

THE ENDURING REMNANT

without approval, and of the wording of the following advertisement which was placed in the *Argus*.

Office of the Joint Committee of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation

The Chief Rabbi having notified that only handmade motzos should be used for Passover. Notice is hereby given that the tender of Mr Josephson has been accepted at 8d per lb, who alone is authorised by the above Board and ministers of the congregations to manufacture them for the ensuing Passover.

B. Benjamin, Chairman

Copies of the notice were also sent to Ballarat, Sandhurst and Geelong asking their congregations to 'kindly allow the enclosed to be affixed to the doors of the synagogue and assist the above committee carrying out the direction of the Right Rev. the Chief Rabbi'.

Davidson was advised that owing to his being in contradiction of the instructions of the Chief Rabbi, the community was being informed that the only Kasher Motzos were to be obtained from the person sanctioned by the Joint Committee and ministers of the congregations. However, Davidson sold Motzos without authority; his competition apparently kept the price to 7d per pound.

On 10 January 1872 Josephson was again authorised to promote Motzos subject to the Rev. Ornstien and Rev. Rintel and Woolf Davis acting as supervisors. Notices to this effect appeared in the press. However apparently some were favourably disposed towards Davidson's efforts of the previous year; he advertised in the *Australian Israelite* his intention to bake again under his personal supervision and with an 'Orthodox Shoumer'. His price was 7d per pound while Josephson was to charge 7½d for first quality and 7d for second quality. A week later Davidson readvertised at 6½d. Josephson advertised that he only employed Jews thereby giving employment to poor Jewish workers and ensuring Motzos to be strictly Kosher; he also invited the Jewish public to inspect the works. On 16 January a letter was sent to Davidson by the Joint Committee to the effect that if he undertook to place the whole supervision of the grinding of the flour, appointment of Shomrim and all other matters connected with the baking of Motzos under the control of the subcommittee appointed by the Board, his application would be favourably considered. However, apparently Davidson did not avail himself of this offer and continued to bake independently. In this instance the small and remote community of Melbourne which was always concerned with forms and traditions participated in a major Halachic controversy (which is still far from settled a century later) and bowed to the almost inevitable march of progress.

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KASHIRUT

am well aware that the eating of Matzot during the Passover is of great importance to us as Jews, being initiated in commemoration of the principle foundations of our Holy Religion, I have considered it is a duty to see that the matzot be baked as Kosher as possible. You will therefore allow Sir, that it must be unpleasant for me, to hear such rumours offered about. During the various vicissitudes of life and the hardship I have had to endure in several parts of the world, I have, I am proud to say never forfeited my reputation as a Jew, it is therefore I repeat very aggravating to ones feelings, to be thus slandered and injured without cause.

In those days Matzot were of course baked by hand in the traditional manner. Supervision was a congregational rather than Beth Din responsibility. In 1865 the Rev. A. F. Ornstien approved the use of a 'patent improved circular pan and roller dough mixer' as an alternative to hand mixing of the dough in a small pan. On receipt of a letter from the Rev. Rintel on behalf of the Beth Din regarding the matter, the Chief Rabbi responded 'I cannot suppress my surprise at the conduct of the Rev. A. F. Ornstien in giving permission for a new mode of baking Motzot without previously consulting a competent authority on the matter, as for instance the Rev. S. Herman'. Apparently the machine took up to sixty pounds of flour at a time, and on inspection its roller had been found to be 'covered with hard paste or stale dough ... regular hard Chamerz'.

When the Rev. I. Pulver retired to Hobart from his communal positions in Melbourne, his cessation of baking was followed by a major controversy as to the propriety of his successor baking with the aid of a machine. For Pesach 1871 applications were received by the Joint Committee of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregations from Messrs L. Josephson and A. Davidson for the right to supply Motzot to the congregations under supervision. Davidson had formerly served on the Board of the Victorian Matzo Association which had been formed to lower the cost of Motzot. Despite the fact that Josephson had purchased Pulver's monopoly, Davidson was hoping to gain custom through reducing prices as a result of mechanisation. Josephson's tender for handmade Motzot was accepted by Rev. Rintel in his capacity as secretary of the Joint Committee of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregations and Davidson was informed that

the committee carrying out the instructions of the Rev. the Chief Rabbi cannot allow the minister to sanction the appointment of Shomrim for, or the use of, *Motzot made by machinery*.

A letter was then sent to the Chief Rabbi informing him of the decision, of the intention of Mr Davidson to proceed with manufacturing machine Motzot

ritual fitness was recognised by the Government in an 1879 request for inspectors of Kasher meat' to assist an enquiry into preventing pneumonitis. They were asked to provide statistical information as to diseases and other causes of unfitness they had found in previous years. The Victorian Meat Supervision Act, the City of Melbourne was required to carry out certain inspections of all meat slaughtered within its jurisdiction. Inspection involved certain charges, and editorials in the Herald echoed the communal view that meat killed through Shechta exempted from those fees as ritual inspections ensured it was of higher quality. Rabbi Abrahams, the Town Clerk, though apparently sympathetic, agreed however that a special stamp would be used only for Kasher hams' insistence that it would not be applied to the hind quarters (with require porging) so as not to give a false impression that such portion. Kasher-slaughtered meat were immediately ritually acceptable.

Matzot for Passover

The only Kashrut issue of concern to the nineteenth-century community other than Kasher meat was the provision of Matzot for Passover. As early as 1840 they were acquired from Sydney. However towards the end of 1855 it was decided to seek tenders for the local baking of 'Mutzos'. The tender was Lazarus and Lazarus was successful and they were baked under the supervision of Rintel. The following year permission to bake was granted to Isaac Pulver and L. Lazarus, and Matzot have been baked locally in Melbourne ever since. The 1857 Laws of the congregation included the provision that the minister be a member of an ex officio committee appointed for the supervision of Kasher meat and the making of Matzot. The question of their Kashrut was taken very seriously. When in 1858 aspersions were cast on their Kashrut, the Rev. E. M. Myers wrote to the committee:

I take the liberty of calling your attention to certain reports which have been freely circulated in this kehilla within this few days which probably have been reached your ear respecting the Passover cakes manufactured by Messrs Pulver and Lazarus. Now Sir, although we have appointed two conscientious Jews as Shomrim or overseers who are well acquainted with the work, nevertheless as I

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