



# Bulletin

## Igud Yotzei Sin

Association of Former Residents of China

August-September 2011 ♦ Vol 58 ♦ Issue No. 405 English Supplement

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## REUNION OF FORMER RESIDENTS OF TIANJIN AT "BEIT PONVE"

### MAY 4, 2011



*T. Kaufman talks about the Jewish Community of Tianjin*



*Sam Muller speaks about the Tianjin Synagogue*



*Former residents of Tianjin in the hall of "Beit Ponve"*

# AT THE RESIDENCE OF THE AMBASSADOR OF CHINA

May 30, 2011



*Countrymen coming to the reception*



*Ambassador Zhao Jun preparing barbecue*



*Entertainment was a success*



*With China's Ambassador at his residence in Kfar Shmaryahu*

**T. Kaufman**

## **NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS!**

On the 26th of September, Jewish people in Israel and across the Diaspora will celebrate the beginning of the year 5,772 in accordance with the Hebrew calendar. Let us hope and have faith that this New Year will bring peace and prosperity to our country and to all Jews throughout the world.

Happy New Year dear friends; a year of peace to all former residents of China.

## **60 [1951 - 2011]**

October 2011 will see the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel [Hebrew - Igud Yotzei Sin]. Without a doubt this is a most significant date in the history of the Jews of China.

Many years have passed since that day and thanks to contributions from our friends in Israel and elsewhere around the world as well as the dedication of the association's members in Israel and abroad, we have managed to carry on with our community work for the benefit of our members and friends.

The work of the association throughout its 60 years of existence has focus primarily on these three aspects - helping the needy amongst the former residents of China in Israel, building and maintaining the links with the next generation of China's Jewish ex-pats and the preservation of our past. The needy number some 60 people at present - lonely, elderly and in poor health. The students - children, grand children and great grand children of China's ex-pats - are awarded some 150 academic scholarships each year in a ceremony which takes place during Hanukkah. The total number of scholarship recipients since the founding of the

association stands at around 4,000 individuals.

"Bulletin", the association's periodical which is published in three languages - Hebrew, Russian and English is our way of preserving our past as does our archive and the Memorial Synagogue for the Jewish Communities of China located in Tel Aviv. The association also supports the centre for the Jewish History Research Institutes in Harbin, Shanghai, Kaifeng and Shandong. We publish books in Hebrew, Russian, English and Chinese dealing with the history of the Jews in China and the last, yet by no means the easiest of our tasks - the training of staff from amongst our members who would carry on with the association's community work.

In addition to the above there are the institutes who owe their very existence to the Association of Former Jewish Residents of China in Israel - Ponve House in Tel Aviv, Israel and the memorial synagogues for the Jewish communities in China, The Jewish cemetery in Harbin, the only one remaining of all the Jewish cemeteries in China and the Museums of Jewish History in Harbin as well as in Shanghai.

The customary blessing for longevity is "till 120!"... We have already passed the half way mark. Let us hope that the path to the preservation of the Jewish past in China will continue.

## **50 [1961 - 2011]**

September this year will see the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Memorial Synagogue for the Jewish Communities in China located at 31, Ha'Golan Street, Tel Aviv. The synagogue was built following the transfer of funds to the embassy of Israel in Bern, Switzerland by the

Shanghai municipal authorities along with China's foreign relations ministry in compensation for the Shanghai synagogue which was pulled down to make way for newly built roads.

The monies received were not adequate for the construction of the new synagogue in Tel Aviv but thanks to Igud Yotzei Sin and the generous donation of the Ponve family and many of China's Jewish ex-pats in Israel and abroad a fund was established.

On a site allocated by the Tel Aviv Municipal Council, the synagogue and cultural centre was built. It is there that the Association's archives are kept. The area acquired the name "The Shanghai Skikun" as some 60 residential units were built for China's Jewish ex-pats. Today only 4 ex-pat families remain on the estate but the synagogue is still the focal point of the neighbourhood though verily, services are held only on Saturday and all other Jewish festivals. A memorial plaque is on display at the synagogue bearing the names of all the departed Jewish ex-pats of China. Not long ago we marked the 60th anniversary of the death of A.M. Kissilev, the former Chief Rabbi to the Far East, China and Harbin.

The Memorial Synagogues for the Jewish Communities in China is a fitting monument to our past. All Chinese dignitaries and Chinese envoys on official sojourn to Israel as well as many local guests pay a visit to our Synagogue.

We offer our sincere thanks to all those who volunteer to keep and maintain the Synagogue.

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*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*

*"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)*

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**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

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# ברכות לראש השנה

## NEW YORK

The Board of Directors of Igud Yotzei Sin  
sends its sincere Holiday greetings to the

### COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN FAR-EASTERN SOCIETY, INC. IN NEW YORK

HONORARY MEMBER OF I.Y.S.  
AND WISHES MUCH HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY TO ALL ITS MEMBERS AND TO ALL  
FAR-EASTERNERS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THE ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP OF THE NEW YORK AMERICAN FAR-EASTERN SOCIETY, INC.

EXTEND THEIR GREETINGS  
FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY AND BEST WISHES  
TO IGUD YOTZEI SIN  
AND TO ALL FAR-EASTERNERS IN ISRAEL  
AND ABROAD

**BELLA RECTOR**

WISHES A HAPPY HOLIDAY  
TO HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS

# ברכות לראש השנה

## NEW YORK

**DORA & JOE WAINER**

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY  
TO ALL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

**ANGELICA AND MICHAEL KLEBANOFF**

HAPPY HOLIDAY AND BEST WISHES TO OUR RELATIVES  
AND FRIENDS

**ROSE AND NORMAN PEISER  
SUSAN AND MARK BRITANISKY**

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

# ברכות לראש השנה

**NEW YORK**

**MRS. LUBA TUCK AND FAMILY**

**WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO OUR RELATIVES  
AND FRIENDS**

**HAPPY HOLIDAY AND BEST WISHES  
TO OUR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS**

**MRS. EDA SHVETZ AND FAMILY**

**TANIA & ROBERT MATERMAN  
AND SON AVRAHAM YAACOV**

**EXTEND BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO ALL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS**

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# ברכות לראש השנה

## LOS ANGELES

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF IGUD YOTZEI SIN  
EXTENDS ITS SINCERE HOLIDAY GREETINGS  
AND BEST WISHES TO THE HONORARY REPRESENTATIVE OF IGUD YOTZEI SIN IN L.A.,  
MRS. MIRA MRANTZ  
AND TO ALL  
THE FAR-EASTERNERS IN LOS ANGELES

**RAISSA GOLDIN**

HAPPY HOLIDAY TO ALL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

**MIRA MRANTZ**

HOLIDAY GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES TO ALL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

**YANA LIBERMAN & FAMILY**

WISHING IGUD YOTZEI SIN, PRESIDENT KAUFMAN,  
CO-WORKERS AND ALL FRIENDS A VERY HAPPY ROSH HASHANA

# ברכות לראש השנה

## LOS ANGELES

**AARON (BILLY) BELOKAMEN**

WISHES ALL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS A HAPPY HOLIDAY

## NEW YORK

**DORA (nee VIDUMSKY) and GABE LEE  
and FAMILY**

Happy holiday to all relatives and friends

# בדכות לראש השנה

## LOS ANGELES

### PETER BERTON AND FAMILY

SEND THEIR HEARTFELT BEST WISHES TO FRED HEYMAN  
AND REISS FAMILIES, DODIK GOOTMAN, RASHA  
AND TEDDY KAUFMAN AND ALL OTHER FRIENDS IN ISRAEL

### MARK and CLARA LEEF

4008-3F CALLE SONNORA, LAGUNA WOODS, CA 92637

### JOE MRANTZ

WISHES ALL HIS FRIENDS AND FAMILY A HAPPY HOLIDAY

## TORRANCE

Memory of Shanghailander Robert Goldman

Love from Faith, Sam and Naomi

# ברכות לראש השנה

## LOS ANGELES

TO HONOR OUR PARENTS

MAX AND MOLLY SAMSON

&

BEN AND VERA BERG

DOLORES & ROGER BERG

# ברכות לראש השנה

## LOS ANGELES

**ALL GOOD WISHES FOR ROSH-HASHANA  
TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS  
RENEE AND ABE FRANK**

**HAPPY HOLIDAY AND BEST WISHES TO ALL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS**

**GOLDA LAZAROVICH**

**DAUGHTER ESTHER AND JACK**

**GRANDCHILDREN ROBERT, LEON & REBECCA**

**GREGORY HODSON  
AND FAMILY**

**WISH ALL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS A HAPPY HOLIDAY**

**BETTY LIAS**

**TO ALL MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY A VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY**

**MARY WOLFF AND FAMILY**

**HAPPY HOLIDAY TO ALL OUR FRIENDS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

# בדכות לראש השנה

## LOS ANGELES

HAPPY HOLIDAY TO ALL FRIENDS AND FAMILY  
**DORA, VERONICA, MIKE AND ALL THE MEDAVOYS**

HAPPY HOLIDAY TO ALL FRIENDS AND FAMILY  
**LEOPOLD and GRACE BORODOVSKY**

WE WISH OUR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

A HEALTHY AND HAPPY HOLIDAY

**ILANA RICHMOND**

CHILDREN: RENEE, DAVID

GRANDCHILDREN: ANDREA, JERICCA, REBECCA,

SARAH, TARYN ELISABETH and DILLEN JAMES

GREAT GRANDCHILD: PARKER GRACE

## FLORIDA

A HAPPY AND HEALTHY ROSH-HASHANA

**SANFORD (SANYA) and CELIA WAINER**

**JERRY EVELYN and JOSH ROTHMAN**

**ANDREW GAIL and ALISON WAINER**

**KENNY BRETT and ELLIE ROSENBERG**

# ברכות לראש השנה

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THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF IGUD YOTZEI SIN  
SENDS ITS SINCERE HOLIDAY GREETINGS TO  
ISAI KAUFMAN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE FAR-EASTERN ASSOCIATION  
IN SAN-FRANCISCO, THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND ALL THE  
FORMER RESIDENTS OF CHINA IN SAN FRANCISCO  
AND WISHES THEM MUCH HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY

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**TO IGUD YOTZEI SIN**  
AND TO ALL FAR-EASTERNERS IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD

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EXTEND THEIR HOLIDAY GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES  
TO ALL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

HOLIDAY GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS  
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# ברכות לראש השנה

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EXTENDS HER BEST WISHES TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

FOR A HAPPY AND HEALTHY HOLIDAY AND PEACE

**HARUKO AND NORMAN SOSKIN**

HOLIDAY GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES TO ALL RELATIVES

AND FRIENDS

HAPPY HOLIDAY TO ALL FRIENDS AND FAMILY

**ARON SLOUSCHTER**

A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO MY CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, RELATIVES & FRIENDS

**GUTIA KATZEFF**



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SINCERE WISHES FOR A VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY  
TO OUR DEAR FRIEND

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THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**ASYA KOGAN & FAMILY**

WISH THE BEST OF HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND

PEACE

TO ALL THE RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

**WITH LOVE**

# ברכות לראש השנה

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**DAVID & FREDERIQUE FAMILIANT**

WISH ALL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS A HAPPY ROSH-HASHANA

MONTE-CARLO

dafaco.david@gmail.com

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FROM IGUD YOTZEI SIN

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FROM

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**BEST WISHES FROM  
LILY LIFSHITZ**

**BEST WISHES TO ALL OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY FROM  
MIKA KERNER (HMELNITSKY) and  
DANIELLA KERNER (LECHTZIN & FAMILY)**

**MAY PEACE, HEALTH AND HAPPINESS BE WITH ALL OF US**

# בדכות לראש השנה

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**MARY BLOCH  
AND FAMILY**

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO ALL  
RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

**DAVID DORFMAN & FAMILY**

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO ALL  
RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

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17 FOXBURY CLOSE  
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WARM GREETINGS TO MY DEAR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

**ALEX FAIMAN**

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## AUSTRALIA

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SENDS TO OUR HONORARY REPRESENTATIVES

**JESSE & NAOMI TRACTON**

AND TO ALL FAR-EASTERNS IN AUSTRALIA

SINCERE GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES

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TO

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Ms. Bronia Scheer  
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DARLING POINT, N.S.W. 2027

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H. RIVKIN & family  
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PYMBLE N.S.W.2073

Mr. & Mrs.  
H. TRIGUBOFF  
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VAUCLUSE N.S.W.2030

Mrs. Hanna Stern  
& family  
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2026 N.S.W.

Mr.& Mrs.  
R. TSUKASOFF and MARK  
18, The Esplanade  
DRUMMOYNE N.S.W 2047

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CASTLECRAG N.S.W.2068

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Jesse and Naomi TRACTON  
Ian, Kim, Michelle, Avi  
and Family  
2 Oakes Place  
NORTH BONDI N.S.W.

Ms. Mara Moustafine  
and Mr. Andrew Jakubovitz  
  
1/155 Brook Street  
Coogee NSW 2034

Mr. & Mrs.  
G. VORON & Sons  
2, Griffin Ave  
EAST ROSEVILLE  
N.S.W. 2069 2070

Mrs.  
J. VINSON & family  
  
P.O.Box357  
TOORAK Vic 3142

Mr.& Mrs.  
Alec and Inna Moustafine  
  
4/3 Alexander Street  
Coogee, NSW 2034

## SWITZERLAND

BEST WISHES TO ALL OUR FRIENDS FOR A HAPPY ROSH-HASHANA

FROM

**ELIZABETH DICHNE  
CHILDREN MOTI, YAEL AND SABRINA  
AND GRANDCHILDREN  
ITAMAR, DANA, OHAD, ADI AND AYELET**

IT WOULD BE WONDERFUL TO HEAR FROM OUR FRIENDS,  
WE CAN BE CONTACTED BY E-MAIL, OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS IS: [disabrina@yahoo.com](mailto:disabrina@yahoo.com)

## MONROE TOWNSHIP, NJ

**CHAG SAMEACH FROM GUITA, EUGENE BASOVITCH AND FAMILY  
WISHING ALL OUR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS ALL OVER THE WORLD**

A HAPPY HOLIDAY



# ברכות לראש השנה

## ISRAEL

### **RASHA AND TEDDY KAUFMAN**

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO THEIR RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND  
ALL FORMER RESIDENTS OF CHINA IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD

### **YOSSI KLEIN AND FAMILY**

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS  
IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD

A HAPPY HOLIDAY AND BEST WISHES TO  
RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

### **RAN (RONNY) VEINERMAN AND FAMILY**

### **NATALIA AND SEVA PODOLSKY**

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY  
TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD

### **ESTHER VANDELL**

SENDS GREETINGS TO ALL RELATIVES  
AND FRIENDS

### **GALIA VOLOBRINSKY-KATZ AND FAMILY**

SEND THEIR BEST WISHES FOR THE HOLIDAY  
TO THEIR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD

# ברכות לראש השנה

## ISRAEL

BEST WISHES TO MY FRIENDS  
IN ISRAEL & OVERSEAS  
ABRAHAM FRADKIN

RACHEL AND YONAH KLIGMAN  
SEND HEARTY WISHES OF GOOD HEALTH AND SUCCESS  
TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

BETTY HAZAN  
SENDS GREETINGS FOR THE HOLYDAYS  
TO FRIENDS AND RELATIVES  
WITH LOVE

# ברכות לראש השנה

## ISRAEL

**ILANA AND GIORA LESK, CARMELA MADPIS  
AND FAMILIES**

**BEST WISHES TO ALL OUR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS**

**AYA AND BERNARD DAREL**

**WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO THEIR RELATIVES, FRIENDS  
AND ALL FORMER RESIDENTS OF CHINA IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD**

**SARAH ROSS**

**WISHES A HAPPY HOLIDAY  
TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD**

**JOE LEVOFF**

**WISHES ALL HIS RELATIVES AND FRIENDS A HAPPY HOLIDAY**

**DAVID GOOTMAN**

**WISHES A HAPPY HOLIDAY  
TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD**

# ברכות לראש השנה

## ISRAEL

BEST WISHES TO ALL OUR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS  
**BELLA AND AVRAHAM GOLDREICH**

**MICHAEL FLEISCHMANN**

SENDS BEST WISHES FOR THE HOLIDAY

TO HIS RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES

**FLORA AND BOB FREIMAN**

WISH A HAPPY ROSH-HASHANA TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

**HANNAH AND SAM MULLER**

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

**PEARL AND ABE WAIK (WAIKOVSKY)**

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

**PEARL AND GEORGE KANPOL (KANTSEPOLSKY)**

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

# ברכות לראש השנה

## ISRAEL

### JENNY AND TEDDY PIASTUNOVITCH

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO RELATIVES  
AND FRIENDS

### ELI ALGOR (GROHOVSKY) AND FAMILY

WISH THEIR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES  
A HAPPY ROSH-HASHANA

BEST WISHES TO ALL OUR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS  
MIRIAM AND DANIEL FRIEDMANN

### PNINA AND BOBBY BERSHADSKY

SEND THEIR HOLIDAY GREETINGS TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

### GARY BROVINSKY AND FAMILY

WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS  
IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD

# ברכות לראש השנה

## ISRAEL

**TEDDY KAUFMAN**

**WISHES A HAPPY ROSH-HASHANA TO THE STAFF OF THE BULLETIN  
AND TO THE VOLUNTEERS**

**WHO HELP IN THE WORK OF THE OFFICE OF IGUD YOTZEI SIN:  
YEHIEL LADYJENSKY, CECILIA LYUBMAN, INNA HANUKAYEV, EMMANUEL  
PRAT, SARAH ROSS, ISAAC DASHINSKY, REBECCA TOUEG, ORIT DUANI, ETI  
GINANSKY, JEANNE TIKOTSKY, TAMARA FAIBUSOVITCH, FLORI COHEN AND  
DAVID GOOTMAN**

**ISAI PIASTUNOVITCH**

**SENDS HIS BEST WISHES FOR THE HOLIDAY  
TO HIS RELATIVES AND FRIENDS IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD**

**RINA AND TIMA LITVIN AND CHILDREN**

**WISH A HAPPY HOLIDAY TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS  
IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD**

**ISAAC DASHINSKY**

**WISHES A HAPPY HOLIDAY  
TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD**

# *Thank you, my dear friends!*

From the bottom of my heart I want to thank you, my dear friends in Israel, U.S., Japan and other countries of the world for your warm concern and sympathy in the difficult days that I, as a resident of Tokyo, had to endure in the days of the earthquake and severe tsunami in Japan. Your concern and involvement in my life were for me the support in those terrible days which are fortunately behind us.

My heart is full of knowledge that I was not alone in the extraordinarily difficult days that my dear friends were living through together with me. Once again I heartily thank all of you, my friends, and wish you all much health, happiness and longevity.

Thank you again, my dear ones.

**Asya Kogan - Tokyo  
August 2011**

To the Fund of the Synagogue in Memory of Former Jewish  
Communities in China

***A donation of 5,000 U.S. \$***

in honor of the birthday of our dear and beloved sister  
and aunt Nelly Avinami

with wishes of good health and well-being.

With love,  
your Asya Kogan, Richard, Rita and Aba

## ***A Guest from Shanghai at Ponve House***

On the 4th of April 2011, Mr. Yuval Ben-Ari visited Ponve House. Mr. Ben-Ari served for five years as the director of the Israel-China Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai.

Mr. Ben-Ari who spent over two hours in conversation with Teddy Kaufman and Yossi Klein has expressed his willingness to participate in the work carried out by the Israel-China Friendship Society.

A Visit to Ponve House by a Camera Crew from Harbin's Television Station  
On April 10th a camera crew from Harbin's Television Station visited Ponve House. They interviewed Teddy Kaufman, Yossi Klein and G. Katz. The crew also met with G. Brovinsky, B. Darrell, A. Rosenblum and R. Rashinsky. The Chinese guests covered the festive Passover meeting as well as the 90th birthday celebration for Emmanuel Prat (Monia Perutinsky). Both events took place on the same day.

## ***Emmanuel Prat has reached 90***

On Sunday 10TH April, at Ponve House, a festive reception was held for the forthcoming Passover as well as a birthday celebration for Emmanuel Prat (Monia Perutinsky) who has turned 90.

Over fifty guests filled Ponve House. Amongst them were members of the Sunday Club, members of Igud Yotzei Sin's management team and friends of Monia (about ten of them).

Teddy Kaufman welcomed the guests and the approaching Passover and went on to relate the story of Monia Perutinsky, the talented journalist

and translator, a master of languages - Hebrew, Russian and English and talked about Monia's exceptional work for the 'Bulletin' magazine in all three languages. Joining in with the greetings for Monia were Yossi Klein, Galia Katz and Erez Levanon, Adv.

Monia in turn thanked Igud Yotzei Sin for organising the celebration in his honour. Rasha Kaufman and Eti Ginansky presented Monia with a gift on behalf of Igud Yotzei Sin. Teddy Kaufman proceeded to thank Eti Ginansky and Rasha Kaufman for their efforts in preparing the refreshments.

Present at the meeting were members of the management team of Igud Yotzei Sin: T. Kaufman, Y. Klein, B. Bershinsky, A. Vandel, E. Ginansky, G. Katz, R. Rashinsky and A. Fradkin as well as members of the audit committee, M. Lichomanov and G. Brovinsky.

The festivities began at 11:30 and lasted till 15:00 as the guests found it difficult to leave the event.

## ***An Exhibition in Ramat Gan***

On the 14th of April, an exhibition showcasing the photographic work of Leonid Padrul opened at the Maria and Michael Zetlin Museum of Russian art in Ramat Gan, titled "Mountains ~ Water - from Tian Shan to the Dead Sea - landscape photography by Leonid Padrul". The exhibition was under the patronage of the Mayor of Ramat Gan, Zvi Bar, and will continue till mid June.

## ***A Documentary Film - The Shanghai Ghetto***

"The Shanghai Ghetto", a

documentary film was screened on the 2nd of May at the Herzliya cinematheque, as part of the annual Holocaust Memorial Day for the six million Jewish victims murdered by the Nazis.

The film was made by Dana Janklowicz-Mann and her husband Amir Mann. Dana is the daughter of our friend from Shanghai, Yechiel Janklowicz who lived in the Hongkou district Jewish ghetto during the war. The film has been screened in numerous international festivals and picked several awards, amongst them the Audience Choice award and the Human Rights Award at the 2002 Santa Barbara International Film Festival as one of the best documentary films.

Amongst the audience at the Herzliya cinematheque, representing Igud Yotzei Sin, were R. and T. Kaufman.

## ***A Reunion of Tianjin Ex-Pats***

On the 4th of May, at Ponve House, a reunion of some twenty of Tianjin's ex-pats took place, an initiative of Igud Yotzei Sin. For some fifty four years [1904 - 1958] a Jewish community, the third largest in China, flourished in Tianjin. Representing Igud Yotzei Sin at the reunion were T. Kaufman and Y. Klein.

Teddy Kaufman briefly talked about the Jewish community in Tianjin followed by S. Miller who talked about the conservation efforts in preserving Tianjin's old synagogue.

A pleasant atmosphere prevailed at the gathering which began at 4 pm and ended around 7 pm. T. Kaufman thanked R. Kaufman and L. Koroshi for organizing the refreshments.



# MAZAL TOV!

## EMMANUEL PRATT (MONIA PIRUTINSKY) AT 90



*Yossi Klein welcomes the hero of the day*



*The hero of the day a birthday cake presented to him*



*Monia Pirutinsky thanks all those present for the reception arranged in his*



### **The Sharon Family's Joyful Occasion**

Keren Sharon and Ofer Rosenstein were married in Herzilya on April 28th..

Keren is the daughter of Ahuvah and Randy Sharon; granddaughter of our friend from Shanghai, Isabella Sharon [Rabinowitz] and great-granddaughter to Rosetta and Gabriel Rabinowitz. The bride's great-grandfather, Gabriel

Rabinowitz, was the architect of the Memorial Synagogue for the Jewish Communities of China in Tel Aviv, his wife Rosetta, the bride's great-grandmother, was for many years an active member of Igud Yotzei Sin, a central figure of the Ladies' Committee at Ponve House.

Igud Yotzei Sin extends their warmest regards to the young couple, to their parents and grandparents, and wishes them all happiness, health

and success.

### **Bershadsky's 60th Wedding Anniversary**

Bobby Bershadsky and his wife Pnina, our friends from Tianjin, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Igud Yotzei Sin extends their best regards to Bobby, Pnina and the rest of the Bershadsky family on this joyful occasion. We wish you all health, happiness and success.



To the **MISHA KOGAN**  
Social aid Fund  
**US\$ 35,000**

In memory of my dear parents  
and in memory of the dear  
parents of Misha Kogan

**ASYA KOGAN (TOKYO)**

August 2011



Kalman Kogan



Abram Kachanovsky



Riva Kogan



Tatyana Kachanovsky

# Jewish Communities in Asia

## CHINA - Beijing

### Chabad House and Community Centre

Fang Yan Xi Lu, next to the south gate of Si De Park

Beijing, PR China

Tel: (8610) 8470 8238 ext. 210, (86) 13910740109

www.chabadbeijing.com

**Chabad of Yao Bao Lu:** Jian Guo Men Diplomatic Bldg, Building 3, 2/F 223 Chaoyangmennei Street, Beijing, PR China

Tel: (86) 1352 2016 427 Email: rabbaimendy08@gmail.com

**Kehilat Beijing (Reform):** Capital Club Athletic Center, 3/F, Ballroom

Capital Mansion, 6 Xinyuan Nanlu Chaoyang District Beijing PR China

Tel: (86) 10 6467 2225 www.sinogogue.org

## Guangzhou

**Guangzhou Chabad:** 31 He Ping Lu, Overseas Village, Guangzhou, China

Tel: (86) 137 1959 5049 www.chabadgz.org

## Shanghai

**Shanghai Chabad (Shanghai Jewish Center):** Shang-Mira Garden Villa #1

1720 Hong Qiao Road, Shanghai, 200336 PR China

Tel: (86) 21 6278 0225 www.chinajewish.org

**Chabad of Pudong:** Vila #69, 2255 Luoshan Road,

Shanghai, 200135, PR China

Tel: (86) 21 5878 2008 www.chinajewish.org

**Sephardi Shanghai Center**

Building B, Apt. 3 (Room 103), 1000 Gubei

Road, Shanghai, PR China 201103

Tel: (86) 21 6208 8327 Mobile: (86) 159008 08733

Email: sscshanghai10@gmail.com, ssc\_shanghai@walla.com

## Shenzhen

**Shenzhen Chabad:** NO. 4, Block A, Guishan Xiaozhu Yanshan Road, Industrial Area, Shekou Nanshan District, Shenzhen, PR China

Tel: (86) 755 8207 0712 www.chabadshenzhen.org

## HONG KONG

**Jewish Community Centre: One Robnson Place, 70 Robnson Road**

Mid-Levels, Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2801 5440 www.jcc.org.hk

**Chabad of Hong Kong:** 1/F Hoover Court, 7-9 Macdonell Road

Mid-Levels, Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2523 9770 www.chabadhk.org

**Ohel Leah Synagogue:** 70 Robnson Road,

Mid-Levels, Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2589 2621 www.ohelleah.org

**United Jewish Congregation (Reform): Jewish Community Centre**

One Robnson Place, 70 Robnson Road

Mid-Levels, Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2523 2985 www.ujc.org.hk

**Shuva Israel (Orthodox):** 2/F Fortune House, 61 Connaught Road;

**Central Hong Kong**

Tel: (852) 2851 6300 www.shuva-israel.com

## Kowloon

**Kehilat Zion (Orthodox):** Unit 105, 1/F, Wing on Plaza, 62 Mody Road,

Tsim Sha Tsui East, Kowloon

Tel: (852) 2368 0061 www.kehilat-zion.org

**Chabad of Kowloon:** 11 Hart Avenue, 2/F, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

Tel: (852) 2366 5770

Email: kowloon@chabadhk.org

## INDIA (Mumbai)

**Magen David Synagogue:** 340 Sir J.J. Rd, Byculla, Mumbai

Tel: (91) 22 2300 6675

**Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue:** 43 Fr. V.B. Gandhi Marg, Fort, Mumbai

Tel: (91) 22 2283 1502 / 2283 9617

**Kurla Bene Israel:** 275 C.S.T. Rd, Jewish Colony, Kurla (W), Mumbai, India

## JAPAN - Kobe

**Ohel Shelomoh Synagogue and Community Center:** 4-12-12, Kitano-cho

Chuo-ku, Kobe 650, Japan

Tel: (81) 78 221 7236 www.jacckobe.org

## Tokyo

**Tokyo Chabad:** 1-5-23 Takanawa, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan 108-0073

Tel: (813) 5789 2846 www.chabad.jp

**JCC Japan (Reform):** Tokyo Jewish Community Centre, 8-8 Hiroo 3-Chome Shibuya-Ku, Tokyo 150 0012, Japan

Tel: (813) 3400 2559 www.jccjapan.or.jp

**SOUTH KOREA**

**Chabad:** 744-18 Hannam-Dong, Yongsan, Seoul 140-893, South Korea

Tel: (82) 107 730 3770 www.jewish.kr

## TAIWAN

**Taipei Jewish Community:** 16 Min Tsu East Road, Second Floor,

Taipei, Taiwan, ROC

Tel: (886) 2 2591 3565

Email: einhorn912@xuite.net

## INSTITUTIONS and FUNDS of «IGUD YOTZEI SIN» in ISRAEL

**PONVE CENTER**

**SYNAGOGUE & CULTURAL CENTER**

*In memory of Jewish Communities in China*

**OLD AGE FUND**

**SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

**FUND FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

**BULLETIN**

# A SECOND GATHERING OF SHANGHAI'S EX-PATS

Benjamin Ze'ev

A second gathering of Shanghai's ex-pats took place at Ponve House on the 26th of January 2011. The second gathering was, like the first on in 2010, the initiative of Ron Veinerman, Oded Hon and Eli Kamah.

At around six pm more than fifty of Shanghai's ex-pats were gathered at Ponve House. Amongst the guests were Israel's member of Knesset, Yitzhak [Buji] Herzog and the Israeli architect Haim Dotan who designed the Israeli pavilion at the 2010 Shanghai Expo.

A light refreshment buffet was laid out for our guests. [Salads, Burek pastries, bread rolls coffee and tea]. Ron Veinerman invited Teddy Kaufman to address the gathering. T. Kaufman welcomed the invitees and member of Knesset, Yitzhak [Buji] Herzog and talked about the Herzog family connections with the Jews of China.

Yitzhak Herzog's grandfather, was Chief Rabbi of the British Mandate of Palestine, and later became Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel. Rabbi Yitzhak HaLevi Herzog was in close contact with Aharon Moshe Kiselev, chief rabbi of Harbin China and the Far East. Rabbi Kiselev would continuously consult rabbi Herzog on all Talmudic matters in the years between 1935 until 1941.

At the start of World War II, when the Soviet army conquered Latvia, Rabbi Herzog approached the soviet authorities requesting the students at the 'Mir' Yeshiva and the 'Tomchei

Temimim' [supporters of the pure ones"] seminary would be allowed to exit Latvia via the Soviet Union on the way to Japan.

The entire Mir Yeshiva and some of the 'Tomchei Temimim' students made it to Japan from whence they made their way to Eretz Israel though many remained in Shanghai. T. Kaufman recounted how the torah scrolls from Harbin's main synagogue were given as a gift to rabbi Herzog's synagogue, at his residence.

T. Kaufman went on to talk about the introduction Rabbi Herzog wrote for Rabbi Kiselev's book "Fine Words". The book was published in Israel by the late rabbi's widow Feige Kiselev with assistance from Jacob Ziskind and Shmuel Abba Seigerman. T Kaufman noted rabbi Herzog tireless with respect of saving Jewish children who found shelter from the Nazis in monasteries and churches in Italy. Later, Teddy recalled the meeting held by the management of Igud Yotzei Sin with Haim Herzog, the Israeli president before and after his visit to China; his concern for the fate of the Shanghai synagogue which he visited on that journey.

Teddy also mentioned Yitzhak Herzog's uncle, the brilliant diplomat, Jacob Herzog who served as Israel's ambassador to Washington.

Teddy Kaufman concluded by presenting Yitzhak Herzog with Rabbi Kiselev's book "Fine Words" Yitzhak Herzog acknowledged the warm reception and the gift. In his address he talked about his visit to

Shanghai and his participation in the opening ceremony of the Israeli pavilion at Expo 2010 and expanded on the ties between Israel and China. The architect Haim Dotan talked about the Israeli pavilion at the Shanghai Expo; about the work on that project, the building of the pavilion, the opening ceremony and the great success it had with the public. His talk was accompanied by a visual presentation of images taken at the opening ceremony as well as during the event when some four million visitors were drawn to the Israeli pavilion.

Haim Dotan's talk lasted about an hour and a half and was well received by the audience, complimented by lengthy applause. Haim Dotan concluded his talk by presenting T. Kaufman with a book - an album, dedicated to Shanghai's Expo 2010 and an anthology of his poems in Hebrew with translation into English and Chinese.

In summation, T. Kaufman thanked the promoting committee and especially its chair R. Veinerman, Y. Herzog MK and the architect Haim Dotan for his instructive talk. Thanks were duly given to A Ginanski and R. Kaufman for organising the refreshments.

The gathering lasted three hours, between 6 and 9 in the evening. The guests took their time departing the event.

See you all at our next gathering at the end of 2011!



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

Miss J. Hasser  
English Editor  
M. Ionis  
Russian Editor  
L. Tomchinsky  
Publisher

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**WINNING** three out of the four sections (Track and Field, Volleyball Team, Volleyball Doubles, and Pingpong) gave Shanghai Betar the athletic championship of the Far Eastern Brith Trumpeldor competition, the Betariad, in which Shanghai scored 184 points to Tientsin's 158. Hongkew Betar came third with 69 points.

Intensely keen and close competition marked every phase of the Betariad, especially in the main attraction—the track and field, in which the home team edged out Tientsin by one point, 114 to 113. In this first Betariad since the war's end held in the last week of August, one track record was broken by Jack Liberman of Shanghai who shattered his own mark of 11.3 seconds for the 100 meters by one-tenth of a second. Liberman took four first places to win the aggregate championship, second place going to Gurvitch of Tientsin who took two firsts and placed second in two events.

The gruelling Volleyball Doubles was won by Tientsin when the combination of Kanzevolsky and Belokamen defeated Shanghai's Liberman and Kaptzan in a tense game. But by far the most exciting and close match was seen in the Volleyball Team competition when Shanghai just squeezed through with a win in the last two games. The match was a replay as it was called off due to darkness the previous day when both teams won two games each.

Awards for the competition were given in a ceremony held at the lawn of the Shanghai Jewish Club on Sunday, September 7. In the evening, all Betarim and their friends marked the end of the Betariad with a dance held at the Betar clubhouse.

The Tientsin team left for their home city on the morning of Thursday, September 11, spending 13 days in Shanghai.

**AUGUST 30** will mark an important date in the history of our National youth Movement—Brit Trumpeldor of China. Betarim from Tientsin, Shanghai Ken No. 1, and Shanghai Ken No. 2 (Hongkew) will parade at the field of the Shanghai American School before the Shanghai Jewish community prior to launching of the Betariad for the first time since 1934 in Shanghai.

Training is in full swing at present and our Betarim are ready to vie for honors with Tientsin, which won the last Betariad held here in 1934, and again in Tientsin in 1936 when Harbin also competed.

The meet will open at the SAS with presentation of sports banners to the committee of judges after which track and field events will commence, terminating with a 4 x 100-meter relay. On September 1 at 5.30 p.m. will see the start of the Volleyball doubles between Tientsin and Shanghai, while at 7.30 p.m. the same day ping-pong will be played in the Shanghai Jewish Club by the three teams. On the following day the Betariad will terminate with volleyball at 6 p.m. at the Betar grounds, following which the winners of the meet will be announced.

Between September 3 and 6 the combined Betar teams will meet leading Shanghai teams in exhibition games, following which a Grand Betar Sports Ball will be held probably on September 7, when presentation of awards will be made.

The Tientsin team is due here after August 26, according to the latest word received from the northern city.

The Betariad will be an historic event in our movement in China and undoubtedly it will reveal the moral and physical strength of our Far Eastern Betarim. It will be of particular significance in view of the latest situation in Eretz Israel, where the hand of oppression has closed down activities of our movement, and when the Jewish youth in Diaspora are now faced with added responsibility.

It is to be hoped that this Betariad in the Far East will serve further to unify us and will point the true road to Jewish youth—the road trod by Vladimir Jabotinsky. We feel certain that our Jewish community will assist us in every possible manner to make this year's Betariad a fitting example of unity and cooperation between our elders and our youth, and between Betar and the community.

*(Contributed by Joe Levoff)*

SUNDAY, JULY 6, 2:30 p.m.—7 p.m.

LADIES COMMITTEE  
IN AID OF  
FUND FOR FIGHTING ZION  
WILL HOLD A  
CHILDRENS FUN FAIR

at the Shanghai Jewish Club  
20 Rte. Pichon

Many Surprises, Plays,  
Kiosks, Prizes, Games.

# From Podziemia to Herzliya

by Mikhail Rinski

The lives of a father and his son - entwined throughout the twentieth century, across different lands as if they each lived in a different era from the other. They dealt with every aspect of their lives with similar vigour and determination, hence the wide variety of their activities over different times and countries.

Lev Piastunovitch was born in 1902 at Berdyansk in the Ukraine. From his mother and father Lev inherited vigour, mental fortitude, courage and resoluteness. They arrived from Melitopol to the region where the Eastern China Railway Line was being constructed at the beginning of the twentieth century. Life there was just beginning to take shape and each newcomer had to start from scratch. Joseph Piastunovitch established a sausage manufacturing factory. His son, Lev, dreamt of being a doctor and so his father, Joseph, sent him to Russia for his university education.

The civil war was raging there at the time and although Lev was exempt from military service due to a congenital limp, he did not manage to complete his studies. Nonetheless, his unstable life endowed Lev Piastunovitch not only with an education but also with considerable experience and an awareness of his nationality which helped prepare him for his role as a future leader. While a student at Tomsk he was an active member of "Tze'irei Zion" [Youth of Zion] and later a member of "Ha'Khaver" movement.

Upon his return to Harbin, Lev found employment as an accountant with one of the larger Chinese companies and almost immediately began his Zionist activities; engrossed by the ideas of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, he established the "Ha'Khaver" movement, becoming the founder

of the youth branch within the Zionist Revisionist Movement. The Betar movement was born during the turbulent times, especially for the Jews in the Far East of the post 'Great War' era and of the Russian revolution. The "Yosef Trumpeldor Alliance" was founded in 1925, in Latvia, better known by its acronym "Betar". It became an essential movement for the Jewish youths in the Baltic countries as well as in Poland. Betar put the emphasis on the combative and sportsman-like ideals, on standing against and up to the nationalistic anti-Semitic movements whilst at the same time preparing their young members for the long struggle and arduous life awaiting them in Palestine. All of Jabotinsky's followers took an oath and vowed to dedicate their lives to a Jewish state whereby the Jews will be in the majority.

National Zionist movements were being eradicated in 1925 in Russia by the new Bolshevik establishment and it was only at the Eastern China Railway construction region that a 'pocket' of some 20 thousand Russian speaking Jews survived, a zone where the Jewish community was not dependant on the Soviet authorities. Yet standing up to the white Russian immigrants and against anti-Semitism became the corner stone for the young Zionist movement in Harbin which went on to elect Abraham Kaufman to be its leader, drawing from the revisionist ideology and founding, in 1929, a cell of the Betar movement.

On the 18th of May that year, at the general meeting, Harbin's Betar committee was voted in. Lev Piastunovitch was elected as chairman and by the 16th of June 1929 the first Betar march took

place, with some two hundred members taking part. The residents were stunned as they watched the Jewish youths marching, dressed in their new uniforms and waving flags to the sound of beating drums.

The marchers were greeted by Abraham Kaufman, on behalf of the World Zionist Organization, and by Alexander Gurevitch on behalf of the Zionist Revisionist Movement.

Under Lev Piastunovitch's leadership, the Betar movement succeeded in assembling young Jews into various sporting activities which quickly became the prestigious thing to do. At its onset, Betar had no appropriate athletics facilities yet with Abraham Kaufman's approval they were able to use the community's various properties for their assemblies and activities, mostly at the Jewish soup kitchen. In time Betar acquired its own gymnasium and stadium.

Between 1932 and 1933, Lev Piastunovitch married and moved to Tianjin; Hena, his wife, was a member of the Kushner family who arrived in Harbin from the city of Chita in Russia during the civil war. Two of Hena's brothers, Hatza and Kalmen, were fur merchants. The third brother, Alexander, a violinist, went on to Moscow where he was tragically killed in 1933 like so many others.

In Tianjin, Lev worked as an accountant and later as general manager of a commercial enterprise. During the Second World War he became the proprietor of a factory, producing alcoholic beverages. Within a short time following his arrival in Tianjin Lev began his community work which placed a heavy demand on his time. His many talents and gifts were evident in any project he set his mind on.

The following quote from an article published at that time attests to that: "He is endowed with a healthy logical thinking, a heightened grasp of reality, political flexibility, religiosity and tolerance yet he also possesses the stubborn national vision of the devoted Jew".

Tianjin was also where Lev began to dedicate his thoughts and work to Betar. It was in Paris, in August 1933, that J. Jabotinsky signed the mandate appointing Lev Piastunovitch to the position of Betar's commander in China. The Mandate document bore an illustration of a Menorah and a caption, written in Hebrew letters, "The State of Israel". Jabotinsky did foresee the future.

In time, Piastunovitch is appointed leader or the Jewish community in Tianjin. At the same time he also becomes the head of the new revisionist branch yet he remains on very cordial terms with the International Zionist Movement. Lev was also elected to head "Kunst" ["Art"], a Jewish club and was the Committee Chairman of the Jewish School. These were only some of his public commitments.

Thanks to him, the Jewish community which numbered some three thousand people became independent and self sustaining. As of 1925 an English speaking Jewish school was established, additional lessons were conducted in Russian, Chinese and Hebrew and Jewish history was taught. Owing to its curriculum, graduates of the school were able to continue their education in England and in the USA.

In 1937 a Jewish club was inaugurated, its hall offering some 500 seats and it became possible to stage theatrical productions. A library was set up in the club as well as a restaurant. In the same year the Jewish hospital opened its doors, treating some one hundred patients a day including Chinese nationals.

In 1940 a specially commissioned synagogue was consecrated.

Moreover, a soup kitchen was established taking care of the elderly, the lonesome, the homeless and the orphaned.

By then, Lev was devoting much of his attention to Betar: its members were provided not only with a uniform but with athletics training facilities. They practiced combat techniques and spent every summer in specially organised sporting cum fighting camps. On the insistence of the Japanese authorities, they marched alongside other ethnic minorities yet the Betar marchers overshadowed all the others with their magnificent uniforms and meticulous marching style.

One can only imagine the difficulties facing the leaders of the Jewish communities - Abraham Kaufman in Harbin and Lev Piastunovitch in Tianjin - to maintain a fair relationship with the Japanese occupiers and with the local Chinese authorities; to provide protection to the Jewish communities and to each Jewish family in the face of anti-Semitic provocations and various fascist organisations.

Despite his social activism Lev took great care of his family and his son Teddy who was born in 1934. The education and schooling of their son was foremost on the Piastunovitch's mind. At the local Jewish school Teddy studied English, Russian and Chinese. A private Chinese tutor made up for the rest of the home study sessions. Teddy also learnt the foundations of the Hebrew language as well as Jewish history and Bible studies. During the Second World War, Japanese was an added subject on the school curriculum. When the family was forced to leave for Shanghai for the duration of a year, Teddy continued his studies there. His school achievements were so high that once back home, he was transferred from year 7 straight into year 10.

The family lived in a nice house located in the town's centre. They

observed the Jewish traditions at home and although Teddy's father spoke Yiddish, Russian was the everyday language spoken at home.

During the Japanese occupation the neighbour's house was taken over by Japanese Intelligence and next door to them lived a Japanese family. His relationship with them enabled Teddy to perfect his command of the Japanese language which along with his command of the Hebrew, English and Chinese languages, would later serve him well throughout his working life.

The Jewish youths were not the only ones sporting a uniform (Betar) at that time. Young fascists wearing "Hitler" uniforms roamed the public spaces. They called the Jews "verfluchten Juden" (damned Jews) in return the Betarists called them "schwein" (swine) and "hund" (dog). Aside from the fascists there were also the anti-Semitic 'white' soldiers. No actual skirmishes ever took place, the Japanese wouldn't allow it but they did respond to disobedience with indescribable cruelty.

According to Teddy, for some reason the Japanese thought that the Betar members would rally to their support when summoned. On the contrary he adds, the Jews were united in anticipation of the allies' victory over the Nazis and the expulsion of the Japanese occupation forces from China. They welcomed their liberators.

With the end of the Second World War, a wave of Jewish emigration out of China began and for a variety of reasons. Those Jews who originated from Europe and still had relatives in the liberated areas mostly wished to reach a safe and tranquil haven. Those holding Zionists ideals aspired to reach Palestine, especially following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

The conditions under which the Chinese authorities would grant an exit visa was dependent upon the type of citizenship the applicants

held but as the majority of the Russian Jews were stateless, they had to first request Russian citizenship and so the possibility of returning to the Soviet Union was available to them or they could receive a permit from the Russian embassy as well as from the Chinese authorities to depart for other countries. Yet returning to the Soviet Union was fraught with danger as was evident from the Soviet authorities' attitude following the liberation.

In those early post liberation days, many 'white' fighters as well as members of the leadership of the Jewish community headed by Abraham Kaufman were arrested. He went on to spend eleven years in Soviet prisons and in the gulag camps and managed to arrive in Israel and join his family only in 1961. The Piastunovitch family managed to escape that fate although Hena's brother, Hatza Kushner, who was drafted during the civil war into the white army and was wounded, ended up in Harbin along with his mother. He was arrested by the Soviet authorities and sentenced to ten years in prison for "illegal border crossing". He was released from prison during the Khrushchev's era and passed away in Novosibirsk. Another of Hena's brothers, Kalmen Kushner remained in Harbin and was the proprietor of a furrier's store. As the Chinese authorities imposed heavy taxes on his business, he was forced to close down and uprooted to Australia.

A great wave of Jewish emigrants from Tianjin, one of the largest port cities in China, found their way out reaching a variety of destinations around the world: Australia, America Israel and Europe. The Jewish community in Tianjin offered assistance to the newly arrived, arranging temporary accommodation while they waited for their exit permits and other papers which on occasion, could last several months.

With the declaration of independence

and the founding of the state of Israel in 1948 decisions had to be taken regarding economical issues and various other problems regarding exit visas and the means of passage for this overwhelming wave of emigration. Lev Piastunovitch flew to Israel where he met with the president - Haim Weitzman, the Prime Minister - David Ben Gurion and with Menachem Begin. In 1949 he returned to China and was forced to remain in Shanghai due to various complications where Hanna and Teddy eventually joined him. For a time they lodged with their relatives, the Madorsky family. Teddy continued with his studies.

It was only by the end of 1950 that they returned to Tianjin and in June 1951, Teddy and Hanna boarded a ship on their way to Israel. From Hong Kong they took a lengthy flight to Tel Aviv. They settled in a two room apartment rented for them by their relatives, the Madorsky family, who arrived in Israel earlier.

The head of the family, Lev, remained in Tianjin until the end of 1951 when the great wave of immigration came to an end. A day after his departure from Tianjin the authorities came to arrest Lev Piastunovitch.

To his great regret, a suitable employment in the new state matching his talents was hard to come by. It is clear that the main reasons were his insufficient command of the Hebrew language and his disability which limited his physical movements. Nobody seemed able of thinking of any benefit he could bring to a job. In 1953 Lev received an offer from Japan to become the chief accountant in one of the Japanese companies owned by the millionaire, Eisenberg. In 1961 Lev passed away in Tokyo. His ashes were flown to Israel and buried there. Following his death Hena returned to Israel.

Despite the fact that he was unable to find employment in Israel - Lev left an indelible memory on his China ex-pat friends. He was one

of the founding members of "The Association of Former Residents of China in Israel" (Igud Yotzei Sin) and was its first chairman. At first the organization was called "The Association of Immigrants from China" but was later changed. Today, Teddy Kaufman - the son of Abraham Kaufman who was the Chairman of the Jewish community in Harbin, heads the association, whereas the son of Lev Piastunovitch - Teddy, is a member of its management team. Lev Piastunovitch headed Igud Yotzei Sin from 1951 to 1953 the year he left for Japan.

We return to the life of Teddy Piastunovitch from the time of his emigration to Israel. A month after his arrival he volunteered to join the army although he was not quite 17 years old. He joined the NAHAL (An acronym of the words Noar Halutzim Lohem, in English - Fighting Pioneer Youth) and went through nine months of military training. Later he participated in the preparation for the establishment of a kibbutz near the border with the Gaza strip. A short time later Teddy transferred to the air force. For a year and two months he worked as an aircraft technician and for two more years as a military air field supervisor. From 1955 he worked for five years as an aircraft technician for El Al at the Lod airport. Teddy married in 1960 and the young couple took off to London for educational purposes. To be a little more precise, Jeanette, Teddy's wife, was already studying in Belgium to become a pharmacist during his military service. In London they both worked and studied and in 1964 Teddy graduated in electrical engineering. He signed a seven year contract working as an engineer within the Eisenberg concern at the same branch in Japan where his late father had worked. Three months later he was sent to Japan but first he studied for five more months in the USA. In Japan he worked at a television manufacturing factory



which exported its products to the USA. As the saying goes - "Jewish head - Japanese hands".

From his father Teddy inherited the inclination for community work and a strong national sentiment. In no time he began working for the Jewish community in Tokyo and became its chairman and general secretary.

This first period was not easy for the young couple. Karin, their first daughter was born in England; the second, Ariella was born in Japan, in 1966. In 1968 Teddy transferred to Korea where the company built cement factories. Once again he was transferred to Thailand, this time working at the offices of the Eisenberg concern. This constant uprooting was not to Teddy's liking and in 1976 he resigned from his post with the Eisenberg concern. The Piastunovitch family left for Hong Kong where Teddy established a chain of restaurants. In addition he set up a consulting firm dealing in various industrial and financial sectors.

From 1976 to 1985 the daughters attended school and set on their future paths. Having graduated from university in Israel, Karin began

working for a bank in Hong Kong. At present she resides in London with her husband. She holds a post graduate degree in ecology and works on various projects for a number of banks. Ariella too has completed her further education studies in Israel and holds a post graduate degree in both psychology and social work. She lives with her family in San Francisco in the USA bringing up her son, Teddy and Jeanette's grandchild. Going back to Teddy... in 1985 following his mother's illness Teddy and his family returned to Israel. A year later they went back to Bangkok where he worked as a high-tech consultant as well as taking part in the establishment of new factories.

In sketching out the character and human attributes of this man it needs to be said that whilst working in Hong Kong, Bangkok and Tokyo, he continued his involvement with the life of the Jewish communities in those cities, always ready to lend his hand to a variety of their projects. Throughout his time abroad, Teddy always maintained his involvement with Igud Yotzei Sin as a member of the management team.

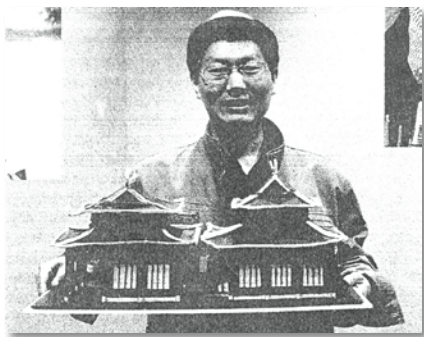
As of 1993, Herzliya became the base

for his family. With the exception of an ongoing interest in the electronics business, the petrochemical industry became his main business concern - namely producing energy from waste materials and taking part in setting up production plants in various countries. Naturally his command of several languages, English, Hebrew, Chinese, Russian and Japanese as well as of the Thai language helps his diverse professional life.

The colourful nature of Teddy Piastunovitch and his many talents match those of his father. In today's world of harsh realities it is not easy to remain as involved, on an ongoing basis, in the community life in several countries yet Teddy manages to live up to the challenge including, as a member of Igud Yotzei Sin, the setting up and successful running of the association's website.

The life of the Piastunovitch family, including the life of their daughters is a fine example of a global kind of humanity, irrespective of borders, nationalities, religion and or war. Teddy took it all upon himself following in his father's footsteps.

## KULANU



See "History of the Kaifeng Jewish Community".  
A beautiful slide show at [kulanu.phanfare.com](http://kulanu.phanfare.com)

KULANU ("All of Us" in Hebrew) is a non-profit organization working with isolated and emerging Jewish communities around the globe, supporting them through networking, education, economic development projects, volunteer assignments, research and publications about their histories and traditions.

For more information, please visit Kulanu's website at [www.kulanu.org](http://www.kulanu.org). We hope you will join us in this important work by contributing to Kulanu at [www.kulanu.org/donate](http://www.kulanu.org/donate),

or by volunteering your time at [www.kulanu.org/getinvolved](http://www.kulanu.org/getinvolved).

*Abayudaya boy, Uganda*

*Photo by Laura Wetzler*

Shi Lei, a descendant of Kaifeng Jews and the only Jewish tour guide in China, holds a model of the historic Kaifeng Synagogue during his Kulanu speaking tour of North America

*Photo by Enid Bloch*

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# The Little Hamlet called Harbin

By Dr. A.Y Kaufman

(Continued from Part One in Bulletin 404)

## Part Two

### *A Small Hamlet called Harbin*

Migration of the Jews from one country to another, from one place to another was always necessitated by social or judicial conditions. It is usually directed from a country with a higher social pressure to a country with a lower pressure, with the highest cultural coefficient in the given area. Essentially, migration is an economic phenomenon. Diaspora is a result of social-political cause. People migrate from one place to another in search of better living conditions. They migrate in the name of survival and self preservation.

In the case of Jewish settlement in Manchuria and Harbin it was different. It was doubtful if anyone would come here to settle permanently. This at-the-world's-end region with no means to develop into a large economic center could hardly attract anybody. The first significant growth of the Jewish population was a result of the Russian-Japanese war. The army was in dire need of providers, contractors, commissioners. Harbin began to speedily absorb any and all men of enterprise, often reckless adventurers, amongst those Jewish merchants and businessmen from Siberia and the European parts of Russia. For the fearless and the daring this bleak region could offer rare opportunity of economic success. There were many of the kind, who answered the call and came, mostly from the South of Russia and Ukraine. Two historical moments - the building

of the KVJD railway line and the Russian-Japanese war - became the factors, which promoted the trade-industrial and cultural development of Harbin and the whole of the KVJD region.

The year is 1905. The war ends. The Jewish population of Manchuria had significantly grown. Many of the demobilized Jewish servicemen decided to remain in Harbin and other points along the railway line and brought their families and relatives to join them.

Other factors, too, played an important role in the regional development: rumors have reached the Jewish Pale about the wondrous Harbin and Manchuria and the "golden rain" perpetually falling there. Why not leave? What was there to lose here? Pogroms? Humility? Hundreds of Jewish communities were looted and razed to the ground? And out of the stuffy, oppressive ghettos in Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, throngs of Jews began their long Exodus -Eastward: to Harbin, to the small hamlets along the newly built railway line. In 1906/1907 the Jewish population of Harbin crossed the 3000 mark. Some time later followed suit the Jews from Siberia, Vladivostok, the Primorski and the Amur regions. Not being "original settlers" (some 400 Jews, registered in the 1897 census), but those who came to live there "illegally" with the beginning of the railroad construction and the outbreak of the "Boxer Rebellion" in 1900, they were denied the right to stay in

Vladivostok and Blagoveshchensk. Those who served in the army and the children of the former "Nikolai soldiers" received permission to stay as the Russian authorities were eager to develop the vast areas of land.

This is how, in a number of cities such as Vladivostok, Nikolsk-Ussuriisk, Nikolayevsk-na-Amure, Blagoveshchensk, Sretensk and others, the Jews who settled there would in the future play an important part in the development of the trade and industry, and to become an important sector of the population of the region. The Jewish traders, bankers and industrialists in Manchuria rubbed shoulders with the most prominent representatives of the financial establishment and were listed amongst the first rank financial entrepreneurs of the region. The Stock Exchange Committee was now headed by a group of Jews: M. Fried, E. Dobisov, D. Samsonovich, G. Drizin, R. Kabalkin and others. Out of the 40 voting members of the Harbin Municipality twelve were Jewish. The main initiators and the leading representatives of the lumber, oil, river shipping, winery, pharmaceuticals, bakeries, textiles, and metallurgy industries are the Jews. So are the chief exporters of grain products, furs and leather.

This equality of rights and status enjoyed by the Jews of Harbin and those living along the KVJD railway tracks, rubbed the anti-Semitic governors of the adjacent proper-Russian Primorskii and Priamurskii regions against the grain. Here the

Jews were deported and persecuted as an unwanted, lawless element. The Priamurskii governor-general, Nikolai Gondatti, again and again demanded of the Russian supreme authorities to equate the status of the KVJD region to that of the cities of the Jewish Pale where the Jews were forbidden to settle. However, despite his being a highly influential administrator, Gondatti's efforts to deprive the Jews of their rights in this newly acquired territory have failed to surmount the existing status introduced by Stolypin, due to the higher priority of depopulating the Jewish Pale, adopted by the Tsar.

The managing director of the region, Lt-general Dmitrii Khorvat had been an extraordinary personality and an exceptional administrator. He won great popularity amongst both the Russian and the Chinese population of Manchuria. The Chinese have erected a monument during his lifetime (1911), praising him for his wisdom, humanity and justice. The monument in a form a large stone tablet stood next to the Railway Assembly in the New City of Harbin the Jewish community found in him a just, honest and a sensitive human being. He pointed out the Jewish achievements and their contribution to the welfare of the regional economy and welfare.

When the Russian Imperial commission headed by Minister Shipov came to Harbin for an inspection, General Khorvat described in detail the benevolent activity of the Jewish community in increasing and strengthening the Russian influence in the Far East. His report was forwarded to the government in St. Petersburg, and the efforts of the anti-semites to curtail the Jewish rights have miserably failed.

I have met General Khorvat several times in my capacity of the representative of the Harbin Jewish community, and once privately. He impressed me as an extremely

pleasant personality. When the local society and the administrative circles of the KVJD celebrated in 1914 the fifteenth anniversary of General Khorvat's heading the KVJD management, he was greeted by the two-man delegation of the Jewish community - A. Dobisov and myself. We conveyed the congratulations of the entire Jewish community living along the KVJD line and presented him with the Scroll of Esther in a silver container, produced by the Bezalel Art Academy in Jerusalem. The general was visibly moved by this homage, and told us that this was the most meaningful and valuable gift. Some time later, at a casual encounter, his wife; Camilla Benoit (the sister of the well known French painter Philippe Benoit, and a painter herself) repeated his words.

After the February revolution (1917), the Interim government nominated General Khorvat as a Supreme Commissioner of the Far East, whose duties he executed at his very best, as usual. Regretfully, the ebb and flow of his life turned to the worse, and despite his having been persuaded to be elected as the Supreme ruler of "all Russians", his regime was short lived in the face of the fierce assault of the Bolshevik forces. He left Vladivostok for Peking, where he lived as a private person, respected and honored by the Chinese authorities and people.

General Khorvat died in May, 1937. At a vastly attended memorial meeting of the Harbin Jewish Community (HEDO), I eulogized him in the name of the Jewish population of Manchuria, noting his devoted service to his country and his attitude towards the minority nationals, Jews in particular, who enjoyed full and equal rights and could live in peace and security and to develop our original culture.

### **Part Three**

In 1912, the Jewish social life had been rather shabby. There were a few Jewish establishments, hardly any cultural activity. For fairness sake,

whatever achievements the Jewish Association could account for was achieved during the past few years. The Jewish community was only nine or ten years old, in 1906 -1907 the population was scanty. There was a synagogue, a school, a charity organization, a house for prayer.

### **The Main Synagogue**

The idea of building a synagogue began to be realized as far back as 1904. A fund raising campaign had been launched and was met by the contributors with enthusiasm, even though economic crisis began to be felt as early as in 1906. Some contributions came from outside of China: Warsaw Jews contributed 2,000 rubles, Lodz sent 450, St. Petersburg - 750, Kiev -1,000. There is no documentation as to whose initiative it was and what the reason was for this generosity by Russian towns. I was told by the old timers that the management of the community and the Commission for the Synagogue construction published an advertisement in the Russian press, appealing for assistance, and the appeal was indeed answered. The largest amount (24,000 rubles), however, was donated by the Harbin Jews, the most towering being F.I. Reefs and Samsonovich families.

In May 1907, the corner stone of the synagogue building was laid in a ceremony, vastly attended by the entire Jewish Harbin population at the corner of Artelliriiskaya and Konnaya streets, on a plot of land contributed to the Jewish Community by the KVJD administration. On January 15, 1907 the synagogue was opened for the first public service. It was named "The Chief Synagogue". At the time, it was considered the most beautiful temple in Harbin, planned and built by Kazy Girei, a Moslem Tartar architect, employed as a senior engineer by the KVJD.

In 1931, practically all the building of the Chief Synagogue had been wrecked in a conflagration, but was soon restored and extended. A part

of the Jewish establishments were housed in the second and the third floors of the renovated building: the Community offices, and a spacious hall where the Community Council gathered for the general meeting. Next to the synagogue stood the beautiful two-storey building of the Jewish School "Talmud Torah".

### ***The Model Jewish School***

Right from the beginning of the Jewish settlement in Manchuria, the question of education, and the care of our young generation had been one of the central concerns of the Harbin Jewish community. On March 4, 1907 the general assembly of Harbin Jews decided to create a National Jewish School. On April 1907 such school was opened to give basic education to 18 Jewish boys and eight girls. In 1908 the number of pupils reached 50 boys and girls, and in 1909 -100. But it had no premises of its own and sheltered in a Chinese mud hut. It was only on April 17, 1910 that the permanent building of the "Model Jewish School" had been completed and regular classes have opened in a two-storey building next to the Chief Synagogue, embracing a five-year curriculum. The program had been prepared by a group of activists, mainly amongst Zionist functionaries. Special attention was given to the Hebrew language and Judaica. The work in school had been my priority interest and concern, and I dedicated most of my time to satisfy the needs of the school.

At the time (1912) there were only 50 pupils studying at the Model Jewish School.. The Director, Lev Grigorievich Koltunov, was an excellent teacher and pedagogue, highly knowledgeable in Hebrew, teaching the language by the "Hebrew-Hebrew" method. General subjects were taught, as well.

The school had a Society in charge of poor pupils, headed by N. D. Dobisova. This organization was charged with the responsibility to ensure that the children of insolvent

parents would be supplied with clothing and shoes, daily breakfasts and, naturally, education and, if necessary, medical care.. From the very first months of my sojourn in Harbin, I was drawn into intensive activity in the School Council.

### ***D. E. B. O.***

There also existed a charity society, named "The Women's circle", which was organized at the very outset of the Jewish presence in Harbin. This was a so called women's committee affiliated to the management of the Prayer home. The members of the committee visited and took care of the needs of the wounded and sick Jewish soldiers, hospitalized in Harbin, sawed and mended their inner clothing and supplied them with foodstuffs and cigarettes. They also raised money for the victims of pogroms in Kishenev, Gomel, Bielostok, and elsewhere. With the end of the Russo-Japanese war, they assisted those stranded in Harbin and supplied them with money and instruments to enable them to open small workshops and other means of survival. They also took care of their monthly rent, heating and food.

Despite the economic crisis, which began to make it felt in Harbin, the Jews donated money readily and generously. In 1906 the Community Management and the Women's Committee organized a committee of assistance to the widows and orphans of their breadwinners, fallen during the war. In 1907 the charity activity increased, and the Women's Charity circle headed by etymologist, Dr. A. E. Ackerman, was organized by members of the Management E.I. Dobisov, S. G. Yabrov, and A.M. Mordohovich. Some time later, in 1914-15, the circle was renamed as the Jewish Women's Charity Association with a set of Regulations approved in 1916 by the Harbin municipal authorities. In 1916 the Association's activity had furthermore broadened with the opening of professional sewing

courses for young Jewish women.

### ***The New Synagogue***

There was another prayer home in Harbin, the Kahn Synagogue, privately built 1908 on the Strakhovaya Street by P.M. Kahn and another two or three private Harbin Jewish citizens. P.M. Kahn equipped the synagogue and purchased the Torah scroll at his own expense. The management and the congregation of the synagogue consisted mostly of the Jews, emigrants from Southern Russia, particularly, Odessa.

During the first years of their sojourn in Harbin, these Jews were segregated into a practically secluded group, calling themselves "Russian" Jews to be differentiated from the majority, who came from Siberia. This differentiation was artificial and had nothing whatsoever to lean on from the very beginning of the organized Jewish presence in Harbin. The most actively creative members of the Jewish community were the "Sibiriaki" as the Siberian Jews were generally known and called: E. I. Dobisov, the Samsonovich brothers, F. I. Rief, A. M. Mordokhovich, G. B Drizin and others. They were also the most generous contributors for charity and building of the Jewish public institution, and naturally held key positions in the Jewish community. This was the reason why the "Russian" Jews, who considered themselves to be of a more distinguished class than the simpler speaking and behaving "Sibiriaks", decided to build a synagogue of their own. These were: Kahn (chairman), M. V. Kofman, Frog, Borovoi, J. A. Karshenbaum, and others. The building of the Kahn Synagogue (to become in the future to be known as "The New Synagogue") was completed in 1921.

### ***"TMALDAG"***

In those years there were no more artificially created boundaries between the "Russian" and the "Siberian" Jews. It was erased

entirely. Undoubtedly, it was the Zionist Organization that had been the main contributor in bringing the Harbin Jews together.

There also existed the Jewish Club "IMALDAG", the Yiddish abbreviation of "The Jewish Musical-Literary-Theatrical Society". It was opened in 1908-1909 to satisfy the cultural quest of the Jewish community. However, like other Russian cultural clubs in the city, it introduced hazard games, viz. cards and lotto. The unseemly, noisy card games lasted till dawn. The spacious hall, earmarked for lectures, concerts and theatrical performances was now filled to capacity by gamblers. This was a profitable enterprise. The club occupied a big two-storey building, where, on the first floor, a 350-seat hall, a library and a reading room was located. The money "earned" by hazard games, "Imaldag" spent in buying books in Yiddish and, first and foremost, Russian languages, which constituted a substantial lending library, the largest in the contemporary Harbin.

It has to be stressed, however, that the every-day main activity of "Imaldag" was dedicated to the money winning enterprise of "lotto" rather than the words "literary", "musical" and "theatrical", brightly shining in electrical lamps from the entrance gate of the Club. The rich book fund gathered dust. Hardly anyone ever entered the comfortable Reading room.

One evening I went to "Imaldag". The night life of the Club was yet just beginning. I inspected the contents of the book shelves, asked questions about the library activity, how many books were there? How many subscribers? Which topics they preferred? A sad picture emerged before my eyes. By that time there were already 5,000 Jews living in Harbin in 1912. For every 100 men there were 31.5 women; 61.5% were labor capable, 23% were of school going age.

There was no Jewish press in Harbin at the time. Not only our own press, but the general press did not "cover" the "Jewish life", except for a rare advertisement or official notice by the Jewish Community office. Not a word about the Jewish Association, Jewish school, Jewish enterprise. There were three Russian-language dailies: the official mouthpiece of the KVJD Administration, "Vestnik Manchuria" - ("The Manchuria Herald"); The large, "solid" "Novosti Jizni" - ("The news of Life"); and a small daily "Vostok" - ("The Orient"). "Novosti Jizni" had been of liberal trend, owned by three Jews: Kliorin, Cherniavsky, Lewenziegler. Its permanent staff was also mostly Jewish. The Jewish commercial firms and enterprisers assisted the paper financially, but have not made use of it in the way of information of their readers as to the increasing activity of the fast growing Jewish community.

### **Part four**

There were Jews, living in other villages and towns of Manchuria, along the KVJD Western and Eastern railway lines. In the little settlement of Manchuria (now The town of Manzhou-li), for example the Jews appeared in 1902. The growth of the population was slow. In 1908, there lived only 25 Jewish families. In 1910 the synagogue was built. In 1913, a small society was organized and legally and registered. In the future, the Station Manchuria population will never exceed 1,500. And yet a beautiful synagogue and a spacious building of the Manchuria Jewish Preliminary School were built, in addition to a library and a number of organizations.

Also, there had been a Jewish community in Hailar, where the first Jews appeared in 1900, and a first "minyan" (the initial group of 10 Jewish males to form a communal prayer unit) was composed. A Russian Imperial military unit was stationed in Hailar, and had 5 - 6 Jewish soldiers serving there. They

had a Torah scroll of their and were a part of the "minyan". The commanding staff placed their club at their disposal for High Holidays prayer. The Hailar Jewish Association had been organized in 1907, and a synagogue was built in 1909. In 1912 the Jewish population numbered 25 families.

A small Jewish community was organized in Tsi-tsi-kar (10 families), in Han Dao He-tse (14 families), and in some other villages.

### **The Palestine Society**

In Harbin there had been also a Zionist organization, (more correctly, a Zionist circle), formed by a small group of men of the Herzlian trend. The group contained a few loyal active Zionists (J. V. Geshelin, S. G. Yabrov, S. L. Rabinovich. The circle was formed by Vladimir Kharitonovich Soskin, an energetic public figure. He was an ardent Zionist and successfully propagated Zionist doctrines. For a short while he lived in Harbin and dedicated all his time and energy to Zionist activity. Young, full of energy, V. Kh. Soskin stood at the head of the Zionist Circle, calling to colors for the sake of the rebirth of the Jewish Nation.

V. Kh. Soskin was born in Kerch, Russia, graduated from the Kerch Gymnasium and the Medicine Faculty of the Kharkov University, and actively participated in the student Zionist movement "Kadima". During the Russo Japanese war, he was mobilized as a physician. After the war he settled in Harbin, where he became a practicing doctor. He appeared at the Zionist meetings with fiery Zionist speeches and worked for the National Fund. In 1909 he left Harbin for Southern Russia, but returned a year later. At the time, his brother, S. Kh.. Soskin, a first rank grain exporter and an owner of a fleet of river navigating ships, also lived in Harbin and occupied a key position in the economic world of Manchuria and Siberia.

Dr. Soskin continued his Zionist

activity, but at the end of 1911 he had a stroke and was paralyzed. His brother sent him to be treated in Berlin, but to no avail. He died in 1912 in Moscow, 34 years of age.

At the time, Zionism was illegal in Russia for political-diplomatic reasons: the Russian Imperial government was eager not to spoil its relations with Turkey because of Palestine, then an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. And yet, open Zionist propaganda continued to be conducted across Russia. So were mass Zionist meetings. The Zionists wanted to create in Palestine a Jewish state, guaranteed by the international law (The Basel Program).

In Russia existed the secret so called "Stolypin Document", persecuting the Zionist activists by creating court cases (under para.124 of the Russians law) against the members of the Zionist committees for their participation in the "forbidden society named the Organization of the Zionists". These criminal "law suits" emerged as a result of a discovery of a cache of "Zionist literature" or money box with an image of the Star of David and an inscription "Zion", etc.

Such "cases" were conducted in Smolensk, Moscow, Odessa, Bendera, Krasnoyarsk, and many other towns. In 1907 the Russian Senate issued a decree, by which any Zionist organization "was recognized as illegal" (Decree #5186, dated June 1, 1907).

According to such prohibitions police conducted searches in Jewish homes, searching for "prohibited literature concerning the Zionist question", as it was officially called, and the whit-blue money box of the National Fund. Once a police squad entered our apartment in the town of Perm, looking for "nelegalshchina" (any illegal material).

Such was the situation in Harbin in 1911. If the box stood openly on the table, police "confiscated" it outright, which shocked local

Zionists, who were accustomed until now to live as free citizens of a free city. "What shall we do?" they asked themselves, "how can we continue to work under such conditions?" "How can we raise money for the "Keren Kayemet?" ("The National Fund").

Then the leaders of the Zionist Circle decided to become legalized, on the pattern of Odessa Palestine Society, which was organized by Dr. Pinsker twenty years ago, and registered with the authorities as "A society of assistance to the Jews, migrating to Palestine for permanent settlement", and, in such a manner to camouflage their Zionist activity.

In January 1912 S. G. Yabrov was charged with resenting the KVJD Management with a set of Rules and Regulations identical to that of the Odessa Palestine Society. In February 1912 the document was formulated and presented to Lt. General Afanasiev, assistant to General Khorvat, the general manager of the KVJD. In May, 1921 the legal status of the Palestine Society, as it was called in brief, was approved by the KVJD Administration, which enabled the Zionist Circle to continue its work undisturbed, and to augment its cultural and Jewish national effort, which played an important role in the life of the Jewry in this remote frontier. It coincided with my arrival in Harbin.

### **Cultural activity**

Soon after my arrival in Harbin I was visited by a group of Zionist activists together with the "Imaldag" chairman P. M. Kahn. They invited me to give a lecture in the Club on Jewish literature, on the work of the Jewish writers and poets, and, in general, on Jewish topics. I agreed, hoping to put the beginning of cultural activity in this establishment, which turned into an exclusively gambling house. My first lecture was at the "Imaldag" club on May 10, about Morris Rosenfeld, poet of the Jewish Ghetto, in connection with his 50th jubilee. The 400-seats club was packed to

capacity. Present was the whole of the Harbin Jewish society, students, Zionist leadership and rand-and-file. I was invited on the spot to give another lecture on May 19 about the Jewish writer Mendele Mocher sfarim. This time, many were refused entrance for the lack of space. Those were the first lectures on the Jewish topics heard in Harbin. They were covered by a Russian newspaper "Our Life", where a substantial article appeared the next day. From then on I began to publish two weekly articles dedicated to the Jewish current news and commentaries, and to inform the Harbiners of what is happening on the Jewish scene, stressing the Zionist strife of the world Jewry. The Harbin Jews were seemingly satisfied with the publication of my articles in the press.

Those were the days of the notorious "Beilis affair" I allotted much effort and time to this libelous insinuation of the "Jewish ritual usage of the blood of the Christian Infants, allegedly murdered by them for this purpose." I could write quite freely. There was no censorship a priori. Although the newspaper was fined for a then large sum of 300 rubles, one year later (1914) for my article "An Historical Day", marking the first anniversary of the trial. The article was signed A.K. But I continued to write.

On May 10, 1912 at the premises of the Jewish Public School the first general assembly of the Palestine Society was conducted. The Jewish population was informed of the event through the Russian newspapers. Registration of the new members was affected at the entrance (86 new members out of 130 present).

The agenda contained my introductory speech about the aims and problems of the Palestine Society (i.e. Zionism), acquaintance with the rules and regulations of the Society and the election of the governing body. I was elected as the chairman of the Assembly, the secretary being J.V. Geshelin, one of the most energetic

Zionist activists in Harbin. The assembly was very lively and showed a lot of interest in the inauguration of the movement.

The first management consisted of: Dr. A. Kaufman, S.G. Yabrov, M.V. Kiro, J.V. Geshelin, Karasik, P.K. Berman, M.A. Goldberg. The registration of the new members continued, the list growing fast and steadily. The Society displayed dynamic activity and soon became the leading element of the Jewish social life in the city. Factually it was the beginning of the national Zionist road. The whole of the Russian press gave detailed accounts of the event and widely commented on the Zionist aims and problems. In July 1912 I received a letter from Menahem Usishkin (Odessa), dated July 23 (5 Av), saying: "I greet your Society as a younger brother of ours, officially functioning the last twenty years. I wish you a thriving and an energetic activity for the benefit of our Palestine cause. We need dedicated workers, seeking the rebirth of our nation in our historical Homeland, which will come with God's help 'beyomeichem ubeyomeinu'. With Zion's greetings, M. Usishkin, Chairman".

From the very first days of its existence, the Palestine Society conducted a comprehensive cultural program. On 20th of Tamuz, 1912, (8th anniversary of Herzl's demise), the community management had arranged for a solemn memorial service in the Chief Synagogue. From then on, this became a traditional annual event with a detachment of the youth Zionist Organizations Brit Trumpeldor (Betar) and Maccabi as an honorary guard, standing at attention with a Zionist banner, with the Chief Rabbi and the community leaders eulogizing the deceased leader.

Special effort was made in raising funds for the Keren Kayemet (Jewish National Fund). Packed to capacity were lectures given in various large halls on various Jewish topics, as,

for instance, the lecture given by Dr. Kaufman and a jurist Bykhovsky on "The resurrected land" and "The Jewish nationalism" respectively. The Zionist following continued to grow.

### **The Jewish library**

Special effort was dedicated by the young Palestine Society to the cultural and educational work with the young generation. In 1913, the Jewish lending library and reading room were opened in the premises of the Jewish school with practically all the main publications in Hebrew and Yiddish being offered to the readers. The public contributed generously for the further broadening of the book fund on Jewish subjects: fine literature, history and political publications - of all coloring and trends. This, in time, became the initial nucleus of the Harbin Jewish Public Library.

### **The "Bezalel Exhibition"**

In 1913 the Harbin Palestine Society organized an exhibition of the works by the Jerusalem Art-and-Crafts School "Bezalel" at the initiative of the director of the school, Boris Shatz, and with the participation of the painters E. Lilion and S. Hirshenberg. The imported artifacts included the output of all the departments of the "Bezalel": carpets, painting and sculpture - in stone, metal and wood. All of them were sold on the first day of the exhibition. The event attracted an enormous audience - Jewish and Russian alike. I gave a report on the aims and attainments of "Bezalel" in Palestine. The Palestine Society eventually became the center of the Harbin Jewish cultural life.

We had no premises of our own and were obliged to conduct all our activities in a rented room in the apartment of the Jewish School director, L. Koltunov. (Artilleriiskaya Street, corner Pekarnaya). About 40 to 50 readers visited the reading room daily. The same room served also as the place of weekly meetings of the Zionist leadership. Here, on Saturday

evenings, lectures were read, as well as parties and dances, which always attracted a capacity-plus-audience.

### **Part Five**

In 1913, The Harbin Palestine Society arranged in the premises of the Jewish School a grand literary-musical event to mark the 34th jubilee of the front row Jewish poet, Semion Frug. I delivered a paper "On the lyrical character of his poetry". The lecture was followed by a musical program. The evening had a capacity attendance, covered in detail by the Russian language local press. The following message was sent to the poet, who lived at the time in Odessa. "By your thirty-year service to the Jewish literature inspired by the noble love for your people, you have created cultural values for the whole of humanity. For thirty years you have prayed at the altar of Resurrection, calling your people to arise from the ages-long sleep. In the name of all those who came to honor you by their presence at the literary event, the leadership of the Harbin Palestine Society greets you, one of the worthiest sons of his people. May the live spring, your creative spirit, continue to burn for many years in the future".

За этим следовала цитата из произведений поэта:

Так пой же нам милые песни твои,

Дай услышать родные нам звуки!

Проснутся надежды в разбитой груди,

Окрепнут, бессильные руки.

И время придет, загорится заря

Над нашею долею бедной -

И станет унылая песня твоя

Торжественной песней победной.

In reply, I received a letter from S. G. Frug on June 21, 1913:

"Dear Doctor! Your letter reached me sick in bed, which for the last several years (after extraction of a kidney) became a regular, practically a constant phenomenon. I sincerely thank you and all the organizers and the participants of the event for

the attention afforded me. Let us wish our future national poet more gratifying topics and less painful experience in his life, at least that he should not endure poverty as severe as he is submerged into presently, after 34 years of literary work, not being able to keep my family up, nor cure my wasting illness. Maybe I should not have complained to you, people, tossed by the fate out to the far away neglected land. But your kind, amiable letter of greetings arrived at such a dark moment! And, be as it may, it is good to think that there, in the far-away Harbin my life-time labor roused an echo of a sincere brotherly sympathy. May God grant you all health and happiness - S. Frug."

The letter, read out at the meeting of the management of the Harbin Palestine Society, had aroused a feeling of deep sorrow and shame in our hearts. The poet of the Jewish Resurrection has no means of livelihood, no way to restore his health and his fading strength. It was decided here and now to raise the necessary funds for the recuperation of the poet. G.B. Drizin and I were charged with the difficult task to realize the project. The time was unfavorable for any fundraising. The Harbin economy suffered from acute crisis. There was no money to heat the Jewish hospital or the synagogue. The charity institutions were on the verge of collapse. The employees of the Harbin Jewish Community were unpaid for months. And yet, we were firm in our efforts to fulfill our duty before our poet. We passed from door to door, we begged for contribution, and, we can proudly say that the Jews of Harbin answered our call. Each one gave -as much as he could.

By then, Frug was known to all the Jewish population of the city. The jubilee event in his honor was not forgotten, and during the first two days after the campaign was launched, we collected 6000 rubles,

a big amount of money in those times. Each one understood that this was a call of honor and each one honored the call.

We have transferred the collected sum to S. G. Frug with the following letter:

"Much honored and very dear Semion Grigorievich, we have read your letter full of grief and sorrow and our hearts were bitter. We were hurt. We, your contemporaries, felt our guilt. We are ashamed that our national poet after 30 years of service to his people is destitute. We are ashamed that you, being chained by illness to the bed, have no means to restore your health and sing again your songs of Resurrection and call us again to live a new life, to the holy toil for the benefit of the people.

We beg you, dear Semion Grigorievich, to accept our modest gift as a token of our deep gratitude for your poems for the hope with which you filled our souls by your words. Please accept our gift and remember that you have an obligation before your long-suffering people, and that this obligation is to continue to create, which is also an obligation not to die of hunger."

This letter was answered by S.G. Frug as follows: "Most honorable doctor! Your letter found me at work on the translation of the first volume of Agada. I am now working, sitting at my desk and, mostly, lying in bed. The 600 roubles you have sent me arrived as an unexpected fortune, at a moment when all my resources were dry. May God send you and your friends in Harbin much happiness and joy?

With all my sincere feeling of honor for you, S. Frug."

Frug sent me his literary works - poems, the first volume of the "Agada" and some short stories in Yiddish. All the books bore his signature. The management of the Harbin Palestine Society ordered a set of his complete works, in reply to which we received this interesting letter: Dec.15, 1913.

Dear Doctor, Together with this letter, I have sent to you 40 copies of my "complete poems"(Sherman publishing house) These copies came to me occasionally, as an addition to my author's revenue. I don't have a copy of the previous edition. There remained remnants of this (bad, in many aspects) edition, still being sold by pirate booksellers, to fight who, we the authors, are helpless. In addition there still exists another "edition" of my poems, which is a pure forgery and belongs to a notorious St. Petersburg book seller Zukerman. These are the 1st and the 2nd volumes of my poems of the 1895 edition, bound in one volume and named "Poems of S.G. Frug", without naming the Printing Press. Such are some of our newest crooks, who allow themselves such fraudulence, knowing very well that the author would not sue his fellow-Jew in a public court. Thus, I was obliged to suffice myself to writing to the editor of one of the local newspapers, which, accidentally did not stop one of the Odessa book stores to continue to sell this fraudulent edition.

The second part of the "Agada" is being printed now, and will appear on the shelves of the book stores in the second middle of this month. I have worked on it ( to say nothing about the "headaches" with the proof reading) for four months and sold it for a miserable sum of money. The book could have appeared already a couple of months ago, but, regretfully, the "Moria" publishing house does not have sufficient equipment - financial and technical.

Now I am busy preparing an elegant edition of my poems for the youthful reader. I do not know when this edition will be ready, but I would hate to have to give this book (which is especially close to my heart) to be devoured by a modern publishing "Moloch" with no less appetite than his Biblical predecessor.

Thank you, dear doctor for the ordered copies. From the bottom



of my heart I send you and your comrades my most heartfelt wishes. - S. Frug”

This was my last contact with Frug. Soon, the outbreak of the First World War threw the continent into havoc and chaos. On November 12, 1916 Frug died in Odessa. He died in poverty.

The Harbin Palestine Society and the Harbin Jewish Community organized a huge memorial meeting. I eulogized him. In 1918 Frug’s wife had been in Harbin. She visited me and told me of his last years and days, which he spent mostly in bed and was unable to write. He was penniless and was partly assisted by the Jewish Scientific-literary Society of Odessa. During the last months of his life, when in the short intervals between crises, he wrote in Hebrew, a language he was fully in command of, but never had used it professionally. During the last year of his life he wrote a number of children’s poems in Hebrew.

His funeral was truly grandiose. All the Odessa Jewry followed his funerary cortege. Despite the war time, thousands of condolence telegrams reached his widow the from all corners of the world.

The Harbin Palestine Society conducted an energetic campaign for the benefit of the Jewish National Fund and also spread political Zionist propaganda. There were weekly “cultural evenings; which attracted the Jewish youth in steeply increasing numbers. I was the chief lecturer and appeared weekly, every Saturday evening. Also spoke L. K. Koltunov and Rabbi Levin, who returned to Harbin in 1913.

The lectures were delivered on the pioneer Zionist settlers, the “BILU” group, on Herzl’s book Judenstadt, on the colonization of Palestine, on the project of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, on the Hebrew language, on Shalom Aleichem, Bialik, Peretz, and, of course on the local community topics, with the constant spirited participation of

Rabbi Hashkel.

The Palestine Society celebrated Jewish national, historical and literary anniversaries. The opening days of the Zionist congresses were dedicated to the discussion of the agenda of the Congress. On the day of the opening of the 11th Zionist Congress in August 1913, there was a general meeting, where I delivered the main paper. Other speakers were Rabbi Levin and Aharonov, an employee of the Samsonovich Co.

On one of the general meetings of the Palestine Society a proposition was made that the Society purchase in Palestine a large plot of land for a Harbin agricultural colony.

The proposal was adopted. Bergut suggested that a delegation of two men should be dispatched to Palestine to get acquainted personally and in detail with the living and labor conditions. Bergut himself visited Palestine twice and privately purchased a plot of land for himself. I approached the Central Committee of the Zionist Organization of Russia for information about the possibilities of purchasing land in Palestine and received a letter dated 27.4.1913 from Boris Alexandrovich Goldberg (a senior Zionist functionary, an author and a journalist, delegated to a number of Zionist Congresses), in which he suggested that we organize a corporation for the purpose of purchasing the plot before going any further in order to guarantee ownership to the participants of the project.

### **Part Six**

In 1913, I wrote a lot in the Russian periodicals on the general Jewish topics, on Zionism, on the Harbin Jewish community and its role in the Jewish life, on the immigration to Palestine, and, in particular, on the Beilis trial.

I took part in the activity of some non-Jewish organizations despite the lack of spare time I was invited to join the medical staff of the Harbin Municipal Hospital (Russian

division) in the capacity of the Chief Doctor, Contagious Department, and the Registrar, Women’s Therapeutic Department. I also received patients privately at home.

The Harbin Municipal Hospital was housed in a large two-storey building at the far end (practically outside) of the town, with a 200 bed-capacity. The Contagious Department occupied six separate little buildings, each for a particular contagious illness (scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles, smallpox, spotted typhus). This department had been entirely under my responsibility, and I was its only physician. There was always something to be done there, and I was full of enthusiasm.

I also dedicated much of my time to social work, especially in the “Children’s protection Society.” The Society opened a nursery for 30 children, but was obliged to take care of 45, supplying the homeless tots with shelter, healthy food, medical care, and something they were unable to obtain at their parents’: friendship and initial education. We fought against hunger, sickness and child mortality. I spent a few years, serving the Society, and approached it not as a matter of charity, but as a part of education. I often visited the nursery, and was happy to watch the children washed, well fed, sleep in a clean bed, and happily laugh. Playing with their little comrades. They had good toys, clean underwear and clothes; they lived in well aired rooms full of sunlight, instead of dark cellars with no ray of sun ever reaching them.

It is interesting to note that amongst 45 -50 children, there was not a single Jewish child in the nursery. Not because there were no destitute Jewish families in Harbin, but because the Harbin Jewish Society supplied them with all the necessary care. My wife, Bertha (also a physician) and I were called up for volunteer work in our capacity at the Manchurian Pedagogical Society, whose members were mostly physicians

and educators, and whose aim was to bring the light of knowledge into the popular masses, The society was headed by a well known pedagogue and teacher of the KVJD Commercial schools (for boys and girls). In the Society daily lectures were given on the educational, medical, judicial and social topics, of which the most popular were lectures on children's education. Each lecture was given twice: once at the "Railway Assembly" in the Upper Harbin (New Town), for the local population, and once for the Lower Harbin (Pristan) and its population.

Her first lecture (on "The Developing Organism") my wife delivered at the Railway and Commercial Assemblies in October, 1913, and I - a week later - gave a lecture on "The life functions of a newly born baby - methods of feeding, heredity and degeneration, morbidity of the newly born, the duty of a mother") At the time I was enthralled with the subject "The child's world" and gave a comprehensive series of lectures exclusively for the educators on the following topics: "Education - learning from children", "Child's sexuality", "Sexual phenomenae of children's questions to their parents", "Biological character of sexual phenomenae", "Psychoanalytical experience", "First acquaintance with the anatomy and physiology of the human body: sexual education", "Myth and actuality", "Sigmund Freud and the 'Great mystery' of mother's body", "The parents and the school", "The role of an educator and his responsibility for the child's future", and others.

I also participated in the effort of the "Social Library", established by the Georgian community and served for a short while in its presidium as a representative of the Jewish community. In October, 1913 the Library arranged an evening, dedicated to the 60th birthday of the Russian famous writer V. G. Korolenko. I represented the

Harbin Palestine Society. The event took place at the Danilov Theatre (formerly Circus). In my paper I have delivered at the event, I stressed the heartfelt attitude of the humanist writer towards the Jewish nation.

### **Rabbi Hashkel**

The year 1913 was rather a turbulent one in the social life of the Harbin Jewish community. Bickering, squabble, arguing, quarreling - all this in connection with an election of a rabbi. From the end of 1911 the Harbin Jewish community had no rabbi. Previously, from 1906 Rabbi Hashkel had the post of the spiritual leader of the community. Clever, well educated in Judaica and general subjects, he was a man of philosophical pattern of thinking. From the very first days of my sojourn in Harbin we often met and had interesting conversations on philosophy, literature, sociology and Zionism. He always attended the Palestine Society's weekly evenings, participated in discussions, expressed deep considerations. He held the position of a Rabbi for five years conscientiously and honestly. He never acted out of desire to please this or that particular person. Compromise was foreign to him. For him Judaism was a teaching, a philosophy, and not just piety.

All his qualities, however, were of no concern for a group of orthodox Jews, who had a different idea of what a Rabbi should be. The Rabbi's personality as a spiritual leader had been much less important for them than their quest for kashrut and other formal issues of the religious cult. The remuneration of a Rabbi was very low in those days, and he had to live in virtual poverty. The head of a wealthy firm, Skidelski, was on friendly terms with Rabbi Hashkel and every now supported him by letting him do some errands for the firm, which earned him a small side income. This, too, was to the dislike of the Orthodox group, who argued: "what sort of a businessman Rabbi

have we got!" They were joined by others, and in 1911 Rabbi Hashkel lost his position.

He stayed in Harbin and continued to work for Skidelski, now full time. H did not participate in the social life of the community, but never missed a Palestine Society evening. He died in 1915.

### **Rabbi Levin**

Having been left without a Rabbi, the community management began to deal with the issue. A nine-member committee was elected, consisting mostly of the Orthodox. There were also others: S. G. Yabrov, M. J. Yelkin. They advertised in the Jewish newspapers of Warsaw and Vilno, wrote personal letters to the leading Rabbis of Russia, asking to recommend candidates for the position of a spiritual leader of the Harbin community. Suggestions and recommendations were received and discussed. A hot controversy ensued. Some were for one candidate, others preferred another. Even some active Zionists entered the struggle. The more prominent of the "Siberian" Jews supported Rabbi Shmuel Levin, who occupied this post from 1903 till 1906. During the Russo-Japanese war he was extremely active in organizing the social work and initiating relief projects. Many knew him from his past fine record in Omsk and Chita, where he now served as a Rabbi. He often visited Harbin and was always active in our Zionist effort. The "Sibiriaks", who occupied key positions in the Harbin Jewish Community wished to see Rabbi Levin as their spiritual leader. The struggle gained further intensity when he was officially invited and arrived in Harbin in July, 1913 to perform his duties temporarily, until the official elections. By then, the committee had already decided upon two contestants: Rabbi Shmuel Levin and Rabbi Aaron Kiselev of Borisov, who enjoyed the highest evaluation by all who knew him. A special envoy was dispatched to Borisov to

meet him personally, and returned with the most enthusiastic report on the man, both as a learned rabbi and a personality. A fierce struggle began. The campaign was conducted mostly in the synagogue. Both the merits and the defects of the contestants were exaggerated beyond extremity. Some even stooped to invent abuse against the opposing side. The loudest of all were the Orthodox.

### **The Leadership**

Simultaneously, raged the election campaign for the general religious and secular leadership of the Jewish community, whose tenure was to be expired in 1913. All this caused fierce debates. The fiercest opposition to the very existence of the secular leadership came from the Orthodox sector. The issue remained on the agenda for three months. It was transferred several times to the conciliatory committee together with the "Rabbis conflict".

As to the question of the religious management, the general assembly voted practically unanimously for E. I. Dobisov (chairman); G. B. Drizin (treasurer) and myself ("learned Jew"). From the very first moment, I refused to participate in all those quarrels and declined to be delegated.

In 1914 the Zionists (Palestine Society) opened a broad campaign for democratization of the community and for the introduction of a representation as broad as possible. At the General Assembly, the recommendations of the Zionists on the issue of the secular leadership was finally settled positively by 150 to 10 votes in favor.

General Assemblies were summoned intermittently by the supporters of either Rabbi Kiselev or Rabbi Levin. The debates became more and more fierce, truth and lies intertwined. At each session of the General assembly again and again a recommendation was posted for the religious leadership, consisting

of three names: Dobisov, Drizin and Dr. Kaufman, despite my constant refusal to be elected. The situation had nearly split the community in two, if not for the Palestine Society's intervention, which prevented it.

### **Elections**

The storm had not eased until October, 1913, a month after the elections, which were conducted in the Chief Synagogue and attended literally by every member of the community. All were there, the old and the young. Needless to say, the event was covered by all the Russian newspapers, delegating their editors and chief reporters to write-up the story on the spot. The premises of the synagogue were full to capacity. Many were compelled to remain in the courtyard.

Engineer F. M. (??) Chairman of the Stock Exchange Committee was invited to chair the elections assembly. He was astonished at the invitation, as he was never involved in any Jewish activity. Neither was he ever seen in the synagogue. However, he agreed when told that this impartiality and the respect for his integrity were exactly the reason for the invitation. This was his first appearance in the synagogue for the ten years of his sojourn in Harbin.

I was extremely indignant at the very idea that the appointment of a Rabbi to his post had to go through the act of casting a ballot - white (for), or black (against) - the candidate, which seemed to me as a derisive and humiliating act towards the sanctified mission of administering religion and towards a person whom we consider to be a representative of our Teaching, our Torah!. No, this is impossible! This is impermissible!

Then came the speeches. Passionate, heated, often offensive to the candidates. Some threatened to leave the community altogether, and to establish one "of their own". I was overwhelmed with emotion and

bitterness. This had to stop.

Most of the abusive speeches were aimed against Rabbi Levin. He was doomed to fail. But how could I prevent his humiliation? I talked to some prominent leaders of the community, especially to Dobisov. There was only one way to prevent the disaster - to convince Rabbi Levine of the necessity of the withdrawal by him of his candidature. For the sake of saving the unity of the Harbin Jewish community.

G. B. Drizin and I went to see Rabbi Levin and informed him frankly and openly of the situation. He and I were on friendly terms and sincerely respected each other. I talked to him. I somehow found enough strength to ask him to withdraw his candidature and save both the unity of the community and his own dignity and honor. He agreed without a word of protest and wrote a letter to the chairman of the religious management in which he asked to cancel his candidature for the benefit of the community, which "is more precious to me than my personal matters. He reminded the chairman that he (Rabbi Levin) was the first rabbi of Harbin and one of the founders of its Jewish community, and that this fact makes him responsible for its unity and peace. The candidature of Rabbi Levin was withdrawn. The chairman ordered to begin the voting. Rabbi Kiselev was elected unanimously. In November 1913 he arrived in Harbin.

He was then 50 years of age. We worked in unison for decades. He - as the spiritual leader, I - as the head of the Far Eastern Jewry. He remained to be the Rabbi of Harbin till the day of his death in 1949. But I shall yet return to speak of him in my narrative of the life and activity of the Harbin Jewish Community.

*(To be continued)*

# AMBASSADOR OF CHINA AND CHINESE EMBASSY OFFICIALS GUESTS OF ISRAEL-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

*Passover trip - April 2011*



*On board the boat in the Haifa Bay*



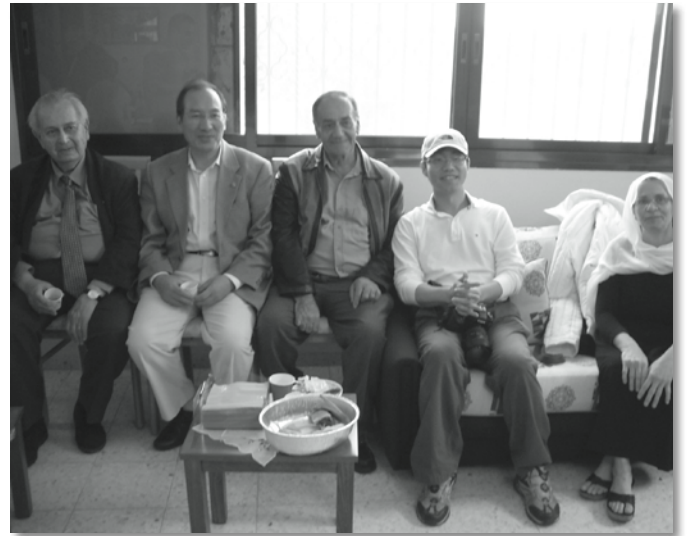
*At the Hecht Museum in Haifa*



*Meeting with the President of the University of Haifa*

# Passover trip with CHINESE EMBASSY OFFICIALS

Visit to the town of Dalyat El Carmel - April 2011



**We send warmest congratulations to dear  
Irit and Teddy ABRAMOV  
on the marriage of their daughter  
and wish them good health and happiness  
All our love  
Asya KOGAN, RICHARD, RITA and ABA**

# SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE RECORDS

By Peter Nash, Sydney, Australia

## 1

Some historical background: prior to the prior to the Communist take-over in September 1949, Shanghai was a cosmopolitan city with three independent sectors: the Chinese Municipality of Greater Shanghai, the French Concession and the International Settlement which included Hongkew where most of the Jewish refugees either lived after arrival circa 1938 to 1940 or were forced to live from 1943. The Chinese Municipality was the largest, but the International Settlement was the city's commercial and industrial centre and also the trading port with fashionable clubs, hotels and consulates and a constant ebb and flow of political intrigue forming a part of world politics. Its ruling body was the Shanghai Municipal Council, a citizen group which in reality was controlled by British interests. Its law-enforcement arm, the Shanghai Municipal Police (SMP), included Chinese, Indian, Russian and Japanese officers, but the most senior officers were British. As a centre of political activity, Shanghai was a natural target for intelligence operations by several powers, particularly Russian, Chinese, Japanese and also key western countries.

I first heard of the existence of the SMP files from an article in the International Review of Jewish Genealogy publication Avotaynu1. I also came across a chapter in "The Jews of China"2 by Marcia R Ristaino {Historian and Senior Chinese Acquisitions Specialist at the Library of Congress, Washington DC}, in which she describes the background to the SMP files - also see her book "Port of Last Resort"3. The files cover the period 1894-1949 and are housed at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA

II] in College Park, Maryland, just outside of Washington DC. They are a collection of Shanghai Municipal Police investigation files used for intelligence gathering by British agencies. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor by Japan in December 1941 and their subsequent military control of Shanghai, the Japanese left the collection of files intact and apparently only removed reports on Japanese personalities. The eventual transfer of the files in 1949 just prior to the Communist take-over, from the Nationalist Chinese to American Strategic Services (forerunner of the CIA) is a hair-raising story in itself.

## 2

When the files were hurriedly loaded on board an American warship, some of the boxes fell into the Whangpoo River and others were damaged when the ship transporting them ran into a typhoon. Luckily most of the files safely reached Japan, and eventually the United States.

My interest was sparked by the potential genealogical data relevant to the 20,000 Central European Jewish refugees and an estimated 10,000 Russian and Sephardic Jews that resided in Shanghai in the 1938 to 1945 period. So my planned visit to Washington DC in July 2003 for an International Jewish Genealogy Conference included some time to access these files. I was not prepared for the vast amount of files containing astonishing reports for all kinds of citizens as well as various lists of Jewish residents.

I was confronted with the daunting task of deciding which of about 67 microfilm rolls and about 120 archival boxes to order from an off-site central storage, also allowing for one to two days retrieval time. Some files exist only on film and

others only on paper and some on film and paper. Fortunately a finding aid was created and published: M1750, which describes briefly the nature of the contents of the files in the Records of the SMP covering the period 1849-1949 - otherwise known as the Central Intelligence Agency Record Group 263. It must be added that the collection also contains 'Related Records' such as records from Tsingtao - a naval port north of Shanghai (now Qingdao).

With the help of John Taylor, Archivist in the Military Records Division of NARA II, I viewed the Pamphlet describing the contents of M1750 (obtainable from the Publications Division at NARA I in Washington DC). M1750 has about 180 pages and 3500 files which are described in mundane, mysterious and also tantalizing ways, for example:

## 3

"Report on a substance supposed to be varnish"; "Report of purchase of Royale typewriter"; "Periodical service corporation advertising for salesgirls"; "Confession of Chulkoff"; "Raids on communist bases"; "Murder in the French Concession of a Korean"; "Arrival of Soviet agent"; "Rumors' re sudden death of Mrs. V. Kolotinsky"; "H.E. Duldner - Austrian Jew", "Central European Jews, arrival in Shanghai, list of professions... immigration certificates an endorsement of identification"; and so on ...

In order to maximize my limited time I decided to access files for the period of 1940-1945 and requested Box 117 containing a Folder with the intriguing title: "Re letter submitted by Mr. Kahan, 1, 1a.

The undersigned begs to support that the petitioner Mr. Kahan is the headmaster of the Shanghai Jewish

School, 544 Seymour Road. The programme is as per attached and contains nothing objectionable. It will start at about 3 p.m. on March 21, 1943 and end about 6 p.m. Approximately 400 persons will attend. No admission fee is charged. There is no objection to the approval of this letter - signed (not legible). D.S., Officer-in-Charge, Special Branch District (District Superintendent?). The attachments to Mr. Kahan's letter include a Program of Prize distribution ("for good work during 1942") and entertainment to be held at the SJS on the day of the Purim holiday. The attachments describing the entertainment included:

- The story of Purim with the full play and characters (by Form III and IV pupils) typed out in English and also written out in Hebrew (!)
- a gymnastic number.
- Musical number on piano and cello: "Pop goes the weasel", "Twinkle, twinkle little star" and "Old King Cole" (!!!)

Very nostalgic, riveting and fascinating! Especially as such an 'important' investigative file is part of the Military Records Division of NARA, housed in a building, funded by the tax-paying citizens of the United States!

#### 4

The box I chose also contained a very thick SMP file labeled "Jewish Affairs". What a mine of amazing information this was! Virtually all Reports (in English and typed!) came from the Foreign Affairs Section of the SMP including for example as follows:

29 March 1943: Extracts from the Shanghai Jewish Chronicle concerning Shanghai Ashkenazi Collaborating Relief Association (SACRA.) and Joint Administrative Committee (JAC) including the names of the SACRA and JAC committees.

April 1943.. Affiliation of the Jewish (sic) Gemeinde to SACRA - with names and addresses of executive members, names of delegates to JAC,

matters relating to the 18 February 1943 Proclamation (re-settlement in the Designated Area), etc.

22 May 1943: Stateless Refugees - Removal to the Designated Area. «In connection with the removal of the Stateless Refugees into the Designated Area it can be stated that the majority, about 90%, have now moved into the area or together with the persons who were already residents of the area, there are at present not less than 13,600 stateless refugees, of whom about 6,600 moved into the area and about 7,000 lived inside the area». Figures 2, 2a.

The file then gives statistics of special circumstances for prolongation before moving; the steps required for obtaining Special Passes to leave the Designated Area; the problems with Polish refugees (Mir Yeshiva?) not wishing to move into the Salvation Army Shelter at 630 Muirhead Road.

12 June 1943: "Rooms sold by SACRA in the Yuhang Road School (the former Chinese Middle School) for availability to refugees - with details of number of rooms, sizes, chargeable rent, repair liabilities, etc." The Report also covers the refugee problems of income earning and housing - and their dissatisfaction with SACRA's attitude to their problems. Opinions are also expressed on alleged profiteering by the Russian Jews from the refugees.

12 June 1943: Financial Conditions of Refugee Families

#### 5

21 July 1943: Report on SACRA Meeting of Supporters at the Shanghai Jewish Club on 20 July 1943. Comment included: "Dr. A.J. Cohn (Chairman)... thanking first of all Mr. T. Kubota (Director-General of the Shanghai Stateless Refugee Bureau) and Mr. Kano for their attendance..."; "A. Oppenheim spoke about... the Charity Section... the Kitchen Fund is supporting over 4,000 persons with one loaf of bread (9ozs) and one hot meal... The Kitchen Fund requires \$ 800,000 every month, but can raise

only... \$ 500,000"; "...although already twice stated by Mr. Kubota that the Proclamation is not an anti-Semitic measure, none of the Jews believe this statement and believe that the restrictions against the Jews have been made through the influence of the Nanking Government...".

31 August 1943: Report on "The Situation of Refugees after the Start and Segregation on Aug 10 1943 - describes the plight of refugees when their limited resources run out and the need to obtain passes to leave the Designated Area ('Ghetto'). Also highlights the problems of refugees having entered the 'Ghetto' then wishing to leave it.

20 December 1943; Letter. from SACRA - "The Relief Committee of SACRA hereby applies for permission to make a collection of old clothing during Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, December 26, 27, 28. This clothing is intended for distribution among the poorer classes of Refugees living at present in the Designated Area. The collection will be made by seven groups of young men and girls, who will call on the dates specified at the homes of Jewish families in the First and Eighth Districts, in accordance with lists attached hereto. No collection whatsoever will be made' on the street..

Trusting that this permit will be granted...". This is followed by: "In view of the good purpose of the collection... there is no... Police objection." Figures 3, 3a, 3b, 3c.

The attached List of Collectors contains the names of the thirty 'young men and girls' and the List of Jewish Families to be visited contains over 500 family names and their addresses.

#### 6

All the families named seem to be from the Russian Ashkenazi community living in the French District. This is exceptional data as other databases, such: as the re-produced Emigranten Adressbuch (November 1938), the 1943-1944 Gross-Hongkew

Census (re-produced on CD-ROM and attached to the book 'Exil-Shanghai 1938-1947' by Armbruster, Kohlstruck and Miühlberger and the Shanghai HIAS Lists as featured in the article "Lost Shanghailanders" on the Rickshaw website, virtually only include the Central European refugees.

8 January 1944: "Notification from the Shanghai Refugee Bureau - All persons whose special passes have recently be (sic) confiscated by Police Headquarters, have to appear to-day,... at 10 a.m. in the office of Mr. Ghoya, Room 4. The above refers to special passes which were taken from persons detained in connection with a raid on the Central Arcade district, held on Dec. 28th, 1943. The number special passes detained was 47." What a frightening experience this must have been for these refugees - to be hauled in front of Mr. Ghoya - the self-proclaimed King of the Jews!!! Figure 4

10 January 1944: "Renewal of Blue Special Passes - Through the Shanghai Jewish Chronicle of Jan 9th, 1944, the Shanghai Stateless. Refugee Affairs Bureau informs that it will begin renewing blue special passes which will expire on Feb. 10th, 1944. They form the majority of passes issued and number over 2000 passes... a change of profession for the... special pass is not admissible, and persons doing so are to be punished according to circumstances... professions such as salesmen, representative, manager or agent are considered as of dubious nature if more than two destinations are to be reached or if longer working hours are demanded." Lists with about 80 names of Blue and Pink Pass holders are attached showing address, age, nationality and profession.

March 1944: A file with-Investigation Reports from the Wayside (Police) Station contained the complete biography of 24 Jewish refugees and some of their family members with vital data such as birth date and

where born, how and when arrived in Shanghai, ID's held, life history (in short) educational standard reached, language skills, vocations before and in Shanghai, income status, etc. Figure 5

## 7

The final section of the one-page Report is titled "Comment and Remarks" (of the Investigating Officer) and is the punch line. It is more or less the same in context for each Report, for example, "He and his wife came to the Barcelona Cafe at about 9 p.m. on the 18th of March and were on the 1st floor. His wife was playing cards "RUMMY" with two of her sisters in law (named). He himself was looking at the game. Owing to the fact that his brother (named) is the partner of the Barcelona Cafe he stated that it is cheaper to go to the Cafe then to be at home, moreover so, because of light control. The play was not for money."

At about 8.30 p.m. on the 16th of March he and his brother, who invited him, proceeded to the Barcelona Cafe for tea. At about 9.30 p.m. the authorities arrived, when his brother was detained and the Resident Certificate was confiscated from him and he was allowed later to proceed to his home."

So - what was their offence? Nothing. However the "authorities" tried to nail them with something. The biggest 'positive' is the vast amount of family history existing in these reports - albeit for only a few of the refugees.

11 June 1945 (Zang Zoh Police Station - Special Branch) (after Germany's surrender to the Allies in Europe); Rumors among Jewish Refugees - "In the last few days information received directly from Jewish circles has shown that Jewish refugees are expecting to be released from the designated area in Hongkew. These rumors are very interesting and according to the Jews there are many signs in the political world which show plans are being made for the

release of Jewish refugees from the designated area. Some Jewish circles in the city have said that an article has appeared in the local Japanese paper in which it was said that the Jewish refugees in the designated area are behaving very well and a hint was given about the liquidation of the designated area. It is one of many signs by which the Jews think that they will be released from the designated area.»

18 July 1945 (the day after the never-to-be-forgotten heavy US bombing in the Hongkew, District]: Markets - «Under impression of July 17 bombings prices on share markets went down about 20%... Reaction about the enemy bombings is difficult to describe at present.

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Certainly there is much pent-up anger at the Americans whose conduct is considered wanton and unnecessary, to say the least...»

19 July 1945; Air Raids July 17 and 18 - "The foreign community is particularly stirred by the bombings of part of the Jewish District, up to now thought to be 'bomb-proof. One hopes that a quick report by the Red Cross and by the local 'Joint' and/or Jewish Community will be sent out to Switzerland so that the US Government may learn about the outrages perpetrated on July 17... For today, 19th, the majority of local foreigners looks forward to another "lunch music", meaning bombings:..." A discourse is then given on further likely air raids, the consequent rise and influx of Chinese refugees, the political future of Japan, the breakdown of administrative control, etc.

As indicated earlier my primary interest was genealogy-related data. Box 79 under File 8263/2 contained a 'List of German Refugees who arrived in Shanghai since 1937'. About 950 refugees were registered with the Zang Zoh Police Station and are not

**Continued on page 57**



## LILLY KLEBANOV-BLAKE'S VISIT TO ISRAEL

Mrs. Lilly Klebanov-Blake, chair person of the Association of Former Residents of China in New York has arrived in Israel early on the 12th of October. R. and T. Kaufman met Lilly at Ben Gurion airport. On the same day, we held a meeting between our guest and the committee members of 'Igud Yotzei Sin', T Kaufman, Y. Klein and R. Veinerman.

Lilly Klebanov-Blake spent three days working at the archives of 'Igud Yotzei Sin'.

On the 17th of October, a festive reception was held in honour of our guest at "Ponve House" attended by some fifty members of 'Igud Yotzei Sin'. Amongst those present were members of the management T. and R. Kaufman, Y. Klein, G Brovinsky, A Wendel, A. and R. Rashinsky, P. and B. Breshedsky, A. Podolsky, A.

Fradkin, and M. Likhomonov. The reception was also attended by guests who arrived from abroad: Dina [Likhomonov] and Gershon Winkau from the USA, Lilly Indikovah-Frosterman and Angela and David Tappet from Australia.

T Kaufman opened the gathering greeting Lilly and the guests. In his speech he mentioned that The Association of Former Residents of China in New York was the first to have been founded, back in 1937. He told of the tremendous help the New York association has extended to those who departed China for Israel in the harsh years of the early 50's. T. Kaufman warmly greeted Mrs. Klebanov-Blake for being the chairperson of the New York Association, following in the footsteps of the founding generation

and wished her good health and success.

Teddy Kaufman has also introduced the guests who arrived from abroad, Dina Likhomonova, sister of Moshe Likhomonov who was born and raised in Harbin and Lilly Indikovah from Shanghai. Of special interest was the history of Angela Tappet. Her father, grandmother and great grandmother are all from Shanghai. Her great grandmother - Anna Schwartz [Teddy Kaufman's aunt, elder sister of his mother, Dr. Bertha Schwartz-Kaufman] - was a well known midwife in Harbin as well as Shanghai.

Lilly told the gathering about the activities of the association she is heading and was greeted warmly by all present. The meeting which began at 11 am lasted until 3 pm.

## SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE RECORDS

### Continued from page 56

listed alphabetically but in groups by their street address - all addresses being in the French Concession. Clearly most of these refugees were forced to move to the Designated Area in Hongkew (the Shanghai Ghetto area) after the February 1943 Proclamation of the Designated Area. The list also includes date of birth, occupation and date of arrival in Shanghai.

File 8263/2 also contained a second Hat titled 'List of German Nationals Residing in Shanghai' numbering about 2,300 persons including some, but not many, Jewish Refugees - the exact number cannot be estimated as Refugee status is not given nor any other vital data. Also given were street addresses, all apparently in the French Concession.

The SMP and/or the Japanese military representatives scoured all the Jewish newspapers, were represented

at official meetings, interviewed (interrogated?) refugees in public places, were always sniffing out possible connections and

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implications with and against themselves and their allies - Germany, Russia, and their enemies - Britain, United States, etc.

Related Records: These include Microfilms of Registration Certificates of the Russian Emigrants Committee (a quasi-official body representing Russian interests) for 1944-45 and of Tsingtao Registration Cards for 1946-1949. The latter include biographical data of Russian and Central European Jews, sometimes with photos. However I did not have time to view these records.

The Shanghai and Tsingtao Municipal Police Records are a historian's smorgasbord as well as an extremely

valuable resource for genealogical research. All documents were de-classified and as five minute copy time limits are imposed I only managed to copy 100 sheets, a fraction of the collection.

### References:

1. Avotaynu Vol XVI No. 1 (Spring 2000), p33 Publisher: Avotaynu, Inc., Bergenfield NJ.
2. Marcia R. Ristaino, "The Jews of China Vol Two - A Sourcebook and Research Guide" Edited by Jonathan Goldstein, M.E. Sharpe Inc, Armonk, New York (2000) pl35-151.
3. Marcia R. Ristaino, "Port of Last Resort", Stanford University Press, Stanford CA (2001).
4. Peter Nash (formerly Nachemstein) is a child Holocaust survivor from Berlin and found refuge in Shanghai from 1939 to 1949. Resident of Sydney since then.

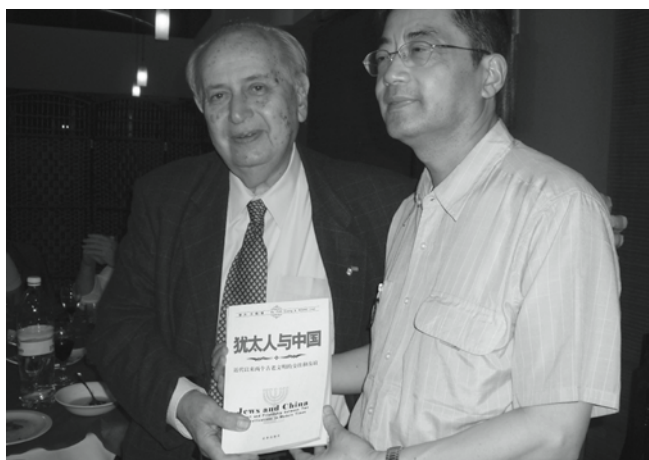
# PROFESSOR PAN GUANG - GUEST OF THE ISRAEL-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY



*Left to right: Uri Gordon, Ruthie, secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, R. Veinerman, T. Kaufman, Professor Pan Guang, I. Klein, B. Darel, Amir Lati, Deputy Director of the Department of East Asia at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prof. Zhou Guojian - assistant of prof. Pan Guang, A. Fradkin*

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*Prof. Pan Guang presents his book on the Jews of Shanghai*



*Professor Pan Guang speaks*



*Prof. Pan Guang's Assistant Professor Zhou Guojian*



*Left to right: Uri Gordon, Iris Elhanani, Ruthie, R. Veinerman, Amir Lati, T. Kaufman*



## 1917 - A Baghdadian family in Shanghai

The photograph below "1917 - A Baghdadian Family in Shanghai" is planned as the first of a series of group pictures taken of our former Sephardic-Baghdadian community members in Shanghai which we hope to publish regularly in the New Israel's Messenger section. If any of our readers have similar group pictures of community or family members we would greatly appreciate receiving them for publication.

### 1917 - A Baghdadian family in Shanghai

Left to Right - sitting: Aaron Moses; Mozelle (Maisie) Abraham, nee Hayim (wife of Ruby Abraham); David E.J. Abraham; - Founder and President of the Sephardic Community in Shanghai, great grandson of David Sassoon; Flora Moses, nee Shellim (grand-daughter of David Sassoon - wife of Aaron and mother of Lionel, Sybil, Aline, Winnie and Cyril); Sassoon "Fat

Boy" Nissim (brother of Aaron Moses and Mozelle Abraham); Mozelle Abraham, nee Moses (wife of David, sister of Aaron); Lionel Moses.

Back Row - Aline Moses (future Mrs. Hayim Hayim); Reuben (Ruby) Abraham (son of David)' Hanini Hayim (mother of Maisie); Winnie Moses (future Mrs. Ezekiel Toeg); Sassoon S. Somekh (half-brother of Mrs. Elia Shahmoon, married to Rebecca Abraham, sister of David) Sybil Moses (future Mrs. Maurice Dangoor).

Seated in front: Grace Ezra; Cyril Moses.

**Historical Notes:** Sassoon Moses was born in Bombay in 1879. He married Mozelle, daughter of Sir Manasseh Meyer and lived in Singapore. They had no children. He changed his name to Sassoon Nissim, his full name being: Sassoon Ezra Meir Moses Ezra Nissim.

When Sassoon's uncle Moses changed his name to Mac Nissim,

The Times of India quipped: You can change Moses, but you can't change noses! (That was before the advent of plastic surgery). His cousin's son, Ellis Moses, later became and editor of the Times of India.

Sassoon Nissim's visit to the family in Shanghai was the occasion for this photo. He sponsored the party after he won the Irish Sweepstake. He is dressed in the garb of a Chinese businessman, known as comprador. Grace Ezra lived in Hong Kong, where she was a court stenographer. She came to Shanghai on visits. She is related to Mrs. David Abraham.

Sir Manasseh Meyer (1846-1930) was born in Baghdad and settled in Singapore in the early period of its development. He prospered greatly and owned half the property of the Colony. He was the Jewish leader of the settlement and in the First World War he donated a whole squadron of aeroplanes to Britain.



# The Lost Records Revealed

## Hong Kong Heritage Project's Jewish Collection

### The Kadoorie Family

The Kadoorie family, Sephardi Jews, emigrated from Baghdad in 1880 to settle in the Far East. The family fortunes were founded by Sir Elly Kadoorie and Sir Ellis Kadoorie, who were pivotal players in the development of business giants such as the Hongkong & Shanghai Hotel Co. and China Light and Power. Elly's sons, Lord Lawrence Kadoorie and Sir Horace Kadoorie continued the family businesses and philanthropic pursuits. The family is today headed by Lawrence's son, sir Michael Kadoorie.

United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and within Hong Kong's academic community.

### The Jewish Collection

Arguably the most precious and unique collection in the HKHP Archive are the records relating to the Jewish communities of Hong Kong and Shanghai, whose own

some within the Jewish community today as "our lost records". Indeed, using these records, it has been possible to trace a coherent historical thread from which we can expose the previously hidden dimensions of the Jewish community in the Far East during the inter-war years and beyond.

The Jewish Collection spans eighty years, from 1902 to 1982. The records are mainly in the form of correspondence written between the Kadoorie brothers or with other leading members of the Jewish community. Records also include Ohel Leah Synagogue membership lists and statements of accounts, photos, pamphlets, and oral history interviews. Notably, the number of oral histories in the Jewish Collection reached over 100 in 2010, after the receipt of interviews undertaken by the Holocaust Center of Northern California in the 1980s -1990s.



*Elly, Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie*

records were mostly lost or destroyed during the Japanese Occupation in the Second World War.

The Kadoorie family status and position within these two Jewish communities meant that high-level records were created and preserved by the Kadoorie brothers, Lawrence and Horace, in St. George's Building, the family's Hong Kong office. Most records miraculously survived the Japanese Occupation in good condition (exempting the period 1942-1945). Recently rediscovered, this collection has been described by

### The Ohel Leah Synagogue Records 1902

The oldest surviving record in the Jewish Collection is a small booklet containing the 1902 Rules and Regulations of the Ohel Leah Synagogue. Generously donated by Sir Jacob Sassoon and named after his mother Leah, the synagogue was built on land given to the Jewish community by Sir Jacob Sassoon and his brothers Edward and Meyer. Rule 3 of this 109 year old booklet displays its age: "Every subscriber shall pay a sum of not less than two dollars per month to be collected

quarterly in advance". The financial accounts of the synagogue in the inter-war years (including 1941) have also been preserved. These are of particular interest in that they give the names, extent, and organizational structure of the members of the community during that era. Notable families during this time included the Gubbays, Abrahams, Raymonds and the Josephs. In 1936, there were only 38 individual subscribers to the Ohel Leah Synagogue, which comprised 25 families.

### **Outbreak of War and Hong Kong**

The records also give clues as to the charitable work and impact of the Second World War on the established Jewish communities in Hong Kong and Shanghai, and the plight of the European Jewish refugees escaping Nazi tyranny to Shanghai in the late 1930s.

Lawrence Kadoorie's 1939 speech at the Hong Kong Jewish Recreation Club (J.R.C) in his capacity as President of the Ohel Leah Synagogue, describes the desperate plight of the Jewish communities abroad and the role played by the Hong Kong community in supporting the refugee Diaspora. The formation of the Jewish Refugee Society, the long-standing world undertaken by the Jewish Benevolent Society, and the frequent visits to the Passport Office "on the subject of refugees who were in transit or have settled in the Colony" showed the Hong Kong community to be active, organized and aware. In his speech, Lawrence reiterated that each and every member had their own crucial role to play: "Today more than even it is the duty of every Jew to realize his responsibilities."

Another area in which the Hong Kong Jewish Community was active was in the creation of and Entertainment Committee for the "soldiers of the Jewish persuasion" posted to the Hong Kong during the Second World War. The Committee came about in July 1941 when Lawrence Kadoorie

asked Mrs. Odell, and active member of the Jewish Community, to help carry out a program for the entertainment of these men. The hope was to "make these men feel at home, more especially as most of them are away from England for the first time and are feeling the separation from their relatives and friends." Events organized in 1941 included a dinner service on 1 October for Yom Kippur and an "At Home" held at the J.R.C. on 9 August.

### **Shanghai Refugees 1938-1945**

Meanwhile, in the visa-free port of Shanghai, the numbers of European Jewish refugees arriving escalated to 15,000 in the 10 months from December 1938 through to September 1939. Various organizations were hastily established in Shanghai and elsewhere to support this burgeoning and penniless refugee population. The HKHP Archive holds pamphlets, letters and minute meetings of these organizations such as the Hilsfond Fuer Deutsch Juden, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JOINT or the JDC as they are better known today), and the Committee for the Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai which issued passports, kept registries, provided assistance in finding jobs as well as financial aid and accommodation for the refugees.

### **S.J.Y.A.: The Beginning**

Horace Kadoorie established the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association (S.J.Y.A.) in February 1937 - before many of the Jewish refugees had arrived - after a visit to the Shanghai Jewish School (S.J.S.) in early January 1937. There he found the children malnourished, plagued by tuberculosis and with little to no opportunities for employment. Soon after establishing the S.J.Y.A., an educational program was in full force, including business classes and an "Employment Bureau" at the Nieh Chih Kuei School which was loaned

to the Association by the Shanghai Municipal Council until 1941, when they were compelled to leave.

The S.J.Y.A. also hosted summer camps with the tag-line: "The Jewish Children's Fresh Air Camp". Activities at the 1938 camp held on the grounds of the Shanghai University included a Fun Fair, evening film screenings, athletic events and amateur theater productions.

By February 1939, with the huge influx of refugees (arriving at this time at over 1000 per month) and the current S.J.S. unable to cope with the increase in numbers, the S.J.Y.A. expanded its activities from summer clubs and camps to regular education, and focused its attention on refugee children, after which the S.J.Y.A. School, otherwise known as the Kadoorie School, became the largest Jewish School in Shanghai and an indispensable support network for refugee families.

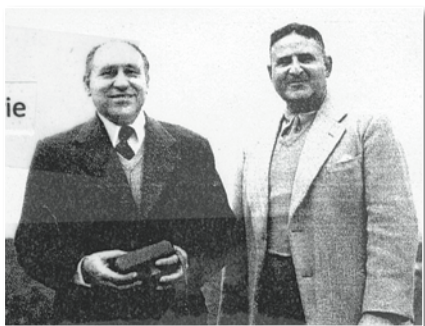
### **Post-War Years**

The records between the years 1942-1945 are lost to history as a consequence of the Japanese Occupation, but they pick up in earnest in 1945 to tell the story of the influx of refugees coming out of Shanghai into Hong Kong, the end of the S.J.Y.A. and the re-establishment of the Jewish Recreation Club in 1950.

### **Work with the JDC 1940s -1950s**

After the end of the War, hundreds of Jewish refugees passed through Hong Kong on their way out of China, prior to and after the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie paid weekly visits to the Hong Kong Immigration Department in the 1940s and 1950s to ensure that refugees would have the necessary visas ready for resettlement to Israel and elsewhere. Preserved in the Archive are the thousands of letters written to governments, embassies, shipping lines and individuals to



*Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie*

guarantee successful repatriation. Many were accommodated in The Peninsula Hotel, where Lawrence had been Chairman before the War, due to the accommodation crisis.

Also forming part of the JDC collection are letters forwarded by Horace, at that time the Hong Kong representative of the JDC, to and from refugees still residing in China. This free postal service, instituted at a time when formal postal channels were still closed, was a vital means of communication for the refugees who were finally able to make their first contact with friends and family abroad.

### ***SJYA: The Final Days***

In 1945 Horace was optimistic about the future of the S.J.Y.A. School. He continued to be actively engaged in its affairs and undertook fundraising just months after the end of the War. In November, he invited 22 leading members of the Ashkenazi Community for tea at Marble Hall (at that time Kadoorie's residence in Shanghai) in the hope of raising funds and support for the school.

A year later, the school was running smoothly. Horace's letter to a friend in 1946 was reassuring: "I know that you will be glad to hear that S.J.Y.A. affairs are progressing nicely. The JOINT are helping out and Mr. and Mrs. Gordsky take great interest in the centre. Mr. Toochinsky has been appointed Treasurer and is making a drive for funds amongst the Russian

Community; Mr. Hamowy has promised to make a drive amongst the Syrian Community."

In 1947, despite the school's remarkable 99% pass rate in the Cambridge Senior Examination, the future looked bleak. Funds were drying up and the community's numbers were rapidly dwindling as families continued to leave Shanghai. The school was dealt a further blow the following year when the much loved headmistress, Lucie Hartwich, immigrated to Australia, due to "the difficult local situation". By 1949, only 40 students were enrolled in classes. Although the "Kadoorie School" was kept open for as long as possible, in early 1949, as the Red Army approached Shanghai, the school was soon to come to an end.

### ***Jewish Recreation Club 1950-1984***

After his return to Hong Kong from Shanghai in 1949, Horace became the first President of the newly built Jewish Recreation Club (J.R.C.). The J.R.C. was established as an Association in 1905 and expanded by Elly Kadoorie in 1909. The beautiful J.R.C. building survived the Japanese Occupation until two weeks prior to the termination of hostilities, when the Japanese forces pulled the Club down. The Club was rebuilt five years after the cessation of the War by the Hong Kong Jewish Community.

Records in the Jewish Collection chronicle the re-opening of the Club in 1950, and give an insight into the running of the Club, the nature of the Jewish Community in the immediate post-War years and the activities and organizational structure of that community.

Less successful, however, were the Flannel Dance and Film Show held the same year. The Flannel Dance was "a pronounced flop due to the lack of the fairer sex" and despite the advantages of expert advice, the

Film Show was a damp squib due to the worn out film soundtrack and acoustic difficulties. Other activities arranged by the J.R.C. included Tombola Sessions, fund-raising drives for Israel, events hosted by the Jewish Women's Association and a Hanukah Ball. Most of the Club's expenses in the opening year went towards the building and grounds, with purchases such as electric fans, a floor polisher and a hard tennis court.

At the end of the first year, Horace gave a positive appraisal of the J.R.C. in his President's speech: "I am glad to say that the Club has, and is, fulfilling its intended purpose, namely, to act as a meeting place for the Jewish Community ... It provides cultural and social amenities for its members."

### ***Giving the lost records a new life***

An exhibition showcasing selections from HKHP's Jewish Collection was held in October 2010 at the Hong Kong Jewish Community Centre in conjunction with the Hong Kong Jewish Historical Society. Arrangements are underway to have the exhibition, entitled *The Jews in Shanghai and Hong Kong: The Lost Records 1938-1950*, displayed at universities and other institutions as well.

The HKHP will continue to preserve and share what is more than the story of the Kadoorie family and more than the story of the Jewish community, but is rather a piece of the history of Hong Kong as a whole.

If you would like more information on HKHP's Jewish or wider collection, or to visit the HKHP Archive, please contact us on: [enquiry@hongkongheritage.org](mailto:enquiry@hongkongheritage.org). More information on the Hong Kong Heritage Project can be found at: [www.hongkongheritage.org](http://www.hongkongheritage.org)

**(From *Asian Jewish Life*, Winter 2010-11)**

# Israel's Messenger



Shanghai, Friday, July 10th, 1908 - 11th Tamuz 5668

**Official Organ of the Shanghai Zionist Association**  
**21 Fortnightly Jewish Paper Devoted to the Interests of Jews and**  
**Judaism in the East**  
**Five Mexican dollars local and abroad: payable in advance**  
**Single copies 25 cents**  
**Israel's Messenger**  
**Office 16 Peking Road, Shanghai**

## **THE JEWS OF MOSSOUL**

The Rev. Elia Shelomo Sayegh has, a few years ago been appointed Grand Rabbin of Mossoul and its dependencies, but on taking charge of his duties he found, to his great surprise, that the educations of the young generation of Mossoul and all its environment is quite neglected mainly due to the extreme poverty prevailing among the Jewish population there. After serious consideration of the matter he thought it best to lay it before the Council of the Alliance Israélite Universelle de Paris and ask them for advice and help. After a long correspondence and after acquiring all the facts acquainting themselves of the real situation of the Jewish Communities of those places, the Alliance finally offered to send and maintain at their expense teachers for teaching Hebrew, French, Arabic, Turkish, English, etc., provided that the Communities will find the necessary accommodation wherein such educations can be imparted. The Alliance has already sent during

the early part of last winter several teachers to Mossoul and a temporary building has been hired for the purpose. So far 295 boys have been admitted in the School and a very large number of applicants have since refused owing to want of necessary accommodation. The Community of Mossoul has at present from 500 to 600 young and from 300 to 400 young girls needing education, to say nothing of those who passed the age at which they can be admitted in the School under the rules of the alliance, nor of those who live in the surrounding dependencies, such as Karkuk, Zakhoo Slemanyi, etc., etc., etc. The Jewish Communities of those places cannot supply nor can they maintain accommodation for such schools. It has been estimated that the cost of buying land and building two schools one for the boys and one for the girls would be about P.St.3, 500 and P.St.2, 500 respectively. The Jewish community of Mossoul decided to appeal to the generosity of coreligionists for their kind cooperation, and with that object in view they have requested their newly

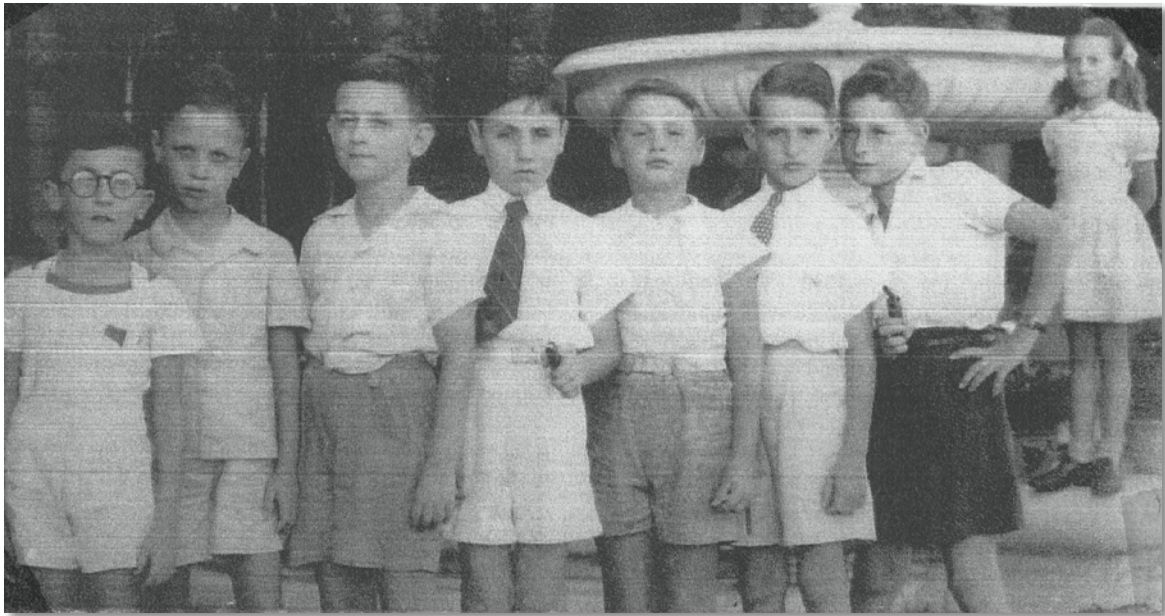
appointed Grand Rabbin to go to various places and make a personal appeal to the Jewish communities for help. He agreed to undergo the task. He was received very kindly at Baghdad and Basorah where he succeeded in collecting about P.St.240 and P.St.120 respectively which he remitted at once to Mossoul. He went then to India, he came to China first to make his appeal. All those who wish to take part in assisting in such a deserving cause are kindly requested to forward their kind contributions to him or to the Editor of Israel's Messenger and it will be duly acknowledged in that paper and for which an official receipt will be granted by him. The cause is an exceptionally good one to require any recommendation in its behalf. It is therefore hoped that the Jewish Community of Shanghai will come forward with their usual generosity and extend their helping hand to their sister Communities in times of need. An interesting interview with the Grand Rabbin is unavoidably held over till our next issue.



*Summer Camp - 1938*



*SJYA Children's Art*



*Refugee Children at the Peninsula*



# Rabbi David Hanania Pinto "Chalita" meets Shanghai Sephardic Community



*Rabbi Pinto giving his blessing to the founder of the Sephardic community Ephraim Betzalel*

The Sephardic Jewish Community of Shanghai had the great honour of receiving Rabbi David Hanania Pinto on 15-17 March.

Tsaddik Rav Pinto is a French Moroccan Rabbi of the Pinto Institutions and founded the Orot Haim OuMoche Kolel, a Sephardic Beit Midrash dedicated to the study of Torah in Ashdod, Israel.

Rabbi Pinto "Chalita" is a direct descendant of a family of elevated spiritual leaders, passed down from one generation to another, over the course of 400 years. At the head of this family tree lies the reputable Rabbi Haim Pinto.

Rabbi David Pinto was warmly welcomed by more than 150 people from the community at the Millenium Hotel who came to hear his words of wisdom. The rabbi's main topic which touched many on a personal basis was the importance of eating kosher food.

Visitors were invited to a grand dinner sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Dov Koskas. Guests were able to meet the rabbi and get a personal blessing. Rabbi David Pinto spends most of his time spreading Torah and traveling

extensively around the world He has previously visited Hong Kong.

Rabbi Pinto also met with the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Mezger, and greeted children at the Shanghai Ganenu kindergarten. They were both accompanied by the Israeli Consul-General and visited the Ohel Rachel and Ohel Moshe synagogues. The following evening Rabbi Pinto gave a Torah class to the French community members at the Sephardic Community Center and was touched by the warmth of the community.

Rabbi Pinto also donated a Sefer Torah that was inaugurated a few months ago in Morocco at the Tomb of Rabbi Haim Pinto.

Photo to be sent to you separately - please insert here.

**(From Jewish Times Asia - May Issue)**

## The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center

To all Members of the Heritage Center and its Friends, After having served for 37 years, with a two-year break when I was a government minister, I decided to resign from the management of the Heritage Center and transfer it to those younger than myself.

I am happy that Professor Ephraim Sadka has agreed to serve as Chairman of the Heritage Center, and I wish him full success and prosperity. Professor Ephraim Sadka was born in

July 1946 in Basra, Iraq. He received a B.A. cum laude in Statistics from Tel Aviv University in 1970 and a Ph.D. in Economics from M.I.T. in 1974 He is at present a Professor of Economics and holds the Henry Kaufman Chair for International Capital Markets at Tel Aviv University, and is Chairman of the Salary committee of the Institutes of Higher Learning. He is a member of various important institutions and committees in Israel and Joint Editor of the international

journal CESifo Economic Studies. List of publications includes 10 books and more than 100 articles in the international professional literature.

I request all our members and friends to extend him whatever help will be necessary to preserve the heritage of Babylonian Jewry, which is the most ancient Diaspora of the Jewish people.

With best wishes,  
Mordechai Ben Porat  
Chairman of the Center

# SAVE THE DATE

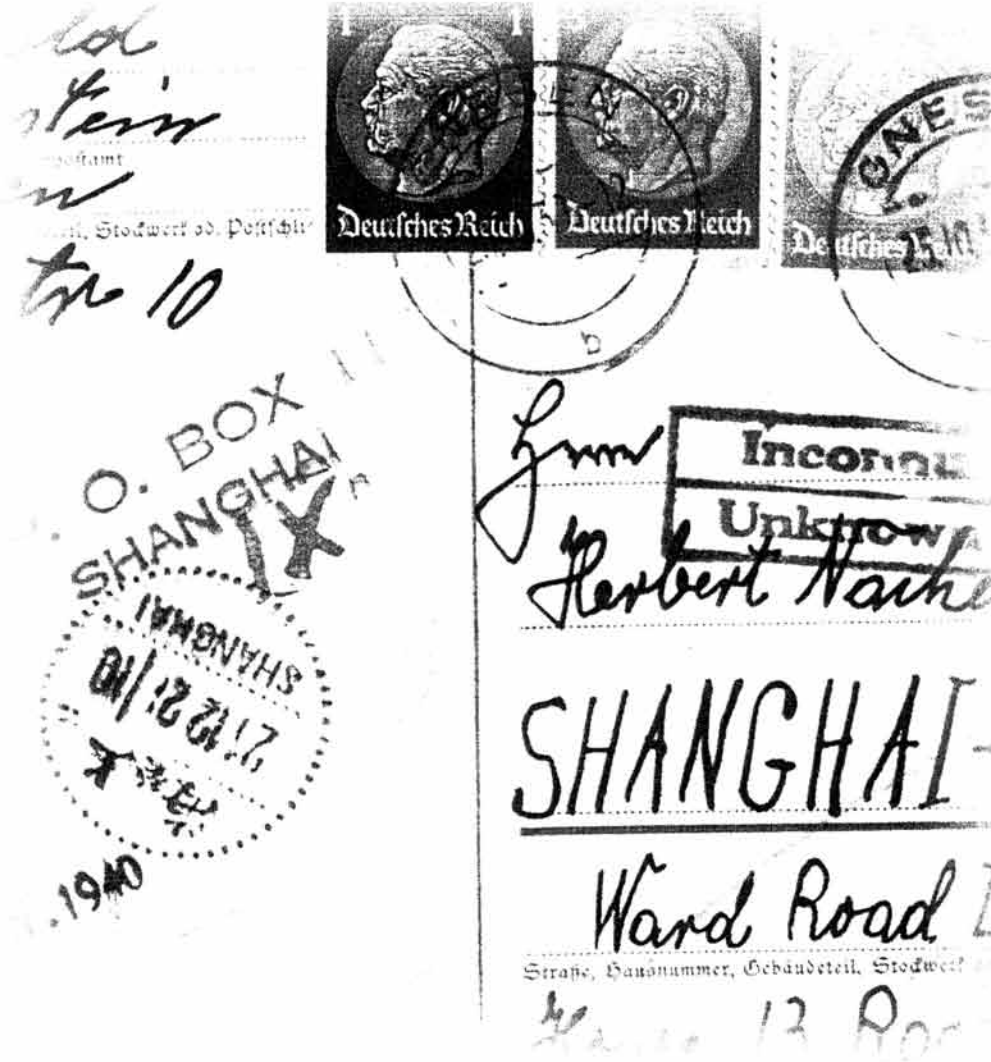
THE KADOORIE HONG KONG HERITAGE PROJECT AND THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HONG KONG  
PRESENTS

## THE JEWS IN SHANGHAI AND HONG KONG

ESCAPE \* SURVIVAL \* RESETTLEMENT

### THE LOST RECORDS

1938 - 1950



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The Hong Kong Heritage Project, established by Sir Michael Kadoorie, together with the Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong, present a rare opportunity for high school students in Hong Kong to delve into the rich history of Jewish life in Shanghai and Hong Kong during and immediately after World War Two.

Through the use of unique and recently discovered records, oral histories, photos and film, history comes alive for this original exhibition that celebrates the courage, forbearance and determination of a small group of people swept up in the turmoil of a changing world.

OCTOBER 25 - OCTOBER 29 2010, AT EITHER 11AM OR 2PM

BOOK NOW: [JCCLIB@ICC.ORG.HK](mailto:JCCLIB@ICC.ORG.HK)

# Clara Ivanoff

## Chapters from a Life Being Lived

As told to and written by Jean Bartlett

*“And on the cliff, enclosed by the ripples of the bay, wind and fate together have carved my profile”. Ukrainian poet, philosopher, humanitarian and painter, Maximilian Voloshin (1877-1932). “In an era of breadlines, depression and wars, I tried to help people get away from all the misery... to turn their minds to something else. I wanted to make people happy, if only for an hour”. Song and dance man, Busby Berkeley (1895-1976)*

On July 27, 1918, London received dispatches from Switzerland and Amsterdam confirming the truth of the recent rumors reporting the death of former Tsar Nicholas of Russia. The news went on to report that the ex-Tsar had been murdered at his residence in Yekaterinburg. Soon it was confirmed. The last Russian Tsar and all his family, including the gravely ill Prince Alexei, were brutally murdered in the basement of the Ipatiev House on the night of July 17, 1918 by a band of Bolsheviks. The house of Romanov, the last imperial family of Tsarist Russia, was no more. This event was not just something that was a part of history; it was part of a series of events that would change the face of Russia forever and which in turn would change the face of a country called the Ukraine. The Ukraine lost its territorial ties with the Russian Empire with the Russian October Revolution of 1917 and was suddenly left in a political vacuum. Different territories of the Ukraine declared their statehood and civil war began. For 8-year-old Clara of the Ukraine, chaos and hardship were the first lessons of life.

On Monday, March 23, 2009, little Clara Ivanoff, nearing 99, sits down in the cozy living room of her daughter Vera Loewer's Pacifica, California

home to discuss some of the events of her life.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was born on April 19, 1910 in the Soviet Union before the Revolution. I was born in the city of Kirovograd (Elisavetgrad) in the Ukraine. (Kirovograd stands along the hilly banks of the Ingul River. In the years of the Revolution and the corresponding Civil War of 1917-1921 the powers in charge changed so often that citizens kept four different flags on hand now knowing which one to raise each morning.) My father's name was Boris Lesagorsky and my mother's name was Vera Azrilian. My father worked in a flour mill. I barely have any memories of my father because I was only four and a half when he was taken off to war - and that was the last I saw of him. He was paralyzed in the First World War and died in a Russian veteran's hospital. My mother I remember very well. She was very pretty and she was a tall woman. All her family except her sister were very tall. My grandfather was tall. I don't know how I came out to be such a midget. I mean look at me! I'm a midget! I have two brothers. Mike died in 1999 in Sydney, Australia. He was

twelve and a half months younger than I am. My brother Jack was several years younger. Poor Jack died in 1977 in Tashkent, Russia. He went there in 1948 with his wife and perished there. I begged him not to go. He spoke out against the Communists when he went there and because of that he was sent to a labor camp in Siberia. He got out of the labor camp in 1960s but he was imprisoned again for teaching free enterprise. Can you imagine, he was teaching people what he knew about hair dressing so they could make a living and he was imprisoned? He was eventually released by he was broken.

I have no relatives in Russia now. Here in the United States I am lucky to have my daughter Vera and my two granddaughters, Danielle and Jennifer. But everybody else, they died on me.

I remember when we were little kids, I saw a U.S. plane coming from Europe, flying overhead and all the little kids - we ran like crazy to watch the plane. It was really something to see. And I remember that the terrain was beautiful. I remember the sugar plantations but that was so long ago. We didn't have a bathroom like everyone does now, at least here in the United States. We had to

build a bathroom in the yard, two holes and two bricks. That's how primitively people lived there; all over the Ukraine, not just where I lived. One was for men and one was for women. And that's where you had to go. It didn't matter if it was in the middle of the night or in the snow, that's where you went. We didn't have lights. Forget it. We had a kerosene lamp if we were lucky. Something else, we often had to walk barefoot in the snow. But the people there were so ignorant. Who knew anything! Nobody! Nobody knew. I had a horrible childhood and a lot of people have horrible childhoods, but I am glad I did. It taught me a lot of things. It taught me to want to study, to learn, to do on my own. There are so many things I learned in this lifetime. When you have nothing, you have to find the way to make something. Later in life I would teach myself to use a sewing machine. Knowing a sewing machine helped me. It helped me that I was not afraid to learn. I even made presents with the sewing machine. When I was a child, presents were something you did not know.

I do have memories of the Bolshevik Revolution and it was horrible. Tsar Nicholas and his wife Alexandra were murdered. I hate humans for doing that. In Russia, people were dying like flies from disease, cholera, starvation - it was just like a nightmare. People should know about it, but this generation they don't understand. But they will understand when it hits them. They think they are immune! No one is immune. Even now, if I was paid \$3,000,000 dollars I would step a foot in Russia. Even now, that country is stinking. It is a kind of a disease with Russia people; they'll never straighten out. Though that is not only with the Russian people, it is with a lot of people in this world. People like to fight, they like to kill and they like to exterminate. There are so many people who consider other human

beings to be animals. But those people who do the considering, they are the animals. But not even animals. Animals do not do to each other what human beings are capable of doing. My advice: humans should be human.

I witnessed so much when I was a kid. When I was about 11, with kids around, I saw a young man with long hair standing on the threshold of a home and Cossacks on horses with sabers passing by. One Cossack stopped, turned back, grabbed the guy's hair, looked at him and cut his head off. Why? Do you know why? Because they thought he was a Jew. He had red hair but he was a Russian. Do you know what humanity is? Men are animals. You can't trust a man entirely' they have that streak in them - to kill. All of us kids, we screamed and we ran. I witnessed horror.

I am half Ukrainian and half Russian. I hate the Ukrainian blood in me. The Ukrainians are miserable. They hang people for nothing. I am also part Jewish. People here do not appreciate the freedom that they have. Someday they will lose it completely and that will be very, very sad. I knew real starvation and real loss of freedom. Freedom - everything is taken for granted here. Years ago I thought this country would have been smart enough to cut out this car business that brought in the dirt and gloom. But oh, that is another story.

One of my childhood memories is Odessa. That is a big city on the Black Sea. It's a beautiful city. As a kid I always used to pick up my young brother Jack. He didn't weigh much. I didn't weigh much either. Maybe that's why I am so short, because I was not given enough food - you need food to grow. I remember one time Jack was sick. So Jack and I went on a ship across the Black Sea to Odessa to give him to the doctors at the hospital. I don't know what was wrong with him. I was a youngster myself. I stayed there while the doctors helped him. And the

people at the hospital they fed me, I remember that. But I looked after Jack. I did.

My childhood was hard. My mother had to run away or else she would have been killed. I was about 11 or 12 when she left. She was working at a theater and they had a little kiosk for food, bagels and sandwiches, and she used to steal some food and bring it home. Something horrible happened to her there. The Ukrainians they are horrible. They screamed at her, "We want your money!" And she said, "I don't have any money. I can give you food if you want." No, they didn't want food they wanted money. Between horses they walked her to the station. And I am young and I followed, crying. I saw them beating her back with sabers. Those sons of bitches whipped her back on her kidneys, hundreds of times. I was so angry with men. I hated men. She was nearly killed and she was in the house for many months, recovering. She became an invalid later because of it.

We heard those same men were coming back to kill her. Why? I don't know why. How can anyone explain such inhumanity? My mother escaped. On the way, she stopped and told her sister Esther to come and take care of us. That was it until so many years later when she asked Uncle David, Esther's husband to bring us to China. We didn't see her for about three and a half to four years. We didn't hear from her. I don't know all that happened to her during that time. This is what I do know.

She traveled through Russia and through Siberia to the Amur River. All Russians fleeing into China had to cross the Amur River. My mother was caught at the post by the river crossing and the guards held her. These guards had dogs and when the guards walked away, my mother patted the dogs and took them off their leashes and then she snuck into one of the boats and covered herself - and no one came after her, and her

boat sailed.

My mother headed across China to Japan. She was there in Japan on September 1, 1923 when the Great Kanto earthquake struck.

(The shocks reached peaks of 7.9 on the Richter scale and it hit the densely populated area of Tokyo and Yokohama. The fires that immediately followed and raged for three days were worse than the earthquake itself. 140,000 people lost their lives.) My mother just went from place to place, trying to survive. At one time she met some man who said he would marry her and she turned him down. I don't know why. But she told him she had three children and she needed to bring them home to her.

Next my mother went to Singapore and then she went to Shanghai where she stayed. Shanghai was full of Russians.

(Tens of thousands of Russians fled to China after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. There were the poor, the aristocrats, the White Russian army officers, the opera singers, the comedy stars, the ballet dancers. By 1932, about 25,000 Russians lived in Shanghai and Shanghai in turn became one of the most famous artistic centers of the Far East)

My mother arrived in Shanghai in 1924 or 1925. By the time she was in Shanghai my mother walked with a cane. She used to walk to the market and find little abandoned dogs and cats and feed them and then find them homes. My mother was very kind, even after all that had been done to her.

While no one knew what had happened to my mother, Aunt Esther and Uncle David and their three children, they watched over us - and they didn't have much. I tell you though if my aunt had a piece of meat, it was a holiday to be screamed about. I remember that every Friday, my brother Mike and I would go to the market. But we just looked. What could we buy?

One time, I went to visit my father's

sister. She lived in the city and I knew how to get there. I walked. I had no shoes. I had outgrown my shoes. When my aunt opened the door she looked at me and started to cry and she said, "God, where is God? My brother's child is hungry." And she packed up a lot of food for me. She grew her own food. When I brought it home my uncle said, "How did you get this?" He was worried. He thought maybe I stole it. I said, "Are you crazy? This is my father's sister". I only saw her one more time.

All this time, no word from my mother and then one day, three or four years after she left, she sent some money. At last we knew she was alive! She had opened a little café in Shanghai with a partner and had sent money to my uncle to bring her children to Shanghai. We went the same route she went - through Siberia and then across the border into China. We traveled once by train, we did some walking and we traveled by little boats. My mother had sent my uncle enough money to feed us as we traveled. It took two and a half months for my uncle to bring us to my mother. I was 16 when I stood in front of my mother. I was so happy to see her, you cannot imagine.

But there were times on our journey to our mother that I was so scared. I was in charge of my brothers. When we came to the Amur River, my brothers were put in a different boat that I was. I worried all the way across the river and it was so scary. Russians would shoot people crossing the river. They would shoot anyone they felt like shooting. People who have never gone through it don't know what "danger" and "scary" means.

Once my uncle arrived with his niece and two nephews, my mother gave him money to bring his family out and he did that too. My uncle was a very brave man but I think there was no one as brave as my mother.

\* \* \* \* \*

I gained a lot of weight when we first came to China. I had never

seen so much food. I ate constantly. My mother gave me a banana and I said to her, "What do I do with it?" She said, "Eat it!" I started to eat it without peeling it. I didn't know. I had never seen a banana. But my mother showed me and I learned. I learned about bananas and oranges and so many things.

Shanghai was an open city, refugees from all over the world, Europe, Russia - you cannot image a city with refugees like Shanghai. In China it was the first time I went to school. There was no school in Russia. It was a time that is hard to explain unless you lived it. In China I learned how to read and write. My mother put me in this school with little kids, kindergartners. It was a Scottish school. I learned quick. I was determined. Everybody spoke English, even the children. I was speaking Russian so I thought what the heck. I need to learn and learn fast. In one year I could speak English. I did learn to speak some Chinese while I was in China, but English was the language that everyone used in Shanghai - or Russian.

I learned office work in Shanghai and I hated it. I worked on a manual typewriter. I still have it somewhere; it's an old one. I told my mother I couldn't do it. I couldn't sit in one spot for hours and then get up and eat and go sit again. It reminded me of Russia. I went to work in a store. The store was owned by Iraqis and I worked there for a couple of months and then someone offered me a job in a coffee shop that sold ground coffee, which I did and I enjoyed it. Then someone offered me an opportunity to see the opening of a gorgeous "show". It was at a nightclub in a hotel. I went to work in the hotel and then in the hotel kiosk and that's how my career started.

Joe Farren invited girls to come and practice dancing and so I came and learned. I became a professional dancer. I learned modern tap dance, jazz - everything. I have photo

albums! I danced in chorus lines, ten girls, eight girls, six girls - we made all sorts of shows. We traveled to Manila, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Mumbai and Singapore - the show was called Joe Farren's Show. I was known as Clara the Paramount Peach. I danced at the Park Hotel in Shanghai and the Paramount in Japan. We danced in big clubs, beautiful clubs. One of the dances was called "Stars and Stripes Forever" and one was called "The Siamese Dance". We did different numbers. Some were jazz, some were tap. It was a whole different world from Russia. I went from being very poor to dancing for people with lots of money. I can tell you, it was fun and I had a career. I met one of my dearest friends while dancing in Joe Farren's Show and her name was Nina.

Not so long ago, around 2000, my best friend Moosa told me she had a nephew Emile, living in Seattle. This nephew of hers had met this guy, George Radhil, who was writing a book about his life and travels in China during the 1930s. He was particularly writing about dancers, the night clubs and the ball rooms. Moosa's nephew told George his aunt had a friend who had lived in Shanghai during that time. Next thing you know this George wants to meet me. He wants to interview me. We met and George showed me the photograph he took on Strand Beach in Tsingtao (now Qingdao) in 1934 with a bunch of the dancers and can you believe it, there I was, right in that picture. I was about 23 when George took that picture. George is maybe six years younger than me, and now we talk all the time. That to me is amazing. George asked me, why in hell didn't I write a book! I should.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was in Shanghai during the Second World War. (In July of 1937, the Japanese invaded Beijing. In August of 1937, the Chinese central government army

and air force under Chiang Kai-shek mobilized to attack the Japanese marines in Shanghai. The "Battle of Shanghai" lasted three months and after an immeasurable loss of life, Shanghai was captured.)

When the Japanese invaded that was another story. I still worked and I still danced, and I was lucky. I worked about two and half blocks from my house at a Russian restaurant on the corner. First I danced with six girls and then three of us danced. The Japanese walked around and they could shoot you without reason. There was a 12 o'clock curfew so I would run and open the gate and run into our home. At night time if you put a little light on the Japanese shot the light out.

We had an old man, an American, living upstairs in our house. And we felt sorry for him. We didn't know what to do with him. He wasn't hiding but he didn't know what to do and neither did we. So we went to the American Consulate and they came and got him. I don't know what happened to him, poor guy. He was so old. It was a hard time. Why do men make war? Do you think a woman would make war? So kill all these men.

I have seen nice people. Some people were even heroes. The man at the Swiss Consulate helped a lot. He helped save the lives of many European refugees. Even when there is so much horror you can still notice a kindness.

\* \* \* \* \*

My future husband was working in the municipal orchestra. His name was Vasia Ivanoff. He came to Shanghai because his family was from Siberia. His father worked for the Trans-Siberian railway. He came like the rest of us, so his family could have enough food to eat.

Vas was a wonderful musician. We met working in a show - before the War. He played the clarinet, and the alto, tenor and baritone sax. He also played the trombone and the

bassoon. He was a born musician, an out and out musician. My mother loved Vas.

My mother was very disabled because of the beating she endured and she was only able to see me dance once. It was before the War and my future husband brought her to the Octavia and while I looked like I danced for everyone, I danced for my mother. It made her happy.

For many years before her death my mother was completely bedridden. She just was not capable of doing anything anymore and we had someone come to our home to help us take care of her. One time she said to Vas: "Do you love my daughter?" She told him: "Don't leave her, she's a wonderful woman." And Vas said: "I'll never, never in my life leave her." I didn't even know about that conversation until later.

She died in 1943. She died in my arms. She was in her early 50s. She died because of the injuries to her kidneys. Her last word to me was "Doch" - it means daughter.

\* \* \* \* \*

My husband proposed in Shanghai and we married in Shanghai on June 12, 1945. Our daughter Vera was born in 1948. We left China in late 1948. By then I had been in Shanghai for 22 years. We stayed until Mao Tse-tung took control of China. Then we left, like everyone else. We went out to the Philippines, on a ship, like refugees.

(The Shanghai-Russians, as they are now known historically, were stateless. The Soviet government had revoked the citizenship of all political exiles in 1921. The only travel document most of them had was the Nansen passport, an internationally recognized identity card issued by the League of Nations.)

We went to the Philippines, specifically to Tubabao (a former military base) because that was the only place to save us from the Chinese Communists. So many families settled there and we lived in

a tent city. My husband, because he was a musician, organized the music. He also cooked. People took their turns at cooking, and he would have his week to do so, then someone else would have the next week - and so it went. I didn't work. I took care of Vera. My husband and I and Vera, who was just a little baby, lived in a tent. I had a crib for Vera in our tent. I did help some of the ladies there who didn't speak any English. We all did something. We were there for a little less than two years.

My husband had two sisters living in the United States. His sister Eugenia lived in Hawaii. Her husband, Victor, was an officer in the Navy and they were there then when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. They had two daughters at that time, Angelina and Leilani, and so Victor packed up his wife and daughters and moved them to San Francisco where they would be safe. He stayed in the Navy. After the War he came out to San Francisco and they decided that's where they would stay. Then they sent for my husband's mother who was still in China, and she came. Victor passed away two years ago at age 95.

Vera was almost three years old when we came to the United States. I carried her here in my arms. We came to San Francisco on an American ship. When we arrived they questioned and questioned me and they were surprised that I spoke English. And I said, "Look, the world is not only built in the United States. It's built all over. We learn English too!" They were shocked. My husband was nervous.

When we came to San Francisco we stayed with my husband's sister Eugenia and her family on Judah Street. We stayed downstairs. That home is still in the family. She had three daughters all told and her daughters Victoria and Leilani are still alive but Angelina died of cancer. Angelina was beautiful, just beautiful.

When I arrived in San Francisco I was

40. I knew I was too old to dance for a living but I was determined to learn and I learned a lot. I used to walk or take a street car and look into the big stores downtown and see how things were done.

When we first got here, I overheard my sisters-in-law, Olga and Jenny, say: "Who did my brother marry? She can't do nothing! She sleeps all the time. She doesn't help her husband." Well I wanted to let them know I could do plenty! I told my husband to buy certain things, and we had a little barbecue outside. I made Chinese food and I put it on the table. "Olga, sit down," I said. "Olga's husband Sam, sit down! Eugenia you sit here." Eugenia's husband Victor wasn't there. And they said to me, "Who made this food?" I said, "These two hands made the food, sit down!" They were shocked. They said, "Why didn't you tell us?" I said, "Tell you what, that I know how to cook?" They thought I was good for nothing. But I taught them something. I taught them never to accuse anyone without knowing what he is what he brings, what he says - never accuse anyone. We moved from there into an apartment in Oak Street for a couple of years. My husband didn't work immediately. He tried to work as a musician but times had changed. It wasn't like Shanghai in the 30s and 40s where there were nightclubs and speakeasies. The United States in the 50s wasn't at all like that, so he had to find another way to make a living. He did join the musician's union and he used to play at weddings and for bar mitzvahs. First he dug ditches for a while. Then he found a job as a janitor at Mount Zion Hospital and he worked there for a while. Then my sister-in-law Olga and her husband Sam got him a job as a painter. He joined the painter's union which is what he did for 25 years - even though he was educated. He was educated in Russia and in China. He had degrees. But he didn't speak English that well until years later. But

he kept playing music. In the 60s and 70s he played in the Concourse 30-piece orchestra in Golden Gate Park every Sunday.

In 1953 my husband and I bought a house on 45th Avenue in San Francisco. In 1953 I became a citizen of the United States. The guy asked me, "How long have you been here?" I said, "Three years." He couldn't believe I was getting my papers in three years. And I said, "Why not?" He asked me two questions about the government and I answered. My poor husband was so nervous and I told him, tell him what you know and what you feel. He was asked five questions. My daughter became a citizen in the 50s but she doesn't remember it, she was five or six. When she was thirteen or fourteen she had to take the Oath of Allegiance in downtown San Francisco and she had to have her photo taken and then she was given a certificate of naturalization.

When we first came here, Vera spoke only Russian. When she was five and she started kindergarten, my husband and I thought well it's time we started speaking English. On her first day at school Vera couldn't understand what anyone said. But she just learned. After a year or two, she couldn't remember any Russian. When I think of who makes me most proud in this life, it is my daughter. She is very sweet to me. She is my daughter and my hope.

\* \* \* \* \*

I learned to cook and bake here. I taught myself. You should have had my "Napoleons!" All over the United States - famous! I was an ambitious jerk! My determination was to learn and to do. I had a girlfriend and she said to me, "Do it! Do it! You'll come out on top." I told her, "I am on top!" But I'm not as smart now. I'm old. I'm 98. I'll be 99 next month.

I learned how to sew and embroider. I didn't want to spend my hard earned money for something that I could do. I did lots of jobs. I worked at San

Francisco State from 1960 to 1975. I made purses in the 70s. I taught myself. I made those as presents for Christmas.

I made all my daughter's clothes. I went to school and learned upholstery and I took old beat up furniture and reupholstered it and made it look nice. I started a catering business for a short time out of a shop on 32nd Avenue and Noreiga. Then I started catering from the house and I had a business on the side for years and years. Some of the San Francisco socialites would come to my house for my hors d'oeuvres and my apple rolls, and my Napoleons, and take them to the big parties. I used to cater some of the parties of the President of San Francisco State in the 60s and 70s. His name was S.I. Hayakawa. My food was famous! You'd be surprised. I wish you would have tasted them. I used to grow vegetables in our yard and I planted beautiful flowers. I think my mom would have been proud of me. She would have said, "You are a wonder. You are an angel." I also used to make borsht soup, the real kind with beets, potatoes, cabbage and I made pirozhki, blintzes, perog, blini and pelmeni and just everything you can think of. I used to make a big sheet cake for relatives birthdays. I still cooked up till about five years ago. I was a good cook. I had my own recipes and some that I got from magazines. I want one of my recipes in this story of about my life.

Carrot Delight Recipe

4 pounds of carrots

2 green peppers

1 large onion

¼ cup of oil

3 garlic cloves

2 small cans of tomato sauce

1 teaspoon of salt

1 teaspoon of white pepper

1 tablespoon of white vinegar

Sugar to taste

Peel and wash carrots. Slice into small diagonal pieces. Slice the peppers.

Chop the onion into medium pieces.

Chop the garlic cloves finely. Heat oil in a large skillet. Add the chopped onion and garlic to the hot skillet and sauté (do not burn) until transparent. Add carrots, reduce to medium heat, and keep stirring the carrots for 10 to 15 minutes. Add the peppers, continue cooking and stirring for 15 to 20 minutes or until the carrots are partially soft. Add the tomato sauce, salt, pepper, vinegar and sugar. Cover, reduce to simmer, and let steam for 10 minutes. Season and sweeten to taste.

You can do anything if you want to do it - if you need to do it.

\* \* \* \* \*

I do have a friend here in the United States that I met in China and then she went to the refugee camp. Tanya is her name. None of the girls I used to dance with are still here, they are all in heaven. But I have other friends, Theda Bogart. She was my first American friend. She showed me how to upholster. There is a lot in everyone's life but I do have a million stories. Still, I yak too much!

There is something in this country I don't understand. When I was poor, I was happy. I didn't have much but I made it. I own a home in San Francisco. I don't need it though. It's my daughter's now. I am not going to take anything with me. In my life, I've danced, I've lived through two Revolutions, one in Russia and one in China, Japanese occupation, two world wars, and I worked hard. I worked in the cafeteria at San Francisco State. I enjoyed cooking. I invented so many things in the kitchen. And yet I see there are so many people here that are not happy. There are my beautiful granddaughters and I love them. When they were younger Danielle was my little pet and Jennifer was a little devil! She was a curious child; oh she wanted to know everything. But they have their own lives now. Do I have any advice for them? Be nice to your parents; be good to your parents! Babies, you pick them up and then they grow.

In Shanghai I had three dogs. I had Lucky, Queenie and Nellie. In San Francisco I had a dog named Nikki. Like my mother and my husband, I love animals, they make me happy. Even when my mother had such hardship she was always happy to help a little animal.

Everyone has tragedies in their life, but you must keep going. My husband died in 1994. That was a tragedy. He shouldn't have died. He was working, working, working at painting and he should have worked as a musician. Painting, that killed him. But my husband and I had a grand time. We used to go the Russian Club in San Francisco. We lived through so much together.

Look around the room. What do I have to show for myself? Elephants! I started collecting them in China, and when I came to the United States people gave them to me for my birthday. Now you tell me that Native Americans believe that people often keep many copies of the animal they are most like in their house. Interesting! Elephants are strong, they live long and they carry many burdens. But I'll tell you of all my burdens, what happened to my mother hurt me badly. I wish I could have helped her. She was a wonderful woman, everybody loved her.

In 1971 I did go back to Russia. I went to visit my younger brother Jack. Oh, I wanted him so much to come here, but his wife didn't want to leave. So he stayed there and died there. I couldn't bring him out. His stepdaughter, Tania, she was his second wife's daughter - she got out. She lives in Canada.

Times were so different. I've had a bad life and a good life and I've made it. I did it! (Even though I smoked for 30 years).

We have a phrase in Russian, "Such is life without a wife, but it's a damn sight worse when you get one!"

~ Chapters from the life of Clara  
Ivanov as told to and written by  
Jean Bartlett ~





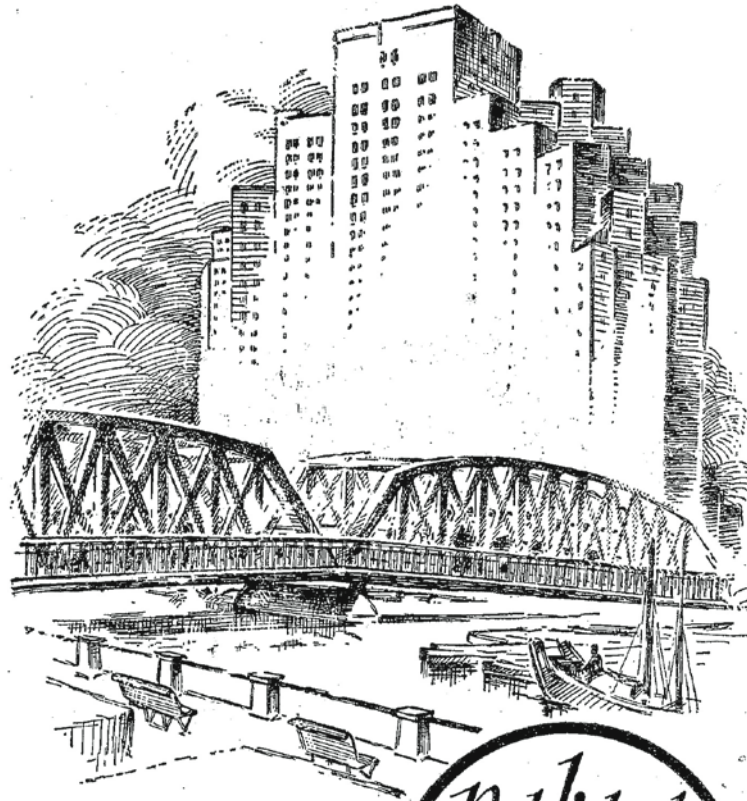
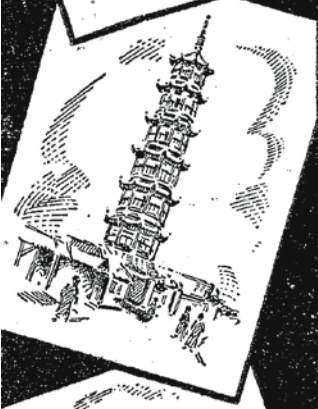
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# Books

## ***Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China.***

***Translated, edited and  
with an introduction by  
Irene Eber***

***Chicago, IL, and London:  
University of Chicago  
Press, 2008***

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***Reviewed by Jonathan  
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Since the demise of Professor Benjamin I. Schwartz of Harvard University over a decade ago, Irene Eber, the Louis Frieberg Professor Emerita of East Asian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has emerged as the preeminent Sino-Judaic scholar educating us about both ancient and modern Chinese Jewish communities. Eber is of Galician Jewish stock, was educated in Sinology at the Claremont Graduate School, and has both the linguistic and analytical tools to describe this complex historical interaction in a nuanced and scholarly way. She is fluent in Yiddish (her mother tongue), as well as biblical and modern Hebrew, classical and

modern Chinese, English, German, Polish, and other languages. She delivered papers about Harbin, Kaifeng, Shanghai, and Tianjin Jewry at Harvard University's 1992 "Jewish Diasporas in China" conference, at which Professor Schwartz was the Senior Scholar. She contributed to both published volumes of essays which emerged from that symposium. She also wrote the introduction to the exhibition catalog of rare Sino-Judaica which Harvard showcased at that conference<sup>1</sup>. A major commemorative volume of the works of other Sinologists was published in Eber's honor on her eightieth birthday, December 29, 2009<sup>2</sup>.

Eber remains vigorously productive. One expression of that vitality is this anthology which was published

<sup>1</sup> See Eber's articles "Kaifeng Jews: The Sinification of Identity," in *The Jews of China, vol. 1, Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. J. Goldstein (Armonk, N.Y. 1999), 22-35; "The Hebrew University's Research Project on Jewish Communities in Modern China," in *The Jews of China, vol. 2, A Sourcebook and Research Guide*, ed. Goldstein, 127-134; and "China and the Jews", in *China and the Jews*, ed. V. Gilboa (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 7-11.

<sup>2</sup> Raoul David Findeisen, Gad C. Isay, Amira Katz-Goehr, Yuri Pines, and Lihi Yariv-Laor, eds. *At Home in Many Worlds: Reading, Writing, and Translating from Chinese and Jewish Cultures. Essays in Honour of Irene Eber* (Wiesbaden, 2009).

in 2008 under the overarching title *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China*. A scholar of lesser abilities might have shied away from as daunting a task as translating, editing, and commenting on German, Polish, and Yiddish writers in China before, during, and after the Second World War. Hopefully the next edition of this sourcebook will include the originals of these valuable but arcane documents. For this volume Eber has selected twenty-five vignettes. They include published and unpublished poems, letters, extracts from diaries, and short stories written between 1935 and 1947. Her selections seem to fall into four categories, each with a slightly different perspective on Jewish cultural self-perception and perception of the other. A first category of memoir examines flight from adversity and fear of perpetual of exile but with minimal or no reference to China itself or even to Judaism. A second category includes memoirs which deal exclusively with Jewish life in Shanghai. A third category comments significantly on the life of Shanghai's impoverished Chinese, rather than its Jewish, population. A fourth category of memoir explores Jewish acculturation into Chinese society.

The first category of memoir is the refugee perspective on his or her flight from Hitler. German emigrant Michael W. Blumenthal has noted elsewhere that Shanghai was "the very last choice to escape Nazi

terror...never the first choice."<sup>3</sup> A journey to this port of last resort involved an arduous overland trip or a somewhat easier passage by sea, both of which became almost impossible after Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. Nevertheless, by a variety of means, thousands of Central and Eastern European Jews managed to reach Shanghai. The city admitted these refugees not because of a self-conscious policy of Holocaust rescue but rather because of bureaucratic inertia. Although technically Chinese, much of Shanghai was in a precarious state of governance, or non-governance, under various administrations which included a committee of foreign consuls. Until the Japanese seizure of Shanghai, there were no visa requirements for entering this place. Breslau refugee Ernest Heppner, also not represented in this volume, marveled as he passed through a deserted Shanghai embarkation hall that "no one asked for our papers...here Jews could just walk ashore." This was at a time when most of the world was barred to Jewish immigration.<sup>4</sup>

The first category of memoir included in Eber's volume explains personal flight from adversity and fear of perpetual of exile with minimal reference to China itself, or even, in most cases, to Judaism. Polish Rabbi Simka Elberg (1915-55) sees Shanghai simply as another port-in-a-storm, after Poland, Lithuania, and Japan have successively "spat" him out. An anonymous and presumably non-Jewish poet bemoans the generic plight of the Polish refugee without ever mentioning Shanghai. Journalist Kurt Lewin (1908-50)

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Carsten Schapow's review of *Voices from Shanghai* in *Journal of World History* 21, no. 3 (September 2010), 555.

<sup>4</sup> Ernest Heppner, *Shanghai Refugee* (Lincoln, Neb., 1994), p. 40. Translated into German by Roberto de Hollanda as *Fluchtort Shanghai: Erinnerungen 1938-1948* (Bonn, 1998).

writes a generalized paean to anti-Fascism and another to the postwar refugee experience. Neither piece refers to China or Judaism. From the safety of her bedroom, Lotte Margot observes a Chinese beggar child on the street at four o'clock in the morning. Margot's reality, however, is more grounded in the Shanghai dance hall known as the "Majestic" than in the poverty in front of her own home. In "The Lament of My Mother," "A Letter", and "Sun in A Net," Polish-Yiddish poets Yosl Mlotek and Mordechai Rotenberg dwell on the themes of despondency and personal loneliness. Neither poet mentions China or Judaism. Annie F. Witting (1904-71), a middle-class German, arrives happily in Shanghai in 1939 and thereafter feels no adversity other than her husband's ill health. She is supported by her brother in South Africa and enjoys what Annette Eberly, an historian of Jewish life in Manila, calls "the good life out there." Shoshana Kagan (1895-1968), a Yiddish actress from Poland, is overcome with feelings of loss and depression. These feelings deepen (as with Witting) at a time of personal loss, namely her husband's death in 1945. As far as Shanghai is concerned, it is "a dirty, disgusting city." In summation, this first category of memoir says nothing substantial about the either impoverished host culture in which these refugees were immersed or about Judaism.

A second category of memoir deals exclusively with Jewish life in Shanghai. Alfred Friedlander describes a festive Chanukah celebration. Yehoshua Rapoport laments the difficulties of reestablishing Yiddish culture in Shanghai and his disappointment when affluent permanent residents of Shanghai are not generous enough to impoverished refugees. Yoni Fayn and Herbert Zernik lament the suffering of Jews in the Shanghai Ghetto. Zernik, an actor, satirizes Kanoh Ghoya, the Japanese commandant of the ghetto.

Both Fayn and Zernik, like Rapoport, make scant reference to the suffering of the Chinese population. Hermann Goldfarb (1942) invokes the theme of "the wandering Jew" and makes no reference to China.

A third category of memoir does attempt to say something meaningful about the life of Shanghai's Chinese, rather than its Jewish, population. In "Shanghai" (1942) Yosl Mlotek contrasts Shanghai's decadent affluence with its poverty, both clearly visible along Nanjing Road. Poet Karl Heinz Wolff describes the peasant wisdom of a Chinese bricklayer, who shrewdly stretches out his workday in order to gain a little more income, even though he could work faster and more efficiently. Willy Tonn, a Sinologist by training, describes the daily life of the Chinese and their interactions with Westerners, although he never mentions Jews. Meylekh Ravitch, a Polish-Jewish tourist passing through Shanghai in 1935, feels and communicates the pain of the rickshaw puller. In "Miniatures" the Polish-Yiddish short story writer Jacob H. Fishman (1891-1965) contrasts the lives of impoverished Chinese with those of affluent, but not necessarily Jewish, Westerners.

A fourth category of memoir hints at a topic which is largely unexplored in this volume but which might well become Professor Eber's next research project: Jewish acculturation into Chinese society. Jacob H. Fishman's short story "A Wedding" [1947] describes a German Jew's serious love affair in Shanghai with an impoverished neighbor who is not only an ethnic Chinese but also a poor carpenter's daughter. The boy's parents have reluctantly accommodated to the marriage of their daughter to an Orthodox Eastern European Jew. But their son's potential marriage to a Chinese is more than they can handle. It is unclear whether Fishman's prose sketch is fact or fiction. Irregardless

of the “truth” of his narrative, the phenomena of intermarriage and acculturation to Chinese culture unquestionably did occur within Chinese-Jewish society, notably in the case of the Baghdadi Jewish immigrant Silas Aaron Hardoon. Polish-born Lazar Epstein (1886-1979), writing in the Peking and Tientsin Times of October 21, 1931, advocated Jewish acculturation. He pointed out that in the West immigrants by the second generation knew the language of their new homelands and contributed to culture there. Jews in China, by contrast, lived on cultural “scraps

from Europe...Does China lose by this lack of cultural intercourse? Probably not, but the permanent Jewish resident here does. He...has sunk no roots into the soil where he shall probably spend all of his days, and his children theirs.” Lazar’s son Israel Epstein goes further than his father in a commitment to China. He throws himself into the nascent Chinese Revolution, meets Mao, writes a biography of Song Qingling, edits China Reconstructs magazine, and ultimately becomes a Chinese citizen and a member of China’s National People’s Consultative Congress, one of the highest honors

any Chinese can receive.

What we have in the Eber anthology, therefore, is a beautifully illustrated literature of exiles and migrants rather than a literature of immigrants who will become a part of a new motherland. The immigrant rather than the migrant experience, while a vital part of the Jewish experience in China, is beyond the scope of Eber’s anthology. Eber and the University of Chicago Press are to be congratulated for publicizing these testimonies to one facet of the Sino-Judaic experience.

## Book Reviews

by Susan Blumberg-Kason

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### Worlds Apart: Displaced During World War II

During the early years of World War II in Europe when Jews had few options - and opportunities - to flee their homelands, a small window for escape opened, they turned to faraway and exotic places including Asia and Africa.

In *Shanghai Shadows* (Holiday House, 2006), Lois Ruby chronicles the fictional story of the Ilse Shpanns, a 13 year-old Austrian Jewess who flees Europe in 1939 with her parents and older brother Erich. The Shpanns settle in Shanghai, the only place that took in refugees without visas back then.

At first the Shpanns live a comfortable life in Shanghai. It’s not what they were used to in Austria, but their three room apartment in Shanghai’s International Settlement is adequate. The family subsists on Ilse’s father’s violin teaching salary and the money her mother earns from a part-time

bakery job and English tutoring. They enjoy Austrian pastries, classical music, and the freedom to travel around the city. But that’s the highlight of their existence in the Chinese metropolis.

After the US enters the war, tens of thousands of Shanghai Jews are rounded up and sent to former Chinese section to live in a ghetto. Ilse’s family is cramped into one room. Her parents lose their jobs and the family struggles to survive, barely able to scrounge up enough food for one meal a day. In the course of the story, Ilse falls for a young Polish Jew and learns a dark secret her mother has kept for years, one that tears her family apart during the Japanese occupation.

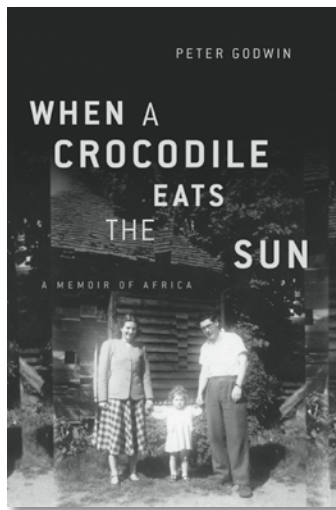
Lois Ruby vividly recounts the lives of the Shanghai Jews in *Shanghai Shadows*, touching upon the resistance, the brutal Japanese

military, and the citizens of Shanghai - Chinese, Jewish and Japanese - who join together to support one another during this dangerous time. The Shpanns Japanese neighbors prove to be some of their most loyal friends.

Other books set in Shanghai during the war, such as Emily Hahn’s *China to Me* (Country Life Press, 1944) and Vicki Baum’s *Shanghai, '37* (Oxford University Press, 1986), also touch upon the Jewish community there. But *Shanghai Shadows* (which is marketed as a young adult novel, but includes mature subjects like prostitution) differs in that it provides a comprehensive understanding of daily Jewish life in wartime Shanghai. European Jews in the 1930s also chose other continents to escape, such as Africa. Peter Godwin’s riveting memoir, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* (Little, Brown and Company, 2006) recounts the current

problems in Zimbabwe, where he was born and raised. Godwin also reveals a long-kept family secret he learns just before his father passes away.

At first Godwin's book narrates the eviction of white farmers from their Zimbabwean land starting around the year 2000. The more violent the conditions in Zimbabwe, the more frustrated Godwin becomes as his parents refuse to leave their home out in the countryside. Living in fear that their house will be taken from them - or worse - the elderly Godwins love their country so much, they not only refuse to leave, but Mrs. Godwin insists on continuing her work as a doctor, even though she's years beyond retirement. To protect themselves from being murdered in their own home, Godwin's parents erect metal guard rails around their bedroom. Sometimes Godwin can't reach his parents because the phone lines go dead or the power shuts off.



It's like a war zone, and Godwin starts to feel like he's become the parents of his own parents.

During one visit home, Godwin discovers some old framed black and white photographs, tucked away in his father's closet, of people he doesn't recognize. And then one day his father tells him about those photos. They were taken in 1930s

Poland. And the people in the photos were Godwin's deceased grandparents and aunt. He didn't even know that he had had relatives in Poland or that they were Jewish.

Godwin always knew his father had arrived as a young man in then-Rhodesia. But he'd also assumed his dad was British and that his ancestors had lived in Britain for centuries. His father never spoke much about his childhood until his health deteriorated, when he unraveled his family's tragic story during the war. And as Godwin learns his family's true background, he better understands his parents' loyalty to Zimbabwe.

Like Shanghai Shadows, the book *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* is also a heart-wrenching story of displaced people in a land where the government no longer welcomes them.

**(From Asian Jewish Life, Summer 2010)**

## *The Former Jewish Ghetto in Shanghai*

During World War II about 20,000 Jewish refugees settled in Shanghai which was an open port that required no visa, despite the Japanese occupation. When the Third Reich demanded that its Japanese allies constrain the Jews, the occupiers forced all "stateless refugees" to live among the Chinese within a few blocks in the northern part of the city around what is now Zhoushan Road. This ghetto became Little Vienna, filled with Yiddish theaters, cafes, synagogues, and schools, until the Communists expelled the Jewish residents in the early 1950s.

The Romanesque Revival town house that contained the offices of the Joint Distribution Committee, a Jewish social-service organization, still stands. Recently Zhang Yuying who has lived in a row house nearby 1945, pointed to a Star of David window in a house across the way. "This whole neighborhood was filled with Jews," she said. "We need to protect this history so the world remembers the friendship between Shanghai and the Jews."

Preservationists, including Mr. Ruan, have pressured the city to salvage the remnants of the White Horse Inn,

a popular Jewish nightclub, which the government says will be rebuilt across the street. And the government has assigned protected status to 70 acres within the area, hoping to draw tourists seeking their Jewish roots. But there has been a downside to the move, which has left much of the neighborhood poor and its row houses crumbling since developers refuse to finance renovations which are more expensive than just razing and starting from scratch.

**From The New York Times,  
May 2, 2010**

# THREE STIRRING LETTERS

By Timnah Lilach

Words written by Yitzhak Oren [Nadel] to his only daughter in the aftermath of the Six Day War [1967]; something of the mood of those days and some light shed on this fascinating yet nearly forgotten writer.

## **JUNE 14, 1967**

I confess: it has been some two days that I keep delaying, from one hour to the next, the writing of this letter. Put simply, it is hard to commence and I know not of a writer's quill anywhere in this world that could describe all that we experienced in these last ten days. As we have sent you a telegram about a week ago I allowed myself to postpone to a degree, the writing of this letter until those experiences have somewhat sunk in, and I can "attempt to hasten my quill" and begin to describe them, even if only in some vague, blurred and confused fragments.

... The day before yesterday I was by the Western Wall and by the Mosque of Omar [I did not go inside as entering its interior is still forbidden]. I nearly reached Jericho and have visited Mount Scopus. For my part Mount Scopus was the most moving. That was the place where I have spent four years studying and as I was standing by the hall in which I attended my first lecture at the Hebrew University [about Hebrew literature given by Klausner], I looked at the magnificent view from Mount Scopus over looking the whole of the old city, one of the first views which stunned me some 31 years ago having just emigrated to Israel, I felt my eyes filling up with tears. Even the glow of the gold dome atop the Mosque of Omar was more impressive looked down at

than when I stood right next to it. As for the western wall, it seems I approached it at a most inopportune hour, that is, just as the various diggers and bulldozers were working there in order to - after two thousand years - widen the surrounding area which until then was but a narrow strip. I remember how I never experienced any pleasant feelings by the western wall. On the contrary, I found it mostly depression inducing. It did not symbolise our greatness but our degradation, the destruction, the oppression the slavery. The British policeman at its narrow entrance point; the devout religious ones bashing their heads against it in prayer; the women beggars in their tattered and patched up attire who wailed and inserted their scraps of paper in between its nooks and cracks. Not for nothing did the gentiles in their myriad languages named it the "Wailing Wall". Even during those 'Days of Atonement' when I would join other 'Betarists' at the wall, to try and rescue from the English that Betari who on every Yom Kippur, after the closing prayer [Tfilat Ne'ila] would sound the shofar despite the strict prohibition by the British mandate government to do so - even on those occasions, I would return home crushed and shattered as it almost always ended with the arrest of that young man who would receive a heavy sentence of - at times - several years of imprisonment with hard labour. Nevertheless the very fact that we now hold that wall, that the bulldozers are turning the crowded strip of laments into the strip of victory and the 'wall rush' of thousands of Israel's inhabitants - herald the new meaning the wall is taking on. By the way, the cracks

are again full of scarps of paper addressed to the Almighty. Standing next to the wall I could not contain myself and pulled out one of them and read it. I must admit the note was marvellously wonderful. The language of its author testifying he was not a traditional man. The Hebrew was modern and lucid and it read something like: "My God! [Not "God, Master of the Universe" and not "Our God and the God of Our Fathers" or some such], please keep our soldiers so they may all return home in peace and victorious. And especially keep out Ilan". The note had no signature.

## **JUNE 25, 1967**

... The radio is broadcasting the weather forecast for the Sinai, the Golan Heights, the Western Bank, the Judean Desert and I am pondering: here I am at the end of my fifth decade of life, I feel just like any other man in this world in that I have not yet finished my mission on this earth and I have still a few things to say which remain unspoken. Nevertheless I do not fear death as come what may - whether I die of angina pectoris, an Arab bullet or a shutter falling from the fifth floor on top of me, the very fact that I was privileged to live during the most exalted era in the history of the people of Israel in the last two thousand years - that would suffice.

## **JULY 30, 1967**

The liberation of a united Jerusalem was a vital interest. It does not make sense that the capital city of a state would be torn and divided, with artillery positions of two enemy states situated at its core. The fact that we became accustomed to this anomaly

does not render it acceptable nor does it become a phenomenon with no end in sight. As for an addition of 60,000 Arabs, it is nonsense to be alarmed by it. It is not true that those who have created the Jerusalem milieu would now abandon the city. On the contrary, that specific Jerusalemite milieu has been created by those Jerusalem veterans in the united Jerusalem. You too were born in a united Jerusalem. Has it ever stopped you from growing up and being educated until the age of five in Rehavia, that typical Jewish Jerusalemite neighbourhood? There are many cities around the world with non homogenous population or they might even contain hostile minorities. Nonetheless the ruling majority dictates its image. I have no doubt the maximal concession achieved from us would be the internationalisation of some holy sites. And those who are alarmed seeing the Arabs strolling along our streets seem to forget that every third person seen on the streets of Warsaw until 1939 was a Jew, not a Pole and yet Warsaw was Polish even when it was full of seminaries and synagogues. The Mosque of Omar and the "Church of the Holy Sepulchre" are part of the Hebrew Jerusalem highlighting the variegated history of the land and a measure of the depth and breadth of the history of our nation.

### **THE DEPRIVATION OF A HEBREW YOUTH**

Thus far the letters and now, here is my father's story.

In 1931 five Betarists emigrated to Israel, they were the first organised pioneering immigration youth group from the city of Harbin in Manchuria, northern China. Dozens of Betarists registered for immigration permits with the Jewish Agency but only a few 'certificates' made it to such a remote corner of the Jewish Diaspora. The tribulations endured by Eastern European and German Jewry meant the Jewish Agency could not afford

such generosity for Harbin's satiated Diaspora. Following the withdrawal of the revisionist movement from the Zionist Federation, the thin trickle ceased altogether in the absence of any other Zionist youth movement but Betar. "The certificate as a concept became everyone's heart's desire" writes my father in his story "All Because of a Small License" from "The Book of The Certificate Immigrants"

Another option for obtaining an immigration permit from the British mandate government was via the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. To do so father had to be accepted for a course of studies at the university. Unfortunately, it turned out that enrolling at the university was not all that that simple. His birth certificate stated, erroneously, that he was born in 1919 [in fact 1918], as a result, his matriculation diploma declares that he was 15 years old when he finished his secondary school.

He writes:

"The Hebrew University found the young genius hard to digest and refused to accept the graduation diploma as a matriculation diploma. The first stage of fulfilling the dream was a failure. In vain did I send pleading letters; in vain did I draw a detailed list of all the subjects I studied at school and what an outstanding student I have been. The university did not respond. At once my expectations were dashed, my world has gone dark. The certificate was beyond my reach. A spark of hope suddenly ignited. My father who used to collect each and every Hebrew book which infiltrated, via land and sea until it arrived in the place which in those day was considered the end of the earth, came back from work holding an azure bound book: "History of Israel" by Joseph Klausner. I was familiar with Klausner's name. In the first Russian language Jewish encyclopaedia, published in Russia prior to the revolution I found an

entry about him and a few important entries written by him.

Father had decided to write a personal letter to professor Klausner and having apologised in florid Hebrew for bothering such an illustrious personality and a distinguished teacher, told him about the "the deprivation of a Hebrew youth, who desperately yearns to acquire knowledge in the most unique of higher education institutions located in the eternal capital of the future Kingdom of Israel destined to be established in no time in our historical homeland". Six weeks after he had posted the letter he received a telegram from the university confirming his admission. The enormous importance of the certificate granted to my father is attested to by the next story he recounted:

"About two days before I embarked on the train to Shanghai whence I would set sail on a forty day journey to Haifa, I was just coming out from the cinema accompanied by a friend. We were ambushed by two young Russian men. One of them punched me in the face with a steel knuckle duster. The force of the blow knocked me out and I collapsed on the pavement. As I was falling I cried: shame for a wasted certificate! That, at least, is what my companion said. Indeed I do recall thinking I was about to die and an invaluable certificate, the ultimate yearning of a Jewish youth dreaming of being a pioneer warrior - would become a meaningless scrap of paper; that one was a student certificate, that is to say a personal, non transferable immigration permit. The certificate may have expired yet has not lost its kick - waking up testified to that. An hour later, my previous night's companion came to inform me that that very night a group of Betarists went out on a retaliation mission and a few Russian hooligans were given a taste of their own medicine" [from "The Book of The Certificate

Immigrants”]

In 1936, aged eighteen, my father left with three other companions on a forty day journey by sea from China to Israel. The ship set sail from Hong Kong and from there via Saigon, Singapore, Colombo and Djibouti all the way to Port Sa’eed. The four Betarists were the only white passengers in the fourth class. In his book “At the Rear”, he describes how during the voyage he befriended a rich Russian merchant, who would invite him to his cabin in the first class for a drink of whiskey and a discussion on opium, religion and the cultivation of coffee and tea. Father even wrote a story during the voyage. The protagonist was a young Chinese man who fell for a European maiden and as per my father’s description; the plot was “full of dramatic deeds and pathetic speeches railing against social and national injustices”.

Within a few days following his arrival in Israel, my father met a woman, eight years his senior and fell tempestuously in love with her, a love which had a lasting influence, bringing him both great happiness and hellish torment for many years, possibly to his last day. Rivka Levine was her name, my future mother. This is what he wrote about their first encounter in his book “At the Rear”. [The book is written in the third person; my father called himself Jacob Marlin and my mother - Tziporah Kaminski]:

“A blonde eyed woman stood at the door, the edge of a light blue blouse hanging from her waist and khaki shorts clung to her thighs. Her right hand fingers held onto the tip of a damp rag. She glanced at him inquisitively.

-Are you Tziporah Kaminski?

-Yes.

Her clear and alert eyes though a little too prominent, reflected an endearing joy. Two wreaths of notched wrinkles encircled those eyes, absorbing a shade of their

blueness.

-My name is Jacob Marlin, your townsman. Son of Marlin the teacher; I arrived only a few days ago.

The rag dropped from her hand and her feet tapped fast and nervously on the wet floor.

-Son of Marlin the teacher? You were but a lovely small child and look at you now, a chubby chap. Come, come, enter... on your heels, walk on your heels. Do tell...

The rag capered on the floor, got under a bookcase constructed of crates, came back without touching any of the books then escaped under the table and finally drowned in the water bucket standing at the centre of the room. Lithe thighs, their strained muscles trembled, a quick flow of speech followed with ease.

-‘tis possible you have nothing to tell me. I have been cut off. Even had I not been cut off, I doubt there is anything you could tell me. Your friends were not my friends. You, I do remember. When I was about to graduate from secondary school you were in the lower classes. Black curls and blue eyes. Why did you always run away from me?... Have you really finished secondary school? When did you manage that? And what in fact do you plan on doing here?

-I am going to Jerusalem to attend university.

-Wonderful! I too am going. To study in a teachers’ seminary. I decided to become a teacher. I have yet the stamina to study. A little late perhaps but that is what I have set my mind on.

In Jerusalem, my father rented a room in an apartment by the Mahaneh Yehudah market and supported himself by working in a variety of jobs set aside for students by the local authorities: rubbish collection, road repairs and gutter sweeping. At times he did guard duties on Mount Scopus and exchanged the beautiful silk shirt his mother lovingly packed for him for a warm coat, much more useful for the cold guard duty nights.

Following several shifts on particularly cold nights doing guard duty, father caught pneumonia and my mother took him into her place to take care of him.

For two weeks Tziporah looked after him and on the third week they left for the sea side. Tziporah bathed in the sea and Jacob sat on the sandy beach. Tziporah was a good swimmer. Soon enough, only a golden sphere of blond tresses, rapidly moving away into the distance, could be discerned. Jacob stared, captivated at the sand, kneading it in his palms. Suddenly a sense of anxiety enveloped his surrounding. The lifeguard blew his whistle, waving desperately from on top his towering hut. Many of those sprawled on the beach jumped to their feet. Jacob too got up and squinted. The golden sphere was no longer visible upon the water. He felt as if his whole nervous system has been electrocuted. He looked and saw the golden sphere being carried by the lifeguard; he ran towards him, took Tziporah in his arms and laid her on the deck chair. The lifeguard was helping her as was the gathered crowd, some with advice others with deeds. A short while later she regained her consciousness. They both returned to Tziporah’s lodgings. That evening she uttered: your arms are strong. In your arms I regained my consciousness; it felt like there was solid ground under my feet. He replied: an Indian philosopher once said that the world stood on an elephant, the elephant stood on a turtle but that he had no idea what did the turtle stand on. A smile, already familiar to him, broke and he began hovering by her lips. [From “At the Rear”]

Father did not complete his university studies. His frank elucidation appeared in “The Book of The Certificate Immigrants”:

My studies at the university were a series of worlds’ discoveries, the existence of which was barely



known to me. I remember the shock I experienced during my first Talmud Introductory Class with Gedaliah Alon... The Gershom Scholem's lecture series about Sabbatai Zevi opened for me a window onto the world of Kabbalah and professors Rott and Bergman disseminated the Ancient Greek philosophical systems as well as the European philosophies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries all of which played a large part in shaping my spiritual world yet all in all my academic studies did not work out well and soon enough I understood that an academic career was far from being for me. I was not cut out for diligent and orderly theorising. Yet already in those days I could lay claim to attempts at experimental fiction writing and journalistic reports which granted me the title "A promising talent".

Not for me were the laurels of the scholar. I dreamt of being a writer, but not just any writer; in my youthful whims I saw myself through the eyes of my raging spirit as an all encompassing visionary who by way of his narrative - in which only his power and fortitude - will bring about a new gospel of salvation to the people of Israel in particular and to the rest of human kind in general.

### **NONE SHALL RECEIVE TIDINGS BUT THROUGH ISRAEL**

Throughout his life, a pulsating sense of his calling permeated my father's being, like a fire in his bones. That was the source from whence his creativity flowed.

In 1978 he wrote an essay titled "The Testament". The poet, Professor Abraham Hoss described the paper as "...a philosophical cum literary essay in which, for the first time, Oren presents his unique world view in the best of humour and irony so typical of his writing"

In chapter 2 he writes:

"From the day I knew my own mind, a sense of my mission in life took form; that is: I was not created but to bring new tidings to the people

of Israel and to the entire world - directly to the people of Israel and obliquely to the remainder of the world as it has always been clear to me that none shall receive tidings but through the nation of Israel; always clear to me, that the world would not receive tidings but by way of the people of Israel. I am certain that my many elders and betters have had similar childhood experiences lasting perhaps into their adolescence, yet most - with the exception those possessed and affected - have abandoned those notions sooner or later under a barrage of the blows life has meted out to them over the course of their existence.

Not so for me: through the hellish torment of a spiritual gestation and insufferable birthing, a world view of sorts sprouted within me, part cogitation part creative, it grew and formed into a method which was part philosophical part visionary, expressed countless times over yet never formally moulded, neither orally nor in writing. Three reasons stood in my way:

A - My own psychological constitution; that which is referred to in religious ethical literature as The Good Inclination [yetzer hatov] and The Evil Inclination [yetzer hara] - within me, both have been blessed by a stormy temperament. A battle has been raging within my being ever since my early youth, between my yearning for intellectual asceticism and a tumultuous passion for life's myriad pleasures...

B - Had it been possible for me to set down an orderly philosophical doctrine I would have remained utterly unsatisfied by the very fact of its completion...

C - I have not been blessed by the necessary diligence or self discipline required by scientists whilst the arts - any art - including poetry and prose - are, for me, nothing but a game; a game on the part of the creative individual and his compulsions. This

is not the case, and all the more so, for the rest of human kind for whom art is one of creation's supreme manifestations.

### **LESSER THAN MY PEERS**

As "Bringing Tidings to the Nation of Israel" could not provide for a family, my father led a double life: impassioned intellectual life full of contemplation and creativity side by side with the modest life of a civil servant who leaves for work every morning carrying his sandwich and a banana in his brief case, shops at the grocery store, walks the dog and spoils his daughter and his grandson. Indeed this is how my father describes his life [from "The Testament"]:

"Forasmuch as I loved life's pleasures, no less than I loved being engrossed in a book or becoming lost in my thoughts and indulge in daydreaming, first and foremost I was looking to earning a living; not to being comfortable, not to gaining wealth, just to earn my keep so that I may, even if modestly, enjoy delightful drinks, delectable food, beautiful women and indulge my loved ones with this or that, starting with my family members to my work colleagues and from my best friend to my favourite dog.

As I was mostly always short of a penny or two, I sold my abilities and part of my talent to institutions, agencies, newspapers and periodicals, report compilers, and balance sheet editors, those in need of a rhyme and the desirous of translations. Since by my very own nature I am totally devoid of any comprehension of monetary issues and at any rate, I am incapable of applying any such knowledge to my personal requirements - besides, as I have been blessed with a full measure of stupidity blended with contempt to any form of commerce - my earnings were crushingly meagre. In truth, I would not have profited even if a cornucopia emptied itself over me. In my life,

money had but one objective: to be immediately spent once I had it in my pocket; to this very day I have no conception of the price of anything. Therefore I do not bemoan the fact that, now, at the end of my days, I have no assets to bequeath those whom I leave behind. On the contrary, I am in fact astounded by the little I do possess. As for my social and public achievements, I have no complaint there either. Ever since my adolescence I was lesser than my peers, be it volunteering and or engaging in the military or the resistance or the settlements; when I did act and followed my conscience, methinks I got my just appreciation. To this day I busy myself with public affairs, as per the dictates of my heart and my capabilities, especially in all matters of intellect. Once every fortnight or so I stroll at night for three hours, armed with a Carbine rifle, a civil guard brassard wrapped around my arm. Yet all that does

not constitute the essence of my life nor my true destiny, as I sense and perceive it. No, far from it!"

In a letter my father wrote to Dr. Tucker [one of the editors of the "Ze'hoot" periodical ["Identity"]] in February 1980, he refers to his work, "The Testament" thus:

"I am pleased the editors of "Identity" are aware of my unusual writings and having read at the time, with great satisfaction, an article by Dr. Hillel Weiss - surely you are aware that I have not been indulged in that way. Nevertheless I doubt whether I could be numbered amongst those gathered around your periodical as I am not observant, not in any conventional sense of the word. As a matter of fact, in that sense, I am a complete agnostic, nay, almost a heretic and my perception of Judaism is so unorthodox that even I have my doubts in expressing it unambiguously, trying all throughout my life, to give it a symbolic

expression, albeit unsuccessfully, at least as far as the reader's comprehension is concerned. For my part, I am absolutely certain that every line I have ever written since the day I have come to know myself, was devoted but to this subject alone.

Only once throughout my existence did I dare articulate directly the essence of my world view; contained in a work I named "The Testament" which I intended, at first, to archive and to be published only posthumously in the hope that, with luck, the zeitgeist of future generations will be more at one with mine. Having reconsidered, I decided to include it in an anthology I am compiling at present, though I am certain this anthology will remain unwanted, sharing its destiny with the rest of my publications"

"The Testament" was published in "From Inception to Completion", published in 1987.

## *Technion scholarships for Beijing students*

*Ambassador of Israel, Mr Amos Nadai, presented eight scholarships to Chinese students who will enroll in the engineering programme at the Technion, an educational institution in Israel*

The students graduated from the Beijing Ba-Yi High School and received their scholarships on 11 August at the embassy in the presence of their parents and school officials.

After the results of this year's collage entrance examinations were made public in Beijing, the embassy conducted a special English exam and interviews with a group of high

scorers. From that group the top eight were chosen and offered the scholarships. This is the first time the Technion has offered undergraduate scholarships to Chinese students. They hope the project will expand in the future and they want to encourage more Chinese students to consider studying in Israel.

The Technion was established in Haifa in 1924, since then, a

large number of Israel's engineers, architects and city planners have graduated from the institute. The Technion serves as a centre of basic and applied research in sciences and engineering and is considered one of the world's top universities in science and engineering.

**JewishTimesAsia (Issue September 2010)**

# SAN FRANCISCO

General Membership meeting of the Far Eastern Society of San Francisco was held on October 30th, 2010, at the popular Chinese Restaurant "Peking".

President Isai Kaufman welcomed all present and invited them to the complimentary luncheon.

The business program started after the lunch. President Kaufman introduced

the present Board Members and expressed his gratitude for their assistance and devotion.

Our organization is small in numbers but we do all we can in assisting the elderly and indigent former residents of China in Israel. This is accomplished via Igud Yotzei Sin.

The quorum was verified by Hon. Secretary Mrs. Gutia Katseff.

The present Board was re-elected by acclamation.

Members enjoyed meeting friends and a sumptuous variety of food.

Mrs. Olga Kaufman was in charge of selecting the menu and providing cookies. All present expressed their gratitude for her efforts.

## A Welcome Plan for Visitors to the Harbin Jewish Research Centre

We are witnessing these days a succession of Jewish ex-pats from Harbin and their descendants coming to Harbin in search of their ancestral roots, seeking to pay their respects at the graves of their ancestors and to get acquainted with the city. Many arrive at the Jewish Research Centre either through the Israel-China Friendship Society or having heard of our reputation, and seeking our help in the hope that we might accompany them during their visit to the various historical sites and or to the graves of their relatives.

In order to maintain our friendly relationship with the Harbin ex-pats and their families and continue with the friendly historical ties between the Chinese and the Jewish people, we shall strive to do our utmost to help our Jewish guests during their

stay in Harbin. However, our institute is a science and research centre and our current budget constraints limit our ability to facilitate all those who arrive at the centre. Therefore it has become necessary for our guests to pay for the expenses, which will be adjusted according to their needs. To that end we have set out the following rates:

1. Transport Expenses Travelling to and from the airport - 200 Yuan; a return journey - 400 Yuan. A return journey to and from the Jewish cemetery - 300 Yuan. Taking public transport within the city centre - 300-500 Yuan [depending on type of vehicle].
2. Accommodation - [per day] - 200 Yuan.
3. A proposed itinerary for a two day visit to Harbin:

**Day 1** - meeting up at the airport

**Morning** - Visiting the new synagogue, previously the main synagogue, as well as the former Jewish hospital now the 'Modern' hotel and the Chou Ren & Co store.

**During the day** - a visit to the Jewish cemetery

**Evening** - World of Ice and Snow on the banks of the Songbei River. [Ticket price - 330 Yuan per person]

**Day 2** -

**Morning** - visiting Tigris Park - ticket price/person - 90 Yuan. A promenade through the town centre including searching for the 'old home' and visiting the park on Main Street.

**Later that day** - transfer to the airport.

# FROM SHINTOISM TO JUDAISM - SETZUSO KOTSUJI



(from left) Rabbi Shlomo Shapira, Kotsuji, Rabbi Shimon Shalom Kalish (the Amshinover Rebbe), Rabbi Moshe Shatzkes (in Japan)

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There were many guests crowded around beautifully set tables in Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz's small apartment, located in the Mirrer Yeshivah in Jerusalem. Rising to speak, Rav Chaim, the Mir's illustrious Rosh Yeshivah, warmly called out, "Dear Reb Avraham, may you merit to grow in Torah and fear of Heaven, in line with the aspirations of your pure heart! May you become a true son of Avraham Avinu, after whom you are now named?"

This was no bar-mitzvah celebration. The celebrant was Setzuso Kotsuji, a 60-year-old Japanese professor, who had recently been circumcised upon converting to Judaism, taking on the Hebrew name "Avraham."

Setzuso Kotsuji was born in 1900 into an aristocratic Japanese family. His father, who himself was a prominent Shinto priest, descended from a long line of well-known priests; the centre of the Shinto religion was Kiyoto, Setzuso's birthplace.

His father hoped that Setzuso would naturally follow the family tradition and study for the priesthood, but he instead embarked on an epic search for truth.

When he was 13, he visited an antique bookshop in which he discovered a Tanach, the Hebrew Bible, which had been translated into Japanese. Thirstily, he devoured that sacred work and learned about monotheism. Realizing that this was the truth, he slowly began to veer away from the polytheistic Shinto religion. In the end, he stopped attending the Shinto temple altogether and searched for someone to teach him more about Judaism.

After his marriage, Setzuso's search for the truth brought him to the US; here he began to study Tanach and Hebrew in an American university. When he returned to Japan with a doctorate in Hebrew and Judaic studies, he continued to broaden his knowledge of these subjects.

In 1937, he published his first book in Japanese on Hebrew language and grammar. He also founded the Hebrew Department at the Tokyo University. Professor Kotsuji gained acclaim in Japan as a scholar and thinker of repute.

At that time, various Japanese researchers published studies which linked the Japanese nation to the Ten Lost Tribes exiled by Sennacherib. These erroneous claims evoked a wave of interest in Judaism among Japan's intelligentsia and Prof. Kotsuji's books became widely read. During his studies in the US, Prof. Kotsuji had not encountered Torah-observant Jews. He first met such Jews in Harbin, the capital of Manchuria,

where a large community of former Russian Jews had existed since 1890. When Manchuria was conquered by Japan, the Japanese emperor invited Prof. Kotsuji to serve as his Jewish Affairs Advisor. He accepted this offer and moved to Harbin, where he remained for a few years.

While there, the professor formed warm relationships with its Jewish community and its chief rabbi, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Kiselev. Prof. Kotsuji's friendship and admiration for the Jewish people reached a peak in 1941, when the Jewish refugees of the Holocaust began to stream to Japan in search of a haven.

When the Mirrer Yeshivah arrived in the Japanese city of Kobe, Prof. Kotsuji went there to familiarize himself with the Torah world. In Kobe, he became very close with the Mir's illustrious rabbis and students, whose refinement and nobility of spirit had a profound impact on him.

## ***A saving friendship***

The permits which the Jewish refugees had received to enter Japan were only transfer visas, meant to expire within two weeks of their arrival there. Although the Japanese authorities extended these visas a number of times, after a while there was pressure exerted upon the yeshiva to leave Japan and continue to their destination - which was, of course, nonexistent since they had nowhere else to go.

For purely humanitarian reasons, Kotsuji became involved in the refugees' problems and made vigorous efforts to have their visas extended. He utilized his friendship with Japan's Foreign Affairs minister.

When top ranking members of Kobe's police force opposed the extension of these visas, he bribed them with vast sums of money, which he borrowed from his wealthy brother-in-law, and repaid himself.

As a result of his intervention, the Japanese authorities agreed to extend the refugees' visas several times, letting them stay for eight months instead of the original two-week period. Later, when the Japanese decided to banish the Jews from Japan, they did not expel them completely but instead deported them to Shanghai, China, which was under Japanese rule.

### ***Fighting the anti-Semites***

As more Jewish refugees streamed into Japan, anti-Semitic sentiment increased. This was because Germany, Japan's ally, attempted to persuade Japan to expel its Jews. This poisonous anti-Semitic propaganda flooded the Japanese media and revolting caricatures of Jews were plastered all over the Japanese newspapers.

Determined to portray the Jews to the Japanese in a positive light, Prof. Kotsuji published a book, called *The True Character of the Jewish Nation*, in which he exploded all of the German myths and lies about the Jews, and portrayed the Jewish people as a highly ethical, righteous nation.

Kotsuji travelled throughout Japan, delivering lectures that praised the Jewish people and refuted the lies of her enemies. He even appealed to the Japanese to assist the Jews, declaring, "Divine Providence has brought thousands of unfortunate refugees to our shores, so that we should help them and grant them a safe haven, where they will find peace and tranquility. This is our mission in life. Let us not betray it."

When a delegation comprising the leaders of the Jewish refugees, headed by the Amshinover Rebbe

and Rabbi Moshe Shatzkes, met with Japanese government representatives in Tokyo, they were greatly aided by Prof. Kotsuji who acted as their mediator and translator.

As a result of his intervention, the Japanese improved their attitude toward the Jewish refugees and withstood Germany's pressure to banish the Jews from Japan, at least temporarily. In 1941, when the Japanese government changed its attitude and banished the Jewish refugees to Shanghai, he continued to maintain warm and active ties with the Jews.

### ***True dedication***

Many warned him that he was risking his life by publishing such material and delivering his lectures. But the brave professor paid no attention to them. Towards the end of 1942, the Japanese Bureau of Investigation began to believe the German reports that Jewish subversives were planning to gain control of the world, and they accused him of abetting Japan's enemies, the Jews.

Kotsuji was arrested and interrogated under torture, in which his interrogators demanded that he reveal his role in the plot. When he said that there was no such group of Jewish subversives, and that it was all a figment of the imaginations of the anti-Semites, he was further tortured to the point that his life was in danger. Then a miracle occurred. At the peak of the interrogation, a high-ranking Japanese colonel who knew Kotsuji very well, visited the prison where the professor was being held. The colonel was startled to see the scholarly professor; one of Japan's most respected academics, incarcerated on blatantly false charges and locked up with criminals. Immediately, the colonel demanded that Kotsuji be released, and that all of the charges against him be dropped.

### ***After the war***

After the war was over, the Jewish

refugees who had left the Far East remained in close contact with Kotsuji. When the American army arrived in Japan, he became friendly with its chaplain, Rabbi Mental.

A few years later, Kotsuji finished his translation of *The Song of Songs*, a project which enabled him to better understand the relationship between God and the Jewish people.

Kotsuji continued to correspond with his friends from the Kobe period - the sages of the *Mirrer Yeshivah*. When he felt that he was ready to lead a fully observant life, he informed these friends that he would be coming to Jerusalem to convert.

In 1959, the 60-year-old Kotsuji was warmly welcomed to the Jewish faith by his friends from the *Mir* and named Avraham ben Avraham Kotsuji.

Kotsuji spent the final years of his life in a religious community in Brooklyn. During that period, he was ill and penniless. The heads of the *Mirrer Yeshivah* formed a special committee which rallied to his aid and raised money to support him.

He passed away on the 5th of Cheshvan, 5734/1974, in the US. In accordance with his will, his was buried in Jerusalem's Har HaMenuchot cemetery. His funeral was attended by a large gathering of leading rabbis, communal leaders and students of the *Mirrer Yeshivah*. Avraham ben Avraham Kotsuji will go down in history first as one of the world's most outstanding righteous gentiles. His total dedication to the Jewish people and his willingness to risk his life for them is an everlasting source of inspiration.

### ***Supplied by D. Sofer***

The story was published in the American edition of "Yated Ne'eman" - a weekly Torah newspaper, and it is reprinted with the permission of the Editor, Rabbi Pinchos Lipschutz.

**(Jewish Times Asia - March 2011)**

# Replanting Roots in Shanghai

by Erica Lyons

## Architect Haim Dotan's Journey

To understand the importance of the Israel Pavilion in Shanghai, it is necessary to understand the history of the ties that bind these two ancient peoples. The story of the Jewish people in China spans centuries and is one that continues today. Jewish communities grew throughout China, in cities like Kaifeng, Harbin and Tietsin, and the history dates back as far as the 8th century, though none of these communities grew as rapidly or as large as Shanghai.

The great influx of Jews to Shanghai began in the second half of the 19th century and continued to grow in bursts through the end of World War II. The city was known as a bustling international trade and commerce hub, free from anti-Semitism and ripe with opportunity. At its height during the Holocaust, this Jewish community, the largest in China, stood at nearly 50,000. While for some it was a haven safe from pogroms and persecution, for others it was a great commercial opportunity, an incredible adventure and a gateway to Asia. The imprint China made on the Jews that lived there was great and deeply personal and there were no shortages of landmarks left behind. These include synagogues, cemeteries, schools, factories, hotel empires and power companies.

The collective memory of these two peoples started to grow anew with the formal establishment of diplomatic

relations between China and Israel in 1992. A steadily growing exchange in trade, the sciences, technology, art, culture, the environment, humanitarian aid and agriculture has since blossomed. It is in the spirit



of this friendship that Israel eagerly accepted the invitation to participate in the Shanghai Expo.

The Israel pavilion, designed by leading architect Haim Dotan, in collaboration with designer Prosper Amir, stands as a tribute to the history of the Jewish people in China as well as to the over fifty years of friendship between Israel and China. It is also a special expression of gratitude to the Chinese people for providing Jews with a safe haven during

the Holocaust. It is an important statement as to the past, present and future friendship of these two nations and their people, each steeped in their own rich history and tradition.

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The character, the content and special building of the Israeli display in Shanghai will demonstrate the possibilities of joining Israeli knowledge with China's developmental requirements, and bestow an enriching experience on the many visitors expected to visit the pavilion, which in turn will contribute to the strengthening of Israel and China's cultural and economic relations."

For architect Haim Dotan, beneath the shiny uber-modern designed seashell shaped pavilion, there is a deeper message. It is personal. His design reflects a true cultural sensitivity passed on to him by his family. The design, reminiscent of two hands intertwined with one another, marks the culmination of the past, present and future between the Jewish people and

China, of his family and the city that sheltered them. It reflects a careful counterbalance of yin and yang, past and present, temporality and eternity, earth and sky, and suggests the influence of eastern philosophy.

For Dotan, this journey to China – to Shanghai, is a return to his roots and an unearthing of the story of his family. Now, nearly 100 years later as Dotan creates the foundation for the Israeli pavilion in Shanghai, he still pays great homage to his family's

history. The pavilion, in many ways, stands for the full circle that Dotan himself has symbolically created in his return to Shanghai on behalf of the State of Israel.

In 1919, the Saidoff family, Haim Dotan's grandfather, aunt and grandmother, like others, sought refuge from the pogroms in Bukhara, in the South of Russia. They fled to Shanghai and settled there in search of a new life for themselves. Haim Dotan's mother, Victoria Saidoff, was born in Shanghai during that period. Ultimately the family immigrated to Israel a few years later where Dotan's grandfather, Isaac Saidoff, a renowned builder, later created the "Batei-Saidoff" complex in Jerusalem. But the move was not without retaining a fondness and gratitude to China for offering them a safe haven. Dotan's childhood in Jerusalem was dotted with images of Chinese house wares and other trinkets, Chinese paintings and other similar reminders of the family's passage through China. An iconic and much loved photograph (see cover photo) of his mother, his grandmother, Yaffah, and his aunt Zipora, shows his aunt in the 1930s, in Jerusalem, cloaked in a black Shanghainese dress, very much reminiscent of their days in Shanghai. Dotan speaks of a "quiet love for Chinese culture in the house."

In looking back at their life in Shanghai, Dotan believes his family lived in the Hongkou district, a popular haven for Jews in Shanghai in the early half of the 20th century and was told the family resided possibly on Shapour Street, No. 18. Through the efforts of friends in China eager to help Dotan in his search, he discovered that, perhaps instead, it is likely that the family actually lived on Xia Hai Pu Road in the Houkong district located near the Suzhou River.

Dontan explains, "In Shanghai, I am a story. I have been searching for my roots in Shanghai since 2005.

However, since winning Israel Pavilion in Expo 2010 Shanghai, the pavilion's beauty and my international reputation as an architect, are a great help in my search through Chinese TV, publications and local newspapers."

While it was his quiet love for China that really inspired Dotan to begin his search for the footprints his family left there, it the Exposition that has made this journey a reality. Certainly his reputation as a master builder and the attention his uniquely designed pavilion is drawing is of great assistance to his personal quest, but even with the interest in this deeply emotional journey, it still can't overshadow the brilliance of his design. The history and the pavilion, to Dotan, are essentially inextricably linked. As Dotan explains, "So I completed a life cycle and open a new cycle in China as architect of the Israel Pavilion in World EXPO 2010 Shanghai."

The exhibition stands as a gallery of inspiration and a symbol of the friendship between the two countries. The Whispering Garden, located between the plaza entrance and the Israel Pavilion, greets visitors by whispering in both English and Chinese as they enter the arena via a shaded path lined with trees. In contrast to this serene commune with nature and its introduction to Israeli architecture, the Hall of Light features a 15-meter high screen that flashes with films, highlighting Israel's technological advancements as well as key historical innovations from Biblical times forward, including a Jewish heritage exhibition. Clear glass allows sunlight to flood the space giving a sense of warmth and optimism.

The heart of the exhibition and the climax of the experience, though, lies in the center in the Hall of Innovation at the core of the pavilion. There, dancing light balls illuminate the space and beam messages, in

Hebrew and Chinese, connecting Israeli children, scientists, doctors and inventors with the visitors. Then, a dynamic audio-visual presentation of balls of light projected on a 360-degree display highlight some of the most remarkable Israeli achievements in fields that include: archeology, agriculture, medicine, renewable energy, science, music, literature, R&D and security. While this prodigious interactive displays offers insight into some of the most remarkable Israeli achievements, the piece de resistance however is the message that connects the future of Israeli innovation with that of China. The pavilion is an impressive monument to the future of technology, development and innovation. It is also a clear testimony to the power of Israeli creativity and the Israeli belief in the wonderful possibilities that the future holds for humankind. Israel's leading innovations and technological developments will be exhibited in this spectacular multi-media show, using the most up-to-date presentation equipment housed in this intricately designed pavilion that stretches across 2,000 square meters.

With an eye towards the future, all Shanghai is now abuzz with commotion and frantic activity as the countdown to the Shanghai Expo in May quickens. Even the most staidly of city dwellers is transformed by the atmosphere, yet Dotan's creation stands out with its quiet love for China, its firmly founded philosophical foundation and its carefully crafted idealism. While speaking to the exhibition theme "Innovation for Better Life", the pavilion encapsulates past, present and future in the most personal way.

***Erica Lyons, a resident of Hong Kong, is Editor-in-Chief of Asian Jewish Life.***

**July 26, 2010**

# My Life in Tientsin

## The Memoirs of Sol Birulin

(continued from the previous issue)

We came to Seattle as my grandfather had a brother Rev. Mendel Baronsky living in Seattle with his family. We lived in the Monmouth apartments on Yesler Way. Father tried to find a job as a pharmacist, but it was not to be. He was terribly discouraged, especially one day when he visited a wholesale drug company McKesson and Robbins and was told "to go and see you people". This was my first contact with prejudice affecting our family. While in China, and in anticipation of moving to the United States and not having American pharmaceutical credentials, father studied by correspondence at the University of Pennsylvania Correspondence School. He obtained his degree in pharmacy and also received a degree in chemical engineering. He showed these credentials to Dean Goodrich of the University of Washington, but the best the Dean could do was grant him credit for two years, and suggested that he attend the University for another two years. This was out of the question since the family needed to live on an income.

Father tried again and again to work as a pharmacist but never succeeded. He worked at Kress as a clerk. He worked at Colotyle as a painter. Finally he worked at the University of Washington Hospital in the maintenance department. It was not long after he began to work there that students discovered that there was an educated man cleaning up the hallways, and during his night shift, after father completed his chores, students came to him to get his help in solving their problems

in mathematics and chemistry, both organic and inorganic. He enjoyed this part of his shift.

Soon upon arrival in Seattle I started to work for a furniture store owned by Hill Krakovsky, "The People's Furniture Store". Mother too got a job at Skyway Luggage, and life became more bearable. However, war in Europe broke out. I was called upon to work at Todd's Shipyards as a translator and interpreter for Russian ships in repair. Then I was inducted into the U.S. Army. I became a citizen and was flown overseas serving in the SHAEF Headquarters as interpreter and translator. It was here that I met Jack Avshalomoff who had also attended the Tientsin Grammar School. The majority of us immigrants were bi-lingual or multi-lingual, and in our unit quite a few were from China. Gene Kushnir from Harbin became my bosom buddy. We were both in the intelligence section.

After the war I returned to Seattle and attended the University of Washington under the G.I. Bill. I graduated from the Department of English, continued my studies, and received my teaching certificate. It was at that time that I met Ann Neiss, a refugee from Poland. She had lost her family in the Holocaust; parents and three brothers. We were married. I received a teaching position in Wapato. There we met another Jewish family, Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Shafran. They owned a haberdashery. We spend much time together but lacking friends of our age and Jewish contacts we returned to Seattle a year later.

After two years of working at Ben Tipp Jewelry Store as a credit manager, I again applied to teach and we moved to Hoquiam. We were there two years before I received a teaching position in Seattle, and in 1956 we moved. Meanwhile we became a family. We had Gloria and then Mark. I was a busy man those days working at school, working part-time at Ben Bridge Jewelry Store, teaching evening classes at the Community College, and studying towards my Master's Degree which I received in 1964 from the University of Washington.

Time went by rapidly, but the thought of revisiting my original grounds, my "homeland" in China, was always at the back of my mind, and so, finally, I began to plan and the reality of the trip began to emerge on paper. From paper it got translated into an emotional expectation as thinking about my life in China excited me to no end. Now it is about to happen. After 45+ years I am about to embark upon a dream to travel to China, the land of my birth, the land which harbored my relatives and friends giving them refuge and to the hundreds of refugees from Russia while the doors of many countries were shut tight and freedom seeking people had nowhere to go.

Someone recently raised the question to me asking if our community in China was organized, or religious, or cultural by comparison with the way of life in Seattle. I can only answer that our Jewish community in China was well organized. We had our President. In the 1920's we



had a gentleman by the name of Mr. Gershevitch. He happened to be a good friend of our family. We had our Jewish school. We had our Synagogue. We had but one kind of Jew, and Orthodox, traditional Jew. I never knew that there was a Conservative Jew, a Reformed Jew. Our Jews practiced one sort of Judaism. As a matter of fact, I felt very comfortable being a Jew and upholding all the laws as I knew them. My very good friend Moses Merkin and his family observed Judaism religiously. Moses was scheduled to take overseas examinations at school one year, and because it fell on a Sabbath, he voluntarily sat in the city jail to be isolated from all influences, and took his examinations after sunset. Our belief was firm, unequivocal. We had our moments of fun with our religiosity. My grandfather related a story of how he dealt with a person who came to see him and wished to be converted to Judaism. They discussed Judaism. They discussed circumcision, etc. In connection with that, grandfather went out of the room and brought in an axe which he laid on the table. As they discussed circumcision, the man listen attentively but nervously as he couldn't help connect the conversation with the axe and what it could do to him in this conversion process. His face went white as a sheet. Grandfather laughed as he related the episode. He used to have a good sense of humor, and there was no harm done. But as far as Judaism was concerned, for him only life prevailed over the law. He was a strict, law-abiding man, unbending but kind and considerate and understanding.

Our cultural life revolved around the Kunst Club and its activities. Our religious life revolved around the synagogue. Our educational life revolved around our school. As for non-Jews, they were people who had other contacts, other institutions or ways in which to express their

spirituality, but we were friends and very often bosom friends. Non-Jews attended our Kunst Club, some would be members, and some would visit our synagogue on our holy days. We used to visit their places. Respect for each other did not entice us into fearing an acceptance of their way of life or they ours. We lived side by side sharing the fruits of our labor and the ways of our people. And that is how I remember our community in China.

We were influenced by many cultures. Living in a British Concession we were naturally influenced by British architecture and interests. Being from Russia, as a mother country of my great-great grandfolks, and grandfolks, and my parents, we were influenced by Russian culture and the language. Living in China, we were influenced by Chinese and their way of life. We were also influenced by other cultures such as French, Italian, German, Japanese. These people had consulates in their occupied concessions after World War I, which protected their interests and their lives in China. We were exposed to their languages and to their young people who attended their schools. We picked up internationalism naturally, and it was easy to distinguish differences but to accept them and live in harmony with everyone in the Chinese environment. I guess I could say we were cosmopolitan in nature. It was rather a unique community, a little united nations in the midst of China, a China which welcomed us and appeared friendly towards us, the foreigner. In growing up I did not feel any special treatment in being what I was. We were all equal in our eyes and in the eyes of the authorities.

As I think back to my childhood and my family, uppermost in my mind are thoughts of charity, service, communal cooperation. Father being a pharmacist, seemed to give of himself to people who needed his advice and services. He being a violinist, gave of his talents which

benefited the community. Mother, being a singer and an actress, gave of herself which benefited the community. By nature she was a kind, charitable person. I recall when I was about seven or eight years old, how she came home one day and cried her eyes red because she came across a family that lived in deplorable conditions, and the young woman was pregnant. Father and mother discussed as to what action they could take to help. The result was that this family moved into our house until the woman bore her child. I wonder how many people would put themselves out to do that now-a-days in our society. Grandfather, being a Rabbi, he too gave of himself to others, and in this spirit of kindness I grew up, and I consider it a gift that was given to me by my family to be sensitive to peoples' needs and to being charitable whenever it is necessary.

In general, life in the '30s was devoid of fast moving vehicles. Hardly anyone owned a car. Distances were short for us and all places were accessible on foot. No one was rich, but there was always an element in our society that needed financial assistance, and that usually came from others like us without publicity. Charity was to be given charitably. We were all emigrants from some parts of Russia, with the exception of those of us who were born in China, but it was our responsibility to take care of our brethren. Our Jewish people and people from Russia shared this feeling of camaraderie, and we lived and celebrated many of their holidays and our holidays as though we were one people. Perhaps I am generalizing to an extent, but I never knew what the word anti-Semitism meant in China until I arrived in Seattle, U.S.A., and began a new life in a democratic society of all places.

It is true that though we lived modestly, the Chinese were far more in need than the immigrants.

(continued from the previous page)

We managed to have a “nanny”, a servant, a cook who served us. Father and grandfather shared their incomes and it brought enough revenue to have help at home. These servants lived in the lower section of our house, and for what the Chinese economy offered its people in those days, they considered themselves fortunate to live in a home, eat regular meals, clothe themselves, and be secure in employment. Unemployment in China among the Chinese was beyond imagination. People died from hunger by the thousands, and stories of their suffering were but stories to us in the concessions. As a youngster I did not understand the significance of poverty or hunger. This was occurring outside of the perimeter of our foreign communities. I did see beggars on the streets and we used to pass them by and throw them a penny or two into their containers, but the full impact of their desperation was never realized by my youthfulness.

Our lives revolved around the immigrants, and our concerns for the welfare of people centered around our people.

Life in China was slow and uneventful. In order to be entertained we had to form our own entertainment. It was my mother who was one of the first to conceive of the idea of playing in plays and singing in concerts in order to bring people together. These benefit concerts eventually led to the formation of our club, our school, our synagogue, our Jewish way of life. And we were an observant community through some people, like everywhere else, were more observant than others.

Many of our people had little shops where they sold herring and pickles. Others had bakeries, sewing and mending shops. They were not big shops but they were accommodating to the needs of the Tientsiners. Some were importers and exporters of furs and textiles. Some people lived in apartments, some in homes. Unlike

the Chinese dwellings, earthy and unfurnished, our people managed to help each other to live comfortably though not luxuriously. Our family was more fortunate in that the two families, the Birulins and the Baronskies pooled their resources and lived in a comfortable home with many rooms and a large yard, and servant quarters. Maybe this was so because grandfather was the Rabbi and he needed a large place to meet with people and entertain guests. Each Sabbath I remember walking home with a group of worshippers from the synagogue to our house where grandfather would make Kiddush and everyone had a drink and gefilte fish. And in Sukkoth time we would have fifty to sixty people in the Sukkah having a great time, eating, telling jokes. As I recall all this, the yesteryears seem wonderful and I am eagerly looking forward to recapturing some of those precious moments as I visit China after an absence of 45+ years.

## CHINA SHOPPING MALLS COMING TO ISRAEL

A chain of shopping malls will soon open in Israel, based on the accepted style in China where hundreds of stalls will be packed together in a large space.

Established by a group of local entrepreneurs, the malls will be called "The Chinese Market" and will mostly be selling low-priced family goods such as toys, clothes to kitchenware. The products will be manufactured in Asia.

The first mall is expected to open later this month around Pessach time in Holon and a second one in Petah Tikvah.

Avraham Alon, marketing chief of 'The Chinese Market' chain, explained that although most Beijing-style markets in the world are open-air, the group has decided to adopt sealed off market spaces common in China.

The malls will be divided into small stalls or spaces furnished with nothing but shelves, as well as stores ranging between 10-40 square meters. Ideal renters are importers or Israeli manufacturers who produce in China.

"The place is founded on low consumer prices, otherwise it has no

calling." Alon said, adding that the market will serve private consumers as well as retailers, and that the prices will be flexible and according to bulk. Retail items include toys, clothing and fashion products, as well as home-wares and electronics. Alon says blueprints exist for five malls so far, in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Netanya in addition to Holon and Petah Tikvah, each of which will be about 3,500 square metres. "Later the plan is to go abroad and open similar or larger centers in Warsaw and Prague," he said.

**Jewish Times Asia – April 2011**

# Medals Commemorating Jewish Life in China

Mel Wacks

Director, Jewish-American Hall of Fame

Because of your interest in the subject, I am pleased to attach information about the limited edition medals commemorating Over 1,000 Years of Jewish Life in China, issued by the non-profit Jewish-American Hall of Fame Division of the American Jewish Historical Society ([www.amuseum.org/jahf](http://www.amuseum.org/jahf)). I offer you special reduced prices while our small supply lasts. If you might like to use these for fund-raising I can give you quantity discounts--just tell me the quantity that you might be interested in. Let me know if you have any questions.

Over 1,000 Years of Jewish Life in China Commemorated on a limited edition medal that deserves a place in every collection of Judaic Numismatics.

Medals commemorating "Over 1,000 Years of Jewish Life in China" are being made in the tradition of the medals issued in 2004 for "350 Years of Jewish Life in America." As they later did in America, Jews have lived in peace with their neighbors and with the approval of the government in China from the time of the Silk Road to the refugees in Shanghai during World War II. These impressive 3-inch, half pound medals are being offered at a substantial discount to you, as one who is interested in Jewish history, rare and beautiful medallic art. A maximum of just 388 bronze, 188 silver-plated bronze and

88 gold-plated bronze medals are being issued—co-sponsored by the Jewish-American Hall of Fame and the Jewish Times Asia.

Medal shown in actual 3-inch diameter size.



Medal shown in actual 3-inch diameter size

According to scholar Xin Xu (The Jews of Kaifeng, China), the first Jews settled in Kaifeng

c.960-1126, and the first synagogue was built in 1163. The first settlers were Silk Road traders, probably from Persia. It is estimated that by the late thirteenth century there were about 2,000 Jews in Kaifeng. A Kaifeng tourist web site states that: "Today the community is fairly well integrated into the local population, after centuries of intermarriage, so that although more than two hundred of the Kaifeng population claim Jewish descent, they will not be overly easy to recognize. Thankfully the beliefs and customs of the Jewish community here that had died out after many centuries of neglect and suppression, is slowly making a comeback." The web site goes on to indicate that a few steles from the synagogue dedications of 1489,

1512, and 1679 can be seen at the Kaifeng Bowuguan Museum.

The medal combines the Chinese yin-yang symbol (representing the two complementary forces that make up all aspects of life—heaven

and earth, male and female, light and dark) with the Jewish Star of David. The Star of David brings the story of the Jews in China to modern times, when nearly 20,000 European Jews found a safe haven in Shanghai during World War II. The Hebrew letters within the star spell

Shemesh (sun) as appeared on a plaque from the Kaifeng Synagogue, above the Shema prayer. Interestingly, the morning benedictions before the Shema echo the meaning of the yin-yang: "Who forms light and createst darkness."

The "Over 1,000 Years of Jewish Life in China" medal features a quote from the 1489 stele in Chinese and English: "THE EMPEROR SAID PRESERVE YOUR ANCESTRAL CUSTOMS." The design of a Jewish worshiper reading the Torah (Bible) was inspired by the drawings of Father Jean Domenge, made when he visited Kaifeng in 1722. Father Domenge also made drawings of the synagogue, which were used to construct a model at the Beth Hatefutsoth Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv, which is depicted on the medal.

The original drawings of Father Domenge depict the worshippers



without shoes, as does the medal. Moses, arriving at the site of the burning bush, was immediately commanded to remove his shoes from his feet, because he was standing on holy ground (Exodus 3:5), and from this episode the Sages deduced that one is required to remove shoes in holy places.

The initials of Jamie Franki, the medal's creator are below the Chinese inscription. Frankie is a prolific designer of commemorative medals, and his frontal portrait of Thomas Jefferson appears on every United States nickel produced beginning in 2006.

*According to scholar Xin*

## **Xu (The Jews of Kaifeng, China) the first Jews settled in Kaifeng**

The "Over 1,000 Years of Jewish Life in China" Medal features a quote from 1489 stele in Chinese and English: "THE EMPEROR SAID PRESERVE YOUR ANCESTRAL CUSTOMS." The design of a Jewish worshipper reading the Torah (Bible) was inspired by the drawing Father Jean Domenge made when he visited Kaifeng in 1722. Father Domenge also made drawings of the synagogue, which were used to construct a model at the Beth Hatefusoth - Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv, which is depicted on the model.

# **KOSHER SHEITELS MANUFACTURED IN CHINA**

Ran Fridman who founded ChinaHelp24.com, a website portal dedicated to providing solutions and assistance to people doing business insert photo here in China, has established Kosher Sheitels Wigs and Hair Factory and School in Qingdao, China.

### **Ran Fridman in his Factory**

The factory was taken over by Fridman three years ago and has been in operation for 12 years. They manufacture some of the most well known and established wigs and hair extensions for dealers in the USA, Israel, Europe, Australia, South Africa and other countries. Fridman has also established his own brand - Sarah Wigs.

According to Jewish Law, Orthodox married women confirm with the requirement to cover their hair and wear a sheitel, part of the modesty-

related dress standard.

The factory produces high-end medical and fashion wigs, hair extensions and toupees and other hair products. Fridman points out that one of the purposes of the setting up of the factory is to help Chabad and other Jewish organizations to source kosher hair products; in addition to medical establishment's and hospitals worldwide, specifically for cancer patients by manufacturing highest quality wigs for them.

Fridman together with his wife has also started the worldwide Chabad Shluchos and the Jewish Centre Wigs programme. "We were thinking with my wife how else we can help and thank Chabad Shluchims and their wives for their great work, for helping our family and others be closer to Judaism and so we decided to create a special programme to help them get a wig directly from our factory at

cost price," Fridman commented.

"Our goal and dream later on is to provide free sheitels by approaching some business people or organizations who would like to help us with this programme. They can put a tag or logo of their name or the donor company information", he added.

They also opened last year a wig factory school for people who want to start their own wigs or hair extension business.

Fridman gives 10% of his income generated from his ChinaHelp24.com website and factory towards Chabad centres, cancer organizations and other charity organizations.

Fridman, was born in Kiev, Ukraine and studied in Yeshiva in Israel. He later immigrated to the U.S., moved to Israel and now lives in China.

**Jewish Times Asia - Business News - May Issue**

# Announcing the 2011 Kulanu-Kaifeng Speaking Tour

Kulanu is delighted to announce that Shi Lei, of the historic Jewish community of Kaifeng, China, is returning to North America for his second Kulanu speaking tour in 2011! Due to popular demand, Shi Lei will present the fascinating story of the Kaifeng Jews - including current developments - to audiences between February 15th and March 7th, 2011. Keep reading for more about the Jewish presence in Kaifeng and how you can invite Shi Lei to your own community!

Cut off from the Jewish world for hundreds of years until it was "discovered" by a Jesuit priest in 1605 CE, the Kaifeng community remained intact until the 19th century when it disappeared from the Jewish map. Today, this ancient Jewish community is undergoing a remarkable resurgence. Shi Lei is a descendant of one of the original

Jewish families, believed to have settled in Kaifeng between 960 and 1127 CE.

An accomplished and experienced speaker, Shi Lei will present the history of this remarkable community, offering insight into the ability of some remnants of the community to survive under difficult, even impossible, circumstances. Today, some 300 descendants still live in Kaifeng, and while some Jewish traditions have been forgotten, others have been preserved through the centuries. Like Shi Lei, many young people desire to learn about their origins. Eighteen of them are currently studying in Israel. Shi Lei is a graduate of Henan University in the province of Henan, China. From 2001 to 2004 he studied in Israel, first Jewish history and religion at Bar-Ilan University and then at Machon Meir Yeshiva in Jerusalem. Now a tour operator and national tour guide, Shi Lei leads private and group tours to Kaifeng and other Chinese cities with Jewish sites of interest, including Beijing, Harbin, Xi'an and Shanghai.

This year's Kulanu-Kaifeng speaking tour will run from February 15th to March 7th, 2011. If you are interested in hosting Mr. Lei at your synagogue, JCC, Hillel or other location, please read on to find out how!

What is required of host locations?

An honorarium of \$1,200 plus a travel expense contribution of \$250, for a total of \$1,450 per event. You are welcome to seek co-sponsors to share your event.

A primary contact to be responsible for the event and for Shi Lei while he is in your city.

Accommodations, meals, and local transportation for the speaker (home

hospitality is preferred).

Event set-up requirements are detailed in the online Event Planning Kit.

If you would like to host the speaker, what should you do next?

Please consult our online calendar to see which dates have already been assigned to other groups, and which dates have tentative requests.

Complete our online inquiry form to let us know of your interest and how to reach you. If you are able, please list three possible dates that might work for you.

Check out Kulanu's Event Planning Kit for an idea of what is involved in hosting a successful speaking tour event.

This is a special opportunity to educate your community about the Kaifeng Jews and about Jewish diversity, and to help Kulanu continue to support isolated and emerging Jewish communities worldwide.

For more information:

about Shi Lei and his work as a tour guide in China, check out his web site at [www.jewishchinatours.com](http://www.jewishchinatours.com).

about the history of this unique Jewish community, see Kulanu's Kaifeng slideshow at [www.kulanu.phanfare.com](http://www.kulanu.phanfare.com).

about the Jews of China, see [www.kulanu.org/china](http://www.kulanu.org/china).

about Kulanu, visit [www.kulanu.org](http://www.kulanu.org). If you have further questions, feel free to contact Kulanu's speaking tour coordinators by emailing [speakers\[@\]kulanu\[.\]org](mailto:speakers[@]kulanu[.]org).

We look forward to hearing from you, and to working together to help educate North American audiences about the Jews of Kaifeng! Your interest and support is greatly appreciated.



*(Photo of Shi Lei courtesy of Sino-Judaic Institute)*

# Can the sleeping dragon keep an eternal flame?

By Noam Dvir

*A team of Chinese researchers recently visited Israel to discuss preserving Shanghai's long abandoned Jewish ghetto*

Dr. Jun Wang, a researcher in the Urban Planning and Design Institute at Tongji University in Shanghai, is standing in the central square of the old train station complex in Tel Aviv and surveying the buildings around him.

The complex opened about a year ago, after a long period of renovation and preservation. Called simply Hatachana - the station - it now houses cafes, restaurants, clothing shops and several authentic railroad cars from the period when the place was in use as an Ottoman train station.

Along with its popularity among denizens and tourists, the complex has been the subject of considerable criticism because of its over-polished and saccharine feel, making it a kind of Disneyland of preservation.

Jun actually agrees with those who praise it. Shanghai, he says, is full of overly precious preservation complexes of that type. Personally, he would add a few more tall buildings, "maybe even in the middle of the square." When I ask his opinion of the Neveh Tzedek tower looming nearby and its integration into the historical fabric, he answers simply: "Just as a person wears a shirt, jeans, a hat and shoes, the city also has to 'wear' various kinds of buildings."

In the name of economic growth thousands of historic neighborhoods have been demolished in China in recent years, making way for new buildings..

But alongside the large-scale

demolition there are also the first signs of an awareness of preservation in China. In Shanghai a series of plans for preserving historic areas are being promoted today, including a plan to preserve the Jewish ghetto, which is located in the Hongkou District.

Jun was in Israel as part of a high-ranking Chinese delegation that came for a three-day Israeli-Chinese conference on the study and preservation of the ghetto, which ended yesterday. The team also included Prof. Xia Nankai of Tongji University and six officials from the Shanghai municipality, headed by Mrs. Chan Hai, the deputy planner of the Hongkou District.

The delegation came to Israel at the invitation of Prof. Moshe Margalit, a lecturer at the school, who holds the Unesco Chair on Modern Heritage.

Margalit visited Shanghai about a year ago and heard the story of the Jewish ghetto. He made contact with academic groups and the government and asked to begin a cooperative project with them, which will lead to the preservation of the neighborhood.

Rich life in poor conditions Jewish presence in Shanghai began to conglomerate in the mid-19th century, shortly after England's victory in the First Opium War. At first about 500 Iraqi Jews came to the city, including the Kadouri, Sassoon and Hardoon families, who engaged in commerce and real estate and became very wealthy.

More significant Jewish immigration to the city took place in the late 1930s.

Due to international agreements between the world powers and China, one could immigrate to the city without a passport or a visa, and about 20,000 European Jews managed to flee there during World War II.

The Jewish refugees were housed in squalid Hongkou, living in great poverty and in overcrowded conditions. Still, they managed to develop a rich community life with synagogues, a hospital, youth movements and other institutions. Even after Shanghai was occupied by Japan in 1937, the Jews were permitted to continue living there.

After the end of World War II and the rise of Communism, the ghetto emptied out almost completely. Many of the Jewish refugees immigrated to the United States and Israel.

As is the case of other historic neighborhoods in Shanghai, the ghetto is today under constant threat of demolition because of vigorous real estate activity. Its proximity to the city center is causing the price of land there to soar very quickly.

Last October Prof. Margalit traveled with a group of students from the Tel Aviv University School of Architecture to visit Shanghai, in order to promote the ghetto preservation project in cooperation with Tongji University and the municipality...

The students collected materials and met with residents, researchers and academics. They presented their conclusions to members of the Chinese delegation.

# Ohel Rachel Synagogue Re-Opens for Jewish services in Shanghai China

*The most historic and important Jewish landmark in Shanghai was returned to the Jewish community in early May, 2010.*

Ohel Rachel Synagogue, established 1920, a beautiful and historic building, was in service until 1949. Then, for 60 years the synagogue sat almost idle. Ohel Rachel was the first of seven synagogues built in Shanghai, and only one of two still standing. The other, the Ohel Moshe Synagogue located in Hong Kou district, hosts a museum dedicated to the history of the Jewish experience in Shanghai.

Ohel Rachel was built by Jacob Sassoon and named for his wife Rachel. The Sassoon family built many of Shanghai's landmarks: the Peace Hotel, Grosvenor House, and the Metropole. But when the Jewish community ebbed, Ohel Rachel became part of the Shanghai Education Commission compound.

Although it was used occasionally by the Jewish community, it was no longer a consecrated synagogue.

But, in a gracious move that delighted the new and growing Jewish community, the Chinese government has allowed the community to renovate and re-open the synagogue on the weekends (Shabbat). The services are geared for tourists and visitors and they are followed by Shabbat meals on premises.

Rabbi Shalom Greenberg, director of the Chabad-Lubavitch run Shanghai Jewish Center, credited the Chinese government with allowing continual use of the synagogue in honor of the 2010 World Expo. We all wish to extend our appreciation to the Chinese government for this tremendous gesture, he said.

The Jewish community in Shanghai is quite different from the original 30,000 to 40,000 members - largely British from India and Persia (Baghdad). The current Jewish community is all expats from literally ALL over the world doing business here, or representing foreign companies, or students studying in university there.

Chabad in Shanghai invites every Jewish person who comes through Shanghai to join them for Shabbat dinner and services, which are held using Sephardic traditions and melodies. It is truly an enjoyable experience no matter what your Jewish background or affiliation, notes Rabbi Mendy Alevsky. Schedules and reservations can be found at [ChinaJewish.org/OhelRachel1](http://ChinaJewish.org/OhelRachel1)

## *Can the sleeping dragon keep an eternal flame?*

**(continued from page 94)**

Later they will formulate concrete planning proposals. Several of them - for example connecting the streets of the ghetto to the bank of the river that crosses Shanghai - look promising. But there is very little left of the Jewish community there, beyond a few remaining community buildings and some mezuzah nails stuck in place.

The neighborhood remains poor and any residents would benefit from razing it and putting up new buildings. Beyond that, some wonder what, if anything can be preserved of

a fabric of life that existed there for only about 15 years and has now all but disappeared?

"The ghetto symbolized the connection between Chinese society and Jewish society," says Margalit. "The Chinese authorities understand this symbolism very well and therefore have been doubly cautious in their handling of the site. Although the Jews were refugees, they succeeded in contributing to Shanghai's social life and culture. Furthermore, in Hongkou a unique urban fabric was preserved that is

gradually disappearing from the city." Jun says that over the years at least 10 different plans have been presented for developing the ghetto, some calling for its demolition, some wanting to integrate high-rise building into it and to turn the historic buildings into a local "train-station complex."

The solution is apparently somewhere in the middle, says the Chinese planner, between overdevelopment and kitschy preservation.

# AT THE RECEPTION AT THE RESIDENCE OF THE AMBASSADOR OF CHINA

## Exchange of greetings



*Ambassador Zhao Jun welcomes the audience*



*T. Kaufman thanks for the warm welcome*



*Countrymen of the Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jun came to his residence in Kfar Shmaryahu*



## **Flori Cohen - 80**

*Our compatriot from Shanghai Flori Cohen celebrated her 80th birthday.*

*Recently Flori has been actively involved in editing the Bulletin of the IYS in English.*

*We sincerely wish Flori and her family good health, happiness and prosperity*



# COUNTRYMEN VISITING THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR



# Searching and Researching

## **Eugenia Sheinman**

I have recently known that my great-great-uncle, Shulim Barak, originally - from Novograd-Volynskij, nowadays Ukraine (former Volhynia of Russian empire), b. 1872, lived in Harbin for many years, from pre-WWI to 1946, when he passed away and was buried in Harbin Jewish cemetery. I know (from the family lore) that he owned some hotel in Harbin. His two children, a son and a daughter, left Harbin and immigrated to the USA but we lost any contacts with them and their descendants. I wish I could know additional details on these persons: maybe your organization - Igud Yotzei Sin - keep certain databases on Jewish residents of Harbin or you could give me the advice what sources I can find and which way to apply to the Archives (keeping Census and/or Vital records on them). Now I am in Israel, so I can visit your office in Tel-Aviv at the appointed time during next two weeks if it's necessary.

## **David Geffen**

First of all, I was most impressed with your Bulletin. I went through 10 years worth this morning at the Ben-Zvi library. I also happened to go to school with Rabbi Tokayer, but I am not as creative as he is.

Several weeks ago, sitting here in Jerusalem, I ran across a reference to the train carrying Shanghai Jewish Refugees across the USA in February 1949.

The first story which I read was in the Southern Israelite weekly of Atlanta Georgia, which is where I was born. It was quite an event when the train stopped on Saturday night February 26. People poured out - some whom I knew, and presented the riders with

cake, food, cosmetics, newspapers while letting them know how much they cared. I also read the New York Times story on February 28 which was quite moving.

Anyway I do some freelance writing for Jerusalem Post so I suggested a story to the feature editor - it was accepted. Some one directed me to Ronni of your organization who was going to get me some information from some, like himself, who was on the train. I have not heard from him again. Now I see your Bulletin and I thought that perhaps you carried a story about the trip from Shanghai to Israel via the sealed train in the USA. Would appreciate any suggestions which you may have. In two oral histories collections in the USA - I found some material....

Appreciate your assistance.

Tel: 02-6714036

Email: geff7068@yahoo.com

## **Toby Levy**

My name is Toby Levy, I am a 21 year old British student, currently studying in Ningbo, China. Through research on the internet, i see that you are a former resident in China. Being Jewish myself and having spent my gap year in Israel (with Habonim Dror), I am fascinated by the ties between Israel and China, and furthermore between China and the Jews. As part of my degree, I must carry out research about anything related to China, and i have chosen to explore this relationship. I am writing to you to see if you have any suggestions/ advice that could help me research this. Is there any specific angle you think may actually be beneficial?

## **Matthias Messmer**

I hope not to bother you too much with my request but my friend Rabbi

Tokayer urged me to write to you.

I might have written you in one of my previous emails that I'm going to publish a book on Jewish wayfarers in the history of Modern China. Lexington Books will be the publisher of this book with the title "The Eastern Horizon - Jewish Wayfarers in Modern China".

My publisher has asked me to provide names of recognized authorities on the book's subject (for some pre-publication comments). It goes without saying that I would feel very honored to give your email-address to Lexington. They would then write to you in May or June, I guess. Do you agree if I give Lexington your email-address?

Since I'm currently in the middle of collecting some illustrations, I'd also like to include portraits of Mr. Hardoon, Trebitsch-Lincoln and Israel Epstein. If you do have some photos of these three persons, I'd be very happy if you could send them to me by email (300dpi). It goes without saying that I will add the words "Courtesy of Mr. Teddy Kaufman".

I'm looking forward to hearing from you and I wish you the best continuation of a happy Pessach Holiday! With kind regards from Shanghai.

## **Phyllis Sakinovsky**

Hi there!

I wrote to Anson (read below) and have now been to your fascinating website and have entered something onto your family search section but was wondering where else I could begin looking for Reuven Traub.

I can send you copies of the letter once I've scanned them.

**Kind regards**

Email: phyllsak@bigpond.com

Address: 3/5-7 Moira Crescent,

Coogee, NSW 2034 AUSTRALIA  
Phone +612 9664 7612 (home) or  
+61406 164 034 (cell)

### **To Anson Laytner**

I have started looking into the life of Reuven Traub, possibly my maternal grandmother's half brother, who lived in Harbin from before WW1 until at least 1923. I know this because I have a letter he sent in 1923 to his father who lived in Cape Town, South Africa, typed in Russian, which we had translated recently. Having been estranged from his father, it gives a detailed account of his unhappy life in Harbin following the war and the Russian Revolution. He speaks of his jewellery and watch shop at 21 China St and his current address was 30 Polevaya St. I tracked your organisation through the internet and was wondering if this letter would be of value to you (I can send you a scanned copy) and also whether I could find out more about him and Harbin during the beginning of the 20th century. Other than your website, I have found an interesting article (31.10.03) in the China Daily An unforgettable history and a newspaper clipping from the Strait Times (2.3.1934) about the assault of two Japanese women in Polevaya St. I look forward to hearing from you.

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Dear Phyllis,  
Thank you for your letter. I would like to run it in our journal Points East. Perhaps one of our readers knows something. I think that you ought to be in touch with the Igud Yotzei Sin, the Organization of (Those who) Left China, which is an Israeli organization comprised of those Jews and their descendants who lived in Harbin and left after WWII. Contact information is on our website in the resources section or just search the web.  
With best regards,  
Anson Laytner

### **Phyllis Sakinovsky**

3/5-7 Moira Crescent, Coogee,  
NSW 2034 Australia  
phyllsak@bigpond.com  
19 May 2011

I promised to send you the letter from Reuven Traub. The pdf is the English translation and the 4 jpgs are the original letter.

Reuven's mother, whose name I don't have but who was probably Traub, died on 5 Adar, probably in 1923. However there is no one by that name on the sites page.

I look forward to hearing from you about I can search for more detail.

#### **Text of Letter from Reuven Traub as mentioned in the letter from Phyllis Sakinovsky:**

"Harbin. 02.07.1923

It's been many years since I've last received your letter. I admit that I myself have not corresponded much because I've not have your proper postal address.

During this time I've been through much turmoil. Prior to the war, I enjoyed prosperity. I owned jewelry and watch stores on China Street, house No.21. Residential crises hit town of Harbin during the years of the war with flat and house prices skyrocketing. My trade did not stand those huge expenses and as a result I had to sell out all of my stocks and close down the entire business.

I still was well off afterwards and making good earnings on commissions and third party deals. However, the Russian Revolution brought about a huge devaluation of Russian money. Unfortunately, I kept almost all of my assets in Russian Rubles that now have become worthless. So that I've got no possessions and my life-long work has turned out wasted.

I still do some go-between business, but the earnings are not as it used to be. Barely can I earn enough to feed us on a daily basis. I keep wondering in the town from morning to night looking for any opportunity to earn even a penny. Rarely am I successful

in these days because the town of Harbin has lost any communication with Russia. The entire population of Harbin suffers ever since business life has gone into stagnation.

Then I want to tell that I've G-d, three daughters, the eldest one - Yenta, 14 years of age, she studies in 4th grade of Gymnasium, the second one Etta, 8 years we teach at home and the third daughter - Haya, 2 yrs.

I have to raise them all and give them a proper education. Sadly, I can't see ways to accomplish that, as I've got no income. I'm devastated at this prospect. In addition to all my misfortune, my mother has passed away on the 5th of Oder. She used to live with us in Harbin. Now I got to the synagogue three times a day to pray "Caddish".

Few days ago I came to the synagogue to pray to G-d for my deceased Mother, I felt very anxious because of my business wrong goings. Suddenly, I was presented with your letter posted to our Rabbi. Gladness left me speechless, as my father who I have not heard from for years was (thanks G-d) alive and healthy. I would not need more to make me happy.

Dear Father, please write to me frequently now as I've not got any other relatives left apart from you - dear Father. Please, let me know about my dear sister and whereabouts of uncle Azriel and his Moissei (Moshe?). Please write to me in as much detail as possible. It will entertain us here in Harbin as we feel very lonely and we've not got any relatives.

It would be good for us leave Harbin as the business is going really bad. Also, we are worried for our daughters - they witness lots of wrongdoings and promiscuities in Harbin. It's impossible to enter Russia now and we've not got money to escape elsewhere either. I just do not know what to do.

We'll take a photo of ourselves very soon and post it to you so that you'll know the entire family. Please he

## IN LIEU OF FLOWERS

# SOCIAL AID TO COUNTRYMEN

Dear Friends,

Rosh Hashanah is approaching and Igud Yotzei Sin continues its activities and gives to the recipient's monthly social aid. According to our data for January 1, 2011, we grant a monthly social aid to 60 needy countrymen. They are mostly the elderly, lonely or ailing people. The situation of many of our countrymen is very grave and without the assistance of IYS they would not be able to make ends meet. In recent years, the number of contributors has decreased, both in Israel and abroad. Also, the rate of the foreign currency impacts adversely the local currency and therefore, the amount of money that we receive for the Social Aid Fund has become considerably smaller. Our social aid totals US\$100,000 per year. We herewith apply to you with a request to donate to the Social Aid Fund in lieu of flowers for Rosh Hashanah, and for any other holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and family occasions or other festive dates. We will also send a proper notification to the person in whose honour the donation is given. We are aware that our contributors will derive great satisfaction from participating in the noble cause of helping our needy. Flowers wither soon but a good deed lasts long.

Your help will make the days of the elderly and lonely brighter.

Please send your donations to the following address:

**Igud Yotzei Sin**

**P.O.B. 29786**

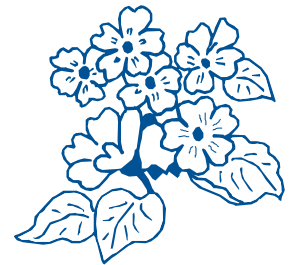
**Tel Aviv 61297**

With friendly regards and all the best wishes for Rosh Hashanah!

Board of Directors of IYS

President T. Kaufman

Deputy President and Treasurer Y.Klein



(continued from page 99)

well and forward my best wishes to my dear sisters, to your Spouse and to all other relatives. Please write me letters in Hebrew.

Please accept sincere best wishes from my wife and daughters. My wife and my eldest daughter will write you the next letter.

I'm looking forward to your response.

Your son,  
Reuven Taub  
30 Polevaya Street  
Harbin, Manchuria  
China"

\*\*\*

Dear Teddy and Rasha,  
I hope you're both feeling well. I'm reading the book in Russian called "Chinese Jews" and it's very

interesting. I got it from the partisan organization in Tel-Aviv. There are many details about creating of the Jewish community in China which I didn't know. I must say, it was and is quite a community. I haven't heard of another community that exists to this day, the way the Igud does, after it was dispersed over half a century ago, and still carries on with the values of achieving, assisting, and communicating and the added achievement of improving relationship with China, which was not a country that was particularly friendly to Israel back in the 1950's. I'm proud of our people and especially proud of our "leadership", you Teddy, and Yossi Klein and all the staff of the Igud, and the branches in

Israel, US and elsewhere.

On another note, a friend of mine here in NY had a relative who went to China from Irkutsk. Maybe he or members of his family can be tracked down. They come from a little place called Makow Mazawiecki. Their name was Piasetsky or something like that, Moshe and Esther, and their children Ezra and Helen, and maybe more. Has anyone from Shanghai or Harbin heard of them?

We hope to be able to come to Israel in May, and of course will see you, right?

Love

Dr. David Geffen

Channoch Albeck 16, Apt. 16  
Jerusalem  
02-6714036

# In Memoriam

## KALMAN SLOOTZKER of blessed memory (1927 - 2010)

By L. Heimann

Excerpts from my book "From My Birth Land to My Home Land - dedicated to his memory

During the summer we used to attend our school's youth camp, it was in Harbin but on the opposite bank of the Songbei River. A good time was to be had for three whole weeks. We would play in the sand, bathe in the river and engage in sports and a myriad of other activities. I remember one day, Kalman and I had a rather serious row. The cause of this row was the word 'labvakar'. During the course of my stay in Latvia I learned a few words like 'Hello', 'Good Morning' and 'Good Evening' which in Latvian is 'labvakar'. And so when one day I said 'labvakar' to Kalman he replied 'labv-kakker' and so the quarrel began around the use of this word during which Kalman took a bucketful of tomatoes and threw the lot at me. I remained standing, covered in tomato red while his father [the teacher Zelig Slootzker] turned red too - on account of being so furious with his son, he then reprimanded him. Despite this incident we remained best of friends and that squabble is remembered as an entertaining anecdote.

### **THE JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL**

We set on the road: Uncle Max and I, Kalman Slootzker, his brother Isaac, his father rabbi Slootzker, his mother as well as Lazar and his brother. Our first stop was Tianjiin where we were met with representatives

of the Jewish Agency who took us under their aegis. We were installed in a hotel, while waiting, for about ten days, to receive our exit visa from the Chinese. Once we got our visas we embarked on a small Danish ship and set sail, some fifty of us, to Hong Kong. We had no permit to enter the city, only the harbour. From there we were driven to Hong Kong airport and took our flight to Lod airport [Israel], stopping en route in Calcutta, Bombay and Sharjah [UAE] in the Arabian Peninsula.

Uncle Max and I paid for our flight to Israel which later turned out to be significant as we were free of monetary debt to the Jewish Agency. I remember meeting one of the Kadoori family members in Hong Kong. He went through the throngs of Jews waiting for the flight to Israel and asked "Does anyone need a toothbrush, anybody in need of toothpaste?" and though the way in which he was concerned with the tiniest of details may have seemed a touch amusing it was none the less very moving. In Calcutta an Indian officer offered to take us to a night club to pass the two hours we had left until take off but we were anxious and so did not go. At the airport in Bombay we sat in a restaurant and ordered some scrambled eggs. Ah! The memory of the blacker than black pair of hands serving us a white plate set on a dazzlingly white table cloth... what a sight. At the same airport we also observed women

constructing a new runway for the planes.

It is a hard job mixing cement with one's feet instead of using a concrete-mixer and it really bothered us that women were made to carry out such a task. Later we arrived at Sharjah, a British base on the Arabian Peninsula. The local Brits invited us over for ice cream and to our surprise, it tasted salty! We asked them, politely, for an explanation and so they told us that as there is not enough fresh water on the base to prepare the ice cream so they used salt water...

After a thirty six hour flight, on the 1st of May 1950 at exactly midnight, we landed at Lod airport. Finally we were in the Land of Israel, the land I have heard so many stories about and of which I have dreamed.

In August Kalman joined us working for the railway company and together we received an appointment as supervisors of bridge building and water crossing works on the new line being built at the time: from Remez junction all the way to Tel Aviv North. [Where Benei Brak is nowadays]

### **WORK ON THE REMEZ - TEL AVIV NORTH LINE**

Our supervising job meant that Kalman and I met with a term which was new to both of us - the "contractor". In China all railway work was carried out by the railway people yet here we had to supervise contracted work. The job included building three large bridges; one over the Hadera River, the second over the

# In Memoriam

Alexander River and the third over the Yarkon River. The bridges were constructed of iron girders and a man named Glass, the proprietor of a large welding workshop, manufactured the components according to the railway company's specifications. In addition there were water crossings constructed of reinforced concrete, the contractor for which was Solel Boneh, Netanyah branch. Kalman and I moved between the construction sites ensuring the works were carried out according to the plans. In order to travel from one site to the next we required a vehicle and so Solel Boneh helped solve the problem by 'donating' an army surplus truck and as we had a chauffeur we travelled easily from one site to the next. Another company, Fanta Saltpetre was contracted to build a bridge through Rotman's orchard in order to facilitate passage between the two parts of the orchard, created as a result of the railway tracks having cut the orchard in two. The supervising engineer was Moshe Shapiro. He and I became close and our friendship lasted till his last day, I still keep in touch with his widow, Avivah.

The work concentrated around the Netanyah area so Kalman and I rented a room in a hotel in the town's centre - "Hotel Netanyah". Our authorised expenses totalled more than our actual monthly salary. We were relieved that we could afford a room and eat well.

In the mornings we would get up, have a cup of coffee or tea with a Danish pastry on the side and leave for work. At times we would replace the hot drink with a small glass-bottled 'lebeniah' [thick cultured milk] purchased at the grocery store. Lunch was taken at the co-operative restaurant in Netanyah. Those were the days of 'austerity', the 'points era' and payment at the restaurant

involved Government Issue food coupons. The coupons afforded one to eat meat and or chicken once or twice a week, but Kalman and I liked our meat, we were two constantly hungry young men so in addition to the coupons we topped the bill with our salaried money and would receive a large portion of rice or pasta with the meat hiding under the mountainous pile of rice so no one could see the meat hiding underneath.

With the working day over at around five or six in the evening, we would stroll around the town. Occasionally, as a treat, we would go to the 'Amsterdam' pastry shop where we would sit, drink coffee and sample their wonderful cream cakes. I must mention though that despite all that food I was still very slim. Once or twice a week we would go to 'Herscheleh'; a restaurant in the centre of Netanyah. It was a one man restaurant and he did everything. Chez 'Herscheleh' the 'points' did not exist - we paid for our meals, a high yet reasonable price. Dining there was a delight: the food was excellent but the gist of it was the relaxed atmosphere of that place. Were we to arrive at eight in the evening our food would arrive not before nine thirty...Herscheleh would prepare everything himself and that took time. After the meal we would listen to a 'concert' - Herscheleh would sing, not just any old singing either, he had a marvellous voice and we along with the rest of the diners present would relish the Jewish melodies - what an experience! I must mention that in 1948, Herscheleh's restaurant served as the headquarters of major-general Shamir. There was fighting in the Tul Karem area and the whole "Haganah" would gather in this small restaurant. It was a special place and Herscheleh, a unique man.

Kalman and I spent many hours together: at work and afterwards in 'Amsterdam' or at Herscheleh's. We liked going to the open air cinema situated close to the beach. They would screen a variety of films, sometimes French films and other times 'Westerns', after all we were young and enjoyed having a good time.

During our time in Netanyah, Kalman and I found ourselves at the centre of a labour dispute. Part of the job involved earthworks and precisely at that period heavy mechanical equipment was being introduced at the workplace. The earthworks labourers were mostly new immigrants from Yemen who lived in one of Kfar Vitkin's neighbourhoods, receiving very low pay for their toil and in my opinion, employed under exploitative conditions. The labourers from Kfar Vitkin, Yemenites and other new immigrants, together with labourers from Netanyah and members of the Histadrut [Trade Union Federation] laid themselves down on the ground just before the bridge crossing the Alexander River and prevented Solel Boneh from commencing their work. This strike was in protest of using the mechanical equipment instead of the labourers and in effect, Kalman and I had nothing to do with the matter; we hardly knew what it was all about yet when the strikers found out that we lived in Netanyah in the hotel they laid siege to it. And why? Because for them we represented the government and their employers. We were shut in the hotel for two days and the hotel proprietor went out to get some food for us. I recall that he was quite pleased with his hotel being the centre of attention...

I could not understand how it was possible to go on strike in the Land of Israel - how could it be that people

# In Memoriam

are in conflict instead of working and co-operating with one another. True enough, I was not involved in local politics, but mainly I was an idealist... in the event, within a few days the dispute with Israel's Labour Party was settled and the then labour minister, Golda Meier succeeded in facilitating the use of the mechanical equipment whilst the labourers got some supplementary pay.

One day as we were working on the bridge over the Alexander River, torrential rain began to fall. We ran from the exposed bridge to find shelter in a small concrete structure which contained a water pump; we squeezed ourselves inside. As we waited for the storm to die down another man arrived. He overheard us chatting in Russian and after we told him we were new immigrants he invited us over to his home. It turned out that he was one of Kfar Vitkin's founders and was older than us. The one special thing I remember from that visit was being served strawberries and cream! At the time, considered a 'grand extravagance', a true luxury; he was a very nice man and we visited his home several times after that first encounter.

## **THE THREE "CHINESE" OF ISRAEL RAILWAY S**

Kalman Slootzker, Leon Heimann and Meier Lazar were graduates of the Harbin Polytechnic, the only higher education institute in the city. Its main course of study was railway construction engineering. "Harbin was an important railway junction and the university supplied the technical workforce for the job" explains Meier Lazar, a chief signalling, electrical and communication engineer with the Israel Railway. Like his two friends, Meier was born in Harbin to Russian ex-pats. The Jewish community in Harbin was

established at the beginning of the 20th century, the main businesses of its members were the fur, wheat and soy trade. The community flourished and maintained charity and alms institutions, synagogues, a school, a hospital and a nursing home.

"We received a Zionist education" said Leon Heimann, engineer for the Northern Region. "In the 30's, few individuals in Harbin who were able to obtain 'certificates' began emigrating and by the end of 1949 the stream of immigrants increased and at present no Jews are left there. The three of us emigrated on the 1st of May 1950. I remember how surprised we were to see a May the 1st demonstration in where none of the participants were coerced into taking part".

An excerpt from an article describing the improvements to Israel Railway s in the 60's and 70's.

## **CONSCRIPTION INTO THE ARMY AND BASIC TRAINING**

A few months following my arrival in Israel I received my IDF conscription order. As any young, healthy and fit man I wanted to enlist and contribute my share. At the time, the new railway project running between Remez and Tel Aviv was in its advanced stages and the management was less than pleased to let me and Kalman as he too was supposed to enlist, go and so requested that we defer our conscription by a year. We did not object as we wanted to finish our job on that railway line. The Transport Ministry's director general, approached by the Railways' director general, appealed to the army and requested a settlement regarding the deferral of our military service. Indeed our conscription was postponed for nearly a year. We enlisted together on the same day, the 4th of July 1951.

And so I got on the bus and travelled to the induction centre at present day Tzrifin then named "Sarafand". There we underwent various medical and psychometric tests after which I was summoned to a talk with an air force captain. The officer asked me if I would be willing to volunteer and go on the flight course. I thought about it for a minute and immediately said 'no'. The officer seemed a little taken aback; after all, this is a pilot's course, an elite unit! I explained that I have studied engineering for four and a half years and that I would like to serve in a position where I could bring the most benefit - the engineering corps. For two hours he tried to convince me but I held steadfastly onto my opinion. Kalman Slootzky went through the same talk afterwards and experienced the same 'treatment'. The officer tried his best to persuade us: he explained what it means to be a pilot, what conditions a pilot receives and described the lot in a very enticing manner - still, I knew it would not be the right place for me and that I preferred contributing from my existing knowledge and capabilities which I already possessed at the time.

After a few induction days at Tzrifin we moved to Bahad 4, a training camp within the Tzrifin site. There our basic training commenced comprising practices I have never experienced in my life; physical training, shooting practice and going on long marches whilst shouldering heavy equipment as well as our rifles. Each one of the recruits became a number - I was no longer Leonfreid Heimann etc. I was army ID number 211645. I understood that and accepted it for what it was - this is the army after all. Yet there were things which upset me... during the last days of basic training we had a concluding training session in the Beit Shemesh

# In Memoriam

woods, near Beit Guvrin. A few days earlier I developed a blister on my elbow which became infected. My commanding officers took no notice of the injury. I went to see the medic who told me that if I want to rid myself of this "furuncle" I should close my eyes and hold tight onto something... he then proceeded to excise the wound, squeezed out the infected part and dressed my arm. I will never forget how much pus oozed out of that wound... I went on to participate in that concluding training session in this condition; it was not easy as I was not feeling too well, but in the end the wound healed and I even finished basic training with honours.

## THE VOLLEYBALL TEAM

Occasionally, when not in the desert or on elsewhere in the field, we had some free time to engage in sport. At our Jaffa base there was a volleyball court and slowly a team formed. Indeed I played volleyball back in my student days in Harbin and as I played well I was chosen to be our team's captain. We organized matches between different units

of the engineering corps and our team won the corps' championship. The Tel Aviv area used to be called 'command 8', and we won that command's championship. In time we have improved and reached the 'All IDF' championship league. We came first and won the cup. We did not have a coach and as the team's captain, my job was to take care of the whole managerial aspect of the team: look after the players, motivate and cheer them up during matches. For me this whole sporting thing was just tremendous fun. It reminds me that in 1952 a French army sports team was supposed to arrive in Israel for a series of various sporting competitions. I received an invite to play for the IDF's volleyball team. By that time we were trained by a famous coach. We were taken to Yonah base, a former British army base, next to where the Hilton hotel stands today. In the end the French never arrived but we got ten days recuperation - a most enjoyable sportive holiday.

## A MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER YITZHAK RABIN

In 1976, if my memory serves me

well, Yitzhak Rabin, who was then in his first term as prime minister, visited Israel Railways. The company had just purchased a new 3200 HP General Motors' engine - a very powerful one which was supposed to perform impressively and in honour of the visit, the director general invited the prime minister and the Minister for Transport to the maiden voyage on the train drawn by that engine. The journey was on the section between Tel Aviv and Netanyah and included breakfast on board. We embarked on the train and drove off and just near Kibbutz Yakum the train ground to a halt. That was most unpleasant, after all, a new engine and such a formal voyage... a mechanical engineer was at hand and he tried to restart the engine. Only after half an hour during which we were stuck midway, the train continued on its way. Whilst we were delayed, Rabin's entourage who were all waiting for him in Netanyah along with his armoured car knew nothing of the reason for the delay and so they called a helicopter into action to search for the missing prime minister...



**Community Memorial Service for  
Messod and Michal Wizman** היידי  
**It is traditional for family and friends  
to participate in a prayer memorial service  
to honor the souls of the departed.**

**The community ceremony will take place  
on Sunday evening, May 22nd  
at 8.00 pm, at Ohel Rachel Synagogue.**

**Messod's brother is planning  
to join us in Shanghai for this service.  
It may be a nice opportunity for us to share  
with him our support and good memories.**



# In Memoriam

## Clara Ivanoff



*Photo by Jean Bartlett*

I would like to thank you all for coming to my mom's memorial service. I know that she would be very happy to know that each and every one of you took your time to honor her. What can I say about the mother that I have had for my whole life? That she took care of me well? That she helped me when I needed it without exception? That her love and devotion were unwavering to all her family and friends? Yes, she did all that and more. What was amazing was that she always approached life and tasks with no-nonsense, straightforward approach. No apprehension, no procrastination, no excuses. Just do it, do it now, was her philosophy. She overcame a very hard childhood, saw the horrors of revolution, war and lawlessness, which twice literally uprooted her life. But she did not allow these circumstances

to overcome her spirit. She still kept a positive attitude, always looking towards her family's future with an open mind. She always strove to learn new things, to contribute to everyone's well-being. When she learned how to sew, she made dresses for me, and identical dresses for my cousin Victoria so we could be twins. When she learned how to upholster, we had "new" furniture. When she discovered gardening, we always had fresh flowers at home and fresh vegetables and herbs. I still remember discovering that fresh mint goes great in iced tea! Then there was her cooking and baking - well, let's just say all our family members were the happy recipients on birthdays, holidays, and all the parties she gloried in. And she did love to bask in the glory of "Wow, this is fantastic, who made this?" Or "Clara, this is the best I've ever had, what is your

secret?"

She believed in doing good things for others. I witnessed all her efforts to help her brother Jack. Jack had unfortunately returned to the Soviet Union from Shanghai, and was imprisoned in Stalin's gulags. She tried to secure his release, but having failed that, she constantly sent packages for him and his family to ease his burden. She also financially sponsored some of her other relatives to be able to emigrate from Russia after the travel restrictions were lifted. She made my growing up years wonderful, and yet, because she just did it so matter-of-factly, I never understood what she went through and how remarkable she was until I was an adult many years later. She would always be there to pitch in if any of the family or her friends needed help. She dearly loved my father, and they had a wonderful marriage. He loved to tease her, and she would pretend she was angry at him. Then they would laugh at each other with delight.

These last years with her were the best and the worst. The best because we were never closer, and I am so grateful for the blessing of having her with me for so long. The worst, of course, because she was ever so slowly and gently leaving us, and although however difficult and stressful it may have been, it was my absolute honor to have cared for her. Just as she always had for me. I will miss her beyond words and love her forever.

SPAKOINIE NOCHIE,  
ZALATAYA MAMACHKA

**Vera Loewer**

# In Memoriam

## Genia Plotkin

In January, 2011, in Petach-Tikvah, our old friend from Shanghai Genia Plotkin (Moiseyev) passed away aged 99.

The funeral took place at the Holon cemetery on January 12th. Many of her relatives and friends came to accompany her on her last journey. Her grandchildren and Teddy Kaufman gave the eulogy and Teddy laid a wreath on behalf of Igud Yotzei Sin.

**Blessed be her memory!**

## In Genia's memory

Our old friend from Harbin, Genia Plotkin (Moiseyev) has parted from us. Not long before her passing Genia celebrated her 99th birthday. It had only been a year since her son Molia and his wife held her 98th birthday celebration where Genia who was always so full of life engaged in a lively conversation with her family and other guests. The same Genia came to know throughout the years - intelligent, warm and friendly.

Genia was born in the far-flung city of Manchuria, close to the border with Siberia, into the prominent and traditionally Jewish Moiseyev family of Harbin. She was raised and went on to live in Harbin, Shanghai, Cuba, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Israel. Hers was a very unique family - at once united and each to their own.

Genia was a devoted Jew and Zionist, a loving mother and grandmother, a loyal wife to her husband Senia Plotkin. She was a genteel and warm-hearted woman. Conversing with her was always a great pleasure to all.

We all wished to celebrate her 99th birthday and then her centenary, yet fate had other ideas. During her last few months Genia was not in the best of health and passed away, Tzadik like, in her sleep.

Genia was surrounded by the love

and care bestowed upon her by her children and grandchildren. Her son Molia and his wife wrapped her in their love and dedication. We all felt old age had been kind to her.

Her life path was not always easy yet she was always a loyal friend to Senia, her husband, whether living in Harbin, Dairen or in Israel. Now, after a long period of separation, they are together again, interred under the same tombstone at the cemetery in Holon.

A dear friend has left us. Knowing that our kind-hearted friend resided nearby, in Petach-Tiqvah and later in Neve Oz was always a comfort to us. She left us quietly, in the same manner she lived her life and all of us who knew Genia during her life time will carry her memory within us for years to come.

## Nussia Hanin

On February 2nd, in Nahariya, our friend from Harbin and Tianjin, passed away aged 98. Nussia (Hannah) Hanin [Madorski]

Nussia graduated from Harbin's College of Commerce with the Gold Star of distinction. She married David Hanin, left Harbin and moved to Tianjin where she had a daughter, Nadia and a son, Sasha. The family later emigrated to Israel.

A double tragedy struck Nussia, the death of her husband David and her daughter Nadia, yet she carried on her daily life carrying her pain in her heart. She was a unique woman, educated, a loyal wife to her husband David, a dedicated mother, grandmother and great grandmother.

I remember well her attendance at the reunion in Israel, held for the graduates of the Harbin College of Commerce. Some six months ago I had to go over some dates and names connected to the college we both attended. I called Nussia and

was given an elucidated and succinct explanation to my inquiry. Her voice sounded young, her memory marvellous, her thinking so logical - who would have imagined she was 98! I also remember her interview by the Harbin's television crew held at Nahariya, capturing on film her memoirs of life in Harbin during the 1920's.

Many friends attended her funeral, amongst them Betty Hazan (Yassinover) who recounted the times she used to play Mah-jong with Nussia back home.

On February 3rd we met with her family and friends at the cemetery in Nahariya to settle our last debt to this dear lady. We laid a wreath on behalf of Igud Yotzei Sin. Flowers wilt fast but our memory of Nussia will stay in our hearts for years to come.

**T. Kaufman**

## 50 YEARS SINCE THE DEATH OF LEV PIASTUNOVICH



**Teddy and Jenny Piastunovich  
at the grave of Ella (Hana)  
Piastunovich**

# Letters

**Renate van Zalen**

**Dear Mr. Kaufman and Igud-Sin,**

I got your email address from Mr. Avrum Ehrlich. Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Renate van Zalen and I work at the Resistance Museum Amsterdam where I do the research for our newest project: the creation of a children's museum.

In this new section of our museum we want to tell the story of the Second World War to today's children by using stories from people who were children during the war.

One of our goals is to show that the war affected the lives of children from all over the world.

That is why I am searching at the moment for a Chinese person who was a child during the war and has seen Jewish refugees arriving in China. I am searching for someone who would be willing to tell us about their wartime experiences.

It is also important to us that this person still has an object, photo, diary or something else to illustrate his/her story in our exposition.

Could you maybe help us find such a person?

Looking forward to your response,

**Rebecca Zeffert**

**Dear Teddy, Teddy, Yossi and Ronny,**

I hope you are all doing well. I'm sorry I couldn't make it to your event in January. I had just arrived back from Hong Kong the night before and it was just too much to fit in. I hope it went well.

In case you didn't see our latest newsletter, I have attached it below. I hope you will be able to attend the event at Tel Aviv University next Tuesday evening which we are co-sponsoring.

I have also been giving some thought to our discussion on joint events. I thought it might be nice to run a series of film screenings on Asia themes accompanied by related speakers.

We have use of an ideal venue not far from Igud's office, which is on Sderot Rothschild, and they have a small cinema space there that we can use.

We have already begun discussing organizing a film screening in Israel with Howard Elias - director of the Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival - when he is in Israel in July. Possible films include 'Shanghai Ghetto', 'Next Year in Bombay' and 'Jewish Girl in Shanghai'. If we decide to go with the China options, I think it would be ideal if a member of Igud Yotzei Sin could speak at the screening about the Jewish experience in China and the Shanghai Ghetto. What do you think?

Also, in terms of materials for your magazine, is it too late to submit materials to you for the next issue? I have attached some links below to articles you could use:

8 ways Israel and China intersect in clean energy

<http://www.israelasiacenter.org/#/8-waysisraelchinacleanenergy/4542741851>

Q&A with Mike Granoff on Better Place's pilot projects in China and Japan

<http://www.israelasiacenter.org/#/qa-mike-granoff/4542648024>

The struggle of Asian micro-entrepreneurs who have built a future in Israel

<http://www.israelasiacenter.org/#/asian-entrepreneurs/4549336179>

Let me know if you need the articles in Word format.

**Prof. Chizuko Takao**

**To: Teddy Kaufman,**

I wish you and the people of IGUD a bright and Happy New Year.

**Moshe Margalith**

**Dear Friends,**

The seminar and workshops held at Tel Aviv University on the preservation and development of the former Jewish Ghetto in Shanghai has been successfully concluded, marking the end of the first phase of the project. We are now going into the second phase of this project and hope to present the students' propositions for the development of Tilanqiao to Hongkou government at the end of the year.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the seminar participants from China; the Hongkou Government delegation and the researchers from Shanghai- Tongji Urban planning and Design Institute at Tongji University, and the participants from Tel Aviv University, colleagues and invited guests. Special thanks to the group of students who presented their work for discussion, and to everyone who was involved in the organization, planning and execution of the seminar, and especially the Israeli consulate in Shanghai, Hongkou district government, Tongji University, and Tel Aviv University for collaborating on this.

Attached is some coverage we got on Haaretz newspaper, both in Hebrew and in English.

Also, the London & Kirschenbaum program at Channel 10 have invited me to present the project, you are welcome to watch the discussion : <http://lnk.nana10.co.il/Article/?ArticleId=795197&sid=182> (min 34:00)

Thank you all again for your support and assistance.

**Varda Yoran, New York, USA**

**Dear Teddy and Rasha Kaufman,**

I hope you're both feeling well. I'm reading the book in Russian called "Chinese Jews" and it's very interesting. I got it from the partisan organization in Tel-Aviv. There are many details about creating of the Jewish community in China which I didn't know. I must say, it was and is quite a community. I haven't heard of another community that exists to this day, the way the Igud does, after it was dispersed over half a century ago, and still carries on with the values of achieving, assisting, and communicating and the added achievement of improving relationship with China, which was not a country that was particularly friendly to Israel back in the 1950's. I'm proud of our people, and especially proud of our "leadership", you, Teddy, and Yossi Klein and all the staff of the Igud, and the branches in Israel, US and elsewhere.

On another note, a friend of mine here in NY had a relative who went to China from Irkutsk. Maybe he or members of his family can be tracked own. They come from a little place called Makow Mazawiecki. Their name was Piasetsky or something like that. Moshe and Esther, and their children Ezra and Helen, and maybe more. Has anyone from Shanghai or Harbin heard of them?

We hope to be able to come to Israel in May, and of course will see you, right?

Love

**Prof. G. Marco Cavallarin**

**Dear Teddy Kaufman,**

I just finished reading your book. Congratulations! First of all it is well written, which is good. And it is rich of details and information, which are really useful. It is also often moving: the life of your father, and yours too, were very intense, positive, human. I loved reading it. Thank you so much.

I want to say a warm thank you for the help you gave us. I don't know how we could do without your engagement. Can you please tell me the names of the ladies that we interviewed?

Thank you very much, and we hope we'll see you soon. Have all my best regards.

Shalom,

**Esther Rabinowitz**

After hearing a lecture on Harbin I would be grateful if you could send me some of your printed material. I am a private citizen interested in Jewish History of the Far East during the time of the Second WW. .Thanking you in advance.

Address: 8 Haelah P.O.B1243 Efrat

Phone 029931728 or 0523591543

**Tamar Raff**

**Dear Teddy,**

It was great to talk to you this morning, (this evening for you). Bruce and I are so grateful that you are willing to help us with our visit to Shanghai. We have been planning this trip for a while, and it is so important for both of us to see what we can from Bruce's mother life.

Bruce's mom, Luba Baranovsky was born in Shanghai August 6, 1926 and lived there until she was 14 years old. Growing up she and Dora Wainer were best friends and until the day she died, Dora was her best friend. I never met Luba, but the moment I met Dora it was a love affair and to this day we call her Aunt Dora.

Luba went to the Shanghai British Girls School, not the Jewish School where Aunt Dora studied. She lived upstairs from the store they owned, a haberdashery store called Drapers and Haberdashers' Baranovsky, L. at 850 Avenue Joffre. The telephone number was 73309. The street is now called Huai Hai Zhong Lu and it was redone. We think that she lived at the Cathay Flats or in Bubbling Well Road.

Luba's parents were named Leon and Esther Baranovsky.

Bruce's Aunt Sarrette owned a book store called the Globe Bookstore and we think that it was at 858 Avenue Joffre. The Coconut Grove Nightclub replaced the store at the same location during WWII, during the Japanese occupation.

Bruce's uncle played in the symphony orchestra at the Lyceum Theatre at the corner Mercier and Bourgeat, which is now the intersection of Maoming Lu and Chaing Le Lu.

Bruce and I will be in Shanghai on Friday, April 22 and Saturday, April 23 and Sunday April 24th staying at the Hyatt on the Bund 199 Huang Pu Road. The telephone of the hotel is 21 6393-1234. We would love to hire someone to take us to these places and other places from the time Luba's family lived in Shanghai. Sunday is the best day for us to go with the guide, but will be open to a time that someone can take us.

With much appreciation for all your help.

Happy Passover.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Varda

New York, USA

**Dr. David Geffen**

**Chanoch Albeck 16 Apt. 16, Jerusalem, 02-6714036**

**Dear Sir:**

Dvir Bar-Gal suggested that I write to you. My name is Dr. David Geffen and I live in Jerusalem. I have written various types of historical articles for the Jerusalem Post.

Currently, I have proposed an article to the paper about the Shanghai Refugees who arrived here in Israel in 1949. I became interested when I read about the two sealed trains with Shanghai Refugees which went through the USA in early 1949. I read articles on the trains in various American Anglo-Jewish periodicals and the large article which appeared in the New York Times.

I am hopeful that there is someone from the Refugees group who might speak to me about the trip from Shanghai to Israel. I also am hopeful that you might have some photographs which I might use to accompany the article. I understand that there are lists of those who arrived in 1949. Are they on the internet?

I am hopeful that someone from the Igud will respond. I am trying to write the article for March.

**Hi Teddy**

I didn't get to the Chanuka party as I hoped the last time, so am trying again for 2011. Please give me the date - if you know when it will be! My children are planning a winter trip to Israel, and I would like to attend the party.

Thanks.

Lena Friedel Feld

Daughter of Sam and Luba Trachtenberg from Harbin and Shanghai

Email: lfeld194@optimum.net

**Howard Elias, Hong Kong**

**Dear Sir or Madam,**

I am the director of the Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival.

The Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival is Asia's first festival showcasing the best Jewish-themed film from around the world. Founded in 1999, the Festival has screened over 200 features, documentaries and short films from 34 countries in 33 languages and dialects. It has hosted directors, producers, film critics and curators, who have attended the event to showcase their films, educate and offer their opinions to audience members. Among the topics the Festival has dealt with are the Holocaust, Israel, Jewish identity, Yiddish classics, food, holidays, music, and religious rituals and customs. One of the Festival's unique qualities is that it attracts many non-Jewish people, with more than one-third of the audience falling into that demographic.

The Festival became a registered charity in Hong Kong in 2006. HKJFF Society Limited has a board of 11 members who donate their time and efforts throughout the year to bring the Festival to life every November.

Our plans for 2011 and beyond are to continue building cultural bridges between the Jewish communities in greater China, Israel and the various indigenous Chinese communities. As such, we are seeking out organisations that share our vision and which may be interested in providing grant funding to our mission.

I would like to find out from you how we may go about being one of your organisation's projects.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Dear Roni Veinerman,**

It was lovely to speak to you on the phone just now.

I'm sorry about the event. Since the cost of the venue and film were more than we had initially anticipated, and we didn't have a sponsor for the event, we were worried that we wouldn't be able to make back our costs on ticket sales.

However, as I was mentioning, we are currently recruiting for our Israel-Asia Leaders Fellowship program for Asian students in Israel. The program will run over the 2011/2012 academic year. The deadline for applications is July 15.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Trade, Israel Export Institute and other Israeli companies and non-profit organizations will be providing programming for the program.

I have attached a flier, and further information can be found here:

<http://www.israelasiacenter.org/#/asian-leaders/4550029873>

I would be very grateful if you could forward this on to the Chinese students associated with Igud. Even if they themselves are not eligible, they may be able to pass it on to their friends. It is a fantastic opportunity for any Chinese student in Israel to really understand the country and will help them build long-term partnerships with Israel on return to China.

Many thanks and wishing you all well there at Igud Yotsei Sin,

Rebecca Zeffert  
Founder & Executive Director  
Israel-Asia Center

**Bonnie Galat**

26 June 2011

Dear Teddy Kaufman,

It was a pleasure meeting you in Tel Aviv earlier this month. Thank you for taking the time to share some of your memories and especially for giving me a copy of your book. I enjoyed reading it and appreciated your writing style and the historical information that served to fill in many historical gaps in my understanding.

Please find enclosed a check for \$1000, which I give in memory of my dear father Shura Galatsky, who also was a resident of Harbin during its "golden age" for Jews (1921-1929). By all information, his family prospered there and he received a top-notch education (both academically and culturally) which allowed him to proceed to finish a doctorate in chemistry in Paris and subsequently to have a fulfilling professional and personal life in the USA. This donation can be used as your Board sees fit - either for the running of the organization or for scholarship money - perhaps for a chemistry or art student since those were his passions.

I look forward to receiving the bulletin to stay in touch.

**Mrs. Leone Engel**

7 May, 2011

Attn: T. Kaufman - Editor, Igud Yotzei Sin

**Dear Sir,**

Your email address was passed on to me by Jesse and Naomi Tracton in Sydney, Australia, as we understand Jesse is the Australian Representative of "Igud Yotsei Sin - Association of former residents of China".

My husband and I will be travelling to Harbin, China, in early October 2011, for a few days and would very much like to pay our respects at the cemetery in Harbin to my late Grand-father, Abraham ben Gershon LEV, who sadly passed away in Harbin. As per the attached photocopy of my late Mother's birth certificate, my mother was born on the 28 January 1919. We have no record of when her father passed away but we are only aware that my late Grandmother, Sosha Bat Wolf, was left a young widow with a young child, namely my mother, Veika (Violet), when her husband passed away from the epidemic Spanish Flu which we understand was raging at the time.

Jesse Tracton suggested that I write to you in the hope that you may be able to assist us. Do you have any English translation records of the tombstones at the cemetery? We would dearly appreciate locating his grave/tombstone. We thank you in anticipation of your assistance in the above and look forward to hearing from you per email at your convenience.

Shalom

Home address: 27 London Street, Bentleigh, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3204

Email address: h.l.engel@bigpond.com

**Leone Engel**

21 June 2011

**Dear Mr. Kaufman,**

Both my husband and I appreciate your response to my email to you dated 27 May 2011.

We will be arriving in Harbin late Tuesday evening 4 October and we will be staying at the Shangri-la Hotel, departing Harbin on Friday 7 October in time to be in Beijing for Yom Kippur.

We will have a guide assisting us on the Wednesday and Friday, and Professor Dan Ben Canaan has kindly offered to take us out to the Huntsman Cemetery on Thursday 6 October.

Are you able to assist us with any further information regarding my late Grand-father, Abraham ben Gershon Lev or anything related to the Lev or Simkin family. My grand-mother told me that she worked in her uncle's store - Eskin Brothers.

We look forward to further contact from you we trust in the not too distant future. Shalom.

**Ruth and Morris Eskin**

28 April 2011

**Dear Teddy,**

I hope this finds you and your family well.

I am reading your Pessach edition of the Bulletin with great pleasure and interest. After all this time, I am amazed at how many of the names are still familiar, most having been friends of my parents in Shanghai.

I would be grateful for your arrangements to change our listing details in future issues of the Bulletin. The new details are as follows:

Ruth and Morris Eskin  
Jonathan, Graham, Natanya  
and families

5/25 Spencer Street  
Rose Bay NSW 2029  
Australia

Please find enclosed cheque for \$100.00 as our donation to your Social Aid Fund.

We wish you continuing success with your wonderful work.

**Yana Liberman, USA**

**Dear Friends Rashonka and Teddy,**

It took me a while to return to normality and to thank you for your kind words about Leinka. With this letter I allow myself the liberty of thanking all our friends for their telephone calls, cables, emails and mourning notices in the Bulletin.

We have shared our lives together from a very early age. Having you all by my side at this painful time helps me to realize that life must go on and I will continue to be blessed by the sincerity, care and good wishes of my family and friends.

Indeed, I have lost a memorable friend and life-partner. May you be blessed with long, happy and healthy lives.

With all my love,

Yana Liberman

P.S. Please note my new address:

Y. Liberman, 5172 Renaissance Ave., San Diego CA 92122

**Irene Clurman, USA**

I enjoyed the interesting articles in your November-December 2010 issue, including Leo A. Orleans' entertaining account of his early years. He mentioned taking a train in the U.S. through a dramatic canyon with a river right next to the tracks and wondered where that could have been. It sounds to me exactly like gorgeous Glenwood Canyon near Glenwood Springs, Colorado, where the train tracks in places are right next to the rushing Colorado River. The train still runs through there on its way from California to Chicago. I also enjoyed the letters from Mrs. Asya Kogan and Ehud Olmert. I have fond memories of visiting the Kogans in Japan in the 1950s with my family, and visiting the Olmerts in Israel in 1961. Mordechai Olmert, Ehud's father, was my father's Betar scout master in Harbin.

Address: PO Box 3520

Evergreen, Colorado USA 80437

Email: isee@indra.com

**Dear Mr. Kaufman,**

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We look forward to further contact from you we trust in the not too distant future. Shalom.

**To Teddy Piastunovich**

**Dear Teddy,**

I am a friend of the Pinsky family. My father, Alexander Galatsky, was a good friend of Paul, having grown up with him in Harbin. I have made the trip to Harbin and met with Prof. Dan Ben Canaan there a few years ago. I will be in Israel for a few days in late May/early June and wonder if it might be possible to meet to further my understanding of life in Harbin, your experiences there, etc. I am very interested in knowing more. I have beautiful documents from my father, pictures of Harbin at that time, his childhood diary in Russian but very little first-hand information that he shared with me unfortunately. I will be at the Sheraton in Tel Aviv as of May 28th and leave June 2nd. I have business meetings most days but hopefully if you are available, we could meet one evening. Best regards, Bonnie



**Sophie Fynland Souroujon**

21st June 2011

To Whom It May Concern

For your information:

I received the information below from a Shanghai childhood friend of mine who currently lives in Encino, Calif., and thought that you might be interested in reading about "A Jewish Girl in Shanghai".

I do not know Lilliane Willens. She attended the College Francaise in Shanghai.

Jewish Traditions in Asia

A Jewish Girl in Shanghai

China's first original movie revealing this important piece of Chinese and Jewish history.

Please join Asia Society Washington for the final event in the Jewish Traditions in Asia Series, which shows a never before seen perspective on an important part of Jewish and Chinese history. A Jewish Girl in Shanghai is the first fully produced movie within the PRC portraying the Jewish community of Shanghai during World War II. For the first time, this story is told from the Chinese point of view in a feature length, animated feature that has been shown in several international film festivals. After the screening a discussion will be held with Susan Barocas, Director of the Washington Jewish Film Festival, and Lilliane Willens, author of Stateless in Shanghai.

Susan Barocas is the director of the Washington Jewish Film Festival and WJFF Year-Round program at the Washington DC Jewish Community Center. She has organized exhibitions of film and video in conjunction with numerous museums, organizations and embassies in DC and NY; served as a grants panelist for the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities; and, since 2004, chaired the jury for Filmfest DC Capital Focus Award. A film/video writer and producer, her credits include PBS, Discovery Communications, and the US Government, among others.

Lilliane Willens was born of Russian Jewish parentage in the former extraterritorial French Concession of Shanghai, China, where she attended a French lycee. Lilliane, her parents and her siblings - all stateless - experienced World War II under the Japanese military occupation, the bombing by American planes, the civil war between the armies of the Nationalist government and the communists, and later the arrival in Shanghai of the victorious People's Liberation Army. Because of difficulties at that time to obtain immigration visa to the United States, Lilliane lived two years under the newly established People's Republic of China. When Lilliane immigrated to the United States, she studied as an undergraduate at Boston University where she also received a Ph.D. in French Language and Literature. She taught these subjects at Boston College and at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. While in academia, she published a book on Voltaire and a number of articles on 18th Century France. Later moving to Washington, DC, she worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Peace Corps.

This event is being co-hosted by the Washington Jewish Film Festival.

Date: Wednesday June 29, at 6.00 to 8.30 p.m.

Location: Asia Society Washington, the Cinnabar Room, Whittemore House, 2nd Fl., New Hampshire Ave, NW 1526, Washington DC 20036.

Directions: Metro access: Dupont Circle (Red Line) - Google Map

Tickets & RSVP Asia Society Members \$15, Non-members \$20, RSVP's are required by 12 pm on June 28.

Speakers Susan Barocas, Director, Washington Jewish Film Festival.

Lilliane Willens, Author, Stateless in Shanghai.

More Information: Web: [www.asiasociety.org](http://www.asiasociety.org), E-mail: [AsiaDC@asiasociety.org](mailto:AsiaDC@asiasociety.org)

(Phone: 202-833-0189).

**Library of Congress**

**Bridgetta C. Jenkins**

Head, U.S. Monographs Section

**Dear Mr. Karny**

On behalf of the Library of Congress we want to thank you and acknowledge your generous donation of the publication, Mina Krimchansky: My Life's Journey, 1916-2007. We are happy to inform you that the publication was selected for addition to the Library's General Collections, and was assigned Library of Congress control number: 2010671499.

Once again, thank you for your interest in enriching the collections of the Library, and your most kind donation.

**Bonnie Galat**

6 July 2011

Dear Teddy Piastunovich and Mr. T. Kaufman,

Now that I am back home in the US, I wanted to send you another thank you note for the time you spent with me at the Association last week. I have already finished reading Mr. Kafuman’s book and appreciated its clarity and personal tone, which added much to my understanding of the extraordinary community that was in Harbin and the momentous historical events that affected the nature of life for its residents over time.

I have given Marc Lesk (son of Boris) the contact details of Mrs. Han provided by Mr. Kaufman. I expect he will try to arrange to meet her on his trip to Harbin later this month.

I will make it a point over the coming months or so to complete reading the diaries that my father kept as a boy while living, and will then communicate with you further on this.

I would like to contribute something to the running of your Association and its programs. How does one do that? Please provide an account or other necessary instructions.

**Prof. Moshe Margalith**

16 April 2011

Dear Friends,

The seminar and workshops held at the Tel Aviv University on the preservation and development of the former Jewish Ghetto in Shanghai has been successfully concluded, marking the end of the first phase of the project. We are now going into the second phase of this project and hope to present the students’ propositions for the development of Tilanqiao to the Hongkou government at the end of the year.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the seminar participants from China; the Hongkou Government delegation and the researchers from Shanghai-Tongji Urban Planning and Design Institute at Tongji University, colleagues and invited guests. Special thanks to the group of students who presented their work for discussion, and to everyone who was involved in the organization, planning and execution of the seminar, and especially the Israeli Consulate in Shanghai, the Hongkou district government, Tongji University, and the Tel Aviv University for collaborating on this. Attached is some coverage we got from the Haaretz newspaper, both in Hebrew and in English.

Also, the London and Kirshenbaum program at Channel Ten have invited me to present the project, and you are welcome to watch the discussion:

<http://ink.nana10.co.il/Article/?ArticleId=795197&sid=182> (min 34:00)

Thank you all again for your support and assistance.

**Varda Yoran**

18 May 2011

To Teddy and Rasha Kaufman

Is it possible to put in a notice in the next Bulletin about 2 adjoining plots that are offered by my friend in the Mount Hermon Cemetery in Queens, NY? If anyone is interested, my friend will transfer the papers to me to send over. Surely there is someone among our “Landsmen” who would appreciate that donation. Time is of the essence in these matters. The recipients might be elderly or frail; my friend who has the papers is not so young either. I need not explain to you. This is personal, not something that has to go to the Igud as an organization. Just get the message out, okay? When is the next issue of Bulletin going out? I also am in contact with the New York branch of the Igud, to let them know. Thanks.

Love Varda Yoran

vyoran@gmail.com

**Faith Goldman, Los Angeles, Ca.**

**Dear Teddy,**

In these troubled times, I pray for peace and safety.

Thinking of all of you.

Shalom.

# You've come a long way, miss<sup>ooo</sup>

By Balfoura Friend Levine

Some weeks ago there was a story on local TV about two sisters embarking on interesting careers - one was joining the police force, the other would be a firefighter. In today's work force, the story is not unusual, but in days of yore, it was a man's world they were entering.

I peeked into my 1950 Pandora, the University of Georgia yearbook, and the law school graduating class featured 40 young men and only two women. The 1983 law school graduating class, my daughter Sandy's generation, featured 130 men and 74 women. My granddaughter Erica's class of 2010, Walter F. George School of Law, Mercer University, had 75 men and 65 women.

I spoke with a friend of mine, a Georgia Tech grad, who said there were no women there in the late 1940s; it was some years later that the school saw its first woman on campus, and absolute rarity. A retired physician told me that there were almost no women at the Medical College of Georgia, in Augusta, when he went there. Today, these institutions and most others have

majority female enrollment in their professional schools.

Then, too, who would have thought that women could lead churches or be rabbis and cantors? Back then, the rabbi's wife had just one option - she was the 'rebbetzen'. Today, a husband and wife team, Rabbis Michele and Barry Coffskey, lead our services at the Renaissance; both are fully ordained. There are many other female rabbis and cantors in the greater Atlanta area alone.

Until about the mid-1950's, most girls took up nursing, social work, or teaching. I really wanted to be a nurse and would have been a darned good one, too, steady of hand and purpose. However - another rarity today - I heeded my mother's advice and did not take up nursing because I would "see naked men in the bed". End of story! Who listens to their parents now? Oh, they might hear us, but they end up doing whatever they please.

After graduating the University of Georgia in 1950 (ABJ, Henry Grady School of Journalism), I aspired to join the U.S. Army, thinking that

with a college degree, I could be an officer. But since I was not a U.S. citizen at that time, I would have to come up in the ranks from buck private. I declined that offer and went to work as a clerk-typist (another predominantly female career then) in the civilian world, first at the American Red Cross and later at Southern Bell.

I'm glad that the girls of today have so many choices. They can pursue a variety of careers, marry and raise families, do neither, or do both. They are now tougher in body and spirit, are better educated, carry guns when necessary, face danger daily, and keep in good health, safe and sound, as well as spiritually joyous.

In contrast, I think of those poor girls in third-world countries, who are veiled, controlled, and habitually abused by the men in their lives. They are not permitted education, nor do they have a choice in anything during their lifetimes. I am so grateful for my lot in life, thank goodness

(From *The Jewish Georgian*,  
January-February 2011)

## Tel Aviv University holds conference on Shanghai's Jewish ghetto

(*Jewish Times Asia* - May 2011)

The Jewish ghetto in Shanghai created in the 1930's welcomed Jews without a passport or visa, allowing some 20,000 European Jews to escape there during World War II.

A joint Chinese-Israeli conference opened on 17 April at Tel Aviv University, entitled Replanning Tilanqiao, Formerly the Jewish Ghetto in Shanghai.

The three-day event, was organized by the Azrieli School of Architecture, and focused on the history and preservation of the ghetto.

Participating in the conference were six senior officials from the Shanghai Municipal Planning Department and three professors from the Architecture and Urban Planning School of Tongji University.

The Jewish ghetto in Shanghai was in the city's Hongkou district. The area is now threatened by real estate development.

Last year, Tel Aviv University's Professor Moshe Margalit travelled to Shanghai and made contact with local urban planning officials and academics.

# Thirty Years in the Far East



*Mr. Birman, Representative of the HICEM in the Far East*

The department of HIAS [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society] in the Far East has been working without interruption since 1917. For thirty years this organization has been watching over the interests of HIAS in the Far East. This time can be divided into three periods:

The First World War and its after effects.

The period between the First and the Second World War.

The period of the two wars and the post-war period.

HIAS is the oldest Jewish world organization in the Far East, and if it had not been for this organization, 20,000 refugees would never have got to the Far East. The Far Eastern HIAS has informed the Jewish public of conditions in the East, and thus has managed to save 20,000 lives. Even later, during the difficult wars between 1942 and 1945, the organization was in constant touch with their representatives in neutral countries such as Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden, and Turkey, and thus was able to give assistance to many refugees. Never for a minute were the activities of HIAS suspended, and thousands of messages and greetings were dispatched. The branch office of HIAS in the refugee district, still very active, has delivered news from friends and relatives daily, and in some cases also lent money

on long terms at a time when neither the JOINT nor UNRRA existed in Shanghai (Joint started operating in 1943), and the Kitchen fund was in a difficult financial situation.

The archives and files of the Far Eastern HIAS contain an enormous correspondence on charitable work during the most disastrous time in Jewish history: two World Wars and the period in between. In the files can be found thousands of letters from people who managed to escape from the European hell, work contracts enabling migration, messages to relatives overseas, which resulted in the reunion of long separated family members. Now that the most dangerous and difficult period has passed, and organizations are working under more or less normal conditions again, the Shanghai HIAS bureau is one of the most important organization for refugees and Jews in the Far East. In 1921, a well known Jewish writer stated in the Jewish paper "The Far East": "There is not one Jews in the Far East who has not turned to HIAS." This was after the First World War. Now, after the Second, the work of HIAS has increased. Hundreds of people visit the local offices daily.

The following statistics characterize the work of HIAS in Shanghai: 2,534 persons received financial help from relatives overseas, the total sum amounting to US\$119,109; 506 persons received assistance from Sweden and Switzerland amounting to Swiss Fr. 48,929; 157 persons received entry permits for San Domingo, Brazil, Columbia, Argentine, Peru, South Africa, Venezuela, Uruguay, France, etc.; 584 permits were received for Australia and 1795 affidavits for the US.

7094 persons were put in contact with relatives abroad. 496 cables were sent and 5467 applications for permits for Australia and other overseas countries were dispatched. 167 items of information were published in the always accommodating "Shanghai Echo" through which medium 60,000 persons were called up. 284 lists of names were published.

Letters of recommendation were sent to representatives of HIAS abroad, with the result that many emigrants were received in such parts as San Francisco, Seattle, Sydney and Marseilles. A total of 61,562 letters were received by HIAS during 1946. Most of those letters were of great importance as they contained messages from lost relatives and instructions of migration. The above-mentioned number also contains thousands of letters from various towns in China and South Asia, all falling under the sphere of operation of the Shanghai bureau.

During the year 1946, 117 lists and books containing the names of Jews from various European countries and camps who had survived the war were received. 14,700 names of local refugees were sent to America and Europe, also a list of refugees who had died in Shanghai. The Central Bureau of HIAS in New York and the Headquarters in Paris have greatly increased their activities during the last year and have today 91 offices in various countries. There are 8 HIAS bureaux in France, 7 in Germany, 3 in Austria, etc. The local HIAS bureau is in contact with all newly established HIAS offices.

This is a brief survey of the activities of HIAS in the Far East during 1946. A complete resumé entitled "Thirty Years of HIAS in the Far East" will be published shortly.

# DONATIONS

## SOCIAL AID FUND

### USA

#### SAN FRANCISCO

#### THROUGH THE COURTESY OF THE FAR EASTERN SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

From	The FAR EASTERN SOCIETY of SAN FRANCISCO for the Rosh-ha-Shana	US\$	1000
"	AARON AND MARIE BLACKMAN FOUNDATION, Inc.	"	1000
"	Mr. and Mrs. Norman SOSKIN for the IYS Social Aid Fund	"	500

### USA

From	Anna OSTROVSKA in memory of Mr. A.JACOBSON for the IYS Social Aid Fund	US\$	2.000
"	Dora (nee Vidumsky) and Gabe LEE and family in memory of Sima and Yasha VIDUMSKY and Mary BEYER	"	25
"	Susan SHENNON in memory of her husband Gregory SHENNON (Zubitsky)	"	25
"	Sanford (Sania) and Celia WAINER and family	"	18
"	Robert MATERMAN in memory of his parents Abraham David ben Pinchus and Deena bat Lipe MATERMAN on their Yahrzeits	"	360
"	Nadia EHRlich FINKELSTEIN in memory of her mother Debora (Dora) OSSINOVSKY EHRlich	"	200

#### In lieu of flowers for the Rosh-ha-Shana

From	Billy BELOKAMEN	US\$	100	From	Betty LIAS	US\$	50
"	Mr. and Mrs. BERG	"	540	"	Yaacov LIBERMAN and family	"	136
"	Peter BERTON	"	100	"	Eva McCOY	"	30
"	Rolf DAVID	"	50	"	Dora MEDAVOY	"	150
"	Renee and Abe FRANK	"	50	"	Bella RECTOR	"	180
"	Raissa GOLDIN	"	100	"	Ilana RICHMOND	"	120
"	Gregory HODSON	"	100	"	Mary WOLFF	"	36
"	Golda LAZAROVICH	"	100	"	Seema ZIMMERMAN	"	100
"	Mark and Clara LEEF	"	50				

### AUSTRALIA

From	Mr. and Mrs. Harry TRIGUBOFF for the IYS Social Aid Fund in lieu of flowers	A\$	3500
"	Harry TRIGUBOFF in memory of his late father Moisey TRIGUBOFF	"	300

#### In lieu of flowers for the Rosh-ha-Shana

From	Dr. S.M.BARD	A\$	250	From	Mr. and Mrs. David LEVITAN	A\$	500
"	Alla BRAGAR	"	200	"	Sopha SAKKER	"	50
"	Ruth and Morris ESKIN	"	100	"	Jesse and Naomi TRACTON	"	250

### CANADA

From	Lessy KIMMEL	Can\$	100
"	Stephen MARGLES	US\$	36
"	Frank and Nadia OGNISTOFF in memory of their parents Gregory and Mary OGNISTOFF	"	100

### ISRAEL

From	Giora and Ilana LESK in memory of Danny and Musia BERKOVITCH towards the Igud Yotzei Sin Social Aid Fund	NIS	20.000
"	Graham ESKIN towards the Igud Yotzei Sin Social Aid Fund	"	3.460
"	Vladimir RESIN towards the Igud Yotzei Sin Social Aid Fund	"	800
"	Olga H.DIESTEL for the IYS Social Aid Fund	Can\$	216

From REVA, MIRIAM, PETER, TAMARA, ABIGAIL and ELIANA  
in honour of their father and grandfather  
Bob FREIMAN on the occasion of his Birthday  
NIS 1.800

From	Lena YUDIN in honour of Emmanuel PRATT's 90th Birthday	NIS	180
"	Sarah and Danny ROSS in memory of their dear family members	"	200
"	Chaim LITVIN in memory of his parents Simon and Rachel LITVIN	"	500
"	Luba TSINMAN for two Teddy Kaufman's books "The Jews of Harbin live on in my heart" (in Hebrew)	"	100
"	the members of the Sunday Club in honour of Meefa ZILBERG's Birthday	"	220
"	the members of the Sunday Club in honour of Ety GINANSKY's Birthday	"	240
"	Lily and Zvi KOROSHI on the birth of their great grandson NOAM, son of Gil and Orly Shmuelson, grandson of Ida and Uri Shmuelson	"	300
"	Esther KANER and family in memory of their dear husband, father and grandfather Sioma KANER	"	200
"	Golda TOLEDO in memory of her father Gershon (Grisha) PESELNICK	"	100
"	Aya ROSENBLATT in memory of her husband Moshe ROSENBLATT and her parents Mr. and Mrs. VAITMAN	"	150
"	Genia OLSHEVSKY for the book "To the Middle East via the Far East. Essays and Memoirs" (Russian Jewry Abroad. Vol. 19)	"	70
"	Shulamit EVEN in memory of her father Mark MORGULEV	"	280
"	Boaz ATZMON in memory of his mother Rosetta RABINOVICH	"	140
"	Boaz ATZMON in memory of his father Gavriel (Gava) RABINOVICH	"	140
"	Mark SHIFRIN in memory of his dear PARENTS and sister ASYA	"	360
"	Alina KRINKEVICH in memory of her dear RELATIVES	"	150
"	Baruch LEVITIN in memory of his father Alexander (Shura) LEVITIN	"	120
"	Bernard DAREL in memory of Sophia DAGILAYSKI	"	50

*In lieu of flowers for the Rosh HaShana*

From	Dolly and Abraham ABRAHAM	NIS	100	From	Pnina and Moshe LICHOMANOV	NIS	150
"	Gary BROVINSKY	"	400	"	Timna LILACH	"	300
"	Bernard DAREL and family	"	100	"	Tamar and Arie MADORSKY	"	100
"	Hezkeyahu DVIR	"	100	"	Boris MATLIN	"	180
"	Abraham FRADKIN	"	500	"	Fania and David MINDLIN	"	250
"	Flora and Bob FREIMAN	"	300	"	Gabriela NACHTOMI	"	100
"	Rosa GERSHEVICH	"	100	"	Alexander NACHUMSON	"	60
"	Inna GLOBIN	"	200	"	Israel ROSENBLATT	"	180
"	David GOOTMAN	"	200	"	Sarah ROSS	"	200
"	Riva HOFFMANN	"	100	"	Judith and Israel SANDEL	"	200
"	Rika and Oded HON	"	100	"	Erica SCHLEZINGER	"	170
"	Eli KAMA	"	100	"	Miriam SHAHAM	"	100
"	Rasha and Teddy KAUFMAN	"	500	"	Renata SHANY	"	360
"	Dina KEDAR	"	180	"	Dalit and Simon SHIKMAN	"	200
"	Tamar and Shmuel KISLEV	"	300	"	Carmela SOKOLOVER	"	100
"	Pnina and Yosef KLEIN	"	360	"	Ran VEINERMAN	"	500
"	Rachel and Iona KLIGMAN	"	450	"	Miriam YAKIR	"	120
"	Abraham KLIGMAN	"	250	"	Fira YARHO	"	120
"	Joe LEVOFF	"	200	"	Aviva and Gershon ZALTSMAN	"	150

## SYNAGOGUE FUND

### ISRAEL

From	Teddy PIASTUNOVICH in memory of his father Arie PIASTUNOVICH	US\$	200
"	Luba TSINMAN towards the Synagogue Fund for the Passover Holiday	NIS	500
"	Fania and David MINDLIN towards the Synagogue Fund	"	100
"	Genia KAUFMAN in memory of her brother Abraham SAMSONOVICH	"	100
"	Shimon ROM (ROSENSTEIN) for the Synagogue Fund	"	180
"	Arie RAAM (ROSENSTEIN) for the Synagogue Fund	"	180
"	Shulamit EVEN in memory of her father Mark MORGULEV	"	360
"	Hezkeyahu DVIR in memory of his parents Henrich and Ida DAVIDOVITCH	"	200
"	Elia GODER in memory of her father Eliahu BAR-YOSEF	"	100
"	Alina KRINKEVICH in memory of her dear RELATIVES	"	150
"	Miriam SHAHAM in memory of her father Yakov BRANDT	"	100
"	Esther YARHO in memory of her parents Iza and Aharon YARHO, and in memory of her grandparents Esther and Abraham YARHO and Enya (37th Yahrzeit) and Michael ( 46th Yahrzeit) KONDAKOFF	"	360
"	Esther YARHO in memory of her uncle Shlomo (Monia) YARHO (42st Yahrzeit)	"	100
"	Bernard DAREL in memory of Sophia DAGILAYSKI	"	50

### SCHOLARSHIP FUND

#### USA

From	Bonnie GALAT in memory of her dear father Shura GALATSKY towards the IYS Scholarship Fund for a chemistry or art student	US\$	1000
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### ISRAEL

DONATION  
From Genia OLSHEVSKY to establish  
the Scholarship Fund in memory of Arie (Leova) OLSHEVSKY  
NIS 5.000

From	Vicky FELLUS in memory of her father Michael BOYARSKY, in honour of Genia OLSHEVSKY's 90th Birthday and Isabel BOYARSKY's 89th Birthday towards the Scholarship Fund in memory of Arie OLSHEVSKY	NIS	500
"	Genia OLSHEVSKY towards the Scholarship Fund in memory of Arie OLSHEVSKY	"	1.500

We send warmest congratulations to dear  
Irit and Teddy ABRAMOV  
on the marriage of their daughter  
and wish them good health and happiness  
All our love  
Asya KOGAN, RICHARD, RITA and ABA

**D e a t h**  
**Bluma KOTZ**

Passed away peacefully on Friday May 6, 2011 aged 93.  
Widow of Leon KOTZ (deceased)  
She will forever be remembered by her son ALEX and her extended family  
May she rest in peace

The BOARD of DIRECTORS of IGUD YOTZEI SIN  
mourns the passing away of

**Bluma KOTZ**

in Sydney, Australia  
and extends heartfelt sympathy to her entire family

AMERICAN FAR EASTERN SOCIETY of NEW YORK is greatly saddened  
by the passing away of our long time member

**Zena SHVETZ**

and extend our deepest sympathy to her dear family

We are deeply saddened by the passing away of our dear friend

**Monia NITZAN (NEMCHENKO)**

Monya was my classmate in the Harbin Commerce High School.  
Monya was liked and respected by all who knew him.  
We express our heartfelt condolences to his family

Olga and Isai KAUFMAN



Our hearts go out to ANICHKA and her entire family on the irreplaceable loss  
of her father

**Mark KAPTZAN**

May his memory be for a blessing

Dora and Gabe LEE

Dorel and Stuart BOGOM-SHANNON and family

Roni and Helene MRANTZ and family

Mike and Michelle SHANNON and family

I deeply mourn the passing away of my dear cousin

**Benny TZUR**

and extend heartfelt sympathy to his family

Eva MCCOY

With deep sorrow we announce the passing of our long time member

**Evelyn TODRIN**

and extend our heartfelt condolences to MARK and to PAULA

AMERICAN FAR EASTERN SOCIETY  
of NEW YORK

The BOARD of DIRECTORS of IGUD YOTZEI SIN mourns the passing away of

**Evelyn TODRIN**

and extends heartfelt condolences to her entire family

The BOARD of DIRECTORS of IGUD YOTZEI SIN mourns the passing away of

**Ben HENKIN**

and extends heartfelt condolences to his entire family

# COUNTRYMEN VISITING THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR



# EMMANUEL PRATT (MONIA PIRUTINSKY) IS 90

*Festive reception in his honor at "Beit-Ponve"*



*T. Kaufman talks about the hero of the day*



*Monia - hero of the occasion*



*Advocate Erez Levanon welcomes the hero of the day*



*Galia Katz (Volobrinsky) delivers a speech*



*Guests in the "Beit Ponve" hall*

# 上海猶太研究中心

Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai

המרכז ללימודים יהודיים בשנגחאי

