

Bulletin

Igud Yotzei Sin

Association of Former Residents of China

March-April 2004 ♦ Vol L ♦ Issue No. 379 English Supplement

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 2003-2004



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kindly note our new address:

Igud Yotzei Sin

P.O.B. 29786

Tel Aviv 61297, Israel

In Lieu of Flowers: Social Aid to Landsmen

Dear Friends!

As in previous years, Igud Yotzei Sin will give a Pesach bonus to the recipients of our monthly social benefits. We do it twice a year – for Rosh Hashana and for Pesach.

Most of our need landsmen are elderly, lonely, or ailing people, whose situation is such that without the assistance of Igud Yotzei Sin, they would not be able to make ends meet. As of January 1, 2004, we have 99 recipients of our monthly aid, about half of them are new immigrants from the USSR who were part of the Jewish communities of China.

In recent years, the number of contributors to the IYS Social Aid Fund, both in Israel and abroad, has dropped. Consequently, it is much more difficult to meet the requirements of the increasing number of needy elderly people. Our current budget requirement is \$100,000 annually.

We appeal to you to help us meet

the needs of our elderly and ailing landsmen by making a contribution to our Social Aid Fund, which according to the tradition of Yotzei Sin, is a donation in lieu of flowers.

Moreover, we would appreciate your remembering the needy by making a contribution to our Social Aid fund at all other festive occasions and holidays. You can also make a donation honoring a designated person, and we shall send a proper notification to the honoree informing them of your gift. In this way, both the donor and the honoree will derive great satisfaction from the fact that in the hour of joy, a needy person will also be remembered.

Please send your donations to:

Igud Yotzei Sin, Social Aid Fund

P. O. Box 29786, Tel-Aviv, 61297

With best wishes for a Hag Sameah,

IYS Central Committee

Chairman: T. Kaufman

Deputy Chairman & Treasurer:

Y. Klein

***To Our Readers
Wishing you
all the best
for a happy
and fruitful
Passover***



THEMES OF THE DAY

T. Kaufman

Pesach - Holiday of Freedom, Exodus and Spring

The readers of the "Bulletin" and our landmen in Israel and in the countries of the Diaspora will receive this festive issue of our magazine on the eve of one of the most important holidays of our people – the holiday of Pesach (Passover). Pesach occupies a special place among the holidays of the Jewish people. This is not only a religious holiday - it is a national holiday underlining the historic meaning of the Exodus from Egypt, which continues up to this very day. The word "Egypt" means "galuth" – the "galuth" of yesterday and of today.

Anti-Semitism grows and flourishes in many countries of the world. Its roots are strong and it is necessary to struggle against it always and everywhere, but it is necessary never to forget that the solution of the Jewish problem is Exodus. The only true way out of the tragedy is an exodus to the State of Israel that was created by Zionism.

Pesach is not only the holiday of freedom from the Egyptian slavery, but it is also the holiday of freedom of the world and of our country. Only the triumph of freedom can bring peace to our region – peace that we pray for and that we hope for, peace that is our goal because only peace can guarantee the future of our people and the prosperity of our country. Pesach is the holiday of spring, the holiday not only of the awakening of Nature after the winter sleep, but also the spiritual, moral and human spring of our people that suffered in the past and endures difficult times today.

On Pesach we celebrate "Seder Pesach" on the first night of the

holiday. It is the Order of the Passover supper served according to a strict ritual: the reading of the Haggadah, the four glasses of wine, the meal. Let us wish that there may be order not only at the Passover table, but also order in Israel's everyday life.

We, landmen from China, have a fine tradition to make donations instead of flowers for the Pesach holiday to the Social Aid Fund for the needy former residents of China in Israel. Let us be loyal to this tradition this year, too.

A Happy Pesach holiday to you, dear landmen!

Demonstration of Friendship and Loyalty to the Roots of the Past

On December 22 we had not just a successful reunion in the Tel Aviv Municipality Workers' House, and not only a festive ceremony of the presentation of scholarships to 150 students, and not only a get-together of four generations of landmen. It was, first and foremost, the demonstration of friendship and loyalty to the ideals of our past in China. 450 former residents of China, their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren together with the representatives of the administration, government officials and public figures of Israel and China got together for a Hanukka reunion of Igud Yotzei Sin.

We do not speak about the perfect order and organization of that get-together, but first of all, about the atmosphere of friendship, solidarity, and inspiration, that reigned supreme on that evening. Everyone who was present felt so, it was what each of us breathed in on that unforgettable evening.

The arrival of a delegation from Harbin – representatives of the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences and the Center of the Studies of the History of Jews of Harbin - embellished the reunion. The warm words and a high appreciation of our organizations that we heard from the honorary guests in their speeches is another proof of the correctness of our way during the 53 years of the existence of our landsmannschaft organization. All this gives us strength to keep on with our social work in the year 2004 and to prepare for the next Hanukka reunion that will take place in December.

The 56th Anniversary of the Foundation of the State of Israel

On April 26 the people of Israel and the Jews in the Diaspora will celebrate the 56th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. We want to believe that, entering the 57th year of her existence, Israel will achieve peace and security, and remain, as ever, the pivot of the Jewish people and a country of truth, social justice and progress.

A Happy Holiday to you, dear landmen!

The New **Israel's**
Messenger 

**The New Israel's
Messenger does not
appear in this issue,
but will be included
in the next Bulletin**

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HANUKKA GATHERING

On Monday, December 22, 2003, at 3:30 p.m. near the Tel Aviv municipality workers' building at 4 Pumbedita St., about half an hour before the building was opened, dozens of Jewish immigrants to Israel from China gathered: 450 guests, and 154 students - 139 Israeli and 15 Chinese – attended the gathering. Those present included parents, grandmothers and grandfathers, great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers of the students receiving scholarships. The guests were welcomed by leaders of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel: T. Kaufman, Y. Klein, R. Veinerman, Y. Bein, and A. Podolsky.

There were many guests, including a delegation with representatives from the Social Sciences Academy of Heilongjiang province, plus the entire Center for Historical Research into the Jews of Harbin. The Chairman of the Social Sciences Academy, Prof. Qu Wei headed the delegation, which also included Prof. Li Shuxiao, Assistant Prof. Mrs. Fu Mingjing, Documentation and Publishing Division Manager of the Academy of Sciences Xie Shouguang, department manager Han Yongqin, "Heilongjiang Daily" (a large newspaper in Harbin) editor Chen Yuzhi, and journalist and photographer Nao Xiaoyan.

The Chinese embassy also sent many representatives, including acting Ambassador Mr. Zhang Qingyang. The ambassador himself was accompanying the President of Israel on his visit to China at the time. This delegation also included advisors Fan Jianmin and Lu Kun (the latter accompanied by his wife), first secretaries Song Xiaolian (cultural attaché) and Chen Tenghua (attaché for education), second secretary Mr.

Ji Gang (accompanied by his wife), third secretaries Luo Songtao and Mrs. Ren Hongyan, and attache and personal secretary of the ambassador Mrs. Zhang Haihua (Emma).

Representing the Israel Ministry for Foreign Affairs were deputy director general Zvi Gabai and his wife, Northeastern Asia department manager Mr. Yigal Caspi, and former Israel Ambassadors to China Mrs. Ora Namir and Moshe Ben-Yaakov (the latter accompanied by his wife). Deputy Tel Aviv Mayor Nathan Wolloch represented the Tel Aviv municipality.

The guests were offered refreshments and drinks. The reception lasted from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. in an informal atmosphere. The Chinese guests and the immigrants from China mixed and spoke with each other. At 5:45 p.m. the doors to the 380-seat hall were opened. 30 persons sat on the podium, and another 40 stood near the walls of the hall.

At 6:15 p.m. Mr. Ron Veinerman opened the formal meeting. Sitting at the presidium table were Teddy Kaufman, Yossi Klein, Ron Veinerman, historian Prof. Jonathan Goldstein from Atlanta (author of books about the history of Chinese Jewry), former Israel Ambassadors to China Mrs. Ora Namir and Moshe Ben-Yaakov, and Association of Chinese Immigrants in Israel representatives Yaakov Guri, and Genia Rosenstein, Sara Morgulev, T. and J. Piastunovitch, A. Fradkin, D. Gootman, E. Vandel, and S. Ross.

Mr. Veinerman invited the guests of honor to the platform: acting Chinese Ambassador Mr. Zhang Qingyang, Deputy Tel Aviv Mayor Nathan Wolloch, Israel Ministry for Foreign Affairs deputy director general Zvi

Gabai, and Prof. Qu Wei. They took their places on the podium to a round of applause.

Ron Ozer, grandson of Mrs. Mary Kamionka (nee Schwarz), lit four Hanukka candles, and all present sang "Maoz Tzur". Mr. Kaufman gave Ron Ozer an Israel album. Ron Veinerman gave the floor to Mr. T. Kaufman, who warmly welcomed those present, both guests and those receiving scholarships. Mr. Kaufman gave a speech about our roots, and emphasized the importance of granting student scholarships. His speech was interrupted a number of times by enthusiastic applause.

Acting Chinese Ambassador Mr. Zhang Qingyang also warmly welcomed those present. He stressed the valuable contribution made by our organizations present to the strengthening of the friendship between Israel and China. Israel Ministry for Foreign Affairs deputy director general Zvi Gabai also spoke about this topic, adding that he knew of no other organization that had done so much to strengthen Israel's ties with China. Deputy Tel Aviv Mayor Nathan Wolloch said that the Association of Chinese Immigrants in Israel was a unique organization, not only in Tel Aviv, but in the whole of Israel.

Prof. Qu Wei welcomed those present in the name of his delegation, and noted the enormous contribution of our organizations to strengthening friendship with the city of Harbin and Heilongjiang province. The last speaker was the vice-chairman and treasurer of the organization, Mr. Y. Klein, who spoke about the Association of Chinese Immigrants in Israel's important achievement last year – the setting up of an

Internet site presenting the history of the Jews of China. Scholarship recipients from China, violinists Ya Ji and Li Yang, and pianist Qi Yang, then gave a musical recital of several compositions for violin by Bach and Israeli composers. Those present warmly applauded the musicians, and Mr. Teddy Kaufman presented them with bouquets.

T. Kaufman reported on the Association of Chinese Immigrants in Israel scholarship funds. 46 funds, including memorial and personal funds, are financing the scholarships. The largest funds are as follows: A fund in memory of Misha Kogan (52 scholarships), a fund in memory of John and Alexandra Maisin (25 scholarships), a fund in memory of Ralph Magid (10 scholarships), and fund in memory of the Schildkraut family (five scholarships). Another 32 funds grant one scholarship each. The Chinese embassy contributed 10 scholarships. T. Kaufman listed all the scholarship donors who perpetuated the names of their loved ones. He thanked the donors, and announced that 139 Israelis and 15 Chinese students studying in Israel had received scholarships in 2003. In the 47 years since the Association of Chinese Immigrants in Israel began, 2,500 students have received scholarships, amounting to an aggregate \$700,000. The audience responded with an ovation.

After the speeches, a precisely organized ceremony awarding the scholarships took place, which lasted over an hour. All the scholarship recipients ascended the podium, and received their scholarships from the presidium members, as well as a copy of the "Jews in Harbin" album.

Chinese student Lian Song, representing the Chinese scholarship recipients, and Israeli student Ilan Sandel, representing the Israeli scholarship recipients, expressed thanks, and praised the activity of the Association of Chinese Immigrants in Israel. Their speeches were

applauded.

T. Kaufman concluded the evening by wishing the students success in their studies, and noting the important role of science in Israel's future development, and in creating a healthy public atmosphere.

The ceremony ended at 8:15 p.m.. Haifa and Jerusalem resident who attended the meeting returned home in minibuses chartered for the purpose. At the end of the ceremony,

the members remained in the lobby of the municipality workers' building, and exchanged impressions from the meeting and its intimate atmosphere. Everyone noted with pride their Chinese origin and their unusual organization.

We thank all those who helped organize the meeting, and those who attended it. Looking forward to the meeting during Hannukah 2004!

Ben-Zeev

Hannuka Gathering



1 Scholarship recipients



2 View of the audience

Speakers at the Hanukka Gathering Greeting the Audience

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Charge d'Affaires, Mr. Zhang Qingyang, Acting Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Israel



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Deputy Mayor of Tel-Aviv, Mr. Nathan Wolloch



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Deputy Mayor of Tel-Aviv, Mr. Nathan Wolloch

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T. Kaufman, Chairman of Igud Yootzei Sin and President of the Israel-China Friendship Society



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Prof. Qu Wei, President of the Heilongjian Academy of Social Science

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Yossi Klein, IYS Deputy President

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At the All-Israel Gathering on December 22 in the Foyer of the Tei-Aviv Municipality Workers Club

1 Tina Smushkovich (Gilevitch), David Gutman, and Friedal Geiman

2 Chinese student Shi Lei, Borya Shaffran with his wife, Benny and Shosh Tzur (Skopitz)

3 Student Dina Degtyarev (Lapishev), Prof. Qu Wei, and Borya Degtyarev

4 Esthher Vandel, Dinah Zaigraeff, and Sara Morggulev

5 Joe Lerner and Isaac Dashinsky

6 A Student from Chiinna, Prof. Qu Wei, Mara Brodsky and Sara Kenig

The Speech of the Students' Representative

Ilan Sandel

Dear Mr. Zhang, Acting Ambassador of China to Israel!

Dear Mr. Kaufman, President of IYS!

Dear public!

Dear students!

Good evening!

Several years have passed since I started my academic studies, and I am already accustomed to come here every year to receive a Scholarship awarded to me by Igud Yotzei Sin.

Before I start to express my gratitude for the Scholarship proper, I would like to mark that the ceremony of the presentation of scholarships and the activities of Igud Yotzei Sin me up, monies have been donated by generous contributors whose devotion and the wonderful organization of the ceremony by IYS never fail to stir up a great agitation in me, and, I believe, in the whole community of students seated in this Auditorium, and add immensely to our feeling of belonging to the community that has had a great destiny.

When I am asked where my parents come from, I always answer that my mother was born in China. This sentence always provokes additional questions about my family, which leads to my telling about my mother's childhood from the stories that I have been hearing since early childhood.

Recently, my tales about my mother's origin from China and her coming to Israel have become more vivid owing to the fact that I went to the city of Harbin about four years ago and found out that all the stories



I have heard from my mother about the repatriation of Jews from China to Israel were quite genuine.

To have seen the streets of Harbin, the inhabitants of the cities, the school, the Synagogue, the Sungari river and all the other sites from my mother's childhood has made her tales much more real and they are not abstract for me any longer. Personally, I was privileged to visit the graveside of my grandfather whom I had not even known, and I recited the prayer, and that was at the other end of the world from where I live!

Today I can tell you frankly that I am quite proud to be an offspring of former residents of China.

But I did not come here to tell the story of my family – I just wanted to use this opportunity to recommend to everybody who came to this festive event to go to China and see

with your own eyes China's beauty and to remember to pass on to the following generations the memory of your families' sojourn in China. And I would also like to use this tribune to thank Igud Yotzei Sin in the name of all the students who are present here for its blessed activities during many years, for the preservation of the ties between the families of former residents of China and for the beautiful tradition of the presentation of scholarships which help us to get along with our studies successfully, so that our dreams may come true. The presentation of scholarships is of great importance especially at these hard times of international tensions.

Thanks a lot, dear Igud Yotzei Sin!
Thanks a lot, dear contributors!
God bless you!

Presidium Meeting

A meeting of the Presidium was held on December 15.

Present: T. Kaufman, Y. Klein, R. Veinerman, J. Bein, B. Bershadsky, E. Vandel, G. Katz, J. Sandel, A. Podolsky, T. Piastunovich, A. Fradkin.

Absent: I. Brunner, R. Rashinsky, M. Kamiouka.

T. Kaufman gave a full account of work done for the past six months, and Y. Klein presented the balance

sheet as of 30.9.03. Both were approved.

It was decided to co-opt Joe Levoff to the Presidium and the Central Committee.

The following items were approved:

- Monthly social aid to A.G.
- Three non-interest loans of 1500, 2000, and 3000 shekels.
- Financial account of the synagogue for the period 6.9.02 to 24.10.03.
- List of 139 students receiving

grants for 2003-2004.

- Holding the all-Israel meeting on December 22 in Tel Aviv.

Y. Klein proposed to assign NIS 20,000 from the fund for preserving the history of the Jews of China towards preparing the issue of book on the history of the Jews in Harbin.

T. Kaufman announced the arrival of a delegation from Harbin, December 21st-28th.

Central Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Central Committee was held on December 15, attended by 18 members out of 35. T. Kaufman opened the meeting with a moment of silence for those who passed away in Israel and abroad during the past six months:

In Israel: Hilia Sarno, Clara Kremer (nee Rivkin), Moshe Michaeli (Mihailovsky), Vera Stofman (nee Rosina-Klein), Willie Vandel, Boria Kenig, Dr. Anatoly Rutstein, Ania Grubner (nee Zelvinskaya).

Abroad: Natan Leibovitch (Sydney), Vera Kiachko (San Francisco), Stella Terr (nee Eskina-Kaffel) (Los Angeles), Shimon Karlikoff (Sydney), Bella Miller (Los Angeles), Shura Piasetsky (Florida).

T. Kaufman gave a full account of work done since the last meeting on 19.5.03 as follows:

1. Two issues of the Bulletin, Nos. 377 and 378 were published and distributed.
2. "In Lieu of Flowers" campaign

for Rosh Hashanah that brought good results.

3. Donations were received from the following:

Izia Magid – US\$31,000

Asya Kogan – US\$20,000

A. Maizin Fund – US\$25,000

4. A delegation from Harbin, from the Center for the Study of the History of the Jews of Harbin, which is part of the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences, visited Israel and were guests at Bet Ponve.

5. The number of families receiving social aid remains 58 families (101 persons) as of 15.13.03. The amount of aid was doubled for Rosh Hashanah.

6. Presents were sent for Rosh Hashanah to 60 grandchildren and great grandchildren of former residents of China serving in the Israeli Army.

7. Active work in Bet Ponve. Sunday get-togethers and an increasing number of volunteers.

Among them are: D. Gutman, Jeanne Tikotsky, Tamara Faibushevitch, Sara Morgulev, Joe Levoff, Benny Zur, Yehudit Bein, Sas Jacoby, Rebecca Toueg, and others.

Plans for 2004:

- Biannual registration of persons receiving monthly social aid.

- Celebrating 50 years of the Bulletin.

- Preparing the budget for 2004 and balance sheet for 2003.

- 15th All-Israel Conference in December 2004.

- Widening the Internet site on the history of the Jews of China.

T. Kaufman's account was approved.

Y. Klein presented the balance sheet as of 30.9.03, which was also approved. T. Kaufman proposed to co-opt Joe Levoff to the Presidium and the Central Committee, to confirm the list of 139 students receiving grants this year, and the IYS annual meeting on December 22.

All was unanimously approved.

People and Events

Mazal Tov

Mazal Tov to Gracie and Mort Solomon on the bar-mitzvah of their grandson Jonathan Max from Shirley and Paul Hoffman (Gertie's friends) in Connecticut.

Bar-Yosef Family

Congratulations to our landsmen, Rahil and Eliahu Bar-Yosef, on the birth of a great grandson. Igud Yotzei Sin sends good wishes to the whole Bar-Yosef family and may they always enjoy good health and happiness.

Bella and Abraham Goldreich

Bella (nee Segerman) who was born in Shanghai, and Abraham Goldreich celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Bella and Abraham and the whole Goldreich family on this joyful event and wishes them health and happiness.

Alex Auswaks - 70

Alex Auswaks, out landsman and former resident of Tianjin, was 70 years old on February 8. Alex is a talented journalist and translator. For many years he has been writing for The Jerusalem Post, and has also published articles and translations in our Bulletin pages. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Alex and wishes him good health and well being till 120!

Bella Goldreich - 70

Bella Goldreich (nee Segerman), formerly of Shanghai, celebrated her 70th birthday in January 2004. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Bella and Avram and all the family on this happy event, and wishes them health and happiness. Till 120!

Grisha Pais - 75

Grisha Pais (Piastunovich), formerly of Harbin and now living in Migdal Ha'emek, is now 75 years old. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Grisha and wishes him health and happiness till 120!

Sammy Poliak - 75

Sammy Poliak, formerly of Shanghai, celebrated his 75th birthday in December. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Sammy, Sopha, and the family, and wish them health and happiness.

Abe Fradkin - 80

Abe Fradkin, formerly of Shanghai, celebrated his 80th birthday on November 24. The celebration was held at "Gan Oranim" in Tel Aviv, and over 100 friends came to the party which was organized by his daughter Ronit and son Ariel. Abe gave a history of his life in Shanghai, Harbin, Berkeley, and Tel Aviv. Friends of the family, co-workers in his company "Delek", and landsmen, greeted Abe in prose or in verse. T. Kaufman also addressed Abe with warm words of friendship. This was followed by a concert program and dancing. The atmosphere was so pleasant that the dinner party continued till midnight. Abe is an active member of Igud Yotzei Sin, the Israel-China Friendship Society, and is a member of the IYS Presidium and Board of Directors, and is also a regular contributor to the Bulletin. He was a member of two delegations of the ICFS to China in 1992 and 1994. Both the IYS and the ICFS wish Abe health, happiness, and much joy from his children and grandchildren.

Rolf Shaw - 80

Rolf Shaw (formerly Schkolnikow), was born on January 7, 1924 in Guetersloh, Germany, the second son of Samuel



and Minna Schkolnikow. With the expulsion order after Kristallnacht, he left Germany with his father on July 1, 1939 for Shanghai. His mother stayed behind due to illness and died shortly after. --- In Shanghai, his lived in the French Concession, and worked for Zelikowsky Bros. In his spare time (plenty of that) he attended Marine school in Rue de Consulate and studied wireless operating and navigation. At the end of the war he was employed by the U.S. Air Force as Radio Operator, but resigned to join UNRRA as Radio Operator / 2nd Officer on one of their ships. In December 1946 he married Alla Ignatovitch. They have one daughter, Michelle, and three grandchildren, Sophie, Joshua, and Emily. In 1949 UNRRA ceased its operations in China. Rolf and his family migrated to Australia, arriving in Sydney on March 21, 1949. He started a jewellery and watch business in 1952 (a trade he learned from his father). He is still active in business with no intention of giving it away.

In honor of his birthday, Mr. Rolf Shaw donated Au\$1000 to the IYS Social Aid Fund. We thank him and wish him a long life of health and happiness.

Rosetta Rabinovich - 94

They came from Haifa, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, to celebrate Rosetta's birthday on January 2 – her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and relatives – a joyful and happy event for a remarkable and very special person.

Eliahu Bar-Yosef - 90

On November 19, our old friend Eliahu Bar Yosef, formerly of Harbin, celebrated his 90th birthday. Eliahu (or as his numerous friends call him 'Liolia') occupies an esteemed place in the first rank of the members in Igud Yotzei Sin in Israel. His eventful biography is marked by a continuous service to his community in Harbin, and later to the security and welfare of the State of Israel.

He studied in the Fourth Railroad School, later graduating from the Harbin Polytechnic Institute as an engineer, and he worked at the Mulin Skidelsky coal mines. He was a dedicated member of the Harbin "Betar" and was one of the first Chinese Betarim to go to Palestine in 1935. Here he joined the "Betar" Labor Brigades ("Plugot Avoda") and served in Netanya and Ramat Tiomkin. Later he became an active member of the IZL underground. For four years he worked at the Dead Sea Novomeisky Salt Concession.

During the Second World War Eliahu served in the ranks of the British army and was dispatched to the Persian Gulf. After his release, he joined the "Haganah" and in 1947 was mobilized by the IDF, where he served as a regular army officer (Engineering Corps), reaching the rank of colonel (aluf-mishne) when released on pension. He also graduated from the "Command and Staff" ("Pikud u-Mateh") Academy, and was sent to the newly independent Tanzania as a military expert and instructor for the Tanzanian army.

From the very foundation of Igud Yotzei Sin, Eliahu was closely connected with our organization, and

for many years headed the Haifa IYS branch. He was also a member of the Central Committee and the Presidium of the IYS. In 1992 Eliahu was one of the initiators of the creation of the Israel-China Friendship Association. As head of the Haifa IYS branch, Eliahu organized and realized four important IYS projects: a meet of the former Chinese Jewish sportsmen at the Wingate Institute; and all-Israel meet at the Chinese Betar settlement, Amikam; the transfer of the Jewish sports archives in China to the "Maccabi" Museum in Kfar Maccabiah in Ramat Gan; and last, but not least – a unique compilation of the history of Jewish sports in China.

Eliahu himself was always an outstanding sportsman. Just a few years ago he took part in the International Senior Sportsmen Olympian competition in Europe, winning gold medals in his favorite sport – sprinting – in the 80-90 year-old group.

A few years ago Eliahu left Haifa where he had lived for many years, to join his daughter and her family in the pensioners' town of Omer near Beersheba. He has many friends amongst the "Old China Hands" here and abroad. Despite the many difficulties he had to overcome during his life, he maintained his evergreen optimistic character, his strong will, and his never subsiding interest in the events surrounding him. He continues to contribute to the preservation of the history of the Jews of China. We are always glad to see him on our annual Hanukka get-togethers. Last September he was the guest of honor at the reception for the delegation of the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences from Harbin where he was presented with a unique album from his personal archive "Harbin in the 1920's – 1930's".

Eliahu is one of those among our countrymen – in the past and present – of whom we have the right to be and should be proud – always and

everywhere. Eliahu is ninety. Our traditional Jewish blessing is "Ad meah ve-esrim" – till 120! – the age of Moses. We, the Jews, also consider 18 to be a lucky number. The Chinese consider it to be 9. so let us congratulate him with five times eighteen and ten by nine, and wish him a happy dozen by ten! Eliahu Bar-Yosef, "Ko le-hai!"

Teddy Kaufman

Gershon Amitai (Grisha Vernikov) - 90

On December 29, Gershon Amitai (Grisha Vernikov), formerly of Harbin, celebrated his 90th jubilee. We all remember Grisha from the Harbin Commercial School and Betar, where he was also known by his nickname "Zikada" ("Cricket"). For some time he edited the Harbin Betar mouthpiece "Hadegeel. In 1933, together with Iliusha Lankin and Misha Abugov, he left for Palestine where he worked in the Betar labor battalions (Plugot Avoda) in Galilee. He then moved to Nahariya, where he worked as a building hand. Later, in Netanya, Grisha joined a group of pioneer workers in the then newly born diamond industry. For two years (1942-44) he worked at the Dead Sea Potash Works. During the War of Independence Grisha fought in the ranks of the Alexandroni brigade in the Negev and Arava sectors, where, incidentally, he took command of a group of newly arrived Etselniks from China. He fought in the Battle of Beersheba and stayed on to live in that city for over five decades. There he worked as the manager of the Beersheba Municipal Library. After the death of his wife, Grisha settled permanently in Tel Aviv. He has two sons, grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

Gershon Amitai belongs to the well-celebrated group of the Harbin halutzim, of whom we all have the right to be proud. On his 90th birthday we wish him plenty of health till 120!

Special Events

Lectures

On October 8, T. Kaufman gave a lecture on Jews in China at the “Avivim” Club in Givat Shmuel. The lecture took about one and a half hours and was met with great interest by the audience who asked questions which were answered by the lecturer.

On January 7, T. Kaufman and T. Piastunovich visited the “Shaar Hanegev” school which is a part of Sapir College. They were invited by Michal Vasser, a teacher of History, who is the niece of Rabbi Marvin Tokayer. T. Kaufman spoke for over an hour and quarter about the history of the Jews in China. The lecture aroused great interest among the 40 pupils and teachers who asked many questions about Jews in China. T. Kaufman was presented with an art album on Israel and a “thank you” letter was read out.

On January 27, T. Kaufman delivered a lecture in Russian on the Russian Jews in China at the Club of New Immigrants from the former USSR affiliated with the Writers’ House named after Saul Tschernichovsky in Tel Aviv. The lecture aroused great interest in the audience. T. Kaufman has spoken at the Club on various subjects dealing with current events in Israel for almost ten years.

Bet Ponve Receptions

On January 11, two students were invited to the weekly Sunday gatherings at Bet Ponve. They were unable to be present at the scholarship awards ceremony on December 22, and came to Bet Ponve to receive their awards. Out of the 139 recipients, seven were unable to attend the ceremony on December 22: Two of them had exams, one had to attend a brother’s wedding, two were ill, and two had to work in the evenings. All seven were invited to

come to Bet Ponve on Sundays at the weekly gatherings and four of them were presented with the awards. On this Sunday Y. Klein presented awards to Dov Olach and Aya Tamar. T. Kaufman welcomed the students. On February 8, a reception was held at our usual Sunday gatherings in honor of Prof. Peter Berton, formerly of Harbin where he was known and Zaika Berstein. Prof. Berton came to Israel to attend an international seminar on the 100 years since the Russo-Japanese War organized by the Jerusalem and Haifa universities. Prof. Baron delivered a lecture on Japan – “Is Japan a Friend or an Enemy?” He is a worldwide authority on Japan and his name is known in the USA, Japan and in many other countries. T. Kaufman greeted the guest and gave a biography of Prof. Berton and his family in Harbin. Prof. Berton shared an interesting account of his many visits to China which was met with great interest by his audience.

Visitors

Mr. Liang Ping’an is one of the assistants of Prof. Pan Guang in the Center of Jewish Studies, Shanghai.

He arrived in Israel for advanced studies at Tel Aviv University and his academic adviser is Prof. Aaron Shai. On February 16 Mr. Liang visited Bet Ponve and met with T. Kaufman, Y. Klein, T. Piastunovich, A. Podolsky and Y. Ladijensky.

Film

A film on Igud Yotzei Sin and Jews from China was shown on the Russian TV channel N.T.V. on December 12. It was filmed in Bet Ponve on one of the Sunday get-togethers, and interviews were given by T. Kaufman, S. Ross, and others.

Synagogue

On Saturday, December 20, “Shabbat Hanukka”, a festive prayer was held at the Synagogue of the Jewish Communities of China, 31 Golan Street, Tel Aviv, in memory of the Jewish communities. The synagogue was filled to capacity, and R. and T. Kaufman were present. After prayers, a kiddush and brunch was held in the Cultural Center of the synagogue – salads, traditional cholent and kugel – sponsored by A. Yoselevich. T. Kaufman spoke about the Hanukka holiday.



Prof. Peter Berton at Bet Ponve with David Gutman



1

1

Bat-Mitzvah in Las-Vegas

A rare get-together took place in Las-Vegas in June 2003 to celebrate the Bat-Mitzva of Maya Friedman, daughter of Irit and Dubi Friedman and granddaughter of Ilana and the late Leva Olshevsky, who was formerly a resident of Harbin an Tianjin.

The guests: **first row:** (left to right) Elimara and Edith Komberg, Dora (nee Segerman) and Joe Wainer, formerly of Harbin and Shanghai, Ilana Olshevsky, Dekel Friedman, Jackie and Kelly Komberg and Molly Roklen. **Standing:** Ed Komberg, Zvia and Yehuda Limor (Yehuda Limor is the son of Sara and the late Mara Morgulev), Evan, Michael and Jonathan Roklen, Bella Goldrich (nee Segerman) and their daughter Sandra Roklen, Avram Goldrich, Dubi and Irit Friedman and the Bat-Mitzva - Maya Friedman.



2

2

Wedding - Revital daughter of Hanna and Ari Nirim, graddaughter of Celia and Mosia Nirim and Adir son of Helen and Robin Shiffman.

The wedding in traditional style took place in Melbourne on 25 January 2004 which was also the 28th wedding anniversary of Hanna and Ari.

Celia Nirim, graddaughter and Ilana Eshel, aunt, came special'y from Israel to celebrate the wedding with the family.

Igug Yotzei Sin sends heartiest congratulations to all the family.



3

3

In Nahariya, in the family circle, Vera (nee Belokamen) of Harbin and Iky Ioselevich of Shanghai celebrated thir gold wedding anniversary. (left to right): Vera and Iky, Shosh Kaspi, Rasha and Teddy Kaufman, Neomi Miller and Benny Tzur (Skopitz)

Dr. A. Kaufman, Camp Doctor - 16 Years in the Soviet Union

Chapter 5, Sections B and C

After several days they started calling me in for interrogations. My interrogator was an officer with the rank of a senior lieutenant; he was a most evil person, just like most of the interrogators of the "MGB". He was not overly educated; he just learnt by heart some of Lenin's quotations and especially parts from Stalin's doctrines. He quotes Stalin's words at every opportunity. "So said Yosef Visarionovitch" Or "our teacher", "our leader", "the great Stalin"...

At the first interrogation session he leafed continuously through a thick file full of various papers and documents that lay in front of him.

"What did you discuss during the secret meeting that took place in 1941 in the "Talmud Tora" at the start of the Soviet - German war?" he asked.

"I have no idea, I never heard of such a meeting"

"How can it be that you have no idea, you yourself spoke at this meeting about the role of the Jews in this war..."

"A meeting like this never took place and could not have taken place".

The interrogator beats the file with his hand and yells:

"Tell the truth, confess! Do not hide anything! Everything is known to us. If you confess, it will be to your advantage!"

"No such meeting took place, nor was the war discussed, neither openly nor in secret. This is a false story that came to you from Fascist and anti Soviet circles".

"At this meeting you discussed the benefits to the Jews from this war and that the Jews will profit from it" he declared.

"This is a blood-libel; it's a lie and a deception".



On hearing my words the interrogator said in a threatening voice:

"The Jews plan to conquer the whole world... This is a known fact..."

"This is an ancient accusation" I said quietly, "fabricated by all the anti-Semites in the world throughout the ages and the members of the "Black Hundreds" of all times".

"My words awakened a storm. He began to yell profanities at me, and waves of obscene and vulgar words spewed from his mouth. He bangs on the table:

"So the "Black Hundreds" are on your mind? You'll yet see... you'll rot in jail here!"

Meanwhile another officer, who was sitting at an adjacent table all that time - the same officer who relieved me of my aluminum spoon - intervened and said:

"Why are you wasting your time with him, send him to the solitary confinement. Let him spend three days with the rats".

The interrogator phoned and summoned the guards who returned me to my cell. I went through many such interrogations in the Sverdlovsk prison, by day and by

night. But normally the interrogations took place from ten in the morning up to six in the evening. The main subjects that interested them were: Zionism, the Jewish community, and the "anti-revolutionary" activities of the Jewish organizations. My interrogator is not a very big authority on Jewish affairs. He has a very sparse knowledge about Zionism. He becomes confused when asking questions and very often has to study the file and some booklet that lies in front of him. It is clearly apparent that he is most confused and can make neither head nor tail from the file and notes in front of him. After 5-6 interrogations he has still not signed me on any final protocol. This is obviously due to the reason that he still has not managed to compile a report on these interrogations.

Once the interrogation took place at 2 o'clock at night. When I entered the investigator's room, he got up and said: "Come with me!"

We walked along a long corridor then down the stairs to the first floor then enter the office of the head investigator. Sitting by a big table covered with a red fabric, on a chair with a high backrest like a throne, sat a big lieutenant colonel, well fed with a crude face. On the floor covered by a carpet stood some armchairs; opposite these armchairs along the wall stood a row of armchairs. I was ordered to sit on one of them.

"Why don't you want to speak?" The lieutenant colonel shouted at me.

"I answer to all the questions that I am asked and tell all I know," I answered.

"You are lying, you son of a bitch! Here, you will talk! We broke stronger ones than you! Start talking immediately!"

If you won't you'll regret it... you will crawl on your knees begging us to hear you... understand? You filth! I will make you yield no matter what... you will be a rag in my hands...you'll tell me everything...you whore!" the lieutenant colonel raved. I listen to his ravings in silence, the most senior "MGB" officer in the prison showing his cursing proficiency.

After the above preliminaries, the interrogation commenced. The first question was about the "Zionist espionage organization Hias".

"Tell me with whom did your organization carry on a correspondence abroad? To whom in France, Belgium and America did you reveal information on the Soviet Union?"

"Hias" I answered "is a federation, or to be more exact, an office that helps people in their search for relatives and offers aid to immigrants in various countries. Personally I had no part in the workings of this office, but I know its functions well".

"The lieutenant colonel was furious; he stamped his feet on the floor and banged his fists on the table.

"You are lying, you villain, this is a Zionist espionage organization" He then turned in the direction of my regular interrogator who was sitting on one of the armchairs nearby remarking "What a scoundrel he is, lying openly without batting an eyelid" then turned again to me.

"With which Zionist espionage organization abroad was Hias connected?" I managed to answer: "Hias is not an espionage organization" He turned quickly to my investigator telling him, "Take him away from here, take him! Maybe he'll come to his senses".

"My investigator led me to his office on the third floor, called the guards and at four o'clock in the morning I was returned to my cell.

On one of the later interrogations – this one too during the night hours – I was interrogated by the lieutenant colonel on the subject of "Brith-Trumpeldor":

"What kind of an organization is Brith-

Trumpeldor?"

"This is sport and cultural organization of Jewish youth".

"An English organization", the lieutenant colonel declares.

"It is not English but an organization of Jewish youth," I correct him.

"Just look at this villain!" hollers the lieutenant colonel "what a liar...Brith, Brith... means British or English organization, I'm telling you!"

"Brith is a Hebrew word meaning 'organization' and 'Brith-Trumpeldor' is an organization named after Trumpeldor", I answered quietly.

"Trumpeldor is a Jewish national hero", the lieutenant colonel cuts in.

"Jews have no heroes... come on, tell the truth: Who is Trumpeldor? Is he a spy?"

"Joseph Trumpeldor is a Jewish national hero", I answered quietly. "He excelled in the Russo-Japanese war; he was promoted to an officer's rank and was awarded the Giorgi medal for bravery."

"All that you are saying are lies! You are a liar and your Trumpeldor is a piece of filth!" raves the lieutenant-colonel. "Talk! your mother! You son of a bitch! Why are you silent?"

"I told you everything" I answered angrily.

The lieutenant colonel turns to the senior lieutenant and says:

"Look at him...he does not look at all like a prisoner... why does he wear eye glasses? Take them from him!"

"As you say comrade lieutenant colonel!"

"Also the buttons tear them out... from the coat, from the sweater and the trousers, all of them. Let him hold up his trousers with his hands," shouts the lieutenant colonel with obscene pleasure.

"As you say comrade lieutenant colonel"

"Take him away from here! Does he want to try the taste of the solitary confinement?" The lieutenant colonel ends the interrogation.

The time was three at night. My investigator led me to his office, removed my eyeglasses and put them

in the drawer of his table. He took out his pocketknife and began to remove the buttons from my coat and sweater. At this moment two other investigators entered the room. When one of them saw that my investigator was cutting off the buttons of my trousers he asked: "What are you doing?"

"This is by order of the lieutenant colonel."

"So if he ordered, must you do it? Stop this nonsense ..."

They all hate the lieutenant colonel. My investigator leaves me be. He managed only to cut one button off my trousers. The guards return me "home"- to the cell.

From the Hebrew by Benny Tzur

(to be continued)

Prof. Haim Tadmor turns 80

On November 20, 2003, the Academy of Sciences and Humanities organized a special seminar, followed by a ceremonial event, in honor of Prof. Tadmor. Prof. Tadmor's colleagues, family members, friends, and immigrants from Harbin attended these events.

Ten Hebrew University professors spoke at the seminar. At the conclusion of the seminar, Prof. Tadmor ascended the podium, and spoke about the achievements of the Hebrew University Assyriology department.

Speakers at the ceremonial event included the Academy of Sciences president, Hebrew University professors, David Tadmor (prof Tadmor's son), and other prominent personalities. Well-known television host Dan Kaner emceed the proceedings. The granddaughter of historian Simon Dubnow recited poems by Alexander Bloch and Osip Mandlestam in Russian and Hebrew.

Immigrants to Israel from Harbin present at the event included Mrs. Nehama Elran. Mr Yitzhak Oren and his wife, and R. and T. Kaufman.

The Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Mirian and Haim Tadmor, and wishes them good health, prosperity, and satisfaction from their children and grandchildren.

Legends of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng

(continued from the previous issue)

5. The Beginning of a New Life

Life in Kaifeng is easy, and the Jews become prosperous. They begin to neglect the ways of their fathers. If the Torah is not followed and the Sabbath is not kept, what will become of them as a people?

Once again the congregation was on the march. Now everyone was happy and in high spirits. They felt sure that their sufferings would soon end, and that the road to a new life was spreading out before them. When they approached the southern gate of Kaifeng, they beheld a scene of great excitement. The gate was wide open. Levi and the other emissaries stood there waiting for them. With them were many Chinese who had gathered to welcome the Jewish newcomers, lining both sides of the main entrance to the city. The emperor's decree was visible to all, hanging on the city wall next to the gate. It read:

My fellow countrymen:

We are honored to have friends from afar live in the Great Song. From this day on they are our brothers and sisters. Let us live together peacefully. For our Israelite friends I have the following words: You have come to our Central Plain. Honor and preserve your ancestral customs, and remain and hand them down in Kaifeng.

The members of the congregation realized that their dreams had come true. They prayed and thanked God for bringing them to such a friendly land and thanked the Song emperor for his kindness and hospitality. Kaifeng was a new world for them. It was a large city with more magnificent buildings and more wealth and luxury than they had ever seen before. The land was different from any they had known. The large broad fields had a system of canals to provide water for the crops. Food grew easily. Life was simpler and

more comfortable than anything they had ever known.

The years passed. A Jewish neighborhood grew up around Earth Market Street. The Jews of Kaifeng were surrounded by people who were friendly and warm. And something new in their history, they encountered no sign of prejudice or hatred and thus experienced no pogroms or anti-Semitism.

With equal opportunity and a conducive setting, the Jewish newcomers soon began to play an active role in Kaifeng's economy and society. They worked as goldsmiths, weavers, and traders. They built homes and lived peacefully with their neighbors. In time, some Jews rose to high positions and held important posts in the emperor's court. The community prospered, and to their great surprise and joy they were later joined by several groups of coreligionists from India and other places.

However, as time passed, some Jews took wives from among their neighbors. Chinese customs began to infiltrate their religious practices. The laws of the Torah were not rigorously followed. The Sabbath was often not kept. If the Jews of Kaifeng were to avoid the fate of the Ten Lost Tribes of ancient Israel, something had to be done.

The religious leaders of the community called a meeting. At this assembly, Levi, the chief rabbi, retold the story of the Ten Lost Tribes, then asked the assembly if they too wished to disappear from the world. The dismayed people listened and were ashamed. They vowed to change their ways and to live by their ancestral customs.

One by one, as each man rose to make his vow, the Jews also reaffirmed the necessity of a house of worship. Without this, how could the laws be reinforced or the customs of their ancestors be

preserved? Thus they decided to build a synagogue. Those who were wealthy donated funds, those who were poor donated their labor; and in the year 1163 (4923 in the Jewish calendar) the Moses Synagogue was erected.

It was a magnificent building. One unique feature was its big-roof architecture, a distinctively Chinese building style. The Jews adopted this style for the synagogue to express the gratitude they felt towards the Chinese for their kindness and friendship.

A magnificent service of dedication was held. Torah scrolls which had been carried with them all the way from their former home were ceremoniously placed in the Ark. Sacred vessels were brought into the synagogue. Levi, the chief rabbi, led the congregation in prayer. And he promised God that he and his people would be faithful to the ideals and religion of their forefathers.

With the establishment of a center for public prayer and communal activities, a solid foundation had been laid for the future of Kaifeng Jewry. Now the community had achieved one of the chief means of keeping its Jewish identity. With the synagogue the Jews of Kaifeng were able to follow their religion, study the Torah, and teach their children.

The congregation had turned a new page, unique in the annals of Jewish history. Because of the vast distances, the difficulties of the journey, and the policy of isolation from foreign lands maintained by many Chinese rulers, the small group of Jews who began a new life in Kaifeng were unable to keep in touch with fellow Jews in other countries. Nonetheless, their devotion to their heritage kept their community alive for many centuries – so much so that their descendants are still to be found in this far-off land.



CHUSAN ROAD CHATTER

Issue 378

IYS Hongkew Division

Editor: Kurt Maimann

I Never Wanted to Be a Hero

by **Lutz Witkowski**

(continued from the previous issue)

China in Retrospect

In Springtime 1989, full of anticipation and more than a few reservations, Gisela and I boarded a plane headed for Shanghai. I hadn't heard of Tiananmen Square at that time but by the time our trip to China was finished I was quite familiar with that historical spot. When I had left China in 1946 I was a street-wise, hard-working, yet still young and penniless Jew in search of my homeland and in search of myself. And in 1989, at 64, I was returning as a pensioner, an honored guest of the Chinese government. What a difference!

We changed our "Jetta" Yugoslavian airplane in Belgrade and commenced our 18-hour flight to Beijing. To while away the hours on that long leg, I made acquaintance with a group of Shanghai Chinese engineers who, I later learned, had been in Germany to dismantle and ship to China a whole factory. The group leader, Mrs. Zhou Xeume, was fascinated to learn that I could speak the Shanghai dialect learned years ago as a resident of her now metropolitan city. The whole group befriended me, gathered around me full of laughter, telling stories. Mrs. Xeume and I had long and intense conversations, and in those flying hours we came to know a lot about each other's backgrounds. She

is from Shanghai and is married to a machine engineer from Beijing. Our friendship was later to be renewed in many ways, one of which would be during stay in Beijing. The flight to China was transporting me physically and spiritually – it was as though I was in a time capsule travelling back in time to another life of mine. I can't think of any other way to explain my exhilaration except that I really felt like I was flying home.

At the kind invitation of Mrs. Xeume,



we decided to accept her offer to show us around the city [Beijing] during our two-week stay there. Luckily through my work with the Municipal Authorities in Frankfurt, I had met and befriended a Chinese petroleum company representative, Mr. Kang Qiang, sent to Frankfurt to look after their interests. Mr. Qiang's company has offices in every town and city in China and he was helpful in our being able to get excellent hotel accommodations at extremely low

rates (compared to other tourists who were paying top dollar for their stays in China). Through these and other contacts I was able to meet – and eventually join up with – a group, an out-of-the-normal tourist group: Israeli VIPs, ex-China residents, on tour just as I was, seeking their past, renewing friendships and revisiting sites not seen since before, during or after World War II. Included in this group were not only people like the former Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Tekoah, but other "personages" and several journalists as well. We were fortunate to be able to join this group for they had an excellent Chinese guide and visited all the most important and interesting sights of the city. In fact, the Chinese guide and I got along so well that he took Gisela and me to several special locations, not normally known to the casual tourist. One event I particularly remember is a Turkish-Chinese friendship night at a top star hotel where we were entertained and fed the very best of what Turkey had to offer to the "outside world".

Too soon our fourteen days fled by and we were on our way to my "home town" of Shanghai by train. Fortunately for us, Mrs. Xeume had arranged first class sleeping-car accommodations for the 18-hour trip

International Symposium on Judaism To be held in China

An International Symposium -- "Judaism and Society" -- planned for Nanjing, China, will offer an interdisciplinary forum uniting scholars, research fellows and teachers in exploring the latest discoveries, achievements, and developments in the study of Judaism. Not only will Chinese scholars in the field of Jewish studies have opportunity to gain a better understanding of the core of Jewish culture, but foreign scholars will learn the latest developments in the study of Judaism in China. Organized by the Center for Jewish Studies and Department of Religious Studies at Nanjing University, with the approval of the Chinese authorities, the Symposium will be held in Nanjing, from October 10-15, 2004.

The Center for Jewish Studies has previously organized two international conferences: "The International Conference on Jewish Studies" in 1996 and "The International Symposium on the History of Jewish Diaspora in China" in 2002, which were attended by over 100 scholars. This Symposium will emphasize the intensification of Jewish studies in China during the last 15 years when Judaism became a formal subject of academic study. The theme of the symposium is "Judaism and Society." We welcome papers dealing with the following topics:

- Judaism in its Formative Period
- Social Functions of Judaism
- Judaism and Modernity
- Judaism and its Relation with Society and Modern Jews
- Study and Teaching of Judaism at Colleges and Universities

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from Beijing to Shanghai. We were extremely lucky, because we soon learned that one of the most sought after luxury items was a train ticket. The trains represent the basic mode of transportation in China, and all trains are solidly booked, perhaps months in advance. Had we not had the help of Mrs. Xeume, this interesting rail journey Beijing-Shanghai might have forced us to take a faster but vastly more expensive flight.

Everyone has a story, and I am always there with a listening ear. In our compartment we met a Romanian couple on a tourist jaunt to China. He, as an engineer employee of the Romanian railroad, was also an accomplished inventor, and having received a prize for one of his recent innovations, was using the money for the trip to China for himself and his wife. Gisela who speaks fluent Romanian engaged them in a lively conversation even though there was more than a little hesitancy on their part to reveal too much about their work or lives, since Romania was still a Communist country at the time. I conversed using my German and my English, but they were most fascinated that I could speak Chinese as well.

The dining car was what seemed to be miles away from our compartment, and seemingly always crowded with lines of hungry passengers waiting for tables. But I was lucky once again. The crew of the train, with headquarters in Shanghai, soon heard me speak Chinese with a Shanghai dialect, and they were amazed. A foreigner speaking their native tongue! I was like a man from Mars, strange and special. They decided to treat me like a king, insisted that they bring us our meals to our compartment (the Romanians too, of course) so that our journey was pure pleasure and comfort.

The Romanian couple had expected that someone would be at the Shanghai station to pick them up, which for some reason did not happen. So they accepted my offer to help them find

a hotel and to make contact with their no-show hosts from the hotel. I got a taxi, driven by a surly and ill-kempt driver. The cab actually looked more like a police paddy-wagon with wooden plank benches on either side of the rear enclosed compartment. The taxi driver was accompanied by his wife and his child, and as we drove along the child said to her parents, "Look at those white devils". In Shanghai Chinese I said, "White people aren't so bad". When the taxi driver heard I could speak Chinese he became very friendly, taking our bags inside the hotel and even refusing any tip.

The hotel, the Shanghai Beauty Hotel, was luminous, spacious and grand, offering the very best cuisine, plush interior design, spacious marble bathrooms, wide corridors, impeccably dressed and courteous employees. Can you imagine my feelings, coming back to China after those desperate years as a youngster in Shanghai, and staying in such an establishment – easily comparable to any European five-star luxury hotel. And while most tourists were paying 400 DM a day, I (because of my petroleum friend back in Frankfurt) was paying only 80 DM a day.

The hotel is situated adjacent to a bridge that in my olden days in Shanghai was known as the Garden Bridge, now renamed the Iron Bridge. Every time I walked out of the hotel I would pause, stare at that bridge, as I recall the memory of the Scottish military soldiers on guard day and night on that bridge, marching back and forth. As a young man those upright, disciplined soldiers were a great fascination to me. Subsequent to the Japanese occupation of Shanghai, when naturally all the international settlements were eliminated, that area of the city in those tense days of World War II was full of Japanese soldiers. And the now Shanghai Beauty Hotel was called the Broadway Mansions, and was headquarters of Shanghai's Japanese Army.

Jewish Buildings in Shanghai November 2003

Photos by Benny Tzur



1

1 The back of the Ohel Rachel Synagogue



2

2 The Former Shanghai Jewish School.



3

3 The Jewish Shelter House

The Exhibition of painting by
LEONTINA SMUSHKOVICH
(Born in China-Harbin)

*Under the patronage of
H.E. Mr. Chen Yonglong
the Ambassador of the People's
Republic of China to the State of Israel*

*The ceremony will be held on
Saturday, May 8, 2004
at 8 p.m. at "Beit Emmanuel"
18, Hibat Zion str.
Ramat-Gan*

*Greetings
H. E. The Ambassador Mr. Chen
Yonglong*

*Mr. Teddy Kaufman
President of the Israel-China Friendship
Society
and
The Association of Former Residents of
China in Israel*

O, Solly Mio!

(After our numerous appeals to the readers of "Bulletin" to send us their memories from their Chinese past, we received a story from an old Tientsin hand, Solomon Davidovich Birulin, known to his numerous friends as Solly, or, simply, Sol.

Solly has a phenomenal memory: in his report he deals in minute detail with his family's wanderings from Lagunsk (Bielarus) to Harbin, China, and then to Seattle (USA). However, since we are interested in keeping record of only the Chinese part of our landsmen's lives, we are publishing just that part of Solly's biography. Those wishing to discover more, may contact him by the following E-mail address, an eloquent witness of his loyalty to his Chinese past: tientsinboy@aol.com-E.P.

Writes S. Birulin: "I was born in the British Concession of Tientsin, North China. My father, Lev Birulin, was a pharmacist, and my grandfather, Abraham Birulin – a well-known Lagunsk physicist. My mother, nee Tamara Baronsky, a dentist by profession is a daughter of Rabbi Joseph Baronsky Her maternal grandfather, Rabbi Koppel Shmerkovich, served in Krasnoyarsk as the Chief Rabbi of Siberia, and, as a representative of the Jews of that part of Russia, was awarded medals and a sword by the governor in the name of the Czar. My parents met and married in Harbin. In 1920 they left for Tientsin, where Joseph Baronsky was appointed as the Rabbi of the Tientsin Jewish community."

Contrary to many of us old-time Tientsiners, Solly remembered and found (during his visit to China a few years ago) a small two-room building

not far from the Pao Shan-li courtyard, which served the Tientsin Jewish community as a synagogue before the new synagogue building was built on Creek Road. "The new synagogue is now a far-unkosher restaurant, with a Magen David on its roof as a sad mockery!" Naturally, he visited the "Kunst Club" building, then still in existence, and the Tientsin Jewish School compound rebuilt into living quarters for the earthquake refugees.

The Tientsin old hands remember Solly as an ardent member of Betar and a frequent visitor of the "Kunst" Club music room, library, and five o'clock parties. But most of all, they remember him for his singing.

The Japanese invasion of China in 1937 is not one of Solly's happiest memories. He writes: "The Japanese sponsored the so called 'White House', the Tientsin headquarters of the White Russian anticommunist movement in China. All the stateless emigrants from Russia (including the Jews) were supposed to be registered in that 'White House' and obey the orders of the anti-Semitic bosses. We had to attend the meetings, demonstrations and parades, which, incidentally took place outside the territory of the British concession. It was dangerous to abstain for fear that unpredictable repressions might follow any abstention. We all hated them bitterly."

In the autumn of 1939 World War II flared up. On hearing that the Japanese were about to cut Tientsin off from the outside world, the Birulins packed up the essentials, and, using their Russian immigration quota, left for the opposite shore of the Pacific to settle in Seattle.

Here ends the Chinese chapter of Solly Birulin's biography. The beginning of the American chapter, contrary to all the legends about the "American paradise", was not an easy one. His father was refused the right to work as a pharmacist. Solly was drafted into the army and served throughout the war as a Russian-English interpreter in the shipyards where the damaged Soviet ships were repaired. After the war he was granted US citizenship and got his degree as an English teacher at Washington University. There he met and married Anne Weiss, a refugee from Poland. They have a daughter, Gloria, now 49. For some time Solly worked in a Seattle jewellery shop, taught English, became the headmaster of the Seattle Jewish Sunday School, and naturally continued singing – in the Seattle Synagogue choir. He contemplated making singing his profession, but circumstances did not allow it.

Having visited Seattle a good number of years ago, I, naturally, met Solly. We spent an unforgettable evening of reminiscing and singing (which I let him do without my assistance). Now we occasionally correspond by Internet.

E. Pratt (M. Pirutinsky)
A former Tientsinboy, too

kindly note our new address:

Igud Yotzei Sin

P.O.B. 29786

Tel Aviv 61297, Israel

A Renewed Beginning

By Xu Xin

I made my fourth trip to Israel in 2003, traveling to accept the highest honor: the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Honoris Causa, from Bar-Ilan University. The citation explicates the reason that the university bestows the honor “for establishing the academic framework for the teaching of Jewish history and culture in China, and for encouraging the development of Sino-Israel ties.” What an honor and compliments!

En route, I could not help but recall my first trip in 1988, long before there were any formal relations between our two countries. Although it was considered very brave for a Chinese scholar to take such an ice-breaking trip, I must say that the purpose was quite simple – to take my journey into Jewish studies with a personal glance at the sole Jewish country on our planet.

With scant knowledge of Israel, I had no idea what I would see and

was unable to predict the outcome of the visit. The result was a visit that changed my life and encouraged me to travel further down the road of Jewish studies, making my small contribution to the development of Sino-Jewish ties. Since then, Israel became the subject of my research and study, signifying an academic addiction to it as a country and as a people. Any news from radio, reports from TV, articles from papers, anything related to Israel catches my attention. As a result, I returned twice after that first trip. Although I expected further trips, I never dreamed that I would one day come back for such an honor.

The degree conferred at a festive ceremony at the newly completed Dahan Family Unity Park on May 28, was also the day designated to dedicate the Park. Many of my Israeli friends attended. Chinese diplomats on a mission to Israel also came to congratulate me. In fulsome

response, I thanked the university’s Board of Trustees and Senate for the honor, recalled the beginning of my journey on the road to Jewish studies, and expressed my happiness, gratitude and future plans. The great, moving and happy event celebrated friendship, a culmination of Chinese and Jewish relations. During the ceremony I had the opportunity to meet Israel President Moshe Katzav who was also a recipient of a Bar-Ilan doctorate for “his extraordinary personal accomplishments and exceptional achievements as a leader in the political arena who strives for unity, social justice and peace for the Jewish nation.” He is the fourth Israeli president I have met, following different introductions to Yitzhak Navon, Chaim Herzog and Ezer Weizman during the past 10 years.

(Excerpted from Points East)

Rickshaw Reunion 2004 in Toronto

Dear Shanghailander,

More than a year has passed since our wonderful reunion in San Francisco (April 2002), at the conclusion of which there was widespread interest in aiming for the next reunion to be held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. With the promised support of several Toronto attendees, I accepted the challenge, and a committee was struck consisting of several Toronto resident Shanghailanders who were willing to tackle the task.

We are an enthusiastic committee, that continues to work towards our promised goal of organizing another reunion. A tentative date has been set for the weekend of October 8, 2004, at the end of all our major holidays.

Meetings and planning activities are in progress.

We have found a wonderful hotel in downtown Toronto that offers all the necessary amenities and provides easy access to every interesting and important part of our very exciting city. The guaranteed price of Can\$129.00, or US\$92.00 per night for 2 persons, is an excellent deal, especially since Toronto continues to be a popular city for tourists and conventions. An added advantage for persons who are NOT residents of Canada is your ability to claim a refund for all your GST (goods and services tax) expenditures, which include taxes for your hotel rooms and any purchases you have made while in Canada.

In order to carry on with our efforts, we ask that you remit US\$20.00 or Canadian \$26.00 per person, cheque or money order, payable to Rickshaw Reunion 2004. This advance is to cover expenses, and is non-refundable.

Looking forward to seeing you in Toronto!

**Sonja Poizner (Golombek)
For the Rickshaw Reunion 2004
Committee**

Those interested in attending the above reunion should reply to:

Sonja Poizner, Fax: (416) 638-1410
Rickshaw Reunion 2004,
Email: rickshaw2004@rogers.com
100 Westgate Boulevard, Downsview,
Ontario, or email Eva Hollander:
Canada M3H 1P3.
oscar.holland r@rogers.com

Japan Internees Claim Discrimination

By Jenni Frazer and Hyam Corney (from the Jewish Chronicle, September 19, 2003)

A new chapter opened this week in a fight by former civilian internees, arrested by the Japanese during the war, to obtain compensation from the British government.

In November 2000, Britain announced that it was ready to pay an ex-gratia sum of £10,000 to the surviving members of British nationals – or their spouses – who had been held prisoner in China during the war. The payment scheme was administered by the Ministry of Defence's War Pensions Agency, and those eligible – “a British civilian who was interned by the Japanese in the Far East during the Second World War” – were invited to apply.

Seven months later, the WPA issued a “clarification” of the guidelines. A spokesperson told the JC this week that “the term ‘British’ means that the claimant, or his or her parent or grandparent, had to have been born in Britain.” The inclusion of this “blood-link” clause meant that hundreds of people – many of them Jews – failed to get compensation.

Since the announcement of the change in criteria, there have been vociferous attempts by the Association of British Civilian Internees, Far East Region, to mount a legal challenge to the government's guidelines. Its chairman, Ron Bridge, told the JC that his association calculated that about one in three potential claimants had been excluded as a result of the change in the rules. “The common thread to all victims is that they held British passports, which at the

time of the war entitled them to live in the UK, and that they were imprisoned by the Japanese because of this,” Mr. Bridge said. The group's lawyer, Richard Stein, told the JC that the association had lost its legal challenge in the High Court, and had appealed to the Court of Appeal, where it again failed. It had then applied for permission to appeal to the House of Lords, but this had been turned down.

Although the association has reached the end of the legal road, the story is not over. Ann Abraham, the Parliamentary Ombudsman, has launched an inquiry into why the rules were changed. Hendon MP Andrew Dismore, chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on prisoners of war, has asked for a meeting with the Pensions and Veterans Minister at the Ministry of Defence, Ivor Caplin; and Lord Janner, chairman of the Holocaust Educational Trust, has vowed to renew pressure on the government.

Lord Janner told the JC: “These people were British enough to be interned as our citizens, so there can be no reason why they should not be British enough to be compensated. It is disgracefully discriminatory, and I shall now do all I can to have this decision overturned.”

Flori Enid Cohen of Givataim, near Tel Aviv, and her husband, Isaiah Meyer Cohen, were both born in Shanghai. Mr. Cohen, who died in 1995, was a British citizen by birth and, together with his mother and

siblings, was interned in two different PoW camps in China.

Mrs. Cohen, has complained that the Ministry of Defence “moved the goalposts” months after the original declaration. She, like about a dozen other potential claimants in Israel, went to the British consulate for confirmation of all her documents relating to her and her husband's British identity.

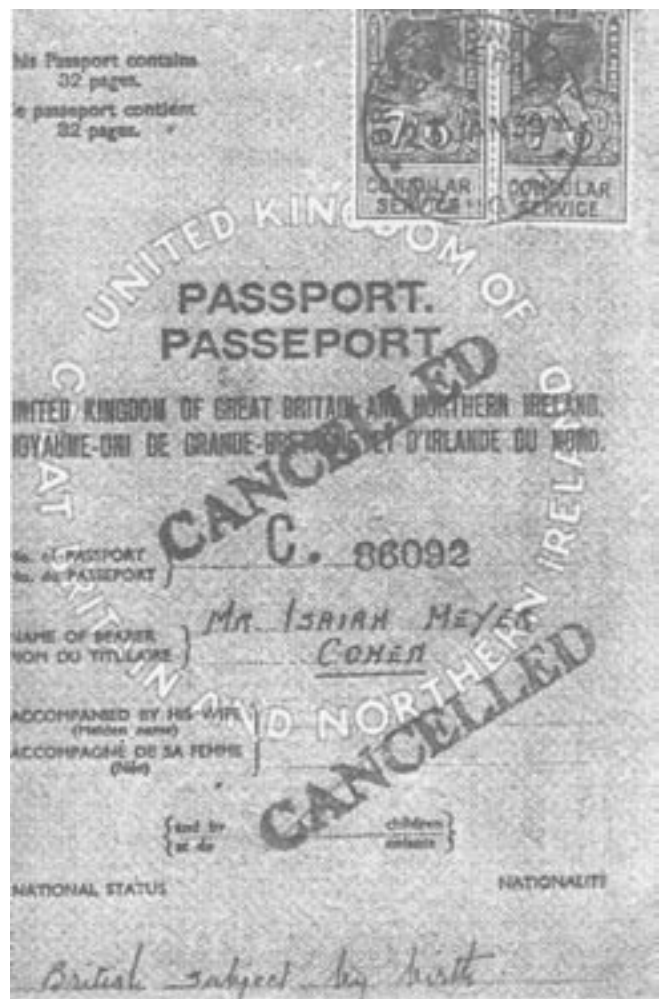
“How can London say that people who were born in Britain are entitled to compensation, but that British subjects who suffered just as much, but were not born in Britain, are not entitled? Where's the justice?”

The Cohens, who considered themselves so British that they named their baby daughter Elizabeth after the new Queen, left Shanghai in 1951. She is, she says, determined not to let this matter drop. She has now written a third letter to Prime Minister Tony Blair and has also written to Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith. “I think that they are waiting for us to die, but I am very determined and I am prepared to go to London if necessary. The money would be useful, but it's the principle.”

Members of the Australia Singapore Jewish Internees Groups are also campaigning for the guidelines to be changed. The group's president, Yahya Bekhore, told the JC: “If we were ‘not British enough’ then we want to know (a) why were we interned? (b) why were we issued with a United Kingdom passport after the war?”

PHOTOS

1. British passport of Isaiah Meyer Cohen –
Note his National Status “British subject by birth”.
2. Passport Photograph of Bearer
These photos were published in Issue No. 30 (November 2003) of the ABCIFER NEWS – published by the Association of British Civilian Internees, Far East Region



"Friendship first, competition second"

Western sports were initially introduced into China by the YMCA in the treaty ports. Basketball was introduced in 1896, shortly after its invention in the USA., and by 1910 knowledge of track and field events, football, basketball, tennis and ping-pong was widespread enough for the First National Athletics meet to be held in Nanking. The Communist educational authorities made special efforts to encourage swimming – possibly after the sad experiences of the Long March.

Constitutionally, sport is an integral part of Chinese socio-cultural life and the common slogan “Friendship first, competition second” emphasizes that sport is for the common good, not for personal glory. Action taken to popularize sports has included ‘Radio

Exercises’ allowing office workers and students to limber up during the day, as well as widely publicized gestures such as Mao Tse-tung’s swim down the Yangtze River in 1966. Systems of standards to be attained in sports such as running, jumping and swimming were introduced in the ‘Labor Defense System’ in 1959’s. In the countryside the absence of facilities has popularized games requiring a minimum of equipment, such as basketball, volleyball and ping-pong.

China’s participation in international sports began with the Far Eastern Championship Games, held 10 times between 1913 and 1934. China participated in the Olympic Games in 1932, 1936 and 1948. After 1949, arguments as to whether Peking

or Taipei should represent China led to China’s withdrawal from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in August 1959. China applied for readmission to the IOC in 1975, and by 1979 a formula was devised allowing Taiwan to participate, though not as China. Taiwan withdrew in protest, resolving the issue in favor of the PRC.

Since the ‘normalization’ of China’s international status in 1971, it has won regional and world championships in several sports, including diving, badminton, tennis, ping-pong and volleyball. The indications are that China will continue to play an increasing role in international sports.

(From the “Cambridge Encyclopedia of China” brought to press by Emmanuel Pratt)



Books

Reprinted from CHINA REVIEW INTERNATIONAL with permission:

Maisie J. Meyer. FROM THE RIVERS OF BABYLON TO THE WHANGPOO: A CENTURY OF SEPHARDI JEWISH LIFE IN SHANGHAI. Lanham, Maryland, New York and Oxford: University Press of America, 2003. xviii, 331 pp. Paperback \$68.00, ISBN 0-7618-2489-8.

Reviewed by Jonathen Goldstein

Maisie J. Meyer and University Press of America are to be congratulated for bringing out a new book on the Baghdadi Jewish community of Shanghai which provides an overall history of the community from its founding in the mid-nineteenth century until its dissolution after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The book's particular strength is that it deals head-on with three controversial issues: the question of whether Baghdadis should be classified as Sephardim [Hebrew: "Spaniards"], technically Jews who left the Iberian peninsula in 1492/3 and retained medieval Spanish or Portuguese as their household tongue in varied places of exile; the role of Jews in the importation of Indian opium, a severely debilitating narcotic drug, into China; and the hotly-debated question of whether Shanghai's Baghdadis "did enough" to help the German and Austrian refugees from Hitler who poured into

Shanghai beginning in 1938.

Meyer states that the ancestors of most Baghdadi Jews did not transit through the Iberian peninsula and that their household language was Judeo-Arabic, not Spanish or Portuguese. She cites a history of unbroken Jewish residence in Mesopotamia as far back as 598 B.C. "when Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, conquered the kingdom of Judah and transported Jews from Jerusalem to Babylon." [pp. 29-30] She points out that when the Spanish consul in Shanghai published Spanish King Alfonso XIII's decree of December 1924 permitting Sephardi Jews to become Spanish subjects once again, only four Shanghai Baghdadi Jews with their families, out of a population of nearly 1,000, claimed such lineage and took advantage of this protection. She notes that David Sassoon was erroneously referred to as a descendant of the Ibn Shoshan family, which emigrated from Toledo to Baghdad in the twelfth century. [p.37]. As the title of her book suggests, she nevertheless categorizes the Shanghai Baghdadi community as Sephardi, arguing that they shared some theological similarities, and a variety of Hebrew pronunciation, with the Jews of medieval Iberia. She also argues that usage determines correctness, noting that the term Sephardi has become a widespread if inaccurate description of Baghdadis and many other Oriental Jewish communities. On this point Meyer

differs from Rabbi Ezekiel Musleah of Calcutta/Philadelphia as well as this author, who continue to see the terms "Baghdadi" and "Babylonian" as more accurate references for Jews who emanated from Mesopotamia/Iraq.

With respect to the opium question, the late John K. Fairbank maintained in his book CHINA WATCH [1987] that "the opium trade from India to China was the longest-continued systematic international crime of modern times." While vast fortunes were made in that trade in the nineteenth century, including the bases of the first four million dollar American fortunes [of John Jacob Astor, Elias Hasket Derby, Stephen Girard, and Joseph Peabody], there always was a small minority of China traders who vigorously denounced it. William Wood and Peter Dobell described the commerce as "pernicious." Nathan Dunn called it "illicit" and refrained from the business on moral grounds. [See my PHILADELPHIA AND THE CHINA TRADE (1978), pp. 50-51]. Most vocal among the abstainers was New York's D. W. C. Olyphant, who characterized the opium trade as "an evil of the deepest dye" and was nicknamed "holy Joe" by the pushers. In a classic defense of a dishonorable profession, John Murray Forbes, of Russell and Co., wrote of Olyphant: "Protect me from all the hallowing influence of holy Joe—his ships are commanded

by J-C—officered by Angels & manned by Saints...Happy thrice happy is the ship even consigned to them.” [Forbes to Augustine Heard, August 28, 1832, Heard Papers, Harvard Business School, Boston, Mass.] Opium merchant and U.S. Guangzhou Consul Benjamin Wilcocks castigated a ship captain who refused an offer of employment with the words “When a Captain stipulates for the particular articles which he will take on my ship, why let him go you know where for a cargo.” [Wilcocks to John Latimer, April 26, 1829, Latimer Papers, Library of Congress].

Intense contemporaneous criticism forced the moral issue on opium dealers. They could not plead ignorance about the drug’s baneful character. Indeed, participation in the opium business was arguably the central moral issue facing American, British, and other foreigners trading in South China between 1784 and 1844. It remained a major issue of conscience for decades thereafter. Some scholars have found major diplomatic, not to mention sociological, consequences of mercantile participation in the opium trade, notably Jacques M. Downs in *THE GOLDEN GHETTO: THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY AT CANTON AND THE SHAPING OF AMERICAN CHINA POLICY* [1997] and the aforementioned John Fairbank. On the other hand, it is unclear from two recent studies by Thomas N. Layton if the author is even aware of the heated contemporaneous debate about the propriety of the trade [*VOYAGE OF THE ‘FROLIC’: NEW ENGLAND MERCHANTS AND THE OPIUM TRADE* (1997) and *GIFTS FROM THE CELESTIAL KINGDOM: A SHIPWRECKED CARGO FOR GOLD RUSH CALIFORNIA* (2002)].

Meyer’s study of Baghdadi Jewish merchants who made the basis of their fortunes in the opium trade is

welcome in that she confronts the moral issue head-on and advances the discourse pioneered by Fairbank and Downs. She builds on the scholarship of Joan Roland, Chiara Betta, Stanley Jackson, and others to delineate the Baghdadis’ involvement in the exportation of Indian opium to China, beginning with David Sassoon’s arrival in Bombay in 1833. Sassoon’s second son Elias opened branches of the family firm in Guangzhou in 1844 and in Hong Kong and Shanghai in 1845. Meyer delineates how other Baghdadi families followed the Sassoon example and, from a base in Shanghai, won fortunes in the trade: Abraham, Benjamin, Elias, Ezra, Haroon, Kadoorie, Raphael, Silas, Solomon, and Toeg. According to Meyer, these merchants “justified and continued this business despite growing adverse public opinion” from the time of the legalization of the trade in 1858 up through the Sino-British Ten Years Agreement of 1907, which provided for the gradual prohibition of imported opium by 1917 [pp. 58, 67]. Meyer concludes that “there is no evidence of any dispute” among Shanghai Baghdadis on the opium issue, sentiment consistent with that of most other foreign traders, with the notable exception of the small dissenting minority mentioned above [p. 67]. She makes an important contribution by documenting the unanimity of the Baghdadi community in support of the opium trade.

Meyer, who is herself from the Baghdadi community of Calcutta, takes the side of her brethren in the ongoing debate over whether they contributed ‘enough’ to ease the plight of approximately 18,000 largely penniless Jewish refugees from Hitler who thronged into Shanghai between 1938 and 1941. In this respect she differs from Shanghai refugee and historian Ernest Heppner, originally from Breslau, who asks provocatively

“whether more could have been done by some of the resident Jews and their leaders.” If financial aid had not come from “a few individuals” as well as from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, “would the Jewish residents who were not interned in Japanese POW camps and not living in the ghetto have considered themselves their brothers’ keepers and helped to feed all their hungry brethren?” [in this author’s *THE JEWS OF CHINA: A SOURCEBOOK AND RESEARCH GUIDE* (2000)]. Meyer concedes, citing Joan Roland, that by 1938 many Shanghai Baghdadis had become the “Rothschilds of the East” [p. 32]. She then cites numerous examples of Baghdadi charity toward German and Austrian immigrants, concluding “whether or not the Shanghai Sephardim could have done more for the refugees is a moot point...In their own estimation, at that time, they believed they had acquitted themselves creditably.” [pp. 216-17]. The debate over aid in Shanghai is a microcosm of the broader debate over who could have done what to stop Hitler, the ultimate cause of the refugees’ misery. These arguments will doubtless continue as long as there are survivors of refugees and of those who tried to help them. Meyer has made a valuable contribution in recording the viewpoint of Shanghai Baghdadis on this issue.

Over and beyond Meyer’s willingness to tackle controversial issues head-on, other commendable features of her book are the vignettes about the efforts of the Shanghai Baghdadis to reach out to the indigenous Chinese Jews of Kaifeng; occupational histories of the doctors, lawyers, and rabbis of the community; and descriptions of Hebrew and secular schools, charities, clubs, cemeteries, real estate transactions, lawsuits, kidnappings, publications, entertainment facilities, synagogues, women’s associations, sports teams, and cadets in the British-organized

Shanghai Volunteer Corps.

There are a few points which Meyer and University Press of America might wish to consider revising in a second edition of this monograph. She writes that “the philanthropy of the opium merchants was legendary. In Canton, for example, the American firm Olyphant and Co. financed virtually an entire mission.” [p. 63]. Olyphant, as noted above, was perhaps the most significant foreign trading company on the China coast which scrupulously abstained from the opium trade, on moral grounds. While at an early stage in the book Meyer mentions Baghdad’s long-serving [1859-1909] ecclesiastical authority Hacham Yoseph Hayim, she does not involve him in her discussion of Shanghai Zionism [pp. 171-90]. She sees that phenomenon as largely the creation of N.E.B. Ezra between 1903 and 1936, when Ezra led the Shanghai Zionist Association [SZA] and edited Israel’s Messenger. However, prior to Ezra, Hayyim was a powerful force inculcating pre-Herzlian Zionism among Baghdadis in India, Burma, the Straits Settlements, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and elsewhere. He urged his brethren to visit and settle the Land of Israel long before Herzl’s establishment of the World Zionist Organization [WZO] in 1896, with which the SZA affiliated, and even before the founding of the WZO’s predecessor organizations, Hovevei Zion and BILU. [See David Sassoon, HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN BAGHDAD (1949)]. In attempting to explain the Chinese Government’s removal of Shanghai Jewish graves to new locations, Meyer writes: “At the time of the Cultural Revolution’s Great Leap Forward, urban development in Shanghai obligated the Chinese authorities to consider the transfer of all foreign cemeteries outside the city limits.” [p. 230]. The generally accepted beginning date for the Great Leap Forward is 1958. It lasted perhaps until 1960.

The generally accepted dates for the Cultural Revolution are 1966-76. [Fairbank and Edwin O. Reischauer, CHINA (1989), pp.506-09, 519; Graham Hutchings, MODERN CHINA (2001), pp. 90-93, 164-66]. It is unclear what Meyer means by “the Cultural Revolution’s Great Leap Forward.” Finally, citing Israel’s Messenger as her source, Meyer states that “Hardoon was probably the only Westerner interested in promoting Chinese technology and preserving China’s rich cultural heritage.” [p. 22]. There are ten foreign members of China’s National People’s Consultative Congress, five of them of Jewish origin, who might dispute that generalization.

While Meyer is generally consistent in her use of pinyin romanization of Chinese, which is fast becoming universal, the title of her book uses “Whangpoo” rather than the pinyin “Huangpu.” Her use of the romanization “Szechuen,” p. 176, is puzzling. She is also inconsistent in her use of “The Israel Messenger,” p. 25, and “Israel’s Messenger,” p. 26. Historian Jacques Downs is misspelled “Downes” on p. 263. Israel Cohen was not “general secretary the Jewish Agency” but of the Jewish Agency [p. 26].

Apart from these mechanical matters which can be corrected in a second edition, Meyer and University Press of America can be praised for producing a stimulating and informative monograph on Shanghai’s Baghdadis.

Jonathan Goldstein is a Professor of East Asian History at the State University of West Georgia, Carrollton, Georgia, and a Research Associate of Harvard University’s Fairbank Center for East Asian Research. His books include PHILADELPHIA AND THE CHINA TRADE [1978], CHINA AND ISRAEL [1999] and THE JEWS OF CHINA [2000].

Searching and Researching

Gail Lichtman Jerusalem

I am a freelance writer living in Jerusalem. I was approached by Berl Falbaum, a journalist from Detroit, to help him with a project he is working on to record the first-hand testimony of Jews who fled Europe for Shanghai on the eve of, or during, World War II, and then publish this testimony in book form. Mr. Falbaum, who arrived in Shanghai as an infant with his parents and lived in the Hongkew Ghetto from 1939 to 1948, is interested in preserving this little known episode in Jewish history before it is too late. I would appreciate your help in locating former Shanghai residents now living in Israel. We spoke about a list you have of your members. I would greatly appreciate receiving this list so as to facilitate the project.

I can be reached at Tel: 02-6720070 or Fax: 02-6733673. Thank you.

Rose Miriam Rayman Australia

I wonder if you can assist me in obtaining information about my parents Josef and Zelda Zylberstein. My parents arrived in Shanghai in 1938 and resided at 54 Ward Road until they emigrated to Israel in 1948. My sister Jetka was born in Danzig and my brothers Lew and Daniel were both born in Shanghai. I was also born in Shanghai and my name at the time was Rosi Miriam Zylberstein. My father was a tailor by trade and the name of his business was “Typhoon Raincoats”.

Thanking you in advance. Regards
Email: rr.raymen@optusnet.com.au

Tientsin - A Heavenly Ford for Jews in the 1920s and 1930s

by B. Kobuliansky (continued from the previous issue)

The word Tientsin in Chinese means “Heavenly Ford”. This story is the English version of the article published in Chinese in the Tianjin Daily, March 11, 2003.

The Jewish Community of Tientsin in the 1930s

The Jewish community of Tientsin consisted of approximately 3,500 people in the 1930s. It was headed by Leo Gershevich. The Tientsin Jewish School (TJS) was opened in 1925, the Jewish Club “Kunst” in 1928.

I will begin with what I remember about the synagogue. The one we see in the photographs (published on several occasions in the Igud Yotzei Sin Bulletin) was opened after our family left Tientsin, so I never saw it. I remember another synagogue, probably a temporary one, which I went to with my father. Because our family was not really religious, this happened only several times on Jewish holidays. As to the TJS and the Kunst Club, I can still recollect some events. First of all, I have to say that I never studied at the TJS, but remember that my mother, G.J. Kobuliansky (nee Gershevich) was very active in the formation and development of the Jewish school in Tientsin. I remember that while my sister Annie and I studied at the Tientsin Grammar School, our mother devoted a lot of time to the improvement of teaching standards at the TJS. At home I could often hear about the splendid work the school staff was accomplishing. ...

In spring, Jewish children were usually taken to the outskirts of Tientsin where they celebrated the

Lag B’Omer holiday in the woods. Here we played all sorts of games and took part in different competitions. Children also took part in different concerts organized in the Jewish club “Kunst”. I personally enjoyed going to the club library during the period 1932-1936. It was from here that I borrowed dozens of books in English, mostly written by Charles Dickens, Jack London, Jules Verne, and others. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the Jewish community in Tientsin is that, in a relatively short period of time, it managed to create conditions for cultural and religious activity of grown-ups.

I believe that Jewish children in Tientsin studied in different schools. The majority of kids attending the TJS belonged to those families who could not afford to pay the fees charged in the other schools. Most of the families belonging to the middle class and the rich ones sent their children to the American School, the Tientsin Grammar School (TGS), and the St. Louis and St. Joseph colleges. My father, up the year 1935, worked in a fur trading company as an accountant. My sister, Annie, and I studied in the TGS. Providing the best possible school education was a priority in the majority of Jewish families. Our family was not an exception, my parents managed to pay the school fees all those years, economizing on less important expenses. The only other preference demanding additional savings was the annual summer vacation in Peitaiho. We loved going to the seaside.

Relatives and Friends

Out of the ten children born in Siberia in the Jewish family of Gershevich, five found themselves in Tientsin, China at the beginning of the 20th century: the elder brother, Leo, mentioned above, another brother Moses, their sisters Sarah, Tsiva, and my mother. Leo had three children: Norman, Vera and Fishel (Fisha). The latter came to Israel from Tientsin in 1933 and served for many years in the Israel Defense Force. Vera later lived in Canada. Tsiva married Ilya Fligil who was, for more than 20 years, the Vice-President of the Tientsin Jewish Community and was also a member of the Kunst Club board. His daughter, Mary, now lives in Australia. I remember several Jewish families – good friends of my parents: the Bihovskies, the Epsteins, the Jacobsons. The Tientsin Daily recently published an article about Israel Epstein who grew up in Tientsin and later devoted all his life to the development of New China – an outstanding personality about whom, I am sure, readers of the newspaper know much more than I do. As for myself, I knew him quite well when I lived in Tientsin. His photograph in the article is a very pleasant reminder of a highly intelligent young man whom I admired so many years ago.

There were two boys in the Bihovsky family. The elder one, Abraham, was about five years older than I; Martin was the younger. After coming to Israel in 1991 from Russia, I got in touch with Abe and during several years we corresponded until he passed away in the USA (December 1997). He was a good friend of China. His brother Marty happened to visit China a couple of years ago.

Passover Celebration with a Chinese Flavor

The holiday of Passover has a particularly strong resonance ... and a distinctive Chinese flavor for Shaker Heights resident Eric Kisch. “For me, Passover means never forgetting it is a festival of freedom,” he says, with his personal freedom and survival made possible thanks to the port city of Shanghai, located in the southeastern part of China. That is where the Vienna-born youngster and his family lived from 1940-46, after fleeing Hitler.

Because he was so young at the time, Kisch has only “vague memories” of those lifesaving Shanghai years. But employing his skills as a market researcher, Kisch, 65, worked hard on validating those memories and those of family and friends who were also in Shanghai during that extraordinary period. An important breakthrough for him came in 1976 when David Kranzler published *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*. That book, Kisch says “put the Chinese Jewish community on the map.” Two pinpoints on that map – one in the French Concession, and the other a few miles away in the Jewish ghetto of Hongkew, were where, at different times, Kisch and his parents lived for six years.

Kranzler’s book provided the scaffolding upon which Kisch could then begin to reconstruct his own story. But it took him until 2002 to complete the puzzle that made up his family’s journey to freedom. In 1938, Kisch’s father, Walter, was thrown

into Buchenwald concentration camp. When he was “bought out” in 1939, he and his brother left for Shanghai, which, unlike most other countries or cities at that time, required no entry visa. A year later, Eric, then two and a half, his mother and grandmother followed. “We were on the last voyage of the Conte Biancamano to Shanghai on Feb. 5, 1940,” says Kisch, showing me the elaborate farewell dinner menu his mother had kept from the trip. His grandmother lived on hardboiled eggs for the three-week voyage, he adds, because she kept kosher. ...

The European Jews began arriving in the 1930s ... were either penniless or professionals who could not practice their respective crafts in Shanghai. In both cases there was almost no way for them to earn a living. The JDC or JOINT, as it was known, helped most of them to at least subsist. Walter Kisch was initially among the lucky ones. He established a handbag store in the upscale French Concession, and “we lived well” Kisch says. But in 1943, Japan ... issued a decree that all stateless people had to move to Hongkew.

In Hongkew some 20,000 Jew were housed in cramped and unhygienic conditions where disease and illness were rampant. The Kisches lived in one room which they shared with Eric’s Tante Lina, only a curtain separating them. “Soup kitchens and dad’s savings from the handbag store he sold (at a pittance) is how we lived,” reports Kisch. At Passover, his father made wine out of raisins

and “because of the dire economic conditions there” the Ashkenazi rabbis told everyone it was permissible to eat (the normally forbidden) rice during the holiday.

While for his mother, “Shanghai was the most bitter experience of her life,” Kisch says he “had a ball.” He had friends, went to school, and enjoyed “free run” of the city. When he lived in the French Concession, he went to a “proper English school.” In Hongkew he attended the Shanghai Jewish Youth or Kadoorie School. For his Hebrew education he attended Talmud Torah at the Ward Road Synagogue (now preserved as the Ohel Moishe museum). Walter Kisch was made air raid warden for his district, and when he did practice drills for evacuating the wounded in the event of a bombing raid, “we kids would fight for the honor of being a victim,” Kisch recalls.

When American bombs began raining down on Shanghai in July of 1945, and did not let up until September, Kisch remembers the oft-repeated routine: He and his parents would go down to the basement of their apartment building. The youngster carried a brown rucksack containing a change of clothes and some toiletries. He would then lie down on the earthen floor, “my mom would lie down on top of me and my dad on top of mom. I remember the ground shaking.”

After the Americans had established themselves in Shanghai, Kisch remembers going down to the docks one day and finding crates of rotting

oranges they had thrown away. The enterprising youngster also discovered some good ones in the crates, and although he had no money, he convinced a rickshaw driver to ferry him and the oranges home, promising the man that his mother would pay the fee. "It was the first fresh fruit we had in China," he recalls. Kisch never remembers going hungry, but he suspects his parents may have. In Australia where the family moved after the war, and where his parents subsequently divorced, Kisch says his mother's refrigerator was always crammed with cold cuts and cheeses. "I promised myself after Shanghai, I'll never be hungry again," she once told her young son.

Kisch, who is married with two grown children, lived in Australia until he attended graduate school in the US ... and then stayed on there.

Finally, if the Kranzler book provided "the intellectual underpinnings" to his life in Shanghai, his stepmother, who died last year at the age of 97, provided the last missing piece of the family puzzle. Kisch knew his father had been "bought out" of Buchenwald, but he never knew who put up the money. Since his grandfather had an important position in a major paper manufacturing company in Vienna, Kisch speculated that he must have written to various contacts for help. Just who that contact was came to light when Kisch found, in his stepmother's possession, a letter his dad wrote in 1958 to a company in Amsterdam. In it, he said, he was enclosing his first war reparations check to "repay a debt of honor" ... the money that had secured his release from Buchenwald. Walter Kisch's son is just beginning to repay his "debt" and indebtedness to Shanghai by telling his story to Jewish and non-Jewish groups of how he and his family were saved from the ravages of the Holocaust by the Chinese city that took them in.

The UN Security Council Resolution 242

By Abraham Fradkin

It took five months of intense negotiations before Resolution 242 was eventually passed on November 22, 1967. During the five-month period the intense efforts by the Soviet Union, the Arabs and their supporters failed to amend the draft of the Resolution to include the word "all" before "territories" from which Israel was to withdraw. A final effort was made by the Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin who contacted US President Lyndon Johnson, requesting the inclusion of the word "all" before "territories". This request was firmly rejected. Following this rejection, Kosygin asked that the word "the" be included before "territories". Again the US President turned down his request.

Among the sponsors of the Resolution was the British representative to the Security Council, Lord Caradon, who finalized the text of the Resolution affirming the withdrawal of Israeli Armed Forces from territories occupied in the 1967 war.

I wish to refer to the following report – "Twenty Facts about Israel and the Middle East" – 2002, edited by Bill Bennett, Jack Kemp and Jean Kirkpatrick.

"One of the Twenty Facts referred to Resolution 242: The oft-cited UN Resolution 242 (passed in the wake of the 1967 war) does not, in fact, require a complete withdrawal from



the West Bank. As legal scholar Eugene Rostow put it, "Resolution 242, which as Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs between 1966 and 1969 I helped produce, calls on the parties to make peace and allows Israel to administer the territories it occupied in 1967 until a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is achieved. When such a peace is made, Israel is required to withdraw its armed forces 'from territories' it occupied during the Six Day War – not from 'the' territories nor from 'all' the territories, but from some of the territories".

The rationale of the Security Council Resolution was based on the withdrawal of Israeli Armed Forces to secure and defensible borders from part of the territories.

In June 2002, President George W. Bush outlined his vision to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and related to the importance of the Security Council Resolution 242. Despite the aforementioned facts, our adversaries continue unceasingly to propagate Israel's withdrawal to the 1967 borders, which the late Abba Eban referred to as "Auschwitz Borders".

The Enigma of the Ten Tribes of Israel

By Dmitry Rabinowitz (“Novosti Nedeli”)

(Ever since the ten tribes of Israel were banished from their homeland and melted away somewhere in the wide world, there is no end to the efforts on the part of the remaining two tribes to discover a Jew or a sign of Jewishness in anyone or anything. An occasional and random likeness of a word in any language to one in Hebrew becomes an “undeniable proof” of that language being of Hebrew origin and the people speaking it of Jewish extraction. At times these efforts cross all borders of logical reasoning, and yet it is perhaps worthwhile to scrutinize more attentively some phenomena which emerge when comparing, amongst others, Jewish and Shinto customs and rituals – Bulletin).

The city of Kaifeng in Central China offers the most convincing proof of a Jewish presence in the Far East from the early post-exilic times. It could only be reached by way of the Great Silk Road, which in those times was the only link between China and the West, including the lands from which the ten tribes of Israel were banished. It easily stands to reason that for them Kaifeng was not the end of the world, and some went on further eastward – to Korea and Japan.

Some Japanese theoreticians believe that the first Jews appeared in Japan during the reign of Empress Himiko (circa 2nd century N.E.), who was known to have encouraged immigration of tribes which exceeded the native population

in their economic and production capabilities, in order to raise the standard of Japanese economy to that of the Chinese. At the same time the Empress was careful enough to see to it that these tribes were not strong enough to be able to seize power in the country. The foreign immigration seems to have been carefully planned, and it proceeded under strict supervision. Among these clans there was one, “Hatta”. They were neither of Korean nor Chinese origin, and came to Korea from the Middle East. Ancient Japanese sources speak of about 100,000 Hatta, but it is possible that the number is highly exaggerated. The “Hatta” are known to have populated 127 towns and villages in the center of the Honshu island and were the pioneers of the Japanese silk production. Since they knew Chinese and could register taxes, many of the clan members were appointed by the Japanese emperors to high posts in the treasury. Many were engaged in medical services and medicine. Some were priests.

“Hatta”, however, was not the clan’s natural name, but rather one given them by the locals. They themselves preferred to be identified as Izrai. Incidentally, according to their chronicles, their ancient leader, Prince Kawa Katzu, was saved in his childhood from drowning in the river, was raised in the king’s palace, freed his people from bondage and gave them a constitution.

* * *

In the prefecture of Nagano in the

central western part of the island Hon Shiu, on the summit of a high mountain named Moria stands a Shinto temple Suva-Taisha, where every spring, for more than the past two thousand years, a religious ritual, Mi-isaku-shi, is performed. The ritual depicts sacrifice of a son by his father: the priest brings a small boy and ties him to a pole at the entrance of the temple, covering his face with a bamboo mat. Then he lifts a knife over the boy’s head, but the sacrifice is thwarted by another priest, who stops the hand of the father and commands him in the name of Moria-no-Kami (the Lord of the mountain) to let the boy go. Instead, he is to sacrifice 75 deer. (It is to be noted that the sacrifice of animals is uncharacteristic of the Shinto religion and that the number of deer to be sacrificed corresponds to that of sheep slaughtered by the Samaritans for Pesach on Mount Gerizim. Furthermore, since sheep were not raised in ancient Japan, they were substituted by deer, an animal answering to all the demands of kashrut).

As for the ritual’s name, (“Mi-isaku-shi”), it is more than eloquent. It consists of three parts: “Mi” – Japanese for “great”, “shi” – grammatical article, and “Isaku”, the child’s name, clearly resembling “Itzhak”.

“Yamabushi” is a rite practiced by the priests of one of the trends of Japanese Buddhism, quite unlike any of its other rites: at the end of

the morning service, the priest, clad in a robe with tassels hanging from its sleeves, puts on his head a so-called “tokin” -- a box made of cow’s hide, held by a strip of hide – and blows a sea-shell. This is a striking resemblance to “tefillin”, “shofar” and “tzitzit”. The followers of this trend of Japanese Buddhism attribute to “Yamabushi” many supernatural properties. It is also to be noted that the rite was practiced in Japan long before Buddhism reached it in the 7th century C.E.

There is a Japanese legend of a hermit, named Tengu, who lived in a cave on a certain mountain and practiced “Yamabushi”, which gave him magical abilities. A local prince, who wanted to partake of these abilities, sent his servant to steal the “tokin”. Tengu, however, convinced him to leave him alone, and, as a token of gratitude, gave him a magic book named “Tora-no-maki” – Japanese for “The Tiger Scroll” (Maki – scroll, Tora – tiger). Another play of words?

After all this, should one be astonished that a 5th century Japanese sculpture of a Samurai depicts him... wearing peyot?

And should one be astonished that the plan of a Shinto temple is identical to that of the First and the Second Temples in Jerusalem?

And should one be astonished that the Japanese Imperial Chrysanthemum is an exact replica of the stone ornament design by which Herod adorned the Temple Mount?

And should one be astonished by the Imperial title “Mikado” being perhaps a hint that Gad may have been amongst the tribes of Israel that reached Japan: “mi” – Japanese for “great”, “k”ado” – perhaps a widely prevalent distortion of “g” in “Gado”, Gad?

Should one be astonished? I was.

(Edited and freely translated from the Russian by Emmanuel Pratt)

Jewish Diaspora Symposium in Seoul

By Pan Guang

I was surprised to receive an invitation to attend the international symposium on Jewish Diaspora in the Republic of Korea because, although I have traveled and lectured widely on ‘Jews in China’ in North America, Europe and Australia, I had no knowledge of any institution engaging in Jewish studies in Korea.

On May 25, with the strong desire to know the present situation of Jewish studies in Korea and to establish links with counterparts there, I came – without any SARS infection – to Seoul by air from Shanghai, a city haunted by the appearance of SARS, to attend the 4th International Symposium on Jewish Diaspora, sponsored by the Israel Culture Center in Korea.

Dr. Ho-lin Chung, one of the Directors of the ICC who studied in Israel and speaks fluent Hebrew, met me at the airport. According to Dr. Chung, the ICC was founded in March 2000 with the financial support of ROK’s entrepreneurs, especially from the Bae and Kim families. It is under the auspices of the foreign ministries of Korea and Israel. Its attentions are focused on the promotion of Jewish and Israeli studies in Korea and ROK’s cultural exchanges with Israeli and Jewish communities all over the world.

The symposium opened at the Konkuk University with three keynote speakers: Prof. David Harman from Israel, Prof. Michael Chlenov from Russia, and I. After welcoming

speeches by Israel Ambassador Uzi Manor and ICC Chairman Youngdeok Lee, the symposium was divided into three sessions. The first was “Jews in China” at which I was the keynote speaker; the second was “Israel and the Jewish Diaspora” with Prof. Harman as the keynote speaker; and the third featured Prof. Chlenov on the “Jewish Diaspora in Russia”.

At the close of the symposium I made a special visit to the Israel Culture Center. Although it employs only three staff members, it still manages to organize a Jewish Cultural Exhibition, Israel Book Fairs and Jewish Music Festivals, in addition to four symposia in the past three years. Through this visit we have established contact with Korean counterparts. We should now strengthen our cooperation and learn from and help each other in joint efforts to promote the development of Jewish and Israeli studies in China and Korea.

What was most surprising to me was that the event was hosted by the Korean university’s Hebrew Department. China, with a vast country of more than 1.2 billion people, has so far no Hebrew department, while only Peking University offers one Hebrew speciality with a few students. It is beyond my expectation that Korea with only 50 million people has a Hebrew department with 80 students and five professors.

(Excerpted from Points East)

With President Johannes Rau in Hongkew

By Pan Guang

In the afternoon of September 14, 2003, German President Johannes Rau and the First Lady of the German Republic made a "Return to History" tour to the former Hongkew (now Hongkou) Ghetto in Shanghai. It is known to all that before and during World War II, Hongkou was a haven for some 20,000 Jews who sought refuge from Hitler's Germany and German occupied area. Therefore, German President's visit to Hongkou is of great significance. Entrusted by Shanghai Mayor, I had the great honor of accompanying President & Mrs. Rau's tour.

The First Lady in Ohel Moshe Synagogue

Just after 5 p.m., Christina Rau arrived in the former Ohel Moshe Synagogue (now The Museum for Jewish Refugees in Shanghai) at the Changyang Road. We easily communicated with each other as the German First Lady can speak English very well. At the very beginning, I accompanied her in the visit former synagogue's service hall on the first floor where everything had been restored to its original appearance. Beside the hall there is an exhibition room displaying paintings and calligraphies, photos and inscriptions in memory of Holocaust victims in Shanghai. During her tour, she frequently made professional comments on exhibited articles, as she was well versed in plastic arts moldering. Then, we came to the photo exhibition of Jewish refugees in Shanghai on

the third floor, which displayed the Jews who sought refuge in Shanghai, especially in the Hongkou District, where they shared weal and woe with the Chinese people during wartime. When looking at these pictures, the First Lady raised questions, such as: "How could Jewish refugees be accustomed to the lives in Hongkou?" "How about their relationship with Chinese people?" Having opened windows, she looked into the distant old dwellings at the Zhoushan Road, Changyang Road and Huoshan Road, and told the German ladies who accompanied her that these were the homes of Jewish refugees from the Central Europe including Germany. After that, we came to the restored garret for sleeping on the fourth floor where interior decoration is in the 1930s' style and all furniture were used by the refugees which had been collected from the Chinese residents in Hongkou recently. Having placed themselves in this 10m2 room, the German guests seemed to have returned back to the war period 60 years ago.

President's Inscription

Just when I accompanied the First Lady downstairs, the President's motorcade arrived at the gate of the Ohel Moshe Synagogue. We witnessed a high-spirited president alighting from his car though he had already experienced his busiest activities. Accompanied by the Vice Mayor of Shanghai, Mr. Jiang Sixian, President Rau came to the main hall and sat down. Then the leader

of Hongkou District made a brief introduction to the new development in Hongkou. After him, I described the story about Jewish refugees in Hongkou. Being different from the reception of the first lady, this was formal diplomatic activity, so my introduction had to be given in Chinese, and then translated into German, although President could speak English fluently. Because of limited time, I quickened the speed of my introduction, while the Chief German Interpreter of Chinese FM, Dr. Yangrong, translated my words into German. The President and all the German VIPs listened attentively to my introduction while frequently nodding their heads. Time was used up in a moment, I could hardly continue my introduction while saying to the President: "Due to the time limitation, I could not make a longer introduction. Luckily, my book entitled Jews in China which made detailed description of how Jews sought refuge in Shanghai has just been translated into German, and I feel greatly honored to present my book to your Excellency, Mr. President." On hearing this, President Rau stood up very excitedly and received my book with both hands; he then shook hands with me to express his hearty thanks. Later on he wrote down in the distinguished visitor's book the following inscription in German: "Wenn der Herr die Gefangenen Zions erlosen wird, dann werden wir sein wie die Traumenden" ("When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them

that dream”, cited from Psalms 126, King James Bible). It reflected the happy expression when the Lord (Jehovah) saved the captured Jews and brought them back to Zion in Palestine. What’s the meaning of the President’s inscription? In my opinion, it contains two layers of meaning: (1) condemning the crimes for persecution of Jews hinting obliquely at Nazi Holocaust; and (2) singing praises of helping the Jews hinting the assistance to the Jewish refugees given by Chinese people during the wartime.

Conversation in the Car

Up to that time, President had just finished half his tour. Next, he would go to Huoshan Park located at Huoshan Road to pay his respects to the Monument in Memory of Jewish Refugees in Shanghai. The President and First Lady warmly invited me to go with them in their deluxe car. The First Lady said, “We can talk more in the car, because of the shortage in time today”. When our car was passing through the former Jewish settlement along the Zhoushan Road, I told President that Mr. Michael Blumenthal used to live in No 59. President was glad to say “He is a good friend of mine, now he is the Director of the Jewish Museum in Berlin.” Blumenthal escaped to Shanghai from Berlin with his family when he was eight years old in 1939, and spent the most arduous years of war in Hongkou, and then migrated to the US. During the Carter Administration 1977-81, he was Secretary of Finance of USA (1977-79). In 1999, he was named by the German government as Director of the Berlin Jewish Museum. Blumenthal is also the good friend of China and Shanghai. I had accompanied him to visit his residence at Zhoushan Road several times. The topic of our conversation turned to the Berlin Holocaust Museum. President Rau said that there were divergent views over the construction of the Berlin Holocaust Museum. But the majority of German people

supported the construction of this Museum, which demonstrated their determination of never forgetting the history. I mentioned to President that I would go to Germany to participate an international conference on “The Jews in China”, while President said he knew about this and would send a congratulatory message to the conference. As expected, at the opening ceremony of the conference held at the University of Mainz in Gernersheim, the conference chair, Prof. Peter Kupfer read out the letter of congratulation in which President Rau mentioned his visit to Hongkou while having pointed out the significance of research projects on Jewish refugees in Shanghai.

In Front of the Monument

While engrossed in our conversation, our car arrived at the Huoshan Park. I then accompanied President Rau to the Monument for Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, while I gave the following brief introduction to President Rau:

In July, 1942, eight months after the outbreak of the Pacific War, Colonel Josef Meisinger, chief representative of the Gestapo in Japan, arrived in Shanghai and proposed a Final Solution in Shanghai to the Japanese occupation authorities. Although the Meisinger Plan was not put into effect due to differences between the Japanese and German governments attitudes toward Jews, the Japanese authorities proclaimed a Designated Area for Stateless Refugees, ordering refugees who had arrived in Shanghai from Europe after 1937 to move into the area within a month. The Huoshan Park was located in the heart of this Designated Area for Stateless Refugees. At that time the Jewish refugees lived around the Park with their Chinese neighbors while passing through the most difficult period of their lives. In April 1994, in order to commemorate this unforgettable history, the Shanghai Municipal Government and Hongkou District Government built this monument.

On hearing my remarks, President face wore the solemn and respectful expression, and added: “Nazi crimes cannot be forgotten”. He then marched forward two steps, and stood very straight in front of the Monument for two minutes.

Taking History as a Mirror

Now the brief tour would come to an end, President Rau and the First Lady were full of zest to meet with the masses outside of the Huoshan Park. While shaking hands with them, President Rau shouted “Thank you! Thank you!” In my opinion, he not only thanked the people of Hongkou for their enthusiastic welcome to German guests, but also for the great assistance given by them to the Central European Jewish refugees during wartime. This reminded me of an inscription written by German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder when I had the honor of escorting him for his visit to Ohel Rachel Synagogue in Shanghai in November 1999. He wrote in the distinguished visitor’s book: “A poet once wrote ‘death is an envoy coming from Germany’. We know that many of the persecuted found a haven in Shanghai. We never forget this history. Today, we are here to show our appreciation and praise for those who provided every possible relief for the persecuted.” Now, President Rau again shows clearly to the whole world with his own behavior that German people will imprint these historical lessons in their minds from generation to generation like Chinese always say: “Taking history as a mirror”.

***Readers are requested
to notify the Editor
whether any personal
names have been
incorrectly spelt.***

Thank you

Wuzhen – Venice of China

by Shen Qiang (“China & the World Cultural Exchange”)

Wuzhen is the best preserved and peacefully secluded of the six ancient “water cities” south of the Yangtze River. Despite its sometimes turbulent thousand years’ history, it did not lose any of its vigor and vitality, remaining tranquil and somewhat pensive. Mao Dun, one of the leading modern authors of China, says that he could not have written his books in any other place. “Neither could I live elsewhere, not even in the neighboring Qingzhen,” adds he.

Municipal records show that during the “Spring and Autumn Period” (770-476 BCE) Wuzhen was a strategic border town of the Wu Kingdom. The town is built along the banks of a network of rivers and rivulets, which serve as its streets connected by picturesque arched bridges, under which thousands of boats make their way up and down the mellow current.

Many buildings are massive, with high eaves, and containing spacious halls. Most of the houses are built of wood and have extensive gardens around them.

It is a pleasure to go for a leisurely evening stroll along the paved passageways, or — still better — a slow boat-ride, watching the old houses, bridges and trees, hanging over the water, strolling by, and listening to the rhythmic lapping of the sleeping water touched by oars.

Wuzhen is a paradise for an architect, for here, unlike in most of the old Chinese towns, you come across a variety of styles, forms and sizes of buildings, harmoniously set into the surrounding topography with slender pagodas occasionally accentuating one hilltop or another. State laws strictly protect the architectural integrity of Wuzhen, while the

municipal architects keep a watchful eye that these laws are kept in word and spirit. Preserved are the famous reading library of a Ming Dynasty Prince Zhao, named by him “*The Self-cultivation Temple*”, the ancient ginkgo trees, the Boat turning Bay, and most of the original Double Bridges. Those, which could not be saved, were reconstructed. The old street in the Xishan (“Western Hill”) Quarter of the town is one of the best preserved examples of Ming (1368-1644 CE) and Qing (1644-1911) architecture.

It is not a bad idea to end this delightful tour of Wuzhen in an old wine shop and to sample the traditional Wuzhen “Sanbai Wine” made of the local mellow grapes or raisins. You will regret leaving Wuzhen.

(Rearranged by Emmanuel Pratt)

The Year of the Monkey

The Monkey, who presides over the Chinese New Year which began on January 22, 2004, is one of the most popular animals in the 12-year Chinese zodiac. Sas Jacoby, who was born in Shanghai in the Year of the Horse explains:

Chinese lunar years run in cycles according to a zodiacal series of 12 animals – rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig. The order is said to have been established by the Yellow Emperor in 2637 BCE. Of all these animals the monkey is said to be the wittiest and is a favorite character in

the literature of China. According to Chinese tradition, it is possible to learn a great deal about a person’s qualities according to the sign under which he was born. Obviously, monkey people have a reputation for being intelligent and lively, but are also known to be tricky and impetuous. Because of his mischievous nature, the monkey is supposed to be in control of all the imps and hobgoblins and other things that go bump in the night, so his duties are to keep demons at a respectful distance.

On the occasion of the new lunar year, Emmanuel Pratt, who was

born in Vladivostok in the Year of the Monkey, and perhaps has all the attributes of the monkey according to Chinese lore, has another explanation of “how to make extra money in China”. Unlike the Western calendar, he says, when one extra day is added in February, one whole month is added in a Chinese leap year. So if you are employed in China on a monthly basis, instead of working one extra day for nothing, you would get an extra month’s salary without doing a thing. Well, what do you know!

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DATE MAKES

By Joe LERNER

The story, which you are about to read, could only have happened in Israel.

War with Iraq was looming. President Bush and Tony Blair were preparing to attack Iraq. Threats started in 2002. By the beginning of 2003, it was just a matter of time.

President Bush promised Israel an air defense cover to protect it from Saddam's long range missiles. By the end of January 2003, the US sent Patriot Missiles stationed in Germany to Israel. Four battery units arrived and were dispersed throughout Israel. The Patriots had arrived in February 2003. One of the Patriot Missiles was stationed outside Tel Aviv near Holon. The commander of this unit was a young Jewish lieutenant from Brooklyn, New York, whose name was Jerry Jacobson. The Israeli Army sent Shelly Burstein, as a liaison officer and a translator, to join the battery unit and help them out with the affairs of the army. Jerry and Shelly worked together in harmony. When they had met, it was love at first sight. Eventually, and up to the end of the war in Iraq, they fell deeply in love. Jerry felt that from now on, he couldn't live without Shelly and decided to marry her. Shelly had the same thoughts in mind, but was scared because she didn't know where they would live after they got married.

On May 1st, 2003 George Bush declared that the war in Iraq was over. By this time, Jerry and Shelly were so much in love that Jerry had to decide their future together. Time was of the essence. The batteries would soon be returned to Germany and Jerry would

be gone, too. Then at the end of May came the order to evacuate all troops and batteries back to Germany. Jerry was leaving, too. Shelly became desperate. The night before the departure, Jerry and Shelly went to the canteen, and there, Jerry proposed to Shelly and asked her to marry him. She agreed on one condition: that they would live in Israel in Kibbutz Degania on the Kinneret. Her parents had left Shanghai, China, long ago, to live in Israel. That's how Shelly knew English so well. At home they all spoke English.

Jerry thought for a while and then said: "I'm willing to live in Israel during the winter. But in summer, we'll go back home to Brooklyn. If you agree, then it's a deal." Shelly agreed to everything, just to be with Jerry. They even agreed on the date of the marriage: a week after Jerry was discharged from the US army in Germany. He still had two weeks before his discharge. Jerry promised to e-mail Shelly when he was to arrive and send it to her unit in Israel. She would then meet him at Ben Gurion Airport.

They parted. Shelly sent Jerry off with a broken-heart. She didn't know if he was serious or not about marriage. So she kept her fingers crossed. Then one day Shelly received an e-mail from Jerry that he was coming for her. The e-mail read: "To my gorgeous Shelly. How I miss you. I was discharged from the US Army and am hurrying to meet you. I'm arriving at Ben Gurion Airport at 16:05 hundred hours, flight 325 El Al, on the 07/06/03. Please meet me at the airport. With all my love and kisses, Jerry." Shelley at

once confirmed receipt of the e-mail and promised to meet him at the airport on that date.

Shelly was in seventh heaven. She rushed to the telephone to tell her parents the good news. They were so happy for her. She also informed her commanding officer Shai of her unit about it. He smiled, wished her Mazal Tov and shook his head. On the 7th of June, Shelly got leave from her commanding officer to meet her fiancée Jerry at the airport. Together with her Mom and Dad they went to the airport. Flight 325 from New York was on time. As the passengers strolled out, there was no Jerry in sight. They waited for an hour, still no Jerry in sight. Shelly started to cry. She was so depressed that Jerry could have changed his mind and not come. That evening at home. Shelly cried all night. The next day her commanding officer Shai tried to soothe her, but to no avail. The days dragged on, but Shelly couldn't forget Jerry. Something went wrong. What could have happened that he didn't show up? She didn't believe that Jerry could have done such a thing to her.

On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean in New York, Jerry was getting ready to fly to Israel for his wedding. His parents were very excited and so was his sister and brother. They all wished him well. Since Jerry had sent the e-mail out to her unit, he was sure she would come to meet him at the airport. When they arrived at Ben Gurion Airport on July 6, 2003 (07/06/03) there was no one to meet them at the airport. Shelly had not come. Jerry got so confused, so angry, so

downhearted that his blood pressure shot up. He became very nervous. His parents couldn't understand why Shelly hadn't come. Something must have happened to her. Jerry and his parents were sure that a thing like that couldn't have happened in Israel. In their hand, they held Jerry's e-mail to Shelly.

After waiting for two hours at the airport, they all went to the departure lounge to book their way home. They had to wait for an hour since all the staff at the booking office had gone out for supper. They sat down next to a young rabbi who was returning home to New York. Whilst they were sitting and arguing and deciding what to do next, the young rabbi who had heard everything they had said, smiled at them and said:

"What are you arguing about? Perhaps I could help you? If it's about a girl or a marriage, then you've found the right guy."

"Ah! said Jerry. "How can you help us. You're just a rabbi."

"Well, first of all, let's get introduced. I'm Rabbi Jacob Aronson from Crown Heights, New York. And you?"

After they all got acquainted, the rabbi asked them what was the problem. Jerry told the rabbi the whole story from beginning to end. The rabbi took a deep breath and asked to see Jerry's e-mail to Shelly. Then he brightened up and began to laugh so heartily that people around them began to stare at them.

"Why are you laughing so much? What's the big joke about?"

When the rabbi stopped laughing, he wiped away his tears and said: "I think I have solved your problem!"

"What problem?"

"About Shelly." One thing I know for sure. She still loves you very much and she's still thinking about you, but...she's awfully mad at you for not arriving on the day she came to meet you at the airport."

"Which day are you talking about?"

"The date you wrote in your e-mail, 07/06/03."

"What about it? Today is July 6, 2003, isn't it?"

"Right! That's what you think in America, but not in Europe. Take a look at your watch. What date is written on it? July 6. That's the American way. In Europe, it would be June 7."

"So what?"

"Don't you get it? You're one month late. That's why Shelly didn't come. And that's the whole story."

When they understood the mishap, they all laughed heartily. Then the rabbi said that he would help them find Shelly, if they would pay the extra for the ticket to fly back home with them to New York. They all agreed.

The rabbi then took the e-mail and went with Jerry to the information service. There they told the nice Israeli girl on duty named Suzy about the story. Suzy promised to help. She immediately telephoned to Kibbutz Degania to find out if Shelly was there. The secretary told her that she was in the army and gave Suzy the telephone number of the army base, where Shelly worked.

The next stage was set. Suzy telephoned the base and asked to speak to the commanding officer. In less than a minute, she was connected. The army commander listened to Suzy carefully, then laughed delightedly at the mistake in the date. They agreed not to tell Shelly anything, so that it would be a big surprise, when they arrived at the base. He gave them the address somewhere in the South and told them that he was waiting for their arrival.

The mother and father were so thrilled that they did not know how to thank Suzy. They promised to invite her to the wedding. They hired a taxi and they all got in for the long drive to the army base. It took them more than an hour to get there. When they parked and paid the taxi, they went to the front gate where a soldier halted them. They said that they were expected by the commander of the base. After

all the formalities and phone calls, the soldier let them in. An officer came to meet the group. He took them to the room of the commanding officer. They were cordially greeted and asked to sit down and wait. The commanding officer asked Jerry and his parents to keep quiet and not to approach Shelly. He said it was best that Shelly should discover the surprise herself. The commanding officer, Shai, then picked up the phone and telephoned to the base, where Shelly was acting as a tour guide to a few foreign military attaches who were to be escorted around the site.

"Hello, hello!" said Shai. "May I speak to Shelly, please."

"I'm sorry. She's busy."

"Doing what? This is Shai speaking."

"Oh! Shai! Just a minute, please."

After a minute, Shelly picked up the phone.

"Hello, Shai. What happened? I'm here with the foreign guests. You sent me to

take them on a tour, didn't you?"

"Yes, I know. Who else is there with you?"

"Vicki and Svetlana."

"Good! Leave them and come here quickly."

"Okay, Ha-Mefaked! I'm coming."

Everyone in the room was excited about the coming meeting. Jerry was very nervous. The commander, too. Only the rabbi was cool and quiet.

Suddenly there was a knock on the door. Everyone froze in anticipation. The door opened softly and Shelly walked in.

"Adoni Ha-Mefaked!" saluted Shelly smartly to Shai. "At your service!"

"Amod no-ah! At ease." commanded Shai.

Shelly noticed some people sitting in the back of the room when coming in. But she hardly paid attention to them. There were always people around.

"What is it, Sir, you wanted to see me about immediately?"

Shai looked at her. She was so beautiful, so young, so smart, so

attractive, that he didn't know what to say. She stared back at him in fear. Then Shai said:

"I called you, because there are so many complaints against you that I really don't know where to start."

Shelley's heart began to pound so fast that she was in fear of fainting.

"For one thing, you mix up the dates and people really get mad at you for that."

"I mix up the dates?!" and she looked at him with her beautiful brown eyes.

"It's you who mix up the dates! And then you blame me."

"All right! All right! I mix up the dates. I'm sorry."

"So what do you want from me? What can I do for you, Ha-Mefaked?"

The others in the room were listening in carefully. The rabbi was translating.

"We got a message from an US Army base in Germany, inquiring about a girl-

officer named Shelly. Someone there is looking for her. Do you think you might know who that person could be?"

"What?!" shouted Shelly, crying. "It's impossible! Are you sure it's me

they're looking for?"

"I'm quite sure. It has your name on the e-mail."

"You're my guardian angel, Adoni Ha-Mefaked! cried Shelley." "WOW! I really don't know how to thank you."

She ran up to him and kissed him on the cheek.

"Hey! Hey! There are people here."

"It doesn't bother me."

"So who do you think it could be?"

"It must be Jerry, my boyfriend. Tell me, but truthfully, did something happen to him? Where is he now? Why from Germany?"

"Now, now, calm down, Shelly. As in love and war, you must be brave. Nothing has happened to your boyfriend Jerry. He's alive and well. And..."

"And what?" asked Shelley in shock.

There was a moment of silence. Shelley looked at Shai with tears in her eyes.

She saw that Shai had tears, too, in his eyes. At this moment Jerry could not stand it any longer. He got up from his chair and looked at Shelly. Shai told Shelly to turn around. Shelly slowly turned around and saw Jerry standing there. She was astounded! Suddenly, she screamed with joy. She couldn't

believe her eyes. Crying, she leaped forward, ran to Jerry, embracing and kissing him fervently.

"Jerry! Oh, my Jerry! My beloved Jerry!" she cried. "How did you find me? I thought I'd lost you forever!"

"And I thought so, too, when you didn't turn up at the airport to meet me. But

what does it matter now? We're together!"

Jerry introduced Shelly to his parents and told Shelly that the rabbi had solved the puzzle of their separation. The commanding officer gave Shelly a week's leave and promised to come to the wedding.

As soon as Shelly got her leave, they all boarded a taxi for Kibbutz Degania. In Degania, they were met by Shelly's parents and the whole family. Everyone on the Kibbutz was so overwhelmed with joy, so glad to see a happy ending, that they forgot for an instant, what a difference a date made, in the lives of the two young people in love. A week later they were married. Their wedding took place at the kibbutz where everyone wished them lots of luck. The army, with commander Shai, was there, too.



The building of the Jewish Gymnasia (high school) in Harbin. Photographed by a French Jewish journalist, Anais Martane in January 2003. Today the building is a school for Korean girls.

An Unforgettable History

By Jin Bo (China Daily staff)

People, architecture revive memories of Jews in Harbin half a century ago

Eighty-four-year-old Fu Youduo had a dozen Jewish friends more than half a century ago in his hometown of Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang Province in Northeast China. Today he still remembers most details of the days when he rubbed elbows with them, though he has lost contact with them all since the 1950s. Fu's association with the Jews began in 1948, when he moved to a courtyard in the Jewish community and opened a private dental clinic there.

According to Fu Youduo's daughter, Fu Mingjing, her father, who later became the dean of the State-owned Harbin Stomatological Hospital, was one of the most famous stomatologists in Harbin at that time. Many Jewish people would turn to him for help when suffering from oral disorders. Some of his Jewish patients gradually became his close friends outside of the clinic. He could hardly spell their full names in Latin, as most of the Jews in Harbin spoke Chinese, and he addressed them with the awkward Mandarin transliteration of their names.

"The Jews were very clever and good at business," Fu recalled. He still remembers among others a violinist name Tebailou, a music professor at the Harbin Normal University at that time, who shared the same hobby of philately with him. "When he emigrated to Australia in 1952, presented me with a set of commemorative stamps, which I still keep today." In addition to that, Fu also purchased much of Jewish violinist's property before he left Harbin. Fu's personal memories are part of the Jewish community's history in Harbin, which is rarely known by most of today's Chinese.

Growth of a city

A little known fact is that the first half of the last century, the northeastern city of Harbin was home to one of the largest Jewish communities in the Far East. Li Shuxiao, deputy director of the Harbin Jews Research Center affiliated to the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences, said: "Under most circumstances, the mere mention of Jews in China would remind people of their presence in Shanghai, while the Jewish history of Harbin has been largely neglected for a long time. Several former members of the Jewish communities of Shanghai and Tianjin have written memoirs lately. Yet few people know that the Harbin community was one of the strongest and most viable." ... In the 19th century "Harbin" was only the general reference to a cluster of small villages on the banks of the Songhua River. The city owed its existence and then expansion to the China Eastern Railway, the outgrowth of a 19th-century treaty in which the Russians were given the right to construct a railway in China to link up with the Trans-Siberian railway network. Around the turn of the last century, Harbin began to flourish with foreigners, most of whom were Russians, arriving in droves and making it an international metropolis. Among the emigrants were many Russian Jews who were escaping bloody pogroms and civil wars by coming to help build the railway.

In 1903, the Jewish population there had reached 500. However, the Japanese invasion of Northeast China in the 1930s resulted in a decrease in the scale of the Jewish community in Harbin. After 1949, most Jews emigrated to the United

States, Canada, Australia, or Israel, among other countries. According to Li Shuxiao, between 1899, when the first Russian Jew settled in Harbin, and 1985, when the last Jew in Harbin passed away, altogether more than 20,000 Jews spent their lives at one time or another in Harbin, just over 480 kilometers away from Vladivostok, Russia.

In Harbin, the Jews gradually re-established the life they had left behind. This process coincided with the rapid growth of Harbin on its way from a cluster of villages to a big city, branding the city with a distinguished "Jewish style". The city's first batch of modern hotels, banks, shops, cafes, newspapers, and publishing houses, were initiated by members of the Jewish community, and helped boost the city's business. Almost all the enterprises in Harbin at that time, whether bakeries or coal mines or mills, were closely linked to the Jews. They also established the first batch of synagogues and cemeteries.

The Jews also raised the city's status as a cultural hub. According to local historian, Zhang Tielin, during the 1920s and 1930s, many renowned Jewish artists came to Harbin to deliver performances. These performances helped promote the spread of Western music in China, ranking Harbin the "City of Music". Even today, the Jewish influence on Harbin's music education can still be strongly felt. All in all, the activities undertaken by the Jewish community helped lay the foundation of the development of Harbin as a modern city.

Memories cherished

However, for today's people, it is a history a little too far away. Most

of the people who experienced the early 20th century have passed away. Even for 84-year-old Fu Youduo, there were only slices of memory left that could be traced back to 70 years ago. In his dim memory, Fu only remembers playing with a little Jewish girl approximately his age when he was 12. And sometimes he would go to movies shown in the Jewish community and attend parties held among its residents. However, there are some other things left, which are more sustainable than human memory.

One of those things is architecture. Today, the architectural treasures in Harbin date from the early 19th century. Most of the elegant old Western-styled buildings built by the Jews have been well-preserved, scattered around the entire city and especially in Pristan, an area which used to be the center of Harbin Jews to conduct religious, political, economic and cultural activities. Old Jewish schools, streets and houses are kept intact or have been renovated. Among such old buildings are two synagogues and one rabbinical school, and the biggest Jewish cemetery in the Far East, which accommodates 700 gravestones with Hebrew inscriptions.

Today on the famous Central Street (Zhongyang Street) which used to be called Kitaiskaya Street and the former center of economic and cultural activities of Harbin Jews in the early 20th century, there still stands one of the oldest buildings in Harbin – the Modern Hotel. The century-old hotel, once famed for its grandiose interiors, and which once accommodated many famous figures, was run by a Jewish entrepreneur. Much of the Jewish influence in the architecture can be immediately recognized by a distinctive Star of David (also called Shield of David, the symbol most commonly associated with Judaism today).

Besides the influences on architecture, Li Shuxiao and his colleagues are carrying out research to find whether there are Jewish influences on the local folk customs and languages. Li

said he had found some traces which could serve as evidence of such influences. “Compared with other Chinese cities, Harbin is very unique in that it breeds many customs similar to those prevalent in countries on the European continent. For example, Harbin people consume more bread and beer than average Chinese elsewhere,” said Li Shuxiao. Harbin Beer, first produced by the Harbin Brewery, was the earliest beer brewed in China.

Also, in the daily language of the old generation of Harbin people, Li has found there are many loanwords. However, Li, who has been studying the local history of Harbin for decades, admitted that the Jewish influences on local people’s folk customs might be slight. “The Jews mainly lived in their own community, and had very limited contact with the local Chinese residents,” said Li. According to the historian, only a few Chinese people from upper-class society, for example Fu Youduo and his family, kept associations with the Jews. But one thing etched in people’s memories is that during the years of Jewish settlement the Jews never met discrimination from the Chinese.

Ya’acov Liberman, a Jew who was from China, wrote: “We lived for some three generations within the vastness called China, neither integrating nor assimilating with the people of the land. If that sounds like ghetto life, be assured it wasn’t. We, the Jews of China, were allowed – rather than forced – by our tolerant host to live a life of our own creation.

Friendship carried on

After China’s opening up to the international society in the late 1970s, many Jews who spent a period of their lives in China, such as Ya’acov Liberman, returned for visits. Among them there were Teddy Kaufman, president of the Israel-China Friendship Society and Helmut Stern, a famous violinist.

“Since 1949 I have visited Harbin twice, in 1992 and 1994, and found it developed into a modern metropolis of a population of 9.4 million. Now

the Sungary River (Songhua River) flows along a beautiful embankment. A new, wide bridge sweeps across the river, and a new skyline of high-rises pierces the horizon. It is a brand-new city of commerce, trade, tourism and culture. And yet, to me, it remained the cozy city of my youth” wrote Teddy Kaufman.

Such visits are getting more and more frequent in recent years. Li Shuxiao said the Harbin Jews Research Center at the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences have so far received about 70 Jews who had returned for visits since April of 2000, when the center was opened. According to Li, the Jews who thrived in China 50 years ago greatly cherish their Chinese origin. They have formed associations of “Jews from China” in many cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco in the United State, and Sydney and Melbourne in Australia. Just days ago, Li’s center ran a course on agricultural technology for Heilongjiang farmers, with guest lectures by an Israeli agricultural expert. Li said the local government of Harbin is now hoping to further ties with “Harbin Jews”.

As the result of strenuous efforts over the past year, the Harbin Jews Research Center published a huge album on the life of Harbin Jews over the past century which was released a few days ago. Titled “The Jews in Harbin” and published by the Social Sciences Documentation Publishing House, the album contains more than 400 pictures which record the history and life of Jewish people in the city. The album includes six parts to tell the story of life in Harbin’s Jewish community, the lives of their descendants and their relations with Chinese people in the past and today. Israel Epstein, who has stayed in China for nearly 80 years since he left Poland with his Jewish parents, wrote the preface of the album. “For ‘Harbin Jews’ the memory of their ‘Chinese homeland’ will last forever” wrote Epstein, now 88, who spent three years of his childhood in Harbin.

Website News

Michael Alderton

Research Director, Paolo Frere & Associates

Katoomba, Australia

I have visited the Igud Yotzei Sin website which looks like a very exciting work in progress. It needs to be said though that some very unpleasantly wrong things have been said about General Cohen following the 1997 publication of a revisionist work which is often mistaken for a definitive biography of the great man's life ...

As a film industry researcher, I am very interested in images and I have a number of scanned photographs of the general. I would be glad to help you choose a suitable one for IYS's website. But I know nothing about copyright provisions as they apply to websites, and perhaps this consideration might affect your choice. However, I do own the copyright to a 1959 photograph taken of General Cohen and my late father in the garden of our Hong Kong home.

Your mention of the Tientsin Hebrew Association reminds me that I have a bad photocopy of a 1957 "Jewish Chronicle" article that speaks of the work of the association, and includes a photograph of General Cohen visiting Jewish graves in the company of Mr. R.I. Abramoff and Mr. G.A. Shnidman.

Reply by Teddy Piastunovich:

As I understand it, copyright provisions apply to websites as they do to the printed media. Thus any photo of the General will do. It is meant to show the viewing public what the man looked like. The 1959 photo will do just fine if you would permit us to use it, as would a scanned copy of the Jewish Chronicle article.

If a scanned copy of the article is not available then a photocopy mailed to me would be appreciated.

Response by Michael Alderton:

... there are probably quite a few images of General Cohen that might, in their own ways, serve to show, as you put it, "the viewing public what the man looked like". Some of these images place the general in rather impressive company, but I guess that it would be the portraits that would best suit your stated purpose.

Perhaps you would permit me to suggest a couple of previously published examples for your consideration:

1. "Mr. M.A. Cohen of Edmonton – 1911"

This is an image of him taken late in 1911 when he was barely twenty-two years of age. Mr. M.A. Cohen is seen here handsomely attired and impeccably groomed, as one would expect of someone who was the manager of one of the provincial capital's leading real estate companies. I guess that he would have looked much the same when, some eighteen months later, he was appointed, on the personal recommendation of the Attorney General, Sir Charles Cross, to serve the Province of Alberta as a Commissioner for Oaths. This portrait appears in Drage, Charles, "Two Gun Cohen", Jonathan Cape Ltd., London 1954.

2. "General Cohen of China – 1943"

This is a rather revealing image of him in middle age, captured, late in 1943, by that gifted American photojournalist, Mr. Carl Mydans. It's quite a powerful portrait of the general taken onboard the repatriation vessel "Gripsholm",

and following his release from the Stanley Internment Camp in Hong Kong. This portrait was published in "LIFE", 20 December 1943.

I have attached scans of these two previously published portraits for your contemplation and I hope that they might help you to make the most suitable choice of image for posting on your website there. If you need to obtain the appropriate permission before posting either of these images, then perhaps I can be of some help to you in that regard as well.

Reply from Teddy Piastunovich:

Many thanks for the photos. I think the 1943 shot of Gen. Cohen best shows the man, though I would have like to see him in a China setting or "in rather impressive company" as you put it.

I would very much appreciate your help and advice on obtaining permission to post the picture on our website.

Mazal Tov

Seva Sherell - 88

Seva (Yoshua) Sherell, formerly of Harbin, is 88 years old. He was born in Harbin, and graduated from the First Harbin Commercial School in 1932. In 1936 he received a "student certificate" to Palestine and entered the Haifa Technion where he graduated as an engineer and has been working till now in this profession. Seva is a member of the well-known Abel Meiseevich Sherell de Florance family in Harbin and Dairen. He is respected and liked by his working colleagues in Haifa and by his landsmen. Igud Yotzei Sin heartily congratulates Seva and wishes him health and well being till 120!

Why do active Russian anticommunists: Synitzin, Shandar, Martynov and others languish in Harbin prison?

From the Harbin fascist press ("Nash Put")

On August 23, 1933 active Russian anticommunists kidnapped a Jew S.J. Kaspé, son of J.A. Kaspé, a foreign secret agent of the Soviet foreign minister. Due to circumstances created by J.A. Kaspé and the Franco-mason consul, the kidnapped S.I. Kaspé was killed on the Eastern line of KVJD on December 20 1933 by Golushko, a terrorist member of the anticommunist group of kidnapers. In connection with this case, Shandar and others were arrested and interrogated under torture by the Manchu-kuo authorities. For many years these loyal sons of the martyred Russia gave all possible assistance, including financial, to the White partisans, as fit the genuine selfless fighters who were set to free Nationalist Russia from the Jido-communist bondage. Shandar was called up as an irreconcilable enemy of communism, sentenced to death in absentia by the Soviets.

The White terrorist Golushko had fallen, defending his nation, when shot by the Manchu-kuo police who pursued the kidnapers. The informers in this case were Soviet agents. Other Russian national heroes languish in prison, paying with their freedom for their heroic defense of the just cause. Judicial authorities of the young Empire were duped by the Soviet secret agents into condemning the kidnapping and killing of a "jid" as a "cold-blooded murder" and calling the Russian patriots "cold-blooded murderers".

All the Russian-language newspapers in Manchu-kuo and China, owned by the Jewish executioners of Russia

and mankind, thwarted a political act into a criminal offense, in order to worsen the state of the arrested Russian patriots and make sure they are to receive death sentence. The "jid"s want Christian blood to flow for the exterminated of S. I. Kaspé, the enemy of mankind. The court demands that the accused disclose their political secret as to their actions on the territory of the USSR, i. e. to force them to betray their oath given before God.

Both the prosecution and the Jews miss two points: 1) inadmissibility of a betrayal of oath; 2) impossibility of struggle against communism without bloodshed and victims falling on the way.

When Manchuria was under Jewish-communist rule, bought by Comintern for the Russian gold, when the old corrupt Manchu regime was bribed by the Soviet consulate, we kept quiet. But now, when this land was transformed into an Empire with kindred ideology, we shall openly declare before the whole world that S. I. Kaspé was kidnapped by order of our high command, and that the action was purely political.

We herewith publish a photocopy of a telegram sent by the Soviet consul-general in Harbin to the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs procured by our agents in a Moscow cache:

Incoming telegram #11768/565

From: The USSR Consul-general in Harbin.

Sent on 27.11.1933. Received 27.11.1933

A member of communist party

(S...) Kaspé, kidnapped by White bandits, was murdered by Golushko. The kidnapping and the murder are of a political character: revenge against our agent J. Kaspé for his appropriation of valuables belonging to the Tzar and others. Kaspé was demanded to pay ransom, but refused. Steps are taken to liquidate the kidnapers.

Signed: Slavutzky, Consul-General, Harbin.

The article was published on 15.3. 1936 as a part of the appeal for the acquittal of the kidnapers. Eventually the culprits were acquitted. An excerpt from the article "Returning to the Kaspé case" by Sabina Breuer, "The Almanac of the Slavonic research".

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Letters

Kfir Baruch Umansky
Jerusalem

To the IYS: The traditional IYS annual Hanukka get-together which took place on December 22 in Tel Aviv once again demonstrated the unusual character of the unusual community of former Jewish residents of China: their effort to assist each other and to perpetuate their “Chinese” heritage, short as it may be, but so deep, long lasting and glorious as to encourage the Chinese Academy of Social Science to commemorate it, so that the descendants of the immigrants from China in Israel and the whole world will be able to pass it on to the future generations.

As for me, personally, it is the third year that Igud Yotzei Sin grants me a generous scholarship for my academic studies. If I add to this the gifts I received during my military service, I may say that for six consecutive years I have personally experienced the charitable activity of this organization. In the difficult times we go through at present such unity is especially inspiring.

I would like to express my gratitude – for the investment in us, students, and the work you do in perpetuating our heritage, which will enable us to pass it on to the future generations. *Ko lehai!*

Stuart Rosen
Los Angeles

To the IYS: Happy New Year! My name is Stuart Rosen – I live in Los Angeles – I am 59 years old. My father’s family emigrated from Russia to Ontario, Canada (about 1905) and then went to Los Angeles (about 1912). My great grandfather was from or lived in Harbin prior to that. I think the original name was Rosenostik or something similar. I was referred to you by Joy Katzen. I would appreciate information about your organization. Thank you.

Email: muchtoomuch@sbcglobal.net

Isador Magid
Australia

To T. Kaufman: I have received your monumental New Year Bulletin and must give you full credit for the work that you and your colleagues have put into it. You doubt sometimes whether your struggling organization can afford such a lavish magazine, but on the other hand it increases its importance amongst us, living in Israel and throughout the world. It certainly is the only magazine of its kind and now that you have become multi-lingual, it serves a much greater circle of readers. When you look through the latter part of your magazine, it is unavoidable that you have more and more pages devoted to the people who pass away. Many of these people we knew, but even more, we have not known them in China.

I hope that you have been given a long life so that you will continue to productively dedicate yourself to charitable and communal work, as well as to continue with lavish articles in your magazine.

Maisie Meyer
London

To T. Kaufman: I would like to congratulate you on the excellence of your publication. It is an important source for scholars researching in the Sino-Judaic field. I am specially moved by the series on Dr. A. Kaufman, a really remarkable person for whom I have the utmost admiration and respect. The New Israel’s Messenger enhances and adds a new dimension to the Bulletin. With all good wishes for 2004.

Email: mjmeyer@email.com

Xu Xin
China

To T. Kaufman: Happy 2004!! I am very glad to see the growing friendly relationship between our two countries. Igud Yotzei Sin certainly has done a great deal to promote a better understanding and friendship of our two peoples. I will go to Canada and the US for a 5-week visit at the beginning of 2004. I am going to organize a conference on Judaism in October 2004. It would be great if we could have friends from your organization to come and talk about religious life in Harbin in those days. It would make more Chinese aware of that part of history.

Email: xuxin49@jlonline.com
(See the Conference Announcement in this Bulletin)

Martin and Esther (Bihovsky) Bates
New York, USA

To the IYS: Enclosed please find a check for \$180 in memory of Sonia Kiseliiov. Please send an acknowledgement to her son: Shmuel Kislev, Rehov Shazar 27, Ramat Gan, Israel 52247. It should read "With many thanks from Marty & Esther".

We are also enclosing two copies of a class photo from the Kadoorie School in Shanghai taken in approximately 1942. It was given to us by Rosi Lewisohn, now Rosie Berman, 152 Leicester Road, Kenmore, NY, 14217 after we showed her a similar class photo in a recent issue of your Bulletin. She said that she is the girl with glasses in the next-to-top row. She remembers the name of the principal, Hadwig, and the teacher, Mr. Gassman or Glassman, but not the names of any of the children. Perhaps you can use it in a future issue and trace the names of some of the other students. If so, she would appreciate hearing from you.

Address: 411 Wabash Avenue, Kenmore, NY 14217-2207, USA

Dr. G. Shelah
Director, Faculty of East Asian Studies
Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

To the IYS: I thankfully confirm the receipt of your plentiful and interesting material in conjunction with our meeting the Heilongjian Academy Delegation, and was pleased to note your wide activity and interest in Chinese culture and history, and in what happens in that country now. As the oldest Israeli academic faculty dedicated to studying the cultures of the East Asian peoples, we will be pleased to continue to cooperate with you. Our faculty often arranges "extra-academic" events on topics concerning China, Japan and Korea. For example: During an event concerning China, popular lectures are given on Chinese history, philosophy, and such "non-academic" subjects as Chinese cooking, hand to hand combat, Chinese medicine, calligraphy, etc. China-produced films are shown and various recently published literary works are read and discussed. Those present are encouraged to participate. These events are open to the general public and we will be honored to host the members of Igud Yotzei Sin. We would very much appreciate your publishing the address of our Internet web: <http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/East Asia/>

Anais Martane
Beijing, China

To Y. Klein: I am very happy to have received your email ... I wish you a prosperous, successful and peaceful monkey year, with new hope! I was pleasantly surprised to hear that the Academic Research Center of Harbin is starting to make its own documentary productions. This is a step for China! But my project is different ... I am a photographer and my way of expression is pictures. I want to show the Jewish impression in China by photographing the places it happened and the people who are linked directly or indirectly with this life. Because I studied the Chinese World since I was 8-years-old, I know that the link between these two 'races' is particular, ... for the Jews towards China and for China towards the Jews. The final goal is to publish a book of photographs and texts. For the texts I would like different people to write articles about their experience and opinions. So I really hope I can meet you when I come to Israel. And also people who agree to participate and to be photographed. ...
Email: anaisenchine@yahoo.com

Albert Dien
President, Sino-Judaic
Institute
California, USA

To the IYS: Dvir Bar-Gal, a young Israeli journalist living in Shanghai, embarked on a project to collect Jewish tombstones scattered in the Shanghai area. With the establishment of the PRC, the original burials were moved from a number of cemeteries to one in the outskirts of the city. That cemetery was destroyed in the Cultural Revolution and the tombstones were widely scattered, sometimes used for building footpaths. In 2003 Mr. Bar-Gal asked the SJI to support this activity. We provided \$5000. As you will see, he has been very active and quite successful in carrying the project forward. (click here: <http://www.shanghaijewishmemorial.com/>).
Email: Sjinst@aol.com

Gary Matzdorff
California, USA

To the IYS: I love your new Bulletin. All the best to all my Israeli brothers from Shanghai S.V.C. and Boyscouts. Shalom.

Anyone interested in memorializing their deceased loved ones should contact

Igud Yotzei Sin.

IN MEMORIAM

Nika Germant - at 87

Without fear or reproach

Nathan (Nika) Germant, formerly of Harbin, died in his apartment in Tel Aviv on December 28, 2003. He was 87.

Nika's name won a prominent place in the recently published British Palestine police archives (1944): "Nathan Germant, alias 'Shimshon', a member of the Jewish terrorist organization, Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL). Extremely dangerous. To be captured and arrested immediately." British police were sparing of empty praise. They evaluated their enemy by his record, and in 1944 Nika already had a long list of daring attacks against the British army bases and police stations, expropriation of arms and ammunition, and strikes against hostile Arab villages.

* * *

Nika was born in Harbin in 1916 to Emmanuel and Fruma Germant, refugees from the Russian revolution. As with most of the Harbin Jewish youth, he graduated from the Harbin Commercial School and spent all his free time in the Betar club, which eventually became his second home, and the Betarim – his family. He was an insatiable reader, the book "Shimshon" becoming his lifetime favorite, and its author, Zeev Jabotinsky, his lifetime teacher and guide.

He became one of the leading members of the Harbin Betar and was noted for his loyalty, reliability and modesty. He was demanding of himself, and, having adopted Jabotinsky's Zionism, he did not waiver: in 1936 he came to Eretz Israel and joined the Betar labor battalions ("plugot avoda"). At first he worked



in Rosh Pina, then in Zikhron Yaakov, where he met his future wife, Nehama (Emma) Zusman, a Betaria from Riga. Then he was sent to Jerusalem, where he joined "Plugat ha-kotel", a Betar detachment permanently stationed at the Western Wall to show Jewish presence there. Then came the children – Yael, and Nir. It was but natural that with the establishment of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, Nika immediately joined its ranks. Political feud raging at the time between various groups in the Zionist camp brought the Yishuv to the brink of civil war. Nika's son, Nir, told me how in 1941 Nika was "arrested and tried" by the members of the Haganah. The trial was obviously staged: Nika was sentenced to death, faced the firing squad, but at the last moment "was amnestied by the highest authority." He was released in a hostile Arab village and by miracle escaped being lynched.

In 1944 the relentless efforts of the British police bore fruit, again not without Jewish assistance: Nika was arrested and deported to a British concentration camp in Eritrea. There he wrote his book, "A Living Alphabet", dedicating it to his daughter, Yael.

In the camp, an unspoken understanding was established between the wardens and the prisoners: "your task is to guard, ours – to escape". Nika became the chief planner and organizer of the escapes, six of which he prepared for his friends, and the seventh – for himself. He escaped with a group of Etzelniks, which included Menahem Begin's aide, Yaakov Meridor. Later, he told a reporter, "The main difficulty and danger was not the escape itself, but the effort not to be caught outside." Having reached Paris, Nika joined Eliahu Lankin, then Irgun commander in Europe,

and the two Harbiners began working on Operation Altalena.

The rest is well known. Eliahu and Nika reached the shore of Tel Aviv aboard the Altalena, the former as the commander, the latter as the arms officer of the ship. In Jerusalem, Nika (then Jerusalem IZL Brigade commander) immediately reported at the newly established Israel Army's headquarters in order to be drafted together with his men. The officer in charge agreed to draft him ... as a private (while Nika's Haganah and Palmach counterparts received the rank of a colonel). This Nika could not accept.

* * *

Nahum Steiner

Nahum Steiner, formerly of Harbin, died at the age of 88 on August 31, 2003 in Sydney Australia. Nahum graduated from the Talmud Tora and the First Public School of Commerce in Harbin. His schoolmates were Sanya and Nioma Krol, Mosia Mihailovsky. Sioma Yeruhimovich, I. Okun and others. From his early youth he was an active member of Betar where he was known as a prominent sportsman. After his father's death Nahum became the head of the family and took care of his sister Bluma and brother Aharon, earning his livelihood as an employee of a perfumery shop and teaching mathematics.

In Sydney, Australia, where the Steiners emigrated after the Communists came to power in China, Nahum was employed as a manager of a factory and worked there until his retirement. He was loved by all his colleagues and numerous friends for his kindness and willingness to help. Nahum Steiner was buried in Sydney on 1 September 2003. He is survived by his wife, Lydia, his sister, Bluma, and brother, Aaron, and their families.

Zichro livracha.

In post-war life Nika became a rank-and-file citizen. He worked as a warehouse manager of Vita, the food-producing Israeli firm, and dedicated all his free time to his family. However he had yet another, his last, dream – to perpetuate the memory of his friends fallen in the battles for the freedom of Israel. A year ago one such monument was erected in Ramla and another in Rosh Ha'ayin. He did not have time for the third.

As ever, he was an ardent reader. Two days before Nika's death Nir found him discussing Russian classics with his house help, Marina, a philologist at the Petersburg University.

Nika was always proud of his Chinese

past, and joined Igud Yotzei Sin the day it was established. He unfailingly attended our activities, as ever modest, as ever noticed.

Nika was buried at the Yarkon cemetery on December 29. Many of his comrades-in-arms and friends paid their last honors to their commander and friend. He was eulogized by Ptahia Shamir, Chairman of the Union of IZL soldiers. The grave was covered by flower wreaths laid by various organizations, including the IYS.

Yehi zikhro shel Nika baruch.

Emmanuel Pratt

Jerusalem

Moshe Michaeli

Moshe Michaeli (Mosia Mikhailovsky), formerly of Harbin, died in his apartment in Givatayim on November 10, 2003. He was 87. Mosia graduated from the First Harbin Commercial School with distinction and was one of the prominent members of Betar. In 1933 he left for Eretz Israel as a halutz, and became one of the first professional tourist guides in the country. He had a thorough knowledge of the history and geography of Israel. The Russian-language edition of "Hebrew Encyclopedia" contains his article: "Geography of Israel". Mosia was a very modest and amicable person, loved and respected by all who knew him. He is survived by his wife, Vicky, and sons, David and Nitzan and families. He was buried at the Yarkon cemetery on November 11, 2003. Yehi zikhro baruch!

Memorial Ceremony for Nika Germant

On January 27 the memorial (askara) ceremony and the laying of the gravestone was held at the Yarkon Cemetery for the late Nika Germant. Nika was buried in a special plot for members of Etzel (Irgun Zvai Leumi). Numerous friends, comrades and landsmen gathered at Nika's gravesite.

Anya Grubner

Anya Grubner (nee Zelvinsky), formerly of Harbin, passed away on September 23, 2003 at the Kfar Saba hospital. She was 85. Anya was born in Harbin in the family of a Jewish social activist Yehuda Zelvinsky, who was a member of the Board of Directors of the Harbin Jewish Association. She graduated from the Harbin Commercial School and was an active member of Maccabi from its establishment in 1939 until it was closed by the Soviets in 1945. I 1950 Anya made aliya, was married, and for a period of more than 20 years worked for the Histadrut concert "Mish'an" (a housing project for the aged). She joined Igud Yotzei Sin from the day of its establishment and was a tireless worker at Bet Ponve. For the last few years she was confined to her bed at the "Mish'an" geriatric hospital in Raanana.

Anya was buried at the Holon cemetery, next to her husband's tomb. Teddy Kaufman recited Kaddish, and he and Rasha Kaufman placed a wreath on her grave. May she rest in peace!

Bella Miller

Bella Miller died in Los Angeles on October 9 at the age of 90. She was the widow of the late George Miller who was active in our Far Eastern Association of South California (Los Angeles). Igud Yotzei Sin sends condolences to the family.

Vera Stofman

Vera Stofman (nee Rozin), formerly of Harbin, passed away on September 25, 2003, after a prolonged illness. She was 87. Vera was one of the finest representatives of the Harbin Jewish Youth. We all remember her as an active Betar member, good at sports, winning numerous trophies. Her graceful, petite figure always crowned the Betar pyramids. In Harbin, Vera married Ura Klein and gave birth to a daughter, Judith (Difa). After Ura's untimely death, the young widow had to take care of her aged parents and be a sole parent to a child.

The first wave of Harbin aliya brought Vera to Israel, where she joined her elder sister who had arrived here with her family some time earlier. Life in Israel was anything but easy, but Vera quickly learned Hebrew and began to work of the Histadrut concern, "Hamashbir Hamerkazi". She married Yasha Stofman, another Chinese Betari, and gave birth to Ariela. From the very establishment of Igud Yotzei Sin she was a dedicated member of its Steering Committee and the chairwoman of the Control Committee of the Igud. For the last few years, after the passing away of Yasha, Vera was very ill and virtually isolated from the surrounding environment. Such was her uneasy path on earth.

But now for Vera as a person of culture and broad interests. She was well versed in languages, wrote poetry (some of which appeared in the Bulletin), both in Russian and in English, and she painted. But first and foremost, she possessed a great sense of humor. I remember two occasions when our paths met. Once a charity dinner was organized at the Soup Kitchen for the benefit of the D.E.B.O. (a Harbin Jewish Women's Charity Organization). E Weingurt asked me to organize and moderate the program. Vera was my counterpart, and I remember how easily and with what sense of humor she did her part, without any previous preparation.

The second association with Vera was far more significant, and again showed Vera as a valuable and

loyal Zionist: in 1949, the General Zionist Organization, and the banned "Betar" and "Maccabi" joined hands to organize an illegal Aliya committee. Harbin was then under Soviet occupation, and we could not hold our clandestine meetings in any of the Jewish institutions premises. Vera, a member of the committee, who worked then for the Rozin enterprises, put their offices at our disposal. I never asked if it was with or without their permission.

For the past few years Vera's condition during her illness prevented all communication, but her image remained and will always remain with me, as well as with all those who knew her.

T. Kaufman

Raya Wainer

Raya Wainer, formerly of Harbin, Tientsin, and Shanghai, died in Montreal, at the age of 91. She lived with her daughter in Canada. She leaves a son and daughter, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. May she rest in peace!

Julietta Abramesko

Julietta Abramesko, formerly of Harbin and Tientsin, died in Haifa at the age of 83. She came to Israel with her family I 1949. Julietta was an active member of our Haifa branch and took part in all the activities of Igud Yotzei Sin. She was respected and liked by all who knew her. She left behind her daughters, Sally Katz and her family (three grandchildren) and Dalia Abramesko. The funeral was held on January 30 in Haifa. Esther Vandel, Chairwoman of the IYS Haifa Branch, laid a wreath on Julietta's gravesite in the name of Igud Yotzei Sin. May she rest in peace!

Luba Read

Luba Read (nee Ekkel), formerly of Harbin, died on January 12 in Sydney. Igud Yotzei Sin deeply regrets her demise. May she rest in peace!

Miriam Vinokurova

Miriam Vinokurova (nee Gribetz), formerly of Harbin, died in Kfar Tabor. She left a daughter Rona and

her family. Igud Yotzei Sin extends condolences to the family. May she rest in peace!

Shlomo Baranovsky

Shlomo Baranovsky, the son of Ita and Izia Baranovsky, formerly of Harbin, died on January 20 after a long illness. He was 57 years old. He left behind his parents, a wife, two daughters, and three grandchildren. The funeral was held on January 20 at the Shikun Vatikim in Netanya. Igud Yotzei Sin deeply regrets Shlomo's death and extends condolences to the family. May he rest in peace!

Ita Ozeransky

Ita Ozeransky, formerly of Harbin, died in Hadera on February 6 after many years of illness. She was the widow of the late David Ozeransky. She left behind a brother Abrasha Ozrelovich and his family. May she rest in peace!

Miriam Elberg

Miriam (Mera) Elberg (nee Slutzker), formerly of Harbin and Shanghai, died in New York and was laid to rest in Jerusalem on January 20. Miriam was a member of a well-known Harbin Jewish family. Her late father, Rabbi Zelig Slutzker, taught Hebrew in the Talmud Torah, teaching generations of Jewish children in Harbin. He was chairman of Mizrahi and a board member of the Jewish community. In 1936, after Miriam graduated from the First Harbin Commercial School (13th graduate year) she left for Shanghai where she married Rabbi Dr. Simha Elberg (Simhoni), a prominent journalist and for many years a contributor to "Jewish Life". Dr. Simhoni came to Shanghai from Europe with the wave of refugees before World War II. At the end of the war, Mera and her family left for New York. She leaves behind her sister, Luba Tzinman, and brother, Kalman Slutzker, in Israel, and a younger sister, Hannah, in New York with their families. Igud Yotzei Sin deeply regrets her demise and extends condolences to all the family. May she rest in peace!

Yom Kippur, 1973: Memories of Sacrifice

by Ya'acov Liberman

It began with shocking disbelief. It ended with great triumph. But in between, the Yom Kippur War was laden with blood, tears and tragedy. Our eldest son, Tovik, was in Hawaii attaining his degree in hotel management and tourism. He served his three years in the Golani Brigade in northern Israel and then proceeded to the University of Hawaii to pursue his education and gain a career. Sitting on our balcony in Ramat Gan and watching helicopters bring in the wounded to the nearby Tel Hashomer Hospital, my wife remarked with a sigh: "Frankly, I am relieved that Tovik is not here at this moment." No sooner were these words uttered than our intercom rang and a familiar voice announced himself: "This is me ... Tovik!"

Our son arrived on the seventh day of the war and decided to rejoin his unit in the north, without telling us of his arrival – so as "not to worry you." The recruiting officers at Lod airport told him he must report home first and come back in the morning. When we asked Tovik how could he leave his studies and where he got the money for the trip, he replied: "Anything is easier than to sit by a TV set in Honolulu and watch your buddies assembling at their units. I collected the money for the trip from the community and I will refund them when I return." On the next day it was too late for Tovik to join his Golani Brigade. Consequently, he was dispatched to the south, where he was destined to be among Gen. Sharon's units that crossed the Suez Canal and assured Israel its remarkable victory.

The way to this historic crossing of the canal was paved by the Israeli paratroopers, who paid heavily for their

bravery. Among these paratroopers was the son of our dearest friends, Hanna and Sam Muller. We knew the boy from birth and watched him grow into a beautiful human being. We all lovingly called him Shulik. It was typical of this soft-spoken, courageous young man to volunteer for the paratroopers. Shulik was one of the first to cross the canal – and one of the first casualties of the canal crossing. For his parents, relatives and friends, this was the highest price to pay for the victory in the Yom Kippur War.

Shulik's dad, Sam, was my very close friend from our early days in the Zionist youth organization Betar in China. We both dreamed of a Jewish state and hoped to be privileged to participate in its creation. At Shulik's funeral, Sam whispered to me: "I hoped that we would do all the fighting and sacrificing so that our sons and daughters would have a home of their own and live in peace. Now look at what is happening: Our children are paying with their lives so that we may continue to have a home and live ordinary lives."

This was 1973, thirty years ago. And our children and our children's children are volunteering for services so that we and they, as well as generations to come, may continue to be blessed with a motherland, freedom and independence. Let us remember our sons, the heroes – those who survived and those who paid the ultimate price. And as we recall their sacrifice and glory, let us also remember to rededicate ourselves to the cause that they served so heroically: a peaceful future in our Jewish state in Eretz Israel, crowned with its eternal and indivisible capital, Jerusalem.

Searching and Researching

Judith Kloogman Weinstein

Great Neck, NY USA

I wanted to let you know that my "new" second cousin Lilian Karolyi, contacted me today! She telephoned from Argentina. We were both so excited to be speaking with one another. Her English language command is wonderful, although she does not think so, and we exchanged many of the basic facts of our lives. She promised to write a long email in a few days, and I in turn will respond to her. I am sure it is the resumption of a wonderful family relationship that was severed by the Holocaust, but is now restored thanks to your help and the help of AMIA, CJES, Igud Yotzei Sin, and Jewish Gen. I hope that Lilian Karolyi in Argentina will be able to inform me about her Karolyi first cousins who returned to Vienna after Shanghai. If not, it will be back to more research. With many, many thanks and much appreciation.

Email: Kloogwein@aol.com

E.D. Stern Jerusalem

Anyone who remembers my father Moritz Stern who was born in Vienna, Austria, on 2.7.1896 and who died in Shanghai, China on 11.4.1948, and my uncle Julius Stern who was born in Vienna, Austria on 1.9.1898 and who died in Shanghai, China on 17.10.1946, is requested to send information to Igud Yotzei Sin, Bulletin Editor-in-Chief, Mr. T. Kaufman in Bet Ponve, Tel Aviv. I thank you in advance.

From The Album of The Past



Some Members of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps (S.V.C.) pictured at the Jewish Club 1n 1934

First Row: B. Slossman, M. Morgulev, Robert Bitker, Capt. Noel Jacobs, M. Talun, L. Kotovich

Second Row: G. and P. Samsonovich (behind Slossman) Hanin (behind Bitker), Feldstein, Sam Sheiflan (at the end of the row)

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(from the by-laws of the Association)

In publishing the Bulletin the IYS IN Israel aims to meet the following needs:

1. To promote a sense of community among the former Jewish residents in China.
2. To maintain a channel of communication for the members of the above community

3. To assist in collecting, preserving and publishing historical materials dealing with the life of the above community.
4. To assist IYS in meeting its goals, particularly those dealing with social assistance and educational stipends to members of the above community living in Israel.