

# Bulletin

## Igud Yotzei Sin

Association of Former Residents of China

September - October 2006 ♦ Vol LIII ♦ Issue No. 389 English Supplement

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!**

**!!! שנה טובה**

### *The International Forum on the History and Culture of Harbin Jews*

*Left to right:*

*Tamara Rojansky,  
Etti Amir, Judith Bain,  
Sabine Breuillard,  
Ella Alon-Goldreich,  
Regina Olmert,  
Lea Liberman,  
Rasha Kaufman, Ora Namir*

*Seating: Svetlana,  
Translator Yi,  
Wanbi (the widow of Israel  
Epstein)*



*Left to right:*

*Prof. Li Shuxiao (Grisha),  
Yossi Klein, Yana Liberman,  
Josef Kruzich, Lev Toitman,  
Gary Brovinsky, Qu Wei,  
Teddy Kaufman,  
Amram Olmert, Eran Rozen,  
Akiva Osherovitch,  
Arie Sharon*

*Seating: Dr. Avigdor Shahan,  
Prof. Dan Ben-Knaan*

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# IN LIEU OF FLOWERS: SOCIAL AID TO LANDSMEN

## *Dear Friends,*

*Rosh Hashana is approaching, and Igud Yotzei Sin, as in previous years, continues to give additional sums of money to the recipients of monthly social aid. We do it twice a year: for Rosh Hashana and Pessah. According to our data for June 1, 2006 we grant monthly social aid to 99 needy landmen. Mostly, they are elderly, lonely or ailing people, part of them are new immigrants from the former USSR who left China either when the Far-Eastern Railway employees were evacuated, or after the year 1946. The situation of many of our landmen is very grave, and without IYS' assistance they would not be able to make ends meet. In recent years, the number of contributors has dwindled, both in Israel and abroad, and, therefore, the sums of money that we get for the Social Aid Fund have become considerably smaller. Nevertheless, the number of the needy remains as high as ever. Our social aid totals*

*US\$ 100,000 per a year. Herewith we apply to you with a request to donate to the Social Aid Fund in lieu of flowers to Rosh Hashana and to other holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and other family occasions, or any other festive dates. We will also send a proper notification to the person in whose honor the donation is given. We are aware that our contributors will derive great satisfaction from participating in the noble cause of helping our needy. Flowers wither soon but a good deed lasts long. Your help will make the days of elderly and lonely persons brighter. Please, send your donation to the following address:*

*Igud Yotzei Sin  
P.O.B. 29786  
Tel Aviv 61297*

***With friendly regards and all the best wishes for Rosh Hashana. Shana Tova!***  
***IYS Central Committee***  
*Chairman: T.Kaufman  
Deputy Chairman and Treasurer:  
J. Klein*

## Visit the Website of Igud Yotzei Sin [www.jewsofchina.org](http://www.jewsofchina.org)

The website contains a wealth of information on

- ❖ The chronology of events of communities with a Jewish presence in China
- ❖ Publications (transcripts of conference speeches). Valuable material for researchers plus books
- ❖ Biographies ❖ Links to other sites of interest
  - ❖ The Harbin Huang Shan Cemetery
- ❖ Family search forum ❖ Photos (some rare photos published for the first time)

# On the Topics of the Day

T. Kaufman

## **Thank you, Harbin.**

It has been almost three months since those unforgettable days in Harbin when we participated in the Forum on the History and Culture of the Jews of Harbin. Even now, after so many days, my heart skips a beat when I relive the hours I spent in the splendidly renovated building of the "New Synagogue".

Only 25 of our compatriots from all over the world attended this Forum as compared to one hundred who came to the previous Forum in 2004. However, on that day, on Saturday, June 17, we experienced what can happen but once in a lifetime.

That Saturday brought us back to 1921 when the Jewish community of Harbin inaugurated the "New Synagogue". And now we are here again, 85 years later, "we" meaning children and grandchildren of those who dedicated the "New Synagogue" so many years ago.

I can visualize them here, standing in the same hall: my parents, my sister, my grandparents, Yossi Klein's mother, her parents and the Kroll family, parents and family of Tamara Rozhansky – the Ponevezhskys, father and mother of Amram Olmert, as well as his grandfather, grandmother and uncle, the whole family of Elad Rosen – the Raznoschikovs and many, many others whose names have been written into the history of the Jews of Harbin in gilt letters.

85 years ago the "New Synagogue" might have looked as impressive as it is today but in 1949, when I left Harbin, the Synagogue was not in such a good condition.

The event we attended on June 17, 2006, was devoted to the opening of a permanent exhibition dedicated to the history of Harbin Jews. However, first of all it was a celebration on the occasion of the restoration of the Synagogue building, once, long ago, one of the most beautiful buildings in Harbin

The exhibition itself was wonderful. We admired the exhibition of pictures put up during the Forum in 2004, but what we

saw in June, 2006, by far exceeded our expectations. How much time, effort, knowledge, money and, above all, love, has been devoted to put up this exhibition which presents a detailed picture of our past in this wonderful city!

It is worth coming to Harbin to see this exhibition. It is important that Jews in Israel, USA Canada, England and Australia should see it. This is a Jewish exhibition made by the Chinese. What other Jewish exhibitions were made by peoples among whom we lived? There are some similar exhibitions in the world but they are very few. Most exhibitions and monuments were made by Jewish hands.

And look at the Jewish cemetery in Harbin! It has been less than two years since we visited the cemetery. Yet everything there has changed beyond recognition. A small synagogue has been built. Its windows are an exact replica of those of the "Old Synagogue". The Magen-David over the building can be seen kilometers away from the cemetery.

At the entrance to the cemetery they put up a tremendous Magen-David of black marble, on it inscribed in gold letters "the Harbin Jewish Cemetery". All around this monument they planted the most beautiful flowers. A few steps away, also at the entrance now stands a black marble obelisk, on it inscribed in gold letters are words of gratitude to the people of China, written in English by Ehud Olmert, Israeli Prime Minister, on his visit to the cemetery. There is also a translation in Chinese..

A new fence has been put up around the cemetery, the lanes have been paved with stone tiles.

All these improvements were made solely by the decision of the officials of the city of Harbin.

Every one who visited the cemetery in June this year was deeply moved by the sight of the restored tombstones and the memorial plaques on graves that have no tombstones.

The Forum itself with lectures on the Jewish history of Harbin by 18 participants from

China, Israel, USA, France and Australia was also very impressive.

Memorial plaques in three languages: Chinese, Hebrew and English are now fixed on all buildings that are relevant to the Jewish past of Harbin, including two synagogues, an old people's home, a gymnasium and a hospital.

Jews always ask "why?". There are many answers to the question why we are hated by other nations. We are hated for our talents and our refusal to disappear from the face of the Earth. Why do the Chinese people preserve the Jewish past in Harbin? Apparently, there are nations who respect and appreciate us. The Chinese are one such nation.

Thank you, the unique city of Harbin, I bow to the ancient people and salute the great country!

## **A Happy New Year!**

This is the eve of year 5767 according to the Jewish calendar. It has been a difficult year for the people of Israel. Dozens of innocent civilians fell victims to terrorism, a great many of our beautiful fields and forests were destroyed by fires. Despite this, Israel grows, prospers and becomes stronger from day to day.

Our community has also hard times: people who established our organization are passing away. Though we are less in numbers, we continue to go on with our work. This year we granted 150 scholarships to grandchildren and great grandchildren of immigrants from China; we send monthly benefits to 99 of our compatriots; the Bulletin is published regularly. We took part in the organization of the second Forum on the History and Culture of the Jews of Harbin. There is a lively everyday community life at "Beit Ponve". The number of volunteers and activists does not diminish and we are deeply grateful that our donators in Israel and in the Diaspora have not abandoned us.

We are meeting the Jewish New year with hope and belief in better days – days of peace and prosperity.

A Happy New Year, dear compatriots!

# Igud Yotzei Sin Presidium and Central Committee Meetings

On July 26, a regular meeting of the IYS Presidium took place at Bet Ponve, Tel Aviv. Present were: T. Kaufman, Y. Klein, R. Veinerman, A. Podolsky, M. Kamionka, G. Katz-Volobrinisky, B. Darel, J. Bein, J. Sandel, R. Rashinsky, A. Fradkin, Z. Feinberg. The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

T. Kaufman reported in detail on the work done by IYS during the past seven months, 2006. Dep. Chairman and treasurer, Yossi Klein, presented balance sheet for 31 December, 2005 – 30 June, 2006. The report, and the balance sheet were dully confirmed.

T. Klein presented for debate amendments in the Rules and Regulations of IYS, in accordance with the latest requirements of the Ministry of Justice of Israel related to public organizations.

The IYS Central Committee

On July 26, a regular meeting of the IYS Central Committee took place at Bet Ponve, Tel Aviv. Present were 18 members of the CC. T. Kaufman opened the meeting and asked the present to rise in honor of the members of IYS who passed away during the period of the past seven months, in Israel and abroad.

In Israel: Ira Fleischman, Sonia Peselnik, Zika Belotzerkovsky-Banevour, Abba Elran, Nehama Elran, Hananya Nissenbaum, Mark Losser, Alex Lauer, Mara Goldberg, Sasson (Sas) Jacobi, Dana Plotke, Riva Balinsky, Mark Alperovich.

Abroad: David Mens (Thailand);

Norbert Smoliansky (Australia).

T. Kaufman reported in detail on the work done by IYS during the past seven months, 2006: two issues of "Bulletin" (## 387, 388) were published. Bulletin # 389 is now being prepared for the coming Jewish New Year. D. Familiant visited Bet Ponve, and was met by old Tientsiners and the Chinese students now studying in Israel. T. Kaufman gave a lecture on the history of the Jews in China and work was done in preparation for the seminar, which took place in Harbin in June 2006.

The following generous contributions were received during the past seven months: D. Familiant – US\$5,000; B. Belokamen – US\$7,000; Danya and Mousia Berkovich – NIS20,000; Asya Kogan – US\$20,000; Abrasha Gurevich – US\$5,000.

Balance sheet for the past seven months, presented by Y. Klein, was confirmed.

Generous gift by Danny and Mousia Berkovich Mousia and Danny Berkovich made a gift of NIS20,000 to the IYS Social Aid Fund for the coming High Holidays. Igud Yotzei Sin is deeply grateful to the donors for the generous contribution.

## ***A lavish contribution by Abrasha Gourevich***

Abrasha Gourevich, formerly of Harbin, now of Los Angeles, made a lavish contribution of \$5,000 to the

IYS Social Fund and the Memorial Synagogue of the Jewish Communities in China.

For many years, Abrasha consistently and generously contributes to the needs of our organization. Recently, he perpetuated the memory of his parents on the marble plaque at the IYS Memorial Synagogue of the Jewish communities in China. In Los Angeles, Abrasha is an active member of the Soviet Emigrants Club.

We are grateful for Abrasha's past support and hope he perseveres in his care for his former countrymen.

## ***Generous donations on the occasion of the 90th birthday of Isi Shani***

At the request of Isi Shani, who recently celebrated his 90th birthday, a sum of NIS 3200 was donated to the IYS Social Assistance Fund in lieu of the birthday presents.

Igud Yotzei Sin sends its heartfelt gratitude to Isi and Ruth for their desire to assist our organization.

## ***A scholarship fund in memory of Harry Umansky***

In connection with the first anniversary of Harry Umansky's demise, his widow, Sarah Umansky contributed NIS5,000 to establish a Memorial Scholarship Fund in the name of her late husband. Igud Yotzei Sin is grateful to Sarah for her generosity, and sends her and her family their best wishes for a long and healthy life.

# People and Events

## **Wedding anniversary**

Harold and Ora Yankelovich, formerly of Shanghai, celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates the "newlyweds" and family on the happy event, wishing them health and long life.

## **Ninth grandson to Agran (Agranovsky) family**

Ziama and Ora Agran (Agranovsky), formerly of Harbin, recently celebrated the birth of their ninth great grandson, Aviv, born to their granddaughter Ruth and husband Haim. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates the Agran family, wishing them and the newly born health and happiness.

## **Abrasha Gurevich reaches 85**

On September 2, our old friend from Harbin, Abrasha Gurevich, celebrated his 85th birthday. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Abrasha, now of Los Angeles, wishing him health and happiness till 120.

## **An Israeli Diplomat visits Bet Ponve**

Amir Latti, a newly appointed Israeli vice consul in Shanghai, visited Bet Ponve, prior to his leaving for his new post. He had a lengthy meeting with T. Kaufman, Y. Klein and R. Veinerman. T. Kaufman briefed the diplomat on the activities of the IYS and Israel-China Friendship Society, and their connections with their Shanghai counterparts.



Meeting in Tokyo  
Asya's son Aba visited Tokyo in June 2006.  
As always, the meeting of two loving hearts brought a lot of joy and happiness to both of them

## **Jewish Shanghai Today**

**SHANGHAI JEWISH CENTER  
AND SIYUM SEFER TORAH**

**SUNDAY NIGHT**  
15th of Sivan, 5766 • June 11, 2006  
7:30 PM

**HONORAR**  
The Rishon L'tzion Chief Rabbi  
Rabbi S

**PRESENTATION OF HONOR**  
Mr. Georges Bohbot & Mr. Max Azria

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Shanghai, CHINA 200036  
Phone: 8621.6278.0225  
Fax: 8621.6278.0225

Celia and Sanford (Sania) Wainer of Tamarac, Florida  
announce the marriage of their darling granddaughter  
Brett Melissa Rothman to Kenneth Rosenberg  
On August 19, 2006 in Bethpage, Long Island, New York

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

## Chapter 8, Section D

After taking our documents and checking the lists of names we were put into cells. My cell was small and narrow and crowded, 48 prisoners were packed inside. We settle down on the filthy floor. Some one squeezes himself under a lower wall bunk. There are many young people sitting on the wall bunks, Latvians and Lithuanians, they were all partisans who fought during the world war on the side of the Germans against the Soviets for the sake of gaining freedom for their countries. Nearly all of them were sentenced to a period of 25 years. In a separate corner of the cell were bunks for criminal prisoners, thieves, rapists, and murderers. All were young people. About 20 people were sitting on the floor, among them two German generals dressed in Hitlerite uniforms, without the epaulets of course. One of the generals was the commander of the Konigsberg garrison. He surrendered the garrison to the Russians and for that was sentenced by Hitler to death in absentia. His wife, daughter and her husband were arrested and imprisoned for the sins of their father. The General himself was captured by the Russians and sentenced to a 25-year prison term; he is now on his way to a hard labor camp. The second General, more elderly than the first was commanding part of the German forces that blockaded Leningrad. He was battle experienced and an expert on strategic problems; he too was sentenced to 25 years of hard labor. Sick and frail lying on the floor with hardly any strength to rise up and go to the toilet stool. Both generals do not understand a word of Russian. Nearly all the Lithuanians and the Latvians in our cell – are members



of the Nationalist party, and sworn enemies of the Soviets, even here in our cell they are not hiding their real feelings. They hate the Russians for forcing their homeland and people into slavery.

One day a big brawl erupted in our cell. The criminal part of the prisoners began to go wild (they consider themselves a privileged group in our cell "real Soviet people" while all the rest, the political prisoners, are nothing but Fascists) and started to take the belongings from the latter, from one of them they took a pullover, from another one his shirt and from the third his trousers. Some of the Latvians approached the leader of the criminals and demanded that they return the stolen items, but he, responded by grabbing one of the Latvians by the throat and started to choke him. A general fracas resulted. They beat each other mercilessly. Everyone was hurt especially those who fell on the floor. The leader of the criminals, a young man of about 25, went mad with fury. When one of the Latvians saw that that the criminal is nearly choking his friend to death, he hit him on the head with a nail studded shoe from the top of one of the bunks, the criminal collapsed

and sprawled on the floor his head pouring with blood. Some one started banging on the door in order to summon help, but no one responded to the yells. Only when the clamor, the banging and yelling became louder one of the guards finally opened the door. When he saw the pandemonium and the blood on the floor he called the camp commander and other senior officers who forced their way into the cell. The wounded criminal was taken on a stretcher to the clinic. While one of the officers started an inquiry as to how and why this brawl erupted. His main interest was to find out who it was that hit the leader of the criminals on the head. However, "nobody saw anything". As a result of this brawl the criminals were transferred to another cell and separated from us. Several days later we too were transferred to other cells, according to the length of time each one was to serve. I was interred together with the prisoners serving "long term" sentences of 20 to 25 years of hard labor. We were approximately 20 people in our new cell, among who were one priest and two Spaniards, one of whom was a medical surgeon who in 1936 participated in the fighting in Spain on the side of the Communists and who later relocated to Russia. Ten years later he became disillusioned and decided to leave the Soviet Union. He approached the Argentine Embassy, was arrested on charges of espionage and was sentenced to 25 years. The second one, a painter, he too, as a communist, fought in Spain, later relocated to Russia. MGB agents in Moscow airport captured him while he was hiding in a diplomatic box belonging to the Argentine

Embassy. In this manner he tried to escape from the Soviet Union, the MGB agents got wind of this plot, opened the box and found him. He too was sentenced to 25 years.

I stayed in this transitory prison in Sverdlovsk for two weeks. During this period I went into a deep depression. Everything around me is despondent. There is no fresh air to breathe and no light can penetrate to brighten my day. What made me happy was when through the cell door opening they threw a copy of the newspaper "The Ural Worker". A very small number of the prisoners wanted to read it. Most were not interested in it and the others did not know how to read Russian. There even were Russians who were not familiar with the Russian alphabet. One day, when reading the paper I came across an article about the arrival to Moscow of the "Ambassador of the State of Israel, Mrs. Golda Meyerson". I read this article several times and then again another several times. The article was printed in small type in an obscure corner of the paper, but it was the only ray of light for me in this Sverdlovsk prison. I concealed the paper and from time to time I reread this article and my eyes were moist with tears.

On September 27th in the middle of the night we were taken out of our cells and gathered in a windowless room with no benches or chairs. We all set on the floor. Till five in the morning we were packed in this filthy room. Someone whispers into my ear:

"Watch you personal belongings... many of the inmates here are thieves"

This, however, did not bother me too much, what can they steal from me? The coat is spread under me, my meager clothing is on me, and all the money I have on me is only 37 kopeks. Their loot from me will not be very big.

In the morning we were taken to the railway station. We were loaded

into wagons containing grated cells, in each cell they herded 20 – 25 people, but this time the doors of the cells were not locked. Guards were stationed in the passageway between the cells and the window openings, with one of them marching lengthwise along the passageway all the time. The prisoners were not prevented to leave the cell to visit the toilet but were not allowed to close the toilet door, while a guard positions himself directly in front of the entrance... Where are we being taken? No one knows and no one tells us anything. Some one tells, however, that in Sverdlovsk, before boarding the train he noticed that one of the officers carried a portfolio with the name Nerilsk written on it. This, according to him, means that we are being taken to Nerilsk. Nerilsk is situated in the Yenisei region, about 2000 kilometers distant. And indeed some of the prisoners were taken there. We, however, were taken off the train after four days of travel, at Karabas – a big transit camp in Kazakhstan. On getting off the wagon we are lined up in fours – with the men at the head of the column, women at the tail end. Under heavy guard we were marched through the town towards the camp. We marched through narrow alleys, through muddy paths, and finally arrived at the gate of the camp. A sentry position checks and counts us, then the gates of the camp open widely in front of us – "Welcome, newcomers".

## Chapter 9 Section A

In the initial period of my imprisonment I was convinced that a court never could find me guilty. For what reason? I asked myself, reflecting in my memory on my past life. At times I even believed that I would be released and free to go soon. However, when I got acquainted with the Soviet reality from close at hand, their interrogation methods, the lies on which the life in the Soviet Union was based upon, I ceased to

believe in this. Whenever I stand in front of the door of my cell or near the gates of the camp, the words from Dante's Inferno run through my mind – "Abandon all hope, all you who enter". With this thought in my mind I passed through the gate into the prison camp Karabas. This was a transit camp where normally thousands of prisoners stay, waiting to be transferred to permanent prisons. They stay in this camp for several months, sometimes for six months, or even up to a year, the reason for this waiting period is the large number of inmates in all the Soviet prison camps totaling about 25 million people.

At the time of my arrival in Karabas the camp held 6,000 prisoners. We were herded into the yard of the camp and left on the out side as all the barracks were full to capacity. To our luck the weather was mild and even though it was autumn the day was warm and sunny. The yard was half full of prisoners. It was divided into several areas – a special area held the hospital and the bathhouse, sentries were positioned between the areas. All the areas were fenced off by barbed wire. A special barrack holds 800-900 "thieves". They are very well organized and are subject to the stringent discipline of this organization. Another barrack holds the "shrews", thieves who quit the organization. "Traitors" so to speak, they too number several hundreds. These two camps are hostile to each other; never a day passes without fistfights, clashes or even murder between them. These "thieves" and the "shrews" too are considered part of the Soviet youth. And more than once they declare themselves proudly: "I am a member of the Komsomol".

Murders are frequent occurrences in the Karabas prison. It sometimes happens that during a fracas a commander of a camp unit is stabbed to death, or that the body of one of the prisoners, either from the "thieves" or the "shrews", is found

in the camp gutter. Investigations do not uncover anything. The barracks in all the Soviet camps, where these criminals live are called for some reason "Shanghai".

I am lying on the ground in the yard of the camp. Lunch is being distributed, some gruel and bread, that's all our lunch. A short distance from me two prisoners are sitting, I overhear their conversation with the food distributor... "No need.... We are not eating..." The food distributor was surprised and did not understand the meaning of this. Hunger strike? For some reason this matter aroused my curiosity, and I listened more closely to the conversation of these two prisoners, then suddenly I hear the words "Yom Kippur"...and I understood the reason of their refusal to eat. I approached them. They are Jews, and because it's Yom Kippur today they are fasting. I gave my gruel to neighbors and joined the two in their fast uttering some words of prayer that I remember. For what reason these two Jews were arrested? Who knows? I never saw them again.

By the evening, I, with some tens of other prisoners, were brought to the "transit hall", I took a place on a bench by the wall and slumbered the whole night half asleep. This half sleep was hampered all through the night. At midnight the camp commander entered the transit hall and began to shine his flashlight on those sleeping on the floor. Suddenly he noticed two youths and began to holler at them: "Caught you, you miserable nothings! Again your hands are outstretched, stealing". Then mercilessly, like a wild animal, he started beating them with a stick he held in his hand, and kicking them with his boots, this lasted for about ten minutes, when he finished the two were half dead. "I will yet return to you two and teach you a lesson," he shouted. After seeing this event could I fall asleep again? I did not close an eyelid the whole night.

On the next morning – "medical check-up", which took place in a small wooden shack. The doctor inquires: "Healthy? Any illnesses in the past?" that's the whole medical check. The doctor is a prisoner too; he is serving as the head doctor in the camp for the last two years. However, a month later he was fired and transferred to another camp, I learned that he was not a doctor at all but a watchmaker, he was employed as a hospital orderly in other camps, gradually learned hospital routines then started passing himself off as a doctor. When he learned that I was a doctor, he billeted me in the hospital barrack in a special ward for the "frail" patients, sick prisoners who require hospital food. This ward is like any other cell with bunks attached to the walls except that the inmates who are billeted there get better food which includes some milk, butter and an additional portion of ten grams of sugar. Doctors also are billeted in this ward. About 150 people were billeted in this ward among them twenty doctors who were waiting for their turn to be transferred to other camps. Some of them were in this transit camp for over six months. Several days later I was appointed the official doctor of this ward for the frail patients and also started to receive patients in a small room adjoining the ward. In addition to this I was also appointed the official doctor of two woman's wards. The number of women billeted in the adjoining barracks came to 1500.

## Chapter 9, Section B

One day during the morning hours, a woman dressed in a white robe entered the clinic reception room and informed me that she was appointed to work as a nurse in my clinic. Following her, the director of the hospital barrack, a Jewish druggist (a former prisoner who had completed his prison term), entered and confirmed what the nurse had informed previously. At the end of the

clinic reception hours, the nurse told me that she too is Jewish and studied nursing in a school for nurses in... Jerusalem! She knows Hebrew and her tutor was I. H. Brenner in person. Following this revelation we spoke very often on my favorite subject... the Land of Israel. Even before she finished serving her first prison term she was sentenced again to another term of ten years. She worked in my clinic for a short while and was then transferred to another camp where I met her again four years later. In the year 1953 she finished serving her second term and was freed. Later on, this nurse met a friend from her past life who came to the Soviet Union with a Polish delegation headed by Gomolka. This friend helped her leave the Soviet Union for Poland where she joined the Communist Party. In 1961 she came to Israel and visited me at my home in Ramat Gan. Our meeting as free people in our free homeland was most inspiring and stirring, we recalled many memories of our mutual past.

During one of the evenings while I was reclining on my bunk immersed in doleful thoughts, someone entered our barrack and told me that I am wanted in the clinic of the hospital. I hurried to the hospital where, in the semi-darkness of the room, the head doctor (he too was Jewish) pointed at a woman standing by the window:

"This woman wants to see you".

"Do you recognize me?"

"No... but who can see in this darkness?" I answered a little excitedly,

"Who are you?"

She told me her name, to which, on hearing it I was stirred to tears. She did not want to turn on the light, as she was afraid to be seen with me. I knew her and her family during my childhood years in Perm. After the revolution her family moved to Manchuria and we met again in Harbin

Her parents died in Harbin. Her two daughters, one a doctor and



the other a nurse, and one of her brothers, returned to Russia ("the motherland is waiting"). The brother disappeared and no one knew what befell him – perhaps he died in prison or executed. This was the time when Yezhov was in power. The sisters were arrested for "cooperating with the Imperialists" and "assistance to world bourgeoisie". They were prosecuted according to paragraph 10 of the Soviet penal law and both sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. The sisters served their sentences in prisons and camps and were released at the end of their terms. Both are now working at their specific professions in hospitals in various camps in Kazakhstan. They learned that I was imprisoned in camp Karabas and one of them, the doctor, now came to our camp on duty to accompany patients who were being transferred to another camp for surgery, and took this opportunity to see me. She brought me a sack full of clothing – a coat, quilted trousers, a cap with earmuffs, a blanket, gloves and also foodstuffs. In addition to that, after the doctor left Karabas, the nurses from her camp sent me every week, for several weeks, underwear and other clothing items, and once they even included a small sum of money. This, of course, was carried out most carefully, so that their contacts with me were not exposed. Many ex-prisoners who remained employed in the camps were punished and sentenced to prison terms for maintaining contacts with prisoners. I never met these sisters again. They were later transferred to other camps and all my efforts to renew contact with them were fruitless. In time it came to my knowledge that both of them died of cancer – one in 1951 and the other one a year later. Life is hard in Karabas. I am perpetually shrouded in loneliness. Of the 20 doctors billeted with me in the barracks, no one arouses any interest in me. The younger ones among them, the new Generation,

are of a low cultural level. I found out that some of them were not even doctors at all. There is a big demand for doctors in all the prison camps and the head of the "Sanitary" department began to summon the doctors living in my barrack in order to check their medical abilities. Some gave their specialization as surgeons, some as skin doctors, and others gave their specialization as internal doctors. Two admitted that they did not complete their studies in medicine. Some just lied about their medical abilities as none of us had any medical documents. Because of this it was decided to carry out a sort of examination to determine the real abilities of these doctors. A board comprising three doctors from the hospital was formed to carry out the exam. Of the 20 doctors that were summoned for this exam only six showed up and only two of them, one a Spanish surgeon and the other an internal doctor, were asked some questions pertaining to medicine. The remaining four and myself among them, were not asked any questions at all and the head of the sanitary department even apologized to us for the inconvenience. The names of the people that did not appear for the exam were struck out from the list of doctors, as they were not really doctors. They were even forced to admit this.

One day a doctor was brought to our barrack – a prisoner who was on his way to Moscow to appear in court as a witness in one of the trials. He does not know nor does anyone tell him anything about the trial. He stayed in our barrack for three days and was my bunk neighbor. This doctor was an active worker for Macedonian independence, one of the Macedonian leaders. A Bulgarian citizen, on one occasion he passed through the Soviet Union, was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison. He is serving his sentence in one of the Soviet camps. During the three days he stayed with us he

told me a lot about himself and his struggles. His confinement in the Soviet camp did nothing to change his beliefs or resolve.

One evening as I was reclining on my bunk I suddenly heard someone calling my name. An unfamiliar voice telling me that a group had arrived today from Petropavlosk and that one of the group has a letter for me from my family. I was overjoyed: "A small event!" a letter from home! God in Heaven! It is more than three years that I did not hear anything, and knew nothing about my family. Where is this person who brought this letter? In which barrack is he billeted? What is his name? No one knew. I ran through all the areas where the group from Petropavlovsk might be. In the first two areas I ran from one barrack to another but did not find anyone. In one of the barracks of the third area I was told that the group that arrived was there, they comprised 400 people, but they were all asleep now. I explain my request to the "Elder" of the group and pleaded with him to help me find this person.

We walked carefully among the sleeping bodies calling out "Who brought a letter for the doctor?" No one responds, everyone is sleeping. Eventually someone answered. He pointed to his sleeping neighbor and said that the letter was with him. It was difficult to wake him up and it took some time until he understood what it was that we wanted of him, and after giving a big yawn and stretch he pulled a small note out of his stocking. This note was a short letter from two friends from Harbin that were imprisoned in Petropavlovsk informing me that my family is well and that just a short while ago they saw my wife and my two sons. May God bless them both and with many thanks from me. This was the first news I heard of my family for three years

Some Jews arrived in our camp and were billeted in our barrack. One of  
**(continued on page 11)**

# Good Things in Small Packages: Sarasota Mini-Conference Highlights the Sino-Judaic Experience

By Jonathan Goldstein

In the course of the last twenty years, major Sino-Judaic conferences have been held in Antwerp, Hangzhou, Hong Kong, Minneapolis, Munich, Shanghai, and elsewhere. An August 1992 conference organized by this author brought 157 participants to Harvard, including six from the People's Republic of China. On March 16, 2006, in variation on the theme of major scholarly conferences, Dr. Alfonz Lengyel, an archaeologist living in Sarasota, Florida, brought together international scholars and local enthusiasts for a small regional conference on "Jewish Diasporas in China". It was an exemplary regional education effort that could be replicated elsewhere.

## Genesis of the Symposium

Dr. Lengyel, who is non-Jewish, is the American director of the Sino-American Field School of Archaeology. Every summer he takes students from the United States and other countries to China for an archaeological practicum. He became interested in Sino-Judaic history while working at Shanghai's Fudan University and Xi'an's Jiaotong University. He participated in last fall's International Convention of Asian Studies in Shanghai, where Professor Pan Guang organized a panel on "Jewish Diasporas in Asia". At that time Dr. Lengyel met Professor Fu Youde of Jinan University in Shandong province, this author, and other historians and religious studies specialists. Upon his return to Sarasota, Dr. Lengyel interested Flanzer Jewish Community Center Cultural Arts Director, Jon Meyer, in including an afternoon-

and-evening program on the Jewish experience in China in the center's weeklong "Kallah" adult education program. Funding was procured from the University of South Florida and private donor, Dr. Helga Wall-Apelt. The Flanzer Center provided space in its atrium for a concurrent photographic exhibit on "The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Settlement in Harbin, China".

## The Program Itself: Lectures by Professors Goldstein, Berton and Fu Youde

The afternoon and evening sessions each attracted about seventy community members. Apart from the introductory and concluding comments by Dr. Lengyel and Jon Meyer, there were three full-length presentations at the afternoon session. This author kicked off the presentations by projecting on the screen a photo of the ship "Wooster Victory" at Cape Town harbor in 1949. The passengers leaning over the rails were all former Jewish residents of China en route to new lives in the reborn State of Israel. He posed the questions: Who were these people? Why were they in China? What were the specific historical conditions of China that enabled their Jewish identity to intensify to the point that they would immigrate to the newly-established Jewish state?

The lecture provided answers to the questions generated by the photograph. Professor Goldstein gave a historical overview of the origins of Jewish settlement in Manchuria and the evolution of Jewish cultural institutions in Harbin. Because

Sarasota is a circus town, the focus was on Harbin's Jewish circus proprietor Frank Izako. Then Professor Goldstein described the cultural and intellectual context, especially the Jewish publishing industry. It included Moshe Levitin's Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian book printing house plus twelve Russo-Jewish periodicals, including *Evreiskaia Zhizn'* [Jewish Life]. There was also a clandestine Communist Party in which some Jews were active, notably Israel Epstein, who later became a member of the National People's Consultative Congress of the People's Republic of China., a largely advisory and ceremonial body. Finally, Professor Goldstein explained the evolution of the Zionist Revisionist movement in Harbin, including the career of Motya [Mordechai or Motti] Olmert, the father of the present Prime Minister of the State of Israel. Motti Olmert's emigration to Palestine in the 1930's occurred at the beginning of an exodus which would greatly expand into the mass migration of many Harbin, Tianjin, and Shanghai Jews to Israel in the late 1940s.

Next, University of Southern California Emeritus Professor of International Relations, Peter Berton, gave a highly personalized account of growing up in Harbin. He began with the statement: "Dr. Lengyel is an archaeologist and I am his fossil". He personalized Professor Goldstein's historical account, describing the economic opportunities which lured his family from Bialystok, Poland, to Manchuria and the cultural life that Russian-speaking Jews found there. Berton is an accomplished violinist (continued on page 11)

# Good Things in Small Packages

and made special note of the rich musical life of the city. He passed around to the audience a concert program from a tour of Manchuria, Korea, and Japan which he made in the late 1930s with the Harbin Symphony Orchestra. Unbeknownst to Berton at that time, the Japanese government was using this orchestral tour for broader propaganda purposes, to justify their colonial presence in Manchuria, Korea and China.

The final speaker was Professor Fu Youde, who gave the audience a taste of the new scholarship about Jews and Judaism that is evolving in the People's Republic of China. Twenty years ago there was only one place in China where Judaic studies was taught: the Protestant theological seminary in Nanjing. There Hebrew was taught, but only as a Biblical language. Today, a new generation of Judaic studies scholars, many of them Western-trained, teach Jewish history and theology as well as modern and Biblical Hebrew. There are well-

*(continued from page 10)*

established programs in universities in Beijing, Harbin, Nanjing, and Shanghai, as well as in Kaifeng, the site of China's oldest Jewish community. Professor Fu, who studied Hebrew at the Oxford [U.K.] Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, is the director of the most recent Judaic studies program to be established in China: the Center for Judaic and Inter-Faith Studies, appropriately located in Jinan, Shandong Province, the birthplace of Confucius. At Sarasota, Professor Fu gave a whirlwind history of Reform Judaism in Germany and the United States. He argued that a streamlined syncretic faith like Reform Judaism could serve as a model for compromise and accommodation for other ideologies in both China and the West.

## **Conclusion: The Importance of Small Sino-Judaic Seminars and Educational Outreach**

The presentations were followed by a lively discussion about the

Sino-Judaic experience, Holocaust issues, and contemporary Sino-Israeli relations. One member of the audience remarked later on the high caliber of speakers and presentations for a non-academic event. After the session, the audience was treated to a medley of Yiddish and Hebrew songs performed by a superbly-trained, all-volunteer choir and accompanist. Both Professor Goldstein's and Professor Berton's talks have been posted on the website of the Igud Yotzei Sin, the Tel-Aviv-based Association of Former Residents of China. Apart from that broader outreach, the Sarasota meeting is significant in that it demonstrated how a low-budget Sino-Judaic seminar could be efficiently organized for the benefit of an enthusiastic constituency, the Jewish community of Southwest Florida.

Jonathan Goldstein is a Professor of East Asian History at the University of West Georgia. His books include *The Jews of China* (1999) and *China and Israel* (2000).

## **Camp Doctor** *(continued from page 9)*

them was a professor of philosophy. He was serving a second term of ten years. The first ten years he served in a camp called Kolima. In this camp his right leg froze and had to be amputated. He now walked around with the aid of crutches. Highly educated, intelligent and knowledgeable, he was very bitter, hated humanity and did not trust anybody. Sometimes we carried on long conversations on philosophical subjects especially on Spinoza and his teachings. He was not interested in Judaism or its problems or the fate of the Jewish people. He got very excited when we touched the subject of Bolshevism or Communism, just like waving a red rag in front of a bull. Another Jew, from the recently arrived group, was born

in Warsaw. Like many other Polish Jews who found themselves in Russia after the war, he too was arrested and sentenced to a term of ten years. An angry and nervous individual. He was aware of his Jewishness and liked to speak in Yiddish. He changed bunks with someone and is now sleeping next to my bunk. Our conversations on subjects close to our hearts made our harsh existence a little more bearable. In a low voice we talked about Judaism, on the Jews of Poland, on Israel. He tried to persuade me to write to my relatives in the Soviet Union so as to establish contact with them; this might help us here in the camp. I actually pondered this matter more than once by myself but feared that writing to my brother

and sister might cause them harm with the authorities; because of their brother the "Zionist", the "anti-revolutionary" they too might be arrested. My neighbor did succeed in persuading me and even dispatched the letter through one of his free friends residing outside the camp. I wrote to my brother, without mentioning where I am staying and from where the letter is being sent, only this – That I am alive, in good health and when I'll have a permanent address he'll be informed. This was in the month of October 1948; I did not know then that my brother had passed away in 1942 during the siege of Leningrad.

**From the Hebrew by Benny Tsur  
(to be continued)**

# Jews visit city where they were born, grew up

Though Harbin, capital of Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, was credited as an international municipality with exotic historical architectural style, the sudden arrival of nearly 100 Jews was still something to marvel at.

They are not visitors, but were excited to stand again in the old synagogue, streets, houses and schools they were so familiar with about more than half a century ago.

They came to take part in a three-day international forum on the history and culture of Harbin Jews, which concluded on Monday, and also to witness the opening of an exhibition of the same theme.

Yehudit Bein could not conceal her excitement to see the house she was born in 66 years ago.

"It is still there after so many years," the Israeli scholar said in scattered English sentences.

Her former home still stands on Central Street, the city's earliest business centre. Her house is just across the street from the Modern Hotel, one of the most famous hotels founded by Jews in 1913. But Bein was a little disappointed to learn the house's entrance is being restored.

"I really want to see the apartment I was born in," she said.

For several decades from the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, more than 20,000 Jewish people came to Harbin. They came to escape the waves of anti-Semitism in Russia and Europe, according to Qu Wei, president of the Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of

Social Sciences.

"Harbin people, with their unique and broad-minded hospitality, accepted and developed long-lasting friendships with them," Qu said. "That history is a brilliant page in China's humanitarian record."

Bein said that she represented the "young Israeli generation" who still remembers Harbin. People of her age left the city around the age of 10.

"Even today, we are still called 'the Harbin kids,'" she said.

Bein expressed her appreciation of the peaceful childhood she enjoyed in Harbin.

"During the war, when the whole of Europe was aflame, we enjoyed a comfortable life," she said.

By the end of the World War II, there were about 30,000 Jews in China.

"Thirty thousand people came and 30,000 people left China," said Teddy Kaufman, President of Association of Former Residents of China and Israel China Friendship Society.

"Nobody was killed," he said.

"A person may experience many important moments during his lifetime and today is one of them," said Kaufman, while attending the opening ceremony of the exhibition of the history and culture of Harbin last Saturday.

The permanent exhibition was held in the newly-restored Jewish New Synagogue, which was first built in 1921.

"Only a great nation and people with the broadest minds can do such great things," he said.

The city made great efforts in preserving

Jewish buildings and relics.

Harbin has preserved the largest Jewish cemetery in East Asia, which has about 600 tombstones and includes the grave of the grandfather of the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

The city's dozens of Jewish assembly halls, hotels, schools, hospitals, banks, shopping malls, dwelling houses, kindergartens and office buildings, some of which are nearly a century old, are protected by Harbin municipal government.

Some of buildings have been repaired and maintained in large scale, like the Jewish New Synagogue, which was restored in 2005.

"The Jewish people have contributed a lot to the economy of many countries in the world," said Ora Nanmir, former Israel ambassador to China. "But no country, no city has done something like that."

"For a long time, no matter how the city expanded or relocated, these historical buildings or relics are basically preserved," Qu said.

Kaufman said that there are a few thousand ex-Harbin Jews in the world today. He hoped these people would come back to visit and do business in Harbin.

"It is very important that the heritage of Jewish past was preserved, they will keep it as they keep it now," he said.

"We have a quite large Jewish community in Shanghai now, but 80 years ago, there was more business here than in Shanghai today."

Source: China Daily



**US \$ 1000**

**Has been donate to the Far Eastern Association in San Francisco in memory of my dear sister Sofia Shfrin (nee Kachanovsky)**

**Asya Kogan  
Tokyo**

**August 2006**

**Cooperation Agreement between Harbin - Dao Li District ("Pristan") and Moshav Amikam, Israel, 21.6.06. Reception at the offices of Harbin Deputy Mayor, Mr. Shi Wenqing**



**Agreement signature**  
 Left to right: Eran Rozen, Arie Sharon, Rasha and Teddy Kaufman, Harbin Deputy Mayor, Shi Wenqing, Academy President Qu Wei, Head, Dao Li District Administration, Mr. Gao and Chinese delegation members

**Participants of the banquet organized by the Deputy Mayor**



**Teddy Kaufman greeting the Deputy Mayor Shi Wenqing**

# From the Journal "Jewish life" in Harbin to the "Bulletin of Former Residents of China in Israel"

T. Kaufman

## "EVREYSKAYA ZHIZN" (Jewish Life)

From the Journal "Jewish life" in Harbin to the "Bulletin of Former Residents of China in Israel" In October 1920, two Zionist leaders Moisei Novomeisky and Aleksandr Yevzerov made a stop in Harbin on their way from Siberia to Palestine via China, and then proceeded to Shanghai. After this trip, they established a weekly Zionist periodical "Siberia - Palestine", subsequently renamed into "Jewish life". Moisei Novomeisky, former chairman of the national council of the Jews of the Far East, Siberia and Urals, including Manchuria, established an industrial chemical enterprise in Palestine for processing the riches of the Dead Sea. This was the biggest establishment of such a nature in the country, and he became its owner. Aleksandr Yevzerov (Ezer) was the initiator of arranging Palestine's first international industrial exhibition, which was opened in Tel Aviv, and building in Jerusalem the Binyanei-ha-Umah" – a palace for conducting international congresses, in which he arranged a famous exhibition "The Conquest of the Desert." The first twenty two issues of the periodical were edited by Aleksandr Yevzerov, and then until June 1943 - by Dr. Abraham Kaufman, the leader of the Zionist movement in China and the chairman of the Harbin Jewish community. From the twentieth issue, i.e., from August 22, 1924, the periodical began to come out under the name "Jewish life" with the indication in the brackets "Siberia- Palestine". This periodical was edited by Dr. A. Kaufman until June 1943, when the Japanese authorities closed it under the pressure of the German ambassador to Tokyo. But what was this periodical for the Jews of Harbin and China, for the Russian-

## Forum in Harbin June 2006

speaking Jews? First of all, for many years it was the only Jewish periodical in the Russian language if we do not consider V.Zhabotinsky's "Rassvet" (Dawn) published in Paris for several years and Betar's journal "Hadegel" (The Banner) published in Harbin once in two weeks for ten years running. The Zionist press in Russia at that time was forbidden, and the journal "Jewish life" was the only means of connection with Palestine, with the Zionist movement and with the Jewish world. In all the issues published in the 1920s, you will find reports of our own correspondents from Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Irkutsk, Omsk, Blagoveshchensk, Verkhneudinsk, Chita etc. about Jewish and Zionist life in Siberia and Primorye. Only one monthly periodical of the Sephardic Jewish community in English, which was published by Nisim Ezra in Shanghai from 1903 till 1937, existed in China. No other Jewish journals were published in China on a permanent basis. "Jewish life" reflected the life of the Jewish communities of China: Manchuria, Hailar, Tsitsikar (Qiqihar), Handaohezi, Shenyang (Mukden), Dalny (Dairen), Tianjin, Shanghai, Hankou and Tsindao. It is not possible to restore even partially the history of these Jewish communities without the publications in the journal "Jewish life" in all 23 years of its existence. All the issues of the periodical which were devoted to the anniversary dates - its 15th anniversary (1930) and to 20th anniversary (1940), 35 years of existence of the Harbin Jewish community (1938), are not just anniversary issues, they are a chronicle of the history of all the Jewish communities of China and Japan. Without these annals not a single historian would be able to thoroughly investigate the history of the Jews of Harbin, the North-east

of China and all the other regions of China. All prominent firms published their advertisements: Jewish (Skidelsky, Soskin, Kogan, Kroll, "Moderne" and others, Russians and others (Churin, Nikitin, Antipas, Lopato), Chinese (Tun Falong, Song Hoshin, Lu Tai and the clothes factory owned by Song Qiu), to mention but a few. In the 23 years of its existence, the periodical formed a complete report about the immigration to Palestine, which contained names, dates, and the names of steamships. Publications reflect the struggles against the Russian Fascists and Japanese anti-Semitism, its position in the case of the Semeon Caspe murder, struggles against German fascism, and indeed this was entirely not easy to do in the years of the Japanese-German alliance. Since 1937, when the National Council of the Jews of the Far East was established, "Jewish Life" began to publish a supplement in English, while since 1939 - a supplement for the young people "A page of Maccabi". "Jewish life" was sent to important libraries and the archives of different countries of the world: up to 1939 into the library of Vatican, until December 1941 when the war between Japan and the USA broke out, to the Jewish university in Jerusalem and into the Library of Congress. However, a complete set of the periodical is today located only in the archive of the Association of Former Residents of China in Tel Aviv. In "Jewish life" you will find articles about China, and a paper by Itshak Ben Tzvi, the second President of Israel, devoted to the history of the Jews of Kaifeng, which he wrote as early as 1928.

Here you will find also rare articles by progressive-minded Chinese journalists and pamphleteers about Zionism, about visits to Palestine, about the attitude of Sun Yatsen to Zionism and

other materials. With the journal "Jewish life" the names of many who collaborated with it during a number of years are connected: A.S.Izgur, A. Dzhinzhikhshvili, S.I.Spivak, Y.V.Ziskind, M.Rakita and others, but, first of all, the editor-in-chief and publisher Dr. A.I.Kaufman, who gratis carried out the work during all the years of the existence of that periodical. He not only edited, he wrote, transferred and filled 80% of all the pages of each issue individually every week, but also he bore all the material expenditures, connected with the publication. Only the future

historians of the Jewish past in China can and must estimate the contribution of the journal "Jewish life" to the history of the development, struggles and the very existence of Jewish communities on Chinese soil.

### **THE "BULLETIN OF IGUD YOTZEI SIN"**

The eleven-year period in the history of the Harbin Jewish community, from June 1943 to May 1954, was not depicted in periodic publications, with the exception of an underground bulletin published for a year and a half (1948 - 1949), which chronicled events in Israel. The immigration of Jews from Harbin to Israel began in 1949 and continued till 1952. These were the formative hard years for the revived state of Israel. About eight thousand and a half of Jews from China arrived in the State of Israel, 80% of them were Jews from Harbin. During October 1951, the former public workers of the three biggest Jewish communities of China, the communities of Shanghai, Harbin and Tianjin, gathered in Tel Aviv. They decided to establish an Association of Immigrants from China, Igud Olei Sin. When the wave of immigration decreased, the new organization was renamed Igud Yotzei Sin or, the Association of Former Residents of China. The Association proclaimed as its goal the mutual aid of the former residents of China, who found themselves to be in hard conditions of life in the immigration

camp. In accordance with a resolution of the Central Committee of Igud Yotzei Sin the Association established the "Bulletin of Igud Yotzei Sin" in May 1954. The first Editorial Board included D. Rabinovitch from Shanghai, V. Zlotnikov from Tianjin and T. Kaufman from Harbin.

During the first years the periodical with the volume of 10 - 20 pages was printed on the hectograph. It contained mainly news from Israel and described the activities of the Association. The "Bulletin" came out ten times a year in 300 copies. From June 1955 (from # 11) the periodical was printed by a printing-house.

At first the "Bulletin" was published only in the Russian language.

From February 1972 (from # 182) a supplement in English was added, while from October 1979 (from # 239) - a Hebrew supplement appeared. For a long time the volume of the "Bulletin" comprised of 24 - 26 pages. At first it was published ten times a year, then eight, six, five, and in the last four years the periodical came out four times a year in three languages. Now it contains 240 pages: 120 pages in Russian, 80 - in English and 40 - in Hebrew.

Since 1992 the "Israel-China Voice of Friendship" - the organ of the Israel-China Friendship Society is published in English, with each issue totaling 16 pages on average.

For many years several public workers who were former residents of China played a decisive role in the editing of the "Bulletin". They were David Rabinovitch, Vladimir Zlotnikov, Mikhail Klyaver, Boris Mirkin and Boris Bresler. The last eight years the journal has been edited by T. Kaufman. The periodical boasts 1200 copies and is distributed in Israel (500 copies), and abroad (700 copies), including China (more than 100 copies). The geography of its distribution contains about 200 locations in different countries around the world.

These are dry facts. How important is this publication and what has its role

been in the past and in the present in the life of the former residents of China, in general, and of the former residents of Harbin, in particular?

First of all, this is the connection with our landsmen from China, who live today in many countries of the world: in Israel, the USA, Canada, Australia, Russia and Western Europe. The periodical helps to maintain connections with the associations of former residents of China in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. It assists in strengthening the friendly ties between Israel and China.

The "Bulletin" dedicates a great deal of its pages to the restoration of the past of the Jewish communities of China. The historical materials are collected here: recollections and photographs. The recollections of Dr. A. I. Kaufman about Harbin from 1912 through 1935, and the recollections of Zalman Agranovsky, the last secretary of the Harbin Jewish community from 1950 through 1963, were published on the pages of the periodical. Hundreds of letters from our compatriots also appear in the periodical. Thanks to these recollections, people find each other in the different ends of the world. The "Bulletin" marks all happy events in the life of the former residents of China: the generation of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, the maturity celebrations of the Bar-mitzvah and Bat-mitzvah, weddings, birthdays and anniversaries. Sad news of all of those who left us for the better world - obituaries and mourning declarations are published in every issue of the Bulletin. The card index of the Association of Former Residents of China counts about two thousand family names.

During the last years the "Bulletin" has been richly illustrated.

The complete set of the "Bulletin" for 53 years of its existence, which is stored in the archives of the Association, contains very much valuable material for science workers, for historians from Israel, China, Russia, the USA, (see page 16)

## T. Kaufman

### **GREETINGS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE "INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY, CHINA 2006"**

On behalf of the Israel-China Friendship Society and of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel I am glad to greet the opening ceremony of the "International Forum on Food Quality and Safety, China 2006" in the city of Harbin which is so dear to us. In recent years the ties between Israel and China have been strengthening with every passing day, especially in the field of agriculture, and we are glad that the Heilongjiang province and Harbin as its capital have become an important center of industry and agriculture of China. Many of us here and now not only represent Israel but were born in China or have been inhabitants of this remarkable city in the past. We are proud of the achievements of the northeast of China in general and Harbin in particular and we wish much success to the Forum, the prosperity of the economy and the growth of the food industry in the Heilongjiang province.

### **GREETINGS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE EXHIBITION IN THE BUILDING OF THE "NEW SYNAGOGUE" OF HARBIN**

Today we are standing at the spot where 85 years ago on September 25, 1921, our fathers and grandfathers who found shelter in this unforgettable city, participated in the inauguration ceremony of the second synagogue, the "New Synagogue" in Harbin. The Jews of Harbin left this city after the Civil War ended and the People's Republic of China was established in

October, 1949. The Chinese authorities made it possible for the Jews of Harbin to leave for Israel and to reunite with their people in their historical native land. During these past 85 years both the people of China and the Jewish people survived tragedies and were the victims of fascism in the East and in the West, but in the memory of Jews born in Harbin and of all those who were residents of Harbin in the past, only good recollections of this great country and city so dear to all of us have been preserved.

This is why today's celebration is so momentous. The city, in which there was no Jewish population for many years, pays tribute to the past of the Jewish sojourn in Harbin. So much has been made in all these years by the Heilongjiang provincial government, by the city council of Harbin, and by the Academy of Social Sciences of the Heilongjiang province headed by President Qu Wei, like the publication of the album "Jews in Harbin", the exhibition devoted to the Jewish past in Harbin, the first and second seminars on the history of the Jews of Harbin, the restoration of the buildings of the Jewish sojourn in the city: the Cemetery, two synagogues, a high school, the hospital, the home for the aged - all this is an unusual contribution to the history of the Jewish people on Chinese soil. Only a great people can show such an attitude to the past of the minorities which once lived in its territory. On behalf of the Israel-China Friendship Society and the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel I greet you on the opening of the exhibition in the restored building of the "New Synagogue" and I express my deep

gratitude and admiration to all those who took part in the restoration of this remarkable building - one of the most important centers of the Jewish past in Harbin.

### **GREETINGS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SECOND SEMINAR ON THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE JEWS OF HARBIN**

Almost two years ago, in September 2004, we participated in the first international seminar on the history of the Jews of Harbin. This was an unforgettable historic event which made a deep impression on all the former residents of Harbin who participated in the Seminar. But not one of us, who was then in Harbin, thought that we would gather here again in two years' time in order to take part in a second seminar on the history and culture of the Jews of China. The first time could be a one-time important event, but the organization of the second seminar which we opened today, is already the beginning of a tradition. I wish to express my appreciation to the government of the Heilongjiang province and to the Academy of Social Sciences of the Heilongjiang province headed by President Qu Wei for their initiative in arranging this important seminar. The papers read by Chinese scientists from Harbin, Shanghai and Nanjing devoted to the study of the Jewish past in China are a valuable contribution to the history of the Jewish people, to the study of our ties with China in the past and to strengthening the cooperation of Israel with China with this city and with this province. We are all proud to participate in this very unusual event and I am sure that as in the past, this Seminar, too, will enjoy great success.

## ***From Jewish Life to Bulletin (From page 15)***

Germany, England, Austria, France, Japan, Canada, as well as for all those who study emigration in the Far East. The materials of the "Bulletin" are reprinted by many publications in the USA, China and the European countries. It is difficult to imagine a

work on the history of the Jews of China without the use of the materials of the "Bulletin". The "Bulletin" of the Association of Former Residents of China" is the continuation of the glorious history of the Jews of China, which thrives in spite of the distances

and years thanks to our roots in the good Chinese soil, which thus influenced our life, our consciousness and which help us today to continue the gold chain of the Jews of China, including, perhaps, first of all, the Jewish community of Harbin.



# Memorial plaques on Jewish historical buildings



The Jewish High School

The Old People's Home and Public Kitchen



The New Synagogue

# The Historical Importance of the Archives of Chinese Jewry

*A lecture by Yossi Klein, deputy chairman of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel at the International Forum on the History and Culture of the Jews of Harbin June 16-19, 2006*

Archives are collections of papers, documents, photographs, and sometimes other materials, that are preserved for historical reasons. They are created in the course of conducting business activities, or, as in our case, during the life of a public organization. Their purpose is to serve as a basis for information and future research.

The modern institution of archives and archival administration dates from the late 18th century, when national and departmental archives were established in France to store the past records of the national government.

In a seminar held in Harbin in 2004, in my lecture about the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel. In the section on present activities, I also commented briefly on the "Archives" section.

This activity by the Association differs in character from the other sections. In contrast to other matters, such as distributing scholarships, social welfare aid, publishing the "Bulletin," etc., the Association does not initiate regular activity in this area. The Association is passive on this subject. Activity involving the archives occurs as a result of inquiries by researchers, and searches by Teddy Kaufman for interesting material to publish in the "Bulletin," which he edits, and the Association publishes.

The purpose of my lecture today is to discuss this subject at slightly greater length, remove the curtain a bit, publicly present the main "treasures" (no other word fits the material found in our offices), and bring them to the attention of researchers dealing with the subject of Chinese Jewry, and of people in general interested in the

subject.

Some of the archive material is in Ponve House, the home office of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel. Some is in the halls of the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, to which it was transferred in 1997, following a decision by a committee established by the Association's leadership, led by Prof. Boris Bresler of blessed memory, on December 13, 1994. After Prof. Bresler retired from UCLA in the United States, he decided to devote his time and very extensive knowledge to preserving the history of the Chinese Jewry. He was the first to systematically address the large volume of archive material that he discovered in the offices of the Association. I was privileged to be a member of that committee (it was actually the beginning of my connections and activity in the Association). I managed to collaborate for a short time with Prof. Bresler before he died in March 2000 in Jerusalem.

The reason for the decision to transfer part of the material to the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People was a lack of storage space and suitable storage conditions in our offices in Tel Aviv.

The main part of the archives that I will speak about later was brought to Israel by Teddy Kaufman, chairman of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel. By dint of great physical and financial effort, he collected the material before leaving Harbin for Israel, and carried it as his personal luggage in two large trunks through all the stopping places on the long route.

He thereby saved the history of all of us immigrants from China.

## ***A List of the Archive Material***

The material kept in the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People is as follows:

**The archive of Rabbi Kiselev**, the Chief Rabbi of Harbin in 1913-1949: this includes his correspondence with the chief rabbis in Israel, and his answers to questions concerning Jewish law, directed to him by Jews in China and Japan. as a greatest Jewish religious authority in the Far East.

**The archive of the Tientsin community**, which, incredibly, was simply sent in the mail to the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel when the community's activities ceased. This archive includes minutes of community council meetings, and all correspondence during the community's existence in 1920-1958.

**(Copies of minutes from July 22, 1945 are on display. This document lists the donors to the Holy Ark in the synagogue).**

Unfortunately, we are missing two volumes that should contain documentation of births, weddings, divorces, deaths, etc. When and where they vanished is unknown.

**The personal archive of Michael Klaver of blessed memory**, a public figure in Siberia, who later held various positions in the Harbin and Tientsin communities. After immigrating to Israel, he became deputy chairman of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel, and edited the "Bulletin" until he died.

## ***The material kept in Ponve House, the offices of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel is as follows:***

**The personal archive of Dr. Abraham Kaufman of blessed memory**, which includes his memoirs in Russian from 1912-1935, and which Dr. Kaufman managed to write down before he died in 1971. These memoirs were published in 35 issues of the "Bulletin" of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel (352-386). They describe the life of the Jewish community in Harbin.

**A transcript of dozens of hours of recordings of Dr. Kaufman speaking in Yiddish.** Yad Chaim Weizmann made the recordings in 1962-1970 as part of its recordings of people who communicated with Prof. Weizmann about his Zionist activity in Russia and Switzerland. In these conversations, Dr. Kaufman tells about his life in Harbin in 1912-1945. He also conducted fascinating correspondence with the heads of the Zionist movement in Land of Israel (Palestine) and in London.

## ***Newspapers published by Jewish Zionist organizations in China.***

***Published in Harbin in Russian "Yevreiskaya Zhizen" (Jewish life) – the complete collection of the weekly published in Russian, at the first years under the name "Sibir-Palestine" (Displayed are the front page of issue no. 2 from October 6, 1920 and front page of Yevreiskaya Zhizen 35 Aniversary issue)***

These issues are full of information about events in the life of the Zionist movement in the Land of Israel and around the world; advertisements by companies in the Land of Israel (Palestine), such as Carmel Mizrahi Wineries, the Anglo-Palestine Bank, Peltours –tours to Palestine (**examples displayed**); and other fascinating material. This inevitably raises the question of how this material was delivered to a remote place in

Northeastern China when the state of communications prevailing at that time was limited even by the standards of the day, not to mention in comparison with the modern media.

**"HadeGel" (The Flag)** – the complete collection (1932-1942) of the biweekly journal of the Beitar Revisionist youth movement, which was the largest Jewish Zionist youth movement in China as a whole, and in Harbin in particular.

My late father, Shmuel Klein of blessed memory, was the last commander of the movement (1940-1945), and also the last editor of "HadeGel" in 1941-1942. The Red Army arrested my father when it entered Harbin in 1945. The Soviet authorities confiscated the complete collection of this newspaper, which was in our house, when they arrested him. It was never returned, of course, although my father was released after a fairly short period.

To the best of our knowledge, the complete editions of "HadeGel" and of "Yevreiskaya Zhizen" kept by the Association are the only ones that have been completely preserved.

Teddy Kaufman brought these collections to Israel, as well as the archives of Rabbi Kiselev and Dr. Kaufman.

## ***Published in Shanghai (unfortunately, the collections are not complete)***

**"Nasha Zhizen" and "Unser Leiben"** in Russian, English, and Yiddish

**"Tagar"** – the journal of Beitar in Russian and English

**"Bulletin of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel"** – all the issues since the first one was published in 1954 in Russian only, including 10 pages printed using a those days typewriter. (**Displayed first page of the first issue**) up to issue no. 388, which was published recently.

This collection includes complete information in writing and photography about the lives of Jews in Harbin, beginning with their absorption experiences in Israel in the early 1950s,

their settling down in Israel, and their activities in many fields of economics, industry, agriculture, etc., including, of course, information about social events, as well as the passing of the parents' generation.

In addition, the "Bulletin" features rich and interesting material from the archives kept in the Association's offices, as described above.

**Documents collected from various sources** in the Association, and sorted and put in order by Prof. Boris Bresler in 1991-1993. These were put into precise order in files and cardboard boxes, while recording exactly every file and its contents.

Some examples from this documentation:

Interviews conducted in 1975 by Prof. Irene Eber, a researcher in the Asian Studies Department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She conducted research on relations between Chinese and Jews, and published a book on the subject: "Chinese and Jews: Encounters between Cultures."

A document, I personally found fascinating had 31 pages "Activities report from Mr. Citrin, chairman of the Eastern Palestine Office of the Jewish Agency in Hong-Kong, to the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem on activities in August 1948 – September 1951."

Almost all the immigration from China to Israel took place during this period, including that of my family.

The document contains a description of the background to the beginning of activity by this body, which was responsible for organizing all of the immigration from China. It includes engrossing information about the work of bringing Chinese Jews to Israel, and gives details of the difficulties, how they were handled, raising of the necessary funds, and exact figures for the number of immigrants on every ship and airplane, from which cities they came, (**this page is displayed**) and many other extremely important details about the organizing of immigration from China.

Another interesting document written on bookkeeping paper, due to the lack of paper during this period (**the first page is displayed**). This document contains the minutes of a community leadership meeting on September 18, 1949, with a report on the activities of the temporary leadership of the community since it was elected in June 1946, including activity related to the death of Rabbi Kiselev on September 9, 1949.

**Photographs collection** – several thousand photographs of events in Jewish life in China, and of events organized by the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel since it was founded.

**Clippings from anti-Semitic newspapers** in Russian that unfortunately were also published in Harbin.

**The Association's website**, [www.jewsofchina.org](http://www.jewsofchina.org), publishes a great deal of material that can be useful to those doing research about Chinese Jewry. Among other things, this material includes the history of the various communities, many photographs taken in various periods, articles on the subject of Chinese Jewry, and a bibliography of the English-language "Bulletin" in 1970-2002. The Association will soon publish a bibliography of the Russian-language "Bulletin." The Hebrew Bibliography is in preparation. Publication has begun of short bibliographies of people who contributed to the economic, social, and public life of the community; a section for locating family members; and many links to websites related to the subject of Judaism in general, and China in particular.

As is well known, there were three large Jewish communities in China. Up until now, I have spoken only about the archive of the Tientsin community. The question arises: what was the fate of the archives in Shanghai and Harbin?

**The archive of the Shanghai Jewish community** was completely destroyed during the Cultural Revolution in China.

**The archive of the Harbin Jewish**

**community** includes material dating from the community's founding in 1903 until community activity ceased in 1963, when the last Jew left. At that time, the archive was left in its regular place in the community offices on the third floor of the main synagogue. Fortunately, it was learned that the archive had survived the Cultural Revolution, and is currently in the possession of the Heilongjiang provincial authorities. It is stored in a location in Harbin of which we are unaware.

Only a few people have managed to view it up until now, and representatives of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel or Chinese Jews were not among them. The Association contacted on this subject all the delegations that visited Harbin in recent years, and we of course raised the subject during our visits to Harbin.

During the visit to Israel in March 2006 by Mr. Song Fatang, chairman of the Standards Committee (Heilongjiang People's Congress), Teddy Kaufman raised the subject with him in the concluding talk. Teddy Kaufman later sent him an official letter, explaining the reasons for our request to open the archive, first to Teddy Kaufman, and later to all interested researchers.

Let it be noted that it was brought to the attention of Mr. Song Fatang that Teddy Kaufman worked in 1943-1949 – his first public activity - as the secretary of the Harbin Jewish community council, and is familiar with all the items in the archive.

It is clear to us that, after over 50 years of neglect, the state of the archive is less than satisfactory. Furthermore, Teddy Kaufman even volunteered to spend a few days at the archive in helping the authorities in Harbin bring the archive to the best possible state.

Unfortunately, our request has not yet been granted, and we are continuing our efforts to obtain authorization for opening the archive to researchers.

It is unnecessary to note the importance of the archive material, which includes all the information about the births, weddings, divorces, and deaths of the

Jews of Harbin; minutes of meetings, the correspondence of the Jewish community council, and the archive of the Jewish community in Manzhouli, which existed from 1903 until 1929. This material is extremely important to former residents of China and those doing research about these Jewish communities. The reason for this obstinacy on the part of the Harbin authorities is unclear to us.

The archive material, which I have attempted to briefly describe in my lecture, is extensive, riveting, and important to those doing research about this unique community of a small number of Jews, and to those who will do such research in the future. This community was numbered in the thousands for about less than hundred years only, yet recorded impressive achievements, even when compared to other communities that were larger in number, and which existed for longer periods.

In recent years, we have witnessed increasing interest in the subject of what is called in general "Chinese Jews," who arouse great curiosity, with many questions emerging at once. Many studies have been written about the subject, and many more will be written. Books have been published, and many Internet sites deal with the subject from various perspectives.

In China in general, and in Harbin in particular, many praiseworthy actions have been taken to preserve the history of the Jews of Harbin, such as preservation of buildings relating to the period, the opening of a permanent exhibition on the subject in three floors of the New Synagogue, albums and books in various languages, and of course seminars, such as the one taking place here and now.

In order for future generations to be able to continue taking an interest, studying and researching the subject, the archive material that I have described, including the archive in Harbin, must be made available to researchers from Israel, and other countries.

Much still remains to be done.

# THE "MODERNE" HOTEL AS ONE OF THE IMPORTANT CENTERS IN THE LIFE OF HARBIN

T. Kaufman

*Speech At The Moderne In Harbin 17.6.2006*

Ten years ago, in 1996, the "Moderne" Hotel marked its 90th anniversary, and today we are here to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the opening of that first luxury hotel in the city of Harbin, built by Joseph Kaspe.

What was "Moderne" for Harbin? First of all, it was a modern hotel that stood in the center of the city on its main street. What was in this hotel from the first days of its existence? Besides the rooms on the three floors of the building, it had a cafeteria, an auditorium for performances and motion pictures, the "White" Hall for banquets and weddings, a glazed verandah, an elegant foyer, a billiard-room and a barbershop. The latest American and European films were shown at the theater. A permanent theatrical team performed on the stage under the management of V.I. Tomsky who staged dramatic plays; there also was an operetta troupe. Performances were almost on a daily basis.

All official banquets and the most expensive weddings were held in the "White" Hall. In this hall every week-end at five p.m. there were tea-dances to the accompaniment of the jazz-band led by Raphael Lemberg, and the Visenberg trio sang in the café-bar. From the very first days of its existence and up to the middle of the thirties the Hall which now houses the café-bar served as a jewelry store owned by J. Kaspe, where the best diamonds were sold for the highest prices.

Famous celebrities stayed at the "Moderne" during their visits to Harbin – the famous Russian bass singer Fedor Chaliapin, violinists Yasha Heifetz, Misha Elman, Efrem Tsimbalist, the renowned pianist Sirota and the conductor Leonid Kreitzer. Members of the commission of Lord Linton, sent by the League of Nations to analyze the situation in Manchuria when it was occupied by Japan, also stayed there. The "Moderne" Hotel was then surrounded by the Japanese, and the commission was prevented from walking out for fear for their

safety, according to the Japanese version.

Three rooms in the second floor had balconies and the most luxurious rooms in the Hotel were located above the main entrance. The most important lodgers lived here. As both of Mr. Kaspe's sons were French nationals, having received their education in Paris, the French flag flew over "Moderne".

After the occupation of Manchuria by the Japanese in the middle of the thirties, the occupational authorities attempted to force the owners of "Moderne" to sell fifty percent of their shares to the Japanese as was done with respect to Skidelsky's coal mines and Zikman's sugar refinery, but a lengthy dispute by Joseph Kaspe with the help of the French consul and Dr. Abraham Kaufman, the Chairman of the Jewish community of the city, succeeded; the "Moderne" remained solely in Joseph Kaspe's hands. Korot who was appointed as the manager of "Moderne" by the Japanese was replaced by Moisei Zimin, the honorable secretary of the Harbin Jewish community.

In this hotel, where Joseph Kaspe lived, (his wife Mary was at that time in Paris) a tragedy happened. A gang of Russian fascists with the assistance of the Japanese gendarmery kidnapped and killed one of his sons, a well-known talented young pianist, who, like the musicians mentioned above, gave concerts in "Moderne".

For the Harbin Jews "Moderne" was, first of all, the center of business meetings. Here the representatives of Jewish business met with their Chinese and Russian partners.

Up until the middle of the 1930s it is here that all events, balls and celebrations of the Jewish community of Harbin were held. For example, celebrations on the occasion of the signing of the Balfour declaration, and also the annual Jewish charitable balls held by Maria Soskin, the income from which covered half of the budget of all Jewish charitable institutions of the city. The farewell banquet in honor of Isaac Soskin on the occasion of his departure

from Harbin also took place in the "White" Hall.

However, from the middle of the thirties and up to 1943 all the celebrations of the Jewish community were held at the Commercial Club, with the exception of the large balls, such as the ball of "Maccabi" in 1939. When in the second half of 1943 at the demand of the Japanese authorities the Commercial Club was renamed the Russian Emigrants' Club and Dr. A. Kaufman ceased to be the Chairman of the Committee of the Chief Officers of Komsob (Commercial Club), the "Moderne" Hotel served as the place where all the events of the Jewish community of Harbin were held. This went on for three years (1943 - 1945). The evening parties of "Maccabi" and "Betar" and Jewish charitable evenings were arranged here.

Charitable evenings of other national communities of the city, first of all by the Russians, and also Georgians, Armenians and others took place at the "Moderne" Hotel.

Every Sunday, from three p.m. to midnight they had a program named "screen and scene" which consisted of a film and performances of actors, singers, ballerinas and musicians. This was an extremely popular program and was always attended by large audiences.

The "Moderne" Hotel meant much in the life of the residents of Harbin. People of every nationality came here in order to see films, theatrical plays, operettas, to listen to music, and to attend concerts. Here, near the large windows in the cafe and the foyer business deals were sealed. World celebrities came here, young couples met under the clock in order to start their promenade on the embankment along the Sungari river. One could hear in "Moderne" the beating of the heart of the city.

As a Harbin-born person, I send sincerest good wishes in this special year, marking the 100th anniversary of this historical place in the city.

# Towards the Sambation River

By Dr. Avigdor Shachan

## An Expedition in the Footsteps of the Ten Tribes

Presentation at the International Forum on Jewish History and Culture in Harbin

June 16 – June 20, 2006

The most wondrous of the legends to be found in the sources of Judaism that ends with the greatest of all puzzles of Jewish history, is the legend of "the Ten Lost Tribes." The legend has its beginnings in three quotations from the Second Book of Kings, one from the First Book of Chronicles and a single reference in the Jerusalem Talmud. The legend has been continuously embellished in Jewish anecdotal writings, in ancient times and in modern day literature.

As the legend has gained momentum, we increasingly find references, testimonies and reports of people who have met people who claimed to be members of these tribes in one continent, and people who have seen them in another; people who have found them somewhere in forgotten arid deserts, and even those who have encountered them on shores of seas and oceans. Indeed there is hardly a place on the face of the earth where traces of their existence have not been reputedly discovered.

This legend, the Legend of the Ten Tribes, or, as they are also known "The Lost Tribes" was born in the year 722 BCE when they were expelled from the Land of Israel by Tiglat Pileser, king of Assyria.

Two hundred and six years earlier, Jeroboam ben Nabat, who had rebelled against the Kingdom of Judah, had wrenched ten of its tribes from the Kingdom: the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naftali, Gad, Asher, Ephraim and Menasseh, and established the Kingdom of Israel. The

Kingdom of Judah was left with the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi.

Biblical and Talmudic sources, as well as the Jewish anecdotal literature, suggest that somewhere on the other side of a legendary river, the Sambatyon, which flows fast for six days of the week and throws rocks out to prevent anyone from trying to cross it, and comes to rest each Sabbath, and over the other side of a terrifying, dark, mist-covered mountain range, the ten lost tribes live in a land of vast open spaces. There they live a life of freedom following the laws of their Torah, the Torah of Moses, tilling the land in harmony and friendship, against a background of well ordered armies, and at the head of them their commanders bearing their banners and flags, ready to defend their land against any invader who threatens their freedom.

One hundred and thirty six years after the expulsion of the ten tribes, the Babylonians expelled the tribes of the kingdom of Judah, after conquering their land and burning their Temple.

Over the 2720 years since the disappearance of the ten tribes, couriers, messengers, researchers and adventurers of the three tribes of the Kingdom of Judah, Levi and Benjamin, have ventured forth to search for them, but their traces were lost among the winding paths of high mountains, in far flung countries and in vast arid deserts. Moreover, when finally, after 1878 years, the three tribes of Judah returned to their land from their bitter exile, they named their new State after their lost brothers – the State of Israel.

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For over three decades, as a historian of the Holocaust and martyrdom, I have researched the footprints of the Ten Tribes. To carry out my research I traveled to far-away countries of Central

Asia and to the jungles of Central America and examined hidden scrolls extracted from dust-laden shelves in libraries storing forgotten wisdom. I studied the concealed references of crumbling maps, perused original and translated manuscripts of the chronicles of the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Jews, Britons, Chinese and Japanese.

I also studied the testimonies of tourists, adventurers, warriors and missionaries, and in doing so I uncovered astonishing and wondrous facts in the traces of the Ten Tribes, that their traditions are still in evidence among peoples and tribes scattered over the entire continent of Asia. In the 380 pages of my research study, "Towards the Sambatyon River – An Expedition in the Footsteps of the Ten Tribes" I recorded their adventures and their institutions, extrapolated from facts described in the history of the peoples of Asia.

I uncovered two vast kingdoms established by these Lost Tribes the Kingdoms of Naftali and Dan. These kingdoms endured for many centuries, and cast fear upon their enemies. Moreover, they controlled the ancient commercial trails traveled by them. The echoes of the stories of the Israelite kingdoms were felt for hundreds of years after the kingdoms themselves had ceased to exist.

An ancient map of those two Kingdoms dating back to 1570, attributed to a Flemish cartographer, Abraham Ortelius, the founder of historical geography, decorates the inside cover of my book.

When the advance guard of the Ten Tribes reached eastern China, it came to a halt in Kaifeng and the areas around it, and from there its members spread out along the entire eastern coast of the continent, north to Peking and south

to Sinkiang, Hangchu and Canton. However, the longer the advance guard stayed waiting for the bulk of the group to catch up, the firmer became its roots in the area.

Other groups of the Ten Tribes which proceeded them and had settled in Chinese Turkestan were received warmly by the Chinese both here and in the depths of China itself, for the brethren of these Jews, who lived in western China, defended their borders against a sudden attack.

In my opinion, the Chinese legend about Moses, as brought by Professor Herbert Giles in his *Adversaria Sinica* of Cambridge University, is to be attributed to the earliest Jewish settlers in China. The legend states:

A maiden bathed in the Chang River (in English "conquest" or "victory" River), and within it she saw a bamboo box floating on the river and coming towards her. She pushed it away, but the box floated back to her and she heard crying from within it, when she opened it she saw an infant. She adopted him and raised him, and when he became an adult he adopted the name "Bamboo," and later he became the ruler of the country.

Even though the story has a Chinese setting, it is easy to trace its Biblical source.

When did the Ten Tribes arrive in China?

That is the question.

The most important sources regarding the history of the Jews in China are five very long inscriptions on four steles in Chinese by the descendants of the Ten Tribes in the ancient temple of the community in Kaifeng. According to the 1613 stele, the first group arrived there in the Zhou dynasty, which – was within a hundred years after they had been exiled from Eretz Yisrael, i.e., in the first half of the 7th century BCE.

Prince Mo-Kong, of the Zhou dynasty, decided to utilize the presence of these Ten Tribes in China and their ties with their brothers in the settlements along the trading routes. In a swift military campaign, in 650 BCE, utilizing the

new presence of the Ten Tribes into Chinese Turkestan, he conquered it and returned it to Chinese control. At the initiative of this Chinese conqueror, a three-way covenant was made between China, the Israelites and the Persian kingdom, which lasted hundreds of years.

The bishop of the Anglican Church in Kaifeng, Prof. William White, an expert on the history of the Israelites in China, notes that in ancient Chinese documents there are hints about Israelite temples in all the large cities of China, including in Chinkiang, Ningpo, Luyang (today known as Honanpo), Nanking, Peking, Canton and Shehong. At least three such temples existed at one time in Kaifeng, which indicates that a sizable Israelite population living there.

The details regarding the only remaining temple in Kaifeng are known to us, as it has a remarkable resemblance to the Temple built by King Solomon in Jerusalem.

For the reading of "the Law" (the Torah) there was a very high chair, like a throne in honor of Moses. The one who read the Torah would cover his face with a mask while reading the Torah. This is a very ancient custom, and it was evidently in use during the first Temple era and was instituted in accordance with what we read in the Book of Exodus: "And Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him." Except for the temple of Kaifeng, we know of no parallel anywhere else in any other Jewish community, to this very day.

The Li family was the "Levi" family, the religious and spiritual leaders of the community. To our days, the descendants of the Levite family have zealously kept the family name, which they add as a prefix to their Chinese name. Those who have this name state that they are descendants of "those who remove the sciatic nerve," as Israelites are known among the Chinese in this city. To this very day, the alley where the temple was located in Kaifeng is known as "the Alley of Those who Remove the Sciatic Nerve."

The daily life of the Israelites in China

was no different than that of their neighbors in the country. They spoke to their neighbors in the local dialect and among them were farmers, merchants, scholars, artists, clerks, doctors, soldiers and military officers. They contributed their talents in all areas of the economy and the daily life of the China society. Many of them were able to attain the highest ranks and some even earned the title of "Mandarin."

In spiritual and religious matters, the Israelites revolved about the temple they had built in this country, as the one in Kaifeng.

In 1644, battalions of Tartars besieged the city of Kaifeng which had a million inhabitants, including 50,000 Israelites and inundated it by breaching the dams on the Hwan-Gho river. The sound of the water rushing through the breached dam could be heard 30 kilometers away. The breach was very close to the Israelite quarter, and their temple. The entire Israelite quarter and temple were all buried under the thick mud. Only about 50,000 inhabitants of the entire city survived. Once the waters receded and the mud hardened the Israelite refugees returned. A census was held in Kaifeng. Among the people listed are 453 Israelite males and 259 Israelite females. Children are not mentioned at all. This would imply that no children had survived. Most of the women, too, had died. The last one of the community to understand Hebrew was Chang-Zhou, who was still alive in 1800.

Some of the Israelite remnants adopted Islam. Others became Buddhist priests, while still others teach in religious seminaries of the Confucian religion. The entire economy of the Israelite community in Kaifeng at the end were based on about fifteen dismal stores, located in holes-in-the-wall.

These were the descendants of the Chosen People, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the bold Ten Tribes, who set out for their Promised Land and who were delayed somewhat – for 2600 years – in China, until their community finally disappeared, like a passing dream.

# Harbin Childhood

By Yehudit Bein

(Forum in Harbin June 2006)

My name is Yehudit Karlik-Bein. I was born in 1940 to Sophia Wertzman-Vigdorchik and Michael Karlik. The extensive Vigdorchik family came to Harbin from Herson, Ukraine in 1907 - 1910. My mother, her parents and two brothers reached Harbin in 1910 after an 18 days' journey by the Trans-Siberian Railway. She was then a two-year-old child, and graduated from the Generozova middle school in 1923. My father was born in Balata, Odessa district in 1917. His parents moved to Vladivostok and he came to Harbin in 1930. He was doing fairly well in his textile-furs business.

I represent the "young Israeli generation" who still remembers Harbin. People of my age left Harbin at the age of 10 or 12, and even today, we are still called "the Harbin kids". During the war, when the whole of Europe was aflame, we enjoyed a comfortable life. Perhaps our parents wanted to hide from us the surrounding realities, but we enjoyed a wonderful childhood and adolescence, and the echo of the war reached us as a muffled thunder.

What do I remember the clearest of the city of my childhood? First of all my home at the Konnaya Ulitza #22, "Dom Antipasa" (standing erect till today), the Old and the New synagogues, my school "Talmud Torah", the great Churin store, and, especially, the tall tree on the Artilleriiskaya Street, with hundreds of colorful strips of paper hanging from its branches.

The "Antipas House", where we lived, was one of the tallest in town, equipped with an elevator, a rare luxury at the time. At the entrance lived a Russian couple. He was what we called "schweitzar", a doorkeeper. He checked the people who entered, and asked them who did they come to visit. I do not know till today if he was "for us" or "against us"?

Majority of the tenants of the Sntipas House were Jews, among them Mrs

Arkus, whose tragic life story one can read in Teddy Kaufman's book, "The Harbin which is in my heart". There was also the Kiol family. Mr. Kiol was the headmaster of the Harbin German School. On the top floor there was only one small apartment with a lot of aquariums with colorful fish swimming in them. There were also many windows, from which the whole of Harbin could be seen like on a palm of your hand.

As all the children of my age, I, too, was attended by a nanny, "niania" in Russian, whom I "inherited" from the Dr. Chaplick family. She was kind and noble, and I loved her very much. I remember her very well: a tall, handsome woman, well educated and intelligent. She was a widow of a Polish officer. When I was five, my father decided that I am sufficiently mature and can do without a "niania". She left our home, but came to visit us for years to come. She died just before we left Harbin. Mother and I attended her funeral at a Catholic church in Novy Gorod (The New City). With my nanny gone, I began to attend the "Talmud Torah" kindergarten.

Each summer, during the hot months of July and August our family used to move to "za-Sungari" (the other side of the Sungari river). In the spring of 1945 I "caught" a severe case of measles and instead of going "za-Sungari" we went to live with our friends in their farm way out of the city. There they gave me plenty of goat milk, which was supposed to have been a potent remedy against the illness. This was also my luck to have missed the entrance of the Red Army into the city.

There was, however, an episode, which I cannot forget till today: One day in 1946 my mother and I were walking along the "Naberejnaya" (The Sungari embankment) when we saw a band of strange men, armed with rifles, coming in our direction. They were haggard,

some barefoot, dressed in tattered khaki. But the most striking thing about them was that they walked in total silence. Passers by, silent, too, looked at them in bewilderment. Much later, mother told me that they were the "Ba-lu din", soldiers of the Communist Eighth Army, who marched to the municipal prison on Kommercheskaya Street to liberate their comrades, who were imprisoned there.

Synagogues played an important part in our childhood experience. During the High Holidays all the Jews of Harbin saw it their duty to be seen in the synagogue. My father, who was an active member of our community, attended the "New" Synagogue, but his mother continued, as ever, to go to the Great ("Old") Synagogue. I believe that the "New" Synagogue was attended mostly by the younger folk. As for us, the children, we changed from one to another. I remember well Rabbi Kiselev, who sat to the right of the Ark, once in the "Old" Synagogue, another time – in the "New".

My father's seat was in the fourth or the fifth row on the right hand side of the aisle. Next to him sat Mr. Oumansky, father of the late Garik Oumansky, who passed away less than a year ago. Facing my father, on the women's balcony sat my mother. She chose her seat purposely: Not being able to read Hebrew and despite her prayer book having a Russian translation, she watched father praying below, and, to keep face, when he turned a page, she followed him.

Before the prayer for the dead, "Yizkor", the Gabbai (president of the synagogue) used to thunder at us: "Children, out!", and we used to pour into the yard. There we played marbles or "kartinki" ("pictures"), a pack of portraits of film stars, placed on the ground with a square frame around it. The contending players had to knock the pictures out of the square by hurling a "bitok", a piece



of flat iron or an old shoe heel.

Come to think of it, the area of our activities was rather limited. At the time it seemed to be boundless, but when we visited it again as adults, we saw that it was just a narrow rectangle from Novogorodnaya to Kazachyia, and from Diagonalnaya to the Sungari embankment.

When I was about seven, my uncle, a great football fan, used to take his son and me to the football games. We walked on foot from the Pristan Quarter, to the football field, across the old water carrier. My nephew and I were fans of the opposing teams, and one of us cried bitterly at the end of each game. One team, however, was an exception, "The Red Star", because the star of the team, Borya Zvibel, happened to be Jewish. We were also very proud of our sports yacht, "Kedma", whose crew were members of the "Maccabi" club. I remember well Teddy Kaufman's brother, Dima, and Shmushkovich, who set out on it along the Sungari.

### **Talmud Torah**

My early *Alma Mater* after the kindergarten was the Jewish school "Talmud Torah". It was a world all its own, completely separated from reality. I remember well the black benches screwed onto black desks with a cavity for an inkstand. The desks were covered with names and drawings, carved by the pupils' pocketknives. Many years later I learned that the school belonged to the chain of schools of the religious party "Agudat Israel". In my time it was a "modern school" where Hebrew was spoken in "Ashkenazi" dialect. Later, with the occupation Manchuria by the Soviet Army, we had to wear a Red Star badge.

I will never forget our Hebrew teacher, Mr. Nadel who lived in a small house in the schoolyard. When the Soviets prohibited the study of Hebrew, he used to take us to his apartment and gave us "private" lessons of the language and the Old Testament.

The school was situated close to our home, and I was allowed to go there

without being accompanied by mother, which was customary. Mothers used to bring their children to school and pick them up after the classes. In winter they used to bring with them warm blankets to protect us from cold, which sometimes dropped as low as minus 30 degrees Celsius!

On Hanukka and at the end of each academic year we had parties, prepared by the Parents' Committee. There were a lot of tasty refreshments, dancing, and, first and foremost, a performance produced by the parents and acted by the pupils. Once we even had a professional producer!

Nothing was taken more seriously than birthdays. All the girls arrived at a birthday party in thoroughly starched dresses, with ribbons in their curls. Boys in formal suits and ties. We sat at the long tables covered by spotless, well starched table cloth and loaded with tarts and sweets. Behind us stood our mothers and made sure that we behaved properly as befits children brought up in god homes.

The meal over, each one of us had to exhibit his talents, for there was hardly a Jewish child who would not be given musical education, even in families of meager means. My specialty was not piano or violin. I sang -- Russian war-time songs and romances. I still remember all of them.

Then came 1949, the beginning of the great *alyia* to Israel. Those were the intoxicating days of expectation and hope to begin a new life in the old-new **country of our own**. I remember how thrilled we were when a short news documentary has shown Golda Meir, the first ambassador of Israel in USSR presenting her credentials in the Kremlin.

At the beginning of 1950 my class at school was all but empty. Every day another pupil came to say good-bye: "We are leaving for Israel!" One day I came home from school and asked my mother, "When are **we** going to go to Israel?" I did not get a reply.

Soon after she asked me (I was ten at the time): "Do you really want to go

to Israel?" I answered in the affirmative. She opened the door of the drawing room and said: "Look carefully at what you see, and remember that you will never have it there." I answered: "Mother, I promise you that never will I ask for anything. Nor will I ever complain". And so it was.

Then came the preparations for the journey. Lists were made of what to sell, what to buy, what to take with us, and what to leave there. The reports from Israel were vague. Some advised the immigrants to take any object they can lay their hands on, even a broom or clothes-pegs, and to buy dark colored bedding, because in Israel there is not enough water for laundering.

We sold our beautiful furniture, which hurt mother a lot, while we, the children, delighted in sliding over the parquet floors in the empty apartment. On April 20 we left for Tientsin, and, from there, by boat, to Israel.

### **What do I regret to have left in Harbin?**

I lived in Harbin ten years and, actually, I am not acquainted with it at all. I had but a few opportunities to play with Chinese children. We did have Chinese friends on the Diagonalnaya Street. They had two sons my age. We played occasionally in their yard. We had a good friend by the name Liu, whom we called Liulka. What wouldn't I give to meet our Liulka today, and to know what happened to him during all these years.

As you know, Israel is a country of Jews, coming from dozens of countries. Here, the people who came from Russia are referred to as Russians. Those who came from Morocco are Moroccans. I am very proud when I am called "a Chinese". I am proud of having a passport where I am registered as: **born in China**.

It is true: we left the country too young to have yet contributed something to it. But we want to thank you for giving secure shelter to our parents, and to us -- a wonderful childhood.

**Yehudit Bein and all the "Children of Harbin".**

# Pioneering the Jewish Exodus from China

By Ya'acov Liberman

(A lecture at the Forum in Harbin June 2006)

In Jewish life, throughout the ages, we did not only chronicle our daily lives in the Diaspora. We also dwelled on the way we left these countries and the various forms of our departures. Often, the process of these departures accurately mirrored our lives in foreign lands and reflected on our historic observations of the periods under study.

The most important departures as recorded in Jewish history were those from Egypt in the days of Moses and from Europe during the Nazi period in the twentieth century. Of course there were others from Spain and from Russia. All of these must be characterized as tragic exits and dangerous escapes.

However, there is one mass departure of the Jewish communities that was not only orderly and voluntary, but which also reflected a life of peace and productive tranquility as experienced by the Jews living in China during the first half of the twentieth century. It is indeed our moral duty to record not only the evil that befell our people during the many centuries of life in foreign lands. It is imperative for us to remember the blessed years of welcome and hospitality, of care and protection, as well as a generous offer of opportunities that we received from our Chinese hosts. To our deep regret and the world's everlasting shame, such humanitarianism was seldom to be found at that time in almost any part of the universe. One such place was China. One such people were the ancient people of this land.

Little wonder then that we are so keen to recall every year of our communal existence in China ... be it in Harbin, Tientsin or Shanghai. However, in our enthusiasm to recollect every aspect of our productive lives as

guests of the People of China, we seem to ignore the equally humane and happily unique story of our collective, voluntary exodus from this land of generosity and compassion. Rarely did Jews leave their Galuth as we left the shores of China. Indeed, we departed as grateful friends, in warm embrace and sorrowful parting. We exited as we lived ... content, free and happy. And therefore, it is this unique exodus in our history that must be remembered in every detail, remembered with pride and satisfaction.

Since I was honored to lead the first vessel with 893 Jewish immigrants from China to Israel on a Liberty boat named "Wooster Victory", it is only appropriate that I share with you the interesting experiences of this historic journey. It all began on December 24, 1948, when passengers began to trickle in from the city. With all the potential immigrants came family and friends. By nine in the morning the pier was a wall-to-wall carpet of people milling around with children, friends and luggage. Hundreds of others from the Jewish Community were also there just to witness this historic moment.

Whereas Jews departing from Europe to Israel had to climb barbed wire fences and cross forbidden barricades, Jews from China came to boats well dressed, loaded with baggage and memories of a happy life led for three generations! My first order of the day was to activate the various committees that would assist us with life on board ship in every conceivable detail. We organized a synagogue, a school, lessons in Hebrew, radio announcements of news and weather, a daily bulletin and a committee for cultural, sports

and entertainment activities.

Our journey would last for 52 days because our vessel could not pass through the Suez Canal and was thus forced to travel around the Cape of Good Hope, or as many used to say, "around the world". By the third day it became evident that the Italian crew on board was both too small and too inexperienced to handle food and medical care. Thus, it became essential to address the problems of the kitchen and the ship's infirmary. We were fortunate to have many excellent housewives on board, who soon upgraded the menu and redeemed the deficient culinary skills of the Italian sailors-turned-cooks. Thanks to them, despite the limited facilities, the food served on Wooster Victory became palatable.

Our medical problems were solved with even greater success. All doctors on board the ship, led by the young Katzenelson brothers (who received their medical degrees at St. John's University in Shanghai, and by now are famous doctors in Israel) helped to transform the primitive ambulatory rooms into a first class medical facility, where all passengers received competent care.

A busy schedule prepared and activated by various committees added spice and anticipation to an otherwise monotonous journey, conducted under conditions far from luxurious. But not all the excitement was premeditated or planned. Early one morning I was woken up by one of our Betarim (members of the Zionist Youth Movement) on deck duty, announcing that an elderly woman had jumped overboard! Within moments, I consulted with the captain and orders were given for the vessel to turn back and begin

the three hour circling of the area, as prescribed by international naval ordinance.

While this was going on, the woman's husband was found. He was a man in his seventies, who spoke only German and insisted on speaking to his wife over the ship's public address system. This frustrating experience only added to the overall sense of tragedy, as it became obvious that the woman had suffered from depression, while her poor husband just could not believe that she was not hiding somewhere on the ship. To prevent any possible repetition of such unfortunate occurrences, our young men on board were instructed to patrol the decks twenty-four hours a day. Some joyous events illuminated our schedule as well. One couple decided to be married at sea, and I was given the honor of performing the ceremony.

A second happy episode of our journey came about when, in the middle of the night, I was informed that a passenger was experiencing contractions. After alerting our medical staff, immediate preparations were made in the ship's hospital room of a delivery. Within an hour "Wooster Victory" had a new passenger! The newborn baby was a boy and our doctors suggested that we not wait the three weeks until our arrival in South Africa, but that we have the Brit Milah (circumcision) performed right there on the ship. The next week, therefore, provided another "first" on our long journey. The ceremony was performed to perfection and the entire ship, both passengers and crew, celebrated the happy occasion.

Thus we continued on our route, slowly rounding the Cape of Good Hope, on the way to our first stop ...Cape Town, South Africa. We well knew that none of us would be allowed to disembark on our stopovers. I was therefore pleasantly surprised to read the cable our Italian captain showed me. It read that, as commander of the passengers,

I would be allowed to disembark the vessel while it is in port. By the time I read the cable, authorities were boarding the ship followed by a delegation of the Jewish Federation of South Africa.

After routine greetings and speeches, I was whisked away to visit the Jewish sites of Cape Town. My wife, being in her seventh month of pregnancy, was unable to accompany me. However, she was happy that I would have the opportunity to see Cape Town. By the time I was delivered back to the ship, it was about five in the afternoon. The sight that greeted my eyes was unforgettable. Thousands of Jews from Cape Town and its vicinity, with truckloads of food and clothing, filled the pier from one end to the other. Women were taking off their jewelry and throwing it at the passengers. They also offered shoes, hats, chocolates and whatever else they could lay their hands on. No doubt the warmhearted Jews of South Africa had no idea that the "Wooster Victory" passengers were traveling with all their belongings as they left a country that was not only hospitable, but also helpful in protecting them and given them comfort and security throughout the years.

Immediately upon re-boarding the vessel, I instructed my assistants to give the food to the kitchen, but to store all the clothing in packages for presentation to Hadassah (Women's Charity Organization) upon arrival in Israel.

As our vessel was preparing to leave the pier of Cape Town, we were blessed by a scene which all of us will remember as long as we live. It was getting darker as the sun was setting on the horizon. Suddenly, from far away – then closer and closer – came the sound of the Hatikva (the Jewish National Anthem) as the throng below and the passengers on deck joined in this "song of hope", while the boat slowly moved out to sea, on its way to the newborn State of Israel.

Our next stop was "Dakar". By

coincidence, as we rounded the coast of Africa, we heard on the radio the news of French recognition of the Jewish State. As a direct result of these developments, the Governor of Dakar sent us a cable indicating his desire to come aboard and meet the passengers on the ship. No doubt the French governor was expecting to find devastation and misery on board the "Wooster Victory". Instead, he was welcomed by well dressed, happy and healthy looking people who organized a colorful reception for the honorable visitors. In fact, the party was met by an honor guard carrying French and Israeli flags, while our own band led by the Sherman brothers of Harbin and Shanghai greeted the visitors with "La Marseillaise" followed by "Hatikva". Finally, we were on our way to Haifa. The long awaited moment was now at hand. From the early hours of the morning on February 14, 1949, passengers began to occupy the best places on deck below the captain's quarters. All of us gazed at the scene before us, trying to etch into eternal memory this first glimpse of the Holy Land. And there it was – Haifa, spread out on the mountains of Carmel, its picturesque buildings dotting the view from shore as far inland as the eye could see. At the pier stood friends and relatives who had arrived earlier by plane, as well as others who were just curious to see what a "Chinese Jew" looked like.

The circle could now be closed. The story of our Jewish Community in China was about to come to an end. Though nostalgic and grateful for the wonderful hosts we left behind, we were now looking forward to a new life and a new home which were aching to build for our people.

And as I peered out at the city of Haifa, and the coastline of Israel, I said to myself: "At last, after 52 days ...NO! ...after two thousand years, we have returned home to a free and independent Jewish State!"

# THE COMMERCIAL CLUB AND THE JEWISH COLONY OF HARBIN

T.Kaufman (Forum in Harbin June 2006)

Together with the Chinese and Russian population of Harbin, Jews took an active part in four non-Jewish organizations of the city. These organizations were the Commercial Club, the First Harbin's Public Commercial School, the Stock Exchange Committee and the Union of House-owners.

Jews headed the first three of these establishments. Thus, for many years, Yakov Romanovich Kabalkin was the Chairman of the Harbin Stock Exchange Committee. Out of thirteen members of the administration, eight were Jews. Y.R.Kabalkin was the director and owner of "Atsetko" company - the first soyabean plant in Harbin. The Chairman of the Committee of the Chief Officers of the Commercial Club and of the administration of the First Harbin's Public Commercial School was Dr.Abraham Kaufman. In Harbin there were three large and popular clubs: the Railroad Club (Zhelsob) which belonged to KVZhD and was located in the New City (Novy Gorod) on Bolshoi prospect, the Mechanical Club (Mekhsob) which also belonged to KVZhD and was located on Birzhevaya street in Pristan (Daoli), and the Commercial Club (Komsob) on Kommercheskaya street also located in Pristan (Daoli). The first two clubs did not have members, they were maintained by the administration of KVZhD. The opera, theater and symphony orchestra performed in these clubs, concerts were arranged. The largest stage in the city was in Zhelsob, and the only circular stage of Harbin was in Mekhsob.

The Commercial Club was a public club, not subsidized either by the city, provincial or central authorities.

Only men could be members of the club, but all members of their families could attend events at Komsob. The annual general meeting of the members of Komsob elected the Committee of Chief Officers. People of a variety of nationalities were club members: Russians, Chinese, Jews, Georgians, Karaites and others. Dr. Abraham Kaufman was the Chairman of the Committee of Chief Officers for many years, Vladimir Isakovich, the Manager of Skidelsky's coal mines was the Deputy Chairman. The members of the Committee of Chief Officers were Jewish: V.Arkin, S.Liberman, Y.Kabalkin et al., Chinese: Song Hoshin, Liu Tai et al., Russians: Attorney G.L.Milenko, I.I.Marks, businessmen Terentyev, Krylov et al., the Chairmen of the Georgian society: Khaindrava and Tsertsvadze and Karaite I.R.Lopato. An auditorium seating 700 people was at the ground level of Komsob, where theatrical productions were performed and motion pictures were shown. The club also had a foyer, a restaurant and rooms for playing card games such as bridge and preference. A billiard-room was located in the basement. A summer verandah and a stage with a roof in the form of a shell were located in the garden adjacent to the building for theatrical appearances during the summer. In a separate building was one of the largest libraries of the city.

At Komsob was the dramatic studio of Kornakova-Brinner, who formerly performed with the Moscow Arts Theater. Kornakova-Brinner was the mother of the famous actor Yule Brinner. The dramatic ensemble of Orlov, formerly a member of the Moscow Arts Theater, also performed in Komsob. On Wednesdays the

women's literary circle met there, the majority of members of which were Jewish. F.Y.Arkin headed the circle for many years. During the summer the children's playground was open daily from nine a.m. to two p.m. for children of ages from five to fourteen. There also existed a youths' dramatic studio under the management of Y.Khorosh.

Komsob was the cultural center of the Russian and Jewish liberal intelligentsia. Christmas, New Year, Easter and Shrovetide (maslennitsa) celebrations were held there, as well as masquerades, balls, student evenings on Tatiana's day, the mutual congratulations on the 1st of January and reports on general themes, lectures by Attorney G.L. Milenko and Dr. A.I. Kaufman. The themes varied: the creative art of K.S. Stanislavsky, the 100th anniversary of A.S. Pushkin's birthday, "Pan-Europe", etc. The wide circles of the Harbin population used the library, which lent books to readers for a reasonable price. Members of Komsob could get up to three books free of charge. Komsob played an important role in the life of the Jewish population of Harbin. Purim evenings of "Betar" were held in the hall of Komsob, the Chanukah evenings of "Maccabi", children's matinees of the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO), and the charitable bazaars of the Ladies' Jewish Charity Association (DEBO).

In the vicinity of the commercial garden, which was very close to the building of Komsob, there was an enormous playground which belonged to the new sport society (NSO), the sister organization of Komsob. From November through

**(continued on page 29)**

# The Influence of Chinese Culture on my Life

By Karl Bettelheim (Australia)

My father got a very good job, and in these early three years, my parents were most successful. They had grown up in an atmosphere of culture and being impressed by Chinese art, started collecting artefacts, which I still have. These surrounded me from an early age and became part of my life.

My mother and I went to visit the old Temple Complex of Lung Wha, the day after she heard that her only brother had been captured by the Nazis. She was so impressed by what she saw and explained it to me. We were stopped by a man selling incense sticks with the words: "Missi, buy incense for Buddha and make a wish". My mother bought one, lit it, and prayed to the Buddha for her brother's safety. Later she often wondered if the Buddha of Lung Wha had been looking after her brother, as he is one of the few survivors.

On another outing into the main city with my mother, a dog followed us all the way home. He was starving and sick, so my father took it to a veterinarian friend asking him to put it to sleep. The veterinarian decided to cure it and persuaded my father to keep it. The dog was an Imperial Pekinese and stayed with us throughout the war and was a most faithful pet, being especially attached to me. Unfortunately, soon after the end of the war, it died and I have been unable to have another dog because I doubt whether I could ever give any other dog the same love I had shared with it.

When we were forced by the Japanese into the Restricted Hongkew area, the few pieces of art and the art books were a great comfort to us during those dark times, but collecting antiques was out of the question in

the very cramped conditions. Many of the Chinese people around us, though much poorer, were never antagonistic towards us. Instead we were invited into the homes of our Chinese neighbors for meals, and I have become a great lover of Chinese culinary culture and rapidly learned to eat with chopsticks.

We were impressed by the varied designs of Chinese matchbox covers, and as I frequently had to buy matches, I started to collect them. I still have this collection of which I am very proud.

A love of Chinese culture and history has been with me all my life, and the varied artefacts which my parents bought have pride of place in our flat. They played a major role in the very formative years I had in Shanghai, which had protected us and provided sanctuary for us.

## THE COMMERCIAL CLUB AND THE JEWISH COLONY OF HARBIN

(from page 28)

March the skating-rink was open, and from May through September the playground became the sportsground of "Betar" and "Maccabi".

The First Harbin's Public Commercial School was located on the second floor of Komsob. This was a classical Russian secondary school with a staff of highly skilled teachers - all teachers without exception had graduated from higher educational institutions. Besides the general subjects, the school taught different languages: Chinese (after the occupation of the city by the Japanese in 1932 Japanese was added), English (since 1942 German was taught instead of

English), and also oriental studies, business correspondence, economic geography, political economy, science of commodities, English correspondence, etc. while Jewish students were taught Jewish history, the Russian pupils learned the New Testament, Georgians, Armenians and Tatars - their national languages. In the national composition this was the school of the United Nations. Jews composed one half of all the students, and the other half consisted of a variety of nationalities: Russians, Chinese, Georgians, Armenians, Tatars, Latvians and Ukrainians. My close friend was a remarkable

Chinese girl Tanya Ai Yingxiang. Her sister Olga also studied in this school, and there were generally many Chinese students in every class. All nationalities were given the possibility to celebrate their holidays. Dr. A.I. Kaufman headed the administration of the commercial school for many years. Broad financial support by the Jewish community was constantly contributed to the school. All this was concentrated in the building of the Commercial Club, which played a vital a role in the history of the cultural development of Harbin in general and the Jewish colony in particular.

# The Eastern Wall

By Noga Olmert

***For 65 years Harbin was a home for tens of thousands of Jews, who created there a well organized traditional Jewish community with institutions of its own: synagogues, schools, clubs, political parties, hospital, etc., At the end of WWII, when the community was dissolved and its members left China for Israel, USA, Australia, etc., these institutions ceased to function and remained closed for over half a century. But History, one is told, repeats itself, and, a fortnight ago, one of the central synagogues of Harbin reopened its gates for Jewish activity, which, as the local authorities hope, may turn the city into an important tourism center for Jewish visitors from all over the globe.***

For many months Natalia and Avi Podolsky waited for their passports to be stamped to enable them to emigrate from Harbin, North-eastern China, to Israel. "It will be stamped in August," they were promised by a Chinese fortune teller. And, indeed, the exit permit arrived in August, 1961, and the happy couple took a cab to the Harbin train station with their four months old son, Alex, the last Jewish child born in China.

"The station was crowded, as Chinese train stations usually are, and we feared that we would never be able to get to the train," tells Avi Podolsky his story, "and it was a miracle that at the last moment a Chinese officer, a neighbor-friend of the Podolskys, came to take leave of them. He stopped in the center of the noisy hall, and roared into the loudspeaker: "Give way! Give way!", parting the human Red Sea for the Podolskys to board the train. They were among the last Jews to leave Harbin.

At present, forty years since the last

Jew left China, history begins to repeat itself: The New Synagogue, one of the central Harbin synagogues, was recently renovated, and now opens its gates again for Jewish cultural activity. It was built in 1921, mostly for the younger generation of the Harbin Jewish community, while the elder members prayed at what was called "The Old" or "The Chief" Synagogue. The prayer sessions are not going to be resumed for the time being, due to the current official Chinese opposition to what is called in modern China, "religious cult" of any faith and any nation. Instead, at the initiative of the government of the Heilongjiang Province, of which Harbin is the capital, a permanent exhibition of the history of Jewish presence in Harbin will be housed in the building, and various seminars on the subject will be held there in the amalgamated framework of the Institute of the History of the Jewish community in Harbin, the Heilongjiang Provincial government, Association of the Israel based former Jewish Residents in China (Igud Yotzei Sin) and the Israel-China Friendship Society.

In his letter of greetings to the second seminar dedicated to the Jewish presence in Harbin, which recently took place in Harbin, Chen Yun Long, Chinese ambassador to Israel wrote: "The History of the Jewish presence in China is not only an important chapter in the Jewish history, but also in the history of the Chinese culture."

Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, whose parents were former residents of Harbin, wrote in his illustrated message to the Seminar: "As a member of a family who lived in China for a long time, I was deeply impressed by the attitude of the

Chinese people towards the Jewish community in Harbin. I hope that this forum will encourage Chinese tourism in Israel and witness the Hebrew culture at work on the soil of its ancient fatherland".

## **25,000 Jews**

At its highest (on the eve of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria), the Jewish community of Harbin was 25,000 strong (as compared to 150,000 "White" Russians). And yet many of its former members reached noted posts on their aliya to Israel. To mention some of them: Yosef Tekoa (Tukachinsky), former ambassador of Israel at the UN; Professor Haim Tadmor, a noted Israeli scientist and vice president of the Israel Academy of Sciences; lawyer Eliahu Lankin, commander of the IZL arms ship, MK and Israeli ambassador in South Africa; a noted lawyer, and a front line public figure, Arieh Marinsky; Engineers Shmuel Miller, Galya Volobrinzky-Katz; and Mark Lo-zar (Losser), MK Menachem Savidor, Director, Israel Railroads, Col. Dan Harel (Peshkovsky), Chief Health Officer, Israel Navy; Col. IAF Shmuel Kislev; Fima Royetenberg; a noted Israeli painter, and many others.

My grandfather, MK Mordechai Olmert, came to Israel in 1933 after he had accomplished agricultural "hakhsharah" in Holland. One of his sons is my uncle, Ehud Olmert, Prime Minister of Israel.

In his biographical book, my grandfather writes that during his student days at the Harbin technical Institute, he wanted to organize a Zionist Student Organization. In his book, "My Long Way", he writes: "Luckily, I met a student by the name of Levi Ravikovich. At the time there was a gossip that the Ravikovich

family behaved 'somewhat strange' : they would not speak to each other in any language rather than Hebrew. Levy Ravikovich, grandfather of the noted Israeli poetess, Dahlia Ravikovich, advised my grandfather not to mention the word "Zionist", as the word "Zionism" was anathema to the majority of the Harbin students . My grandfather listened to him and the "Jewish students organization" came into being.

In 1928, Mordechai Olmert joined the Revisionist "Betar" movement. "Betar influenced the Harbin Jewish youth more than any other," writes Teddy Kaufman, chairman of "Igud Yotzei Sin" in Israel. Teddy himself was not a member of Betar, since his father opposed the revisionists. Instead, he joined the "Maccabi", organized in 1925 by David Laskov, to be known in the distant future as "the oldest soldier in the Israeli Army" after having been released at the age of 80 as a *tat-aluf* (brigadier-general). During the Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards destroyed all foreign temples, churches and cemeteries across China. Fortunately, the Harbin Jewish cemetery was situated far from the city and remained the only one untouched. In 1992, with the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and China, Kaufman appealed to the Chinese authorities with a request to renovate the Jewish cemetery, which may become a site of pilgrimage for the former residents of Harbin, now living in Israel and the US. They agreed and in 1994 the IYS prepared a detailed map of the cemetery in order to be able to identify individual graves, according to the archive lists of burials. In 2001, while serving with the Israeli Embassy in Beijing as an agricultural expert, my father, Amram Olmert, discovered the grave of his grandfather Yoseph Olmert. My father and his three brothers decided to renovate it.

Another former resident of China, Raya Fein, z"l, aunt of HK Epi

Eitam, and a close friend of my grandparents, asked my father to find the graves of Ephraim and Clara Fein, the grandparents of Epi. In 2004, my father and his brother, Ehud, at the time Minister of Trade and Industry, visited the grave of their grandfather Yoseph, and then said Kadish at the graves of Ephraim and Clara Fein. Last week HK Epi Eitam told me: "Despite my political disagreements with Ehud Olmert, I appreciate his gesture. It was humane and befitting a relative and a gentleman". Eppi told me that he and his family intend going to Harbin to visit the graves of his parents.

### ***Trade, Industry and Art***

From the earliest days of the newly born city, the Jews of Harbin contributed much to its trade and industry. No less was their influence felt in the spiritual life and development of the city. Except for specific Jewish institutions, like synagogues, schools, youth organizations, cemetery, the Harbin Jewish community established a hospital and a soup kitchen, which served general public regardless of faith and origin. There was not one industrial or trade institution in Harbin, which was not involved one way or another with the Jewish economic entrepreneurship, including flour mills, sugar refineries, coal mines, banks, hotels, bakeries, publishing houses, theatres, tea rooms and restaurants, to say nothing of shops and stores. The Jews were also prominent members of the board of directors of the Harbin Stock Exchange.

However, no less than in the economic development of the city, were the Jews active in its cultural life. From 1918 on Jewish plays were staged by the Jewish literary-theatrical society, "Imeldag". World wide Jewish celebrities came to perform in Harbin, amongst them violinist Jascha Heifetz.

With the Japanese conquest of Manchuria, the Jewish community shrunk to 3,500 members. The

relationship with the new authorities had its ups and downs, but all and all, Jewish every-day life was not affected much, except for the economic activity, curtailed by confiscations of foreign ownership and the growing antisemitism of the "White" Russian populace. With his coming to power, Hitler pressed the Japanese to adopt the anti-Jewish Nuremberg Laws, but the central Japanese Authorities in Tokyo withstood this pressure, both out of their reluctance to accept Nazi ideology, and, no less, for political reasons. Amongst those in Tokyo, who influenced the Japanese government in favor of the Jews was Prof. Kotsuji, a Japanese Jewish historian converted to Judaism. For his friendly attitude towards the Jews, the Germans demanded his expulsion from Japan proper, which the Japanese government reluctantly agreed to. As a result, he and his family migrated penniless to Harbin, where the Jewish community granted him a pension and paid rent for his apartment for four years. At the end of the WWII, Kotsuji returned to Japan where he wrote two books: "From Tokyo to Jerusalem" and "Instruction on Hebrew Grammar". He passed away in 1973, and, by his request, was buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

The worst ever period for the Harbin Jews befell them during the eight and half months of the Soviet occupation of Manchuria. Many Jews were arrested and forcibly taken to the Russian Gulags, and all the Zionist activity stopped. Among the first to be arrested were Dr. A. Kaufman, the father of Teddy Kaufman, who was the head of the Harbin Jewish community, and Yefim Podolsky, the father of Avi. Dr. Kaufman was released in 1961. He joined his family in Israel. Podolsky was released in 1956 and only two years later was allowed to join his family in Harbin.

\* \* \*

Recently the Chinese press began to show interest for the tiny community **(continued on page 32)**

# Old China Hands Grand World Wide Reunion Portland, Oregon USA September 10th to 13th, 2006

**Co-Organizers: Ed Immergluck, Shanghai (1940-1946), PTH,  
Aurora Tavy Levenspiel, Shanghai native, WDPS, Aurora**

Why Portland? Ed and Tavy both live in Corvallis, Oregon, 85 miles south of Portland. It happens that one of Portland's principal industries is tourism, hence ideal for a reunion! It is a large city (1.7 million), yet maintains a small town charm! It is a Pacific Rim International trade hub. It has a large China-town, adjoined by a city block size Classic Chinese Garden. Portland's International Airport serves 17 airlines. It is connected to the city center by a 30-minute ride on the light rail system (MAX), trains running every 15 minutes from 4.30 AM to 11.30 PM. All buses, streetcars and the three MAX lines are accessible to persons with disabilities. There's a large fare free downtown area. Many interesting things to do in and around Portland; info later.

Who is providing guidance, advice

and help? Bob deVries, Organizer of the 1990 Reunion at Anaheim; Harold Nyland, Co-Organizer of the 1994 Reunion at San Francisco; Mario Machado, Co-Organizer of the 1996 Reunion at Las Vegas; Peter Stein, Organizer of the 2000 Reunion at Phoenix; Zoya Shlakis, attendee at all reunions, and Organizational Participant at most; Prof. Robert Gohstand, Organizer of the CSUN OCH Archive gatherings in 2002 and 2005; and Joe Jedeikin, volunteering to address and advance the cost of mailing of our postal mailed announcements.

Will you come? We need this information as soon as possible. A good and early count will allow us to secure the best rates at a desirable type, size and location hotel facility, and for group events. If you have any

questions or concerns, please write on the back of the questionnaire. If you "definitely" plan to come or "may come" we would much appreciate an advance deposit of US\$25 per person to help defray initial expenses. This will be refunded if you later find that you cannot come; but it will provide you priority in the event we would need to limit attendance. Make checks payable to "2006 OCH Portland Reunion"; please note on the check: "Advance Deposit".

Please cut on line below and return the Questionnaire to:

Ed Immergluck, 2006 OCH Portland Reunion, 2215 NW 13th St., Corvallis, OR 97330-1429, USA

(For your Info: Phone: 541-754-0808; Fax: 541-754-2626; E-mail: immer0808@msn.com)

## The Eastern Wall

(continued from page 31)

which had lived amongst them for more than half a century. According to Teddy Kaufman, who takes an active part in the seminar, the Harbin municipality invested two and a half million dollars in renovating the New and the Old synagogues, and the Preliminary School "Talmud Torah", which was transformed to an educational institute for Korean girls. The Institute of Research of the Jewish Presence in Harbin published a large Chinese-English album of photographs on the subject. The subjects discussed at the seminar included the strengthening of cooperation between Israel, the Jews

living in Diaspora and the people of the Heilongjiang Province.

In his book "The Harbin Jews are in my Heart" (now in the process of being translated into English and Chinese) Teddy Kaufman writes: "We never felt that we lived in a 'far away country' and that Harbin was situated 'at the end of the world', For us Harbin was the center of the world. However all our yearnings and dreams were riveted to Eretz Israel." He adds: "I do not live in Harbin any more, but Harbin will remain within me forever." He made aliya to Israel in 1950. "Maariv"

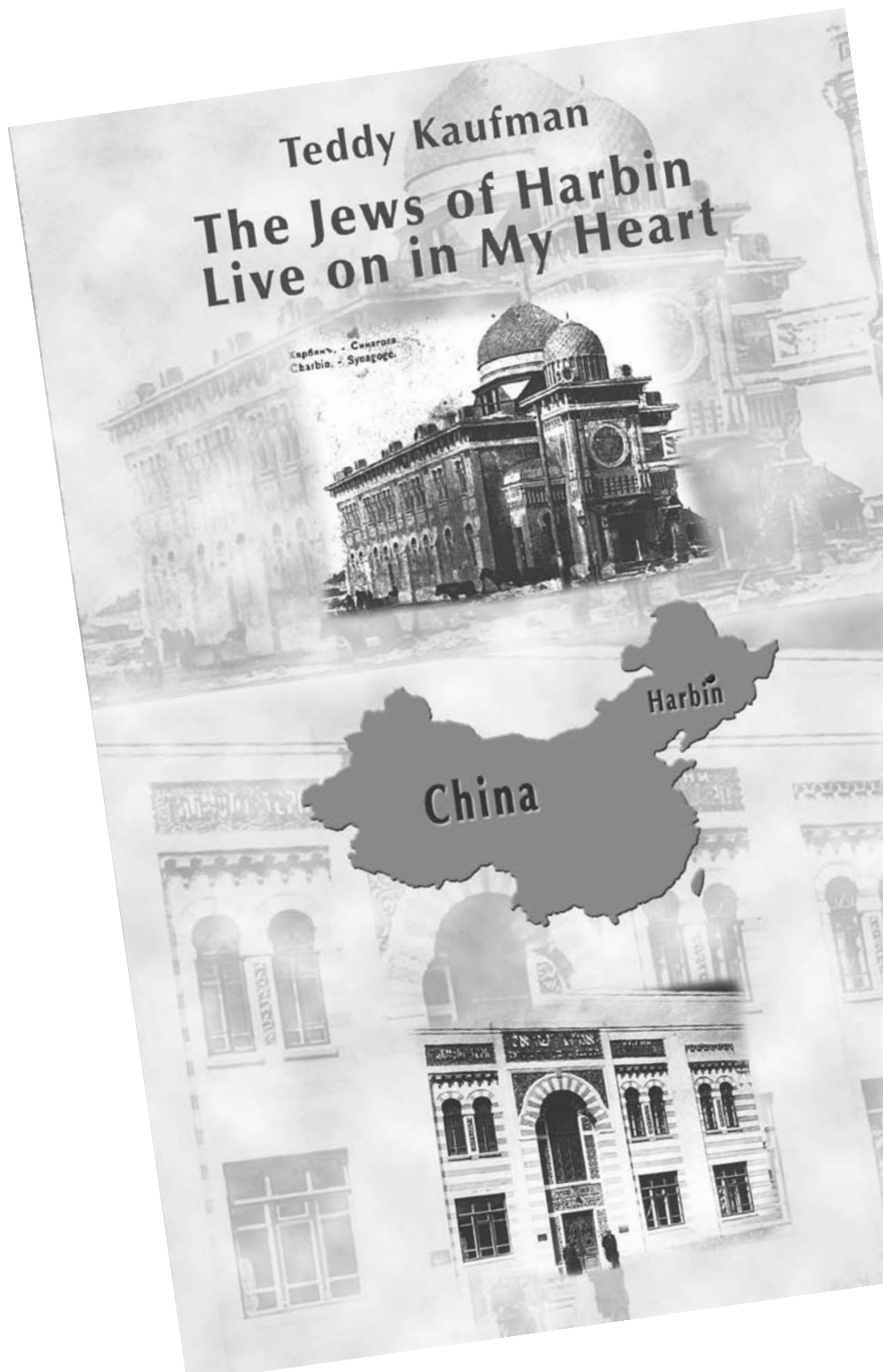
PLEASE NOTE  
Our new e-mails:  
igud-sin@13.net

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

*Thank you*



# Books



Igud Yotzei Sin is pleased to announce the publication of the historical account of the Jewish presence in Harbin "The Jews of Harbin Live In My Heart" by Teddy Kaufman (In Hebrew). The book is a comprehensive documentation of the life pattern of the Harbin Jews and their contribution to the economical and cultural development of the city. It also owes its unique value to the fact that the author was an associate of the activities of the "HEDO", (The Jewish Community of Harbin), and includes his personal reminiscences of the turbulent 1930's – 1940's.

Bat Ami Melnik, the Hebrew editor of the book, writes:

"Teddy Kaufman, born in Harbin in 1924, is chairman of the Igud Yotzei Sin, formerly an activist in the Harbin Jewish community, and son of one of its leaders, Dr. A. Kaufman. At the suggestion of his close friend and deputy chairman of the IYS, Yossi Klein, also formerly of Harbin, Teddy Kaufman put his reminiscences on paper. The book unfolds before the reader a broad panorama of historical events which took place in Manchuria and the capital of its Jewish settlement, Harbin, from the downfall of the Chinese rule, through the stormy period of the Japanese occupation, and up to its self-dissipation with the emergence of the Communist regime. In his book, T. Kaufman opens a window overlooking another fascinating facet, at times tragic, at times gay and humorous, of this unique Jewish community".

The book can be obtained at the Igud Yotzei Sin offices at 13 Gruzenberg St., Tel-Aviv

Tel. 03-517-1997. Cost: NIS40, proceeds for the IYS Social Welfare Fund.

# The Jews of Harbin, China

By Jonathan Goldstein

Monday, April 10, 2006 -  
Bangor Daily News

Israeli presidents and prime ministers have traditionally originated in Europe, America and the Middle East. The family of Ehud Olmert, who is about to be sworn in as the next Israeli prime minister, was originally from Russia but made a detour to Israel via the Far East.

Indeed, Olmert's politics, and those of his father and grandfather, derive from the family's residence in Harbin, China, a crucible for Jewish ideological development. What were the particular characteristics of Harbin that attracted the Olmert family there, exposed them to Zionism, and inspired Olmert's father and many other Harbin Jews to immigrate to Israel? On the most fundamental level, the conditions of Harbin underlie the Olmert family commitment to Zionism.

On one level the Harbin Jewish community underwent an almost uninterrupted sequence of wars and upheavals between 1898 and 1958. It lived through two world wars, two major local wars and two revolutions involving civil wars. On another level, despite these upheavals, the Jewish community of Harbin grew from zero individuals in 1898 to a high point of about 13,000 in 1931. It then began a precipitous decline. Most Jews left by 1950. In 1982, the community consisted of one elderly resident, Anna Agre, who kept many of the Jewish communal archives under her bed.

It is the community's flourishing amidst adversity rather than its decline which merits attention. For much of its 60-year existence the Harbin Jewish

community experienced a vibrant intellectual life which ranged from the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisroel to the secular faiths of Third International Communism and Maoism.

A distinct economic context underlay this intellectual flowering. The city was and is a railroad hub, constructed in 1898 by Czarist Russia on land leased from China. It was located at a point on the Sungari, or Songhua, River where the railroad intersected with extensive river traffic. Most significantly from the point of view of Jewish history, Harbin both was and was not part of Russia. It was a railway zone where Jews enjoyed residential permission plus an array of economic, political and cultural freedoms unavailable in Czarist Russia proper. Despite wars, revolutions and upheavals, many of these fundamental rights remained after the railroad zone was sold to Japan in 1936.

Harbin's Jews arrived at a particularly fortunate moment in time. They enjoyed the "boom town" experience that accompanied frontier expansion. Like other boom towns such as San Francisco, Harbin did not remain a cultural backwater. It quickly developed into a sophisticated city, nurtured by the wealth of its new entrepreneurs.

Several examples can be cited of Jewish participation in Harbin's cultural life. In the early 20th century Moshe Levitin established a Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian publishing company. It brought out the Hebrew and Russian-language tracts of Harbin's long-serving Rabbi Aharon Moshe Kisilev (1866-1949). Kisilev had embraced the pre-Herzlian religious Zionism of Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever while a student at the Volozhin

Yeshiva. Kisilev was also a prolific author of Zionist and secular tracts, notably "Natsionalizm I Evreistvo: Stat'I, Lektsii, I Doklady" (Russian: "Nationalism and the Jewish People: Articles, Lectures and Reports").

Yet another exemplar of Jewish intellectual life in Harbin was its hospital director, Abram Yosifovich Kaufman, who lived from 1886 to 1971. He was effectively the secular counterpart to Rabbi Kisilev. Under Kisilev's and Kaufman's influence, which spanned the years 1913 to 1949, a majority of Harbin Jews became Zionist. Twelve Russian-language Jewish periodicals were published in Harbin, including "Evreiskaia Zhizn" (Jewish life) and "Gadegel" (the Cyrillic rendition of the Hebrew "ha-degel," literally meaning "the flag" and having specific reference to the blue-and-white Zionist flag). There was also a clandestine Communist Party in which many Jews were active, notably Israel Epstein, who later becomes a member of the People's Republic of China's National People's Consultative Congress, a largely advisory and ceremonial body.

The Olmert family are products of this vibrant, highly politicized environment. Ehud's grandfather arrived in the city from European Russia early in the 20th century. The grandfather died there and is buried in the city's vast, 700-plus grave, Jewish cemetery. In the late 1920s, because of Harbin's large Russian-speaking population, it became the East Asian entry point for Vladimir Zeev Jabotinsky's Zionist Revisionist movement. Most Revisionist literature at that time was in Russian. Ehud's father Motya, also known as Mordechai or Motti, was among the first Harbin

## Harbin Today

Jews to embrace Revisionism.

In the early 1930s he emigrated to Palestine "to till the land." He and his sons became active in Israel's Revisionist-oriented Herut Party, the ancestor of today's Likud, which is in turn the progenitor of Ariel Sharon's and Ehud Olmert's mainstream "Kadima" party. Sharon and Olmert took some Likud stalwarts with them when they formed "Kadima." Many hard-liners remain in Likud.

Throughout these transformations the family has retained its China ties. In 2004 Ehud returned to the People's Republic accompanied by nearly 100 Israeli businessmen who hoped to capitalize on the then-Deputy Prime Minister's China connections.

Both Ehud and his brother, an attaché at the Israeli Embassy in Beijing, were much-photographed reciting the Jewish prayer for the dead at their grandfather's tomb, for which they had ordered a new gravestone. Shortly after the Olmerts' return to Harbin approximately 100 other Israelis of Harbin origin came to the same cemetery, worshiped at Rabbi Kisilev's grave, and participated in a gala reunion and historical seminar on the Jewish experience in their ancestral city.

The inauguration of Olmert, a son and intellectual protege of Harbin, as Israel's next prime minister, is yet another expression of the Jewish culture which once flourished in the city. In 2005 the son of Harbin Jewish Hospital director Abram Kaufman collaborated with Harbin Professor Qu Wei on a book which they entitled "The Homesick Feeling of the Harbin Jews." That title encapsulates the sentiment of many Jews who lived in this city of refuge and culture for 60 years. The title says it all.

*Jonathan Goldstein is a professor of East Asian History at the University of West Georgia. His books include "The Jews of China" (1999) and "China and Israel" (2000).*

<http://www.bangordailynews.com>



1. "Kitayskaya" street
2. "Kitayskaya" street opposite "Konnaya" street
3. J. Bain at the entrance to "Antipass" house, where she resided  
At present, 3 stories were built on top, used as hotel

# The “Hicem” in the Far East

It is superfluous to enlarge upon the enormous aid-work of the “Hicem” for Jewish emigration and immigration. Needless to praise the “Hicem” and difficult to realize what aspect the whole problem of migration would have without this mighty organization. At the present time it is impossible to state and to judge the role of the “Hicem” in the history of Jewish martyrdom.

Hicem is the abbreviated name of two of the greatest and best known Jewish organizations that have joined to do Jewish emigration work. One of them is the American Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, abbreviated “Hias”, the center being in New York, and the other is the Jewish Colonisation Association, abbreviated ICA, with the central office in Europe. The Hias was founded 55 years ago when the rush of hundreds of thousands of Jews from the countries of East Europe began at the American shore. The ICA was created at the same time by the great philanthropist, Baron Moritz Hirsch.

The joining of these world organizations in the service of Jewish emigration was effectuated in the year 1927. Before that there was only a so-called “emigration directorium” (Emigdirect) and a couple of dispersed emigration organizations in all countries but without a unitary powerful center.

The Far Eastern Central Information Bureau, known under the name of “Daljewcib” was created in the Far East during the World War, 10 years before “Hicem” existed. It was in the year 1917 when ... thousands of refugees came from the occupied

districts of Poland, Lithuania, Lettland and North West Russia. These unfortunate people tried to find their way through Siberia, Manchuria and Japan to join their relatives and families in America. The American organization Hias sent this time their special representative Mr. Samuel Mason to the Far East. Also the American Joint Distribution Committee sent its representative, the late Mr. Frank Rosenblatt. The representative informed exactly about the facts and created the Far Eastern Central Information Bureau in Harbin, abbreviated “Daljewcib”, a great emigrant-home in Japan (Yokohama) and branches in Vladivostok, Irkutsk etc. It was planned to set up offices in all the important cities of Siberia and Russia. But the revolution which broke out in Russia as well as the civil war and the blockade prevented the execution of this project, and for this reason only Siberia and the Far East could be touched by the aid work for the refugees. Later, also Siberia was cut off from the Far East by the events of the years 1919-20, and the work of the Daljewcib was limited during some time only to the Far East. Harbin was at this time the greatest and most important central point of Far Eastern Jewry.

It is known that the Jews of Harbin are esteemed to be the first pioneers for the development of economic and business life in the districts of Manchukuo and the Far East. Immediately after the opening of the great arterial road, the Chinese Eastern Railway in 1903, Russian and Siberian Jews arrived, putting there the first foundation for the development of business life in this half cultivated

country. Later on the Russian Japanese War in the years 1904/05 brought a new rush of Jews from Russia to Harbin. So the town of Harbin had already, before the Great War, more than 6000 Jewish inhabitants and some local institutions. The Great European War brought an enormous number of [immigrants from the] occupied districts and from Russia. Many of them were well-off and experience businessmen. There were also some intellectual and economic experts. The time from 1917 to 1922 is considered as the prime of Harbin and the town was called among Jews “The Jerusalem of the Far East”. Many splendid public buildings were constructed at Harbin and welfare and cultural organizations, public education and art societies were founded. Among the Jewish newspapers in the Russian language ... even a Yiddish newspaper was issued – “The Waiter Misrach” whose editor was Mr. Birman.

Later, in the years 1921-22 when the frontiers of Russia and Siberia were re-opened, the influx of victims of Ukrainian pogroms, of famine and natural catastrophes, never ceased. All sought shelter in Harbin, but these people could not find any existence in the Far East. The loss of the Russian market and the interior events in China effected an economic crisis in Harbin and other Far Eastern places, causing a new great rush of emigrants. The Daljewcib was very active to receive the arriving people, to establish connection with overseas relatives and to bring these people to the stabilized overseas countries. At the same time the Daljewcib became the link between the Jews of the Far

East and those of Russia and the new European countries.

From the first day, the Daljercib was in uninterrupted connection with all world aid organizations in all countries. Ten thousand persons came and were assisted. This will be stated by the files in the office. It is interesting to mention the following characteristic fact: The Daljercib worked in 1920-21 together with the Joint Distribution Committee that had a branch in Vladivostok to help the Jewish prisoners of war of the Austrian-Hungarian and German army who suffered in the concentration camps of East Siberia and the Far East, in the coastal district, on the Amur river and in the surroundings of Ussurijsk. Many prisoners of war were sent home by steamer and stopped at Harbin. It is an irony of fate that twenty years later among the victims of anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria, the same persons called on the bureau of Daljercib-Hicem in Shanghai, who already twenty years ago claimed at Harbin the assistance of this organization, advised and cared for by the same manager who now has this post.

From the first day of the existence of a united center of Hicem in Paris, the Far Eastern Bureau "Daljercib" was included automatically in the Hicem organization, being therefore the only non-local Jewish world organization in the Far East. In 1933 new work was added. Also formerly the Daljercib-Hicem was permanently in touch with the "Hilfsverein" in matters of immigration and transmigration through Germany.

But already in April 1933 the first circular of the "Hilfsverein" arrived, [stating] that a greater emigration from Germany was to be expected [and] asking to examine and to communicate the possibilities for Jewish emigrants from Germany to the Far East. Up to this date, the collaboration with the German organizations was never interrupted. Thousands of applications arrive

by the Hilfsverein and each was thoroughly examined. Investigations were made for possibilities in all places of the Far East, ... Owing to the good knowledge of the Far East and the careful working of the bureau, the few emigrants before the great rush of November 1938 was well placed and owing to the preparative work, each of the emigrants knew where he could go and where he would earn his livelihood.

Already in June of last year the Far Eastern Central Information Bureau got a telegram from Hicem of Paris to remove the bureau from Harbin to Shanghai. Unfortunately the removing was only possible in September. During this time the situation had completely changed. The tasks of the bureau in the Far East became more complicated and more responsible. As known, the free emigration to Shanghai was stopped in August. The war broke out. The individual help by granting Hicem-cheques ceased. Most of the stabilized overseas countries where chances and possibilities for work and livelihood exist, protected themselves by prohibiting emigration. The mail is checked. The greatest part of the countries have prohibitions for the exportation of foreign currency so the help of relatives there is not to be obtained. On the other hand, the distress here in Shanghai increased. The families were cut off, many emigrants were surprised by war and were interned in different parts of far tropical countries.

Hundreds of families arrived without luggage owing to the outbreak of war. Their luggage, the last things they had, are scattered in all parts of South Europe, East Africa, South Asia and the Far East. The war interrupted in the first months every normal aid and active connection of the Far Eastern Central Information Bureau with the Head Office sometimes interrupted too. It can be easily realized how many new tasks and how much new work were caused by the events of

the last months for the Daljercib-Hicem. The new immigration laws of Shanghai which are human compared with those of other countries, raised new hopes in the hearts of thousands of victims in the totalitarian countries of Europe looking for a shelter and a refuge by emigration.

The European affiliated organizations in innumerable cases address the bureau asking for collaboration and the telegrams and letters arrive continuously. On the other hand, thousands of emigrants living here and having no possibility of earning a living ask for help to emigrate to other countries. During the five months in Shanghai the bureau performed enormous activity in searches and establishing connection with relatives in all parts of the world. From November 1939 to March 1940 more than 2,000 enquiries to relatives and family members were forwarded to get affidavits, permits, and especially financial help.

Many of them already succeeded and nearly every mail from America and other overseas countries brings good news to the Daljercib Hicem and considerable help of the unfortunate people here. More than a thousand persons here got advice and instruction concerning emigration. The number of people sent from Shanghai to other places is already 110 on March 1st 1940 from whom more than a half went to America and other overseas countries. The Far Eastern Central Information Bureau does not stop to urge the Central Office in Europe in view of the situation in the Far East.

Though the question of the Hicem-cheques was not any more to be discussed owing to the catastrophic situation in Europe, the reports of the Daljercib Hicem about the situation in the Far East did not miss their effect so that this question was supervised and partly dissolved. The Daljercib-Hicem also drew the attention of such world organizations as ORT to the situation of the young refugees in **(continued on page 38)**

# Searching and Researching

## **Annag Rose Chandler**

My mother in law, Mina Abramovna Zeltzer, was born in Vladivostok and grew up in Harbin along with an older and a younger brother. She spent the war years working for the YMCA in Shanghai and emigrated to the US after the war. She met her future husband, John Vitlin [born Alexander Shriro] in China and married him shortly after the end of the war. They built an import-export company here in San Francisco with another Jewish emigré from China, Mark Ross [born Isaac Trotsky], with whom Mina went to grammar school in Harbin. We can provide a fuller biography of them should you like one.  
Email: annie@globalexporter.com  
Tel: 415 285-2371

## **Sid Silver USA**

Years ago my mother whose maiden name was Labkovsky told me that we had relatives in Shanghai. This was back in 1946 when I was in the Philippines. I was wondering if any of my relatives still were there. Please contact me on my email.  
Email: sidneyrobbins@csc.com  
Address: 9991 Verree Rd,

Philadelphia, PA 19115  
Tel: 267 767 3459

## **M. Starkey Australia**

I am trying to find out where my grandfather Moses David Irliar comes from and where the name Irliar originated. He arrived in Shanghai somewhere between 1902/1905 and died there in around 1924, being buried in the Baikal Road Cemetery. Grandmother and mother both died whilst I was young and I have not been able to decipher faded writing on a photo of his tombstone. Any help would be much appreciated.  
Email: mlstarkey@bigpond.com  
Address: 71 John Tebbutt Place, Richmond, NSW 2753, Australia.

## **Faith Ann Goldman**

First of all, I want to express my personal prayers for peace, calm, and safety.  
I have a search question to print - looking for the family of Jakob Hanemann, Shanghai resident listed at 144 Kingchow Road. Family was from Berlin. My late husband Robert and his father Noah Goldman lived at 146 Kingchow Road 1948 -1958. We just visited the homes and met

the people who lived there also #148 the same time frame.

I have submitted stories and articles before via the mail system. Thank you for printing everything. I will have more to submit in the next few weeks. How do I submit them? Pictures, too. Thank you.  
Email Address : faithnamdlog@aol.com  
Phone Number : 310 371-1055

## **Ruth Ravve**

My father was born and raised in Harbin, and has told me many stories about his life growing up in China. He has wonderful memories. I have an interest in helping preserve the history of Jews, such as my father, whose families escaped eastern Europe for the safety of China early in the century.

My background is in television, and I am interested in producing a documentary about the Jews of China. I'm wondering if anyone from your organization has done anything such as this previously, or might be interested in working with me on this project. I look forward to hearing from you.  
Email: ruthravve@aol.com  
Tel: 773-472-4002

**(continued on page 67)**

## **The "Hicem" in the Far East (from page 37)**

the Far East, and so it is not impossible that the American ORT will soon start its constructive work in the Far East. As an organization working for 23 years in the Far East, knowing excellently the local conditions and circumstances and being in touch with all communities and corporations of the Far East, the Daljewcib Hicem aspired from the first day of the removing to Shanghai to enter into connection with all interested organizations and institutions and to awaken the interest of the communities of Russian Jews in

all neighboring places in the problem of emigration. The bureau sent hundreds of enquiries to the different communities of Manchukuo and North China asking for the reception, lodging and settling of emigrants. The close collaboration with the National Council of Jewish Communities in Harbin gave the possibility for the latter to inform about the real standing of the emigrant's question and to use all its power to resolve some extremely actual questions of emigration, for instance, transit through Manchukuo, emigration quota for a certain number

of experts there, etc. (though the latter question is not already settled, steps on this behalf were already taken.

The opening of the Hicem Central Bureau in neutral Belgium, in Brussels, put the Daljewcib Hicem before new possibilities and new tasks for help. In only four months the bureau received the appreciation of the Jewish organizations of the whole world and the Daljewcib in Shanghai is expected to be one of the main addresses of the organizations of all countries.

**(From Jewish Life, No. 12, 1941)**

# ONCE MORE WITH FEELING! REUNION SHANGHAI APRIL 24-30, 2006

By Evelyn Pike Rubin

On Monday, April 24, Marilyn Sheldon, Sheryl and I boarded our flight at Liberty International Airport, Newark, NJ, for the 11:10 a.m. departure to Tokyo, scheduled to arrive there approximately 13 hours later at 1:30 PM on Tuesday, April 25, local time. The Kosher meals which we were served were substantial and excellent. At 6:30 PM our Northwest Airlines flight departed for the 2-1/2 trip to Shanghai.

When I visited Shanghai, for the first time in 1995 (with Lenny), since my departure in 1947, I had been all choked up when I looked out the window, as the plane prepared for landing. Now, again, 67 years later, since my arrival in the city where my family and I, with so many others, had found refuge from the Nazis, my emotions took hold again, as the plane prepared for landing. I was visiting my father and my grandmother again. They were buried in Shanghai, but their graves are now non-existent. The kids felt my emotions, and they too were a little choked up.

The beautiful, modern airport was in Pudong (I knew it as the slum Pootung). We quickly found our guide, who took us to the van for the 1 hour ride to the hotel on a beautiful 3-lane highway. Everything was new. It was 10:00 PM as we checked into the Regal International East Asia Hotel at 516 Hengshan Road in the former French Concession, not too far from where I had lived during our first 4 years in Shanghai. We were looking forward to meeting all the other Shanghailanders at breakfast, the next morning.

It was a sumptuous, buffet breakfast – something for everyone and of course it was so nice meeting friends again and then meeting new people

many of whom quickly became friends. After all, we had a common bond. There were approximately 120 attendees and three buses with guides were put at our disposal. The first official program took place on Wednesday, April 26, at the Center of Jewish Studies for a welcoming orientation. Coincidentally, this Center's address is 622-7 Huai Hai Road W, the same street on which I had lived from 1939-1943 at #1817A, when it was the Avenue Joffre.

We were welcomed by Prof. Pan Guang, who was instrumental in the establishment of this Sino-Judaic Center. I had the pleasure of meeting him in 1995, when I was invited to give a talk at the Center. It was at that time, that I received confirmation that the Columbia Road and Point Road cemeteries (where my father and grandmother, respectively, were buried) were no more. Supposedly the graves were moved outside of Shanghai – no one knew where. In 1998, Prof. Pan Guang arranged for a Chinese film crew to film a documentary in my home in Jericho, Long Island which, I was told, was screened in many theaters within Shanghai. Also present, as part of the welcoming committee, was Prof. Zhang, whom I had also briefly met, as well as various Chinese local officials and of course Rene Willdorff, the organizer of this Reunion. Slides of various world leaders, including Yitzhak Rabin and Bibi Netanyahu, were shown visiting this Sino-Judaic Center, as well as slides of little Chinese children singing in Hebrew and being taught the language.

Our next stop was in a huge shopping mall, the location of a wonderful, Buddhist restaurant where we had a delicious vegetarian lunch.

That evening was our official welcome dinner. In celebration of Sino-Jewish friendship and to honor Shanghai for its role in Jewish history, many dignitaries had joined us, among them members of the Shanghai Hongkou (formerly Hongkew) District People's Government, Shanghai Society for People's Friendship Studies, Shanghai International Association for Friendly Contact, Shanghai Society for World history. Also present were Maurice Ohana, President of the present Shanghai Jewish Community and the Chabad-Lubavitch emissary, Rabbi Shalom D. Greenberg of The Jewish Center in Shanghai. There was a musical presentation by four ladies in beautiful cheongsams playing on traditional Chinese instruments.

The most poignant part of the evening was the photo session, with approximately 35 second generation, and a handful third generation participants, none of whom would have been around if it wasn't for our survival in Shanghai!!

The following morning, Thursday, April 27, the buses took us on a city tour (present population 17 million, up from about 9 million when we lived there). We couldn't believe the new buildings, ultra modern skyscrapers, freeways, overpasses, and a subway, as well as cars, cars, buses and bicycles everywhere – traffic jams. Quite different again from the city we grew up in. Then we experienced traffic jams mostly with rickshaws and bicycles. We ended up in bus No.3 with Mico, our beautiful, charming and most knowledgeable guide...

It was very particularly exciting for me, to visit the Ohel Rachel synagogue on N. Shanxi Road, (formerly Seymour Road), on the grounds of

the former Shanghai Jewish School, where I had received my education from 1939-1947 and where I learned English, French and subsequently Japanese, which was added to the curriculum in 1943. As part of our religious studies, we would visit that synagogue quite often. Those of us, who had attended this school, were crying as we entered the synagogue, which has now been refurbished as a museum, commemorating the Holocaust and the wartime refugee community in Shanghai.

TV crews and newspaper reporters dogged us everywhere. I was interviewed by numerous reporters, including two who had come from Germany representing the popular magazine "Die Welt." This was the first time, that I gave an interview in German. One of the reporters had worked with Prof. Erhard Roy Wiehn, the publisher of the German edition of my book at the University of Konstanz.

Most reluctantly the Chinese authorities permitted us to pay a short visit to my former school, now a government building. It was again very emotional moment for me to enter the building, albeit not through the front door, but through one of the side doors and then only on the ground floor. The walls and floor were unchanged. I went around the corner, hoping to get in by the front door which had boasted broad steps and a beautiful entrance way, only to find that this front entrance was gone and bicycles were stored against the wall. It was a very poignant visit, remembering a time long gone, part of my childhood and early teen years.

Following this moving visit, we were taken on a drive through Podung, now a modern, suburban community on the other side of the Huangpu River, (formerly Whangpoo), with luxurious hotels, and the most marvelous architectural designed skyscrapers, landscaped gardens, manicured lawns and broad avenues.

Our next stop was the highlight and most exciting part of our trip – Hongkou, (Hongkew, the former ghetto). We were welcomed by local government officials at a reception at the Ocean Hotel. It was a delight to see Mr. Wang again, whom I met on my last visit to Shanghai, and who is in charge of all the refugee memorabilia at the former Ohel Moshe synagogue – the synagogue that we frequented during the ghetto era.

For the edification of the press, who were present in great numbers, the speeches were first in Chinese and then translated into English for us. We were warmly welcomed by all the officials who expressed a desire for us to meet our former neighbors. They were most anxious for us to visit Huoshan Park, on Huoshan Road (formerly Wayside Road, where one of the larger "Heime" – dormitories - and the refugee hospital had been located). A large plaque in English, Chinese and Hebrew commemorating the refugees, who had lived in Shanghai during World War II, is located at the entrance to the park. Again we were enthusiastically welcomed by other officials and also residents of the area who had remembered us. As a matter of fact, an elderly lady attached herself to me, chattering most excitedly and the translator told me that she was sure she had remembered me. (It is quite possible, for she looked a lot like the lady I had met in 1995 in my lane.) This is the first time that I heard that the ghetto area, or designated area as it was called at the time, actually had a name – Tilanqiao. We were asked to sign a large white, plastic sheet to be submitted to UNESCO in the form of a petition, to designate a section of this former ghetto area, as a historic landmark, a World Heritage site.

After these ceremonies, I wanted to show my kids my former ghetto home. I had been inside it in 1995 and was told at the time, that the whole area was being demolished to make way for new housing.

I was hoping it was still there for them to see. Accompanying us, was Martin Wallner, a young Austrian, of the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service, sent by his government to do research on the life of the Shanghai refugees. He was working with Prof. Pan Guang and had been attending all the ceremonies as part of his research.

It was strange to walk again on the old Ward Road – now Chang Yang Road, and remembering the many times, during a four year period, that I had walked along this road. It looked the same – the lanes, the shops, the prison, the prison hospital, in front of which I had waved to the British and American prisoners of war. It brought back so many memories. My lane number was 498 and my house was #8 in the middle of an alley. When we came to Dalian Road, (formerly Dalny Road), I did not recognize it as such. This road, which I remembered as a narrow road, like all the side roads in Hongkew, was now a wide boulevard, with traffic signals, and a subway entrance. As we crossed over, my hope of finding my house diminished. Sure enough as we approached my lane (which now didn't have a #), there were workmen in hard hats in the process of demolishing all the buildings. Martin, fortuitously, spoke some Chinese and confirmed that this was indeed #498. However, the workman pointed to the yellow tape across it and told us we couldn't enter. A gentleman passed by and heard the conversation and told us we could probably enter the lane through a side entrance from around the corner, to which he kindly guided us.

Sure enough we found #8, the house my mother and I had lived in from 1943-1947 with three other families. The buildings across from it were already torn down. The door was locked – no one lived there any more and there were signs on the door - one didn't have to know the language to know that these signs stated "No



Entry – Dangerous – Keep Out.” We took photos and as soon as we departed, the workmen continued their job of demolition. We were really there in the nick of time - ten minutes later, there would have been nothing left. On our way back to the bus, we met others also looking for their former home. That evening I was interviewed by a Chinese film making crew for another documentary.

The next morning, Friday, April 28, we left for Suzhou (formerly Soochow). It was interesting to see the construction of numerous huge apartment houses along the way. Of course this city is quite different from Shanghai – instead of it being a metropolis, it is scenic with beautiful gardens, tranquil canals and small bridges for crossovers. As part of this sightseeing trip we visited a 400 year old magnificent garden, beautifully landscaped with all kinds of sculptures and plantings. At one time, the attached building, a mini-palace, was the living quarters of a privileged family.

Our next stop was a silk factory, where we were treated to a most interesting lecture on the silk making process and then actually watched the workers extracting the silk threads from the cocoons. We then proceeded to the showroom and displays of magnificent silk garments for purchase. And because many of us did purchase, it was not easy to get everyone back on the bus for the next tour – a boat ride on the river and canals of Suzhou. Time had run short for those of us, about thirty five people, who had planned to attend Shabbat services and dinner at Chabad, and we decided to split up and forgo the boat ride and have one of the buses take us directly to the shul.

The Jewish Center, under the auspices of Rabbi Shalom D. Greenberg, is located at 1720 Hongqiao Road in a beautiful house, within a gated compound, in an upscale residential area. Sheldon had already moved to

the magnificent, luxurious Hongqiao State Guest Hotel, at 1591 Hongqiao Road, a few minutes’ walking distance from the shul. Chabad has special rate arrangements with that hotel, so that Shabbat observers could comfortably stay there during their visit. They also delivered Kosher meals to the hotel for us.

We arrived at the shul before candlelighting, where we were warmly welcomed by the Rabbi and his beautiful wife Dina, who put out candles for us to light before Shabbat. Of course services, in a large room downstairs, were conducted with a mechitza down the center of the room. However, there were enough openings in the screen for us to observe and participate in the davening next to us. It was a Sephardic service, yet not much different from the Conservative service I am accustomed to. When they came to the Kabbalat Shabbat, the men starting singing and dancing around the bima. It was for us a wonderful, joyous celebration of welcoming the Shabbat.

After services, we were treated to a wonderful Shabbat dinner, Kiddush and the singing of Sholom Aleichem. Rabbi Greenberg then gave a little speech, welcoming our group, and telling us how delighted he was that we were celebrating Shabbat with them. He asked for one of us to tell the assembly of approximately 120, our reason for being in Shanghai. The group chose me as their spokesperson and I proceeded to give them a synopsis of our background as well as the reunion ceremonies. Everyone present was so pleasant and genuinely welcoming making all of us feel it was surely one of the highlights of our trip – Shabbat services at Shanghai Chabad. Who would have thought of it – ever!

The next day, Shabbat, April 29, I returned for Shabbat services, which were followed by a sumptuous lunch. The discussion at our table centered on our group and the Reunion.

That evening was the Reunion’s closing dinner. Rene thanked everyone for participating in the most joyful, interesting, emotional, meaningful, and by all accounts greatest reunion ever. He was presented with a huge “thank you” card bearing the signatures and comments of the participants, which also included donations collected from all of us to be distributed by Rene to a charity in our name. To commemorate this Reunion, our hosts, the Center of Jewish Studies, presented us with a beautiful chop – our name in Chinese – which included the traditional red ink.

The next morning, Sunday, April 30, after some tearful goodbyes, and “we hope to see you sometime soon,” we all dispersed for post-reunion tours to various destinations. My children had interacted with a few “second generationers” and had made new friends – hoping to get together at a future time. Our tour continued on to Beijing and joining us were Seema (Simi) Zimmerman, who had also attended the Shanghai Jewish School, and her daughter Lisa.

**Beijing:** Even though I had visited that city with Lenny in ‘95, I did not mind a return visit, particularly because my kids had never been there. After a 1-1/2 hours’ good flight, we arrived in this capital of China, to be met by our guide, Lily, (Lvyunqing) for the ride to the Marco Polo Hotel at 6 Xuanwumen Nei Avenue. Lily informed us that she had received a call on her cell phone that Lisa owed money to the Regal Hotel in Shanghai. Even though Lisa had left her credit card information at the desk on check-in and had also personally checked out, that wasn’t good enough. They insisted we had to stop at a Regal Hotel in Beijing for her to sign herself out from the Shanghai Regal.

On the way to the hotel, we made our first stop – Tiananmen Square - a piece of modern history, and a piece of ancient history, the Forbidden City.

This took us back to the time of the emperors. We were bombarded by vendors wanting to sell us Beijing Olympic 2008 memorabilia. This happened wherever we went. The forthcoming Olympics are a big thing in Beijing. They are frantically putting up new buildings and cleaning up slums for the expected tourist trade. The Marco Polo, though not quite as luxurious as the Regal in Shanghai, was still a very nice and pleasant.

As a group of only six people, we made a decision to deviate from the planned itinerary to suit our tastes and desires. We did not want to attend a performance of the scheduled Peking Opera that evening (it seems this is a “must” for all tours, suggested by the government). We preferred to go to the Acrobats instead, and were willing to pay for that. The necessary permission from Lily’s boss, at the local touring company that she worked for, to take us to the Acrobats was most reluctantly given. (A few days later another “Reunion” group arrived, after a stop in Xian and they also did not want to attend the opera, but were told they absolutely cannot substitute anything else, so they were stuck. They were a group of 25 people, so it became more difficult to effect a change.)

The following day, Monday, May 1, we were scheduled to visit the Great Wall. It was then, that we realized we were here, not only on a national holiday on that day, but Lily told us that the whole first week of May was a national holiday – people off from work – children home from school, etc., augmenting the usual crowds to just more crowds. It was also the hottest day of the whole trip. Temperature was in the upper 80’s and the air pollution, the worst ever. We had a quite a walk to the Badaling section of the Wall, from where the bus left us off, passing a Starbucks on the way – somehow that didn’t fit in. As we walked through the archway, leading to the first level of the Wall, the crowds were so dense, we had

to hold on to each other while, at the same time, cars were driving through in the opposite direction. Unbelievable. When we got to the first level, inasmuch as Simi and I had been up on the Wall on our previous visit, we decided not to go further and stop in a small café. So Lisa and my children continued on, with Sheldon going all the way to the top of that section.

That afternoon we visited a cloisonné factory. It was interesting to watch them manufacture the pieces with intricately placed wires, then painted and finished in a kiln so very beautifully.

The next day, Tuesday, May 2, we visited the Summer Palace, with its magnificent garden and lake, at the foot of the Xishan Mountains, built in 1750 during Emperor Qianlong’s reign. We then continued on to the Ming Tombs walking down a long garden path with animal sculptures on each side. After that we visited a pearl showroom, where the most magnificent pearls were displayed. We all made some wonderful purchases. From there Lily took us to the most beautiful, antique furniture showroom, containing fabulous pearl imbedded screens, among other gorgeous items. We were fascinated watching a workman fashioning a sculpture out of a tree trunk.

Wednesday, May 3, was supposed to be a “day of leisure,” however, we wanted to see the Pandas and take a pedicab ride through the Hutong, so we asked Lily to spend the day with us as our “private” guide. (They now call pedicabs “rickshaws.” I only knew rickshaws that were pulled by rickshaw coolies.) The Hutongs, narrow lanes and alleys, have been preserved as historical sites and some of the homes, which look very shabby from the outside, sell for about \$1,000,000, we were told. Halfway through the tour, Sheryl didn’t feel well and went to sleep in the van. Because of time constraints, (Simi and Lisa were continuing on to Hong

Kong that afternoon), we decided not to have lunch in the home we were going to visit. However, when we arrived there, the lady had already prepared an elaborate, delicious, vegetarian lunch. We felt we just couldn’t walk out on her, so we stayed to eat. This house, which also looked shabby on the outside, in a narrow lane, had a pretty living room, containing a flat screen TV and was nicely furnished. This was a most interesting experience. When we got back to the hotel, we said goodbye to Lisa and Simi. We were sorry to see them go. We had a good time with them.

Sheldon wanted to prescribe an antibiotic for Sheryl, who by now had a temperature and was feeling quite ill when we got back to the hotel. However, he thought that a prescription written by him, would not be accepted by the local pharmacy. He contacted a colleague, a Chinese physician, who happened to be the president of FuXing Hospital in Beijing and asked him to call in a prescription to a nearby pharmacy. As it turned out, in China no physician’s prescription for antibiotics and most other medications is required. Dr. Xi told Lily what to ask for in the pharmacy. Then he stopped by the hotel to visit Sheryl, before taking Sheldon out for a drink.

That evening we wanted to do some more shopping – by now we were experts in “handling” with the vendors - and Lily (again on her own time) took us to an indoor flea market where we purchased some more gifts to take home.

(Lily had asked us what kind of a reunion “Shanghai Reunion” was, because that was still the name of the extended tour. I showed her a copy of the Chinese newspaper which had our story in it, and also happened to have my photograph on one of the pictures. We tried to explain to her what “Jewish” was and realized that she didn’t know anything about **(continued on page 48)**

The New

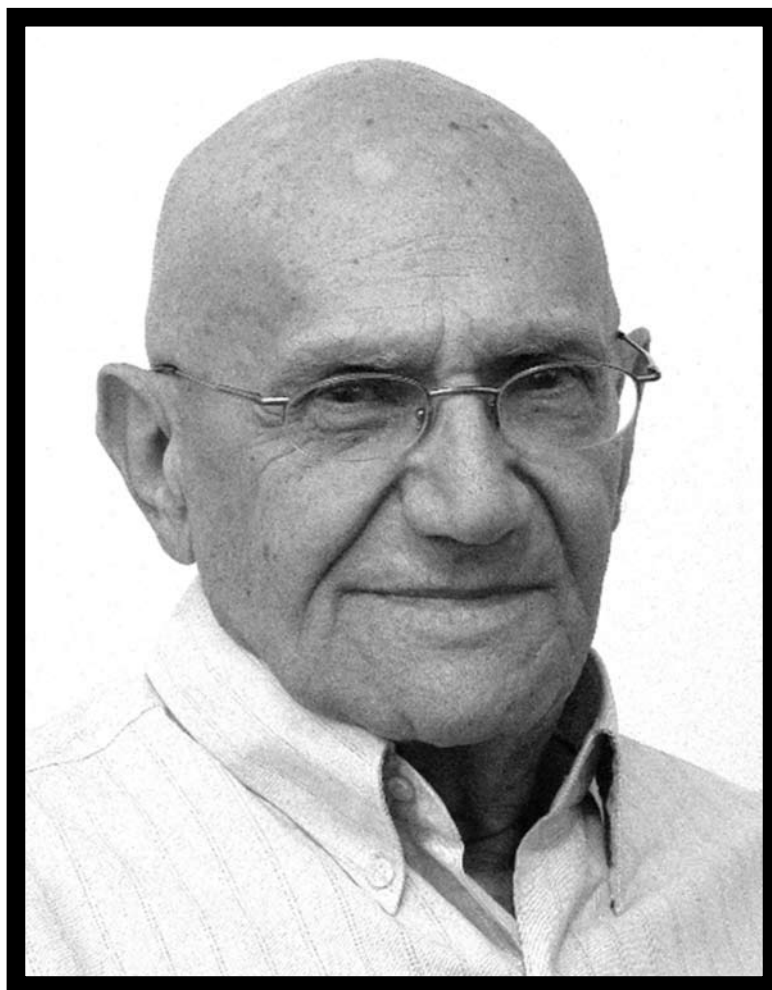
# Israel's Messenger



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Editor: Sasson Jacoby



**SASSON (SAS) JACOBY**  
**MAY 14, 1918 - JUNE 11, 2006**

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# He Was a Good Friend of Mine

By Emmanuel Pratt

I think, Sasson Jacoby (or "Sas", as he was called by his friends) was the first man I met in the Shanghai Betar Club, when I landed that city in December 1948, on my way from Tientsin to Israel. Vovka Dichne, who took me under his auspices, introduced him rather quaintly: "This is Sas, a representative of the Arab League in Shanghai, but never mind, he is a good fellow!" Answering a mute question mark in my eye, he added that this was a friendly sobriquet given to the Betarim of the Shanghai Baghdadi community. He also informed me that Sas and I belonged to the same "journalist clique". As it often happens amongst the young, we struck up a friendship almost immediately. We had supper at the club buffet and parted with a promise to "meet soon in the homeland!" I did not know then that I would be stuck in Shanghai for many months yet.

In the meantime, Arieh Marinsky and Sam Miller returned from Israel to mobilize the Chinese Betarim as an IZL unit in the War of Independence. Our training camp was in the quiet Chapu suburb and the Shanghai Betar club, situated in the cellar of the Jewish club. Despite his slight frame, Sas proved to be a sturdy soldier, good at close combat and grenade throwing. Then I left for Israel with the second Shanghai IZL unit (with an unforgettable short stop-over in Damascus), and it was only in February 1949 that I saw Sas again, standing in full Betar uniform at the railing of the Zim steamer "Negba" amongst the 300 Shanghai Betarim, brought to Israel by Yaakov Liberman.

Then, again, in the whirlpool of the postwar absorption efforts, I lost sight of him. To my surprise, I heard of him having joined a "Moshav shitufi" somewhere in the South. I couldn't imagine Sas, a bright journalist and a

natural metropolis burgher, working in a hen house or a cow shed. But it seems that anything could happen to a young Zionist in those miraculous days. From what I heard, Sas was doing well and was even elected to be the coordinator of the agricultural work at the Moshav. There he met and married a Jerusalemite, Hannah.

## ***"O.K. You're in!"***

I was not the only one to be surprised at Sas's choice to become a "moshavnik". His old friend and another member of "The Arab League", Yosef ("Black Joe") Cohen, wouldn't get off his back, trying to convince him to "quit the nonsense" and return to writing. And so the fortune had it. One day, during Sas's visit to an old Shanghai journalist friend, George Leonov, the latter told Sas that there was a vacancy for the job of a night editor at the Jerusalem Post, where Leonov worked at the time. He invited Sas to visit the office, where he introduced him to the Editor-in-Chief, the late Gershon Agron. Agron agreed to take Sas for a week's trial period. It was not easy for Sas to get a week's leave from the Moshav, at the end of which Agron revealed to Sas that according to the rules and regulations of the newspaper, one had to pass a half a year of "candidates' screening period" before becoming a permanent employee. Sas could not accept further prolongation. He replied that in case the Board of Directors of the JP decided against him, he would have nowhere to return, and it was too risky for him to take such a chance. Agron was silent for a moment, and then said: "OK, you are in!"

## ***How to live? Where to live?***

It is cool and quiet in the Yaakobi ground flour apartment garden in the Talbieh Quarter, Jerusalem. Hannah

and I sit at a cup of tea-and-jam, and speak of "those were the days", gone forever, and yet still deep in our hearts. "We lived then in an old religious Geula quarter, where our son, Yehezkiel ("Ziggi") was born," reminisced Hannah, " We were secular and it was difficult for us to fit in there. One Shabbat morning things came to a head. We went out for a walk in a near-by little garden. On the way, we met a group of men who found the length of the sleeves of my blouse insufficient to measure up to their standards of modesty. They spat at me, shook their fists, called me names. Sas tackled them, but the zealots of morality were quick to disperse in one of the Jerusalem inner yards. I was hysterical. Little Ziggi screamed in his pram. Sas was pale with rage. At that moment I swore in my heart that I would not remain in this neighborhood. But a decent apartment in a decent neighborhood was always expensive for an average Jerusalemite.

"The banks refused to grant us a loan, and Sas was too proud to ask for help from my relatives, who, themselves, were hardly able to assist us. And yet, there were still some miracles left in the City of David. At one of the parties, often arranged by the Jerusalem Post journalists, someone asked me if we had already subscribed for the housing project launched by the Jerusalem Journalists' Association for their members. I asked Sas why he hadn't told me about it. He replied that he did not want to touch this vulnerable question for the lack of funds to realize our dream. I couldn't sleep that night, waiting for the morning to begin my campaign. I returned to the bank directors and at last got a loan of the required 500 Israeli lirot for the initial subscription rights. I worked hard – at anything I could lay my hands at: cooking,

# Sasson Jacoby, 88: 'Post' foreign editor, China expert

by Alexander Zvielli

For over 30 years (1952-1982) Sasson Jacoby – popularly known as 'Sas' – was an integral part of the Post editorial team. He started out as a reporter, but his wide scope of interests and an excellent knowledge of the Near and Far East earned him the prestigious foreign editor's position. His regular feature "The World Scene" appeared weekly for more than a decade. He was part of a select group of experts who could correctly analyze political trends in Far Eastern nations, whose actions were indirectly bound to the fate of Israel.

In an article published in 1976, Sas commented that all the learned Sinologists had made a multiplicity of utterly wrong predictions following the death of Chinese premier Chou en Lai. The time had come, he wrote, to answer the question: Where does China's army stand in the correct power conflict? Sas correctly analyzed the

Chinese leadership's internal struggle, winning the respect and admiration of an entire army of local and foreign correspondents stationed in Israel.

Sas, the scion of a prominent Baghdadi family, was born in 1918 in Shanghai. His father was rabbi of the Jewish congregation there. Sas eventually settled in Israel, together with a huge number of other Iraqi immigrant families, many of whom found work and a future in various functions at the Post. At the time of his arrival, he served in Mahal. The Post was in the process of rapid expansion from its War of Independence limit of two pages daily and four on weekends to a full-sized 16- or 24-page daily. Sas helped provide the content to fill those extra pages. As foreign editor he fulfilled Gershon Agron's desire to lift the Post from a local newspaper to the level of an international tribune.

An expert on international affairs,

Sas was perhaps the sole member of the Post's staff who was both an expert on Chinese culture and on the multitude of UN and other worldwide organizations. His articles were highly informative; foreign policy decision makers were said to take his view into account in formulating Jerusalem's positions.

A fearless critic of duplicity in international affairs, Sas was never shy about presenting his own, however unpopular, view on matters of the day. He had also edited the China English Bulletin for immigrants from that country.

Healthy throughout his long and fruitful life, he died at 88 and was buried in his beloved Jerusalem. Sas is survived by his wife, Hana, a son and daughter-in-law – Yehezkel and Ronit Jacoby – and three granddaughters: Inbar, Hagar and Gal.

*(From the Jerusalem Post)*

## He Was a Good Friend of Mine *(From page 44)*

nursing old people, baby sitting, animal sitting, what not. This, together with a good part of Sas's salary, rendered us always solvent to meet our financial responsibilities, until the mortgage was finally covered and we could heave a deep sigh of relief. And now I may honestly say that this achievement was no small a share on my part in our common struggle for the future...."

O, Hannah, Hannah! The typical Israeli "sabara" – brave, steady, modest!

**"If you recognize me...."**

During the last years, Sas and I became very close, partly due to our common work in the Bulletin, where Sas was my English-language editor. It was a pleasure to work with

this knowledgeable, experienced journalist, who taught me a lot, especially in the realm of the special character of English journalistic writing, compared to that of the Russian or the Hebrew. It is to Sas that our Bulletin owes the rise in its standard of style and vogue.

We met, exchanged e-mails, talked on the phone more than once a day. Every once in a while we met for a vegetarian bite-and-a-beer at the "Sarah & Zion's Buffet". We also had a common hobby – watching the TV broadcasts of the world tennis matches. All his life Sas was an ardent sportsman, cared for his impeccable fitness, covering several kilometers on foot to his gym and back home. The gym members admired his athletic

physique, saying, "Wish I'll have one like that at his age!"

"At his age!" Yes, the years rolled on, smoothly and quietly.

Till one morning, when my telephone rang on my desk. It was Ziggi: "Father had a stroke. Come to the Shaarei Zedek Hospital, if you can." I ran.

At Sas's bedside stood Hannah, Ziggi, his wife Ronit and the elder granddaughter, Imbar. Green curves smoothly slid across the monitor screens. Sas lay motionless. A dropper and an oxygen bottle sustained the last shreds of life.

I came up, put the palm of his hand on mine, and said: "Sas, if you recognize me, squeeze my hand." In a moment I felt a slight clasp of his hand. It was gentle and warm.

# Sas Jacoby (1918-2006)

Maisie Meyer

I was saddened to hear that Sas Jacoby (Sasson Jacob) passed away in Jerusalem on 11 June. His face looking out from the pages of the New Israel's Messenger, which he ably edited from June 1997, has been a fixture in its thirty-one publications. He believed it was a privilege to have been brought up in Shanghai, away from religious persecution that beset Jews worldwide, and was dedicated to establishing close contact between members of the once vibrant Shanghai Sephardi community.

He needed persuasion to write his biography for my forthcoming publication "An Illustrated Saga of the Baghdadi Jews of Shanghai" but once he started, there was no stopping him as his memories flooded back. It is poignant that this same material is being used to write his obituary.

Sas was born on May 14, 1918, to Ezekiel Sion and Katie (Khatoon) Jacob, who had settled in Shanghai shortly before the outbreak of World War I. He was proud of his Baghdadi roots. His maternal grandfather, Hakham Eliahu Yitzhak Hazan was head of the Adoneinu Yehezkel Yeshiva in Hillah (1880-1904) and officiated in the Ohel

Leah Synagogue in Hong Kong. He described his father Ezekiel Sion Jacob who was by all accounts a skilled scribe, hazan and shohet, (ritual slaughterer), blower of the shofar and mohel as an "all-purpose" rabbi.

Sas was educated at the Public and Thomas Hanbury School and graduated in 1936 with an Overseas Cambridge Certificate. He excelled in athletics especially in middle distance running and, even when an octogenarian, he was an enthusiastic jogger, swimmer and body-builder. He joined the prestigious China Press as a reporter in 1938 and later worked for the Evening Post and Sunday Mercury. He also became police reporter for the Shanghai Times, and described his job as "a full time exciting beat". He was astounded at the amount of hard liquor the veteran journalists imbibed.

A turning point in his life came in the beginning of 1941 when he was offered a job in the English Department of the Japanese Domei News Agency, where half the staff were Nisei (second generation) Japanese Americans. Having lived in close proximity with both Japanese and Chinese in Hongkew

(Hongku), he spoke Chinese and felt no awkwardness with Asians.

At the end of the Pacific war in 1945 he became interested in Zionism and was inducted into the Irgun Zvai Leumi. He went on aliya with his brothers Jack and Ellis in late 1948 on the first transport ship to Israel. After military service Sas became one of the founders of a cooperative agricultural settlement Moshav Shitufi Ramot Meir near Rehovot where he met and married a Jerusalem sabra Hannah Levi. In 1954 they settled in Jerusalem where he joined The Jerusalem Post and spent the next 40 years as news editor. He retired at the age of 75 in 1993. Four years later after the Sephardi Division was formed at the Igud Yotzei Sin (the Association of Former Residents in China) he became joint editor of The New Israel's Messenger with Rebecca Toueg and later became involved with the English supplement.

The Sephardi Jewish community of Shanghai has lost a devoted member. We take comfort from the fact that this remarkable man lived life to the full. Alav ha-Shalom (May he rest in peace).

## Post-journalist Sasson Jacoby dies in Jerusalem at 88

By Dapha Berman

Veteran Anglo Israeli journalist Sasson Jacoby passed away last week in Jerusalem at the age of 88. Known to friends and colleagues as Sas, Jacoby was an editor and foreign correspondent at the Jerusalem Post for nearly 40 years. His journalistic career in Israel spanned several decades; as a Post reporter, he covered the Eichmann trial in 1961, among other major events.

Born and raised in Shanghai, Jacoby immigrated to Israel in 1949 as part of the Mahal program for overseas volunteers and was immediately

drafted into the Israel Defense Forces. He lived on Moshav Ramot Meir and then Moshav Bnei Dror, after which he moved to Jerusalem to begin his work at the Post. Jacoby served as layout editor, night editor, foreign correspondent at the Post until his retirement in 1988 at the age of 70. He later briefly edited the English news at the Israel Broadcasting Association and on a voluntary basis, served as English editor of the newsletter for the Association of Former Residents of China.

Jacoby's father was the chief rabbi of

Shanghai's Baghdadi community, also serving as the community's mohel (ritual circumciser) and shochet (ritual slaughterer).

Jacoby attended the city's St. Francis Xavier school for boys, studied journalism at St. John's University in Shanghai, and worked for a local newspaper before he immigrated to Israel.

An avid sports fan, Jacoby was a close follower of tennis star Shahar Peer.

He is survived by his wife, Hannah, his son, Ezekiel, and three grandchildren.

(from Haaretz, June 23, 2006)

# THE JACOB FAMILY

by Sasson Jacoby

**Extract from the forthcoming publication of *An Illustrated Saga of the Baghdadi Jews of Shanghai*, by Maisie Meyer**

Each of the Baghdadi families who reached Shanghai during the 19th and early 20th centuries has its unique history. Our upbringing in the cosmopolitan city of Shanghai had a beneficial effect on us, and although our lives interacted with both the native Chinese and myriads of other foreign people, we were able to preserve our Jewish traditions free from the calamities that beset so many Jews elsewhere.

Both my parents were born in December 1889, my father in Baghdad, and my mother in Hillah Iraq, a town situated south of Baghdad. My mother's father (b.1852) was the product of a marriage between a Baghdadi woman and a young, red-haired, blue-eyed young Ashkenazi who had arrived in Baghdad either on a schnorring visit or to further his rabbinical studies, and was absorbed into a local Jewish family. All we in Shanghai knew of his origin was that "he came from Ashkenaz" and that his name was Israel Ben-Yitzhak.

My maternal grandfather, who became known as the Hakham Eliyahu Yitzhak Hazan was trained at an early age to be a hazan (cantor) in the synagogue. When he was only 17, the congregation in Hillah, some 100 kms. south of Baghdad near the bank of the Euphrates River and where the Prophet Ezekiel was buried, invited him to officiate as a hazan. On the death of Rabbi Muallem in 1880, he became head of the Adoneinu Yehezkel yeshiva in Hillah. Twenty-four years later in 1904 went abroad to collect funds to renovate the tomb of the Prophet Ezekiel. Leaving his

family, he went to India and the Far East reaching Hong Kong about the year 1906. He became the first rabbi of the Ohel Leah Synagogue, which Sir Jacob Elias Sassoon built in 1901 in memory of his mother (nee Leah Gubbay).

Part of the Hakham's family, including two sons, Joseph and Ezekiel, and a baby daughter, Naomi (Emma) were eventually brought to Hong Kong. His two other daughters, Simha and Khatoon remained in Hillah. My father, Ezekiel Sion Jacob, who had attended the Hillah yeshiva received his rabbinical diploma (semicha) in 1910. Soon after, he married Khatoon. At that time, the Ottoman authorities were mobilizing young men in preparation for one of their interminable wars in the Balkans, and the Jews knew that few returned home. Warned by a friendly Turkish police officer, Ezekiel Sion, with his wife and his younger brother, Silman, as well as Simha and Shaul, hastily left for Basra, just a jump ahead of the Ottoman military press gangs. From there they boarded a British ship for Karachi, now in Pakistan but then part of India, and began wandering from one Jewish community to another: from Karachi to Bombay, to Calcutta, then on to Rangoon in Burma, Singapore and even to Batavia in the Dutch East Indies (now Djakarta) without prospects of making a living.

My father's surname became Jacob after his father, Yaacov. My older brother, Yaakov, was called Jack in Shanghai. I, the third son, was named Sasson, which changed to Sassoon, a prominent Baghdadi name in the east. My sisters were named Gertrude and Ruth and the youngest son Ellis was named after grandfather Eliyahu. It was shortly before the outbreak of World War I in 1914 that my family settled in Shanghai which was booming economically and

the Baghdadi community was outgrowing the one in Hong Kong. There my father by all accounts was a fine hazan (he was the last official one after the end of the Pacific War in 1945 and emigrated to the U.S. in 1946), a shohet (ritual slaughterer, and an expert mohel (circumciser). Dozens of septuagenarians and octogenarians now living all over the world were circumcised by him. My father generally performed circumcisions (brith milah) without payment, except from wealthy members of the community. When the Ohel Rachel Synagogue was built in March 1920, Hakham Eliyahu was transferred from Hong Kong to conduct services there. The synagogue was endowed with \$10,000 by Sir Jacob Sassoon in memory of his wife (nee Rachel Isaac of Calcutta). But the community leaders, believing that an English-speaking rabbi would represent their interests among the foreign authorities in Shanghai, appointed Rabbi W.Hirsch in 1921 as the official rabbi of the congregation. Many Baghdadis regarded this innovation incomparable with their tradition and liturgy, and in fact, it also irked some that on the holidays, prayers were said for the well-being of the English Royal Family.

By 1945 our family had begun to disperse: my parents in 1946 to San Francisco, followed later by my two sisters, while my brothers Jack, Ellis and I left Shanghai at the end of 1948 to settle in Israel.

I often think of the similarity between life in the multi-cultural environment of Shanghai and life in Israel, the nucleus of Jews from all corners of the globe. My son, Yehezkel, a "pure" Sephardi, married Ronit Chaikin, the child of a Polish-born mother and a third-generation Russian Jew. Their offspring, my three granddaughters, consider themselves totally Israeli.



## ***FORMER CHUSEN RD. JUNE 2006 RESTORATION OF THE OLD BYILDINGS.***

***(continued from page 42)***

Israel. One of the stores we visited had an atlas and we showed her Israel's location. The following day, Lily informed us that she spoke to a friend who told her she knows about Jews and that "Jews are very smart, they are doctors and lawyers and know how to make a lot of money." She gave us her e-mail and mailing address, because I wanted to send her my book, which I immediately mailed to her on my return home. Her e-mail to me, when she started reading, indicated that she knew nothing about Hitler, anti-Semitism or the Holocaust. Perhaps I educated at least one Chinese person

on the subject!)

The following morning, Thursday, May 4, was to be our last day in Beijing and in China. Our plane was leaving at 3:45 PM. We decided to go out on our own. Sheryl felt much better and joined us. We took a taxi to Tiananmen Square in order to view Mao's tomb. Little did we realize that about 2 million people (no exaggeration) had the same idea. Instead, we went to see the meeting/banquet halls of the various provinces – very imposing - and then went to a museum across the street. Lily picked us up at the hotel at 1:30

PM to take us to the airport. We left Beijing in a happy mood. It was a most memorable trip – especially the Shanghai Reunion part – again, thank you, Rene. I was so happy that at least three of my kids had accompanied me to visit and experience the place where their mother and grandmother survived the war and where their grandfather and great-grandmother lay buried.

Thirteen tired hours later, still Thursday, May 4, 5:45 PM EDT, we arrived at Liberty International Airport. It took us about one week to get over the jet lag.



# Jewish Life in Shanghai 60 Years Ago

Shanghai, Friday 31 May 1946

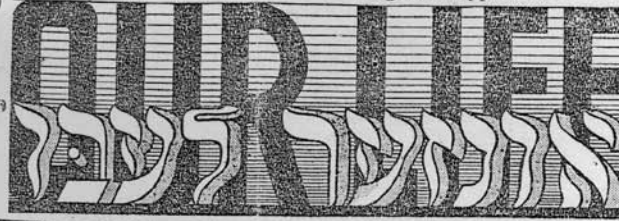
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## Shanghai Hebrew Relief Society and Shelter House Supported by Successful Ball and Collection Campaign

It gives us much pleasure to announce that the oldest local Jewish organization - Shanghai Hebrew Relief Society and Shelter House has been relieved from the financial crisis due to a well supported financial campaign and the success of the traditional ball arranged on October 28 at the Shanghai Jewish Club.

A well chosen entertainment program contributed to the success of the evening attended by a non too numerous described the financial crisis that the organization was facing but some weeks ago and announced with satisfaction that the financial drive carried out with the help of social workers and ladies has already brought substantial results. He further announced that each meal served to Shelter House inmates costs approximately \$100 - and offered the public to make donations equivalent to a certain number of meals. His proposal was well supported, the guests announcing the number of meals to be paid up by each.

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## Shanghai Jewish School Corner

Rumours concerning a mysterious election, with ceremonies to be held on the compound of the school, have been so persistent that our reporter could not help alluding to them in his last SJS - Corner instalment. Now the secret has leaked out, and here is some more news about the event which promises to be a „big affair": some time in June, pupils, parents, friends, invited guests and newspapermen will gather in the beautiful garden of the school to elect the school's Miss Palestine and pay homage to her. At a general assembly, a list of candidates chosen among the girls of the upper classes, was presented, and pupils were told to ponder well over their decision before giving their final vote which, it was hoped, would go to the most likeable, the most lovable, the one most deserving for her modesty and purity of heart. Every candidate will bear the name of a Jewish settlement in Palestine. After the vote, scheduled to be cast on the great day, Miss Palestine, in apparel fitting her new dignity, will accept the homage of the public. A colorful obeisance and parade, interspersed with dances and other artistic features, will mark the day. No doubt that this delightful little ceremony will draw the spotlight on the Shanghai Jewish School; no doubt that it will be a sunny day, not too hot and not too cold, a glorious June day as we have it so often in Shaughai; no doubt that all friends of the school, and all friends of its friends will be welcome.

Though the problem of how to vote looms large in the mind of every student, work claims its own: the youngsters seem more and more excited as the date of „exams" draws nearer; the heroes however, are the top-form pupils, who prepare their Cambridge. It is gratifying to know that, in spite of all difficulties experienced during the war, the school will now be able, after an interval of so many years, not only to enter for the Cambridge, but that it will do so with a flourish: Form Six Upper students will enter for the S. C. examination without a single exception, and though the minimum of subjects required is five, not one of them proposes to enter for less than seven, but the majority for eight which is the maximum. Superstition has it that hopeful prophecies draw bad luck, especially in examinations, but if you promise to keep the secret from the Cambridge Nemesis, we may as well tell you that our students' prospects are brilliant.

News from the sports front is short: Samsonites won the scrimmage league stop S.J.S. pupils gave a good show in football matches against the Junior J.R.C.

IN MEMORIAM: In lieu of flowers on the grave of Sigismund Osipovich Sakheim, \$5000 donation to the Shanghai Jewish School from I. A. Goldberg.

(Contributed by Joe Levoff)

*To all Israeli families who are in sorrow and pain, my heart and prayers goes out to you. Losing husbands and sons and fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers has shattered your lives. There is so little one can say to console your broken hearts. Maybe this poem will hopefully lessen the grief.*

*With lots of love.*

*Joe Levoff*

# LETTER FROM HEAVEN

To my dearest family, some things I'd like to say

But first of all, to let you know that I arrived okay.

I'm writing this from here. I dwell with G-d above,

Here there's no more tears of sadness, here is just eternal love

Please do not be unhappy just because I'm out of sight

Remember that I am with you every morning, noon and night.

That day I had to leave you when my life on earth was through

G-d picked me up and hugged me and he said, "I welcome you,

It's good to have you back again; you were missed while you were gone

As for your dearest family - they'll be here later on

I need you badly; you're part of my plan

There's so much we have to do, to help our mortal man."

G-d gave me a list of things, that He wished for me to do

And foremost on the list was to watch and care for you

And when you lie in bed at night the day's chores put to flight

G-d and I are closest to you....in the middle of the night.

When you think of my life on earth and all those loving years

Because you are only human, they are bound to bring you tears

But do not be afraid to cry, it does relieve the pain

Remember there could be no flowers unless there was some rain.

I wish I could tell you what G-d has planned

If I were to tell you, you wouldn't understand.

But one thing is for certain that my life on earth is over

Now, more than ever before, I'm to you closer.

There are many rocky roads ahead of you, and many hills to climb,

But together we can do it, by taking one day at a time.

It was always my philosophy and I would like it for you too,

That as you give the world, the world will give to you.

If you can help somebody who's in sorrow and pain

Then you can say to G-d at night, "My day was not in vain."

And now I am contented....that my life was worthwhile.

Knowing as I passed along, the way I made somebody smile.

So if you meet somebody, who is sad and feeling low;

Lend a hand to pick him up. as on your way you go.

When you walking down the street, and you've got me on your mind;

I'm walking in your footsteps, only half a step behind.

And when its time for you to go....for your body to be free,

Remember, you're not going.... You're coming here to me.

**Author unknown>>**

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## *The International Forum on the History and Culture of Harbin Jews June 2006*





# CHUSAN ROAD CHATTER

Issue 389

IYS Hongkew Division

Editor: Kurt Maimann

## From Prague to the Far East

By Joseph Schulhof (continued from the previous issue)

### *The Jews as a "World Power"*

One day during the war the board of the Tientsin Hebrew Association (of which, as already noted, I was a member) received a visit from a representative of the Japanese occupation authorities. He informed us that the Germans had been pressing the Japanese in China to take some action against the Jews. In Shanghai, the Japanese had already given in to the Nazi demands and interned the Jews in Hongkew, a part of Shanghai that had been turned into a concentration camp. We were further told that somewhere in Central China, gas chambers were being built for Jews, just as in Auschwitz. However, the official hastened to add, the Japanese were not truly eager to emulate their German allies in this respect, but they would have to find a good excuse to keep the Germans off their backs. He mentioned that the Japanese army could use some gold and platinum. If we, the Jews of Tientsin, could make some gold and platinum available to the Japanese government, the authorities might be able to withstand Nazi pressures as far as the Jews were concerned.

And so we levied a tax on the Jewish community. Everyone had to turn over to the Tientsin Hebrew Association some gold or platinum. In this way we collected a considerable amount of the precious metals. The Japanese accepted our "gift", thanked us

for it, and we heard nothing more about concentration camps or gas chambers.

Sad to relate, some of our own people in Tientsin tried to exploit this situation in order to enrich themselves. One such individual, whom I knew quite well, was the brother of our family doctor. This man – let us call him B. – paid a visit to the Japanese occupation authorities in Peking. He told them he would be able to furnish them with some additional platinum, provided the Japanese would give him the money he would need for this purpose. The Japanese advanced him some money, without asking any further questions. Several weeks later, B. asked for more money, and received it. He never produced any platinum. At last, after months of reminders and finally, warnings, the Japanese summoned B. to their headquarters. We never saw him again. Later, we learned that he had been shot.

One day in August 1944, about a year before the atomic raids on Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought the war to an end, the seven board members of the Tientsin Hebrew Association were invited by the Japanese army command to a luncheon at the former British Club. I remember that it was a miserably hot day. After a sumptuous meal, including wine, a Japanese colonel launched into a lengthy speech. Since he knew no English and we spoke no Japanese, he addressed us in French. A German Jewish lawyer,

Dr. Heinz Dawid, translated for us. There are some books that mention this incident, but they do not report it correctly. I was present in person, and so I remember exactly what the colonel said. It was something on the following order: "You will agree with me, I am sure, that all through this war we Japanese have treated you Jews well. We gave you complete freedom; we allowed you to travel wherever you wanted. We never bothered you. Now the time has come when you can do something for us in return.

"We know that Japan cannot win this war. We are looking for some understanding with the American government which will provide acceptable conditions for the termination of the war with Japan. You Jews are a world power, You have brethren in the United States who wield influence. We want you to contact them, and ask them to intercede in Washington on our behalf."

As Dr. Dawid finished translating the colonel's speech, we were stunned. What could we, a tiny group of Jews in remote China, do for the Japanese empire? We told the colonel that we had no way of contacting anyone in the United States because the war had cut off all communications with America. The colonel insisted that we were in a position to make these contacts.

"I know that you have brethren also in Switzerland. You can communicate (continued on page 53)

# History Lives with Shanghai's Jewish Immigrants

By Zhang Kun

SHANGHAI: At the age of 19, Michael Blumenthal was carrying the dead and wounded from a field in Hongkew, Shanghai. It was July 1945 when the American Air Force dropped bombs in the area, targeting a Japanese military base in the occupied Shanghai. Unfortunately, the bombs hit civilians, including local Chinese and Jewish refugees who lived in Hongkew, the designated area for Jews known then as "refugees without nationality".

"We carried them to a big courtyard. Most of the wounded and dead were Chinese. If we lost 20 to 30 of us, the Chinese must have lost hundreds," recalled Blumenthal, 79. (He was a former US Secretary of Treasury under President Jimmy Carter). Blumenthal had followed his parents to Shanghai in 1939 after fleeing Berlin, Germany. "We came to Shanghai only for one reason, to save our lives," he told local media last week in Shanghai during a series of events commemorating the Jewish refugees' survival of World War II in the city.

"Mostly we arrived traumatized and bewildered, the victims of prejudice and a perverted race hatred, and of man's cruelty to his fellow man. And this too we had in common: We were the survivors, the lucky ones. Our families, friends and those who were left behind mostly were killed. Had Shanghai not opened its doors, we would surely have shared their fate," he said at the opening of the seminar.

## Crucial Haven

Jewish refugees started to immigrate to Shanghai, an open harbor, in 1933 when Hitler came into power, according to Pan Guang of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. However, it was during 1938 that large numbers

of them poured in, as most countries closed their gates to them. Fengshan Ho (1901-1997), then Chinese consul general in Vienna, provided many of the fleeing Jews permits to go to Shanghai.

"When my father saw them suffer so much, it was natural for him to sympathize and help them," said Manli Ho, Consul General Ho's daughter, who joined the commemoration in Shanghai last week. The city received nearly 20,000 Jewish refugees during the war from 1939 to 1945. Sixty years have passed since the war ended in 1945, but when the former refugees came back for the commemoration, old memories were vivid. They know that friendships last longer than lives.

"Life was difficult at that time, both for the Chinese and the refugees," Blumenthal recalled. "I don't think Shanghainese today can understand how different the city was at that time. There were not so many tall buildings, not enough food, no hospital."

"Many of them arrived with no more than 10 Deutsch marks on them, the rest of their property confiscated by the Hitler government, said Pan in his introductory slide show of the history of that time. The seminar on the Jewish refugees in Shanghai was held at the Hotel Equatorial last Friday.

"Their first stops were temporary dormitories with bunk beds, and later they scattered to different parts of Shanghai," said Pan.

An exhibition featuring the Jewish refugees experiences in Shanghai is being held through December 10 at the Ohel Rachel Synagogue. Many refugees did not expect to stay long, believing the war would be over soon. They ended up living in Shanghai for nine or ten years. They found jobs and started businesses, adapting themselves

to the Chinese lifestyle.

"I remember my mother cooking on a little stove in the yard, and we went to the street corner and paid 10 cents for hot water from a shallow kettle," recalled Rene Willdorff, who spent ten years in Shanghai.

## Friendly Neighbors

Many Chinese remembered their former Jewish neighbors as "honest, hardworking and smart, with strong business talents." Unlike people in most Western countries, The Chinese did not have any hostility towards the Jews. On the contrary, Jews and Chinese shared common values, like emphasis on family, tradition and education. A commentator at the seminar believed that not only Shanghai's status as an open harbor but also these shared values and the tolerance inherent in Chinese traditional culture made the city a rare haven for the refugees of the war. Hu Dexuan, now in his 80s, has maintained his friendship with a Jewish family through the decades, even after the Jewish family migrated to Australia following the war.

In a time when Chinese still believed that the more children a family had, the happier they would be, it was his Jewish friend, Known as Dr. Stengraber, who told him that fewer children would benefit his family. It was important to give the children, including daughters, a good education, Hu recalled Dr. Stengraber as saying.

"Years after the Stengrabers left China in the 1950s, I still wore clothes they gave us," recalled Hu Youhua, the youngest Hu daughter.

Some refugees cultivated a life-long love for Chinese culture. Karl

Bettelheim, a renowned biologist, was from an antiques dealer's family. As soon as the Bettelheims settled down in Shanghai, his parents resumed their interest in cultural relics and started to collect Chinese antiques.

"We have two tapestries and some bronze and porcelain, one of which has proven to be from the Qianlong period (1736-1795)," said Bettelheim. "Wherever I move, I always have them with me."

As a child, Bettelheim developed his interest in collecting matchbox covers. His precious collection of about 1,000 matchboxes, many from Old Shanghai, still accompanies him along with the highly valuable Chinese antiques.

At a reunion of old neighbors held at the Ohel Moshe Synagogue last week, Sonja Muhlberger took out some colorful rubber bands and sang a ballad, sharing her childhood memories through lyrics made up of Chinese and pidgin Japanese. The rubber bands reminded her of one of the few games shared by the refugees and Chinese children, in which they strung together the elastic bands and used them as jump ropes.

In 1942, the Japanese, under pressure

from the Nazis, tightened controls on Jewish refugees. They made the Hongkew area a designated "ghetto". Today, rows of European-style buildings remain in the area. Several newspapers were published here, in English, German and even Yiddish. It was the refugees who brought Yiddish literature to Shanghai for the first time, without translation from English or Russian.

"We are still the kids. Having been raised in horrible circumstances, we have family feelings for each other. I want to try to keep that family together," Rene Willdorff said at the seminar. He is the chairman of the "Rickshaw Union," a network of refugees in Shanghai.

"Only a few of us with valid firsthand memories are still alive. Soon we too will be gone," Blumenthal said at the seminar. He came back to visit Shanghai several times after the 1970s, bringing his children along. "I used to walk for hours, showing them the past."

Remembering history helps to promote international harmony," Pan said. "Now there are still many religious and national conflicts in the world."

Remembering the history also

helps today's development. Many former refugees have an emotional attachment to Shanghai and are ready to contribute their efforts to the city. A new Jewish community has been established in Shanghai. Dvir Bar-Gal, a photo journalist from Israel, is trying to discover the tombstones of the immigrants to Shanghai in the early 1900s. He has torn stones off old walls and dug them out of Suzhou (Soochow) Creek. He hopes one day to build a memorial place in Shanghai for these stones. The local Shanghai government is planning to protect the former Jewish communities, which cover about 30 hectares, in the coming five to eight years. "Both Jews and Chinese have deep respect for our ancestors and remembering history is a way to live our own," he said.

(From The China Daily, November 16, 2005)

## From Prague to the Far East

(from page 51)

with them. Switzerland is neutral. You can ask the Swiss Jews to approach the American Jews on your behalf. We have treated you well throughout this war, so we are expecting you to do something for us."

We were in a state of shock. We did not know how to answer this man. In the end, we assured him that we would do our utmost to comply with his request.

After the colonel had dismissed us, we went directly to our headquarters and, behind the closed door of the board room, we discussed what action we could take. Obviously, the Japanese colonel had been brainwashed by the Nazis about the role of the Jews as a "world power" and the influence of the American Jews on the government of the United States. We, of course, knew well that we could do nothing. We decided to forget our encounter with the colonel. Apparently the Japanese felt the same way; we never heard anything again about this strange proposal.

### Jewish Shanghai Today

#### Chabad Jewish Center of Pudong presents: Kosher Take Out Service

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# Historical Links

By Brian Publicover

## *The Israeli Ambassador talks about his life, loves, and a past that links Jews and China* by Brian Publicover

The city of Kaifeng, Henan Province, is home to an unusual cultural legacy. During the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234), a synagogue was constructed, marking the centre of a small, isolated Jewish community that had thrived in the city for hundreds of years. The house of worship finally disappeared in the 1800s, and while direct descendants still live in the city, the community and its traditions have gradually disappeared.

"But there was no persecution," says Dr. Yehoyada Haim, Israel's Ambassador to China. "We Jews are thankful to the Chinese for Harbin and Shanghai. They are two cities that opened their doors when Jews were being persecuted, and during WWII a lot of doors were closed".

The affable Ambassador handles the serious subject matter with aplomb, comfortably shifting from one question to the next with the ease of a seasoned diplomat. It soon becomes clear that Haim's self-deprecating sense of humour is one of his greatest strengths; one immediately feels at ease in his presence.

"The most important thing is to be honest with yourself. I say what I think ... I'm not so sure if these are good qualities for a diplomat, but this is who I am" he says with a chuckle.

As a young man, Haim's natural athleticism gave way to a brief stint as a physical education teacher, but his interest in Middle Eastern affairs eventually led him to study the politics of the region, both at home and in the United States. Haim started his second career later than most of his peers, but he quickly rose through the

ranks of the Foreign Ministry, moving from research to political advisory positions in New York and London. His first ambassadorial posting was in New Delhi, India, eventually leading him to Beijing in 2002.

"I tried," Haim says when asked of his Chinese language abilities. "I took lessons, but nobody understood me".

### *Cultural exchange*

But despite his lack of proficiency in the language, Haim has travelled to every corner of China and has read hundreds of books on the country.

"I'm not sure I understand very much about China yet, but I love reading. I love Chinese novels, sayings, proverbs, anything" the Ambassador says. "I love everything historical. (Outside of my official duties) I've been to the Forbidden City at least five times, same for the Temple of Heaven. I love walking in the hutong and markets. I love to see how people live, eat, work, fight – this is part of my job, to understand how people behave".

Like most foreign expats living in the Chinese capital, he is awestruck by the pace of development. "The changes are striking. Everywhere the change is unbelievable. It's something everyone in the world should see" Haim says. "But I told one Chinese minister not to destroy Chinese culture. Modernize ... but not at the expense of the culture".

Culture is clearly important to Haim. One of the embassy's next events will be an exhibit on the Holocaust and humanity at Beijing World Art Museum in the China Millennium Monument. "Human and Inhuman" will open on June 27. "I believe I've almost tripled the number of cultural programmes at the embassy.

Travel also deepens mutual understanding, and China granted Israel Approved Destination Status last June, potentially paving the way for an influx of Chinese tourists. "We're working on an agreement, which we hope to reach with a few more weeks" Haim says. Exchanges flow in both directions, however. One Chinese government official recently told Haim that approximately 40,000 visas were given to Israelis in 2004. There are also now two direct flights between Israel and Beijing, and three to Hong Kong. But mutual cultural awareness still remains relatively low. "This is why I'm trying my best to bring our culture here" Haim says.

### *Agricultural technology*

The embassy celebrated Israel's 58th Independence Day in May by "adopting" the village of Xiaoliugezhuang near Beijing. "We brought two groups of artists and pantomimes to hospitals and schools for the disabled". The government and about 20 Israeli companies offer a total initial donation worth 500,000 yuan (US\$62,500). The contributions include agricultural, medical and educational resources. Pressurized drip irrigation systems were also installed in 20 greenhouses in the area, as well as mobile milking machines. Local farmers were provided with high-quality seeds and agricultural training.

As an arid country, Israel is in a unique position to provide countries such as China with technologically advanced irrigation systems. These agricultural exchanges have further fuelled bilateral trade, which has been expanding by 23 to 25 per cent every year. Israeli model farms in the Beijing area and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region are also used as



Israeli Ambassador to China Dr. Yehoyada Haim puts people at ease with his sense of humour.

part of the 40 different courses the Israeli government offers to locals. Approximately 250 Israeli companies are now operating on the mainland. "Many Israeli irrigation companies have joint ventures here" says Haim. "Most of the courses our government provides are in agriculture, especially water management and treatment. We're working to share our knowledge".

### **Local community**

The Ambassador estimates there are roughly 1,000 Jewish expatriates from a range of Western countries living in Beijing. The city still lacks a synagogue, however, so services are usually held in hotels. "We want to have a place, like a Jewish cultural centre, where we can meet, teach Hebrew, and celebrate our holidays". And despite his own struggles with Mandarin, Haim advises foreign newcomers to China to learn the language. "It makes life easier. You have to talk to the local people. It would greatly help my understanding of the country if I could speak Chinese".

*(From Beijing Weekend, June 23-25, 2006)*

## Letters

### **Juergen Schneider German Estate Department**

Re: Estate of Esther Witt, nee Budnick  
Your address was given to us by the Shanghai Jewish Center to which we were referred by Mr. Albert Dien at the Sino-Judaic Institute of Menlo Park, California.

The latter organization had initially been contacted in hopes that they may be able to provide information regarding this estate matter wherein our services were enlisted by the guardian ad litem seeking assistance in locating the decedent's unknown heirs.

The decedent was born Esther Budnick in Harbin on March 23, 1907 to Russian migrant parents. She was a member of the Shanghai Ashkenazi Jewish Communal Association.

Our request is that you give us whatever information you may have about the decedent's family. Details regarding her parents, the date of their arrival in Harbin, their previous residence, and possible information as to when they left Harbin, and where they went from there, all could be of particular interest.

The decedent is believed to have had a brother "Tulia" who may have returned to Russia (Moscow?) shortly

after World War II. If you have any information regarding that brother or other members of the family, please let us know.

As of 1951 the decedent is known to have resided in New Jersey (USA). If you do not have a record on the decedent's family, perhaps you can refer us to a place where such a record might exist.

We thank you for your attention and cooperation and look forward to hearing from you.

Address: Hoerner Bank,  
Aktengesellschaft, Oststrasse 77,  
Heilbronn 74072, Germany  
Email: schneider@hoernerbank.de

# JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF HARBIN AND SHANGHAI UNDER JAPANESE OCCUPATION, 1931-1945.

by Dr. Zvia Bowman of King's College, University of London

The aim of this paper is to examine Japanese treatment of the Jewish community in Harbin from 1931 and their treatment of the Jewish communities of Shanghai from 1937. I shall start with Harbin. Jews migrated to Manchuria to escape repression and violent pogroms that they suffered in Tsarist Russia. Starting with just a few Jews in 1898, by the 1920's the community numbered more than 13,000 people. They built synagogues, Jewish schools, a Jewish hospital, and a home for the aged and established many charitable organisations. It was a vibrant community that helped its own, staged plays and concerts and published its own newspapers.

They were a minority among a larger Russian community, which numbered 124,000 by 1921. The Russians themselves were a minority among a large Chinese community, which numbered more than 300,000 by 1921.

Under the benevolent management of General Dmitri Horvath, the General Manager of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER), all minorities coexisted peacefully in Harbin and the Jews did not suffer from pogroms.

The situation of the Jews in Harbin deteriorated rapidly with the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931. Units of the Kwantung Army entered Harbin on February 5th, 1932 to a rousing welcome from the White Russian community.

The Chinese population was both

fearful and resentful, while Dr Abraham Kaufman, the leader of the Jewish community in Harbin, extended a cautious welcome to the Japanese forces. Within a few short weeks, the whole population of Harbin started fearing the occupiers. The Japanese military regarded their posting in Manchuria as a good opportunity to enrich themselves. Local shop owners had to pay a huge amount in protection fees and the Japanese also set up gambling houses, opium dens and brothels in all the major cities. Factories were constructed all over Manchuria to produce morphine, cocaine and heroin.

Harbin was controlled by nine different law-enforcement agencies, among them the Tokumu Kikan (Special Services Agency); the military gendarmerie or Kempei, the Harbin Municipal Police and the Harbin Criminal Police. Members of all these agencies used their position to intimidate the local population and to enrich themselves. They hired White Russian, Chinese and Korean thugs to kidnap wealthy citizens for ransom. Some of the White Russians, motivated by their hatred of the "Red Bolsheviks and the zhidi (Yids)", formed the Russian Fascist Party in 1925 in Harbin. Modelling themselves on the Italian Fascists, these Russian Fascists wore a black uniform and an armband with a black swastika. Their leader, Konstantin Rodzaevsky, and his friends published their anti-Semitic

and anti-Soviet views in a newspaper called Nash Put (Our Path)

They were behind the kidnapping and the grisly murder of a young pianist, Semion Kaspe, in 1933, which caused an international outcry. Semion's father, Joseph, was one of the richest Jews in Harbin. He was a jeweller and the owner of the beautiful Hotel Moderne. Young Semion was a talented piano-player, he studied music in France and had French citizenship. His father refused to pay the ransom demanded by the kidnappers, and asked the French consul to help release his son. His refusal to pay for his son's release infuriated the White Russian kidnappers, who mutilated and killed Semion. Besides Semion, another Jew named Koffman was also killed by his kidnappers. Even though Chinese judges passed a death sentence on his kidnappers, the Japanese had the Chinese judges arrested and set the kidnappers free.

These and other cases of kidnapping and intimidation created an atmosphere of fear in Harbin. Since the population also faced economic difficulties, many Jews had no choice but to leave Harbin and make new lives for themselves in Tientsin, Beijing or Shanghai. Thus, the Jewish population of Harbin dropped to less than 5,000 by 1939.

Why did the Japanese treat the Jews in such a fashion? Even though most Japanese had never met a Jew in their lives, by the 1940's, anti-Semitism had become an integral part of ultra



- nationalist thought disseminated by major Japanese newspapers with the approval of the Japanese government. Many Japanese believed that Japan and Germany were engaged in a single struggle against a common Jewish enemy and Japan must expel Jewish influence from Asia. The Japanese government was exploiting anti-Semitism at home to enforce ideological conformity.

However, the Japanese official policy of wartime anti-Semitism was not used to persecute Jews. On December 6th, 1938, the Five Ministers Conference (Gosho kaigi), consisting of the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and the ministers of the army, navy and treasury, adopted the following three principles towards the Jews:

- 1) Jews living in Japan, Manchuria and China are to be treated fairly and in the same manner as other foreign nationals. No special effort to expel them is to be made.
- 2) Jews entering Japan, Manchuria, and China are to be dealt with on the basis of existing immigration policies pertaining to other foreigners.
- 3) No special effort to attract Jews to Japan, Manchuria, or China is to be made. However, exceptions may be made for businessmen and technicians for utility value for Japan.

This policy enabled 18, 000 Jewish refugees to enter Shanghai and 6, 000 Jews passed through the Japanese port of Kobe on their way to China and other destinations. The Japanese population of Kobe treated these refugees well, and some even brought them presents.

The Japanese rulers of Manchuria (its Manchurian Emperor Pu-yi was appointed by the Japanese and was a puppet in their hands) realised that Japan would need huge investments to develop the region. At first they tried to attract European and American investors. Europe was soon engulfed in the Second World War, while America was in the grip of the

Great Depression and also strongly disapproved of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

Nevertheless, the founder of Nissan Industries, Ayukawa Gisuke, wrote an article entitled "A Plan to Invite Fifty Thousand Jews to Manchuko". He hoped that America would invest one hundred million dollars in the resettlement of these German Jews in Manchuria. While his article was received with interest, his plan could not succeed if the Jews kept leaving Manchuria and taking their capital with them. In order to persuade them to stay on, Colonel Yasue Norihiro was appointed as the chief liaison officer of the Japanese military forces in Manchuria. Colonel Yasue had been interested in the Jewish question for years and even toured Palestine in 1927. He had also written many articles and books on the "Jewish problem" and was considered an expert on Jews. He at once started calming the volatile atmosphere in Harbin by reining in the anti-Semitic activities of the Russian Nazis and by befriending the leaders of the Jewish community.

According to Dr Kaufman's son, Mr Teddy Kaufman, Colonel Yasue became a frequent guest at Dr Kaufman's house. Speaking fluent Russian, he would often stay for supper and discuss for hours the fate of the Jewish people, the future of Palestine and the future of the Jews in China. It seems that a genuine friendship soon developed between these two men.

In 1934 the Far Eastern Jewish Council was established as the representative body of the Jews. It held the First Conference of Jewish Communities in the Far East in December 1937. Japan was winning its war against China at the time and seven hundred Harbin Jews as well as Jewish representatives attended the conference from Tientsin, Kobe in Japan and other cities in China. It was also attended by several well - placed Japanese officials, the most

senior being General Higuchi, Chief of the Special Service (Intelligence). The Jewish leaders pledged their loyalty to Japan and Manchukuo and publicly thanked Japan for treating the Jews equally, while other countries were persecuting them. The Jewish delegates concluded the conference with a resolution that they would cooperate with Japan and Manchukuo in building a new order in Asia. The Japanese obviously controlled and manipulated the Jewish leaders in Manchuria.

Soon after the conference finished, prominent Jews started writing articles in praise of the Japanese occupation of China in the Jewish newspaper *Evreiskaya Zizn* (Jewish Life). Encouraged by the success of the first conference, the second one took place in December 1938 and the third in December 1939. All three conferences were well attended by the Jewish representatives of Harbin and Japanese military personnel. Its resolutions were sent to every major Jewish organisation worldwide and were of great propaganda value to the Japanese.

A decision was reached after the first conference that all the Jewish communities in China would be combined into a single overall autonomous association. It would cover all religious problems, educational, cultural, social and economic activities and support orphanages and care for refugees from Central Europe. It would also register all Jews and every Jewish organisation in the Far East.

In 1937 Dr Kaufman was awarded a medal by the Manchukuo government for his public activities and in May 1939 he was invited to visit Japan for sightseeing and talks with senior officials.

Thus, while Harbin's Jewish population faced economic hardships and their freedom was constricted by the Japanese occupiers, they were fairly treated as long as they collaborated with the Japanese authorities. They

were not forced to live in camps or in ghettos and continued working in their jobs. They could still enjoy their social lives in the evenings and continue employing Chinese workers and servants.

Let us now examine the situation in Shanghai, once the city was occupied by the Japanese forces in December 1937. By the late 1930's, there were from 4,000 to 8,000 Ashkenazi (European) Jews living in Shanghai. The number of Sephardic (Oriental) Jews was never large and did not exceed 1,000. Most Sephardic Jews were wealthy businessmen and landowners. The founders of the community, like members of the Sassoon and Haroon families, arrived in Shanghai in the 19th century and amassed vast wealth from trading in South East Asia, China, India and Europe. Most of them were British citizens.

In contrast, only 1% to 2% of Ashkenazi Jews were wealthy. Most were refugees from Russia, who arrived in Shanghai via Harbin. Around 60% were middle or lower class shopkeepers. Of the remaining 38% many were unemployed or partially employed. Some were Soviet citizens, but most were stateless since they did not want to take up Soviet citizenship after 1917 Revolution in Russia.

When Shanghai surrendered to Japanese military forces in 1937, at first it did not affect the lives of the Jews. Moreover, nearly 20,000 German and Austrian Jews found a safe haven in Shanghai after its occupation in 1937.

In 1938, 1,374 Jewish refugees arrived in Shanghai; in 1939, 12,089 and in 1940, 1,955; but in 1941, only 33 came. Some wealthier refugees were able to rent apartments or rooms in the foreign concessions area, but most refugees were quite poor and had to settle in Hongkou area, which was heavily damaged during the recent Battle of Shanghai. The housing in this hastily rebuilt

area was cheap and thus eagerly occupied by nearly 10,000 Jewish refugees. Those who were destitute had to live in crowded camps that were hastily set up in Seward Road, Ward Road and other locations in Shanghai. The camps housed more than 2,500 refugees who relied on aid from American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC) and wealthy Shanghai businessmen like Sir Victor Sassoon. He made the first floor of his Embankment Building available to register and to house the newly arrived refugees. He also donated large sums of money to house other refugees in camps and to start their own businesses. Most of these refugees were very resourceful and soon set up Viennese cafes, restaurants, dental clinics, tailor shops, groceries, beauty parlours and repair shops in Hongkou and other area of Shanghai. Others found employment as musicians, doctors, secretaries, private tutors or shop assistants mainly in the foreign concession sectors of Shanghai. However, they were competing for housing and employment with thousands of Chinese refugees, who poured into Shanghai from the surrounding towns and villages affected by the war.

In December 1937 a puppet Shanghai Municipal Government under Mayor Fu Xiaolan was established in the Chinese parts of Shanghai. Foreign concessions remained outside Chinese and Japanese jurisdiction. While Shanghai residents' lives became more uncertain, Jews were not singled out or discriminated against. Japanese authorities regarded these refugees as industrious and cooperative and were pleased with their rebuilding of Hongkou area.

The situation changed in December 1941, when Japan declared war on the United States of America. Allied nationals, including Americans, British, Belgian and Dutch citizens, were asked by Japanese Kempetai to register with them and to report

on their financial worth, debts, real estate and movable goods.

After the fall of France in June 1940, Vichy government declared its neutrality, which was recognised by Japan. Thus, the French Concession in Shanghai and its French residents did not have to report to the Japanese.

By November 1942, the Japanese began interning the enemy population in camps, starting with single men. In early 1943, the internment began to include the civilian population. They were given just ten days to pack and move to camps. They had to bring their own beds and bedding, clothes and other essentials. There were seven camps in Shanghai and Jews, who were American or British citizens, had to move to them as well. About 8,000 Allied nationals were moved into the camps by summer of 1943.

Conditions in the camps were crowded, there was little food and washing facilities were minimal. Eventually, the internees were allowed to grow their own vegetables, receive food parcels from the Red Cross and they started to organize cultural and sports activities. They even opened libraries and printed their own newspapers in the camps.

Now the Japanese turned their attention to the refugees from Germany and Austria. In November 1941 the Third Reich had passed laws stripping Jews living abroad of their nationality. Thus these Shanghai Jews became stateless. Japanese authorities claimed that these stateless Jews lacked government protection and should be strictly supervised. On February 18th, 1943, the Japanese military ordered all these stateless refugees to move to a "designated area" about half a mile long and three quarters of a mile wide in Hongkou district. Stateless refugees were ordered to move to this area by May 18th, 1943. Many had to sell their property for less than its value in order to meet the deadline. It was hard to find accommodation in **(continued on page 59)**

# H.E. Gabriel (1914 - 2005)

Harry Eric Gabriel, or Eric Gabriel as he was more commonly known, was born in Shanghai on August 7, 1914, the oldest of five and only son to David and Hannah Gabriel. His parents had arrived in Shanghai circa 1912 from Siberia (Eric's maternal grandfather, Samuel Kaflevitch, had been exiled to Kansk with his family, from Russia) but soon after his birth, the Gabriel family moved back to Harbin, which was the hub of a large Russian-Jewish community.

David Gabriel started working for the well-known Hotel Moderne and young Eric first attended "cheder" and then the Commercial Russian School. Eric also began his violin studies at an early age under the tutelage of his grandfather, Samuel, and a few years later, became a very active member of the Betar youth movement.

At 15, when the Gabriel family relocated to the then British colony of Hongkong, Eric attended the Central British School in Kowloon, where

he learnt his English and continued to study violin. When the family moved back to Shanghai, several years later, Eric started a printing business and continued his intense involvement with Betar and also the Shanghai Jewish Volunteers, he met Reva Goldman, his wife of 63 years, at Betar and the two were married in 1942 in the French Concession of Shanghai, during the Japanese Occupation.

In 1946, daughter Laura was born in Shanghai and a year later, Eric, Reva and their toddler moved to Hongkong, where daughter Barbara was born in 1948. Eric started another business, Gabriel Trading Company (an import – export business ) and later joined the Eisenberg Group of Companies as Hongkong branch manager. He also worked with Reva in Balore, a successful, beaded knit wear company that the couple founded together in the early 60's.

The family were active members of

the Jewish Recreation Club and the Ohel Leah Synagogue and Eric also joined the Hongkong Philharmonic Orchestra where he became first violinist for several years under the baton of Monya Bard.

The Gabriels were transferred to Manilla in 1968 to set up a branch office for the Eisenberg Group. Eric and Riva continued to play an active roll in the Jewish and business communities while living in the Philippines. Upon his retirement in 1983, Eric and Riva immigrated to San Diego, California.

Eric Gabriel was survived till his last day by his wife Riva, daughters Laura and Barbara, and grand daughter Dona, in Sandiego. His Grandchildren Falie and Tiffany and great grandson, 1 year old Samuel, live in Sydney, Australia. His 2 sisters, Tonie and Freda reside in Hadera, Israel while sister Sara lives in Orlando, Florida.

**Passed away in San Diego (Rancho Bernardo) on May 6, 2005.**

## Dr. Ziva Bowman, Jewish Communities Under Occupation

(From page 58)

Hongkou ghetto, since it housed many thousands of Chinese refugees. Whole families had to share one room, food was meagre and sanitary conditions were appalling. After August 10th, 1943, all exits from the ghetto had to secure a pass from a sadistic Japanese official named Ghoya. Very often he would refuse exit passes, making it difficult for the ghetto dwellers to find employment outside the ghetto.

Jewish overseers were appointed in the ghetto to keep order and to patrol its perimeters. Thus life for Jews in Allied camps and in Hongkou ghetto

was equally harsh until it ended with the Japanese surrender in the summer of 1945.

However, the Russian Jews were not interned and could continue working and living freely in Shanghai. Why were they treated differently?

There were several reasons for the leniency towards them:

1. Most of the Russian Jews arrived in Shanghai before 1937.
2. The neutrality pact signed by Japan and the USSR in April 1941 may have also influenced the Japanese decision to exclude the Shanghai

Russians and Russian Jews.

3. In Harbin Japanese authorities hoped to gain American investments to help them to develop Manchuria, hence they tried to befriend Manchurian Jewish population. Even after the outbreak of the Second World War in December 1941, the Japanese still wanted Manchurian Jews to help them develop the region, causing them to encourage Jewish and Zionist activities in Harbin and other towns in China.

# The Treasured Friendship from a Foreign Land

By Li Jisheng

Some days ago a local media reported that the Jewish people living in Shanghai over sixty years ago were treated in a friendly way by the Chinese people. I had not yet settled down in Shanghai at that time, but I knew that Hitler, the Fascist monster, cruelly persecuted Jewish people during the Second World War, and as a result thousands upon thousands of Jews were murdered in Nazi concentration camps.

In 1950 Ba Jin went to Warsaw, Poland to attend the Conference for the Defense of World Peace where he visited the Auschwitz concentration camp and viewed the evidence of Nazi crimes. He then wrote an article "The Story of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp" in which he says: "In a room for the memory of the Jews, people lay down flowers before a monument. On the monument some Hebrew words were engraved – Remember it forever. Rudolf Hess, one of the Nazi heads, admitted that at least 2.5 million Jews were murdered in Auschwitz. When Ba Jin came back to China, he edited 4 volumes of "Pictorials on War Against Fascists" which comprised both historical photos and Ba Jin's writings. Fifty years later, in 2005, the Shanghai Ba Jin Research Society and the Shanghai Social Science Publishing House republished Ba Jin's pictorial book. In this new book there is an explanation: "The book shows Ba Jin and other Chinese intellectual's hard work in the world war against Fascists when they kept their cultural duties, overcame difficulties and created remarkable deeds".

Before 1949, Ba Jin translated a novel "Six Men" written by Rudolf Lokel, a German writer. Ba Jin wrote in the postscript: "Rudolf, a German revolutionary, was exiled and never

came back to his home country since Hitler seized power. Rudolf was not Jewish, but he wrote books either in German or in Yiddish". Several years ago, a Japanese scholar visited a library in Europe. He found many letters in French or in English written by Ba Jin to his foreign friends, among which were six letters written to Rudolf. In these letters Ba Jin told him that he was translating his book "Six Men" into Chinese and hoped to get the Yiddish version as well as a Yiddish grammar book. Ba Jin also mentioned in his letter that in the 1920s he kept up a correspondence with Rudolf. So we can see Ba Jin had wished to learn Yiddish so as to learn more about the Jewish people's old culture.

On November 20, 2003 I went to Chengdu to attend the 7th International Symposium on Ba Jin. In the meeting I met a Jewish writer, and Israeli poetess Bat-Sheva Sheriff and her husband. We took a picture together. She presented me with her poetry book "The Ancient People", a lovely book with beautiful photos and verses translated by Shen Zaiwang and published by Sichuan People's Publishing House. At the group meeting the poetess recited her four poems presented for Ba Jin. Although we got to know each other for the first time, we shook hands just like old friends. We were so lucky to meet in Chengdu.

Two years later when I was in deep sorrow for Ba Jin's passing away in November 2005, Li Xiaolin (Ba Jin's daughter) transferred the poetess's new book "the wildness of Eagle-Owl" to me. This pretty book with nice pictures and poetry was also translated by Mr. Shen and was published by Sichuan Literature and Art Publishing House. In the new book there was an attached letter written by Mr. Shen to Li Xiaolin

on November 3: "I was very sad for Ba Jin's loss. I am sending you the Israeli Poetess Bat-Sheva Sheriff's poetry book with include four poems written by Bat-Sheva for Ba Jin to express our memory of him. I told Bat-Sheva about Ba Jin's death over the telephone and she sent a fax immediately to Mr. Jin Binhua the Secretary of the Chinese Writer's Association to express her condolence. Today she called me again and wishes me to tell Ba Jin's relatives about her feelings. She also mentioned that at the Chengdu meeting she met Mr. Li Jisheng, Ba Jin's younger brother, and she wishes to know about Mr. Li's health". The poetess's sincere concern profoundly touched my heart and soothed my distress. I am so grateful to her and will always remember her kindness. This friendly sentiment from a foreigner is so precious. It proves that the friendship between the Chinese people and the Jewish people has historical origins.

Here is one of the Bat-Sheva poems presented for Ba Jin:

Sometimes it happens than

**The air is still,  
Neither rising nor falling.**

**In the stillness**

**You cling to the air**

**So still you are**

**Unquenchable**

**When the air is still.**

**Why be lonely**

**You curl around**

**A column of air**

**And stand at**

**Attention**

**To the sound of**

**Hymns floating by,**

**Floating pangs of desire**

**When the air is still.**

*English translation by Shen Zaiwang  
Published in (Shanghai) Xinmin  
Evening Journal on March 28, 2006*



Portrait of Misha Kogan  
by artist L. Smushkovitch

# To the Misha Kogan Social Aid Fund

## US \$ 20.000

In memory of my dear brothers  
and sister

**Asya Kogan**  
**(Tokyo) July 2006**



Leva Kachanovsky



Borya Kachanovsky



Misha Kachanovsky



Sofia Shifrin

**Leva, Borya, Misha, Sofia !**  
**I love you and always miss you.**

**Asya**

# NEWS FROM SAN-FRANCISCO

On July 30th, 2006 the Far Eastern Society of San-Francisco celebrated new election year at the popular Chinese Restaurant "PEKING". The lunch was complimentary to honor our Members and at the same time to elect a new Board of Directors. By request of Members, the previous Board of Directors will remain for this year too.

The president, Mr. I. Kaufman, informed all those present, of the achievements of our Organization for the past year and thanked the members for their cooperation, He also congratulated Gutia Katzeff of the graduation from the Hebrew

Academy High School of her granddaughter Alyson who was offered acceptance by four Universities. She just came back from visiting Israel, being a great patriot of Israel.

Mr. I. Kaufman, a very active President, achieved many financial supports for our Organization from different sources and deserves to be recognizes, especially at this critical time of aging of our members, as a very active collector of many donations thus enriching Social Aid Fund of Igud Yotzei Sin. Mrs. G. Katzeff, on behalf of the Members thanked Mr. Kaufman for his hard work and devotion to the good cause.

Mrs. Olga Kaufman, the wife of the president, was also thanked for doing many errands for the benefit of our Organization.

In recognition of their efforts the Members present applauded them. The lunch was a very pleasant affair when friends meet friends, exchange the family news, where they will spend vacation time and, of course, the health subject was always there. The most important subject was the situation in Israel. We are all very concerned and we pray to God for the victory for Israel.

G. Katzeff  
Hon. Secretary

## George Carlin's view on aging

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Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we were kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions.

"How old are you?"

"I'm four and a half!"

You're never thirty-six and a half. But you're four and a half, going on five! That's the key.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead.

"How old are you?"

"I'm gonna be 16!"

You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16!

And then the greatest day of your life – you become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony, you become 21. Yesssssss!!!

But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He turned; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just a sour dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?

You become 21, you turn 30, Then you're pushing 40. Whoa! Put on the

brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you reach 50 and your dreams are gone.

But wait!!! You make it to 60.

So you become 21, turn 30, push 40, Reach 50 and make it to 60.

You've built up so much speed that you hit 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you hit Wednesday!

You get into your 80's and every day is a complete cycle; you hit lunch; you turn 4:30; you reach bedtime. And it doesn't end there. Into the 90's, you start going back-wards: "I was just 92".

Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!"

May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!

### How to stay young

- Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them.
- Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
- Keep learning, Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening,

whatever. Never let the brain idle.

- Enjoy the simple things.
- Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gag for breath.
- The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life is ourselves. Be alive while you are alive.
- Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies. Your home is your refuge.
- Cherish your health: if it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it, if it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
- Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, to the next county or to a foreign country, but not to where the guilt is.
- Tell the people you love that you love them at every opportunity.

### AND ALWAYS REMEMBER:

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.  
"Jerusalem Post"

# Articles from the *Shanghai Daily*

## **Exhibition remembers Jewish bond**

**By Zhang Jun**

Five former Jewish refugees who lived in Shanghai about 60 years ago returned to the city yesterday to commemorate a unique period in World War II. They attended the opening ceremony of an exhibition entitled "Noah's Ark in Fire and Sword" at the Ohel Rachel Synagogue on Shaanxi Road N. It was followed by a launching ceremony for three new books about Jewish people in China.

"We are very grateful to the Chinese people and the people of Shanghai ... this day is very good proof of our relationship" Michael Blumenthal, curator of the Jewish Museum in Berlin and a Jewish refugee in the city in 1939, said at the ceremony yesterday.

Blumenthal, who was the 64th US Treasury Secretary in 1977, is among more than 30,000 Jewish refugees who fled Europe seeking asylum in Shanghai during World War II. The 79-year-old American citizen said he learned English in this city and it was Shanghai's acceptance that gave hope to him and many of his companions.

Karl Bettelheim, a biological scientist in Australia; Sonja Muhlberger, a German writer; Ruth Shany, a renowned Israeli artist; and Rene Willdorff, chairman of the Jewish Refugees Reunion Committee, were also invited by China to attend.

The exhibition, which will be open on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday for a months, displays more than 150 pictures and documents of Jewish

people in Shanghai. Ho Manli, daughter of Ho Fengshan – the Chinese consul general in Vienna who issued thousands of Chinese visas to help Jews flee between 1938 and 1940 – also attended the ceremony. She told Shanghai Daily her father's picture was on display at the exhibition and that she is very proud of her father. She said she is planning to contribute historical material for a museum in Yiyang, Hunan Province, her father's home town, to commemorate him.

## **Former neighbors reminisce, catch up on 60 years**

**By Zhang Jun**

Several former Jewish refugees yesterday talked with their Chinese neighbors when they lived in the city about 60 years ago. The talks were held at the old site of Shanghai Ohel Moshe Synagogue – close to the original homes of most former Jewish refugees who arrived in the city after fleeing Europe before and during World War II.

Two refugees told Shanghai Daily they hope to hold an art exhibition and to deliver a biology lecture to local researchers – a way of showing their gratitude to the city.

Sonja Muhlberger, a German writer, said she was born in Shanghai in October of 1939 and her parents were Jewish refugees. She said when she was a child her parents lived frugally. They couldn't afford to buy dolls, so Muhlberger would make her own paper dolls. She said at that time Jewish children didn't play with Chinese children, but they would

watch each other. She showed a picture of her family when she was only one year old.

According to Hu Dehong, 84, who lived close to Jewish refugees in that period, the community left a strong impression. "They are well-educated people with good manners," he said. Hu added he had a very good Jewish neighbor and even to day he keeps in contact with the man's children.

Ruth Shany, a renowned Israeli artist and also a former Jewish refugee, said: "I hope to hold a personal exhibition of drawing-on-silk works in the city." Karl Bettelheim, another former refugee who is now a biologist, said: "I want to deliver a lecture to local researchers on diarrhea and hopefully, we can have more cooperation on health sciences."

## **City lays out welcome mat**

Shanghai opened its door to Jewish refugees during their darkest hour in World War II. For that reason Shanghai is still revered by Jewish people. From 1933 to 1941, Shanghai accepted more than 30,000 Jewish refugees from Germany and other countries occupied by the Nazi army. Although thousands of Jewish refugees settled in a third country after using Shanghai as a transit point, 25,000 remained in the city as a temporary home when the Pacific War started in December 1941. The number exceeded the combined total of Jewish refugees accepted by Canada, Australia, India, South Africa and New Zealand.

There were a number of outstanding talents among the Jewish refugees settling in Shanghai. They contributed to the creativity and diversity

File photo: A small street in the residential area of Jewish refugees in today's Hongkou District.



### Historical sites of the Jewish community in Hongkou District

of Shanghai as Jewish societies organized education, entertainment as well as sports activities. There were more than 400 college teachers and students who escaped the Nazis. They insisted on studying in Shanghai for the duration of the war. The Jewish community also made outstanding achievements in the media. From 1903 to 1949, more than 50 Jewish newspapers and periodicals were published in languages such as English, German, French, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish. Jewish people fleeing Europe developed many friendships with common Chinese people.



Michael Blumental (left), former US Treasury Secretary and curator of the Berlin Jewish Museum, and a fellow WWII Jewish refugee in Shanghai attend the exhibition "Noah's Ark in Fire and Sword" at the Ohel Rachel Synagogue on Shaanxi Road.



# Legends of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng

(continued from the previous issue)

## 14. Kaifeng Jewry's First Family

While the emperor bestowed seven family names on the Jews, only one of them has a story of its own. The Zhao family's history provides a blend of wisdom and heroism.

In front of the main gateway of the Kaifeng synagogue, in accordance with the customary Chinese manner of commemorating a celebrated family or individual, stood an archway in honor of the Zhao clan. The surname, Zhao, which is listed first in the Hundred Chinese Surnames, a reading primer for Chinese children, was not the family's original name, but was bestowed by a Chinese emperor as a reward and honor. Legend states that the emperor gave seven surnames to the Kaifeng Jews. But of these famous seven, the name Zhao is the only one which has a separate story, indisputably substantiated in written documents from both Jewish and Chinese sources.

The first Zhao who brought considerable fame to the family was Zhao Cheng, a fifteenth-century Kaifeng physician. Originally his name was An San, meaning "An the Third", a title connoting low birth and alien origin. Legends tell that he was a very honest man, and loyal to the imperial court. During the Yong Le period (1403-1425) of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), while serving as a soldier in the Henan Central Guard, he discovered a treasonous



**The Zhao-Glory of the Kaifeng Jewry**

plot hatched by Su, the prince of Zhou, a nephew of the reigning emperor. Horrified, An reported it to the emperor. When his charges proved to be correct, he was rewarded with an appointment as an officer of the Brocaded Robe Security Corps, a national security force with broad police and imprisonment powers. Later, he was further rewarded by imperial edict and told to change his surname to Zhao Cheng ("Zhao the Honest"). It was an honored Chinese tradition to reward faithful service or good deeds by bestowing a favorable surname or given name, or even an entirely new and complete name.

In later years, when Zhao became supervisor of the rebuilding of the Kaifeng synagogue in 1421,

he expressed his gratitude by erecting a plaque wishing "Long Life to the Emperor of the Great Ming Dynasty". This pleased the emperor, and Zhao was again promoted to a higher rank. Ultimately, he rose to the post of lieutenant governor of the military district of Zhejiang Province.

While An was not a Chinese name, Zhao is first in the Hundred Chinese Surnames, which according to some scholars lists the most common Chinese names in a sequence based on their importance and frequency. The change was both an honor and a mark of social acceptance. The rank of lieutenant governor, a relatively high post, was grade three on the list of Eight Official Grades. Thus his social status improved. The meteoric rise of Zhao Cheng, a common soldier and physician,

cleared the way for other Jews to seek governmental office. Because of this, Zhao achieved considerable fame for his family and won a place in the inscription on the 1489 stele, where his story is told. Ever after, the Zhao family played a leading role in the Kaifeng Jewish community.

The importance of the Zhao family continued into the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty, which began in 1644. Zhao Chengji, a sixth-generation descendant of Zhao Cheng, was the first person to be appointed an official in the new Qing Dynasty. He was the military commander of the Kaifeng district and formerly was a field officer in Guyuan County in Shaansi Province.

When Kaifeng was flooded by the Yellow River in 1642, Zhao Chengji,

as mayor of the city, sent them troops under his command to patrol the city and protect the ruins of the synagogue day and night. He supervised the repairing of the bridges and roads, and summoned the people to return to their occupations. Later, he got permission from the authorities to rebuild the synagogue, and urged his coreligionists to return home and contribute generously to the construction fund. Because of this, he was actually the main force behind the restoration of the community as well as the synagogue.

Another hero of the Zhao family was Zhao Yingcheng, a cousin of Zhao Chengji. He was born in 1619 and had the Hebrew name of Moses ben Abram. He was a warm-hearted, calm person and had the air of an ancient and solid minister, according to legend. He had a very fine reputation as a learned man, not only in Jewish matters but in Chinese as well. He received the title of Ju Ren in 1645 and scored a Jun Shi grade as a successful candidate in the highest imperial examinations, the following year. Though many Kaifeng Jews obtained academic titles both before and after him, he was the only one to earn that coveted rank.

His Jin Shi title and personality brought him a number of high appointments. In 1650, he was appointed secretary of the Board of Punishments. Then he was sent to Fujian Province to serve as an investigating judge, or intendant, the most prestigious and rewarding official assignment a Jew from Kaifeng had ever received. At that time, the area was troubled by bandits who had to be controlled if order, justice and peace were to be restored. The task was difficult, as the bandits were very well organized, strongly entrenched, and in a strategic position. However, Moses ben Abram, with a mighty hand and a good strategy, quelled the gangs at one stroke. His achievement was recorded in Chinese gazetteers as follows:

*When Zhao Yingcheng first took up*

*his post, it was already the end of the year; he considered the extermination of the bandits his most urgent task. He drew the charts of the suffering of the people in thirty volumes, and submitted them to the provincial governor. He personally supervised the village militia, and together with the major launched a direct attack on the bandits' nest. The bandit heads were either captured or killed. The hidden ruffians were thus once and for all flushed out.*

Afterwards, he directed the building of schools for the populace. "For the first time the sound of reading was heard among the people, all on an extensive scale", according to the local gazetteer.

Busy with his assignment, Zhao never forgot his people. In 1653, when he returned to Kaifeng to mourn the death of his mother, he was once again very active in the congregation. At that time, Kaifeng Jewry had suffered enormously because of a Yellow River flood. Many people died; the synagogue had been swept away. He took an active part in assisting the chief rabbi on the collating of the damaged Torah scrolls recovered from the flood and contributed generously to the restoration of the synagogue. A competent Hebraist, he wrote a commemorative work, A Record of the Vicissitudes of the Holy Scriptures, to record these events, as well as other books.

In 1656, Zhao was appointed assistant surveillance commissioner in Hepei Province, but he died shortly after assuming the post at the age of thirty-eight. His untimely death was certainly a great loss for the community. But his achievements and merits were carved on the stele of 1663 and remembered forever after by his people.

Zhao Yingdou, the younger brother of Yingcheng, was another outstanding member of the family. In 1654 he obtained the title of Gong Seng, meaning that he had been selected to study at the Imperial College, and later on he was granted an honorary Jin Shi

title. In the 1660's he was appointed county magistrate in Yunnan Province. While occupying this post he played an important role in building Yunnan's Confucian temple and a palace of learning, greatly pushing forward academic studies and learning in the area and bringing great prosperity to the region.

Zhao's merits brought respect and honor to the Jewish people when it was learned that he was a Jew from Kaifeng. When Jewish merchants later came to do business in Yunnan, they were well received by the local people, who still remembered the merits of Zhao Yingdou. As a result, the merchants decided that Yunnan would be an ideal place to settle with their families, and a small Jewish community was established there in the early years of the Qing Dynasty.

In 1653, Zhao Yingdou, with his brother Yingcheng and their cousin Zhao Chengji, helped rebuild the synagogue. He compiled a book ten chapter long entitled A Preface to the Illustrious Way, presumably a description of the tenets of Judaism. The book was described by the Jesuits as the work that the Kaifeng community presented to the Chinese authorities.

The fame of the Zhao clan did not stop here. In the following generations, more than a dozen members of the family obtained prestigious scholarly titles or official posts of various ranks, adding glory to the family. The Zhao clan was unquestionably more prominent in Chinese affairs than any other Jewish family and made its mark on Chinese society. The brilliant academic and civil service careers of the Zhaos were a source of enduring pride to Kaifeng Jewry.

The Jews of the city were very proud of the Zhao's achievements and regarded the clan as the community's leader. Whenever they listed the surnames of the community, they always put Zhao first, at the beginning of the list, to honor the family's priority among them.

# Searching and Researching

*(continued from page 38)*

## **Sonia Gold (nee Altshuler) Australia**

I am trying to research the family history of my great-grandfather, Evsei Dobisov, before his marriage to Najeda Beckerman. In addition, I would like an accurate record of the birth dates of his children

My great-grandfather was Evsei Dobisov, the father of Deborah who married Moishe Altshuler in 1916. My father, Elias Altshuler, passed away in 1995 and I am pursuing his deep interest in Genealogy. Through my membership of the Australian Jewish Genealogy Society, I recently discovered an article by Dr. Kaufman in an issue of the Igud Yotzei Sin # 385, September – October, 2005, page 4 entitled 'Harbin Jewry and the Saga of Assistance – 1914 – 1918. It included a statement about my great-grandfather's participation in this assistance.

At present, I am researching my great-grandfather's family history before he married Najada Beckerman. Among the rich mementos that I have inherited is an extract from the Memoirs of Dr. Kaufman that had been translated into English by my father.

In addition I possess a copy of a photo of community members taken at a reception for a Zionist leader in 1917. If possible, would you have any accurate information about his children – dates of birth and their lives?

Email: msgold@bigpond.net.au  
Address: 26A Greville Street, Chatswood, New South Wales, 2067, Australia

## **Lee Brozgol New York**

My great uncle, Herschl Kushinsky, was an actor in the Yiddish theater

in Harbin. He had fled there from Ekaterinislav. My hunch is that he and his family resettled in Israel.

Email: LBrogold@aol.com

Address: 174 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002

Tel: 646-602-2680

## **Haim Gad Tel Avi.v, Israel**

Edith Konstein, daughter of Dorothy, was born in 1932 and they lived in China, probably in Shanghai in 1948. I think Edith then went to Israel. It is possible Edith married and changed her name. I will thank anyone who knew or knows them and their whereabouts now, or maybe Edith's children (if she had children).

\* \* \*

First of all, let me thank you very much for your speedy and promising answer.

According to the information I have ERNST KONSTEIN was not Edith's father, but very likely he was an uncle or at least a close relative. As we know, many times Jewish people who fled from Europe went to places where their relatives already set foot. This is why I would be grateful if you have more information about this ERNST that you found.

Here are more details I have about Edith Konstein:

She was born in Wien (Vienna, Austria) in 02/05/1932.

Father name was MAX. He died in Poland (I don't know when), so EDITH went to China with her mother.

Mother's name was DOROTHY (nee WEBER).

In 1948 they still were in Shanghai, and after that Edith probably went to Israel.

(In 1948 she was only 16 years old, so it's likely that she married afterwards and changed her name). Is there a

way to find (today) the KONSTEIN family - probably Ernst's children - in Shanghai? (or elsewhere).

I know very little about China, so I ask you if there is a telephone book or some other means of finding people there. If I have a phone number or an address (email or postal), I'll try of course to call them or write.

Tel: 054 - 442 4642

Email: HYPERLINK "mailto:hagad@netvision.net.il" hagad@netvision.net.il

## **Ze'ev Rosenkranz**

Amira Stern of the Jabotinsky Institute in Tel Aviv suggested that I contact you.

I'm currently doing some genealogical research. My late father, Arnold Rosenkranz, who was from Vienna, was a member in Betar during his time in Shanghai from 1938 to 1948. My late grandfather, Karl Rosenkranz, was buried there.

Amira mentioned that you may know of others who are doing research on Viennese Jews in Shanghai. If you do and you have their contact details, please let me know.

Many thanks and best wishes,  
Historical Editor, Einstein Papers Project

California Institute of Technology M/ C 20-7

Pasadena, CA 91125, USA

Tel.: (626) 395-3658

Fax: (626) 449-0814

<http://www.einstein.caltech.edu/>

<http://www.alberteinstein.info/>

## **Gary Nash Australia**

I have just read a copy of your latest Bulletin. My congratulations on an excellent publication. I am also ex-China, having been born and raised in Tientsin. I phoned Stella Udovitch to ask her how to contact

you, not realizing that your contact information is on the back cover. As you know, she's not too well at this stage, having undergone a knee replacement a few months ago.

The reason I wanted to contact you is that, in the article by Robert Skidelski, he mentions meeting in Tientsin with a schoolmate of mine, John Han-Yu – Chi (he calls him John Han - second-last paragraph on page 55). I met with John in Tientsin in 1988, and had corresponded with him for a while after, but finally lost contact with him after he retired from his job in the Medical Library. My wife and I will be visiting Tientsin in September, and I would very much like to establish contact with John again. Does Robert know how I could contact him?

I would appreciate your passing on this email to him. Many thanks in advance for your assistance.

Address: 79 The Bulwark, Castlecrag NSW 2068, AUSTRALIA  
Tel: 61-2-9958-3089

### **Sabine Breuillard** **France**

Last September Teddy Kaufman spoke to me about the possibility of an extension of the Harbin conference in Tianjin, but I have not yet heard anything further about this.

Also, do you have any information about Gérard Gourieviedis ? I was told that his father had a factory of soap in Tianjin. Do you know if he is still alive? I would like to meet him.

Email: SabineBreuillard@wanadoo.fr.

### **Tom Ye** **Beijing, China**

I am a Chinese documentarist residing in Beijing. During my several years stay in Canada, I had a chance to do research work on a TV serial regarding Jews in Shanghai. In 2002, I was honoured to meet the then Ambassador of Israel in Canada, Mr. Haim Divon at his office in Ottawa.

I am now working on a documentary of Chinese Jews and Jews in Kaifeng. I would like to know if members of your association have lived or studied in Beijing whom I could meet and

talk directly about Chinese Jews issue at their convenience one day.

Thank you very much and I hope to hear from you soon.

Email: taoyear10@yahoo.com.cn

Tel : +86 131412 69508

Cell : +86 131412 69508

### **Sara Katzenelson** **Petach Tikva, Israel**

Looking for relatives (Katzenelson) who lived in China.

Email: sarin@012.net.il

### **John Louton**

I have a request for information about the presence, or lack thereof, of a Jewish Community in Chongqing.

Email: loutonjm@state.gov

Tel: 86-28-8558-3792

### **Jack Mata**

Hi I am a documentary photographer studying at Brooks Institute of Photography in the U.S. I was wondering if there are other Jewish communities in China, for instance in the Sichuan area. I am traveling to the Chongqing Sichuan area for a documentary project and I wanted to visit a Jewish community while I am there. Please let me know if you have any information that may be helpful. Thank you.

Email: jmatamoscas@yahoo.com

Tel: 619-822-6282

### **David Babow**

I found mention of some of my ancestors on your website for the late 1800's and early 1900's in Harbin. The name is Samsonovich. There was mention of a department store owned by the Samsonovich Brothers, one of whom was my great grandfather. Where would be a good place to find further information on them?

Thank you for your help. I also understand from a relative in Sydney, Australia, that there is a relative named Tali Midian, living in Israel as well but I have not had any luck contacting her. I've tried contacting her at Midian Design and also at tmidian@bezeqint.net but with no results. If you wish please have her contact me.

Email: d0811babow@hotmail.com

Tel: 505-293-3717

Address: 4624 Hilltop Pl NE  
Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA  
87111

### **Gladys Goldberg** **Argentina**

One of my great-grandfather's brothers was Moses Lazarevich Samsonovich. My great-grandfather's name was Aaron Lazarevich Samsonovich. Please let me know how I can get in contact with you so that we can share Samsonovich information.

Thank you.

\* \* \*

I began writing a book about all the stories I know and that my grandfather and my father and aunt told me. I don't do it alone. I have a woman to help me and I wrote to the China Consulate here in Argentina because many Hebrew schools in Argentina want to know this story about the Jews of China. In Argentina they only know about the Shanghai Ghetto, but they never knew that Jews lived there so many years ago.

I will send you every year US\$1000 in the name of my grandfather Samsonovich, but his name here in Argentina was changed to Moises Samsonovich. He was here in the Jewish community and he chose this name because he says it was his real name in the synagogue when he was born. I will tell you how my idea continues and my future book. Thank you for all the interesting magazines you sent me.

Email: gladysraisa@ciudad.com.ar

### **Maria Paz Rivera** **Zurnovsky**

I would like to obtain information regarding Lazar Zurnovsky Bogoslavsky, one of my grandfather's brothers. He travelled from Chernigov to Vladivostok to work and then he moved to Sakhalin.

The family lost communication at the beginning of WWII.

Email: mariapaz.rivera@cepal.org

Tel: (56 2) 210 2618

# I Love Shanghai

By Ruth Shany

I grew up in an assimilated Jewish family who had lived in Germany since the year 1703, and felt themselves to be good Germans with Jewish faith. My father took part in the First World War. He even received an Iron Cross, which made him and all the Nussbaum family very proud. As a wounded soldier, he was taken to a hospital where he fell in love with a young Jewish girl who had volunteered to work with wounded soldiers. Soon after the war they got married and built their life in Schoenberg, Berlin. Their home was just around the corner from the one of Albert Einstein.

They had two children, my brother and myself. In 1933, when the Nazis came to power, their whole life changed and they decided to leave for another country – as near as possible, in order to return when this terrible regime would end. So the whole family left for Prague, Czechoslovakia. At the beginning of 1934, when the Olympic Games were in preparation for the year 1936, Hitler announced over the radio that all the German Jews who had left during the past years could return to live again in Germany and he would not harm them.

My father, as a former soldier in the German army, wanted to believe this and took the family back to Germany. But they were deeply disappointed because Hitler did not keep his word (as was expected). After re-installing themselves, which was not easy at that time, they came to the conclusion that they could not live there again. The promise of Hitler was only a terrible lie in order to make the other countries believe that the Nazis were not as terrible as what was being rumored by the Jews.

Shanghai was the only place in the whole world to open its doors to Jewish refugees. My family of five was lucky to be among the passengers on the “boat to China” the Conte Verde, an

Italian shipping company. In February 1939, one can say at the last moment, it was a miracle still to be able to leave Germany. After three weeks – which were very pleasant for us children – our parents were very worried about the future. At that time they did not know what was to be the fate of the Jews still in Germany, but we were so lucky to be taken in by China.

We arrived at the port of Shanghai and did not have much time to look around as big trucks awaited us to bring us to Hongkew, which at that time was a devastated place. When we arrived in Hongkew, we were taken to a large building, a former school or hospital, and the HIAS or Joint Organization took care of us from then on. At the beginning life was not easy. My mother and I found work in a workshop. But after two months I found work in the bookshop of Mrs. Vogel on Broadway. We needed money badly to move out of the “Heim” as all our belongings never arrived in Shanghai, maybe they were never sent.

In 1941, when we were already living in our own little room, my mother became very ill with SPU, a tropical illness, and passed away at the end of the year. After this terrible loss I started to work in different places in the British Settlement and was lucky to meet a local artist who taught me the secrets of painting on silk. From that time my life changed, and I became acquainted with the beauty of Shanghai, with the people, and as I could now afford it, I began to enjoy movies, exhibitions, concerts, etc. I fell in love with this fantastic town – Nanking Road, Race Course, Bubblingwell Road and many other beautiful spots which I will never forget.

After the Japanese interned us in Hongkew, life changed again. We could not visit any more the beautiful parts of Shanghai. In 1944 I married and had my first child with whom I walked in

Wayside Garden twice a day. We had a nice life, I tried to learn the complicated but beautiful language, and until today I also remember a few words.

Shortly after arriving in Israel, I divorced my husband, remarried, and have one daughter Lana Laor who is a painter in her own right. After a seven-year itch, I divorced my second husband and remarried. I met my husband of today during his home leave as Ambassador in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and we spent the following year there. During our married life of 30 years, we spent five years in Paris and one year in Geneva, with all the other years in Israel. We have altogether five children and nine grandchildren.

I have had about 30 one-woman shows in Europe, USA, etc. and have my own studio in Safed, Upper Galilee, where we spent the summer months. Five years ago, my husband and I came to Shanghai in order to show him Shanghai, the heaven which had saved us and at the same time I visited the cinema where I always went with my brother. My son was chosen from Israel to show one of his films during the First International Film Festival in Shanghai, and I recognized it as one of the movie houses I had frequented many times.

I do not want to miss this opportunity to say Thank You to the people of China, especially those of Shanghai, who saved us from a terrible fate, as many family members were brutally killed during those years. I also want to thank Mr. Song Chao, the General Director of the Information Office of the Shanghai Municipality, and of course Prof. Pan Guang, Dean of Jewish Studies, Shanghai, without forgetting Teddy Kaufman, President of the Israel-China Friendship Society, who appointed me as the Israeli Delegate. I also want to say thank you to the two lovely ladies, Daisy and Cherry, with whom I corresponded by e-mail quite a lot, who have me all the necessary information.

# Letters

## **Shuqing China**

To Teddy and Rasha Kaufman: How are you? I came back home safely. And my husband, especially my daughter were very glad. I was so excited to meet you again in Israel. Here, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks again to Teddy Kaufman for offering us the scholarship and for your invitation to your home for dinner. It will be a beautiful memory in my life forever.

I remember you will come to Harbin for the symposium this month, I am not sure whether I can meet you again in Harbin this time, for until now I didn't get the invitation. Anyway, wish you a pleasant trip.

I am looking forward to our other meetings, no matter whether in Israel, or in China.

Email: sqzhang830@yahoo.com

## **Faith Goldman USA**

To T. Kaufman: It's me –Faith Goldman – wife of the late Shanghailander Robert Goldman – 1940-1958. The 10 years of research and traveling and meeting 2 of Robert's classmates including the ones at Mrs. Cubbin's school 1951-1955 has turned into an oral-visual-musical and dinner presentation. Because of its success on many levels, our Sisterhood has enclosed a check for US\$200 to go the Social Action Committee. The "Slow Boat from China was presented March 5th . Article will follow.

## **Liat Hoffman Haifa, Israel**

To the IYS: My name is Liat Hoffman, I am a 16 year old Israeli living in Shanghai for over ten years now. I attend Shanghai American School and am doing a project for my school on the Jews in Shanghai. I met with one of your members and she showed me your Bulletin that you publish. If possible, I would greatly appreciate it, if you could help me, by sending me information about the Jews in Shanghai. I am currently in Haifa, Israel till August 8th. My current address in Israel till the 8th of August is:

Levavi Family (for Liat Hoffman)

P.O.B. 7445 Code 31073

Haifa, Israel.

Again, I would greatly appreciate it if you could reply to my email, and help me make the history of the Jews in Shanghai more known with the younger generation. Thank you.

Email: liatie88@hotmail.com

## **Shoshana Zirkin Shanghai, China**

To T. Kaufman: Re: Jews in Modern China, Book Proposal

I am sorry for this delayed response. Avrum and I are hoping that you could write something about the activities of your organization and also about the memories that people have for China. Clearly people maintain some sort of commitment and nostalgia for China. Perhaps you can write about this. In addition, you can write about Jewish expatriates in China and their relationship with China. Articles should be approximately 10-15 pages. I hope this answers your question. Please let me know if you would like to contribute and feel free to ask me any other questions you have.

Address: Fudan University, Foreign Students Dormitory,  
57 Wudong Lu, Yangpu District, Shanghai, China 200433.

Email: szirkin@yahoo.com

## *To my Jewish friends*

I am the initiator and founder of first Chinese Jewish internet website. Many good articles have been incorporated into [www.jewcn.com](http://www.jewcn.com), and they could affect the readers' opinion about Jews, and most people after seeing that will have a further understanding of Israel and build a good impression of Jews. It is my aim to build Jewish network. My purpose for maintaining [www.jewcn.com](http://www.jewcn.com) is to eliminate the prejudice to Jews in China and build an understanding of Israel among Chinese people. One of the readers criticized our news report about the separating wall, another reader supported Israeli military action against Hamas after reading about the baby suicide-bomber.

[www.jewcn.com](http://www.jewcn.com) contains almost all the information about Israel and Jews, and includes 15 million Chinese characters, 33 books, 700 pictures and 200 thesis.

I have read the "view Israel" in [www.sina.com](http://www.sina.com), it is just a net page with relatively few contents, no Jewish news, no Jewish history, no Jewish personage, no Jewish economy, no Jewish intelligence, no Jewish religious, Holy Bible, and Middle-East conflict. Moreover, it has hushed up the truth of the conflict between Israel and Arab, in the articles it still hold the viewpoint that Israeli waged all war that invaded Arabs, occupied Palestine and repress Arabs, and are still misled by our TV news.

The content, Jewish web is 80 to 100 times larger than Sina's net page.

The problem is that Jewish web does not have its own server, it has to hire others' space on internet, so its speed is relatively slow and can't get further improvement. If we have a server of ourselves, we can introduce Judaism not only by words, but also by video and sound. We can provide films and documentaries. In China there is only a few Jewish-related films that introduce Nazi's massacre to Jews, for example "Schindler's List". Most Chinese people don't know the story of how Israelis defended their homeland against Arabs under the bad conditions of a lack of weapons and soldiers, and how Israelis built their country on an arid desert, with a lack of water and other resources. So I think more information about Israel could help Chinese people understand Israel better.

As we know, China's political regime is very different from that of the USA, Australia or Israel. No religious community or non-government organization can exist independently, nobody can speak differently from the government, otherwise they will have to face unemployment, jail, even death. So to eliminate the misunderstanding of Jews among Chinese people we have to first change the government's attitude.

There is an obvious characteristic among China's Jewish researchers. It is that the number of these researchers is few and their conclusion can't affect the government's policy. For a long time our government has been adopting a Middle-East policy that stand by Arabs, controlled and the news reports hold the same opinion. So under the misleading influence of the media, most of the Chinese are determined to support Arabs and are anti-Israel because they do not know world history very much. For example, they even show their anger for the military action that Israeli troops capture terrorists. I hold the same opinion with Professor Solomon Wardour, expert of Jewish Policy Making Graduate School in Jerusalem. He wrote a strategic report after he had done lots of research in China's provinces of Henan Shandong Yunnan Beijing Shanghai.

Through millions of readers include high officials and other distinguished personage in different occupations are attracted by Jewish website, the China's decision-makers will realize the value that they turn to Israel and give Arabian up, and stop supporting the countries and organizations who is anti Israel. The anti-Israel organizations will not be so rampant without China's support, and Israel's safe condition will get much better.

So I wish the Jewish website could be advertised on Reference News and Global Times who have the best circulation among Chinese newspapers. Reference News is the most effective newspaper to the officeholders in mainland China, and Global News affect Chinese younglings the most, their viewpoint represent the common opinion of our 1.3 billion people. In China policy is not decided by the will of the mass but the politicians only. Now, everyday only hundreds people enter Jewish web, if it can be advertise on these 2 newspapers, the number will increase to thousands even million. Jewish Web plays an important and convenient role than books on promoting understanding, no other approach can match Jewish web on introducing Israel.

For long I've been constructing HYPERLINK "<http://www.jewcn.com>" [www.jewcn.com](http://www.jewcn.com) and eliminating misunderstands to Israel by myself, I know the Chinese government policy like the back of my hand. If the HYPERLINK "<http://www.jewcn.com>" [www.jewcn.com](http://www.jewcn.com) been the effective website, it could change the policy of Chinese government, and the intimate-Arab policy can be changed. Then our TV news, newspapers, broadcast can all report at a relatively just voice. And the regret that most students stand by Arabians at Jewish classes in China last year would not happen again.

Now the Jewish Web is still a baby, lack of employees and fund, I face many difficulties, for instance, if buy a server it will cost 20000rmb, advertise Jewish web on Reference News need 40000rmb, another 20000rmb is needed to advertise on Global times, and the cost for office rent and salary for works, I've been bearing these stress since I

founded Jewish Web. Now I have used up all my amassment. Although now I have several volunteers to help me, it still is hard for me to continue Jewish Web without Jews' support.

I have a long-term plan that make the Jewish Web one of the most professional Websites, and go public on NASDAQ, so that Jewish Web could earn profit and use the profit to develop other Jewish-related activities in China . For example build a Jewish memorial in Henan province where is the only place in China that ancient Jews had ever lived, and construct a massacre memorial in Shanghai city where the Jews has taken sanctuary during World War, and Jewish library and so on. I also wish to publish Judaism-related magazines, use all means to introduce Judaism and enhance its effectivness, just like Jews dominate US politics.

Construct Jewish Web is just the beginning of my plan, all the other actions will be carried out along with the Jewish Web get success. And with the enhancing of Jewish Web's effect, the whole attitude to Jews in our nation will change, so will be the government-policy. I will do my best to achieve this aim throughout my lifetime.

Long live Sino-Israel friendship

And long live Israel

The Jewish firmly supporter: Hu Liangming

### ***Balfoura Friend Levine Atlanta, Georgia, USA***

To T. Kaufman: As always, it's a huge treat when I receive my Igud bulletin. I enjoy both the English and Russian supplements, although I can't read the Hebrew one. The July-August issue was especially wonderful because of the article on my Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi. He was my Rabbi, and from our days on Chusan Road in Hongkew, his family was part of my life. Our house was at the corner of Ward Road and Chusan Road, ours was No. 1 Chusan Road, and the Rabbi's family lived in No. 8 Chusan Road. Rabbi Ashkenazi signed my birth certificate, which now sits in my bank deposit box here in Atlanta, Georgia. His children, Mania and Esther and I played together as youngsters, and then when they moved to 'Frenchtown' (I think it was Rue Cardinal Mercier) then we went to school, as well as socialized as teens.

I adored my Rebbetzin Ashkenazi, who was so patient to us boisterous kids, especially on Shabbes, when she wanted to rest a bit after 'tiffin' (lunch to you Americans), and she would say plaintively "children, please be quiet, I want to rest". Many years later, as adult parents ourselves, I asked Esther (whilst visiting New York) how come we never learned to read or speak Hebrew, and Esther replied "because we were girls, and only the boys learned to read Hebrew at a cheder". Her brother Mosia, went to then Palestine to his grandparents to become a rabbi.

As a child, I recall going with my father Jacob Friend to the Ohel Moshe synagogue on Ward Road, around the corner from our house. On Friday nights us youngsters would get a sip of wine from the Rabbi as he made the Kiddush ... that was a special treat for us kids.

By the way, in the Russian supplement, page 32, there is a full-page photo of Chusan Road ...perhaps the nearest house from the bottom, with the ladies sitting on the stoop, could very well be the one that the Ashkenazi family lived in. And if all of the above isn't a walk down memory lane, I must also tell you, that the author of the bio on Rabbi Ashkenazi is married to the great-granddaughter of my Rabbi Yisroel Shaw, known in his native Atlanta as Joseph Shaw, and is the son of my dentist, Dr. Allen Shaw of Atlanta.

Warmest regards to Rasha and yourself, as well as to your readers.

Address: 3755 Peachtree Road Ne #704, Atlanta, Georgia 30319, USA.

### ***Nadav Ashkar Press Secretary***

Israeli Embassy in China

To T. Kaufman: During a fortnight in February, 2006, a television crew from Beijing shot a video film on Israel, travelling throughout the country. As a result, they have produced a series of half-hour documentaries. The films were shown throughout China, seen by hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens. I want to thank you for your participation in the project. We are sending you a DVD copy of the film and would like to note that the film consists of six parts: "Jerusalem, the City of Peace"; "From a Kibbutz to the Wonders of Agriculture"; "Israel in Color"; "The Basics of HITECH"; "To Remember and Never to Forget (The Holocaust)"; "Jews of China". Again, many thanks.



**Peter Berton**  
**USA**

To T. Kaufman: I sent you my recollections of the Japan Tour by the Harbin Symphony Orchestra. I would like you to reproduce the original program of our concerts in Tokyo which illustrates what I am saying in the piece about the discrepancies between the English and Japanese texts.  
Email: berton@usc.edu

**Zheng Feng and Xu Buzeng**  
**China**

To Abraham Fradkin: Thanks for your greeting card. We have been away from home in town for quite a time. We are sorry for our late response. The rather cold and prolonged winter season finally ended. Shanghai is celebrating its new-named Peach-blossom Days. The St. John's University Alumni will hold their World Reunion in Singapore and Malaysia in the coming April. Please give my best regards to Tsipora, Ariel and Ronit.  
Email: xubuzeng@hotmail.com

**Asya Deane**  
**Australia**

To Teddy and Rasha Kaufman: It was lovely to talk to Rasha last night. I mentioned to her that my late Father played with the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra under the baton of Foa and Paci. I have this photo which I am attaching, perhaps it will be of some interest to you. There were many Jewish musicians at the time. I remember Mr. Shiller who joined the IPO and later came to Australia with them. Also Mr. Itkis whose son is in the States and Mr. Tsiroolsky who emigrated to Russia. There were many more but I do not remember them. You can see my Father in the second row behind and slightly to the right of the singer in white. He is the one with the black bow tie and holds the viola bow in his hand. Warmest regards  
Email: wolfdan@iprimus.com.au

**Rena Krasno**  
**USA**

To Teddy Kaufman:  
When I was in Shanghai I met a young woman, Georgia Noy, who kindly took me around in her station wagon to a number of places, including Kadoorie's Children's Palace, the Ward Rd. Gaol etc... etc... She was very well informed. She is also the one of the first people who stumbled upon a Jewish gravestone and told Dvir about it. Now she is in Israel teaching Arabic - which I find amazing!- and English and giving lectures about China. I think she could give an excellent talk to the Igud about Shanghai today, how it changed even during the years she spent there, about the growing interest there in Jews etc... and about the new Shanghai Community Center. and... how old Shanghai is still remembered. If you are interested, please contact her at noygeorgia@hotmail.com  
I thought perhaps this might be a good program for a Sunday morning, when I believe old timers gather at the Igud, or any other time for that matter. I am sure young people too would be interested.  
As for me, I have finished the long manuscript of my 8th book and am very busy writing, lecturing etc. and enjoying a very active life in spite of my age!  
I have no doubt you and Rasha's lives are full and productive and you both are doing your best in all ways, as usual.

## **Mark Erooga**

I was interested to read about the Chinese Seniors Club and pleased to find the names of my former classmates Iona Kligman and Seva Sherell amongst them. Please pass on my greetings and best wishes. Of course I would also qualify, as would our other classmates in Australia – Sopha Sakker(Klarer), Boris Kaploon and Solomon Bard, whom I hope to see in London shortly.

## **George**

### **MSc Wang Zhaoli**

To T. Kaufman: Maybe you have forgotten me. I met you at the International Conference on Jewish Culture and History when working as an English translator.

How are you doing? How is your niece Alla?

Learning from TV, I know that your country is at war with Lebanon. I am so worried about you and the other Israeli friends' safety. Is the place you live far from Haifa? Is your everyday life influenced by the war? How about Alla and her family?

Could you please be kind enough to say Hello to Alla for me? I would like to extend my gratitude and wishes to her, Unfortunately I do not have her Email address. Your offering of her communication ways will be appreciated.

Wish peace for Israeli people.

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## **Mark Leef**

### **California, USA**

It was a great pleasure to read the article about Rabbi Ashkenazi, Taiba Lazarevna the rebbezin and the family. The town, or rather a shtetl of their birth, Cherikov, is situated on the River Soj, a tributary of the Dniepr, in the Mogulev Province. According to my late father, photographer Jacob Lifshitz, also from Cherikov, the whole population at that time was 5000.

Amazingly, despite the small size, Cherikov has produced so many who, in later years, made a name for themselves. Dobkin, a singer, founded a conservatory of music in New York with support by Eleanor Roosevelt, shown on photographs sent. His son, I believe, became famous as an illustrator. Mr. Wainer (father of Joseph) became a well-known banker in Harbin. Boris Paley, a famous furrier and the owner of a large store. Among many names that I remember who comprised a "gang" of Cherikovlians" and "Mogilevers" were Zelezniakov, Soloveichik, Frog, Vertlieb and others. All were active in social and synagogue lives of the city, but for recreation played often "preference" in our house.

Personally, as a student in St. John's, upon arriving in Shanghai from Tientsin, and as a son of a landsman, I was extremely well received by the Ashkenazi family. I was invited weekly for the Friday dinner. One day, I was surprised by witnessing their apartment jammed by tall, bearded young men, all "davening" aloud. That was part of the Mirrer Yeshiva that Rabbi Ashkenazi was instrumental in saving from Europe. Rebbezin Taiba Lazarevna was such a kind person. In fact she practically saved my life by insisting on taking me immediately to a doctor. My foot was badly infected and neglected, and her prompt action saved me. It was also a pleasure to get to know their daughters, Mania (Malka) and Esther. The latter, now Mrs. Mordy Fink, I was happy to meet again in New York.

Address: 4008-3F Calle Sonora, Laguna Woods, CA 92637, USA

Tel.: 949-206-1846 Fax: 949-206-1848

# DONATIONS

## SOCIAL AID FUND

### USA

#### SAN FRANCISCO

#### THROUGH THE COURTESY OF THE FAR EASTERN SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

From	The FAR EASTERN SOCIETY of SAN FRANCISCO for the ROSH-HA-SHANA	US\$	2000
"	The AARON AND MARIE BLACKMAN FOUNDATION, Inc. for Sefardic Fraction of IYS	"	1000

Contributed at the Annual Membership Meeting – Luncheon of FES of San Francisco

From	Mr. & Mrs. Henry BERK	US\$	700
"	Bella BERKOVITCH	"	200
"	Mr. & Mrs. Mark KAPTZAN	"	100
"	Mrs. Gutia KATZEFF	"	100
"	Mr. & Mrs. Isai KAUFMAN	"	200
"	Mr. & Mrs. Leonid KORCHEMSKY and Ms. Sophie PERLSTRAUSS	"	100

## GIFT

**From Mr. Aaron BELOKAMEN**

for the Social Aid Fund of Igud Yotzei Sin

**US\$ 7000**

### USA

From	Gregory HODSON in memory of his wife Rose HODSON	US\$	25
"	Robert MATERMAN in memory of his beloved parents Dina and Abraham-David MATERMAN	"	180
"	Gary MATZDORFF towards the IYS Social Aid Fund	"	500
"	Ruth and Zalman AGRAN in the name of their granddaughter NINA, her husband CHAIM and the great grandson AVIV	"	54
"	Ruth and Zalman AGRAN in memory of their late sister Edith OROSZ on her Yahrzeit	"	36
"	Zalman AGRAN in honour of his dear wife, friend and life companion RUTH	"	36
"	Bertha ELKIN and family in loving memory of her parents Solomon and Elizabeth OPPENHEIM	"	100
"	Esther and Martin BATES in memory of Rebecca and Solomon BIHOVSKY and Israel EPSTEIN	"	54
"	Golda LAZAROVICH in memory of Stella TERR for her Yahrzeit	"	25
"	Leopold BORODOVSKY in memory of her mother Nina BORODOVSKY	"	10
"	Gutia KATZEFF in memory of her HUSBAND, PARENTS and RELATIVES	"	100
"	Golda LAZAROVICH in memory of her brother Joseph ESKIN	"	150
"	Tania SALTER in memory of her mother Zina ROBINSON	"	18
"	Anna OSTROVSKA in memory of Mrs. A. JACOBSON	"	700

## *In lieu of flowers for Rosh-ha-Shana*

From	Mr. & Mrs. Y.LIBERMAN	US\$	100	From	Matook R.NISSIM	US\$	100
"	Benjamin HENKIN	"	100	"	Susan SHENNON	"	25
"	Aya PIVO (nee Machlin)	"	500	"	Joe MRANTZ	"	100
"	Cathy HARDOON	"	25	"	Isabel SKY	"	10
"	Mr. E.FOMIL	"	100	"	Renee TOOCHIN	"	125
"	Morrie and Inna MINK	"	50	"	Prof. Simon KARLINSKY	"	100
"	Archie OSSIN	"	50				

## **ENGLAND**

From	Dr. Mark EROOGA in memory of his parents Dr. A.M. and Mrs. M.A.YAROOGSKY-EROOGA			GBP	100
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## **JAPAN, Tokyo**

From	Ms Isumi SATO, Associate professor of the Faculty of Humanities at Toyo Gakuen University, during her visit to Israel, towards the Social Aid Fund of Igud Yotzei Sin			GBP	150
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## **AUSTRALIA**

From	RELATIVES and FRIENDS in honour of Stella UDOVITCH on her 80th Birthday (Sheraton on the Park restaurant, Sydney) towards the Igud Yotzei Sin Social Aid Fund			A\$	1834
"	Mrs. Rosa HEETMAN on her husband SAM Yahrzeit			"	90
"	Mr. Harry TRIGUBOFF in memory of his mother Frida TRIGUBOV on her Yahrzeit			"	500
"	Mrs. Mrs. Rachel ROBIN in memory of her husband Solomon ROBIN			"	54
"	Nora and Efim KROUK in memory of his sister Gita SAPEJINSKY			"	100
"	Anya LEVITAN in memory of her father David DINABURG on his Yahrzeit			"	100
"	Eleonora GALPERIN for Yahrzeit prayers for her mother Rita BOGDANOVSKY			"	30
"	Mrs. J.VINSON in memory of her mother Rose HABINSKY on her Yahrzeit			"	18
"	Sopha SACKER in memory of her dear husband MARK			"	50

## **ISRAEL**

From	Ora and Harold YANKLOWICZ on their 55th Wedding Anniversary			NIS	300
"	Jehuda SEMBERG in memory of his mother Sonia SEMBERG			"	100
"	Mark KREMER in memory of his mother Clara KREMER			"	100
"	Bernard DAREL in memory of his brother Isai DAGILAYSKY			"	50
"	Roza and Oriel NISHLI towards the IYS Social Aid Fund			"	50
"	Mary KAMIONKA in loving memory of her beloved parents Motia and Hana SHWARTZ			"	120
"	Esther VEINERMAN in memory of her mother Elena Abramovna SHMULEVSKY			"	250
"	Shoshana ARAMA in memory of her mother Bella MIRKIN and Dov (Boris) MIRKIN			"	200
"	Pesia AHARONI in memory of her mother Bella MIRKIN and Dov (Boris) MIRKIN			"	100
"	Flora and Boris FREIMAN in memory of Mark SAKKER			"	100
"	Shulamit EVEN in memory of her father Mara MORGULEV			"	180
"	Israel KARNY in memory of his father Mark KRIMCHANSKY			"	300
"	Yona PONIMONSKY in loving memory of his wife Genia PONIMONSKY (nee Shifrin)			"	180
"	Timna LILACH in memory of her parents Yitzhak and Isabella NADEL			"	300
"	Shalva BRODSKY in loving memory of her dear husband Vova BRODSKY			"	100

## On occasion of Yitzhak SHANY's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday

From	Miriam and Isaak BARTON	NIS	150	From	Zvi and Judith JAGERMAN	NIS	200
"	Hanna and Meshulam RATH	"	300	"	Shulamit and Heinz ADLER	"	200
"	Esther and Rudi BARTA	"	360	"	Benzion and Tamar FUCHS	"	180
"	Mayana and Michael KOL-NESHER	"	150	"	Tamar GRIZIM	"	288
"	Sr. Will SIMON and Ruth ZARHI	"	100	"	Tamar and Zalman ROTH RAHUM	"	180
"	Miriam BERGER	"	200	"	Mira KALISH	"	180
"	Moshe BOAZ	"	100	"	Teddy and Rasha KAUFMAN	"	120
"	Netty and Lix BURIAN	"	200				

## SYNAGOGUE FUND

### USA

#### THROUGH THE COURTESY OF THE FAR EASTERN SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

From	Dr. Basil BERNSTEIN for Synagogue Fund of IYS	US\$	18
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### AUSTRALIA

От	Блюмы КОЦ с семьей в память дорогого незабвенного мужа, отца и дедушки Левы КОЦ и в память дорогих родителей С.Н. и Ш.А.ШТЕЙНЕР и любимого брата Наума ШТЕЙНЕРА	A\$	50
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### ISRAEL

From	Miriam SHANAM in memory of her father Yakov BRANDT	NIS	150
"	Pesia AHARONI in memory of her mother Bella MIRKIN and Dov (Boris) MIRKIN	"	100
"	Shalva BRODSKY in loving memory of her dear husband Vova BRODSKY	"	80

## SCHOLARSHIP FUND

### AUSTRALIA

From	Lyka KAGANER and family in loving memory of our dear husband, father and Deda Yasha KAGANER towards the Scholarship Fund in memory of Yasha KAGANER	A\$	100
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### ИЗРАИЛЬ

#### ФОНД СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ ПОМОЩИ

От	Муси и Дани БЕРКОВИЧ в Фонд социальной помощи ИИС в память дорогих РОДИТЕЛЕЙ	НШ	20000
«	ТЕЛЬ-АВИВСКОГО КОМИТЕТА Игуд Иоцей Син взамен цветов к празднику Рош-ха-Шана	«	2000
«	Нади и Зеева РУБИНСОН в фонд социальной помощи памяти наших РОДИТЕЛЕЙ и доктора Кэти ЛЕВИНСОН	«	1000
«	Аи РОЗЕНБЛАТ в честь рождения ПРАВНУКА	«	150
«	Мары БРОДСКОЙ в память дорогого мужа Гриши БРОДСКОГО	«	150
«	Тимы ЛИТВИНА в память о погибших в Хайларе 9 августа 1945 года С.ЛИТВИНА, Л.ПАТОВА, Б.БОРКОВСКОГО	«	300
«	Жени ОЛЬШЕВСКОЙ в память брата Левы (Арье) ОЛЬШЕВСКОГО	«	100
«	Мини ЦЕМ в память дорогих РОДИТЕЛЕЙ и жены ТАМАРЫ бат Ицхак	«	180
«	Серафимы и Игоря РИВИНИК и Амалии и Якова СИМКИНЫХ в Фонд социальной помощи ИИС	«	200
«	Иланы БУРШТЕЙН в память мамы Брони НАХУМСОН	«	200
«	Нюси ХАНИНОЙ вместо цветов на могилы дорогих ДАВИДА и НАДЕНЬКИ	«	150
«	Нюси ХАНИНОЙ светлой памяти всех родных усопших	«	150

«	Миши ФЛЕЙШМАНА по случаю 70-летия Эти ГИНАНСКОЙ	«	300
«	Гали КАЦ в честь дня рождения Стеллы ЮДОВИЧ -- 5 раз «хай»	«	90
«	Тони ДОРОН в память НАТАНА бен Шломо и Батьи ДОРОН в день Йорцайт	«	150
«	Арье МАДОРСКОГО в память Рахели и Лени РОГАН	«	200
«	Шуламит ВУДОВИЧ, Алона и Рут ВОЙХАНСКИХ и Жени АЛЬКОЦЕР в память дяди Гени-Ханоха и тети Ани ФЕГЕЛЬБОЙМ. День Йорцайт Гени-Ханоха, сына Гершона и Мани, 21-го дня месяца Сивана, а тети Ани, дочери Якова и Марии Лазаревны, 22-го дня месяца Тамуза	«	200
«	Муси РОЗЕНБЛЮМ в память дорогого мужа Левы РОЗЕНБЛЮМ	«	300
«	Иехиэля ЛАДЫЖЕНСКОГО в память моих дорогих родителей ЛАДЫЖЕНСКИХ Иццока Ихиль-Михелевича и Ольги Анатольевны (ур. Михельс) и сестры НИНЫ	«	200
«	Любы БРУННЕР в память мужа Левы БРУННЕРА в день Йорцайт	«	500
«	Леонфрида ГЕЙМАН в память дорогой жены ГЕНРИЕТТЫ	«	180
«	Фиры ГЕРШКОВИЧ в память родителей ГЕРШКОВИЧ и ПАТКИНЫХ	«	200
«	Тони ДОРОН в память дорогого мужа Нахмана ДОРОН	«	150
«	Сарры РОСС в память дорогой сестры Хили САРНО	«	100
«	Кармеллы СОКОЛОВЕР в память отца Нафтали ШАРОНА	«	50
«	Фиры КАНЕР в память дорогого мужа, папы и дедушки Семьи КАНЕР	«	200
«	Софьи ФУКС и Муси ХЕНИГСБЕРГ в память дорогих ушедших родителей и братьев ПЕРСОВЫХ	«	500
«	Миры ГОЛЬДБЕРГ в память мужа Мары ГОЛЬДБЕРГА	«	100

#### ФОНД СИНАГОГИ

От	Ривы ХОФФМАН в память сестры Любы ФИШБАЙН в день Йорцайт	НШ	100
«	Ривы ХОФФМАН в память родителей Фани Вульфовны и Исаия Ароновича СОКОЛ	«	150
«	Рахили ВЕКСЛЕР в память мужа Павла ВЕКслера и недавно скончавшегося в возрасте 53 лет после продолжительной болезни сына РАФАЭЛЯ	«	200
«	Зельды и Давида ФРИДМАН и Лики КАГАНЕР (Австралия) в день памяти родных, погибших в Хайларе 9 августа 1945 года	«	500
«	Галины РЕХЕС в память мужа Хаима РЕХЕС	«	50
«	Клары ШВАРЦБЕРГ в память мужа Бенъямина ШВАРЦБЕРГА	«	180
«	Любы ЦИНМАН в память дорогих родителей раввина Зелига Иегуди и Дины Израилевны СЛУЦКЕР	«	300
«	Любы ЦИНМАН в память сестры Ханы ВАЙНБЕРГЕР в день Йорцайт	«	200

#### ФОНД СТИПЕНДИЙ

От	ТЕЛЬ-АВИВСКОГО КОМИТЕТА Игуд Иоцей Син в Фонд стипендий памяти Беллы Соломоновны ВОЛЬСКОЙ	НШ	1000
«	Изы и Эстер ЯРХО в Фонд стипендий памяти Арона ЯРХО для китайских студентов, обучающихся в Израиле	«	500

## ВМЕСТО ЦВЕТОВ К ПРАЗДНИКУ

От	Давида ГУТМАН	НШ	200	От	Наталии и Ави ПОДОЛЬСКИХ	НШ	100
«	Гени КАУФМАН	«	100	«	Израэля РОЗЕНБЛАТ	«	180
«	Абрама БАРАНОВСКОГО	«	200	«	Тины и Германа СМУШКОВИЧ	«	100
«	Раши и Тедди КАУФМАН	«	360	«	Сарры УМАНСКОЙ	«	100
«	Шмуэля КИСЛЕВ с семьей	«	200	«	Миши ФЛЕЙШМАНА	«	1000
«	Ионы КЛИГМАН	«	250	«	Зельды и Давида ФРИДМАН	«	100
«	Фриды КУПЕРМАН	«	250	«	Бетти ХАЗАН	«	200
«	Иосифа ЛЕРНЕРА	«	100	«	Ривы ХАТИНОЙ	«	200
«	Вениамина ЛИТВИН	«	1000	«	Ривы ХОФФМАН и Виктора		
«	Рины и Тимы ЛИТВИН	«	300	«	КОХАНОВСКОГО	«	200
«	Фани и Давида МИНДЛИН	«	200	«	Клары ШВАРЦБЕРГ	«	360
«	Сарры и Шломо НИЦАН	«	200	«	Реувена ШЛИФЕРА	«	180
«	Абраши ОЗРЕЛОВИЧА	«	300	«	Моси ШМЕРЛИНГ	«	200
«	Альтера РОЗЕНБЛЮМ	«	100	«	Ципоры ШНЕЙДЕРМАН	«	150

## *In lieu of flowers*

From	Lea ALPER	NIS	180	From	Esther and Yosef KATZ	NIS	100
"	Shoshana ARAMA	"	200	"	Prof. Daniel KATZNELSON	"	360
"	Garry BROVINSKY	"	500	"	Mr. & Mrs. A.KLIGMAN	"	250
"	Bernard DAREL	"	100	"	Katy LEVY	"	200
"	Abraham FRADKIN	"	500	"	Bobby and Dina MILLER	"	100
"	Reva FREIMAN	"	400	"	Hanna MULLER	"	500
"	Flora and Boris FREIMAN	"	300	"	Mr. & Mrs. Kurt NUSSBAUM	"	500
"	Bella and Abraham GOLDREICH	"	180	"	Tania PRISH	"	200
"	Jacob GURY	"	200	"	Miri SAHRAM	"	75
"	Yair HENDEL	"	150	"	Dalit SHIKMAN	"	100
"	Mrs. Eva ISAACS	"	200	"	Ron VEINERMAN	"	250
				"	Lutz WITKOWSKI	"	250

## THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE EXHIBITION ON THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF HARBIN JEWS



Right to left: T.Kaufman, Shi Wenqing, the Vice-Mayor of Harbin, Ora Namir, the former Ambassador of Israel to China, Pan Zhanlin, the former Ambassador of China to Israel, and Prof. Qu Wei, the President of the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences

In loving memory of

## **Elia POLIAK**

who passed away peacefully at the age of 93 years  
on May 11, 2006

Kay and Glenn POLIAK

FAY BROOMER and family

Olga and John POLIAK and family

Anne GRAY and family

Sarah ROSS and family

Zofia and Sammy POLIAK and family

Diana and Walter POLIAK and family

Genie and David LONG and family

Lena and Fred FELD and family

Bob POLIAK

Vera LEVINE and family

Jenny POLIAK

Mary POLIAK and family

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The AMERICAN FAR EASTERN SOCIETY is very saddened by the passing of

## **Elia POLIAK**

a lifelong member and good friend.

Sincere condolences to the POLIAK family

In memory of a good friend and good memories

## **Elia POLIAK**

Bella RECTOR

Eda SHWETZ

Frances GREENBERG



# Death

With deepest sorrow we announce the sudden passing of

## **Betty TRACHTENGERTS**

on Tuesday, August 15, 2006, aged 97.

Beloved wife of EFIM (CHAIM) ל"ר

Cherished mother and mother-in-law of

Jesse and Naomi TRACTON, Robert (Bobby) ל"ר and Estelle TRACTON.

Beloved Nanna to

IAN and KIM, MICHELLE and AVI, DANIEL and MICHELLE, and SARAH.

Great-grandmother of

AIMEE, MIKAELA, CARLY, ANNABEL, JARED, ARIELLA and GABRIEL.

A woman of immense love, devotion, courage and strength,

her memory will always be in our hearts.

May she rest in peace.

We are deeply saddened by the death of our dearest friend

## **Betty TRACHTENGERTS**

and extend our heartfelt condolences to the TRACHTENGERTS (TRACTON) family

Anya GOODRICH  
Olga GREGORCHUK  
Vera KARLIKOFF and family  
Sima ROSENFELD  
Sophia SAKKER and family

Hannah STERN  
George TSIPRIS  
Rene and Yvone TSUKASOFF  
Stella and David UDOVITCH  
Nora and Jim VINSON

We express our deepest sympathy to Jacob, Claire and Joshua BEIL on the death of their mother and grandmother and our dear friend

## **Vera BEIL**

who passed away on June 27, 2006 in Columbus, Georgia

Paul and Esther AGRAN  
Raymond and Melinda AGRAN  
Miriam and Herbert STRAUSS

Центральный комитет ИГУД ИОЦЕЙ СИН  
глубоко скорбит о смерти дорогой

## **Дани ПЛОТКЕ**

и выражает искреннее соболезнование семье покойной

Центральный комитет ИГУД ИОЦЕЙ СИН глубоко скорбит о смерти

## **Мары ГОЛЬДБЕРГА**

и выражает искреннее соболезнование МИРЕ с семьей

Додя ГУТМАН глубоко скорбит о смерти дорогого старого друга

## **Мары ГОЛЬДБЕРГА**

и выражает свое искреннее соболезнование МИРЕ с детьми и всем родным покойного в постигшем их неутешном горе

With deep sorrow we announce the passing of

## **Raisa (Raya) ORJELICK**

on May 21st 2006 in Sydney, Australia

Beloved wife of RUDOLF (RUDY) deceased,  
loving mother of ROBERTA and JENNIFER, mother-in-law of ROBERT,  
adored grandmother of JACQUELINE, MICHAEL, SARA, SASHA and ANNA

Sadly missed by all her family and friends

We are deeply saddened by the death of our friend

## **Raya ORJELICK**

and extend our heartfelt condolences  
to her daughters ROBERTA and JENNIFER and their families

Anya GOODRICH

Sopha SAKKER

Emil and Olia SCHWARTZ

Hanna STERN

Yvone and Rene TSUKASOFF

Stella and David UDOVITCH

Mary and George VORON

## **Galina BRAUN**

Passed away peacefully on the 3rd of August, 2006 in Melbourne, Australia

Beloved wife of MORIS, mother and mother-in-law of JACK and HELEN,  
adored grandmother of NATALIE, MICHAEL and ANIA

May she rest in peace

Deeply saddened by the passing of our dear

## **Verochka GANAPOLSKY**

and extend heartfelt sympathy to Leova LIFSHITZ, his nieces and nephews

Lily and Dov LIFSHITZ

Essie and Lou SILVER and family

We wish to express our heartfelt condolences to Leova LIFSHITZ  
on the loss of his dear sister

## **Vera GANAPOLSKY**

Dorothy and Al RAYSON

С глубокой скорбью извещаем о смерти дорогого сына, мужа, отца и брата

## **Рафаэля ВЕКслера**

Похороны состоялись 1-го июня 2006 г. в Герцлии

Мать Рахиль ВЕКслЕР  
Жена ИОНА с дочерью ХАСИТ  
Дочь ИМБАР с мужем ДОРОНОМ  
и дочерью ДОРИН  
Сестра Кармелла КОГЕН с семьей  
Брат Даниэль ВЕКслЕР с семьей

Фира КАНЕР с семьей скорбит о смерти дорогого

## **Рафи ВЕКслера**

и выражает искреннее соболезнование РАХИЛИ и всей семье покойного  
в постигшем их горе

Раша и Тедди КАУФМАН глубоко скорбят о смерти

## **Рафаэля ВЕКслера**

и выражают искреннее соболезнование Рахили ВЕКслЕР с семьей

Центральный комитет ИГУД ИОЦЕЙ СИН глубоко скорбит о смерти

## **Рафаэля ВЕКслера**

и выражает глубокое соболезнование Рахили ВЕКслЕР с семьей

My heartfelt condolences to the JACOBY family on the loss of their dear

## **S A S**

I was not acquainted with Sas in Shanghai as he graduated from the PTH in 1936 and I enrolled in the same school the following year. We were close in Israel due to our activities in the Igud.

Abe FRADKIN

The Board of Directors of Igud Yotzei Sin  
are saddened by the passing of

## **SASSON (SAS) JACOBY**

and express profound sympathy  
to HANNAH and YEHEZKIEL and family

Joe LEVOFF and Beni ZUR are saddened by the passing of

## **Sas JACOBY**

and express their deepest sympathy to the JACOBY family

Mrs. Golda LAZAROVICH mourns the passing of her brother

## **Joseph ESKIN**

Passed away on June 19, 2006 in Long Beach, California

Рина и Тима ЛИТВИН с сыновьями и внуками извещают о смерти дорогой

## **Шурочки АНЦЕЛЕВИЧ**

и тяжело переживают потерю нашего близкого долголетнего друга.

Пусть земля будет ей пухом.

Скончалась 19 июля 2006 г. Похоронена 21 июля 2006 г.

I deeply mourn the passing of old friend from Tientsin, China

## **Zika BELOTSERKOVSKY**

and express my sympathy to her son GRISHA

AI RAYSON

I am deeply saddened by the passing of

## **Ira FLEISCHMAN**

and express deepest sympathy to MISHA, children and grandchildren

AI RAYSON

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our lifelong friend

## **Nehama ELRAN**

and extend our heartfelt condolences to ISRAEL, ADA and all the ELRAN family

Vera KARLIKOFF and family

Nora and Efim KROUK

Leana LEIBOVITCH

Stella and David UDOVITCH

Sonya YEZERSKI

Zalman and Ruth AGRAN and Paul and Esther AGRAN  
are deeply saddened by the death of our dear friend

## **Nehama ELRAN**

and express our heartfelt sympathy to the whole ELRAN family

# The Jewish Cemetery in Harbin



1. Synagogue built in cemetery, whose window frames are exact copy of the Old Synagogue frames
2. Marble Magen David at the entrance to the Cemetery  
Left - gravestone of Rabbi A.M. Kiselev  
Right - gravestone of Rabbi Z.L. Gashkel

# From The Album of The Past



The leaders of the community at home of the Soskin brothers, Harbin 1931  
Sitting from right: Isaac Soskin, Gera Krichevsky, a visiting guest from  
Keren Hayesod in Palestine Dr. Solomon Ravikovitch  
Standing: Dr. Avraham Kaufman and Nahum Soskin

From the book "The Jews of Harbin live in my Heart" by Teddy Kaufman  
Tel-Aviv, 2006

## IGUD YOTZEI SIN BULLETIN – English Supplement – ISSN 0793-8365

*THE IYS BULLETIN (Russian, English, Hebrew), (approximately 250 pages per issue), all aspects of Jewish communities of China, historical, memories, book reviews, archival information, current lives of individual Jews (China expatriates) worldwide. Continuous Publication since 1954*

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**Association of former residents of China**  
(founded 1951)  
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Phone: (03) 5171997, Fax: (03) 5161631.  
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"The aim of the Association is to organize the former residents from the Far East for the Purpose of mutual assistance and cooperation."  
(from the by-laws of the Association)

Editor-in-chief: **T.Kaufman**  
Editorial board: **Sas Jacoby,**  
**Teddy Kaufman, Emmanuel Pratt,**  
**Rebecca Toueg, Joe Levoff**  
Editor New Israel Messenger: **S. Jacoby**  
Editor, Chusan Road: **K. Maimann**  
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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.