



# Bulletin

## Igud Yotzei Sin

Association of Former Residents of China

November - December 2004 ♦ Vol LI ♦ Issue No. 382 English Supplement

### *International Seminar of the Jewish History in Harbin August-September 2004*



The Presidium of the seminar



In the hall of the seminar

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T. Kaufman

## Jewish People Live in Shanghai

Jews often refer to the Sabbath in the feminine, calling it "Queen Sabbath." This terminology is used to express the great amount of anticipation that leads up to this day of rest. The use of the word Queen then has a dual significance. The Sabbath is sometimes also portrayed as a bride. For me to celebrate the Sabbath far away from my home in Israel is never easy. How solemnly descends the Sabbath upon the holy soil of Israel. Businesses and shops are closed when this much coveted holy day arrives, and people hurry home. Families gather together and take part in a festive family gathering. And while being abroad, even in a most friendly country and in such a great city that Shanghai is, the heart still lacks the feeling of that exceptional atmosphere of Queen Sabbath's coming.

It was our first day in Shanghai. We arrived from Harbin by air on Friday noon. We were the guests of the Shanghai Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and we were told that the Rabbi of Shanghai's Jewish Community Center, Mr. Shalom Greenberg, was expecting us to come to the Sabbath celebration at 7 p.m.

At a quarter to seven the Rabbi's wife Dinah met us at the entrance. We entered a three-storey building of the Jewish Community Center when the evening prayer had already begun. Rabbi Greenberg was praying with about sixty other men and twenty women. Trepidation seized at my heart as they sang out joyfully, "Leha Dodi, Likrat Kala" ("Come, my Beloved . . . let's greet the Sabbath"). Among those praying there were American and Israeli Jews who were on business trips in China and who came to Shanghai from Beijing and Nanjing and also some Jewish people who live almost permanently in Shanghai.

The prayers over, the people did not leave. "Aron-ha-Kodesh" where the Scroll of Torah is kept was closed and in a matter of minutes the place became a dining-room with tables

full of traditional Jewish meals. People were seated at the tables and the Sabbath songs were sung.

Rabbi Greenberg, of the **Habbad** movement, which is one of the most important branches of Hassidism, greeted everyone and introduced us to the other guests, describing in warm words our work in the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel and then he invited me to speak in front of the public.

I felt as if the past of my Habbad-Hassidic father, grandfathers and great grandfathers had returned to me after so many years and I spoke in Hebrew about the Jewish Shanghai, about the three Rabbis of the Jewish communities in China who belonged to the Habbad movement: A.M. Kiselev, M. Ashkenazi and S. Levin – and the fourth Rabbi is now in Shanghai – Rabbi Shalom Greenberg.

Rabbi Greenberg and his wife have re-kindled the light of Judaism in remote Shanghai. With Hassidic enthusiasm, with the energy of the Habbad followers they established a Jewish home where so many people who come to Shanghai are finding warmth and assistance.

It warmed my heart to find out that far away from my home in Israel I could celebrate Sabbath in such nice Jewish surroundings. It was a wonderful experience to see that Jewish people are again living in Shanghai after 40 years of our absence from that city. It is really an example of Jewish immortality.

**Tuesday, December 14, 2004, at  
04:00 p.m.**

At Bet Oved Ha-Iriya  
4 Pumbeditha Street, Tel Aviv

**An All-Israel gathering of  
Former Residents of China  
and the opening ceremony  
of the 15<sup>th</sup>  
conference of IYS.**

Scholarships will be awarded after  
the lighting of Hanukka candles.

# Jewish Yesterday in Tomorrow's China

T. Kaufman

## After the Seminar in Harbin

More than three months have passed since we left Harbin, so remote but so very close to our hearts, after the end of the seminar on the history of the Jews in that city, and I am still under the impression of that absolutely exceptional event in the life of former residents of Harbin and in the history of the Jews in China.

What was so special about the seminar and why did it leave an unforgettable trace in the memories of all those who took part in the reunion in Harbin in August and September, 2004? 106 years have passed since the day when the building of the Chinese Eastern Railway began in 1898, and the first Jews came to Harbin, then a village on the bank of the Sungari, and 101 years since the day when 500 Jews founded the Harbin Jewish Religious Community (HEDO) in Harbin in 1903.

55 years have passed since the beginning of the mass emigration of the Jews from Harbin, just several months after the People's Republic of China was born on October 1, 1949, to their historic motherland, the Jewish State of Israel, reborn in May 1948.

The Civil War in China was then over, the borders of the North-West of China opened and the Government of the New China allowed all the Jews of Harbin to leave China for Israel. 41 years have passed since the day when the last remaining Jews who still resided in Harbin left on their way to Israel and Australia, and the

Jewish community ceased to exist in the city which had been the cradle of the Jewish national, social, cultural, charitable and religious activities in China and in the whole Far East.

It would seem that our Jewish past in that city has gone to eternity, but ... oh wonder, our Chinese friends are now trying to restore, take care of and preserve our past in that city. The publication of the album "The Jews in Harbin" in Chinese and English, the exhibition of photos "Jews in the Life of Harbin", that has 300 photos reflecting all sides of the former life of the Jewish people in Harbin, both private and social, as well as their commercial activities. The exhibition that is worth being displayed not only in Harbin, but in all the centers of the Jewish Diaspora, so that our people may know how in relatively recent times, just 65 years ago, there existed a flourishing Jewish community, a Jewish colony in China, which had done so much for the city, the province and the whole area – and all that so far away from the world's Jewish centers, behind the Great Chinese Wall on the kind Chinese soil.

And last, but not least, at the top of the achievements of our Chinese friends from the Academy of Social Sciences of the Heilongjiang Province, was the seminar on the history of the Jews in Harbin. More than one hundred landsmen from cities in seven countries such as Sydney and San Francisco, Tel Aviv and London, Athens and Moscow, came to Harbin

in order to pay tribute to our Jewish past in remote Harbin. The presence of high-ranking guests – the Vice-Governor of the Province, the Deputy-Mayor of the City, the Ambassador of Israel in China, a number of Chinese professors from Harbin, Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing and Hong Kong, their most interesting informative reports reflecting all aspects of Jewish life in Harbin – all that made the seminar a historic event that has no equals not only in the history of the Jews in Harbin, but in our history as a whole.

It was not just a seminar, it was a reunion of former residents of China and, what is still more important – up to 20 per cent of our landsmen brought their children and grandchildren who wished to return to their roots together with their parents and grandparents in China, a country that already lives in the future, and not just in the future, but I should say that it is going along the road of progress into the next century. There are many nations that cherish their past, but only a great nation cherishes and preserves the past of another nation, a minority that used to live on its soil.

I wish to conclude with the words I said while closing the seminar in Harbin, the words of gratitude to the organizers for having held this unforgettable get-together, this seminar which will remain in our memory for many years to come. God bless that exceptional city, that ancient people and that great country!

## Presidium and Central Committee Meetings

A meeting of the Presidium was held on July 26. Present: T. Kaufman, Y. Klein, R. Veinerman, R. Rashinsky, T. Piastunovich, G. Katz, J. Bein, M. Kaminka, A. Podolsky, A. Fradkin, M. Lihomanov, and Z. Watner. The members of the control committee were also present. Absent: B. Bershadsky, J. Sandel, I. Brunner, and Joe Levoff. T. Kaufman gave a full account of work done in the past three months, which was approved. Y. Klein showed the balance accounts as of 31.12.03 and of the first half of 2004 till 30.6.04. Both balances were approved.

The meeting of the Central Committee of Igud Yotzei sin was held on July 26, with 17 members present. A minute of silence was held in memory of members deceased since April 20, 2004. Abroad: Eugenia Bershadsky, Fusia Busel, and Victor Roland in New York, Luba Fishbein in Ottawa, Lily Kolos in Sydney, Sandy Nehamkin in Florida, and Raya Vishnitzer-Barton in Panama. In Israel: Galia Kogan. T. Kaufman then gave a full account of work done during the past three months, which was approved. Vice-Chairman and Treasurer, Y. Klein, gave the balance accounts as of 31.12.03 and for the first half of 2004 till 30.6.04, which were approved. T. Kaufman wished all members and landsmen of Igud Yotzei Sin a very Happy New Year.

### JNF Golden Book

The IYS Central Committee has reported that Isai Kaufman, President of the San Francisco branch of the Far Eastern Association, was inscribed in the Golden Book of the Jewish National Fund) as a token of appreciation of his meritorious social and cultural work in the ranks of Igud Yotzei Sin. The decision was timed to coincide with Isai Kaufman's 85th birthday.

At a plenary session of the SF FEA branch, Sept. 12, secretary Gutia Katzeva handed I. Kaufman the JNF certificate.

## People and Events Sarah Ross Exhibits Historical Photographs

A retrospective exhibition of unique photographs by Eli and Sarah Ross, formerly of Harbin, opened at the Bechar Gerard Cultural Center, Jerusalem, on Sunday, October 24. The 30 pictures exhibited were taken during the past 50 years and represent a singular record of events at a site in Jerusalem less familiar to the general public: the Presidents' Residence, of which Eli and Sarah were accredited photographers.

The opening of the exhibition, organized by the Igud Yotzei Sin and the Israel-China Friendship Society, was attended by the fifth President of Israel, Yitzhak Navon, Ambassador of China in Israel, Mr. Chen Yong Long, former ambassador of Israel in China, Mrs. Ora Namir and a house-full of Jerusalemites, amongst them many China old hands. The Director of the Center, Isi Shohat, opened the exhibition.

Yitzhak Navon shared with the guests some memories of the Rosses who were "not just official photographers of the site, but also amicable friends". Ambassador Chen expressed his satisfaction with the activity of the Israel China Friendship Society which promotes the cultural ties between the two countries. Teddy Kaufman greeted Sarah and paid tribute to her late husband, Eli Ross (Rosenberg), as a friend and a photographer.

### Mazal Tov

Mor Shmuelson and Raz Bar Haim were married on June 6 in "Sham Yam" Tel Aviv. Mor is the daughter of Ida and Uri Shmuelson and the granddaughter of Lily and Zvi Koroshi (Krugliak). Mor is a student in Bar Ilan University and Raz works for a Hi-Tech company. Many guests attended the wedding and relatives

arrived from overseas. Mazal tov to the young couple and best wishes to the parents and grandparents.

Dotan Rom (Rosenstein) and Maya Ben Zvi were married on October 15 in Nataf, Judean Mountains. Dotan is the son of Rivka and Shimon Rom (Rosenstein) of Harbin and Shanghai. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates the Rom and Ben Zvi families and wishes them mazal tov.

To my dear sister and our aunt  
Zina Kamonski upon your  
90<sup>th</sup> birthday  
Wishing you good health and  
happiness till 120!

Dinah Zaigraeff

Lily, Asia with families

Zahava Miller

Gil, Shirly, Tal and families

Esther Vandel, Avi, Devora and  
Shlomi and families

Itai Bershadsky, the grandson of Bobby Bershadsky, formerly of Shanghai, and his wife Pnina, married Nona Ofer. Itai is the son of Zvika and Adi Bershadsky. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Pnina, Bobby and all the Bershadsky family and wishes them health and happiness.

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# Mira and Joe Mrantz at Beit-Ponve



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T. Kaufman greets Mira and Joe. From left to right: Joe Mrantz, T. Kaufman, Mira Mrantz, Yossi Klein, Roni Veinerman and Seva Podolsky



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Mi ra thanks for the reception

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At the office of Igud Yotzei Sin

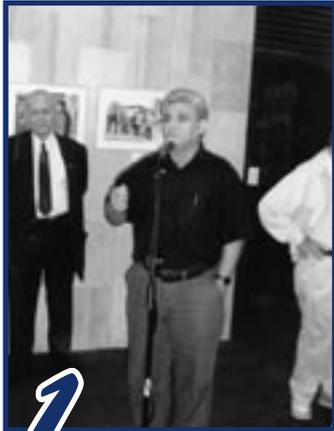


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Joe Mrantz thanks for the reception

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# The Opening of the Sarah and Eli Ross Exhibition of Photos



**1** Mr. Yossi Shohat, the Director of Gerard Behar Cultural Center, opens the exhibition



**2** Mr. Itzhak Navon, the fifth President of Israel, speaks



**3** The Chinese Ambassador, Mr. Chen Yonglong



**4** Mrs. Ora Namir, the former Ambassador of Israel to China, T. Kaufman and Sarah Ross



**5** T. Kaufman speaks



**6** Sarah Ross thanks those present



**7** A bunch of flowers from Chinese friends



**8** Itzhak Navon greets Sarah



**9** One of the visitors

# Letter from Harbin

by Dr. Jonathan Goldstein

A near-forgotten cycle of Asian Jewish history was brought to a close September 2, when Tel Aviv businessman Teddy Kaufman came to Huangshan Cemetery, in the Chinese city of Harbin, and recited a memorial Kaddish prayer at the grave of his boyhood teacher, Rabbi Aharon Kisilev.

Kisilev died in 1949 after serving for nearly four decades as chief rabbi of what was once China's second-largest Jewish community. But Kaufman's trip was more than just a graveside visit; Kaufman is president of the Israel-China Friendship Society and is a onetime Harbin resident, and he was here for a four-day seminar on the history of the Jews of Harbin sponsored by the local authorities with the help of the Chinese government. A delegation of more than 100 former residents, their children, grandchildren and scholars of Chinese and Jewish history from Israel, Australia, England, America and China accompanied him.

Some of the guests, such as Freddy Heyman, former general manager of Israel Railways, had not visited their parents' graves since leaving China a half-century ago, following the 1949 communist revolution. Others never left China. Israel Epstein, a Beijing-based journalist, returned to his childhood home in a government limousine, in his capacity as a member of the National People's Political Consultative Congress, China's parliament. Chinese policemen snapped to a smart salute when Epstein's red-flagged vehicle and police escort sped by.

Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang province in the chilly Manchurian

region of northeast China, is an industrial metropolis of some 3 million, 570 miles northeast of Beijing and 300 miles west of the Russian Pacific port of Vladivostok. Tucked in between Mongolia to the west, Siberia to the east and north, and North Korea to the south, it was a sleepy village in an isolated region until the Chinese Eastern Railway came here in 1898 and turned it into a boomtown.

The Harbin Jewish settlement, like the better-known Jewish community of Shanghai far to the south, began when Russian Jews started fleeing eastward to escape pogroms and persecution at the turn of the 20th century. Local records show that the first Jewish settler came in 1899; by 1908, the community had grown to some 8,000. A religious school was opened in 1907, a grand synagogue in 1909. A high school, hospital and cemetery soon followed. Kisilev, a Russian Torah scholar, was named chief rabbi in 1913

During and after World War I, the Harbin community played an active role in mobilizing aid to pogrom victims in Russia and Poland, occasionally coming into conflict with Russia's communist regime. The Jewish community grew to some 15,000 by the mid-1930s, and the city, occupied since 1931 by Japan, became a center of Jewish publishing, theater and politics, mostly in Russian.

At the historical seminar, held in downtown Harbin's Shangrila Hotel and organized by the Harbin Jews' Research Center at the provincial Academy of Social Sciences, participants rose one after another to tell horrific tales of their families' lives outside this city of refuge.

Lily Klebanoff described her uncle's return to Leningrad in 1936 to study music. He was promptly arrested and shot by the NKVD, Stalin's secret police, on a trumped-up charge of heading a Harbin-based spy ring. Many of Mara Moustafine's returning relatives suffered a similar fate at the hands of the NKVD, on suspicion of being Japanese agents. Frankfurt-born Ze'ev Rubinson and his family fled the horrors of Hitler's Germany, only to wind up in limbo in the coastal city of Port Arthur, then under Japanese control. Teddy Kaufmann's father, director of the Harbin Jewish Hospital, intervened and found sanctuary for the Rubinsons in Harbin.

Returnees recalled a vibrant cultural life. Ex-Harbin violinist Peter Berton delivered a paper on "Contributions of Jews to the Musical and Cultural Life in Harbin in the 1930s and early 1940s," describing his ensemble's regional tour of Korea and Japan. Epstein, the parliament member, remembered a 1936 concert by the visiting Russian opera singer Feodor Chaliapin. Epstein's businessman/journalist father wrote for the city's Yiddish newspaper, *Der Vayter Mizrekh* (The Far East). There also were more than a dozen Russian-language Jewish periodicals and a Hebrew-language publishing house.

Sitting in the shadow of Stalin's regime, Harbin became an international center of Russian-language Zionist activity in the 1930s. A stronghold of anticommunist sentiment, it produced a number of leading figures in what would become Israel's Likud party. One was Mordecai Olmert, an ally of Likud founder Menachem Begin and the father of Israel's current deputy (see page 9)

# In Pursuit of Yesterday

by Ya'acov Liberman

For more than a hundred of us – born, raised and educated in Harbin – a return to this unique city of warmth, excitement and wondrous memories, is nothing short of a dream come true. The official “excuse” for this remarkable reunion was the historic seminar devoted to the various contributions of Harbin’s Jewry to the overall cultural development of the city. It was meticulously planned and successfully carried out by the combined efforts of the Israel-China Friendship Society in Israel and the Harbin Jewish Research Center in China.

The seminar was rich with historically significant recollections illustrating a solid input of Harbin’s Jewry into the cultural and economic life of Harbin as a whole. Memorable lectures were heard from Mr. Teddy Kaufman, President of Igud Yotzei Sin and the powerful engine behind the entire venture, and Professors Berton, Goldstein, Grossman, Melihov, Moustafine and many others. Several outstanding presentations were made by Chinese scholars exalting the Jewish contribution to the academic and commercial life in China. But the overt excitement and enthusiasm of many participants was centered on the anticipated visits to the preserved relics such as the Jewish cemetery, the synagogue, the Jewish school, the Free Jewish Kitchen for the needy, the Jewish hospital, and the Jewish Bank, the Kommercheskoye Uchilische, Churin, Matzuura, Café Mars and Hotel Moderne.

As to be expected, it all started with a major disappointment. After all, to most of us, both entrance and exit to and from Harbin has always been associated with the small railway station at the nearby Novi Gorod. The station is still there. It has been

expanded and remodeled. But to those of us who remember it well – it is still recognizable. However, the present gateway to Harbin is now in what we regarded to be “out of town” in the majestic and beautiful Harbin Airport of today. As you drive the 45 minute distance from the airport to Shangrilla – the new luxurious hotel located on the former Politzeiskaya Street – you begin to doubt that you arrived at the right city. The modern highways, cutting through a forest of large apartment homes and business offices, makes you wonder if this is indeed the Harbin of your dreams. In reality – it is not.

Nothing is the same. Nothing is recognizable. Nothing brings forth the anticipated nostalgia. Only when we concluded the first two days of the seminar and were left to ourselves to rediscover Harbin, did our dreams Begin to transform into a nostalgic reality. Our first stop was Kitaiskaya Ultiza, presently called Central Street of Harbin. It is now a promenade with no traffic allowed. The pavement of cobblestone remains intact as it was laid out in the early twenties. The Kommerchiskaya Ulitza is no longer identified by the booza and baklava kiosk on the corner of Kitaiskaya Street. The bootka (booth) of the police station on the opposite corner is also gone. But if you continue walking towards Artilleriskaya Street, you will rediscover the old Komsob building which housed the Kommercheskoye Uchilische. Instinctively, you look for the adjacent garden with its “Detskaya Plochadka” (playground) and the library. It is not to be found. Neither can you locate the skating rink over the fence, which was the Betar and Maccabee sports grounds during the summer months. Instead, large buildings have rudely displaced

these treasures of our youthful memories. Some were fortunate to locate their apartments. Most were not. Among the best preserved buildings is what was once the pride of the Jewish Community of Harbin – its three storey hospital located on Birjevaya Street. It is now an eye clinic. Hotel Moderne too remains intact. The actual hotel business is now conducted from behind – from the other side of the building. The façade of the hotel of old has been restructured to accommodate a bank and several stores. Churin and Matzuura department stores, on the other hand, remained unchanged and continue to entice customers with their diversified commodities.

By late evening we returned to our hotel. However, most of us are reluctant to return to the solitude of our rooms. Instead, we gather in the large foyer to share our impressions and once again, revive our treasured memories. The next day we are taken on a short cruise on the Sungari River. Again disappointment: the rowboats are gone. The river between the Yacht Club and “Stop Signal” is drained to prevent recurring floods, and the motorboats no longer ply across but rather along the Sungari River. On the other hand, the big railway bridge across Sungari is intact, the Yacht Club is not only there, but it continues to provide food and entertainment. The Yacht Club pavement along the Sungari bank has been modernized and commercialized. Hundreds walk up and down enjoying “bargain sales.”

On the final day, we are treated to the most memorable gift of all – a visit to the restored “new” Jewish Cemetery of Harbin. During the fifties, the “old” cemetery was moved to a new site on the outskirts of the city. There were

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but a few Jews left in Harbin at the time. Yet, the leaders of this tiny community, with their bare hands, moved the graves one by one, to this new location. Of course, they could only move graves which still had tombstones identifying the deceased. Thus, some six hundred graves were moved to the "new" Huang Shan Cemetery. Teddy Kaufman, together with his colleagues in the Igud, made more than one visit to this cemetery and helped to identify and list every existing grave.

During our visit, the cemetery was cleared of debris, trees and flowers were planted, tombstones were repaired, and in some cases new ones were ordered. Thus, many of us in the group were able to locate the graves of our dear ones: mothers, fathers, grandparents, sisters and brothers, daughters and sons... Appropriately, the first grave we all visited was that of the venerable Chief Rabbi of Harbin, Rabbi Aharon Kiselev. Before proceeding to seek out other graves, Teddy Kaufman recited kaddish while the Chinese head of the local Sino-Israeli Friendship Society, placed a bouquet of flowers on the Rabbi's grave. From tombstone to tombstone, Teddy followed each member of the group, reciting the kaddish as he stopped by each grave. On this morning, he recited kaddish no less than 47 times! The last grave we visited was the one of the talented pianist, Simon Kaspé, kidnapped and brutally murdered by a gang of fascist Russians in the thirties. On the long way back to our hotel, we had time to reflect on the enormity of the occasion. Also, as we passed the modern freeways and wide boulevards framed by an array of skyscraping buildings, we were jolted into reality. This is not really the Harbin we left behind some sixty years ago. Nor could it have been ...

Our final evening in Harbin was an emotional farewell to our hosts at a banquet they prepared for all participants. The event conveniently

coincided with Teddy Kaufman's eightieth birthday. It was truly a festive occasion lending itself to a flood of emotions which blended nostalgia with historic reality, pride with gratitude. How good to know that the lives and activities of five generations of Jews in Harbin are being remembered and honored by their generous and appreciative hosts. On the other hand, we, Jews of Harbin, will remain forever grateful to the People of China for their characteristic hospitality and for rescuing our brethren on two occasions in one century: welcoming thousands

of Russian Jews fleeing the pogroms of Tzarist Russia and giving shelter to more than 20 thousand refugees escaping the horrors of nazidom. When all doors were closed to our people, only one country opened its gates of welcome. Only one people opened their arms and their hearts to our brothers and sisters. This country was China! These people were the People of China!

And now we return to the realities of our lives. As far as Harbin is concerned, my pursuit of yesterday is now completed.

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**(from page 7)**

prime minister. Another was Yaakov Liberman, onetime Begin chief of staff, who attended the seminar and publicly thanked the Chinese people for giving European Jews a haven from Stalin and Hitler. Liberman's handshake with Epstein, the Beijing lawmaker, was captured on film and became a symbol of the delegation's historic mood of reconciliation.

Most of Harbin's Jews left in 1950 and 1951, fleeing the communist revolution for America, Australia and Israel. For a half-century afterward the communist authorities ignored this energetic constituency, until the entrepreneurial leadership of post-Mao China embraced it. Qu Wei, president of the social science academy, promised participants "a world-class research center on the lives of the Harbin Jews" and an exhibition that "we will send to Israel, Australia, the U.S.A., England and Germany."

Pan Chun Liang, the provincial vice minister of public relations, praised the "history of cooperation between Chinese and Jews in Harbin." He cited the province's

efforts to maintain Harbin's Jewish cemetery, with more than 600 graves, as "the biggest and best-protected" in East Asia. The provincial vice governor announced that Harbin's monumental synagogue is undergoing major restoration and that "we have great potential for developing tourist resources." Israel's ambassador to China, Yehodaya Haim, responded that "Harbin is a city we love and admire because of their attitude toward us Jews.

As the ex-Harbiners filed out of the Jewish cemetery, many were preparing for their imminent El Al flight back to Tel Aviv. Epstein, who had just celebrated his 89th birthday, observed that "in the one country in which there was no persecution of Jews, there is a new birth of friendship, which corresponds with the lives of many of the people here today." He predicted that this friendship "will have a fine future."

*Jonathan Goldstein, a professor of history at the State University of West Georgia, was one of the Western scholars who delivered papers at the International Seminar on Jewish History and Culture in Harbin*

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

## Chapter 6, Section A & B

On January 11, 1947, the door to my cell opened, the officer who opened it said: "Pack your gear!" This meant that I'm either being transferred to another cell or am going on a prisoner's journey to another prison. Actually I have no need to "pack". I'm ready, always ready. All my belongings are on me and with me. Within fifteen minutes I was shoved into an empty room. Ordered – "undress!" They searched my body and went through my things. I then dressed. They gave me bread, sugar and dried fish – food for four days. Indeed, I am being moved from here, and it seems that it's only me alone, as I don't see any other prisoners around. No one is telling me anything. Where am I being sent? An officer and two soldiers are accompanying me and we are heading for the main gate of the prison. My "documents" are checked – everything is in order. In front of the gate a vehicle is awaiting me, a "black raven" – very quickly we are hurtling through the streets of Sverdlovsk.

We arrive at a railway junction, so many rails. We walk on the rails stepping from one rail to another passing one wagon after another. I am tired and hardly drag my feet. At the end of the rails I see a solitary wagon with grated windows. A Stalipin-Stalinist prison wagon. At long last we arrive to this solitary and neglected wagon standing at a side fork of the rails. The officer unlocks the door of the wagon with a key and "invites" me inside, the soldiers shove me into one of the cells; one of them remains with me in the cell. I spread my coat over the bench and lie down. It's cold. I get up and march around the small cell, sit for a while then lie down again. It could be that I am being transported to the capital city, Moscow. The food that I was given, if it can be called food, is to last me for four days – the time it takes to travel to Moscow, also the "Guest" is from Moscow, he probably came to "invite" me there. An officer enters my cell



(probably the wagon commander); he asked my name then ordered me to follow him. I told him that I have some belongings and money in my suitcase, he answers: "It will arrive together with you". He puts me into a special cell, which has three tiers of bunks. They lock the cell from the outside. In the corridor stands an armed soldier. Occasionally he peeps into the aperture of my cell. The cell is filthy, the floor and the bunks are covered with remains of food and other garbage. All the cells around are full of prisoners and sometimes more are brought in. While to me, "the important criminal" a Zionist! A separate cell was allocated, and a special guard assigned just for me. Lunchtime arrived. I sliced a piece of bread, sprinkled it with some sugar, and here I have my "lunch" or "dinner", doesn't really matter which. I want to drink. I knock on the door. "What do you want?" "I want to drink, can I have a cup of tea?" "I'll check". Half an hour later the soldier returns: "There was no hot water at the station... here is some cold water." And he hands me a cup of ice cold water. I drink thirstily and am thankful for this. This journey was very arduous. I had to make do with bread only. My

sugar supply ran out on the first day, the fish was impossible to eat. I did not receive any tea during the entire journey. Twice a day the soldier gave me a cup of cold water through the small aperture of the cell. A visit to the latrine was a most complicated matter. The key to my cell was in the possession of the commander of the wagon, who is not easy to locate when needed. He is either asleep in his cabin or away somewhere, and the soldier cannot take me out of my cell.

For three full days I traveled and suffered in this prison wagon. In one of the stations our stop lasted one hour, I overheard one guard tell another that this station is Kazan. This too is proof that our journey is headed for Moscow. On the fourth day of our journey we arrive at our destination. We are taken out of the wagon. Close by a "black raven" is awaiting me. I had just got off the train when an officer asked me:

"And where is your gear?"

"I don't know, it was not with me in the wagon... In Sverdlovsk they told me that my suitcase is being placed in another wagon and will arrive together with me..."

He did not say a word; he knew his colleagues very well. I never saw my suitcase again.

The "black raven" is crammed full with prisoners. I have a special cell assigned to me next to the driver. The cell is very narrow, I can move neither to the left nor to the right. I am stuck to my seat facing forward.

Where are we? Where am I being driven to? I have no idea. We drive along the streets of Moscow. I see many "black ravens" passing by on the streets of the capital. In those days, thousands of prisoners were being moved from place to place, and in order not to attract the attention of the passing population the blessed word "bread" was painted in white on the outer panel of the vehicle.

We arrive at someplace. The “raven” came to a halt. For over an hour we are held in a room by the entrance. Two soldiers are guarding me. Someone approaches and asks: Surname, first name, fathers name, and date of arrest. Around us there is a commotion, officers and soldiers running about here and there, the telephone is ringing continuously. About a half an hour later I was brought into a big room which contained one table only, a solid wooden door without any aperture, a wide window without any grating. I do not know where am I; could it be that such are the prisons in Moscow? Very soon they bring me cabbage borscht and cereal. The soldier says:

“You are probably hungry, eat!” He then positioned himself by the door. When he saw that I had consumed the food he took the plates and said:

“Satisfied? Tasty? We have good food here” Indeed, to each one his own taste. It’s getting dark. I’m still in the room. I wait. Finally, they summon me. They order me to take a mattress, a blanket and other bed items that are lying near the door. We go up the steep stairs to the fourth floor. I am collapsing under the weight of the things I’m carrying. I was deposited in one of the rooms. The light is dim, and by this weak light I look around me; the walls and the floor are filthy as well as the bed and the table. There is only one bed, which means that I am in a solitary confinement cell. There is a small grated opening just below the ceiling. The door is locked with a key.

The opening suddenly opens and an outstretched hand gives me a cup of tea with a cube of sugar. However, before I manage to drink the tea the door of the cell opens and a voice orders: “Gather your belongings!”

I return exactly the same way I came with the mattress and other bed items on my back. We descend one floor after another, and again I’m on the ground floor. I return all the bed items and stand and wait. The telephone is ringing continuously. From the conversations I overhear I understand

that a mistake occurred; this is not the prison to which they were supposed bring me but to some other prison. Someone made a mistake. The authorities are frantic and hurriedly send me out of this prison. I say goodbye to Lefortovo prison, which housed me for a little while and even honored me with a meal. Our parting, however, would not last a long time and very soon I was to return to this prison again and this time for a period of one whole year...

Again the “black raven” carries me through the streets of the capital. We drove for one hour. In addition to myself a guard accompanied me in the vehicle. We both sit in silence as talking is forbidden. The vehicle stopped; we arrived at our destination. We step out of the “raven” into a dark courtyard. I am led down to the basement level and marched through a long semi-dark corridor. Everything around me is threatening. Suddenly a lightning thought passes through my brain, who knows; maybe here they will do away with me. Maybe this is the place where people disappear. We continue marching, one soldier in front and another behind who hurries me on with the butt of his rifle. A door opens into another corridor, with doors on both of its sides, cells, one after the other. I am shoved into one of them and the door is locked behind me. The cell is small with no windows; a stone seat is attached to the wall. An officer enters and writes down my personal details, then departs. Within a few minutes another officer enters accompanied by a woman in a white dressing gown holding an electric torch light. She orders me to undress then checks me from head to toe, using the torch light when necessary and without any feeling of embarrassment checks all the cavities of my body, the mouth, the nose, ears and other places... all that in silence, without uttering one word. She is referred to as “doctor”. I met many such “doctors” during my stay in the various Soviet prisons or work camps that worked for the Stalinist “MGB”. After the check up I was photographed

from the front and from the side, then they imprinted my fingerprints, first the whole palm of the hand then each finger separately. Lastly I was put into a small cell where I stayed for three days. Why only three days, I cannot say. Perhaps it was a sort of three days quarantine, or perhaps there were no free places in the other cells. It often happens in Soviet prisons that “all rooms are occupied”. On the fourth day I was transferred to another cell which already had two occupants, a soldier who was imprisoned for “treason against the motherland” and a sports instructor for “counter-Soviet activities”. Thus I arrived to the Lubyanka prison, famous for its tyranny and cruel treatment of prisoners by the “CHEKA.”

I try not to form any relationship with my two cellmates. Who knows, they could be brooders. The sports instructor is a communist, a party member; he says that he is “sitting” here because he told an anti-Soviet joke. Well, if jokes are a negative matter in a country and the teller of the joke endangers himself with arrest due to his being a “counter-revolutionary”, as in “our” Soviet Russia, there are no negative phenomenon, crime does not exist, murder, robbery, drunkenness and other lawlessness’ are not permitted to be mentioned or written about. “Our” country is nice and clean.

The food in the Lubyanka prison is not worse than in other Soviet prisons. In general one can say that the food in all the prisons or work camps is just enough to keep you alive but too little to live on.

The next morning I am summoned for interrogation. In the Lubyanka prison and in other Moscow prisons a prisoner is not called by his full name when he is summoned for interrogation but only by the first letter of his family name and the prisoner is expected to respond. I responded, and was ordered: “Alert!” We ascended to the fifth floor. A clerk wrote down my name and the exact time of my arrival, and then I was led into the interrogators room.

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

# Charity Activity of HEDO

By Prof. V.V. Romanova, University of Khabarovsk

In 1903, The Jewish Community (HEDO) was registered in Harbin, then the center of the construction of the KVJD railway, whose Manchurian stretch, Pogranychnaya – Vladivostok, would considerably shorten its total length. Then there were approximately 500 Jews. By comparison, in 1910 there were 267 Jews in Vladivostok, in Nikolayevsk –358, and in Khabarovsk –610.

One of the main activities of the Harbin community from its very foundation, was charity for both its needy members, and those who were not its members. Its first test was the Russo Japanese war. The percentage of the Jews in the ranks of the Russian imperial army was sufficiently high. The Harbin Jewish community had undertaken the organization of the religious service on their behalf. In addition, it took care of the wounded Jewish soldiers and of the burial of the dead in the Jewish cemetery plot, allotted by the KVJD administration. After the Russo-Japanese war the Jewish influx to Harbin had increased extensively as a result of pogroms throughout Russia. A good part of the Jewish soldiers preferred to stay there, attracted by the opportunities offered by the free movement and trade. The new arrivals were temporarily supported by the HEDO, while the handicap were given permanent allowances.

In 1906, the Jewish Women's Charity Organization was established within HEDO. In addition to supplying Jewish women refugees with money, clothing and fuel, the JWCO paid school fees for the children, helped the Jewish families with the rent and payment of the bank loans. The JWCO budget was based on membership fees

and contributions. Approximately 200 families were supported by the organization.

In July 1907, a Free Jewish Soup Kitchen was established. By 1913, there was a Jewish library of 13,000 volumes. "Gmilit Hesed" a non interest loan Association was established in support of petty merchants and entrepreneurs. No other Jewish community in Siberia and the whole of Far East could boast of such a wide range of charity and cultural activity. At the same time, suffering numerous prohibitions and under constant police surveillance, the Siberian Jewish communities were hampered from developing, to say nothing of charity activity. This was the reason, why, in time, Harbin became the Mecca for the Far Eastern Jewry.

Considerable growth of Jewish presence in Harbin was marked during World War I. In 1915 the Russian government eased migration restrictions, and many Jews moved to the United States, fleeing the pogroms, lawlessness and destitution. As the military activity continued on the Western Front, Harbin became the main transit station for the Jews moving to the US. The majority of the refugees traveled with no means for existence, hoping for the help of their fellow-Jews. In order to cope with this new need, an Immigrants' committee was established in HEDO. It arranged for the reception, temporary dwelling and transport of the refugees overseas. Its budget exceeded 5,000 roubles a month. Soon the American HAYAS Association established an immigration committee in Harbin, which somewhat lifted the burden from HEDO's shoulders. Similar

committees were opened in Irkutsk and Vladivostok, attracting all Jewish political parties, legalized after the February Revolution. With the termination of WWI, HAYAS shifted to Europe, and the Emigration Committee was reorganized and renamed Far Eastern Information Bureau for the Jewish War Victims.

The Civil War in Russia brought yet another wave of Jewish refugees. The FEIB assisted them in finding relatives in the US and those who remained in Russia. In 1920, when the Far East was cut off from the Soviet Union, the Bureau established a transit station for postal dispatches to Russia. By 1920, 2500 Jewish refugees were transported to their relatives in America.

All this did not make Harbin Jews forget about their brethren in Russia. A special page in the history of this extraordinary relief activity is dedicated to assistance for the victims of pogroms and hunger in 1921. A special Far Eastern Public Committee for the orphans of pogrom victims was established for the orphans of the pogrom victims, which embraced 22 Jewish organizations of various, sometimes rival political leanings. One of the Jewish Children's Homes in Kharkov accepted 500 such orphans. In 1921 – 1922 the Jews of Manchuria dispatched to the hunger stricken gubernii (provinces) of Russia five trains, 30 carriages each, of food and medication.

In the 1920's HEDO began to grow both numerically and in its charity activity. According to professor G.V. Melichov, formerly of Harbin, and a renowned historian of the Russian emigration to China, "the Jewish community in Harbin, beginning from

1918 – 1920, had the most developed network of charity institutions open to the needy of all nationalities, in addition to participating in all the Russian emigrant charity activities.

In 1921 HEDO opened an old men's home, which gave asylum to single elderly and to those whose relatives could not afford their upkeep. It was originally planned for a full board occupancy of 25 people. In 1934 this institution lodged 84 men and women. In 1921 the Jewish Women Association established a professional school, where 40 young girls were taught to be seamstresses. There was also a hospital fund ("Mishmeret Holim") for free medical treatment of the needy. An asylum for chronic ill was established in 1925. All in all, HEDO subsidized six charity institutions. In addition to those there were charity institutions financed by religious and educational organizations.

In November, 1933, thanks to the efforts of Dr. A.I. Kaufman, and the well-to-do members of the community, a well equipped Harbin Jewish Hospital was established. Out of its 24 beds, 10 were earmarked for the poor who were treated free of charge. The majority of the patients were Jews, but no one was ever refused medical help, irrelevant of their nationality. The medical personnel of the hospital actively participated in fighting epidemics and even relief work during the great flood.

With the increasing stabilization of the socialist regime in the USSR, connections of the Harbin Jews with their former Russian compatriots gradually weakened, and after the sale of the KVJD rights to the Chinese government in 1935, they ceased to exist. However, at the end of the 1920's and the beginning of the 1930's, in the midst of the antireligious campaign in the USSR, HEDO was still given whatever help they could to their persecuted coreligionists. Of special concern was the situation of the rabbis, deprived by the Soviet

authorities (as were the "servants of cult" of other religions) of all means of existence. In 1934, a special fund raising operation on behalf of the USSR rabbis was organized in Harbin, producing \$1,400.

Even if the money reached the rabbis, it was the last measure of the kind, due to the political "legal action" taken by the Soviet authorities against clerics throughout the country. However, the main and basic effort of HEDO was assisting the Jewish youth to emigrate to Palestine.

The new era in the history of the Jewish presence in Harbin began with the occupation of Manchuria by the Japanese and the establishment of the puppet Empire of Manchukuo in 1931. In the beginning, the new regime did not influence the routine life of the Jewish community in Harbin. The Japanese authorities did not have any specific policy towards the Jews and related to them as any other foreign community. Such policy, adopted in defiance of German protests, enabled an influx of Jewish refugees from Europe. Laudable mention in this respect is due to the chief of the Japanese military mission in Harbin (1937 – 1938), General Higuchi, who showed personal concern in refugees' welfare. In March, 1938, the first contingent of 20,000 Jewish refugees reached Harbin via Russia. HEDO rendered the refugees constant assistance, without any Japanese hindrance whatsoever. During the WWII special refugee relief organizations were established: "Eastcom" took care of the needs of the East European (Poland, Lithuania) Jews, while "Centrocom" was in charge of help rendered to the Jewish refugees of Central Europe (Germany, Austria). In 1935 both committees merged. The budget depended on the contribution by the Western charity organizations, chiefly of the American "Joint", and the rich Jewish Far Eastern organizations, based mainly in Harbin. 77% of the budget was spent on food, the rest on

medical care, lodging, etc.

Of special concern was the so-called Hongkew Ghetto in Shanghai, created by the Japanese under ever increasing pressure of their German allies. In all fairness, it is to be mentioned that the Ghetto had nothing to do with the European Holocaust, but, still, life in it was extremely hazardous for the 20,000 inmates, due to their devastating financial situation, undernourishment and lack of medical care. HEDO constantly organized fund raising campaigns on behalf of the Hongkew refugees, especially when help from the US Jewish organizations virtually stopped with the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941. It was a difficult period in the history of HEDO; its activity constantly narrowed until fully extinguished.

On August 17, 1945, the Soviet Army invaded Manchuria. A month later, Dr. A.I. Kaufman and other prominent functionaries of the Harbin Jewish community were ostensibly invited to a banquet given by the commander in chief of the Soviet forces in Manchuria, Marshal Malinovsky. At their arrival they were arrested and sent to the Soviet Gulags in Siberia. Dr. Kaufman returned to his family after 16 years. A similar fate befell many other members of the Harbin Jewish Community, and it ceased to exist.

After the end of the civil war in China, and the emergence of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Jews began to leave China en-mass – some to the US, some to Australia, but the majority to the newly established independent State of Israel. Here they organized their compatriot Association, Igud Olei Sin, later to be renamed as Igud Yotzei Sin. This organization, under the leadership of Teddy Kaufman, the son of Dr. A.I Kaufman, is a unique example of loyalty to the ideals of one's past: mutual assistance and brotherhood. In its by-laws and rules it is stated that the basic task of the association is "to organize the former Jewish residents (see page 32)

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

by B. Kobuliansky

(continued from Bulletin #380)

## *The Japanese in the Tientsin Area (the 1930s)*

Abraham (Abe) Bates [Bihovsky], mentioned above, left China in 1938 and settled in

the USA. In an obituary published after his death, one could read a number of statements about Abe related to China. I will quote some of them:

- “Mr Bates was inspired to a life as a human rights activist by witnessing the Japanese invasion of China (at that time he lived in Tientsin). He would often talk about the killings he saw” .

- “To see the horrors of that war, and especially the starvation that went on with the Japanese invasion, played on his mind and made him more sensitive. He really wanted to work for peace and the social welfare of people around the globe”.

- His daughter Victoria said: “He wanted a wiser world”.

\* \* \*

In pre-war China (1934-1936) I, too, witnessed several events involving the Japanese military.

1. This happened in 1934 or 1935. The Japanese had already been pushing from occupied Manchuria into Northern China. That year my father was jobless (the fur company where he had worked went bankrupt). Our mother was already in Peitaiho, organizing the vacation boarding for several families, including ours. Our father saw us off from

Tientsin. I and my sister Anniea who was two years older than I, were sitting in a hard-seated carriage. Not far from us were several Japanese soldiers with baskets full of pigeons. In about two hours after leaving Tientsin, something horrible happened: all of a sudden, there was a terrific blast and the train stopped. We soon found that between our carriage and the steam engine, there were two carriages, and in one of them there was a huge explosion which killed many people and injured a lot of others. Most of them were Chinese. A woman came into our carriage and asked for some dressing; my sister found a couple of bed sheets in our suitcase and gave them to the woman for bandaging the wounds. Through the window I saw the horrifying results of the carnage. Very shortly, the Japanese soldiers wrote several messages and sent them off with the carrier pigeons. Then they climbed up the telegraph (telephone?) poles and probably sent a message by wire. The train reached Peitaiho several hours behind schedule. Our mother was among those meeting the passengers; everyone was, of course, deeply agitated about what had happened. As far as I remember, the main version explaining the explosion was that this train was the first to open a new service on the Tientsin-Mukden route. Many people were against it, considering it to be an intrusion into North China.

The bomb, which went off in the carriage was apparently meant to provoke tension.

2. Once I was riding my bike in Tientsin; on the other side of the road there was a quarrel between a Japanese officer and a rickshaw man about the price charge by the latter. The officer unsheathed his sword and struck the rickshaw man (with the flat side of the sword – what a humane act!)
3. In either 1934 or 1935, together with a group of boys we rode donkeys and reached the dunes north of Peitaiho. We were approached by a detachment of Japanese military men on horseback. I don't remember in what language they began asking questions, which we couldn't answer. Then they rode to the north in the direction of Shanghaigwan, and we safely returned home.

## *Former Jewish residents of Tientsin - friends of China*

After we returned to the Soviet Union in 1936, the rough times of that period quickly brought my sister and me to maturity ... but this is another story...

Our childhood and youthful experience in China proved to be a significant factor in molding our characters, and in some way, a capacity of coping with reality in the years to come. My father and mother did their utmost to give us the best possible school education in Tientsin. My mother in Tsarist times, as a Jew, had to overcome extreme (see page 34)

# Searching and Researching

## Laurent Vogel

Bruxelles

I am the son of Eliane Vogel-Polsky, one of the granddaughters of Rabbi Kiselev, the daughter of his daughter Nina (Nechama). My mother is now 78 years old and she is writing a story of her life and the life of her family. She met Rabbi Kiselev only when she was very young. She spent about two years in Harbin before 1930. As you can imagine, the "oral tradition" of the family is very rich and sometimes contradictory. The youngest daughter of Rabbi Kiselev, my great-aunt Riva, died a few years ago in Israel. The descendants of Rabbi Kiselev are now living in at least four different countries (Belgium, England, the United States, Israel, and –may be! – the former Soviet Union). In 1980 I visited the town of Borisov in Byelorussia where my grandmother was born and I met some old people who had memories of the Jewish community at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century before Rabbi Kiselev left the town for Harbin. One of the members of our family in Israel told us that the Igud Yotzei Sin has published a book on the story of the Jewish Community of Harbin and that you had worked with Rabbi Kiselev. I would be very grateful if you could tell me how to purchase a copy of the book and if you could send me any material on Rabbi Kiselev. I read English and Russian without difficulty. Some of my friends can translate for me from Hebrew or Yiddish.

Address: 5 Blvd du Roi Albert II, Bruxelles B-1210.

Tel.: (32) (0) 2 224 05 60 Fax: (32) (0)2 224 05 61

## Anais Martane

France

I am contacting you now about a movie project. I am looking for the English edition of the "Shanghai

Jewish Chronicle" in the period 1938 to 1943. In the Shanghai Municipal Library they only have the German edition. Do you have it? Do you know where I can find it? Also, I am doing a deep research now of old pictures of the city of Shanghai and the Jewish life in Shanghai (30's, 40's). The help of Mrs. Sarah Ross was already wonderful, and now we need more materials. Because we are finding some "treasures" of pictures, we want to issue an album when the film will be shown on screen. So I am asking all the people who have old pictures to keep them, contact me, and we will organize a way to copy them. I am also looking for Mr. Horst Eisfelder. I have seen some of his very good pictures. I am sure that was a photographer because of the high quality of these images. The problem is that each publication had used a "copy of copy" of the original so the print is not good. Today I need good definition pictures because we are making a presentation of the movie project that has to be printed in a few days. Do you know how I can contact him quickly?

Email: [anais.martane@rosefilms.com](mailto:anais.martane@rosefilms.com)

## Martin Sugarman

London

I am the Archivist of the Association

of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women of the UK (AJEX). I am researching this group of the Jewish Company of the Shanghai Volunteers Corps 1932-42, and would like to know if any veterans of the Jewish Company are in your group and if they will contact me. I am already in contact with Alex Katznelson but would like more personal testimonies from other surviving members.

Address: 16 Brenthouse Road, London E9 6QG, England

Tel.: 0208-986-4868 (evenings after 7 pm London time)

## Arnon Hershkovitz

Israel

I am writing an article about Jewish life in China for a travel magazine. Can you please tell me a little about some interesting traditions the Jews in China have developed over the years? Are there any special Jewish food dishes in China? Are there any special customs in the holidays? Is there any special prayer in the synagogues? I'll be glad to get some information and maybe to contact you to hear more. Thanks in advance.

Email: [arnonh@tapuz.co.il](mailto:arnonh@tapuz.co.il)  
Tel. 052-3550578

**Tuesday, December 14, 2004, at 04:00 p.m.**

At Bet Oved Ha-Iriya

4 Pumbeditha Street, Tel Aviv

**An All-Israel gathering of Former Residents of China  
and the opening ceremony**

**of the 15<sup>th</sup>  
conference of IYS.**

Scholarships will be awarded after  
the lighting of Hanukka candles.

# Website Family Search

Glenn Siegal to Teddy Piastunovich: Rena Krasno suggested that I contact you. I live in California and have been researching my ancestry. A large missing piece is the part that lived in Shanghai. My grandmother and her sister immigrated to the U.S. in 1907. They had two brothers who could not get visas at that time and instead went to Shanghai via Harbin. Their name was Chaikin and they were supposedly elders in the temple. Other family names that are associated with my Chaikin uncles are Mirkin and Sterling. If you have any information whatsoever about my family, or any suggestions, I would be grateful if you would let me know. Reply: Boris Mirkin was an active member of the Association of Former Residents of China (in Israel). He was a member of Betar in Harbin (please visit our website: [www.jewsofchina.org](http://www.jewsofchina.org) and use the search engine for Mirkin. You will find a reference to him there). In addition we will post your letter in the forthcoming issue of the Bulletin, a quarterly publication of the Association with the hope that some of readers may be of assistance. Mr. Teddy Kaufman, the president of the Association is out of Israel at the moment. He will return in October and should be able to shed light on your query. HewasveryclosetoBorisMirkin.

## **Yehudit Gur:**

Please let me know about the Jewish cemetery location in Shanghai. My grandparents were buried there in 1948, and I intend to visit there shortly.

Reply: I regret to inform you that the Shanghai Cemetery (as opposed to the one in Harbin) was razed to make way for urban development. The graves were not re-sited and nothing remains. I heard from Shanghai that Mr. Dvir Bar-Gal ([dbargal@hotmail.com](mailto:dbargal@hotmail.com)) has

collected over 100 tombstones and more are being discovered all the time in stores etc. You could contact him to see whether your grandparents tombstones are in his possession. This, I imagine, would be better than nothing.

Perhaps Tess Johnston of 70/3/201 DongHu Lu, Shanghai, 200031 China, Ph: (86-21) 6437-0280, Email: [tessjohnston@ssbg.com.cn](mailto:tessjohnston@ssbg.com.cn) could be of help to you in putting you in touch with Mr. Ben-Gal.

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

## **From Jacqueline Levitin:**

I am doing research about my family's life in Harbin and the history of Jews in China (in particular in Kaifeng), hoping to make a documentary film. I would be grateful to communicate with anyone who has expertise in this area - particularly on the years before 1925 in Harbin. I have located a few sources but would be interested in others. I have not been able to access the database of the gravestones from the Harbin cemetery. Could you advise how to do that? I visited the cemetery in 2000 on a visit to Harbin. I understand the city has a collection of photographs. Is it possible to access these? Thanks for help with my many questions. Reply: The Huangshan cemetery website is indeed off line, however we do maintain a list of graves on our website (in Russian).

Perhaps the leading expert in China on the Jews of Kaifeng is Professor Xu Xin of the Nanjing University. In addition to numerous articles Prof. Xu Xin has written two books, *The Legends of the Jews of Kaifeng* and most recently *The Jews of Kaifeng, China* (both available from Amazon.com). The email address of Prof. Xu

Xin is [xuxin49@jlonline.com](mailto:xuxin49@jlonline.com)

Teddy Kaufman, President of Igud Yotzei Sin is the best person to contact through [igud-sin@barak-online.net](mailto:igud-sin@barak-online.net).

To this date the Harbin city archives have not been made accessible to the public, however the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences - Harbin Jews Research Centre has published a book *The Jews in Harbin* edited by Qui Wei and Li Shuxiao. The book contains numerous interesting photographs.

We will post your letter in the forthcoming issue of the Bulletin with the hope that some of our readers may respond and be of help to you.

## **From Miriam Werczberger**

Relatives of mine recently traveled from Brooklyn, NY to Harbin to search for their grandparent's burial sites. Unfortunately, they were unsuccessful. They were directed to a cemetery but could not find the tombstones, in fact, they were told that even the ones that were there, were not on the original burial site. The last name is BRISKMAN. The website '[www.hrbjewcemetery.com](http://www.hrbjewcemetery.com)' appears to be unavailable. I was hoping to get some vital information there. Any ideas?

Reply: Indeed, the original cemetery was razed to make room for urban development. The Harbin authorities removed most, but not all of the graves to a new site at Huangshan.

The website you mention is not being maintained by the Harbin authorities, but we posted a list of graves on our website (in Russian). Unfortunately the name Briskman is not shown. I have also searched the Huangshan Cemetery database with negative results.

We will post your request in the forthcoming issue of the bulletin with the hope that some of our readers may be able to assist you.

**(see page 17)**

# Website News and Views

From Daniel Kazez  
Professor of Music, Wittenberg  
University  
Springfield, Ohio

I am very interested in your web site below. It is excellently arranged and very informative.

<http://www.jewsofchina.org/communities/index.asp>

I have the very strong possibility of a travel grant to visit China--in order to perform music. My specialty is "Music on Jewish Themes": <http://userpages.wittenberg.edu/dkazez/dk/jmu.html>

I enjoy performing concerts around the world--concerts of "Music on Jewish Themes." I am thinking of arranging a concert in Kaifeng. Do you think it would be possible? Do you know anyone there I can contact? P.S. My travel grant allow me to require no payment of any kind from the

community in Kaifeng.  
Reply: Dear Professor Kazez

First of all thank you for your kind comments on our website. It is a work in progress and more information is being added all the time.

Now for Kaifeng (Please see the Kaifeng section in our website for a slice of history). I have recently returned from Kaifeng. The "Jewish" community per se does not exist, however there are several families of Jewish descent residing in Kaifeng. There seems to be a revival of interest in their Jewish roots. I also understand, but was not a witness to it, that some of the families meet on Friday nights for Jewish studies. Your idea of giving a concert in Kaifeng is therefore quite intriguing!

One of the leading experts on the Kaifeng Jews is Professor Xu Xin of the Nanjing University. He is the author of two books, The Legends

of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng and his most recent book The Jews of Kaifeng China will provide excellent background reading. He can be contacted at the China Judaic Studies Association, Nanjing University, [xuxin49@jlonline.com](mailto:xuxin49@jlonline.com). He would be well placed to advise you of the degree of interest in your idea.

Another person well acquainted with the Kaifeng community is Rabbi Marvin Tokayer of Great Neck New York. He has visited Kaifeng on many occasions. You could discuss your idea with him. He can be reached at [mtokayer@juno.com](mailto:mtokayer@juno.com)

Should you require travel arrangements in China, I would be pleased to introduce you to a reliable travel agent in China.

I wish you luck with your endeavour

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

(from page 16)

## **From Vera Holder**

My mother, Ella Goldstein, was born in Harbin and lived there until she was nine. Her parents, Uriel and Vera Goldstein established a Music Conservatory there in the 1920's. My grandfather also conducted the local orchestra. My mother said that her grandmother, Lubov Borisnova Goldstein, came from a family of 12 siblings and that her father came from a family of 9 siblings, but that contact with most of the family which stayed behind in Russia was lost. Could you help me discover any further family information on either of these lines? P.S. I have several scrapbooks containing news reviews of concerts performed in China during that period. I would be happy to forward photocopies if these are of interest to your organization.

Reply: We will post your request in the forthcoming issue of the Bulletin

with the hope that one of our readers will be able to assist. Teddy Kaufmann, would likely have some information, but he will return in October. I hope he would be able to shed light on your the whereabouts of your family

Regarding the scrapbook, we are very interested to receive copies which could be mailed to Igud Yotzei Sin, PO Box 29786, Tel Aviv 61297, Israel

## **From Daphna Brafman:**

I am trying to trace information about a relative who lived in China after World War 2. His name was Marcus Brafman, and I believe he was saved by the Japanese diplomat Sugihara. Hope you can help me.

Reply: We will post your request in the forthcoming issue of the bulletin with the hope that one of our readers will respond with news on Marcus Brafman

## **From Mr. Briskman**

Can you please tell me if the synagogue in Tianjin is still standing?

Reply: Yes, the synagogue is there, but it is being used as a restaurant. The Jewish school and the Betar building have been recently razed to make way for urban development

## **From Nehemiah Persov**

Do you have any biographical information of any of my Persov family members (like Max and his cousin Pinkas Pavel etc.) who lived in Harbin? I looked at the list you have for biography and for the cemetery and did not see the name at all. I wonder where they were born and lived, and when they came to Manchuria.

Reply: We will post your request in the next issue of the Bulletin of Igud Yotzei Sin with the hope that some of our readers may be of assistance to you.

## PIG UNDER THE ROOF

by Emmanuel Pratt

家

### Chinese character for family

The Chinese character "Jia" (family) pictorially represents a pig under the roof, which is rather perplexing for many non-Chinese. In China it is not so. Unlike the Westerns, they do not identify the pig with something filthy and mean, but, to the contrary, this animal is associated with prosperity, satiation, well being, satisfaction, and a secure snooze under one's roof, with an occasional grunt after a square meal. And this is exactly how every Chinese wanted and still wants to see his family. Hence, a pig under the roof.

Throughout the ages, under dominant Confucian ethics, the family was placed as the cornerstone of China's spiritual values, pressing for a proper conduct of relationships and elaborate rituals. Today, under an anti-Confucian Communist regime, Chinese still recognize the centrality of the family, if in a somewhat modified form. It is true that in urban areas the Communist leadership succeeded in partly shifting loyalties from family to community. Yet, on the other hand, in urban areas any such policy will have suffered setbacks when they directly challenged family-centered issues.

The traditional Chinese Jia consisted of a father and a mother (sometimes mothers), all their sons, their unmarried daughters, their sons' wives and children for as many generations as possible. The death of the head of the family led to a division of property either by the accepted principle of equal inheritance among sons, or by a court decision. Thus new family

tightly knit units were created, each striving to multiply their male offspring and to expand their property and influence. The heads of the new families were, naturally, the eldest males of the eldest generation.

### A badge of family dignity

The peculiarity of the Chinese language made it difficult to define proper family relationships. From the times of the Han dynasty (about 2000 years ago) every Chinese possessed a surname – ming tze – a kind of badge of family dignity and identity of lineage identity, carefully registered in his family annals. This tradition of family veneration created a highly differentiated kinship terminology with a greater variety of relationships than are found in other languages. In spite of the difficulty to adhere to this multitude of terms, the Chinese are known to readily respect other people's and their own family dignity and values.

The Communist regime took active steps to change the existing loyalties and to encourage the individual to develop a separate identity from the family. Modernizing forces, including employment opportunities, education in community schools and migration to urbanized areas reduced family influence to its present low level..

### Hierarchy & authority

Throughout its long history, the structure of China's social and political life rested on hierarchy and authority, both on the family and the national levels. And yet, the Chinese remained true to the Confucian principles of

individual performance achievement rather than on privileged birth or material standing, although individual graft, bribery and corruption reigned supreme in all periods and circles, and were prosecuted by criminal tribunals.

From ancient times till the Communist revolution in 1949, the ideal Confucian social hierarchy placed the degree-holding literati at the top of the ladder, granting them the privileged official power of mediating between the court and the populace. These literati were an elite chosen from among numerous educated candidates, on the basis of their achievement in the standardized examinations and the academic degrees awarded to each. It has to be noted that this method of creating and running of state apparatus was adopted in the late 19th and the first middle of the 20th century by European countries, with England being the first to introduce it to serve as a criterion of the candidate's worth.

As the last (Jin) Dynasty dwindled to its end, the overgrown ruling body of ethnically distinct (Manchurian) courtiers abolished the system of Confucian examinations and extended privileges to hundreds of thousands of randomly chosen individuals. Commercial development of China allowed merchants to gain substantial influence over the populace, while the warlords completed the destruction of the stable foundation of the family-orientated traditional China, and prepared the arena for the approaching political and social upheavals.

Mao Tze-dung and the rest of the Communist leadership have made a strong effort in remaking the hierarchy of Chinese society. In (see page 19)

# Hami: A City of History

By Zhan Hua (“Cultural Exchange”)

Hami, located at the east border of the Hsin-jiang (Chinese for “New Province”) is an unavoidable pass on the Silk Road if one trekked from inland China westward. Due to its strategic importance, heavy armed forces were deployed there throughout millennia. Culturally, it was permanently under combined influence of both the Han and the Uygur Muslim civilizations, not without having developed its own traditions.

The Great Mausoleum of Hui (Moslem) kings and queens outside Hami is one of the prominent landmarks of the Uygur presence in Northwestern China. Its architecture differs widely from that of the usual Moslem mausoleums and blends features of the typical Han design in ancient inland China. Next to the mausoleum stands the Great Mosque, the largest in Hsin-jiang. Its inner walls are decorated with delicate floral and geometrical designs, and passages from the Qur’an in exquisite Arabic calligraphy. Especially magnificent are the mausoleum and the mosque at sunset when they seem to glow in the golden aura of the fading light and the deep-blue lofty desert sky.

## Guardians of Gaisi Tomb

It is said that Gaisi was an Islamic missionary who came to China during the Tang dynasty (618-917). When he died in Hsing hsing-hsia, King Hami built a tomb for him. In 1945, Muslims of Hami donated large sums of money to move Gaisi’s remains to the new tomb. It is said that Gaisi was much taller than average people. After his death he gained the status of

a “Sage” and is worshiped by some as an immortal. In a small house next to the mausoleum lives an old woman. The 6 RMB tickets she sells as an entrance fee to the mausoleum is her only means of livelihood, but she does not consider leaving the place where her family lived for three generations. She and her daughter are known in the area as “The guardians of the Gaisi tomb”.

## Mingsha – The sand resounding hill

Mingsha Hill is a tall dune 70 kilometers northwest of Hami, slowly moving southward. In the eternal silence of the desert, it is the only source of a whistling-hissing sound which gained it the name of “Mingsha” – the sand resounding hill.

Scientists were attracted by the phenomenon and recently discovered that the key to the mystery was that a steam resonance was produced by the process of water evaporation from within the dune. It is still scientifically unknown how the hill was formed, but the storytellers have a long memory. They relate that on the hill a battle was fought and that the fallen warriors of the female general Fan Lihua are buried there. There were 72 of them. The golden sand covered their bodies and 72 domes were erected there in their memory and honor. Once upon a time there were flowers and a spring of water and a golden cup for the thirsty to drink from ... It was not a deep spring, but it never went dry. Till one day, when a greedy merchant passed by, drank the water and stole the cup. Since then the flowers faded

and the spring went dry. No grass grows on the hill any more, although the surrounding hills are covered by a green carpet, dotted with colorful flowers. And the sound that comes from within the hill is a sigh, so the storytellers say.

## Melons, melons

What else is there in Hami? Ah, yes ... Melons, the sweetest in China.

Edited by E. Pratt

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(from page 18)

contrast to the Confucian order, they opposed learning not associated with manual labor and severely hampered the training, performance and career aspirations of the intellectual literati. Since Mao's death in 1976 mental labor has regained its high prestige. Competitive examinations open to virtually all youths were reinstated as the primary means for selecting entrants to universities and government officialdom.

Now China steadily moves towards egalitarian standards of hierarchy, which, however, lags far behind other countries, and the change of status of an individual is still difficult. The means to climb the hierarchy ladder in contemporary China depends on factors like membership in the Chinese Communist Party, service in the People's Liberation Army and, now, above all, on superior educational performance.

# Legends of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng

*(continued from the previous issue)*

## 7. Bearing the Weight of Tradition

In this tale of another Moses and another Aaron, one brother must take on the responsibilities of the other – and in accepting them also takes on the mantle of his people.

In the days of the Yuan Dynasty (1280-1368), which succeeded the Song Dynasty, there lived a Jewish household in Earth Market Street. It had taken a Chinese surname, Jin, one of the seven surnames bestowed by the Song emperor. The family's Hebrew name was Isaac. Samuel ben Isaac, the head of the house, was a merchant. He married Leah, one of the three daughters of Rabbi Levi. For many years they did not have any children, although they longed for them very much. Finally, when Leah was forty years old, she gave birth to two boys in one year. The first son, born on the first day of the year, was named Aaron. The second, born on the last day of the year, was named Moses. The two brothers looked so much alike that they were often taken for twins.

The boys brought great happiness to their family. After they were grown to manhood, Aaron was very much interested in trade and entered his father's business, becoming a merchant and helping him. Moses was keen on learning and wished to become a rabbi. The parents were very pleased to see each of their sons developing his own talent and moving successfully in a different direction. Aaron married at age twenty-two.

Moses, still busy with his learning, delayed his marriage plans. However, he was in love with Dina, the beautiful daughter of Ha-Levi, another Jewish merchant in the community.

Everything seemed fine for the whole family. Two years later, however, a misfortune overtook them. Aaron suddenly caught cholera (a common ailment of the time) while on a trip to a neighboring county to buy goods for the family business. He died in a local inn, far from home. Upon learning of his death, the saddened family sent servants to bring his body back and buried him in the family graveyard in Kaifeng. His wife was doubly bereft. Not only had she lost a much-loved husband, but in spite of the fact that they had been married for two full years, she had not yet had any children.

Soon after the end of the official mourning period, the parents told Moses that they expected him to marry his sister-in-law, Aaron's widow.

"We are Jewish and therefore must abide by the law of levirate marriage," Samuel said to his son. "According to our tradition, if a man dies without fathering children, it is the surviving brother's obligation to marry his widow and build up his house, so that the dead brother's name will not be blotted out."

Moses had read about levirate marriage in the Torah, of course, but nonetheless he was shocked.

"What? Marry my sister-in-law? No," he protested.

"My child," said Leah, "father is right. It is your duty to do this for your dear brother. A man who died without

progeny has no one to say Kaddish for him, no one to carry on his name. The firstborn child of the brother and the bereft wife is considered to be the son of the dead brother."

Moses was struck silent by his parents' words.

"You know, Moses," said his father, "we are a proud people. We lost our country. Our only hope for return is to keep ourselves together as a people. The only way to keep ourselves together as a people is to keep our common faith in one God and preserve all our ancient traditions. The principles and ideals for which our ancestors lived and died are much too important to be cast aside. We must accept the responsibilities of the covenant upon ourselves, and do everything as much as possible according to our heritage. Especially since we live in this far-off land and are cut off from the rest of world Jewry, we must be very strict. Otherwise, we will be lost very easily. We know you want to be a rabbi. But a rabbi must not be derelict in his duty. Moral guides must do nothing that might forfeit the respect of the people. We don't think you want to let down your dead brother. You yourself must understand who and what you are, and you must decide who and what you will be."

Hearing this, Moses wept. This brought him a slight relief and the awareness that his soul was being sorely tested. The marriage would be no ordinary one. His decision would be for more than himself. Since he was sincerely committed to his faith, he must behave according to the law of his people, no matter what the

personal pain and sacrifice.

Moses' parents were pleased to see their son's understanding gradually develop as he came to terms with the problem. They also asked the chief rabbi to help Moses fulfill his duty. The rabbi was more than willing to help, since he wanted very much to train Moses to be his successor. He made an appointment with Moses to study the Torah in the synagogue.

"Come with me into the Holy of Holies," the rabbi said to Moses when they entered the building. "I want to put the Torah scroll into your hands." Moses followed silently. As they approach the Ark, he was overwhelmed by the solemnity. In front of the Ark the rabbi stood motionless. In a deep voice he said: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one."

The sonorous familiar words of the Shema rolling from the rabbi's lips stirred Moses. He listened and struggled to understand the meaning of his people's faith. What his parents expressed in their own practical way in their careful observance of feast days and worship days, in rites and rituals, all was an outward manifestation of the burning spirit of the rabbi. They believed that their people were a special people, set apart by God to fulfill a special destiny.

Then the rabbi prayed: "Blessed be the glorious name of His Kingship for ever and ever." With these words, he opened the Ark. Moses saw the congregation's thirteen Torah scrolls, each enclosed in its own case. One of the scrolls was dedicated to Moses, who thousands of years before had led the Jews out of Egypt; the others represented the twelve tribes of Israel.

"You know that these are the sacred books of our people," said the rabbi. "Twelve of them represent the twelve tribes of Israel. As for the thirteenth ..." So saying, the rabbi took out the book describing the first Moses, who had given the Torah to the Jewish people.

"Put out your hands," he said to Moses standing before him. Moses did as he

was commanded, and the rabbi placed the Torah case upon them.

"Take it to the Chair." He pointed to the special place known as the Chair of Moses, where the Torah scroll rested when the Law was read.

Moses walked to the chair and set the Torah case upon it. Then the rabbi opened the cylindrical case, removed the Torah scroll, and unrolled it until he had come to chapter 33 of the Book of Deuteronomy. He read the following words:

The Lord came from Sinai  
He shone upon them from Seir;  
He appeared from Mount Paran,  
And approached from Ribboth-  
kodesh,  
Lightning flashing at them from His

right.  
Lover, indeed, of the people,  
Their hallowed are all in Your hand.  
They followed in Your steps,  
Accepting your pronouncements,  
As the heritage of the congregation of  
Jacob.

He then looked at Moses and said to him in a grave voice:

"My son, I am getting older. It is you who will speak to our people in the words of the Law. Whatever you do and say is very important. As my successor, I hope that you feel your obligation and responsibility."

They studied the Law for another hour. Afterwards, the rabbi again handed the Torah scroll to Moses. For the first time Moses felt the weight of his people fall upon him with all the heaviness of responsibility.

A clear cool wind swept through the hall of the synagogue as Moses walked to the Ark to return the scroll. He breathed deeply. Now he knew exactly what he would do.

"Don't worry, rabbi," he said to him as they walked out of the synagogue.

"You can be sure that I am a true Israelite."

Then he continued:

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,  
Let my right hand forget its cunning.  
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of  
my mouth

If I remember thee not.

"God bless you, my child." With this, the rabbi bade good-bye to Moses.

Moses knew that he had to explain the whole matter to Dina, his fiancée, and try to win her understanding. He loved her far too much to willingly hurt her.

Dina was one of those rare creatures who were born beautiful. She had cream-pale skin and large dark eyes glowing between long curled lashes, and her lips were red and full. In addition, she was filled with spirit, a high quality which was the result of her parents' long-time education in the family tradition.

Her parents had already talked to her about levirate marriage when they learned about Aaron's death. They had warned her that Moses would not be able to marry her unless he willfully went against tradition by refusing to marry his sister-in-law and undergoing halitzah. And doing so would be to forsake his dead brother. Moses would not do that; he was not that kind of person.

Dina was anguished when she learned about the law of levirate marriage. But her love for Moses made her realize that her only course was to avoid causing him further pain.

"Don't say anything, please." She put one of her hands on his mouth. "I don't want to hear anything," she said, when he came to her.

"Dina, listen." He tried to be calm. "I have to talk to you. There is something restless in me. I feel some hidden guilt in me if I do not tell you what's in my heart."

"You don't have to say anything. I know what's in your heart. I know you are a faithful Israelite." She began to cry sadly.

Moses stared at her, not knowing what to say.

After a few minutes, she continued: "I just want you to sit with me quietly for the last time."

Now he understood that she knew the purpose of his coming, and would not protest his decision. Moses was deeply touched by Dina's behavior. He understood her generosity of

spirit, that she, too, would not indulge selfish concerns, but would act as one with their people and tradition.

Both of them wept when they bade each other, and all their previous hopes and dreams, good-bye. Yet would the sacrifice be possible, even if both Moses and Dina accepted it?

Moses' difficult decision was almost canceled by an imperial decree. This was caused by a misunderstanding among Moses' closest Chinese friends and classmates, who knew nothing about Jewish traditions. Shocked and unhappy when they learned that Moses was being made to marry his sister-in-law instead of his beloved Dina, they wanted to help him out of the dilemma.

How could such a travesty (as they saw it) be stopped? After much discussion, they decided to write to the emperor, saying that the Jews were about to pollute public morals by arranging an unnatural marriage between the brother of a deceased and his bereft wife. Levirate marriage had never been a Chinese custom, and a union of this kind was regarded as morally repugnant. They believed that the emperor would surely stop the marriage when he learned about it.

Shortly after, the emperor decreed: "Marriage between the brother of a deceased and a bereft wife is forbidden."

Samuel and Leah were dismayed when they heard this. They had no idea what to do. Moses saw that his friends had misunderstood the situation and thought he was being coerced. But in any case, it would certainly not be wise to violate the emperor's orders. What could be done?

The chief rabbi had the answer. He comforted Moses and his parents.

"Don't worry. We can write to the emperor and bring our case to him. We will tell him about our history and tradition. We will make it clear to him that we Jews have our own tradition and laws, but do not ask others to believe in them. We ask only to be allowed to continue our own traditions and laws. We will remind

him of the decree issued by the Song emperor when our ancestors first came to China. We will explain to him that they asked for nothing except to live here quietly in accordance with their own laws and traditions. The Chinese authorities understood them and granted them the right to preserve their ancestral customs and laws. I am sure that he will reconfirm our rights when he learns this."

So another written plea went to the emperor. They begged him to reconsider the case and search for the decree which the Song emperor had issued. When the proclamation was found, the emperor saw that the Jews were right. He canceled his previous decree and sent his permission for the marriage to take place.

When the news reached Kaifeng, the Jewish community was overwhelmed with excitement. They prayed to God:

"O Lord, Blessed be your Name, You have done a great thing with us."

Then they praised the emperor:

"Blessed be the emperor, His kindness will be forever remembered."

Moses' family rejoiced. They prepared for the wedding.

However, human fortunes are unpredictable. A week before the ceremony the widow, like her deceased husband, was infected with a grave illness. This time it was pneumonia. At the beginning she did not seem to be seriously ill, but on the third day she took a sudden turn for the worse. The best physicians were sent for, but to no avail. On the fifth day of her illness, the widow died.

The whole family mourned her loss. Moses was heartbroken and sorrowful. She died just when he was ready to marry her, after so much turmoil and soul-searching.

They made a mighty funeral for her and buried her next to her husband in the graveyard of the Jews of Kaifeng. The chief rabbi read a prayer beside her grave.

Two years later, Moses married his

first love, Dina. But he did not forget his obligation. When Dina gave birth to their first son, he dedicated him to his dead brother, to build up his brother's house.

Moses' deeds were praised highly by the community and he was considered a wise and saintly man, a tzaddik. At the deathbed of the chief rabbi, Moses was anointed as his successor, and he fulfilled this role with honor all the rest of his days.

## The Giant Bell of Longhua

The Chinese celebrate the New Year twice: on the first day of January and at the lunar new year, or Spring Festival, which usually falls in February. To usher in the calendar New Year, it is considered lucky to strike a bell. On New Year's Eve, 31 December, Longhua Buddhist temple provides the appropriate setting, as well as traditional Chinese entertainment until 12 p.m. when its many small bells will be at your disposal. Bring some cotton wool for your ears because the big bell, 6,500 kg. In weight, two meters in height, and housed in a three-storey bell tower, can be heard from a distance of several kilometers. If your visit doesn't coincide with the festivities it is still worth visiting the 1,743-year-old temple site in Shanghai's southwestern suburbs. Restored several times after the ravages of fire and the Cultural Revolution Red Guards, the existing structure dates back to 1875. The statues of the four heavenly kings in the front hall look fierce enough to ward off any future disaster. In front of the temple is a seven-storey octagonal pagoda with upturned eaves. One legend tells of a bowl of water kept under the peak of the pagoda; a pair of sacred carp splashed about in it, but the bowl never ran dry.



Our 26th issue of the Messenger comes at a time of worldwide confusion, especially for our region, which has become a battlefield where the forces of light and those of darkness contend for mastery.. I often think of the Latin adage: Tempora mutantur et nos mutantamur in illis – Times change and we change with them.

Our thoughts and work in the Sephardi Division may seem pale by comparison, but we are ever hopeful for a good wind that blows no ill. The passage of time may not have been too kindly to the remnants of the former members of our Sephardi community scattered all over the world. We shall continue trying to maintain our contacts with them and involve them in our efforts here to preserve our history and renew our ties with our Chinese heritage.

Some progress has been made, slowly but surely, in our quest to renovate the Ohel Rachel Synagogue, a project which has long been promoted by Seth Kaplan in Shanghai. That building some time ago became a UNESCO International Heritage, part of the plan that is dedicated to preserving historical buildings. It is well to point out why it is important to launch this project. Ohel Rachel, built in 1920, was the torchbearer of the traditions, customs, religious and otherwise, and even to some extent Zionism. We are aware that we are facing a formidable task, but we are convinced that when it is renovated, it will re-establish the aura of our history and tradition in Shanghai.

The synagogue was closed down by the Japanese authorities at the outbreak of the Pacific war in 1941. It was re-opened in 1945, but with the exodus of Jews after the Communist takeover of Shanghai, the building was requisitioned and became neglected even after its use by the local education department. It was partially restored later on in 1998 in honor of the visit by President Clinton and his wife Hillary, and since then there has been much discussion among the various elements of the small



Jewish community in Shanghai regarding its use as a synagogue once more.

The plan for the construction of the synagogue is being ably conducted by Rachel Lev, the museum designer in charge of the technical project. She has just completed the computerized drawings of the interior. This was done at considerable expense and we are grateful to have received donations from Seth Kaplan, Matty Nissim and Rose Horowitz. We intend to issue a booklet about the whole project to be distributed among members

of our former community in order to raise funds for the renovation. Rachel Lev's work, it turned out, was incredibly difficult, "much more than we thought," according to her report. It meant pursuing the work according to the original architectural document. She also reports this includes the "walls, woodwork, furniture, carpets, lighting, religious artifacts." Ms. Lev has been using much material she gathered from the Shanghai Municipality as well from the Beth Hatefusoth in Tel Aviv.

Time, it is often said, never stands still, and it may seem idle to Hope to find surviving the tales and information about what happend in our younger days. The old folk are gone, but must remains in the heads of the surviving generation now in their seventies and eighties spread worldwide. In their heads (though they may not realize this) are photos and other memorabilia which tells the story of a community which lasted a full century in Shanghai, as well as providing some details of our synagogue.

A special gathering of our Israeli members is being planned in the near future to display the reconstruction plan, and in our next issue we intend to give a detailed report about the progress made in the Ohel Rachel project.

# THE SAGA OF THE JEWS OF SHANGHAI

By Joseph Cohen

(continued from previous issue #381)

The first arrivals in 1938 were cared for by an organization known as the "Hilfsfond für deutsch Juden" (Relief Fund for German Jews). But in August 1938, when it became apparent that the emigration would reach enormous proportions, it was decided to found International Committee for granting relief to European refugees, with wider and more embracing powers. This committee, commonly known as the "IC" operated a Registration Office, where all refugees were registered; the Sir Victor Sassoon Rehabilitation Fund which granted loans to refugee undertakings; a Milk Fund for distributing milk amongst refugee children; a Legal Department which gave advice and settled disputes through its arbitration board; a Passport Department which issued local passports; an Employment Department which tried to find suitable employment for refugees; a Thrift Shop which sold to the Shanghai public articles belonging or made by the Jewish refugees, as well as libraries, nurseries and scholarships.

The most powerful organization, however, as far as the Jewish emigrants were concerned, was the Committee for the Assistance of Jewish Refugees which provided food and shelter for the destitute refugees and which derived the bulk of its funds from the Jewish Joint Committee in New York. The Assistance Committee was inaugurated in January 1939

and at its peak operated six refugee homes where food and shelter were provided. It also distributed food to those needy refugees living outside these homes and took care of the health of the refugees by maintaining a hospital, an isolation hospital, a maternity ward, a polyclinic, a dental parlour and a central dispensary where medicines were distributed gratis to the emigrants.

The financial situation of this Committee grew worse as time went by because the cost of living in Shanghai increased by over 400% during 1940-1941, the income from America decreased owing to the necessity of helping needy Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe, and war funds and war collections instituted in Shanghai curtailed the local income. Hence the Assistance Committee had to cut down its activities and distributed only one meal daily instead of the previous three. This naturally intensified the sufferings of the poorer sections comprising by far the majority of the Jewish refugees.

Picture yourselves the lives of the average Jewish emigrants who came to Shanghai. Hardly had they caught sight of the muddy banks of the Whangpoo than they were herded away in trucks to their new destination, the refugee homes. They passed through destroyed blocks of Hongkew which was then almost completely deserted, and after having taken a glance at this miniature of "ruined civilization" they reached

their newly-established homes.

A dreary, uneventful and hopeless life began. Hongkew became, except for a few wealthier refugees who moved south, the refugee district of the city. Out of sight of Shanghai's foreigners who disliked visiting this forlorn quarter, they continued to lead an existence based entirely on the past. Food and living accommodations were poor, and the mortality rate surpassed the norm. The refugees, the large majority of whom were men, gradually lost hope. Many in pre-Hitler days had been successful businessmen, artisans, journalists, professionals, etc. They could only be saved either by emigration to a new country or by a great and total change in the local situation.

A number of German and Austrian refugees fitted themselves into the economic life of Shanghai. Those who possessed capital opened various businesses, such as night clubs, boarding houses, etc. A number of youths who spoke English obtained suitable occupations. Others in large numbers became pedlars but generally met with little success. The desperation of their conditions drove many to crime and this, coupled with the fact that to a large degree they appeared to have lowered the dignity of the foreigners in the East, caused them to be disliked by the other foreigners who, in many cases, refused to employ refugees when an opening occurred in their business.

The German and Austrian Jewish refugees were more successful in their religious, social and cultural life than in their economic one. Although they never erected their own synagogue, they appointed qualified rabbis and used several temporary synagogues. During the Jewish festivals a number of halls were hired for religious services. In the social field they had their own morning and afternoon newspapers, organized interesting theatrical shows, concerts and dances. The older sections of the Shanghai Jewish Community cooperated by accepting refugees in the Jewish Recreation Club (J.R.C.) where because of their numbers, they constituted the majority.

The Brith Trumpeldor organized a new branch of their world-wide organization in Hongkew especially devoted to the German Jewish refugees. Jewish refugee children living south of Soochow Creek were enrolled upon arrival in the Shanghai Jewish School, whilst those living in Hongkew attended a new school opened by Mr. Horace Kadoorie's S.J.Y.A. where regular subjects were taught, particular emphasis being laid on the English language and correct pronunciation.

Let us see how the Jewish community, excluding the newcomers, fared during the years 1938-1941, a period so momentous in the history of the world. As previously stated, they assisted their brethren from Europe as far as possible. This is particularly true of the wealthier sections of the Sephardi community. The Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews became more united than they ever were previously due to their participation and association with various community activities such as the A.Z.A.

Junior Bnai Brith, expansion of Betar and Revisionist members, Jewish magazines and periodicals written in English and Yiddish, various sports

activities, etc. There were also mixed committees that attended to the requirements of the old Jewish community as well as to the welfare of the European immigrants.

There were a few intermarriages between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews. This first started when Russian Jews arrived after the First World War. The Sephardi Jews, especially the younger generation, seemed to have more in common with the Russian Jews than the new immigrants from Europe. If matters had continued in a stabilised form to around the 1980's, marriage between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews would have been quite common. However, there existed quite a number of distinctions and differences in values between the two communities. Not all Russians could speak English; there were different culinary tastes; a lot of Russian Jews squandered their income on gambling on horse and dog races. Some could not hold their drink and often got drunk and jailed. Some Russian Jews opened up places of ill-repute and some engaged in prostitution. The Sephardi Jews were more united; they led a close-knit and protected family life and were extremely well-mannered, partly due to the influence and association with the British in finance, trade and industry.

The world political situation around July 1941 affected Shanghai. Importation demands, machinery, spare parts as well as necessary funds were curtailed. Around October 1941, the 4th U.S. Marine Corps who were stationed in Shanghai left quite secretly for the Philippines, and then on December 7th the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour which brought about the Pacific War. Prices for food and commodities sky-rocketed and the Japanese imposed more restrictions on the population. The Japanese became a member of the Axis group fighting the Allies. Enemy nationals were interned in separate P.O.W. camps and

many American civilians were cruelly treated and killed. The Russians and Russian Jews were not interned because during that period Japan and Russia signed a pact of neutrality. Some Sephardi Jews holding dual passports were not interned while many gave up their British passports and became stateless citizens but had to wear a red, numbered armband. In 1942 Japanese was taught at the Shanghai Jewish School in order to be on good terms with the occupiers.

The refugees underwent a very difficult period. The Japanese issued food and coal rations which were inadequate. Those who had money and good connections with the Chinese managed secretly to obtain certain goods and food products at high, black market rates. A number of refugees committed suicide because of the terrible situation. Later on, in July 1945, just before the end of the war, many refugees as well as Chinese were killed and injured during an American air-raid on the outskirts of Shanghai and the Bund area.

When reports arrived at the end of 1942 that Jews were being sent to the gas chambers and that other atrocities were being perpetrated by Nazi Germany, they were greeted with disbelief. When reliable Jewish sources and later the BBC confirmed such reports, the whole Jewish community was stunned and one can imagine the anxiety of the refugees for their family members and friends who were still in Europe.

On August 15th, 1945 the first news arrived of Japan's surrender to America and thus ended the Pacific War. Shanghai was overwhelmed with joy, but this was also the beginning of the end of all foreign residence in Shanghai as well as in the other cities in China. The old Jewish community was shell-shocked, because most of them realised that their livelihood was threatened and also the great

responsibility they carried concerning the welfare and fate of the refugees. SOS messages were sent, especially to America, and help in the form of food packages, blankets and clothing came from the U.J.A., private individuals and later from UNWRA.

In 1946 an American naval unit came to the port of Shanghai and stayed for a period of time. Quite a number of American Jewish sailors attended the Friday night services at the Ohel Rachel Synagogue. Many of the local members stayed on after the regular services to hear and join in the special service that was conducted by an American chaplain according to the prayer books issued by the U.S. Army. A number of American Navy men were invited to Sephardi homes to have a taste of their meals and to be introduced to their families.

In 1946 world events proceeded swiftly. Peace treaties, the return of POW's, refugee rehabilitation, relief organizations, Nazis brought to trial, etc. were only some of the urgent matters facing the newly created United Nations. Many foreigners and some Jews managed to leave Shanghai mainly by boat. The war between the Chinese Nationalists and Communists intensified. Foreign powers were on the threshold of giving up their concessions in Shanghai. The foreigners were feeling the pinch with food prices and other commodities increasing monthly. In early 1947 local Jewish residents and European refugees were employed by the U.S. Air and Naval forces and by other American organizations. This lasted till November 1948 when most jobs were terminated due to the departure of the Americans from Shanghai.

But by 1947 the Chinese Communist Army were advancing on all fronts and the influence of Communism began to be felt in Shanghai. Wage disputes due to inflation and strikes

were common. Many big firms went bankrupt because of the prolonged war and occupation; rubber plantations, cotton mills, navigation enterprises etc. made losses that affected the stock exchange. Furthermore, the main offices of the Shanghai Stock Exchange were transferred to Hongkong.

Events in Palestine and the struggle for Jewish independence now became a central concern for the Jewish community. The core of the I.Z.L. organization which was affiliated to Betar and Revisionist groups, had been established in Shanghai in 1946. Members of the old Jewish community and the refugees comprised two separate groups within this organization, but they had one common aim of driving the British Army out of Eretz Israel. Mrs. Yehudit Ben-Eliezer (the leader), Jack Liberman, Tony Gaberman and Maurice Cohen (known as Two-Gun Cohen) were some of the initial organizers, followed later by Aryeh Marinsky, Shmuel Muller and others. The main center for training, learning about Eretz Israel, etc. was somewhere in the French Concession, the building and compound being provided by Edward Nissim, a prominent member of the Sephardi community. Quite a number of the members in the I.Z.L. were from the Sephardi community. Some of the boys who had I.Z.L. training, flew during September 1948 on a Dutch airline to Marseilles and finally arrived in Israel where they participated in fighting the Egyptians in the Negev. The Dutch cancelled other flights after discovering that the passengers' final destination was Israel which had proclaimed independence on May 15th, 1948.

Nevertheless, the I.Z.L. did not give up. The organization abroad bought two ships of the Liberty class – the Pan York and the Pan Crescent. The Pan York was renamed the Wooster Victory, and was the first ship to

sail from Shanghai to Israel. It left on December 25th 1948 with 852 passengers, many of them I.Z.L. members. The ship carried an Italian crew and sailed under a Panamanian flag. It stopped in Singapore, Cape Town, Dakar and then to Marseilles where the passengers were transferred to the Israeli ship, Negba which took on some immigrants before arriving at Haifa port on February 14th, 1949. Not long after, the second boat made a similar route and brought more Jews from China – mainly from Shanghai, Tientsin, Harbin and Peking – to Israel. The majority of the Jewish community left Shanghai during 1948-1949 and about 20% of them came to Israel. There were very few Jews in Shanghai after 1950. The Jewish population in Shanghai at the end of the Pacific War had numbered 32,000 – 35,000. By March 1949 Shanghai was controlled by the Communist Regime and the core of the Chinese Nationalist Army fled to Taiwan (Formosa). Foreign properties, buildings, businesses, etc. were confiscated. Those who had made early arrangements to leave before the Communists took over, did well. Many lost all they had and some were lucky to be allowed to leave.

The Shanghai Jewish Community had been founded in 1844 and one could say that a little over a century later there were hardly any Jews there. One must thank the Chinese people for being a very tolerant and never anti-Semitic. Jews had first settled in China about 1000 years ago and lived mainly in Kaifeng which was at one time the capital of China. They were mostly merchants coming from Persia who had obtained permission from the Chinese Emperor to settle there temporarily because they were unable to return to their homeland while war was raging in China at the time. Since this continued for many years these merchants finally intermarried with Chinese women and taught their children the Jewish (see page 27)

# Shanghai's History

## - Facts and Fiction

(from page 26)

religion and prayers. A synagogue was built in Kaifeng in 1183. But by the early 20th century the colony had dwindled down to only a small number of descendants still conscious of their Jewish origins. A graveyard with monuments engraved in Hebrew lettering and a few Torah scrolls and other Hebrew scripts were discovered.

An interesting chapter on Chinese Jewry has come to a close. Yet since the 1980's many Jews who formerly lived in Shanghai began to return there for a walk down memory lane. Former Shanghaianders can be found today in all the continents of the world, and they still keep in touch for nostalgic reasons and occasionally hold reunions. The spirit and experiences of the refugees who had lived in the Hongkew district is still fresh in their memories. The Hongkew Chronicle, a quarterly periodical, was published in California until recent years and recorded episodes and pictures of their Shanghai life and experiences. It helped to create contacts and to forge a strong link between those who had once lived in Shanghai. In Israel, the Bulletin published by Igud Yotzei Sin – the Association of Former Residents of China - has kept the members of the Russian Jewish Community in Israel and abroad in close touch with each other over the decades.

Today there is a new Jewish community of about 200 persons in Shanghai created mainly by American, European and Israeli organizations and businessmen. Prayers are held on Jewish festivals and community life is thriving again. As for the old community, reunions will no doubt continue into the 21st century and the saga of the Jews in Shanghai will continue to retain an important place in Jewish history.

Very often when reading an article about Shanghai, such as the one 'The Saga of the Jews of Shanghai' by Joseph Cohen, that appeared in the I.Y.S. Bulletin Issue 381, pages 24 to 27, one comes across some strange claims about that city's history and geography. On page 24 (last paragraph) it is said that when the Sephardi Jews had come to Shanghai (after the Opium War) Shanghai was merely a village on the banks of the Whangpoo. Then on the next page (middle column) it says that two decades following World War I 'Shanghai, which had been a fishermen's village and pirates haunt less than a century ago.'. In the same paragraph it is stated that before the War Shanghai occupied a small area known as Hongkew. Off course the facts are quite different. Shanghai had been an important trading port and administrative centre for several centuries before the Opium War. Because of frequent raids by Japanese pirates who liked to plunder this 'fisherman's village' in the 16th century, a city wall was erected in 1553. This wall stood until 1912. By the time of the Opium War Shanghai had a population of about a quarter Million people, who managed to raise a ransom of 3 Million Silver Dollars payable to the British lest their 'fishing village' would be destroyed. The location of the original Shanghai was not to the Northeast in Hongkew, but to the South below the foreign enclaves. The location of the original walled city can easily be seen on any map, old or recent, because the original walled city was of a

distinctive oval, almost round shape. On page 27 (second last paragraph) it is claimed that migration to Shanghai was halted with the outbreak of World War II in September 1939. However because Italy did not enter the war until June 1940, and it was Italian ships that brought most of us to Shanghai, that considerable numbers kept arriving by this route until mid 1940. True enough many similar statements to the ones found in that article can be found in many newspapers, magazines, and books, and while they may make good reading that are not necessarily factual.

**Horst Eisfelder,  
Melbourne, Australia.**

### *Donations to the IYS Sephardi Division*

Dear friends,  
Enclosed you will find check #1445 in the amount of \$2,500.

The above-mentioned check is for the following:  
From the "Aaron and Marie Black Foundation" received from Mr. Matook Nissim via Mr. Jacobs, President. \$2,000

From Mr. Seth Kaplan  
(former Shanghai Community).  
\$500

The check is for the Sephardic Division of Igud Yotzei Sin.

With best wishes,  
Isai Kaufman  
President, Far Eastern Society of San Francisco



# CHUSAN ROAD CHATTER

Issue 382

IYS Hongkew Division

Editor: Kurt Maimann

## Shanghai to Honor Its Jewish Legacy

By Edward Cody

### City to Save Part of Refugees' Ghetto

Washington Post Foreign Service  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/a62426-2004sep4.html>  
Sunday, September 5, 2004; Page A23

SHANGHAI -- Saul Marmer, a retired Cincinnati shoe retailer, peeled away from his tour group the other day to reflect on a special moment in Shanghai's long and eventful history. As summer rain bathed the city, and its residents raced about in their relentless drive to accumulate wealth, Marmer, 79, ducked into the Ohel Moishe Synagogue.

Jewish headstones broken during the Cultural Revolution and used in construction are being collected and restored. This one was used as a path in the mud. (2001 Photo Dvir Bar-gal -- Zuma Press.)

The European-style temple, constructed in 1927, was the centerpiece of what was once a ghetto inhabited by nearly 20,000 European Jews who landed here seeking safety, first from Russian pogroms, then from Hitler's Holocaust. The Shanghai Jews have long gone, but they left behind an eccentric little neighborhood in the middle of Shanghai with European-inspired row houses, a theater, the synagogue and several grand buildings that would not be out of place in Vienna.

Prodded by Chinese and foreigners with a personal or historical interest

in the story of the Shanghai ghetto, the city government has for the first time begun to recognize the cultural and tourist value of the historic neighborhood. It is set in the low-rent Hongkew district, a few hundred yards from the Whangpoo River and the prestigious towers of the Bund, the west bank of the river traditionally renowned as a center of finance and culture.

According to Chinese and foreign activists, municipal authorities who long ignored their city's Jewish legacy have accepted several proposals to save at least some historic buildings from the developers who are eager to transform Hongkew into another Shanghai boom scene. If all goes well as city officials make their final decisions in the months ahead, the activists said, the outcome will be preservation of the heritage that Marmer arrived to appreciate.

"We need to have development, but we also need to have protection of these historical sites," said Wang Weiqiang, an architect and urban planner at Tongji University, whose Institute of Urban Planning and Design has identified about 50 buildings that should be preserved. "These buildings cannot be reproduced. We must protect them."

The Ohel Moishe Synagogue, which has been placed under the wing of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences,

has long enjoyed the protection of city cultural authorities who renamed it the Jewish Refugee Memorial Hall. No longer a temple for religious services, it has become a center for remembering Shanghai's Jewish past and responding to the needs of tourists who drop by regularly to visit.

One frequent visitor is W. Michael Blumenthal, who was treasury secretary under President Jimmy Carter and spent part of his boyhood in a one-room apartment at 59 Chushan Road, just around the corner from the synagogue. The rust-colored buildings along Chushan Road have retained their European facades, but have been taken over by low-income Chinese families more interested in getting decent places to live than in preserving history. Protecting the heritage of Chushan Road would mean finding new apartments for dozens of families, with all the expense that implies.

"We just don't have experience with this," Wang said, an allusion to Shanghai's reputation as a city moving as fast as it can into the future, not thinking about the past.

"Sometimes making money has a different meaning from the quality of life," said Chen Yifei, a Shanghai-based painter and arts entrepreneur who has made a documentary on the Jews' time here entitled "Escape to Shanghai." He called the old Jewish (see page 29)

# Hankow Jewish Community rides again!

(From the 'Yevreiskaya Jyzn' correspondent)

At present (1934), 30 to 35 Jewish families live in the city of Hankow, some of whom came to the city as early as 1912. Since then, there were several futile attempts to establish a normal communal life. This year, however, one of the old Hankow hands, M. Goldstein, at his own initiative and expense, brought a Torah scroll from the United States. This gave a push to others: Y. Cohn, a young physician, formerly of Nagasaki, Japan, was distressed by the absence of a synagogue in Hankow. "A synagogue," he pointed out, "could also serve as a cultural

center and a point of social contact between the Jews of the city."

Dr. Cohn not only made speeches, but, with the assistance of his friends, T. Gez, Mrs. Goldstein and others, built a small but a beautiful synagogue in a short period of time, despite all the financial and administrative obstacles. The inauguration of the synagogue and the installment there of the Torah scroll took place during Shavuot in the presence of all members of the Hankow Jewish community. At the opening ceremony, and surprisingly \$4,000.- were raised, demonstrating the generous spirit of the Hankow

Jewish community and how dearly they cherish their spiritual values. In their speeches at the reception after the official part of the ceremony, the speakers stressed the fact that the creation of the synagogue will further strengthen the unity of the Far Eastern Jewry.

A week later, at the synagogue, elections were held for the committee of the newly established Hankow Hebrew Association.

**H. Plotkin**  
"Yevreiskaya Jyzn" (#19 – 20,  
20.6.1934)

(from page 28)

neighborhood "the most important area for Shanghai's history."

Wang and other activists predicted that Shanghai authorities will end up with a compromise, preserving the synagogue and many of the buildings around Chushan Road but sacrificing others to the developers' wrecking ball.

"The government cannot preserve the whole Jewish area," said Zhou Guojian, who is an associate dean at the Jewish Studies Center and a scholar at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. "It is very large, and they want to develop it. But we have asked them to preserve the main part."

A group of Canadian Jews has proposed a broader preservation project, he said, and is raising money to help finance it. Wang's group also has drawn up a preservation plan, as have others here and abroad.

The Hongkew district People's Congress, or consultative legislature, held a hearing two weeks ago to take

more suggestions. But authorities have not indicated what they plan to do.

Religious manifestations have been sensitive issues in China since the Communist Party took power in 1949. During the Cultural Revolution, extremists destroyed churches and other religious sites, including Jewish cemeteries and other legacies of Shanghai's Jewish past. Even after the Cultural Revolution, the government has insisted that only state-sanctioned churches and religious groups have the right to conduct worship services. Zhou said that only two or three Jews from the large community of the 1930s and 1940s remain, the product of mixed marriages. The others, such as Blumenthal's family, emigrated to the United States, Canada or Israel after World War II.

Several hundred foreign Jews moved to Shanghai more recently, he explained, but they are here largely as part of a large expatriate business community. With permission, they have held

services occasionally in Shanghai's other remaining synagogue, which is usually closed, Zhou said, but Ohel Moishe plays only its historical role.

The walls have been decorated with photographs from days when the Jewish community flourished. Furniture from some of the Chushan Road apartments has been put on display upstairs. Zhou and others have made themselves available to explain the history to visitors. But the cafes and delicatessens that once lined the street have disappeared.

"Now that I'm here, what do I do?" Marmer cracked.

A widower, Marmer said he stopped by to carry out a mission for his brother, an Atlanta ophthalmologist. One of his brother's patients, Marmer said, is an elderly woman who spent several years of her girlhood here and insisted that Marmer take a look and report back on what was left of her past.

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# Letters

**James G. Leventhal**  
**Development Coordinator**  
**Judah L. Magnes Museum**  
**Berkeley, Calif., USA**

To Teddy Kaufman: It was quite an honor and privilege to get the opportunity to meet you here at the Magnes. You did us a great honor in your visit and I know that the Museum will profit from its relationship with the Association of Former Residents of China and the Israel-China Friendship Society as we plan our eventual display of the Bressler Papers and related materials on the experiences of Jews in China.

As you requested a list of those who were in attendance at the lunch it is my pleasure to provide you first with the contact information from Gregory Grossman for those whom you know well: Jack Citrin, Aaron Sloushcher, and Moses Grossman.

From the Magnes in attendance were:

Dr. Alla Efimova, Chief Curator,

Aaron Kornblum, Archivist, Western Jewish History Center,

Seymour Fromer, Director Emeritus,

Edwin Epstein, Chair, Peace and Conflict Studies Group and Magnes Trustee.

I wish you continued success in the great work that you do building bridges between past and present, and laying a foundation for the future. It was a real honor. Thank you, once again, for coming, and I look forward to working with you.

**Helga Alcone**  
**Los Angeles, USA**

To Rasha and Teddy Kaufman: I want to wish you Shana Tova and hope that this message will bring all the best to you and also the State of Israel. Enclosed is an article from The Los Angeles Times (Orange County Edition). Mira Materman had tried to talk me into coming to Harbin. Frankly, I thought it is going to be too emotional. I thought on your next communication with Mr. Li Shuxiano, you might want to mention that a few hundred European Jewish families came to Harbin after Crystal-Night and during (beginning) of the Holocaust, just like my parents and myself, spent nine years there. Some of them were also buried in the Jewish cemetery. I think that knowing about that will add to their records.

P.S. Most of the European families came from Germany and Austria and some from Poland.

**Herta Shriner**  
**New York, USA**

To the IYS: Shalom. By chance I came across your booklet and could not let it out of my hands. I am an 85-year-old former Shanghailander from 1939 to 1949. I find your articles highly interesting and would like very much to subscribe to your bulletin. How do I go about that and what are the fees? I know that not too many folks of my generation are around but I still feel connected to the time of my youth in Shanghai.

Email: omiherta@juno.com

**Beit Halochem, Israel**  
**Cape Town**

To the Chairman and Staff of Igud Yotzei Sin: Shalom. It is with best wishes that we write to advise you that a donation has been presented to Beit Halochem in your name in celebration of the High Festivals by Leslie and Paula Marcus, "With warmest thoughts, good wishes, and for a happy, peaceful New Year and well over the fast.

Email: luoxl@sun450.scu.edu.cn

***Beba Leventhal***  
***Pacific Palisades, Calif. USA***

To T. Kaufman: This is the niece of Lazar Davidovich and Sonia Epstein writing to you. I am always glad to receive and read the Bulletin. Yesterday I read with great pleasure the article about my cousin Israel Epstein with whom I am in touch. My uncle Lazar, who brought me to the United States, told me many interesting stories about his life in China. It seems that he was active in the Jewish community. However, I have never seen his name mentioned in the Bulletin. It is possible that not many people remember him. I met some of his wonderful friends like Mr. Gershevich ..., Manievich, Todrin and others. It is hard for me to believe that in September it will be 25 years since this wonderful person left us.

***Dr. Qiu Xing***  
***Chengdu, China***

To the IYS: I am very glad to know that you plan to publish my translation "Jews in Four Big Cities of China". I have finished the translation and now send it to you. I am now in China. The visit to Israel gave me an opportunity to better understand Israel and the Jewish people. And I am writing some articles to introduce Israeli education to Chinese readers.

Lora Wang  
Culture and Consular Division  
Consulate General of Israel in Shanghai.  
Shanghai, China

Part of my work is maintaining and updating our website. Our Deputy Consul General Eliav Benjamin showed me the other day two copies of the Bulletin (Issue No. 379, 380) and he wanted to put several articles onto the website of the consulate. I'm writing email to ask if you still keep the digital files of the above-mentioned copies of the bulletin. If you have, do please let me know, because this will make uploading the files much easier. Thank you in advance for your help and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Email: [culture\\_consular@shanghai.mfa.gov.il](mailto:culture_consular@shanghai.mfa.gov.il)  
Tel. 021-62098008-210 Fax: 021-62098010  
Website: <http://shanghai.mfa.gov.il>

***Izumi Sato***  
***Japan***

To Teddy Kaufman: Shavua Tov to you and Mrs. Rasha Kaufman. I hope you had, first of all, a wonderful Rosh Hashanah, and wish you, your family and all of the Yotzei Sin members a Happy & Healthy New Year. I'm sorry that I am sending my New Year greetings so late. Secondly, I hope you had a wonderful trip to China and America. While you were in the United States, I was in Tel Aviv-Jerusalem. I met Mr. Leon Heyman who had just returned from his trip to Harbin and Shanghai so I learned briefly about his family's visiting China; including his granddaughter, Lael being interviewed by the Chinese media. I also visited Jean Tikotzky who was ill and Mr. Kurt & Mrs. Celia Maimann. In Jerusalem, I met Mr. George and Mrs. Rita Leonoff as well. So I've got a bit of news here and there.

Now a friend of mine in Tokyo, Ms. Julie Alexander knows someone from Harbin who lives in Hawaii. I think her friend should be connected to Igud Yotzei Sin, and as he is a good traveler, he might be able to join one of your branch reunions in San Francisco or New York, or perhaps in Ponve House in Tel Aviv. As she also asked about the status of what is remaining in Harbin on behalf of her friend, I thought that he should hear the direct report from you and other Igud Yotzei Sin members. I thank you in advance. Please send my sincere regards to Mrs. Rasha Kaufman and all of our Igud Yotzei Sin members.

# Ehud Olmert in China



Ehud Olmert led a 200-strong Israeli trade delegation as part of a push by Israel to boost trade and seek new markets for its security and hi-tech products. The Israeli telecommunications company RAD signed cooperation agreements with the Chinese firms Putian Corp. and Huawei Technologies. Those followed the earlier establishment of investment funds worth \$225 million to finance use of Israeli hi-tech in China. Israel has also pitched sales of its security and communications gear for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and Olmert said the sides would exchange lists of technologies that could be used.

Olmert dismissed the controversy over Israel's last-minute cancellation

of a deal to sell China the Phalcon radar system in 2000 amid intense US pressure. Washington argued that such aircraft would increase the threat to Taiwan and endanger US pilots in case of war with China. Although China blamed the United States for interfering, Israeli businessmen said lingering ill will over the matter held back new deals.

Trade has since rebounded, growing by about 20 percent last year to more than \$1.8 billion, according to Chinese officials. Israel's military industries are also believed to have extensive links with China's People's Liberation Army, including help in developing Chinese jet fighters. Olmert declined to discuss that trade, but he indicated that Israel made little distinction between technologies purely for commercial use and those that could also have military applications. Israel sees China as its top trade priority over the next ten years. Other promising areas include biotechnology, environmental industries, and agriculture.

Israel is China's third largest export

market in the Middle East and North Africa. Members of Olmert's delegation have signed two business deals. One was an agreement with Valuelink Investments, a venture capital company with offices in New York State, Shanghai, and Israel, to set up an investment fund of \$150 million to finance use of Israeli hi-tech in China. The other, with the US-Israel investment company Infinity Venture Capital Fund, would set up a \$75 million fund to invest in hi-tech businesses in China and Israel.

Olmert's trip to China also includes a stop in Harbin, the northeastern city where his family lived before his parents emigrated to Israel decades ago. Harbin was home to thousands of Jews fleeing Czarist Russia in the early 20th century. Olmert said he planned to visit his grandfather's grave in Harbin, fulfilling a lifelong wish. "I have been hearing about Harbin all my life," he said. "I will go to Harbin to visit the roots of my family in China."

**(Adapted from reports in The Jerusalem Report, June 2004)**

**(from page 13)**

assistance and cooperation".

Igud Yotzei Sin makes an enormous charity effort through a number of funds, established by the IYS members: Social Assistance Fund, which upholds the needy old and single members of the Association; the Fund of non-interest Loans, and the Scholarship funds. The latter helps the sons, grandsons and great grandsons of the original immigrants from China to be educated in the universities of Israel. According to an established tradition, "Chinese" youngsters, serving in the IDF regularly receive gifts on the eve of the Israel Independence Day and Rosh

Ha-Shana. It is to be stressed that the Funds were established not only by the members living in Israel, but also by those living abroad. In every issue of the IYS quarterly magazine "Bulletin" appeals are published "not to forget our needy", to donate money "instead of flower or gifts" for High Holidays, etc. There is also a tradition of people establishing or contributing to Funds in memory of their late relatives.

It is also worth noting that the IYS budget, including that of the "Bulletin" is rigidly inspected by an elected committee and book-keepers, and that it is covered exclusively by the

membership fees and contributions of its members. Not a penny of it is received from the Israeli government or any political party or organization. One can readily agree with the words of the director of the Jerusalem Research Center, "Russian Jewry Abroad", M. Parhomovsky, who writes: "the Compatriot Association of the Jewish Immigrants from China inspires admiration and amazement. It continues in the footsteps of the remarkable traditions of the Jewish charity, which acquired an unimitable singularity, and, under the conditions of "the Russian Harbin", cemented forever the unity of these people."

# Gero Krichevsky in Harbin, 1928

by Dr. G.V. Melichov

## Institute of Russian History Russian Academy of Sciences

This paper does not deal with the problems of the Jewish community of Harbin and Manchuria, nor the history of the history of the World Zionist Organization (W.Z.O.). It is no more than a page taken out from both. The source of the paper is the Russian language Harbin press of May – August, 1928 of various political leanings. However, this source alone is sufficient to follow the official side of the important mission assigned to Gero Krichevsky by the Keren Hayesod.

Gero Krichevsky arrived in Israel on May 27, 1928. The democratic Harbin newspaper "Zarya" published a friendly article about him, "Yevreiskaya Jizn" described the enthusiastic reception by the Harbin Jewish community, headed by the Far East chairman of the WZO, Dr. A.J. Kaufman, S.J. Ravikovich, Rabbi A.M. Kiselev, chairman of the Harbin Jewish community, J.H. Soskin, chairman of the Jewish Women organization, N.F. Frizer and many others.

On the other hand, the pro-Soviet newspaper "Novosti Jizni" received Krichevsky with sharp animosity, called him "a Zionist" (then a bad word in the USSR) and accused Zionism of being no less imperialist and Great Britain itself. The article received a worthy reply by "Memo" in "Yevreiskaya Jizn". However, obeying the instructions of the Harbin USSR Consul General, Melnikov, a Soviet spy and a member of Board of Directors of the KVJD Railway (arrested on May 4, 1937 and shot on July 28, 1938), the paper published again and again articles against

Krichevsky, causing sharp polemic exchanges in the local press. The reason for publishing such vicious articles was obvious: hatred of Zionism and the Soviet failure to improve relations with China.

It is worth noting that the arrival of Krichevsky in Harbin and his activity there, were not reflected in the book of the contemporary Chinese historian, Li Shuxiao, in his "Historical Chronology of Harbin". ("Haerbin lishi bianbian, Harbin, 2000). In my opinion, the mission of Krichevsky in the Far East had a triple aim: collecting money for the furthering of WZO activity, mobilization of the Jewish masses in Harbin in favor of Palestine, and a popular explanation to the Jews, the local authorities, and the foreign diplomatic corps, of the WZO aims and activity. Krichevsky understood the collection of money for the purchase of land in Palestine, not as just another contribution, but as the duty of every Jew. I do not know, how much money Krichevsky actually collected, but since these two cities had large and wealthy Jewish communities with strong Zionist sentiments, the amount collected must have been large.

Gero Krichevsky worked energetically, and immediately on arrival, he visited the Chief Synagogue. At the invitation of the management of Talmud Torah, he inspected the school and the nursery, attended lessons and was satisfied with the way the school functioned. He also visited the "People's Bank". The Jewish Women Association arranged for "a cup of tea afternoon". Over 80 women attended. The guest lectured them on the subject of "The

Jewish Woman throughout Jewish history." Beginning with the heroic Biblical era, he gradually switched to modern times and told them what was going on in Palestine and of the priceless contribution, which the Jewish women contribute there in helping their men-folk to build a new homeland. Ms Zondovich in her reply said that even though the economic conditions in the far East are not as good as he may have expected, his work here will not pass unnoticed: he had rekindled in many the desire to fulfill at least a part of their duty for the resurrected land.

On June 17 Krichevsky was the guest of the Jewish students. He told them about the Jewish youth in Palestine, about their healthy upbringing and way of life. As a result of this meeting there was an intensification of Zionist activity. At a banquet organized in his honor by the "Mizrahi, he told the audience about the religious life and institutions in Eretz Israel. Rabbi Kiselev called the Jews of Harbin to rally around the spiritual leadership of Zionist-religious Judaism. Next to speak was Dr. A.J. Kaufman who gave a comprehensive lecture on the relationship of Jewish orthodoxy with the Zionist cause. At the end of the banquet, over \$1,300.- were raised for the benefit of the Keren Hayesod. A week of Gero Krichevsky's presence in Mukden resulted in the founding of a Palestine committee, headed by Grigori Abramovich Bychovsky.

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On the following day Krichevsky and Kaufman paid a visit to the mayor of Harbin, Gen. Chu-zhen and the commander of the local police, Gen. Jin Zhungui. The Mayor expressed his support for the Zionist cause, while the police chief showed great interest in the reconstruction of a Jewish sovereign state. The same evening he came to listen to Krichevsky's lecture in the Komsob club on the "Moral basis for the Zionist demands". He was given the right of speech and in a short but forceful presentation expressed his support of the Jewish aspirations. Gero Krichevsky visited a number of foreign consuls in Harbin, who expressed their interest in the progress of the Jewish efforts in Palestine and paid Krichevsky a visit at his residence. Therefore, as we can see, the three objectives of Gero Krichrevsky's mission in Harbin were fully achieved.

It was already on the first day of Krichevsky's arrival in Harbin on May 27, that a committee of 20 was established to arrange for a Keren Hayesod campaign in China and Japan. By June 5, the campaign collected US\$7,000.- which were dully remitted to the Keren Hayesod in Jerusalem. In the meantime the

attacks of the anti Jewish Soviet "Novosti Jizni" continued unabated, and the Jewish community leadership was compelled to publish a strong protest against the anti-Semitic press. The peak of Gero Krichevsky's sojourn in Harbin was his speech given at the Komsob club on June 14 on the subject "Contemporary Palestine and the perspectives of its development". The speech was covered in detail by "Zarya" and "Yevreiskaya Jizn". "Novosti Jizni", naturally, did not mention a word about it. At the meeting, the British consul, Sir Grant Jones, said in his introductory speech: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have the honor to present to you Mr. Krichevsky, who rendered such valuable service to the Palestine government, and who today wishes to introduce us to this land and its future. I am sure that we shall be given a lot of new facts of which we were oblivious until today, and hope that at the end of the presentation we shall hear again that Great Britain does not crave tyrannical imperialism, but that it stands for the freedom for every nation."

In his comprehensive presentation Krichevsky spoke of the history of Palestine and of the enormous work done by the Zionist organization in industry, agriculture, building and cultural life. In the end he stressed the great help received from the Jewish communities throughout the whole world. "The insufficiency of this help, great as it was, calls everyone of us to contribute his bit for the Jewish national cause." "Help is needed not for those who have already established their homes in Eretz Israel. They are doing well. Help is needed for those who want to reach the Promised Land." The applause was thunderous.

These are the highlights of the visit of Gero Krichrvsky in Harbin in May – August, 1928. On August 28, a modest farewell party was given in his honor at the Comsob club attended by 60 people. Dr. Kaufman summed up

his work, saying that he had injected new blood in the veins of the Harbin Jewish community and awakened new interest for Eretz Israel. In his farewell address, Krichevsky thanked them for their warm welcome and broad generosity, and said that he would never forget the wonderful experience he had in this unforgettable city. He was accompanied to the train station by the whole group. The train left to the sound of Hatikva.

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### (from page 9)

obstacles, but finally managed to graduate from the Tomsk University (Siberia). She hoped that I could get a higher education, and this dream of hers finally came true. I did study in the same University and became a specialist in Electronics Engineering. After working in this field for many years, together with a group of colleagues, I received the highest award of the Soviet Union for practical accomplishments in Science and Technology.

After retiring I came to Israel with my children and grandchildren. Here I found out about the Association of Former Residents of China – Igud Yotzei Sin, which has, by now, been in existence for 50 years. In the offices of the IYS there is a collection of historical chronicles on the history of Jews in China, and researchers of China and other countries have made use of these documents. The Israel-China Voice of Friendship is a bulletin published by the Israel-China Friendship Society in Tel Aviv.

...

I taught at the Haifa Technion for 10 years, and on several occasions had a chance to speak to people from China. These occasions revived some nice memories of my life in Tientsin. China never produced the kinds of religious prejudice and racial discrimination which gave rise to anti-Semitism in Europe. Jews through long periods of time had a great respect for the Chinese people and we can expect that the remarkable friendship will continue.

# Report from China: Fall 2003

By Peter Berton

*(continued from previous issue)*

## **Chunking: The New Metropolis of 33 Million**

My biggest surprise on this trip was the city of Chungking (now spelt Chongjing), the wartime capital of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist China, located at the confluence of Yangtze and one of its largest tributaries. This is interior China, far from the tempestuous building that goes on in coastal China. And yet I was startled to see skyscrapers all over the place, and Suzuki and Yamaha motorcar and motorcycle plants. The Japanese are smart to build in inland China where wages are much less than in Shanghai and other coastal cities, and where Audis and Buicks are being built. We visited the wartime home of General Joseph (Vinegar Joe) Stilwell, the nominal chief of staff of the Chinese Nationalist armies who was feuding with his Commander-in-Chief Generalissimo Chiang, who was more interested in preserving his forces for the coming civil war with the Chinese Communists than in fighting the Japanese. Stilwell used to refer to Chiang as the "peanut head", and in his diaries he poured out his contempt for the Chinese general. (When I was at the Hoover Institution at Stanford, I saw the original Stilwell diaries; the published version is highly sanitized.) The house is located on a hill, a former residence of a wealthy Chinese, and is now rebuilt and refurbished as the Stilwell Museum. We saw pictures of Stilwell, Chiang, and Madame Chiang, a strikingly good-looking Wellesley graduate, who by chance died in New York at the age of 105, as we were touring the museum and admiring her pictures. Because of the Japanese air raids, the hills are full of air raid shelters which, our guide told us, are now inhabited

by laid-off workers ("nice place in the summer, but terrible in winter"). Chungking is also home to an artists' colony, where mostly elderly painters work predominantly in the Chinese traditional style, although we also did see some modern work.

Interestingly, it is the seat of the newest and largest municipality in all of China, 33 million inhabitants, in an area that encompasses part of Szechuan province and other places, and all the new dam areas that were previously under different provincial administrations. Now Chungking is larger than the Peking and Shanghai municipalities put together. I suppose it makes good administrative sense. (After all, I live in L.A. county which in addition to the City of Los Angeles, has over 90 other separate cities, like Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, Pasadena, and the greater LA metropolis includes parts of four or five other counties.)

## **Shanghai: A New Map Every Month**

From Chungking we flew to Shanghai, conveniently landing at the old, closer, now domestic airport. I was in Shanghai two years ago, and the metamorphosis was breathtaking. We were told that the Shanghai municipality has to issue new maps of the city every MONTH, because of the new roads and building and new construction all over the place. We stayed again in a most luxurious Portman Ritz Carleton in the center of town, connected with a bridge to a theater where we saw the world-famous Shanghai Acrobats. We visited one of the most notable prewar buildings on the Bund, now the Peace Hotel, where a jazz band plays tunes from the 1930s and 1940s.

The relatively new Shanghai museum of Art is well worth spending a day. At the museum gift shop, I bought a collection of musical instruments (both Chinese and Western) made of jade, lapis, and agate. Two years ago, my plane from Hong Kong landed at the new international airport, quite a distance from the city. Now the Germans are building facilities for a train that will travel at the speed of almost 300 miles per hour, better than the renowned Bullet train in Japan. When it is completed, the heart of the city will be connected to the airport by minutes of comfortable travel.

An hour's train or bus ride is the small city of Suchow, where one can see some handicrafts and a silk-making facility, where young Chinese girls deftly extract silk thread from cocoons, and where one can see the entire process leading to a gift shop where one can buy all kinds of silk goods, from handkerchiefs and ties to sheets and dresses. On our tour, we also visited an embroidery school and a carpet factory, where everything is hand-made. I tried to find out what the monthly wages of the young girls were, but was told that they are paid by the piece (no further calculations were offered). Some of us had visions that next to the touristy facilities there might be sweatshops.

## **My Lectures: On Tour and at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences**

During our 17-day tour, I gave a series of lectures on the history, politics, and foreign relations of China; U.S.-China relations, with particular emphasis on cooperation in the war against terror and in the matter of the North Korean nuclear program, a prognosis on the future economic

development of China, and what that might mean to the balance of power in the East Asia-Pacific region. The tour participants demanded and got an extra question and answer session a day before departure. When I was thinking of China's spectacular economic performance during the past decade, I wanted to get the latest figures on its GNP and especially the current per capita GNP. I asked the Australian tour director to look up for me the latest statistics on the Internet. I knew that when Deng Xiaoping launched his four modernizations, also known as the "To be rich is glorious" campaign, per capita income in mainland China was about two hundred dollars and the goal was to quadruple to a thousand dollars by the year 2000. I knew that the Chinese even overshot that goal and that multiplied by 1.3 billion would give the Chinese a GNP of about one and a half trillion, compared to the U.S. economy of over ten trillion. However, the Internet figures gave me China's gross national product not in dollar equivalence (which is the common way of calculating) but in terms of purchasing power. In other words, not what things cost in China, but what they would cost on the world market. Calculated that way, China's per capita income is around four and half thousand, and its GNP is over five trillion dollars, making it the world's "second largest economy", which I dispute because the Japanese GNP is higher than that. The problem remains, however, how will the Chinese economy perform in the future. At the rate of close to ten percent per annum, it will overtake the United States in a couple of decades, but of course things do not run in a straight extrapolation. Look what happened to Japan. In 1970, the famous physicist and futurologist Herman Kahn predicted that Japan would overtake the United States by the year 2000. But the bubble burst in 1989, the Nikkei (Japan's Dow) plunged from 39,000 to under 10,000,

and the Japanese economy has been in recession for the past decade and a half. In China's case, there is not only the economic factors, but also potential instability as the middle class grows and begins to demand freedom, representation, and political reforms. Of course, the phenomenal success of the Chinese economy is relatively cheap labor. (In the not distant future it is reasonable to expect that the hermits in North Korea will follow China's lead toward export-driven economic growth, and the Chinese will be undersold by a factor of five or ten. Speaking of cheap labor, at the Tiananmen Square and at other places, we were accosted by vendors shouting "one dara" (dollar) trying to sell some touristy items, such as caps with the insignia "Beijing 2008" and the Olympic 5 interlocking circles (signifying the five continents). Such caps I recently bought at the Carmel Bach Festival for 22 dollars, and a USC Trojan cap for \$18.25. So a dollar is quite a bargain, but in one place I managed to get three, repeat three, caps for one dollar, and I showed it off to my fellow travelers on the bus who applauded my bargain hunting ability. On the whole, we encountered very few beggars, even in the provinces, but in Xian, as we were approaching a swanky restaurant, we were accosted by a swarm of kids.

When I was in Shanghai two years ago, I gave a lecture at the Shanghai Academy of Sciences, and this time I was also invited to make a presentation. Last time, my lecture was held in a conference room in one of the Academy of Social Sciences buildings, but this time I had a treat. My seminar was held in a mansion in the old French concession where Mao stayed in the early 1950s. It is now a small hotel, where I stayed two years ago. The conference hall is quite splendid with wall paintings, elaborate chandeliers, and parquet floor. Some forty Chinese professors and a few graduate students attended my presentation, and there were

a number of questions, some in Japanese, to give a break to the Chinese interpreter. And to think that Chairman Mao presided over the Politburo in the same room.

### ***Jewish Postscript***

Yom Kippur I greeted in Chungking and a flight to Shanghai. I had already communicated with my friend Professor Pan Guang, the director of the Center of Jewish Studies and of the Center for Eurasian Studies at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, and compiler of the pictorial album "The Jews in China". He told me that there was a Jewish community center headed by Rabbi Shalom Greenberg. I called the rabbi and asked him if they could accommodate the three of us (two Israeli women long-time residents of Chicago and myself) at the "break-the-fast" meal. He told us that we were welcome, and upon arrival in Shanghai we took a cab to the Jewish center. I was surprised to see a policeman guarding the place, and we were greeted by the rabbi who turned out to be a Chabadnik, with tsitses hanging out, and a young wife with a couple of kids. It turned out that the rabbi had attended a Yeshiva in Pittsburgh with the nephew of one of my two companions on the tour. It is a small world, indeed. We were told that there are about 300-400 Jews in Shanghai, mostly business people, a far cry from half a century before when there were several tens of thousands of Jews in Shanghai: Sephardi, Ashkenazi from Russia, and including some twenty thousand refugees from Hitler restricted to the Hongkew district. When I was in Shanghai two years ago I saw handsome brochures of Jewish sites in Shanghai, showing pictures of the wartime Jewish refugee ghetto in Hongkew, the new Holocaust Memorial Park in that area that was built to commemorate this chapter in Shanghai's history, the Shanghai Jewish Club, and two synagogues (one is now a museum, with artifacts and pictures of a bygone era). Although (see page 37)

# Did the Essenes Write the Scrolls?

By Emmanuel Pratt, Jerusalem

More often than not, the focal point of earthquakes in Israel lie low in the Dead Sea area. So was the one that recently shook the Qumran caves, causing, however, no damage, except for a crack in the form of a question mark, cut into the long established theory that the famous Qumran Scrolls were written by the members of the monastic Essene community, living there at the end of the Second Temple period. Severe damage was also done to the belief that the contemporary site is the remainder of what was conceived to be a sort of "Jewish monastery", instead of an ordinary community, with its rich and the poor, sinners and saints, luxury and privation, as it may be concluded from the findings of the recent ten seasons' excavations.

The sensational hypothesis put forward by two Israeli archeologists, Itzhak Magen and Yuval Peleg, has it that not only did the inhabitants of Qumran enjoy comfort and luxury, they did not write the scrolls at all. The finds of this dig, the most extensive

since the one conducted by Roland de Vaux in 1950-1956, include numerous pieces of jewelry, imported Roman glass and expensive stone perfume bottles and valuables containers. "The fact that we do not find a record of this in de Vaux's report is either because a part of it is lost, or he simply ignored what did not suit his concept," says Yuval Peleg.

The first to identify the scrolls as having been written by the Qumran Essenes was Eliezer Sukenik of the Hebrew University. Later, a Dominican monk-archeologist Roland de Vaux of the Ecole Biblique de Jerusalem concluded from his six years dig that the site served as a scroll copying center for the Essenes, who he believed lived in the surrounding caves. Sukenik's son, Yigael Yadin, a celebrated Israeli archeologist, supported de Vaux's theory, as did most of the scientists at the time.

The Qumran scrolls are regarded as the most important archeological find ever made in Israel. They are the only original contemporary writings

to survive the Second Temple period, and, as such, are the invaluable source of information about the customs of the time. They are also the oldest biblical scrolls ever unearthed.

Although de Vaux's theory was accepted by most scholars, doubts kept accumulating over the years, and the recent scientists have begun to accuse de Vaux of purposely concealing finds that challenged his theory. In 1995 another scientific earthquake shook de Vaux's and Yadin's concepts: Professor Norman Golb of the University of Chicago argued that the scrolls came originally from various libraries of Jerusalem, and were brought to Qumran and hidden in the surrounding caves to ensure their survival during the Great Revolt of the Jews against the Romans. Golb based his theory on the fact that the scrolls were written by more than 500 different hands, some of which belonged to members of sects rival of the Essenes.

(from page 36)

people now mostly remember the Shanghai ghetto, it is well to remember that Sephardi Jews like the Sassoons and Kadoories built the first hotels and skyscrapers along the Bund on the river. The Kadoories were also the builders and owners of the old Peninsula Hotel in the Kowloon area of Hong Kong, the parent hotel of all the other Peninsula hotels, including the one our group stayed at in Peking and the one in Beverly Hills, less than a mile from my home. There is an impressive Kadoorie gallery in the Shanghai Museum of Art. Although I could not find the brochure on Jewish Shanghai, I was given a brochure of the Center of Jewish Studies, and the

preservation of the Jewish presence in the city. Among the advisors to the Center were several past mayors of Shanghai, the prime minister, the 88-year-old Israel "Eppy" Epstein, a Russian Jew who grew up in Tientsin and remained in China after the takeover by the Communists. A left-leaning journalist, he was befriended by Madame Sun Yatsen, the widow of the first Chinese president, and a sister of the wife of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (mentioned above), Chou En-lai, and other Communist leaders. He was made editor of the propaganda magazine "China Reconstructs", married a Chinese woman after his English wife died, and cast his lot with

the new rulers of China. He was even elected to China's puppet parliament, but Chou could not save him during the so-called Cultural Revolution, and he spent several years in prison. (By chance I knew his father, Lazar Epstein, an old Jewish Bund socialist, in New York). The Center brochures also feature a picture of the PRC Prime Minister congratulating Epstein on his 88th birthday, an auspicious date in Chinese, Japanese, and other East Asian zodiac calendars. The amazing thing is that Eppy is still committed to the Chinese Communist Party, and is probably the last remaining Maoist in China.

# San Francisco

## ***Our Countrymen in San Francisco - a friendly reunion***

On Sunday, October 12, at 11:30 a.m. the annual plenary session of the Far Eastern Association, San Francisco branch, took place at the "Peking" Chinese restaurant. The meeting served as a convenient occasion for a rare get-together with Israeli guests returning home from a conference on the History of the Jewish Presence in Harbin, held there on 29.8. 04 – 2.9.04. President of the SF branch, Isai Kaufman, greeted the guests, Rasha and Teddy Kaufman of Israel, Dr. Natalie Wilson (Lopato) of Edmondton, Canada.

A comprehensive activity report was presented by I. Kaufman and was unanimously confirmed by the meeting. So was the financial report, presented by the treasurer, S. Feldman. The Board of Governors was then re-elected for the period of an additional year.

At the end of the deliberations, the floor was given to Teddy Kaufman, who divided his speech into three: evaluation of the Harbin conference, activity of the Igud Yotzei Sin in Israel, and the political-economical situation in Israel today. Teddy's report was met with appreciative applause.

There was a diverse Chinese cuisine menu, and the President's wife, Olga, treated the guests to her traditional cake. The get-together ran into the late afternoon hours.

## ***A Whirlwind of Visits***

During their stay in San Francisco, Rasha and Teddy Kaufman had ample opportunity to meet old friends. They visited Bella Berkovich (Fainland), Gutia Katzeva, Risia Yonis (Tukachinsky), Bella Kaptzan (Topaz) and Mark Kaptzan' Inna Mink

(Ginzburg) and Dr. Murrey Mink, Prof. G. Grosman, Prof. M. Grosman, A. Sloushcher, Mira Tarnopolsky, Lili Berg (Dmitrovsky) and Henry Berg, Sophie Sorozhen (Fainland), Esther Wohl (Osina-Osinovsky), Dr. Reuven and Edna Wekselman' and Sophie Pelstruz.

It was a whirlwind of visits.

## ***The Kaufmans visit Magnes Museum***

On September 20, Rasha and Teddy Kaufman visited the Magnes Museum, Berkeley, at the invitation of the museum's management and Prof. Gregory ("Zorya") Grossman, formerly of Harbin. For over two hours the guests, accompanied by museum's director, Professor Seymour Frumer, observed the artifacts and documents of the archive, partly dedicated to the Jewish communities in the Far East. The archive also contains the personal archive of the late Professor Boris Bresler. Professor Frumer commented on the aims and the significance of the museum.

At the tour's end the guests were entertained by the board of directors at a lunch meeting with the director Prof. S. Frumer, deputy director, Prof. Edwin Epstein, Prof. Jack Citrin (the son of Walter Citrin), director of the archive, Eran Kornblum, the curator, Dr. Ella Yefimova, executive secretary Janice Loewenthal and our "Chinese" Professors Gregory and Michael Grossman and Aharon Sloushcher. Prof. G. Grossman introduced the guests and spoke of the significance of the museum as a memorial body of the Jewish past in the Far East. Given the floor, Teddy Kaufman spoke to the hosts about the activity of the Igud Yotzei Sin. He stressed the important role played by the prominent Harbin families, Zikman, Grossman, Citrin and others, in the economic and

cultural life of the city. He also promised to supply the museum with material for its archives. It was decided that a Russian-speaking student will be dispatched to Israel to work on the IYS archives.

# New-York

## ***With our "Chinese" Abroad - New York***

On October 6 Rasha and Teddy Kaufman were guests of the President of the Far Eastern Association in New York, Frances Greenberg for lunch in her apartment in Manhattan. Among the invited were Deputy Presidents, Eric Hasser and Joseph and Dora Weiner, members of the Board of Directors, Bella Rector (Schwetz), Liuba Tuck (Shifrin), Secretary Leona Foreman, and members, Lilly Blake-Klebanov, Dorik and Tamar (Ponve) Rojansky, Vera Toper, Ella Feinbeg and Sopha Weinerman (Treiman). After lunch a meeting was held where the future of the New York branch was deliberated at length.

F. Greenberg suggested a possible cessation of the branch's activities, which the rest of the gathering rejected outright. Teddy Kaufman spoke of the importance of the NY branch support of the Igud and stressed the critical economic and political situation of Israel. A resolution was passed by which the members present at the meeting were called to the banner – L. Tuck, L. Blake, L. Foreman and T. Roshansky. The debate passed in a warm and a friendly atmosphere.

On another occasion, the Kaufmans met Esther Funk-Ashkenazi (daughter of Shanghai's Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi), Vadya Gurevich, Sally Berman (Goldenberg), Teddy Baron, Suzy Lipcy, and Varda Yoran (Rose Granevsky).

# Rasha and Teddy Kaufman in Los-Angeles



1 At the reception held by Billy Belokamen in honor of R. and T. Kaufman. In the first row from left to right: Mara and Klara Lif (Lifshits) and Yehuda Limor (Morgulev). In the second row: Teddy and Rasha Kaufman, Leah and Yana Liberman, Betty Liass, Billy Belokamen and Zvia Limor.



2 Billy Belokamen and Teddy Kaufman



3 A reunion of old friends. Rasha and Teddy Kaufman and Yana and Leah Liberman.

## American Far Eastern Society of Southern California

### Bulletin #94 (Aug/Sept/Oct - 2004)

It is with great sadness that we lead off this bulletin with the announcement of the passing of our dear friend and member, Michael Medavoy. The board, on behalf of the entire membership, expresses its deepest sympathy to Dora and family. He will be greatly missed. Our condolences go out also to Bernyce Green and her mother on the loss of their uncle and brother, Daniel Litvin, who passed away in Thousand Oaks on Sept. 3, 2004.

On the brighter side, the Board wishes to express its sincerest thanks to the entire membership for its marvelous cooperation in responding so promptly with the dues for this

fiscal year. We are proud to announce that virtually one hundred percent of our members have renewed, and did so immediately. As a result, we were able to forward \$2500.- to the IGUD in Israel just in time for the holidays. As some of you know, several of our members traveled to Harbin, China to participate in a Conference on the History of the Jewish Community in Harbin, which was sponsored by Chinese officials. From what we have heard, everybody participating was cordially welcomed and experienced warm hospitality from the host city. We are happy to report that Lou Grossman, our Treasurer, is improving gradually and certainly feels much

better at this time.

There were also other members on the go since our last bulletin. Edith Nissi reports having a wonderful time and experience in China, mostly in Shanghai. Luba Roland spent a week in England visiting her late husband Vic's family. Mira and Phil Materman as well as Jack Liberman attended the above mentioned Harbin conference. Later this month Mira and Joe Mrantz will be off to Israel and will be away for approximately three weeks.

Our apology to Greg Hodson for the error in the spelling of his late wife's name in the IGUD bulletin. Shana Tova to one and all. Have a healthful and happy new year!

# Dragon Tower Offers the Best to Tourists

by *Bian Ji*

The Dragon Tower in Heilongjiang's capital city of Harbin, the highest steel-structure tower in Asia, has been graded by the National Tourist Administration as an AAAA tourism destination, making it one of the nation's leading scenic spots in terms of infrastructure and service quality. Construction of the 336-metre-high tower began in 1998 and was completed in 2002. It opened to tourists in October 2002.

The tower is multifunctional and combines TV and broadcast transmission, sightseeing, catering, entertainment, popular science, wireless communications and environmental and meteorological monitoring. It has a floor space of 16,600 sq. m. including 13,000 sq. m. of foundation floors and 3,600 sq. m. of tower floors. Various tourism and catering facilities have been built in the tower to entertain tourists. A police museum on the second floor showcases a gun used at the founding ceremony of the People's Republic of China, an automatic fingerprint identification system, and vivid depictions of police stories. Located on the same floor is a holy altar of the Red Emperor and the Yellow Emperor, common ancestors of the Chinese people. An investment of 300,000 yuan (US\$36,000) was used for the building of the holy altar, which was completed in November 2003.

On the third floor there is a corridor of world landscapes, a popular science base for youth, and an exhibition hall for the terracotta warriors and horses of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC). A Dragon's Legend Exhibition Hall

is situated on the same floor, which exhibits pictures and sculptures of dragons in different forms. Alongside the exhibition hall is the Dragon's Offsprings Wax Figure Museum. In China, dragons' offsprings refer to emperors, the highest rulers of ancient China. Thus the museum displays wax figures of 20 famous emperors from 10 ancient dynasties.

From the third floor, visitors can take a sightseeing lift to tour the tower and view the whole city. The lift will first take visitors to the "Walking-on-the-Clouds" corridor at an altitude of 181 m. The corridor, consisting of 80 pieces of transparent glass, is a 60-metre-long ring. It is said to be the longest of its kind in the world. Each square metre of glass can carry a load of 1,000 kilograms, thus it offers an adventurous but definitely safe experience to visitors.

At the altitude of 186 m. is the largest rotating restaurant in China. Offering Chinese and Western style food, the restaurant can accommodate about 300 guests. At an altitude of 190 m. an outdoor platform provides visitors with a complete view of the city of Harbin. On the same level is a butterfly exhibition hall. About 16,000 butterfly species from Argentina, Jamaica, Indonesia, Myanmar [Burma], the Philippines, Japan, Iran and Afghanistan, are on display. The Qifu Temple was built at an altitude of 203 m. and now serves as a museum for cultural relics of the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234), a dynasty which had its origins in Northeast China. Another museum is located at an altitude of 206 m. which displays historical relics from the Warring

States Period (475-221 BC) such as swords, ceramics, and Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) Buddha sculptures.

Already many tourism promotions have been launched in the tower, making it one of the most attractive tourism destinations in Harbin. Also, the tower has welcomed foreign guests from more than 30 countries, such as the United States, Russia, Japan, France, Vietnam, and Thailand.



**Tuesday, December 14, 2004,  
at 04:00 p.m.**

At Bet Oved Ha-Iriya  
4 Pumbeditha Street, Tel Aviv  
**An All-Israel gathering of  
Former Residents of China  
and the opening ceremony  
of the 15<sup>th</sup>  
conference of IYS.**

Scholarships will be awarded after  
the lighting of Hanukka candles.

# Jewish Life in Shanghai 60 Years Ago

Shanghai, Friday, December 8, 1944 English Supplement No. 123 ("Our Life" No. 182)

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## Lord Strabolgi Demands Jewish Dominion

Central Press, Stockholm, November 28—At a dinner held in London the President of the Palestinian Dominion League Lord Strabolgi declared that the status of Palestine will have to be decided in the near future. A self-administered Dominion embracing the territory within the historical borders on both sides of Jordan seems to be the only practical

solution, he said. Such a Dominion will be a bridge between the British Empire and the world Jewry and between Zionists and Anti Zionists. England has promised to establish in Holy Land the Jewish National Home and the influence of some extremists does not justify the breaking of this promise.

## Stateless Refugee Doctors' Right of Practice in Shanghai

In connection with our previous announcement re. the right of practice of stateless refugee doctors in Shanghai who cannot be subjected to the regulation authorizing the right of practice only to doctors—citizens of the countries which

give reciprocal rights to Chinese doctors, it now became known that according to a special regulation the right of practice will be accorded to all those stateless refugee doctors who are registered with the Shanghai Health Department.

## Betar Warms Up New Tea-Party for

To mark their removal into own Club premises at 1290, Avenue Joffre, the local ken of Brith Trumpeldor arranged on Sunday, November 25 a private tea-party for leaders of local social organizations and the Jewish press. The tea-party was held at Mr. Chernomorsky's apartment who has graciously placed at Betar's disposal the upper floor of his house where the Club is now located. The guests were first invited to inspect Betar's new premises consisting of a hall and adjoining small office which left a most pleasant impression of freshly painted walls decorated with scenes from Betar life.

## Premises by Arranging Local Leaders

new furniture and young faces of uniformed boys and girls around.

Later on, gathered around the tea-table, the guests partook of the excellent cakes and indulged in speech-making. The first speech was delivered by Mr. L. Tomchinsky, Mofaked of the local ken, who warmly welcomed the gathering and briefly outlined the aims of Betar in educating the Jewish youth. The guests responded by thanking the leader for his hospitality and were unanimous in stressing the need of national upbringing of the young Jewish generation.

## "Dreimaederhaus" Enchants Music Lovers in Repeat Performance

Franz Schubert's melody-filled "Dreimaederhaus" was presented to an admiring and enthusiastic audience at the Eastern Theatre on Monday 27th last. Incidentally, it was a special repeat performance which spoke well for the popularity and success of the Light Opera and the cast.

The story deals with the three daughters of a Viennese glassmaker. Two of them thanks to the kind intervention of Franz Schubert at a critical moment, are able to marry their sweethearts, while the third is courted by a handsome Baron and his dearest friend the composer himself. The latter, being of an extremely timid disposition, is unable to

express his love for her in words. However, calling music to his aid he writes a love song and asks the Baron to sing it to her who inspired it. He agrees. The song "Dalin ist mein Herz" so captivates the girl that she falls into the arms of the singer — and not the composer. Schubert, unhappy and yet glad to see those he loves united, turns to his music for consolation. A few complications in the form of a temperamental Italian singer, her jealous lover and a foolish detective provide much food for laughter.

## Emigration Certificates for Palestine

Central Press, Stockholm, November 29—A decree issued by the British Colonial Secretary was published in the Jewish paper "Palestinian Information". According to this decree, Jews from "liberated" localities will be able to get emigration certificates for Palestine.

Poor as well as rich families must emigrate to Palestine

in order to strengthen trade and economy of the Palestinian Jews.

Beginning from November, 1,500 emigration certificates will be issued—a quota which, in the opinion of the mentioned paper, is insufficient in view of the great number of Jews waiting for emigration to Palestine.

## Death of Franz Jaffe

Franz Jaffe, well known in local emigrant circles, met his untimely death on November 27th. The deceased was a well educated man and occasionally contributed articles to "Our Life".

Having come to Shanghai with the emigrant wave, Mr. Jaffe led a lonely and hard life. He is reported to have died from avitaminose and the resulting sickness.

## Brith Trumpeldor's Hanukkah Ball and Children's Matinee

Following the tradition set in past few years, Brith Trumpeldor will hold its annual Hanukkah Ball on Saturday, December 16 in the Shanghai Jewish Club. The diverse program of the evening will be performed by the Betari among whom there are a good many amateur artists of high merit. This Ball usually proves quite an attraction for the local

younger set, and good attendance is expected.

On Monday, December 11 at 2.30 the Shanghai Jewish Club will present a ground for children's entertainment with Betar staging a Children's Matinee (Durga "Aleph" Day). The guests will be offered tea and a varied program of scenes, singing and recitation. Entrance free.

## Concert of Winternitz Orchestra

The re-organized Philharmonic Orchestra in the Designated Area, has inaugurated the winter season by presenting a program of light music at a concert held on Sunday, December 3 in the Eastern Theatre.

Despite the tremendous efforts of the undoubtedly gifted conductor Mr. G.M. Winternitz, the orchestra has not yet attained that level of perfection in technique and smoothness which could assure it permanent patronage of the public. Progress could be seen, however, in comparison with summer concerts and the interval between summer and winter seasons must have been well used for rehearsals.

The soloists collaborating with the orchestra were at their very best. Mrs. Margit Langer-Klemann who sang two airs — "The Prayer" from "Tosca" and the waltz from "La Boheme") has shown an extraordinary gift of rendering as well as clarity, softness,

depth and excellent technique of her soprano. The Cellist, Walter Joachim, well known for his frequent appearances on the local stage, has displayed deep feeling in rendering Serenade in D Moll by Volkmann under the accompaniment of the strings.

As to the orchestra itself, in the first part of the program it played the Overture to the Opera "Der Freischutz" by Weber, a Waltz by Strauss and the Phantasy from "Carmen", and in the second a Dance from the Opera "La Gioconda" and "Reminiscences from Vienna" by Lehar. Both in Strauss' Waltz as well as in Lehar's pot-pourri it displayed its best preparedness for rendering light music. The last item—the pot-pourri—was best received by the public which followed it by enthusiastic applause. The public, we must say, has proved quite sensitive both to the good and the weak points of the performance.

X.

brilliant renaissance of both spiritual and national prestige.

Such is the Story of Heroism coming down to us from the ancient past that has served as a source of inspira-

tion to innumerable generation of Jews who have learnt it from their fathers on the night of 22 Kislev by the twinkling light of a little candle.

A. G.

(Contributed by Joe Levoff)

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# IN MEMORIAM

## **Motia Roshansky**

Matus (Motia) Roshansky, formerly of Harbin, has passed away in Montreal, Canada. In Harbin, Motia was a member and a standard-bearer of the Maccabi sports organization and a fine athlete. Before leaving for Canada, he stayed for some time in Shanghai. In Montreal he maintained a close friendship with those from China, and did some voluntary work for the Igud Yotzei Sin. He is survived by his wife and two daughters. May he rest in peace.

## **Gina Santos**

Gina Santos (nee Soskin), formerly of Harbin, passed away in Santa Monica, California, in September. She was 92. Gina was the daughter of Isaac Haritonovich Soskin, a legendary Harbin pioneer entrepreneur at the turn of the last century. She was married to the late Norman Santos. Harbin old hands remember Gina as a mild-mannered, amicable, cultured person, well versed in Russian literature and arts. Gone is another close witness of the saga of Harbin's early days. May she rest in peace.

## **Sarah Osina**

Sara Ossina was buried at the San Francisco Jewish cemetery on October 24. The ceremony was attended by many of Sara's friends, amongst them Rasha and Teddy Kaufman, who were visiting San Francisco at the time. She was eulogized by members of her family and the President and secretary of the SF FEA branch, Isai Kaufman and Gutia Katzeva. Teddy Kaufman placed a wreath on her grave on behalf of Igud Yotzei Sin.

Sara was buried next to her husband, Joseph Osin (Osinovsky).

## **Daniel Litvin**

An azkara - a memorial service for Daniel (Danny - Dally) Litvin,

formerly of Harbin, was held at the San Francisco "Sinai Memorial Chapel" on September 8. Many of Danny's old friends from China and the US attended the service, amongst them, Olga and Isai Kaufman, Rasha and Teddy Kaufman, Paul Yonis, Bella Berkovich, Mara Kaptzan, Alik Fainland, and others.

The memorial Kaddish and El maleh rahamim prayers were recited by the Rabbi of the congregation. Danny was eulogized by his niece and Isai Kaufman, President of the SF branch of the Far Eastern Association. At the end of the ceremony, lunch was served at the "Peking" Chinese restaurant.

**K. B.**

## **Grisha Shanon (Zubitzky)**

George Shanon (Grisha Zubitzky), formerly of Tientsin, passed away in Melbourne, Australia, on October 18. Grisha is remembered by the Tientsin old hands as a senior officer in the Tientsin ken of Betar and a prominent member of the Kunst Club, respected by all who knew him. For many years he contributed generously to the needs of the Igud Yotzei Sin. May he rest in peace.

## **Sarah Morgulev - at 89**

Sarah Morgulev (nee Rosenstein), formerly of Harbin and Shanghai, passed away on October 27 and was buried in Tel Aviv's Hayarkon cemetery on November 1. She was 89.

Sarah's son, Yehuda Limor, wife Zviah and daughter Edith; daughter, Shulamit Even with her son, Aharon and his wife Lorry, and daughters Ashrith and Iris flew in from the United States to be present at the rites. Numerous relatives and old friends from China and Israel came to accompany Sarah to her last resting place. She was eulogized by her granddaughters, Edith and Asherit,

Professor Alex Katznelson and Teddy Kaufman. Her son, Yehuda Limor, recited Kaddish. Yossi Klein, on behalf of the Igud Yotzei Sin, placed a wreath on her grave.

Sarah was buried next to her husband, Mara Morgulev (plot 1, block 10, row 22).

## **Boris Shafran** **- at 83**

Benzion (Boria) Shafran, formerly of Harbin and Shanghai, passed away at the "Sharon" hospital, Petach Tiqwa on November 6. He was 83 years old. Boria spent his formative years in Harbin. He studied in Talmud Tora, sang with the Old synagogue choir and was an active member of Betar, at first in Harbin, and later, in Shanghai, where he married Eve, a young refugee from Germany. The couple made Alyia in 1950 and settled in Petach Tiqwa.

Boria was one of the oldest members of Igud Yotzei Sin and a permanent participant in Igud's Sunday Brunch Club at Bet Ponve. His modesty and friendly ways earned him esteem and appreciation of all who knew him, and his absence at the traditional Sunday lunches will be noticed and regretted. Boria is survived by wife, Eve, and two daughters.

On November 7 Boria was put to rest at the Segula cemetery, Petach Tiqwa. Many of his friends and China old-timers attended the ceremony. Teddy Kaufman placed on the grave a wreath of flowers on behalf of Igud Yotzei Sin.

May the good man rest in peace.

# Life Is Hard Without a Friend

**T. Kaufman**

**Isia Magid passed away**



October 10, midnight, a telephone call from remote Australia. It was Isia Magid's daughter Nora, and what she had to say was brief: "Father died today".

I knew Isia had been ill. I knew he was more than 91 years old. I knew he had no taste for life after the passing away of his loyal lifelong friend, his wife Ira, who died two years ago. But, nevertheless, the sad news was like a stab in my heart. How many dear life-long loyal friends does one have? Certainly, not many, however, Isia was one of them. A man who possessed a keen wit, a great deal of knowledge, an intellectual and one who had a big Jewish heart.

Isia was a warm-hearted Jew, an ardent Zionist and a patriot of Israel.

He was a man for whom to serve the people was a part of his everyday life, and for whom the idea of the Jewish renaissance and the assistance to the State of Israel was close to his heart.

There were no bounds to his generosity. He not only gave generous donations to institutions and social bodies, but he also helped many of his friends to whom fate had not been kind. He was helping them quietly, regularly and without anybody knowing about it.

For many years Ira and Isia used to come to Israel annually to attend official ceremonies and meetings with the Government or the University held in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, but the main events for them were their meetings with their personal friends, the former residents of China, with all those who loved this remarkable couple.

After Ira passed away, Isia visited Israel only once. He did not feel strong enough to be able to make the journey from Melbourne to Jerusalem, but the link between us was not broken. How impatiently I waited for those telephone conversations with Isia! Every Wednesday for the last two years of his life I rang him up to tell him in

detail about life in Israel, its policy and the state of its economy, about Igud Yotzei Sin and about our landmen in Israel and in the Diaspora.

Until Isia's very last day he possessed an exceptionally clear mind, and had a great interest in everything that was going on in our Jewish motherland and in the Jewish world. His heart ached for all the sufferings that befell the Israeli people especially during the last four years of the Intifada.

Every conversation with Isia made me richer, for it was not just a friend's warmth that reached me from distant Australia, but also because our talks enriched my knowledge with the great wisdom of Isia's words. Alas, there will be no more of those telephone conversations. That's why it is so painful, and the joy that for many years had accumulated in my heart from my meetings with Isia is giving way to sadness and sorrow and my heart bleeds for Isia.

Very few of our Chinese compatriots can boast of as richly colourful a biography as that of Isia's. His life embraces China, Australia and Israel. His communal work began in Harbin and continued in Shanghai, when he was appointed the first honorary consul of Israel, until he left for Australia. However his Jewish and Zionist endeavours reached their peak in Australia and Israel since he and his family settled in Melbourne. He became not only one of the first ranking Jewish communal leaders, but also the most generous contributor to Jewish and other benevolent societies in Australia. The Queen of England honoured him with high awards and there is a street in Melbourne named after him.

In Israel, Isia was a long-time member of the central institutions of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency. He contributed generously to various institutions of the Hebrew University, one of them being the School of Dentistry and also the Magid Institute for advanced studies. As a token of gratitude, the Hebrew University

granted Isia an honorary doctorate and several other awards. During the past ten years Ira and Isia were most generous contributors to Igud Yotzei Sin, having established a fund for social assistance and scholarships for higher education in memory of their son Ralph who died tragically in an accident. In gratitude for their generosity, Igud Yotzei Sin elected them as honorary members of our organization.

Isia donated very large sums to the Scholarship Fund for Chinese students in Israel in the framework of the Israel-China Friendship Society. The Fund in memory of his son, Ralph Magid, helped many students from China during their studies in institutions of higher education in Israel.

Two years ago, Isia's wife, Ira, his lifelong love and comrade, passed away. We, his friends, knew how difficult it was for him to continue without Ira's warm care and wise advice. Isia said more than once that he was tired and that he did not want to go on living without Ira.

But despite all that, we find it hard to accept the fact that in remote Australia the heart of our dear Isia is no longer beating.

In these difficult days of mourning and sorrow we are together with Nora and Bobby and their families, and with the whole Magid family.

May their lives be worthy of their unforgettable father and grandfather. May they go on in life along the road of glory that Isia walked with so much dignity during his long and meaningful span of life.

Isia is no longer among the living, but he will remain forever in the hearts of all those who knew, respected and loved this exceptional person and this true son of our people.

Goodbye, our dear friend! But we are not parting with you, as your image will always accompany us in all our activities that were so close to your heart during all the days of your worthy and dignified life.

**T. Kaufman**

# Sarah

## T. Kaufman

Preparations were in full swing in Los Angeles and Tel Aviv to celebrate Sarah Morgulev's 90th birthday on May 2, 2005. But destiny makes its own decisions: on October 27 at 6 p.m. she passed away at the Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv. When one would say, "Sarah", there was no need to add "Morgulev", because there was only one Sarah for her family, friends and landsmen.

Sarah was born in Tomsk, Siberia, in 1915. Her father, Moshe-Yaakov Rosenstein, a tradesman and a first-rank Jewish social figure, the gabbai of the synagogue in Achinsk, and, many years later, the gabbai of the Ohel Aharon Synagogue in Shanghai. During his stay in Harbin he was a member of the Board of Directors of the local Branch of the World Zionist Organization.

Sarah graduated from an English school in Shanghai, where the Rosensteins migrated from Harbin, and later taught in the Shanghai Jewish School. She married Mara Morgulev in 1935. The couple left for Palestine with a group of Shanghai Betarim, and settled in Jerusalem, where their son, Yehuda was born. Mara served with the British Police force in order to make clandestine contacts for the Jewish Agency. Soon the British discovered the connection, and the Morgulevs had to flee – back to Shanghai. During the Pacific War (1941 – 1945) Mara and Sarah were interned by the Japanese as enemy nationals (British Palestine). There, in the camp, their daughter, Shulamit, was born. In 1948, with the establishment of the State of Israel, the Morgulevs



returned to an embattled Eretz Israel. Those were difficult years of struggle and hard work, with Sarah at the side of her husband – always supportive, always a source of strength to him. Then came the days of wanderings – Hong Kong, Singapore and back home to Israel. Here, both Sarah and Mara dedicated themselves to intensive work at Igud Yotzei Sin. Later on came the long period of Mara's illness, his isolation from reality. And more than ever before, Sarah remained true to their bond. No matter how painful and difficult, she was always with him – till the very end.

Sarah – the widow – remained active and vibrant. She plunged into activity, overcoming pain, loneliness and

grief, dedicating herself to her family and her work with Igud Yotzei Sin: the Sunday get-togethers, four hours of daily work, compiling the index and bibliography of the Bulletin and "Yevreiskaya Jizn" in English and Russian, and translating articles into English for the Bulletin. To the very last Sarah did not lose a bit of her energy and keen involvement with the world surrounding her. She read a tremendous amount. She was always reading.

Sarah was loved and respected by all who knew her. She seemed to have a key to people's hearts. She was a unique personality. A symbol of the generation of "halutzim", always ready to answer a call to work or fight for a noble cause. She remained true to the end to the ideals of her youth, the ideals of Brith Trumpeldor. There was no limit to her loyalty, faithfulness, and readiness to be useful. She always was a part of the crowd

she was in – no matter how young or old, and despite her age she always remained independent of any outside help. Indeed, Sarah was one of the most extraordinary personalities I have met in my life.

It is difficult to imagine that we shall not see Sarah again, and hear her laughter. Her presence alone created a cheerful mood. So let her image and her life be an example for her family and landsmen, for all those who knew Sarah. Her passing away is mourned in Israel, Los Angeles, Tokyo, New York and Sydney. We shall always miss her, because without her we are so much poorer. Life will go on, but it is so different without Sarah.

## Sara - Our Mother

We feel very privileged to be the children of two extraordinary parents. While many people know of our father's achievements, it may not be widely known of the active role that our mother played. The Betarim Sara and Mara got married in Shanghai in February of 1935 and immediately made aliya to Eretz Israel/Palestine. They settled in Jerusalem, and Mara, at the request of Betar, joined the British CID. His position enabled him to alert the Jewish Underground of any impending raids – a work for which he received from the Ministry of Defense the “Ot Hamishmar” and “Ot I.Z.L.” At the same time, Sara provided a warm home of the Chinese Betarim, took care of baby Yehuda, hid David Raziel (co-founder of the IZL) and ammunition in their two-room apartment.

A few years later, their work was betrayed to the British and they escaped back to Shanghai. Upon the outbreak of World War II, the British Consulate in Shanghai was evacuating Commonwealth women and children to Australia. Sara adamantly refused to leave her husband, insisting they should always be together regardless of circumstances. Furthermore, when the few Palestinian families in Shanghai voted unanimously to keep their British passports, Sara was in total agreement with Mara about the vote. As a result, all these families spent the war in Japanese internment camps in Shanghai, while their families with Russian passports were free.

This mutual love, respect and partnership between our parents continued until the very end. Together they continued to accomplish incredible feats and lived a life that could inspire a best-seller.

הנאהבים והנעימים בחייהם  
ובמותם לא נפרדו

Yehuda Limor  
Shulamith Even

## To My Grandmother

I don't know where to start to talk about our Savta Sara. She has touched our lives like no one else. She was the matriarch of our family. She was loved and adored by her kids, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and grand nieces and grand nephews. This has been such a shock to all of us, but when is it a good time. I always knew that I could never let her go at any age. I cannot believe that she is gone. It breaks my heart. Every time I think of my past, she is entwined in it and tears swell in my eyes. When I look all around me, I see her in everything – memories are so painful, yet thank God we have them. Such beautiful memories. Looking in her apartment, the kitchen, her room, the building, its elevator, the pictures. Her favorite foods or the way she answers the phone. Oh the sweet memories – how they sting. I still cannot believe that my Savta Sara is gone. I was so blessed to have spoken to her a few hours before she died. She sounded so wonderful and fulfilled. It is of course my last memory and a very special one.

She was so vibrant and kind. She was always there for her family and friends. This was what was important to her. And her family and friends were there for her. We can see this with all of you here today. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to go through this eulogy, especially after my father asked me to speak for him. But I am honored and proud to do this. Savta Sara, I love you so much, we love you so much. We are going to miss you tremendously. I cannot imagine my life without you. But I know that we must all go on and will forever love and miss you. May you rest in peace and always continue to watch over us.

Edit Limor Komberg  
For Sara Morgulev

A few years ago I was in an acting class in New York. The teacher was

coaching me on a monologue in front of the class – it was from a play about Joan of Arc – and I was having a hard time giving it enough emotion. The teacher said: “Try to think of the thing that frightens you the most”. Joan was terrified of fire – what are you afraid of?” The first thing that popped into my head was “if something happened to Grandma”. Tears stung my eyes and my throat started to close up. Needless to say the monologue certainly improved. I never told Grandma that story; I don't think she would have liked it. The reason I tell you now is because it's the best way to explain how special she is.

When you are young it is hard to have a concept of how old someone is – and that they may not be there forever. Grandma's 85<sup>th</sup> birthday was when it hit me. I told people, “Yeah, I'm going to L.A. My Grandma came in from Israel and we are celebrating her 85<sup>th</sup>”. “What!” they would say, “she flew that far by herself at 85! Wow, she must be some lady!” I would just smile and say, “Well ... she is amazing”.

I have so many memories of Grandma, but my favorite ones are from the simple moments: lying on the bed together talking – she would tell me stories, sometimes sing and pat me on the back; sitting at the kitchen table, each sipping coffee – me telling jokes and funny stories. My favorite thing to do was make Grandma laugh. She had a wonderful laugh.

Though saying goodbye at the end of each visit was always difficult, after her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday it became even more so. Each time I knew it could be the last and reminded myself that each year we have her is a blessing. This is what I remind myself now. I should be so lucky to live a life as full as hers. Beloved by so many people. Sorely missed and remembered with so much love.

Asherith Even

# Funeral of Sarah Morgulev



1+2 Near the grave of Sarah



3 The cantor prays



4 Sarah's son Yehuda says "Kaddish"



5 Sarah's granddaughter Edith near the grave



6 Granddaughter Oshrit at the grave

**Rabbi A.M. Kiselev's Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren at the Tomb of their Grandfather. 18 members of the Kislev family headed by Shmuel Kislev, the grandson of Rabbi A.M. Kiselev, visited Harbin. September 26 2004**



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1 At the tomb next to Shmuel stand Prof. Li Shuxiao and Secretary Han Tianyan

2 The inscription on Rabbi Kiselev's tomb

3 At the exhibition "The Jews in Harbin" at Rabbi Kiselev's portrait. Next to Sh. Kislev is Prof. Qu Wei, President of the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences

4 The Kislevs at the entrance to the Main Synagogue

# From The Album of The Past



Lifshiz photographer using circuit camera to photograph anniversary of Chinese Republic. On left Lifshiz. On top Aron Wasserman, Next, Boris Katz and Max Kogan. Tientsin 1935. From the album of Mara Leaf (Lifshiz), San Diego

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

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

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.