During the 1930s, with persecution of European Jews on the rise, several international resettlement schemes proposed the purchase of tracts of land in various countries around the globe to provide safe havens for Jewish refugees.

In May 1939, the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonists dispatched Isaac Steinberg (1888-1957) to investigate the feasibility of purchasing 7 million acres in far Northwestern Australia on which to settle 75,000 Jewish refugees. Known as the Kimberely Scheme, it was the intention of this project that Jewish settlers would develop the pastoral and agricultural industries of the sparsely populated region.

You can read more about the proposed Kimberely Scheme in this brochure printed in Sydney for the Freeland League for Jewish Territorialisation in about 1940.

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A Jewish settlement in Australia / by S. Stedman.
A Jewish Settlement in Australia

By S. STEDMAN (Sydney)

On behalf of the Friends of a Jewish Settlement in Kimberley

DOES AUSTRALIA NEED MORE POPULATION?

This is the one question upon which there is no division of opinion. People of all classes and of all political parties agree that this Commonwealth must have a steady and ever-widening stream of immigrants and settlers entering Australia.

To expand her industries, to increase her home market, to develop her agriculture; in a word, to take her rightful place among the nations of the world, and particularly in the Pacific, Australia must fill her empty spaces. In order to grow strong, great and prosperous, this Commonwealth needs more people. But Australia cannot depend upon her natural increase to populate this vast country. To substantiate this statement we quote from the speeches of Australian statesmen:

On the 28th March, 1938, the then Prime Minister, the late Mr. Lyons, stated: "In 1927 our population was increasing at the rate of 125 thousand per year; 80 thousand from natural increase, 45 thousand from migration. In 1938, the natural increase fell to 51 thousand and migration to under 10 thousand."

Mr. B. S. B. Stevens, in his newly published book, "Planning for War and Peace," writes:—"At present our net reproduction is falling, and it has been falling for some time. That is to say, the excess of births over deaths is threatening shortly to become an excess of deaths over births. "If this process continues, three things will happen. The first is that our population, which is now 6,900,000, will never reach 7,500,000. The second is that within a comparatively few years—perhaps only a generation hence—our population will actually cease to grow at all, and then inexorably commence to decline. The third is that within the lifetime of babies now being born, our population will have dwindled to 5,500,000."
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Map showing the position of the area selected for settlement.

Statistics published on 27th February of this year show that it had taken only seven years to increase the five million people to six, whereas it has taken 15 years to add another million and bring the population to its present level of seven millions. Commenting upon these figures, Senator Poll said:

"I hope and anticipate that, at the conclusion of the War, there will be a large influx of British migrants. We must look to them first to build up our population, but if sufficient people from Britain are not available, we must seek good type immigrants from other countries."

And Mr. W. M. Hughes warned:—"The statistician's figures are, in effect, a closing of the doors of hope and progress."

Speaking before members of the Royal Empire Society on 6th March, 1918, Mr. Spender, Federal Treasurer, stated:—"We must face the fact that the Empire itself cannot supply the people we need. They will have to be sought—in quantity—elsewhere."

That this fact is recognised by people in authority has been proved by the endeavours made by successive Governments to bring people from other lands. It is but a natural desire to obtain, if possible, new settlers of British stock. But experience has shown that the numbers willing to come were insufficient, that the Englishman is not very anxious to leave his native land and migrate overseas. Whether greater numbers of Britons would be willing to come here after the war is, to say the least, doubtful.

From the Australian Institute of International Affairs we learn that, for the five years ended 1938, a time of comparative prosperity, Australia lost by emigration, 3389 persons of British birth.

As to the British migrant, official opinion has presumably run rather ahead of public opinion in realising that Australia cannot be too "choosy" in selecting migrants for assistance. "She must take not the best, but the best available." The following view was expressed by Mr. Malcolm Mc

Donald, British Colonial Secretary:

"The British Government has made up its mind that the Common
wealth must, if it wants migrants in large numbers, seek them outside Britain."

Apart from all that, there must exist very serious causes to compel large numbers of people to forsake the country of their birth, and to emigrate to distant lands. Religious and political persecution is one of the main reasons, utter lack of opportunities to succeed is another. Overpopulation and overcrowding may be cited as yet another reason, and the general conditions of the country must be so bad as to make life difficult if not entirely unbearable. Not one of these reasons can be found in England, and therefore mass migration from England is unlikely.

The Australian Government has realised this. As proof of it we may mention the negotiation of our Ministers with the Dutch, Scandinavian and Swiss Governments, which had taken place just before the outbreak of the War.
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A JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

Whether the above-mentioned countries could supply Australia with the much-needed migrants is not for us to say, but the fact remains that our Government, in its natural concern for Australia, has approached certain countries and invited them to send their people to settle here.

Should large-scale migration, either from Holland or from any other country, take place, one wonders how these newcomers are going to be settled on the land in Australia.

Are they to be allowed to buy land and pay for it, or would it be Crown land given them free? Are they to occupy large tracts of vacant country and settle in groups, or will it be a simple process of infiltration among the Australian farmers?

This latter form of migration seems to be favoured by the Graziers’ Association of New South Wales. A resolution carried by their conference protested against the formation of any colony of aliens in Australia, but strongly favoured the absorption of good immigrants in the community. Put into plain language, the resolution means that the Graziers are in favour of unorganised, haphazard immigration, where the newcomers are forced to compete with local people for the jobs available, antagonise the Australian workers or shopkeepers, spend their money in the difficult task of adapting themselves to local conditions, and, in the end, embittered and disillusioned, regret their coming here. But, is that really their intention?

We do not for one moment believe that this would be the policy of any Government really desirous of seeing large-scale migration into Australia. Unplanned migration is unscientific and harmful. The whole idea of bringing migrants is to settle uninhabited or thinly-populated districts, and that leaves the only reasonable form of settlement—group settlement.

That from the economic standpoint this form of settlement is the most convenient and sound, all must acknowledge. If these new arrivals are to feel happy on the land, and this is essential for the success of the settlement, there must be full and complete understanding, co-operation and a community of interests among the settlers. These conditions would naturally prevail in a community of the same type.

THE JEWISH REFUGEES IN EUROPE

In its endeavours to obtain suitable immigrants, Australia has gone far and wide, and so far with no great success. Yet there is in existence to-day a vast reservoir of human material from which Australia can pick and choose what she requires. Large masses of homeless Jews are searching for a haven of refuge, a land which would give them the opportunity to settle on the soil, build their homes, and to labour in peace for the glory and prosperity of their adopted country.

It is not necessary to recapitulate the sufferings of the Jews in present-day Europe. Robbed of all their possessions and deprived of the means of earning a livelihood, the Jewish masses find themselves in a position so tragic and hopeless that, unless countries could be found to
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admit them, they must perish. As long as Nazism, with its inhuman treatment of minorities, holds sway in Central and Eastern Europe, there will be no room for the Jews, and the hatred caused by propaganda must persist long after the War.

In these circumstances, the Jews must look for new homes in countries which still possess empty spaces, in countries with slowly increasing population and with immense chances of expansion. AUSTRALIA IS ONE OF THESE COUNTRIES.

The Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation, whose Secretary, Dr. Steinberg, is at present in Australia, proposes to settle Jews in the Kimberley districts (W.A.). This area of approximately seven million acres, is practically uninhabited and with every prospect of remaining so for many years to come.

The Freeland League proposes to settle the Jews there at its own expense and to develop the land at no cost to Australia.

All expert investigation, the building of homes, water storage and irrigation, road construction, etc., will be carried out by the League and paid for by people who have sufficient faith in the project. Australia has an opportunity to populate a large tract of empty land without any expenditure of money. Quite apart from any humanitarian considerations, it is a good business proposition, and the Freeland League presents its case from this angle as it cannot expect any country to be guided in such matters by sentiment only. The human material from which Australia can select her needs consists of approximately from four to five million souls. Like all large groups of people, this Jewish group comprises men and women of every walk of life. There are amongst them, men of science and men of letters, professional men, and men who controlled large industries; agricultural, tradesmen and common labourers.

These people have lived in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland for a thousand years and more, and before the rise of Hitler with his mediaeval brutality, they gave these countries of their best.

How many people knew that Einstein, Ehrlich, Wassermann, Heine and thousands of others who contributed so much to the progress and cultural life of Germany were Jews? These people were content to let their country draw the benefit and lustre of their discoveries and creations. And this is true of all Jews in all lands.

The Jew is no better nor worse than his Christian neighbours. The same Mother Earth feeds them, the same social and political conditions mould their characters. They suffer from the same ills of modern society and, in common with the rest of mankind, look forward to a happier future.

A few years ago the average Australian citizen did not bother his head over much about the Jews. The few thousands of them who lived in this country presented no special problem. They lived and worked, shared in Australian prosperity and suffered through the years of depression. They contributed their full quota of soldiers during the war, and added their labours to the upbuilding of this country. All this they did
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as Australian citizens, and even those who occupied prominent positions in the life of the Commonwealth were first and foremost Australians; their religious beliefs were a private matter and had nothing to do with their actions as citizens. As far as Australia is concerned, the position has not changed. The few thousand Jews who entered the country during the past two to three years have in no way created a Jewish problem and are not likely to create one in the future, yet the Jew looms large in the eyes of the Australian people, and no wonder! Hardly a day passes without some news or comment appearing in the newspapers and magazines. A flood of propaganda has been pouring into every country from the anti-Semitic Germany.

In the present War, apart from the Jews who serve in the British Army and in the expeditionary forces of the Dominions, 120,000 Jews have enlisted in Palestine, including Women's Auxiliaries; 120,000 out of a population of 450,000! Yet there are two widely held prejudices which require some explanation or answer. The first is that all Jews are rich. The second is that Jews do not like manual labour. It would take up too much space to quote figures in rebuttal of this false idea, but should anyone wish to study the question thoroughly, we could recommend a book by Jacob Lestschinsky, “Das Jüdische Volk im neuen Europa.”

Here we can only quote a few salient facts. Soviet Russia, with a Jewish population of about three millions, contains no rich Jews. Every Jew there is a proletarian. Poland's three and a quarter million Jews are, on a percentage basis, probably the poorest people in the world. As far back as 1934, in the cities of Vilna and Lemberg, the number of Jews who were unable even to purchase the unleavened bread for the Passover, comprised 60 per cent. of the Jewish population. In Lodz in the year 1931, 15,458 families, consisting of 69,696 souls, depended upon Jewish charitable institutions for their sustenance. Now, for the present at least, Poland is no more and the plight of the Jews under the Nazis is beyond description.

Six hundred thousand Jews of Germany, close on 200,000 in Czecho-Slovakia, Austria's 135,000, are now helpless wanderers over the face of the earth. Mussolini, too, following in the footsteps of his erstwhile partner, had confiscated the property of Italian Jews, thus transforming them into proletarians. The million Jews in Roumania, of whom many thousands have recently been deprived of their citizenship, live in daily fear of new, oppressive laws, and the majority of them are by no means rich. One must also mention Hungary, where the Jews are not permitted to enjoy complete freedom, and where the vast majority of the Jews are poor. Even in America, where one finds millions of Jews, one never hears of Jewish millionaires. Morgan, Rockefeller, Ford, Carnegie, Du Pont, household words these, but no Jewish name appears amongst them. In "Jews without Money," by Michael Gold, one reads of a million poor Jews living in one city! What about the other cities?

The East End of London is not populated by rich Jews, and there are many thousands of them. It may be of interest to quote the Australian
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A JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

figures as shown in the Census Returns of 1933. These figures represent the breadwinners among the Jews and there were 12,379 of them.

No income ........................................ 1,165
Under £52 ........................................... 2,111
£52-£103 ........................................... 2,028
£104-£155 ........................................... 1,609
£156-£207 ........................................... 1,132
£208-£259 ........................................... 994
£260 and over ........................................ 2,944
Not Stated ........................................... 342

Total ........................................... 12,379

According to these figures, 66 per cent. earn less than £3 per week, and 65 per cent. less than £4 per week (from “Australia and the Jews,” by L. P. Fox, Melbourne, September, 1939).

Apparently to the question, “Are all Jews rich?” can be given but one answer: NO. We may repeat that on a percentage basis they may be the poorest people. Apart from that, there are probably two million Jewish workers in America who have only their weekly earnings to rely upon—the only money between them and starvation.

ARE JEWS WORKING PEOPLE?

The second widely-held opinion is “that the Jew does not like manual labour.” One is tempted to remark that nobody really likes it, but that the Jew will not shrink from it when it is necessary. The Jews, as a people, were originally purely agricultural. Tilling the soil and raising sheep were their national occupations. It was only after the loss of their country that their hosts compelled them to change their mode of life. Uncertain of their daily existence, depending entirely upon the whim of some petty King or Lord, living in ever-present fear of instant expulsion, it was always easier to carry one’s gold or precious stones about one’s person. Property could be confiscated, as Hitler proved in our own time, goods and chattels were too bulky and land was of no use. Besides, they were not permitted to own land. From country to country, they wandered throughout the centuries. They suffered the horrors of the inquisition in Spain, pogroms in Germany, massacres in Russia; they died by the thousands and the tens of thousands, yet always and ever they cried: “Next year in Jerusalem!”

This faith and hope of a speedy return to the “Land” of their fathers gave them strength to endure.

It was the great ideal to settle once again on their own land that sustained them. The beautiful vision of once more to plough the Holy Soil, to inhale the fragrance of newly upturned earth, to plant the grape vines and to gather in the harvest, was the guiding star in a black firmament.
A JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

And when after the last war Great Britain promised the Jews a National Home in Palestine, their joy knew no bounds. “Back to the Land!” shouted the millions of land-hungry Jews. “Back to the plough and the simple life!” And back they went. As far as the Palestine Administration allowed, a stream of Jews flowed into Palestine. Doctors, lawyers, university students, tradesmen, labourers and men of no definite occupations, young and old, taking their women and children, they went to the Land. They toiled as men ever toiled before. They drained malaria-infested swamps, risked their lives, died and conquered. Barren rocks were transformed into groves of golden oranges, land which lay waste for two thousand years blossomed forth and gave crops of grapes and other fruit. The Jew came Home, but there were no homes. So he built cities and villages and on the hot sands of Palestine he built a beautiful city. Tel-Aviv stands to-day as a monument to Jewish labour. Unfortunately the gates of Palestine were never opened sufficiently wide to admit even a fraction of the numbers that wished to go there. Now the gates are almost completely shut. Once again the would-be labourer is compelled to remain in the cities of the world, engage in trade and commerce, and be called an exploiter of labour who does not like manual work.

As far back as 1804, Alexander I of Russia offered the Jews the possibilities of agricultural life in South Russia. By 1807, the first four colonies were founded with a population of 500 families. Years of oppression and of persecution could not destroy the firmly-rooted Jewish colonies in Kherson and Yekaterinolov. In 1927 there existed 48 colonies, with 7,892 farms and the population was 35,503. Since the Revolution, when the Jews of Russia obtained the rights to settle on the land, several Jewish settlements were established in the Crimea. There are about six thousand settlers in the district of Freidorf. Jewish land settlement on a large scale was intended in the East-Siberian province of Biro-Bidjan. Altogether, according to figures quoted in the Jewish Encyclopaedia, there are about 250,000 Jews in Russia engaged in agriculture. These people, who were not permitted to own land before, have made a success of their farms, and they are held up as models of efficiency.

There are about 5000 Jewish farmer families in the Argentine. This settlement owes its existence to Baron Maurice de Hirsch. It was he who founded the Jewish Colonisation Association, for the purpose of settling Russian Jews on the land in the Argentine. Owing to the fact that the fund established by him was under the administration as a philanthropic institution and the directors were not responsible to anybody in particular, the land settlement did not prove the success it should have been. Yet 31,500 Jews are engaged in farming there, and the Jewish town of Mosesville stands as a witness to their enterprise and labour.

There is also a large Jewish community of farmers in Bessarabia. After the Great War, the land-owners, instead of the thousands of hectares which they formerly owned, received only 150 hectares, while the remainder of the land was distributed among the land-workers. Before the War, the Jews possessed in all about 12,000 acres of land apart from that held on lease, which amounted to about 20,000 acres. At the present time, 25,000 hectares or over 60,000 acres are in Jewish hands, while a further 50,000 acres are held on lease. All this land is worked by Jews.
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To summarise, all the following figures give an approximate idea of Jewish land-workers to-day, apart from Palestine:

1. Soviet Russia ................ 250,000
2. Poland ........................ 134,000
3. U.S.A. ......................... 100,000
4. Bessarabia ..................... 40,000
5. Argentina ..................... 31,500
6. Hungary ....................... 13,600
7. Lithuania ...................... 6,000
8. Other countries ................ 8,000

Total ............................ 582,500

This process continues and gathers momentum. Wherever possible Jews go on the land. Training centres exist in many countries. In Lithuania, Poland, England, and even in Germany, the Jews are training their youth in agriculture and artisanship. From these people would come the Kimberley settlers.

Another question which must be answered is: Will the Jewish settler assimilate and become a good Australian? This question has already been partly answered. The Jew, when he arrives in a new land, does not owe any allegiance to the country which expelled him. The Jew coming to Australia and building his home here has no interests outside Australia. The country of his adoption will become his country and the country of his children. As the Jew has proved throughout history, he has been loyal and has sacrificed even his life for countries which ill-treated him.

Given freedom to live and to work, Australia would have no more loyal citizen than the Jew. Will he assimilate? In answer to this question we can only point to the Jews in every land and say: Do these people, with the exception of their religion and traditions, differ from their fellow-citizens? Is Hore-Belisha not a good Englishman because he is a Jew? Was not Sir John Monash a good Australian?

Yet we find that one more point must be explained, one more fear, if possible, allayed. Will the Jewish settlers remain on the land, or will they drift into the cities? An important point this, requiring careful consideration.

In the first place, we wish to say that the "Freeland League" will take great care in the selection of people to put on the land. This will not be a haphazard emigration; every man and woman sent to Australia will have to be of a certain standard. The League treats the matter of Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys as an ideal, a founding of a permanent home in which the people would find not only a means to satisfy their hunger, but also a spiritual, cultural home. To build that home for homeless suffering Jews is a holy task, and every settler who would participate in that task would be working for an ideal. The same ideal inspires the Jews in the rebuilding of Palestine.
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In 1888, there were 25 Jewish settlements in Palestine with a population of 4,500 people. In 1914 the number of settlements rose to 55 and the number of settlers to 11,000, which was 11 per cent. of the total Jewish population. By 1937 the number of settlements increased to 222, the number of settlers to 99,901, and the percentage of population 20 per cent. In spite of the fact that large cities like Haifa and Tel-Aviv grew up and offered all amenities of city life, the people continued to settle on the land; as fast as land could be obtained it was occupied by settlers. This process continues to-day, and the number of people eager and anxious to go on the land is determined only by the land available. Throughout the world, the trend of population is from the country to the city. In Palestine the reverse is taking place. During the period of prosperity from 1933 to 1936, wages in the cities of Palestine were high and there was a scarcity of labour, but very few people left the villages. They preferred to live within the narrow limits of their inadequate income even in those years of prosperity. It would probably be safe to say that 90 per cent. of those who settle on the soil become deeply and permanently attached to it.

So the 10 per cent. who would perhaps drift to the cities from the Kimberleys would, no doubt, be replaced by Australian Jews who would settle in the Kimberleys. The big city in Australia offers very little inducement to the stranger. The new arrival finds it hard to fit into the complex business life of the community. The fierce competition ruling in the large cities, the over-abundance of every sort of shop and manufacture, makes it almost impossible for the foreigner to gain a footing. For every one that succeeds, nine go to the wall. This life of worry, anxiety and uncertainty has been the Jew's lot too long. He requires a rest from all that, a change and a peaceful life. A life of useful work, of contact with the soil from which to draw energy and inspiration. A place where he could build a home on land he could call his own. But this does not mean political segregation or the creating of a colony within Australia.

The Kimberley settlement is intended to be an integral part of Australia and the inhabitants to become Australian citizens as soon as the law permits. With Australian administration and Australian schools, with English as the official language, the settlement, after a while, would in no way differ from any other Australian settlement.

As already mentioned, the Jewish settler would owe no allegiance to any other country and have no interests outside Australia. Here he would live, adapting himself to local conditions, study the country, the language and the people, and in a few years become part and parcel of Australia.

THE KIMBERLEY COUNTRY.

Now a few words about the district which the Freeland League has selected for the proposed settlement—East Kimberley. No full and complete data is available as the country is little-known and was never made a subject of thorough investigation.

The area selected for settlement consists of about seven million acres, two million of which are within the boundaries of W.A. and the rest in Northern Territory. It is within 50 miles east of Wyndham, and is at present very sparsely populated.
A Jewish settlement in Australia / by S. Stedman.

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The first question usually asked when speaking of Kimberley is that of the climate. Mr. George F. Melville, M.Sc., who has visited the country in company with Dr. J. Steinberg, writes as follows in “The West Australian,” 22nd July, 1939: “To many, the climate is a first objection. Actually the period of discomfort is confined to the two or three months of rains during which time humidity is associated with high temperatures. For this season, the climate is tropical, but during the remainder of the year, the inhabitants enjoy a typical Mediterranean summer — warm days, cloudless skies and cool nights.”

Mr. R. H. Underwood, formerly M.L.A. for Pilbara (W.A.), refers to the climate, in the same paper on 5th August, 1939: “Much has been stated about the weather in the North generally. I can most positively assert that the weather we have suffered during the last two or three months here in Perth has been more uncomfortable than any inflicted upon me in the North at any time in my residence there. I have been closely associated with prospectors and others who have been in the North for 40 and even 50 years; they seem to live quite satisfactorily. I believe (and I am certainly not alone in holding that belief) that the climate of Northern Australia is the healthiest in Australia.”

The next important question is that of water. In this connection we may point out that two rivers, the Ord and Victoria, traverse the land, and Mr. Arthur Jose, in his book “Australia,” writes: “Its rivers give a fairly permanent water supply. Though navigation is uncertain and risky, small vessels can go a hundred miles up the Victoria.”

Round the coast zone, the Kimberleys district has an average rainfall of 50 inches a year. Ninety per cent. of the 26-inch average over the settlement area falls in five summer months. The monthly average in inches, taken over 33 years at Argyle, one of the cattle stations there, is:

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Most important is the reliability of the rainfall. During 54 years of kept records there was no drought in that part. Artesian wells can also be sunk, so that all possible sources of water are present, and this water would be utilised for purposes of irrigation.

At present there is practically no agriculture in existence there. Yet two types of agriculture appear possible. Mr. Melville writes this: “The growing of seasonal crops, chiefly cereals, during the rain period and perennial and dry season crops under irrigation are possible. Over extensive areas of country the old basalt lava flows have produced a heavy ‘black’ soil of undoubted fertility, suited to such crops as rice, maize, cotton, coffee, etc., to mention but a few.”

The Freeland League proposes, if the necessary permission is given, to send a special investigation committee consisting of scientists to carry out a thorough survey of the land and its possibilities. Nothing will be done without expert advice, nothing that would jeopardise the success of the scheme.

It is also necessary to mention that the Freeland settlers would not devote themselves entirely to agriculture. This is not the intention. Where there is an agricultural or large pastoral centre, there is naturally room
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A JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

for secondary industries. The beef and mutton, skins and hides; the products of the garden and the orchard would supply the raw material for the factory, and the workers and farmers would create a home market for the finished article. It is too early to speak of other markets, for years would pass before the settlement could satisfy its own needs.

So we have shown that all necessary requirements to begin the work are present. Organisation, land, labour-power, finance and the will to succeed. But first of all it is necessary to have the sympathy and the goodwill of the Australian people. Will these freedom-loving citizens of this democratic country turn a deaf ear to the clamour of homeless people who need a home? Will the Australians refuse to admit the Jews who wish to till the Australian soil, help to build this country, and to become good and useful citizens? In this connection we must pay tribute to the Government of Western Australia which, after very careful consideration, gave its approval of the scheme. The Australasian Council of Trades Unions expressed in a resolution its support to a Kimberley settlement, and this resolution has been confirmed by the Trades and Labour Councils of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. Hundreds of men and women of Australia have shown their sympathy in various ways and scores of leading citizens, men and women, have signed their names under statements which were published by them in the papers of Perth, Melbourne and Sydney, appealing to their fellow Australians for support and sympathy.

We feel confident that the collective voice of Australia will be raised in favour of the settlement. By granting the necessary permission, the Commonwealth Government would reveal to the world its broadminded outlook and the humanitarian qualities of the people of this beautiful land. We hope that the barriers will be removed and the sufferings and anxiety of a portion of the Jewish people will be ended.
A Jewish settlement in Australia / by S. Stedman.

Isaac Steinberg arrived in Western Australia in 1939 and immediately travelled up to the Kimberely in order to inspect the region and select the land for the proposed settlement. He then toured the country to rouse support for the scheme from Jewish and non-Jewish Australian community leaders.

You can read Isaac Steinberg's booklet promoting the Kimberley Scheme which was published in Melbourne in 1943:
I. N. STEINBERG

Plain Words to Australian Jews

Translated from Yiddish by I. RIPPS

Jewish Publishing Company
“Freeland,” Melbourne
162 Lygon Street, N, 11.
Plain words to Australian Jews / I. N. Steinberg ; translated from Yiddish by I. Ripps.
Plain words to Australian Jews / I. N. Steinberg ; translated from Yiddish by I. Ripps.

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

It is gratifying to know that the English Edition of my "Plain Words To Australian Jews" appears so soon after the Yiddish one.

In spite of a four years' campaign for a Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys, it seems strange indeed that some Jewish people have doubts about this plan. I tried to formulate their arguments in a systematic way and to reply to them by setting the Kimberley problem into the perspective of the Jewish future as a whole.

There can be no understanding of this project without bringing it into close connection with the totality of our political and cultural aims as a people.

I. STEINBERG.
Sydney, June, 1943.
Plain words to Australian Jews / I. N. Steinberg ; translated from Yiddish by I. Ripps.

I ask you not to be displeased that I am addressing you in this direct personal manner and not by means of an article in the Press. The matter about which I would like to talk to you is so important, so vitally important, that people should discuss it with each other face to face, as it were. Nowadays one cannot brush aside this question with easy talk or light excuses. The question tormentsthe mind of every honest Jewish man and woman.

This is the question: how is it possible that the life of the Jews in Australia should be so calm, so unusually placid? Life goes on placidly and comfortably as if it were used to do in those half-forgotten pre-war days. Jewish communal life continues with its old cautious rhythm, not unlike the placid waters of a forgotten brook in a hot and lazy summer day. People while their time away in the usual manner, they carry on their businesses, they amuse themselves, they collect funds for various causes, they take their regular and frequent rests. Is such a “normal” life really normal while the world around us is breaking up and the Jewish people is utterly crushed?

How can we explain this state of affairs?

Did you ever notice, when a person is acutely ill in one’s house, how relatives and visitors behave? People speak in a lower voice, they move about unnoticed, they walk on tiptoe. Their faces bear an earnest expression, their minds become clearer, their attitude towards each other more careful. The danger that hovers over the sickbed of a dear one unites the people around it. Deepens their relationship, makes them feel and see better. When the danger passes, one notices all of a sudden that countless family bonds have come into existence. Is the position not the same with the people now? Do not millions of our nearest and dearest, our parents and our children, face at present, dire danger in Europe? Is not the world wide press filled with descriptions of their fears and suffering? Is not each issue of every Jewish paper or magazine wet with hot blood and tears of our own kith and kin whom from afar address to us heart-trending cries for pity?

And yet, Jewish life in this country goes on calmly and undisturbed.

What is the explanation?

It seems to me that the reason is that the Australian Jew has not yet noticed two important things. He does not yet grasp the magnitude of the disaster in Europe and he does not yet feel how great could be his own help for his tortured brethren.

Let us examine these two factors more closely.

In order to understand the immensity of the catastrophe which befall our people, one has only to realize the meaning of the one word: EXTERMINATION.

From each letter of this ominous word blows an icy cold wind. It brings to us the breath of agony and the muffled sound of “SHIMA ISRAELI”.

Have we ever before heard the same cold and cruel word EXTERMINATION? We have heard it from the mouth of a devoted Jewish woman, Queen Esther, when she was defending her people from annihilation. Do you remember the unforgettable scene in the palace of Ahasuerus, during the banquet with Haman, when Esther passionately implored the King? “If we had been sold for bondmen and bondswomen, I had held my peace; but we are sold and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish.” And just as the Jews of those times clearly realized the danger that threatened them, so must we now see the immediate danger of annihilation and of physical disappearance that threatens our people to be destroyed, to be slain and to perish.
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One can easily understand that people cannot live continuously in a state of utter pain and mourning. We must from time to time forget even the sufferings of our very dear ones, otherwise one would lose the will to live. The Angel of Olivets is compassionate and covers with His mantle the sadness and cruelty around us. But there is a limit to this forgetfulness. There is also the sacred duty of remembering the most important things of life. The pious Jews of old, in order to remember the destruction of the Temple, used to point a black spot in the centre of a white-washed wall. The destruction which is now proceeding in Europe is unfortunately not a thing of the past; we therefore dare not leave it out of our minds. I do not want to mention here the countless instances of Jewish suffering which freezes the blood in our veins. Many thick volumes of blood-stained Jewish annals could be filled with it. Some cases must, however, be mentioned in order to arouse us all from our complacency.

The biggest savagery in the process of exterminating the Jews was shown in the district of Kowna. The Jewish population in that town and in a whole group of townships, was done to death by gas.—report Jewish communal workers from underground Poland. “In order to illustrate the state of mind of people who are awaiting death, we bring here a letter from a family known to us. ‘This family, which is from Zhytkhvin, is no more alive. Many letters like this have been received.”

“Dear Bronis! My hand is trembling. I cannot write. Our situation is very bad; our minutes are numbered. God alone knows whether we shall ever see each other again. I am writing amid tears, my children are crying in despair; they want so much to live. We all kid you, farewell!... Answer at once. Perhaps we shall still get your letter. If you do not get an immediate reply from you, it will mean that we are no more.”

(From the Bund Organ “Our Times,” October 1942, New York).

The above letter was written in February 1942, and in December 17 of the same year a solemn declaration was made by the Allied Nations. The declaration states in unmistakeable terms what is going on in the hell of Europe.

“The German authorities are now carrying into effect Hitler’s oft-repeated intentions to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe. From all occupied countries Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality to Eastern Europe. In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughter house, the ghettos established by the German invader are being systematically em- pty of all Jews except the few highly-skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labor camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions. The number of victims of these bloody outrages is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women and children.”

One has only to digest these reports in order to realize the full meaning of this blood-stained words:

EXTERMINATION OF JEWS.

The Jews in this country would have awakened from their slumber, if they only concentrated their thoughts upon what is happening to their people. So let everyone of us keep always before our eyes the sacred names of Vilna, Warsaw, Buczacz, Ballyeck, Lodz, Plock, Drvink, Minsk and the thou- sands of other cities, towns and townships in Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Germany, Poland, Holland, France, Belgium and elsewhere.

There is another reason why the Jew in Australia is not yet alive to the tragedy of his own people.
He does not realize how he could help his unfortunate brethren overseas. Faced with their desperate situation he feels helpless; he does not know what to do. How different he would feel, were he to know that he is in the position to do something great and lasting for his people, right here, in Australia.

Of course, quite a great deal is being done here with a view to receiving our masses in Europe. We hold protest meetings and send telegrams to Governments. We keep on demanding the rights of the Jewish people on the Continent, and we try by all means to consolidate our position there. We make all kinds of collections to alleviate the plight of suffering people in Russia, in Poland and wherever possible. Certain sections of the Australian Jewry are at times absorbed in all these necessary activities—and yet, they have often a glowing feeling that all this is not enough. There is a feeling of helplessness which will persist as long as we do not provide active help for our people, here and now, with our own resources of hand and brain—and this is preparing a home in Australia for a part of our homeless people.

Just imagine for a while that you are standing on a road along which thousands of panic-stricken Jews are fleeing from the enemy. On their shoulders and in their pushcarts you see their miserable belongings tied up in bundles. Mothers carry weeping babies; in their frightened eyes you can perceive but one mute question: Whither? . . . How would you act in such a case? You would certainly throw open your doors to them, you would give them your bed, your comfort, your last crumb of bread. You would have but one desire—to give these unfortunate brethren all assistance to give them friendship and security.

Let us now imagine that you are not on the road, but hundreds of miles away from the Valley of Sorrow. Would you not, if you heard from afar the cries of the persecuted, run to meet them with a helping hand and with the warmest of friendships? Of course, you would do it, for your Jewish hearts respond even when hundreds of miles away. Have Jewish hearts become numb, have Jewish minds grown paralysed, just because we are thousands of miles away from our dear ones? (as in Australia, for instance). We have only to close our eyes—and our native town, our township, our relatives and friends will at once appear before us. How dare we then not to prepare a home for them too, a resting place here, where we live in peace and security?

Let us understand clearly that the first, insatiable and genuine answer which comes from the Jewish hearts at the sight of the flood of refugees is—Bring them into our homes, create a new home for them here, with us. It is not difficult to foresee what a stormy and panic-stricken emigration of Jews will begin soon after the end of the war. Streams of our uprooted people will probably flow into all corners of the free world. Should not Jews, who live on firm ground with peaceful skies over their heads, make in time the necessary preparations to receive these unfortunate ones? Must we not see to it in time that this panic-stricken dislocation should become an organised colonization?

This is the way Jews should feel in Canada, South Africa and Argentina. The same applies to Jews in Australia. Our reply to the Jewish catastrophes in Europe must also be the reconstruction of Jewish life in Australia. Should events prove later on that our people do not need it, so much the better. But just in case our people should need a home in Australia, it must be prepared in advance.

Christian leaders in Australia have this notion in mind to give a home to the homeless. May I be permitted to mention here the statement by Rev. A. R. Eger, of Sydney, who has on his own initiative, broadcast the following message on December 27, 1942:

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"A bitter cry has recently come to us from the Jews of Europe in their desperate need. I am quite sure, that as our enemies realize the certainty of defeat which is surely coming, they will vent their anger and their disappointment on the helpless Jews still in their grasp.

I believe that America and our Empire in addition to passing paper resolutions, however strong, should offer practical assistance and should offer it at once, without a moment’s delay.

I hope and pray that the Commonwealth Government will immediately declare to the World that we are willing to receive any 100,000 Jews from Europe into Australia. The question of transport and of finance may well be left to the generosity of Jewish Leaders throughout the World.

It would be a wonderful thing for our Jewish Patriotics in Europe to know that a new Home, where Freedom is assured, is waiting for them in the broad spaces of Australia.

I plead with our Leaders to consider the introduction of a Five Year Plan to carry this into effect and to do it now.

"God gave us this Land with its great opportunities, as a solemn Trust. Here is a great opportunity to honour that Trust. A notion that does a big and generous thing for People in dire need will never regret it—if I may say so reverently. God will see to that."

If Christian people feel like this, how is it possible that Australian Jews do not respond immediately with practical measures of help? Apparently, they have not yet become aware of their direct and immediate responsibility. There is, however, not the slightest doubt that, when the sense of brotherhood will awaken, it will revitalize the ailing Community, will refresh it and make it warmer. The Jews in Australia will realize that a great historic task awaits them—the creation of a home for a part of their brethren—and they will set their hearts on achieving this sacred goal.

The whole of Jewish life in Australia would appear in a different light if the Jews of this country would realize these two aspects. They must, in the first place, feel deep in their hearts how great is the catastrophe that befalls our people. They must, in the second place, understand that in their hands is a key (albeit a small one) to the salvation and redemption of part of our tortured brethren. No sooner will this twofold feeling of burning sorrow and of sacred duty rise in the hearts of Australian Jews, than our life here will become more stimulating, more co-operative, more noble—and wiser as well.

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Let us now examine more closely how various sections of Australian Jewry, how its "four sons" respond to the great Jewish calamity. Every one of them has its own way of life but all together form the bulk of the people.

We should not describe at length the openly assimilated Jew, whether Australian born or "Australianized." His psychology and character are more or less familiar to all. One should not expect from him active, passionate and deeply meditated help for our people.

Jewishness is to him synonymous with a few rites and prayers in Hebrew. B’nai Israel is to him "Palestine," and our Torah—the "Bible." Jews of this pattern do not know and do not want to know the Jewish people as a living body; still less do they

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want to be mixed up with it. In times of catastrophes, they help, of course, the individual Jew, by means of charity, in a haphazard way. Some of them do it very eagerly and display a good Jewish heart. Yet, what they have in mind is always the individual Jew, not the Jewish people. They are not in the least interested to see the Jewish Community in this country grow in numbers or in importance. Their ambition was and remains—to be Jewish Australians rather than Australian Jews.

This is the very reason of their fears of a Jewish colonization in Australia of a Kimberley scheme. Not all of them will admit it openly. Many of them think that by their opposition they defend the interests of “Australia” as a whole. But if Australia had really to be afraid of a Jewish colonization scheme, how can we explain the fact that so many responsible Christian people, “died-in-the-wool Australians,” no less patriotic than the Jew, support the Kimberley plan? Are we to assume that they all, politicians, labor leaders, church representatives and professors of Universities, representatives of trade and industry—do not understand the interests of their country as well as the assimilated Jewish citizens? Quite the opposite is probably true: the non-Jewish Australians support the idea of Jewish colonization for the very reason that they understand the interests of their country very well. Besides, not only material interests, but also purely humanitarian ideals move them to stretch out a helping hand to the persecuted.

Thus the Jewish assimilations defend not so much the interests of Australia as a “whole” as their own “Jewish” interests: they fear that their social and political status in this country might be endangered. The very same people, who repeatedly speak of their Australian patriotism, seem in reality to be influenced by their purely personal and not at all patriotic, fears and desires.

They should, as real Australians, support constructive Jewish immigration into this underpopulated continent, but, as fear stricken Jews, they are unconscious ly prepared to hinder this healthy process. They are still Jews but with dangerously twisted minds.

Living as they do in the permanent fear of anti-Semitism, they decry the influx of Jewish masses to Australia. In their shortsightedness they do not realize that it is precisely the chaotic, non-organised immigration of Jews which will create more anti-Semitism than any other cause. No charitable institution, no Welfare Society of any kind will be in the position to help them when the tide of immigration flows into this country. What then is the use of opposing the unavoidable current of Jewish immigration, not to mention human justice and Jewish ethics. Why then not transform this chaotic flow into planned colonization which will both be profitable to the country and become a source of pride for the Jewish people? I am afraid that not only the assimilated Jews, but a good many of “our own” Jews are not too enthusiastic about a big Jewish colonization. We should not be afraid to admit that there are such people among the Jews who have recently arrived, although they will always try to adorn their sentiments with clever and even noble excuses.

Let us now turn our attention towards the great masses of “our” Jews who live practically outside any clearly defined communal duties. The number of these “Neutral” or “Latue-alone” Jews in Australia is very large. We can assume that they probably form the majority of the thirty thousand Jews in this country. One cannot say that they are bad Jews, but they believe as though they lived outside the Jewish Community. When still in the old countries many of them knew very well their duties towards...
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their people, but they either lost this consciousness or they have turned it into “pasty cash.”

This can easily be explained. But a short time ago people extricated themselves from the pangs-like and undifferentiated life in the townships “over there.” Not long ago they entered this free country with its wonderful opportunities of making a living in security. They have toiled hard during the first years after their arrival here in order to secure a certain position in the business world. During these years of toil and sweat, they had to forego many customs and traditions of Jewish religious and communal life. They had to be good to get a potential “Parnasse” for themselves and a future for their children. And when circumstances have helped them, they discover that they are not longer plain Jews from the poor old country, that they are “aright” in Australia and that they can afford to enjoy life.

They definitely want to forget the misery of former years and the obstinate demands of our times. They want to rid themselves of all notions of the very heavy burden of Jewishness so that they may feel free. (“We live but once” would be their philosophy of life). Naturally then, their minds would not concentrate on the immense sorrows of European Jewry. Oh, certainly, these “neutral” Jews are gravely by the news about their relatives in the Nazi hell. They think of the disaster that befell their families, they long for them. Immediately after the war they will send them help and permits to come over.

This, however, is only anxiety about their own relatives. It is not yet anxiety for the Jewish people as a whole. They will, of course, do their utmost in order to bring out a sister or a brother, but they are not concerned about bringing here Jewish brethren as such. A communal plan to organize Jewish immigration to this country, the land which gives them security and prosperity, is foreign to them. When they hear of such a plan, they adopt a light-hearted attitude of “leave me alone.” Or they simply say, “Why Not? . . . If the plan can succeed we will not oppose it.”

How do these Jews live in the meantime? . . . In the meantime they are entirely absorbed by their private affairs. They enjoy life to the hilt in a most normal and pleasant manner. Business with not too many complications, joyful family events with “Nachas” from children, pleasantable card-plays “every Monday and Thursday.” Bits of charity on this or that occasion. They are, it seems, Jews with all the attributes Jews in every gesture and movement. In every English word they pronounce they remain Jews in their deepest instincts and dreams. And yet, these neutral or neutral Jews make real someerals in order to be quite free themselves from allegiance to their own people. They probably think this will somehow enable them to escape the Jewish fate, to preserve the unity and security of their families. But who can nowadays be clever enough to subjugate the fate of our people? No Jew succeeded in escaping it even in the smallest most faraway townships in Poland or Lithuania. We cannot escape our common destiny seen far away in Australia. The Jew in Australia is not a just a privileged child of God Almighty. It is of no use then trying to strike outside the large Jewish Community.

For even here two dangers threaten Jews. This is, in the first place, the chaotic, non-organised, purely individualistic immigration of Jews immediately after the war. No matter what we think of the future world, there is little doubt that thousands upon thousands of Jews will flow into Australia as well. They will...
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flood the few large cities and will forever seek to secure for themselves some place in the economic life of the country. It goes without saying, that relatives and friends of the immigrants will try to "settle" them somehow, by putting them into some kind of business, by making bookkeepers out of them, etc. Naturally, the immigrants will not go to smaller towns and townships, nor will they settle on land in the provincial, strange and utterly lonely life of the inner areas of the country. After the general experiences of Europe they will naturally strive to settle nearer to their own people, i.e. in the big cities.

But they will not be the only people in Australia who will be looking for a speedy and promising change of life. The country will be filled with the hordes of returned soldiers and demobilised workers. They certainly will demand the bitterly fought for part in the new peaceful life. They also will flood the few cities—and competition will inevitably arise with the accompanying economic and cultural strife. It will be a real miracle if, at that period of great social upheavals, we shall not, all of a sudden hear the outcry: "Jews are taking over our position!" and this outcry will, as usual, be directed not only against the new arrivals but also against all Jews who have come here and established themselves long ago. A chaotic flow of Jewish immigrants to this country will thus increase the insecurity of the whole Jewish Community. Why? Because each immigrant will try to secure a place for himself and by himself, without regard for the interests of the rest of Jews and to the general interests of the country, in other words in a chaotic manner.

There is but one means to counteract this danger: to organise the flow of immigration, to give it plan and co-ordination. A Jewish and an Australian plan are needed. But how can this be achieved? By organisating the immigrants in the cities, by some Welfare Society or even by establishing a Central Employment Office? No, you cannot organise it in this way, because the immigrant will in that case try by all means to penetrate into the economic life of the cities through all its fissures and holes. They will hardly go on the land, they will become a foreign body within the economic organism of Australia. If we are imbued with the genuine desire for an organised assimilation, there is no other way but Colonisation, i.e. an entirely new and healthy upbuilding of a Jewish economy, life and culture in an allotted area. It will be both real Jewish reconstruction and a genuine contribution to the upbuilding of Australia. If such a plan is well advanced, then the "maek" Jews of to-day too will feel better on the very real danger of unrest. Nobody can nowadays afford to live without foresight, just from hand to mouth.

A place must be found where Jewish colonists will work on a large scale, where they will develop agriculture and cattle raising, as well as industry and handicrafts, where they will engage in building houses and roads, bridges and ports.

There is another danger that menaces the very soul of the Jewish Community, a danger of a spiritual and moral character. The stream of immigrants will be mixed and heterogeneous. Jews will be coming from various countries where they have been tortured, speaking different tongues, accustomed to different ways of life. There will be collisions between them and a cultural medley on a scale never witnessed before. A real race for assimilation will begin. Jews assimilate here not with the better type of Gentiles but with firmly established Jewels. In the noisy streets of the large cities many will hurry to cast off the yoke of Jewishness in order to hitch themselves to the wagon of the surrounding life. The children...
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of the immigrants will make particular efforts to assimilate themselves. They will settle into schools, into general amusement places, crowd various festivities. They will soon lose the language common to them and to their parents. A generation which has just succeeded in escaping from the hell of Nazism, will sink in the swamp of ignorance and slavish life. Having left behind them a life of nightmares, and enjoying the newly won freedom, they will seek to escape from themselves. Poor fathers and mothers will be forced to run limpingly after the young ones. The old Jewish wine will be more and more diluted with water.

The older generation will continue "enjoying life" as before. On the one hand, family events, Brit-Mitzvah, Bar-Mitzvah, weddings, bar-mitzvah, kaddish, festivities, all the things that do not commit you to anything. On the other hand, shops, business, concerns for children—and parties, card-parties, charity parties, so many of them that they cannot be distinguished from surrounding family affluence. The soul will have to be satisfied with poor spiritual food, and will become ever more shallow. People will finally come to a stage where they are "neither here nor there," neither Gentile nor Jews, neither Australian, nor "Polish." Shall this be all that remains of that Judaism for which not only our grandparents shed their blood, but also our own generation under Nazi domination?

No matter how neutral and indifferent these Jews may be, this kind of spiritual future cannot make them happy. Nobody wishes that to him should be applied the Jewish folkways:

"What is your purpose in this world?"

"What would you come with to the other world?"

Against this second danger there is only but one remedy: Colonisation in a specially designated area. The various currents of Jewish immigrants will adapt themselves much more easily to the new country there, the basis for a cheap city-like assimilation will disappear much more rapidly there. Jewish youth will not be compelled to force the half-closed doors of the structure which was finished before their arrival—but will start on Australian soil, their own structure of a harmonious economy and Jewish culture.

All this being true, how is it possible that "our own" Jews should stand aside and not become active friends of a Jewish colonisation in Australia?

How are we to explain the lukewarm and indifferent attitude of many Zionists to the question of Jewish colonisation in this country?

It is easier to raise this question than to give an answer to it. The Zionists, unlike the first group, by their very nature, are not strangers to the Jewish people and, unlike the second group, are not estranged from the needs of the people. Just the opposite is true, they think of and work for the full and final redemption of the Jewish people. The superhuman feelings of our brethren in the disappoinment and intensity their aspirations to a national home. Nevertheless, the Australian Zionists are so often antagonistic to colonisation in the very country in which they live... Why?

The Zionists are afraid that the idea of Jewish colonisation outside Palestine may be harmful in two ways: in relation to the world at large and within the ranks of the Jews themselves. The outside word, aware that Jews envisage other colonisation.
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schemes, may cease to consider Palestine as the only solution for the Jewish problem. The nations may then try to be released from their obligations towards the Palestinian question; this may become a dangerous factor during the forthcoming Peace Conference. On the other hand, the Zionists are also afraid that the Jewish man in the street will turn his attention from the work of reconstruction in Palestine if other possibilities of colonization will open before him. The problem of Palestine both is so important and so delicate that it seems a pity to weaken, even to the smallest degree, the love for the National Home. The love of Zionism is a national love.

How much truth does the first apprehension contain: danger to the Zionist cause from without? To answer this question, we must leave away the dangerous faculty that dominates all our talks about the post-war period. The conception of "Post-War" has many meanings and is therefore very confused. Who can nowadays, in 1943, have a clear vision of the world constellation and of the position of nations after the war? It may well be that Europe will be united politically in some kind of a Federation. It is quite possible that the whole world will find itself under Anglo-American influence. The formation of an immense Empire of all English-speaking nations is quite a possibility. On the other hand, the further subsistence of separate states in Europe and America cannot be ruled out. It cannot be taken for granted that the Anglo-American influence will be decisive in modelling the post-war world, in which Soviet Russia may become a very important factor. It is also possible that the so-called coloured races, viz., China, India and the Arabs, with their hundreds of millions, will make themselves felt in the New World. Their interests and ideals may differ radically from the ambitions and traditions of the "White Race." The course and the result of this frightful war in which all nations and civilizations, are involved, without exception, will be determined only in the last stages of the struggle. It is therefore more than a failure to see in the coming Peace Conference the same picture which Europe presented in 1918.

And what will be the social and economic condition of the world? It is not impossible that the terrible experiences through which the peoples have passed, will impose far-reaching charges upon the whole system of capitalistic economy. It is also possible that the peoples, exhausted through war and suffering, will be more interested in a rapid return to a quiet, individualistic way of life, albeit on the basis of old conceptions, than in social transformation.

After the battle comes peace but it is difficult to assess the scale of dead-tired soldiers. Moreover, it is quite possible that there will be a compromise between the unrestrained economic "order" of the pre-war days and the many new plans of economic rebuilding of the world. There may be a compromise which will be neither capitalism of the old pattern, nor orthodox socialism, but some cooperative idea in the economic relationships between individuals and nations. The outcome of this atomic struggle, the destruction wrought in many countries, the depletion of natural resources—all these factors will play their part in the founding of the New Order. At any rate, the coloured races will have their say in the new distribution of the riches of the world will be. Who can predict now the working principles of this unpredictable development?

What will be the position of the Jewish people at that epoch-making stage? Shall only one demand, Palestine, be put on the table of future negotiations? Is it in the interests of the national strategy of our people to have the flag of the "White Race." Who has even heard of a country or an army fighting for its life with but one strategic plan, without taking

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into account possibilities of a failure? Our people fight desperately for their very existence, much more desperately than any other nation. How dare we then put all our hopes into ONE plan? What if, God forbid, the plan should not succeed?

Jews will not be the only group to present their claims to the Peace Conference. The Arab world, too, will not lose any opportunity to let its voice be heard. Indeed, too, will have something to say. The Arab Powers, moved by political or economic interests, may indulge in all kinds of combinations regarding the Middle East problems. It is also possible that under the pressure of events, the Arabs will come to an agreement with the Jews on the basis of a federation. The result depends to a large extent on the organised efforts of the Zionist movement. But who can take upon himself the responsibility of affirming that only one certain plan is to be presented to international public opinion and that he has the right to hinder any other Jewish plan or to remain indifferent to it?

Our ideas about the political situation in the future are nebulous. Is it wise, is it in the interests of our own people to release all other nations from their obligations towards Jews? By focusing all the attention on Palestine we are getting two results: on the one hand, we try to force all the nations to help the Jewish people to achieve the redemption of Palestine; on the other hand, we ourselves release the same nations from their duties and do not demand their direct help in their own countries. Why should the Dominions of the British Empire or the United States or South America not participate in the solution of the tragic Jewish problem? The Jewish people have an unalienable right to playing their part in the reshaping of the world. These considerations are the reasons why a united Jewish delegation should come to the Peace Conference with a fourfold plan: Europe, Palestine, and colonisation outside Palestine.

How much truth is in the second Zionist contentions?
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Portions to the future of the whole people. Or shall we resign ourselves to the dangerous idea that Jews shall once more wander from country to country without any plan, or system, guided only by private interests or kindhearted Welfare Societies? The whole world is busy ranking places; shall we, who need them more urgently than anybody else, again wander about blindly and aimlessly, without rulers and acids?

Let us take the concrete example of Australia: what shall be the Zionist's attitude to the imminent Jewish immigration to this country? One can understand his attitude to this question when he lives in Europe or in Palestine; he wants immigration to Palestine. What is he to say when he lives in Australia and he knows that Jews will be coming here in large numbers? How are they to be accepted? As individuals, as "customers" of charity institutions, or as an organic part and parcel of one and the same people? In the previous pages we have already mentioned the material and spiritual dangers of a chaotic influx of immigrants. A storm of anti-Semitism and the scattering of the Jewish way of life may be the result of an un-regulated immigration. If we want to have a well-prepared and planned immigration, it can only mean Colonisation, i.e. the creation of a thoroughly Jewish, economically harmonious and spiritually healthy community. In such communities the wrecked Jews of Europe will regain their strength and serve the people. Such communities will, moreover, influence even from a distance the Jewish life in the assimilated cities.

If the Zionists reject the idea of a colonization, what would be the alternative? It would mean that plan and control should be applied only to immigration into Palestine. In all other countries, on the other hand, Jewish life will go on without a plan. Tens of thousands of scattered Jewish individuals will settle once again under the conditions of dispersion. They will lead a shallow and chaotic spiritual life on unhealthy economic foundations. They will gallop at full speed after assimilation. Can a sincere Zionist desire such a state of affairs? Can the building of Eretz-Israel go on without the support of a strong and nationally-conscious Diaspora?

What would Palestine be today without the enthusiasm and active help of former Jewish communities of Russia and Poland? What would it be today without the situation of Palestine without the American Jewry, i.e. without the American sector of the Diaspora? The only reservoir of material and spiritual forces for the further development of Palestine is to be found in the communities outside Palestine. These must therefore be strengthened and encouraged in every possible way. Therefore Jewish colonization in Australia can indeed become a factor which will consolidate and intensify Jewish life in the Diaspora. Who knows the part that the Australian continent may play some day in the shaping of the destiny of the Jewish people? It may well be equal to that of America. Who could have believed fifty years ago that American Jewry would become today the backbone of our people in these circumstances?

Of course the Zionist movement, as well as any other, can declare: my aims are the only ones that matter and I devote all my energy to their attainment. I have but one goal: the building of Eretz-Israel. However, Jewish people with a wide national outlook and imbued with a deep sense of responsibility dare not speak like this. Besides love of Eretz-Israel there is also love of and loyalty to the people of Israel. It is therefore the earnest duty of all Jewish communities all over the world to look for the much-needed sources of refuse, and to build their foundations in time. In Australia this historic mission is the responsibility of Australian Jews, just as it is the concern of Jews of Canada, South Africa or Argentina in their respective countries.
The Australian Zionists cannot ignore this mission. If they remain true to the idea of "Kviov Havshech", the survival of our people, they cannot regard Jewish colonisation in Australia with complacent indifference, let alone with hostility. Their work for Palestine has a future and can be fruitful only if at the same time a genuine and creative Jewish life is being built in this land. There can be no Zionism in Australia without Jewish people in Australia.

How shall we explain the passive and indifferent attitude to the problem of colonisation in the part of the relatively minded sections of the Jewish population of Australia?

I cannot deny that the Rodzic (whether they belong to the "Band, Getest" or to Zionist circles in general) are spiritually akin to the people. They may have very wide differences with other Jewish movements, but it remains true that the needs of the Jewish masses preoccupy their minds, that they feel most keenly the Jewish disaster. No wonder, for they have but a short time ago lost the Jewish success of Eastern Europe. Yet, they too keep aloof from any plan of organised colonisation in this country. Why?

I do not want to elaborate on the question of principle, whether the Jewish people, generally speaking, are in need of colonisation in new countries. Let us assume, for argument's sake, that all these movements are right to a certain degree when they come out against the solution of the Jewish problem through mass emigration. They all believe firmly that this will inevitably lead to a great social and political upheaval all over the world, and that this will provide a just and permanent solution for the Jewish problem. According to the Rodzic, the solution of the problem lies not in quitting a country in which one is established and in exchanging it for an unknown desert, but on the contrary, in remaining tenaciously in the old countries and in fighting together with the rest of the population for a brighter and better future. If we should renounce this solidarity with the progressive elements of the old countries, we would not be able to build a secure home in any new foreign land, except the Rodzic.

I do not for one moment intend to dispute this train of thought which is at present—in Poland and elsewhere—being hollowed through untold of sufferings and self-sacrifice of countless Jewish martyrs. I do not want to dispute. I just want to put one question: What if? What if the holocaust of the present will end not in the triumph of those radical ideas of which humanity dreams so passionately? What if the immense world tragedy will end in a world-wide compromise? What if humanity will have to try through a series of transitory periods, even during the revolutionary post-war era and before it reaches the ultimate goal?

Who can foretell what the future has in store for us? The convulsing world may insist on a thorough re-distribution of its natural wealth, as well as of its population. It is possible that decisive factors of that time will force large masses of people to settle in uninhabitated or underpopulated parts which still await their development. Voluntary colonisation of new emigrants in various countries may then become an important milestone on humanity's road to permanent peace.

Who can predict what will be the position of the Jewish people during those tremendous economic and political changes? Will the Jewish people again remain the step-children of the world-family? Are they simply motions with which they have common ties and to enjoy to go an supporting, as hitherto, the struggles of the with them the newly won freedom? Or can they to appear w. on the international stage with their own demands too?
Isaac Nachman Steinberg

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None of the Radicals will deny the fact that the economic collapse of our people in Europe is complete, that soon or later we shall have to rebuild their whole economic position. Of course, should humanity start building a new world on the most righteous social principles immediately after the trumpet call of the armistices—flowers and fruit will also grow on the devastated Jewish soil. One can only believe in this, but not predict it with any certainty.

On the contrary, it is safer to assume that the rebirth of the economic and cultural life of Europe will be a long and slow process. In the meantime what is to become of the people who are most distressed in the whole world and whom we all have so much of heart? Should they not come out with a well prepared and complete programme of reconstruction? Will our people be content to remain just embankers, will they not demand to play their part when the worlddiscusses great projects of colonization and organised migrations? Have not our people, by fighting and suffering, earned their share in the general settlement?

Any socialist knows the difference between a maximum and minimum programme. He has before his eyes the inspiring vision of a noble and united humanity. This vision gave socialist strength and faith when they worked with utmost devotion for the needs of the working masses. But even with the ultimate goal ever-present in their minds, socialists never failed to carry on the fight for immediate and vital objectives. They never neglected To-day for Tomorrow, the Minimum for the Maximum. Such a broad and practical approach to the acute social problems were both the source and the proof of genuine idealism. Why should we not apply the same principle in dealing with Jewish affairs? Let us by all means have faith in the maximum programme of the Jewish future, but what is to take place in the long period before the sun of the future rises? Should we not prepare—on the road to the maximum—a minimum programme as well, a programme of economic regeneration, or organised immigration, of colonization?

Let us now assume that the Radicals reject such minimum plans because they are, according to them, in contradiction to the Jewish maximum programme—the one only that counts. For this reason they refuse to have anything to do with plans of an organised colonization in faraway and empty lands. This is the reason why they defend, a.e. in Europe, in Poland, the so-called "ramin-here" policy. But what shall be the socialist's attitude to the same problem when he lives in a country outside Europe, viz. in Australia? Not even the Radicals will deny that large numbers of Jews will leave Europe, that they will also come to Australia. Should the Radicals not admit that this will become an important social phenomenon of Jewish life in the country in which they live? Should they not try to give it plan and co-ordination and infuse it with the spirit of the Jewish masses. In other words, does this not mean that planned Jewish colonization is also their concern?

In the old countries, a.e. in Poland, where they defended tenaciously the "ramin-here" policy, the Radicals desired not just any sort of Jewish life, but definitely wanted a thoroughly organised Jewish way of life with full cultural development. They wanted the Jews to live in large, compact masses, and definitely on one continuous area so that they should be able to develop normally in every sphere. The same situation confronts the Radicals here in Australia, where they have to do with a different type of community. The Radicals should not resist themselves even here to the idea of a Community which may become a core of discouraged, individualistic, most petty bourgeoisie. The Radicals should see here too the dangers arising out of an unrestrained spirit of assimilation, out of an anarchical economy of the Jewish im
Plain words to Australian Jews / I. N. Steinberg ; translated from Yiddish by I. Ripps.
Unpromised land
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Plain words to Australian Jews / I. N. Steinberg ; translated from Yiddish by I. Ripps

...Today, more than ever before, Australia should acknowledge her increased moral and political responsibilities to the world at large, and extend all possible aid to persecuted peoples. Patriotism can no longer be confined to one country; it has a higher and wider implication, which includes every activity calculated to rebuild justice and order... 

...The opportunity to help in the rehabilitation of homeless peoples will be an asset in Australia as in any country in the world; and approved by the Federal Government of the proposal to form a Jewish settlement in the Kimberley would be an indication that we are not unmindful of that opportunity.

The plight of the Jews in Europe has deeply distressed public opinion throughout the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Government has wholeheartedly encouraged (with the solemn declaration by the United Nations of December 17, 1942, condemning in the strongest possible terms the bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination of the Jews in Europe...
Plain words to Australian Jews / I. N. Steinberg ; translated from Yiddish by I. Ripps.

words, on 9th March, 1943, three Church leaders of Australia have sent a letter to the Prime Minister, Mr. Curtin, in which they have said:

"...We also urge a decision from the Government in answer to the request that a considerable area in Australia be set apart as soon as circumstances permit for Jewish settlement. The matter is immediately urgent in view of the recent renewed threats of the German Government."

So, both within the country and outside of it, the psychological and political ground for the realisation of the idea of a Jewish Colonisation is being prepared. The whole matter is being put on a practical basis. We must be cautious, however — this plain, in all its conception, will mature fully only when the majority of the Australian people will understand it. Australia is a democratic country, which means that both the Government and the Press watch attentively the public opinion. Therefore a clear and widespread work of enlightenment must be carried on among the population.

The time is now very propitious for such educational propaganda. Every day the average Australian realises more and more that his country will witness many changes after the war. Millions of new people will have to come to Australia in order to invigorate and enrich it. The isolation of this youngest of the continents will be a thing of the past. Besides Europe, Australia will have close ties with America and China. To uphold her high social standard, Australia will have to develop to the fullest her agriculture, her industries and her culture. All these will demand first, foremost and all the time, people, people and people! Therefore, it is high time for us to make very clear to every thinking Australian the idea of Jewish colonisation and to show him how it coincides with the interests of the country. Besides material interests, humanitarian ideals and the urge for justice will appeal to his imagination. Thus, the Jewish proposal will appear before him as both useful and noble.

Every Jewish person has a part to play in this work of enlightenment. Every Jew has connections with certain sections of the population, or he can get in touch with them if he wants to. At the same time, when speaking of colonisation, Jews will enlighten non-Jews about our position in general: they (Jews) will thus indirectly fight the arms of anti-Semitism. It is generally easier to carry on propaganda for the Jewish cause when one does it in connection with a concrete scheme which the average man understands. That is why it is so important to explain to people the work of recolonisation in Palestine and to secure their sympathies for it. Still more important can become the dissemination of the idea of colonisation, here in Australia, for this morally commits them to constructive actions in their own country. These can be no doubt about it: every new Jew ever to come to the land will at the same time become a friend of the Jewish People in general.

EVERY Australian Jew can participate in this great task, whatever his ideological views may be. The Zionist believes in Palestine as the only solution to the Radical, the social revolution may remain the only solution of every evil. However, as long as they live and remain in Australia and as long as Jewish immigrants are coming to Australia, both of them must adopt a clear attitude to this immense problem. They must give a constructive answer: How to make of future immigrants an organised people and prevent them from becoming a mob.

The "Neutral," conscience Jew will also have to recall the well known saying: "Do not hide thyself from thine
Unpromised land

Isaac Nachman Steinberg

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To the reader:

The matter which has been discussed in the above pages is of the utmost importance to all of us. If anyone has questions to ask or critical remarks to make, I should be much obliged if he would write to me. I shall try to reply as soon as I can.

The address is:
C/o Julius Karpin,
91 Willoughby Road,
Croy's Nest,
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Plain words to Australian Jews / I. N. Steinberg ; translated from Yiddish by I. Ripps.
Isaac Nachman Steinberg

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"FREELAND" PUBLICATIONS:

"Jews and the Post-War World", by Gabriel Haus; published by the London Freeland League.
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"A Jewish Settlement in Australia", by E. Schuman; published by the Sydney Freeland League.
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"Australians and a Jewish Settlement in the Kimberleys", parts 1 and 2. A collection of articles from the Australian Press; published by the Sydney Freeland League. 1/14d. posted.

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6) Willoughby Road, Crows Nest, N.S.W.

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Plain words to Australian Jews / I. N. Steinberg ; translated from Yiddish by I. Ripps.
You can read local reactions to the proposed Kimberley Scheme in the Australian press of the day:

[Image] a5398001h.jpg [71]
Australians and Jewish Settlement in the Kimberleys

[A Collection of Articles from the Australian Press]

I. Our Opportunity

A HOME FOR REFUGEES

(By WALTER MURDOCH)

Germany is blowing her brains out. She is steadily pursuing the suicidal policy of driving out the best intellects of the country. That the policy is suicidal I do most firmly believe; in the long run, a land that puts military efficiency, or industrial efficiency, above the higher forms of intelligence will find that she has slain her own soul; and it is the soul that keeps the body alive. In these days of confusion and bewilderment and the impotent drifting of the nations, it becomes ever more and more evident that our supreme need is the need of wisdom, of clear thinking, of brainpower. No country in the world can afford to make a present to other countries of its best minds.

Happily there are still countries in the world able to appreciate the value of what Germany spurns. Sigmund Freud has been welcomed and given an honoured place in England; America is too shrewd not to be glad that men like Einstein and Thomas Mann have found refuge with her. If Australia is wise she will welcome to her universities and to what are called the learned professions men of distinguished talent who are now, for political or racial reasons, homeless. She has everything to gain, and nothing to lose, by offering to such men a shelter from the blizzard of insane hatred which is sweeping over their own country.

But that is not the subject of the present article; I don’t wish to write to-day about exiled men of genius, or
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Australians and Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys : a collection of articles from the Australian press.

Even men of exceptional talent. I wish to speak, not of a few individual exiles, but of a whole race of exiles. I wish to return to a subject on which I have written in these columns before, in an article entitled "The Agony of the Jew," which ended with the sentence: "We must face the problem—not an easy one, I admit—of how to help such of these unhappy people as may manage to escape from the torture-chamber prepared for them by the new barbarism.

You will perhaps say that this was rather rhetorical talk. I received a good many letters reproving me for exaggerating. I know, of course, how stories of atrocities are apt to be wildly and fantastically overstated, and I was inclined to think at the time that perhaps, after all, I had allowed myself to believe horrible tales too thinly verified. Since then, a mass of evidence has accumulated—impeccable evidence, evidence of which I find it impossible to doubt—that "torture-chamber" was not an unimportant statement, but a literally exact description of the conditions inflicted on thousands of our fellow-countrymen at the present time. They are being tortured in body and mind, with a brutality sickening to contemplate.

Enough: let us leave this appalling subject. I don’t propose to have your feelings with an account of life in the Dachau concentration camp. I am not, to-day, appealing to your compassion, to your humanitarian side, to your ordinary sympathy with a persecuted section of the human race. Not—if you happen to call yourselves Christians—to your feelings about the notion of which the Founder of your religion was a member; I am not appealing to your feelings at all. I am appealing to your common sense.

There are, as Wyndham Lewis observes, “great numbers of public men and women, and powerful institutions, appealing to our kindly emotions on behalf of the Jew. As a consequence, our kindly emotions are perhaps somewhat overworked.” It may be so. We have a limited capacity for emotion; and so many things are being done and suffered to-day that we are, “at our wit’s end.” Very well then, let us give our emotions a holiday, and set our common sense to work on the question. If we do, we shall see, I believe, that Israel’s extremity is Australia’s opportunity.

If we were, we shall seize the opportunity. With both hands. Australia will shortly, I understand, be asked to defend from her shores a small body of Jewish refugees—mainly engineers and agricultural experts—who will, if we agree, prepare the way for a Jewish refugee settlement on a patch of land, several thousand square miles in extent, lying partly in Western Australia and partly in the Northern Territory. An association in England, interested in securing a home for refugees to live and work in, is prepared to spend a large sum of money—amounting, it may be, to several million pounds—to do the needed preliminary work, of irrigation, road-making, and what not, before settlement on a large scale can begin. The number of settlers would gradually increase until the limit was reached—the maximum which this area is capable of maintaining with a standard of living. I don’t know what maximum is contemplated, but a reasonable guess seems to be in the neighbourhood of 75,000 souls.

At first sight, it seems a staggering proposal; but that is only because we have a fixed and wholly futile notion that if anything could be done with our vast uninhabited spaces, somebody would have done it already. The idea that a piece of our country which at present is occupied by a few dozen white men might possibly be made a home for 75,000 is, as I say, staggering; but we must not allow ourselves to be staggered by it; we must bring cool and dispassionate minds to bear upon it, and weigh its pros and cons deliberately.

I lately read the report of a British Commission on the project of forming a home for Jewish refugees in the highlands of British Guiana. The report was, on the whole, favourable, though it revealed misgivings; as far as I could make out, British Guiana offers the settler a very much poorer chance of success than our own North-West. But what struck me most forcibly as I read the report was—Why British Guiana? Why does Australia not fulfill that country? As far as I know, there is no crying need for immigrants in British Guiana, as there is in Australia.

Those who have travelled abroad and used their ears know that the rest of the world has a fixed idea of Australia as an almost empty land held by a handful of people, mostly living in cities on the edge of the continent; and I for my part have always found it difficult to connect that reputation with the question—Is your country then mainly a Sahara? I was once asked by an Italian whom I was trying to convince that our “vacant spaces” were a myth, or at least that if they were not cultivated it was because they were not cultivable. He was obviously unconvinced, and I had an uneasy feeling that I was talking nonsense.

It is probable that the foreigner has an exaggerated idea of the capacity of Australia to absorb a mass population; nevertheless, his description of our country as a continent held by a handful of people living on its fringes is substantially true; and I do not for a moment believe that this state of things will be allowed by a land-hungry world to continue indefinitely. So, from the defence point of view, our crying need is for more population.
Australians and Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys: a collection of articles from the Australian press.

2. To Populate the Kimberleys

BY JOHN HARDCOURT (MELBOURNE)

I talked with a man yesterday who is inspired with a dream of populated north, a dream of millions of acres of the empty Kimberleys turned into a garden:

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Unpromised land
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Many Australians have dreamed the same dream, but they have dreamed it dimly. The dream of this man, who is not an
Australian, but a Jew, is not idle, but intensely practical. It is a dream born of knowledge and the confidence of vast
wealth, which needs only the consent of the Federal Government
to become an immediate reality. He offers, in a word,
to populate the north for us—to turn it into a garden at its
own expense.

This man is Dr. Isaac Steinberg, secretary of the Free
land League. It was called into being by the plight of the
Jews in the Terawin which now threatens the civilized world.

"The North," he said, "is not a desert land; it is
merely an empty land. Those who live there live at the mercy
of Nature, but not in the inimical sense of the phrase, for
Nature is so merciful that there is nothing to do. So nothing
is done, and the land remains empty."

The organisation Dr. Steinberg represents wants
to establish a Jewish co-operative colony on all, or part of,
the 7,000,000 acres which comprise the vast Durack pastoral
holdings in the far north of Western Australia, near
Wyndham. The West Australian Government approves of the
plan—despite its lamentable experience of group settlements
in the past, Dr. Steinberg has succeeded in convincing it—and it
remains only for the Federal Government to give its
blessing.

NOT AN ALIEN COLONY.

The four main points of the plan are:

(1) The settlement would be non-political.
(2) The Freeland League would accept financial
responsibility for three years. At the end of that time
the State, if it wished, might take it over.
(3) Money would be available.

(4) The settlement would be an Australian, not an
alien colony. Although the Freeland League would pay for
their schools and all such necessary institutions would be
controlled by the State, the State’s laws would operate, and
the development of the settlement would proceed under full
State supervision.

When the West Australian Government was approached
about the scheme about four months ago it was set to
work. Dr. Steinberg was advised to “go and have a look at
the country.”

He did so. He took with him a member of the agrici
tural school of the University of Western Australia (Mr.
G. Melville) to make scientific tests of soils and other
investigations. He came back and made concrete proposals
for the Government—proposals for a co-operative settlement
on the general lines of the co-operatives of Palestine, but
differing essentially in this respect. Palestine is being developed
Page Six

Australians and Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys: a collection of articles from the Australian press.

as a Jewish national home; the proposed colony in the north
would have in it nothing of nationalism; it would be a settle
ment of harmless human beings who seek a place on the
earth on which to live at peace, who would be Jews by blood,
but who would adapt the nationality of the land in which
they found that place, and give it loyalty and love.

"They would develop the north as you cannot develop it
yourself,” said Dr. Steinberg. “You have richer lands
on which to concentrate your efforts. Yet the land I saw
may be made to carry a population of 100,000, or more.
Everything is there—rich soil, vegetation, water. I saw two
and-a-half acre patches growing 32 different kinds of vege
tables. I saw maize 15 feet high. I saw 2,000,000 acres of
land suitable not only for grazing but for intensive agriculture.

"It would not be an adventure. No! We do not propo
se to bring out thousands of people and just let them
loose. Such a scheme must proceed by stages.

"In the first instance, perhaps only 500 or 600 picked
young colonists would come out. They would prepare the
way. Gradually others would follow. Pastoral and agricul
tural industries would be developed first. Secondary indus
tries would follow, but they would not be such industries as
would compete with those already established in Australia.
They would be new. Peanuts, for instance, might be grown,
and distilleries would be necessary to extract the oil. Cattle
and sheep would naturally lead to secondary industries for
treating skins and hides. Canneries would follow the cre
ation of fruit and vegetable growing industries.

"The land can be made to produce ten times the wealth
it is producing at present, given the capital and the energy.
And we have both of these. . ."

Australians and Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys: a collection of articles from the Australian press.

Many contradictory opinions have been expressed regarding the northern areas of Australia and their capabilities of carrying more than a sparse population of 3,000 or 4,000 over an area of more than a quarter of a million square miles. The impression obtained, on visiting the country and comparing it with other parts of the State which have to some extent been developed, is that many of the expressed opinions have been based on insufficient or total lack of knowledge of the country.

To study the climate is a first objective. Actually the period of discontinuity is confined to the two or three months of rain, during which time humidity is associated with high temperatures. For the remaining part of the year the climate is tropical, but during the remainder of the year the inhabitants enjoy a typical Mediterranean summer—warm days, cloudless skies and cool nights. It was most astounding to find that the health of the inhabitants was particularly good, and that there were no serious indigenous diseases, which are quite often associated with a tropical climate. Women were found living and nursing children and appeared healthy and happy in their environment. Men of 60 and 70 years of age, who had spent the greater part of their lives in the country, were still enjoying perfect health and were engaged in manual work.

In fact, the general impression was obtained that with the provision of houses designed for tropical conditions, refrigeration facilities for preserving food during the hot months, fresh vegetables and fruit and the amenities of community life the inhabitants would overcome any existing disabilities of the environment.

The capability of the country to support other than a sparse pastoral community has been variously discussed. To many, the existing state of the cattle industry is taken as an indication of the country’s productive capacity. There is no doubt that the pastoral industry in these northern regions is languishing, not because of the inferior quality of the country, but because it is too good. Abundant pastures of perennial grasses, natural waters in the pools and billabongs have provided conditions ideal for the grazing of cattle, with the result that little or no incentive has been given the grazier to improve his methods of husbandry beyond the traditions of the pioneer pastoralists. Such essential practices as the providing of better and more water facilities, controlling the grazing of the beasts within paddocks and introducing new breeding stock have in very few cases been recognised. It must be conceded that under such conditions the industry could not have persisted for 20 years unless the country had been of superior quality.

The opportunities of improvement within the industry are great; two aspects of improvement appear distinctly eco-

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“arist, "Page Eight

nomical. Firstly, by the improvement of husbandry methods involving an expenditure of capital in supplying fences, water, etc., and, secondly, by introducing other animals, particularly sheep. In comparison with the pastoral regions of the North-West the seasons in the Kimberley and Northern Territory are assured; major droughts involving heavy stock losses are unknown. Due to this freedom from drought the production per unit area is three to four times as great in these northern areas as compared with the North-West. Much of the area considered unsuitable for cattle, including chiefly the sandy “sandsite” country, would be ideal for sheep, goats, mules, etc. As this type of country forms perhaps 50 per cent. of the area, its utilisation as sheep country would greatly increase production on a whole. From a pastoral point of view the region is ideal, and with closer settlement, bringing in capital and intensive systems of stock husbandry, should develop as a major pastoral region of Australia.

Agriculture, except for a few isolated areas of peanuts and vegetables grown for household requirements, is non-existent at present. Lack of capital and difficulty in marketing and transporting small quantities of produce have limited this sphere of activity. With large areas of fertile soil, abundant water and a comparatively reliable rainfall the prospects for agriculture appear particularly promising.

Two types of agriculture appear possible—the growing of seasonal crops, chiefly cereals, during the rain period, and perennial and dry-season crops under irrigation. Over extensive areas of country the old basalt lava flows have produced a heavy “black” soil of undoubted fertility suited to such crops as rice, maize, cotton, coffee, etc., in mention but a few. Under irrigation crops such as sugarcane, vegetables, rice, coffee, etc., would be possible, while the establishment of perennial pasture crops, irrigated and perennial could form the basis for a dairy farming industry associated with cattle and pig fattening. Water for irrigation exists to-day in the river pools and it would not be necessary in the initial stages to contemplate a complicated system of irrigation involving the damming of rivers.

The Carpent Reach on the Old River is a stretch of water seven miles long, at least 300 yards wide, of unknown depth, bordered by fertile alluvial lands suited to agriculture with irrigation. Many such pools containing varying volumes of water exist and could be utilised for simple irrigation schemes. Based on the results from these small schemes a comprehensive system on a large scale could be contemplated.
Unpromised land
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Australians and Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys: a collection of articles from the Australian press.

Refugees as Pioneers

BY GEORGE FARWELL (SYDNEY).

Many who regret Australia's departure from the great tradition of her earlier pioneering days will have their imaginations stirred by the projected settlement of European refugees in the Kimberleys. The scheme has been under discussion for some time, but no official action has yet been reached, although the Western Australian Government and the A.C.T.U. have both expressed their approval.

The drift to the cities is a problem we shall have to face sooner or later. Here is an opportunity not only to meet the demands of the cities, but also to serve the interest of adventure and conquest.

There is no need to discuss now the question of enlarging the population and filling our open spaces. But, as we can expect no further emigration from England, for the present, at least, the opening of the Kimberley for Jewish Territorial Colonisation may well be our last hope of securing a large influx of people.

THE KIMBERLEY COUNTRY.

That the Kimberley region would bear another settlement has been established by the recent investigations of Dr. Page Twelve.

Steinberg, organising secretary for the league, and Mr. Malville, M.C. (Agriculturer at the University of Western Australia), in their opinion, an area of 7 million acres, now owned by Connell, Day and Durack, Ltd., is very suitable for pastoral and agricultural development. A large part of this territory consists of a plateau, ranging up to a height of 100 feet, crossed by sweet rivers, notably the Ord and the Victoria, to form a lower stratum of vast and fertile plains.

This lower stratum is mostly basalt soil, and an abundance of native vegetation makes it suitable for cereal and pasture crops. The deep gorges would also lend themselves to water conservation and irrigation, and could also be harnessed for electric power. In addition, there is a great deal of poorer grazing which would support goats, mules, and other hardy animals. Although the rainy period lasts seven or eight months, the country is naturally well-watered; where boring has been attempted, plenty of water has been found at shallow depths. For the rest of the year the rainfall is one of the most reliable in Australia, so that storage tanks would guarantee a regular supply.

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The first object of the settlement would be to become self-supporting. In addition to sheep and cattle, the settlers would grow rice, maize, cotton, hemp, flax, tropical fruits, sugar cane, and the usual vegetables. About 20,000 acres of grazing land should adequately support one family unit, and 2,500 sheep or 500 head of cattle, while on agricultural land, 2 acres under intensive cultivation or 20 acres of perennial pasture and grain crop would be allotted each family. The demand for road materials, houses, and public works could be met locally, for the country has plenty of white clay for bricks, limestone, sandstone, and slate.

Once the settlement had been firmly established, secondary industries would be developed—the tanning of hides, leather goods, dairy products, dried and canned fruit, canned vegetables, milled corn, (from Angus grain), oil extracts from soy beans, peas, linseed, castor and tung oil, pig products such as bacon, pig bristles, and so on. Within a few years there should be a surplus either for export or for the home market. Transport facilities at present are very poor, but Wundham offers an excellent port, while the building of roads would rapidly open up the country. The export of best wool alone would benefit Australia, for the densely-populated countries to the north are still an almost unexplored market. The settlement would have this advantage, too—that cattle would not have to travel hundreds of miles inland to reach a port.

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HAND-PICKED SETTLEMENTS.

Experience of previous immigration schemes has made us very wary, but in this case it must be realised that the settlers would be largely men of experience in similar work. They would, in fact, be hand-picked. Any objections that Jewish people do not make good colonists can be refuted by the example of Palestine, which—quote Sir Norman Angell—has been the most successful example of organised mass settlement anywhere in the world. Itdispels charges commonly made against the Jews that they are unqualified for truly productive work, work on the soil, and are by nature parasites.” Their success in creating a prosperous country in what was originally desert or marsh has astounded all who have examined the result.”

POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS.

There can only be three relevant objections to such a settlement. First, the fear of competition with established Australian industries; second, the crystallisation of a Jewish enclave; and third, the possibility of settlers eventually drifting to the cities.

For from competing with present industries, the settlement would have quite the reverse effect, for it would offer a further outlet for Australian goods, particularly machinery. Again, it offers a probable increase in our export trade. There is little likelihood of a political enclave, because the refugees, being drawn from a number of different countries in Europe, would have no common national or cultural ties. To suggest that the Jewish races are solely exclusive is to misunderstand their history, or at least to confuse self-defence against recurrent persecution with aggression. In the main, these refugees would not be of German origin; their common language would be English, their one desire freedom to build up their shattered lives a fresh and to create a peaceful colony, which would by no means exclude Australians. Their gratitude along should make a sufficient basis for allegiance to the British Crown—as is the case in Palestine. A drift to the cities is unlikely, geographically the Kimberleys are remote, and locally the members will be drawn from hardy stock accustomed to life on the land. In this respect, such a settlement might be more effective than the present limited policy of infiltration.

—”Sydney Morning Herald.” 17/1/40.
Australians and Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys: a collection of articles from the Australian press.

7. Using the North

Responsibility of Australia

(By William Hatfield)

Once again a scientist heaps a plain assertion of mine. Even at the risk of being classified as inveterate "I told you so," I must mention this. Mr. George F. McVittie, M.Sc. ("The West Australian" of July 23), substantiates my contention in a book now three years old that the northern portions of Australia offer great scope for agriculture, and that the climate is in no way inimical to the health of white people. The writer bold enough to step out ahead of current opinion positively needs these corroborations from time to time to offset the mass of dead weight sitting on present conditions as the only possible conditions, arguing that if further development were possible, unassisted individual effort would of necessity already have accomplished it.

What a picture Australia would present to-day if that spirit had animated all pioneers from the earliest arrivals. In the beginning, there was not, in the whole 3,000,000 sq. miles of this continent, a single edible plant or domesticable animal. Serious-minded officers of the first fleet said that the country could never be self-supporting for the few miserable wretches condemned to pass their existence here. Always they must depend on the food ships from England. In the interim Britain's population has quadrupled, yet Australia could supply it with every item of diet, every article of clothing, every engineering requirement. Yet we have only developed the southern and eastern littoral. The north is a new colonial empire awaiting occupation.

What a fine line of settlement is kept with Australian workers, as is all too often the case with foreign settlement. Dr. Steinberg has great hopes for the success of the settlement scheme. He says: "Given the possibility of starting new life on a new soil, irrespective of Government aid and amidst a tolerant population, the Jewish persecuted youth of Europe will bring with them more than man-power, more than skill and financial resources. They will bring inspiration for a hard ploughing work, and a deep loyalty to the country of their adoption." — "The Australian Worker," March, 1940.

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quarrements and those of many other countries outside the
territories benefitted from tropical rain and sunshine. Queensland alone
produced every known crop. The fallacy that cattle labour is an essential for tropical agriculture is blown out by the
results in the North Queensland cattlefields, where white
Australians cut twice as much cane as the Kanakas did, and
thrice as much. A small area of 30,000 acres of irrigated land in
New South Wales (where the highest farm wage on earth is
gold) can meet the continent's needs for rice and export a similar amount—to Asia, profitably, at a price compative
cost of rice. California is producing rice cheaper than it can be grown in China or India, using, of course, modern mechanical methods. No cooee, however, is possible to compete with mechanised farming.

ADVOCACT FROM EXPERIENCE.

It would be more satisfactory from every point of view if
a railway were built to avoid the possible and advisability of throwing open the North to Jewish settlers there is much tendency on the part of detractors of the scheme to dismiss the views of its protagonists as the vapidings of people ignorant of the North and its conditions. So I feel it necessary to say before going any further that I have
lived the greater part of my quarter century in Australia
north of the line of Cappobin, that I am a practical man
among stock, having had charge of a cattle camp tenning a
herd of 30,000; that I am not ignorant of the economics of
northern enterprise, having had an acquaintance in pastoring,
mining, mercantile and shipping offices in the North; that I am of the "most unsuitable type" for northern
colonisation, being of the blue-eyed, fair-haired Saxon type,
reared till nearly 20 in the Northern Hemisphere north of
latitude 50; and that from a possible "chest case." I built up
an estate of 12,000 acres capable of withstandin strikes, without illness of any kind, the outdoor rigours of England's
worst winter for half a century (1938-39) and the strain of hard manual work in temperatures over 100 degrees in the
shade, where there wasn't any shade.

Apart altogether from my personal experience, from
the work or health point of view, however, the vital statistics
for tropical North Queensland speak for themselves. The
death-rate is one of the lowest, and the infantile death-rate
second lowest in the world to New Zealand. Sixteen per
1,000 less than London. Deaths per thousand of mothers of
childbirth are down among the lowest in the world's lists.
Thompson-Wood, writing of the men of North Queensland,
says: "There is something in these great gaunt men of tropical
Queensland, acting three meals a day, a type distinct
tinct from anything I know. Tall, straight, of striking ap-
pearance, with eyes of steel. If we have not abolished wars
in the real next century my pity goes out to the enemy who has
to meet these men's descendants with the bayonet!"

Since Dr. Woid wrote the world is seething with war from
Gibraltar to Shanghai. Australia needs a million or
two of these tall, straight men with eyes of steel, needs them in
the North, one of the world's richest prizes for an aggre-
sor-to-day. I have been hammering away at concerted action
to populate the North for years, with southern Aus-
tralias for its immigrants. The settled areas of southern
Australia could be emptied of them on the dis
ter of those growing mankind to the new "Colobine Empire" of the North
exactly as the European States did in the latter half of last
century when their manhood was poured out by the million to
occupy the newly discovered and newly developed lands
across the seas, and on that prosperity home populations
doubled. The great industrial expansion in Europe of the
eighties and nineties was directly attributable to that emi-
gration, and to no other thing. Pioneers need equipment,
and in return they send back new produce in abundance.

SETTLEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT.

Instead of enjoying that boom Australia is floundering
along in the slough of unemployment. The greatest folly
given voice to in all this talk against the granting of a home
in the north is the plea that Australian un-
employed must first be found work. The one thing that
would set Australian factories churning to-day is the influx
of thousands of new settlers. If this young men from the South
cannot be financed to begin this new wave of colonisation,
putting one man back in work for every one who leaves for the
North, no obstacle should be placed in the way of settlers of
Jewish race from undertaking it at their own expense.
There is room for millions of them. Millions, not a paltry
few thousand.

It can be safely said, however, that although there has
been no survey of the North for the purposes of soil classifi-
cation, there is, at least estimate, 100,000 square miles
of land capable of intensive development, either improved
pasture land or agricultural land. Perhaps half of that can
be brought directly under irrigation. And in case a mere
50,000 square miles sound little enough land to talk of:
bringing millions of people to, let it be considered that the
total irrigated area of Egypt—Upper, Lower, and the Delta—is
7,000 square miles, and the population of Egypt is
15,000,000! The North, of course, is very much with a belt
but it does get its regular rainfall, ranging from 20 to 60
inches. Egypt gets none, depending entirely on irrigation.
The North gets its growing season in the natural order of

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things without irrigation. The incalculable surplus that now runs off to the sea can be conserved, and used for inter-season needs. West Australians, who have before them the world’s boldest irrigation project—water conserved on the coast and pumped 1,000 feet on to a plateau 350 miles inland—should not need theoretical argument regarding what can be done by irrigation.

Irrigation is the one thing needed for the intensive development of northern Australia. Under it, human progress might well outstrip that in the southern portions of the continent, with the uncertainty of their rainfall.

And if the Jews are willing to begin it, by all means let them try. Not all the Jews in Europe could begin to exhaust the population possibilities of the North. Nobody is suggesting granting them territorial rights and national sovereignty on Australian soil, so far, and if they were, they could come under an Australian “Monroe Doctrine” and would be the staunchest allies possible. And if any Australians doubt the Jews’ fighting capacity, let them but remember two outstanding Australian Jews in the fight game, one at either end of the scale—Mendoza and Monash.

What of “racial problems,” and “minority questions”? If only the people of one race must inhabit a continent, there must ensue wars of attrition till only five races survive? No minority question arises where a powerful majority is not actuated by a desire to subject a minority. I know, from conversations with refugees reaching this country, that all are anxious to come under Australian laws, even looking forward to the time when they can attain citizenship and join the military forces of the Commonwealth. And Jews do not carry any dangerous minority problem with them. They have no home State wielding political power, and have no ties with a nation that has.

If Australia cannot find in its heart to give to the people which gave it its code of morals, the very basis of its laws, a home in its present empty thousand of miles of country, which it will not use itself, it does not deserve to survive to see established an order of world peace, when men of all races meet as friends, unarmed—the grand conception of a Jew.

—“The West Australian,” 27/7/39.

All enquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Freeland League, Julius Karpin, 91 Willoughby Road, Crow’s Nest, N.S.W. ‘Phone: XF 1365.

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In July 1944, however, though the Australian government was well aware that sparse population in the country's north made it vulnerable to invasion, Prime Minister John Curtin advised the Freeland League that the Australian Constitution would not allow group settlement on this scale, and so the Kimberley Scheme did not proceed.

Read More in Isaac Steinberg's intriguing book about the Kimberley Scheme and his experiences in Australia
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