

'The Dirty Vat': European Migration to Australia from Shanghai, 1946-47

Leslie Haylen, chairman of the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, visited Shanghai in 1948 in order to report on Australian migration processes to Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration. He later described the city he was visiting for the first time using an Orientalist trope, perhaps influenced by films such as *Shanghai: City for Sale* (1940):

Shanghai of the flaunting wealth and the utter, abject, heart-breaking poverty. Shanghai the indescribable, the city of arrogant racketeers and humble saints. Shanghai the capital of squeeze, the diadem of despair the white man had placed on the brow of China. Less romantically, Shanghai called by the Chinese the Dirty Vat.¹

From the mid-nineteenth century the Chinese city of Shanghai had been carved up into foreign concessions controlled by Britain, France and the United States.² After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, 'White' Russians (including Russian-speaking Jews) added to the cultural mix, so that Haylen viewed the city as a place where White Russians sold the 'Tsarina's diamonds' and 'where you could pick up a girl of any nationality for the night'.³ In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany joined the now substantial European émigré communities in Shanghai, which was under increasingly overt Japanese domination.

At the end of the Second World War, both new and old arrivals from Europe sought resettlement in the West. While the group of displaced Jewish refugees in Shanghai in the post-war period was initially viewed by Calwell as a humanitarian crisis, they then became an 'extraneous sort of problem': a controversial sideshow to a planned mass resettlement of displaced persons from Europe.⁴ This article will contextualise the actual and proposed Jewish and Russian migration from Shanghai with regards to Australian attitudes towards post-war European migrations from the East. This argument traces the anti-Semitic and anti-Russian sentiments that pressured Calwell into ultimately

¹ Leslie Haylen, *Chinese Journey: The Republic Revisited* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1959), 56; Robert Bickers, 'Shanghaianders: The Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai 1843-1937', *Past & Present*, 159 (1998), 200.

² The International Settlement was under consular governance and administered by the Shanghai Municipal Council, made up of British, American, Chinese and (later) Japanese officials; the French Concession was solely under consular governance. From July 1927 the Chinese Municipal Administration governed the Chinese area of Shanghai. In 1943, the International Settlement and the French Concession were returned to China.

³ The term 'White' Russians refers to those members of the anti-communist White movement during the Russian civil war, and associated groups of post-war emigres. It could also include Poles, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Czechs and Lithuanians. Haylen, *Chinese Journey*, 56; Marcia Reynders Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort: The Diaspora Communities of Shanghai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 5.

⁴ Report of Charles Jordan, 4 October 1947, 1945-1954: Records of the Geneva Office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, G 45-54, Archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (hereafter, JDC online).

blocking Russian migration from Shanghai as well as placing a tight curb on the migration of Jewish displaced persons from both Asia and Europe.

Russians and Russian-Speaking Jews in Harbin and Shanghai

Russian settlement in China began in Harbin, a town in the north of China which was built in 1898 by the Russians to service the new Chinese Eastern Railway. Settlers of various cultures and religious persuasions flocked to Manchuria: ethnic Russians, but also Jews (escaping restrictions in the Pale of Settlement), Poles, Tatars, Ukrainians, Armenians, Georgians and Lithuanians. By 1914, there were fifty thousand Russians in Harbin.⁵ Between the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the end of the civil war in 1921, over one hundred and fifty thousand Russians fled to the Far East, many to Harbin and then on to Shanghai. At its peak in the late 1920s, there were one hundred and twenty thousand Russians in Harbin; with over twenty Orthodox churches and a rich cultural life, it was a 'conspicuously Russian city'.⁶

Amongst the inhabitants of Harbin (and Shanghai), there were conflicting loyalties: monarchists, social democrats, social revolutionaries, constitutional democrats, and exiled Bolsheviks.⁷ Refugee advocate John Hope Simpson, argued that refugees who were conspicuous for their political activity were not representative and that most Russians in Harbin were non-political. Instead, there was a 'general patriotism and homesickness for an idealised Russia'.⁸ However, the contested territory of Harbin was politically turbulent and the citizenship of individuals was also a complicating factor.

During the Russian civil war, Harbin served as a major supply base for the White armies in their fight against the Bolsheviks. When the Soviets took control in 1924 there was a wholesale 'deprivation of political rights' because of the perceived 'common disloyalty' to the Soviet Union.⁹ While many Russians registered with the Soviet consulate, this didn't entitle them to full rights as Soviet citizens, or even the right to move to the Soviet Union. These people were sometimes known as 'radishes - red skinned [holding Soviet registration] but white [anti-Bolshevik] inside!'¹⁰ Others who were once Russians now became stateless emigres. In 1929, the Chinese fully took over the railway and then in 1932 Japan invaded Manchuria. The Russian population rapidly declined during

⁵ Henry Dobinson, 'Russian Expansion into Asia', 30 October 1926, Dossier 14B Russians (Red and White) in China, 1927, FO 228/3608, National Archives (UK).

⁶ Mara Moustafine, *Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files* (Milsons Point, NSW: Random House Australia, 2002), 77.

⁷ British Consulate General, 'A Summary of the Russian Organisations in Shanghai', April 1942, A434, 48/3/13904, in Thomas Poole and Eric Fried Collection, UQFL336, Fryer Library, University of Queensland; Tanya Pridannikoff, 'A Cruel Illusion: 'Russian Fascism in Queensland During World War Two', Honours thesis, University of Queensland, 1998, 11, in Thomas Poole and Eric Fried Collection, *op cit*.

⁸ Sir John Hope Simpson, 'Refugees: A Preliminary Report of a Survey' (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1938), in Thomas Poole and Eric Fried Collection, *op cit*.

⁹ Alexey V. Mikhalev, 'Russians as a Minority in Socialist Mongolia: Social Exclusion and Identity', *Inner Asia*, 15 (2013), 127.

¹⁰ Dorfman, 'White Russians in the Far East', 167.

this period to around a quarter of what it had been, with many going to Shanghai.

Historian Peter Gatrell has noted that in Harbin, while Russians maintained a vibrant culture, the voices of those who were unable to trade on artistic talent or social connections were usually concealed.¹¹ According to one Russian memoir: 'a good part of the Russian population' in Harbin 'was without money'. Stories circulated of formerly well-placed Russians who faced hardship in China; these included a member of Alexander Kolchak's anti-communist Provisional All-Russian Government (1918-20), who died impoverished in Harbin.¹² Contemporary Russian voices explain why, describing the 'almost fabulous cheapness of Chinese labour in Manchuria [which] makes any kind of [labour] competition impossible'.¹³ Historian Chia Yin Hsu argues that because a good number of the emigres were indigent, they presented a spectacle of the fall from power of a contingent of the 'white' race, and the erosion of colonial privilege conferred by whiteness. One Russian admitted that: 'the appearance of destitute Russian emigres ended once and for all the myth of the power and prestige of white-skinned people'. A Japanese diplomat describing Manchuria in the 1920s portrayed Russians as 'a proud race ... now dominated by the very people whom it had lorded over'. These were now destitute emigres whose very Europeanness (or whiteness) was doubtful.¹⁴ Material conditions deteriorated in Harbin with its takeover by Japan, and Japanese workers, in the early 1930s, which resulted in 55 per cent unemployment in the White Russian community.¹⁵ Between 1937 and 1945, the Chinese war of resistance against Japan, as well as Japan's involvement in the Pacific War, resulted in a region plunged into financial crisis.¹⁶

There was similar dire poverty amongst the twelve thousand Russians in Shanghai in the early 1930s.¹⁷ While there were wealthy Russians in Shanghai, and a healthy middle-class,¹⁸ there was also an indigent working and underclass, willing to compete with Chinese labourers, and this increased as thirteen thousand more Russians moved from Harbin during this decade.¹⁹ A 1937 study, for example, found that 75 per cent of Russian schoolchildren in Shanghai were malnourished.²⁰ Many Russians were unable to secure good jobs because they were not able to speak English, which was the *lingua franca* of the foreign

¹¹ Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 57.

¹² Chia Yin Hsu, 'Russian Resorts and European Leisure: Railroad Vacations, 'Native' Sites, and the Making of a Russian (Post)Colonial Identity in Manchuria, 1920s-1930s', in Anika Walke, Jan Musekamp, Nicole Svobodny, eds., *Migration & Mobility in the Modern Age: Refugees, Travelers, and Traffickers in Europe and Eurasia* (Indiana University Press, 2017), 129.

¹³ Hsu, 'Russian Resorts and European Leisure', 129.

¹⁴ Hsu, 'Russian Resorts and European Leisure', 109, 110.

¹⁵ Pridannikoff, 'A Cruel Illusion', 11.

¹⁶ Hsu, 'Russian Resorts and European Leisure', 119.

¹⁷ Ben Dorfman, 'White Russians in the Far East', *Asia*, 35 (March 1935), 167, in Thomas Poole and Eric Fiedler Collection, *op cit*; Bickers, 'Shanghaianders', 176.

¹⁸ See Katya Knyazeva, 'High and Low: The Material Culture of the Russian Diaspora in Shanghai, 1920s-1950s', *Global Histories*, 3:2 (2017), 21-42.

¹⁹ Inga Eber, *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), Kindle edition, 56.

²⁰ Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 95.

community in Shanghai. There was also a rigid hierarchical system set out on racial lines, with the British at the top.²¹ So, Russian men worked as dockworkers, janitors, guards, chauffeurs and bodyguards. Poor Russian women infamously either worked openly as prostitutes in 'Russian houses' in the French Concession and Hongkou area or became taxi dancers who sold sexual services for an extra fee.²²

Immorality in both Harbin and Shanghai in the Russian communities became an international issue in the 1930s. In 1933 a report by the League of Nations found that Russian women from Harbin 'form the source of supply of almost the entire occidental prostitution in the great international commercial centres of China'. In 1935, the League reported that over 20 per cent of Russian women in Shanghai 'are said to be engaged in professional or casual prostitution or [are in] danger of becoming such' (in Harbin, it was up to 70 per cent).²³ Whereas other 'poor whites' in Shanghai could claim the aid of consular officials and compatriots, Russians had less recourse to similar assistance. Chen argues that the visible presence of foreign indigents, especially the proliferating numbers of Russian women working as cabaret hostesses and prostitutes, became the source of anxious commentary for 'respectable' residents of the treaty port.²⁴ Journalist Ben Dorfman noted in 1935 that 'so many Russian women are engaged in dispensing amorous wares' that 'Russian women ... are generally *persona non grata* in the foreign clubs and social sets of China's 'ports'.²⁵ The presence of the Russians thus challenged an entrenched ideology of white superiority, as they were collectively regarded as 'emotional, untrustworthy and usually drunk'.²⁶ After visiting Russian communities in China in 1938, refugee advocate Sir John Hope Simpson lamented:

Things could scarcely be worse from the [Russian] refugee standpoint, and unless steps of some kind are taken the mass of the emigration will sink into a condition of moral degradation and economic misery which will disgrace Western civilisation.²⁷

Politically problematic activity also increased amongst the Russians in China during the 1930s, with Harbin's All-Russian Fascist Party boasting four thousand members in 1936.²⁸ In 1945 the Soviet Union took over Harbin again briefly, before handing it over to the Chinese. During this time, they arrested around fifteen thousand Harbin Russians, alleging collaboration with the Japanese,

²¹ See Bickers, 'Shanghaianders', 170, 188.

²² Tatiana Schaufuss, 'The White Russian Refugees', *The Annals of the American Academy*, 202 (March 1939), 53; Haochen Wang, 'Citizens of No State: Daily Life of Shanghai White Russians, 1920s-1930s', *Primary Source*, IV:1, 31-32

²³ Russian Women's Hostel in Shanghai, 1934-1947, 3AMS/B/13, Records of the Association for Moral & Social Hygiene, The Women's Library, London School of Economics.

²⁴ Janet Y. Chen, *Guilty of Indigence: The Urban Poor in China, 1900-1953* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 78-79.

²⁵ Dorfman, 'White Russians in the Far East', 168.

²⁶ Wang, 'Citizens of No State', 32.

²⁷ John Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem: Report of a Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), cited in Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, 57.

²⁸ Pridannikoff, 'A Cruel Illusion', 10.

membership in the Russian Fascist Party and in White Russian organisations, and publication of anti-Soviet articles and books. Some old leaders of the White movement were taken back to the Soviet Union: one was hanged, others were shot or sent to gulag.²⁹ This period also saw an intensive repatriation drive by the Soviet Union.³⁰

When the Japanese attacked and then occupied Shanghai in 1937, Russians also faced allegations of collaboration. A Japanese-owned newspaper reported on the 'pro-Japanese enthusiasm of local Russians',³¹ while a Chinese-owned newspaper described the Russians as, pragmatically, 'cashing in' on the occupation.³² One example apparent from the Shanghai Municipal Police files is Paul Tokareff, who had lived in Japan and was fluent in Japanese, and who worked to source a fleet of motor vehicles for the Japanese.³³ Shanghai Municipal Police files also reported that bombs had been thrown at the Soviet Club, a Soviet newspaper, and a Soviet repatriation centre. The police concluded that the Japanese were behind the bombing, and had employed Russians to pass it off as a White Russian affair.³⁴ During the war, Russians and Russian-speaking Jews (registered with Soviet authorities or stateless) were treated as 'neutrals' by the Japanese, enjoying 'the benefits and privileges which resulted from that status'.³⁵ They were never interned but did come under the supervision and control of the Japanese; in quick succession, two leaders of the Russian Emigrants' Committee (representing 25,000 emigres) were assassinated.³⁶

Jewish Refugees in Shanghai

German and Yiddish-speaking Jews arriving in the late 1930s added to what historian Peter Gatrell has called the 'febrile' atmosphere of Shanghai in this period.³⁷ Many countries, including Australia, made it extremely difficult for Jews fleeing the genocidal racial policies of Nazi Germany to obtain entry visas. After Japan attacked and occupied Shanghai in 1937, Japanese authorities kept the port open; visa requirements became arbitrary, which was particularly valuable to the refugees.³⁸ It was the only option left for many European Jews in the pre-war period although it was still difficult: money, and luck, were required to organise a passage on a suitable ship heading east, while the German government confiscated property and charged exit taxes.³⁹ After September

²⁹ Olga Bakich, 'Émigré Identity: The Case of Harbin', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 99:1 (Winter 2000), 65.

³⁰ Bakick, 'Émigré Identity', 65.

³¹ *Manichi Daily News*, 28 September 1937, in *White Russians – Files on Noulens Associates: Chinese Newspaper Clippings & Translations, 1937-1940*, Shanghai Municipal Police Files, 1894-1945, GALE (hereafter, Shanghai Municipal Police Files).

³² *The China Press*, 6 August 1937, in *White Russians*, Shanghai Municipal Police Files.

³³ Report, 12 August 1937, in *Shanghai Bombings*, Shanghai Municipal Police files.

³⁴ Report, 14 July 1937, in *Shanghai Bombings*, Shanghai Municipal Police Files.

³⁵ Charles H. Jordan, 'Re White Russians', undated, *Non-British European Migration from China Part 1*, S250253, A6980, NAA.

³⁶ Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 164, 166, 170.

³⁷ Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, 57.

³⁸ Eber, *Voices from Shanghai*, 100.

³⁹ Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 100; Peter Witting, interview by Ann-Mari Jordens, 2006, National Library of Australia (NLA).

1939, a complicated system of destination visas, transit visas and exit visas were required.

Over eighteen thousand European Jews arrived in Shanghai from 1938 to 1941.⁴⁰ Most of these were Germans and Austrians who fled following *Kristallnacht* in November 1938; some had been released from Dachau and other concentration camps under the condition that they leave the country immediately.⁴¹ They were joined in 1941 by one thousand Jewish refugees who arrived in Shanghai via Japan, including hundreds of Polish *yeshiva*.⁴² The refugees were mostly middle-aged: over seven thousand (or 55 per cent) were over the age of forty, and they arrived with about fifteen hundred children under the age of sixteen. The majority were middle-class, with occupations ranging from businessmen and artisans to employees and intellectuals.⁴³

They arrived in a Shanghai which was already at war. In 1937, the Japanese had attacked, bombing the city and fighting for three months: almost a million (predominantly Chinese) residents (of a total population of 3.5 million) became refugees, dependent upon aid for survival. Upon arrival, around 3,000 of the total new arrivals were dependent upon emergency accommodation organised and funded predominantly by the local community of Sephardic and Russian Jews, including wealthy businessman Sir Victor Sassoon, and by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC or Joint).⁴⁴ The six Jewish *Heim* (homes) joined the hundreds of refugee camps scattered around the city.⁴⁵

Ten-year-old Peter Witting, whose father, a banker, evaded imprisonment on *Kristallnacht* after a neighbour's warning, later described his family's arrival in mid-1939:

We landed on the wharf on the Bund [waterfront area], which was right in the centre of Shanghai. We left that luxurious ship and walked down the gangplank to the wharf and up a plank on to open flat top trucks, to be taken, packed in like sardines, to a Jewish shelter in Hongkew.⁴⁶

In a letter home, Witting's mother Annie described conditions in the *Heim* on Ward Road:

⁴⁰ Eber, *Voices from Shanghai*, 73.

⁴¹ Rutland, "Waiting Room Shanghai": Australian Reactions to the Plight of the Jews in Shanghai after the Second World War', *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 32:1 (1987), 408.

⁴² Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 138, 141.

⁴³ Felix Gruenberger, 'The Jewish Refugees in Shanghai', *Jewish Social Studies*, 12:4 (1950), 229-230.

⁴⁴ Local organisations included the Committee for the Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, the Committee for the Assistance of Jewish Refugees from Eastern Europe, and the Shanghai Ashkenazi Collaborating Relief Association. Eber, *Voices from Shanghai*, 64, 174; Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 119.

⁴⁵ Christian Henriot, 'Shanghai and the Experience of War: The Fate of Refugees', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, 5:2 (2006), 215, 222, 227, 229.

⁴⁶ Peter Witting, *op cit*.

We were living thirty-four people to a room, women, men, and children together. From a European perspective, bathroom facilities are indescribably bad. We had to wait in long lines for meals and, despite the bad weather, had to walk a quarter of an hour to get to the place. For breakfast we received tea in enamel cups and dry bread; for lunch [the main meal] a casserole dish; for dinner tea, dry bread and two eggs or two bananas. This is the reality of shelter life.⁴⁷

Annie's brother, based in South Africa, sent cash, which then enabled the family to rent a room in 'Jewish Town', located in the poorer, Chinese and Japanese-dominated suburb of Hongkew.⁴⁸ This was a usual story; in other cases, small amounts of money were loaned to poor refugees from the various charitable bodies. Jewish refugees soon established shops, restaurants and other businesses, as well as hospitals and schools.⁴⁹ However, at the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941, five thousand refugees were still dependent on welfare and another three thousand were in dire need.⁵⁰ The blockade that resulted from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour resulted in food shortages;⁵¹ it also closed off channels of funding from America (which would not resume until 1944).⁵² For the Jewish refugees, the small 'relief allotments were not sufficient to prevent starvation'.⁵³

In May 1943 Hongkew became the site of an enforced 'designated area', known as the 'Shanghai Ghetto'. Around half of the Jewish refugees not already resident in Hongkew were ordered to move into the newly-segregated district: an area also populated by Japanese and up to one hundred thousand Chinese residents, but outside of which the German, Austrian (and later, Polish) Jewish 'stateless refugees' could not travel.⁵⁴ Passes in and out of the 'Ghetto' were authorised by a sadistic Japanese officer, Ghoya, who styled himself 'King of the Jews'.⁵⁵ Jewish refugee doctor Felix Gruenberger later described the 'desperate economic conditions' of the ghetto: there was a lack of potable water, fuel for sterilising water, and food. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) later reported that three thousand refugees died from malnutrition and its attendant diseases.⁵⁶ Ilse Adler's father and maternal grandparents died within weeks of arriving in the Shanghai ghetto; Ilse and her mother 'fended for survival for six lean years'.⁵⁷ Peter Witting, dependent on one bowl of soup per day from the Ward Road camp, found himself bedridden for

⁴⁷ Eber, *Voices from Shanghai*, 318.

⁴⁸ Peter Witting, *op cit*.

⁴⁹ Ristaino, 'White Russian and Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, 1920-44', 64.

⁵⁰ Peter Witting, *op cit*; Gruenberger, 'The Jewish Refugees in Shanghai', 334; Henriot, 'Shanghai and the Experience of War', 222.

⁵¹ Henriot, 'Shanghai and the Experience of War', 230.

⁵² In February 1943, JDC representatives Laura Margolis and Manuel Siegel were interned for the duration of the war. Eber, *Voices from Shanghai*, 225.

⁵³ Gruenberger, 'The Jewish Refugees in Shanghai', 337, 343.

⁵⁴ Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 195; Peter Witting, *op cit*.

⁵⁵ Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 199; Peter Witting, *op cit*.

⁵⁶ UNRRA Operational Analysis Paper number 53, UNRRA in China 1945 to 1947, 73, A10671, NAA.

⁵⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 November 2013.

over a year after his 'health broke down' due to malnutrition.⁵⁸ Teenager Annie Silverstein later said: 'I often wished I was in an internment camp, as then I would have been sure of one square meal a day'.⁵⁹ Gruenberger reported that in the summer of 1942, sixteen people died in one day from heat exhaustion. Thirty refugees resorted to begging, seven registered themselves as prostitutes, and around twenty mothers 'sold their newly-born babies in order to improve their living conditions'.⁶⁰ On 17 July 1945, up to fifty refugees were killed and others were wounded when the ghetto was hit by American bombs.⁶¹ By this time, eleven thousand were dependent on relief.⁶²

After the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, and as awareness of the shocking magnitude of the Holocaust grew, all Jewish refugees were categorised by the United Nations as 'displaced persons' (DPs), to be registered with and cared for by UNRRA. UNRRA, with the assistance of the JDC, vetted the refugees, provided certificates of identity, obtained exit and transit visas, and assisted in tracing family members.⁶³ In November 1946, UNRRA was forced to negotiate with the Nationalist Chiang Kai-shek government to permit the refugees to remain in Shanghai until an emigration program could be organised.⁶⁴

While viewed by international agencies as displaced persons, in Shanghai the European Jews were viewed by the British as suspect; the British had been interned by the Japanese while the Jewish refugees were only confined to a ghetto, in relative freedom. There were allegations that Jewish refugees had robbed the British of their possessions, and had even informed on British escapees.⁶⁵ There was perhaps a longstanding antipathy: while the French consulate had allowed Jewish refugees to enlist in the French forces, the British had not.⁶⁶

For the Jewish refugees, conditions in post-war Shanghai did not improve much. Some were employed by American forces, UNRRA and the JDC, and some resurrected flagging businesses.⁶⁷ However, the Chinese civil war erupted again and unemployment in Shanghai rose dramatically.⁶⁸ Shanghai again became known for 'black markets, its inflation, and unethical business methods', as well as 'graft and corruption'.⁶⁹ One German-Jewish stowaway who arrived in

⁵⁸ Peter Witting, *op cit.*

⁵⁹ *Cairns Post*, 21 January 1947.

⁶⁰ Gruenberger, 'The Jewish Refugees in Shanghai', 340.

⁶¹ Hundreds of Chinese were also killed or wounded.

⁶² Rutland, 'Waiting Room Shanghai', 411.

⁶³ UNRRA Operational Analysis Paper number 53, UNRRA in China 1945 to 1947, *op cit.*

⁶⁴ Rutland, 'Waiting Room Shanghai', 411.

⁶⁵ Letter from Jordan to Calwell, 2 October 1947, and Report by L A Taylor, September 1947, Reports from Shanghai on Alien Immigration – H Loveday, O C W Fuhrman, L A Taylor, 1947-1948, 1947/3/21, A434, NAA.

⁶⁶ Gruenberger, 'The Jewish Refugees in Shanghai', 335.

⁶⁷ Antonia Finnane, *Far From Where?: Jewish Journeys from Shanghai to Australia* (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1999), 213.

⁶⁸ Eber, *Voices from Shanghai*, 518.

⁶⁹ Charles H. Jordan, 'Statement No. 1', undated, Reports from Shanghai on Alien Immigration, *op cit.*

Australia in 1946 (and was subsequently deported) complained that conditions in Shanghai were so bad that he would rather have died than stayed there.⁷⁰

Humanitarian Resettlement Initiatives

After meeting with representatives of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), in late 1945 Arthur Calwell announced a family reunion scheme for Holocaust survivors, including (after some persuasion) two hundred landing permits specifically for refugees in Shanghai and the Far East.⁷¹ Justifying this scheme, Calwell told Parliament:

[This is] an act of humanity. Many of the individuals concerned are the last surviving members of their families in Europe. The whole purpose of the plan is to make a humanitarian gesture to those long-suffering victims of Nazi tyranny.⁷²

The scheme required ECAJ to facilitate up to 2,400 family sponsorships of individual migrants, with sponsors guaranteeing support for five years after arrival.⁷³ In practice, a few prominent members of the Jewish community in Melbourne, including Jacob Waks, Leo Fink and Abram Sokol, attempted to sponsor around one thousand Polish Jews from their hometowns: 'all Jews were "cousins" or "brothers"'.⁷⁴ ECAJ, sometimes using Calwell's departmental office space, typed up the forms and submitted them; the applications were sent to the newly installed Australian Legation office in Shanghai, which acted as the representative of the Department of Immigration in China.⁷⁵ For Calwell, this was a 'convenient and safe method'; ECAJ, rather than the Department itself, was in charge and carried the full responsibility. Calwell realised that this scheme included 'some risk', but argued:

The old idea of careful selection and hand picking of migrants as if we were selecting pedigree cattle has but little place today. We must be more adventurous and take the opportunity of encouraging those who have as the outcome and aftermath of the recent international conflagration a burning desire to seek a new life of freedom and opportunity.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Klaus Neumann, *Across the Seas: Australia's Response to Refugees: A History* (Collingwood, Vic: Black Inc, 2015), 292.

⁷¹ 'Australian Jewry Quota for Migrants' and correspondence, Executive Council of Australian Jewry – Re Jewish Immigration (1945-1947), 1951/12/3672, A440, NAA.

⁷² Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-1948* (Sydney: Croom Helm Australia, 1985), 292.

⁷³ 'Australian Jewry Quota for Migrants', Executive Council of Australian Jewry, *op cit*; Suzanne Rutland and Sol Encel, 'No Room at the Inn: American Responses to Australian Immigration Policies, 1946-54', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 43:5 (2009), 515.

⁷⁴ Memorandum, Department of Immigration, 19 August 1947, Masel, Alec – Report on Activities in Shanghai, 1947-1950, 1949/3/4673, A434, NAA; Letter from F. A. Kearns, Aliens Control Officer, Sydney to Secretary, Department of Immigration, 24 January 1947, SS 'Hwa Lien' 20/1/47, 1947/2/574, A433, NAA.

⁷⁵ Rutland, 'Waiting Room Shanghai', 412; Report of Jordan, 4 October 1947, JDC online.

⁷⁶ 'Australian Jewry Quota for Migrants', Executive Council of Australian Jewry, *op cit*.

Still, Calwell was only prepared to offer up to 2,400 landing permits for Jewish displaced persons from either Europe or China; after that figure had been reached, the humanitarian scheme would be regarded as 'closed and completed'.⁷⁷

The first displaced persons from Shanghai arrived in Australia in March 1946, a full four months before the first shipload travelled to the United States.⁷⁸ One family member of Jewish refugees arriving from Shanghai characterised aid workers from the Australian Jewish Welfare Society (Victoria) as 'the silent service': there was little or no publicity given to this scheme.⁷⁹ Calwell seems to have been personally sympathetic to the plight of the displaced persons, and so were some politicians and newspaper editors. However, polls consistently found opposition to large-scale Jewish immigration and a 'surprising antipathy', particularly among public servants.⁸⁰ In an attempt to ward off any criticism, Calwell instituted, in July 1946, a quota of Jewish refugees on any one ship: 25 per cent. By this time, around one thousand landing permits had been issued, while only around three hundred had been able to access shipping in order to travel to Australia.⁸¹

Despite these concerns, negotiations to provide more landing permits for Shanghai Jews were ongoing. In December 1946 Calwell met with Gertrude van Tijn, a representative of the JDC;⁸² Alec Masel, President of ECAJ; and Walter Brand, of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society. Van Tijn reported that Calwell's attitude 'was, throughout [these discussions], one of great cordiality and I was deeply impressed by his humane approach and his sincere desire to alleviate the lot of the unfortunate refugees in Shanghai'.⁸³ Van Tijn did note, however, that 'evidently the "staff" in Canberra is not always too anxious to carry out the minister's wishes' and that 'the minister is extremely sensitive to what appears in the press'.⁸⁴

The main outcome of these discussions was that Calwell authorised Alec Masel to travel to Shanghai as his personal representative, in order to list potential European (Jewish and Russian) refugee emigrants for Australian resettlement. Calwell agreed to grant landing permits (issued through the Australian Consulate

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 25 July 1946.

⁷⁹ *Hebrew Standard of Australasia* (Sydney), 4 April 1946.

⁸⁰ Suzanne Rutland, 'Postwar Anti-Jewish Refugee Hysteria: A Case of Racial or Religious Bigotry?', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 27:77 (2003), 70; Andrew Markus, 'Jewish Migration to Australia 1938-49', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 7:13 (1983), 26.

⁸¹ Between 1 January 1946 and 31 January 1947, 766 Jewish refugees were resettled from Shanghai to Australia. Appendix 'C', 'Displaced Persons – Emigration from Shanghai by Countries of Destination from 1st January, 1946 to 31st January, 1947', Reports from Shanghai on Alien Immigration, *op cit*; Letter from Charles Jordan, JDC to Donald S. Gilpatric, American Consulate General, 12 November 1946, Travel – Refugees from Shanghai, 1946-1947, 366/1947, A4144, NAA.

⁸² Van Tijn was in fact the personal representative of Charles Jordan, Director of JDC Far Eastern Activities (1945-1948). Letter from Charles Jordan to H. M. Loveday, Australian Legation, Shanghai, 19 December 1946, Travel – Refugees from Shanghai, *op cit*.

⁸³ Rutland, 'Waiting Room Shanghai', 419.

⁸⁴ Letter from Gertrude van Tijn to Charles Jordan, 20 December 1946, JDC online.

in Shanghai) to all refugees verified by Masel, as long as they were young and skilled workers suitable for migration to Australia. All of these 'Masel permits' were to be organised before March 1947, when UNRRA was due to withdraw from Shanghai.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, some Russians and Russian-speaking Jews in Shanghai had also been attempting to emigrate via landing permits sponsored by relatives. While the Shanghai Russians were perhaps less inclined to move than the Jewish displaced persons, over four thousand repatriated to the Soviet Union under a general amnesty; others viewed the post-war advance of the Communist People's Liberation Army with trepidation.⁸⁶ In general, there was some confusion over how to regard the Russians in China. There were 'White' Russians, 'Red' Russians, and Russians who were not 'Red' but nonetheless carried Soviet passports. Others were stateless with no papers at all, while some had Chinese Stateless passports. Various charges of collaboration with both the Japanese and with the Soviet Union had been made. A letter sent to Calwell from a British citizen in Shanghai in early 1946 repeated common rumours, stating categorically:

Half the white population in China consists of White Russians. Among these are many dangerous elements. I have heard the view expressed that a migrant's political opinions or inclinations should not hinder his desire for emigration. This may be true of migrants from Europe, but certainly not from China. In North China the White Russians voluntarily signed a paper stating that they were at war with the Allies. Many Russians who were employed as spies for the Japanese are now doing similar work for the Chinese Communists and the Russian Soviet. I know that Russia is trying to send some of her agents as migrants to Australia.⁸⁷

Indeed, some were refused entry because their sponsors had connections to the 30 Russian fascists who had been interned during the war in Australia.⁸⁸ There were also Russians who didn't seem to be ethnic Russians: perhaps they were 'Asiatic Russians' rather than 'European Russians'.⁸⁹

In late 1946 Mr Karskoff of the Russian Central Welfare Committee approached Tasman Heyes, Secretary of the Department of Immigration, in order to sponsor 'a dozen or two dozen Russians'. He said that the Rev. A. D. Clarke in Shanghai

⁸⁵ Report from Gertrude van Tijn to Charles Jordan, 20 December 1946, JDC online.

⁸⁶ British Consulate General, 'A Brief History of the Russian Migration to Shanghai', May 1949, A434, 48/3/13904, in Thomas Poole and Eric Fried Collection, *op cit*.

⁸⁷ Letter from Freda Berents to Minister of Information, March 1946, Entry to Australia – Immigration – Allegations Against Immigrants from China, 314/1947, A4144, NAA.

⁸⁸ R Annand, Aliens Control Officer, 'Reverend V. Antonieff – Russian Orthodox Church', 18 February 1947, Russian Orthodox Church – Admission Russians, 1946-1950, 1950/3/2010, A434, NAA.

⁸⁹ Jon Stratton, 'The Colour of Jews: Jews, Race and the White Australia Policy', 62; see also Letter from James Marjoribanks, Official Secretary, Acting High Commissioner, to the Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 21 December 1951, International Relations – China – Refugees from China under the auspices of the International Refugee Organisation, 612/2/5, A462, NAA.

had informed him that Calwell 'had agreed to admit up to 1,500 Russians and that the selection of these' would be left up to him. This sounds remarkably similar to Calwell's plan with Masel and the ECAJ. Heyes, however, shut this down immediately, saying that the number 'for the start was limited to 35'. He also warned against sponsoring fascists 'who would seek to arouse ill feeling with the present Russian regime' and noted: 'what we wanted ... were young migrants who would help to develop and populate this country, and not old people who in a few years' time might become public charges'.⁹⁰

In January 1947, a ship carrying Jews and Russians from Shanghai reached Australia to a barrage of negative publicity. The passenger list of *Hwa Lien* in January 1947, from Shanghai to Sydney, was a rare exception to Calwell's 25 per cent quota. The JDC booked berths for 304 Jewish refugees (33 of whom were sponsored by Jacob Waks) and subsidised the fares of each of the other 135 passengers, including 35 'former Russians' and 54 British.⁹¹ The Department of Immigration in Canberra were only alerted to this breach of compliance from early press reports, and cabled the Australian Legation urgently.⁹² The Legation replied that it had been difficult for the JDC to find non-Jewish passengers for the ship; even Australian 'distressed seamen' were being repatriated aboard another vessel. While the JDC had been concerned about the 'possible bad effects of simultaneous arrival of a large number of refugees', the Australian Legation had 'assured them' that 'conditions leading to present ship load were understood'.⁹³ The Legation, however, had overstepped its authority and was perhaps too optimistic a patron.

Those against any form of Jewish migration had seen their chance. MP, and former ex-Premier of New South Wales, Jack Lang maligned Calwell as the 'Minister for Reffos', while 'outspoken' MP Jo Gullett warned against Australia becoming a 'dumping ground for the world's unabsorbable at the dictates of the Minister for Immigration'.⁹⁴ Newspapers were kept busy following the debate, printing columns-worth of letters for the next week or so. This all seemed to reflect a wider 'antipathy' against so-called 'Yids and refujews'.⁹⁵ At the very least, Australians were concerned that ex-servicemen and potential British migrants have access to the shipping, accommodation and jobs that seemed to be going to Jewish displaced persons. Lang declared: 'Money is talking louder than anything else. It's swearing its head off'.⁹⁶ This emphasis on the stereotypically perceived wealth of the refugees (arriving from 'rich, squalid

⁹⁰ Memorandum: 'Russian Central Welfare Committee - Admission of Russian Migrants', 4 November 1946, Russian Central Welfare Committee, 1950/3/7145, A434, NAA.

⁹¹ SS 'Hwa Lien', 20/1/1947, *op cit*.

⁹² Telegram from External Affairs to Australian Legation, 14 December 1946, Travel - Refugees from Shanghai, *op cit*.

⁹³ Telegram from the Australian Legation to the Department of External Affairs, 20 December 1946, Travel - Refugees from Shanghai, *op cit*.

⁹⁴ *Century*, 10 January 1947, cited in Beverley Joan Hooper, 'Australian Reactions to German Persecution of the Jews and Refugee Immigration, 1933-1947', MA thesis, Australian National University, 1972, 262; *Argus*, 12 February 1947.

⁹⁵ Markus, 'Jewish Migration to Australia 1938-49', 26.

⁹⁶ *Smith's Weekly*, 19 January 1946.

Shanghai')⁹⁷ meant that luggage left on the *Hwa Lien* while refugees found accommodation was 'jimmied open' and any valuables stolen.⁹⁸

The *Bulletin* characterised 'Mr Calwell' as the 'Minister for No Information on Immigration' and wondered whether the Jewish refugees had been 'footloose' (ie, not interned) under the Japanese: perhaps they had been Japanese collaborators.⁹⁹ Indeed, the press reported that 'Commonwealth officers' alleged that there were two criminal syndicates facilitating Jewish immigration, 'one Communist-controlled, the other dominated by White Russians'. The Jewish refugees were communists as well as capitalists, and possibly potential terrorists (this last allegation referred to the situation in Palestine). They were also now conflated with the White Russians: they were criminals, Japanese collaborators, and Soviet spies.¹⁰⁰ One editorial suspected that 'the Minister may have allowed his sympathy to override his judgment'.¹⁰¹

While publicly defending the passengers, Calwell disavowed Masel and acted quickly to prevent future complaints.¹⁰² Ten days after the landing of the *Hwa Lien* he reinstated standard immigration criteria for Jewish refugees and admitted that the government had 'gone as far as it can reasonably be expected to go for the present in granting landing permits to people of these classes on purely humanitarian grounds'.¹⁰³ In future, a migrant's 'ability to contribute to Australia's economic development' would be key'.¹⁰⁴

Shanghai Reports: Fuhrman, Taylor, Haylen

Local reactions were soon followed by increasingly negative reports coming from Australian officials in Shanghai. In March 1947 Australian officer H. M. Loveday at the Australian Legation had reported that the Russian community in China was made up of 'many able-bodied men who have had actual experience of farming work and who, if given the opportunity, would genuinely desire to do farming work' but indigence was a problem: unfortunately, many among these would require financial assistance either to ship down to Australia or to get established there. While supporting the resettlement of the Jewish refugees, Loveday resented the 'good deal of work' involved in interviewing and conducting health and security checks for potentially thousands of applicants. This process was made worse by language difficulties, where 'many applicants either speak only German or Russian and much time is wasted in getting them to understand even the simplest of instructions'.¹⁰⁵ Loveday also complained

⁹⁷ *News* (Adelaide), 27 April 1949.

⁹⁸ SV, interview by author, 25 July 2018.

⁹⁹ *Bulletin*, 8 January 1947.

¹⁰⁰ *Sun* (Sydney), 21 January 1947; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 January 1947; Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 93.

¹⁰¹ *Sun* (Sydney), 22 January 1947.

¹⁰² Letter from T. H. E. Heyes to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, February 1947, Masel, Alec, *op cit*.

¹⁰³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 January 1947; Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 95.

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Calwell to S. Symonds, President, ECAJ, 17 May 1947, Executive Council of Australian Jewry, *op cit*.

¹⁰⁵ Report: Emigration from China to Australia, by M. Loveday, Third Secretary, 20 March 1947, Reports from Shanghai on Alien Immigration, *op cit*.

about Calwell's envoy Masel, who had arrived in February 1947 'practically without warning'.¹⁰⁶ Masel and his wife interviewed 2,200 potential migrants, with cooperation from both JDC and the Russian Emigrants' Association, and submitted a list of 1,865 recommended applicants to Calwell, made up predominantly of Jewish displaced persons, but also including some Russians and Russian-speaking Jews.¹⁰⁷ Leslie Haylen later noted that:

Masel did a great mischief up here at Shanghai. He blew into that city as your direct representative and was actually announced in the press as the 'New Messiah'. I told them here that this was extremely bad form. At the very best Masel could only be the new 'John the Baptist' who came to tell of the 'New Messiah' who was *Calwell of Canberra*.¹⁰⁸

Major-General Fuhrman, the new Australian Consul General in Shanghai, arrived in July 1947; one of his responsibilities was to oversee issues of migration. In his initial report, based mostly on conversations with various British officials, Fuhrman described Shanghai as the 'world's cesspool of vice and infamy' and the 'Mecca of the unwanted – the place to which the world's human flotsam and jetsam have helplessly and sometimes hopefully drifted'. The various refugee populations in Shanghai existed on 'intrigue, sharp practice, crime, espionage and acting as agents provocateur for foreign governments'. Their integrity was not to be trusted: 'They are and must continue to remain suspect'. While acknowledging the humanitarian aspect of relieving 'the world's unwanted', Fuhrman recommended that migration from Shanghai should cease; the refugees were 'unknown quantities, of obscure origin, and intention, with records which cannot be checked'. As for 'citizens of the USSR domiciled in Shanghai', Fuhrman stated: 'in my opinion and from the angle of security in Australia, [they] are potentially dangerous'; the Russian Emigrants Association had 'a most unsavoury reputation' and had been 'hand-in-glove' with the Japanese. Fuhrman admitted that the Russians not being interned by the Japanese during the war was a major factor in his distaste for them as a group; he also referenced their perceived immorality by recommending that any Russian migrating to Australia be tested for syphilis.¹⁰⁹

In August 1947 migration officer Athol Taylor was sent to Shanghai to facilitate Masel's immigration scheme. In a twenty-two-page report confirming Fuhrman's sentiments 'in every detail', Taylor echoed British antipathy, stating that as neither the Russians or the Jewish refugees had been interned during the war (although of course the European Jews had been confined to a ghetto), they must all 'be regarded as Japanese collaborators' who are 'without a doubt a human flotsam and jetsam', compelled to resort to crime during the war to make a living, and he referenced stories about prostitution, money rackets, and

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Report by Alec Masel, 1 May 1947, Masel, Alec, *op cit*; Cablegram from Taylor to Heyes, 15 September 1947, Reports from Shanghai on Alien Immigration, *op cit*.

¹⁰⁸ Report by Leslie Haylen, August 1948, Non-British European Migration from China, *op cit*.

¹⁰⁹ Memorandum from O. C. W. Fuhrman, Consul-General, to the Secretary, Department of Immigration: Migration to Australia Ex-Shanghai, 22 July 1947, Non-British European Migration from China, *op cit*.

corruption. He reported that an Australian employed by UNRRA alleged that 'most of the wealth held by [the Jewish refugees] is derived from rackets and considered that these people have passed on their habits to the Russians'. A British priest working amongst the Russians informed Taylor that:

From a migration point of view 80% could be discounted immediately and that of the remaining 20% possibly 10% would be found to be suitable after careful investigation, which he considered essential ... Altogether he could not recommend more than 50 families and that he would not fully trust one Russian.¹¹⁰

Taylor further noted that Masel's list included Russians supplied by the 'suspect' Russian Emigrants Association. Lumping the Jewish refugees in with the Russians, Taylor concluded:

After careful consideration of the facts presented to me I consider I have no alternative but to recommend complete cessation of migration from here to Australia, so far as the Russian and European refugee classes are concerned, and I do this most strongly. Any further concession granted to them will to my mind render a great disservice to this country.¹¹¹

As soon as the Secretary of the Department of Immigration, Tasman Heyes, received this report, he instructed the issuing of landing permits and visas to cease.¹¹²

Charles Jordan, Director of JDC Far Eastern Activities, attempted to combat what he saw as Fuhrman and Taylor's 'completely and utterly unreasonable attitude' in recommending the 'immediate suspension of [the] migration of aliens from China'.¹¹³ In a panicked telegram to Calwell, Jordan argued that there needn't be a 'mass migration', that Australia could 'select the most useful and morally and politically most reliable persons'.¹¹⁴ After meeting with Jordan, and receiving a further negative report from Taylor,¹¹⁵ a compromise was reached. In October 1947 Calwell approved the resumption of landing permits for an interim quota of only three hundred Jewish refugees spread over a period of twelve months (to 30 June 1948), subject to security checks.¹¹⁶ The Jewish displaced persons were also closely vetted as to age and capital, as well as the relationship with their sponsor.¹¹⁷ The migration of Russians was suspended 'except in special cases'

¹¹⁰ L A Taylor, 'Report on Shanghai', September 1947, Department of Immigration, 16 September 1947, Reports from Shanghai on Alien Immigration, *op cit*.

¹¹¹ *ibid*.

¹¹² Rutland, 'Waiting Room Shanghai', 424.

¹¹³ Telegram from Jordan to Calwell, October 1947, and L A Taylor, 'Report on Shanghai', September 1947, Reports from Shanghai on Alien Immigration, *op cit*;

¹¹⁴ Telegram from Jordan to Calwell, October 1947, *ibid*.

¹¹⁵ Taylor report, 17 October 1947, Reports from Shanghai on Alien Immigration, *ibid*.

¹¹⁶ Memorandum: Immigration into Australia of Aliens resident in China, Non-British European Migration from China, *op cit*.

¹¹⁷ Shanghai Applications – Submissions to Minister, 1947-1948, 1949/3/61, A434, NAA.

(usually involving sponsorship by close family members): 66 landing permits were issued to Russians between May and December 1947.¹¹⁸

The next year, in 1948, Leslie Haylen reviewed the situation of potential European migrants in Shanghai. Haylen had previously advised Calwell that 'the responsibility for selection ... should not be delegated' to interested parties such as Masel.¹¹⁹ In Shanghai, he spoke to Colonel A. G. Clarke, Australia's Military Attache in Nanking, who argued that:

The American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee will give any Jewish refugee a clean record as their main object is to get as many of these refugees out of China as possible. They are not particular as to what country the refugees go or how they are likely to behave in that country so long as they are no longer a financial drain on American Jewry.¹²⁰

Clarke also advised that the White Russians 'were of much the same calibre as the Jewish refugees', and recommended a freeze on migration. Haylen reported that 'nobody' in Shanghai liked the refugees, and that Fuhrman 'hates the Russians, the refugees and the Chinese with a fine indiscriminate fury'. Mr Gill, the British Security Officer, further advised that the refugees in Shanghai 'arrived here by devious means': 'The Jews on his evidence are bad. A big percentage are in the black-market, money riggers, brothel owners and drug runners.' Haylen himself was favourably impressed by the young Russians he met, but was concerned to highlight the potential of the 'Red passport' for admitting Soviet agents into the country in the guise of immigrants. His other main concern was that the cohort was 'too old and too ill to be of much use'. He also seemed to conflate the refugees with the antipathy held by some Australian government officials towards UNRRA in China, which was accused of wasting Australian aid money. As far as the various refugee organisations were concerned, Haylen said: 'I'm sure the *security* angle doesn't keep them up at night'. He concluded that 'Australia has very little to gain from Shanghai migration'.¹²¹

Future Schemes: Anti-Semitic, Anti-Russian

Masel later described Calwell as 'the staunchest friend that the Jewish community in Australia has ever had'.¹²² Jordan, more pragmatically, noted: 'While the Minister may be a perfectly wonderful man, his ideas about

¹¹⁸ Memorandum: Immigration into Australia of Aliens resident in China, Non-British European Migration from China, *op cit*; Memorandum, B. K. Lawrey, 2 December 1947, Shanghai Applications, *op cit*.

¹¹⁹ Letter from Haylen to Calwell, 2 June 1947, Masel, Alec, *op cit*.

¹²⁰ Letter from Colonel A. G. Clarke, Military Attache Nanking, to Colonel C. G. Spry, Director of Military Intelligence, 23 August 1948, Non-British European Migration from China, *op cit*.

¹²¹ Report by Mr Leslie Haylen, MRH, Leader of the Parliamentary Delegation to Japan on his Visit to Shanghai where he undertook a Mission for the Minister for Immigration, 22 August 1948, Non-British European Migration from China, *op cit*; see also China - (1) USA, Aid (2) UNRRA in China, 58/A/6, CP529/1, NAA.

¹²² Blakeney, 'Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-1948', 308.

immigration are not very much liked by a large number of people in Australia'.¹²³ Calwell had learned his lesson. Before the *Hwa Lien*, he had been proactive when it came to complaining about anti-Semitic media.¹²⁴ However, now that Calwell had started to really think about how to quickly 'populate [or perish]' post-war Australia, he realised that he needed the anti-Semitic (and increasingly anti-Russian) press on his side. By March 1947, two months after the arrival of the *Hwa Lien*, a Gallop poll reported that 58 per cent of respondents were against the resettlement of Jewish refugees.¹²⁵ Perhaps Calwell felt that he had very little choice but to rely on the advice of his officers, particularly as Fuhrman was on the ground, issuing (or rejecting) visa applications and organising security and health checks in the most obstructive way possible.¹²⁶ Jordan noted that the Australian government did 'not wish to burden itself further by fighting reaction around this pretty extraneous sort of problem of Jewish immigration'.¹²⁷ In other words, the government, and particularly Calwell, was 'determined to maintain a positive attitude towards Jewish immigration, but they will not allow it to overshadow essential immigration'.¹²⁸

In July 1947 Calwell had entered into a new mass migration scheme, resettling displaced persons from Europe.¹²⁹ He later explained that he was impressed by the 'quasi-military discipline' of the displaced persons camps housing people from countries bordering the Baltic Sea – Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians:

I remember seeing in one camp the photographs and names of inmates, together with a doctor's certificate, indicating that the persons concerned were suffering from venereal disease. The camps demanded a high code of moral rectitude.¹³⁰

Besides containing a 'choice sample' of potential migrants, the agreement with the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) meant that Calwell could stipulate almost any selection criteria.¹³¹ Explicit instructions were sent at various times to immigration officers (including Athol Taylor) in the European camps to reject or restrict Jewish applicants. Calwell had told the JDC in 1947 that once non-Jewish displaced persons started coming to Australia, 'the pressure stemming from anti-Jewish sources would be relieved'.¹³² However, out of the one hundred and

¹²³ Rutland, 'Research in Transnational Archives', 114.

¹²⁴ Letter from Calwell to the Chairman of the ABC, 20 December 1946, Executive Council of Jewry, *op cit*.

¹²⁵ Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 94.

¹²⁶ Rutland, 'Waiting Room Shanghai', 428.

¹²⁷ Report of Charles Jordan, 4 October 1947, JDC online.

¹²⁸ *ibid*.

¹²⁹ See Jayne Persian, *Beautiful Balts: From Displaced Persons to New Australians* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2017).

¹³⁰ Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not*, 103.

¹³¹ Jayne Persian, 'Chifley Liked Them Blond': DP Immigrants for Australia', *History Australia*, 12:2 (2015), 89.

¹³² Report from Irwin Rosen, 'Meeting with Mr Arthur Calwell, Australian Minister of Immigration', 16 July 1947, JDC online.

seventy thousand European displaced persons who were resettled in Australia under this scheme, only five hundred were Jewish.¹³³

Upon receiving urgent queries from the International Refugee Organisation with regard to taking more migrants from Shanghai, Calwell advised his Prime Minister, Ben Chifley:

In view of our existing commitments, in particular our agreement to receive 100,000 DPs from Europe within the next 18 months and the scarcity of accommodation, we are in the position to make only a small contribution to the solution of this problem, and we will be unable to accept the vast majority of these people from China.¹³⁴

The European displaced persons were seen to be less risky migrants. Not only were they young, fit and racially acceptable, they were not tainted by the 'Chinese Babylon' of Shanghai.¹³⁵

6,350 words; 8580 all inclusive

¹³³ Rutland, 'Subtle Exclusions', 56-57.

¹³⁴ 'Suggested reply to Cablegram', undated, Evacuation of White Russian Jews and other Refugees from China, Part 1, A445, 235/3/7, NAA.

¹³⁵ Pavel Muratov for *Vozrozhdenie* (Paris), *Navstrechy solntsu* (Shanghai), February 1934, Katya Knyazeva's Scrapbook: Shanghai History and Architecture, <https://avezink.livejournal.com/26762.html>.