Dr Fanny Reading: ‘A Clever Little Bird’

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This thesis is submitted in total fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis is the biographical study of the ‘transnational’ life of Dr. Fanny Reading (1884-1974). Dr Reading came to live in the Ballarat area c. 1888 when she was four years old. Originally she was born in Karelitz near Minsk, Russia as Zipporah Rubinovitch. The thesis tells the story of her transformation and also the story of her family members because they were a close-knit orthodox Jewish family. Reading’s biography is of a migrant woman who belonged to a persecuted minority group, and who through force of character rose above the challenging circumstances of her birth. It serves to redress the fact that historically she has been overlooked. It confirms that at a grassroots level she mobilised the Jewish women of Australia and was a significant Jewish leader.

As a transnational figure of considerable stature, Reading’s biography contains themes of place, class, gender, ethnicity and diaspora that are woven throughout the thesis. It covers her early childhood and adolescence in Ballarat, then her move to Melbourne early in the twentieth century where she became involved in Jewish youth activities and taught Hebrew at the St Kilda Jewish Congregation. The family name was changed to Reading about 1919. Reading entered the University of Melbourne firstly to study music and then medicine (M.B., B.S.1922.) After graduation, she went into general practice with her eldest brother, who was also a doctor, in Sydney. Inspired by a Zionist emissary Bella Pevsner, Reading founded the Council of Jewish Women in 1923. This organisation became the National Council of Jewish Women in 1929. Reading had a keen interest in the health and education of women and girls, the Hebrew language and Israel. She was held in high regard in both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities and received an MBE in 1961.
Statement of Authorship

Except where explicit reference is made in the text of this thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person’s work has been relied upon or used without due acknowledgement in the main text and bibliography of the thesis.

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Dated: 3 October 2016

Jeanette Mary Debney-Joyce
Candidate

Signed: Dr Anne Beggs Sunter
Dated: 2 October 2016

Dr Anne Beggs Sunter
Principal Supervisor
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Ben Michael Debney with sincere thanks.
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<tr>
<td>AWAVA</td>
<td>Australian Women Against Violence Alliance</td>
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<td>AWA</td>
<td>Australian Women’s Alliance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>Castle Line</td>
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<tr>
<td>CJW</td>
<td>Council of Jewish Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECAJ</td>
<td>Executive Council of Australia Jewry</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERA</td>
<td>Equal Rights Alliance</td>
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<td>FHW</td>
<td>Federation of Zionist Women</td>
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<td>FZW</td>
<td>Federation of Zionist Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>GZD</td>
<td>General Zionist Delegate</td>
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<td>HMO</td>
<td>Hassadah Medical Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICW</td>
<td>International Council of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICJW</td>
<td>International Council of Jewish Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>IWSA</td>
<td>International Women’s Suffrage Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBD</td>
<td>Jewish Board of Deputies</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBG</td>
<td>Jewish Board of Guardians</td>
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<tr>
<td>JNF</td>
<td>Jewish National Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>JLWS</td>
<td>Jewish League for Women Suffrage</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>JYPA</td>
<td>Jewish Young People’s Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBGTI</td>
<td>Lesbian, Bi, Gay, Transgender, Intersex.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBBS</td>
<td>Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Science</td>
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<td>NAA</td>
<td>National Archives of Australia</td>
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<td>NAUK</td>
<td>National Archives of the United Kingdom</td>
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<td>NANZ</td>
<td>National Archives of New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCW</td>
<td>National Council of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCJW</td>
<td>National Council of Jewish Women</td>
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<td>NCJWA</td>
<td>National Council of Jewish Women of Australia</td>
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<td>NLA</td>
<td>National Library of Australia</td>
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<td>NLNZ</td>
<td>National Library of New Zealand</td>
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<td>NER</td>
<td>North Eastern Rail</td>
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<td>OAM</td>
<td>Order of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>OWM</td>
<td>Organisation of Working Mothers</td>
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<td>PWZ0</td>
<td>Palestine Women’s Zionist Organisation</td>
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<td>PJTS</td>
<td>Poor Jews’ Temporary Shelter</td>
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<tr>
<td>SKHC</td>
<td>St Kilda Hebrew Congregation</td>
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<td>SZC</td>
<td>Sydney Zionist Council</td>
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<td>RMSS</td>
<td>Royal Mail Steam Ship</td>
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<td>USC</td>
<td>Union Shipping Company</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>VSPCC</td>
<td>Victorian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to...</td>
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<td>WILPF</td>
<td>Women’s International League for Peace and Friendship</td>
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<td>WIZO</td>
<td>Women’s International Zionist Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWM</td>
<td>Women’s Workers’ Movement</td>
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<td>YMHA</td>
<td>Young Hebrew Men’s Association</td>
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<td>ZFA</td>
<td>Zionist Federation of Australia</td>
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<td>ZO</td>
<td>Zionist Organisation</td>
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Introduction

The introduction covers what was known about Reading historically and the challenges that became apparent when a decision was made to research her life story. It refers to the ‘gender blindness’ of earlier historians and endeavours to set the historical record straight on this matter. It describes the archival path and approach taken to the primary sources revealed. It discusses the themes of the thesis - Transnationalism, the New Woman and the Jewish Diaspora.

The life of Dr Fanny Reading (1884-1974), a general practitioner, Jewish community leader and Zionist, deserves to be remembered and acknowledged more than has been the case, especially in Ballarat, where she grew up and where her Jewish family found safe haven. Reading was born Zipporah Rubinovitch in Russia, and Zipporah (who was the wife of Moses) was her Hebrew name. She was usually called Fanny, which is Faigelah in Yiddish, with both names meaning ‘bird’. She was 65 cm (5’5”) tall, fair and intelligent. In Sydney, and more broadly in New South Wales, she has been recognised for the medical and community work she did for both their Jewish and the gentile communities. She rallied the Jewish women of Australia at a grassroots level and formed the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia (NCJWA) in 1929. This thesis makes the case that Reading was a transformational leader and a transnational figure in Australian history in the twentieth century, primarily as a result of the formation of the NCJWA and her support for Zionism.

The following themes illuminate the thesis: diaspora, class, gender and transnationalism. The method – biography, is discussed in the next section. The migration story of Reading’s father, Nathan Rubinovitch, fleeing Russia c.1885 and the background to what is known as ‘the Great Migration’ of 1881 is covered in Chapter 2. Whilst countless similar stories exist, this thesis is concerned with Nathan’s story, and the consequences of

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his decision to migrate ahead of his family to Australia, rather than to South Africa or Canada. Effectively, Reading did not know her father until she was four years old because of this separation and she bonded strongly with her mother Esther, the pair remaining close during Esther’s lifetime.

Since the 1850s, members of the Jewish community have contributed substantially to public, business, professional and artistic life in Ballarat. It is apparent that Jews once lived in Ballarat’s urban environment as there are Jewish names on old buildings around the city, students attending local schools who have Jewish names, and there is a fine but rarely used synagogue in East Ballarat.


The initial problem that had to be overcome when writing a biography of Reading was the paucity of primary sources. Her papers are held at Sydney’s Mitchell Library, and these consist of: an incomplete series of personal letters she wrote home to her family while overseas in 1925 and 1926; an autograph book; a photograph album; passports and certificates; a scrapbook about a visit to Israel; miscellaneous papers and news cuttings; a Council of Jewish Women of NSW minute book; and reports relating to the National Council of Jewish Women (1933-34). A small collection is held by the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Darlinghurst, Sydney: a photocopy of a personal letter from D.H. Harris to Reading; a First Prize Certificate for French in 1900 at University College,

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5 Dr Fanny Reading 1884-1974 Papers, Mitchell Library, Sydney, accessed 10 May, 2013. Reference MLMSS2860/K22000
Ballarat; a copy of Esther’s Application for Naturalisation (1904) and a copy of the Statutory Declaration she also made that year.

These primary sources will be subjected to critical analysis and interrogated. The data will be consistently questioned and background research undertaken to situate an account in its historical context, triangulated with other evidence and checked for internal and external consistency.\(^6\) Comparative analysis will be carried out to eliminate bias, although acknowledgement will be made that in published documents bias may help to explain an important shift in public opinion.\(^7\) The use of letters as a genre takes into account the logistics of correspondence with regard to time and space. In the mid-twentieth century, letters between Britain and Australia took less than a week to reach their destination and allowed for a more immediate response to questions and concerns than in previous years. All the same, the correspondents had to deal with separation in time and space.\(^8\) Chapter 6 relies on the letters that Reading wrote to her family from England, Europe and the Middle East while she was travelling in 1925.

The challenge was to write a biography from a very limited number of primary sources. Reading’s childhood and teenage years were spent in Ballarat and the surrounding district before she and her family moved to Melbourne - could anything be gleaned from the nineteenth-century histories of Ballarat? Unfortunately these revealed little about her early life, as they concentrated on the male members of the Ballarat Jewish community. Newman Rosenthal mentioned Reading briefly in his book *Formula for Survival* (1976) when he wrote of her return visit to Ballarat with her mother on 8 October 1929, and the establishment of a Ballarat Branch of the NCJWA.\(^9\) There is a longer entry in *Look Back with Pride* (1971), also by Rosenthal. He wrote that she had resigned from her position as a teacher of Hebrew at the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation to study medicine, and that later she had set up the NCJW.\(^10\) The school registers from the Lake Bolac Primary

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8 Thomson, ‘Life Stories and Historical Analysis,’ 112.
School and the Humffray Street Primary School in Ballarat, during the years she attended are missing and therefore could not be consulted.

The preliminary research for this project produced considerable information about the Jewish men who had lived in Ballarat, such as Newman Rosenthal and Nathan Spielvogel, but very little about women in the Ballarat Jewish community which was first established in the 1850s.\(^{11}\) It did not seem credible that these successful Jewish businessmen in nineteenth-century Ballarat had prospered unsupported by their womenfolk. A case of gender blindness in the writing of history by Weston Bate, W.B. Withers and others caused the contributions of Reading and many other sterling women to be overlooked.\(^{12}\) This negligence made it all the more important for a biography of Reading to be attempted. Recent theory in this genre is covered in the Literature Review.

Reading’s life and her achievements were considerable. As a poor Jewish refugee from Russia, she eventually became a doctor and an important Jewish community leader, principally in NSW but with connections throughout Australia and internationally. With the establishment of the Council of Jewish Women in 1923, which led to the National Council of Jewish Women in Sydney in 1929, her defining achievements were significant for that era when she could be seen a radical, a visionary, a leader and a role model.

The epistemological question at the heart of this thesis is: it is really possible to know another person’s life? How best could one approach a study of the life of Dr Fanny Reading? Various historical research methods were available and were considered. Oral history or interviews were a possibility but rejected for two reasons: Reading died in 1974 and a hagiographic biography was not desirable. A collective biography of her immediate family was not possible since they were also deceased. Computer-based research was unsuitable since there was not a large historical database about Reading to interrogate and analyse. Knowledge of Hebrew or Yiddish could provide ‘opportunities for decoding meanings,’ however they were neither spoken or understood by the

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researcher. Upon reflection, a narrative biography seemed the most suitable historical research method of approaching the life of Reading starting with her birth in Russia in 1884 and ending with her death in Australia in 1974.

Krista Cowman (2012) defines biography as ‘at its simplest, the history of an individual’s life, generally arranged chronologically from birth to death and set in a wider context.’ John Tosh (2010) suggests that the modern biographer is more likely to ‘make the right inferences’ if they have followed their subject from childhood. As indicated earlier, the first section of this thesis therefore focuses on the formation of Reading’s identity during her early years and in these chapters she is referred to as ‘Fanny.’

The biography is set in its historical context. Alistair Thomson (2012) stresses that the duty of historians is always to hear those found stories and ‘understand what they meant in their own time.’ Likewise, Anne Thwaites (1998) insists that ‘a great deal depends on context.’ Reading’s life is considered as a young woman at the time of Federation, within the context of nationalistic ideals of ‘White Australia’ and the rise of feminist ideas about independence and equality for women, including Jewish women. Each stage of Reading’s life is set into context paying particular attention to the issues she considered important.

Tosh claims the modern biographer must weigh ‘the public records for the period.’ The public record in Sydney of Reading’s medical work includes ‘an honorary medical officer at St. George Hospital, the Rachael Forster Hospital for Women and Children, the Wolper Jewish Hospital, and … a life governor of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales, …’

16 After the family name changed from Rubinovitch to Reading in 1919, she is referred to as ‘Reading’ in the remainder of the thesis. This is to signify the change in her identity.  
the Dalwood Children’s Homes and the Women’s Hospital, Crown Street.’ \(^{20}\) The Feminist thinker Barbara Caine (2010) draws attention to the notion of biography becoming a quest for understanding. \(^{21}\) She argues this has led to ‘a particular interest in family dynamics, in repetitive patterns of behaviour set up in childhood and often evident in adult life.’ \(^{22}\) Biographers became interested in female activists whose lives were significant as insights were gained about the issues and causes that gave their lives ‘shape and meaning.’ \(^{23}\) Reading’s establishment of the NCJWA and her work and support for Zionism gave her life ‘shape and meaning;’ \(^{24}\) in addition to the strong social values that drove her medical career.

Barbara Merrill and Linden West (2009) discuss the appropriateness of using biography as a method, particularly if a feminist perspective is used. \(^{25}\) They argue that employing feminism in biographical research has not only opened up issues of gender inequality but also issues of class and race. \(^{26}\) Biography has always been an important part of the women’s movement according to Reinharz (1992) because it ‘draws women out of obscurity, repairs the historical method and provides an opportunity for the woman reader and writer to identify with the subject.’ \(^{27}\) Likewise, Shirley Leckie (2004) argues that biography gives voice to those whose voices have been silenced or unheard and ‘who, for far too long, have been relegated to history’s margins.’ \(^{28}\) Drawing these threads together, Reading’s biography provides insight into a neglected group – migrant women in Australia. Jan Pettman (1992) observes that migrant women are perceived as triply disadvantaged: being women, working class, and culturally different; or quadruply disadvantaged if they are not white. \(^{29}\) Reading was able to transform her status as ‘outsider’ and become influential and effective in both the gentile and Jewish

\(^{20}\) Rubinstein, ‘Reading, Fanny (1884–1974)’
\(^{22}\) Caine, *Biography and History*, 41.
\(^{23}\) Caine, *Biography and History*, 46.
\(^{24}\) Caine, *Biography and History*, 46.
communities. The thesis argues that her leadership style was transformational and her influence was transnational (i.e., international); she inspired a generation of Australian Jewish women after her.

What significance can be drawn from the fact so little remains of Reading’s private thoughts, her writing on political subjects and her political views (except her support of Zionism)? There is so much more known about her public life, particularly with the NCJWA, which was documented in Marlo Newton’s detailed study (2000).\(^{30}\) In addition, how is Reading to be placed within the complexity of female lives, as she was neither mother nor wife, particularly as the orthodox Jewish culture to which she belonged placed such a high value on both roles? Finally, as a Jew, child and refugee to Australia, she lived on the margin of society ‘in the cross currents of cultural and political flow.’\(^{31}\) How did she deal with these cross currents in life? Was she swept away or did she manage to ride the waves successfully?

On the Archival Path

Reading left little in the way of primary sources and some papers may have even been destroyed in the name of privacy. Impoverished migrant women do not leave a convenient paper trail behind them in the form of diaries, letters, documents and miscellaneous papers. Busy female general practitioners do not leave copious diaries for a researcher to access. However, as biography has been chosen as the method for this thesis, a number of biographies have been read in preparation.\(^ {32}\) These have proven to be unsuitable models as they were written from research conducted in rich archives. *An Eye for Eternity: The Life of Manning Clark* (2011), for instance, was written from an

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\(^{30}\) Newton, *Making a Difference - the History of the NCJWA.*


extensive collection of his private letters, journals, diaries and papers, together with notes which he left for his biographer-to-be, Mark McKenna. Edmund De Waal’s *The Hare with the Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance* (2011) had a thematic structure based on a collection of 264 miniature Japanese *netsuke* he had inherited from his wealthy Ephrussi family.

Graeme Davison’s *Lost Relations* (2015) presents a possible model, as it encountered similar challenges to the ones faced in writing a biography of Reading. *Lost Relations* was written as a number of factors intersected: a popular interest in family history, the availability of databases of Ancestry.com and the Church of the Latter Day Saints, and available recreational time for (amateur) historians who had the necessary computer skills. Davison, a professional historian, acknowledges he has been motivated by the general interest in family history. He also wanted to ‘think more concretely about the relationship between the familial and the communal pasts.’

Knowing so little about Reading’s life, it has been deemed better to acknowledge the incompleteness of detail and give up the search for a complete narrative. Davison has found difficulty in creating complete narratives and acknowledges there were gaps in his family records. In order to give more substance to particular family members he has used photographs, an artifact (a button), maps, a recipe for Elderberry wine, a cure for cancer and a recipe for good cheap beer. To strengthen the character of one of his relatives, he inserted a short compositional feature ‘Hard Times.’ Here exists a possible method to follow, one that endeavours to place Reading in the issues of her life and time, and as a result, a theory of ‘Heterography’ rather than of ‘Biography’ follows.

**Heterography - An Alternate Theory of Biography**

Heterography is suggested as an alternate description to the term Biography in this thesis, as a solution to the challenges it presented. The word ‘biography’ comes from ‘bios’ (life) and ‘graphia’ (writing), so another definition becomes possible if the prefix ‘hetero’ (different/other) is used. Heterography’ becomes a method of exploring a life as

34 Davison, *Lost Relations*, 92.
heterography ‘assumes difference but also the possibility of multiplicities of meaning.’

This alternative definition of biography argues that a heterography of Reading’s life is less of a chronological narrative with a beginning and an end, and bears more resemblance to a cubist painting with its intersecting planes.

Pamela Scully (2010) suggests the solution to the dilemma of wrestling with a challenging biography, (particularly when the archival resources are few) lies in formulating a new kind of biographical method. In addition, she argues that our peripheral vision should be used instead of a full-on stare to observe our biographical subject. This method entails getting a glimpse of Reading ‘out of the corner of our eye.’ While this is frustrating, even disappointing, it seems this ‘peripheral vision[s]’ may be the best way to capture an elusive biographical subject.

Consider, for example, Georges Braque’s cubist painting ‘Woman and a Guitar’ (1913). The lines of the intersecting planes are delineated, some planes are opaque and others are transparent. The representations of the woman and the guitar are fragmented and so a greater mental adjustment is needed to access the coherence of the whole composition. The composition is internally consistent and reality is presented in a new, abstracted way. A metaphor for a heterography of Reading can be visually understood by studying Braque’s abstract painting.

It follows that Reading’s heterography is more multifaceted, more fragmented and more disjointed than a traditional biography. Returning to the analogy of the cubist painting, the heterography opens up different biographical spaces. These vary:

36 Scully, ‘Peripheral Visions: Heterography and Writing the Transnational Life of Sara Baartman,’ 32.
some are spaces of disenfranchisement and diaspora; some are geographical, lonely, wind-swept spaces in Russia and Australia; others are gendered spaces of opportunity and education; others are cultural or religious spaces of tradition or change. There are tense juxtapositions full of colour and noise, as in violent events like pogroms (attacks on people and property) or war. In other spaces, voices have been silenced, colours have faded, noise is muted, and there is death, sorrow and loneliness. Therefore, this model of heterography is woven into each chapter, and the chapters are chronologically organised.

Using a heterography for Reading acknowledges how ‘very fragmentary’ the archives have been.³⁸ Carmel Nelson (2015) cites Foucault who argues that ‘the absence of information about a life effectively derealises it, and the essay becomes a mediation on how to represent those lives in a way that preserves their affective force.’³⁹ The affective, that is, the emotional force of Reading’s life is preserved because she was exceptional. She could be characterised as being thrice disenfranchised: by birth a Jew, by her migrant working class status and by her gender. However her life demonstrated determination, drive and will, and she chose a life path that was far from easy. Her archival sources are depleted so any existing archival elements, such as her photographs, ‘which seem most real and incontrovertible’ have to be strongly interrogated to yield up as much information as possible.⁴⁰

It is a truism that historians prefer words.⁴¹ There is the sense that ‘non-textual sources … are unreliable.’⁴² However, historians have used visual sources and material culture in an increasingly multi-disciplinary way to add dimension to an array of ‘historical issues and problems.’ Ludmilla Jordanova (2012) advocates ‘an eclectic, flexible orientation’ when approaching visual material.⁴³ The historian is encouraged to consider photographs not as reflections of the past but rather as interpretations of the past.⁴⁴ Jordanova (2008) argues

³⁸ Scully, ‘Peripheral Visions,’ 38.
³⁹ Carmel Nelson, ‘Archival Poetics: Writing History from the Fragments, Fictional histories and historical fictions; Writing History in the twenty-first century,’ Text, Special Issue 28 April, 2015: 10.
⁴⁰ Scully, ‘Peripheral Visions,’ 38.
that historians could do well to consider the ‘fresh insights’ that visual material sources can provide.\(^{45}\) They could consider giving greater consideration to the role of audiences, no matter how diverse these might be. Mette Sandbye (2014) cites Richard Chaflen who thought that family photography was simultaneously ‘a process and a doing, an act of communication and a symbolic activity.’\(^{46}\) Older photograph albums like those of Reading’s have been closely associated with memory and family bonding. They do not contain negative or disturbing images, they are a record of the good times, the important family or individual occasions preserved for future reference.

Finally, this heterography suggests a more complex relationship between the elements of Reading’s life than would appear in a chronologically linear narrative. Most biographies of ‘Great Men’ appear in linear narratives because the subjects have ensured that they have left comprehensive, chronological archives. It also represents the way that western culture thinks about time, and to get to the heart of a heterography of Reading, the logic of the West has to be de-centred for it places the idea of a ‘self’ at the centre of a biography.\(^{47}\)

This again raises the epistemological question: is it really possible to know the ‘whole self’ in a biography? If carefully selected, primary sources can be misleading; if there are gaps in the source material then a complete picture does not emerge. Even the selection the biographer makes in deciding what is important and what is not, distorts the biography. At best, what may be attempted is for the biographer ‘to be about context as much as character, with the place of the subject in his or her times made clear.’\(^{48}\) In order to understand these contextual aspects of Reading’s life many additional sources have been consulted. These are listed in the following section.

\(^{47}\) Scully, ‘Peripheral Visions,’ 33.
\(^{48}\) Tania Evans and Robert Reynolds, ‘Introduction to this Special Issue on Biography and Life-Writing,’ *Australian Historical Studies*, 43, 1, 2012: 117.
Archives and Sources

The primary sources held at the Mitchell Library, the State Library NSW and the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) have been noted. The Archive of Australian Judaica at the Fisher Library, University of Sydney was consulted. At the Public Records Office of Victoria, the following records were consulted: Ballarat and Ararat Petty Court Session records, the Supreme Court of Victoria records, and Victorian school registers. Australian newspapers have been extensively consulted through TROVE at the National Library of Australia (NLA) that also included Jewish newspapers: the Jewish Herald and The Hebrew Standard of Australasia. The Jewish Chronicle (London) was consulted through its online archive. The Australian Jewish Herald and the Sydney Jewish News, newspapers that have not as yet been digitised, were read at the State Library NSW. Through Ancestry.com records of births, marriages and deaths were available, as well as passenger and electoral lists. The handwritten passenger lists from Hamburg have been scrutinised in order to locate Nathan Rubinovitch’s departure c.1885. Through the National Archives of Australia (NAA) the Application for Naturalisation submitted by Reading’s father was obtained; both Esther’s and Nathan’s applications have provided valuable information regarding their arrival in the colony. The NAA has also been a valuable resource for the World War I service records of Reading’s three brothers and for the Military Intelligence Report on Nathan Rubinovitch.

The guide written by Malcolm J. Turnbull Safe Haven: Records of the Jewish Community in Australia (1999) listed the records held by the National Archives of Australia. Through the site JewishGen.org Jewish death and burial records were obtained. The Ballarat Genealogy Society held records of Reading’s cousins who had lived in Ballarat, and the Sands and McDougall’s Directories have been useful for addresses. At the National Library Australia (NLA Canberra) the NCJWA Bulletins were obtained, as well as the records concerning Nathan Rubinovitch’s appearances in the East Ballarat Court of Petty Sessions.

The Australiana Room at the Central Highland Regional Library in Ballarat, the Gold Museum at Sovereign Hill, and the Langi Morgala Museum in Ararat have provided valuable background material on the living conditions, history, geography and geology of
the goldfields district. The Ballarat and District and the Ararat and District Historical Societies have been consulted for their historical visual and written resources. In addition, a number of theses have been read and are listed below.\textsuperscript{49} The exhibition \textit{Strength of Mind: 125 Years of Women in Medicine} (2013) mounted by the Medical Museum at the University of Melbourne profiled the medical graduates of 1922, which included Reading. Finally, obituaries have also been consulted, including those of Professor Heinrich Finkelstein (1865-1942), the nutritionist whom Reading visited,\textsuperscript{50} and Percy J. Marks (1867-1941), a leading light in Sydney’s Jewish community;\textsuperscript{51} and those of Reading herself.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{A Transnational Life and the New Woman.}

Placing Reading in a transnational context is appropriate because it has been possible to get glimpses of her as she moved throughout her life across continents– from Russia to Australia, back to North America, Europe and the Middle East, and back to Australia. She was transnational, both in a physical sense and in terms of her influence, engagement and commitment, as this thesis demonstrates. As Guterl (2013) argues:

\begin{quote}
The life here is different. It is not offered here in the sense of your typical biography, where the goal is to unearth the minutiae of the everyday, to plot a human being’s circumstance in all of its cradle-to-the-grave detail, and in doing so to explain his or her consequence. Indeed, the purpose of the ‘life’ in these projects is to focus an answer to a question that might, were it not appropriately consolidated, expand without end, and to reveal, through containment and focus, something new –something exciting – about the relations of self to place, time and space.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{49} Ruth Lee, ‘Mary de Garis: Progressivism, Early Feminism and Medical Reform,’ (PhD, Deakin University, 2010); Raya Gadir, ‘East European Jews in Sydney 1881-1981; the process of migrant adjustment,’ (PhD, University of Sydney,1983); Monika Wells, ‘Gentlemen the Ladies Have Come to Stay!’ The entry of women into the medical profession in Victoria and the founding of the Queen Victoria Hospital.’ (Master of Arts, University of Melbourne, 1987); Suzanne D. Rutland, ‘The Jewish Community in NSW 1914-1939,’ (Honours, Master of Arts, Sydney University 1990); Maggie McKee-Huey, ‘The Role and Importance of Jewish Evangelism in Nineteenth Century Great Britain: The London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews’ (Honours, University of Oklahoma, 2013). Dorothy Glennys Wickham, ‘Beyond the Wall: Ballarat Female Refuge: A Case Study in Moral Authority,’ (Master’s thesis, Australian Catholic University), 2003.


\textsuperscript{53} Matthew Pratt Guterl, ‘The Futures of Transnational History,’ \textit{American Historical Review}, 118,1, February 2013 : 130.
Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake (2006) argue the Australian version of transnational history has been influenced by a ‘desire to break the historiographical marginality and isolation.’\(^{54}\) The influence of the women’s movements at the end of the nineteenth century played its part in the attempt to break free of the confines of nationalism. Reading grew up in a period characterised by ‘whiteness’, when it was ‘a transnational form of racial identification, that was at once global in its power and personal in its meaning, the basis of geo-global political alliance and subjective sense of self.’\(^{55}\) This was a period when there was a new construct about what it was to be a woman.

The term ‘New Woman’ emerged in the late nineteenth-century to describe educated, independent, career orientated women whose numbers were on the rise. Devereux (1999) claims the appearance of the ‘New Woman’ occurred within the cultural context of nineteenth-century British Empire expansionism.\(^{56}\) A feminist ideal, the New Woman appeared to endanger the strength and the security of the Anglo-Saxon race and so ‘served as a focus for anti-feminist sentiment.’\(^{57}\) This was the period when Reading was growing up in Ballarat, attending school, helping her mother with her siblings, and the thesis argues that when the family moved to Melbourne, she became more aware of feminist issues. For instance, a report on the inaugural service of the Jewish Religious Union in London (in which The Honorable Lily Montagu was deeply involved) was reported in the *Hebrew Standard* in 1902; Reading quite possibly read about it as it was in the public domain.\(^{58}\)

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57 Devereux, ‘New Woman New World,’176.
Jewish Diaspora

Simon Schama (2013) has written evocatively of the Jewish diaspora.\(^\text{59}\) Chapter 2 of this thesis describes the ordeal Nathan Rubinovitch, Reading’s father, underwent to get to Australia ahead of his family:

> What the Jews have lived through and have somehow lived to tell the tale, has been the most intense version known to human history of adversities endured by other peoples as well; of a culture perennially resisting its annihilation, of remaking homes and habitats, writing the prose and poetry of life, through a succession of uprootings and assaults.\(^\text{60}\)

In a total population of 23,401,892 the Jews represented 0.4 per cent of the Australian population, numbering 91,000 in the 2016 census.\(^\text{61}\) This is a 6 per cent decrease from the 2011 census.\(^\text{62}\) Maintaining Jewish group identity in the host nation of Australia is very important. The importance to Australia’s Jewish community of a visionary leader such as Dr. Fanny Reading therefore becomes significant. She enabled them to consolidate their group identity and consciousness, and her significance as a cultural referent was enhanced by the honours and commemorations bestowed on her.\(^\text{63}\) Commemorations of Jewish cultural memory are significant in a subordinated group such as Australian Jews, because they become ‘a badge of group consciousness.’\(^\text{64}\)

Commemoration is a ‘calculated strategy for stabilising collective memories.’\(^\text{65}\) The celebration of Bonfire Night in Britain on 5 November continues today, but the political referent of Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 has become ‘symbolically impoverished.’\(^\text{66}\) In a similar way in 1897, the Purim picnic for the Ballarat Hebrew School students, including the 13-year-old Fanny Rubinovitch (Reading), was revived by


\(^{60}\) Schama, *The Story of the Jews*, xvi


\(^{62}\) ‘Stories from the Census 2016’ Australian Bureau of Statistics.

\(^{63}\) MBE: 1961 A banquet hosted by Sydney Jewry; 1961 NCJW War Memorial Fanny Reading Council House; 1966 Fanny Reading Surgical Wing, Wolper Jewish Hospital, Woollahra; 1972 Auditorium National Jewish Memorial Centre, Canberra, 2011 Fanny Reading Lounge, Wolper Jewish Hospital, Woollahra.

\(^{64}\) Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 325.

\(^{65}\) Patrick Hutton, ‘Recent Scholarship on Memory and History,’ *The History Teacher*, 33, 4, (2000): 537.

D. H. Harris who was the Ballarat Hebrew schoolteacher. Harris believed that Purim had started to lose its significance to the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation. In this way an act of commemoration ‘anchors the past in the present.’ Over time referents can diminish unless they are refreshed or reframed, and the Jewish constructs of time, memory and history work together to achieve this.

Collective memory, for many historians from Jules Michelet to R. G. Collingwood, is ‘perceived to be the subject matter of historical understanding.’ Following the ‘linguistic turn’ in history, and Hayden White’s (1973) *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe*, historians lost faith in the neutrality of historical narrative. John Tosh (2010) discusses memory in terms of a culture of commemoration and oral history. ‘Collective memory’ is defined as the ‘stories and the assumptions about the past that account for the key features’ of the current society. It prizes and prioritises certain ‘cultural values and political loyalties’ that occurred in the past -- such as the destruction of the Jewish Temple in CE 70.

The Jewish sense of time means Jews do not orientate themselves in Christ-centric terms of the historical divide, before Christ (BC) or after Christ (AC), but prefer to use the term and the abbreviation Common Era (CE). Jews count their calendar from the beginning of time according to the literal account in the Bible. The Jewish date of 5751, for example, implies that creation occurred 5,751 years ago. *Rosh Hashanah* is the Jewish New Year and that is the day the *Torah* (the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament) considers to be the first day of creation, and it usually falls in September. Jewish months are based on the moon, not the sun. *Shabbat* is the most important day in the week, the most holy of days, and lasts from Friday evening to Saturday evening; the next day begins with the onset of night at sunset rather than at dawn. Jewish religious practice is ‘made accessible by being embedded in time.’ In this way, time, history and memory are entwined in Jewish culture.

68 The festival of Purim celebrates the deliverance of the Jews living in the Persian empire during the fifth century BCE from a plot to kill them.
69 Hutton, ‘Recent Scholarship on Memory and History,’ 537.
70 Hutton, ‘Recent Scholarship on Memory and History,’ 534.
The memory of Reading is alive today in the collective memory of the Australian Jewish community and this thesis argues that her significance as a cultural referent for the Jewish community is still valid 43 years after her death. This explains why her memory is kept alive today and why the current Australian Jewish community still cares deeply about a legal judgment in which Reading was involved 70 years ago. *Smith’s Weekly (1947)* was a tabloid publication and it alleged falsely that the Jewish community was raising funds in Australia to be used against the British in Palestine. The funds in question were for the Youth *Aliyah* organisation to assist Jewish children in need, anywhere in the world, to travel and settle in Palestine. Reading appeared as the plaintiff on behalf of Youth *Aliyah* 1949 in the Supreme Court, and the case has become embedded in the collective Jewish memory. The analysis by Morris Ochert OAM (1996) in ‘Dr Fanny Reading vs. *Smith’s Weekly*’ reveals Reading’s significance as a leader of the Australian Jewish community. Her legal suit failed on a point of law. In spite of the legal judgment that went against Reading, the Australian Jewish community felt very strongly that she held the high moral ground, and at the time the case was a *cause célèbre*. The strength of community feeling that continues today reveals her important function as cultural referent for the Australian Jewish community, in death as in life. The hysteria against Jewish terrorists in Palestine created by articles like this one in *Smith’s Weekly* had a negative impact on public opinion in Australia about Jewish immigration to Australia.

The Jewish community’s collective memory also holds the memories of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the lost homeland (*Zion*); of a Jewish diaspora and the ways the suffering Jewish people have wandered the world, and finally, of the *Shoah* (Holocaust). Claire Kramsch (2014) shows how late modernist constructs of historicity and subjectivity co-constructed ‘membership in a discourse community that shares a

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74 Rubinstein, 'Reading, Fanny (1884–1974)'
75 Ochert, ‘Dr Fanny Reading vs Smith’s Weekly,’ 308-342.
76 Reading represented a group, not an individual.
77 Ochert, ‘Dr Fanny Reading vs Smith’s Weekly,’ 308.
common space and history, and common imaginings.\textsuperscript{79} It evolved into Zionism, and in doctors such as Reading it found expression in the care for the sick, the dispossessed, refugees and the isolated. Collective memory reflects traditional core values: the care and education of the young in religious traditions, and the importance of language as the transmitter of values. Reading firmly upheld these core values in her promotion of the leadership of women in the NCJWA, in her mentoring, advocacy, communication of the importance of education for younger women, her interest in Hebrew and support of Israel.

Peripheral sightings of Reading are intriguing. Those who knew her spoke of her as a ‘living legend’ and said that she ‘did not dwell on personal matters.’\textsuperscript{80} Others have spoken of her character as having a ‘ruthless side’ and of being ‘a very hard task master but a fair and loving person.’\textsuperscript{81} However, her own voice can be heard in the private letters she wrote home when she was overseas (discussed in Chapter 6). Her first language as a child in Russia was Yiddish and the Polish Jewish author Isaac Bashevis Singer (1902-1991) observed when making his acceptance speech for winning the Noble Prize for Literature in 1978, that Yiddish has specific positive qualities: humour, humility, gratitude. Is it possible Reading absorbed some of these qualities from the language she used as a little girl? Singer’s words are apposite here:

> There is a quiet humour in Yiddish and a gratitude for every day of life, every crumb of success, each encounter of love. The Yiddish mentality is not haughty. It does not take victory for granted.\textsuperscript{82}

In preparation for this thesis extensive reading was undertaken. The following chapter covers this in detail and the relevance of the material covered to the thesis and the biography of Dr Fanny Reading.

\textsuperscript{80} Andgel, ‘The Law of Loving Kindness,’ 247.
Literature Review

This chapter deals with the literature that was consulted with regard to transnationalism, the White Australia policy and the development of the women’s liberation movement. Following these are sections on American Jewish feminism, Australian Jewish feminism and Zionism.

Transnationalism and White Australia

As an introduction to the development of transnationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, *Drawing the Global Colour Line* by Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds charts the ‘spread of ‘whiteness’ as a transnational form of racial identification. The former African and Asian colonies of European countries moved towards nationalism and imperial complacency was challenged. This new form of transnationalism represented ‘whiteness in a defensive but defiant mode.’

Outlying emergent new centres of growth such as California or the colony of Victoria, were frustrated by ‘distant metropolitan centres of power.’ Washington and London threatened the sovereign right of these distant colonies, especially where Chinese immigration was concerned. The global dimensions of Chinese immigration spread throughout the Pacific Basin, Singapore, Thailand, Manila, Vietnam, Java and Australia, and did not go unnoticed. Anti-Chinese sentiment had grown in the United States, particularly in the western states, and by the late 1870s the industrial leaders could no longer ignore it. In an example of transnational influence, the findings of the 1867 Congressional Joint Special Committee in the Burlingham Treaty found their way into the shelves of parliamentary and public libraries in Australia. Australian newspapers had

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their own correspondents based in San Francisco. The direct shipping line from Sydney to San Francisco added to the cross-fertilisation of ideas at another level.¹

The development of ‘whiteness’ as a transnational form of racial identification was ‘at once global in its power and personal in its meaning.’² The English had a conviction that their racial superiority was supreme.³ Binary thinking that governed British Imperial rule and put nations into either an ‘advanced’ or a ‘backward’ category, and the American naturalisation law that divided people into ‘white’ and ‘not white’ categories, were characteristic of the Anglo-American rapprochement of the late nineteenth century.⁴ At the centre of this was the construct of the white, adult male who was superior to any person with black or yellow skin. In 1901, the newly formed Commonwealth of Australia expelled several thousand ‘kanakas’ (Pacific Islanders) ‘in an act of racial expulsion.’⁵ The Immigration Restriction Act (1901) was then passed and White Australia was established.⁶

In 1904, a large number of Chinese labourers were contracted to work in the Transvaal goldmines.⁷ This produced an outcry in reaction and the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand, Alfred Deakin and Richard Sneddon, lodged an official protest to the Colonial Home Office.⁸ The key issue for these self-governing countries was to say who could or could not enter their country.⁹ When W.H.Hughes sailed for the United States of America in 1922 on a speaking tour, he appealed to his American audiences for their moral, financial and physical support because ‘Australia was undertaking a great social experiment.’¹⁰ Australia’s constitution had already been modelled on the American one.¹¹

The ideas that Hughes delivered on his speaking tour were accepted by American

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⁴ Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 144.
⁵ Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 137.
audiences, who were also anxious about the rise of a modern Japan. This was the time of the growth of eugenics and other forms of racism that were of interest to American scholars. On the western side of the USA, Australia and New Zealand, there was ‘strong opposition’ to the idea of racial equality, and transnational influences clearly existed between the three countries in creating a colour line that excluded anyone not white. The idea of a ‘working man’s wage’ at this time of Federation in 1901 also excluded women and condemned them to domestic servitude.

Other women also faced difficulties as they struggled and fought for women’s rights. A short summary of the gentle women’s movement follows, and this then moves to a consideration of the beginnings of Jewish feminism. This movement had an entirely different character in the USA than in England. The beginning of the women’s movement was marked in 1888 when the International Council of Women was formed. In time, it would spread to the poorer third-world countries as women were permitted to vote and there was a multiplicity of women’s groups. This movement – the first wave of the women’s movement – was gender-based and initially only in European countries or proto-European countries such as Canada and Australia.

The Women’s Movement

Leila Rupp (1997) wrote that Mary Wollstonecraft’s Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792) had roused women in both England and the US. Wollstonecraft had advocated education for women, believing that by becoming educated women would not be left at the mercy of their husbands, while if left uneducated, would be in danger of becoming domestic tyrants over their children and servants in frustration. Another spark igniting the women’s movement was the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, where women delegates were refused entry. In 1878 the first international women’s conference convened in Paris – the ‘Congrès International de Droit des Femmes’ was held in connection with the World Exposition. Women were motivated because a number of

12 Lake and Reynolds, Drawing the Global Colour Line, 312
13 Lake and Reynolds, Drawing the Global Colour Line, 312
14 Lake and Reynolds, Drawing the Global Colour Line, 312
causes – ‘abolitionism, socialism, peace, temperance and moral reform, called their attention to the cross-national character of their causes.’

The second international conference for women held by the USA National Women’s Suffrage movement in Washington, D.C., had invited international representatives to its 1888 meeting. This was an attempt to broaden the base of the suffrage movement and to include literary clubs, temperance organisations, labour groups, moral purity groups, peace groups and professional groups. The International Council of Women (ICW) was formed in the USA in 1888 and wife of the Governor-General of Canada, Lady Aberdeen, agreed to be the first president. At this stage there were no national councils; the overarching international body had been formed first. Between 1888 and 1904 the following countries joined the ICW: Canada (1893), Germany (1897), Great Britain (1898), Sweden (1898), Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands (1899), Italy, New Zealand (1900), Argentina, France (1901), Austria, Switzerland (1903), Hungary and Norway (1904). The ICW was marked by its conservatism and its ‘reputation as an aristocratic body.’ The ICW claimed to represent ‘4 to 5 million women by 1907 and 36 million by 1925.’

Although it had started out as a suffrage organisation, the conservative position that it took on this issue resulted in a split. Consequently, the International Women’s Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) came into being in Berlin in 1904. Australia also joined this organisation in 1904 together with Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, USA, and Great Britain.

During the next nine years many nations joined the IWSA including South Africa (1908), Iceland (1911) and China (1913); there were 26 national auxiliaries in 1913 and 51 in 1926. The IWSA had ‘a strong feminist identity’ and expanded its interests beyond

16 Jupp, Worlds of Women, 15.
17 Jupp, Worlds of Women, 16, Table 1.
20 Jupp, Worlds of Women, Table 1, 16.
suffrage.\textsuperscript{22} The IWSA split in 1915 over the controversy of holding a peace conference during wartime; from the 1915 meeting in The Hague the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace was formed. This organisation was renamed the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in 1919.\textsuperscript{23} Consequently, these three organisations – the ICW, IWSA and WILPF proclaimed their ‘openness’ to women of all backgrounds and creeds.\textsuperscript{24} This next section covers the development of Jewish feminism and how it developed differently in the USA, England and Australia.

**Jewish Feminism**

In order to fully comprehend what the equality struggle for Jewish women meant, consider their status concerning Jewish Law; a short discussion follows. This is followed by sections on American, English and Australian Jewish feminists.

In traditional Jewish law women were equal to men. Jewish women did not have a lower status, but their obligations and responsibilities were different from those of men, while no less important.\textsuperscript{25} Rabbinic interpretation of the Bible taught that the qualities which women possessed were intuition, understanding and intelligence. Some rabbinic scholars taught that the first ‘man’ created had dual gender and was later separated into a man and a woman. The matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah were superior to the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In Judaism women have been held in great respect since biblical times.\textsuperscript{26} Traditionally, Jewish women had rights to buy, sell and own property and to make contracts long before Western women were granted those rights. The Jewish woman’s sphere of influence was in the home – housekeeping and raising children. Jewish religious life did not revolve around the synagogue but around the home. Therefore, the role of the Jewish wife was to support her husband so that he could study the Torah and be relieved of the day-to-day worries of life.\textsuperscript{27} The strictly ultra-orthodox Jewish community in St Kilda, Melbourne still live in this manner and are close-knit but insular. The normative state for an orthodox Jewish person is to be married; the concept

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Jupp, ‘Constructing Internationalism,’ 1575.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Jupp, ‘Constructing Internationalism,’ 1575.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Jupp, ‘Constructing Internationalism,’ 1573.
\item \textsuperscript{26} ‘The Role of Women.’
\item \textsuperscript{27} ‘The Role of Women.’
\end{itemize}
of a celibate single life does not fit with Jewish tradition. In order to achieve success in life, Reading, as a single Jewish woman, needed important role models (covered further below) and these were emerging in Australia and overseas.

Generally speaking, during the nineteenth century in the USA, UK and Australia, Jewish women agitated for different things from their gentile sisters: the young Jewish women working in manufacturing in the USA on the east coast wanted better industrial conditions; other American Jewish women wanted to take part in the synagogue ritual; be permitted to sit in the synagogue not separated from the men; 28 and to have religious education for Jewish girls as well as boys. Gentile women in the United Kingdom (UK) agitated for the vote, or for temperance issues, for equal opportunity and for other rights, and Jewish women observed them and followed suit, although their issues differed. Reading observed these women and the unfolding events and certainly was in touch with Jewish feminists before she left Australia for an overseas trip in 1925. Madam Bella Pevsner, a Zionist speaker visiting Australia, was an early feminist who had a profound effect on Reading after she graduated in 1922.

Reading has been placed within a transnational framework because she founded the Council of Jewish Women (CJW) in 1923, which became a national movement in 1929. 29 Through her positions as National President of the NCJWA (1929-31 and 1935-48), and Life President (1955-74), and as a delegate in the 1920s to the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW) and as a Vice-President from 1949, she exercised transnational influence. 30 After 1929 the NCJWA linked with Jewish women all around Australia, and with other ‘transnational node[s]’ overseas in Chicago, New York, London, Vienna, Cairo, and Tel Aviv, claiming that … ‘in our transnational histories we will need to allow for multiple temporalities and spatialities to coexist, perhaps acrimoniously.’ 31 In this way, the NCJWA became part of the larger movement of gentile and Jewish women organising themselves internationally.

28 Jewish women usually sat in the gallery, a mezzanine floor, separate from their menfolk. The issue here was men and women sitting together.
29 Newton, Making a Difference, 4.
30 Newton, Making a Difference, 19.
The ICJW was formed in Rome, but not until 1912, considerably later than the other women’s organisations. The ICJW was active until World War 1 and reconvened in 1923 in Vienna with representatives from 23 countries; it also met in Hamburg in 1929. There were several reasons Jewish Women’s organisations formed later than gentile ones. Jewish women had to form their collective identity by defining their group boundaries; they had to raise consciousness of their identity as a Jewish group. Finally, they had to create the ‘politiciization of everyday life embodied in words and symbols.’ Jewish women had also to deal with ‘anti-Jewish sentiment’ in the progressive gentile women’s movements in the USA and in the UK where, for instance, Amelia Pankhurst’s suffragette organisation was anti-Semitic. The gentile feminist movements regarded the Judaic patriarchal structure as being oppressive, and anti-Zionist rhetoric was ‘equally strong in radical women’s movements.’ However, Jewish women felt obliged to defend Israel. Also, they wished to be feminists but they at the same time wanted to remain the ‘matriarch of a family’ and therefore were not ‘radical’ feminists. This dichotomy created a tension between Judaism and feminism, and continues to exist today.

Some Jewish women were involved with these organisations and they encountered not only Christian assumptions and traditions but also anti-Semitism ‘both within their organisations and from the outside.’ Jewish women observed what their gentile sisters were doing, and the ‘bonds of sisterhood’ and interaction with their gentile peers encouraged them to leave their homes, become motivated about Jewish issues, and become involved in the women’s movement. They focussed on specific Jewish issues, which were principally concerned with improving the status of Jewish women within their own Jewish communities. They were concerned with the struggle against being second-class citizens in their own religious and communal life. They wished to broaden their traditional roles as wives and mothers, for they were permitted only to leave the

32 Newton, Making a Difference, 19.
33 Newton, Making a Difference, 19.
35 Newton, Making a Difference, 47.
36 Newton, Making a Difference, 47.
37 Newton, Making a Difference, 48.
38 Newton, Making a Difference, 68.
The situation for Jewish women who came from Middle Eastern cultures was doubly compounded. These cultures regarded women as ‘the other’ that is, being inferior because of their gender. Jewish women from such cultures were triply disadvantaged, for they were Jewish, female and ‘inferior’.

Broadly speaking, Jewish feminists believed that the notion of social service to their community had to be modified and they pressured prominent male run community institutions such as the synagogues into supporting their campaign for social reform. Through this process, feminists were able to slowly erode traditional Jewish attitudes towards women. The first wave of the Jewish feminist movement from 1887 laid the groundwork for the resurgence of Jewish equal rights in the 1970s. The nature of the issues concerning Jewish women differed depending on their background and their host nations. The situation in the USA differed to that in Britain. Consequently, the next section is a brief overview of the development of Jewish feminism in the USA, England and then Australia. It also profiles two American Jewish women who were significant role models for Reading.

American Jewish Feminism

In the late nineteenth century the Eastern European Jewish women in the USA worked mainly in the clothing industry, so initially their concerns were more focussed on conditions of work and pay than on suffrage. Nineteenth century America saw the rise of a set of norms from ‘the hegemonic Protestant middle class of nineteenth century America.’ These social norms for women required them to be pious, pure, submissive and domestic. Piety was the dominant norm and was linked to religion, and the terms ‘women and religion became increasingly synonymous.’ There was also the idea that women were charitable, so religion and charity were closely associated in nineteenth century America.

40 Kuzmack, Woman’s Cause, 184.
41 Kuzmack, Woman’s Cause, 185.
42 Kuzmack, Woman’s Cause, 191.
43 Kuzmack, Woman’s Cause, 3.
45 Herman, ‘From Priestess to Hostess,’150.
When American Jews were faced with the challenge of two million Jews arriving in the USA as part of the Great Migration after 1881, the Sisterhoods of Personal Service was formed. In accepting the gendered norms of Protestant America, these women were not only proclaiming how modern they were, but also how American they had become.46 The Sisterhoods of Personal Service had also been influenced by the late nineteenth century Christian Social Gospel movement that worked to end poverty and vice.47 The American Jewish community had a tradition of caring for its own since Peter Stuyvesant in 1655 had promised that the Jews would not be a burden on the new American colony.

The development of Reform Judaism in the USA had given non-orthodox Jewish women, who made up the majority in the Sisterhood, an outlet. The Jewish authorities believed that young American-born Jewish women working in the Sisterhood might be ‘enticed’ back to synagogal or religious activities.48 The Sisterhood movement demonstrated that Jewish women could express their religious identities through charitable works. This organisation differed from previous Jewish ones because it was run entirely by the women themselves and was devoted to the ideal of personal service.49 The Sisterhood focused its attention and work mainly on women and children, and there are similarities here with objectives of the nascent Australian Jewish movement conceived of by Reading in 1923.50

The following section examines two important role models who influenced Reading – Henrietta Szold and Hannah Solomon who were both American Jewish activists.

46 Herman, ‘From Priestess to Hostess,’ 150.
47 Herman, ‘From Priestess to Hostess,’ 151.
48 Herman, ‘From Priestess to Hostess,’ 152.
49 Herman, ‘From Priestess to Hostess,’ 152
Role Models

Henrietta Szold 1860-1945
Jewish Museum, Maryland.

The two women Reading perhaps admired most, Henrietta Szold (1860-1942) and Hannah Solomon (1858-1942) were important role models for her because they were ‘great women imbued by ideals of service.’ Szold was an important Zionist and although Solomon was not a Zionist, she supported the migration of East European Jews into Palestine. Both women paved the way for American Jewish women to work in Palestine.

Szold’s father was a rabbi and raised her to be deeply committed to the Jewish people, Jewish tradition and scholarship. Szold was the first woman to study at the Jewish Theological Seminary, but her work in creating Hadassah the women’s charity to Israel is regarded as her greatest achievement. She managed the organising and the fundraising in America, as well as the field hospitals these made possible. Szold set up food banks, nursing schools and organised the young kibbutzim (collective communities), and as part of the early Zionist authority she helped to set up the infrastructure that turned the dream of a Jewish State into a workable authority.

53 ‘Henrietta Szold.’
54 ‘Henrietta Szold.’
Hannah Greenebaum Solomon (1858-1942) founded the National Council of Jewish Women in Chicago in 1893, which dedicated itself to the religious, philanthropic, and educational aims as Reading did when she established the NCJW in Australia.\(^5\)

In the late nineteenth century Jewish women had little education about Judaism and the NCJW (US) organised study circles in order to teach Jewish women about the fundamentals of Jewish religion and practice.\(^6\) Solomon realised the creation of a women’s organisation was a radical step in itself and that Jewish women would be criticised for neglecting their homes and children.\(^7\) Solomon and Jewish women justified their public roles as an extension of their duties as wives and mothers.\(^8\) The NCJW pioneered many areas of Jewish charity and assistance to immigrants.\(^9\) Solomon was a supporter of women’s suffrage and international women’s issues and was a delegate to


\(^6\) Wenger, ‘Hannah Greenebaum Solomon.’

\(^7\) Wenger, ‘Hannah Greenebaum Solomon.’

\(^8\) Wenger, ‘Hannah Greenebaum Solomon.’

\(^9\) Wenger, ‘Hannah Greenebaum Solomon.’
the 1904 International Women’s Conference in Berlin. Solomon visited Palestine in 1923 for she supported it as a refuge for Jews. This thesis contends that these two significant Jewish women supplied Reading with two important role models, not only for her own actions, but also for the type of organisation for Jewish women she would establish in Australia.

Modern American Jewish Feminism

The following section will consider some of the most important American Jewish feminists of the twentieth and twenty-first century: Paula Hyman, Judith Plaskow, Shulamit Reinharz, Blu Greenberg, Alice Shalvi and Sylvia Barak Fishman. These are Jewish academics concerned with issues of gender, class, feminism and Israel.

Paula E. Hyman (1946-2011) was a social historian who pioneered the study of women in Jewish life and who became an influential advocate for women’s equality in Jewish religious practice, including their ordination as rabbis. Descended from Eastern European migrants to America, she studied and wrote about the life experiences of Jewish women in Europe and the USA before and after the Jewish migration of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hyman chronicled how married Jewish women overcame difficulties to become full partners in family businesses in the New York garment workforce and leaders of successful community protests such as the Lower East Side kosher (fit for consumption) meat boycott of 1902 and the New York rent strike of 1907.

When interviewed by Donna Berman (2016), Hyman told her that although the Reform movement had granted equality to women one hundred years earlier, the Jewish congregation her family attended ‘treated women like second class citizens.’ Hyman said the rabbi at the family’s Reform synagogue was against the coming-of-age ceremonies for boys and girls (bar and bat mitzvah) but gave way later when parents

60 Wenger, ‘Hannah Greenebaum Solomon.’
61 Wenger, ‘Hannah Greenebaum Solomon.’
insisted upon the ceremony for the boys. The boys were accorded individual ceremonies but the girls ‘despite the fact that they were better and more serious students, had a group Hebrew recognition ceremony.’ Hyman said that even at that young age (about 13 years) she was forming ideas that something was wrong, because the Hebrew girls had separate ceremonies. In retrospect, Hyman later said, ‘these contradictions in women’s status were analogous to the racial messages I had received as a young child.’

Influenced by the feminist movement of the 1960s, Hyman sought to apply ‘consciousness raising’ to Jewish traditions that made Jewish women second-class members of their own cultural communities. She published a pioneering work The Jewish Women in America (1976) while she was still a graduate student with two colleagues Charlotte Baum and Sonya Michel. She became a Jewish religious scholar which grew out of her interest in Feminism and Judaism. She had been motivated by the ‘depth of women’s marginalisation in Judaism’ and believed that something had to be done to remedy this situation.

Judith Plaskow (1947 - ) has been identified as one of the most significant constructive theologians of the twentieth century. Plaskow’s theology had a profound effect on Jewish women’s theological conversations in every decade since the 1970s. Plaskow’s distinctive dialectic, which counterpoises the tensions and the complementarities between Jewish thought and feminist religious thought in general, was visible in one of her earliest works, ‘The Coming of Lilith’ (1972). The importance of this work can be gauged by the number of times it has been reprinted in interfaith and Jewish feminist collections.

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68 Berman, ‘Interview with Paula E. Hyman,173.
71 Berman, ‘Interview with Paula E. Hyman,177.
72 Berman, ‘Interview with Paula E. Hyman,181.
73 ‘Paula E. Hyman.’
75 ‘Judith Plaskow.’
During a panel discussion in 2004, Plaskow described a ‘desirable Jewish feminist critique mode in the following manner’ – the need to continually question the presumptions of the disciplines; the power relations embedded in the definition of Jewish studies as a field; familiar modes of operation in the academy and the Jewish community; the substance of particular texts, ancient and contemporary; and the methodologies used.\textsuperscript{76}

Shulamit Reinharz (1946 - ) is the Jacob Potofsky Professor of Sociology at Brandeis University and the author of 12 books.\textsuperscript{77} Reinharz researched the methodologies used by feminist researchers.\textsuperscript{78} Reinharz has been described as a pioneering figure in women’s studies.\textsuperscript{79} At a paper presented to a conference of American sociologists in 1992, she challenged the prior understanding of the term ‘knowledge.’\textsuperscript{80} This grew out of the resurgence of the women’s movement at that time.\textsuperscript{81} Reinharz asserted that a symbiosis had developed in the minds of many people between qualitative research methods and feminism, but on closer study that symbiosis was ‘more myth than reality.’\textsuperscript{82} Her study concluded that feminist statistical research was the ‘neglected voice’ in feminist research.\textsuperscript{83}

Reinharz wrote an award-winning book \textit{Feminist Methods in Social Research} (1992) based on her research.\textsuperscript{84} This text has been referred to in the Introduction to this thesis, and the point Reinharz made was that biography was important in the women’s movement because it drew women out of obscuration.\textsuperscript{85} She theorised that Jews are likely to be good sociologists, because people like Jews (who have been positioned on the margins

\textsuperscript{80} Reinharz, ‘Neglected Voices and Excessive Demands in Feminist Research,’69.
\textsuperscript{81} Reinharz, ‘Neglected Voices and Excessive Demands in Feminist Research,’69.
\textsuperscript{82} Reinharz, ‘Neglected Voices and Excessive Demands in Feminist Research,’69.
\textsuperscript{83} Reinharz, ‘Neglected Voices and Excessive Demands in Feminist Research,’70.
of society) tend to be astute social observers.86 She asserted that ‘double marginality’ (being a Jew and a woman) is an advantage because it can lead to particularly profound sociological sensitivity.87 Reinharz believes that the marginalised position Jews have found themselves in socially is the reason so many past Jews have become sociologists. She was the founding director of the Women’s Research Centre at Brandis University, the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute and is deeply engaged in community development, in Jewish women’s studies and empowering women and scholars through many new programmes.88

Blu Greenberg (1936 - ) is an author and lecturer who has published widely on contemporary issues of feminism, Orthodoxy, the Jewish family and other areas of scholarly interest.89 Raised in an Orthodox Jewish family, Greenberg did not particularly question the male-preferential context of her religion.90 Her personal turning point with regard to this issue came in 1973 when she gave the opening address at the First National Women’s Conference in the USA.91 In 1997 she founded the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA) and while she no longer serves as its chairperson, she continues to guide the JOFA in exploring the ways to reconcile the principles of feminism with the observance of Jewish law.92

Alice Shavli (1926 - ) is an important scholar who made possible a journal of Jewish women’s studies and gender issues, among other outstanding achievements.93 Shalvi established the English department at the Institute of the Negev (now the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev) between the years 1969 and 1973.94 She taught at the Pelech School for Haredi Girls, which became the Pelech Experimental Religious High School

87 Reinharz, ‘Sociology in the United States.’
88 Brandis University, Department of Sociology, People, Shulamit Reinharz, accessed 30 July 2017. https://www.brandeis.edu/departments/sociology/people/faculty/reinharz.html
90 ‘Blu Greenberg.’
91 ‘Blu Greenberg.’
92 ‘Blu Greenberg.’
for Girls from 1975.\textsuperscript{95} Initially this appointment was only to be a temporary teaching position but Shalvi stayed for 15 years. She inculcated feminist ideas and ideals in her students, many of whom became leaders in the modern-Orthodox feminist movement in the following years.\textsuperscript{96} One of Pelech’s innovations was pupils serving for at least two years in the Israel Defence Force, or serving within the National Service framework. This second option allowed students to maintain a religious lifestyle during their period of service.\textsuperscript{97} Shalvi, together with other Israelis who had taken part in an American-Jewish Congress, formed the Israel Women’s Network (IWN) in 1984.\textsuperscript{98} The IWN worked to improve the status of Israeli women but did not provide childcare, as other organisations such as Na’amat, WIZO and Emunah did.\textsuperscript{99} The IWN was responsible for some of the most progressive legislation on Israeli women’s status and rights, as the direct result of legal successes in cases the IWN represented in the Israeli High Court of Appeals.\textsuperscript{100}

From 1997 to 2001 when Shalvi was Rector at The Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Israel, she introduced significant innovations into the curriculum.\textsuperscript{101} This Institute runs M.A programmes on Jewish history, culture and religion.\textsuperscript{102} Her enthusiasm and support contributed to the successful launch of \textit{Nashim}, the journal for scholarly papers on Gender and Women’s Studies.\textsuperscript{103} Shalvi was guest editor on the topic of ‘War and Peace’ for the first issue.\textsuperscript{104} Shalvi found there were difficulties in finding material on this topic from women engaged in research or academic work. A few were able to contribute non-academic essays when offered the opportunity to do so; they inverted the feminist aphorism ‘the political is personal’ and wrote from their personal life experience.\textsuperscript{105}

\begin{footnotesize}
95 ‘Alice Hildegard Shalvi.’
96 ‘Alice Hildegard Shalvi.’
97 ‘Alice Hildegard Shalvi.’
98 ‘Alice Hildegard Shalvi.’
99 ‘Alice Hildegard Shalvi.’
100 ‘Alice Hildegard Shalvi.’
101 ‘Alice Hildegard Shalvi.’
102 ‘Alice Hildegard Shalvi.’
\end{footnotesize}
Shalvi remained on Nashim’s editorial board and was the consulting editor for the issue on Women, War and Peace (Autumn 2003).106

Sociologist Sylvia Barack Fishman is the Professor of Contemporary Jewish Life in the near Eastern and Judaic Studies Department at Brandeis University and also co-director of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute at Massachusetts.107 Fishman has published eight books, numerous monographs and articles on the interplay of American and Jewish values, transformations in American Jewish life, the impact of Jewish education, gender studies and the changing roles of Jewish men and women, contemporary Jewish literature and film, and the relationship of Diaspora Jews to Israel.108

In a 2014 interview, Fishman spoke at length about Modern Orthodox practice in America.109 She said that the Pew Research Centre’s Review (2013) showed clear demographic evidence that 83 per cent of Orthodox Jewish parents raised Orthodox Jewish children and that the story of the modern American orthodox Jew was an incredibly successful one.110 In her book Jewish Life and American Culture I (2000) Fishman asserted that there are two critical, ongoing adaptive processes taking place amongst American Jews.111 She called this process ‘coalescence’, which is a pervasive process through which American Jews merge American and Jewish ideas.112 According to Fishman, certain types of American Jews usually used a compartmentalising model for conflict resolution.113 The process of coalescence, however, involves the two values systems merging, ‘much as one might access two different texts on a single computer screen.114

110 Interview, Times of Israel, 12 November 2014.
112 Fishman, Jewish Life and American Culture, 1.
113 Fishman, Jewish Life and American Culture, 9.
114 Fishman, Jewish Life and American Culture, 10.
Reading would have been delighted to hear these brilliant women speaking Hebrew fluently, undertaking Jewish religious education, moving into tertiary education as high level academics and administrators, nurturing their own families and the next generation, as well as many becoming rabbis. The legacy that Reading did leave – the National Council of Jewish Women (Australia) was a foundation stone which enabled Australian Jewish women of the late twentieth and twenty-first century to move forward in these directions. This will be the focus of Chapter 1, but the women’s movement in England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century developed in a different way, and this is covered in the following section.

English Jewish Feminism

The situation for Jewish female activism in England was quite different. A group of upper class Anglo-Jews from the Franklin extended family, from Jewish organisations and from community groups, were the leaders and social reform activists there. They were members of the Jewish League for Women’s Suffrage (JLWS). There were other members who were more radical and who disrupted synagogue services, because Jewish religious practice reinforced male dominance in the Jewish community. Jewish women demanded more effort be put into the religious education of girls and Jewish women be permitted to become seat holders in a synagogue. Two Jewish institutions, the Jewish Literary Societies and the Jewish Religious Union, had allowed women and men to sit together, and non-Jewish congregations practised equality, seating men and women together. These practices did not go unnoticed by Jewish women.

These activists had feminist goals with Jewish loyalties and ‘couched their campaigns in Judaic terminology and feminist rhetoric.’115 Anglo-Jewish suffragettes had existed prior to the formation of the JLWS; 40,000 women marched to the Albert Hall in 1911.116 The JLWS formed an East End branch in 1913 to assist the Eastern European women of that area, but this branch did not

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115 Kuzmack, Woman’s Cause, 137.
116 Kuzmack, Woman’s Cause, 139.
merge with Sylvia Pankhurst’s branch because of her anti-Semitism. One important member of the core group of the JLWS was The Honorable Lily Montagu.

Lily Montagu (1873-1963) was a member of the ‘Franklin Cousinhood’ – the upper-class and middle-class group of Anglo Jews from the Franklin extended family. They also represented the Jewish community and women’s organisations and were a ‘small but powerful’ group. This group included Lily (founder of the West Central Jewish Club, and precursor to Youth Clubs UK); her sister Henrietta ‘Netta’ Franklin (pioneer educator, suffragette, President National Council of Woman in Britain from 1925-27); Laura and Leonard Franklin (the founders of JLWS, cousin, MP, social worker); Hugh Franklin (cousin – suffragist); Helen Bentwich (née Franklin, worker for women’s rights); Nettie Adler (daughter of the Chief Rabbi Dr H. Adler, and politician); and Eva Hubback (a cousin, suffragette, feminist, Morley College President, Kensington). They were a close-knit, powerful group who exercised considerable influence in Britain. The qualities that the ‘Franklin Cousinhood’ shared were class status, personal commitment, social reform credentials and organisational skills. Reading had all these qualities except class status and like Reading, Lily Montagu had been brought up in a strictly orthodox Jewish home.

By the age of 15 The Honorable Lily Montagu had decided Orthodoxy did not agree with her personal interpretation of Jewish teaching. Her father Samuel Montagu disapproved and their relationship was severely damaged. Montagu had been influenced by Benjamin Jowett’s (1817-1893) conception of a broad church that had influenced many Anglicans. Montagu and Claude Montefiore (1858-1938) together formulated a broad notion of Judaism. Montagu was also influenced by Italian writer Joseph Mazzini and his concept of God’s plan for action. Mazzini convinced Montagu that human progress

117 Kuzmack, Woman’s Cause, 139.
118 Kusmack, Woman’s Cause, 155.
119 Kusmack, Woman’s Cause, 165.
120 Kusmack, Woman’s Cause, 165.
123 Umansky, Lily Montagu, 78.
might best be served by ‘men and women working together towards a common goal.’\textsuperscript{124} By bringing these strands together, Montagu formed her understanding of religion through these influences and that of other Liberal Jews.\textsuperscript{125}

The reform movements in the USA and in Germany were also influential in helping Montagu move towards the idea of reforming Judaism in England.\textsuperscript{126} She founded the Jewish Religious Union in London between 1901 and 1902, and this organisation started the first liberal synagogue in London. Montagu was also concerned with conditions in sweat shops, bad housing and the effects of unemployment. Montagu and Reading shared a concern for young Jewish girls. Montagu was concerned:

primarily with the female experience. For her, the question of poverty was compounded by the sexual vulnerability of women. Women who could not earn a decent wage could become easy prey to predatory rich young men or be ensnared by prostitution. Intolerable working conditions made young women vulnerable to hasty and unsatisfactory marriages. Meanwhile, Saturday work denied them the opportunity for Sabbath observance and they could thereby be easily lost to an inflexible Judaism, either through conversion to Christianity or through marriage to a Christian.\textsuperscript{127}

There is no record in her papers of Reading meeting Lily Montagu when she was in England in 1925, but she must certainly have heard of her, of her charity work with the working class girls in the East End of London, and of her foundation of the Jewish Religious Union. Although Esther and Reading adhered to Orthodox Judaism, in their last weeks in London they went to ‘the new Liberal shool [sic], a very large building which holds services on Sunday for those who are not able to attend on Shobos [sic].’\textsuperscript{128} Reading did not turn her considerable energy into reforming Judaism; she appears to have been willing to stay with the status quo as far as her religious practice was concerned. Reading did not seek to undermine the key social norms in Judaism, one of which is the Jewish family.

\textsuperscript{124} Umansky, Lily Montagu, 78.
\textsuperscript{125} Umansky, Lily Montagu, 78.
\textsuperscript{126} Umansky, Lily Montagu, 78.
Australian Jewish Feminism

Jessie Street (1889-1970) was a leading feminist in Australia and according to Rutland in *Jessie Street: Documents and Essays* (1990), was a close associate of Reading’s, as were Ruby Rich- Schalit (see below), and Nerida Cohen (Goodman), other leading Australian Jewish feminists. Street was not Jewish, but was a human rights activist, an autobiographer, a community worker, a feminist and a pacifist. Street had experienced the treatment of the Jews in Europe and their flight from Nazism. In 1938 she was in Vienna following a trip to the Soviet Union, and was deeply saddened by the way Nazis treated Jews. In Australia, she had close contact with a number of people who were also aware of the persecution and who became leading figures in the Zionist Movement. Street had the support of the leading Jewish figures such as Reading and Sydney Einsfeld, because they also believed the Australian Labor Party was sympathetic to their desire for social justice.

Ruby Rich-Schalit (1888-1988), who was Jewish, had been the Honorary Secretary of the Jessie Street Election Committee 1943. In 1937, Rich became the first President of the Australian Women’s International Zionist Organisation from 1937 to 1940. The Women’s Movement therefore was major feature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with gentile and Jewish women swept up by its momentum. They went about pursuing their aims in various ways depending upon the era in which they lived, the context of the culture in which they found themselves located, and their personal and communal resources. Many of them were Zionists, as was Reading, so the following section covers the historiography of the Zionism movement both in Europe and Australia.

131 Rutland, ‘Jessie Street,’ 149.
132 Radi, ‘Street, Jessie Mary (1889–1970).’
133 Rutland, ‘Jessie Street,’ 149.
135 Rutland, ‘Jessie Street,’ 150.
Zionism


Laqueur’s comprehensive and detailed history of the movement of Zionism covers five decades. Lacqueur’s history was essential reading for this thesis because Reading was an ardent Zionist and devoted her life to its cause. *The History of Zionism* describes ghetto life for the European Jews and the dreams and aspirations for a return to Israel, (Zion) and an escape from persecution and pogroms. This section also covers Theodore Herzl (1860-1903) who was born Benjamin Je’ve Herzl in Hungary, a journalist, writer, political activist and playwright. He formed the World Zionist Organisation and promoted a return to Palestine as a solution to the problems of the Jewish people. Section Two covers the struggle of the movement and the tensions that developed between different factions as to how it was best to proceed to achieve their goal. Zionism was not without its critics and Laqueur devotes part of this section to covering these. (Gur Aloey’s work, detailed below, develops these). Section Three covers the leadership of Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952), World War I and after World War II the creation of the Mandate of Palestine and the state of Israel in 1948. Weizmann served as the President of the Zionist Organisation and was the President of Israel from 1949-1852.

Hyams (1998) chronicles the history of Zionism in Australia from the late nineteenth century until 1997. Zionism did not experience substantial support from the Australian

139 Newton, *Making a Difference; A History of the NCJW of Australia.*
140 Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia.*
Jewish community until Hitler (1889-1945) rose to power in Germany in 1933. However Reading and the NCJW supported the idea of a Jewish state but a distinct Zionist section of the Council was not formed until November 1936.\textsuperscript{142} Hyams claims other potential fund-raising campaigners like Rose Slutkin attempted to divert Reading’s fund raising efforts away from the Jewish National Fund.\textsuperscript{143} Hyams’ paper (2000), a separate study of the efforts of Australia Jewish Women to form Zionist organisations, is referred to further in the thesis (see the end of Chapter 5.) These female organisations were not overly successful, although the NCJW and the Women’s Zionist Organisation (WIZO) were the front-runners and lasted the longest.

Newton’s \textit{Making a Difference; A History of the NCJW of Australia} (2000) clarifies that from the inception of the Council of Jewish Women in 1923 Reading was one of ‘a tiny group of communal leaders’ who believed in Zionism in Australia.\textsuperscript{144} The other Jewish communal leaders were all anglophiles and were concerned about the loss of security in Australia due to the fear of anti-Semitism.\textsuperscript{145} Russian immigrants in Perth and Brisbane were perhaps the exception to this rule, as noted by Israel Cohen who was an early Zionist emissary to Australia.\textsuperscript{146} Newton describes the NCJW as being ‘genuinely progressive’ in looking to help Palestine.\textsuperscript{147} In 1923, the CJW raised and sent money to found a district nursing service in Tel Aviv, and this effort was was the first funds ever raised by Australian Jewish Women. The CJW planned to form a standing committee to engage in fundraising and other cultural and relevant activities but not until 1929.\textsuperscript{148} All subsequent NCJW leaders have identified as Zionist, but Reading was ahead of her time when ‘most Australian Jews were not.’\textsuperscript{149} Other NCJW leaders such as Vera Cohen, Mina Fink, Ray Ginsberg, Zara Young, Lynne Davies and Malvina Malinek attempted to foster strong links with Israel.\textsuperscript{150}

\textsuperscript{142}Hyams, \textit{The History of the Australian Zionist Movement}, 51.
\textsuperscript{143}Hyams, \textit{The History of the Australian Zionist Movement}, 58.
\textsuperscript{144}Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 95.
\textsuperscript{145}Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 95.
\textsuperscript{146}Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 95.
\textsuperscript{147}Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 96.
\textsuperscript{148}Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 96.
\textsuperscript{149}Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 106.
\textsuperscript{150}Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 106
Newton argues that there were Palestine émigrés in both Melbourne and Perth who settled in both cities during the 1920s and were of East European descent. Some had lived in Palestine for generations, others had settled there and been unable to succeed economically, so they migrated to Australia. Both groups were vocal in their support for Jews in Palestine and assisted in the development of practical Zionism.\(^{151}\) Price (1964) notes that the increased Jewish migration into Australia during the 1920s was mainly from Poland which strengthened the Yiddish culture and the Orthodox religious viewpoint that had slowly been gaining strength in areas of ‘first settlement’ where the first settlers moved out of the ‘down-town areas’ like Carlton in Victoria.\(^{152}\) Among these immigrants were those ‘radical rationalistic elements’ that divided their attention between Zionist campaigns to establish a homeland in Palestine and socialist campaigns to improve working-class conditions in Australia.\(^{153}\) (Price does not give any names.)

As a consequence of these pressures, practical Zionism was easier for the NCJW to support than political Zionism in the 1920s and 1930s, and its activity was directed to welfare services.\(^{154}\) The East European migrants who migrated to Australia contained ‘ardent Zionist cells’ (as mentioned above) but their members were not in leadership positions or in positions to influence the Australian Jewish community.\(^{155}\) Rabbi Herman Max Sanger (1909-1980) arrived from Germany in 1936 and while he was a Zionist, his congregation in St Kilda, Melbourne was not sympathetic to the cause.\(^{156}\)

Rutland (1997) argues that as a consequence of the rise of Nazism and Hitler’s success politically in 1933, Zionism in Australia moved from being an organisation on the fringe of communal organisation and identification to being ‘a central focus’ of Jewish involvement. Those who opposed Zionism or who were neutral, continued to worry that a pro-Zionist stance would increase the possibility of anti-Semitism, and would imply criticism of the British Mandate.\(^{157}\) Additionally, there was anti-refugee hysteria in

\(^{151}\) Newton, *Making a Difference*, 96.
\(^{153}\) Price, ‘Jewish Settlers in Australia,’402.
\(^{154}\) Newton, *Making a Difference*, 97.
\(^{155}\) Newton, *Making a Difference*, 97.
\(^{156}\) Newton, *Making a Difference*, 97.
Australia to be contended with in the early 1930s. Sydney’s community leaders such as Rabbi Cohen, Sir Samuel Cohen and later Saul Symonds were conservative and consequently the congregation was perceived as ‘lukewarm’ toward the Zionist movement.

Rutland describes one of these successful Jews of the early twentieth century. Samuel Wynne’s (1891-1982) success in the Australian wine industry was matched by his welfare work for the immigrant Jewish community, his support of Yiddish culture through the establishment of Kadimah (the Yiddish Library) and his activity as a leading Australian Zionist. Wynne was President of the State Jewish Council of Victoria during World War II and twice President of the Zionist Council of Australia. His second wife Ida Benison (1896-1948) was a leader of International Zionism and entered Australia in 1936 and 1939 on behalf of the Women’s International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) to raise funds for Jewish children in Europe. The relationship between the NCJW and WIZO is covered further in the thesis.

In the chapter ‘The Zionist Idea: Conflicting Interpretations in the 1940s and 1950s’ Rutland covers the long clash between Sir Isaac Isaacs (1855-1948) and Professor Julius Stone (1907-1985) over Zionism. Alfred Harris, (1870-1944) editor of the Hebrew Standard was anti-Zionist and so the ‘battle of the scholars’ was played out in its pages. Rabbi Cohen of the Great Synagogue, Sydney was a great friend of Harris and both shared a belief that Jews owed their national allegiance to Australia not Zionism. Isaacs continued his campaign against political Zionism in the pages of the Jewish Outlook. In 1947 he argued that Judaism was a religion only, dual nationality was

158 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 295.
159 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 295.
160 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 125.
162 Wynn, Samuel (1891–1982).
163 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 298-299.
164 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 298-299.
166 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 300.
problematic and the Arabs were in a majority in Palestine.\footnote{Rutland, \textit{Edge of the Diaspora}, 300.} Rabbi Danglow of Melbourne also expressed his opinions in \textit{Outlook}, and in the period immediately before the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 he was ‘highly critical’ of Jewish territorial activities in Palestine.\footnote{Rutland, \textit{Edge of the Diaspora}, 300.}

Suspicion of Zionism continued into the 1950s.\footnote{Rutland, \textit{Edge of the Diaspora}, 300.} The Australian Press took its cue from London and events were sensationalised, particularly in the \textit{Bulletin} and \textit{Smith’s Weekly}.\footnote{Rutland, \textit{Edge of the Diaspora}, 301.} It is in this context that Reading stood as plaintiff in her capacity as vice-President of Youth \textit{Aliyah} at the trial in 1949,\footnote{Mentioned in the Introduction.} when the Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry and the Zionist Council issued a libel writ against \textit{Smith’s Weekly}.\footnote{Rutland, \textit{Edge of the Diaspora}, 301.}

Gur Alroey’s \textit{Zionism without Zion: the Jewish Territorial Organisation and its Conflict with the Zionist Organisation} (2016) traces the search for a safe haven territory for East European Jews in the late nineteenth century. The Territorialists wanted any territory that would take the East European Jews, and as the colonial age was coming to a close, they were willing to work with any colonial government. Both Zionists and Territorials ‘diagnosed the problem in the same way, but they were divided over the prognosis.’\footnote{Alroey, \textit{Zionism without Zion}, 181.} After the 1906 Zionist Conference in Helsingfors the Zionists decided to ‘work in the present’, whereas the Territorials saw themselves as part of a ‘rescue mission’ and searched for an uninhabited area for mass settlement of East European Jews.\footnote{Alroey, \textit{Zionism without Zion}, 182.} The Territorialists were worried about future relations between Jews and half a million Arabs in Palestine. They searched for a safe haven in Kenya, northern Australia, Canada and Angola without success.\footnote{Alroey, \textit{Zionism without Zion}, 183.} Alroey describes the tension between the men in the two movements (Pinsker, Zangwill, Herzl, Nordau, Jabotinsky), but by the eve of World War II, the decline of the Territorialist movement and ideology was evident.\footnote{Alroey, \textit{Zionism without Zion}, 183.} Zionism as an
ideology and a movement had (and still has) the power to polarise the Jewish and non-Jewish community powerfully. The establishment of Israel in 1948 really meant the end of the Territorialist movement, but not of the problems with the Arabs.

The fact that Reading had the strength of character and conviction to prevail against the social pressure of the anti-Zionists in Australia indicates how radical she really was. Even the idea of organising a group of women was a radical idea following the end of World War 1. Rutland (1987) argues that this was because of strong male opposition to any possible interference by women in the running of the Jewish community. The following chapter is devoted to Reading’s legacy, the formation and development of the National Council of Jewish Women where she successfully mobilised Jewish women at a grassroots level.

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Chapter 1. Reading’s Legacy – National Council of Jewish Women

This chapter addresses the formation by Reading of the Council of Jewish Women (CJW) in 1923 and the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia (NCJWA) in 1929 in Sydney. The formation and establishment of the National Council of Jewish Women was Reading’s greatest work, legacy and evidence of her influence as a visionary.

The chapter describes Reading’s efforts to form state branches by personally visiting each state, including return visits to her childhood home of Ballarat. It describes the aims of the NCJW and how these were implemented during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The chapter also includes the NCJWA work for refugees and for Israel including the formation of Neve Zipporah (Zipporah’s Field) a settlement in honour of Reading. It touches briefly upon a power struggle that developed in the NCJW between
Reading and Rieke Cohen. Reading’s supportive network, which enabled her to bring her ideas and vision to fruition, concludes the chapter.

The Formation

Reading’s call to Sydney’s Jewish women was made in the following manner. On 24 June 1923 a reception for Madame Bella Pevsner was held at the home of Mrs Morris Symonds, Sydney.\(^1\) Two days later on 26 June 1923, Reading heard Pevsner lecture on ‘Women of Different Laws’ at the Myola Café, Sydney.\(^2\) ‘She inspired me to form an organisation with a Zionist soul,’ Reading said years later about Pevsner.\(^3\) After Pevsner’s lecture Reading declared, ‘I then proposed a scheme for the CJW and got 60 members.’\(^4\) She wrote to the Jewish Herald about the formation of the CJW.\(^5\) Jonah Marks (1884-1971), a former classmate from Ballarat and editor of the Jewish Herald for a short period, always supported her by giving publicity to every CJW activity.\(^6\) Her published letter read:

I, therefore appeal to the Jewish women of and girls of Sydney, to initiate with me this great movement. Already I have 60 members who have solemnly promised to do all in their power to further this scheme- but as I stated at that meeting, on 26th inst., I would not convene a meeting until 200 women and girls of Sydney had promised their support…\(^7\)

It proved a greater success than had been anticipated and largely because of this publicity within a year it had more than 400 members.\(^8\) Reading’s vision in 1923 for the fledgling organisation the CJW was clearly laid out in her aims – education for Jewish girls and women; social activities for families and children and activities to counter assimilation; philanthropy for Jewish and non-Jewish Australians, for world Jewry; reconstruction of Palestine, assistance for distressed Jews in Europe and Jewish immigration.\(^9\)

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3 Dr Fanny Reading, ABC Radio Broadcast ‘Past, Present and Future,’ c.1948
In this manner therefore Reading formed the Council of Jewish Women (CJW) in Sydney in 1923. The aims of the organisation were decided at this meeting: its duty was ‘Service to our religion, to our people and to the country where we live.’ The first conference of the CJW was held from 21 to 27 May 1929 in Sydney. It became a national body at this conference and Reading modelled it on one formed by Hannah Greenbaum Solomon in 1893 in the United States, where Solomon was prominent in the Reform Jewish community. ‘Always a visionary, Dr Fanny concluded by asking those present to dream of a united band of Jewish women all over Australia.’ The motto of the organisation was ‘the Law of Loving Kindness.’

Reading was quite radical in forming the women’s organisation, as Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen was not supportive of the idea of a women’s organisation and was also opposed to Zionism. Rabbi Cohen was the chief minister at the Great Synagogue in Sydney and shaped the attitudes of countless Orthodox Sydney Jews towards political Zionism. Rabbi Cohen feared the ‘deleterious effect’ the influx of too rapid an increase of Eastern European Jews in the 1920s into Australia would have on Jewish-gentile relations. He also feared the fledgling CJW because it was an ‘American innovation’ (that is, too Reform Judaism.) There were other objections too, the scheme was too ambitious; customs such as the segregated seating in synagogues would be eroded; the sectarian nature of the organisation would increase anti-Semitism; and finally the debt on the

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10 Newton, Making a Difference, 6.
11 Newton, Making a Difference, 6.
20 Rutland, ‘Dilemma of changing women’s role in Community,’ quoted in Newton, Making a Difference 5.
Maccabean Hall, Sydney should be cleared before money was sent overseas to Palestine.\textsuperscript{21}

Despite these pressures, Reading was successful in forming the Council, which immediately took a national focus to its work. When the second conference of the NCJW was held in 1932, the membership constituted a ‘Who’s Who?’ of Australian female Jewry, including Mrs B. Stone from Ballarat.\textsuperscript{22}

The newly formed NCJWA in 1929 focused on religion, education, philanthropy and social activities.\textsuperscript{23} Religion was important because Reading was extremely worried about the assimilating tendencies of the Australian Jewish community in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{24} Education was important because Jewish women living in places such as Kalgoorlie in Western Australia needed to know enough about their Jewish heritage in order to preserve it.\textsuperscript{25} Philanthropy, better understood as tzedakah (charity), related more to social justice.\textsuperscript{26} Reading’s idea that Jewish women should work not only for their own Jewish community but also for the wider Jewish community was considered radical in 1923.\textsuperscript{27} The fourth aim was the social aspect of the NCJWA. This was important because its function was to draw isolated Jewish housewives out of their homes into a centre for social contact. The underlying theme of the four aims of the NCJWA was social justice. The NCJWA developed a number of committees to deal with these various aspects of their charter, which are detailed further in this chapter.

Reading set to work immediately after the formation of the CJW. In 1923 the CJW raised funds for a District Nurse to visit the sick in Israel.\textsuperscript{28} An Immigrants’ Welfare Committee was also formed in the first year and met every boat arriving to welcome the

\textsuperscript{21} Rutland, ‘The changing role of women in Australian Jewry’s communal structure,’ 107.
\textsuperscript{22} F. Reading and D. Abramovitch(eds), \textit{Programme NCJW Second Conference March 1932}, 1.
\textsuperscript{23} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 6.
\textsuperscript{24} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 6.
\textsuperscript{25} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 6.
\textsuperscript{26} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 6.
\textsuperscript{27} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 6.
\textsuperscript{28} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 6.
immigrants.\(^{29}\) At the end of 1924 the CJW held a big fete, raising £1500 for an Infant Welfare Centre in Tel Aviv.\(^{30}\) Dora Abramovitch established English classes for refugees in 1925, and in 1928 a Jewish Men’s Hostel was opened in Day Street, Sydney a clear example of Reading’s visionary approach.\(^{31}\) While she was overseas in 1925, Reading made a network of excellent contacts through the National Council of Jewish Women (US), the Women’s International Zionist Organisation WIZO (UK), and the Zionist Congress; she was well prepared to set up a similar network for Jewish women in Australia. The following section describes how she went about this enormous task.

**Establishing State Branches**

In 1929, Reading travelled around Australia to encourage the establishment of state branches, and as a result the following affiliated council branches were established: Perth (18 September), Kalgoorlie (25 September), Adelaide (30 September), Ballarat (8 October) and Geelong (10 October).\(^{32}\) Newton (2000) wrote that a section was formed in Hobart, Tasmania in 1932, but there were not enough Jews living there to make a

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branch viable. In September 1929, when Reading returned on the East-West express from Perth to Adelaide, her trip was reported in The Register News Pictorial (Adelaide). The journalist described her as having ‘a vivid clever face and a strong personality’.

Reading was greeted in Adelaide by Mrs N. Solomon, Mrs P.A. Moses and other Jewish women from the city. Reading said that when the Adelaide women formed their Council, ‘we can be fully recognised as a full national movement.’ The journalist asked did she work as a doctor as well, to which Reading replied, ‘Yes, jolly hard.’ She explained that she did not take holidays from her general practice, but any spare time she had went into Council work; she did not have ‘firm divisions in her mind between her medical work and Council work.’

This interview is particularly valuable because Reading makes a number of interesting distinctions. Social work is compared to charity work and linked with the idea of citizenship. Reading said when she formed the Council that Jews had a double duty – to the country in which they lived and to their persecuted race which had experienced such suffering. She explained that the national organisation would bring Jewish women together and allow them to do charitable work on a much larger scale than they had been used to; also it would educate Jewish women in social work and would make them better Australian citizens. Reading outlined the accomplishments so far of the NCJWA: an infant welfare centre in Palestine and a modern and well-equipped maternity ward in Jerusalem; a hostel for Jewish migrants; plans for a migration system for about 30 migrants each year; subsidies for Jewish education; facilities to assist Jews to travel inexpensively to Palestine. She also stressed the importance of communication between

33 Newton, Making a Difference, 140.
35 Register News- Pictorial, 28 September, 1929, 2.
36 Register News- Pictorial, 28 September, 1929, 28.
37 Register News- Pictorial, 28 September, 1929, 28.
38 Register News- Pictorial, 28 September, 1929, 28.
39 Newton, Making a Difference, 9.
members across Australia. *The Council Bulletin* was the means by which this was accomplished between all the state Councils; the first issue had been published in NSW in 1926 and ‘was modelled, in form and content, on the NCJW (US) newsletter in Philadelphia, USA.’\(^4^0\) Reading stressed the importance of keeping in touch ‘with all the big national movements’ such as the International Council of Jewish Women.\(^4^1\) Reading was buoyed by the success of her visit to Perth and Kalgoorie in ‘amalgamating’ the existing Western Australian League of Jewish Women with the Council of Jewish Women ‘into a transnational organisation.’\(^4^2\)

The interview Reading gave on arrival in Adelaide in September 1929 contrasts sharply with one she gave in London years earlier outside the offices of *The Jewish Chronicle*, in which she detailed the work of Jewish women in Australia\(^4^3\) (see Chapter 6). In 1925 she had been embarrassed, awkward at being interviewed and photographed in public. Two years later she had learnt to mask her shyness by a calm, professional persona. She spoke confidently and self-assuredly when speaking to the press; she succinctly described the broad scope of the proposed work of the CJW and its relationship with the transnational women’s movement. She spoke eloquently of her vision of the future of the CJW (that is as a national organisation), which was justly described as her ‘masterwork.’\(^4^4\)

The membership of the first 20 or 30 years of the NCJWA consisted predominantly of middle-class Anglo-Jewish women.\(^4^5\) In 1932 at the Second Conference of the NCJWA, the officers and Board of Directors were Mrs V. Goldenberg (Vic), Mrs J. Levy (Queensland), Mrs B. Stone (Ballarat, Vic) Mrs J. Rosenfeld (NSW), Mrs V. Cornfield (NSW), Miss Doris Abramovitch B.A. (NSW), Mrs M. Cohen (Queensland), Dr F. Reading (NSW), Mrs S. J. Slutzkin (Vic), Mrs H. Cohen (NSW), Mrs Nat. Solomons (SA), Mrs Fanny Breckler, (W.A.) Mrs I. Morris (NSW), Mrs A.E. Matison (SA), Mrs

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\(^{40}\) Newton, *Making a Difference*, 14.

\(^{41}\) Register News-Pictorial, 28 September, 1929, 28.

\(^{42}\) Newton, *Making A Difference*, 173.

\(^{43}\) ‘Jewish Women’s Work In Australia,’ *Jewish Chronicle*, December 4, 1925, 4, accessed 26 February, 2015 archive.thjc.com/search/frame.v

\(^{44}\) Newton, *Making a Difference*, 12.

\(^{45}\) Newton, *Making a Difference*, 12.
Mayer Breckler (Perth, WA), Mrs L.A. Alman (Kalgoorlie, WA) and Mrs P.Koot L.L.A. (Vic.). These women had sufficient time and money to take part in interstate conferences, and all were drawn from established Jewish families. Before World War II the tzedakah of the NCJWA was directed to the Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe and Palestine women, as well as towards local non-Jewish causes. Interestingly, the membership of the NCJWA did not perceive Reading as a migrant because she had ‘lived in London as a baby and her English [would have] sounded natural and accented.’ Her English in fact was fluent and was recorded in a speech in 1933 for the Jubilee Celebrations of the NCJW.

Regarding the NCJWA work for Israel, Reading’s position was that she was a Zionist. However she knew a ‘stand-alone’ Zionist women’s organisation would never survive in Australia because it would have only consisted of ‘a handful of idealists and no more.’ She kept her pledge made to Madam Bella Pevsner (see Chapter 5 ‘Sydney the Turning Point’) and so working for Palestine became one of the planks of the NCJWA. Although Reading was ‘favourably disposed’ towards the Zionist cause, she had to ‘tread carefully’ on the matter because a ‘substantial proportion of her members were not so disposed.’

In August 1929, the NCJWA planned a standing committee ‘designed to engage in fundraising and relevant cultural activities.’ The form of this aid that the NCJWA provided for Palestine was the improvement of facilities for women and babies, as noted above. This follows the lead started by WIZO in Britain in 1918, and Reading had taken a great interest in the facilities for women and children when she visited Palestine (see Chapter 6 ‘Letters Home’).

46 F. Reading and D. Abramovitch (eds), Programme NCJWA Second Conference March 1932, National Council of Jewish Women, Archives NCJWA, SL NSW.
47 Newton, Making a Difference, 6.
48 Newton, Making a Difference, 13.
49 Dr Fanny Reading, Speech, Past, Present and Future.
50 Zionism- a national political movement for the re-establishment, development and protection of the Jewish people in their former homeland, and their sovereignty in the Land of Israel.
51 Andgel, ‘Law of Loving Kindness,’ 204.
52 See Chapter 5-Sydney and the Turning Point.
53 Hyams, ‘Women in Early Australian Zionism,’ 44.
54 Hyams, The History of the Australian Zionist Movement, 51.
A Return to Ballarat

Reading’s first recorded return to Ballarat with her mother was on 8 October, 1929 when she was on her Australia wide tour for the NCJWA. It was an ‘emotional occasion’ for the few remaining members of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation. However no mention of her visit appeared in the local press. Hannah Stone, wife of the President of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, said that they were ‘delighted’ to have Dr Fanny and her mother back in their old hometown. Reading may have been away from Ballarat for almost 25 years, but it is reasonable to assume she experienced some emotion on her return to the city where she had grown to adulthood with her siblings and cousins.

Esther and Reading visited Ballarat again on 10 May, 1931, and a special reception was held ‘for our beloved founder and leader’ at the Hebrew Communal House, Ballarat. As far as can be ascertained this was the rabbi’s cottage next to the synagogue. After the preliminary business of the meeting was completed, Nathan Spielvogel entertained with

59 The Paul Simon Memorial Hall c.1973 now fulfills this function.
readings of his own stories. Reading urged the Ballarat group to consider establishing a debating group and to invite visiting speakers to Ballarat. She described the activities of the NCJWA where the women worked hard to strengthen the bonds of Judaism and for the ‘abolition of petty class distinctions.’ This comment hints at Reading’s dislike of snobbery and pretence, and she again expressed affection for ‘her old home town.’

Fulfilling the Aims of the NCJWA

Education and Scholarships

Reading was President from 1923 until 1931, and served a second term from 1936 until 1948. By the time of the NCJWA Golden Jubilee in 1972, the four original aims were well established. Reading’s mentoring of young Jewish female leadership in NCJWA was crucial to the future of the Council. The NCJWA is an invaluable support structure for Australian Jewish women and its psychological effect it is positive affirmation. The Council has become an advisory system for future Jewish female organisational leaders


61 Hebrew Standard, 29 May, 1931, 7.

62 Hebrew Standard, 29 May, 1931, 7

who will work for modern social justice causes. Since the organisation is affiliated with the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW), these Jewish leaders will continue to be transnational in their vision and influence.

In Education there were programmes for the study of Jewish religion, history, the Bible and the Hebrew language (the importance of Hebrew is covered in Chapter 4). The NCJWA supported the Jewish day school initiative and provided bursaries at Moriah College, Sydney; Carmel College, Perth; Talmud Torah, Brisbane; Beth Rivkah Ladies College, Melbourne; and supported Mount Scopus College as well as the Jewish Education Board. In addition, university scholarships were established, for Jews have always held in high regard any intellectual accomplishments which were portable and could be taken when the Jewish community was under attack and had to flee. As Rutland (1990) observes, ‘learning has always been regarded as a primary duty and a mark of distinction for every Jew.’ Thinking and planning strategically, Reading set two scholarships in place before her death to support two of her keenest interests, Jewish female leadership and the Hebrew language.

The NCJWA Scholarship for Leadership was inaugurated in 1973, a year before her death. The recipients in 2015 were Mandi Chonowitz-Jacobson (NSW), Deborah Strauch (Vic) and Shelley London (WA). The NCJWA Fanny Reading Scholarship in Hebrew Language scholarship was inaugurated in 1947 with a grant of £600 to be held in a trust account. It is currently worth $670 annually for an outstanding student in the

66 The Spanish Jews were forced to flee in this way on 2 August 1492, the day before Christopher Columbus set out on his voyage to the New World.
69 Fanny Reading Scholarship, NCJWA National Awards.
70 Fanny Reading Scholarship, NCJWA National Awards.
Program in Jewish Culture and Society at the University of Melbourne.\textsuperscript{72} Anne Axel was the 2016 recipient.\textsuperscript{73}

A number of the original educational aims of the NCJWA were met by 2016, for example religious education for girls and a greater role for women in the synagogue.\textsuperscript{74} Rutland (2002) argues that the struggle of Jewish women differed from the struggle of Anglican women for ordination ‘because of the individualistic nature of Jewish congregations and the fact that services did not need to take place in a synagogue building.’\textsuperscript{75} The first female Liberal rabbi was appointed in Melbourne in 1981 when the American Karen Soria was appointed at the Temple Beth Israel.\textsuperscript{76} Aviva Kipen and Jackie Ninio served at Sydney’s Temple Emanuel.\textsuperscript{77} In Orthodox Judaism, women’s prayer groups were established in Sydney and Melbourne, although the Melbourne group closed in the late 1980s.\textsuperscript{78} These were followed by the Women’s Tefilah (prayer) Groups and the HaMakom (the place) community.\textsuperscript{79}

The NCJWA Education Portfolio contained a National Scholar in Residence Programme by 2016.\textsuperscript{80} Author, sociologist, educator, activist and thinker, Elana Sztokman is the current 2016 Scholar-in Residence.\textsuperscript{81} Issues about gender and feminism also appear in \textit{The Council Bulletin} (2015), some of which had been written by Maryles Szotaham, and these have an educational dimension, for example, ‘the struggle is far from over – with high status positions still male dominated, and issues of equal pay, work-life balance, LBGTI inclusion and others still painfully unresolved.’\textsuperscript{82} These expanded aims go well
beyond the original vision of Reading, who strove for religious education for girls, and might have surprised her greatly.

There is a separate portfolio for the Status of Women focusing on Violence Against Women and Children, Women’s Economic Autonomy, Women’s Leadership and ability to participate in leadership discussions and the issue of the agunot, which is the issue of Jewish women who are unable to get a divorce.\textsuperscript{83} This issue is a traditional one (and is mentioned in Chapter 2 when it was the concern of married, but abandoned, Jewish female transmigrants in England.) By 2016, only a small number of Jewish women in Australia were affected by the agunot. Nonetheless, within the context of gender rights it is still an issue for Jewish women. The NCJWA is affiliated with the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA), the Australian Women’s Alliance (AWA) and the Equal Rights Alliance (ERA).

\textit{Support for Israel}

The NCJWA has worked steadily for Eretz Israel and has done this effectively with a number of different Jewish bodies, particularly the Jewish National Fund (JNF) to which it is also affiliated. It worked with the JNF on the Alma border settlement in northern Galilee from 1969, and provided four secondary school bursaries to the Alma secondary school.\textsuperscript{84} NCJWA continued to work on the Alma project until 1982.\textsuperscript{85}

There have been many joint projects with the JNF but the settlement project Neve Zipporah, honoring Reading, was undertaken between the NCJWA and the JNF in the 1950s, and is covered in detail in the section following. In 2016, the NCJWA supported the JNF on projects designed to improve the environment of Israel and the quality of Jewish life there. These included the establishment of forests and desert reclamation, with recent work undertaken on the rehabilitation of the Yakon River and environment.\textsuperscript{86} The NCJWA has responded to issues about climate change and sustainability with alacrity in

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\item \textsuperscript{84} \textit{Council Bulletin}, 46, 2 (1972) : 16.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 119.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
their support for *Eretz Israel*. NCJWA also worked in Israel with the ILAN Foundation for Handicapped Children and Adults and in 1972 it provided a kindergarten for children with cerebral palsy.87 More recently, it has provided wheelchairs and computers specially adapted to the needs of handicapped children and adults.88

It is clear the Council’s original aims for Israel have been progressively modernised and adapted to the changing needs there, for in the 1920s ‘raising money for their Jewish settlers was easier to support than political Zionism.’89 By the end of 2015 however, a separate folio had been created covering Israel and tourism, and the NCJWA responded more overtly to the political and military threats facing Israel. For example, Prime Minister Netanyahu’s address to the General Assembly at the UN in 2015 was quoted at length in a Portfolio Report in late 2015 and was available on the NCJWA website.90 Benjamin ‘Bibi” Netanyahu (b. 1949) is the current Prime Minister of Israel, a member of the Knesset and the leader of the Likud Party.91 Perhaps this is evidence that the NCJWA now has a preparedness to acknowledge political Zionism more than it did in the 1920s. It also is a recognition that internet sites are an effective way of disseminating information and that the content of a speech by the Israeli Prime Minister should be easily available to the Council members. The NCJWA advertises that it is an affiliate of the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA).92 Reading would certainly have expressed her approval of this affiliation, which represents a significant shift from the earlier position the NCJWA held in the late 1920s, when Zionism was very unpopular with many members of the newly formed CJW reflecting the attitude of the mainstream Anglo-Jews at the time. Knowledge about the *Shoah* (Holocaust), the systematic murder of six and a half million Jews by the Nazis shifted community attitudes towards Israel, particularly in Australia’s Jewish community.

The NCJWA has several projects specifically related to its work for Israel, where it concentrates on consciousness raising and fundraising for specific affiliated projects. For example, the Haifa Rape Centre was established in 1979 and provides services against sexual violence in northern Israel from Hadera and the Upper Galilee. Seventy volunteers run this crisis centre 24 hours a day, servicing an area that has a population of more than one million people. The MICHA project located in Tel Aviv is another project, a multidisciplinary centre for children with hearing loss. It was established in 1953 by Dr. Ezra Korine an ear, nose and throat specialist. The MICHA centre cares for 460 multi-ethnic children every year from throughout Israel. The NCJWA became involved with MICHA in 1977, and strongly supports its mission to assist children as early as possible with a hearing impairment or loss to acquire as many communication skills as possible. Another project is the Haifa University Ethiopian Women’s Fund. Since 1988, the NCJWA has funded the Ethiopian Women’s Scholarship, which enables young women of Ethiopian descent to access higher education. Many of these students return to work with their own communities after they have been empowered by their education at Haifa University, which is reputed to be a highly pluralistic university.

**Community Service and Social Welfare**

*Tzedakah* has always been a central tenet of Judaism. From its inception, the Council has worked for the Australian community as well as supporting its own community. For instance, in 1972 when Reading was a Life President of the NCJWA, the community services the Council provided were exhaustive. Its volunteers supported non-Jewish as well as Jewish services, such as Meals on Wheels, Talking Books for the Blind, World Refugee Day, Freedom from Hunger Campaign, the Cancer Appeal, and Red Cross.

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94 Haife Rape Crisis Centre, NCJWA
96 MICHA and Central Region, NCJWA
97 MICHA and Central Region, NCJWA
99 In 1984, 14,000 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel.
100 Ethiopian Women’s Fund, NCJWA
The Jewish services it supported were maintaining the kiosk at the Montefiore Homes, finance and service to Jewish aged homes and orphanages, and many more. Today this work has been expanded and Jewish volunteers work to connect with the Jewish and non-Jewish community, but the nature of their volunteering varies from state to state. NCJWA volunteers work hard to break down the barriers which isolate people and have programmes such as ‘Mums for Mums’, welcoming refugees, hospital and home visits, for Reading believed that ‘it was necessary for Jews to work for and give back to their community.’102 It is evident that this aspect of the NCJWA community work has evolved into a well-organised, professionally run volunteer service by more than 1500 experienced, capable women, who can be found in all sectors of community life where they live, although they are predominantly middle-class.103

Social welfare is the fourth area that has expanded. Previously the Council worked for senior citizens, Golden Age Clubs and the important establishment of the Wolper Jewish Hospital (see Chapter 7).104 It also played a major role in the establishment in Perth of the Maurice Zeffert Home for the Aged.105 ‘Health Issues’ now has a separate portfolio and current medical advice in a variety of areas is available to members. Breast and lung awareness experts are invited to speak at meetings.106

There is a separate portfolio now to support and encourage interfaith and intercultural activities liaising with the Australian Women’s Coalition, the Jewish Community Council (Vic) and the Catholic Interfaith Committee (Vic).107 The NCJWA ran leadership programmes for the Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Coalition and women from the Islamic Council of Victoria. In 2007, the NCJWA National Vice-President convened the Jewish Christian Muslim Women’s Association of Australia Conference for three days; in 2009 in Melbourne there was a ‘Parliament of the World’s Religions’ in

103 Rutland, ‘Perspectives from the Australian Jewish Community,’ 12.
which the NCJWA played a significant role.\textsuperscript{108} The NCJWA is affiliated of course with the Executive Council of Australia Jewry (ECAJ).\textsuperscript{109}

It is clear from these initiatives that the earlier definition of social welfare has been expanded to include many domains of religious and faith dimensions. These have been constructed on the second tier of female leadership and participation, women acting with greater confidence and competence in fulfilling their charter. They represent the successful outcomes of Reading’s leadership seventy years later on.

\textit{Neve Zipporah 1957}

The legacy of the settlement in Israel named in Reading’s honour, ‘\textit{Neve Zipporah}’ (1957), is another example of the relationship between the NCJWA and the JNF.\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Neve Zipporah} was located ‘45 kilometres southeast of Tel Aviv in Negev, the District of Gaza. It was 12 kilometres east of the seashore, 7 kilometres east of the Kantar-Hai-Fa railway line.’\textsuperscript{111} Originally it was intended as a small settlement for Moroccan Jewish families.\textsuperscript{112} According to Newton (2000), \textit{Neve Zipporah} was a specific project and the NCJW raised a great deal of money for it from their Queen Esther balls and competitions.\textsuperscript{113} These were held in all the state branches of the NCJWA and were very popular and successful social events. On the following page is the photograph of a young woman who is being crowned as Queen Esther.

\textsuperscript{108} ‘Interfaith and Intercultural Portfolio,’ NCJWA, accessed 17 February, 2016.
\textsuperscript{109} Affiliate Organisations, NCJWA, accessed 21 February, 2016.
\textsuperscript{110} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 118. Zipporah is the Hebrew form of Faigeleh, Reading’s original yiddish name.
\textsuperscript{113} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 117.
At the Neve Zipporah settlement the Vera Cohen Cultural Centre, incorporating the Gladys Slutzin Library, was established in the Housing Quarters. The NCJWA worked hard to raise £36,000 to lease the land for a settlement.\textsuperscript{114} It was formally named in March 1957 and Reading and Vera Cohen attended the ceremony.\textsuperscript{115} In 1976 the control of these buildings had passed to the local council, the Achuzad Yaacov Yeshiva, and to the horror of the NCJWA executive, offices and laboratories had been constructed in their place.\textsuperscript{116} As a result, it was decided that all future joint projects between the NCJWA and the JNF were to be parks or irrigation sites where ‘perpetuity of identification’ could be guaranteed to the NCJWA.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{114} Reading Papers. (Mitchell Library) Neve Zipporah was 75 acres (about) 300 dunams, located 45 km south–east–south of Tel Aviv in Negev, the District of Gaza. It was 12 kilometres east of the seashore, seven kilometres east of the Kantar–Hai–Fa railway line. It was part of the lands leased for the cultivation of the communal settlement of Negba. The nearby settlement of Gath was 11 kilometres to the south-east, Nitzanim was nine kilometres to the north-west. Keren Kayemeth Leisrael (JNF no. 138)

\textsuperscript{115} Newton, Making a Difference, 118. Vera Cohen and Gladys Slutzin were members of the NCJWA.

\textsuperscript{116} Newton, Making a Difference, 119

\textsuperscript{117} Newton, Making a Difference, 119.
Reading and other Zionists of the mid-twentieth century prioritised Jewish settlement of Palestine. Theirs was ‘a revolutionary undertaking,’ and they were forging ‘a new and better world.’118 Reading believed that Jewish settlement in Palestine was legal, necessary and the rightful home of Jewish people. When she visited in 1925 she observed Arabs living there and made comments in letters to her family. She had been appalled at the filth of their living conditions and the various eye infections the dirty Arab children suffered from. She had observed Arab women in their black burquas hurrying through the streets, their poor living conditions, and described it carefully (see Chapter 6).

Reading was not the only Zionist to have seen Palestine as ‘hopelessly primitive.’119 Many pioneer Zionists (the chalutzim) believed they would ‘make the desert bloom’ and that their labour justified ownership of the land.120 Many were idealists and would need this strong belief to enable them to overcome the difficulties that lay ahead of them. While the NCJWA tried to assist where they could from Australia, the geographical

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119 Efron, *A Chosen Calling*, 89.
120 Efron, *A Chosen Calling*, 89.
distance, the life – which was culturally worlds away from Western life in Australia, was sometimes a shock to Council visitors who visited Palestine.\footnote{121 Newton, \emph{Making a Difference}, 120.}

This Chapter now turns back to Australia and the developments that had taken place there, particularly with regard to the establishment and growth of the Women’s International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) and the implications for the Reading and the NCJWA.

**Leadership Tensions**

Reading continued to work on a number of levels – she practiced as a doctor and worked solidly for the NCJWA when she was not involved with her patients. Every spare minute was spent on Council work, assisting the women with the production of \emph{The Council Bulletin} or making up packages to give out to refugees who were being met at wharf side. Newton (2000) wrote that Reading ‘was determined that new arrivals would receive a heartier response than had met her as a child.’\footnote{122 Newton, \emph{Making a Difference}, 79.}

Reading’s mentoring of young Jewish female leadership in NCJWA was crucial to the future of the Council. The NCJWA is an invaluable support structure for Australian Jewish women and the psychological effect it has upon them, as mentioned earlier, is one of positive affirmation. The Council has become an advisory system for future Jewish female organisational leaders who will work for modern social justice causes. Since the organisation is affiliated with the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW), these Jewish leaders will continue to be transnational in their vision and influence.\footnote{123 Affiliate Organisations, NCJWA, accessed 21 February, 2016. http://www.ncjwa.org.au/who-we-are/affiliate-organisations/}

However like most organisations, difficulties arose after some time. There was tension at the NCJWA headquarters in NSW, as it seems that there had been ‘personal rivalries within a few years of its inception’ within the Council between Reading and Reike Cohen (1887-1964).\footnote{124 Suzannd D.Rutland, \emph{The Jews in Australia}, Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 109.} Cohen had been a foundation member of the NCJWA and president of
the Immigration Welfare Centre in 1929. In December 1934 Reading, the Federal President, and her executive closed this branch, and alienated, Cohen resigned from the NCJWA. Rutland (1997) argues that as a direct result of this disagreement with Reading, Cohen formed Ivriah. This was initially a monthly journal with a circulation of about 350 and in due course became the official publication of the Australian Zionist Organisation. Ivriah developed into a Zionist group and was renamed the Women’s International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) in 1937. Following the visit of Ida Benison, a prominent Canadian WIZO leader in July 1937, a WIZO section became part of the NCJWA. WIZO had continued to be active in the United Kingdom since its inception. (See Chapter 6 for more on the early days of WIZO-UK). An earlier suggestion to establish an Australian division of the WIZO had been met by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) with alarm in case it became ‘a formidable fundraising rival.’ In any case, WIZO would do very valuable fundraising work for Zionism, but its formation in Australia in 1937 came about because there was a split between two strong personalities in the NCJWA – Reading and Reike Cohen.

However, the NCJWA continued to work and to fulfill its charter as evident in its work for refugees becoming increasingly urgent in the 1930s. It was the rise of Adolf Hitler in Germany which would make the significance of a Jewish homeland more urgent for European Jews who saw the warning signs of rising Nazism and were fleeing from Europe in their thousands. Money was urgently needed for the reconstruction and welfare work in Palestine and ‘this fund-raising aspect was the one which acquired a great sense

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125 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 159.
127 Rutland, 'Cohen, Rieke (1887–1964).'
128 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 305.
129 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 305.
131 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 305.
133 Hyams, ‘Women in Early Australian Zionism,’ 442.
of urgency with the turn of international events by the late 1930s.\textsuperscript{135} This next section covers the development of the German Jewish Relief Fund, which eventually became the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, (the umbrella organisation), and the Fellowship Jewish Doctors which consisted of refugee doctors in Australia that Reading joined.

**Working for Refugees**

Reading was always concerned with refugees and her work for them started early, as noted previously in this chapter. In 1928 she wrote:

> Who are we to say that we are pleased that certain immigration restrictions will be placed on the admittance of our brethren into our country? That we are glad that our task will be made lighter while our brethren languish for freedom and the right to live? *The Council Bulletin*, November 1928.

As well as petitioning the Federal Government to take more Jewish immigrants, as many other Jewish groups also did, Reading and the NCJWA intensified their campaign of ‘Dock and Port work and social adjustment.’\textsuperscript{136} Reading had one important skill that was appreciated by the immigrants in particular – she spoke Yiddish.\textsuperscript{137} When the Kiss family, for example, arrived in Australia from Russia, (via Harbin, Manchuria) in February 1928, Reading was able to greet them in Yiddish.\textsuperscript{138} What a comfort this must have been to disorientated migrants to be greeted in their own language.

When the Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS) duly became the main coordinating body for Jewish refugees into Australia, the NCJWA gave very practical advice and help at the point of entry. It undertook the provision of food at the dockside, where a buffet

\textsuperscript{135} Hyams, ‘Women in Early Australian Zionism,’ 443.

\textsuperscript{136} NCJWA Living History Project, 7.

\textsuperscript{137} J.P. Davidson, *The Planet World*, London: Michael Joseph. 2011, 130

Yiddish has been called the ‘language of the ghetto and the shtetl.’ Before World War II Yiddish was spoken by about 11 million. It is a proper language that is a hybrid of medieval German and Hebrew and it uses the Hebrew alphabet with some influences from Aramaic and Slavic languages. The word ‘Yiddish’ means ‘Jewish’ and as a language it has a rich vocabulary to express the human condition. Often it uses humour to rail against the sufferings of life which its speakers were subjected to. Many of its words have entered the English language – schmaltz, chutzpah, bagel, schmooze and so on.

\textsuperscript{138} NCJWA Living History Project, 17.
was frequently organised. Volunteers’ cars were used to shuttle newly arrived migrants to the Council House in Sydney where they would be provided with food, clothing and lodging if needed. Some migrants were assigned to Government hostels in Greenwich, some were assigned to the NCJW Council House lodgings in Day Street, or were billeted with volunteers.

They were helped over the initial stages of culture shock. For example, if they intended to open a business in Australia, they were advised they would have to work on Saturday. Migrants would have ‘to give up any idea of keeping Shabbat (Sabbath) if the business was to be successful,’ and that tea was served with milk not lemon. They were assisted through the often daunting process of passing through Customs at the wharf side – one man arrived with a very old sewing machine, another arrived with a sack of empty beer bottles, and a young Russian girl arrived with watches all up her arm.

Meanwhile, the Jewish residents in Australia watched Hitler’s rise in Germany as Chancellor in 1933 with increasing anxiety. Tension grew in the Australian community and mass rallies were held in Melbourne, Sydney and other state capitals in April and May 1933, ‘specifically to protest against the persecution of the Jews under Nazism.’ These rallies were attended by Jews and non-Jews, who had responded in horror and outrage at the persecution of European Jews, which had a ‘traumatic and galvanising effect upon Australian Jewry.’

In March 1935 the anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws were introduced and in March 1936 Adolf Hitler re-occupied the Rhineland, violating the Versailles Treaty.

140 NCJWA Living History Project, 14.
141 NCJWA Living History Project, 14.
142 NCJWA Living History Project, 14.
143 NCJWA Living History Project, 26.
144 NCJWA Living History Project, 12.
Following the German Nuremberg Laws and the increased persecution of Jews it was realised that a more concerted effort had to be made to assist German Jews. A Council for German Jewry as formed in Britain and it was decided to raise £3,000,000 to assist 100,000 Jews to emigrate to Palestine or other safe countries. This Council contacted Sir Samuel Cohen (1869-1948) a businessman in Sydney who formed the German Jewish Relief Fund and became its first chairman. It was decided that Australian Jewry should raise £50,000, and the first appeal in Sydney on 16 April 1936 raised £10,000. Following a series of high level meetings between the Department of the Interior, local Jewish leaders and a representative of the Council for German Jewry, the Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS) was formed in 1937 to coordinate all activities concerning applications for admission, reception and the integration of the refugees, headed by Sir Samuel Cohen. Three organisations in Australia played a prominent part in meeting ships and refugees – the NCJWA led by Reading, the Young Men’s Hebrew Association (YMHA) led by Hans Vidor, and Ivriah under the direction of Rieke Cohen. Australia’s geographical remoteness was perceived by refugees as an advantage being far from Germany and Nazism.

By 1938 the number of volunteers in Sydney had risen to 200, but 1939 was to see the most intense volunteer work. Concerned at these events and anxious for family members still in Europe, the NCJWA approached the Minister for the Interior in Canberra for specific information regarding immigration to Australia.

In April 1936, Dora Abramovitch (the National Secretary of the NCJWA) wrote to the Minister informing him that the NCJWA had been approached by ‘several large European

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147 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 175.
148 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 176
149 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 176.
150 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 176.
151 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 178.
153 Andgel, Fifty Years of Caring, 17
organisations’ concerning Jewish immigration to Australia.\textsuperscript{154} She did not specify what these organisations were. She also requested the total number of Jews living in Australia and the percentage that they represented in the general population.\textsuperscript{155} She inquired about their distribution in the following categories – cities, towns or country areas, age groups, and occupations.\textsuperscript{156} The NCJWA sought further information about legislation regarding foreigners working in Australia; immigration into Australia including any modifications to existing legislation in the previous 10 years; legal protections for Jews in Australia; the size of Jewish immigration into Australia between 1931 and 1936; and finally the size of Jewish emigration between 1931 and 1936.\textsuperscript{157} In attempting to clarify these details, the NCJWA were clearly trying to get the clearest picture possible of the number of Jews in Australia and their circumstances.

The Acting Commonwealth Statistician’s reply included information from the 1933 Census.\textsuperscript{158} The Bureau was unable to supply the occupational distribution or the migration of Jews in the previous five years.\textsuperscript{159} However in 1933, the distribution of Jews was as follows: Ballarat 70, Victoria 9500, central Sydney 1133, NSW 10,305, and the total number of Jews in Australia in June 1933 was 23,553\textsuperscript{160} (see Appendix 2).

Reading wrote again to the Minister at the end of April requesting further information on Jewish immigration to Australia for the period 1926 to 1936,\textsuperscript{161} statistics on general immigration into Australia, and information about the legislation concerning foreigners and working Australia in the previous 10 years.\textsuperscript{162} J. A. Carrodus, the secretary to the Minister for the Interior replied that the Commonwealth Statistician was unable to

\textsuperscript{154} NAA. A433. 1943/2/3378.74082, National Council of Jewish Women, letter from Dora Abramovitch, Sec. NCJWA, 13 April, 1936.
\textsuperscript{155} Dora Abramovitch, Hon.Sec. NCJWA, 13 April, 1936.
\textsuperscript{156} Dora Abramovitch, Hon. Sec. NCJWA, 13 April, 1936.
\textsuperscript{157} Dora Abramovitch, Hon. Sec. NCJWA, 13 April, 1936.
\textsuperscript{158} NAA. A433. 1943/2/3378.74082, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Rolan Wilson, 30 April, 1936.
\textsuperscript{159} Rolan Wilson, 30 April,1936.
\textsuperscript{160} NAA.A433. 1943/2/3378.74082, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Census Data 1933, 30 April,1936.
\textsuperscript{161} Ministers of the Interior were Thomas Patterson (2 November 1934 – 29 November 1937) and John Mc Ewan (29 November 1937 - 26 April 1939).
\textsuperscript{162} NAA, A433. 1943/2/3378. 74082, letter from Dr Fanny Reading, 29 April, 1936
provide any more data on immigration or occupational distribution.\textsuperscript{163} Carrodus advised that Jews in Australia were entitled to the same legal protection as other residents in the Commonwealth. \textsuperscript{164} Jews who became Australian citizens were entitled to the same rights, privileges and obligations as other Australian citizens. \textsuperscript{165} Carrodus forwarded a copy of the Immigration Act 1901-1925 and copies of subsequent amendments to the Act to Reading and to the NCJWA.

Reading and the NCJWA were informed that before 1925 there were no special restrictions to foreigners or Europeans landing in Australia apart from a ‘temporary prohibition’ against former national enemies – ‘ex-enemy aliens.’\textsuperscript{166} Such potential immigrants had to meet the set standards of health and other criteria. Following the quota restriction into the USA, the numbers of people wanting to enter Australia had increased, and as a consequence the quota into Australia had also been tightened. The letter spoke in generalities – there were no figures given for the numbers allowed each year into Australia. Any immigrants called ‘alien immigrants’ had to have £40 upon arrival in Australia or had to have arranged somewhere to live. In certain unspecified European countries, visas were limited.\textsuperscript{167}

In 1931, Landing Permits could be issued to dependents of relatives and those with £500 in Australian currency. In 1936, dependent relatives who would not take employment away from an Australian, would not expect the state to support them, and had £50 landing money (Australian currency) would be granted Landing Permits.\textsuperscript{168} Those migrants who did not have relatives, but who possessed trade skills required in Australia and £200, would be eligible for a Landing Permit.\textsuperscript{169}

\textsuperscript{163} NAA, A433, 1943/2/3378,74082, J.A. Carrodus, Sec. to Minister of Interior, 22 May, 1936, 1.
\textsuperscript{164} J.A. Carrodus, 22 May, 1936, 1.
\textsuperscript{165} J.A. Carrodus, 22 May, 1936, 1.
\textsuperscript{166} J.A. Carrodus, 22 May, 1936, 1. This is an example of Public Service bureaucratic jargon.
\textsuperscript{167} J.A. Carrodus, 22 May, 1936, 1.
\textsuperscript{168} J.A. Carrodus, 22 May, 1936, 2.
\textsuperscript{169} J.A. Carrodus, 22 May, 1936, 2.
After the Austrian *Anschluss* in March 1938, the NCJWA tried to assist individuals anxious to immigrate to Australia.\(^{170}\) In March 1939, Reading made enquiries to the Minster about a wholesale firm in Bratislava that made sacks; the owner had £6000 but would only be able to take out £1000 and would be able to offer employment to many people in a factory he wanted to set up in Australia.\(^{171}\) A week later, Reading wrote again on behalf of a Budapest knitwear manufacturer, who wanted to set up a factory in Australia and could give employment to 20 or 25 people.\(^{172}\) The negative replies to these letters did not inspire hope, and these requests belong with the thousands of others that have been described as the ‘most touching and distressing documents in the National Archives.’\(^{173}\) After 1937 it was the task of the AJWS to co-ordinate Jewish immigration; it received 1200 applications in the week following the *Anschluss* in March 1938.\(^{174}\) Australia House in London received 120 inquiries a day regarding immigration in March 1938, so it faced an ‘enormous and heart-breaking task.’\(^{175}\) Sir Samuel Cohen of the AJWS welcomed departmental restrictions on Jewish immigrants, unless they were ‘likely to become true Australians.’\(^{176}\) Unfortunately, the Jewish refugees who arrived in Australia before World War II received a hostile reception from both Jewish and non-Jewish communities.\(^{177}\) These attitudes reflect the isolationism and the White Australia Policy prevalent at the time and particularly the snobbish, elitist attitudes of Sydney Jewry who failed to respond wholeheartedly to the challenges presented by the refugees.\(^{178}\)

According to Rutland (1990), the most concerted effort to settle Jewish settlers overseas came from the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonization Overseas that was created in London in 1935.\(^{179}\) The League planned to settle 100,000 Jewish settlers on the

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\(^{170}\) *Anschluss*, German: “Union”, political union of Austria with Germany, achieved through annexation by Adolf Hitler in 1938.

\(^{171}\) NAA. A433. 1943/2/3378. 74082, Dr Fanny Reading, 15 March, 1939,

\(^{172}\) NAA. A433. 1943/2/3378. 74082, Dr Fanny Reading, 23 March, 1939,


\(^{175}\) Turnbull, *Safe Haven*, 19.

\(^{176}\) Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 185.


properties purchased from Connor, Doherty, Durack and Company.\(^{180}\) Although supported by Australia’s High Commissioner in London, the Australian Government did not look with favour on the proposal.\(^{181}\) Responding to the xenophobic fear of Chinese masses from the northern hemisphere invading Australia, the Commonwealth Government felt that any aliens entering country ‘should be distributed as widely as possible,’ and it was firmly opposed to the idea of a self-contained, autonomous, unassimilated colony in Australia.\(^{182}\) The Tsarist Jews who fled to America met a similar reaction from the established Jewish community in the USA, largely led by Jews of German origins.\(^{183}\) In a similar way the Austrian and German Jews also rejected social contact with the ‘Ostjuden’ who fled Polish anti-Semitism to Germany before and after World War I.\(^{184}\) Alarmist headlines appeared in the *Bulletin*, *Truth*, *Smith’s Weekly* and *Truth* demanded that all Jewish refugees be refused entry into Australia.\(^{185}\)

In 1943 Dora Abramovitch, the Honorary Secretary for the NCJWA, wrote to the Prime Minister John Curtin, requesting he forward to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill three very important resolutions from the NCJWA.\(^{186}\) The first resolution called for urgent action to save the 4,000,000 European Jews (including 600,000 children) from Nazi annihilation.\(^{187}\) It expressed dismay at the failure of the Bermuda Refugee Conference and requested immediate ‘measures of rescue and asylum’ and the doors of the Jewish National Home be opened immediately to Jews fleeing Nazism.\(^{188}\) The second request was for the British Government to abrogate the White Paper of 1939 and to open up Palestine for the urgent immigration and re-settlement of European Jews.\(^{189}\) The third


\(^{183}\) Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 188.

\(^{184}\) Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 188.

\(^{185}\) Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 189.


\(^{187}\) Dora Abramovitch, 12 August, 1943.

\(^{188}\) Dora Abramovitch, 12 August, 1943.

\(^{189}\) Dora Abramovitch, 12 August, 1943.
requested that the Australian Commonwealth increase Jewish immigration into Australia as part of its post-war reconstruction plans.¹⁹⁰

The United Emergency Committee was established in Sydney in 1942 by Dr. J.M. Machover.¹⁹¹ Machover arrived in Australia in 1939 to search for homes for refugee children and Reading’s organisation lent support to the United Emergency Committee. The shocking news of the destruction of three to four million Jews in Europe was known by 1943, and by November 1943 a document regarding the parlous state of the remaining Jews was presented to John Curtin from all the Jewish agencies in Australia.¹⁹² To Australia’s shame, only 8200 Jewish refugees entered Australia between 1933 and 1943.¹⁹³ 3200 of these refugees (classified as ‘friendly aliens’) were males between the ages of 18 and 45 years, and 1200 of these Jewish men enlisted for active service in the Australian Defence Forces as soon as they could.¹⁹⁴ Price (1964) using the birthplace by religion statistics of the 1954 Census and in conjunction with an applied death rate suggested that the net migration for non-British male Jews was approximately 6550 between 1933 and 1947, and 6450 between 1947 and 1954.¹⁹⁵ He estimated that the net migration for Jewish females was about 6050 for 1933-47 and 5950 for 1947-54.¹⁹⁶

Initially, criticism was levelled at the Jewish refugees for fear that they would bring infectious diseases such as cholera to Australia.¹⁹⁷ When special English classes were organised for them by the NSW Education Department, there were complaints that the funds available to the state schools would be reduced.¹⁹⁸ As Rutland (1990) argues, the Jewish refugees to Australia improved Australia in many ways.¹⁹⁹ Their rapid adjustment to Australia and their subsequent success in business and the professions ‘justified the

¹⁹⁰ Dora Abramovitch, 12 August, 1943.
¹⁹¹ Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 221.
¹⁹² Rutland, The Jews in Australia, 58.
¹⁹⁶ Price, ‘Jewish Settlers in Australia,’ 366.
Government’s confidence.” They helped establish many new industries, increased Australia’s population, stimulated Australia’s cultural and artistic life and stimulated a more cosmopolitan way of life. While many doctors perished under the Nazis, some managed to escape to Australia. Reading’s connection with the refugee Jewish doctors who managed to get Australia is covered in the section below.

**Fellowship of Jewish Doctors**

Reading was a member of the Fellowship of Jewish Doctors (Australia) and attended the inaugural meeting of the Fellowship on 27 March 1955. This was a group of refugee Jewish doctors who had trained overseas, principally in Europe, and managed to escape annihilation under the Nazis (many did not). The Fellowship was also founded in memory of Jewish doctors murdered by the Nazis. Many fled to Australia and received an unsympathetic reception.

On the following page is a cartoon which was published in the *The Daily Telegraph* on 7 December 1939 attacking the refugee doctors. The *Telegraph* was a daily tabloid based in Sydney. On 1 September 1939 Britain had declared war on Germany and it must have seemed very distant. The cartoon’s capture ‘Keeping Him Under’ has a double meaning. It means both keeping the patient-doctor unconscious and keeping him ‘under the thumb’ or under control. The patient moreover is labelled as ‘alien doctor.’ The operating doctor show little sympathy to his patient, and a notice tacked on the back wall of the operating theatre reads, ‘Urgent - doctors needed in outback.’ This was a racist and anti-Semitic attitude.

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201 Rutland, ‘The Jewish Community in NSW 1919-39’ 246

The refugee doctors who had faced great difficulties surviving World War II faced more in coming to practice in Australia. Among their difficulties were obtaining documentation about their original medical training in Poland or Germany, or wherever that had taken place, because often it had been destroyed in the war. Other challenges were obtaining landing papers for Australia and assembling the £200 landing fee, developing English skills and dealing with an inflexible Australian bureaucracy that insisted they retrain for three years at an Australian university.

They then faced a limited quota system, which meant only eight foreign doctors a year could be admitted to the profession. As a response to these many difficulties and pressures, the Fellowship had been founded by ‘refugee doctors who wanted to meet together for medical and social needs.’ Naturally Reading supported them by joining the Fellowship where she played a double role in the Fellowship, not only as a professional colleague, but also acting as a mentor to the refugee Jewish doctors. Her English language skills, medical training and experience, local contacts, and understanding of the Australian bureaucracy and customs made her a valuable friend to these new colleagues.

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203 Rutland, Take Heart Again, 6.
204 Rutland, Take Heart Again, 59.
The refugee doctors sorely needed friends, as their migration was opposed by Australians who feared their living standards would be undermined by their admittance, and who preferred British and Irish immigrants. They faced ‘social rejection’ from the Anglo-Jewish doctors in Australia, who might have been expected to support them. Rutland (1983) argues that this attitude reflected the established Jewish communities ‘sense of fear and mistrust’ and their sense of insecurity. This rejection was a final blow to the refugee doctors who quite rightly felt that their co-religionists might have been the first to assist them.

Reading’s support of this particular refugee group is clear evidence of her strength of character in pushing against the prevailing social attitudes of her own professional peer group in Australia, in her championing of the under-dog, and her sympathy and empathy to newcomers who were experiencing loneliness and rejection. Her brother Abe’s name, for example, does not appear in the handwritten list of doctors who attended the inaugural meeting. This does not suggest Abe was unsympathetic to the situation and difficulties his co-religionists faced, perhaps he was just too busy with his own practice and family to attend the meeting. It is evident that because of the difficulties involved in Reading’s own path to a medical career, she was empathetic and supportive to the ‘reffo’ doctors who arrived in Australia in the 1930s, 1940s and the 1950s. The story of the refugee doctors in Australia is a moving one, and it is fitting that their narrative is included in this thesis because Reading supported their struggle to gain the right to practice here. She identified with those who struggled to practice medicine, which is a clue that her pathway to medicine had not been without significant difficulties.

How did such a busy professional woman cope with all she undertook? The next section attempts to explain this aspect of Reading’s life, certainly at some time removed both in

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205 Rutland, *Take Heart Again*, 3.
206 Rutland, *Take Heart Again*, 3.
207 Rutland, *Take Heart Again*, 41.
208 ‘Reffo’ was a derogatory term used by Australians to describe European refugees in this period.
space and geography. Her supportive network made it possible for her to practice as a doctor and lead the NCJWA.

**Supportive Network**

It is the contention of this thesis that single people, regardless of gender, who have professional careers and cope well, do so by creating supportive networks. Reading was no different from others in this regard, for by establishing and maintaining a personal and professional supportive network, she managed her medical workload, commitment to life governorships and honorary positions, and community work. Reading was also able to have ‘a straight run’ at her medical career as an unmarried woman. Many married women are unable to achieve this because they have a husband and children who compete for their time and attention. Certainly Reading’s career was delayed until she was almost 40 – the intervention of World War I meant her entry into the University of Melbourne did not occur until 1916 when she was 32. Therefore, at the prime of her life Reading was able to channel her time and energy into specific goals of the medical care of women and children, the NCJW and support for Israel.

There were other effective single and married Jewish women in the Australian community of Reading’s generation with drive and ambition, such as Ruby Rich-Schalit (1888-1988). Rich-Schalit assisted Millicent Prestin-Stanley with her first but unsuccessful campaign to be elected to parliament.\(^{209}\) Her association with the League of Women Voters and the International Women’s Alliance groups meant that she became a leading Jewish feminist and held many official positions.\(^{210}\) Mirrie Hill, Fanny Cohen, Gladys Marks and Zoe Benjamin were all contemporaries of Reading’s in NSW and worked to improve the status of women and children.\(^{211}\) These women and Reading belonged to the second phase of Australian feminism, post 1920.\(^{212}\) Rutland (2005) argues that these Jewish feminists were not ‘radical feminists’ because they worked to upgrade the status of women within the context of Judaism and family and community

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211 Lysbeth Cohen, ‘Not Merely Housewives,’ 11.
relationships. Accordingly, Reading was not a ‘radical feminist’ because her work was within the context of Orthodox Judaism and she did not challenge the status quo regarding Jewish marriage. In that sense, she was no threat to the authority of the Jewish clergy. While it is not possible to list them all, the following people are some Reading worked closely with.

Miss Dora Abramovitch BA was a secondary school teacher who worked with Reading for many years in numerous capacities. Years later, Abramovitch wrote that soon after arriving in Sydney she was introduced to Reading at a welcome home reception for Reading from her overseas trip. This would place their meeting in 1926. Abramovitch possibly met Reading at the party at ‘The Astor’ which was hosted by Mrs Marcus Marks on Thursday 4 March 1926. Abramovitch wrote that she also met Mrs Marks and her daughter Hannah, Mrs Henry Lewis and Pearl Samuels that evening. There was also a function at the Maccabean Hall the following Saturday night where 250 people welcomed Reading home from overseas, but Abramovitch was not listed among the distinguished guestlist – although that is not to say she was not in attendance. Abramovitch wrote in 1973:

> From the moment Dr Fanny was introduced to me she never let me go. I became her secretary and nearly every moment of my life was spent in the service of the Council.

Abramovitch worked with Reading on The Council Bulletin of the Council of Jewish Women in Australia until 1929 when she was transferred to Bathurst High School. Abramovitch was the first editor of the NCJW Bulletin, she wrote occasional papers for conferences and taught English classes for the NCJW in Sydney in 1925. She edited The Council Bulletin, took the copy to a printer, collected and corrected the proofs, and

217 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 March, 1926, 5.
took delivery of the printed copies of *The Council Bulletin* at her home.\textsuperscript{222} There she had assistance from other members of the Council – Ruth Phillips (Mrs Freeman) and Ettie Emanuel (Mrs Van Coverdon) to fold, address and mail out *The Council Bulletin* to members all over Australia.\textsuperscript{223} The importance of *The Council Bulletin* as a communication tool was paramount.

By 1932, Abramovitch was on the National Board of the NCJW of Australia representing NSW.\textsuperscript{224} In the mid-1930s, Abramovitch was acting as the Honorary National Secretary of the NCJW and continued in this role for many years. Looking back on her time with Reading years later, Abramovitch said, “I would like to give you some idea of Dr Fanny’s personal magnetism and her power over everyone she met.”\textsuperscript{225} Abramovitch said she believed that this arose from ‘the strength of her ideals and her dedication.’\textsuperscript{226} In 1964 Abramovitch was still acting as the Honorary National Secretary, although she shared the task with Pearl Mendes.\textsuperscript{227} Abrahamovitch worked closely with Reading in Sydney until she moved to Melbourne in 1960.\textsuperscript{228}

Andgel (1998) said there were two other significant women who were very supportive to Reading. Betty Roden (née Krantz) worked in the King’s Cross surgery from 1938 and as well as dealing with Reading’s patients, did a great deal of NCJW work.\textsuperscript{229} Reading was also supported in her Council work by Roma Baffsky (née Lang), whose duties varied from ‘taking dictation, to running between the two surgeries … then … to cook for the Sabbath.’\textsuperscript{230} In 1943, Roma Lang had been the NCJW’s candidate in the JNF Queen competition, the proceeds of which were directed to the Jewish National Fund (JNF).\textsuperscript{231}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{224} F. Reading and D. Abramovitch (eds), *Programme NCJW Second Conference* March 1932, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{227} *Programme for 14th Triennial Conference NCJW*, Sydney: National Council of Jewish Women of Australia, 1964, 10, Archives NCJWA, State Library of NSW.
\item \textsuperscript{228} Newton, *Making A Difference*, 40
\item \textsuperscript{229} Andgel, ‘The Law of Loving Kindness,’ 250.
\item \textsuperscript{230} Newton, *Making A Difference*, 9.
\end{itemize}
Roma was the daughter of Mr and Mrs Lang of Rose Bay, Sydney. In 1944, when she was 19, Roma Lang won the competition, having raised £2643. Lang worked for Reading for 17 years. Reading needed fulltime support of the kind that Lang provided because her medical practice and work with the NCJW took her full attention. Roma Baffsky worked in the Oxford surgery from 1940 until 1957 and eventually became Reading’s live-in carer for four years when Reading’s health deteriorated.

Possibly Reading’s greatest support was her mother who came to live with her in Darlinghurst after Nathan’s death in 1934 in Richmond, Victoria. According to Andgel (1988), Esther prepared a lunch for Reading every day at about midday. Their hospitality was extended to many others usually for lunch on the Sabbath. Esther had always been Reading’s moral support, travelling overseas with her in 1925 and later in 1929 when she travelled overland to Adelaide, Perth and back.

A photo of Esther exists in Reading’s photograph album in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. It was taken by the commercial photography firm Talma and Company, which had offices at 119 Swanston Street in Melbourne, 374 George Street in Sydney, and another in Adelaide. This firm specialised in the photography of theatrical personalities and was active from 1890 until 1920. Nellie Stewart, Nellie Melba (1905) and the violinist Jan Kubelick (1908) were among their clients. The firm specialised in postcards too, a popular form of communication in the early twentieth century.

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233 Newton, *Making A Difference*, 115
234 Newton, *Making A Difference*, 115
241 Dr Fanny Reading Photographs and Realia, ca. 1890-1974, Digital Order Number: a5749107 (Mitchell Library)
This particular photograph of Esther’s (there are others of her as an older woman) is in sepia, fashionable at the time. Esther is posed gracefully as if she were seated in a window box at the opera. One hand is resting lightly upon her cheek, the other is resting on the plush velvet edge of the box with her opera glasses held ready for use. The curtains are also velvet, edged with tassels, and are draped asymmetrically behind her. Her pose is relaxed and contemplative. Her hair is piled high and her steady look engages the viewer. Her jewellery is restrained but visible – a double strand of pearls is around her neck, a bracelet is on her left arm and rings are on both fingers, indicating that she is a married woman of some standing in the community – respectable, successful and still youthful enough to be attractive.243 One senses a strong character in the sitter – someone who would be steady and dependable.244 The wooden picture frame is of the classical egg and cup design and the carved outer frame is typical of the nativism of the period, with the

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244 Synder (2010) said that the Biblical models for Jewish women were the matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. Nonetheless, Esther remained a very popular Jewish name, at least in eighteenth century naming patterns in colonial British America. Esther’s story is re-encountered each year at Purim and her courage and determination to save her people.
laurel wreath flanked by eucalyptus leaves and gumnuts. Possibly taken early in the twentieth century, in 1904 Esther would have been 40 years old, living at 42 Odessa Street St Kilda, and engaged in home duties.245 Her move to Sydney in the latter part of her life brought her closer to all her children and grandchildren, and she was able to give Reading much needed support in her private and domestic life as mentioned above. Esther did not learn to speak English; she always spoke Yiddish, and advised her children and grandchildren to assimilate into the Australian society as quickly possible.246

There is one other significant photograph in Reading’s private photograph album of someone whom Reading admired. It is of Golda Meir (1898 -1978) and the inscription in one corner reads ‘Jerusalem 1942.’247 Meir was born in 1898 as Golda Mabovitch in Kiev, where she was forced to live a marginalised existence in the Pale of Settlement. She was determined to see Jews freed from tyranny and felt deeply the powerlessness of the Jewish people in Russia. According to her biographer she was influenced by her sister Sheyna and came to believe there were three possible ways to end anti-Semitic violence: advocate for change within Russia, immigrate to a location where it was less likely that anti-Semitism would be practiced, or return to the land from which the Jewish people had been exiled and re-establish Israel.248

247 Dr Fanny Reading Photographs and Realia, ca.1890-1974, (undigitised) accessed 10 May, 2013. (Mitchell Library)
248 Ellyn Lyle and Dustin MacLeod, ‘Women, Leadership and Education as Change’ in Racially and Ethnically Diverse Women Leading Education: a World View, eds Terri N. Watson and Anthony Normore (75-90), Bingley, UK: Emerald, 2017, 81.
Meir immigrated to the United States of America in 1906 with her family. She grew up in Milwaukee and while in high school joined a Zionist group Poalei Zion. In 1924 she moved to Jerusalem and became an official of the Histadrut Trade Union (General Federation of Trade Unions.)\(^{249}\) After an active life of service to Israel, she became Prime Minister in 1969 when she was 71 years old. Although only 44 years of age when this photograph was taken, her face is deeply lined and her hair white. She looks 10 years older than her age, which indicates the difficulties she faced in life. It is Meir’s eyes that speak to the viewer – dark and deeply set, with a serious gaze. Like Reading, she had an important mission in life to fulfill – to advance the Jewish community, which Reading shared.

There are parallels in the lives of Reading and Meir, both leaving Russia to seek refuge in a distant country, Israel being of great importance to them, and both being significant Jewish leaders. Reading attended a convention of the ICJW in Israel in 1957 and possibly met Meir at some time during that trip obtaining the photograph for her personal album.\(^{250}\)

Reading must have admired Percy J. Marks because there is a studio portrait of him (see below) in her photograph album.\(^{251}\) Reading got to know Marks and other Sydney Zionists when she moved and became established there in 1923, because she was also a Zionist. In Sydney during the 1930s, the Zionists were led by the few Australian born among them, such as Percy J. Marks, Arthur W. Hyman, Morris Symonds and Silva Steigrad.\(^{252}\) No doubt there were many common interests and intellectual discussions to be enjoyed with these people.

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\(^{249}\) Lyle and MacLeod, ‘Women, Leadership and Education as Change,’ 81.

\(^{250}\) Rubinstein, 'Reading, Fanny (1884–1974)' accessed online 10 February 2016.

\(^{251}\) Dr Fanny Reading Photographs and Realia 1890-1974. Image a5749078.

\(^{252}\) Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 302.
The next chapter deals with Reading’s parents and their decision to emigrate from Russia to a safer haven. It commences with Reading’s father Nathan Rubinovitch and his story, and then moves to her mother Esther’s story. The Rubinovitch family were part of the Great Migration of the late nineteenth century, their decision to leave Russia and start a new life somewhere elsewhere resulted in their daughter, Fanny, arriving in Australia.
Chapter 2. The Decision to Immigrate.

This chapter covers the departure of Reading’s parents Nathan and Esther Rubinovitch from Russia. It is an ‘imagined’ recount based on secondary sources, as there are few primary source documents available for their individual departures. However, it is a faithful reproduction of the migration experience for many impoverished and desperate Russian Jews after 1881. Nathan’s story is related first and followed by Esther’s, who travelled later with the infant Fanny (Reading).¹ A section on the Poor Jews’ Temporary Shelter in London and other organisations that were set up there by various bodies to assist Jewish (and other) migrants follows. The chapter includes a short section on the historical background of the Minsk province, where the family originated.

Reading’s mother, Esther Rose Levinson, was born in Karelitz (Korelichi) on 9 August 1864, and her father Nathan Jacob Rubinovitch was born on 14 July 1861 in Vilna, in the neighbouring province of Grodno.² They married at Karelitz in 1883 in a Jewish ceremony.³ Fanny was Esther and Nathan’s first child, born in the freezing depths of a Russian winter on 2 December 1884.⁴

Their decision to immigrate was brought about by poverty and would be repeated many times into the early twentieth century by many Jewish families in Eastern Europe.⁵ The common pattern was to split the family unit and one family member,

¹ In this thesis Reading will be referred to as ‘Fanny’ until the family name was changed to Reading in 1919.
² Statutory Declaration by Esther Rose Rubinovitch.c. 1904 Archives Australian Jewish Historical Society.
⁴ Rubenstein, Reading, Fanny (1884-1974).
usually the head of the family, went on ahead to the new country. Nathan and Esther Rubinovitch made a joint decision to emigrate. They would have known their decision would place great strain on their relationship, but there was no alternative. When Nathan had made enough money he would purchase steamship tickets for Esther and Fanny. They would be sent, and there would be great excitement in their shtetl (townlet), Karelichi, when they finally arrived. In the Rubinovitch family’s case, this took several years, so Esther and Fanny duly waited in England for steamship tickets to Australia; it was not until June 1889 that the three of them were reunited in Australia.

The Rubinovitchs’ migration was part of the great transmigration of the nineteenth century, brought about by the invention and development of the steam engine, the steamship and the development of the rail system. According to Stampfer (1995), economic hardship constituted the main impetus for East European migrants to migrate abroad. Therefore, through the integration of the shipping and the rail systems from the Baltic and North Sea ports to Great Britain, great numbers of migrants were moved, together with coal, iron, ore, timber and chilled provisions. In the twentieth century the travel business and tourism would take over these integrated networks to move cargo of a different kind – tourists. Nathan’s story follows below.

Nathan’s Departure c.1884

A 23-year-old Nathan Jacob Rubinovitch, fled soon after his daughter’s birth on December 1884, which clearly indicates his desperation and fear. The reasons for
these are set out at the end of the chapter. When he set out in late 1884 or early 1885, it must have been a miserable farewell to Esther and baby Fanny. If he had travelled by wagon, bus, or walked though deep snow, he possibly went to Minsk, northeast of Karelitzi.12 Hamburg, Bremen and Antwerp were the three major ports of embarkation for Eastern European refugees heading to America in 1885. A cheaper passage to New York could be purchased in London, so most Jews preferred to go through London to New York, than directly from Hamburg or Bremen.13

Departing from Minsk, Nathan’s next destination west was most likely Brody. Today, Brody is located in Ukraine, but in 1885 it lay close to the Austrian-Hungarian border with Russia. After 1881, a rumour had circulated through the Pale of Settlement (the western region of Imperial Russia where permanent residency of Jews was allowed), that the journey to America was free once a refugee arrived in Brody; thousands of desperate Russian Jews rushed there.14 Their numbers swelled with Romanian Jews also trying to escape persecution; about 6000 Jews eventually camped there in 1882.15 With approximately $10 US in his pocket, Nathan would have bought a passage to London, bribed his way across borders and secured rail travel to his port.16

By 1885 however, the year Nathan was travelling, the Prussian authorities had closed their eastern border. They felt their German identity was under threat from Polish nationalism and Jewish infiltration17 and in 1885 the USA authorities forcibly repatriated some Russian Jews. The Prussian government considered these Jews to be not only a financial burden, but also a security risk.18 Consequently, 40,000 Poles and Jews from Austro-Hungary and Poland were expelled from Prussia in 1885.

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12 This is the spelling Reading used in her letters home to her family in 1925, so it has been adopted for this thesis.
18 Caestecker and Feys, ‘East European Jewish Migrants and Settlers in Belgium: A Transatlantic Perspective,’ 256.
Following these events, Nathan may well not have been able to get to Hamburg or Bremen. If not, he most likely would have taken the longer route through Austria, bypassing the Prussian border, in order to get to Antwerp to embark for England. If however, he had travelled north from Minsk his long, arduous train trip to Hamburg would have been taken at night because it was cheaper. By 1885, Hamburg was a main processing point and Nathan would have arrived there in the early hours of the morning. In order to cope with the numbers of immigrants, the Prussian authorities would set up 60 control or quarantine stations, but this would not occur until 1891.19

Nathan would have used an agent to buy his ticket to England for the shipping companies - Allan, Cunard, Union and Castle, White Star, Norddeutscher-Lloyd and Hamburg-America had carved up the immigrant trade between them.20 By 1860, these companies had local agents in all of the shtetlach (townlets) in the Pale. It is very likely the same agent would have arranged a passport for him. Nathan might have shared his passport with other people unknown to him; this was a common practice.21 The passport was a simple document and not at all like a modern one, but it allowed him to leave Russia. The Russian borders were very long, porous and illegal crossings were possible.22 If he had been unable to get a travel document from the Russian government, he would have bribed smugglers and border guards to get himself over borders.

After crossing the North Sea, Nathan would have disembarked at Hull or the port of London – both were important arrival ports for Eastern European and Scandinavian transmigrants.\textsuperscript{23} Jewish refugees had flooded into England after 1881 and most were in a parlous state. It is most likely Nathan found his way to London; he would have been in the large cohort of Russian Jewish emigrants in 1885 and 1886 seeking safe haven in England, who had to be cared for by Anglo-Jewish charity.\textsuperscript{24} On arrival in England, Nathan would have been called an ‘alien.’\textsuperscript{25} An ‘immigrant’ was defined as a migrant coming to a country and settling down in that country. A ‘transmigrant’ was defined as a migrant passing through one country to get to another to settle.\textsuperscript{26}

In 1885, when it is highly probable that Nathan would have been transmigrating through England, Simon Cohen (or Becker), a baker and a refugee from Poland, took in destitute Jewish transmigrants from Eastern Europe who arrived in London.\textsuperscript{27} The bare essentials, soup and a floor to lie on, were all Cohen could offer. The Jewish Board of Guardians in England, fearful of encouraging more poverty stricken Jewish immigrants, declared Cohen’s refuge unsanitary and closed it.

\textsuperscript{23} Caestecker and Feys, ‘East European Jewish Migrants and Settlers in Belgium: A Transatlantic Perspective,’ 264
\textsuperscript{25} Before the Alien Act of 1905 in Britain, an alien was defined as a person who was not of British nationality arriving into Britain.
\textsuperscript{26} Newman, ‘The Union Castle Line and Emigration from Eastern Europe to South Africa,’ 7.
There were many protests about this and in October 1885, Herman Landau and Samuel Montagu opened a Poor Jews’ Temporary Shelter (PJTS) in Leman Street, East London. In 1885-86, the number of Jews passing through the Shelter was 1027; in 1886-7 it was 1162; in 1887-8 it was 1322. These numbers were for men, women and children, and occasionally destitute Christians who also sheltered there. The shelter would issue the inhabitants with a printed card in English that they could show a policeman if they became lost in London. Transmigrants could stay there for two weeks and were given two meals a day.

Nathan’s short wait in London was not without its advantages, for he could buy kosher food for the long voyage to Australia, learn some basic English language and customs, and glean useful information from other would-be travellers to Australia, his final destination. The long sea voyage and distance to Australia was unattractive to many Eastern European Jews, but Nathan must have heard of the Victorian gold rushes and decided to try his luck. He may have also learnt that one of the gold rush cities (Ballarat) had an orthodox Jewish community. Ballarat’s Jewish population in

29 Dr S. Faine, Melbourne, 28 March, 2013, email correspondence.
30 Rutland, The Jews in Australia, 9. According to Rutland, in 1861 after the gold rushes, Victoria had the largest Jewish population in Australia, totalling 3000.
31 Rutland, The Jews in Australia, 23.
1861 was 355. Nathan belonged to the second wave of Jewish migration to Australia, and between 1881 and 1921 the Jewish population in Australia increased by about 11,000; of these, only 3000 came from Eastern Europe.

Nathan arrived in Australia on 23 May 1885 on the iron clipper *Patriaoh* that was build especially for the London to Australia run, and as there is no record of his passage, he must have travelled steerage. By early 1886, he was hawking out into plains west of Ballarat. In their travels about the countryside, hawkers had the ability to see where a likely spot for a hotel would be. Nathan chose a site at the base of Mt William in the Grampians that would eventually be called Mafeking. He held the licence for a hotel there from 1886 until 1908. Nathan would have to wait until 1900 and the Mt William gold rush to make use of this licence, and have his foresight and business acumen rewarded. This is covered in Chapter 3 ‘Ballarat and Becoming Established.’

**Esther’s Departure**

The emigration experience for Jewish women of the Pale of Settlement was a completely different one to that experienced by Jewish men. In part this came about from the particular legal status of Jewish wives. The Jewish marriage contract meant the wife was the husband’s property; she needed a *get* (permission) from her husband to apply for a divorce or failing this, proof of her husband’s death to void the marriage contract. Nathan may have organised marital proof before he left, but this seems unlikely. He may have seen a lawyer and left a signed statement proving that Esther and he were married and this would have enabled Esther to obtain a passport relatively easily, however considering the expense, this also seems unlikely. Had he

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34 NAA: Series MP 16/1, Control Symbol 1918/618, Barcode 323108, Intelligence Record File, Nathan Jacob Rubinovitch (digitised copy viewed on line 30 June, 2014.) He gave his age as 35.

35 PROV, VPRS 8159, P0002, Defunct Hotel Licences, Mafeking Hotel Licence, (digitised copy viewed on line 30 June, 2014.)

36 PROV, VPRS 8159, P0002, Defunct Hotel Licences.
gone to the Russian consul in Australia on arrival and obtained a similar statement of marriage, this also would have facilitated a passport for Esther and Fanny. Without a passport or statement of marriage, a woman in Esther’s position would have gone to the police and advised the authorities that her husband had deserted her. After a short investigation to verify the claim, she would have been provided with a document to this effect, which would have enabled her to apply to the governor of the district for a passport.\(^{37}\)

The Jewish wife was the economic manager of the family unit; her role was to relieve her husband and sons of those duties so they were free to study the Torah (Jewish law and scripture) and debate various points. The Jewish wife was the upholder of the family’s morality and respectability and this role was a heavy burden upon her. Her boundless devotion to her family, coupled with the financial responsibility for the family, often resulted in a domineering matriarch, since the husband was often working away from their shtetl too.\(^{38}\) For Eastern European Jews ‘reality dictated two working parents for most Jews.’\(^{39}\)

\(^{37}\) Alroey, ‘And I Remained Alone in a Vast Land,’ 44.

\(^{38}\) Alroey, ‘And I Remained Alone in a Vast Land,’ 44.

\(^{39}\) Hyman, Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History, 71.

\(^{40}\) Alroey, ‘And I Remained Alone in a Vast Land,’ 43.
partnership that ‘gave Jewish wives some family authority, a knowledge of the marketplace, and a certain worldliness.’ The skills she had developed prior to his departure, her ability to cope, and her emotional strength to carry the enterprise through were then tested, sometimes quite severely. Not only did she have to bear the pain of separation, but also she became the sole breadwinner for the family. This was Esther’s situation from 1885 and her strength, resilience and resourcefulness were to be tested in the four years ahead.

Esther needed a passport to leave Russia and to get this she had to show her marriage certificate, a letter of invitation from her husband to join him overseas, a police certificate of good behavior, and produce the necessary passport fee. Failing these, her only option would have been to approach an agent for a passport (many of whom were dishonest), or bribe border guards and slip over a border at night. She had to be alert for crooks and swindlers who would take advantage of her exhaustion, confusion and vulnerability. Esther’s economic circumstances were precarious, so she made her journey in two parts. Nathan sent money for her travel to London with their young child, but from there she waited for the steamship tickets to Australia. She had to have kosher food for the journey and money for costs at the borders; firstly she had to get through Germany. Many mothers resorted to charity when they could not provide for their children.

As mentioned earlier, after 1885 the eastern Prussian border closed, but transmigrants holding steamship tickets to the United States were permitted to pass through Prussia they paid 400 marks each and 100 marks for a child. After 1886, some Prussian border guards were letting migrants through for less than 400 marks. The two leading German shipping companies the Hamburg–American and the Norddeutscher-Lloyd, had set up control stations at the Prussian borders that effectively acted as quarantine


centres. At one of these quarantine centres Esther and Fanny would have bathed and their clothes would have been fumigated. Esther would have paid one mark a day for lodging and food in Hamburg, then they would have boarded their ship for England. In Hamburg and Bremen there was a large compound next to the gangway where Jewish emigrants were required to stay without charge until the time came for them to embark. Infectious diseases such as cholera were greatly feared, so these measures were more about protecting the local population than caring for the immigrants.

After 1886, the Antwerp route was increasingly favoured by the Russian Jews, but it meant passing through the Hapsburg Empire, Saxony and the southern German states. It is quite possible Esther went through Antwerp and there she would have received assistance from the Alliance Israélite Universelle that helped Jewish transmigrants. The authorities were well organised at the Antwerp dockside. Esther and Fanny would have been medically checked again before boarding their ship. They would have travelled steerage, which was cheap, uncomfortable, dark and crowded. Esther would have carried their own kosher food, but some ‘sweet water’ (that is, not sea water) was given to them daily, but there was not enough water for washing clothes or themselves. They would have been in a wretched state when they arrived in England, after being at sea for three days. Immediately on arrival at either Hull or London, Esther and Fanny would have gone to a large dockside shed for processing. The shipping companies had built waiting rooms there and some had special facilities for the needs of the Jewish passengers – kosher food and water.

Esther urgently needed to find accommodation for herself and Fanny in England. There was a traditional and long-standing Jewish pattern of support in England that was to assist Jewish travellers in need. Such organisations had been set up in

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45 Gartner, ‘Women in the Great Jewish Migration,’ 130.
Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester, as well as the PJTS in the East End of London. Esther and Fanny may have stayed in the women’s quarters of the PJTS for two weeks, then she would have sought the cheapest lodging possible in the East End. Esther would have looked for any of her relatives or landsleit (fellow countrymen or women who came from the same town or village) who could come to her assistance.\textsuperscript{48} The PJTS helpfully recommended the numerous lodging-houses that offered meals and lodging at fixed rates, and Esther would have found accommodation in one of these.\textsuperscript{49} Beyond accommodation, many other difficulties lay in wait for Esther and Fanny in London. These ranged from language, food, frauds and tricksters, evangelical Christians wishing to convert Jews, and Jack the Ripper.

Esther may have learnt to understand a few words of English in the East End of London.\textsuperscript{50} She probably understood a few simple words from the street stalls and markets, and from the evangelists and medical missionary doctors. Fanny must have acquired street English rapidly from the many children living in the East End.\textsuperscript{51} In spite of the chronic overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions and poverty in the Jewish East End, there was a rich cultural and religious life that created an environment of creativity and self-help. Esther would have used every possible charitable means in London to keep Fanny and herself healthy and safe. After approximately 24 months in temporary accommodation, they left London on 18 April 1889, bound for Melbourne, Australia. Esther had written on her Application for Naturalisation in 1904 that she arrived in Australia on 1 June 1889.\textsuperscript{52} Since the \textit{RMSS Carthage} of the P&O Steam Navigation Company was the only vessel to dock in Melbourne on that date, it is assumed Esther and Fanny sailed on her to Australia.\textsuperscript{53} \textit{RMSS Carthage} reached Gibraltar on 23 April, and docked in Malta on 27 April. On 3 May it passed through


\textsuperscript{50} Private Information from Jennifer Burman. Esther spoke only Yiddish in Australia.


\textsuperscript{52} Esther Rubinovitch, Application for Naturalisation and Statutory Declaration, 1904.

the newly opened Suez Canal – the first of the P&O ships to do so. Esther and Fanny would have experienced the intense desert heat during this passage and sought refuge on the decks from their stifling steerage quarters below. *RMSS Carthage* reached Albany, Western Australia, on 26 May, giving them their first glimpse of Australia. On 30 May, *RMSS Carthage* called into Adelaide, before finally docking at Melbourne on Saturday 1 June 1889. Esther and Fanny must have travelled steerage, as their names were not listed in the report of *RMSS Carthage*’s arrival to Melbourne published in *The Argus*.54 Nathan was presumably there at the dockside in Port Melbourne to greet them and meet Fanny, whom he had seen last as a small baby, and they were reunited as a family.

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54 *Argus*, 3 June, 1889, 4.
Why did the family leave Russia?

The Rubinovitch family lived in the gubernii (province) of Minsk and according to Aronson (1990) Minsk was an area free of pogroms in the period 1881-83. Aronson argued that by long tradition the Russian government and people had nurtured an intense animosity towards the Jews on both religious and moral grounds. The Poles and the Ukrainians also suffered, but the Jewish minority was discriminated against extensively and persistently. Stampfer (1995) has demonstrated that a disproportionate number of Jewish migrants to the United States came from areas that were typified by economic depression with a low level of anti-Semitic violence. Pogroms occurred in Volnia, Chernigov, Podolia, Kiev, Poltava, Kherson, Ekaterinoslav and Taurida. Jews in other provinces feared anti-Semitic violence too, and considered migration to countries other than the United States which was regarded as the goldene medina (golden country), although this was the favoured destination of migrating Jews.

Nathan Rubinovitch, like so many desperate other Jews and Christians, immigrated for primarily economic reasons on the basis of Stampfer’s research. As mentioned earlier the migration pattern out of Russia was that it was customary for the Jewish male to set off alone, get established and then send for his family.

Aronson argues against a conspiracy theory with regard to the pogroms of 1881-3; his contention is that they arose as a result of Russia’s accelerating and modernisation in the late nineteenth century. Industrial workers became dislocated and disorientated

55 A pogrom is a violent riot aimed at the massacre or persecution of an ethnic or religious group, particularly a riot aimed at the massacre or persecution of Jews.
59 Stampher, ‘Patterns of Internal Jewish Migration in the Russian Empire,’ 37.
61 Stampher, ‘Patterns of Internal Jewish Migration in the Russian Empire, 42.
and the peasants struggled to become proletarians under very severe working conditions.\textsuperscript{63} A map of the boundaries of the Pale of Settlement follows below.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map.png}
\end{center}

The Jews had lived mainly in the Russian countryside where they engaged in petty trade.\textsuperscript{64} These \textit{shtetlach} varied in size from several hundred people to several thousand.\textsuperscript{65} The \textit{shtetel} was the economic link between the Jews and the peasants in the Pale of Settlement.\textsuperscript{66} The Jews engaged in petty trade and leased the feudal prerogatives of the Polish landlords, and in particular the right to distill and sell liquor.\textsuperscript{67} Jewish businesses were generally of a very small scale and involved the

\begin{itemize}
\item[64] Kiler, ‘Russian Jewry on the eve of the pogroms,’ 4.
\item[65] Aronson, \textit{Troubled Waters: The Origins of the Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia}, 35.
\item[66] Aronson, \textit{Troubled Waters: The Origins of the Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia}, 35.
\item[67] Kiler, ‘Russian Jewry on the eve of the pogroms,’ 4.
\end{itemize}
whole family who lived in poverty. Nonetheless, their Jewish lives in the shtetlach were marked by cultural homogeneity, close-knit family and community life, warmth and intimacy. The following section reviews the actual methods of migration from Russia, the shipping companies, transfer routes, the organisations formed to assist Jewish migrants and the shelters and help available to them.

The Great Migration

It was not only Jews who took part in the Great Migration of the 1880s from Europe – many poor Christians also left in search of a better and more secure future. These migrants streamed through Britain in the mid-1850s and ‘between 500 to 1000 Jews a year arrived via Hull alone.’ It is likely Nathan had considered America as a destination, it being the most popular destination for Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe. Most European transmigrants going to America disembarked at Hull, and between 1885 and 1889 numbers grew for 271,351 migrants disembarked there; Hull was the third largest port in Britain. These westward bound transmigrants then used the efficient British rail system to go across England from Hull to Liverpool, and onto ships bound for New York.

The shipping companies had extensive networks established for the trade of cattle, iron ore and general cargo, so the movement of migrants was simply accommodated in the existing network of companies such as Det Forende Dampskibs Selskab (Copenhagen), Thomas Wilson and Sons (Hull, UK) and Det Dansk Russisk Dampskibs (Copenhagen). Other shipping companies quickly moved into what was a lucrative trade in shipping migrants. These shipping companies had networks of agents in Eastern Europe who facilitated the purchase of steamship tickets, and who organised groups of migrants to travel.

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68 Aromson, Troubled Waters: The Origins of the Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia, 36.
69 Aromson, Troubled Waters: The Origins of the Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia, 35.
71 Nicholas Evans, ‘Work in Progress: Indirect Passage from Europe Transmigration Via the UK, 1836-1914,’ Journal for Maritime Research, 3, 1 (2001): 76, Fig.1.
A man wanting to migrate, such as Nathan Rubinovitch, would have carefully compiled as much information from various sources as he could before he left. Most useful were any letters sent to his neighbours in the *shtetl* from those who had already successfully moved overseas. Another important source of information came from the advertisements of shipping companies such as Allan, Cunard, Union and Castle, White Star, Norddeutscher-Lloyd and Hamburg-America that had carved up the immigrant trade, and by 1860 these companies had local agents in all of the *shtetlach* in the Pale.73 After 1893, for example, advertisements to South Africa were placed in Yiddish newspapers in the Kovno region of Lithuania by the Cunard, Allan, White Star and Wilson shipping companies that accounted for many Lithuanian immigrants moving to South Africa.74 Nathan would have used an agent, otherwise he would have been exposed to languages he did not understand and given instructions he did not comprehend. Whichever port he used, his was a journey into the unknown. He had never seen the sea before, let alone taken a voyage by sea. He may not have known that seawater was undrinkable; his limited understanding of space and geography would have made the concept of migration daunting, and Australia was a very distant place.

Nathan would have taken a ship bound for South Africa and then onto Australia, as this was the main route to Australia. The Union Shipping Company (USAC) and the Castle Line (CL) had the Royal Mail contracts and they provided cheap steerage passages and third class fares to South Africa.75 Migration figures show that for the year he was transiting through Britain in 1885, 3268 immigrants indicated that South Africa was their destination, 692 of these travellers were registered as aliens.76 This meant they were transmigrants and had no intention of staying in Britain. The discovery of gold at Witwatersrand in South Africa caused the gold rush of 1886, with

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76 Aubrey Newman , ‘The Union Castle Line and Emigration from Eastern Europe to South Africa,’ 5.
an increase in migration there, principally from Cornish tin-miners because there had been a collapse in the Cornish tin industry.\textsuperscript{77}

There were other companies also providing cheap passage, but these two companies the USC and the CL, had most of the custom, and ships were build specifically to cope with this trade. Between 1891 and 1900, the USC brought 12 new ships into service for this route; in the same period the CL brought in 24 new ships. Pursers had been instructed to allocate sleeping room for passengers wherever possible.\textsuperscript{78} If poor Jewish passengers to Australia in this period did not have the money to buy second-class tickets, then they had to travel ‘tween decks’. If Nathan had planned to go to America, moves by USA authorities to exclude certain categories of immigrants put an end to his dream. The USA Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1882 that imposed a 50 cent tax on all incoming aliens to the USA. State appointed officials had to examine all ‘aliens’ and those not meeting criteria were excluded. In addition, they were not permitted to allow convicts, lunatics, idiots or people who were unable to care for themselves into the USA.\textsuperscript{79} The purpose of this legislation was to exclude the Chinese and the mentally ill. Europeans were still admitted into the USA if they did pass the criteria, but nativism grew stronger in the next few years and USA policy immigration was aimed at keeping the ‘destitute at bay.’\textsuperscript{80} The \textit{Jewish Chronicle} (1885) declared that:

\begin{quote}
the United States authorities now prohibit the landing of emigrants who have no means of subsistence: and the prohibition has been put into force on several occasions, as many a Jewish refugee knows to his cost. \textsuperscript{81}
\end{quote}

Clearly, the word of mouth in London as well as in the Jewish press was the doors to America were closing. In 1885, the USA had deported a number of destitute Russian Jews back to Germany.\textsuperscript{82} Between 1881 and 1914, almost 22 million people of different faiths emigrated to the United States of America. \textsuperscript{83} Jews who chose to

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\textsuperscript{77} Newman, ‘The Union Castle Line and Emigration,’ 6.
\textsuperscript{78} Newman, ‘The Union Castle Line and Emigration,’ 6.
\textsuperscript{79} ‘USA Immigration Legislation,’ University of Washington Library, accessed 8 June 2014. library.uwb.edu/guides/USAimmigration/1882_immigration_act.html
\textsuperscript{80} Carstecker and Feys, ‘East European Jewish Migrants and Settlers in Belgium,’ 264.
\textsuperscript{82} Carstecker and Feys, ‘East European Jewish Migrants and Settlers in Belgium,’ 265.
\end{flushright}

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migrate to America believed that ‘freedom and equality’ awaited them there.  

84 85% of Jews who came to America, entered through the port of New York and large numbers of East European Jews settled in that city and worked especially in the fast-growing clothing trade.  

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Poor Jews’ Temporary Shelter – London

The role and importance of the Poor Jews’ Temporary Shelter (PJTS) has already been referred to briefly in Nathan and Esther’s stories and the ‘chain of assistance’ that developed throughout Britain, although the places might not have been called shelters.  

86 There were also shelters on the Continent; in Paris there was an asyle; in Rotterdam there was the Montefiore Vereinigen; in Vienna and Berlin there were a number of Hilfsverein.  

87 This latter organisation was at the centre of the German network; it published pamphlets about immigration laws, repatriated rejected immigrants, and provided medical care, shelter, clothing and medical care.  

88 There were some formal shelters in Leeds, Manchester and London.  

89 There were no shelters at the British ports of Grimsby and Hull because the companies wanted to move the transmigrants on as quickly as possible. The integration of the Victorian railway transport system in Britain with the outward-bound ships was to protect British commercial interests, rather than provide transmigrants with service or luxury. The practical purpose was that the migrants who could potentially be carrying diseases would not mix with and infect the local population—cholera was especially feared.

Samuel Montagu (1832-1911) who started the PJTS with Herman Landau (1849-1921) in London’s East End, was a millionaire banker, philanthropist, an M.P. and eventually became Lord Swaythling; he was the father of The Honorable Lily

84 Sarna, American Judaism: A History, 153.
Montagu. The PJTS was a formally constituted shelter with clear rules—it could not offer accommodation for more than 14 nights to transient migrants; it was not a source of cheap labour; and it insisted it was not intended as a magnet for increased migration from Eastern Europe (which was the fear of Anglo-Jews who were settled in Britain).90

The PJTS opened from April 1886 with a married couple supervising the building and attending to the requirements of the inmates.91 Records which have survived throw some light on its day to day activities.92 When migrants sought refuge in the shelter, their name, place of birth, marital status, occupation, place of departure, length of stay in the shelter and their intended destination were all entered into the register. The PJTS register from December 1898 shows the age range of people registering was from 17 to 70, and their occupations were bootmakers, dealers, watchmakers, painters, upholsterers, bakers, tailors, carpenters, teachers and a few agriculturalists.93 Most transmigrants had embarked from Hamburg or Bremen, and many Jews indicated they were intending to move on to South Africa or America.94 After 1886, it was a common practice for the steamship authorities to telegraph the PJTS in London to advise that transmigrants were on their way to the shelter. There was a close relationship between the arrivals of the steamers in Hull and the NER departures.95 The incoming migrants were met at the Hull, Grimsby, Harwich or London docks by either the representatives of the shipping company or by representatives of the PJTS. They were assisted to the shelter either on foot or train.

92 Newman, ‘The Poor Jews’ Temporary Shelter,’ 142. These are 13 volumes of the PJTS’ registers from 1896 until 1914, as well as the minute books, annual reports and statistics for the Board of Trade.
94 National Archives UK, Register Book of Inmates of PJTS.
95 Evans, ‘Work in progress,’ 80.
The Jewish Board of Guardians, the main Jewish charity in England, created the Conjoint Visiting Committee in 1884 to provide advice and financial assistance to poor Jews. This followed a rapid increase in the Jewish population in Britain; the number of Russian-Jewish Immigrants settling permanently there between 1881 and 1905 was about 100,000.\(^96\) It has been estimated that about 2.5 million Jews migrated west from Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1914; most of them moved onto America, South Africa but only a small number to Australia.\(^97\) The majority of the new arrivals originated from Eastern Europe and came from an Ashkenazi (from Eastern Europe and speaking Yiddish) background, which had its own gendered customs and traditions. Like the Rubinovitch family, they were poor and from a marginalised class.

Anti-Semitism was rife in the East End in the 1880s and the influx of these poor Russian Jews caused more tensions. Social issues such as housing, jobs and wages were ammunition for anti-Alien campaigners. Reformers were greatly concerned about Britain’s health—pollution and morality were their priorities. These Jewish newcomers symbolised their concerns with these issues.\(^98\) In 1885, Constance

\(^{97}\) National Archives UK, ‘Immigration into Britain.’
Rothschild Lady Battersea (1843–1931) formed the Jewish Association for the Protection of Young Women and Girls.\(^9\) This association was composed of middle and upper class Jewish women who were interested in suffrage, temperance and educational reforms, and worked closely with inter-denominational anti-white slavery organisations.\(^10\) The Anglo-Jewish Sephardi community (Jews from North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula who spoke Judaeo-Spanish), and which had been in Britain since 1655, was socially stratified and very anxious that Jewish newcomers would become ‘respectable’ and not cause them embarrassment or damage their security in Britain.

Sometimes relatives or landsleit (fellow countrymen from the same village, town or district) came to the assistance of the new arrivals.\(^11\) Jerry White (1980) believes reception into the East End of London was facilitated by this cooperative method rather than by any formal process, and that it expressed the solidarity of the immigrants.\(^12\) There were numerous lodging-houses providing meals and lodging at fixed rates that were recommended by the PJTS; probably Esther found accommodation in one.\(^13\) There was also the Rothschild buildings, opened on 2 April 1887, with flats to let to Jewish immigrant workers; by 1900 these could accommodate 228 families.\(^14\)

The position of deserted Jewish wives (agunah) in British cities was a concern to the Jewish authorities and frequently they were regarded with hostility. One Jewish wife complained that the Jewish Board of Guardians had spent time and effort trying to trace her husband, but had done nothing to support her.\(^15\) More often than not,

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\(^{13}\) Newman, ‘The Poor Jews Temporary Shelter,’ 144.  
\(^{15}\) Marks, ‘Jewish women and Jewish Prostitution,’ 9.
women who found themselves in this condition were not supported by the Anglo-
Jewish community and were regarded by the British community as a problem (for the
Jewish community). The Jewish Board of Guardians and the Russo-Jewish
Committee for Russian Refugees from Persecution repeatedly announced they would
not aid ‘deserted wives’. The Board declared, ‘We have given as little as we could to
the deserted wives so as to make the husbands resume their duties as soon as
possible.’

The fact some Jewish women had to become prostitutes was a source of great
embarrassment to Jewish authorities, since it challenged Jewish ethics on sex and the
status of women. There was no concept that these women, often aged between 15 to
25, were victims of a complex set of circumstances. There were perhaps a thousand
Jewish prostitutes, although it is difficult to ascertain precise figures. According to
Laura Marks (1987), the Jewish prostitute symbolised ‘the tenuous position and
vulnerability’ of the Jewish woman as a whole.

Esther would have been aware that prostitution was rife in the East End. She would have observed some of her
countrywomen resorting to prostitution rather than face starvation. There is no
evidence to suggest that Esther did or did not resort to prostitution. In any case, Esther
– highly vulnerable and under pressure to keep herself and her child alive – would
have understood how precarious her position was, and that of other women in similar
circumstances.

The white slave trade further complicated matters. The emigration of countless young
single men after the pogroms of 1881 left fewer potential husbands available to young
Jewish women from the shtetlach of Eastern Europe. Since marriage had been their
goal in life, the prospect of marriage following emigration was attractive to them.
Dishonest agents lured them away with promises of marriage, but failed to produce
husbands, or produced husbands who deserted their brides, leaving the women

archive.thejc.com/search/frame
107 Marks, ‘Jewish women and Jewish Prostitution,’ 10.

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vulnerable to prostitution. The Jewish Association for the Protection of Young Women and Girls, mentioned previously, established ‘rescue homes’ and organised lady visitors to befriend these young women and girls and to defend their chastity; ‘Gentlemen Committees’ met incoming unaccompanied women at the wharves. However, these were really only superficial remedies; they did not get to the root of the problem, which was the large numbers of impoverished Jewish women migrants travelling alone. The percentage of Jewish women immigrating between 1871 and 1911 was higher than for any other migrant group.\textsuperscript{108} Single and married Jewish women sought work in the East End where they could find it, in garment, cap or cigar and cigarette making factories or sweatshops, although anti-Semitism was frequently a barrier to their employment. Only 9\% of Jewish women worked as domestics and their wages were half what a man would be paid.\textsuperscript{109}

**Mildway Mission**

The Mildway Mission to the Jews was opened in the 1880s. One of a number of evangelical missions started by Dr William Burns Thompson in the 1850s, it provided free medical care for Jewish migrants and sought to convert them to Christianity. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were 28 evangelical organisations with 481 salaried workers and volunteers.\textsuperscript{110} If Esther needed medical treatment for herself or for Fanny in London, it is likely she would have approached the doctors at the Mildway Mission. However, she would have been forced to listen to a sermon or hymns before receiving her treatment. She probably used the same coping mechanism as the other Jewish women in her situation, who often stuffed wool into their ears and listened with ‘selective deafness.’\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{109} Tananbaum, ‘Britain: Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries,’ 3.
The evangelical missions had more success with the young, single Jewish males from Eastern Europe because they were easier to convert. The Bible-centred style of Protestant conversion fitted more with their orthodox Jewish tradition that was oral, argumentative and based on a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament). The missions also offered young Jewish men housing, income and jobs, whereas the Jewish women were too often illiterate, or too burdened with young, large families and exhausted by their struggle with poverty. Jewish women did not always have the necessary familiarity with the scriptures and regarded themselves as second-class members of their own congregations, for they considered that religion was the concern and responsibility of their husbands.112 It was Jewish men who went to synagogue, and Jewish boys who received a religious education and the women stayed home. Therefore, free medical care to the poor Jewish immigrants was the lever used by the evangelists. The *Jewish Chronicle* (London) in 1897 dryly noted that the huge funds which Christians devoted to proselytising was out of proportion to their relatively few successful converts, who they felt in a material sense, had made a ‘substantial gain.’113 As the church had failed to Christianise Christians, so it would fail also to Christianise Jews.114

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114 *Jewish Chronicle*, 8 January 1897, 10.  
philanthropy. Recent DNA evidence suggests Jack the Ripper may have been a Jewish barber called Aaron Kosminski from Poland, but this has not been conclusively proven. (See Chapter 8 for more on anti-Semitism and Jewish images.)

There was considerable real support for transmigrants like the Rubinovitches in the East End of London, and those who arrived in Britain in a state of extreme poverty. In the East End there were soup kitchens for the poor, a library at Whitechapel (known as the University of the Ghetto), numerous synagogues, political activities, theatre, art and music. The Yiddisher Market was in Hessell Street off Commercial Road and had kosher butcher shops, bakeries and delicatessens. The Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration of 1888 reported on the health of Jewish children in the East End and found they were in better health than their non-Jewish neighbours of the same age and living in similar conditions. Perhaps one of the significant reasons was because Jews did not spend money on alcohol so had more money to spend on food. Jewish mothers wholeheartedly embraced breastfeeding and preferred to stay at home to care for their children whenever possible. William Hall (1903) wrote to the Times detailing the differences between the poor children in Leeds. He weighed and measured 650 Jewish Board school children living and crowding in the same unsanitary area as the poor gentile Board school children.

The Jewish boy, at 12 years averages at least 10lb. more and is 4 in. taller than the factory boy was 30 years ago. In all these points he is more superior to the Gentile boy. His teeth are better, and he is also much less rickety. After careful investigation I express the opinion with confidence that this superiority of the poor Jewish Board schoolboy over the Gentile is not racial but due to diet.

116 White, Rothschild Building- Life in an East End Tenement Block 1887-1920s, 26.
117 The Australian, 9 September, 2014, 7.
120 Hall, ‘British Physique,’ 4.
Jewish mothers were remarkable cooks and food was a strong link with the motherland, culture and the people they had left behind.\textsuperscript{121}

Once again, the motivation to assist the Jewish arrivals in their speedy onward movement was in case they encouraged more arrivals. By February 1885, the Jewish Emigration Committee had assisted 200 cases, consisting of 400 people at a total cost of £1647, although the emigrants had contributed £727 themselves; of these cases 184 went to American, 15 to Australia and one to the Cape (South Africa).\textsuperscript{122} The Jewish Chronicle in 1886 said that the ‘normal work [of the Board of Guardians] is overshadowed by the extraordinary glut of pauperism caused by the influx of Russian Jews ‘passed on’ by the Continent.’\textsuperscript{123} Finally, the Jewish Board of Guardians ruled that any applicant for money had to be resident in the country for six months, and the money was to purchase a return ticket home, but as a general rule the local authorities disregarded the letter of this law.\textsuperscript{124}

Many desperate people made the journey Nathan undertook, so he was not unique in that regard. Many never reached their intended destinations and many were never reunited with their family members. Lucky ones, like Nathan, did succeed and were not entrapped by the perils and difficulties along the way. They were the ones who were resilient, younger, able to cope with the loneliness, the hunger and had the drive to succeed.

The following chapter deals with Nathan’s efforts to make a living in order to bring his family to Australia. He became a hawker out into the Western District of Victoria. There was a gold rush at Mafeking at the foot of Mount William in the Grampians in

\textsuperscript{121} Black, ‘Health and Medical Care of the Jewish Poor,’ 108.
\textsuperscript{123} Jewish Chronicle, 3 December, 1886, 7, accessed 30 June, 2014. archive.thejc.com/search/frame.
\textsuperscript{124} Jewish Chronicle, 3 December 1886, 7.
1900 that the Rubinovitch family became involved with. The family moved back to Ballarat and the education of the children began. Jewish children, including Fanny and her siblings, attended Hebrew school at Ballarat’s Hebrew synagogue and the chapter concludes with a letter to Miss Fanny Rubinovitch from her Hebrew teacher.
Chapter 3. Ballarat – Becoming established and a making living

This chapter follows the arrival of Fanny and her mother Esther to Australia and their reunion with Nathan. The family lives in various places in Victoria’s Western District, all on the circuit of Nathan’s travels with his horse and van where he sells household goods to distant farms. The chapter also covers the gold rush at Mt William in the Grampians and Nathan’s trials and tribulations in trying make a living for his family there. Fanny returns to East Ballarat to live and goes to primary, secondary and Hebrew (language) school. She also attends University College in Ballarat and prepares for the next stage of her life.

Fanny was four-and-a-half years old when she reached Melbourne with Esther on 1 June, 1889. Her father was a stranger to her and arriving in Australia marked a new phase in the family’s life. They settled in Ballarat East, possibly at 127 Humffray Street.¹ Ballarat’s environment contributed positively to Fanny’s development as it offered her parents, and her father in particular, a livelihood. Support was available to Nathan Rubinovitch, because during the 1850s the early Jews in Ballarat had a strong philanthropic drive. Early Jewish settlers had quickly established the Ballarat Jewish Philanthropic Society and the Ballarat Hebrew Ladies’ Benevolent Society. About 1854 ‘Jews contributed 10.35% of the charity in Ballarat being only 00.78% of the population.’²

Hawking or peddling goods was at the bottom of the social ladder and there was definite evidence of prejudice towards the hawkers, many of whom were Indians or Afghans. This is discussed in more detail below. It is not clear what Nathan did when he first arrived in Ballarat, but no doubt he was in contact with other members of the Jewish community and found out as much as he possibly could about the colony. He may have earned some

¹ PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/, Ballarat East Petty Sessions Registers, 31.
² Dorothy Wickham, ‘Beyond the Wall: Ballarat Female Refuge: A Case Study in Moral Authority,’ (Masters Thesis, Australian Catholic University, 2003) Table 45.
money, or secured a small loan, and made connections which would assist him in setting up a business. He no doubt readied himself for the arrival of Esther and Fanny. He would have seen that hawkers were evident in Ballarat and that it was a traditional Jewish occupation because it was mobile and required little capital to establish.

The Hawkers and Pedlars Act of 1890 forbade hawking within the city limits or boroughs of Melbourne or Geelong, but the fruit hawkers in Ballarat were active.\(^3\) Hawkers had been in the news for some time, particularly regarding the numbers of Hindus and Afghans. In 1890 *The Argus* reported that in 1887 in the Colony of Victoria there were 787, in 1888 there were 523, and in 1889, it had decreased to 371.\(^4\) Police inquiries throughout the Victoria’s Western District revealed that for the most part most foreign hawkers gave no cause for complaint in the area and a previous incident concerning an Indian hawker had been exaggerated. The article noted that the entrance into the colony of Chinese, Hindus and Afghans could not be stopped without special legislation. Tensions regarding hawkers appeared to be newsworthy material in this decade, no doubt exacerbated by the depression of 1890. A couple of examples from the press of the day will illustrate the point.

In 1890 the *Bendigo Advertiser* described the dissatisfaction of a group of Hindu hawkers who had applied at the Bendigo Court of Petty Sessions for their hawkers’ licence in December, which was the usual month for hawkers to submit their applications.\(^5\) There were about 80 of them in court that day and their applications were tended to, after the applications from several Englishmen and a Chinese man. The bench was comprised of the Mayor of Bendigo, J.R. Hoskins and two J.Ps, A. Bayne and C. Roeder. The Bench recognised it had ‘an unusual task to perform’ and retired for a few moments to consult with each other and also with Sergeant Fahey.\(^6\) The Mayor thought that licences should not be granted ‘wholesale’ to the Hindus, as it was likely they would over-run the

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\(^3\) PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/, Ballarat East Petty Sessions Registers, 37.
\(^6\) *Bendigo Adviser*, 10 December, 1890, 4.
country. Sergeant Fahey said as far as the police were concerned there would be no objection to the renewal of the licences, which had been granted to the Indian hawkers in the Bendigo Court of Petty Sessions in 1889. Fahey’s support meant 14 of the applicants had their licences granted immediately. The remainder, about 66 men, had obtained their hawkers’ licences either in the Melbourne or the Ballarat Court of Petty Sessions. Those men were instructed to return to the Melbourne and Ballarat courts in order to renew their licences, or they could return to the Bendigo court in three months. Their interpreter protested that the men were ‘not Chinese’ and were loyal British subjects of Queen Victoria, but his appeal was lost. The reporter noted the concern of the Indians at this turn of events, for starvation stared them in the face, but nobody else seemed to be bothered about that.

Ian Simpson (2016) argues that most of the Indian hawkers from the Punjab in NSW were on the whole ‘decent fellows.’ Due to a set of circumstances concerning rising land prices in the Punjab in the 1880s, the availability of finding work on British vessels, the advancement of a globalised economy, the scarcity of land, and the competition for status, many Punjabi individuals considered emigration. A constant theme in the Australian newspapers during the late nineteenth century was that Indian hawkers constituted a moral threat to the nation. This was put down to their dirty, unsanitary living conditions – when often four of five slept in room there was the constant fear of the spread of disease, the little respect they showed Australian women while often exploiting their own, and their reputation for indulging in sharp practices such as obtaining licences under false names or swapping licences.

This negative attitude towards Indian hawkers in particular was shown in the Illustrated Australian News in 1891, which published a pictorial page of black and white line drawings depicting the strange and alien ways of Indians – a hawkers was flogging his

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7 Bendigo Adviser, 10 December, 1890, 4.
8 Bendigo Adviser, 10 December, 1890, 4.
9 Ian Simpson, ‘Decent fellows, making an honest living: Indian Hawkers in white Australia,’ History Australia, 13, 3, 321-334
10 Simpson, ‘Decent fellows, making an honest living: Indian Hawkers in white Australia,’ 331.
11 Simpson, ‘Decent fellows, making an honest living: Indian Hawkers in white Australia,’ 331.
wares to two housewives; a man was driving off a hawker with a large stick; a hawker was squatting and smoking out of what appeared to be a glass demi-john; a group were seated around a mat and eating with their fingers; another group were lying closely together in a hut sleeping, with their wares tightly bundled in clothes at the end of the small hut.\textsuperscript{12}

There was nothing particularly new about this xenophobia. In July 1870, 20 years before, an article on the Chinese camp in Ballarat had circulated through the news wires of Australia.\textsuperscript{13} The language of the report leaves no doubt as to the impression the reporter wanted to give to the reader. The camp was an ‘accumulated filthy degradation and vice’ and ‘a plague spot.’\textsuperscript{14} The writer painted a scene of the buildings made of wood, canvas and tin as crowded hovels, with little ventilation and light, and narrow streets. He wrote that the Chinese population of the Ballarat district numbered about 1500 – 266 were storekeepers, 550 were miners, 120 were hawkers, 250 were gamblers, five were publicans, 15 were butchers, 100 were thieves, 15 were brothel keepers, 150 were gardeners and 30 were children. The gambling and opium dens were places of vice and have exerted an ‘extremely demoralizing effect on the surrounding district.’\textsuperscript{15}

Weston Bate (1978) noted that the rejection of the Chinese in the 1870s was because the Ballarat population identified strongly with being British, and this attitude was an active ingredient in the xenophobia surrounding the foreign fruit hawkers still in the 1890s.\textsuperscript{16} Keeping Australia white, the issue of the eight-hour day and anti-Chinese attitudes based on the 1870 conditions at Golden Point all meant there was heightened class awareness in Ballarat in this period.\textsuperscript{17} Bate made a rough estimation of the multiculturalism of Main Street Ballarat from tombstones in this period. On 60 tombstones: 23 were German, eight were French, six were Scandinavian, three were Italian, three were Spanish, and about 18

\textsuperscript{14} Mercury, 6 July, 1870, 3.
\textsuperscript{15} Mercury, 6 July, 1870, 3.
\textsuperscript{16} Weston Bate, Lucky City, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press,1978, 254.
\textsuperscript{17} Bate, Lucky City, 254.
were Jews from central Europe.\textsuperscript{18} These figures do not represent the numbers of people who lived and moved to other centres.

Overtly negative attitudes were prevalent in the Ballarat district when Nathan Rubinovitch began work as a hawker. After settling in Ballarat East, he applied for and was granted a Hawker’s Licence in the Ballarat East Court of Petty Sessions on 9 December 1890.\textsuperscript{19} This cost him £2 and with a small loan from a sympathetic member of the Jewish business community like Abraham Levy who had a large wholesale fruit and potato business, Nathan was able to set himself up in business as a hawker.\textsuperscript{20} He may also have benefitted from a small loan from the Ballarat Jewish Aid Society, for the Melbourne Jewish Aid Society was lending money to fruiterers, hawkers, tailors, cigar-makers, dealers, boot-finishers, jewellers, travellers, tobacconists and many other Jews at this time.\textsuperscript{21} He probably used a system peddlers and hawkers called ‘custom-peddling’, which was a type of installment plan.\textsuperscript{22} His hawker’s licence was for a horse and cart, complete with a cover which made it an all-weather vehicle, and his name clearly painted on the sides of the canvas top, as the regulations specified.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Chinese_Miners_at_the_Ballarat_Goldfields_--_National_Museum_of_Australia.png}
\caption{Chinese Miners at the Ballarat Goldfields – National Museum of Australia.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{18} Bate, \textit{Lucky City}, 107.
\textsuperscript{19} PROV, VSP 290/P000/29, Ballarat East Petty Sessions Register.
\textsuperscript{20} Peter Mansfield, Australian Studies Centre, University of Ballarat, Unpublished manuscript, 1993, 7.
Under the regulations of the Hawkers’ Act of 1890 (Victoria) Nathan would have applied for a licence under the third schedule of the Act, that is, ‘authorizing the holder thereof to carry his wares and merchandise for the purpose of sale by packhorse or other animal or by cart or other vehicle or by boat, vessel or craft’. The licence did not allow him to carry newspapers, fish, fruit, vegetables or victuals of any kind, or agricultural produce.

He had to get two character references from two well-known people of the district, which suggests he received support from two established members of the Ballarat Jewish community. There were a number of successful Jewish businessmen in the Ballarat community whom he might have approached for a character reference, and who were part of the Jewish Congregation – Benjamin, Goldrich, Felgeltaub, Heinz, Marks, Solomon, Cohen, Phillips and others.

24 PROV VPRS, 9717/P0001/2, School Records.
As Nathan was not allowed to trade within the confines of the city limits, it was necessary for him to move out into the countryside to the west of Ballarat. He found a tallyman who supplied him with the goods he intended to sell on his travels. A tallyman was not necessarily male; many women acted as tallymen and no doubt Nathan found a suitable supplier among the wholesalers who were active in business at that time, and who also supplied the Indian hawkers of the period. Wolf Flegeltaub, for example, was a produce importer in Ballarat whose business was situated in a two storey brick building in Ballarat East, and may well have supplied Nathan.\(^{25}\) Many wholesalers in Melbourne supplied the Indian hawkers so Nathan may have gone to Melbourne for suitable goods. Hawkers took dressmaking materials and cooking equipment, and over the course of time grew to know what the isolated wives and daughters of settlers in the Western District wanted. The women looked forward to these visits that broke the monotony and tedium of their lives.

Nathan’s route took him west across the plains to Lake Bolac and then north along the edge of the Grampian Ranges towards Ararat. This was a dangerous business because a hawker, who usually travelled alone, was a target for thieves, especially when finishing his circuit of the district and carrying money to bank. Nathan owned a gun in 1904 and had purchased it earlier, probably for defence.\(^{26}\) As he traversed around the base of Mt William in the Grampians, he noted a location where he could stop for a rest, or sleep the night in his wagon. Speaking speculatively, Jewish hawkers developed a skill for noting likely spots for a hotel where they paused for the night. Indeed, many often became licencees, as Nathan would become in 1900 at Mafeking, at the base of Mt William in the Grampians.

The Rubinovitch family lived initially in Ballarat, the birth of Fanny’s brother, Abraham Solomon registered at Ballarat East in 1891.\(^{27}\) However by 1892 it seems that they were living in Lake Bolac, as Rachael’s birth that year was registered in Lake Bolac.\(^{28}\) The hamlet is situated at the intersection of two major north-south and east-west roads beside

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25 Mansfield, unpublished manuscript, 7.
27 NAA, Australian Birth Index, 1788-1922, Registration Number 503.
28 NAA, Australian Birth Index,1788-1922, Registration number 24735.
the freshwater lake, on the flat, open, windy, volcanic plains of the Western District. The original settlement there occurred in 1842 when Robert Patterson selected 38,400 acres and called it Lake Boloke, which was the aboriginal name for the lake.\textsuperscript{29} In the early days, gum trees and kangaroo grass grew around the lake and the local tribe, the Boolucburrers, fished for eels.\textsuperscript{30}

John McMaster sold Nathan the small bluestone building next to the original bluestone St Brendan’s Catholic church.\textsuperscript{31} The foundation stone for this church was laid in November 1872 and the small bluestone building had apparently been envisaged as a parish school. Both buildings were completed but a parish school was not established. McMaster had been on the building committee convened to construct St Brendan’s church.\textsuperscript{32} He turned the small building into a store instead and Nathan took over the running of the store from him.\textsuperscript{33} Nathan and Esther Rubinovitch ran the little store at the south end of Lake Bolac for three years.\textsuperscript{34} Nathan did not apply for a Hawker’s Licence in 1892 in the Ballarat Court of Petty Sessions.\textsuperscript{35}

Nathan had his business worries and decided to use the colonial justice system available to him, to recover monies owing to him. As a Jew in Russia he would have had no redress at all, for the justice system was skewed against Jews. In April 1893 he was in the Ballarat Court of Petty Sessions taking action against Mrs Starr for goods and chattels to the value of 14/6d.\textsuperscript{36} The same month he was in the Ararat Court of Petty Sessions, claiming payment for goods sold and delivered to A. McDonald for £3.7.3.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{29} Mary Green, \textit{History of Lake Bolac 1841-1966 - After the Boolucburrers}, (Lake Bolac State School Centenary Committee), Lake Bolac: Lake Bolac and District Historical Society, 2007, 5.
\textsuperscript{32} Michael Taffe, Archivist, Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, 16 July, 2014, email correspondence. No written evidence of the sale has been obtained.
\textsuperscript{33} Green, ‘\textit{History of Lake Bolac 1841-1966},’ 16.
\textsuperscript{34} NAA, Application for Certificate of Naturalization, 04/2016, Esther Rose Rubinovitch.
\textsuperscript{35} PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/29, Ballarat East Petty Sessions Register.
\textsuperscript{36} PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/35 Ballarat East Petty Sessions Register, also Ballarat Genealogical Society, Microfiche Ballarat East Petty Sessions, Part 2. 1888-1921 Complainant Sequence. 11/14.
\textsuperscript{37} PROV, VPRS 1688, VA.734,76, Moyston Petty Session Registers.
In October 1894 he was again in court claiming money from George Petters for chattels and goods to the value of £4.11.3. In December 1894, Nathan applied once more for a Hawker’s Licence in the Ballarat Court of Petty Sessions. Another sibling arrived for Fanny when Hyman was born in 1894. Hyman’s birth was registered at Colac, south of Ballarat, which suggests Nathan’s work as a removalist took him to the Colac area.

Further circumstantial evidence that Nathan, Esther, Fanny, Abe, Rachael and baby Hyman lived in Lake Bolac for some years is Nathan being fined on 11 April 1895 in the Ballarat East Court of Petty Sessions, £2 with costs of £1.1.0. The summons was from the Ballarat East Town Inspector Samuel Matthews. Nathan’s property at 127 Humffray Street Ballarat East did not meet local health standards. Living in Lake Bolac with a store and four young children to care for, Esther could hardly have cared for the house in Ballarat East as well. In October 1895 Nathan was in the Ballarat East Court of Petty Sessions to claim money for board and lodging, money lent, and goods and chattels sold and delivered to Samuel Ďboretsky for £3.14.8. Ďboretsky had clearly absconded, possibly from the Ballarat property. There was a second summons in mid-1897 on 127

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38 PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/39, Ballarat East Petty Session Registers.
39 PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/39, Ballarat East Petty Session Registers.
40 PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/2, Ballarat East Petty Session Register.
41 PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/41, Ballarat East Petty Sessions Register.
Humffray Street Ballarat East from the Ballarat East inspector, so the picture merges of general neglect and emptiness at 127 Humffray Street, Ballarat East.\textsuperscript{42}

There is some evidence that from time to time between 1895 and 1900, the Rubinovitch family were once more physically divided. Gold was discovered at the south-eastern foot of Mt William in June 1900, which ‘sparked off an old time mining rush’ at Mafeking.\textsuperscript{43} Nathan established a hotel and general store there, presumably having closed the Lake Bolac store.\textsuperscript{44} His general business was described as ‘Drapers and Traveller’ in the \textit{Mount William Pioneer} edition of July 1900. In 1899 Nathan took out a hawker’s licence in the Ballarat East Court of Petty Sessions,\textsuperscript{45} and again in 1900 and in 1902.\textsuperscript{46} At Mafeking, Esther and Nathan ran the hotel and the store between them, and as Esther had described herself as a ‘hotel-keeper’ possibly it was Nathan who ran the store.\textsuperscript{47} In Mafeking their hotel was known as ‘Rubinovitch’s Hotel’ to distinguish it from ‘Patterson’s Hotel.’\textsuperscript{48} Nathan Rubinovitch held the Mafeking hotel licence until 12 December 1908, when it was transferred to George Alfred Rose. The sale was advertised in \textit{The Ararat Advertiser} in July 25, 1914, noting that it was to be sold under instructions from N.J. Rubinovitch.\textsuperscript{49} A handwritten note on the defunct hotel licence indicated that Nathan had abandoned the hotel premises on July 29, 1914.\textsuperscript{50}

Nathan Rubinovitch was often absent from home as he set out to make a living from hawking, but he made great efforts to be home for the Sabbath on Friday nights, when Esther lit candles. While the environment in Ballarat was class conscious, racist and not

\textsuperscript{42} PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/39, Ballarat East Petty Sessions Register.  
\textsuperscript{44} Vanda Saville; ‘Dear Friends,’ Unpublished monograph, Heywood: Heywood Museum and History Centre, 1982, 61.  
\textsuperscript{45} PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/39, Ballarat East Petty Sessions Register.  
\textsuperscript{46} PROV, VPRS 290/P0000/ 49 and 53, Ballarat East Petty Sessions Register.  
\textsuperscript{47} NAA, Application for Certificate of Naturalization, 04/2016, Esther Rose Rubinovitch (Hotel keeper).  
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Mafeking and the Mount William Gold Rush}, 4.  
\textsuperscript{50} PROV, VPRS. 1688, VA 734, Petty Sessions Licensing Register, Defunct Hotel Licence, Moyston Court.
always lawful, it was a safer environment for Fanny’s family than the one they had left behind in Russia.

In conclusion Nathan Rubinovitch used the British justice system to claim against the people who did not pay him, but under the Russian Czarist law he would have had no hope of redress. The following section is devoted to East Ballarat where most Jews lived.

**Ballarat East Community and Schooling**

Newman Rosenthal (1979) described the effect that the newly arrived Jews from Eastern Europe had on the established more affluent Jews in Ballarat in the 1880s. These were known as the ‘Anglo Jews’ and had been in Ballarat for 30 years and were settled and considerably anglicised. Rosenthal said of them, ‘of course there were difficulties even among themselves.’51 He said that sometimes the Jews ‘fought bitterly amongst themselves’ but they closed ranks if faced with a common enemy such as anti-Semitism.52

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The newly arrived Russian Jews were different again because they were more expressive than the Anglo Jews, with ‘shrugging shoulders and gesturing hands.’ The former practice of the Russian Jews in their homeland had been ‘a way of life.’ Their world outside the ghetto walls in Russia had been so hostile there had been no option for the Jews but to turn inwards to their own congregation. Fanny told one of her early biographers that when her family arrived in Ballarat, ‘No-one wanted to know us.’ The picture Rosenthal drew of the Jewish community in Ballarat during the 1880s was of one coming to terms with these new and different arrivals. Even so, some Russian Jews were set up in business through the charity of Anglo Jews.

Many Anglo Jews who had become well established in the community over the years sent their children to St Paul’s Church of England School in Ballarat East, which later became an adjunct of the Humffray Street Primary School. The roll call of the children’s surnames included Abrahamovitch, Benjamin, Flegelbaub, Cohen, Phillips, Bernstein, Solomon, Goldrich, Flohm and so on. It may be significant that the children of the Russian Jews, like the children of Nathan and Esther Rubinovitch, attended the Humffray Street State School from the period 1890 to 1900; and the children of Wolf and Yette Rubinovitch (Fanny’s uncle and aunt) in the first and second decade of the twentieth century. It may point to the division between the two groups that Rosenthal alluded to and was mentioned above.

Newman Rosenthal himself attended St Paul’s Church of England School from 1905 to 1910. His father’s occupation was initially listed as ‘pawnbroker’ but was upgraded to ‘financier’ within a year or so. Jonah Marks was in Fanny’s peer group, although he attended St Paul’s Church of England Primary School,

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56 Bate, *Lucky City*, 254.
57 Rosenthal, *Formula for Survival*, 6
58 PROV, VPRS 9719/P1/2, School Records.
just down the road from the Humffray Street Primary School. Later, he became the editor of *The Hebrew Standard* and a Zionist like Fanny.

The school which Fanny, her siblings and cousins attended, was the Bakery Hill Primary School (number 34) which opened in 1853. It sits in Humffray Street at the top of Bakery Hill, and the first head teacher was W.H. Williamson. By November 1853 there were 150 pupils at the school and Williamson had applied for an assistant teacher. An application for ground for a new school was made in November 1863 and the Education Department bought land in Wills (later Mair) Street in 1868, paying £3700.

Further land was purchased in 1874. The original school was a tent and timber school and the brick construction started in 1875. The firm Llewellyn and Edward tendered for its construction, their tender listed as £4075.19.0 and £62.0.0 for the existing timber classroom. The new brick building was opened on 10 January 1876 by G.R. Fincham MLA. The Boards of Advice for the schools in both West and East Ballarat were the ‘watchdogs’ and caretakers of the schools. They were elected annually and while they contributed advice and worked for the interests of the schools, they had no power to hire or fire teachers and no control over school buildings. The Humffray Street brick

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59 PROV, VPRS 9719/P1/2, School Records.
62 Bate, *Lucky City*, 235.
building still stands today and houses an antique business. It is a substantial landmark on the eastern side of the modern city and represented a serious investment in the education of Ballarat East children.

Edward Rosenblum was the fifth head teacher from 1864 to 1890. He was active in the affairs of the district and was involved in the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum, the Ballarat East Public Library and the Ballarat Jewish Congregation. He was an influential man, in charge of teacher training in Ballarat. According to Bate, ‘school was a social escalator’ in Ballarat during this period and a means for its poorer inhabitants to a better economic and social future. Rosenblum’s connection with the orthodox Jewish congregation is significant here, but he left before Fanny’s arrival at the school.

At the Humffray Street Primary School, education was focused on reading, writing and arithmetic. The Inspector’s Register of 1908-10 shows the children were tested in spelling, composition, grammar, arithmetic and mental arithmetic. They were tested once a year and the results entered meticulously into the Register. For example, Fanny’s cousin Rachael Rubinovitch (no.994), aged 11 years and 7 months, obtained the following results: 5/10 spelling; 9/10 composition; grammar 10/10; arithmetic 9/10 and mental arithmetic 6/10. Fanny’s earlier primary school education would have differed little from her cousin Rachael’s. However, in the absence of state high schools there was nowhere for bright pupils from the state system to study before university.

There is evidence that Fanny did attend the University College in Ballarat, which was a private school operating in Camp Street, a wooden building built by the Australian Natives Association and completed in 1892. University College was established in 1892-3 by Charles W. Wilson B.A. and advertised that it could cater for boarders as well

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63 Bate, Lucky City, 235.
64 PROV, VPRS 9313/P1/3, school records.
65 PROV, VPRS 9313/P1/3, school records.
66 Bate, Lucky City, 236.
as day pupils.\textsuperscript{68} It later moved to a two-storey brick building with wrought iron work on the veranda, a couple of doors down in Camp Street. This attractive heritage building still stands today and is used as professional offices.

When Fanny was 13 years old in December 1897, University College had been established for four years. Her results at the Humffray Street School indicated to her teachers and parents that she was an intelligent girl and should continue with her education if possible. It seems that at the end of primary school Fanny transferred to University College and began her secondary education. When she was 16 in December 1900 she was awarded first prize in French. (See certificate on the next page.) Years later, in 1925 when writing home to her family from Milan, she would remark that she and Esther had gone to a cinema in Basle and she had been able to follow the French ‘quite well.’\textsuperscript{69} Fanny was multi-lingual and understood Hebrew, Yiddish, English and schoolgirl French acquired in Ballarat. When she visited Venice she wrote to her family saying, ‘I visited the ghetto and could not find a Jew who could speak Yiddish.’\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{68} Ballarat and District Directory 1901, Ballarat: Harry Tulloch Prop. Ltd., c1900, 114.
\textsuperscript{69} Reading, 13 August, 1925 (Mitchell Library).
\textsuperscript{70} Reading, 13 August, 1925 (Mitchell Library).
Another skill Fanny acquired while growing up in Ballarat was playing the piano. By the early years of the twentieth century she was an accomplished accompanist. Ballarat had a strong musical tradition with a strong Welsh community devoted to Eisteddfods. The introduction of the Royal South Street competitions in 1891 made music an integral part of community life in Ballarat. Anne Doggert (2009) points to the gendered experience of musicianship in Ballarat in the nineteenth century. Musical performance was highly valued because it helped woman fulfill their roles as wives and mothers.

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The piano was suitable for females because they could sit gracefully and act as ‘a supporting partner for instrumental and vocal soloists.’ Modern educators describe musicians as ‘sequential thinkers’, a trait which served Fanny very well in the years to come when she was founding and planning for the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia.

If Fanny had considered university study after 1900 there were a number of colleges close to the University College she might have attended. There was the school established by Angus Bain in 1868. In 1872 it had been a grammar school, however from 1882 to 1892 it was advertised as a high school. It operated as a private school with Angus Bain as the principal and advertised that it prepared students for all the public examinations of the University of Melbourne and the Department of Education. Fees were one and a half guineas per term and a boarder’s fees were ‘three guineas a term.’ The School of Mines also conducted classes for students who had already matriculated but wished to prepare

73 Doggett, ‘Beyond gentility: Women and music in early Ballarat,’ 37, 3.
76 Wise’s Victoria Post Office Directory 1884, 114.
for entrance exams into pharmacy, education or the public service. However by the time Fanny may have considered university she had moved away from Ballarat.

Towards the end of the century Ballarat East was not the most pleasant of places to live, but things did improve. After 1880, cesspits became rare in Ballarat East and night soil was removed by town employees. Ballarat East had an excellent water supply, but the area was also heavily mined and full of pits and mining debris. The Red Streak Lead, First Chance Mine and other workings had dominated this area in the nineteenth century. There were noxious chemical processes associated with mining, food processing, and many of the boarding houses were of a poor standard. According to the medical officer in 1890, Dr Radcliffe, East Ballarat responded more slowly to the directions of the Board of Health. East Ballarat had better drainage than the City of Ballarat West but there was less impulse for improvement there than in the City of Ballarat West. Consequently, the physical environment was poorer where the Rubinovitchs were living than in the more affluent and elevated Ballarat West. However, their proximity to the Ballarat Synagogue, the Ballarat East Library in Barkly Street and other Jewish families in Ballarat East would have added a richness and happiness to their lives that may have been compensation enough for the drawbacks of the area.

Ballarat had provided an environment with a supportive Jewish community for Fanny and her family. As the nineteenth century ended, many of the Jewish families moved away from Ballarat. If Esther and Nathan were to find suitable Jewish husbands for their two daughters, then a move to Melbourne and a larger Orthodox community was essential. Nathan had completed a Letter of Naturalisation to become a British Subject in the Colony of Victoria in July 1897. Esther made her application for naturalisation in 1904 and like most parents they were probably considering what was best for their children’s futures, in choosing to become British subjects.

77 Wise’s Victoria Post Office Directory 1884, 114.
79 Rowe and Jacobs and Ballarat (Vic) Council, Ballarat Heritage Precincts Study, 250.
80 Rowe and Jacobs and Ballarat (Vic) Council, Ballarat Heritage Precincts Study, 250.
81 NAA, A712/31070, Application for Certificate of Naturalization, Nathan Jacob Rubinovitch.
Hawking and Hotel Keeping

Nathan Rubinovitch continued to work away from Ballarat as Fanny and her siblings were growing up. Esther said that she lived in Ballarat for 10 years. Nathan was running his business at Mafeking, the gold rush peaking there between 1900 and 1902. That gold rush was short-lived; the first geological surveys of the area were undertaken by Selwyn and Ulrich in 1866, and Krause in 1873. These were reconnaissance surveys and the surveyors were not looking for alluvial gold.

Passing travellers, such as Rubinovitch and other hawkers with the time and inclination to search for gold, found traces of alluvial gold. Previously there had been a small gold-working area west of Rose’s Gap, which was on the miners’ overland route from Adelaide to the Victorian goldfields. By 1898 the basic parish geological maps had been drawn up and the alluvial gold had been noted. The gold at Mafeking was buried under some young alluvium, which may explain why it was not discovered until 1900.

Mafeking was a crude and rough mining environment – bleak and cold in winter and hot and dry in summer. In August 1900, ‘each day the rain fell in torrents, and heavy snowstorm have been experienced’, but Nathan Rubinovitch found 10 ounces 12 drachm of gold and later 7 ounces 9 drachm of gold.

As an observant Jew, Nathan was severely restricted in his working relations with the gentiles at Mafeking, as Fletcher (1978) points out. The closure of business on the Sabbath (Saturday) and High Holy Days was problematic because there is a complete ban on work or duties on these days for an observant Jew. Jews were not even permitted to light or extinguish candles or sign their names on those days and so many found it

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82 NAA, Application for Certificate of Naturalization, 04/2016, Esther Rose Rubinovitch (Hotel keeper), AJHS archives.
83 Ross Cayley, Senior Geologist, Department of State Development, Business and Innovation, Melbourne. Email correspondence, 10 June, 2014. Email correspondence.
85 Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish community 1891-1901: its interrelationship with the gentile community,’ 222.
86 Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish community 1891-1901: its interrelationship with the gentile community,’ 222.
difficult to conduct business with gentiles and at the same time follow the dictates of their religion and conscience.\textsuperscript{87}

In 1901 Nathan made another court appearance in the following manner. The Emmett brothers had been credited with initiating the Mt William gold rush, but Nathan disputed their claim and allegedly took them to the Supreme Court in Melbourne. \textit{The Argus} reported on 26 June 1901 that he claimed to be the owner of a three-fifths share.\textsuperscript{88} According to the report, in June 1900 Phillip Emmett was rabbiting on the Mount William station and found gold. He marked out a claim and registered it at Ararat, with four associates connected to his claim – Robert Emmett, Frank Emmett, Arthur Emmett and George Mason. These men formed a company called the Mafeking Gold Mining Company.\textsuperscript{89} Mason was the sleeping partner who supplied the Emmetts with the food and goods and chattels they needed, in direct competition to Nathan’s business.

\textsuperscript{87} Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish community 1891-1901:its interrelationship with the gentile community,’ 222.  
\textsuperscript{89} Mafeking and the Mount William Gold Rush, 5.
Through his lawyer, Nathan claimed that shortly after the registration of the claim, Frank Emmett and George Mason had sold him their shares for £200 - £10 cash deposit and the balance to be paid out of the gold, obtained as wages for both these men, at £2.2.0 per week.\(^90\) Nathan said Phillip Emmett had also sold him his share for £10, on the same terms as for Frank Emmett and George Mason, which made him the owner of three-fifths of the claim. Frank Emmett also tried to sell his one-fifth share (which he had already previously sold to Nathan) to George Mason, Wilfrid Murch and William McFadyen. Nathan took these men to court claiming three-fifths ownership of the mine, requesting a dissolution of the partnership and any accounts, and an injunction against Murch and McFadyen.\(^91\) The defence claimed that since Frank Emmett was a minor and Mason had thought that he was only signing a receipt for £10, the agreement was ‘invalid by mutual mistake.’\(^92\) There was no record of any further court action in the Supreme Court in Melbourne, which perhaps indicates that there was a settlement out of court.\(^93\) Nathan must have felt he had a strong case to take his appeal to the Supreme Court in Melbourne, for it appears he had been duped by the Emmetts and Mason. Subsequently, Phillip and

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90 Argus, 26 June, 1901, 8.
91 Argus, 26 June, 1901, 8.
92 Argus, 26 June, 1901, 8.
93 PROV, VPRS 267, VA 2549, P0000, 106, Civil Case Files.
Frank Emmett were credited as the unofficial discoverers of gold at the Mt. William (Mafeking) goldfields.  

By October 1901 *The Ararat Advertiser* was reporting that things at the Mount William field were very quiet and the returns were small. Nathan was still trading in 1904 in Mafeking, *The Argus* reporting details of another court appearance, this time in the Ararat Court. He had been charged with trading on a Sunday, the incident that led to this charge an unpleasant one. Miner William Barker was drinking at Rubinovitch’s Hotel with his friend Thomas Vale. They bought a bottle of beer, but returned after closing hours for a second bottle. They were refused and consequently became angry, abusive and broke several windows, a couple of lamps and other items. Armed with a rifle, Nathan came out to see what the disturbance was about. The barman Arthur Smith, got rid of Barker and Vale by giving them a couple of bottles of beer. Since all of this transpired after midnight, Nathan was charged with trading on a Sunday. He was fined £2 and costs, but the report said he had a fortnight to lodge an appeal. Barker and Vale did not get off lightly – they were each fined £1 for damaging Nathan’s property, costs of £2/10/0 and £4/13/6 instead of a month’s imprisonment, and for using obscene language 40/- and costs of £1/3/6 each. This is evidence of the rough and unpredictable life on the Mafeking goldfields, although most of the gold had run out by 1904. Nathan had to work on his Sabbath, which as an orthodox Jew he would have kept for prayer and the synagogue, but was charged for working on the Christian Sabbath.  

Such were the difficulties of living and working in Australia which included separation from his family in Ballarat, who must have moved back because they were certainly residents there in 1897.

In the next three years Esther made the application in the Licensing Court in Ararat for the renewal of the Mafeking Hotel licence in December. She eventually took over the licence for the East Brunswick Hotel that she sold in July 1905. It is not clear how Esther managed financially to achieve this, but she was possibly able to get a loan from a

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97 PROV, VPRS 1688, VA.734. 76, Ararat Court of Petty Sessions.
Jewish charity. In these ways Nathan and Esther provided for their family, but Esther possibly had the better business head of the two.

The Hebrew School and Teacher D.H. Harris

D.H. Harris was Fanny’s Hebrew teacher in Ballarat and in 1897 when she was almost 13 she was dux and first prize winner of the Hebrew School in the Second Class, awarded a silver brooch for good conduct.\(^9^9\) Abe was in the First Class and had won a second prize. Earlier that year, Harris had taken his Hebrew class to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens for a Purim picnic which was an ‘old time custom.’\(^1^0^0\) There, his young students presented him with a silver mounted umbrella for his birthday, in the certain knowledge that he would need it during the next Ballarat winter.\(^1^0^1\) Hebrew was to become an important concern of Fanny’s in the future and she was an exemplary Hebrew scholar. Harris was destined for a greater role in Fanny’s life than as a humble Hebrew teacher.

D.H. Harris had come from England, formerly the Vice-Master at the Home for Jewish Children, Norwood, South London.\(^1^0^2\) This was a charity for Jewish children with disabilities, and still exists.\(^1^0^3\) When the Board of the Macquarie Street Synagogue in Sydney advertised for a new minister in 1876, D.H. Harris applied. He did not get the position but was appointed temporary Reader instead.\(^1^0^4\) He then moved to Bendigo and from October 1886 was conducting services at the Bendigo Synagogue.\(^1^0^5\) When Isidore Myers resigned as minister and shochet (ritual slaughterer) of the Synagogue in 1886, Harris was appointed on a monthly basis, which suggests he might not have been very experienced.\(^1^0^6\) Mr. Barnett and M. Perl frequently assisted him on the High Holy Days such as Jewish New Year.\(^1^0^7\) According to Lazarus Goldman (1954) the position was

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\(^1^0^1\) Jewish Herald, 2 April, 1897.
advertised at £3 a week and D.H. Harris was appointed as reader and teacher. Rose Herman helped him in the schoolroom and her father S. Herman acted as honorary mohel (circumciser). The congregation fell into debt and this was blamed on Harris’s appointment, but a special fundraising drive on Kol Nidre night (the Day of Atonement evening service) raised sufficient funds to wipe out the debt.  

Harris was apparently interested in art and music, and was mentioned in the prize list of the 1888 Geelong Jubilee Juvenile and Industrial Exhibition as ‘D.H. Harris of Sandhurst,’ the winner of the special prize of two guineas for an oil painting in the Section A. The section was for exhibitors between the ages of 18 and 21 years, and this suggests that D.H. Harris may have been born about 1868, which would have made him about 16 years Reading’s elder. He was very active in the Bendigo community as the Honorary Secretary of the Sandhurst (Bendigo) Art Gallery until his departure for Melbourne in January 1889. He enthusiastically lobbied in the Bendigo Advertiser for his vision of a centre for music and art in the city:

Let a combined gallery of music and art in Sandhurst once [sic] becomes an accomplished fact, and the Bendigo exhibition of 1886 will have at least sown one good seed which will grow, blossom and flourish.

When he retired from the Sandhurst Art Gallery, the Vice-President Rev. Mr. Garlick said Harris had been a good secretary and increased the gallery’s membership until it exceeded that of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, which must have been very pleasing to Sandhurst community. The Sandhurst Art Gallery gave him a farewell gift of 10 guineas in acknowledgment of his services.

Harris moved to Melbourne in 1889, where he became the provisional Head of the East Melbourne Hebrew School. While there he introduced a bad mark system in the school, which proved to be such bad pedagogical practice and so deeply unpopular with the

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students, that he was forced to resign. Any suggestion of his reappointment after the
departure of his replacement, Rev. Lewis Mendelsohn six months later, was firmly
squashed by the President’s casting vote.113 Goldman (1954) wrote that Harris had
assisted Isidore Myers in the teaching of English to Yiddish speaking foreigners at the
Jewish Intellectual and Social Improvement Society, a society which was formed for the
express purpose of teaching English to Jewish immigrants. D. Gans was the secretary and
the classes grew to five a week.114 The ‘Beth Hamidrash (study hall) for Melbourne’
received positive coverage in the Melbourne Jewish press in 1890.115 However Harris
would soon be on the move again, back to the country.

Newman Rosenthal (1979) wrote that D.H. Harris was one of the six applicants for the
position of teacher, second-reader and collector at the Ballarat Jewish congregation,
sometime between 1895 and 1898.116 Harris’ position at Ballarat was terminated for
several months (the reason was not given), but after several months he was re-hired in his
previous position. Goldman (1954) confirms this and is more forthcoming; after I.
Bernstein had resigned, the committee re-hired Harris.117 While in Ballarat, Harris tried to
establish Hebrew classes as a day school with Hebrew and secular instruction, but he was
unsuccessful and the school had to close.118 Speculatively, perhaps Harris attempted to
reintroduce his bad mark system that failed so badly in East Melbourne, or perhaps he
was ill as a result of the ‘nervous disposition’ to which he refers in his letter to Fanny in
1909.119 At that time the Ballarat congregation had only 36 members and 34 (paid-up)
seat holders, but there were quite a few country members. The congregation’s generosity
for Jerusalem and the Anglo-Jewish Association exceeded that of the Melbourne Jews.120

According to Rosenthal (1979), Harris had been generally regarded in Ballarat as a very
kind and capable teacher, so perhaps his teaching skills had improved, or Rosenthal was

119 D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch, 1909, 3. AJHS Archives.
simply being generous. When Rev. I.M. Goldreich had an unfortunate fall in his backyard, Harris competently conducted the services in the Ballarat Synagogue.\textsuperscript{121} He was also choirmaster on the occasion of the service to commemorate Queen Victoria’s 60 years on the throne in 1897.\textsuperscript{122}

Harris kept in touch with Fanny and he wrote her a 16-page letter on 15 November 1909 – a detailed analysis follows.\textsuperscript{123} However, by 1906 Fanny was living in Melbourne, but this has been included in this chapter because it has been concerned with Fanny’s former relationship with Harris as a boarder with her family and his role as a teacher of Hebrew to the Ballarat Jewish children.

**D.H. Harris’ Letter**

We can only speculate what the writer of this letter (which follows this discussion) may have intended and what Fanny’s response might have been. It provides us with a rare window into a 25-year-old Fanny’s personal life and may represent an important turning point in her life. D.H. Harris would have been about 41 years old.\textsuperscript{124}

It opens formally to ‘Miss Rubinovitch’ but contains a personal message, as he wrote ‘with an exuberance of spirits.’\textsuperscript{125} His real response to her letter starts with the phrase, ‘this entire change of my life which you urge upon me.’\textsuperscript{126} What did she suggest to him? Whatever it was he had given it serious consideration and had not rushed a reply, because it had taken him five weeks to put pen to paper and to mail his reply. It seems Fanny had also been sitting an examination in the interim, as he comments towards the end of his letter, ‘I have given you time to let me know if you have passed your exam, have I not?’\textsuperscript{127} This examination would have been part of her Diploma of Music, which she did not complete until 1914.

\textsuperscript{123} Appendix 1.
\textsuperscript{124} The initials D.H. remain a mystery.
\textsuperscript{125} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 16. (AJHS Archives.)
\textsuperscript{126} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 1. (AJHS Archives)
\textsuperscript{127} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 16. (AJHS Archives)
When Harris wrote about becoming ‘older and less energetic’ it is reasonable to assume he was Fanny’s senior by some years. He had been a teacher of Hebrew and had tutored all the Rubinovitch children in Hebrew, which is confirmed when he refers to ‘former duties’ with Fanny. He wrote that he had been ‘living in the same house with the children whose mental, moral and spiritual welfare was always uppermost in my mind,’ which indicates he had boarded earlier with the Rubinovitch family in Ballarat. There are hints that Harris had been her Hebrew teacher when he adds, ‘ALL my love’s labor is not entirely lost, and that which may have taken root in your heart,’ and the emphasis clearly points to an earlier relationship with her and the others ‘entrusted to my care.’

Harris equivocates about moving to Melbourne, for Fanny was living in Melbourne in 1909. His first reference to marriage comes with the oblique phrase that in order to transplant himself he would require an ‘inducement of no ordinary character.’ Harris is inviting Fanny to produce an inducement, to signal that she would indeed be willing to at least become engaged. However he lacks the self-confidence to be more direct, so makes the suggestion coyly, in the hope she will intuit his meaning.

It seems Fanny must have suggested Harris could resume his former duties again in Melbourne, perhaps teaching Hebrew with her. When he quotes her own letter back to her, Harris acknowledges the importance of teaching to him, but he emphasises its mental and physical costs. He does not sound a strong man, speaking of his ‘mental and nervous complaint’ that made him ‘over-susceptible and easily disturbed by small events.’ Living with the three Rubinovitch boys (Abraham, Hyman and Lewis) when they were younger, boisterous and noisy must have been very tiring for him. If Fanny had suggested in her letter that her siblings had been a burden for him, then Harris’ reply was that if that

128 D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch, 1909, 1. (AJHS Archives)
129 D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch, 1909, 1. (AJHS Archives)
130 D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch, 1909, 9. (AJHS Archives)
131 D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch, 1909, 8 author’s emphasis. (AJHS Archives)
132 D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch, 1909, 1. (AJHS Archives)
133 D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch, 1909, 3. (AJHS Archives)
were so, it was only because he had loved them (like Moses had been with his Jewish people). He is demonstrating the strength of his Jewish faith and affection for her brothers.

There is gentle humour in his comment, ‘My dear girl, I cannot pose as a saint.’\textsuperscript{134} There is the suggestion of his unexpressed affection for Fanny when he writes, ‘I cannot truthfully assert that on their account alone I should have ever found an entrance into Mr. Rubinovitch’s family,’ but here he is being coy again.\textsuperscript{135} He makes it clear some other inducement is needed ‘other than for their sakes alone’ for him to uproot himself and make a move.\textsuperscript{136} He ‘cannot tell’ what this would be; this is not true, he can tell but he will not say; and he expects Fanny to work it out.\textsuperscript{137} He is playing with her, but he is also careful to write something that could be read quite innocently; in other words he is hedging his bets and being discrete.

Harris paints an attractive picture of his weekly bachelor evenings when writing, ‘I am as free as a bird, without a thought of care, and free, nomadic.’\textsuperscript{138} This is only one side of the coin; another force pulling him towards Fanny. ‘What is it that keeps impelling me to come to you?’\textsuperscript{139} Harris is toying with her – after all she is not a child now, but a 25 year-old woman. He is playing with her, saying, ‘Yes, it is you (‘one letter of the alphabet’), who is urging me on.’ Is he suggesting a shift in their relationship here, if she is ‘up for it?’

It would seem Fanny had encouraged him to return so he could live in a Jewish household again, where he would be able to adhere to the tenets of the Jewish faith, which were clearly very important to them both. Harris writes about his dislike of empty ritual, where custom and repetition have stripped meaning away. He is critical of what has been taking place at the Montefiore Home, where a bencher (a congregation member) ‘an old frum

\textsuperscript{134} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 8. (AJHS Archives)
\textsuperscript{135} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 9. (AJHS Archives)
\textsuperscript{136} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 8. (AJHS Archives)
\textsuperscript{137} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 10. (AJHS Archives)
\textsuperscript{138} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 9. (AJHS Archives)
\textsuperscript{139} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 10. (AJHS Archives)
(observant) man’ has fallen asleep in the middle of the readings from the Bible. Prayers should come from the heart. Harris writes respectfully, sincerely and honestly to Fanny, clearly trusting in her discretion, sympathy and understanding.

Harris moves back to his previous discussion and writes, ‘If I were an independent man I would come back by the first aeroplane.’\textsuperscript{140} He means that if he were a man of independent financial means nothing would hold him back.\textsuperscript{141} He asks rhetorically, ‘Is it not just a picture?’\textsuperscript{142} He is really asking, ‘Can’t we have a pleasant life together?’ He teases her gently when he writes, “I shall be so pleased to hear that you are a Bachelor my dear Spinster.’\textsuperscript{143} Harris concludes, ‘Is there any prospect for betterment?’\textsuperscript{144} This has a double meaning – he is not confident and needs a clear signal from Fanny to encourage him to take the next step. In order to make certain he will not miss her reply, he adds three forwarding addresses with the relevant dates as postscripts at the bottom of his letter. He makes plain that ‘we should distinctly understand our relative positions.’\textsuperscript{145} Did Fanny get the subtleties in his letter? It is not clear if she replied; the only thing that is certain is she kept this letter with her other private papers her entire life.

\textbf{Letter to Miss Rubinovitch}

November 15, ’09.

Dear Miss Rubinovitch,

I am writing this in reply to yours of 5\textsuperscript{th} October. My delay in answering your letter is not altogether due to accident. This entire change of my life which you urge upon me is one that requires no little consideration. As one becomes older and less energetic this uprooting and transplanting becomes more and more distasteful. I have fallen naturally into a mechanical and routine groove, and as I do not get younger or stronger

\textsuperscript{140} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 14. (AJHS Archives)
\textsuperscript{141} Louis Blériot flew his monoplane from France to England in July 1909.
\textsuperscript{142} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 15. (AJHS Archives)
\textsuperscript{143} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 16. (AJHS Archives)
\textsuperscript{144} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 16. (AJHS Archives)
\textsuperscript{145} D.H. Harris, Letter to Fanny Rubinovitch,1909, 16. (AJHS Archives)
it requires and inducement of no ordinary character to impel so drastic a change as that which I am asked to make. In connection with my former duties with you, you use the term ‘arduous’. My work I never considered arduous. It was not really hard in itself. It could not be more arduous to teach a few children than to have charge of a school with all its responsibilities. It was not the actual, mechanical part of the work that affected me in any way, it was the irregularity of it and yet its continuity. This may sound at first paradoxical, but you will doubtless understand what I mean. Living in the same house with the children whose mental, moral and spiritual welfare was always uppermost in my mind I never felt off duty. For example, if I were in the seclusion of my room and heard, or fancied I heard any untoward occurrence taking place, occasionally high, rude or disrespectful demeanour on the part of the children towards their parents or yourself, I had at once to cease whatever occupation I was engaged in, and I could never rest until the disturbance had subsided with, or without, my intervention. I always felt in such areas that my ministrations were a failure. I know of course, and I knew then that it was a foolish feeling. And that it was due, in a great measure, to that mental and nervous complaint of mine which rendered the mind over-susceptible and easily disturbed by small events. Most men would have been unaffected by it and would have said to themselves, ‘Let them fight it out.’ This same complaint always made me restless too under the conditions of the work, which were unavoidable. Thus, when I felt strong and well in the early part of the day there was nothing to do. As the day advanced and I became mentally and physically tired and more easily irritated the duties commenced. And then after dinner when I was only fit for mental rest, the formality of being present when the children did their homework. As all this happened seven days a week (for Saturday demanded my services as well) and week after week, and month after month you can more readily comprehend now what I mean by its “continuity”. Were it not for my unfortunate (or fortunate) weakness of being over-earnest and sincere in the children I should have considered my position with you a veritable sinecure.

As it was it was the most incessant work that ever I have undertaken. And this brings me to the point of the your letter where you say that you will be able to help me more now than before. My dear Miss Rubin, you cannot help me at all. In the mechanical
part of the work – the practical teaching-no help is needed, for me it is child’s play wherever children are obedient and subject to discipline. It is the other part of my duties that constitute my real sphere of work. If my services are worth anything at all it is here alone that they have their value. And to such services there is no market value. When I am with you I consider, under God’s help, that I am responsible for the children’s moral and spiritual development. And this responsibility is a great one. If undertaken with love, sincerity and earnest desire to success it brings its own rewards here and after to us all. What money price is to be spoken of in connection with work such as this? I have written somewhat warmly upon this subject as a kind of protest against your asking me whether the children would be a burden upon me, as, as you observe, I said they were before. I do not ever remember saying that the children were a burden, but if I did, I used the word exactly in the same sense that Moses uses it in connection with his willful flock - but that he loved them all the same. Had he NOT loved them they would not have been a burden.

The most forcible reason you assign for my return is the ‘pleasure and pride’ you think I ought to feel in being ‘instrumental in shaping and forming the children’s characters and minds to good and noble purposes.’ That is just the kind of language I love you to write, and that I expected you to write. I feel a modest thrill of satisfaction that, at all events, ALL my love’s labor is not entirely lost, and that which has taken root in your heart may, perchance, may also have taken root in the hearts of hundreds of others whose moral and spiritual training has been entrusted to my care – your brothers and sisters among them. But, my dear girl, I cannot pose as a saint. Much as I am concerned in the welfare of the children of your family (more especially since I have become more attached to them) I cannot truthfully assert that on their account alone I should have ever found an entrance into Mr. Rubinovich’s family. In my present mode of existence my light work is done before evening, the nights are spent in a chess club, I have one day every week when I am as free as a bird without a thought of care, and free, nomadic, independent life is doing me a world of good physically, mentally, morally and spiritually (I will refer to the latter later on). This is one side of the picture – here. The other side – one with you – I have started already. Now, my dear Miss Rubin, much as I love the younger Rubinoviches [sic] I do not think that for their
sakes alone and on their account alone I could be induced to uproot my present existence for a change of which I have already had an experience. You must see that I have a long list of attractions to keep me as I am. What is it that keeps impelling me to come to you again? I cannot tell. It is not the prospect of a home, nor of earning a little more money with some more regularity and security, not the nobleness of the work, nor the affection I bear the children – it is none of these- it does not even seem to be the fulfillment of any wish or desire – the power that seems unaccountably to be urging me on may, curiously enough, be summed up in a sentence, not in a word but in one single letter of the alphabet.

You tell me that with you I will have a Jewish home, that I will be able to remember that I myself an a Jew, and that where I am not able to adhere to the tenets of my faith. The first and last are both true, not so the second, one does not necessarily need to be among Jews to be a Jew. But I am only able to be a spiritual Jew, and the spiritual which I have acquired has been gained through the best (and severest) school it is possible to learn the spiritual from - the School of Suffering. And my Teacher has been Experience. For long, long years now I have had but little heart feeling in the matter of ceremony. In nearly every instance where I have made a study of it in others, I have only seen a dead body – a mere lifeless, empty act of formality without one spark of the real Spirit wherewith to give it a semblance of a living thing. Those incessant forms of prayer, those interminable ‘benchings,’ those pages and pages of words garbled over for form’s sake have wearied me long ago. At the Montefiore Home where all this is indulged in to its fullest extent, they ‘bench’ in full, three times a day. How often in the middle of the 2nd, 3rd or 4th page the ‘bencher’ (an old ‘frum’ man) came to a sudden pause! He was fast asleep! I tried to press an innovation, but to no purpose. A few words from the heart to God was not in their line. I have seen more ‘dovening’ with or without tefillin at the same time reading the

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146 Prayers (noun) see Glossary
147 To pray (verb) see Glossary
148 One who prays (noun) see Glossary
149 Observant (adjective) see Glossary
150 Praying (verb) see Glossary
newspaper! Had such men been brought up to “pray from the heart” more and ‘doven from the lips’ less there would have been more real religion in them. It is astonishing what little spirituality there is in the majority of so-called “frum” people.

Now while it is absolutely essential that children should be trained spiritually and morally, it is almost equally necessary that they should go through a practical course in Hebrew and Religion tenets. But the teacher has to be constantly on the alert that the latter be not considered as a substitute for the former. I always had this in consideration when I had your children at prayers. Weary them with (Hebrew) prayers when young, and they will fly to the other extreme. It requires a great effort to keep the heart in a state of devotional thought for any lengthened period when young. But it grows on one in later years if one has suffered much, and is spiritually inclined.

There is one very charming sentence in your letter which, if I were an independent man, would bring me back by the next aeroplane. “I look forward to an ideal intellectual and spiritual existence when you come back, so please do not put anything in the way to mar this pleasant picture”. Is it not but a picture? What a girl you are for making a fellow’s mouth water!

You ask me in replying not to be sarcastic. If there was any sarcasm in my last, it was not intentional- no malice in it, but more an exuberance of spirits arising from the pleasure of finding myself writing to you.

I think that I have written more about myself to you than to all my other correspondents put together. It is a real relief to leave myself alone. I have given you time to let me know if you have passed your Exam, have I not. I shall be so pleased to hear that you are a Bachelor, my dear Spinster.

Dear Miss Rubin, if I return to you, do I do so under similar conditions as before as far as home and payment, are concerned, or is there a prospect for any betterment? Don’t

151 Tefillin: the little box that is worn on the head and on the arms containing the Shema,’Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one’ see Glossary
infer from this that I am dissatisfied, but being so far away it is very desirable that we should distinctly understand our relative position. In my reply to your next I hope definitely to state whether there is a prospect of again renewing the days that were.

With love to all, D.H.Harris.  

This letter from her Hebrew teacher was prized by Reading, who kept it with her private papers. Hebrew was very important to her because she had not only learnt it as a child, heard it in the synagogue, but longed to be able to speak it herself. Reading admired linguists and was fulsome in her praise of those whom she met at the Zionist conference in Vienna in 1925. Hebrew is therefore the focus of the next and last section of this chapter.

Hebrew

Reading’s letters written in 1925 (see Chapter 6) celebrated Hebrew when she found it being spoken in Jerusalem. The importance of Hebrew to Reading and the Jewish population in Australia is related to their core values. Jerzy Smolicz (1981) defined core values as ‘the heartland’ of an ideological system of a group’s culture. It is through these core values that a group’s distinctive ethnic, religious, social identity can be established. There may be a number of core values in any one group, such as the Jewish community in Australia, and these may or may not be in a hierarchal arrangement. Speaking in general terms, when core values are threatened by an external force, such as assimilation for example, then the group culture ‘brings forth counter measures.’ In a pluralistic society such as Australia, threats to Jewish core values exist through anti-Semitism, assimilation and inter-marriage. The establishment of Jewish day schools as part of the local synagogue meant these language schools played ‘a vital role in the

152 Harris’ postscript. If you post your reply not later than 30 November, address = Post Office Rookwood, NSW. If after, not later than Dec 3 = “Auburn, NSW. Then to Dec 31st Bankstown, NSW. After that P.O. Rookwood. Until further notice.
153 Reading, 13 December, 1925, Andaursky’s Hotel, Jerusalem. (Mitchell Library)
154 Reading, 13 December, 1925, Andaursky’s Hotel, Jerusalem. (Mitchell Library)
156 Smolicz, ‘Core Values and Cultural Identity,’ 76.
157 Smolicz, ‘Core Values and Cultural Identity,’ 77.
The Hebrew schools that were subsequently opened in Melbourne and other Australian cities have also taken over this role, and were supported by the NCJWA.

The Jewish core value system is complex but extremely well integrated. It rests upon three fundamental components – ‘religion, people-hood and historicity’. There is a symbiotic relationship between the teaching of Jewish religion and history and this becomes clearly apparent when fully integrated into Jewish consciousness – ‘a group with a distinct past, present and future.’

Hebrew was the language associated with religious ritual. Other Jewish groups used different languages – for example, the use of Yiddish by Jews in Eastern Europe, Arabic by the Jews in Yemen and Ladino by the Sephardic Jews. However the revival of Hebrew coupled with the rise of the nation-state Israel is ‘not only related to the ancient state of Israel but also with the Mosaic religion.’ The development of a common language to unite people of different languages was used when the Republic of Indonesia was formed in 1945 and Bahasa Indonesia was developed from Bahasa Melayu. In a similar way, when the state of Israel was formed in 1948 Hebrew became the common tongue or the lingua franca. This only occurred however, after a long argument from different groups about the place of Hebrew in the new nation.

The revival of Hebrew for the Jewish nation can be dated back to Abraham Mapu (1808-1867) and Yehuda Leib Gordon (1830-1892) who were contemporaries of Tolstoy and Dostoievsky. Mapu and Gordon were early writers of the Haskalah (Jewish enlightenment) an intellectual movement that spread throughout central and Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century. They were educationalists and mentors and used their

158 Smolicz, ‘Core Values and Cultural Identity,’ 77.
159 Smolicz, ‘Core Values and Cultural Identity,’ 77.
160 Smolicz, ‘Core Values and Cultural Identity,’ 78.
161 Smolicz, ‘Core Values and Cultural Identity,’ 79.
162 Lacqueur, A History of Zionism, 64.
163 Lacqueur, A History of Zionism, 64.
poems, essays and novels as vehicles for their message.\(^{164}\) According to Safran (2005) they failed in their attempts to revive Hebrew in the enlightenment period.\(^{165}\)

The Bundists, largely secularists in Russia (anti-Zionist Jewish socialists), argued for Jewish rights and a place for the Jewish people in a socialist Russia; they stressed the importance of Yiddish.\(^{166}\) The Zionists however, wanted Jewish national rights in their own land expressed in Hebrew. ‘Yiddish was considered easy whereas Hebrew had to be learned.’\(^{167}\) Consequently, there was a great deal of work that had to be done on both Hebrew and Yiddish. Both languages had incomplete vocabularies – Yiddish lacked a vocabulary for scientific or abstract concepts, while Hebrew lacked adjectives and nouns for flora and fauna. Hebrew had the weight of tradition in its favour and its triliteral root structure made the formation of new words relatively easy; moreover, words could be adopted from cognate Semitic languages.\(^{168}\)

Ahad Ha’am (Asher Ginsberg) (1856-1927) had failed in his attempts to restore Hebrew as a spoken language, although he emphasised it had been the language of the Jewish people.\(^{169}\) Ahad Ha’am’s vision of the Jewish homeland was of a ‘spiritual centre’ and he has been credited as the founder of cultural Zionism.\(^{170}\) The founder of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) did not speak Hebrew at all and had not been an advocate for Hebrew.\(^{171}\) However for other Zionist leaders ‘the revival of Hebrew was a precondition for Jewish nation building.’\(^{172}\)

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858-1922), who moved to Palestine in 1881, set his own example: he spoke Hebrew to other Jews and his family and devised a seven-step program to encourage and promote Hebrew as an everyday language. The seven steps were: Hebrew

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164 Lacqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 64.
167 Safran, ‘Language and Nation Building In Europe,’ 77.
168 Safran, ‘Language and Nation Building In Europe,’ 77.
169 Safran, ‘Language and Nation Building In Europe,’ 44.
171 Safran, ‘Language and Nation Building In Europe,’ 44.
172 Safran, ‘Language and Nation Building In Europe,’ 44.
speaking households; an appeal to other Jews in the diaspora to use Hebrew in a range of
tasks; the teaching of Hebrew in schools; newspapers in Hebrew; a Hebrew dictionary;
and the establishment of a language council. The effective disseminators of Hebrew were
however ‘the workers, the elementary – school teachers and the youth.’

In Palestine schools set up by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU) (Universal Israel
Alliance) during the first decade of the twentieth century, there was some rivalry from
French as a national language. The *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden* (Aid Association of
German Jews) advocated German as the language of instruction in *Ertez Israel* (the land
of Israel). The teachers formed an association in 1903, with their aims being the
improvement and the standardisation of schools, the revival of the Hebrew language and
instillation of the Jewish spirit, and the improvement of teachers’ conditions. However
urban schools in Palestine that were run by the *AIU* and the *Hilfsverein* refused to use
Hebrew as the language of instruction and the teachers went on strike in 1914. The
Techion was founded in 1915 and the teachers insisted on Hebrew being the official
language of the institution, so the ‘battle of the languages’ reached its conclusion. They
chose Hebrew with the Sephardic pronunciation (rather than the Ashkenazi one) and their
strike and actions ‘settled the argument once and for all in favour of Hebrew.’
The German Jews in Palestine thought Hebrew was too ‘primitive’; Arthur Koestler (1905-
1983) thought the Hebrew alphabet was obsolete and cumbersome and wanted to replace
it with the Latin alphabet; in spite of similar negative attitudes the *Yishuv* (the Jewish
community in pre-state Palestine) persisted in its use of Hebrew and in the secular use of
Hebrew for everyday life.

Ghil’ad Zuckermann and Gitit Holzman (2014) argue that some scholars believe in the
‘heroic miracle’ of the resurrection or the awakening of ancient Biblical Hebrew. Other
scholars claim Hebrew had never died but it had been used in one form or another all the

173 Safran, ‘Language and Nation Building In Europe,’ 50.
174 Safran, ‘Language and Nation Building In Europe,’ 49.
175 Safran, ‘Language and Nation Building In Europe,’ 49.
176 Safran, ‘Language and Nation Building In Europe,’ 49.
177 Ghil’ad Zuckermann and Gigit Holzman, ‘Let my people go!: towards a Revolution in the Teaching of the Hebrew Bible,’
time. There was evidence that Hebrew was previously used while Jews were in exile, but ‘Hebrew was only used in masculine, public and scholarly settings.’ Zuckerman argues that the modern language called Israeli, which is sometimes mistakenly called Modern Hebrew, is a ‘fascinating and multifaceted 120 year old Semito-European hybrid language’ which has elements in it of all the languages of the peoples who make up Israel’s population – Yiddish, Polish, Russian, German, Ladino and Arabic. In any case, in many years to come, Fanny’s future delight in hearing spoken Hebrew in Israel would be evident in her letters home to her family (see Chapter 6).

The next chapter describes the educational pathways Fanny and her siblings undertook when they left Ballarat for Melbourne. The family moved to Carlton then to the more (at that time) upperclass St Kilda to be near and to be part of an Orthodox community. Abe went to the exclusive Scotch College, Fanny taught Hebrew and continued with her piano lessons, and the three younger siblings prospered and grew up too.

178 Zuckermann and Holzman, ‘Let my people go!’ 65.
179 Zuckermann and Holzman, ‘Let my people go!’ 68.
Chapter 4. Melbourne and the Getting of Wisdom

Educational Pathways

Chapter 4 explores the pathways the Rubinovitch siblings took when their family decided to move from Ballarat to Melbourne. Towards the end of the nineteenth century various factors caused many Jewish families to move from Ballarat as the gold fields became worked out, including to find a larger Jewish community, and for educational and business opportunities. World War 1 (1914-1918) was a disruption to their established lives in Melbourne, but it also created new opportunities for young women like Fanny. After World War 1 Nathan decided to change their surname, creating a new identity for them all (more details later in this chapter.) Fanny’s brothers went to war and she went back to university. This chapter opens during the Depression in the last decade of the nineteenth century, when there was a general movement of Victoria’s Jewish population from Victoria to Sydney, NSW. The number of Jews in Victoria in 1891 was 6459 and by 1901 it had dropped to 5907. However the Rubinovitch family were not ready to move to Sydney – that would come later, after the war was over and Fanny was a newly qualified general medical practitioner, which is covered in Chapter 5.

The Rubinovitch family saw the educational pathways and opportunities available in Melbourne for their children. Lewis was born in 1896 and little Miriam in 1898, but she had only lived for six months, so perhaps a fresh start for the family was attractive. Esther and Nathan knew their two eldest children, Fanny and Abe, were academically bright and realised that in order for them to prosper and rise to a higher socioeconomic level in Australia, education would be the key factor. It has already been noted that education in Ballarat was a ‘social escalator’ and it became clear to Nathan and Esther that the metropolitan centre of Melbourne offered more than Ballarat could in terms of further education. Not only that, but there was a larger Jewish population in Melbourne

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1 Jupp, The Australian People An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origin, 528.
2 NAA, Australian Birth Index, 1788-1922, registrations numbers 621 and 634.
and far more amenities such as kosher food available in Carlton and St. Kilda. Many other Jewish families also moved from Ballarat at the end of the nineteenth century to find new opportunities in metropolitan centres. Among those were Jonah Marks the childhood friend of Fanny; Newman Rosenthal (1898-1986) who had an extensive career as an airforce officer, historian, editor and community worker, and who wrote a book about the movement of the Jews to Melbourne in *Formula for Survival* (1979). By 1901 there were only 266 Jews living in Ballarat.

1904 must have been an important year for the Rubinovitch family because by then they were already in Melbourne. Esther had previously taken over the licence of the West Brunswick Hotel and in July 1905 transferred the licence to Henriette McKenzie. Subsequently, Fanny’s younger siblings, Rachael (Rae), Hyman and Lewis, were enrolled at West Brunswick Primary School (No. 2890). Abraham (Abe), her closest sibling, had won a state scholarship to the prestigious Scotch College Melbourne. The scholarship covered his fees for all of his first year in 1904, but only for term one of his second year. His fees must have therefore been paid privately for the rest of his time at Scotch College.

Abe was a highly capable student and in the 1908 senior public examinations he received honours in algebra, trigonometry, mechanics, physics and chemistry, and a pass in geometry. He was awarded Class III Honours in mathematics, Class II in mechanics and science, and won a first year open scholarship and exhibition to Ormond College, Melbourne University for mathematics, physics and chemistry. Abe studied medicine at Melbourne University and become the resident medical officer at the Royal Naval

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4 Bate, *Life After Gold*, 121.
9 Paul Mishra, Archivist Scotch College Archive and Museum, email correspondence 19 August, 2014.
Dr Fanny Reading: A Clever Little Bird

College at Jervis Bay, NSW. He was then transferred to the Flinders Naval Base at Western Port in September 1915.10

Meanwhile, Rachael, Hyman and Lewis were at West Brunswick State School in 1904; the Coburg Leader published the student results for that year and Lewis was dux of the upper fourth class, while Hyman was mentioned for good conduct.11 This is the first indication Hyman may have had ‘learning difficulties’, for he was two years older than Lewis but in the same class as his younger brother. All three younger members of the Rubinovitch family obtained their merit certificates; Rachael went on to attend the continuation school and her results were as follows: English, Latin, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, physics and theory (very good), drawing (good).12

When Rachael left school she became a clerk13 and on 6 October 1920 she married Benjamin Burman at the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, St Kilda.14 Rachael’s path led her to the traditional role of Jewish wife and mother.

After 1904 Lewis moved to Tooronga Road State School, which was much closer to St Kilda where the family were living. He was an outstanding student and won what was called an ordinary government scholarship to Wesley College, Melbourne, starting there in February 1909.15 Lewis was in a class called ‘The Twenty’, composed of boys who had been ‘fast tracked’ into Wesley College from the state system.16 Hyman and Rachael may possibly have moved with Lewis to also attend Tooronga Road State School, but that is only conjecture.

The Wesley entry book for February 1909 listed Nathan Rubinovitch as Lewis’ parent and his home address as 3 Alma Grove, St Kilda. When the census was taken later that

13 AEC, Australian Electoral Rolls, 1919.
14 Reading Family tree, AJHS Archives.
15 Wesley College was founded by the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1866.
16 Margot Vaughan, Associate Curator of Collection, Wesley College, email correspondence 1 September, 2014.
year, the family address was at ‘Karelitis,’ 42 Odessa Street, St Kilda. They had moved, but stayed in St. Kilda within walking distance of the synagogue and had named their new home after their former shtetl in Russia. Lewis did very well at Wesley College, capable academically and excelling at football, cricket, high and long jump. During his final year in 1913, he won colours in football but failed the senior public examination by one subject, being keener on sport than studying. Wesley College was important to Lewis for he attended a reunion Founder’s Day dinner in France in 1918 with 16 other Old Wesley Collegians.

McCalman (1993), writing of Melbourne a couple of decades later, but also reflective of the pre-war city, describes Melbourne as ‘a sharply divided society, both in class and religion; and [where] college people enjoy considerable prestige.’ Abe and other Jewish students living in the St Kilda district caught the 69 tram from St Kilda Beach to Cotham Road, Kew to either Scotch College or Methodist Ladies’ College. Both schools welcomed Jewish students at a time when ‘many other private schools [had] a covert Jewish quota.’ Abe was therefore able to enter Scotch, and the school saw its task to ‘train the boys in the mental skills and moral habits which would enable them to join the middle class in their own right and remain there securely and honorably.’ It was McCalman’s contention that education in the ‘right’ school expedited social upward mobility.

It seems Fanny may have tried to have Hyman admitted to Wesley College to be with Lewis, as she was given as the family contact (rather than Nathan) in the Wesley entry book for 1910. Hyman did not complete that school year, leaving before the end of the final term. This suggests he was either not successful or not happy at Wesley. Fanny was noted in the entry book as a teacher at the school and must have been a sessional piano teacher, for she was not a qualified classroom teacher.

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17 AEC, Australian Electoral Rolls 1903-1990.
18 Vaughan, Wesley College.
20 McCalman, Journeyings, 3.
21 McCalman, Journeyings, 9.
Fanny won a scholarship to the Conservatorium at the University of Melbourne\textsuperscript{22} and started the Diploma of Music there in 1906.\textsuperscript{23} She finished her music studies in 1914, gaining a Diploma of Music.\textsuperscript{24} Taking eight years to complete it may have been due to a number of factors, as there were other calls upon her time and energy – music lessons, the Jewish Young People’s Association, assisting Esther with domestic duties and financial pressures. At the same time, Esther was occupied with home duties and boarders and Nathan was working as a traveller.\textsuperscript{25} Notices of Fanny’s success in music examinations had been published in the \textit{Argus} between 1906 and 1908.\textsuperscript{26} If she had not been successful in winning the scholarship, then the fees for each year for the Diploma of Music would have been £12.12.0.\textsuperscript{27}

If she had entered the Conservatorium on a ‘free scholarship’, her fees would have only been £3.3s.0. In her first year she studied harmony, counterpoint, form and analysis, history, literature and aesthetics of music.\textsuperscript{28} Music would remain very important to Fanny for the rest of her life, although she chose another path.

\textsuperscript{22} Cohen, ‘Not Merely Housewives,’ 20.
\textsuperscript{23} Hilary L. Rubinstein, ‘Reading, Fanny (1884–1974).’
\textsuperscript{24} Rutland, \textit{The Jews in Australia}, 109.
\textsuperscript{25} AEC, Australian Electoral Rolls, 1909.
\textsuperscript{26} Andgel, ‘The Law of Loving Kindness,’ 201.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{University of Melbourne Calendar}, 1906, 138.
As indicated earlier, Fanny supplemented her scholarship by working as a sessional piano teacher at Wesley College. She also taught at Methodist Ladies’ College, with several of her pupils winning music prizes in 1910.  

She was sought after as piano accompanist in St Kilda, and Doggeret makes the point that piano playing in Ballarat had been considered genteel and a means of social advancement. This was also true of St Kilda’s Jewish community, as Fanny played at a social evening following Rev J. Danglow’s post-biblical class in 1907 and at the Victorian Zionist Association Hatchiah concert in 1915. There were other enjoyable social occasions in the St Kilda Hebrew community that was comprised of acculturated English-speaking Anglo-Jews often from German backgrounds.

Yiddish-speaking Jews had settled in Carlton and there was ‘mutual hostility’ between the two groups, their institutions tended to develop along national lines. The 1901 census revealed that 5100 Jews lived in Melbourne, 40 percent lived in the inner city area around Carlton and 23 percent lived south of the Yarra River in the St Kilda area.

Initially, it may have been the Rubinovitchs’ intention to settle in Yiddish speaking Carlton as Reading’s three younger siblings were at the nearby West Brunswick Primary School. However they settled in St Kilda and were closer to the

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30 Doggett, 'Beyond gentility: Women and music in early Ballarat,' 1.
34 Mclean and Turnbull, Carlton: A History, 64.
orthodox St Kilda Hebrew Congregation (SKHC) and were socially aspirational, preferring the Jewish community south of the Yarra River. In any case, this gave Fanny the opportunity to once again take up teaching in the Hebrew School attached to the synagogue as she had done in Ballarat.

As a first step in this process, a motion to elect her father to the membership of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation was made at a meeting of the Congregation in January 1907; the proposal was made by Mr Michaelis and seconded by Mr Blashki who were leading and influential members of the St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation.37 These men were Anglo-Jews and established and wealthy members of its Jewish community.38 The teaching of Hebrew is very important in Judaism because it is at once the history of Jews and the religion of Jews. Fanny’s ability to teach Hebrew was also the means for her to earn a little money necessary for her music studies which were expensive, as has been detailed above.

The new Hebrew School rooms of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation opened in December 1896, which gave priority to this important issue.39 In 1894 Joel Fredman organised two successful concerts that raised enough money to enable the Congregation Committee to erect a school building on the Congregation grounds in 1896.40 In September 1905 Miss H. Feuerman was engaged as assistant teacher.41 At a Congregation meeting in June 1907, the committee were advised that an assistant teacher was required at the Hebrew School, so perhaps a second assistant was needed but no further details were minuted.42 One hundred pounds was allotted for the new schoolroom in October 1907;43 shortly afterwards the building of a new schoolroom commenced.44 In December 1907 the Congregation Committee decided to raise Miss Feuerman’s salary to 30 shillings

38 Michaelis was of German background and Blashki of East European. However, by this time they were fully acculturated.
40 Rabbi Jacob Danglow, History of the St Kilda Congregation 1871-1921, Melbourne: St Kilda Congregation, 1921, 13.
41 Klein, Pillars of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, 9.
42 SKHC Minutes, 30 June, 1907, (Volume 2, 524.)
43 SKHC Minutes, 13 October, 1907, (Volume 2, 533.)
44 SKHC Minutes, 13 October, 1907, (Volume 2, 535.)
a month;\textsuperscript{45} this would have given her an annual salary of £18. This can be compared to the following salaries – Rev Danglow £500 p.a., Mr Fredman £266 p.a. and Mr A. Feuerman (the father of Miss Feuerman) £144 p.a.\textsuperscript{46}

The Hebrew School must have been active because L. Slutzkin donated two dozen Hebrew grammar books and two dozen prayer books for use in the school.\textsuperscript{47} The synagogue had 394 seats, all of which were let;\textsuperscript{48} but on High Holy Days when the synagogue was crowded the committee decided the schoolroom would be a suitable venue for an ‘overflow service.’\textsuperscript{49} At the same meeting Miss Feuerman’s salary was increased from £2 to £3 a month from the 1 July 1911 and the start of the new financial year.\textsuperscript{50} This gave her an annual income of £36 a year. The Hebrew School had 118 pupils (77 boys and 41 girls) but Rev Jacob Danglow (1921) gave these as totals in 1921, so the totals for separate years are not available.\textsuperscript{51}

Danglow (1921) described himself as superintendent of the Hebrew School, J. Fredman as headmaster, and the three female assistant teachers were G. Benjamin, L. Fredman and H. Feuerman.\textsuperscript{52} Andgel (1998) wrote that Fanny had taught Hebrew at the St Kilda Congregation Hebrew School, but it seems Fanny may not have specified in which capacity.\textsuperscript{53} As she was not listed as part of the staff in Danglow’s history, this suggests she was only hired as an assistant Hebrew teacher on a casual and cash basis when one of the three young women assistant teachers fell ill and was unable to teach. Further evidence that Fanny’s position was as a casual relief teacher was her letter tabled at the Congregation meeting on 20 May 1913.\textsuperscript{54} The Congregation Committee had granted her an additional £10 ‘in addition to her present salary,’ but the details of her salary were not

\textsuperscript{45} SKHC Minutes, 22 December, 1907, (Volume 2, 550.)
\textsuperscript{46} SKHC Minutes, 1 November, 1908, (Volume 2, 560.)
\textsuperscript{47} SKHC Minutes, 25 January, 1911, (Volume 3, 57.)
\textsuperscript{48} Danglow, \textit{History of the St Kilda Congregation 1871-1921}, 20.
\textsuperscript{49} SKHC Minutes, 18 July, 1911, (Volume 3, 68.)
\textsuperscript{50} SKHC Minutes, 18 July, 1911, (Volume 3, 68)
\textsuperscript{51} Danglow, \textit{History of the St Kilda Congregation 1871-1921}, 20.
\textsuperscript{52} Danglow, \textit{History of the St Kilda Congregation 1871-1921}, 22.
\textsuperscript{53} Andgel, ‘The Law of Loving Kindness,’ 201.
\textsuperscript{54} SKHC Minutes, 20 May, 1913, (Volume 3, 105.)
tabled at the meeting. Fanny had written a letter of thanks for the extra £10 that was duly tabled at the June meeting.

When Rabbi Dr Abrahams conducted the annual examination of the Hebrew students early in 1914, presumably some of these were the students Reading had tutored. Newton (2000) claims that Reading was employed as an assistant teacher at the Hebrew School from 1908 until 1916, teaching Hebrew and Jewish studies; she also was acting head of the Hebrew School on one occasion while Rev Fredman was absent. Fanny was therefore employed on a beginner’s salary of £2 per month rising to £3 per month with £10 extra each year. There was no record as to whether or not this final sum was a bonus, although the minutes read as though it might have been intended as such.

In 1908 the Hebrew School at the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation was registered in accordance with the Teachers’ Registration Act. This act required Victorian schools to place a sign near their front door indicating the school had been registered with the Victorian Government. The Act also required music teachers to make applications for approval to teach in Victorian schools, which would have also affected Fanny. At the same Congregation meeting in August 1908, £204 was withdrawn from the redemption fund for the new schoolroom. The building or extensions to the schoolroom were delayed until sufficient funds were available. When the schoolroom was completed, the Congregation Committee leased out the room in the evenings to defray their costs; for example, it was rented to the Maccabean Union for the evening of 22 December 1908. Fanny was associated with this club, which was a Jewish literary and debating society, and she served as an honorary secretary at some point.

55 SKHC Minutes, 20 May, 1913, (Volume 3, 105.)
56 SKHC Minutes, 28 January, 1914, (Volume 3, 118.)
57 Newton, Making a Difference, 8.
58 Newton, Making a Difference, 282, Footnote 32.
59 SKHC Minutes, 2 August, 1908, (Volume 2, 549.)
60 Bendigo Advertiser, 15 May, 1907, 8.
61 SKHC Minutes, 2 August, 1908, (Volume 2, 549)
62 SKHC Minutes, 20 September, 1908, (Volume 2, 554.)
63 Rubinstein, ’Dr Fanny Reading.’
Rev Danglow and Mrs Danglow founded the Jewish Young People's Association in June 1911 in the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation. Fanny was a vice-president of the Jewish Young People’s Association (JYPA) at a later stage, with the first vice-presidents being Rupert Levi and Clifford Joseph. The first edition of *The Jippa* under the auspices of the Jewish Young People’s Association was published in Melbourne in December 1927 under the editorship of Grace Benjamin and sold for sixpence per copy. However by 1927 Fanny had moved to Sydney and was occupied with her medical work and the National Council of Jewish Women. *The Jippa* would be published until 1932; Rabbi Danglow wrote an encouraging foreword and said the aims of the journal would be ‘to promote the study of Jewish history and literature, to further a love for Jewish ideals, and to strengthen the spirit of mutual co-operation among the members, as well as to deal with matters of local Jewish interest.’

The practical aim of the Jewish Young People’s Association was to bring young single Jewish people of both sexes together. ‘Given the size of the community, either its members found their marriage partners among the members or they were doomed to remain single or to marry “out.”’ Fanny’s activity with the Jewish Young People’s Association was based on her firm belief in the sanctity of Jewish marriage and the importance of inculcating in young Jewish women the necessity of choosing Jewish husbands. This underpinned her later interest in and work for adolescent Jewish girls. These Jewish Young People’s Association activities also introduced her to meeting procedures, networking, fundraising and interaction with other young Jewish people, but they did not result in a marriage partner for her, although the JYPA’s primary function was to serve as a place to find a Jewish spouse.

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64 Levi, Rabbi Jacob Danglow, 4.
65 Levi, Rabbi Jacob Danglow, 59.
67 J. Danglow, Foreword to *The Jippa*, (ed) Grace Benjamin, 1,1, 1927 : 2.
68 Levi, Rabbi Jacob Danglow, 60.
69 Reading, 22 December, 1925, Jerusalem. *Letter referring to the Jewish Chronicle*, 4 December, 1925, 18. (Mitchell Library.)
Fanny also belonged to the Princess Ida Club (1888-1915), which was for past and present students of the University of Melbourne. Its activities were based around social functions, literary activities and debates. 

Among Reading’s private papers is a large group photograph of the Princess Ida Club (dated 1905-1906). In April 1906, Mrs Fox, M.A. became the president and Dr Georgiana Sweet became the vice-president of the Princess Ida Club. This club provided a ‘support network’ for the predominantly gentile women and launched campaigns for the good name and stature of women at the university, but was mainly the ‘province of the wealthy’. Fanny must have started studying music at the Conservatorium about 1906 when she was 22 years old. However, by mixing with this group of people in an attempt to broaden her social circle, she still encountered anti-Semitism and snobbery. There were class divisions even within the Jewish community in Melbourne; divisions were based on ethnicity, wealth, business prominence and length of residence in Melbourne. The prominent Michaelis Hallenstein family in St Kilda for instance, held to the ‘rituals of the Australian mercantile class with its mixture of egalitarianism and snobbery’. Fanny and her family had to contend with such issues both within the Jewish community and the wider gentile community in Melbourne. Greater issues were at stake however, as

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71 Reading Photographs and Realia (1890-1974), Image a5749124. (Mitchell Library.)
73 Levi, Rabbi Jacob Danglow; 31.
74 The old established Jewish families of St Kilda were profiled a century later in the publication of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, Pillars of the S. Kilda Congregation: Celebrating our History (2012) by Karen Klein. The Reading (Rubinovitch) family were not included.
Australia moved slowly but surely towards World War 1, which would affect all – rich and poor, Jew and gentile.

The Musician or the Doctor?

It seems that Reading’s first love was music, although she spent eight years gaining her Diploma of Music. It is entirely possible that since she was a gifted musician, her first preference for a career might have been as a musician – she could have taught music and been an accompanist. ‘Miss Fanny Rubinovitch was awarded the Ormond Exhibition on passing the first year for the Degree of Bachelor of Music, she has shown exceptional brilliance in music.’75 One newspaper report claimed:

before the war she had been one of Professor Laver’s most brilliant pupils, and she had decided on music as her career; but the war made such an impression on her that her thoughts turned to succouring her fellows rather than entertaining them, and that is why she set aside dreams of fame and is content to be modest but singularly useful Dr Reading of Kogarah.76

Consider the fact that in all the places Reading lived after she moved to Sydney, there was always a grand piano in the sitting room that she never played.77 On the top of the grand piano sat a framed photograph of a young man in army uniform, whose identity she refused to discuss with her young nephews and niece.78 Therefore, both the piano and the photograph were mementoes of two possible life paths Reading did not follow – marriage and a musical career. Perhaps Reading was also a perfectionist, and having decided upon a career in medicine, she decided to focus on science and closed the door to music and romance.

This thesis argues that the following factors inspired Reading to deviate from the path of music to that of medicine: places for women in medicine at the University of Melbourne during World War 1; the ability to contribute substantially to the Australian society as a doctor; and the maternal feminism in the inter-war period when professional women’s

77 Personal information Jennifer Burman, March 2014.
78 Personal information Jennifer Burman, March 2014.
roles as health care workers were being consolidated.\textsuperscript{79} Reading’s high social status owed a great deal to her occupation as a medical doctor as well as to her personal qualities. Additionally, she was a graduate of the University of Melbourne, which was an exclusive institution with high standards.\textsuperscript{80} Rutland (1983) argues that in Australia during the 1930s, ‘the income and status enjoyed by Australian medical practitioners was very high – higher than in Britain or on the Continent.’\textsuperscript{81}

These factors, combined with Reading’s professional skill and her personal charisma contributed to the status she enjoyed and the growing respect in which she was held during her lifetime. Founding the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia in 1929 also added to the great respect in which she was held, not only in the Jewish community, but also in the non-Jewish community.

\textbf{World War 1}

The Australian Jewish community made a huge contribution to the Australian war effort considering their numbers. In World War 1, 3878 Jewish men and women were service personnel;\textsuperscript{82} 300 were killed and Jews had a higher ratio of enlistment than the non-Jewish population – 13 percent for Jewish males compared to 9.2 percent of the overall population.\textsuperscript{83} For many young men in Australia the call to enlist and serve king and country was the opportunity of a lifetime to travel and have adventures. When war was declared on 4 August 1914, 416,809 Australian men enlisted.\textsuperscript{84} Reading’s brothers however, were not in the first intake of men into the Armed Forces;\textsuperscript{85} initially Lewis and Hyman did not meet the medical conditions for the AIF, but they both tried to enlist.


\textsuperscript{81} Rutland, \textit{Take Heart Again}, 4.

\textsuperscript{82} Rutland, \textit{The Jews in Australia}, 127.

\textsuperscript{83} Rutland, \textit{The Jews in Australia}, 46.


\textsuperscript{85} The contributions made by the Reading family to the war effort are covered in detail in Chapter 9.
again, as there was still a shortage of troops in 1917.  

86 (See Chapter 9 for the Reading family’s war service). In June 1917, some 7000 recruits a month were needed to maintain the five Australian divisions in the field; 87 by June 1917 there were more than 76,000 Australians killed, wounded or missing on the Western Front. 88 It was also in June 1917 that tree planting started in Ballarat where an ‘Avenue of Honour’ would grow as a memorial to the enlisted men who had already died; ultimately it would have 3700 trees and stretch for 22 kilometres. 89

After World War I broke out, Rabbi Danglow listed all the 227 Victorian Jews who had enrolled. 90 The Jewish community made a huge commitment to Australia during World War I. A kiosk in Hyde Park Sydney was used for serving refreshments for troops. General Sir John Monash (1865-1931) proved to be a ‘brilliant tactician with tanks’ and while he was not an observant Jew he never forgot his Jewish roots. 91 Not everyone was able to go to the war and with so many young men away, new opportunities arose for those left in Australia. This is covered in the next section.

Medical Studies

The advent of World War I created many opportunities for women that had previously been unavailable to them, and Fanny seized the opportunity to go back to university. In 1914, aged almost 30, she was already a ‘blue stocking,’ (a kinder term than ‘old maid’) but in 1916 made the decision to re-enter the University of Melbourne and study medicine. It is not clear what she did between finishing her music studies in 1914 and 1916 – perhaps she just had a rest from intellectual study, assisted at one of the local charities and continued teaching Hebrew at the St Kilda Congregation. The Rubinovitch family story was that Lewis had started medicine at the University of Melbourne and

87 Beaumont, Broken Nation, 374.
88 Beaumont, Broken Nation, 389.
89 Beaumont, Broken Nation, 376.
91 Rutland, The Jews in Australia, 49.
Fanny had decided to enroll with him for support. On his AIF enlistment form, Lewis described his occupation as a ‘student;' however he did not complete the medical course and his occupation after the war was given as a ‘traveller.’ Fanny however, did not leave university and eventually went on to graduate (M.B., B.S.) in 1922 when she was 38.

Fanny must have seriously considered and discussed her decision to stay on at University of Melbourne. It was very expensive to study medicine and as she needed to study for and sit the matriculation examination in order to enter, the fee was £1.1.0. For each of the next five years of the course the fee was £22.0.0 a year. There were additional fees for the hospital, the annual sports fee of 7/6d and the annual club fee of 7/6d. There was an additional fee of £3.3s. at the Women’s Hospital for caution money. The ‘caution money’ was paid by medical students in case any expensive equipment was broken or damaged. Any unused caution money went to the university to purchase books.

Abe may have been able to pass any medical textbooks that he owned onto Fanny, which would have helped her cut the costs, which totalled at least £188. Without doubt Abe encouraged and supported her decision to study medicine. Ever resourceful, Esther helped her daughter meet the financial costs of her medical studies by taking in boarders; D. H. Harris for example had boarded with Esther. During World War 1 and the years following, Fanny was fully occupied with her medical studies at the University of Melbourne.

93 NAA, Australian Electoral Rolls, 1919.
94 Dr Fanny Reading 1884-1974 papers, Graduation Certificate, 1922. (Mitchell Library.)
96 There were additional fees for Hospital and Pharmaceutical Tuition which were also expensive. In the third year the College of Pharmacy fee was £6.16s.6d; third year students were placed at the Melbourne, Alfred or St Vincent’s Hospital and the hospitals charged £10.10s.0d. entrance fee and the fourth and fifth years were taken up with gynaecology, (£2.2s.) obstetrics (£8.8s), anesthetics (£1.1s), children’s diseases clinical fee of £6.6s.od. In the fourth and fifth years of medicine, the clinical fees rose to £13.13s.0d and £14.11s.0d respectively. (£1.1s), ophthalmology (£1.1s), diseases of the skin (£1.1s), mental diseases (£1.1s), fever hospital (£1.1s.), diseases of the throat, nose and ear (10/6d). These could be undertaken at the Women’s, St Vincent’s or the Melbourne Hospital.
97 D.H.Harris, Letter, 1909. Reading Papers (Archives AJHS, Sydney.)
In this photograph dated July 1920, in the gynaecology/obstetrics group Miss Fanny Rubinovitch is seated in the front row on the right, with Miss E. Govan and Dr Jacobs (superintendent). Standing behind are Dr Wynne, Miss T. Roche and Dr James. The men were the lecturers and the female students went either to the Women’s Hospital, the Melbourne Hospital or St Vincent’s Hospital to complete their studies.

In a photograph of the senior anatomy class of 1918, there are 78 students posed in front of the south entrance to the Old Quad, which was a favourite place for photographs. There are 20 female and 58 male students in this group. The photograph of ‘The Fifth Year Medical Students of 1920,’ reproduced above, comprised 42 students: 31 males and 11 females. These photographs are visual evidence that the ratio of men to women studying medicine at the University of Melbourne from 1918 to 1920 was approximately

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98 Photographer P. Pearce, University Studios, 106 Lygon Street, Carlton.
99 Dr Fanny Reading Photographs and Realia, 1890-1974, Image a5749122. (Mitchell Library)
3:1. Fanny and her female student colleagues were ‘trailblazers’ in this regard and they were honoured in the University of Melbourne Medical Museum Exhibition Strength of Mind (2013) as the ‘Class of 22’.\textsuperscript{100} Although Fanny did not get an individual biography in this publication, she clearly was very worthy of one. The iconic white doctor’s coat was to become part of Reading’s wardrobe after she graduated in 1922. The message it gave was one of authority, and certainly on the wards and in her surgery, it signalled her professional presence and care.

A Change of Identity

After the war in 1919, Nathan Rubinovitch changed the family name to a surname that sounded less foreign – Reading. He took this name after Lord Reading (Rufus Isaacs), a successful London Jew, the Lord Chief Justice, who had been appointed Viceroy of India.\textsuperscript{101} This was not an unusual practice. Simcha Myer Baevski who came from Kritchiff (now in Belarus) changed his name to Sidney Myer.\textsuperscript{102} In 1905 Myer married Hannah (Nance) Flegelbaut at Ballarat.\textsuperscript{103} However, before Nathan’s application was processed, the Intelligence Section of the Australian Military Forces required a report on ‘particulars as to his nationality, loyalty and general conduct.’\textsuperscript{104} In May 1918 the Brigadier General of the Third Military District replied:

\begin{quote}
Nathan Jacob Rubinovitch is a naturalized British subject of Russian origin. He was naturalised at Ballarat on 20 July 1897. He is engaged on time share payment drapery trade and had a good reputation [sic] and is looked upon as loyal and has sons in the Australian Imperial Force.
\end{quote}

After 1919 all the members of the Rubinovitch family took the surname Reading. For Fanny Reading this became a change of identity (from this point she will be referred to as ‘Reading’ in this thesis). The Reading family remained an orthodox Jewish family and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[100] Strength of Mind: 125 Years of Women in Medicine, University of Melbourne Medical History Museum, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2013.
\item[101] Levi, Rabbi Jacob Danglow, 124.
\item[104] NAA, Series World War 1 Intelligence Section Case Files, MP16/1,1918/618, Nathan Jacob Rubinovitch.
\end{footnotes}
Esther kept a kosher household – it was only outwardly they had changed. This marks perhaps a stage in their assimilation to Australia, or a defensive response to the anti-Semitism in the Australian community. Reading emerged from a Jewish tradition that had evolved over 2000 years, and to which she was deeply attached. The following section attempts to describe Reading’s acculturalisation to Australian values.

**The Little Aussie Battler**

This thesis will argue that as well as being Jewish, Reading was also a ‘little Aussie battler.’ This is not a derogatory term, rather it is a ‘term of respect and endearment intended to empower, or at least acknowledge, those who feel as though they exist at the bottom of society.’

A battler is a significant term in Australian culture depending upon the context in which it is used. Its negative connotation is of someone who is poor and struggling to survive; its positive connotation is someone who can overcome adversity through hard work and perseverance; its class connotation in contemporary media and texts is that it refers to an ordinary person. The other quality that a battler has and is admired for is a fighting spirit.

The use of the adjective ‘little’ is not pejorative either; it is affectionate. Australians are known to prefer the use of diminutives, even in names, usually reducing them to one syllable where possible – Robert becomes Bob, Shirley becomes Shirl, Dr Fanny Reading became Dr Fanny or Dr Fan. Australians have a strong preference for informality, so ‘little battler’ can be an Australian indirect way of displaying familiarity, friendliness and equality for people who are battling the vicissitudes of life. Reading certainly had to battle the vicissitudes of life, particularly in her early childhood, and later in life she displayed the qualities of the ‘little Aussie battler.’

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106 Sekiya, ‘Aussie “battler” as a cultural keyword in Australian English,’ 27.
If Reading’s Russian Jewish family and her Judaism were the primary influences on her character and development, then her life and education in Ballarat exposed her to secondary influences. Like all the other children who attended government schools at the end of the nineteenth century, she was exposed to the late Victorian mores of class, sex and gender. Understanding Reading as the ‘little Aussie battler,’ together with her identity as a Jewish migrant, it is evident she has many of the qualities of the battler – stoicism and perseverance, and perhaps atypically in Reading’s case – prodigious energy.

There was considerable pressure from her Jewish community to conform and blend in with the host Australian community, and not to be too distinctive. Reading once said, ‘In the face of adversity and depression, we double our efforts.’ She was actually speaking of Jewish women as a whole, but this also expressed her own fighting spirit. Her Jewish contemporaries recognised this quality in her, and upon her death in 1974 from Parkinson’s disease, the President of the NCJWA, Sylvia Gelman, wrote, ‘May the light that was Fanny Reading illuminate our paths for many years to come.’

Reading absorbed various cultural influences from the Australian childhood environment as she was growing up, firstly at Lake Bolac, then at the Mt William goldfield at Mafeking near Mt William in Western Victoria, and finally in Ballarat. Reading’s feelings of childhood loneliness have been mentioned earlier, and she experienced isolation from Anglo society in Lake Bolac and Mafeking. Reading was not completely isolated from Australian culture in Ballarat, since she went to primary and secondary school there. She must have absorbed some of the characteristics of being Australian in the tough playground culture, such as ‘not fair’ and ‘payback’ and by dealing with the teasing which happens in schoolyards. It meant growing a thick skin, dealing with the toughness of the Australian environment, when people should try not to be ‘overwhelmed by the harsh life which may face them but rather to ‘bear up’ and try to do something for themselves.’ This is the kind of battling spirit that Henry Lawson depicted in his stories

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such as ‘The Bush Wife’ (the character was allegedly based on his mother) and which Lawson’s mother, Louisa Lawson, displayed in her own life.

Reading displayed a battling spirit and she would have seen within her own family numerous examples of having to ‘bear up.’ Examples include: the death of her little sister Miram in 1898; her parents having to work very hard; having to ‘make do’ in the depression in the 1890s; and her 12-year-old cousin David’s death in 1919. As discussed earlier, Reading’s family would have benefitted from the charity work of the Ballarat Jewish Philanthropic Society and the Ballarat Hebrew Ladies’ Benevolent Society that were formed in early Ballarat. Charity work by Jewish women had started from the earliest days in Australia; in Jewish tradition ‘tsedakah’ (charity) is central, and is a recurring theme in this thesis since it was one Reading’s core values.

Wickham (2003) notes that in order to be acknowledged as worthwhile, honorable, and valuable citizens in their new homeland, Jewish men ‘sought and accepted positions on the major community charitable committees as well.’ Freemasonry also brought together Jews and Protestants in Ballarat, although Catholics were excluded. Once again this applied only to men and women tended to be more isolated in their homes. In Sydney, the Ladies’ Hebrew Benevolent and Maternity Society was founded in 1844, and in Melbourne the Hebrew Ladies’ Benevolent Society was founded in 1857. The Jewish women in both cities went to work for the Montefiore Homes for the Aged and also worked for non-Jewish charities such as the Red Cross, which was covered more fully in Chapter 1.

Nonetheless, Reading’s adult life demonstrated qualities of the ‘little Aussie battler’ – strength in the face of difficulties, resilience and energy. Some of these qualities are

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114 Dorothy Glennys Wickham, ‘Beyond the Wall: Ballarat Female Refuge: A Case Study in Moral Authority,’ (Master’s thesis, Australian Catholic University), 2003, 46.
115 Rutland, The Jews in Australia, 106.
116 Wickham, ‘Beyond the Wall: Ballarat Female Refuge, 46.
117 Wickham, ‘Beyond the Wall: Ballarat Female Refuge, 46.
118 Rutland, The Jews in Australia, 106.
displayed in the next chapter, which focuses on the early period of Reading’s life as a medical doctor. She moved to Sydney and joined Abe at Kogarah then Bondi Junction, as well as establishing her own practice in Kings Cross.
Chapter 5. Sydney - The Turning Point-1923

This chapter commences with the period when Reading was setting up practice in Sydney and formed the Council of Jewish Women (CJW). The chapter is entitled ‘The Turning Point’ because it marks a significant time of change in Reading’s adult life. As Denzin (1989) directs biographers to the idea that there ‘is the belief that a life is shaped by key turning points. These moments leave permanent marks.’ Reading’s important meeting with Madam Bella Pevsner, a Zionist emissary from Palestine, really inspired her to form the CJW. It covers the growth of the Zionist movement in Australia and Reading’s attendance at the Fourteenth Zionist Congress in Vienna in 1925. Sections from her lengthy report on this congress, written afterwards from London, are included.

Setting up Practice in Sydney

This section covers Reading’s early practice in Kogarah and Kings Cross before her move to Bondi Junction.

Upon graduation as a medical doctor from the University of Melbourne in 1922, Reading left Melbourne and went into practice in Sydney with her brother Abe. He was also a doctor and Reading shared ‘a very strong bond ’ with him. In 1923 Reading resided at 19 Belgrave Street, Kogarah when she started work at the Kogarah Hospital in Kogarah, Sydney. Later, in addition to her Kings Cross practice, she joined Abe’s practices in his rooms at Old South Head Road, Bondi Junction and then 253 Oxford Street, Bondi Junction. Abe’s practice facilitated Reading’s entry into general practice and meant she avoided hitting the ‘glass ceiling’ so many other early female medical graduates had encountered when they tried to enter general practice.

Many Jewish families were living in Sydney and Abe set up his practice among them.\(^5\) Therefore, after she left Kogarah Hospital for private practice, Reading was able to start work immediately, principally with Jewish women and children.\(^6\) Sydney’s Jewish population originally settled in the central areas of Haymarket, Surrey Hills and Darlinghurst.\(^7\) As their economic position improved they moved to the eastern suburbs and by 1921, 33.9 percent of Sydney’s Jewish population had moved to Bondi and Bellevue.\(^8\) By 1929 Reading was at 31 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst and then in 1930 at 99-100 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst.\(^9\) In 1932, Abe and Reading’s medical practice was registered at 40 Bayswater Road, Sydney.\(^10\) Price (1964) discusses this movement of Jews, which he calls the movement from the first area of settlement to the uptown area.\(^11\) The place of the first generation settlers in the ‘downtown quarter’ was replaced by new arrivals.\(^12\)

In Sydney the Reading siblings followed the practice of other Jewish families and lived in close proximity to each other. Abe and his wife Esma Daisy were at 103 Darlinghurst Road, and their brother Lewis Reading, whose occupation was listed as a ‘clerk,’ was at 45-47 Darlinghurst Road.\(^13\) Their other brother, Hyman Sydney (Samuel) Reading, was a ‘traveller,’ and was based at Woongarra on the Queensland coast between Bundaberg and Hervey Bay. He undoubtedly moved around the countryside of NSW and southern Queensland for his work, and kept in touch with his family.

\(^6\) Rubinstein, ‘Reading, Fanny (1884–1974).’
\(^7\) Rutland, *The Jews in Australia*, 37.
\(^8\) Rutland, *The Jews in Australia*, 37.
\(^9\) Australian Electoral Commission, East Sydney, 1903-1980, No. 7242
\(^10\) *Sands Directories*, Sydney and NSW, Australia. 1858–1933.
\(^12\) Price, ‘Jewish Settlers in Australia,’ 402.
\(^13\) Australian Electoral Commission, East Sydney, 1903-1980, No. 7244
Kogarah

Kogarah was a working class area in southern Sydney where Abe initially settled and began his medical practice.14 After her graduation in 1922, Reading joined his practice and she also worked at the St George Hospital.15 When she wrote home in 1925 from England she asked Abe to let the ‘Kogarah Hospital’ know that she would be away for a little longer.16 She also sent her greetings to the Kogarah people, which suggests she had many friends there.17 In 1921, the St George Hospital had a separate maternity ward where Reading would have practised after her arrival.18 Although 1922 was her first year out of medical school, Reading devoted considerable time and energy to a number of social activities in Kogarah that focused on specific issues in which she had a burgeoning interest – the medical care of women and children. These would become lifelong interests for her and be the basis for the organisation she would eventually found in 1923 as the Council of Jewish Women.

15 Certificate of Registration, NSW Medical Board, 1922, photocopy from Archives AJHS.
16 Reading, 13 October, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
17 Reading, letter, 10 January, 1926, The Hotel and Pension "Nordau" Grousenberg Strasse 10, Tel-Aviv. (Mitchell Library)
Her charity work in 1922 for the St George Hospital is also evidence of work Reading undertook for the gentile community as part of her broader civic values.\(^\text{19}\) She became the honorary organiser of the large fundraising committee that worked hard to support the St George Hospital;\(^\text{20}\) in 1923 it raised money for an ambulance for the suburb.\(^\text{21}\) In July 1922, Reading attended a fancy dress social evening at Kogarah and judged the children’s fancy dress entries.\(^\text{22}\) In September 1922, she was again in attendance at a masquerade ball where she awarded prizes.\(^\text{23}\) These sorts of activities were common ways of raising money for hospitals and charities after World War 1. Clearly Reading became involved with the local Kogarah community as soon as she arrived, in addition to her medical duties. This suggests a wider interest in her patients’ lives, but is also indicative of her wish to give something back to the Australian community that had provided her family with a safe haven.

By 1925, while Reading was on leave overseas from the Kogarah Hospital, enough money had been raised to equip and support both an X-ray and pathology department at St George District Hospital.\(^\text{24}\) The hospital grew quickly and a year later was planning additional accommodation for its nursing staff.\(^\text{25}\) This project needed £19,910 to complete the accommodation building and fortunately the NSW Government agreed to pay half the cost, but the hospital had to find the remainder.\(^\text{26}\) Eventually Reading would become an honorary medical officer at St George Hospital where she had started as a newly graduated doctor many years before.\(^\text{27}\) However, on 28 October 1929 the New York stock market crashed and there was ‘frenzied trading’ for ‘banking support was unable to prevent [today’s] disastrous break.’\(^\text{28}\) This calamitous event did not cause Reading to

\(^{19}\) Andgel, ‘The Law of Loving Kindness,’203.


\(^{26}\) Sydney Morning Herald, 13 July, 1926, 9.

\(^{27}\) Rubinstein, ‘Reading, Fanny (1884–1974).’

waver, and she went on with her plans to make the Council of Jewish Women a national body, which has been covered in Chapter 1.

**Kings Cross 1923**

When Reading set up her own private practice in Sydney she chose to work in Kings Cross, Sydney because she wanted to tend to the poor, the sick and the down-trodden.29 Ochert (1996) quoted Reading directly when she made plain her reasons for doing so. ‘Where else would I find such need, such human tragedies? No one wants to know that, below its glossy exterior, there is so much heartbreak, suffering, sickness and degradation in the Cross. I must live and work there!’30 She did just that, living in a flat in Kings Cross that adjoined her surgery.31 This clearly demonstrates the compassion Reading brought to her medical practice.32 Like other female doctors of the early twentieth century, such as Dr Mary de Garis (1881-1963) in Geelong, Victoria, getting through medical school had been only half the battle.33

When Reading began her practice in Kings Cross in the 1920s it was a bohemian, art deco and live entertainment area where the creative synergy was palpable.34 Kings Cross is the traffic intersection between Victoria Street and Darlinghurst Road, Sydney, although most Sydney-siders today consider that the Cross is a wider geographical area rather than just the intersection of these roads.35 Originally, it had been planned by Governor Darling as the first grand residential area of Sydney.36 Two sets of stairs were built in the 1870s linking the ‘social divide’ from the well-to-do Potts Point with the very poor working class Woolloomooloo Bay on Sydney Harbour. Some of the Darlinghurst residents were

30 Ochert, ‘Dr Fanny Reading vs. *Smith’s Weekly,*’ 310.
32 Ochert, ‘Dr Fanny Reading vs. *Smith’s Weekly,*’ 311.
34 Ochert, ‘Dr Fanny Reading vs. *Smith’s Weekly,*’ 310.
http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/kings_cross
36 Dunn, Kings Cross, Dictionary of Sydney.
‘people of the highest strata of Sydney society,’ and they were concerned property values would fall if Darlinghurst got too bad a reputation, which it eventually did.\(^{37}\)

Gadir’s (1983) study of Jews in Sydney revealed that by 1918 the north-eastern part of Darlinghurst was an upper-middle class area, but at Kings Cross there were rows of terrace houses with their gardens enclosed for shops.\(^{38}\) However, after World War 1 many young, single women lived in Kings Cross because they needed to be close to the central business centre of Sydney where they worked.\(^{39}\) The proximity of this peer group may well have been another reason why Reading chose to settle there. As property values decreased, bedsits became available in apartment buildings in the area, which were affordable for young, single women.\(^{40}\) Gadir argues that in spite of the worsening conditions for residential accommodation in inner Sydney, ‘the city was still the major place for employment.’\(^{41}\)

This description of Kings Cross suggests that Reading’s medical practice in the suburb would have been diversified, although it consisted mainly of women and children.\(^{42}\) News of her arrival in Kings Cross travelled quickly and she made house visits (as doctors did in those days) as well as seeing patients at her surgery.\(^{43}\) She may have treated the theatre community, musicians and singers, transgender performers; but perhaps not the pimps – only their girls and infants, as the following story indicates.\(^{44}\)

Andgel (1988) relates the story of Reading not only treating a ‘badly injured young woman’ who had been beaten up by her pimp (who was also her lover), but also sending out for the baby, who was being minded elsewhere, and making up a crib for it while she


\(^{40}\) The Strip on the Strip, 19.

\(^{41}\) Gardir, ‘East European Jews in Sydney,’ 216.

\(^{42}\) Andgel, ‘The Law of Loving Kindness,’ 203.


\(^{44}\) Andgel, ‘The Law of Loving Kindness,’ 251.
treated its mother.\textsuperscript{45} Morris Ochert (1966), a friend of Reading’s, wrote that ‘her little apartment was a haven for abused prostitutes, street kids, beaten wives and the homeless dregs of humanity who haunted the Cross.’\textsuperscript{46} Reading saw in her Kings Cross practice both the best and the worst of humankind. She saw through the superficiality and glamour of Kings Cross to the real needs of the people living and working there.

By 1929, as an area undergoing change, Kings Cross was described as the ‘business centre of Darlinghurst.’\textsuperscript{47} It was also a ‘charming residential centre’ and the residents defended their area, pointing out that the activities of ‘drugs fiends and their associates’ actually occurred outside Darlinghurst.\textsuperscript{48} Although things were clearly changing in Kings Cross there was a mood of resistance towards this from some of the older, established residents who did not like the new direction in which the Cross was moving.

However, it appealed to others for the European migrants who arrived in NSW after World War 1 found the area more ‘European’ in character than other parts of Sydney, and many settled permanently in Kings Cross.\textsuperscript{49} By 1921, almost a third of all Jewish immigrants and 45 percent of the Eastern European Jews were living in the inner city (compared to 23.8 percent of the total Sydney population.)\textsuperscript{50}

After Reading’s arrival the female residents living there had a woman doctor with whom they could share their most intimate concerns without embarrassment; they could be examined by a woman, and certainly one who understood the realities of a difficult life. Most working class women avoided hospital because of their dislike of being examined by male medical students and being subjected to the ‘none too delicate remarks that they can hear.’\textsuperscript{51} Bashford (1997) maintains that the loutish behavior of male medical students


\textsuperscript{46} Ochert, ‘Dr Fanny Reading and Smith’s Weekly,’ 310.


\textsuperscript{48} Argus, 2 October, 1929, 6.

\textsuperscript{49} The Strip on the Strip, 19.

\textsuperscript{50} Gadir, ‘East European Jews in Sydney,’ 186.

\textsuperscript{51} Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 205.
was the reason women travelled long distances, sometimes at great expense, to consult woman doctors, and ultimately why women’s hospitals became such a success.\textsuperscript{52} In addition, these Jewish migrants had reasonable housing, proximity to the city, and were a comfortable walking distance to the synagogue and contact with the old Jewish settlers (the Anglo-Jews) of Sydney. They also had contact with Jewish settlers who had moved to the more affluent eastern suburbs such as Bondi Junction.\textsuperscript{53}

Some of Reading’s patients suffered from sexually transmitted diseases, especially the prostitutes, but also married women whose husbands engaged the services of prostitutes. Those who contracted venereal diseases would suffer for the rest of their lives.\textsuperscript{54} Both gonorrhea and syphilis have latent phases and can reappear later in life.\textsuperscript{55} Untreated syphilis caused various problems with pregnancy – miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery or the death of the baby shortly after delivery. Babies who survived were often of a low birth weight. Some who survived suffered from congenital or constitutional syphilis that often resulted in serious kidney and bone damage, progressive blindness, deafness, atypical facial features and mental retardation.\textsuperscript{56}

The management of venereal diseases (VD) before the 1920s in Australia was still a contentious area and certainly the subject was not mentioned in polite society. In 1916, the Victorian Government had passed a Venereal Diseases Act that was more sensitive to the privacy and civil rights of the afflicted women than the previous legislation.\textsuperscript{57} These conservative attitudes slowly changed as public education about VD became more common in Australia during the next decade.\textsuperscript{58} World War 1 delivered the knowledge of birth control down the class system, because VD among the troops caused the military

\textsuperscript{52} Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 205.
\textsuperscript{53} Gardir, ‘East European Jews in Sydney,’ 194.
\textsuperscript{54} McCalman, \textit{Sex and Suffering}, 99.
\textsuperscript{55} McCalman, \textit{Sex and Suffering}, 99.
\textsuperscript{57} McCalman, \textit{Sex and Suffering}, 152.
authorities to issue condoms.\(^{59}\) It was understood that prophylactics offered some form of protection against VD, but legislation in 1923 prohibited the importation of condoms, supposedly to protect the local production of condoms, but more likely to control the fertility of women, which is discussed further in this chapter.\(^{60}\)

However, as there was no family planning or contraception available, many pregnant, poor, married and unmarried women in Australia in this period resorted to abortion rather than bringing another child into a family that was already struggling with poverty and had many mouths to feed.\(^{61}\) Mechanical contraceptives were expensive, difficult to find and unreliable.\(^{62}\) The poor and ignorant had to resort to the time-honoured practices of abstinence, withdrawal and abortion.\(^{63}\) The practice of abortion is very old, with typically powerful emetics and drugs such as ergot, which caused strong contractions, being widely used.\(^{64}\) These products were sold by chemists and ‘shady’ midwives everywhere; in fact abortion was regarded as birth control and was the one technique available to poor women.\(^{65}\) It was dangerous, and from the 1920s all medical staff at the Women’s Hospital, Melbourne, (including Reading as a medical student there) had been taught to assume that every postabortal sepsis case was the result of a criminal abortion.\(^{66}\)

While the infant mortality rate had decreased around 1900, maternal death rates remained high until the 1930s.\(^{67}\) Some of these deaths would have been from botched abortions, as had occurred in Elma Reading’s case. (This is covered is Chapter 8). Falconer’s (2002) research shows most poor, pregnant girls went to the local Salvation Army Home where the baby would have been given over by the mother for adoption after birth.\(^{68}\)

\(^{59}\) McCalman, *Sex and Suffering*, 152.
\(^{60}\) Gifford and M. J Temple-Smith, *Sexual Health*, 12.
\(^{61}\) Gifford and M. J Temple-Smith, *Sexual Health*, 12
\(^{62}\) McCalman, *Sex and Suffering*, 126.
\(^{63}\) McCalman, *Sex and Suffering*, 126.
\(^{64}\) McCalman, *Sex and Suffering*, 128.
\(^{65}\) McCalman, *Sex and Suffering*, 128.
\(^{66}\) McCalman, *Sex and Suffering*, 129.
\(^{67}\) Gifford and M. J Temple-Smith, *Sexual Health*, 12.
Reading, known affectionately as Dr Fanny to her patients, would have been sympathetic and caring to women in circumstances relating to their general health and reproductive capacities. After all, she had witnessed at close hand during her impressionable teenage years, Esther’s five pregnancies, her mother’s struggle with poverty and her grief over little Minnie’s death at six months in 1898. Reading knew the realities of motherhood secondhand and she would have been accordingly a gentle and compassionate physician. Not only that, she was generous, as she often did ‘much unpaid work for the sick and needy.’

**Bondi Junction**

Reading joined her brother’s established practice in Bondi Junction, first in Old South Road and then Oxford Street. Her mornings were spent in Kings Cross at her own practice and then she would go to Bondi Junction in the afternoon to the family practice. The Jewish immigrants in Sydney before World War II prospered and as their families grew, they moved to other areas of Sydney including Bondi Junction. They were able to do so because new synagogues were established nearby: the Central Synagogue (founded 1923); the Mizrachi synagogue (founded 1931); and the Adass synagogue (founded 1942.) A move to Bondi Junction would have meant for those Jewish families and children better housing, cleaner air and more space for children to play. Reading would have dealt with many of the illnesses of childhood including diarrhoea, ear, nose and throat infections, or the ubiquitous ‘winter cough’ during the colder, winter months. She also tended to women’s general health. This was the era of the stay-at-home mother,

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70 Andgel, ‘Law of Loving Kindness,’ 249.
and as discussed earlier, the traditional role of the Jewish mother was to stay at home and look after her family.75

McCalman (2009) cites Anne Hardy’s study where she found that rickets was ‘less prevalent’ in Jewish children in poor districts, but this was not solely due to the diet.76 Hardy argues that a very high value was placed by Jewish parents on their children, which resulted in Jewish children receiving ‘a better share’ of the family meals than gentile children received.77 These mothers provided a ‘continuity of care’ that made a vast difference to the health of their children, by staying at home fulltime.78

However, Jewish women (wherever they lived) were isolated and lonely in their homes, and remembering her own loneliness in Ballarat, Reading was determined to minister not only to their physical ailments but to their social needs as well. This led her to form the Council of Jewish Women in 1923 and the National Council of Jewish Women in 1929. This constitutes the next section of this chapter, the arrival of Madame Pevsner and the contact with other Zionists as well as the formation of a Jewish women’s organisation.

Madam Bella Pevsner’s 1923 Visit

Madame Belle Pevsner (1872-1942) was to have an enormous influence on Reading. Firstly, some background detail about this emissary for the new Palestine Restoration Fund (PRF), who arrived in Australia just as Reading moved to Sydney in 1923. Pevsner was a feminist and a Zionist and her meeting with Reading was serendipitous. In 1912 Pevsner had been in San Francisco fundraising for the Bezalel Institute in Jerusalem promoting its arts, crafts and domestic industries.79 The Institute formed the foundation of

76 McCalman, ‘Silent Witnesses,’ 30.
77 McCalman, ‘Silent Witnesses,’ 30.
78 McCalman, ‘Silent Witnesses,’ 27.
the future Bezalel Museum, which later became the Israel Museum in 1965. In this way, early Jewish settlers in Palestine tried to link the art and craft movement with their practical Zionism to create an artistic national Jewish identity. In 1923 Pevsner was on another world fundraising tour on behalf of the JNF in Jerusalem, the Keren Kayemeth Leisrael.

Madame Bella Pevsner
_Chicago Examiner_, 14, 22.

Pevsner’s public speeches and writings make it clear she was a dedicated Zionist who took the traditional position with regard to Jewish women. She claimed that since Jewish women were not caught in the maelstrom of business they had more leisure time to

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81 Boris Schatz (1866-1932), ‘Bezalal: Art, Craft and Jewish identity.’
transmit the Jewish message to their children.\textsuperscript{82} Her lectures were variations on these themes and the importance of Palestine to the Jewish people.\textsuperscript{83} Pevsner saw the resurrection of the Jewish soul in the Bezalel Institute.\textsuperscript{84} She also saw an important role for herself in promoting the cause of Zionism around the world, and by all accounts was a charismatic Zionist speaker.\textsuperscript{85}

Pevsner was also well practised as a writer for her essay on ‘The Pride of Ancestry’ (published in full in \textit{The Maccabean}, May 1919) argued that the inner creative spirit and genius of the Jewish people was long overdue for recognition.\textsuperscript{86} As early as 1912, Pevsner made it quite clear to Jewish audiences that it was not possible for all Jews to live in Palestine, smashing the plans of many Russian Jews who had hoped to migrate there.\textsuperscript{87}

In 1916 Pevsner gave a lecture ‘Why do Jews Intermarry?’ in which she argued that intermarrying was occurring because the Jewish soul was asleep, that the younger generation were in grave spiritual danger and that Judaism was becoming nothing but an empty shell.\textsuperscript{88}

In Australia in 1923 advertisements were placed in local newspapers announcing her speaking tour. In Brisbane \textit{The Courier} advertised that she would speak on the ‘Old and New Palestine’ in June 1923.\textsuperscript{89} Later that month she was in Adelaide where \textit{The Register}\textsuperscript{89}.

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\item 82 Bella Pevsner, ‘Why do Jews Intermarry?’ \textit{American Hebrew}, (6 October. 1916), 794.
\item 83 Some of Pevsner’s lectures were ‘Woman Builder and Breaker of Worlds’, ‘Old and New Palestine and how it affects the Present World Problem’, ‘The Secret of Jewish Survival’, ‘The Place of Women in Civilisation’ and ‘The True Position of Palestine’. She argued for a Hebrew republic.
\item 85 Sydney Morning Herald. 9 June, 1923, 9.
\item 86 \textit{The Maccabean}, May 1919.
\item 88 American Hebrew, 6 October, 1916, 79.
\item 89 Brisbane Courier, 1 June 1923, 11. Accessed 13 January, 2015.
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announced her presentation on ‘Role of Women in the Progress of Humanity.’ While in Sydney, Pevsner stayed with Morris Symonds and his wife. Symonds, among other things, was the President of the Sydney Union of Zionists.

On 24 June 1923, following an address by Pevsner in Sydney, a Union of Jewish Women was formed to support the Jewish National Fund. Four days later Pevsner spoke to a meeting of the Jewish Social and Entertainment Committee of which Reading was president. This was a crucial meeting, as it was at this point Reading conceived and formulated her idea of an organisation that would involve all the Jewish women of Australia, not just those living in Sydney. Spurred on, Reading wrote in August 1923 to the editor of The Hebrew Standard of Australasia (her old classmate Jonah Marks) that ‘Woman is the spiritual [sic] force of the universe – women [sic] is behind man in all his actions.’ Her statement reflected that at this point she agreed with Pevsner’s message about the traditional role that women would play in Zionism. In the future she would seek a more active role for women in Zionism.

In the same edition of The Hebrew Standard there was an advertisement that Pevsner would lecture in the King’s Hall, Hunter Street, Sydney on ‘Women and Palestine.’ This important lecture was promoted by the Zionist Union of Australia and the Council of Jewish Women (CJW), which Reading had formed by this stage. The CJW would have to support Zionism covertly since there was ‘enormous resistance’ to it in the early days in Australia, with not all members supportive. Indeed, until World War II, Zionism was to remain a fringe movement for Australian Jews. However, Reading was a solid supporter from this date.

91 Andgel, ‘The Law of Loving Kindness, 204.
95 Hebrew Standard, 10 August, 1923, 10.
96 Rutland, The Jews in Australia, 79.
97 Rutland, The Jews in Australia, 79.
Pevsner’s last visit in Australia in 1923 was to Perth, on her voyage home to Palestine. As a result of her lecture there, separate men and women’s Zionist organisations were formed in Perth. The London Zionist headquarters expressed its disapproval, as it felt separate organisations served to ‘compound’ rather than ‘improve’ the organisational situation of Zionism in Australia.\textsuperscript{98} The same people were constantly contributing money and Zionist headquarters feared the funding sources would dry up very quickly.

It seemed the only ‘permanent and positive legacy’ from Pevsner’s visit was the formation of the Council of Jewish Women under Reading in Sydney.\textsuperscript{99} While Pevsner marginally strengthened Zionism in Australia and New Zealand, it seems her role as a catalyst in the formation of the Council of Jewish Women (CJW) was of far greater importance.\textsuperscript{100} The formation of the CJW forged in NSW’s Jewish women a sense of group consciousness and distinct identity as a group, and strengthened their self-esteem; the growth and development of these were covered in Chapter 1.

The following section is a concise summary of some of the important developments in Zionism, such as the Balfour Declaration of 1917, Churchill’s White paper of 1922 and the McDonald paper of 1939, and responses to these by Australia’s Jewish community. Reading would have carefully followed all the overseas developments reported in the local Jewish and Australian press. The Hebrew Standard, which by this time took an anti-Zionist stand, influenced many Australian Jews.

**The Balfour Declaration and Zionism In Australia**

The Zionists’ dreams came true and their hard work was realised when eminent Jewish member of the English establishment and Zionist, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote a letter to Lord Rothschild on 2 November 1917:

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\textsuperscript{98} Hymans, \textit{The History of the Australian Zionist Movement}, 33.

\textsuperscript{99} Hymans, \textit{The History of the Australian Zionist Movement}, 34.

\textsuperscript{100} Andgel, ‘The Law of Loving Kindness,’ Footnote 20.
His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.\textsuperscript{101}

Known as the Balfour Declaration, it made clear that nothing should be done to compromise the civil and religious rights of non-Jews in Palestine. At the end of World War I the Treaty of Versailles was signed on 28 June 1919. In 1920 the British Mandate for Palestine was approved at the San Remo conference.\textsuperscript{102} However, there was considerable unrest in Palestine because the British authorities disturbed worship at the Wailing Wall and riots broke out in 1920 and 1922.\textsuperscript{103} As a result, Churchill’s White Paper of 1922 appeared to be something of a setback for the Zionists, stating:

Unauthorized statements have been made to the effect that the purpose in view is to create a wholly Jewish Palestine. Phrases have been used such as that Palestine is to become "as Jewish as England is English." His Majesty's Government regard any such expectation as impracticable and have no such aim in view.\textsuperscript{104}

It appeared Britain was working towards a compromise to ease the tension in Palestine and only wished to see a Jewish community in Palestine. The British Government also created Transjordan by partitioning the territory east of the Jordan River and effectively cut off Jewish settlement there.

Meanwhile in Australia, others had already turned their attention to the challenging task of building Zionism in Australia. G. Friedman had complained of these difficulties to Bella Pevsner in 1924.\textsuperscript{105} He noted that enthusiasm had dropped off in Melbourne in the wake of her visit, there were difficulties in raising money for Palestine because the same

\textsuperscript{102} Rutland, \textit{Edge of the Diaspora}, 171.
\textsuperscript{103} Rutland, \textit{Edge of the Diaspora}, 171.
people were donating all the time, and no receipt had been received for £35 which had been sent six months before.\textsuperscript{106} It was true that many Melbourne subscribers were skeptical about whether their money was actually going to Palestine. By 1927, these doubts had increased to the point where some Melbourne subscribers were under the impression the Zionist delegates were receiving a high percentage of the subscriptions as a special high commission.\textsuperscript{107}

Dr A. Goldstein, an executive member of the WIZO who was sent to Australia in 1927 specifically to promote its cause, lamented that the assimilated English Jews in Melbourne had adopted typical English formality and mentality, and complained that the absence of receipts had created ‘endless harm’ to the Zionist cause.\textsuperscript{108} Pevsner, he wrote, had also expressed disgust at the behaviour of assimilated Melbourne Jews, stating that if anything her reaction only ‘increased their apathy.’\textsuperscript{109} However the final blow was delivered when David Brown gave a blunt, empty speech to a representative group from the local Jewish congregation. Brown ordered the doors to the venue be shut and no one could leave until he or she made a contribution.\textsuperscript{110} Many of the potential subscribers attending the meeting said they were so disgusted they would never attend another Zionist meeting.\textsuperscript{111}

Other factors impeded the Zionists in Victoria. In 1927, 1500 Jewish migrants arrived and the Melbourne Jewish community, believing that ‘charity begins at home’, preferred to donate to their cause.\textsuperscript{112} Moreover, Melbourne-based Rabbi Jacob Danglow (1904-1958) was not a supporter of Zionism.\textsuperscript{113} He was bound to his community by marriage and

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{107} A. Goldstein, 9 September, 1927, 8.
\bibitem{108} A. Goldstein, 9 September, 1927, 8.
\bibitem{109} A. Goldstein, 9 September 1927, 8.
\bibitem{110} A. Goldstein, 9 September, 1927, 8.
\bibitem{111} A. Goldstein, 9 September, 1927, 8.
\bibitem{112} A. Goldstein, 9 September, 1927, 8.
\bibitem{113} Rutland, \textit{The Jews in Australia}, 82.
\end{thebibliography}
friendship, so his views held great sway over the congregation. Broader forces also played a role, as Australia was entering the Great Depression caused by the stock market crash (mentioned earlier in the chapter) on ‘Black Tuesday’ 29 October 1929 in the United States. Money was short everywhere and people feared for their future.

In general, rabbinical leaders in Australia were not supportive of Zionism. They felt Zionism challenged the security of Jews in Australia and that it was not possible to have divided loyalties to Zionism and Australia. They believed the creation of a secular state was not supported by religious teachings and the unsuitable land for Jewish settlers in Palestine made it an unrealistic dream. Rev D.I. Freedman in Perth was the exception—he was strongly pro-Zionist. Preaching in Adelaide, Rev D. Hirsch spoke for many anti-Zionists when he said, ‘the error of the Jew had been that in the Balfour Declaration he thought he held the key to the inner gate of Israel’s return, whereas he had only unbolted the wicket to the outer door.’ Following the 1929 attacks on Jews in Hebron, Safed and Jerusalem, most Jewish leaders in Australia offered support to their co-religionists in Palestine. In December 1934 in Sydney, ardent Zionist Rabbi Ephraim Levy was appointed successor to Rabbi Cohen. This in due course, combined with other problems, led to the dismissal of Rabbi Levy and he left for England in 1938.

In 1938, Weizmann demanded the restoration of Jewish immigration into Palestine be regulated in accordance with the absorptive capacity of the country, which was reported in the Australian Jewish press. The rise of Arab nationalism from 1936 to 1939 had caused outbreaks of violence by Arabs, who were outraged over Jewish settlement in

115 Rutland, *The Jews in Australia*, 82.
118 *Advertiser*, 2 September, 1929, 11.
122 *Australian Jewish Herald*, 22 September, 1938, 23.
Palestine. The Peel Commission of 1938 was sent to Palestine from England to investigate and Weizmann demanded that Jews there be given adequate protection and security. He declared that Jewish people would never give up hope for large-scale immigration into Palestine. ‘Our position today has become so acutely critical that we must demand a permanent solution to our problem.’ Nonetheless, the MacDonald Paper of 1939 restricted Jewish immigration into Palestine to 75,000 over the next five years and produced an immediate negative reaction among the Zionists. Although the Paper called for a Jewish national home within 10 years, Lord Ludgate, a former British member of the Permanent Mandate Commission, proposed that consultation should take place after five years. An editorial in the New Statesman and Nation predicted, ‘There is no indication that the leopard and the lamb will lie down together, and we believe that some form of participation will before long seem to be inevitable.’ The Hebrew Standard, under the editorship of Alfred Harris, was anti-Zionist and Harris had supported the MacDonald White Paper of 1939. The Australian Jewish community was very disappointed and joined their co-religionists in condemning the MacDonald Paper, which they felt had effectively negated the Balfour Declaration.

The following section looks at the development of Zionism in England. London became the centre of Zionism and Reading and Esther sailed there in 1925, armed with many useful letters of introduction. One of the many significant and important people they would be introduced to was Chaim Weizmann. Wieszmann (1874–1952) was born in Russia but became a British citizen in 1910 which he renounced in 1948 to become President of Israel. Wieszmann was a biochemist and had been senior lecturer at the

124 Australian Jewish Herald, 22 September, 1938, 23.
125 Australian Jewish Herald, 22 September, 1938, 23.
126 Australian Jewish Herald, 22 September, 1938, 23.
129 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 297.
130 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 308.
University of Manchester.  As head of the British Admiralty Laboratories from 1917 to 1919, he developed a process for the production of synthetic acetone the British needed desperately during World War I.  Refusing any title or honour for his work, he replied, ‘All I want is a national homeland for my people.’

The next section of the thesis returns to England and its Zionists, who were led by Weizmann. The chapter then moves onto Reading’s overseas trip with her mother. Esther and Reading were based in London and so by using her letters as primary source documents, the chapter follows their travels through Europe and Palestine. It is more than a travelogue however, due to Reading’s keen observations and comments.

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132 Wiezmann, Obituary, *New York Times*
133 Wiezmann, Obituary, *New York Times*
134 Wiezmann, Obituary, *New York Times*
Chapter 6. Letters Home ‘My Dear People’

This chapter commences with a section on Zionism in England, as Reading was a Zionist and introduced to important Zionists while in London during her overseas trip in 1925. This introduction therefore provides a context to these meetings. The chapter then moves chronologically through her journey from Europe to Palestine and is drawn from the letters she wrote home.

Zionism in England

Chaim Weizmann led the Zionist congregation to the Peace Conference at Versailles and in 1920 became the President of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO). As a result, the headquarters of Zionism moved to England and Professor Weismann taught and lived in Manchester. Weizmann, Nahum Sokolow (1859-1936) and their assistants undertook political work for Zionism in London, with Leonard Stein acting as the secretary.¹ The Goodman home was the meeting place of London Zionists and Zionists from abroad, with Weismann and Sokolow attending regularly. Goodman and his wife Romana were at the heart of the Zionist movement in England², while Dr David Eder was also an important Zionist leader. He was a Freudian analyst, chairman of the Palestine Zionist Executive and president of the English Zionist Federation.³ These Zionists, especially Weizmann, persistently lobbied the British Government; they had only moral persuasion to meet their aim of transplanting thousands of Jews to Palestine. Zionism had little money, no military power and Jews needed Britain far more than Britain needed Jews. Palestine was not of paramount importance to Britain as it was to the Jews.⁴ Finally, the establishment of the Mandate for Palestine became effective on 23 September 1923, guaranteeing a Jewish homeland.

¹ Laqueur, A History of Zionism, 466.
² ‘Romana Goodman 1885-1955,’ Jewish Women’s Archive.
⁴ Laqueur, A History of Zionism, 595.
Feeling belittled and frustrated at being excluded from this important Zionist work, the wives of some of these influential men, Rebecca Sieff, Vera Weizmann and Romana Goodman, founded a ladies committee within the British Zionist Federation in 1918. That year, a small group consisting of Rebecca Sieff, her husband Chaim, Vera Weizmann and Edith Eder visited Palestine and were appalled at the suffering of the Jewish settlers. On 12 January 1919, the women held a founding conference for a Federation of Zionist Women that was the precursor of the Women’s International Zionist Organisation (WIZO). WIZO held its first conference in London on 11 July 1920 and Sieff expressed her vision of women working together in co-operation with their men to rebuild the Zionist homeland in Palestine.

Reading was undoubtedly strongly influenced by her meeting with this authoritative group of Zionists in London (see below), and their support and example assisted her in building a national organisation once she returned home. WIZO focused on fundraising for Palestine, whereas that was only one aspect of the NCJWA platform.

Letters Home 1925

Reading wrote a series of long letters home when she, Esther and Hyman went to the United States and Europe in 1925. Some of these are kept in the Mitchell Library. Some are complete letters, others just fragments of undated pages, and mostly on the unused, numbered pages of an old ledger book rather than on airmail paper or notepaper; this points to Reading’s thriftiness. Fanny, Lewis and Hyman had moved to Sydney to join Abe, following Reading’s graduation and her subsequent move to Sydney to practice medicine in Kogarah. Nathan and Esther stayed in Melbourne until Nathan’s death in 1934, then Esther moved to Sydney to live with Reading.

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6 ‘The First Decade 1920-1930,’ WIZO’s History.
7 ‘The First Decade 1920-1930,’ WIZO’s History.
The letters were addressed to ‘My Dear People’ and express the warmth and closeness of her family circle. Lengthy, conversational and informative, they were intended to be passed around by all the family. Sometimes written at haste, probably at night after a full day’s sightseeing or study, they contained misspelt and abbreviated words which also spoke of the familiarity of her intended audience; Reading was completely at ease – all defences and pretences down – with her family. As such, they reveal much about her personality, character, values and interests. Reading’s letters also serve as travelogues, charting the travels that provided opportunities for her to witness Jewish life in different contexts, and opened her eyes further to the political significance of Zionism. These themes are discussed below.

United States

As travelogues, the letters provide rich detail about the places Reading, her mother and brother visited. On their way to New York, Reading and Esther stopped in Chicago. The sheer size of the Jewish population there impressed Reading greatly: ‘There’s a population here of 3,000,000 Jews – we can pick Jews out here wherever we go.’ The drawback, as their relatives the Rosenthals, told them, was that anti-Semitism was rife. Yet as a result, Reading found that in Chicago ‘the Jews stick together and it is lovely to see.’ Reading and her mother had many invitations to visit Jewish families and observe Jewish life in Chicago. Reading thoroughly enjoyed the experience, writing after one evening: ‘we had dinner with Mr. [and] Mrs. Mitekman, grand-daughter of Mr. [and] Mrs. Levin [they] made us very happy, I enjoyed being with them.’ Reading’s Chicago relatives, although not rich, seemed to be very comfortable. Their apartments were of six to nine rooms and they had a car – ‘a beautiful Hudson coach you can get here for £250 and who wouldn’t have one?’ Reading admired the Rosenthal’s standard of living, but more importantly, she also admired her relatives because they were ‘a very united family and are very devoted to each other … they formed a family club … and met each month

8 Reading, undated single page 22. (Mitchell Library)
9 Reading, 22. (Mitchell Library)
10 Reading, 22. (Mitchell Library)
11 Reading, 22. (Mitchell Library)
12 Reading, 22. (Mitchell Library)
at some one [sic] of their homes, have meetings and conferences & [sic] live most happily together.'

Interested in the rituals surrounding Jewish family life, Reading noted that all Jewish young people in Chicago married between 16 and 21 years, and that ‘there’s no such thing as non-Jews for friends – they only know Jews and the boys and girls only mix with Jews, they have no other friends and hence they nearly all marry Jews.’ Reading firmly approved of this practice, as it lessoned the possibility of intermarriage with non-Jews. She believed teenage girls should be carefully chaperoned, educated in their faith, and marry a Jewish man.

Esther, Hyman and Reading went to New York from Chicago, where Reading met Henrietta Szold (1860-1945), the influential Jewish woman who established and was president of the Women’s Zionist ‘Hadassah’ organisation in 1912. They were to meet again in Vienna at the Zionist Congress in 1925. While in Washington, Reading attended the International Quinquennial Council of Women Conference and probably also heard about the Jeanette L. Arons Scholarship for under-privileged girls, the details of which were published in *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* on 7 May 1925.

The scholarship had been inaugurated the previous year to commemorate Arons’ work. President of the Brooklyn Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), Arons (1881-1960) had decried the lack of leadership among the Jewish women of the area. Arons was an influential member of the NCJW (US) who worked extensively to assist new immigrants with English and citizenship programs, people with disabilities and who dedicated herself to health programs. Among Reading’s papers at the Mitchell Library is a typed council message about the Jeanette L. Arons’ scholarship; it is possible she modelled the future Dr Fanny Reading Scholarship on it.

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13 Reading, 22. (Mitchell Library)
14 Reading, 22. (Mitchell Library)
Leaving New York on 8 July 1925, in the Minnekahda of the Atlantic Travel Line, Reading and Esther travelled onto London. Reading wrote that they had left ‘Hym … in New York – he met some Jewish girl, a very nice girl just before we left, so he wanted to stay – perhaps he has written you since – I don’t know that anything will come of it.’ Although they enjoyed their time in the United States, Reading wrote from Piccadilly Circus that ‘we like London ever so much and feel more at home among the English than among the Americans.’ They appreciated the London policemen who were ‘standing encyclopedias and so kind to everyone;’ the flower-girls; the people themselves ‘who are not as commercial as the Yanks and who had time to talk to and to be courteous.’ Elaborating on this point, Reading explained: ‘I find the Londoners very different to Americans - they are more reserved, talk less about their city and are not at all anxious to take you over London and show it to you like the USA [sic] did.’

It was not just the people; Reading felt that the historic buildings in London had a charm that the buildings in America (and Australia) lacked. Easily missed, the London buildings were hidden away in squares, crescents and courts. There were theatres, picture theatres, cafes – though not as “gay” as those in New York – where everything finishes I think at 2am. The London modes of transport fascinated the travellers – ‘the tube railway, the buses painted vividly red and loud advertisements shriek at you from them.’ There were ‘the old carriages, old fashioned tall bodied tapis [sic], horses, the bicycles, the pushcarts, all are most interesting.’ The view from the hotel in Piccadilly Circus thrilled Reading as the chimes of Big Ben rang out. Significantly, no reference is made to the
Jewish quarter of London; a poor area that they would have passed through on their way to Australia 36 years earlier. Instead, Reading’s descriptions of London have a vividness associated with free impressions and a lively interest, as if it were her first time there, which in many respects it was.

Reading drew further contrasts and comparisons to delight her readers back home. In London she wrote, ‘Abe would like the dress of the men – tons of silk top-hats riding on top of buses, this is so novel - in America nothing [but] straw hats.’ Mother and daughter attended a cricket match between Eton and Harrow at Lords, ‘a great event.’ The little boys wore ‘Eton suits with top hats and others were in long-tailed suits.’ Many of these young cricketers were staying at the Piccadilly Hotel and their antics greatly ‘amused Mum and me.’ Generally however, Reading noticed that conditions seemed ‘less prosperous’ in England than America. Few English people had cars and entertainment seemed to be home based. ‘Family life is more solid, there’s more substance to the people,’ she commented.

Esther and Reading went to a garden party at Hampton Court Palace, an historical building dating back to Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII. It is a mark of their social standing and confidence that they attended and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It was a very formal event: ‘You should have seen the Indians and their women, the latter dressed in native costumes and jewels.’ The Indian men looked quite European to Reading; they dressed like Englishmen, she wrote, ‘so smart with spats and top hats.’ On another occasion, Reading and Esther attended a reception at Australia House. They also attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace. Reading did not reveal how they managed to obtain invitations to these prestigious events, although The Honorable Mrs G.L. Rankin gave

28 Reading, 17/25 July, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
29 Reading, 17/25 July, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
30 Reading, 17/25 July, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
31 Reading, 17/25 July, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
32 Reading, July 17/25, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
33 Reading, July 17/25, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
34 Reading, July 17/25, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
35 Reading, July 17/25, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
them invitations to a London garden party that they did not use. Before leaving London the pair visited the National Gallery, escorted by a friend of Esther’s called Wolfiln from her hometown of Karelitz. They saw ‘a wonderful collection of pictures [they liked] especially the Graeco-Roman period, then [went] to dinner and the theatre.’

Reading had considerable contact with Zionists and supporters of the Zionist cause while she and Esther were in London. An important first meeting occurred on 16 July 1925 in London at the home of Dr David Eder and his wife Edith. A Freudian analyst, Eder was chairman of the Palestine Zionist Executive and president of the English Zionist Federation. Edith Eder, who was on the executive committee of the Women’s International Zionist Organisation (WIZO), invited them to lunch the following week to meet more people working for the Zionist cause. It seems the forthcoming Zionist Congress was discussed, for Reading’s subsequent letter home stated that she planned to go to the ‘big Zionist Conference in Vienna, 18th Aug.’

Reading and Esther met ‘all the heads of the WIZO’ at the lunch hosted by Edith Eder, including Mrs Halpern, Mrs Marks, and Miss Daisy Ader [sic]. Paul Goodman, a leader of Zionism in Britain, was also present. These London-based Zionists were important social and political contacts for Reading, and she in turn was important to them. Like-minded, articulate and intelligent, they recognised Reading as someone who could be counted on to support and hopefully further their cause in Australia.

After meeting this circle of influential and motivated Zionists in London, Reading decided to attend the Fourteenth Zionist Congress, held in Vienna in August 1925. Her

36 Reading, 16 July, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
37 Reading, London, undated fragment. (Mitchell Library)
39 Reading, 16 July, 1925, Regent Palace, London. (Mitchell Library)
40 Goodman had married Romana Manczyk in 1907 and had become one of the prominent early leaders on Zionism in Britain. In 1914 he had become the honorary secretary of the English Zionist movement. Romana Goodman 1885-1955, Jewish Women’s Archive, accessed 5 December, 2014. http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/gooman-romana
younger brother Hyman and his friend also planned to attend. At this late stage she found the formalities to attend the Congress as a delegate were too formidable, and had probably left those arrangements a little too late. In any case, a solution was at hand: ‘I have appointed myself press correspondent for the Sydney Jewish Press as it has been difficult to get in as a delegate, so much formality to go through.’

The Continent

By August 1925 Reading and her mother were in Milan, which was ‘all hustle and bustle.’ They had passed through the St Gotthard tunnel into Italy and on seeing Lake Maggiore Reading remarked, ‘you would have been astounded that nature could have been so generous.’ They travelled through Switzerland and France, spending a few days in each country. Reading was very impressed with Switzerland: ‘everywhere are signs of prosperity.’

Reading thought the Swiss and the French were as different as ‘chalk and cheese.’ She preferred the Swiss who were ‘clean, wholesome people who love their homes and their country – every inch of their country is beautiful.’ Here we see clear evidence of Reading’s value system: she valued the love of home, family and country. She wrote that in Switzerland there ‘was no arid land anywhere’, drawing an implied contrast between drought stricken Australia and Switzerland where it is ‘just green everywhere.’

Reading found the Milanese so different to the ‘cool, calm collected Swiss.’ Her close observance of the people, their economic conditions and way of life suggests she had a genuine interest in people and their situations. She tried to draw as detailed a picture as

42 Reading, 30 July, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
43 Reading, 30 July, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
44 Reading, 30 July, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
45 Reading, 13 August, 1925, Milan, Italy. (Mitchell Library)
46 Reading, 13 August, 1925, Milan, Italy. (Mitchell Library)
47 Reading, 13 August, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
48 Reading, 13 August, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
49 Reading, 13 August,, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
50 Reading, 13 August, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
51 Reading, 13 August, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
she could for her family in Australia. She described Milan’s busy streets with its beggars, flower-girls, priests and restaurants with ‘the beautiful displays of all their foods, so delectable that it was most inviting – the effect enchanting.’52 She hastened to reassure the family that ‘we always find a kosher restaurant in every town we visit and so we enjoy food very well.’53 In Reading’s earlier life food had not always been as abundant or delectable.

All the markets in Milan were open and busy on Sunday morning, with people milling around, shopping and conversing to the sounds of church bells pealing. This gave Reading pause: ‘So sincerely religious are the Italians,’ she observed somewhat wryly, for perhaps she would have preferred them to be more observant, hastening to church to the summons of the ringing bells.54

Arriving in Venice at night after travelling from Milan, Reading wrote that she was beginning to enjoy the ‘excitement of getting porters and luggage’, yet she reflected that next time they travelled they would ‘take as little luggage as possible’, for with this as one’s motto there would be ‘no trouble at all.’55 While in Venice she paid a visit to the Jewish ghetto, but ‘could not find a Jew who could speak Yiddish.’ This was a problem because ‘you know how much Italian I know’, nor could she ‘distinguish Jews from Italians here.’56 To Reading’s eyes, the Jews in Venice had ‘grown like them’ – they had assimilated completely.57 This is hardly surprising. Jews had lived in Venice since 1382 when legislation had been passed allowing money lending.

After Venice they travelled to Vienna, arriving there in time for the Fourteenth Zionist Congress from 14-31 August 1925. They were still there a week later, thoroughly enjoying themselves. They had met and had been impressed by so many Jews who were

52 Reading, August 13, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
53 Reading, August 13, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
54 Reading, August 13, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
55 Reading, August 13, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
56 Reading, August 13, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
57 Reading, August 13, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
attending the Congress. Hyman had also joined them in Vienna for the Congress as planned, but then went travelling through Europe with his friend Dare.\textsuperscript{58}

Although anti-Semitic riots had been anticipated before the congress, Reading noted that these had been largely forestalled by the 6000 extra police who had been put on duty. There were a few outbreaks associated with local issues, but Reading and Esther did not personally experience any anti-Semitism in Vienna: ‘we saw nothing, and as the papers are in German I can’t read much.’\textsuperscript{59}

\textbf{Vienna, 1925 - The Fourteenth Zionist Congress}

Reading was eventually reunited with Bella Pevsner in Vienna;\textsuperscript{60} and met with Henrietta Szold (1860-1945) whom she had already met in New York.\textsuperscript{61} Nothing remains of Reading’s letters home about the Congress, if indeed she had had time to write any. She was too busy writing a length report for \textit{The Hebrew Standard} and a discussion of this follows shortly. What might Reading have heard and witnessed at the Fourteenth Zionist Congress? Certainly she would have heard very lively arguments and counter arguments. She would have heard the delegates from the Revisionists led by Ze’ev Jabotinsky (1880-1940) argue that the path forward was to claim Palestine for the Jews and the gradual transformation of Palestine into a self-governing commonwealth under the auspices of the Jewish majority. By all accounts, he delivered a brilliant speech in which he attacked the executive for failing all along the line.\textsuperscript{62} Other delegates challenged Jabotinsky to show what pressure he would bear upon the

\textsuperscript{58} Reading, 8 September, 1925, Vienna. (Mitchell Library)
\textsuperscript{59} Reading, 8 September, 1925, Vienna. (Mitchell Library)
\textsuperscript{60} Reading, 13 December, 1925, Andaursky's Hotel, Jerusalem. (Mitchell Library)
\textsuperscript{62} Laqueur, \textit{A History of Zionism}, 456.
British. Jabotinsky had thought Britain and Zionism had common interests in the Middle East and that Britain would not dissociate itself from the Mandate of Palestine.

At the congress, Weizmann announced that relations between Arabs and Jews had improved and Palestine was the quietest part of the Middle East. Sokolow said he thought the day would come when Zionists and Arabs would sit down together at one congress. Weizmann declared the Near East should be opened up to Jewish initiative and there could be real development in commitment and friendship with Arabs, but delegates rejected Weizmann’s plan for the Jewish Agency to include non-Jews.

The rightwing General Zionists attacked the Socialist settlers (who wished to fuse Zionism with Socialism) for leading a semi-parasitic existence. They believed in Halutziat or pioneering and fought alignment with Soviet Communism. The Ben Gurions believed the agricultural sector had to be strengthened, as only one Jew in 43 in Palestine was a farmer. Delegates reported that they had been engaged in pioneering work and that profits could not be expected for a long time.

However Reading fulfilled her self-appointed task as a press representative and wrote a long report on the congress that was published in The Hebrew Standard in Sydney on 20 November 1925. Keeping in mind her Australian audience, she commenced with details of the security – ‘additional police and a threat to bring out the military if necessary’ kept the peace in Vienna – and noted that outside the venue the Austrian and the blue and white Zionist flag flew boldly ‘in defiance of all political demonstrations.’

63 Laqueur, A History of Zionism, 346.
64 Laqueur, A History of Zionism, 345.
65 Laqueur, A History of Zionism, 243.
66 Laqueur, A History of Zionism, 243. The rightwing faction was the centrist section of the Zionist Organisation.
69 Laqueur, A History of Zionism, 316.
The congress, Reading reported, was ‘a most important milestone in the history of the Jews of the diaspora.’ She described it as a ‘huge parliament that attempted to do two year’s work in ten days.’ Seated on a platform with the press, Reading had an excellent view of the brilliantly lit hall and the proceedings. The official party sat on a large platform decorated with palms and shrubs native to Palestine. In the centre of this platform, mounted high so that it was visible throughout the hall, hung a ‘sombre oil painting of Theodor Herzl’ to pay ‘all honour and reverence.’ The entrance of Dr Chaim Weizmann, the president of the Zionist Organisation and Nahum Sokolov was greeted with tremendous applause.

Reading informed her readers that the main issues the congress addressed were between the 40 Polish delegates and the chaluzim (the pioneers in building the Jewish state), the Jewish agency and the administration of the Zionist Organisation. She reported that discussion about the Jewish Agency and the administration of the Zionist Organisation had been ‘heated and exciting.’ Reading remarked that when large numbers of Jews gathered together there was a wide diversity because of the ‘great varieties and shades of opinion, and conflicts between parties.’ The delegates were aware of the ‘gravity of the situation and of the tremendous task ahead.’ Many foreign governments representatives were there, but when the British ambassador arrived he was greeted with deafening cheers. The ambassador was a very welcome guest.
because of ‘our obligation to Great Britain and our absolute confidence of good will.’\textsuperscript{79}

Reading was proud of the number of languages the representatives could speak and of the standard of speeches at the congress. A number of the most important delegates were remarkable linguists: ‘Nearly all knew Hebrew, which I am glad to say is becoming a living language,’ Reading wrote proudly.\textsuperscript{80} She had a sincere wish to speak Hebrew, writing, ‘My earnest desire is to know it before I visit Palestine.’\textsuperscript{81} Delegates came from all parts of the world, but they were all were ‘united by one common cause of kinship.’\textsuperscript{82} Two hundred came from Palestine, among them Rabbi Uziel, the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Jerusalem, with his ‘long black gown turban headgear and swarthy countenance.’\textsuperscript{83} The chalutzim (pioneers) from Palestine were sunburnt, healthy looking, red cheeked, ‘hopeful of expression, [and] anxious for the complete success of the Congress.’\textsuperscript{84}

The largest contingent was from the United States, composed of 43 delegates and more than 100 visitors. Many of the heads of commissions at the congress came from this group. Reading had already met many of them in New York. This was an indication of the importance of the circle she had been introduced to in New York, including Judge Bernard Rosenblatt, Rabbi Stephen Wise, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, R. Brainin, Schmaryahu Levin, A. Goldberg, M. Rothenburg and Henrietta Szold. This group held special meetings at the Imperial Hotel in Vienna, where ‘English speakers were invited’ to participate.\textsuperscript{85} Reading did not indicate whether or not she had been invited to participate.

Few women attended the congress, but those who did sat ‘mostly in the balconies’ and ‘lent colour, charm and grace’ to the proceedings.\textsuperscript{86} Henrietta Szold sat on the main
platform because of the important position she held as a vice-president of the Zionist Organisation and president and founder of the American Women’s Zionist Organisation. Reading was delighted to see many young people aged 17 and older at the congress; Reading believed this presaged ‘well for the future of the movement.’

Reading’s talent for descriptive writing came to the fore when she drew a picture of the leaders of the Congress. She didn’t take photographs, but described her subjects in such vivid detail that none were needed. Dr Weizmann, she wrote, was:

of distinctly distinguished appearance, sharp deep fiery eyes, clear headed statesman and diplomat, recognized as leader and statesman by every civilized country – clear, deliberate sound speaker, deep thinker, intensely popular – mind of a scientist – soul of a Jew- he impressed all.

Nahum Sokolow, one of the first Zionist leaders, might have been ‘more than seventy years’ old, but age was:

no obstacle to his energy in his life’s work – a rhetorical speaker, an expert linguist, profound mind, enthusiasm for the cause which he transmitted to his hearers, and whenever he appeared was greeted with a tremendous ovation.

Leo Motzkin, a most able and respected chairman was:

beloved and respected by all parties, ruling them by his shrewdness, his quick observation, his mastery of all languages, his quick repartee, stormed at them and then smiled, his humour never forsook him and brightened the proceedings, his vast knowledge of parliamentary debates and international law that he possessed was fundamental to control this huge parliament with its divers [sic] factions.

Reading felt there were others who stood out, such as Ze’ev Jabotinsky – a ‘fearless soldier’ – and Louis Lipsky, the head of the large and important American delegation.

After all this intense activity and stimulation, Reading and Esther returned to the United Kingdom in late September; Esther stayed in Manchester during October, while Reading...
travelled to Dublin for a month-long course in obstetrics at the Rotunda Hospital. In her letters home, Reading inquired regularly about her family, asking after their welfare and wellbeing. As her travels lengthened her letters became more melancholy, frequently ending in phrases such as ‘anxious to see you’, ‘homesick’, ‘keep well all you dear people ‘and ‘until we see you again’. She turned her attention to family matters when she wrote letters home to Australia.

Reading gave an impromptu interview to *The Jewish Chronicle* before she left London and they took her photograph. The aims of the recently formed Council of Jewish Women in Australia were expressed in the article ‘Jewish Women’s Work in Australia.’ Reading said:

> we are particularly interested in the problem of the adolescent girl and we aim to continue the education of Jewish girls after the age of fourteen in the knowledge of their race and religion … The problem of intermarriage gives us great concern.

Reading expressed her frustration about the interview to Abe: ‘they wanted a photo so took a snap outside their offices in the heart of London, such an ordeal with hundreds passing and stopping to look at you.’ In the years to come she would grow in confidence when dealing with the press and photographers in order to publicise her work with the Jewish women in Australia.

**Egypt**

Esther and Reading sailed from England to Palestine on 24 November 1925 on the *Hobson’s Bay* of the Commonwealth Government Line. Egypt was their first port of call.

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92 Reading referred to ‘Mum in Manchester’ in one of her letters home. Esther may have been staying at 82 Heywood Street, Cheetham, Manchester, which was given as Reading’s last address in the UK before their departure. (Mitchell Library)
93 Reading, Central Hotel, Jerusalem, 13 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
95 Reading, Jerusalem, 22 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
and Reading’s close powers of observation were revealed in a letter written on 9 December 1925 from the Central Hotel, Faud el Auwal Avenue, Cairo. Her description of the unexpected was evident when they arrived in Cairo:

Our baggage was hauled down by means of ropes into the government boat and we had to get into a small boat to go ashore. Customs – they looked through our luggage for jewellery, cocaine and opium.97

Reading’s culture shock was intensified when they made their way to their hotel. She thought that the tall Sudanese men she saw in the chaotic streets were ‘markedly handsome, and I can’t wonder at European women marrying them because they are most attractive.’98 She noticed the very few Arab women there and those she saw were dressed entirely in long black robes with ‘face pieces.’99 The numerous Arab children were ‘dirty and unkempt.’100 Her trained professional eye was appalled at the living conditions of the native Egyptians, the refuse, the exposed food, and the ‘goats, donkeys, flies in millions and almost as many children as flies … all the people have such eyes – tracclima, cataractsm [sic] iritus blind [sic].’101

As usual when visiting a new city, Reading sought out the Jewish quarter. She went to visit a Sephardic school in Cairo but she ‘could hardly tell whether they were Jews or Arabs they look just like them.’102 Reading probably felt that, like the Jews in Venice, Jews in Cairo had assimilated; this was something Reading was increasingly disapproving of. Her inability to understand Sephardic Hebrew, although an excellent Hebrew scholar herself, left her feeling less than positive about the Jewish situation in Cairo.103 Their visit became more positive when they met the relatives of Mr Loffin, a friend from Australia.

97 Reading, 6 December, 1925, Central Hotel, Faud el Auwal Avenue, Cairo. (Mitchell Library)
98 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
99 It is not clear whether Reading meant niqabs or burkas by this term.
100 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
101 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
102 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
103 Reading and her family belonged to the Ashkenazi Yiddish speaking Jews of Eastern Europe; Sephardic Jews came from the Iberian peninsula.
Mr Loffins’ brother and niece were both professional Jewish people living in Cairo, and they escorted them safely around the city and explained its history.

Reading and Esther learned that 40,000 people lived in Cairo and all the biggest businesses were in Jewish hands. They visited an orphanage for Jewish children, their visit coinciding with that of the Chief Rabbi of Cairo.104 Esther and Reading’s real interest lay in the many biblical sites in Cairo. Reading wrote of seeing ‘Joseph’s well (where, according to tradition, he was supposedly imprisoned for 12 years)’ and of visiting the oldest shul in Cairo.105 This synagogue caused them a great deal of concern because it was in a poor state. Reading wrote that they saw ‘the old Sephardic torahs (first five books of the Pentateuch) in their standup cases.’106 Most probably this was the Rav Moshe Synagogue, also known as the Maimonides Synagogue.107

Reading and Esther visited Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo, where the brilliant bougainvillea on the walls of the sultan’s palace evoked memories for Esther of the bougainvillea blooming in Karelitz.108 From there they went by carriage to the place on the River Nile where Moses had allegedly been found in the bulrushes; a pasha’s palace now stood there. Nearby was the famous Ben Ezra Synagogue; Reading described it as ‘the famous old Ibu Ezra shool [sic] 900 years old with its Ark inlaid with mother of pearl and its Alemna [sic] of white marble.’109 She elaborated, ‘Ibu Ezra prayed and died here; Elijah the prophet took refuge here when he was running away from King Ahab; under the crypt of this shool [sic] is the famous mikvah [sic] where Sarah is supposed to have bathed.’110 Reading and Esther also visited the busy business quarter where ‘Moses led

104 Chaim Nahun (1822-1960).
105 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
106 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
107 The Jewish philosopher, rabbi, and physician Maimonides (1135-1204) is believed to have arrived in Cairo and prayed there about 1168.
108 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
109 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
110 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
the Israelites out of Egypt." Reading’s enthusiasm and enjoyment in relating their visit to these historical biblical sites were revealed in the vividness of her descriptions.

After visiting these ancient historical Jewish sites they visited a modern Jewish synagogue that had ‘no triselled [sic] gallery for the ladies.’ This would have been very unusual, for Jewish women were seated separately, screened from view. The modern synagogue was a fine, wide structure with ‘simple decorative schemes of margen [sic] consisting of the star of David and the ten commandments.’ This synagogue was probably the Etz Hayim Synagogue built around 1900. Their visit to Cairo was a fitting precursor to their visit to Jerusalem. Reading and Esther’s untiring interest and delight in visiting these famous biblical sites was shared with her Australian relatives. Well versed in Torah, her family would have not needed an explanation from her regarding their biblical significance.

Palestine

In 1925, the Mandate of Palestine was an area under the British administration following the defeat of Turkey in World War 1 and the breakup of the Ottoman Empire. By 13 December 1925 Reading and Esther were installed comfortably at Andaursky's Hotel, in Jerusalem. Reading wrote, ‘the atmosphere of purity and wholesomeness of Jewish spirit pervades all things. At midnight a perfect peace hangs over the city – what a contrast to Cairo.’ They first went to the Mount of Moriah and saw Samson’s tomb and the cave where Delilah cut his hair. Reading felt ‘that this is a city the like of which there has been nothing in my travels.’ Of the Jewish atmosphere there, she wrote, ‘it is as though you have lost something so dear to you and you had now found it again.’ She delighted in:

A group of Yesivah [sic] boys with their long payes [sic] on each side, long, black coats and black felt hats; old Jewish women with black shawls on their heads and

111 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
112 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
113 Reading, 6 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
114 Known to gentiles as the Old Testament, to Jews as the Hebrew Bible.
115 Reading, letter, 13 December, 1925, Andaursky's Hotel, Jerusalem. (Mitchell Library)
116 Reading, 13 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
some with shytels [sic] young Sephardic women with silk covering around their hair and handmade wreaths of flowers – very beautiful.\textsuperscript{117}

Reading wondered with pleasure at there being Jewish carriages, Jewish bus drivers, Jewish police, Jewish everything. Nearly everyone, including the children, spoke Hebrew. Reading and Esther went to see an opera ‘The Maccabees’ which was all in Hebrew and ‘and the singing in hebrew [sic] [was] most effective and medolious [sic]’; they heard Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook deliver a fine address in Hebrew on the occasion of the depositing of the colours of the Fortieth Palestine Royal Fusiliers, and they visited a kindergarten with 80 children, all of whom spoke Hebrew. After attending a performance of Moliere’s ‘Le Malade Imaginaire’ by a troupe from Moscow, Reading wrote: ‘I never thought that the Hebrew language would lend itself so well to humour.’\textsuperscript{118}

They visited the English/American shul (synagogue) and listened to the men singing old Jewish melodies and giving speeches in Hebrew. This exposure to Hebrew as a spoken language must have moved Reading very deeply. She did not say in her letters whether or not she had successfully spoken Hebrew herself whilst in Palestine.

Reading and Esther met with numerous important contacts in Jerusalem, including Mr and Mrs Epstein. They had met Mr Epstein, Chief of the Jewish National Fund in the Mandate of Palestine, in Vienna at the Congress. They met Miss Landsmann, the head of Hadassah (Women’s Zionist Organisation of America), Rose Slutzkin who escorted them to visit the important infant welfare and pre-maternity unit, and Mrs Magnus, wife of the head of the university who took them to see the Jewish baby home and the Jewish orphanage. Jerusalem was the highpoint of Reading’s travels; in the future she would work for the Jewish National Fund (JNF) with the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia, while the care of mothers and infants would be central to Reading’s future medical practice too.

\textsuperscript{117} Reading, 13 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
\textsuperscript{118} Reading, 13 December, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
Before leaving for Australia, Reading and Esther toured Palestine for a week and visited a number of Jewish settlements. At Nabatal [sic] (Nahalal) they ‘had supper and stayed the night on one of their barracks.’ Moving north into Galilee they visited the major settlement at Tiberias and Safed, ‘the former beautifully situated on Lake Galilee.’ They ‘saw the excavations of an old synagogue more than 2000 years old, … visited the tomb of Rabbi Meir-baal-ness’, and ‘Mother had a hot spring bath.’ They also visited Gadamia and Migdal ‘where we got the most wonderful grapefruit.’ However, it was not all sight seeing as Reading was intent on gathering information. She visited as many Jewish centres as she possibly could in a week – an infant centre, an Hadassah (Women’s Zionist Organisation of America) hospital, a gymnasium with 900 pupils, boy scouts and girl guides – observing, asking questions, taking in the sights and impressions for future reference. They also managed a visit to Haifa and Mount Carmel. Tel Aviv was signalled out for special mention, ‘Tel Aviv is a 100% [sic] Jewish city. It is such a peculiar sensation to see everything made and built by Jews.’ This keen interest in the colonies in Palestine and in the amenities available there for nursing mothers, infants and children points significantly to the directions Reading’s community work would take with the future National Council of Jewish Women of Australia. (NCJW).

By November 1925 Esther and Reading had been away for more than six months and Nathan wanted them to come home. Reading wrote to him about several trunks that she had already dispatched to Australia and gave him instructions regarding their collection from the shipping depot. The only evidence that Reading and Esther indulged in any shopping in London, is a receipt for four Irish linen cloths, no doubt intended for use on

119 Reading, 10 January, 1926, Tel Aviv. (Mitchell Library)
120 Reading, 10 January, 1926. (Mitchell Library)
121 Reading, 10 January, 1926. (Mitchell Library)
122 Reading, 10 January, 1926. (Mitchell Library)
123 Reading, 10 January, 1926. (Mitchell Library)
124 Reading, 10 January, 1926. (Mitchell Library)
125 Reading, 10 January, 1926. (Mitchell Library)
126 Reading, 23 November, 1925, Common Room, British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, WC1. (Mitchell Library)
at Shabbat on Friday evenings, or to be given away as presents. They departed from Port Said about 20 January 1926 on the RMS Esperance Bay, reaching Melbourne a month later.

This journey to the United States, England, Ireland, Europe and the Middle East had had a transformative effect on Reading. Her Yiddish and Australian provincialism was diminished and her confidence increased through her meetings with leading American and British Jewish feminists. Armed with new networks of useful contacts, her experiences made her ‘a dreamer of great dreams with the courage to implement them even in the face of strong opposition.’ Without doubt, attending the Zionist Congress in Vienna must have been an intellectually stimulating environment for Reading. The idealism inherent in the idea of a Jewish state, and the passionate belief in a future for the Jewish people in Palestine, were ideas that became more and more central to her value system. Reading was adamant that ‘we in far Australia should take up this work with heart and soul,’ keeping ‘in most intimate relation’ the future work of the Congress.

Her visit to the Mandate of Palestine and the Jewish settlements early in 1926 on route home to Australia undoubtedly reinforced her ‘loyalty and work for this great cause.’ Once back in Australia Reading was free to turn her energy and drive to nationalising the Council of Jewish Women and support of Israel became one of its aims. Others had already turned their attention to the difficult task of Zionism in London and Australia.

The Zionist program focused on gathering in the diaspora into Israel, including the female settlers. Reading and the CJW worked from the start to support the Yishuv (the Jewish settlement in Palestine.) The following section deals briefly with the emerging constructs of the ‘muscular Jew’ and of the ‘New Woman’ and how they were adapted in the environment of the experimental society that was being created in Palestine in the twentieth century. One aspect of this was the kibbutz (collective community based on

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127 Reading, 23 November 1925, receipt from The Irish Warehouse 312 Regent Street, London. 18 November 1925, £3.12.9d. (Mitchell Library)
128 Reading, 10 January, 1926. (Mitchell Library)
agriculture) lifestyle that was developed by the Jewish settlers in *Eretz Israel* where the settlers endeavoured to live a communal life.

**The Modern Zionist Woman in *Yishuv***

There were various approaches to the nation building before Israel was recognised as a nation-state by the United Nations. Among these was the development of a way of being Jewish – being young, male, physical and working outdoors was the most dominant. Constructs of being young, female and Jewish developed also and are described below.

The catalyst to this movement was Max Nordau (1849-1923), who was an influential man in the Zionist movement and whose vision of the ‘muscle Jew’ applied originally to men but not women. Nordau’s book *Degeneration* (1892) had been an attack on various elements in the rapidly urbanising European society, including ‘degenerate’ art, and a range of social issues that formed part of the *fin de siècle* of the nineteenth century. Out of this movement, which also owed something to Social Darwinism, grew a new vision of a Jew.\(^ {131}\) Nordau’s aim was that Jews should rid themselves of ‘internalized anti-Semitic stereotypes and consequent self-hatred.’\(^ {132}\) Zionists wanted to replace the inferior self-image that Jews held of themselves with a new image of manliness that was not degenerate, pale, scholarly, bookish and effeminate. The new image was of the young Jewish settler as a labourer in the fields.\(^ {133}\) However the young settler women in Palestine also wanted to become ‘muscle Jewesses’ for they believed in physical culture ‘as a personal and national cure.’\(^ {134}\) Nordau, as a Zionist intellectual, argued against female emancipation because ‘emancipation that accorded Jewish women freedom, in fact was nothing but looseness in sexual practices and indifference to the established, traditional forms of Jewish women’s identity.’\(^ {135}\)

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132 Berg, ‘Zionism’s Gender,’ 143.


134 Berg, ‘Zionism’s Gender,’ 143.

135 Mickutė, ‘Making of the Zionist Woman,’ 139.
however, turned to the domestic sector and motherhood as a way of contributing to the building of a new nation.\textsuperscript{136}

As well as these new constructs concerning men, there was also the construct of the ‘New Woman’ in the late nineteenth century, which was discussed in the Introduction. The new or the ‘modern woman’ also appeared in Zionist circles and in a number of guises.\textsuperscript{137} There is the modern woman who came to Palestine to farm and develop agriculture and who was also a ‘muscular Jewess.’ There is the modern woman who was European, middle-class and who came to do charitable works particularly with the \textit{Mizrahi} Jews in Palestine during the Mandate period.\textsuperscript{138}

Reading and members of the NCJWA who visited Palestine fall into this second category. All these women were involved in nation building, particularly after World War 1 when the settler movement became the ‘dominant component of the Zionist Organisation.’\textsuperscript{139} Hirsch (2011) argues that motherhood in pre-state Israel or Palestine defined women’s citizenship, and that most of the early initiatives were aimed at their ‘capacity as biological reproducers of the nation.’\textsuperscript{140} In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, a woman was defined exclusively through a relationship to a man and her childbearing ability.\textsuperscript{141} Within this conceptual framework of ‘patriarchal normativity’ the two main pillars were wifehood and motherhood, and any woman trespassing on these limits was deemed to be degenerate.\textsuperscript{142} For a Jewish woman who also had the responsibility of passing on to her children their Jewish history and

\textsuperscript{136} Berg, ‘Zionism’s Gender,’ 144.
\textsuperscript{139} Berg, ‘Zionism’s Gender,’ 138.
\textsuperscript{140} Hirsch, ‘Gender and ethnicity,’ 276.
\textsuperscript{141} Hirsch, ‘Gender and ethnicity,’ 140.
\textsuperscript{142} Hirsch, ‘Gender and ethnicity,’ 140.
traditions, she was seen as also abandoning her very Jewishness and therefore compounded her degeneration in the eyes of conservative Jewish men.143

Stern (2011) describes two other archetypes of the Zionist Hebrew woman.144 There were the middle class Hebrew women who collaborated with the religious Zionists, and then there were those ‘revolutionary’ women who were secular and ‘liberated’ and were usually settlers.145 Revolutionary or leftwing Hebrew women wanted equality with men and did not wish to be defined by either their status within the family or their reproductive role.146 The Jewish men condemned them because they saw these ‘revolutionary’ women as a threat that might disrupt the stability of the emerging Yishuv (settler) society.147

The archetypical Hebrew woman, the middle class woman, represented by Reading and her NCJWA members. They worked with the settler leaders and imported into Palestine models of maternalist discourse that saw them working in settlement houses (in the poorer Mizrahi areas like in Old Jerusalem), or involved in social work and public health nursing.148 The Mizrahi Jews in Palestine were from Muslim countries, many of them Sephardic Jews who had fled the Iberian Peninsula after the Alhambra Decree of 1492 and the Portuguese Decree of 1496. When they settled under Ottoman rule they had been subjected to the mores of their host country, which meant the Mizrahi Jewish women were confined to the house, and were isolated from society. This indicated that the ‘main manifestation of women’s subordination’ was in their homes.149

The work of middle-class women has been listed earlier in this chapter in the section devoted to Israel. Women such as Henrietta Szold and others eschewed marriage and motherhood to do ‘national work.’ The Palestine environment meant that new

143 Hirsch, ‘Gender and ethnicity,’ 140.
144 Bat-Sheba Margalit Stern, ‘“He walked through the fields,” but what did she do? The “Hebrew woman” in her own eyes and in the eyes of her contemporaries,’ Journal of Israeli History, 30, 2, (2011): 165.
145 Stern, ‘He walked through the fields,’ 165.
146 Stern, ‘He walked through the fields,’ 165.
147 Stern, ‘He walked through the fields,’ 165.
149 Hirsch, ‘Gender and ethnicity,’ 280.
opportunities opened up for such ‘ethically dominant’ women, even if they operated outside the established, dominant, patriarchal system.\textsuperscript{150} There were two main Jewish middle-class organisations which acted as ‘agents of “nationalisation” and westernization among these \textit{Mizrahi} Jews.\textsuperscript{151} These organisations were the \textit{Hassadah} Medical Organisation (HMO) founded by Henrietta Szold (USA) and the Palestine Women’s Zionist Organisation, founded by Henrietta Helena Thon.\textsuperscript{152}

Reading’s contact with these organisations has been mentioned earlier. She had visited a \textit{Hassadah} hospital that was set up by American Jews in 1926 in Palestine. Out of this meeting came a commitment from the NCJWA to \textit{Hassadah} and its \textit{Misgav Ladach} Hospital in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{153} The NCJWA’s funds were transmitted through a group called \textit{EZRA} (help) that had been founded in Palestine in 1924 by Mr Lazar and Rose Slutzin, and this arrangement overcame the difficulty of transferring money to Palestine.\textsuperscript{154} One of \textit{EZRA}’s aims was to establish a system of district maternity nursing.\textsuperscript{155} The hospital required a maternity unit and Reading suggested a scheme so that a ward of 10 beds could be completed and 500 cases could be treated annually; the NCJWA made an on-going financial commitment to this scheme donating an initial £2000 and then £1500 annually after 1929.\textsuperscript{156}

Both the HMO and Palestine WIZO were composed of Jewish women of either a middle-class German or Ashkenazi (East European) background. The American women (predominantly of German background) wanted to focus on the needy \textit{Mizrahi} Jews, while the Ashkenazi group wanted their organisation to focus on increasing Jewish migration from Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{157} There was a hierarchical relationship between these

\textsuperscript{150} Hirsch, ‘Gender and ethnicity,’ 288.
\textsuperscript{151} Hirsch, ‘Gender and ethnicity,’ 276.
\textsuperscript{152} Hirsch, ‘Gender and ethnicity,’ 276-7.
\textsuperscript{153} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 107.
\textsuperscript{154} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 107.
\textsuperscript{155} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 107.
\textsuperscript{156} Newton, \textit{Making a Difference}, 107.
\textsuperscript{157} Hirsch, ‘Gender and ethnicity,’ 271.
different female groups in Palestine, and they were divided yet again into Diaspora and settlement Jewish women. As a result they did not form a homogenous group, which frequently resulted in tension between them. An example of this tension is given by Berg (2001) describing Hannah Meisel’s efforts in establishing an agricultural school for girls at Nahalal.

In the early 1920s Meisel had sought financial support from the WIZO in London, mentioned above. Meisel’s values and aims which included young women working on their own on a farm, being financially independent and achieving equality through their labour, did not fit comfortably with the values of the ‘relatively conservative Diaspora women’ there.\(^\text{158}\) When soliciting funding from WIZO (UK), Meisel had to reword her proposals so that the young agricultural workers ‘would fulfill their duties as wives of the working agriculturalists or as independent workers.’\(^\text{159}\) The WIZO women in London, presumably the same group Reading was introduced to in 1925, had notions of women’s work in the Yishuv as being about bringing cleanliness and beauty to rural life or decorating the dining hall; but importantly at the same time avoiding ‘competition with men in areas of male power such as politics.’\(^\text{160}\)

Nahalal was one of the settlements that Reading and Esther had visited in 1925 when they stayed overnight in the barrack accommodation.\(^\text{161}\) Established in 1920 by Meisel and her husband as a cooperative farm, it struggled to reclaim swampy land for agricultural purposes.\(^\text{162}\) The conditions there in the first few years were very primitive, before special facilities were built and the funding became regular.\(^\text{163}\) After Meisel had carefully reworded her funding applications, in 1924 WIZO (UK) agreed to fund the agricultural school for girls at Nahalal. Meisel felt the complaints and interference of WIZO ladies

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161 Reading papers, The Hotel and Pension‘Nordau’Grousenberg Strasse 10, Tel-Aviv 10 January, 1926 (Mitchell Library)
about the ‘disorder’ at Nahalal revealed a lack of understanding about what the settler women were trying to achieve:

Complaints from London from the middle-class ladies of London about conditions at Nahalal only confirmed Meisel’s general idea that the Diaspora philanthropists, whether male or female, did not endorse the values of the new Jewish homeland nor grasp the relation between the value of labor and the transformation of gender identity.¹⁶⁴

In this way the WIZO (UK), which was founded in London in the early 1920s and which Reading had transnational links to, became involved in a power struggle with the local Palestine Zionist organisation for control over various projects.¹⁶⁵

According to Las (2015) there were ‘real women’ who conformed more to Stern’s second archetype of the Hebrew woman, and that they were the ones who ‘fought like bold horsewomen and were members of the Hashomer (watchman) defense groups, “with a grenade underneath their shirts.”’¹⁶⁶ Zionism was a movement that had started at the beginning of the twentieth century and ‘stood out thanks to its unyielding emphasis on improving women’s status.’¹⁶⁷ In a nation-building context like the one in Palestine, especially in the early years, emphasis was often more on the traditional conservative values (the patriarchal status quo), while the reforms that women called for were often viewed as constituting a threat to the national project.¹⁶⁸

The welfare women’s organisations in Palestine that included the Federation of Hebrew Women (FHW) and the Federation of Zionist Women (FZW) failed to achieve any measure of political cohesion, according to Bernstein (1992).¹⁶⁹ However, the Women’s Equal Rights Association was militant, and the women in the labor movement had aligned

¹⁶⁷ Las, Jewish Voices in Feminism, 183.
¹⁶⁸ Las, Jewish Voices in Feminism, 183.
themselves with a political party. Later on, the welfare women’s organisations did choose political avenues as attempts to achieve their objectives. Their failure initially to gain access to political power might in part have been due to the perception that politics was seen as ‘a masculine preoccupation,’ and even the WIZO –UK had reservations about political activity, preferring to leave that to the men. Therefore, until they could gain a measure of political power, the Jewish women who were unwaged homemakers in Palestine continued to be in a subordinate position and marginalised.

The Labor Union (the Histadrut) supported the male worker in his efforts to build the land and establish a national home. The contributions and difficulties of Jewish female homemakers who were without independence and status did not concern it. The formation of the Women’s Workers’ Movement (WWM) in 1911 and the Organisation of Working Mothers (OWM) in 1930 as an active arm of the WWM, went some way to meeting the needs of the Jewish mothers. However, many of them had to contend not just with salaried employment for the ‘national effort,’ but also had to cope with the demands of housework and child rearing. They were caught in a double bind that ensured their subordinate status.

Jewish women had the vote in the Yishuv but in terms of parity between labour and wage, there was no equality. Other religious issues which concerned Jewish women like divorce remained unresolved.

The involvement of Reading and the NCJWA and other international organisations that worked to support the Yishuv clearly indicate it was not a single unified movement. The influence of university educated women such as Reading, who brought progressive ideas ‘cloaked in scientific, rational and democratic discourse’ permeated Yishuv life with their projects concerned with social work, nursing and hygiene. The grassroots organisations in the Yishuv which were primarily concerned with education and welfare

170 Bernstein, Pioneers and Homemakers, 299.
171 Bernstein, Pioneers and Homemakers, 299.
172 Bernstein, Pioneers and Homemakers, 300.
173 Bernstein, Pioneers and Homemakers, 253.
174 Bernstein, Pioneers and Homemakers, 253.
175 Herzog, ‘Redefining political spaces,’ 16.
176 Herzog, ‘Redefining political spaces,’ 18.
organisations made a significant contribution to the collective by ‘women’s strong emphasis on the world of women and their work for women and children.’ They were pioneers who paved new social paths and by their practice constituted alternative political spaces that were undoubtedly gendered spaces.

These events influenced Jewish feminists, affecting their view of themselves and their relationship with Israel; this resulted in the growth of ‘identity feminism.’ For early Jewish feminists there was tension between their connection to Israel and the first feminist principle ‘of an all-embracing sisterhood.’ However, these developments transpired after Reading’s death in 1974 and she was too ill before her death to attend to them.

The following chapter focusses on Reading’s medical work principally in Sydney. It places her within the context of the changes that were occurring with hospitals in Melbourne and Sydney being started by medical women doctors who were unable to get

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177 Herzog, ‘Redefining political spaces,’ 11.
178 Herzog, ‘Redefining political spaces,’ 11.
179 Las, Jewish Voices in Feminism, 203.
the necessary experience in hospitals dominated by male doctors. It opens with Reading’s post-graduate medical studies overseas in 1925.
Chapter 7. Medical Work

This chapter examines Reading’s medical career in Sydney. While overseas in 1925 she undertook post-graduate study as well as touring and attending the Zionist Conference in Vienna, which starts the chapter. Reading returned to Sydney then worked with other doctors in an honorary capacity in a number of Sydney hospitals, together with her established practice. The chapter concludes with a section on why so many Jews throughout the centuries have been drawn to the medical profession.

Post-Graduate Study Overseas 1925

While Reading was attending the Fourteenth Zionist Conference in Vienna in August 1925, she had the good fortune to meet Dr Augusta Manoy from New Zealand. Manoy proved to be a very good contact and friend, giving her useful introductions. She facilitated Reading’s membership into the American Medical Association, which was particularly useful when Reading returned to London from Vienna. Dr Manoy hoped to catch up with Reading when they were both back in Sydney. She was engaged to Samuel Klippel from Brody in Poland, and after their marriage moved to Sydney. Manoy practised in Sydney hospitals until her return to New Zealand in 1934.1

Dr Manoy was the first woman to graduate in medicine in New Zealand and received her degree from Otago University in 1926. She followed this with graduate studies in Vienna and London, like Reading was undertaking in 1925 when they met. Manoy immigrated to New Zealand with her mother and sister from Latvia, joining her father (who had immigrated first) at Stratford, Taranaki in 1910. At the Stratford District High School, Manoy gained a senior board scholarship, entitling her to free education.

As a girl, Manoy decided to become a physician and was the first Jewish student to attend St Margaret’s College. She was an important medical contact in Reading’s expanding network, and Reading expressed in a letter home her pleasure at their meeting and her hopes for future collaboration. The two women had very similar backgrounds and consequently formed a firm friendship at the Zionist Congress in Vienna. Reading wrote to her family in Sydney about her new friend, ‘She is going to marry Mr Klippel's brother & [sic] was delighted to know me as her future lies in Sydney.’

Reading decided to spend the month of October 1925 at the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin, which was a well-respected ‘lying-in’ hospital. Initially founded in 1745 by midwife and surgeon Bartholomew Mosse, it became a teaching maternity hospital, the first of its kind in Ireland. Reading was accepted into the postgraduate course that cost £6.6.0 for the month and was able to find board at £2.0.0 a week. She wrote to Abe and Lewis saying ‘I hope to come back an expert obstetrician [sic] & Gynaecoly [sic].’ While she was busy in Dublin she arranged for Esther to stay with friends in Manchester, England.

In her letters to Abe, Reading described the medical procedures she had witnessed at the Rotunda Hospital. One treatment was with an ‘eclamptic’ [sic] patient had come into the

3 Reading, 30 July, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
4 Reading, 8 September, 1925. Vienna. (Mitchell Library)
5 Lying-in is an old childbirth practice involving a woman having a period of bed rest in the postpartum period after giving birth.
7 Reading, 8 September, 1925. Hotel Osterreihischer Hof. Vienna. (Mitchell Library)
8 Reading, 8 September, 1925. Hotel Osterreihischer Hof. Vienna. (Mitchell Library)
9 Reading, 8 September, 1925. Hotel Osterreihischer Hof. Vienna. (Mitchell Library)
hospital two nights previously. Reading did not go into detail, assuming her brother would understand her shorthand professional notes. She described the use of morphine and compared it with a case she had seen in Vienna. Reading commented on an article Dr Lazard in Los Angeles had given her. It described the use of ‘Mag Sulp intravenously’ [sic]; she thought that it was ‘awfully good’. Reading was discussing hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, which was very important knowledge for her future successful practice with pregnant women in Sydney.

Reading wrote of the treatment of a ruptured uterus; she observed the Rubens test and a different way of using forceps in delivery. However it was the use of chloroform which caused her to write anxiously, ‘I have seen a patient blue nearly all the time – I don't like the [sic] this way and I would be very so afraid with the chlo [sic] but nothing seems to happen thou! [sic].’ She watched Dr Solomon operate; he was ‘a most brilliant surgeon’ and she thought that the clinic run by Dr Cassidy had been ‘marvellous.’

Her enthusiasm and interest in learning and witnessing new procedures at the Rotunda were enthusiastically shared with Abe. She invited his feedback and urged him to try out

10 Reading, 13 October, 1925, Rotunda Hospital, Dublin. (Mitchell Library)
11 Reading, 13 October, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
12 Reading, 13 October, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
13 Reading, 13 October, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
14 Reading, 13 October, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
the new methods she had witnessed. She asked a collegiate favour of him, ‘PS Apply for
extension of leave from Kog Hos [sic] please dear boy for me.’\textsuperscript{15} The hospital at Kogarah
would have to so without her professional services for a little longer, as her plans for their
trip became extended after the Zionist Congress in Vienna in August 1925.

Following her interest in the health care of mothers and children, Reading was delighted
in Berlin when she was able to fit in several days at Professor Heinrich Finkelstein’s
(1865-1942) clinic. She wrote about two mornings work with the ‘great infant nutrition
man, world famous.’\textsuperscript{16} Finkelstein was appointed the medical director of the Emperor and
Empress Frederick Children’s Hospital, Berlin in 1918. He was regarded as a world
expert on child nutrition, but being Jewish had never been offered a professorship at
Berlin University. Reading brought some of his groundbreaking ideas back to her Sydney
practice – the idea of a comprehensive public infant care service, an appropriate rest
period for pregnant mothers before and after birth, statutory care for working pregnant
mothers, and the idea of an artificial milk. Finkelstein’s textbook on the diseases of
infancy had been a complete presentation. He had classified the nutritional and digestive
disorders and developed a system of diet therapy for the prevention and the treatment of
diarrhoeal diseases.\textsuperscript{17}

After the political and social stimulation of the Vienna Congress and her post-graduate
studies, Reading returned with Esther to London in November 1925, where she then
undertook a course in anesthetics and visited a number of London hospitals. She wrote to
her father from the Members’ Common Room of British Medical Association House in
Tavistock Square, explaining how busy they had been. In addition to her medical interests
and courses, they went ‘sightseeing and meeting various people. Spent the day yesterday
with Dr Alan Owen and his mother and enjoyed it so very much.’\textsuperscript{18} Wisely, Reading did
not neglect her mother and spent some time with her relaxing and sightseeing around

\textsuperscript{15} Reading, 13 October, 1925. (Mitchell Library)
\textsuperscript{16} Reading, 18 September, 1925, written en route to Manchester. (Mitchell Library)
\textsuperscript{17} Heinrich Finkelstein, MD, 1865-1942, Obituary, \textit{JAMA Pediatrics}, 63, 3, 1942: 582.
\textsuperscript{18} Reading, 23 November, 1925, Common Room, British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, WC1. (Mitchell Library)
London. When she returned to practise in Sydney it was during an era of the development of women’s hospitals and specialisation. This new era and the role Reading played in it is the focus of the next section.

**Women’s Hospitals And Medical Specialisation.**

When trying to write about Reading’s medical career, the main problem is that she wrote very little about it. Monika Wells (1987) identified this when she was writing about medical women as the ‘nature of the sources.’¹⁹ Medical men wrote ‘copiously’ about their institutions and each other.²⁰ Female doctors did not write as readily about their experiences or each other. The early female doctors in Australia had difficulties getting the medical experience they needed, so they decided to open hospitals themselves, firstly in Melbourne and following that success, in Sydney.

Nineteenth century feminists accepted the idea that men and women had different natures. In the pre-Federation period men and women inhabited separate domains, which were divided into public and private spheres.²¹ Feminists believed the values enshrined in the home could be moved into the public sphere.²² They did not necessarily seek integration into the male institutions, but established many organisations of their own, such as the New Hospital in London, in order to bring the female point of view into the public sphere.²³ This particular hospital provided the model for the Queen Victoria Hospital in Melbourne, which was also a charitable institution, both only charging a nominal fee for treating poor women and children.²⁴ The New Hospital, London, and Queen Victoria Hospital, Melbourne were therefore philanthropic ventures; the doctors (apart from a few paid residents) were voluntary.²⁵ It was ‘crucial’ to the professional development of

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¹⁹ Monika Wells, ‘Gentlemen, the Ladies Have Come to Stay!’ The entry of women into the medical profession in Victoria and the founding of the Queen Victoria Hospital. (Master of Arts thesis, University of Melbourne), 1987.
²⁰ Wells, ‘Gentlemen, the Ladies Have Come to Stay!’ 16.
²¹ Wells, ‘Gentlemen, the Ladies Have Come to Stay!’ 2.
²² Wells, ‘Gentlemen, the Ladies Have Come to Stay!’ 2.
²³ Wells, ‘Gentlemen the Ladies Have Come to Stay!’ 2.
²⁴ Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 201.
²⁵ Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 206.
women doctors that they were able to secure such honorary positions. Reading was able to secure three honorary resident medical officer positions in Sydney – at St George Hospital, Rachael Foster Hospital and Wolper Jewish Hospital, all detailed further in this chapter.

Accordingly, when Queen Victoria Hospital opened in Melbourne in 1896, it was destined to be a hospital run entirely by women. Its founder, Dr Constance Stone (1856-1902), was powerfully motivated to provide healthcare for women and the suffragist Anne Bear Crawford assisted her. In the Queen’s jubilee year of 1897 women doctors in the colony of Victoria, together with philanthropic ladies and feminists, launched a major fundraising effort to establish a hospital staffed entirely by women. Women throughout the colony were invited to donate one shilling to the fund.

Bashford (1977) argues that these organisers appealed for funds for the following three reasons – women could be examined by women doctors and spared the ‘painful ordeal’ of the presence of male medical students; Queen Victoria herself cared for the suffering poor and sick, and would be gratified to have the hospital named after herself; and all classes of women working successfully together was a practical federation of women. She cited Monika Wells, who wrote that Queen Victoria Hospital was not established ‘as a result of exclusion’ from medical practice (as the New Hospital, London had been), but from ‘a positive conception’ of the idea of women’s health care delivered by women.

In 1921, Sydney doctors Harriet Biffin, Lucy Gullet and Susannah O’Reilly, who were inspired by the Queen Victoria Hospital in Melbourne, held a meeting and founded the NSW Association of Registered Medical Women. This association would become the

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26 Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 206.
27 Rubinstein, ‘Reading, Fanny (1884–1974).’
28 Wells, ‘Gentlemen the Ladies Have Come to Stay!’ 1.
29 Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 198.
30 Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 198.
31 Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 198.
32 Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 200.
Medical Women’s Association of NSW in 1928.\textsuperscript{33} Their first action was to establish a women-operated hospital in Sydney. Using privately raised finance they purchased an abandoned two-storey terrace in Surrey Hills for £1000 on 3 January 1922.\textsuperscript{34} They planned to use the building as a charitable outpatient dispensary; like other Sydney women doctors, they saw their university education as a means to improve working class women’s health and living conditions.\textsuperscript{35} Bashford argues that:

> by the 1920s women doctors’ investment in women’s health was less defined by [this] critique of men in medicine and far more defined by merging maternalist discourses and eugenic concerns.\textsuperscript{36}

The New Hospital, Sydney was formed with two aims – to serve the general health needs (excluding maternity) of poor women and children at sixpence a consultation, and to provide Sydney women medical students, graduates and specialists with the necessary professional clinical experience in medicine and surgery.\textsuperscript{37}

In 1922, the year before Reading graduated and moved to Sydney to start her practice, an all-women’s hospital opened in the harbor city. Initially called the New Hospital for Women and Children, in 1925 it was renamed the Rachael Foster Hospital for Women and Children and moved to larger premises in Redfern.\textsuperscript{38} (Rachael Foster was the wife of the Governor-General.) Female doctors in Sydney had encountered far more stringent opposition, both to their medical training and hospital appointments, than in Melbourne.\textsuperscript{39} There were other professional medical options available to them, albeit options ‘still fraught with personal and structural discrimination.’\textsuperscript{40} This makes clearer what a professional asset her brother Abe was to Reading, for by 1923 he had established a practice in Kogarah and had made a network of contacts.

\textsuperscript{34} Witton, ‘Rachel Forster Hospital, 1.
\textsuperscript{35} Witton, ‘Rachel Forster Hospital, 1.
\textsuperscript{36} Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 204.
\textsuperscript{37} Witton, ‘Rachel Forster Hospital, 1.
\textsuperscript{38} Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 201.
\textsuperscript{39} Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 201.
\textsuperscript{40} Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 200.
In due course, Reading became an honorary medical officer at Rachael Foster Hospital and practised a similar model of benevolence. This model legitimated women’s medical education and practice, rendering it socially viable and respectable.\(^{41}\) However, the second wave of feminists after 1970 repudiated the argument advanced by the earlier feminists, who said separate organisations such as all-women hospitals perpetuated subordinate positions and did not achieve equality.\(^{42}\)

**Medical Work In Sydney**

Reading undertook part of her medical training at the Women’s Hospital, Melbourne, which had maintained close links with the University of Melbourne (established in 1862) and aimed to lead in setting standards for medical and nursing care of women.\(^{43}\) This chapter has covered the postgraduate study Reading undertook at her own cost in 1925. This put her in touch with leaders in medicine overseas and gave her a network of professional medical people. Reading chose to practise in Sydney, where her brother Dr Abe Reading had already established a practice, and this thesis argues that this facilitated her entry into general practice in Sydney.

In the period following World War 1, hospitals were increasingly functioning as places for institutionalised childbirth.\(^{44}\) There was a real anxiety regarding population issues and increasing state control over hospitals, and many working class women moved to hospitals to give birth.\(^{45}\) The focus on the birthrate and the child in the interwar years was

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\(^{41}\) Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 207.
\(^{42}\) Wells, ‘Gentlemen, the Ladies Have Come to Stay!’ 3.
\(^{44}\) Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 215.
\(^{45}\) Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 214.
the aftermath of the loss of life in World War I, as well as intersection of the new theories of psychology, nutrition and child rearing, and treatment of diseases.46

McCalman (1998) argues that after World War 1 ‘the nation needed more babies and better babies.’47 To improve the lot of mothers (and babies) there were a number of significant improvements – the maternity allowance (1911), antenatal care, infant welfare centres and free kindergartens.48 Doctors advocated interventions and medical reforms that could be implemented immediately.49 Improvements in obstetrics and gynaecology had been introduced due to the use of antiseptics, case analysis, clinical teaching, research and science. For instance, at the Women’s Hospital in Melbourne, a new midwifery wing opened in early 1917, which included a proper antenatal clinic. By 1919, there were 500 attendances a year.50

The Women’s Hospital led the Victorian professionals in women’s health and Reading brought their medical practice with her to Sydney. One area of concern was the high incidence of eclampsia that drove the need for antenatal care even more than preventable infection.51 During her post-graduate study at the Rotunda Hospital Dublin, Reading took a specific interest in their management of eclampsia.52 As referred to earlier she mentioned in her letter to Abe that she had witnessed their use of morphine to sedate a mother.53

There were two schools of thought regarding the treatment of eclampsia – the English school believed the toxic response of the mother was due to the mother; the Rotunda

47 Janet McCalman, Sex and Suffering: Women's Health and a Woman's Hospital, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1998, 156.
48 McCalman, Sex and Suffering, 156.
49 McCalman, Sex and Suffering, 156.
50 McCalman, Sex and Suffering, 159.
51 McCalman, Sex and Suffering, 161.
52 Reading, 13 October, 1925, Rotunda Hospital, Dublin.
53 Reading, 13 October, 1925.
taught that the metabolism of the mother was at fault.\textsuperscript{54} Another area of concern was cancer, and since 1921 the Women’s Hospital had been treating cancer with radium.\textsuperscript{55} Dr Arthur Wilson taught the under-graduates and his surviving lecture notes reveal there were too many preventable deaths from infection and poorly managed eclampsia and haemorrhage.\textsuperscript{56} He also taught that the modern doctor was there ‘to watch, record and access and to respect the processes of Nature, rather then to intervene.’\textsuperscript{57} It is fair to assume Reading followed his careful instructions to the best of her professional ability, and this was attested to by the respect and affection that her patients held for her.

The Fight Against Diseases

Diphtheria is a serious bacterial infection that affects the mucous membranes of the nose and the back of the throat.\textsuperscript{58} It was known by the late nineteenth century that diphtheria was caused by a bacterial infection.\textsuperscript{59} In 1928, Professor Alexander Fleming at St Mary’s Hospital, London discovered penicillin.\textsuperscript{60} Following this discovery, treatment became available for diphtheria through the development of antibiotics such as penicillin or erythromycin.\textsuperscript{61} By 1942, penicillin was available for use in the general community for the treatment of pneumonia, venereal diseases and other medical conditions which doctors had been unable to cure.\textsuperscript{62} While diphtheria is now rare in Australia (there has not been a reported case or death since 1992) this is in stark contrast to the first half of the

\textsuperscript{54} McCalman, \textit{Sex and Suffering}, 161.
\textsuperscript{55} McCalman, \textit{Sex and Suffering}, 167.
\textsuperscript{56} McCalman, \textit{Sex and Suffering}, 168.
\textsuperscript{57} McCalman, \textit{Sex and Suffering}, 169.
\textsuperscript{58} ‘Diphtheria,’ Mayo Clinical Staff, accessed 15 September, 2015. http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diphtheria/basics/definition/con-20022303
\textsuperscript{61} ‘Diphtheria Treatment,’ Mayo Clinical Staff.
\textsuperscript{62} ‘Alexander Fleming’s Discovery of Penicillin.’
twentieth century. At the height of the 1921 epidemic, while Reading was in her final year at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Melbourne, there were 23,199 notifications of the disease in Australia; between 1926 and 1935 there were 4043 deaths from diphtheria. So, it is inconceivable that Reading would not have carefully checked all her patients who were suffering breathing difficulties or had a sore throat for signs of diphtheria.

Historically, Sydney had been a centre of infection – in June 1910, 262 cases were reported for the month, which was a record. In 1912 there was another severe outbreak of the disease in Sydney with 100 cases, as well as some in country districts. In 1913, at

The Royal Women’s Hospital, Melbourne
https://www.thewomens.org.au/about/our-history

64 Communicable Diseases Intelligence, 24, 2000, 6.
Wellington, 362 kilometres west of Sydney, the locals greeted another outbreak of diphtheria with horror. By the 1930s immunisation programs against the disease were developed in NSW but there was community apathy towards them. It was evident that parents needed to be educated on the protective aspects of the immunisation programme, but there was no doubt as to its efficiency ‘in more than 95 percent of cases.’ The NSW Government Medical Officer Dr P. W. D. Collier, said that there had always been opposition to preventive medicine, but that the inaction of the local councils in NSW was due to ‘inertia’ not prejudice. Even before the nationwide mass childhood immunisation programs were put into place, the smaller families and improved living conditions meant that fewer children were becoming infected with diphtheria.

Polio infantile paralysis (known as poliomyelitis or polio) was another highly infectious disease, which struck down many individuals in Australia. Reading carefully examined her patients in case they exhibited symptoms such as pains in the legs or arms, stiff necks, muscle weakness, a fever and a sore throat. She was aware of the epidemic of infantile paralysis in Victoria; this epidemic peaked in 1937 and 1938. In 1932 the Melbourne Children’s Hospital extended its appeal for £40,000 to extend its orthopaedic section for its treatment of patients with infantile paralysis. This section of the hospital was located in Carlton, an area Reading was familiar with, since the University of Melbourne is located there. This section of the Children’s Hospital served the children who contracted the disease and whose condition required protracted treatment. They were wheeled in specially constructed perambulators to the Carlton clinic several times a week, where

69 Newcastle Sun, October 8, 1937, 6.
70 ‘Diphtheria in Australia, recent trends and future prevention strategies,’ Communicable Diseases Intelligence.
72 Newcastle Sun, 8 October 1937, 6.
73 ‘Poliomyelitis: Infant Paralysis’ City of Kingston Historical Website.
their treatment consisted of massage and muscular education. Elizabeth Kenny, a nurse, is credited with using muscle stimulation to treat polio in 1910.

The polio epidemic caused great fear in communities and there were numerous notifications in the newspapers of the period recording the numbers of patients stricken; or advice that children under the age of 16 would not be admitted to a public event; or even advising that a certain area was infection free. The Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital in Victoria was still running short of available beds and was experiencing an acute shortage of staff in 1947. However, the vaccine for polio was discovered by Dr Jonas Salk (1914-1995) in 1955, who campaigned for mandatory vaccination. Following this discovery, mass vaccination began in Australia in 1956 with the Salk inactivated polio vaccine in a large publicly funded program. The last laboratory-confirmed case of poliomyelitis in Australia was in 1967 and there were three clinically compatible cases notified in 1972. The last known imported case of poliomyelitis was in 1977.

As well as working diligently to keep her patients free of disease, Reading turned her attention and energy to the establishment of a hospital for Jewish patients in Sydney. The Jewish hospital project was conceived in 1938 by Professor A. Lippmann, a refugee doctor from Germany who arrived in Sydney that year. The development of this important project is covered in the next section. The Hospital Visiting Committee of the NCJWA continued its important work. However many of the hospitals were outlying and there was a need for the care of the Jewish mentally ill patients. There was also a need to provide convalescent facilities for Jewish people catering for *kashruth* (dietary

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76 Argus, 13 August, 1932, 6
80 ‘Editorial: Polio Eradication in Australia and the World.’
81 ‘The Beginnings,’ *The First Fifty Years: Wolper Jewish Hospital, Sydney: Wolper Jewish Hospital*, 2011, 2.
83 Rutland and Caplan, *With One Voice*, 82.
laws) and the need for a Jewish atmosphere. In 1945 the Jewish Board of Deputies (JBD) met for the first time. The JBD was formed to unite and represent the interest of Australian Jewry and the refugee migration contributed significantly to this area of Jewish community development. Reading would in time become one of the Trustees of the Wolper Jewish Hospital, the development of Wolper covered below. After the end of World War II these important matters could be attended to.

Jewish Hospitals

In Sydney the NCJW was closely associated with the development of a Jewish hospital. In Perth the Maurice Zeffert Old Age Home also started as a Council project under Edna Luber-Smith. On 26 October 1948, there was an inaugural fund-raising dinner at the Trocadero, Sydney where Reading was seated next to Sam Karpin, OAM, who would serve in the future as president of the Wolper Jewish Hospital from 1961 to 1986. At this dinner £20,000 was pledged for a new Jewish hospital. Reading said that the formation of a Jewish hospital was long overdue and she also pledged the support of the NCJWA. Mr Hans Vidor, the hospital committee president, said the proposed hospital was to be open to people of all faiths and would be of ‘great value’ to the general community as well as to the Jewish community. The hospital committee included Ernest Morris, together with Sam Karpin, Hans Vidor and Reading. The Medical Board was heading at first by Professor Lippman, and later by Dr Joseph Steigrad. A substantial home called ‘White Ivy’ at 4 Wentworth Street, Point Piper, Sydney was purchased for the purposes of a Jewish Hospital in 1950. This opened in 1952 but ran at a loss for some years. This property also served concurrently as a centre for the Young Men’s Hebrew Association

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86 10th Triennial Convention of International Council of Jewish Women, Melbourne, Australia, 1975, 4.
88 Rutland, ‘The changing role of women in Australian Jewry’s communal structure,’ 117.
90 Hebrew Standard, 28 October, 1948, 4.
94 Rutland, Take Heart Again, 56
Dr Fanny Reading: A Clever Little Bird

Jeanette M. Debney-Joyce

(YMHA) that had been established in 1929. Eventually, this first hospital was closed and the property was sold.

A generous bequest from Gertie Wolper in 1956 to the Hospital Visiting Committee of the NCJW enabled Reading to purchase a property in Trelawney Street Woollahra, Sydney, on behalf of the Hospital Visiting Committee NCJW. Abram Landa, MP and a founder of the YMJA with Abe Reading, opened the property as Australia’s first convalescence home (non-denominational), but run according to strict Jewish dietary laws. After the sale of the Point Piper property the assets of the original Jewish hospital were transferred to the Wolper project in Woollahra. This in due course became the Wolper Jewish Hospital. Under Sam Karpin’s leadership it was upgraded to become a full hospital. It was established through the collaboration of the Young Men’s Hebrew Association (YMHA), the NCJWA and the NSW Fellowship of Jewish Doctors.

In May 1965 the Wolper Jewish Hospital, where Reading was an honorary medical officer, carried out the first community wide genetic screening program in Australia on the Tay-Sacks genetic disorder. Tay-Sachs disease is a rare inherited disease that gets worse with time so that it is a progressive disease. The nerve and brain cells break down and it is most commonly seen in the Ashkenazi Jewish population descended from Eastern Europe. The Wolper Jewish Hospital in association with the Royal North Shore Hospital has conducted a free genetic screening program in Jewish high schools since c. 2000.

95 See the section on Abe Reading in the chapter of Reading’s family.
97 Rutland, ‘The changing role of women in Australian Jewry’s communal structure,’ 117.
98 Rutland, ‘The changing role of women in Australian Jewry’s communal structure,’ 117.
100 Rutland, Take Heart Again, 56.
101 Rutland, The changing role of women in Australian Jewry’s communal structure,’ 117.
102 ‘The Beginnings,’ The First Fifty Years: Wolper Jewish Hospital, 4.
104 ‘Tay Sachs Disease,’ Disease Infosearch.
105 ‘Genetics Carrier Testing for you and your family,’ The First Fifty Years: Wolper Jewish Hospital, 1.
In time, Reading would enter the Wolper Jewish Hospital as a patient, and she died there on 19 November 1974. After World War II, the Australian Jewish community worked hard to get surviving Jewish refugees to Australia and the Wolper Jewish Hospital’s

Sam Karpin, Matron V. Falston and Fanny Reading, Wolper Hospital, c.1973.

Wolper Hospital Archive

Rubinstein, ‘Reading, Fanny (1884–1974).’
mission was to give them the best medical possible. The NCJW in both Sydney and Perth were in the forefront of providing the creation of facilities for the aged and the sick.  

**Life Governorships**

Reading held three life governorships – the Benevolent Society of NSW in Paddington, Sydney, the Dalwood Children’s Home at Seaford, Sydney and the Women’s Hospital at Crown Street, Surrey Hills, Sydney. Reading was invited to sit on the Boards of these organisations because of the qualities she brought to their discussions – strategic thinking, problem solving, leadership and interpersonal skills. She also brought medical experience and knowledge and a capacity to inspire others.

The Benevolent Society was founded in 1813 by Edward Smith Hall for promoting Christian Knowledge and Benevolence. In 1818 it was renamed the Benevolent Society of NSW and became a non-religious organisation, and Governor Lachlan Macquarie, the fifth Governor of NSW, became its patron. The Benevolent Society was Australia’s first charity and its aim was ‘a just and compassionate society where everyone thrives.’

In the early years of the colony, most new settlers did not have the support of family members and so the society provided asylum in the sense of being a refuge – it cared for the sick, the poor and the destitute. In 1921, the Benevolent Asylum opened in George Street, Sydney, where the Central Station now stands. Before 1850 its purpose was mainly directed towards married women (especially those approaching confinement), older men and families. In 1866 the Benevolent Society became a maternity hospital. In 1902, it was incorporated through an Act in the NSW Parliament and women directors

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107 Rutland, ‘The changing role of women in Australian Jewry’s communal structure,’ 117.
108 Rubinstein, ‘Reading, Fanny (1884–1974).’
110 ‘Australia’s First Charity.’
113 ‘Australia’s First Charity.’
114 ‘What was the Benevolent Society?’
were appointed to the Board.115 In 1905 it opened and operated the Royal Women’s Hospital in Paddington, Sydney until 1992.116 By 1917 it had opened Scarba House, which was a welfare house for women and children at Bondi, Sydney.117

Reading’s professional interests and her expertise in the care of women and children would have made her an invaluable board member. Perhaps she recalled a time in her own young life when she and Esther had been forced to accept the charity of others in their journey from Russia to Australia, or when they had been discriminated against because they were Jewish and spoke Yiddish. She was able to empathise with those who were poor, destitute, abandoned and ‘down and out’ because her early childhood had exposed her to these experiences or very similar ones as a refugee in search of a safe haven.

The Dalwood Home, set up by the Food for Babies Fund in 1924, is another non-Jewish organisation in Sydney where Reading served as a Life Governor. Located in Seaford near the seaside suburb of Manly, the non-denominational home began operating as a home for mothers and babies.118 In 1931, it was incorporated as a ‘second schedule hospital’ and was extended to support vulnerable families who were unable to support their children in their own home.119 During World War II increasing numbers of children of servicemen were admitted, and from 1931 to 1989 more than 2000 children were admitted for either short or long-term care.120 Reading’s work with the Dalwood Home indicated that she understood how important family relationships were, and that timely support for vulnerable children (and teenagers) was essential. It also indicated her compassion and insight into the needs of disadvantaged children and their need for the provision of intervention programs as well as medical care.121

115 ‘Australia’s First Charity.’
116 ‘Australia’s First Charity.’
117 ‘Australia’s First Charity.’
120 ‘Dalwood Children’s Home,’ (1924-1999).
The Women’s Hospital in Crown Street was the third institution where Reading served as a Life Governor. Founded in 1893 by Dr James Graham, its focus was on maternity care with the aim of raising medical standards in the area. It provided maternity care not only within the hospital but also in the women’s homes. The Women’s Hospital gave medical instruction to women who had acted as midwives without having had any prior medical training. It started in Hay Street and moved to Surrey Hills in 1897. The Women’s Hospital later functioned not only as a general hospital, but also as a public and maternity hospital, a care-provider and an adoption agency. The Crown Street Women’s Hospital was non-denominational and administered by the NSW Government. In 1919 a Permanent Auxiliary Organisation was formed to centralise offers of assistance; in 1933 another was established in Abbotsford, and in 1937 another was established in the Bondi-Waverley district, nearer to the Reading practice. Until it closed in 1983, it was the largest maternity hospital in NSW. The hospital admitted unmarried mothers, state and Aboriginal wards, and many of the children born there to unwed mothers were placed for adoption. While many of the adoption procedures are unacceptable by the standards of 2017, the Women’s Hospital operated within the laws of the period. Unfortunately this meant unmarried mothers were given little option but to give up their babies for adoption.

These three life governorships in Sydney reveal that Reading’s reputation and sphere of influence were more extensive than in Kings Cross and Bondi Junction where she practised. They reveal the extent of the professional network she established and are clear.

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123 ‘Archives in Brief 88, Crown Street Women’s Hospital.’
124 ‘Archives in Brief 88 Crown Street Women’s Hospital.’
126 ‘Crown Street Women’s Hospital (1893-1983).’
127 ‘Archives in Brief 88 Crown Street Women’s Hospital.’
129 ‘Breaches of Adoption Regulations, Laws and Crimes.’
indicators of the respect in which she was held in the medical profession and wider community. They also strongly confirm that she contributed in Sydney to the wider Australian public as well as to the Jewish community. The following section examines some of the reasons why the practice of medicine has attracted so many Jews throughout the centuries.

Why did so many Jews practise as doctors?

Medicine was one of the few professions open to Jews when other professions were inaccessible to them. Jews have lived and worked as doctors for centuries, in spite of anti-Semitic quotas that precluded them from the universities. Jewish doctors were part of the Islamic world of medicine and later of Christendom. Efron (2014) argues that the Jewish physician became a role model in Jewish society, especially after the High Middle Ages. Jewish doctors held positions of power in royal courts, but ordinary people were forbidden to consult them. A series of bans between 1246 and 1491 threatened Christians who consulted Jewish doctors with excommunication. In spite of this deterrent they did consult Jewish doctors, which implies that they must have been effective physicians and their patients got better or did not die:

Although the king had forbidden Jews to be apothecaries, the people had confidence in no others. The priests, particularly the Jesuits, harangued against infidel medicine from their pulpits, published pamphlets on the subject, petitioned the Sejm and the governors to disqualify Jews from medical practice, but no sooner did one of the clergy fall ill, than he called in a Jew to attend him.

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In addition, Jews saw the practice of medicine as a means of contributing to the life of the nation in which they were sheltering. Their long, tragic history has not dampened the value that they put on life – as one Talmudic tractate says:

Only one man was created in the world, to teach that, if any man has caused a single soul to perish, the Bible imputes it to him as though he had caused a whole world to perish, and if any man saves alive a single soul, the Bible imputes it to him as though he had saved the whole world.\(^\text{136}\)

Jews did not want to be a burden on the community in which they found themselves. However in Germany during both the medieval and modern periods, Jewish doctors were reviled first in the name of Christianity and later in that of Aryan Germanism.\(^\text{137}\) For example, in 1384 Jews were burnt at the stake when the Black Death swept Europe because it was believed that they had poisoned wells.\(^\text{138}\)

Prior to 1230 CE, most Jewish doctors were to be found in the Islamic world of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.\(^\text{139}\) Arab medicine played an influential role in Jewish culture and conversely, Judaism’s positive attitudes towards medicine contributed to the prominence of Arab medicine.\(^\text{140}\) Greek books on medicine written by Galen c.200 CE were translated into Arabic in the ninth century in Baghdad and consulted in twelfth century Cairo.\(^\text{141}\) An important Jewish centre in the East was the Jewish community at old Cairo (Fustāt), where Jews worshipped at the Ben Ezra synagogue.\(^\text{142}\) Reading and Esther visited this synagogue when they went to Palestine in 1925 and Reading wrote a detailed description of it to her family, included in Chapter 6.\(^\text{143}\)


\(^{138}\) Paton, ‘Review of Medicine and the German Jews,’ 1257.


\(^{143}\) Reading, 6 December, 1925, Central Hotel, Faud el Auwal Avenue, Cairo. (Mitchell Library)
This suggests the possibility of some connection with the ancient Jewish physicians who had practised and worshipped there. One of the rooms in the Ben Ezra synagogue was used as a depository or as a genizah (storage place for religious papers).  

From the twelfth to the nineteenth century, religious and secular documents were stored there and perfectly preserved in the dry air of Egypt. These became an archival treasure house for scholars. Among these dried shards of parchment and paper were prescriptions for drugs, for pharmacology was one of the areas in which Arabs excelled.

While the subject of the many contributions of Jews to medical science are beyond the remit of this thesis, moving forward now to the modern era, Efron contends that in the twentieth century in Europe between the two world wars, 50 percent of the physicians in Berlin were Jewish, 60 percent in Vienna, 66 percent in Warsaw, 74 percent in Vilna and 83 percent in Lodz. Mentioned previously was the great nutritionist Professor Heinrich Finkelstein (1865-1942), whose teaching licence in Germany was revoked due to his...
Jewish heritage. Reading’s visit to him was a significant part of her post-graduate professional study and she brought his teaching back to Sydney and to her practice there.

There are other factors that may explain why Jews have been drawn to medicine other than for religious or philanthropic reasons. Medical knowledge was portable and could be carried if Jews were forced from a country, as they were in Spain in 1492 CE by the Edict of Granada. In the modern era Efron (2014) argues that in Russia in the post-revolution period, science offered a way ‘for Jews to bootstrap themselves from the nether edge of society … to the center.’ Science provided the means by which Jews could progress, and many Zionists such as Je’ve (Vladimir) Jabotinsky believed that in spite of Zionist rhetoric, Jewish settlement in Palestine would proceed in a scientific manner. Chaim Weizmann, a Zionist, President of the Zionist Organisation, and first President of Israel, expressed faith in science ‘as a bridge between two cultures,’ as his own brilliant scientific career demonstrated and which has been referred to earlier in the thesis.

Efron argues further that it was science in the early decades of the twentieth century which attracted Jews in various parts of the diaspora – the USA, Palestine, the Soviet Union, England, Australia – in fact wherever they found themselves, because they saw science as a ‘progressive force’ … a universal and universalizing force. Medicine met Reading’s Jewish core values – life, hope, responsibility for self and for others.

After World War I Reading was able to practice medicine to help her fellow men and women and as this chapter has demonstrated she did so in a professional and selfless manner. However her practice of medicine and life in Australia was not without its difficulties due to the rise of increased anti-Semitism in Australia. (See

150 Efron, A Chosen Calling, Jews in Science in the Twentieth Century, 71.
151 Efron, A Chosen Calling, Jews in Science in the Twentieth Century, 75. Weismann discovered a process for producing acetone, a product crucial to the mass-production of explosives that were of vital importance in World War I for the success of the British war effort.
chapter 8 for a fuller discussion of this.) In response to this and concerns about fascism, particularly with the activities of the Australia First Movement, the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (JCCFA) was formed in Melbourne in 1942.\footnote{153 Rutland and Caplan, \textit{With One Voice}, 20.}

Following the attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941 and Japan’s entry into the war, and knowledge of the Nazi death camps in Europe, a sub-committee of the Jewish Advisory Board was formed in February 1942. This committee was to deal with public relations (PRC) and Reading became a member.\footnote{154 Rutland and Caplan, \textit{With One Voice}, 20.} A Bureau of Jewish Affairs was formed to carry out the work of the PRC and it had a very ambitious program.\footnote{155 Rutland and Caplan, \textit{With One Voice}, 20.} It collected and reported on all anti-Semitic statements and actions, with each one to be investigated and appropriate action taken. The Bureau undertook a demographic study of the Jewish population, to ascertain its employment profile in order to counter negative statements about Jews in the workplace. A program of lectures to various community groups such as churches or trade unions was instituted.\footnote{156 Rutland and Caplan, \textit{With One Voice}, 20.}

The next chapter examines anti-Semitism in Australia, the role of \textit{Truth} newspaper and its proprietor John Norton, and its vicious attack on Reading and members of her family. These details are included in this thesis in order to expose anti-Semitism and demonstrate the difficulties they imposed on Reading and her family. The chapter then moves to a consideration of refugees, as although many Jewish refugees were economic refugees they were also refugees from anti-Semitism, making the two inextricably linked.
Chapter 8 Anti-Semitism

Hilary Rubenstein (1991) writes that the term anti-Semitism was coined in Germany in 1879 to describe a phenomenon otherwise known as Judenhass or Jew hatred, which has existed since the beginnings of the Diaspora. Rubenstein defines anti-Semitism as ‘meaning enmity towards Jews and typically leading to discrimination against them if not outright persecution.’ In Australia it has mainly been confined to ‘blackballing’ at exclusive clubs and other forms of private social exclusion, and not reached significant levels amongst the general population.

Australian (Anglo-Celtic) attitudes originated in Europe where Jews had been historically reviled as Christ-killers, the poisoners of wells and murders of Christian children. P.Y. Medding (1968) observes also that, generally speaking, anti-Semitism in Australia has been relatively minor, confined mainly to verbal prejudice, social exclusion and the dissemination of anti-Semitic literature. These became more serious during the 1930s and the 1940s, particularly in the ‘yellow Press’ – The Bulletin, Punch and Smith’s Weekly. Another source of anti-Semitic press in Australia was Truth newspaper and its proprietor John Norton. (Truth attacked Reading and her family members after their move to Sydney, which is detailed further below.)

John Norton (1857-1916) migrated to Australia the year Reading was born (1884), and reached Sydney on 5 April. He became a newspaper proprietor and politician in Australia, and in 1896 became the proprietor of Truth, the only national newspaper that

1 Rubenstein, The Jews in Australia, 471.
6 Medding, 1968, 57.
had separate state editors and a huge circulation. Norton set the lowest journalistic standards, which involved the muckraking of alleged evils where none existed and sometimes printing attacks on innocent people. Truth was anti-Semitic and characterised by a recurring larrikin note that Cyril Pearl (1958) observes was one of its successful elements. Pearl asserts that Norton was an ‘instinctive demagogue’ who was able to play on the fears, prejudices and frustrations of all classes of people. In 1896, in his first edition Norton attacked the Anglican bishops as ‘‘big-binged, wine-bibbing.’’ Truth editorials took a definitive form following this first one. Norton wrote a series of articles after the Russian pogroms in Odessa in 1905, declaring that the total number of all Jews who had been massacred in Russian pogroms had been exaggerated; Norton claimed that not more than 10,000 had been killed and 50,000 injured. According to Rutland (1988), John Norton was blatantly anti-Semitic. The Bulletin and Truth both highlighted the economic peculiarities of the Jewish minority in Australia and both were anti-Semitic in their tone.

The cartoon depicted above illustrates the role played by the Sydney-based Bulletin, that during its first five years of publication engaged in stereotyping Jews as avaricious exploiters of gentiles, clannish (especially in their money-lending activities) and alien and ugly in appearance. In The Bulletin cartoon published on 11 November, 1899 note the hooked noses and the double pun on ‘A question of interest.’

8 Cannon, ‘Norton, John (1858–1916),’ ADB.
9 Cannon, ‘Norton, John (1858–1916),’ ADB.
11 Pearl, Wild Men of Sydney, 209.
12 Pearl, Wild Men of Sydney, 111.
13 Pearl, Wild Men of Sydney, 112.
14 Pearl, Wild Men of Sydney, 209.
15 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 1988, 96.
Hyams’s (2001) paper on the early years of The Bulletin claims it had a ‘self-appointed role for the lower classes of Australian society.’ Hyams writes that this helps explain The Bulletin’s emphasis on usury, whether pleading the plight of borrowers or that of the particular ‘victims.’ The Bulletin sheeted the blame for the national and economic misfortune at the end of the nineteenth century onto the Jews. Hyams cites Karl Marx’s portrayal of Jews as being a clannish, asocial and alien group engaged in exploitation of gentiles. In a similar manner the Jews were seen as a separate cultural group and in terms of the growing nationalism in Australia ‘surpassed only in their separateness perhaps only by the Chinese immigrants which lead to negative stereotyping of both groups.’ (Rev Abraham’s prejudice towards the Chinese - which might be read an indication of his own insecurity - is discussed below in his letter dated 15 September, 1896 to The Age in the section about the Dreyfus affair towards the end of this chapter.)

However, returning to the discussion about anti-Semitism, there is evidence this construct is learnt behaviour, as the example below illustrates.

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In their 2014 study of anti-Semitism in the Australian schoolyard, Rutland and Gross found that ‘classical racial antisemitism’ was evident in Australian schoolyards, which drew on stereotypical elements portraying Jews as greedy and evil.\textsuperscript{23} One aspect of the playground bullying was a coin being thrown onto the ground and a Jewish child taunted, ‘Hey Jew, you should pick this up!’\textsuperscript{24} The researchers argue that this particular form of bullying has been passed down through the generations. The following cartoon, originally published in \textit{The Bulletin} in 1897, depicts a similar schoolyard incident.\textsuperscript{25}

Gross and Rutland (2014) propose that anti-Semitism emerged in three forms.\textsuperscript{26} The first was religious anti-Judaism, which emerged with Christianity and accusations of deicide, and is also found in some Islamic texts. Racial anti-Semitism arose in Europe in the late nineteenth century and reviled Jews as evil and corrupt in an economic and biological


\textsuperscript{24}Gross and Rutland, ‘Combatting antisemitism in the school playground: an Australian case study,’ 318.

\textsuperscript{25}Gross and Rutland, ‘Combatting antisemitism in the school playground: an Australian case study,’ 325.

\textsuperscript{26}Gross and Rutland, ‘Combatting antisemitism in the school playground: an Australian case study,’ 325.
sense.\textsuperscript{27} The third type is associated with the contemporary Israel-Palestinian conflict, when legitimate criticism of Israel morphs into an irrational hatred of Jews.\textsuperscript{28}

Blakeney (1985) argues that the ‘portability of the anti-Semitic stereotype’ in various pieces of Victorian culture eased its transference to Australia from Britain.\textsuperscript{29} For instance, Shakespeare’s character Shylock is the best-known Jewish character. Blakeney claimed that Dickens based the character of Fagin, the second-best known Jewish character, on Isaac Solomon who was transported to Australia in 1831.\textsuperscript{30} Moreover, Marcus Clarke, author of \textit{For the Term of His Natural Life} (1870) repeatedly depicted the Jew as a parvenu, usurer and social parasite.\textsuperscript{31} Usury may be defined as ‘money lending on the basis of excessive profit.’\textsuperscript{32} According to Rutland (1988), Henry Lawson blamed Jews for the 1890s Depression and then Norman Lindsay continued the anti-Semitic literary tradition.\textsuperscript{33}

The British heritage left-wingers believed Jewish manipulation in society was caused through the application of money power, and the right-wingers believed it was through a world conspiracy.\textsuperscript{34} Application of the ‘Jewish money-power’ construct found adherents in pre-Federation Australian society. However \textit{The Bulletin} championed a new kind of Australian character, ‘Australia for Australians’ and became strongly anti-Semitic, claiming the Boer war was being fought ‘in the interests of “London Jews.”’\textsuperscript{35} Australians absorbed these anti-Semitic attitudes in their colonial literature without consciously realising they were doing so.

\textsuperscript{27} Gross and Rutland, ‘Combatting antisemitism in the school playground: an Australian case study,’ 325.
\textsuperscript{28} Gross and Rutland, ‘Combatting antisemitism in the school playground: an Australian case study,’ 325.
\textsuperscript{29} Michael Blakeney, \textit{Australia and the Jewish Refugees 1933-1948}, Sydney: Croom Helm Australia, 2001, 2.
\textsuperscript{30} Blakeney, \textit{Australia and the Jewish Refugees 1933-1948}, 1.
\textsuperscript{31} Blakeney, \textit{Australia and the Jewish Refugees 1933-1948}, 1.
\textsuperscript{33} Rutland, \textit{Edge of the Diaspora}, 95.
\textsuperscript{34} Blakeney, \textit{Australia and the Jewish Refugees 1933-1948}, 6.
\textsuperscript{35} Blakeney, \textit{Australia and the Jewish Refugees 1933-1948}, 12.
James Jupp (2010) said the decade 1890-1900 was one of increased anti-Semitism in Australia, due to the Depression and high unemployment. A survey of Australian newspapers of the decade confirms that anti-Semitic attitudes were evident, particularly with regard to moneylenders, but were more sympathetic to the stock character of Jews in high Victorian theatre. Theatre may be seen as the legitimate outlet for the release of societal tension, and it is now that the thesis turns to a discussion of colonial Victorian theatre and some published reviews of local productions, as well as a consideration of the construct of the Jewish moneylender.

The Jewish Money-Lender c.1890-1900

Jews were stereotyped in the Australian press as ‘usurers.’ This was a derogatory term that implied avarice or acquisitiveness, and in the vernacular was a synonym of a ‘loan shark.’ For example, in Brisbane in 1891 a Queen Street draper Dese [sic] was unable to repay his Jewish moneylender who had lent him £250. Eighteen days later the moneylender demanded repayment with £150 interest. When Dese was unable to pay £400, the moneylender ‘called in the law.’ In the Brisbane Supreme Court that same year, W.H. Sheehan declared he had inherited property worth £15,000. He had mortgaged it to Jewish moneylenders for £700, but had only received £400. In his weekly column ‘Truth’ in 1894, a fictitious Lantonshere had an imaginary conversation with a moneylender called Shylock. Shylock had almost ‘persuaded’ Lantonshere to be a ‘usurer.’ 60 percent was the average rate of interest which he might expect on a loan, when the risk was low it might fall to 40 percent and when the risk was high it might rise as high as 80 percent. The tone of these pieces was anti-Semitic and suggests that people

39 Shylock is a fictional character in The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare.
41 Caulfield and Elsternwick Leader, 31 March, 1894, 7.
were feeling economic pressures, that cash was scarce, and that Jews were convenient scapegoats.

An examination of newspapers in Australia during the decade 1890 to 1900 (when Fanny Rubinovitch was growing up in Ballarat) reveals there were numerous references to what appears to be a Jewish stock theatrical character. These further strengthen the stereotype of Jews, although they are in the main more sympathetically drawn. For example, in June 1894 the latest play from Drury Lane, London was playing in Sydney at the Lyceum Theatre. The *Evening News* reviewed ‘A Life of Pleasure’, which was set in the estates in Ireland of an Anglo-Irish Lord. Its stage scenery was more complicated than usual, for there was a scene of a picnic party on the Thames River and a battle scene in the jungles of Burmah [sic].42 Captain Chanos, who was in ‘the clutches of Isidor Scarci a Jewish money-lender,’ was played by Chas Brown.43 In May 1896 the *Evening News* reviewed the play ‘London Day by Day’ which was playing at the Theatre Royal.44 The plot revolved around a beautiful young girl who was innocent, but who predictably suffered dreadful misfortune. The leading villain was her half-brother and the other villain was Jewish moneylender, Harry Ascolon, played by Bland Holt, who was ‘very convincing’ in the role, while there were very few stage Jews ‘more amusing.’45 The comment that ‘the stage Jew may indeed be … about as unnatural as the stage Irishman, or the stage nigger’ indicates an understanding that stage stereotypes of Jews, Irishmen and other non-Caucasian characters bore little resemblance to their actual realities.46 Jews were depicted as being short, stout, bearded, with big feet and big noses, often with greedy eyes and thick lips.47 This is how they were frequently depicted in cartoons of the decade, as the cartoons in *The Bulletin* and other publications show.

43 *Evening News*, 18 June, 1894, 3.
45 *Evening News*, 16 May, 1896, 2.
46 *Evening News*, 16 May, 1896, 2.
In June 1896 the *Evening News* reviewed the G.P.O. Dramatic and Musical Society production at the Royal Standard Theatre in Sydney.\(^{48}\) It was a comedy drama ‘Won at Last’ and the young hero was at the mercy of the Jewish moneylender and T. M. Goldrich played the role ‘with great spirit.’\(^{49}\) The Jewish moneylender was Adolphus Buchanan, ‘in a good make up.’\(^{50}\) This additional note suggests that Buchanan’s features had been exaggerated so that his skin was darkened, his lips thickened and his eyebrows made bushier. This particular villain even demanded marriage with the heroine Constance, ‘as the price of her family’s honour.’\(^{51}\)

Therefore the Jewish moneylender was a stock character in late Victorian theatre, generally male, and was presented as an object of fun, of humour and jest, with a distinctive physical appearance. At the same time, he was a character with whom the audience could enjoy and even sympathise with, even if he was booed from time to time, as was the tradition in vaudeville theatre of the era.

There are also local examples of anti-Semitic reporting. *The Ballarat Star* was published between 1865 and 1925. In 1882 under a heading ‘Brevia,’ the *Star* mentioned that the Rothschild family, a fabulously wealthy Jewish family was based in London and Europe.\(^{52}\) According to the *Star’s* report, the Rothschild family owned one-fifth of the Nile delta in Egypt, in itself a curious fact because the Nile delta consisted of low-lying boggy sand and was seemingly of little commercial value. The Rothschilds owned £12,000,000 worth of Egyptian bonds and ‘an envious anti-Semite’ claimed that Baron Rothschild’s income was £28 per hour.\(^{53}\)

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\(^{49}\) *Evening News*, 23 June, 1896, 3.

\(^{50}\) *Evening News*, 23 June, 1896, 3.

\(^{51}\) *Evening News*, 23 June, 1896, 3.


\(^{53}\) *The Ballarat Star*, 16 November, 1882, 4.
Further afield, in November 1894 *The Telegraph* reported that the Russian government was going to float a huge loan of £40,000,000 at 3.5 per cent.\(^{54}\) Jewish moneylenders were assisting with this enterprise and consequently Czar Nicolas II intended to ‘assume a friendly attitude towards the Russian Jews.’\(^{55}\) By early December 1894, the loan had dropped to £20,000,000\(^{56}\) and Czar Nicholas II intended to remit the peasantry’s taxes and fines and restore the rights of Polish rebels (but not their lands).\(^{57}\) Two weeks later the loan of £16,000,000 had been subscribed 10 times over.\(^{58}\) Jewish money-lenders (that is the Rothschild family) had lent special assistance on the understanding that the ‘disabilities and persecutions’ to which the Jews in Russia had been subjected to, would cease.\(^{59}\) The Rothschilds were the bankers governments turned to, they were immensely rich and produced at least one financial genius per generation in the nineteenth century.\(^{60}\) For instance, between 1815 and 1915, N.M. Rothschild and Sons in Britain handled 18 government loans worth £1,600,000,000.\(^{61}\) Jews had traditionally moved into banking and money lending because the other professions had been closed to them.

This type of reporting built up further resentment against Jews in Australia in the Depression of the 1890s. In this same decade in Australia there was the bold scheme ‘the New Australia Movement,’ which aimed to found a co-operative venture inland for unemployed men. However, the scheme was doomed to fail because of moneylenders, the climate, the sandy soils and lack of water.

It was the possible threat of the settlement of Jewish Russian paupers in Australia that caused a backlash. In 1891 when Jewish immigration from Russia reached a peak, unsubstantiated rumours of a large Jewish agricultural settlement promoted by Baron


\(^{55}\) *The Telegraph*, 29 November, 1894, 4.


\(^{57}\) *Border Watch*, 1 December, 1894, 3.


\(^{59}\) *The Mildura Cultivator*, 15 December, 1894, 7.


Maurice de Hirsch caused an immediate negative reaction.\textsuperscript{62} There were estimates of 2000 to 500,000 refugees to be settled in Australia.\textsuperscript{63} Both the Jewish and non-Jewish press reacted with ‘expressions of fear of Australia being flooded by hordes of Russian Jews.\textsuperscript{64} The Paris correspondent of \textit{The Times} writing from London wrote:

\begin{quote}
In all the great centres on the continent this is the burning question, and Anti-Semitism is only the natural result of the feeling that these Jews bring nothing with them except the thirst for life, and add nothing to the fortune of the country in which they settle.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

The opposition in Australia to Baron Hirsch’s settlement proposal was xenophobia and anti-Semitism, and the anti-Semitism was exacerbated by the economic depression of the 1890s.\textsuperscript{66} The following section will indicate that anti-Semitism flourished still in parts of Europe, especially in rural areas in Hungary.

\textbf{The Trial of the Tisza-Eszlar Jews}

Lacqueur (2006) argues that by the early years of the twentieth century it was widely believed that in enlightened circles anti-Semitism was a thing of the past.\textsuperscript{67} However in the late nineteenth century there was a ‘throwback to the Middle Ages’ in a distant rural place, with rumours of ritual murder such as at Tisza-Eszlar in Hungary.\textsuperscript{68} In Pressburg, Hungary a young child called Esther Solymossy disappeared and the local Jews were blamed for her death, although there was ‘insufficient evidence against them.’\textsuperscript{69} In August 1882 these Jews were acquitted of Esther’s murder and \textit{The Ballarat Star} reported that violent attacks were subsequently made on the Jewish quarter in Pressburg.\textsuperscript{70}

In 1883, Rabbi I. Goldreich of the Ballarat Hebrew congregation wrote to \textit{The Ballarat Star} in defence of Tizar–Eiar [sic] Jews on trial in Austro-Hungary.\textsuperscript{71} \textit{The Ballarat Star}
had reported their trial and Goldreich had taken exception to the wording in the heading, ‘A Curious Cablegram.’ Rabbi Goldreich challenged the use of the adjective ‘curious’ explaining that Ballarat readers may ‘fail to grasp’ the meaning of the heading and may conclude that ‘there is some truth’ in the false accusations against the Jews.\(^\text{72}\) The Hungarian Jews had been accused of using Christian blood in their Passover ceremonies, and Rabbi Goldreich protested that this was an old anti-Semitic slur and lie that once again had raised its ugly head.\(^\text{73}\)

Understandably, Jews in Ballarat and Australia followed such events in Europe closely, for an issue like this was among the reasons why so many Jewish families had decided to immigrate. In reply, The Ballarat Star printed a letter from its Viennese correspondent which read ‘the innocence of the Jews is established. And the real object of the tribunal should now be to prevent the real murderers from escaping justice.’\(^\text{74}\) The fate of the Pressburg Jews in 1883 indicates how the old prejudices against Jews were still active in Eastern Europe and foreshadowed the two waves of pogroms of the early twentieth century, particularly in Russia, from 1903 to 1906 and from 1917 to 1921. Jewish authorities in Australia monitored these overseas events carefully. Lacqueur (2006) claims anti-Semitism as a central issue existed only in czarist Russia and a few other backward regions of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, such as Romania such as the Tisza-Eszlar case illustrates.\(^\text{75}\)

**The Dreyfus Affair 1894**

The Dreyfus affair in France was widely reported in Australian newspapers. It commenced in 1894 and continued until 1906. Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish Army Captain was convicted of treason for allegedly selling military secrets to Germany in 1894. In early April 1895, The Telegraph’s Paris correspondent wrote about the ‘convict

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\(^{72}\) Ballarat Star, 3 July, 1883, 4.
\(^{73}\) Ballarat Star, 3 July, 1883, 4.
\(^{74}\) Ballarat Star, 6 August, 1883, 3.
\(^{75}\) Lacqueur, The Changing Face of Antisemitism, 103.
Dreyfus. Dreyfus was described in a very negative way – he had never been persona grata with his military superiors; he had failed to make friends; his only friend had been a young male actor; there was an atmosphere of distrust around him; and ‘his whole manner and demeanour were considered un-French.’ Dreyfus was summarily declared a traitor and accused of being an enemy of France and a spy for Germany. In December 1893 a military tribunal behind closed doors sentenced him to life imprisonment on Devil’s Island and he spent four years there in solitary confinement. Dreyfus’ trial was a sensation and in September 1896 *The Age* published a letter from the Rev Joseph Abrahams (1855-1938) who was the rabbi of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation from 1882.

Rev Abrahams thought the ‘unfortunate Dreyfus affair’ might cause citizens to question the patriotism of Australian Jews. It did not matter what religion a man believed in, it was ‘of no more consequence to his capacity to fulfilling his position than is the colour of his hair.’ Abrahams was at ‘a loss to understand what class of people can properly be termed foreigners in Australia.’ A man who pays his taxes, has allegiance to the Crown, performs his duties as a citizen, is welcome to ‘any honours the nation may bestow.’

Clearly Rev Abrahams was referring to Jews who were good Australian citizens and fulfilled all their civic duties (and more). The sole exception, Abrahams noted, was the Chinese who displayed a tendency to create an unfair competition and drag men down to their level. Abraham’s letter displayed a concern for the security of his own Jewish flock and a disappointing prejudice towards Chinese citizens.

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77 *Telegraph*, 4 April, 1895, 6.
78 *Telegraph*, 4 April, 1895, 6.
81 *Age*, 15 September, 1896, 4.
82 *Age*, 15 September, 1896, 4.
83 *Age*, 15 September, 1896, 4.
84 *Age*, 15 September, 1896, 4.
In December 1897, *The Age* published a lengthy item on the Dreyfus affair.\(^85\) Public opinion ‘was mortified and irritated at the possibility of a miscarriage of justice.’\(^86\) In January 1898, *The Jewish Herald* analysed the political implications of the scandal for the forthcoming French elections.\(^87\) *The Jewish Herald* supported Dreyfus’ case and lampooned the statement that there was ‘a big Jewish syndicate with a capital of two million dollars pledged to save Dreyfus.’\(^88\)

The Dreyfus affair clearly was of concern to many people in Australia, for the news was cabled through and the anti-Semitism of it horrified those who believed Dreyfus was innocent. Émile Zola in Paris was one of those who rose to support Dreyfus, as ‘a terrible mischief has been done.’\(^89\) ‘Zola said the French had carried out a ‘great injustice towards an innocent man’ and had not held to France’s national motto of ‘Liberty, Fraternity and Equality.’\(^90\) Zola and another courageous writer Bernard Lazare investigated on Dreyfus’ behalf and it appeared that the evidence against Dreyfus had been faked by two fellow officers – one of whom had committed suicide and the other escaped abroad.\(^91\) The case spilt France and led temporarily to riots and outbreaks of anti-Semitism.\(^92\) The Catholic Church and the traditional right were heavily involved in the affair, and politically it led to a strict division between church and state in France.\(^93\) As a result anti-Semitism in France weakened but continued to exist.\(^94\)

What was the consequence for Reading and her family as a result of these anti-Semitic attitudes? The next section deals with family problems and being consequently thrust into the public arena by articles in *Truth*. Graeme Davison (2015) has written about the

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86. *Age*, 15 September, 1896, 4.
88 *Jewish Herald*, 7 January, 1898, 15.
90 *Jewish Herald*, 21 January, 1898, 9.

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problem of painful, personal family material being included in history, saying ‘the point of revealing (them) is not healing so much, as an enlarged understanding.’\textsuperscript{95} This is the reason they have been included in this thesis, in order for the reader to comprehend more fully and sensitively what Reading and her family endured.

Family Problems 1922

In 1922, Reading’s younger brother Hyman had been living in coastal NSW in Springfield Avenue, Woongarra, and working as a travelling salesman.\textsuperscript{96} Hyman seemed to have moved about and in 1925 a personal tragedy unfolded that severely impacted on Reading’s life. This event caused her considerable personal unhappiness and may have potentially caused her professional embarrassment; it certainly caused her to alter her departure date to Europe. Reading’s love and care for Hyman, who was 10 years younger, has been evident throughout her life. For example, at West Brunswick Primary School he had been placed in the same class as Lewis, who was two years younger, which indicates he had a problem of some kind. Reading had also tried to place Hyman at Wesley College to be with Lewis when he moved there.\textsuperscript{97} Hyman was discharged from the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) after 83 days service, being declared medically unfit for military service.\textsuperscript{98} (War service is covered in a Chapter 9). Various factors point to the speculation that Hyman suffered from a condition which today would probably be diagnosed as a type of learning disability.

Lewis employed Hyman in an estate agency he set up after the end of World War 1.\textsuperscript{99} In 1920 Hyman married Elma May Dickinson and they had a child, June, who was born in 1921.\textsuperscript{100} The couple experienced problems and separated for two years. In 1922 Hyman appeared in a Sydney court, owing eight weeks unpaid rent for a flat in ‘The William’ at

\textsuperscript{95} Davison, \textit{Lost Relations}, 236.
\textsuperscript{96} AEC, Australian Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980.
\textsuperscript{97} Margot Vaughan, Associate Curator of Collection, Wesley College. Email to candidate, August 2013.
the top of William Street, Sydney.\textsuperscript{101} Hyman had rented the flat for a year from 19 November, 1921 at £3.00 a week. He won the case, saying that the state of the flat made it uninhabitable as a furnished flat and so he had moved out.\textsuperscript{102} This suggests he was leading a separate life by the end of 1921, having left Elma and June.

In 1924 Hyman and Elma attempted a reconciliation and she became pregnant.\textsuperscript{103} Elma did not want to proceed with the pregnancy and had an abortion on 22 February, 1925, unfortunately contracting peritonitis.\textsuperscript{104} She died on March 4, 1925, aged 24 years\textsuperscript{105} and was buried in the Rookwood Cemetery.\textsuperscript{106} The newspapers published the news and her death was reported around Australia by the wire service with sensationalised headlines.\textsuperscript{107} Hyman and the doctor involved, Dr Patrick, were both charged with conspiracy and murder, although these charges were later dropped.\textsuperscript{108}

Reading and Esther had already made plans to go to the USA and Europe in 1925, and had apparently included Hyman in their original plans. Reading’s original departure date had been 11 March on the \textit{RMS Sonoma}, but she delayed her departure, probably because of the traumatic events that had transpired. It appears Hyman had told Elma that he was interested in acquiring new business contacts in Chicago and New York.\textsuperscript{109} Her sudden death in February 1925, about two months before the group’s actual departure overseas, was an added incentive for them to leave Sydney for a lengthy period. However, it must have been a great shock to them all when Elma died and Hyman was charged with murder. In the end, Reading, Esther and Hyman (duly acquitted) departed from Sydney in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[101] NSW Marriage Index, Reg. No. 3414.
\item[105] \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 13 March, 1925, 6.
\end{footnotes}
the *RMS Tahiti* bound for Wellington, New Zealand and arrived in San Francisco on 17 April, 1925.\(^\text{110}\)

Reading and Esther doubtless believed that a change of scenery and a fresh start for Hyman under their watchful eyes was required. Reading had written that they had hoped that he would meet a ‘nice’ Jewish girl in Chicago or New York.\(^\text{111}\) They planned to visit their relatives, the Rosenthals, in Chicago.\(^\text{112}\) It was Reading’s intention to attend the quinquennial meeting of the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW) in Washington, U.S.A in May 1925. She knew it was important that the Council of Jewish Women (Australia) should become affiliated with the ICJW as soon as possible.\(^\text{113}\) The CJW had much to learn from the international organisation and its experienced delegates.

Hyman’s good friend ‘Dare’ joined him at some point in America and all four were in London in July 1925. Hyman and ‘Dare’ travelled around Europe together and sailed for Melbourne on the *RMS Orvieta*, which left Naples on 30 August, 1925 and was due to dock in Melbourne at the end of September 1925.\(^\text{114}\) In the meantime, Reading used her time overseas to extend her medical knowledge and professional contacts. To some extent Reading was able to distance herself from family worries while she was overseas in 1925, although her letters home were full of inquiries about family members and friends.\(^\text{115}\)

Years later, there was to be another troubled time in 1927.

**Family Troubles 1927**

In May 1927, when Reading was fully occupied with her patients and the Council of Jewish Women, events occurred which caused her private pain and professional embarrassment. After the scandal concerning Hyman and Elma’s death in 1925, their


\(^{111}\) Reading, 17/25 July 1925. (Mitchell Library.)

\(^{112}\) Reading, 17/25 July 1925. (Mitchell Library.)


\(^{115}\) Reading, 13 October, 1925, Vienna.
daughter June had been left in her maternal grandmother’s care. Unwelcome publicity concerning June broke in the Sydney press in 1927 and embroiled Reading and Dr Abe Reading.

In 1927, their brother Hyman took the unusual step of issuing a writ of Habeas Corpus against his former brother-in-law George Dickinson for the return of ‘the little blue-eyed baby girl’ (June) to his care. June was by then about six years old and had had little contact with her father or other members of the Reading family since her mother’s death. Upon her maternal grandmother’s death, she lived with her uncle George Dickinson. In the intervening years, Hyman had made two trips around the world. One of these was in 1925 with his mother Esther and Reading, and the second at a later date. He told the court it had been his habit to drive down to Rushcutters Bay in his firm’s car and observe from a distance his daughter at play.

‘Reading’s Memory Fails’ the bold headline read in a Sunday edition of *Truth* in April 1927, but it did not mean Dr Fanny Reading, it referred to one of her younger brothers. Hyman Reading (Robinovitch [sic]), described as having the ‘dilettante and inconsequential air of the young man about town,’ had been unable to answer all the questions put to him by Justice Ferguson. The journalist’s description of Hyman, now aged 33, makes him appear as a superficial, insincere, poor and unreliable witness, for he answered, ‘I can’t remember’ to many of the questions put to him.

Counsel for Dickinson took Hyman though Elma’s conversion to Judaism. George Dickinson was an associate of Justice Ferguson, which suggests a bias for Dickinson may have existed in this court. Hyman agreed that his family were Jewish, very religious.

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118 *Truth*, 24 April 1927, 15.
120 *Truth*, 24 April 1927, 15.
121 *Truth*, 24 April 1927, 15.
122 *Truth*, 24 April 1927, 15.
123 *Truth*, 24 April, 1927, 15.
and strongly against inter-marriage. His family had tried to make the best of his marriage to Elma after it had happened, although neither had asked for parental permission from their parents to marry. Hyman had not given Elma any help when she decided to take the Jewish faith; she had organised obtaining several Jewish prayer books herself. Commonwealth Bank statements were produced in court as evidence of the £5.00 maintenance each week that Hyman paid his former wife.\textsuperscript{124} However there arose the sensitive question of Hyman’s refusal to pay his wife’s medical bills. Hyman had refused to believe his wife had had an illegal operation, and declared he had not been aware his wife was so ill that she was close to death.\textsuperscript{125}

Hyman referred to his eldest brother who he said stood in his father’s place, and he always sought Abe’s advice before undertaking a course of action. Dr Fanny Reading also appeared in court to support his case.\textsuperscript{126} Two photographs accompanied this article – one of Hyman ‘looking studious’, probably because he was photographed carrying two books, and one of Reading from the time of her graduation.\textsuperscript{127} The caption under this photograph read, ‘Dr Fanny Reading who was frequently mentioned in the legal fight.’\textsuperscript{128} This caption does suggest that Reading was very actively involved in the dispute, when there was no real evidence to support this claim.

Hyman’s application for June’s custody resulted in a prurient, distorted piece of anti-Semitic reporting in \textit{Truth}. The article was written in a manner to satisfy the reader ‘whose appetites could be satisfied by sensationalism and key-hole voyeurism.’\textsuperscript{129} However for the next few weeks, in spite of this pressure, Reading went on with her life in Sydney in a dignified and professional manner, no doubt supported and assisted by the close knit Jewish community. In early May she presided over a regular monthly meeting

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Truth}, 24 April, 1927, 15.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Truth}, 24 April, 1927, 15.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Truth} 24 April, 1927, 15.
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Truth}, 24 April, 1927, 15.
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Truth}, 24 April, 1927, 15.
\textsuperscript{129} Ochert, ‘Dr Fanny Reading and Smith’s Weekly,’ 313.
of the Council of Jewish Women at the Maccabean Hall. Rabbi Kirsner spoke to its members about the starvation and distress of the Jewish people in Eastern Europe. They received the news that the Council House had now been purchased and that Council was receiving rent from the property, and that Jewish immigrants on a ship had to go on a starvation diet to draw the Captain’s attention to the fact that they had no water for washing. Reading suggested ‘a self-denial week,’ this suggestion coming in a period when she was under great personal duress because of Hyman’s court case. She also attended a successful ball at the Wentworth Hotel in aid of the Sir Moses Montefiore Home and wore a gown of ‘white beaded georgette’. She found time to attend the ‘shower’ tea-party dance for Bernice Rosenthal at The Ambassadors restaurant. She joined other leading members of the Sydney Jewish community at Sydney railway station to greet Dr Alexander Goldstein, the Zionist speaker, when he arrived by train from Brisbane. The analysis of the Sydney press over a short period of time reveals a heavy social schedule for Reading, in addition to her medical practice.

On 22 May, 1927 the court reconvened and Reading was recalled and re-examined by Dare (for Hyman). Dare said a ‘strong woman’ was needed to look after June, and that Dr. Fanny Reading was ‘a woman peculiarly fitted.’ Justice Davidson ruled against Hyman’s application for custody of June. He said June could not go into the custody of people whose religious beliefs were such that they were prepared to ‘sacrifice a young woman on its altar.’ Justice Davidson ruled (erroneously) that since Elma had been driven to suicide, he could not leave her ‘to the tender mercies of these people.’ There was no evidence of suicide; the 1925 Coroner’s report on Elma’s death clearly indicated

131 Hebrew Standard, 6 May, 1927, 2.
132 Hebrew Standard, 6 May, 1927, 2.
137 Truth, 22 May, 1927, 13.
139 Truth, 22 May, 1927, 13.
that a pregnancy termination had eventuated, and this document would have been available to the Court.140

Hyman was described as ‘well-dressed’, with the air of a man about town, and received the judgment with ‘outward equanimity.’141 This description portrays Hyman as superficial and devoid of proper feelings, as well as being a bad father and something of a predator. The salacious report was accompanied by another photograph of Reading and Hyman which was captioned, ‘Are they sad? Well, the camera does not lie’ implying that they were not sad at all.142

Justice Davidson confirmed George Dickinson’s custody of the child, and Truth attempted to destroy Hyman and the Reading family’s credibility. The case was sensationalised in the press as a battle between two families and two religions.143 Without doubt this experience at the hands of the Sydney ‘gutter press’ was the basis for Reading’s distrust and dislike of the Australian secular press, which was to climax in a Smith’s Weekly case in 1949, which was referred to in the Introduction.144 Truth ‘showed no remorse over its ugly reputation’ and destruction of the good name of people.145 As a piece of anti-Semitic reporting this article is also evidence that anti-Semitic prejudices existed in Australia in the 1920s at least in certain sections of the ‘yellow’ press.

This was a very difficult time for Reading, who was fully committed to her practice and to the Council of Jewish Women. In the unlikely event that she had been given custody of June, it would have been an enormous challenge for her to look after a six-year-old child. Moreover, June was settled and happy in her uncle’s care. Reading’s support for Hyman is testimony of her affection for him. Notwithstanding the fact Hyman had not had any great involvement with his daughter since her birth, the court case appears to have had

140 Coroner’s Report on death of Elma May Reading, State Archives NSW; Series: 2766; Item: 3/956; Roll: 343, 554.
141 Truth, 22 May, 1927, 13.
142 Truth, 22 May, 1927, 13.
144 Ochert, ‘Dr Fanny Reading and Smith’s Weekly,’ 312.
145 Ochert, ‘Dr Fanny Reading and Smith’s Weekly,’ 312.
little regard for any rights he might have had as her father. There is no discussion of access visits, although *Truth* did report that Hyman had expressed affection for his daughter.\(^{146}\)

The case does bring to light issues which Johnny Bell (2012) elucidates, that during the interwar period in Australia, Australian fathers suffered a ‘serious depreciation in value placed on their capabilities.’\(^{147}\) Bell’s study of the Victorian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (VSPCC) in Melbourne in the 1920s and 1930s is pertinent here. Similar forces were at work in Sydney during the same period which may explain the hostility of the court towards Hyman. Bell argues that the VSPCC was unconvinced a sole father could provide a child with the care it needed.\(^{148}\)

Firstly there were the needs of the nation; after the loss of so many men in World War I, children were no longer a private concern.\(^{149}\) They became a symbol of hope, and the mental hygiene movement of the 1930s focused on the child.\(^{150}\) Marilyn Lake (1992) demonstrates that the great loss of Australian lives in World War I (60,000 out of a population of four million people) had been turned into a meaningful event by the Anzac myth.\(^{151}\) Accordingly, the population project had new meaning for ‘motherhood’ was publicly feted and the ‘citizen mother’ was championed by both sides of Australian politics.\(^{152}\) Hilary Land (1992) cites Maureen Molloy and Marilyn Lake, who argue that women as mothers were performing a vital service to the state. The ownership of property ‘in their own persons’ was a hallmark of citizenship for men but could not be fully

\(^{146}\) *Truth*, 24 May, 1927, 15.
\(^{147}\) Johnny Bell, ‘Needing a Woman’s Hand: Child Protection and the problem of Lone Fathers,’ *History Australia*, 9, 2 (May 2012): 94.
\(^{148}\) Bell, ‘Needing a Woman’s Hand,’ 92.
\(^{149}\) Bell, ‘Needing a Woman’s Hand,’ 92.
\(^{150}\) Bell, ‘Needing a Woman’s Hand,’ 103.
\(^{152}\) Lake, ‘Mission Impossible-How Men Gave Birth to the Australian Nation,’ 313.
extended to women. Falling birthrates in certain classes and ‘races’ led to anxiety and it became women’s duty to prevent ‘race suicide.’

As well as these issues and concerns, there was also the rise of the ‘science’ of mothercraft and home care, which led to what was called the ‘learned activities’ of mothers as managers in and of homes. This in turn led to the belief a ‘woman’s hand’ was required and that a father could not provide the care a child required. If this could not be provided, then the child was better off in institutional care. The intersection of these ideas not only denied the ability of fathers to care for their own children, but also denied them their children. It is quite conceivable that such ideas also influenced the court in Hyman’s case for the custody of his daughter.

Unfortunately Reading suffered at the hands of the anti-Semitic press in Sydney in both cases. Their attack was upon her family members and her letters written home from Europe in 1925 are an enduring testimony to her affection and care for them. Chapter 9 is about the Reading family members and what happened in their lives.

The relationship between anti-Semitism and immigration is that anti-Semitism constituted one of the ‘push’ factors for European Jews who fled Nazism before World War II in 1939. Australia was a safe haven for these refugees. From 1938 to 1939 a more generous quota of refugees was gradually introduced into Australia. The Australian Government was motivated partly by humanitarian considerations and partly by national interest. The final section of this chapter examines two aspects of Jewish refugee migration to Australia in the 1940s and 1950s.

155 Bell, ‘Needing a Woman’s Hand,’ 92.
156 Bell, ‘Needing a Woman’s Hand,’ 96.
157 Bell, ‘Needing a Woman’s Hand,’ 93.
158 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 174.
159 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 174.
Refugees

Reading herself was a refugee and so the care and support of refugees was a central aim in the work the NCJW undertook from its inception, as has been detailed earlier in the thesis. This section will focus on the work of Dr Max Joseph who organised Jewish refugees in NSW (1938-1946). Following this is a section on the Fellowship of Jewish Doctors that was formed in 1955. In 1942 the news started filtering out of the German occupied territories in the east of the enormity and the extent of the German killing of the Jews of Europe. In December 1942 the United Emergency Committee for European Jewry (UEC) was setup in Sydney. A Victorian UEC was set up on 28 January 1943. The Sydney UEC gathered together a high-powered group which included Dr Fanny Reading, Rabbis Porush and Schenk, Abram Landa, MLC, Bernard Sugarman, KC and Professor Julius Stone. They issued fortnightly bulletins and spoke at many meetings in the general Australian community.

In 1938 Dr Max Joseph, a Jewish refugee from Germany, succeeded Dr H. G. Levi as the president of the NSW Association of Refugees. Dr Joseph had been interned at Tatura for a period and became the NSW Association’s first executive director. Tatura was the purpose-build internment camp built at Rushworth, Victoria and housed German and Italian internees from 1940 until 1947. Camp 2 had a kosher kitchen and one hut was converted in a synagogue for the use of Jewish interns. Joseph worked as an accountant in Germany and in Australia worked with Robert Mitchell and Company from February 1944. Joseph wrote to the secretary of Scientific Manpower (Engineering) at the

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165 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 204.
167 Taura- Rushworth (1940-1947).
Institute of Engineers in Sydney requesting permission to apply full-time for a position at the Association of Refugees, as there were too many activities to be managed by someone acting in an honorary capacity.¹⁶⁹ Joseph explained:

I am working in a honorary capacity forming the Association of Refugees (NSW) which at present has more than 900 members who with their families represent about two-thirds of all refugees in Australia. This organisation is doing important work for the Refugees, co-operating with the authorities concerned (Security Service, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, Department of Interior etc.). At present I am arranging a War Loan Drive as a concerted effort for all Refugees in NSW in co-operation with the Commonwealth Bank War Loan Campaign (115 Pitt Street, Tel. B. 0540).¹⁷⁰

Advertisements then appeared in *The Hebrew Standard* calling for subscriptions to the First Victory Loan under the name of the Association for Refugees (NSW) 350 George Street, Sydney.¹⁷¹ The NCJW supported the Loan, asking its members to make advanced subscriptions and advising members that special slips for the purpose could be obtained from the NCJW at 166 Pitt Street, Sydney.¹⁷²

The Association produced a booklet in English to assist refugees.¹⁷³ It called upon all who could to participate in the War Loan.¹⁷⁴ It railed against the injustice of refugees who as ‘enemy aliens’ were called upon to work with other refugees taken from internment camps who were in fact Nazis or Fascists.¹⁷⁵ It was ‘a constant injustice’ to find these former enemies in the Civil Internment Camps.¹⁷⁶ The Association reassured the refugees, ‘Nevertheless we are trying to do whatever we can – whether regulation 108 is altered or not.’¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² *Hebrew Standard*, Thursday 9 March, 1944, 8.
¹⁷⁴ Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 1.
¹⁷⁵ Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 2.
¹⁷⁶ Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 2.
¹⁷⁷ Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 2
Jewish refugees’ legal status was a great concern because they had been rendered stateless by the German Decree of 1941.  

Consequently, the booklet outlined the concerns the Association had concerning the legal as well as the actual position of the refugees. Regulation 365 of the *Aliens Control Regulations* classified them as Refugee Aliens and they wished to be classified ‘legally and actually’ like Friendly Aliens in every respect. If this were to occur then all the ‘inconsistencies which exist at present would be rectified in general and Regulation 108 as well.’ The irritation and the abhorrence the refugees felt about their situation – stateless, supervised, forced to work with Nazis and Fascists interned with them, being described as ‘aliens’ is evident. After the Japanese entered the war on 8 December 1941 more than 200,000 men enlisted in the Australian defence forces. The shortage of manpower prompted the Australian Government to at last distinguish between the various categories of ‘aliens.’

The Association of Refugees developed an activity called ‘Transmare’ (across the seas) and worked on a comprehensive card index in an effort to trace missing family members. The membership of the Association was 1200 and in family groups possibly

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178 Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 2
179 Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 5-6.
180 Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 5-6.
183 Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 6.
represented 3000. These members authorised the Association to speak on their behalf as refugees from Nazi oppression with regard to war crimes. ‘Our bitter experience in the past should have taught us one thing: There is no strength but in unity, and difficulties can only be overcome by the combined efforts of the united Refugee Community.’

The question of German reparation caused great debate amongst Australian Jewry. Joseph believed the Association of Refugees (NSW) should be the representative body in NSW with regard to German reparation. This position was strongly opposed by Sydney Einfield of Executive Council of Australian Jewry and this resulted in Joseph deciding to disband the Association. Upon his resignation on 15 July, 1946, Dr H. G. Levi praised him saying:

it was no easy task to put the Association on its feet. The war was at its height. Refugees were enemy aliens, subject to severe restrictions of movement, looked at with suspicion, subject to severe restrictions of movement, and forbidden to go to the beaches or to the pictures in another suburb without a police permit. They could not organise themselves, and the question of holding meetings of refugees did not occur at all. In this setting Dr Joseph and a few other men and women who had the cause of refugees at heart began to work.

Another group to support a specific group of Jewish refugees was to be formed in the post-war period – the Fellowship of Jewish Doctors.

The story of the refugee doctors in Australia is a moving one, and it is fitting that their narrative is included in this thesis because Reading supported their struggle to gain the right to practice here. She was a member of the Fellowship of Jewish Doctors (Australia) and attended the inaugural meeting of the Fellowship on March 27, 1955. This was a group of refugee Jewish doctors who had had trained overseas, principally in Europe, and

184 Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 2.
185 Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 7.
186 Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 7.
187 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 388.
188 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 388.
189 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 388.
190 Booklet for Association of Refugees (NSW), March 1944, 1.
191 Rutland, Take Heart Again, 42.
who had managed to escape annihilation under the Nazis. The Fellowship was founded in memory of the many Jewish doctors murdered by the Nazis.

The refugee doctors had faced great difficulties surviving World War II and faced more in coming to practice in Australia. Among their difficulties was obtaining documentation about their original medical training in Poland or Germany (or wherever it had taken place) because more often than not it had been destroyed in the war. Other challenges were obtaining landing papers for Australia and assembling the £200 landing fee, developing English skills, and dealing with an inflexible Australian bureaucracy that insisted that they retrain for three years at an Australian university.

They faced a limited quota system that meant that only eight foreign doctors a year could be admitted to the profession.\(^{192}\) Prior to 1939 the NSW Practitioners Act was amended to a quota allowing only eight foreign doctors a year, with those demonstrating outstanding qualifications and those who had retrained at the University of Sydney being permitted to register.\(^{193}\)

As a result of these many difficulties and pressures, the Fellowship was founded by ‘refugee doctors who wanted to meet together for medical and social needs.’\(^ {194}\) Reading supported them by joining the Fellowship, where she played a double role. Not only was she a professional colleague, but she was in a position to act as a mentor to the refugee Jewish doctors. Her English language skills, her medical training and experience, her local contacts, her understanding of the Australian bureaucracy and customs, her knowledge, and contacts in the Jewish community made her a valuable friend to these new colleagues. Many of the wives of these refugee doctors joined WIZO because they could see the importance of a home in Israel.\(^ {195}\)

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192 Rutland, Take Heart Again, 6.
193 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 190.
194 Rutland, Take Heart Again, 59.
Unfortunately, Jewish migration was opposed by Australians who feared their living standards would be undermined by their admittance to Australia and preferred immigrants from Britain or Ireland.196 Apart from the British, the preferred immigrants were (in order of preference): Americans, Scandinavians, (Norwegians, Swedes and Danes), Dutch, Belgians, Swiss, Yugoslavs, Greeks and Albanians.197 The Jewish doctors faced ‘social rejection’ from the Anglo-Jewish doctors in Australia who might have been expected to support them.198 Rutland (1983) argues that this attitude reflected the established Jewish communities ‘sense of fear and mistrust’ and their sense of insecurity.199 This rejection was a final blow to the refugee doctors who quite rightly felt that their co-religionists might have been the first to assist them.

Reading’s support of this particular refugee group is clear evidence of her strength of character in pushing against the prevailing social attitudes of her own professional peer group in Australia, championing the underdog, and showing sympathy and empathy to newcomers experiencing loneliness and rejection. Her brother Abe’s name, for example, does not appear in the handwritten list of doctors who attended the inaugural meeting, while Reading’s does.200 This does not suggest Abe was unsympathetic to the situation and difficulties his co-religionists faced – perhaps he was just too busy with his own practice and family to get away to the meeting, as no doubt any other sympathetic doctors were. Reading’s support for the Jewish refugees doctors suggests her own medical pathways had not been without difficulties and struggle.

Although the Association of Jewish Doctors was not formed until 1955, there are earlier indications of xenophobic attitudes towards the ‘reffo’ doctors, depicted in the following cartoon published in the Daily Telegraph on 7 December, 1939, together with a small item from the Sydney Jewish News, 16 June, 1939 entitled ‘Alien Doctors.’ ‘Reffo’ was

196 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 226.
197 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 226.
198 Rutland, Take Heart Again, 3.
199 Rutland, Take Heart Again, 3.
200 Rutland, Take Heart Again, 41.
the term used to describe European and Jewish immigrants to Australia during this period and it was tinged with anti-Semitism\(^{201}\) and had a derogatory connotation.\(^{202}\)

The cartoon’s caption implies that the alien doctor is to be kept anesthetised on the surgery table and is to be ‘kept under’ (excluded). On the surgery wall is a sign that reads, ‘Urgent Doctors wanted for outback.’\(^{203}\) This relates specifically to the following newspaper item published in the *Daily Telegraph* headed ‘Alien Doctors.’ It referred to a discussion that was under way in the NSW Legislative Council during the second reading of a Bill to amend the NSW Medical Act. The Amendment Act of 1939 was to permit regional registration to ensure the availability of doctors in ‘areas “otherwise deficient.”’\(^{204}\) Clearly, this meant the outback of NSW.

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Dr Colvin said the right way to attract doctors to sparsely populated areas of the country was to increase the Government subsidy from £500 a year to £1000. Sir Norman Katter (1874-1965) declared the Medical Board should be given the power to send foreign doctors to Sydney University for a practical examination in surgery, medicine and obstetrics. Foreign doctors who duly qualified could be sent to sparsely populated areas of NSW and Australia.

The conservative thinking of Australians during this period was influenced by editorial policies such as those of *The Bulletin*, which also warned of the danger of refugee Jews importing Communism into Australia. Those refugees who arrived from Germany, Austria and later Hungary and were classified as ‘enemy aliens’ and subjected to supervision and censorship by the police (as was the case with Dr Max Joseph), were horrified. No consideration was given to the fact they were victims of the Nazi regime. Dr Max Joseph later claimed that as a result of the work of the Association for Refugees, the Australian Government changed the refugees’ status from ‘enemy alien’ to ‘friendly alien.’

The following chapter looks at Reading’s immediate family circle, who were well established by World War II (1939-1945). They prospered and established their own families, but were held together by strong familial bonds. Like so many Jewish refugees who came after them during the twentieth century, they contributed to both Jewish and non-Jewish Australian society. They transformed and diversified Jewish religious life, strengthened Jewish social and cultural bodies, and established schools and hospitals. If families are the units of a successful society, then follow the footsteps of the Reading family in Chapter 9.

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205 *Sydney Jewish News*, 16 June, 1939, 3.
206 *Sydney Jewish News*, 16 June, 1939, 3.
Chapter 9. The Reading Family

This chapter is a review of the lives of Reading’s immediate family. Reading called her family members her ‘Dear Ones’ and she drew her strength from her close family circle.¹ Ehrmann (1986) discovered that ‘Eastern Europeans were fun to be with … their parents had a warmth and generosity.’² No doubt the Reading family were similarly warm and generous. Reading’s letters written from overseas in 1925 and early 1926 are evidence of their familial closeness and her deep affection for them.

Abe Stanley Reading (1891-1958)

The first of Fanny’s brothers to enlist for service in World War 1 was Abe who enlisted in 1916, aged 25 years.³ He joined the Australian Army Medical Corps and took up his duties in April 1916.⁴ He had been the resident doctor at the Flinders Naval Base⁵ and before had been the resident medical officer at the Royal Naval College at Jervis Bay, replacing Dr Tansey.⁶ As a medical doctor already serving in the Navy, he entered war service with the rank of Captain.⁷

Abraham Solomon Rubinovitch 1916
NAA – Australian Medical Corps

¹ Dr Fanny Reading letters, Papers Dr Fanny Reading 1884-1974. (Mitchell Library)
² Susie Ehrmann ‘A Reappraisa,’ in Community of Fate, (ed.) John Foster, North Sydney: Allan and Unwin, 1986: 167
³ Abraham Solomon Rubinovitch, NAA, MT 14861/1, Barcode , 9696470, accessed 2 August, 2015. These records are not as yet digitalised.
⁵ Dandenong Advertiser, 17 February, 1916, 2.
After the war Abe practised medicine successfully, his medical career referred to in Chapter 5 which detailed Reading’s move to Sydney. He married Esma Daisy Rodd in 1929 in Sydney and they had three children: Anthony (born 1931), Bruce David (1931-2003), and Jennifer (born 1940). In 1927 he undertook an overseas tour to London, New York, Paris and Vienna to gain greater surgical knowledge, as Reading had done. Abe specialised in obstetrics and female surgery and after returning to Australia on the steamer Port Wellington, he said in an interview that Australian surgery was ‘equal to the best.’ In 1929 first official meeting of what was to become the Young Men’s Hebrew Association was held at his home with Abram Landa and Dr Joseph Steingrad. Its aims were religion, education, social and athletic activities. Abe practised ‘in harmony’ with Reading at the surgery rooms in Darlinghurst and Bondi Junction. By all accounts he was very close to his eldest sister, a great raconteur of jokes and an endless source of financial help to her, with the NCJW which he described as ‘the bloody Council.’

Lewis John Reading (1896-1963)

Lewis (Service No. 18729) enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 25 May 1917 as a private; he was away at the war for two years. He was 21 years old upon enlistment, single, and a student. His father Nathan still lived at 23 Charwood Road, St Kilda and Lewis put him down as next-of-kin. On his application form Lewis indicated he had been a cadet for four years at Wesley College, Melbourne, but because of poor vision had been rejected as unfit for active service. However on 11 October 1917 he was recommended for active service in the Army Medical Corps. He was attached to the 3rd Casualty Clearing Station and served in the Army Medical Corps Reinforcements. After the training at Broadmeadows Hospital (Vic) and the General Hospitals (Numbers 11 and

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10 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 160.
11 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, 160.
14 Lewis Judah Rubinowitch [sic], NAA, B2455, (1914-1920), Barcode 8073054, 1.
15 Lewis Judah Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455, (1914-1920), Barcode 8073054, 3.
16 Lewis Judah Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA:B2455, (1914-1920), Barcode 8073054, 35.
Lewis embarked on the *HMAT Nestor* on 21 November 1917 and arrived at the Australian Camp at Suez in the middle of December. He was stationed there until 30 December 1917.\(^\text{17}\) He then re-embarked on *HMS Maple* and sailed to Alexandria; from there he sailed on *HMS Abbassich* on 2 January 1918 for Southampton, England, arriving there on 21 January 1918. From 4 April 1918 Lewis served in the Rouelles area in France in the Army Medical Corps (AMC), until March 1919. He was hospitalised three times during this period with an illness of some kind.\(^\text{18}\)

As a member of the AMC, Lewis would have seen at first hand the battle casualties caused by shrapnel, shell fragments and high-velocity bullets, given ‘the wounds these projectiles caused were grievous.’\(^\text{19}\) Many of the men were also severely shell shocked, and between 1916 and 1917, 1624 soldiers were officially identified with this condition.\(^\text{20}\) Medical officers had to be on the lookout for men who faked illness, or who committed suicide, as it was ‘not difficult to do so in the firing line on the Western Front.’\(^\text{21}\) The medical challenges on the field were enormous and many thousands of men died of their injuries shortly after the war ended.\(^\text{22}\) By the end of 1918, 15 ships carrying 13,312 men sailed for Australia, with priority given to those who had enlisted earliest.\(^\text{23}\) However Lewis embarked on *HMS Derbyshire* on 21 January 1919 for Australia,

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17 Lewis Judah Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455, (1914-1920), Barcode 8073054, 4.
18 Lewis Judah Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455, (1914-1920), Barcode 8073054,14.
arriving 2 March 1919.\footnote{Lewis Judah Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455 , (1914-1920), Barcode 8073054, 15.} Like all other wartime parents in a similar situation, Esther and Nathan welcomed him home joyfully, very glad their son was safely home. Lewis signed a Statutory Declaration on 12 May 1920 that he had changed his name by Deed Poll to Lewis John Reading and submitted it to the Australian Military Forces.\footnote{Lewis Judah Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455 , (1914-1920), Barcode 8073054, 37} He received the British War Medal on 26 May 1921.\footnote{Hyman Samuel Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455 , (1914-1920), Barcode 8073053, 9.}

**Hyman Sydney Reading (1894-1956)**

Hyman tried to enlist numerous times. His first enlistment into the AIF (Service No. 2128) was on 19 May 1915 in Melbourne when he was 22 years old.\footnote{Hyman Samuel Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455 , (1914-1920), Barcode 8073053, 8.} Hyman gave his mother, Esther, at 23 Charwood Road, St Kilda as his next-of-kin and listed his occupation as a motor importer; he also said he had been in the Senior Cadet Corps of Wesley College for eight years, which was untrue.\footnote{Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 21.} He was attached initially to the No. 12 Co. Depot of the Australian Medical Corps for 10 days, then transferred to the No. 14 Co. Depot for 19 days, then to the 6\textsuperscript{th} Reinforcement of the 8\textsuperscript{th} Battalion, and discharged on 7 July 1915.\footnote{Hyman Samuel Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455 , (1914-1920), Barcode 8073053, 8.} Hyman was diagnosed with ‘chronic endocarditis’, an inflammation of the inner layer of the heart.\footnote{Hyman Samuel Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455 , (1914-1920), Barcode 8073053, 1.} There may have been other problems with Hyman, but these are not recorded. ‘Men who were rejected for medical or other reasons moved from state to state in search of a depot which would accept them.’\footnote{Hyman Samuel Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455 , (1914-1920), Barcode 8073053, 1.}

Hyman’s second enlistment occurred on 24 January 1918 in Darlinghurst, East Sydney; on this application he indicated that his first service had lasted for 84 days and that he had been declared medically unfit.\footnote{Hyman Samuel Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455 , (1914-1920), Barcode 8073053, 1.} A handwritten note at the top of the enlistment form indicated that Hyman had expressed a preference for the Field Artillery or the Light
Horse Brigade.\textsuperscript{33} He was declared unfit for active service by the medical board on 30 January 1918.\textsuperscript{34} Despite his best efforts, Hyman was not able to serve in the AIF which would have been attractive financially, for ‘the pay in the AIF was good. For privates, it was six shillings a day.’\textsuperscript{35} He did try to serve Australia like his brothers, but it was not to be. After the war ended Hyman went into business with Lewis, which is covered in the following section which deals with the post war period.

**After World War I Lewis and Hyman**

In 1924 Reading’s brother Lewis was 28 years old and his address was still at St Kilda East, Balaclava, Victoria.\textsuperscript{36} After the war he was enrolled in medicine at the University of Melbourne and paid two guineas a week as he enrolled as a former serviceman. However when he met Morris Rosenthal he decided to go into the theatrical business with him in NSW, giving up his university studies and moving to Sydney.\textsuperscript{37} He lived with his brother Abe who was practising in Kogarah at the time.\textsuperscript{38} Lewis had earlier tried being a bookie at the Randwick racecourse, no doubt influenced by Hyman who had various interests at Randwick (see below).\textsuperscript{39} The picture that emerges is Lewis moving around after the end of the war, trying various pursuits, as no doubt many other returned servicemen also did.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image.png}
\end{center}

Hyman Sydney Reading, ca.1920. Dr Fanny Reading Photographs and Realia, c.1890-1965.

\textsuperscript{33} Hyman Samuel Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455, (1914-1920), Barcode 8073053, 1.
\textsuperscript{34} Hyman Samuel Rubinowitch [Rubinovitch], NAA, B2455, (1914-1920), Barcode 8073053, 9.
\textsuperscript{38} NAA, B2455, (1914-1920), Barcode 8073054, Rubinowich [Rubinovitch]/ Lewis Judah, 28. Lewis signed a receipt for his British War Medal on 22 December, 1923 and gave address as 19 Belgrave Street, Kogarah, Sydney.
\textsuperscript{39} Newton, *Making a Difference*, 89.
Lewis Reading and Morris Rosenthal rented the Rialto Theatre on the Corso, Manly, from the Smythe Brothers.\(^{40}\) Henry Gilbert Smith had laid the Corso in 1854 and 1855, a boardwalk which joined Manly’s sand spit and the harbour pier. Many people believed it followed a path which had been used originally by the local Kay-ye-my people.\(^ {41}\) The Smythe Brothers commissioned architect Lewis Kaberry to design the Rialto Theatre. In September 1923 they had formed Manly Theatres Limited as a holding company for their three Manly picture palaces.\(^{42}\)

By September 1925, seven months after moving to Sydney, the partnership of Lewis and Rosenthal faced bankruptcy and the men were in the Bankruptcy Court, with liabilities of £824.\(^ {43}\) Neither had a family to support, but their weekly rent for the theatre was £125. Lewis had debts totalling £170 that he had to repay – £40 to his tailor for two or three suits and £118 to the Repatriation Department for his vocational training. Abe had given him £551 to put into the partnership.\(^ {44}\)

Lewis and Rosenthal submitted their business partnership to a public examination on 16 September 1925.\(^ {45}\) The order for the discharge of their bankruptcy was filed on 22 December 1925.\(^ {46}\) Reading and Esther were still overseas at this time and it is unlikely they were aware of all the details of Lewis’ business affairs, as there is no mention of them in Reading’s existing letters. Perhaps Lewis was rather glad that his mother and eldest sister were out of the country, as they probably would have had something to say to him about his expensive wardrobe. Lewis appeared to have stayed in business and in

\(^{40}\) Evening News, 15 September, 1925, 7.


\(^{42}\) Terry Metherall, ‘The Corso Heritage Walk.’


\(^{44}\) Evening News, 15 September, 1925, 7.


1941, at 48 years of age, he married Ellen Theresa Foley in Woollahra, NSW. He died aged 76 in Sydney and had no children.

Hyman was destined to lead a colourful business life, but in Victoria worked with his father as a draper. After World War 1 he went into business with his brother Lewis as an estate agent. He married Elma May Dickinson in 1920 and they had a daughter June in 1921 (covered in detail in Chapter 8). At some point he had a lingerie shop in Kings Cross. In March 1928 he took over the licence for the Bristol Arms Hotel in Sussex Street, where Reading housed newly arrived refugees to Australia.

Hyman was described as a cigarette maker, a member of the Australian Jockey Club and a racehorse owner in 1929. In August 1929 and January 1930 he appeared in the Bankruptcy Court in Sydney. By May 1932, Raymond Dare and Crockett Corke Ltd were trying to prevent him from trading in manicure products. In February 1935 he was listed as a director of the Comprehensive Investment Company Pty. Ltd., Collins Street, Melbourne. He was a subscriber to a newly formed company Merchandise Discount and Credit Corporation in December 1936. Later he moved back to Victoria and by 1936 and 1937 he was living in the electoral districts of Balaclava and South Yarra in Melbourne, Victoria.

Hyman’s second marriage was to Enid Esther Hermann (1918-1991) on 21 January 1936 in the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, Toorak. They had one child Leigh Nathan.
Reading (born in 1932). Hyman died on August 2 1956 and was buried in the Rookwood Cemetery Sydney where his first wife Elma was buried.

Rachael Burman (1892-1961)

As mentioned earlier, Rachael’s life followed the more traditional Jewish path of wife and homemaker. She was Reading’s only surviving sister and married Benjamin J. Burman on October 6 1920 in the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, Melbourne.59

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59 Australian Marriage Index, Reg. No. 14699, 1926.
Rachael was born in Lake Bolac in 1892,60 her husband was sometimes known as Benj Josh Burman, or even ‘Josh Benj’ as he was on his marriage certificate to Rachael.61 Benjamin’s birthplace on his marriage certificate was registered at Lake Bolac, but it has not been possible to find further evidence of the Burman family living in Lake Bolac in the late nineteenth century.

Rachael and Benjamin had three sons: Alan (born 1922), Lloyd John (born 1925) and Ian.62 Although her other siblings were based in Sydney by 1920, Rachael stayed on in Melbourne.63 Rachael became an early leader of the Victorian section of the NCJWA from 1935 until 1938.64 After that she moved to Sydney and worked with the Darling Point NCJW group on projects to support the war effort during World War II.65
Reading remained in close contact with her siblings her entire life, as well as with her nieces and nephews, who remember her kindness to them with love and gratitude. If she needed to make a train trip to visit a branch of the NCJWA, she would frequently take a niece with her. If illness or an operation became necessary, she would stay close by until health was restored. A very busy woman, Reading found time in her life for family members when they needed her.

Nathan (1862-1934) and Esther (c. 1864 -1946)

Nathan and Esther celebrated their golden wedding celebration in July 1933 (see the photograph following.) They were still living at ‘Karelitz,’ 23 Charnwood Road, St Kilda. The photograph following of Nathan depicts him as a successful Victorian gentleman, wearing a top hat and carrying a cane, every bit the Victorian pater familias. He is very far removed from the humble, poor hawker struggling with his horse and cart to get established in the Western District of Victoria. In the Introduction it was argued that visual materials can provide ‘fresh insights.’ The image in this photograph reveals the ideal that Nathan aspired to, as well as his portrayal as a decent, solid, respectable citizen. Photographs of this genre were intended for display proudly on a mantelpiece in a prominent position.

Nathan died in 1934 and was buried in the Brighton Cemetery, Melbourne. Esther then moved to Sydney and lived there with Reading until she died in 1946. She kept house for Reading and generally cared for her. The mother and daughter had always been close, so it must have been a difficult time for Reading when Esther passed away.

71 Hebrew Standard, 28 July, 1933, 4.
72 Latin for ‘father of the family’ or ‘owner of the family estate.’
74 JewishGen, JOWBR- Australia, Section, Row ROW 03, Plot, 49, I.
Esther Rose Reading enjoys a special bouquet of flowers, possibly on the occasion of her golden wedding anniversary. c. 1933. Dr Fanny Reading Photographs and Realia c.1890-1974.

Reading Family Group, undated. Dr Fanny Reading Photographs and Realia c. 1890-1974.
Miriam Minnie Rubinovitch, the sibling of the Reading children who died when she was 6 months old on July 5 1898, is buried in the Old Cemetery, Ballarat. Her cousin David Rubinovitch (1907-1919), who died at the age of 12 on 7 July 1919, is also buried in the Ballarat Cemetery. David’s father was Nathan’s brother, Wolfe Rubinovitch (1873-1937). Wolfe and his wife Yette (née Flacheur, 1879-1954) and their children Abraham (1900-1967), Joseph (1903-1975) and Essie Sara, known as ‘Sarah’ (1905-1985), also moved to Melbourne.

After Nathan’s death, possibly at the end of World War II, the family sat for another group photograph. There is a much earlier one in Reading’s photograph album that was probably taken in 1919 when Nathan changed the family name to Reading. The later photograph depicts a successful respectable middle class family. It masks the deep
anxiety they felt for Jews in Europe during World War II and their sorrow at the deaths of family members and other Jews left behind in Europe under threat from Nazism.

The family trees follow and concluded this chapter. They include the family of Nathan’s brother Wolfe, who also settled in Ballarat before moving away, as well as Nathan and Esther’s descendants. These are followed by Chapter 10 on Dr Fanny Reading and this final chapter answers the research questions of the thesis and suggests further areas of possible research following from this thesis.
Family Trees

Family Tree – Nathan and Esther Reading (sections 1 and 2)
NAA, Birth and Death Records, Ancestry.com.au
Family Tree of Wolfe and Yette Rubinvitch
Chapter 10 Dr Fanny Reading ‘The Law of Loving Kindness’

The Introduction asks: Who was Fanny Reading? What was her contribution to society? How did she relate to the tumultuous times through which she lived, marked by war, de-colonisation and the rise of the women’s movement? These questions have been addressed in various ways throughout the thesis; however they have not been definitively answered. This chapter will answer these questions. It will also indicate further areas of research.

Who was Fanny Reading?

Reading was a member of a close Jewish family. The repetitive patterns of behaviour the biographical subject sets up in childhood are often evident in adulthood.¹ This was certainly true of Reading. Her family relationships were very important to her, as her letters home from England, Europe and the Middle East revealed (see Chapter 6). Foremost among these was her close relationship with her mother, Esther, with whom she shared so much, and her care and consideration for her younger brother, Hyman. Further, Reading’s efforts to be the peacemaker in her family (as also evidenced in her letters), her close relationship with her nearest sibling, Abe, and her affection for her father are patterns which were formed during childhood and discernable in adulthood. Although Reading was reserved by nature and not demonstrably affectionate, she expressed her love for her immediate family in ‘good works’ that were the leitmotifs in her life.²

Reading was a successful student in a period when studying was not an easy option for a young Jewish woman from an impoverished refugee family within a marginalised group. She had early success with her French examination in 1900 (gaining the top mark) and Chapter 3 covers this period of her life. She gained honours at her piano examinations graduating with a diploma in 1916 from the Melbourne Conservatorium.³ Finally she

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¹ Caine, Biography and History, 41.
² Private information Jennifer Borman March 2016.
graduated successfully from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Melbourne in 1922. From these achievements alone it is possible to deduce that Reading was hard working, ambitious and strove to better her skills and knowledge. Chapter 4 covers Reading’s years in Melbourne as a young woman.

Reading was a professional physician with a commitment to the welfare as well as the health issues of women and children. Reading specialised in gynaecology and nutrition, undertaking post-graduate study overseas in 1925. She successfully established a medical practice and consultancies in Sydney at a time when female doctors in Australia were struggling to gain the necessary consultancy experience required. The idea of ‘women’s health care for women by women’ was part of her code of practice. Reading helped to establish the Wolper Hospital in Woollahra Sydney (1961) which served the health needs of Sydney’s Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

Reading was an outstanding leader who sought to make the absolute best of what she had available to her. In this regard she took inspiration from Napoleon whom she quoted in 1923 when announcing her intention to form a women’s organisation in Sydney. “Someone spoke to Napoleon about opportunity. ‘Opportunity,’ said he, ‘I make opportunity’.” Her leadership encouraged Jewish women to aspire to become participants in the development of Jewish communal policy formation in Australia, based upon the traditional Jewish ideal of charity work combined with the modern notion of fundraising. This broke with accepted Jewish tradition for female philanthropy in Australia as elsewhere. As a community leader, Reading transformed the lives of Australian Jewish women. The real strength of her leadership was to unify them as a group so that they could contribute to the preservation and the continuation of her race, as

4. Rubinstein, ‘Reading, Fanny (1884–1974)’.
5 Rubinstein, ‘Reading, Fanny (1884–1974)’.
6 Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 206.
7 Bashford, ‘Separatist Health,’ 200.
9 *Jewish Herald*, 29 June 1923 in Minute Book CJW, 1923, 1.
10 Minute Book of CJW 1923, 1. Emphasis in the original.
11 Rubinstein, ‘Reading, Fanny (1884–1974)’.
she made clear in a speech she gave when the State of Israel was proclaimed in May 1948.12

Reading was radical; she rejected the conventional role of the Jewish mother and demonstrated that it was acceptable for a single Orthodox Jewish woman to have a career. She was not a revolutionary, for she accepted the normative values of her faith — she accepted that other Orthodox Jewish women might follow the prescribed path of an Orthodox Jewish wife and mother, but she had the courage and will to move against those values when she felt it necessary, such as when she called for a meeting of Jewish women in Sydney to form the CJW. It is a testament to her achievement that she managed, in the long term, to win her critics over and ameliorate attitudes towards Jewish women having careers and interests outside the home.

Reading was humble and gave her life in service to the organisation she founded. She believed that community service ‘is the rent people pay for the space they occupy on earth.’13 She made it possible for Jewish women of Australia to pay their rent, that is, to contribute meaningfully not only to the continuity of the Jewish community but also to the welfare of the wider Australian community. Reading was awarded the MBE for her services to the welfare of the Jewish and non-Jewish communities in Sydney in 1961.

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Reading was a Zionist who believed firmly in the Zionist mission and legitimacy of the Jewish claim on Palestine. In spite of the strong opposition to the position she took on Palestine, she remained steadfastly committed to the Zionist vision together with a small group of like-minded others in Australia. Reading hoped that the national organisation that she created would have a Zionist soul.

Reading was compassionate and believed in the power of kindness. She chose to work with the ‘down and out’ in Kings Cross. She wrote on the back cover of the NCJWA Conference Program in 1932 (and on all subsequent ones) her ‘law of loving kindness.’ She encouraged her fellow NCJW members to take her message to their respective states and communities when they returned home. This was a powerful message because it was something within the grasp of every woman, cost nothing, and engendered goodwill and bound the NCJW members together.

What were Reading’s contributions to society?

Undoubtedly, the formation and creation of the NCJW in Australia was Reading’s greatest contribution, as it helped to cement the formation of organised Jewish life in Australia. In this way it related to the theme of the Jewish diaspora in the thesis. Chapter 1 describes the formation of the precursor to the NCJW, the CJW, formed in 1923 in Sydney. Reading’s work with and for refugees in the NCJW is also related to the Jewish diaspora. Today, the NCJW is a vibrant, modern, nationwide group of volunteers with transnational connections, working not only for the Australian Jewish community, but also for the non-Jewish Australian community.

Reading contributed to the advancement of women and girls and this achievement related to the theme of the ‘modern woman’ in this thesis. She championed the education of Jewish girls although this related to their religious education (as distinct from their secular education.) She encouraged Jewish women to take on various roles within the NCJW, particularly leadership roles. She developed the Jewish principle of *tzedakah* to include the notion of service to the host nation. Reading became a radical activist when she extended service into fundraising. She raised the confidence of Jewish women in their efforts to move out of the private sphere of society and into the public sphere. These achievements are covered in Chapter 5 ‘The Turning Point’.

In terms of class (another theme in the thesis), Reading successfully demonstrated that class mobility was a possibility for a very impoverished Jewish refugee in Australia. Through resilience, hard work, making and seizing opportunities as they arose, Reading demonstrated that a more secure financial middle-class lifestyle was attainable. Reading undertook teaching (piano and Hebrew) when she left Ballarat to live in Melbourne – a respectable profession. She later initiated a scholarship in Hebrew at the University of Melbourne on behalf of the NCJW to assist other scholars in the future. She also demonstrated that a Jewish woman could enter, enroll and graduate from that prestigious Australian university as a doctor in 1922 when few Jewish women had done so. Chapter 4 covers Reading’s achievements in these fields of endeavour. As a doctor in Sydney, Reading contributed significantly to the health of women and children in her care. She
contributed to their nutrition, the positive management of their pregnancies, and their deliveries. She treated children when they experienced the dreaded ‘winter cough’ or had tonsillitis, or any other ailments which affect children. Chapter 7 covers this medical work in Sydney, the experience she gained there and her important consultancy positions and influence.

Reading’s feminist achievements were demonstrated not only in her career choice but by her decision to remain single and resist the societal pressures of the Jewish community to marry, to live independently in a flat in Sydney’s Kings Cross, and in her politics. Reading’s decision to start a separate women’s organisation was also a radical break from past practice for a Jewish orthodox woman. Her determination to continue her postgraduate medical studies indicated her feminist drive and commitment to her chosen career. Reading contributed to the Zionist movement in Australia because of her support for Israel, and this relates to another theme in the thesis, that of ‘place’. The NCJWA included support for Israel as one of its aims and Reading’s visit to Palestine is covered in Chapter 6. In all these matters Reading’s achievement was to be a suitable role model for other Jewish women who wished to avoid patriarchal domination, but who did not wish to separate from the community which nourished them and to which they had strong ties.

Future Research

There are several areas of future research that could result from this thesis. On a personal level, who was the young man whose photograph stood on Reading’s grand piano in her Sydney flat? At the local level, a map of East Ballarat where Jewish families were mainly located could be compiled from local archives. This study might reveal exactly where Nathan’s East Ballarat house was located in Humffray Street. A history of the Hebrew synagogue in Ballarat could be written. Research could be conducted on other Jewish families who settled in Ballarat and the contributions they made to the city. The Stone family and their connection to the Ballarat Gold Museum, which forms an important part of the Sovereign Hill Historical Park, is a case in point. Reading’s conflict with Rieke Cohen, another influential Jewish woman, also deserves more attention. A study of how closely the modern NCJW follows Reading’s original aims could also be conducted.
Finally, a study could be made of the effect that educated Jewish English and American women had on the *yishuv* (Jewish residents) in Palestine before 1917.

Fanny Reading was a singular and significant community leader in Australia; her contribution to Australian Jewish and non-Jewish society was positive and enduring. A final honour in her name was created in 2016 by the NCJW (Vic), the Fanny Reading Human Rights Lecture.¹⁷ It is hoped this thesis also honours her. In life Reading was guided by her moral conscience and that is at the core of the legacy she left the NCJW – the moral conscience of Fanny Reading – ‘the law of loving kindness’.

Appendix 1 Chronology

Non-Jewish Women’s Organisations

1792 Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *Vindication for the Rights of Women.* (London, England.)


1878 Congrès International de Droits des Femmes, Paris (World Exposition)

1888. Second International Conference USA National Women’s Suffrage Movement (Washington D.C.)


1893 Canada joined the ICW.

1897 Germany joined the ICW.

1898 United Kingdom joined the ICW.

1899 Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands joined the ICW.

1900 Italy and New Zealand joined the ICW.

1901 Argentina and France joined the ICW.

1903 Austria and Switzerland joined the ICW.

1904 Hungary and Norway joined the ICW.

1904 ICW split and the International Women’s Suffrage Alliance formed (IWSA).

1904 Australia, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, the USA and Great Britain joined the IWSA.

1908 South Africa joined the IWSA.

1911 Iceland joined the IWSA.

1913 China joined the IWSA.

1915 The IWSA split over the issue of holding a peace conference in wartime.

1915 The International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace formed (The Hague.) ICWPP

1913 26 National auxiliaries had joined the IWSA.

1919 The International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace renamed The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. (WILPF)

1926 51 National auxiliaries had joined the IWSA.
Jewish Women’s Organisations and Dr Fanny Reading:

1881 The Sisterhoods of Personal Service formed in the USA.

1884 Fanny Rubinovitch born in Karelichi, Minsk, Russia.

1889 Esther and Fanny Rubinovitch arrived in Australia at Melbourne on 1 June.

1893 National Council of Jewish Women (Chicago USA)

1897 First Zionist Congress

1896 National Council of Jewish Women (USA) First Convention held

1900 Fanny Rubinovitch won First Prize in French, University College, Ballarat

1901-1902 Lily Montague formed the Jewish Religious Union (London).

1902 Union of Jewish Women formed in England

1904 Jüdischer Frauenbund formed in Germany

1912 The International Council of Jewish Women formed in Rome, active until 1914

1912 Jewish League for Women’s Suffrage formed (England)

1913 Jewish League for Women’s Suffrage East End branch formed to assist East Europeans in London.

1922 Fanny Reading graduated from University of Melbourne (MS.BS)

1923 The International Council of Jewish Women reconvened in Vienna.

1923 Dr Fanny Reading formed the Council of Jewish Women (Sydney)

1923 Dr Fanny Reading was a delegate to the International Council of Jewish Women Conference (USA)

1929 The National Council of Jewish Women (Australia) formed.

1929 The International Council of Jewish Women met in Hamburg.

1929-1931 Dr Fanny Reading National President of the NCJWA.

1935-1948 Dr Fanny Reading National President of the NCJWA.

1947 Dr Fanny Reading General Zionist Delegate (Sydney Zionist Organisation).

1949 Dr Fanny Reading Member of the United Emergency Committee (NSW)

1949 Dr Fanny Reading Vice-President ICJW

1955-1974 Dr Fanny Reading – Life President of the NCJWA.

1974 Death of Dr Fanny Reading
Appendix 2 Census Data 1933

Data from the Census of 1933 from the Australian Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra.¹⁸

The data in next four pages relates to the reply that the NCJWA received from the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics in response to the letter written by Dora Abramovitch dated April 13, 1936.

## Census 1933

### Adherents of the Hebrew Religion Classified in Local Government Areas at the Census of the 30th June, 1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Area</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New South Wales</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
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### CENSUS 1933.

**NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ADHERENTS OF THE JEWISH RELIGION IN EACH STATE AND TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA AT THE CENSUS OF THE 30TH JUNE, 1933.**

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*Commonwealth Bureau of Census & Statistics.*

*July 15th, 1933.*
Appendix 3 Glossary

agunah- A woman whose husband has refused her a Jewish divorce. A woman who is unable to remarry, due to the fact that her husband is missing and it is not known whether or not he is alive.

aliyah- a return

Anglo Jews – a broad term to describe the assimilated Jews

Anschluss - the annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany on 12 March 1938

Ashkenazi Jews – are from Eastern Europe and speak Yiddish

bench - to recite a blessing

bencher – one who is reciting a blessing

Bundists – anti-Zionist Jewish socialists

cantonists - Jewish children who were conscripted to military institutions in czarist Russia with the intention that the conditions in which they were placed would force them to adopt Christianity.

chalutzim – pioneers in Palestine

chevra kadisha - volunteers who sit with the dead and prepare their bodies for burial

Eretz Israel – Land of Israel

doven – (Hebrew) to pray

friendly aliens – male refugees from European countries between the ages of 18 and 45 years.

frum - religious; observant; Orthodox

gallery - a mezzanine floor in a synagogue where traditionally female members sat.

galut – exile

genizah – (Hebrew) storage place for papers

get – permission for divorce

goldene medina – the golden country (America)

hachnasat-kala – an important charity helping poor brides to get married

halachic – Jewish state or governed by Jewish law

hashomer – watchman
Haskalah – Jewish enlightenment
hatechiya – rebirth
koser – (Hebrew) fit for consumption
Keren Kayemeth Leisrael (Hebrew) - Jewish National Fund
Kook – Abraham Isaac (1865-1935) first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of British Mandatory Palestine.
Kol Nidre – The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) evening service
landsleit – fellow countrymen or women from same village, town or area.
linat tzedek – tending to the sick at night
makom – space and place of God
minyan – the prayer quorum traditionally consisting of ten men necessary for public prayer.
Mizrahi – Jews descended from local Jewish communities in the Middle East.
mohel – circumcision
Pale of Settlement – western region of Imperial Russia with varying borders that existed from 1791-1917 where permanent residency of Jews was allowed and beyond which Jewish permanent residency was not permitted.
pogrom – a pogrom is a violent riot aimed at the massacre or persecution of an ethnic or religious group, particularly a riot aimed at the massacre or persecution of Jews.
purim - a holiday celebrating the rescue of the Jews from extermination at the hands of the chief minister of the king of Persia.
schocet- ritual slaughterer
shtetl – (Hebrew) townlet
shtetlach- (Hebrew) townlets
Reform Judaism – Progressive or Liberal Judaism
tzedakah (Hebrew) - meaning justice or righteousness (with a sense of obligation) interpreted as charity
torah – has a range of meanings but usually means the first five books of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Tanakh given to Moses.
tefillin (Hebrew) – the little boxes that are worn on the head and the arms that contain the Shema, ‘Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.’

tractate – an organisational unit of talmudic literature

yishuv – body of Jewish residents in Israel prior to 1917

Zion - Mount Zion is an ancient destination for Jerusalem and a symbol for the national Jewish homeland.

Zionism- a national political movement for the re-establishment, development and protection of the Jewish people in their former homeland, and their sovereignty in the Land of Israel.
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