

# Bulletin

## Igud Yotzei Sin

Association of Former Residents of China

March - April 2005 ♦ Vol LI ♦ Issue No. 383

English Supplement

# Happy Passover! !NDU NOG AN

The All-Israel Gathering of Ex-residents of China

Presentation of Scholarships and the Opening of the National Conference of Igud Yotzei Sin  
Hanukkah 2004



At the Presidium table (left to right): Raya Fine, Ronny Veinerman, Dany Berkovich, Mr. Chen Yonglong, the Ambaassador of China, Teddy Kaufman, Tzvi Gabai (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Yossi Klein, Igal Kaspi (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), recipients of the scholarships- Israeli and Chinese students

**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)

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**T. Kaufman**

## *The Joy of Success*

This happens in Tel Aviv each Hanukkah, for the past ten years. They gather at the Municipal Workers' Club for the traditional IYS four-generation "Old China Hands" get-together. They come from all the corners of Israel: from Nahariya to Jerusalem to Beer-Sheba, from Haifa, Nazareth, Ashdod, from Migdal ha-Emek, Kfar Tavor, Rishon Le-Zion. This time more than 350 old-timers came for the occasion. Those who approach their 90's and those who just passed their first 10. One of the latter lit the Hanukkah candles. How bright is the joy, for this event has become a holiday in itself. Until we meet again, dear friends, -- next Hanukkah!

### ***148 Scholarship Recipients***

Practically half the crowd that filled the auditorium consisted of the scholarship recipients: children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of the former immigrants of the various Jewish communities of China. This year 40 of them are freshmen in the high educational institutes of Israel. Others continue their studies from the previous academic years, and receive their scholarships for the second, third, fourth and fifth time.

These are the faces of our country's future. These young people come to our get-together, listen to the stories of our past, and share our pride in our yesterday and today – and the activity of our organization.

### ***Our activity grows from year to year***

The first IYS scholarship was granted 48 years ago, in 1956. In 2002 the number of recipients reached 128, in 2003 – 138, in 2004 – 148. In two years we shall celebrate the 50th year of the IYS Scholarship Fund. May the number of the recipients continue to grow, and may our landsmen continue to establish

new funds and support the old ones – to commemorate their kin and promote high education in our land.

### ***15th IYS Conference in Israel***

The 15th IYS Conference took place at Bet Ponne on Dec. 15. The IYS is 54 years old. I remember the first conference, which opened on Oct. 6, 1953 in Netanya. Many, too many, participants not only of the first, but even was held of the 14th Conference are no more with us. It is sad to think that they are gone, but good to remember that they were the ones who created our organization. Life continues, and the 37 delegates of the 15th Conference confirmed the necessity of the further existence of our Association and defined our future activities – preserving our heritage, taking care of our present tasks, and supporting those who will build the future of our land and people.

### ***Students from China***

Yet another tradition was born in the Hanukkah gatherings: scholarship certificates were awarded to students from China, studying in the Israeli universities. These scholarships are covered by the Scholarship Fund of the Israel-China Friendship Society. This, the eighth time, there were 12 Chinese recipients. part of them learn the history of Zionism, Jewish history, history of the Holocaust, Hebrew literature and Judaism: evidence of the importance of the project.

The warm feedback from the Chinese Ambassador, the Chinese press and the officials of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, as well as the warm atmosphere at the mixed Chinese-Israeli get-together, is another symptom of the strengthening of friendly personal contacts between the two people. There is no doubt that upon their return home, the Chinese students will be faithful messengers of good-will for Israel.

# IN LIEU OF FLOWERS: SOCIAL AID TO LANDSMEN

## DEAR FRIENDS!

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

Most of our needy landsmen are elderly, lonely or ailing people, whose situation is such that without the assistance of Igud Yotzei Sin, they would not be able to make ends meet.

As of January 1, 2005 we have 101 recipients of our monthly aid, about half of them are new immigrants from the USSR who were part of the Jewish communities of China.

In recent years, the number of

contributors to the IYS Social Fund, both in Israel and abroad, has dropped and consequently it is much more difficult to meet the requirements of the increased number of the needy elderly people. Our current budget requirement is \$ 100,000.00 annually.

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

Moreover, we would appreciate your remembering the needy by making a contribution to our Social Aid

Fund on all other festive occasions and holidays. You can also make a donation honoring a designated person, and we shall send a proper notification to the honoree informing them of your gift. In this way, both the donor and the honoree will derive great satisfaction from the fact that in the hour of joy, a needy person will also be remembered.

Please send your donations to:  
Igud Yotzei Sin, Social Aid Fund  
PO Box 29786, Tel – Aviv, 61297

With best wishes for a Hag Sameah,  
IYS Central Committee Chairman:  
T. Kaufman Deputy – Chairman & Treasurer: J. Klein

## IYS Presidium Meeting

A regular meeting of the IYS Presidium took place at Bet Ponve on Nov. 25, attended by: T. Kaufman, Y. Klein, R. Veinerman, A. Podolsky, G. Katz, J. Bein, J. Sandel, E. Vandel, A. Fradkin, and R. Rashinsky. The minutes of the previous meeting of July 26, 2004 were confirmed.

T. Kaufman reported on the work done by the IYS during the past four months, which was confirmed. Likewise, the financial report by Deputy Chairman and Treasurer, Y. Klein for the period of January 1 - September 30, 2004 was confirmed. The IYS Presidium also confirmed the 148 scholarships to the students, the agenda and the list of the 58 delegates of the 15th IYS Conference to take place on December 14 -15, 2004.

## IYS Central Committee

A regular meeting of the IYS Central Committee took place at Bet Ponve on October 15. Teddy Kaufman opened the meeting by asking those present to rise in memory of the members who passed away since the last committee meeting on July 26.

In Israel: Eliahu Bar Yosef, Sarah Morgulev and Boris Shafran. In the Diaspora: Hannah Weinberger (Slutzker) and M. Yadgarov in New York; Robert Tarkion and Rachel Agranovsky in Sydney; Sara Ossin and Daniel Litvin in San Francisco, Isador Magid in Melbourne.

T. Kaufman delivered a comprehensive report on the activity of the IYS for the past four months. #381 of the Bulletin was issued, and #382 was in the process of preparation. The 15th

IYS Conference was being prepared to take place on December 14-15. Kaufman also reported on the Harbin Seminar on the history of the Jews of that city and about his visit to the New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles former Jewish communities in China. The report was confirmed. Deputy Chairman and Treasurer, Yossi Klein delivered a financial report for the period from January 1 to September, 30, 2004, which was confirmed. Also confirmed was the list of 148 students to receive the IYS scholarships at the traditional IYS Hanukkah get-together in Dec. 2004. Likewise, a list of 58 delegates to the 15th IYS Conference was confirmed.

# Resolutions and Directives of the 15th Conference of Igud Yotzei Sin in Israel

*(December 14 - 15, 2004)*

The Steering Committee proposes that the Conference confirm the following resolutions and directives:

1. Teddy Kaufman, Chairman of Igud Yotzei Sin Central Committee, presents the Conference with a comprehensive report on the five years of activity of IYS (from 14th to 15th Conference), which the Conference duly confirms with satisfaction, and expresses its gratitude to the Central Committee and the IYS Management for their work.
2. Yossi Klein, Deputy Chairman and Treasurer of IYS presents the Conference with a financial report for the period of 1999 – 2004. The Conference confirms its satisfaction, lauds the broad and significant assistance rendered by the Central Committee to the former immigrants from China in financial assistance, loans and scholarships, and delegates Mr. Klein to further activity in his present capacity.
3. The Conference congratulates Teddy Kaufman on the occasion of his 80th birthday and on his being the Chairman of the IYS in Israel for the past 33 years. The Conference is grateful to him for his devoted leadership and fruitful activity. The Conference calls on him to continue with his task in his present capacity.
4. The Conference is deeply grateful to all the IYS activists and its representatives in Israel and abroad for their outstanding effort on behalf of our organization.
5. The Conference notes with satisfaction the immense work done by the editorial staff and reporters of the Bulletin, and expresses its gratitude to all those contributing to our magazine's success.
6. The Conference is deeply grateful to our friends, former residents of China, now living in Israel and abroad who assist the IYS by their generous financial support vital to the very existence and functioning of our organization. The Conference wishes to single out the generosity of Asya Kogan of Tokyo and her lasting readiness to meet our needs whenever requested.
7. The Conference greets all the former immigrants from China and guests who visit Bet Ponve and hopes that their visits and the events organized there will continue. It calls on the committees to expand their activity in organizing a variety of additional events in Bet Ponve.
8. The Conference is pleased to note the permanent concern and attention of the committees and members of the following former Chinese Immigrants' Associations:  
The Far Eastern Society in New York, headed by Mrs. Frances Greenberg.  
The Far Eastern Society of Southern California, headed by Mrs. Mira Mrantz.  
The Far Eastern Society of San Francisco, headed by Mr. I. Kaufman.  
Thanks are extended to the honorary representatives of Igud Yotzei Sin

in Sydney, Australia, Mr. and Mrs. David and Stella Yudovich for their devoted work on behalf of the "Bulletin" and their annual IYS fundraising effort.

Thanks are also extended to the honorary representative of Igud Yotzei Sin in Montreal, Canada, Ms. Lily Frank.

9. The Conference calls on the government of Heilongjiang Province, China, to open the archives of the Harbin Jewish Community to the general public in order to facilitate historical research of the Jewish presence in the city and in all of China.
10. The Conference greets and encourages the representatives of the IYS Younger Generation Division to join the ranks of the IYS active workers, and hopes that such activity will gain volume and strength in the future.
11. The Conference decides to create a committee to form a new framework of the IYS management and laws and regulations, according to the requirements of the Non-Profit Associations Law ("Hok ha 'Amuto").  
The committee will consist of: Yossi Klein, Chairman. Members of the committee: Teddy Kaufman; Ronny Veinerman; Teddy Piastunovich; Zahi Weinberg. Advisors: Danny Friedman, IYS's legal adviser; Howard Radley, auditor.
12. The Conference decides to grant the Far Eastern Society of San Francisco the title of Honorary Member of Igud Yotzei Sin.

# The 15<sup>th</sup> National Conference of Igud Yotzei Sin

14-15 December 2004, Beit-Ponve



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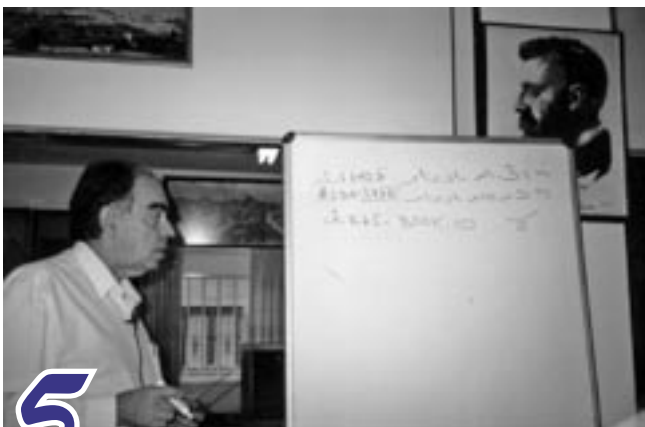
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1. T. Kaufman opens the Conference.
2. Haim Zuker and Vera Begun light the Hanukkah candles.
3. Raya Fine, the Chairman of the Conference, at the head of the Presidium.
4. T. Kaufman speaks about the activities of Igud for the past five years.
5. Yossi Klein speaks about the financial situation of Igud for the past five years.
6. Tzahi Fainberg speaks. He is a newly-elected member of the Central Committee and the Presidium as a representative of the young generation.

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# The Traditional Hanukkah Gathering



Beth Ponve - 2005

the many landsmen organizations in the country". He congratulated Teddy Kaufman on his 80th birthday. So did Igal Kaspi of the Foreign Ministry, who stressed the significance of the IYS and AFIC activity aimed at broadening of the Israel-China cultural and economic ties. Former ambassador of Israel to China, Ora Namir, noted the personal merits and achievements of T. Kaufman.

IYS Dep. Chairman, Y. Klein, described the contribution of T. Kaufman to the development of IYS and AFIC as "extraordinary" during his 33-years' service as IYS chairman. In his reply, T. Kaufman thanked the orators for their kind words and congratulations, and returned to the problems confronting IYS and AFIC. His speech was loudly applauded.

During the Intermezzo musical program, the Israeli Yemenite singer, Ofira Gluska, presented a medley of popular Israeli songs and performed a few Chinese melodies to the loud approval of the public, especially the Chinese students.

T. Kaufman gave a statistical account of the scholarship funds, out of which 148 Israeli and 12 Chinese students received their stipends this year. The handing to the recipients of the 160 certificates of the 40 IYS and AFIC scholarship funds lasted more than an hour. In addition to the certificates, each Israeli student received T. Kaufman's book "The Harbin Jewry in my Heart" in Hebrew, while the Chinese students were given the photo album "Israel", in Chinese.

Arnon Beim thanked IYS and AFIC in the name of the Israeli students. T. Kaufman closed the session at 8 p.m.

**B. Zeev**

6 The annual Hanukkah gathering of the Old China Hands in Israel and the opening of the 15th IYS Conference took place on Dec. 14, 2004 in the Municipal Workers' Club in Tel Aviv. The event was scheduled to begin at 4 p.m., but the doors were wide open much earlier, as the guests began to arrive from all corners of Israel. They were received at the entrance by T. Kaufman, Y. Klein, R. Veinerman, J. Bein, A. Podolsky and B. Darel.

Refreshments and plates full of Hanukkah doughnuts added to the holiday mood. Amongst honorary guests were China's ambassador in Israel, Chen Yun-lun and major officials of the Chinese Embassy, Deputy Mayor of Tel Aviv Nathan Wallach, Zvi Gabbai, formerly of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, and Igal Kaspi of the Ministry's NE Asian Department, former ambassador of Israel in China Ora Namir, Danny Berkowitz, Raya Fein, Sasson Jacoby and the IYS Presidium members, T. Kaufman, Y. Klein and R. Veinerman. J. Bein, J. Sandel, A. Podolsky and R.

Rashinsky organized the ceremony of scholarship presentation: at a long table, covered with green cloth sat those to present the grant certificates, amongst them Nehama Elran, Jenny Piastunovich, Sarah Ross, A. Fradkin, G. Tandet and D. Gutman, secretary of the Scholarships Distribution committee. Haim Yarden, grandson of H. Bracha, lit the Hanukkah candles, and the Hanukkah songs filled the auditorium. The singer Ofira Gluska performed a number of traditional Israeli songs. Haim Yarden was presented with the "Israel" album.

The first to speak was Ambassador Chen, who lauded the work done by the Igud Yotzei Sin and the Israel-China Friendship Society. He also spoke of the efforts of T. Kaufman in the cause of strengthening the ties between the two countries, and congratulated him on his 80th birthday. His speech was often interrupted by applause.

Deputy Mayor of Tel Aviv Wallach noted that the IYS is a unique organization, "one of a kind among

# *In the Hall of the Hanukkah Festivity*



1. Yarden Naim, Haya Braha's grandson, lights the 8th Chanukah candle.
2. Singer Ofira Gluska.
- 3-6. The students and their relatives, guests and landsmen in the hall.

# MAZAL TOV

## **Haya Baranovsky-Gatz-Shluger Turns 100**

A brunch on Sunday 27 February 2005 celebrated the birthday of Haya - remembered by many as Hayusha - with the presence of children Ephim Shluger, Leona Shluger Forman and son-in-law Shepard Forman, grandchildren Alexandra and Jacob Forman and Tatiana and Sophie Shluger, nieces Eleanor Shluger and Lilly Langotsky and husband Stuard Uram, as well as friends and neighbors.

It has been an adventurous life trajectory which started in Chita, Siberia in 1905. Born to Bluma and Meier Baranovsky the family then spent several years in Urga (Ulan Bator), Mongolia, where with her parents, four sisters and a brother, they survived the ravages of Baron Von Ungern. Later, in 1924, she left Chita for Harbin, China, as a young bride of Anisim Gatz and mother



of Isabella. During the Japanese occupation, the family moved to Tientsin, China, and she lost her first husband.

In 1940 she married Jacob Shluger constituting a new family with the

birth of Leona and Ephim. Wars and revolution propelled them across the globe to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the next twenty years, when after the death of Jacob, she moved to Ann Arbor Michigan to live close to daughter Leona, making new friends and reinventing herself again, before finally settling in New York City where she currently lives.

Today, she is very frail but feisty, with a keen sense of humor and many memories that bring up joy and laughter, as well as sorrow.

As we celebrate Mother's centennial, we send greetings to all of Mother's friends who still remember, and who might want to send her their greetings, memories or even photographs they would like to share. She would find it wonderful to hear from them:

Haya Shluger  
49 East 73rd Street # 10-A  
New York City, NY 10021

## **Birthdays**

One of the oldest activists of Igud Yotzei Sin, **Rosetta Rabinovich**, celebrated her 95th birthday on January 2, 2005. Her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren gathered at the home of the heroine of the day. The Central Committee of the Tel Aviv branch of IYS, the Ladies Committee and the members of the Beit-Ponve Sunday club sent Rosetta their flowers and greetings.

Rasha and Teddy Kaufman took part in the family festivity. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Rosetta and the Rabinovich family on the joyful event and wishes them health and happiness.

**Benjamin (Venya) Litvin**, formerly of Harbin and Tientsin, recently celebrated his 90th birthday. He is a long-time friend of Igud Yotzei Sin.

IYS sends him a hearty "Ad meah v'esrim!"

**Isai Piastunovich**, formerly of Harbin, celebrated his 85th birthday on October 1, 2004. An old-time member of IYS, he is a generous contributor to our organization.

IYS sends Isai, a heartiest Mazal Tov.

**Teddy Piastunovich**, born in Tientsin, celebrated his 70th birthday in October, 2004. Teddy is a member of the IYS Presidium and Central Committee. He designed and operates our Internet Website. IYS sends Teddy, Jenny and daughters a hearty Mazal Tov and Ad Meah v'esrim.

**Yakov ("Yasha") Orlovsky**, our old friend from Harbin (now of Switzerland) recently hit his 80th jubilee. IYS greets Yasha and family, wishing them health and happiness.

**Prof. Simon (Senya) Karlinsky**, formerly of Harbin, (now of California)

celebrated his 80th birthday. Till recently he taught Russian literature at the Berkeley University.

IYS sends Senya best wishes of longevity and health.

**Teddy Kaufman** celebrated his 80th birthday on September 2, 2004.

Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Rasha and Teddy and wishes him health and happiness, and a continuation of his activity in the field of social prosperity.

To my dear sister and our aunt Zina Kamonski upon your 90th birthday.

Wishing you good health and happiness till 120!

From: Dina Zaigraeff, Lily, Asia with families, Zahava Miller, Gil, Shirly, Tal and families, Esther Vandel, Avi, Devora and Shlomi and families.



## Births:

Aaron, second son to Gita and Jonathan son of Ada and Ray Pivo of Encino, CA. Igud Yotzei Sin sends Mazal Tov to the Pivo family of two sons, six granddaughters and a grandson, may they multiply.

A great granddaughter Noa was born to the Bar-Yosef (Roisberg) family of the late Eliyahu and Rachel. Noa is the daughter of Sara and Fabian Goder and the granddaughter of Eliyahu and Rachel's daughter Aliya and her husband Goder. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates the Bar-Yosef family on the happy event and wishes them good health and well-being.

## Married:

**Dotan Rom (Rosenstein) and Maya Ben Zvi** of Moshav Nataf, Jerusalem Hills on Oc. 15, 2004. Dotan is the son of Meira and Shimon Rosenstein, formerly of Harbin and Shanghai. IYS congratulates the newlyweds and their families.

**Jennifer Niefeld**, granddaughter of Raya Diamond (nee Machlina), and Dean Russ were married. The bride is the daughter of Leah (nee Diamond) and Steve Niefeld. The wedding took place on October 17 at the Westlake Inn Hotel. Rabbi A. Rabishaw officiated. The happy and proud grandmother Raya was escorted by her oldest nephew Ron Pivo to her seat. Relatives and friends joyfully participated in the festivities and the bride's sister Amy charmingly sang the young couple's favorite song. After a Hawaiian honeymoon the newlyweds are residing in Toluca Lake, California.

## Abraham Goldreich reaches 75

Abraham Goldreich (husband of Bella Goldreich-Segerman, formerly of Shanghai), celebrated his 75th birthday on January. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Abraham, Bella and family and wishes them lots of health and happiness – till 120.

## Sophie and Sammy Poliak - Golden Wedding

On February 25 Sophie and Shmuel (Sammy) Poliak, our landsman from Shanghai, celebrated their golden wedding. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates the "newlyweds", wishing them many happy years together.

# Scholarships: Numbers & Statistics

*On Dec. 14, 2004, 148 scholarships were granted through various IYS funds to the three generations of the descendants of former residents of China.*

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Recipients live in:</b>                       |    |
| Tel Aviv and Central Israel                      | 76 |
| Haifa and the North                              | 45 |
| Jerusalem and the South                          | 27 |
| <b>They study at eight Israeli universities:</b> |    |
| The Hebrew University (Jerusalem)                | 21 |
| Tel Aviv University                              | 22 |
| Haifa University                                 | 10 |
| Ben Gurion University (Beer Sheva)               | 5  |
| Bar-Ilan University (Ramat Gan)                  | 10 |
| The Haifa Technion                               | 7  |
| The Open University                              | 6  |
| The "Derby" University                           | 1  |
| Others   | 63 |
| Yeshivot   | 3  |
| First year                                       | 33 |
| Second year                                      | 38 |
| Third year                                       | 41 |
| Fourth year                                      | 30 |
| Fifth year                                       | 3  |
| Sixth year                                       | 1  |
| Studies for MA                                   | 1  |
| Studies for PhD                                  | 1  |
| <b>They are:</b>                                 |    |
| Women  | 85 |
| Men  | 63 |
| <b>Parentage:</b>                                |    |
| Formerly of Harbin                               | 92 |
| Formerly of Shanghai                             | 35 |
| Formerly of Tientsin                             | 19 |
| Formerly of Mukden                               | 1  |
| Formerly of Canton                               | 1  |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Congregational division:</b>                                   |     |
| Ashkenazi (Russia)  | 129 |
| Sephardi (Shanghai)   | 6   |
| European (formerly refugees – Shanghai and other cities in China) | 13  |
| <b>Birthplace:</b>  |     |
| Israel  | 131 |
| Russia  | 8   |
| Kazakhstan  | 2   |
| England   | 2   |
| USA   | 1   |
| Canada  | 1   |
| Rep. of South Africa  | 1   |
| Japan   | 1   |
| Iran  | 1   |
| <b>Division by professions:</b>                                   |     |
| Medicine  | 5   |
| Computers   | 13  |
| Business management   | 22  |
| Music   | 2   |
| Political science   | 13  |
| Tourism   | 1   |
| Humanities  | 15  |
| Communications  | 6   |
| Social work   | 10  |
| Economics   | 1   |
| Agriculture   | 2   |
| Statistics  | 1   |
| Chemistry and Biology   | 8   |
| Fine Arts   | 6   |
| Engineering   | 15  |
| Physics and Chemistry   | 3   |
| Law   | 10  |
| Pedagogy  | 10  |
| Judaism   | 3   |
| Interior decoration   | 2   |

## Jenia Rosenstein turns 90

On March 20 Jenia Rosenstein, formerly of Harbin and Shanghai celebrated her 90th birthday.

Jenia is an active member in the ranks of the Igud Yotzei Sin from the first days of its existence.

Jenia's 90th jubilee will be so much the more joyous now that her newly born great granddaughter recently joined the family. Igud Yotzei Sin heartily congratulates Jenia and the Rosenstein family with the double mazal tov, and wishes Jenia a lot of good health and joy.

# Heart for Poetry

Alexandra Walker



Double Bay poet Nora Krouk wrote her first English language poem to impress another woman's boyfriend.

"I had a friend who fell in love with an English-speaking boy and she bragged to him that she was a poet, Ms Krouk said.

"She ran to me one day and said, you have to write me a poem in English."

Ms Krouk, whose mother tongue is Russian, didn't keep that poem but she wishes she had because it marked the beginning of her successful career as an English language poet.

Skin for Comfort, a collection of Ms Krouk's poetry, has won this year's IP Picks Award for best poetry.

Judges praised the collection for its emotional breadth and intelligent structure.

Through the collection, Ms Krouk explores her personal history, encompassing the history of the Jewish people, the impact of Stalin in Russia, the Holocaust and conflicts in the Middle East.

"I like to face up to things" she said. "I think of poetry as constellations of words, it's a wonderful thing to give your heart to."

While she does a lot of her writing in English, Ms Krouk hasn't lost her love of Russian poetry. "Russians write wonderful lyric poetry," she said. "They still rhyme. Because of the way the language is structured, the rhymes are endless.

# The IYS Scholarship Fund

The IYS Scholarship Fund includes 40 memorial and nominal funds as per the following list of funds and the number of scholarships granted:

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Fund in memory of Misha Kogan                                    | 50 |
| " " Alexander and June Meisin                                    | 50 |
| " " Ralph Magid  | 5  |
| " " Ira and Isador Magid   | 5  |
| Fund of CPR Embassy in Israel                                    | 5  |
| Fund in memory of Bertha and Shura Schieldkraut                  | 1  |
| " " Eliahu Lankin  | 1  |
| " " Dr. Ernst Cohn   | 1  |
| " " Ella Piastunovich  | 1  |
| " " Gershon Niv (Nihamkin)                                       | 1  |
| " " Moshe Nirim  | 1  |
| Fund after Mary and George Bloch                                 | 1  |
| Fund in memory of Bella Volsky                                   | 1  |
| " " Yasha Kaganer  | 1  |
| " " Zina and Olya Fradkin  | 1  |
| " " Liova Piastunovich   | 1  |
| " " Boris Kotz   | 1  |
| " " Sara and Mara Morguliov                                      | 1  |
| " " Albert Weinerman   | 1  |
| " " Boris Mirkin   | 1  |
| " " Moma Lesk  | 1  |
| " " Yasha Tandet   | 1  |
| " " Ettl Dan   | 1  |
| " " Mikhail Kliaver  | 1  |
| " " Leon Britanisky  | 1  |
| " " Eli Ross   | 1  |
| " " Alexander Boltiansky   | 1  |
| " " Clarissa Dmitrovsky  | 1  |
| " " Moisei Todrin  | 1  |
| Fund of Women's Committee of the Far Eastern Society in New York | 1  |
| Fund in memory of Sima Feinland                                  | 1  |
| " " Grunia and Yehezkiel Gluek                                   | 1  |
| " " Fruma and Kalman Friedman                                    | 1  |
| " " Vera Domer   | 1  |
| " " Dr. Shimon Prizan  | 1  |
| " " Pavel Pinsky   | 1  |
| " " Bella Mirkin   | 1  |
| " " Yosef Rector   | 1  |
| " " Shulamit Neder   | 1  |
| " " Robert (Bobby) Trakton                                       | 1  |

Igud Yotzei Sin calls upon former emigrants from China living in Israel and the lands of Diaspora to establish funds in memory of their kin, and thus to both perpetuate their memory and promote a higher standard of education in Israel.

# Presentation of Scholarship to Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren of Former Residents of China



1. The Ambassador of China, Mr. Chen Yonglong
2. Mr. Igal Kaspi
3. Mr. Danny Berkovich
4. Mrs. Raya Fine
5. Mr. T. Kaufman
6. Mr. Yossi Klein

# Reminiscing about the Conference

By Raya Fein

By the beginning of August all doubts and uncertainties about the trip to Harbin were behind us. The invitation from the Heilongjiang Province Academy of Social Science was received to participate in the conference on the Jewish presence in Harbin, organized by the Academy's Center of the Studies of the History of the Harbin Jews. The Chinese visa was stamped in my passport, the flight ticket was bought. On August 27 at 11 PM our El-Al plane took off for the long flight to China. The next morning we landed in Beijing. However, no matter how fascinating our three-day visit had been in the ancient capital of China, it pales in comparison with my reminiscence about Harbin.

It all began from the very moment of our arrival. We found our hosts busy searching for us all over the "Arrivals" part of the airport, and a spacious tourist bus was parked waiting for the guests from Israel. Having arrived at the Hotel Shangri-la, we learned that we were late for the reception banquet, but having checked the schedule, we realized that the number of the future banquets leaves no room for any regrets.

Doubtlessly, each participant of this unique travel returned home with a set of his/her own individual impressions. As for me, the most striking one was the exceptional warmth and care we were accorded by our hosts. I was one of the guests, whose physical limitations would prevent me seeing and enjoying all there was to see and enjoy, if not for the organizers' extraordinary thoughtfulness, care and resourcefulness. They simply would not let anyone miss any event or happening. I'll never forget the words of one of the hosts in reply to my thanking him for his being exceptionally helpful: "It's but natural. Didn't you make this

long and difficult journey in order to see all there is to see? Well, it is our natural duty to enable you to do so."

The conference hall was vast and equipped with the latest high tech facilities to enable maximum coverage. And, indeed, each lecture by the participants added yet another detail or a feature to the colorful mosaic of the contribution of the Jewish genius to the development of Harbin. Memorable is a phrase in Teddy's lecture on Rabbi Kiselev, which pinpointed the Rabbi's inner substance: "He preserved in a man a human being, and in a human being he preserved a Jew." We felt proud of our past.

Permit me to quote a few of my words in an interview by the Harbin Television: "We are proud of our contribution to the cultural and economic welfare of the city, but it would have been impossible without the mutual understanding and friendly relations between the Jews and the Chinese."

A special and an unforgettable chapter in our Harbin experience remains our visit to the Harbin Jewish cemetery. My first thought was: "Is it possible that we are here?!" Our hosts made it so. Teddy recited Kadish for many of those buried there, including my parents, whose grave stones were ordered by me in Israel, and carved in Harbin by Chinese masons. This common Kadish recited by Teddy, became a bond of kinship between those present at the unforgettable ceremony.

I cannot but relate a detail: a few minutes before the beginning of the ceremony, I tried to sweep away the yellow autumn leaves, covering the graves of my parents, when a Chinese woman organizer gestured me to stop and wait for a while. She left and soon returned with a container of water, and washed the stone slabs. (It so happens

that the Chinese and the Jews have a common mitzvah of Sao Mu – the sweeping of the graves of the parents). I attach a photo of the occasion. I wanted to thank the woman for her kindness, but she modestly disappeared in the crowd and I never saw her again. I would so much like her to know that I shall never forget her.

Our visit to Harbin was not devoid of a disappointment: we could not recognize the Harbin for which we had longed so much. When we left the city, both of us – the city and we -- were in a cradle, so to speak. And now? Harbin grew to become a young giant, and we?.... And yet, an inner nostalgic tension vibrated within us throughout the journey.

There is no way to avoid mentioning the royal banquets we were treated to at least twice a day. We reached the peak of feasting in celebrating Teddy's 80th birthday. Here, however, it was the warm atmosphere that got the upper hand over the savor of the dishes. And the speeches... Everybody spoke: the hosts, the guests, the scientists, the municipal officials. All languages were heard: Chinese, Russian, English, Hebrew. And yet it seemed that we all spoke the same language, the one known in Hebrew as שפת אנוש. And the subject was also one and same: Teddy. Teddy Kaufman -- the social figure, Teddy Kaufman -- the friend, Teddy Kaufman -- the human being, Teddy Kaufman -- the prototype of a Harbin Jew.

These reminiscences are only sparkling splinters of the events and the thrills of the experience we went through during those five days of the Seminar. But not one of its participants will forget them -- ever.

*From the Russian – Emmanuel Pratt  
Jerusalem*

# BUILDING THE NORTH-EAST: JEWISH ENTERPRISE IN MANCHURIA, 1900-1940

*Names of people and places are here given in their Russian versions.*

*Transliteration from Cyrillic is by the Library of Congress method.*

1. Our gracious hosts at this "International Seminar on the History and Culture of Harbin Jews" have already evoked and enriched our memories with the publication last year of a milestone event, the photo album "The Jews of Harbin". Among the book's major themes are three that I should like to single out:

- (a) the history of the city's Jewish community as such, its organization, its leaders, and its communal institutions,
- (b) the active part played by Jews in the rich cultural and intellectual life of the city's Russian speaking population as a whole, and
- (c) the relatively large contribution of Jewish businessmen and entrepreneurs -- traders, merchants, shopkeepers, industrialists, bankers, innovators, modernizers, etc. -- to the initial founding and later growth of a modern economy in and around Harbin during the early decades of its existence. It is this third theme -- enterprise -- that I should like to address in this very brief presentation.

But first a caveat. I am not a historian of Manchuria or Harbin; rather, at best, an amateur who relies on the scholarly work of others. Fortunately, such work is rich, and, has lately been growing markedly richer thanks to the opening of archives and to a revival of professional and devoted scholarship in China, Russia, Israel, USA, and elsewhere. My own qualities today's discussion are sparse and stem from my childhood and youth. Born in Kiev in 1921, I was brought to Harbin in March 1923 at the age of one year, where I grew up in a Russian-Jewish and a business milieu. In the summer of 1938, at age 17, I emigrated to the United States. But at least, after two-thirds of a century in America, I retain the use of the Russian language; reminiscences from the years from, say, 1927 to 1938; and, not the least, the misty, mythical memories of that unique city, Harbin, and the lingering nostalgia for it which afflicts so many of us Kharbintsy.

2. At the time of arrival of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) in Manchuria, the region was a vast but very thinly populated land of over a million square kilometers and fabulously rich in natural resources -- truly an economic frontier awaiting and inviting development. The call of the

wild did not remain unanswered. Material and social infrastructure was provided by the CER from the very start, and continued to be provided, though unevenly, for the four decades covered in these remarks, despite several drastic changes in the railway's ownership and/or control. Manchuria's borders had been opened to in-migration. Large waves of peasant-workers poured in by the million from intramural China to populate the land and its towns and to man the nascent industries.

Another kind of labor was simultaneously arriving from Russia, attracted by employment and business opportunities in the new frontier-land, and reflecting nearly the whole broad range of the Empire's ethnic/national and religious groups. Among them from the beginning were Jews, not many in absolute numbers but proportionately high in terms of the Russian or even Siberian immigration into Manchuria. In addition to purely economic reasons, Jews were attracted to Manchuria also, and importantly so, by its comparatively tolerant and liberal atmosphere: official, economic, and social -- in Russian-controlled "extra-territorial zone" [polosa otchuzhdeniia]. Private enterprise and private capital were called for and generally welcomed. These, too, came forth, both non-Jewish and Jewish. Yet, it is fair to say that Jewish enterprise and capital

played a disproportionately large role in preparing the historical base for the eventual industrial and economic take-off in the North-East of China in the 20th century.

3. The Harbin-Jewish experience may be viewed through the prisms of various historical and sociological approaches, such as

- (a) Jews as a diasporal "trading or entrepreneurial minority" (cf. Diatlov in Diaspory); and, related, the historical reasons for the individual "Jewish" economic pursuits, e.g., local and international commerce, finance, medicine, science, music, etc. (cf. Gross:1975)
- (b) the history of Jews in Russia and the Russian history of Jews (to follow Romanova's useful distinction);
- (c) same as (b), but with emphasis on the history of Jews in Siberia and the Russian Far East in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

Regarding (c): Indeed, a small but crucial group of Jewish businessmen and entrepreneurs in Siberia and the Russian Far East were prominent among the pioneers of economic development of Manchuria. Geographic proximity (relatively speaking) is of course an obvious factor. But there must have been more than that: the frontier conditions, the prior favorable business climate, the opportunities of amassing considerable capital, and perhaps a certain frame of mind, played significant roles in the case of the Sibriaki. Names like Skidelsky, Kabalkin, Frizer are pre-eminent, but dozens of others - not all as well known - belong in this category. Among the latter is the Lury family from Nikolaevsk-na-Amure (discussed below), whose far-flung business empire included Harbin and Mukden; or the Irkutianin Bresler, who built a candy factory in Harbin and a chain of fine "Victoria" cafe's in many cities. One might add the name of my uncle Lew Zikman (also discussed below),

not really a Sibriak, but one who for several years honed his business skills and his world-view travelling as salesman on the Trans-Sib before moving on to Harbin and bigger things in 1916. Of course, there were many non-Siberian Jews among early businessmen in Harbin as well. (See Shickman-Bowman, and the series of articles since 1997 by her and by V.V. Romanova in Bulletin.) Of the latter, Semion Soskin, the "king of soybeans", stands out. Seventy years later, a ditty still whirls through my head: Bez zhenshchiny muzhchina, A man without a woman, Kak ofitser bez china, Is like an officer without rank, Kak mestnyi Soskin bez bobov. Like our own Soskin without soybeans. Indeed, the humble soybean was to Manchuria what gold was half a century earlier for California. The one and the other placed its respective land on the world economic map, attracted people, created wealth and capital (and a freer atmosphere as well), and shaped politics. California as well as Manchuria, witnessed an inflow of Jewish businessmen and entrepreneurs who made relatively large contributions to the economy and culture of the state. (There were also actual gold miners among them, in witness whereof there still remain seven Jewish cemeteries in the Gold Country.) Of course, these early arrivals in California were not from Siberia or the rest of Russia; those came later. They were mostly from Germany and France. No matter. Today one can no more stroll through San Francisco without seeing the many fine monuments of its Jewish past (and present) than to stroll through Pristan' without seeing the monuments of its Jewish past. (On the place of soybeans in Manchuria's history see Wolff, To the Harbin Station, passim, and, in a more lyrical tone, Wolff in SAQ) For the remainder of the limited time and space allotted to me, I turn to two case studies, two Russian-Jewish men whose lives and work were

very different from one another in many respects, but whose business acumen, entrepreneurial vision, and elan were alike. They are -- were -- Lew Zikman (b. Ukraine in 1886, d. San Francisco in 1973) and Robert M. Lury (b. Nagasaki in 1906, d. near San Francisco in 2001).

#### 4. THE ZIKMAN-GROSSMAN FAMILY IN HARBIN.

My uncle, Lew Zikman (Lev Grigor'evich TSYkman) was a "self-made man" and -- though far from the very richest in Harbin - still by local standards a rich and outstanding Russian-Jewish merchant and industrialist between the two World Wars in Harbin. He was also a major philanthropist. But his roots were far away. Born in 1886, one of eight surviving children of a notary public, in Starokonstantinov, a small Ukrainian town within the Russian Empire close to what was then the Austrian border. At the end of the XIXth century its population was 16.5 thousand, of whom 56% were Jews. As a young man -- I do not know at exactly what age -- Lew Zikman left the home town, where prospects were very bleak, to seek his fortune in Siberia. Since at that time Jews were legally barred from Siberia; thus I assume that his presence there was illegal, a fact that suggests at least some measure of venturesomeness. After crisscrossing Siberia for several years as a traveling salesman, in 1916 he moved to Harbin to stay. As already noted, in addition to its generally freer business and social atmosphere, Manchuria's attraction for Jews at that time derived from the fact that the restrictive anti-Jewish laws of Russia did not extend there, not even into the Russian-controlled railway zone.

In Harbin, Zikman established a firm under his own name, specializing in the import of cane-sugar from Java and its wholesale distribution. As a secondary activity, he also began importing jute bags ("gunny bags") from India, to be used primarily for

the then already booming export of soybeans from Manchuria. His business did well. He opened also a major office in Yokohama, Japan, (where, by sheer luck, he was saved far out at sea in the great 1923 earthquake). The Harbin office was on Mostovaia ulitsa, Gostinyi dvor, and remained there until the end.

The early 1920s were a very difficult time for members of his family who had remained in Ukraine, then already under Soviet rule. Among them was his sister, Raisa, then living in Kiev married to a man also from Starokonstantinov, Miron Moiseevich Grossman. They had a baby son, Grigorii (Gregory). That baby was I, born in 1921. Lew Zikman arranged for us to emigrate, together with my father's then unmarried sister, Polina. After a long and difficult railway voyage, the four of us arrived in Harbin in March 1923. My father went to work for Zikman's firm. Lew married Polina in 1927; i.e., brother and sister were married to sister and brother. They had no children. Also in 1927, Zikman arranged the emigration from Kiev to Harbin of yet another Grossman family -- my father's elder brother Grigorii Moiseevich, his wife Kiara Davydovna, and their son Moisei (Eng., Moses), born 1921. Still in 1927, but already in Harbin, a second son was born -- Il'ia (Eng.: Elias). Grigorii Moiseevich also went to work in Zikman's firm.

Lew Zikman was a self-made man of great ability, daring, and enterprise, not to mention many other impressive qualities, who acquired considerable wealth in his early and middle years, which, however, he eventually mostly lost in consequence of historic forces beyond his control. In their years in America, from 1946 on (when he turned 60), he and his wife lived in comfort but not in opulence. Fortunately for him, and for the rest of us, the whole Zikman-Grossman family of Harbin ended up together in California. Augmented by further generations and now more widely

scattered, our extended family continues to be a close-knit one, not the least in the realization of the debt we all owe to this one man, beginning with his having brought us out of the Soviet Union in good time.

Although he had not had much formal education, Zikman spoke and wrote excellent Russian. By the force of his mind and of much worldly experience he learned many things of both practical and abstract nature. He held his own opinions on the ways and issues of this world, and thought big when the occasion arose. Not the least, he had a fine sense of humor. I remember him saying: "One must have a sharp pencil, but with an eraser at the other end". This tells much about him, always the businessman. Another of his statements that is etched in my mind is: "The day begins when the bank opens". [better in Russian: "Den' nachinaetsya kogda bank otkryvaetsya".]

To a considerable extent Zikman's business activities were connected with the "Ashihe" beet-sugar mill, some 50 km SE from Harbin on the railway, near the town of Achen. The factory, and an adjoining distillery producing alcohol from waste molasses, were built by a Polish group in about 1908. Much of the time it was not commercially successful. There was no, or not enough, customs tariff protection of that domestic industry (which incidentally was what permitted Zikman to develop the importation of sugar from Java). For some 25 years the factory changed ownership several times, in the course of which Zikman at times bought and re-sold its sugar, and apparently occasionally even financed it without owning it. In the late twenties the factory was foreclosed by The National City Bank of New York (which had a branch in Harbin), and, in 1932, Zikman bought the Ashihe factory from the bank on his personal account. But almost immediately history struck again. In

1934, following the take-over of all of Manchuria by the Japanese, he was pressured to cede just over 50 percent of the factory's ownership to a Japanese sugar firm as part of a new entity, the North Manchurian Sugar Industrial Company, Ltd. Nonetheless, the NMSI's corporate Articles of Association (of which I have a copy) state that with respect to major decisions (listed) require a vote of 60 percent of shares to pass, i.e., the Zikman-Grossman shares retained veto power to this extent. I remember how proud he was on having won on the issue.

An important by-product of the formation of the NMSI for the present-day historian is that its periodic reports contain valuable information about the mill's operational and economic facts and problems. For example: "The Board of Directors ... wants to draw your attention to the special working conditions prevailing here in North Manchuria ... far from the big centers [of world sugar industry]. This condition makes it very difficult to obtain machine parts, necessary chemicals, special knives, instruments, rubber goods, etc. Consequently a great many things must be bought beforehand and prepared in advance and in quantities to last the entire campaign." In addition, and significantly, beetroot seed was imported all the way from Poland, many months in advance of the growing season, for distribution among the peasants growing under contract. I might add from personal recollection that the factory included a very large (and surely expensive) workshop to do mechanical repairs that otherwise would be done by specialized firms.

Lew Zikman was very Jewish in many ways, although not very religiously so. That was his origin, those were his people. On the Zikman family side he lost two brothers, a sister, uncle and aunt, and a cousin in the Holocaust, and more yet on the Grossman side. He was sensitive to the plight of his

fellow Jews, both far and near; his philanthropic instincts were strong (and not limited to Jews). Much of his help to those in need refugees began to pour out remained unpublicized. After Hitler came to power in Europe, Zikman drew up a project to settle a good number of Jewish refugees in Manchuria and to provide them with jobs. He traveled to America for financial support for the project, but to his deep disappointment obtained none. (Cf. Kranzler:1976, Sakamoto:1998, passim.)

By way of Postscript: Is the production of and trade in sugar a "Jewish" occupation? A perusal of the encyclopedic "Economic History of Jews" (Gross:1975) reveals many instances, over many centuries, of Jews (or Marranos) being so engaged on an important scale. Thus (pp. 189-190), "the Cairo Geniza records reveal that making and selling sugar from sugar cane was one of the most important occupations of Jews in the Middle Ages... When sugar began to be used for everyday consumption (15th century) Marranos played a leading role in introducing sugar cultivation" in Atlantic islands, later in Caribbean islands and Brazil, and so forth. In later centuries, Jews were prominent as sugar traders and brokers in Amsterdam, Hamburg, and London. "Jews also played a leading role in the development of the sugar-beet industry in Poland, Russia, the Ukraine, Hungary and Bohemia." Details follow in the book. The biggest beet-sugar magnates in pre-revolutionary Russia/Ukraine were Jewish. In his youth my father worked in a modest capacity for one of them, Halperin, until the mill's nationalization by the Soviets. It has been said that the Ashihe sugar factory was built by a Polish Jew; I have not been able to confirm this.

5. THE LURY FAMILY.

[This section is based almost entirely on the unpublished typescript "Autobiography and Family History" by Robert M. Lury (1906-2001); see

Bibliography below. I had only one meeting with him, about two years before his death and shortly after he completed the work. He was looking for a publisher at the time, but in fact it was not quite completed when he died.]

As mentioned, the story of the Lury family is in many ways different from that of the Zikman family, yet in some basic respects also alike. The Lurys' roots were (relatively) close to Manchuria, in the small but historically and economically significant town of Nikolaevsk [hereafter Nikolaevsk]. Established in 1852 by the Russian-American Company, it is located at a militarily and commercially strategic spot about 10 km. from where the mighty Amur River (Heilongjiang) meets the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean. The river and the ocean were bountiful sources of wealth, while the town's hinterland provided forest products including a great variety of fur. Its location and natural resources, together with a relatively tolerant atmosphere, attracted the (small) Jewish community and defined its major business activities. At the end of the XIXth century Nikolaevsk's total population was appr. 4,500, of whom the majority were military personnel stationed there, while 42 persons are listed to have been of Jewish faith (Brokgauz-Efron encyclopedia). The same source also states that the climate is nasty all year round.

But its socio-economic climate was far from nasty. As Robert Lury [RL] wrote in his Autobiography ..., "Siberia, generally, was famous for its special breed of people -- generous, open-handed, and big-hearted -- something similar to the original settlers in the Western United States, and for the same reasons, a pioneering spirit." And, "For a small city of that size, the number of people who became successful in Nikolaevsk, on their own and in their own occupations, was extraordinary." He estimates

that by 1920 Nikolaevsk's total population was about 15,000, with 2-300 Jewish families. The ocean apart, the sole thoroughfare was the Amur and its tributaries (among the latter Sungary, leading to Harbin and the CER), either on water or in winter on ice.

As mentioned above, before 1917, Jews were barred from Siberia and the Far East unless they were "merchants of the first guild" or "cantonists" (impressed as children to serve 25 years in the Tsar's army), or descendants of such. The Lurys qualified on both scores. There was, understandably, much intermarrying and business-partnering within that small Jewish community. RL's father, Meyer Moiseevich Lury, was born in Nikolaevsk in 1881. By 1902 he had already established his own wholesale business, "Lury Brothers", in salmon fishing and in fur. The business expanded very rapidly in terms of both the range of commodities produced or traded and in terms of geographic extent. Only in a few years, apart from Nikolaevsk, the Lury family established its own offices in Vladivostok, Hakodate, Yokohama, Tokyo, Shanghai, Harbin, Mukden, and Dairen. RL lists ten of the owners of the most important fisheries at that time in Nikolaevsk (the Lurys' the largest). Judging by the names, at least half of these businesses were owned by Jews.

As we see, the Lurys' business was largely oriented toward the ocean, primarily toward Japan, which of course was dictated not only by market forces but also by the state of transport toward the east. There was no close rail connection between Nikolaevsk and the rest of Siberia and Russia, and, in fact, there is none to this day. After Trans-Sib was built, connection was via upstream on the Amur to Khabarovsk. The Amur was the main eastward highway -- by water, and during the long winter on ice. The same route also connected via Sungary with Harbin. (RL presents



several vivid descriptions of such travel.)

RL writes: "The business gradually grew to become an 'industrial empire'. It included salmon fishing and salting and preparation of caviar on the Amur; salmon fishing and salting on Sakhalin... as well as canning of both salmon and crab in Kamchatka; considerable size sea-going fleet... ; coal mines, lumber and gold concessions... ;export of soya bean cakes from Manchuria. The sources of supplies for the far-flung operation were also far-flung. Salt came from as far as Port Said. [Cf. Zikman's problems with supplies for the sugar mill, supra.] Many of the sons, cousins, uncles, were brought into the business.

In 1918, owing to the Russian Revolution, the Lury family moved permanently to Japan. Soon thereafter their business and wealth in the Russian Far East were seized by the Soviets. In the 1920s, Robert and his sister and brother studied in and all graduated from the University of California in Berkeley. Robert obtained a degree in Commerce. The American connection eventually led to his becoming a film distributor for major Hollywood studios in the Far East (including Manchuria), an enterprise he pursued for a long time, until his retirement in 1977. Surely, some of those attending this Seminar must have enjoyed the fruits of this enterprise of his.

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# *Symposium in Harbin - Statistics*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Total active participants --                         | 149  |
| From China:  | 59   |
| From abroad (87 Jews, 3 others):                     | 90   |
| Israel   | 35   |
| USA  | 27   |
| Australia  | 11   |
| England  | 10   |
| Greece   | 2  |
| Canada   | 1  |
| France   | 2  |
| Russia   | 2  |
| Former China residents                               | 50   |
| Accompanied by:                                      | 40 (2nd, 3rd generation -- 19)   |
| Papers and lectures delivered                        | 25 (10 in English; in Chinese 9; in Russian 6)   |
| Lecturers – from China                               | 10   |
| From abroad  | 15 (Isr. 6; US 4; Aus. 1; Eng. 1; Rus 2; Fr. 1)  |
| Organization Committee                               | 11 (Ch. 10; Isr. 2)  |
| Presidium , from China --                            | 11   |
| From Israel --                                       | 3  |
| Media 30 journalists (Ch. 26;; USA 2; Isr. 2; Fr. 1) |  |
| Media daily coverage                                 | 10 –20 mins. (plus interview of T. Kaufman by Prof. Qui Wei, President SSA)                        |
| Lectures, interviews and speeches                    | T. Kaufman: 10 interviews, 5 lectures<br>Prof. Qui Wei 4<br>Prof. Pan Guang 2<br>Others – one each |
| Security (provided by China)                         | 12 (in uniforms and mufti)   |

# My Family and its City: Fifty Years in Harbin

Paper by Mara Moustafine

*Author of Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files*

*Vintage 2002*

*International Seminar on the History and Culture of Harbin Jews*

*30 August - 2 September 2004*

*Shangri-La Hotel, Harbin*

**Mara Moustafine** is the author of **Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files**, which was awarded the 2003 NSW Premier's Literary Award and was a finalist in the Kiriyama Book Prize 2004 and the Australian National Biography Award 2004. Mara was born in Harbin, China into a family with Jewish, Russian and Tatar roots and came to Australia as a child in 1959. Bilingual in Russian and English, she completed a Master of Arts in International Relations at the Australian National University. She has worked as a diplomat, intelligence analyst, journalist and a senior business executive in Australia and Asia. She is currently National Director of Amnesty International Australia.

This paper is based on material from:

Mara Moustafine, **Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files**, Vintage, 2002; and Mara Moustafine, **The Harbin Connection: Russians from China** in Shen Yuanfang and Penny Edwards (eds) **Beyond China: Migrating Identities**, Centre for the Study of the Chinese Southern Diaspora, Australian National University, 2002.

Four generations of my family lived in Harbin and Manchuria for over fifty years. On my mother's side,

they were Jews from Byelorussia, who arrived in the early 1900s. On my father's side, they were Russians and Tatars from central Russia, who fled the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and the Russian Civil War. They lived through extraordinary times: the Japanese occupation under the puppet Manchukuo regime in 1932; liberation by the Soviet Red Army in 1945; and the first ten years of the People's Republic, until we left for Australia in 1959.

Much of this history is covered in my book, **Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files** (Vintage, 2002). Today, I would like to focus on the experience of my Jewish family (my grandfather's family, the Zaretskys and my grandmother's family, the Onikuls) to provide insight into the socio-political history of the community in which they lived.

## **Why Harbin?**

As many of you know, it all started with the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER/KVZhD). A deal was struck in 1896 between the governments of Qing China and Tsarist Russia, whereby Russia was granted a concession to build the railway across Manchuria, linking the Trans-Siberian railway to Vladivostok. With this came extraterritorial rights in the zone along the route of the

railway. Manchuria in effect became a Russian colony, and Harbin its de facto capital.

From the turn of the 20th century, people from the far reaches of the Tsarist empire came to settle the new frontier and build a new life. Keen to attract entrepreneurs and to help develop Manchuria, the Russian authorities deliberately created an environment of tolerance, equal opportunity and actively encouraged minorities – including Jews, Tartars, Georgians, Poles, Armenians and many others – to come and live there.

For Jews of the Tsarist empire, Russian Manchuria was the land of opportunity. The discriminatory laws and restrictions which prevailed in the empire proper – like those confining the Jews to live in the Pale of Settlement, excluding them from certain professions and setting quotas for their numbers in schools and other educational institutions – did not apply there. Most importantly, there were no pogroms and little overt anti-Semitism, at least until the late 1920s.

Jews started coming to Manchuria from 1898. They played an early role in developing natural resources and commerce in Manchuria. Most Jews who came to Manchuria settled in

Harbin, though smaller communities were also established at small towns along the railway at Hailar, Manchuria Station, Mukden and Tsitsihar.

Harbin was a multicultural and cosmopolitan city, with many nationalities and religions living side by side in relative harmony. As well as establishing a range of their own community institutions, Jews were active in the commercial, cultural and public life of Russian Harbin. They also participated actively in Harbin's municipal affairs—making up 12 of the 40 members on the city council in 1909. Although there is no evidence of Jews being employed by the CER before 1915, this may have been in deference to the hiring practice in Russian state enterprises, as there was no law to this effect.

In most families, the pattern of migration was that one member of the family would come first – to test the opportunities in their new homeland – then others would follow – brothers, sisters, parents, uncles, aunts and cousins.

So it was, with my family from Byelorussia – early settlers on both sides. My great grandfather, Girsh Onikul followed his brother and cousins to Harbin from Moghilev in 1909. Instead of staying in Harbin, he moved on to Hailar, a small trading post on the edge of the Mongolian steppes, where he was an agent for Singer sewing machines and later had a small dairy business. His wife, Chesna Klebanova, joined him the following year, with her son and my 6 month old grandmother Gita. Other relatives followed.

My grandfather, Matvei Abramovich (Motya) Zaretsky, arrived in Harbin from Kopsis in 1912 as a teenager to join his older brother, Ruvim, who had come in 1906 and by 1909 set up the family meat business “Zaretsky and Zalmanov”. His sisters and parents followed. They had a small kosher butchery in Yamskaya Street and a retail outlet at Harbin market. By 1921, Motya was a partner in

the business, responsible for cattle purchase and slaughter. In 1924, he set up a cattle trading partnership “Myasotrud” and headed up its Hailar office for 8 years.

It was during this time, that he met and married my grandmother. Although their parents on both sides were observant Jews and my grandparents were married by a Rabbi under a chupah in Hailar and observed the high holidays, like many Russian Jews in Harbin at the time, Motya and Gita were secular rather than religious Jews.

During the civil war that followed the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the numbers of early settlers in Manchuria were swelled by thousands of refugees. At its peak in the mid 1920s, the Russian community in Harbin numbered about 120,000 people, with another 30,000 living in the smaller towns along the railway's route. Jews in Harbin numbered around 13,000, with around 2,000 in other towns – so about 10 per cent of Russians were Jews..

During the turbulent civil war years, while its political status was in limbo, the CER zone was a staging ground for the anti-Bolshevik White Guard and Cossack armies. With this came a rise in anti-Semitism, as the Cossacks regarded all Jews as Bolsheviks who deserved to be punished as perpetrators of the revolution. For Jews living in areas close to the Russian border, like Hailar, life became especially dangerous. In 1919, my great-grandfather Girsh Onikul was captured by one of Baron Ungern-Sternberg's men, though miraculously he escaped alive.

In 1920, the Chinese ended Russian extraterritoriality. But in 1924, after protracted negotiations, China recognising the Soviet Government and agreed to joint Soviet-Chinese administration of the CER, including the railway, schools, hospitals and other institutions. It was decreed that only Soviet or Chinese citizens could work for what was effectively

the civil service in the CER zone. Some Russians, Jews among them, registered as Soviet citizens (mostly to preserve their jobs or, like my mother's family, to avoid being stateless; though a few did so out of sympathy for the revolution). The rest chose to remain ‘white émigrés’.

At this stage, these citizenship choices had little impact on the lives of Russian Harbintsy. They continued to live side by side, mix socially and to do business with each other. But the division into White émigrés and Soviets would have far-reaching consequences for those who remained in Manchuria during the 13 years of Japanese occupation under the guise of the Manchukuo puppet regime.

### **Exit Harbin - 1930s**

Life for Jews in Manchuria deteriorated seriously after the Japanese occupation. The Japanese themselves were not driven by anti-Semitism and publicly maintained good relations with the Jewish community. But they associated closely with militant anti-Soviet Whites, such as the Russian Fascist Party (RFP), whose ideology of anti-Bolshevism and nationalism was laced with virulent anti-Semitism.

In the early 1930s, Russian thugs linked to the RFP engaged in a campaign of kidnappings, extortion and murder against wealthy businessmen, mainly Jews, masterminded by the Japanese military police, the Kempeitai. Faced with a declining economy, the rise in banditry, anti-Semitism, the takeover of their businesses by the Japanese and political intimidation (particularly of those who had Soviet citizenship), many Jews left Manchuria. Some went to other cities in China, notably the international settlements in Shanghai and Tianjin. Others left for the USSR, among the 30,000 families who departed after the Soviet Union sold the CER enterprise to Japan in March 1935, losing its influence in Manchuria for the next decade. While most were CER employees, there were others who felt there was

no future for Russians in Manchuria. By 1935, Harbin's Jewish community had declined from 13,000 in 1931 to only 5,000. By the end of the 1930s, the Russian population of Harbin had dropped to around 30,000.

For our family, as for many others, the Japanese occupation proved to be a watershed. My grandparents and mother stayed on in Harbin, where my grandfather had recently built a two story apartment block and joined his brother in a new firm "Brothers Zaretsky and Co". However, my grandmother's parents and siblings – the Onikuls – decided to seek refuge in the Soviet Union in the mid-1930s. It was a fated choice. At the height of Stalin's Great Terror in 1937-38, they were among the 48,000 Harbintsy who were arrested as Japanese spies – some 31,000 were shot; the rest sent to labour camps. My book *Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files* tells their story, based on their secret police files which I obtained from the former KGB after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

### ***Harbin under Manchukuo (1932-1945)***

For many of those who stayed on in Harbin during the 13 years of Manchukuo, life was a harrowing experience. Suddenly people who for years had lived side by side, united by their Russian origins, became identified by the characteristics which divided them: 'White émigré' or 'Soviet', 'Orthodox Christian' or 'Jew'.

In garnering support of Russian émigrés for their occupation, the Japanese rekindled old dreams and prejudices. As a mechanism to control the Russian population in Manchuria, in 1934 the Japanese established the Bureau of Russian Émigré Affairs in Manchukuo (BREM). Nominally under Russian control, it was headed by a succession of White Army generals and run by members of the RFP and their sympathisers, thereby giving implicit sanction to their fiercely anti-Bolshevik and anti-

Semitic ideology.

All adult émigré Russians were required to register with the BREM. Only then could they receive identity papers, residence permits, employment cards and travel documents. Those who did not were denied employment and education for their children. Though his brother and some other relatives "converted" to émigré status, my grandfather insisted that being stateless—"a citizen of nowhere"—was too risky in the face of Japanese aggression and his family remained 'Soviets'.

As a result, my mother Inna was excluded from school and had to study at home with a tutor. Later, when contact between 'émigrés' and 'Soviets' was forbidden she could no longer study music or participate at concerts at Madame Gershgorina's music school. Nor could she belong to either of Harbin's two Jewish youth organisations – Betar or Maccabi. At first, she would walk her friends to meetings or sporting events to share a little of the excitement, then have to turn around and go home. Eventually, even this was stopped as émigré parents were warned there might be consequences if their children associated with 'Soviet' friends.

But even émigré status did not save my grandfather's brother, Ruvim. In 1940, the Japanese arrested him and took over his retail business at Harbin market. Ironically, they kept my grandfather on because of his experience in the wholesale business, making him an adviser in their meat monopoly association. Only in 1943 was he removed at the behest of BREM officials, who from the documents I uncovered in the BREM archive in Khabarovsk, concocted a case full of bizarre anti-Semitic and anti-Soviet innuendo to secure his removal.

Still, the family fared much better than friends and relatives in Hailar, some of whom were imprisoned by the Japanese as alleged Soviet agents; others were among the 47 Jews and

'Soviets' rounded up and beheaded by the Japanese on the eve of the arrival of the Soviet Red Army in August 1945.

### ***Soviet liberation?***

When the Soviet Red Army arrived in August 1945 to "liberate" Manchuria from the Japanese, they were welcomed with flowers and euphoria by most Harbintsy, regardless of their political tags. Still, thousands of innocent émigrés, including representatives of Harbin's various communities and social organisations, were rounded up by Soviet military intelligence agents of SMERSH! and deported to prison camps in the USSR, along with Japanese collaborators. Among them was Jewish community leader Dr Abraham Kaufman. Their crime? Representing their communities to the Japanese authorities.

### ***Exit Harbin - 1950s***

In 1956 my family started to make concrete plans to leave Harbin. With one campaign being rolled out after another, like many other Russians, they found it difficult to adapt to life in Harbin with an increasingly Maoist flavour.

By that time, my parents, both graduates from the Harbin Polytechnical Institute's new Faculty of Oriental Studies and fluent in Mandarin, had spent several years as technical interpreters working with the Sugar Refineries Construction Bureau. They had resisted first the invitation, then pressure to repatriate to the Soviet Union as part of Khrushchev's "Virgin Lands" campaign. Now they were at risk of being sacked from their jobs. Even so they refused to contemplate the proposition of taking me to the Soviet Union to build the 'socialist paradise'.

Pre-empting the nationalisation of private enterprise, my grandfather and his partners had already liquidated their meat and livestock business. Since 1951, Motya's main occupation was as director and

manager of cash transactions at the Jewish Bank in Harbin. He later took on the additional role of shochet, performing the kosher slaughter of animals for the dwindling Jewish community, and served on its audit committee.

Our exit options were twofold – Israel, where some of the Zaretskys had gone on aliyah, or Australia, which was one of the few countries taking Russian refugees at that time. It took a while to obtain visas, co-ordinate the exit and entry permits required and conclude all formalities. In the meantime, my family played their part in the Great Leap Forward, feeding scrap metal into the neighbourhood furnace on the street near our house and clattering saucepans on the roof to eliminate such “superfluous creatures” as sparrows. By the time we departed for Sydney in 1959, the Russian community in Harbin had dwindled to a couple of thousand and a couple of hundred Jews. Some of our relatives, unable to secure visas earlier, left China in 1964, bearing the repercussions of the breakdown of relations between China and the Soviet Union in the early 1960s.

### ***Harbin Jews in emigration***

In emigration, Harbin and China have remained central to the identity of most Jewish Harbintsy, as indeed it has for Russian Harbintsy. Asked about their ethnic identity, most identify themselves not just as “Russians” or “Jews”, but as Russians or Russian Jews “from China”. In their literature, they describe themselves as the “Chinese” branch of the Russian or Jewish diaspora. Jewish Harbintsy are able to maintain their links with each other through the Association of Far Eastern Jews established in Israel 53 years ago, with branches across the world and the Bulletin of Igud Yotzei Sin. Its pages are laden with histories of Jewish institutions and life in China, personal reminiscences, searches for erstwhile friends, necrologies and nostalgia. There are similar examples among Russians from Harbin. In

Australia, the alumni of the Harbin Polytechnical Institute, Harbin’s main tertiary institution, have been meeting regularly and publishing a journal for over 30 years. Not long after the collapse of the Soviet Union, active “Harbin” associations sprang up in a number of Russian cities, suggesting that informal networks existed long before. Now, their periodicals, with names like *In the Hills of Manchuria*, *Russians in China*, and *Harbin*, have a substantial following among Harbintsy worldwide.

To a large extent, this is an identification with the world of Russian or Jewish Harbin, which the Harbintsy created, then lost, rather than with China itself. For during their years in Harbin, most Russians and Russian Jews lived in a predominantly Russian world, with little thought for the China around them. Few studied the language seriously or delved into the culture. Most of their interactions with Chinese were confined to their domestic assistants, tradesmen and merchants, who spoke pidgin Russian, or with educated Russian-speaking Chinese. Yet in emigration, the reverse has proved to be true. However removed they may have been from the reality of China, for most Harbintsy, their life in China has become the defining element of their Russian identity.

Today there is a great desire on the part of former Jews and Russians of Harbin and their children and grandchildren to reconnect with their history, to honour their antecedents, who once lived here. And there is a great opportunity to forge a strong link between us and the government and people of Harbin, who can help us do this, including scholars, researchers, building conservationists and archivists.

I remember how important it was when, in May 2000, I made my first return visit to Harbin after 41 years, together with my parents, that we were able to visit the recently restored Jewish cemetery and find

the Zaretsky family graves and those of other friends and relatives, with the help of Director Liu Jun. Although it was sad to find that our apartment block had been knocked down, my parents were heartened to visit their old schools which were both still operating – my father’s as the Korean School and my mother’s as a girls school. They spent time talking with the students and teachers and old people round the town and making living connections. It was on that visit that I first met Professor Qu Wei and his team from the newly formed Jewish Research Centre.

On my second visit six months later, with my partner and a colleague, Professor Qu Wei invited us to a seminar, where we heard about the priority being given at both provincial and municipal level to preserving the vestiges of former Jewish life in Harbin, including plans to transform one of the former synagogues into a permanent Jewish museum. Why not both, we asked? It is very exciting to hear that matters are now progressing apace on this development. I commend the efforts of Professor Qu Wei and all others involved in this initiative. I also congratulate him, together with the People’s Government of Harbin and Teddy Kaufman for organising this international seminar. I hope it will be the first of many.

In closing, I would like to make one suggestion. The archival records and files of the Jews and Russians of Harbin are very precious historical resource are. In writing my book, I had the good fortune to access such records in many places in the world, including some here in Harbin. I cannot urge strongly enough the importance of making access to these records available while those who have interest or knowledge about these records are still alive and can help us all understand them. Because history belongs to all of us.

# ZIONISM IS THE NATIONAL RENAISSANCE OF HARBIN'S JEWRY

By Teddy Kaufman

*A report delivered at the International Seminar in Harbin*

The national renaissance and existence of the Jewish community in Harbin was connected with Zionism. Zionism penetrated Jewish Harbin at the beginning of the XX century, but the "conquest" of the Jewish community by Zionists occurred in the 1910s when a group of Zionists became the leaders of the Jewish community. They came from Russia and Europe, started the Zionist movement and spread the idea of the national renaissance of the Jewish people in remote Harbin.

Here, in Harbin, the struggle took place between the Zionists, on the one hand, and the Bund and the Volkspartei, on the other hand, the struggle between Hebrew and Yiddish, the struggle for national education in the Jewish school and in the Talmud -Torah. The Zionists won on all fronts. Zionism flourished in the 1920s when the Jewish community and all its institutions were at their peak. Already in 1918 the Zionist organization celebrated the first anniversary of the Balfour Declaration in the "Moderne" theater.

In 1919 the first group of Zionists left Harbin for Palestine. There were several waves of immigration from Harbin to the Land of Israel. In 1919 – 1921 – 1928 members of the youth organizations, such as Maccabi, Ze'ire-Zion, Hashomer Hatzair and Hechaver left for Palestine. About 150 representatives of the youth Zionist organizations left Harbin, Tianjin and

Shanghai. In spite of the fact that in 1930 – 1935 all the certificates for immigration to Palestine were allotted to the Jews rescued from Germany, there was a wave of immigration "aliya", mainly of the members of "Betar" ( Brith Trumpeldor). Then about fifty young men and women went to Palestine.

Among the young men who immigrated to Israel in the 1920s were Alexander Ezer (Yevzerov), Judge Gubernik and the Kachko family who were among the founders of Ramat-Gan. Two young men from the Betar group became members of the Israeli Parliament (Knesset): Eliyahu Lankin and Mordechai Olmert. One of the advisers of Prime-Minister Golda Meir was Yaakov Lanir (Lankin). Prof. Haim Tadmor, the Vice-President of the Israeli Academy of Sciences in Jerusalem who is now present here as a member of the Israeli delegation, and who will deliver a lecture at this Seminar, was also in that Betar group.

The "Algemeine" Zionists, a branch of the World Zionist Organization, as well as the New Zionist organization (Zionists-Revisionists), the religious Zionist movement "Mizrahi" and the women's organization WIZO, were very active in Harbin. All these organizations had branches in Harbin and were closely connected with their centers in London and Jerusalem. Harbin was the center of the Zionist movement of the Jewish

communities not only in the North-East of China, but also in all of China and of the Far East. Two Zionist congresses of the Jews of China and of the Far East were held in Harbin, one in 1919 and the other in 1921.

Two youth organizations played an important role in the Zionist life – they were Betar (Brith Trumpeldor) that existed from 1929 till 1945 and Maccabi that existed in 1921-1925 and in 1939- 1945. Both organizations embraced up to 90 per cent of the Jewish young people. They had clubs, sports grounds and yachts, and conducted a lot of cultural and educational work. Betar, as was mentioned above, sent a youth aliya to the Land of Israel in the 1930s.

The Zionist press played an important role in Harbin. A weekly journal in Russian "Yevreiskaya Zhizn" ("Jewish Life") was published. It was edited by Dr. A. Kaufman for 23 years (1920-1943). That weekly journal was also the official publication of the Zionist organization, of the National Council of the Jews in the Far East and of Maccabi. The "Yevreiskaya Zhizn" was closed down by the Japanese authorities in June 1943. The second Zionist journal in Russian was "Hadelgel" (the Banner) edited by S.A. Klein. This journal was the official publication of the Zionist Revisionist Movement and Brith Trumpeldor.

Continued on p.25

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

## Chapter 6, Section C & D

### Chapter 6, Section C

My first interrogation in Moscow. The interrogator is a Lieutenant Colonel of the MGB; opposite him across the desk sits an officer with the rank of Major. I am instructed to sit on a small round table in a corner of the room.

"Name? Family name?" the Lieutenant Colonel begins, then turns to the major and says:

"He is an important Jewish leader...a Zionist". The major gives me a brief look.

"Do you know where you are?" continues the Lieut. Colonel then answers his own question "In the Ministry of State Security! Don't forget this and answer all questions with candor. Do you have relatives in the Soviet Union?"

"I had, but it's over 20 – 25 years that I have not heard from them".

"Where do they live?"

"At that time they lived in Leningrad and Moscow".

"Brothers, sisters?" It was obvious that he knew about my relatives more than I did.

"In what line of work are they?"

"I don't know".

"Didn't they write to you?"

"No we did not correspond"

"What is the address of your relatives?"

"I don't know, I don't even know if they are still living"

"You know very little about your relatives, don't you?"

"What can I do? The conditions of our lives caused this rift, like living on two different planets."

The interrogator asked me about my brother, I gave the same answer. I did not know then that my two brothers



were not alive. The interrogator knows this, of course, but pretends that they are still living.

"Do you want to meet them?"

"I would very much want to meet them, but not as a prisoner."

"If so, tell us everything you know in honesty, Then you will be permitted to meet them", the interrogator promises. On hearing his words, I smile ironically.

"You don't believe me? Pity, There's nothing easier for us to release you, if you tell us all you know ... and you know much...very much. Think about it. Be a friend to yourself and don't bear a grudge against us..." the interrogator concludes smilingly.

The interrogation is over. I was returned to my cell. It seems that this interrogator is not a rudimentary personality; all during the interrogation various people, officers, typists translators enter the room giving him papers to read and sign.

During the following interrogation he said to me:

"Let's agree between ourselves now, so that I do not have to repeat this each time: whenever someone enters my office you are obliged to stand up!"

I nodded my head in agreement; whenever anyone entered the office I stood up. A major entered, I stood up. He gestured to me with his hand: "sit" and left the office. A few minutes the same major entered again, I stood up. He turned to me:

"You will drain all your strength if you stand up every time."

"These are my orders." The major whispered something to the interrogator, when he left the officer the Lieut. Colonel said to me:

"In the future you stand up only when I stand up."

I am tortured with interrogations daily, except on Sundays. On this day Liublianka stops all activities. On the day of rest, only arrests are being performed. One Sunday a new prisoner was put into my cell. He was a student in the faculty of history at the University of Moscow. He was arrested in the morning, and at noon was put into my cell. For some unknown reason he came to me. He asked me for how long am I imprisoned here, for what reason, he then whispered into my ear:

"Are you a Jew?"

"Yes."

"I'm also Jewish."

A Jewish student, he was the son of parents who were party members, old Bolsheviks. His father was a lecturer at the institute for "red" professors; in 1937 during the period when Yezhov ran amok he was arrested together with other relatives and executed. His mother was sent to one of the cities in the Urals for responsible party work where she got sick and died within two years. Only their son and his late mother's sister remained living in their spacious apartment in Moscow. One of the senior officers of the MGB coveted

this place, and illegally took possession of one of its rooms, from where he tormented the student constantly in order to evict him from the apartment altogether. The student appealed to the central committee of the party and the senior officers wish was not granted. The officer then resorted to a method proven to be always successful, "informing". The student was arrested and imprisoned in Liubianka. During the first interrogation the student told them of the officers intrigues to get the apartment but to no avail. The interrogator told him that his case is not serious and he would probably be sentenced to about three years in prison only, under the paragraph "Dangerous social element". Nearly everyone can be stuck with this paragraph in the Soviet Union, for many reasons like: knowing people from abroad, chance meeting with foreigners and conversing with them, praising items manufactured abroad, sympathizing with the West. For all these "crimes" one can be charged under this paragraph "Dangerous social element" and be sentenced to 5 – 7 years in prison.

### Chapter 6, Section D

During one of the interrogations I was questioned about Birobijan.

"Because of people like you, Birobijan, the Jewish Autonomous Republic does not exist," aspersed the Lieut. Colonel, then turning to the Major sitting across the desk, he adds: "Imagine, you give the Jews everything, you tell them go settle the land, establish a Soviet Jewish Autonomous Republic, live there as you see fit... and what do you think? They don't go, they don't want to go, and those who did go, returned. What a fertile and rich territory this Birobijan is! What regions!" The Lieut. Colonel spreads a map and shows the Major where Birobijan is situated, then takes a booklet, browses through it and reads: "Birobijan is sparsely populated and the number of Jews living there are not more than 1000 to 1500 people. They don't come. But, if it will be declared that they are permitted to go to the Land of Israel, they will all go! What a people

they are" said the Lieut. Colonel. Then after a small break continues:

"They only believe in what is theirs. During the days of the revolution, I and two friends once lost contact with our unit. Tired and hungry we tried to find our way; we arrived at some small town... we entered one dwelling which was Jewish, one of the three of us was Jewish too. We were young then only 19 – 20 years of age, our Jewish colleague whispered to me: 'just wait, soon we'll receive all the best that is in the house'. He entered into a conversation with the owner of the house in their language, and what do you think? We were immediately fed and watered; they even gave us food for the way. The Jews, wherever they live, keep institutions where they feed their poor and hungry brothers, homes for their lame ones, everything for their own kin... what a people! Then pointing at me, "And here is one of the leaders of the Jews, who established eating places and hospitals, all for Jews."

He shows a page out of a thick volume to the major.

"Why didn't you want to go to Birobijan, why did you fight against the Birobijan program?" Asks the Lieut. Colonel threateningly.

"I was not in the Soviet Union and did not take part in any deliberations on Birobijan."

"You want the Land of Israel, do you? I promise you, that you'll never achieve this or ever see this happen," threatens the Lieut. Colonel.

"Perhaps I will not live to see this happen, but my children and grandchildren will and how they will".

"You hear this?" the Lieut. Col. shouts. "Because of people like this the Birobijan program failed" then he turns to me "You miserable fascist!"

For one long hour the interrogator did not utter a word. He probably had to calm his nerves, and the major too. They sat and nervously leafed through their papers. They did not speak nor look in my direction. I remained sitting on the round table and pondered. I thought of the day when my children

will win the right to settle in the Land of Israel. Another half hour went by, the interrogator turns to me and asks:

"Were you a member of the Zionist-Fascist party?"

"Zionist-Fascist?" I ask in amazement "such a party never existed" I answer firmly.

"Never existed! You miserable scoundrel!" The Lieut. Col. shouts heatedly, walks to the book case, extracts a notebook, leafs through the pages, then reads aloud:

"In fire and blood Judah fell. In fire and blood it will arise! So said the Zionist-Fascist leader Jabotinsky! You knew him?"

"Jabotinsky was never a fascist, nor did a Zionist-Fascist party ever exist. These words have no connection to fascism nor are they Jabotinsky's".

The interrogator jumps from his place and shouts: "Well, what do you say about this scoundrel? He's lying without batting an eyelid! Do you know Jabotinsky?"

"Of course I know him, I met him personally, and even read his books and articles".

"When have you last met him?"

"The last time I met him was about forty years ago".

This reply shook him up completely. The Lieut. Col. lost all control of himself, He started swearing and shouting obscenities, then picked up the telephone and shouted in it an order that I should be removed immediately out of his room.

The next morning the interrogator opens the interrogation by asking me:

"How are you?"

"Not bad"

"Is the food good?"

"So, so."

The Lieut. Col. is not happy with my answer. He gives me a sheet of paper on which three photographs of three people are pasted in a row.

"Do you know these people?"

"No, I don't."

"Look properly, which of them do you know?"

"I don't know anyone of them."



"The one in the middle, him too you do not know?"

"No, I don't."

"Look properly, he knows you very well".

I look at the picture again.

"No, I don't know this person."

"You know him, and how," shrieks the interrogator.

"It could be that I met him some time in the past, but I cannot recognize this picture."

"Do you recognize the name?"

"Yes, I recall a young person named M."

"But the picture in the middle, isn't it of M?"

"By this picture, I do not recognize him, but it's possible..."

"Yes that's it – he's also a Zionist... one of your people, he knows you very well... he also, like you, was arrested and sentenced to 15 years. He confessed to everything and told us that you and your community sent him to the Soviet Union to spy for England." The interrogator extracts another notebook, studies it then continues: "Well do you

remember?"

" I remember very vaguely a person named M, but I never met him and know him slightly..."

"But here, according to his statement..." shouts the interrogator.

"What statement?"

"You don't remember? I'll remind you" yells the interrogator triumphantly, and reads from the paper:

"In 1922 the Jewish community sent me to the Soviet Union for espionage purposes. By order of the chairman of the community I received 2000 Yen from the community fund. I traveled twice to the Soviet Union in the service of the community – Do you remember now?"

Asks the interrogator.

"Comrade Lieut. Col. The only thing I can tell you is that these statements are complete fabrications and made by an insane person".

"When did you see M?"

"I remember that during the years 1918-1919 there was a person in Harbin by the name of M, but I had no dealings with him or ever met him."

"What did he deal in?"

"If I remember correctly he either was a clerk or a salesman in a store."

"And did you know Dr. Adler of Odessa?"

"No."

"How is that possible, did you not, or your community, to be exact, give M a letter addressed to Dr. Adler, the English spy..."

"All these are pure fabrications, I do not know in what state of mind M was when he gave these statements, perhaps he went insane?"

"Well, I want you to know this... M was arrested in 1937 and sentenced to 15 years in prison for spying. He knows very well all that's going on and these are his statements about the Zionist spying activities for the English..."

"Pure fabrications and nothing else" I answer. "I request to meet M face to face."

"Fine, we'll arrange a meeting," promises the interrogator. "You don't worry, we'll arrange this meeting", he repeats.

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

## *Zionism of Harbin Jewry (from page 22)*

The journal was published twice a month from 1931 till 1942 for 11 years until it was closed down by the Japanese authorities in June 1942.

The Emissary of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Palestine was Dr. A. Kaufman. He was the one who distributed the immigration certificates to Palestine for many years. Until 1939 the ties of the Jewish Community of Harbin with Palestine were on a regular basis. The correspondents of the "Jewish Life" wrote from Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and the Jewish stores in Harbin sold different agricultural produce from Palestine: olives, figs, wine, Passover vodka and fruit juices. Quite a few plots of land in different parts of Palestine were sold to people in Harbin.

Tel Aviv-based firms, such as the "Anglo-Palestine Bank", the "Discount"

bank, the newspapers "Davar" and "Haaretz", published advertisements in the "Jewish Life". These newspapers and the journal "Haolam" were received by several subscribers in Harbin. Three funds raised money for the Jewish population in Palestine. They were "Keren Kayemeth le-Israel" (Jewish National Fund), "Keren ha-Yesod" (Foundation Fund) and "Keren Tel Hai" (Tel Hai Fund). Many homes in Harbin had money boxes for fundraising and the members of "Betar" and "Maccabi" took part in fundraising campaigns for those funds.

For many years, especially in the 1920s, several delegates came from Palestine to Harbin, for example, Gero Krichevsky, Bella Pevsner and others, to promote the Zionist movement in China and raise money for Palestine. The "American" Movie Theater showed films that

reflected the life of Jews in Palestine.

The Zionist activities were stopped when the Soviet Army entered Harbin in August, 1945, but as a result of the Zionist education that had been conducted for so many years, more than 80% of the Jewish people in Harbin emigrated to the new Jewish State of Israel established in 1948. The emigration became possible after the end of the Civil war in China and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949.

The Zionists and the Zionist idea resurrected the Jewry of Harbin and created a monolithic Jewish community which withstood all the storms that befell Harbin during the 65 years of the sojourn of the Jews in the city of Harbin that will forever remain the best memory for all those who were born and lived here.

# Jewish Life in Shanghai 60 Years Ago

Shanghai, Monday, March 26, 1945

English Supplement No. 128 ("Our Life" No. 187)

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## PASSOVER

Once, again, as many times before, we shall utter  
on the night of the 14th Nisan in the words of Hag-  
gadah: "Slaves were we unto Pharaoh."

And once again we shall bring forth the hope in our  
hearts in the prophecy of Ch. N. Bialik:

"The last generation of slaves and the first generation  
of freemen!"

## Cheap Kitchen for Local Jews in "Kavkaz" Restaurant

With a view to meeting  
the high cost of foodstuffs and  
the shortage of cooking facilities,  
affecting a large group of  
local Jews, a cheap kitchen  
was organized at the restaurant  
"Kavkaz" in Avenue Joffre a  
fortnight ago and at once pro-  
ved a highly popular enterprise  
among the local community.

Centrally situated, provid-  
ing good service and meals at  
about 50% of their actual cost,

this Kitchen is being attended  
mostly by employees and their  
families and also by all those  
who live in flats and rooms de-  
prived of cooking facilities.

The Kitchen is being super-  
vised by the Ladies' Committee  
of the Hebrew Relief Society  
and Shelter House; the members  
of which are daily on duty at  
the restaurant. The meals are  
being issued against coupons  
paid for a day before.

## "Cavalleria Rusticana" at the Eastern Theatre

A strictly classical evening  
was presented to music-lovers  
on Fehr. 6 at the Eastern Thea-  
tre. The programme consisted  
of a concert of 3 Italian operas  
and Mascagni's one act  
"Cavalleria Rusticana".

The selection of music for  
the concert was good: Verdi's  
"Traviata", Puccini's Tosca and  
Bajazzo by Leoncavallo, its  
execution, however, left much  
to be desired. The Winternitz  
Orchestra augmented by several  
members of the Shanghai Phil-  
harmonic Orchestra, was not  
up to its usual standard, as a  
matter of fact one had the im-  
pression that the musicians  
were unaccompanied so sadly  
were they lacking in harmony.  
The beautiful melodies were  
played in so dispirited and col-  
ourless a manner that the au-  
dience could not feel the elix-  
ir usually accompanying good  
music.

During the intermission a  
few words were said in memory  
of Leo Schoenhach and one  
minute's silence was observed.  
The well-known cellist Krauss  
then played a solo dedicated  
to the departed conductor.

The second part of the per-

formance, namely, the presen-  
tation of "Cavalleria Rusticana"  
was a great success: Margit  
Langer-Klemann who sang the  
role of Santuzza has a pure and  
beautiful soprano and displayed  
unusual technique, purity, depth  
and tenderness in the render-  
ing of her part. Turiddu, her  
faithless lover, was weekly por-  
trayed by Hans Bergmann. His  
voice is on the same high level  
as Margit Langer-Klemann's  
and its richness and strength  
were a joy to the ear. The duet  
wherein Turiddu rejects Santuz-  
za was a musical treat in itself  
and held all listeners spell-  
bound. The rest of the cast  
featuring Bella Resek, Karla  
Breuer and Ludwig Kossell gave  
a creditable performance as did  
the chorus of male and female  
voices. Happily, the playing of  
the orchestra improved con-  
siderably and their accompani-  
ment of the soloists showed  
good judgement. The burst of  
applause at the drop of the  
curtain spoke volumes but we  
venture to say that we would  
appreciate more entertainment  
so rich in musical value and  
much oftener.

M. K-in.

(Contributed by Joe Levoff)

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# The New Israel's Messenger



Vol. VII No. 3

IYS Sephardi Division

Editor: Sasson Jacoby

This editorial for the 27th issue of the Messenger is devoted to our Portuguese Sephardi brethren. The following is an article published in the UMA (Uniao Macanese Americana) New Bulletin about the Portuguese who saved thousands during World War II.

## ***Aristides de Sousa Mendes Defied his Government's Rules***

Vatican City, June 21, 2004 – Cardinal Renato Martino presided at a Mass in Rome in memory of a Portuguese consul who saved the lives of thousands of people, including 10,000 Jews during World War II. During his homily, Thursday, the cardinal-president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace said it was men such as Aristides de Sousa Mendes who, during the dark years of the war, helped to save “humanity’s honor”. “Because of this we want to thank the Lord, who is able to inspire good even in contexts marked by the horror and demonic mystery of iniquity that constantly taints relations between persons and peoples,” the cardinal added.

The Mass was celebrated in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere at the suggestion of the Raoul Wallenberg International Foundation.

As a consul in Bordeaux, France, Sousa Mendes saved individuals persecuted by the Nazi regime, giving them Portuguese visas in violation of the neutrality of his government. Beginning June 16, 1940, Sousa Mendes openly defied his government and began granting visas non-stop to all who came to his consulate until Germany bombarded Bordeaux three days later. Most notable among the applicants were several Hapsburgs, members of the Austrian imperial family. Upon learning the news, Portuguese dictator Antonio de Oliveira Salazar ordered Sousa Mendes’ arrest and trial. Nevertheless, since the



dictator kept the borders open, one million refugees were eventually able to escape using the route mapped out by Sousa Mendes through Spain. Stripped from his position as consul, he and his family fell into misfortune and he eventually died in poverty.

Thursday’s Mass was attended by Rabbi Mario Ablin, vice president of the Raoul Wallenberg Foundation and of the Angelo Roncalli International Committee who brought greetings from Jerusalem. Rabbi Ablin explained that to commemorate the 50th anniversary

of the Portuguese diplomat’s death, the Wallenberg Foundation is promoting the celebration of religious services in 30 churches and 28 synagogues in 28 countries. The Wallenberg Foundation and the Roncalli Committee are dedicated to disseminating the message and remembering the deeds of individuals who risked their lives to save people persecuted during the Holocaust. Two such persons were Wallenberg and Apostolic Nuncio Angelo Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII.

At the end of the Mass, which was attended by numerous ambassadors to the Holy See, the foundation and the committee announced the decision to award the Sousa Mendes 50th Anniversary Prize to Cardinal Martino. The award is given to individuals whose personal conviction and public action reflect ethical principles, values of human solidarity and exemplary conduct.

**Correction:** Please note that the previous issue of the Messenger was Vol. VII No. 2

# A Brief Outline of the Portuguese Sephardim

By Rufina Bernardetti Silva Mausenbaum Emmarentia, South Africa

## ***Sepharad is the Hebrew word for the Iberian Peninsula that encompasses Portugal and Spain.***

The history of the Jews in Iberia spans some 3,000 years, having first arrived with the Phoenicians (1100-900 BCE). They lived and traded in organized communities, with Lisbon as an important trading port. They continued trading during the Greek and Carthaginian domination of the Mediterranean. Roman and Greek writings recount that they found the Iberian cities well developed in the arts, music and dance, upon their invasions and colonization.

At the time that Portugal emerged as a distinct national entity under Affonso Henriques (1139-1185), there existed a number of wholly Jewish districts and towns, including large communities in Lisbon, Oporto, Santarem, Beja, Viseu, Faro, Evora, Covilha, Tomar, amongst others. King Affonso I employed Yahya ibn Ya'ish as his treasurer, initiating the pattern of the Portuguese rulers enlisting Jewish talent in the management of affairs of State. Under King Affonso III (1248-1279), Portugal attained total independence and fixed its historic geographic boundaries...

Portuguese Jewry prospered and the proud enduring Portuguese Sephardi heritage was shaped. During the centuries, the Sephardim held a disproportionate prominence in society, and played a major role in the country's monarchical capitalism. They were exposed to heavy taxes and some measure of isolated persecution, but enjoyed mostly a 'protected' status. Having been relatively free of prejudice, the Portuguese Jews never considered their predicament as hopeless, and when Spain expelled her Jews in 1492, the majority (between 150,000 and 300,000) fled to Portugal where both the general and Jewish culture approximated their own.

King John II (1481-1495), eager to augment his treasury, approved their admission, charging outrageous amounts of money for the right of permanent residence. The Jewish craftsmen were admitted with an eye to their potential military production for which the Jews were well known. Emanuel I, also known as Manoel the Fortunate (1495-1521), signaled the end of normative Jewish life in Portugal. By consenting to the conditions set out by the Spanish Crown for the marriage to Princess Isabella of Spain to take place, he signed a decree of expulsion on December 5, 1496, ordering that by October of 1497, no Jew or Moor should remain in the country. No action was taken against the Moors, they were allowed to leave Portugal because as stated cynically by the authorities,

the Portuguese (Portugal) could be subject to reprisals from lands where the Crescent ruled supreme!!!

King Manoel soon reconsidered the expulsion decree, as the economic loss and drain of skills would have been to the detriment of Portugal. He tried everything possible, from persuasion to torture, all with no success, the Chief Rabbi Simon Maimi dying while resisting conversion. On March 19, 1497, the first day of Pesach, all Jewish minors were forcibly baptized and detained with a large number of them sent to Sao Tome, an island off the west coast of Africa, that way prevent the parents from fleeing. Days of madness took over in Portugal. People old and young, women, babies, men, children were forcibly dragged, detained, tortured and abducted to be baptized and declared citizens of the realm. The rest were declared Catholic in October 1497 and bewildered Conversos cautiously began to emigrate, prompting King Manoel to respond by withdrawing the right of emigration from the "New" Christians.

In 1506 over 2,000 New Christians were massacred during a Lisbon riot. If the Conversos had any thoughts of finding solace in the religion thrust upon them, such riots dissuaded them, and consequently, even those who had made genuine attempts to become Christians once more clung to their God. A new phenomenon was born, that of the "Crypto Jews". Outwardly Christian, these wretched souls, unable to leave, unaccepted as Christians, clung to whatever was possible of their Judaism.

The next step was inevitable. The Inquisition was instituted to ferret out backsliding "New" Christians who by now had become an embarrassment to the Crown. The auto-da-fé took place in Lisbon on September 20, 1540, with permanent tribunals established at Lisbon, Evora and Coimbra (and Goa).

It is thought that the Portuguese became inspired more by greed than piety. Nevertheless, whatever the motivation, they produced spectacular autos-da-fé, and the Crypto Jews sought precarious safety among the ruling classes and the clergy. In time, this tendency resulted in a significant percentage of Converso blood being found within Portugal's ruling class (and nobility), as was bitterly documented by Mario Sa.

There was a systematic and thorough destruction of all things Jewish, with a fear of learning becoming evident, as this would make them suspect of being Jewish. The psychological manipulation and control by the State became entrenched, with insecurity and fear being transmitted from generation to generation, polarizing the life of the whole country.

A constant flow of Conversos escaped, some with daring, some with luck, to the communities of the Diaspora, where they reverted back to Judaism, sometimes up to two centuries after living as Christians. With this exodus, now and prosperous Portuguese communities were established in countries around the world. Their new host countries, prospering with their knowledge and contacts, took over from Portugal as the leading civilizations from the beginning of the 17th century, first Holland, and in the 18th century, England.

Many important roles were played by Portuguese Jews, singly and collectively. I want to mention two important developments that was to change the future for all Jewry. The first was the landing at New Amsterdam (New York) in 1654 of 23 Portuguese Jews, the first Jewish settlers on the North American mainland and the pioneers of what would in time become the world's largest and most prosperous Jewish community. They were the pioneers of the first "Grandee Sephardic Elite" of North America.

Today, the "Shearith Israel" synagogue of New York still proudly continues in the Portuguese tradition. Congregation Shearith Israel has a wealth of archival

material and historical artifacts reflecting the American-Jewish experience for almost three and a half centuries. This beautiful synagogue in New York, better known as the Portuguese and Spanish synagogue, was founded in 1654 by the first 23 Portuguese Jews of America.

The second development was the return of Jewry to England from which all Jews had been expelled in 1290. In 1655, the great leader who was born on the mysterious and beautiful island of Madeira as Manuel Dias Soreio, fled to Holland where he changed his name to Menasseh ben Israel (1604-1657) and addressed his famous petition to the Lord Protector, the puritan Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658). Menasseh, whose face is immortalized in an etching by Rembrandt, came to England in 1655 and remained there for two years. His petition was not formally granted, but from 1656 onward, Jews were allowed to settle in England and establish their synagogues openly once more. (Jews had already been secretly living in England for a few centuries). In the 19th and 20th centuries, "English" Jewry would play a central role in the resettlement of the Holy Land and the rebirth of Zionism.

## *Hongkong Detention Site*

Robert Warren, a Jewish former China resident, recently identified a Japanese detention site in Hong Kong, BCC. The site had not been listed on the SCAP – Supreme Command Allied Powers, Tokyo-listing. After the Japanese Imperial Army occupied Hong Kong, senior bankers were detained at the Sun Wah Hotel and daily marched under guard to their banks to transfer funds to Japan.

Warren identified the site and provided particulars to key historians who maintain the POW – internee camp rosters.

Robert Warren lived in Urumqi, Hong Kong BCC and Hong Kong SAR.

## *Memorial for Shanghai*

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From That's Shanghai of Today: CARVED HISTORY: A New Jewish Memorial for Shanghai

Make sure you make time to take in this architectural exhibition that has meticulously pieced together fragments, photos and symbolic representations of Shanghai's four major pre-liberation Jewish cemeteries. Presented by Israeli-photo journalist and documentary maker Dvir bar-Gal and architect Chris Choa.

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# Social and Personal

## **A Chinese of British Culture, by Rina Yanai**

We came from many countries – says the song, to the big melting pot in a small country. The Jewish Diaspora wandered among many countries and reached all parts of the world. Many of us can tell tales about the country of their origin. Many carry memories of childhood in a faraway land ...

Among us is Jacki Guri, born in China, who spend his childhood and adolescence in Shanghai and this is his story:

Jacki's parents were born on two different continents. His mother, Regina Levi, whose origin is from Iraq, was born in India. His father – John Goldberg from Romanian-German origin, was born in Alexandria, Egypt. During their childhood, the parents wandered from country to country until they settled in Shanghai, which in those days was an international city under British rule. Jacki was born there on November 20, 1923, and named Jacob Nissim Goldberg.

The first Jews who settled in Shanghai

in 1840 were from Iraq. The Jewish immigrants came in three stages. The first community was purely Sephardic who came from Iraq. The second were Jews from Russia ... The third arrived during and after the Second World War. Shanghai gave secure asylum to those who could flee and the community welcomed them. At that time the Jews in Shanghai numbered 30,000.

Jacki went to primary school. His studies and culture were under British influence. From kindergarten until the end of high school he studied together with children from different countries and nationalities. Very few of them were Jewish. When he was eight, he joined the "Young Jewish Scouts" and was very active. His academic studies as accountant were interrupted by the war. In the Scouts he became familiar with the Zionist movement and when Mao Tse-Tung rose to power, many Jews left Shanghai for other countries. Jacki, aged 25 at the time, came to Israel, while the rest of the family headed for Canada. He settled down

in Haifa and lived there most of his life. There he met his spouse –Dvora, a Sabra from Safed, third generation in Israel, their origin from Eastern Europe. The couple have three children: Dan, Dafna and Doron and four grandchildren.

Today Jacki is chairman of the Sephardic section of the ex-Chinese immigrants. There are about 4000 in the country. The organization supports the sick and needy, grants scholarships, is in touch with Chinese who study agriculture and music in Israel. They are also in close contact with the Chinese Embassy and take part in events and celebrations. Jacki never went back to Shanghai, but his sympathy is with China, her culture, her achievements and development. Today Jacki and Dvora live in Protea. They are happy and take pleasure in everything the village has to offer. China remains a distant memory and a foreign homeland.

(Adapted from an article published in "Protea in the Sharon", Golden Age Newsletter No. 14, Autumn 2004)

## **Correspondence**

Dear Sas,

I have received and read your autobiography and found it fascinating. Will definitely write very soon. You mentioned about Lord Kadoorie. He was the director (one of many directorships) of an American bank, Wells Fargo in Hong Kong where I worked for seven long years and I knew him personally. He always called me Joyce and we had many confidential business discussions at his offices in St. George's Building in Hong Kong. I had the task of looking after him at conferences held at the Peninsula Hotel with leading American bank presidents from around the world.

He suffered from Parkinson's disease and needed someone to ensure that he always had a chair nearby or ate the right foods, etc. I liked Lord Kadoorie immensely and I think the amiability was reciprocal. We spent many working hours at his office. He and Lady Muriel invited me to their home in Boulder's Lodge and I often went to Kadoorie's Farm in the New Territories. I left Hong Kong for England in 1986 and I wish I had stayed on a little longer.

From your snapshot I think I may have seen you before, possibly in 1954/1955 in the offices of the South China Morning Post or the Foreign Correspondents' Club? I like your inimitable style of writing and wonder what you intend to do with

your repertoire. You mentioned the possibility of writing a book and I hope you will send me a copy upon completion.

I am in the throes of writing a collection of stories about the Macanese civilians, their trials and tribulations during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. It is a painful and daunting undertaking as I have to rely on interviews over the telephone and to a large extent, on my own memory of accounts passed on from relatives and family who have sadly passed on. I may yet have to seek your assistance and draw upon your expertise from time to time. Will write again and soon.

Joyce van Langenberg

Email: Joyceanlang@aol.com



# CHUSAN ROAD CHATTER

Issue 383

IYS Hongkew Division

Editor: Kurt Maimann

## Shanghai, Hongkou September 2004



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1. In Chusan Road, Hongkou.  
Left to right: Chen Jian, Deputy Director Foreign  
Affair Office Hongkou District People's Government  
Shanghai Municipality, Teddy and Rasha Kaufman,  
Yan Yiming, Deputy General of the Shanghai People's  
Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries
2. At the entrance of the Ohel Moshe Memorial  
Synagogue. Left to right: Yan Yiming, Chen Jian, Rasha  
and Teddy Kaufman and Qin Siguan, Director of Ohel  
Moshe.
3. The exhibition in hall of Ohel Moshe Synagogue.
4. At the memorial monument to 20,000 refugees  
from Europe who found shelter in Hongkew. The  
monument was unveiled by T. Kaufman in 1994.



Stopover on the long road to the "Promised Land".- Jewish refugees part of a group of 447 en route from Shanghai, China, to the State of Israel, are shown as they arrived in San Francisco aboard the liner general Gordon. With the exception of children who were born in China, all members of the group had fled Germany and other European countries during World War II. They are making the long journey to Israel under the auspices of the International Refugee Organization, a United Nations relief agency. (I.N.P. Soundphoto)  
March 6 1949 "Forward" New-York

### *Shanghai Hongkou September 2004*



In the museum of the Ohel Moshe Memorial Synagogue in Shanghai, Hongkou District  
At the entrance of Hua Shan park with the monument to Jewish refugees in Shanghai





## ***"The Jews of Harbin Live In My heart"***

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: NIS 40, proceeds for the IYS Social Welfare Fund.

## **Proposal for a Book entitled: Jews and Judaism in Modern China: A Meeting of Civilizations. Editor: M. Avrum Ehrlich**

Jews and Judaism in China has had a long, somewhat anonymous history. In recent years Chinese scholars and laypeople have become more interested in Jewish civilization, culture and thought but still some presumptions about Jews are superficial and there remain many misconceptions. In addition, as China opens to internationalism, Judaism as a world culture will likely make further headway in China. These developments are interesting on a number of levels and are worthy of investigation.

This book brings together writings from some of the most important thinkers and scholars on the subject of Judaism and China with the intention to illuminate the areas of cooperation and interest between two of the oldest civilizations on earth.

Below are suggestions of articles that contributors may choose to write about. If you have suggestions for more specific articles or authors illuminating the general subject, please forward an abstract.

Suggested Essays (not fixed)

M. Avrum Ehrlich (Shandong University)

1. Exploring the Possibilities of Judeo-Sino Socio-Intellectual Exchange.
2. The Contemporary circumstances of the Descendants of the Jews of Kaifeng.
3. A Survey of Jews and Jewish Communities in China (academic, business elements, Anglo Saxon, French, Russian Jewish business men in China), the influence of Jewish tycoons, Jewish owned PR firms, military firms, Jewish ambassadors in China, the phenomena of Jewish tourism to China, the kashrut industry in China.
4. Chinese Fascination with Jews: Stereotype vs Reality  
Fu Youde (Shandong University)
  1. A Modern Chinese – Jewish Dialogue
  2. Judaism and Confucianism

3. Where Jewish and Chinese Philosophy Meet

Pan Guang (Institute of Social Studies, Shanghai)

1. Shanghai as a Jewish City
2. The Present Relationship between China and Israel
3. Obstacles on the Road to Cooperation  
Xu Xin (Nanjing University)

1. Chinese Policy Towards Judaism and Jewish Nationality
2. The Development of Jewish Studies in China.
3. The phenomena of Jewish tourism to China
4. The Descendants of the Jews of Kaifeng and New Documents

Irene Eber (Hebrew University)

1. Jewish Influence in China
2. Dimensions to Judeo Sino Culture  
Zhang Shuqing (Henan University)

1. The Jewish Holocaust and China
2. Dealing with Suffering  
Noam Urbach (Hebrew University)

1. Contemporary notes on the Jewish Descendants of Kaifeng.  
Shalom Saloman Wald (Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, Jerusalem)

1. Contemporary Jewish – Chinese Relations  
Zhang Ping (Tel Aviv University)

1. Jews and Judaism on the Chinese Internet Since 2002.

Lingling Chang (Jerusalem)

1. Chinese Christianity, Biblical interpretation and its relationship to Judaism and Israel

2. Chinese Tourism to Israel  
Andrew Jakobowicz (UTS and MIT)

1. Shanghai and Jewish Modernity
2. The Menorah of Fang Bang Lu  
Rena Krasno (Igud Yotzei Sin)

1. The transformation of Jewish Shanghai as witnessed by a Jewish expatriot.
2. Jewish organizations and their relationship with China.

# Charitable Activities of Harbin Jewish Association (HJA)

*Prof. V. V. Romanov*

*Dept. of Political History, Khabarovsk State Normal University*

In 1903 in Harbin, the center for the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway, the Jewish Association was registered. Its official registered name was Harbin Jewish Religious Association, with a membership of close to 5001, which was not a small number compared with other places of the Far East. For instance, in 1910 Vladivostok had 267 Jews, Nikolayevsk had 358, while Khabarovsk had 6102. In accordance with tradition, in the beginning one of the major activities of the Association was charity, which not only served its members but benefited non-member groups as well.

The Japan-Russia War became the first touchstone for their charitable activities. As some of the Russian soldiers fighting in Manchuria were Jewish, HJA conducted religious rites for them. Besides, they tended the wounded and helped bury the dead in the cemetery reserved particularly for Jewish soldiers by the authorities of the Chinese Eastern Railway Bureau. After the War an increasing number of Jews rushed into Manchuria, because a new series of wars and massacres occurred in Russia. A lot of Jews decided to leave their homes and immigrated to Manchuria. The Jewish soldiers fighting in Manchuria also preferred to remain in Harbin and enjoy the comprehensive residential rights offered to them.

It was HJA that provided initial help and support for the newcomers, and regularly assisted the poor, the old, and the handicapped. In 1906 HJA founded Women's Charity

Associations, which aimed at helping Jewish women from Russia. They provided clothes, some money, wood, and coal when necessary, and also helped poor Jewish families to pay rents, repay bank loans, or pay tuition for their children. The expenses were covered by membership fees and donations. On average a Women's Charity Association helped about 200 families.

Jewish Free Soup Kitchens were opened in Harbin in July 1907, and all the needy were welcome. Shortly afterwards the Jewish Public Library was established, which boasted 13,000 books of all kinds by 1912. In order to help small businessmen, craftsmen, and entrepreneurs, a Charity was founded in 1913 whose main activity was to provide provided zero-interest loans for the poor. Such diverse and comprehensive charitable activities were far beyond those done by Jewish groups in Siberia and other areas of the Far East, where due to all sorts of restrictions and police surveillance they were not only deprived of opportunities to carry out charity-like activities but had their own existence endangered. This was why Harbin gradually became a haven of peace for the Jews of the Far East.

During the First World War, the Jewish population increased quickly. In 1915 the government decided to adopt more lenient policies for Jews to immigrate, and consequently a great number of Jews fled from violence, poverty, and denial of human rights and rushed to the

United States. Because of the ongoing battles in West Russia, Harbin became one of the important transfer stations for Russian Jews to immigrate to America. As most immigrants were penniless and had no means to live on, they had to rely on the support of religious brothers and sisters. To help these people, HJA founded an Immigration Committee, which was in charge of receiving and arranging for the refugees to arrive at the other side of the Pacific. This cost about 5000-6000 roubles per month.

Soon the American Jewish Immigration Association established an Immigration Bureau in Harbin to serve the refugees who fled Siberia and the Far East to transfer to unite with their relatives and friends in America. The Bureau consisted of not only delegates from HJA but representatives from every Jewish group that appeared after the February Revolution. The Bureau set up branches in Irkutsk (phonetic trans, Иркутск) and Vladivostok (Владивосток). After the signing of the Versailles Peace Pact, the American Jewish Immigration Association moved their activities to Europe, and the Immigration Bureau in Harbin was reorganized to become the Far East Information Bureau for Jewish War Casualties.

When the domestic wars in Russia caused news floods of refugees, HJA provided tremendous help for them. The Far East Information Bureau assisted refugees to find their American relatives and friends and receiving news about those who left

behind in the home country. Since the Far East was separated from Soviet Russia in 1920, in order to establish connection between refugees and their families in Russia, the Far East Information Bureau-Harbin Branch and Irkutsk (Иркутск) jointly set up a correspondence transfer station in Mongolia which was in charge of transferring letters to Russiavi.

Up to 1920 altogether 2500 Jews escaped from the wars and massacres and landed in America with the help of the above institutions. The Jews in Harbin sympathized greatly with their fellow Jews who stayed in Russia and suffered ill fate and pain. Their charitable activities that relieved the victims of the massacres and famine of 1921 were remarkable in history. Representatives from 22 different Jewish sects formed the Far East Jewish Public Association for Relieving Orphans and Victims of Massacres, which took the responsibility for raising funds for an orphanage in Kharkov (phonetically trans, Харьков), which had nearly 500 orphans. They also organized the "Aid for Massacre Victims Ten-Days" and the "Food and Materials Donation Week". In 1921 and 1922 the Jews in Manchuria sent 5 trains of food to the hungry in Russia, each of which was composed of 30 cars.

In the 1920s members of HJA increased and charitable activities were more extended. A former Harbiner and expert well-known for his research in history of Russian immigration to China, Prof. Melikhov (phonetic trans, профессор Г.В.Мелихов) said, 'HJA started to build the most extensive charity networks that served all nationalities in 1918 through 1920, and Russian immigrants also actively participated in all kinds of charitable activities. ix' In 1921 HJA founded a Home for the Aged, which provided residences for the elderly who were widowed or did not have family who could support them. In the beginning they accommodated 25 old people, and

in 1934 the number increased to 84. A training school was opened in the Jewish Women's Charity Association in 1921, where nearly 40 young women were studying tailoring and sewing for free. To provide free medical services for the poor, HJA established a clinic Mishmereth Holim (Мишмерес Хейлим), and a sanatorium specifically for patients with chronic diseases was opened in 1925. HJA included charity groups in 6 different areas; moreover, they conducted religious activities and cultural education.

An out-patient hospital was opened in Harbin in Nov. 1933 through the efforts of the chairman of HJA, medical Dr. A. I. Kaufman (А.И. Кауфман) and with the help of the members of the Association. The hospital had a total of 24 patient beds, including 10 free ones. It mainly served Jews, but did not refuse to treat any non-Jewish person. The medical staff also took an active part in the struggles against floods and all sorts of infectious diseases.

Along with the "continuous achievements socialist construction" in Russia, HJA had less and less connection with their former countrymen. After the Soviet federal government sold its rights to the Chinese Eastern Railway, the connection fell to virtually none. In the meantime, although anti-religious movements were running high in the late 1920s and early 1930s, HJA helped fellow Jews in Russia a lot. Jews in Harbin were particularly worried about Jewish rabbis in Russia, who were deprived of all rights and subsistence (like followers of other religions). In 1934 HJA organized a fund-raising campaign for rabbis in Russia who lost their rights, and raised \$1400. No matter if this amount reached the rabbis or not, this was the last well-known event related to Russia. In its entire history HJA aided Jews in their return to Palestine. Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931.

However, their invasion and the establishment of the puppet Manchu state in 1932 did not affect either the existence or the activities of Jewish communities in Harbin. In fact Japanese soldiers were governing Manchuria, but they did not formulate any policies concerning the Jews, and treated Jewish communities in the same way they did other ethnic communities. Despite protests of Germans such treatment continued, and a large number of Jews fled Europe. In March 1938 the first group of Jewish refugees from Europe arrived in Manchuria by way of Russia whose number amounted to 20,000x. At Manchuria just as always the refugees received sympathy and support. The Japanese regime did not interfere at all with the Jewish communities which regularly helped refugees.

Jewish associations in East Asia established special organizations to help their fellow Jewish brothers to escape genocide, particularly refugees from Poland and Lithuania in East Asia; another organization specifically helped refugees from Mid-Europe. These two organizations merged in 1943. Their funds came from mainly Jewish charities in the West, including in particular the American Jewish Union Distribution Committee and also donations from the Far East Jewish Association and HJA, the latter being the biggest donor. 77% of the funds were used for food and drink for the refugees, and the rest was used for medical services, shelter, and other things.

HJA was particularly concerned with the Hongkou Jewish community in Shanghai, which was set up by the Japanese under German pressure in 1943. Honestly speaking, this community was not all similar to the notorious Jewish residential areas in Europe. However, living conditions for the 20,000 Jews there were horrible, medical services were lacking, and sanitation was very bad; the Jewish residents were also

frequently insulted. HJA often raised funds for them, while donations from Jewish associations in America had virtually ceased.

HJA was undergoing a difficult time: membership kept on declining, and activities including charity continued to lessen. Russian armies entered Manchuria on Aug. 17, 1945. A I. Kaufman, along with other famous activists of Harbin and leaders of other ethnic communities were invited to a reception by the Russian commanders in Harbin, which actually turned out to be arrests and interrogations. Only 16 years later was A Kaufman able to return home. At the same time other members of the Association also suffered miserably. HJA virtually ceased to exist.

When civil wars ended and the communists won in China, a great many Jews immigrated to America and Australia, and even more went to Israel, which had declared itself an independent state. Jews of Russian nationality from China founded their own organization in Israel in 1951, that is, the Association of Former Residents of Harbin in Israel). It was

renamed the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel (IGUD YOTZEI SIN), after immigration was completed. The current leader of the Association is Teddy Kaufman, son of Dr. A.I. Kaufman. Teddy is an outstanding role model for being committed to the ideals of his youth and for fulfilling the tradition of friendship and mutual aid. As was stipulated in the HJA Regulations, its task was to 'organize immigrants from the Far East and promote mutual aid and cooperation'.

The Association of Former Residents of China in Israel took advantage of various to organize a series of large-scale charitable activities, such as providing relief for the widowed elderly and former townfolk who were ill and zero-interest loans and grants-in-aid for students. Grants-in-aid were even awarded to the grandsons and great grandsons of immigrants from China. Worthy of special note was that the funds came from not only members living in Israel but also former townsmen who were then living in other countries.

Each issue of 'Association of

Former Residents of China in Israel Newsletter' encouraged people to 'save the money that could have been used to purchase flowers on holidays' and help the needy as much as they could. Published in every issue was a long list of donors, including the name of the donor, his/her dwelling place, and the amount of the donation, thus continuing the tradition of contributing to funds to commemorate ethnic fellows who had lost their lives. Generally speaking, all expenses of the Association including those used for journal publication were covered by donations of members and former townsmen.

We very much agree with the head of the research center Russian Jews Overseas, M. Parhomovsky (phonetic trans, М.Пархомовский), who said that 'Immigrants from China were indeed awesome and amazing, in that they carried on the valuable Jewish tradition of charity and were united quite strongly by the characteristics of Harbin which had been Russianized early on.'

## Searching and Researching

### Laurent Vogel

Bruxelles

I am the son of Eliane Vogel-Polsky, one of the granddaughters of Rabbi Kiselev, the daughter of his daughter Nina (Nechama). My mother is now 78 years old and she is writing a story of her life and the life of her family. She met Rabbi Kiselev only when she was very young. She spent about two years in Harbin before 1930. As you can imagine, the "oral tradition" of the family is very rich and sometimes contradictory. The youngest daughter of Rabbi Kiselev, my great-aunt Riva,

died a few years ago in Israel. The descendants of Rabbi Kiselev are now living in at least four different countries (Belgium, England, the United States, Israel, and –may be! – the former Soviet Union). In 1980 I visited the town of Borisov in Byelorussia where my grandmother was born and I met some old people who had memories of the Jewish community at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century before Rabbi Kiselev left the town for Harbin. One of the members of our family in Israel told us that the Igud Yotzei Sin has published a book on

the story of the Jewish Community of Harbin and that you had worked with Rabbi Kiselev. I would be very grateful if you could tell me how to purchase a copy of the book and if you could send me any material on Rabbi Kiselev. I read English and Russian without difficulty. Some of my friends can translate for me from Hebrew or Yiddish.

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# American Far Eastern Society of Southern California

## Bulletin #95 (Nov/Dec 2004/Jan 2005) - Los Angeles

Dear Friends and Fellow Members:

It is with regret that we have again members who have fallen ill. Leo Hanin, who just celebrated his 91st birthday is temporarily incapacitated by breaking his ankle which is now in a cast. He is resting and hoping to be back on his feet before long. Walter Wolff has recently undergone surgery and he too hopes to be up and around soon. Lou Grossman continues to rest at his home under the care of Mara.

We were advised by IGUD that Sara Morguloff passed away a few weeks ago. The funeral took place in Israel and Yehuda and Tzvia are already back home. Sara was an extraordinary human being, always there to help wherever and whenever it was needed. She will be missed not only by her family but by all who knew her as well. The Board expresses its deepest condolences to the family.

Mira and Joe Mrantz are back from a 2 week visit to Israel where they were cordially and warmly received by the Igud, many members of which they had not seen for many years. At the Igud's reception/luncheon there were emotional meetings with old friends. Mira and Joe had the opportunity, on behalf of our membership, to applaud Teddy Kaufman and his associates for the great and highly important work that they are doing in keeping the community together and in particular, the help that the IGUD is rendering, financially, to those of the membership who are in need. It became very clear that we must make every effort on our part to help in this respect on a continuing basis. As it happens, we presented a check for \$2000.- from AMFESOSCA to the IGUD at that time. Teddy Kaufman expressed IGUD's thanks for all our help and donations from LA.

Since there will not be another bulletin

issued before the end of this calendar year, the Board wishes to take this opportunity to wish all of our members and their families a very happy, and healthful New Year 2005. Birthday Tributes received for the Month of October 2004

To:

From:

Olga Kaufman Mary and Walter Wolff, Mira and Phil Materman,

Mara and Lou Grossman, Bernice Fishman, Leo Hanin

Raissa Goldin, Golda Lazarovich, Mira and Joe Mrantz

Jenny Nemirovsky Mira and Phil Materman, Mara and Lou Grossman,

Mira and Joe Mrantz

Goldie Miller

Genie Beeler, Raissa Goldin, Golda Lazarovich

## Far Eastern Society of San Francisco

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Far Eastern Society of San Francisco, Inc. held on September 12th 2004 at the "Peking" Restaurant.

This was a complimentary luncheon for the Members of the Far Eastern Society of S.F. Inc. The President, Mr. Cy Kaufman, greeted the members and had great pleasure to introduce his brother and sister-in-law Ted and Rasha Kaufman, who just arrived from their visit to China. As we all know, Ted Kaufman is the President of the Igud Yotzei Sin of Israel and its worldwide branches. Since some members arrived late, Mr. Kaufman proposed that before starting the agenda, the members should have the pleasure of eating their lunch first.

#### AGENDA

##### President's Address:

**Financial Report:** Mr. Kaufman informed the members of all the activities of our Organization and read the Financial Report that showed our financial state is healthy and we have received many donations. Most of the donations were sent to Igud Yotzei Sin

to be distributed by their Social Aid Fund as needed.

**Questions and Answers:** There were none.

**Elections of the New Board:** The present Board will remain for 2004-5.

**Celebration:** At this luncheon we also celebrated the birthdays of Ted and Cy Kaufman and wished them good health, happiness and to continue their charitable work.

**Surprise Presentation:** Hon. Secretary Mrs. G. Katzeff, on behalf of Igud Yotzei Sin presented Cy Kaufman with a plaque for the Jewish National Fund informing him that his name is inscribed in the Golden Book of the JNF in appreciation of his charitable endeavors.

**Speech by Mr. Ted Kaufman:** Mr. Ted Kaufman informed our members of the great work done by Igud Yotzei Sin. He praised our organization for sending donations to their Social Aid Fund. It was interesting to hear his

description of their trip to China where he was joined by many members from different countries. Mr. Kaufman will probably describe his China Trip in the Igud's Bulletin, and that is why we do not write about it in detail. All members applauded him for his interesting speech. I would like to mention the social work and help to the needy done by Rasha Kaufman. She is a great help to Igud Yotzei Sin. I would also like to mention the help that Olga Kaufman is giving to our organization.

**Conclusion:** The Members had a lovely time meeting each other, talking to each other, and enjoying the Chinese food which was excellent. And especially meeting Teddy and Rasha Kaufman. Please visit us more often.

**Guests:** Natasha Wilson – friend of Ted Kaufman.

Mr. & Mrs. D. Woll – daughter and son-in-law of Sarah Ossin.

It was a pleasure to see them.

G.Katzeff, Hon. Secretary

# Two Harbin Boys in Nahariya

By Moshe Lichomanov

I remember with yearning the first, naive days of the State of Israel, the days of the spirit of haluziut and a drive to build a new motherland in the Land of Israel. Where did those days disappear? Nothing remains but reminiscences of people who were more or less socially equal with no class distinctions, perhaps because none of us had money. There was enough food for all. No one was hungry. There was time for communal and cultural activity. It is true that one could not freely buy "delicatessen" and clothes. There were purchase coupon cards, equally distributed among the consumers. Free food trade was prohibited, and all the agricultural produce was sent to the government controlled Tnuva. In our moshav we had chickens and eggs, but the control was strict, and whoever sold anything privately could be heavily fined, or even jailed. This, naturally, created a black market, where one could get almost anything – at high price and personal connections. Crime was almost nonexistent. People left homes with doors unlocked. Children, like myself, traveled by "catching a lift", without fear. Life was hard, but calmer than now. There was less security tension than now, and people felt secure and safe.

## *Nahariya in the 1950's*

There were 5000 inhabitants, in Nahariya in 1950, almost all of them "yekes" (immigrants from Germany and Central Europe, coming to Palestine in the early 1930's, with the emergence in Germany of the Nazi regime). Most of them were well off, amongst them the Straus and Zoglobek families, who brought the means and the know-how to open large dairy and meat concerns. The Zoglobeks, for instance, even brought a large wooden house of Gothic architecture, which the set up in the center of the then moshava

Nahariya. The main source of the income of the inhabitants was tourism – small "pension" motels, work in the Zoglobek and Straus food concerns and other neighboring factories. The two buildings that became the "trade mark" of Nahariya (and still stand firm till this very day) were the water tower and the Café Penguin on the main Gaaton Boulevard. The latter was a popular meeting place for the Nahariyans, British officers and soldiers (during the mandated days), and tourists. The city old-timers relate that during the "illegal" immigration, Nahariya shore, patrolled by the British day and night, was one of the chief landing beaches of the illegal boats. On the 1947 New Year's Eve, Café Pengin arranged for a "Happy New Year" celebration, "cordially inviting" British officers and soldiers. Late that night five ships landed a record number of maapilim, promptly whisked to the interior by the Hagana. In summer, people danced to Penguin's orchestra and watched artists performing in its garden. Such was the lifestyle in Nahariya then. Entrance was payable, which we, the youngsters, could not afford. But the desire to see an artist perform was great, and we watched the show through the holes and cracks in the fence of the garden (In those days this was not considered demeaning). In such a manner I saw all the celebrated artists of that period: Yafa Yarkoni, Shoshana Damari, Zadok Savir, Israel Itzhaki, Arik Lavi, and who not! The other place of entertainment was the only cinema in the moshava, a long and a narrow building, once used as a horse stable. The seats were made of wood, and, whenever anybody moved, one could hear them creak and squeak, but there was no choice, nobody complained, and filled the hall to see the movies and newsreels, which preceded each film. In summer the films were projected in a spacious

garden behind the cinema building. Here, too, children made a breach in the fence, and entered (without buying tickets) after the lights went out. Ah, those were the days!

In the early 1950's Nahariya absorbed a good portion of the East European aliya. We, the ten families from China, settled in Moshav Zahal (later renamed as Liman), seven kilometers north of Nahariya, but for the main social services (school, medical care, shopping and entertainment) were dependent on Nahariya. The "invasion" of the East European immigrants broke the demographic balance of the moshava, whose Central European majority lived as a rather closed community, with German being the dominant language heard. A bi-communal society emerged, consisting of the well to do old time "yekes", and the destitute new immigrants, living in tents and wooden shacks on the outskirts of Nahariya. I cannot say that the old inhabitants hated us, but there is no denying of a certain uncomfortable feeling sensed by them with the drastic change in their tranquil lives by the intrusion of the new alien element.

As the only new immigrant pupil in my form, I felt the class differences only too well. My "yeke" classmates weren't too helpful in my absorption process, and, certainly, did not accept me in their midst. My Hebrew was still primary, and I'll never forget a funny episode in the third grade, in which I began my studies. Our geography teacher, having explained how water resources are formed, asked the class how a swamp (pronounced similar to "egg") is created. No one seemed to know. To me it was strange that my classmates could not answer such a simple question. I picked up my hand and said, "Chickens lay them!" There was a thunder of laughter. Even the teacher smiled. At the moment the bell rang and everybody ran out of

the class. I was left alone, mortified: nobody bothered to tell me what was wrong with my answer. Since I had no friends who would help me improve my Hebrew vocabulary, I invented a way to help myself. At an intermission, I would hit or push a boy. The boy would shout, "Why do you hit and push me?" Two new words were learned. Then I pulled a girl by the hair. Another verb and a noun. Soon enough the school director called for a man-to-man talk. He was a nice good natured "yeke". I explained to him the reason for my behavior. He took me to the class and suggested the children to be more helpful in promoting my Hebrew. He left, congratulating me on my initiative. Since then there was a visible improvement in my image and status. My authority as a "Chinese" was tested

and approved, when the teacher decided that the whole class would appear at the Purim party dressed as Chinese. I gave a public lecture, and, later, ample advice as to what and how to wear, make-up one's eyes, etc. My glory reached the peak when I taught the class the only song I knew in Chinese: the anthem of the Chinese Communist party. "If only Mao Tse Dong would have known it, he would immediately appoint me Ambassador of China ...in Nahariya!" I thought. During the summer, Nahariya was full of tourists. Usually rather quiet and slow, now it was noisy and busy. Café and restaurants were open till after midnight. Newlyweds and couples-in-love were for some reason attracted to the horse carriages which took them for a ride around the moshava. Taxis and "privates", as they were then called,

blew their horns. Ice cream stalls made money. In a word, the summer was "living it up" to its full – for four months. Then, after the High Holidays, the tourists returned to their homes and quiet returned to Nahariya. All were tired of the noise and the tumult, and glad to come back to the normal. The Sleeping Beauty went back to sleep... I was not the first to come to Nahariya from Harbin, and there is no way to end the story without mentioning my predecessor, Zelig Soskin. He was one of the four famous Soskin brothers, giant grain traders of Manchuria. Zelig, however, was a zealous Zionist. He left his brothers' business in Harbin, went to Holland to study agriculture, immigrated to Palestine, taught agriculture, and, eventually, becoming one of the founders of Nahariya. There is a street in the city named after him.

## *A Portrait Gallery of Jewish Harbin*

*By Reb Saadia Litvin*

One of the central figures of the Harbin Jewish religious life most certainly was Rabbi Saadia Litvin. For 35 years he served the Harbin Jewish community as a shoet. Who does not remember his majestic figure, which by its appearance alone demanded to be respected and honored by all who happened to see him, and I still have to meet a Harbin old hand who did not respect, honor and love this highly educated, wise and modest Jew. Reb Saadia, as he was called amongst the Harbiners, was not only a shoet, but also a close confidant and a trusted adviser of Rabbi Kislev. During Rabbi Kislev's prolonged illness, Reb Saadia carried out the Rabbi's errands and commissions, such as performing weddings, arranging divorces, conversion into Judaism, eulogizing at funerals, giving sermons in the synagogue on High Holidays, and was actually the chief Rabbi's authorized proxy and assistant.

His sermons were always meaningful and filled with pearls of Jewish wisdom. For decades Reb Saadia headed a daily Talmud class, the so-called Chevra Mishnayot. Despite his being a fully authorized Rabbi (baal smichuyot), he continued to study the Talmud day and night. In addition, he gave Hebrew lessons and prepared boys for their Bar Mitzvah ceremony. I recall seeing him in his small room in the Moshav Zkenim's yard, poring over a thick volume of the Talmud. My grandfather, Yosif Zalmanov Kaufman, and my grandmother, Sofia Borisovna Kaufman, managed the Moshav Zkenim until my grandfather passed away in 1934, and I remember, how we, the children (one of them Reb Saadia's son, Velvel), used to play in the yard. My brother Isai and I spent Fridays and Saturdays at our grandparents' apartment. My grandfather studied Talmud with Reb Saadia, and I well recall how he spoke of him with great respect, sympathy and admiration.

I remember how in 1946 we celebrated Reb Saadia's 30th anniversary of service to the Harbin Jewish Association (HEDO), and when in 1949 Rav Kislev passed away, he was elected to the post of Chairman of the Religious Committee and acting Rabbi of the Harbin Jewish Community. In this capacity he served until his Aliya to Israel in January, 1950. Whenever I reminisce about our Jewish past in Harbin, a file of men and women arises before my eyes - people who created and protected the Jewish national, spiritual, social and philanthropic life in this far away city on the map of the Diaspora. Amongst these people, Reb Saadia is one of those who for many decades protected the walls of Jewish Harbin, faithful to the eternal biddings of our religion. Saadia (Shaya) Litvin passed away on December 27, 1970 and was buried in the Holon cemetery. He was 86.

**T.Kaufman**

# Legends of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng

(continued from the previous issue)

## 8. In the Hall of the Moral Gao

***A judge solves a mystery, frees an innocent man, punishes the guilty, and then leaves office, sickened by political corruption. As brilliant as his judicial career, he is even more brilliant as a physician. He is honored in his lifetime with an inscription over the entrance to his residence, and this honor is carried on by his descendants.***

For hundreds of years, a horizontal board has been displayed over the front gate of the residence of the Gao family, one of the seven most famous Jewish families in Kaifeng. This rectangular wooden sign is covered with black priming paint and inscribed with four red Chinese characters reading "The Hall of the Gaos Who Highly Value Morality", and this is the story behind the inscription.

In the fifteenth century, a son was born to the Gao family and given the Chinese name Gao Nian. A very intelligent lad, he decided that when he grew up he would become an official in the Chinese civil service in order to bring honor to his family and community. When Gao Nian reached school age, he began to read the classic writings of Confucius and other sages. After a dozen years of diligent study, he took the imperial examinations at the provincial level and passed. Immediately after, he was appointed magistrate of the She County in Anhui Province in eastern China.

This appointment went beyond being a personal honor for himself and his family. It created a great sensation in Kaifeng because it was the first time

that a Jew who had passed the imperial exams had been appointed to such an important official post. It meant that the Jewish community had been fully accepted and that a Jew's social and profession status would not be limited by his religion. The synagogue, as well as the Gaos' residence, was decorated with lanterns and festoons for the celebration, which lasted until the week was over. Then Gao Nian and his wife, Rachel (the daughter of another Jewish family in Kaifeng), packed up their belongings and set off for the She County.

For three months everything went well except for one criminal case, which came to haunt Gao. This case had been brought before the county court about a year before Gao assumed office. The charges covered both robbery and murder, and the former country magistrate had found Qian, the accused, guilty. He was scheduled to be executed after the autumn harvest. Gao arrived in late May, five months before the execution. Qian's wife and children had approached the court and appealed to the mercy of the earlier judge. When Gao assumed office, they began coming to court even more frequently. This aroused Gao's interest, and as he weighed the evidence, he became skeptical about the verdict. He called in the deputy county magistrate. Upon questioning him, Gao discovered that many people in the town had never been convinced of Qian's guilt. He also found out why Qian's wife and children had suddenly begun making appeals so many months after the trial. The former magistrate had refused to retry the case. Thus it had been futile to plead until Gao

arrived on the scene.

The execution day was rapidly approaching. "Has anyone reviewed the case?" Gao asked. And when he discovered that nobody had taken the trouble to review the verdict, he fell into deep thought. The next time the doorkeeper announced that Qian's family were in court, Gao decided to see them in person. When the deputy tried to discourage him, he answered: "As county magistrate, I must undertake the responsibility of serving the people and dispelling their sufferings." Again the deputy tried to turn him aside, warning him not to interfere. "What do you mean by not interfering?" Gao was angry. "Would justice be served if I ignored injustice?"

Gao met with Qian's wife and the children, who cried sadly all the time they spoke of their husband and father. That night he told the story to his wife: "Rachel, I have come across a very complicated case which bothers me a lot," he said, and he related the details to her.

Qian, a native of She County, was a merchant, good at trafficking goods. A year before, he and his good friend and partner, Sun Ping, had gone to trade in the city of Lu Zhou, in Anhui Province. They were able to open up new sources of first-class goods and made a fortune. Just before the New Year they happily set off for home, eager to celebrate the festival with their families.

Disaster struck when they were accosted by a gang of bandits in Qing Yang County. Qian, who was suffering from diarrhea at the time, was hiding in a thick growth of weeds relieving himself when the robbers arrived.



Hearing an outcry, he looked through the weeds and saw the bandits beating his friend and robbing him. Qian had no weapons. He did not dare to do anything. And so he trembled and waited in the weeds until the gang had gone.

When he ran to his friend, he found him fatally injured. Sun Ping was near death, unable to say a word. Instead, he pointed at his belly with one of his fingers. Qian did not understand the gesture. Why was Sun Ping's last act to point at his belly? But when he touched the spot Sun had indicated, he realized that his friend's money belt was still there. He removed it and found that it contained twenty-five liangs of silver, a considerable amount, since one liang equals about fifty grams. Qian was devastated by the unfortunate death of his friend and grieved for him. He purchased a piece of land and hired someone to bury Sun Ping. Before continuing on his way home, he planted a willow tree beside Sun's grave as a memorial.

Upon his return, he went directly to Sun Ping's house to tell the victim's family the sad news and comfort them. He told the whole sad story to Sun's wife. Then he took out the silver he had found in Sun Ping's belt and gave it to her. He told Sun's wife to come to him if there was anything he could do for the family. Then he proceeded to his own home.

However, the third day after he returned, *yamen* (court) runners from the county court came to Qian's house and arrested him. Qian was taken to the county court. In the middle of the court sat the former county magistrate. On the left of the hall stood the wife and children of Sun Ping. Qian was bewildered and had no idea what he was being accused of. He was forced to go down on his knees after entering the court.

"Your Excellency, the accused Qian is here," the *yamen* runners reported to the former country magistrate.

"Qian, you have been accused of murdering your partner, Sun Ping,

for his money. You'd better confess," the former county magistrate stated coldly.

Qian was astonished. He could not imagine why he should be accused of murder and robbery. He tried to explain what had happened, but his explanation was ignored. The charges had been brought by Sun's wife and family.

"Confess! Confess!" the *yamen* runners shouted.

"I'm not guilty. I've been wronged," Qian repeated to anyone who would listen.

The county magistrate was very angry and said, "Accused Qian, don't try to fool me. I can prove you are guilty. Let me ask you: Why, if you and Sun Ping left together, did you not return home together? How could he be murdered and you be left untouched? It must be that you murdered your friend for his money. After you killed him, you invented a story and tried to cover up your crime by giving some money you took from Sun to his family. Any attempt to gloss things over can only result in making them more obvious. You'd better confess."

When Qian persisted in maintaining his innocence, the former county magistrate had him cruelly tortured. Qian was beaten half to death. Though he did not want to look as if he had dirty hands, the torture was so painful that he confessed to the false charges in order to save his life. But whenever the torture stopped he would again insist that he was not guilty. However, using his forced confession as evidence, the former county magistrate sentenced him to be executed on the day after the autumn harvest.

"How could he try a case that way?" Rachel was shocked when she heard the story. "The verdict was obviously unjust."

Gao agreed, but pointed out that it would not be easy to clear Qian. He mused on the difficulties: "What would I say to the former county magistrate, who is now a deputy governor, if I clear Qian of this injustice? What

could I say to Sun Ping's wife and family if I set Qian free? Will I be accused of anything if I fail to find the real culprits?"

Rachel encouraged Gao to seek justice for Qian no matter what the difficulty. "I think the case depends a lot on the complainant," she said. "Qian would not have to be executed if you could make Sun's wife withdraw her accusation. The former county magistrate would have nothing to challenge you about if that happened."

"That's a brilliant idea." Gao was excited. "But how can I make her withdraw her accusation? After all, the victim was her husband."

"Why don't you ..." Rachel suggested. Hearing her idea, Gao beamed with joy.

The next day, Gao held a court hearing. Sun's wife was summoned for interrogation.

"As the complainant," Gao asked "do you have anything else to say about the case?"

Sun's wife was puzzled and had no idea why the new county magistrate was questioning her.

"You have accused Qian of murdering your husband and robbing him, haven't you?"

"Yes, I have."

"Did you see it with your own eyes when the murder took place?"

"No, I didn't. The murder took place in another county far away from here."

"Do you have any human witness or material evidence for your accusation?"

"No, I don't."

"I believe that you understand the principle of arresting a thief with stolen goods. Why did you accuse Qian of murdering your husband without any evidence?"

"I believed that he murdered my husband for his money," she said sadly.

"Do you think there were any grounds for your accusation?"

"Yes."

"In that case, please tell the court why

Qian returned twenty-five liangs of silver to you if he had murdered your husband for his money. You know very well that the money was hidden in your husband's belly belt and nobody except your husband and Qian would have known about it if he had not told you."

She turned pale and did not know what to say.

"Therefore, we may conclude that you accused Qian of murder and robbery without either evidence or witnesses. Qian bought a burial plot for your husband, buried him and even planted a tree as a memorial. But most important, I repeat, he handed over the money to you, and he could easily have hidden it. Do you still think it is just to accuse this man?"

Sun's wife was frightened.

"I don't think that you framed an innocent person intentionally," Gao continued. "But you brought a false charge against Qian, who was actually very kind to your late husband and to you and your family."

Hearing this, Sun's wife began to weep and went down on her knees.

"I am terribly sorry," said she. "I had no intention of accusing an innocent man. All I wanted was to bring justice to the murderers and avenge my husband's death. Please tell me what I should do."

"Withdraw your accusation against Qian."

"But my husband was murdered. What about my husband's killer?"

"I will find and arrest the culprits who murdered your husband and you will have your just revenge. But Qian is innocent, and now I am going to release him."

Gao ordered Qian to be brought to court from his prison cell. When Qian was brought in, Gao publicly reversed the verdict and released him from handcuffs and shackles. Then he set him free with a verdict of not guilty.

Qian was very surprised and grateful to Gao for his upright behavior.

As might be expected, rumors soon spread that Qian had bought his life

by bribing Gao. Moreover, the former county magistrate was not happy to learn what had happened. He felt humiliated by Gao's reversal of his verdict because it caused him to lose face throughout the province. He complained to the governor who sent a commissioner to thoroughly investigate the matter.

"Someone has charged that you suspended the law to suit your private interests, Mr. Gao," the commissioner came straight to the point when he arrived, "and that you arbitrarily freed a convicted prisoner. Is that true?"

"Your excellency, it is true that the convict was set free. But the reason was simple. The complainant had withdrawn the accusation against him. I had to set him free according to the law. Besides, Qian was not the murderer." Gao replied.

"Is there any testimony and evidence?"

"Yes. Here you are." Gao handed over the court records, which he had prepared before the commissioner's arrival.

The commissioner was satisfied with the documents. Then he asked: "What are you going to do about the real murderers?"

"We will try our very best to find and arrest them as soon as we can and avenge the victim by bringing them to justice."

"Are you serious?" the commissioner demanded.

"Yes. I will write a pledge to find the suspects and capture them within six months. If I fail to do so, I will resign." This was what the commissioner wanted. He was eager to report it to the governor. When he left, he carried the signed document with him.

Gao realized that it was extremely important to catch the murderers if he wanted to justify his conduct. After careful consideration, he decided to contact all the neighboring counties and request their assistance. Then he sent undercover policemen to conduct an investigation in several places frequented by criminals.

Four months elapsed before he learned anything, and he had begun to worry about his promise. At the beginning of the fifth month, to his great joy, a report finally came from a court in a neighboring county. A gang of bandits had been arrested after trying to waylay and kill merchants and rob them of their belongings. Three of the bandits confessed that they had murdered a traveling merchant about a year earlier. The police of the county asked Gao to send people to confront the accused. Meanwhile his undercover investigators reported that they had found another clue in the case.

Gao immediately went to Shilo County, accompanied by Qian, Sun's wife, and the prosecutor. Qian recognized the criminals at first sight. Sun's wife identified the other clue; the purple fur jacket which she had made for her husband three years earlier lay among the spoils seized by the authorities.

Gao tried the case in person, and the accused bandits confessed and pleaded guilty. Qian had been proven innocent and honest. Sun's wife was satisfied that the true criminals who had killed her husband had finally been brought to justice. The Qians were very happy to hear the news because it wiped out the disgrace to the family's reputation. Both families wanted to give expensive gifts to Gao to express their gratitude. Gao thanked them but declined.

Normally this should have been a time for Gao to celebrate his triumph. However, during his eight months as country magistrate he had seen so much political corruption that it often made him sick and sad. He realized that politics was not for him. It was impossible to be an official without becoming corrupt, Gao felt. After much discussion with his wife, he decided to leave office and return home, relinquishing the burden of official duties.

The next day he told the deputy about his decision. Soon after, the news spread throughout the county. People were sad to lose such an upright

official. The Qian and Sun families were saddest of all when they heard the news, because they had not had the opportunity to pay back their debt of gratitude. They wanted to reciprocate, so they went to ask the deputy's advice.

"We will be happy and willing even if we have to mortgage our houses or land as long as we can express gratitude for his uprightness," they said.

When they heard the deputy's proposal, they left smiling.

A few days later, Gao and Rachel quietly set off for Kaifeng, since they wanted to avoid having a great farewell rally. When they arrived at their home, they were surprised to find their house once again decorated with

lanterns and festoons. What was more, over the front gate hung a beautiful horizontal board inscribed with the words: "Hall of the Gao Who Highly Values Morality". While they stood there, amazed, the front gate opened. Out came Gao's parents supported by four other persons. These were none other than Qian and his wife and Sun's wife and son.

Now everything was clear. It was they who had made the board and had it mounted over the front gate of the Gao residence.

The legend continues that after Gao returned to Kaifeng, he decided not to seek any other official post. Instead, he began to study medicine. Because of his remarkable talent and brilliance, he

became a great physician. It was said that his patients recovered soon after taking the medicines he prescribed. He was even able to bring the dying back to life by a miraculous cure. When the poor came to see him, he not only never collected fees from them, but also gave them free medicine. Many of his descendants were said to have become good physicians who served the people wholeheartedly.

Because of this, the inscription became the title of honor not only for Gao Nian but also for his descendants in Kaifeng. The board was displayed over the gate of the Gao residence for hundreds of years.

# Grabbing a Share of China's Beer Market

By Mure Dicke *Financial Times*

Even with its humble start, the popular Harbin Brewery is attracting attention from Anheuser and SABMiller. The hot topic of just about everyone in the international brewing business is the unprecedented battle for China's Harbin Brewery Group Ltd. between world industry leader Anheuser-Busch Cos. and archrival SAB Miller. Everyone, that is, except workers at the Hong Kong-listed company's plant in a down-at-heel neighborhood of this northeastern city.

Few members of the Harbin staff have even heard the news of St. Louis-based Anheuser's decision to buy a 29% stake in Harbin Brewery and London-based SAB Miller's resulting \$474-million hostile takeover bid for the company. "That's really happening" Really?" asked one 20-year Harbin veteran. Local restaurateurs and residents were just as surprised by the level of international interest in the brewery, whose dirty walls divide it from a

district full of failing state enterprises. But if Harbin Brewery's humble environs lent an air of unreality to the nearly 38 times price-to-earnings multiple put on it by SABMiller's hostile offer, retailers and consumers in the grimy city offered insights into why the company seems so appealing.

With a relentlessly promoted pedigree as China's most venerable brewer, the 104-year-old Harbin has a powerful grip on the local mass market despite a recent rise in the price of a 21-ounce bottle from 18 cents to 20 cents. Harbin's local rival, China Resources Breweries, part-owned by SABMiller, did not match the price hike, but local shopkeeper Xu Changjiang says Harbin is much more popular than CRB's now cheaper Sun Sings brand. "Sun Sings takes much longer to sell ... and I don't like it so much myself," Xu said.

Such is local loyalty to the brand that some residents reacted with dismay to the news that their city's flagship brand

could be absorbed by a multinational. "I don't think Harbin Brewery should be sold to foreigners ... it's a national Chinese brand," said Ji Yanpo, a 33-year-old businessman. Such nationalistic fervor contrasts sharply with Harbin's cosmopolitan history, however. The oldest part of the company was founded by a Russian businessman in 1900 and was later run by Czech and Chinese managers. Another part was established by the Dainippon Malt Wine Company during Tokyo's colonial occupation of Manchuria in the 1930s. After Japan's 1945 defeat, the brewery was taken over by the Soviet Red Army for four years.

The decision to sell the city's remaining stake in Harbin reflects Beijing's long-standing policy of allowing foreign involvement in the beer industry while trying to promote national champions like Tsingtao Brewing Co. and Beijing Yanjing Brewery Co.

(From The Los Angeles Times)

# From the Album of the Hanukkah Festivity



1



2



3



4



5



6

## Chinese Friends

1. The Ambassador of China, Mr. Chen yonglong, speaks and a Chinese student – recipient of the SCHOLARSHIP, Ms. Wang Yi, translates from Chinese into Hebrew.
2. Students-recipients from China.

## From Police and Yeshiva

3. A grandson-recipient is a policeman.
4. Another grandson studies to be a Rabbi.

## Two Generations

5. Isai Piastunovich celebrated his 85th birthday during Hanukkah
6. Y. Sandel heads the "Next Generation" Section of Igud Yotzei Sin. She is a member of the Board of the Israel-China Friendship Society and IYS.

# At the Hanukkah Reunion in the Vestibule



1



2



3



4



5



6

1. From left to right: Esther (Fira) Gershkovich, Sarah Ross, a Chinese student and Rita Leonov
2. Hana Miller (Litvin) and Bobby Bershadsky
3. Fira Kesler, Vera Begun and Haim Zuker
4. From left to right: Alia Reches, Fania Mindlin and Aya Rosenblatt
5. From left to right: David (Dima) Mindlin and Bobby Miller
6. Ilana Herman (Rabinovich) and Ronny Veinerman

# China Through the Ages

# Chinese Attire

By Emmanuel Pratt

*"A foreigner, dressed as a Chinese is more Chinese than a Chinese dressed as a foreigner". (An old Chinese proverb)*

When in the wake of the Sun Yat-sen's revolution of 1911, the last imperial (Manchu) Jin Dynasty fell and the Republic of China was established, one of the first ventures of the great reformer was to change the outward image of the Chinese. Like Peter the Great of Russia, who shaved the beards off the Russians and introduced foreign coats, Dr. Sun clipped the plait off the Chinese heads and cut out what is now mistakenly called "the Mao Tze-dung suit". His reason for taking these steps was "tidiness and freedom of movement make work easier," or, as he himself once said: "Were the Chinese properly dressed, they would have built the Great Wall twice as fast!"

During the consultations on the subject, Dr. Sun gave preference to the simple jacket generally worn in the Southern province of Guangdong. He suggested some functional additions. As a result, there emerged a somewhat military looking short buttoned-in-front coat with four laid-on pockets and a stiff bent-down collar.

Sun Yat-sen himself always wore such a costume except for official occasions for which etiquette demanded wearing a tailcoat and a silk hat. Once, appearing all dressed up at the Guo Min-dang party meeting, he apologized: "Excuse me for coming dressed in my working clothes. I didn't have time to change." Decades later David Ben Gurion repeated Sun's remark at a Histadrut meeting. Great minds think alike. It didn't take long for the Chinese crowd to assume a new image. It attained character and force, but lost much of its old

glamour and romance. But what can we do? Progress is merciless.

In our times of constant and direct contact between East and West, Sun Yat-sen's invention, mistakenly called by the Russians "Mao-tzedunovka", is no more fashionable. It was replaced by the ordinary Western combination of trousers and a jacket with the occasional addition of a vest. More often, however, an average Chinese suffices with a pair of dark trousers and a white shirt.

All this is true of the big cities' dwellers. It's different in the provinces. The deeper the province the harder it is to uproot old beliefs and old fashion.

## ***Qipao out to conquer the world***

If Western mens wear overran the Chinese market, Qipao, Chinese women's apparel, is on the march to subdue the West with a fair chance of success: Ask any man, regardless of his nationality, and his assessment of the Chinese women's garb will hardly be less than enthusiastic. Nowadays not only is it not taken off the mannequins in the show windows of the Shanghai elite "haute couture" houses, but you may see them in the vogue magazines in the world in ever growing numbers.

Qipao, as the Chinese traditional dress is called, demands a short historical explanation. When the Manchu armies crossed the Great Wall at the Shinghaiguan pass in 1644 to establish the Manchu Jin ("golden") Dynasty, they formed a new ruling aristocracy, identifiable by their color banners ("qi", Chinese

for banner). Soon the concept "qi jen" – banner men – became common to all the Manchurians, and qi pao, different in its style from the feminine Chinese attire, became "the banner (Manchurian) dress".

Despite the republican regime having succeeded the imperial, introducing new ways and styles in the life of the Chinese people, qipao survived the changes and became the traditional dress of the modern Chinese beauties. It owes its endurance to the simplicity and ease of its cut and comfort of wear. It does not require much material, nor additional ornamentation, such as belts, frills or lace. It sports a high collar, and is fastened on the right side by two small loops. The sleeves may be very short or full length, depending on the season or the desire of the woman. It lies free on the chest and fits closely at the waist. Two deep slits are cut along both sides of the dress, giving full expression to the charms of the feminine forms. It is both esthetic and practical, ready to be worn both as an everyday garment or on special, festive occasions. It always emanates subtle charm and an impression of simplicity and tidiness. No wonder it is so popular not only in China, but amongst the women in other countries as well

## ***What do they wear on the Roof of the World?***

The climate on the windy Tibetan Plateau is harsh and the weather unpredictable. They demand a special, multifunctional robe. The Tibetans invented one, by which a Tibetan can be distinguished from

(Continued on p.47)

# FIVE (Wu)

**Five** is one of the most important ciphers in Chinese number symbolism. Being uneven, it is a 'male' number. It is associated with the **five directions** (four points of the compass plus the Middle), **five odors** and **five tastes**. In **Lao tze** we read: "The five colors make man's eyes blind; the five notes make man's ears deaf; the five tastes injure his palate. The classical Chinese dictionary Kang Hsi Tze Dian (Issued in 1617) has 12 meanings of the character wu = 5, and 1,148 compounds using it. Of these, about one thousand are directly connected with nature's elements or 'states of being', i.e. customs of practices: festive customs, funeral customs, hospitality customs, military customs, customs associated with good wishes; five noxious creatures; the essence of five kinds of

animals: the furry, the feathered, the shell, the scaly and the naked (= the man).

There are **five kinds of relationships** between people: ruler and subject; father and son; man and wife; elder brother and younger brother; friend and friend ("The Book of Rites"). Confucian doctrine sees all of these relationships in terms of strict hierarchical order, even in the case of two friends, the older being always 'above' the younger. Traditional Chinese medicine is based on various relationships and objects arranged in combinations of five. Similar combinations underlie Chinese astrology and geomancy.

The **Five Dynasties** (Wu-dai) – is the period of the peak of cultural development of China, from the T'ang till Sung, inclusive.

**The Five Moral Qualities** (Wu

Chang) are, according to Confucius: humanity, sense of duty, wisdom, reliability, ceremonial behavior. **The Five Gifts** (Wu li) are (in the following order of importance): longevity, good health, peace and tranquility, virtue, riches. **The Five permutations of being** (Wu hsing) are: wood, fire, earth, metal and water. **The Five Thunders** (Wu lei) is a Taoist magic spell. **Five measures of rice** (Wu dou mi) is the name of a Taoist sect, after its founder Zhang Lu, whose payment for healing a spirit of a man was fixed in that form and quantity.

During Sun Yat-sen's First Republic, China's national flag was a **five-stripe banner**, each stripe representing one of the national minorities inhabiting China. With the pronouncement of the People's Republic of China, it became a **Five-star** one.

## (from Page 46)

other ethnic minority groups of China. They call it the zhuba. It is a cloak, spacious and comfortable, covering only the left shoulder, not unlike a Roman toga. In case of need, the right shoulder may be covered by an inner long sleeve.

It is tied at the waist by a sash and has no pockets or buttons. Instead, the front of the cloak hangs over the sash, forming a space one can use to store a bowl for rice, chopsticks, tobacco, pipe, or any such objects for immediate use.

Tibetan nomads make their zhubas of hides and skins, lining them with fur to isolate the outside temperature from the inside, making them wearable during the freezing nights and scalding days, like some of the Bedouin abbayia. In addition, it may be used as a blanket, in case of an unpredicted halt in the mountains at night.

It is only natural that the thought of changing this dress for another, no matter how fashionable, never enters the mind of a Tibetan.

### *Longpao -- "The Dragon dress"*

The Dragon is the most powerful, yet benevolent creature of the Chinese mythology. Consequently, it symbolizes the most powerful and benevolent of men on earth – the Emperor. This synonymous association between the two was eloquently demonstrated in China by clothing their emperors in what they called Longpao – "The

dragon dress": a robe made of heavy brocade with nine gold and silver dragons, sun, moon, stars, clouds, animals and birds displayed on it – the whole of the Universe, whose master was none else but the person wearing it. Such was the official attire of a Chinese Emperor – from the first dynasties of the Tian Xia - The Sub-Heaven Empire.

Needless to say, the privilege of wearing Longpao belonged solely to the emperor. Anyone else putting it on would be considered an usurper of the Imperial authority and dealt with accordingly – guess how...

### *Chinese Jews on ITV*

During January, 2005, twice a week, Israel Television (Chanel 25) screened films about the Jews in China, including an interview with Teddy Kaufman about the Jews in contemporary China, and with Teddy Piastunovich about the Jews in Kaifeng. Shi Lei, one of the 40 remnants of the Kaifeng Jewish community, took part in the interview.

# Letters

## Alexander Goldstein

To T. Kaufman: I am sending you this message as I have visited the website of IYS Association. I believe that my twenty years experiences in Chinese modern and ancient languages, as well as my personal skills will be of worth help to the Association. I have attached herewith my basic Resume for your benign perusal and consideration with the hope that you will grant me the opportunity of visiting your office to explore the possibility of collaboration. I thank you for your time and concern, and with anticipation of your early response.

## Prof. Yehezkel Dror The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute Jerusalem, Israel

To T. Kaufman: We are pleased to forward you one of the first printed copies of the strategy paper: "China and the Jewish People: Old Civilizations in a New Era". This document was prepared by Dr. Shalom Solomon Wald. It is the first in a series of strategy papers designed to improve the standing of the Jewish people in emerging superpowers without biblical traditions. The series is one of the main projects of the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute in the context of our work plan. The document on China will be followed by strategy papers on India and other emerging superpowers in Asia. We would appreciate your comment. If you are aware of any organizations of scholars who will be interested in this publication, please refer them to our website: [www.jpppi.org.il](http://www.jpppi.org.il). If you wish to communicate directly with the author, please write to: Dr. Shalom Solomon Wald, 99 rue de Passy, Paris 75016, France. Email: [s.wald@libertysurf.fr](mailto:s.wald@libertysurf.fr)

## Dr. Robert Warren Kowloon, Hong Kong

To T. Kaufman: Joseph Cohen opened up a side story when he wrote about I.Z.L. purchasing the two ships, the Pan York and Pan Crescent. This tangent story has Jewish connections also. The Pan York and Pan Crescent, although Liberty class, were banana carriers owned by the United Fruit Company. Both "Pans" participated in Aliyah Bet, with the Pan Crescent renamed the Azmaut. In 1970, United Fruit Company merged into United Brands Corp. The key financier was Eli Black, and orthodox rabbi. He committed suicide regarding a corporate scandal involving a Central American government. Both the Pan York and Pan Crescent entered the commercial fleet of Zim. Joseph Cohen's article was excellent.

## Noa Olmert

Shalom! My name is Noa Olmert.. I have the honor of being amongst the recipients of the Igud Yotzei Sin scholarships for 2004, my first year of academic studies. In spite of belonging to a family proud of its Chinese past, I have heard of your organization only a few months ago in a conversation with another former "Chinese". I was happy to hear that this unique community has an organization of its own and, still more, to have been accepted so warmly as its member. I was thrilled by the scholarships grant ceremony: it was my first contact with the Igud and the wonderful people working there. The only thing that made me sad was that my dear grandfather and grandmother, the late Mordechai and Bella Olmert, were not there to share with me my thrill and joy. I was proud to see a community, united and dedicated to help its younger generation to contribute to the welfare of our state the best way there is – the way of education. As for me, I am sure that your scholarship will help me to concentrate and reach better results in my academic studies. I am happy to have made my first contact with the Igud, and hope that your organization will continue to flourish and do its important work for many years to come. Now, more than ever before, I am proud of being a part of our Chinese community. Again, please accept in my name and the name of my family my deepest gratitude for your concern and generosity.



**Ian Leventhal**

To T. Kaufman: I am president of Living Bridge, a company that is currently working with the Hong Kou government on plans to restore a seven block area in the old Jewish district around the Ohel Moishe synagogue. We have been in contact with Israeli Consul General Ilan Maor for two years as the project has progressed. In our plans for the area is a new Shanghai Jewish Cultural Complex. This building, planned to be built adjacent to the synagogue, will house a museum on the Jewish experience in Shanghai. It just so happens I will be in Israel from March 17 through to March 28. It would be my pleasure to meet you and share with you some of the details of the proposed restoration plan. In the meantime you can google me and read about our work in Shanghai, or visit our web site at [www.livingbridge.net](http://www.livingbridge.net). Looking forward to hearing from you.  
Email: [ianleventhal@rogers.com](mailto:ianleventhal@rogers.com) Phone Number : 416 484 9118 416 484 9129

**Isai A.Kaufman**  
**Far Eastern Society of San Francisco, Inc.**  
**San Francisco, California**  
**USA**

To Y. Klein: I received your letter on behalf of Igud Yotzei Sin and all former residents of China in Israel with good wishes on my 85th birthday. I also received a certificate from Igud Yotzei Sin informing me that my name is inscribed in the Golden Book of the Jewish National Fund. Please accept my sincere gratitude for the good wishes and the certificate; I will cherish the certificate – it was one of the best birthday presents. It is very gratifying for me to realize that my humble contribution to the charitable endeavors and untiring work and devotion of Igud Yotzei Sin was appreciated.

**Shalom Wald**  
**Israel**

To T. Kaufmann: I am the author of a little book "China and the Jewish People" which has already been brought to your attention by several of my friends, including Mrs. Ruthi Shany from TA/Zfat/Shanghai and Prof. Zhang Qianhong from Kaifeng. Copies to you should be in the mail by now. I have given my Institute (the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute in Jerusalem) your private address. I am sorry for the delays which are due to the current end-of-year work pressures in the Institute.

I would be glad if my effort could support your own important endeavours and hopes. I am reading your "Bulletin" from time to time and would be very grateful if you could mention the book there and give it some publicity, with the reference that it can be bought via [www.israelbooks.com](http://www.israelbooks.com) for 16 US Dollars, postage included, and also, that the Hebrew edition will be published early in 2005 (probably in January).

**Marvin Tokayer**

To T. Kaufman: I trust that you are feeling better, and overcoming the flu epidemic that is currently worldwide...I wish to express my sincerest appreciation for the signed copy of your recent book, with the wisely chosen, and emotional and touching title, as you are a true harbinger in heart and soul. I look forward to seeing you when I am in Israel, as there are so many aspects of the book that I wish to further explore with you... I was even amazed to read that you are a direct descendant of the founder of Chabad Hasidism...again, many many thanks for thinking of me with your book, and congratulations upon a superb achievement and a lasting legacy of the Jewish communities in Manchuria and Harbin. P.S. It may interest you to know that a documentary was made of my book, The Fugu Plan, which will be shown on national television in the U.S.A. on May 5. I will get you a copy of this film.

**Caryl Simon-Katler**

Dr. Jonathan Goldstein suggested that you would have Dr. Kaufman's 1912 Kol Nidre sermon in which he discoursed eloquently on the Beilis case. Can you tell me how I can obtain a copy?  
Email: [csimon@localnet.com](mailto:csimon@localnet.com)

**Kenneth Neiman**  
USA

On the back of the referenced current edition of "Bulletin" picture #5 is the home of the Skidelsky family. My mother's maiden name was Skidelsky and the Skidelskys of Harbin were relatives. Is it possible to send me the original or copy of the photograph for our family records? Please let me know the charges, I will send you my check at once. On the inside of the back cover, you have identified photo #5 as a synagogue in Tientsin. I believe it is actually in Harbin and was originally a Talmud Torah built in 1920 by the Skidelsky family. I have a color photo of the building shown on page 21 of a book published in Hong Kong by the Old China Hand Press called "God and Country" which features important Western Religious Architecture in old China. Incidentally, the Talmud Torah is mentioned in Chaim Potok's writings along with a photo of a Hebrew class which was held in the building!  
Thank you in advance for your kind assistance in this matter. Email: (kenmyr@hotmail.com) Address: 4545 W. Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood, IL 60712, USA

**Shi Lei**  
Kaifeng

To Teddy Piastunovitch: Shalom, I was very happy to hear from you. My parents and I are fine. Thank you! I miss my family a lot. So I am back to China this time. I don't know yet when I will return to Israel. Be in touch, please! My parents and I wish you and Jenny Happy New Year! My parents and I often talked about you and Jenny and your Kaifeng visit. We like the pictures you took very much! They are very nice pictures! Also please convey my regards to Teddy Kaufman and all the members of the Igud Yotsei Sin.

**Naoki Maruyama**  
Tokyo, Japan

To T. Kaufman: Thank you very much for your cooperation. Last year I missed the chance to visit Harbin. But in November Pan Guang visited Tokyo and we met and were joined by Peter Berton then also visiting Tokyo. I wish you a happy and peaceful 2005. Best wishes.

**To Teddy Kaufman:**

I am forwarding this message from my brother Sasha who lives in New York - hope it is of interest. I hope all is well with your family and Dima's - we read about you all the time in the BULLETIN but not a word about him. We are all well and hope to be in Israel soon. Best regards - Ariel/Riuka

**From:** "Isaac Shapiro" <ISHAPIRO@skadden.com> **To:** bbsariel@hotmail.com, shapi@jps.net **Subject:** Harbin exhibit  
Date: Tue, 25 Jan 2005 10:03:01 -0500

**Dear Ariel, dear Jacob,** Ever since I revisited Harbin in May 2004, I have been working with the Harbin Jews Research Center to help organize a travelling photographic exhibit covering the history of the Jews in Harbin from 1895 to 1985, which they want to bring to the United States in 2006. The Yeshiva Museum in New York has agreed to provide a New York site for the exhibit and to help locate other sites in the US, including California. A Chinese delegation from Harbin is coming to New York for a meeting with the folks at Yeshiva Museum on February 7th. Meanwhile, the Museum has found a professional who is able and willing to create a video which will consist of a set of interviews with people like us, Peter Berton, Issya and Golda and others. While the Harbin Center has offered to bear all costs associated with the exhibit, the Museum would like to start on the video now because of the advanced age of some of the interviewees, notably in California. This would require seed money of around \$10,000, and they have asked if anyone among the former Harbin residents in California is notably well off and would like to give or loan money for this project. Would you kindly e-mail a copy of this e-mail to Peter and anyone else you think appropriate and let me know if someone volunteers? Love to you both,  
**Sasha/Isaac**

# Website Family Search

Teddy Piastunovich: [teddy@jewsofchina.org](mailto:teddy@jewsofchina.org)

**From Jenni Hymoff  
Koeppel**

**Request:** Cathy Kai of the Harbin Foreign Affairs Office gave me your address for me to contact you for help in finding how to trace relatives of ours who lived in Harbin until around 1950. We are trying to find the names of those persons in order to locate them in Israel, which is where we think their descendants might be today.



**21.01.1919**

**Ida Samuilovna Redler  
Ида Самуиловна Редлер**

My great-grandmother, Tobei Redler Kravetsky, had a brother who fled the Russian Imperial Army around 1914 and lived in Harbin for several decades where he was a barber. He died in Harbin, and his son emigrated to Israel. We are trying to locate the family to reunite after all these years. The name could be Saul or Isaac Redler (one brother ended up in St. Paul, Minnesota and became naturalized under the

name Elia so we are not sure which of the names we have obtained from the Odessa Archives correspond to which brother, the one in St. Paul or the one in Harbin).

I have checked the online Jewish Cemetery register but have found no Redlers. If you know of any website or postal address we could approach regarding finding these people, it would be of immense assistance.

**Reply:** At Teddy Kaufman's request I have asked some of the older members of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel whether the name Redler rings a bell. One of the members remembers that a Redler couple did immigrate to Israel and resided in Migdal Haemek near Nazareth. There were many immigrants from China residing there in the 50 and 60s (whether this Redler is related to you is not known). He also remembers that both the Redlers passed away some time ago and seems to think there was a son.

A check with the phone company indicates that there are at least 30 Redlers in Israel. The name of an offspring would be of help (I tried 3 and drew a blank). In any case we will post your inquiry in the forthcoming issue of our Bulletin and hope that someone could be of help.

Next month we will have a "Family Search" section on our website [www.jewsofchina.org](http://www.jewsofchina.org). At that time your query will be posted there as well. P.S. We have a list of graves in the Harbin section of the website, but Redler is not listed there. The original Harbin Jewish cemetery was razed to make room for urban development, but the Harbin authorities moved most but not all

of the graves to a location a Huang Shan. Perhaps the Redler grave was one of those not moved, in which case there would not be any records left.

## **To Mark Shklov**

Reference your email of Nov 29, 2004. Your request has been attended to by posting it in the Bulletin of Igud Yotzei Sin. (see a sample of the latest Bulletin in the Igud section of the home page). You may also wish to surf to [www.jewsofchina.org](http://www.jewsofchina.org). There you will find material on Harbin, Tianjin, Shanghai and cities along the China Eastern Railroad that supported Jewish congregations. In the Harbin section you will find a list of graves and several biographies. We are at work in indexing about 50 years of the Bulletin issues (Russian and English). These will be posted in the next few months. Perhaps you will find reference to your family in one of the articles.

## **Ben Weinstock**

### **New York**

I have recently learned that my grandfather had cousins born in Tiraspol, Bessarabia who went to Harbin around 1915. They were: Gershon and Khana Weinstock sons Boris, David, and Simon Weinstock, all born in the 1890s-early 1900s. The family had a successful business (clothing?) in Harbin in the 1920s. Boris Weinstock left Harbin in the 1930s and went to Belgium, where he was killed in the war. It is possible that Simon went to Israel. Do you have information about this family?

# IN MEMORIAM

## **Sara Morgulev**

### **A Love Letter to my Mother-in-law, Sara Morgulev**

by Tzvia Limor (Morgulev)

There is a void in my life with the passing of my mother-in-law, Sara Morgulev. Sara was the best mother-in-law I could have ever wished for - who was also my friend and mentor. This is a Mother who, together with Mara, had always treated me as though I was one of their own children. Sara was always there for me when I needed help with my own parents; her relationship with my parents - specially with my Mother - was as close as could be. Whenever my Mother needed any kind of advice or assistance - Sara was the very first person she called. This extraordinary relationship between the two Mothers was a tremendous help to me, being since I was living overseas.

Sara was my confidant, and in a strange way - I was hers! We always asked each other's advice, and our relationship became more and more like two sisters. I will forever remember the good memories when Sara visited and stayed with us in Los Angeles, sitting in our kitchen enjoying the food and her company. She was always telling us stories about her Rosenstein family, in Siberia, Harbin and Shanghai. Sara

## **Misha Kogan**

On February 10 it was 21 years since Misha Kogan passed away. Misha's and Asya's Japanese friends gathered together at Asya's residence in Tokyo for a traditional memorial in memory of Misha.

loved to spend hours and hours with her great-grandchildren, singing songs and playing games with them. They in return loved and adored her ... always calling her "Savta Sara".

I sorely miss Sara, and I know that she is somewhere up there with her loving Mara, watching over me and my family.

## **Sarah Ossin**

It is with great sorrow that we stand here today to say the last goodbye to our dear friend Sarah Ossin. Sarah was an exceptional person. In her better days she was full of life, always with a smile on her beautiful face. She was a person with whom you could discuss many subjects, personal matters and always get an experienced advice. All those who knew her will miss her, especially the Far Eastern Society of San Francisco. For many years she was the President of the Ladies Auxiliary and all the affairs of that organization were planned under her watchful care. May she rest in peace - we will always remember her.

**Gutia Katzeff, Hon. Secretary  
Far Eastern Society of San Francisco**

## **Isador Magid (1913-2004)**

### **Philanthropist and Progressive Community 'Giant'** - John Levi

Isador Magid was born in Harbin, China. His mother and father had come from Siberia in 1906. There were 6000 Russian-speaking Jews living in Harbin and he graduated from a Russian school in which one-third of the students were Jewish. After graduation he went to central China to study at the American Presbyterian College, but the global recession of the 1930s profoundly affected his family, forcing him to abandon his studies.

In 1937 Isador and Ira married. In a card to Ira for their 60th anniversary in 1997, Isador wrote: "You have been a true partner and support in difficult and dangerous times. I love you with all my heart from first sight to this day and consider myself fortunate to share my life with you."

In 1941, Japanese-occupied Manchuria was under threat from Germany and Isador and his young family were advised to leave immediately. The family moved to Tsingtao, then Tientsin and finally to Shanghai, where they would live for 10 years.

At 35, Isador became president of the Executive Council of the Jewish Communities in China. In 1949, he became the honorary Israeli consul in Shanghai, a position he held until the family left for Australia in 1951. After two initial business ventures, Isador Magid established the Overland Corporation which developed housing estates and shopping centers, including Brandon Park in Mulgrave and Fountain Gate in Berwick.

Isador was a loving and proud father. When their youngest son Ralph died, Ira and Isador shared that devastating grief. Every Sunday they would come out to Springvale to place flowers on their son's grave. Bobby and Ruth and Nora and Danny brought them delight and gave them grandchildren - Jackie, Anthony, Lara, Sasha, Anna, Yoni, Alex and Ben. Each of them inspired their grandfather and brought him joy.

Isador was committed to social justice, to Israel and to Zionism. He was a friend of every Israeli ambassador in Canberra. Isador taught others how to give - a tough lesson to convey to those Jews born in Australia who had never known poverty and who had never known what it meant to begin

life anew again and again.

For 21 years Isador was chairman of the United Israel Appeal in Australia. It became a full-time part-time job. Locally, Saul Same became his partner, his "brother" in this work. He was an executive member of the Zionist Federation of Australia, an honorary vice-president of the Jewish National Fund and a member of the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce.

Internationally, Isador became chairman of the Jewish Agency's Department of Immigration and Absorption. He saw the first Jews freed from the former Soviet Union and then the first Jews arrive in Israel from Ethiopia. Isador also served on the executive of the Sochnut for 12 years.

In Melbourne, together with Bob Zabłud, Sam Lipski and Michael Danby, he found the Australia/Israel Review. He became a member of the governing body of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. He was a creator of the Golda Meir Fellowship Program in Australia, campaigning together with the late Ron Castan for the Yitzhak Rabin memorial fund at the Hebrew University. He had dedicated a wing of the Australian student's dormitory on Mount Scopus in his father's name as soon as Jerusalem was reunified and then dedicated an auditorium at the university's hospital to his late son.

In 1980, the Hebrew University honored him with Bublick Prize and in 1985, the Golda Meir Prize. In 1988, he received an honorary doctorate from the university. In 1986, he was made a Member of the Order of Australia.

When the time came for Temple Beth Israel to rebuild, Isador chaired the project. The Magid Resource Centre on Alma Road, formally opened by former prime minister Bob Hawke, is the result of part of that work.

Twenty-six years ago Isador joined me in establishing The King David School, Australia's first Progressive

Jewish day school. Last week, building commenced at the Magid Institute for senior students on Dandenong Road.

In Jerusalem there is also a Magid Institute for continuing and adult education at the Hebrew University. It serves Jews and Arabs, and thanks to Isador's generosity, it is now spreading its wings to other Israeli centers.

How will Isador be remembered? Scores of people around the world remember his kindness. He was at once considerate, gentleman, creative, stubborn, sentimental, far-seeing, devoted and loved. He was a giant; a concerned Australian and passionately Jewish. Historically, a magid was someone who traveled as a speaker or an expounder of ethics. Isador always considered his public speeches very carefully but his actions were far louder than his words. His life is an astonishing achievement and children and adults, both in Australia and in Israel, for years to come will know that magid really means blessing.

**(Edited extract of the eulogy delivered by Temple Beth Israel's Rabbi John Levi)**

### *Ernest G. Heppner*



Ernest G. Heppner, 83, who escaped the Holocaust by fleeing to Shanghai, China, died on October 6, 2004.

Mr. Heppner was active in the community and as a member of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. He was a self-taught scholar whose book *Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto* is the only documented memoir by a survivor of the wartime Jewish community in Shanghai. As a result of the research for his book, he disclosed to the world the service of a Dutch consul in Lithuania, Jan Zwartendijk, who helped more than 2,000 Polish Jews flee the Nazis.

He was born in Germany, where his family had owned a bakery that produced matzos. He and his mother fled to China from Europe in 1939. He arrived in the United States in July 1947. After working for Monroe/Litton Corp. as a systems manager, he joined RANAC Computer Corp as vice-president and general manager, retiring at the end of 1986.

He was awarded the Anti-Defamation League's Torch of Liberty Award and the Jewish Federation's David Cook Memorial Award. Mr. Heppner was a fervent enemy of racism and bigotry. For services rendered in that effort, he received a citation from the FBI. In 1992 the Anti-Defamation League established the Ernest G. Heppner Distinguished Community Leadership Award. In 1997 Indiana University bestowed on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. A documentary, "Victory Heppner," describing his life, has been televised on PBS.

Mr. Hepper was past chairman of the State of Indiana Regional Advisory Board and past honorary chairman of Ohio/Kentucky Indiana Regional Advisory Board of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith. He served as president of the Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai; B'nai Brith Lodge #2192; of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Brotherhood, and of Toastmasters Club #1071. He was a Life Board Member of Indianapolis Jewish board member of the National Conference

of Christians and Jews and Project Commitment of the Inter-religious Commission on Human Equality. Mr. Heppner volunteered his services to the Executive Service Corps, which aids new entrepreneurs.

Survivors include his wife, Illo L. Heppner; a daughter, Anita Plotinsky; grandchildren David, Benjamin, and Miriam Plotinsky, and a brother, Henry Heppner who lives in England.

Funeral services were held on Monday, October 11, at Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. Burial was in Indianapolis Hebrew North Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the Anti-Defamation League or The Social Action Committee at Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. Arrangements were entrusted to Aaron-Ruben-Nelson Meridian Hills Mortuary.

**(From The Jewish Post & Opinion, October 13, 2004)**

## 54 *David Vardi (Volovik) - at 87*

On Decemer 29, 2004, David Volovik (Vardi), formerly of Shanghai, passed away in Jerusalem. He was 87.

We all remember David as an ardent member of the Shanghai Betar, an excellent sportsman and a boxing champion. In 1949, David and his young wife, Hadassah (Judy) came to Israel and settled in Jerusalem. For over half a century, David worked at the Hadassah Hospital maitenance department, and after having retired, intensively participated in the Igud Yotzei Sin activities, for five years, as a chairman of our Jerusalem branch. He was loved by each and all for his amicable ways and his being over ready to help anyone in need. Many of his friends, Israelis and former immigrants from China, attended his funeral. Flower wreaths were laid on the grave by Teddy Kaufman and Seva Podolsky.

David is survived by wife, two daughters and a son. May his memory be blessed.

## *The Son of the Rabbi*

**By Alexander Rosenbloom**

For the past few years I am engaged in the search for my old fellow countrymen from the city of Borisov (Russia), who disappeared forever in the dungeons of the notorious gulags. In some cases I succeeded (their names can be found in my site). But I haven't finished yet. Some time ago I have come across a man by the name of Yevsei Moiseyevich Kiselev. He was born in Borisov in 1907, but lived in Leningrad, where he worked as a chemical engineer.

On October 2, 1937 he was arrested. As it was customary in those days, a "case" was quickly fabricated, and after a 12-day blitz investigation, a so-called NKVD committee sentenced him to death for "treason", according to the well remembered paragraph #58 of the USSR Criminal Law. According to another paragraph of the same law, such sentence was not subject to an appeal and as a rule was executed immediately. However, the state hangmen must have been busy shooting others, so that the doomed man had to wait until 1937 for his turn.

I remembered that at the beginning of the 20th century, a Rabbi by the name of Aaron-Moshe Kiselev, a graduate from the famous Volozhin Yeshiva, lived in Borisov. In 1913, by invitation of the Jewish community of Harbin, China, he settled in that city and became the Chief (Ashkenazi – E.P.) Rabbi of China and the Far East. A thought crossed my mind that Yevsei Moiseyevich could very well be the son of that Rabbi, since those whose relatives lived abroad were the most attractive victims for the punitive forces of that criminal regime to be deprived of the right to live.

My first thought was that the most likely place to begin an investigation would be the intensively active Israeli based Igud Yotzei Sin, who knew Rabbi Kiselev well. They venerate his memory and even wrote a book dedicated to his life and deeds in

China. But, to my regret, they could not confirm that the Rabbi had a son, punished by the Soviet authorities, but still living in Russia. Neither did I get such a confirmation by the Rabbi's grandson (by another line of descent), Shmuel Kislev, now living in Israel, whom I queried by phone. However, a friend of mine, Valery Ladijensky, secretary of the abovementioned organization, gave me an e-mail address of still another descendant of Rabbi Aaron-Moshe Kiselev. His name is Lauren Vogel of Brussels, Belgium, who informed me that one of Rabbi's sons had been chastised by the Soviet authorities. My further investigation was also fruitful. Going through the St. Peterburg's telephone book, my finger stopped on the name Ilia Yevseyevich Kiselev. My intuition told me that this is the man who will supply me with the crucial information. I was right. The grandson of the Rabbi and the son of the engineer shot by the Soviets, was astonished that someone shows interest in perpetuating his father's memory.

Yevsei Kiselev was a highly educated man. He studied physics and chemistry in the Paris Sorbonne. Being a political activist, he joined the French communist party and eventually repatriated to his Motherland, the land of workers and peasants, little suspecting that the Motherland will turn out to be a cruel step-mother for him. And not only for him: his wife, Emilia, too, was arrested on the grounds of being a member of the family of "a traitor of the State", her life, however, was "magnanimously" spared, and she was sent to a far-away exile for many years.

Did Ilia Yevseyevich know anything about his grandfather and other relatives? He did hear about his Rabbi-grandfather, living in China. His mother also told him about other relatives, but, for obvious reasons, he never contacted them. He was very happy to receive from me a

photograph of his grandfather, whom he never saw before. He is way over 70, but is hopeful to make up for lost time, and to get acquainted with his relatives living in various countries. I, too, am delighted to have been able to make a son of my fellow countryman happy with such a totally unexpected surprise. And, last but not the least, concluding my story, I cannot but express my deep gratitude to Irina Shapiro of St. Petersburg, who took close part in my endeavors.

### **Nesia Shamir (Friedman) - at 82**

On February 6, Nesia Shamir (nee Friedman), formerly of Tientsin, passed away in Kfar Saba at 82.

Nesia was born in the city of Manchuria, and later moved with her family to Haiolar. When the Japanese occupied Manchuria, the Friedmans moved to Tientsin. Nesia is well remembered by the old-time Tientsin Betarim, both as an active member of the Tientsin Betar and a very amicable and friendly young girl. She also took part in the elite Russian literary circle of Lusja Jemchujny and the "Kunst" Club theatrical company. In 1944 she married Boris (Bob) Shmerling (now Dov Shamir), another popular member of the younger Tientsin Jewish community. The couple made aliyah in 1949 and settled in Agrobank (Giv'at Olga) of which the first houses were built by the Chinese olim themselves, including Bob. For some years he worked as a truck driver, while Nesia took care of their three children: Avraham and the twins Dalia and Benyamin.

The Shamirs eventually moved to Tel Aviv, where Boris and Nesia worked as book-keepers – he in El Al, and she -- in an insurance company. After their retirement Nesia and Boris moved away from the busy center – to Kfar Saba. For the past few years Nesia's health gave way, and Boris devotedly took care of her providing for maximum comfort they could afford. Nesia and Boris were members of Igud Yotzei Sin from

its very foundation, although Nesia's dwindling health prevented her from participating in its activities.

Nesia was interred in the Yarkon cemetery on February 7. She is survived by husband, three children and brother, David Friedman and families.

Her image will be well remembered by her family and many friends, amongst them the writer.

**E. P.**

### **Riva Basin - at 89**

On December 22, in Jerusalem, Riva Basin (nee Moiseyev), formerly of Harbin, passed away at the age of 89.

Riva was born in the town of Manchuria in a well known Zionist family, known for their extensive activity on behalf of the Jewish communities of Manchuria, Harbin, and, later, of Shanghai and Kobe, Japan.



**Riva Basin**

In her youth in Harbin, Riva was an active member of Betar and was known to be a talented actress. She is an author of a notable essay on the history of her native town of Manchuria and a medley of poems and short stories. She and her husband, Sima, came to Israel with the first wave of the mass aliyah from China and settled in Jerusalem. For

many years she was the secretary of the Jerusalem department of the IYS. Gone is another representative of the splendid generation of the Jews of Harbin, nurtured by the Russian-Jewish tradition. May her memory be blessed and remembered.

### **Ruth Tichman (Budnevich)**

It is difficult to write an obituary about a life-long friend – from childhood till the old age. Our friendship with Ruth (or Rutha, as we called her) began in Betar.

Rutha was one of the ablest girls amongst us: she played piano and gave personal concerts in spite of her being a green teenager. She was the best pupil in her class, and graduated from the Harbin School of Commerce with a gold medal award. Our music teacher, Valentina Grigorievna Gershgorin, insisted on Rutha to go to New York, saying that "her talent calls for wider horizons."

In New York, Rutha met Herbert Tichman, a young talented clarinet player. The two were soon married and gave duet concerts in New York and Tel Aviv. When in Israel, they stayed with us, and when visited the USA, we lodged with them. We had an intensive correspondence, and often talked to each other on the phone. We have a number of their audio cassettes we frequently listen to.

Their three daughters went in the steps of their parents: the eldest, Nina, a talented pianist, won an award in Europe; Nadia (a spit image of her mother in her youth) plays the first violin on one of the prestigious USA orchestras; and the youngest, Naomi, is an actress.

When Rutha's health gave way, the Tichmans moved to San Francisco, closer to their children. Herbert devotedly took care of Rutha, but the illness steadily progressed, and, finally, death claimed her for her own. As for me, I lost a dear, life-long friend.

**G. Tandet**

# From The Album of The Past



**The Jewish Theater in Shanghai, November 1927**

## **IGUD YOTZEI SIN BULLETIN – English Supplement – ISSN 0793-8365**

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(from the by-laws of the Association)

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

1. To promote a sense of community among the former Jewish residents in China.
2. To maintain a channel of communication for the members of the above community
3. To assist in collecting, preserving and publishing historical materials dealing with the life of the above community.
4. To assist IYS in meeting its goals, particularly those dealing with social assistance and educational stipends to members of the above community living in Israel.