

“REFFOS, WOGS AND DAGOES:” THE IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCE IN POST-WORLD WAR II AUSTRALIA

Susan Jacobowitz*
The City University of New York
New York, NY, USA

Abstract

This article seeks to analyze the ways in which immigrants experienced Australia in the years following World War II, when the makeup of Australian society changed. In *The Voyage of Their Life: The Story of the SS Derna and Its Passengers*, Diane Armstrong – a child immigrant to Australia – writes, “Homogenous, conservative and almost entirely Anglo-Saxon in its origin, Australians were about to awake from their illusion of perfection” (274). Focusing on memoir, poetry and short stories, this article analyzes Andra Kins’ memoir *Coming and Going: A Family Quest*; Serge Liberman’s short stories “Home,” “Greetings, Australia! To You I Have Come,” “The Fortress” and “Two Years in Exile;” Peter Skrzynecki’s *The Sparrow Garden*; Lily Brett’s poetry; and Susan Varga’s memoir *Heddy and Me*. Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants from Russia, Poland, Latvia, Hungary and Ukraine struggled with trying to build new lives in a new land in the face of prejudice and “anti-refo” feeling. Measures were introduced to limit severely the number of Jewish refugees allowed to travel to Australia. Despite these obstacles, Australia was transformed. According to Mark Wyman, “Eventually, 182,159 DPs emigrated to Australia, led by 60,000 Poles and 36,000 Balts. Enough of an Eastern European mixture was admitted through Australian gates to constitute a small revolution in the nation’s much-publicized homogeneity. The long tradition of allowing only British stock down under was broken. By 1966 almost one in five Australians was a postwar immigrant or the child of one, and 60 percent of this group had non-British ethnic backgrounds” (191).

Keywords: Immigration; Immigrant Literature; Refugee; Holocaust Survivor; Second-Generation Literature

“Beneath its picture postcard sky, Australia in 1948 sprawled in sluggish innocence, content to paddle in the sunlit shadows of life [...]. Although Australians believed in giving everyone a fair go, beneath the veneer of egalitarianism lurked a deep-seated but unacknowledged racism. Aborigines on reserves had no vote, and their children were being plucked from their mothers’ arms to induce them to abandon their own heritage and embrace European culture. Asian migrants were excluded, Jewish immigrants were restricted and foreigners were referred to as reffos, wogs and dagoes. Homogenous, conservative and almost entirely Anglo-Saxon in origin, Australians were about to awake from their illusion of perfection” (274).

Diane Armstrong, *The Voyage of Their Life: The Story of the SS Derna and Its Passengers*

In Baz Luhrmann’s film *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), when Scott attempts to explain to Fran why he gave up on the idea of dancing original steps at the Pan Pacific Grand Prix Open Latin Final, he says, “It’s hard,” but she cuts him off. “Hard?” she asks. “How hard do you think it’s been for me?” Then she launches into an angry monologue where she gives voice to the kinds of comments she has been receiving for many years: “How’s your skin, Fran? How’s your hair, Fran?” and the even more bitter play upon her name, “Frannie de la pangie de la squeegee mop.” Fran is the homely ugly duckling, the beginner, the girl in need of a makeover. Francesca’s family represents the wave of Southern Europeans who came to Australia after World War II. The family speaks Spanish and they live right alongside the train tracks –

* Professor at the Queensborough Community College, City University of New York, interested in second generation literature, Jewish and immigrant literature, the Jewish graphic novel, Australian Jewish literature, post-war Jewish writing in Europe. Her email address is SJacobowitz@qcc.cuny.edu



the implication is that Fran is from the wrong side of the tracks. Liz, Scott's first dancing partner, represents a beautiful, blond ideal that Fran cannot hope to emulate. She lives in a state of humiliated, dowdy invisibility until her amazing transformation and triumph. Part of Fran's hardship stems from the fact that she represents the ethnic, immigrant "other" in contrast to the traditional Anglo-Celtic elite. In the Latin Final, as she and Scott dance their own creative, flashy, "crowd-pleasing" steps, she seems the embodiment of fusion, half New Australia and half Old Spain. Also of significance in the film is the casting of dark-haired, ethnic "other" Paul Mercurio as the male lead—a departure from the traditional preference for more fair, blond or "typical" representations of ideal Australian manhood.

This experience of fusion or otherness is a recurrent theme in literature by children of immigrants, or by those who were brought to Australia when they were very young, in the aftermath of World War II. Andra Kins, the child of immigrants from Latvia, writes in her memoir *Coming and Going: A Family Quest*: "Now duality feels like an old, worn-out skin I am shedding. I can see through the illusion of romance, through the romance of complexity, whether related to nationalism or to personal relationships, and look into what it means to experience life as it really is" (126). Kins' mother Gunta never takes to her new home, although she spends "forty-nine of her fifty-nine years in Western Australia" (129). Kins claims Australia as her own in a conversation with her aunt, when she is an adult and visits Latvia. When her aunt tells her that Latvia is her homeland, she replies, "But I was born in Australia. That's my homeland" (159). Serge Liberman, who came to Australia as a child in 1951, writes in his short story "Home" about a mother and son. Again, the mother never really takes to the new life in Australia but the son, in contrast, reflects, "That the sun shone over Australia, I knew, but that was *my* legacy, not hers" (*On Firmer Shores* 202).

In Australia, the preferred immigrant historically was one with a British background (Langfield 55). Suzanne Rutland writes:

The Pacific War radically changed accepted attitudes within Australia. Many policy makers

became aware of Australia's need to increase her population for reasons of defense and economic development. For the first time in Australian history, non-British immigrants came to be regarded as a viable migrant source. However, in the face of hostile public reactions to Jewish refugee migration, the government sought to minimise the number of Jewish migrants permitted into Australia. (1)

According to the new hierarchy, desirable nationalities apart from the British were, in order of preference: Americans, Scandinavians (Norwegians, Swedes and Danes), the Dutch, Belgians, the Swiss, Yugoslavs, Greeks and Albanians (*ibid.*).

Klaus Neumann, in an article on refugees, claims that "Australia's government as much of as the majority of its people were strongly opposed to the admittance of refugees *as refugees* (that is, on humanitarian grounds)" (6). Before the war, there was no rush to help Jews escape Europe. At the Evian Conference, the Australian delegate told the conference: "It will no doubt be appreciated that as we have no racial problem, we are not desirous of importing one" (Aizenberg 4). After World War II, the focus was still on British immigrants.¹ Immigrants needed to be "healthy, free of fascist sympathies and ready to live anywhere and work at anything in Australia" (Wyman 191). Applications to emigrate to Australia were processed promptly, which refugees appreciated, but families were often separated upon arrival because of the contract immigrants had to sign with the Australian government. Peter Skrzynecki, the child of a Ukrainian mother who was adopted by his Polish father at the age of three, describes this experience in *The Sparrow Garden*:

Displaced persons were bound under a two-year contract to undertake any work that was found for them in Australia, unless sponsorship had been arranged. This was the experience of my parents and the hundreds of others who arrived with them on 11 November 1949. Their exile had been officially recorded into the annals of Australia's history. Not convicts. Not squatters. Not landed gentry. Just refugees – *reffos, wogs, dagoes, bloody Balts*". (38)

In a debate with her aunt, who never left Latvia, about who had it worse, those who stayed behind or those who emigrated, Andra Kins offers, “It was hard for my parents too. In a new country. No language. Treated like second-class citizens by the largely British population. The supreme colonials. Racists too” (184). If it was hard for non-Jewish immigrants, one can only imagine how much more difficult it was for Jews. The same language greets the young boy fresh off the gangplank in Serge Liberman’s “Greetings, Australia! To You I Have Come,” but with an extra twist. The protagonist gets assaulted by local boys in the street when he steps outside during his first night in Australia. The leader of the boys addresses him. Liberman writes, “But go understand him! What words are they that for all his smile are coated with marble hardness? ‘Reffo.’ ‘Nover ov’em bastids.’ ‘Nuboy.’ ‘Juboy’” (*A Universe of Clowns* 75).

Despite this lack of welcome, some of the fathers in Serge Liberman stories embrace Australia as their new home.² Lily Brett’s parents are also relieved and grateful to be in Australia. In her poem “Until I Was Six,” she recounts how every night her father tells her that they live in “Paradise” (*After the War* 56). Yet there is still a feeling of separateness or of being different. In “We Spoke Languages,” Brett describes, “...I spoke English/the mother tongue of the English/and the Australians Americans and Canadians/but we were not English/or Australian American or Canadian/we were Jews” (*Mud in My Tears* 150-151). She writes in her poetry of never really feeling at home anywhere. In “Places” she writes, “I have stayed/displaced/in/most places” (*After the War* 101). Andra Kins reflects, “Yes, I feel like I’m outside – sometimes outside of everything. Perhaps just occasionally while singing, really singing in a group, I feel a sense of togetherness, of not being an outsider” (135).

Peter Skrzynecki and his mother spent two years at the Parkes Migrant Holding Centre camp, on the site of a former RAAF Flying School (*The Sparrow Garden* 42). His father leaves the camp and travels to Sydney, where he finds work with the Water Board as a pipe-layer. He is a labourer, a “pick-and-shovel man.” He lives in a Tent City at the Water Board’s depot at Pott’s Hill, in Yagoona. Lily Brett’s parents also go to

work immediately. In her poem “Three Days Later,” she describes them sitting behind sewing machines, assembling “pyjamas,” three days after their arrival in Australia (*The Auschwitz Poems* 109).

These authors document and commemorate their parents’ hard work, not forgotten years later. Skrzynecki’s father does hard physical labor, dangerous at times, and he only misses work twice, for medical reasons. In his poem “Feliks Skrzynecki,” Skrzynecki writes:

I never once heard him
complain of work, the weather
or pain. When twice
they dug cancer out of his foot,
his comment was, “but I’m alive.”
Growing older, I
remember words he taught me,
remnants of a language
I inherited unknowingly –
the curse that damned a crew-cut, grey-haired
Department clerk
who asked me in dancing-bear grunts,
“Did your father ever attempt to learn English?”
(*The Sparrow Garden* 211-212).

Children bristle at the indignities heaped upon their parents, many of whom were working too hard to ever completely master a new language. Feliks Skrzynecki returns every month to visit his wife and son; his wife spends the two years working as a domestic on the farms and in the town surrounding the camp (42).³ About the camp experience, Skrzynecki writes:

Living those two years in Parkes meant different things to [my parents] and to me. Whereas my parents remembered Europe vividly, I had only broken images of it: rabbits kept for food, snow falling outside a window, travelling [sic] by train through dark pine and birch forests that filtered sunlight and hid the scattered remains of bombers painted in camouflage colours that’d been shot down, boarding the *General R. M. Blatchford* at Naples, staring up at the huge gangplank for the start of the journey to Australia. (45)

Other memories are not as benign—in a story called *Strays*, a man named Adam, a displaced person

who lives in the camp, gets drunk, rounds up all of the stray dogs in the camp and drives them into the bush. The young Peter follows; hiding, he witnesses the execution of the dogs as Adam fires bullets into their heads, cursing in Polish, until the whole area is covered in quivering dog corpses. This is extremely traumatic for the young child—he stays home from school for several days, wrapped in a blanket, trembling. Adam disappears. Skrzynecki writes, "Years later, when we moved to Sydney, I overheard my parents and others speaking about the 'terrible tragedy' of what happened to the man I called Superman, how he'd broken down under the strain of having lost his wife and two little girls in the war. All along he'd been telling people that he wasn't going to live 'like a dog' anymore" (57). One distinction between Christian and Jewish immigrants was that there was at least a chance that Christians came with their families or even with extended family members; Jews who had been in Europe during the Holocaust experienced a very different reality. They were often the only survivors of their families or the only remaining remnants of large extended families and communities.

Susan Varga's mother, Heddy, lost her husband but survived the war in Hungary with two small children. She wanted very much to leave Europe and all that it represented behind. Heddy married a man whose wife and two small sons had been murdered at Auschwitz. They emigrated to Australia. As she describes to her daughter, "Fear had left me. I wasn't afraid any more. I *hated* that fear. I had been afraid so much, and then it stopped. If I had to pay a price for that in Australia, I didn't mind" (Varga 193). She wanted to plant her children in the soil of a new land, even if the children themselves might suffer feelings of displacement and estrangement. And Susan does. While her mother and other adult survivors in their community agree to put the Holocaust behind them, never to talk about or dwell upon the past, such a mission is fraught with difficulty for Susan. She writes, "I was entering a particularly troubled adolescence in which sexuality, Jewishness and migrantship were key problems. The Holocaust loomed over it all, still the Unmentionable, but carrying with it such nightmarish images and implications that

I was becoming resentful" (213). She finds it difficult to feel Australian, to feel as if she fits in and is enough like everybody else.

Issues of "otherness" remain for Peter Skrzynecki as well. In *The Holiday Outing*, he spends a day at work with his father, engaged in hard labor. He writes, "I want to lean across and hug him and kiss him, say thank you for being who you are, for looking after Mum and me all these years and I hope that I make you proud of me. I like the name 'Skrzynecki' as a surname even though there are boys at school who make fun of it" (108). The young boy can see the differences between the men at work. "Some speak in English—their are the nasal accents of the 'dinkum Aussies,' the 'True Blue' citizens of the country. Others speak in their mother tongues. I recognise Polish voices, an Italian, a German, a Russian. There are also Hungarians, Czechs, Yugoslavs. These are the 'New Australians,' the imported manual labourers" (109).

Andra Kins' parents—political refugees—met at the Displaced Persons' Camp in Wurzburg, Germany, where they spent five years. Her father followed her mother to Australia; he knew so little about the geography of Australia that he landed in Sydney and got in a cab and asked to go to Perth (48). Her parents married in 1949. To work off their passage, her father worked in a cement factory; her grandfather and an aunt worked as cleaners at a hospital; her mother was sent to work at a hospital in Three Springs, 300 kilometers north of Perth. She "escaped" on a midnight train and finished her service in Perth. Kins's grandmother stayed home and did the housework. Writes Kins, "Oma only left the house if she and Opaps were going to a Latvian social event, or visiting Latvian friends. She picked up English from the television. She refused to let me play in the street with 'dirty English-speaking children.' I was placed in solitary confinement in the back yard of 58 Alma Road" (48).

Kins grows up in Australia, but is not meant to be of Australia. The language of the home is Latvian and the family clings to the Latvian community, to Latvian culture. The children sing Latvian songs and celebrate Latvian holidays, even though the midsummer festival in June falls in the middle of winter in Australia. The holiday celebrating the shortest night of the year takes

place during one of the longest nights of the year. Kins is expected to marry a Latvian and to keep the language and culture alive—she is not to assimilate. This is somewhat ironic, since one of the arguments for taking immigrants after the war who were not Jewish—immigrants who were Latvian, for example—is that they would be better able to assimilate into Australian society. Suzanne Rutland describes: “During a parliamentary debate on the budget in December 1946, H.B. Gullet, Liberal member for Henty, Victoria, stated, ‘We are not compelled to accept the unwanted of the world at the dictate of the United Nations or any one else. Neither should Australia be a dumping ground for people whom Europe itself, in the course of 2,000 years, has not been able to absorb’” (60). The Jews who came to Australia from Europe after the Holocaust had absolutely nothing to go back to—their families and communities had been completely devastated. Their only hope was to live in the present and, hopefully, invest in the future.

Kins has a different kind of experience. Her mother Gunta never stops longing for Latvia and eventually returns there. In 1986, Gunta writes:

I am still a refugee, not an emigrant. I will always be a Latvian artist. Sitting in the aeroplane at Perth airport, the first time we went back to Latvia to visit, I looked out of the window and thought that I didn't feel love for Australia. But say, for instance, you were made to marry a man you didn't love, and after a certain time you grew to like or feel some sort of affection for him, well that's how I felt about Australia. And I thought, 'thank you Australia' you've been really good to me. But it really took a long time to get to this point. I truly hated being here. (63-64)

Kins' parents and grandparents all want to be buried in Latvia. Kins herself goes back and forth, first for visits and later to spend long periods of time with relatives there. In her poem “Australian-ness” she writes:

Born in a mother's tongue
 Mother is a naturalised alien
 She heaved a sigh, and wiped her eye

And over the land went rambling
 Maps are not of course meaningless
 Here the sun once wept (53)

And in another stanza:

The home is a house not in the homeland
 Both usages have hidden the original meaning
 The history of maps indicates an infinite
 number of mapping systems
 A tongue lost in a fatherland
 At the heart of the real rhythms and rhymes
 Dressed in poems hung out on a tree to dry (54)

Kins's mother demands that she not become “too attached to Australia” (75). Kins writes, “When I look back, it feels like I was a member of a cult. My life outside school was guided and strictly controlled by my parents and grandparents. I was special. I knew that I had been chosen to play a special role in life—to maintain my ‘Latvian-ness’ come what may. To ensure that ‘Latvian-ness’ outlived and conquered communism and Soviet colonialism. Usually in cults, dissociation with the past and family is encouraged, but with me it was the opposite—the past and family were all-important, were everything” (92).⁴ Even though there is a kinship between the immigrants and children of immigrants from various ethnic groups, overlap is discouraged. A slight flirtation with a Jewish boy is cut short by both, with the feeling that it is not something that could ever progress.

Serge Liberman also focuses on themes of immigration and assimilation. In “Greetings, Australia! To You Have I Come,” a survivor mother, newly arrived in Australia, fears that her young son will not be allowed to assimilate in the new country after he gets beaten up and abused in the street by Australian boys who call him a “reffo,” “nuboy” and a “Juboy” (*A Universe of Clowns* 75). The mother seethes, “Even here?! For this have we come?! For this have we bled?! For this?! For this?! Everything for this!” (76). But in “Two Years in Exile,” there is a shift. The mother of a young son fears that her son *will* assimilate, that he *is* assimilating. The boy is beginning to be captivated by Australia (7-8). A violent encounter with some “real” Australian boys who react badly to the boy's teacher having referred to him as “a regular Aussie” changes the equation (8). For

the mother, the violence is not the crisis. Panic ensues when her son is accepted by a non-Jewish neighbor child, Colin. Colin tells the young boy, "We kill Jews, do ya' know?" and the boy denies that he is a Jew (13). The mother complains, "What a country this is. There is no God here. See, now, what a shegetz is growing up under our roof" (14). The family comes out of "exile," into the center of St. Kilda. Her son re-identifies with his Jewish roots, and the crisis passes.

With older children, the stakes are higher. Jewish survivors left the graveyard of Europe to start over again in a strange country with the hope that their children might escape persecution. But they apparently did *not* come to Australia so that their children could marry *goyim*, cease to identify as Jews and sire children who are not Jewish according to Jewish law. "For this?!" becomes the refrain of parents challenged by the choices their children—particularly sons—make when it comes to dating and to marriage. Ironically, now the threat doesn't come from the fear that their children will be rejected and beaten up by their non-Jewish Australian counterparts. Now the fear comes from intimate acceptance by the same group. If the children don't fall in love with and want to marry Christians, they pair up with other Jews who, for one reason or another, reject the inheritance of Judaism. In "The Fortress," Max Widofsky wants to give his daughter a synagogue wedding but she and her Jewish boyfriend are non-believers and choose to get married at the registry office instead (259). Normal life to Susan Varga is generic, bland and Christian. Varga moves out of the house after she turns eighteen and never returns (221). She becomes a "radical" during the 1960s and, when she gets married, she does not marry a Jewish man or have a Jewish wedding, opting instead for a "registry office wedding" (228). This is a shocking disappointment to her parents. When she was young, she started praying on her knees by the side of her bed like her Christian friends. Her stepfather, upon discovering this, tells her gravely, "Jews do not kneel" (217). She knows what *not* to do. But it is not enough—she seems alienated from her roots, disconnected from her past. Later she reflects: "Changes of identity, half in one world, half in another. A child, yet not, a Jew, yet not, an Australian, yet not" (301).

The struggle over assimilation is an on-going one. In a poem entitled "24 February 1995, Perth," Kins writes, "My mother's words surface in my memory" (75) and these are some of the things she hears her mother say:

The Australian bush is so ugly and dry. There are no seasonal changes. Wait till you see the greens of Europe, the vivid colours of autumn.

And:

These Australians lack style (76).
Lily Brett writes a poem in which the mother disparages Australian men. In "The Sound of Cheering," Brett writes, "Australian men/you told me/again and again/live in pubs/and/beat/their wives/for recreation..." (*Poland* 171).

In the poem "15 January 1994, Perth, King Edward Memorial Hospital, oncology ward," Kins visits her mother in the hospital. After her mother asks for her to bring better food, mother and daughter have the following exchange:

'And bring Maija with you. I'm most concerned that you're not speaking Latvian with your own daughter.
'Mum, don't start that again.'
'But your language.'
'It's your language.'
'It's your first language, your mother tongue.'
'I want to live in my language.'
'But you mustn't let it die.' (86)

Gunta wants Andra to hold onto the past at all costs—Kins feels "stifled by the past" (193). She muses, "I used to like the metaphor of the past being a solid foundation. Something that would always be there, that would give me a sense of security, and define who I was. But the past keeps me from fully experiencing and appreciating who I am. It keeps me from reaching towards the unknown future. I long for a sense of identity that is not steeped in cultural conditioning" (Kins 194).

Kins is from a family on a linear journey from Latvia to Australia, from the past to the present and

into the future—each person occupies a distinct place on the continuum. Kins and her daughter, who is in college at the end of the memoir and also an artist, seem to stake out an identity that is Australian but tinged with Latvian roots. Her daughter has an interest in and an appreciation of her Latvian heritage. Kins scans the papers of Western Australia. She describes, “I read all the death notices posted by relatives and friends. The Latvians who are dying now are mainly the older Latvians of my parents’ generation. Our grandparents’ generation has all died. Occasionally I find a young one, and I look to see if they are married to a Latvian and how many children still have Latvian names. I am bearing witness to the process of diaspora taking its natural course” (239). The pressure on children to not hasten the work of the war – the equating of assimilation with genocide – can be intense.

The Skrzyneckis and the Kins represent the immigrants Australia deemed more suitable. Writes Klaus Neumann, “Australia preferred flaxen-haired, fair-skinned and blue-eyed young men and women” (6). According to Suzanne Rutland, “[I]t was felt that the 7,000 to 8,000 refugees, mostly former German and Austrian Jews admitted in the 1930s before the outbreak of the war, were not desirable as ‘most of them, probably 80 per cent, settled in Sydney and Melbourne and soon became conspicuous by their tendency to acquire property and settle in certain districts, such as King’s Cross, Sydney’[...]Overall, Jewish immigrants were depicted as less desirable than any other European immigrants” (2). Nevertheless, Arthur A. Calwell, Australia’s first minister for immigration, “agreed to the introduction of a ‘humanitarian’ migration program whereby 2,000 survivors of concentration camps who had family living in Australia who were able to act as sponsors would be admitted into Australia during the twelve months from August 1945” (3). Even this family reunion plan was met with hostility due to “anti-refo” feeling.⁵ Calwell introduced measures to limit severely the number of Jewish refugees allowed to travel to Australia (6).⁶ The implementation of these discriminatory measures gave rise to questions about who—or what—constituted a Jew. The Australian government issued the following guidelines: any person

who is of Hebrew race will be considered a Jew regardless of any later baptismal change; any person who is of the Hebrew faith will be considered a Jew regardless of nationality; and any person whose passages are sponsored by HIAS or any other Jewish organization will be considered as of the Jewish race (7).

Despite these obstacles, Australia was transformed. According to Mark Wyman, “Eventually, 182,159 DPs emigrated to Australia, led by 60,000 Poles and 36,000 Balts. Enough of an Eastern European mixture was admitted through Australian gates to constitute a small revolution in the nation’s much-publicized homogeneity. The long tradition of allowing only British stock down under was broken. By 1966 almost one in five Australians was a postwar immigrant or the child of one, and 60 percent of this group had non-British ethnic backgrounds” (191). According to 2011 census data, the twenty largest migrant groups in Australia identified as coming from the United Kingdom, India, China, the Philippines, South Africa, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Thailand, Indonesia, the United States, Afghanistan, Iran, Ireland, Pakistan, Singapore, Burma and Bangladesh. Looking at this kind of literature provides insight into the beginning—the first crack in the door, so to speak—of significant and on-going changes in the ethnic and religious make-up of modern Australia.

Notes

1. In his book on displaced persons in Europe, Mark Wyman writes, “Australia embarked on an immigration program immediately after the end of the war, seeking 70,000 newcomers a year. But these were to be of British stock only, people who could be assimilated easily into life in Australia. Accordingly, the Australian minister for immigration went to London soon after the war’s close to start a flow of Britons. But the British were not interested. Concerned over an inadequate population to support economic growth, the British detoured the Australian minister across the Channel and urged that he seek his immigrants among the DP camps of the Continent. Fearing that any influx of non-Britons would provoke hostility at home, the minister and his entourage moved cautiously among the camp inhabitants, picking blue-eyed, blond DPs less likely to offend native-born Australians. The first boatload of DPs arrived in Australia on 27 November 1947” (191).

2. Liberman came to Australia as a child, in 1951. Queensborough Community College, Bayside, New York, 2006.
3. For a fictional account of this experience, see the film *Silver City*. The screenplay, by Sara Dowse, was later adapted into a novel. Armstrong, Diane. *The Voyage of Their Life: The Story of the SS Derna and Its Passengers*. Sydney: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001.
4. Recalling her younger self in a history class in 1967, Kins writes, "We are all here because of the bloody war. We are here in this dry, hot land waiting to go back to our real home once the communists are overthrown. Nobody at school talks about these sorts of things except my Jewish friends. There are lots of them at Mt Lawley High. They live in an area the rest of us call 'Mt Sinai,' in Coolbinia. They are smart and get good marks. They know the importance of education and the need to do well, just as I do. On Jewish holidays, half the school is empty. They go off to Jewish festivals, and Hebrew classes while I go off to cultural festivals and Latvian youth camps in the summer holidays" (106-107). Brett, Lily. *The Auschwitz Poems*. Brunswick: Scribe Publications Pty Ltd., 1986.
 _____. *Poems by Lily Brett: In Her Strapless Dresses, Mud in My Tears*. Sydney: Picador, 2001.
 _____. *Poland and Other Poems*. Brunswick: Scribe Publications Pty Ltd., 1987.
5. Fears were expressed that Jews would take housing away from others who needed it, operate sweatshops, undermine manufacturing by working for low wages and introduce criminal elements. They were also scorned as moneylenders who controlled banks and the media. There were attacks against Jews and Jewish property, particularly in Jewish neighborhoods in Melbourne and Sydney (3). The conflict between Jewish settlers in Palestine and British mandatory authorities also brought out the ire in Anglo-Australians (4). H. B. Gullet wrote in a letter, "The arrival of additional Jews is nothing less than the beginning of a national tragedy and a piece of the grossest deception of Parliament and the people by the Minister for Immigration" (Rutland 2003, 5). Langfield, Michele. "Recruiting Immigrants: The First World War and Australian Immigrants." *Journal of Australian Studies*, University of Queensland Press, March 1, 1999. (13 pages, electronically downloaded version.)
6. There was a shipping shortage after the war, and so it was decreed that Jews had to travel on non-British ships. Calwell imposed a limit on the number of Jewish refugees permitted to travel on any one ship to 25% of the total number of passengers. When Jewish refugee organizations tried to charter planes to overcome this obstacle—they couldn't find passengers to make up the other 75% since no one wanted to travel on what were referred to as "hell ships" because of the appalling conditions—Calwell applied the 25% rule to planes as well (6-7). Liberman, Serge. *On Firmer Shores*. Fitzroy: Globe Press Pty Ltd, 1981.
 _____. *A Universe of Clowns*. Brisbane: Phoenix Publications, 1983.

Neumann, Klaus. "Thinking the Forbidden Concept': Refugees as Immigrants and Exiles." *Antipodes: A North American Journal of Australian Literature*, June 2005. 6-11.

Rutland, Suzanne. "Postwar anti-Jewish refugee hysteria: a case of racist or religious bigotry?" *Journal of Australian Studies*, University of Queensland Press, March 1, 2003. (11 pages, electronically downloaded version.)

Skrzynecki, Peter. *Immigrant Chronicle*. St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1975.

_____. *The Sparrow Garden*. St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2004.

Strictly Ballroom, directed by Baz Luhrmann, released in 1993.

Varga, Susan. *Heddy and Me*. Abbotsford, Victoria: Bruce Sims Books, 2000.

Wyman, Mark. *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Recebido em: 15/01/2016
 Aceito em: 24/02/2016

References

Aizenberg, Rabbi Isidoro. "Sosúa, The Dominican Republic: A Refuge from the Holocaust in the Tropics." Brochure prepared for an exhibit at the Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archive,