



**List of Presenters, Abstracts and Biographies
AAJS Conference: SANCTUARY
Melbourne Holocaust Museum, February 2025**

Keynote Presentation

KATHY TEMIN

Marking Memory: Looking at the Influences on My Artistic Practice and Proposing a Different Form of Remembrance

Professor Temin works within Fine Arts at Monash Art Design & Architecture and is one of Australia's eminent contemporary artists. She has exhibited her work since 1990, and is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery in Melbourne and Roslyn Oxley 9 Gallery in Sydney. Her work is represented in major public art collections within Australia including the NGV, Victoria, The AGNSW and the MCA, Sydney, and the NGA, Canberra. Professor Temin's oeuvre often evokes a theme of questioned sanctuaries. Her signature medium of synthetic fur provides contrasting environments of soft material against geometric form. Combining oppositional dialogues of remembrance and play, minimalism with sentimentality, and within these monochromatic spaces, the artist's family history of persecution and displacement have influenced her memorial and monument projects. Her larger scale sculptures are active interventions into public space where the personal and the collective are combined.



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AVRIL ALBA

**Sanctuaries of Learning or Unsettled Sanctuaries? A Roundtable on the
Complexities of Holocaust Education in Australian Museums**

This roundtable investigates the urgency of understanding the long-term impacts of Holocaust Educational Programs (HEPs) in two Holocaust museums in Australia. Conducted by members of the academic team from a current Australian Research Council Linkage Project grant (LP220100140), our research asks, “Does learning about difficult pasts contribute to the development of ethical and/or moral behaviour in individuals and broader contemporary society?” In seeking to offer a positive and impactful experience to as many young adults as possible, Holocaust museums must provide a safe space while simultaneously exposing students to distressing histories. This illuminates a central tension for Holocaust museums and the ongoing viability of their education programs: how to design a visitor experience where exposure to confronting content is held in equilibrium with an overall sense of sanctuary and willingness to engage. This roundtable will discuss our early research findings of semi-structured interviews with guides and volunteers at the MHM and the Sydney Jewish Museum. How do the interviewees conceptualise and practically reconcile (or not) the dual demands of “safety” and exposure to distressing and confronting content? The findings reveal dichotomies between the exhibition space as a curatorial space and an educational space, the design’s affective intent and the exhibitions’ inevitable unsettling content.

Roundtable. Australia and the Holocaust: An Intimate History

The panel will convene four Australian scholars researching the Holocaust and Jewish migration. We will discuss the state of the field almost 80 years after the end of World War 2 and the main shifts in the historical research in the last decade. The main focus will be on emphasising the relevance of history research and Holocaust education in the Australian context. As a part of the discussion, we will introduce the forthcoming Palgrave Handbook of Australia and the Holocaust.

Avril Alba is Professor in Holocaust Studies and Jewish Civilisation in Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies and Deputy Head of the School of Languages and Cultures (Education) at the University of Sydney. She teaches and researches in the broad areas of Holocaust and modern



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Jewish history with a focus on Jewish and Holocaust museums. Her monograph, *The Holocaust Memorial Museum: Sacred Secular Space*, was published in 2015. From 2002 to 2011 Avril was the Education Director at the Sydney Jewish Museum (SJM). She has also served as the Project Director/Consulting Curator for the SJM permanent exhibitions ‘Culture and Continuity’ (2009), ‘The Holocaust’ (2017), and ‘The Holocaust and Human Rights’ (2018), the latter being a major output of her Linkage project ‘The Holocaust, Human Rights and the Contemporary Museum’. She is currently working on an ARC Discovery project, ‘The Memory of the Holocaust in Australia’ and an ARC Linkage Project ‘Evaluating the Impact of Holocaust Museum Education’.

PROFESSOR RUTH BALINT

Roundtable. Australia and the Holocaust: An Intimate History

(See abstract under Avril Alba)

Prof Ruth Balint (UNSW) is a prominent scholar of post-war Jewish migration to Australia.

LENA CHRISTOPH

From the Philippine Sanctuary to New Homes: Post-War Experiences of Jewish Refugees in Manila

This paper examines the underexplored post-war transit experiences of Holocaust refugees who found sanctuary in the Philippines. Between 1937 and 1941, around 1,300 Jewish refugees escaped Nazi Europe with the help of the local Jewish community and the Commonwealth Government. However, after surviving the Holocaust, the Japanese occupation, and the destruction of the Pacific War, these refugees faced new challenges: limited possibility to return, few prospects for remaining in the war-torn Philippines, and no political solution for their resettlement.

Drawing on ego documents, community archives, and official records, this paper explores the nature of this transient sanctuary. It first shed light on post-war rehabilitation efforts, including the reconstruction of the Manila synagogue, and the networks of actors involved in these initiatives. It then traces the onward journeys of the refugees, with a particular focus on the resettlement in Australia. Even though Australia was not the primary destination amongst the



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displaced persons and migration possibilities were limited, a small number made their way to Sydney and Melbourne, where they build new lives. By examining the specifics of this story of transit, rehabilitation, and resettlement, the paper reflects on the fragility as well as resilience of this sanctuary.

Lena Christoph is a doctoral researcher at the Department of Contemporary History, University of Vienna, working within the ERC-funded project GLORE. Global Resettlement Regimes. Her dissertation, *Between Exile and Resettlement: Transnational Journeys of Jewish and ‘White’ Russian Refugees through the Philippines (1945–1953)*, examines the complex trajectories of refugees navigating displacement and resettlement in the postwar era. Lena was a 2024 fellow at the German Historical Institute, Washington D.C., and has been awarded a research fellowship at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for 2025. She is currently a visiting scholar at Monash University, Melbourne.

RAPHAEL DASCALU

“Sanctuary and Symbolism: The Mishkan as a Window into Jewish Intellectual History”

The Sanctuary (*mishkan*) described in the Hebrew Bible has been a focus of rich speculation over millennia. Since antiquity, readers of the biblical text have interpreted the Sanctuary through a cosmological or anthropological lens. These interpretive stances are instructive, not only giving us an important insight into the cosmologies and anthropologies of the authors, but also illuminating broader aspects of Jewish intellectual history. In this paper, we will explore some examples of cosmological and anthropological interpretations of the Sanctuary from late antiquity through the late medieval period. Based on these texts, we will make some broader observations about the dynamics of Jewish intellectual history – particularly regarding the situatedness of rabbinic Jewish culture, and questions of continuity and discontinuity in Jewish engagement with Hellenistic and Arabic philosophy.

Raphael Dascalu is a Melbourne-based researcher and translator. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Sydney, his MA at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and his PhD at the University of Chicago (2016). He also studied in a number of institutions of Jewish learning, including Yeshivat ha-Kibbutz ha-Dati (Ein Tzurim), Pardes



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Institute of Jewish Studies, and the Hartman Institute. Raphael is an Adjunct Research Associate at Monash University, and a founder of Beit Midrash Oz.

IDAN DERSHOWITZ

The Lost Sanctuary of Beer Sheba

I propose that the foundational Beer Sheba (בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע) narrative of Genesis 21:22–34 originally had a cultic flavour, but this was masked by a later editor. Specifically, the feature of a cultic stone pillar, which commemorated a peace treaty between Abraham and Abimelech, was replaced — improbably — with seven ewes. This substitution was not entirely successful, and it introduced several vexing problems into the text. But why make such a bizarre edit in the first place? What do sheep and stones have to do with one another? I suggest that Beer Sheba's status as the site of a sanctuary was objectionable to Deuteronomistic redactors, who had a particular distaste for stone pillars. Their solution was to remove the pillar and insert in its place a redundant and contradictory explanation for the name Beer Sheba — not שֶׁבַע in the sense of an oath, but שֶׁבַע in the sense of the number seven. Various biblical texts regarding stone pillars, in addition to passages relating to Beer Sheba, will be discussed.

Idan Dershowitz (Dorshav) joined the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation (ACJC) at Monash University in 2024. He was previously Director of the School of Jewish Theology and Chair of Hebrew Bible at the University of Potsdam. His current research interests include the evolution of biblical religion and the methods of ancient biblical editors. He is the author of *The Dismembered Bible: Cutting and Pasting Scripture in Antiquity* and *The Valediction of Moses: A Proto-Biblical Book*.



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NACHUM DERSHOWITZ

Computational Analysis of Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts

The extant Hebrew and Hebrew-character manuscripts constitute unique remains of medieval Jewish literary culture, having survived centuries of migrations, persecutions, and censorship, often when the communities themselves no longer exist. To study them is to follow the various ways in which ancient Jewish heritage travelled from the Eastern homeland to Diaspora communities, spread from Central Asia in the east to France and Portugal to the west, from England in the north to Yemen in the south.

The National Library of Israel in its Ktiv project has digitized some 100,000 medieval Jewish manuscripts. We are PIs in an ERC-funded Synergy project, “MiDRASH: Migrations of Textual and Scribal Traditions via Large-Scale Computational Analysis of Medieval Manuscripts in Hebrew Script”, designed to make much of this treasure trove accessible as searchable text, and then leverage those texts for philological and historical study.

Unfortunately, only some 3500 are securely dated. We are in the process of using state-of-the-art machine learning algorithms to undertake paleographic analysis of tens of thousands of those manuscripts, and propose fine-grained regional and chronological typologies. With the results in hand, we plan to map out the migration, genesis, and evolution of written works within medieval Jewish communities—on a hitherto unimaginable scale.

Nachum Dershowitz is Professor Emeritus of Computer Science at Tel Aviv University and former incumbent of the chair in Computational Logic. He is author of *The Evolution of Programs*, coauthor of *Calendrical Calculations and Calendrical Tabulations*, member of Academia Europaea, and recipient of the Herbrand Award. His research is in computational humanities, computational logic, and computational health.



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DONNA-LEE FRIEZE

**Sanctuaries of Learning or Unsettled Sanctuaries? A Roundtable on the Complexities of
Holocaust Education in Australian Museums
(See abstract under Avril Alba)**

Dr Donna-Lee Frieze is a Senior Research Fellow and genocide studies scholar with the Centre for Contemporary Histories at Deakin University in Melbourne. She has published widely on the Armenian Genocide, the Stolen Generations and the Holocaust in relation to philosophy, film and cultural studies. She is the editor and transcriber of Raphael Lemkin's autobiography, *Totally Unofficial* (Yale University Press, 2013). She has been an academic advisor for several films and exhibitions on genocide. Donna was a Chief Investigator on "The Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Survey in Australia", for Gandel Philanthropy (2021-2022) and also for the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment's "Holocaust Memorial Week project" (2021-2022). She is an expert delegate for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and is writing a monograph on the one-hundred-year history of the Holocaust in Landsberg am Lech (Routledge, 2026).

DEBORAH E.-S. HEMSTREET

**The Medical Professional Elimination Program and the Ideology and Motivation of Nazi
Physicians**

The appointment of a new chancellor in 1933 marked the beginning of the Third Reich in Germany. The ideology of the Nazi Party focused on establishing a pure Aryan state characterized by nationalism and racial superiority. Their goals would be achieved through a totalitarian form of government that enforced the subjugation, exclusion, and elimination of inferior minorities, particularly Jews, who were depicted as inhuman. Implementation of the Nazi ideology required the exclusion of Jewish people and other dissenters, particularly physicians from their professions. The exclusion of Jewish physicians, referred to herein as a "Medical Professional Elimination Program," eliminated the dominance of Jewish physicians in Berlin (40% of total) and of the dominance of the Jewish Physicians in Vienna, (60% of the total). Hundreds of physicians were dismissed from Charite Hospital in Berlin and many more from



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Viennese hospitals. Where did they find sanctuary? The program was gradually imposed on other Jewish professions in the nations absorbed by the Third Reich.

A large group of physicians reached the UK, only to be considered “aliens” and sent to the colonies. Few ships were sunk by the U-boats on the way to Canada or to Australia, few reached Australia’s East coast.

The case of Dr. Kessel from Bremen was searching for Sanctuary in Cuba, USA, Canada, he was returned to Germany, but managed to escape to UK, only to be sent Australia. On arrival, he was interned in Tatura camp in NSW, where he remained till the end of his life in 1942. He committed suicide when learned about the fate of his left behind family. He was buried locally, close to the hospital where he worked and was appreciated. His body was eventually exhumed and reburied in Sydney’s Jewish Cemetery. I discovered his grave only recently, cleaned with the help of local official, and said Kadish, most likely after some 70 years. Did he reach Sanctuary?

The case of Dr. Dvorjetski, from Kovno, a survival of subsequent ten concentration camps, eight in the Baltics and two in Germany. He escaped in the last day before liquidation and recovered in the American camp. He reached for Sanctuary in Paris and started local Yiddish monthly journal publication, was not happy. Lost his family but rebuilt and reached Sanctuary in Israel. He published numerous papers on Nutrition, Starvation, on Refeeding syndrome, on diabetes, was a politician and testified at Eichman Trial. Prominent members of his family are retired in northern Israeli region.

SIMON HOLLOWAY

**“I Will Be for Them a Small Sanctuary”: The Place of Torah Study During the
Holocaust**

From personal letters, official documentation, memoirs and survivor recollections, there is ample evidence for the flourishing of private study groups during the Holocaust. In some instances, these groups were comprised of diverse participants, united only by their interest in pursuing Torah study; in other instances, they were made up of people who had previously met on this basis in the years before the war. This paper considers the evidence for such study groups, drawing on examples from ghettos, camps and places of hiding, and seeks to advance a methodology for determining the nature of their respective curricula.



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In some of these groups, participants possessed expertise in the literature they were studying, but was it ever the case that they also made welcome the uninitiated? In several of them, there is evidence that they continued studies in which they had previously been engaged, but did they ever seek out new and unfamiliar literature? Not all of these questions will be possible to answer, but by considering the nature of Torah study during the Holocaust we hope to shed light on this important form of spiritual resistance. Ultimately, it is the intention of this paper to make clear the need for better understanding of the ways in which people drew encouragement from their learning, and the ways in which they used it to make meaning of their experiences.

Dr Simon Holloway is the Manager of Adult Education & Academic Engagement at the Melbourne Holocaust Museum, where he writes and delivers programs for tertiary, adult and corporate groups. He holds a PhD in Classical Hebrew and Biblical Studies, for which he wrote a dissertation on the application of metaphor theory to the Hebrew Bible, and a Masters in Ancient History. At present, Simon's research concerns the identification of references to the biblical and rabbinic literature in diaries and letters of the Holocaust.

JONATHAN C. KAPLAN

**A Fashionable Body? Clothing and the Grotesque in Oskar Panizza's *Der Operierte Jud*
[*The Operated Jew*]**

The German sociologist Georg Simmel famously addressed the paradox of fashionable dress that renders wearers visible or invisible (1957[1901]). In this light, fashionable clothing has the ability to offer sanctuary through conformity of dress or exposure through distinction. While this is true of diverse cultural and geographic contexts, here it is foregrounded in the context of Jewish modernisation and emancipation in Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a period of which Simmel himself was product and theorist. This paper discusses clothing and other aspects of the dressed appearance, inasmuch as they functioned as a tool in external, often antisemitic representations of the Jewish body and issues relating to the assimilatory and acculturation processes. The accusation that Jews were trying to 'mask' their Jewishness by wearing modern, fashionable attire was common during the period, and is explored alongside notion of 'passing' or finding sanctuary in discreet, unobtrusive patterns of dressing. Referring to Oskar Panizza's 1893 novella, *Der operierte Jud*, and other contemporary



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texts, including satirical caricatures, I explore how clothing and its function as tool for self-fashioning were closely linked in the racialized discourse of antisemitism in central Europe at the fin de siècle.

Jonathan Kaplan is a senior educator and manager of research at the Sydney Jewish Museum and adjunct fellow at the University of Technology Sydney, where he was awarded his doctorate in 2019. His research examines the function of clothing as a tool for self-fashioning and performance of modern Jewish subjectivities in central Europe at the fin de siècle. His recent monograph, *Jews in Suits: Men's Dress in Vienna, 1890–1938* was published by Bloomsbury Visual Arts (2023).

JAN LANICEK

Roundtable. Australia and the Holocaust: An Intimate History

(See abstract under Avril Alba)

Associate Professor Jan Lanicek (UNSW) is a scholar of the Holocaust and modern Jewish history in central Europe and Australia.

REBECCA MARGOLIS

Yiddish Sanctuary in Melbourne: Australian Migration on the Small Screen

Yiddish has featured in reimaginings of Jewish migration on screen over the last fifty years, including in Australia. A vast number of films and television programs produced in English-dominant countries have portrayed Jewish migrants as Yiddish speakers, both via their accents, Yiddish words or grammar, or by having them speak in Yiddish. This paper investigates the use of Yiddish in an Australian television series set in 1920s Melbourne: the popular crime drama series, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*. I focus on an episode called “Raisins and Almonds,” which aired in 2012 and is based on an earlier novel by the same name. The episode contains Yiddish in multiple forms: written, peppered into English speech, and in subtitled dialogue. Here I consider each of these uses and how they fit into the wider strategy of Yiddish on screen as a mimetic device to represent the Jewish migrant experience in popular culture.



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Professor Rebecca Margolis is the Pratt Foundation Chair of Jewish Civilisation at Monash University, Australia. Her scholarship focusses on Jewish linguistic continuity and cultural production with a particular interest in literary, stage and screen production. She is the author of *Jewish Roots*, *Canadian Soil: Yiddish Culture in Montreal, 1905-1945*, *Yiddish Lives On: Strategies of Language Transmission*, *The Yiddish Supernatural on Screen: Dybbuks, Demons and a Haunted Jewish Past*.

MARIUSZ KALCZEWIAK

Interwar Poland, Gender Anxiety, and the Search for a Male Sanctuary

Interwar Poland (1920s and 1930s) was a place where Jewish men struggled with antisemitic exclusion from traditional spaces of male confirmation, such as state jobs or top military positions. Antisemitism had its gender dimension and made men, particularly those of the middle class, feel vulnerable not only as Jews but also as men. At the same time female claims for equality made many Polish-Jewish men anxious about their status as husbands and fathers. The transforming social reality of interwar Poland challenged Jewish men to rethink the patriarchal gender order and to adjust their gender identities. In my presentation, I will demonstrate how diverse groups of Polish-Jewish men constructed and performed their masculinities against the backdrop of social and cultural transformations. I will start by sharing examples illustrating the perceived incompatibility of Jewish women's desires, and what Jewish men could provide as partners, lovers, and family providers. Next, I will venture into traditional male sanctuaries, such as the university fraternities or the military barracks, and will analyze how Jewish men maneuvered to construct masculinities in line with the all-European bourgeois model. My talk will underscore how in times of social upheavals, Jewish men searched for a shelter that would anchor their gender identities to what was perceived as normative masculinity.

Mariusz Kalczewiak is interim Associate Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Potsdam, Germany, and Research Assistant Professor at the University of Wrocław, Poland. He is a scholar of modern Jewish history, with particular interest in migration studies and gender studies. Mariusz holds a PhD in history from Tel Aviv University and has previously worked at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and the University of Warsaw. Mariusz is



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the author of *Polacos in Argentina. Polish Jews, Interwar Migration and the Emergence of Transatlantic Jewish Culture* (Alabama University Press, 2020) and *Men of Valor and Anxiety. Polish-Jewish Masculinities and the Challenge of Modernity* (Indiana University Press, 2025).

ANNA MICHAŁOWSKA-MYCIELSKA

Sanctuary of the Community: The Social Function of Synagogues in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (16-18th c.)

In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the early modern period, the synagogue was the center of communal life. In addition to its liturgical functions, it served a number of social functions: it was a place for meetings and elections, for taking oaths and court proceedings, as well as for administering punishments: casting curses and executing prison sentence. In the synagogue, communal authorities announced their regulations, and an individual could raise his objections to what he believed was unfair treatment by judges or officials. The paper shows how the various rooms and spaces of the synagogue were used for a variety of purposes, as well as how the synagogue was a place of ostentation of the social position of individual residents and brotherhoods (rank of places, honoring individuals with a Torah reading, funding synagogue equipment, charitable activities). Another important element visible through the synagogue space is the growing role of women in the 17th and 18th centuries, both in religious and social life. What remains questionable, however, is the defensive role of synagogue buildings, which ancient historians portrayed as a shelter against military invasions and urban riots, and what is denied in more recent studies.

Anna Michałowska-Mycielska is Associate Professor of Jewish history at University of Warsaw and head of Mordechai Anielewicz Center there. Her research focuses on history of Jews in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (16-18th c.), with a particular emphasis on forms of organization of Jewish society and Jewish-Christian relations. She is the author of *The Jewish Community. Authority and Social Control in Poznań and Swarzędz, 1650-1793* (2008) and *The Council of Lithuanian Jews, 1623-1764* (2016). She also edits Hebrew primary sources and has published two communal pinkassim (*Pinkas kabału swarzędzkiego (1734-1830)*, 2005 and *Pinkas kabału boćkowskiego (1714-1817)*, 2015) and several source collections.



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RITA NASH

A Most Unlikely Sanctuary: The Polish Jews in Stalin's Soviet Union

The majority of the Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust did so in the totalitarian Soviet Union. Panicked by the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 and understanding that their lives were in danger, tens of thousands of Jews, made an invidious choice to leave their homes and head east towards an uncertain, hazardous, sanctuary as refugees in the Eastern Borderlands of Poland (now western Belarus and western Ukraine). Within two weeks, Stalin invaded and annexed these lands and began to 'Sovietise' them. Many of the refugees were declared to be 'enemies of the people' and were deported to labour camps in 'Siberia' where about 70% survived despite the brutal conditions.

When Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, the Polish Jews, seeking refuge from yet another Nazi onslaught, made perilous journeys south to the Central Asian Soviet Union, joined by deportees who had been released from incarceration. Despite precarious and erratic conditions they settled wherever possible. Most did not know that their families and compatriots who had remained in Nazi-occupied Poland were being slaughtered by the Einsatzgruppen and in the death camps. At war's end, they were repatriated to Poland where they sought to re-create Jewish life - a hope that ended in despair and a further search for safety.

These 250,000 or so people were the 'surviving remnant' of the Jews of Poland – fewer than 10% of the pre-war population of 3.3 million. Around 80 % of this remnant survived ONLY because their time in the Soviet Union had provided a relatively safe, albeit draconian, sanctuary. Until recently, this story has been a neglected part of the Holocaust narrative. This paper explores the complex geopolitical framework behind this epic story.

While researching my parents' holocaust survival experience, I realised that they were part of a complex geopolitical story which had been largely overlooked. I aim to redress this imbalance and have developed two copiously illustrated lectures about the lives of the Polish Jews in the Soviet Union and their return to Poland at the end of the war. The lectures have been presented at:

- Sydney Jewish Museum Wednesday Lecture Series, October 2021
- Limmud Oz, Melbourne, September 2022
- Many private groups since 2021 (ongoing)



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- Lubliner Reunion, Lublin, Poland, July 2023
- Staff inservice program, Sydney Jewish Museum (date tba)

“*Return to Poland: The Jews in Lower Silesia 1945-1950*” was published in the inaugural edition of the peer-reviewed journal *Musings: Sydney Jewish Museum Journal*.

JAYNE PERSIAN

Roundtable. Australia and the Holocaust: An Intimate History

(See abstract under Avril Alba)

Associate Professor Jayne Persian (USQ) is an authority on war crimes trials in Australia and post-war migration to Australia.

MARCIA PINKSIER

Institutional Child Sexual Abuse: Abuse of Sanctuary

In contemporary times, Israel’s Law of Return, offering automatic citizenship for all Jews, has seen complexities evolve, as Israel becomes a sanctuary for many Jews fleeing allegations of institutional child sexual abuse.

The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse detailed multiple instances of institutional leadership enabling individuals, against whom allegations had been made, to flee the jurisdiction, including on occasion to Israel. Reports outlined reasons why these steps had been taken, commonly prioritizing the interests of the institution above that of the victim and leaving children at continued risk.

Comparable behaviours were seen in the infamous case of Malka Leifer, Principal of Adass Israel College, where actions by the school and community leadership resulted in an extended extradition process from Israel, where she sought sanctuary, and protection of local laws to avoid returning to face criminal charges in Australia.

This presentation presents current research findings, speaking as to why leaders have assisted individuals against whom allegations have been made to speedily seek sanctuary elsewhere. It deals with the loss of community as sanctuary for victims of ICSEA, and outlines steps that may be taken to improve practices, and restore and rectify outcomes, looking to the future.



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Marcia Pinskier is a Doctoral candidate in the Department of Social Work, Monash University. Her area of research is Institutional Child Sexual Abuse and Leadership in the Australian Jewish community. Marcia has an extensive background in governance and leadership in the Not-for-Profit sector. She provided a number of submissions to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, relating to governance in the Jewish community, as well as providing support to survivors and their families, and assisting grass root community groups. Marcia also provides assistance to organisations in management of ICSEA incidents.

HELENA ROBINSON

**Sanctuaries of Learning or Unsettled Sanctuaries? A Roundtable on the Complexities of
Holocaust Education in Australian Museums**

(See abstract under Avril Alba)

Dr Helena Robinson is a Senior Lecturer with the Transdisciplinary School at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and Acting Course Director of the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation. Her scholarship straddles museum theory and practice, transdisciplinarity, and educational research. Grounded in her professional experience as a curator and collection manager, Helena's museum-focused research explores meaning-making in museums through the interaction of curatorial disciplinary practices, institutional governance structures, cultural policy, and stakeholder agency. Her PhD investigated the convergence of galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM), while her recent museological research and publications evaluate the concept of cultural democracy, practices of stakeholder participation in cultural programs, and museums as complex systems.



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SUZANNE RUTLAND

**Sanctuary For Whom? Jewish Victims and Nazi Perpetrators
in Post-war Australian Migrant Camps**

In 1988, Catherine Panich published a book entitled, *Sanctuary? Remembering postwar immigration* but the only reference to Jewish migrants was in the preface. Then in 1989, Mark Aarons published his groundbreaking work, *Sanctuary: Nazi fugitives in Australia*. This paper will examine the dichotomy between the subjects of these two books, and explore why it was possible for Nazi war criminals and collaborator to enter Australia, but harder for Jewish Holocaust survivors, who needed personal sponsorship.

From 1947 to 1950, Australia absorbed 170,000 Displaced Persons (DPs) through the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). Jews were largely excluded from this program, but the few Jewish DPs who were selected found themselves living with Nazi collaborators and war criminals. This paper will explore the Australian IRO program, the reasons why Nazi war criminals were able to enter Australia, the experiences of Jewish Holocaust survivors in the Australian migrant camps and the failure of efforts to persuade the government to pursue the issue of Nazi war criminals entering Australia. It took over forty years before Australia was prepared to investigate this problem, but by then it was too late.

Suzanne D. Rutland (OAM, PhD), Professor Emerita, Hebrew & Jewish Studies, University of Sydney, is a past president of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies, patron of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, and member of the Australian IHRA Delegation. She is a widely published author on Australian Jewry focusing on the Holocaust, immigration, Jewish and Holocaust education, Russian Jewry, antisemitism, and Jewish leadership. Her latest books are *Lone Voice: The Wars of Isi Leibler* (Hybrid 2021) and, with Professor Zehavit Gross, *Special Religious Education in Australia and its Value to Contemporary Society* (Springer 2021).

MYER SAMRA

Are Jews Ethnic?

The Whitlam government from 1972 to 1975 dramatically changed the nature and complexion of Australian society. In the immediate postwar period, Australia embarked on a policy of mass immigration, seeking to recruit 90% of new settlers from the British Isles, with the rest from



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other Northern European countries. As these sources dwindled, Australia gradually broadened the countries from which it recruited new immigrants.

Whitlam, with Al Grassby as Minister for Immigration, abolished the White Australia Policy and Australia began the process of transformation from an essentially British focused society to one that celebrated the diversity of a population coming from all parts of the world.

Languages other than English were encouraged and Australians became familiar with the concept of ethnicity. In 1975, the government initiated 2 new radio stations, 2EA in Sydney and 3EA in Melbourne, broadcasting in various community languages, EA standing for Ethnic Australia. The same year, Ethnic Communities Councils were established in various states, seeking to serve as representative roof bodies for the varied national groups settling in Australia, giving these groups more sway with politicians when they could speak on shared interests.

The Jewish community in Victoria readily participated in these developments and accepted the "ethnic" designation. By contrast, in NSW the community balked at the notion and debated whether it should be seen as an "ethnic" group and participate in these new resources.

In this paper, we shall look at why Sydneysiders did not wish to be seen as ethnic and consider whether there might be any particular difference between Jews in Sydney and Melbourne that might explain their different positions.

Dr Myer Samra completed his PhD on Baghdadi Jews in Australia in the Department of Anthropology at The University of Sydney in 1987. He has also undertaken research on the Benei Menashe from North East India and has an interest in the relationships between various Semitic languages. He has recently retired after a long career as a lawyer with specialist accreditation in children's law.

ANNE SARZIN

Athol Fugard's Exposition of Jew-hatred Corrupting the "Sanctuary"

Athol Fugard is one of the Western world's pre-eminent dramatists. His play *Coming Home* (2009) is unique, as it is his only play that focuses on the origins of Jew-hatred, its growth personally, collectively and globally, and its impact on its advocates and victims. This theme is amplified by contextual references to racist and xenophobic political and judicial systems that dehumanise those seeking a viable sanctuary from persecution. The concept of sanctuary is at the play's heart;



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the place where the downtrodden, dispossessed and delegitimised aspire to be, reflecting Emma Lazerus’s lines on the Statue of Liberty pedestal, ‘Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free’. All four characters—Mexican waitress, Adela; South African professor, Henry; and Eastern European Shoah survivors, Solly and Rachel—arrive in the United States with hopes for security, renewal and wellbeing. In my paper, I will focus on specific forces triggered by the presence of the Jewish survivors, leading to a catharsis of conscience in Henry, and Fugard’s profound analysis of the origin of Jew-hatred, its dangerous pervasiveness in the ‘sanctuary’, and its consequences for those who hope to build new lives in a place of peace and security.

Dr Anne Sarzin is the author of *The Angel of Kings Cross* (2023), the first authoritative biography of Australian feminist and social activist Dr Fanny Reading. With her daughter, Dr Lisa Sarzin, she co-authored *Hand in Hand: Jewish and Indigenous people working together* (2010), a landmark publication based on 80 interviews with participants in collaborative initiatives. For many years a full-time journalist/editor in the university sector (University of Sydney and University of Technology Sydney) and as a freelancer, Anne has published widely in media in Australia and abroad. Her work is also represented in peer-reviewed journals. Anne has two doctorates, a PhD from the University of Cape Town for a thesis on dramatist Athol Fugard; and more recently, a PhD from UTS for her biography of Dr Fanny Reading (2021). Anne is also a qigong teacher—Tiandi qigong and Sheng Zhen Gong—in Sydney.

JANINE SCHLOSS

Sanctuary in the Margins: Third-generation Marginal Holocaust Narratives

This paper presents the notion of the marginal Holocaust narrative, locating it within the emerging field of third-generation Holocaust memory. In honing in on the small group of German Jewish refugees who spent the World War II years in Eswatini, then Swaziland, it investigates the ways in which these as yet untold stories can further our understanding of what it means to ‘remember’ the Holocaust. Exploring themes of place and displacement, it considers the notion of ‘sanctuary’, in terms of the Swaziland Jews specifically, and the impact of these stories on the field of Holocaust and Memory Studies.



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In presenting a work in progress through a selection of archival research, oral histories and observational fieldwork, this paper probes the notion of Holocaust representation. In looking to the margins of the Shoah; the places as yet unexplored and unnarrated, the frames in which Holocaust narrative sits are expanded. Through the perspective of a Third-Generation writer and scholar whose background blends Australian, South African, Eswatini and German perspectives, this paper interrogates the ways in which these marginal narratives can further delineate a generation which contends with its inherent multifariousness. This notion adds to the growing number of stories that bear witness through the imagination.

Building on Esther Jilovsky's work on the evolution of Holocaust memory, and Atina Grossman's research in the marginal Holocaust narratives among others, this paper presents a means of deeming the past more "usable" and relatable.

Janine Schloss is a PhD candidate in Jewish Cultural Practice and a Teaching Associate at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. She is currently researching the German Jewish refugees of Eswatini (Swaziland) through the prism of Third-Generation Holocaust narrative. She is writing a short-story cycle as part of her practiced-based PhD project. Her research focus is on the marginal Holocaust narratives from the perspective of Third-Generation representation. Janine is also a Program Manager at Melbourne Jewish Book Week.

JASON SCHULMAN

"Schism in the Sanctuary"

Synagogues—and other Jewish communal institutions—have served as miniature sanctuaries in Jewish history, places where Jews have sought comfort and repose. But these sanctuaries have not been immune from the realities of intra-communal conflict. In this paper, I explore how religious schism has been a central part of modern Jewish sanctuaries, and how these conflicts have been resolved—contrary to the long history of Jewish communal conflict in earlier eras—in secular courts. Using the United States as a case study, I look beyond the usual gaze of historians at institutional histories of sanctuaries, which creates an impression of continuity and harmony.



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By looking at moments of schism and conflict that found their way to court, we can see a more complex picture of the Jewish past.

Jason Schulman is a lecturer in Jewish history at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. He is a 2025 Fulbright Scholar to Australia. He is the U.S. liaison for the Australian Association for Jewish Studies and serves on the editorial board of *Western States Jewish History* and *AJS Perspectives*, the magazine of the Association for Jewish Studies. He earned his PhD from Emory University and his BA from Columbia University.

DOVI SELDOWITZ

A Matter of Little Intolerances: Revisiting Australian Media Responses to the 1959-1960 Swastika Epidemic

During European Jewry's destruction in the Holocaust, Australia was viewed as a potential—though mostly unrealised—sanctuary from the unfolding horror. However, a mere fifteen years later, the 1959-1960 Swastika Epidemic, marked by widespread synagogue desecration, witnessed Jewish disillusionment being met with an odd combination of apathy and dismissiveness on the part of Australian media and political leadership. This paper revisits this brief but panicked antisemitic episode, the sudden turmoil it cast upon Jewish communities around the world and presents a critical analysis of the coverage found in the pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald* that point to a fundamental minimisation of Jewish collective experience. This paper argues that, despite extensive reporting, the *Herald* appeared disinclined to consider local incidents representative of any real threat to Jewish safety, a sentiment echoed in Prime Minister Menzies' condemnation of these events. By juxtaposing media narratives and emphases with statements from Jewish leaders, this study highlights a dissonance in the *Herald's* representation of events and raises questions concerning media accountability in reporting antisemitism, an issue still relevant sixty-five years later. This analysis considers sociological incentives for media minimisation of Jewish fear and anxiety and their implications for Australia as a sanctuary for Jewish life.

Dovi Seldowitz is a PhD candidate (sociology) at UNSW Sydney, previously earning his BA(Hons I) in Sociology and Anthropology at UNSW and awarded the University Medal for his



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thesis on Hasidic women's leadership. Dovi previously received his rabbinical ordination and his interests in Jewish studies include Midrash, Hasidism, and contemporary Jewry.

ANDREW SINGLETON

**Sanctuaries of Learning or Unsettled Sanctuaries? A Roundtable on the Complexities of
Holocaust Education in Australian Museums
(See abstract under Avril Alba)**

Andrew Singleton, PhD, is Professor of Sociology and Social Research at Deakin University, specialising in qualitative and quantitative approaches. His research spans youth religion, personal belief, and alternative religions. Singleton has published extensively, including the books *Freedoms, Faiths and Futures: Teenage Australians on Religion, Sexuality and Diversity* (co-authored with Anna Halafoff, Mary Lou Rasmussen, and Gary Bouma; Bloomsbury, 2021), *The Spirit of Generation Y: Young People's Spirituality in a Changing Australia* (co-authored with Michael Mason and Ruth Webber; Garrett Publishing, 2007), *Religion, Culture and Society: A Global Approach* (Sage, 2014), and his new book, *Let the Dead Speak* (co-authored with Matt Tomlinson; Manchester UP, 2025).

DAVID SLUCKI

Third Generation Writing in Australia

While there is a growing body of scholarship on Third Generation writers in the Americas, Israel, and Europe, less is understood about what might distinguish the Australian experience of growing up surrounded by Holocaust-surviving grandparents and their memories. In this paper I will investigate numerous recent writers grappling with this question, as well as reflecting on my own experience as a third-generation memoirist. How has the sanctuary our grandparents sought shaped our sense of what it means to inherit our grandparents' stories? In what way does the landscape of Australian cities create a specific geography of Holocaust memory? In investigating this body of literature, I ask: what is distinct about this nascent body of work? Is there something about the experience of being the descendant of Holocaust survivors in



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Australia that distinguishes this body of work from that of third-generation writers and artists in other countries? Or are these works part of a broader transnational tradition?

These works encompass writings that deal directly with writers' journeys to uncover their grandparents' narratives or that are explicitly framed as third-generation works, like works by Bram Presser, Tess Scholfield-Peters, Esther Elise Hearst, and my own. But it also includes writers like Maria Tumarkin, John Safran, and Sarah Krasnostein, whose works touch on their experience as grandchildren of survivors, but aren't necessarily at the centre of those works.

David Slucki is the Director of the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, and the Loti Smorgon Associate Professor of Contemporary Jewish Life and Culture at Monash University. He is a historian who has written widely on Jewish life after the Holocaust, focusing particularly on survivors and their descendants, and on representations of the Holocaust. His publications include *Sing This at my Funeral: A Memoir of Fathers and Sons* (2019) and *The International Jewish Labor Bund after 1945: Toward a Global History* (2012). He is the co-editor of *Laughter After: Humor and the Holocaust* (2020) and *In the Shadows of Memory: The Holocaust and the Third-generation* (2016). He is currently working on projects focusing on antisemitism in Australia, Holocaust denial in popular culture, and Jews and sitcoms.

KIM SWIVEL

**The Problem with Australian Holocaust Fiction as a Safe Cultural Space for Jews, and
Alternative Sanctuaries of Jewishness in New Jewish Australian Writing**

Within the public cultural institution of Literature, which is itself a vehicle for antisemitic stereotypes and ideas, both Jewish and non-Jewish writers have attempted to create safe spaces for Jews through fiction. The rise of Holocaust fiction was meant to provide literary sanctuary in which mourning, commemoration, and 'never again' resistance could take place, but this cultural space is not always safe for Jews. With good intentions, bestselling Australian Holocaust novels, predominantly written by non-Jews and expressly intended to combat antisemitism, continue to represent Jews as cultureless, stereotypical victims of horror, devoid of any depth of Jewish experience or history, or of Jews celebrating or finding refuge in their Jewishness. Instead of creating sanctuary for Jews, reductive depictions in Australian Holocaust fiction inadvertently make unsafe cultural spaces by limiting readers' understanding of Jewish cultural experience and



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history. How, then, can Australian writers create a genuine sanctuary in the literary sphere? Recent popular fiction by Australian Jews – Elise Esther Hearst and Nadine Cohen – provides culturally complex yet broadly accessible depictions of Jews and the intergenerational effects of the Holocaust that challenge stereotypes. By this complexity, these new ‘own voices’ novels not only create sanctuaries of cultural exploration for Jews but pathways of understanding for non-Jewish readers too.

Kim Swivel is author of thirteen long-form fictions, under the penname Kim Kelly. Her work has been short- and longlisted for various awards, and her latest novella, *Ladies’ Rest and Writing Room*, won the 2023 Finlay Lloyd 20/40 Prize. She holds a Master of Creative Writing from Macquarie University, for which she earned the Faculty of Arts Fred Rush Convocation Prize, and she is currently undertaking a Creative Writing PhD there, researching stereotypes of Jews in English and Australian fiction. She also works as a book editor in the Australian publishing industry.

SHANI TZOREF

Sanctuary and Covenant: A Fugue of Sacred Time and Space in Leviticus

This paper explores the intricate relationship between sanctuary and covenant within the concluding chapters of Leviticus. By examining the narrative structure and linguistic features of Lev 25-26, I argue that the text forms a cohesive exploration of sacred time and space, where divine directives intersect with human obligations. The discussion will draw on literary techniques, particularly wordplay, and *inclusio*, to demonstrate how these chapters are woven together in a fugue of divine instruction and human response related to sacred time and space. Through a close reading of the text, I demonstrate how the interplay of these themes establishes a framework for understanding the nature of divine-human relations, which I believe can illuminate contemporary discussions of sanctuary in Jewish thought and experience.

Dr Shani Tzoref is an educator specializing in Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Originally from New York, she holds degrees from Yeshiva University (B.A., M.S.) and New York University (Ph.D.). She has taught at universities in the US, UK, Israel, and Australia. As a former professor at the University of Potsdam’s School of Jewish Theology, she advocated for



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reforms in German rabbinical education. Her research focuses on narrative, discourse, and the relevance of the Hebrew Bible in modern society. Shani recently transitioned to K-12 teaching and relocated to Australia in November 2024. She is currently completing a second M.A. in Digital Humanities.

GEORGE M. WEISZ

The Medical Professional Elimination Program and the Ideology and Motivation of Nazi Physicians

(See abstract under Deborah E.-S. Hemstreet)

George M. Weisz came from Israel 49 years ago as an orthopedic surgeon and remained despite many surprises. He was integrated gradually, established three practices and turned mainly to spinal surgery. Before retirement he obtained a Bachelor of Arts at UNSW and a Master's degree at The University of Sydney. He retired some 20 years ago, at the age of 66. Writing, publishing and presenting, he is affiliated to the School of Humanities at UNSW (Associate Senior Lecturer) and UNE (a/Associate Professor). He is Editor in Chief of *Annals of Medico-Legal College*.

GABRIELLE WOLF

A Denial of Professional Sanctuary: Refugee Doctors in Australia, 1937-45

On the eve of and during World War Two, some doctors who had fled Nazi-occupied Europe, where they had been prohibited from practising medicine, sought sanctuary in Australia. Many of them had extensive medical training, there was a shortage of doctors in Australia, and the circumstances of their arrival were well known: they were referred to as 'refugee doctors'. Australia offered them physical safety. Yet, for reasons of protectionism and possibly prejudice, representatives of the local medical profession attempted to deny the refugee doctors professional sanctuary by ensuring they were not legally entitled to practise medicine in Australia. Those Australian doctors occupied prominent roles in the states' medical registration authorities, the British Medical Association (the peak body for doctors in the Empire), and Australian universities' medical faculties. This paper will discuss examples of their attempts to use the law to achieve their objective, but also of some refugee doctors' resistance (through lawful and unlawful



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means) to this campaign to impede their resumption of their medical careers in Australia. The paper will examine, too, a federal scheme that was created to use refugee doctors to address growing deficiencies in medical services as the war progressed. This was, however, an expedient and temporary arrangement, which was not intended to provide an enduring sanctuary for refugee doctors to pursue the profession for which they had trained.

Dr Gabrielle Wolf is an Associate Professor in the Law School at Deakin University. She will commence as a Professor in the Faculty of Law at Monash University at the end of March. Gabrielle obtained a Bachelor of Arts (with Honours), Bachelor of Laws and PhD in history from the University of Melbourne. Gabrielle has published her research on the current and past regulation of health practitioners, public health law, health records, sentencing law and theatre history. She previously worked as a judge's research associate and as a lawyer in private practice and in-house.