



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

CHERHUB SEMINAR

## JEWISH SOLIDARITY AND BIG BUSINESS HOW THE SEPHARDIC AND ASHKENAZI JEWS REVITALISED THE ECONOMY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

At the time of the French Revolution, prohibitions, ill will and tension characterised relations between the Sephardic Jews of France's south-west and Ashkenazi Jews of the north-east. Within sixty years, however, the impact of Jewish emancipation had introduced considerable changes in social and economic interaction between them, especially for those entrepreneurs and bankers who embraced technological innovation and industrial development. In examining the case of the Pereire brothers, railway developers, bankers and financiers under the Second Empire, this paper explores ways in which Sephardim and Ashkenazim forged alliances which underpinned some of the most significant commercial and industrial enterprises in nineteenth-century France.

*Helen Davies is a Fellow in the School of Historical Studies, University of Melbourne. Her PhD thesis Jewish identity, social justice and capitalism: the making of the Pereire brothers (University of Melbourne 2006) is the basis for a more extensive study of Emile and Isaac Pereire which she is currently writing. Her subjects, Sephardic Jews from Bordeaux and committed Saint-Simoniens – early 'socialists' – ultimately became railway entrepreneurs, bankers and financiers under the French Second Empire. Dr Davies returned to study after a long career in both private and public sectors during which she held senior executive roles. She is a member of the Rothschild Research Forum in London and of the Société des Études saint-simoniennes of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris.*



Dr Helen Davies  
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Jessie Webb Library

ENQUIRIES

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