

中國-猶太學院

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The Sino-Judaic Institute is a non-denominational, non-profit, and non-political organization which was founded in 1985 by an international group of scholars and laypersons with the following goals:

- 1) To promote friendship and understanding between the Chinese and Jewish peoples and to encourage and develop their cooperation in matters of mutual historical and cultural interest.
- 2) To assist the descendants of the ancient Jewish community of the city of Kaifeng, Henan province, in their efforts to preserve and maintain the artifacts and documents they have inherited from their forebears, as well as in their efforts to reconstruct the history of their community.
- 3) To support the establishment and maintenance of a Judaica section in the Kaifeng Municipal Museum.
- 4) To promote and assist the study and research of the history of early Jewish travel in China and in the rise and fall of the various Jewish communities that were established in China over the past millennia.
- 5) To publish general information and scholarly materials dealing with all aspects of the Chinese-Jewish experience.
- 6) To serve as a briefing and information center for those interested in Sino-Judaica, and for travelers to Kaifeng and other centers of Jewish interest in China.
- 7) To cooperate with other groups whose interests lie in Sinitic and Judaic matters.

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*Those who maintain membership at the Sponsor level will receive a free copy of Michael Pollak's *The Jews of Dynastic China: A Critical Bibliography*. Patrons will receive the above plus a free copy of *Sino-Judaica*.

I wish to become a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute and receive *Points East* three times a year. Enclosed is my check for \$ _____.

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Points East

中國-猶太學院

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JACOB OF ANCONA: A REVIEW OF REVIEWS

by Albert E. Dien

On September 22, a front-page article in the *New York Times* reported the publication of a translation of a previously unknown account by a 13th-century Italian Jewish merchant and rabbi purporting to be a report of his stay in China in 1271 to 1272, which would antedate the arrival of Marco Polo by some years. The publication in England of this work, entitled *The City of Light* by Jacob d'Ancona, translated by David Selbourne (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1997), has elicited much criticism, to such an extent that the American edition has been postponed, or "put in a holding pattern." According to Doreen Carvajal, in the *International Herald Tribune*, Dec. 10, a professor of Chinese history at the University of London scheduled a lecture entitled "The Faking of 'The City of Light'," and there have been other scholars who have found an Arabic word in the text tantamount, they say, to finding the word Oldsmobile in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Still, there are others who are not so quick to condemn the work. Since the topic may be of interest to the members of the Sino-Judaic Institute, I have prepared the following report on the controversy as it has appeared in various publications. I myself have not had an opportunity to read the book, and so I reserve judgment.

The translator, David Selbourne (1937-), is the grandson of a rabbi and a former Tutor in Social and Political Theory at Ruskin College, Oxford University, who now lives in Urbino, Italy. He is a guru for the "creed of communitarianism," according to Tunku Varadarajan in the *World News* of October 1. This is a philosophy which emphasizes the bond between citizens and civic order. He is a playwright and author of a number of books. Selbourne claims that the manuscript in question was secretly handed to him swathed in a piece of 17th-century silk and he was allowed to read it only on condition that he not show the original to others or to reveal its owner's identity. The reason was that the provenance of the manuscript is unclear, and the present-day owner, who lives near Urbino, fears that his ownership might be questioned in court, and so is reluctant to be identified. According to Selbourne, the anonymous owner "had no trust in disclosing it to an Italian," a sentiment which Selbourne finds quite reasonable. In addition, of course, the fact that the manuscript is not available to others has immediately raised doubts about its authenticity.

The alleged author of the manuscript, Jacob of Ancona, a merchant from that port city in northern Italy, set off with an entourage of eight men and two women in April, 1270, in a four-masted ship, and after a journey by land and sea, reached Zaitun (modern Quanzhou, in Fujian province) in August, 1271. He

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In Memorium Leo Gabow

By Rena Krasno

As this issue of *Points East* was going to print, we at the Sino-Judaic Institute were very much saddened to learn that the Founding President of the Sino-Judaic Institute, Leo Gabow, had passed away. He had fought a long, courageous battle against his cruel disease, retaining his wide interest in many subjects till the very end. He even found the strength to write shortly before his death, the short obituary (which appears in this issue) on his friend, Father Malatesta.

A loving memorial service was held for Leo at the Albert L. Schultz Jewish Community Center on February 22, 1998. As several guests pointed out, Shakespeare's words from Julius Caesar well depict the wonderful person we all had lost:

*His life was gentle
And the elements so mixed in him
That nature might stand up
And say to all the world
This was a man!*

Our deepest condolences go to his wife, Bess Gabow, and to the rest of his family. In the following issue of *Points East*, we shall publish an article on Leo Gabow.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF DAIREN (1900-1951)

EXCERPTS FROM THE FORTHCOMING BOOK: FAREWELL TO RUSSIA: MEMOIRS OF AN ALLEGED 'AMERICAN SPY'

by Joe Lerner

I. Jews from Russia came to Dalny in 1900. They were few in number, but after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, Jews began to trickle to Dalny from Harbin. It was now under Japanese rule and was incorporated into the Japanese Empire. It was renamed Dairen by the Japanese (1905-1945) and Dalian by the Chinese after 1945. Under the Japanese, the Jews had their freedom and they were not oppressed like they were by the Russians. The Japanese treated them well, as equals. They had the freedom of speech, religion and they could indulge in business in whatever sphere they liked. The small Jewish community living in Dairen at first had no synagogue, no club, no community center, no school, nothing of their own. As the community grew

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SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	261
China	11
Israel	10
England	8
Hong Kong	5
Canada	3
Australia	3
Japan	2
Germany	1
Hungary	1
Indonesia	1
Singapore	1
South Africa	1
Sweden	1
Taiwan	1
Italy	1
TOTAL:	311

FROM THE EDITOR

Due to the demands of her work, Wendy Abraham has had to relinquish her role as editor and the Board of the Sino-Judaic Institute asked me to resume that job.

Being a tough negotiator, I insisted on receiving double the pay and increased benefits. I thought I had Al Dien over a barrel, but he proved to be more than my equal. He said he would multiply my pay a hundredfold and he assured me that if I took the position, I would get unlimited benefits. Thrilled to have gotten the better of him so easily, I quickly assented to becoming the editor again, only to realize upon hanging up the phone that 100 x \$0 was precisely what I had been earning all along!

So, what I had thought was my retirement as editor of Points East turned out to be a short sabbatical instead. No matter, at least I still get unlimited benefits.

One of these benefits is that I have inherited a better publication. To give credit where credit is due, we must thank Wendy, aka Dr. Abraham, for this. Drawing upon her skills as a journalist, Wendy was responsible for redesigning our masthead and improving the layout, with the result that Points East looks more professional and is visually more enticing and exciting to read.

A second benefit is that I now have an editorial committee to work with whereas previously I did it all on my own. Now granted there is a certain ease in decision-making when one works solo, but Points East is a publication of an organization and that body needs to be represented collectively, not singly. Furthermore, although it is certainly the case that one cannot be truly miserable except when serving on a committee; in this case, I am pleased to share the editorial responsibilities with some colleagues.

A third benefit is that I once again shall begin to receive articles and communications as you, dear readers, submit manuscripts and letters for publication. I must confess that during my sabbatical I was suffering from sino-judaic information withdrawal, but now that I am editor again I thrill anew to email and correspondence pouring in from all over the world.

Al Dien is a wily one. He knew SJI couldn't compete against the big bucks I earn directing a small non-profit human service organization in Seattle, so he enticed me with the unlimited benefits of being editor once again. And you know what? He was right.

Anson Laytner

Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

Points East is published by the Sino-Judaic Institute, a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. The opinions and views expressed by the contributors and editor are their own and do not necessarily express the viewpoints and positions of the Sino-Judaic Institute.

Letters to the Editor and articles for *Points East* may be sent to:

Rabbi Anson Laytner
 1200 - 17th Ave. E.
 Seattle, WA 98112
 fax: 206-322-9141
 e-mail: layt@seattleu.edu

All other correspondence should be sent to:
 Rena Krasno, Public Affairs
 255 S. Rengstorff, #106
 Mountain View, CA 94040

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FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE

SJI members interested in receiving a copy of the annual financial report should send a self-addressed envelope to: Shelton Ehrlich, Treasurer of the Sino-Judaic Institute, 755 Northampton, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

The Sino-Judaic Institute
 232 Lexington Drive
 Menlo Park, CA 94025
 (650) 323-1769

President, Prof. Albert E. Dien
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Benjamin M. Levaco

By Rena Krasno

The Board of the Sino-Judaic Institute was very saddened to learn that Benjamin (Ben) Levaco, a loyal member and good friend, passed away on January 3, 1998. Ben who died at the age of 86, was an optimistic, energetic, adventurous and daring man who pursued his various interests almost until the very end of his life.

Ben Levaco was born in 1911 in Kainsky, Siberia. As a result of the civil war in Russia and anti-Semitic pogroms, his family left first for Harbin and then for Yokohama where they survived the horrendous 1923 earthquake. The Levacos then settled in Tientsin and became respected members of the Jewish community. Ben completed the local British run Grammar School and Business College. He was active in the British Rover Scouts, the British Municipal Volunteer Corps and excelled in a number of sports. He later joined an American casings manufacturing company and travelled throughout China as its representative. His keen observation, his interest in all that surrounded him, and his extensive reading, helped him to understand both the culture and politics of China. During World War II and the Japanese occupation, Ben's American company had to cease its activities. Ben, who was stateless, was not incarcerated as were so-called "enemy" nationals (U.S., British and Dutch citizens). He survived the war by dealing in real estate and left for the United States in 1950.

Ben maintained a lifelong interest in China and bought a large number of books on this subject. He also collected Chinese stamps and art. He maintained a correspondence for 45 years with his old friends from China and became a founding member of the American Far Eastern Society. After his wife died in 1989, he travelled four times to China, visiting remote corners of the country. He took countless photographs and documented his impressions and thoughts. In 1990, at the age of 79, he enrolled in a writing course and began to pen articles on his experiences, as well as to compose poetry. In addition, he translated some of his father's poems from Russian into English.

We, at the Sino-Judaic Institute, will never forget Ben Levaco's visit to us, his talk at the Palo Alto Jewish Community Center, and the suitcase full of material he brought for inclusion in the archives of the Hoover Institution. His quick movements, ever-present intellectual alertness, his charm and warmth will be sorely missed by all those who knew him. We were touched to learn from a Brief Biographical Statement by his son-in-law, L.H. Goldman, that "a number of original photographs, copies of Levaco's essays on his experiences in China, and personal correspondence are being donated to the Sino-Judaic Institute."

Our deep condolences go to the Levaco family.

Publications of Note

The Jews in Shanghai (Album in English and Chinese), Pan Guang, Editor. Shanghai Pictorial Publishing House and Center of Judaic Studies in Shanghai, 1995. USD \$40.00 (including postage).

Shanghai Jews Memoirs (Chinese), Pan Guang, Editor. Center of Judaic Studies, Shanghai, 1995. USD \$10 (including postage.) Please send cash, check or bank draft to: Pan Guang, 1331 Fuxing Road (M) #32, Shanghai 200031, PRC.

"Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Jews in India", by Ashe A. Bhende and Ralphy Jhirad. Cost of publication \$18. Postage and handling \$2. *"David Sassoon - The Great Philanthropist"*, a documentary video (19 minutes and 25 seconds long) is available for \$50 plus \$15 postage and handling for individuals, \$75 including postage, for Institutions and Libraries. Please indicate PAL or NTSC format. Make checks out to "O.R.T. India" and send by registered mail to Mr. Ralphy Jhirad, Director, O.R.T. India, 68 Worli Hill Road, Behind Worli Dairy, Worli, Mumbai 400018, India.

Encyclopedia Judaica (Chinese version), Xu Xin et al., comp. Contact: Prof. Xu Xin, c/o English Dept., Nanjing University, 22 Hankou Rd., Nanjing, PRC 210008.

Jewish Historical Tours of China - Travel Handbook. Contact: Dr. Wendy Abraham, P.O. Box 9480, Stanford, CA 94309. \$15 (including postage).

In Memorium for Father Edward Malatesta

By Leo Gabow

This must be necessarily a subjective In Memorium. Father Edward Malatesta was a close personal friend, and a fast friend of the Jewish people.

Our friendship goes back more than a decade, and though we were of different faiths, and probably held different philosophical views, all this was erased by the congeniality of our relationship. We knew each other as friends and colleagues and enjoyed the companionship that resulted from it.

More than ten years ago Father Malatesta, as Director of the Ricci Institute at the University of San Francisco, hosted a seminar on the Kaifeng Jews, and the Sino-Judaic Institute played a major role at the seminar. Participants at the seminar were Prof. Albert Dien, Prof. Daniel Donald Leslie, Michael Pollak and myself. There may have been others present from the Institute, and I must apologize for not mentioning them. I also recall that Father Malatesta wrote a masterful summary of the events at the seminar.

For the undersigned, Father Malatesta's passing remains an acute loss and it will be difficult to fill his shoes. He was a scholar, author, and lecturer, and we were fortunate in having him as our guest speaker a few months ago. I am proud to say that I was a friend of Father Malatesta, and his passing is a blow that I shall not soon recover from. I say with the Bard "this was a man, whence comes such another."

Farewell — my friend.

Business Opportunities in Kaifeng: Partners Sought

My name is Edward Zhao. I am a descendant of the Kaifeng Jewish community. Since 1985, my dream has been to revive Jewish life in Kaifeng. I waited for twelve years before finally making it to Kaifeng on July 10, 1997.

In Kaifeng, I made it clear that I am Jewish and the people were very friendly to me. I talked to the city officials about the North and South Teaching Scripture Lane because I was worried that they would demolish it in order to develop high rises on the site. The City replied that it will not, but it does intend to widen the road in front for more traffic.

Chinese policy encourages overseas Chinese investments. Kaifeng is a development area in which investors are exempt from taxes for the first four years. Government run industries and businesses are losing money so the government is selling stocks to private individuals hoping that private individuals will buy them out. This means that now is an excellent opportunity for business ventures in Kaifeng. It also provides a means to invest in and preserve Jewish sites in that city.

I would like to hear from any Jewish entrepreneurs (or others) interested in exploring business opportunities in Kaifeng. Currently, I am a real estate and mortgage entrepreneur in the greater Puget Sound area (Seattle/Tacoma, Washington). I can be reached at (206) 824-4713 or P.O. Box 3631, Kent, WA 98032. Please note that this is purely a private venture and that it is neither sanctioned nor endorsed by the Sino-Judaic Institute in any way.

Web Site for Torah Scrolls of the Chinese Jews

The web site for downloading Michael Pollak's book on the Torah Scrolls of the Chinese Jews is:

[www.smu.edu ~ bridwell/chinese_torah_scroll](http://www.smu.edu/~bridwell/chinese_torah_scroll). A preliminary digitization, which does not contain the illustrations has been available for several months. This will shortly be replaced by a more typographically appealing version, including illustrations. The same site address may then be used to download the new version. (There is no fee for downloading the book.)

Put Me to the Door

By Holly King Emma

My family once had a daily custom; whenever one of us left the house everyone at home escorted that person to the door. This custom began when my younger brother, then just old enough to speak, said "put me to the door" whenever he wanted to go out. To this day, when my brother and I return home to visit our parents, someone still puts us to the door - maintaining an expression of caring and good will toward one another as we venture out into the world.

On October 28, 1997 Dr. Wendy Abraham, director of Jewish Historical Tours of China, put me and several others to the door for an incredible adventure. I have often traveled with the Diaspora in mind because I have learned that even widely different cultures can be quickly bridged by people who share this one very strong bond. Visiting China and getting to know the Chinese through Jewish historical sights and Chinese Jewish descendants turned out to be a trip that I will never forget.

Our journey began when Wendy Abraham met several of us at San Francisco International Airport for a brief orientation and to see us to our gate. Xu Xin, one of China's leading Judaic scholars and a professor of Judaic studies at Nanjing University, met us at Shanghai's Hongqiao International Airport where our adventure began. Amongst the many buildings and parks on our itinerary that Xu Xin took us to visit in Shanghai was the site of the Ohel Moshe Synagogue in the Hongkou District.

Our visit to the synagogue, now a museum housed on the top floor of the original building, occurred on our first full day in China. Unfortunately, I was feeling rather woozy from a serious case of jet lag. While Wang Faliang, the docent, was explaining the photographs hanging on the walls and sharing his memories and knowledge of Shanghai's Jewish community during the 1930's, I wandered off to sit quietly and regain my sea legs. Feeling miserable about missing what I had traveled 6,200 miles to visit, I tried to remain part of the group, but the photographs were a bit too far away for me to see and Wang Faliang was speaking in another room. As my eyes wandered, I noted a discreetly placed visitor's book resting on a small podium nearly above my head.

I have never taken a lot of interest in visitor's books before, but as I started to read this one I realized that I was holding something that resonated as loudly as the photos and Wang Faliang's memories. The profound gratitude to the Chinese by refugee Jews who had fled to Shanghai was recorded over and over again. One entry recorded the life of a visitor's grandparents after having fled from Hitler. The account was infused with memories of how warmly the Chinese had greeted the family and how readily they have been accepted. The visitor also mentioned the exact street address including the lane and alley where the family had lived. My own family has never had to flee from anything. Nor have they ever recorded previous addresses with such accuracy, pride and appreciation.

This visitor's book as well as previous and future volumes are treasures. Even as I write this article emotions well up in me as I remember what I read. Nothing else in my past has ever made me feel about Judaism quite the way I do when I remember this book.

I am an air-age baby with many miles logged over the years. Sadly, I have never fully experienced train travel in the United States or overseas. As a result, I never really understood the romanticism and mystique associated with train travel nor travelers' wistful memories. Since my train trips have always been rather tame affairs involving sleepy borders or preoccupied commuters, I thought an overnight train trip within China would be a wonderful experience.

Our train journey began in Xian, site of the once buried Terracotta Warriors, at about 8:00 p.m. on a platform that had recently undergone its own excavation. What remained was a rather large pit in the middle of the platform fully exposed and waiting to be crossed. I took one look at it and realized that I would forever be a typical American since all that came to mind was "lawsuit in waiting." But there was no time to ponder legalities as we had to quickly walk through the pit and climb up into the train. We accomplished this feat with uneasy footing, luggage swinging madly in all directions and while competing with a throng of very experienced Chinese travelers. Pandemonium was the word that came quickly to mind and I never felt more alive!

Once lined up in the narrow passageway

of our car, we awaited Xu Xin's further instructions moving side-to-side to let "porters" and other travelers pass. As tourists, and the only Westerners on the train, we had the best accommodations but there still seemed to be a fair amount of negotiating before we could take possession of our nine reserved soft berths. Our initial impression of the train's best compartments was perhaps a bit hasty. Once settled in, however, the two sets of double decker bunks separated by a foot of floor space, a table hinged at the window, lockable compartment door, bed lamps and an overhead light were really cozy and all that we needed. The clean, crisp linen and one very heavy duty thermos of hot water added a touch of home.

I had the pleasure of sharing my compartment with Dr. Donald Leslie, Dr. Maisie Meyer and Ms. Eva Schaffer. As the train started to roll out of the station we embarked on what was to become the time of our lives. After choosing our berths and distributing blankets and pillows, we spent time chatting, laughing and taking photos to record our adventure. Having been told that the lights automatically shut off at 10:00 p.m., we took off our shoes and crawled under the down blankets as our heads hit the husk filled pillows. I was lulled to sleep by the wonderful rhythm and harmony of the train.

I can't remember a more restful and fun way to travel nor can any of my bunk mates. In fact, even before our 5:40 a.m. arrival in Kaifeng we had decided that this may be the only way to travel and we were already planning our next trip! While this experience did not suit everyone in the group, for those who miss traveling by train or want to experience a sleeper and plan to visit Kaifeng, I can't recommend it highly enough.

Kaifeng was the highlight of the tour and having Donald Leslie and Xu Xin there to explain what we were seeing was a great opportunity. As a result of much planning by Wendy Abraham and vigilant execution by Xu Xin we had two packed days in Kaifeng.

Having been recently robbed, the Kaifeng Municipal Museum is a somewhat sad affair these days, badly in need of attention and new exhibits. Luckily, the Jewish wing and the steles, written by Chinese Jews in both the 15th and 16th centuries to record their history, are protected because of their remote location in the museum and locked

entry. We were very fortunate to have been able to not only see the steles but to take individual photos of it as well. The rubbings of the steles that hang on the wall are far more legible, however, especially if you can read Chinese.

While visiting the museum, we were introduced to the curator and Zhang Xingwang, one of the Chinese Jewish descendants. Zhang Xingwang is also known as Moshe Xingwang Zhang as printed on the English translated side of his business card. He is a wrestling and kung fu coach at a local middle school. Both he and the curator were very excited to meet us, but unlike Wang Faliang, neither spoke English so Xu Xin translated. Zhang Xingwang was asked some questions I don't think that he expected, but he happily answered. While he does not eat pork, he was not circumcised and each generation of the family has passed down the knowledge that they are descended from Jews. Moshe was a name given to him at birth by his father.

Guild Hall of Three Provinces actually made a bigger impression on me than the museum itself. I was able to see what Kaifeng looked like in the early Sung Dynasty, about the 10th century when Jews first arrived in Kaifeng, as represented in a beautiful scroll painting. I also saw a more contemporary Kaifeng as represented in an architect's model complete with a replica of Kaifeng's Forbidden City. It was easier for me to grasp the significance of the steles and the descendants when I had a sense of the tremendous history they represent.

We were very happy that Xu Xin was able to arrange a dinner at our hotel with Zhang Xingwang and several members of the Shi family. Again Xu Xin translated as we timidly asked questions of one another. We learned that there is a concerted effort to enhance the Judaic wing at the Kaifeng Municipal Museum. A duplicate of an exhibit about the Kaifeng Jews, mounted by the Sino-Judaic Institute in Palo Alto, California, has been sent to the Kaifeng Municipal Museum and Xu Xin is helping to translate it into Chinese. I was really happy to hear that the descendants not only appreciated these efforts, but were also very interested in receiving additional exhibits, books and other materials about the Jewish religion. They also seemed pleased when someone offered to send Jewish calendars noting that one or two would be enough since they too would need to be translated.

During one of the most touching moments of the evening, Zhang Xingwang presented each member of the group with a replica of the scroll painting of Kaifeng that we had seen earlier at the Guild Hall of Three provinces. I nearly left China with an advanced degree in shopping, but the scroll painting means more to me than anything that I purchased.

What is most interesting to me is that while the community in Kaifeng does not continue to observe many of the Jewish traditions and rituals, in fact they are not even familiar with the Jewish calendar, it is still very important to them that they maintain their identity as having descended from Jews. And while communicating with the descendants was a little difficult because of the language barrier, I still feel that very strong bond that happens to be shared by two of the oldest civilizations.

SJI Chairman Art Rosen to Lead China Tour April 20 - May 5, 1998

SJI Chairman Art Rosen, former President of the National Committee on US-China Relations and former US diplomat in Shanghai, will lead a special Jewish interest tour to China next Spring. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Sino-Judaic Institute, and all Institute members are cordially welcome to participate.

The 16-day tour will include stops in Beijing, Xi'an, Kaifeng, Shanghai and Suzhou, and will feature special lectures by Mr. Rosen on current political and economic issues facing the People's Republic as it approaches the 21st century. Jewish architectural landmarks will be visited in Shanghai, and tour participants will have the opportunity to meet some of the Chinese Jewish descendants while in Kaifeng.

Anyone interested in the tour should contact: Jewish Historica Tours of China, P.O. Box 9480, Stanford, CA 94309. Phone: (650) 968-1927. e-mail: wabraham@leland.stanford.edu.

Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries (Available Again Soon)

Michael Pollak's book, *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries: The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire*, has been out of print for around three years, but a third edition is scheduled to be issued this coming spring. The bibliographic reference will be: "New York/Tokyo: Weatherhill, Inc., 1998." The book will appear as a lithographic reprint of the 1980 and 1983 editions, but will contain a preface that will correct a few errors in the original text and also provide an overview of what has been learned about the Kaifeng Jews since the book was originally written. An annotated bibliography of the more important recent studies and books on the subject will be included.

Request for Material on Hong Kong Jewry

I would like to take the opportunity to ask the readers of Points East newsletter whether they are in possession of material that might be of interest to my research; or whether they know of the existence of relevant material.

I am a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Centre of Asian Studies, The University of Hong Kong. Recently, I have started research on the social history of the Jewish community of Hong Kong, which is supported by the Trustees of this community. The aim of the project is to document the social history of Hong Kong Jewry. In particular, I hope to gain an understanding of what the relations between Jewish identities and involvement in Hong Kong society are.

The sources I look for might be: impressions of the Hong Kong Jewish community over the last 150 years as found in diaries; letters/postcards; photographs; or travel accounts; or reference to literature which describes this community, and/or its members. I am happy to pay the costs, such as mailing and photocopying, for making material available.

My address is: Caroline Pluss, Centre of Asian Studies, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong, S.A.R.; fax: 852-2559 3185, tel: 852-2859 2460; e-mail: cbpluss@hkucc.hku.hk.

stayed. Restrictions were put on immigration in August 1939, but still they came in droves as war consumed Europe and other avenues of escape closed. Thousands arrived in rags, with neither entry permits nor any means of support. Housing for late-comers was extremely sparse – hundreds languished in temporary shelters.

It was a constant struggle, but the community took care of itself until Pearl Harbor in 1941. Foreigners from Allied nations were sent to prison camps. German and Austrian Jews, the largest group, were considered stateless refugees, and were confined to Hongkou ghetto in 1943.

In Shanghai, the Jewish community quickly rebuilt itself after the war, but the city would never be the same. The Japanese were defeated, yet fighting continued in the civil war between the Nationalists and Communists. . .

By 1953, 440 Jews remained in Shanghai, and the number fell to 84 by 1958. Most were sick or elderly, and in the care of the Council of the Jewish Community of Shanghai, which ran a shelter until 1959.

Afterward, virtually all trace of Jewish life in Shanghai was wiped away. Schools and shops closed, and most synagogues were demolished by China's new rulers. Shanghai remained unobservant of its Jewish legacy for three decades. Then, one by one, the spirits began stirring. I felt their presence during my first visit to the city in 1990. And little wonder, since I was staying at the old Jewish Music Club, now the Shanghai Music Conservatory. A foreign student mentioned some old professors who had formed a Jewish study association. After numerous calls, I finally tracked them down.

In a dingy basement, I found a dozen mostly retired teachers arguing odd points from the Bible. Odd, because it was apparent few, if any, had ever read a Bible. They had half a dozen associations, with ambitious names like the Center of Israel and Jewish Studies of the Chinese Institute For Peace and Development Studies. But all involved the same men, exchanging the same second-hand scholarly gossip. Genuine information was rare, and for good reason: Such study was not sanctioned by the government.

"We've produced more than two dozen papers to date," one retired professor told me. When I asked for copies, he sheep-

ishly admitted: "None of them has been published. We don't have permission." Some were thrilled to actually be meeting a Jew, and one with a Chinese connection – my father and his parents also escaped from Germany through China, but not by way of Shanghai. Still, many were genuine scholars, with a keen interest in sharing information. I found this out after a meeting with one of the men. We sipped tea for hours, discussing practically anything but our common interest. Then at the door, the professor paused to casually mention a report from the city archives, barred to foreigners. Holding excitement in check, I said farewell. Just before the door closed, though, he pulled some papers from under his shirt and handed me the report. It sounds funny now, but China was a nervous place at the time.

Since then, I have kept in touch with these scholars, watching with fascination as their field slowly gained credibility. As it did, so too did their lives improve. By my next visit, they had moved from their basement office to a large estate. On the doorway was a smart brass nameplate. And, best of all, the professors proudly showed me their first book, a collection of essays on Jewish subjects, written in Chinese.

By then, the various associations had blended into the Center of Jewish Studies, headed by Pan Guang. A young history professor from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Pan is the official spokesman on this subject, and it is a sign of the times that he travels much of the year, a feted guest at Jewish conferences eager to have a Chinese speaker on board. Pan recently published *The Jews of Shanghai*, the first book about the community in English and Chinese.

Nor have the other academics been passed over. Xu Buzeng, who translated into Chinese David Kranzler's definitive 1976 work, *Japanese, Nazis and Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*, has also lived to see published several of his papers on prominent refugee musicians and composers. Xu Xin, perhaps China's leading Judaic scholar, heads a Jewish-studies program in Nanjing. He recently coordinated the release of an abridged Chinese version of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, a 900-page volume that took three years and the work of 40 scholars to complete. And Yu tutors Shanghai residents in Hebrew.

"The Jews and China were always good

friends," notes Pan Guang. Indeed, China was an early supporter of the concept of a Jewish state, according to Rena Krasno, a Shanghai Russian Jew and author. In a paper published by the 12-year-old Sino-Judaic Institute in California, Krasno reprints a letter of support from a founder of modern China, Sun Yat-sen. China was among members of the League of Nations that in 1922 voted in favor of the Palestine Mandate, proposing a Jewish homeland.

All this history wells up in Shanghai, where a determined researcher can still find Stars of David decorating old tenements in the French quarter. And interest is being rekindled by a growing number of Jewish businessmen, who hold regular religious services in the city. "There's a real cultural connection between the Chinese and the Jews," Pan says. "Many people write about this. The Chinese have been called the Jews of Asia, you know. Both emphasize family and education. And both build cultures, the oldest in the world. Both peoples also live in many places, but the people never change."

Theodor Katz Passes

We have just received a letter from Dr. Gregor Katz, Satraangsagen 58, 182 36 Danderyd, Sweden, notifying us that his brother Theodor passed away in Stockholm on November 27, 1997.

He was the author of a number of articles, mainly in Swedish and German, about the Jews of China as well as about various other "exotic" Jewish communities, and lectured extensively on these communities throughout northern Europe. In fact, the last issue of Points East contains a letter to the editor written by him. He was, of course, a member of SJI and his involvement will be missed by all.

left the house alone except for the two rooms at the top of the house we claimed my parents occupied, a room on the ground floor which they commandeered, and a dug-out they built at the end of our back yard that was constantly filling with water which the Japanese ladies of the neighborhood tried to empty daily.

The Ghosts of Shanghai

By Ron Gluckman
excerpted from *Asia Week*, June 6, 1997

Yu Weidong brings his bicycle to a stop alongside a corner dress shop. On the wall behind three mannequins is a tiny brass plaque. Puffing with excitement, Yu recites the inscription, a memorial to his favorite Shanghai ghosts. Three weeks later, on the other side of the world, Judith Moranz rests her head upon her husband Karl's shoulder. Time peels away in Las Vegas's MGM Grand Hotel ballroom as they sway to big band tunes, soundtracks of their youth. Her eyes grow misty. The songs are sentimental favorites from wartime America, but they take Moranz back to that same street corner in Shanghai.

A half century ago, they inhabited an intriguing corner of China: Shanghai's boisterous Jewish ghetto. Viennese gentlemen sipped coffee outside Austrian bakeries so authentic that the neighborhood was called Little Vienna. Nearby were kosher butcher shops and German delicatessens. Diners read Shanghai papers printed in German, Polish, even Yiddish. Candles for Jewish holidays were sold nearby at Abraham's Dry Goods, and the tango was danced nightly at Max Sperber's Silk Hat.

A unique Jewish community once thrived in Shanghai, where Jews had worked since the opening of China's largest treaty port in 1842. A century later, European Jews fleeing Adolf Hitler poured into Shanghai where, even among the large international settlements, they stood out, a distinct community with its own hospitals, theaters, schools and sports leagues. Life wasn't always jolly, of course. Jewish refugees were later herded into Hongkou ghetto in the city's northeast, where food was scarce and disease rampant.

Before and during World War II, some of Shanghai's richest men conspired to save tens of thousands of Jews. Exactly how many is not known, but some historians say Shanghai saved more Jews from the Nazi Holocaust than all Commonwealth countries combined. Among them were

hundreds of religious scholars. A wartime chaplain in Shanghai wrote that 500 scholars in Shanghai maintained the nearly 6,000-year tradition of Jewish teaching, making it at that time one of the world's great Jewish cities.

Ironically, this remarkable religious community vanished even more rapidly than it took root. When civil war enveloped China, the refugees fled again. By the end of the 1950s, Shanghai's synagogues were shuttered and its Jews gone.

And that should have been the end to this little-known tale. But, in another twist to the saga, about a decade ago Jewish culture returned to China, where religion has been suppressed for half a century. Stories from the Talmud are being retold and Hebrew scriptures studied again. Most remarkable of all, Shanghai's new Jewish scholars are all Chinese.

Yu is one of them. He is a graduate of China's first Jewish-studies program, which was pioneering in every way. Students used old Hebrew newspapers and concocted lessons themselves when no Jewish teachers could be found. Five other students joined the pilot program of Jewish and Hebrew studies launched by Peking University in the mid-1980s. The other students later went abroad, to Israel or the U.S., leaving Yu with an odd distinction: he's probably the sole Hebrew-speaking college graduate in a country of 1.2 billion people.

For years that distinction was meaningless. Yu found some work as a tour guide for a trickle of curious American Jews seeking what signs remained of the Jewish community in Shanghai. Yu also practiced Hebrew with visitors from Israel. But, up until a few years ago, they were even rarer. China and Israel, two ancient nations reborn after World War II, lacked ties until 1992.

Since then, there has been a steady increase in exchanges between sinologists studying Shanghai's Jewish community, and the local academics who are trying to make sense of the odd little Jewish settlement that flourished in their midst. "We have to rescue this history," insists Xu Buzeng, 70-year-old doyen of Jewish scholars in Shanghai, who realized a life-long dream last fall when he visited Israel on a fellowship to Hebrew University. "We must research and write about this rich period of our history," he says. "Otherwise,

in 10 to 20 years, when we are gone, this history will be lost forever." . . .

Jewish history in China dates to at least the 8th century, when West Asian traders roamed the Silk Road. A Jewish settlement was established in the city of Kaifeng, in what is now Henan province, where a synagogue was built in 1163 and thousands of Jews worshipped openly. Kaifeng today boasts some Hebrew writing on tombstones, but no living link to its Jewish past (although some residents claim Jewish blood). By the 20th century, the community in Kaifeng was eclipsed by cities like Harbin, Ningbo and Tianjin, which all had sizable Jewish settlements.

This small Jewish circle was affected in the early 1900s by a second wave of immigration that brought Russian Jews fleeing the pogroms (campaigns of repression) and, later, the Russian Revolution. Most settled in northern China. By 1910, Harbin had 1,500 Jews, but the number grew to 13,000 by 1929. Many moved south to Shanghai after the Japanese took Manchuria in the early 1930s.

The Russians did not mix much with Shanghai's Jewish elite. Russian Jews ran their own stores and restaurants, read Russian newspapers and enjoyed their own music and theater. Many settled in the French quarter, where they founded the Jewish Club. There were conflicts, especially over religious issues, but the Jews were no different than Shanghai's tens of thousands of other foreigners, whether British, American, French, German or Japanese. All kept to classes defined by ethnic and economic lines. Otherwise, rules were few in Shanghai, and opportunities endless.

As the rest of the world closed to desperate Jews seeking escape from the Nazis, Shanghai remained one of the rare free transit ports. Explains *The Muses Flee Hitler*, a book by Washington's Smithsonian Institute released to honor the centennial of the birth of Albert Einstein (who visited Shanghai twice in the 1920s): "Shanghai required neither visas nor police certificates. It did not ask for affidavits of health, nor proof of financial independence. There were no quotas."

Thus began the third phase of Jewish migration; an estimated 20,000 poured into Shanghai from 1937 to 1939. Some merely passed through, en route to the Americas, Palestine or Australia, but about 90%

The 1489/1512 Stele of the Kaifeng Jews

By Donald Daniel Leslie

I visited the Jewish floor of the Kaifeng Museum on November 6, 1997. All that was on display were:

A. Two steles, one of 1459/1512 and one of 1679;
B. Three copies (or rubbings?) on wood, two of the 1489 inscription, one of the 1512 inscription

A. The 1489/1512 Stele

There is nothing new to report about the 1679 inscription. Almost no characters can be read, but this was already the case many years ago, and all we have is a reconstructed version given by White. The 1489/1512 stele is in an appalling condition. It has a crack running through it, and has been bolted together by iron bars. Moreover, a large number of the characters have been obliterated.

It has been suggested, by Kai Sheng and by Michael Pollak and others, that the extant stone was formerly two separate stones with separate inscriptions, later banded together by the iron bars. This is completely wrong. We have overwhelming evidence that this extant stele is a single stone, with 1489 inscription on one side, 1512 inscription on the other. Gozani in 1704 and Gaubil in 1723 were emphatic that the 1489 and 1512 inscriptions were on reverse sides of a single stone. Martin, 1866, saw only a single stone on the synagogue site, and photos thereafter show one stone only (the 1679 stone was discovered later). Gammon in 1904, White in 1912, Horne in 1924 or 1924, Brown, 1932, Hoferichter in 1949 to list only the most explicit, saw a single 1489/1512 stone.

It was suggested to me in Kaifeng that the iron bars had been needed many years earlier, possibly because Bishop White had attempted to cut the stone in two when he wished to ship it out of Kaifeng. This last slander of Bishop White is easily countered. Chen Yuan, 1920-1923, makes no mention of any damage to the inscriptions. Moreover, Horne in 1924 or 1925 writes "the first tablet, with its two inscriptions, is still in a good state of preservation"; Hoferichter in his letter to Preuss, 25 July 1949, also writes that the two inscriptions of the single 1489/1512 stele were in good condition. Actual rubbings of the 1489 inscription made by Japanese visitors c.

1940 show a totally readable inscription (I hold a copy). I would suggest that the heavy damage exhibited by the extant stone is very recent, probably the result of "natural erosion and damage by men" (I quote Kai Sheng). This may have occurred during the Cultural Revolution. However, we can only state for certain that it happened some time between 1949, when seen by Hoferichter, and 1981, when Betsy Gidwitz saw the stele "badly eroded from long exposure to the elements" (she did not mention the iron bars). When were the iron bars first noted? I have no record earlier than the 1990's.

B. The Two Copies of the 1489 Inscription

Hanging on the wall of the Museum, but obscured by screens which made it impossible to get a proper picture, were three copies (or rubbings?) of the inscriptions, one of the 1512 Inscription, and two of the 1489 Inscription. There is no problem with the 1512 Inscription.

One of the 1489 copies has clearly been made from the extant stone (at some time in the late 19th or early 20th century, before the stele was so badly disfigured after 1949). We know this because it has the names of the Jewish families chipped away out of fear, which occurred, so we are told by Horne and others, around the time of the Boxers. This is almost certainly identical to the version given in Tobar, 1900, based on rubbings made by Volonteri in Kaifeng around 1898.

The second copy, however, was a total surprise for me. I had never heard of such a copy. To my amazement it had what seemed to be the identical 1489 inscription, but with the Jewish surnames appearing clearly on it.

There are two possibilities for its origin. Firstly, as suggested by the Museum authorities, it was made in the 19th (or even 18th century) before the scratching out of the names had occurred. Secondly, it was made very recently; not, of course, from the extant stele, but copied from a modern work (the 1920/1923 article by Chen Yuan for example, which restored the surnames as given by Gozani).

I myself am inclined to favour the second answer, for I believe we would have known about any such copy made in the 18th or early 19th century. However, one must keep an open mind for the time be-

ing. I am fairly confident that a careful inspection of the whole copy, comparing it with earlier copies and rubbings and published versions, will one day allow us to decide between the two possibilities. Fortunately, this is not a major problem for the historian since we can have total confidence in the versions given us around 1704-1722 by the Jesuit missionaries, Gozani and Gaubil, who visited Kaifeng and made accurate copies and rubbings at that time (including, incidentally, the 1663 inscriptions for which the stele is no longer extant).

Reunion of Former Members of the Sephardi Jewish Community, Shanghai in Israel April 20-22, 1998

The Sephardi Division of Igud Yotzei Sin (Association of Immigrants from China), invites all those interested to attend a reunion on the occasion of Israel's Jubilee Anniversary.

Participants will be addressed by Haifa's mayor, Amram Mitzna, and their activities will include:

- A visit to the Kadoorie Memorial Grove
- A visit to the Shanghai Synagogue
- A conference at the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center
- A festive luncheon with a menu of Iraqi foods
- Video films, slides and tape recordings

For further information, please contact: Igud Yotzei Sin, P.O.B. 1601, Tel Aviv 61015.

Jacob of Ancona: A Review of Reviews

(continued from page 1)

was there until February 1272, arriving back at Ancona in May 1273, while Marco Polo did not set out from Genoa until 1271. The account, written in Italian vernacular but including Hebrew words, gives a vivid description of his travels through Syria, the Persian Gulf, India and China. If the manuscript is authentic, it would be very valuable because it would provide a new source of information about life in medieval Asia, according to scholars to whom Nicholas Kristof spoke (*New York Times*, and cited in the *Herald Tribune*, Sept. 22). Jacob describes everything from mass-circulation pornography to an early flame-thrower, and how he became so embroiled in such fierce Chinese political debates that he had to flee for his life. He is deeply troubled by the moral depravity, particularly among the city's women, who "give no value to being chaste, just as others think adultery no shame, nor even to bear children without concern, whom they secretly kill. All these go about the streets wearing stuff so thin that a man may see their bodies, so immodest is their dress, may God spare me for what my eyes have seen."

Criticism concerning the authenticity of the text was not long in coming. The fullest description of the contents of the book has been supplied by Jonathan Spence, a well-known China scholar at Yale University, in his essay (what was to have been a review before the publication in America was suspended) in the *New York Times*, October 19. Spence claims that he has no reason to dispute that Jacob reached China before Marco Polo, nor that there was a Jewish community in 13th century Ancona, which maintained a lively trade throughout the Mediterranean to places in Asia. A Jewish merchant could well have written a detailed account of his travels, but the question, Spence emphasizes, is not the feasibility of such a record, but rather the believability of this particular one. The points which Spence questions are Jacob's taking two women "for washing my clothes" when contemporary records show that medieval trades with unauthorized women in their entourages could be arrested and all their property confiscated. Spence suggests that the two women, who proved to be immoral, were inserted to enrich the narrative. Zaitun at that time was a major commercial port with a sizable foreign community, as Marco Polo de-

scribed it. Jacob enlists the services of a half-Chinese, half-Italian young man who spoke "Frankish" to search the underworld of Zaitun to locate his missing navigator. This provides the occasion for a visit to the brothel area of Zaitun and an excuse to record a wide spectrum of sexual practices including male transvestites, lesbian couples, and others copulating in full view of those passing by. To this, Spence opines, "This general sexual voyeurism, naively descriptive, can be found in countless works from the 18th century to the present day." As for the opium-takers and besotted drinkers, Spence remarks that opium addiction as a Chinese phenomenon is normally found in the 19th century or later, after the drug was exported to China in large quantities by Western traders. Finally, Jacob takes part in a debate with various scholars and merchants who discuss whether to resist an expected Mongol invasion, risking the slaughter of the city's inhabitants if the defense fails. As Spence says, "Jacob's record of his prominent role in these debates, his descriptions of the crowded public forums in which they took place, let alone the mnemonic feats of his interpreter, all seem to me as unbelievable as the specificity of the depiction of the sexual acts." Spence points out the long passages of philosophical argument with Chinese sages given by Jacob, with implied critiques of shortcomings in the Western value system, resemble "a picaresque tale by the 16th-century Portuguese adventurer Mendes Pinto, and were later carried to higher levels by Voltaire and Goldsmith." Spence wonders if Selbourne has been taken in by some Italian who has forged the text for some purpose, to reconstruct Jewish medieval mores or to mock them, or is the creative impulse to be found in Selbourne himself, a continuation of his early career as a dramatist of such plays as "Samson" which "darkly explored levels of male desire and sexuality, or else in his political writings of a later date?" It is no surprise that Spence does not place any credence in this work.

Robert Irwin, in the *Guardian*, October 16, also comments on the debate in Zaitun with the Chinese merchants and thinkers on civic duty and other matters. Jacob and his occasional intellectual ally, a former Chinese official whom Jacob called 'the noble Pitaco,' argue in favour of the duties of the individual to society and vice versa. They denounce the decline in religious values, the decay in respect for the old, the cult of youth, moral relativism, permissiveness in education, the unfet-

tered free-market, homosexuals, violence in entertainment, and the passing on the blame for criminal acts on to society as a whole. As Irwin adds, Selbourne himself writes on political philosophy from a right-wing point of view (though he has described his position as 'civic socialism') and he must have found Jacob's thoughts on religion and civic responsibility thoroughly congenial. Irwin believes it is most improbable that Chinese mandarins would have condescended to debate with a visiting European trader as an equal, nor how Jacob could have participated so successfully in such a debate when working through an interpreter. Above all, he concludes, it is obvious that the terms of the debates are flagrantly anachronistic. On a more mundane note, Irwin also raises doubts as to the possibility of a caravan journeying from Damascus across the Syrian desert to the Euphrates at a time when the Mamluk sultan of Egypt and Syria were at war with the Mongol Ilkhans and the Syrian-Iraq frontier was closed to trade, and in addition, the route as described was not one usually chosen by caravans.

Frances Wood, head of the Chinese department at the British Library, and the author of a recent book which claims that Marco Polo never went to China, in the international issue of *Time*, November 10, notes that part of the text could have been written to fill the well-known holes in Polo: his omissions of bound feet, tea, Chinese script and woodblock printing. The forum, mentioned above, made up of scholars and merchants, is unlikely because the officials despised the merchants. She goes on to list other errors, perhaps of a lesser sort. For example Jacob purchases saffron, which was not known in China at the time, nor was movable type widely used in the Sung, and it was soon abandoned. Quanzhou, which Jacob describes as a "free port" was decidedly not so, as the tariffs collected there was a major source of government income. Jacob claims there was a Jewish community of some 2000 there at the time, and yet the Jewish monuments which he describes seem to have disappeared, while those of Islamic, Hindu, and Christians have survived. Finally, Ms. Wood asks, why did Jacob not write the text in Hebrew as was usual for Italian Jews of the period. Selbourne, she reports, has hinted that his text may have been translated into "the vernacular" but he never explains why. So Ms. Wood concludes that this is not a book about China, rather it is about political theory, and too much of it is wrong.

Points East

Points East

The Shammos of Shanghai A Chinese Man Keeps Memories of the Jewish Ghetto Alive

By Douglas M. Bloomfield
excerpted from *Jewish Sentinel*, Dec. 5-11, 1997

At 77, Wang Faliang still has a lot of bounce in his step and effervesces with enthusiasm for his neighborhood. But then, it's not just any neighborhood in this bustling and teeming city of 13 million.

He has lived in the neighborhood all his life and delights in showing visitors around the streets and alleys, oblivious to the buses, bicycles, taxis and pedestrians that seem to be going in all directions at once.

During World War II, his neighborhood was home to as many as 30,000 Jews, most of them refugees from Hitler's Europe. Officially the "designated area for stateless refugees," it was the Jewish ghetto of Shanghai.

"I worked for a Jewish cafe in Frenchtown, Didi's Cafe, and I made out the bills. The waiters were all White Russian Jews; two of them, their names were Stein and Friedman, introduced me to a Jewish family who was selling their house when they were leaving Shanghai in 1946. I've lived there ever since," Wang said.

He is the living memory of the old ghetto, its "shammos," who looks after what was once the ghetto's synagogue, Ohel Moshe, at 62 Chang Yang Road.

On the door frame is a mezuzah donated by the Colonia, N.J., Hadassah chapter in 1974. There are also pictures of distinguished visitors — like former Israeli Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres and President Chaim Herzog — and a photo of the ghetto's most distinguished alumnus, Michael Blumenthal, Secretary of the Treasury in the Carter Administration and recently named director of Berlin's Holocaust Museum . . .

On the eve of World War II there were about 10,000 Jews in Shanghai, mostly Russian, he said. The Sephardi community was small but wealthy, he added . . .

The Chinese and the Jews lived as good neighbors during those difficult years. Many Chinese were helping the Jews. We sympathized with each other. We liked their long history and culture, and they

liked ours," said Wang.

Wang excitedly takes visitors through the park, past the Jewish theater, to the former hospital. He stops at what was once the Vienna Cafe to reminisce. He asks everyone to sign the guest book at Ohel Moshe and points out the names of dignitaries, alumni and tourists who have visited the old synagogue. He is delighted that the Shanghai Jews have not forgotten their former home and that so many others are discovering it.

Two Lucky Escapes

*"God moves in mysterious ways,
His wonders to perform."*

William Cowper

By Henrietta Reifler

The first lucky escape is the story of my late sister-in-law, Dorothy Reifler.

My late husband, Professor Erwin Reifler, had come from Vienna to Shanghai in 1932. Realizing in 1936 that Austria would be invaded by Hitler in due course, he wrote to his mother and sister advising them to join him in Shanghai. They followed his suggestion and immediately made preparations for the long journey. Because his mother was a diabetic with heart trouble, the doctor told them to travel overland via Siberia rather than by ship.

My husband had a close Chinese friend who was connected with the Chinese Ministry of Railways. He suggested that when his mother and sister reached Peking, they should transfer to a new train, named The Blue Express. They did as directed and arrived in Shanghai in good order in November, 1936. Because no visa was required, the date of their arrival in Peking was not recorded in their passports.

A short while later my husband received an unexpected bill from Thomas Cook and Sons for their passage on The Blue Express - unexpected and upsetting, because he had thought the transfer had been an invitation. A man of modest means, he could ill afford this unlooked for and unnecessary expense; however, he felt he could not discuss the matter with his Chinese friend, paid the bill, and filed the receipt without further thought.

My husband's mother unfortunately passed away in March, 1937, but his sister lived

in our household.

Then in 1943, the Japanese, egged on by the German Consulate, decided to place the European Jewish refugees, who had arrived in Shanghai after March 1937, in a ghetto in Hongkew, where some of the refugees had settled. This meant great dislocation for those who had managed to settle themselves outside the area. There was no question as to the date of arrival of my husband, but there was nothing to show that my sister-in-law had arrived in November 1936. What was one to do? After realizing there was no date of arrival on her passport, he decided to look through his files to see if there was something of help there. And lo and behold, he came across the receipt of Thomas Cook and Sons, dated November 1936.

He took it to the gendarmerie. The gendarme in charge remarked on seeing the receipt, "A lucky escape!"

The second lucky escape concerned the house at 188/1 Avenue du Roi Albert rented by my late father, Rev. Mendel Brown, from the firm of E.D. Sassoon.

Some weeks after our marriage, my husband and I went to live in Hong Kong. We had to return to Shanghai in June 1940, because the Japanese army had arrived at the borders of Canton and the British authorities wanted women and children off the island.

Because of the expensive key money required at the time, we could not afford to rent an apartment, so we lived with my parents, who fortunately had sufficient room to house us. Somehow along the way, the lease of the house was transferred from my father's name to my husband's.

My sister Lilly, who was working in the firm of E.D. Sassoon when it was taken over by the Japanese authorities after the bombing of Pearl Harbor thinks it may have been her Japanese boss who made the change possible.

Whatever the circumstance, it was providential, because by 1943 the Japanese authorities had decided to place "enemy nationals" in "civilian assembly centers" or internment camps and to scatter their own citizens in the vacated houses and apartments. When my parents were interned in June 1944, we would have lost the house, but because the lease was in my husband's name and he, as a stateless person, was not considered an enemy, they

CONFERENCES, EXHIBITIONS AND FILMS

Old China Hands' Reunion Shanghai, May 1998 May 5-11

This reunion is directly mainly towards former Shanghaianders who were incarcerated in camps by the Japanese during World War II. Visits will be organized to the locations of these camps, to homes, schools and other places participants may wish to visit. There will be optional outings to Hangzhou, West Lake and a river journey. Special trips will be arranged to Beijing, Xian and Guilin.

Further details and reservations can be made by contacting:
Aeroscope Travel
10 Middle Row
Chipping Norton
Oxon 5NH
England U.K.

Tel. 00 44 1608 641983
FAX 00 44 1608 644252
e.mail: aeroscope@aol.com.uk

The Jews in Shanghai

The Jewish Museum of Australia, which is located in St. Kilda in Melbourne, Australia, is showing a major historical exhibition titled "The Jews in Shanghai." The exhibit opened in October, 1997 and will run through March, 1998.

The exhibition on Jews in Shanghai will feature artifacts and oral histories, documents, original maps, and photos of Melbourne's former Shanghai residents from Russia, Poland, Austria, Germany, Harbin and Tientsin. Simultaneously, an adult education program will be held.

FILMS

The film "Exil Shanghai," by world-known Berlin filmmaker Ulrike Ottinger, was selected by the German media as the 'Best Movie Documentary' of 1997 at the International Berlin Film Festival (Berlin, February 1997). It featured three 'Old China Hands,' Russian Jews and three Jewish refugees from Nazism in Europe.

In 1997, screenings of the film took place in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. In 1998, showings have been scheduled so far in New York, Paris, Washington D.C., Singapore, Bombay & Shanghai.

For details on dates, locations and further screenings please write to: Ulrike Ottinger, Filmproduktion, Hasenheide 92, 10967 Berlin, Germany, Fax: 030-691-3330.

BOOK NOOK

Two-Gun Cohen

Daniel Levy
St. Martin's Press
\$29.95 - 400 pages

Extracts from a review by Hillel Halkin, *Forward*, October 17, 1997.

At last, a biography of General "Two-Gun" Moishe Cohen . . .

Two-Gun Moishe Cohen, a.k.a. Morris Abraham Cohen (1887-1970) truly lived and breathed. And yet Mr. Levy's book has not quite brought me the anticipated joy of a childhood legend confirmed. This is not because it is not well-written. It is mainly because Two-Gun Cohen himself, sad to say, turns out to have been a hype after all. Yes, he packed two guns, all right - at least in Canton in the early 1920's, when he worked as a bodyguard for the Chinese nationalist leader Sun Yat-Sen. And he was a genuine tough guy, a brawler, gambler, drifter and small-time criminal already in his childhood in London's East End, and afterwards, in western Canada, to which he was sent from England in 1905 with a shipment of juvenile delinquents. It was there that he fell in with Chinese underworld types and developed a liking for the Chinese that led him, after a World War I stint in the Canadian army, to voyage to China as an adventurer in search of action.

But a real general Moishe Cohen was not. In fact, apart from being a soldier of fortune, he was not a soldier of any kind. Even his European army service was spent working in a railway construction corps. While in China . . . his military rank was pure army surplus. Conferred on him by Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang government in 1935 as a reward for being a part-time gun-runner and arms purchaser (he was by then known in Kuomintang circles not as "Two-Gun" but as "Five Percent" Cohen), it looked good on a business card.

What exactly did Cohen do in all the years he spent in China is not always clear even after reading Mr. Levy's meticulously researched book. He brokered the occasional weapons and business deal, hobnobbed with Kuomintang's officials; served Chiang's regime as a free PR agent, chatting up Western journalists and diplomats . . . and successfully palmed off on both casual visitors and professional China watchers as a great expert on the country without even speaking Chinese very well, let alone reading it. Not everyone was charmed by him. He had his redeeming qualities: physical courage was one of them. So was loyalty to friends. He had a big heart and appetite for life, was generous with his money when he had it, loved children, and was devoted to his parents, brothers and sisters. And, while hardly active as a Jew, he was proud to be one, and did his best to lobby with the Chinese government on behalf of Israel when the Jewish state was born. In a word, Two-Gun Cohen was hardly the figure that the self-propagated myth of him suggests. I doubt we shall be hearing much more of him.

In another review, David Abulafia, in *The Times of London*, December 1, believes that while the account is enormously entertaining, it contains egregious historical errors. On the basis of having written about the Adriatic port of Ancona, about the Jews of Italy and about the Levant trade that linked Italy to the Middle East, he concludes that "the long-suffering Rabbi Jacob is not a credible figure." While Ancona had hoped to become a trading rival of Venice, Venice had suppressed voyages from Ancona to the rice ports of the East just at the time when Jacob is supposed to have traveled there, and in time, Venice waged war on the combined forces of Ancona and Genoa in Acre. The allies lost and Venice destroyed Acre so that the enemy could not return. Yet, Jacob reports that Acre was teeming with the merchants of Genoa and Ancona just when they were being kept out. At that time, too, Jewish merchants were being kept out of the spice trade by the Muslims who ensured that only Muslim merchants could pass through the Red Sea. The galley on which they sailed the Indian Ocean was said by Jacob to have been owned by a certain Aaron of Barcelona, the "great Jew of Aragon," but such a figure can be shown to be a figment of the imagination. According to Dr. Abulafia, other parts of the voyage followed non-existent trade routes on impossible ships. Finally, Dr. Abulafia turns to Jacob's description of Zaitun. The description of the sexual mores is one with women freely "giving their bodies to all, believing she who has had more men is more pleasing than the rest," homosexual acts as being entirely normal, single mothers being a common feature of the society, slimming being a craze among young women, the older ones obsessed with preserving the appearance of youth, the streets full of drug addicts and muggers, music sounding like raucous sounds from Hell, euthanasia being freely practised, and children being allowed to do as they please, and the citizens are so depraved that the most beautiful of the harlots are considered as goddesses by both men and women who seek to copy their clothing, their makeup, and even their voices. This is a picture of a society teetering on the brink of the abyss, ignoring the terrible fate that awaits it from the Mongol invasion. All of this, Dr. Abulafia believes, is not a picture of Zaitun at that time, but is an account of our own society, and is directed at the social condition of the West at the present time from the point of view of one deeply hostile to modern trends. Thus, Dr. Abulafia con-

cludes, this is not a Jewish Marco Polo but a Jewish Gulliver.

Mr. Selbourne replied to this critique in a letter to *The Times of London* of Dec. 5. The letter in full is as follows:

Sir, Dr. David Abulafia ("An amazing journey-or just a hoax?," December 1) thinks Jacob of Ancona is a "Jewish Gulliver" rather than a Jewish Marco Polo. But like many scholars who have written on my translation of *The City of Light*, he makes a number of errors in his account of the work.

Thus he is mistaken in his assertion that Venice had 'suppressed' voyages from Ancona to the ports of the East in 1270, when Jacob set sail. It is true that there was rivalry and hostility between the two Adriatic port cities for control of the Adriatic and Byzantine trade. J.F. Leonhard, in his detailed study of mercantile Ancona in the Middle Ages (*Ancona nel basso Medio Evo*, Ancona, 1992), describes several unsuccessful attempts by the Venetians to blockade the port between 1228 and 1231. And after Jacob's return to Ancona (in 1273) there were several sea battles between Venice and Ancona until the peace-treaty signed between them in 1281.

But notwithstanding the intermittent conflicts, the 13th century was a period of commercial prosperity for the city of Ancona, derived from both local and long-distance trade, and a voyage such as Jacob's made during the interregnum in hostilities between the cities is entirely plausible. Far from its trade being 'suppressed,' Ancona was an active and flourishing port in 1270.

San Giovanni d'Acri (Acre) had not been 'flattened' at the time of Jacob's arrival. It had been damaged, not flattened, 15 years earlier, as a result of conflicts between Venetians and Genovese. But by Jacob's arrival in May 1270, he reports the resumption of friendly relations there between Italian merchants hailing from different cities, and I see no reason to doubt him.

Finally, giving an inaccurate and highly-coloured summary of my translation, Dr. Abulafia states that the merchant, Aaron of Barcelona - to whom Jacob makes several references - 'can easily be shown to be a figment of the imagination.' Unfortunately he does not fur-

nish any real evidence for his assertion. It will be up to scholars of medieval Aragon to explore this question further.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID SELBOURNE
C.P. 152, 61029 Urbino (PS), Italy
December 1.

The opinion of Bernard and David Wasserstein is signaled by the title of their piece in the *Jerusalem Post*, December 5, reprinted from the *Times Literary Supplement*, which was "Jacopo Spuriioso." Bernard Wasserstein is president of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, while David Wasserstein is professor of Middle East and African History at Tel Aviv University. After reviewing Spence's doubts about the authenticity of the account, they go on to other points. Jacob mentioned that the Jews of Cochon had a Talmud which was all in Hebrew, but there is no such thing as a Talmud in Hebrew known to have existed in Cochon, or anywhere else in the premodern world, for it was mostly written in Aramaic. The account refers to the Feast of Gedaliah, but that is a fast, not a feast. Jacopo is depicted by Selbourne as a follower of Maimonides, but some of his statements are completely at odds with Maimonides' central doctrines. Some of the quotations from the Bible in the manuscript, Selbourne states, were in Italian, but no medieval Jew would use Italian rather than Hebrew for this purpose. But the "smoking gun" which the Wassersteins adduce, is that when Jacob reached the Persian Gulf city the modern name of which is Bandar Abbas, he reported that he visited the Jews in their *mellah*. In Selbourne's learned Glossary, he defines this word as "(Arabic) Jewish quarter of a town." Mellah is indeed an Arabic word for the Jewish quarter of a town but it was used in the Maghreb, not in the Middle East. Further, the root meaning is "salt" and it came into use in that meaning in 1438 when a specific area of salt marsh in the city of Fez was set aside as a Jewish quarter. From that date, the usage spread to other towns in Morocco. It is therefore impossible, the Wassersteins conclude, for it to have occurred in this way in a document purported to have been written in the early 1280's.² The conclusion by the Wassersteins is a devastating one. "Selbourne claims that some of the views set forth in Jacopo's manuscript 'influenced' his own recently published book in political philosophy. These passages read more like discarded bits and pieces

left over from earlier work. Trickle-down economics, libertarian concepts, and quasi-communitarian ideas jostle here fashionably and anachronistically. In literary terms the book is a big bore, rendered supremely irritating by the enveloping balloon of apparatus criticus. Considered as a satire on contemporary mores, Jacopo's memoir falls flat on its face."

How does Selbourne himself respond to all of this. In a letter to *The Times of London's Literary Supplement*, December 23, he spoke at length in defense of the account. In all justice, his letter should be quoted in full.

Recently I translated the manuscript of a merchant, Jacob of Ancona, who set sail for the East in 1270 and arrived in China a year before Marco Polo. But since the owner of the manuscript will permit no further access to the work lest his anonymity be broached, the appearance of my translation *The City of Light* has been a turbulent event.

The book has been greeted by some as a hoax, a political satire worthy of a Montesquieu or a Swift, even a plot by the Left to discredit me. Folly and error of judgment have marked the reviews.

That the book is also a Jewish work of piety, containing an account of historic Jewish tribulation and defiance as well as an excoriation of Christian "idolatry," has, for whatever reason, barely been mentioned. Yet if there were still a Vatican Index, it would surely be placed on it.

The manuscript's owner—who is himself not Jewish and not an inhabitant of Urgino, where I live—first approached me about it in 1990. Why me? Because my interest in Judaica, including the history of medieval Jewry in Italy, was known to him, and because I was not Italian, yet within reach. Only those familiar with Italian mores could understand the mistrust, often justified, which Italians hold one another, while Italian scholarship is a byword for bad faith, corruption, and indolence. By contrast, the Englishman will generally be considered, rightly or wrongly, as trustworthy in keeping a pledge, as non-materialistic and as hardworking.

As to the essential authenticity of the Ancona manuscript—pending access to it by others better qualified than I—and the genuine purposes of its owner in wanting its contents translated into English, I have not been in doubt. I worked on it intermittently for several years at the owner's house, neither permitted to take it from his premises, nor to take samples or photographs of it, on the (mistaken) grounds that it would lead to the provenance of the manuscript and the present owner's identity becoming known to all.

A considerable amount, perhaps a fifth or sixth of the original, largely Tuscan, Italian - there are also Hebrew exclamations, encomia to God and Talmudic citations - was incorporated in my notes and translation as I went along. These were words, idiomatic phrases, proper names and philosophical terms which I wished to study further in lexicons and works of reference. I incorporated most of these words and phrases into the text of my translation, placing them in square brackets. The British publishers, Little, Brown, struck them out in the editing process, but they had been provided as an earnest, in the interim, of the authenticity of the text. A very small proportion of them remains in the notes. No review, so far as I recall, has remarked on them.

Instead, cabal-like pressures, originating in American academia, have been exerted against Little, Brown in America, the holders of subsidiary rights in my translation. A kind of scholarly fatwa has been pronounced against it, compromising freedom of publication (and intellectual freedom) in the very land of the free. The British publishers are made of sterner stuff, as are other publishers worldwide, whose translators are hard at work on the text.

Yet, in England also, risky libels about a "fake" have been spread; scholarship has pronounced upon the supposed anachronism of a single word; the manuscript has been described as "too long." I have been informed from the pulpits of academia that, although Jacob of Ancona categorically mentions them, there were no wheeled carriages in the great city of Zaitun (Quanzhou) which he visited, no saffron, no opium - although medieval Chinese pharmacopoeias mention it - and even

no sex or sexual aberration, although Jacob gives an account of both.

I have been unblushingly told, too, in a broadcast exchange with an English critic, that the Chinese of 13th century Zaitun would have had 'great difficulty' in communicating with each other in oral speech, so that the moral and political debates which Jacob describes could not have taken place - a proposition laughed to scorn by Chinese scholars.

That the conditions under which I worked on the translation would cause difficulty I anticipated. But I did not expect that mere opinion and supposition would be presented as counter-facts, nor the false assumption made that what today's academics do not know - or did not know - until they read the Ancona manuscript - could not be knowledge. Thus far, only the pointing out of one serious typographical error about a Jewish fast will be of service for future editions.

In sum, Jacob's tale, like Marco Polo's, stands, legitimate and spurious doubts notwithstanding. However assailed, the Ancona argosy sails on, to the discomfiture of critics and the delight of readers. Like Marco Polo, Jacob of Ancona lives.

Finally, there is a statement by a former colleague of Selbourne's, Tudu Parfitt, a professor of modern Jewish studies at the University of London, as reported in *The New York Times*, December 9. "He told me, looking me in the face, that this is genuine. I tend to believe in what people tell me. I believe him an honorable man, but some of the criticisms are fairly difficult to counter. What we're all waiting for is for him to come out of his corner with his manuscript." That, indeed, would settle the matter.

¹ According to the blurb on the English edition, he is "the grandson of one of the greatest of modern rabbinical philosophers, Moshe Avigdor Amiel (1882-1945)."

² The matter is a bit more complicated than presented in the review by the Wassersteins but not in a way that contradicts their observation. See the column by Philologos, "On Language," Forward, December 19.

gees from Europe 2,200. In Tientsin there were still 1,100 people, in Harbin 1,700, in Dairen 140, in Mukden 40 and in Hankow 30.

Finally, the rest of the remaining Jewish communities began leaving China after the seizure of power by the Chinese Communists in October, 1949. The majority emigrated to Israel, the United States and Australia. One of the last refugee ships left Tientsin in 1951, carrying 700 sick and elderly Jews from Tientsin, Dairen, Mukden and Harbin.

The Jewish community in post-war Dairen in 1945 (with the exception of a small influx of Jews from Harbin after the Russian occupation of Manchuria) numbered around 250 people.

The Dairen Jewish community with what was left of it, after the numerous arrests carried out by the Russians in Dairen after the war, emigrated en masse to Israel in 1950. Some went to America to join their relatives there. Most of them left Dairen by train for Tientsin, where they were met by the JOINT and the Jewish Agency who took care of their needs. They were put up in a Jewish Hotel in Tientsin, called the Savoy Hotel, run by Mr. & Mrs. Bronfman, until the time came for their passage by chartered boat to Hong Kong and from there they flew on via Calcutta, India to Israel.

The last remaining Jews in Dairen, the Wexlers and their families, left Dairen by boat for Shanghai in 1954. They arrived in Israel only in 1958. They got stuck in Shanghai because the Chinese authorities had refused to issue them exit visas for four years.

After the Wexlers left, there was only one Jew remaining in Dairen. He was my cousin, Yasha Kalinchick, who ran a dry-cleaning shop in Dairen called "Gaisters." He had married Mrs. Gaister in 1947, but she died of cancer in Dairen in 1948. Yasha continued with the business in her name. He never corresponded with us and no one ever knew what happened to him after that. His fate in Dairen was sealed in oblivion.

Torah Scroll Sought

The Jewish Community of Shanghai seeks a Torah scroll, as a gift or on loan, for religious purposes. Please contact Seth Kaplan at skaplan@uninet.com.cn if you can help with this important mitzvah.

In New Era, Jews Turn to Shanghai Once Again

By Sarah Jay

Excerpted from *The New York Times International*, Sunday, December 14, 1997

David Issokson of Durham, N.H., arrived here not long ago, a 1997 graduate of McGill University in search of gainful employment. He is determined, resourceful and knows how to network.

He is also Jewish.

"On my second day here," he said, "I came to this synagogue and I met the old guy." This was a reference to Wang Faliang, the administrator of the Ohel Moishe Synagogue, which was a center for Jews fleeing Nazi Europe and is now a government office and a small museum.

Mr. Wang "went to his desk and got Seth Kaplan's card," Mr. Issokson added. "That was the connection, Seth was the man. He knows everyone."

Mr. Kaplan has been a catalyst for what, at about 200 people, is fast becoming the most active and organized Jewish community in Shanghai since World War II. He fields increasing numbers of calls each week from new arrivals like Mr. Issokson, from international Jewish leaders passing through town, from the Israeli Consulate and from Jewish former residents.

"I have a 20-year plan in Shanghai," said Mr. Kaplan, who is 31 and from New York. "I'm going to build my company and career here, I'm going to try to find a wife who meets my Jewish needs and my needs to stay in Shanghai, and I'd like to build a Jewish family."

That dream has fueled Mr. Kaplan's mission to identify and mobilize the Jewish residents — whose numbers are increasing with those of the foreign community as a whole. When he moved to Shanghai in August 1996 with ambitions to start a company — and eventually settled on a job at a private, foreign-administered university in the nearby city of Ningbo — he knew of only one other Jew in Shanghai.

But Mr. Kaplan, who is neither shy nor taciturn, found more. By the end of Passover in April of this year, he had 70 names in his database. Many came from the Chabad Lubavitch rabbis who had organized religious services this year and last. Mr. Kaplan

formed an executive committee, of which he is president, and together the members are carrying out his vision: sponsoring regular Sabbath dinners; providing a Hebrew school for Jewish children; bringing in a permanent rabbi, probably from the United States, and one day having a permanent place — a synagogue, perhaps — for these events. . .

The current group of Jews in Shanghai probably has most in common with 19th century generations who came seeking opportunities after the city was opened to foreign trade under the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing. Although the city is again open to entrepreneurial foreign Jews, many of them, sensitive to its abrasive edge, are tapping their community for support.

"It's lonely," said Jay Goldberg, 26, of Los Angeles. "I have no family here, so it's good to be part of a community. And because it's a Jewish community, I go to a lot more religious activities than I would have."

Living in Shanghai has not been easy for Barry Wicksman, originally from New York, who moved from South Korea several months ago to set up an international kindergarten and preschool near the Shanghai zoo. Frustrated and overwhelmed by daily challenges — complicated banking, unreliable phones and food concerns (he is a vegetarian) — Mr. Wicksman said the Jewish community had been a heartening find.

"I have gotten more into my Judaism being here," he said, adding that he had earlier been leaning toward Buddhism and Taoism. "That's the one thing that's really coming together."

He is not alone. In the absence of any other obvious handle, many formerly nonobservant Jews are latching on to it for balance.

Matthew Eaton, a marketing director for Image Factory Communications Design, said he had not attended a Passover service for 10 years before coming to Shanghai at the start of this year. Now he is discovering that being Jewish links him to his home in Boulder, Color., as well as to Shanghai.

"It's like having guanxi outside of having Chinese guanxi," he said, using the Chinese term for connections. "Everybody relies on everyone else to grow."

the Jewish people, which had been subsequently adopted as Nazi policy in Wansee in 1942. At that time in 1942, the chief of the Gestapo for Japan, Manchukuo and China, was a colonel named Josef Meisinger.

Meisinger was sent by the Gestapo to Shanghai. One dark night he boarded a Japanese submarine and landed in Shanghai, where the largest Jewish population in the Far East lived. There he was to arrive at a final solution to the Jewish problem with the local Japanese authorities. According to Sam Gottfried, amongst Meisinger's suggestions were ... "the making use of some sea-unworthy ships docked across the Whang-Po river ... and the suggested plan was to have the ships loaded with Jews and towed out to sea and then finally sinking them. Or yet another plan, putting the Jews to work in abandoned saltmines upriver where they would finally die of exhaustion and hunger." (Sam Gottfried. BULLETIN No. 343, p. 28, Feb. 1996.)

However, this plan was aborted very soon. Once Dr. A.I. Kaufman, the President of the Jewish Communities in the Far East, got word of the extermination plan to Matsuoka with his contacts in the Foreign Ministry and to Colonel N. Yasue with his friends in the upper ranks of the army, Meisinger's dream was doomed to oblivion. Urgent steps were immediately taken to abolish the plan completely. It was finally decided to assemble all the Jewish refugees in Shanghai into a designated area for stateless persons called the 'Hongkew Ghetto.' The other Jewish Communities in China, Japan and Manchukuo had no idea of Meisinger's dream and were not informed about it.

III. The Jews of Shanghai first heard of the European Holocaust in July, 1945. Just before that, many German and Austrian Jews were hoping against hope of returning back home after the war. But when they heard what the Nazis had done to the Jews of Europe, they voted against it. With their dreams of returning home shattered, the 20,000 Jewish refugees in Shanghai considered their future and plans were hurriedly drawn up to leave for Australia and America.

After the War, on October 14th, 1945 there was a great national mass meeting of the Jewish population in Shanghai. History was moving at such a breathtaking pace that it made events only a few months back

sound like ancient history. The meeting was called to show solidarity and express the will for freedom and independence and was held at "Kadoorie School" in Hongkew, Shanghai. The Coordinated Committee for United Zionist Action in Shanghai issued an Appeal to all the Jews in Shanghai. The Appeal read in part as follows:

TO ALL JEWS IN SHANGHAI!

A P P E A L

The war is over. Victory has been won! The prolonged sufferings and horrible days have come to an end. Jubilation and happiness reigns everywhere. A new, delivered world has been born, where people should live safe from want and fright.

Under the banners of the Allied Nations, **a million Jewish soldiers fought in this war!** Thousands of Jews met their death in underground resistance movements and guerrilla units, all over Europe; nevertheless, the White Paper is still in force; the gates of Palestine still locked. There is still no home for the homeless people. Will also today the wandering Jewish refugees be met on the shores of their historical motherland with pointed guns? Will they be forced out again into the open sea?

JEWS: We face at present, an unprecedented crisis in our existence. At all critical stages in our history, we gave birth to prophets, messiahs and champions of freedom. Our pain and sorrow we mould into strength and endurance; and we have lived to see the evil powers shattered.

Today, also, let us strengthen ourselves in the belief of the eternity and rejuvenation of the Jewish people, and final victory of its case.

JEWS, remain Jews! Be strong and dignified!

For any price will Palestine be Jewish! Let reconstructed Eretz-Israel stand out as a living monument to those millions that loved Palestine so strongly and were so tragically murdered away from her sacred soil!

Jews of Shanghai!

Let us show our solidarity and express our will for freedom and independence. **COORDINATED COMMITTEE FOR UNITED ZIONIST ACTION**

After this emotional Appeal to the Jews of Shanghai, which in fact was an Appeal to

All the Jews of China, a large number of Jews and Jewish refugees began to leave China after the end of World War II, whilst the rest of the Chinese Jewish Communities in Tientsin, Dairen, Mukden, and Harbin gradually began to disintegrate. The dispersal of the Jews in Shanghai began in 1946. By 1948 Jewish emigration became a mass exodus. As the Jewish communities in China began dwindling one by one, no one wanted to remain behind.

The Palestine Committee in Shanghai was responsible for the emigration of all the Jewish communities in China. A special commission was organized in Tientsin. An emissary from Tsingtao came to Shanghai to coordinate the emigration of the Jews.

The work of the Committee was spread to Shanghai which was divided into Ashkenazi and Sepharadic communities, as well as to Hongkew, which included the massive refugees from Central Europe. The Committee was also responsible for the evacuation of the Jews from Tsingtao, Tientsin, Hangkow and Mukden. The Dairen and Harbin Jewish Communities, with its 250 and 1700 members respectively, remained behind the Iron Curtain in Soviet occupied Manchuria.

In the beginning, the Committee deemed it necessary to send a transport of 300 young men to Palestine as illegal immigrants, to help to fight in the War of Independence. That was before May 15th, 1948. But immediately after the creation of the State of Israel, there followed a mass emigration of Jews from Shanghai.

Israel sent Moshe Yuval, a representative of the Ministry of Immigration, to Shanghai. The emigration of the Jews began in earnest and at a quick pace. They came to Israel by chartered ships and planes. During the years 1948-1949 Jews left Shanghai on the following ships: on the SS Victoria - 892 people; on the SS Kastel Blanka - 899; on the SS Captain Markos - 224; on the SS General Gordon - 443; on the SS General Miggs - 193 and on other transports 118 people. By plane No. 1 - 60; by plane No. 2 - 52; by plane No. 3 - 60 and by plane No. 4 - 64 people. In all - 3026 people. From North China only 148 people were able to leave and amongst them were all the Jews from Tsingtao. Tientsin at that time was temporarily cut off. By the end of 1949, there still remained in China 7,120 people, of which in Shanghai the Ashkenazi community numbered 1,700. The Sepharadi Community 200; refu-

The Jewish Community of Dairen (1900-1951)

(continued from page 1)

slowly to one hundred and fifty people, they decided to organize a community center.

The Dairen Jewish Society was inaugurated on the 8th of December 1929. The chief motives for the organization of the society were: 1) religious duties, 2) charitable activity, and 3) cultural work.

The activities of the Dairen Jewish Committee were divided into the following eight sections: 1) Religious; 2) Philanthropic; 3) Financial; 4) Cultural Educational; 5) Monitoring Members Section; 6) Arbitration Tribunal (Beit Din); 7) Gmilus Hessed (Care of the Needy & of the Dead); 8) Palestine Section.

From 1929 to 1935 the life of the Society had been without any alterations and no important events happened during this period. In 1935 an event took place relocating the Society from the premises occupied by the Society on 181 Yamagata-dori to 32 Kii Machi. The new premises had offered the possibility to allot a room for the prayer House, a room for the library which at that time had noticeably grown, a small room for the office and a hall for cultural events. The cultural events included lectures, musical evenings and small dramatic plays.

The second noticeable event was the donation of a house by Mrs. M.S. Shulman, on 61 Yonagy Machi, in memory of her late husband Mr. A.M. Shulman in 1938.

By now, the Jewish Community had a synagogue which was housed in a rented Club House. The policy of the Committee always stressed that religious worship should never be interfered with under any circumstances and that religious holidays should be celebrated solemnly. On Passover and on Yom Kippur, the big hall was always packed full to capacity, with observant Jews and non-observant Jews celebrating together as one community, where they carried out prayers in the Jewish tradition.

But in all practicality, the Jewish Committee was unable to organize a religious section. Work in this field was carried out individually by a few members of the community. Because the religious section was unorganized, work on the Jewish Cemetery was not carried out to its full extent. My

father, Grigory Fridelovich Lerner, took the responsibility of improving the Jewish cemetery by carrying out practical renovations. Steps were taken to install tombstones on the graves, fences were put up and the cemetery was cleaned and kept in good order.

The club house was the focus of the social and cultural section of Jewish life in Dairen. This section was predominantly attended by all the young people of the community. However, the central attraction of this cultural section was the library.

There was a big Jewish community library in Dairen stocked with numerous books in different languages (3,994 in all). In the library one could read English, Russian and Japanese daily newspapers and weekly periodicals and magazines - 9 in all. Among the newspapers and magazines were the English daily newspaper, *The Manchuria Daily News*, the journal *Jewish life - Yevreiskaya Zhizn* in Russian, edited by Dr. A.I. Kaufman in Harbin, the Russian daily newspaper *Nash Golos*, the Shanghai Jewish journals, as well as foreign magazines and newspapers. Since most of the Jews in Dairen were from Russia, the library had predominantly Russian, English, Yiddish and Hebrew books. And because the library was so well stocked with books, it was also used by the local White Russian Community.

Towards the end of 1938, the Jewish community library received a valuable donation of 1983 books from the Manchurian Jewish community and by 1938, it already had a stock of 8,363 books.

The cultural and enlightenment section of the community took part in organizing lectures and cultural entertainments. It was decided to have 'Thursdays' as the day during which lectures had to be delivered and papers read on Jewish themes; plays staged in the Jewish language, classes of Yiddish and of the Hebrew language organized, etc.

Altogether in 1938, they organized 19 meetings, 2 Jewish plays, 3 children's outings, 2 traditional Balls and 1 evening of literary dialogue and criticism.

It is impossible to ignore the organization of a Children's Colony at Kakagashi in 1938. It had been a great and difficult task. Fifty sick, tired out children of German refugees had been brought there from Shanghai for the recovery of their health.

The Society had noticed with moral satisfaction that the task undertaken by it had been fulfilled.

The assistance to the refugees had not been only limited to this. The Society had given much of its attention and care to them before and after 1938. The Dairen Jewish Community added to all its regular expenses, the expenses brought on by the refugees. During the month of December 1938, over 50 refugees en route to Shanghai passed via Dairen. The Society furnished them with lodging, organized their feeding and gave them a small sum of pocket money for expenses.

The basic fund for the organization of the Society had come from voluntary subscription and donations. Furthermore, the Committee had found means for the existence of the Society by: a) the collection of membership fees, b) by the organization of charity balls and evenings, c) by voluntary donations.

All the questions concerning the refugees passing through Shanghai were taken up by the Refugee Section of the Committee, which was quite ready to help them with all the means at their disposal. The Refugee Section was always ready to receive new groups of refugees going via Dairen and helped them get to Shanghai. However, the question of settlement in Dairen, for those refugees passing through it, was complicated by the limited possibilities for a European to find work in Dairen. In spite of the difficulties, individual refugees seeking asylum in Dairen were helped by the Society and eventually they settled down and work was found for them.

The Jewish author Zenin and Rabbi Blumenkranz passed through Dairen this way, from Vilna to Palestine, en route to Shanghai. These two emigrants had with them Palestine Certificates and had succeeded in receiving Soviet transit visas for passage through the USSR and Japan. From Shanghai they left for Kobe. In Kobe they succeeded in getting a boat bound for Bombay. There in Bombay they had to change the boat for Basra and from Basra there was a bus connection via Iraq and Syria to Palestine. These two were the first pioneers of the round-about way to Palestine. Many more were to follow after they succeeded in reaching Palestine.

Mr. Zenin, who had visited the Bureau of the "Hizem" in Shanghai, told them that in the regions occupied by the USSR, es-

pecially in Lithuania, there were many hundreds of people processing Palestine Certificates. He also reported that for one of the groups of Jews, it had been possible to charter a steamer from Odessa to Istanbul, from where this group succeeded to make their journey to Palestine by the Bagdad Railway. As this railway passed through Syrian territory for a length of 27 kms, they needed French visas for transit through Syria. The French authorities had not issued the visas, so those emigrants had to make that journey on camel back in order to avoid that piece of forbidden Syrian territory. That group, which had arrived in Palestine via Odessa and Istanbul, consisted of 300 people. After that, all negotiations about further groups of Jews venturing to go via Odessa and Istanbul had had no results.

The Dairen Jewish community not for one moment forgot that it was indebted for its peaceful and prosperous life to the well-wishing and humane concern of the authorities; and wherever it could, the Society emphasized its gratitude and acknowledgment by taking part in all kinds of collections for the needs of the Japanese people. The Society gave 1000 Yen as a New Year present to the Imperial Japanese Army, to be given for distribution among the needy Japanese families. The Society also subscribed to Japanese State Loans, etc.

In the creation of exclusively good relations of the Society with the authorities in Dairen, the Society was indebted to Colonel N. Yasuye, Chief of the Special Service of the Japanese Military Mission, who by sheer luck had his residence in Dairen. It was Yasuye who had educated a whole group of officials who were penetrated with humane views on the Jewish question. Those circumstances made the work of the Society easier.

In the summer of 1938, an Italian Friendship Mission accredited in Japan and Manchukuo arrived in Dairen. The head of this mission was Count Jiokomo Pauluchi di Carboli Barone, who represented the Italian delegation. The procession passed through the city center, where thousands of pupils from all the schools in Dairen were lined up on the streets to greet the delegation. Even the Maryknoll Academy was there, as the sole representative of a foreign school in Dairen. The Italian delegation never expected to receive such a warm welcome in Dairen.

The Dairen Jewish community sent its greetings to the Italian delegation and indicated that it would like to thank the Italian government and people in gratitude for its attitude towards the Jews of Italy, and wished the delegation success in its mission of friendship between Italy, Japan and Manchukuo.

That same year, in 1938, the Dairen Jewish community's Palestine Section held its first meeting on Palestine. Those who attended that evening were united in their feelings towards Palestine. The hall was decorated with the national colors. A portrait of Theodore Herzl and a map of Palestine hung on the wall. After a short opening speech, articles from newspapers in Russian and Yiddish were read to the audience. It informed them of life in Palestine, its economy, its industry and its kibbutzim.

In March 1939, the Foreign Minister of Japan, Hachiro Arita, declared that no discrimination would be made against Jewish residents or immigrants in Japan. Katsuji Debuchi, then a member of the Dowakai party of the Upper House and a former Ambassador to Washington, asked Foreign Minister Arita to give a clear cut enunciation of the Government's policy towards Jews. Foreign Minister Arita said that Japan had never made any discrimination against alien people, either through legislation or as a matter of fact. In view of public attention attracted by an increasing number of Jews in the Far East since Autumn 1938, the Government had decided on a definite policy towards Jews. That policy aimed at a 'No Discrimination Against Jews.' "In accordance with that new policy," said Foreign Minister Arita, "the Jewish residents in Japan shall be treated just like other foreign residents who are free from discrimination, while the Jews arriving in Japan shall be subjected to the Immigration Law like other foreigners, but will never be denied entry simply because of the Jewish nationality."

II. The First Conference of the Jewish Communities of the Far East took place towards the end of December 1937. The solemn session of the First Conference of the Delegates of the Jewish Communities of the Far East was held in the hall of the Commercial Club in Harbin at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. It lasted for two days (26 to 28 December 1937). The flags of Japan, Manchukuo and the National Jewish blue and white flag decorated the stage of the Commercial Club. The Conference united

all the Jewish Communities of Manchukuo, Japan, Central and Northern China, with Dr. A.I. Kaufman as its President. The Conference elaborated the Constitution of the Jewish communities which included in it the most ample rights of the Jewish Communities in the domain of religious, national and cultural activities.

At this Conference held in Harbin were present the representatives of the High Local Japanese Administration and the well-known General Higuchi, who welcomed the Conference and made a 'Statement,' showing the attitude taken by Japan and Manchukuo towards the Jewish minority in these countries and towards the Jewish problem in general. The statement by General Higuchi read as follows:

"It gives me pleasure to welcome the representatives of the Jewish Communities of such great cities as Harbin, Dairen, Mukden, Shanghai, Tientsin, Kobe, Hailar and Tsitsikar being present at today's conference, who owing to the serious situation in the Far East at present, have justly decided to show their position in relation to Japan and Manchukuo, which I consider to be not only a timely measure but also the most important fact in the establishment of peace in the Far East. We are quite aware of the frictions in relations between the Jews and other nations and their results.

We know that the Jewish people are endowed by nature with eagerness for knowledge and labouriousness and famed for their abilities in science, social and economic lines, thus rendering a service to the whole of mankind.

The Jewish religion was the basis of Christianity and Mahomedanism. Notwithstanding the deprivation of their native country during some 2000 years, the national unity of the Jewish people has been constantly preserved in the Jewish masses.

All along the whole history of the Jewish people, their positive features are clear to Japan, where in Europe, especially in the Middle East, the Jewish question has become very acute. The Jews are accused of materialism, internationalism, socialism and not wishing to assimilate.

These accusals are the results of the loss of their beloved motherland by the Jew-

ish people and their perpetual existence during two thousand years, under the yoke of other nations. Not wishing to assimilate is the natural character of the Jewish people. The ability of the Jews to respect their religious feeling, together with their strong national spirit, is the cause for the impossibility of assimilation." (Jewish Life. Harbin. No. 6, Page 15, 1938.)

After the prayer and the blessing of the conference conducted by Rabbi A. Kiseloff, Dr. A.I. Kaufman spoke about the plight of the Jewish people.

"The Jewish people, having lost their territory, their empire, had been wandering for two thousand years. Fifteen and a half million Jews are living scattered all over the world experiencing the tragedy for want of arable land, a tragedy of homelessness. During these 20 centuries the Jewish people have been suffering great pains and persecutions.

All the hardships that have befallen the Jewish people can hardly be expressed in words. The Jews are in a solitary state. The world's conscience is dormant and does not wake up even when there is a catastrophe and over them hangs the sword of death and extinction.

Here on the territory of Manchukuo and Japan, the Jewish people have the opportunity of developing their ancient national culture; here there is a possibility to work and live and to be useful citizens, following the wills of our great teachings which we have carried through for two thousand years, and with which we have enriched the world civilization. Those teachings that say about the love to fellowmen and those teachings that say about the fraternity of all peoples are immortal." (Jewish Life, No. 3, Page 1, 1938.)

At the conclusion of the 2nd session of the National Jewish Far Eastern Society in 1938, a Special Section had been organized by the Dairen Hebrew Society for granting relief to European Jewish refugees arriving from Germany, within the time of the great anti-Semitic occurrences.

The Refugee Section of the Society had the following special departments: Departments for Correspondence, Shelter and Feeding, Meeting and Farewell, Employment, Visa, Freight, etc.

From November 1938 up to 1939, around one hundred refugees passed through Dairen, partly arriving and leaving the same day, but mostly staying on for a few days, either waiting for the visa to Manchukuo or for a passage to Shanghai.

In cases where refugees arrived with or without insufficient means, they all got the support that was necessary for them. The Dairen Jewish community always tried to place, feed and entertain the passing refugees as well as possible, in order to make them forget all their troubles, difficulties and hardships they had gone through during the last few months.

The work of the Refugee Section was primarily indulged in arranging the entrance visas for the refugees going to Harbin, and correspondence with the different Relief Committees and Hebrew Societies in the Far East, as well as with the Emigration Associations at Berlin and Vienna. On November 30, 1938, 19 refugees, most of them from Vienna, came from Harbin to Dairen. This group had been placed on the account of the Society in local Jewish hotels and fed at the Club. The refugees from Berlin and Vienna waited in Dairen for their visas to be granted, which usually took a few days. But whenever possible, the Society always endeavoured to place the refugees in private Jewish houses, thus giving them the feeling of being at home.

During the Purim Festivals the Society had the pleasure of inviting those refugees to the Purim Ball, and the next day, to the children's performance. The Society did its utmost to cope with the situation regarding the Jews in Europe and was indebted to all those members and friends, who supported and helped the refugees in their plight.

As to Dairen, the number of refugees for whom they were able to find a position, as I mentioned before, was very limited. Due largely to the small foreign community and other local circumstances, not much could be done for them in Dairen. Nevertheless, the Society succeeded in arranging some contracts for Jewish refugees passing through Dairen.

The political situation of the Jews in Manchukuo and in Japan in 1940 was considered to be quite satisfactory. The Jews, as citizens, enjoyed the same rights as all the other inhabitants of the country. No

legal restrictions for Jews existed there. The Jews could occupy themselves with any kind of commerce, industry, trade or liberal profession.

No special laws about the Jews existed in Japan or Manchukuo, and in practice no measures were taken that would have restricted Jews in their rights. The Jews were equal before the law with all the rest of the citizens that populated the states of Japan and Manchukuo.

The economic situation of the Jews depended on the general conditions in the country, which were reflected upon all parts of the population. And since there were no specific restrictions on the Jews, the economic prosperity for them depended entirely on the general situation.

In February, 1940, the National Council of the Jews of the Far East applied to all the Jewish communities of Manchukuo, Japan, Central and Northern China, with an offer to mark the National holiday of the Japanese nation – 2600th anniversary of the foundation of the Japanese Empire – in a suitable manner. A solemn divine service was held at 10:30 in the morning, prior to which a short address had been made to explain the meaning of the celebration. A special prayer had been offered by Rabbi Sh. Levin, who had been at that moment on a visit to Dairen, for the prosperity and happiness of the Japanese Imperial House.

In 1941, a farewell banquet that had passed in an atmosphere of exclusive friendliness, was given by the Dairen Jewish community in honour of Dr. A. Kozuji, on the occasion of his departure from Dairen. Dr. A. Kozuji, it will be remembered, spoke in the Hebrew language at the last two conventions of the Jewish communities in the Far East which were held in Harbin. He was a sincere friend of the Jewish people and took a great interest in the Jewish cause.

Dr. A. Kozuji was a Japanese, a graduate of an American university. He had studied semitology and had taken a special interest in the Bible and the Hebrew language. His departure was a great loss to the Dairen Jewish community, which had great esteem and reverence for him.

In spite of the prevailing calm, no one suspected in the summer of 1941, that SS Reichsfuhrer Heinrich Himmler had conceived a plan for the total annihilation of