



Bulletin

Igud Yotzei Sin

Association of Former Residents of China

November-December 2007 ♦ Vol LIV ♦ Issue No. 394 English Supplement

JEWISH HARBIN TODAY

(October 2007)



Upper row (left to right): the building of the Jewish high school, the building of the Jewish hospital.

Lower row: the exhibition on the history of the Jews of Harbin in the "New" synagogue, the entrance to the Jewish cemetery and the new synagogue at the cemetery.

VERA KARLIKOV - GUEST FROM AUSTRALIA



Vera Karlikov, our compatriot from Shanghai, arrived on a visit in Israel and participated in the Sunday get-together at Beit-Ponve that was arranged in her honor. From left to right seated are: Shosh Tsur, Jeanne Tikotsky and Rosa Gershevich.

Stand: Iky and Vera Ioselevich, Benny Tsur, Vera Karlikov, Rasha Kaufman, Tamara Faibusovich and Teddy Kaufman.



From left to right: Rosa Gershevich, Vera Karlikov and Jeanne Tikotsky



From left to right: Shosh Tsur, Tamara Faibusovich and Vera Karlikov.

GUESTS IN "BEIT-PONVE"



At the regular Sunday get-together at "Beit-Ponve" present were Professor Izumi Sato of Tokyo and Daniel Schuster of Vienna. In the photo from right to left: Professor I. Sato, T. Kaufman, Daniel Schuster and Y. Klein.

Daniel Schuster from the Austrian Memorial Museum of the Shoah came to Israel and works at the "Yad VaShem" in Jerusalem. Daniel visited "Beit-Ponve", where met with T. Kaufman and Yossi Klein and received explanations concerning the materials which relate the story of the sojourn of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria in Shanghai (Hongkew).

Contents

- 3. Themes of the Day
- 6. People and Events
- 7. Camp Doctor
- 10. Appeal to Harbin Residents
- 11. Forum in Harbin
- 16. Chinese Homecoming
- 21. Jewish Life in Shanghai
- 22. The Podolsky Family
- 26. Menorah of Fang Bang Lu
- 38. Memories of Harbin
- 42. Letters
- 45. The New Israel's Messenger
- 49. Hongkew Ghetto in Shanghai
- 53. Searching and Researching
- 56. Among Compatriots in San Francisco
- 57. Chusan Road Chatter
- 58. Saved in Shanghai
- 60. Rickshaw Reunion
- 61. Insider – Outsider
- 64. Jews of Asia
- 66. My Talmud Torah Days
- 69. Rosh Hashanah in Tokyo
- 70. Israel Epstein
- 73. Donations
- 77. In Memoriam
- 80. Obituaries

THEMES OF THE DAY

T. Kaufman

Again, we are together

A year has passed since the last all-Israel Hannuka get-together of the former Jewish residents of China took place in December, 2006. Another painful year – for the people of Israel, for the country and for our organization. And yet, despite everything, we are looking forward to be together again on December 11, 2007, at the traditional meeting of the Chinese old hands - grand fathers, fathers, sons and daughters, and their children. We greatly regret that each year less and less grandparents appear at the party to

see their grandchildren being handed scholarships to continue their academic education. This is our contribution for the benefit of the future generations of the citizens of our independent state in which they live and which they are building.

Hannuka is the annual festival of Jewish heroism, a miracle of the victory of tiny candles over age-long darkness. For us, immigrants from far away China it is also a miracle of being a brotherhood of members of a small Jewish community, preserving its roots on the soil of our historical fatherland.

Happy holiday, dear friends!

Hannuka Gathering

The Board of Directors of Igud Yotzei Sin is pleased to announce the forthcoming traditional annual gathering of former residents of China and the ceremony of awarding scholarships to students.

The event will be held on the evening when we light the eighth Hannuka candle on Tuesday, December 11, 2007 in the Auditorium of the Association of the Employees of the Tel Aviv Municipality, Beth Oved Ha'iriya, 4, Pumbeditha Street, Tel Aviv.

Doors will open at 4.p.m. for the meeting of members and light refreshments. The doors of the auditorium will close at 5.45 p.m. for the opening of the ceremony.

All ex-China residents are invited to participate

From The Album of The Past

Tientsin Jewish School



Typewriting and Shorthand Class, 1940

Mrs. S. Cavaliere, Instructress

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

THE IYS BULLETIN (Russian, English, Hebrew), (approximately 250 pages per issue), all aspects of Jewish communities of China, historical, memories, book reviews, archival information, current lives of individual Jews (China expatriates) worldwide. Continuous Publication since 1954

Published by: **Igud Yotzei Sin**
Association of former residents of China
 (founded 1951)

13 Gruzenberg Street
 P.O Box 29786, Tel Aviv, 61297, Israel
 Phone: (03) 5171997, Fax: (03) 5161631.
 e-mail: igud-sin@013.net

"The aim of the Association is to organize the former residents from the Far East for the purpose of mutual assistance and cooperation."
 (from the by-laws of the Association)

Editor-in-chief: **T.Kaufman**
 Editorial board:
Teddy Kaufman, Emmanuel Pratt,
Rebecca Toueg, Joe Levoff, Benny Tzur.
 Editor New Israel's Messenger: **R. Toueg**
 Editor, Chusan Road: **K. Maimann**
 Design & Production: **Profil 03-9045050**

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.

THE LEADERSHIP OF IGUD YOTZEI SIN IN ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH FAR-EASTERN SOCIETIES IN THE DIASPORA

Chairmen of IYS:

L. Piastunovich 1951-52
B. Kotz 1953-71
T. Kaufman since 1.1. 1972

Board of Directors:

Chairman - T. Kaufman
Deputy-President and
Treasurer - Y. Klein
Vice-President -
R. Veinerman

Members of the Board:

J. Bain
B. Bershinsky
G. Brovinsky
B. Darel
Y. Guri
D. Gutman
Z. Fainberg
A. Fradkin
M. Kamionka
G. Katz
D. Lvov
A. Podolsky
T. Pyastunovich
R. Rashinsky
J. Sandel
E. Vandel

Control Commission

M. Lihomanov
Z. Vatner

Honorary legal adviser

Attorney D. Friedmann

COMMITTEES

Committee of Tel Aviv:

V. Begun
E. Genansky
L. Koroshi
Z. Olshevky
M. Piasetsky
A. Rosenblum
Z. Rabkin
J. Tikotsky

Committee of Haifa and the North:

Chairman – E. Vandel
Members of the Committee:
M. Brodsky

I. Yudovich
D. Katvan
A. Vailer

Committee of Jerusalem

Chairman: A. Podolsky
B. Bershinsky

AMERICAN FAR- EASTERN SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

Secretary: Mira Mrantz
Board of Directors:
Leo Hanin
Joe Mrantz
Mika Cantz
Zoya Shlakis
Rose Horowitz

AMERICAN FAR-EASTERN SOCIETY, NEW-YORK

President:
Frances Greenberg
Vice-presidents: Eric Hasser
Joseph Wainer
Naomi Terk

Treasurer: Rose Peiser
Secretary: Leona Forman
Board of Directors:
Sally Berman
Robert Materman
Blanche Orjelick
Bella Rector
Eda Shvets
Luba Tuck
Dora Wainer
Auditor: Zalman Agran

FAR- EASTERN SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO:

Board of Directors:
Mr. I. Kaufman – President
Mr. A. Aronovsky –
Vice-President
Mrs. G. Katzeff –
Honorary Secretary
Mrs. S. Feldman–
Honorary Treasurer
Mrs. O. Kaufman – Director
Ms. L. Ostroff – Director
Mrs. B. Berkovitch –
Member
Mrs. R. Ionis – member

JEWISH FAR-EASTERN ASSOCIATIONS ABROAD AND HONORARY REPRESENTATIVES OF IGUD YOTZEI SIN

NEW YORK – USA

American Far-Eastern Society, Inc.
Mrs. F. GREENBERG – President
2124 Broadway PMB 3300
New York, N. Y., 10023, USA
Phone No. {212} 7877564

SAN FRANCISCO – USA

The Far-Eastern Society
of San Francisco, Inc.
Mr. I. Kaufman, President
5082 C. Diamond Heights Blvd.
San Francisco Ca. 94131 USA

LOS ANGELES – USA

American Far-Eastern
Society of Southern California
Mrs. Mira Mrantz,
Hon. Secretary
and Hon. Representative
5 Tanakill Park
Dr. E Creskill, N.J. 07626

CANADA – MONTREAL

Hon. Representative
Lily Frank
1460 Dr. Penfield, #905
Montreal QC Canada
H3G1B8

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Hon. Representatives
Stella and David Udovitch
57 Military Rd
Dover Heights NSW 2030
Australia
Phone No. (02)-93719347
Fax No. 61-2-93714397

People and Events

Prof. Izumi Sato visits Bet Ponve

On August 12, Professor Izumi Sato of the University of Tokio visited Bet Ponve. She took part in the traditional Sunday brunch and had a meeting with Teddy Kaufman.

Professor Sato is a long time friend of our organization and spent much time at our archives, working on her projects. Over the years she acquired many friends, and is considered by the IYS old-timers as an "honorary Jewish Chinese". Teddy warmly welcomed the guest and stressed her generous support of our Social Aid Fund.

Israel-Chinese tourist ties to strengthen

On August 13, a team of officials of a large Chinese tourist company "East-West International Travel", stationed in Beijing, visited Bet Ponve. Steve Xiu, the general director of the firm, and Ms. Kerry Yui were received by Teddy Kaufman, Yossi Klein and Ronnie Weinerman.

At the meeting, the Chinese company officials suggested a number of tourist excursions across "the Jewish China", including Harbin, Tientsin, Kaifeng and Shanghai. They also plan to take steps in the direction of developing Chinese tourism in Israel.

Israel Ambassador to China visits Harbin

The new ambassador of Israel to China, Amos Naddai, paid a two-day visit to Harbin. He had a meeting with the mayor of the city.

The ambassador was an honorary guest at a large exhibition of photographs and artifacts on the subject "China and Israel: Two ancient Peoples: today – friends, tomorrow – partners." The exhibition displayed the relationship between

the Chinese and the Jews throughout the ages.

Daniel Shuster visits Bet Ponve

During the current year, the Israel Memorial Museum "Yad va Shem" hosts Daniel Shuster of the Vienna Holocaust Memorial Center, working there in preparation of the forthcoming international seminar on the Austrian involvement with the Jewish tragedy during the Nazi occupation of the country (See the letter).

The seminar is planned to take place in 2008, at "Yad va-shem", Jerusalem, with the participation of scientists from Austria, Israel, China and others.

Daniel Shuster visited Bet Ponve to negotiate IYS assistance in the project, which was promised him by T. Kaufman.

Daniel Shuster came to Israel as an alternative service in the Austrian army.

Parisian Jews visited Harbin

A group of 55 Jews from Paris made an extensive excursion of "The Jewish Past in China". In Harbin, they met with the president of the Heilongjiang Academy of the Social Science, Cui Wei. They were especially impressed by the perpetual comprehensive exhibition at the premises of the former "New Synagogue".

The Israel-China-Austrian seminar on Holocaust, 03-13.07.2008

The Israel-China-Austrian seminar on Holocaust, organized by the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service (AHMS) will take place in Israel in July, 2008. It will last ten days with the participation of eight experts from each country. The first part will take place at the Yad va-shem in Jerusalem

centered on international relations. Instead of presenting papers, the seminar will rather take a form of dialogues between various sections. Here is the list of subjects to be discussed:

- a) An involuntary union between Austria and Germany from one side, and Israel (as a country basically originated from the Holocaust) – from the other: the differences, possibilities and apprehensions, as compared to the normal international relations;
- b) China's role in 1948 relating to the creation of the Jewish State;
- c) The influence of the Holocaust on the Israeli society;
- d) The Austrian fascism;
- e) The Zionist movement;
- f) The Sino-German relations;
- g) Comparison between Holocaust and the Japanese genocide in China;
- h) The post holocaust Israel-Austria relations;
- i) National Socialism in Shanghai: the only shelter.

The second part – A five-day tour of Israel: In Jerusalem – excursion of the Old City, Knesset, the High Court of Justice, the National Museum. An excursion to the Dead Sea – Ein Geddi, Massada; The Sea of Galilee and the Golan Heights, Haifa.

(The Israeli participants are also invited to participate in the second part of the Seminar).

For further information please contact:

Martin Wallner

Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service,
the China coordinator

wallner@auslandsdienst.at

Daniel James Schuster

Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service,

Coordinator of the Seminar

schuster@auslandsdienst.at

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

Chapter 10 Section G

An issue standing in its own category is the exchange of letters with relatives, those living in the Soviet Union and especially with those living on the outside. In a camp having a special status like ours under a prison-like regime, a prisoner is permitted to send letters twice a year and not more. The letter is first sent to the censor who crosses out everything not to his liking or taste. Sometimes he tears out half a page and sometimes he destroys the whole letter. The censor registers every letter so that the prisoner should not send, god forbid, more than one letter within the half year. The prisoner can receive letters, in theory, without any restrictions, but in practice, he gets the letters very seldom as most of the letters received for him are never given to him. At times, months pass before a letter received for a prisoner are given to him. There are prisoners, however, who know how to get around this problem of sending letters, They give the letters to some supervisor without writing the name of the sender on the letter this supervisor sends letters to their destination without them passing through the hands of the sensor. For this service the supervisor receives some gift from the sender, usually some item from a parcel the prisoners receives from time to time. The letters coming from the outside do not carry a specific address but just the name of the prisoner and the post office box number, each hard labor camp in the Soviet Union has its own post office box number. During my entire stay in the hard labor camp I never wrote to anyone.



To all my family living abroad or to my relatives in the Soviet Union. I was afraid to write so that no harm should come to them because of being in contact with a "criminal" like me. In the late summer of 1949 a Jewish inmate of the hospital, originally from Lithuania entered my room and said:

"I know that you are not in contact with your family, living abroad for many years, and you and they know nothing about each other, write them a letter and I shall see to it that it is dispatched, and be sure that it will reach it's destination".

His offer caused me to be suspicious, but in any case I asked him cautiously:

"I don't dare to ask you how you are going to do it and how my letter will reach its destination, this is your secret, but is there no fear that some harm should come to someone?"

"Don't worry your letter will be dispatched from Lithuania or Poland..."

I was attracted by this offer, and wrote a few insignificant words on

my health situation and that I did not lose hope for better days to come. Ten days later this person returned again and suggested that I send another letter. I did as he suggested.

A month and a half later one of our female doctors came to me, she too was a prisoner; she looked around, to make sure we were not observed, and handed me a paper and in a shaking voice whispered into my ear "Take this letter its from your family" when she noted my awe she added "I was asked to give this to you..." and quickly left the room. My heart started to beat faster, I lock the door with shaking hands, I recognize my wife's handwriting. This letter is actually from my home. Tears fill my eyes. I read the letter and read it again and again tens of times. The Lithuanian

Jew did not betray me, the letters I sent arrived at their destination, in time a received a second letter from my home. After some time this person was transferred to another camp and the contact that was established through him with my family was lost. Since then, and up to 1955 I knew nothing of my family, and they knew nothing about me.

One day the supervisor of the Sanitary Department fell ill and her second in command, a Jewish officer with the rank of captain, took her place, he carries out her duties over zealously, very often he used to interfere everywhere and it was obvious that he enjoyed the extra authority that befell him. One night he remained to sleep in the camp. In the evening he called me and suggested that we take a little walk in the yard. We walked

around the hospital barracks. The captained started our talk by praising my expertise and professionalism and that I enjoy the full confidence of the prisoners and also the sick that are not in the camp. I felt that the reason he asked me to walk with him was not for showering me with praises and I was not wrong. When he finished praising me he began talking about my "behavior", that I forget that I am only a prisoner and I have to follow the rules of behavior towards my superiors, I understood that he implied by this about the orders I receive from the young lady doctor who is the head of the children's ward.

"Yes" I replied, "I am a prisoner and I must take orders from my superiors even if I see that the head of the children's ward permits herself to act harmfully to the patients while the responsibility for her actions lie on me and not on her. All of us employed in the ward are resentful of her actions, but we keep silent, as we prisoners have no rights, while she is "free". However when the head of this ward told me to choose only Russian women to work in the ward, I told her: No, I will not agree to be a part of her scheme"

The captain interrupted my words and said loudly:

"This is not for you to decide, and she probably had a good reason for her decision"

"The Tsar too had probably a good reason to impose restrictions on the Jews...'

The captain does not stop shouting:

"How dare you...you are now in the country of Soviet Socialism..."

" Exactly, Comrade Commander", I replied, "what she proposed is not socialism, and it has a smell of ' The Russian League' or the 'The Black Hundreds'"

The captain is filled with wrath and yells at me angrily:

"Don't forget you are a prisoner...do what you are ordered!"

We walked for a few minutes without

uttering a word. When we returned to the barracks the captain asked me to come to his room. When I entered the room he said:

"You are a Jew and you must not forget it"

"Yes" I said, "Also in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic I must remember that I'm Jewish, I am, citizen sir ... I do not forget it, and I am not permitted to forget it... more than once I'm reminded of it!"

The captain replied in a low tone:

"The effects of the past have still not been obliterated, we are still struggling against them, but it's not easy at all"

"Yes" I said "but for that one is not arrested or punished, as the Jews are punished for having feelings of national identity as Jews or Lithuanians or Ukrainians...people here are not punished for anti-Semitism, for Russian chauvinism, or for 'only Russians' and 'except Jews and Poles' for this they are not sent to prison, this is not counter-revolutionary..."

The Captain jumped from his chair and declared in a loud voice:

"Yes, Russia is conscious of its national identity, and all of us too, are conscious of our Russian national identity in the positive sense of the concept and this was mentioned by our leader, the brilliant, Joseph Visarionovitch ...you understand?"

He concluded in a menacing tone of voice.

"Yes, I understood everything..." I answered. The captain continues in a tone of severity threateningly:

"There is nothing in common between us and people like you, you are enemies of the revolution, and there can never be anything in common between us. We hate you prisoners, you are the enemies of the revolution, while we are are loyal to communism which carries with it the promise of freedom and liberty for the whole world, to all humanity... this you do not understand and never will..." With this our talk ended, I left

his room and returned to mine.

I never wanted to meet this person again, however, very shortly afterward I was forced to approach him again. It happened like this:

One day we were informed by the camp authorities that instructions were received that a group of prisoners are to be transferred from our camp to another camp. A general rule of the camp authorities is that prisoners are not kept for long in one camp and are transferred from time to time to other camps and there is no end to these comings and goings of prisoners. The reason for this is that the authorities are afraid that the prisoners will develop friendships between themselves, which could be turned into an action against the despotic treatment, which exist in the camp.

The Jewish captain decided to transfer in the next batch among others also a woman, an Estonian, a mother of a one and a half year old child and in this way separate her from the child. The woman approached me and asked me to help her. Her husband was arrested in 1948 and no one knew what befell him. Some months later she too was arrested, as the wife of a traitor. At the time of her arrest she was pregnant in her seventh month and gave birth to her son while in prison. When the child was only 4 months old she was transferred to our camp. On arrival at our camp the child was feeble and ill, but because he did not go through the quarantine period yet, I could not enter him into the children's ward, I hospitalized the child in my internal department ward. And here in the hospital, while coming to visit her sick child she met her husband by chance, a prisoner among prisoners who was an inmate of our camp and was hospitalized with dysentery. Here in the hospital the husband saw his child for the first time. I was present during this meeting and it is difficult to describe the excitement that they experienced together with myself. No one but

me knew that they were husband and wife, if this would have been discovered by the camp authorities, they would have been separated and the husband would have been transferred to another camp. When the child recovered from his illness and entered the children's ward, the wife continued to see her sick husband, to which I helped her to make the visit, sometimes even in my room. When the husband recovered he returned to the men's area, they used to write to each other. Every day at a set hour a woman prisoner used to throw a batch of notes tied with a string over the wall to the man's area. In this manner too the men's notes used to reach the women's area (incidentally, in nearly all the camps all over the Soviet Union, these notes were called by the Hebrew name "KETIVA" [writing] no one knows why and how this Hebrew word infiltrated into the language of the camp prisoners). The Estonian woman and her husband exchanged these "ketivot" between them and no one knew that they were husband and wife.

This Estonian woman and two other Russian women who also had children in the children's ward were included by the captain in the list who were destined to be transferred to another camp. When this became known, the Estonian woman came to me and asked for my help not to be separated from their children. I had no desire to approach the captain but when I saw these women and heard their pleas I could not refuse them.

I went to him and asked him to postpone the transfer until the children grew a little older so that they could be housed in one of the children's quarters. The captained turned a deaf ear to my request and in addition started to curse nastily.

"No, they will definitely be transferred, those whores..."

When my request was rebuffed I approached the commander of the camp with the rank of lieutenant

colonel, who knew me, more than once he used to invite me to his home, outside the camp area to treat some of his family members who were ill. I voiced my request to him – to cancel this verdict. He immediately called the duty officer and ordered him to cross out the names of these women from the transfer list.

I returned to the hospital and informed the women of the good news, they cried with happiness, kissed me and there was no end to their delight.

Chapter 10 Section H

All the male doctors of our hospital, which is situated in the women's area of the camp were moved and exchanged for female doctors. Only two male doctors remained in the hospital – the supervisor of the laboratory and myself. In my ward for internal ailments two female doctors, who were prisoners too, began to work. One of them a doctor specializing in ear, nose and throat ailments, was behaving very strangely. Up to now, before she was transferred to the hospital, she did not work in the camp at her profession. She absolutely will not accept the fact that she is a prisoner. When prison clothing was distributed to the prisoners, she refused to accept hers and demanded defiantly that the prison authorities return her own clothing that remained in Leningrad. "I will not wear your rags," she would answer repeatedly. When the supervisor of the Sanitary Department told her that she was not filling out the medical forms correctly, she answered:

"Did I ever tell you that I would fill those forms? Do it yourself! I have no desire to deal with this matter at all. I don't even have to treat patients, I was taken here illegally, and I am demanding to be sent back to Leningrad"

She was very quickly fired from the hospital and sent to the nearest "ATAP", when the time come for her to be transported to another camp she refused to enter the vehicle and

had to be put in forcefully.

There are many prisoners in the Soviet labor camps who are mentally and nervously afflicted. Every camp hospital has a special department for mental patients, which are always full to overflowing, and there are still more of them living in the regular barracks. Many of them just cannot adjust themselves to the life in the camp to the regime of cruelty and coercion that exists in them.

The demand for my services has spread not only among the inmates but also beyond the camp area. I had many "private" patients among the "free citizens", who used to come to the camp to be treated by me and nearly everyday I was driven to the town to treat sick people. I cannot say how the hospital workers found out that the 29th of November is my 40th year anniversary of my medical profession. On that day I started my work as usual, at 8 o'clock in the morning I came to my ward accompanied by three nurses. As soon as I entered the ward, one of the female inmates came up to me, wished me a happy anniversary and gave me a greeting card, all the inmates applauded. The same thing occurred in every ward I entered. I was overwhelmed with emotion; I did not expect such a surprise to happen in a Soviet camp. That was not all, however, after I finished my rounds and returned to my room a double surprise awaited me, the table, the chairs and the bed were loaded with gifts – cakes, candies, a sweater, gloves, handkerchiefs with a monogram, books, note books and so on. It was very touching, tears filled my eyes.

In September 1950 I was informed by the authorities that they intend to transfer all the children from the children's ward to another camp, they will be transported in groups. I was appointed to choose the first group of children whose health condition is completely sound. Their mothers will accompany the "sucklers" and the

Appeal to Former Jewish Residents from Harbin in Israel

We are the Center of Jewish Studies Harbin, Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences, Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China. Our Center of Jewish Studies Harbin was set up in 2000. We major in the history of Harbin Jews, extending the friendship and cooperation between China and Israel, erecting a bridge of friendship and cooperation between the Chinese and the Jewish people. In the past few years, supported by the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Government of China and the Government of Harbin City, helped by the Embassy of Israel in China and the Embassy of China in Israel, the Israel-China Friendship Society, the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel, our work has made great progress.

Now we are writing the Encyclopaedia of Harbin Jews, and we want to write your family story in Harbin, but because of some reasons, we are deficient in reference, so we need your help so as to make the Encyclopaedia more perfect and make your family's history known in Harbin for ever.

Would you please write your family story, including when and where and why they came to Harbin, conditions of their life in Harbin and conditions of their life after leaving Harbin.

After you finish your writing, please send it to us by E-mail. If you have some old photos taken in Harbin, please send us with explanations by E-mail or by air mail. After our using the photos, we'll post them back to you.

After the Encyclopaedia is published, we'll send you the electronic text in gratitude for your help.

We are looking forward to hearing from you soon.

With best regards,

President of Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences Qu Wei

Address: No.501, Youyi Road, Daoli Dist, Harbin, China. 150018

Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences

Qu Wei

E-mail Address:

hantianyan69@163.com(Russian)

wgzhlj2005@sina.com(English)

Tel /fax: (86)451-86497956

fax: (86)451-86497539

Camp Doctor (continued from page 9)

"crawlers". I chose about 40 children and handed the list to the supervisor of the sanitary department, she informed me that I am to accompany the group on their journey and to return to the camp in five days time. When everything was prepared for the journey I told the supervisor that as the journey is for only five days I will not take with me any clothing but just a few items. She answered "Its better that you take all your belongings with you" I immediately understood the hint and told the nurse who, is going with me too to do the same. Again the authorities are trying to deceive and lead us astray. The day of the journey arrived. 40 children, 15 mothers, a nurse, 2

nannies and myself were driven to the railway station; here too a disappointment awaited us. We were told at the camp that in order to transport the children an ordinary passenger carriage would await us. But instead a wagon named "Stolipney", used for transporting prisoners and other Soviet underlings, was set up for us. We were deceived once again. The children, the mothers, the nurses were herded into cells without any window openings, the doors of the cells, however, remained open. I was put into a cell, alone, but the door to my cell was locked by lock and key. On the way the mothers protested and caused an uproar as to why I was locked in and could not

give their children my attention when they needed it, due to a shortage of milk, bad food, lack of ventilation and hygiene the children started to become ill one after the other. The mothers become unruly and even violent they lashed out against the armed guards and even the officer in charge of the wagon who was urgently summoned by the guards. In the end the officer had to agree to their demand and ordered the guards to unlock my cell. After a trip of two days we arrived to our destination – Camp Spask.

From the Hebrew by Benny Tzur.

To be continued

Forum in Harbin

June 2007

Ran Veinerman

I landed in Beijing on June 14, 2007, at 9:00 pm, seven hours late. I slept for three hours in a hotel near the airport, and took a flight to Harbin at 9:00 am the next day.

I met the municipal delegation from Givatayim, at Beijing Airport. Givatayim, a sister city of Harbin, was invited to the conference there.

The purpose of our journey to Harbin was to take part in an international forum of economic cooperation with world Jewry and a ceremony presenting the Chinese translation of Teddy Kaufman's book.

Our hosts were members of the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences.

Galia and Alex, members of the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences, met us at the airport. They took us straight to the Gloria Plaza Hotel to freshen up in preparation for the rest of the day.

After lunch at the hotel, we went to the conference hall at the exhibition center, where the opening session of the annual Harbin commercial and economic fair was taking place. The hall was enormous, with thousands of seats occupied by representatives from various countries. The international conference was aimed at tightening commercial ties between Heilongjiang Province and Harbin, and foreign countries. The lectures we attended were in Chinese, with simultaneous translation via wireless earphones. They focused mostly on economic development in various northern provinces in China in industry, trade, and agriculture.

Following the end of the opening session of the conference, we traveled

to a Siberian tiger reserve near the city. On our arrival at the reserve, the entrance confronted us with the fact that we had come to see Siberian tigers, not mere wildcats. Colored statues and giant pictures of tigers told us where we were, and what we were going to see. We entered a bus with iron meshing filled with Chinese visitors, other than Yossi and myself (we are also natives of China, by the way). We saw no animals immediately after we entered the reserve. The tigers gradually appeared. Some were lying on the ground and looking at us, as if to ask what exactly we were doing there. Perhaps they thought that one of us would make a good meal for them (the tigers). We later saw a bunch of tigers lying or strolling around, all of them in an open area. We were the ones behind bars, while the tigers roamed freely. At one point, a tender with iron meshing brought food for the tigers. They jumped on the roof of the tender, and surrounded it on all sides. When the driver opened the door in order to throw them some meat, one of the beasts went near the door, but did nothing further, perhaps knowing that the person was going to feed him.

The second part of the visit to the reserve included tigers, leopards, and other felines – all behind bars. This time, we were the ones who circulated freely, while they were the ones in cages.

That night, our hosts took us to an impressive show by an acting school. The stage, the scenery, and the singers were amazing. The music, Chinese, but in a Western style, was

very pleasant. The high voices of the Chinese female singers blended nicely with the male tenor voices, creating interesting and enjoyable harmony. The show included dancers floating in the air with the help of thin invisible ropes, giving the stunned audience the illusion that they were flying. The rich scenery, accompanied by firecrackers, created an enthralling effect on the stage.

A children's orchestra with some 200 players performed in the foyer before and after the show. They entertained the crowd outside with wonderful Chinese and Western melodies.

Our activity began the next day at the international forum for economic cooperation with world Jewry, which took place in the conference center of the Shangri-La luxury hotel.

150 representatives from countries with organized Jewish communities attended. Other than Israel, the countries participating included representatives from Hungary, Birobidzhan, the United States, and Israeli representatives living and working in China.

Speakers at the forum included Harbin Mayor Zhang Xiaolian, Israel Ambassador to China Haim Yehoyada, Daoli District head Da Weigao, Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences President Qu Wei, Amran Olmert, Israel-China Friendship Society Acting Chairman Yossi Klein, Israel-China Friendship Society Vice-Chairman Ran (Roni) Veinerman, Harbin municipal tourism head Yan Li, Prof. Dan Ben-Canaan, Wan Yuan, Shanghai Center for Jewish Studies Deputy Director Li Shu-tziu, Harbin Center for Jewish Studies

Director Fu Minian, Birobidzhan Deputy Governor Gurevitz, afforestation specialist Shen Li, and Jewish Studies coordinator Zhang Tiang, The members of the Givatayim municipality delegation deserve special mention; they earned respect for their city and for Israel. They took an active part in the forum, lectures, discussions, and social gatherings. We should strengthen the ties between us, and continue our cooperation in promoting relations with the city of Harbin, for which former residents of China have a special feeling. Harbin was the gateway for Russian Jews who immigrated to China. Most of the Jews who went from Russia to China pass through Harbin, although some of them later settled in other cities, such as Shanghai, Tientsin, etc. All the topics raised at the forum were related to world Jewry and existing or potential relations with the city of Harbin. There were also other subjects.

Yossi Klein spoke about the Kaufman family. A Chinese translation of Teddy Kaufman's book was presented at the forum, and Teddy Kaufman's greetings were read at the opening of the forum.

Prof. David Yulitz from the United States raised the subject of the Harbin Jewish community archives, which are still secret. Access to the documents is not allowed. He said that a few years ago, he was given access to the documents, and found extremely interesting material in them. In his lecture, he stressed the need to facilitate free access to the archives for interested parties.

Amram Olmert read greetings to the conference from his brother, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. He spoke about agriculture and said it should be applied at a practical level, not treated as a mere academic subject.

I raised the subject of tourism between Israel and Harbin in the context of the Israel-China Friendship Society. Two trips have to China have already taken place (regular Israeli

tourist agencies organized them with the help of the Israel-China Friendship Society), but Harbin was not included in them. Another tour is being organized this year for the end of September, and Harbin will be included in the itinerary.

The People's Government of Heilongjiang Province hosted the conference, together with the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences and the Israeli embassy in China.

The conference was held under the auspices of the Israel-China Friendship Association, the People's government of the Daoli District of Harbin, the Heilongjiang Daily Newspaper Group, and the Heilongjiang Northeast Radio Network Station.

The following day, after breakfast, we visited the renovated synagogue that serves as a museum for the heritage of Harbin Jewry. The event included the opening of an exhibition by painter Ruth Shany, who was born in Berlin, and lived in Hongkou in Shanghai during WWII. The exhibition included 60 paintings, featuring special technique and Chinese-Western themes. The paintings received a great deal of praise, and the exhibition was an outstanding success.

The same building featured a permanent exhibit about the heritage of Harbin Jewry, including a number of exhibits of a typical Jewish home. The models were authentic, and stunning in their accuracy and beauty. Pictures of persons who contributed to the development of the city and the advancement of the Jewish community were shown. Items and documents were artfully exhibited, so that even visitors who were not born in Harbin became absorbed in the history of Harbin Jewry, and felt part of the general experience. All this was due to the thought and effort invested in every detail by the organizers. Former residents of Harbin, former Jewish residents of China, and the State of Israel owe them their heartfelt gratitude. It should be noted

that a number of placards in three languages – Chinese, Hebrew, and English, have been posted to explain the history of each of the buildings. I hope that other Chinese cities will follow this example.

After lunch, we visited the Jewish cemetery in the cemetery compound close to Harbin. It should be noted that the Jewish cemetery appears to have been looked after more carefully than other cemeteries, thanks to local institutions, which have striven to give the location the proper and holy atmosphere of a cemetery. Some of the tombstones have been moved from their original location in the city, and some have been repaired in recent years. A huge Magen David welcomes visitors at the magnificent entrance. There is no doubt that the Jewish cemetery in Harbin completes the circle of the hospital, soup kitchen, synagogue, and partial residences present in the city as a living tribute to the splendid period of Harbin Jewry.

One of the participants in this forum was Harbin municipal tourism manager Mrs. Yang Jia, who also spoke about strengthening cooperation in tourism and the promotion and development of friendship between Israel and China.

Following her lecture, I asked to meet Yang Jia in order to discuss with her the topics that I raised in my lecture, and to examine possible ways to promote tourism. She gladly agreed. A tour was arranged for two days later. On the morning of the tour, at precisely 8:30 am, Yang Jia's secretary and assistant appeared with a car and driver, and offered us a guided tour of all the tourist sites that we mentioned in the meeting on the preceding day. The trip was arranged on the spot. The first place we visited was the Sun Island. This is a giant park covering an enormous area. It includes woods, meadows, lakes with boats, and other equipment for use by children in the water, a deer reserve, a squirrel park with large

numbers of squirrels, waterfalls, and so on. An ice hall is located at the entrance to the park, with statues of ice and snow, representing the annual ice festival that takes place in Harbin every winter, when the weather is very cold. It seemed to me that the ice statues in the hall during the summer were only a small sample of exhibits shown in the winter festival. That is undoubtedly true, but this small sample was enough to amaze me with the diversity of the exhibits and their size, some of which we could enter and move around in, with a building made entirely of ice. There was also an ice-skating rink built on inner tubes, and a bar built completely from ice, where no refrigeration was necessary.

The visit to the ice hall was an unforgettable experience, and the cold of 15 degrees below zero (centigrade) bothered no one.

After the ice hall, we entered the popular Harbin aquarium. This is a huge building that includes polar animals, such as bears, wolves, various types of fish, small whales, penguins, etc. On our way from one site to the next, I asked the secretary, who was also a translator, about the Harbin television tower, and whether the city could be seen from it. She answered that the tower indeed had a view of the city. At noon, we were invited to a meal at a luxurious Chinese restaurant. The Harbin municipal tourist manager was waiting for us in a private room. During the meal, we exchanged impressions from the morning tour, and discussed the topics that we had begun discussing at the forum.

After the meal, we continued the tour at the infamous Camp 731, where the Japanese conducted experiments with biological weapons on Chinese people during the occupation of Manchuria in WWII.

A museum there displayed evidence documenting the crimes committed by that unit of the Imperial Japanese Army.

Unit 731 was a special unit of the Japanese Army stationed in China at the order of the Japanese emperor. The base at which biological weapons were researched, tested, and manufactured was founded in the Pingfang District of Harbin in 1935. It became the command center that contributed to one of the most widespread uses of biological weapons in human history.

The soldiers of Unit 731 cruelly used human beings as material for experiments designed to produce biological weapons. Studies have shown that at least 3,000 victims of such experiments in 1939-1945 died as a result. Because the biological experiments used few people, the soldiers in the unit decided to conduct "extra" experiments, such as testing how long a person could live with his head submerged in a bucket of water (the equipment used in the experiment was displayed in the exhibition), how long a person could live when exposed to the cold Harbin winter, how long a person could live without food, and so on. A further 300,000 people were killed as a result of Japan's use of biological weapons in its war against China.

When Japan surrendered in 1945, Unit 731 destroyed the main installations of its camp in order to conceal incriminating evidence before retreating from China. Today, the 23 exhibits that have been preserved document the crimes of the Japanese Army. The exhibits include statues portraying experiments, the burning of bodies in a crematorium, equipment, documents, and other items.

The exhibition is extremely impressive. The documents are very convincing, and the general atmosphere is very reminiscent of the crimes committed by the Germans, who were Japan's allies in WWII. The building left in the camp as a memorial to what happened resembles buildings that we saw in Auschwitz and Mauthausen; the

events in these locations all occurred in exactly the same period, at opposite sides of the globe.

We finished the impressive, but depressing, tour of Japanese Army Camp 731 at 5:00 pm. According to the plan, I assumed that we were returning to the hotel, when I saw that we had come to the Harbin television tower, called the Dragon Tower. To our surprise, we were invited to dinner at the top of the tower in a revolving restaurant overlooking the city of Harbin from a height of 180 meters.

The delicious meal we ate there and the dazzling view of Harbin highlighted the city in its full present and past glory and greatness. Since it was the first time that I had viewed Harbin from such a height, I lacked a basis of comparison, but there can be no doubt that the city's development has been remarkable. The rapid pace of construction there will achieve new and impressive peaks.

The observation point on the television tower is well fenced in, and does not allow passage to the round area surrounding it outside the fence, which has no fence at all. People walk around this high route at the risk of acrophobia. The unfenced area contains a swing suspended from the upper building. The range of its swing passes the border of the unfenced area. In other words, someone sitting on the swing finds himself at one point of his route suspended between heaven and earth at a height of 180 meters, with nothing over or under him. This is extremely frightening, and made it very easy for me to decline my hosts' suggestion that I try it.

On the way back to the hotel, we stopped at the Sophia church, which serves as Harbin's architectural museum. The building, an example of Byzantine construction, was built about a century ago. The exhibition contains models of the various parts of the city from different periods of Harbin's development, pictures of

residents who contributed to the city's development, and various documents relating to construction and business in the city during each period.

We went for a walk on the Harbin promenade that evening – an experience in itself. The promenade starts at the monument in memory of the 1932 flood in Harbin. The residents of Harbin (including the Jews) enlisted to a man in the effort to stop the water from flooding the various parts of the city.

The same square contains the Gloria Plaza Hotel, where we slept, where the promenade begins. It should first of all be noted that two promenades are located in the same place: one a day promenade, and one a night promenade; the two promenades are different.

Construction of a two-level interchange and general renovations, so typical of an entire city in the midst of intensive building, are taking place at the beginning of the day promenade. As soon as we passed the area in which the construction was taking place, we reached the building that was the Jewish hospital in the city, now being used as an ophthalmology clinic. The building features the style prevalent at that period, with extremely strong Russian and Western influences. There is nothing notable inside the building, which is being used intensively by the ophthalmology clinic; the impression gained from the building is solely from its external form.

At both sides of the promenade at this point are stores selling virtually everything, including souvenirs of China, among them Mao's famous book, various military ranks (including from the Russian army), Chinese statuettes of Buddha and other well-known figures, Chinese drugs, and of course, some of the world's most famous brand name fashion stores, a board listing Harbin's sister cities (including Givatayim, with an Israeli flag, and pictures of the mayor of Givatayim and places in Givatayim,

with explanations in Chinese and English), etc. Later in the tour, we saw breathtaking construction on both sides from the end of the 19th century, the period of the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, during which the Russians established themselves in Harbin. The Jews, who also arrived at the same time, settled mainly in Harbin. Records from many spheres of activity were displayed: industry, banking, medicine, music, etc.

The Moderne Hotel is located in the central part of the promenade. Built in 1906, the hotel celebrated its 100th anniversary last year. Many modern businesses are in the area of the hotel, including the best of global fashion brands. The entire area is swarming with visitors, mainly Chinese, Russian tourists, and others.

Walking on the night promenade is a very special experience. All the buildings that so impressed us during the daytime assumed an added dimension, with special lighting in diverse colors, which gave them a theatrical appearance, and gave the spectators a feeling of the construction period. When you look upwards and see the spellbinding illumination, it is hard to take your eyes off the resulting vista. Looking downward, however, you see many people's heads constantly turning in various directions without any discernable purpose. Perhaps the main purpose of walking on the promenade is to absorb the heady atmosphere. That, however, is only part of the experience; there are quite wide side streets starting along the full length of the promenade, where a completely different picture emerges. There are no brand name stores there. The buildings on these streets are less impressive and well lit. There is no need to look upwards; here you can look straight at stands offering various kinds of food at particularly low prices. These stands are on both sides of the street, while the middle of the street is taken up with tables and benches where people can eat. There are also stands in the middle of the street

for selling beer. Beer is sold in large containers, not in cups. People buy a number of containers, and drink beer in large quantities. Seeing the Chinese prepare the food in their stands, and people buying, and hungrily eating the food and drinking the beer, is a sight that should not be missed.

To sum up, I would like to write a few sentences of a personal nature. I am a second generation native of Shanghai; my mother was also born there. I left China in 1949 when I was eight and a half years old. Amazingly, I remember many details from the time I was in China, and this was proven when I returned to Shanghai 52 years later. I noticed things and spotted places that even surprised myself. Among other things, I remember the name Harbin as a small distant place with a lot of sand – perhaps because people in Shanghai vacationed in Harbin, and at the time I associated vacation with the sea and sand. Perhaps because of my childhood associations with Harbin, and perhaps because of the stories I heard, I did not expect a fraction of what I saw there. It was one of the most beautiful and stunning cities in China, with a great deal to offer a tourist, if only they knew the right way to sell the valuable merchandise they possess. I recommend that anyone planning to visit China not forego a visit to Harbin and its riveting sights. Shanghai is the city dearest to me, because I was born there, but Harbin has become its twin sister, which gives me the same homey feeling that I get from Shanghai.

**Bulletin No. 395
(Passover issue)**

**will be out of press on
March 20, 2008.**

**Articles and
advertisements will be**

**accepted no later than
March 10, 2008**

People and Events

BAT MITZVA

Sanford (Sania) and Celia Wainer are proud to announce the Bat Mitzva of their granddaughter Allison Michelle Wainer. Proud parents are Andrew and Gail Wainer of Ardsley, New York. The Simcha will take place on December 1, 2007.

REPRESENTATIVES OF CHINESE TOURISM AT "BEIT-PONVE"



Representatives of an important Chinese tourist company "East-West of International Travel", Director-General Mr. Steve Xu and Ms. Carrie Yu, the director of the international division of this company, visited "Beit-Ponve" and met with T. Kaufman, Y. Klein and R. Veinerman.

In the photo from right to left: R. Veinerman, T. Kaufman, Ms. Carrie Yu, Mr. Steve Xu and Y. Klein.

Israeli ambassador visits Harbin

The new Israeli ambassador to the People's Republic of China, H.E. Amos Nadai recently paid a visit to the city of Harbin.

On September 19 -25 an exhibition "The Ancient Civilization in the Past, Friendship at Present, Partnership in the Future" graphically demonstrated the history of China-Israel mutual relationship throughout the ages.



Mr. Juan Xiaonan, Chief correspondent of the Xinhua news agency in Beijing, Head of the Jerusalem branch of the agency, visited "Beit-Ponve" and interviewed T. Kaufman.

FRANKLIN COLE AT "BEIT-PONVE"



Franklin Cole, a son of our compatriot Heinz Kohn from Shanghai (Hongkew), who lives in San-Angela, Texas, visited "Beit-Ponve" and presented valuable documents from the archives of his father, which relate to his stay in Shanghai (Hongkew).

A Chinese homecoming

By Robert Skidelsky (Prospect Magazine)

A railway contract brought my Russian family to Manchuria 110 years ago. Now that China's European past is unfreezing, I am welcomed back like a long-lost son to my birthplace, Harbin.

I had been plotting my return to China for about a year, and now an invitation from Lanxin Xiang, author of a book on the Boxer rebellion, to lecture in Shanghai made it possible. I say "return", because the last time I had been on the mainland was in 1948, when I was nine years old. I was born in Harbin, Manchuria, in 1939, came to England when I was three, and then went back to China with my parents in 1947, living for a little over a year in Tientsin (now Tianjin). We escaped to Hong Kong just before the communists took the city.

Why had we gone back to China in 1947? The brief answer is that the Skidelsky family owned large properties in Harbin, and leased the largest coalmine in Manchuria – the Mulin Mining Company. After the Second World War, my father, a British subject since 1930, decided to reclaim the family business. In a spectacular piece of bad timing we reached Tientsin at the moment when the communists were seizing control of Manchuria from the nationalists. We hung around in Tientsin for the reversal of fortune that never happened. I remember thinking even then what a bad general Chang Kai-shek was to allow his best army to be cut off in Manchuria.

When you are building your own life, your family history is a matter of supreme indifference. But now I am fascinated by my family origins, and wish I had listened more attentively to family stories told by my parents. They help me make sense of my own life. The Skidelskys were one of the

leading Jewish-Russian families in the Far East. My great-grandfather Leon Skidelsky started his career in Skidel, now in Belarus. Some time in 1880s, he moved with his family to Odessa on the Black sea. In 1895 he won a contract – how and why I don't know – to build the last stretch of the Trans-Siberian railway, which ran through northern Manchuria to Vladivostok. Leon made Vladivostok the family home. The Skidelskys were one of ten Jewish families allowed to live there. My father, Boris, was born in Vladivostok in 1907.

By the time Leon died in 1916, the family owned residential, industrial and mining property in Eastern Siberia, had 3,000 sq km of timber concessions in Russia and Manchuria, and was one of the region's largest employers. The Manchurian side of the business was managed from Harbin by one of Leon's sons, Solomon. The family firm supplied coal to the Chinese Eastern Railway (as the Manchurian stretch of the Trans-Siberian railway was known) and exported timber, plywood and flour to London and New York. The family was identified as "oligarchs" of the Far East in several recent books dealing with Russia's eastward expansion. As my host Lanxin Xiang told me, everyone in Manchuria had heard of the famous Xie Jie Si family – Skidelsky in Manchuria.

In 1918 the Skidelskys left Russia, losing all their properties there, but with several million dollars in cash. My father's widowed mother moved to Paris, and sent her four sons to English public schools. Back in Harbin, great-uncle Solomon acquired a 30-year lease of the Mulin Mining Company in 1924. This became the mainstay of the reduced, but still substantial, Skidelsky fortune. Harbin, already a big Russian city, swelled with White

Russian exiles from Eastern Siberia. The European sector was laid out with broad streets and avenues, fine houses, banks, shops, restaurants, cinemas and an opera and ballet company. In the 1920s it was known as the "Paris of the East."

When my Paris grandmother lost her money in the stock market crash of 1929, she went to live in America and my father Boris went to Manchuria to work in the family business. He married my mother in 1936, and I was born three years later. My father fought for Britain during the war, but the Harbin Skidelskys, who were stateless, went on supplying coal to the railway, now taken over by the Japanese, who occupied Manchuria from 1932 to 1945. When the Soviets entered Manchuria in 1945, Solomon and his brother Simon were carted off to Russia, and perished in one of Stalin's gulags. The Chinese communists took over the Harbin properties and the coalmine. In 1984 I received a cheque from the British government for 24,000 English pounds in full settlement of a claim for compensation that amounted to 11 million pounds.

I know less about my mother's family, the Sapelkins, who unlike the Skidelskys were Christian Russians, but, like Skidelskys, were part of the eastern flight of Russians from the Bolshevik revolution. They were "free peasants" who emigrated from Nizhny-Novgorod on the Volga to eastern Siberia in the late 19th century and were also involved with the building of the railway. My maternal grandfather, Venamin Vassilievich, turns up as mayor of Manchouli, in Russian Manchuria, in the early 1920s, before moving to Harbin. He was a literary gent, and I remember as a child receiving a letter from him in very old-

fashioned Russian (as my father told me in translating it), full of lofty moral guidance. My grandmother's family probably came from Bessarabia. My mother Gali was born in Harbin in 1918.

My family history is a microcosm of the first wave of globalization – based on the railway, steamship and telegraph – which opened up East Asia to the world market over a century ago. The Skidedlsky's rise and fall mirrors the fate of this cosmopolitan world, which was mortally wounded in the First World War. It shows how easily politics can capsize economics. Wealth did not save my family, and others like them, from revolution, nor did economic interdependence save the world from fascism and communism. Today there are no Skidelskys left in the Far East. Following the communist victory in 1949, China was closed off to the rest of the world for 40 years. Harbin, together with ports like Shanghai and Tientsin, became a purely Chinese city, filled with the melancholy ruins of a dead European culture: the Bund in Shanghai, Victoria road in Tientsin, the Bolshoi Prospekt in Harbin. Now a "second opening" is taking place. It is homegrown, but the European underlay is also unfreezing. In my birthplace, Harbin, I was welcomed back like a long lost son.

19th September, 2006, Shanghai. Lanxin Xiang (pronounced Lanshin Shang) meets me in the morning at Shanghai international airport, a spectacular structure. He is accompanied by a cameraman, Yang Mei, and a producer, Han Yu. My visit is to be filmed and shown on Chinese television. A bouquet of flowers is placed in my hands, and the cameras start whirring. We pile into a minivan for the drive into Shanghai. On the way we pass through the new city of Pudong. Ten years ago this was fields; it is now home to 4 million people with high rise after high rise of offices and municipal housing. I am staying in the Jin Jiang hotel, where Nixon stayed on his historic visit in 1972. Yang Mei's camera is running all the time. I think

he would take up residence in my bedroom if I let him.

I resist boiled toad for lunch, but I am looking forward to Chinese food. Lanxin introduces me to a Chinese vodka made of fermented rice. It smells of drains.

Walked down Hwai Hai, the main shopping thoroughfare, formerly Avenue Joffre. A pretty Chinese graduate student, QiuJun Zhou, has been detailed to show me around – with Yang Mei and Han Yu she makes up my trusty team of three companions. Displayed on the pavement is a small green car, made in China, and known as QQ. I am told it costs 25,000 yuan, or \$3,000. It is my first exposure to the "China price". I try to learn a couple of phrases: shie-shie (thank you), xia how (good afternoon), kung kow shing tao chung kuo (I am very happy to be in China...). I am told my accent is good, but my memory is leaky.

20 September, Shanghai Lecture at the Shanghai Academy of Sciences on globalization. "How long am I expected to talk?" I ask QiuJun "Two hours", she says. Fortunately she means the total meeting time. Lunch is formal with a lot of professors. I get into a discussion with one of them, Zhgou Jianming, about Taiwan. Would the US defend it against a Chinese invasion if it declared independence? He was certain it would not; I said it might. Accompanied by QiuJun, I visit a tailor and order a suit and a jacket. I will cost me 4,370 yuan or about \$500.

21st September, Shanghai A morning visit to Dulwich College, the Chinese outpost of the South London School, in Pudong. Drive past miles of skyscrapers. How strict is censorship? I ask Zhang Shumei, a student who is accompanying me today. "You can discuss everything in public, but not criticize the government... that you must do in private," she adds. I wanted to see Dulwich because Brighton College, the independent school whose governors I chair, is thinking of opening a school in Russia. Get back to Shanghai in time for a

meeting with Yang Jiemian, deputy director of the Shanghai Institute of International Studies. He tells me that China is the status quo power, the US the revolutionary power. International law can be changed only by agreement, not by US unilateralism. He believes that the democratization in China is inevitable, but slow, and everyone must be patient. China is a "socialist developing economy". Socialism is needed to counteract what capitalism creates. Economic development increases inequality, socialist planning will be necessary later to close the gap. Is he allowed to tell the truth in public? He replies that when he can't tell the truth, he doesn't lie, but simply keeps away from the subject. He told me he was sent to be re-educated in a village in Mao's cultural revolution, and I can see that he is not going to take a risk of having to go on his travels again.

It is 4 pm and my three companions and I have got caught in a thunderstorm on the Bund – the old European business centre – with torrential rain, thunder, lightning.

22 September, Shanghai In the morning I visit the old town of Juajiao. My main guide, QiuJun, was born there, and calls it the "Venice of China". In the courtyard of the restored Dao temple I see the symbol of yin-yang carved on a stone. The rejection of the spirit/matter, good/bad dualism is what makes Chinese thought, I am told, so different from the western.

Afternoon lecture on globalization, hosted by the School of Advanced Studies. About 200 graduate students and teachers. It is a difficult topic, but an efficient interpreter translated highlights. This is followed by a colloquium on east and west with Liu Qiliang, a professor at Xiangtan University.

In the evening we take a cruise on the Whangpu (Yellow grapes) River in the Da long (Great Dragon) boat, with the skyline of the Bund on the west bank and the spectacular new Shanghai on the Pudong (east) side. Some of the new architecture is both stunning and

strange: the Pudong side is dominated by the television tower Oriental Pearl, a pencil reaching the to the sky, with two great orbs that change colour.

23rd September, Tianjin I am flying to Tianjin, where I lived in 1947-48, attending St Louis College, the French school, belonging to the order of St. Mary, whose most famous old boy was Chou En-lai. It is said he showed kindness to the city when he came to power.

On the plane I talk to Lanxin about Mao, Confucius and western values. He divides his time between Geneva and the School of Advanced Studies. His parents were high-placed CP officials, and he defends Mao. I ask him why there has been no public accounting of the Mao years. He says most Chinese don't write off the Mao era. Mao made lots of mistakes but had good intentions. So did Stalin and Hitler, I reply. But Mao cannot be compared to them, says Lanxin, because he didn't deliberately kill people, though millions starved to death as a result of his policies. Anyway, good and bad are combined in every system, every person. Mao had Confucian aspects. His personal life was austere, his descendants are not rich, he wanted an uncorrupt society. Predictably, Lanxin doesn't like the new biography of Mao by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday. Lanxing is a Confucian, and says that only the Jesuits properly understood Confucius. He rejects the idea of the "rise" of China, whether warlike or peaceful. He prefers "restoration."

I have booked with Lanxin and my "crew" at the Astor House Hotel, the oldest European hotel in China, dating from 1863. It is near the "Bund" of old Tianjn, full of palatial banks built in the classical style of the 1920s, with imposing columns and marble interiors. A new extension has been added to the hotel, but I am given a suite in the old part. I lived here with my parents in 1947-48 when my father had got a temporary job as manager and he and my mother were splitting up – something of which

I was then unaware. My memory of long, wide corridors has not deceived me – there they are with their darkly paneled walls. I raced my electric car, given to me by my father for my eighth birthday, up and down those corridors.

The manager shows us around the old part of the hotel. Many famous people have stayed and even lived here, and old photographs and portraits of them line the walls – Gustav Detring its founder, General Gordon, Sun Yat-sen, Herbert Hoover, Ulysses S. Grant, Banchan Lama, Chou En-lai. Pu-Yi, the former boy emperor, and his wife danced the hours away in the Astor's ballroom in the 1920s before he succumbed to Japanese temptation and became the puppet emperor of Manchuria in the 1930s. I persuade the manager to turn on Sun Yat-sen's metal fan made by Siemens, which performs faintly.

Dinner with Anthony Wong and John Han, my fellow old boys of St Louis College. John Han says he was converted to Catholicism, not by the brothers, but rather, after he left, by falling for a Catholic girl. The relationship didn't work. He then married a Russian and as a result was doubly disgraced. The highest job he could get was deputy librarian in a medical institute. Anthony Wong, a linguist and also a Catholic, was denied a university post until after Mao's death. As a school teacher, he was beaten up in the cultural revolution. They are gentle and delightful old gentlemen.

Afterdinner, I insist on a reconnaissance to Dublin Road, where I lived with my maternal grandmother, my mother's half-sister Tamara and her son Alec. To my horror we find a great hole where No. 5 had been – recently created to make way for a subway station. Other houses have survived, but not the drawing room, where I played checkers with my Aunt Tamara, or the basement where our house boy Shitah lived. In his wonderful memoir of Tientsin, *The Ford of Heaven*, Brian Power says that Dublin Road was full

of brothels and bars between the wars. Perhaps these had gone by the time I got there; or perhaps I was simply too young to notice.

Opposite our vanished house, I can see the ghostly outlines of the synagogue, now a ruin. Beyond it a creek, down which bodies occasionally floated, has gone, covered over by a great highway. Underneath it a subway runs where the river used to flow, and beyond it a regiment of skyscrapers, where the streets and shops of the old British concession used to stretch. We went into the synagogue, which had been a restaurant in communist times. Now some people from Israel are trying to raise money to restore it. But how many Jews are there in Tianjin? We meet an old lady of 81, a former communist "veteran". She and her family were allocated accommodation in Dublin Road left by the fleeing Europeans. She remembers "old Soviets" at No 5 – it must have been my granny and our family who had stayed on until the early 1950s, when my mother was able to resettle them in Brazil.

24th September, Tianjin A busy day. First, we try to discover my grandparents' shop in Cousens Road. This sold produce from their dairy farm outside Tianjin. The shop was in the old British concession; the street is now a mixture of building site and a maze of dilapidated small houses, shops and restaurants, looking very much as they must have 60 years ago. The bicycles swarm round us. Bent old crones appear from alleyways as news spreads of our arrival and quest. One remembers a Jewish garment factory, long since gone. Another suggests that the dairy shop might have been near the Kiessling restaurant, still in business though not on its original site. The old ladies are courteous, animated and try to be helpful. Everyone – men and women, young and old – joins in the chatter. One of the great contrasts between China and Russia is the quantity of old people one sees in China. In Russia, the men in particular, die off before they are

60. Now China faces a huge ageing problem as the result of the one-child policy. The contrast with India is that in China there are no beggars. And despite the huge number of people in China, one gets less a sense of the sheer weight of numbers than in India.

Another St Louis old boy, Isaac Huang, turns up for lunch with old school photos. All three old pupils are at least five years older than I am, so at school they wouldn't have noticed a midget like me, or I them. The brothers converted Huang to Catholicism, and he had been active in a proscribed Marist organization, so for 20 years he could work only as a manual labourer.

Then, after lunch, on the site of St Louis College itself, in the French concession. This massive redbrick Edwardian pile was torn down soon after the communists came and a hospital built in its place. Now the hospital is to be demolished to make way for – a school. I suggest to my team that it be called the New Louis School, as the St would still be politically incorrect.

In the school register I am listed as one of 32 entrants on the 23rd September 1947; British by nationality, and Protestant by religion. I was one of the only two British and three Protestant, boys. Most were Catholic and Russian Orthodox, four were classified as "Hebrew" and eight as "pagans". These were Chinese. The brothers took their mission to the heathen seriously, and made strenuous efforts to convert us. I remember Brother Otto trying to convince us that Catholics were superior to Protestants because they gave alms to the poor. I suppose I was sticking up to the Protestants, not just because I was British, but because I was an altar boy at All Saints church. Tientsin, a book by David Hulme, gives a detailed, though by no means flattering, account of me at St Louis. The author relied mainly on the recollections of a Japanese boy called Atsuo Tsukada, who became my best friend, and who remains a good

friend. It is painful to read, because I was initially so beastly to Atsuo, teasing him mercilessly for his English (he mixed up his Ls and Rs) and for his "paganism". Peace between us was made by my mother. She invited Atsuo for tea in the Astor House hotel and fussed over him like a long-lost relative. I decided there and then that Atsuo was to be my best friend, though I do not recall that he was consulted in the matter.

On the way to the restaurant for dinner, I took a ride in a bicycle rickshaw of the kind that used to take me to and from school. The 1947 version had brass lamps on either side and a decorated awning. In winter I was covered with a quilt blanket to protect me from truly icy winds from the Mongolian plains. My rickshaw driver had a long nail on his little finger and wore a quilted suit in the winter. He would blow his nose and wipe it on his jacket sleeve. The long nail was also used to pick his ears.

It's odd the things children remember. It must have been in the summer of 1948 that we went on a school outing from Tientsin to Peking. The civil war was by this time getting very close and the railway line had been blown up. On our return journey our train had to wait for hours while the track was repaired. But what I chiefly remember from that trip was a huge spitting bowl in the middle of our carriage. I was entranced by the ritual of spitting. At that time the Chinese were great spitters. Today it has mainly gone.

According to the St Louis school register, 27th November 1948 is the last day I attended school. Almost immediately after that we must have been evacuated from Tientsin to Hong Kong on a British destroyer. I remember a HK newspaper headline of December 1948 which went "Fu [the nationalist general Fu Zuoyi] stands firm in North" and another one a little later "Shanghai will be defended to the last drop of blood." Both proclamations were quickly followed by the surrender of the nationalist armies..

25th September, Beijing On the train to Beijing. It's a packed double-decker, the journey is only an hour and a half. Check into the Capital hotel near the station: luxurious, with a fine view of the Forbidden City.

I meet the economist David Li of Tsinghua University and director of a think tank sponsored by BP. The Chinese, he told me, save too much because they have such a scanty social insurance. Rural people save even more than the urban population, though they have less. He wants the rural population from the middle and western regions to flock to the coastal cities, where, with better infrastructure, they would save less and consume more. This would do something to correct the Chinese-US payments deficit. But urban congestion would become horrendous, I suggest. I argue for government investment in rural infrastructure instead. He does not believe in this. He is attracted by London as a model of successful conurbation. Has he ever traveled on the M25?

26th September, Beijing/Harbin

A heavy fog hangs over Beijing. Lanxin says it is mainly pollution. We're on our way to the dowager empress's summer palace in the Garden of Clear Ripples, before there are photos of me there in 1948. The palace was looted by the British and French after the opium war of 1856-60, and the empress then built a replacement using naval funds, which is why China was defeated by Japan in 1895. Or so legend has it. It was damaged after the Boxer rebellion and rebuilt in 1902. It is a wonderful lakeside site full of fine buildings. The most amazing construction is a boat made entirely of marble.

In the afternoon, I give a talk at the China Institute of International Studies, a think tank said to be close to the foreign ministry. Ambassador Ma Zhengang, formerly of London, introduces me with a long explanation of Chinese current foreign policy. Then we hurry off to catch the plane to Harbin.

We arrive at Hotel Moderne at 8 pm. This is the old hotel, which, I am told, my great-uncle Solomon used for assignations with a lady friend. I am in the suite in which Mme Sun Yat-sen stayed in 1927 and Chaliapin in 1936. My mother told me about his visit and how they met and how he took her out. She was 18 and very beautiful. The suite is grand, but awkward. To turn off the bath tap one has to walk through the shower. There's an elegant desk, but when I plug in my laptop the lights go off.

On my arrival I am met by Qu Wei, the president of the Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of the Social Sciences and director of the Harbin Jews Research Centre, and assorted professors, researchers and translators who keep me talking till almost midnight. They tell me how honoured Harbin was to be visited by an English lord and representative of Harbin's most famous Jewish family. They then hands me a "diary" of banquets, visits and presentations, including a two-hour interview and a substantial speech. I see I am to be sucked into their research programme on the Harbin Jews. They are making a film on this theme to promote Chinese-Jewish understanding, world peace and other worthy aims. I am happy to take part in the Jewish history project, but not to be taken over by it. I say I am deeply interested in the story of the Skidelskys, but my mother's family, which was not Jewish, is of equal interest. Moreover, I was baptized an Anglican and have been in a synagogue only once in my life, to attend the wedding of my friend Danny Finkelstein. They seem unmoved.

27th September In the morning, I am taken by the Jewish committee to the Jewish cemetery on Imperial Hill outside Harbin. Fourteen are in attendance, and there is a tombstone on my great-uncle Moses, who died – presumably in poverty, as his stone is modest – in 1951, aged 76. The original grave, in the city, was dug up and transferred here in 1963. My father used to tell me stories about

Moses. He was noted for his good taste and extravagance, and possibly for that reason was eventually excluded from the family business. After the communists came, he was allowed to stay on in Harbin because he had not been active in the Manchurian business, but of course there was no more money coming in. The grave is well kept by the municipality and by an Israeli charity. A bunch of flowers is thrust into my hands, which I lay on the grave. I am called on to make a speech. What can I say except that I am here to honour my father's family, Harbin and the Jews of Harbin. Graveyards are always melancholy, but even more so when the dead have no connection with the surrounding living.

Back in Harbin, we re going to visit the synagogue. Harbin is now a city of 2.6m inhabitants. [Since my visit, Harbin became notorious around the world in November when benzene leaked into the Songhua (Sungari) river, producing a 50-mile slick]. In the old days of the "eastern Paris," there were about 20,000 Jews embedded in a community of 200,000 Russians and the same number of Chinese. The Jews were caught between pro-Soviet and anti-Semitic Russians. But I never heard that my family had been affected by the latter.

I tell the Jewish committee the famous family story of how Solomon won the Mulin coalmine concession from a local warlord, Chang Tso-lin. Both loved poker, but Solomon was the better player. He let the warlord win for six months, and put him in such a good mood that he signed a contract for a 30-year lease without demur. After the visit I am made a research fellow of the Harbin Centre for Jewish studies, and handed a scroll and mirror.

In the evening another banquet for 16. The food gets heavier the further north one goes. My stomach protests. At night I have a vivid dream. I am traveling in a coach with a very small, round, amusing Jew. I am much taller than he is. At one point I sit down in what I think is a gap in the seat

and send him sprawling off the end on to the floor. He picks himself up reproachfully and squeezes himself back onto the seat beside me. What does this mean? That I am trying to expel the Jew in myself? My dreams have been getting very interesting (to me), and it is easy to write them down.

28th September, Harbin Wake up with a headache and the runs. We drive to the Skidelsky house on the Bolshoi Prospekt. It is bigger and grander than it appears in the photographs, but a shadow of its former glory. Whereas before it was set in spacious lawns and looked out on to open fields, now the town has crept up on it and it is closed in by skyscrapers. The house was looted in 1945, and like so many similar properties, minimally maintained as an institution – in this case a People's Liberation Army leisure centre. I meet several of these ancients sitting on white sofas around what must have been a sumptuous drawing room. When I am introduced by the director as the "former owner", they greet me warmly. One "veteran" thanks me very politely for letting them use my house! I refrain from saying that it is not with my permission.

The house is on two floors, with a central staircase made of wood curving down to the front hall. I imagine Solomon and his wife (or paramour) descending to greet their guests. The staircase has been painted a hideous brown. The director asks for my advice on the colour for the outside, which is being restored, and when I suggest a light ochre, he says he will pass on my "instructions" to the municipal authority.

29th/30th September, Shanghai Driving back into Shanghai at 8 pm. Why are so many of the high-rise apartment blocks dark? Han says most are bought to sell on a rising market so no one ever lives in them. Final meal with Qiujun Zhou, as lovely as ever in a pink dress, and Yang, my faithful cameraman. Next morning the trio – Qiujun, Yang, and Han – come with me to the airport. Fond farewells. #

Jewish Life in Shanghai 60 Years Ago

TAGAR-
—STRUGGLE
—BIWEEKLY
—MAGAZINE



Organ of the United Zionist—Revisionists & Brit Trumpeldor in the Far East

Miss J. Haaser
English Editor
M. Louis
Russian Editor
L. Tomchinsky
Publisher

Editorial offices of Tagar are open daily,
except Saturday from 2 to 3 p.m. at the
premises of the Shanghai Jewish Club,
163 Avenue Road, Telephone 14096.

SUBSCRIPTION
C.N.G. \$3,000
Monthly
Single Issue
\$ 1.50

Jews Thank China for Hospitality

CHINA'S traditional role in upholding religious tolerance through which large number of persecuted Jews were able to find a safe haven in this country, were paid tribute by leaders of the United Jewish Organizations of Shanghai yesterday morning when they paid a formal call on Mayor K. C. Wu at the Administration Building.

In the course of their visit, the Jewish delegates handed a letter to Mayor Wu requesting him to convey to China's leaders and her people their "unfailing gratitude for the haven of refuge provided by China for Jews seeking protection from persecution the world over in these many past years."

Headed by Rabbi M. Ashkenazi, Chairman of the United Jewish Organization the Group included Rabbi G. Kantorowsky, Mr. I. Magit and Mr. R. Poliak. They were received by the Mayor in his office shortly after 10 a.m.

Mr. I. Magit, of the U.J.O. Executive Committee and spokesman of the delegation, addressed to the Mayor on behalf of the Jewish communities in China and warmly praised the freedom of religious and civil rights enjoyed by Jews in China. He stressed that most of the local Jews had fled countries where they had been subject to extreme and severe persecution, and in the sorest moment of their grave plight had found welcome and safety in Shanghai and in many other cities of China.

Mr. I. Magit declared that "now that we stand on the threshold of the inception of our independence in our own homeland in Palestine, we do not wish it ever to be forgotten that in their hour of greatest need Jews were welcomed to China with open arms and were accorded the fullest measure of freedom of civil rights and religious belief." He then handed to Mayor Wu a letter expressing gratitude of the Jewish communities in China to the Government and people of China. The closing paragraph of the letter reads:

"We shall pray for the continued success of your great country and we trust that our hands shall always remain clasped in international friendship."

(Contributed by Joe Levoff)

Mr. R. Poliak then handed to Mayor Wu a cheque for \$30,000,000 a contribution of the Shanghai Ashkenazi Jewish Communal Association to the City Government's winter relief drive.

Mayor Wu replied to the delegation as follows:—"China has always welcomed and endeavoured to assist the persecuted people and it has been a long established policy of the Government of China to accord equal rights to all nationalities irrespective to their religious belief. I extend my best wishes to the Jews wishing to return to Palestine, and at the same time I would assure those who will decide to remain in China of a continued welcome."

Mayor Wu expressed his deep appreciation for generous donation of Jewish Communal Association to the Winter Relief Fund.

Hanukkah Ball

THE traditional Hanukkah Ball, sponsored by the United Zionists-Revisionists and Brith Trumpeldor, was successfully held at the Shanghai Jewish Club on Thursday, December 11.

The affair was held with the customary gay atmosphere prevailing, and the Jewish Club premises were thronged all evening.

Thanks are especially due to members of the Ladies Committee for their work in making the collections, sale of lottery tickets, arrangement and the operation of kiosks. The UZR and Betar wish also to thank all those shops and persons who donated prizes, as well as to the "Bleuet" Flower Shop for all the flowers donated.

The entertainment program was provided by members of Betar, starting with the Darga Alef choir, followed by pyramids performed by P. Samsonovitch, A. Feldman, I. Soroka, J. Kligman, G. Kanzelpolsky and Dinah Shor. The trio of Mira Kaptzan, G. Nissenbaum and I. Miller, put on an acrobatic dance number, while Mr. and Mrs. I. Miller danced a tango.

Children's Day

ON Sunday, December 14, the UZR and Betar held its Children's Hanukkah Day at the Betar club premises. That afternoon the clubhouse was packed with eager and delighted children, who received presents, were given refreshments, and treated to a program of songs and acts performed by members of Darga Alef.

Plugá Tagar To Present Hecht's Play March 21

ON March 21 at 10 a.m., Betar's Plugá Tagar will present for the second time, Ben Hecht's play, "The Terrorist" as the feature of the memorial meeting to be held at the Eastern Theater in Hongkew on the occasion of Joseph Trumpeldor's 28th death anniversary. Admission will be by complimentary tickets which may be obtained at the Betar club, 80 Route Pichon, and at the Hongkew Betar, 85 Wayside Road.

On the same date in the evening, Plugá Rak Kach will mark the anniversary by presenting a play befitting the occasion. Entrance is open to all.

21

l
g
u
d
y
o
t
z
e
i
S
i
n

THE PODOLSKY FAMILY: A LONG AND A WORTHY ODYSSEY

By Mikhail Rinsky

The Podolsky family story is a typical example of a restless, unstable life of a Jewish family, be it even a prosperous one, in the Diaspora, and, from the other side, a content fruitful life and labor of their offsprings in their own land.

The little town of Dobraya Velichkovka was not at all different from the little Russian towns of the Russian Pale at the dawn of the 20th century. The Jews lived here for ages, according to a scenario, written by a one and the same playwright. Children were born – boys studied in a “heder”, girls prepared for an orthodox family life, reared children, who will grow up to live similar lives, and then silently depart into the hereafter, if, that is, they had not fall a prey to an axe or a club of a Russian pogromshchik.



Avi (Seva) Podolsky in childhood

The large Podolsky family, just as other Jewish families in the Pale, lived for decades under the threat of pogroms. Fleeing them, they settled in Nikolayev. After all, it is a large city and it should be safer to live there. But no!

It was yet in the First World War that the Jews began to flee the Pale. During the revolution they fled en-masse. Some fled to the United States, some to central Russia. Those who were more adventurous and brave moved to the far away town in the legendary Manchuria – Harbin. One of those was Yefim Podolsky, who reached Vladivostok in 1932. He contacted a band of smugglers, paid them well and was taken over to the Chinese territory. Podolskys settled in the “Rusian” town of Harbin, the center of the newly built and prosperous Chinese Eastern Railway.

This was the year when the Japanese invaded Manchuria, finally ousted the Soviets and founded a puppet Empire of Manzhou-di-Guo under the thrice



Seva and his friend Vova Vatner swim in the Sungari

dethroned Jing Dynasty Emperor Pu-Yi. The Japanese took over the foreign enterprises. The Europeans began to emigrate from the once fabulously prosperous land. They left wherever they could: USA, Australia, China proper where the Great Powers still held to their concessions.

The Jews, however, were apprehensive not so much of the Japanese as of the Russian anti-Semites, who, with the coming of the new invaders and refugees of all kind, have lifted their head and threatened the security of the Jewish residents. As to Yefim, he began working as a salesman in a textile shop, and in a short while decided to open his own fur and textile business on the central Kitayskaya Street. Two years after his arrival in Harbin, Yefim married a young pianist, Lea Zharova. Soon the couple became parents to son, Seva and daughter, Fira.

Despite the Japanese occupation and the anti-Semitic hooliganism, Yefim's business prospered and the family lived in a good apartment in a prestigious quarter of the town. They had a Russian nurse for the children and a Chinese cook, who spoke Russian. They were stateless, or, as this political status was termed in those days -- “White” Russian emigrants. The Soviet consulate was eager to co-opt as many new citizens as possible, but actually at the moment there was no reason for Yefim to take up Soviet citizenship: the Japanese persecuted them, their children were

not accepted in schools, during the war time, when food was scarce, they were not given ration cards. Many were arrested. Some were murdered and their property was confiscated. Yefim preferred to stay stateless.

The Japanese formed a large Russian military unit for the possible use for guerilla fighting in future. However they never had time to put this project to test. At the end of the WW II the Soviet Army invaded Manchuria and finished up the operation before the Japanese could say "Jack Robinson". The Russian emigrant force was immediately disarmed, and the personnel deported to Russia.

The leaders were shot and the lower ranks found their future in the Soviet GULAG camps.

The Soviet "liberators" were met by the civilian population with an ovation. Nevertheless, the arrests began almost immediately. The first to be arrested were the leaders of the Jewish community, including her honored chairman, Dr. Avraham Kaufman, who was held for many years in Siberian work camps. The cruelty and perfidy of the new conquerors were beyond description.

Yefim Podolsky was arrested in his shop. At first he was released, but then they came for him again. When he was deported to Russia, he was a tall, healthy and handsome man. In 1953, after Stalin's death, he was released and rehabilitated. But then he was already an invalid never to recover. He was not given permission to return to his family in China and, after a lengthy torturous odyssey, he reached his sister in Moscow. In 1956 Lea and the children joined their invalid-father.

During all these years Lea had a difficult time rearing Seva and Fira. After the Jewish school was shut down, Seva studied in a Soviet school and graduated from it, gaining a silver medal. He entered the Harbin Polytechnical Institute, which was a difficult feat by itself.

The Chinese management demanded that the students should be versed in the Chinese, and, since Seva knew the language well, he was accepted. He graduated from the Institute as a certified building engineer.



In Tiananmen Square in 1958

Yefim Podolsky joined the family in China in 1958. They applied immediately for a visa to Israel, but the Soviet consulate dragged its granting for another two years and a half. In the meantime, Seva began working as a building engineer at the institute where he studied. Then he received an excellent employment to build living quarters for the workers of a large factory, but, again, the Soviet consulate refused to issue a necessary permission for travel. The remaining time before leaving for Israel, Seva spent, giving Russian lessons to the Chinese.

At this point Seva married Natalia. She, too, gave Russian lessons to the Chinese. Her mother, a physician, married for the second time and left for Israel before the Podolskys. In 1961, when Seva and Natalia were already parents to a son, the family received at long last all the necessary papers of their leaving China for Israel, perhaps due to an acute worsening of diplomatic relations between China and the USSR.

The absorption of the young couple was relatively a smooth one. At first they settled in Beersheva. Seva worked as an engineer, building living quarters for the new immigrants. Yefim, despite his being an invalid, worked as a simple workman. Lea, too, was employed for sometime. Fira, a certified engineering draftsman, was also employed in her profession.



Seva and his friend Devik Volkov (now lives in San-Francisco) in Sobornaya Square in Harbin



At the Bar-Mitzva ceremony of his son at the Western Wall

In 1964 Seva and Natalia moved to Jerusalem, where Seva began working for the engineering department of the Hebrew University, which, at the time, was in the process of expanding its Givat Ram Campus. Natalia worked at the University Library.

In 1967, as a result of the Six Day War (in which Seva served in an artillery unit), the Jordanians were ousted from the old city, and a new era of extensive building began at the old campus on Mount Scopus. Seva was appointed to head the engineering department of the University. In 1973 the work at the Mount Scopus was completed and new projects were taken up at the Givat Ram campus. In the Yom Kippur war Seva's unit reached the Suez Canal. At the age of 45, Seva passed two officers' courses graduating as a Seren (Captain).



In the 1970's. Avi Podolsky as Head of the Building Department of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem

After the conclusion of the expansion works at the Givat Ram, it was necessary to modernize and centralize the control system of the technical maintenance of the total territory of the university. Seva was appointed to be the chief maintenance engineer of the united campus.

Seva retired in 2003, but did not change his bubbling way of life. He is one of the front line activists of the Igud Yotzei Sin on the Jerusalem and all-Israel scales. He is a member of the Presidium and heads the Jerusalem Committee of the Organization. Having visited China on three occasions, he saw that his Chinese had seriously dwindled and decided to go for a year's course of Chinese History and Language in the Chinese faculty of his mother-University.

Seva and Natalia have two children. The elder, Alex, is a food industry technologist and the daughter, Galia, is an economist. They have four grandchildren, Tal, Dana, Guy, and Roy.

A long and a worthy Odyssey.
(From the Russian: E.P.)

RAFI GAISENBERG IN HARBIN

The son of our compatriots: now deceased Nathan (Notik) and Lida Gaisenberg. Rafi who lives in Israel has visited Harbin and sent us the photos of his visit to the city in September, 2007.



The grave of the grandfather Ilya Mendelevich Gaisenberg who passed away on February 14, 1943 (row 10, place 16) at the Jewish cemetery in Harbin.



With the staff of the Center for the study of the history of the Jews of Harbin: From left to right: Svetlana, Rafi and Christy



Rafi in the building of the "New" synagogue in Harbin



**To the Misha Kogan
Scholarship Fund
US\$ 25,000**

**In memory of my dear
Parents**

Asya Kogan (Tokyo)

September 2007



Abram Kachanovsky



Tatyana Kachanovsky

I love you and always miss you

Asya

The Menorah of Fang Bang Lu: Shanghai Modernity and the Jews of China

Andrew Jakubowicz *Professor of Sociology University of Technology Sydney*

Abstract

In November 2000, I found an old menorah with a music box in its base in a second hand market in Fang Bang Lu, in the old Chinese city in Shanghai. There was no information available about the provenance of the menorah, only that the music box was probably of European origin, and the piece itself was probably from the late 19th century. That it should still be in existence nearly fifty years after the last major settlement of Jews in Shanghai was dispersed, prompts this exploration of seven families whose lives crossed in Shanghai, and all of whom settled thereafter in Sydney Australia. The central theme of the chapter discusses the value of the concept of modernity as a framework for exploring the interaction between the Shanghai Jews and the wider Chinese society. In particular the paper draws on Chinese memorabilia of the Jewish presence, and Jewish memorabilia of the Chinese sojourn, to argue that the interaction was more than a momentary collision, but rather left significant and unintended consequences on both communities.

Introduction - Shanghai, China as a crossroads

While there has been a Jewish diasporic presence in China since the eighth century CE, the role of Jews in current Chinese political consciousness is a consequence of the emergence of a "Jew industry" in the wake of the 1992 normalisation of relations between China and

Israel. One centre of this interest has been Shanghai, where in recent years there have been a series of campaigns around the re-discovery and re-establishment of the city's "Jewish history" – including the preservation of the Ohel Rachel synagogue, the reconstruction of the Ohel Moishe synagogue, the preservation of the centre of the old Designated Area of Hongkew (now Hongkou) around Chusan Lu, and the rescue of cemetery tombstones brought to light in urban redevelopment.

Shanghai has a peculiar presence in both Western and Chinese understandings of modernity. In each case the city stands for the many contradictory tendencies within modernity, both as an explanatory concept in the social sciences, and as an aesthetic, moral and political constellation. In this chapter I want to use the environment and dynamism of Shanghai over a period of two decades from the early 1930s to the early 1950s as a test bed to explore many of these contradictions. In particular the experience of the Jewish communities in and of Shanghai offers a critical set of relationships - within and between the communities ostensibly of the same religious persuasion, in their relations with the many elements of Chinese society, with the Japanese occupiers, and after the war with their various societies of reception and survival.

The concept of modernity is useful here for three reasons - much Chinese

and Western writing on Shanghai uses that city as the exemplar of modernity and the transformation of Chinese society^{1[1]}; Jewish diasporic communities are often conceived of as harbingers of modernity; and the rise of Nazism and its bureaucratisation and industrialisation of mass murder (which drove many of the Jews to seek refuge in Shanghai) have also been described as the dark side of modernity (Bauman, 1989).

Modernity is a short-hand term for a package of theoretical appraisals of the contemporary era, which retain embedded theorisations of history and the nature of social relations. If we use Marxian notions of social and economic development, modernity can be understood as the cultural and aesthetic expression of the later periods of the capitalist mode of production, marked on the one hand by the alienation of workers from the means of production through the wage-labour relationship, and on the other by the increasing regularisation of production and the tendency to replace labour by capital goods - the industrialisation of production. In this sense, modernity marks a break from feudal relations, such that market

^{1[1]} For instance, Rey Chow speaks of Shanghai as either an artificially imposed Western creation, symbolic of China's shame and subordination to imperialism, or as a "success from which a new Chinese tradition that seeks integration with world civilization has since developed" (Chow, R. (1991) *Women and Modernity*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 38).

relationships intrude into every sphere of social life. The intrusion of market relations and their institutionalisation in law, aesthetics, consumption, and wider social relations point to a bureaucratisation of the society around the appropriation of surplus value by the owners of the means of production. A process of social polarisation is thus triggered, with the development of social classes, and the ordering of politics to reflect the struggle between classes for the allocation of the surplus value produced in the society. While such Marxian derived accounts read increasingly as jargon-bound and out of date, they do point to a critical question - the amorality of modernity as a social form.

The amoral face is immediately challenged by sociological accounts that stress the very morality of capitalism and modernity. Associated with the work of German writer Max Weber, modernity can be understood as the moral order derived from the "spirit of capitalism", encompassing the vision of the Enlightenment project, wherein the ostensible goals of human freedom, dignity and individual rights require a market economy, the rule of law, and the bureaucratisation of social practices. The most significant divide between the modern and the pre-modern lies in the former's celebration of rationality and science, over the latter's insistence on the traditional and the super-natural.

Charles Taylor has argued that there are two theories of modernity at work - which he labels "cultural" and "acultural" (Taylor 2001). The former locates modernity in the Atlantic cultures of Europe and North America, and argues that the characteristics of the modern are reflections of the civilisation of the "West" - it has anthropological specificity. Thus modernity is driven by the ideological and spiritual values common to these societies.

Against this perspective the

"acultural" view offers a paradigm case available to any traditional culture, a set of transformations that do not depend on the cultural capital of the society in which they occur - they are culture neutral. The constellation of elements defined by Taylor include: growth of scientific reason, secularization, instrumental rationality, population concentration, industrialisation and so forth. Taylor's own view is that modernity is a cultural phenomenon, very much tied to the development of Euro-American cultures, and that modernity cannot be conceived of apart from the specific cultures in which it progresses. Moreover, its transposition into other societies "will produce different results that reflect their divergent starting points" p.182. Acceptance of the cultural nature of modernity Taylor proposes, allows us to escape our own ethno-centricity and avoid the seduction of believing that Western culture is naturally superior and will naturally replace all others, due to the logic of the supremacy of rationality, a proposition he describes as the myth of neutral self-understanding {Taylor, 2001 #1534}p.196..

The various "modernities" that coalesced in Shanghai expose these contradictory yet curiously reinforcing perspectives. Shanghai had been established adjacent to an old Chinese city on the "Whampoo" river, not far from where it joins the Yangtze, and then empties into the Sea of China/ Pacific Ocean. While there had been Europeans in the area for centuries, the British only finally managed to wrest territory in China for a "treaty" port in the wake of the Opium wars of the 1840s. Various imperial nations joined the British in the International Settlement created there, where the British effectively ran the Customs Service and all the military forces. Shanghai rapidly became, with Hong Kong, the centre for mercantile capitalism, rising by the 1930s to be the sixth largest city

in the world. Its initial wealth was made from drugs - the importation of opium from India and its peddling amongst the Chinese; and the export of Chinese tea to the industrially numbed masses of Europe and their bourgeois masters (and mistresses). The river front, named the Bund (an Indian term) by the British, was lined with grand sandstone buildings housing banks, trading firms, the Customs' Service, and hotels.

The physical face of Shanghai has been marked by the succeeding epochs of economic development, each of which set in train the possibilities for the emergence of the next iteration of modernity. They also demonstrate the cultural struggles over the way in which the components of modernity are to be integrated into the various potential futures they allow (Lee 2001).

Context: China and the Jews - a background of two millenia

Jews had been part of Chinese life since early in the Christian era, if not before (Goldstein 2000). Jewish traders from Mesopotamia plied the Silk Road across Asia, with a major settlement identified at Kaifeng in Henan early in the second Christian Millennium. That community was in the final stages of disintegration, its synagogue destroyed in civil unrest in the 1840s, when the next Jewish community was established in Shanghai. David Sassoon, a Baghdadi merchant based in Bombay, opened a trading house (exporting silver and tea, importing opium and textiles) in 1850, bringing in many of his Sephardic co-religionists. They formed the basis for the famous Jewish families of the city - Kadourie, Ezra, Abrahams, Hardoun - and those who served in the religious institutions they established - such as the Ohel Rachel and the Beth Aharon synagogues. The Sephardic Jews followed the rites of the Babylonian tradition, maintaining links with the Jewish centres of Baghdad and the Ottoman Empire.

By the late 1890s a new community appeared in Shanghai (Moustafine, 2000). Russian Jews had started to come into northern China when Tsarist Russia gained a concession for its Chinese Eastern Railway (CER), from Manchouli on the Siberian border to Dairen on the Pacific coast. The concession created a Russian colony with extra-territorial rights, its central city growing out of the former fishing village of Harbin. Some of the Russian Jews who went to Harbin and the other CER towns such as Heilar, moved south to Shanghai. The CER was a “safe haven” for Jews – where the restrictions imposed on them by the Pale of Settlement in Russia did not apply. In addition it attracted many of the Jewish Russian soldiers demobbed after the defeat of the Russians by the Japanese in 1905. These soldiers brought their families from the west, and were joined by some of the Siberian Jewish families from cities like Vladivostok in the wake of rising anti-Semitism in Russia.

While Jews were not allowed initially to work for the Railway itself, they provided much of the civil infrastructure – food and drink, hotels (the famous Hotel Moderne built by the Russian Jew who took a French name, Caspé) and banks. They also worked as engineers, doctors, teachers and dentists. By the early 1930s there were about 15,000 Jews among the 100,000 Russians in Harbin. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 was followed by the Soviet sale of the CER to the Manchukuo puppet government in 1935. The invasion created significant changes for Jews – there were a series of kidnapping and murders, by gangs of Chinese criminals linked to the Japanese secret police and White Russian fascists. The Jews began to leave Harbin at that time – some for the smaller international settlement at Tientsin, but mostly heading for Shanghai. Many however took up the Soviet invitation to go back to the

new Russia. These “Harbintsy”, as they came to be called, were targeted by Stalin after 1937, with many being executed as “Japanese spies”, and most of the remainder enduring decades in the gulags.

By the late 1930s there were over 6000 Russian Jews in Shanghai, outnumbering the 1200 or so Sephardis. There were many more White Russians, including a significant group of anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic fascists. Yet Jews and non-Jews could often be found meeting and interacting in many organizations. For Russian Jews, there was the Shanghai Jewish Club in Bubbling Well Road, and for the many thus disposed, the Shanghai Soviet Club. They also built their own Ashkenazi rite synagogues – such as the Ohel Moishe in Hongkew, and in Rue de la Tour in the French Concession.

Shanghai Jews in the war years and after

The initial stage of Nazi anti-Semitism in Germany (and after 1938 in Austria) focussed on the expulsion of Jews from the Reich. As the world closed its doors to the refugees, and Britain blocked emigration to Palestine, Shanghai, a place of free entry, became one of the few places that offered haven. The expulsion of Jews towards Shanghai (facilitated by Adolf Eichmann’s office in Vienna) also became increasingly difficult as 1939 opened (Altman and Eber 2000). The international Shanghai Municipal Council, dominated by British and American commercial interests, sought to halt the inflow of refugees. The leaders of the Jewish community – Sephardic, Russian and other European, set up a Committee to assist the refugees – though they too were concerned about the numbers arriving in the city.

A bizarre debate developed, with the British seeking Japanese military support (Japan by then controlled the Chinese city and Hongkew) to forbid the entry of the refugees, and turn them back. The Nazis pressed

the Japanese to keep Shanghai open, while the Italians also urged the Japanese not to halt the lucrative trade in refugees who mostly used Italian shipping lines from Genoa. The European war closed off the sea option in September 1939. By 1942 the Final Solution ended any hope of escape – though Jews were still making the journey from Vienna via Berlin, Warsaw and Moscow to Manchouli and Dairen until the outbreak of war between the USSR and Germany in mid 1941. By the end of 1941 when the Pacific War broke out there were about 18,000 Reich refugees in Shanghai.

The final refugee group to arrive in Shanghai took two years to make the trek across Asia from Poland. In the first few weeks of September 1939, in the face of the Nazi blitzkrieg, some 300,000 of the Jews living in western Poland fled east towards the Soviet occupied territory. Some of these headed north for then independent Lithuania, and found temporary refuge in the city of Vilna/Vilnius, then a Polish city with a large Jewish population. In mid 1940 the Soviets invaded Lithuania, and many Jews sought to escape again. In a twist of fate, the Japanese consul Sugihara Chiune, who had come from Harbin, agreed to provide Japanese transit visas for those with entry permits – to countries like Haiti or Curacao. Curacao was the most famous and fictitious destination – the Dutch consul had arranged a stamp that simply indicated that no visa was required to enter that colony – but entry in fact was not possible despite its historic role as a haven for Caribbean Jewry since the 17th century.

In early 1941 some 4000 Jews left Lithuania across Siberia. They included the whole of the Yeshiva from Mir, plus many urban Polish Jewish families. From Vladivostok they sailed to Japan, where they were looked after by the Eastern Jewcom, with support from the US

based Jewish JOINT Committee. The Japanese expelled the thousand or so who could not get visas for elsewhere, to Shanghai in late 1941.

When the Japanese took control of Shanghai on December 7 1941 there probably about 26,000 Jews in the city – from the wealthy Sephardic families, to the nearly starving refugees in the slums of Hongkew. The Japanese dealt with each group rather differently. The Japanese Army took over the International Settlement, leaving the French Concession more or less alone – by then France was under Vichy control and an ally of Germany. Most anti-Axis allied nationals were rounded up, and interned in camps.

For the Sephardic Jews the next 40 months would split families and generate crises in the community. The Jews with British papers (e.g. born in Aden or Hong Kong) were deemed “enemies”, and interned. Their Shanghai-born relatives or those with other countries’ papers were not touched. Life in the camps was frugal – with little to do, with less and less food available as the War worsened for the Japanese; security grew more intense as a number of the inmates escaped, joining the underground war against the Japanese.

Russian Jews (mainly living in the French Concession) remained outside the round-up of the “allies”, as Japan was not at war with the USSR, and had no desire to trigger conflict to its north. There was however considerable anti-Semitism in the Japanese controlled media, reflecting the influence of White Russian fascists. For the most part the Russian Jews sought to provide support to their religious brethren in Hongkew, some working in the area and running businesses that employed the refugees.

The central European Jews lived mainly in the area of Hongkew, beyond Soochow Creek, and the Garden Bridge, still in the original

International Settlement. The area had been badly damaged in the 1937 fighting between Japanese marines and Chinese soldiers, and was then taken over by the Japanese – and rebuilt by work-gangs of the refugees during 1939 and 1940. They found work in many ways – some in their own professions as doctors, dentists and even lawyers. Some became teachers at the Kadourie-supported Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School, which many of the Hongkew refugee children attended. At least one was a musician who was able to secure work as a member of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.

The small community of Polish Jews were supported in part by the Polish Government in Exile and the American JOINT Committee (Republic of Poland 1942). The over 200 rabbinical students and rabbis of the Mir Yeshiva were given the use of the Beth Aharon Sephardic synagogue. Polish residents’ certificates were issued, and communal kitchens established. The original kitchen was in the French Concession near the Jewish Hospital, and then in Hongkew in a tiny lane-house in Tongshan Rd.

In late 1942 the Gestapo’s Col. Meisinger arrived in Shanghai, bearing the orders from Berlin to ensure the Japanese helped organise the Final Solution (also translated as “Thorough Finishing” in Chinese (Huang (trans.) 1999)) for all the Jews in the city (Kauffmann 1963). Jewish leaders discovered his plan and worked with the Japanese vice consul Shibata to undermine his influence. Shibata was exposed, and sent back to Japan in disgrace, but ultimately the Japanese rejected the Nazi demands. However in the process many of the Jewish leaders were arrested, and tortured, spending long months in the infamous gaol of Bridge House, the Kempetai Headquarters.

The Japanese in February 1943 created a Designated Area in Hongkew (

also translated as “Insulation Area” in Chinese (Huang (trans.) 1999)) in which all post 1937 refugees would be forced to live. This “ghetto” as it is sometimes called, became home to over twenty thousand Jews from mid 1943 – most living in cramped and unhygienic conditions, squeezed into “heime”, or as families living in single rooms. Sephardic and Russian families provided support to the refugees, often inviting them to their homes for the Sabbath meal. The American JOINT committee also re-organised its facilities so that funds were provided through the Swiss Red Cross (Margolis 1944). As the War progressed these resources were squeezed; they were used to support a number of communal kitchens.

The Ghetto administration was headed by Sgt Ghoya Kanoh, a Japanese military police officer, who reported to the Japanese Director General of the Office of Stateless Refugees Affairs (Kubota Tsutomu). Ghoya was renowned as a vicious and egotistical martinet, using his power to humiliate Jews seeking his permission to move in and out of the ghetto area. He described himself as “King of the Jews”. Many refugees report his practice of standing on a table (he was quite short-statured) and slapping the faces of those applicants for passes who displeased him. The boundaries to the Designated Area were patrolled by Japanese soldiers and a Jewish militia (Foreign Pao Chia Vigilance Corps), with barricades across the road junctions at the edge of the area (e.g. where Wayside Road met Broadway). Passes were required, and while they were widely used, access was a humiliating and slow process.

Within the ghetto life was crowded but intense, with the residents often badly affected by diseases such as typhus. Chusan Road served as a central road with cafes and meeting places, and was known as “little Vienna”. Many of the refugees could

barely afford to use these facilities; one woman remembers being invited out by young men for tea or cake. Some had passes to leave the Area on a regular basis. The Kadourie SJYA school was just outside the boundary, so all its teachers and pupils needed passes. Those who worked in the International Settlement or the French Concession made the long daily trip across the city, to places such as the Shanghai Jewish Club in the French Concession. Teenage students daily rode their bicycles to the Shanghai Jewish School in Seymour Road.

In July 1945 American bombs rained down on the area, aiming for but missing an adjacent Japanese military installation. Dozens of refugees were killed, and hundreds were injured. The Kadourie school was just due to let its children go home – but its air raid warden told them to stay put – and they survived. The Tongshan Rd communal kitchen was damaged, while hundreds of the poorly repaired residential buildings collapsed, leaving thousands homeless. Jewish communal organisations petitioned Kubota, asking for the containment of the refugees to be lifted, and for them to be free to resettle in other parts of the city - their appeal was not successful²[2].

Soon, however, the war against Japan ended, and the city was at peace of a kind, again, being liberated

²[2] The Jewish organisations involved in the petition reflected the full range of different communities, and political and social organisations. They were the Shanghai Ashkenazi Jewish Communal Association, the Ohel Moishe Synagogue, the Central Control Board, the Jewish Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Russian Emigrant Jews, Shanghai Jewish Hospital, Shanghai Hebrew Relief Society and Shelterhouse, Shanghai Jewish Club, Jewish Information Bureau “HICEM”, Ashkenazi Hevra Kadisha (burial society), “Eastjewcom”, Mahazikei Talmud Torah (religious school), Society “EZRA”, “Our Life” (newspaper), Jewish Recreation Club, Brith Trumpeldor Shanghai Branch (“Betar” a militarised Zionist group), the New Zionist Organisation, and the Shanghai Zionist Organisation “Kadimah”.

on 7 September 1945. Many of the refugees remember the end of the War as a moment when they heard the Internationale being sung in the late night streets by Russians. In the internment camps prisoners woke to find the places deserted by their Japanese guards. In the ghetto Japanese shops were left open, abandoned by their owners. Many Japanese crouched by the roads selling their last possessions, as the refugees had done throughout the war years. Russian Jews heard of the Soviet invasion of Manchuria and its declaration of War a week before the bombing of Hiroshima.

With the arrival of American troops in support of the Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kaishek, life changed again. Many of the Jews found work with the new occupying power. However the most stunning consequence of the Americans was the newsreels of the liberation of the concentration and death camps of the Nazis. Over a period of weeks the Jews from Europe had to come to terms with the horror of that tragedy – yet around them the post war culture of America swamped the city. “Gone with the Wind” and “Fantasia” played at cinemas, while the Symphony continued to perform; on the walls of Hongkew long lists of Holocaust names were placed by the Red Cross and Jewish agencies.

In the French Concession the Russian Jews re-established their lives, and began to take stock of the changing political landscape. Communist victories were reported from the north and west. The Nationalists were corrupt, looting and extorting the city. The refugees looked for a way out. For those with relatives in Australia, that could be the goal, as few wished to return to Europe. Many others, particularly the members of the popular Betar movement, planned to go to Palestine. The Sephardic Jews realised that the lives they had known for generations were gone – many of the wealthiest members had

escaped and moved their businesses out of China. Their own futures were initially bright, but then grew more treacherous as the international situation worsened again.

Over the four years up to the Communist victory and takeover of Shanghai, most of the Jews made their arrangements to leave. Most who came to Australia had relatives already there - pressing for the visas they needed. Australia’s reluctance to accept Jewish refugees was increased as local anti-Semitic reactions rose - initial acceptance turned quickly to the imposition of bureaucratic restraints, until finally the communist takeover in China allowed the Australian government to refuse any further visas.

Given this history we can now turn to examine the nature of the Jewish communities in the city, and how they can be understood within the theoretical frames of modernity.

Nationality, culture and social organisation- the Jewish communities of Shanghai

The structure of the communities reflected their histories and the circumstances of their presence in Shanghai. Each in their own way introduced certain elements of modernity into the city, despite the cultural differences between them. The first major impact reflected the culture and economy of mercantilism, and its relation to modernity.

Max Weber, on whom Taylor (Taylor 2001) draws heavily for his argument about the cultural practices of modernity, had identified a free market as an a-priori condition for the emergence of capitalism. Moreover, this free market had to be supported by rules of law which allowed both predictability and recourse to restitution should the market relationship fail or be corrupted. The first Jewish settlement in Shanghai was closely implicated

with the imperialist endeavour of the Europeans, especially the British. The arrival in the early 1840s of the Iraqi Jew David Sassoon, whose trading firm was well established in India, was linked to the capacity of his firm to source Indian opium for import into China. He brought in other Iraqis such as Hardoun and Kadoorie, who soon branched out on their own. They were to become amongst the wealthiest merchants in the city.

The aim of the British was to find a means of forcing China to open itself up to imports of British cotton goods and similar products, through building a requirement for international trade in a society the government of which believed it could be self-sufficient. The Jewish community, among others, developed comprador relationships with the Chinese, and rapidly built trading routes and substantial wealth. These practices were essentially mercantile, protected by British military force, and therefore only an early form of "free market". They did however provide the capital base on which other investment could be developed.

It was in these other investment areas that we see that rapid emergence of the modern forms of economic relationships that were to characterise Shanghai for the next century. This is not to argue that the Sephardic Jewish families were sole harbingers of modernity - they too were transformed by their relationships with the British and French colonial powers. Rather, it was their interstitial cultural location that allowed them to facilitate, if not expedite the modernisation of the city. The families were soon involved in banking, and real estate development, with Hardoun building the central Nanking Street, and becoming a major property developer. Many of the other major commercial buildings along the Bund were built by the Jewish companies, while the entrepreneurs themselves increasingly modelled their behaviour and aspirations on

the British elite with whom they mixed. They had not real hope of entering that elite, though a number of Sassoon's were knighted, and others served the British in the World Wars of the twentieth century.

The third Sassoon built himself a half-timbered Tudor mansion, with a water garden based on Ryoan-ji in Kyoto, itself the inspiration for Monet's water lily garden in Giverny. Kadoorie constructed an enormous palace, faced with marble and reflecting western European aesthetics. Hardoun built a walled garden for his house, and there is a famous photo of him seated in it with Sun Yat Sen, the President of the Chinese republic. Hardoun was a strong supporter of Sun's presidency, while Sun reciprocated with his support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Yet this embrace of British modernity ran together with a desire to retain tradition. Both Sassoon and Hardoun sponsored the building of synagogues - though Sassoon's (named in honour of his wife, Ohel Rachel) resonated with the formal mercantile buildings of the Bund. It was built in Greco-Roman style, with doric columns and a face that could have fitted any western edifice; internally it was lined with white marble. Hardoun's synagogue (Beth Aharon) reflected the brutalist modernism then current in Europe.

The Sassoon company's commitment to modernist projects finds its most emblematic expression in the twin towers of Cathay Mansions and Grosvenor House. These multi-storey apartment blocks were designed by Russian trained engineers, with elaborate art-deco interiors and embellishments. They sat on huge concrete caissons, floating on the muddy swamps of the French Concession.

Taylor suggests that the distinction between an inner self and a public persona is also part of "modern identity", and has intense cultural

roots. So the issue of the modern in Jewish identity in China is as critical an issue as the impact of Jewish economic activities on the modernisation of Shanghai. For the Russian Jews, issues of modernity were paramount. Caspé's construction of the Hotel Moderne in Harbin exemplifies the sense of so many Russian Jews as culturally modern - in the context of the tradition bound and feudal mass of Chinese society. Many of the Harbin Jews were influenced by the diverse currents in Russian political and cultural life - from the high culture of the Bolshoi and grand opera (Boris Chaliapin stayed in the Hotel Moderne in a room now named after him), to the transformative revolutionary dynamism of the Communist victory. This is not to say that there were not anti-Communist Jews among the Russian community; rather, many of the younger Russians were enthusiastic about Communism, as it promised both the modernity of a society escaping feudalism, and liberation from the systemic anti-Semitism of the Tsarist times.

Even before the revolution the CER zone promised a world in which the feudal constraints of Tsarist rules, such as the denial of citizenship to Jews and their restriction to the Pale of Settlement, would not operate. The zone was an experiment in economic modernisation, albeit a militarised form, and soon became to symbolise modernity in northern China for the Chinese and the Japanese as well. The Japanese "Fugu Plan" was an unrealised adventure specifically designed to import tens of thousands of German Jews into Manchuria as the basis of economic modernisation, in support of the Japanese imperialist policies in the region (Tokayer 1979; Imonti 1987).

As Harbin became more regulated by the Japanese army after 1931, and Russian fascism exploded in the city, Shanghai offered itself as a city that promised freedom, opportunity and

another form of modernity - against the provincialism of Manchuria. Many younger Harbintsy moved south, some first gaining tertiary education in Europe (especially France) or in the United States. One who arrived in Shanghai from her studies in politics at University of California Berkeley, was described by the North China Daily as a woman without a place - seeking refuge from the Japanese occupation of Harbin, Russian by culture but not by nationality, a temporary sojourner in the USA with no right of return, though born in China not a Chinese national, and finding in Shanghai the only place where at the time none of these mattered. She would become a Shanghailanders (a European resident of the city), not a Shanghainese (a Chinese resident).

Within Shanghai the Russian Jews became part of the middle class. Most however never rose to the heights of the Kadouries or Sassoons. They ran businesses that drew on their northern links (furriers) or allowed them to use their scientific skills (pharmacies), or worked for the trading companies. They were active in the Jewish community, where a dominant figure for twenty years (1927-1947) was Rabbi Ashkenazi, a Vladivostok born religious leader. Soon they became involved with the Sephardic community in the development of communal organisations - the Shanghai Jewish Club, the Jewish Recreation Club, the Shanghai Jewish School and so on. While their parents had come from fairly religious traditional backgrounds, and they were brought up in Jewish rituals, the generation which went to Shanghai in young adulthood or who grew up there, very quickly adopted the secular lifestyle of the city. An extremely popular locale for the Russians was the French Sporting club, across the road from the Cathay Mansions/Grosvenor House complex where many of them lived. Many also belonged to the Soviet Club, which

was a centre for chess and political and cultural events.

For this generation of Russian Jewish Shanghailanders, their lives were quintessentially modern. Their political orientations tended to be progressive, they were mainly (but not exclusively) well educated, often in American, French or British colleges in China, if not overseas, and they were oriented to economic sectors that epitomised the modern. One example was the impact of western music, which found its way into Shanghai through the activities of a German professor, who created a band in 1879, which in turn became the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra in 1907 (Kraus 1989). The orchestra was led for 40 years after 1917 by an Italian conductor, and soon came to include many of the Russian musicians - Jewish and non-Jewish - who fled there after the revolution. The Russians were also active in the many jazz orchestras that arose from the 1920s on.

When the first German Jewish refugees began to arrive after the rise of Nazism (1933), the Russians for the first time were confronted by a Jewish community that did not view them as modern, but rather the reverse, potentially as a vestige of the "Ostjuden", or eastern Jewry.

Inter-group attitudes among Jewish communities were affected by a wide variety of factors - including assumptions about racial hierarchies current within their societies. Thus Germany had seen itself as the acme of western culture, the society that had produced Beethoven and Schiller, that had developed the most refined science and the most innovative engineering. Its middle classes expressed the cultural sensitivities of their time, while viewing societies to the east (such as Russia and Poland) as wilder, more primitive and less civilised. With the rise of Hitler to power, German Jews were often dumb-founded by how their society could turn on its own, attacking and

casting out its doctors and lawyers and intellectuals, good Germans all, whose only crime was their adherence to the Mosaic faith. When they found sanctuary in Shanghai, they had arrived at the end of their world - yet in the early days they were able to establish themselves in business, and to re-start their professional careers.

For the early arrivals, they were a minority in a minority - among the scattering of Jews other than Sephardim and Russians who had migrated to the open city. The early German Jews in the city tended to be employees of German firms. Fritz Kauffman, who later became the Vice Chair of the Central European Communal Association (the "Judische Gemeinde"), was one such; he arrived in Shanghai in 1931, and became active in the relief and rehabilitation committees established after 1938. He worked closely with the Sephardi and Ashkenazi (Russian) representatives in this capacity (Kauffmann 1963).

The increasing velocity of a flow of central European "Kultur" into Shanghai, was to have a significant impact on the way in which the city would interpret and ingest the culture of modernity. Kraus notes that a large number of the European Jewish refugees were professional and amateur musicians, who ran a radio station playing music from its library of over ten thousand records. Ten of the refugee musicians joined the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra, while others joined the faculty of the Shanghai Conservatory and St. John's University (Berg-Pan 1983).

The tastes of the Chinese audiences introduced to this music were quite specific - according to Kraus, they preferred "the symphonic warhorses of the nineteenth century, and ... the romantic literature for piano... the most bourgeois phase of the history of European culture " (Kraus 1989) p.8. The Chinese urban cosmopolitans of Shanghai, found in the music of the European middle classes a signal of

the modern, a way of entering the sensibility of a culture that was set in contra-distinction to the feudal structures that the revolution of 1911 had sought to wash away. The music mirrored in a cultural space the politics of democracy that much of the urban population associated with the modernity of the west had brought, even if that modernity was oppressive in many ways. Shanghai's appreciation of the swing orchestras was another example of the cultural face of the modern - and it was in these interfaces where the Chinese and Europeans could begin to co-mingle in a frame which was not dominated by the business and political hierarchies exemplified by the Bund.

The German speaking community soon became the most significant of the Jewish groups, forming on its own perhaps 15% of the total European population of the city during the Japanese occupation. Their internment in 1943 in Hongkew forced them to re-negotiate again their place - driven in short time from comfort to penury, into very severe conditions. A 1944 census of the Hongkew area reveals a little about the conditions and make-up of the German-speaking population (Armbrüster, Kohlstruck et al. 2000). Of the 14,000 or so names listed on the Police dossier, some 10,000 were Germans (both German and Austrian). They were mainly adults - or those names recorded were of adults - 95% were over fifteen years. The majority were men - a ratio of 1.4:1 - and the oldest person listed was 85 years.

In occupational terms, they were:

- Employees/workers 9%
- Sales 9%
- Tailor/dressmaker 5%
- Merchant 4%
- Owner 3%
- Waiter 3%
- Teacher 2%
- Doctor 2%
- Musician 2%
- Nurse 2%

- Café owners 1%
- Other categories
- School children 6%
- Apprentices 2%
- "Nil" or unemployed 47%

This suggests a community bifurcated between the half who had work, and the half without. The workforce included the many musicians (some 200), and the professionals - doctors and lawyers. Clearly their occupations did not mean that they were in constant employment. And the role of the café society should be noted, where nearly 100 people were listed as café owners, while 300 or so were regularly employed as waiters. Here is a society of often single men, living socially on the street, their families nearly all dead in the Holocaust.

The arrival of the remainder of the Sugihara Jews - the Poles - in late 1941 added the final element to the mix. In an report in August 1942, the Polish Consulate (Republic of Poland 1942) identified 972 individuals, of whom 401 were identified as being rabbis, rabbinical students, trainee rabbis, cantors and ritual slaughterers, 251 as professionals, white-collar workers or students, and 320 as merchants, industrialists, farmers or artisans. Of the religious groups, the largest was the Mir Yeshiva (203), followed by the remnants of "Chachmej Lublin" (33), and the Lubavitcher yeshiva "Tomchei-Tmimim" (29) (Zuroff 1984; Zuroff 1986).

Some 261 were members of political and social organisations, including Agudas Israel (66), Betar (19), the socialist Bund (65), ex-services association (35) and the various other Zionists (76).

The 1944 Police dossier of those who responded to the census would show there were just under 1000 Poles listed in the Hongkew area - with a male female ratio of 3:1, no children listed under the age of 7 years, and the oldest person a man of 72. While many of the names on the Consulate list do not appear on the Police list, the picture

of the community is somewhat similar, though more impoverished after more than a year behind the wire. The community was composed essentially of two groups - the Mirrer Yeshiva members and a few other rabbinical survivors, and the more middle class urban refugees who had lined the summer 1940 trail to Sugihara's consulate door in distant Kovno

Poles:

- Rabbinical student 40%
- Employees/workers 10%
- Clerk 4%
- Sales 4%
- Rabbi cantor 4%
- Tailor 3%
- Merchant 5%
- Student 2%
- Waiter 3%
- Teacher 2%
- Bookkeeper 1%
- Other categories
- School children 5%
- "Nil" or unemployed 32%

There was still a strong political and social program in the community, though tensions between the religious and political Jews continued to simmer - especially as American aid such as that described by Zuroff (Zuroff 1984) tended to favour the religious groups. Many of the divisions between modernity and tradition that had marked the pre-war Polish Jewish political scene were carried over in a minor key into the Shanghai period.

Thus modernity wound its way through the lives of the Shanghai Jews. They were its bearers, its vanguard, its opponents and its victims. In the sense that the Holocaust marks the extreme perversion of the social, it also reveals the murderous surface that it can expose, and the industrialised horror it can encompass. In a bizarre twist it was the Japanese reluctance to accept the Nazi modernist project, through their acceptance of other modernist values of shared humanity and the potential that the Jews could play in their own modernising projects, that saved the Jews in Shanghai from the

“thorough finishing” (Huang (trans.) 1999) planned for them (Bauman 1989), (Kauffmann 1963).

Seven Families: Shanghai as a crossroads for the Jews of China

“The Menorah of Fang Bang Lu” 3[3]website explores the experiences of seven Jewish families of very different backgrounds, whose paths crossed in Shanghai in the 1940s, but who only all got to know each other when they met in their refuge, Sydney, in the year 2001, at the launch of the project. They were all participants in the “Crossroads: Shanghai and the Jews of China” exhibition held from 2001 to 2002 at the Sydney Jewish museum.

The families reflect the complexity of the trajectories of Jewish diaspora and its relation to China – from chosen home to forced place of exile and refuge. In this diversity they represent the range of experiences, yet do so from within that small group who were survivors of the Holocaust, and alive in Sydney Australia in the first year of the third Christian millennium.

A brief overview of their characteristics and their journeys to Shanghai demonstrates the relation between cultural capital and survival in order to reach and then to live within the Shanghai environment. This idea of cultural capital refers to the symbolic, analytical and psychological resources they used to make sense of and then find a place in the many environments of danger they or their forebears had had to negotiate.

We begin with the earliest arrival, the Moalem family – Moalem meaning teacher in Persian. The Moalem family grandfather arrived in the late nineteenth century, recruited by the “Sephardic” community to be the shamas or beadle of the synagogue. He had been living in the historic Jewish

centre of Aden, and his recruitment indicated that the community, by then well into its second generation in Shanghai, was seeking to renew its links with its sites of origin, and build a stronger institutional religious base. The other grandfather came from Babylon in Mesopotamia, on the run from the Ottoman empire’s military conscription, travelling via Burma and Malaya before arriving in Shanghai in 1904. In one family we can see the two intersecting themes – continuity and tradition, and escape to freedom.

The next generation of the family has already begun to bridge the divide between orient and occident – the Moalem father works for a multinational Euro-American trading company from a new office block on the Shanghai Bund, while his brother helps found the inter-ethnic Shanghai Jewish club in 1934. The Moalem family is caught in the 1932 Japanese shelling of Hongkew and moves to the greater safety of the International Settlement, close to the grand Sephardic synagogue of Ohel Rachel in Seymour Rd. After 1942 as British passport holders, the Moalems are interned by the Japanese, moving from a certain bourgeois luxury to the pitiless conditions of the internment camp. The Moalem son grows up during the Second War, and later trains as an engineer in Shanghai, finally moving to Australia where he becomes a mathematics teacher. In his apartment he keeps a few relics of the Shanghai years, some silver pieces, hangings, furniture and a collection of Shanghai postcards from the 1940s. The cards show the Shanghai of the international period, its grand buildings and crowded streets, and the constant reminder of the racial hierarchies of power that were in the throws of dissolution.

While Russians had been part of the Shanghai scene since the European settlement, and an imposing Tzarist (later becoming Soviet and later again Russian) consulate was built

in the consulate district at the mouth of Soochow creek, the major inflow of Russians took place in the decade and a half from 1922 to 1937. The Russians who had fled the Soviets from Vladivostok to Korea, and then to Shanghai in the 1920s, were joined by those fleeing the Soviet takeover of the railway corridor through Manchuria (with its centre in Harbin), and then by those leaving after the Soviet sale of the railway to the Japanese in the early 1930s. So as the Moalem family was settling into its Seymour Road row-house free from Japanese gunfire, Efim Krouk was trying to establish himself as a penniless new arrival from Harbin, with an English education from the American Presbyterian College in Cheefoo. He found work with a local company and became involved with the Jewish Club, and with the Soviet Club where he met Nora Koulesh, recently arrived in 1939 from Harbin, and an aspiring poet and journalist. They marry in 1941, and remain free to live in the French Concession, As his company is taken over by the Japanese, Efim sets up a bakery in the Hongkew area, serving the rapidly growing refugee population forced to live there. At war’s end there is a brief moment of heightened tension when the USSR declares war on Japan; but Japan soon declares its general surrender, and the Japanese leave.

The Krouks become once more part of the middle class Russian and Jewish society of the city, living in a fine apartment in the French Concession. They had no other country, both being Manchurian born – by 1947 they had agreed to accept Soviet passports, but Efim’s father had disappeared under Stalin following his son’s advice that Shanghai was no place for the older man – and he had gone back to the USSR where he had been murdered in the purges. With the Communist takeover, the Krouks were stuck – partly because the new regime wanted them to stay, partly because they had no place else

^{3[3]} Website: <http://transforming.cultures.uts.edu.au/ShanghaiSite>

to leave for and did not want to go to Israel. It would take them until 1957 to finally get exit permits and leave on Israeli papers – returning within months to Hong Kong.

Rachel Rolbant is the daughter of a wealthy Harbin family, sent to study politics and economics in the late 1920s at the University of California, Berkeley. By the time she completes her studies the Japanese have taken over Manchuria and a number of wealthy Jews have been kidnapped and murdered by gangs of Russian and Chinese criminals, sanctioned by the Japanese secret police. One of these men is Myron Kofman, a businessman held for ransom and then assassinated. His son Vladimir (Valya) returns from France, and meets up with Rachel in Shanghai – where they marry. Kofman becomes a prosperous businessman in Shanghai, and Rachel establishes a high class dressmaking business. At the end of the war they travelled to France where Rachel secured a Dior agency, and returned to Shanghai in 1948 to sell Dior haut couture – within a year the Chinese revolution had ended that lifestyle. After two years under Communist rule, they manage to get to Hong Kong, and from there to Australia.

For middle class Jews in Austria, the kultur of middle Europe was their ambience. The Rosner family of Graz, a provincial city, was no different. Yet they were aware of rising anti-Semitism and the growing pressure on Jews associated with the growth of Nazism. Then in November 1938, with Austria already under Nazi control following the Anschluss, the so-called Kristallnacht riots destroy the vestiges of Jewish dignity in Austria. Wilhelm Rosner is arrested and sent with thousands of other Jewish men to Dachau, a concentration camp designed to intimidate the spirit and motivate departure from the Reich. Her father is released and Lisl Rosner, then about twelve years old, flees with

her parents through Switzerland to Genoa – and a four week sea voyage on an Italian ship to Shanghai.

In Shanghai they join the thousands of refugees from the Reich in the battered Hongkew quarter of the city, under Japanese control and a tumbledown suburb of bombed out buildings and rabbit warren alleyways. They share a heime, a communal lodging house, with many other German-speaking refugees, until finally they find a room for rent. That will be their home throughout the war. Wilhelm finds work as a violinist at the White Horse café, and Lisl herself begins working as a kindergarten teacher at the Shanghai Youth Association School in Hongkew soon after her graduation from the Shanghai Jewish School in the International Settlement. She remains at the school until her departure for Australia in 1948.

Fritz Gunsberger experiences the full contradictions of the Nazi period in Vienna, his home town. Trained as a chemist, he is ill in hospital during the Kristallnacht round-ups, and returns home to find everyone taken. He lives underground making soaps for the black market, until in 1940 he manages to get an exit permit from the Nazis. Unable to go by sea, he takes the tortuous route across Europe and Asia towards the haven of Shanghai, by now almost the only open port for Jews in the world. He travels with his “Juden” (Jewish) passport stamp from Vienna to Berlin to Warsaw to Moscow, across borders and through cities ravaged by war. Within months the borders will be closed and Moscow and Berlin will be in conflict – but for the time being an uneasy peace facilitates his movement. At Manchouli on the Soviet/ Manchukuo border he transfers to a Japanese train, and under guard traverses Manchuria to Dairen, from where he takes a Japanese boat to Shanghai.

He finds work in a Japanese dairy, and then marries a fellow refugee he met on the trans-Siberian train. Once the Japanese enforce the Restricted

Area rules on him in 1943, he sets up a margarine factory in the ghetto, eking out a living. By war's end the family with a new baby is facing a harder existence, compounded by the failure of the business when the US occupation troops flood the market with cheap, high quality products. Facing a choice of return to Austria, emigration to Palestine, or joining his brother in Australia, Gunsberger took his family on one of the boats accepted into Australia in the eighteen-month “window of opportunity” opened up in 1946.

For some Jewish residents of Shanghai there was an interstitial location, a way of living that was created by the contradictions of the wartime rules and regulations. George Szekeres was a chemical engineer from Budapest, who had left Hungary with his wife before the war, to join his brother in Shanghai and found work in a tanning factory. With the outbreak of War the Szekeres found themselves in a curious situation – they were not refugees, they carried passports issued by an independent country, yet one that was soon to ally itself with the Nazis (and indeed be taken over later in the war). In the International Concession they could intermingle with Hungarians, a small but prosperous pre-war community, and with Jews, and with German-speakers. As well, they were both mathematicians by calling, and were thus part of an international community of scholars for whom numbers rather than letters formed the lingua franca. Indeed during the war when their passports ran out, they were renewed with the help of the Hungarian consul, a well-known local architect.

When the Japanese took over in 1941 the Szekeres were thus in a quite unique position. They were Jews but not stateless or Russian or enemy civilians; they were holders of Axis alliance papers and therefore free to move about as they wished. They could move comfortably between

the Designated Area and the main city, and used this freedom to make a modest living, carrying goods made in the ghetto to clients in the city. Esther Szekeres worked as a book-keeper for a Hungarian nightclub owner in the French Concession, as well as looking after her young son Peter, born in Shanghai. Later she became a teacher at the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School, where she was a colleague of Lisl Rosner. At war's end George, who had been writing mathematical papers whenever he could, found employment in Australia's Adelaide university as a mathematics lecturer. The family flew to Australia in 1948. The last significant group of Jews to enter Shanghai did so just a week before the Pacific War broke out in December 1941, and the Japanese took control of the whole of Shanghai. As part of this group the Weyland family fled the western Polish city of Lodz in September 1939, just ahead of the Nazi troops. They travelled east to the zone that would soon be occupied by the USSR under the secret pact between Hitler and Stalin, and then north to Vilna in Lithuania, a mainly Polish city, much of the time under German attack. They would live in Vilna for seventeen months as refugees, initially under Lithuanian rule, then Soviet. Marcel Weyland remembers having to learn Polish, then Lithuanian and then Soviet patriotic songs as a school child of twelve. Finally along with 4000 others, they secured transit permits from the Japanese consul Sugihara in Kovno, the Lithuanian capital, so that they could negotiate for exit visas from the NKVD. With these visas, they would travel east again across the Soviet Union to Vladivostok, and then by boat to Tsuruga in Japan and onto Kobe.

By the end of October 1941 the war between the USSR and Nazi Germany had erupted, drawing Soviet troops to the west, and relieving the Japanese military of the threat from Soviet forces

to their north. With this problem solved, the Japanese could move south on the European colonial possessions of south east Asia and the Pacific. But the remaining Jewish families in Kobe represented a threat that the Japanese did not want – and they were shipped to Shanghai. In Shanghai the Weyland family re-established a life – Boleslaw Jakubowicz, the son-in-law, found work as an accountant at the Shanghai Jewish Club, using his proficiency in languages (German, Polish, Russian, French, English); Halina his wife, continued to operate a small dressmaking business begun in Kobe; Estera the mother took charge of the Polish Jewish communal kitchen, while Marcel went to the Shanghai Jewish school. The family managed to live in the French Concession until late in 1943, during which time Michal Weyland died of cancer, and Halina survived the typhus epidemic of 1942 that killed many of the refugees. In 1943 the family were forced to move from their apartments in the Concession to a room in a row house in the ghetto. Boleslaw continued to work at the Club and was also involved in the Polish Jewish community's mutual support association, while Estera and Halina both worked at the small Tongshan Rd communal kitchen. In July 1945 Halina was caught in the American bombing of Hongkew that killed over thirty refugees – she survived. At war's end the family like many others worked for the occupying American forces, until they could leave in 1946 to join the other daughter, Maria, in Australia.

Cultural memory traces : Jews in Chinese memory, Shanghai in Jewish memory

The Jewish Shanghai continues to exist, in Chinese memory and Jewish memory. Since the re-establishment of relations between China and Israel in 1992, the role of the Jews in China has become a small but growing industry in China - linked to an exploration of the sources of Chinese modernity, the Israeli example of

economic development, and the potential for Jewish tourism and investment. Three main centres exist or are planned: the Shanghai Centre of Jewish Studies of the Academy of Social Sciences headed by Prof Pan Guang (Pan Guang 1995), the Nanjing University-based Centre for Jewish Studies directed by Prof Xu Xin, and the emerging Centre for Jewish Studies in the Heliojiang Academy (in Harbin). There are also smaller centres operating at the University of Shandong in Jinan, and in the University of Henan in Kaifeng. In Shanghai there are two buildings seeking to be identified as the Jewish Museum (in either the Ohel Rachel in the Seymour Rd complex in the International Settlement, or the Ohel Moishe in Ward Rd in Hongkew) , while plans are in train for such a museum in Harbin (in either the old or new synagogue buildings).

Chinese books about Shanghai and its Jewish population, or which mention the Jews, have been prepared for an English-reading audience (Pan Guang 1995), (Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House 1998; Xie Zuoxuan and Pan Junxiang 1998). Pan's book is the best known, and reflects research undertaken in the early 1990s. Its chapters cover the four major themes that the Chinese seek to affirm about the special relationship between Jews and China (an idea that also is featured in Jewish memory artefacts). There is an introductory chapter setting the early history, a focus on the Holocaust haven role, an investigation of the internal dynamics of the communities, and an affirmation of the role of Shanghai as a bridge between the Chinese and Jewish people. Pan's influence is widespread, and his work has served as a model for the Heliojiang group, and underpins the presentations made by Kaifeng guides. A number of Jews are mentioned in the heroes of the Chinese struggle for independence, including a number who volunteered to fight with the Communist armies

against the Japanese. One of the China Jews, the late "Eppie" Epstein, was appointed to the Chinese People's Assembly, as recognition of his long years as editor of "China Reconstructs". Epstein has identified 4 [4] his early Jewish/Bundist up-bringing as playing a role in his orientation towards social justice, and his disappointment with American society (he went briefly to the USA in the late 1940s).

There has been an argument that cultural memory in Chinese and Jewish societies share certain processes and dynamics (Schwarcz 1998). In particular, memory narratives play a critical role in the maintenance of the sense of place and purpose within each culture, and are continually recycled to throw light on the present and point up the continuities between generations into the distant past, and thereby, into the far unforeseeable future. Schwarcz suggests that Shanghai has come to take on a very particular meaning to contemporary Jewish communities - it represents the almost sole example of the other pathway, of the potential of survival in an alien environment that refuses to be hostile, of an alternative modernity (Gaonkar 2001), (Lee 2001). She offers conversations with three of the Shanghai refugee rabbis still surviving - noting in passing that Shanghai was a city for immigration for the Chinese as well, and that in their settlement in the city they set up home place associations (similar to the Jewish *landmanschaften*), which demonstrate the "moral excellence of loving the group" (Schwarcz 1998) p. 132. One of them is Rabbi Anszel Wajnhaus (no. 164 of the rabbis on the Polish consulate list), who tells of the miracle of the rescue of the Mirrer yeshiva, and his own tortuous escape - the Mir yeshiva, we learn, was an outcome of the *haskala* (the enlightenment) within Jewish thought, a modern outpouring of religious tradition, a rationalist engagement

⁴[4] The author interviewed Epstein in Beijing, in November 2000.

with faith.

For the rabbis, the presence of Rabbi Ashkenazi provided a link, a symbol of continuity between the world they had left behind, now in flames, and the world they had entered, a dirty crowded space, full of chaos, noise and unintelligible symbols. One of the escapees was the Amshenover Rebbe, Szymon Kalisz from the Lublin yeshiva, who had negotiated the survival of the Jews with their Japanese "hosts" in Kyoto (Tokayer 1979; Imonti 1987; Sakamoto 1998), . It was he who had answered the queries of the Japanese naval command about the antipathy of the Nazis to the Jews, by saying "they hate us because we are Asiatics" - thus earning the acquiescence of the Japanese military to the continued presence of the Jewish refugees in Kobe until late in 1941 - far beyond the short period allowed by their visas.

These memories have been played out over and again - in a string of Jewish exhibitions (in Sydney, Melbourne, Harvard, Washington, San Francisco, Vancouver, Berlin, Vienna at the very least) , dozens of studies⁵[5] and memoirs, and a number of documentaries. The Shanghai story has become an emblematic moment for Jewish communities world-wide, intensifying by its accidental nature the horror for those who could not escape there, challenging beliefs about European civilisation (and its unconscionable abandonment of the Jews to their fate) by exemplars of un-selfconscious Asian modes of sociation.

Conclusion: culture, power and memory

Modernity is a useful device to pierce the apparently random and meaningless accidental sense of a world in which many die and some survive. In the 1937 Nanking massacre - where the Japanese army rampaged through the city, raping, torturing and murdering, it was the

⁵[5] See references and additional reading below.

Nazi party member John Rabe, a local businessman, who declared the international section of the city a refuge, and mounted Nazi swastikas and Red Cross flags to define its boundaries and signal that the Japanese should stay away. He and his comrades may have saved over 100,000 Chinese from a similar fate to those pictured in the Nanking Massacre museum in Nanjing (<http://www.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/NanjingMassacre/NM.html>).

One of the weapons of social survival is the capacity to render memories into the historical record, to build story telling of events into the regular rituals of the social moments of a culture. For once those stories are embedded they can be called up again and again to validate the struggle for survival. For the Chinese in Shanghai the Jewish moments of their history are minor in terms of numbers, but important in building a sense of their own modernity, and the Chinese-ness of that modernity. For the Jews who experienced Shanghai, it was a determining time in their lives. For those Jews who did not, it increasingly represents an alternative modernity, where self-interest was not the sole arbiter of decision-making, and where the morality of caring for the group was able to emerge. Bauman (Bauman 1989) argues that modernity is characterised most clearly by the opportunity to see moral choices and act in ways that assert an ethical morality over self-interest - it was the morality of the situation that the Japanese Shibata chose to follow, that would allow the Chinese writers fifty years later to celebrate their friendship towards the Jews.

The fundamental dynamic it would appear, has to do with the choices that are made about what aspects of the modernist project are to be taken, and how the different but shared experiences of the Jews and the Chinese can be used to help throw light on what a moral order of modernity should be allowed to become.

My Memories of Harbin

By Mark Leef (Mara Lifshitz)

My father, Yakov Matveevich Lifshitz, arrived in Harbin in 1919. He, and his nephew Lev (Liosha) Birulin and another cousin, Grisha Birulin, fled from Russia in 1914 in order to avoid military conscription at the beginning of the World War One. Yakov had already served a term of five years (1903 – 1908). His battalion, a part of the famous Alexander Nevsky regiment, had been banished to an island in the North Sea, and disbanded for a careless execution of an order to suppress a mutiny at a factory. Yakov spent a year and a half on the island, cleaning frozen fish, having left behind his young wife, Sterna, and two children. Sterna waited for his return from the army for five years. However, on the very first day of his return from the army the couple was forewarned that the very next day their sons, in spite of being small children, would be conscripted as “The Tzar Nikolai’s soldiers”.

The family fled the town the very same night. They crossed the great spaces of Russia, and finally found themselves in Harbin, where the Russian military police all but captured them. After many adventures, changing places and names, paying bribery, they were able to reach Kobe, Japan.

The Jewish community in Kobe is well known for their generous treatment of the Jewish refugees from Russia. They were given shelter and food, until an opportunity presented itself to transfer them to the United States (in those days there was no need of an entrance visa). At their arrival in Seattle, the refugees were assisted by the “Hayat” association to

find relatives (if any) and work. These were difficult days for the new arrivals in the U.S., especially for the Jewish refugees. With no knowledge of the language and having no profession, they were happy to work wherever they could find a job, no matter how hard the work happened to be. Yakov, being a photographer, was in a better position than most of the refugees. He impatiently waited for the war, when he would be able to return home to his wife, Steria. In the meantime, their two children had died, one of diphtheria, the other of scarlet fever. Warsaw, where Steria arrived in 1920 to live with her sister, was struck by severe hunger, remembered till today by the local population.

In 1919 Yakov Lifshitz and Lev (Liosha) Birulin Left America. Travelling through China, they found themselves in Harbin once again, without the possibility of entering Russia’s closed borders due to the outbreak of the Russian revolution. Grisha Birulin stayed in Seattle. He met a Jewish-American girl and married her.

Liosha married the daughter of the well-known Rabbi Baronsky, and the both families left Harbin for Tientsin, where Liosha began a long pharmaceutical career. As for Yakov, he continued to await Sterna’s arrival, and in the meantime opened a photography studio and very soon became the most popular photographer in Tientsin.

Much was written about the legendary city, Harbin, and its industrial and cultural development. It was populated mostly by over 250,000

“white” Russian stateless refugees (a drop of water in the vast sea of the Han Chinese) and soon became a typical Russian city, with its excellent schools, opera factories, luxury shops, theatres and cinemas. The Russian language reigned supreme. Even the names of the streets and shop were written in Russian.

In 1921 Sterna was fortunate to arrive in Harbin as a legal immigrant. She was nicknamed “the first nightingale”. Until now, crossing the Russian-Chinese border with the help of guides and trackers, people risked their lives, crawling under barbed wire and mine fields. I remember how my parents took me to welcome the foursome family of the brother of the well-known Harbin furrier, Boris Paley, who arrived in such a way.

Sterna was helped by her cousin, Sasha Udovich of Chernigov, whose family lived in China. He met her on some train station, registered her fictitiously as his wife, and took her with him to Harbin. It was a horrible two-weeks journey in small cattle wagons. After a seven-year-long forced separation Yakov and Sterna began a new life.

The Lifshitz studio did very well. Yakov, talented and energetic fully plunged into the fervent Harbin life of the gay twenties when the city has been known as “the Paris of the Orient”. Yakov documented all the important events: international congresses in the “Moderne” Hotel, concerts given by the world-famous artists, like Feodor Shaliapine, Jasha Heifetz, and others. He even photographed an opera “live” on

stage, from the rise of the curtain till the final applause.

He was obliged to take up Soviet citizenship in order to have access to the then Soviet owned KVJD Railway, with its thousands of workers to immortalize by his camera obscura. Once he has done what only rare photographers are known to have done: he "shot" a whole department of workers standing in a circle around him. For this feat he had to use an ultra wide "fish eye" lens, only very few of the likes existed then, at the dawn of the age of photography. He was a pioneer in the Far eastern photography. Amongst the most technically complicated of his works is a photograph of the wedding of the niece of Sonia Lichomanova, when he had lit up the whole of the enormous hall of the New Synagogue. Not once did he return home with his face singed by the magnesium flash used in those days.

All the Harbin who-and-who stood in queue to be photographed "by Lifschitz himself" – generals, clad in their regalia, bankers, artists, high KVJD railway officials. Even Shaliapin the Great and Hefetz found it necessary to visit Yakov's studio during their visit to Harbin. In other words, "anybody, who was not photographed at the Lifshitz studio, was a nobody". Even the Chinese street photographers solicited their clients, witnessing: "Me photoglyph like Lifshitz!" (Chinese had difficulty in pronouncing the "r" "sound, and pronounced it as "l".)

Yakov was also very active in the activity of the Jewish community of the city. He was very well educated in Jewish history, philosophy and ethics, participated in planning and building of the New Synagogue, and was elected to be its Gabbai.

After the 1932 flood, the studio was moved from the Tshomelidze House to the Bogdanovsky House at the Kitayskaya corner Yamskay, above Petrov's Store. In the same house also lived Liberman, the warden of

the Jewish cemetery, and, on the top floor, -- the Tesmenitsky family.

In the lab (called "the dark room") worked young assistants: Motia Machlin, S. Karlikov, S. Weiman, Aharon and others. Some of them grew to be photographers on their own.

This was Harbin's "golden age". Many made good profits. I remember that my parents regularly went to the concerts and opera and theater performances. They never missed a good film, after which a shashlyk at the Gidulian's famous basement restaurant was "a must". And how I loved the feel of warmth of a bunch of chestnuts in the pockets of my shubka, while skating at the skating rink, a regular meeting ground of the Harbin youngsters in winter. At home there always was a gay atmosphere. We often met around a table full of tasty food and drinks with out friends, "old Mogiliev hands", Boris Paley, Soloveichik. Frog, Weiners, Zhelezniakovs, Wertlieb, and others. Then the card games, while our Chinese cook prepared the blyni with the siomga fish placing them between the towels to keep them warm. Music was provided by an RCA victrola with a clever doggie face on the lid. Someone played piano. Someone sang a Vertinsky song. Sterna whirled around the room in a dance with her nephew Nathan Ryvkin.

The Jewish holidays were celebrated solemnly. Returning from the synagogue service, we sat down around the table covered with traditional Jewish food. Ah, the tsymes with the sweet-sour meat! Ah, the Pesach teiglach and Imberlach! And the barrel of the home-salted cucumbers!

Ours was a home to the many newly arrived relatives, whom Yakov succeeded to whisk away to Harbin from the horrors of the Russian revolution – someone was paid a substantial bribe for their arrival. I remember Aunt Sonia and Uncle Leon Lichomanovs, with the two-

year-old Dinusia, who charmed all of us!

Unfortunately, some of the relatives returned to Russia. They gave in to Stalin's sweet invocations. Perished in the Gulags were cousins Max Kogan, his brother Liova, Nathan Ryvkin, whom Yakov taught photography and provided with the best cameras, predicting: "You'll be the best photographer in Moscow!" But the poor Natanchik did not reach Moscos. He died ina Gulag on the way.

All of the "returnees" were accused of spying for the Japanese and rehabilitated "with apology" in 1956. Boris, Nathan's brother, did not return to Russia. He continued to work at the "Daltotat", and, later, emigrated with his sons to Israel.

Like most of the Jewish children in Harbin, I was sent to the Talmud Torah School to get my preliminary education. Then, like most of the Jewish children in Harbin, I switched to the First Harbin Municipal School of Commerce, or, simply, "Commercheskoe". There the education standards were very high, and it was difficult to integrate. I remember that once, at the maths exams, I had to copy Mara Wolfin's answers. Soon, again, as most of the Jewish children of the city, I joined the Zionist youth organization, Betar, where I was first taught the basic rudiments of the Zionist cause and the methods of their achievement. The older Betarim were anxious to emigrate to Palestine as soon as possible, despite the difficulties of the long journey there and knowledge that life there may be dangerous and hard. Yakov made a farewell photograph of a group of departing Betarim, shich included Iliusha Lankin, Abrasha Milichiker, Germant, Hirsch Nihamkin, Mulka Rolbant, Isia Losser, Isia Nadel (Oren), Krasnov, Isai Krinkevich, and two girls, whose names I have forgotten. This photograph I handed to the late Prof. Boris Bressler to be deposited

at the "Jews of China Archive" at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

In Betar I made many life-long friends, whose memory still thrills me despite our separation so long ago. At the end of the WWII, many of them settled in the newly established State of Israel to forge their future together with that of the country. I humbly admit that sometimes, thinking of it, I regret my not having participated in it together with them. I cannot forget the words of my former sgan in a Betar unit and an old friend, Monia Pirutinsky. At our meeting in Jerusalem in 1967, shortly after the Six-Day War, he said to me: "It is true, the support from our brothers and friends abroad does help, but nothing can be compared to our blood, shed on our battlefields." Kol ha kavod lecha, Monia, for your life-long dedication. Greetings to my old school mates and friends, the late Joe Tukachinsky and Liova Olshevsky. All the best to Yana Liberman and Abrasha Fradkin, and many, many others.

No doubt, the prosperity period of Harbin came to an end with the occupation of the city by the Japanese in 1931-32. Personal security and economy were on the decline, and it was evident that the time had come to pack one's bags and move southwards to China proper within the Great Wall, where law and order still reigned under the British and French flags.

On December 31, 1931 fire destroyed the house we lived in. It started at the Toropov school and soon reached our building. I stood in a crowd watching the conflagration and the fourth-floor tenants escaping the flames by the fire fighters' ice-covered slippery ladders. Yakov ran in through the back door in an effort to save whatever was yet possible to save. He entered the dining room and saw five firemen sitting around the table and cheerfully drinking the peisachovka wine earmarked for my bar-mitzva. The chief fireman right on the spot presented him with an

ultimatum: "Either I get a goodly part of the insurance money, or drown everything by flooding the apartment. Similar ultimatum was presented to our next door neighbor. There was no way out. Yakov had to give in. "The Lawless period" followed "The Golden Age."

To the North-west of Harbin, the Japanese fought the Soviets at the Khinghan Mountains. In the city itself, the political trend of the new masters was obviously anti-Soviet and encouraged the "White Russian" groups in their "anti communist fervor" which very soon became physically anti Jewish. The Fascist newspaper "Nash Put" was openly enticing the Russian "patriots" to engineer a Jewish pogrom. Street fights between the Shurka Bubeloff's "Muskateers" and the Betar and Makkabi members became an everyday event.

Jewish businessmen were abducted for ransom. No old time Harbiner forgot or will ever forget the notorious Kaspe murder case in 1933.

In the past, the Jewish community lived in comparative peace with the Russian inhabitants. Now things changed sharply to the worse, even though the mainstream Japanese policy was never outright anti Jewish.

Yakov began to receive threatening phone calls. A rumor was spread that I was kidnapped. My parents gladly denied it to the horrified friends and relatives. The atmosphere was irrevocably poisoned. And yet we tried to continue living our lives. During the summer vacations we went to the old health resorts and spa around Dairen (now Dalian -- just as the Chinese pronounced "l" instead of "r", the Japanese pronounced "r" instead of "l"), then ruled by the Japanese. Like most of the Jewish vacationers, we lived at the Kakahashi's best "Lerner Hotel" right next to one of the world's unrivaled beaches.

There always was a minyan for a

Shabbat morning service. I even celebrated my Bar mitzvah, cited the Maftir blessings and gave a s[peech in Hebrew, as taught by my Hebrew teacher Nadel the father who returned to Harbin from a visit to Palestine. People wondered at my "outlandish Hebrew pronunciation", and Yakov had to explain that this is the way they speak in Eretz Israel.

We often made excursions to the near-by Port Arthur, the site of the long siege and a bloody battle during the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War. Reminsced about Joseph Trumpeldor, took group photographs at the grave of the legendary general Bondarenko, visited the Rokotan beach where one could see the bottom of the crystal clear sea at a depth of 20 feet.

Back in Harbin, the situation sharply worsened. The threatening phone calls were now an open blackmail. A newspaper reporter demanded 10,000 Japanese Yen, "or else..." "Or else what?" asked Yakov, refusing to pay. "You'll see!" On the New Year's eve the newspaper featured the "or else" -- a page long article: "The photographer Lifshitz is an GPU agent-provocateur!". Chapter by chapter, lie by lie, the article "disclosed" how Yakov smuggled \$400,000 in his cameras for Manchuria's dictator, Chang Tso-lin, later assassinated by the Japanese, and so on and so forth. Next morning the reporter phoned Yakov to ask how did he like the article? "For a New Year feuilleton not bad at all," answered Yakov with a chuckle, shaking with fear. He was afraid that I shall share the horrid fate of Kofman, Wittenson and Semion Kaspe. He seriously began thinking of leaving Harbin. But it was not so easy to leave everything and emigrate to Tientsin or Shanghai, without any knowledge of the English language spoken there. I was hastily transferred to an English school where all the subjects were taught in English.

Soon a batch of newspapers and pamphlets was mysteriously planted

continued on page 41

Ancient philosophy guides China's modern diplomacy

When Chinese ancients first carved the character “He” (Harmony) on tortoise shells, it is doubtful if they imagined how profoundly the implication of this word would influence their generations millennia years later.

“The Chinese have always pursued a life in harmony, both on the level of individuals and nations, despite differences in their approach to various social and political attitudes,” wrote Chinese foreign minister, Li Zhao-xing, in a magazine article, commenting on the Chinese concept of ideal co-existence between nations.

The first, who spoke of harmony without uniformity, was the Chinese philosopher Kong-fu, known to the Western world as Confucius (551 – 479 BC). “This is the major component of the concept of the Chinese philosophy and code of ethics, concerning the union of the peoples of the world,” said Prof.

Zhang Li-wen of the Peking Ren Min University in a lecture on sociological background of the international exchange. “The culture of harmony emphasizes coordination and peace among various elements, and this is the basic principle of China’s diplomacy of today.”

A similar note was struck by the President of the People’s Republic of China, Hu Jin-tao at a recent meeting of China’s Communist Party’s Central Committee: “Keeping firmly in mind the recent history of foreign powers’ invasion and oppression, the Chinese people are yearning for stability and peace. Having suffered bitterly from the scourge of war in modern times, the Chinese people are keenly aware of the necessity and value of peace.” President Hu stressed the fact that throughout modern history China was an important force safeguarding world peace: “China have never sought hegemony over anybody and never will. Our country’s aspiration for

harmonious co-existence with other nations is eloquently demonstrated by the boundary treaties it signed recently with 12 of its 14 neighbors, demarcating 90 percent of its 22,000-kilometer-long land border.

Zheng Bi-zhang, Chairman of the China Reform Forum said on the same occasion that “China is not a challenger of the existing international order, but its participant.”

On the most sensitive and complicated North Korean nuclear issue, he said that China has initiated the hosting of four rounds of negotiations in a bid to seek a peaceful solution to this explosive problem”.

To the sound of prolonged applause, Chairman Zheng concluded his remarks: “One would make a serious strategic misjudgment of the path China entered in the 21st century if he failed to see its basic trend.”

“China View”
Beijing

My Memories of Harbin (continued from page 40)

at our Novy Gorod studio. It turned out to be Communist propaganda. Fortunately, Yakov succeeded to get rid of them before it were found by the Japanese gendarmerie. Having realized that further indecision may prove to be disastrous, Yakov visited an American where he was supplied with a document, stating that he was to go to Mukden (now Shenyang) to purchase a new model camera. Taking

no extra change of clothes, he took the first train going south. In Mukden he used the traveling pass of his friend, J.M. Liberman, making the best of the similar initials, to allow him to travel further south, and safely reached Tientsin. In a week or so, mother and I secretly followed him. The Harbin Lifshitz Studio existed no more.

In Tientsin, Yakov settled on the territory of the English concession.

He entered the social life of the Tientsin Jewish community, actively participated in the building of the new synagogue, and served as its Gabbai for many years.

And the photography? His new studio on the main Victoria Road became no less successful and famous than the old one in Harbin.

(From the Russian: Emmanuel Pratt, Jerusalem)

Letters

Daniel James Schuster

Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Igud Yotzei Sin!

I am a representative of the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service (AHMS) and currently serving at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem for a period of 12 months. The AHMS sends young Austrians to work at Holocaust-related institutions as an alternative to the Austrian compulsory military service. To Israel it currently sends young Austrians to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem since 1994, and to China to the Center for Jewish Studies Shanghai since 2006, and plans to be sending people to the Harbin Jewish Research Center in future. All AHMS interns are supported financially by the Republic of Austria.

As the AHMS has been very successful in China since it started there and is highly interested in fostering the relations between Israel, China and Austria, we have decided to organize a seminar on the topic Holocaust at the Yad Vashem Museum for July 2008, with an equal number of Chinese, Israeli and Austrian participants. As I am the Project Coordinator of this seminar, I would be very glad to establish contact with your organisation and converse about the seminar. Perhaps there are ways how our two organisations could cooperate. I would be very thankful for any kind of help.

I would furthermore appreciate an opportunity to meet somebody of or visit your organisation. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Email: schuster@auslandsdienst.at

Tel.: 052-8825725

42

I
g
u
d
y
o
t
z
e
i
S
i
n

Gary Matzdorff

California, USA

To T. Kaufman: It was a great surprise and a great pleasure to meet you and our Shanghai and Harbin friends at the Air Force Center last month. I always wanted to meet you and chat with you about China in general and Shanghai specifically. I arrived in Shanghai together with my parents and grandmother in May 1939 from Berlin, Germany. On our arrival we were immediately transported to the Kinchow Road School which was converted into a camp. We arrived with exactly US\$2.50 per person, that was all we were allowed to take out of Germany to get that coveted Exit Visa. After one month living like vagabonds, my father received 200 pounds sterling from England. My Dad was a fur wholesaler in Berlin and that money came from a fur dealer. With that money we rented one room from a White Russian in Hongkew for us four. That was better than camp life. I got a job as a secretary to a Eurasian man downtown after 2 weeks. I had many different jobs until Pearl Harbor on Dec. 8.

Until that time I was a boy scout with Marc Tokachinsky, Danial and Alex Katznelson and many others like Jaacob Lieberman at Seymour Rd. School. I then joined the S.V.C. Jewish Company and also became a rover in scouting. All of that was important for me to get out of the Refugee Syndrome and to meet locals. But the war changed all that, and I lived in Hongkew the whole time, barely making a living. I was an active Betari in Hongkew.

I got married in 1947 to a Viennese girl and come to the U.S. in 1948. I am a leather worker by trade and started my own business 10 years after arrival. This country was good to me and I worked very hard and was lucky to meet the right people and became successful. Then it was time to give back to various causes: Hebrew University in Jerusalem on Mt. Scopus and the I.A.F. Center. Nancy and I will be back next year again, and hope to see you again in good health. Your work with China is wonderful. I have a Chinese godson living in Atlanta. I will tell you that story another time. I follow and read the Igud Paper regularly. Best wishes to all your readers and your family.

Address: 12644 Bradford Pl. Granada Hills, CA 91344.

Frédéric VIEY

I pass by Harbin on next 14th August and I will be in Tianjin on August 16th 2007 with my group of French Jews. We will see the synagogue and the old Jewish district and we will eat in Kisserling Bar.

I read that Anna Song and several personalities wish to see the synagogue becomes a museum. It is possible, in your opinion, to meet a person in charge for the Town hall of Tianjin at the time of our passage in this city. Could you give me a name and a telephone number.

What about the conference in Tianjin in October? Can you address the program and the speakers to me? I think that you know that French Jews settled in Tianjin since 1860 and that we have articles on this community in "L'Univers Israélite" and "Les Archives Juives".

Dalit and Simon Shickman

Thank you so much for the Rosh Hashanah gift you sent to our sons Avi and Tzachi Shickman.

Tzachi writes:

Again, I thank you so much for the gift and for its reminder that though a soldier in the Israeli army, I never for get my fathers roots in China.

Anson Laytner

I am the newly elected president of the Sino-Judaic Institute. I don't know what sort of relationship our two organizations have had in the past, but I would very much like to cooperate with you, share resources, and at the least, have links on our websites.

I would like to communicate with someone in leadership there to explore our relationship further.

Email Address :layter@msn.com

Phone Number : 206 323 4768

May and Julie Kotsuji

Japan - Kamakura

To Igud Yotzei Sin: Wishing you the best of health and happiness always.

Patricia Goldberg

I am going to be in Shanghai on Oct. 6th and would like to visit either Ohel Rachel or Ohel Moshe. I was told by the tour company that they are both under renovation and I can't get in. Is this true of both of them? If not, I understand that at least one has a museum which I would like to see. Can you tell me the hours it is open?

Email: spgold41@adelphia.net

Tel.: 518-25224

Dina Vincow (Lichomanova)

It was great to visit Bet Ponve this summer and to see old friends. It brought back memories of my school days at the Talmud Torah. I wrote about some of them and would like to share them with your readers, hoping they can join me along memory lane. I am sending the article separately in an email

Email Address :dvincow@syr.edu

Phone Number : 315-446-0497

Katherine Shang

Dear Mr. Kaufman,
I am a research officer and honorary assistant professor of the School of Chinese, University of Hong Kong. I find out in the academic circle in our city, not much attention has been paid to the study of Jews in China and I hope I can sow the seed of interest among the students here before my retirement. Recently, the university has given me the permission to offer a course on Jews in China to undergraduates and I will be the sole lecturer. I am looking for archives that can be accessible.
Ms Rena Krasno has advised me to contact you and I would like to see if a copy of the archives about Jews in China can be made and sent to me. I am willing to cover all the expenses. Please let me know the cost including postage first. Your help to enrich the course will be deeply appreciated. Blessings,

D. Shuster

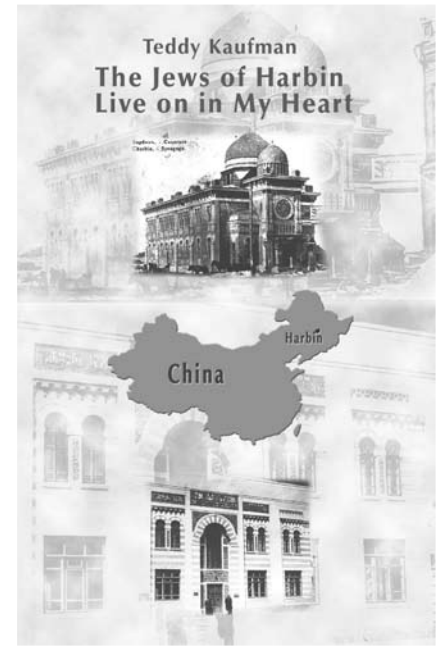
Gentlemen,
The writer is a representative of the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service (AHMS), working during the current year at the Memorial Holocaust Museum of Israel, Yad va-shem. In Jerusalem.
Our organization sends young Austrians to work in various institutions related to the Holocaust, as an alternative to the compulsory service in the Austrian army. In Israel, since 1994, such an institution is "Yad va-shem", and in China, since 2006, it is the Center of Judaic Studies in Shanghai. In the future, it will be transferred to the Center of the Research of the Jewish community in that city. All the expenses of those who serve in the framework of the

AHMS are covered by the Republic of Austria. Since the AHMS is interested in the development of friendly relations between Austria, China and Israel, we decided to organize in Israel a seminar on Holocaust in July, 2008 with an equal participation of the three participating countries. As the future coordinator of the seminar, I would very much like to establish a contact with your organization and discuss the future seminar. Hopefully our two organizations could collaborate in the said enterprise.
I shall be grateful for any assistance afforded by you. I shall try to pay a visit to your organization in the near future.
Respectfully,
Daniel James Shuster

Avi Shaked's newest gamble

Avi Shaked, founder of 888 casino-on-Net, has decided to gamble on investing in the food industry. Recognising China's seemingly insatiable thirst for coffee, Shaked has invested in chain of coffee shops in China. Their new Chitta Cafe, will open in Shanghai in November with three other location planned to open

through- out the city shortly. Plans for further expansion include a total of 130 chains in various provinces. Avi Shaked's son, Eyal, Tamir Barleko, and Ma'ayan Kahan will also be partners in this new venture. Shaked is a regular in the media. In 2006 he was ranked by Forbes as the 14th richest person in Israel.
Jewish Times Asia November 2007





Remembering Joe

It is with great sorrow that we inform our readers of the death of Joe Jacob (Yosef Yaakov), a well-known and dearly loved member of the former Shanghai Sephardi Jewish Community. Those who recall those happier days in Shanghai, will remember Joe as an active participant in all spheres of social and communal life. They may still remember his wonderful voice in synagogue prayer and song at the Ohel Rachel Synagogue, especially during the Simhat Torah celebrations when circling the bimah for the hakafot. It was he who used the famous melody from Beethoven's 9th Symphony to sing the final Haleluya – the last psalm that was sung at the end of each circling.

It was his love for Shanghai and all that it had once had meant that made him join the Sephardi Division of Igud Yotzei Sin that was set up about 10 years ago by a group of former members. Joe was active as liaison and correspondent, and a loyal participant in all the social and



administrative gatherings. He also served for a time as the head of the Ohel Rachel Project for the architectural reconstruction of the synagogue interior in the hope of its future restoration as a synagogue.

During the week of Succot in 2006, Joe participated in a small gathering of the Sephardi Division at the Binyamin Shamash Iraqi synagogue in North Tel Aviv where Aba (Joe) Toeg conducts the religious services and supervises its administration. The guest of honor, Matty Nissim, and his wife Jackie had come from California, USA to participate in this celebration. On that occasion, the ark was opened to show the two Sefer Torahs belonging to the Toeg family that had been brought from the Ohel Rachel Synagogue in Shanghai. A photograph (see above, left to right) of Matty Nissim, Joe Jacob, and Jack Guri (Chairman of the Sephardi Division) standing in front of the open ark. All three had once been classmates at the Shanghai Public School for Boys.

Yosef Yaacov dies at 84

By Meir Ronen

Veteran journalist, broadcaster, diplomat and sometime Jerusalem Post sub-editor, Yosef Yaacov, always known as Joe, died in Jerusalem Wednesday aged 84.

Born in Shanghai to one of the oldest established Iraqi-Jewish clans there, Joe came to Israel in 1948 and helped establish Israel's English news service; his faultless diction was a byword. After serving as Consul-General in Ottawa and Washington, Joe was appointed minister in charge

of information (hasbara) in London and at the United Nations.

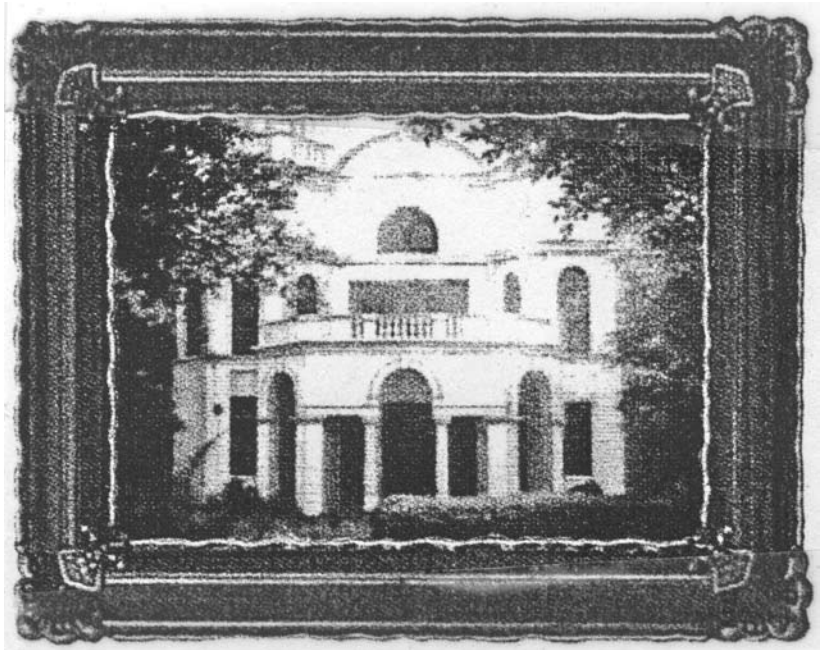
Following his retirement, he continued to work as an editor for the Foreign Ministry until just a few months ago and also became a sub-editor at this newspaper. Always the modest gentleman, Joe was a truly gentle man, gifted with a quiet sense of humor. He is survived by his wife Arlene and their children, Gilad and Daniela. (From The Jerusalem Post, September 20, 2007)

Mrs. Rose Horowitz has donated \$500 to the IYS in memory of her late brother, Joe. The Sephardi Division will match this amount and establish a scholarship in his name to be awarded at the annual Hannuka gathering of IYS members.

A History of the Jewish Community in Hong Kong

Ohel Leah Synagogue

On August 7, 1901, Abraham Jacob Raymond, the senior member of E.D. Sassoon & Co., laid the foundation stone of the new Sassoon-sponsored synagogue in Robinson Road. It was an event attended by a large gathering of the new century's Hong Kong Jewish community. 'It now affords me very great pleasure,' Raymond addressed the gathering, 'on behalf of Mr. Jacob Sassoon, to inform you, ladies and gentlemen, that this synagogue when completed will be dedicated to the Jewish community of Hongkong in commemoration of his beloved mother Leah, and will be a gift to the Jewish community of Hongkong – the building from himself and the site from himself and his brothers, Messrs Edward and Meyer Sassoon.'

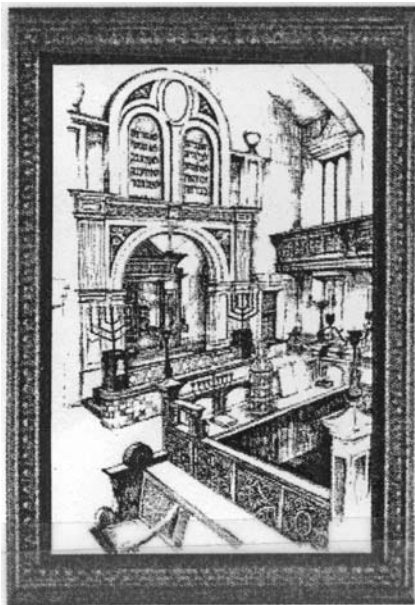


family matriarch. The laying of the foundation stone ended an era which had been characterised by modest, sometimes temporary, worship premises. In the last few years of the last century, a lack of consensus had prevailed, particularly about where and how a permanent synagogue was to be built.

The Sassoons had sponsored premises for worship from 1870 (on Hollywood Road) to 1899 (on Staunton Street, where the first Ohel Leah Synagogue was established in 1881). During the 1890s, Emmanuel Rafael Belilios took up a call by the close-knit Jewish community to find a better site for the synagogue, and proceeded to purchase a Kennedy Road site on which to build a new synagogue. However, the new plans went awry when firstly, sufficient funds to build a new synagogue could not be raised and, secondly, when a disagreement arose over

whether all or only part of the land Belilios had purchased was to be given over to the Jewish community. The controversy was played out in court and concluded in 1898 in favour of Belilios and the new site was purchased on Robinson Road. The cost of building the synagogue which was designed in Colonial-Sephardic style by architects Leigh & Orange, was estimated by newspaper reports of the time at \$26,000.

Newspaper reports of the land dispute court case provide some notion of the worship practices of the Jewish community at the end of the last century. Evidence given during one court session revealed that attendance at the existing synagogue in 1896 on *Yom Kippur* comprised 40 men, 17 women and 10 children. At that time, women and girls only attended the synagogue on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*.



This synagogue was the third to be patronised by the Jewish community of Hong Kong, and the second to be named Ohel Leah after the Sassoon

The Ohel Leah Synagogue came to symbolise a growing sense of a permanent Jewish community and fellowship, and was often admired by visitors to the colony. 'The synagogue is beautiful, and its location more beautiful still. Within a spacious, well-kept tropical garden, it affords a magnificent view of the harbour,' commented a visiting Reform rabbi from Philadelphia in 1912.

Today, membership of the synagogue comprises 238 families, who represent some 17 nationalities.

War Years

In 1938, on the Fast of Tammuz, a special service of prayer on behalf of Jewish people threatened by the advancing Nazi movement in Central Europe, was conducted at the Ohel Leah Synagogue. The Hong Kong Jewish community had responded to a call for prayer by the Chief Rabbi of England: 'It is a stirring thought,' said Albert Raymond in his address, 'that we in Hong Kong are identifying ourselves with sister communities throughout the vast British Commonwealth'. Raymond ended his speech with the tenuous hope that the 'darkness' would soon 'roll away and usher in a happier day'.

But the 'darkness' encroached and, in the same year, several divisions of Japanese troops landed at Bias Bay, only 30 miles from Hong Kong; they also advanced on and occupied Canton. Then in 1939, the policy of appeasement ended, plunging Europe into outright war – an occasion the Jewish community of Hong Kong can only have learned with the greatest trepidation. For more than two years, the Hong Kong Jewish community had learned of, perhaps even witnessed, Japan's brutality against the Chinese in its undeclared war against China. By 1940, Japan's decision to side with Germany and Italy was confirmed in the



conclusion of the Tripartite Pact, commonly known as the 'Axis'. 'Hong Kong could only wait to see what the Japanese would do,' recalls Dr. Solomon Bard, who later spent three-and-a-half years in a prisoner of war camp during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong.

However, the waiting was not an inactive period and, as Bard remembers, 'Already most of the young men and women of the Jewish community had joined volunteer organisations,' in support of the Allied countries working against the Nazi threat. 'Many of us had joined the Hong Kong Volunteers, a territorial unit which in time of war would be automatically embodied in the Army and fight alongside it.' The entire

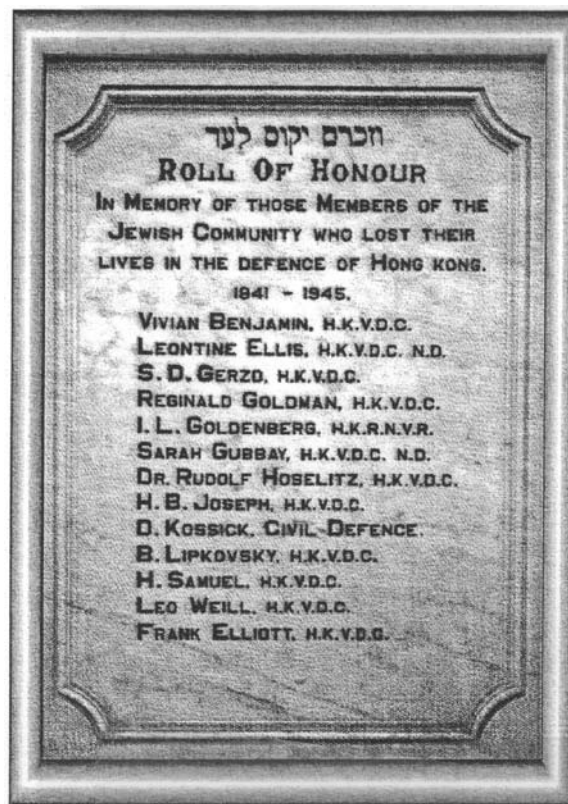
expatriate population of Hong Kong had already rallied to conscription and the construction of air-raid shelters. The evacuation of women and children, mostly to Australia, was well advanced. Nevertheless, fear of advancing war did not stifle individual courage or community spirit during this period of uncertainty, to which Bard's own story attests:

'In December 1939, I graduated as a doctor and immediately joined the Field Ambulance Unit of the Volunteers as a full lieutenant. I recall that most of the young members of the Jewish community were either Volunteers or in some similar organisation, such as the Air-Raid Precaution. Older men also joined up, such as Harry Odell, who joined the naval volunteers and was subsequently wounded in action.'

All British citizens and uniformed men of Hong Kong were taken prisoners of war. Bard survived this ordeal and, while the brutality of the Japanese against captives is well-documented, Bard recalls little discrimination against the Jewish

prisoners in his camp: 'A small group of us was able to form a Saturday *Minyan*, at which prayers were ably conducted by Nathan Rakusen. The Japanese allowed small prayer books into camp for our use, books which were prepared for the American Jewish members of the forces.' Another of the Hong Kong Jewish community's prisoners of war, Lawrence Kadoorie, remembers the daily rations in the camp of 3,500 where he was interned and comprised 'one cigarette, a tin of rice, some boiled lettuce and a little soup.'

A memorial tablet was laid on Sunday, 13 June, 1948 at the Ohel Leah Synagogue during a service held 'In memory of those members of the Jewish community who lost their lives in defence of Hong Kong, 1941-1945.'



Letters of Condolence:—

DEAR MRS. EZRA,—The news of the sudden death of your beloved and noble husband has given my wife and myself great surprise. Please accept from us our most sincere sympathy and condolence.

We count Mr. Ezra among our best friends, and the loss of his personal friendship is certainly a grief to us. Yours most sincerely,

(Magor) WU TE-CHEN.

Shanghai, 464, Avenue Haig, December 5th, 1936.
Editor, ISRAEL'S MESSENGER.

DEAR SIR,—From the December issue of ISRAEL'S MESSENGER I see with pained surprise and regret that my friend, the Founder and Editor of ISRAEL'S MESSENGER, Mr. N. E. B. EZRA has passed away so suddenly. I beg to express to his bereaved family my sympathy in their loss and sorrow. We are all mortal, and death knocks sometimes suddenly at the door. To the family of the late Mr. EZRA it must be a source of great consolation to know that the late Mr. EZRA left behind him a record and a name admired and honoured by a great number of people.

I hope that ISRAEL'S MESSENGER will continue, and continue the work of the late Mr. Ezra championing the cause of the sorely and unjustly oppressed and persecuted Jewish people.

ABBOTT CHAO KUNG.

DEAR MRS. EZRA,—We are very much grieved to hear of the sudden and untimely death of your husband, Nissim Ezra Benjamin Ezra, an indefatigable champion for the Jewish cause, a great Jew and devoted worker, one who is not to be substituted.

As a staunch sentinel he stood on guard for the protection of our suffering brethren for about 40 years and has burnt himself down in the flames of fight for the Jewish cause.

We loath to believe that this great Jew and great man has been ruthlessly taken from our ranks and cannot imagine Shanghai Jewry without him.

Along with all Far Eastern Jewry we are deeply lamenting the great loss that is never to be regained, and feel deep in our hearts that you will find some consolation in the universal recognition and appreciation of the work done by your late husband, and our much esteemed friend, who has done more than enough for the benefit of Jewry to be forever remembered and not to be forgotten by all to whom the Jewish cause is dear.

THE FAR EASTERN JEWISH CENTRAL
INFORMATION BUREAU, HARBIN.

(Miss) A. HALPERN, M. BIRMAN,
Acting Secretary. Manager.

Harbin, December 15th, 1936.

DEAR MRS. EZRA,—The sad news of the passing of your dearly beloved husband, Mr. Nissim Ezra Benjamin Ezra came to me as a shock having been noticed in this morning's local press so suddenly.

Would you kindly accept my most sincere sympathy and profound condolences over your loss.

I am, Dear Mrs. Ezra,
Yours faithfully,
T. FUNATSU.

THE JAPANESE COTTON MILLOWNER'S
ASSOCIATION IN CHINA.

Shanghai, December 4th, 1936.
24 The Bund, Room 51.

CABLE FROM ZIONIST ORGANISATION

JERUSALEM 28 DECEMBER 1936.

EZRA FAMILY 6 PACIFIC GARDEN SHANGHAI.
DEEPEST CONDOLENCES YOUR IRREPARABLE LOSS
WE MOURN PASSING LIFE LONG ZIONIST STALWART
EXECUTIVE KEREN KAYEMETH KEREN HAYESOD.

The Canadian Jewish Chronicle of the 11th ultimo contains the undermentioned tribute for which we are grateful:—

N. E. B. EZRA

"The death of Mr. N. E. B. Ezra in Shanghai, China, removes from Jewish life one of the most colorful personalities in that part of the world. Endowed with a burning zeal and desire for service, Mr. Ezra founded the Anglo-Jewish weekly "Israel's Messenger" about a quarter of a century ago. It is no hyperbole to state that this journal was in a large measure the liaison between our brethren in that far-flung domain and Jews in other parts of the world.

Uncompromisingly unorthodox, staunchly Zionist, and with total disregard for "playing to the gallery," Mr. Ezra never swerved one iota in his convictions, and translated his thoughts into expression with unimpeachable consistency. Under his able guidance, "Israel's Messenger" became a dignified tribune for Jewish thought which earned the esteem and respect of its contemporaries the world over.

The passing of Mr. Ezra not only deprives our contemporary of an able pilot, but leaves a void in the Jewish life of the Far East which will be felt, and not easily filled."

DONATIONS

In Memory of the Late Mr. N. E. B. Ezra

Jewish Charities

Mr. and Mrs. S. E. Levy	\$10.00
Mrs. E. S. Levy	10.00
Mr. and Mrs. A. Hillaly	10.00
Mr. and Mrs. M. A. Hillaly	10.00
Mr. and Mrs. M. E. Dangoor	5.00
Mr. D. J. David	10.00
Mr. and Mrs. M. Myers	5.00
Mr. R. Julian	5.00
Mr. S. M. Joseph	10.00
Mr. M. J. Nathan	5.00
Mr. S. David	10.00
Mr. D. E. Levy	10.00
Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Moses	5.00
Mr. S. Sudka	5.00
Mr. D. Raphael	5.00
Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Joseph	20.00
Mr. and Mrs. Elis Joseph	20.00
Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Sopher	10.00

Shanghai Hebrew Relief Society and Shelter House

Mrs. F. Saphire	\$5.00
Mr. and Mrs. H. Gensburger	5.00

Jewish Ladies Benevolent Society

Mr. C. S. Gubbay	\$10.00
Mrs. D. M. Nissim	10.00
Mr. and Mrs. D. E. J. Abraham	10.00
Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Abraham	5.00
Mrs. H. Hayim and A. J. Hayim	10.00
Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Hayim	10.00
Mr. and Mrs. M. Simmons	50.00
Rev. and Mrs. M. Brown	10.00
Mrs. Freda Joseph	10.00

Jewish Communal Association

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Nissim	\$10.00
--------------------------------------	---------

THE TALMUD: THE SECOND SET Of Volumes Containing the Tractates of NASHIM (Women)

WILL BE PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER IN LONDON AND AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION IMMEDIATELY. The Very Rev. the Chief Rabbi Dr. Hertz, in his Foreword to the Second Set, says: "The eight Volumes of Seder Nashim have been planned on the same lines as those of Seder Nezikin, alike in regard to text, rendering and cultural notes. Editor and his collaborators have again performed with consummate skill a task of stupendous difficulty, and the standard of scholarship and accuracy set in the previous volumes has been fully maintained.

Price for the set of eight volumes £9.9.0

Apply to ISRAEL'S MESSENGER.

The Hongkew Ghetto in Shanghai

By James R. Ross (From: *Escape to Shanghai*)

They were eating stew and millet again for lunch, but Eva [Kantorowsky] thought the millet tasted musty. Bob's mother had worked hard to cook the meal over their stove – it was actually more like an upside-down flower-pot – heated by the weak embers of small, round briquettes made mostly of mud and straw. She had fashioned the stew from a cow's spleen and covered it with lots of onion gravy to overcome the taste. But there wasn't much she could do with the millet her husband bought on sale at the Chusan Road market. It apparently had been stored in a damp warehouse and was discolored from mildew. Neither Eva nor her in-laws could afford to let food go to waste, however, so they ate without complaining. Whatever bargains Bob's father brought home – moldy millet, cracked wheat, half-frozen sweet potatoes, even the nearly inedible free food from the Kitchen Fund – they would eat, as the Germans say, until it grew from their throats.

Most of the Jewish refugees in Hongkew had similar diets in the summer of 1943, and, as usual, they found humor in their misfortune. They liked to say that the Jews have a blessing before eating food that grows from the ground and another blessing before eating food that grows from a tree. But what, they would ask, is the blessing for food that grows from the throat?

(The dark humor sometimes got refugees in trouble. Comedian Herbert Zernik was nearly arrested after a performance at the Chaoufoong camp that spring for parroting the way

Japanese soldiers searched pedestrians and for announcing that Adolf Hitler Square in Berlin had been renamed Stalin Square.)

Eva and her new husband walked to his parents' house every afternoon for tiffin, their big meal of the day. As bad as the food was, it was better than anything they had at home. For breakfast, they usually ate gruel, a mixture of water, flour and sugar stirred in their small electric cooker. They washed it down with green tea; coffee was too expensive on Bob's small salary. If they ate in the evening, it would be a piece of bread, often dry and moldy, spread with lard Bob's mother had cooked or some of the strange-tasting margerine manufactured in Hongkew. A piece of cheese, or a slice of one of the shrivelled salamis hanging over the door, was an occasional treat.

Bob and Eva lived in his aunt's lane house on Kinchow Road, similar to the houses in which most of the refugees now lived in the alleys of Hongkew. Most of the lane houses had thin wooden doors on the outside, leading to an alcove. A second door led to the living quarters, a cramped series of small rooms joined by narrow staircases. The housing conditions in Hongkew were so crowded that many refugees – including Bob and Ev – lived in the tiny concrete rooms that housed the electric meters.

The lanes veered off nearly every street in Hongkew – Chusan, Ward, Tongshan, Alcock, Dalny, and others – and many of them connected to other lanes. They were like little communities of their own, where

there were few secrets and almost no privacy. Some lanes were occupied entirely by Chinese, others by the refugees. The Chinese and the refugees lived in a few of the lanes together (some of the refugee children became fluent in Shanghai-dialect curses), but the Chinese and foreigners mostly maintained the tradition of polite separation.

In the oppressive summer heat and humidity, it seemed impossible to breathe inside the houses, where mold and mildew grew on food, clothes, linens, and shoes, and inside closets and chests. Few people could use fans because electricity was strictly rationed. The ubiquitous insects and mosquitoes added to the discomfort. In the evenings, nearly everyone moved outside into the lanes, where they played cards, gossiped, cooked, ate, and even slept. Men walked around in boxer shorts with sweat towels around their necks; most women wore only bra and panties, a few of them arousing sexual fantasies among some of the boys. The children seemed oblivious to the heat, running wildly through the lanes.

Bob and Eva's tiny concrete meter room was halfway up the stairs from the first floor. It normally was used as a bathroom or kitchen and had two small windows. There was barely enough space for their small brass bed, a portable wardrobe closet, a washbasin attached to the wall, a tiny table, and two stools. For privacy, they usually closed the window to Bob's aunt's room when they made love. They washed and bathed from the cold water tap over the basin and

used a bucket in the room downstairs as a toilet. Every day Eva carried their thermos to the water shop down the lane, where she used bamboo tokens to purchase hot water for drinking. (The water sellers used bamboo sticks as currency).

The conditions were depressing, particularly for Germans used to cleanliness and hearty foods. Eva suffered from intestinal problems caused by the recurring dysentery she first contracted on the train ride across Russia; it was aggravated by parasites and her poor diet. Twice, upset when she feared she might be pregnant, she went to see a doctor she had known from Berlin, who put her on a regimen of vodka and quinine to abort the pregnancy. It made her terribly weak and sick, but Eva and Bob knew they could not raise a child under these conditions.

They had only to walk down Ward or Alcock or Seward roads to see others, living in the camps, who were worse off. Refugees who had once been distinguished lawyers and academics now held out tin cups to beg for money or food. They had sold all their possessions and burned their lice-infested clothes. Some wore outfits made from jute flour bags. Women who had worked as bar girls now openly solicited customers as prostitutes. Some twenty mothers even sold their newborn babies to raise money for food. Several babies froze to death that winter in the refugee hospital's maternity ward.

The year after Pearl Harbor had been difficult, but conditions this year were much worse. Since the Japanese proclamation in February 1943 that required all the refugees to live in a designated area in Hongkew, nearly everyone suffered under poor living conditions and malnutrition. But Bob and Eva, young and in love, were rarely depressed. They lived to enjoy each new day with each other ...

Eva and Bob found a nice, small room in a lane house on Dent Road, in a fairly new complex of buildings

where Eva's parents also lived. Two weeks after they moved in, they heard an announcement over their radio. They were stunned to hear the Japanese army and navy commanders proclaiming restrictions for the "stateless refugees":

Due to military necessity, places of residence and business of the stateless refugees in the Shanghai area shall hereafter be restricted to the undermentioned area in the International Settlement. East of the line connecting Chaoufoong Road, Muirhead Road, and Dent Road; west of Yangtzepoo Creek; north of the line connecting East Seward Road and Wayside Road; and south of the boundary of the International settlement.

The stateless refugees at present residing and/or carrying on business in the district other than the above area shall remove their places of residence and/or business into the area designated above by May 18, 1943 ...

Persons who will have violated this proclamation or obstructed its reenforcement shall be liable to severe punishment.

Their new apartment was on the border of the designated area, but on the wrong side of Dent Road. With almost no money, the newlyweds would have to find another place to live.

An article in the Shanghai Herald defined the terms of the proclamation. "Stateless refugee" meant people who had arrived in Shanghai "since 1937 from Germany (including former Austria, Czecho-Slovakia), Hungary, former Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, etc. who have no nationality at present". That definition covered almost all of the twenty thousand refugees, the last of whom had arrived from Japan just before Pearl Harbor. It excluded most of the Russian and Polish Ashkenazi Jews who had preceded them to Shanghai.

Refugees with jobs outside the designated area could be granted

temporary permission to leave during working hours. Chinese who lived inside the area were encouraged to move outside to make room for the refugees.

The Japanese claimed that the proclamation was "motivated by military necessity" and was not intended as a form of oppression. "It is even contemplated to safeguard, so far as possible, their place of residence as well as their livelihood in the designated area," the military leaders announced. They were careful not to use either the word Jew or the word ghetto in their statement.

The Japanese security concerns may have been affected by reports of black marketeering and other suspicious activities. Their main source of information was the Shanghai Municipal Police special branch, a unit dominated by anti-Semitic White Russians after all the British detectives had been interned. The police records report on a riot at a public meeting of refugees to discuss relief programs and on nuisances created by Jewish beggars. In addition, Japanese naval intelligence relied on reports from Pick Hovans, the White Russian former convict who had tried to extort money from Boris Topaz (a Russian Jewish member of the Japanese-controlled relief committee) and others for information on the refugees. Hovans strongly advocated more controls over the Jews in Shanghai. Local newspapers also fed Japanese fears. Just two days before the proclamation, the Shanghai Times published a major story headlined: "Shanghai, Hunting Ground of Thriving Jewish Racketeers: Prominent but Shady Part Played by Unscrupulous Jews in City's Economic Life and Development".

Most refugees were shocked by the proclamation and not comforted by Japanese assurances. It meant an end to the relative freedom they had enjoyed and raised horrifying memories of centuries of oppression against the Jews and of enforced segregation, from Venice in 1515

to Łódź and Warsaw in 1940. There was added terror for the thousands of refugees who had been imprisoned in Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Buchenwald, and those whose families had been resettled in Poland. Was the proclamation to be only the first step? Many refugees saw the influence of Josef Meisinger (chief representative of the Gestapo in the Far East) and the Gestapo in the proclamation, although there is little evidence of this.

Beyond the psychological impact, the proclamation meant that about half of the sixteen thousand refugees who had registered with the Japanese would have to move within three months from their houses and apartments in the French Concession, International Settlement, Western District, and parts of Hongkew outside the designated area. The biggest adjustment came for the three thousand refugees who lived in the French Concession and International Settlement, most of whom lived in nice apartments and some of whom had tried to hide the fact that they were refugees.

The exchange of apartments proved costly. Agents charged excessive rents for apartments and demanded large sums of key money, an illegal payment to a landlord for transferring a lease. Few refugees could afford such sums. The proclamation also divided some families. Several non-Jewish German women who had come to Shanghai with their Jewish husbands registered at the German consulate, so they were exempt from the segregation order and eligible for German relief assistance, which they shared with their husbands. ...

Eva tried to remain cheerful. But just after they moved to Kinchow Road in the spring of 1943, she received a brief letter from her brother Hans via the Red Cross. It was the first time she had heard from him in months and the last letter she would receive. He had been back in Berlin, he wrote, and now was probably on his way to their father's old heimat (neighborhood). Eva understood the message – Hans

was being deported to Poland. But he was going even farther east than his father's native town of Loslau, to the Polish village of Oswiecim. The Germans called it Auschwitz.

Other refugees in Shanghai were receiving similar messages. By the summer, nearly all of them had lost contact with their relatives in Eastern Europe. In July 1943, the Far Eastern Jewish Information Bureau in Shanghai sent an appeal to a Jewish refugee agency in Portugal:

Dear Sirs,

During the last time have begun receiving for our numerous applicants here replies of the International Red Cross Committee from various parts of occupied Poland – mostly from the regions of Lublin, Radom, Kielce, Warsaw, also from the Baltic countries and occupied Soviet Poland. The replies are all the same, vis. That the relatives (respectively, parents, children, brothers, sisters, wives, etc.) are no longer under the given addresses and [have] left for unknown destinations. As to Litzmannstadt, formerly Łódź, replies are received that there is no mail connection with the ghetto, i.e. enquiries are sent back to us.

Such replies naturally cause acute mental anguish to the enquirers, and they constantly appeal to us asking to take further steps in order to trace their near of kin. Unfortunately, being so far away from European centres and for that reason not [aware] of the true state of affairs in East European ghettos, we do not know what to undertake. Generally, we ask the applicants to give us several addresses of relatives in the same place and direct an enquiry to the I.R.O. Geneva for further investigation. But it is doubtful whether the relatives are still there and whether they would be able to give to the I.R.O. the information desired. Tracers are also directed by us to our affiliated organization in Stockholm, Zurich, Geneva, etc.

By the present we beg to apply to your esteemed organization with a request

to inform us of the following – should you find it possible and convenient for you, naturally:

1. Whether Jewish residents were deported from the small cities of Lublin, Radom, Kielce, and other regions of Poland, and if so where? We mean the constant residents of these places as well as those who in its time were deported their from Central Europe.

2. Do "Jüdenrats" exist (or similar Jewish organizations) in the occupied regions, and if so, is it possible to get in touch with them through neutral countries, i.e. whether tracers could be addressed to them?

3. Is there any possibility of sending any individual assistance there through neutral countries?

We are well aware that all the questions raised by us are extremely complicated at the present moment, and not very hopeful, therefore. But the desire to know whether there is a possibility of helping our applicants at present, as well as the desire to know more about the situation in Europe, has prompted us to apply to you on the matter ...

... The Japanese proclamation ordering the refugees to move into the ghetto had not worked as planned. By the deadline of May 18, 1943, more than fifteen hundred refugees remained outside the designated area. Physicians and relief workers were granted three-month extensions; eleven hundred others were put on a waiting list for housing. SACRA [Shanghai Ashkenazi Collaborating Relief Association], the Japanese-controlled organization of Russian Jews that supervised the relocation, had taken over and renovated only a handful of houses and apartment buildings. There were few private apartments available in the crowded ghetto, and real-estate agents demanded excessive rents. A Japanese name Kano, who served as secretary to SACRA, had bought a number of buildings in Hongkew and collected huge sums for reselling them.

Shanghai Jews Show Support for Israel's Special Olympics

By Ruth Eglash

Shanghai's 2000-strong Jewish community has raised more than \$20,000 to support Israel's delegation to the Special Olympic games, which are being held in the city from October 2 to 11. The community, which is headed by Maurice Ohana, has also provided the 38 Israeli athletes with uniforms and sports shoes, and will host the 83-member delegation in its succa and ensure that those who require it have kosher food.

"We are delighted that Israel is participating in this important event," Ohana told *The Jerusalem Post* in a telephone interview on Tuesday. "We are happy that there will be so many Israelis visiting Shanghai."

Taly Kornhouser, the chairwoman of the delegation and the executive chairwoman of the Israeli Special Olympic Association's board of directors, said that while the team has no sponsor, the support of the Shanghai Jewish community had been overwhelming.

"So far, the community has been extremely warm, calling us all the time and asking us what our needs are," said Kornhouser, who will travel with the athletes to the Chinese metropolis on Thursday night. "We have been invited to home hospitality, a meal in the community succa. They are all just waiting until we arrive." Kornhouser, whose 19-year-old

daughter Lynn will represent Israel in the table tennis tournament, said the sports program had boosted Lynn's confidence and independence.

Aimed at individuals aged eight and up with intellectual disabilities, the Special Olympics was founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in the United States in 1962. Its goal is to embrace the diversity of all individuals' abilities and to celebrate all differences. More than 7,000 athletes from 169 countries will compete in the games. "We are hoping to be emissaries for Israel," said Kornhouser.

(From *The Jerusalem Post*, September 26, 2007)

The Hongkew Ghetto in Shanghai (continues from page 51)

As late as the winter of 1943-44, there were still hundreds of refugees living outside Hongkew. Some of them, including many of the Polish Jews and yeshiva students, had declined to comply with the proclamation and actively resisted the Japanese order. The Poles, with the help of the Russian Jews, had rented some of the best housing when they first arrived in Shanghai, mostly in the French Concession. Most of them were well clothed and fed and had received support from the local Russians and from abroad, even after Pearl Harbor. The Polish Jews had refused to recognize SACRA or to name representatives to its board. They

claimed they were Polish citizens of the Polish government-in-exile rather than stateless refugees and therefore were exempt from the proclamation. The Poles generated little sympathy from SACRA and even less from the Hongkew refugees, who resented the Poles' comfortable living conditions and their refusal to assist, or even acknowledge, the non-Orthodox German and Austrian Jews, many of whom were suffering from poverty and malnutrition. The Japanese rejected the Polish appeals.

But the Polish Jews continued to resist. Mir Yeshiva students staged a riot in the SACRA office when they were ordered to move to a Salvation

Army compound owned by SACRA, smashing furniture and throwing it out the window. The police arrested thirty-three of them until Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi (head of the Russian Jewish community) intervened, rescuing them from jail sentences. The Japanese eventually agreed to let them rent their own private housing.

Other Poles simply refused to move. By the end of 1943, Japanese officials had begun to lose patience. They had established the Stateless Refugees Affairs Bureau, headed by T. Kubota, to oversee the relocation and threatened to arrest anyone violating the order. The arrests began the following March.

Searching and Researching

Vanessa Sypko

My name is Vanessa Sypko. I live in the United States, New Jersey to be exact. My grandmother was born in Bucharest, Romania but grew up in China (Peiping) until she left in 1947 with my grandfather who was a US GI. I have found the manifest of the ship that they took to California on May 19, 1947. The last city she listed having a permanent address in was Peiping but her passport visa was issued in Tientsin and the ship sailed from Shanghai. I do not know her birth name or her maiden name. She goes by the name Jenny. I believe that her father ended up in Israel. She had a daughter named Dolly that stayed behind in China. I am looking for any information about Dolly that I can find. She tells me very little about that time in her life. She says that her father was a business owner, something to do with chocolate. Any information or memory would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.
Email: i.heart.science@gmail.com
Address: 23B Seafoam Avenue, Winfield Park, NJ 07036

Natan Samsonovich

I have been researching the genealogy of my family (Samsonowitz, Samsonovich) and would like to establish if there is a family link between the three Samsonovich brothers from Harbin and the Samsonowitz family from Lithuania.
Email: nasa18@zahav.net.il
Tel.: 054-537-0636

Graciela Granek

I was very impressed with your website. I am the Hebrew Director and Jewish Studies Supervisor at Geshher JDS in Virginia, USA and we planning to work with our middle school students on Yahadut Sin [Chinese Jewry]. Are there other sources

(including multimedia) that you can refer me to? I appreciate your help!
Email: ggranek@gesher-jds.org
Tel.: 1 703 978 9789

Miryam Yankelovich

I am looking for my relative Marcus Maximilian Blumenfeld who was born in Mitau (Jelgava now) in Courland Russia (Latvia now) in 1874. His father was Mendel Blumenfeld and mother Ida Blumenfeld (nee Hirshberg). I know that he graduated University in Tartu, Estonia. He was doctor of medicine. He left for China but I don't know when.
Email: miryamy@zahav.net.il
Address: Ha-Shayarot Str.21/4, Jerusalem 92544

David Irving Phillips (nee Goldberg)

I was searching through the Jewish Communities of China site, as I and my cousins are looking to trace the descendants of our grandfather Philip Goldberg, born Garvolin Poland, who left Poland in 1904 and came to Liverpool England. His wife, Yetta followed him, and they had 11 children, one of whom was my father. My cousins, and I have also been tracing our Goldberg roots. I have just returned from a week in Poland, where I attempted further research, at the state archives, for records of Garvolin. My cousins believe that our grandfather's brother, Moses Goldberg and his sister Yetta Goldberg, got out of Poland, before the Holocaust. We have no real information to go on, save that they recollect their parents referring to family being in America, Australia, Paris and Shanghai. Individually we are searching the databases, to see what we can find. I am concentrating on Shanghai. I did come across another Moses Goldberg, formerly of Garvolin, and

applied for copies of his application to purchase land in Shepperton Australia, in 1942. Unfortunately, this Goldberg, was not one of ours, despite having come from Garvolin too. If I can be of any help or if you want to compare notes, I would be happy to do so. It may well be that we shall be following up further research ourselves, in Australia, if we get another link, and your contact/advice would be useful to us too.
Email: davidirv@davidirvingphillips.freeserve.co.uk
Address: St. Helen, Near Liverpool, England

John Wilton

Re: The Myerson and Sinitzky families in Harbin 1902 - 1914
My father Julius Myerson, was born in Harbin in 1903. His sister Ray was born there in 1909. His family (parents Boruch and Fradel) were there from about 1902 to 1910, having come from Barovke in what is now Latvia. His aunt Millie (nee Myerson) and uncle (Aaron Sinitzky) also lived there and two cousins (Hymie and Sylvia) were born there. They left in about 1914, and both families emigrated to South Africa. I want to try and find out more about their lives in Harbin, including where they lived.
Email: johnwilton@yahoo.co.uk
Address: 1A York Road, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 7TJ, UK

Alla Aizenberg

I am trying to find some information about one of my ancestors. Here is what I know...

1. According to my aunt, my Great Great Uncle, Michail(?) Kaufman, had a phenomenal voice. Being a Jew in Ukraine shtetl, at that

time, he was not allowed to study music, so he went to St. Petersburg, converted to Christianity, changed his name to Michail Vasilyevich Bocharov, and was admitted to the Conservatory. Under the name of Michail Vassilyevich Bocharov, he was one of the most famous opera baritone singers of his time and was singing in Mariinsky theatre. Later he married a noble Russian woman (Dvoryanka), and at the time of 1917 revolution, he left Russia and went to live to Harbin and/or Shanghai, China with his family. Every year, he would go back to visit his relatives in Russia, but his father, being a very, very religious man, would not let him into the house because he has converted to Christianity. So Michail would stay on the streets, and his relatives would approach him in order to greet him.

2. I found the following on Wikipedia ("[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki: Mikhail_Bocharov_singer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Bocharov_singer) , based on the book by A. Shampanier A., Russian Theater [Kiev, 1905], pp. 53-54.: Mikhail Vasilievich Bocharov (1872 - 29 April 1936) was a Russian opera singer. Vocally speaking, he is best described as a baritone. He graduated from Kiev University as a lawyer. He then studied singing with Everardi and Petza at the Kiev music college, and graduated in 1898. He continued his education in Italy. Bocharov sang in Kiev opera since 1900, then sang in Moscow (Zimin Opera), St. Petersburg, Odessa and other cities. He was awarded the honorary title Meritorious Artist of Russia in 1925. From 1932 onwards he sang mostly in concerts. He had a voice of a great range and cultivation. His roles include: Escamillo in Carmen, Figaro in The Barber of Seville, Bechmesser in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Gryaznoi in The Tsar's Bride,

Ivan-Korolevich in Kashchey the Immortal, Kochubey in Mazeppa, Onegin, Demon, and Rigoletto, as well as various others. So, here is my dilemma: There is some disconnection in these two accounts. The only connection is that my aunt mentioned that my ancestor was a famous opera singer who changed his name to Bocharov, and the biography from Wikipedia does not mention him as being Jewish. I am trying to connect these two biographies, if I can...

Can you help me to find any information on Bocharov being in Harbin?

Email: allaaiz@optonline.net

Tel : 201 327-6877

Yemima Rolbant

I was wondering if you had any information about my family, as I am going to China next month and would like to visit my grandparents' home. My grandfather, Avraham Rolbant, deserted the Russian army and went to Harbin in 1905, I believe. My grandmother, Leah Samuelovitch (or maybe Axelrod) joined him there and they had three children: Rachel (who later married Valentine Kofman), Naomi and Samuel (my father). Rachel and Valia settled in Sydney eventually; Naomi still lives in Ramat Gan and my father made aliya in 1936, left for England in 1938 and returned to Israel in 1950, by which time I had been born. He died in 1984 and is buried in Holon. Would you by any chance have an address of my family in Harbin and later in Shanghai? My grandparents stayed in China till the early 1950s, as far as I can remember. Avraham, my grandfather, had been mohel-shochet in Harbin and he sold Judaica as well. He was very pious. I would be so grateful to you for any assistance. Email: mrolbant@gmail.com Tel.: 020 8932 5460

Leona Shluger Forman

Dear Friends,

We have just found some interesting pictures of the Tientsin Synagogue on Internet - looks quite fixed up - and wonder if you have more information about plans for re-inauguration? As I mentioned in my previous queries, there is a group of us who would like to participate should anything be organized. I will be much grateful for any information.

Keith Ellis

I would like to learn about General Don Carlos Faith, father or Colonel Don Carlos Faith. The father was married to a Reinsel lady of Washington, Indiana. I am not certain the Faiths were Jewish, but am sure the wife named Reinsel was. The Faith family lived in Tientsin from about 1929 to 1932, working for the US Army.

Email: jolk85@yahoo.com

Address: 213 Ogdon Street, Washington, Indiana 47501

Lessy Ashkenazi Kimmel

Dear Naomi,

I heard you had put out a search for me after seeing my name in the magazine of Igud Yotzei Sin. I had answered you as soon as I had heard of it, but got no reply from you. Looking through the list again, I noticed that no reply had been sent, which means that you never received it. Though this note will be short, I did want you to know that I remember, and would very much like to hear from you. Where do you live now? As you can see, I now live in Montreal, and have been here since 1955. Take care, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Email: earl.kimmel@sympatico.ca

Address: 1103-6795 Korczak Crescent, Montreal, QC H4W 2W7, Canada (514) 484-9039

Gal Zohar

My name is Gal Zohar, I live in Beijing, I am a bachelor's degree student at Beijing Language and

Culture University in, and I am at the moment in the process of researching for my thesis. The theme of my thesis is a few thousand visas which were granted to Jews in Austria by the Chinese consul Mr. Hofengshan and allowed these Jews to escape to Shanghai.

The information that I am hoping to obtain from your organization is regarding the whereabouts of any of those Jewish refugees or their family members so that I can interview some of them.

I am also interested in information about Mr. Hofengshan himself and his rescue acts during WWII.

I will be very grateful to receive any assistance that your organization might offer.

Thank you for your attention.

Email Address :

biatreche@yahoo.com

Phone Number : 0528-624747

Sonja Muehlberger nee Krips

I am looking for my second cousin Benny Floersheim who was born on July 15th 1939 in Shanghai. He was adopted when he was 6 months old, apparently from a Russian family in Shanghai. Maybe his new parents have changed his name.

Email: Sonja.Muehlberger@online.de

Address: Scharnweberstr. 57, 12587 Berlin

Tel.: (+49 30) 645 71 41

Phillip Symonds

Australia.

My mother in law is Debora Abaron. Her maiden name was Fuchs. Her father, Simon Efim Fuchs died in Tientsin in about 1936 -37.

He was buried in Tientsin Cemetery. Years later when his daughter Debora lived in Israel (about the 1950's) she received a request to send money to Tientsin (The Benevolent Society she seems to recollect) as the old cemetery was to be "dug up" and all of the graves were to be moved to a new site.

Money was sent but she never heard again as to what happened to the graves in the "old cemetery" or where they were relocated to.

Debora is now in her late 80's and would like to know if you are aware of where the graves were moved to and if the site is still in existence.

Would there be any records we could apply for such as her father's death certificate? or confirmation as to where her father is now buried. If so, who would we contact in that regard. I thank you in advance and await your reply.

Pinhas Yungman

Re: Yungman or Jungman
Only last week I heard from my father that his father had a brother that immigrated from Poland to China before World War II. All the family was murdered in the Holocaust and my father survived. I want to find out if we have relatives in China.

Email: yungmanp@gmail.com

Address: P.O.B 5542 Rosh-Ha'ayin, Israel

Beba Leventhal

USA

I am writing to you with the hope that somebody still remembers my dear uncle Lasar Davidovich Epstein, his wonderful wife Sonia (Sophia) and their son Izzy (Israel) who passed away recently. My uncle brought me

from Sweden to New York after the Holocaust and started a whole new life for me. Our family and I owe him the deepest gratitude. As you know, the Epstein family lived in Tientsin. My uncle Lasar passed away in September 1979 at the age of 93.

Address: 851 Enchanted Way, Pacific Palisades, California 90272.

Mark Leef

California, USA

Regarding a letter published in Bulletin £393 from Dalit Shikman inquiring about Faivel and Esther, their daughter Anne. I know quite a bit, especially about Anne. Please write to me either in English or Russian and I will respond. Let me know if she wishes to write in English or Russian and her address.

Address: 4008 Calle Sonora, Unit 3F, Laguna Woods, CA 92637 USA
Tel.: 949-206-1846

Tahlia Laufer

I am searching for information about my grandmother who arrived in Shanghai before World War II . Her name was Edith Salzberger and she married Sigfried Lindenberg while in Shanghai. I believe she married at the Ohel Moishe Synagogue
Email: tal_laufer@optusnet.com.au
Address: P.O. Box 620 Toorak, Victoria, Australia 3142
Tel.: +61398264154

IGUD YOTZEI SIN

Association of Former Residents of China in Israel

On Tuesday, December 11, 2007, at 4 p.m.

at Beit Oved Ha-Iriya,

4, Pumbeditha Street, Tel Aviv,

the All-Israel reunion of former residents of China

scholarships will be awarded after the lighting of Hanukka candles.

All the former residents of China in Israel are kindly invited to take part in the reunion

AMONG COMPATRIOTS IN SAN FRANCISCO



**"Monterey" -
Anna Perlstrauss-Korchemsky's
painting**



**"The first night" -
Leonid Korchemsky's sculpture**

The Association of the Veterans of the Second World War in San Francisco had an excellent art exhibition on July 21 and 22, 2007.

It was very interesting for the Jewish community of Far-Easterners to learn that among the paintings were works by artist Anna Perlstrauss-Korchemsky and copper sculptures of her husband Leonid Korchemsky. Anna was born in Harbin and grew up in Shanghai. Her talent developed in Canada and in California where her pictures in the style of pointillism and impressionism drew much attention.

Leonid Korchemsky was born in Kiev and studied in Moscow. His sculptures are uncommon, and his themes are unforgettable scenes of human life.

The creations of Anna Perlstrauss-Korchemsky and Leonid Korchemsky are appreciated in many countries.



CHUSAN ROAD CHATTER

Issue 394

IYS Hongkew Division

Editor: Kurt Maimann

Kurt Maimann



On September 5, passed away another of our old friends, Kurt Maimann, formerly of Shanghai (Hongkew), at the age of 77. He was a faithful IYS member, but for the past 16 years a terminal disease precluded him from actively participating in the our social effort.

Kurt was born in Vienna, and came to Shanghai with his parents at the age of ten. There he attended school and was a member of Betar.

In 1949, the Maimann Family came to Israel. After having served in the IDF, Kurt was employed by the Ministry of Agriculture until the illness forced

him to retire.

Kurt was a born social worker: he founded and actively participated in the Israeli Association of the Refugees from Central Europe (Germany and Austria), and organized the European refugee section of the Igud Yotsei Sin. He also initiated the English language "Chusan Road Chatter" supplement of our "Bulletin", and was its editor until forced to stop working. In addition, he was amongst the founders of the Israel-China Friendship Association. Kurt was a living encyclopedia of the history of the German and Austrian refugees in China, and conducted

a world-wide correspondence with hundreds of them. He collected any shred of evidence on the Holocaust refugees in China, and had an ample archive of his own on the subject.

Kurt will be remembered by his many friends as a highly cultured person and an animated conversationalist on art, literature and philosophy.

Another dear friend left us for the better world. Together with his faithful wife, Celia, who stood heroically by him for so many painful years, we all mourn the passing of our Kurt, may his memory be blessed.

T. Kaufman

Saved in Shanghai

By Lydia Aisenberg

A slow boat to China was one of few options available to European Jews fleeing the Nazis in the late 1930s. With country after country slamming their doors shut on Jewish refugees, the then-international city of Shanghai – where no entry visas were required – was a beacon of hope in the darkest of times. However, the sanctuary was over 8,000 miles away.

Guided tours of Shanghai's former Jewish quarter, Hongkew, have been offered in recent years by the local Chinese authorities, proud of their part in helping save some 20,000 Jews who succeeded in reaching their country. Holocaust survivors and descendants of those who found a safe haven in Shanghai have been returning to visit the country. Three years ago, the film *Shanghai Ghetto* made by Amir and Dana Janklowicz-Mann, the latter a daughter of a Shanghai survivor, document such a journey back to the Chinese past of former residents of the northern Shanghai district of Hongkew. The film sparked new interest in the harsh experiences of Jews far away from the European arena of horrors, where most of their extended families perished. The documentary deals with the relationship between the Jewish refugees and the local Chinese, the harsh circumstances under which all were forced to live after occupation by the Japanese army, and how the Jews organized themselves under those extremely cruel occupiers.

One of the families who pulled into the Shanghai harbor during one of the stormiest and cruelest

periods of history, was that of Austrian-born Ehud (Ernst) Gewing, who eventually made aliya to Israel in the early 1950s. Gewing, his parents and two brothers left the town of Leoben – where there were few Jewish families – and headed for the northern Italian port of Trieste where they boarded the Shanghai-bound *Conte Verde*. During the voyage, the ship passed through the Suez Canal where the then-young schoolboy almost rubbed shoulders with Palestine. Little did he know at the time that this is where he would eventually end his long journey to freedom, beginning in Austria and on to Shanghai, eventually to America and then, after a few years, to the Promised Land that he sailed past more than a decade previously.

Gewing is one of the survivors who in recent years made the journey back to his Hongkew past before viewing the Janklowicz-Mann documentary. "The Shanghai experience was extremely well captured in the film,"

Gewing commented after watching *Shanghai Ghetto*. The father of filmmaker Dana Janklowicz-Mann, Yechiel (Harold) Janklowicz, is a close friend of Gewing's from their Shanghai days. Gewing's Polish-born paternal grandfather settled in the Austrian town of Leoben prior to the First World War. "He was originally a peddler and then became a shop owner," explained Gewing, whose own father ran a household goods shop. On his mother's side the family tree went back several generations in Austria. "My maternal grandfather and great-grandfather served in the Austrian army," he says with understandably mixed feelings. Gewing's wife Rachel is also a Holocaust survivor and author of the book *My Father's Request*, relating her horrific Holocaust experiences before being brought – still only a young child – to the newly-founded State of Israel.

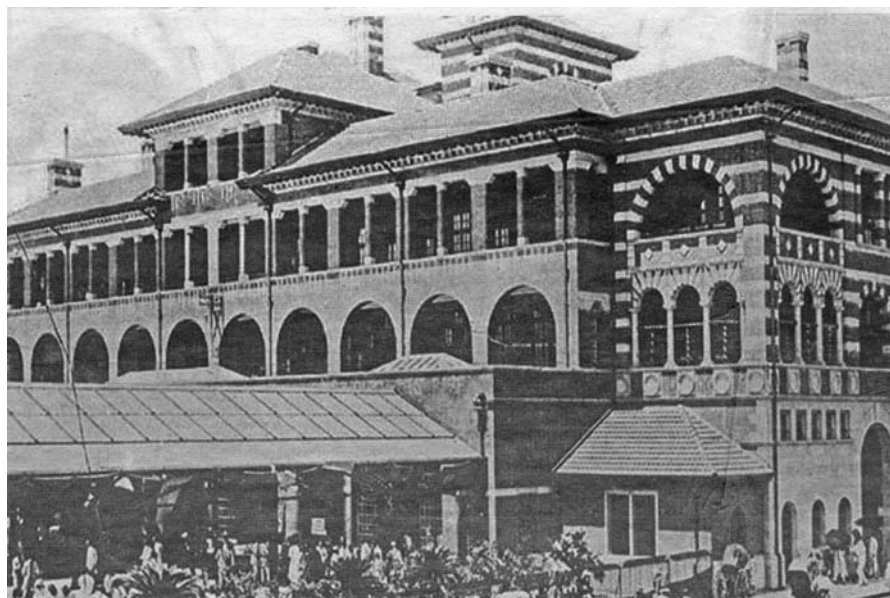
He has positive memories of the journey to Shanghai that took a



Ehud Gewing (left) and brothers

couple of weeks and called in at Bombay en-route. “Shanghai was divided into different areas, part under the control of the British, part French, and another part under the Americans with the law of each individual country taking hold in each area,” recalled Gewing. “In Shanghai there were basically two Jewish communities: the Iraqis and the White Russians, the latter group being both Jews and non-Jews who had fled the Bolsheviks. Our group was the first to arrive in Shanghai as refugees, and the Jewish community helped us settle down in the French quarter and father opened a clothing shop. I remember we always lived frugally and really don’t know how much help came from the Jewish community, but obviously some,” he recalled. Ehud and his brothers attended the English language school in the British section known as the Shanghai Jewish School. “The teachers were all English speaking but not necessarily British, as I remember some were Russian. We never thought about the teachers’ nationality until they disappeared in 1941. After Pearl Harbor they were rounded up by the Japanese and put in internment camps,” he explained. “We lived peacefully until 1943 when the Japanese moved us to a very poor neighborhood which became a ghetto in the area of Shanghai known as Hongkew. Father, of course, had to sell the shop and he opened another in Hongkew with an Austrian Jewish partner. Not all the Jews and Russians were interned – only those who came as refugees after 1938 – but we were around 18,000 in the ghetto. There were no walls around the ghetto, but we had to carry passes and a civilian police force made up of Jewish refugees checked you whenever you moved around.”

“A school was established by the refugees and my education continued in the English language,” continued Gewing, the father of four daughters and a member of Kibbutz Mishmar



Old Shanghai

Ha’emek in the Jezreel Valley. “My father’s parents managed to join us in Shanghai in 1941, having traveled by train via Siberia to Japan, and from there to China. We all lived together in extremely cramped conditions, the who extended family in two small rooms,” Gewing recalled, adding that his grandfather died of natural causes while they were living in Shanghai. When Gewing returned to Shanghai in 2004, he paid a visit to those rooms. “I still can’t understand how we managed to live that way for the time we did,” he exclaimed. He was accompanied to Shanghai by a Chinese professor of English, an acquaintance of his brother in the US, and therefore had no problem communicating with the local Chinese residents who showed a great deal of respect to their visitor on an emotional journey back to his childhood in their part of the city. The Hongkew synagogue has been turned into a museum and many of the other buildings occupied by Jews during the war are still standing. Shanghai has been undergoing a tremendous construction boom in recent years – just this week a massive 101-floor building was completed – and there was talk of demolishing the area that had been the ghetto. However, the Shanghai municipality decided that about 50 historical structures were

to be preserved in the former Jewish neighborhood.

The Gewing family eventually made it to the US. “We had an aunt in New York and she sent affidavits for the whole family, but Fritz – my mother – contracted TB in Shanghai and the Americans wouldn’t allow her entry. My parents decided that my father would take my twin brother, myself and old brother to America before our visas ran out and that she would eventually follow.” Gewing went to school in San Francisco, became a member of the Zionist youth movement Hashomer Hatza’ir, and made aliya in December 1951. “When Shanghai was evacuated before the communist takeover in 1949, all the Jews went to Italy as did my mother, but she died in hospital there and was buried in Rome,” he recounted sadly. A few years ago, Ehud and his twin brother Heinz visited their mother’s grave and had the gravestone, which had fallen into a state of disrepair, replaced. “To this day I don’t understand how we left her behind, sick and alone,” he said, gazing at a black-and-white photograph of the whole family together in Shanghai and lost in swirl of deep emotions.

(From The Jerusalem Post, September 21, 2007)

A RICKSHAW REUNION CRUISE IN APRIL 2008

A reunion of Shanghailanders with their spouses, friends and relatives, is currently planned for April 6, 2008 on the cruise ship "Caribbean Princess". The itinerary for the seven day cruise leaves from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and is as follows: Two days at sea, St. Maarten, St. Thomas, one day at sea, Princess Cays, Bahamas, and back to Fort Lauderdale on April 13, 2008. Please note that the date does not fall during the Passover week.

Those interested, please let the Reunion Committee know latest by October 15, 2007, and include a \$25.00 check per person payable to "Rickshaw Reunion Committee." The check will cover the incidental fees incurred during the initial phase of making the necessary arrangements and notifications to prospective participants of the cruise.

ATTENTION

WE DECIDED TO HAVE OUR GROUP BOOKED THROUGH AN EXPERIENCED TRAVEL AGENT. HERE IS HER INFORMATION. PLEASE CALL HER DIRECTLY, NOT PRINCESS CRUISES.

PLEASE CALL HER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO MAKE YOUR BOOKING IN ORDER TO GET THE BEST POSSIBLE AVAILABILITY AND THE LOWEST PRICES!!!!!!!

LOTTY SCHULLER
TIFFANY TRAVEL SERVICE
12308 VENTURA COURT
STUDIO CITY CALIFORNIA 91604
PHONE: 818 -763 - 3433 EXTENSION #203
FAX: 818 - 763 - 3422
TOLL FREE: 800 - 527 - 3392 EXTENSION #203
EMAIL:LOTTY@TIFFANYTRAVEL.COM

SHE WILL ADVISE YOU OF CURRENT PRICES AND AVAILABILITY AND ALSO HELP YOU WITH YOUR FLIGHTS IF NECESSARY, TRANSFERS FROM THE AIRPORT TO THE SHIP AND FROM THE SHIP BACK TO THE AIRPORT, AND, IF NEEDED, ANY HOTEL ARRANGEMENTS BEFORE OR AFTER THE CRUISE.

SHE CAN ALSO ADVISE YOU ON THE PURCHASE OF INSURANCE WHICH WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND. THE INSURANCE WOULD INCLUDE TRIP CANCELLATION IN THE EVENT THAT YOU UNFORTUNATELY HAVE TO CANCEL AT THE LAST MINUTE. THE INSURANCE RATES CAN ONLY BE DETERMINED AT THE TIME OF YOUR BOOKING SINCE IT IS AFFECTED BY WHAT CABIN CATEGORY YOU CHOOSE, ETC THERE ARE CANCELLATION PENALTIES IF YOU DO NOT HAVE INSURANCE AND THESE CAN BE DISCUSSED AT THE TIME OF YOUR BOOKING. DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS, DATES DUE, AND FINAL PAYMENT WILL ALSO BE DISCUSSED UPON YOUR BOOKING.

In the event there are not enough Shanghailanders interested, the cruise will be cancelled, and all remaining funds will be refunded less a small amount to defray for mailings, etc.

Further details will follow once we have an approximate count of interested persons.

Please send your reply with check payable to "Rickshaw Reunion Committee" to:

Rickshaw Reunion Committee

c/o Ralph Harpuder

148 So. Formosa Ave

Los Angeles, CA 90036

rickshaw2008@aol.com

THE INSIDER - OUTSIDER

Netty C. GROSS (From "the Jerusalem Report")

Step by Chinese-born Nitza (Vicky) Wu found God, then Jews, then Israel.

But will she ever be fully accepted? LIKE THE BIBLICAL ABRAHAM 36-year-old Vicky Wu, born and raised in Guangdong province on the southern coast of the People's Republic of China, discovered God as an adult. Till then, the very idea of a divine, moral force controlling human destiny was widely viewed in China, she says, as a bizarre, even comical concept. During the 1966-76 Great Cultural Revolution and even afterward, religious worship was seen as feudalistic in Communist China. «We were raised to believe in ourselves and not in an invisible being» she explains.

Today Wu, who prefers using her adopted Hebrew name, Nitza, which was chosen by a late Jewish mentor and has several interpretations – victory», «spark» and «flower bud» - is a modern Orthodox Jew. For the last three years, she has made her home in Jerusalem, where she lives by herself in a modest apartment. She makes a living teaching Chinese as an extra-curriculum Course of study at the all-boys Orthodox Himmelfarb high school, working as a business consultant to Israeli firms requiring assistance in Chinese culture and etiquette, and translating Chinese texts to English, a language she speaks with fluency after years off formal study in China and seven years spent in New York.

Recently Wu worked on the set of «Noodles,» an Israeli feature film starring Hollywood-based Israeli actress Mili Avital about the plight of foreign workers in Israel, scheduled to be released later this year. She served as a translator for a small Chinese



boy acting in the film. The encounter between the newly Orthodox Wu and secular Israeli filmmakers, she says, led to mutual soul-searching. «I came to Israel to be closer to God, Torah and Judaism. It was shocking to discover how many Israelis are not believers at all and how wide the range of observance is. Many Jews here are going in the opposite direction than I am.

It's a conundrum.» And at the same time, she says, the film crews were «endlessly curious» about her decision to become Orthodox and settle in Israel, a country they often find professionally and personally limiting.

In New York, Wu studied Judaism with modern Orthodox Rabbi Alan Schwartz, attended his Manhattan synagogue, Ohav Zedek, and converted in August 2004. She visited Israel a short time later and decided to immigrate in 2005. She came on a tourist visa, assuming she would formally file for immigrant status

under the Law of Return once here, but ran into bureaucratic obstacles. The Interior Ministry, suspicious of her Asian origins, refused to recognize her conversion even though it had been accepted by Israel's rabbinate. According to Rabbi Seth Farber, co-founder of ITIM, an Israeli advocacy group which helps individuals with Jewish status problems, the Ministry demanded that Wu return to live in her converting community (New York) for one year to strengthen the case for receiving citizenship - a demand which an earlier landmark Supreme Court decision declared to be unlawful. Farber says the ministry backed off after the Chief Rabbinate provided documentation verifying Wu's conversion. «We pointed out that if the rabbis approved her, how could the ministry refuse to?» says Farber.

Waiting on a tourist visa for the process to sort itself out «were the hardest six months of my life,» she says these days without bitterness. Even after she received citizenship, Wu, an outgoing and friendly woman who has the cheery hard driving zeal not uncommon among converts, acknowledges that her life in the Holy Land among Jews was a challenge. «Israelis would just stare at me, sometimes with unfriendly expressions.» She was often mistaken for a foreign worker from the Philippines, both by Israelis, who would inquire «how much I charge to clean their homes, a question which baffled me,» and by Philippine nationals, «who would stop me on the street and address me in their native tongue which I didn't comprehend.» On the whole, she says, most Israelis are «friendly» and «receptive» to her. «I don't mind the questions about who

I am, as long as they ask. I can't stand the silent staring.» And she quips, «I just wish the Israeli emigration police would quit mistaking me for an Asian foreign worker and stop demanding to see my papers.» These days Wu feels «somewhat established.» She has developed friendships among a wide circle of friends, religious and secular, American Jewish immigrants as well as native Israelis, and is familiarizing herself with the twists and turns of Israeli politics.

She spent Seder night with veteran immigrants originally from Washington, D.C. Her approach to Orthodoxy is «flexible,» she conveys with a lighthearted chuckle, placing herself in the «mainstream» modern Orthodox camp, but she begs off labeling herself and hasn't yet formally joined a synagogue. «I really don't know all the nuances of Orthodoxy yet, but I am definitely not ultra-Orthodox,» adding that she goes to movies, theater productions and museums. Though she speaks enough to get by, her Hebrew is limited and she often resorts to English. Her cultural orientation, too, is decidedly American: Recently sitting in a Jerusalem coffee shop, she promptly orders pancakes for breakfast - and seems surprised when the uncomprehending waitress says that the restaurant does not serve the item.

Dressed for our interview in a pink business suit, Wu wonders whether Israelis may, be too provincial to accept an «Asian Jewish face,» and whether she ultimately might be more comfortable in Manhattan where Asiatic Jews have become part of the social landscape. She was not surprised by a recent New York Times article which pointed to the growing numbers of Chinese-Jewish children - often the products of intermarriage and adoption - celebrating bar and bat mitzvas in Manhattan these days. «There are many shared cultural values between Jews and Chinese,» she says, such as strong family ties,

deep respect for the elderly, and resourcefulness. «I grew up poor but my brother and I never felt it. My mother could make a meal out of an apple,» an anecdote Jews could relate to.

Still, despite the cultural similarities, conversion to Orthodox Judaism requires a «leap of faith» for «any person» - especially, she adds, someone who comes from an Asian and atheist background.

And so, dating has been not without its complications. «I would like to get married and have a family,» she shrugs with a helpless laugh, which hints at the frustrations of finding a mate within an insular society.

PERHAPS UNSURPRISINGLY, Nitza Wu's tale of self-discovery from the humid streets of Guangdong to Emek Refaim, a popular cafe- and boutique-lined thoroughfare in southern Jerusalem where we meet for breakfast, is punctuated by humor and pathos.

Wu says her road to Judaism started with simple curiosity. «As a kid, I was always asking a lot of questions about good and evil.» Born to a brain surgeon father and opera singer mother, Wu says Guangdong's proximity to Hong Kong and Macao, spared it from merciless Revolutionary Guard excesses during the Cultural Revolution.

Though educated and worldly, her parents were not persecuted and were allowed to carry on with their jobs, «although we did suffer from poverty.» By the time she was born in 1971, China was slowly opening up to the West. That year, it replaced Taiwan at the United Nations and secretly hosted Henry Kissinger (heralding Richard Nixon's historic visit in February 1972). By the time Wu started elementary school, Mao Zedong was dead, the Gang of Four defeated, and Deng Xiaoping was moving the country toward economic and cultural reform. «We were encouraged to learn,» she said. Wu studied English and international

business management at university, became an official tour guide and spent five years working with visiting political and business dignitaries and their families across China.

«I know the country quite well:» she says.

She also managed to travel abroad on excursions to Australia and Singapore. In 1996, she decided to leave China («My parents were against it and wanted me to settle down, but supported me in the end. How Jewish, right?») to study hotel management in Lucerne, in Switzerland. Short of cash and lonely for her family, she ultimately fell in with Christian missionaries who provided lodging and fellowship and first introduced her to the idea of God.

«They were very kind and showed me my first Bible. They said there is a God, He's invisible but His spirit goes with you wherever you are. It was a very strange idea. I felt like I came out of a cave.» But the concept of a divine presence ultimately made sense to Wu. Growing up in China, she says, «hardship, hunger and homelessness were always around me. Believing in a God made me feel less hopeless. I accepted the thesis that there is a God and I wanted to find a way to serve Him better.» Wu says she could have settled down in Switzerland where her language skills attracted employment opportunity but was restless to visit North America and left for New York before her Swiss Christian friends «got up to the chapters on Jesus.» Once in the United States, Wu first stayed with relatives in Michigan «to get over my jet lag and orient myself,» but returned to New York where, through a friend, she rented a basement apartment in the Brooklyn home of a Chinese family.

Wu, whose English was good enough, says she began sending out resumes and first landed a job offer in Los Angeles, «but I didn't want to go there.» Finally she found employment

at a midtown Manhattan family hotel owned by the first Jew she'd ever met, an Orthodox Holocaust survivor. Wu says the general knowledge imparted to Chinese pupils is that the Germans were the aggressors in World War II. «But I had never heard of the Holocaust.»

The encounter triggered her curiosity about «the wildly different» views about Jews to which she'd been exposed. «My Swiss Christian friends didn't like Jews, but my New York boss was very good-natured, not bitter, and eager to show kindness to a stranger. I started to wonder: How can you dislike, even hate, a whole people?» On the Thanksgiving holiday following 9/11, («the whole city was crying silently») Wu traveled by herself to Washington, D.C. and visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. «The events of 9/11, as I saw it, were all about blind hatred. I was looking for answers,» she says now.

She came away feeling that «this cannot happen again to any people and that the Jews are misunderstood, even unknown, to millions, certainly in Asia. Perhaps my good deed to humanity would be to help fight anti-Semitism by acting as a bridge between peoples.» Wishing to understand Jews better, Wu enrolled in a beginners Hebrew-language course at Makor, a Jewish cultural center on the Upper West Side, taught by Jonathan Joseph (J.J.) Greenberg, then a charismatic

36-year-old rising star in Jewish communal leadership and son of Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg and veteran Orthodox feminist Blu Greenberg. Wu encountered difficulties in mastering the Hebrew alphabet but says that Greenberg was a patient and soulful teacher. He however begged off from having philosophical debates with her about Judaism, telling her that his schedule didn't permit. «But that's not a good excuse in New York where no one has time,» she later wrote about him. Wu

persisted and says she and Greenberg eventually developed an intense 11-month-long dialogue, mostly by e-mail, in which they discussed weighty topics such as God, Judaism and Jewish history. Though he lived in Manhattan, Wu I says, Greenberg, who was unmarried, shared with her his conviction that Jews must be committed to Israel. «In a cold world, he was uniquely caring,» she says, her voice cracking with emotion.

Greenberg was struck by a car while bike-riding with a brother and friend in Zikhron Ya'akov on a visit to Israel in September 2002 and died of his injuries a day later at a Tel Aviv hospital on the eve of Yom Kippur. Desolate, Wu says Greenberg's sudden death challenged her faith. «I walked around Times Square like a zombie, very frightened. What now? I thought.» On his memorial website Wu later wrote that when Greenberg died, «I thought it was a sign that I should stop everything Jewish in my life because my only Jewish contact was taken away. On the other hand, I was facing another painful decision because deep in my soul I knew that I could never return to the old lifestyle.» After paying a condolence call to Greenberg's parents, Wu felt that what Greenberg bequeathed to her «was his inspiration. I was sad to let go of the grief but realized that I had found a solution.» She decided to convert «to replace J.J.'s loss, be a good Jew and continue his mission to repair the world via Judaism.

«Wu joined the modern Orthodox Congregation Ohav Zedek, housed in an imposing building on the Upper West Side, which has been enjoying a renewed vitality in recent years, She made friends and plunged into the study of Judaism with Rabbi Schwartz. «Sanhedrin, minha, Rosh Hodesh,» she says, ticking off a broad list of Jewish concepts she familiarized herself with. After the conversion, Wu made H pilot trip to Israel with aliya in mind. «I knew it was a big commitment but a Jew's

love for Israel is not optional" BACK IN GUANGDONG, HER parents didn't quite understand - «No one cares about being Jewish in China» - but supported her decision nevertheless, she says. However, once in Israel. She encountered a culture shock the likes of which she hadn't experienced in 10 years living abroad. «I had no idea that not everyone living in Israel was Jewish, that not all Israeli Jews were religious and how divided the religious world itself was.»

Still, with all the evident hardship, Wu says she decided to «throw herself in the lake» and immigrate anyway, explaining her willingness to embrace hardship as part of the conversion process' although the subsequent negative encounters with Israel's Interior Ministry over the acceptance of her Jewish status made her wonder.

But the bureaucratic problems were eventually ironed out, and these days (three years later). Wu says she has no regrets, about her decision to move to Israel. She is building up her growing Chinese-Israeli consulting firm and recent clients have included a Tel Aviv architect who won a bid in Beijing to preserve tombs from the Ming Dynasty and a jewelry designer seeking to manufacture in China. She's also planning a China tour next autumn for Israelis.

Religious imperatives aside, I ask Wu, does she think that she will ever be accustomed to questions, express and implied, of Israelis about her Asian identity? She pauses, poking at her breakfast omelet, before answering. «Every day is difficult living here,» she says, hinting at her quixotic struggle to find love and acceptance among Israeli Jews. «But I love Israel.

Despite its political problems, the internal bickering, and my personal hardships, it's a magnificent little country... there's a lot to enjoy and a lot of goodness. Yes. I always will be something of an outsider. But that's very Jewish, isn't it?"

The Jews in Asia: Comparative Perspectives

[CJSS Jewish & Israeli Studies Series Vol. I]

Edited with an Introduction by

Pan Guang

Associate Editors: Yu Jianhua, Wang Shuming & Sheng Wenqin

Preface I

Both the Chinese and Jewish nations have a long history of more than 5000 years and are listed among the great ancient civilizations of the world. These two civilizations have many similarities in common. Both are hard-working, freedom-loving, and have an outstanding national heritage, having made significant contributions to the development of world civilization.

Since 1840, with the imperialist invasion, China became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. The Chinese nation, unwilling to succumb, has continually demonstrated its spirit of resistance to oppression and its revolutionary will. In 1911, under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen, the Chinese people overthrew the autocratic monarchy that had ruled China for thousands of years. In 1949, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and Mao Zedong, the Chinese people won the complete victory of the New Democratic Revolution. And after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, especially since 1978, under the guidance of the Deng Xiaoping Theory, China made tremendous achievements in socialist revolution and construction.

Jewish people were living in Palestine in the 13th century BC, the establishment of the Israel – Judea Kingdom of the 11th century BC created Judaism. In the 1st-2nd century AD, during the rule of the Roman Empire, the majority of the



Our compatriot from Shanghai (Hongkew) Ruth Shany visited Shanghai in June 2007. In the photo: Ruth Shany in Hongkew's Suchen Road

Jewish people were expelled from their residence. In ancient times, Jews came to China along the Silk Road, and established a prosperous Jewish community in Kaifeng in China. They gradually integrated with the locals and eventually, it has become a much-told tale in the communication history between the Chinese and Jewish people for the first time. Most of the Jews in the Middle Ages in Europe engaged in lending and commercial activities. Ushering into the 19th century, some people engaged in industrial and financial work and became rich merchants.

Both the Chinese and Jewish people in modern times have suffered exceptionally serious misfortunes. Jews killed in the Nazi Holocaust during World War II were about the shocking number – more than 6

millions. In the meantime, Shanghai had become the world's only port that opened the door to the nearly 30,000 Jewish refugees in the city. This is still another much-told tale in Sino-Jewish communication history. In 1937, the shocking Nanking massacre, commonly known as "The Rape of Nanking", is an infamous war crime committed by the Japanese invaders. The civilian death toll was as high as 300,000. During China's Anti-Japanese War, the Chinese anti-Japanese bases were "mopped-up" by the Japanese troops who adopted the policy of "burning all, killing all, looting all".

The above mentioned are only a very brief description of the Jewish origins, development, exchange and bitter experience of two civilizations, of the Chinese nation and the Jewish nation. But the need for further data excavation, the introduction of new visions, new viewpoints, are too numerous to mention. It can be said that the Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai (CJSS) under the leadership of Dr. Pan Guang, are shouldering heavy responsibilities while their road ahead in very long, and there are plenty of opportunities for them. In the early 1980s I was deputy director of the Research Institute of Economics of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS). Together with Mr. Chen Zengnian we had spent three years to look up the files of "Sassoon Co. Ltd.", while having compiled the book *Sassoon Group in Old China* which was published

by the People's Publishing House in 1985. This book made a more comprehensive study of 100 years of British Jewish magnates' business in old China. Thus I was also looked upon as a scholar on Jewish Studies. CJSS was initiated and established by Dr. Pan Guang in 1988. I was invited to serve as an advisor to the Center. It may be noted that in 1988 when I was president of the SASS. I certainly supported such a center under the SASS, because it is consistent with my vision. The SASS should not only have research centers, but those with best qualities among the same discipline in China. The establishment of CJSS is the realization of my personal vision of "First One" and "Only One" in a certain research area at that time.

Dr. Pan Guang majored in world history, became a learned scholar with a rigorous academic approach, and was proficient in foreign languages and good at organizing important academic activities. He is now the Vice Dean of the School of World Economy and Politics, Director of the Institute of Euro-Asia Studies, SASS, and Director of the Shanghai Center for International Studies, while he cooperates well with a group of outstanding young scholars. Recalling in 1993 when I led a SASS delegation of International Studies to visit the United States, I found that Dr. Pan has a lot of Jewish friends in the United States including the people from political, academic, religious, business and other parties. Of course, Dr. Pan Guang has repeatedly visited Israel, while having got acquainted with Jewish people from all walks of life in many Asian countries. After successfully holding the International Symposium on Jews in Asia: A Comparative Study for the first time last year, we suggested the idea that we should publish the papers of the symposium as the first volume of the CJSS Jewish-Israeli Studies Series. This is a major event for CJSS, which all those who engage in Jewish Studies have expected. I wish the smooth

publication of this first volume, while wishing the Jewish Studies in China progress with the passing time and enjoy a more bright future.

Prof. Dr. Zhang Zhongli,

Honorary Dean, CJSS

Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai (CJSS)

Established in 1988, the Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai (CJSS) is the most influential research institution in China on Jewish and Israeli Studies. It not only coordinates the research activities both in Shanghai and China, but also actively collaborates with scholars from all over the world.

The major academic accomplishments achieved by the members of the CJSS in recent years include: Israel and Judaic Studies (papers), the Jews in Shanghai (album), the Jews in China (album), the Jewish Civilization (book),

Touring of Jewish Civilization (book), Shanghai Jews since 1840 (book), The History of the Jewish Community in Shanghai (photo exhibit) and so on. CJSS has sponsored and organized dozens of national and international conferences, reunions of Shanghai Jews, and exhibits on accomplished and well-known Jewish individuals, on the Nazi Holocaust, and on today's Israel. It also sponsors, as the first time in China, Hebrew teaching for school children as well as for part-time adult continued education. In addition, the CJSS also spearheaded or sponsored the effort in making documentary films and television productions on Jews in China, especially Shanghai Jews collaboratively with TV/FILM studios, and assisting the Shanghai Municipal Tourist Administration to publish the tour map on historical Jewish sites in Shanghai.

Amiad to treat water for Beijing Olympics

Israel's Amiad has been selected to treat all water filtration and sewage for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. The Amiad Filtration system will be a key component to the successful operation of the Olympic Village.

In support of the award of this bid, the Israeli Consulate in China has recently published an advertising brochure of Amiad installations for agriculture, water treatment, and water technologies.

Both the Ayun Water Treatment Plant in Israel and the Beijing 2008 Olympic Village installation are

illustrated in the brochure: Water Treatment 2007 Brochure.

Amiad Filtration Systems, headquartered in Israel, is one of the world's most significant producers of water filtration products and filtration solutions. Founded in 1962, Amiad headquarters today including an injection molding plant, production and assembly halls, warehouses and office space, containing an imitational filtration training centre and research laboratories. They are well known in industrial projects in Israel and abroad.

My Talmud Torah Days

Dina Vincow

For many of us Jewish children born in Harbin, Talmud Torah was the starting point of our learning and a determining factor in our lives. I recall reading, a while back in the Bulletin, a beautiful tribute to our school written by Luba Slutsker-Tsinman.

My memories of Talmud Torah belong to a different, later period. I attended this school between the years 1939 to 1947, and I would like to describe here some of my personal recollections of these years of being a student at Talmud Torah.

Here is my earliest one. I am told that I am going to be attending kindergarten. My mother brings me to a large sunlit room with low tables and stools. Apparently, I am happy to stay there (I let my mother leave me there without a fuss). The classroom of our kindergarten is the largest and the brightest of all classrooms, the one on the first floor with its windows facing Konnaya Street. The most memorable people for me in this room are Moreh Nadel, or as we are accustomed to address him, Ademoireh (short for "Adoni Hamoreh"), and a teachers helper, Luba Slutzker. She is a young beautiful girl, whose hand we are all fighting to hold when we are asked to form a circle. I like making little woven mats from strips of colourful shiny paper and love to use the sticky glue.

But we also are doing some serious learning: Ademoireh takes me aside and lets me read in a book which teaches the Hebrew alphabet. I read words like "booba"-doll, "sal"-basket. Apparently I am learning to read in Hebrew. We have posters with pictures hanging on the wall. One of the posters has pictures of animals, another one of musical instruments. Ademoireh is pointing to various items and names them, we repeat after him and are learning Hebrew words.

Music is an important part of our school days. A small organ requires pumping with feet to make the keyboard play. Our teacher Nadel plays the organ and we stand around and sing Hebrew songs with words that we do not really understand, but we absorb them with ease.

On some of the holidays there are special stage performances, and we rehearse skits and choral presentations. For my first Chanukkah stage appearance, my mother helps me memorise some lines in Hebrew. Neither she nor I know what we are saying, but I remember the wonderfully festive mood of the Chanukah celebration and the blessing for the lighting of the candles on the stage as little Shurik Feingold sings them. Somehow this memory always comes back to me each Chanukah time.



**The Elementary Jewish school
"Talmud Torah"
established in 1920.**

I recall listening to a speech given by Doctor Abraham Kaufman on our school stage. I was quite young at the time but I knew that it was about the Land of Israel. My mother, who also listened to the speech, was full of admiration for the speaker and commented again and again about what a wonderful orator Dr. Kaufman was. (I also remember that he came to our house as a doctor. My two year

old brother was very sick. He was treated by another doctor at the time and was getting worse. Dr. Kaufman diagnosed that my brother had pneumonia and took care of him.)

The school stage brings up many memories for me. There were many occasions when I stood on that stage throughout my years at school. I will describe one particular one later.

It is winter and, while we are waiting for our mothers to come and pick us up, we put on our coats and our rubber boots over our shoes with the help of one of the two Chinese men who work for the school as the janitors and caretakers: "Vasili" (Vasia) the tall and slim guy, and "Ivan" (Vaniya), the short and chubby one. They take care of us and of the building, serve us hot tea at lunch time as we sit at long tables and eat the sandwiches we bring from home. A single slice of bread is served to each of us. I think it is done in case someone comes to school without a sandwich from home.

At home we do not keep kosher, but I carefully instruct my mother not to give me anything that is not kosher for lunch. My peers are watchful and would make my life difficult, if they would see something of that nature.

There is noise in the lunch room; everybody is talking at once, but not for long. We hear our Moreh Slutzker rushing into the room with words of admonition: "Sheket udmama!!" We quiet down for a while. After lunch the older kids are called upon to read the short version of Birchat Hamazon. Only on rare occasions they call me to participate as well.

The lunch room is also the main hall where we spend our recess in the wintertime. I watch the older boys exercise on parallel bars and other sports equipment like the rings.

They seem to me so grown up. The school had six grades at this time so they must have been about twelve or thirteen years old.

Moreh Nadel was still our teacher in the first and the second grades. He was serious but not condescending. He treated us with respect. But he had some lighter moments as well. On occasion he called our attention to the fact that his two eyes were of different colours: one blue and one brown.

A very special time for me was when Nadel taught us the narrative of the holidays: Passover, Purim and more. He did it in Russian, of course. He was a master story teller. He told each story in several sessions and we could not wait to hear the next instalment. We were so involved in the story that we hated to hear the sound of the bell at the most crucial moment: We are at the point of the story of Passover when Moses is standing at the burning bush. We are told: "And then Moses heard..." This is when we hear the bell that announces the end of the lesson period. We are begging our teacher to go on with the story, but he tells us that we have to wait till the next day to hear the rest. Everybody sighs with disappointment but is looking forward to tomorrow.

In teaching us the books of Bereishit and Shemot, Nadel mixed the biblical text with the "peirushim" and the "Agaddah". Many of the things I learned then stayed with me for life. When we were in the second grade a special event took place. On the second day of Passover we were invited to visit Moreh Nadel and his wife Rachil Isaakovna, who was our math teacher, in their apartment. The Nadels lived on the second floor behind the main school building. I was much excited and somewhat nervous about visiting the home of my teachers. But I also felt very privileged. We were given some refreshments, played games with walnuts and had a good time.

In those first two or three years we



*Teachers and students of second grade, elementary school "Talmud Tora"
From left to right, top row: Rabbi Zelig Slutzker, Rabbi S. Levin
and Mrs. Rachel Nadel*

learned to read and to write Hebrew. Obviously, we did the same in Russian. While in kindergarten, we were briefly exposed to some English by Mr Elkind, but then came the war. The study of the English language was now forbidden in the Japanese occupied territory. Instead we began learning Japanese with Dinda San, a Korean woman who was probably not the best of teachers. In her culture she was accustomed to disciplined students. We, a small group of Jewish children, apparently did not meet her expectations in that regard, and she showed us her dissatisfaction. We, in turn, paid her back by misbehaving and doing mischief. Even though I was a timid soul I got into trouble with her at times. Our motivation to study Japanese was somewhat lacking, but in spite of it I learned to read Katakana script. Aside from the lessons in Japanese language, we all memorised the words of the Japanese and the Man-dju-di-go national anthems. We also observed a daily moment of silence in memory of the Japanese soldiers that fell in the war. The war marched on. In its last couple of years we became more aware of the hardships of war time. There was a shortage of coal to heat the school building. We sat in freezing classrooms. I remember having to

wear our coats and gloves during the lessons and, on a few occasions discovering that the ink froze in the inkwell. We did not know then how lucky we were to live in that remote corner of the world named Harbin where we only had to deal with the shortages of material goods and not the disaster that befell all the European Jews.

Sometime in the beginning of the fourth grade, I became sick with what was at first diagnosed as a strep throat infection, but turned out to be diphtheria. A few other children came down with the same sickness. One of them, Difa Fonaroyova died. For me, the aftermath of diphtheria resulted in many months of "complications" from the disease. I missed a good portion of the school year, but at the end of it the teachers decided that I could catch up and move on to the next grade. The one thing that I did not make up was learning to read the more advanced Japanese Hiragana script. Luckily, by the time I was in the fifth grade the war ended and a whole new era began for us at our Talmud Torah school.

It was 1945. The Russian Red Army came to town. In order for it to continue to exist the school now had to restructure its curriculum in accordance with the Soviet school

model. New teachers were hired. They were educated Russian émigrés who were well qualified to teach subjects like Roman History, Algebra, Geometry and Russian Grammar. The number of students per classroom was very small at this time. In the fifth grade we had only 5 or 6 students. We were getting an excellent "private" education. Our Russian teachers were caring and dedicated. I remember sometimes wondering about how they really felt about us, Jewish kids, thinking of the anti-Semitism that was associated with the White Russians. One of them, Boris Ivanovich Dobromyslov, was a former White Army officer. But I only remember their efforts to educate us, and I hope that they enjoyed their work. I do not remember the name of our history teacher any more, but I do recall that when her husband died during the school year our whole class attended his funeral at the Cathedral in Noviy Gorod. There was an open casket and it made a strong impact on our young minds.

A very special presence was Galina Gregorievna, our teacher of Russian language and grammar. She was such an energetic, enthusiastic and dedicated presence. She was very strict and completely determined to make us literate in Russian. What I learned from her served me well later on in life when, as a student at the University of Washington, I myself was given a chance to teach Russian to American students.

Our education in Hebrew continued in spite of the pressures of the new curriculum. Moreh Slutsker was strict and most of us behaved in his presence. In general I think that, because we were such a tiny group of children, we were somewhat spoiled and had not learned proper behaviour in a classroom. Talmud Torah of my time was a very protective and pampering environment for us.

In the Hebrew lessons of that period, I remember studying the book of Isaiah. We were supposed to



*Teachers and pupils at the school,
1922*

memorise each chapter by heart. This was a difficult task. Moreh Slutsker let us get away with having an open book on the desk in front of us, so that when I was asked to recite the chapter, I would peek at the lines to keep myself going with the recitation. In addition to the Tanakh studies, at some point we were reading stories by Peretz in Hebrew. This was a big stretch for us.

But later on I found out that whatever I learned as a child in Talmud Torah became a strong foundation for my future learning in Israel. It allowed me to begin speaking Hebrew a very short time after arriving. I am so grateful to all my teachers for what they gave me.

When we were in the sixth grade, the final grade of Talmud Torah at that time, all of us (parents and students) became aware of the fact that in the Soviet educational system the primary education consisted of the completion of seven grades of school. It made good sense, therefore, for our school to add another grade. We, the students, were strongly motivated to lobby for it. For us it meant staying another year in our familiar and protective environment and having the advantage to further our Hebrew education. But how could this be accomplished? We became aware of the fact that it was a matter of funds which the school did not have. Before that situation I personally never knew how much my parents paid for my schooling but had a vague notion that the tuition in our school depended on the financial status of the family. Now we all became aware of the fact that

our school existed largely because of the generosity of the community philanthropists.

So we were advised by our parents and our teachers to turn to the individuals who could help us. By this time, I think, there were just the four of us: myself, Mark Goldberg z.l., Shurik Faingold z.l. and Alik Fainman. We had to convince the community leaders that it was a worthwhile project to which they were asked to contribute. We prepared a program of part entertainment, part speeches of appeal. In the entertainment part we wanted to show how much we have learned and in the appeal part we expressed our desire to learn more in Hebrew studies. I remember standing on our stage and delivering some convincing arguments about our request. I was very nervous and I am not sure who was in the audience that day. I wish I could remember the names of the individuals who so kindly responded to the four Jewish kids who asked for a lot of money so they could have another year of the very special education that Talmud Torah had to offer. The event was a success and we were given that chance.

The building of our Talmud Torah is no longer there, but I can still see it very clearly in my mind: the way we entered it through the yard and the back door, the corridor with its dark walls, the classrooms and the room that the principal German Yakovlevich and the teachers used, and finally the main hall and the stage. It all looked very big then, but probably was not that big after all. These are my beautiful memories that I share with all of those who had the privilege to have been students in the Talmud Torah of Harbin.

(This last summer I had the chance to meet with a few of my friends at "Beit Ponve". With many of them, my friendship started at the Talmud Torah. It was a very happy occasion for me. It made me think of our school and our special little world.)

Rosh Hashanah in Tokyo

Rivka Sue Newman

Our family lived in Connecticut, America. My husband Geoff got an assignment to work in Tokyo, Japan. I am a jewelry designer and have my own jewelry design company. Our daughter Miriam is seventeen months old. We moved to Tokyo in September 2007 in time for Jewish New Year which is called Rosh Hashanah. .

Rosh Hashanah occurs at the end of the summer season and in the beginning of autumn. Our sages said Rosh Hashanah was the birthday of the world. Adam and Eve were created. According to Hebrew lunar calendar, this year Rosh Hashanah fell on the eve of September 12, 2007.

We got our Japanese visas and passports back on Sept.6, 2007. We took an airplane from Hartford Connecticut to Washington D.C. on Sept. 9, 2007. We flew to Tokyo through Washington D.C. It took more than twelve hours flying non-stop from Washington D.C. over the North Pole to Tokyo by Boeing 777. We arrived in Tokyo the day before Rosh Hashanah.

Geoff bought beautiful orchards and purple pink roses for Rosh Hashanah. The colors of the flowers were very pretty. I used the lovely flowers. I made a painting for our new home in Tokyo after Rosh Hashanah.

We bought new clothes and new shoes for Rosh Hashanah. We had Rosh Hashanah festival dinner with other families and friends who came from all over the world at the Jewish Community Center in Tokyo.

We ate bread and apples dipped in honey. It symbolized sweet life. We ate the seeds of pomegranates which symbolized prosperity and performing good deeds. Some Jewish



families would like to put a fish head on the table. They wish to be the first not the last. We also drank good wine to celebrate Rosh Hashanah. .

We observed two days of Rosh Hashanah celebration in Tokyo. During the Rosh Hashanah, we listened to the sound of ram's horn. It symbolized to get attention that God would listen to our prayers.

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah,

there was a tradition which was called Tashlich. This ceremony was to get rid of our sins and to begin the process of repentance. Jewish communities had for many generations gathered in a place alongside flowing water where we could see fish in the water. Symbolically we shake a little bread crumbs out from our pockets into the water and recited the *Tashlich* Prayer.

We did Tashlich in a beautiful Japanese garden. We saw carp happily swimming in the water.

Fish reminded us that just as fish swam freely in the water. It could suddenly be caught in a net. We could also helplessly fall into the net of sin. We pray to be protected by God. We hope that God will watch over us and forgive us. We will be written in the book of life.

We begin our new lives in a new place. Tokyo has special meaningful for our family.

Israeli green architectural project designed for China

An international architecture competition, sponsored by Living Steel, awarded the first prize to an Israeli Technion project designed for use in China. The now annual competition calls on architects to create sustainable housing options that raise environmental, economical and social aspirations for a growing world population.

The entrants were asked to submit designs for China, Brazil or the United Kingdom that brought innovation and environmentalism to the design process. Tagit Klimar and David Knafo, lecturers from Technion, Israel Institute of

Technology, won the first place for their design in China, which they were able to integrate dwelling - units and greenhouses into an apartment complex. The design would allow for growth enough vegetables for all families living in the development.

In addition to a prize of about US\$ 75,000, the Technion lecturers will also be given the opportunity to construct their project in the Chinese city of Wuhan. This initial development will serve as a construction model for future green house communities

Israel Epstein (1915-2005)

by Jonathan Goldstein*

Israel Epstein, prominent Chinese author and Editor-in-Chief of *China Reconstructs* magazine, was born in Warsaw, Russian Poland, in 1915. He was the only child of a middle-class Jewish family. Shortly after his birth, his family sought a better economic future in Kobe, Japan, where his father entered the maritime insurance business. This was a rare opportunity in the middle of the First World War. Because Germany had hermetically sealed off Russia's Western front, the Russian war effort was supplied by maritime shipments via Kobe to Vladivostok or Dalian and then westward across the Trans-Siberian Railway. By 1919 business opportunities brought the Epsteins to Harbin, the rail and commercial hub of northeast China. In 1920 the Epsteins went to Tianjin, the port servicing Beijing, and lived there continuously from 1920 until 1937. Like most Jewish children in Tianjin's Foreign Concession, Epstein was educated in English. He attended St. Joseph's Convent, the Tianjin American School and the British-oriented Tianjin Grammar School. He writes in his memoir *On Being a Jew in China* that the students at these schools "became partly Anglicized or Americanized...We were taught virtually nothing about China, its language or its culture. In the community of some three thousand Jews in Tianjin in my time there, I can remember only one Jewish child in a Chinese school...I do not remember a single Jewish-Chinese wedding."

Although isolated from the Chinese populace, the Epsteins had extensive interactions with the local non-Chinese population. One of Epstein's American School classmates was the novelist John Hersey, who became a lifelong friend. Hersey was born in Tianjin, where his father was a Protestant missionary. The Epsteins had troublesome interactions with the expatriate White Russian community which lived all over Northeast Asia. It was in that expatriate Russian context that Epstein's social consciousness began to develop. He writes that in North China he "first became aware of the 'Jew equals Bolshevik' variety of anti-Semitism...One of my memories was of hearing how a young Russian-Jewish journalist name Cherniavsky, son of the publisher of the mildly left Russian daily *Novosti zhizni* [News of life], was chased down a Harbin street and shot dead by White [Russian -ed.] officers who resented his presence at a meeting. On nearby White-governed territory in Siberia, Jews were pulled off trains and slaughtered by Cossacks under two Japanese-sponsored White Russian warlords, [Grigorii] Semyonov and [Ataman Ivan Pavlovich] Kalmykov. In Urga, Mongolia, Jews of a small merchant community were destroyed on sight or after cruel torture by the White troops of the Japanese-backed Baron von Sternberg. Some survivors told the grisly story in our home." At age sixteen Epstein got a job as a reporter for the Peking and Tientsin Times. He writes that "for hands-on

journalistic training, my job at the Times was very useful...By age 18 I had read proofs, written headlines, done make-up, reported on local affairs from weddings and funerals to police and law court matters, and even written editorials." In 1934, at the age of nineteen, Epstein married his childhood sweetheart, another Jewish resident of Tianjin. The marriage lasted only briefly because, according to Epstein, "our aims were different. Hers was to set up a family, mine to report from China's war front." In 1937, in a fashion totally uncharacteristic of the Russian-Jewish experience, Epstein's parents left China for the United States but he remained in the 'old country.' Epstein was hired as a war correspondent for the North China Bureau of United Press and moved to the national capital, Nanjing. Epstein writes that it was only as he began to report on Sino-Japanese hostilities from the Chinese side "that I really contacted Chinese society." In 1938-39 he joined Sun Yatsen's widow Song Qingling (1893-1981) in Hong Kong as a member of her China Defense League. There he wrote articles for *The South China Morning Post* and also his first book, *The People's War*, which Victor Gollancz published in London in 1939. That 384-page tome, with "six full-page woodcuts carved specially for this book by Chen Yin-Chiao," provided eyewitness testimony about the early phases of China's struggle against Japan. In 1940 Epstein and Song Qingling

fled Japanese-occupied Hong Kong for China's relocated wartime capital of Chongqing, in Sichuan province. There Epstein married the English social activist and correspondent Elsie Fairfax-Cholmeley (1905-84). In Chongqing they had the opportunity to see China's Guomindang government at close hand. They intermixed with a galaxy of internationally-renowned politicians, soldiers, and journalists, including all three Song sisters; their brother T. V. Song [Song Ziwen]; Sun Yatsen's son Sun Fo; United States General "Vinegar Joe" Stillwell, diplomat John Stewart Service, and war correspondent Jack Belden; and Zhou Enlai, who was the Chinese Communist Party's resident representative for inter-party affairs. Finally, it was in Chongqing where Epstein encountered anti-Semitism for the first time from the Chinese side. He writes that "the Guomindang, when criticized for being passive in fighting the Japanese and active in profiteering and suppression at home, injected anti-Semitism into its attacks on some foreign reporters. I heard Mme. Chiang Kai-shek [Song Meiling (1897-2003)-ed.], furious at Time magazine correspondent Theodore White, describe him as 'that little Jew.'"

In 1944, while writing for The New York Times, Epstein visited Yan'an and other Communist-held areas of Shaanxi Province. He interviewed Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong (1893-1976) and Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies Commander Zhu De (1886-1976). Epstein recalls that "in Yan'an, unlike official Chongqing, the war seemed not as just between nations but as an international joint effort against fascism. I found ready understanding when I said that my belonging to the oppressed Jewish people was one source of my anti-fascism."

From 1944 on, Epstein's Yan'an experiences, and particularly his meeting with Mao, led him to commit to Third International

Marxist-Leninism and to the Chinese Communist Party. In the spring of 1945 he published a second book, *I Visit Yanan: Eye Witness Account of the Communist-led Liberated Areas in North-West China*. He and Elsie then traveled to the United States, where Epstein worked as a correspondent for *Allied Labor News* and published a third book, *The Unfinished Revolution in China* (1947). Elsie edited the *Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy's* news monthly *Far East Spotlight*. Harassed by McCarthyism, both returned to China permanently in 1951 at the invitation of Song Qingling, who wanted them to set up the English-language monthly magazine *China Reconstructs*. Epstein's other books, all written in China, include *From Opium War to Liberation* (1956), *Tibet Transformed* (1983), *Woman in World History: The Life and Times of Soong Ching-ling* (1995), and *My China Eye: Memoirs of a Jew and a Journalist* (2005). Epstein frequently contributed to the US-China People's Friendship Association's *US-China Review* (New York, 1974-).

Epstein had been stateless since leaving Imperial Russia as an infant. He became a citizen of the People's Republic in 1957. His assistance in editing the English-language translation of Mao Zedong's four volume *Selected Works* secured him membership in China's Communist Party in 1963. During China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Epstein and Elsie, like many Chinese residents of foreign origin, were accused of espionage. After being imprisoned from 1968 to 1973 Epstein was publicly exonerated by Zhou Enlai. Epstein remained a Communist Party loyalist, returned to China *Reconstructs*, and rose to become its Editor-in-Chief in 1979. From 1983 on, he also served as an elected member of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Political Consultative Congress, an honorific position in a rubber-stamp advisory

body.

Epstein and other "foreign friends" often served as "officially unofficial" spokesmen for the Chinese government. It was Epstein who, in April 1999, publicly denounced the accidental American bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. He represented China at international conferences, including a well-publicized reunion of former Jewish residents held in Harbin in 2004. Chinese policemen snapped to a smart salute when Epstein's red-flagged vehicle and police escort sped by.

In his later years Epstein continued to address Chinese he met on the street, and even taxi drivers, as *tongzhi* [comrade], long after China embraced free-market reforms and that term had fallen out of common usage. Looking back on his China years, he praised the "historic achievements in which Mao's leadership played a key part. There were, of course, also mistakes and setbacks, including those caused by wrong judgments Mao made late in life. But mistakes have occurred and been corrected at many points in the Chinese revolution, giving me confidence that others occurring will also be corrected."

Epstein remained publicly silent after the governmental crackdown on Chinese students in Tiananmen Square in 1989. In 2005 he died of natural causes and was cremated. He left an ethnic Chinese wife whom he married after Elsie's death in 1984 plus several adopted Chinese children. At a memorial ceremony in Beijing's Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery, Chinese President Hu Jintao eulogized the old warrior for his "sincere affection for China and the Chinese people" and his "outstanding contributions" to China's progress.

REFERENCES: In addition to the books cited above, see Epstein's autobiographical essay "On Being a Jew in China: A Personal Memoir" in Jonathan Goldstein, ed. *The Jews of*

China. Volume Two: A Sourcebook and Research Guide (Armonk, NY, 2000), pp. 85-97; John Hersey's "A Reporter at Large," The New Yorker 58, no. 12 [May 10, 1982], pp. 49-58; and Goldstein's "Letter from Harbin: Returning to a Chinese Refuge and Recalling Its Rich History," Forward [NY] vol. 108, no. 31,516 [September

24, 2004], pp. 1, 6.

***Jonathan Goldstein** is a Research Associate of Harvard University's John K. Fairbank Center for East Asian Research and a professor of East Asian History at the University of West Georgia, Carrollton, Georgia, USA. His books include Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682-1846

(University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1978); The Jews of China (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, vol. one 1998, vol. two 2000); China and Israel, 1948-1998 (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998); and, with Hilary Conroy and Jerry Israel, America Views China (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1990).

China Cultural Festival in Tel Aviv

This summer, Israel kicked off its first China Cultural Festival to mark 15 years of bilateral relations between the two countries. The Festival, jointly organized by the Chinese and Israeli governments, will last until November 2007 and has brought more than 200 performers from China to participate in a series of cultural events throughout Israel. The events included Chinese acrobatics, folk dances, folk music, arts and crafts, photo exhibitions, theater and film. The National Theater of China presented "The Public Toilet", a play

highlighting major social changes over the past thirty years. The drama follows a cast of characters who meet around a Beijing public toilet. The toilet evolves from a primitive outhouse into a five-star luxury hotel washroom and represents the economic and social reforms that China is undergoing. The humorous play, just one event in the Festival, allowed the local audience a rare and important opportunity to learn about the daily life of Chinese people. The performance, put on by a talented cast of 50 actors and musicians, was

followed by a standing ovation and rave reviews.

Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai opened the evening by greeting the audience and welcoming Chinese Ambassador to Israel Zhao Jun. Jun extended his thanks to the audience and described the social changes presented in the play. Science, Culture and Sport Minister Raleb Majadele, also took the stage, congratulating the theater company and relating that the theme of the play was truly universal and shared by the Israeli experience as well.

Shanghai Special Olympics medal winner

Israel's 39-person delegation to the International Special Olympics returned home from Shanghai, China, with 36 medals - 10 of them gold, 16 silver and 10 bronze.

"The Special Olympics athletes proved to the world that determination, will and faith in one's abilities are the ways to overcome any limitation," said Reuven Samuel, Chairman of the National Association for the Habilitation of the Mentally Handicapped in Israel (AKIM).

The Israeli athletes expressed pride in their accomplishments and confidence that the team would do

even better the next games. Many said their goal in the games had been to "bring pride to Israel."

The returning athletes were greeted by Social Services Minister Yitzhak Herzog, Reuven Samuel, Olympic medal-winning judoka Arik Ze'evi, Olympic medal-winning swimmer Eitan Orbach, basketball player Meir Tefiru and other well known Israeli athlete.



DONATIONS

SOCIAL AID FUND

USA

SAN FRANCISCO

THROUGH THE COURTESY OF THE FAR EASTERN SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

From	Mrs. Asya KOGAN for the Far Eastern Society of San Francisco in memory of her sister Sonia SHIFRIN	US\$	1000
"	Lillie SHRIRO BERK for the frail elderly from China	"	1000
"	Mr. and Mrs. Norman SOSKIN towards the Igud Yotzei Sin Social Aid Fund	"	500
"	Mira and Phil MATERMAN in loving memory of their parents Betty and Jacob LIBERMAN and Dina and Abram MATERMAN	"	100
"	ANONYMOUS in memory of Henry BERK, in honour of a kind and generous man	"	100
"	Mr. and Mrs. Isai KAUFMAN towards the Igud Yotzei Sin Social Aid Fund	"	100

USA

From	Sanford (Sania) and Celia WAINER on the occasion of the Bat Mitzvah of their granddaughter Allison Michelle WAINER	US\$	36
"	Jenny NEMIROVSKY in memory of her husband Nathan NEMIROVSKY	"	30
"	Illo HEPPNER in memory of her husband Ernest HEPPNER on his Yahrzeit	"	20
"	Dora MEDAVOY in memory of her husband Mike MEDAVOY	"	25
"	Michael YANOWITCH in memory of his mother Rachel YANOWITCH	"	150
"	Dora WAINER in memory of Sarah SEGERMAN	"	54
"	Leo WINSTON in memory of his mother Raya VAINSTEIN	"	50

In lieu of flowers

From	Luba TUCK	US\$	180	From	Archie OSSIN	US\$	200
"	Mr. & Mrs. Solly COHEN	"	25	"	Gina STEINBERG	"	200
"	Esther and Paul AGRAN	"	250				

FRANCE

From	Anna OSTROVSKA towards the Igud Yotzei Sin Social Aid Fund	US\$	700
------	--	------	-----

CANADA

From	Frank and Nadia OGNISTOFF in memory of their dear parents Gregory and Mary OGNISTOFF	US\$	500
"	John VAINSTEIN towards the IYS Social Aid Fund	Can\$	50
"	Lydia and Jeannette POLOTSKY in memory of Evsei POLOTSKY	"	50

Annual Appeal

From	Lily FRANK	Can\$	125	From	Lily LIFSHITZ	Can\$	100
"	Ronald KAY	"	500	"	Jeannette POLOTSKY	"	100
"	Mika KERNER	"	500	"	Abe ULAINÉ	"	700
"	Leon LIFSHITZ	"	100	"	Musia WEREK	"	200

AUSTRALIA

From	ANONYMOUS	US\$	1000	From	Mrs Sopha SAKKER	A\$	50
"	Mr. and Mrs David LEVITAN	A\$	4000	"	Asya DEANE	"	50
"	Mr Harry TRIGUBOFF	"	3500	"	Liya GUREVITCH	"	200
"	Jesse and Naomi TRACTON	"	300	"	Mr. and Mrs. Alex SACHTER	"	100
"	Nora FENBOW	"	100	"	Dr. Freida RIGGS	"	200
"	Mr. and Mrs. Moris BRAUN (Melb.)	"	50				

From	Bella SHANNON in memory of her husband George SHANNON	A\$	1000
"	Asya DEANE in memory of Sarah and David FROUMSON	"	200
"	Mrs. A.RAHMAN in memory of her husband Aharon RAHMAN	"	30
"	Mark TROITSIN in memory of her mother Helen TROITSIN on her Yahrzeit	"	25
"	Asya DEANE for two books "The Jews of Harbin live on in my heart" by Teddy Kaufman towards the IYS Social Aid Fund	US\$	54
"	Mr. Harry TRIGUBOFF in memory of his brother Joseph TRAVERS	A\$	200

ISRAEL

From	Danny BERKOVITCH towards the Igud Yotzei Sin Social Aid Fund in memory of late Mussia's and his dear PARENTS	NIS	25000
"	Ella and Adam ALON-GOLDREICH in honour of Teddy KAUFMAN's 83rd Birthday	"	1080
"	Shulamith EVEN in honour of Teddy KAUFMAN's Birthday	"	180
"	Shulamit EVEN in memory of her mother Sarah MORGULEV on the day of her Yahrzeit	"	180
"	Teddy PIASTUNOVICH in memory of his mother Ella PIASTUNOVICH	"	200
"	Jeanne TIKOTSKY in loving memory of her dear mother Mira KANER	"	180
"	Galia PARDO and Orly SCHLIFER-SARUSY in memory of their father Reuven SCHLIFER	"	1000
"	Shalva BRODSKY in loving memory of her dear husband Vova (Vladimir) BRODSKY	"	90
"	Lily FOLAD in memory of her mother Anya ODER	"	500
"	Sophie FUCHS and Musia HENIGSBERG in memory of their dear PERSOFF parents, brothers and sister-in-law	"	500
"	Yakov ROSENBLUM in memory of his father Arie (Leova) ROSENBLUM	"	200
"	Musia ROSENBLUM in memory of her husband Leova ROSENBLUM	"	200
"	Menahem MISHORI, Malka OREN and family in memory of their wife, mother and grandmother Rachel MISHORY on her 6th Yahrzeit	"	180
"	Alina KRINKEVICH in memory of her dear RELATIVES	"	250
"	Isaac DASHINSKY in memory of his cousin Alex KAPLAN and Isador MAGID	"	100
"	Leah BECKER in memory of her husband Moshe BECKER	"	120
"	Maurice BEYAR in memory of his wife Mary BEYAR on her Yahrzeit	"	200
"	Shoshana ARAMA in memory of her mother Bella MIRKIN and Dov (Boris) MIRKIN	"	250
"	Abraham OZRELOVICH in memory of his parents Yuda Abramovich and Rosalia Leontievna OZRELOVICH, sisters and other relatives	"	500
"	Isai PIASTUNOVICH in memory of his wife Haya-Fania Benjaminovna PIASTUNOVICH and her parents Benjamin Isaakovich and Matlia Ionovna KOPILOV	"	300
"	Yona PONIMONSKY in memory of his father-in-law ZIAMA SHIFRIN on the occasion of his Yahrzeit	"	120
"	Sara ROSS in memory of her dear mother-in-law Yevgenia Levovna ROSENBERG	"	100
"	Minia ZEM in memory of his dear PARENTS and wife TAMARA	"	180
"	Esther VANDEL in memory of her husband Willy VANDEL	"	100
"	Aya ROSENBLAT in memory of her husband Moshe ROSENBLAT	"	100
"	Nusia HANIN in loving memory of her dear husband DAVID and daughter NADIA	"	150
"	Nusia HANIN in memory of her dear relatives	"	150
"	Linor LANKIN in memory of her father Eliahu LANKIN on his Yahrzeit	"	500
"	Israel ROSENBLAT in memory of his father Moshe ROSENBLAT	"	180
"	Eva SHAFRAN in memory of her husband Boris SHAFRAN	"	200
"	Judith BAIN in memory of her mother SOPHA KARLICK	"	180
"	Celia MAIMANN in memory of her husband Kurt MAIMANN	"	1000
"	Leonfrid HEIMAN in memory of his uncle Mordechai (Max) HEIMAN	"	100
"	David GOOTMAN in loving memory of his parents Mary Davidovna and Hertz Abramovich GOOTMAN	"	300
"	Ran VEINERMAN in memory of his father Albert VEINERMAN	"	100

In lieu of flowers

From	Mr. & Mrs. T. PIASTUNOVICH	US\$	500	From	Hanna and Shmuel MULLER	NIS	500
"	Dvora ABRAMOVITCH	NIS	100	"	Ilana MUNBLAT	"	100
"	Hasya DVIR	"	100	"	Gabriela NACHTOMI	"	150
"	Shulamith EVEN	"	360	"	Alex NACHUMSON	"	150
"	Reva FREIMAN	"	250	"	Sarah and Shlomo NITZAN	"	200
"	Etti and Meir GINANSKY	"	100	"	Inga and Kurt NUSSBAUM	"	600
"	Dan GOR	"	250	"	Mira and Israel PISETSKY	"	200
"	Jacob GURY	"	200	"	Mali and Eli RAPID	"	50
"	Dafna GURY BEN GARA	"	100	"	Dr. Asnat and Niv REISS	"	100
"	Elia and Dan GODER	"	100	"	Naomi ROLBANT	"	200
"	David GUTMAN	"	200	"	Carmela ROSEN	"	200
"	Moshe HAREL	"	250	"	Judith and Israel SANDEL	"	200
"	Betty HAZAN	"	150	"	Renata SHANY	"	200
"	Eva ISAACS	"	100	"	Edward and Tatiana SHEINGEIT	"	200
"	Ruth and Israel KARNY	"	300	"	Tania SCHLIFER	"	100
"	Prof. Daniel KATZNELSON	"	360	"	Riva SCHMERLING	"	200
"	Tamar and Shmuel KISLEV	"	150	"	Tsipora SCHNEIDERMAN	"	200
"	Sima and Abe KISLEV	"	300	"	Clara SCHWARZBERG	"	360
"	Pnina and Yosef KLEIN	"	360	"	Judith TSUK-RAMON	"	200
"	Frieda KLIPPER	"	150	"	Benny TZUR	"	400
"	Frieda KUPERMAN	"	250	"	Ron VEINERMAN	"	100
"	Joseph LEVOFF	"	300	"	Liora VINER	"	100
"	Moshe and Pnina LICHOMANOV	"	150	"	Lutz WITKOWSKI	"	250
"	Rina and Haim LITVIN	"	300	"	Yosef YAKOBSON	"	100
"	Benjamin LITVIN	"	1000	"	Vera YOSELEVICH	"	100
				"	Aviva and Gershon ZALTSMAN	"	100

SYNAGOGUE FUND

USA

SAN FRANCISCO

THROUGH THE COURTESY OF THE FAR EASTERN SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

From	Mr. and Mrs. Norman SOSKIN for the Synagogue Fund of IYS	US\$	100
"	Mr. and Mrs. Isai KAUFMAN in memory of their PARENTS	"	100

USA

From	Raissa GOLDIN towards the Synagogue Fund for memorial prayer for her son Joseph FRENKEL	US\$	90
------	---	------	----

ISRAEL

From	Shalva BRODSKY in memory of her husband Vova BRODSKY on his Yahrzeit	NIS	90
"	Eva ISAACS towards the Synagogue Fund	"	100
"	Rachel VEKSLER in memory of her husband PAVEL and son RAPHAEL	"	100
"	Riva HOFFMANN in memory of her father Itzhak SOKOL	"	100
"	Michael FLEISCHMANN in memory of his late mother Bertha FLEISCHMANN on the day of her Yahrzeit	"	500
"	Iza and Esther YARCHO in memory of Aharon YARCHO	"	300
"	Tema BLUM in memory of her parents Golda and Moshe ZANTLAUFER	"	180

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

USA

From	Bella RECTOR in memory of her husband JOSEPH towards The Scholarship Fund in memory of Joseph RECTOR	US\$	1000
"	Rose HOROWITZ in memory of Yosef YAAKOV towards The Scholarship Fund in memory of Yosef YAAKOV	"	500

AUSTRALIA

From Lyka KAGANER and family in memory of their dear husband, father-friend and Deda Yasha KAGANER towards The Scholarship Fund in memory of Yasha KAGANER A\$ 250

ISRAEL

From Sarah UMANSKY in memory of her husband Garry UMANSKY towards The Scholarship Fund in memory of Garry UMANSKY NIS 10000

" Rachel RABKIN in memory of her dear parents Elena Yudovna and Simon Izrailevich BERENSTEIN towards The Scholarship Fund in memory of Shulamith NEDER " 90

" Rachel RABKIN in memory of her dear husband Yasha RABKIN towards The Scholarship Fund in memory of Shulamit NEDER " 90

" Rachel RABKIN in memory of her dear sister Jenia ROSENSTEIN towards The Scholarship Fund in memory of Shulamit NEDER " 90

" Rachel RABKIN in memory of her dear niece Shulia NEDER towards The Scholarship Fund in memory of Shulamit NEDER " 90

" Iza and Esther YARCHO in memory of their dear husband and father Aharon YARCHO towards The Scholarship Fund in memory of Aharon Yarcho for the Chinese students in Israel " 500

" Zelda FRIEDMAN and family towards The Scholarship Fund in memory of Yasha KAGANER

NEWS FROM SAN FRANCISCO

On October 14, 2007 the Far Eastern Society of San Francisco celebrated the new election year at the popular Chinese Restaurant "Peking". This lunch was complimentary in honor of our members. The President opened this meeting by asking a minute of silence in memory of Leo May Bella Kaptzan Henry Berk There was no re-election because the members requested the previous Board to serve another year and the Board accepted this request. The only change was promotion of Mr. A. Aronovsky to the position of First Vice-President.

The President, Mr. I. Kaufman, informed all those present of the achievements of our organization for the past years and thanked the members for their cooperation. Mrs. G. Katzeff, Hon. Secretary of F.E.S., complimented Mr. Kaufman as being a very active President, achieving any financial donations from different sources which, eventually, are transferred to Igud Yotzei Sin of Israel. He deserves to be recognized and, therefore, on behalf of all the members of our organization is presented and awarded with an honorable PLAQUE that describes his devotion and achievements.

After the presentation the President was given a loud applause. Mrs. Katzeff also thanked Mrs. Olga Kaufman, the wife of the President, who is of great help to our organization. She is also known as a specialist in baking cookies for dessert after lunch. The Lunch was a very pleasant affair when friends meet friends, exchange family news. May God bless us all, give us good health to continue our work and friendships and to help those that need help.

G. Katzeff

IN MEMORIAM

Isabelle Zimmerman - Maynard

On July 1st, 2007, Isabelle Maynard, a very dear friend of mine, passed away in San Francisco at the age of 78, after bravely and spiritedly fighting a protracted illness. Isabelle was born to Abe and Sonia Zimmerman in Tientsin, China. I too was born in that city and when I first met her, she was a very grown-up 17 year-old, bubbling with life and dreams of the future. Even then she had wanted to be both a writer and a painter. In fact, she eventually became both. When she came to San Francisco after the war, however, she knew she had to work and help provide for herself and her parents. So, she worked and studied persistently until she graduated from Berkeley University as a social worker.

By the time she retired, she had reached a high rank in her profession, giving comfort and good advice to hundreds of poor and ill patients in the vast area under her supervision. At the same time, throughout all those years, she kept on developing her passion for creative writing, painting and playing the piano. This I had the privilege and pleasure of witnessing this whenever I visited her on my journeys in the United States. Indeed,



she succeeded in having many short stories published and paintings exhibited. She also wrote plays which were staged. Some years ago she wrote a book called "China Dreams: Growing up Jewish in Tientsin." I believe it may be of interest to anyone who has had the experience of living in China before

and after World War II. In addition, she contributed some of her stories to the Bulletin of Igud Yotzei Sin.

Isabelle was small and fragile physically but powerful and abundant in her spirit and love of life and the people surrounding her. She was very close to her family who adored her. Nothing I can add will illustrate this better than her own last words which I received by e-mail just a few days before she succumbed to her illness: "Glad you are feeling better. My spirits also soar at times and I think I can do anything and everything. But not today – when I feel nauseous, etc. Still plan to go swimming – always helps as does working on my art – Did several more paintings this week" Long will she be missed by her daughter Judy, her grandchildren Cassie and Ben and all her relatives and friends who loved her.

Tanya Prish

Henry Berk

In San Francisco, passed away Henry Berk (Oxenber), formerly of Harbin, where he belonged to a well known Zionist social worker family of Yaakov Oxenberg. In 1939, Henry left Harbin to settle in San Francisco, USA. He was married to Lili Shiro, nee Dmitrovsky.

All his life Henry actively participated in the work of the Far Eastern Association, of which he was a vice president.

Igud Yotzei Sin deeply mourns Henry's passing away and expresses their heartfelt sympathy to Lily and family.

May his memory be blessed!

Kurt Maimann

On September 5, passed away our countryman, Kurt Maimann, formerly of Shanghai (Hongkew) The burial ceremony, which took place on Sept. 6 at the Holon cemetery was attended by numerous friends from China. Kurt was lauded for his life-time faithful social work by the chairman of the Association of the Austrian Immigrants in Israel, Gid'on Eckhaus and the Chairman of the Igud Yotzei Sin, Teddy Kaufman. R. and T. Kaufman placed a wreath of flowers on his grave in the name of IYS.

Kurt succeeded by his wife, Celia. May his memory be blessed!

**Rabbi Eliyahu Broide,
the Rabbi of the Synagogue in Memory of the Jewish Communities of China,
passed away on November 14, 2007. May his memory be blessed!**

**Dov Shamir (Boba Shmerling)
of Harbin and Tianjin
passed away on November 11, 2007. May his memory be blessed!**

Henry Berk

August 29, 2007

Rabbi's speech at the grave-site Henry Berk spoke the language of his birth, Polish. He spoke the language of his youth, Russian. He spoke the language of his spiritual fathers, Hebrew. He spoke the language of his exile in Harbin, China, Chinese. He spoke the language of his internment, Japanese. And he spoke the language of his liberation, English. And more...

He spoke the language of kindness with his every deed. He spoke the language of goodness with his every generous and compassionate act. He spoke the language of love with his every embrace, his every gentle word, with his every openhearted gesture of welcome and with every expression of concern for another's well-being.

Henry was the first American to set

foot in Hiroshima after the Atomic bomb destroyed the city, changed and challenged the world and ended the war in the Pacific. He translated the terms of Japanese surrender for the US.

He translated the Treaty of Peace between the allied nations and Japan. He was there standing in the throws of history.

And he did make history... as a good man, sweet and loving, as a devoted husband to Bernice and then to his love, Lillie. He was a father to Linda and Mark and a grand father to Carly, Nick and Teddy and to Charles-Eugene and Marie-Anya. He was steady and sure, strong and stoic. He was a good friend and advocate. He was charitable and involved in Jewish causes. He was interested in the world and in the history he lived through. He was family, he

believed in its saving grace and in its power to soften the blows dealt by circumstance.

And now, Henry Beck has returned to the Great Shalom. He is at peace, this little peace treaty maker. He is at ease. He rests the rest eternal. The Mystery so vast and profound has reached out, gathered him in and offered him a place among the righteous. His tasks are complete. Someone else will build and design a nuclear sub, someone else will travel to keep family ties closely woven, someone else will have the strength and the will to vacation in romantic Italy. Others will walk and talk or look or think or experience a similar awe at the twists and turns of history unfurrowing its stars and stripes, but no one else as passionately. Shalom, Henry, Shalom...forever and ever.

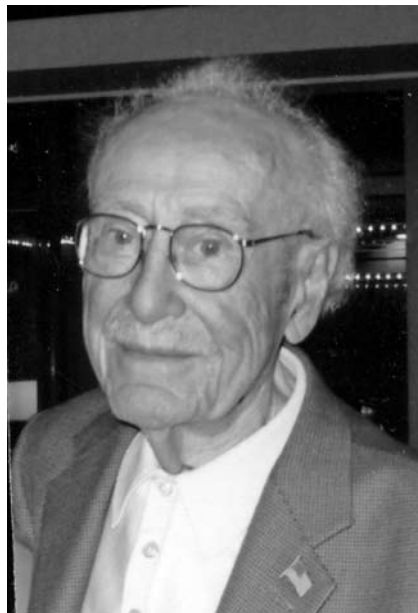
78

HENRY BERK

I lost one of my best friends. We were friends since we were 10 years old.

I was born in Harbin, China and Henry was born in Perm, Russia but he spent most of his adolescent life in Harbin. We finished High School in 1936 and Henry left for San Francisco. I arrived in San Francisco in 1939. Henry and another friend from Harbin met me in port. I stayed with Henry one month in his room and then I left to Los Angeles where another good friend from Harbin lived.

I had different jobs in Los Angeles but decided to return to San Francisco



where I rented room about two blocks from Henry. We used to see each other almost dally. We even, once in a while, splurges go to the nice French restaurant to have Sunday dinner was 50 cents and we could not afford it too of offer.

Both of us served in the Armed Services - Henry in Orient and I in Europe.

Our friendship continued until the day Henry left us.....

Henry was gentle and generous man and liked by those who knew him. Henry was my good friend and I will always remember him.

Isai Kaufman

Memorial Service in honor of the Hailar Jews, massacred by the Japanese at the end of the WW2

On August 18, at the Memorial Synagogue dedicated to the Jewish communities in China, a commemorative service (azkara) took place in honor of the 12 Jews (names

, in alphabetical order of the family names of the victims), residents of Hailar, massacred by the Japanese soldiers on August 9, 1945, five days before the end of the Second World

War.

The ceremony was arranged by the Friedman family, formerly of Hailar. Present at the Azkara were the families of the victims.

Leo Boris May

April 28, 1911 - July 17, 2007

Born Leo Madorsky, son of Eva and Boris Madorsky, in Harbin, China, he lived there with his extended family, including his father, brother, aunt, uncle and cousins. In 1930 he graduated from high school and left China to study at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. After one year there he transferred to the University of California in Berkeley, California, where he made many friends and received his B.A. degree in Mathematics in 1936.

After graduation, he moved to San Francisco and worked as an accountant, shipyard worker (during World War II) and postal worker. In 1941 he married Esfir (Fira) Levin (also of Harbin, China) and they raised three daughters in San Francisco.

After working at the U.S. Postal

Service for many years, he retired in 1976 and spent his time reading, gardening and traveling (he visited France, Italy, Spain, Israel and Australia, as well as many places within the United States). Leo was not only an avid traveler, but also a voracious reader, stamp collector and gardener, film and concert goer, lover of nature and good food. He and Fira were supporters of the Fine Arts Museums, the Academy of Sciences, the San Francisco Public Library, the Far Eastern Society (a worldwide association of Russian former residents of Manchuria), and many other cultural organizations.

After Fira died in 2004, he spent his last years at Coventry Park, a retirement home in San Francisco, where the warm, loving staff took excellent care of him.

Leo was predeceased by his devoted wife Fira, daughter Naomi Stauss,

brother Mara and sister-in-law Yvonne, as well as many cousins. He is survived by loving daughters Nadine May (Enrique Tevar), and Ruth (and William) Maginnis, and by granddaughter Sarah Maginnis (Dennis Willis), great-grandson Daniel Willis, his brother-in-law John Levin, nephew David Levin (Ruth Auerbach and Matthew Levin) (all of San Francisco), his adored niece Lia Madorsky and her children Alessandro and Emmanuela (in Italy), cousins Nusia Hanin of Israel, Irving Glusker (Lillian) of New York, and Leon, Evelyn and Larry Mason, and many other friends and relatives throughout the world.

Memorial gifts can be made to the Igud Yotzei Sin Aid Fund, Oxfam, International Rescue Committee, Amnesty International, or a charity of your choice.

Mina Krimchansky - at 91

On October 22, in Giv'at Shmuel, passed away Mina Krimchansky (nee Shneider), at the age of 91. Numerous family members and many friends came to accompany to her last place of rest. She was eulogized by T. Kaufman who stressed her having been a cultured woman, a patriot and a pedagogue.

Mina is survived by two sons, Dr. Bengi Krimchansky and Israel Karni, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was laid to rest next to the grave of her husband Mark (Monia) Krimchansky. Rasha and Teddy Kaufman laid a wreath of flower on her grave on behalf of IGUD YOTSEI SIN..

IN MEMORY OF MINA KRIMCHANSKY

Another of our dear fellow-countrymen from China has passed away – Mina Krimchansky.

Mina was of the dor khalutzei ha-alyia (generation of pioneer immigrants) from China at the very beginning of the 1950's. She came

to Harbin with her parents from Russia when she was just three years of age. In 1925, her family moved to Tientsin, where she attended the Tientsin Jewish school and was an active member of the Zionist youth movement Brit Trumpeldor (Betar). There she met her husband Mark (Monya) Krimchansky, the son of the famous Tientsin cantor, Yakov Izraelevich Krimchansky. Mina and Monya were known as the "Tientsin's most handsome couple". Soon they were the parents of two sons, Israel (Sana) and Benzion (Benzi).

The Krimchanskys came to the newly established State of Israel and settled, first at the agricultural settlement Sukhmata in the Western Galilee, and some time later – at the Shikun Olim in Naharyia. Those were difficult years of integration, but Mina bravely and patiently navigated the straits, assisted by Monya and the family. Some time later they moved to Giv'at Shmuel, where Monya passed away a few years ago.

The sons have a successful career: Benzi, now Dr. Benzion

Krimchansky, is a deputy director of one of Israel's largest medical centers, Bet Levenstein of Kfar Saba; Sani worked for many years at the Neshet Cement conglomerate. The family grew. Mina, having had a versatile upbringing and education, had a long career of a teacher. At the age of 80, she organized a workshop for ceramics for the local children, and many adults attended it as well. She was loved not only by her grandchildren and great grandchildren, but also by her pupils and children at large, or anyone who ever had a chance to associate with her. She had just finished writing a book of her memoirs, which, if published, may be an interesting documentation of her life in China and the early Israel.

Just a year ago, we congratulated her on her 90th birthday, and today - covered her with the earth of the land she loved so much.

Mina's truly luminous personality will be remembered long by all who ever crossed ways with her.

Teddy Kaufman

In loving memory of my dear husband

Henry (Oxenberg) BERK

who passed away on August 26th, 2007

He is dearly missed by our adoring grandchildren

Carly, Nicholas and Teddy SCHENK.

Also by Marie Anya and Charies SHRIRO.

He was "grandpa" to all of them.

Henry was a good, considerate man, who will never be forgotten.

Loving wife LILLIE

The BOARD of GOVERNORS and MEMBERS of the FAR EASTERN SOCIETY of SAN FRANCISCO are saddened by the passing of their lifelong devoted member of the Board of Governors

Henry BERK

and express sincere condolences to LILLIE and family

We are saddened by the passing of our dear lifelong friend

Henry BERK

and express our heartfelt condolences to LILLIE and family

Olga and Isai KAUFMAN

We are deeply saddened by the death of our friend

Henry BERK

and extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife LILLIE

Flora and Bob FREIMAN,
RIVA, MIRIAM and PETER

Raya BERGMAN (Gusinskaya), Shalom NITZAN (Monya Nemchenko) and Michael FLEISCHMAN are greatly saddened by the passing away of our classmate and dear friend

Henry BERK (Zhenya Oxenberg)

Our heartfelt sympathy to LILLIE and relatives

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our dear friend

Henry BERK

and express our heartfelt condolences to dear LILLIE and family

Jose BEERBRAYER

Stassia FELDMAN

Nita JUELICH

Mark KAPTZAN

Gutia KATZEFF

David KIACHKO

Lea and Yaacov LIBERMAN

Louise OSTROFF

Aron SLOUSTCHER

Haruko and Norman SOSKIN

Nina STERN

Dorothy and Victor STERN

Mira TARNOPOLSKY

Mina VITLIN

We are greatly saddened by the passing of dear

Henry BERK

Our heartfelt condolences to our lifelong friend LILLIE and her family

Bella RECTOR
Eda SHVETZ
Helen KAPTSAN
Frances GREENBERG

We deeply mourn the passing away of

Henry BERK

in San Francisco, an old friend and classmate from Harbin, China,
and express our condolences to his wife LILLIE.
Our friendship continued for all the years since we left China
and he will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Al and Dorothy RAYSON
Montreal, Canada

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our dear friend

Henry BERK

and extend our heartfelt sympathy to dearest LILLIE and family

Bella and Larry BERKOVITCH
Janie and Dan WISSBAUM
Rissia, Zvi, Brigitte, Zeev and Nancy IONIS
Bella IONIS SORREN

The BOARD of DIRECTORS of IGUD YOTZEI SIN
is saddened by the passing of

Henry BERK (OXENBERG)

The first vice-president of the Far Eastern Society of San-Francisco
and extend heartfelt sympathy to LILLIE and family

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our dear friend

Henry BERK

and extend our heartfelt sympathy to LILLIE and family

Rasha and Teddy KAUFMAN

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our cousin

Ben BOREVITZ

and extend our condolences to IRENE, BRADLEY, CHAIM, RICHIE and
families.

Your loving cousins The MOISEEFFS
SIDLINES and HERMANS

The BOARD of DIRECTORS of IGUD YOTZEI SIN
and the COMMITTEE of ISRAEL-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY
are saddened by the passing of our dear member

Eva ISAACS

and extend heartfelt sympathy to her family

It is with great sorrow we announce the passing of

Mina KRIMCHANSKY

on October 22, 2007, aged 91 years

She was always there for us and will be loved and missed eternally

Sons Israel KARNY & Benzi KRIMCHANSKY

Daughters-in-law Ruth KARNY & Zipi KRIMCHANSKY

Grandchildren Anit, Itay, Onn KARNY

Oren, Shavit, Dor KRIMCHANSKY

Great grandchildren Neil, Liam, Arin Miran,

Mark, Shein, Daniel, Olivia, Natali

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our dear friend

Mina KRIMCHANSKY

and express our heartfelt condolences to her CHILDREN and
GRANDCHILDREN

Nusia HANIN

STERNBERG family

HANIN family

Betya HAZAN

The BOARD of DIRECTORS of IGUD YOTZEI SIN
is saddened by the passing of

Mina KRIMCHANSKY

and extend heartfelt sympathy to her family

Alina KRINKEVITCH is deeply saddened by the death of very dear friend
Mina KRIMCHANSKY
and expresses her heartfelt condolences and deep sympathy
to BENZI and SANI with the families

With great sadness we mourn the passing
of our beloved husband, father and grandfather

David FRIEDMAN

who passed away on 4th of November, 2007

He will forever live in our hearts

Zelda FRIEDMAN
DAUGHTERS and their families

Together with ZELDA, IRIT, SARIT and their families we grieve the passing
of our dear brother-in-law and lifelong friend

David FRIEDMAN

May he rest in peace

Lyka KAGANER and family

Cecilia and Leonid LYUBMAN are saddened by the passing of
David FRIEDMAN
and extend deepest sympathy to ZELDA and daughters IRIT and SARIT
with their families

David and Stella UDOVITCH, Ira LEVINSKAIA, Lyka ONIKUL, Isaac ROGOVOY are deeply saddened by the passing of their dear friend

David FRIEDMAN

and extend heartfelt condolences to ZELDA and family

Inna and Alec MOUSTAFINE, Mara MOUSTAFINE, Andrew JAKUBOWICZ and Ronia ONYKUL are deeply saddened by the passing of our dear friend

David FRIEDMAN

and extend our heartfelt condolences to dear ZELDA, IRIT and SARIT and their families

We are very saddened by the death of

David FRIEDMAN

and express our deepest sympathy to ZELDA and family

Rasha and Teddy KAUFMAN

Aya ROSENBLATT

Rivka and Emanuel INGERMAN

Shalva BRODSKY

Genia OLSHEVSKY

The BOARD of DIRECTORS of IGUD YOTZEI SIN
is saddened by the passing of

David FRIEDMAN

and extend heartfelt sympathy to ZELDA and family

We mourn the loss of

Leo Boris MAY (MADORSKY)

on July 17, 2007 in San Francisco, California

His daughters Nadine MAY and Ruth MAGGINNIS,
his granddaughter Sarah MAGINNIS,
his great grandson Daniel WILLIS,
his niece Lia MADORSKY and her children SASHA and EMMA

The BOARD of GOVERNORS and MEMBERS of the FAR EASTERN
SOCIETY of SAN FRANCISCO are saddened by the passing
of their lifelong devoted member of the Board of Governors

Leo MAY

and express sincere condolences to NADINE, RUTH and families

We mourn the passing of our longtime friend

Leo MAY

and express our sincere condolences to NADINE, RUTH and families

Lillie BERK

Louise OSTROFF

Gutia KATZEFF

Nina STERN

Olga and Isai KAUFMAN

I mourn the passing of my dear cousin
Leo MAY (MADORSKY)
and divide the sorrow with his daughters RUTI and NADINE
and his niece Lia MADORSKY
Niusia HANIN (Madorsky)

The BOARD of DIRECTORS of IGUD YOTZEI SIN
and the COMMITTEE of ISRAEL-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY
are saddened by the passing of our dear member

Kurt MAIMANN

and extend heartfelt sympathy to his wife CELIA

We are very saddened by the death of our dear friend

Paulina TRIBE

and express our deepest condolences to ALEX, LARRY and their families

Raissa GOLDIN
Golda LAZAROVICH and family
Mary and Walter WOLFF and family

We grieve the passing of our dear friend

Paulina TRIBE

and express our sincere condolences to Laurence and Alexander TRIBE,
Hilia RIVKIN, Mifa JACOBI and their families

Bella BERKOVITCH	Isai and Olga KAUFMAN
Olga INKER	Irene RINNENBERG
Mark KAPTZAN	Mina VITLIN

With great sadness in our hearts we announce the passing
of our dearest mother

Vera MESTER

who left us peacefully in her sleep on September, 20, 2007
Beloved wife of the late EFIM, she will be terribly missed
by her loving daughter IRENE and son SOL (MONYA)
We love you, Mom.

We deeply mourn the passing of our dear friend

Vera MESTER

and express our deepest sympathy to IRENE and SOL (MONYA)
Deep in our hearts her memory is kept to love, cherish and never forget

Mary DIAKOV

Lily FRANK

Edith and Nick JAVID

Mika KERNER

Lois KRUPKA and Martin PERSKY

Lily and Dov LIFSCHITZ

Musya LUXENBERG and family

Carlotta MEEROVITCH

Hisya PITTEL

Ellie and Mel SANDLER

Sandra SOUCCAR

Olga VASHERMAN

Abe ULAINÉ

**AMBASSADOR OF CHINA ZHAO JUN AT THE GRAVE OF DR. JACOB ROSENFELD,
COMMANDER OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY OF CHINA AND CHIEF OF
THE MEDICAL CORPS OF THE 4th and 8th ARMIES OF CHINA**

Tel Aviv. At the Kiryat Shaul Cemetery on September 24, 2007



The Ambassador of China at the tombstone of Dr. J. Rosenfeld



The Ambassador of China lays a wreath on the grave of Dr. J. Rosenfeld



T. Kaufman recites a prayer



At the grave of J. Rosenfeld: the Counselor of the Embassy Zhang Xiao'an, Ambassador Zhao Jun, R. Veinerman, Military Attache Liu Xianyou and the officials of the Embassy



R. Veinerman lays a wreath on the grave of Dr. J. Rosenfeld

THE AMBASSADOR OF CHINA IN THE SYNAGOGUE IN MEMORY OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF CHINA



Torahs from Harbin in the Holy Ark



"Aron Kodesh" – the Holy Ark



The Ambassador near the memorial plaque in memory of Dr. J. Rosenfeld



The Gabai of the synagogue Shalom Shpilman recites a prayer for the prosperity of the President and the people of China. Near him is Gabai Eliezer Shibek



In the synagogue during the prayer



Yossi Klein talks about the Jewish communities of China at the cultural center of the synagogue near the marble map of the Jewish communities of China