

Bulletin

Igud Yotzei Sin

Association of Former Residents of China

November - December 2005 ♦ Vol LII ♦ Issue No. 386 English Supplement

At the World Reunion of the Kiselev Family

A world reunion of four generations of the family of Rabbi Kiselev of Harbin took place in Israel. The relatives from Israel, Russia, Belgium and England participated in to the reunion.



On November 6, 2005 "The Great River Television" group from Beijing shot a film about generations of former residents of Harbin, China, in Moshav Amikam. The photo shows the second, third and fourth generations of former residents of Harbin, living today in Amikam.



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On the agenda

By Teddy Kaufman

The annual meet

As usual, this issue of our Bulletin will appear on the eve of Hanukka, which signifies to us, former residents of China, not only the victory of Light over Darkness, but also a by now well established tradition of an all-Israel meeting of the three or four generations of Igud Yotzei Sin members. We all look forward to this happening, accompanied by presenting our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren with scholarships for continuing their education in Israeli universities, and are happy to be able to keep up this annual custom of which we are so proud.

The Sephardi Division meets in TA

On the Sukkot holiday, an all-Israel get-together of the Sephardi Division of the I.Y.S. took place in the spacious sukkah of the Benjamin Shamash Synagogue in Tel Aviv. There were also guests from the USA and former members of the Jewish Sephardi community of Shanghai. Some of the participants of the meeting haven't seen each other for years.

It is hoped that in the future the Sukkot meet will become another tradition to commemorate the past of the glorious Jewish Sephardi community of Shanghai.

Ex-Tientsiners, too, hold a meeting

On December 1, 2005, a second all-Israel meeting of the former residents of Tientsin took place in Bet Ponve in Tel Aviv. The first meeting took place in 1998, in the framework of a reunion of the graduates of the Tientsin Jewish School. At the meeting, plans were discussed to establish a Center of research of the history of the Tientsin Jewish Community, and to hold a

seminar in Tientsin on that subject at the end of 2006.

Second Seminar on the Harbin Jewry

The second seminar on the history of the Harbin Jewish community is planned for June, 2006. At the seminar a permanent exhibition, "The Jews of Harbin", showing hundreds of photos and documents which depict the contribution of the Jews to the economic and cultural welfare of the city and the Heilongjiang Province as a whole will be inaugurated, and a two-hour film on the history of the Harbin Jewish community will be shown. By then, it is expected that the renovation of the historical New Synagogue of Harbin will be accomplished, and its premises permanently occupied by the Center for the research of the Harbin Jewish community. It is also hoped that the access to the Jewish Community Archives, now in the custody of the Harbin Municipality, will be open to the public. Preparations for the opening of the Seminar are already underway, and their progress will be dully reported by the Bulletin.

In memory of the 12 murdered by the Japanese

On the November 25 in the Memorial Synagogue of the Jewish communities in China, in Ramat Gan, an Azkara was held in memory of the 12 Jews murdered in Hailar by the Japanese soldiers at the end of the Pacific War in 1945.

Ten years ago, by a resolution of the Central Committee of the Igud Yotzei Sin, a plaque in memory of the 12 was fixed on the wall of the synagogue. The families of the victims and Igud Yotzei Sin are to hold an annual Azkara prayer on the date of the tragic event.

People and Events

Israeli Film on China

A field team of the Israel Television Second Channel left for China to shoot a full length documentary targeted on young backpackers traveling through the "Middle Kingdom". Filming will take place in Beijing, Harbin and Kaifeng. Before leaving for China, the team met with T. Kaufman who lectured them on the Jewish presence in modern China. The IYS and the Israel-China Friendship Association provided the team with contacts on the filming sites.

Haifa get-together

On July 26 a traditional meeting of IYS members living in northern Israel took place in Hotel Shulamit, Haifa. In spite of the hot weather, the event was attended by more than 50 of our landsmen from Haifa, Nahariya, Tira, Afula and other towns. T. Kaufman, Y. Klein G.Katz came from Tel Aviv and R. Veinerman – from Tivon. Esther Vandel opened the event, after which T. Kaufman reported on the work done by the Igud during the outgoing year: two films on the Harbin Conference were shown – one, sent from Harbin, the other shot and commented on by Y. Klein.

Guests were treated by plentiful and delicious refreshments and the get-together passed in a lively and friendly atmosphere, lasting for over four hours. T. Kaufman thanked E. Vandel for her efforts in organizing the event and for her work as Chairperson of the Northern Israel department of IYS.

An all-Israel get-together of the IYS members is planned to take place in Tel Aviv on Hanukka, December 28, 2005.

Bet Ponve Visitors

Rabbi Marvin Tokayer of New York, formerly the Rabbi of Tokyo, visited Bet Ponve and had a lengthy conversation

with Teddy Kaufman. Rabbi Tokayer is the author of the book "The Fugu Plan". Professor Izumi Sato of Tokyo took part in the weekly Sunday Brunch at Bet Ponve on July 31. She made a generous contribution of US\$600 to the IYS Social Assistance Fund. Teddy Kaufman presented the guest with his book "The Harbin Jews Are in my Heart".

David Katz Scholarship Fund

A new scholarship fund was established by Galia Katz-Volobrinisky in memory of her late husband David, formerly chief engineer of Kupat Holim Klalit. An anthology of poems by G. Katz "Feelings and Thoughts" (336 pp., in Russian) was recently published in Tel Aviv. The book may be purchased at the IYS offices. The proceeds are for the new scholarship fund.

Meeting of Rabbi Kiselev's Descendants in Israel

A world-wide gathering of the descendants of Rabbi Aharon Moshe Kiselev of Harbin took place in Kiryat Ono on August 6. Seventy members of the Kiselev family from Israel, St. Petersburg, New York, London and Brussels attended the event, arranged by the Rabbi's eldest grandson, Shmuel (Sana) Kiselev, formerly of Tientsin. Orators spoke Hebrew, English and Russian and the speeches were correspondingly translated. Sana and Abie Kiselev opened the meeting. Teddy Kaufman reminisced about his meetings and work with Rabbi Kiselev. A. Rosenblum spoke of the city of Borisov, where Rabbi Kiselev had served for 12 years (1900 -1913).

David Udovich reaches 85

On September 10, **David (Dodik) Udovich** of Sydney, Australia, celebrated his 85th birthday. He and his wife, **Stella**, are veteran honorary representatives of Igud Yotzei Sin in

Australia, doing outstanding work on behalf of our organization for many years. Igud Yotzei Sin sends their best wishes of happiness, health and "nahes" from children and grandchildren to Stella and Dodik – till 120.

Meeting old friends, Dora and Joe Weiner

A reception was held by Rasha and Teddy Kaufman at Bet Ponve in Tel Aviv on June 21 in honor of Dora and Joe Weiner of New York. Joe is the Deputy President of the American Far Eastern Association. Dora (nee Segerman) is the elder sister of Rasha Kaufman and Bella Goldreich. Among the numerous participants were the members of the IYS Presidium, T. Kaufman, Y. Klein, R. Veinerman, A. Podolsky, E. Vandel, A. Fradkin and G. Katz and some 50 old friends from China.

Y. Klein and Rahel Rabkina greeted the guests. T. Kaufman spoke of the IYS activities and the assistance our organization receives from the American Far Eastern Association and J. Weiner personally. To a prolonged applause, Teddy announced the donation by the Weiners of \$10,000 for the IYS Social Aid Fund. Joe thanked the hosts for the warm reception.

After the lunch, a video film on the Harbin International Conference 2004 was shown, commented on by Y. Klein, who filmed it.

Rabbi Tokayer in Bet Ponve

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Izumi Sato in Bet Ponve

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Mazal Tov

Bar Mitzvah

Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Bella Goldreich, formerly of Shanghai, on the occasion of her grandson Jonathan Roklin reaching Bar Mitzvah. Jonathan is the son of Sandra (nee Goldreich) and Even Roklin. The Roklin family lives in Los Angeles, but the Bar Mitzvah was celebrated in Jerusalem. The ceremony was attended by all the Roklin family: Sandra and Even with their three children, Michael, Jonathan and Molly; Tanya and Roy Zuretz with their children, Daniel and Adar; Aunt Dora and Joe Weiner (formerly of Harbin and Shanghai) of New York.

Births

Greetings and Blessings! It is with great joy that we share with you the news of the birth of our daughter. Thank G-d, Mom and baby are doing well, and father and siblings are thrilled! May we always share happy occasions! With blessings for happy and sweet new year, Shalom and Dina Greenberg

Benny Tzur -- a grandfather

A granddaughter was born to Benny Tzur formerly of Shanghai. The newly born is the daughter of Yigael and Sima Tzur.

Igud Yotzei Sin extends their

congratulations to the Tzur family, wishing them health and happiness.

David Udovich 85

David Udovich with his family and friends celebrated his 85th on September 10, 2005, at the lunch in the Sheraton Hotel in Sidney. Nearly forty relatives and friends were present. In his speech David indicated that his wife Stella and he had been working for IYS (Far Eastern Jews in Israel) for more than 15 years in Australia and he underlined that one of the reasons why they had been doing it was that the history of Jews in the Diaspora repeated itself. Jews always and everywhere help those in need he mentioned that in 1930 when he family came as refugees from Russia/ the Jewish organization in Harbin, China helped him and his late brother all the years they were at school untill David was able to help himself. Now he and his wife are working for the Organization of Former Residents of China in Israel that helps those who are in need of help. As usual, in lieu of presents, as David asked, this time also, donations were collected for Igud Yotzei Sin in Israel.

Sara Ross is 90

Our compatriot from Harbin and Shanghai Sara Ross celebrated her

90th birthday in October. Sara is an active member of Igud Yotzei Sin and a permanent photo correspondent of the "Bulletin of IYS". Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Sara and her entire family with the happy event and wishes her health and prosperity till 120!

Yehuda LIMOR is 70

Our compatriot from Shanghai Yehuda Limor (Morgulev) celebrated his 70th birthday in November. Igud Yotzei Sin wishes him and to the entire Limor family much health, happiness and prosperity till 120!

Danny Berkovich is 90

Our compatriot from Harbin Danny Berkovich celebrated his 90th birthday. Danny is great friend of IYS and a generous donator to Igud Yotzei Sin funds. We congratulate Danny, Musia, Giora with family and Carmella with family with this happy event and wish health, happiness and prosperity till 120!

Osia Yakobson is 65

On October 31 our compatriot from Tianjin, Osia Yakobson, was 65. During all his years in Israel Osia has been a member of Kibbutz Ifat. Igud Yotzei Sin congratulates Osia and wishes him and his family health and prosperity.

Tuesday, December 28, 2005, at 04:00 p.m.

At Bet Oved Ha- liya

4 Pumbeditha Street, Tel Aviv

An All-Israel gathering of Former Residenns of China Scholarships will be awarded after the lighting of Hanukka candles.

Jewish Life in Shanghai 60 Years ago

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National, Independent Organ of Jewish Thought

National Jewish Welfare Board of America brings joy and happiness to refugees here.

A most successful Chanuka Festival was arranged by JWB on December 2nd at the Alcock Heim to bring some light and happiness into lives of refugees, mostly elderly people, who are still on relief. The festival was opened with an inspiring speech by Chaplain Alvin I. Fine which brought tears to the eyes of the audience and was met with full-hearted applause. A delightful program followed with such well known celebrities as Joseph Fruchter, R. Shoshano, R. Albach-Gerstel, Hersh Friedman, Raya Zomina and Henry Margolinsky participating in it, which was fully appreciated. The festival will be long remembered by the refugees who during all these years had nothing to

divert them from their unhappy thoughts.

In the morning of the same day the JWB arranged together with Chaplain Alvin Fine a Children's Chanuka Party at the Eastern Theatre, Hongkew. The theatre was filled to capacity and the program given by children of the Kadoorie School was excellent. In addition to this program the audience was entertained by a Magician and Chinese acrobats. Children simply screamed from enthusiasm and their happiness had no bounds when on the way out they were met at the doors by rows of Jewish GI's who distributed among them one thousand candy bars.

Chanuka Gelt from Jewish GI's to refugee children

Influenced by Chaplain A. Fide, Jewish GI's from Kunming and Chungking remitted here US\$1200.— for distribution among refugee children as Chanuka Gelt. This money was given out to children on

Thursday last, each receiving a US\$1.00 bill enclosed in a specially printed card inscribed: "Chanuka Gelt from your new found friend Jewish GI". The distribution was made at the Kadoorie School.

Russian Jews begin a drive in order to build own house for Cheap Kitchen and Shelter House

The old creative spirit of the Russian Jewry seemed to have revived, judging by the last meeting of the Shanghai Hebrew Relief Society and Shelter House. Although the annual report showed that this organization is left without any funds, all members of the Committee optimistically declared that the Russian Jewish community can be relied upon as there was not an instance when an appeal for assistance issued by the Society has not been met with a

fullhearted response. Moreover, Mr. A. Oppenheim proposed that a drive should be made to create a fund of US\$100,000/-150,000.— to acquire or build a large suitable house for the Shelter House and Cheap Kitchen. This proposition was enthusiastically upheld by all members and a special Building Committee was elected.

The above meeting was presided over by Mr. J. Brick, while Mr. D. Rabinovich was elected as Secretary of the meeting.

(Contributed by Joe Levoff)

Shanghai Jewish School Starts Autumn Term on October 1

Having retrieved its premises in Seymour Road, from which it was evicted by the Japanese the Shanghai Jewish School will start its new school year on October 1 said Mr. B. Kahan, Headmaster of the School when interviewed by "Our Life".

In view of the Jewish holidays and the repairs that are necessary to re-adopt the School building for its original purpose after it had been used as an air raid shelter by the Japanese, the autumn term will start a month later than usual this year, said Mr. Kahan.

Improvement in School curriculum has been visualized he said, for many teachers have been released from internment camps, and the School will do its best in engaging the best available pedagogues.

Victory Ball

For the past week, Shanghai has been buzzing with rumours about the Gala Victory Ball that is being planned by the Fifth (Jewish) Shanghai Rovers and the Junior B'nai B'rith (AZA).

FLASH! The latest communique from their headquarters reveals that the date of the function has definitely been set for the 19th September, Wednesday, at 8.00 at the lovely, romantic beauty-spot, "Rio Villa", at 888 Weihaiwei Road.

There will be amusing skits, acrobatic displays, and a magnificent number: *The Dance of the United Nations*.

The next issue of this paper will carry further details, so until then, folks, please stand by for further news.

Watch for it!

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Present Harbin May Be Found In Her Jewish Past

By Prof. Dan Ben-Canaan

It is summer of 2004. A rainy season in Harbin.

The buildings and pavements of Zhongyang and Tongjiang streets in Harbin's Daoli District have been washed by an earlier rainfall and are ready to welcome a large delegation of Israeli officials and business executives. They came to Harbin to strengthen future economic ties between Israel and Heilongjiang Province. Although it is an official State visit, many of them will find their roots here.

For all of them it is a journey between past and present. For many it is a personal encounter. As descendants to grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who once lived here, they are trying to put their presence on these Harbin streets into the many stories they heard at home.

"This is the place where my parents lived." Says Ehud Olmert, Israel's Deputy Prime Minister. "It is far away from home in Israel. These are different buildings. Houses of different style and strange streets. But somehow we have an emotional attachment to this place, to Harbin. This is where my parents lived and worked and dreamed. Here they grew up, studied and got married. Jews who came to China found a warm place within a warm society."

Later, an ancient Hebrew prayer of remembrance will be heard on Harbin's northern hills of Huangshan. Awakened for a moment by visitors and so many dignitaries, the Harbin Jewish Cemetery on Huangshan – the Royal Mountain - draws back into itself and to its silent graves. A long history of active and lively Harbin

Jewish Community is buried here.

Growing out of small fishing villages, Harbin turned to be a modern and lively city. Today, it embraced skilfully, the cultural, social, and architectural values that were left here by the Harbin Jewish community. Harbin's past can be found in her present.

In order to understand the successful active Jewish experience in Harbin, one must understand the organic form in which different communities unite under a central authority while retaining limited self-administrative tools.

The Jewish people, which have been the longest-lasting and most widespread "organization" in history, are organized on covenant or federal principles and enhance its survival power by applying them in changing situations.

The Jewish **organic form** created a will for survival and a gradual and continuous development of political, cultural and social institutions serving a population rooted in one place, into a continued functioning whole system.

The **covenant form** of the Jewish organization emerges out of agreements to form partnerships for purposes of social/cultural/political organization. It does not presuppose a territory, a clear chain of command, or organic development in a particular place.

Beyond the communal survival, consent has remained the basis for the shaping of Jewish self-administration. Jews in different localities consented together to form congregations and communities. They did this formally through articles of

agreement, charters, covenants, and constitutions.

Over many centuries, a very distinctive kind of self-administration has developed as the organized expression of Jewish communal life. Over the centuries, it has undergone many adaptations. However, the foundation of Jewish communal institutions, cultural expression and ideas and social involvement has continued to run through the course of the Jewish cultural/social/political life.

The Jewish experience of the past several centuries should not be looked upon as based wholly on its religion. It is entangled with its national principles and aspirations, and maintains a legal code based on its total needs as a Jewish nation.

While not every Jew had the same commitment to religion or religious codes as an ultimate end, this legal system gained normative status among Jews so that even those who were not highly motivated by its ultimate goals but wanted to stay within the framework of the Jewish community felt the necessity to conform.

In Harbin, the Jews abandoned communal separatism for the advantages of modern and open society. Most of them found ways to remain within the Jewish fold even while participating as individuals in the civil societies in which they found themselves or to which they migrated. They adapted Jewish institutions to a new kind of diaspora existence.

The Great Wall of China was erected so that it may secure the nation from outside hostile aggressiveness. Today, it is just a historical reminder.

In places where it was needed, Jewish communities built walls of their own in order to protect themselves as a national and religious entity. Europe was hostile to the Jewish existence, thus, walls were needed to establish a barrier.

Harbin was a "safe-haven" to its Jews and the only wall that were erected here were those of the buildings that served both the micro and macro communities. Some of those walls stand erect until today with their great architectural achievements.

The Jews of Harbin, once flourishing and influential, should be seen as a mirror to the ability of the Jewish people as a whole to integrate, adopt, and contribute to their host community.

A comprehensive study of this unique and ancient nation of people who maintained their common historical, cultural, religion, political and social fabric, while in the diaspora, will point out their sensitive manner by which they, as a group, incorporated themselves into their host communities. Through their high degree of thoughts, creative abilities, and strong link to Jewish communities elsewhere, they contributed more to the development of the macro community in which they found refuge than all other emigrants did.

That is one of the most important assets the Jewish people brought with them to Harbin. A micro community that functions within the macro and contributes to the human, social, educational, and artistic development of their new city and its citizens.

Being entrepreneurs in their nature, they have produced through their Jewish ancient civilization famous philosophical thoughts, social, educational, cultural, artistic, and political ideologies, and personalities. Those have helped not only their own development but shaped and structured the general society in which they lived. Starting in the later part of the 19th century the Harbin Jewish community was able to participate fully in all of the city's culture and civil life.

Equipped with both newcomers'

ambition for excellence and achievement and the Jewish traditional elevation of education and learning values, many Jewish individuals soon gained prominence in the economy, social, politics and culture. Originating from a rather verbal and intellectual cultural tradition, their contribution to Harbin was especially evident in the fields of education, health and sciences, thought, economy and culture.

It manifested itself not only in Harbin's basic infrastructure, architecture, and ties to Western cultures, but in the present desire of Heilongjiang Province's leadership and the Harbin government to build a city of excellence where historical values of the past mix with those of the present, thus transform to a great future of a leading provincial Capital.

The Jewish and the Chinese people share many common values. They are both ancient people who maintained their unbroken histories for thousands of years. Both have made a valuable contribution to others and to the world as a whole.

It is only natural that the cooperation between the Chinese and the Jewish people will continue and progress. The historical contributions and links established by the Jewish community of Harbin should be a model for further studies, research, and learning.

Academic and cultural ties between Heilongjiang and Israel are being deepened. Under the leadership of both the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences' Harbin Centre for Jewish Studies and Heilongjiang University's School of Western Studies, as well as other provincial principle institutions, links of cooperation have been established with The Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel.

Many and diverse studies and activities, that can be implemented by both institutions, may provide an important window to the history of the Jewish people contribution to the Chinese experience and to Harbin's economic and cultural development.

Harbin, on the shores of Heilongjiang's

Songhua River, was the centre of one of the largest Jewish communities in China. The Jewish active presence in Heilongjiang's capital city lasted nearly a century. It is my sincere belief that Harbin should become China's leading centre of Jewish and Sino-Israeli studies, research and development.

Prof. Dan Ben-Canaan

Hon. Research Fellow - Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences
Heilongjiang University, School of Western Studies
Heilongjiang University,
Sino-Israel Research and Studies Centre – in association with The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Harbin, PR China, August 30, 2004

Letters

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

The Katzneslon Saga

By Mikhail Rinsky

Bobruisk-Tomsk-Shanghai

After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, the world did not become more tranquil, certainly not for the Jews. The civil war in America, the Russian setback in the Crimean War, its weakening during the reign of Tzar Alexander II, galvanized the Russian Jewish masses into motion. Now, with the walls of the Pale crumbling, the Jews were able to seek new havens. A part of the Katzneslon family left for the USA, but the wise grandfather Boris Nisanovich preferred to take advantage of the new resettlement privileges given to the Jews and to migrate from Bobruisk to a closer and a more familiar environment – Siberia. In those days there was no Trans-Siberian Railway. The only means of transportation was horse-drawn carriages. At night people stopped at road inns. Having arrived at Tomsk, the enterprising Boruch (Boris) Katzneslon set up a kvas (Russian national soft drink) factory. While he was busy making a living, his wife brought up the children, sending them to school, of which she was very proud.

The son, Mikhail Katzneslon, became a dentist. In 1908 he left for a two-years qualification course in the US, but soon the father called him back to Tomsk. When the World War I broke out he was mobilized, but obtained a permit to stay and work in Tomsk. In 1917 he married Rivka, a daughter of a successful trader, Moisei Sanderzon, an immigrant from Lithuania. Having received a dentist diploma in Vilnius in order to legalize his immigration to Siberia, Sanderzon did not even begin to work in his professional capacity. Instead, he became a businessman. The Sanderzons had nine children, all of them well educated. Rivka graduated from a grammar school and mastered several languages, including Hebrew and Yiddish. She was brought up as an

ardent Zionist.

In 1919 Rivka bore a son, Alexander, and, after two years, another – Daniel. The Russian revolution was at its peak and the living conditions in Russia were unbearable. The Katzneslons decided to emigrate to America via China, which was the least dangerous route to be taken. The trip had to be postponed for a year due to the unexpected death of Moisei Sanderzon. In 1924 they reached Shanghai, but by then the US government introduced a quota system, and the Katzneslons reluctantly had no choice but to remain in China.

A quarter of a century in Shanghai

In Shanghai, the Europeans lived in the so-called International Settlement and French Concession, governed by the British, French and other foreign states. The Russian emigrants led a practically destitute life in this metropolis, which already at that time had a two-million population. Having no money, language or profession, one eventually found himself at the very bottom of this merciless city. The Jewish immigrants from Russia were assisted by the two Jewish communities: an affluent Sephardi and a poorer one, Ashkenazi. A small community of Sephardic Jews (approximately 1000 strong), which settled in Shanghai in the second half of the 19th century became exceedingly wealthy by trading in jewelry and opium. They also owned property, land, banks and even (indirectly) an island in the Yangtze delta where goods were transferred from foreign ships to Chinese smugglers. They also had an important say in the Shanghai Stock Exchange, which consisted of some 40% Sephardi Jewish brokers. They established a solid communal structure, built two synagogues, a school, a well-equipped club, etc. The Ashkenazi community was mostly made up of

refugees from Russia (many of them from Siberia), Poland, Rumania, and other East European countries. They earned their scanty living as petty businessmen, unskilled laborers, waiters, tailors, and musicians. But the community kept growing. In 1930's it reached 5000 members. At first, the religious needs were taken care of in rented premises, but as time went on, a stately synagogue was built which was followed some time later by a home for the aged, a hospital and a club. In 1933, after Hitler came to power in Germany, a community of refugees from Germany was formed. Among this group there were many specialists and wealthy businessmen and industrialists.

In 1924, Mikhail Katzneslon, thanks to his knowledge of the English language and two-years' experience in America, was employed by the most prestigious American dental hospital in Shanghai as a senior dental technician. He worked there for over 18 years, till 1942, when the Pacific War hostilities increased and the Japanese authorities closed down the hospital, and Mikhail Katzneslon opened his own dental clinic.

Like most Russian emigrants, the Katzneslons were stateless for over 20 years, until the end of the World War II, when the Soviet government offered them citizenship and means to "return to the Motherland". In a way, the stateless status was advantageous to the emigrants: all the Japanese restrictions and limitations affected only citizens of the anti-Hitlerite coalition. Thanks to the well-paid profession of Mikhail, the Katzneslons were relatively well off. Alexander and Daniel studied in the prestigious Public and Thomas Hanbury School. To graduate from the school, students had to pass the Cambridge Seniors examinations, which gave them the right to enter any English university without taking entrance tests. The

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Katznelson brothers graduated from the school with honours. Rebecca, too, played an important role in the comprehensive education and cultural development of her sons: in addition to the languages taught in school, private tutors were hired to teach them Chinese and Hebrew.

The International Settlement had its own defense force – The Shanghai Volunteer Corps, supplied with arms by the British and commanded by British officers. Attached to it, there was also a Jewish Company, of which the Katznelson brothers were members. Recently, Alexander Katznelson compiled a comprehensive account on the Jewish force in Shanghai, and forwarded it to the Jewish Military Museum in London.

After having graduated from the school, Alex and Daniel entered St. John's University, operated by American missionaries. During the Pacific War, the Japanese intended to close it as an enemy owned institution, but the Chinese authorities prevented this measure, using a weighty argument that in such a case, thousands of idle students will have no choice but to go into politics. The university stayed open, and Alex and Daniel completed their studies in medicine and became full fledged MD's. Alexander began to work in a Chinese hospital, and Daniel was employed by an American missionary hospital in Wuhsi, a small town two hours away from Shanghai by train. In 1948 Alex married a Vladivostok-born New York dentist, Judith Rodomyselsky. Daniel followed suit.

Haaliya

At the end of 1948 the first consul of the newly born State of Israel arrived in Shanghai. Soon afterwards, the two young families boarded an ocean liner headed for the beleaguered country, fighting for its very existence. The ship had to sail all the way around the Cape of Good Hope, evading the Suez Canal, blocked by the Egyptians, and reached Naples after a two-months odyssey. There they changed for an Israeli ship the "Negba", which brought

them to Haifa. Almost immediately the two brothers were mobilized as army physicians. Alex was assigned to the 5th Military Hospital (now Tel Hashomer). Daniel was attached to the elite Givati Brigade then fighting on the Jerusalem front.

At the time the hospitals were in dire need of physicians, especially surgeons. Experience gained at the Chinese hospital in Shanghai stood Alex in good stead in his new qualification as an orthopedic surgeon. Despite the difficult military situation, the hospital was equipped with the latest medical apparatus and regularly supplied with medicines. From the very start, Alexander Katznelson became one of the leading orthopedic surgeons at the 5th Military Hospital, and later was appointed to head its orthopedic department.

Daniel's progress had been somewhat different: after a half a year of combat duty, he was transferred to the same 5th hospital as a pediatrician, a qualification novel for him. Within the first year of its existence, the population of Israel doubled – from 600,000 to 1,200,000 – with thousands of immigrant children in need of medical care in various areas. People lived in tents, and in wooden and tin huts in unsanitary conditions, freezing in winter, suffocating in summer. Children (especially the holocaust survivors) suffered the most. Many contracted infectious diseases. This catastrophic situation was reported to the Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, who instructed the chief army physician, Lieutenant Colonel Haim Shiba to immediately set up at the 5th Military Hospital a special children's division with a separate medical staff, equipment and facilities.

Of the four physicians assigned to this operation, only Daniel Katznelson had the experience (gained in China) of fighting epidemic diseases, and there was an urgent necessity to prevent them from spreading among the children in Israel.

It all began from the scratch. When the first children were received for

treatment, the Children's Division was situated in an abandoned British army barrack which did not even have children's beds for the little patients. They were placed across the beds for the adults – three on each bed. Once in a fortnight the Division was visited by Dr. Shimon Berman, a leading pediatrician and, as Daniel remarks, "one of the best physicians I have ever worked with." Dr. Berman instructed the Division doctors, sharing with them his experience during the mass aliya from Yemen, which he compared with the biblical Exodus from Egypt. "What I regret," he used to say, "is that we didn't have Moshe Rabeinu with us at that time."

For various reasons, three out of the four doctors working in the Children's Division were assigned elsewhere, and Daniel, the youngest Israeli doctor, had to face the crisis alone. In the meantime an experienced and dedicated contingent of nurses was formed, making things easier for the young doctor. Many of them were new immigrants, of whom Dr. Shiba coined an expression: "self-absorption".

Mikhail and Rebecca Katznelson arrived in Israel in 1953. They settled in Netanya, where Mikhail opened a private dental office. He died in 1963 at the age of 76, survived by Rebecca by 20 years. Alex's wife, Judith, worked as a pediatrician-dentist at the Asaf Harofe Hospital till her demise in 1967. She and Alex had two sons, David and Jonathan.

At the beginning, medicine was taught only in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Critical need of physicians prompted the authorities to seek help amongst the immigrant medical students, who did not have the opportunity to graduate from medical schools in the countries they came from. Groups of students were directed to hospitals where veteran doctors lectured them and supervised their first steps. The Katznelson brothers were among the new teachers. Simultaneously, Alex began to publish articles in the Israeli and foreign

medical press. He was the first Israeli orthopedic surgeon to reinstate an arm, torn off by a shell in battle, and restore its sensitivity and movement functions. During his medical career he repeated the feat nine times. He cured paralysis by transplanting muscles. He replaced bones in cases of osseous tuberculosis. He is the first orthopedic surgeon in the world to successfully treat sarcoma without amputating the affected limb, by super precise carving of the harmed muscles, bones and tissues. In 1973 at a congress in Stockholm he reported on such an operation, the first of the kind, to be followed by 18 others in the future.

Professor Alexander Katznelson retired in 2000, at the age of 81, instead of 75, as prescribed by the law. He is the author of five books and some 150 scientific articles and an honorary member of many Israeli and international medical societies, and holds prestigious awards and citations, such as the Cambridge

"Future Researches of the 21 Century" and the US "The Freedom of the World". He is an honorary citizen of Ramat Gan. Alex also has a hobby: collecting unique walking sticks.

For the past 37 years his wife and faithful comrade is Mariatza Bat Miriam, professor of genetics at the Tel Aviv University. For many years she taught at the London and US universities. Alex's elder son, David, is a well-known Israeli agronomist. The younger, Jonathan is a dentist at Hadassah Hospital and also teaches at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The life of the younger of the Katznelson brothers is closely connected with Tel Hashomer Hospital, even until today. He established the pediatric division of the hospital, and during the past four decades taught hundreds of students, who are now among the leading Israeli pediatricians. Like his elder brother, Professor Daniel Katznelson is a participant and a lecturer at many

international conferences on pediatrics and teaches at the Tel Aviv University since 1981. After having retired from the Tel Hashomer hospital in 1986, he continues to participate in the university's and the hospital's research projects until this day.

The names of Alex and Daniel Katznelson are well known amongst the immigrants from Ethiopia and Russia. Both brothers were (and still are) very active in helping the newcomers to find work, mostly in the medical and educational field. With the wave of the "Russian immigration", 15 of the Katznelson family have immigrated from Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk. Such – in short – is the saga of the brothers Alexander and Daniel Katznelson. From Tomsk, through Shanghai – to the young Jewish State of Israel, for whom they brought, and continue to bring, an inestimable benefit.

(From the Russian – E.Pratt.)

Memories of Harbin Reunion

By Monique Leibovitch *(Granddaughter of Leana Leibovitch)*

SYDNEY.- More than a year has passed since visiting China. It was awesome after 50 years to see the lifelong friendships Igud Yotzei Sin members still have with each other, even after separation from all corners of the globe. The connection between people was so warm and relating to their history that only Harbin Jews could possess. Although Harbin has changed, it was good to see them sharing their reminiscences with each other.

The Harbin University and government representatives treated us like royalty, something I don't think I will ever experience ever again; traffic was diverted to make way for our entourage, dining in extravagant ballrooms and feasting without even knowing what we were eating. There were bold banners welcoming Jews from around the world; there were even decorations and singers and dancers imported from Russia to entertain us Yiddish songs. We visited places that were new to me

but which Harbiners had seen before. I enjoyed listening to your stories and seeing your reactions as we visited schools, synagogues and parks where you had played as children. Although things in Harbin have changed a lot since you were there, I got a lot of sense of the place and an understanding of my heritage that I would not have had if I has not taken this trip.

I saw my grandmother's favorite street, Kitaisky Ulitza, which once had a Russian name, and the location of her graduation ball at the Moderne Hotel (the ballroom did not live up to her description). I never imagine that I would stroll through the places where my grandma spent her family holidays at Solnichy Gorodok, or sail through the beautiful Sungari River that she had spoken about so many times. The Jewish schools and synagogues reminded me of the presence of Jews scattered throughout the diaspora. Remnants of the Jewish past, the signs of plastered

Magen Davids peeping through layers of repainting, had survived the Chinese penchant for development – destroy and rebuild. Harbin had a nice mix between donkey-drawn carts and skyscrapers being built and Jewish monuments under restoration.

The extraordinary welcome and respectful treatment accorded us by the Chinese showed that the Harbin Jews were highly regarded. So much so that they have a faculty at the university dedicated to the study of Jews, the Heilongjian Provincial Academy of Social Sciences, and the Jewish Research Center. I feel honored to have been a part of the Harbin Jewish Reunion and heart warning to have been among friends. If a second reunion is planned I'd buy a ticket now! Much gratitude goes to the IYS staff and the Chinese scholars to organize this event. It was a pleasure to be a part of the ex-Harbiner family.

Dr. A. Kaufman, Camp Doctor

16 Years in the Soviet Union

Chapter 7, Section D

My interrogators are hardening their attitude towards me. The interrogations are getting more and more tedious. Every day they are trying to pin all kinds of absurd charges against me. They read to me the testimony of two members of the "Brith-Trumpeldor" in Harbin, reporting on "sabotage" activities carried out by this organization, which supposedly dispatched people into the Soviet Union for purposes of spying and sabotage, and at the head of all these activities stood none other but me – "The head of all the Zionists". One of these men also said that two Rabbis of Harbin took part in these anti-Soviet activities. "And do you know "I"?" The interrogator asks. "No I do not remember anybody with this name..." "But he knows you very well...he is a Zionist, he operated together with you and calls you the leader..." "I do not know him" I repeated. "Try to remember. It was you who sent him into the Soviet Union. "I" admitted to everything and is now serving a prison term...do you want to meet him?" the interrogator asked, smirking slyly.

"Willingly, but you never carry out your promises. You promised to arrange a meeting, face to face with some person who accused me of all kinds of falsehoods, maybe he did this due to ill health. Three times you promised but you never carried this out."

"Which means, you do not believe these facts?"

"How do you expect me to believe these insane charges," I protested.

My interrogators rotate amongst themselves. One day I am again interrogated by my old acquaintance, from Lubianka prison. When I entered



his room he feigned cheerfulness. "Hello, how are you? You're still alive? You are still keeping silent and still don't want to open your mouth? A pity, we know everything about the espionage activities of the Zionists against the Soviet Union, everything is wide open and clear to us, even if you do not want to admit it, we know who and what you are. Do you want me to read to you our appraisal on your personality?" I keep silent.

"Do you want? I'll read it to you."

"I have no need for this."

"No, no, it is very interesting. Listen!" say the interrogator in a voice of authority.

He began to read loudly a report of my character that someone had written back in 1933, and what was written there: "A talented spokesman and lecturer, influential among the inhabitants and governmental circles... The Russian immigrants association and their leaders are concerned about his influence and are forced to take his opinions and that of the Jewish community whose head he is, into account for many years..." Further on the report reads as follows: "A very cautious person in his political

activities...He never takes part in general meetings of the immigrants or in any political demonstrations that are carried out by the Russian immigrants and the Japanese authorities." The interrogator read every word with emphasis and it was clear that he did not read everything but only chosen parts from a document that was prepared by the Soviet secret police in Harbin. When he finished reading and looked at me, I smiled.

Well? Everything is correct, isn't it?" he asks arrogantly.

"Your informer who wrote this paper does not understand anything at all. All that he said about the pro-Japanese attitude that the Jewish community and the Zionists were supposed to have adopted are pure rubbish... the Jewish community in Harbin, or any other place for that matter, and the Zionists did not deal in political matters but only in matters concerning themselves, cultural, economical and national Jewish. Politic matters were never discussed. All the Jews living there were either Soviet citizens or Polish or Lithuanian or Stateless. The information that you possess is very meager, citizen Major".

The interrogator hands me a typed paper that was torn off some pad, folds off the top part of the paper so that I could not see what was written there and orders:

"Read!"

In the lower half that was open to me I read that the Jewish community was dealing in espionage for Japan and America. The paper was undersigned by the Deputy Minister for Internal Affairs, Markolov (Later, in 1953 he

was executed, together with other "traitors").

"Well, did you read? Do you see who wrote this?"

"Yes I see, but nevertheless this is a lie and an abhorrent libel"

"Now talk, tell me how you and your Zionist community acted in favor of the Japanese" demands the interrogator.

But I stay silent, what could I answer to a question that was asked of me for the hundredth time.

"Start talking, but tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth".

"We did not act in favor of the Japanese, neither the community nor me, and this is the whole truth"

"Did you give money to the Japanese?"

"What money? To whom?"

"Did you not pay taxes?" yells the Interrogator.

"Of course we paid...everyone pays taxes"

"What taxes did you pay?"

"Income taxes, Taxes for dwellings"

"And the money, for what purpose was it used, do you know?" yells the interrogator loudly.

"To finance their conflict against us, to prepare for war against the Soviet Union."

"How can that be? Were you not allies with the Japanese?" I answer quietly. "You even signed a pact of neutrality and non-belligerence with them."

The interrogator rose from his place and started to shout at me threateningly.

"This does not concern you... this is politics, and if it is necessary we can make a pact even with Satan himself ... and it has nothing to do with you."

"But taxes were paid by everyone, even Soviet citizens paid Land Taxes, income taxes and taxes for dwellings"

Again the interrogator started yelling: "There were no Soviet citizens in

Harbin...what kind of Soviet citizens are they who possess houses who own factories and even deal in trade? We do not recognize these Soviet citizens, they are traitors..."

"But they held Soviet passports and were listed in the Soviet Consulate..."

The interrogator cuts me off and yells again:

"They are carrion and scalpers, and are not Soviet people."

Every day without any respite I am called for interrogation. I was transferred to another cell. The walls are black, dirty. The floor is filthy and the lice are biting viciously. We were three people in the cell, however every once in a while the cellmates are changed. One day a young German was billeted in our cell, a lawyer from Dresden. He does not speak Russian and we converse in German. He was arrested in Germany and flown to Moscow. In one of my interrogations the interrogator asks:

"Who are your cellmates?"

"Two – A Russian and the other one a German."

"Who are they? Do you know their family names?"

"I don't know, I did not ask them."

"But the interrogator continues to ask questions about the German, what does he tell me, on what subject does he speak. I answered that I do not enter into conversations with him."

The interrogator continues to connect me to all kinds of crimes. He reads to me various statements given by various people Jews and non-Jews on my "criminal" Zionist activities to which I listen with amazement.

Later on, when I signed the final protocol at the end of my interrogation I was permitted to read the statements. I did not hold any grudge or enmity against any of the people, some of whom I had worked closely with in the past. They were trying to "save their skins" or anyway that's what they thought at the time. "We were not involved in this",

we know nothing about this, everything was in his hands", "He managed all the political activities and we were not in his confidence," they also said. "He established the community and all its institutions, the social kitchen and the Hospital..." "He is the head of the Jewish Community loved and respected by everyone, he was in contact with the government institutions and served the Jewish People and we knew nothing of what he did." "He" of course was me. These people were the members of the Central Committee of the community, they were frightened to death of being tortured or punished and perhaps they were forced to sign the protocols. I read the statements of my colleagues, for a moment I was saddened, then, however, I pondered in my heart and thought...may God forgive them!

Chapter 7, Section E

During one of the interrogations, when I entered the office and sat on the place that was pointed-out to me, the interrogator turned to me and asked: "Did you know Michaels or have you ever heard of him?"

"The Jewish actor, Michaels?"

"Yes... Here read, the newspapers are writing about him. He was killed in a motor accident He was a great actor. He played King Lear, he was the best in the Soviet Union". He hands me a page from "Pravda" showing a photograph of Michaels lying in a coffin and an article of appreciation of his achievements on the stage.

"Here, you see, in Moscow there exists a theater especially for Jews... only in the Soviet Union such a thing is possible. Nowhere was the question of Jewish nationality solved the way it was solved here and everything is thanks to Yosef Visarionovitch ...Did you read his book on the question of nationalities? A brilliant solution to such a complicated problem." The interrogator concluded. I kept silent all the time and did not utter a word to his last absurd sentence. At that time I did not know how Michaels

really lost his life. Later, when I was in one of the camps in Kazakhstan, I learned the real circumstances of his death.

Most of my interrogators in addition to being uncultured and complete boors do not even know how to read and write properly. I was a witness to this when I read the protocols of my interrogation that were written by them. One of the interrogators, with a quite senior rank, even asked me to correct the grammar mistakes before signing the protocols, which I did and had many corrections to do.

During the last several months I had a cellmate, a shoemaker from Moscow. A nervous person, who, it was obvious, was on the verge of total nervous collapse. When he found out that I was a doctor he told me his life story and about his ailments. During the war he was seriously wounded in the head, he was discharged from the army and returned to Moscow. As a disabled war veteran, he received a meager allotment, which was not enough to support his family. He started to look around for a job but without success even though he was a wounded war veteran. He applied to many government institutions but in every place was rebuffed with empty promises. Finally he was promised a job as a vendor in one of the stalls of the government market but at the last moment the job was given to a young girl, a party member. When he was informed about this he harshly criticized the arrangements in that department.

Someone informed about this to the MG" B and as a result the authorities started to harass his life. He was living with his wife and daughter in a one-room apartment. One day half his apartment was confiscated and given to another family. In order to sustain his family he started to work on his own as a shoemaker – a profession he had learnt as a youth – however, because he only had half the room at his disposal there was no space to house the workshop. He was very thankful to accept a proposal from an officer whom

he met by chance, and who offered him a tiny corner in his apartment. One day the officer was arrested on charges of espionage and several days later so was the shoemaker and he too was charged with cooperating with the officer in his spying activities. In his interrogations they demanded that he reveal who were the people with whom the officer met. In vain did the veteran repeatedly state that he never met the officer before nor did he ever speak to him when he worked there. In vain did he swear to his loyalty to the Soviet motherland for whom, during the war, he paid with his blood – nothing helped. Night and day he was interrogated and tortured. He returned from every interrogation in complete exhaustion and could hardly stand on his feet. He cannot sleep nights, and during the day he cannot lie on his bed, as it is removed from the cell every morning and returned only after lights-out in the evening. When he tried to lie down on my bed the guard burst into the cell and ordered me to forbid him to do that, if not they will also remove my bed from the cell. One day a doctor entered our cell and gave the veteran some sort of pills, "in order to reduce his need for sleep"- so the guard explained. After several weeks the veteran collapsed completely and by the doctor's orders was transferred to a hospital. He never returned to my cell again, it could be that he was interned in a hospital for nervous disorders where he probably ended his life.

One day I was summoned for interrogation. The interrogator's first question was:

"When did the all Jewish congresses take place?"

"We had three such congresses. The first was in 1937. The fourth was forbidden to take place by the Japanese authorities."

The interrogator gives me a sly look then asks:

"How much money have you paid the Japanese for the permit to hold the congress?"

"I do not understand the question..."

"Didn't you bribe the Japanese to let you have the congress? How much did you pay them?"

insists the interrogator.

"We did not bribe the Japanese, we received the permit without any payment."

"You are lying, you scum," shouts the interrogator. "The Japanese don't do anything without payment. Just for your pretty eyes only the Japs would not let you hold a congress...we know that you paid the Japanese military authorities 300 thousand yen for permission to hold the congress..."

"This is a lie...your source of information is not correct."

"You refuse to admit this."

"This never happened and I have nothing to confess to."

"And if I show you written proof, what will you say?"

"By all means, show me."

"In here, documents from the Japanese Military Authorities," says the interrogator, brandishing the briefcase in front of me.

"If so, show me..."

"You carrion you, you should be hanged..." concludes the interrogator. But he never showed me the documents. Two days later I was called for interrogation at seven in the morning, an unusual hour for interrogations. The guard leads me to an unfamiliar room. By the table sits my old acquaintance – the lieutenant colonel.

"Did you have breakfast?"

"Not yet."

"We'll eat now." He picked up the phone and said just one word "Serve!"

A soldier enters carrying a tray with two full breakfasts on it - for the colonel and me.

"Eat now and then you'll write," orders the interrogator. We ate. When we

finished the soldier came in and took away the dishes.

The colonel then goes to his table and brings me paper, pen and ink.

"Here you are, write! Write as much and as long as you want...till you get tired."

"About what shall I write?"

"About the story of your life, on your Zionist activities, about the Zionist Federation and its structure..."

"My life story from the day I was born?" I asked tauntingly.

"We are not interested in your childhood days and also not in your family life...write about your Zionist anti-Soviet activities..."

"And if I did not carry out such activities?"

"Write about everything, but only the truth. We know everything about your criminal activities..."

"Fine" I said, "I'll write only the truth."

I began to write. I wrote about the activities of the Jewish community, on its institutions, cultural, religious and the various charitable organizations. I wrote about the Zionist Federation, its aims and activities. I covered about thirty pages. The hour was already 12 noon. I had no more paper. I told the interrogator "I have no more paper." He gives me more. I continue writing till 5 o'clock in the afternoon. I already covered sixty pages. The interrogator did not expect such an output and told me with satisfaction: "Well, enough for today... continue tomorrow..." taking away my written papers. I was returned to my cell after working for 10 hours.

On the next day the interrogator tells me:

"What did you write there? Who needs it? Just a waste of paper!"

"I wrote only the truth, they way it was."

The interrogator tears the pages to shreds, all 60 of them, and throws them

into the wastepaper basket.

"Enough of playing the fool! The truth he is writing. Wait, wait, you will yet write the real truth with me! I will show you where the truth really is!" yells the interrogator and hands me another sheaf of papers. "Write about the structure of the Zionist Party. Whereabouts is the location of the Central Committee, what is this party's program, what are the relations between you and England and the United States..."

I started to write again. I wrote about the first Zionist congress, about the Basel program. About the Zionist Federation and its political stand, about its loyalties to the various countries in which its institutions are located, about the settlements in the Land of Israel and their cultural problems.

By writing the above, to me, it was a form of protest against the coercion and violence of the MG"B People and against their demands that I confirm in writing the "anti-revolutionary" activities of the Zionist Federation.

The interrogator takes the additional forty pages from me, studies them superficially then says: "You are making fun of us! You write nothing about the political activities of the Zionist Federation and on the missions that Weizman assigned you."

"Neither Weizman nor anyone else gave me any political missions." I reject vigorously the interrogators insinuations.

He started to yell viciously:

"And the dispatch of saboteurs into the Soviet Union, isn't that a political mission? you are a British spy and so is Weizman..." the lieutenant-colonel goes berserk and again tears my papers into shreds, throws them into the wastepaper basket, then sits down and writes something. He continues writing for one whole hour without even looking in my direction, then orders the guard to return me to my cell. 100 pages were destroyed for nothing. But I got my satisfaction. The next day I was ordered

by the interrogator to write again, this time about "Brith-Trumpeldor", its aims, its functions and activities. I sat down and wrote 10 pages. The interrogator gives these papers a casual glance then asks angrily:

"Why did you not write about Brith-Trumpeldor in Riga?"

"I never in my life was in Riga and know nothing about Brith-Trumpeldor in this city..."

"It's a lie" The interrogator goes berserk again. "You had contacts with Brith-Trumpeldor in Riga..." and tears those papers into shreds again.
(From the Hebrew by Benny Tzur.
to be continued)

Shanghai

Government Marks

60 years to the End of the Jewish Ghetto

This week, as part of its ceremonies to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of the Japanese occupation, the city government has organized a celebration to mark the end of the Jewish Ghetto in the Hongkew District. This ceremony is being done in conjunction with the Jewish Study Center at Shanghai's Social Science University, led by Professor Pan Guang.

The opening ceremony will take place, Thursday, November 10, at the Ohel Rachel Synagogue on Shanxi Bei Road. A representative delegation of the Jewish residence in Shanghai was invited to join.

We were asked to invite and encourage all Jewish residents of Shanghai to join the following seminar.

Seminar Topic: 'Jewish Refugees in Shanghai'

Date: Friday, November 11, 2005

Letter from Israel: Aliya of the East Wind

By Wendy Elliman

Jewish remnants can be found in every corner of the world. Here is a story about those whose thousand-year journey was made in China. Shi Lei's family name is Mandarin Chinese for stone, and he's thinking of choosing Evven (Hebrew for stone) as his family name in Israel. He has not yet decided what to do about his first name, Lei, which means integrity-but then it is in Shi that his identity and history are cradled.

According to a story handed down for over a thousand years among the Jews of Kaifeng, a Chinese emperor wearied of twisting his tongue around the outlandish names of his Jewish subjects and imposed on them his own family name and the names of six of his ministers. The descendants of those seven families from Song Dynasty times still bear these names: Shi, Zhao, Li, Ai, Zhang, Gao and Jin.

"I've known I'm Jewish for as long as I can remember," asserts Shi Lei (pronounced Sherr-Lay), who was born in Kaifeng 26 years ago and whose skin, hair, features and build are classically Chinese. "I heard it from my father and my grandfather since I was a child. It's part of who I am. But no, I didn't know any more than that. I didn't know Jewish history or thought, Jewish laws, customs or traditions. I'd never heard of Seder night or Yom Kippur or opened a Tanakh. I knew only that I'm a Jew." Shi Lei is one of an estimated 300 descendants of the ancient Jewish community of Kaifeng who stubbornly cling to their Jewish identity; their last rabbi died 150 years ago, Jewish knowledge has dissipated and the once close-knit group (that dates back to the 11th century) has disintegrated into isolated families. The passion

of the emotional bond, however, persists. In July 2000, when a visiting American rabbi whom Shi Lei had met only days before suggested he spend a year in Israel studying his heritage, the young man's answer was an instantaneous "Yes."

"I was leading a group of American Jews on a study tour of Jewish communities in Japan and China," says Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, chief rabbi of Tokyo for many years before retiring to Great Neck, New York. "Shi Lei, a college graduate with fluent English, had been referred to us as our Kaifeng guide. From the first evening we met, he had question after question about Judaism, Jewish history and his ancestry. I asked if he'd be willing to spend a year in Israel studying Judaism and learning Hebrew. Not only he but also his father agreed at once, tears blurring their eyes."

Shi Lei left shortly afterward-traveling 15 hours by rail from Kaifeng, on the south bank of China's Yellow River, to Beijing and from there a further 14 hours by air to Tel Aviv. "I wasn't afraid to go so far," he says. "Israel is the land of my ancestors. I was going home."

Shi Lei, who followed his one-year Jewish studies program at Bar-Ilan University with two years at the Machon Meir Yeshiva in Jerusalem and now wears a kippa, is not the only Kaifeng Jewish descendant to come home. Four years ago, Jin Guang-Yuan; his wife, Zhan Jin Ling; and their daughter, Jin Wen-Jing, made a similar journey.

"There were people helping Jews from Russia go to Israel," says Jin Guang-Yuan, 48, a former furnace foreman who now calls himself Shlomo. "They decided to look for Chinese Jews who

wanted to go home as well. They came to Kaifeng. When they asked me if I wanted to go to Israel, I said, 'Of course.' I'm Jewish. Even my Chinese papers list me as Youtai [Jew]. I'd always wanted to live in Israel. In Kaifeng, there is no Shabbat and we are not allowed to pray as Jews."

In an article in *Judaism* (Winter 2000), Irwin M. Berg explains that "It would be dangerous for the descendants to exhibit a commitment to the Jewish religion.... The Chinese government does not recognize the existence of Jews as a protected religious minority, although it welcomes the tourism their presence generates. The government would be especially vigilant to oppose a religious movement with foreign support."

The decision to leave Kaifeng was harder for Shlomo's wife, Zhan Jin Ling, 45, who is not Jewish but Han (ethnic Chinese). "Of course I knew Guang-Yuan was descended from Jews," she says. "Even before we married

I knew that. It didn't matter to me. But I hesitated when he said we should move to Israel. I agreed to go in order to keep our family together."

When the family came to Israel, Jin Wen-Jing, then 16, was enrolled at Yemin Orde, a Youth Aliyah school near Haifa. This past June she not only received a matriculation certificate to enter university but also appeared before a Haifa Jewish court, which approved her conversion to Judaism. Taking the Hebrew name Shalva (Serenity), a translation of Wen-Jing, the teen is the first descendant of the ancient Kaifeng Jewish community to return formally to Judaism.

"I didn't want to go through conversion

because I've always thought of myself as Jewish," she says in faintly accented Hebrew. "But according to halakha I had no choice. God chose the Jewish people to be His nation, and I wanted to be accepted as part of it."

Kaifeng Jewish descendants know from their family names and traditions that an unbroken Jewish line on their paternal side stretches back about a thousand years; a group of Persian Jews traveled the legendary Silk Road to the bustling metropolis of Kaifeng, capital of the ruling Song Dynasty, and what proved to be a welcome home. Brought before the emperor, the travelers offered him cotton goods. He accepted the tribute, saying, "You have come to our China. Respect and preserve the customs of your ancestors and hand them down."

And hand them down they did, but in the Chinese style, where personal status is patrilineal. With wives adopting the faith of their husbands, the men were permitted to marry outside the faith.

"The importance of ancestry...is key to Jewish survival in Kaifeng," explains Tokayer. "Unfortunately, however, there is a halakhic problem. In Jewish law, personal status is matrilineal. However clear the Jewish origins of the Kaifeng community and however strongly Kaifeng's Jewish descendants feel their Jewishness, they are not recognized as Jews under Jewish law."

The halakhic difficulty is neither insurmountable nor unprecedented, according to Michael Freund, director of Shavei Israel (Returnees to Israel), a newly founded organization that reaches out to those with Jewish ancestry who want to reclaim their Jewishness.

"Returning Jews aren't a new phenomenon," says Freund. "There have always been persecutions and forcible conversions and Jews torn away from their faith. Over the years, procedures have been developed for

those who want to return."

He cites the Marranos who arrived in 16th-century Amsterdam 150 years after the height of the Spanish Inquisition, asking to reclaim their Jewishness. "A halakhic mechanism was created to receive them," he says. "We're currently researching Jewish sources and halakhic approaches for a model to be used today for this 'seed of Israel,' which includes not only the Kaifeng Jewish descendants but also Crypto-Jews from Spain, Portugal and South America and the apparent descendants of the Lost Tribes. Our aim is that when someone of Jewish descent wants to return, there's both room for them and halakhic leniency in the conversion process."

For example, with certain communities that have moved to modern Israel whose Judaism is in doubt and a formal conversion required, the length of time mandated for learning about Judaism (usually two to three years) is much reduced prior to their appearance before a *beit din* and immersion in a *mikve*.

Shavei Israel continues the work of the veteran Amishav, an organization with similar aims that fought rabbinical suspicion when it was first founded 30 years ago by Rabbi Eliyahu Avihail in Jerusalem. It was through Amishav, then functioning out of Avihail's apartment before it moved to Jerusalem's Chief Rabbinate building, that Freund first met Shi Lei.

"I'd just finished a novel about the Kaifeng Jewish community—*Peony* by Pearl S. Buck," he says. "And suddenly there was Shi Lei, looking as if he'd stepped straight out of its pages."

That meeting led to growing Amishav involvement with the Kaifeng descendants. First that organization and now Shavei Israel are helping guide the Jews toward conversion through Israel's difficult-to-navigate bureaucracy. Avihail translated his summary of Jewish philosophy and practice into Mandarin and plans to furnish a Jewish library at

Nanjing University. He also hopes to create a college scholarship and Jewish-studies program in China for economically struggling Jewish descendants and help them come to Israel to study.

The Kaifeng community, staggering under repeated natural, military and economic catastrophes and weakened by intermarriage and acculturation, appealed to world Jewry early last century to help them survive as Jews. Overwhelmed by the refugee crisis of World War I, however, their plea went unheeded.

"Now that we have a chance to remedy the past, we must do so and do so on the terms of the people we're helping," says Freund. "Maybe the majority aren't interested in converting. Maybe all they want is knowledge about the ancestry they've honored against great odds." This, of course, is the key question. Is there a Jewish awakening, a religious spark waiting to be rekindled, or is the yearning for knowledge no more than curiosity?

Xu Xin, president of Nanjing University's School of Foreign Studies and professor of the history of Jewish culture, has no doubt. A former Cultural Revolution Red Guard who is an expert on Jewish literature and the Kaifeng Jewish community, he lists the factors he believes prove a Jewish awakening.

"First, Jewish tradition has always remained strong among the Kaifeng Jewish descendants," he says. "Second, China's new open-door policy has enabled Jews from the outside to visit them. Some have brought or sent Jewish religious articles and Chinese-language books about Judaism. Others have performed Friday night and Sabbath morning services for the Kaifeng Jewish descendants. All this has generated new Jewish interest among them. Third, the descendants now have greater opportunity to learn about Jews and Jewish history, which gives them increased reason to return to their traditions. Fourth,

an increasing number of Chinese scholars are writing about Judaism and studying the Kaifeng Jews, making the descendants more keenly aware of their past."

Finally, Xu Xin says, the descendants themselves are becoming more active and initiating contacts with other descendants inside Kaifeng and with Jews from outside.

Freund, however, sounds a note of caution. "It's easy to get swept away by the drama of the Kaifeng story," he says. "As yet there's no clear evidence of a general awakening."

A Jewish community that at its peak (under the Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644) numbered some 5,000, has dwindled to no more than a few hundred. In 1988, in the last Chinese census in which Jews were allowed to identify themselves as Jews, there were 700 to 1,000 Youtai in Kaifeng.

(Thereafter, concerned the descendants

would seek privileges accorded to recognized minorities, the Chinese government changed their official identity from Youtai Houdai, Jewish descendants, to Han.) An unofficial survey 10 years later found only 300 self-declared Youtai.

These figures, however, are not reliable. Some Jews identify themselves as Muslim to circumvent the one-child-per-family ruling (unlike the Jews, Muslims are a recognized minority); others prefer calling themselves Han rather than show commitment to Judaism. While there are no recorded incidents of anti-Semitism in China, ancient or modern, the Chinese government does not welcome religious movements that have foreign support.

Do Shi Lei and the Jin family see themselves as exceptional in their return to Judaism?

"No, there are many like us," says

Shlomo Jin. "Once they see me get Israeli citizenship, others will follow."

"It's hard for them to come to Israel and study like I did, because the Kaifeng Jewish descendants have very little money," says Shi Lei. "But the desire is there."

Shi Lei and the Jin family are optimistic about an influx of Kaifeng Jews. With his fluent Chinese and English, Shi Lei hopes to help them find a voice in the Jewish world. Shalva Jin, who speaks Chinese and Hebrew and has navigated her way through four years of Israeli high school, also sees herself helping Kaifeng's Jews settle into Israel. As far as they're concerned, their millennium in China was simply an extended stay away from the land that is their true home.

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I wish to express my profound gratitude to all my very dear good friends and acquaintances who sent me good wishes during my recent illness. Allow me to reciprocate and wish you all, from the bottom of my heart, best wishes for your good health, well-being and hope we meet again in the near future on happy occasions.

**Love, Asya Kogan
Tokyo**

Tuesday, December 28, 2005, at 04:00 p.m.

At Bet Oved Ha-Iriya

4 Pumbeditha Street, Tel Aviv

An All-Israel gathering of Former Residents of China
Scholarships will be awarded after the lighting of Hanukka candles

Legends of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng

(continued from the previous issue)

11. Resisting Conversion

Despite diligent efforts by Catholic and Protestant missionaries, not a single Kaifeng Jew is converted to Christianity.

The existence of Kaifeng Jews was no longer unknown to outsiders after the historic 1605 meeting between Ai Tien and Matteo Ricci in Peking. Ricci reported to his superiors in Macao and Rome shortly after the meeting, and the sensational news that there was a small enclave of Jews in the interior of China was widely reported in the West. There was much excitement. Christian theologians speculated that the Torah scrolls and other sacred writings of the Kaifeng Jews would be the oldest scriptural texts in existence, perhaps identical in every detail with those of the ancient Hebrews.

For years, some theologians had believed that the text of the Hebrew Bible as it had come down to them over the centuries was neither complete nor reliable. Christian polemicists had been insisting for well over a millennium that the contents of the Hebrew Bible were not fully trustworthy because the text had been tampered with.

The logic of these scholars was quite simple. To begin with, the New Testament contained several passages which purported to be quotations from the Old Testament but could not be found in it. As Christians, they were unwilling to doubt the reliability of the New Testament, so they could only conclude that the Old Testament text available to them was incomplete. Moreover, they found it utterly inconceivable that the Jewish Scriptures could have failed to foretell the coming of the Christ in very specific terms. Since the Hebrew Bible lacked any prophecies relating to this epochal event, it was self-evident that all such passages must have been excised or rewritten.

Christian theologians were convinced that the rabbis of the talmudic era, in the centuries immediately following the time of Jesus, had expunged or altered a

number of biblical verses predicting his birth and ministry. They hoped that by comparing a Torah scroll from Kaifeng with the standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament, they would be able to demonstrate that the Hebrew Bible was "corrupt".

For the Jesuit missionaries in China, the discovery of the Kaifeng community had another dimension; it was not merely of historical interest but an opportunity to broaden the scope of their activities. The Jesuits had gone to China to preach Christianity and convert as many Chinese as possible. After many years work, they had converted quite a few Chinese, but they knew how difficult a task they had undertaken. When compared with the total population of China, their converts made up a very small number. One of the major obstacles was that the Chinese lacked certain fundamental convictions that made people in the West receptive to theistic religion. Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism were not God-oriented; they did not extol the holiness of a deity or set forth a series of specific acts and moral demands that were said to be of divine origin and therefore incumbent on worshippers. Chinese philosophers were concerned with enabling the individual to become more in harmony with the essence of life as each faith conceived it. In Christian eyes, however, the Chinese seemed to be polytheistic and idolatrous. It was very difficult to make them accept Christ.

But, reasoned the Jesuits, Jews might be another matter. Thus, as soon as they learned of their presence in China, the Jesuits began contemplating the conversion of the Kaifeng Jews. They believed that it would be much easier to convert them because they shared the same creation story and belief in an omnipotent God, the same Bible (at

least in the Old Testament), and the same prophets. While earlier experiences in Europe told them that the Jews were a strong-minded people, unwilling to give up their faith, the Jews of Kaifeng, they reasoned, might be different. Kaifeng's Jews had been isolated in this far-off land for centuries and their knowledge of Judaism was weak. Their community seemed on the verge of extinction as a religious entity.

Father Ricci himself believed that the conversion of the Kaifeng Jews would not be difficult. "It appears to me," he declared, "that the Chinese Jews could ... be easily led to the recognition of the true Messiah and into conversion to Christianity".

Ricci asked the Jesuit general in Rome to assign one or two fathers versed in the Hebrew language to the task of winning over the Kaifeng Jews, and in the meantime he sent a member of his mission to Kaifeng with a letter to the rabbi and the congregational leaders. In the letter Ricci explained the origin and meaning of Christianity. He told them about the New Testament, and invited them to send people to his Peking residence to study it.

The messenger from Father Ricci was well received by Kaifeng's rabbi and communal leaders, but they were unwilling to discuss anything with him except the Hebrew language and the concept of monotheism. They had no interest in the New Testament or in Jesus, the Messiah that Christians claimed had already arrived. The rabbi and his colleagues regarded Ricci as a learned scholar and a kind man. As a friendly gesture, they told the messenger that they intended to invite him to their synagogue to teach Hebrew and conduct services, on the condition that he keep kosher and refrain from eating pork.

The mission to Kaifeng was certainly unsuccessful, but the Jesuits would not give in. Over the next few years, they continued to send priests to visit the community. When this strategy did not work, the Jesuit missionaries established a church within walking distance from the synagogue in 1628. They continued to visit the synagogue and contact individual Jews. They tried to persuade them that Christians had replaced the Israelites as God's chosen people when Jesus appeared sixteen hundred years earlier. They argued that Christianity was a new revelation, destined to supplant Judaism, which was "old". They declared that the Jewish religion was simply the forerunner of Christianity. With the appearance of Jesus, the religion of Moses had lost its whole purpose. They denied that Israel still had a covenant with God. Salvation could no longer be achieved by fulfilling the requirements of the Law of Moses, but only through faith in Jesus Christ.

By and by, some individuals indicated an attraction to these teachings. To halt this tendency, a debate between Jews and Jesuits became inevitable. We know from the historical sources that there were several debates of this kind. Whether in China or the West, such disputations always followed more or less the same pattern, and the following summary, which imagines a Jesuit priest confronting the rabbi of Kaifeng, can be regarded as a reliable outline of the usual topics.

The Jesuit maintained that man was

fundamentally sinful and needed to be "saved" through identification with Jesus, who had been sent to earth as mankind's savior. The rabbi insisted that man was born sinless and had the capacity for righteousness within himself. To overcome sin, he only had to obey God's moral and ethical laws as revealed through the Torah and the teachings of Judaism. There was no need for a mystical union with a crucified savior.

In response, the Jesuit said that Jesus was the son of God and had come to earth to die for the sins of the world. The rabbi replied that there was only one God. There could be no "God the Father" and "God the Son" as Christians claimed. It was not possible that a deity could take human form and die for the sins of the world.

The Jesuits now maintained that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, and therefore that the Messiah had come more than seventeen hundred years ago. The rabbi ridiculed this notion: "It surely cannot be that the Messiah has come. Was it not said that when the Messiah comes all suffering will end and there will be peace, only peace, on earth? But look, look about you, what do you see – nothing but poverty and bloodshed. Surely Jesus was not the Messiah. The Messiah will not come until ten thousand years from now". To the Jews, the rabbi's words sounded stronger, more reasonable, and more forceful than the Jesuit's claims, and they stood steady as a rock in their faith.

The Kaifeng Jews were displeased by the constant attempts to convert them and soon became very cautious. Visitors who came to the synagogue to discuss the Torah or carry on a dialogue in Hebrew were welcomed, but those who wanted to talk about the New Testament and Jesus were not. Such visitors were not even permitted to glimpse their copy of the Pentateuch. We know how the Kaifeng Jews responded to missionary efforts because the Jesuits themselves reported it. Following is an example:

So long as they thought that the Father was of their faith, they gave him a magnificent welcome and listened with great joy to the stories of the Old Testament patriarchs; but once they noticed the pictures in his Bible, abominable in their eyes, they understood he was a Christian of the Cross who worshipped Jesus, whom they called Isai, a name taken from the Moors, and they immediately charged about, urging the Father to leave the synagogue, which they thought had been profaned by his presence. He would have liked to discuss the Bible with them, but it was of no use. They had suddenly grown distrustful, and conversation no longer suited them.

Because of the firm stand taken by the Kaifeng Jews, and in spite of three centuries of missionary efforts, first by Catholics and later by both Catholics and Protestants, Christians failed completely to win over even one single Kaifeng Jew to the cross.



US \$ 1000

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

**Asya Kogan
Tokyo**

October 2005

Shanghai: A Modern Colossus

By Caramba

(Excerpted from the News Bulletin of the Uniao Macaense Americana)

As one who left “Zong Hai” in the early fifties, along with the hordes that headed in the direction of Hongkong – in my case via Macau – it was truly a nostalgic journey, to return home, as it were, after more than half a century. In the intervening time, I had keenly followed what was happening in the Old City, reading about it, talking to people who had visited and so on. So what I came upon was no revelation and yet, on the ground and seeing the staggering contrast first hand was something else. Mind-boggling, to say the least.

I flew into the \$2 billion International Airport built only 5 years ago in Pudong (Pootung) which as a boy I remembered as being mostly farmland with a few warehouses and several oil installations. It was the other side of the Huangpu (Whangpoo) River. The Maglev train, the fastest in the world with a top speed of 250 mph took me into the city center of Pudong in 8 minutes, a distance of 24 miles! Built by Siemens of Germany, magnets in both vehicle and track make for propulsion without contact with the track.

The taxi ride from the skyscraper-filled business district of Pudong to the hotel was mainly over elevated highways all the way to Puxi (PooWest) as the city of Shanghai is known. I had a good chance to look back at Pudong, at its two outstanding landmarks, the unmistakable TV and Observation Tower that is the Oriental Pearl and the pagoda-looking Jinmao Tower, 88 stories high with the Grand Hyatt taking up the last 20 floors. After an hour my taxi arrived at my three-star hotel overlooking Zhongsan Park which I recalled as Jessfield Park.

The next morning I could barely wait to get out and about to get a feel for the town

but not before a workman’s breakfast consisting of TseVe (compressed rice with sugar wrapped around a Yu Dior or fried sticks) and Der Chi-ang (soy bean milk with chili oil, fried bean curd). I headed for Nanjing Lu (Nanking Road). After a short subway ride on the No. 2 line, I surfaced at People’s Square with which the adjacent People’s Park used to be the Shanghai Race Course. It happened to be Labor Day, May 1. The crowds were enormous. My first stop was the Foreign YMCA next to the Park Hotel, where I had spent many happy days, swimming, playing basketball, indoor bowling and having a soda at the only soda fountain in town at that time. It was a sad sight to see it so run down. Apparently used as a hostel for Overseas Chinese these days.

The People’s Square more or less divided the extended road into two, as Bubbling Well Road is now known as Nanjing Xilu (Nanking Road West). The eastward stretch to the Bund is virtually all pedestrian-way, culminating in the Peace (Cathay) Hotel. The Bund with its neoclassical buildings was almost exactly as I remembered it... Hongkong & Shanghai Bank, Yokohama Specie Bank, Customs House, the Shanghai Club claiming then to have the longest bar in the world, the British Consulate at 33, the Bund, overlooking SuZhou (Soochow) Creek. To think these facades go back a hundred years for generations to come. They built them well in those days.

Westward from People’s Square, along what used to be Bubbling Well Road, so called because there was a 3rd century well at its end, was a continuous profile of glass-clad, glitzy buildings, offices, hotels, department stores and malls. There is apparently a fast-bulging middle class in this metropolis of some 15 million who have probably acquired the habit of overspending with the

advent of “plastic money.”

My first evening was spent in Xintiandi which means New Sky Earth, made up of restored alleyways.

I wanted to have some local food after all these years but felt I should see how the affluent youngsters spent their leisure time. Sure enough, the yuppies could be seen, couples holding hands, mingling with expats and tourists. The place had boutiques, art and craft shops and open air bric-a-brac stalls. We had a snack at a German eatery.

The second day was spent strolling in the French Concession, well known for its tree-line avenues and Tudor mansions and the home of wealthy British and Americans, Chinese revolutionaries, White Russians, especially along Huailai Lu, or Avenue Joffre, which extends from Xizang Nanlu (Boulevard de Montigny) in the east to Hongqiao (Hungjiao) in the west. Yet more shopping malls on the way... Times Square, Hongkong Plaza, and further west several upmarket furniture outlets and Ikea. I did have that Shanghai meal that evening in a fashionable restaurant in a former Chinese general’s mansion in the French Concession.

My trip took on a sentimental journey to my old haunts... St. Francis Xavier’s College in Nanzing Road in Hongkew, opposite was the Sacred Heart Church where I was baptized, but since demolished during the Cultural Revolution which rated for ten years from 1967. The school functions as such and has been visited by umpteen old boys so that there a plaque on the wall which reads St. Francis Xavier’s College, Alumni Association, HongKou, Shanghai. Embankment Building was another stop where for a time my family and I were kindly put up during the Sino-Japanese war. Sun Court Apartments was next on my list, situated in Wehaiwei Road, by Moulmein

Road, looking very shabby indeed these days. Then it was off to Shanghai No.2 Medical College, formerly Universite l'Aurore. I had graduated from this French Jesuit University, just before pushing off for Hongkong, and finally visiting St. Ignatius Cathedral in Xujiahui or Zicawei. It was restored after the Red Guards destroyed the 90-foot spire. It formed part of the Jesuit settlement which included the famous observatory of the day.

A cosmopolitan city it certainly was. The very mention of its name would conjure up images of its beauty contrasted with its bawdiness and gaudiness, conspicuous wealth and extreme destitution and rampant poverty. The city was a source of enormous riches and grand living for tycoons; names that came readily to mind – the Sassoons, Harpoons, Kadoories, Keswicks, Mollers. Then there were the White Russian émigrés who tended to flock along Avenue Road after the Russian revolution. By and large law abiding were many

Cossacks in their midst working as riding instructors or bodyguards, and their women employed as seamstresses, hairdressers, dance hostesses and what have you.

I had many Jewish friends in SFX as refugees from Nazi Germany were quartered in Hongkew. Their fathers were physicians, teachers, jewelers, merchants and even bakers. Anyone recall the Kiesling Bakery in Bubbling Well Road? It's still there but the chestnut cream cake is not quite what it used to be. They certainly knew how to enjoy themselves in the long gone days....formal tea and dinner dances like the Country Club in Bubbling Well Road, Cercle Sportif Francais in Route Cardinal Mercier which after the takeover became known as Jinjiang Club. Now only the entrance remains as a foyer for the six-star Okura Garden Hotel. There were amateur dramatics at the Lyceum Theatre, for the night birds umpteen cabarets - Ambassador, Majestic, Ciro's, and for the gamblers,

horse racing, greyhounds at the Canidrome, Hai Alai played by Basques from Spain.

Till about 1990, Shanghai appeared to be in a time warp for four decades. The place was truly decrepit. The only saving grace was the European skyline of the Bund and the art deco homes in the French Concession. This of course fascinated old Shanghai hands who came back to reminisce. But soon after all this changed with a vengeance. Beijing poured billions in massive infrastructure projects – giant bridges, elevated highways, tunnels, three subway lines, convention centers and to top it all a whole new city in Pudong.

I'm glad to see the incredible change. The old town was swallowed by the new buildings. Did I feel like coming home? The truth be known, I did not. I found no affinity for this modern colossus. Perhaps I had been away too long. Moreover there was no one to come home to.



Letter about a Review of Israel Epstein's book

Oren Rawls Opinion Editor
& European Bureau Chief
Forward

In an October 28 review of Israel Epstein's "My China Eye: Memoirs of a Jew and a Journalist," Gal Beckerman writes that "the communism arrived with the mother's milk" ("Seeing Red"). The comment may sound cute, but it hardly squares with the politics of Izzy's Bundist parents, who were dedicated Social Democrats and Yiddishists all their lives. Lasar and Sonia Epstein were important and respected leaders of the Jewish community in Tianjin,

China, until they, along with my parents, left for the United States after the Japanese invasion of 1937. Lasar was the first president of the Jewish Club Kunst in Tianjin, while Sonia always seemed to know who in the community needed help, and was frequently able to find someone who would provide the help. In New York, Lasar was an active member of the Workmen's Circle and the Jewish Labor Committee, and was particularly involved with trying to provide succor for the Jewish remnant in Europe. He also provided a weekly Yiddish radio program of news and comments on WEVD. I wasn't quite 12 when we left

Tianjin to return to the United States, but Izzy's parents and mine were close friends from the 1920s to the end of their lives. Nor was that our only familial tie: Izzy's first wife was my sister, Edith. After leaving China in 1937, I visited only once, in 2000. I was certainly impressed. Even the poorest coolies were decently dressed, and the open sewer in Tianjin had been covered over. One could even see to the bottom of the Hai He, a river that used to be brown with mud and who knows what else.
Martin Bihovsky Bates
411 Wabash Ave.
Kenmore NY, 14217-2207
716-877-7696

Center for Judaic and Inter-Religious

Studies Shandong University

The Center for Judaic and Inter-Religious Studies of Shandong University was developed in April 2003 from the Judaic Culture Study Center of Shandong University, which had been set up in January 1994. The present director is Prof. Fu Youde, who presides over the Center with the assistance of two deputy directors, Associate Prof. Jiu Jianke and Prof. Liu Jie. The Center invited Prof. Zhao Dunhua, Dean of the Department of Philosophy of Peking University, as Consultant of the Center. The Center is composed of four institutes:

The Institute of Religion, Science and Social Studies: director Prof. Jiang Sheng

The Institute of Baha'i Faith Studies: director Prof. Cai Degui

The Institute of Christianity Studies: director Prof. Liu Xinli

The Institute of Buddhist Studies: director Assoc. Prof. Chen Jian.

There are 15 full-time research members and 12 half-time ones in this Center. In 1994, having finished his studies in Britain, Prof. Fu Youde returned to Shandong University and established the Judaic Culture Study Center of Shandong University, which focuses on Judaic religion and philosophy, and on inter-religious and cultural studies. Since then, Judaic studies have taken a systematic and scientific approach. The past decade witnessed the continuous perfection and development of the Center. In 2003, it became the Center for Judaic and Inter-Religious Studies of Shandong University, which provided solid groundwork for further development in the future.

In its academic capacity, the Center put much emphasis on the introduction and cultivation

of qualified personnel. On the one hand, it engaged prominent scholars, at home or abroad, on a long-term or short-term basis, and introduced doctoral graduates from key universities. On the other hand, it provides a favorable scholastic atmosphere for its young teachers and postgraduates, who have attained considerable achievements. In the scope of academic research, a decade of effort by the Center has led to remarkable success. In addition to the emphasis on Judaic religion and philosophy, the Center managed to broaden the research field and engaged relevant professional research members in inter-religious studies concerning Christianity, Islamism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Baha'i Faith, etc.

Regarding academic communication and exchanges, the Center proposed the tenet of "High Starting Point, High Standard" and sent Fu Youde, Liu Jie, Guo Peng and Fu Yongjun successively to Britain, the U.S., Hong Kong and Taiwan, to further their studies and to keep constant and close contact with academia abroad in order to keep up with the international frontier in this field and collect a great amount of newly published literature materials. Besides its open style of academic research, the Center has also invited foreign experts to give lectures, and has hosted and attended important international and academic conferences. In the last five years, 40 foreign experts were invited to give lectures here on a long-term or a short-term basis, including the prominent philosopher of religion, Richard Swinburne, and well-known scholars such as Melville Stewart, Jonathan Magnet, etc.

Since the 1990s, the Center has accomplished a series of remarkable achievements:

The first part of the Masterpieces of Judaic Culture Series, translated and edited by Prof. Fu Youde, has been published. This series gathered the classic works of Judaic culture, providing first-hand reference materials for Judaic studies at home. The series comprise the following books: *Judaism on Trial*, *Everyman's Talmud*, *Modern Jewish Religious Movements*, *A Short History of the Jewish People*, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, and other works.

In its Program of Modern Jewish Humanistic Philosophy, one of the National Social Science Funds Programs, the Center produced *Modern Judaic Philosophy* (People's Publishing House, 1999), the first book in this field for home study. *The History of Judaic Philosophy* is another work under way in this program.

In Judaic culture studies, the book *Biography of Jewish Personalities: Thinkers*, edited by Prof. Fu Youde, was published in 2002. It introduced and appraised the important Jewish philosophers and thinkers during every stage of its history with concise language and profound insights.

Papers published in formal journals are: "Maimonides on Prophecy: Synthesis and Reconciliation" (Britain, 1994), "Judaism and Confucianism: A General Comparison" (Israel, 2000), "Revelation and Prophet: Comparative Studies of Judaism and Confucianism" (Hong Kong, 2002), "Soul and Body: The Comparative Study of a Problem in Religious Philosophy" (1999), "On the Jewish Phenomenon" (1998), "Jewish People: A Nation Good at



Portrait of Misha Kogan by
L. Smushkovich

**In loving memory of
Misha Kogan
US\$ 20.000**

was donated to the Social
Aid Fund established
by his wife
Asya Kogan
(Tokyo)

September 2005

**In loving memory of
Misha Kogan
US\$ 20.000**

was donated to the
Scholarship
Fund established by his
wife

Asya Kogan
(Tokyo)

October 2005

Seeking Differences" (Israel, 2002), "The Comparison of the Concept of Messiah in Judaism and Christianity" (1997), "Christianity and Judaism: Dialogue, Problem and Prospect" (2000), etc.

In July 1999, the National Symposium of Western Religion and Philosophy was held in Weihai, Shandong province, at which the following articles were presented: "On Judaic Philosophy and Its Fundamental Characteristics" (by Fu Youde), "Ethic Unitarianism and Ethic Testification of One God – the Modern Significance of Leo Baeck's Liberal Theology" (by Fu Yongjun), "Religion: From the Perspective of Philosophical Anthropology – on Martin Buber's Religious Thought" (by Liu Jie), etc.

In addition, young teachers and graduate students also did some fruitful work, among which are Guo Peng's thesis on Maimonides, DaiYanfang's thesis on Philo, etc.

In other aspects of inter-religious studies, the Center has brought out some substantial works.

Books: Studies of Contemporary Islamic Arabic Philosophy, Studies of Contemporary Baha'i Faith, Modern Islamic Tide and Movement, Chinese Taoist Science and Technology History, Deng Xiaoping Theory and Studies on Contemporary Religious Issues, Christianity and Western

Culture, Christianity and the German Nation, etc.

Articles: "Islamic Philosophy in the Arab World", "Millenium Communion of Oriental and Occidental Cultures", "Baha'i Faith", "What is Judaism?", "Terrorism and Religious Issues", "Self-Annotation of Judaism", "The Rise of Primitive Taoism and the Social Order of the Han Dynasty", "Early Religious Taoism and the Re-understanding of the History of the Han Dynasty through the Three Kingdoms", "Schools of Primitive Taoism in the Han Dynasty", "Buddhist Ethics: A New Perspective of Ethics", "On the Educational Thought in Buddhism", etc.

The Center set up a journal Judaic Studies in 2002. Its content ranges from Judaic religion and philosophy, history and culture, ethics and law, literature and art, ideology and politics, folklore and customs, relationship between Judaism and Christianity, and relationship between other religions and cultures.

In the next few years, the main activities of the Center for Judaic an Inter-Religious Studies of Shandong University are as follows:

1. Continue the translation and publication of the Masterpieces of Judaic Culture Series, increasing the number of volumes from ten to twenty.

2. Hold an academic symposium annually.

3. Finish the first book on Judaic history (two volumes) and An Introduction to Judaism.

4. Build a national information center of Judaic culture studies.

5. Improve the quality of Judaic Studies.

Professor Youde Fu is Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Institute for Jewish Culture of Shandong University, China. PhD, Beijing University; Summer School at Hebrew University; Visiting Scholar at Leo Baeck College, London; Postgraduate year, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies; BA, Shandong University.

Professor Fu teaches Introduction to Judaism, History of Jewish Philosophy, Comparative Studies in Judaism, and Confucianism. He has organized a series of translations including the Guide for the Perplexed; Modern Jewish Religious Movements, Everyman's Talmud; and Judaism as a Civilization. He published Modern Jewish Philosophy in Chinese and twenty articles on Judaism and Jewish philosophy in China and abroad. Currently, he is working on a history of Jewish philosophy and an introduction to Judaism.

Chinese Writer Lectures in Jerusalem

(On September 8, 1929 the Jewish magazine "Yevreiskaya Jizn" in Harbin published an article on a Chinese writer Shing Chang who visited Palestine and lectured in Jerusalem, expressing his admiration of the Jewish pioneers' work and the Zionist effort in rebuilding their state on the soil of the ancient homeland of the Jewish people. Now, in the perspective of seven decades, this lecture acquires an historical value and a new significance for the contemporary Israelis).

The Resurrection of the Orient

The Chinese and the Europeans – the Jews and the Arabs

(Excerpts from the lecture of the writer Shing Chang)

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is somewhat difficult for me to speak in the Holy City about the Chosen People. The issue I am about to speak about is very great and if I exaggerate or belittle it in my remarks, I will hardly be worthy of being called a Chinese. Furthermore, I am still too young to absorb the full meaning of the issue. I therefore hope that you will not judge me too harshly.

The resurrection of the Orient! But don't we have more than one Orient? And more than one Occident? We differentiate between the Near East and the Middle East and the Far East. They are entirely different one from another, both in their fall and in their resurrection, because each has its own way of life. The religious (or metaphysical) way of life still dominates in the Near East. Japan is dominated by militarism and science, but there is no spiritual resurrection in Japan. One can witness spiritual

resurrection only in Palestine, China, and, perhaps, Turkey.

However, even here in the Near East there are extreme differences in the way of life. I came here via Egypt. What a contrast! Here, in the Zionist Palestine I found the West within the East, with Tel Aviv as its center. I arrived here before a couple of weeks and I have no right to judge everything. But by the little that I managed to see during this time (mostly in the kibbutzim), I was simply astounded! When I arrived at a kibbutz, I asked myself: "Are you sure you are in Palestine and not in Russia?" But soon enough I understood the difference: there, in Russia, people are forced by the government or the party to make this fantastic social experiment, while here it is made effortlessly by the free will of the people living in the kibbutz.

The Orient is still asleep. It does not think in the terms of exact measurements of time and space. If we delve into the Western culture, we will see that it is based on the precision measurement of space and time. This factor was known in China 4,700 years ago. The Chinese divided the time into hours. But this became obsolete. In the West people learned to measure time not by hours, but by the velocity of ethereal waves.

If the Orient wants to occupy a place in the world's economy, it has to begin to be aware of the concept of precision in time and space. In the countries governed by religion and metaphysics there is no awareness of such concepts. That is why there is no balance and no stability in those countries.

The West knows only two states of

mind: that of "religiosity" and that of "anti religiosity". In China things are different. Quite often I am asked: "What is your religion?" or "What is the Chinese religion?" It is difficult for me to answer this question. The concept "religion" does not exist in China. In China there is no religion or religions as such. There are *teachings* or *ways*, like the teaching of Buddha or Confucius, or Lao-tze (Daoism, *Dao being "Way" for Chinese*). In addition to the "religious" or "metaphysical" nations, there are "pragmatic" nations. But there are also 'nations of morality'. China is one of them. Foreigners living in China are unable to understand Chinese traits. They cannot understand that the Chinese are like a tree being strangled by the weeds tightly surrounding it. Chinese youth try to get out of this deadly clinch.

Here in Palestine one can also witness the resurrection of the Jewish spirit. Because without spiritual resurrection the people will remain a lifeless body. It was already in the Biblical times that the Jewish people exhibited their economically centered way of life. We see that the Pentateuch dealt in measurements and computations. At first I could not understand the book of "Numbers", but when I read it the second time, I found in it many valuable things: numbers and quantities, as if the book hints about the Jewish passion for economy.

The destiny of the Jewish and the Chinese people has clearly similar milestones. You, the Jews suffered bitterly from the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Christians. Now you have returned to your homeland. We, the Chinese, too, suffered for ages from

Presentation by Liora

daughter of Eliahu Lankin at the dedication ceremony of the street in Jerusalem, named after her father

There are stories heard in childhood that are remembered for the rest of one's life. When I was a child no one told me the heroic stories of the Betar Work Batalions in Zichron Yaakov, nor about the illegal Aliya ship "Af Al Pi" ("Despite all"), not even about the fabulous escape from the British concentration camp in Eritrea. I read about them in books much later. After all, when I was born, they were already history. But there was a story (a very short one) which I asked to be told again and again, and which now I want to relate to you. It is about a small apartment in Jerusalem's Rehavia quarter where Lazar and Rivka Halperin once lived.

Here it is: a man by the name of Haim Beinhardt searched for an apartment, or, to be more precise, for a room (nobody rented a whole flat in those days) for the newly arrived Betarim from China. He saw an advertisement in a paper: "A room in a family apartment in Rehavia for rent -- **for three**". It was rented by **four**: Mosia Michailovsky, Misha Abugov, Grisha Vernikov and my father, Iliusha Lankin. After a few months the owners of the flat notified the tenants

that their son, Zeevik, was to return from a kibbutz to live in Jerusalem, and that they would have to vacate the room. The reply was: "We shall think the matter over and will let you know of our decision by to-morrow." The next day they told the Halperins: "We are ready to accept Zeevik in our room, but on one condition: Iska Nadel will move in, too." So now they lived, happy and cheerful, all six of them, in a room for three: Iska, Moska, Mishka, Grishka, Iliushka and Zeevik. Moska was known as an "aristocrat from Tientsin" because of his prize possession: a suit, which passed from Moska to Mishka, from Mishka to Grishka, from Grishka to Iliushka – whenever one of them had an important appointment. However, what was much more important than the suit, Moska was also the owner of a pyjama. In the mornings, when Lazar and Rivka had their breakfast at a small table in the kitchen, Moska in his pyjama went to the bathroom to wash and shave. Then the pyjama was passed to Iska, and so on. One morning Lazar observed to Rivka: "Very strange. These Chinese seem to have the same taste for

pyjamas".

This story, with a few corrections, I heard again last week, this time from Iska Nadel. And I asked myself, what makes it so special, so unforgettable? I think I know the answer: it is friendship, modesty, unselfishness. The people, who will live in the beautiful houses on Eliahu Lankin Street, perhaps will not believe that the same Eliahu Lankin lived in one room with five other boys, -- and was happy. Today we need a room for each child and a bathroom for each room. Today we are no longer as kind and thoughtful as we were in those far away days. But those who gathered here today to inaugurate Eliahu Lankin Street, will understand me, and this is why I am proud that there will be a street in Jerusalem (which meets Betar Street – what a happy choice!) that will preserve – be it just a little – the aroma of the small apartment in Rehavia, with its warmth, and kindness and love for all which is pure and beautiful, which so well characterizes my father, Eliahu Lankin.

(From the Russian: *Emmanuel Pratt*)

From page 24

foreign domination, but now we are on the way to liberation. Similarly, a freezing winter gives birth to a blossoming spring. There is similarity even in the way to the resurrection of the two people – yours and mine: I saw in the kibbutzim hundreds of young men and women who sacrificed comfortable living for the hardships of a factory worker or a peasant. The same thing happens in China: since the revolutionary spirit triumphed, a youth movement emerged and called on Chinese youth to go and join the people in the distant villages.

It is true, that in this land you are faced with a complicated problem of

sharing it with another people who lived here for many centuries: the Arabs. A bitter enmity developed between the two peoples, but it seems to me that it is not the Arab peasant or an Arab worker who hates you, but the Arab politicians and functionaries who rule the Arab masses. The Arabs and the Jews are children of one father and only the difference in the standard of their development separates them. You look at them with European eyes, while they look at you with Oriental eyes.

Give and take! You are capable of giving them the thing they vitally

need – culture. In this struggle the conqueror suffers no less than the conquered. There is no solution to the conflict without reaching symmetry and balance, which are based on the teachings of Moses and Confucius.

(Editorial note: In his lecture, Shing Zhang mentions two teachings: that of Moses and that of the ancient Chinese sages. He does not mention the third teaching, that of Mohammad, which calls for a total and perpetual war against "the infidels" (i. e. Jews and Christians) until the ultimate victory of Islam to become the sole master of the world. – Emmanuel Pratt)

Nora Krouk

by Andrew Jakubowicz

Dr Andrew Jakubowicz is professor of sociology and coordinator of international Development at University of Technology, Sydney.

(Text of a speech given at the Sydney Jewish Museum on Sunday 29 May 2005.)

Nora Krouk came into my life about five years ago, when she and Yefim agreed to participate in the website 'The Menorah of fang Bang Lu,' a project associated with the Sydney Jewish Museum. There had been an earlier, more peripheral contact when Yefim operated a bakery in Dairen Lu, near where my parents lived in the shanghai Hongkew restricted area in 1944, and from which they bought their daily bread.

The cover of the book of poetry *Skin for Comfort* shows Nora and Yefim framed by a Chinese arch at a pleasure lake a few hours from shanghai. The photo dates from about 1946, half-way through Nora's nearly twenty years in shanghai, an interlude between harbin in Manchuria, and Hong Kong, and then twenty years further on- Sydney. Now it is nearly thirty years since she arrived in Sydney, and the poems in this book are like her favourite ikebana, blooms carefully selected and placed, one against the other, their colour and tone and shape and silhouettes marching in a hidden order that only she can know, but which we slowly begin to discern.

When Nora was born in Manchuria the Russian revolution was well under way and the civil war raged, and the Qing dynasty was in disarray as the Chinese revolution built its strength. All the passions that would inflame the world for that century and beyond were bubbling away, starting to throw off wisps of corrosive steam into the old regimes.

The 1930s Harbin of her childhood had thousands of Jews and Russians, refugees, fascists, communist, wheelers and sealers, and merchants. Growing

up, Nora experienced the extraordinary tragedies of the time- the effects of Civil War after the Russian revolution, the Sovietisation of the railroad that is Harbin's lifeblood, and then in 1932, the Japanese takeover. Her family stayed in Harbin until 1939, when she left for shanghai. Her poetic passions were already ablaze, and she began to read her work at the Shanghai Soviet Club, a centre for Russian creativity and political life, and a haven later in the war from the Japanese who controlled the city after 1941.

Nora's world was full of politics- initially a leftist celebration that evolved as reality crept in. With the end of World War 2, the realization of both Nazi and Stalinist tyrannies struck home, and her young sensibilities hardened as she worked through her raging emotions and the demolition of fantasy.

In Nora married Yefim, whose own family tragedies Nora recounts, and together the couple strode the shanghai stage. They became active in the shanghai Jewish Club, also a center for Russian exiles, where they played bridge and Yefim dominated the chess scene. Indeed they were trapped in China until 1957, when it is claimed Yefim had successfully taught Chinese chess players to outwit Russian masters.

The revelations about Stalin confirmed Nora's horror of totalitarianism, while she worked into her poetry her sadness at those horrors and her hopes for a reborn freedom, touched always by a healthy cynicism. In Hong Kong she began to write in English and transfer the Russian soul into the language of Shakespeare.

In Australia, Nora's work took on a new sense of openness. This current book of poetry, *Skin for Comfort*, written over twenty years, draws together the threads of her life, divided not too neatly into six segments, each pointing to a powerful node of her personal compass. I will talk

of three of them here.

The Plot Fails systematically addresses the failure of the Russian Revolution, and its sinister legacies. It also weaves the story of the Jewish people, a recurrent theme, into the wider world history, and does so in subtle ways that point to resonances in the present from long ago events. Consider the Gulf plays on the two meanings of the noun- a what was- had the Axis won the second war. But the poem ends with an inflection, drawing the link between the Baltic states under Hitler and Stalin, and Kuwait in the Gulf of 1991, suggesting that now totalitarianism must not be tolerated in the name of 'peace at any price'. For that price would be what might have been had Axis not been resisted.

You cannot grieve moves to Israel and the carnage of mutually assured destruction, feeling grief for the Jewish sons and Nora's own lost son, and the conversation with the editor at the *Far Eastern Review* who declaims that we cannot grieve for everything that hurts in the world- Nora wants, however, to pray for them all, those 'ghosts of dark places.'

Her concluding poems are joined together as *Memoir*. They are about family- hers and Yefim's, the stories interwoven- her father's amours, and his father's execution, two pathways that chance decided would begin close together and then spread apart until they wandered in separate universes, one of freedom and delight, the other more terrible than anything that can be written. The memoir ends with fragments of childhood by the Sungari River and the strange world of Russia in a Chinese landscape.

We cannot do better than to let the final word or phrase be spoken by her Polish father (Nora chose to be Russian... as a Pole I cannot fully comprehend this choice!) 'History pulls no punches.' Nor indeed does Nora.

Beijing TV Makes a Film about Harbiners in Moshav Amikam



At the New Year Celebration at Beit-Ponve



In the hall of "Beit-Ponve"



Bobby Miller and his wife



Student Shi Levi from China and Galia Katz



(Left to right): Galia Zundalevich and Eva Albatovsky (nee Golenpolsky)



Bob Shlifer and Natasha Ritov



(Left to right): Teddy Piastunovich, Shosh and Benny Tzur



(Left to right): Zhenia Ferber, Tina Smushkovich, Alia Rekhes and Gena Ferber

Igud Yotzei Sin

By Maya Bass

Baltimore

In August 1945 the victorious Red Army entered the city of Harbin in China. A great victory over the Nazi Germany was followed by a lightning defeat of the Japanese Quantung Army leading to an unconditional surrender of Japan a month later. The Jewish community of Harbin was exuberant over the victory. Jews were respected in the city. They knew that they also had made their contribution, within their powers, to this triumph. Throughout the war, each member of the Jewish community contributed one day's salary once a week for the needs of the Red Army.

Now, a regiment of the Red Army is in Harbin! Joy in the hearts and tears in the eyes. At last! The regiment commander invited the elite of the Jewish community to a banquet. In the evening people dressed in their best clothes and came to take part in the celebration. They seemed to be expected.

But what is going on? Instead of the banquet hall they are being taken to the basement!

All of them were arrested as "Japanese spies", sent to the USSR and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Some of them came home after 10 or 17 years. Some never came back.

Abram Kaufman came back after 16 years. I read this terrible and at the same time quite usual story in the Bulletin of Igud Yotzei Sin published in Israel by Abram Yossifovich's son Theodor. Kaufman's memories under the title "Pages from My Life" were published by installments.

In June, 2004, issue 380 of "Igud Yotzei Sin" (Immigrants from China Association) was published. This

issue celebrated the 50 years of the editorial board's work in Israel. The Bulletin was filled with greetings from all over the world.

Let me quote two of the messages:

"I congratulate everybody whose devotion to the magazine helped to turn it into an outstanding cultural phenomenon. It has become an important connecting link for thousands of former Chinese residents who have been scattered all over the world. Lilly Frank, honorary representative of ICA in Montreal".

"Recollections of eye-witnesses or participants of some events are of major interest for a historian. Academician Georgy Melihov".

In the past years a number of new periodicals were started in Israel, however only few managed to attract readers' attention, hold their ground and survive. "Igud Yotzei Sin" survived. The Bulletin unobtrusively asserts the values and importance of Jewish solidarity. The declaration of the main purpose of the organ is placed on the cover: "The aim of the Association is to organize immigrants from the Far East for mutual help and cooperation".

Jews who left China found themselves in different countries. Some went to Israel, others settled in Australia, Germany, Japan, Russia, etc. However, all of them were grateful to China where there was no anti-Semitism and where the attitude towards Jews was calm and friendly. According to ancient legends, the first Jews arrived in the Celestial Empire (as China was called then) in the 11th century, during the time of the Sung Dynasty (960-1279).

The Jews fled their cities in the

Middle East because of bloodthirsty Crusaders who killed everybody except those who agreed to convert to Christianity. Most of the Jews refused to betray their faith. From merchants who traveled in many countries they learned about the Great Silk Way leading to China where there was no anti-Semitism. At that time China was famous worldwide for its silks, hence the name of the Great Silk Way.

The first caravan of Jewish refugees set out on its way to China. It was a long and painful trip. For months upon months camels carried families with children, old people, possessions and carefully guarded Torah scrolls. Some of the weak and old did not live through this journey.

Upon arrival in China the Jews sent seven envoys to the emperor to seek permission to live in the country. As a gift to the emperor the applicants brought multi-colored cotton cloths that were unknown in China at that time. The emperor heard out the envoys with interest and gave his permission to the Jews to live and work in his country and keep their customs and traditions, on condition that they obey the Chinese laws. The emperor found it hard to pronounce and remember Jewish names, so the seven envoys were given Chinese names: Dziao, Lee, Dzian, Gao, Tzin, Shi and Tyan. Later Jews from Iraq and India and other countries joined the Jews from the Middle East. In time they were totally assimilated. Nevertheless they kept the memory of their Jewish roots. As it turned out, even today many Chinese of Jewish origin cherish the memory of their ancestry. Some of them study at yeshivas in Israel. Several girls

even passed examination in Hebrew and gained the right to convert to Judaism.

“Igud Yotzei Sin” has fulfilled the task it set for itself: it has united the readers. Readers living abroad have become faithful subscribers and frequent guests of Israel. Israelis of Chinese origin meet regularly and always celebrate Jewish holidays together.

“Igud Yotzei Sin” (IYS) is the first Russian-language periodical in Israel. It remained the only such periodical for 15 years, until the first big wave of immigration from the USSR.

In the past years (the first issue of IYS came out of press in May 1954) subjects covered in the bulletin changed. Changes also occurred in the circle of contributing writers. The bulletin, which was designed as an information sheet, with time became a literary and historical magazine. Its appearance also underwent changes. Now “Igud Yotzei Sin” is a large-size magazine with a multicolored cover, readable type on fine paper and many illustrations.

In response to wishes of the ever-increasing number of subscribers, the magazine started publication in three languages: Russian, English and Hebrew, with a supplement in English for Chinese readers. Each issue of the magazine demonstrates friendly concern for all aspects of life of its readers. The magazine always leaves space for respectful and compassionate notes about good works and honest labor of the departed. Other pages at the end of the magazines (the magazine contains up to 160 pages) are used to publish congratulations on festal family occasions: birthdays, wedding anniversaries, births of grandchildren, etc. Beside topical articles, new literary works in verse and prose and translations from Chinese, “Igud Yotzei Sin” publishes memories of first immigrants from Russia who infused new life into Jewish communities of Harbin, Shanghai and other Chinese

cities in the 20th century.

In the 1920s and the 1930s, Jews of Harbin, though only 3 % of the city's population, played a significant role in its economic, political and cultural life. The Jews built a synagogue, libraries, a hospital and a dining hall (not for Jews alone). A magnificent building was erected to house the Jewish gymnasium. And to this day the Jewish gymnasium is one of the best and most beautiful educational institutions.

A. I. Kaufman, the father of the present publisher of the Igud Yotzei Sin bulletin, founded one of the most popular newspapers - “The Jewish Life”, which was published in Harbin for 25 years. Since 1912, Abram Yossifovich Kaufman was one of the leaders of the Jewish community of Harbin. Kaufman was a young doctor who received his medical degree in Bern. He left Russia fleeing pogroms. He arrived in Harbin with his wife who also was a medical doctor. Harbin was a new city on the Chinese East Railway, which had been under construction since 1898. The Chinese authorities treated him with respect as an honorable representative of the community. The Japanese who later occupied a part of China also treated him with respect despite the fact that the Jewish community and “The Jewish Life” spread anti-Nazi propaganda during WWII.

Abram Kaufman's son Theodor carries on his father's lifework. The magazine is read in 24 countries. 100-150 agents distribute “Igud Yotzei Sin” in different countries of the world. The magazine, like the shofar, rallies and unites people from the right and from the left, those who are “pro” and those who are “contra” – they are all its readers, they all have a common goal: to provide a decent life for their children and for themselves. Let us not forget that there are only 13 million Jews in the world, and strife between them makes their enemies rejoice.

The editorial board headed by

Theodor Kaufman does not limit itself to publishing activity. It is engaged in diverse community work which deserves to be described in many articles. Thanks to subscribers' donations, that is, to their solidarity referred to above, “Igud Yotzei Sin” is able to render financial help to sick and old-aged members of the community, grant scholarships to over 100 students of higher education establishments- grandchildren and great-grandchildren of immigrants from China. “Igud Yotzei Sin” also sends gifts to young soldiers who are connected with the Association.

Concern for young people and financial help extended by the editorial board attracts new young readers for whom “Igud Yotzei Sin” is becoming a thing of interest and a necessity.

Jews from China and their Association played a certain role in development of Israel-Chinese friendship. The two countries exchange delegations on a regular basis. New chairs of Jewish studies were opened in four Chinese universities. A new field of historical research was opened in Harbin: “The history and culture of the Jews of Harbin”. A scientific research center was founded in Harbin specifically for this purpose. 25 people are currently employed by the center.

“Igud Yotzei Sin” regularly informs its readers of sessions, seminars, and conferences held in Israel and China and dedicated to Jewish contribution to Chinese culture. The latest such seminar took place between August 20 and September 2, 2004. Participants of these scientific forums represent a number of countries: Canada, Poland, the USA Australia, England and others. I am grateful to all contributing writers whose articles and essays helped me to acquaint new readers with our Bulletin.

This article was published in newspaper “Nash Golos” distributed in 10 states of the USA., issue 88, August 1-15, 2005.

The New Israel's Messenger



Vol. VIII No. 2

IYS Sephardi Division

Editor: Sasson Jacoby

Ten years ago, on August 20, 1995, just two years before the Sephardi Division of the Igud Yotzei Sin was formed, a meeting of members of the former Sephardi Jewish Community of Shanghai was held for the first time at the home of Flori Cohen in Givatayim. It was the forerunner of other such meetings held rather sporadically. However, this 30th issue of our publication, we are pleased to note, is dedicated to the closing of a gap with an enjoyable reunion during the Succot festival. Old friends and acquaintances met at the succa of the Benjamin Shamash Synagogue in Tel Aviv.



I wish to emphasize that the idea of such a reunion was first suggested and wholeheartedly supported by our chairman, Teddy Kaufman, who pointed out that a previous such meeting some years ago was held at that synagogue. Invitations were sent out and those who attended were not disappointed by the program set out by the organizers. This was ably backed by the gabbai of the synagogue, Abba Toeg, who not only acted as a master of ceremony but even wowed the audience with his rendition of the songs in the style of the Baghdadi liturgy.

We have always stressed that an important part of our work is to record for posterity our way of life in a once vibrant Jewish community in Shanghai; this event perhaps in a way, was nostalgic, but nostalgia is an important element in our efforts to be the trustees of posterity. In any case, the meeting brought us back full of memories and being held in a synagogue gave a genuine impression of our Baghdadi tradition.

A speaker at the event was Mordechai Ben-Porat, director of the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center and former Knesset member and government minister who gave new information of the museum's collection and documentation of the Jewish communities of the Far East; good to know we are not alone in dedicating such effort in our work. Another was Matty Nissim, who came with his wife Jackie from California. Many thanks for

the generous contributions received through him from the Blackman Foundation in California. He is also undoubtedly the most sympathetic reader of The New Israel's Messenger and is most concerned about the future of our publication.

At the meeting, Rachel Lev, the museum designer who is in charge of the Ohel Rachel Synagogue's reconstruction project, displayed some of the computerized plans of her work, which as it turned out, was incredibly difficult, pursuing her work according to the original architectural document.

She is preparing a booklet on the Ohel Rachel soon to be published and distributed among our members.

Rachel Lev displays a drawing of the synagogue's interior, aided by Joe Arzooni, himself an architect



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Left to right: Teddy Kaufman, Matty Nissim and Sas Jacoby



Estelle Hillaly with Matty Nissim



Mordechai Ben -Porat explains new plans of the Babylonian Center



Yosef Yaacov pays attention to a speech



Granddaughters (left to right) Inbar, Gal and Hagar Jacoby



Abba Toeg delivers one of his songs



Tora scrolls of the Benjamin Shamash Synagogue



Rebecca Toueg speaks



Left to right: Matty Nissim, Yosef Yaacov and Jack Guri



Esther Abraham(left)and Hannah Jacoby



Left to right: Hannah and Sas Jacoby and Rasha Kaufman



Rasha Kaufman and Ronnie Veinerman in a thoughtful mood

Our Succot Celebration

After a long break in our social activities, we held a Succot celebration during the festival week at an Iraqi synagogue in North Tel Aviv which has been for many years under the direction of Joe (Aba) Toeg. This is the synagogue where his father, I.A. Toeg had always prayed and where he had deposited the two Torah scrolls named after his father and brother that had originally stood in the ark of Ohel Rachel Synagogue in Shanghai. The prayers in this synagogue are conducted according to the pure Baghdadian style familiar to those of our community who once attend our Shanghai synagogues – the Beth Aharon and the Ohel Rachel.

The event was attended by about 35 participants and was held in the synagogue succah. Our guests of honor was Matty and Jackie Nissim who had come especially from San Francisco to join our celebration. Teddy Kaufman, President of Igud Yotzei Sin, came with his wife Rasha and Vice President, Roni Veinerman. Also attending were Mordechai Ben Porat, Chairman of the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center who had arrived directly from the airport after landing in Israel from a trip abroad. His assistant, Iudit, who also attended the gathering, is in charge of preparing an exhibition of the Far East Baghdadian communities that will open some time next year. The architect Rachel Lev came with her two assistants, bringing the proposed booklet and architectural plans for the restoration of the Ohel Rachel Synagogue in Shanghai.

Members of the Sephardi Division who attended the event included the following:

Jack Guri and his wife Dvora
Yosef Yaakov (Joe Jacob)
Sasson Jacoby and his wife Hannah,
Yehezkel Jacoby with his wife and three lovely daughters.

Aba (Joe) Toeg
Rebecca Toueg
Flori Cohen (nee Isaac) with her friend, Moshe Kashi
Estelle Hillaly
Liza Benjamin
Sylvia Lief (nee Benjamin)
Joe Arzooni (son of the late Isaac Arzooni) and his wife Gloria Arzooni
Shelley Levy (nee Jacob)
Esther Abraham
John Hardoon

Some members of the Benjamin Shamash synagogue also participated.

The Chairman, Jack Guri, welcomed everyone and introduced Matty Nissim and his wife Jacky. Teddy

Kaufman was called upon to say a few words about Igud Yotzei Sin and the participation of the Sephardi Division in its activities. Mordechai Ben Porat was invited to speak about the Babylonian Center and its many plans and projects. Matty Nissim also spoke about his Sephardi community in San Francisco.

Rebecca Toueg then spoke about the contributions sent by Matty Nissim for the ongoing research and publication activities of the Sephardi Division, and also of the contribution made by Seth Kaplan and Rose Horowitz (nee Jacob) to the Ohel Rachel restoration project. She then introduced the architect, Rachel Lev, who gave a comprehensive report of her work on the reconstruction project for the Ohel Rachel Synagogue and the booklet that will soon be published and distributed to our members.

Everyone sat together at a long table in the succah behind the synagogue and enjoyed the Iraqi type food served. Aba Toeg, the synagogue hazan and gabbai led the singing of the well-known Baghdadian songs and festival hymns for Succot, Simhat Torah and other occasions, ending with a rendition of the well-loved Aleph-bet-gimel-dalet that had to be recited at great speed. He also spoke about Hoshana Rabba which was to begin that evening, when the congregation stayed up all night to read extracts from the Bible, Mishna and Talmud and to recite prayers. He then invited us into the synagogue to see the Torah scrolls and to go upstairs to the larger synagogue, which is used during the High Holidays.

The atmosphere was very warm and enjoyable, and all the participants were happy to have made the effort to attend. Many more had been invited but were unable to come. We hope that at the next social event, which will probably be held at the Babylonian Center, will attract more of our members to see their planned exhibition.



Rebecca Toueg poses with Matty Nissim, Teddy and Rasha Kaufman



From Prague to the Far East

By Joseph Schulhof as told to Lewish Weiner

(continued from the previous issue)

Shanghai

At the pier in Shanghai we were met by a friend from Prague who had come there some time before us. He took us to a hotel where we stayed for the first few days. Later, we rented a small apartment. We joined the "Czechoslovak Club" which provided an official "address" for refugees from Czechoslovakia, and whose members had sworn allegiance to the Czechoslovak government-in-exile. I think I should mention at this point that Charlotte and I had managed to hold on to our Czechoslovak passports. The Gestapo had demanded that we surrender our Czech passports in return for our German passports, but we had succeeded in obtaining a certificate from the Czech police stating that our Czechoslovak passports had been lost. Luckily the Gestapo had accepted the certificate and given us our German passports without additional difficulties. We then hid our "lost" Czechoslovak passports on our persons. If the Germans had discovered them, Charlotte and I would have had serious trouble.

Our Czechoslovak passports had already served us well in Bombay when the British boarded the ship to look for "enemy" passengers. I showed them these passports along with our German passports to

prove that we were Czech refugees, not German "enemy aliens". Eventually, the representative of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile at the "Czechoslovak Club" took our German passports, exchanging them for documents certifying that we were bona fide refugees and members of good standing at the Club. We kept our old Czechoslovak passports, which still had another five years to run.

At that time there were in Shanghai about 20,000 Jewish refugees. Most of them had come from Germany, but there were also some from Austria and Poland, and a small group of about 40 from Czechoslovakia. Individuals with passports identifying them as Jewish refugees could not travel anywhere outside the international settlement of Shanghai because the city was surrounded by Japanese-occupied territory. Japan had been at war with China for several years, but had left Shanghai unmolested because it was an "international city". Shanghai was divided into "concessions" set up by the Western world powers, including Great Britain and France. Each "concession" was governed by representatives of the nation to which it belonged, and was subject to that nation's laws. The apartment into which we moved was in the French concession.

While we were still at the Chinese

hotel, we made a new friend. I overheard him speaking German and started a conversation with him. He told me that his name was Haas, and that he had come to China as a refugee from Vienna. He was now living in the city of Tientsin, in northern China, and was visiting Shanghai in the company of a Japanese girlfriend. I asked him how he managed to travel to and from Shanghai. He explained that it was not difficult, provided you had the right documents. When he heard that Charlotte and I had Czechoslovak passports, he said that we, too, should have no trouble traveling wherever we wanted. The Japanese would not stop us (It should be remembered that Japan was then at war only with China: though on close terms with Hitler, the Japanese empire was still officially "neutral" in the conflict between the Axis and the Allies.)

Mr. Haas's name had a familiar ring. Before marrying my father, my mother had been married to a man by the name of Haas, of Moravská Ostrava, with whom she had moved to Magdeburg, Germany, but who had died only six weeks after the wedding. My mother then returned to Bohemia, eventually marrying the man who became my father. So I had discovered that I just met a nephew of my mother's through her first marriage. His father and my mother's

first husband had been brothers. Mr. Haas suggested that Charlotte and I consider leaving overcrowded Shanghai and settling elsewhere, perhaps in Tientsin, where we would have a better chance of finding work. But Charlotte and I felt we should remain in Shanghai, at least for the time being. We met a number of people who had been living in Shanghai for a long time. One of them, a Mr. Vajda, had come to Shanghai from Czechoslovakia some twenty years before us and had become quite well-to-do. Like most of the other affluent Jewish "old hands in Shanghai" he was in the import-export business.

As a first step toward finding a job, I started to learn English, the international language of business. My textbooks were an English language newspaper and an English-German dictionary. Charlotte and I visited the "Czechoslovak Club"

almost every day. The Club gave us moral support. But that was all it could offer, and we asked for nothing else.

Through the Club I joined the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, a paramilitary organization that had been set up to preserve order and help defend the international city. The Corps had three battalions: one British, one composed of emigrants from Russia, and one made up of Russian Jews, some 8,000 of whom were then living in Shanghai. The Jewish refugees from Czechoslovakia formed a platoon within the British battalion under the command of Captain Taussig, acting military attaché to the Czechoslovak government-in-exile. We wore British uniforms, carried British rifles, and were trained by British officers. The declaration of allegiance that I signed at the request of the Czechoslovak Club on December 11, 1940, six months after our arrival in Shanghai,

included a statement signed by Captain Taussig certifying that I had "enlisted voluntarily for special war work within the British Empire".

One of my assignments was patrol duty. I remember walking my "beat" in the company of several Chinese police constables early on damp and foggy November mornings. We would pass beggars sleeping in the entranceways of banks and public buildings. Many had only a jute bag for cover against the wet winter chill. Quite a number of these unfortunates died overnight of hunger and exposure. On some days we would pick up as many as twenty bodies. Occasionally I performed night duty, acting as a security officer at the Chinese court of law. I was on duty with the Corps at least two days each week, which was no problem for me because I still had no job.

(to be continued in the next issue)

Jewish passport donated

Zhang Jun 2005-09-07 Beijing Time

A JEWISH woman who fled Europe for Shanghai during the Nazi's rise to power in the late 1930s donated her recently retrieved passport to the Shanghai History Museum yesterday. "Shanghai is a heaven for Jewish refugees. We are very grateful to the city," said Gerda Brender, 71, who was among thousands of European Jews to seek refuge in the city during World War II. Shanghai was one of the last open refuges for Jews fleeing the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s. She said her family, after settling in the city in 1938, were controlled and insulted by Japanese invaders during the war time. Chinese people suffered much worse during the Japanese occupation of the city, she noted.

Brender and her husband took part in memorial activities to commemorate the 60th anniversary

of the country's victory against Japanese aggression last week. In 1938, Brender and her parents fled Austria for Shanghai to avoid persecution. Her family lived in Shanghai from 1939 to 1949 when they left the city to settle down in Australia. Her passport, like many other Jewish passports, was left behind in the city. In 1999, a local collector Zhu Peiyi bought the passport from a flea market. He tracked down Brender with the help of several organizations including Shanghai Daily, and returned the document to her in April of this year. Officials from the Shanghai History Museum said they consider the passport a very precious document about the city's history and will display it in their new museum. Fu Weiqun, deputy Party secretary of the museum, said: "The passport is a special artifact to show what

Chinese people, Jewish people and many other foreign people suffered during the Japanese aggression." Experts say during the World War II, more than 30,000 Jewish refugees fled Europe for Shanghai, where many lived in the area of the city that is currently known as Hongkou District.

Anyone interested in memorializing their deceased loved ones should contact Igud Yotzei Sin

The Angel of Austria's Jews

by Mark O'Neil

South China Morning Post

Amid the turmoil of pre-war Austria, a young Chinese consul-general in Vienna risked his life and career to help perhaps tens of thousands of Jews escape vicious Nazi persecution and the horror of the Holocaust. Ho Fengshan is one of the unsung heroes of World War II - and the 20th Century - and this self-effacing man's story is only just coming to light.

China's mission chief in Nazi-occupied Vienna, Ho Fengshan, saved thousands of Jews during World War II.

Ho may have been responsible for saving the lives of more European Jews than any other single individual. An exhibition at the United Nations in New York in April, to be attended by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, will honour Ho and other diplomats who saved Jews in similar ways during the war. His family has nominated him for the status of "righteous among the nations", an award bestowed by Jerusalem on non-Jews who helped Jews at the risk of their own lives. It is Israel's highest civil award. Those chosen are remembered in the Yad Vashem museum of the Holocaust in Jerusalem. Ho headed China's mission in Vienna from May 1938 to May 1940. He gave visas to Jews in defiance of the orders of his government and the opposition of the Nazis, who closed his consulate. At the time, Jews in Austria were trapped and at the mercy of the Nazi purges unless they had a visa for a specific country. Ho gave them visas for China - their ticket to freedom. But most went elsewhere - to Portugal, Cuba, North and South America, Palestine, the Philippines and Australia. Ho started his career as a diplomat in the foreign ministry of

the Nationalist government in 1935, after obtaining a doctorate in political economics at the University of Munich in 1932. Fluent in German and English, he was sent as a secretary to the Chinese embassy in Vienna in 1937. In March 1938, Adolf Hitler's army annexed Austria. It threw Jews there into panic. At that time, Austria had the third largest Jewish population in Europe, and 90 per cent of them were in the capital. In May, the Chinese embassy was replaced with a consulate, and Ho was appointed consul-general with one assistant. He was 37. Ho and the rest of the diplomatic corps were invited to meet Hitler. The new consul-general recorded his impressions of the Nazi leader in his memoirs: "He was a short little man. He had a ridiculous mustache. He was an unspeakable martinet." These in themselves are extraordinary. His daughter Ho Manli, who lives in San Francisco, told the Post by telephone that her father rarely spoke of his time in Austria, but in the 1980s, when he was in his 80s, he decided to write a book. Published in 1990, *My 40 Years Of Diplomatic Life* is 290 pages long - but only 10 cover this tense time during the war. And tense it was. With the Anschluss, anti-Semitism erupted in full force. Nazis vandalised Jewish-owned businesses, arrested their owners, and confiscated their homes and properties. The Jews searched desperately among Vienna's foreign missions for a diplomat who was prepared to give them a visa. Almost all refused, on orders from their governments, which were unwilling to offend the Nazi government. Ho wrote: "Since the annexation of Austria by Germany, the persecution of the Jews by Hitler's 'devils' became increasingly fierce.

The fate of Austrian Jews was tragic, persecution a daily occurrence. There were American religious and charitable organisations which were urgently trying to save the Jews. I secretly kept in close contact with these organisations. I spared no effort in using any means possible. Innumerable Jews were thus saved." Many Jews in Austria were high in society and Ho would have known many personally. He decided to give a visa to any and all Jews who applied for one. The news spread quickly and hundreds queued up outside the consulate from morning to night. The Chinese ambassador to Berlin, Chen Jie, soon learned of this. He telephoned Ho and ordered him to stop at once to preserve the good relations between the Nazis and the Nationalists. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the president of the time, was close to the German government. He used German military advisers and weapons and had sent his younger son, Wei-guo, to be trained by the Nazis. Wei-guo became a second-lieutenant in the German 98th Jaeger Regiment and took part in the Austrian Anschluss before returning to China. Ho disobeyed his ambassador. Chen sent a subordinate to Vienna to investigate whether Ho was being paid for the visas. The officer could find no evidence of bribery. Life became more tense, and Ho more involved as the suffering deepened. He saw first-hand the pogrom in Germany and Austria known as Kristallnacht (the night of broken glass) on November 9-10, 1938, when more than 200 synagogues were destroyed, 7,500 Jewish shops looted and 30,000 Jews sent to concentration camps. On the morning of November 10, Ho went to the home of one Jewish family

to whom he had given visas, to see them off. The Gestapo had arrested the father of the household. Ho confronted the officers, who pulled a gun on him. There was a tense face-off before the Gestapo backed down, realising Ho was a diplomat who issued valid visas. They allowed the family to leave for Shanghai. But in early 1939, the Nazis confiscated Ho's consulate. They said that it belonged to a Jew. He asked his government for relocation funds, but it refused, saying China was at war with Japan and no funds were available. Unperturbed, Ho rented smaller facilities at his own expense, and reopened the consulate. It is not clear how many visas Ho had issued by the time he left Vienna in May 1940, but anecdotal evidence suggests many thousands: by October 1938, only five months after Ho had arrived, he had issued 1,900 visas. Then came Kristallnacht, and persecution intensified. By the time war broke out in September 1939, almost 70 per cent of the 185,246 Jews registered in Austria had emigrated. And more than 18,000 European Jewish refugees had arrived in Shanghai. But how many of those left with visas issued by Ho? His daughter, Ho Manli, says: "We do not know the exact number. No one will ever know." Dr Eric Saul, a professor of Jewish history, says that since Ho was the principal source of all exit visas, a large proportion must have been given by him to Jews. Despite his refusal to obey orders during his time in Vienna, Ho does not appear to have been treated badly - at least initially - on his return. In May 1940, Ho was transferred for one year to New York, where he did political analysis, before returning to China's wartime capital of Chongqing to help in the war effort against Japan. In 1941, when the US entered the war, China broke off relations with Germany and closed its consulate in Vienna. In the interim, little is known about Ho until 1947, when he began a nine-year tenure as ambassador to Cairo and seven other Middle Eastern countries. In 1949, when the Chinese civil war

ended in a communist victory, Ho chose to remain loyal to the Nationalists, who fled to Taiwan. His subsequent postings were as ambassador for the Kuomintang to Mexico, Bolivia, and Colombia. He retired in 1973 to California, where he died on September 28, 1997, at the age of 96. He was never reunited with any of the people he had helped. Despite many years of service to his government, Ho was denied a pension by the Nationalists over an accusation that he could not account for US\$200 of embassy expenses, his daughter says. Ms Ho believes the continuing slur was for a "political vendetta" because Ho had offended one of Chiang's sons, Ching-kuo, and not because of his actions in Vienna. "The government was not happy with what he did but it was involved then in a war with Japan and later the civil war," she says. When Ho died, Taipei was not represented at his funeral - yet Beijing's consulate in San Francisco sent a wreath. Because Ho had talked so little about the events in Vienna, the public knew nothing of his involvement. After his death, his daughter posted an obituary in a newspaper, with one line about her father's work in Vienna. This attracted the attention of Dr Saul, who embarked on the painstaking work of collecting evidence from those who had received visas from Ho and from their descendants. What motivated Ho to do what he did? "He was generous in nature," Ms Ho says. "To help other people was very natural. From a humanitarian point of view, it was what you should do. There was nothing much to say. "When he talked about it, he mentioned two things most: one was that when Hitler entered Vienna he was welcomed by people lining the streets. He [Ho] was disgusted to see this. The other was Kristallnacht, which he witnessed . . . firsthand, one atrocity after another." But Ho was also deeply religious, beliefs instilled by Norwegian Lutherans who raised him after his father died and left his family destitute.

Europe Died in Auschwitz

Written by a Spanish journalist, Sebastian Villar
Rodriguez.

I was walking along Raval (Barcelona) when all of a sudden I understood that Europe died with Auschwitz.

We assassinated 6 million Jews in order to end up bringing in 20 million Muslims! We burnt in Auschwitz the culture, intelligence and power to create.

We burnt the people of the world, the one who is proclaimed the chosen people of God.

Because it is this people who gave humanity the symbolic figures who were capable of changing history (Christ, Marx, Einstein, Freud) and who is the origin of progress and well-being.

We must admit that Europe, by relaxing its borders and giving in under the pretext of tolerance to the values of a fallacious cultural relativism, has opened its doors to 20 million Muslims, often illiterates and fanatics that we could meet, at best, in places such as Raval the poorest of the nations and of the ghettos, and who are preparing the worst, such as the 9/11 and the Madrid bombing and who are lodged in apartment blocs provided by the social welfare. We have also exchanged culture with fanaticism, the capacity to create with the will to destroy, the wisdom with the superstition.

We have exchanged the transcendental instinct of the Jews, who even under the worst possible conditions have always looked for a better peaceful world, for the suicide bomber.

We have exchanged the pride of life for the fanatic obsession of death. Our death and that of our children. What a grave mistake we have made!

"The Jews of Harbin Live In My heart"

תדו קאופמן
יהדות חרבין אשר בלבי

Игудот - Еврейское
Общество - Харбин



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

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

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

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

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

Dora and Joe Wainer from New York Visited Beit-Ponve



Y. Klein opens the get-together



Right to left: Dora Wainer's sister Bella Goldreich (nee Segerman) and her daughter Tania Zuaretz



Rachel Rabkin greets the guests. Left to right: A. Podolsky, R. Rabkin, D. Wainer, T Kaufman and Joe Wainer



T Kaufman speaks



Left to right: Dora Wainer, Naomi Palei and Bella Chernomorsky



Joe Wainer(left) and Mosia Shmerling

Guests in "Beit-Ponve"



Rabbi M. Tokayer from New York visited Beit-Ponve and met with T. Kaufman and T. Piastunovich



Prof. Izumi Sato from Tokyo visited Beit-Ponve and met with T. Kaufman



S. Goldberg-Samsonovitch from Buenos-Aires visited Beit-Ponve.

Left to right: R Veinerman, T.Kaufman, S. Goldberg-Samsonovitch, G. Kaufman(nee Samsonovitch) and Y. Klein



Dora Lee (nee Vydovsky) and her husband Gabriel visited Beit-Ponve

Left to right: E. Ginansky (nee Beim), Dora and Gabriel

Tuesday, December 28, 2005, at 04:00 p.m.
At Bet Oved Ha-Iriya
4 Pumbeditha Street, Tel Aviv
An All-Israel gathering of Former Residents of China
Scholarships will be awarded after the lighting of Hanukka candles

Letters

Malka (Malvina) Levitina

To T. Kaufman: I was so happy to get your email. Thank you very much for giving me all information I asked about. I will use it as soon as possible to get in touch with my dearest Harbinians. My mailing address is as follows: Malka Levitina, 3028 West 29 Str. #13H, Brooklyn, NY. Please, feel free to give it to anyone who wants to have it. In a few days I will have a new email address: malka_levitina@verizon.net. I wish you a happy New Year, dear Teddy. You are doing a wonderful job. Thank you very much for publishing my letter in the Bulletin. I have read the online version of it and want to thank you and other Harbintsy for your long-lasting efforts for the sake of our city. My cousin Simon Karlinsky (Senya) and I speak a lot about you. I have some requests (questions) to you. How can I subscribe to the Bulletin? How can I give money to those people who take care of Harbin Cemetery? How can I contact Mara Moustafine? We have a lot of mutual friends. How can I contact NY Harbintsy? And the last thing I would like to ask you for: Maybe someone knows my close friend Tsilya Lyubman (Levinsky). I can't find her. I know that I have too much requests but all these things about Harbin are so dear for me. I apologize for bothering you. Thanks again. My best wishes to you and your family.

Olga Jorgenson (Orloff)

Your magazine of 03-04 came to me accidently. Imagine my surprise when I saw a picture of my old friend Mary Biar (Beim). Would you be so kind as to pass my e-mail address to her if indeed she is my friend Mary. My mother Elizabeth Orloff was a matron of Shanghai Jewish hospital until its closure in 1952. I lived in a hospital for many years much to Mr. Kogan's displeasure. Since then I visited the hospital many times and got to meet Dr. who knew my mother. Imagine my surprise when in October 2004 as per usual I went to visit the hospital. Alas it is no more. There is a new eye, ear and throat hospital. Sorry I could not send this letter in Russian, because my computer is not equipped for this task. Thank you for your troubles and wonderful memories.

Peter Berton

To the IYS: I regularly tape the Jewish half hour on Sundays at 9 am on Channel 18. It is called the Phil Blazer's show, for forty years the editor of JEWISH LIFE.

The show apparently originates in L.A. but is shown in Chicago, New York, Miami, etc. Today's show started with excerpts of a documentary produced in China by Chinese on the Shanghai refugees. It was mostly in English, with some of the original Chinese commentary, and consisted of some interviews with the original refugees, scenes of Jewish life in Shanghai, etc. Some of the interviewees stressed how friendly the Chinese were toward the refugees. There was no mention of the good Chinese consul in Vienna, but I imagine that this aspect was probably also in the documentary. Has anyone heard or seen the full Chinese language documentary, which apparently was very widely distributed throughout China. I am saving the tape, and would be happy to share with anyone who is interested. Just let me know.

Peter Nash Sydney

The item on Page 11 of the September-October 2005 Issue No. 385, namely, "Lost Passport Returned", told how Gerti Waszkoutzer, now known as Gerda Brender, also living in Sydney, was able to reclaim her passport after more than 50 years. After informing Gerda about her 'lost and found passport', I then decided to find the owner of the passport in the name of Manfred Lichtenstein. After a few weeks research I found that Manfred Lichtenstein, aka Fred Light, died in 1996 in Chicago, but I tracked down the only two surviving members of his family, his niece Susan Schmidt and her father, Manfred's brother-in-law Joseph Leib, also an ex-Shanghaiander. They plan to reclaim Manfred's passport. The amazing story of the 'lost and found passports' has been placed on Igud Yotzei Sin's website in the Family Search section. Email: genealogy@rpnash.com

Kate O. Goldstein USA

To the IYS: My name is Kate O'Brien Goldstein and I am the Educational Programming Associate at The Jewish Theological Seminary's Office of Community Outreach (the Va'ad Gemilut Hasadim). I am seeking information about any experts in the New York Area who can speak about the history and current issues of Jews in China. We would like to extend an invitation for this person to participate in as an expert panel member at this year's Va'ad Shabbaton, "Jewish Chesed Goes Global," on Friday evening, November 11, 2005. I designed this conference to expand students' base knowledge about pressing Jewish issues and social needs in the Diaspora beyond the U.S., including the Far East, Russia and Ethiopia. Our goal is to motivate students to direct their social action energy to international Jewish communities in need. I would like to invite someone to speak about the Jews of China and other Far East communities and those populations' needs and challenges. The Friday evening session will include three speakers (the two other professionals will discuss Ethiopian and Russian Jewry). The session will include a Shabbat dinner, featuring food from each of these countries. We would be happy to cover the speaker's local travel expenses and to offer a comfortable room and meals, should he/she wish to remain in the JTS neighborhood over Shabbat. Thank you very much for your consideration. Your involvement in the project would mean so much to us and would enrich our program immensely. Please feel free to contact me at this email address, or by phone at (917) 207-5321 Email: kagoldstein@jtsa.edu

Sidney J. Gluck, President

Sholom Aleichem Memorial Foundation

We appreciate the material you have sent us. You, no doubt, have the contact of a number of cities and organizations in China that were host to the European Jews of WWII who subsequently migrated to Israel, the US and Australia. Last year there were reunions in China, which our organization had planned to attend but for unexpected circumstances these plans fell through. We would appreciate contact information for all of these Chinese communities, as well as any particular scholars who have made a specialty of relations with the Jewish community. We are particularly interested in any Chinese scholars who know Yiddish. We had met one individual in Nanjang and Shanghai, years ago, but seemed to have lost contact there too. Your cooperation will be much appreciated.

Youde Fu

Director of the Center for Judaic and Inter-Religious Studies, Shandong University

To T. Kaufman: It is my great honour to have your book and some other materials which I received this morning. Thank you very much. I will have a post-doctoral researcher next semester who will devote himself to the Jews in Harbin. Please visit us when you come to China again. With kind regards

Peter Berton

Jews will soon begin our 5,766th year on this earth! Who would have believed this possible? If anyone had told Abraham that his people would be around this long he probably would have been astounded. NOTE: Imagine, we did this without beheading anyone, without a single suicide bomber, without kidnapping and murdering school children, without slaughtering Olympic athletes, and without flying airplanes into skyscrapers. We lasted this long despite: 400 years as slaves in Egypt, 40 years of wandering in the desert, the mighty Roman army who nailed us to ten thousand crosses; despite the best efforts of the Christian crusaders, the Spanish Inquisition, Hitler's Third Reich, Stalin's gulags, five Arab wars of annihilation, 100 years of Arab and Arafat terrorism, and 800 hate-filled UN resolutions! How did we Jews do it? We did it by concentrating our efforts on education, love of family, faith, hard work, helping one another and a passionate dedication to life no matter what evil befell us!

We hung in there with hope that the rest of the world would one day overcome its hatreds, jealousies, violence and join us in a life of cooperation and mutual respect. We're not there yet, but we're still hopeful. And when we enter our places of worship, this is what we always pray for, with all the strength in our hearts.

Happy New Year

Faith Ann Goldman

To T. Kaufman: Shalom and Happy New Year. I am scheduled to go with the Rickshaw group in April 2006 to Shanghai. After I presented a program called Slow Boat to China in March 2005 at Temple Menorah, Redondo Beach, California, I had our sisterhood send a \$200 check for the Social Aid Fund. However I wasn't listed in anywhere in the summer edition of "our" paper. The check was cashed and I would like some paperwork and acknowledgement about the donation for the sisterhood. Perhaps I am missing it. I am enclosing a recent published article that may be in "our" paper.

Albert Cheng

I just wanted to drop you a line to tell you that I think you've created a fantastic website! It really is amazing! I never knew that the Jewish connection to China goes back centuries! You described this link in a wonderfully detailed and descriptive manner. The materials that you posted on your website were extremely educational and I learned a great deal from them. Please keep up the sensational work you have done for this website.

I do, however, have a question for you that I hope you can answer. Since you are an expert and an authority on the history and culture of the Kaifeng Jews, I'm sure you will be able to help me out. My question is as follows: I've read that the Jewish community in Kaifeng consists of around only 400 members, and that community is aging and shrinking due to intermarriage with non-Jewish groups in China as well as the government-enforced "One-Child" policy. Do you believe that Israel will allow and that China will permit a small exodus of the remaining Kaifeng Jews to make aliyah to Israel? It appears to me they are an endangered (and unrecognized) minority in China today.

Karen Stern USA

To T. Kaufman:

I met you more than a year ago at the memorial service for Dan Litvin. At the time you were publishing a book on the Jews of Harbin. I wonder if an English version has been produced. My husband's family, Jack, Boris & Sonia Sterenson, is from Harbin. We would love to learn more about Russian Jews experience in Harbin. Has your book been published in English? I'd like to purchase a copy. Please let me know how I can buy one. I know other families that would be interested in purchasing a copy. We've been surprised to meet a number of people in our community, Marin County, California, whose parents are from Harbin. Address: 6 Spindrift Passage, Corte Madera, CA 94925
Tel. 415.927.1974

Marty Bihovsky Bates

Dear Abie and Sana Kislev,

I was saddened to hear about Raya Fine's passing, but grateful for the information that you provided. I had known Raya from the time that she left Harbin for Tianjin in the mid 1930's. In fact, Raya tried to teach me piano when she first came to town: This was a truly thankless job, since I was neither talented nor motivated. I even seem to remember that she stayed at our house for a while. I suppose that I should include one incident in my 'Al Het' list for next Yom Kippur: This concerns the time when I encountered some of my fellow American School students at a movie in Tianjin in 1937. They were Raya's better students, and were being treated to the movie and to dessert at the Victoria cafe. I attached myself, like sticking plaster, to the group, and managed to mooch some icecream with the rest of Raya's guests. Many years later, I was on the phone with my brother's first wife, Yelena (Lucy) Jakobson. She had taught briefly at the Tianjin Jewish School with my sister, Edith, and with Raya. In the course of the phone call, she mentioned that she had just had a call from Raya, who was then visiting the United States, and my sister-in-law told me that Raya had started the phone call by saying, "guess who this is". Of course, she was unable to guess. Raya reached me shortly thereafter, with the same opening question. Being forewarned, I could easily answer "Raya Fine", which probably spoiled her whole day. I enjoyed meeting Raya at Abie's house in Dania, on our recent visit; and earlier, visiting Raya in her own apartment. I had some questions for her, but now I will be unable to ask them or to receive answers. Meanwhile, I will be waiting to receive my next issue of the Bulletin of Igud Yotzei Sin, where she was so involved. This is where I have been able to read about her recent exploits, including photos from her visit to Harbin and her meeting with my sister's first husband, Izzy Epstein.

All good wishes,

Address: 411 Wabash Ave., Kenmore NY, 14217-2207 Tel. 716-877-7696

Mary and Julie Kotsuji Japan

To the IYS: We received a beautiful certificate on October 15 inscribing us in the Golden Book of the JNF by the Association of the Former Residents of China in Israel, Igud Yotzei Sin dated Israel, September 19, 2005. We appreciate this unexpected honor and do not have enough words to thank you.

Today we sent you a copy of our late father's book, The Origin and Evolution of the Semitic Alphabets as a small token of our gratitude.

Our best wishes to all the members of the Association.

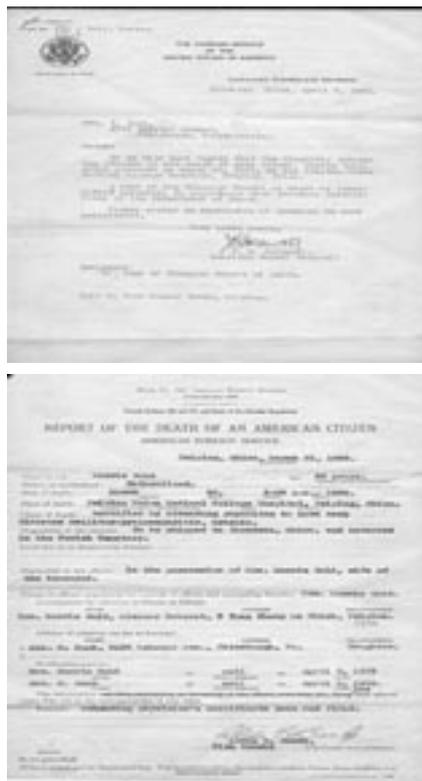
Website Search

To Martin Rosenson
manchild2525@msn.com
Re: Tianjin Cemetery Morris and Pearl Gold
Unfortunately the Tientsin Jewish Cemetery was razed by the authorities and no graves or records remain. There may be some mention of the Golds in the Tianjin archives that are held in Jerusalem. We access those from time to time, and the next time we do so, I shall try to find some records of the Gold burials and get back to you, but you should understand that access is sporadic and there is no fixed time frame.

Regards Teddy Piastunovich
teddy@jewsofchina.org

Reply from Martin Rosenson
Again we thank you for your past reply as to the condition of the cemetery in Tianjin/Tientsin. I thought that perhaps you might be interested in seeing some documents we found regarding the death of our grandfather. Incidentally, on the Death Certificate Mrs. Morris Gold is listed as present. But in fact Mrs. Morris Gold had died years before. We think Mrs. Morris Gold was actually Pearl Gold, Morris' sister. I have sent along copies of the documents under separate cover.

Ilana Shapiro



This is a wonderful website. It combines two of my biggest interests and passions. I currently live in Nanjing, China and have been studying Chinese for the past four years. I've grown up as a religious Jew and am very excited to see the growing interest in Jews in China. Please let me know if there is any way that I can get involved. Thank you very much!
Email :ilanadshapiro@hotmail.com
Tel : 13921431659

Reply:

Thanks for your compliment on the website.

I am sure you know Prof: Xu Xin the dean of School of Foreign Studies, Nanjin University, Nanjin 210093. Prof. Xu Xin is one of the world's leading experts on the Jews of Kaifeng and has recently been appointed to the chair of Judaism at Nanjing University. He is a regular contributor to the Bulletin of the Former Resident of China. He could be of assistance

to you if you care to research the "Jews of Nanjing" The Bulletin comes out 4 times a year in three languages. To subscribe please contact Mr. Teddy Kaufman at info@jewsofchina.org the Chairman of the Organization. You could view some past issues on our website. The bulletin is a gold mine of information.

To answer your question, you could contribute stories of human interest for the bulletin and the website that touch on the lives of Jews in China, past and present. To the best of our knowledge, a Jewish community did not exist in pre-war Nanjing though there may have been some Jews in Nanjing (Nanking) in the years before the Japanese occupation but I believe little was done to verify this fact. . You will notice that our map does not list Nanjing as a Jewish Center for that reason. Perhaps you could rectify this fact.

Teddy Piastunovich
teddy@jewsofchina.org
pteddy@netvision.net.il
pteddy1@gmail.com

----- Original Message -----

From: Igud-Yotzei-Sin
To: Teddy Piastunovich
Sent: Sunday, October 09, 2005 9:58 AM
Subject: Fw: Jews of China

Raya Zalik

I was referred to you by Jonathan Goldstein in my quest to locate the grave of my grandfather Abram Borisovich Zelikovsky who was buried in Harbin in 1929. I am going to Harbin September 5, 2005 to visit the cemetery and would appreciate your assistance.

The Chinese about the Jews, the Jews about the Chinese

By Dan Michael

Let me tell you a Jewish story. Once a Jew and a Chinese happened to sit next to each other on board a plane. The Jew asks the Chinese:

- Sorry. Are you, by any chance, a Jew?
- No, I am Chinese.
- Oh, come on! I know that some people conceal their origin. But you can confide in me.
- Maybe I can, but I am Chinese.
- You know, there is so much in common between us. Some say that the Chinese also descend from the Jews. Go on, confess!
- Maybe you are right, but I am Chinese.
- You know, I shall not let you go until you confess.
- O.K. You have won me. I am a Jew.
- Yeah. But if you are a Jew why do you look so much like a Chinese?

This story demonstrates what Jews think of themselves rather than imparting any information on the Jewish-Chinese relations.

Benedict Spinoza was probably the first to suggest Jewish -Chinese analogies. The famous philosopher writes in his Theological and Political Tractate of 1679 that the Jews managed to preserve their uniqueness among other nations thanks to adherence to their distinctive customs. Spinoza compares the Jews to the Chinese who "with amazing persistence cling to their custom to wear a braid which makes them different from all other nations. They have been preserving their uniqueness for thousands of years, and they are by far the most ancient nation in the world". The antiquity and continuity of the Jewish and Chinese cultures and adherence of both peoples to book wisdom have been provoking analogies

and speculations about similarity and affinity of the Jews and the Chinese since Spinoza's time. However a genuine encounter of the two cultures has never occurred. Probably, enormous differences between the Jewish and the Chinese cultures and their remoteness from each other only made it easier to draw analogies.

It makes one wonder what any Jew knew about the faraway China before the Maoist revolution except that there were rice and tea in the country. How could two cultures, so remote geographically and historically, meet? Except for a small community in Kaifeng in the early 12th century and several small communities of Russian Jews who fled Russia in the time of the October Revolution (in Shanghai, Harbin and Tientsin in the 20th century, the two nations never met. The existence of small communities cannot be considered a historical encounter that left any memory in, let alone influenced, any of the two nations.

Professor Irin Inbar of the Department of Asia and Far East Studies of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, maintains that it was not the sinification of the Kaifeng Jews that caused assimilation and dissolution of their community. See her book: *The Chinese and the Jews: Encounter of the Cultures*, Publishing House of the Bialik Institute, Jerusalem 2002 (in Hebrew).

This theory is questionable, and not only from the viewpoint of the Jewish religious tradition. A French monk Henry Bastian Gregoire who visited China in the 18th century wrote in his famous tractate *The Essay on Physical, Moral and Political Revival of the Jews* (1789): "The Jews of the Khe-Nan province adopted some of the Chinese

cults and they worship Confucius". This fact, in his opinion, proves that Jews are capable of giving up most of their cult and adopting customs of peoples in the midst of whom they live. It is worth mentioning that the discovery of the Jewish community in Kaifeng in the 17th century gave rise to hopes for finding a copy of the Bible in the synagogue built in 1163.

The Kaifeng community attracts attention as an exotic phenomenon. In reality the cultural contact between the Jews and the Chinese had a purely textual character. It was based on attempts of several Jews and Chinese to study each other's cultures. These attempts brought forth fantastic analogies and images resulting from a wide gap between the cultures that they tried to bridge. The first book about Jews written in Chinese appeared in the 19th century. Professor Su-Syan wrote about it in an article published in the collection of articles "Sino-Judaica" issued by the publishing house of Tel-Aviv University. The book was written by a priest Russell H. Grieves, also known under his Chinese name Gi Haobi. The book was published in 1821. It ought to be observed, however, that Chinese interest in Judaism sprang from their interest in the origins of Christianity rather than from an interest in Jews.

The Bible brought to China by Protestant missionaries became a source of cultural contacts between the Jews and the Chinese. The first Asian-American woman writer Edith M. Ayton (her Chinese name is Sung Sinpar) relates: "My Chinese husband told me once and again that the biblical stories were more like Chinese stories than American. If I did not know otherwise I would think that they were written

by a Chinese". A Chinese writer of the 19th century Loo Chang Sin wrote that the Ten Commandments are absolutely identical with the classical rules of Confucius. The Commandments of the Jews are close to the laws of Confucius concerning worship of ancestors, sacrifices, laying down rules and penitence.

Shmuel Izhak Joseph Shershenevsky (1831 - 1906) stands out among Protestant missionaries. He was born in Lithuania, received a Jewish religious education and emigrated to the USA where he converted to Christianity and in 1859 became a deacon. Later he left for China with a mission. In China he translated the Book of Genesis into the northern dialect of the Chinese language. Afterwards the northern dialect became the official language. Analyzing this and other translations of the Bible into Chinese languages might be interesting as a research into attempts of rapprochement between such dissimilar worlds of the Bible and Chinese culture. Professor Inbar believes that "Jewish wisdom was an important factor in the adoption of Protestant Christianity in China. In China of the 19th and 20th centuries it helped people to understand biblical ideas".

One way or another, translations of the Bible into classical Chinese and colloquial languages made it available to the general public. The educated Chinese decided that: "biblical themes are similar to and often identical with ancient Chinese wisdom". Writers and scientists began to use biblical quotations beside quotations from ancient Chinese sources.

The Jews in Arab countries knew about China at all times. Yehuda Halevi wrote about China in his book "The Kuzari" (1140). A real encounter with China, however, occurred in the time of the Jewish Enlightenment, the Haskalah. Limited and biased information about remote and strange Chinese culture, based mainly on missionaries' reports, reached Jewish writers through European authors. Writers and cultural

workers of the Jewish Enlightenment found in the Chinese culture a source of inspiration, even an example to be imitated.

However, the attitude towards China was ambiguous. On the one hand, Jewish enlighteners appreciated the achievements of the Chinese, became interested in the ideas of the "natural religion" of Taoism and showed respect for a moral philosophy not founded on the Divine Revelation. A learned Jew from England, Abraham Ben Naphtali Tang (d. 1792), translated "The Chinese Catechism" from Voltaire's "The Philosophic Dictionary" for his book "The Meaning of Man". An orthodox Jewish writer Naphtali Hertz Weisel (1725-1805), falling for a Chinese fashion that swept over Europe in the 16th century, studied Confucius using European sources. The similarity between many Jewish and Chinese ideas made Weisel suggest that Confucius was none other than a Jewish wise man from the tribe of Asher. Weisel saw in Confucius' works a continuation of prophetic literature. It is interesting to note that talks about the striking likeness between the Jewish ideas and Confucian morality were resumed following publication in Chinese of two of the most famous ancient Hebrew tractates "Pirkey Avot" ("Sayings of the Fathers", Mishnah) and Derekh Eretz Zuta ("Rules of Conduct") brilliantly translated by Dzyan Pin. A radical Haskalah activist Yehudah Leib Maizis (1831-1898) even called for the adoption of Chinese methods of mass teaching in disseminating principles of Reform Judaism among Jews.

On the other hand, Jewish writers described the Chinese as a corrupt barbarian people worshipping pagan gods. A learned physician Yehudah Gorvitz wrote in his book "The Pillars of the House of Judah" that bribery among the Chinese is most shameful because they understand and recognize their sins "which makes them responsible and aggravates their sins and misdeeds". As is easy to see, all the above opinions were a part of a bitter strife between

Jewish enlighteners - rationalists and the Jewish Orthodoxy and had very little to do with China as it is.

Jewish theologians faced an equally hard task when confronted with the ancestry of the Chinese civilization. The multi-millennial continuity of the Chinese history challenged the accuracy of the biblical chronology. A religious writer Jacob Hart who lived in England and wrote under the assumed name of Eliakim Ben Abraham was the first to rise to the challenge. In his book "The Lord's Wars" (1794) he argued that biblical events are older than the most ancient Chinese chronicles.

It should be noted that Jews, like Christian writers, picked from the wealth of Chinese tradition only such facts that matched their tastes and could be used as arguments in disputes. Moreover, in their works they presented the Chinese culture as one-sided and monolithic. This tradition is so deeply seated that even today one can hear primitive one-dimensional schemes with regard to China. The only Jewish thinker who took a serious interest in China was Martin Buber. For Buber, interest in Chinese culture was a part of his interest in Far Eastern philosophy and his rejection of the West. This part of Buber's legacy is little known in the Jewish world. Jonathan R Herman wrote an interesting book on this subject: "I and Tao: Martin Buber's Encounter with Chuang Tzu". Buber took an interest in works by Lao Tze and tried to find a common ground between Taoism and the Jewish religious tradition.

Analogies abound. In his book "The Contours of the Talmud" Rabbi Steinzaltz writes about an ancient method of interpretation of the Holy Writ according to which the whole text was considered as answers to questions posed by the Almighty. The meaning of the Jewish teaching lies in attempts to understand what the questions were. "To any question, even the most complicated question, if it is asked, there is an answer. However, the correct answer may only be given if the wisdom of the questioner is equal to

the complexity of the answer". This is a question from Confucius.

In the 20th century many works of Jewish literature were translated into Chinese from Yiddish, Hebrew and English. Even before the Cultural Revolution works by Sholom Alechem were translated from Yiddish in Peking. The Preface to the Chinese edition of Sholom Alechem's works includes this passage: "A Chinese reader of this book will be attracted by protest against oppression of men both by traditional social environment and the hostile world". In her article Professor Inbar mentions 40 works of Yiddish literature translated into Chinese. Among them: works by Sholem Asch, Izhak Leibush Peretz, Izik Fefer and Izhak Bashevis Singer.

It should be noted that the socialist Yiddish poetry and even the Zion Hebrew poetry in 1930-1950 often made use of a figure of a Chinese,

especially an emigrant Chinese, a representative of an oppressed class and a friend of a Jewish emigrant worker. The collection of stories in Hebrew "Children of Labor. Stories about Children of Workers All over the World" compiled by Bracha Habes and edited by Berl Kaznelson in the mid-1930s includes a story about a Chinese boy Tao Shi: "He is yellow all over. He knew hunger from his cradle". It should be noted that the influence of the Chinese culture on young developing Israel has not yet been properly assessed. After the Maoist revolution links between the two peoples were restricted. They were never severed completely, even in hard times of international isolation of Israel and the Cultural Revolution in China, to say nothing of links with Taiwan. Chinese students appeared in Israeli universities a long time before China opened its doors for businessmen and tourists. The most fruitful, alas, proved

to be military cooperation rather than cultural.

The Jewish-Chinese cultural dialogue is being gradually expanded, though it is still a long way to a real mutual understanding. It is like in an old Chinese story:

A philosopher asked his pupil: "Do you understand?" "Yes. I did", - said the pupil.

"No, you don't", - said the teacher. - "Because the sign of understanding is the joy reflected in your face, not your words".

From: "The International Jewish Newspaper" Moscow

The author expresses his gratitude to a veteran officer of the Soviet diplomatic service in Peking Boris Petrovich Rychilo and to Doctor Judy Syao from New-York for their help in writing this article.

Searching and Researching

Isabel Cymerman USA

How would I go about getting a birth certificate for my cousin who was born in the French Concession in 1927? She is alive today and would give her permission.

Tanya Schlifer Matlin Ramat Ilan, Israel

I am seeking news of my aunt, Ada (Doba) Salomonova Stipunina (nee Matlin), who left Shanghai (Helmskot Gardens #8) for Sverdlovsk (Ekaterinburg) in 1955. Whilst in Sverdlovsk she was employed at Gostbank. She was born in Tomsk but was raised in Harbin and moved to Shanghai in 1933(?) where she owned and operated a boarding house. She had two brothers Gregory and Yasha Matlin and a sister by the name of Lena Chramchenko. Any news would be appreciated

Tel: +972 (03) 53234451

Email: galia24@speedy.co.il
Irina Simon

I am looking for information about my mother's parents and grandparents. My mother was born in China (Harbin). My grandmother's family (Mr Nisnevich and Ms Ovsjanickaia) was probably of mixed Jewish-Russian origin. We have no information about our origins, because my grandmother destroyed all the documents when she transferred to Russia in the 1950s. She then lost all contact with her relatives and friends. Could you please help me in my research or let me know whom I could contact for more help? Thank you very much in advance. Tel: 0041 79 392 45 48

Email: isimon@gmx.ch
Marshall Ackerman

I would like to know if you have any information about Jews in China

prior to the 2nd century CE. - maps, archaeological findings, historical records, etc. I need to find established Jewish communities between 200 BCE and 200 CE.

Monika Warszawski Australia

One of my clients wishes to find her ID card and those of her parents upon arrival in Shanghai in 1938-39. We have all the details - they were from Vienna. Would you happen to know if these ID cards which had photos on them, are available and how one could go about accessing them? Address: Lost Histories, 409 Inkerman Street, East St Kilda Victoria 3183 Australia ph./fax +613 95072552 losthistories@optusnet.com.au www.losthistories.com

CHINESE NUMBER SYMBOLISM

By Emmanuel Pratt

One (Yi)

The classical Chinese Dictionary Kang Hsi Tzu Dian [compiled in 1713 by Emperor Kang Hsi of the last (Jing) dynasty] gives 67 meanings of the character Yi , making a total of 3,417 compounds. Another, more recent, Tzu Hai ("A Sea of Words"), takes 923 pages to deal with this single character. Confronted with this mammoth problem, the publishers stopped producing complete dictionaries of ciphers.

* * *

According to ancient Chinese philosophy there was in the beginning "The Greatest and the Highest", or the philosophic concept of Tai ji ("The Original", or "The Absolute") which was later split into duality (Yin-Yang), which, in turn, generated Wu Hsing ("Five Elements": earth, wood, metal, fire, water), and, finally, Wan Hsiang -- "Ten Thousand Images (things)" -- Chinese, for "everything".

The one concept both Confucius and Lao Tze could agree on was that Yi is the Undivided, the Perfect Entity. The first hexagram of the Yi-jing ("The Book of Changes"), C'ien ("The Creator"), relates to Yi as: "Great is the Original Power of the Creator, to whom all things owe their existence. And this power flows through the whole of Heaven".

In his Dao de jing ("Dao and its manifestation") Lao Tze puts it in poetry:

"There is a thing confusedly formed,
"Born before heaven and earth.
"Silent and void, it stands alone and does not change,
"Goes round and does not weary.
"It is capable of being the mother of the world.

"I know not its name, so I style it DAO, The Way".

(Translated: D. C. Lau)

Zhu Hsi, one of the greatest Chinese sages, made Tai ji into the Absolute, the ruling principle of the metaphysical world, whose symbol now became the circle partitioned into Yin (dark) and Yang (light) patterns. It is popularly believed that this circle can be seen on the embryo at birth. Since the 16th century, the same word is applied to a form of boxing.

Two (Erh)

Like all even numbers in Chinese, Two is female. In ancient times it symbolized earth, One, being male, represented sun, and Three (see below) -- man.

"One stands for unity, which can have no other value, as it is the all-embracing totality," writes Marcel Granet in his capital work Chinese Number Mysticism, "it is a Whole, combining One and Two, in which right/left; up/down; back/front; circle/square; Yin/Yang are canceled out. This Whole, which is at once a Unity and a Pair, repeating itself in all uneven numbers, beginning with Three (which is One plus Two)".

Consultation on the oracle is based on Two, since each of the 64 hexagrams of the Yi-jing consists of two superimposed trigrams.

Three (San)

In the early Chinese symbolism, a multitude of "trinities" were derived from the original Trinity (San cai) of Heaven, Earth and Man. For an extreme example: early Han speculation perceived the first three Dynasties (Xia, Shang and Zhou) as a "trinity" representing Loyalty (zhong), Respect (jing) and Refinement (wen) respectively. According to the "Book of Rites" (Li jing) , man, due to his intermediate position between heaven and earth, corresponds to the number Three.

The three Buddhas: Bhaisajya, Sakyamuni and Amitabha (the Buddha yet to come), are often represented as a trinity in the Buddhist temples. Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism are seen as the Three Teachings (San jiao) and are summarized in the expression: "The three teachings are one". In reality, however, Confucianism enjoyed a superior position among the three. It is true, though, that all three religions have their own part to play in human life: Confucianism is the religion of filial piety (xiao); Daoism has to do with the man's position in the community, and Buddhism is "a way of looking at life and death". Buddha is not to be pestered with trivial matters and desires: what he has to decide is whether a man should be reborn on his present level, or as an animal, and whether a spirit should suffer in purgatory, or go straight to paradise.

Up to just as recently as 1949, when the Communists took over, Chinese children learned their written Chinese from San tze wen (the Three Character Classic), a work, indoctrinating Confucian morality, consisting of simple sentences, each consisting of three characters, Village elders and city fathers used to be called "the three old worthies". Here, the cipher three was used as a standard emblem of any hierarchical body.

To summarize, it may be said that Judaism was not the first to discover the Oneness of the Creator, and Christianity was not the first to discover the Trinity: China preceded them. In China, however, these entities remained within the framework of philosophical thought, while in Judaism and Christianity they became a religion.

Shanghai Redemption

By Faith Goldman as told to Sara Nuss-Galles

Six years after Hitler's ascension to power in 1933, Noah Goldman, my late husband's father, finally accepted that it was time to leave Berlin, since life for Jews had become intolerable. Little did the once-proud German know he would be taking his family to China. Being a resourceful 40-something entrepreneur – he owned a movie house and Berlin's first dry cleaner – Noah bribed a Gestapo agent he knew to secure passports that would ultimately save his family's life. Over two harassing days he purchased seven visas, including ones for Thea, his young wife, Gerhard, her son, and for Thea's parents and their family.

At the time, Shanghai, China, was one of the only ports open to Jews. So that is how my husband, Robert, happened to be born there. Although I knew that life was difficult for his family, he spoke little of his 18 years growing up there. After Robert passed away in 1994, I began doing research to piece together his past.

In 1937, the Japanese bombed Shanghai, demolishing much of the city. It seemed odd that they willingly absorbed 18,000 Jews, but my research showed it was not a humanitarian gesture. The Japanese were implementing their Fugu Plan for postwar rebuilding. Named after a poisonous blow fish that is deadly if handled improperly, the Fugu Plan dealt with accepting rich, connected Jews. Despite the initial strain on Shanghai's resources, the Japanese believed they would provide a prosperous infrastructure in the future. Of course, Japan lost the war in 1945, and the ensuing rise of Communism took Shanghai from bad to worse.

While his family crossed to Bangkok

and then Shanghai by ship, Noah flew on KLM Airlines with his prized dry-cleaning machine. Ironically, Shanghai was bereft of luxury goods and Noah's machine was never used. When the finely attired refugees arrived at port Shanghai, reality hit hard. Many were overwhelmed by the war-torn city that lay before them. It was poor, overcrowded and disease-ridden. Opportunities for middle-class professionals simply did not exist.

With almost zero communication to the outside world, the refugees knew nothing of the Holocaust. Only as they scanned lists of survivors after the war did they realize what they had escaped. At the time, they knew only their own deprivation. Whereas these Jews had owned linens and fine china and lit candles on Friday night, they now slept on cots in dormitory conditions, separated by age and gender. Robert and his mother and brother lucked into a tiny room, while the rest of the family lived elsewhere. There was no water or plumbing, and the waste was collected daily to fertilize the rice paddies. The soup kitchens run by Jewish groups saved many a family from hunger. And yet, among so large a population of Jews, only two births occurred in 1939, and 65 in 1940, including that of my husband, Robert. As the war escalated, the refugees also endured air raids and bombings.

But they were not completely abandoned. ORT, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the Joint Distribution Committee and wealthy Jewish families helped establish a processing area where the Goldmans and others received food, medicine, clothing and housing. Then, in 1941, Chaim Rozenbes, an ORT

worker from Poland, opened the ORT training program in Shanghai. Rozenbes realized that these refugees lacked practical skills, and that they needed to learn trades to regain self-sufficiency. Many Jewish men resisted even though the classes were free. For them, manual labor simply meant further debasement.

Noah, who was older and upset at leaving Germany, grew paranoid and angry at his life and refused to learn a new trade. But in 1944, he relented and enrolled in an ORT program. He trained as an auto mechanic, and was once again supporting his family. The ORT center at 475 Jansen Road, taught machine knitting, mechanics, carpentry and even gardening. ORT Shanghai trained some 50 students in 1942 and 400 to 500 in 1944 to 1945. No one knows why the numbers are not higher – perhaps because, with the war raging, funding was erratic. Still, ORT's programs were a saving grace for so many, providing skills and a means to earn a living after the war took everything they had.

When the war ended and the American Army arrived, Noah, along with many other ORT-trained refugees, got a job with the U.S. forces as a mechanic, earning \$200 per month. But by 1949, the Army withdrew from Shanghai and the Communists took over. The struggle to survive had taken its toll on the Goldmans, and Robert's parents divorced. When the family left Shanghai with the majority of the refugees, Noah stayed behind and refused to let Robert leave with his mother. The two remained in Shanghai for 10 more sad, difficult years.

Noah was not the only ORT-trained Goldman. When Robert was 10, (see page 51)

The Peking Axis

Restored

(by Wu Zhu-lian, "China & the World Cultural Exchange")

he also enrolled in an ORT program. Along with his life-long friend Freddie, Robert attended school during the day, then Talmud Torah for Hebrew studies and then a special ORT program for kids in the late afternoon. The children participated in activities with one catch – in order to play games (including ping pong), they had to learn carpentry and make the components themselves.

Robert kept silent about his Shanghai experience for years. When he finally opened up, his recollections were quite sad: His family had disintegrated and his father had grown mentally unstable. By 1958, when the pair left Shanghai for England, Noah was physically and emotionally frail, and Robert was his caretaker. In 1960, Robert emigrated to America under his mother's sponsorship.

Robert's experience in Shanghai made him value family above all. He and I became pen-pals when he was an American G.I. stationed in Germany and I was a student at Danbury State College. Robert spoke six languages and had traveled the world, and I had gotten only as far as Pennsylvania for my graduate work. But he wanted a nice, educated Jewish girl and a normal family. We felt beshert. We were married for 27 good years and had two wonderful children. He was great with people and had a successful career in the international airfreight business.

As for Robert's carpentry training: At his 50th birthday party, his friend Freddie said it just right. "We may have been trained by ORT, but he still calls me to change a light bulb." Though Robert never was handy, I believe his ORT experience provided him with security and a sense of belonging, strong father figures, clean surroundings and physical outlet. With all that he lived through, Robert did more in his 54 years than many people do in 100.

Sara Nuss-Galles is a writer in Southern California whose work has appeared in The New York Times and The Los Angeles Times.

The evolution of Peking into one of the world's greatest metropolitan cities is largely indebted to its clearly defined plan, the most outstanding hallmark of which is its North-South axis set during the Yuan (Mongolian) dynasty 800 years ago to split the city into two precisely congruent halves. The line also influenced the drastic changes in the cityscape which emerged in the wake of the city's growth and modern development on both its sides when a grid of hundreds of streets and hutongs created a gray-brick background to the red-and-gold heart of the Capital – the Imperial Forbidden City. In the recently engineered plan for urban development, passed by the Greater Peking municipality, it was decided to neutralize the somewhat jarring encroachment of Western patterns on the purity of the classical Chinese architectural styles, and to build new landmark buildings along the axis. This new spine of the city, trademarked "Ode to Joy", will consist of three different sections and span a total of 25 kilometers.

Northern Axis: the Time Line

The northern line will be primarily composed of two sections: sports venues and housing areas. As half of the 2008 Olympic facilities will be located along this part of the city's axis line, a new vision of China's capital will be created in harmony with the traditional Chinese style. The urban design for the Olympics venues will redefine the northern end of the axis, at the same time maintaining its traditional character. The new development will be felt for centuries to come.

Central Axis: Line of History

The central axis, running 7.8 kilometers from the Yong Ding-men gate in the south-eastern point of the city wall to the Bell Tower, just north of the Forbidden City, represents the essence of the architectural landscape of the capital. Here, in the "old town", where most of the traditional buildings, ancient temples, imperial gardens, nobility residences and tombs are located, vast restoration works are to be undertaken to reveal by 2008 the past glory of the city. The main victims of this mammoth operation will be the incompatible modern buildings to be raised to the ground to regain the beauty of traditional hutongs, who will now obtain modern facilities without sacrificing their original charm. New buildings erected in the Forbidden City will also be torn down and residents will be moved out to reduce its population density and re-create its historic landscape. The Yong Ding-men gate, one of the most impressive entrances into the city, demolished during the 1950's by the communist "planners of the Better Future", will be restored in detail.

Southern Axis: Line of the Future

The area south-east of the Peking city wall is earmarked for commerce and culture. Here, a spacious residential area will rise, surrounded by grassland and forest, while a new commercial "downtown" area is planned, with new museums, art galleries, libraries and concert halls to serve the cultural needs of the new generation of Peking dwellers.

(Translated from the Chinese by E. Pratt)

Secrets and Spies

by Mara Moustafine

Presentation for the Sydney Institute

Mara Moustafine is the daughter of Inna (nee Zaretsky) and Alec Moustafine. She was born in Harbin, China, into a family with Jewish, Russian and Tatar roots and came to Sydney as a child in 1959. Bilingual in Russian and English, Mara completed a Masters in International Relations at the Australian National University. She has worked as a diplomat, intelligence analyst, journalist and senior business executive in Australia and Asia. "Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files" is her first book.

"A single death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic", Joe Stalin is reported to have said glibly as he signed off on quotas for the arrests, executions and incarcerations of thousands upon thousands at the height of the Great Terror in 1937-1938. Millions of people died in the Soviet Union during the purges. Some were executed, others starved to death or worked to exhaustion in the Gulag labor camps which enmeshed the Soviet Union. Just how many millions is impossible to establish with any accuracy. They merge with millions more who were victims of Stalin's collectivization, the 1931-32 famine and those who perished in the Second World War.

The scale of such death is incomprehensible. It is impersonal. The numbers make your eyes glaze over. To that extent, Stalin was right. Yet these statistics represented millions of personal tragedies. They touched almost every Russian family – my own included. But so pervasive was the Terror that few dared to voice their anguish or to speak about what had happened. Because around those millions of personal tragedies was a wall of fear and silence. And

so insidious was this intimidation that millions wept when Stalin died. Even after Khrushchev exposed Stalin's crimes in his secret speech at the 1956 Party Congress and started the process of rehabilitation, few were able to discover what had really happened to many of their loved ones. At most they received certificates advising that the cases of their relatives had been reviewed and the charges dropped – i.e. they had been "posthumously rehabilitated". But no details were given and the survivors rarely talked about it. After all, who could tell what might be around the corner ...

It was no different in my own family – though one side had lived in Harbin in North China from before the 1917 Bolshevik revolution and my parents had never even set foot in the Soviet Union. Growing up in Cold War Australia in the 1960s, I vaguely knew that five members of the grandmother's family, the Onikuls, had gone to the Soviet Union to escape the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. I knew that three of them – her father, younger sister Manya and older brother Abram – had died during the purges. But it was no something we really talked about. Thus, I learned about Stalin's purges from textbooks at university. I read about the millions of victims in Conquest's *Great Terror* and struggled with Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* in the original Russian. The scale of the horror they described was eye-glazing. The two works which I found most gripping were Evgenia Ginsburg's *Journey into the Whirlwind*, which told of her eighteen years in Stalin's prisons and labor camps, and Anna Akhmatova's poem *Requiem*, which described

the numbed grief of the women who like her, stood for hours in queues at prison gates to hand over parcels for loved ones whose fate they did not know. But did I draw a connection to the fate of my own family? Not for a minute. The Terror was something that happened to "them – over there". We were different. We were "Russians from China".

All that changed during the long hot summer of 1992, when I was staying with friends who were posted at the Australian Embassy in Moscow. It was a time of change and turmoil. The Soviet Union had collapsed. The newly emerging Russia was still in the full bloom of democratization and openness. Families separated for years by the Iron Curtain were at last able to reunite.

Although my grandmother's mother and younger brother had passed on, his widow was still alive in Riga. It was she who gave me my great-grandmother's extraordinary collection of family photographs and papers, including their so-called "rehabilitation certificates". These said cryptically that the charges against each of the family members had been dropped and their sentences revoked in the absence of criminal evidence. Charges? What charges? What did this all mean? I wanted to know what really happened and why. I was particularly fascinated by the fate of the younger Onikuls – Manya, the mysterious woman in the trench coat whose photograph is on the cover of my book, and her brother Abram. They were young, talented, life-loving people – she a dentist, he a Chinese interpreter. Why had their lives, so richly depicted in the

(see page 54)

The Gersheviches in Tianjin (1920s- 1930s)

By B. Kabuliansky

Yehuda 1851- 1927

Leo 1878- 1950

Moses 1885- 1977

Sarah 1881- 1937

Gise- Hava 1883- 1939

Ziva 1891- 1976

At the beginning of the 1920s, 6 members of a family from Siberia, after having covered a distance of about 2000 kilometers, settled down in Tanjin.

Yehuda was the father of 10 children. One of them died at an early age, four children stayed behind in Russia.

Leo was married to Miriam (Maria), they had 3 children- Norman, Vera and Fishel. His father Yehuda and his sister Sarah, who was not married, lived with Leo's family.

Moses was Leo's partner in the "Gershevich Bros" business. He was married to Lydia. They had no children.

Gise- Hava came to Tientsin with her husband Abraham Kabuliansky and two children, Anna and Benjamin.

Ziva was married to Ilya Fligil, they had two daughters- Mary and Annie.

During many years Leo Gershevich and his sister Gise- Hava Kabuliansky, nee Gershevich- were especially active in the development of the Jewish community in Tientsin.

The Jewish Encyclopedia recognized Leo Gershevich as the head of the Tienstn Jewish Community (TJC). His outstanding contribution was acknowledged in number of publications of the Igud Yotsei Sin. This has also been mentioned in the album "The Jews in Tianjin" published in China in 2004 (Editor in Chief- Song Anna).

One instance illustrating that Leo Gershevich was held in the greatest

respect by the TJC is the inscription made on a page of the prayer book, shown on the next page.

We remains to be emphasized is the significance of the TJC in the years that followed. The TJC proved to be a safe refuge for Jews Fleeing the Holocaust.

When the refugees from Nazi Germany arrived in Tientsin, they had at their disposal all the social, educational and cultural facilities created earlier. They prayed in the synagogue, came to the Jewish Club "Kunst" where they where always welcome, their children could study in the Tientsin Jewish School (TJS).

Many of the refugees were highly professional people and positively influenced the TJC. By the end of the forties most of the Jewish had left Tientsin and in 1958 the community ceased to exist. However, the younger generation of Jews who immigrated into Israel, the USA, Canada, Australia and other countries were better prepared for a new life facing immigrants.

It would be fair to state that all this, together with the safe haven and friendly environment provided by the Chinese, city of Tientsin helped the younger generation to make a good start in new conditions with new challenges.

Many years after they had left Tientsin, these people still remember the TJS and the club "Kunst" and in their letters and articles to the IYS mention these former entities with a warm feeling and nostalgia. One of the reasons why the accepted pattern of development of the TJC proved to be so successful is that the people organizing the educational and

cultural institutions were selected both in terms of professionalism and devotion to the cause. However, limited information has been made known to the public regarding these fellowships.

The prayer book was published in Jerusalem at the beginning of the XX century. Leo passed it to his son Fishel. After Fishel passed away in Tel- Aviv in 1983 the prayer book was preserved by his daughter ora Nitzan, Leo's granddaughter.

I will bring forward the information about just one of the members of the School Board, and that is about Mrs. G. Kabuliansky who happens to be my mother. I believe that her background unveils in the specific circumstances of a Jewish school attended mostly by Russian speakers and functioning in a Chinese city. Here are some facts that characterize this member of the school board.

Gisa-Hava (Guita) was born in the Siberian town of Verhneudinsk (Ulanude). At the age of 17 she received the title of "People's Teacher" and began teaching in an elementary school in her native town. In her certificate it was stated that she was not eligible for teaching Russian children. Notwithstanding the prohibition, she taught these kids for 2 years.

A group of teachers including Gutia organized a teachers union that started teaching grown-ups as well as children in Sunday schools. This Union was dissolved in 1905 by the Tsarist government. In 1905 Gutia began studying in the prestigious Tomsk Imperial University (juridical Faculty) and graduated in 1912. she was one of the few Jewish women who managed to make it, although

during that period she was expelled twice by anti-Semitic executives. She began teaching Jewish children in her hometown and gave private lessons to Russian children. This experience proved invaluable after emigrating from Russia in 1924 to Tientsin, China. Here, in 1925 she was elected as a member of the board of the TJS. Surely, a Jewish woman who overcame such barriers in the Russian Empire would be bent on helping Jewish children in their quest for knowledge. During more than ten years, right up till departure of the Kabuliansky family from Tientsin in 1936, she was a member of the board. 70 years later I was glad to see my mother in the 3 photographs of the staff and students of the TJS included in the above mentioned album.

Mrs.G.Kabuliansky also took an active part in organizing the leisure of Jewish kids in Tientsin. Especially exciting were the picnics on the holiday of Lag Ba'omer, when the children were taken out of town into woods where they enjoyed numerous games and competitions.

Of course this short account is devoted to just one of the members of the TJS board. Looking at the list of teachers and members of the boards, published in the Russian-language version of the IYS Bulletin (June-July 2004, N380, pp 56-59 "Jews in Tientsin, 1904- 1935") I can see the names of several people, whom I had known and still remember: Mrs.Bihovsky-Epstein, Jacobson, Dr. Pertz, Mrs.M.I.Gershevich (Leo's wife). They were intelligent people committed to the education of the younger generation.

Hopefully, IYS's access to the archives of the former Tientsin Hebrew association now in care of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and recollections of former Tientsiners will uncover additional information about the people who worked for the welfare of the Community.

(from page 52)

photograph albums, been snuffed out in their prime?

I knew the people best placed to help me were the "new KGB", known in post-Soviet times as the FSB. I learned from my friends that the Russian authorities were starting to open up the old Soviet archives and to release information about Stalin's purges. They suggested that, in a system which still ran of officious bits of paper with crests, signatures and stamps, the rehabilitation certificates I now had might get me a foot through the door.

In all honesty, I did not expect to get very much. After all, more than sixty years had passed since the purges. At the most, I thought I might get an official response written in Soviet-speak, full of legal clause numbers and acronyms. But at the very least, it was a chance to test Russia's new openness and see whether things had really changed. It was worth a go! So one sunny morning, I caught the metro to the Lubyanka -headquarters of Soviet state security in all its incarnations – Cheka, GPU, OGPU, NKVD, MVD, KGB – and now of the Russian FSB – to seek their help.

"You did what?" many people have asked me. "Weren't you afraid?" Of course, it was eerie to enter through the heavy wooden doors of that sinister building. But the thing I feared most was being turned away. In retrospect, I have come to understand that my attitude was very much conditioned by the fact that I grew up here in Australia, free from fear and harassment, in a society where respect for the rule of law was tempered by a healthy skepticism about the institutions of power and where individuals were encouraged to "have a go!"

I got a lot more than I bargained for. Enter Vladimir, the blond blue-eyed face of the new KGB – charming,

casually dressed in blue jeans and a polo shirt, speaking English with a Russian American accent. He was so keen to help me that he dictated to me on the spot the formal letter from me to him setting out my requests. He also had a wicked sense of humor. "Nobody is engaged in repression now, madam," he told a telephone caller while I was in his room, "we are only involved in rehabilitation". Vladimir made no promises and explained it would take some time to trace where any information might be held. But some six months down the track, after some prodding from my friends, I received a two-page summary from the Ministry of Security in Nizhny Novgorod (formerly Gorky) setting out what had happened to four of the five members of the family. All had been arrested under the infamous Article 58.6 of the Criminal Code as Japanese spies in 1937 or 1938. Many, aged 26, and her father had been executed; her younger brother sentenced to ten years hard labor in the Gulag, and her mother exiled to Kazakhstan for five years. In 1956 they had all been cleared of any charges and rehabilitated. I found it totally inconceivable. The family had left Manchuria in order to escape the Japanese!! What could they possibly have done to even be suspected of such a crime? I was still looking for logic and reason where there was none.

About a month later I received advice from Khabarovsk in the Russian Far East about the missing brother Abram. It said that he was working as a Chinese interpreter for the Far Eastern NKVD when he was arrested and charged for treason and anti-Soviet activity in Khabarovsk. But all charges against him had been dropped in 1957. He too had been "posthumously rehabilitated".

(To be continued in the next issue)

A Russian Jewish Composer in China

Prof. Xu Buzeng Shanghai

From the 1920's to the early 1950's a number of resident Jewish musicians made contributions to Shanghai's western music. Among them were Arrigo Foa, Alfred Wittenberg, Wolfgang Fraenkel, Walter Joachim and Aaron Avshalomov. Arrigo Foa (1900 – 1981) was from Italy. He graduated from the Milan Conservatory with first prize, was invited to Shanghai in 1921, and became concertmaster, deputy conductor and conductor of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra (now The Shanghai Symphony Orchestra) which was founded in 1879. Foa also taught at the National Conservatory of Music in Shanghai (now The Shanghai Conservatory of Music). From its very founding in 1927 as the first of its kind in China, the Conservatory and the Orchestra have been and remain the two most important music institutions in Shanghai. Foa went to Hong Kong in 1952 and conducted the Sino-British Orchestra (renamed the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra). Foa was decorated with the Star of Solidarity by the Italian Government in 1952 in recognition of his work in the musical field in Shanghai.

Wittenberg and Fraenkel fled to Shanghai from Germany in 1939 as refugees while Joachim left Germany a year after Hitler's reign in 1933 and came to Shanghai from Kuala Lumpur in 1940. Alfred Wittenberg (1880 – 1952) was educated in the Konigsliche Musikademie, Berlin and played in the Konigsliches as first violinist in 1900 – 1903 and in the first Artur Schnabel Piano Trio. He was one of the world famous Hungarian violinists, Joseph Joachim's best pupil, and was noted for his ravishingly beautiful tone. In Shanghai Wittenberg's virtuosity in performance, his astonishingly good

memory and his erudite musicianship enabled him to demonstrate how different performing masters interpreted music in different ways. At a time when western music in Shanghai was still at an elementary level Wittenberg demonstrations broadened the musical outlook of his pupils many of whom became outstanding violinists.

Both Wolfgang Fraenkel (1897 – 1983) and Walter Joachim like Arrigo Foa played in the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra and taught at the National Conservatory of Music. Fraenkel studied violin, piano and music theory at the Klindworth Scharwenke Conservatory in Berlin. In Shanghai Fraenkel taught composition as well as harmony and counterpoint. He introduced the new composition techniques of the second Viennese School headed by Arnold Schonberg Hius, leading his pupils into realms hitherto unknown to them. Fraenkel emigrated from Shanghai to the U.S.A. in 1947 and his Symphonische Aphorismen was awarded first prize in the International Competition of the City of Milan. Joachim studied at the Stadlische Hochschule fur Musik in Cologne. After graduation, he toured across Europe and Asia. In Shanghai he enjoyed a high profile both in the Orchestra and the Conservatory and among his pupils was Situ Zhiwen who later became the Chairwoman of the All China Cellists Association. Joachim left Shanghai for Canada where he joined the Montreal Symphony Orchestra as first cellist until 1979 and taught for a long time at McGill and several other music institutions. His teaching produced a number of talented young cellists there, as he had done in Shanghai. In January 1992 he was made Knight of the Order of Quebec in appreciation of his extraordinary contribution to

the cultural life of Canada. In 1987 he was invited by the Shanghai Conservatory to attend its sixteenth anniversary celebrations. This reunion with former colleagues and pupils in the Shanghai Orchestra and Conservatory after a lapse of thirty odd years created immense joy. In November 1991 he again visited China with his wife Monique this time giving coaching lessons gratis to master cello students in Shanghai Jinan (the provincial capital of Shandong), and Beijing.

Aaron Avshalomov (1894 – 1965) was born in a Russian Jewish family in the city of Nikolayevsk-on-Amur (Chinese name Miao Jie, meaning Temple Street) at the easternmost edge of Siberia where the river of Amur runs into the sea of Okhotsk. The region was occupied by the Russian troops in 1850 and ceded by the Chinese Emperor to the Tsar in the 1860 Sino-Russian Peking treaty. As an inland navigation and fishing port Nikolayevsk was also the base of the Russian Pacific Fleet until it moved to Vladivostok in 1872, twelve years after the latter was also ceded by China to Russia in 1860,

Aaron Avshalomov was the grandson of a Mountain Jew from the Caucasus who had been banished to Siberia for the crime of killing in the 1970's. The convict was sent into exile with his wife and a one-year-old baby. There and on the Kamchatka Peninsula the exile established fisheries, which his son Asher took over. During Aaron's childhood there was still a large Chinese population with Chinese shops, restaurants and theatres in Nikolayevsk. As Asher's fisheries prospered he had many employees who were mostly Chinese. One of Asher's trusted employees was an elderly Chinese whose responsibility was to take care of little Aaron. He

often took Aaron to his home and to the Chinese theatre to watch Peking opera performances and familiarized him with Chinese legends, folk music, street cries and story telling. Aaron was fascinated by the Peking opera in particular and he felt that this genre was unique in blending ingeniously the acting, posture, and facial expressions with singing, dancing and orchestra accompaniment into an organic whole. Although he felt that the music of the opera was rich and colorful, he also believed that at times the music was a rough, tedious and had an unceasing repetition of simple melodies. He thought that it was a pity that the vast musical treasury embedded in Chinese folklore lay untouched. Later he resolved to devote his life to the advancement of Chinese national music and the Peking opera.

After finishing the gymnasium Aaron was sent to Zurich to study medicine, which he soon found he could not stomach, and instead he bootlegged his favorite music study at the Zurich Conservatory without his father's knowledge. Later he was summoned to escort his youngest sister Sarah to Switzerland, also to study music when the Russian October revolution broke out in 1917. Aaron, as his family's only son, was spirited out of the country, became stateless, traveled through Northeast China (Manchuria) and North China and headed for the U.S.A. Ignorant of the U.S. law then in force which withdrew citizenship from women who married an alien, Esther became stateless as her husband. The couple embarked for China in 1918 and their son, Jacob, a future composer and conductor, was born in Tsingtao (now Quindao) in 1919. In 1921 Aaron and his family left for Tientsin (now Tienjin) and then Peking (now Beijing). He made his living as a bookman successively for the China booksellers and the Libraire Francaise. In the meantime he collected Chinese folk music for his future compositions with Chinese

traits.

Avshalomov's first opera was on the Goddess of Mercy, Kuan Yin (Bodhisattva). The Chinese subject, was presented in the ballroom of the magnificent Grande Hotel de Pekin in 1924. His sister Sarah already an accomplished singer and pianist, came from the Soviet Union's Siberia, coached the cast and sang the role of KuanYin. The Opera was produced also in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. in the following year. Once again it was mounted at the Neighborhood Playhouse, New York directed by Howard Barlow.

In 1926, in Peking, Avshalomov composed The Soul of Chin a dramatic ballet the story of which was written by a Japanese by the name of Ken Nakazawa. The ballet was first produced in the same year, in Shanghai on May 21, 1933 at the Grand Theatre and on January 19, 1936 at the Lyceum Theatre where its music was played by the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra with the composer guest conducting. In the U.S. it was performed in 1928 by Avshalomov's friend Jacque Gerschkovitch conducting the Portland Junior Symphony Orchestra and again guest conducting the New York Symphony Orchestra. In 1997 in Russia's capital Aaron's son Jacob conducted the Moscow Symphony Orchestra to play "The Soul of the Ch'in" for a CD recording. He was interested that this music composed in China over half a century ago should be completely intelligible to this Russian Orchestra.

While Aaron indulged himself in composing, his wife Esther was often angry that her husband had neither attended to his proper duties nor made much money to become a rich man, as other foreigners in China usually did. Frequent quarrels between them on this issue finally led to their divorce. Aaron left alone for Shanghai to seek better opportunities as a musician and married Tatiana from Russia in 1934. Esther remained

in Peking, made a living as a typist and took care of little Jacob. When Avshalomov came to Shanghai it was a metropolis still throbbing with full force and excitement of the New Culture movement. He made acquaintances with many Chinese musicians like Nie Er, Xian Xinghei, Ren Guang, Lui Ji and He Luting as well as writers dramatists and actors. Nie Er was the composer of among other works "The March of the Volunteers" which later became the National anthem of the Peoples Republic of China. Nie Er wrote the score of the March for the film "Sons and Daughters of the Hour" when he was in Japan on the way to the Soviet Union and he mailed it to Shanghai. But he was too busy to make the orchestration himself. His friend He Luting who later became the director of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and is now its honorary director at the age of ninety-six, turned to Avshalomov for help. Avshalomov produced the first orchestration of this song at He's request and his orchestration was different from the later one's, including the one in current use for the military band, in that he made it in a five tone (pentatonic) scale without Western harmonics, and play on the DIZI (Chinese flute) the ERHU (two stringed Chinese fiddle), the SANXIEN (a three stringed Chinese plucked instrument) and the SHENG (Chinese mouth organ) with the PENGU (Chinese drum) and lots of other Chinese percussion instruments. It was a great pity that shortly afterwards Nie Er was drowned when swimming off a beach in Japan. Never having had the chance to hear his March played in orchestration. He died and early death at the age of twenty three.

While still in Shanghai Nie Er was present at the premiers of Avshalomov's symphonic sketch "Peiping Hutungs" on February 7, 1932 and on his pantomime "Incense Shadows". On both occasions, Nie Er

like Avshalomov's and other Chinese friends hailed the performance and published comments in which he made sound analysis of Avshalomov's works, affirmed their achievements while criticized their deficiencies. In Shanghai Avshalomov worked for the Pathé-Marconi firm of France in Shanghai as the conductor of its orchestra. From 1933 to 1943 he was head of the Shanghai Public Library affiliated to the Shanghai Municipal Council, the governing body of the Anglo-American ruled International Settlement. With a longtime experience as a bookman working successively for the China Booksellers and Librairie Francaise in Peking and for the Chinese-American Publishing Company in Shanghai. He fulfilled the requirements of expertise of library sciences and the Dewey Decimal System of Classification; he was enrolled as the chief librarian. The munificent monthly salary of two hundred fifty teals sufficed to make him live in plenty and compose at ease during his spare time. In the library he was able to chat leisurely with such illustrious visitors as the writer Somerset Maugham and Pearl Buck and the highly controversial figure Ignatius Timothy Trebitsch-Lincoln. Trebitsch-Lincoln (1879-1943) was an international adventurer and accomplished linguist of Jewish descent born in Hungary and became a Buddhist monk in China. Avshalomov had a profound love and predilection for things Chinese ever since his childhood. In Shanghai his drawing room was decorated with Chinese paintings and Peking opera costumes as well as various kinds of Chinese musical instruments like the Sheng (Chinese mouth organ), the Xiao (vertical Chinese bamboo flute), the Gu (Chinese drum), the dizi (horizontal Chinese bamboo flute), the Suona (Chinese woodwind instrument) and the Luo (Chinese gong). He loved to dress himself in Chinese long gown and wear Chinese cloth shoes. In his big collection of

books there were lots and lots of translations from Chinese classics and monographs on Chinese music, history and culture.

Among Avshalomov's Chinese friends there were three who offered him utmost help. They were Jiang Chunfang, Shen Zhibai, and Yuan Likang.

Jiang Chunfang gave Avshalomov all-round help. Jiang had a large circle of friends among the writers, musicians, dramatists, journalists, film workers and actresses whom he introduced to Avshalomov and whom he invited to join discussions on the rehearsals and performances of Avshalomov's music and stage works. As the director of the "Shidai Ribao" (Epoch Daily) he published news about and commentaries on Avshalomov's works and performances to make them widely known. In the two years from 1943 when Avshalomov was dismissed by the Japanese from the Chief-Librarianship of the Shanghai Public Library and lived in great privation, to August 1945 when the Japanese capitulated, Jiang with his Chinese friends like Yuan and others lost no time to come to Avshalomov's rescue, offering him financial support and encouraging him to persist in his composition.

Yuan Likang was a music loving patriotic and rich but not too rich coal merchant from Harbin, Manchuria, where he had been the head of an anti-Japanese harmonica club. When the club's activities were detected by the Japanese, then in power, Yuan made a narrow escape from their arrest and fled to Shanghai. In Shanghai his business prospered and, on learning from Jiang Chunfang that Avshalomov had lost his job and fallen into dire straits, he not only supplied Avshalomov with his family's daily living expenses but also founded with Jiang Chunfang and a friend of theirs a Chinese Music Drama Association for the rehearsals and performances of Avshalomov's "The Great Wall". Yuan supported Avshalomov not

only with his own means but also with loans from banks, friends and relatives. His support was great and timely. Avshalomov was deeply grateful that he once wrote his son Jacob that without Yuan's financial help he would have been a beggar on the street.

Shen Zhibai was an erudite Chinese scholar well versed in Chinese as well as Western music, history, theory, and composition techniques. He had a profound study of Chinese music, acting, dancing, and costumes as exemplified in the Peking and Qungu operas and folk art. Shen thought that a new genre of Chinese national music should be created, with the Chinese national style, using melodies operatic and folk music and played with modern Western instruments. Shen and Avshalomov taught and learned from one another in that Shen familiarized Avshalomov with Chinese melodies and thematic materials while Avshalomov helped Shen to master Western composition techniques. They shared common interests in promoting Chinese national music. The melodies Avshalomov made use of in the second movement (Adagio) and third movement (allegro non troppo) of his piano concerto in G were suggested by Shen. They were respectively the melody "In Memory of a Nobleman" from a Quangu opera and the tune "The Hegemon King Removing His Armour" an ancient pipa (Chinese guitar) solo piece. Avshalomov's stage works like "The soul of the Ch'in" "Incense Shadows" and the "The Great wall" were likewise composed with Shen's collaboration or revised at Shen's suggestion. Shen, Avshalomov and other Chinese musicians. In many respects the relationship between Shen and Avshalomov was somewhat similar to that between the Russian art and music critic Vladimir Stasov (1824-1906) and the new Russian Music School (nicknamed "The mighty handful") composers like Alexander

Borodin, Modist Moussorgsky and Nikoai Rimsky-Korsakov. Also in the production of Avshalomov's many works Shen played an important role as an advisor and secretary. Without Shen's it was unlikely that Avshalomov could advance with such steady steps toward his goal of creating music with Chinese themes and Western composition and orchestration techniques.

What Avshalomov tried to do throughout his creative life is to evolve a synthesis of Chinese musical materials and western forms and media. He studied not only ancient Chinese classical music, but also folk and temple music, as well as street cries. The melodies he composed (almost never borrowed) were in the several five-tone (pentatonic) scales. He combined his Chinese-style melodies with other secondary tunes; using simple meters such as 2/4 much

of the time and in the minor keys. The original name of the symphonic sketch "Peiping Hutungs" was "The Impressions of Peiping Hutungs". Hutung was the Peking dialect for alley or by-way and Peiping was the name used for Peking (now Beijing) from 1928 to 1949. When China's capital moved from there to Nanking (now Nanjing). Composed in Peiping in 1931-1932 this ten-minute long music was a tonal evocation of street sounds from dawn to dusk. There were early morning street cries, bits of Chinese opera, temple and popular music as well as funeral procession with its deafening panoply of drums to drive away the evil spirits. After reaching a final climax the music ended in the same tranquil mood with which it began. This tonal depiction of the carefree leisurely life in the ancient city had its world premiere in Shanghai on

February 7, 1933. Again on May 21, 1933 it was played together with "The Soul of the Chin" by the Shanghai municipal orchestra at the Grand Theatre, Shanghai, conducted by the composer. It was recorded two years later for the Path-Marconi firm of France in Shanghai, played by the same orchestra under the baton of the Italian conductor Mario Paci, a pupil of Giovanni Sgambati. The recording was made according to an exchange agreement of Path firm with the Columbia Recording Corporation. This music full of oriental charm had its American premiere on November 8, 1935 played by the Philadelphia Orchestra with Leopold Stokowsky on the podium. This was followed by Jacob Avshalomov's making a recording of it with the Portland Junior Symphony Orchestra.

(to be continued)

60 Years After the End of World War II

by Leonid Shkoliar

(Birobidjan Community)

Just before the war, the Soviet youth organization, the Komsomil, with an affiliate in the Birsk region, sent us to help build a road in Babstvo-Leninskoye. After hearing news about the Nazi aggression we immediately left for home, and on August 21, 1941, aged 17, I was drafted into the Army by the Birsk local military commission. It is interesting to note that I was a former pupil who had been drafted together with the Director of the Birsk school. We were both sent to pass a two-month military training course as political officers at the Khabarovsk Infantry School. Later I was sent to work on the fortification construction projects in the Amurskaya oblast.

Just before the start of the war with Japan in August 1945, our division was given orders to take new military

positions near the Grodekovo border town in the Primorye region. We crossed the Manchuria border on the night of August 8-9, 1945. The roads there were in a very bad condition and jammed with troops moving. We started to gain ground in Manchuria with no enemy resistance at first, but soon afterwards it was by the hidden enemy machinegun fire. Later we reached these formidable built-in mountain fortifications unnoticed at first sight. Only after storming the Small Hingan Heights we were really surprised to see these heavily fortified positions where regiments could live independently for years.

When the heavy fighting and capture of the Manchurian town Mutanchiang ended, I was summoned, as an infantry automatic fire platoon commander, to attend an officers' meeting at which we were given orders to be ready

for immediate travel by transport to Vladivostok. There we were told to be ready to board a ship designated to carry us tomorrow to Hokkaido Island, Japan proper. But in reality this "tomorrow" lasted for a week of uncertainty. After a day of sailing from the port, the ship suddenly stopped, and it was announced that we were to sail to South Sahalin Island. While we were awaiting orders, the USA sent an invasion force to Hokkaido and occupied all the ports there. Just before our arrival, the battle for South Sahalin had ended with the border guards arriving from the North. We finally landed at Kholmsk. I served there for a while, then again moved to South Sahalin and later to Brest on the western border with Poland.

I was demobilized in captain's rank and later worked in TU and party organizations in the Obluchenie region, and finally in Birobidjan.

The Tientsin Synagogue

By Teddy Piastonovich

The story of the Tientsin Community¹ and its Synagogue can be said to start in distant Harbin with the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railroad (CER) in July of 1897. It was the largest civil engineering project ever undertaken by Russia of that time. The line Tarskaya (Moscow) - Hilar - Harbin - Nikolsk-Ussuriski and Port Arthur was to be the main link between Moscow and the warm water port of Port Arthur (Lushun). The development and construction of the railroad brought with it Russian workers to northern China that included officials, railroad workers, businessmen, doctors, musicians (most of them Jewish), miners, laborers and so on. On arrival most settled in Harbin finding employment with the railroad.² However some decided to continue on to Tientsin and Shanghai forming the first Ashkenazi Jewish communities there. By 1904 about two hundred Jewish families resided in Tientsin. Not being accepted by the non-Chinese communities, especially the anti-Semitic White Russian refugees the Jewish families adopted the Harbin pattern of self-help and determination. The Tientsin Hebrew Association (THA) was duly registered with the Russian (Czarist) Consulate in Tientsin.³

The community continued to grow at a moderate pace when a series of events in Harbin in 1924 would cause a rapid and substantial increase in the Tientsin Jewish population. Following the Rapallo conference in 1922 when Germany recognized the Soviet regime, a Sino-Soviet agreement was signed in Beijing leading to a takeover of the Chinese Eastern Railway by China. One of the conditions of the takeover was that only Chinese or Soviet citizens could be employed by the CER. As a quid pro quo China agreed to an

expanded Russian influence in Outer Mongolia. This agreement was a severe blow to the Jews since most of them were stateless, because having left Russia when it was Czarist, they found themselves citizens of a state that no longer existed. The situation came to a head when in 1924 China lifted diplomatic recognition of the Russians consulates. The Soviet regime stepped in with an offer of Soviet citizenship to those émigrés. (Jews and non Jews alike). This left the Jews with a critical decision. To accept Soviet citizenship and remain in the employ of the CER, or to remain stateless and loose their jobs. Many elected the latter option⁴ and were obliged to seek alternate employment in Harbin. Opportunities, however were scarce and this prompted many to relocate to Tientsin (and Shanghai) in search of new employment and business opportunities.

The Tientsin community experienced rapid growth in the years 1925-1935. Many of the newcomers to Tientsin were Zionists and Revisionists (The BETAR Movement in China was established by Leo Piastunovich in Harbin who then moved to Tientsin in 1932) whilst others were Socialists and Bundists. Whatever their political inclination they were by and large observant Jews. To retain their sense of cohesion and self-help they established communal services complete with a school (largely subsidized by the community), hospital (open to all who applied), synagogue, old age home, free kitchen, cemetery, and a social club (Kunst) an arbitration society provided financial assistance to those in need. As the community continued to expand a Rabbi was engaged to lead the congregation (Rabbi Shmuel Shaul Levin). Until then prayers were held in rented premises on Busy

Street but the Rabbi understood that a permanent house of prayer was needed soon because there was heavy pressure from the landlord to vacate the rented premises.

In 1935 this need was discussed with prominent community members. To assure widespread support from his eclectic congregation and knowing full well that this project would impose a serious financial strain on the communal coffers, the Rabbi wrote⁵

The General Purpose of the Synagogue

A Synagogue is built not only for religious observances, as are places of worship in other faiths, but as a popular university for the Jewish people in all senses of the word where the "Sons of Israel" would be taught the Torah and eternal G-d and acquire the superior traits which differentiate the Sons of Israel from others as being the first in compassion and charity and educate them in those areas where the "Sons of Israel" excel. Those familiar with Jewish history are aware that all charitable acts start in the Synagogue. In times of calamity or distress in the life of a Jew, he would come to the Synagogue and when called to the Torah and give his blessings, donate a certain sum to the Synagogue and seek the mercy of the Almighty to save him from trouble and grief. Likewise in times joy he could be heard in the Synagogue: when marrying or commemorating the birth of his son or daughter he would come to this house and bless the Synagogue or another charitable body exhibiting his better traits, and thanking providence for all favors granted him, and in appreciation to G-d donates and shares part of his income with the Synagogue or another charitable body."

In July 1936, a group of Tientsin

residents vacationing in the seaside resort of Peitaiho (now Beidaihe) met to discuss the issue of constructing the synagogue with Rabbi Levin. As a result, a spiritual-financial committee was formed in September of 1936 within the framework of the Tientsin Hebrew Association (THA). The committee was chaired by Rabbi Levin and consisted of: Mr. A. Witgob - President, Y. Lifshitz – Secretary, L. Gershevich, then the President of THA, P.L. Topper, M. Baeff, N. Ferber, I. Pecker, A. Stekol, M. Schiffrin, F. Merkin, L. Merkin, M. Raskin, A. Tikotski, S. Altschuler, D. Habinsky, Joe Morris and Engineer I.U. Levitin (И.Ю. Левитин)⁶ A total sum of Tientsin Dollars (T\$) 8000 was allocated from THA's central fund for the purchase of a plot on the corner of Douglas and Sydney for T\$5837.73.⁷

Eng. I.U. Levitin was commissioned to produce plans, specifications and drawings for the synagogue. These were published in Russian and English for distribution to building contractors and to interested members of the community (no records remain of this letter but it is mentioned in the archives). As planning progressed it became clear that the purchased plot was too small and a larger site was bought from Messrs. Collins and Co real estate agents on the corner of Creek and Dublin roads (now Nanjing and Zhengzhou Roads) for a sum of T\$11,847.45. The Douglas and Sydney road site was then sold below its purchase price of T\$5400.00. Project management and the supervision of construction was awarded to the local firm of Lin and Yang.

To raise money for its construction the committee employed a novel method (for that day) of selling "building blocks" of the Synagogue. This effort was headed by L. Gershevich (the President of the Community in those years). The first lot of 37 blocks were auctioned off for a sum of T\$6000. In all 241 members participated in

the auction. The bids varied between T\$750 (the highest) to T\$3.00 (the lowest). The majority of bids were in the T\$5-T\$10 range. A separate "Synagogue" account was opened in the books of the THA and all monies connected with the construction of the Synagogue were deposited there. Rather than engage a prime contractor it was decided that the THA would fulfill this function and enter into contracts and pay vendors as needed. The first stage contract was awarded to Messrs Yen (full name unknown). Supervision and quality control remained with Messrs Lin and Yang.

The corner stone was laid on the 13th of June 1937 in the presence of most of the members of the community.

This event did not go unnoticed by the foreign community. On June 9th 1937 a congratulatory letter was sent by the Minister of the Union Church the Rev. T.T. Faichney MA MD⁸

Union Church
THE MANSE
53 Gordon road
Tientsin
North China
Rev T. T. Faichney M.A. M.D

The Tientsin Hebrew Association
126A Victoria Road

Dear Sirs –

I notice by the newspaper this morning that you are laying the foundation stone of the new Synagogue on Sunday morning 13th inst. It is a matter of genuine regret on my part that owing to the fact that I have to be in Shanhaikuan to take Church Services for the British troops, I shall not be able to be present with you on this very happy occasion. The religion which I profess owes very much to the Heritage of the Hebrews; in worship, in religion and in morals; and not least of all in the service of the Synagogue, which was taken over in large measure into the

Church, and is, in fact, the basis of the Services used to this day in the churches.

My prayers and good wishes will be with you on Sunday, that the Lord may bless you "in your going out and your coming in, from this time forth, and even forever more"

Yours Sincerely
(Signed T.T. Faichney)

On June 13 1937 a prayer meeting was held to commemorate the laying of the cornerstone. Records of the day show that the meeting opened with a prayer "Pitchu Shaarei Zedek – Open the Gates of Righteousness" sung by Cantor Krimchansky followed by a sermon delivered by Rabbi Shmuel Shaul Levin, and the laying of the cornerstone. A list 32 of the initial donors amongst them L. Gershevich, Rabbi Shmuel Shaul Levin, Leo Piastunovich and other prominent members and donors were sealed in an earthenware vessel and buried in the western cornerstone. (The writer assumes that list is still in its original position place).

Because of civil unrest and the resulting labor shortage and flooding, construction of the Synagogue was halted in the early part of 1937, but a newly elected THA committee working with the Finance-Construction committee decided to renew work and in spite of all difficulties the first floor and the "Хедер Шейни" – Heder Sheni – Second Room) was completed in the rough in March of 1939. The rented space on Busy Road that served as a temporary Synagogue was vacated and returned to the landlord.

On March 19, 1939, in the presence of hundreds of members the 8 Torah Scrolls were transferred in two limousines from Busy Street to the partially finished Synagogue. These were ceremoniously placed in the "Second Room" which henceforth would be used only on weekdays



China and for southern China, as well as a Military Yen. The Federal Reserve Bank of China issued the Northern Chinese Dollar (also known as the Peking Dollar, Tientsin Dollar) (CNJP). Northern China had refused to send its silver reserves to the Nationalist government under the 1935 monetary reform, and autonomous coins and banknotes were issued in 1936 prior to the Japanese invasion. The Northern Chinese Dollar was set at par to the Japanese Yen, and later set at 1 Northern Chinese Dollars equal to 3.8 Nanking Dollars.

The Japanese set up the Central Bank of China in Nanking after they invaded southern China. The Nanking Yuan were equal to one-fourth Military Yen and were exchanged at the rate of 1 Nanking Yuan equal to 2 Chinese Dollars after occupation. All the Japanese currencies issued in occupied territories became worthless after the Japanese lost the war, though citizens were usually allowed to redeem some of them into the local currency, though usually at a discount to their face value. (Global Financial Data Inc.)

⁸ This type of interfaith courtesy was commonly practiced the foreign communities who felt a need to maintain 'solidarity' between foreigner residents. The exception were the White Russians who were rabidly anti-Semitic.

⁹ Open the gates of righteousness for me, I will enter and praise God, This is the gateway to Hashem, Through which the righteous may enter

¹⁰ This prayer is said on entering a Synagogue as part of the morning Service "And as for me, in the multitude of thy loving kindness I will come into thy house: in thy fear will I worship toward the holy temple. Into the house of God we will walk in company. How Godly are thy tents, O Jacob; thy tabernacles, O Israel. And as for me, in the multitude of thy loving kindness I will come into thy house: in thy fear will I worship toward the holy temple....."

and Saturdays until the completion of the Synagogue and the transfer of the Torahs to the permanent "Aron Kodesh – Torah Ark" in the Synagogue's main hall.

The Jewish Life Newspaper (Published in Harbin) of that period describes the ceremonies:

9:00 am

Most of the community gathered near the Synagogue, several hundred members.

Before entering the lower floor of the new Synagogue called "Heder Shenit – the Second Room" those attending were offered the opportunity to bid for the "Keys" to the Synagogue. The response was enthusiastic and several thousand dollars were collected.

10:00 AM

The ceremonial consecration of the Synagogue commenced. Cantor Kremchansky chanted "Open the Gates of Righteousness"⁹ and "How godly are thy Tents, O Jacob"¹⁰ The festive placing of the Torah scrolls after Hakafoth were performed (circumventing) was accompanied by fund raising e.g. the "Sale of Doors and Windows" and payment for every prayer sung by Cantor Kremchansky. In total of T\$ 5700 were raised on that day. Engineer I.U. Levitin was charged with the planning and execution of the project.

(Endnotes)

¹ Much of the data for this article is taken from the Tientsin Communal

Archives and the Golden Book detailing events surrounding the construction of the Synagogue. This record is handwritten by the Honorary Secretary of the Synagogue Y.M. Lifshchitz

² The history of Harbin and the Chronology of events there can be found on www.jewsofchina.org

³ China withdrew its recognition of the Chinese Consulates in 1922

⁴ A wise decision for many, as time would tell. Those who retained Soviet citizenship were repatriated to Russia after World War II and underwent grievous suffering at the hands of the Soviets.

⁵ What follows is the writer's loose translation of the Hebrew Text. (A translation in Russian also exists in the Tientsin archives)

⁶ Initially Levitin submitted a proposal for a Synagogue in the Moorish style which was then popular in Central Europe. It followed the architecture of the Synagogue in St. Petersburg designed by the Russian architect Shaposhnikov; with the interior done by the Jewish architect Bachman - the first Jewish graduate of the Arts Academy in Russia. The two Harbin Synagogues designed by Levitin show marked similarities to the one in St. Petersburg. For reasons that are unclear at this time, the Tientsin Synagogue was built in the Transitional Style

⁷ When the Japanese invaded the rest of China in 1936, they issued separate currencies for northern

Selihot in Beijing

By Barbara Sofer

"Do you know when was the last time I went to synagogue services?" asked Frank, an elderly visitor from Australia.

Rabbi Shimon Freudlich is used to such questions in the unusual flock he shepherds in Beijing, China. The rabbi of the four-year-old Chabad House has a congregation drawn from the thousand Jews who happen to be in Beijing on any given day, most of them from a growing local community, the others tourists, business people, and youngsters with the travel itch. Like Chabad emissaries everywhere, he and his wife Dina have had to solicit the resources to set up an outpost of Judaism in this far-flung capital. The challenges are prodigious, including a communist government. Nonetheless, as the world's fastest growing economy, coupled with the drive to get the capital in shape for the 2008 Olympic Games draws entrepreneurs and curious travelers to Beijing, his congregation grows. Once barely a minyan, Rosh Hashana 5766 will be kosher catered at the nearby Renaissance Hotel; 120 have already signed up.

But on Friday night, Chabad House somehow stretches for whoever comes by, be they bearded kashrut inspectors back from long rides of dirt roads traveling into the interior of the country to check canned fruit and fish factories, Israeli tourists sponsored by optical companies, wandering young people or vacationers like me. To gain entry to the guarded area set aside for embassies, you make the gesture of a pretended beard beneath your chin. Although the minyan attracts some folks, more guests arrive for the delicious food and warm fellowship. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, who dispatched his army of emissaries, insisted on the name Chabad "House" because he wanted a homelike atmosphere.

Nonetheless, the services, conducted with passion and alacrity, may touch a note of nostalgia. Chabad House was still new the night Frank came, but there were 60 for dinner. He sat in the front row during the services. "Sit near me," Rabbi Shimon urged Frank as the living room was turned into a dining room, with long narrow tables draped in white tablecloths, the aroma of chicken soup and soy sauce wafting from the modest kitchen.

"Usually," said Rabbi Shimon, "the person who asks me when was the last time he was in a synagogue means his bar mitzvah. That's what I expected." But Frank's story was different. He told the rabbi that his last services were on April 13, 1945. Two days earlier he had been liberated by the US Third Army from Buchenwald, where 56,000 men, women and children were murdered amid the beech woods of Germany. Among them were members of Frank's family. Services were organized by Lt. Meyer Birnbaum, one of the few Orthodox Jews among the liberators, and kaddish was a mournful chant.

After the soup, on Shabbat in Beijing, Rabbi Shimon asked the guests to introduce themselves. He begged Frank to tell his story. He had become a successful businessman in Melbourne, but he never again had entered a house of prayer. "I didn't realize my soul was still searching for what I've found here tonight in Beijing," Frank said. "I vow to go to services every Friday night when I go home."

Dinner resumed, with more courses and singing. After dinner, when guests began to disperse, one of them tentatively approached Frank. "I know it's a long shot," she said. "But might you remember my father, Leonard Katz, who survived Buchenwald, too?" Rivers of tears began streaming from Frank's eyes. "Of course I remember

him," Frank said. "Like me, he was one of the few kohanim." Hesitantly, he asked in words that resonated with the sound of the biblical Joseph in Egypt, "Is your father still alive?" Leonard was living, in Connecticut. The daughter would reunite them.

The following week, Rabbi Shimon traveled to New York City. Unusual for a Chabad rabbi, he was the Shabbat guest of Satmar hassidim. After the chicken soup, the host turned to him with a half-smile. "Nu, Reb Shimon. Vus titzuch, what's happening in Beijing?"

"The story was still so fresh, that I told it," said Rabbi Shimon. To his shock, the head of the Satmar kollel began to weep. At last, he wiped a face wrinkled like a walnut. "Please tell Frank and Leonard," said the white-bearded hassid, "that Yankel, the third kohen, in the minyan, is also still alive."

Rabbi Shimon told me the story last Saturday night when my husband and I arrived a little early for slihot, the repentance prayers which precede the High Holy Days. The family was still eating, and a gathering of little girls – some with Asian features – was playing a Jewish card game in which players need quartets of Shabbat candlesticks and havdala spiceboxes.

Rabbanit Dina had just returned from a Saturday-night run to Ikea; a Beijing family wanted help in koshering its kitchen. At midnight, Rabbi Shimon pushed into place the partition that converts the living room into an Orthodox synagogue and slihot began. When his powerful voice intoned the words of Isaiah, "Beiti beit tefilla yikareh lechol ha'amim" – "My house shall be called a place of prayer for all peoples" – I knew I had come to the right address.

(From The Jerusalem Post, September 30, 2005)

IN MEMORIAM

Sara Froumson

My mother, Sarah Froumson, passed away in Melbourne, Australia on January 9, 2005.

She was born Sara Katz on May 29, 1911 in Tomsk, Russia. At the age of two she moved with her parents to Harbin, China where she grew up and matriculated at the age of 16. She married my father David Froumson in 1934 and together they moved to Shanghai where I was born.



Sara and David Froumson

Before the communist takeover, they moved to Israel and settled in Netanya in 1949 where she not only worked as a dental technician, but also assisted my father in his optical business. They were both involved in musical circles and she enjoyed my father's performances as a member of a musical quartet.

They moved to Melbourne in 1963 where she led an active social life and attend the University of the 3rd Age. She had a deep love and appreciation for classical music and whilst my father was an accomplished violinist, my mother was the pianist in the family. She loved entertaining and enjoyed having her family over for meals, and had a special soft spot for her grandchildren. Her incredibly strong will saw her overcome several battles with cancer over the last 25 years, but despite her ill health, her devotion to her immediate family was unabated and she expressed her love in many different ways.

She was fortunate to live into her 90s and see her grandchildren settled and

happily married and also enjoy her four beautiful great grandchildren.

We shall miss her forever.

Asya Deane (nee Froumson)

Dahlia Ravikovitch - Israeli Poetess

On August 21, the noted Israeli poetess, Dahlia Ravikovitch, passed away in Tel Aviv at the age of 69. She was born in Ramat Gan and brought up in Kibbutz Geva. It was probably from her parents that she inherited her talent and love for poetry: Her father was an engineer and an amateur poet. Her mother -- an educator. Dahlia was the granddaughter of a prominent social figure in the Harbin Jewish community, Solomon and Anna Ravikovitch.

Dahlia's first book of verse, "A Love of an Orange" was published in 1960. 39 years later she won "The Israel Award" for some dozen books that followed. Her poems for children and short stories are very popular in Israel, and some are taught in schools. She also translated into Hebrew world classical literature. "Dahlia Ravikovitch's poetry is characterized by a subtle blend of highly poetic and bluntly prosaic every-day Hebrew," wrote the judges in their reasoning for granting her the award. She also received The Bialik Award and the Prime Minister's Citation for Poetry.

The central motive of Dahlia's poems was the eternal struggle of man against his destiny. Ever since her father was killed in a car accident some years ago, Dahlia was in a state of deep depression, and it is common knowledge that she attempted suicide a number of times. It is widely believed that the last such attempt on August 21 was successful. May her memory be blessed.

Emmanuel Pratt

David MENS

Our compatriot David Mens passed away on October 10 in Bangkok at

the age 61 after a severe illness. David was born in Tienstin in the family of Elie and Jimmie Mens. He was loved and respected by all who knew him. He is survived by wife, two sons and Aunt Alya Krinkevich. May he remain in our memory forever! David Mens Our compatriot David Mens passed away on October 10 in Bangkok at the age 61 after a severe illness. David was born in Tienstin in the family of Elie and Jimmie Mens. He was loved and respected by all who knew him. He is survived by wife, two sons and Aunt Alya Krinkevich. May he remain in our memory forever!

Leo Max Rogalsky

Leo Max Rogalsky passed away peacefully on October 5, 2005. He was born on October 29, 1912 in Harbin, China. He served in US Army intelligence during World War II, worked at the House of Sobel for 33 years, and was President of the Far East Society of San Francisco for 12 years. He joined the Masons in 1959. Leo is survived by his beloved wife, Dorothy; stepson, Thomas (his wife Gretchen); stepdaughter, Carole; grandson, Armando; granddaughters, Cindy, Elena and Michelle; and seven great-grandchildren.

Joseph Frenkel

Our compatriot from Harbin, Josef Frenkel, the son of Isie and Adolf Frenkel, passed away on October 30 in Tel Aviv at the age of 63. The funeral took place on October 31 at the "Yarkon" cemetery. Among those who came to the cemetery were R. and T. Kaufman. His son Avi said Kadish. The deceased is survived by wife Rimma, his son Avi Frenkel from his first marriage, mother Raissa Goldin(Frenkel) who lives in Los Angeles. Igud Yotzei Sin mourns the death of Josef and expresses sincere condolences to the family of the deceased.

From The Album of The Past



**Tientsin's Lifshitz and Birulin families in Peitaiho (Beitaihe)
summer 1935, with Chinese cook and amah**

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

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e-mail: igud-sin@013.net

Editor-in-chief: **T. Kaufman**
Editorial board: **Sas Jacoby,**
Teddy Kaufman, Emmanuel Pratt,
Rebecca Toueg, Joe Levoff
Editor New Israel Messenger: **S. Jacoby**
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(from the by-laws of the Association)

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

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