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THE FALL AND RISE OF THE BROTHERS SOLOMON

by

E.S. RICHARDS, B.A., Ph.D.†

(Read before the Society on 11.6.74).

The two brothers, Vaiben and Emanuel Solomon, did not have far to fall in the world of proletarian Jewry in England in the hard years that followed the Napoleonic Wars. They were of the lowest stratum of London life, and in 1817 they were despatched as convicts to Van Diemen's Land for a term of seven years. From these unpropitious beginnings the rise of the Solomons was impressive: by the mid-century they had entered the ranks of respectable society and had been accepted as social leaders in Jewish, civic and business affairs. Their success was as much a tribute to their individual tenacity and energetic acquisitiveness as to the upward mobility of Jews in the colonial society of Sydney and Adelaide in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Solomon story was a minor saga in Australian-Jewish history, a part of the establishment of the Jewish community in the Antipodes. But it was also part of the more general Australian experience, the making of colonial society. For instance, the economic activities of the Solomon brothers can tell historians a great deal about the operations of business in the embryo economy, especially of South Australia in the 1840s. The manner of their assimilation, and the avenues open to their enterprise, can say much of the nature of colonial society itself. Perhaps the most interesting, and ultimately unanswerable, question, is how much of the success of the Solomons was contingent on their Jewishness, and how much on the characteristics of the society within which they pursued their activities.

† Senior Lecturer in Economic History, The Flinders University of South Australia. This Paper was read at a meeting of the Society in Sydney on 16th December, 1974. The author, who was then abroad, wishes to thank Mr Forbes for delivering the Paper for him. He particularly wishes to thank Mrs Sadie Pritchard, who looks after the archives of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, for much help with family details of the Solomon family. I have received much assistance also from Mrs Joan Hancock of Flinders University. The research for this paper is related to work on the history of the South Australian Economy which is being supported by the Australian Research Grants Committee.

The colourful lives of the Solomons were set in the mould of Horatio Alger and Samuel Smiles – a dedication to religion and commercial instincts which, in the colonial capitalist world, yielded its due success to enterprise. Unfortunately there are many gaps in the evidence about the careers of the Solomons: convicts and struggling merchants do not normally leave behind much trace of their thoughts and actions. But there exist many fragments which may be pieced together in the hope that further material will eventually come to light.

The Solomon brothers were Londoners, almost certainly from the East End. They were born at the turn of the century: Emanuel in 1800, and Vaiben probably a year earlier. At that time there were about 20,000 Jews in England of whom about three-quarters lived in London and (apart from the distinctively rich Jewish elite), these Jews formed a lowly underprivileged echelon of London life: impoverished, persecuted to a degree, and performing some of the least rewarding employment in the city. It was only in the following decades that they shifted upwards, their former position being taken over by another impoverished and disadvantaged immigrant minority, the Irish.

It was from this stratum that the Solomons grew up. Their father was Samuel Moss Solomon, born in London, who married Elizabeth (Betsy) Moses in 1796.¹ He was known as "Moshe the Pencil Maker", and his two sons were later described as 'Pencil Makers and Labourers'. These facts set the Solomons in the context of London Jewry. Pencil-making appears to have been one of a small number of trades which were dominated by Jews; cigars and sealing wax were similar specialities.² In 1849 Henry Mayhew, the man who recorded vivid scenes of Jewish life in London, recounted the memories of a commercial traveller relating to an earlier period in the century: "he could never leave town by any 'mail' or 'stage', without being besieged by a small colony of Jew boys, who most pertinaciously offered him oranges, lemons, sponges, combs, pocket-books, pencils, sealing wax, paper, many-bladed pen-knives, razors, pocket-mirrors and shaving-boxes – as if a man could not possibly quit the metropolis without requiring a stock of such commodities. In the whole of these trades unless in some degree in sponges and black lead pencils, the Jew is now out numbered or displaced."³ By 1850 the Jews had moved away from many of these trades.

At the beginning of the century – in the childhood of the Solomon brothers – the circumstances of the London Jews were a good deal harsher. While some Jews fared well as importers and exporters, many more were occupied in collecting and vending second-hand clothes. It was also the line of subsistence into which the small-time Jewish tradesman would sink during times of slack business. As Mayhew reported "The itinerant Jew clothes man . . . was generally the son of a former old clothes man, but some were cigar-makers, or pencil-makers, taking to the clothes business when those trades were slack . . . If the

parents of the Jew boy are poor, and the boy a sharp lad, he generally commences business at ten years of age".⁴ Pencil-makers were most likely to have been reduced to hawking old clothes in the terrible days after Waterloo when the British economy underwent severe fluctuation. At this time also Jews were travelling considerable distances from London in search of trade, to other seaports where the nuclei of provincial Jewish communities were being formed. Some Jewish street-traders travelled the entire length of England in this fashion as part of that "impoverished and peddling proletariat"⁵ of Jews at large.

These were probably the circumstances of Emanuel and Vaiben Solomon in 1817. Two Jewish youths, sons of a London pencil-maker, were in the north of England, in Durham, where they fell foul of the law. Itinerant Jews had a reputation for petty crime at that time,⁶ and the law was hardly biased on their side. We are told that poverty encouraged them into crime and that in 1766 the officials of the Great Synagogue had co-operated with magistrates to suppress the rising traffic in stolen goods.⁷ The social problem was compounded by popular prejudice against the Jews. As late as 1839 W.D. Miles reported the gross discrimination of the law: "juries are so delicate with regard to convicting a receiver of stolen property; there is great difficulty in obtaining a verdict, because a host of neighbours, out of kindness, came forward to give testimonials as to character, etc; the man escapes, unless he happens to be a Jew, then he is fully suspected and convicted as a matter of course".⁸

There was no escape for the Solomon brothers. In the summer of 1817 they were in County Durham and had the misfortune of being charged by a farmer with stealing clothes. They were tried at the Durham Assizes and the proceedings were reported laconically in the *Durham County Advertiser*:

"Emanuel Solomon, aged 16, and Vaiben Solomon, aged 15, late of the parish of Heighington, labourers, charged by Thomas Prest, of the parish of Heighington, farmer, with feloniously stealing sundry articles of wearing apparel, the property of the said Thomas Prest. Guilty."⁹

The description of the brothers is slightly mysterious. Vaiben is described as the elder brother in other documents. Being described as 'Heighington labourers' may suggest that they were working as migrant agricultural workers who had travelled north for the harvest. They were sentenced to seven years transportation.

It was several months before the brothers were shipped off to the other side of the world. Convicts had one advantage over most of the working classes: they were not lost to posterity. They passed through the hands of many different clerks, and the bare details of their existence were recorded. The brothers travelled on the *Lady Castlereagh* and its indent provides these details:

Emanuel Solomon: Durham Assizes, Court of Pleas Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery (where convicted); 4th August 1817 (when convicted); 7 years (term); London (native place); pencil maker (calling); 17 years; 5' 4½"; dark complexion; black hair; dark eyes.

Vaiben Solomon: Durham Assizes, Court of Pleas Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery (where convicted); 7 years (term); London (native place); pencil maker (calling); 16 years; 5' 2½"; dark complexion, black hair; dark eyes.¹⁰

The *Lady Castlereagh* sailed from England on 22nd December 1818. The Solomons were fortunate in several respects. The *Lady Castlereagh* was the first convict vessel to be fitted out in a newly improved manner designed to "segregate juvenile from more hardened offenders and at the same time to permit a freer circulation of air." It was better lit and ventilated and altogether a substantial improvement on earlier ships. The passage was surprisingly short — a mere 171 days to Sydney. Much more extraordinary was the fact that there were no deaths among the convict passengers: the 300 male convicts arrived without loss of life on the 842 ton vessel, the largest of the convict fleet. Having landed its penal cargo at Port Jackson on 30th April, 1818 the *Lady Castlereagh* was chartered by Governor Macquarie to carry troops to India and it was there that she was wrecked in 1819.¹¹ The Solomons were relatively lucky to get to Australia. They were, of course, not the only Jewish convicts in Australia. Joseph and Rachel Aarons of London had been transported for life in 1821 for stealing woollen cloth.¹² Abraham Polack was given seven years for stealing a watch.¹³ But the most remarkable similarity was with another set of Solomon brothers, Judah and Joseph, who were sentenced at the Kent Assizes in 1819. As emancipists they became prominent Tasmanian businessmen of great respectability as well as leaders of the Hobart Jewish community.¹⁴ The other Solomon brothers followed a somewhat similar route.

There is small trace of the seven convict years of the Solomon brothers — there is, indeed, nothing apart from the grim record of punishment received by Emanuel which suggests that he was the more spirited, if not truculent, of the two.^{14a} The treatment of convicts was not generally considered as an exercise in rehabilitation. Governor Macquarie himself had complained of the administration of the convict population: "I have no doubt that many convicts who ought to have been rendered useful and good men had they been treated with humane and reasonable control, have been sunk into despondency by unfeeling treatment, and that many . . . driven to acts of violence by harsh usage . . . have betaken themselves to the Woods, where they can only subsist by Plunder."¹⁵

Emanuel Solomon was punished for neglect of duty for which he was sentenced to four days of special work. In January 1820 his crime

was more serious — he had absconded from George Town and taken to the bush. On re-capture he received fifty lashes. Three months later his neglect of duty brought him another twenty-five lashes, and then in October 1820 he was punished for possessing an iron pick, crown property, for which he suffered fifty lashes. His last recorded crime was an echo of his first collision with the law. In March 1821 he was convicted for stealing wearing apparel for which piece of recidivism he was transferred to Newcastle for three years.¹⁶ The official indent noted that he had been sent to Newcastle “for three years in irons for a Robbery”.¹⁷

After seven years the Solomons received their freedom. *The Sydney Gazette* of 12th August 1824 records the certificate of freedom of Vaiben Solomon and there is official record of Emanuel’s certificate of freedom. The details of the latter indicate that his growth had not been entirely stunted — he had grown 1½ inches in seven years.¹⁸

The nadir of the Solomon story was obviously the time that Emanuel spent in chains in Newcastle. From emancipation the brothers appear to have made rapid progress until they became well known traders in Sydney. Most convicts, wrote the historian George Rude, ‘melt into the crowd after the first few years from their arrival and tend to disappear from view.’¹⁹ The exceptions were the successful emancipists of whom there were a significant group of well known Jews, for example Solomon Levey, Abraham Elias, James Simmons, Samuel Lyons and Abraham Polack.²⁰ The Solomon brothers followed very closely the pattern of Polack — the immediate entry into the general merchant business of Sydney and into the embryo network of Jewish business connections, and then diversifying his interests and widening his business horizons.²¹ Jewish emancipists seem to have had a particular propensity for trade, rather than enterprise in agriculture or pastoralism, and this may have reflected the traditional *forte* of the background of London Jewry.

More problematical is the manner in which the emancipists — Jews and others — were able to raise capital and set up in business. Some convicts brought out capital with them while others, like Joseph Aarons Senior, appear to have accumulated funds while still serving their sentences.²² Neither of these conditions appear to have applied to the Solomon brothers who probably built up their working capital by a process of gradual accretion. Such emancipists, we are told, “accumulated capital painfully by barter, supplying ships and speculating with the products of local industry. They made every penny work, and the industrious, independent and reformed emancipist was a source of patronising pride to every free colonist”. Such enterprising emancipists eventually merged “imperceptibly into the general commercial class when their accumulated assets permitted them to launch into independent speculations”.²³

*EMANUEL SOLOMON*

Small-time trading was probably the start made by the Solomon brothers in Sydney, either separately or in partnership. The evidence for these early years is very sparse, but Vaiben Solomon was already sufficiently established by July 1826 to think in terms of employing labour. In fact he applied to the local authorities to have the convict, David Myers, assigned to him. Vaiben's petition read thus: "That Petitioner has a relative David Myers a Prisoner per Ship *Almorah* in the year 1817 for the Term of Fourteen Years who is a Watchmaker by Trade is 36 years of age, and has lately arrived from Port Macquarie where he has been employed as a Constable from the period of his landing there. That Petitioner humbly begs to state that the said David Myers would be of great Service to Petitioner in Carrying on his business in King Street, Sydney." The colonial authorities commented that Solomon had met Myers at Port Macquarie and that it was not usual for a convict to be assigned to a relative, but it is not known whether Solomon's petition was rejected.²⁴ It is known that Myers received his ticket of leave on the first day of 1829 "for having aided and assisted his Master in his defence against Bushrangers."²⁵ On at least four other occasions Vaiben Solomon applied for assigned convicts — in 1829 he was successful but in June and July 1832 his applications for 2 men were both refused. In 1833 he applied for 5 assignees and received one.²⁶ All this does suggest the expanding nature of the Solomons' enterprises.

Until 1829 the brothers appear to have operated separately in Sydney trade. In October 1827 Emanuel was advertising the auction of all his stock,²⁷ and in 1828 Vaiben was also auctioning property in Sydney. Interestingly he was also offering to let premises at 74 George Street which included a stable, chaise house and store²⁸ — all of which suggests that he was already a man of considerable capital.

The first reference to the partnership of the two brothers — V. and E. Solomon — came in 1829 when they were recorded as conducting an auctioneering business at the 74 George Street address in Sydney.²⁹ For more than a decade this partnership was to be a familiar name in Sydney business circles. It was primarily a speculative enterprise involving the purchase of miscellaneous items in the hope of reselling by auction or by retail at a higher price. It required a good eye for market prospects and good business connections, and the nerve to take calculated risks. In 1830 the brothers advertised a stock of china for sale,³⁰ in 1831 they were dealing in large quantities of clothing; at another time it was wine and all manner of imported goods.³¹ They dealt in bags and bagging, pease, oatmeal, porter, Irish mess pork, sherry and madeira and salt fish. Emanuel Solomon may have been speculating in the coastal trade at this stage, sometimes journeying to Launceston for business.³² He saw to it that he was publicly noticed as contributing to the Halloran and Patriotic Funds.³³ Respectability and business thrived on each other. Vaiben Solomon's capital was obviously

growing at a healthy rate in these years: in 1831 he bought part of the Jamieson subdivision and in 1833 he was granted a liquor licence presumably to complement the auctioneering business. In early 1835 Emanuel Solomon bought the Dolphin Inn.³⁴

Some emancipists, as they moved successfully through ordinary business circles, found it difficult to retain their specifically Jewish identity.³⁵ Various circumstances operated in the reverse direction for the Solomon brothers in their Sydney period. Despite marriage outside their religion, parenthood helped to consolidate the nexus with the Jewish community. Both brothers made arrangements for their children to be initiated in the Jewish Faith.³⁶

The first recorded assignment of the Reverend Solomon Phillips in Sydney was to officiate in the naming of the daughter of Vaiben Solomon in 1834.³⁷ The children took distinctively Jewish names.³⁸ Both brothers were prominent also in founding the Jewish community in Sydney, notably in Vaiben's contribution on the Building Committee for the construction of a Synagogue in the city, a role which Emanuel performed with at least equal vigour in Adelaide some years later.

Just as significant in sustaining the Jewish identity in Sydney was the transfusion achieved by way of further immigration. It is clear that a process of chain migration was operating by which relatives followed out children to reinforce the family vitality. The Solomons were probably typical in this respect. The elder Solomon, 'Moshe the Pencil Maker', arrived in Sydney with his daughters, Hannah and Elizabeth, in April 1833. Another daughter Esther arrived in Hobart in January the same year. Yet another daughter Sarah arrived in December 1839. Elizabeth Solomon married Michael Cashmore, first Mayor of Melbourne. Another son, Isaac, arrived in May 1838 and married the daughter of his half brother four years later.³⁹ The labyrinthine interconnections of this proliferating family were accommodated within the consolidating community of colonial Jewry in the 1830s. They may also have helped finance some of the business ventures of the Solomon brothers.

In the mid-1830s the Solomon brothers were beginning to cast their aspirations towards new horizons. Neither seems to have been fully satisfied with their auctioneering business and each hoped for better things. In January 1835 Emanuel Solomon informed the world that he was about to leave the colony and that his entire stock in trade and household furniture was for sale.⁴⁰ He had already sold his premises in George Street, Sydney, to another emancipist, Abraham Polack.⁴¹ Nevertheless it seems likely that the announcement of Emanuel Solomon's departure was premature for he continued to trade in Sydney for another three years. In December 1835 he advertised regularly as a trader, offering goods at "25 per cent cheaper than at any other House in Sydney . . . Shopkeepers supplied with punctuality and despatch".⁴² He was also dealing in sperm oil at that time.⁴³

Vaiben Solomon was also in an unsettled state of mind even though the fraternal partnership continued to operate. In May 1836 he announced his retirement from business and the sale of his stock-in-trade and two months later he advertised himself as 'Tailor and Draper' in these terms:

"In returning thanks to his Friends and the Public for the liberal patronage he has received since his commencement in the above business, begs to inform them, that having engaged with a Person whose abilities as a Cutter are well known in Sydney, and having made arrangements in England for a constant supply of Cloths, Kerseymeres, Tailor's Trimmings"

he would be well placed to serve the public. He also advertised his need for tailors who were offered constant employment at good wages.⁴⁴ In September of that year he purchased 13 acres of land at Brighton for £144.⁴⁵

The most eligible explanation for these developments is that Emanuel Solomon was seeking to switch his enterprise to a new colony where he could get a head start as a pioneer trader with good connections in Sydney and Hobart. His interest in sperm oil is another clue to his thinking in these years. It is very likely that he was watching developments regarding the proposed colony of South Australia with a particularly keen eye. The stop-go-stop-go plans for the new colony marked its career in London in the mid 1830s, and Emanuel Solomon's premature announcement of departure from Sydney in 1835 is probably related to the extreme variability of the plans for the colonisation of South Australia. The main evidence is the document by which J.B. Strangways transferred his interest in a grant of land in South Australia to Emanuel Solomon, Mathew Smith (a lawyer) and John Bentham Neales, apparently in December 1835 – that is a full year before the proclamation of the colony of South Australia.⁴⁶

Emanuel Solomon did not venture to Adelaide until 1838. In October of the previous year he again announced his retirement from the Sydney retail trade and the sale of his stock-in-trade.⁴⁷ In August 1837 the premises of V. and E. Solomon at 74 George Street were sold to Abraham Polack.⁴⁸ But the partnership continued to exist and to trade and it is probable that the brothers had agreed to co-operate in promoting the coastal trade between Sydney and Adelaide. Vaiben was set to maintain the Sydney end of the trade. In 1839 he was advertising for six stone-masons and later for a storeman who could keep accounts and whose "character must bear strictest examination."⁴⁹ His social position may be gauged by his need, in 1840, for a man and wife to act as his house servants.⁵⁰ The brothers were already engaged in shipping enterprise, acting as agents for the brig 'Nereus' in 1838,⁵¹ but then selling the vessel to Polack in the following year.⁵²

Emanuel Solomon left Sydney for South Australia aboard the 'Lady

Wellington' 29th June 1838 having previously visited Launceston. Vaiben probably joined him briefly in 1839 then returned to Sydney to take control of the eastern half of the partnership.⁵³

South Australia gave no welcome to convicts, little to probationers, and was not very happy about emancipists. Established on the finest available principles of colonisation, South Australia tried to isolate itself from the taint of convictism, to keep its pristine innocence. Some regarded the colony as "a free and uncontaminated offset of England", not on any account "a receptacle of the mother country's damaged goods" infected with the "moral malaria of half-pardoned convicts". Nevertheless ex-convicts, emancipists and probationers could not be legally excluded from the new colony, whatever the ambivalence of its citizenry. In 1837 200 arrived from Van Diemen's Land.⁵⁴ Emanuel Solomon was one of several who became highly respected pioneers of the colony — but there is no further reference to his convict experience in the rest of his life, or indeed, in any of the published celebrations of his career.

The new colony was much more hospitable to Jews. After all Jacob Montefiore was one of the founding fathers and the philosophy of colonisation raised to a principle the right of religious dissent. The general atmosphere was extremely progressive for its times, and Jews were vested with full civil and political rights and opportunities from the start — and in advance of the mother country and the other colonies.⁵⁵ These circumstances enhanced the degree of vertical mobility for Jews in society and provided Emanuel Solomon and his burgeoning family an opportunity of which they took great advantage.

Within a month of his arrival in Adelaide, Emanuel Solomon was advertising his enterprise as a merchant and auctioneer on behalf of V. and E. Solomon. In September 1838 he was already able to offer small quantities of sperm oil for sale at his store at Sydney House, Gilles Arcade.⁵⁶ Solomon had arrived in Adelaide at a time when economic activity was building up into a boom which developed until its ultimate and damaging collapse in 1841. The basis of his own activities was the coastal trade with Sydney together with property development in the city of Adelaide. He was clearly a man of substantial capital by this time. In 1840 V. and E. Solomon sold the brig 'David' for £800;⁵⁷ Emanuel Solomon owned property in Adelaide, built a theatre at great expense, and with Vaiben owned the brig 'Dorset' which became the basis of their partnership and a well-known carrier between Adelaide and Sydney. The 'Dorset' was a vessel of 82 tons which sometimes undertook the return journey in less than 30 days. The essence of its trade was speculation in miscellaneous commodities between the two markets. It required fine co-operation between the two brothers, and a clear appraisal of market prospects.

Pursuing his own interest, buying in the cheapest market and selling

in the dearest, Emanuel Solomon also performed a vital service to the embryo economy of South Australia. He sought export markets for local products and searched for opportunities to fill scarcities in the supply of the local market. It is good fortune that his business letter book for the years 1840 to 1846 has survived.⁵⁸ This charts the relationship of the Solomon brothers — but it also charts the development of the South Australian economy in these critical years. As a vigorous merchant Emanuel Solomon had his finger on the pulse of economic activity in the colony and his letters are of considerable historical interest. This is not the occasion to summarise in detail the letter book — except to provide a rough outline of his activities.⁵⁹ More particularly the letters offer insight into the characters of the Solomon brothers, and the deterioration in their relationship in these years.

The most important circumstance of the period for the partnership of the Solomon brothers was the severe depression and crisis that crippled South Australia in 1841 and which persisted for several years. Depression and the contraction of business generated extreme competition among merchants; it created liquidity difficulties which weeded out the weaker brethren, and a prolonged fight for survival. Emanuel Solomon weathered the storm with the greatest difficulty — but fared better than most. Solomon had committed his financial resources very heavily in the boom that preceded the fall. He had bought a great deal of property in Adelaide — notably in the construction of the first theatre in the colony — the Queen's Theatre in Gilles Arcade. He had the extreme ill-fortune to have been caught in the throes of completing the construction of this major enterprise when the collapse of the local economy occurred. Solomon found himself caught with large unrealizable assets as the sources of credit dried up all around him. His main line of business came to rest on the trade of the 'Dorset'.

In November 1840 Emanuel Solomon complained to his brother that "The Markets are very dull" and that the opportunities for trade were dwindling. But he continued to order materials for the completion of the theatre. His actors were causing trouble and he told Vaiben in Sydney that "the fellows calling themselves actors here are conspiring in a similar manner against me that they did against Wyatt on the opening of his new house. I should therefore like you to engage two good actors and two actresses".⁶⁰

The depression worsened and the theatre did not pay — it was "a losing game as yet" reported Emanuel in March 1841. He hoped to weather out a few months until improved conditions returned.⁶¹ Family problems developed. Moss Solomon had been involved in the operations of the theatre but in August 1841 the theatre was closed: it had become a white elephant. Emanuel Solomon was critical of Moss who, he said, lacked character and vigour, and "has not nerve enough to seek a livelihood away from his own home" — and Moss departed for

Sydney. Emanuel's report threw light on his own personality – "my hasty and loud manner of speaking, he misconstrued, and considered by doing so – (to use his own words) that I treated him like a servant."⁶² There was a truculent, even combative side to Emanuel's character which was increasingly exposed in his letters to Vaiben.

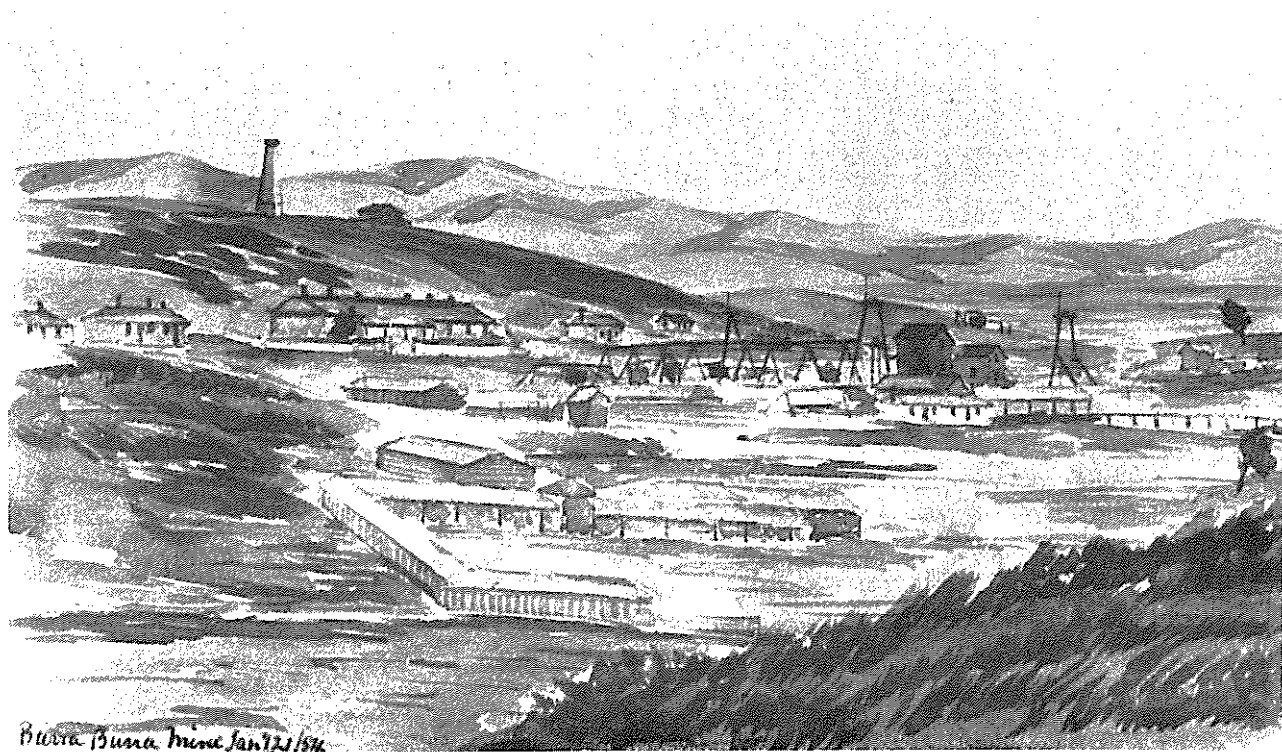
The theatre was yielding only £6 a week in rent; while the competition for the Sydney trade was severe, especially from the rival brig, the 'Emma', which Solomon hoped to drive off the trade. He believed that some business was lost on account of his religion: "I can plainly see there is a strong feeling of prejudice against a Jew".⁶³ Neither religious nor fraternal feelings tempered Emanuel's criticisms of Vaiben who repeatedly failed to meet his brother's expectations. In July 1842 Emanuel wrote "It is no use my staying here wasting my time and money if you do not send me what I want. There is nothing to be done except at times when there happens to be a scarcity, and then you invariably disappoint me."⁶⁴ A fortnight later it was much the same "in this as in all my suggestions to you you have acted entirely opposite" – thereby bringing the partnership close to bankruptcy like so many other Adelaide merchants. Emanuel and Vaiben had bought land worth £2,700 on which they had constructed buildings at a cost of £14,000 – but "there is no selling or letting them at present". If placed on the market "they would be sold at a Ruinous Sacrifice". Therefore Emanuel's efforts were directed to avoiding all debts and living as frugally as he could until conditions brightened. Vaiben's alleged inefficiency in Sydney was a danger to their enterprise and was compounded by his failure to report family matters. Emanuel complained bitterly in September 1842: "I feel much surprise that strangers here should know what is going on in our family better than myself. I understand that Judah and Isaac are both married yet I have never received any notice at all of it".⁶⁵

Solomon was forced to close the theatre and convert part of it into a family hotel and tavern in 1842. His good friend and theatre manager, John Lazar, returned to Sydney with the faint prospect of a renewal of the Adelaide enterprise in the future (which indeed occurred with great personal success for Lazar several years later). Emanuel Solomon continued his trading concern often helped by his connections with other Jews and masons. Ironically he was involved in the shipment of convicts from Adelaide to Van Diemen's Land, a trade which provided supplementary income for the 'Dorset'. By chance there exists a dramatic description of one such voyage by a ship's surgeon travelling to Sydney by the 'Dorset' in 1841. He paid £20 for his passage in the company of 12 cabin passengers, 4 steerage and 4 prisoners. There was only one basin between six of them, "each of them taking their turn to clean himself". He recounted one episode: "about midnight one of the prisoners, Wilson, convicted for life for shooting at a policeman was

discovered standing at the bows having cut his iron off stripped and in the act of jumping overboard. he was brought down again and secured by ropes to the foremast but in a short time after got loose and to the astonishment of Ashton who went to look after him found him lying comfortably in his bed; he was allowed to remain but strict watch kept over him".⁶⁶

In the course of his life Emanuel Solomon was several times enmeshed in public disputes, often marked by considerable rancour. One occurred in 1843 which related to Isaac Nonmus, a corn dealer and auctioneer of Adelaide, who had fled the town to avoid a number of debts. One irate creditor wrote an anonymous letter to the *Examiner* newspaper which accused Emanuel Solomon of aiding and abetting Nonmus in his escape. The letter was headed 'Nonmus the Bolter' and described him as a late Snob, Methodist, Oddfellow, insolvent and uncertificated bankrupt. More pointedly the letter asserted that Nonmus was a "converted Israelite" who had lived with Solomon for a week before decamping. In order to trick the sheriff he had put his name on the passenger list of the vessel 'Vixen', but secretly arranged to leave for Sydney by Solomon's 'Dorset'. He was greatly in debt particularly to customers on whose account he sold goods.⁶⁷ In response to this attack on his public reputation Solomon rose to a full height of indignation and penned a characteristically vigorous rebuttal which was published in the *Southern Australian*, 6th June 1843. He denied that any passenger had been received on board the 'Dorset' unless cleared by the Customs House. "The coarse scurrility and profanity of the article prove pretty clearly from whose pen it comes; the attempted wit of making Nonmus a 'converted Israelite' and the application of texts of the Christian Scriptures may be very pious in a Plymouth Brother but a Jew has too much reverence for his own Scriptures to make them either a Jest Book or a Dictionary of Quotations". Nonmus did not live with Solomon, he rented a house from him; he travelled not by the 'Dorset' but by the 'Vixen'. Solomon obviously knew the identity of his adversary and offered that person the following thought: "I am not in the habit of allowing my name to be used by every scribbler with impunity, and I advise this writer if he wishes to sleep in a whole skin to avoid the practise [sic] in future". In support of Solomon came notice of the resignation of the editor of the *Examiner* on the grounds that he had expressly opposed the publication of the allegations against Solomon.⁶⁸

In 1843 conditions appear to have been worse than ever in Adelaide. Part of the Queen's Theatre was let to the government at a small rent, to be used as a Supreme Court with, it is probable, a tacit arrangement that no other premises would be given a theatrical licence in the meantime. Relations in the firm of V. and E. Solomon went from bad to worse and in early 1844 Emanuel travelled to Sydney to resolve the problems. His visit culminated in the dissolution of the partnership in



BURRA BURRA MINE, From a Watercolour (1854) in William Leigh's Album of Coloured Sketches. (By Courtesy of Mitchell Library, Sydney)

April 1844, "by mutual consent".⁶⁹ The extent of the rift in relations was evident twelve months earlier when Emanuel told Vaiben that it was "very evident that I have lost your confidence, that you think more of what other persons say to you of me, than of what I say myself and I guess who that is. Michael Joshua [another prominent Adelaide Jew], a man that I neither want to hear from or see for he has behaved to me in the most villainous manner that a man could possibly have done."⁷⁰ Although some trade with Vaiben continued, the agency in Sydney was taken over by John Lazar. Meanwhile Emanuel, aided by improving general conditions, was widening his trading horizons. The network of Jewish business connections was undoubtedly helpful in this regard — thus, for instance, Solomon was able to write to David Moses in Hobart to suggest a commercial venture.⁷¹ By this time Emanuel Solomon was sole owner of the 'Dorset' and possessed property in Adelaide with an annual rent of £800.⁷² He also appears to have owned the schooner, the 'Sans Pareil'. He was, clearly, a substantial mercantile capitalist, and had successfully weathered the depression.

In 1845 Emanuel Solomon was devoting less time to the inter-colonial trade in order to concentrate more on his auctioneering and property enterprises. He was increasingly associated with Judah Moss Solomon, his nephew, who had been developing his own interests in Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide through the previous five years. Vaiben Solomon gradually slipped from the scene, and in October 1845 there were reports that he was to embark on a new speculation in New Zealand. Emanuel's confidence burgeoned and he looked forward to the re-opening of his theatre, and was exultant in the prospects revealed by the discovery of copper at Burra in 1845. At one stage he was offering the 'Dorset' for sale, at another hoping to open a direct trade with England.⁷³ However it was not until 1848 that he sold the 'Dorset', after which he appears to have concentrated on his auctioneering business in Adelaide — in partnership with his ambitious nephew, Judah Moss Solomon. When the 'Dorset' was put up for auction in February 1848 it was described as "The favourite, fast-sailing brig . . . 82 tons register, well known as a regular trader between South Australia and Sydney . . . well known at both of the above ports as a constant and regular trader, having established her reputation as a real clipper by beating every other vessel engaged on the line between South Australia and Sydney . . . The vessel has and is still netting from £800 to £1000 per annum." Solomon gave as his reason for the sale his intention to start in the Auction and Commission business, "and he has pledged himself to his constituents to discontinue importing". It was a mark of his prosperity that he was able to offer any potential purchaser of the 'Dorset' five year's credit, at ten percent interest "secured upon good landed property".⁷⁴

When Jacob Montefiore visited South Australia in June 1843 he addressed the colonists on the state of the province. He noted that

there were many natural advantages including the splendid climate, a fine soil, "and numerous mines of copper, lead and other metals, which I sincerely wish will prove mines of wealth to you all". But, he added, the colonists had been taught a severe lesson in the depression, and must now proceed slowly and surely.⁷⁵ In fact the mines proved wealthier than anyone had imagined and progress was fast and unplanned. Emanuel Solomon was directly involved in the copper boom which surrounded the name of Burra in 1845. True to his speculative nature Solomon was one of the original shareholders in the South Australian Mining Association which was floated in April 1845 – an enterprise which sought to purchase mineral rights in areas likely to yield copper. As public lands came up for auction the Association made examinations for the prospect of minerals and Solomon was involved in the direct investigation of sites. In this manner the SAMA was instrumental in raising the level of public consciousness of the importance of mineral prospecting, and it was partly in response to their publicity that the territory 90-100 miles north of Adelaide was explored. Sadly, although the Association investigated several possibilities, they missed the sensational discovery at Burra of the 'Monster Lode'. However the Association was asked for financial assistance by the lucky promoters at Burra, and as a consequence Solomon and two other directors of the SAMA were elected to the newly constituted Board. Solomon apparently held a substantial number of the scrip – directors could hold seats only if they possessed more than 40 scrip (at £5 each). Solomon and the SAMA were lucky to become involved in the 'Snobs' party which drew the bonanza section at Burra, known as the 'Northern Lode'. Between 1847 and 1877 the Company paid out total dividends of £782,000 on the original capital of £12,320.

Solomon was very excited by these events and his letters exult in the prospects as they were revealed in the middle months of 1845. The shares rose marvellously and he had thoughts of running a direct copper export shipping service to England. In January 1846 he wrote "With regard to Mining Shares in the Burra Burra mine I can assure you there are none to be got, the present price offered is 500 percent on the original cost and no sellers at that, it is decidedly one of the best specs I have heard of for a long time."⁷⁶ It was at this point that Solomon acted in a very remarkable fashion and appears to have sold out his interest in the great copper company. Before Christmas 1845, only four months after his election to the Board, he resigned his directorship. The reason he gave was the appointment of another director, Samuel Stocks, Jr, to a paid position, that of resident Director-Supervisor at the Mine.⁷⁷ Solomon believed that this move created a conflict – that a paid official of the Company was answerable to the Board and should be also a member of that Board. Standing on this high principle was probably an expensive gesture for Solomon. The first detailed list of

shareholders of the Company, in 1847, does not include his name. Undoubtedly he would have made a very handsome profit on the sale of his shares — a £5 share had risen to over £150 within a few months. But, of course, the future profits were a consideration forgone by Solomon in his resignation.⁷⁸

There was once a theory that Jews were, in some intrinsic sense, favoured by nature and training for the field of commercial speculation. The great economist, Alfred Marshall, wrote "The strong brains of the Jews fitted them for many tasks; they took good part in several industries and in colonization. No other race has maintained vigour of intellect and character during so many centuries."⁷⁹ Similar theories continue to have currency today.⁸⁰ The case of Emanuel Solomon cannot be regarded as confirmation or contradiction. His personal tenacity and ambition contrasted with others in the same family. His convict past probably compounded his 'need for achievement'. The channelling of his energies into commerce represented an extension of the propensities of London Jewry. Australian colonial society offered substantial rewards to mercantile enterprise. Successful in Adelaide, Emanuel Solomon seems increasingly to have devoted his energies to building a position of respect in local society, not least in the establishment of local Jewry as a community. By the late 1840s the career of Emanuel Solomon had reached a plateau: he had achieved very substantial success in business and he had become a well known figure in the commercial world.⁸¹ His aspirations turned toward social and civic goals, to complement his achievement in business.

Vaiben Solomon drifted apart from his brother and his career after 1843 is far less generously documented. Nothing is known of his plans for a New Zealand venture nor of his business interests. His children appear to have grown up in Sydney and he died at Liverpool N.S.W. of influenza, 20th June, 1860.^{81a} His death certificate recorded that he had been born in London and had arrived forty years previously. He was described as "Gentleman".

It would have been a great personal satisfaction to Emanuel Solomon to have read the encomium printed in the *South Australian Register* in March 1843. It read:

"Perhaps to no one private individual is South Australia so much indebted as to Mr Emanuel Solomon. He has spent upward of £20,000 amongst us, and, on many occasions which we could name, he has promoted the interests of the Colony to the injury of his private purse. It is to him that we are indebted for the establishment of a regular communication with the sister-colony (maintained for many months at a great sacrifice), and that too, at a time when, without such intercourse, we should have stood in an unenviably isolated situation. He has been the patron of all our literary and philanthropic institutions, in public and private charities are

notorious [sic]; and, if he has not built us a synagogue, he has built us a theatre, which is always readily and gratuitously offered for our public meetings and our Mechanics' Institute".⁸²

The creation of a Synagogue was, of course, at the forefront of Solomon's public thinking. His role in these events has already been celebrated in this Journal,⁸³ and Munz properly described him as the "pater familias of the Jewish community" in South Australia. It seems that as early as 1843 he had called a meeting to raise subscriptions for the formation of a Jewish Congregation. It was in 1848 that the first concerted gathering of Jewish members took place, paving the way for the formation of the Congregation. Solomon's Temple Tavern was the meeting place.⁸⁴

Another signal, and unusual, service performed by Solomon to local Jewry was his purchase, in company with Matthew Smith of the original site of Port Pirie, known as Solomontown. This was 85 acres purchased from the government in 1845 for £85. It was divided into blocks and soon after much of it was resold at the Adelaide Auction Mart — at an average price of £10 an acre.⁸⁵ However, in addition to taking the splendid profit from the speculation, Solomon reserved a section of the land at the centre of Solomontown for religious purposes. This was known as the 'Church Circle'. Four years later Solomon was instrumental in forming the Adelaide Hebrew Philanthropic Society which assisted in relieving distressed families. In the 1850s his civic role began to extend more fully beyond the Jewish community.

It was towards the end of his life that Solomon entered formally into the arena of State politics. It may be that he was reluctant to make this move. When South Australia attained responsible government in 1857 a petition of many electors of Adelaide was organised to request Solomon "to allow himself to be nominated for the first election for members of the Legislative Council under the new constitution". The petitioners declared their conviction "from many years knowledge of your integrity and business habits that you are fitted to become a member of such Council", and that "From your long residence in this Colony and practical knowledge of its requirements we are satisfied of your fitness for the position, and trust you will accede to this request and we hereby engage to use our best exertions to secure your Return". Solomon's old friend John Lazar was the returning officer.⁸⁶

It was not until February 1863 that Emanuel Solomon became a member of the South Australian Parliament. He was elected member of the House of Assembly for West Adelaide for the period until the end of 1864. In August 1867 he at last entered the Legislative Council and remained until ill-health persuaded him to resign in 1871. Of this aspect of his life his obituarist wrote "Although Mr Solomon as a politician was quite conservative in his principles, he was by no means

obstructive, but on many occasions advocated important reforms, particularly in the interests of the working classes, with whom he was a decided favourite."⁸⁷

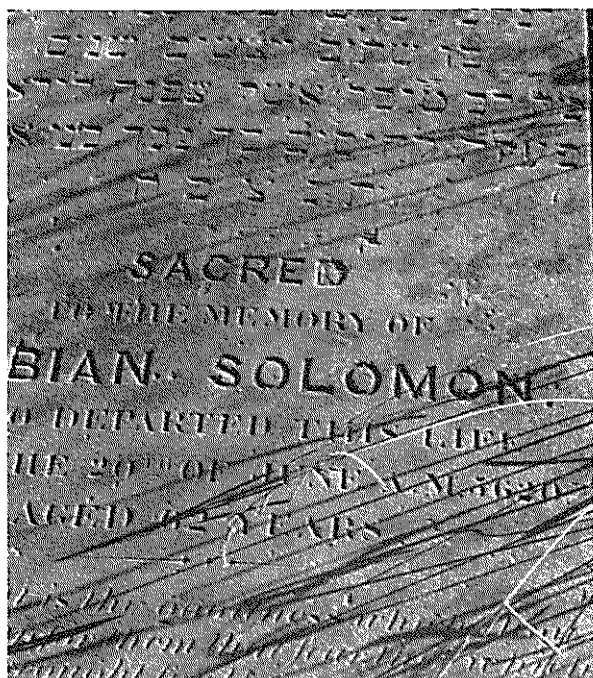
In Parliament Solomon was not a particularly loquacious figure, but his opinions were characteristically forthright: he was not a man to pull his punches. In 1867 he supported the provision to M.P.s of free railway passes: "He considered that every member was bound to sacrifice his time in attending to his Parliamentary duties, but that as he would feel it necessary very frequently to visit and inspect public works, such as railways and the like, he ought to be allowed free passes by railway to enable him to do so. If he sacrificed his time he ought not to be called upon to sacrifice his pocket also."⁸⁸ A year later he dismissed the Northern Territory Act Amendment Bill "as not worth the paper it was written on".⁸⁹ He believed that there had been much waste of money in the north on surveying land which English capital would never take up: "It was easy enough to take a horse to the water, but you could not make him drink – and so it was easy enough to offer land to the English holders, but you could not make them take it."⁹⁰ On another occasion he advocated greater security of tenure and compensation to land-holders in the State, and re-asserted the Wakefieldian principle that the product of land sales should be expended on immigration in order to provide cheaper labour for the farmers.⁹¹ He believed in rigorous economy in government expenditure, in the opportunity for capital and enterprise to seek its own avenues, and in the undiminished principles of free trade. It is unlikely that his opinion ever shifted from the view he expressed in 1842 in the infant days of the colony that "The free and open commerce derived from the facilities of Shipping" constituted "the great bulwark of the world".⁹²

Emanuel Solomon's political career was not so successful as that of his nephews Judah Moss Solomon, and Vaiben Louis Solomon: the latter represented the State in the framing of the Federal Constitution in 1897, and had the curious distinction of being Premier for a week in 1899. Yet of all the Solomons it was Emanuel who had had the furthest to climb in colonial society: from the humiliations of a convict life in Van Diemen's Land he scaled the peaks of Adelaide respectability in the 1860s. His finest hour – indeed his apotheosis in Adelaide society – came in December 1871 when, on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the colony, he gave a Grand Banquet to 520 old colonists in the Town Hall. It was a grandiloquent gesture which celebrated both the colony and the man.

The banquet was a great exercise in nostalgia. Solomon made sure that invitations went to a body of people 'representative of all classes': "the bone and sinew as well as the brain of the infant settlement were thoroughly represented". The evening was successful and somewhat rowdy, and some of the eminent speakers could hardly be heard over

the enthusiastic reminiscences at individual tables. In thanking Solomon for his splendid gesture J. Hart recollected that he had known Solomon in New South Wales and "he remembered his asking the question before he started to come here whether there were any Scotchmen here — because if there were he said it would not be well for him to come". He paid tribute to Solomon's generosity and liberality, "for he believed he had a stone in every church and chapel in the city". J.M. Solomon recited a "colonial poem" in celebration of the occasion. In his own speech Emanuel Solomon recollected the early days of the colony — the depression of the early 1840s, the vicissitudes of the government and the exertions of "the true old yeomanry". He ended his speech perhaps with a personal sense of irony, with an elaborate jest about the days when he transported convicts to Tasmania from Adelaide. He made no allusion to his memories of his own convict days.⁹³

Solomon's health deteriorated at this time. In 1866 he had been run down in a traffic accident and had never fully recovered from his injuries. In 1870 he at last retired from business and took his family to Sydney "and he felt the benefit of his trip". But in 1873 his condition



TOMBSTONE OF VAIBEN SOLOMON, formerly at Raphael Cemetery, Lidcombe.

worsened and he suffered a stroke. His death certificate, dated 3rd October, 1873, notes the cause of death as 'senile decay', and his trade or calling, 'gentleman'.

Emanuel Solomon had remained firmly within the close Jewish community throughout his life, always within an extensive network of relatives and Jewish associates. But he had also moved beyond these circles and his funeral reflected his position as an Adelaide citizen — many of the Jewish congregation attended, but so also did many representing other interest-groups in the state: "many citizens and old colonists of other denominations".⁹⁴

One perplexity remains. The will of Emanuel Solomon — a complicated document with codicil clauses — made adequate provision for his wife and grandchildren. But the total inheritance was sworn as "under £4,500".⁹⁵ On the face of things this is a surprisingly modest sum for a man who had been a successful businessman for almost half a century. Thirty years previously he possessed property in Adelaide alone which was worth at least £20,000. It is difficult to believe that Solomon had become any less careful and acquisitive in the latter part of his life. It may be that his business success diminished in these later years, and he was well known for his donations to charity.⁹⁶

APPENDIX I: THE TRIAL OF THE SOLOMON BROTHERS IN DURHAM, 1817

The following document which records the trial of Emanuel and Vaiben Solomon is from the Public Record Office, London. (Crown Copyright: Durham 16/3)

Wednesday Morning 6th August 1817

Present the Lord Chief Baron

Petty Jury

Thomas Richmond
Robert Harrison
William Russell
Robert Gibson
George Curry
George Burrell

Sworn

William Crozier
Thomas Craddock
Lancelot Craddock
William Crowe
James Wilkinson
Richard Dale

<p>The King against Emanuel Solomon and Vaiben Solomon</p>	<p>The Indictment charges the Prisoners by the Names of Emanuel Solomon late of the Parish of Heighington in the County of Durham Labourer and Vaiben Solomon late of the same Place Labourer for that they on the fifteenth Day of October in the 56th Year of the Reign of King George the third about the Hour of eleven in the forenoon of — the same Day with force and arms at the Parish aforesaid in the County aforesaid the</p>
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Dwelling house of Thomas Prest there situate feloniously did break and enter (no Person in the same Dwelling however then and there being) and one Coat of the Value of ten Shillings, one other Coat of the Value of ten Shillings, one Waistcoat of the Value of five Shillings, one Cloak of the Value of ten Shillings, one Piece of Cloth of the Value of one Shilling and one Pair of Stockings of the Value of six Pence of the Goods and Chattels of the said Thomas Prest in the same Dwelling home then and there being found then and there feloniously did steal take and carry away against the Peace, The Prisoners severally plead Not Guilty and upon their Trial they are both found not Guilty of breaking the Dwelling house but Guilty of stealing the Goods and Chatels in the Indictment mentioned. It is therefore ordered that they be severally transported to Parts — beyond the Seas for the Term of seven Years.

By the Court.—

APPENDIX II

THE AUSTRALIAN ISRAELITE, 5th January, 1872. ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLONY

The 28th December is always a national holiday, as it celebrates the day when South Australia was proclaimed a British province. Thursday was the 35th anniversary of the founding of the colony, and it was of course kept as a special holiday. The most interesting gathering was that which took place in the Town Hall on Thursday night, when upwards of 500 persons — old colonists — assembled at the hospitable invitation of Mr Emanuel Solomon, to partake of a liberal banquet provided by that gentleman. The invitations were issued mainly to persons who arrived in the colony prior to the year 1841, but a number of gentlemen who were later arrivals were also present, as prominent citizens or as personal friends of the host. Six long tables ran along the hall, and there was also a cross table at the top of the room, at which there sat the host and a number of gentlemen. The catering was left entirely with Mr Aldridge, who provided a most 'recherche' entertainment, the tables being crowded with a most elegant repast, including every delicacy of the season. Covers were laid for upwards of 500 persons, and it was estimated that about 510 gentlemen sat down to partake of Mr Solomon's large-hearted hospitality. A 'Kosher' table was provided for those who desired to join it.

Mr Emanuel Solomon occupied the chair as host, being supported on his right and left respectively by Sir John Morphett (President of the Legislative Council), and Sir G.S. Kingston, together with the Members of the Ministry, and several other gentlemen of position. After the usual loyal toast by the Chairman, "The Parliament" was proposed by Mr E.L. Grundy, and responded to by Sir John Morphett, who said it was his duty to respond to the toast just honoured; but before he did so he must express his thanks to their kind and liberal-hearted host, Mr Solomon — (cheers) — for giving them the opportunity of seeing so many old faces, and meeting old friends — some of whom they had not seen for thirty-five years. (Cheers.) That day was the thirty-fifth anniversary of their landing. He was then a bachelor — a gay and hopeful bachelor — and he, like many others, came here with a hopeful spirit, and expecting to found a good colony; but they never expected when they landed at Holdfast Bay to found such a colony as that was. At the present moment he believed he was correct in saying that their exports of actual produce were equal to 18 pounds per head of all the population — a thing

unexampled in the history of the world. (Cheers.) It might be supposed, and it was supposed, that the old colonists suffered great privations, but that was all a farce; they did not suffer such privations as represented. It was true, they roughed it. The speaker concluded an interesting speech amid much applause.

The next toast was "The Army and Navy"; after which The Hon. J. Hart, C.M.G., in the absence of the Hon. H. Mildred, asked them to join him in drinking with enthusiasm, "The Health of our Host, Mr Emanuel Solomon." (Tremendous applause.) He should like to have had some time to prepare himself to propose such a toast, but having been called on at the last moment, he would claim their indulgence in making a short speech. He had known Mr Solomon as long perhaps as any man sitting at that table, seven or eight and thirty years. He remembered him in New South Wales, before he came to this colony, and he remembered him asking the question if there were any Scotchmen in South Australia, because, if so, he would not come. (Laughter.) He would say of Mr Solomon that he was one of the largest-hearted men he knew. He had only to look round on that large assemblage to see what a large-hearted man he was to call together so many old colonists. That, however, was not the only thing that showed the liberality of Mr Solomon. He was known as a liberal man throughout the colony, and, had a stone in almost every church and chapel in the place. That was not a political meeting, for although Mr Solomon had been in the Legislative Council, he had retired from it, and therefore that meeting was not called for political purposes. In the very kindness of his heart he had called together the number of gentlemen present. He was able to speak from long acquaintance of Mr Solomon, and he honoured and respected him. It was a very noble thing for a meeting of old colonists to be brought together by the liberality of one man. (Cheers.) He trusted that others would follow in the same wake, and bring them together in future years.

"Thrice happy he, enabled to pursue

What thousands wish the power to do."

He trusted, however, that there would be some man who would be able and willing to follow the example of Mr Solomon in future years. He called attention to this fact — that there was no particular class of people invited to that banquet. The poor man as well as the rich had been invited — (cheers) — and he said all honour to the noble-hearted gentleman who had brought them together. He asked them to drink the toast with three times three.

The toast was drunk with great enthusiasm, the band playing "For he's a jolly good fellow." Mr Emanuel Solomon was greeted with tremendous applause on rising to respond. He thanked the proposer of the toast, and he thanked them all for their attendance that night. He arrived here in 1838, and when he landed here the whole colony was in a state of bankruptcy. He did not believe there was a silver shilling to be seen. The Government, and likewise all the merchants, were insolvent, and directly he landed he found he must go with the rest and become bankrupt, too. He had to land his goods on to a sand bank over which the tide washed several times before the goods could be removed. The consequence was ruination. The next thing was, the Government had no money, and they said, "Solomon, we'll let you have bills on England at par." They took his money for them, about four thousand pounds, and the bills went to England, and he had them returned with twenty percent expenses on them. (Laughter.) . . . He had seen many gentlemen land here with their pockets well lined, and holding their heads very high but before three months were over, they held their heads very low. It was a few of the old colonists who had kept the colony up — (Cheers) — and they owed an especial debt of gratitude to their yeomanry — old plodding

farmers, who had toiled on in spite of bad crops, not knowing whether for a year's work they would get a day's meal. (Applause.) What could be obtained now for one shilling cost at that time about four pounds.

Mr Solomon continued in the same strain, and was followed by Sir John Morphett, who bore testimony to the large-heartedness of Mr Emanuel Solomon, in proof of which he stated that Mr Solomon had specially stipulated that all that was left from that feast should go to the orphans on the morrow. (Applause.)

A round of applause was given to Mr Solomon in acknowledgement of his thoughtful consideration of the orphans.

Several other toasts were then proposed, amongst them "The Press", By Mr J.M. Solomon, M.P., who, in the course of his speech, said that he was thankful he lived in a community that had a press of which they had reason to be proud – that endeavoured with all its power to do the greatest amount of good to the greatest number that could be done. In his opinion, if the press allowed a man to become so self-important as to be a nuisance it did not perform its duty. (Cheers.)

The National Anthem brought a most enjoyable evening to a close.

Notes

- ¹ I owe this information to Mrs Sadie Pritchard. By a second marriage Samuel Moss Solomon married Esther Davis.
- ² See Dorothy George, *London Life in the XVIIIth Century* (1925) pp. 125-6. George suggests that pencil making was a Jewish industry as early as the 1730s and that "Isaac Solomon was a maker of improved lead pencils in 1771 and a man of some standing. In 1780 Samuel Solomons of Whitechapel. pencil-maker, was tried as a Gordon rioter" p. 360, fn. 64.
- ³ Peter Quennell (editor), *Mayhew's London* (1949) p. 277.
- ⁴ Mayhew, op. cit. p. 279.
- ⁵ R.D. Barnett in V.C. Lipman (ed.), *Three Centuries of Anglo-Jewish History: A Volume of Essays* (1961) p. 62.
- ⁶ See J.J. Tobias, *Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century* (1967), p. 109, and especially P. Colqhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis* (1806 edition) pp. 119-20, 292, 319-23.
- ⁷ Lipman, op. cit. p. 62.
- ⁸ Tobias, op. cit. p. 111.
- ⁹ *Durham County Advertiser* 9th August 1817. I am very grateful to Mr J. Keith Bishop, County Archivist, Durham County Record Office, for this information. Heighington is about 6 miles from Bishop Auckland.
- ¹⁰ Archives Office of New South Wales (hereafter AONSW) 4/4006.
- ¹¹ Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships 1787-1868* (Glasgow 1969), pp. 69, 203, 210, 342, 382.
- ¹² 'Joseph Aarons Sen. (1777-1865)', *J.A.J.H.S.* Vol. VII, p. 234.
- ¹³ G.F.J. Bergman, 'Abraham Polack (1797-1873) Rise and Fall of a Jewish Emancipist', *J.A.J.H.S.* Vol. VII p. 348, ff.
- ¹⁴ Max Gordon, *Jews in Van Diemen's Land* (1965) p. 15.
- ^{14a} I am informed by Rabbi John Levi that his researches disclose that Vaiben in August 1820 received 25 lashes as punishment for 3 absences from Church.

- ¹⁵ Quoted by A.G.L. Shaw in G.J. Abbott and N.B. Nairn (editors), *Economic Growth in Australia 1788-1821* (1969) p. 116.
- ¹⁶ Gordon, op. cit. pp. 33-4. Vaiben Solomon was also transferred to Newcastle.
- ¹⁷ AONSW 4/4423 Register of Certificates of Freedom.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ George Rude, 'Early Irish Rebels in Australia', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 16 (1974), p. 28.
- ²⁰ See Getzler op. cit. p. 18.
- ²¹ See Bergman op. cit. passim.
- ²² See Aarons op. cit. p. 234. See also the case of Judah Solomon in Lazarus Morris Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century* (1954) pp. 12-13.
- ²³ M.J.E. Steven in Abbott and Nairn, op. cit. pp. 128-9.
- ²⁴ AONSW 4/1817 p. 109. The N.S.W. Colonial Secretary: In Letters, 1822-26. See also 4/1750.
- ²⁵ AONSW 1206 p. 486 N.S.W. Governors Despatches 1830.
- ²⁶ AONSW A. 1206 Governors Despatches 1830, p. 372; A1210 p. 253; A1211, p. 691; A1211 pp. 691 and 695. Emanuel also applied for a convict in 1833 and 1835.
- ²⁷ *Sydney Gazette* 19th October 1827.
- ²⁸ *Sydney Gazette* 2nd January 1828; *The Australian* 9th January 1829.
- ²⁹ *Sydney Gazette* May 1829.
- ³⁰ *The Australian* 6th May 1830.
- ³¹ Ibid. 10th January 1834; 25th March.
- ³² Ibid. 22nd May 1830; 7th November 1834.
- ³³ Ibid. 11th March 1831, 23rd June 1835.
- ³⁴ Ibid. 9th January 1835, 12th July 1833, 30th September 1831.
- ³⁵ See Getzler op. cit.
- ³⁶ Emanuel married Mary Ann Wilson in St. Phillip's Church Sydney 6th November 1826, and Vaiben married Mary Smith 12th June 1826 at the same place.
- ³⁷ Victor Cohen, 'Reverend Solomon Phillips and his Descendants', *A.J.H.S.*, Vol. I, p. 76.
- ³⁸ See Ernest S. Marks 'An Early Census', *A.J.H.S.*, Vol. II and G.F.J. Bergman, 'Australian Jewry in 1828', *A.J.H.S.*, Vol. V p. 248.
- ³⁹ All this information and much more family detail was kindly provided by the good offices of Mrs Sadie Pritchard.
- ⁴⁰ *The Australian*, 9th January 1835.
- ⁴¹ Bergman op. cit. p. 359.

- 42 *The Australian* 5th June 1835.
- 43 Ibid., 7th August 1835.
- 44 Ibid. 29th July 1836.
- 45 Ibid. 27th September 1836.
- 46 AONSW Colonization Commissioners for South Australia — Land Order to J.B. Strangways, 9th December 1835, Drawer 45, (D/350/4). Unfortunately it was not possible to locate this document and it is not improbable that the date, 1835, given in the Mitchell Library Manuscript Catalogue, is misplaced. See also BPP 1840 XXXIII, p. 5 which relates to a purchase by Strangways of 1,620 acres at 12/- an acre, in December 30, 1835.
- 47 *The Australian* 25th October 1836, 29th August 1837.
- 48 Bergman, op. cit. p. 361.
- 49 *Australian*, 11th May 1839, 24th March 1840.
- 50 Ibid., 28th March 1840.
- 51 Ibid., 14th August 1838.
- 52 Bergman, op. cit. p. 362.
- 53 *Australian*, 13th March 1838, 5th June 1838, 29th June 1838, 22nd October 1839.
- 54 Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent. South Australia, 1829-1857*, (1957) pp. 285, 297.
- 55 See Getzler, op. cit. pp. 75-83.
- 56 *South Australian Register and Colonial Gazette*, 5th September 1838. Cited in Hirsch Munz, *Jews in South Australia 1836-1936* (1936) p. 40.
- 57 *Register*, 16th May 1840.
- 58 South Australian Archives, Business Letter book of Emanuel Solomon, SAA 1312.
- 59 I hope to deal with Emanuel Solomon's business life in these years in a fuller treatment in a later paper on early Adelaide merchants.
- 60 Ibid., E. Solomon to V. Solomon, 10th November 1840.
- 61 Ibid. 15th March 1841.
- 62 Ibid. 13th September 1841. Emanuel Solomon was fully aware of his own short temper and his quarrelsome nature. The late Mr G. Pitt, archivist of South Australia noted accurately "a certain ruthless and choleric vindictiveness towards his rivals" (SAA 1312) — which may very well help to explain the survival of Solomon in the Sydney trade.
- 63 Ibid. 19th February 1841.
- 64 Ibid. 9th July 1842.
- 65 Ibid. 9th September 1842. There is a good account of these events in G.L. Fischer, 'The Queen's Theatre, Adelaide, 1841-1842', *Pioneers' Association of South Australia*, Pamphlet 1957.

- ⁶⁶ AONSW B824 Log of the surgeon of the emigrant ship 'Warrior' pp. 153-4.
- ⁶⁷ *Examiner* 3rd June 1843.
- ⁶⁸ *Southern Australian*, 6th June 1843, 9th June 1843.
- ⁶⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3rd April 1844. When he returned to Adelaide he reported that Sydney traders, formerly bankrupt, had re-established themselves, and were richer than ever. This was subject of a denial in the SMH 4th June 1844.
- ⁷⁰ SAA 1312, E. Solomon to V. Solomon 14th April 1843.
- ⁷¹ Ibid. E. Solomon to D. Moses, 10th September 1844.
- ⁷² Ibid. E. Solomon to Messrs Rowan McNab and Co. 1st February 1845. It is likely that Emanuel took possession of the 'Dorset' in part exchange for property in Sydney transferred to Vaiben.
- ⁷³ Ibid., letters of 1845.
- ⁷⁴ *South Australian Register*, 16th February 1848.
- ⁷⁵ Quoted in Munz, op. cit. p. 11.
- ⁷⁶ SAA 1312 E. Solomon to J.M. Solomon, 18th October 1845, E. Solomon to Cashmore 12th January 1846.
- ⁷⁷ SAA, Mining Association Minutes p. 67.
- ⁷⁸ Virtually all the preceding information on Solomon's connection with the Burra is derived from notes supplied by Mr Mel Davies of the Economics Department at the University of Adelaide. He is preparing a thesis on the Burra enterprises, and I am very grateful for his assistance.
- ⁷⁹ Alfred Marshall, *Industry and Trade* (3rd edition 1920) p. 696.
- ⁸⁰ E.g. Arthur H. Cole, *Business Enterprise in the Social Setting*, (1959) pp. 104-5.
- ⁸¹ He was involved in several partnerships. One was Solomon and Company which included Joseph Flemming, Richard Adams and J. Daniels, trading as auctioneers and commission agents, which was dissolved in April 1854: *S.A. Government Gazette* 13th April 1854, p. 319. A later partnership associated E. Solomon with J.M. Solomon, I. Solomon, Maurice Salom and John Daniels, the last of whom departed in April 1859: *S.A. Government Gazette* 7th April 1859, p. 323.
- ^{81a} Vaiben Solomon's tombstone formerly stood in the Raphael Cemetery at Lidcombe. The deceased's Hebrew name was Yom Tov ben Shemayah. The text engraved upon the headstone read: "How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for them that revere you, which you have wrought for them that trust in you before the children of men (Psalm 31.20).
- ⁸² Cited in Munz op. cit. p. 61. Loyau in *Representative Men of South Australia* p. 223 also made a virtue of Solomon's 'speculative tendencies': "Unlike many wealthy men who keep their money locked up in Banks where the highest percentage is to be obtained, Mr Solomon invested his capital where it would do most good, not merely to himself, but to his fellow colonists."
- ⁸³ See A.J.H.S. Vol. II 'Centenary of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation', and Vol. II Rabbi A. Fabian, 'Early Days of South Australian Jewry'.

- ⁸⁴ See Munz op. cit. pp. 18-19.
- ⁸⁵ R. Cockburn, *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia* II p. 99. I thank Mel Davies for this reference. In another place, I p. 243, the date of sale is given as 1848.
- ⁸⁶ AONSW A627. Solomon stood in 1857 but was not elected. SAPP 1857-8 Electoral Returns.
- ⁸⁷ SAA Davies, Biographical Cuttings, Vol. IX, p. 160.
- ⁸⁸ *S.A. Parliamentary Debates*, 8th October 1867, p. 909.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 8th September 1868, pp. 376-7.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 20th October 1868, p. 625.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 12th January 1869, p. 1399.
- ⁹² SAA 1312 V. and E. Solomon to the Editor of the *Adelaide Examiner*, 3rd August 1842.
- ⁹³ SAA PRG 67/32 Vol. I pp. 56-7.
- ⁹⁴ SAA Davies, op. cit.
- ⁹⁵ S.A. Probate Office, Probate Book 14, No. 02449, pp. 370-383.

Ed. — It was mentioned at the Society's meeting by Mr John Minchin, who has a family connection with the Solomons, that the explanation of this "puzzle" may be that land devolved upon the heir-at-law. Further, Mr David H. Solomon has referred to the will of Emanuel Solomon which stipulated that none of his estate should be divided until 20 years after the death of the last surviving child. That child, Joseph Samuel Solomon, the last of seven, died at the age of 97 at Adelaide in 1940 (see article by Lawson Glassop in *The Advertiser*, 5th June, 1961).

- ⁹⁶ It is possible that the business of Emanuel Solomon suffered a severe set back in 1856. In mid-November that year a fire broke out in some buildings on Hindley Street, Adelaide which engulfed the stores of Messrs Solomon. The Company lost a three-storey building and sustained the greatest financial loss. The roof had been composed of highly inflammable shingle, and the *S.A. Register* 17th November 1856, commented "Had Solomon's stores been covered with metal or slate, they and their contents might have remained to this moment intact ... We are exceedingly sorry for the loss and inconvenience sustained by Messrs Solomon and Co., through no fault of their own, and can only express a hope they were covered by adequate insurance." In his letterbook of the early 1840s Emanuel Solomon took a fairly cavalier attitude to the question of insurance cover.

THE TALE OF AUSTRALIA'S FIRST "RABBI" JOSEPH MARCUS 1767-1828

by

RABBI JOHN S. LEVI, M.A.

(Read before the Society on 16.12.74).

At the Sydney Jail, in the last week of September 1806, the Rev. William Cowper first encountered Joseph Marcus, a former convict, who voluntarily served as Australia's first unofficial rabbi in the years before the establishment of a synagogue. The strange story of this meeting is to be found in the proceedings of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews.¹ Through Cowper's fervent desire to bring "salvation to the Jews", we learn of the identity and spiritual adventures of Sydney's "only acknowledged Levite" whose Hebrew and Jewish knowledge enabled him to conduct funerals and religious services and to deal with the spiritual needs of the first Jews in Australia.

Joseph Marcus was born on 24th March, 1767 at Mannheim.² At the age of seven, two years after the death of his father, he was sent to study at a Yeshiva in Poland, where he remained for seven years. He then returned to Germany and continued his religious education at Metz and later in Jerusalem where he lived for almost two years.³

In 1791 Marcus was sentenced to death at the Lent Assizes in the County of Staffordshire for breaking and entering the house of Michael Dainty of Leck and stealing 15 spoons, 2 salt holders, a mustard pot, 4 salt spoons, 2 pairs of sugar tongs, one wine strainer, a cup and 2 linen shirts, valued at £9.5.0.⁴ Like thousands of other Jews in the late 18th century, Marcus had migrated to England where he had become a pedlar. In the course of his wanderings Marcus later remembered having been introduced by a country vicar to Dr Blayney, Professor of Hebrew at Christ Church, Oxford, and Marcus spent some time there, where his rabbinic knowledge aroused some curiosity.⁵ When arrested, Marcus had obviously been trying to augment his meagre stock by breaking and entering an unguarded house, perhaps hoping to take his goods back to London and sell them to some friendly receiver of stolen property in the metropolis.

In February 1792 Marcus arrived in New South Wales on the convict transport ship "William Pitt", having had his death sentence commuted to transportation for seven years.⁶ In 1795 Marcus left Sydney for Norfolk Island where he remained to serve his sentence and only succeeded in returning to the mainland in 1805.⁷ Marcus served as a Constable at the Sydney jail in 1806,⁸ and as a servant to the Sydney emancipist merchant, Simeon Lord, during 1807 and 1808, during which time he narrowly escaped conviction after being caught "entering his master's house through a window at night, with a suspicious design".⁹

On 29th August, 1805 in Sydney, the 30 year old Jewish convict, Elias Davis, was found guilty of burglary and sentenced to death.¹⁰ Eight days later Davis died on the gallows and, as the Sydney Gazette reported, "being of the Mosaic persuasion was, at his own desire, attended by a friend of the same religion".¹¹ There is little doubt that this friend was Joseph Marcus. As the Rev. Cowper later wrote about Marcus, "Our first interview happened in one of the cells of the jail, where he came to visit a Jew under sentence (of death). We then had some conversation concerning the forgiveness of sin, the Messiah and particular passages in the Prophets relating to his coming and the manner of his appearance, the atonement, etc. Marcus was then in health and strength and seemed to be a well behaved and intelligent man."¹²

In 1809 Marcus and his de facto wife, Dorcas Jane Broughton, rented a farm at George's River on the Parramatta Road, about 20 miles from Sydney.¹³ His rural experiment was not a success. In September 1809 their farm was attacked by a band of 15 aborigines who stole 2 muskets and some property, and Dorcas Jane was injured by a spear.¹⁴ Desperate for money, Marcus sold his government-supplied subsidised seed wheat to a baker and on 10th July, 1810 was sentenced to 3 months' hard labour for his "turpitude".¹⁵ In January 1811 Marcus asked Governor Macquarie for a grant of land. It was refused with Macquarie's comment: "Not to have any grants, not being a good character".¹⁶ In the next year Marcus decided to bow to the demands of society and married his de facto wife at St. John's, Parramatta.¹⁷ The farm brought more miseries and debts and in December 1813 the Provost-Marshall arranged for the sale of 4 acres of wheat, 4 acres of corn and some potatoes.¹⁸ Marcus moved to Sydney, having been stricken with a "very severe paralysis".¹⁹ His financial plight is reflected in the sale of his cottage in 52 Kent Street, Sydney, to the meteorically successful Jewish emancipist, Solomon Levey. The contract is signed with a mark, as Marcus was so ill that he was unable to write.²⁰

In pain and penniless, Marcus vainly sought consolation. In 1820 his wife was charged "with cruel treatment of her husband, a palsied and infirm old man and with being a common nuisance in the streets of Sydney" and was sent for six months hard labour to the females' work prison at Parramatta.²¹

Marcus briefly turned to Sydney's new Roman Catholic chaplains to see whether they could help him. He then "most earnestly entreated the Rev. Cowper to visit him," assuring him that his time would not be spent "in vain", for he greatly desired to understand the truth, and to save his soul.²²

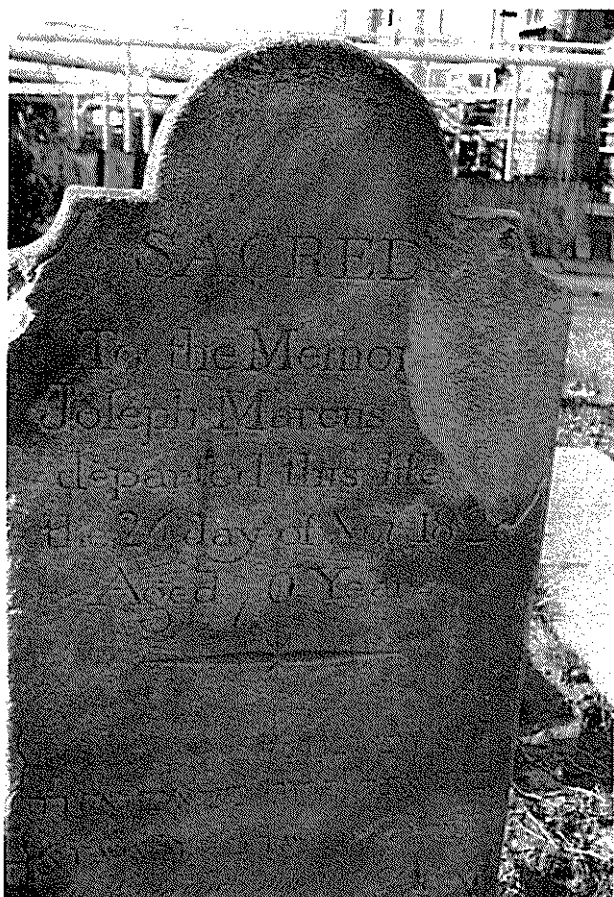
Cowper's first letter to the Society, written from Sydney on 26th February, 1820, describes Marcus as Australia's "only acknowledged Levite" and as "an intelligent, peaceable and well-disposed man" who

had spent much time studying the Scriptures in Hebrew.²³ Cowper reported that "about thirty" Sydney Jews had recently agreed "to meet together once or twice each week to have their own prayers and the Scriptures read to them". Marcus had begun to attend Cowper's Church "as his bodily infirmities permit him" and the colonial chaplain asked the London Society to send him half-a-dozen copies of the New Testament in Hebrew.

This reference to the agreement of a group of Jews in Sydney to meet together for prayers in February 1820 is the earliest recorded reference to Jewish worship in Australia. In 1845 George Moss, the Secretary of the Sydney Synagogue, wrote in the first short history of the Sydney Jewish community that prayers had been held "for the first time, morning and evening, during the seven days of mourning" at the time of the death of Joel Joseph.²⁴ Joseph died in Sydney in October 1820 and it is interesting to note that Moss remembered that at their time of need the Jews of Sydney turned to the Rev. Dr Cowper who allotted "the right-hand corner of the Christian Burial Ground to the Hebrews as a place of internment for their dead". As Cowper himself wrote in that first letter to the Society in London, "All the Jews are most respectful in their conduct towards me and I feel it my duty to serve them, in the fear and cause of God, as 'beloved for the fathers' sake'. Gratitude, indeed, constrains; for we know that 'Salvation is of the Jews' ".²⁵

Once the Hebrew New Testaments arrived, the Rev. Cowper wrote once more to London. He had found his prospective convert's Hebrew and Biblical knowledge "very superior". Marcus "repeatedly assured me all his prejudices against Jesus Christ and the Gospel were entirely removed, by the convincing explanations afforded him. Many were his difficulties in both English and Hebrew Scriptures, but by patient investigation and appropriate comparisons, these were gradually overcome. His cabalistical and talmudical expositions he used to be very fond of introducing . . . It is impossible to describe the expression, the satisfaction and the joy which he seemed to experience . . . when he saw the New Testament in the language of his nation. He read it with great delight and much benefit".²⁶ Indeed by November 1821, Marcus "although labouring under great tribulation from bodily infirmity" wrote to London thanking the Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews "for providing him with a Hebrew New Testament having had no previous opportunity to read any Christian book".²⁷

Progress then became more difficult. In July 1822 the Archdeacon wrote home to tell the Society that "Marcus perseveres in reading and meditating upon the New Testament, printed in the Hebrew language".²⁸ His health had improved. "His mind appears to be more vigorous and his desires more ardent; his understanding is good and his affections are strong". In August Cowper added, "The more he reads



TOMBSTONE OF JOSEPH MARCUS AT BOTANY

and knows the New Testament, the better he likes it . . . He intended to come to church yesterday, but was disappointed in the man who was to assist him. He wishes much to have the Old Testament in Hebrew, in type such as that of the New Testament",²⁹ By February 1823 Cowper described "his regret on account of the indifference and inattention to which the Jews in this place had returned, after having made some professions of religion by weekly meetings for prayer, etc."³⁰ Joseph Marcus, it was claimed, continued to be imbued with pro-Christian feelings although "his bodily indisposition does not allow him to attend our public worship; nor has he been able, of late, to minister to his brethren according to the flesh". From which we learn that Marcus had

obviously done some "pastoral" work within the little Jewish community. Indeed Cowper described how the Jews had asked Marcus to officiate at a funeral service "of a learned Jew who died in Sydney, but Marcus declined because the deceased had not manifested any fear of God. Thus he dares to be singular and to show himself on the Lord's side".

Not surprisingly, the Rev. Cowper found that the Jewish community did not respond to his missionary endeavours. Though Marcus spoke of "the happiness which he has found in searching and comparing the Psalms, the Prophets, and the New Testament" ... "he cannot bring his carnal brethren to think as he now thinks, nor to use the means generally necessary to acquire a right knowledge of the sacred oracles". Only "one intelligent young man" in the Jewish community seemed willing to listen. He had come free to the colony and readily donated 2 spanish dollars - a very small sum - for some tracts supplied to him by the chaplain.³¹ This "intelligent young man" could only have been Barnet Levey, the father of the Australian theatre, who arrived in Sydney in 1821. Cowper also mentions that, on the suggestion of Marcus, a parcel of tracts and two or three Hebrew New Testaments were sent to Van Diemen's Land that "they may become a blessing to some of the Children of Israel in that dependency". And from this it is reasonable to infer that in the early years of the 1820s, there was contact between the Jews scattered in the two lonely Australian convict colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.³²

As Dr Cowper's relationship with Marcus deepened, the earnest cleric began to have difficulty distinguishing fact from fiction. In 1824 Cowper wrote that before the father of Marcus had died he had given his five year old son a parchment scroll "charging him never to open it till he should be 13 years of age. The scroll, when opened, was found to be the New Testament in the Arabic language, written in the Hebrew characters."³³ This extraordinary story had, of course, already been contradicted by Marcus himself when he first wrote to the Society in 1821 thanking them for "first introducing" him to the New Testament. Marcus claimed to have known seventeen languages in the year of his arrival in New South Wales. Dr Cowper observed, "probably he was not grammatically acquainted with more than three or four of them".

Joseph Marcus died on 26th November 1828 and was buried in the Jewish section of the Devonshire Street Cemetery.³⁴ He died a Jew, despite Cowper's final letter to the London Society claiming that "the aged Rabbi Marcus is growing in grace, and in the knowledge of his Saviour. Although he is infirm in body, he is vigorous in mind ... If I happen to be more than two or three days without visiting him, and reading three or four chapters with him, he calls me to account for my apparent inattention".³⁵

Was Marcus a Christian? Did he really believe that the Rev. Dr Cowper had the key to his salvation? Or, did he enjoy the mental

stimulation of being able to argue about passages in his beloved Hebrew Bible with a cultured adversary? Perhaps he was simply grateful for company during his long and painful illness. Obviously his fellow Jews did not believe Marcus had denied his faith, for they buried him with the words of the Hebrew prayer book written upon his grave.

At Botany Bay, in the shadow of the oil refineries, whose savage fumes continue to destroy the old inscriptions etched on the gravestones of our first pioneers, lies the memorial to Joseph Marcus.^{35a} Carved in Hebrew letters are the last four lines of the familiar Synagogue hymn, *Adon Olam* (the Lord of All). Appropriately, these lines form the longest Hebrew inscription to be found on the old stones that had originally been erected in the Jewish section of the Devonshire Street Cemetery. The gravestone of Joseph Marcus seems to have been a dignified one. Perhaps it was erected by general subscription among the early emancipist Jewish community as a tribute to their "acknowledged" minister.

Marcus died a little over two months after a fellow emancipist, Abraham Polack, had made the first official attempt to establish a synagogue in Sydney.³⁶ By 1828 the first significant numbers of free Jewish settlers were arriving in Australia and the birth of an organized Jewish community was very near.

Ed. — Nearly all speakers at the discussion following the reading hereof, expressed doubts as to whether Marcus would have had any genuine personal interest in the message of the New Testament brought by Cowper. Perhaps Marcus misled the good cleric who in turn must have raised undue hopes in London.

Notes

¹ The Jewish Expositor and Friend of Israel being the Proceedings of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews, London 1816-1826.

Jewish Records. Chiefly for the Use of Collectors and Small Subscribers to the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, London 1818-1827.

² Proceedings, 1824 p. 334. The 1828 Census of N.S.W. states that Marcus was 70 years old, thus making the year of his birth 1758.

³ Jewish Records No. 21. 1825. Letter from R.W. Cowper, Sydney, May 1824.

⁴ Crown Minute Book Lent Assizes 2/25.

⁵ Op cit.

⁶ William Pitt. Indent (A04/4004) p. 272.

⁷ Sydney Gazette. 14th July, 1805. Also Norfolk Island Victualling Book 1795 (ML).

⁸ Proceedings of the Bench of Magistrates ML 1/301, 5th Nov. 1808. Also ML 1149, 22nd Sept. 1806. 7/33.

- ⁹ Op cit. 5th April 1807.
- ¹⁰ Ibid. 31st Aug. 1806.
- ¹¹ Ibid. 7th Sept. 1806.
- ¹² Proceedings 1822 p. 288. Letter from Rev. W. Cowper. 17th Nov. 1821.
- ¹³ Op cit. 10th July 1810.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. 27th Sept. 1809; Sydney Gazette, 24th Sept. 1809.
- ¹⁵ Ibid. 10th July 1810.
- ¹⁶ N.S.W. C.S. Letters Rec'd. AO 4/1822 Memos 1810 L-Y. C.S. Memo 2. Dated 15th Jan. 1811 misplaced in 1810 Register No. 204.
- ¹⁷ Married 3rd Nov. 1811 (Mutch Index ML).
- ¹⁸ S.G. 27th Dec. 1813.
- ¹⁹ Proceedings 1822 p. 288.
- ²⁰ Piper Papers V.1. 387 (ML A254) 16th Jan. 1819.
- ²¹ S.G. 16th Sept. 1820.
- ²² Proceedings p. 288. Letter from Rev. W. Cowper 17th Nov. 1821.
- ²³ Jewish Records 1821. No. 7. p. 10.
- ²⁴ Report of the Committee of the York St. (Sydney) Synagogue 1845, p. 7.
- ²⁵ Op cit.
- ²⁶ Proceedings 1822 p. 288. Letter dated Sydney 17th Nov. 1821.
- ²⁷ Ibid. Letter from Marcus dated 12th Nov. 1821.
- ²⁸ Ibid. 1823 p. 68. Letter from W. Cowper dated 15th July 1822.
- ²⁹ Ibid. Dated 19th August 1822.
- ³⁰ Ibid. 1824 p. 332. Letter from W. Cowper, dated 11th Feb. 1823.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Marcus may have visited Van Diemen's Land in his earlier days. The Sydney Gazette contains a number of notices concerning his departure from the Colony. (S.G. 23rd March 1806, 29th March 1807).
- ³³ Jewish Records No. 21. 1825, p. 4.
- ³⁴ It is recorded in the plan of the Devonshire St. Jewish Cemetery that a Rachel Marcus was buried there. No date or further information is provided. Was this a daughter of Joseph Marcus?
- ³⁵ Op cit.
- ^{35a} All the old memorials at Botany are now being removed and some may be placed in a Pioneers' Memorial Section. It is hoped to save and restore the headstone of Marcus amongst some others.
- ³⁶ J.S. Levi and G.F.J. Bergman. *Australian Genesis* 1974 p. 220.

Note. Ed. The authors of *Australian Genesis* at p. 74, remark that "it is not likely that fellow-Jews regarded him very benevolently". If so, Marcus may finally have grown in the estimation of his co-religionists.

See the biography of William Cowper by N.S. Pollard in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 1, pp. 254-6. The writer mentions Cowper's extreme Evangelical attitude and he is listed as connected with many Evangelical societies. There is no mention of the Society for Propagating Christianity among the Jews.

THE ORTHODOX MINISTRY IN CONFERENCE: 1946-1975

by
RABBI ISRAEL PORUSH, Ph.D., O.B.E.*
(Read before the Society on 28th July, 1975)

The need for regular exchanges of ideas and experiences among the Ministers of a far-flung, isolated community such as Australasia is beyond dispute. Some Ministers lead a lonely life, without the stimulus of discussion with like-minded colleagues. Many are all the time givers, with few contacts which could enrich their intellect. After all, this region is thousands of miles away from the great, pulsating centres of Jewish life in Jerusalem, New York and London.

The layman seldom appreciates the longing of the Minister for personal acquaintance with the great scholars and great libraries and institutions about which he only reads from time to time. To go occasionally overseas is a necessity; to be saved from stagnation, he needs a mental re-charge periodically. But a casual trip overseas is no substitute for the fellowship and the practical cooperation with fellow-workers nearer home, which a "professional" convention can provide. Theoretically all agree that such a convention is a good thing; in practice it is not always easy of fulfilment. In Australia one can find early in the day, in the Press and at General Meetings, utterances in favour of synagogal or ministerial or combined conferences. The most serious attempt in this direction was made at the turn of the century, when the Australian Federation came into being and the Jewish Community celebrated this historic event with two Services of thanksgiving at the Great Synagogue, the most natural venue for such a combined celebration, to which Ministers and leaders from all States were invited. And indeed, the clergy of Victoria, South and West Australia accepted the invitation.

At an informal meeting of Ministers and lay leaders then held it was resolved to hold "periodical conferences of Ministers and representative laymen", and the first such nation-wide conference was to be held in May, 1901. This effort proved abortive for reasons described in my article in our Journal (Vol. VII, part 5). This much can be said here: It seems that neither the Ministry nor the laity were ready to sink their individual aspirations in the pool of the common good. Almost half a century later, in 1946, conditions were so utterly different that a full Australia-wide Ministers' Conference could be held in a wonderful spirit of fellowship and with widest participation. The moment was

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propitious. It was a few days after the end of World War II, viz. on 23rd August, 1945, that I sent out the invitations to my colleagues. The response was most gratifying. Although Rabbi Danglow expressed generally some doubt as to the efficacy of such conferences, in true fraternal loyalty he did attend the conference when held, and he delivered a paper on "Intermarriage", which was subsequently printed as a brochure and widely distributed in the community; Rabbi Danglow drew from his vast experience as Minister of a large congregation.

The post-war years were a time charged with sadness and gigantic problems. Globally the world lay in ruin after the most destructive war in human history, seeking to regain sanity and humanity and labouring in the rehabilitation of millions of returned soldiers and of millions of homeless people in camps. From the Jewish angle the situation was immeasurably worse. We were the worst hit victims of the war. The end of hostilities revealed the magnitude of the European holocaust at the hands of the Nazis. The pitiful surviving remnants had no places to return to; they knocked in vain at the doors of the Promised Homeland in Palestine. Very few lands opened their gates to the "displaced persons". Australia was one of the few countries which was ready to accept migrants in larger numbers. In 1938, at the Evian Conference, Australia granted 15,000 permits to victims of Nazi oppression of which less than half could then be used because of the outbreak of the war. In the late 1940s and early 1950s large numbers of Jewish migrants joined our community. Next to Palestine Australia absorbed the largest number of Jewish migrants in relation to the size of the already existing community. In a few years the community more than doubled, and this entailed great responsibilities for Ministers and laymen alike. One could feel, that we stood on the threshold of a great development.

Indeed, it was a soul-stirring, busy time, and the Ministers deemed it necessary to meet in conference on a federal basis and to discuss the challenges facing them and the community at large. The first letter to all Ministers stated: "Jewish life is passing through a critical stage. We are faced with numerous grave problems which have been accentuated by the tragedy of our people in Europe and by the disintegrating influences of the war. The confused Jewish public is waiting for and will be impressed by unequivocal and authoritative pronouncements on some of the burning questions of the day, such as intermarriage, proselytism, youth and education, the returned soldier, Palestine etc. It is imperative that the Ministry make its voice heard unitedly, clearly and powerfully . . . There are, in addition, questions of Jewish law and congregational problems concerning which an exchange of views among Ministers must prove of benefit to all". Our relationship to the outside world was equally acute, and the reader is referred to the article "New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews" in our Journal Vol. VI, page 181f.

And so, the First Australasian Conference of Jewish Ministers was held in Sydney at the Maccabean Hall on 3rd and 4th March, 1946. No less than 15 Rabbis and Ministers participated, among them Rabbis Danglow and Freedman from Melbourne, and Rabbis Blumenthal and Ehrentreu who had been transported on the "Dunera" from England to Australia as internees and later released. Others attending were Rabbis Fabian and Super and Revs. Belfer, Katz, Kezelman, Morris, Rabinovitch, Rechter, Steinhof and Wolff. The meetings were open to the public, and the two evening sessions were well attended by laymen, some of whom keenly participated in the discussion.

The 'Presidential Address' was characteristically entitled: "The Future of Australian Jewry", and seven additional papers were read on the subjects: Eretz Israel as a religious factor, Jewish education and youth, Intermarriage and proselytism, Religious reconstruction, The Synagogue and the returned soldier, Kashruth. The papers and the discussions were on a high level. It was planned to publish them, but, as on other occasions, funds were not available.

Important resolutions were passed and published. The Conference came out strongly in favour of the Jewish day school at a time when this type of education was as yet strange in the minds of most Australian Jews. In fact, one of the participating Rabbis made no secret of his negative attitude, even though it must be said to his credit that later in life he changed his mind. The majority of Ministers promoted the idea of the day school from the pulpit in the face, at times, of disapproving congregations. In addition, the Conference made a number of recommendations for the strengthening of education outside the Jewish day school by increasing the hours of instruction, by training teachers and by improving the curricula. No boy, it was felt, should be permitted to be Barmitzvah unless he had passed an examination based on an agreed syllabus.

We renewed our loyalty to the authority of the Chief Rabbinate and the London Beth Din. It is true, this connection became weaker with the passage of time, but even the latest Conference in 1975 upheld the association with the Chief Rabbinate, albeit in rather vague terms.

The Conference, thoroughly committed to *Shivat Zion*, the Restoration of the Holy Land as an integral part of our Faith, expressed concern over the unhappy affairs in Palestine and pledged its unswerving support for the upbuilding of Eretz Israel. It also called upon the Australian Government to support the Jewish rights in Palestine.

The Conference proclaimed its adherence to historic Orthodox Judaism and condemned deviations from Halacha and Jewish Tradition, and appealed to the community for greater religious observance. An appeal was made for the establishment of Kashruth Commissions wherever possible, to ensure the proper supervision of Kashruth. It recommended interchanges of pulpits and pastoral tours to isolated Jewish families in the country.

The problem of conversion by Liberal congregations was hotly discussed at the Conference. It was agreed that, to avoid indiscriminate proselytisation and in the interest of communal peace, an attempt should be made by the Batei Din of Sydney and Melbourne to meet the Liberal Ministers in order to discuss future admissions to Judaism with a view to ensuring that only genuinely sincere applicants should be admitted and that only such Batei Din in Australia as are recognised by the Chief Rabbinate shall be the final arbiters on the genuineness of the applications and the executors of the Reception into Judaism. Should this meeting fail to reach an agreement, a public pronouncement should be made, that proselytes not received by a Beth Din acceptable to the Chief Rabbinate are not recognised by the orthodox community. This far-reaching resolution did not get off the ground because it was ascertained that no prospect existed for the Liberals to accede to the demands alluded to. Finally, it was decided that conferences of Ministers should be held regularly, and with this in view a Standing Committee was created consisting of Rabbis Porush (chairman), Danglow and Freedman.

One of the tangible benefits of the Conference was the publication of three pamphlets and their extensive dissemination in the community: (1) "The Sabbath" by Rabbi Porush (27 pages, 3000 copies); (2) "Intermarriage" by Rabbi J. Danglow (22 pages, 3300 copies); (3) "Kashruth" by Rabbi Porush (24 pages, 3500 copies). These booklets were freely distributed by the synagogues to their members.

One can say without hesitation that the First Ministers' Conference was a meaningful and successful convention, and a historic move in the right direction. It is difficult to measure the tangible results of such a Conference, but slowly some of the words filtered through into the deeds of the Ministers. A word may be said about the unfortunate lack of meaningful cohesion among the orthodox congregations in Australia. Contrary to popular assumption, the cooperation among orthodox synagogues has proved to be more difficult than the organisation of the Ministry, which has after all held seven Conferences in the last 29 years and has done some good in asserting the role of the Ministers in the community. To this day, despite talk and hope, not a single convention of all orthodox synagogues in Australia has ever been held.

Such a united Australian federation could hold regular conferences to discuss the problems confronting Jewish life and religion today. It could speak with a united voice, when necessary in cooperation with the Ministers, on matters relating to the congregational interests of the community. It could help place the synagogue again on the map of the secularised community, regaining for the synagogue the central position it had always occupied in Jewish life. To mention but a few shortcomings: The inadequate representation of our Kehilah at the World Conferences of Synagogues held in Jerusalem; the setback we

suffered in regard to the Marriage Bill in 1961; the plight of the smaller, often leaderless congregations; the absence of expert youth leadership in almost all synagogues; the lack of coordinated adult education so successfully organised in other communities. A strong central body, well provided with finance — and I stress this point — could execute many healthy projects for the good of all.

There is no reason why combined conventions of Ministers and lay leaders could not be held — one such local convention was held some years ago in Sydney and was most successful. But to create an effective federation it is necessary for each congregation to sink its parochial interests for the benefit of the common good and give of its resources to a common fund. Without the sinews of finance no federation will be more than a paper institution.

The Second Conference did not take place until 17th-18th March, 1952, this time in the presence of Chief Rabbi (later Dr Sir) Israel Brodie, who visited Australia as part of a Pastoral Tour. Such tours are rare but stimulating. It is a pity that so few scholars and Rabbis visit this country; it is out of the way and no funds are available. Almost all prominent emissaries are fund-raisers.

Rabbi Brodie, who was for 15 years Rabbi of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation (1922-1937), was familiar with Australian conditions, and his participation was most helpful. He delivered a paper at the public session on: "The Religious and the Secular in Judaism". As head of the London Beth Din he was able to advise the conference on proselytisation, Liberal-orthodox relations, and the cooperation between Ministers and lay leaders. The Presidential Address dealt with "Some present-day religious problems facing the Ministry".

Among the messages received was one from Chief Rabbi Dr Isaac Halevi Herzog of Jerusalem. At our invitation, the President of the N.S.W. Jewish Board of Deputies, Mr Saul Symonds, addressed the conference, deploring in particular the neglect of our youth. In all, 18 Ministers attended the Conference, and some 8 papers were read and discussed. Among the resolutions not dealt with before were: To promote the unification of the synagogues and to cooperate with such body; to request all Ministers not to attend functions which are not supervised by the Rabbinate; to organise interchanges of pulpits; and — most important! — to constitute itself as an "Association of Jewish Ministers in Australia and New Zealand". Rabbi Porush was elected President and Rabbi I.L. Swift of the Central Synagogue Hon. Treasurer and Secretary. Chief Rabbi Brodie was honoured with the Honorary Presidency of the Association.

The Association has ever since played a worthy role in the religious affairs of the community and in the representation of the Ministry both inside and outside the community.

Australian Jewry has no Chief Rabbi. Some welcome this situation, others regret it. There is good reason to believe, that the benefits of an

Australian Chief Rabbinate would outweigh the disadvantages, but the community has a long way to go before there is enough unity and purpose in the Kehilah to translate this aim formally and effectively into an office.

All further Conferences were organised by the Association, and the vast majority of the Ministers were financial members. But the Conferences were not the only avenues of cooperation in the Ministry. The two Batei Din in Sydney and Melbourne also met on a number of occasions to discuss religious problems and procedures. Inter-ministerial consultations took place frequently, and in a quiet way we helped one another in answering questions, solving problems and even arbitrating. The communities which had no Beth Din of their own placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Batei Din in Melbourne or Sydney in regard to certain ecclesiastical functions. Equally important was the work done under auspices of the Association in presenting Jewish interests and rights vis a vis State authorities and the outside world. For instance, the Association made representations in regard to Russian Jewry, Israel, Religious instruction in state schools, examinations on Sabbath and Festivals, the defence of Shechitah, the Family Law Bill, the Commission of Human Relationships, Racial discrimination, Immigration of Jews, State Aid for schools, the recent PLO affair, and many other occasions too numerous to be mentioned. The united Ministry also issued many "Calls" to the community on special occasions, organised Special Services, distributed special prayers, sent numberless messages inside and outside Australia, made representations to Israeli authorities on religious matters, and so forth.

One of the useful activities of the Association between conferences was the issue of Newsletters to all Ministers informing them of important events in the community and in the Jewish world. They were all compiled by Rabbi Dr S. Coleman of Perth, but not frequently enough.

One of the resolutions of this Second Conference could, if fully observed, be helpful to the congregations: When appointing Ministers or Shochtim the approval of the Chief Rabbi or his appointee should be sought as to qualification.

At the Third Conference, 11th-13th November, 1956, the pattern was set for all future meetings: The Conference lasted over two days, comprised a Service and seven sessions, papers read by members, resolutions and elections. The highlight was the Opening Session on a Sunday evening held in a big hall and open to the public. The interstate congregations were responsible for the travel expense of their Ministers, whilst the host community defrayed the cost of accommodation, meals, publicity etc.

At the Opening Session in 1956 Rabbi Dr I. Rapaport gave the Invocation, messages from Chief Rabbis Herzog and Brodie were read and the Assembly was addressed by the Israeli Ambassador, Mr M.

Nurock, and Mr S.D. Einfeld on behalf of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. The theme of the Presidential Address was: "The present state of Religion in Australia". Among the resolutions passed was a call to the community to rally around the Emergency Appeal for Israel then in progress, a recommendation to hold joint conferences with the synagogal lay leaders, and an expression of dismay at the inroads made into Jewish life and the serious consequences ensuing from the breaches of Jewish law in relation to marriage and conversion. The Conference also appealed to the community to observe widely Yom Haatzmaut, Israel's Day of Independence, not only entertainingly but also with Services of Thanks giving as an event of deepest spiritual importance.

The Fourth Conference, held in Sydney on 19th-21st February, 1962, was again graced by the presence of Chief Rabbi Brodie. It was, unfortunately, a time of divisiveness in the Sydney Rabbinate, which contained the seed of serious discord. Some Rabbis organised themselves in a so-called "Rabbinical Assembly", to challenge the position which the Chief Minister of the Great Synagogue had occupied inside and outside the community. The several reconciliatory meetings between the parties, at which some concessions were made by both sides, failed to reach an agreement. And so it came about that the Chief Rabbi, much against his inclination, became involved in the local dispute. He unequivocally upheld the seniority of the Rabbi of the Great Synagogue, but suggested certain concessions in favour of the dissidents. These related to representations on formal occasions. In substance, the status quo was upheld. The Chief Rabbi's ruling did not fall upon willing ears and much ill feeling was engendered by the continuing disagreement. Happily the dispute did not last long. The general support of the Senior Rabbi by the Community and the vast majority of Ministers including the Melbourne Batei Din, and other factors, led to a gradual disintegration of the "Assembly" and to a normalisation of relationship. It is to the credit of all concerned, that no lasting animosities have ensued.

Among the resolutions passed were: To establish a Central Office for Marriages; to approve and register all marriages, as is the case in London; to recognise a federal body of orthodox synagogues as the "Religious Body" required by the Marriage Act.

In 1967, 6th-8th February, the Fifth Conference was held, again in Sydney. In the interim period the N.S.W. members of the Association, for geographical reasons, organised themselves into a Council of Ministers remaining all the time a branch of the Association. This Council, under the same chairmanship as the Association, dealt mainly with local matters. For instance, the Council initiated several communal Services, organised "Back-to-Judaism Campaigns", prepared a Barmitzvah syllabus, distributed the visitation of hospitals, held meetings with emissaries and leaders of Appeals for Israel, had

discussions with representatives of the United Orthodox Synagogues and the Board of Deputies, and made representations to other bodies on behalf of the religious interests of the community.

Messages were received from Israel's Chief Rabbi Unterman, the newly-appointed British Chief Rabbi, Dr I. Jakobovits, Chief Rabbi Emeritus Dr Israel Brodie, and also from the President of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, Rabbi P.Z. Levovitz.

Among the resolutions passed were: To join as a constituent the European Conference of Rabbis, of which Rabbi Brodie was President, and which in the post-war years did much for the religious rehabilitation of the surviving communities in Europe; to suggest to the Synagogues the creation of scholarships for the training of Ministers; to make known our view in favour of State Aid to Denominational schools; to support the Hillel Foundation.

The N.S.W. Federation of Synagogues (as the United Orthodox Congregation was originally called), submitted to the Conference the question, whether the Rabbinate favoured the setting up of a committee to meet with a similar committee of the Liberal congregations in order to act unitedly in non-halachic questions. The reply was in the negative.

The Fifth Conference was held at a time of great tension in the Middle East. Communal Services of Intercession were held throughout the communities the most moving of them on the very eve of the Six-Day-War. It was a memorable day, full of foreboding.

Before the next Conference a meeting of the Executive was held, as well as a day-long joint session of the two Batei Din of Sydney and Melbourne. The latter dealt with the practical work of the Beth Din with special reference to the problems of adoption, conversion, the Canberra Community Centre, the jurisdiction of the two Batei Din in the smaller communities, and the production of kosher foods.

The Association was represented at the First World Conference of Synagogues in Jerusalem in February 1968 by Rabbis Porush and Rapaport.

The Sixth Conference was held in Sydney on 23rd to 25th April, 1972. The highlight was again the public session at which the President delivered his address on "A Retrospect – What of Tomorrow?", which was published in the Great Synagogue Journal (Vol. 29, pt 1).

A number of significant events had occurred since the previous Conference. The Executive Council of Australian Jewry organised in Sydney a conference of South East Asian Jewish Communities. The Association was ignored in this project.

In Melbourne, the Yeshiva Gedola, the Talmudical College, grew in numbers and standard, and attracted a goodly number of Australian students who were given an intensive course in Talmud and Ethics. The Lubavitcher Rabbi sent six young Rabbis from America for a period of two years to serve as tutors and lecturers of the Yeshiva. This injection

dramatically raised the standard of the Yeshiva. Its impact has proved a great blessing far beyond its own circle.

In Sydney, the Shalom Residential College at the University of New South Wales opened its gates under the leadership of Mr Z. Amit, an orthodox educationist from Israel. It is the only college of its kind in Australasia.

The Rabbinate has been seriously concerned about the problems relating to Jewish divorce (Get). In Jewish Law a civil divorce between two Jews is insufficient, and no re-marriage can take place until a Get has been effected at the Beth Din. In normal circumstances the consent of both parties is necessary for a Get. When one of the parties refuses to cooperate and the Get is withheld, the parties are regarded as still married in Jewish Law.

The Batei Din in Sydney and Melbourne and the Association made strenuous and persistent efforts to place their case before the authorities, suggesting an alleviation of this problem by giving the Court the power to make the Get on human grounds, i.e. to make re-marriage possible, part of the Court's order.

The Association petitioned the Attorney-General of Australia and the Senate Committee on Divorce for appropriate legislation, especially as a new Family Law Bill was being submitted to Parliament. These efforts failed, and recently the President renewed his efforts in evidence he gave before the Commission of Human Relationships in public session. The answer will not be known for some time.

At the time of this Conference it was already known, that the President of the Association would soon retire from his post as Rabbi of the Great Synagogue. He offered to vacate the Presidency. The time was ripe for the Presidency, and the Conference, to move to Melbourne. The Rabbinate of Sydney felt in general that it was time the Melbourne Ministry took a more leading part in the affairs of the Association. But lack of coordination in the Melbourne Rabbinate made this impractical. This resulted in the re-election of Rabbi Porush as President for another term.

We come now to the latest, the **Seventh Conference**, which for reasons alluded to above was again held in Sydney, on 4th to 6th May, 1975. In his last Presidential Address Rabbi Porush gave a brief historical survey of the development of the community in the 29 years 1946-1975, i.e. the period covering the seven conferences, concluding thus:

"Our situation now is full at the same time of light and shade, of promise and misgiving. In such a state the responsibility of the spiritual leader is particularly heavy. The challenges facing him are mighty, but the opportunities are also great. We Ministers cannot afford to sit back in *laissez-faire* complacency. Many of us dissipate our forces on inessentials, chasing the shadows and neglecting the substance. We must not become functionaries. Leadership is our banner. A Conference of

this kind should be a moment of stocktaking and mutual consultation, of learning from one another and of dedicating ourselves to the ideals of our sacred calling . . . We hope to emerge from the Conference fortified and enriched, and resolved to redouble our effort for the establishment of Torah and Judaism as the norm of our life, and to deepen our commitment to Klal Yisrael and to Eretz Yisrael."

Thirty-two Rabbis and Ministers participated in this conference, including two Rabbis from New Zealand, and 12 addresses were given in all. For the first time a Hebrew paper was read by the President. The subject was "Rabbi Yosef Caro", the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, the accepted Code of Jewish Law, whose 400th anniversary of death was commemorated just before the conference. It was one of the rare occasions when a purely academic paper was given to give some of the participants a chance to present the results of their research.

Among the papers discussed were: The halachic aspects of conversion, the inroads of assimilation, Israel and the diaspora, contemporary halachic questions, and others.

The "Halachic Questions", presented by Rabbi Abramson, comprised weighty problems which relate to the way of life of modern society. They included: Contraception, abortion, artificial insemination, adoption, euthenasia and others. A lively discussion followed this presentation, because some of the questions are still under discussion among the great Rabbanim in the world, the *Gedolei Hador*, and their practical application is still in a somewhat fluid state requiring constant consultation with expert authorities.

The Conference appointed two important sub-committees: One to prepare a detailed constitution of the Association to be adopted at the next Conference in three years time; and the other to act as a vigilant over the rights of Ministers vis a vis their congregations. There is an anomaly in the relationship between the Jewish Minister and his congregation. After all, the Minister is a "professional" — though, of course, he is more than that — with a family to look after and with material needs. All other professions are organised for the purpose of promoting their interests and their entitlements. The Jewish Minister enjoys no such protection, and therefore his rights, moral or legal, are sometimes disregarded with impunity. Let us hope that the new sub-committee will be given a fair hearing by the Boards of Management of the Synagogues if and when the need arises.

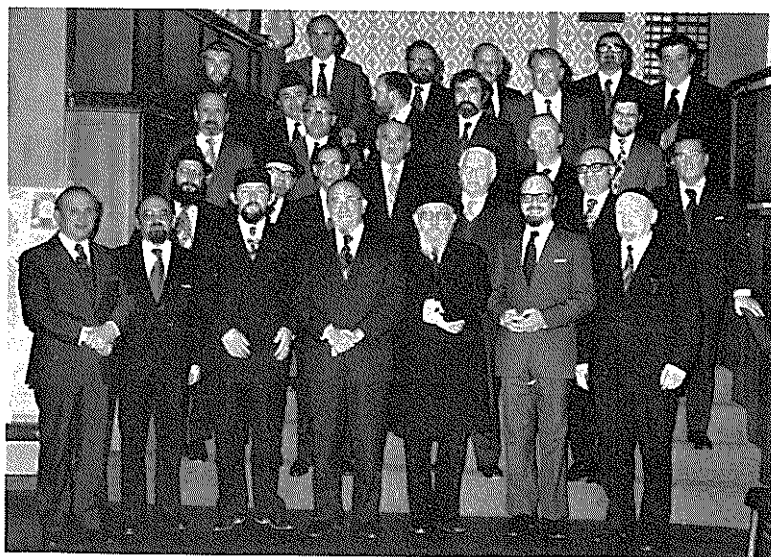
The Conference, as usual, concluded with the election of officers. Rabbi Porush retired from the Presidency after 29 years, and was honoured with the "Honorary Life Presidency" of the Association. The elections resulted in:

Rabbi R. Lubofsky, of St. Kilda: President.

Rabbi Dr S. Coleman, of Perth: Executive Vice President.

Rabbi R. Apple, of the Great Synagogue, and

Rabbi J. Schreiber, of Kew, Victoria: Vice-Presidents.
Rabbi S.S. Silas, of the Sephardi Synagogue: Treasurer.
Rev. S. Link, of St. Kilda: Secretary.
Rabbi T. Rafalovicz, of Adelaide and
Rabbi A. Rosenfeld, of Wellington N.Z.: Committee.



Ministers in attendance at Conference, 1975.

PHILIP JOSEPH COHEN
(1802 – 1864)

by

G.F.J. BERGMAN, D.Ec., LL.B.
(Read before the Society on 16.12.74).

When a "Memorial", published by his family after P.J. Cohen's death, praised him as "The Founder of the nucleus of the First Hebrew Congregation in the Antipodes", his importance for the development of Sydney's Jewish community appears to be slightly exaggerated. Nonetheless, the somewhat pathetic story of the life of this early Jewish settler, whose knowledge, devotion and vitality had a lasting influence on the community, is worth a detailed biography.

ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA

On 19th May, 1828, the "Sydney Gazette" reported that "a gentleman, one of the passengers on board the 'Alexander Henry', visits the Colony under the auspices of Messrs Rothschild. The gentleman's name, we believe, is Cohen. A vessel, with a valuable cargo of merchandise, will quickly follow him to the Colony from London".

The "Alexander Henry" "had", the paper wrote, "a tremendously long passage, having been six months from London". It had been four weeks detained in the Irish Channel by adverse weather. The "Register of Ships arriving" recorded that the ship, a 299 ton Canadian cargo boat, had left London on 21st November, 1827 with only a few passengers, among whom were Messrs P.J. Cohen and Lawrence Joseph Spyer. P.J. Cohen was aged 25, when he arrived in Australia.¹ Apart from the long delay, the journey does not seem to have been entirely without trouble, because on 27th May, 1828, both Cohen and Spyer signed, together with two other passengers, a "Letter to the Editor" of "The Australian"² in which they stated, that "hearing that a report prevails throughout Sydney that Captain Muggeridge of the brig "Alexander Henry" from London and Cork, starved his cabin passengers during the voyage, was a most unfounded and malicious rumour".

This refutation of a rumour was typical of the honesty of P.J. Cohen, who did not hesitate to refute at once the statement "Sydney Gazette" that he had come out "under the auspices of Messrs Rothschild". On 21st May, 1828, he wrote to the Editor "Sydney Gazette" that "no person had authority from me to use the name of the respectable firm, and I therefore request that you will contradict the same in your next publication". Nevertheless, when he died, his family, in the "Memorial" wrote that he "left England entrusted with

important commercial missions connected with the great Banking firm of Rothschild".

An enquiry, made in 1964 by this author with the firm of N.M. Rothschild & Sons in London, revealed that a "careful search in the archives of the firm has failed to produce any reference to Philip Joseph Cohen or any documents relevant to him".

THE FIRM "COHEN & SPYER"

The two new arrivals, who are to be listed among the first free Jewish settlers,³ and who were obviously friends, decided to make common cause and did not take long to establish themselves as traders in Sydney.

On 11th July, 1828, "The Australian" noted, whilst misspelling the name of the junior partner — Spyer was 22 years old — that "a new trading house has been this week opened in Sydney under the Style of Cohen & Shyre".

On 30th July, "Cohen & Spyer, having taken extensive premises next to the Custom House, George Street", announced⁴ that they "will, on arrival of the 'Coronet'," which was the cargo previously alluded to and whose arrival they daily expected, "open their premises with the most extensive description of European goods which, having been purchased in England for cash, they will be enabled to sell at very reduced prices". They also offered the remainder of their consignment per "Alexander Henry", consisting of e.g. wines, cement, wooden shovels, white lead, paint, linseed oil, chain cable with anchor etc for sale.

The house which they had acquired for their business was in George Street, at the corner of what is now Martin Place and the General Post Office. It was also used as P.J. Cohen's residence.

The opening of the store was, however, delayed, because the "Coronet" did not arrive until November 1828, and on 21st November, 1828, the firm made known that the store in George Street would shortly be opened with goods received per "Coronet", "Prince George" and "Adams".⁵ They also now acted as shipping agent for the "Coronet"⁶ after whose arrival a large choice of goods was offered at the new store in January 1829.⁷ They continued to import wares from England by "Surrey",⁸ "Elizabeth",⁹ "Amethyst"¹⁰ and also established a large Jewellery Department for which they appointed Mr Felix Lynn as manager.¹¹ As usual in those days, they followed the practice of other traders and employed Sydney auctioneers like Mr Bodenham,¹² V. & E. Solomon¹³ and Samuel Lyons¹⁴ to sell their stock.

As it was fashionable for the traders to be shareholders of the Bank of New South Wales, the fact, recorded in Historical Records of Australia, Ser. I Vol. XIV, p. 560, that P.J. Cohen had in December, 1828 bought five shares of the Bank, value £100, was not surprising.

Cohen had also followed the example of J.B. Montefiore and Michael Phillips and on 8.12.1828 applied for a grant. Interviewed by the Land Board, he stated that he had a capital of £2500, submitted a schedule of his capital and pointed out that the stock in trade of his firm was £8000. Although he wrote that he had "no intention to discontinue his mercantile and trading concerns nor that he would be prepared to say that he would permanently divide up his land, but would engage a free man to be put in charge, the application, backed by a recommendation of Michael Phillips, was on 27.2.1829 approved by the directors of the Land Board, Mr Dumareq & James Busby.

On 12.6.1829 a grant was made out of 2560 acres on the South side of the Goulburn River, but as it turned out that a Mr Arndell had already previously selected this land, he was asked to select other free land. On 17.3.1833, he selected 2560 acres "from the junction of the Bell River with the Macquarie River adjoining the grant of J.B. Montefiore. This was approved by the Governor on 28.2.1833. (Col. Secr. Letters received re applications for land, Mitchell 2/7827).

It must be assumed that this land became a casualty of his second bankruptcy in Maitland, as nothing further is heard of it.

Cohen made his name known in the mercantile world, when at a Traders' Meeting on 23rd November, 1829 he "submitted sundry resolutions". An official exchange value of "Dollars, Rupies and Dumps" was at this meeting requested by the merchants and approved.¹⁵

Very soon, P.J. Cohen also became a member of the Jury.¹⁶

So everything seemed promising, when disaster struck. It seemed that the two young men were not used to the hazardous credit conditions in the colony which then was just recovering from the severe depression of the years 1825-1827. They probably extended credit to a large number of rather dubious traders. And it appears that they bought large quantities of goods from fellow-Jewish traders such as Joseph Barrow Montefiore and Michael Phillips, both of whom were connected with the Rothschilds and at this time, at least, financially, far more secure than Cohen & Spyer.

The first sign of difficulties appeared in July 1829 when, in a court case, Cohen & Spyer v. Webb, 600 acres of land were advertised to be sold to cover their debts.¹⁷ They had obviously aimed too high and had been too inexperienced in business, because, although on 20th January, 1830¹⁸ they still advertised that "large new stocks had arrived", they probably had also exhausted their credits in England.

On 22nd July, 1830, the Bank of N.S.W. advertised in the "Sydney Gazette" that "Mr Philip Joseph Cohen had on 17th July, 1830 parted with all his interests in the Joint Stock and Capital of the Bank to Mr J.B. Montefiore and ceased to be any longer a partner of this Bank". In an effort to prevent insolvency, Cohen & Spyer advertised on 5th October, 1830 in the "Sydney Gazette" that they are "about to

relinquish business" and requested all debts to be paid by 27th October. But it was too late. And on 27th January, 1831 P.J. Cohen and L.J. Spyer were made bankrupt by Michael Phillips, represented at the Court by the popular Jewish lawyer David Poole. (S.G. 27.1.1831)

On 31st March, 1831 their partnership was formally dissolved "by mutual consent", an agreement witnessed by Michael Phillips and Horatio Samuel, a relative of Phillips. (S.G. 2.4.1831)

It appears that, when on 4th February, 1831 the trustees for the creditors – and there were many of them, apart from Phillips and Montefiore – were selected, Michael Phillips became the acting Trustee empowered to wind up the firm. The sale of their stock-in-trade was postponed several times from 7th February onwards, until on 12th March, 1831, Samuel Lyons advertised in the Sydney Gazette that he would sell the whole stock in trade as well as Cohen's household furniture, horses, carts and all other effects at his residence in George Street on 22nd March, 1831.¹⁹ Curious trade practices, to say the least, appear to have prevailed in those days. Whilst the firm's stock in trade was sold on 22nd March, 1831, P.J. Cohen seems to have deposited about a week later a considerable part of his stock at the store of the Trustee of his creditors, because on 15th May, 1832, Michael Phillips advertised in the "Sydney Gazette" that "unless the store rent and other charges due upon a quantity of casks of cement, chain cables, paint and a variety of goods deposited in my store since 1st April, 1831 be paid before 19th May, the same will be sold at Public Auction by Samuel Lyons on 21st May, 1832, to cover the rent etc ..."

It appears that, when everything seemed favourable, Cohen & Spyer had not only bought land on the South Head Road in Sydney and, at the sale of Barnett Levey's Waverley Crescent, three lots, No. 12, 13 & 14 of the Crescent, but also a large farm known as Brock Lodge near the Wollombi Creek in the Hunter Valley. Maybe they intended to trade there, because on 10th August, 1830 they had advertised in the "Sydney Gazette" that they wanted to "acquaint the inhabitants of the Hunter's River that they opened their stores for the sale of every description of goods and that produce will be taken in exchange for goods". However they learnt – alas, too late – from experience, because they added in the advertisement:– "No credit will be given to any one ..."

Now all this land went under the hammer too, when on 7th June, 1831 the Sheriff advertised that on the request of "Montefiore and others" he would sell all this land on 16th June. And, on 26th March, Phillips had advertised as acting Trustee that creditors should come forward with their accounts, as otherwise they would be excluded from a dividend from the estate to be distributed after May 1831. This was the sad end of the short-lived firm of Cohen & Spyer and, whilst



P.J. COHEN

apparently Spyer remained in Sydney and was joined by his brother Stephen and began to trade again, P.J. Cohen decided to seek his fortune in the country. From an advertisement, published in the "Sydney Gazette" of 19th May, 1832 it may be deduced that Stephen Spyer established a store at West Maitland, which was managed by his brother Lawrence Joseph.

MAITLAND

During the twenties, gentlemen immigrants and emancipists had taken up land in the fertile valley of the Hunter River, on the Patrick and Wallis Plains. In 1829, the Government township of East Maitland was founded, whilst the older settlement of Wallis Plains then became known as West Maitland.²⁰

On 12th June, 1831, the first steamship in Australia, the "Sophie Jane" was put on the Sydney-Newcastle run, opening up the district which until then could only be reached by sailing ships, or by long coach travel via Windsor and Singleton,²¹ often menaced by bushrangers. This might have influenced Cohen to choose Maitland

which, as an agricultural centre, was then of greater importance than the port of Newcastle as the place to build up a new life. He did not lose time and on 8th July, 1831 he announced in "The Australian" and a day later in the "Sydney Gazette" that he "will shortly open a store at newly erected premises near the Rose Inn at Maitland".

The plan to go into the country no doubt matured in Cohen's mind even before the failure of the firm Cohen & Spyer, because in the Land Grant registers of the Registrar General Department Vol. 43, p. 13 is recorded that on or before 19th May, 1830, Governor Sir Richard Bourke promised Cohen a land grant of 8 acres, 2 roods, 8 perches in the County of Northumberland, Parish of Maitland on the "High Road". The land was actually granted to him by Sir Richard Bourke after the liquidation of the firm of Cohen & Spyer, on 16th January, 1836 in accordance with a Report No. 317, made on 10th July, 1836 by the Commissioners appointed under the Act of the Colonial Legislature 4 William IV. No. 9. "The Australian" of 5th September, 1834 recorded this grant as one of 10 acres.

By the end of 1831, Cohen moved to Maitland. He was then in the prime of his life and ten years of happy and rewarding activity commenced for the young immigrant, who soon became one of the best known personalities in the district.

P.J. COHEN AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE SYDNEY JEWISH COMMUNITY

In P.J. Cohen's "Memorial" it is said that "setting himself to work, he consummated the hope of his life, by drawing together the Jewish residents for Holy Worship and thus founded the nucleus of the first Hebrew congregation in the Antipodes". This statement was based on the "Report of the Committee of the York Street (Sydney) Synagogue" of 1845²³ which recorded that "Mr P.J. Cohen having offered the use of his house, Divine Worship was, for the first time in this Colony, according to the Hebrew form, performed every Sabbath and Holidays." This "Report" has, for more than a century been the basis of Australian Jewish history and created the legend of P.J. Cohen as the "Founder" of the Sydney Jewish community. A thorough research into the matter can only promote doubts into the veracity of this statement.

There is no doubt that Cohen was a deeply religious man and was familiar with Jewish law and that, before embarking for Australia he had obtained an authorisation from the Chief Rabbi of the British Jews, the Rev. Solomon Herschell, to perform marriages according to the Jewish rite.²³

But it is very doubtful that through his initiative alone the first regular services were held in the Colony. It must be assumed that services had been held in private homes before his arrival, because on

29th August, 1828, Arbraham Polack, a then well-to-do emancipist, petitioned Governor Darling for the use of a house in Elizabeth Street "on behalf of himself and other members of the Jewish persuasion" to "celebrate Divine Services". Governor Darling refused with the remark that the Jews could have found a worthier person (Colon. Secr. Petitions 4/1990, 28/6877) This shows that there existed a nucleus of a Jewish community before Cohen started his services. Further, the "Report" also recorded that "from some difference of opinion then existing among the members of the faith, Divine Service was also occasionally performed in a room hired by Messrs A. Elias and James Simmons". This "difference" found expression, when at the Passover of 1830, Cohen & Spyer invited the Jews to a Seder service,²⁴ a rival service was held by James Simmons and Vaiben Solomon.²⁵ I firmly believe that it was not religious differences that caused this dissent, but that these men, all of whom were older well-established emancipists, who certainly had held services before in their homes and who probably had asked Polack to petition for a house of worship, did not want to be dependent for their religion upon a 25 years old immigrant who had the ambition to become a leader of the community. It is significant that of the members of the "Sub-Committee" appointed in 1845 to prepare the "Report", P.J. Cohen and Moses Joseph were the only members in New South Wales in 1828 and the early thirties.

The "Memorial" continues with the assertion that "mainly through his untiring energies, premises were erected in Bridge Street and Divine Service was conducted therein by him". However, we have a report from a non-Jewish source which clearly indicates what had happened in the years 1828 to 1837 in the Jewish community of Sydney. Mr J. Macle hose in his book "The Picture of Sydney and Strangers' Guide in New South Wales for 1838", published in Sydney in 1837, wrote:

"There are not, perhaps, above 100 Israelites in Sydney, and they are of various grades and classes in Society. About the year 1828, some few endeavoured to form a place, that the children of the ancient faith should meet to pray to the Supreme Power and Deity, in the language in which the Word of God is written . . . A room was obtained from a gentleman then residing in Sydney; there a few of the members met in devotion and piety. When the members increased in number, a meeting of that body was called, on which occasion J.B. Montefiore Esq. acted as chairman. He 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"; yet he, with the assistance of some few, rented extensive premises in George Street and fitted it up neatly as a place of worship which answered all the purposes required . . . The house of prayer was established under name "Beth Zephilla".

In the present year (1837), the members increased in numbers and a

more commodious building was required for their religious meeting . . . more extensive premises were leased . . . and they have now a well-arranged place of worship".

I have the impression that Cohen not only encountered the opposition of the emancipists who regarded him probably as a brash youngster, but also of fellow-immigrants like J.B. Montefiore and Michael Phillips, both of whom belonged to the "London Establishment", who may have regarded Cohen as an "upstart" who assumed positions which, in their opinion, belonged to them. These two Jewish notables, both of whom were, incidentally later to suffer similar fates, forced Cohen into bankruptcy and out of Sydney.

By 1832, when the first congregation was founded under the presidency of J.B. Montefiore, Cohen was no longer in Sydney.

Montefiore, quite obviously soon lost interest in the community, because of the "cabal", mentioned by Macle hose, and probably despised the former convicts who formed the majority of his congregation. By 1836 Abraham Polack was President of the congregation and it was he, and not P.J. Cohen who was responsible for the move of the congregation to the Bridge Street House. It is significant for the reliability of the 1845 "Report", that neither the early George Street, nor the Bridge Street Synagogue is mentioned in this "Report".

But, Cohen did not immediately relinquish his influence on the community after he had moved to Maitland. It appears that he travelled often between Maitland and Sydney, to attend services and celebrate marriages, the first of which was that of Moses Joseph and Rosetta Nathan on 1st February, 1832.²⁶ After his departure, he had to transfer his power to celebrate marriages to other members of the community as e.g. Solomon Phillips.²⁷ But on 31st December, 1835 he celebrated the marriage of his old friend Lawrence Joseph Spyer to Miss Angeline de Metz in the George Street Synagogue.²⁸

Although in 1832 Messrs J.B. Montefiore and Michael Phillips had obtained a distinct grant of Land from the Government for a Jewish burial place²³ in July 1835, Cohen's name was added to those of the original grantees as trustee of the burial ground in Devonshire Street.¹⁰⁰ And, according to the Bridge Street Synagogue Minutes, on 27th September, 1837, at the first meeting of the Committee, at the Bridge Street Synagogue Chambers, Cohen was elected an Honorary Member of the Committees of the congregation.

One can hardly imagine today what effort it then meant to travel from Maitland to Sydney. Cohen had first to travel from Maitland to Morpeth by horse-drawn cab or coach and then to travel by steamboat via Newcastle to Sydney, a run which normally took about eight hours.

His later failure in Maitland may, at least partly, be attributed to his frequent absence from his business and his devotion to his friends in the Sydney community.

ACTIVITIES IN MAITLAND – MARRIAGE

It did not take long for Cohen to settle down at Maitland. His store seems to have been a success and he became at once involved in local activities. He was so well regarded by the settlers in the district that in April 1833 he was appointed Secretary of their race meetings which were held in July.²⁹ He applied for and was assigned several convict servants.³⁰ He was appointed a Justice of the Peace.

Thinking now that the time had come to found a family, his eye fell on a Jewish girl, 10 years his junior, who had just arrived, in May 1833, with her parents from England. On 9th October, 1833 he was married in Sydney by Michael Phillips to Annette Abigail Levien, daughter of Solomon Levien.³¹ The most prominent public house in West Maitland was the Rose Inn which, in October 1833, had been taken over by George Moss who was later to play an important role in Sydney's Jewish community. In January 1834, Cohen's father-in-law became the licensee of the Rose Inn and was responsible for the mail at West Maitland.³² The two families were now happily united in the small country town.³³

In October 1833 Cohen became the newsagent for "The Australian" in Maitland and in the November of the same year he opened a soap factory, advertising that he sold "the best yellow soap at 4½d per lb", whilst at the same time informing the public that he was continuing to sell all kinds of goods in his store.

In January 1835 he embarked on a new career, that of a publican. He took over the "Rose Inn" from his father-in-law, who moved to Sydney's fashionable "Pulteney Hotel".³⁶ "Returning sincere thanks for the liberal encouragement received during his residence of four years at the Hunter" – which shows that he had moved to Maitland immediately after his bankruptcy – in his store and soap factory, he announced, "that he was still continuing to conduct these enterprises" and "having received a considerable addition to his usual supplies, will be enabled to sell at a much lower rate".

When, in October 1835, under the Act of Governor and Council 5th William IV No. 24 Post Offices were established in Sydney and in the Country Towns, Cohen was on 21st October, 1835, officially appointed Postmaster for Maitland,³⁷ a position he maintained during his whole residence at Maitland.

On 18th October, 1836, the birth of his first child, a daughter, was announced in "The Australian". Eleven more children, two of whom died in childhood, were added to his family circle.

In January 1839 he obtained a contract to convey the mail to and from Maitland to Darlington³⁸ and in January 1840, "The Australian" noted that Cohen "intended starting an excellent coach which will travel in four hours from his Rose Inn to Darlington".³⁹

On 13th August, 1839 he advertised in "The Australian" that he was receiving applications for shares in the "Hunter River Bank", an

התורה אשר שם משה לפני בני ישראל
הם

חמשה חומשי תורה

מדויקים במיב דקה מן חלקה
בקרי וכתוב

חסרות ויתרות ע"פ בעלי הסמכות והושם עינא פקחא על
כל קץ וקץ ע"פ אנשי שם הבקאים במלאכת
הנהגה :

גם העניתי בסוף כל ספר וספר

סדר החפוטות כנהוג וסדר חכמות

לפניהם ואחריהם :



בלונדן

נדפס בבית וברדפוס

יהודה ליב בר אלכסנדר זצל

בשנת

אשר נתון לנו תורה אחת למען

PENTATEUCH believed to have been used by Phillip Joseph Cohen at first authorised Service in Sydney.

institute of which however nothing was further heard.

Soon new plans were occupying his mind. In May 1840, he became the Secretary of the "Maitland and Newcastle Steam Navigation Company", a company which was proposed to be founded as a Joint Stock Company for the purpose of providing large steam boats between Sydney and Newcastle, smaller boats for the river traffic and a steam tug to convey barges to West Maitland.⁴⁰ As Secretary of this Company, he advertised in August 1840 that he would receive designs and estimates for 10 vessels⁴¹ and on 8th September, 1840 he called the shareholders of the Company to a meeting at his Rose Inn for the election of Directors and the signing of the deed of settlement.⁴²

On 14th January, 1841, the "West Maitland Steam Boat Company" with Cohen as its Secretary, announced the launching of a boat on Anniversary Day,⁴³ but in April 1841, Cohen gave notice of forfeiture of shares of the M. & N.S.N.C. by shareholders, if the second instalments were not paid immediately.⁴⁴ It appears that during the following years he relinquished the post of Secretary of this company. Nevertheless, the experience gained in this enterprise and the connections he gained through it, was to become very valuable for him in the last years of his life.

In December 1840 the first newspaper in Maitland, the "Maitland Express and Hunter River Advertiser" was launched and Cohen became the newsagent in Maitland, whilst his father-in-law was the paper's agent in Sydney.⁴⁶ The paper was short lived and in December 1846 was replaced by the "Hunter River Gazette" of which Cohen also acted as agent. Half a year later, in June 1842, this paper, too, closed down. It was, on 7th January 1843 replaced by the "Maitland Mercury and Hunter River Advertiser", a newspaper which still exists today as the oldest country newspaper in New South Wales. It is to be regarded as the most valuable source of the history of the Jews in the Hunter Valley.

In the meantime P.J. Cohen's half-brother, Simeon Joseph Cohen, had arrived from England and joined P.J. Cohen at West Maitland, where he founded with P.J. Cohen's brother-in-law, Alfred Levien, the firm Simeon J. Cohen & Co., informing the public on 14th March, 1840 in the "Australian" that they had opened business at the Post Office, Maitland as Commission Agents.

Simeon Cohen advertised, however, on 11th December, 1841 in the "Hunter River Gazette" that "he was also continuing his business as auctioneer and commission agent with store rooms in Sydney" and was "still adhering to his original system of business, i.e. hiring servants, shipping wool, supplying rations, loading drays and other services". Further that he was "supplying flour, and accepting commands for the purchase of grain, colonial tobacco etc". He also announced in the name of his firm or of "the proprietor Samuel Cohen of Bridge Street,

Sydney", that "all centrally situated business premises between the Rose Inn and the Commercial Bank in High Street, West Maitland, known as 'Cohen's Buildings' were to be let for 5 or 7 years, the proprietor having retired from business".⁴⁷

Samuel Cohen, who was no relation to Philip Joseph, had arrived, aged 19, by "Resource" in April 1834⁴⁸ and settled in Maitland, where in 1841⁵⁰ he failed in business, only to recover soon after the depression and to found a "dynasty" which for a century furnished the Sydney community with outstanding leaders.⁴⁹

Two other prominent Jewish settlers had also received land grants in West Maitland, although they never settled there. Saul Samuel of Wellington N.S.W., the later Baronet, was promised one rood on the High Road by Governor Darling, which was, 18 years later, on 1st June, 1830, granted to him by Governor Fitzroy.⁵¹ The other one was Saul Lyons, brother of Samuel Lyons, the famous auctioneer, who on 20th May, 1837 was granted 33 perches on the High Road⁵² and a further 37 perches in September, 1837.⁵³ Saul Lyons was the actual proprietor of the Rose Inn which he leased out.

Maitland was then a "bush township", far removed from the life of Sydney. The "Hunter River Gazette", on 29th January, 1842 complained bitterly that "bushrangers were active in the district, that the inland mail was often robbed and individuals held up and robbed". This was, indeed, shortly after the time when Edward Davis's "Jewboy Gang" had terrorised the Maitland countryside and in November 1840 had attacked the inn of Henry Cohen at Black Creek near Maitland.⁵⁴ "Housebreaking was not unusual", the paper continued, "and intoxicated aborigines, who often robbed and murdered in outlying stations were a nuisance in the town." Slowly people in the "outback" also began to realise that a grave commercial crisis was looming.⁵⁰

The year 1841 had shown a general rush of land and merchandise to the market, allowing excessive speculation in land and stock, and when payments were due to the banks, many could not meet their obligations. The local crisis came as a sequel to grave depression in the United States and in England, where wool prices went down and firms like Montefiore Brothers "interrupted" payments, making things worse in the colony. In 1842 it became necessary to proclaim an Insolvency Law. In 1843 the Bank of Australasia crashed and with it many traders faced ruin.

The repercussions of the general shortage of money soon reached Maitland. On 5th March, 1842 the "Hunter River Gazette" announced the insolvencies of four Gentile firms or persons.

Notwithstanding the difficult times, on 30th April, 1842, Simeon Joseph Cohen and Alfred Leven opened a wholesale wine and spirit trade firm, and announced that they would continue their commission agency, but "for cash only".⁵⁵ The giving of credit had passed, and the

liquor trade was still a flourishing branch of business. In May 1842 the Rose Inn became the agent for the Albion Brewery⁵⁶ and in June 1842 Edward Salamon opened a branch of his George Street, Sydney business in High Street, Maitland, for the sale of wines and spirits.⁵⁷ Salamon was another brother-in-law of P.J. Cohen, having married Annette Cohen's sister Henrietta Levien in October 1839.⁵⁸

LOCAL AFFAIRS IN MAITLAND

From 1838 onwards P.J. Cohen became very active in the local affairs of the country town.

The "Historical Records of Australia" indicate in Ser. I. Vol. XIX p. 327/8 that as a patriotic citizen, he signed, on 19th March, 1838, together with Alfred Levien, Samuel Cohen and Simeon Moss, an Address to Queen Victoria from the citizens of Maitland on the occasion of her accession to the throne.

On 7th March, 1839 he wrote a long Letter to the Editor of "The Australian" about the longstanding conflict between the townships of East and West Maitland. There had been confusion about the boundaries which had been defined in the Government Gazette of 1835. West Maitland, although subjected to floods, had grown ahead of East Maitland. Meetings had been held concerning the establishment of markets in both townships. "The Australian" of 2nd January, 1840, quoted a meeting in the Court House of East Maitland which had taken place on 30th December, 1839, at which P.J. Cohen had been the foremost speaker, pressing for a motion to establish such markets. The rivalry between the two townships came again to the forefront, when Cohen and other members of the commercial interests induced the Magistrate at East Maitland, Mr Grant, to hold on 24th February, 1840 a Court meeting at West Maitland. For this purpose, Cohen had fitted out a commodious room in his Rose Inn for the Court to be held.⁵⁹ As the Clerk of the East Maitland Court did not appear at the Meeting, Cohen acted as Clerk of the Court and in an article in "The Australian" of 18th February, 1840, was thanked for "having given his valuable services gratuitously on this occasion". This fact occasioned an acrimonious article in the "Sydney Gazette"⁶⁰ in which an anonymous, obviously East Maitland "Observer" accused Cohen of being the originator of the scheme of holding Police Courts at West Maitland instead of at East Maitland "with the view of putting money in his own pocket" — (an argument that was perhaps not entirely improbable). The writer also objected against Cohen having acted as Clerk of the Court. Whereupon Cohen, in a long letter to "The Australian", published on 5th March, 1840, defended himself against such accusations, pointing out that "the holding of Police Courts at West Maitland was perfectly justified by the fact that West Maitland had 3000 inhabitants, whilst the Government Township of East Maitland, although it had a Court House, had only 300." Referring to

the letter by "Observer" in the "Sydney Gazette", he asked the writer to reveal his name and not to shield behind anonymity. As the Clerk of the Court of East Maitland did not appear at the Rose Inn meeting, he had been asked, he said, and consented to take down the depositions and to transact the business of the Court.

In October 1841 he took part in the founding of the "Hunter River Society"⁶¹ of which he remained a very active member.⁶²

Needless to say that, like most of his co-religionists, he continuously contributed to any good cause, like e.g. the Maitland Church Fund,⁶³ the Governor Bourke statue⁶⁴ of which he was a member of the fundraising committee,⁶⁵ the West Maitland Wesleyan Chapel,⁶⁶ the Church of St. John at West Maitland.⁶⁷

THE ELECTIONS

When, in the depths of the Depression, in 1843, the writs were issued for the first election of 24 members of the Legislative Council of New South Wales and East and West Maitland had to elect members, P.J. Cohen was in his element and threw himself wholesale into the election campaign. A meeting was held on 14th January, 1843 at his Rose Inn for the purpose of inviting candidates to represent the district. At this meeting Cohen moved to invite Messrs Richard Windeyer and Edye Manning of Sydney, but "such a multiplicity of amendments was proposed that the meeting was adjourned to 24th March".

"The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser" was not in favour of Cohen's propositions, arguing that the gentlemen proposed by him were largely unknown to the people in the district.⁶⁸ A number of other candidates came forward, as e.g. Major D'Arcy Wentworth, a brother of W.C. Wentworth. At a meeting of "Friends of Major Wentworth", Cohen warned the electors "not to pledge anything but on the day of the election to give the vote to the best man in the field." He founded an "Edye Manning Committee", consisting of Messrs James Wolff, Samuel Cohen and himself with his address as that of the Committee⁶⁹ in spite of the "Mercury" 's warnings, and when Mr Manning declined to stand, then nominated a Mr Foster. At an electors' meeting of 24th January, 1843, he was practically the soul of the meeting. He also backed together with Samuel Cohen a committee for a Mr Scott as member for the borough of Northumberland.⁷⁰ On 11th February, the "Mercury" reported that Cohen went with other supporters of Mr Scott to Newcastle to attend an election meeting of supporters of Major Wentworth and spoke against the Major. Among other things he said that "emancipists owed a great lot to Major Wentworth's brother, Mr W.C. Wentworth, but nothing to the Major".

During the whole election campaign he continued to support Mr Scott, but when the results were known, Scott had been defeated by Major Wentworth, yet Cohen had the satisfaction to see Mr Foster elected for Northumberland⁷¹ and Mr Windeyer for the County of Durham.⁷²

INSOLVENT AGAIN

In the meantime the economic situation in the colony had gone from bad to worse. Simeon J. Cohen and his partner Alfred Levien were the first Jews in Maitland to become insolvent with £2458.10.8 debts and £1961.4.3 assets in January 1843.⁷³ In April 1843, P.J. Cohen received again his publican's licence for the Rose Inn, whilst Simeon Joseph Cohen, who was also the licensee of the "Bush Tavern" at Maitland, was granted the licence subject to obtaining his certificate of discharge which he did not receive until February 1844. A new licence for the "Freemasons' Arms" at West Maitland was refused Samuel Cohen.⁷⁴

Had P.J. Cohen neglected his business for electioneering or would he have failed, anyhow, with or without elections? The elections were hardly over, when on 14th July, 1843 he had to plead his schedule and was declared insolvent with a debt of £4078.8.10. As assets there were listed landed property to the value of £1150, personal property worth £1085, outstanding debts £794.7.0, resulting in a deficiency balance of £1149.1.10.⁷⁵ Creditors' meetings at the Supreme Court House, Sydney, were called for the 26th July and 2nd August, 1843.⁷⁶ He was allowed to carry on his business at the Rose Inn by order of the provisional trustee.⁷⁷ At the third meeting of creditors it was stated that he owed the firm of Montefiore, Breillat & Co. of Sydney, which was also in difficulties, the sum of £546.9.0, and to Abraham & Saul Lyons £50.⁷⁹ In September 1843 Messrs Henry McDermott and Nicolas James had been confirmed as trustees in his insolvency.⁷⁸ A fourth meeting of creditors in October 1843 showed that he owed Abraham Polack £193.15.0. At this meeting he was allowed to retain his wearing apparel and household furniture, together with his wife's trinkets.⁸⁰

This was the sad end of P.J. Cohen's enterprise at Maitland which had started so well. It might have been his own fault because he had so often neglected his business for communal interests in Sydney and local public interests, but even if he had devoted less interest and effort to public causes, he would probably also not have escaped being involved in the general economic crisis. He was not alone in failing. On 12th August, 1843 Samuel Cohen had become insolvent with debts of £7304.19.1 and a balance deficiency of £1250.13.3 ("Maitland Mercury" 12.8.1843), followed by Edward Salamon with debts amounting to £12,330.2.1 and a deficiency balance of £3875.11.1.⁸²

As an "election epilogue", P.J. Cohen's trustees tried in March 1844, to recover an alleged debt of £300 in Maitland Court from Mr A.W. Scott, the defeated candidate. It turned out that the amount was for drinks etc supplied to voters by the candidate's agent . . . Finally an amount of £91.3.6 was awarded by the Court to the Trustees . . .

THE MAITLAND THEATRE and two Old Bush Songs

The Cohens did not take their financial debacle lightly, yet it seems that in the midst of general economic catastrophe, they, like their fellow-citizens at Maitland, had preserved enough humour, to laugh about their misfortunes.

In his book "Jemmy Green in Australia" (Sydney 1955), Professor Colin Roderick, better known as a Henry Lawson specialist, who edited this "Comedy in 3 Acts" by James Tucker, an early convict, wrote that P.J. Cohen, whom he calls "a man whose name we have to notice as one of the leading spirits of Maitland until the middle of 1844" and his brother Simeon Joseph had been connected with the "Maitland Amateur Theatre". The theatre was founded in 1843, in the midst of the depression, to support the "Maitland Benevolent Society" and its Asylum. P.J. Cohen probably patronised the enterprise, whilst Simeon seems to have taken an active part in it. The "Maitland Mercury" reported on 1st June, 1844, shortly before the brothers were to leave Maitland, that "a new scene painted by Mr Randon and S.J. Cohen was introduced in 'Midnight Hour'. It was a beautiful painting and had most striking effect". Apart from plays, some popular ballads saw the light at these performances, the authors of which have remained anonymous. In the "Bibliography of Australia" Vol. IV the authorship of a song called "Billy Barlow in Australia" is attributed to Mr Benjamin Griffin of Maitland to whom the theatre licence had been issued. Dr Roderick, however, has suggested that Simeon J. Cohen might have had a hand in the composition of at least one of the songs which has become famous in Australian folklore and from which, according to Dr Roderick, "Jemmy Green" derived its plot.

Some verses of the song, which was published on 18th May, 1844 in the "Maitland Mercury", may be quoted to show that they contain allusion to P.J. Cohen's activities in Maitland, and, alas, the unfortunate failure of his business:—

"The interest was due, and as
I couldn't pay, you see, Sir,
They sold the farm the other day,
To pay the mortgagee, Sir.
So after twenty years have past
With all my pains and toiling,
I'm left without a stick at last.
To keep the pot a-boiling.

So thus you see we're floored at last
By overspeculation
With discounts, auction companies,
And Steamboat Navigation.
And once more hard to work we'll go,

and forward we will creep yet,
 And when we get some cash again
 We'll know the way to keep it.

So, if the truth you'd understand,
 If wisdom you'd diskiver (sic)
 Take warning by the oldest hand
 Upon the Hunter River."

The song, which was called "An Old Hand's Chaunt", depicts the commercial ventures of the brothers, even P.J. Cohen's secretaryship with the Steam Navigation Company, and I think there is little doubt that it was composed by Simeon J. Cohen, although, when this discovery by Professor Roderick was discussed by the late S.B. Glass in Vol. IV, Part III, p. 89/90 of this Journal, he wrote that "though an adaptable person, nothing that is known of him by this Society would indicate that Simeon had other than a town dweller's indirect connection with the ups and downs of a life of a sheep farmer in New England or elsewhere". But, then, the late S.B. Glass did not know about either P.J. Cohen's scattered career or the failure of both brothers at Maitland.

When this song was first presented at the "Amateur Theatricals" on 4th May, 1844, which took place under the patronage of the Maitland Freemason's Lodge "Unity" of which P.J. Cohen was the Secretary, the "Maitland Mercury" noted that it had been written "by a gentleman of the Company for the occasion". Professor Roderick reinforced his theory of Simeon Cohen's authorship of the ballad, by mentioning that, after Simeon had returned in 1845 to Sydney, he sent out the cigars which he sold in his shop, in wrappers, containing another ballad, with the inscription:— "Colonial Melodies No. 2. By the author of 'Billy Barlow'. 'The Mayor's Tea Party'. Air:— The King of the Cannibal Islands".

FAREWELL TO MAITLAND

In December 1843 Cohen obtained his discharge from insolvency.⁸¹ In April 1844 he was still at his Rose Inn and advertised that he had reduced his prices to 2/- for breakfast, 2/6 for dinner and 2/- for bed accommodation. He also gave notice that he "would be happy to receive 2 or 3 respectable boarders at his table on moderate terms."⁸⁴

But slowly he came to the conclusion that it might be better to return to Sydney. Certainly the fact that he had now three sons and that he realised that there was better opportunity to bring up a family in Sydney than under the rather primitive conditions of a country village, had something to do with this decision.

In June 1844, he went to Sydney to attend a meeting of Sydney's Licensed Victuallers, maybe to get contacts, for he had decided to take over a Sydney hotel.⁸⁶ A committee was formed at the meeting for the

purpose of conferring with Mr G.R. Nichols relative to petitions to be presented to the Legislative Council.

When Cohen returned to Maitland, he had made up his mind. For twelve years he had been at Maitland and the citizens did not let him leave the township without a touching farewell ceremony. On 13th July, 1844 the "Maitland Mercury" reported that on 10th July a farewell dinner had been given at the Albion Inn to Mr P.J. Cohen "late of the Rose Inn, on his leaving the district to reside in Sydney". The room was marvellously decorated by his friends. Over the chair was the motto "Auld Lang Syne", at the lower end of the room there was a large green flag with the old Irish Harp and the motto "Erin go Bragh". On one side of the room there was a banner "Maitland's friend" and on the opposite another "Success attend him!", all worked in variegated papers. Flowers and evergreens also decorated the hall. Between forty and fifty gentlemen attended the dinner which was chaired by Mr W. Lipscomb, supported on his right by Cohen himself. After the usual toasts, Mr Lipscomb proposed the toast "to a man whom they had known for a number of years and who had done the best he could for the town and district. No man had put himself more out of the way to forward any object for the benefit of the district than their guest. In many particulars they had disagreed about the way in which they should go to work — (this was an allusion to the election campaign during which Mr Lipscomb had been the main supporter of Major Wentworth) — but he knew of no one who entertained more liberal sentiments, or whose purse was more open to forward anything which might be beneficial to the district. He was never more proud in his life than he was to preside at this meeting. The toast he had to propose was the health of their guest, Mr P.J. Cohen. (Cheers!) He wished him prosperity, health and success in Sydney. Whilst Mr Cohen remained in Sydney, he felt satisfied that he would do all he could to forward the interests of the town and district." Cohen thanked the chairman, pointing out that "he had endeavoured to prepare and arrange his thoughts beforehand, but he found himself unequal to the task. He would therefore speak spontaneously and by doing so express the genuine sentiments of his heart." For him, he said, "it was an occasion of grief, for he was to be separated from those friends among whom he had been living for the past 12 years. It was the second time in which he had been called to break the bonds of friendship, the first was, when he quitted England and left behind his family and friends, and now again. But he had a family to provide for, and it was a duty he owed to them, to better his condition, if he could. . . . At the time of election, although he acted in opposition to the majority of his fellow-voters, he thought, they would give him credit for honesty of motives. In other political matters connected with the town, he had acted in accordance with their wishes, and had studied the interest of the town to the best

of his powers, and that he had done so, he thought, he may say so without boasting, when he saw such a number of gentlemen surrounding so humble an individual as himself that evening. . . . He considered this as a great reward to himself. . . . As long as he lived, he should feel gratified for this mark of approbation. He could only say, he parted from them with regret and hopes to see some of them at his residence in Sydney. He could not sit down without thanking them for the assistance they rendered him on a recent occasion, and which, he assured them, he would never forget. He was now about to cast his lot among strangers, but he should not forget them, he should always have the interests of the district at heart, and would use his best to promote them."

He then toasted the health of the chairman, who, in his response, again referred to his political differences with Cohen, but said that "he did not see why on that account they should not sit down together in private and mingle in business, . . . for every individual has as much right to his own opinion as he has to his." Many other toasts were proposed and "the company did not separate until a late or rather an early hour".

PUBLICAN IN SYDNEY

Some days after the farewell dinner, P.J. Cohen returned with his family to Sydney, never again attempting to settle in the country. On 23rd July, 1844 he advertised in the "Sydney Morning Herald" that "Mr P.J. Cohen (late of the Rose Inn, Maitland) is opening the 'Saracen Head Inn', corner King and Sussex Streets, as a commodious hotel". He said that he had also fitted out a "Coffee Room" on the first floor, as well as a large room for public dinners, balls etc. He "begged to intimate to his friends on the Hunter, Paterson and William Rivers that he will be happy to execute any commission business either in sale or produce, collection of orders or purchase of property and that his brother Simeon J. Cohen, who was residing with him, will attend to this department."

In an advertisement in the "Maitland Mercury" of 10th June, 1844, Simeon Joseph Cohen had thanked the inhabitants of the Hunter River District for the support he had received from them as a Commission Agent and expressed hopes for the continuation of their favours in Sydney. He announced that he was prepared to "make advances with an eminent mercantile firm for the purpose of consigning produce to their correspondent in England".

For some time everything seemed to go well again. The Inn proved to be popular with Jews and Gentiles alike.

On 23rd July, 1845 Cohen advertised in the "Sydney Morning Herald" that he was serving Turtle Soup as a speciality of the house at lunchtime. Although it appears that the Inn was, according to this

announcement, not "kosher", the "Sydney Morning Herald" of 12th August, 1845 could announce that a "Philanthropic Ball" will be held at the Saracen Head Inn in favour of the Jewish Benevolent Society. In September 1845 the Inn became the headquarters for Mr J. Little, a candidate for the Bourke Ward at the 1845 Municipal elections. (S.M.H. 17.9.1845)

On 12th February, 1846, "The Australian" reported that a dinner had been given to Mr Alexander Boyd, in gratitude for the services rendered to the squatters and that the dinner had been provided by Mr P.J. Cohen "whose admirable arrangements tended to enhance the festivity of the evening". However, something must have gone wrong again, because a year later the brothers were no longer at the Saracen Head Inn and P.J. Cohen was listed in Low's directory for Sydney 1847 as the licensee of the "Fitzroy Hotel" in George Street.⁸⁷

THE QUARREL WITH SAUL LYONS

On 19th August, 1844, Abraham and Saul Lyons had advertised in the "Sydney Morning Herald" that "the well-known, old established hotel "The Rose Inn", West Maitland was to be let to a respectable tenant" and on 21st August, that possession of the Inn would be given on 1st October, 1844.

It looks as if the circumstances under which the Cohens had to leave the Rose Inn and Maitland, had been aggravated by their "landlords", the Lyons brothers. What their differences really might have been, can only be guessed. The matter came into the open at a coroner's inquisition on the body of a Mr Stephen Coxen who had committed suicide in the Saracen Head Hotel. The "Sydney Morning Herald" reported on 9th September, 1844, that P.J. Cohen, heard at the enquiry as witness, had alleged that Mr Coxen, before his death, had dwelt particularly on a subject, "the persecution, as he called it, by one of his creditors, Mr Saul Lyons, and that this was the whole cause of his excitement and that before dying he said: 'This cursed Saul Lyons has killed me. I have taken poison'."

Thereupon, on 10th September, 1844, in a "Letter to the Editor", Saul Lyons accused P.J. Cohen "of extreme malice evinced in the evidence before the Jury", publishing at the same time two letters, signed by other creditors and trustees of Coxen who testified that Lyons had only protected the interests of the creditors. He disclaimed "ever having felt the slightest wish to injure or unnecessarily annoy Mr Coxen". "The feeling of rancour and malice", he concluded, "so clearly to be seen through Mr P.J. Cohen's evidence, which I knew to exist, and which has been so frequently expressed by him, arising in consequence of disputes respecting the Rose Inn at Maitland which he tenanted of me, requires no further comment". In consequence of this letter, the "Sydney Morning Herald" of 19th September, 1844 noted that Mr Saul

Lyons was summoned before the magistrate, Mr Windeyer, to have libelled Mr P.J. Cohen and, as he declined to enter on his defence, was committed to take his trial for libel. Lyons was allowed bail and the result of the quarrel is not known. It may perhaps be assumed that important members of the Jewish community intervened and that the matter was settled out of Court.

THE JEWS' FIGHT FOR RELIGIOUS EQUALITY

Shortly after his return to Sydney, we find P.J. Cohen again closely involved with Jewish communal activities. It might be mentioned that in 1842 whilst he was in Maitland, he had according to the Minutes of the Sydney Synagogue, been made an Honorary Member of the Foundation Committee of the York Street (Sydney) Synagogue. Yet, when, in 1844 the congregation in Sydney moved into its new, the first permanent, Synagogue in York Street, P.J. Cohen was still under the cloud of his financial failure and this might have been the reason, why no important position in the congregation was offered to him. When the famous "Report" for the year 1845 was planned, he appeared as the last on the list of the Subcommittee to draft this report.

In 1844 the Legislative Council had appointed a Select Committee to deal with educational matters and the Jews of Sydney were active to assert, what they termed, their rights to subsidies for Synagogue, Jewish school, and ministers.

This matter has been dealt with in this Journal by Percy J. Marks⁸⁸ and Rabbi Dr I. Porush⁸⁹ as well as in Professor Israel Getzler's book "Neither Toleration nor Favour" (Melbourne 1970) and cannot be discussed here in details.

On 17th September, 1844, a meeting of Jewish notables took place at the Synagogue Chambers and desiring that the population of the Colony should not be uninformed about their intentions, Moses Joseph, the President of the congregation, published on 19th September, in the "Sydney Morning Herald", the resolution passed at this meeting. The first resolution, moved by J.J. Cohen⁹⁰ and seconded by Samuel Lyons, read:—

"To petition the Legislative Council that, as the System of General Election recently recommended, is to embrace the tenets and doctrines of the Christian faith, the Israelites of this Colony would, if adopted, be precluded and virtually excluded from an equally free and legitimate participation in the benefits of general education".

The second motion which had been moved by P.J. Cohen and seconded by S. Emanuel said that the Israelites, as British subjects, were entitled to the same rights and to a proportionate share of advantage from any measure of general education. The "Sydney Morning Herald", mentioned that, although the meeting had been called for the Hebrew population only, the press was given the opportunity to attend, and,

making use of this privilege, published a long and detailed account of this meeting.⁹¹

As P.J. Cohen was one of the main speakers, I think that the forceful terms of his speech to the second motion should be preserved for posterity. He said that the loyalty of the Jews to their Sovereign, in whatever part of the world they may reside, was a fact so well known that it would be an insult to the meeting to question it. He would at once go into the subject which more immediately concerned them – the right the Israelites have as a body to the support of the State. They were contributors to the revenue in the same proportion as their Christian brethren, and if funds for the education of the people were to be paid for out of the general revenue, they were entitled to their share. It was a question to which no opposition could be anticipated, so just was their claim that any body of men must readily concede it. Upon the question of education, although it might be presumptuous of him to offer an opinion, where so many men of genius and ability have differed, he certainly did think it would be far better to have one system, where all may be taught, where all religious creeds could meet; it would soften that asperity of feeling which existed between persons of different creeds, and would do more to improve the social condition of mankind than anything that has yet been attempted. He considered it was the duty of every parent, and of the ministers of religion, to attend to the spiritual education of their flocks. He said, their religion was of so simple a nature, the belief in a Divine Creator only, that it wanted no powerful ability to inculcate that fact in the mind of youth; it was innate in every breast, and never could be eradicated. He impressed upon the meeting the necessity of being unanimous, as the petition which they were about to present, would place them in that position of society which they ought long since have been placed in.

The Deputation was to approach Mr W.C. Wentworth and was to consist of Messrs Moses Joseph, Solomon Phillips, Samuel Lyons, Joel Joseph Cohen, Isaac Simmons and Philip Joseph Cohen. The petition was laid out in Samuel Lyons' auction mart in George Street for signature and was finally signed by 167 "members of the faith of Israel".⁹¹

P.J. Cohen appears not to have been present when the York Street Synagogue was consecrated on 2nd April, 1844, neither was he then able to contribute financially to the building fund. After his return to Sydney he donated, however, together with Samuel Joseph, a "Yod" or pointer, used in reading the Scriptures and a curtain for the Ark and a Mantle for covering the Roll of the Law.

In 1846, he was, together with Samuel Benjamin, Emanuel Phillips and Lewis Barnett appointed to a Committee for the purpose of collecting the births and deaths of all children born in the colony for registration⁹² and in 1849 he became a member of the "Corresponding

Committee" for the appointment of a minister in Sydney.⁹³ When in 1850, the Government granted to the "Hebrew Community of the Colony" a piece of land at Church Hill, Sydney, for the purpose of building there a school for Jewish children, (which was never built there), he was appointed Secretary of the Committee which was to collect subscriptions for the Jewish school.⁹⁴ Subsequently, in 1853, he became a member of the Sub-Committee which submitted a report "on the best means of establishing a school for the education of the Jewish Youth in the colony."⁹⁵

In 1855, it was P.J. Cohen who proposed to buy a piece of silver plate for Mr G.R. Nichols MLA, who, supposedly in full knowledge of his Jewish descent,⁸⁵ had put up a valiant and successful fight in the Legislative Assembly for equal rights for the Jews for assistance to Jewish ministers and religious institutions.⁹⁶

After the passing of the Jews' Relief Act in England in 1858, he was, at a meeting of the Jewish community, held on 8th November, 1858, in Sydney, one of the main movers to express through Baron Louis de Rothschild MP, congratulations to the Jews of England on this memorable occasion.⁹⁷ When after the departure of the Reverend Herman Hoelzel, the congregation was again without a proper Minister and had only the Reverend Morice R. Cohen to rely on, P.J. Cohen, according to the York Street Synagogue Minutes of 6th September, 1858, offered his services again for the High Holidays, together with the Reverend Cohen, an arrangement which was gratefully accepted and a vote of thanks recorded at a Special meeting on 19th September for his kind assistance in the performance of the services.

THE MACQUARIE STREET SECESSION

The following year, 1859, saw the deep cleavage in Sydney Jewry, which led to the foundation of a rival Synagogue, the Macquarie Street Synagogue, on 26th June, 1859.

It is difficult to believe that only the fact that the then Minister of the York Street Synagogue, the Reverend Morice R. Cohen had not followed the usual ritual custom at the initiation of a boy, because his mother, although regarded as a Jewess, was not born of a Jewish mother, led to so far-reaching consequences. There were definitely deeper personal and social reasons than this purely ritual question, and the allegiance of the majority of the congregation to the Reverend Cohen, which led to the secession which for nineteen years divided Sydney Jewry into two bitterly opposed factions. Both the late S.B. Glass and Rabbi Dr I. Porush in their papers about the "Reasons for the Macquarie Street Secession" in this Journal, as well as the late D.J. Benjamin in his "History of the Macquarie Street Congregation",⁹⁸ agreed that "separatist tendencies" existed before the case of the Reverend Cohen brought about the final secession of a minority of

important members of the York Street Synagogue, but neither of them furnished a satisfactory explanation of the actual differences in the community.

In my opinion, there were two main facts which led to the secession:—

1. A personal feud between the "Cohen clan" and the Reverend Cohen.

2. A cleavage between the old English-born "Establishment" in the Jewish community and immigrants, most of whom were of either German or Polish origin, who had doubled the number of Jews in Australia after the discovery of the goldfields in the early fifties.⁹⁹

The personal feud between the "Cohen clan" and the Reverend Cohen was based on the fact that the person allegedly offended by the Reverend, was Solomon Cohen, the brother of Samuel Cohen and of David Cohen, who by then had already returned to England.

Solomon Cohen had, on 27th February, 1856, been married by John Isaacs, the Reader of the York Street Synagogue, to Miss Hannah Julia Cohen, the daughter of well-known Sydney jeweller Joel Joseph Cohen.

On 10th March, 1859, P.J. Cohen, who, although he was not related to Samuel, David and Joel Joseph Cohen, had strongly taken the side of them against the Reverend Cohen, in a letter to David Cohen, accusing the Reverend "of malicious motives, because he had not been on friendly terms with Samuel Cohen and had been watching for the opportunity to insult him and thought this a good opportunity".

P.J. Cohen's letter was published in Rabbi Porush's paper, but without the names of the protagonists.⁹⁸

It was Samuel Cohen who, according to the Minutes of the York Street Synagogue, asked for the dismissal of the Reverend Cohen and brought about the whole crisis.

The unpleasant and undignified form of this feud against the Reverend Cohen may be judged from the following note, published on 28th January, 1860 in "Bell's Life in Sydney".

"On Wednesday, Samuel Cohen Esq. J.P. appeared on the wrong side of the police floor to answer the information of the Reverend Morice Robertson Cohen, the Jewish Minister, who charged the worshipful defendant with using insulting and abusive language towards him. The Reverend complainant deposed that, on the occasion when the offence was committed, he was standing opposite the synagogue. The defendant was until lately a member of his congregation.

On the 6th instant, whilst standing on the footway, the defendant came up to him and said:—

"You d . . . d scoundrel, you have returned from the country, have you? How many children did you bastardise there? You are the biggest liar, thief and scoundrel in New South Wales!"

Prosecutor replied:—"I thought, since you became a magistrate, you would have more sense than to insult me without provocation, in the

way you have done during the last twelve months." He added, also that he would take a summons out for him, whereupon the defendant, who was holding his fist in the prosecutor's face, turned up his coat tails and back towards him, saying: "You will find it of use to you!"

Being close to Mr Levey's door, prosecutor pulled the bell and obtained admission."

Samuel Cohen was fined £3 with £2.2.0 professional costs and the paper's comment was "Who will say the time has not come for the purging of the List of Her Majesty's Commissioned Justices?"

From the article it is also revealed that the Reverend Cohen did not, as stated in Vol. III p. 26 of this Journal, leave Sydney "soon after the High Holidays and departed from Australia in the 'Tasmania'," but was in January 1860 still in Sydney. He had probably gone to one of the other Australian cities.

By 1859, the York Street Congregation was divided into two factions, the old English-born "Establishment" and the immigrant Jews. P.J. Cohen, in the letter to David Cohen referred to the latter group as "the more ignorant portion of the Community" who were "unfortunately in the majority" and who "uphold the Reverend Cohen's acts against all reasons and discussions". The immigrant Jews were perhaps ignorant of English law, but they were certainly not ignorant of the Jewish laws. They were, in fact, more orthodox than the "Establishment".

It was undisputed that neither the wife of J.J. Cohen nor her daughter had ever properly been made a proselyte to the Jewish faith, although on request of the then Committee of the York Street Synagogue, in the Ketubah, the Jewish marriage contract between Solomon and Hannah Julia Cohen, it had been inserted that she was "the Jewish daughter of Joel Cohen" which, according to Jewish law, she was not. The more orthodox "ignorant" Jews were not as accustomed to condone intermarriage as the "old-Australian" Jews, who had to put up with it because of the notorious lack of marriageable Jewish women in the colony and of advanced assimilation. "The mere raising of the question", wrote P.J. Cohen to David Cohen, "has been the cause of much affliction to many families here". No wonder, because there had been intermarriage in many of the families and even all the piety and religiosity of P.J. Cohen did not prevent the intermarriage of two of his daughters. It is significant that, as Mrs Hilda Stone wrote in her "Reminiscences on the Macquarie Street Synagogue"⁹⁸ "the Macquarie Street Congregation included some of the wealthiest and more influential members of the Community". These included Samuel Cohen, J.G. Raphael, L.W. Levy, Elias Moses, S. Davis, Stephen Spyer, P.J. Cohen and his brother S.J. Cohen. But, Mrs Stone also wrote that "the York Street Synagogue was filled by a numerous congregation even on an ordinary Sabbath, whilst in comparison, the Macquarie Street building was sparsely attended" . . .

Few of the older settlers had remained faithful to the York Street Synagogue. Among them was Lawrence Spyer, who may no longer have been on good terms with his brother, Saul Samuel, who, as the nephew of emancipist Samuel Lyons, was probably not yet regarded as a member of the "Establishment", and Joseph Simmons businessman, actor and theatre director, who as President of the York Street Congregation preserved his peace of mind during these difficult times.

As the history of Australian Jewry shows, this was only the first of many separation movements which followed immigration waves, although in all of the later cases, it was the immigrants who formed new congregations in this case it was the "Establishment" which separated from the newcomers who were more orthodox than they were.

P.J. Cohen was one of the main movers to form a new congregation and became one of the main supporters of the new Synagogue and one of its stalwarts until his death.

When, in August 1859, the Provisional Board of Management was formed, he was, of course, elected, a member of this Committee. His brother Simeon Joseph became Treasurer of the congregation. At the Consecration of the Synagogue on 23rd September, 1859, he was its first officiant and delivered an address which was given much prominence in a report by "The Empire" of 26th September, 1859.

P.J. Cohen was a Trustee of the Burial Ground at the Devonshire Street Cemetery since 1832. Michael Phillips and J.B. Montefiore had returned to England, and he was now the only remaining trustee. He had no intention of relinquishing this honorary position, and in November 1859 the Board of the Macquarie Street Synagogue informed the York Street Synagogue that he would continue to carry out the power vested in him as trustee of the Burial Ground. In August, 1860, P. J. Cohen was suddenly served with proceedings in the Equity Court, issued by the York Street Synagogue, with intention to remove him from the trusteeship.¹⁰⁰ Court proceedings went on which lasted several years, until finally Saul Samuel was appointed for the York Street Synagogue and Moses Moss for the Macquarie Street Synagogue whilst P.J. Cohen retained formally the trusteeship until his death.

The bitter clash had been aggravated by a "bombshell" from the York Street Synagogue which in February 1861, after a first motion to this effect had lapsed on 21st April, 1859, rescinded the resolution of 12th October, 1835, by which P.J. Cohen had been made a "perpetual member" of all Committees of the York Street Synagogue, an honour granted to him in recognition of the work he had done for the congregation during the years of its foundation.

After this action, P.J. Cohen ceased to have any connection with the mother congregation. It was, as the late David Benjamin wrote, "despite its apparent justification", a "rather petty action" and did little credit to the then rulers of the York Street Synagogue. For P.J. Cohen, this was probably the last straw, and the ingratitude of his old congregation

bound him more than ever to the new venture.

When, in 1861, Samuel Cohen, who had become President of the Macquarie Street congregation, died, we see P.J. Cohen in the chair, proceeding to elect a new President. He himself became Vice-President, a position which he held until his death, although, when the famous traveller Rabbi Jacob Saphir visited Sydney in 1863, he noted P.J. Cohen as "treasurer" of "the other Synagogue".¹⁰¹

When new "By-laws" had to be prepared in 1862, this task was entrusted to him together with his brother Simeon Joseph and J.G. Raphael. He also continued to assist the Minister in the conduct of services, gave addresses and lectures. As chairman of a communal gathering, it was he who presented J.G. Raphael with a silver cup.¹⁰² But he was not to see the reunion of the two Synagogues in the Great Synagogue in Elizabeth Street in 1878.

CUSTOMS AGENT AND SHIPPING COMPANY MANAGER

P.J. Cohen's career as a publican had, unfortunately, been a failure again. He could not have been at the Fitzroy Hotel for very long, because on 14th August, 1849, Samuel Lyons advertised in the "Sydney Morning Herald" that he was selling the Hotel, which was then occupied by a Mr O'Keefe. And the Electoral Roll for the Bourke Ward showed Cohen in 1847/49 at a "Counting House" in George Street.

In 1851 we find him managing a "private board and lodging house" at No. 7 Jamieson Street, where his brother Simeon Joseph had also his office as Commission Agent. Up to 1850 he is still listed under this address as his residence, but in the meantime he had established himself as a Customs House Agent with an office at Circular Quay,¹⁰³ whilst his brother had remained at 7 Jamieson Street.

And then he began a new, and, as it appears, his only successful commercial career. His name suddenly appeared on 2nd February, 1860 in the "Sydney Morning Herald" as the Manager of the "New Hunter River Navigation Company". This Company had been founded in 1852 with a capital of £400,000 in opposition to the "New Hunter River Navigation Co." which was the successor of the old "Hunter River Steam Navigation Co.", founded in 1840. After the gold discoveries of the early fifties, shippers of cargo and produce in the Hunter valley began to entertain grievances against the "Australian Steam Navigation Co." because of the lukewarm attention given to their interests by the Company. Meetings were held in the Lower Hunter Valley and finally a purely local company, to be known as the "New Hunter River Steam Navigation Company" was founded.¹⁰⁴

Cohen had fortunately maintained his connections with his old friends at Maitland and with the shipping interests in the Hunter Valley and, as an unidentified newspaper cutting in the Mitchell Library (probably from the "Maitland Mercury"), showed, "Mr Cohen's services

were gladly availed of by the directors of the new company, for the sole managership”.

In January 1861 P.J. Cohen was appointed manager of the company and remained in their employment until his death.

He was well suited to be manager of this company because he had been Secretary of a similar company in 1841 and because he knew the local conditions and nearly everybody in the Hunter Valley. This position, as his salary was certainly not enough to support his large family which had moved to a new residence at 124 William Street, allowed him to retain his occupation as a Customs House Agent with an office, now in Macquarie Place West.¹⁰⁵ And it left him enough time for his many communal commitments which, however, in Sydney, he seems to have restricted to Jewish interests.

Sometime between 1861 and 1863, he and his family moved to, what was to become his last residence, at 97 Forbes Street.¹⁰⁶

The last four years of his life were in all probability his most secure and contented ones. But now that he had finally settled down, death overtook him. On 13th November, 1864, he died, aged only 62 after a short illness.¹⁰⁷ Until his last days he had gone to his office as usual. He had been held in great esteem, especially on the waterfront. On intelligence of the event reaching the shipping circles, wrote the “Sydney Morning Herald”, numerous flags were hoisted half-mast on the harbour. He was buried on 15th November at the Devonshire Street Cemetery. Many members of the Community, as well as the officers and employees of his Company attended the burial,¹⁰⁸ but no mention of his decease can be found in the York Street Synagogue Minutes . . . In 1901 his tombstone was transferred to Rookwood Cemetery, where it may still be seen in the old section. P.J. Cohen died a poor man. When administration of his estate was granted to his widow, the goods were sworn at £300. There seems to have been no real estate left . . .¹⁰⁹

He was survived by his wife, five sons and five daughters.

David Cohen, born 8.4.1840, died 10.9.1886.

Sidney Cohen, born 23.3.1842 died 20.4.1904

Francis Cohen, born 20.1.1844, died 22.1.1922

Victor Cohen, born 3.8.1851, died 20.4.1941

Edward Cohen, born 12.3.1861

Catherina (Mrs Philip Solomon of Goulburn) born 10.12.1834, died 21.12.1910

Harriet, born 10.10.1836, died 2.7.1921

Henrietta (Mrs Robert Lewin, Nelson N.Z.) born 9.6.1838, died 30.7.1909

Janet (Mrs Harry Rouse, Bathurst) born, 9.6.1848, died 14.5.1919

Mathilda Rebecca (Mrs Smith, later Mrs George McGloglan, NZ) born 14.4.1854.

Two daughters had died in early childhood:—

Phoebe Jessie, born 28.6.1846 and Edith Esther born 7.12.1857.¹¹⁰

Simeon Joseph Cohen, died in Sydney, aged 78 on 18th March, 1889, as a Customs Agent at 96 Hunter Street. He was unmarried.

CONCLUSION

Although his influence in the early period of Sydney Jewry should not be overrated, he had been a driving force. He was a man, deeply devoted not only to the religious values of Judaism, but also to the assertions of the rights of the Jews as citizens. Whilst he did not miss an opportunity to make his voice heard in the Jewish community and did not avoid controversial issues, he actively participated in the activities of the general community. This was especially the case during his twelve years of residence at Maitland.

He was, however, perhaps because of his too great involvement with other activities, less fortunate in his commercial career and failed as a businessman. But he never despaired and brought up a large family, one of the largest Jewish families in New South Wales, despite many setbacks, working hard until the last days of his life. His name will always be spoken of with respect, as one of the "Founders of Australian Jewry".

Notes

¹ Census 1828. (Mitchell Library)

² The Australian 28.5.1828

³ Dr G.F.J. Bergman "Australian Jewry in 1828". Austr. Jewish Historical Society. Journal & Proceedings Vol. V. Part V. p. 234 ff.

⁴ The Australian & Sydney Gazette. 30.7.1828.

⁵ The Australian 21.11.1828.

⁶ The Australian 21.11.1828, Sydney Gazette. 1.1.1829.

⁷ The Monitor 26.1.1829.

⁸ Sydney Gazette 27.1.1829.

⁹ Sydney Gazette 26.5.1829.

¹⁰ Sydney Gazette 23.9.1829.

¹¹ The Australian 30.6.1829.

¹² Sydney Gazette 6 to 15.1.1829.

¹³ Sydney Gazette 5.2.1829.

¹⁴ Sydney Gazette 5.5.1829.

- ¹⁵ The Australian 20.11.1829.
- ¹⁶ The Australian 7.4.1830, 1.10.1830.
- ¹⁷ The Australian 31.7.1829.
- ¹⁸ The Australian 20.1.1830.
- ¹⁹ The Australian 11.3.1831. Lawrence J. Spyer was joined in May 1834 by his brother Stephen J. Spyer ("Australian" 27.5.1834). The two brothers went into a partnership which lasted about 30 years. They bought a house in January 1836 ("Australian" 22.1.1836) and established themselves as merchants and commission agents. They were successful and had business interests in Port Phillip ("Australian" 19.11.1840) and South Australia ("Australian" 24.8.1841). They became representatives of the British Colonial Bank in 1843 ("Australian" 12.1.1843) and had import and export interests. ("Australian" 11.12.1844, 3.1.1845). In the fifties the firm was joined by Henry and Joseph Spyer under the name of L.S. Spyer & Co., merchants, with office at Wynyard Square. As such this firm is listed in Sands & Kenny's Commercial & General Sydney Directory until 1865, when it suddenly disappeared. Stephen Spyer had on 8.1.1840 married Miss Rosetta Metz who, however, died in childbirth with her son on 25.2.1841 (Devonshire Cemetery, Jewish Section, plan).
- ²⁰ Australian Encyclopaedia Vol. V. p. 465.
- ²¹ J.H.M. Abbott, "The Newcastle Packets and the Hunter Valley". Sydney 1943.
- ²² The Australian 8.7.1831.
- ²³ Report of the Committee of the York Street (Sydney) Synagogue 1845. Australian Jew. Hist. Society Journ. & Proc. Vol. III. Part I. p. 7/8. Percy J. Marks, the First Synagogue in Australia, Sydney 1925. By letter, dated 11th May, 1928 from the Secretary of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, the volume of the text of the law from which the portion of the law was read at the first authorised service of the Jewish residents in Sydney, which had been donated to the Great Synagogue by Commander Victor Cohen, son of P.J. Cohen in 1928, was offered on "indefinite loan" to the Public Library of NSW. The offer was submitted to the Mitchell Library Committee on 15th May, 1928 and accepted. The Volume is now in the safe of the Mitchell Library (Safe No. 1/94).
- ²⁴ Sydney Gazette 8.4.1830. "The Australian" 9.4.1830.
- ²⁵ "The Monitor" 10.4.1830.
- ²⁶ Australian Jew. Hist. Soc. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part VI. p. 205.
- ²⁷ Austr. Jew. Hist. Soc. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part VII. p. 244.
- ²⁸ "The Australian" 1.1.1836.
- ²⁹ "The Australian" 24.5.1833. "Sydney Gazette" 30.5.1833.
- ³⁰ Governor Sir R. Bourke Despatches Vol. 21. p. 192, Vol. 22. p. 631, Vol. 25, p. 684.
- ³¹ The Australian 18.10.1833.

³² "The Australian" 27.1.1834. 7.2.1834.

³³ Solomon Levien arrived in Sydney on 14.5.1833 with his wife Harriett and their sons Alfred (aged 20) and George (aged 10) and their daughters Annette (aged 16), Henrietta (aged 13), Mathilda (aged 11) in "Westmoreland". (Ships Register S.G.21.5.1833). After P.J. Cohen had taken over the "Rose Inn", Solomon Levien returned to Sydney, where he became the licensee of the Pulteney Hotel in York Street. ("Australian" 21.7.1837). For some time he was in 1840 supervising the Leviathan Hotel in Melbourne ("Australian" 9.5.1840), but returned to Sydney in 1841 to the Pulteney Hotel. In June 1842 he also became a victim of the depression and insolvent. He died on 9.11.1851. His wife Harriett Levien died on 12.8.1862. (York Street Syn. Burial Register).

³⁴ "The Australian" 25.10.1833

³⁵ "The Australian" 29.11.1833, 16.12.1833, 27.12.1833 and Percy J. Marks, "The Jewish Pioneers" in Maitland "Daily Mercury" 7.1.1933.

³⁶ "The Australian" 13.1.1835.

³⁷ "The Australian" 27.10.1835.

³⁸ "The Australian" 3.1.1839.

³⁹ "The Australian" 11.1.1840.

⁴⁰ "The Australian" 2.5.1840, 4.7.1840, 21.7.1840, etc.

⁴¹ "The Australian" 11.8.1840.

⁴² "The Australian" 8.9.1840.

⁴³ "The Australian" 14.1.1841.

⁴⁴ "The Australian" 1.4.1841.

⁴⁵ In Mr J.H.M. Abbott's "The Newcastle Packets and the Hunter River Valley" (see note 21) the "Maitland and Newcastle Steam Navigation Co." is not mentioned. Mr Abbott records, however, for 1839 the foundation of the "Hunter River Steam Navigation Co." which was established in 1840 with a capital of 40,000 pounds, subscribed in 2000 shares at 20 pounds each. I have been unable to find out, if the two companies were identical. It is possible that the "Maitland and Newcastle Steam Navigation Co." was either a forerunner of the H.R.S.N.C. or a purely local enterprise which failed in the depression. It is also possible that it was the same company and that only the name had been altered.

⁴⁶ "The Australian" 17.12.1840, 2.1.1841.

⁴⁷ "Hunter River Gazette" 11.12.1841, 18.12.1841.

⁴⁸ Ships Register & G.F.J. Bergman, Samuel Cohen, A.J.H.S. Journ. & Proc. Vol. VI, Part 6.

⁴⁹ Maitland "Daily Mercury" 7.1.1933 (see note 35).

⁵⁰ "Hunter River Gazette" 22.1.1842.

⁵¹ Registrar General's Dept. Register of Grants Vol. A. 3 P. 212.

⁵² Registrar General's Dept. Register of Grants Vol. A.1. P. 35.

- 53 Registrar General's Dept. Register of Grants Vol. A.1. P. 52.
- 54 G.F.J. Bergman, "Edward Davis, Life and Death of an Australian Bushranger", Austr. Jew. Hist. Soc. Journ. & Proc. Vol. IV, Part 5, p. 206ff.
- 55 "Hunter River Gazette" 30.4.1842.
- 56 "Sydney Herald" 21.5.1842.
- 57 "Hunter River Gazette" 18.6.1842.
- 58 "The Australian" 15.10.1839.
- 59 "The Australian" 11.2.1840.
- 60 "Sydney Gazette" 29.2.1840.
- 61 "The Australian" 14.10.1841.
- 62 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 18.3.1843.
- 63 "The Australian" 11.11.1834.
- 64 "The Australian" 15.5.1838.
- 65 "The Australian" 5.12.1837.
- 66 "The Australian" 19.6.1838.
- 67 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 18.2.1843.
- 68 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 14.1.1843.
- 69 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 21.1.1843.
- 70 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 28.1.1843, 2.2.1843.
- 71 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 1.7.1843.
- 72 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 19.3.1844.
- 73 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 14.1.1843. "Sydney Herald" 17.12.1842.
- 74 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 22.4.1843.
- 75 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 22.7.1843. "Sydney Herald" 15.7.1843, 26.7.1843, 2.8.1843, 23.9.1843.
- 76 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 29.7.1843.
- 77 "Sydney Herald" 20.7.1843.
- 78 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 2.9.1843.
- 79 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 20.9.1843.
- 80 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 7.10.1843.
- 81 "Sydney Herald" 4.12.1843.
- 82 "Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser" 26.8.43. Samuel Cohen received his certificate on 9.8.1844 ("Australian" 20.5.1844).
- 83 "Sydney Morn. Herald" 23.3.1844.
- 84 "Sydney Morn. Herald" 3.4.1844.

- 85 About Mr George Robert Nichols, see "Australian Encyclopaedia" Vol. VI, p. 340, & J.H. Heaton, "Australian Dictionary of Dates", London 1879, p. 152/3. G.R. Nichols was the grandson of Esther Johnston, a first-fleet Jewish convict girl, the son of her daughter Rosanna who had married Isaac Nichols, Australia's first postmaster.
- 86 "Sydney Morning Herald" 25.6.1844.
- 87 "Low's Directory of the City and District of Sydney", 1847.
- 88 Austral. Jew. Hist. Society. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part 2. p. 25FF.
- 89 Austral. Jew. Hist. Society. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part 10. p. 340ff.
- 90 Joel J. Cohen was a jeweller. His shop was called "Temple of Fashion" and was situated in George Street, opposite the Old Treasury.
- 91 "Sydney Morn. Herald" 21.9.1844.
- 92 Austr. Jew. Hist. Society, Journ. & Proc. Vol. II. Part 2. p. 81.
- 93 Austr. Jew. Hist. Society. Journ. & Proc. Vol. II. Part 4. p. 176.
- 94 Austr. Jew. Hist. Society. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part 2. p. 28.
- 95 Austr. Jew. Hist. Society. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part 2. p. 29.
- 96 Austr. Jew. Hist. Society. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part 2. p. 32.
- 97 Austr. Jew. Hist. Society. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part 2. p. 8ff.
- 98 S.B. Glass, & Rabbi Dr I. Porush, "The reasons for the Macquarie Street Secession", Austr. Jew. Hist. Soc. Journ. & Proc. Vol. III. Part I. p.6ff, & D.J. Benjamin, "The Macquarie Street Synagogue, 1859-1877", Austr. Jew. Hist. Soc. Journ. & Proc. Vol. III. Part 9. p. 380ff. & Miss Esther Hinda Stone, "A Reminiscence of the Macquarie Street Congregation", Austr. Jew. Hist. Soc. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part 9. p. 319ff.
- 99 Dr Charles A. Price, "Jewish Settlers in Australia", Austr. Jew. Hist. Society. Journ. & Proc. Vol. V. Part 8. p. 357ff.
- 100 Austr. Jew. Hist. Soc. Journ. & Proc. Vol. III. Part 384ff.
- 101 Austr. Jew. Hist. Soc. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part 2. p. 47.
- 102 Austr. Jew. Hist. Soc. Journ. & Proc. Vol. I. Part 10. p. 359.
- 103 "Sands & Kenny's Commercial & General Sydney Directory" 1858/9.
- 104 J.H.M. Abbott, see Note 21.
- 105 "Sands & Kenny's Commercial & General Sydney Directory" 1861.
- 106 "Sands & Kenny's Commercial & General Sydney Directory" 1864.
- 107 Devonshire Street Cemetery Register.
- 108 "Sydney Morn. Herald" 15.11.1864.
- 109 Register of Wills, Sydney Probate Office.
- 110 The data are from the family "chumash", into which P.J. Cohen and later his son Victor Cohen had inscribed the relevant dates of births, deaths etc of the members of the family. The book is in the Mitchell Library safe. See Note 23.

- ¹¹¹ Great Synagogue Burial Register. The tombstone is at Rookwood Cemetery, but not in the proximity of that of her husband.
- ¹¹² Letter by the Secretary of Messrs N.M. Rothschild & Sons, New Court. St Swithin's Lane London E.C.4, of 28.4.1964 to the author.

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge the assistance given by Mrs Marjorie Hancock, Acting Mitchell Librarian and by the Staff of the Mitchell Library and I am also very much indebted to the following persons for their valuable help:—

Mr I.N. Goodman, Secretary, the Great Synagogue, Sydney,
Messrs N.M. Rothschild & Sons, London E.C.2.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

At the Annual General Meeting of 16th December, 1974, the principal Paper, "The Fall and Rise of the Solomon Brothers", by Dr E.S. Richards, Senior Lecturer in Economic History at The Flinders University of South Australia was well received when it was read by Mr M.Z. Forbes. The Society is most grateful to Dr Richards for this worthy contribution to our Journal.

Among other manuscripts to come into the hands of the Society in recent months has been Mr M.S. Pitt's extensive HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND. This was written some years ago. It was brought to us personally by Rabbi A. Rosenfeld of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation when he attended the Ministers' Conference, in May. Also, we now have Mary Lazarus's scholarly biography of Ephraim Zox, MLA, read before the Victorian Branch last year.

The Committee met four times this year. In February, the question of Editorship was considered: it was decided that Mr Forbes would become Acting Editor. It was decided to demonstrate our appreciation of the Great Synagogue's co-operation by presenting it with a complete bound set of our Journal. Miss Hannah Hart expressed the desire to accept financial responsibility for the book binding costs involved here. In the meantime, until the Index to Volume VII is printed, a letter has been sent to the President, Mr Philip Solomon, expressing our appreciation and our intention. The task of preparing the Index was undertaken by Dr Bergman, and the typing of it, by some Committee members.

A sub-Committee to embark on a Membership drive was formed. Sophie Caplan and Terry Newman commenced a campaign in this direction. The idea was not merely to increase numbers, but to try to attract members who would, in practical ways, promote the work of the Society. Selected members of the community were approached and invited to attend one of our meetings. Since the beginning of the year over 60 new members have been enrolled.

The report to the Meeting of the Pioneers' memorials at Raphael's cemetery and Botany cemetery outlined the slight progress being made in each case. One of the seven stones saved from Raphael's cemetery was satisfactorily restored, and the Contractors, Curran & Son Pty Ltd, had completed the cement surround and the landscaping of the area.

We have obtained a firm understanding from Messrs Smith & Ring to complete the work. This firm has a letter cutter with considerable experience of Hebrew writing on Memorial Stones.

We have received from New Jersey, USA, Mr W.S. Jessop's gift of the complete, bound set of his ancestor's newspaper, THE AUSTRALIAN

ISRAELITE, and, are thus the possessors of one of the very few complete sets of this publication of the 'seventies.

The Jewish Historical Society of England's promised support with the publication of Dr John Levi's *DICTIONARY OF BIOGRAPHY – JEWISH SETTLERS, 1788-1830*, may no longer be expected, in spite of Dr Anthony Joseph's strong recommendation to them. We are told that this is because of "inflation and too many competing claims for cash on dwindling resources". We still hope to publish the work ourselves with financial assistance from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, in New York, and local funds.

Terry Newman reported on the old Goulburn Jewish Burial Ground, and a subsequent letter from the Goulburn Historical Society, with an offer to take into safe custody the one remaining undamaged grave stone. It is hoped that some steps can be taken towards improving the condition of this Ground.

On May 12, our General Meeting featured Sophie Caplan's *EARLY HISTORY OF THE FIRST MODERN JEWISH DAY SCHOOL*, and Rabbi Porush's address, *THE IMPACT OF THE HOLOCAUST ON AUSTRALIAN JEWRY*. The latter item was to mark the 30th anniversary of the conclusion of World War 2. A record attendance of members and friends made this Meeting highly successful. However, as the result of a number of recommendations, afterwards, it was decided that in future, "A Paper read at a General Meeting shall be no longer than 35/40 minutes' duration to enable sufficient time for questions and discussion. That it be called a precis or extract of the complete work, which will be later published in full in the Journal." In this way, it was felt, the Paper may gain additional data as well as avoiding lengthy readings which protract the Meetings to a very late hour.

In June, our Journal Volume VIII Part 1 was published. It was greeted with much favourable comment: its varied contents, general style and format, and the willing assistance of *HIGHLIGHT PRINTING*, evoked such praise as Rabbi John Levi's "It is the best looking and most interesting historical journal that I have seen for a long time. The article on Perth is excellent and the figures have come up well." Dr Anthony Joseph was similarly impressed, and wrote, "The new journal is most commendable. I did indeed enjoy it; particularly interesting to me was the article on Mocatta, and also the statistical details from the 1971 census." The Journal has always been and continues to be our most important activity, so that it is a good thing that its immediate future seems to be assured. It is in our Journal that the effectiveness of our work is reflected.

To further meet the continuous rising costs, the Committee decided to recommend that Benefactor-Membership will, from 1976, cost \$100; and, that Life Membership status be abolished.

The Victorian Branch continues to hold quarterly meetings. In July, Rabbi Porush's Paper, "THE CONFERENCE OF JEWISH MINISTERS

OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND" was read. This Paper was also read — by Mr Forbes — before the Sydney audience at the General Meeting of July 28.

The English Jewish Historical Society's TRANSACTIONS, Volume XXIV, of 1975, contains Dr Joseph's scholarly work "JEWRY OF SOUTH-WEST ENGLAND AND ITS AUSTRALIAN CONNECTIONS. It runs to 18 pages including 4 detailed family trees, extending over three centuries. This Paper was originally read before the English Society in 1970 to mark our bi-centenary.

A Benefaction of \$100 was made in Memory of Celia Rosenberg who died in January of this year.

Mr Percy Wolfson, who died in November 1974, left the Society a bequest of \$50, and the gold key which was presented to him as first President of the Western Suburbs Synagogue when it was opened in 1919.

The Patron Member, Sir Bernard Sugerman, has been ill, and, replying to our letter conveying good wishes, he sent friendly greetings and expressed the hope that our work would continue to flourish, and looks forward to the time when he will again be able to attend our meetings.

The Society was represented at the Women's Year Exhibition held at Bronte House in July, with a large picture of the Hebrew Ladies' Bazaar held in Martin Place for a week in 1875.

Since Mrs Phoebe Davis took over the Treasurership and Mr Terry Newman became Assistant Secretary, the administration of the Society is flowing smoothly, and additional areas explored. Our President, Rabbi Porush, is now residing in Melbourne, and although he will not be as accessible as in the past, we know that his support will be maintained. We are grateful indeed for his support and his many services, which we hope to recognise appropriately.

The Society requires many more supporters: we know that the work it is doing is valuable and must go on, but we would be much happier if our Community as a whole showed greater appreciation of the need for reclaiming its history whilst there is still this possibility, and preserving it for future generations. Too many links with our past are being lost as they disappear. The history of the Australian Jewish communities is relatively short, so that we can little afford to allow any of it to fall into oblivion. Fortunately, the Society has supporters who are concerned and strive to salvage the heritage of the pioneers and of our predecessors in this land.

CORRIGENDA

At page 67, Vol. VIII Part 1, read, "THE BURNETT", at Doctor Thompson's, Watercolour, etc.

At page 87, note the Writer of the Obituary, Rabbi John Levi.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society extends a welcome to each new member who has recently joined. The work of those responsible for the Membership drive is much appreciated.

Adler, Lawrence J.
 Ariel, Avraham
 Baker, Keith D.
 Berliner, K.L.
 Blackman, Mr & Mrs Leon
 Bos, Mr & Mrs Joe
 Breward, Rev. Prof. Ian
 Churchill, Richard C.
 Copeland, Norbert A.
 Docker, Elsie
 Faerber, Ruth
 Ferster, Bernard
 Freeman, Miriam
 Freyer, Dr Otto
 Glick, Dr Mick
 Groden, Joycelyn
 Haber, Anna
 Hammerman, Mr & Mrs Bernard
 Jacobs, Dr Lionel A.
 Jones, Justin M.
 Keen, George J.
 Kemp, Liliane
 Kleerekoper, Victor S.
 Korsunski — Carmel School & Seeligson
 Kindergarten Library
 Kuring-Gai College of
 Advanced Education Library
 Lenny, Brian J.
 Levy, Dr Elizabeth
 Lowy, Eugene
 McDowell, Florette
 Mane, Mr & Mrs Sam
 Marmot, Nat
 Myers, Victoria
 Resler, Eric
 Rogut, Rabbi & Mrs David
 Roller, Rachel
 Royal, Noah
 Salpeter, Mr & Mrs Milan

Sperling, Mr & Mrs Sidney
 Swarts, Maurice P.
 Tal, Eli E.
 Walter, Ellen
 Weinreb, Dr Alfred

VICTORIA

Marks Harry
 Mount Scopus College Library
 North Eastern Jewish War
 Memorial Centre Library
 Wunderlich, Martin

BENEFACTIONS
IN MEMORY
OF

ERNEST SAMUEL MARKS, C.B.E.
ADOLPH AND AMELIA ALEXANDER
GERALD AND ISABELLE BENJAMIN
ERNEST R. BARUCH
SIMON JOSEPH GUSS
SIR SAMUEL AND LADY COHEN
HYAM SHOLOM AND KATHLEEN HIMMELFERB
HERMAN AND RACHEL AHRONSON
WILLIAM L. AND GLADYS N. COHEN
ELIAS AND LEBE GREEN
SIR BENJAMIN BENJAMIN AND LADY BENJAMIN
ALFRED AND MAY PHILLIPS
FREDERICK DAVID AND ESTHER ZILLAH MICHAELIS
JACOB AND EMMA GLASS
PERCY BRIGHTON COHEN
LIONEL COHEN
PHILIP SCHNEIDEMAN
SYDNEY BENJAMIN GLASS
DAVID JAMES BENJAMIN
JUDAH AND FANNY ELLIS
RABBI LAZARUS MORRIS GOLDMAN
RALPH SYMONDS
JUDAH GREEN
PHILLIP MORRIS & DORA ELIZABETH HART
REV. ABRAHAM TOBIAS BOAS
SAM ROSENBERG
Mrs REBECCA HAYMAN (nee Josephson)
BELLA GREEN
CELIA ROSENBERG

CORRESPONDING MEMBER FOR GREAT BRITAIN:

Dr ANTHONY JOSEPH
25 Westbourne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. 15

CORRESPONDING MEMBER FOR U.S.A.:

Dr ISIDORE MEYER
90 Laurel Hill Terrace, New York, N.Y. 10033

BENEFACTOR MEMBERS:

DAVID GOLDMAN
ISRAEL GREEN, O.B.E.
SIMON GREEN
M. HARRY KELLERMAN, O.B.E.
MILLIE KELLERMAN

LIFE MEMBERS:

GORDON ALEXANDER
Rabbi RAYMOND APPLE, B.A., LL.B.
Mrs RONALD BRASS, B.A.
PHOEBE DAVIS
GERALD FALK, O.B.E.
HAROLD H. FRANKFURTER
RACHEL GLASS
HANNAH HART, C.S.J.
W.S. JESSOP
Dr ANTHONY JOSEPH
TERRY A.S. NEWMAN, B.Ec.
Mrs ARTHUR D. ROBB
LOUISE ROSENBERG
IRENE SCHULTZ (nee Irene Joseph)
SYDNEY SCOTT
Professor Rev. IAN BREWARD

The amount of the subscription payable by a member is seven dollars (\$7) or six dollars (\$6) each for two or more members of a family per annum, commencing from January 1st in each year.

A person donating an amount of not less than \$100 in one sum may be elected by the Committee a Benefactor Member of the Society.

