

Displaced Persons

Calwell's new Australians

Egon F. Kunz

To Bill & Anthony Gull

with best wishes

Egon Kunz

Camden, 23 August, 1952.



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posed serious political problems straining already tense relations with a former ally.

Between 1947 and 1954 over one million displaced persons were resettled, mainly overseas. Of these, Australia took close to 180 000, which turned out to be the second largest intake after the United States. Ninety-five per cent of them came under a specially designed scheme which is the subject of this book.

Not only was the intake extremely high but the fact that Australia had little experience in cultural pluralism made the undertaking remarkable, and its results worthy of close analysis. The decision to take the refugees was itself historic. It resulted from a new Australian immigration policy framed under the impact of the Japanese advance to the coasts of Australia, and the realisation of the helplessness of a thinly spread population in the face of a powerful enemy.

Unlike previous immigration schemes, the new policy was not born out of immediate workforce needs, but from a desire for national growth. It was aimed at self-sufficiency and an increased defence potential to meet possible future crises when allies might prove too distant or too preoccupied to help. Consequently it had features which differed from earlier policies followed by state and Commonwealth Governments. Firstly, the new policy set a long-range target of annual growth, specified as two per cent of the population. Secondly, because a sustained and large-scale intake of immigrants could not be secured from the United Kingdom alone, the immigration programme implied — although initially this was not clearly spelt out — a substantial move away from the traditional 'predominantly British' immigration policy. It resulted in the active encouragement of potential migrants from a wide range of countries who under previous policies would generally have been ineligible for government assistance.

Because the new policy put long-range benefits above immediate convenience and involved the introduction of a large number of immigrants from little-known or completely untried sources, the framers of the policy expected a degree of tension, dislocation and readjustment. The exact nature of anticipated difficulties was, however, not specified; nor was the question of where the burden of coping with such difficulties should fall much considered. Indeed, some of the implications of the plan became apparent only when the programme was already well under way.

Introduction

The political and military events of World War II led to the uprooting of some twelve million people. The majority of the homeless were ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) who were fleeing from eastern Europe or were expelled by revengeful regimes, while the smallest section consisted of Jews who had survived deportation and persecution. A third group, comprising former citizens of the buffer-zone nations lying between Germany and Russia, had become displaced during the war, and were now unwilling to return to their occupied homelands where communist regimes were set up under the umbrella of the Red Army. Unlike the *Volksdeutsche* and the Jews, these displaced persons were not escaping from ethnic persecution, but were refugees fleeing from political changes.

Some of the displaced persons, who were soon to be known around the world as 'DPs', found themselves in such far-flung places as Southeast Asia and Africa at the end of the war. Yet the vast majority survived the war in Europe. They became displaced as prisoners of war taken by Hitler's army, as forced labourers and deportees freed by the armies of the Western Allies, as soldiers in military units withdrawing westwards, or as civilian evacuees fleeing west from the oncoming Russian Army.

With the defeat of Germany, the survival of the uprooted people became the responsibility of the Western Allies. The victors' difficulties increased as the imposition of communist regimes in Soviet-occupied Eastern Europe drove more and more refugees west of the gradually descending Iron Curtain. The International Refugee Organisation (IRO) was created to deal with the problems of the non-German displaced persons: to feed, to house, to repatriate or resettle the refugees whose very presence made military administration of Europe not only more difficult, but also

When the new policy was first conceived the extent of the refugee problem (particularly the size of the non-Jewish displaced population of Europe) was not known. However, as post-war tensions erupting in Russian-occupied countries not only made repatriation impossible, but added further vintages of refugees to those already displaced, the problem became more widely recognised. The new Australian immigration policy, based upon an aggressive recruitment of Caucasians, dovetailed with the Western Powers' desire to eliminate the explosive displaced persons problem. Not only did supply and demand complement each other in the IRO Australian scheme; there was also a shared sense of urgency which gave impetus to the scheme and kept it going.

It was through the handling of the Displaced Persons Scheme that immigration and integration policies and procedures were hammered out and the newly fledged Australian Department of Immigration developed an awareness of the complexity of immigration issues. Through the mounting tide of newly arrived displaced persons the average Australian used primarily to British experiences, values and ways, became acquainted with non-British Europeans. It was the displaced persons' unenviable lot to be the subjects on whom the social and political feasibility of the Government's intention to maintain large-scale non-British European immigration could be tested.

These new developments in Australia's immigration policies thus not only opened the way for large-scale immigration of displaced persons to Australia but foreshadowed the conditions of their eventual integration into the Australian workforce and community. Because the immigration policy was motivated first of all by fears for national survival and a sense of urgency, the current labour force needs of Australia were not paired with the displaced person's background and expectations, nor were problems of the eventual occupational integration of the immigrants much considered.

draw ... on his last reserves of courage and spirit, for if he fails he is doomed — in a few years he will be still in a refugee camp ...⁷

Some heartbroken, others with enthusiasm born of their will to win through, lined up to join the queues before the offices of the 'consuls' (as immigration officials were commonly known) who from 1947 onwards descended with increasing frequency on the refugee camps.

Endnotes

1. For further reading on refugee selectivity and the kinetics of refugee movements see Kunz (1973; 1980b;1981).
2. Holborn (1956:15).
3. Hulme (1959:132).
4. Proudfoot (1965:172).
5. Quotation from Pire (1960:105). See also Bakis (1955).
6. Hulme (1959:193).
7. Rees (1959:105).

4

The IRO Scheme: Recruitment and Selection

The race to secure DPs begins

In July 1947, although the agreement between the Australian government and the PCIRO had not yet been signed, Arthur Calwell, on hearing that shipping was to become available, dispatched two officers from London to Germany to begin the recruitment of 12 000 DPs. Informing the Prime Minister of his action, he justified his sudden move by explaining:

Other countries are keen competitors for best migrant types and unless we act quickly we may lose our opportunity of securing migrants on selection basis. I am sending 2 officers to make preliminary selection in D.P. camps of those classes of workers who can best assist our manpower shortages. We would select types specially suitable for rural work, nursing and domestic work in hospitals, labour for our reconstruction programme and developmental projects. Selection will be on general suitability for work to be performed, after IRO and British security have satisfied our medical and security requirements.... Consider this by far most speedy and economical method of securing best types of migrants required for Australia's economic rehabilitation from non-British sources in shortest possible time.... If you approve I will go to Geneva and sign agreement with IRO on behalf of Australia.¹

Though the need for urgency was perhaps over-emphasised, it was true that while the Australians were just beginning to find their way around the camps and agencies, other nations were already old hands in the field.

The British, who began their operations in 1946, were particularly active. Recruiting workers through their *Baltic Cygnet* and *Westward Ho!* schemes, they had received 30 000 displaced persons even before the end of 1947. These early arrivals were followed by a record intake of 40 000 during the first six months of 1948. The Belgians were mainly interested in miners, and by the end of December 1947 had been able to contract over 15 000 DPs for this work; France, during the first two years of the IRO's operation, took just under 10 000 DPs every six months.

Of the countries beyond the Atlantic, Canada and Argentina were first in the field. The USA, traditionally the land of hope for refugees, was at the start hampered by its quota legislation. However, the limitations set by the quota system were lifted by the *Displaced Persons Act* of 1948, opening the door for an initial admission of 200 000 DPs; later the figure was increased to 400 000.² The passing of the Act brought an immediate and typical reaction from Calwell: he announced Australia's willingness to match the US intake if America could help with shipping:

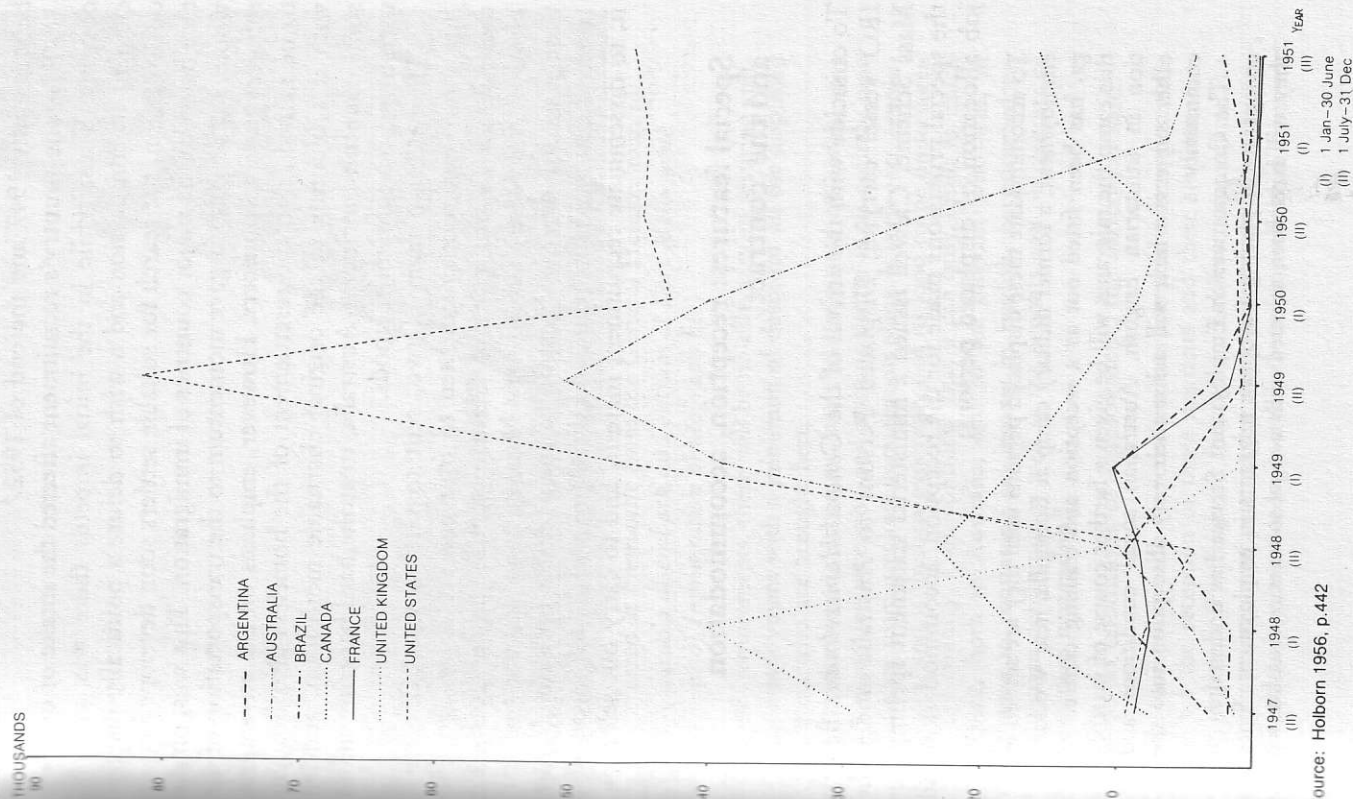
The Australian Government is prepared to accept up to 200,000 people from the ranks of Europe's displaced persons if shipping can be obtained — thus matching the decision of the United States Government to admit 200,000 displaced persons to America as permanent settlers.

Representations are being made to President Truman seeking the assistance of the United States Government in the provision of shipping . . .

If the efforts now being made to secure shipping for a total of 200,000 of these people to come here at a greatly accelerated rate are successful, Australia will be indeed fortunate. They, together with the people of British stock who are already arriving at the rate of tens of thousands a year, can play an important part in advancing our security and furthering our economic development. This in turn may be an important factor in future Pacific stability.³

Both the relatively late start by Australia, and the effort to match the US intake, are highlighted in Figure 4.1 which illus-

FIGURE 4.1 Select countries of destination of IRO refugees by date of departure from resettlement areas



Source: Holborn 1956, p.442

trates the departure of DPs to the chief areas of resettlement between July 1947 and the end of 1952.⁴

That one country's recruitment affected the intake of others is obvious. Thus, while in the initial impetus there was a strong element of compassion and a wish to defuse a politically dangerous situation, the search for suitable settlers soon developed into a race between the major countries of immigration. This was, on the whole, fortunate as it gave momentum to the transportation of the refugees in large numbers. However, emphasis on the advantages to be gained from the resettlement of the homeless also brought with it a blunting of the original charitable motivation, and led some countries, including Australia, to strike hard bargains and to use strong recruitment methods.

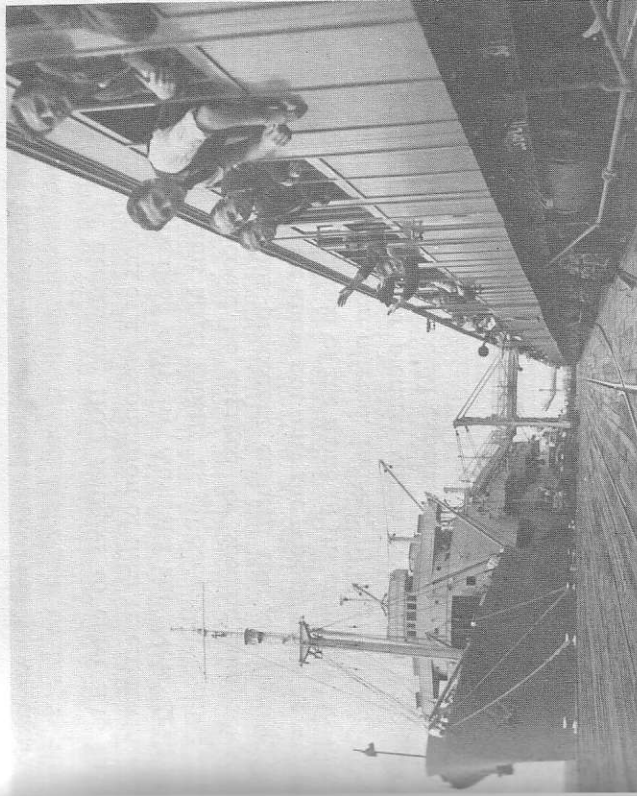
The selection team of two, sent to Germany by Calwell in July 1947, was soon augmented to four and set up in Bad Pyrmont in the British Zone of Germany under the control of the Head of the Australian Military Mission, who was for this purpose placed under the direction of the Minister for Immigration. It was the duty of this team, and the teams which later augmented it, to disseminate recruitment material and to carry out selection.

Special features: reception, accommodation and the 'contract'

To coincide with the arrival of the *General Heintzelman*, the first IRO vessel carrying Displaced Persons to Australia under the Mass Scheme, Calwell issued a ministerial statement spelling out the special provisions made for the reception, accommodation and job allocation of displaced persons:

To accommodate these displaced persons until they are settled in employment, a former military camp at Bonegilla, near Wodonga, has been fitted out as a reception and training centre. At this camp the migrants will be given a further course of instruction in utilitarian English, Australian social conditions and other subjects which will assist their easy absorption into the community . . .

The Commonwealth Employment Service has undertaken to co-operate in placing European migrants in employment. Since they will have been selected with a view to meeting our known



DPs transferred at Fremantle from the General Heintzelman to HMAS Kanimbla disembark and entrain at Port Melbourne (Department of Immigration photograph file)

labour requirements, there will be no difficulty in securing suitable employment with a minimum of delay for all the displaced persons who are brought here.

The decision to accommodate these migrants on arrival in a well organized reception and training centre is an entirely new departure from previous immigration plans. It is, in fact, revolutionary, and is the first experiment of its kind to be undertaken in this country. I am confident that it can only result in much benefit, both to Australia, and to the migrant who will, in addition to continuing his lessons in English, be informed on Australian conditions as well as the benefits and obligations of Australian citizenship.⁵

In regard to conditions of employment, the statement said:

The Commonwealth Government has accepted full responsibility for the reception of these migrants and their settlement in employment. The migrants themselves, however, are required to remain at least one year in the employment to which they are allocated. It is intended generally to employ them in country

areas rather than in the cities and many will go to rural employment.⁶

The policy of demanding IRO refugees to enter into such open-ended indentures as a precondition of their resettlement was an arrangement practised only by Australia and New Zealand. Other selection teams acted mostly as go-betweens seeking out suitable DPs who could be engaged for specific companies as contract workers. This procedure ensured that on signing the contract the immigrant knew not only the type of work he was to undertake but was advised of the name of the company, its location and the remuneration offered. Indeed, in some instances the DPs were shown films or pictures which gave them some idea about the conditions they could expect.

The Australian scheme was different. It entailed no 'contract', although the unilateral undertaking which the DP had to sign was referred to as such by IRO staff, the DPs and members of the Australian Missions. The wording of the document which the DP signed changed slightly with the passage of time. During the peak years of the DP intake, the following form was used:

Undertaking:

I hereby certify that the personal particulars supplied by me to the Australian Selection Officers are true in every respect and that I have made myself familiar with the conditions under which displaced persons can emigrate to Australia. I fully understand that I must remain in the employment found for me for a period of up to two years and that I shall not be permitted to change that employment during that period without the consent of the Department of Immigration.

Full name (Blocks)

Signature

Date

The system had both advantages and disadvantages. Its advantages were mainly administrative, economic and political. From the administrative point of view, selection based on good health and general ability to carry out unskilled jobs simplified procedures. It obviated the necessity of matching applicants with vacancies and was a key factor in enabling Australia to become the recipient of more DPs than any other country except the USA. Once in Australia, the *carte blanche* signed by the refugees meant

that refugees could be sent to areas or sectors needing labour with little regard to individual backgrounds. Indeed, complete shipments were on occasions diverted by radio to ports close to areas with labour shortages to satisfy urgent demands. The economic advantage of the system was obvious: the DPs arriving in a country with over full employment were to be kept away from luxury industries which would have competed for their labour and were reserved to fill vacancies in essential industries and services. They were also to be used in jobs at distant locations avoided by Australians, and in developmental projects which necessitated camp-type accommodation.

The political advantages were at least as significant and were no doubt paramount in Calwell's mind.⁷ By restricting the occupational choices of the refugees, the contract ensured that the immigrants would present no competition to Australian labour, and that the scheme would be palatable to the trade unions. In this respect it was important that although the DPs were to be directed to specific jobs, within those jobs they were to enjoy the same conditions and wages as the Australian worker, and they were encouraged, or even expected, to join trade unions. Also, as the immigration of non-British persons on such scale was new, it was important to test Australian reactions to the scheme. The two year contract (the initial 'one year', and subsequent 'up to two years' was soon interpreted unilaterally as, and later substituted, by 'two years') meant that the DPs, could be quickly extracted from industrial situations which would prejudice the continued acceptance of the scheme should this be politically expedient. As it turned out the use of DPs in essential industries and services in dire need of labour soon resulted in spectacular improvements, details of which were seized upon by the Department of Immigration. By publicising the contribution made by the refugees, public acceptance and the continuation of non-British immigration was ensured.

On the debit side, the undertaking was clearly arbitrary and carried the seeds of misunderstanding and bitterness. This was unfortunate, for Australia wanted loyal, enthusiastic life-long settlers first of all; workforce needs were of secondary importance in the minds of the designers of the scheme.

Nevertheless, as the majority of the displaced persons were healthy, relatively young and as most of them did not speak

English, it was an advantage that the Commonwealth took on its shoulders the most acute problems of the new arrivals: orientation, accommodation and employment.

The search for quality: nationality as a criterion

Calwell realised that the initial impression made by the first shipment of immigrants to reach Australia was critical for the success of the whole scheme. Consequently, when selection began in the British and American zones of Germany, the most stringent standards were applied.

Baltic people were held in high regard by most other countries recruiting displaced persons. This fact, together with the Immigration Advisory Committee's preference for these people and his own impressions persuaded Calwell to have the first shipment, if at all possible, comprise only Baltic refugees. All those selected were to be single people under 40 years of age. Eventually 840 DPs comprising 726 men and 114 women (138 Estonians, 262 Latvians, and 440 Lithuanians) embarked in Bremenhaven aboard USAT *General Heintzelman*.

The first group of refugees made an excellent impression on everyone. One of the ship's officers commented:

Most of these passengers consisted of young men and women. They were well dressed, carried additional clothing, made a fine appearance and looked bright and intelligent. Most were from the Baltic countries and the majority spoke English or German. Many of these displaced persons had college or university degrees and among them were engineers, chemists, artists, lawyers. It was indeed a select group of young people.⁸

The warm reception given to the shipment in Australia convinced Calwell that the Baltic image of the DPs should be preserved. From then on he often referred to the displaced as 'Baltic' or 'Baltic people', long after approval had been given for the inclusion of other nationalities.⁹ This was a typical Calwell touch, and it meant that for years all non-British, non-Mediterranean immigrants were by unsuspecting Australians referred to as 'Baltic' — a misuse of the term to which many of the immigrants, including some from the Baltic area, vehemently objected.

It soon became clear that if both the high standards of selection and the narrow age criterion were to be maintained, the

limitation on nationalities would have to be liberalised. As recruitment progressed, therefore, restrictions based on nationality were one after the other relinquished and displaced persons from almost all countries who satisfied the IRO of their eligibility became acceptable for the Mass Scheme. The approximate dates when nationalities became eligible for the Mass Scheme were:

July 1947	Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians
September 1947	Slovenes, Ukrainians
January 1948	Yugoslavs, Czechs
May 1948	Poles (single, or childless employable married couples only)
July 1948	Hungarians
August 1948	White Russians

Table 4.1 Nationalities of Displaced Persons Arriving in Australia under the Mass Resettlement Scheme Showing Years of Arrival

	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Total
Albanian			109	98	28	—	—	—	235
Austrian		5	196	57	61	—	5	—	324
Bulgarian			185	410	110	13	—	—	718
Czechoslovak		322	2950	4707	844	296	23	—	9142
Danish			4	6	1	—	—	—	11
Estonian	138	1032	2857	1145	140	17	—	—	5329
French			9	12	13	—	—	—	34
German		6	738	801	330	68	32	—	1975
Greek			19	12	9	—	6	—	46
Hungarian		5	5231	5202	1195	271	15	—	11919
Italian		4	17	56	91	3	1	—	172
Latvian	262	2516	10557	5325	674	77	10	—	19421
Lithuanian	440	1800	5972	1519	146	24	5	—	9906
Norwegian			2	—	—	—	—	—	2
Polish		1995	26871	31049	3109	321	49	—	63394
Romanian		6	397	940	251	45	—	—	1639
Russian		75	1201	1384	463	127	6	—	3256
Swedish			20	3	—	—	—	—	23
Ukrainian		833	7928	5192	483	20	8	—	14464
Yugoslav		1317	7728	10580	3155	722	40	1	23543
Stateless		26	2153	1406	578	43	241	4	4451
Others		11	342	308	27	8	—	—	696
	840	9953	75486	70212	11708	2055	441	5	170700

Source: Department of Immigration unpublished statistics

Table 4.2 Religion of Displaced Persons in Australia in Conjunction with Nationality (percentages)

Nationality	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Roman Catholic (Greek Rite)	Eastern Orthodox	Hebrew	Other	Indefinite	No Reply	Total
Czechoslovak	14.8	76.5	3.2	1.4	—	.1	1.0	2.8	100.0
Estonian	88.8	1.5	.7	5.6	—	—	.4	3.0	100.0
German	49.6	38.7	1.3	3.3	1.1	—	.4	5.4	100.0
Hungarian	22.8	72.5	1.7	3.3	1.1	.1	.2	.4	100.0
Latvian	80.3	10.9	1.0	4.5	—	.1	—	3.2	100.0
Lithuanian	12.9	73.3	.9	9.3	—	.2	.2	3.4	100.0
Polish	2.5	83.3	6.8	6.0	.5	—	.1	.8	100.0
Romanian	8.4	36.7	5.6	47.4	.9	—	.2	.5	100.0
Russian	2.5	9.7	5.7	80.5	.4	—	.2	.8	100.0
Ukrainian	2.3	7.9	48.9	39.1	—	.1	—	1.7	100.0
Yugoslav	3.9	62.4	1.1	30.5	.1	.1	—	1.0	100.0
Stateless	4.6	30.4	3.5	59.3	.7	—	.4	.7	100.0
Other	10.4	44.1	2.6	27.3	—	15.6	—	—	100.0

Source: Zubrzycki's 10 per cent Survey

Table 4.3 Male and Female Arrivals Born in Germany and Austria by Nationality with an Estimate of Wives Born in Germany and Austria

Nationality	Est. total born in G. and A. males	Est. total born in G. and A. females	Surplus: wives born in G. and A. (est.)	Approximate proportion of G. and A. born wives to all women aged 20-39 of same nat'y
Czechoslovak	185	240	50	1/30
Estonian	137	279	130	1/13
Hungarian	450	765	260	1/10
Latvian	588	1213	570	1/7
Lithuanian	410	678	240	1/7
Polish	6770	9064	2000	1/7
Russian	320	510	180	1/7
Ukrainian	1170	1730	500	1/8
Yugoslavs	890	2028	1000	1/4

Sources: Total German and Austrian-born calculated on percentages based on Zubrzycki's 10 per cent Survey. Wife surplus estimates based on assumed 1.05:1 male:female child ratio, minus approx. 10% error.

- February 1949 Poles with families
- April 1949 Albanians, Romanians, Bulgarians
- May 1949 All nationalities accepted by IRO.¹⁰

However, lest anti-Semitic sentiments in Australia should jeopardise the immigration programme, selection teams were instructed not to include more than fifteen per cent Jews in any transport.¹¹ In fact the Jewish content of the scheme turned out to be well under three per cent, the reason being that Jews on the whole avoided the Mass Scheme with its contract obligation, relying instead on assistance given by Jewish organizations such as HIAS and JOINT to provide for their passage. It was in the same spirit of avoiding controversies that Calwell instructed the selection teams to reject applications even from those *Volksdeutsche* who after screening were declared eligible for assistance by the IRO. However, the intake did include approximately 5000 German and Austrian-born wives of DPs who on marriage assumed the nationality of their husbands (Table 4.3).

In the final count the scheme brought to Australia sixteen per cent of the total resettled DPs.

Table 4.4 Sex and Age of Displaced Persons Arriving in Australia, by Calendar Years

Age Groups	1947		1948		1949		1950		1951		1952		1953/54		Male Grand Total		Female Grand Total		% of Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	—	—	80	82	5003	4743	5837	5772	974	861	94	112	23	26	12011	11596	12.0	16.4		
5-9	—	—	62	59	2153	2124	1940	1872	352	332	69	52	24	20	4600	4459	4.6	6.3		
10-14	—	—	60	46	1546	1500	1387	1337	252	252	35	29	5	4	3285	3169	3.3	4.5		
15-19	55	8	349	193	2094	1561	1965	1430	469	280	127	57	20	10	5079	3539	5.1	5.0		
20-24	273	25	1541	763	6453	5175	5248	4691	913	739	329	144	67	19	14824	11556	14.8	16.4		
25-29	200	42	1902	652	9109	6518	8425	6258	1255	965	310	151	66	32	21267	14618	21.2	20.7		
30-34	99	15	1173	353	5657	3037	5054	2644	777	509	132	87	55	22	12947	6667	13.0	9.4		
35-39	87	21	1103	356	5573	2813	4956	2099	701	350	83	45	13	12	12516	5696	12.5	8.1		
40-44	13	1	644	196	3557	1860	2868	1327	459	265	59	33	12	8	7612	3690	7.6	5.2		
45-49	—	—	206	77	1596	992	1133	880	205	161	25	23	5	1	3170	2134	3.2	3.0		
50-54	—	—	24	15	501	535	590	622	92	110	7	14	—	1	1214	1297	1.2	1.8		
55-59	—	—	10	7	223	350	364	427	74	87	5	11	—	—	676	882	.7	1.2		
60 & over	—	—	—	—	252	561	439	647	117	155	11	11	—	1	819	1375	.8	2.0		
Total	727	113	7154	2799	43717	31769	40206	30006	6642	5066	1286	769	290	156	100022	70678	100.0	100.0		
	840	9953	75486	70212					11708	2055	446				170700		100.0			

Source: Department of Immigration unpublished statistics

The search for quality: sex, age, family composition and health criteria

Concentrating on securing employable males, and to a lesser extent employable females, Australia only reluctantly and slowly accepted children, home-bound mothers and the aged — displaced persons whose presence would put a strain on housing and essential services (see Table 4.4). Not only were there seven males to every two females among the arrivals of the first sixteen months, but even more significantly, less than four per cent of the refugees landed were children. These required the care and attention of no more than 3 per cent of the intake, leaving some 93 per cent of all immigrants available for job placement.¹²

However, it soon became evident that refugees of working age with no dependents were in limited supply and selection policies would have to be modified if the flow of departures was to be maintained, let alone increased. Consequently in April 1948 a

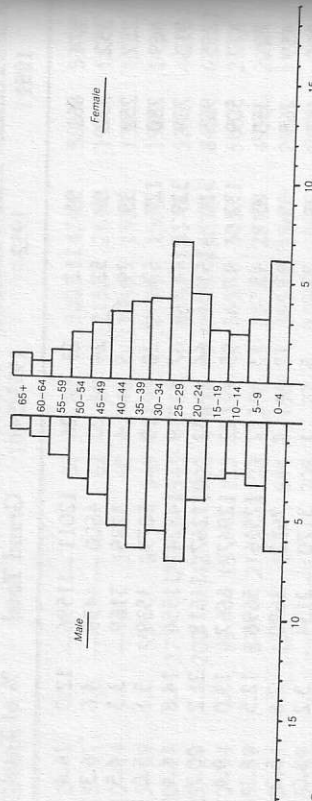
review of selection policies was carried out. As a result, by September 1948 the principle of *net gain* became the basis for the selection of family units, though dependents even then had to stay back occasionally, joining breadwinners later as housing became available.

As illustrated in Table 4.4, although the new policy resulted in an improvement of the balance of sexes and in a broadening of the age categories, the composition of the intake still remained slanted towards young adults, particularly young men. A comparison between the sex and age pyramids of the Australian and USA intakes in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 highlights this Australian preference.¹³ A similar preference for young, able workers also characterised the Canadian intake.¹⁴

The predominance of young age groups among Australia's DPs probably reflects not only the drive for young people, but also Australia's stringent health criteria to which mainly older refugees fell victim. Senior IRO officials were well aware of this. In an interview given in 1965 one of them said:

FIGURE 4.2

Sex and age structure of DPs selected for the United States



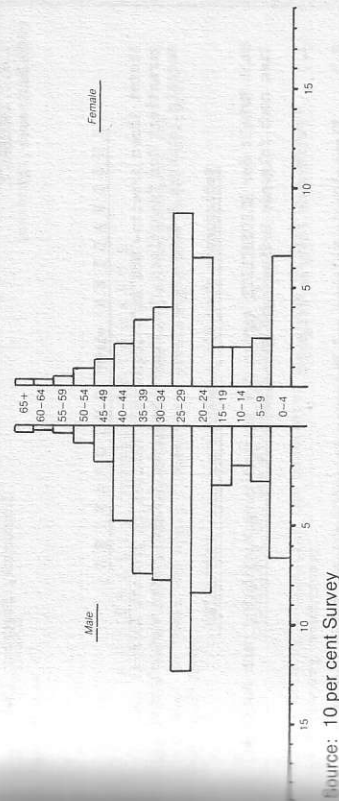
Source: US Displaced Persons Commission, Annual Report to the President 1952, p.368

The general impression was that Australia did well for herself from the IRO and drove a very hard bargain. The high medical standards etc. meant that Australia skimmed the cream and got some very good migrants. Fair enough... if what Australia wanted were good immigrants for population building; but other countries — U.S.A., U.K., N.Z., etc. — came into the IRO not because they wanted immigrants but because they were ready to help with a humanitarian problem and, in fact, didn't want immigrants. The bargain was especially tough in that it cost IRO a lot to ship migrants to Australia.

But, above all, it made things difficult for the IRO in selling the scheme elsewhere — after all, one had a much better chance of getting other countries to take refugees if those available were a good cross-section: if the cream had been skimmed it was much harder.

Also Australian medical standards were a bit absurd. The medical advice given the IRO was that persons with a healed T.B. scar were probably immune and less likely to contact T.B. than those with no sign of infection. But Australia wouldn't accept them...

But though the IRO had these feelings... they recognized the value of the Australian contribution and if one asked any of the IRO people which countries did most to help solve the refugee problem they would unhesitatingly say the U.S.A., U.K., Israel and Australia.¹⁵

FIGURE 4.3
Sex and age structure of DPs selected for Australia

Source: 10 per cent Survey

The search for quality: calling the well qualified

References to 'high quality' and 'finest quality' were recurrent words in the migration officers' vocabulary. Vague as these expressions were it is clear that the educational level of the prospective immigrant was important. For example, the high proportion of 'intellectuals' and professionally qualified people among Latvians, Estonians, Lithuanians and Hungarians was cited when describing DPs of these nationalities as excellent types and arguing for their inclusion in the scheme, while the generally low level of education among some other groups was mentioned with dismay, and apparently militated against their acceptance. There was thus an intriguing contradiction in that recruitment aimed at workers who would sign a 'blank cheque' contract for two years to perform jobs which Australians were unwilling to do, while the selection criteria singled out the well educated.

Some of the recruitment material distributed in the refugee camps also emphasised Australia's eagerness to receive people with qualifications and promised them freedom to practise their trades and professions. The stencilled leaflet (Figure 4.4) preserved by a doctor who was later denied practice in Australia is an

FIGURE 4.4

Australian DP recruitment leaflet Innsbruck, November 1949

I.R.O. INNSBRUCK
Falkstrasse 17

Innsbruck, November 1949

A U S T R A L I E N wärbt E M I G R A N T E N,

bietet ihnen Arbeits- und Aufstiegsmöglichkeiten in grossem Ausmass und garantiert dem Tüchtigen eine aussichtsreiche Zukunft unter verhältnismässig leichten Bedingungen.

Bedingungen fuer die Auswanderung nach AUSTRALIEN:

Nach Erhalt der ELIGIBILITE werden dem Auswanderungskandidaten nach Australien noch folgende Bedingungen gestellt:

- 1.) Politische Zuverlässigkeit
- 2.) Ehrwandfreie Haltung und Fuehrung im oeffentlichen Leben (amtlich belegt durch ein polizeiliches Fuehrungszeugnis)
- 3.) Aufenthalt in Oesterreich seit mindestens 3 Monaten
- 4.) Bestimmungen ueber Eheschliessung:
Australien anerkennt die kirchliche Trauung,
jedoch bei Heirat mit einer Oesterreicherin oder einer Staatsangehoerigen, die die Eligibilite erst durch die Heirat erwaert, ist nach Abschluss der Ehe nach eine Frirt von 6 Monaten erforderlich, un der Australischen Komm. sion vorgestellt werden zu koennen.
- 5.) Altersbegrenzungen: bei alleinstehenden Maennern und Ehepartnern ohne Kinder: 45 Jahre,
bei alleinstehenden Frauen und Ehepartnerinnen ohne Kinder: 40 Jahre,
bei Familien mit Kindern kann das Familienoberhaupt bis zu 50 Jahren sein,
bei "DEPENDANTS", d.h. nicht arbeitenden Familienangehoerigen besteht grundsaeztzlich keine Altersbegrenzung.
- 6.) Familienbegrenzungen:
Familienangehoerigen wird die Bewilligung zur Ausreise in dem Ausmass erteilt, dass ein Gleichgewicht zwischen arbeitenden und nicht arbeitenden Familienangehoerigen besteht, Kinder im Mindestalter von 6 Monaten, Eltern, Geschwaister und auch Verwandte im weiteren Sinne koennen als "DEPENDANTS" mitgenommen werden - im naecheren wird eine Auswahl durch den Konsul selbst bei der Vorstellung getroffen.

7. Berufsbegrenzungen:
solche bestehen fuer Australien grundsaeztzlich nicht. Jeder in einem bestimmten Beruf ausgebildete D.P. hat die Zuesicherung, in einem diesem Beruf entsprechenden Fach arbeiten zu koennen.
Diese Bestimmung gilt naementlich auch fuer Aerzte.
- 8.) Bildungsgrad: Analphabeten ausgeschlossen.

Ueber Moeglichkeiten, Verhaeltnisse, Loehne und vor allem ueber den vorbildlichen Ausbau der sozialen Fuehrlicht-unwen in Australien geben Ihnen zahlreiche Broschueren Auskunft.

I.R.O. INNSBRUCK - AUSTRALISCHE ANSTELTUNG.

FIGURE 4.5

Translation of Australian DP recruitment leaflet shown in Figure 4.4

I.R.O. INNSBRUCK
Falkstrasse 17

Innsbruck, November 1949

A U S T R A L I A recruits E M I G R A N T S

offers them on a large scale opportunities for work and advancement and guarantees to those who apply themselves a promising future under relatively easy conditions.

Conditions for Emigration to AUSTRALIA:

After obtaining ELIGIBILITY the candidates will have to comply also with the following conditions:

- 1.) Political reliability
- 2.) Irreproachable conduct and behaviour in public life (verified officially by a conduct certificate issued by the police)
- 3.) At least 3 months residence in Austria
- 4.) Regulations relating to marriages:
Australia recognises church weddings,
but in the case of a marriage to a woman of Austrian citizenship or to a citizen who acquires the eligibility only through this marriage, a period of 6 months must elapse after the marriage before appearing before the Australian Commission.
- 5.) Age restrictions: for unaccompanied men and married men without children: 45 years,
for unaccompanied women and married women without children: 40 years,
for families with children the head of the family may be up to 50 years old,
for DEPENDANTS, i.e., non working relatives there are in principle no age restrictions.
- 6.) Family restrictions:
Permit to emigrate will be accorded to relatives only so far as an equilibrium is maintained between working and non-working members of a family. DEPENDANTS could include children aged at least 6 months, parents, brothers and sisters, as well as relations in the wider sense - an exact decision on this will be made by the Consul at the time of the interview.

- 7.) Occupational restrictions:
basically such do not exist in Australia. Any D.P. trained for a particular vocation has the assurance that he will be able to work in a corresponding field. This regulation also applies specifically to medical practitioners.

- 8.) Level of Education: Illiterates excluded.

There are numerous brochures which can give you information on the opportunities, conditions, wages, and the organisation of social institutions in Australia which are the unmatched model for all. I.R.O. INNSBRUCK - AUSTRALIAN SECTION

example of the type of misleading information disseminated among DPs which on at least one occasion led to disapproval from IRO executives.¹⁶

Was such mischievous and irresponsible propaganda restricted to written information or was it also reinforced by verbal enticement by recruitment staff? Apparently it depended on the 'consul' the DP was to meet. When interviewed later in Australia, 45 per cent of former refugees holding diplomas and degrees in medicine, architecture, engineering and science stated that while in Europe they were led to believe that either on their arrival or at least after the expiry of their contract they would be permitted to work in their professions. On the other hand 33 per cent stated that they were explicitly told by Australian immigration officials that they would face serious difficulties. Twenty-two per cent said that they did not care to inquire as they just wanted to leave Europe.¹⁷

Wide research uncovered no instances of misleading information emanating from Canberra: inaccurate information appears to have originated either from the office of Brigadier F.G. Galleghan, Head of the Australian Military Mission in Berlin or from some, but not all, teams working under his supervision.

Insufficient control from Canberra, an ignorance of the conditions relating to the licensing of professional workers and those with higher trade qualifications, and lack of sympathy towards professional expectations by hurriedly assembled and poorly qualified staff were some of the factors which contributed to the dissemination of inaccurate information. An overeagerness to please Canberra by recruiting 'high quality immigrants' in large numbers may also have played its part. Other causes could have included the laying of overmuch emphasis on the urgent, 'rescue' nature of the operation, and the failure to realise that once freed from daily deprivation each refugee would seek work for fulfilment. In addition the words of the 'contract' by no means excluded the logical expectation, that though they would be directed to essential services, possibly in remote areas, the DPs would be given work in their own fields. Cultural differences between the status conscious central and eastern Europeans and their egalitarian interviewers were a powerful source of misunderstanding, which caused lasting bitterness to many displaced persons holding professional and trade qualifications.

Desperation, daring and decision

There can be no doubt that more thorough, and perhaps more honest, guidance would have provided the DPs with a better idea of their occupational chances. However it is improbable that even wise and earnest counselling could have prevailed against acute fears, inextinguishable hope, or the terror of a life slipping away in abject disarray. Twenty years later some DPs recounted the motivations, hopes and pressures which culminated in the decision to sign up for the Mass Scheme, a decision for each momentous in its consequences:

I wanted to get away, to get married, I would have signed for 10 years. That was the state of my mind at that time. (Respondent 143)

I had no other choice. (Respondent 147)

I had no expectations. I thought as long as I will be able to buy classical recordings and have a radiogram, it should be all right. (Respondent 357)

I left from desperation. After the experience of the life in the camp any place looked better than Austria.' (Respondent 436)

I did not think of difficulties. It was another example of extreme confidence of youth. (Respondent 515)

Migration office in Germany advised me not to mention my studies — be a labourer. (Respondent 531)

I chose to come here because life in camps became unbearable (hunger, crowded conditions, uncertainty as to what action U.S., Britain and France were planning to do with the D.P.'s — many were deported to Communist Countries against their will). Australia seemed a good country (of what I knew of it then) and then it seemed at the other end of the world, far away from Communism and European war upheavals. (Respondent 621)

Such were the feelings of tens of thousands of displaced persons who embarked in Bremerhaven or Napoli on the long, trying voyage to begin a new life in Australia.

Endnotes

1. AR:ANU 1.
2. Holborn (1956:410-1. 442).
3. Australia. Minister for Immigration. Press statement of 8 July 1948.
4. Israel, the second largest recipient of displaced persons, is not shown in Figure 4.1 as only in rare instances did her special appeal to Jews bring her into competition with other countries.
5. Australia, Minister for Immigration (1947b:3,8-9).
6. Australia, Minister for Immigration (1947b:8).
7. Calwell (1972:104) and Kunz (1977).
8. AR:ANU 2.
9. The House of Representatives Hansard contains many such references to Balts. Some examples from 1948: 7 April, v.196, p.598; 9 April, v.196, p.813; 14 April, v.196, p.833; 28 April, v.196, p.1135; 29 April, v.196, p.1241; 2 June, v.197, pp.1605-7; 17 and 18 June, v.197, pp.2310-1.
10. Compiled from ANU Department of Demography files; Initiation of the Scheme; Selection Policy, various pages. (AR:ANU 2).
11. *The Bulletin* (Sydney) was particularly notable, for example 23 July 1947 and 6 August 1947. In the Federal Parliament there were many questions directed to the Minister for Immigration on Jews, for example Francis, 25 March 1947, v.190, p.1088; Lang, 8 May 1947, v.191, p.2093; 16 May 1947, v.192, p.2517; 4 June 1947, v.192, p.3332; Hamilton, 2 October, v.193, p.425.
12. Based on tables of 'Family status of assisted immigrants arriving in Australia', published in various issues of the Department of Immigration's Statistical Bulletins. The figures are approximate.
13. Departmental statistics are available for sex and age of the DPs, but these characteristics were not cross classified by place of birth or nationality. To enable further comparisons of the sex and age structures of the various nationalities brought to Australia under the scheme the pyramid calculated from the ten per cent survey was used throughout this study. Though the survey indicates a slightly older intake than departmental data would suggest, the difference is not significant on the 5 per cent level.
14. Walmsey (1954:213).
15. AR:ANU 2.
16. Cf. Kunz (1975a:13-20).
17. Tertiary Sample.

5

Baltic Vintages: Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians

Baltic vintages

The histories of the three Baltic states — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — between 1939 and 1945 are sufficiently alike to discuss them under the one heading.

When Russia and Germany occupied Poland in September 1939, the westward advance of the Russian armies caused considerable anxiety in the Baltic states. By October, Hitler, aware of the impending invasion of the Baltic states by Russia and wishing to acquire German settlers for the German-occupied parts of Poland, instructed his ministers in Estonia and Latvia to demand the release of ethnic German minority groups so that they could become settlers in German-occupied Poland.

Embarkation of ethnic Germans began from Latvia in the second week of October, although a treaty providing for the move was not signed until 30 October 1939. Movements from Estonia began after the signing of a protocol on 15 October. The *Volkssdeutsche* of Lithuania were not evacuated at this stage. The population transfers proceeded rapidly, stimulated by the fear of Soviet annexation and by the not inconsiderable pressure exerted by Himmler, who was in charge of the programme. By January 1940 some 48 600 had left Latvia and 12 900 had left Estonia. A substantial number of these were not ethnic Germans, but Esto-

and resist German demands for the persecution of her Jewry. Though accepting the return of the Hungarian-settled areas of Czechoslovakia (1938) and Romania (1940) from Mussolini and Hitler, Hungary refused to join with Germany against Yugoslavia. In 1941, in order to forestall a German thrust south in which Hungarian participation would be demanded, the government of Pál Teleki effected a quick rapprochement with Yugoslavia. A German ultimatum followed, resulting in the suicide of the Premier, and having thus dramatically demonstrated her helplessness position Hungary entered the war on 27 June 1941.

Hungary co-operated with Germany only reluctantly, and under the premiership of Kállay desperate efforts were made to reduce the country's military and political involvement. Finally German forces invaded the country on 19 March 1944, arrested Kállay, and forced the appointment of a pro-German government.

In October 1944 Horthy and his circle tried once more to break off hostilities by approaching the Russians with an armistice offer. The Germans retaliated by besieging the Royal Palace, arresting Horthy and appointing the leader of the Hungarian minority Nazi party, Szálasi, as their quisling. Szálasi immediately ordered an all-out effort to continue the war and to persecute Jews, liberals, conservatives and democrats. It was under these anarchic conditions that the Russian armies besieged Budapest between December 1944 and February 1945. The occupation of the country was completed in April 1945.

As the Red Army advanced through the Carpathians into Hungary in the middle of 1944, part of the Hungarian Army, adhering to the armistice order of the Regent, surrendered or changed into civilian clothing. Similarly, most of the population, trusting Western guarantees for free democratic life after the war, stayed behind. There were those, however, who decided to fight to the last, even if this meant fighting on German soil under German command. There were also soldiers wedged between units under pro-German command who had no choice but to continue fighting. Ahead of them civilians jammed the roads leading west.² Evacuees were numerous, and comprised not only civilians cleared from battle areas, but public servants ordered to assigned locations with their departments. The number who took part in this immense westward movement has been variously estimated at between 300 000 and 1 500 000 people, and involved

10 Hungarians

The problems which the Treaty of Trianon of 1920 created for Hungary were the opposite of those faced by newly formed Czechoslovakia. While Czechoslovakia's difficulties lay in the ethnic diversity and large masses of restive minorities, Trianon reduced Hungary to one-third of its former size and left over half of her population outside her borders. Freed from her former ethnic problems Hungary became central Europe's most homogeneous country, but among those the treaty severed from Hungary were three and a quarter million Magyars, of whom some 1 600 000 lived in blocks adjacent to the border.¹

The discontent of Hungary's remaining population, and the desire of ethnic Magyars outside the boundaries to return, produced a volatile atmosphere. Disarmed by the conditions imposed by Trianon, afraid of Russia and distrusting Germany's aims in the east, Hungary looked towards Italy, whose anti-French, anti-Yugoslav leanings, as well as her apprehension of a possible German advance into Austria, made her a natural ally. However, with Mussolini's change of heart the 'Italian line' as a balance against German ascendancy collapsed, and German propaganda played on the desire of Hungarians for the return of the Hungarian populated areas lost through the Trianon Treaty.

The Regent, Admiral Horthy, threw in his lot with those aiming to preserve neutrality, or at least to keep involvement on the German side to a minimum. From 1938 to 1945 pro- and anti-German governments alternated in Hungary, making the Germans wary enough not to press their demands too far. In this way, though almost totally surrounded by belligerent and ardent-ly pro-German countries, Hungary managed to remain neutral

men, women and children.³ Contemporary communist propaganda gave the name 'westwarders' to those taking part in this huge refugee movement, and although originally used in a derogatory sense, the word remained in use to distinguish this important exodus from later vintages.

It was fear of Russian atrocities that led many to flee, and their fears were justified: it took several months before order was restored. Not surprisingly, at the election held in October 1945 the anti-communist parties scored a resounding victory, Communist Party polling only 17.1 per cent of the vote.

As news of the electoral victory spread west refugees began to return in ever increasing numbers. By 1 July 1947 the IRO had on its registers only some 8000 Jews and 1600 non-Jewish Hungarians. Hungarian sources gave the number of Hungarians living in the US zone of Germany as 23 000, indicating that the total number of refugees, including those in other zones of Germany and nearer to the Hungarian border in Austria, may have been twice or even three times as many.⁴

Following the communist defeat in the election the Russian occupying force moved to gain control for the Communist Party by other means. Through Marshal Voroshilov, who was installed as Chairman of the Allied Control Commission, the Russians demanded a coalition government in which the Communist Party should hold the key portfolio of Ministry of Interior, in charge of police. Between 1946 and 1949 anti-communist parliamentarians, including Cabinet ministers, were one after the other arrested either by the communist-directed police or by the Russian army. This takeover gave rise to two new vintages of refugees.

The first vintage consisted in the main of Jewish people who, sensing that economic life would become progressively socialised, began leaving soon after 1946. They were on the whole anticipatory refugees: they left with one-way passports and with their possessions while the road was still open, and obtained overseas landing permits before leaving.

During 1946 and 1947 there were few non-Jews leaving Hungary, but by 1948 it became clear that Western promises of free determination had yielded to Yalta, and from behind the ever more closely watched borders a new vintage of refugees began fleeing to the West. The method of their flight exerted selectivity; the refugees were agile, mostly male, young and well-educated.

Many were either connected with the dissolved political parties or with other resistance activities. A considerable proportion claimed the distinction of being 'double proof', many indeed having served in the resistance movements against the Nazis before 1945 and against the communists after that date. In their ranks there were many university students as well as men of various professions, especially from those fields where giving vent to one's opinion was part of their daily activity such as clergymen, teachers, journalists and lawyers. Among them were also some adventurous youngsters who had had their fill of poverty in defeated Hungary, and tradesmen and merchants escaping the threat of socialisation. Notably absent from this group were the peasants, from whom the land given by the land reform of 1945 and 1946 had not yet been taken back by collectivisation, and the industrial proletariat, in whose name the regime acted.

Thus the approximately 100 000 to 150 000 Hungarian refugees who ultimately had to be resettled overseas or integrated into the economies of European countries were made up of four basic vintages. First were the survivors from Nazi concentration camps. Their number was probably the 8000 reported by Vernant, and most of them eventually settled in Israel. The second vintage was that of the westwarders who did not return, consisting mainly of older refugees, politically conservative or right wing, who had their families with them. The third vintage, comprising mostly Jews were mostly anticipatory refugees who spent little or no time in transit and migrated with assistance from Jewish welfare agencies. The last vintage was that of the border-jumpers, among whom educated young males predominated.

Because the Western Allies initially considered displaced Hungarians as enemy nationals escaping from just retribution meted out by the Red Army, they were deemed, unless Jewish, ineligible for UNRRA support. However, as the role of the Russian Army in converting the elected non-communist government into a communist dictatorship became known in the West, it was conceded that these refugees had valid reasons for seeking asylum. The growing stream of neo-refugees in mid-1948 forced the issue. By December of that year the arrest of Cardinal Mindszenty focussed world sympathy on Hungarians, and IRO assistance became more readily accessible to them.

About 63 000 Hungarians emigrated through the IRO: 16 700

went to the USA and Australia took some 13 000, the majority of whom came through the Mass Scheme. Canada and Israel each took over 7000 while those remaining went mainly to South American countries.

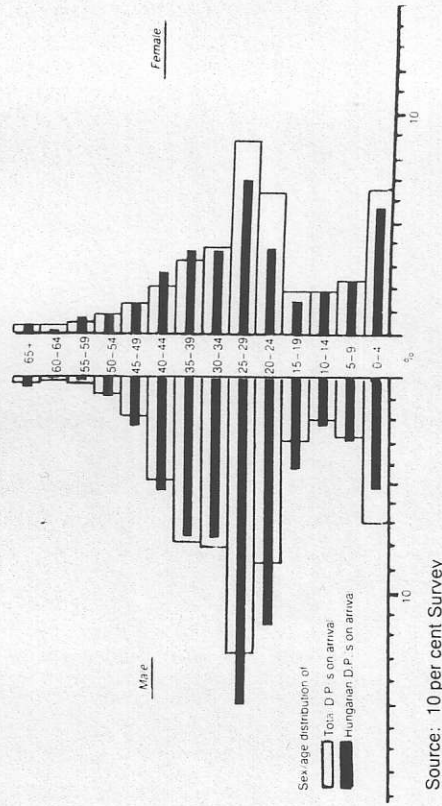
Australia's Hungarian intake

In July 1948 the Australian Military Mission in Europe for the first time drew Canberra's attention to the availability of Hungarians, commenting on the high proportion of intellectuals among them.⁵ Approval from Canberra duly arrived, and by the end of the year the first five Hungarians landed in Australia under the scheme. By the time the Mass Scheme wound up, Hungarians, though late-comers in the field, comprised seven per cent of the DP intake and with a total of 11 919 became the fifth largest national group after Poles, Yugoslavs, Latvians and Ukrainians.

Government Scheme DPs listed as Hungarian nationals were not the only Hungarian speaking immigrants to enter Australia between 1947 and 1954. Several hundred Hungarians within the Scheme came as Czechs or Yugoslavs, and others as Romanians. In addition during the same period about 1650 more Hungarian nationals came outside the government's IRO Scheme. The overwhelming majority of these were Jews or Hungarians of Jewish extraction. In addition to these 'unassisted immigrants', the pre-war Hungarian refugees, who by the time of the 1947 census numbered 702 males and 525 females, were also predominantly Jewish. As in the case of Polish and Czechoslovak immigrants, subsequent censuses include not only Hungarians brought to Australia by the Mass Scheme, but also non-DPs or DPs who came outside the scheme and were therefore not bound by the two year contract.

Significantly, the 14 602 Hungarian-born persons listed in the 1954 census, (of whom around 80 per cent arrived as government-assisted DPs) within three years were joined by an almost equal number of refugees from the Hungarian revolution of 1956. As a consequence estimates of DPs' characteristics based on subsequent censuses are extremely conjectural, unless the Hungarian born DPs can be separated out by periods of residence.

FIGURE 10.1
Sex and age distribution of Hungarian national Mass Scheme DPs on arrival in Australia



Source: 10 per cent Survey

Turning to known characteristics of the DP intake, Figure 10.1 is of considerable interest. This population pyramid, in spite of the application of Australian selection criteria, still carries traces of the basically two-vintage origin of Hungarian DPs. It reveals strong cohorts of predominantly male and young neo-refugees absent from the pyramids resulting from the more typical westward type of population displacements. However it differs also from the purely neo-refugee, excessively young male-biased Czechoslovak pyramid (Figure 9.1) by its better sex balance and wider age distribution, enhanced by the inclusion of the generally older and married westwarders. The male/female ratio of 1756/1000 reflects this composite background; it is more extreme than the sex ratio of Latvians, Estonians, Poles, Ukrainians or Russians but it still considerably better than that of the Czechoslovak neo-refugees.

The proportion of those born in Germany further illustrates the half-way position of the Hungarian displaced refugees between the westwarder and neo-refugee vintages (see Table 4.3). Approximately one in every tenth Hungarian woman in the 20 to 39 age group was a German or Austrian-born wife. This proportion is lower than the one in seven found among most westwarder groups, and attests to the short time spent in transit by the

Table 10.1 Vintage Origins of Hungarian Males, with Birth Dates

Date of birth	Flight vintages				Total	
	1944-1945 (westwarders)		1946-1950 (neo-refugees)		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1890-1905	13	93	1	7	14	100
1906-1915	24	73	9	27	33	100
1916-1930	22	36	39	64	61	100
Total	59	55	49	45	108	100

Source: Tertiary Sample

neo-refugee section of Hungarian DPs. At the same time the relatively high number of German-born among both sexes is a reminder that many of the Hungarian refugee women were of child-bearing age in exile. Of the 1300 Hungarian children of zero to four years of age indicated by the Survey, only 190 were born in Hungary. This suggests that about 85 per cent of these children were born in transit, while fifteen per cent of them would have been carried over the border by their neo-refugee parents.

Table 10.1 shows a 55-45 distribution in favour of the westwarders among males and suggests that with the inclusion of females and children, westwarders would have probably outnumbered the neo-refugees two to one. Though based only on males of the Tertiary Sample arriving in Australia, the table emphasises the wider age-representation among westwarder refugees and the youthful composition of neo-refugee groups shown already.

Only 91 Hungarians of the Tertiary Sample stated their mode of displacement. Of these eleven (twelve per cent) said that they crossed the border as civilian evacuees, 29 (32 per cent) as soldiers of the withdrawing army and 49 (54 per cent) as individual refugees of either vintage. Two (two per cent) of the sample were displaced in 'other circumstances'.

The sample shows that the time spent in transit differed widely. Of the 108 whose time spent in transit is known, 31 (29 per cent) arrived in Australia within one year of crossing the Hungarian border, fourteen (thirteen per cent) within two years and 58 (54 per cent) within three to five years. Only five (five per cent) spent six or more years in transit.

Because many of the respondents spent only a short time outside Hungary, and because the teaching of foreign languages in Hungarian high schools concentrated primarily on German and secondly on French, relatively few Hungarians spoke English on arrival, even among the tertiary educated. Of the 104 whose English rating was recorded, 34 (33 per cent) spoke no English at all and 44 (42 per cent) spoke little. Only eight (eight per cent) spoke fair, sixteen (fifteen per cent) good and two (two per cent) excellent English when landing in Australia.

Educational and occupational levels of the intake

The educational standard of Hungarians who landed in Australia under the DP Scheme was extremely high (see Table 13.1). Whether measured by the proportion of tertiary qualified and active tertiary students, or by the percentage of those who matriculated, Hungarians had the largest proportion of higher educated among any sizeable DP group. Almost half the adult male Hungarians disembarking from DP vessels had at least matriculated, and half of these were either tertiary students or graduates of tertiary institutions.

Indeed Hungarians, who comprised no more than seven per cent of the DP intake, contributed about 20 per cent to the tertiary educated males and perhaps fifteen per cent to the tertiary student males among Mass Scheme DPs (see Table 13.3). Because of this, the specialisation found among Hungarian professionals substantially weighted the composition of the total intake.

The numbers provided by the sample are large enough to serve at least as crude guides to the distribution of specialisation. Of the 89 tertiary qualified Hungarians in the sample 21 (24 per cent) were professional army officers who had graduated from military academies. Eighteen (20 per cent) had graduated in law or administration: this very high figure reflects the omnibus nature of the law degree in Hungary, and the strong civil servant component of the major vintages creating this intake. Graduates in agriculture in the sample numbered eleven (twelve per cent) and medicine seven (eight per cent). As these were difficult professions to break into in Australia, their training resulted in over half of

those with professional qualifications having to face difficult periods of occupational adjustment. Among the tertiary educated, including members of liberal professions, the proportion who at home had held salaried civil service positions was above average. With minimal representation of peasants, the lower educated among Hungarians were mostly tradesmen. According to the full sample, skilled workers outnumbered the unskilled two to one. An unknown potential within the intake was the large number of university students who signed the two year contract without choice. They were overwhelmingly neo-refugees and, like the students coming from Czechoslovakia, not only had youth on their side, but their short time in transit meant that they had suffered less damaging interruptions to their studies than most other displaced students.

Endnotes

1. Cf. Montgomery (1947:48).
2. Cf. Kunz (1969:179-190).
3. Proudfoot (1956:227) 303 000; Vernant (1953:70) 800 000-1 000 000; *ibid* Hungarian Red Cross Report: 400 000; Holborn (1956:182) 1 500 000.
4. Vernant (1953:70-71).
5. Memorandum from Head of Military Mission to Secretary of the Department of Immigration (AR:ANU 1).