

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



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AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

The Australian Jewish Historical Society was founded in Sydney in August 1938. The Victorian Branch of the Society was founded in October 1949. A Branch also exists in Canberra and Western Australia has its own Jewish Historical Society.

The Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal has been published since 1939. From 1988 the production of the Journal has been shared by New South Wales (June edition) and Victoria (November edition).

The Journal is edited and published by an Editorial Committee whose members are:

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A complete list of the Society's office-bearers is printed on the back cover.

The Editors welcome suggestions for articles and manuscripts dealing with any aspect of the history of the Jewish people in Australia. The Journal is national in coverage and deals with the whole sweep of Australian Jewish history from 1788 to the contemporary period.

Material submitted for consideration for publication in the Journal should be presented on a 3.5 inch Macintosh or DOS computer diskette. The data format preferred is Microsoft Word or Microsoft's generic intermediate data format, Rich Text Format (RTF). If you can only supply data as 'text only/ASCII' you must note which platform the data was prepared on (Macintosh/DOS/Windows). The disk should be sent with a double-spaced printout or typescript, and may be accompanied by illustrations. References should be in the form of endnotes rather than footnotes. Please submit a 100 word abstract with your article. No payment can be offered for any contribution. No handwritten submissions will be accepted.

For the NSW edition, communication should be sent to The Editor, Dr S.D. Rutland, or Mrs Helen Bersten, Honorary Archivist, AJHS, Mandelbaum House, 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlington, NSW 2008, Australia, from whom information about membership of the Society and its other activities and resources may also be obtained.

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Front cover: Percy Marks

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EDITORIAL

As I sit down to write the editorial for this edition of the Journal, I cannot help but reflect on what a momentous and tragic year it has been. In the past twelve months we have seen a significant deterioration of the situation in Israel and, after the World Trade Centre tragedy, new and disturbing challenges have emerged with the 'War against Terrorism'. With the increasing problems of the twenty-first century it is helpful to reflect on our origins and to try and seek better understanding and perspective through the study of history.

In this issue there are three important articles dealing with origins in Australian Jewish history. Morris Forbes' study of Australia's first synagogue in the Bridge Street gives an additional perspective to the story of the beginnings of organised Judaism in Australia, as well as providing insight into the difficulties of locating relevant historical sources. In this case, a random event, the rebuilding of a section of the Great Synagogue for the Israel Green Memorial Hall, led to the unearthing of a key book of minutes. Steve Hart has carefully investigated his Jewish origins through his study of the Hart/Moses family while they lived in Yass. The convict origins of the Jewish community always make fascinating reading. The article on Percy Marks by Yehuda Feher, assisted by Marianne Dacy, relates to the origins of our own Society through a study of our Society's founder. Percy Marks always deserved a more detailed study of his life so that this article is an important contribution which fills a gap in our history.

Prolific Australian Jewish historian, Morris Ochert's contribution deals with issues relating to General Sir John Monash, one of the outstanding figures of Australian Jewish history. While a number of articles have been published in this Journal on Monash, including two in the first two years of publication, the last article on Monash appeared in 1966. As Ochert stresses, it would be a great shame if this great Australian were forgotten by coming generations. Ochert raises a number of interesting questions about

Monash, including the issue of why Haig remained as commander-in-chief of the Allied forces despite Monash's military genius.

The final two papers deal with postwar issues relating to the last two decades of the twentieth century. Amelia Klein has analysed the history of the development of the Child Survivor Group in Sydney since 1987. This article is part of her wider study of child survivors in Sydney which was the subject for research for her BA(Hons) thesis. We need to encourage more young people to research and write about Australian Jewish history and to publish their findings in the *Journal*. I have a strong sense of sentiment about publishing Amelia's work, since my first book, *Seventy-five years: a history of the Jewish press*, was produced thanks to the initiative of the late Louis Klein, her grandfather. The Australian Jewish Historical Society, then under the presidency of my teacher and mentor, the late Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, published the book. My article on Jewish women in adult education was based on a paper which I delivered to an international forum on 'Contemporary Jewish Women and Jewish Education' held at the Institute for Research into Jewish Women at Brandeis University in Boston in December 1999. Many of the developments which I have discussed also began in the late 1980s. At that conference I was one of eleven international speakers representing a range of countries from Uruguay in South America to Turkey in the Middle East, as well as the United States, England and Israel.

In the last few months a number of significant books relating to Australian Jewish history have been published or republished. These include Diane Armstrong's study of the *SS Derna* which arrived with postwar immigrants to Sydney in 1948; Judy Berman's study of Holocaust memorialisation; the memorial publication for Rabbi Ronald Lubofsky, *Eshkolot*; and the long awaited revised edition of *Australian Genesis* by Rabbi John Levi, who is obviously putting his retirement to good use.

Once again, I would like to thank wholeheartedly my *Journal* sub-committee without whose assistance this issue could not have been produced. As in past years Judy Shapira has done the sub-editing and I wish to acknowledge her eagle eye for spotting the gremlins that seem to appear. As always, I would also like to thank Helen Bersten for all her invaluable assistance. I thank my research assistant, Amelia Klein, for her help with the *Journal* and also take this opportunity to thank the Sydney committee and the wonderful team of volunteers. I acknowledge the financial assistance we receive from the Jewish Communal Appeal (JCA) which enables the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney to function effectively.

Suzanne D. Rutland

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST SYNAGOGUE AT BRIDGE STREET, SYDNEY

Morris Forbes

It has been said that basic facts are the raw materials of the historian rather than history itself and that accuracy is the necessary condition of the historian's work, though it is not always seen to be essential.¹ That statement is equally applicable to Jewish historians in their reliance upon the research into relevant archives and source materials. With reference to the early stages of Jewish life in this country, there is now much more data available than was the case prior to the establishment of the Australian Jewish Historical Society over sixty years ago. At that time in Sydney, Percy J. Marks² was still recognised as the principal authority on such matters within the Jewish community. Most of the Jewish history of the seminal period in New South Wales, which culminated in the erection of the York Street Synagogue in 1844, is virtually complete. Present day scholars and writers have turned their attention to topics relating to the more recent and contemporary affairs of the Jewish community, especially as there are ample archival materials at their disposal. Nevertheless, it is still useful and instructive to revert occasionally to the beginnings of Australian Jewry in Sydney and to review some of the sources and the use made of them.

About a generation ago Rabbi John Levi and Dr. George Bergman published their seminal work, *Australian Genesis*, which threw so much light on the earlier history of Australian Jewry. Since that publication there is now a wider knowledge, at least within the Jewish community, of some of the central subjects of early colonial interest. These include Esther Johnston, the Jewish convict wife of the Lieutenant Governor, and Joseph Samuel, who in 1803 was the man they could not hang. There has even been a recently published suggestion that it may have been providential that the execution was abortive because it was scheduled for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.³ Others may want to learn of the exploits of the 'Jew Boy gang' of bushrangers, 1838-1840, even though establishment Jewish leaders of the day such as J.B. Montefiore and his

circle would have been greatly embarrassed to acknowledge a Jewish convict element. The shadow cast by the convict origins on the communal escutcheon led them to try to deny this early history.

While the veil has been lifted on these darker episodes, and some might even desire to hear more on that score, there still remain other chapters of Jewish communal history of which more ought to be known. Not least of these relates to the early efforts to establish Jewish communal life in Australia. Throughout their long history, the Jewish people have been concerned as settlers to provide for three essential requisites, namely: a burial ground, a place of worship and the education of the youth in their traditions. Even after the arrival of Philip Joseph Cohen in Sydney in 1828 and the steps taken by him, the formative religious measures remained rather sketchy until some of the research material of Levi and Bergman was published in their book and in various articles in this Society's *Journal*.

Since its erection in 1844, the story of the York Street Synagogue, the Great Synagogue's immediate predecessor, has been adequately recorded. In its well-known *Report* of 1845, the Committee were able to take pride in a 'splendid edifice', in 'a building which will reflect honour on its founders and show to posterity the great zeal evinced by a handful of people'. That *Report* mentioned a few earlier, ineffectual attempts to build a synagogue or rather to found a viable congregation and to hold 'meetings for prayers' regularly, it being noted that 'the worldly conditions of the Hebrews' in the colony had considerably improved. The *Report* contains only a brief reference to religious services held in the house of P.J. Cohen, and it has been stated that it was there, at the corner of George Street and Martin Place, Sydney, where Cohen traded, that the 'first regular Jewish religious services in Australia' were held.⁴ Even in this small community, however, divisions appeared from the very outset, for emancipists like James Simmons, and others as well, did not care to be led by a young newcomer from London, so that P.J. Cohen was not the sole organiser of religious services. Eventually in 1831 Joseph Barrow Montefiore, an establishment figure, became the president of the Sydney Synagogue. In 1833 a publication was issued comprising *Laws and Rules* for that synagogue.⁵ From the beginning of services, various addresses were used from time to time as temporary synagogues. These included a house owned by Vaiben Solomon at the corner of Bridge and George Streets,⁶ accommodation opened at Cohen and Spyer's for the Passover in 1830,⁷ and premises 'elegantly fitted up' over a shop of a Mr. Rowell in George Street.⁸ The president, Montefiore, had been concerned to have a permanent synagogue erected but not enough

support for his proposal was forthcoming. In *The Picture of Sydney and Strangers' Guide in New South Wales for 1838*, a book describing Sydney, its streets and buildings, the author, James Macle hose, after brief references to these early religious efforts by the Jews, states that Montefiore 'implored his brethren in faith to organise some plan for the erection of a place of worship but owing to a variety of circumstances, his plan was defeated by a cabal...'.⁷ In the preface of this book, published in a further edition in 1839, the writer said that it was intended as a faithful record of facts in the hands of the future historian.

Speaking of Sydney's Jews, Macle hose remarked: 'they are of various grades and classes in society'. Macle hose also mentioned a row of indifferent cottages in a part of George Street which, he said, was 'well situated for the sale of seamen's slops etc., they are mostly occupied by Jews.'⁹ He noted the 1831 visit to Sydney of Aaron Levi (of the London Beth Din), saying that he helped 'to instil into the minds of the Hebrew community a taste for religion'.¹⁰ The number of Israelites, as Macle hose termed them, then in Sydney, was said by him to be about 100, but it is probably true that the number was closer to 400, judging by the Census of 1841. Macle hose seemed to be informed in rather broad terms of what was being done within the Jewish community and he wrote of the desire to 'meet and pray to the Supreme Power and Deity in the language in which the Word of God is written, as it is usefully expressed in the holy Scripture:- "In any place where you mention my name, there will I come to thee and bless thee."¹¹ Regarding these tentative steps to establish a place of worship, the *Report of the Committee of the York Street Synagogue* mentions, in passing, only some of those specified also by Macle hose. Yet, unlike the latter writer, the *Report* did not go on to refer in any way whatever to the Bridge Street Synagogue of 1837 and thereafter.

In 1837 the president of the Sydney congregation signed an Address to Governor Bourke on his departure from the colony. It was tendered on behalf of 'the Israelitish Community' by the 'free inhabitants, Elders and Committee of the Sydney Synagogue and members of the Israelitish faith'. The Address was no doubt motivated by the governor's promise to reserve a plot of land, as the document said, 'in an eligible situation' upon which to build a place of divine worship. Another three years elapsed before such a grant of land was made. In 1941 Herbert I. Wolff, then Secretary of the Great Synagogue, drew attention to this Address in an article in this *Journal*.¹²

Under the heading, "The First Synagogue in Australia", the late Rabbi Dr Israel Porush in his *The House of Israel*, describes the

Bridge Street premises as being the first 'proper' synagogue in Sydney.¹³ As Macle hose wrote, by 1837 with the growth of the community, a more commodious synagogue was required.¹⁴ Further evidence is provided by a 'Domestic Intelligence' note in *The Sydney Herald* of 31 August 1837, to the effect that a large room in Bridge Street, next to St. John's Tavern was then being fitted up by members of the Jewish persuasion as a synagogue. Macle hose furnished a few details. He described it as 'a well arranged place of worship' containing about 100 seats rented, he said, by the rate-payers, a reading desk and pulpit and an Ark which, as he wrote, 'contains the decalogue and a manuscript copy, written on vellum, of the Books of Moses.'¹⁵ He stated further that the synagogue included a ladies' gallery and a neat candelabrum. Private persons, Macle hose added, who were competent to officiate as readers and ministers, voluntarily perform the services because the congregation lacked sufficient funds to obtain an ordained minister from England. The writer's book, it should be noted, included illustrated engravings of Sydney buildings, among them that of the Bridge Street Synagogue.



Bridge Street Synagogue in 1838

In 1955 David J. Benjamin discovered the official Minutes of what are referred to as 'Sydney Synagogue Minutes', commencing in September 1837, together with other valuable archives, when the Great Synagogue basement was being cleared for construction of the Synagogue's War Memorial Centre. These Minutes of the Bridge Street congregation are now lodged in the Mitchell Library where they may be consulted.¹⁶ Rabbi Porush, in his book previously mentioned, writes of these earlier mislaid archives under the heading, 'The Discovery of Records'.¹⁷ It will be found that the Minutes in question provide valuable and relevant historical data, which were not available to previous researchers such as Percy J. Marks. However, no Minutes are now extant relating to any synagogue affairs preceding the synagogue built at Bridge Street. In 1925 Marks read a paper before the Royal Australian Historical Society, which was later published in that Society's *Journal*, entitled, 'The First Synagogue in Australia'.¹⁸ It was afterwards published in pamphlet form and was for many years regarded as authoritative on the subject. That learned author, as can be seen from his paper, was at great pains to find sources to authenticate his researches. The Minutes of the Bridge Street congregation were unavailable to him and the reader of the paper will see that Marks remained in some doubt as to the correct date when the congregation came into being. He made it quite clear, however, that the building at Bridge Street was not in fact the first synagogue used by a Sydney congregation. 'After this lapse of time and the carelessness', Marks said, 'which characterised the early pioneers in preserving their records, it is difficult to accurately determine the dates.'¹⁹ It might be added that these difficulties are not confined to dates alone. Nevertheless, one cannot seriously doubt, as Marks remarked, that the Bridge Street house 'apparently was the earliest one definitely recognised and used as a *permanent synagogue*'.²⁰ In 1978, the truth of that statement, in a sense, was to become a point of contention between George Bergman, then senior vice-president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, and the former president, Rabbi Porush.

Indeed, for the sake of historical accuracy, as he expressed it, Bergman wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* to deny a statement attributed to Rabbi Porush, namely, an assertion that the Bridge Street Synagogue was Sydney's first.²¹ The same point was the subject of short discussion between these same parties in this Society's *Journal*.²² There was really no serious dispute between them and both of them were well aware that the Sydney Jewish community had in fact used other premises prior to the Bridge Street building as a synagogue. The difference in views, however, as Rabbi Porush

observed, was 'less in substance than in semantics', and he meant to say that 'the previous place or places of worship lacked the structural appearance and permanence of a synagogue.'²³ It cannot be said that the debate was a sterile one as both of these writers were equally concerned to eliminate any confusion on the point at issue between them.

A book after the style of Macle hose, but a little more pictorial, *Sydney in 1848*, was published by Joseph Fowles. He advised the public that the colonists had 'not been inattentive to matters of higher import' in raising beautiful and commodious buildings 'by piety and industry for the use of Religion.'²⁴ He described the new York Street Synagogue as a 'chaste and classic edifice'. Emulating Macle hose, to whom he would have been indebted for the historical summary, Fowles also outlined the development of the Hebrew religion in the colony. He noted, as did the *York Street Report*, that Michael Rose of London was engaged in 1833 to minister to the Jewish congregation. Rose is referred to by Rabbi Porush as being the first Jewish minister in Australia.²⁵ There is no indication that Rose, who left the country after three years, acted as a minister at Bridge Street, though the Minutes do show that he performed the duties of a collector.²⁶ He also appears in the official Bridge Street Birth Register as a *mohel*. It seems that Solomon Phillips, also an auctioneer, continued to act as a part-time minister for the Jewish community.²⁷ It should be noted that Fowles' book contains a picture in which the Bridge Street Synagogue is included in adjacent buildings extending from the northern side of Bridge Street near George Street.

Of incidental relevance at the time when the above mentioned Address was tendered to Governor Bourke and when the new synagogue premises were first occupied, there was dissension in the general community and sectarian debate relating to an Address to Queen Victoria on her ascension to the throne. There is no indication that the Jewish community was in any way affected by this issue. In a leader in its columns, the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* commented:

Why, a Jew might join cordially in an Address of Thanks to Her Majesty..., and certainly, we must say that the Jew, looking at the antiquity of his creeds, would be able to urge conscientious objections in the much greater force than the Unitarian.²⁸

It is not altogether surprising that the Jewish leaders of that time avoided involvement in the sectarian issue raised in Christian cir-

cles. They were far more concerned to appear to be seen as strong loyalists and to avoid any official doubts on their eligibility to secure a grant of land for their religious purposes.

The Minutes of the synagogue at 4 Bridge Street run from September 1837 to about November 1841. For the most part these Minutes are not particularly informative but in a few instances they did record events worthy of notice. For example, on 27 September 1837 a General Meeting of the Management was held in the vestry, those present being Abraham Cohen, president, A. Elias, treasurer, together with Vaiben Solomon, George Moss and Abraham Levy. A first meeting, as it was described, was held on 29 October at the Pulteney Hotel, with A. Cohen presiding. The attendance of S. Levien and A. Polack was noted. The purpose of this meeting, it was recorded, was to undertake a general review of the past of the congregation and to strengthen the interests of the community. A week later, so the Minutes read, an award of £172 was made to B.A. Phillips for work done by him in connection with the erection of the synagogue. Most of that work would have involved carpentry as Phillips was a theatre personality and had become Barnett Levey's stage carpenter.²⁹ Either one or perhaps two *Torah* scrolls, it was reported, were to be purchased in England, those held by the congregation being *passul* (defective). Later, money had to be raised for this purpose.

The Great Synagogue, it is generally known, is in possession of the large Egyptian-style cedar Ark, of the York Street Synagogue. In more recent times this Ark was substantially restored and it has been describes as a 'massive' piece of synagogue furniture.³⁰ However the Great Synagogue also has a smaller such Ark in a similar style, not as elaborate as the other, which became known as the 'reputed Ark of the Bridge Street Synagogue.'³¹ It is said that the Ark's origin and history remain a mystery. The present writer has discussed this matter with Kevin Fahy, an acknowledged authority on colonial antique furniture, who has inspected these two Arks. He agrees that the smaller one was made for the Bridge Street congregation about 1837. It is quite likely that it afterwards became the model for that used in the York Street Synagogue some seven years later, even though the subsequent piece was superior to it. It may be of interest to mention, as Mr. Fahy agrees, that a convict craftsman, in his spare time, located at the lumber yard near the Bridge Street Synagogue may have been the artisan of the Ark.³²

While P.J. Marks' paper of 1925 was for long regarded in Jewish circles as the authoritative source relating to 'The First Synagogue', the fact remains that it was not specially instructive from the viewpoint of Jewish communal history. Much of what Marks had to say

was largely of incidental interest, especially in his reference to the conveyancing history of the land at number 4 Bridge Street on which the synagogue premises stood. As a solicitor and a practising conveyancer, the author no doubt had a special interest in tracing that history. He tells us that from 1832 until 1839 the premises were owned by a Dr. J. W. Wallace and thereafter came into the ownership of Thomas Cadell. Marks described this modest two-storey house, which in later times was put to various uses, finally being demolished in 1913. 'Passing up Bridge Street', he said, 'one could not but notice this building, with its quaintly pointed roof and attic window'.³³ Marks mentioned that J.E. Richter, writing in the press one year prior to its demolition, regarded the building as one of the oldest in Sydney, probably erected in 1810.³⁴

The synagogue committee in 1838 let the upper part of its premises to two Jewish tenants. Earlier in that year, George Moss, so it appears, was in dispute with the committee from which he resigned but later rejoined it. The Minutes indicate that a copy of the Laws of the Synagogue was received.³⁵ A letter from Michael Hyam asked that his marriage with Mrs. Broughton, a convert to Judaism, be registered by the synagogue. It was decided that his request be granted and he was given a certificate signed by J.F. Crabbe and others.³⁶ The committee, late in the year, agreed that Friday, 2 November be observed at the synagogue as a day of prayer, as appointed by the governor. It was so held throughout the colony as a general fast and humiliation in humble prayer and supplication to Almighty God to send 'such moderate showers and rain as may, through his blessing, relieve us from the distress in which we are threatened.' As desired by the governor, all churches and chapels were opened for divine worship and all places of business remained closed for the day.³⁷

The synagogue at Bridge Street had not been in occupancy for quite one year when it was learnt that a plot of ground was available for purchase at Berwick Lane, Woolloomooloo upon which a synagogue might be erected. It was found, however, that the frontage was not sufficiently large for that purpose.³⁸ It seems that the ownership of the synagogue premises was about to change. In the meantime the committee was concerned to maintain due discipline on the part of its congregants. Thus, Joseph Aarons was fined 21 shillings — not exactly a pittance in those times — for officiating as a minister, having been told not to do so. The committee warned Aarons that the fine would be increased to five guineas for any future offences of the kind.³⁹

The Minutes indicate the committee's growing concern to acquire land for establishing synagogue premises under the own-

ership of the Jewish community. They made enquiry of a Mr. William in case his residence in Bridge Street was available and the Jewish solicitor, David Poole, was instructed as well to apply to the government for a gift of land.⁴⁰ By May of 1840 the Synagogue heard from Rev Jacob Myer Isaacs who, he said, was induced to come from London as he thought that there was a vacancy for a Minister. He was at first offered a salary of £100 and was informed that no more could be paid. After further negotiations, Isaacs was engaged for one year at a salary of £208.⁴¹ In May 1840 the synagogue was the subject of a letter from nine Jewish prisoners addressed to the Elders of the Jewish Congregation and forwarded by the Superintendent at Norfolk Island, Captain Maconochie. The prisoners sought a supply of prayer books and Passover provisions. They had asked that they be suspended from labour on the Sabbath. The synagogue, through its president, Isaac Simmons, acceded to the prisoners' request by sending them a parcel of prayer books, some notes of religious instruction and a calendar with the festival dates marked in red. However, the authorities at the same time were urged, on behalf of the synagogue, to ensure that no prisoner was granted a suspension from work unless he attended the service. A further request early in 1841 resulted in candles and *matzos* (Passover cakes) being forwarded to the Island.⁴²

By 1840 the new owner, Thomas Cadell, was pressing the Committee to vacate the premises. A reply was given to Norton, the owner's solicitor, to the effect that it would not be possible to yield up possession before 28 November 1840 as the festival and fast days were soon due.⁴³ Because of the uncertainties in which the committee found itself, it had already been decided in September 1839 to open a subscription list for the building of a 'New Synagogue' though no land and site for it was available yet. So it was, as the Minutes record more than two years afterwards, that the committee was officially advised of a grant of land in Kent Street North.⁴⁴ It was ultimately decided not to use this land as it was found that excavation of it would be too expensive. For some months, part of the residence of Abraham Moses was let by him to the synagogue, and then from August 1841 the synagogue held a one year's lease of rooms owned by Lewis Cohen in Lower George Street.⁴⁵ In this regard, Marks stated that the Bridge Street premises remained in use until the opening in 1844 of the York Street Synagogue. It is more correct, however, to note that other premises were occupied until the York street edifice was ready for use as the community's place of worship.

In the absence of records, it is not clear how long any premises were *continuously* used as a synagogue before the move to Bridge

Street. Bergman has written that a synagogue in George Street was located in certain rooms for about five years, but there is reason to doubt its duration in the one place. Bergman went on to explain that the *York Street Report* made no mention of the Bridge Street premises which, he said, were regarded as temporary only. He added that the *Report* mentioned the George Street Synagogue because, according to his view, it had existed for a longer time than the Bridge Street Synagogue. Bergman thought that he had adequately explained why the *Report* included no reference to Bridge Street. The compilers of the *Report* stated that there was a need to relate a short history of the community's religious life in the colony, so that it seems a little strange that they saw fit to exclude mention of the Bridge Street religious effort. In their own words the *Report* had presented 'a rough and perhaps imperfect sketch of the Hebrew religion in this Colony'.

Many years later Marks and others felt that the Bridge Street synagogue merited historical notice and attention. Indeed the non-Jewish contemporary writers, Macle hose and Fowles, obviously believed it to be worthy of inclusion in their respective publications. Even in comparatively recent times, *Australian Genesis*, contains only a few lines on this synagogue, describing that afterward erected in York Street as 'the first in Sydney'.⁴⁶ In this Society's *Journal* there are scattered references in various issues, but nowhere is there an article exclusively, and in some detail, on the subject of the first synagogue in Bridge Street as Marks had attempted to do elsewhere. In this present article, however, most of the relevant data has been collated in the expectation that it will be of assistance to those who are interested to understand and to study, with reference to religion, the origins of this country's oldest Jewish community.

It is entirely understandable that our Jewish historians have been concerned to present correct and factual accounts and details of the past in relation to the origins, the growth and development of Australian Jewry, depending on the extent of research and the source materials available. The historian, however, equally perhaps with those who prepare exhibitions in museums and such places, may sometimes, legitimately, look back to the past, not as an antiquarian exercise, but rather to notice what has disappeared, inevitably and perhaps beyond recall, in the progress of the years. Thus, in the facsimile edition of Fowles' book, the architectural authority, Morton Herman, concludes his Foreword by the perception, in his words, that 'A vague nostalgia hovers over this book' when it is appreciated that it speaks of 'a beautiful Sydney that was and never will be again'. These remarks have relevance for the general area in the vicinity of which the quaint Bridge Street

Synagogue premises stood. To this present writer, it may be added, that the building was reminiscent in its appearance of some of the small European synagogues, perhaps similar to those seen in the *shtetl*, the small townships of Jewish settlement in Poland. Those who have seen sketches of the medieval Rashi synagogue at Troyes could liken its outside appearance to that of the Sydney synagogue discussed in this article. It may, indeed, be a mere coincidence, in fact, that such a comparison is made, yet it need not go unrecorded in the context of this paper.

Sydney, it has been said, is Australia's oldest urban centre. Bridge Street was originally, and for some years later remained, at the heart of settlement. It was very close to Sydney Cove and the early Government House was built near there. The street was crossed by the Tank Stream where there was a crude bridge of logs, which was replaced by a stone bridge. The waters of the stream, it was written, at first stole silently through a very thick wood, but it was found difficult to safeguard the purity of the water. A modern day historian writes with nostalgia of this early scene as follows: "The ferny gully where once lyre birds sang and danced has vanished forever."⁴⁷ By 1845 the first Government House had been demolished. Near that site there now stands a new building within which is the Museum of Sydney. The original foundations of Government House are preserved and glimpses of them may be seen. The director of the Historic Houses Trust remarked that it is more than just this site; it is our history that springs out of the site.



Old Government House 1828 (Augustus Earle painting)

Though the foundations of its original premises cannot be seen, a similar observation would be appropriate for the site of the first synagogue in Bridge Street. It is hoped that this paper, in this *Journal* of which P.J. Marks was a founder, may assist in revisiting the scene which witnesses some of the genesis of the religious life of Australian Jewry.

It is also of interest to notice that early artists depicted the vista along Bridge Street in the vicinity of the synagogue premises. A new migrant to the colony in the 'thirties, Conrad Martens, had his studio in the Colonnade which was the address also of the Spyer family. In 1839 Martens painted a watercolour of the area in Bridge Street near Pitt Street, which would have been familiar to those who attended the synagogue. The painting has been reproduced in several books and may be seen in the Dixson Galleries of the State Library. Martens excelled in painting such scenes earlier in the nineteenth century. He left a complete visual record of the country's heritage, his works being described as 'culturally significant as illustrations of Australian history'.⁴⁸ In 1862 the artist and engraver, Frederick Charles Terry, produced a book of engravings of Sydney and other views. It included a view of Bridge Street looking east. The former synagogue building was still standing and Terry's engraving clearly enables the front of it to be identified. He



Bridge Street 1839 — Conrad Martens

may perhaps have taken his cue from Martens in finding an attractive subject for his work in that historic part of Sydney.

The artist, Sydney Ure Smith, did a drawing of the old Bridge Street building shortly before its demolition. It was presented to the New South Wales Jewish War Memorial by A.M. Lowenthal and hung for many years in its library at the Maccabean Hall in Darlinghurst. In 1950 the drawing was included in an exhibition by this Society at that Hall. The exhibition was the subject of a paper by David J. Benjamin who stated that the drawing had attracted particular attention.⁴⁹ A friend and associate of Smith, the well-known artist, Sir Lionel Lindsay, also produced a sketch of the same Bridge Street premises, a copy of which is in the archive of this Society.

In planning for the move to York Street, one of the aims was to promote the image of the Jewish community and the Building Fund claimed that it was intended 'to erect the first place of public worship for the Hebrew nation in the Southern Hemisphere.'⁵⁰ As the Editor of this *Journal* wrote in a Note, that claim must be qualified and seen as an exaggeration made 'in the excess of enthusiasm' since earlier sites for public Jewish worship existed, including the Bridge Street Synagogue of 1837, even though the York Street Synagogue was the first 'purpose built' synagogue in Australia.⁵¹ Within a span of about forty years, and disregarding the earlier temporary locations, three synagogues were established in Sydney in succession: commencing with Bridge Street in 1837, York Street superseding it in 1844 until, in 1878, the Great Synagogue, regarded as a 'cathedral' style edifice, came into being. Indeed, within this whole period four places of worship were used, including the premises of the breakaway Macquarie Street congregation, which existed from 1859 to 1877.

The Scriptures indicate that the sacred dwelling, the Tabernacle, accompanied the Children of Israel in all their journeying after the Exodus prior to their entry into the Promised Land. It was surrounded by cloud and the people did not move from one place to another until the cloud lifted. All the stations of the wanderings are listed, for, it is explained, every station had its purpose. While no such miraculous cloud directed the movements of Sydney's early Jewish community, if this *Midrash* be permitted, their various moves were never aimless. The establishment of the Bridge Street Synagogue marked the transition from a difficult pioneering stage to a time when it could safely be said that Judaism had taken firm root in the colony. It enabled the members of the Jewish faith to put down sure foundations upon which to structure the future of the community. The stay at Bridge Street proved to be short, but the

premises were recognised by Jew and non-Jew alike as the religious centre of the small community. An historic purpose was served, thereby, and it is appropriate to acknowledge and appreciate that step as Australia's first synagogue in this distant region of Jewish Diaspora settlement.

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13. Porush, *op.cit.*, p.8.
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17. Porush, *op.cit.*, p.217.
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37. *Minutes*, 24 October 1838.
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40. *Minutes*, 23 February 1840.
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42. *Minutes*, 29 May, 30 June 1840. *AJHS Newsletter*, nos. 41, 42, 1997.
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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SOME JEWISH PIONEERS OF YASS TOWNSHIP

Steve Hart

The genesis of this presentation was an article written for the *Yass Tribune* in January 1999 to commemorate the 150th year of the Royal Hotel.¹ This hotel was built in 1849 by my great-grandfather, Henry Hart, a Jewish businessman who lived in Yass for about 34 years.

Henry Hart was a nephew of another Jewish pioneer of the district, Moses Moses and, following the publication of the commemorative issue of the *Tribune*, I was approached by Earl Hoffman, President of the Canberra Jewish Historical Society, to give a talk to his members about my illustrious forebear. Unfortunately, there was insufficient information on Henry Hart alone to justify a focused presentation and so we agreed that the theme should emphasise the Jewish influence on the growing township of Yass where both men made an impact.

If the genesis was the *Tribune* article, its exodus was a short presentation entitled 'The Life and Times of some Jewish Pioneers of Yass Township'. Since that time, additional genealogical research has revealed more information about other members of both the Moses and Hart families who may be genuinely called pioneers of the town so this third appearance (Leviticus perhaps!) has been updated and expanded to include this additional research. I will endeavour to keep the story in chronological order by years.

My early ventures into genealogy began in mid-1981 when my wife (who is a very keen historian) and I were wandering through the Catholic section of the Yass cemetery looking for the grave of my great-grandfather. This activity was based on a casual remark my father had made to me many years ago about his father having been born in Yass and that my father has been named after his grandfather, Henry Hart.

A lady, later identified as Freda Crocker and a well known identity of the Yass Historical Society, saw us and asked who we were looking for; I replied Henry Hart, to which she quickly responded;

"Henry Hart the Jew? You won't find him here!" You can imagine that this revelation came as quite a surprise and as a result of subsequent confirmation, I can now honestly claim to be an Australian born, Irish Catholic Jew. But let us now start the story at the beginning. Residents of Yass, no doubt at some time have visited the home and grave of Moses Moses so he provides us with a logical starting point.

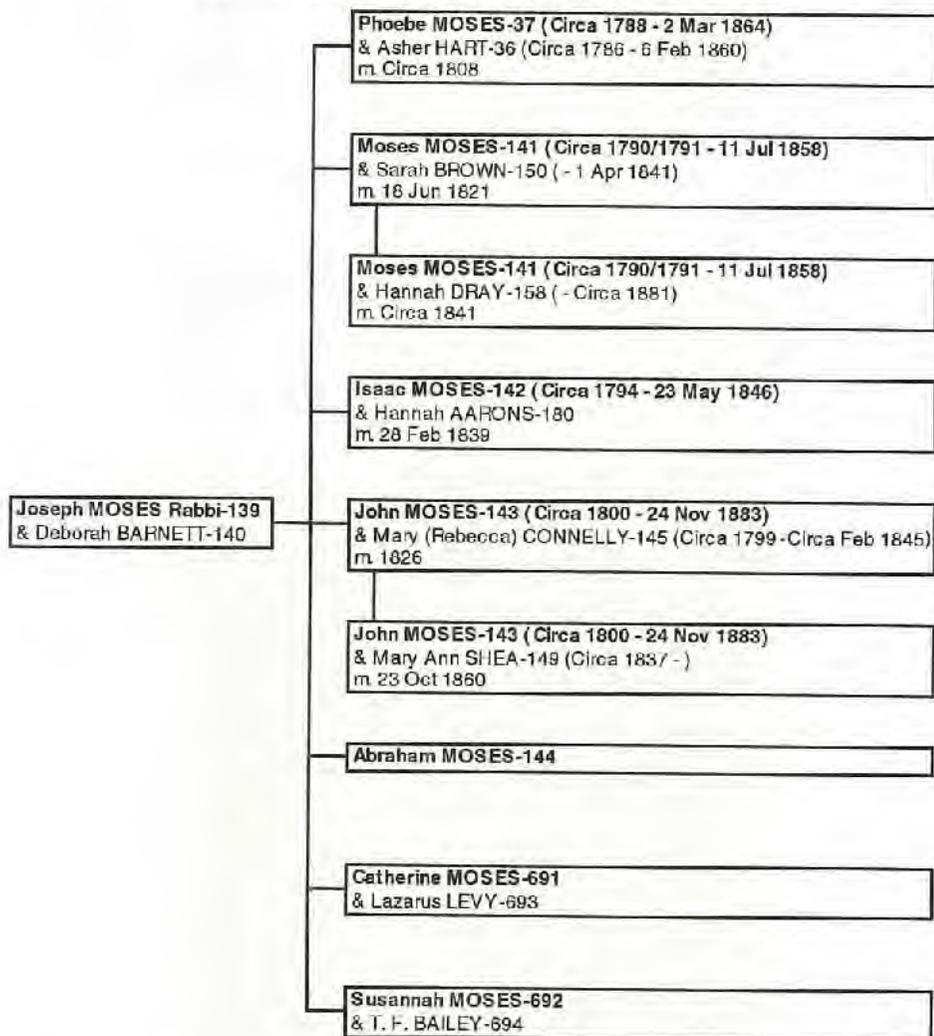
MOSES MOSES

Moses was born in London circa 1790/1791, the son of Rabbi Joseph Moses and Deborah Barnett. There were seven children in the family and Moses' elder sister, Phoebe (my great, great grandmother) married one Asher Hart, the father of Henry Hart. This established the first family connection between the Moses and Hart families.



*Phoebe Moses, eldest sister of Moses Moses,
who married Asher Hart c1808.*

**DESCENDANT CHART -
RABBI JOSEPH MOSES & FAMILY**



Moses, the eldest son, was one of three brothers transported from England as juvenile delinquents. Moses was the first to be convicted; brother John was sentenced in 1820 to 7 years transportation and brother Isaac got 14 years in 1822.² We will mention more about Isaac later. A fourth brother, Abraham, migrated as a free settler in 1833. All four men later became successful businessmen.

Moses Moses was listed as a glasscutter by occupation but in 1813, at the age of about 22, he was charged as one of four men who hustled a passerby and stole his pocket book. He was convicted in the

**DESCENDANT CHART -
ASHER HART & FAMILY**

Asher HART-36 (Circa 1786 - 6 Feb 1860)
& Phoebe MOSES-37 (Circa 1788 - 2 Mar 1864)
m. Circa 1808

Abigail HART-198
& ? FREELANDER-685

Isaac HART-199

Julia HART-188 (- 20 Aug 1857)
& Abraham MEYER-189 (- 20 Aug 1857)
m. 5 Nov 1845

Mary HART-194
& Joseph COHEN-195
m. 2 Oct 1850

Sarah HART-192
& Abraham Leopold LEVY-193
m. 30 Mar 1853

Goodman HART-38 (Circa 1812 - 2 Apr 1874)
& Ellen ?-39 (- 26 Jun 1904)
m. Circa 1852

Henry HART-14 (Circa 1814 - 8 Feb 1884)
& Hannah LEVEY-15 (Circa 1827 - 20 May 1892)
m. 20 Mar 1844

Deborah HART-184 (Circa 1816 - 7 Dec 1884)
& Solomon MOSES-185 (1800 - 7 Oct 1875)
m. 20 Jan 1835

Elizabeth HART-186 (Circa 1818 - 29 Feb 1888)
& Joseph JONES-187
m. 16 Feb 1842

Rachel HART-190 (Circa 1820 - 31 Jul 1889)
& Abraham SOLOMON-191 (Circa 1822 - 17 Jan 1864)
m. 16 Jun 1852

Lazarus HART-196 (Circa 1836 - Nov 1851)

Rebecca HART-197 (Circa 1838 -)

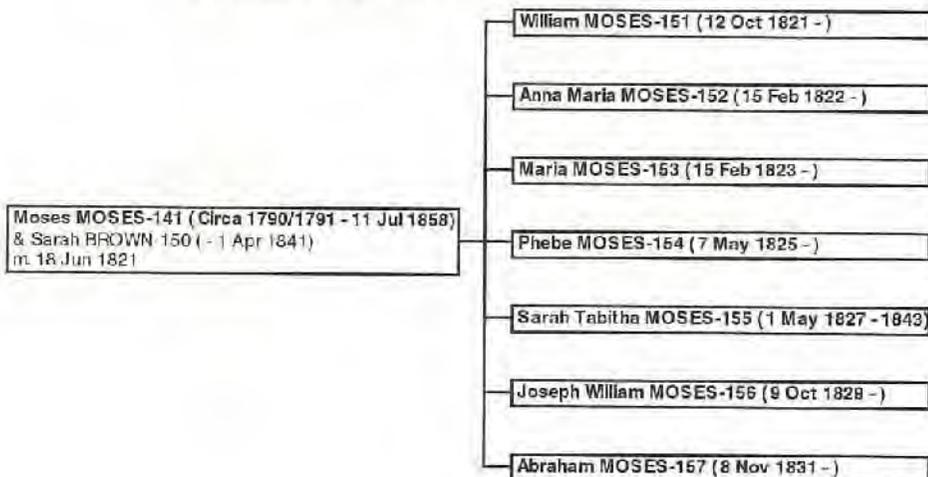
Old Bailey on the 14 July 1813 and transported for life. Compare this with crime and punishment today! His convict record described him as 5'4½" tall, dark complexion, dark brown hair and dark eyes. He arrived in NSW in January 1815 per the *Marquis of Wellington* and was assigned to the farm of a Mr. Hovell, from which he duly absconded. In July 1815 he was recaptured and sent to Hobart Town where he was listed as a convict bricklayer in the 1816 male muster.

His propensity to abscond was obviously still quite strong because in May 1817, he and a Samuel Lyons (and three other convicts) attempted to escape to England by stowing away aboard the *Kangaroo*. In October 1817, he and Lyons were grabbing more local headlines when they attempted to win some easy money by entering one of the earliest recorded public exhibitions of boxing in the colony.

In June 1821, Moses married an Irish convict named Sarah Brown. She was already carrying their first child, William who was born the following October. Over the next ten and one half years, Sarah bore him a total of 7 children, three boys and four girls. Sadly, my research has not been able to reveal what happened to any of these children, other than Sarah Tabitha, who died aged 15 and is buried beside her father in the Yass cemetery. Some or all of the children (the eldest being about 12 years old) must have accompanied their parents when they moved to Yass in 1833.

During the productive years of fatherhood, Moses was never very far from the law. His Van Diemens Land police dossier reveals that he was charged with receiving stolen property in August 1821 but was released when the prosecutor failed to appear! By 1822, he

DESCENDANT CHART - MOSES & SARAH MOSES



was in business in Hobart Town and was advertising confectionery goods. In 1824 and in 1825 he was in trouble again for bread that he sold — once for charging more than the officially allowed price and once for selling his bread underweight! In 1827 he was fined 20 shillings 'for traveling with a cart on the Lord's day'.

Despite these misdemeanors, he was granted a ticket of leave in April 1824 and a Conditional Pardon in February 1832. With this latter document, he obviously resolved to shake all memory of Van Diemens Land from his system and, perhaps with the discerning eye of an astute businessman who recognised the potential of a growing population and rural expansion, we next find him taking up residence in the relatively new township of Yass.

YASS TOWNSHIP

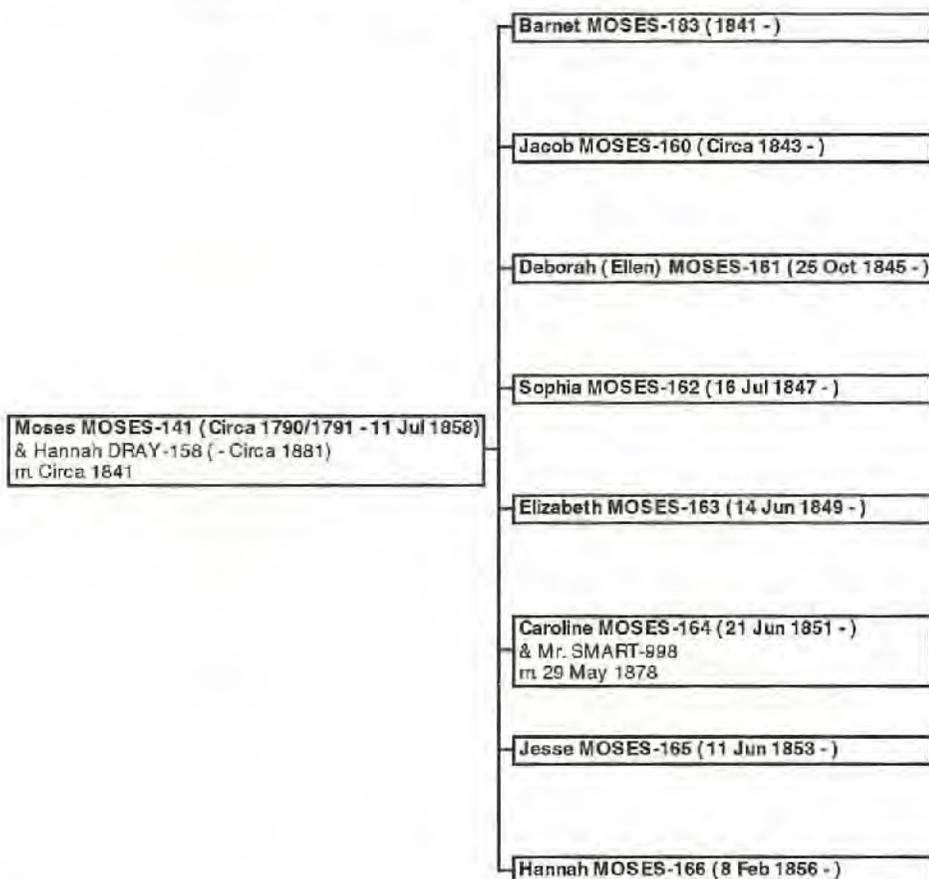
Suffice to say that whatever the motivation, Moses Moses decided to try his luck in the fledgling township; he came, prospered and stayed. We do know that William Bayley in his *Yass Municipal Centenary History* of the town noted that "early founders of Yass town included Christians and Jews. Moses Moses arrived at Sydney in 1813 and (in Yass) in 1833 aged 43, residing there 25 years until his death."³

We know very little of Moses' and his family's economic circumstances when he first arrived in Yass, but as the township began to prosper, so did Moses. In September 1837 he was appointed the pound keeper and by June 1839 we find him as the proprietor of the *White Hart Inn* in Dutton Street. This establishment 'was spoken of very well by all travellers to the Murrumbidgee and in June 1842 it was advertised in the *Sydney Herald* for let."⁴

Two other memorable events impacted upon his personal life. His wife Sarah died on 1 April 1841, the records showing that 'she died of a broken heart from peculiar family trials.' What these peculiar circumstances were can only be speculated upon. Cheryl Mongan (the President of the Yass and District Historical Society Inc) has a belief that Moses had her committed and there could be more than a grain of truth in this theory. He married Hannah Dray in 1840 and Sarah did not die until 1841, the same year as the birth of the first child of the second marriage. This second marriage was even more fruitful than the first as Hannah gave him eight children in 15 years, the last, a daughter Hannah being born just two years before Moses' death in 1858 at the age of 68.

One humorous anecdote during his ownership of the *White Hart* involved the attempted arrest of a bushranger. Moses suspected that one of his customers was the bushranger Massey. He burst into the

**DESCENDANT CHART-
MOSES & HANNAH MOSES**



dining room, attacked the outlaw, and seized him by the throat. Moses (who has been recorded as being a very powerful man and sometime professional boxer) soon had the upper hand and sent for the police, but the bushranger escaped as soon as they led him out of the hotel under the control of the policeman. However, the residents of Yass were so pleased with Mr. Moses that they presented him with a suitably engraved silver medallion. Sort of like an Olympic gold! The inscription read: ' *By the inhabitants of the district of Yass, to Mr. Moses Moses for his gallant conduct in endeavouring to capture the bushranger Massey and in which he failed only in not being supported by the constable present, and upon whose assistance he naturally calculated. Presented May 23, 1842.*'

On 14 August 1843, the charter incorporating the district coun-

cil of Yass was proclaimed and Moses Moses was appointed to the first council⁶, a position he held for many years. In this capacity he gained significant influence including the consecration of a Jewish cemetery in Yass (1844) and membership of the first hospital board (1848), among other achievements. He did not ignore his Jewish ancestry because in 1845 he became a contributor and seat holder at the Sydney Synagogue. He built the *Yass Inn* on the southeast corner of Comur and Rossi Streets about 1846 and established this as his home. It was recorded of the *Yass Inn* that it was the best hotel out of Sydney.

ISAAC MOSES

Discussion of the Moses family and their impact on Yass would not be complete without reference to Moses Moses' younger brother Isaac. The third of the Moses boys to be transported, Isaac was sentenced in the Surrey Quarter Sessions on 29 July 1822 to 14 years transportation. He was described as 5'6¹/₄"', sallow complexion, slightly pockpitted, dark brown curly hair, grey eyes, large nose. He arrived in NSW per the *Surrey* in March 1823. He was listed in the 1828 census. 'Dealer at Mary Larkins, Kent St., Sydney with 2 horses and 6 horned cattle'. His Ticket of Leave was granted in January 1830, after which he was recorded as living with his brother John Moses, pastry cook of George St., Sydney. He was allowed to live in Parramatta in 1834.⁷

Isaac Moses worked as a dealer through the 1830s. There is a record of his being attacked by a thief he had detected whilst at an auction in Joseph Simmons' auction room in 1833. He moved to Yass in the mid-1830s where he bought land at the first land sale in the township. He built the *The Rose*, an inn in Comur Street, Yass, circa 1836/7. When it was sold at auction two years later, *The Rose* was described thus. It 'contains 11 rooms, finished in style, three of which are 18 feet by 14, and 11 feet clear between floor and ceiling, with a cellar under the building 9 feet deep. Detached are erected a stone-built kitchen and 3 rooms, together with a ten stall stable, and the requisite out-buildings for such an establishment.'⁸

The Rose was sold by auction ('solely on account of ill-health of the proprietor') on 21 January 1839 to James Middleton. He subsequently leased *The Rose* to Isaac's nephew, Henry Hart on 1 July 1844 and he continued to operate this lease until 1847.

By this time, Isaac and his brother Moses were partners in local commercial enterprises. As was announced in the press: 'Messrs. I & M Moses beg to inform the inhabitants in the neighbourhood of Yass that they have opened extensive stores... I. Moses thanks his

friends and the public for their patronage whilst he was in business in Sydney... large number of products listed for sale.⁹ Later, in 1838, they opened the *Argyle Store* in Yass.

In February 1839, Isaac married Hannah Aarons in Sydney. There were to be three sons of this marriage, the youngest son, Barnet Aaron later marrying Rachel Hart, the eldest daughter of Henry and Hannah Hart. It is possible that the new Mrs. Moses didn't care for Yass because in April 1839, the partnership with his brother Moses was dissolved. Two adjoining newspaper advertisements advised of the 'dissolution of partnership. I & M Moses of Yass, having dissolved partnership in April last, beg to inform all persons with claims... forward accounts to I. Moses at the *Goulburn Inn* for immediate liquidation.' Immediately below this was a reference to the new *Goulburn Inn* 'with excellent accommodation, stabling and first rate liquors' which Isaac opened in September 1839.¹⁰

Isaac eventually retired in Sydney where he became a seat holder at the Sydney Synagogue in 1845 and it seems donated 25 pounds to the building appeal. He died in May 1846 in the Asylum Sydney and was buried in the Lidcombe (Rookwood) Jewish cemetery.

As an aside, his brother John Moses also spent some time in Yass around 1844, moving there following a period as a publican in Hobart. An extract from a Jewish historical journal records that at Yass, Henry Hart, Moses Moses, and his brothers Isaac and John must have monopolised the early liquor trade in the district. For those of you with an interest in Shoalhaven district history, one of John Moses' sons, Henry, who later changed his name to Moss, became one of the influential pioneers, including mayor, of the township of Nowra.

During the above commentary (circa mid 1840s) we noted the first mention of Henry Hart, so let us briefly look at his background and then see how both he and Moses worked together to put their own mark on Yass history.

HENRY HART

Henry was born in Portsmouth, England in 1814, one of twelve children of Asher and Phoebe Hart, née Moses. He arrived in the colony, presumably with his parents and most of the family about 1841 as far as I can determine; my detailed research to date has not been able to identify them on any passenger lists. The first recorded note of his business activities was in July 1841 where we note he was running a general store in Goulburn, adjacent to the *Royal Hotel*.¹¹

The name *Royal Hotel* was to assume something of significance for him and his family. First, on 22 March 1844, he married Hannah

Levey, the daughter of Phillip and Hannah (née Mordecai) Levey, a furniture dealer; this marriage took place in the *Royal Hotel* in Sydney. Later, he was to build and run the *Royal Hotel* in Yass.

It is highly probable that Henry was encouraged to establish himself in Yass by the success and possible influence of his uncle, Moses. There is some uncertainty about exactly when he first saw Yass. A conflicting *Yass Courier* newspaper report of 1877 infers that Henry first arrived in Yass on 21 January 1836, but this is four to five years before I believe he arrived in NSW! Such are the tribulations of genealogical research! It is a fact that by 1844, Henry held the licence of the *Rose Inn* (later Dr. Powell's residence) and their first three children, Rachel, Deborah and my grandfather, Joseph, were born there. Like their illustrious forebears and relatives, the lack of television and other distractions resulted in a fruitful family of twelve, seven sons and five daughters.

Being a shrewd businessman, Henry was always looking to improve profitability and like his uncle, maybe pushed the envelope a little too far for the law's liking. In 1848, we note that 'Henry Hart of the *Rose Inn* was charged with selling a bottle of rum on a



Henry Hart, born Portsmouth, England c 1814 arrived in Yass c1841. He built and operated the Royal Hotel from 1849 to 1878.

Sunday, but after adjournments the case was dismissed on account of insufficient evidence.¹²

By then he had accrued sufficient collateral to build his own hotel, *The Royal* in 1849. The *Yass Courier* noted that he was 'admired for building at the top of the town, away from other buildings. Another reference noted that building material was very cheap. The bricks used in the construction of *The Royal* cost 18 shillings per thousand delivered on site. Henry either had premonitory powers or was just plain lucky because the flood of 1850 effectively washed away the original settlement and the new town of Yass was reconstructed further up the hill, virtually with *The Royal* as the centre of the new town.

On 23 April 1850, a letter appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* addressed to Dr. Charles Strutt and signed by 50 citizens of Yass, including Henry and Lazarus Hart, both of the *Royal Hotel*. The letter expressed appreciation of Dr. Strutt's work in discharging his 'duties as surgeon-general of the female Irish orphan immigrants during your stay amongst us, and we feel that it will be as satisfactory to you to learn, as it is pleasing to us to mention, the general good conduct of the fifty girls who have obtained situations amongst us.'¹³

My immediate presumption from this snippet of history was that Henry had accepted one of the Irish orphan girls as an employee in the hotel. However these girls were not permitted to work in



Royal Hotel, Yass

**DESCENDANT CHART -
HENRY HART & FAMILY**

Henry HART-14 (Circa 1814 - 8 Feb 1884)
& Hannah LEVEY-15 (Circa 1827 - 20 May 1892)
m. 20 Mar 1844

Rachel HART-16 (21 May 1845 - 6 Jul 1929)
& Barret Aaron MOSES-27 (11 May 1843 - 6 Oct 1926)
m. 14 Sep 1864

Deborah Emille HART-17 (29 Aug 1846 - 1927)
& Lewis BENJAMIN-28 (- 12 May 1871)
m. 14 May 1865

Deborah Emille HART-17 (29 Aug 1846 - 1927)
& David BERNSTON-564 (- Before 1886)
m. 25 Dec 1872

Deborah Emille HART-17 (29 Aug 1846 - 1927)
& Jonathan WAINWRIGHT-159 (Circa 1845 - 1932)
m. 6 Mar 1886

Joseph HART-12 (Circa 1849 - 29 Nov 1900)
& Hosaina HAWKE-13 (13 Dec 1875 - 13 May 1944)
m. 11 Oct 1898

Mark Henry HART-18 (Circa 1850 - 1929)
& Blanche Julia LEVY-29 (Circa 1859 - 1935)
m. 10 Oct 1882

Lewis HART-19 (24 Feb 1852 - 26 Oct 1891)

Sarah HART-20 (10 Mar 1854 - Circa 1922)
& Lewis Charles EMANUEL-30 (Circa 1852 - 31 Jul 1894)
m. 19 Aug 1879

Abraham Myer HART-21 (15 Mar 1857 - 15 Dec 1930)
& Hannah Louisa FALK-31 (1866 -)
m. 7 Mar 1888

Abraham Myer HART-21 (15 Mar 1857 - 15 Dec 1930)
& Gertrude Violet COPELAND-32 (Circa 1876 - 18 Mar 1937)
m. 26 Jun 1913

John Moses HART-22 (13 Jun 1859 - 2 Mar 1935)
& Mary UNKONWN-1005 (- After 1931)

Asher. H HART-23 (25 Jan 1862 - 10 Feb 1937)
& Julia LAWRENCE-33 (24 Oct 1862 - 12 Nov 1931)
m. 26 Jun 1888

Phoebe Francis HART-24 (18 Jun 1864 - 1901)
& Louis Abra MORRIS (nee ABRAMOWICH)-34 (1862 -)
m. 1 Dec 1886

Phillip Morris HART-25 (31 Mar 1866 - Circa 1933)
& Dora Elizabeth (Dorette) LANDAUER-35 (20 Oct 1866 - Circa 1928)
m. 15 Oct 1890

Leah Julia HART-26 (14 Sep 1868 - 5 Feb 1945)
& Louis Abra MORRIS (nee ABRAMOWICH)-34 (1862 -)
m. Circa 1901

inns and it is probable that Henry signed the letter as one of the main citizens of the town. The reference to Lazarus is interesting. It is assumed that this is Henry's younger brother who drowned in the Murrumbidgee River in November 1851, allegedly in considerable debt to Henry, who had written to their father on the matter.

The *Royal* became a centre of major social activities in the town. There was a big luncheon on 18 September 1854 to celebrate the opening of the new Hume bridge over the Yass River.¹⁴ In 1858, the first telegraph apparatus between Yass, Goulburn and Sydney was fixed in a room at the *Royal Hotel*, transmitted by Mr. Godfrey. On 26 January 1865, the Yass Theatre Royal had its opening night. In June 1868, the Chorale and Dramatic Society held their first concert and from this time onwards, the *Royal Hotel* was the host to a variety of travelling entertainers. Among those to perform were the Kentucky Minstrels, the Empire Minstrels, Madame Corodini, Frank Howson Family, Christy Minstrels and the Lancashire Bellringers. Visitors from all walks of life patronised the *Royal* over the years. The infamous bushranger Frank (Darkie) Gardiner was arrested there in March 1854. In July 1897, David Jones Sydney was selling merchandise from the premises to the locals. In September 1913, the *Royal* (then owned by James Hoban) hosted the British Parliamentary party.

OTHER JEWISH BUSINESSMEN

Henry continued to expand his business interests. In January 1858 he purchased (from Joseph Crouch) buildings in Cooma St, adjacent to the hotel for £1,150. A number of shops (grocery, hardware, jeweler, restaurant and fruit shop) became known as *Hart's Row*.¹⁵ He leased the *Royal* in 1865, but continued to reside there. He entered into a business partnership with a Mrs. Sarah Benjamin (his widowed sister-in-law) and they had a commercial store in Cooma St, selling wines and spirits.

Hart and Benjamin were enthusiastic litigators and there are a number of recorded actions in their favour, presumably recovering bad debts. In the meantime, uncle Moses continued to prosper and his family continued to grow. In 1857 he built a six-room cottage in Glebe St., calling it *Alfristan Cottage* after the birthplace of his wife Hannah. After his death, his widow sold the property to J.P. Ritchie and he renamed it *Linton*. Eventually the ravages of time took its toll and Moses died on 12 July 1858 and was buried in the Yass cemetery.

The report of his death said that prayers were read by Mr. Michaelis of Burrowa, his death certificate noting that there was 'no rabbi present'. His tombstone is worked in both Hebrew and English

and records the Jewish year of death as 5818. The inscription reads; 'He was one of the oldest inhabitants of the town of Yass. He was much respected by all who knew him.' His wife carried on with the *Yass Inn* until March 1863 when the licence was transferred to Abraham Cohen.

Another interesting piece of history arises here. Three years after Moses died, his widow had all the children baptised as Christians. It leads one to the belief that she and Moses may have agreed that this recognition of Hannah's faith would be bestowed on the offspring only after a decent interval following his death.

TRAGEDIES

Life in the nineteenth century was tough and not without its sadness. As mentioned earlier, Henry Hart's brother, Lazarus drowned in the Murrumbidgee River in November 1851. Lazarus also had an interesting history. He was transported to Australia with a life sentence. His trial was on 27 May 1830 at the Middlesex courts and he arrived on the *York* in 1831. He was granted a Ticket-of-leave (no. 39/771) on 1 May 1839 and allowed to travel to Yass 19 June 1839 on authority from the Police Magistrate Campbelltown. Subsequently he was allowed to live in Sydney from 12 August 1841 'so long as he remains in the service of Mr. Moses (Isaac?)'. His ticket-of-leave was destroyed 20 September 1845 after he received a pardon (no. 44/241) dated 1 July 1843.

Henry's sister, Julia, her husband Abraham Meyer and four (possibly six if the stated Passenger List of the NSW State Records are correct!) infant children all perished in the wreck of the *Dunbar* off Sydney heads on 20 August 1857 on their way back from a trip to England.

On 19 November 1844, John Moses was visiting his brother Moses in company with two of his daughters, Hannah aged 14 and Sarah aged 12. In a tragic accident, both girls were drowned in Barbers Creek, near Yass and subsequently were buried in the new Jewish cemetery in Goulburn. Sarah Tabitha Moses, a daughter from his marriage to Sarah Brown, died at the age of 15 and is the oldest grave in the Yass cemetery; she lies next to her father.

Behind these two graves, is the grave of Sarah Benjamin nee Levey, a sister of Hannah Hart, who, as a widow, died in June 1867, 'leaving a young family of six children'. Sarah (who it will be recalled was at one time a partner of Henry Hart in the liquor trade) died in the *Royal Hotel* under unusual circumstances and a coroner ordered a post mortem, but the jury found that she died from natural causes.

HENRY HART DEPARTS YASS

On 15 February 1878, Henry and his family left Yass for Sydney, after putting the hotel and the adjacent *Hart's Row* buildings up for auction. Of him, the *Yass Courier* stated that 'he has been a useful townsman, having taken part in most objects that have the welfare of the town and district in view. Both he and Mrs. Hart carry with them the good wishes of the entire community and the deepest regret is generally expressed at the circumstances under which they had taken their departure. The *Royal Hotel*, built and so long occupied by Mr. Hart, has been closed for the past day or two.' ¹⁶

The so-called 'regrettable circumstances' which caused them to move has been a mystery to both family genealogists and this his-



Moses Moses' grave

torical society for some years. Recently, however, with an astute eye for detail and a researcher's enthusiasm to seek the truth, I believe Gloria Carlos, a Yass and District Historical Society member, may have recently unearthed the solution to this mystery. It appears that Henry had invested heavily in a mining venture called the Cunningham Plains copper mine as a *Yass Courier* extract of 1 April 1873 reported that he was a large shareholder. Subsequently, it has been revealed that at some stage he had mortgaged the four *Hart's Row* properties to Thomas Laidlaw (who had died in 1876) and legal correspondence in March 1878 associated with his estate reveals that 'Hart had been ejected from all his premises and had left town'.¹⁷ This development requires more detailed research but at this stage it would appear that Henry just ran out of luck and funds and was forced to sell his last surviving asset, *The Royal*.

Henry, Hannah and the remaining single members of the family moved to a residence in Bourke Street, Surry Hills, where, on 8 February 1884, Henry died; he was buried in the Haslem Creek (Rookwood) cemetery in Sydney. On 20 May 1892, Hannah died and she was buried adjacent to her husband in the Hebrew cemetery at Rookwood.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Moses and Hart families have of course continued to multiply, but thankfully not in the numbers of our illustrious forebears! Of course they are not all Harts or Moses, although in my own family line there have been no females born in 5 generations, that is since the daughters of Henry Hart. During my research, I have made contact with a great number of interesting people and my own genealogical database now contains a little under 2,000 names that emanate, in one way or another, from these two early Jewish pioneers of Yass.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PERCY MARKS — A JEWISH RENAISSANCE MAN

Yehuda Feher with Marianne Dacy

INTRODUCTION

In 1920 Israel Cohen, a prominent British Zionist visited Australia to conduct an appeal for the Palestine Restoration Fund (forerunner of the *Keren Hayesod*). After a very successful campaign, visiting the Jewish centres in Australia and New Zealand and some Pacific Islands, he returned to London and subsequently published his memoirs of places and people. Of the many Jewish personalities he met, he singled out Percy Joseph Marks, as 'one of the few Australian-born Jews with a true comprehension of the Zionist ideal'.¹ In his eulogy of Percy Marks in 1941, the late Rabbi Falk said of him:

He was one of the first in this community who responded to the call of Herzl and he carried its banner aloft, even in those days when Zionism was looked upon as a subversive movement or at least as inimical to the interest of British Jewry.²

and

papers from his pen established before Jews and non-Jews a reputation for scholarship such as is seldom possible to a lay-member of the faith in Australia.³

As the founding president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society and a major collector of materials on Australian Jewish history now located in the Mitchell wing of the State Library of New South Wales, he deserves a more detailed study of his life and contributions. This article sets out to fill an important lacuna in Australian Jewish history.

Percy Marks was an Australian Jew born in 1861 far from the Jewish centre of Europe who absorbed the Zionist ideals and

worked for them all his life. He was conversant not only with all facets of Judaism and Jewish history, but also with Australian history. He was a leading member of the Royal Australian Historical Society, and his interest in English literature led him to become a prominent member of the Shakespeare Society of New South Wales. Details of his life, family background and writings so far largely unpublished will cast some light on this outstanding many-sided personality.

1. EARLY LIFE

Percy Marks was a third generation Australian Jew. His grandfather on his mother's side, Samuel Benjamin arrived in Australia in 1833 and became a very successful merchant in Sydney with branch stores in Windsor, Goulburn and Queanbeyan. He was also a conscientious Jew who sat on the board of the Bridge Street Synagogue and then on the first board of the York Street Synagogue. He and his wife Rachel had several children, some of whom died in childhood, but one son and three daughters survived. One of these, Elizabeth, was Percy's mother.

Percy Mark's father, Joseph Marks, also came from England. He was only nineteen years old when he arrived in Sydney in 1854, coincidentally the same year in which his future father-in-law Samuel Benjamin died. He went to Maitland where there had been a small thriving Jewish community since the 1830s, and soon became well known in the local community. Among the positions he held was that of the District Trustee to the Savings Bank of New South Wales. He was also one of the founders and first honorary treasurer of the West Maitland Synagogue and a prominent member of the volunteer corps.⁴ In 1866 he married Elizabeth (Lizzy) Benjamin. The wedding was held in Sydney at 82 William Street.⁵

Their first son, Percy, was born a year later, in 1867. The actual birth took place in Sydney, again at 82 William Street.⁶ They had two more children, Hilda born in 1869 and Ernest Samuel born in 1871. In 1873 Elizabeth Marks gave birth to another daughter, who died as a baby. Two years later, at the age of twenty-nine, she died in childbirth. Percy was thus not yet eight years old when he and his younger sister and brother lost their mother. One wonders what difficulties and problems their father faced in the small Jewish community in Maitland with three small children, and what sort of home-life and Jewish education he could give them.

As it happens, this was also the period when the Jewish community of Maitland reached the peak of its development. In 1878 the community erected a synagogue and appointed the Reverend Samuel

Goldstein as minister of the congregation. He was a graduate of Jews' College, London, a young man of dignity and scholarship.

Thus Percy Mark's education in Judaism must have started, apart from early childhood influences from his father and mother, with the teachings by Rev. Samuel Goldstein. Rev. Goldstein, however, did not stay long in Maitland, and Rev. Solomon Levy followed him in 1880. This is the year in which Percy Marks became *Bar Mitzvah* and therefore must have been tutored and instructed by Rev. Levy.⁷

It was also the time (1879/80) when young Percy first showed his interest in writing and journalism. He produced several 'home-made magazines'. These were small eight page leaflets, written and illustrated by hand, set out as a newspaper produced with columns, editorials and features. His first paper carried the heading: '*Morning Post* — published and printed by P.J. Marks at the ROSEBUD Office'. This was followed by the *Maitland Fun* (9 January 1880) with the introduction:

In presenting our first number before the public we hope to have their support and patronage for without that a paper cannot prosper so we will try our best to please them. — Editor.

The *Maitland Fun* was also produced in the ROSEBUD PRINTING OFFICE — P.J. MARKS PROPRIETOR. Among its features was 'Conundrums, Mirths, Fun and Tricks'. The young twelve-year-old editor introduced the second issue:

We have now great pleasure in presenting to the public our second issue and if the other did not please we hope this one will as we will try and improve as much as we possibly can.

At the end of the third issue he states: 'We are sorry to have to notice that unless we receive a certain number of subscriptions this issue will be the last'. However, in the next issue he writes: 'We are glad to see that our appeal to the public has been answered in a very generous style. We thank them for it'. Although only short essays into 'journalism', they reveal Percy Mark's ability to express his thoughts interestingly and precisely from an early age. Percy, in fact, also became a contributor to a real newspaper, the *Illustrated Maitland News* that had a column of 'Facts' and a 'Pastime Column' as well as 'Funny Sketches by Funny Fellows'. He was also a regular contributor to the 'Pastime' column of the *Sydney Mail* (1881).⁸

In 1882 Joseph Marks decided to leave Maitland. By that time he had become a successful businessman, trader in wool and produce

THE Maitland Fun
 March 1880
 Vol. 3, No. 1

We are glad to see that our appeal to the public has been answered in a very good style. We present a beautiful picture entitled "Gathering in the Pines".



Maitland Fun
 JANUARY 1880
 Vol. 3, No. 1

Representing our friends before the public we hope to have their support and patronage for without that a paper cannot prosper and we will try our best to please them.

Remember for **JANUARY 1880**

S	1	2	3	4	5
M	6	7	8	9	10
T	11	12	13	14	15
W	16	17	18	19	20
T	21	22	23	24	25
F	26	27	28	29	30
S	31				

26 January
 70th anniversary of the colony of NSW.

THOUGHTFUL RESPECTABLE
 Well I think you will do suit me. What is your name?
 SUGGESTION
 I have a relation to the colony of NSW.

Maitland Fun
 1880
 Vol. 3, No. 1

Owing to the Jewish Passover being so near the end of the month of mid the Editor being in Sydney we have to publish a much smaller number. We give as a Supplement to the Maitland Fun Almanack for 1880. In next number we issue a picture entitled ON THE PINE.

Maitland News
 10 penny each
 70 per annum
 Edited by E. S. Marks
 Published monthly
 All take it



Maitland Fun
 1880
 Vol. 3, No. 1

THE Maitland Fun is a weekly paper published in Sydney. It is a supplement to the Maitland Fun Almanack for 1880. It is published monthly and is sold at 10 pence each. It is edited by E. S. Marks and published by the Maitland Fun Office.

Maitland News
 10 penny each
 70 per annum
 Edited by E. S. Marks
 Published monthly
 All take it

Examples of Maitland Fun

and a part owner of a tin mining company. While the main reason for moving to Sydney must have been to expand his business, he was also perhaps prompted to move to the capital by the educational opportunities, both general and Jewish, for his children. In fact, both boys were enrolled immediately at Royston College, Darlinghurst and already in November 1882, Percy Marks was listed as having been successful in the Junior Public Examination held at the University of Sydney (Subjects: history of England, arithmetic, geography and geology). In the following year Percy was named first in the prize list of Royston College and a year later was a successful candidate for matriculation.

Although his natural inclination was towards architecture and engineering, he was dissuaded from both these professions and decided on Law. As there was no Faculty of Law at Sydney University at the time, he enrolled in the Faculty of Arts and graduated with a B.A. degree in 1887.⁹

During the five years after leaving Maitland, while Percy Marks completed his formal education, he must have continued his Jewish education and maintained his interest in the community.¹⁰ This is evidenced by the fact, that when the *Hebrew Literary and Debating Society* was founded in his graduation year (1887), he became its treasurer and his brother Ernest, the secretary.¹¹ Percy also contributed to the Society by giving talks on various subjects which already at this early stage reflected his varied and wide ranging interests. In 1888 he gave a talk on 'What is Socialism?' This talk was reported in detail in the Jewish Press and also in the *Bathurst Times*. In it Percy Marks traces the history of socialism from 1835 when the word 'socialism' was first used.¹²

After receiving his B.A. degree, he commenced his legal training by being articled to the Sydney law firm of Creagh and Williams. In 1891 he was admitted as a solicitor at the Supreme Court. Already during the period of his legal training he found time to pursue his Jewish interests. He became the Sydney correspondent of the *Melbourne Jewish Herald* and published his first polemical article 'The Bible and Land Monopoly'. In this article Percy Marks points out that the idea of land nationalisation, at that time proposed by the American economist, Henry George, who was visiting Australia, had already been known by the Jewish people in Biblical times. He quotes the law of the Jubilee year (Lev 25:10; 27:30) and the fact that it had been practised for hundreds of years. He concludes his article:

I have endeavoured to show, and I hope that I have been fairly successful in my attempt, how a primitive people... practically

J.A.P.m. 361.16
HEBREW
Literary and Debating Society.
Synagogue Chambers
Castlereagh St. Sydney.
March 24th, 1887

Dear Sir,

You are hereby invited (together with all members of your family and friends) to attend a Special Meeting to be held at the above rooms on Thursday the 31st inst. at 8 p.m. precisely, for the purpose of considering the Rules framed for the management of the above Society, and to elect office-bearers.

I have the honor to be,
Yours faithfully,
Percy Marks,
Hon. Sec. pro tem.



Letter for founding meeting of the Hebrew Literary and Debating Society, 24 March 1887.

solved by peaceful methods the problem, which according to Mr George, is the root of all poverty...but the times and circumstances are now quite different and ideas have to be altered to suit them...all honour is, however, due to those economic thinkers who are endeavouring by different methods to find a way to apply in these modern times the ancient biblical principle of allowing to every man a fair share in the use of the land, and who thus hope to reduce poverty in the world and to raise the general status of mankind.¹³

In 1891 Percy Marks commenced his legal practice at 17 Bridge Street, Sydney. We do not know how busy his practice was, but we do know that in 1894, he decided to visit England, in those days, 'the Mother Country', to everybody in Australia. A few weeks before he sailed he published in the *Australian Hebrew Times* an interesting piece which showed his interest in classics. Entitled 'An Imaginary Conversation', the Prophet Malachi and the Greek philosopher Plato meet again after two thousand years. After exchanging pleasantries Plato says:

'What grieves me is that the Greeks as we knew them are no more. How is it with your people? Do they still exist or have they been absorbed by the races that have since sprung up?' Malachi replies: 'The people of Israel have suffered much since then...but they still exist and although scattered east, west, north and south throughout the world, yet remain a powerful and influential race.'

Plato: 'How is that, Hebrew? Our great writers are still acknowledged to be unsurpassed. Have your people had a similar influence? — Malachi: 'Yes. The Bible, the inspired literature of the Jews has become the property of all mankind...We too have given the world its religion and its indebtedness to our race is even greater than yours.'

And so the two great ancients go on discussing God, immortality, science and they part as two friends.¹⁴ Percy Marks signed this article with his 'nom de plume' SAMOJEP which he used many times later.

When Percy decided to travel to England in 1874, he must have been well known in the community since a newspaper reported:

Among the passengers by the 'Opir' which will leave Circular Quay at noon tomorrow, will be Mr Percy Marks, B.A. He is

proceeding on a trip to Europe previous to his settling down to his profession as a lawyer in Sydney. Mr Marks is the popular and zealous Hon. treasurer of the Sydney Hebrew Literary and Debating Society of which he was one of the founders seven years ago. He is also an esteemed contributor to the *Hebrew Times* as well as to other Sydney publications. We heartily wish him a pleasant journey and safe return to Sydney where he will be much missed during his absence.¹⁵

Another newspaper reported:¹⁶

Mr Percy Marks, son of J. Marks, a clever young solicitor, is about to visit Europe for a period of twelve months. Mr Marks is, amongst many other accomplishments, noted of his thorough knowledge of *Volapük*.¹⁷

Apart from his intellectual pursuits Percy Marks was an accomplished athlete who excelled in running and swimming like his brother Ernest. The latter had developed an outstanding reputation in the world of sport. Percy's trip to London was focused not so much around his intellectual interests as on his interest in sport. *The Daily Chronicle* (of London) reported on 28 July 1894:

P.J. Marks, well known in Sydney in swimming and athletic circles has arrived in England and is at present staying in London. His chief mission is to study the methods of English swimming and organization as he was asked to make a report on his return to the Colony.

Percy Marks must have fulfilled his task in London as another newspaper report (unattributed) in the P.J Marks collection testifies:

At a meeting of the Council of the New South Wales Amateur Swimming Association, Mr Percy Marks, of the Darlinghurst Harriers, who has recently returned from a visit to London, furnished a somewhat lengthy and highly interesting report of his impressions of swimming in England.¹⁸

It is evident that Percy Marks' interest in sport was not limited to its physical aspect only but also aimed to improve the legal status of sports organisations as is evidenced by another newspaper report:

At the last annual meeting of the New South Wales Amateur Athletic Association Mr P.J. Marks, B.A., solicitor of this city,

and a member of the Darlinghurst Harriers and East Sydney Swimming club, had a motion on the business paper in reference to obtaining legislative authority for the legal recognition of athletic and other clubs. Owing to other important matters taking precedence the motion was not discussed. Since then, however, Mr Marks has elaborated his scheme, and it is the intention of his brother, Mr E.S. Marks, hon. secretary of the Amateur Athletic Association, to bring it before the meeting of amateur bodies to be held at the end of the month. Mr Marks' idea is to obtain an Act of Parliament giving clubs the right to sue and be sued in courts of Petty Sessions.¹⁹

After his return to Sydney, Percy Marks resumed his legal practice (first at 17 Bridge Street, then at Royle's Chambers — Bond Street, and from 1896 at Eldon Chambers — 92 Pitt Street). He resumed his activities in the Jewish community. From 1894 to 1896 he was the honorary secretary of the Sydney Jewish Education Board. He was also one of the early champions of the study of the Hebrew language. In one article in the *Australian Hebrew Times* (January 25, 1895) he wrote:

Hebrew should be included amongst the subjects of a university examination. It is as much entitled to a place in the curriculum as Greek, and behoves us as Jews who are so to say, the custodians of this tongue, to see that it occupies such a place.

In 1896, Percy Marks was associate editor, together with Daniel Levy of *The Australasian Hebrew*, a short-lived newspaper that lasted only one year but was of a high literary standard. In the same year he also published a lengthy treatise on 'The Jews and the Marriage laws'.²⁰ In this he examines the marriage laws of England and those of New South Wales in detail and the ways in which they affect Jews and Quakers, as a section of these statutes 'permits Jews and Quakers to continue to contract and solemnise marriage according to their religious belief'. Many years later (1936) Percy Marks re-wrote this study, including a detailed consideration of Jewish marriage laws.²¹

In 1900 Percy Marks wrote another illuminating article entitled 'The Hebrew and Other Early Versions of the Bible'.²² Two years later he gave a long talk on the same subject to the Jewish Literary and Debating Society under the slightly different title of 'The Bible, Its Canon, Text and Early Translations' which was reported in the *Hebrew Standard* (June 6, 1902) and also printed as a pamphlet for private circulation.²³

2. THE ZIONIST

Percy Marks first entered the public arena of Australian Zionism early in 1900 when he announced in the *Hebrew Standard* 'that he has received from England a copy of the articles of association of the Zionist Bank (the Jewish Colonial Trust, Ltd) and he is willing to show it to intending shareholders and afford what information he can free of charge'.²⁴ There is no record how and why this information was sent to him from London and what response — if any — there was to this announcement.²⁵

By this time a number of people in Sydney expressed interest in the Zionist movement, particularly Samuel Goldston at whose instigation public meetings were held in January 1901 at the Great Synagogue in Sydney. Percy Marks was one of the speakers. After the meeting on 24 January 1901 it was decided to form a Zionist Society, whose name was later changed to the New South Wales Zionist League. Henry Hockings was elected president. In the same year, at the first meeting of the Sydney Jewish Literary and Debating Society, whose treasurer was Percy Marks, it was moved that 'the Zionist Movement should be encouraged'. 'Percy Marks led the debate and gave a very clear exposition of Zionism'.²⁶

On the other hand, there were others who opposed the emerging Zionist movement on the local scene. The most outspoken among them was the Reverend J.H. Landau, assistant minister of the Great Synagogue who even went as far as discussing that matter in the general press and at public meetings. At one of these meetings, held mostly for non-Jews, Rev. Landau even objected to the presence of Jews and engaged in fiery debate with them. Percy Marks was so incensed that he stormed out of the hall in disgust. Subsequently, he took it upon himself to defend Zionism in a long letter to the Editor of the *Jewish Herald* headed 'Zionism — a Reply to the Rev J.H Landau'. He wrote: 'In his endeavours to stem the growing tide of Zionism Mr. Landau will be as successful as was Canute when he tried to keep the waves from wetting his feet.'²⁷ Later in the same year, Percy Marks gave a lecture to the Hebrew Mutual Benefit and Medical Society. Again, after decrying Rev Landau's negative attitude he presented his audience with a clear exposé on Zionism:

Zionism is no new idea. Every Jew is necessarily a Zionist of some type or another...Zionism means the realisation of the hope that we as a nation shall at last obtain a firm foothold in the land of our fathers which is the final resting place of the wandering of so many centuries... The Zionist movement is

the greatest of all Jewish developments of recent times...Humanity and Judaism will be richer and better for what Zionism has done and is still doing...²⁸

During the next few years, although Percy Marks did not seek any executive position, he must have watched anxiously the slow development of the Zionist movement. In May 1906 he wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Zionist organization in Cologne complaining about 'the apathy in Australia and New Zealand about Zionism.'²⁹ Only two years later after the demise of the earlier Zionist League, Percy Marks called a meeting in his office and in the presence of thirty people explained the objects of the movement in some detail. At this meeting the decision was made to form the Sydney Zionist Society with Percy Marks as its first president. The society would be affiliated with the International Zionist Organisation. Thus, 'the new chapter of the history of local Zionism began in which the name of Percy Marks is written large.'³⁰

For the next ten years Marks remained the president and was at the helm throughout the difficult war years (1914-18). During this time he made repeated representations to the Commonwealth Government for permission to remit money to London for the benefit of the Jews in the Holy Land, but it was refused. In spite of his strenuous efforts he had to report again to the Zionist Bureau in 1911 that:

The general attitude of the Jewish community is one of apathy. There are comparatively few enthusiastic Zionists. The majority of the Jews here are if anything non-Zionist, but there is no hostility.³¹

Subsequently he reported that: 'We have difficulties with Zionist propaganda...there is little enthusiasm on the subject... there is much apathy here at the moment...'³²

In 1916 the Young Men's Zionist Society was formed to take a more active part in political activities. Both the Balfour Declaration and the occupation of Jerusalem by British forces in 1917 were duly celebrated. In July 1918, the two Zionist organizations combined to form the Union of Sydney Zionists and Percy Marks was elected as vice-president together with Solomon Pechter.

In 1920 Israel Cohen came to Sydney to conduct a most successful campaign for the Palestine Restoration Fund. The highlight of the campaign was a big public meeting presided over by the Governor, Sir Walter Davidson. Among the Zionist leaders on the platform was Percy Marks.³³

In 1922, in the course of another overseas trip, Percy Marks visited Shanghai. He was of course welcomed by the local leadership as 'the prominent leader of Sydney Jewry and active Zionist and communal worker'. 'We are thankful', wrote the *Israel Messenger* — that Shanghai was remembered by Mr Percy Marks in his itinerary. Needless to say such a visitor...can hardly come and go without leaving an impression behind.' In his farewell message published in the same issue of the *Shanghai Israel Messenger* Percy Marks wrote:

I cannot conclude this letter without congratulating you on the excellent work done on behalf of Zionism. As one who has been connected with the national cause for many years it indeed affords me pleasure to see the enthusiastic manner in which the institutions of Zionism are supported in this Far East City.³⁴

After the departure of Israel Cohen there was slackening of interest in Zionism in Sydney and even though Great Britain was granted the Mandate over Palestine by the League of Nations in 1922, many Australian Jews considered it disloyal to be Zionist. In an effort to counteract this attitude, Percy Marks published a letter in the *Hebrew Standard* on 10 September 1926, under the title: 'More British than the king'.

It seems to me that a Jewish subject of the king of England if he be loyal to his religion and to his king he must be a Zionist. When we find such good Englishmen as Lloyd George, Lord Balfour, Viscount Allenby... and others too numerous to mention all actively interested in Zionism, although not Jews, it is hard to understand how British Jews can be opposed to the movement... Zionism is part of the policy of the British Government, otherwise the Balfour Declaration means nothing...For the preservation of Judaism a spiritual centre in Palestine, such as Zionism will provide, is essential, and lastly a home of refuge for the thousands of Jews who are living in misery and starvation in Eastern Europe, should appeal to the generosity of all Jews.³⁵

By the mid twenties, interest in Zionism had increased and was stimulated greatly by the arrival in Australia of another eminent emissary, Alexander Goldstein, a member of the executive of the World Zionist Organisation. In 1927 Goldstein called a conference in Melbourne with Zionist representatives from all states (except

Tasmania) at which it was decided to form the Australian Zionist Federation. This was the first time that Jews from the different states had gathered to form a federal body.

While General Sir John Monash accepted the position of Honorary President of the Federation, the conference also elected M. Zeltner as president and Rabbi Israel Brodie and Rabbi Mestel as



Percy Marks

vice presidents. Percy Marks was also there as a representative of the Union of Sydney Zionists and chaired the second session of the conference. While he was a supporter of the Federation he had always had reservations about it. As far back as 1909 he had written to the Zionist Central Bureau in Cologne:

I agree with the idea of a federation, but cannot see much chance at present...the societies are scattered and there are not enough of them... and we need people who will give the time...³⁶

Even after the very successful second conference of the Australian Zionist Federation, Percy Marks was very critical. In a letter to Israel Cohen at the Zionist Head Office in London he wrote:

...having considered the matter very carefully, it appears to me that it is necessary to consider whether it is advisable to carry the Federation with its large expense and comparatively small result.³⁷

Perhaps because of his difference of opinion on organisational matters Percy Marks was less active in the Federation in the following years, but he was always ready to speak up when necessary. Such an occasion was after the Wailing Wall issue in 1929 when he took issue with Rabbi Francis Cohen of the Great Synagogue.

The Rabbi having...publicly given expression to views which to me are neither British nor Jewish, I feel it my duty to disassociate myself from them. When an injustice is done to anyone, be he Jew or Gentile, by a government official, surely one has the right to protest and there is no question of loyalty involved.³⁸

Percy Marks remained on the executive of the Union of Sydney Zionist almost to the end of his life. He also became a keen supporter of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, donating books and other material to its library. When, at the initiative of Ruby Rich, a society of the Friends of the Hebrew University was established in 1936, Percy Marks was elected as its first president. Rabbi Falk in his obituary wrote:

The Hebrew University had a special fascination for him. He regularly sent gifts to the library and thus created for himself a special niche which will keep there his memory ever green.

No wonder that the bibliographical quarterly of the Hebrew University always referred to him as *Yedideneu Ha'neeman* — 'our faithful friend'.³⁹

Percy Marks' lifelong devotion to Zionism is suitably summarised by the eminent Australian Jewish historian, Suzanne Rutland:

Percy Marks' leadership was important because of his belief that Zionism had done more for Jews and Judaism than had any other movement. In this respect he was an exception since most Australian Jews did not understand the meaning of Zionism...⁴⁰

3. SHAKESPEAREAN SCHOLAR

Percy Marks was a foundation member and an active participant of the Shakespeare Society of New South Wales throughout his life. His first contribution was a paper read to the Shakespeare Society in 1901, entitled 'Shakespeare and the Jews'. In this he points out that there is no historical record that Shakespeare had actually met any Jews. He stressed that:

It will be seen that in his plays Shakespeare followed the prejudice of his own and other ages, both prior and since, in speaking of the Hebrew race in contemptuous tones... And specifically in *The Merchant of Venice* both the plot and the character were borrowed from various sources... Although our poet could not altogether rid himself of the prejudice of his time, yet he showed himself superior to his predecessors by making Shylock a human being, with human feelings and aspirations.⁴¹

Percy Mark's major contribution was his 'Australian Shakespeareana — a bibliography of Books, Pamphlets, Magazines, Articles, etc, that have been printed in Australia and New Zealand, dealing with Shakespeare and his works.' This was published in 1915 by Tyrrel's Limited. In compiling this bibliography Percy Marks used not only the catalogues of all the major public libraries but also inspected several private collections. He aimed also to include everything printed in Australia irrespective of its literary merit. Also included are many works which, although their titles do not indicate any Shakespearean interest, have been found to contain chapters or essays dealing with the dramatist or his works. *The Sydney Morning Herald* reviewing the work at the

time stated: 'A compilation quite unique of its kind... is an excellent specimen of bibliography...Mr Marks is to be congratulated on his compilation...'⁴²

In a subsequent long review the literary editor of *The Sun* wrote:

It must have meant to Mr Marks a remarkable amount of patience and research, for he had no earlier book to begin from, and scarcely anything in the way of systematic record to cover even part of the field he was exploring...Thus he is certainly doing the spade work of Shakespearian bibliography in this country, putting down the first foundation on which he or other compilers will build later.⁴³

Percy Marks presented three other papers before the Shakespearean Society. One was in 1923 on the occasion of the three hundredth anniversary of the 'First Folio'. It was in 1623 that all the collected works of Shakespeare were first made available to the public in one volume. In his paper Percy Marks describes some earlier prints of individual plays and gives some details of the first complete folio, concluding:

In rendering honour to Shakespeare on this, the three hundredth anniversary of the appearance of his works, we should also pay reverence to all those through whose labours the plays have been preserved.⁴⁴

'Shakespeare, the Actor and the Theatre of His Time' was the title of another talk to the Shakespearean Society. In this talk Percy Marks traces the young Shakespeare's first contacts with theatres in London, not as an actor but as one of the 'supernumeriers' such as 'servitor' or 'prompter's attendant.' He then describes the various theatres and playhouses of the time, including *The Globe*, of which Shakespeare became part-owner and gives a detailed description of what a theatre of the time looked like and how the performances were given.

As to Shakespeare's appearances on the board, there is not much authentic material to rely upon, but the probability is that he was an actor of no mean parts.... But it was this experience which enabled Shakespeare to write his great plays in which 'the technicalities of the stage are always correct'.⁴⁵

Another talk entitled 'Shakespeare and the Bible' is introduced thus:

English literature is very rich in masterpieces, but these two books (one being in translation) which are the most valued of all... the English version of the Bible and the works of Shakespeare. These are so unique and valuable as literature, that if all other books written in English were destroyed, the language would still be studied for the sake of these two books.⁴⁶

Whilst the reference is to the 'unauthorised version of the Bible' (of 1611) Percy Marks mentioned many other translations during the previous century, but it is not certain which translations Shakespeare used. There are said to be no less than four hundred and fifty distinct biblical quotations and allusions in the writings. Percy Marks did not attempt to enumerate them, but instead discussed the points of resemblance between the Bible and Shakespeare's writings. He claimed that: 'A person desiring to improve his English composition and to develop a literary style could not do better than study these two books'.⁴⁷

Later in his essay, he advised that:

It will well repay all students to read the Bible as they do Shakespeare, not as a religious work, but as a great piece of literature. The Book of Job, for instance is unsurpassed by any other work, ancient and modern. What more interesting short story is there than that told in the Book of Ruth. The poetry of the Psalms is unique and Proverbs and Ecclesiastes probably contain more words of wisdom to the inch than any other similar composition.

As many of the beauties of Shakespeare are lost in translation, so it is with the Bible. Excellent as the English version is, yet it fails in some respects to reproduce the original. Like Shakespeare it contains many plays on words which it is impossible to translate adequately.⁴⁸

Percy Marks concluded his treatise:

Shakespeare's work like the biblical books can be read and read again, and every time one does so, it is only to find fresh beauties in them, and to appreciate more and more how rich English literature is, having these two master pieces.⁴⁹

Percy Marks remained active in the Shakespearean Society throughout his life. He also presented a talk on the 'History of the Shakespeare Society of New South Wales'. At one stage he was the

Society's honorary treasurer. At his death, the honorary secretary of the Society wrote the following condolence letter:

Mr Marks was a foundation member of the Society and it was largely due to his keen interest and untiring efforts that the Society has reached its present standard...He gave his best and those who were privileged to come in contact with him became enriched by his inspiring qualities.⁵⁰

4. THE COLLECTOR. BOOKPLATES, PAPER CURRENCY, COINS AND MEDALS

Among his many interests, Percy Marks was a keen collector of bookplates and was a committee member of the Ex-Libris Society. He collected and recorded Australian Jewish bookplates. In an article in the *Jewish Herald* he wrote:

In my small collection I have a few examples varying from the mere printed label to the engraved armorial and the purely pictorial...A complete catalogue would be of value to the collector, but it is not likely to be so to the ordinary reader, so I propose to briefly allude to some of the most important in my possession...The earliest of these which I have been able to identify is that of Joseph Barrow Montefiore, the first president of the Sydney Synagogue. Another early engraved plate was that of Mr Moses Moss, also a former president of the synagogue.⁵¹

Next he describes a number of later examples such as that of Eliezer Levi Montefiore, the art critic and Rabbi Francis Cohen (1908). The bookplate designed by the artist H.S. Rocknell for his brother Ernest Marks shows a bookcase and various pieces of sporting equipment, sport being his brother's main interest.

Percy Marks' first bookplate was very simple, bearing only his name in a decorative frame. In 1906 he also commissioned the artist Rocknell to design a beautiful plate which he describes in his article.

The centre represents an open bookcase, underneath which are the scales, sword and hourglass, as representative of his profession. Above is the upper part of a female figure holding a scroll; in the top corners are the waratah and the bottom corners have the double triangle, with the word 'Zion' in Hebrew.⁵²



Percy Marks' first and second bookplates



Percy Marks' third bookplate

Apparently Percy Marks was not quite satisfied with this bookplate and in 1932 he adopted a third design, described as follows:

It depicts himself seated in his library, its window opening out to show the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Artistic items as well as

books surround him. On the table before him are the five large volumes of his primary interests: Law, Judaism, Numismatica, Shakespeare and Australia. Around the room is further indication of his life-style, a bust of Shakespeare, the Menorah, and Shofar, and a Scroll. At the base of the plate is a Star of David supporting the Eternal Lamp.⁵³

COINS AND PAPER CURRENCY

Percy Marks was an active member of the Australian Numismatic Society most of his life. He was the society's treasurer from 1916 till his death in 1941. Throughout this time he participated in the society's activities, attending regular meetings, during which he displayed some of his rare numismatic collections for discussion. He also contributed by giving talks to the society such as 'Notes to Illustrate the Adelaide Sovereign', 1917, 'Early Paper Currency in Fiji', 1922, 'Notes on the Vagaries of Eastern Currency', 1923.⁵⁴

In 1930 Percy Marks published a treatise 'The Shekel'. In this he discusses in some detail the first Jewish coins which were variously attributed to the period of the Maccabees (BCE 140) or to the later period, that of the Jewish revolt against Rome (CE 66-70). After giving a detailed description of the actual coins, he concludes:

The value of numismatics in the study of history is well recognised, and if an additional proof of its utility in this respect be needed, the Shekel affords it.⁵⁵

Allied to Percy Mark's interest in numismatics was that of paper currency, as shown in a long talk he gave to the Royal Australian Historical Society entitled: 'The History of Paper Currency in Australia'.⁵⁶ In his introduction he states that his intention is:

to give a brief account of the various paper currencies of Australia including therein the private promissory notes, which, from a historical point of view are of more interest than the regular notes issued later by the Banks and Government under statutory authority.⁵⁷

The article traces the history of store receipts and paymasters' bills, gives accounts of forgeries, individual promissory notes, tradesmen's notes, currency payable in other than sterling and the establishment of banks. From this time pay bills were still issued as well as different banknotes by various banking companies until the passing of the Australian Notes Act (1910) and the achieving of

standardised currency with the issuing of Government notes. At the end of this very detailed and illustrated article, he writes:

In the course of this paper I have treated of the paper currency of Australia from its foundation to the present day, and although in order to keep within reasonable limits, have had to omit much, yet I have endeavoured to give a fairly full account of the various devices used to take the place of metal coins.⁵⁸

There were two other 'devices' used as currency. Percy Marks described these in his article entitled 'Rum and Wheat Currency in New South Wales' also published in the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 26 (1940), 511-514.

The complete list of Percy Marks' Collection of coins is found in the Percy Marks Collection of Judaica in the Mitchell Library, MSS 2718 (Box 3). This list includes sovereigns, silver coins and tokens used for Australasian currency including the Spanish dollar of 1748, silver crowns, half-crowns, shillings, florins, sixpences, pennies and half pennies as well as foreign coins. This collection is no longer extant.⁵⁹

However, there are two other collections in the National Library in Canberra. These include photographs and glass negatives of early Australian notes and currency exhibited by Percy Marks. The collections also include a box of medals from New South Wales and Great Britain, some dated from 1878 and commemorative coins including one celebrating the opening of the first Federal Parliament in 1901 and another commemorating the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.⁶⁰

5. THE PERCY MARKS COLLECTION OF JUDAICA

Undoubtedly his most valuable collection is his Judaica collection which contains many items on Australian Jewry not found elsewhere. When the chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, Joseph Herman Hertz, visited Australia in 1921 he wrote a letter to Percy Marks stating: 'I have just received the Pamphlets of Australian Judaica you have been good enough to send me. I need hardly assure you that they are not only valuable but also extremely interesting'.⁶¹

This was the first public recognition and appreciation of what eventually became the 'Percy Marks Collection of Judaica' in the Mitchell Library of the State Library of New South Wales. The beginnings of the collection most probably were the books and records

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Nov. 29. "Federation" ... Mr. Edmund Barton, M.A., Q.C.

1895.

January 10. "The World To-morrow." ... Col. George W. Bell.

January 24. "Our Pleasures" ... Miss Florence M. W. Gordon.

February 7. "The Clerk of the Weather." ... Mr. D. M. Myers, B.A.

February 21. "The Other Fellow" ... The Revd. George Walters.

March 7. "Morality and Poetry." ... Prof. M. W. MacCallum, M.A.

March 21. "Rome" ... Mr. P. J. Marks, B.A.
Also Nomination of Office Bearers.

April 4. Annual Meeting.

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Examples of materials in the Percy Marks Collection.

Percy Marks inherited from his maternal grandfather, Samuel Benjamin, who died in 1854 'a man of deep religious fervour... If not a literary man, he was at least fond of books and reading.'⁶² Percy was also fond of books but he was also 'unique in collecting historical records and data'.⁶³

Encouraged by the Chief Rabbi, Percy Marks compiled a catalogue of the Australian Jewish section of his library in 1930, which he updated in 1936. He added to it a 'list of publications relating to Australian Jewry found in the Mitchell and Public Libraries of New South Wales' which was compiled by a member of staff. Both sections were then printed for private circulation.⁶⁴ This bibliography was indeed ground breaking. Half a century later, the compiler of the latest bibliography (1987, 1991 [revised]) Serge Liberman wrote: 'In compiling this bibliography...the author has used as inevitable starting-points Percy Marks' 1930 listing and his 1936 up-date'.⁶⁵

When Percy Marks died in 1941 his books and the collections were taken over by his brother, Ernest Marks.⁶⁶ The latter added to it and after rearranging it, bequeathed it to the State Library of New South Wales in 1947, on condition that it be maintained as a unit and be housed separately. Most of the books bear the following book-plate:

This book is one of the
Percy J. Marks
Collection of Judaica

bequeathed and endowed
in his memory
by his brother
Ernest Samuel Marks
1948

Regrettably, this most valuable collection has not been utilised as well as it should. The collection contains many thousands of items, including books and pamphlets, magazines and newspaper cuttings, and reports of contemporary societies and is a veritable goldmine of historical information.

In 1994 the collection was re-arranged and catalogued by Di Jackson of the Mitchell Library. In the introduction to the catalogue she states:

Access to the collection has been hampered by the fact that it is not indexed in the Printed Books Catalogue or on URICA. Again, apart from a 1936 author index, there has been no complete index or shelf list to the collection, which meant that it was not often used. Two stocktakes of the Collection were carried out, the latest being in 1993, and from these a shelf list was created.

The Collection is now indexed under the following headings:

- 1) Judaica (non-Australian)
 - a) J010/1–J990/19 (Books)
 - b) J. Pam 010/1–J Pam/ 6 (Pamphlets)
- 2) Judaica Australiana
 - a) JA 1–JA 63 (Books and Periodicals)
 - b) JA PAM 010/1–JA PAM 990.1/20 (Pamphlets).

After completing the catalogue Di Jackson commented:

Aside from the wealth of material in the Marks collection, what I found most interesting were the many handwritten annotations in some of the volumes — annotations made by members of the Marks family or by Percy himself. Birth and death dates appear, as does an envelope inserted in a volume by Hilda Marks containing 'the flowers that fell from my dear auntie's wreath from the coffin' in 1888. The envelope is still sealed after all these years.

When making up the index, I endeavoured to include notes regarding these annotations as I found them to be a poignant reminder that this was once the poignant collection of an amazing man.⁸⁷

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COLLECTION

While the most interesting aspects of the collection are the original newspaper cuttings and pamphlet files cataloguing the history of Sydney's Jewish community, it is evident that Marks wished to document the production of Judaica overseas. Marks' collection includes such Jewish sources as the *Talmud* and *Mishnah* in their original languages and translations, the *Biblica Polyglotta*, the Septuagint, Rashi, Jewish apocrypha, *Targum Onkelos* and Jonathan and various biblical commentaries, *Pirke Avot*, *Midrash*, the *Shulchan Aruch* and the writings of Moses Mendelssohn.

The oldest work by the translator John Davis, dated 1656 is

entitled *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew tongues: Being a Translation of the Learned Buxtorsius, Epitome of His Hebrew Grammar*. Another unusual work translated by the Reverend Philip Lefanu is entitled: *Letters of Certain Jews to Monsieur Voltaire containing an apology for their own People and for the Old Testament, with Critical Reflexions*. Percy Mark's version is the second American edition of 1845.

There also are several versions of the Jewish prayer book and commentaries on Jewish liturgy, as well as sermons and biblical treatises. His interests were broad for there are such diverse titles as J. Cohen's *The Deicides: Analysis of the Life of Jesus and of the several phases of the Christian Church in their relation to Judaism* and Norman Bentwick's *Hellenism*.

Other books relate to modern Judaism with works on Zionism and the Jewish religion, or such works as Leonard Stein's *The Truth about Palestine*; and at the other end of the spectrum Israel Zangwill's treatise on the *Jewish Territorial Organization*. Some works deal with antisemitism, various aspects of Judaism, the Jew and the world ferment and there is a bound volume of the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* (the infamous antisemitic forgery). Another category relates to Jewish law, divorce, the criminal code and marriage. The collection includes reference works such as dictionaries, grammars of Hebrew, Jewish legends of the Middle Ages and Jewish literature including Yiddish and Hebrew humour. There is quite a substantial section on Jewish history, Jewish travellers and Jewish coins. An interesting item is Moses Gaster's, *The Samaritans: their History, Doctrines* and a descriptive catalogue of Samaritan manuscripts in the Sassoon Library, London. A few works are on Israel, the Hebrew University, the Balfour Declaration and the United Israel Appeal. A large pamphlet collection treats such topics as bibliography of Jewish books, the letter of Aristeeas, Jewish ritual and the Jewish question in Poland. He has also collected a number of Jewish periodicals including *The Jewish Review* and a bound volume of the sermons of the Chief Rabbi of England, Joseph Herman Hertz.

The most unique part of the collection is the last third devoted to Judaica Australiana, which includes both books and pamphlets, newspaper cuttings, Australian Jewish magazines and annual reports of organisations. These provide documentation of the history of Sydney's Jewish community in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Three files are about Jews of note. The pamphlet collection takes up by far the greater portion of the Australiana collection with such items as the first report of the Central Synagogue, Sydney (1914), sermons from the Great Synagogue, Orders of

Service, the first annual report of the Sydney Zionist Society (1909), and the deed of association of the Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Home, 1889.

6. THE HISTORIAN

Mr Marks for years had recognition among a small circle of acquaintances as the unofficial historian of Australian Jewry. His feeling for history was the legacy from his ancestors.⁶⁸

In the early 1900s it was Coleman P. Hyman who was regarded as the authority on Australian Jewry's past.⁶⁹ When Hyman left Australia to settle in London in 1912 'the official mantle of authority on Australian Jewish history passed to Percy Joseph Marks.'⁷⁰

An early demonstration of Mark's detailed knowledge of communal minutiae was a lengthy review of the *Jewish Encyclopaedia's* entry about Australia in which he systematically catalogued and corrected the multiple inaccuracies.⁷¹ 'If a second edition of the *Encyclopaedia* should be published', wrote Marks, 'it is hoped that these errors will be corrected. It is a pity in these far from small matters greater accuracy was not secured.'⁷²

In 1911 Percy Marks addressed the Royal Australian Historical Society on 'The Preservation of the Old Records and Collection of Modern Ones' where he stressed the great importance of the correct preservation not only of important legal and other documents but also of pamphlets and general ephemeral literature which could be of importance to future historians.⁷³

Percy Marks could also claim to be the first demographer of the Australian Jewish community. He studied and analysed all census figures appertaining to the Jewish people, including marriage statistics. The first census figures he analysed were those of 1901 and his first study was entitled 'New South Wales Jewish Statistics'. This was published in the *Jewish Herald* of 29 August, 1902. Another article 'The Religious Census of Australia' was published in the *Jewish Chronicle* of 21 November 1902. His most detailed study was made in 1905 when in a long series of articles he examined the census figures of all six Australian states and those of New Zealand which were all published in the *Hebrew Standard* between March and December 1905. In 1907 he published a second similar series. In 1913 he published 'Intermarriage Statistics 1911' in the *Hebrew Standard* on 31 January 1913. A few years later he again analysed the census figures and published 'A Census of Australian Jewry — Some Interesting Statistics (from the census of 1921) in the *Hebrew Standard* of 9 January 1925 and 'Australian Intermarriages' in the *Hebrew*

Standard of 9 April 1925. His last article on this subject was entitled 'Australian Jewish Statistics' and was based on the census of 1933.

In 1913 he presented a long talk to the Jewish Literary and Debating Society on 'The Jewish Press of Australia Past and Present', which was the first ever full survey of all the Jewish press printed in Australia till that time.⁷⁴ He dealt in detail with all publications, their contents and history. At the end of his talk he exhorted his audience to collect all Jewish newspapers and reports, to build up valuable records for future historians of the Jewish communities of the Commonwealth.

In 1922 the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* announced somewhat prematurely that:

Mr Percy Marks is about to write and publish a complete history of the Jews of Australia. Mr Marks has made this the subject of his study for a number of years, collecting many interesting items. As a keen observer, as a literary man, and a lucid writer, such a publication will be interesting and will give a great deal of information to Jewry outside Australia.⁷⁵

This prediction did not materialise, however, and Australian Jewry had to wait for another sixty years before the first comprehensive histories of Australian Jewry were written by Rubinstein and Rutland.

In 1925 Percy Marks addressed the Royal Australian Historical Society of which he was a council member, on the topic: 'The First Synagogue in Australia'.⁷⁶ In this he traces the first divine services held by the small Jewish community in private houses and then focuses on the building at number 4 Bridge Street which actually served as the first proper synagogue.

The exact date when the property in Bridge Street was acquired and converted into a synagogue cannot be definitely stated...but it could not have been earlier than 1833 and probably later...

...It may be fairly assumed that the Bridge Street synagogue was first used for divine worship in 1837 and continued to be used till the opening of the York Street Synagogue in 1844.⁷⁷

In the concluding page of the article he also quotes a contemporary description of the interior of the first synagogue:

Containing about one hundred seats which are rented by the rate payers, a reading desk and a pulpit for the officiating

minister, and an ark which contains the Decalogue and a manuscript copy written on vellum of the Books of Moses; also a ladies' gallery containing about thirty seats, fitted up with neat candelabras...⁷⁸

Percy Marks' general interest in local history is shown also by a well researched treatise on 'Norfolk Island and the Bounty Mutiny.' In this he traces the discovery of the island and its subsequent use as a penal colony, its abandonment for a few years and re-establishment as a convict settlement. He also traces the fate of the mutineers and their descendents who first settled on Pitcairn Island and eventually were transferred to Norfolk Island in 1856. Here they settled for good and formed the population of the island that became a territory of the Commonwealth in 1914.⁷⁹

This interesting history was published in a limited edition of two hundred copies for private circulation. One wonders why Percy Marks chose this method at the time when he was already well known by the Royal Australian Historical Society, of which he was a member and whom he addressed several times.

In 1938 Jewish immigration to Australia became a public issue and consequently the local Jewish community itself became a subject of interest. Percy Marks took it upon himself to provide information about the Jewish community writing an article for *The Australian National Review* under the title: 'The Jew in Australian Life'.⁸⁰ In it he gives the Jewish population figures since the early settlement, names outstanding figures and their contribution to the development of Australia, in particular the Jewish contribution during World War 1, and some of the outstanding Jewish personalities in many other fields.

Perhaps Percy Marks' most valuable contribution to Australian Jewish history was his leading role in the establishment of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in 1938. Sydney B. Glass, who was a close friend and collaborator of Percy Marks, wrote that: 'The formation of the Society was due to the inspiration of one man — our foundation President'...⁸¹

For years we had talked about doing something. We met daily and talked over our mid-day luncheon. We had no one interested with us...Nowhere in Australia were our people active in historical societies...⁸²

The impetus came from two sources. One was the first Jewish community record, the history of the Jews in South Australia written by Hirsch Munz on the occasion of the centenary of South Australia in

1936. The second event was the sesquicentenary of Australia's foundation being celebrated in Sydney. As Glass wrote: 'There was a general stirring of historical consciousness.'⁸³

At the inaugural meeting on 21 August 1938, convened by Rabbi Falk, Sydney Glass, Hirsch Munz and Percy Marks, the latter was proposed as chairman by Herbert I. Wolff. Wolff claimed that Percy Marks had 'constituted himself and had acted as an unofficial historian of Australian Jewry and collected much valuable data. His work in that field was already well known abroad'.⁸⁴ Percy Marks was confirmed as the inaugural president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society at the first business meeting on 7 November 1938.⁸⁵

One of the talks given at the first quarterly meeting of the Society in April 1939 was by Percy Marks entitled 'Early Jewish Education in New South Wales'. On this occasion he gave a detailed account of all the early efforts and the subsequent gradual development leading to the successful establishment of the N.S.W. Board of Jewish Education in 1909. The story begins in 1839 when it was decided to build a synagogue and there is a request 'that a competent master be engaged to instruct the youthful members of the Mosaic religion.' The first classes started in the 1850s. In the early 1860s there was a Sydney Hebrew School at 334 Pitt Street, which became a Certified Denominational School with four professional staff. There was a gradual but constant development even after the cessation of the Denominational School in 1882. Other Hebrew Schools were founded, including the Sydney Sabbath School in 1863 by Rev A.B. Davis and the Society of the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge. In 1882 the Sydney Jewish Education Board was founded, following the decision to close the Denominational School, eventually becoming the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education in 1909.⁸⁶

It is most probable that this was Percy Marks' last public talk. At the first annual meeting of the society in 1940, it was reported that one hundred and twenty members had joined since its foundation. Numbers had increased to one hundred and sixty-two by the second annual meeting in June 1941. Regrettably this meeting had to be held in the absence of the President who was away ill; but it must have pleased him on his sickbed to hear Sydney Glass' report that the Society had an increased membership and was 'firmly established'. A few days later Percy Marks died on 22 June 1941 at his flat in Kirribilli.⁸⁷

After examining these many facets of Percy Mark's life what are we to conclude about the nature of this man who lived such a full and productive life? Here we can turn to his contemporaries:

Modesty and sincerity of purpose were the cardinal features of the character of Percy Marks.⁸⁸

He was a scholar with a calm and retiring nature.⁸⁹

He was a handsome man...quite youthful in his appearance...a kindly, gentle and loveable character — he would not willingly hurt a fly...he had no personal following, no collaborators... There was a certain loneliness about him — the isolation of a scholar... His inspiration, the most impelling fact about the man, did not die with him. It lived on.⁹⁰

Unfortunately, it was not so. Percy Marks died during World War II when the whole country was engaged with the war effort and the tragedy of European Jewry was looming as the Jewish community's more immediate problem. Percy Marks' quiet but widespread contribution to Australian Jewry tended to be, if not forgotten, effectively sidestepped. Now more than sixty years after his death, it is time to recognise his contribution to the Australian Jewish community and to acknowledge him as a true Jewish Renaissance man.

POSTSCRIPT

Percy Marks never married, nor did his brother Ernest and sister Hilda. Anecdotal information is that all three of them carried a disease which they had inherited from their mother and apparently were reluctant to pass it on to the next generation. They died within a few years of each other and 'the line is now at an end.'⁹¹

PERCY MARKS LEGACY

Percy Marks' name has been preserved at Sydney University as well as at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A letter from the Registrar of the University of Sydney to the executors of his will, in 1943 states:

The Professorial Board at a recent meeting decided, on the recommendation of the Faculty of Arts that the income from the bequest of the late P.J Marks should be used to establish a prize for an essay on a subject in Semitic Archaeology, giving special weight to knowledge of Hebrew...

From this legacy, a number of prizes are awarded each year for the study of Hebrew in the Department of Semitic Studies at the

University of Sydney.

Percy Marks left a further £100 to be devoted to a Jewish educational institution in Palestine. The executors have agreed that this amount... should be given to the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem to be invested and the income...to be awarded as a prize annually for some phase of school work as may be decided by the Directors...⁹²

A further £100 was left to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

...the income to be awarded as a prize to be called the 'Joseph Marks Memorial Prize' in some branch of Hebrew or Jewish learning.⁹³

The last time this prize was awarded was in 1990 after which time the original fund was exhausted.⁹⁴

While Percy Marks, the man, largely may have been forgotten, his legacy lives on. The Australian Jewish Historical Society continues to be an active and thriving institution. The study of Classical Hebrew at the University of Sydney has continued to grow and strengthen. Above all, the Zionist movement to which he devoted so much of his life has moved into the mainstream of the community with Australian Jewry being in the forefront of most Diaspora communities in its support for Israel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Yehuda Feher wishes to acknowledge Marianne Dacy's help in preparing this manuscript for publication.

NOTES

1. See Israel Cohen, *Journal of a Jewish Traveller*, London: John Lane, Bodley Head Ltd, 1925, 65.
2. *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 3 July 1941.
3. Leib A. Falk, 'Percy Joseph Marks', *AJHSJ* 1:6, 1941, 205.
4. *Stock and Station Journal*, 13 June 1919, 6.
5. Newspaper clippings on the inside cover of an old Siddur (Prayer Book) in the 'P. Marks Collection of Judaica' in the Mitchell Library. ref. J240/17, 'Weddings', '14 Nov 1866 at the residence of the bride's sister, 82 William Street, N.S.W. by the Rev. A.B. Davis, assisted by the Rev. A.A. Levy, Mr Joseph Marks of Maitland, the son of the Lazarus Marks of London,

- to Lizzie, daughter of the late Samuel Benjamin of Sydney and niece of David and Solomon Benjamin, Esqs, of London'.
6. Ref J240/17, 'Births'. 'On the 12 November 1867, at her sister's residence, 82 William St, Sydney, NSW, the wife of Mr Joseph Marks (of Maitland) of a son'. The actual birthplace of Percy Marks was Sydney and not Maitland as it is given in most of his biographies.
 7. See G. J. Bergman, 'The Jews of Maitland' *Australian Jewish Times*, 3 July 1975 and M.Z. Forbes, 'A Short History of the Jews of Maitland', *AJHSJ* 8:7, 1979, 413, 428.
 8. All these papers can be found in Box No 4, Personal Papers of the Marks Family, Mitchell Library, MSS 2718.
 9. See also Sydney B. Glass, 'Our First Decade', *AJHSJ* 3:2, 1949, 63.
 10. One of the books in the Marks Collection in the Mitchell Library is inscribed: 'To P.J. Marks by his old teacher and friend Ph. Phillipstein 21/11/03.' Rev Phillipstein was assistant minister at the Great Synagogue in Sydney. He was keenly interested in education and probably had an influence on Percy Marks.
 11. See Israel Porush, *The House of Israel*, Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1977, 48.
 12. *The Bathurst Times*, 20 July 1888.
 13. *Jewish Herald*, 14 February 1890 republished in *Evening News*, 25 February 1890.
 14. *The Australian Hebrew Times*, 9 February 1894.
 15. Undated newspaper cuttings, MSS 2718.
 16. Many of the news clippings in the Marks' collection are unattributed, such as the two just cited.
 17. *Volapük* — artificial international language invented about 1879 by J.M. Schleyer. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1964. See also letter to the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph* by P.J. Marks on *Volapük*.
 18. Unattributed newspaper clippings in Marks' Collection, MS 2718
 19. Unattributed newspaper report, op. cit, Box 2.
 20. *Jewish Herald*, 11 December 1896.
 21. Unpublished typescript in the personal papers of the Marks Family, Mitchell Library, MSS 2718.
 22. *The Jewish Herald*, 19 January 1900, 55.
 23. Percy Marks Collection of Judaica, JA Pam 220/1.
 24. *Hebrew Standard*, 9 February 1900.
 25. Two years later he made another announcement in the Jewish press that he would act as a secretary if one hundred shares

- were taken up in the Jewish Colonial Trust, *Hebrew Standard*, 7 February 1902.
26. See Morris Z. Forbes, 'Early Australian Zionism in Sydney: 1900-1920', *AJHS J*, 3:4, 1950, 171-2.
 27. *The Jewish Herald*, 22 May 1902.
 28. *Hebrew Standard*, 21 November 1902, 2-5.
 29. Z2/269 Central Zionist Archives (CZA), Jerusalem, in Marianne Dacy, *Early Australian Zionism: An Annotated Index of Records in the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, I*, Sydney, University of Sydney, Archive of Australian Judaica, 1993, 15.
 30. Forbes, 'Early Australian Zionism', op. cit, 176.
 31. CZA Z2/500, 'Report of Zionist Activity in New South Wales', [1911], 2.
 32. CZA Z2/500. Letter from P.J. Marks, 31 August, 1909.
 33. Forbes, 'Early Australian Zionism', op. cit, 185.
 34. *Israel Messenger*, 1 December 1922, 23.
 35. *Hebrew Standard*, 10 September 1926.
 36. CZA Z2/500. Letter from P.J. Marks, 1 August 1909.
 37. CZA Z4/3217, 31 March 1930.
 38. *Hebrew Standard*, 15 February 1929, 11.
 39. L. A Falk, 'A Tribute to the Late Percy J. Marks', *Hebrew Standard*, 3 July 1941.
 40. Suzanne D. Rutland, *Seventy Five Years: The History of a Jewish Newspaper* Sydney: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1970, 18.
 41. This talk given to the Shakespeare Society was printed in the *Jewish Herald*, 13 September 1901, *Israel's Messenger*, Shanghai, 22 March 1907, *The Religious Advocate*, Chicago, 27 July 1907, and the *Hebrew Standard*, Sydney, 12 & 19 May 1916 as well as being issued in pamphlet form for private circulation in July 1916.
 42. Undated cutting in P.J. Marks Collection.
 43. *The Sun*, Sunday, 2 April 1916.
 44. Percy J. Marks, 'The First Folio of Shakespeare': Paper read before the Shakespeare Society of New South Wales on 29 November 1923.
 45. Percy J. Marks, 'Shakespeare the Actor, and the Theatre of His Time', read before the Shakespeare Society of New South Wales, and reported in the *Australian Star*, 7 November 1908.
 46. Unpublished manuscript, Percy Marks, 'Shakespeare and the Bible', 1, Personal Papers of the Marks' Family, Mitchell Library, MSS 2718.
 47. *Ibid.*

48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Letter, dated 29 June 1941. Personal Papers of the Marks Family, Mitchell Library, MSS 2718.
51. Percy J. Marks, 'Australian Jewish Bookplates', *The Jewish Herald*, 16 August 1912, 5.
52. Ibid.
53. See Louise Rosenberg, 'Bookplates of Jewish Interest', *AJHSJ* 8:3, 1977, 129.
54. See Mitchell Library Catalogue Q737/A: 'Australian Numismatica Society. Reports of Meetings'.
55. See the *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, 27 February 1930, 3.
56. See the *Royal Australian Historical Journal and Proceedings*, P.J. Marks, 'The History of Paper Currency in Australia,' 5:3 (1919), 105-56.
57. Ibid, 105.
58. Ibid, 151.
59. Information from C.E. Pitchfork, President, Australian Numismatic Society, 10 December 2001.
60. National Library, Canberra: MS 3622 and MS 153. These include Percy Marks' collection of paper money and treasury notes as well as the manuscript of his talk on the subject.
61. Personal papers of the Marks family, Mitchell Library, MSS 2718, Box 5.
62. Sydney B. Glass, 'Our First Decade', *AJHSJ* 2: 6, 1949, 62.
63. M.Z. Forbes, 'George Bergman 1900-1979: a Tribute', *AJHSJ* 8:7 (1979), 397.
64. A copy can be found in the 'Percy Marks Collection of Judaica', Access No: JA/35 of the Mitchell Library.
65. *A Bibliography of Australian Judaica*, compiled by Serge Liberman, edited by Joy Ruth Young (1987) and Laura Gallou (1991), Sydney, Mandelbaum Trust and University of Sydney Library.
66. Ernest Marks was the younger brother of Percy Marks. One time a Lord Mayor of Sydney, whose main interest was sport, he was founder and active member of many sporting organizations and represented Australia at the Olympic Games in 1908, 1912 and 1932. The E.S. Marks athletic field in Moore Park is named after him. For detailed biographical notes of both Percy and Ernest Marks see Suzanne Rutland's entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 10, Melbourne University Press, 1986, 413-414. The E.S. Marks Collection of Sport is also part of the special collections of the Mitchell Library.

67. Letter to the Editor, *Australian Jewish News*, 20 February 1998.
68. See Glass, 'Our First Decade', op. cit, 62.
69. Communal worker, editor of the *Australian Hebrew Times*, and collector. For full biographical details see 'Coleman P. Hyman', *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, 27 February 1930. In 1913 Hyman wrote to Percy Marks from London:

'Dear Marks ...It seems a matter for regret, but as I told you years ago, nothing like a complete history of the origin and development of Australian Jewry can be written unless we two combine our efforts'. Personal papers of the Marks Family, Mitchell Library MSS 2718, Box 2, Item 4.
70. See Malcolm Turnbull, 'Two Pioneers of Australian Historiography,' *AJHSJ* 13:3, 1996, 487.

Percy Marks himself considered Maurice Brodsky, who wrote the 'History of the Melbourne Synagogue' as the first Australian Jewish historian. See 'The Jew in Australian Life,' in the *Australian National Review*, 1 September 1938, 19.
71. M. J. Turnbull, op. cit, 386.
72. Percy Marks, 'Australia in the Jewish Encyclopaedia,' *Hebrew Standard*, 30 Septembers 1904.
73. 'Address to the Royal Australian Historical Society, 28 November, 1911', *AJHS* 1:9, 1943, 302-305.
74. Talk to the Jewish Literacy and Debating Society in January 1912 and reported in *Evening News*, 265 January 1912. Reprinted in: *Periodical Publications from the Australian Jewish Community: A Union List by Marianne Dacy; with an introduction by A.D. Crown and M. Dacy*, Sydney: Archive of Australian Judaica, University of Sydney, 1986, iii-vi.
75. *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, 29 June 1922.
76. Percy Marks, 'The First Synagogue in Australia', 26 May 1925. Address read before the Royal Australian Historical Society. Printed in *RAHS Journal* 11:4, 224-230.
77. *Ibid*, 230.
78. *Ibid*.
79. A copy can be found in Sydney in the archives of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Mandelbaum House, Box AB 182.
80. *Australian National Review*, 1 September, 1938.
81. See Glass, 'Our First Decade', 62.
82. *Ibid*.
83. *Ibid*, 64-5.
84. Inaugural Meeting, *AJHSJ*, 1., 1939, 3.
85. *Ibid*, 5.

86. *AJHS J*, 1:2 , 1939, 25.
87. Glass, 'First Decade', op. cit, 66.
88. See L.A. Falk, 'A Tribute to the Late Percy Marks', *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 3 July 1941.
89. Forbes, 'Early Zionism in Australia', op. cit, 186.
90. Glass, 'Our First Decade', op. cit, 63-66.
91. *Ibid*, 63.
92. *The Hebrew Standard*, 23 December 1943.
93. *Ibid*.
94. Information from Eliyahu Honig, Vice-President of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 6 May 1997.

GENERAL SIR JOHN MONASH LEST WE FORGET

Morris S. Ochert

Many laudatory articles have been written about Sir John Monash.¹ I will add some further observations. I cannot do better than to quote the opening paragraphs of an article which appeared in the 'Outlook' pages of the *Australian Jewish News*, 1 December 1989. I record my gratitude to its editor for readily giving me permission to draw upon that excellent presentation:

Only one nation in history, Israel excepted, has chosen Jews to be its Head of State, its Chief Judge and the Commander of its armies in the field. That nation is, of course, Australia. The men who held these great offices were Isaac Isaacs, Zelman Cowan and John Monash respectively. [This] is a record of which we can all be proud.

I say that in a special sense, not with any complacency, and not to assert that Australia has never been disfigured by anti-Semitism, any more than it could be held that we have not suffered monstrous damage from sectarianism and racism. But it does, I believe, represent an important statement about Australian society, its values and ideals.

Annually, we of the Jewish faith recount the narratives of the Exodus, of our miraculous rescue from the plots of Haman and Amalek and of the Holocaust. Why? The *Tenach*² replies that we must 'remember and not forget'. I, therefore, make no excuses for repeating some matters which previously may have been published with regard to Sir John Monash. It would be a sad thing indeed, if the Australian people in general and Australian Jewry in particular, could no longer recall the greatness of John Monash. With that in mind, I will set out a summary of his life and achievements.

John Monash was born in 1865 and died in 1931. He was the son of poor German Jewish migrants, yet rose to some of the highest positions in the nation. History records him as: 'General Sir



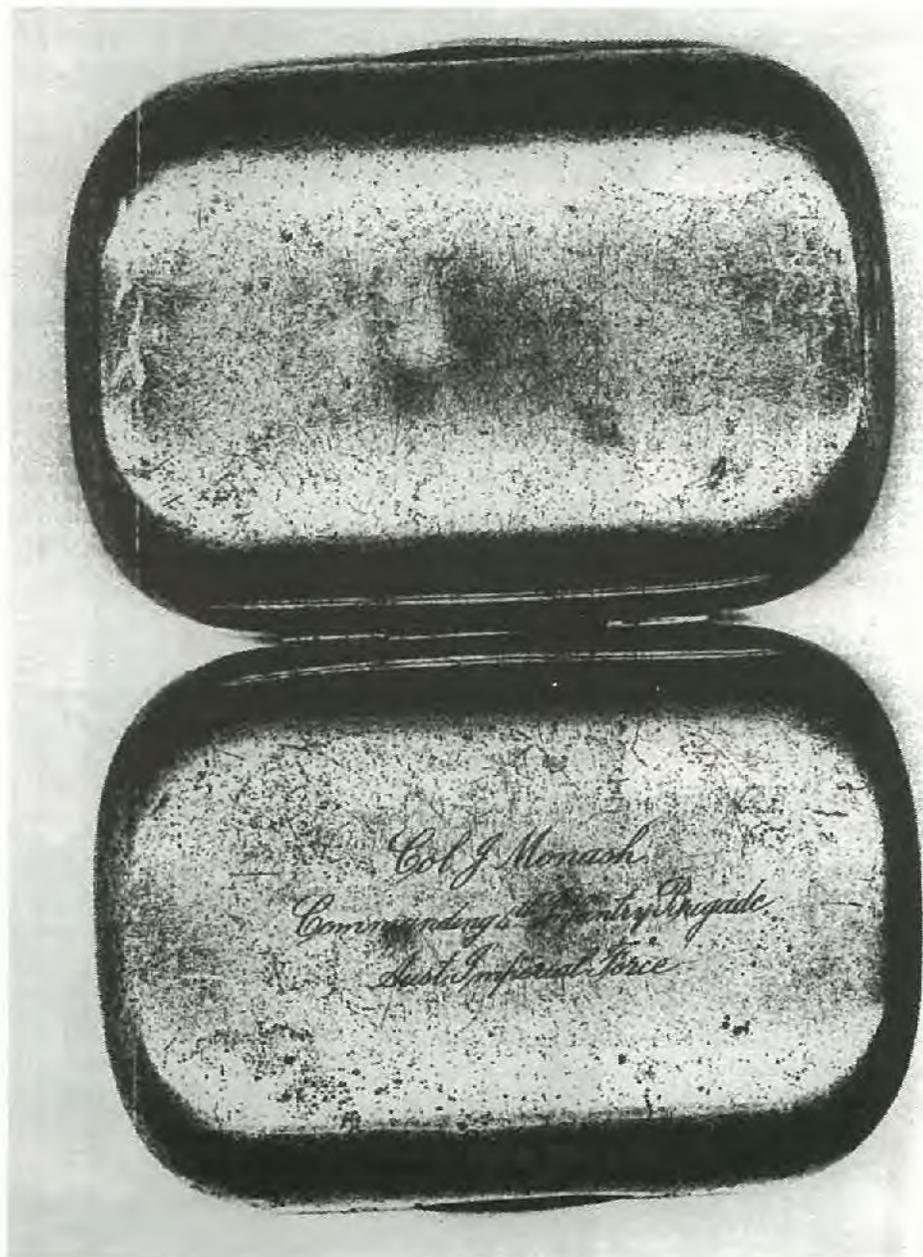
A copy of a painting, signed by the artist John Longstaff in 1919. Longstaff was recognised as the Australian official Great War portraitist.

John Monash, G.C.M.J., K.G.B., V.D., B.A., D.C.L., L.L.D., D.Eng., M. Inst. C.E., Chairman of the Victorian State Electricity Commission 1921-1931, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Honorary Life President of the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand 1927-1931, Patron of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, 1921-1931.⁷

There could be few, indeed, who have held doctorates in both Law and Engineering. Though a citizen soldier and not a career soldier, during the First War he rose to be the Commander of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) of 200,000 men. He wrote that the AIF was 'a force four times larger than that commanded by Wellington at Waterloo'. His biographer, the late Professor Geoffrey Serle⁸, recorded that 'the great victories of the AIF... were achieved by Australians under the command of Monash'. Amongst the others who have recorded his achievements were General Lord Montgomery, military historians Liddel Hart, A.J.P. Taylor, A.J. Smithers, C.E.W. Bean and F.M. Cutlock, as well as parliamentarian Anthony Eden, General Blamey, General Sir Brudenell White, H. Jacka V.C., Maurice Askanasy Q.C., (Jewish Communal Leader), W.D. Rubinstein (Australian Jewish Historian). He was knighted in the field by King George V in 1918.



The knighting of John Monash by King George V at Corps HQ, Bertangles Chateau, France, on 12 August, 1918. This was the first knighting on a battle field in 200 years.



An inscribed case from the wartime kit of Sir John Monash.

It is recorded that the tactics in the battles in which he led the Australian troops were such that they are written into military history and they remain a compulsory topic at the Australian Military College at Duntroon — not a bad tribute to a 'citizen soldier!'

At the end of World War I he was made the Director General of Repatriation and Demobilisation and performed that vast task with his usual high level of proficiency. He then returned to his profession as an engineer, leading the State Electricity Commission into a period of intense activity. The exploitation of lignite (brown coal), its utilisation as briquettes to fuel the huge generating plants at Yallourn, which he was largely responsible for designing and operating and the distribution grid covering Victoria, were further great achievements in his spectacular career. He was well-informed on Jewish communal activities and on the Zionist program, had a good knowledge of music and literature and had an active concern for the environment.

After his death, a statue was erected in his honour near Government House in Melbourne. There is a plaque to his honour in the Jewish War Memorial in Sydney. On the centenary of his birth a postage stamp was issued and there have been many other memorialisations of his name, both in Australia and in Israel, where the Monash Forest was planted and Kfar Monash was established. It houses the Monash Museum. (At the time of writing, Mrs E.M. Durre, his granddaughter, was just back from the 50th year commemoration of that settlement.) In the Second World War, Monash Hut was the name given to a recreation centre for servicemen, donated by the Jewish people of New South Wales. The naming of a Melbourne University to honour him was a particularly appropriate tribute.

He was the honorary life president of the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand. He was patron of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation until his death in 1931. In 1930 he was given the great honour of being chosen to open the magnificent synagogue of the congregation in Toorak Road.

In 1929, Sir Isaac Isaacs and Sir John Monash were each considered for the governor generalship of Australia. The former was appointed as he had a far greater legal background.⁴ As well, Monash expressed reluctance to accept the position. Soon after, both Monash and Sir Harry Chauvel were promoted to full generals. It was a proud time for Australian Jewry, when three of its famous sons were honoured within so short a time. His portrait appears on our \$100 note.

Monash was a citizen serviceman, not a professional or career soldier. His brilliance was recognised early in his years of military



The Melbourne Synagogue, opened by Sir John Monash in 1930.

service. When the First World War broke out, he was in command of the 4th Infantry Brigade, part of the force which invaded the Gallipoli Peninsula. In 1916 in Europe, he was already a Major General, commanding the 3rd Division of the A.I.F. He was soon promoted to Lieutenant-General⁵ in charge of the entire A.I.F.

On the European Front, the war was proving to be a disaster. General Douglas Haig had been promoted to Field Marshal in late 1916. That appointment was enthusiastically supported by King George V, but opposed by David Lloyd George, who became the British Prime Minister about the same time. By mid-1917 the conflict was being spoken of as a 'bottomless pit', a stalemate. All commentators agreed that a change of the top command was overdue and inevitable. Due to irrelevant considerations, a laissez-faire attitude and inertia, nothing was being done to correct what was seen as grave deficiencies in the Allied leadership. There was such a reluctance to face the central issue that some people in authority, when discussing the problem, would avoid using the names of the two men under discussion. They were Field Marshal Haig and General John Monash, who was the man most often spoken of as Haig's successor. Haig would be spoken of as 'the old (or older) man', or the G.O.C. (General Officer in Command), while Monash was 'that Dominions Officer', or 'the younger man'.⁶

No such reluctance to use their names was shown by many newspapers and historians. Especially outspoken was the German War Historian, Dieter Blau, who poured scorn upon the High Command on each side. He summed up the situation better than most, in his volume 'The War We Lost'.⁷ He blamed the stalemate upon the 'old guard'. He indited the out-dated and outmoded philosophies of the elderly Commanders on both sides. He wrote '*Unsere Generäle und ihre Generäle waren mit veralteten Traditionen der Kriegskunst belastet*'. 'Our Generals and their Generals were burdened by the outdated traditions of warfare'. Their concept was to throw wave after wave of men against the enemy, until one side or the other was broken. Their ill-fated columns were ordered, again and again, to face almost certain disaster. The opposing High Commands felt they had to disregard the soaring casualties, the withering gunfire, rain, mud, hunger, illness, cold, despair, demoralisation, barbed wire, blood, shell-shock, broken bones and decaying bodies. Whichever side was still standing at the end of a battle was the victor for that day, while the spoils were a few yards of shell-pocked mud. Blau argued that the Allies had the only man who could win the war with the following: 'He proved it on St. Quentin's Heights, at Villers-Bretonneux, at Hamel Hill and on the Hindenberg Line. His name was Monash, a Jew of German extraction⁸, from Australia. But the establishment would not hear of this man becoming commander-in-chief, because that would have led to a loss of face because he was not a professional soldier and was from the dominions. That veteran professional soldier, Field Marshal Haig, had been nominated to be the Supreme Commander by King George V. There was a rumour that the King threatened to abdicate if Haig was deposed. Monash was opposed because he was a civilian soldier and a Jew, a member of the wrong religion. Such a change could not be contemplated, so the war dragged on slowly, to its bitter end, at great cost.'

Though vast numbers of people — newspaper leader writers, war correspondents, commentators, army personnel and many of the public were calling for 'Butcher Haig'⁹ to be replaced by Monash, there were some voices raised against such a move. I will deal with a few of their arguments.

- 'He is too young'. Monash was born only four years after Haig.
- 'He's untried in real conflict'. Monash led the 13th Infantry Brigade in the landing at Gallipoli. His record there, and in France at Mont St Quentin, the Hindenberg Line, the Battle

of 8 August, Villers-Bretonneux, all indicated that he was a most mature, innovative and bold commander.

- 'He is too haughty, proud and aloof'. Monash had a great record of mingling with his troops and sharing their discomfort. It is recorded that, when he could have enjoyed dry and safe billets behind the line, he rigged a shelter of scrap corrugated iron and cooked his meals and slept in it, to be close to his men. If ever it could be said of any man that he could '...walk with Kings nor lose the common touch'¹⁰ then this could be said of John Monash.
- 'He was seeking the limelight'. Though few men could have deserved plaudits more, he was most humble and ready to share credit for his many successes.
- One of the least justified remarks was, 'You could not expect his seniors to call attention, in despatches, to the performance of a subordinate who, at the commencement of the war, was an amateur — a civilian'. This is a shocking trivialisation of the well-known record of the man who has been widely acclaimed as 'probably the greatest soldier in modern military history'. He joined the Citizen Military Forces in 1884 at the age of nineteen, rising steadily until he was seasoned Colonel at the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Thus, he was already a soldier with thirty years experience, when he was being called 'an amateur!' By 1914 he was also experienced in Public Administration, Engineering, Law and Personnel Control, apart from Military Service — all very necessary in a man who was judged worthy to be appointed to the General Staff.

A wartime English newspaper editorial read:

...The solution is painless and bloodless. We don't need to upset the King by kicking out his Field Marshal. Give Haig a few more medals, keep him away from the Front and allocate to him all the 'casual' duties. There'll be plenty for him to do handing out medals, attending at those ceremonials where people are knighted, taking the salute at parades, farewelling the boys off to the front, hospital visits, signing letters of condolence, attending funerals, giving lectures, seeing and being seen. Move the younger man into a new position at the same pay and rank. He can be Haig's full-time Deputy with only one task — quickly to finish the war!

In the 1930s, the NSW Branch of the Australian Jewish Ex-Servicemen's Association had a club-room in the basement of the Maccabean Hall. It was called, 'The Dugout'. On a wall was a framed copy of a cartoon cut from a left-leaning English wartime newspaper. The name of Monash was not indicated. However, he was identifiable as the officer leading a phalanx of Allied troops to the front, for he was sketched carrying an Australian flag. Behind him marched men of the Allied forces in appropriate uniforms — Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, Indians, French, Americans, each group carrying their flag. They were moving through a bombed-out battleground. A battered sign-post pointed 'TO THE FRONT'. Hanging from it, as from a gibbet, was an elderly general, apparently intended to represent the commander-in-



Copy of cartoon. From my description of the cartoon referred to in these notes, artist Richard Werner sketched this likeness.

chief. The caption reads 'Follow the young general from Down Under'.

Also on that wall was a cutting from a local newspaper which told that Lloyd George, who was Prime Minister of England in the final year of the war, deplored the stalemate into which the conflict had sunk. He also deplored the fact that it was 'costing us so dearly in men and materials' and urged that 'Field Marshal Haig be replaced by that younger man from the Dominions, who has proved that he has the acumen and verve to bring the war to a speedy end'. This was followed by a brief interview in which Lady Monash was

asked what would she think of such a move. She replied, 'It would be sad — it would break Lady Haig's heart'.¹¹ While, at first glance, that may appear as a pointless response, it was actually a wise reply, for it can be tactless for a wife to make comments about her husband's career. Often, the best reply is no reply at all and Lady Monash wisely gave no hint as to Sir John's thinking or if she indeed knew what he felt about the move to replace General Haig.

I received my early education in the 1920s. In those days it seemed that most male teachers were ex-servicemen. The headmaster of my school was always called Brigadier Fawkes. He was an intensely religious man and an outspoken Judeophile. 'Always respect the Jewish People', he would shout at assembly, 'Chief Justice Sir Isaac Isaacs, General Chauvel, General Monash are some of the greatest Australians. If the War had lasted until 1919, Monash would have become the Allied Field Marshal and he would have led us all to a glorious victory!'

My manuscript, 'Dr Fanny Reading v *Smith's Weekly*',¹² dealt largely with the xenophobic anti-Semitic attitudes of that paper. Yet even *Smith's* heaped praise upon Monash in an issue in 1920, in which it is stated that 'Haig should have been kicked out to make room for Monash'.

The Bulletin, which commenced publication about 40 years before *Smith's* first appeared, was just as sarcastic and discriminatory in its attitudes towards Jews. In my 'Flegeltaub' manuscript¹³, I gave an example of the trash it purveyed. Yet, in an editorial in 1924, to mark the anniversary of the declaration of War, ten years before, the *Bulletin* printed (inter alia) these words about Monash: 'He came to be regarded as the absolute antithesis of the unapproachable, self-conscious brass-hat'¹⁴.

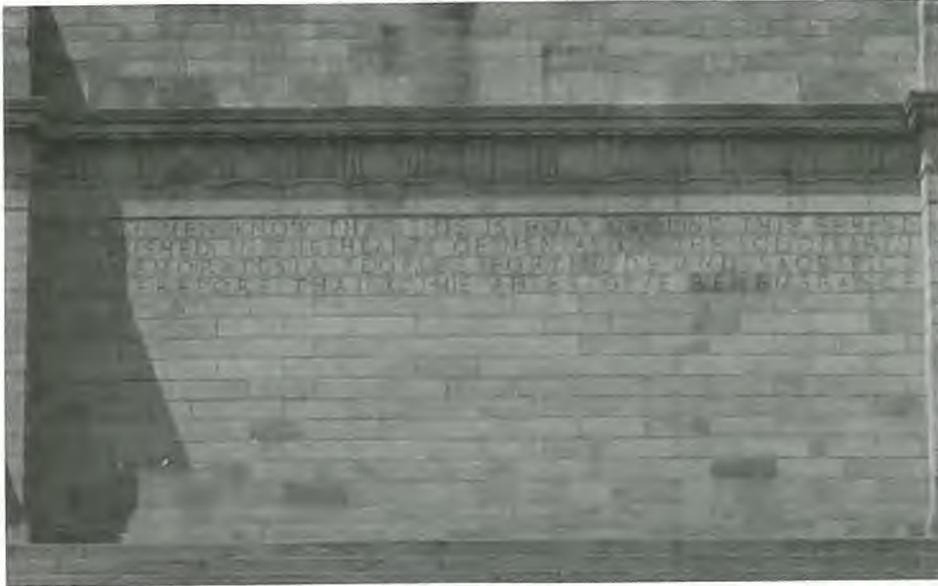
Long after the war, Lord Montgomery nominated Monash as 'the best General in Europe...the war might well have been over sooner and with fewer casualties had Haig been relieved of his Command and Monash been appointed to command the British Forces'.

I am puzzled as to why the monument¹⁵ of the man who has oft been referred to as 'Australia's Greatest Son' is so bare of plaudits. This may be as a result of one of two circumstances:

- 1 Perhaps in his Will, or verbally to his daughter, Bertha, he may have instructed that his deeds should not be so inscribed.
- 2 Perhaps he left no such instructions, but his daughter may have decided on this modest memorial inscription.

Neither his granddaughter, Mrs E.M. Durre, nor his biographer, the late Professor G. Serle, could throw any light on this matter. Whatever records may once have existed have been lost or forgotten.

It appears, however, that Monash did not want plaudits. Someone commented: 'Why bother? Who needs one's deeds to be inscribed on a monument?' In reply, I quote Sir John's own words, engraved on the Shrine of Remembrance... 'Let all men know that this is holy



Monash's inscription on the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance.

ground. This shrine...commemorates a people's fortitude and sacrifice. Ye, therefore, that come after, give remembrance.'

How will the generations which come after know of the deeds, achievements and sacrifices of our great predecessors, if some indication of their deeds is not engraved in stone? One would assume that his monument would carry an impressive statement of the life of John Monash. Instead the English inscription is only:

***To the memory of John Monash,
Born June 27 - 1865. Died Oct 8 - 1931
Mourned with love and pride***

The equally brief Hebrew inscription reads:

Pey Noon
(Abbreviation of the Hebrew for 'Here is buried')
Hasar Yaakov ben Reb Yehudah
(The Knight Jacob, son of Judah)
The Hebrew date of death

The customary five Hebrew letters, abbreviation for: T'hi nish-mato tz'rurah bitsz'ror hachayyim, meaning 'May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life'.

Thus, with only one word — *Hasar* — is homage done to this great man on his *matzevah*.¹⁶,

His wife's Hebrew inscription is a little more laudatory:

*A woman of worth, full of good deeds,
Her house was blessed by her splendid acts.
Hannah, daughter of Moshe,
Wife of the distinguished knight Yaacov,
passed away, untimely, on 8 Adar 5680 (1920).*

In her English inscription, she is referred to as 'Lady Hannah Victoria, wife of Sir John Monash'.



Headstone inscriptions over the graves of Sir John & Lady Monash.

Other than Sir John Monash, there have been few men to whom the words of the Swabian philosopher, Frederick Schiller (1759-1805) may more aptly be applied:

'Zage nicht — Es giebt!'¹⁷ noch edle Herzen, die für das Hohe, Herrliche erglühn.'

'Despair not — there are still noble hearts that glow for the august and sublime'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SOURCES

- Mrs E M Durre, granddaughter of the late Sir John Monash.
The curator of the Jewish Museum, St. Kilda.
Professor Geoffrey Serle, Faculty of History, The University of Melbourne, biographer of Sir John Monash. Passed away in 1998.
An article on 'Monash — Australian, Soldier, Jew', in the *Australian Jewish News*, 1 December 1989.
The Monash University, Melbourne.
The State Electricity Commission, Victoria.
Dr Max Brandle, Professor of Applied Linguistics, Griffith University, Brisbane.
Officers at the Defence Corporate Services, Gallipoli Barracks, Brisbane.
Ephraim Finch, Director of the Melbourne *Chevra Kadisha*.
The State Library, Brisbane.
The State Library of Victoria.
The Times, London.
Minutes of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation.
Minutes of the Zionist Federation of Australia.
Commonwealth Archives, Canberra.
Various War I historians such as Dieter Blau, C.E. Bean, General Montgomeray, Liddel Hart, Anthony Eden.
The Melbourne Age.
The Bulletin, Sydney.
The Manchester Guardian.
The New Statesman.
Richard Werner, Artist.

NOTES

1. See previous articles in this *Journal* by Boaz, Vol 1, Part 4, 1940, 97-105, Hyman, Vol II, Part 1, 1944, 20-29, Perry, Vol IV, Part 6, 285-306, and Gordon, Vol VI, Part 2, 1966, 69-80.
2. *Tenach*, The Hebrew Scriptures. They comprise the Torah, the Prophets and the Miscellaneous Writings.
3. Refer to G. Serle, *John Monash — a Biography*.
4. John Monash's areas of expertise in Law were mainly in Contract and Company Law and the legislation appertaining to Local Government. Isaac Isaacs had been Chief Justice of the High Court and he had expertise in International Jurisprudence.
5. It is not always realised that a Lieutenant General is senior to

- a Major General, whereas a Lieutenant is junior to a Major. This originates from the schedule of ranks set out for 'The New Model Army' by Lt. Gen. Cromwell in 1645.
6. Actually, there was not a great difference in their ages. Haig was born in 1861 and Monash was born in 1865. However, they were frequently referred to as 'the older' and 'the younger' respectively.
 7. A copy of Blau's volume, *Der Krieg, den wir verloren, The War We Lost* (published 1922), with an English translation was in the library of a British vessel on which I served in World War II. I have quoted from notes I made from it at the time. I have used the capital letters to emphasise some details. There was a note in the book that the title should have read 'The War We Nearly Won'.
 8. My late father would say, 'When a Jew does well, each nation is happy to claim him as their own. If not, he is someone else's Jew!'
 9. Considerable use was made of the very pejorative expression 'Butcher Haig', to indicate that the Field Marshall was guilty of sending great numbers of his troops to be 'butchered'.
 10. From Rudyard Kipling's poem 'If'.
 11. The remark by Lady Monash was obviously made while the debate, and the War, still waged, for some after the Armistice, Haig was made an Earl and his wife would then have been entitled to be referred to as Countess Haig.
 12. See 'Dr Fanny Reading against Smith's Weekly' in the Issue of the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Vol XIII, Part 2, (1998).
 13. See note 20 on Lewis Flegeltaub in the Society's *Journal* of Vol. XV, Part 2 (2000).
 14. A derogatory term, used to mean a very senior officer, usually in the sense that he was hide-bound against all considerations except the archaic training he had received.
 15. The grave of Sir John and that of his wife, Lady Hannah Victoria are in the Jewish section of the Brighton Cemetery in Melbourne.
 16. Hebrew: tombstone.
 17. 'Giebt'- Ger. 'Are'. The spelling of this word was changed to 'Gibt' in 1914. However, when quoting, as in this case, it is usual to use the original form.

THE SYDNEY CHILD SURVIVORS' GROUP: THE HISTORICAL PATH TO A SEPARATE IDENTITY

Amelia Amber Klein

Being a *child survivor* took on a whole new feeling for me. My memories were validated. I really was there — my connection with the Holocaust began here.¹

In 1987 the Sydney Child Survivors' Group was established.² Worldwide, child survivors have expressed a need to be recognised as a distinct subgroup of Holocaust survivors. In this article, issues regarding the formation of the Sydney Child Survivors' Group will be examined. Such issues include the reasons for the Group's relatively recent formation (over 40 years after the Holocaust) and their need to maintain a separate identity from the Australian Association of Holocaust Survivors and Descendants.

The external and internal silence surrounding the Holocaust was shattered in 1985 when The Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors held a gathering in Sydney.³ It opened the eyes of the Jewish community and wider Australian community to the tragedy of the *Shoah* and the importance of remembrance. Susan Bures, then editor of the *Australian Jewish Times*, recollected that 'there was an explosive need for people to tell their story. The flood-gates opened — the sense of their own mortality, the beginnings of Holocaust denial inspired the rush for survivors to tell their story.'⁴ Marika Weinberger commented that 'first there was no talk and now there is how much longer can we talk'.⁵

The breaking of the silence surrounding the Holocaust began with major world events such as Adolf Eichman's trial in Jerusalem in 1961. The Six Day War, 1967 and Yom Kippur War, 1973, in Israel invoked fear that once again Jews were facing a serious threat to their existence. In 1977, America established an Office for Special Investigations to investigate Nazi War Criminals and in 1978 President Jimmy Carter endorsed Holocaust commemoration. The television series *Holocaust* increased public awareness and the first

World Gathering of Holocaust survivors in Israel at *Yad Vashem* in 1981 was another pivotal point. This led to the formation of the Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors (Association) in 1982 by Albert Halm. Its formation was important for remembrance and to combat denial. Simultaneously, a Holocaust exhibition in the Sydney Town Hall in 1981 was attended by over 30,000 people.⁶ These were key stages in the development of Holocaust awareness.

In Sydney, the watershed event for child survivors was the 1985 Holocaust Survivors Gathering where one of the keynote speakers was Professor Sarah Moskovitz. Moskovitz had already undertaken an important study on child survivors and organised the first group of child survivors in Los Angeles in 1983.⁷ She stressed that 'child survivors [should] emerge from hiding... as the last living witnesses to the Holocaust'.⁸ Eva Engel recalled:

We now have a category that had never identified as a survivor and not as a second generation, they had no identity... They had never really talked about the past... they were the chameleons of the community.⁹

As Moskovitz was detailing her research on child survivors from Theresienstadt, Litzki Lemberg recognised herself in the example given. On introducing herself, Moskovitz replied, 'Litzki, I have been looking for you for years.' Litzki described that 'being a survivor, a child survivor, as Sarah coined it, took on a whole new feeling for me. My memories were validated. I really was there'.¹⁰ Charles Kamerman recalls that 'I hadn't heard the term child survivor... Sarah provided the trigger for the group'.¹¹

Sarah Moskovitz advised Eva Engel to form a group with the people that showed interest in the lecture. Eva Engel suggested this to Litzki Lemberg and Eva Grant. Litzki remembers that she was a 'little anxious'. However, 'being able to talk about things had such a profound effect' on her, that she realised perhaps it would be 'the same for others'.¹² Eva Grant had recently received photographs of cousins who had perished in the *Shoah* and replied:

We should [form a child survivor group] because nobody thinks about them — the ones who died and their parents died and their grandparents died and there is no one to remember them.¹³

Litzki attributes Sarah Moskovitz with founding the child survivor movement worldwide. However, she says that in Sydney, 'Eva Engel was the catalyst. She made it happen here and recruited me to help her'.¹⁴

The first meeting was held at the B'nai B'rith Lodge on 9 March 1986. Twenty-five people attended. As Litzi recalls, 'we had come to share experiences and to be acknowledged.'¹⁵ The newsletter sent out after this meeting stated that 'it is not our purpose to dwell on past experiences... but to get together over a cup of coffee... please come to our next informal meeting'.¹⁶ This meeting was hosted at the home of Alex and Marika Weinberger in Bellevue Hill. Eva Engel emphasised that there was concern over the definition of a child survivor. Sarah Moskovitz had specified that the cut off point should be fifteen or sixteen at the end of the war. One man was devastated that he could not join as he had been eighteen. This demonstrated to Eva that 'we cannot really judge who felt like a child... we shouldn't exclude anyone'.¹⁷ Therefore, the first newsletter stated: '*child survivor* is a broad term - if you consider yourself a child during those years — either in hiding, in a camp, or wandering under false papers — do join us'.¹⁸ As a result in the Group's Constitution a child survivor is defined as a 'Jewish person, who during the Holocaust, lived under Nazi occupation as a child and survived'. No age limit is given as defining oneself as a child survivor is a personal issue dependent on the individual survivor's perspective of his/her age or stage of life during the Holocaust.¹⁹

The child survivors' first community involvement was at the Holocaust commemoration ceremony on 26 April 1986. Litzi wrote in the Child Survivors' Group newsletter, 'this year it may have more relevance to us because the child survivors are going to light the six memorial candles'.²⁰ Until Moskovitz's visit, none of the core members of the Child Survivors' Group had been involved with Holocaust related work, 'nor had the confidence to face talking about it'.²¹ At this ceremony, Litzi Lemberg spoke publicly for the first time:

We as child survivors have 'gone public' here tonight. Many of us grew up together, went to school and youth groups together, but never knew that we too were Holocaust survivors.²²

In 1987, Moskovitz returned to Sydney.²³ Articles in the *Australian Jewish Times*, entitled, 'Speaking of Past Horrors, Child Victims Gather' advertised the second gathering. 'Child Survivors overcome a 40-year reluctance to speak' by Susan Bures detailed the stories of Litzi Lemberg and Eva Grant. Both wanted to 'draw attention to the gathering, promote the group and encourage other child survivors to attend the meeting'.²⁴ Reflecting on this interview, fourteen years later, Bures recalls, 'they appeared to be accepting their identities as child survivors'.²⁵ Eva Engel explained that such publicity was

important as people 'realised that being of a certain age did not disqualify them from being survivors and they were inquisitive to come to the seminar'.²⁶

The program, a talk by Moskowitz, group discussions and a dinner were held at B'nai B'rith Centre, on Thursday 29 January 1987.²⁷ Eva Engel records that two hundred child survivors attended.²⁸ The ages varied — 'to arrive at the definition of a child of that time was difficult'.²⁹ Videos of interviews conducted by Moskowitz were shown.³⁰

At this meeting, Eva noticed that the senior survivors, who were between sixteen and eighteen at the end of the war, dominated the discussion, like a parent talking to a child, and 'severely inhibited the younger child survivors'. There were large differences; the 'sixteen year old had known his parents, whereas the six year old was brought up alone'. Also, the senior survivors were more interested in teaching the lessons of the *Shoah*, 'Never Again', whereas the child survivors had only begun the process of identifying and remembering. This difference raises interesting questions about how adult and child survivors perceive their identities as Holocaust survivors. One of the older survivors stated that he did not think the group was necessary, others made the choice not to be part of the group.³¹ There are parallels with such responses in Sydney and those found by researchers overseas. For example, Robert Krell has documented the feelings of intimidation that exist between adult and child survivors.³²

Nora Ariel's article, 'Many survivors switched identity' reported on the B'nai B'rith gathering. Moskowitz had 'described problems including identity crises and feelings of confusion, guilt and loss'. Ariel quoted Moskowitz saying that Australian child survivors 'vowed to be more Australian than the Aussies... however they knew they were acting like chameleons and not being true to themselves'. She encouraged them to record their testimonies for future generations.³³

This first formal child survivor meeting had a major impact. Eva Engel commented: 'They walked in as acquaintances and they walked out as siblings'.³⁴ Registration forms had been distributed including questions such as, 'would you want to belong to an association of child survivors for purposes of friendship?'³⁵ Reflecting on the 1987 conference Litzi remembers that 'everybody was most interested and amazed [at] actually being recognised as survivors'.³⁶ Eva Engel summarised:

The Gathering has created a 'coming out' of children (now adults) some of whom have never spoken about their early

lives. They have felt isolated and neglected... unique in their situation. Most [who] attended the Gathering have voiced the opinion that although it hurt, they wanted the experience of being together. They found an atmosphere of family — a common bond which up to now was not available. Most who attended were extremely glad they came and wanted follow up meetings.³⁷

The first public address about the Group was given by Eva Engel at the Australian Association of Jewish Studies conference on 27 July 1988 held at Shalom College. Eva questioned both Litzi Lemberg and Lexie Keston, both child survivors, about their personal stories which were presented at the conference.³⁸

After preliminary and organisational meetings in 1986, The Sydney Child Survivors' Group formally started in 1987. Newsletters kept members updated.³⁹ Monthly meetings were held in private homes and later at the Folk Centre. In the beginning members 'talked about themselves, told their stories, how they felt... it wasn't structured.' After approximately five years, members decided that they wanted to do 'something other than talk'. Eva Engel recalls that many people said, 'I don't want to cry when I come here, I want to laugh and be happy'.⁴⁰ Litzi stated that members said, 'I don't want to listen to this any more.' Therefore, the original plan to have discussions about child survivor issues was



Sydney Child Survivors' Group, 1993.
Photo by Elaine Kitchener, courtesy of Litzi Lemberg

not followed through.⁴¹ Guest lectures, a concert, fundraisers, picnics and a cruise have been organised over the years.⁴² Members attended the International Child Survivor Conference in California in 1990.⁴³ In February, 1990, Litzki Lemberg went to speak to Melbourne child survivors about how the Sydney group started. The Melbourne Child Survivor Group subsequently formed, guided by child survivor Paul Valent.⁴⁴

In 1991, Moskovitz returned to Sydney to workshop sessions on 'Jewish identity', 'how the past affects our present' and 'learning to speak to groups about our experiences'. A function was hosted by Sol and Diana Schonberger at their home in Bellevue Hill.

Child survivors also became involved in the wider survivor community. Members held positions on the board of the Association. According to the child survivors, the Association did not understand why the group would not come under its umbrella. Some child survivors recall being continuously told, 'you are not children any more' and 'why can't you join?'⁴⁵ However, the child survivors, although individually members of the Association, had decided by consensus:

We wanted to be autonomous. We tried to do things together, but they were not pleased. We needed to develop by ourselves. Perhaps we would join later when we "grew up". We were not ready to be involved or to be organised, official or take responsibility. We just wanted to be together and talk. And so we "separated" from the Association and stopped trying to please them.⁴⁶

Eva Engel had also been active in forming a Second Generation group in 1984.⁴⁷ After the 1985 Gathering, a Second Generation sub-committee of the Association was formed. Since 1986, the chairman of this group was a member of the Board of the Association.⁴⁸ In 1995 the word 'Descendants' was added to the Association's name.⁴⁹ The child survivors thought that the dynamics of the Second Generation Group had changed after it had become part of the Association. The members of the Child Survivors' Group were in the beginning stages of forming their individual and collective identities and did not want to conform to the structured way in which they believed the Association was run.⁵⁰ As Litzki summed up, 'we felt that we were children again with someone looking over our shoulder'.⁵¹ Sol Schonberger, child survivor and member of the Association's executive, stated that the 'Association always tried to accommodate the child survivors as we - child survivors - are the majority of the Association's committee.

We always stressed with a strong Association we can achieve together.' He believed that if the child survivors wanted to have a separate group, it should be similar to the descendants group, that is, under the rubric of the Association. Sol feels that the Association should not have been split, that there was room for everyone.⁵³ These issues created tensions between the older and younger survivors.

The Association hosted a reception for Moskovitz in 1991. Eva Engel, Litzi Hart (later Lemberg) and other committee members attended even though they felt they were not officially invited. Sol Schonberger indicated that every member of the Association was formally invited.⁵³ Susan Bures recounted the 'simmering divisions between the child survivors and the Association'.⁵⁴ The child survivors emphasised their need to meet as a separate group whilst the Association believed the child survivors 'must work under the communal umbrella of the Association'. An older survivor questioned Moskovitz 'why is the Child Survivors' Group necessary?'⁵⁵ These older survivors had already come to terms with their identity but the child survivors felt the need for their own, separate group.

The tension was further complicated by the fact that a number of the Association's board members had originally been members of the Child Survivors' Group and are themselves *child survivors* in terms of the definition expounded by the group. Moskovitz attempted to explain the special identity issues which child survivors faced. She stressed it was 'essential to establish a mutually respectful adult dialogue between child survivors and older survivors. One group cannot impose on the other.' During the vote of thanks the Child Survivors' Group was referred to as the 'splinter group', a term which offended many. They had always been an autonomous group. Eva Engel felt that 'asking whether the child survivor group is necessary was almost a disrespect'.⁵⁶ Marika Weinberger offered the 'hand of friendship' and Bures reported that the child survivors appeared to 'recognise that a lack of communication of their needs and intentions had been part of the problem'.⁵⁷

As president, Marika Weinberger openly invited child survivors to attend the Association Board meeting. However, members of the child survivors group decided that it was 'too stressful' to attend Association meetings as the situation 'was not progressing' and the 'anger was being fuelled'.⁵⁸ Lexie Keston, honorary secretary for the Board from 1990-2, resigned because of the tension.⁵⁹ Ruth Leiser, a member from 1990-5, emphasised that they have always been 'frowned upon and labelled the "so-called" child survivors. The

Association never accepted our desire to be separate so they never acknowledged the existence of the child survivors in those days'. Ruth stated: 'I felt absolutely slighted whenever I opened my mouth about anything.'⁶⁰ Sol Schonberger believes that the child survivors who were members of the Board did not consider the importance of the Association as the powerful spokesperson for Holocaust education and remembrance.⁶¹ Reflecting back, Marika stated that some of the adult survivors lacked understanding. She emphasised that the child survivors are an important group as they represent a continuity of survivors.⁶²

In April 1994, the group unanimously agreed to write a constitution and join the Jewish Board of Deputies. They were formally recognised with a representative at the meetings only in July 1997.⁶³ Writing a constitution made the group more structured and forced them to consider their purpose. The committee decided on the following aims:

To provide a support group and a safe environment for Holocaust survivors who were children between 1939 and 1945 approximately.

Litzi indicated that this wording reflected 'who the group was and what was happening'. They accepted anyone who 'identified and felt at home with child survivors'. No one was turned away, resulting in the wide age ranges that exist within the membership. According to Litzi, this has not caused any issues.⁶⁴ The main objectives were:

- a) To provide a forum for Child Survivors to discuss and share their experiences during and after the Holocaust with each other and their friends and families and to provide a support Group for its members
- b) To extend help to members and others suffering from traumatic problems
- c) To seek recognition for the trauma and suffering of those who were children during the Holocaust irrespective of the circumstances under which they survived.

Other primary objectives recorded in the Constitution were: Combating revisionists and deniers of the Holocaust; disseminating child survivors' personal experiences to youths of all faiths; opposing racism and oppression of minorities; maintaining contact with other child survivor groups; supporting the Jewish commu-

nity and its charities and seeking affiliation with other Jewish organisations.⁶⁵

In May 1997, six child survivors again lit the six memorial candles at the annual Holocaust commemoration whose worldwide focus was on child survivors.⁶⁶ In September 1997, the group organised its tenth anniversary celebration. Marika Weinberger spoke at their birthday dinner. On behalf of the Executive board of management of the Association she congratulated the child survivors on their *simcha* and achievements. She emphasised that she 'looked forward to continued efforts towards our mutual goals in the years ahead'.⁶⁷

Over time the meetings have changed. The newsletter for October 1998 stated that 'we have had several guest speakers this year... I hope we haven't forgotten to talk to each other... so this meeting will be a talking meeting, re-evaluating our Group, voicing our opinions, ideas for future directions.'⁶⁸ Whilst annual membership has been consistent, numbers at meetings have fluctuated. Litzi explains that 'some people don't come any more. They may have explored all the things they wanted to.'⁶⁹ In contrast, a few members, who have been receiving newsletters for years, have decided to attend meetings now. Ruth Leiser commented that 'it is a very constructive group. We have had people who have come who are to this



Eva Engel (left), Ruth Leiser, Litzi Lemberg, Sydney Child Survivors' Group meeting, 21 September 2001.

Photo courtesy of Amelia Klein

day traumatised by their childhood. They feel that they are home somehow, it has opened up a whole world for them.⁷⁰

Charles Kamerman took over the presidency from Litzi Lemberg in August 1999. Believing 'education is our salvation', he attended the *Yad Vashem* course graduates' presentation in 2000.⁷¹ There, Charles voiced his concern about the lack of research on child survivors. As a result I wrote my BA Honours thesis on the Sydney Child Survivors' Group. Due to health conditions, Charles resigned in November 2000 and Litzi resumed the position that she has held for the entire history of the group, apart from this brief interlude.⁷² Lexie Keston emphasised that Litzi has been an intrinsic part of the continuation of the group. She stated that 'without her dedication the group would not have begun nor survived'.⁷³

Attempts have been made to rectify the tension between the Association and Child Survivors' Group. Litzi met with Marika Weinberger to see whether the situation could be resolved.⁷⁴ As president, Charles Kamerman also tried to unite the groups with common meetings and constitution and establish 'one voice to represent all that had suffered under the Nazi regime'. As Charles said, 'we all derive from the same background, we all suffered — you can't measure suffering.' He met with the immediate past president Marika Weinberger and current president George Foster. Both were prepared to help but in general the child survivors were not supportive. Charles commented that the group 'enjoys their informality, they fear being swallowed up and taken over.'⁷⁵ The attempts were rejected on the grounds that the child survivors wanted to maintain their own identity.⁷⁶

Kamerman felt that child survivors had originally been overlooked by the Association. He noted that 'it is only of late we have earned their respect and the right to stand along side of them'. Marika Weinberger noted that today 99.5% of the child survivors are also members of the Association.

They were the late developers. There is a big hole in their lives and that is why it was very difficult for some of the older survivors to understand that when the child survivors get together they have a totally different atmosphere, different needs and we have to respect that.⁷⁷

Originally Marika felt that the child survivors should 'melt' into the Association. However, she has come to realise that 'they don't have to mix with the rest of us. Let them retain that little bit of a dream that they still have.'⁷⁸ The tensions of the early years of

the Group's formation are slowly subsiding as the presence of child survivors as a separate group is accepted. 'They recognise us as survivors in our own right and there hasn't been any friction lately'.⁷⁹

Child survivors have become active in the Sydney Jewish Museum as volunteer guides. Ruth Leiser stated that on a personal level, communication was amicable between the older and younger survivors. 'They never slighted you in any shape or form'. 90.7% said that they do not feel out of place with the older generation of survivors.⁸⁰ One person stated that they did.⁸¹

As the community focuses on Holocaust awareness and remembrance, the Child Survivors' Group has taken on responsibilities. The child survivors' desire to assert their independence and come to terms with their newfound identity meant that the early years were unsteady. The formation of the group brought many members, who had been isolated, into touch with the Jewish community.⁸² Once they had established their collective identity, and felt more at ease with the 'label' child survivor, they widened their gaze from inward looking to more outward and became part of the Jewish Board of Deputies. Litzi commented that the group has always maintained a low profile:

If we wanted to make ourselves more vocal then we would have been noticed. But we would have got flack from the Association and it would spoil the nature of the group.⁸³

Newer members of the Association have started to question why the Child Survivors' Group is separate. Litzi said 'it's very difficult to convey that history'. Litzi feels it is a shame that the only reason the 'Child Survivors' Group is apart now is because of the intractability, the rigidity' manifested by the older survivors during the formative period. She concluded:

I've always been a bit philosophical about the group. As long as people want it, it will be there. I still worry that if we get lost in the Association then we will lose the group because they still want to have that intimacy and camaraderie.⁸⁴

Like true chameleons, the Sydney Child Survivors' Group have displayed a remarkable adaptation to the changing circumstances—from silence to the active acknowledgment of the need to break this silence. Coming to terms with their identity on a personal and collective level has been part of the process in the establishment and history of the group in the last fifteen years.

NOTES

1. Litzzi Lemberg, 'What it means to be a Holocaust survivor', unpublished personal speech, Personal archive documents, 1998.
2. A.Klein, B.A. (Hons) Thesis, 'Chameleons: The Layered Identities of Sydney Child Survivors Of the Holocaust', University of Sydney, 2001, Chapter 5.
3. Sol Schonberger, personal interview. 7 June 2001. He stated that 'it was the younger survivors, those who were 14, 15, 16 during the *Shoah*, who actually took on that important mission, to tell the story and not to be quiet'. He emphasises that the older survivors were so 'traumatised that it was up to the younger ones to take on the challenge'. However Sol stated that when they met in private, there were always conversations between survivors about their personal experiences during the war years.
4. Susan Bures, personal interview. 9 June 2001. See also *The Gift of Life, A Commemorative Book of the Holocaust Gathering*, May 1985, Sydney, Australia, Published by the Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, Sydney, 1989, 16, 17. See statements from Robert J. Hawke, Prime Minister. Yissakhar Ben-Yaacov, Ambassador of Israel emphasises the commitment of both Jews and non-Jews to remember and never forget the *Shoah*.
5. Marika Weinberger OAM, personal interview. 6 June 2001.
6. The Association has close to one thousand members making it 'one of the largest organisations of its kind in the Jewish world'. Rutland & Caplan, *With One Voice*, Sydney: AJHS, 1998, 320-1.
7. S. Moskovitz, *Love Despite Hate: Child Survivors of the Holocaust and their Adult Lives*, Schocken Books, New York, 1983; S. Moskovitz, 'Longitudinal Follow-Up of Child Survivors of the Holocaust', *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, 24, 4, 1985, 401-7.
8. S. Moskovitz, 'Child Survivors of the Holocaust', in, *The Gift of Life*, op.cit., 79-83.
9. Eva Engel, personal interview. 29 May 2001. She left Austria as a child in 1938. Eva feels that this experience has left her traumatised and has resulted in her active involvement with all aspects of the community. Since the 1970s Eva has organised outreach programs for Jewish youth. From the 1980s to the present she has been a key community worker with Second Generation groups and child survivors of the

Holocaust. Eva is devoted to issues of Jewish identity in youth. She was awarded an Order of Australia in 2002.

10. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001 and Eva Engel, personal interview. 29 May 2001.
11. Charles Kammerman, personal interview. 4 June 2001.
12. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
13. Eva Grant, personal interview. 12 June 2001.
14. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
15. P. Valent & L. Hart, 'History of the Australian Child Survivor Groups: Melbourne & Sydney', in J.S. Kestenberg & C.Kahn, eds., *Children Surviving Persecution: An International Study of Trauma and Healing*, Praeger Publishers, Westport, Connecticut, 1998, 193.
16. Sydney Child Survivors' Group Newsletter, March 1986. All newsletters were written by Litzi Lemberg. It is produced by and for the group, under letterhead, not in published form. Copies kept by individual members of Board.
17. Eva Engel, personal interview. 29 May 2001.
18. Sydney Child Survivors' Group Newsletter, March 1986.
19. Constitution of the NSW Child Survivor Group, for membership in the Jewish Board of Deputies, courtesy of the Sydney Child Survivors' Group, 2.
20. Sydney Child Survivors' Group Newsletter, March 1986. The child survivors who lit the candles were Mark Speigelman, Judy Bahar, Peter Hersch, Elizabeth Levy, Braham Stern and Litzi Lemberg.
21. Eva Engel, 'Child Survivors' Report', Conference of The Australian Association of Jewish Studies, 27 July 1988.
22. Litzi Lemberg, 'Introductory Speech for Child Survivors', Personal archive documents, April 1986.
23. Letter to Eva Engel from Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, 4 March 1987, Personal archive documents of Eva Engel.
24. Bures, 'Child Survivors overcome a 40-year reluctance to speak', *Australian Jewish Times*, 15 January 1987, p.9.
25. Susan Bures, personal interview. 9 June 2001.
26. Eva Engel, personal interview. 29 May 2001.
27. These discussions were divided into groups for child survivors, second generation, spouses of survivors, people who were interested in recording testimonies and histories or in activities combating the revision of history. There was also a Shabbat service held at the Central Synagogue.
28. Eva Engel said that the majority were child survivors, however some may have been spouses of child survivors.

29. Engel, 'Child Survivors' Report', op.cit.
30. Engel, 'Seminar Report', Gathering of Child Survivors, 29-30, January 1987, unpublished paper.
31. Eva Engel, personal interview, 29 May 2001. Eva was the chief organiser of this seminar and a letter from John Engelman, then president of the Association, congratulates her for the 'excellent manner' in which the seminar was organised and thanks her for her 'valued contribution, great effort and time' in making Sarah's visit successful'.
32. R. Krell, 'Aging Holocaust Survivors: Memory, Nostalgia and Treatment Issues' & 'The Aging Child Survivors And The Problems Of Memory/Nostalgia', in, R. Kenigsberg & C. Lieblich, eds., *The 1st National Conference on Identification, Treatment and Care of the Aging Holocaust Survivor: Selected Proceedings*, Holocaust Documentation and Education Center, Inc. & Southeast Florida Center on Aging, Florida International University, 37. He indicates that the younger child survivors feel that their stories appear less significant than those of the older survivors.
33. N. Ariel, 'Many survivors switched identity', *Australian Jewish Times*, 12 February 1987, p. 7.
34. Eva Engel, personal interview. 29 May 2001.
35. Other questions included: Are you interested in having further discussions with other child survivors professionally guided? Would you be willing to serve on a planning committee to start such a group? Personal archive documents of Eva Engel.
36. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
37. Engel, 'Seminar Report', 1987, op.cit.
38. Engel, 'Child Survivors Report', 1988, op.cit.
39. The newsletters kept the members' updated on restitution issues and the Claims Conference. Worldwide conferences on child survivors were also announced as well as items of interest concerning museum exhibitions and events in the community. Members personal *simhot* and bereavements were also listed. Sydney Child Survivors' Group Newsletters from 1987 to present.
40. Eva Engel, personal interview. 29 May 2001.
41. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
42. The first fundraiser was in 1989 which raised \$5,500 for project *Yad le Yeled* for *Kibbutz Lochemai Ha Getaot* in Israel. The Group also had a second concert in 1991, to raise money for UIA, approximately \$5000. In October 1995, another \$1000 was donated to *Yad le Yelad* for a plaque in the name of The

Child Survivors' of the Holocaust Group Sydney. Money was also donated to fund the Australian Union of Jewish Students Holocaust Study Tour to Poland. \$300 was donated to *Yad Vashem*, The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, Jerusalem, Israel. Litzi Lemberg, telephone conversation, 28 September 2001. Also see personal archive documents of Litzi Lemberg.

43. Valent & Hart, *op.cit.*, 192-194.
44. Sydney Child Survivors' Group Newsletter, March 1990.
45. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
46. Valent & Hart, *op.cit.*, 193.
47. They also held regular meetings for 11 months prior to the Gathering. These Second Generation meetings were facilitated sessions with psychologists and psychiatrists leading the discussion. These discussion groups did not continue when the Second Generation group became affiliated with the Association. From 1991-1996, an offshoot self-help Second Generation group met regularly under the guidance of a second generation psychologist Ruth Nathan.
48. Michael Jaku, telephone conversation. 1 October 2001. He indicated that this sub-committee was never separate from the Association. They were responsible for organising the educational functions on behalf of the Association. When the 'Descendants' were incorporated into the title, they stopped meeting as a separate group and became completely part of the Association. The psychological groups were completely separate from the Association whose focus was education and commemoration.
49. Rutland & Caplan, *op.cit.*, 329.
50. Eva Engel, personal interview. 29 May 2001.
51. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
52. Sol Schonberger, telephone conversation, 30 April 2002.
53. Sol Schonberger, telephone conversation, 30 April 2002.
54. S. Bures, 'Healing a rift', *Australian Jewish News*, Sydney edition, 18 January 1991, p.8.
55. Eva Engel, personal interview. 29 May 2001.
56. Eva Engel, personal interview. 29 May 2001.
57. Bures, 1991, *op.cit.*
58. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
59. Lexie Keston, telephone conversation. 21 June 2001. She emphasised that Mark Speigelman was a dynamic individual and a important representative for the child survivors on the Board.
60. Ruth Leiser, personal interview. 18 June 2001.

61. Sol Schonberger, telephone conversation, 30 April 2002.
62. Marika Weinberger OAM, personal interview. 6 June 2001. It is interesting that as they were always a separate group, the child survivors have not held leadership positions within the Association. At present, a descendant, Dr George Foster, is president of the Association. Michael Jaku pointed out that it is almost as if the leadership skipped a generation as it has progressed from survivors as Presidents to descendants, skipping the child survivors. Michael Jaku, telephone conversation, 1 October 2001.
63. A committee worked together on the guidelines of the Constitution which Charles Kamerman prepared. Jack Katz, member and lawyer assisted with the legal jargon. The current elected representative is Halina Robinson. She attends these meetings and reports back to the group. Sydney Child Survivors' Group Newsletter, May 1994.
64. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
65. *Constitution of the NSW Child Survivor Group, For Membership in The Jewish Board of Deputies.*
66. H. Pitt, 'A world away from the Holocaust, survivors, united in peace', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 May 1997, p. 11.
67. Marika Weinberger, OAM, personal speech, 10th Anniversary Dinner, Sydney Child Survivors' Group.
68. Sydney Child Survivors' Group Newsletter October 1998.
69. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
70. Ruth Leiser, personal interview. 18 June 2001.
71. This course, 'Teaching the Holocaust and Antisemitism' taught at *Yad Vashem* in Jerusalem has been attended by Australians since 1980. A winter course was established in 1986/7 to enable Australians to participate. This winter program has continued successfully till the present, with approximately fifteen Australians attending each course most years. Upon return, participants give presentations about their individual research projects to the community.
72. Charles Kamerman, personal interview. 4 June 2001.
73. Lexie Keston, telephone conversation, 12 May 2002.
74. Litzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
75. Charles Kamerman, personal interview. 4 June 2001. At present, Charles hopes that the group will come into the responsibility of the Association but he doubts that the Group's executive will proceed in this direction.
76. Ruth Leiser, personal interview. 18 June 2001.
77. Marika Weinberger OAM, personal interview. 6 June 2001.
78. *Ibid.*

79. Ruth Leiser, personal interview. 18 June 2001.
80. A. Klein, 'Chameleons: The Layered Identities of Sydney Child survivors of the Holocaust', Source Book, BA Honours Thesis, University of Sydney, 2001, Question 81.
81. Ibid.
82. E. Fogelman, 'Group treatment as a therapeutic modality for generations of the Holocaust', in P. Marcus and A. Rosenberg, eds, *Healing their wounds: Psychotherapy with Holocaust survivors and their Families*, New York: Praeger, 1989. Fogelman notes that the 'process of Jewish identity development' can be traumatic for child survivors as their Jewish identity is linked with victimisation. They may have found it difficult to feel enriched and strengthened through the experience of being Jewish. Hence, child survivor groups provide a way in which many may regain connection with the Jewish community and their own Jewish identity.
83. Litzzi Lemberg, personal interview. 2 June 2001.
84. Ibid.

JEWISH WOMEN AND ADULT JEWISH EDUCATION: THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

Suzanne D. Rutland

Since 1945 the area which has witnessed the greatest level of change in Australian Jewry has been Jewish education and orthodox observance. The educational revolution initially focused on the day school movement, so that in 2002 there are 19 Jewish day schools in Australia, with 70% of Jewish children in Melbourne, 60% in Perth and 62% in Sydney attending Jewish day schools. Over the last decade, this educational revolution has expanded into adult Jewish education, notably in relation to the Melton adult education program, operating at community centres; university programs; and the Women's *Tefillah* movement which has had ramifications for women's study in both homes and synagogues. In addition, the traditional forms of women's adult education, especially as offered through the established women's organisations, have been strengthened and these organisations have added innovative programs, in some cases with government funding. Women have played key roles in all these developments, not only as learners and participants, but often as the key educators and administrators. In this way, since the late 1980s Jewish women have been at the cutting edge of change in adult Jewish education in Australia.

In the period up to 1945 Australian Jewry was marked by relatively low standards of Jewish education. In 1944 a survey of Jewish education facilities in Melbourne estimated that only 10 per cent of Jewish children received more than two hours of Jewish education each week.¹ At a meeting called by the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board in 1946, it was claimed that only 30 per cent of Jewish children in Melbourne received any form of Jewish education.² Sydney faced a similar situation. In 1950, the annual meeting of the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education was informed that only one in three Jewish children attended a Hebrew School

(usually on a Sunday). Most Jewish children received an average of 35 minutes a week at Right of Entry classes in State schools.³ In 1951 a visitor to Australia, Reuben Avinoam, described the Sydney Jewish community as:

...a spiritual desert... they have time... but for Hebrew education of their children, none whatsoever... with few exceptions, this community is lacking in appreciation of Jewish teachings... it does not thirst for Jewish knowledge,... it is turning its back on Jewish traditions, rejecting its spiritual heritage in favour of material gain...⁴

Overall, part-time Jewish education which took place after school and on Sunday mornings in both cities had too few students who attended classes too late in the afternoon for too few hours and lacked a Jewish background within their own homes. In addition, insufficient finance meant that teaching standards were inadequate, as were classrooms and other facilities.

By the 1980s, all this had changed radically. In comparison with Jewish communities world wide, Australian Jewry had developed a day school system which is widely admired. Not only did the day school system attract a very high proportion of Jewish students, but most of these students now remain in Jewish schools until Year 12 because of the outstanding academic reputations which the Jewish schools have in Australia. In 1985 Mount Scopus College in Melbourne, with a student population of 2,800, was the largest private Jewish day school in the world, while The Emanuel School in Sydney was the only Reform Jewish day school worldwide which offered a K to 12 program. While the student enrolment at Mount Scopus has declined from the peak of 2,800 and today the school only has 2,300 students, in the same period, Bialik College, another key Jewish school in Melbourne has increased from 300 students to over 1000.

Until the mid 1980s, the community's efforts and finances were focused on school education and adult Jewish education, including university Jewish Studies, was largely neglected. In the 1940s Jewish education at the tertiary level was established with Departments of Semitic Studies at the universities of Melbourne and Sydney. In Melbourne in March 1945, Dr Maurice David Goldman was appointed as professor of Semitics and he remained in that position until his death in 1957. Goldman had arrived in Australia in 1938 as a refugee from Germany, having grown up in Kolo, Poland, and trained at the Berlin University where he received his doctorate in Semitic languages. Once the Department was established, thanks

to an endowment from two Jewish brothers, Lazarus and Abraham Hyam Sicree, it offered a wide range of courses including Hebrew, Jewish history, Arabic, Syriac and Ethiopic. Another leading academic who also arrived as a refugee was Professor Samuel Billigheimer.⁵ The numbers of students remained small, most being theological students with the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, though there has been a steady trickle of Jewish students. In Sydney the Department of Semitic Studies was established independently of the Jewish community. Its head, Colin MacLaurin, believed that this was advantageous as the department was more likely to attract non-Jewish students if a non-Jew taught Hebrew.⁶ It also only attracted a small number of students and, from the Jewish Studies perspective, had a limited number of course offerings.

In 1988 Professor Bernard Reisman of Brandeis University was invited to Sydney as a scholar-in-residence for the Hillel Foundation (now renamed The Shalom Institute). He commented on the stark contrast between the strength of the day school movement and the weakness of Jewish education at the university and adult levels. As a result of the impact of these comments, further reinforced by comments made by Professor Hanan Alexander at a major conference held in Melbourne looking toward the future of Australian Jewry, as well as internal developments, both adult Jewish education and university Jewish Studies have been strengthened over the last decade, with female Jewish educators often spearheading these initiatives.

HOMES AND SYNAGOGUES: THE WOMEN'S *TEFILLAH* GROUP (WTG) AND OTHER INITIATIVES

In Sydney the first meeting of the Women's *Tefillah* Group was held in Kislev 1989, Gael Hammer being one of its founding members. Earlier that year Gael had been in New York and attended the Women's *Tefillah* Group of Flatbush, a group with which her older daughter, Viva, was involved. Melbourne born, Gael Hammer (nee Sage) had been deeply influenced by an incident she had experienced as a university student during the 1956 Suez crisis. At the time her father was *Rosh Ha'Kahal* of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, led by Rabbi Dr Izaak Rapaport who had a reputation of being unbending in his orthodoxy. During a Shabbat service at the time of the crisis Rabbi Rapaport made an appeal for financial support for Israel. He announced from the *bimah* that during times of crisis, if Israel were in trouble, it was *halachically* appropriate for funds to be publicly collected from all possible sources including

from women, and to this end, he invited the women present to come up to the *bimah* and make a donation. Talking about this episode, Gael Hammer recalled:

There were only six women in *shule* that *Shabbat*. There was a stunned moment, and then a buzz of talk from the men's section. Three of us, including myself, came downstairs, sat at an indicated, separate area at the side and were called up. I stood beside an open *Sefer Torah* and donated, I think, one guinea. I was twenty years old and at university at the time. I did not say the *brachot*, but I did kiss the Torah with a *tallit*. That was the beginning of my Jewish feminist career.⁷

Gael Hammer has continued to be the one of the key figures in the Women's *Tefillah* movement over the last decade.

The initial meeting in Sydney was organised by Viva Hammer in the Hammer home as a result of her experiencing women's prayer in New York the previous January. Subsequently, Gabrielle Resnik chose to celebrate her batmitzvah at a *Succot* women's prayer gathering; two months later Lisa Belle Sive (nee Furhagen) was called to the *Torah* on the day of her wedding, and this is how the group started regular services. They decided that they would have an ongoing *Tefillah* experience, at least on the days when *Rosh Chodesh* falls on a Sunday, which is usually twice a year. These services are held at Shalom College because it is a community institution and the politics of using such a place are less contentious. All the women involved have become very knowledgeable in how to conduct the *shacharit* (morning) and *musaf* (additional) service. The *Sefer Torah* which is used is on permanent loan to Shalom from the Great Synagogue, but not all rabbis are in favour of allowing the women to use it for this purpose. In addition, the women hold regular *shiurim* (classes) in order to learn more about appropriate issues in Jewish tradition and have a book reading group to study newly published relevant texts. Rabbi Raymond Apple has acted as *posek* (rabbinic guide and consultant) for the group from its inception and his wife, Marian, has been very involved in its activities. In addition, there have been other guest speakers including Rebbetzin Esti Gutnick. These *shiurim* are held in the private homes of members of the group. From 1997 until 2002 regular *minchah* (afternoon) services were also held about eight times a year on *Shabbat Mevarchim* at Mizrachi Synagogue located in Bondi. The Mizrachi rabbi, Rabbi Moshe Gutnick, does not permit reading from a *Sefer Torah* so the group used a *chumash*. In 2002 *Minchah* services have been trialled in private homes because of problems with the

Mizrachi membership. The *gabbayit*, Shelley Einfeld, who does the *lehning*, has a beautiful voice and reads faultlessly. She was one of a group of five women who were taught by Mr Max Lemberg, one of the longest serving barmitzvah teachers in Sydney, who has been most supportive of women learning the skill of Torah reading.⁸

In addition, to these activities, another group called 'Women for Life', founded by Lori Lurie and Gabriella Aber, holds full moon *shiurim* every *Shabbat Mevarchim* in private homes in Sydney's Dover Heights area in order not to clash with Mizrachi *Shabbat Mevarchim shiurim* for women. Anywhere between 8 and 35 women attend these *shiurim*. Many local synagogues hold regular day time *shiurim* for women, while the Great Synagogue led by Rabbi Apple is particularly active in promoting women's learning and activities. The Great Synagogue holds an annual Women's Shabbat, and in 1999, for the first time held a *Shabbaton*, providing women with a 25 hour intensive Jewish learning experience that included a Shabbat dinner, addresses by women in the sanctuary at the end of the morning service, a luncheon, afternoon panel discussion and *havdalah*.

In Melbourne a Women's *Tefillah* Group also formed in the late 1980s but it faded away. Then, in 1996, a new congregation striving at full equality for women was formed. Its founders chose the name *HaMakom*, both as one of God's names and also for its more literal meaning 'the place' in order to create many levels of resonance. Its mission statement stresses:

HaMakom [The Place] is a community which defines itself by its commitment to operating within a *Halachic* [Jewish legal] framework. One of its central ideas is to facilitate the practice of and participation in Judaism for and by women in as many meaningful ways as is *halachically* possible. We operate through a process that is, as far as possible, based on inclusivity, consensus and a lack of hierarchical formality. Ultimately, we are about God.⁹

This community prays in a private home, has no rabbi, paid membership or executive leadership. On an ordinary Sabbath it attracts over 150 worshippers. The members pray together, but separate for the Torah readings to enable women to read from the Torah. *HaMakom* also introduced passing the Torah scroll to the women. In 1999 the Gandel Besen Synagogue in Melbourne followed suit, creating an outcry among the orthodox leadership, but since then a number of other synagogues have introduced the practice.

The emergence of *HaMakom* reinforced the activities of the WTG in Sydney and contributed to the development of a similar group in

Melbourne. One of the founders of *HaMakom*, Melanie Landau, started a Women's Circle at the Jewish Museum which influenced a group of orthodox university students. They held a Sunday morning forum which established the Orthodox Women's Network (OWN) in 1999 with the aim of holding regular discussions looking at ways of incorporating women more actively into all the major life cycle events. From these monthly learning sessions the Women's *Tefillah* Group emerged. In 2000 a separate *Torah* reading was held for women on *Simchat Torah* and in 2001 the WTG also read the *Megillah* on Purim. With the development of women's participation in prayer, with girls celebrating their *batmitzvah* through the WTG, some reading from the Torah, women saying *Kaddish* [memorial prayer] and an increased role for women in the wedding ceremony, Melbourne rabbinic opinion has gradually become more open on these issues.¹⁰

The development of the WTGs in Australia has been assisted by the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA) in New York, with strong support being provided by Blu Greenberg who visited Sydney as a scholar-in-residence for Shalom College in 1996. Australian women leaders have attended JOFA conferences in New York and in February 2001 there was the largest delegation to date with five delegates.

Women in the Chassidic world have also been seeking a more active role, particularly within *Chabad*, the strongest Chassidic sect in Australia. *Chabad* women in Melbourne under the leadership of Miriam Cowen have developed their own learning programs and the same has been happening in Sydney. Music has also been an important vehicle through which *Chabad* women have been able to express themselves.

These developments have not taken place without controversy. Australian Jewry is a very traditional community, with between 70–80% identifying as Orthodox through synagogue membership and school affiliation, and only 20–30% identifying as Reform. The issues of women touching the *Sefer Torah*, holding the *Sefer Torah* and reading from it has caused controversy in both Melbourne and Sydney. In 1999 in Sydney, for example, at a session of the annual Jewish Free University which dealt with the issue of Women and Orthodoxy, there was quite a strong debate which was followed up with numerous articles in the Jewish press. Defending the Women's *Tefillah* Group, Rabbi Apple wrote:

Apart from its prayer gatherings, the *Tefillah* Group has devoted many an evening or Sunday morning to the study (using Hebrew text material) of issues such as women and

minyan, tzitzit, tefillin, Kiddush, Havdalah, Sheva Berachot, Megillah, Torah reading, Kaddish and Torah study...

This is what is studied by the Women's Tefillah Group at learning sessions that are precisely that — *shiurim*, without polemics, politics, point-scoring or anti-traditionalism. The axiom is that of Rav Moshe Feinstein, who was prepared to address such issues only if they arose out of genuine piety and not anti-*halachic* militancy.

The result is that Sydney Jewish women are in their own way joining Jewish women everywhere in beginning to be students, scholars and sages...¹¹

This point was reinforced by Gael Hammer who stressed in an article published in the same periodical that 'humility, respect and a proactive search for knowledge within *Halachah* is motivating observant women'¹² and that they are not seeking to overturn Orthodox practice.

Jewish women who are committed to developing their Jewish education and spiritual involvement in this area face opposition not only from the rabbinate but also from other orthodox women who do not see the need for such learning and involvement and fear it will threaten orthodox practice. Another problem is that the number of women who participate is fairly small in size. Despite these problems, the general feeling is that the struggle to bring about this level of participation for women is important, if not for this generation then for the next generation. And Shelley Einfeld, who leads the Shabbat *Mevarchim* services in Sydney, usually brings her six year old daughter with her, while her mother is also a strong supporter of the group. Shelley is the granddaughter of Sydney D. Einfeld, son of the *chazan* of Sydney's Great Synagogue, Rev Marcus Einfeld, who served Sydney's mother congregation from 1909 until his death in 1937. Sydney Einfeld was one of the great stalwarts of Australian Jewry and one of the architects of its post-war immigration program. Thus, a strong heritage of Jewish communal learning and leadership is being maintained.

COMMUNITY CENTRES: THE MELTON ADULT JEWISH EDUCATION

In 1992, Dr Hilton Immerman, master of a Jewish residential college for university students, Shalom College, and at the time also Hillel Director, proposed the development of the Melton Adult Mini Schools in Sydney. As a result of this proposal, Sydney became the first diaspora community outside the United States licensed by the

Florence Melton Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to introduce this program. Initially under the auspices of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, but with its administrative centre located at Shalom College at the University of New South Wales from the beginning, the then president of Shalom, John Glass, strongly supported the program from the start. In August 1992 Susie Klein, who had worked in the area of Jewish programming for adults, was chosen as the Melton coordinator and Rabbi Yonatan Mirvis was appointed as the Hebrew University contact person. From its tentative beginnings in 1993, the Melton Adult Education program has gone from strength to strength. After the initial two year program was completed, many students did not wish to leave, and a whole series of graduate programs have been devised, so that there are some students who are now in their seventh year of Melton and Sydney has over 800 participants and graduates. While the Melton program is coordinated from Shalom College, classes are held in two main community centres: at the Hakoah Club on the Eastern Suburbs and the Pelerman Centre on the North Shore. In 1997 Melbourne followed Sydney's lead and also introduced the Melton program. In Melbourne, the Jewish Museum of Australia has been chosen as the coordinating body because no other suitable organisation could be found.

Women have played a central role in the development of Melton, both as facilitators and also as participants. One of the early lecturers was Noga Ganor, the wife of the then Jewish National Fund (JNF) emissary, who was a creative educator and made a vital contribution to the establishment of Melton. Appointed as the program's education director, she revised the curricula and trained facilitators. When she returned to Israel in 1997, a leading Sydney Jewish educator and Jerusalem Fellow, Peta Jones Pellach, was appointed to replace her.

Australian born Peta Pellach has proved to be a dynamic appointment and, together with Susie Klein, has continued to build on the foundations laid by Noga Ganor. As a teenager, Pellach assumed leadership roles in the Zionist youth movement, Habonim, and in 1972 she spent a year in Israel at the Institute for Youth Leaders from Abroad. On her return to Sydney in 1973 she became actively involved in Jewish student politics and in combating anti-Israel propaganda on campus, while studying for her degree at the University of New South Wales. She is one of five children, all of whom have played an active role within the Jewish community; her sister, Amanda Gordon, was vice-president of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies while her brother, Jeremy Jones, was elected president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry in

December 2000. A key turning point in Peta Pellach's life was in 1975 when Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, while on a visit to Sydney, advised the students on tactics for their Israel campaign. Rabbi Hertzberg noticed that, at the time, Pellach was the only female Jewish student who was deeply involved in the campaign and, as he had two daughters himself and no sons, he reached out to her. He suggested that she undertake a Masters degree at his university, Columbia, in the United States. Peta was at that stage dedicated to *aliyah* (living in Israel) but when she mentioned the idea to her parents they were excited by the suggestion. At Columbia, she 'found for the first time academic stimulation in an academic environment'.¹³ Pellach also met her husband, Aharon Pellach, at Columbia and after they married and had their first child they returned to Sydney where they had another three children. Peta became the inaugural Jewish history teacher at the newly established Masada High School in 1982, as well as taking on the *Batmitzvah* ceremonies, and in 1989 was chosen as the first participant from Australia in the Jerusalem Fellows Program.

After two years of intensive study in Jerusalem she returned to continue to work for a short period in secondary Jewish education, first at Moriah (1991-93) and then at Masada High (1993-96). In 1997, she accepted the position of full-time education director at Melton where she had been involved with Noga Ganor from the beginning. She had always been concerned with the concept of adult education and in her early years working at Masada High she had sought to involve the parents of her students with education evenings. There she organised an adult education program around the television series *Pillars of Fire*, the use of videos at that time being an innovative approach. Some of the parents who participated in that program were among her first Melton students. She had also attended an annual general meeting of the program in Jerusalem and had met its benefactor, Florence Melton, who was extremely supportive of its spread to Australia. Peta found Noga Ganor 'an exceptional partner to work with'¹⁴ and there is no doubt that the challenge they faced was to transform the Melton education program which was geared to a North American Jewish audience to Australian Jewry which is, in many ways, a very different community. That they were successful in that curriculum development is evidenced in the strength of the Melton program, not only in Sydney but also in Melbourne.

The team of Peta Pellach and Susie Klein has proved to be extraordinarily effective, with Susie Klein's efficiency and quiet diplomacy being a vital factor in this success. In June 1999 Pellach and Klein introduced another first for Australia with a two day inten-

sive Jewish learning experienced called *Limmud Oz*, modelled on the British *Limmud* program. It was very successful, attracting between 200 and 300 participants. Overall, women far outweigh men as participants in the Melton program on the basis of one man to two women.

In Melbourne, women have also played a key role in the development of Melton, with the support of Dr Helen Light, the curator and director of the Jewish Museum of Australia proving to be a crucial factor. As in Sydney, the program began with part-time teachers, but in 1999 they appointed a part-time education director, Paul Forgasz, who had been vice-principal of the largest Jewish day school in Melbourne, Mount Scopus College. Rabbi Aviva Kipen has been among the female educators involved with teaching and coordinating the Melton program in Melbourne.

In addition, a movement called Womanpower has been created under the guidance of Susie Klein and the Hillel Foundation to maximise women's role in the Sydney community. It was launched with the holding of a series of eight leadership training sessions for women. The formation of the women's group was largely from the impact of Blu Greenberg, an orthodox Jewish feminist, who came out as a scholar-in-residence for Hillel with her husband, Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, in 1993. Womanpower has continued to hold seminars and educate the Jewish women of Sydney, with most of its functions being held at the Hakoah Club.

UNIVERSITY STUDIES AND YESHIVOT

The importance of university Jewish Studies, both for fostering Jewish academia and for training Jewish educators was overlooked in the past by the Australian Jewish community. However, dynamic developments in this area have occurred in recent years in both Melbourne and Sydney. This has included the success of the Jewish History program at Melbourne University taught by Dr Mark Baker, the creation of the Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University, the expansion of courses offered by the Department of Semitic Studies at the University of Sydney, including the Einhorn lectureship in Modern Hebrew and the four year course in Jewish Civilisation, Thought and Culture, and the establishment of the Jewish Law course and the Hakoah lectureship in Jewish Studies at the University of New South Wales. Sydney has also benefited from the opening of Mandelbaum House at the University of Sydney. The Australian Association for Jewish Studies, established in 1987, is a small but ongoing body sponsoring research and publications, as well as holding annual conferences, alternating between Melbourne

and Sydney. Its academic journal is entitled *The Australian Association for Jewish Studies Journal*.

For many years Jewish day schools were largely dependent on importing teachers from overseas or using local Israelis, many of whom lacked professional qualifications. At a major Jewish Education Conference organised by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) in 1949 a number of key resolutions were passed, supporting both the establishment of Jewish day schools and the establishment of a teachers' college to train Jewish Studies teachers. While the first goal was realised, the second remained a dream and it is only in very recent years that efforts have been made in Australia to establish a local teacher education program for Jewish Studies.

Initially, schools were able to draw on a pool of teachers who came as part of the pre- or post-World War II immigration from Europe with in-depth knowledge gained in *yeshivot* and teachers' seminaries. The community then moved to be reliant on *shlichim*, teachers who were brought out on contract from Israel. But this system proved problematical, since *shlichim* need a period of adjustment to Australian conditions, and by the time they have acclimatised it is often time to return to Israel.

Since the early 1980s, the New South Wales Interschools Committee for Jewish Education has developed a local program to meet the needs of training Jewish Studies teachers from preschool to Year 12 at the University of Sydney. In 1990 I was appointed as Jewish Education Co-ordinator in the Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney, initially on a part-time basis; it later became a full-time position, funded by all the Sydney Jewish schools and the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education (Academy BJE). This position has met a real need, and was mirrored in Melbourne with the creation of a similar position, albeit part-time, in 1995 at Monash University's Faculty of Education.

The teacher training programs in Australia are integrated into the framework of the general teacher education programs offered by the universities and the only separate Jewish Studies teacher training seminary which exists is *Ohel Chana* in Melbourne, run by the *Chabad* movement, which offers a one year course for Jewish women. At the tertiary level, both Monash and Sydney universities offer Judaic Studies Method and Hebrew Method courses, as part of the overall teacher education program (at Monash a one-year Diploma of Education course and at Sydney a two-year Master of Teaching course which was introduced in 1996). Method courses have prerequisites of a major in the subject area in the Bachelor of Arts (that is, three years of university study for Jewish

Studies/Hebrew). At the University of Sydney students can also undertake a Bachelor of Education at either primary or secondary level and specialise in Hebrew and Jewish Studies within these courses.

Women have played an important part in these recent developments. Almost all the lecturers in Modern Hebrew, at Melbourne, Monash, Deakin and Sydney universities have been female¹⁵ while women lecturers have also played a key role in teaching Jewish Civilisation. At the University of Sydney four of the five lecturers in Jewish Studies at present are female, including the writer who is now chair of the Department of Semitic Studies. There is also a much higher proportion of female students. In 1999 in the Modern Hebrew classes at the University of Sydney, out of a total of 26 students, all were female except one student who was also the only non-Jewish student in the course. In a number of the Jewish Civilisation classes held at the University of Sydney either all or almost all the students are female.

The NSW Jewish Educators Network (JEN) was established in 1990 as a professional association in Sydney, creating a sharing of ideas and a collegiality across the Sydney schools. In 1995, Mrs Eileen Franklin, the inaugural president of JEN in NSW, created a nation-wide organisation which held its first National Conference together with the Zionist Federation of Australia in Melbourne in June 1997 and its second conference in conjunction with Limmud Oz in Sydney in June 1999. At both conferences around 250 Jewish educators from across Australasia participated. Teachers in day schools are also disproportionately female, resulting in the situation where most students, most trainee teachers and most Jewish educators are female. In a community which is still largely ruled by the orthodox rabbinate with the majority of senior educators in the day schools being males, this situation creates an interesting dichotomy. There are more women rising up the ladder in the Jewish schools with Sydney's Masada College having a female principal for a number of years, Perth's Carmel College being led by a female principal, and Melbourne's Bialik College, Yavneh College and Sholem Aleichem having female principals in 1999. In Sydney Mrs Lilly Maltz was appointed as the principal of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Education (Academy BJE), the first woman to assume this role in Sydney, and she is proving to be a most effective and innovative administrator. Thus, the imbalance between educational leadership and the grass roots teachers is gradually being overcome.

The growth of the internet as a medium of communication over the past decade has been remarkable and it is an area where Jewish

women have been involved. Jewish Ozzies Internet (JOIN) has become a significant player in the world of cyber-communities, having been recognised by international as well as local internet providers as an award winning group. The activities of JOIN include highlighting and publicising communal activities, assisting with welfare and providing a forum for the discussion of community issues and ideas through JOIN-TALK. It was set up and is now run by two Jewish women, Geraldine Jones and her daughter-in-law Naomi Jones. Although more men than women currently participate in JOIN-TALK, this is something the providers hope to change. They are actively involved in women's networks which aim to upgrade the internet skills of women. This is potentially a significant vehicle for women's participation in debate on significant Jewish issues.

JEWISH WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

There are two main Jewish women's organisations functioning in Australia today, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) and the Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO).¹⁶ Both run their own education programs for their members which are offered through their centres. The Council of Jewish Women was founded in Sydney in 1923 by Dr Fanny Reading, 'a dreamer of great dreams' and a visionary who was one of the early Jewish feminists. Dr Fanny, as she was affectionately known, saw Jewish education for women as one of the main CJW planks and this policy has been continued until the present day. One innovative education program which the Council is presently undertaking with federal government sponsorship is entitled 'Living in Harmony' and aims at bringing women from different ethnic groups together to share their cultural heritage and so create a greater understanding across different groups of women in Australia. WIZO also holds regular education programs, both at Beth WIZO and in the private homes of its members at their monthly meetings. This is another important level of Jewish adult education for women. Synagogue women's auxiliaries continue to play a role in Australia's religious life, some of which, like the Great Synagogue, have regular *Divrei Torah* and *shiurim* (study sessions).

CONCLUSIONS

The last decade of the twentieth century witnessed extremely rapid growth in Jewish adult education in Australia, affecting every area of home, synagogue, community centres and universities, with pos-

sibly only the establishment of women's *yeshivot* in Australia still lacking. Young women who wish to study at *yeshiva* still have to go to Israel or the United States, although as mentioned *Ohel Chanah* does operate in Melbourne as a *Chabad* teacher training seminary. Women have played an active role in these developments, both spearheading the changes and being the main participants. There are a number of reasons for this. Traditionally, Jewish education has been a less well paying career area, which has tended to attract women who appreciate the more flexible working hours which meet their family commitments. Most Jewish mothers still aspire to have 'my son the doctor or my son the lawyer', rather than 'my son the teacher'. In general there is a much higher proportion of female students than male students in the humanities and in recent years this has been reflected in the higher percentage of female lecturers in Jewish Studies. It is difficult to ascertain the exact reasons for this high proportion of women as there has been no research into the issue and one can only make suppositions. It is possible that many men are too tired after work to attend classes while women, most of whom do work, seem to have more need for the intellectual challenge and social interaction. Since women live longer, and the proportion of older women in adult education is quite high, this is another factor.

In all, Jewish women's involvement in adult Jewish education has created an intellectual and cultural renaissance in Australia over the 1990s which has proved to be an exciting phenomenon, although there is still much to be achieved and barriers to be surmounted in overcoming traditional resistance to women playing such roles, especially in relation to *Women's Tefillah* Groups and in the development of women's *yeshivot*.

NOTES

1. Peter Medding, *From Assimilation to Group Survival: a political and sociological study of an Australian Jewish Community*, Melbourne: Cheshire, 1968, p.99.
2. *Sydney Jewish News*, 31 May 1946.
3. Jewish women were active as teachers in this period and included Laura Boas, Hettie Feuerman, Ethel Wolinski (later Mrs Kirsner), and Minnie Kierson. The leadership of the Board of Jewish Education remained in male hands until Lilly Maltz took over as Education Director in 1997.
4. *Sydney Jewish News*, 20 April 1950.
5. Apple, Raymond, 'Origins of the Semitic Studies Department, Melbourne University', *AJHS Journal*, Vol V, Part 1, 1959.

6. *Sydney Jewish News*, 15 October 1948
7. Interview with Gael Hammer, Sydney, 12 October 1999.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Telephone interview with Yvonne Fein, Melbourne July 2001.
10. Information supplied by Janet Belleli, 17 July 2001.
11. *Australian Jewish News*, 15 October 1999
12. *Ibid.*
13. Interview with Peta Pellach, Sydney, 19 and 21 October 1999.
14. *Ibid.*
15. The two exceptions to this were Jonathan Shunary and Yossi Gamzu, both of whom came from Israel and taught for comparatively short periods.
16. For a detailed discussion of these groups and the history of Jewish women in Australia see Suzanne D. Rutland 'The Changing Role of Women in Australian Jewry's Communal Structure' in W.D. Rubinstein, ed., *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987, pp.101-126, and Marlo L Newton, *Making a difference: A history of the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia*, Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2000.

BOOK REVIEWS

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE IN AUSTRALIAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES, 1945–2000

by *Judith E. Berman*, (*University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, W.A., 2001*), xi + 276pp

Previous historians of the post-war Australian Jewish community have devoted surprisingly little attention to the ceremonials, museums, and activities surrounding Holocaust commemoration. In some respects, this has been a strange omission, given the centrality of the Holocaust in contemporary Jewish consciousness. In other respects it is perhaps easy to understand why this neglect has occurred. That the Holocaust ought to be remembered and commemorated is one matter about which there is total and unanimous agreement in the Jewish community, probably the one and only assertion about which there would be unanimous agreement. When I was active in the Melbourne Jewish community I did indeed see Holocaust commemoration matters about which disagreements occurred, especially the use of Yiddish, Hebrew, and English in the community's annual commemorative service, but, of course, never any disagreement that such a ceremony ought to be held and well-attended.

That there have been serious disagreements about the type of message conveyed in Holocaust commemorations is one of the major themes of Judith Berman's excellent book on this topic. Early commemorations, just after the war, tended to emphasise the gallantry of the Warsaw ghetto uprising; more recent ones the necessity to support Israel as the phoenix arisen on the ashes of the Holocaust. Most recently, the question of universalistic lessons to be drawn from the Holocaust — whether the massacres in the Balkans or Rwanda are like the Holocaust, and whether Jews ought to make note of them at a Holocaust ceremonial — have been raised. The extent to which the Holocaust was unique, and a uniquely Jewish tragedy, is one which has raged among scholars in a highly unseemly fashion in recent decades. Most Jews would, I think, prefer to deemphasise the universalistic implications of the Holocaust and would wish to commemorate its purely Jewish aspects. There

have been many other lines of division in Australian Jewish Holocaust commemorations as well. Language — whether Yiddish, the language of so many victims, should be given a major role in commemorations, although few younger people can understand it — is one. Another is religion, with a disturbing track record of boycott by Orthodox rabbis if Reform rabbis appeared.

Dr. Berman has traced all these controversies in admirable and lucid fashion. As well, she has examined the growth of Australia's Holocaust museums and of Holocaust education in the Jewish day schools. Her work is an outstanding example of how fruitful a detailed study of the recent Australian Jewish community can be, especially if undertaken by a sympathetic and well-informed author. There are useful illustrations and tables, and the results of her poll of Jewish day school teachers on this topic. A number of subjects are only hinted at but not directly discussed. The attitude of the Strictly Orthodox synagogues and schools towards the Holocaust is not explored in full. Many Strictly Orthodox Jews hold the view that the Holocaust was indeed a catastrophe, but not necessarily worse than others which have befallen the Jewish people, such as the Destruction of the Temple; as with previous catastrophes, a remnant of observant Jews survived to start again. In other words, they would reject the notion that the Holocaust was unique. (Personally, I find this view very appealing and probably 'accurate'.) At the very extreme edges of Strict Orthodoxy is the view that the Holocaust represented Divine punishment for Jewry's lapse into secularism, a view which, understandably, arouses fury and disbelief. This work also says little about Holocaust courses in the universities, a major growth area around the world. Dr. Berman very accurately concludes that Australian commemorations of the Holocaust have typically played down the universalistic implications of the Holocaust, unlike such commemorations overseas. In tracing and identifying these patterns, she has made a most notable contribution to the historiography of Australian Jewry.

William D. Rubinstein

THE VOYAGE OF THEIR LIFE: THE STORY OF THE SS DERNA AND ITS PASSENGERS

by Diane Armstrong Sydney: Flamingo, HarperCollins
Publishers, 2001, ix + 484 pp

In the period from 1946 to 1954 Australia accepted over 17,000 survivors of the Holocaust from Europe and Shanghai. This intake, which almost doubled the size of Australian Jewry, has been by far the most significant wave of Jewish immigrants to date. Most of these newcomers arrived on boats which were chartered by the Jewish welfare organisations, the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society and the American Joint Distribution Committee. The Labor government introduced a quota system in 1946, whereby no more than twenty-five percent of the passengers of any one boat could be Jewish. Because of the shipping shortage after the war, many of the boats which were chartered were in a terrible condition, yet they were filled to capacity. Conditions on board were terrible, so that they became known as 'hell ships'. One of the worst of these was the *SS Derna*. In a superbly investigated piece, Diane Armstrong has provided a vivid and realistic picture of the conditions on board this hell ship, detailing the experiences of both the Jewish and non-Jewish passengers.

The *Derna* left Marseilles on 30 August 1948 with 200 Jewish migrants on board, including sixty orphans. As outlined in the *Sydney Jewish News* on 12 November 1938, the ship caught fire in the Indian Ocean and had to put in for repairs in India and a journey which should have taken four to five weeks took ten weeks. Diane Armstrong has brought to life the conditions on the *Derna* throughout this difficult journey by personalising the story. For example, she wrote about the effect of the fire as follows:

Husbands, wives and children were gathering on the deck. Honeymooners Heniek and Krysia Lipschutz clung to each other. Grabbing a plank of wood he found on the deck, Heniek told his petite bride "If we have to abandon ship, we'll hang on to this". Watching the couples enviously, the widows felt abandoned. One of them was Sala Snur, whose husband had been killed during the Holocaust. She was travelling with her six year old daughter, Anna, whose dimpled cheeks and glossy black sausage curls won the admiration of all mothers and the envy of all the little girls, including me. Wherever Sala looked, she saw men making sure that their wives and children were safe, but no one was looking out for them. Did we survive the

war just to become food for sharks? If the two of us perish in the fire or fall into the ocean, no-one will know or care, she thought bitterly, drawing her little daughter closer. [Armstrong, 2001, 34]

This is but one example of her moving, effective style through which she is able to highlight the difficulties of the journey.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the journey itself and the second part gives sketches of the life story of various passengers once they arrived in Australia. She deals with the stories of both the Jewish and non-Jewish passengers. There was a group of largely Baltic passengers who were travelling to Australia under the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) scheme based on a two year work contract in Australia. They were under the care of Colonel Ogden Hershaw about whom Armstrong spares no punches because of his womanising and antisemitic attitudes. While highlighting the difficulties of the voyage, she also writes about the positive experiences, especially for the young Jews on board who could enjoy socialising and listening to music on the deck in the evenings after the horrors of the Holocaust.

One of the main strengths of Armstrong's book is the thoroughness of her research. She has interviewed as many passengers of the *Derna* as she could locate and some of these passengers were able to provide her with invaluable primary source material. She has worked hard to ensure that no stone was unturned and her meticulous research has produced dividends. Another strength is her writing style which enthralls the reader so that despite the fact that it is a long book, it is difficult to put down. Although a thoroughly researched historical account of the journey, it reads like a novel proving that history is stranger than fiction.

Armstrong is careful to place her story within the broader historical context. Many of her pen sketches highlight the horrors of the Holocaust. She has written about the twenty-five percent quota which the Australian government imposed and noted the irony for her own family's story in the following manner:

Jews who had survived the war and wanted to migrate now faced discrimination in the form of quotas imposed by countries which had helped to vanquish Hitler. It was ironic that three years after the war had ended, Jews like my parents and me who had survived the Holocaust by keeping our Jewish identity secret, were obliged to conceal it once again in order to gain passage to our new land. [Armstrong, 2001, 59]

She also shows the Australian government's fear of Communist infiltration at the time with the parliamentary debates between Labor Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell and H.B. Gullett, the Liberal member for Henty, Victoria.

Diane Armstrong's study of the *Derna* is an important contribution to postwar Australian history since Calwell's postwar immigration program radically changed Australian society. Her careful research combined with her excellent writing skills make this book essential reading for anyone interested in the development of Australian society, both in terms of the Jewish characters which emerge, and the other ethnic groups discussed, particularly the Balts.

Suzanne D. Rutland

AUSTRALIAN GENESIS: JEWISH CONVICTS AND SETTLERS 1788-1860

*By John S. Levi and G.F.J. Bergman. New edition, Melbourne:
Melbourne University Press, 2002, xiv + 385pp*

At last the long awaited new edition of the definitive history of the convict origins and establishment of the Australian Jewish community has been published. Prospective readers will no longer have to comb the second-hand bookshops to purchase battered, over-priced often barely readable copies of this wonderful book to pursue their interest or studies. This lovely new edition — almost a coffee-table volume — is now available and cheaper than the second-hand one too!

Many of the chapters have been reprinted just as they were in the first edition of 1974, although sometimes their order has been changed, but the text has been revised very carefully by Rabbi Levi, following the death of his co-author Dr George Bergman in 1979. As Rabbi Levi explains in his Preface, he had to wait until 1997 when he became Rabbi Emeritus of his Melbourne congregation to find the time to devote to this work, and even then this is only the first volume of a two volume work. The second volume will be a biographical dictionary of the Jews of colonial Australia 1788-1850. That volume will surely be a haven for the multitude of genealogists in Australia today!

This new edition is not divided into three books, as was the first, and has fewer reprints of historical documents, many of which, written in the handwriting of the day, were very difficult for our eyes to read. Most of the printed documents are re-produced, how-

ever, as well as some twenty-five colour plates which considerably improve the appearance of the book. There is some re-arrangement of the material, with some stories moving from one chapter to another. For example, the hanging of Abraham Aaron in Van Diemen's Land is now in the chapter on *The Man They Couldn't Hang*, page 68, quite an appropriate transfer. Also there have been some additions to the text in the light of twenty-first century interpretation. In writing of the founding of Melbourne by John Batman and the Port Phillip Association, the first edition stated: 'Because they had "bought" the land from the Aborigines and not from the Crown, their claim was highly speculative. Far more official notice was likely to be taken of their physical presence as squatters on land claimed by the British monarch than as purchasers of tribal property'. This new edition adds the following sentence: 'At least, the Association clearly recognised that the real owners of that vast territory marked *Australia Felix* on the maps were the indigenous inhabitants.'(page 280). It is a pity that neither edition noted that the currency used to 'buy' land was necklaces and trinkets ... of doubtful use for aborigines, but perhaps this is unverified history.

Another type of addition comes at the end of the early chapter, *The First Lady*, on page 39. A reference is made to the late Admiral Sir David Martin, the last governor to be knighted, and who established in 1990 a foundation in his own name to fund centres for needy and homeless youth. To this is added the following: 'It was a fitting memorial to the pride he felt in being the great, great, great grandson of George Johnston and a starving pregnant waif named Esther Abrahams.'

In writing such a major work, it is difficult to avoid a few minor errors, discrepancies and omissions. The ark of the York Street Synagogue, for example, is described as being 'a larger version of the ark designed for the Bridge Street Synagogue in 1830' (opposite p. 178). There is no extant evidence of the design of the ark of the Bridge Street Synagogue, which in any case, did not open until 1837 as described by Mr Forbes in an article published in this issue of the *Journal*. Likewise, the illustration of the York Street Synagogue on p.162, attributed to John Rae, is acknowledged in the list of illustrations on p x as in the collection of the York Street Synagogue, which ceased to exist in the 1870s. The image is dated 1842 and the caption says the synagogue can clearly be seen, but the synagogue was not built until 1844. It is a pity that more recent research, such as the story of Mordecai Moses who played a significant part in the Sydney synagogue, was not included in this new edition.

The authors' sense of humour keeps shining through what could be dry factual material (like the dreadful Australian history

books we had when I was at school), and the book is delightfully readable for the lay reader as well as the serious historian. All in all, this long awaited second edition was worth the wait, and will add immeasurably to promote the history of the first Jews in Australia.

Judith Shapira.

“ESHKOLOT: ESSAYS IN MEMORY OF RABBI RONALD LUBOFSKY”

*Andrew Strum, Managing editor, Melbourne:
Hybrid Publishers, 2002, xi + 421pp*

Rabbi Lubofsky was a powerful figure in Australian Jewry for so long that it is almost impossible to believe that he was over 70 at the time of his sudden death. His personality was so vibrant, his mind so energetic, his interests so all-absorbing and his voice so strong that he seemed to have remained as young as the day he arrived on these shores. His passing during Pesach two years ago has left our community a duller place, and it is good that a large and variegated group of scholarly admirers have joined together to produce this literary tribute to him.

The title “Eshkolot” echoes an ancient Rabbinic phrase describing a multi-faceted sage as “*Ish ha-Eshkolot*”, i.e. *ish she-hakol bo*, a man who contained everything. The many talents and interests contained in Rabbi Lubofsky are well reflected in this book. Of the varied offerings many are solid, though some are rather slight. Most are engagingly written, though unfortunately many are marred by poor proof-reading, even the ability to spell Lubofsky (or Leibler) correctly.

The essays touch on art, music, history, literature, liturgy and theology and range as far afield as bio-ethics, interfaith dialogue and Zionism. All are strands in the broad-ranging tapestry of Rabbi Lubofsky's interests and concerns.

A review in a journal dedicated to Australian Jewish history must inevitably focus on the contributions to Australian Jewish historical studies. In this respect we read, often as the result of solid original research, essays on the Jewish Museum of Australia; Rabbi Lubofsky's early years in Sydney; and the remarkable Rabbi Gurewicz (this particular essay is an edited transcript of an address by Rabbi Lubofsky himself, and apart from presenting Gurewicz as a detractor of Rabbi Danglow it is an important chapter in the his-

tory of strict orthodoxy in Australia). We read about Rev Moses Rintel; we trace references to Australia in *HaMagid* in the 19th century; we enjoy reminiscences of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation. My own contribution is a study of mixed choirs in Australia and elsewhere.

A significant proportion of the authors are Australian by birth or adoption. There are Liberal Jews and Orthodox Jews, historians and *halachists*; a *halachic* paper by the Rabbi of Mizrahi in Melbourne deals with feminism in the synagogue.

All in all, it is a book to be enjoyed and to learn from. As a tribute to Rabbi Lubofsky it makes the reader wonder how one man could play so many roles so successfully.

Raymond Apple

ERRATA

• **Perth Jewry's Memorial Cemetery by David Mossenson, *AJHS Journal*, Vol XV, Part 4, June 2001.**

p.662: First paragraph: the formation of the Perth Hebrew Congregation should be 1892 not 1902.

p. 662: Third line of third paragraph: date of the bicentenary should be 1988 not 2000.

• **The Ballarat Hebrew Congregation and the Spielvogel Register by Lee A. M. Simmons:**

p.669: should be the Reverend Israel Moses Goldreich not the Reverend Samuel Goldreich.

GENEALOGICAL ENQUIRIES

This list represents enquiries made to the AJHS until May 02. If you did not initiate the enquiry but would like to add information, please write to our genealogist at 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlington, NSW, 2008

- ASHENHEIM, Charles, son of Jacob and Malky, Scotland. Doctor in Victoria, then Dubbo. Married out. Died 1866, aged 38. Information sought on his life.
- BELENKIY, Vladimir (Velevel), son of Borukhiv, daughter Thiya from Berdichev, Russia arrived 1819-1920. May have used name White or Bell.
- BERG (ROSEBERG), Morris/Maurice and Malka (Millicent or Matilda), Melbourne
- BRODNITZ, Barnett, son of Zeib and Caroline nee Stolz. Died Rockhampton 1873. Brother Michael. The Brodnitz Brothers had businesses in Rockhampton and Mackay.
- DAVIS, Benjamin. Supposed to be connected with Goulburn community.
- DE HIRSCH, Maurice (Baron De Hirsch). Family tree sought.
- DONAETZ, Isaac, arrived Sydney 1943. Owned sweet shop.
- DRUCK, Joseph. Worked for relatives on a farm or sheep station near Tarcutta in 1920s. Information sought on Jews in the area.
- FRANK, Abraham, ex South Africa pre WWII, married a Zeffert, son Ernest
- FRIEDMAN, Solomon, married to Angelia Maria Kron. Date of his death sought.
- FRIEDMANN, Kurt, Walter and Arnold, sons of Max and Selma (nee Bachmann)
- GAFFIN (GAFFINOVITCH), Joseph/Yosef, son of Lewis/Aryeh Labe. Born 1873/4. Emigrated ex UK to Australia, date unknown. Information sought by Dr G. Gaffin.
- GOULSTON, David (Davis). Son of Moses and Rebecca, born Prussia (Poland), 1838. Came to Aust. 1858. Married Dorcas (Dora) Austin, Sydney, 1866. Divorced. Daughter Eva.
- HERSCHELL, Derrick James and Alexander Kenneth, Toowoomba.

- HILLMAN FAMILY, Queensland and NSW. From Tulsin, Latvia.
- JACOBS, Frederick William Godfrey (born Fitzroy, Vic 1888) m. to Edith Mary COLLINS (parents James and Catherine).
- JACOBS, Frederick William Godfrey (born Prussia c. 1852) m. to Harriet Rosamunde (Rose) Bessey (Bessie) PIGGIN 1885 or 1886 Richmond, NSW.
- JACOBS, Samuel, son of Moses, brother of Lawrence. Lived in Hobart in 1840s. More information sought.
- MARKS, Maurice (Morris) died in action 8.8.1918 aged 18. Son of Barnet (Baruch) Marks. Relatives sought.
- MYERS, Emanuel, convict. Married Rebecca Abrahams, Abigail Barnett. Died 1863. Burial site and other information sought.
- RABINOVICI, Frida, born Romania about 1900, daughter of Samuel (Shmuel) and Rachel (Rashela) Rabinovici. Went to Australia in 1920s to work for Jewish Colonisation Association.
- THORNFIELD, Charles, (originally Abraham Dornfeld), wife Sophie (née Roth), son Godfrey. All in Bondi/Waverley, Sydney between 1911 and 1924.
- ZEFFERT, Samuel Walter. Ex South Africa WWII. Married Sydney 1919, died Petersham 1945.

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LEVY **Godfrey H.**

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Raymond Apple, AM, RFD, LLB, MPhil, senior rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, for 30 years, lecturer in Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney and Jewish Law at the University of NSW. He is Master of Mandelbaum House at Sydney University. He is a past president of the Organisation of Rabbis of Australasia and of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. He holds office in the Council of Christians and Jews and many other public bodies. In freemasonry, he is past grand chaplain of the United Grand Lodge of NSW and ACT.

Marianne Dacy, M.Phil, Ph.D, Grad Dip Lib (CNAALondon), AALIA has run the Archive of Australian Judaica at the University of Sydney since July 1983, is the national secretary of the Australian Council of Christians and Jews and a member of the Sisters of Our Lady of Zion.

Yehuda Feher has a Diploma in Textile Engineering from Leeds University. In his early years he was active in Zionist youth movement. He is one of the original members of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies from 1945 and has been involved in a number of communal organisations since then.

Morris Forbes, OAM, BA, LLB, Fellow of the AJHS Inc, previous past president and editor of the *AJHS Journal*.

Steve Hart BA, Dip in Communications Engineering, graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1958 and the Army Staff College in 1970. During his 25 years of military service, Steve's primary specialisation was in Signals Intelligence and Electronic Warfare. He served in Germany with the British Army of the Rhine, in Vietnam and on the staff of the Australian Army Attache in Washington DC. Retiring from the army in 1980 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, he was self employed in the defence marketing industry until 2001. He is now retired and undertaking

a Graduate Diploma in Local and Applied History through the University of New England. His interest in the early Jewish population of Yass grew from the discovery that his own forebears were members of that closely related nucleus of early commercial life in the town

Amelia Amber Klein, BA (Hons) has recently graduated from the University of Sydney, majoring in Jewish Civilisations. She wrote her Honours thesis on Sydney Child Survivors of the Holocaust and aims to continue her research in the field of Holocaust studies at the doctoral level.

Morris S. Ochert, OAM, ASTC, (MechEng), MIE Aust, CP Eng., Queensland correspondent for the AJHS, researcher and author of many articles on Australian Jewish history, specialising in Queensland topics, a retired engineer and honorary life member of the Institution of Engineers of Australia. He is an honorary life member of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.

William D Rubinstein, MA, PhD, FAHA, FASSA, FRHistS, is professor of modern history at the University of Wales-Aberystwyth. Until 1995 he was professor of social and economic history at Deakin University in Geelong, and from 1988-95 was editor of the issues of this Journal produced in Melbourne.

Suzanne D. Rutland, MA (Hons) PhD, Dip Ed, is chair of the Department of Semitic Studies, University of Sydney, president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Inc, the Australian Association of Jewish Studies, and Sydney editor of this Journal since 1991.

Judith Shapira, BA, Dip Ed., English/History teacher, who has been most involved over the last few years in Holocaust education, and in that capacity has read a lot of survivor stories. She was also very involved in the Anti-Defamation Unit, B'nai B'rith, New South Wales, of which she is past president, and especially the Courage to Care Exhibitions. She is a vice-president of the AJHS Society.

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