

Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Forced Adoptions

Leonie Horin

Part A: The abduction of my baby sister Sally, and background.

This part of my submission was taped and then transcribed.

It's the 9th April 2011.

My name is Leonie Horin.

I am 61 years old and I was born in Melbourne, Victoria in 1950.

I am taping this attachment now for the current Australian Federal Senate Inquiry into Forced Adoptions, 2011.

My earliest memory is of accompanying my father, my Jewish father, to Synagogue on Friday night.

The Synagogue was in Lord St East Brunswick. And we lived in Deakin St East Brunswick, around the corner from Lord St.

My other early memories are of me being taken by members of the Jewish Welfare to Jewish Sunday School and to Zionist Youth activities on Saturday, as well as going to East Brunswick State School during the week.

My memories of all this are not happy, as I clearly remember a lot of abuse, emotional abuse, taunting and bullying because my mother wasn't Jewish.

It left me very sad. I remember being very sad and alone. Who does a 5-6-7 year old child turn to about all this?

When I was picked up and taken by Jewish person – or a Jewish person would come and pick me up – sometimes the same Jewish person, sometimes a different one – would come and pick me up and take me to these Jewish activities. Mainly in Carlton on the weekend. And how could a child of 5, 6, 7, 8 – 9 even, or even 10 – understand they were being child abused?

My family was poor, my mother was sick and my father was sick. And that's my memory of my childhood.

I became very confused, as I was continually told every weekend by these people, who took me from my home to these Jewish activities, and who pointed out disapprovingly that my mother wasn't Jewish and I was not a good “chosen person” like the rest of them.

Of course, I was too young to say – at 6, 7 years of age – well, why are you taking - why am I here? And I was too young to understand, why the Commonwealth Government was allowing me to be abused like this, from a religion that was getting funding from the Australian Government.

I just thought – well, I don't know what I thought.

I just was sad all the time, and came home to my sad, poor mother who was usually sick.

It didn't enter my head to tell my mother. I didn't understand what was happening and I didn't understand it was abuse.

I don't know how a little girl could go home and tell her mother, "they're calling you a 'shiksa' at Sunday School".

Especially if my mother looked like she could barely cope as it was.

As I am now 61, I know I looked very depressed and sad, so why weren't the Jewish Welfare – why didn't they ask me or accompany me to see what was happening at these Jewish Activities.

And why didn't one of these trained people at the Jewish Welfare – these trained, supposedly University-trained social workers – well, they couldn't tell when a child looked child abused, and distraught? I find that hard to believe.

Yes, my mother wasn't Jewish. But that shouldn't have been a crime, that my mother wasn't Jewish. I'm shocked what I went through, and I'm shocked what my mother went through, in our own country.

My mother had no support, when she married my Father, who she met in the City of Melbourne in 1940.

And it looks like they had to get married, because my mother was pregnant – that's what the dates on the marriage documents show, against when my oldest sibling was born.

But I'll put my mother aside. I would like to know what the Jewish Welfare was doing controlling me. A 5 year old, 6 year old and 7 year old little girl. And calling me not Jewish. And taunting me and bullying me.

I also find it very, very confusing that somebody in the Jewish-Welfare, or Jewish relatives, informed the Brunswick East State School that me and my siblings were Jewish. And yet on the weekends, I was humiliatingly pointed out at Jewish Children's Activities, that I wasn't really Jewish, and/or that my mother was a Shiksa.

The Jewish Welfare had federal and state funding to emotionally abuse me and/or my siblings like that?

I'll put that aside for now.

That's the background to what happened next.

My mother told me she was having a baby in 1956, and that I had to go to _____ place.

In 1956, when I was 6 and a half, my mother said she was having another baby, I was sent to _____ place, another Jewish family around the corner. All organised by the Jewish welfare.

And after my mother told me she was going to have another little brother or sister, I was six and a half, and I had to be a good girl and go and stay at _____ place. I'll never forget it.

I felt like I had to do an important job, and go to _____ place, and wait until the baby was born. Mum was going to hospital, and I had to get ready to help her when she came out of hospital.

I went to _____ place, and stayed there. I can't remember if it was a day or a week. I can't remember. It wasn't very nice at _____ place. So maybe it was a short time, but it felt like a long time.

The next thing I remember, is being with Mum, back home, in Deakin St East Brunswick, and the

new baby is there, who Mum and Dad called Sally. my older brother is with Aunty .
He is two years older than me. I was 6 and a half. was four, and was two. They were
either out in the backyard, or out in the kitchen. It was not a big house. But they were not in the
front room with me and Mum.

Before this – I don't know if it was a week before, or maybe it was a day before – I have this
memory of my father yelling out to my mother – and maybe my father thought I was asleep, or
couldn't hear, I don't know -
but he said to my mother, that the Jewish Welfare told him that they had to sell Sally, because they
were too poor to have another child.

I never heard my mother respond. I don't know whether she was so horrified, she couldn't respond. I
might have thought it was a nightmare or something. I don't know what I thought.
Yes, of course I remember it was awful.
But that on its own, I might have forgotten about it, because I was only six and a half.

But – whether it was the next twenty-four hours, or the next day, I don't know, but –
My next memory, is of me being with my mother, and my mother was patting Sally to sleep in a
cot, and I was helping.
I don't know where my father was, and as I said, , my older brother, was with Aunty .

And I was by myself with my mother, in the front room of Deakin St East Brunswick.

And out of nowhere, three Jewish people came into the front room. Two men and a woman. Which
to my horror, I later learned one man and the woman were the illegal adoptive parents.

How did I know these people were Jewish?
I honestly can't remember if I heard them speaking in Yiddish, or because I saw them wearing a
yarmulke, a hat that Jewish men wear. I don't know if it was for one or both of those reasons.

But I knew they were Jewish.
And anyway, the only people who had ever been to our house, were Jewish.
Not that we had many visitors, as I usually got picked up for those Jewish activities after somebody
knocked on the door and waited outside. So we didn't ever have many people – *any* people –
coming inside.

These people just ran in and said something to my mother, and my mother's face went red, and she
screamed, and started crying.

And the woman grabbed baby Sally from the cot, like she was grabbing a bag of stolen loot, and she
ran out the door with Sally just about under her arm like a dog, and the two Jewish men followed.
My mother had fallen to the floor screaming.
I turned around to see the abducting woman getting in the car with Sally and the car driving off.
It was all so fast.
As they ran out the door, they knocked me with Sally's blanket. Something knocked me in the side
of the face. They pretended they didn't see me. I was pushed out of the way like a dog. It was
violent. It was like I wasn't there.

My mother was lying on the floor and crying loudly.

I went over to pat her.

I went over slowly, because I could hardly walk. I had a big lump in my throat. I felt like it was all my fault Sally was taken because the Jews had said I wasn't really Jewish. I felt like Sally had been taken because Mum wasn't really Jewish, and also because Mum had no teeth. I felt really, really awful. I couldn't really talk. I was six years of age, patting my mother on the floor. My crying mother.

Two Greek women came in from next door. They heard my mother screaming and came in through the door. They started yelling at me, "What happen , what happen ."
I couldn't talk. I couldn't answer them.
After about a minute or two, they left. (That's how much they were interested as well.)

My little brother and sister came in from the back yard.
They looked at me and they looked at Mum on the floor crying. I couldn't talk.
My little brother said, "Where's Sally".
I couldn't talk.

After a while, as I was patting Mum, my brother and sister started to lie on Mum. They were both crying. They were getting up and down on Mum, and Mum was crying.
I was patting Mum, and then I was patting them.
I was all by myself with nobody to turn to.

I felt so ashamed.
That Sally was just kidnapped, and I did nothing. I couldn't stop it.
I didn't know what to do. I didn't know who to turn to.

And from that day onwards, I can't remember ever being happy really again.
I've always felt broken, and disturbed, and very confused and very guilty, as if I was a criminal from a criminal family. I thought to myself, only a bad family could have a baby taken off them like that. And I believed I was a very bad person, and I must have been a very bad sister.

As I grew up and saw that it was illegal to kidnap babies or anybody, I could not work out why nobody went to the Police about my sister being kidnapped. And this all reaffirmed in me that we must have been a very bad, shameful family, that nobody even cared about us to go to the Police. And maybe the Police didn't care either. Because we were poor and my mother had no teeth, and because my non-Jewish mother married a Jewish man, I felt that the whole country was saying we were bad.

As I grew up and learned about adoptions, I learned you had to do a special thing and go to a babies home, and do all special forms and screening to adopt a baby.

I've never heard of anybody running in and cruelly grabbing a baby off of a screaming mother, in front of a child.

What sort of a person could take a baby out of a cot, in front of her crying sister? As I've got older, I've thought, what sort of callous people could do such a thing?

And as I got older, I got more and more depressed, to wonder how this could all happen.

In the next few weeks or months, I overheard my father telling my mother that Sally was sold for ₤ 200.

I read records in the last few years where my father was quite sick, and trying to get treatment, but never really did.

But what I don't understand, how come the police weren't called?

How could this all happen?

How could my baby sister, as my father said, be advertised in the Jewish News, abducted and sold?

Where was the Commonwealth of Australia, to protect me from this shocking child-abuse?

Because I wasn't the same child again. It affected me and my siblings. Forever! It's affected our potential to have a good life! It affected my potential to have any life. I can't call the last 50 years of hiding a crime, having a life.

I was a suicidal child, as six years of age. I've never recovered.

I am a distraught, crying human being and I seem to get worse every year.

I am stuck in 1956. I've been stuck there for 55 years.

I am stuck in 1956, in October, when I saw three Jewish people come in and

I remember after all this, the Jewish people came and started taking me again to all the Jewish activities, and I was more depressed than ever. They took me to Hanukkah celebrations, and they bought me a clock, for Hanukkah. I remember, I was so upset, to get a clock, after they took my sister, but I couldn't express it. When I got home, I threw the clock on the floor.

I started wetting the bed, and screaming in the night.

I don't understand why nobody cared about the state I was in.

My mother was now a broken and shocked woman. Very traumatised.

I don't understand, if the Jewish Welfare were in total control of me, organising every weekend to take me to Jewish Sunday School and Zionist activities, why didn't somebody say, "we've done the wrong thing. Look at Leonie. Look at the state she's in. Look at the state the mother's in. We've done the wrong thing. Let's bring the sister back."

No, they didn't do it. They just left us like that.

They kept taking me to the Jewish activities, and saying I wasn't Jewish, and my mother was a dirty shiksa.

And this went on for years, and years.

I want to know, where was the Commonwealth Government, and where was the Child Protection system, in the country I was born into, and why were they giving the Jewish Welfare taxpayer funding to abuse me.

And why were the Jewish Welfare authorities given the authority to come to our house and take me to activities, were I was emotionally abused, and physically abused as well.

Why. I want some answers. I want some answers. I deserve answers, and an explanation to all this.

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Part B: Comments on the abduction of my baby sister Sally

What sort of cruel people would come to a poor person's home to take a baby, see them crying and distressed, and still take the baby? Has anybody heard of such cruelty?

How was it the Jewish News and/or Jewish Welfare were instrumentally involved in selling my sister?

The advertisement clearly says, "if interested write to the Jewish News".

How could the Commonwealth Government sanction any Welfare agency to illegally run an advertisement in the first place?

Whose "permission" did the Jewish News get to run this advertisement?

And doesn't illegal mean illegal?

Here enclosed is a copy of the Child Welfare act of 194... Stating it is illegal to advertise a child for adoption.

My weak, sick, unsupported mother, who was being called a dirty shiksa by the Jewish Welfare staff and by Jewish relatives was totally powerless to object to the authoritative intimidation of the "decision" to the advertise her seventh child for adoption.

And was even more uninvolved in the hideous, inhumane "idea" to sell Sally.

If my Jewish brain-damaged father was involved in this "idea", it would only have been because the idea was put to him by people who he believed were authoritative child welfare officials.

But is the Jewish News or the Jewish Welfare above the law?

Were they allowed to come up with an inhumane, illegal "idea" of selling a baby?

And why would the Jewish News run and personally support an advertisement, advertising a baby?

Let alone looking for Jewish parents for a non-Jewish baby. Remember the Jewish Welfare staff called my mother a shiksa and told me I'm not really Jewish.

So, how did this all work? According to all the Jewish religious laws, and rules?

And what of Jewish morality and ethics? And above all – what about human rights?

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Part C: How I tried to get Files from the Jewish Welfare

I will now talk about how I became so desperate to deal with my past in my 40's I tried to obtain my files from the Jewish Welfare (now Jewish Care) and I was lied to by the Jewish Care worker named _____, who dishonestly told me that all the files had been destroyed in a fire a few years before at the Jewish Welfare/Care office.

But I checked with authorities about this fire and I was informed there was no such fire in the Jewish Welfare offices.

I was also informed by a Government worker that if there was any such fire affecting people's records, there should have been a Public Notice made.

So I am appalled that the Jewish Welfare can act so unaccountably with our taxpayer funding. And basically hide or destroy Australian records, which is totally illegal to do.

I was a “forced client” of the Jewish Welfare since I was at least 6 years of age. I had no say in it all.

But I was a client. And there should be records.

I was taken to my first Zionist camp at Dayelsford in 1957. And I will never forget it.

This was all arranged by the Jewish Welfare.

Lastly, I rang up the Jewish News many, many times asking about why they advertised my baby sister for adoption and damned my childhood and life to hell.

The response I got was not compassion as the Jewish people have demanded for themselves, no, I was hung up on.

On a good day I was argued with and told the Jewish News would never do such an advertisement, because it's against all Jewish lore and family. “And why would the Jewish News want to be involved in destroying a Jewish family let alone a non-Jewish family.”

The head staff person at the Jewish News confirmed to me right up to 2000 that “no advertisement advertising any baby for adoption had ever been done by the Jewish News, and there was no such advertisement in existence”. So, it was no use me looking in any archives, because no advertisement was ever done by the Jewish News advertising a child for adoption. And once again said, “the Jewish News wouldn't do something so illegal and so immoral”. And I was hung up on again.

In about 2001-2, I found the Jewish News advertisement, advertising my sister for adoption in the Victorian State Library, with the help of a archives librarian. I was 52 years of age. And the Jewish News had lengthened my suffering for over 20 years by denying that this advertisement existed. I have now many, many copies of this advertisement.

P.S. _____ is a Jewish relative by marriage, and I got the impression that he knew that too when I rang up.