

# 中國-猶太學院

## JOIN THE SINO-JUDAIC INSTITUTE

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.

Membership in the Institute is open and we cordially invite you to join in supporting our endeavor. Our annual dues structure is as follows:

Benefactor .....	\$1,000
*Patron .....	500
Corporate Patron .....	500
Corporate Sponsor .....	250 to 499
Corporate Member .....	250 to 499
*Sponsor .....	100
Regular Member .....	50
Libraries .....	50
Academic .....	30
Senior Citizens .....	25
Students .....	25

\*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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**PLEASE PRINT**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: The Sino-Judaic Institute, 232 Lexington Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025**



# Points East

## 中國-猶太學院

Vol. 13 No. 2  
July, 1998

A Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute

### THE SUGIHARA STORY: FACTS, MYSTERY, MYTH

by B. Bresler  
reprinted from *Bulletin-Igud*  
*Yotzei Sin*, 350 & 351, June-July & Sept.-Oct. 1997

I. Several books and many more articles have been written about Sugihara - the Japanese Schindler - who in 1940 issued Japanese transit visas to thousands of Jewish refugees in Lithuania, saving them from Hitler's clutches. A significant addition to these writings has been recently published in which Hillel Levine records an investigation of the remarkable events surrounding Sugihara's story (*In Search of Sugihara*, by Hillel Levine, The Free Press, Simon and Shuster 1996, 323 pgs., \$25.00). The author goes beyond the mere detailing of the dramatic events. Using "the textures and devices of a novel to tell a true story" and blending facts with imaginary events he tries to penetrate the mindset of this Japanese official whose extraordinary actions saved thousands of Jewish lives. This search for "reality" more than fifty years after the real events, when most of the important participants are no longer alive, when much of the documentary evidence has disappeared (or is not available), and when the social and political setting surrounding these events is so different from the contemporary world, this search for reality is almost an impossible task. Yet Hillel Levine's work, spun out of facts, mystery and myth is an important contribution to the "Sugihara story."

The book begins with biographical facts. Born on January 1, 1900, in a small town of Gifu Prefecture, Japan, Chiune Sugihara graduated from high school at the age of seventeen. He spent the next two years preparing for entrance examinations to Waseda University, and in April 1919 gained admission to the English Division Normal School. In July, because the limited financial resources of the family were insufficient to meet the Waseda high tuition, he competed for a foreign language study scholarship awarded by the Foreign Ministry and qualified for one of the seventeen such scholarships offered that year. Choice of Russian as field of study got him an assignment to Harbin Gakuin, the Institute of Japanese-Russian Society, headed by a Japanese Director, employing a mixed Japanese and Russian faculty, and offering a three-year post-secondary course of study. His studies began in November 1919, but were interrupted the following year, when he was called up for compulsory military service.

After a year-and-a-half in the Army he was honorably discharged with a rank of sergeant in the reserve. In March 1922 he returned to Harbin, but at this point the record is confusing, listing him as Instructor in the Harbin Gakuin and referring to his contemporaneous employment in the Japanese Consulate. Clearly, he could not have been a language instructor, having completed only one year of study. Just discharged from the Army with the rank of

### FROM SHANGHAI TO BERLIN EXTRACTS FROM THE MEMOIRS OF: SONJA MUEHLBERGER

by Sonja Muehlberger

I was born Sonya Krips on October 26, 1939 in Shanghai. My parents, Hermann and Ilse Krips, came from long established Jewish families in Germany. Research in my mother's family tree confirms that a branch had existed in Germany as far back as 1258.

A week after 'Kristallnacht', in November 1938, my father was arrested and sent to the Dachau concentration camp. At that time, it was still possible to leave the camp upon presenting proof that one would leave Germany immediately for another country. My young, pregnant mother found the courage and initiative to solve this problem and arranged their departure for Shanghai, China. After a 4-week voyage on the Lloyd Triestino steamer, the Bianca Mano, my parents reached Shanghai. They each carried a suitcase weighing 20 kgs. And 10 German Rieschsmarks.

In Shanghai, my parents, like most refugee late arrivals, were first put in a communal 'Heim' a large room with 74 bunk beds. Later they managed to rent together with three men two small communicating rooms in Hongkew (Kinchow Rd.). Finally they moved to 954 Washing Rd., likewise in Hongkew, and remained there until our departure for Germany in July 1947.

Hongkew had been badly destroyed during the Sino-Japanese fighting. However, as a child, this did not disturb me as much as it did my parents. I was a poor eater and did not suffer the pangs of hunger my parents often had to bear. We did have one guaranteed meal a day. This was provided by American help organizations and some influential local families, such as the Sassoons and the Kadoories. As a young child (1 year and 4 months) I was placed in Day Care for refugee children subsidized by the Sassoons. My mother had learned tailoring before her departure from Germany and found work which helped pay for our food.

After looking unsuccessfully for a job, my father decided to open a bakery and thus *Sonny-Bread* came about. Unfortunately, this venture soon came to an end. Finally he, like some other immigrants, worked for a Chinese as an egg-seller. He soon learned to speak the Shanghai Dialect. He also improved his English - which he studied in Germany - by listening to radio broadcasts. Sometimes, when he went to the countryside to purchase eggs and hens, I rode on the back of his bicycle. He delivered eggs on his bike and often carried heavy baskets up staircases. He was let into homes by the servants' entrance. He would always manage to take me to the kindergarten, and later to school, and bring me back home.

(continued on page 6)

(continued on page 10)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Featured Articles**  
 The Sugihara Story ..... 1  
 From Shanghai to Berlin ..... 1

**Letters to the Editor** ..... 14

**China Notes** ..... 14

**Book Nook**  
 My China. Jewish Life in the  
 Orient 1900-1950 ..... 11  
 Bible in Modern China ..... 11

**Articles**  
 Next Year in Beijing ..... 12  
 Dr. Jakob Rosenfeld ..... 12  
 Bringing the Hebrew  
 to the Chinese ..... 13  
 Old China Hands ..... 14  
 From Buchenwald  
 to Shanghai ..... 14  
 Flight to Freedom ..... 15  
 Sino-Judaic Institute Documents  
 in the Hoover Institution  
 Archives ..... 18  
 The Jews of Kaifeng: An  
 Orphan Colony in China ..... 19

**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
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>311</b>

**FROM THE EDITOR**

As a student of Jewish history, I could not read the newspaper accounts of the anti-Chinese rioting in Indonesia last March without thinking about the anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, or indeed of the Jewish experience in Europe in general. Here, in a sad and macabre way, is yet another Sino-Judaic connection.

Although one people's size is immense and the other's minuscule, in their respective diasporas, each is a minority, powerless despite their relative wealth, and beholden to the whims of the host nation and the ruling powers.

In Indonesia, the Chinese constitute at most 4% of the 200 million strong population but are said to control about 60% of the nation's assets. Political power resides with other ethnic groups, almost all of whom are Muslim (87%). As Indonesia descended into economic chaos, and the government was forced to raise the price of basic goods such as rice and cooking oil, the ethnic Chinese - mostly small shopkeepers and middle class professionals - became scapegoats for the crisis. Riots in cities across Java, Sumatra and elsewhere left dozens of Chinese-owned stores in ruins and as many Chinese as are able thinking of ways to flee their homeland. Unfortunately, it has been the lower-income Chinese who have borne the brunt of rioting but who lack the means of escape.

According to the New York-based Human Rights Watch, the rioting began spontaneously, but senior government and military officials fueled anti-Chinese sentiments in veiled public statements. In many cases, police stood by as rioters wrecked and looted Chinese homes and businesses. (Sounds just like Kishinev to me!)

During the Dutch colonial period, the Chinese were favored to do business in Indonesia and this made their patriotism suspect. During the 1960s, the army suspected them of supporting Indonesian communists. (Like the Jews, the Chinese are blamed both for being capitalists and communists!) With government polices prohibiting them from the military and the civil service, the Chinese focused their energies on business and professional careers. Now they are being attacked for filling an economic role into which they were at least partially forced.

Similar to the "overseas" Chinese and the Jews, the Indians of East Africa also served the role of resident alien economic middlemen, and therefore made a convenient target when rulers like Idi Amin of Uganda needed someone to assume and deflect the wrath of the people.

People in East Asia are often puzzled by the Jewish experience in Europe because it makes no sense to them. Unfortunately, in our own day, we are seeing that this particular Jewish experience is also a universal one, with the ethnic Chinese of Indonesia playing the role of the Jew in Europe.

*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

*Points East* is published three times a year, in March, July and November.

Deadlines for submitting material to be included in these issues are January 15th, May 15th and September 15th.

**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  
 1st Vice President, Rabbi Joshua Stampfer  
 2nd Vice President, Michael Pollak  
 Publisher, Rabbi Anson Laytner  
 Public Affairs, Rena Krasno  
 Treasurer, Shelton Ehrlich  
 Counsel, Robert Grodsky

**Board of Directors**

Arthur H. Rosen, Chair	Rena Krasno
Wendy Abraham, Ed.D.	Rabbi Anson Laytner
Rabbi Arnold Belzer	Prof. Donald Leslie
Mark Cohen	Dennis Leventhal
Dr. Marshall Denenberg	Prof. Andrew Plaks
Prof. Albert Dien	Michael Pollak
Shelton Ehrlich	Prof. Vera Schwarcz
Leo Gabow (z'l)	Prof. Louis Schwartz
Prof. Steve Hochstadt	Elyse Beth Silverberg
Phyllis Horal	Rabbi Joshua Stampfer
Dr. Ronald L. Kaye	Rabbi Marvin Tokayer

**The Jews of Kaifeng: An Orphan Colony in China Specifications for Mounting the Exhibition**

The exhibition consists of 9 narratives, 57 photographs, and 46 labels, all mounted on 3/8" Foam Core board. The majority of these photos are 11" x 17", although there are some larger ones (33-1/3 x 48-1/2 and 18 x 37).

The exhibition at its initial venue occupied 108 linear feet of wall space. The exhibition is composed of four sections in the initial installation; these were: 1) The Arrival of Jews into China, 27'; 2) The Synagogue in Kaifeng, 45'; 3) The Discovery by the West, 26'; 4) The Descendants of the Chinese Jews Today, 30'. Of course, spacing can be adjusted to the individual venue.

At its initial venue, the photos were mounted on the wall by means of 5/8" push pins, though other techniques may be used as long as there is no damage to the face of the photos. The pins may be included if needed.

A Handsome metal sign in the form of a Chinese street sign, 14" x 30", with the current name of the lane on which the Jews lived, "Teaching the Scriptures Lane," in English, Hebrew and Chinese, is also available.

A set of photos of the manner in which the exhibit was originally mounted is available for possible guidance in setting up the exhibition.

A one-page handout giving the general overview of the exhibition is available.

A 32-page pamphlet, "The Jews of Kaifeng: The Sect that Plucks Out the Sinews," by Michael Pollak, is available for sale at the exhibition, serving as an exhibition catalog. The price is \$2 each, and it can be sold by the exhibitor at a higher price to recoup some of the cost of mounting the exhibition.

Other publications can also be made available for sale; a list of these is provided. The postage for mailing these materials to the exhibitor and for returning unsold copies to the Institute are the responsibility of the exhibitor.

A copy of a video tape, "The Jews of Kaifeng: Chinese Jews on the Banks of the Yellow River," produced by the Beth Hatefutsoth, Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, Jerusalem, is available. This proved to be a very popular adjunct of the exhibit. The exhibitor, of course, must supply the TV and VCR for viewing.

An audio cassette tape of the music from a Confucian temple ceremony can be supplied to provide background music for the exhibition.

The Institute requires that brochures and membership applications of the Institute, supplied by the Institute, be displayed as a part of the exhibition.

The materials are shipped via United Parcel Service in a container. The shipping costs to and from the Institute are the responsibility of the exhibitor. There is, in addition, a handling charge of \$100 to be

paid to the Institute.

The exhibition can be enhanced by additional materials supplied by the exhibitor. At the original venue, a display case with historical materials was put together from various library resources. The Institute can supply a list of relevant titles.

Copy and photographs for use by newspapers and other forms of publicity are available.

The Institute is also able to assist in locating lecturers on this topic. Such lectures can be an important part of the exhibition. The expenses and fees involved are to be negotiated by the exhibitor.

Handmade tallits, challah covers, etc. embroidered with expressions in Hebrew and Chinese are also available to be sold as a tie-in to the exhibit.

The period of the loan of these materials is not to exceed two months. This allows adequate time for shipping to and from the Institute, the mounting of the exhibition, and the duration of one month for public viewing of the exhibition. Any exceptions must be explicitly requested and negotiated before shipment of the exhibition material.

Those interested in mounting the exhibit should contact the Sino-Judaic Institute, 232 Lexington Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025, tel and fax: 650-323-1769, e-mail: aldien@leland.stanford.edu.

**Recent Gifts**

The Sino-Judaic Institute would like to thank the following people who recently participated in the April 20-May 5 tour to China organized by Wendy Abraham through Jewish Historical Tours of China, for the following donations to the Institute, which were a portion of the cost of the tour:

<b>Ms. Marion F. Adler</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>Dr. and Mrs. William Lewit</b>	<b>\$800</b>
<b>Dr. and Mrs. Cesar Armoza</b>	<b>\$400</b>	<b>Mr. Harold Raiklen</b>	<b>\$200</b>
<b>Dr. and Mrs. Joel Karliner</b>	<b>\$400</b>	<b>Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Sall</b>	<b>\$400</b>
<b>Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Kohn</b>	<b>\$400</b>	<b>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Bernard Silverman</b>	<b>\$400</b>
<b>Ms. Gloria Levien</b>	<b>\$200</b>		

## Sino-Judaic Institute Documents in the Hoover Institution Archives (at Stanford University)

By Rena Krasno

We have collected various documentation on Jews in the Far East for the Hoover Institution Archives. Our thanks for assembling this material are due to members of the Sino-Judaic Institute and friends.

The Hoover collections are open to the public without fee. Hoover Institution scholars, Stanford University faculty, staff and students, as well as visiting researchers, are invited to use all this material. Besides printed matter and hand-written manuscripts, there are also photographs and films.

We are pleased to give you a list of the research material on China that we have entrusted to the Hoover Institution. Complete and up-to-date information is available on the Hoover Institute home page <http://www-hoover.stanford.edu>.

Levaco, Benjamin Michael, 1911-; Papers, 1901-1992, 2 ms. Boxes. Russian businessman in China. Summary: Autobiographical writings, letters, certificates, bulletins, and photographs, relating to the Russian Jewish community in China from 1915 to 1950. Language: English. Year: 1901-1992. Item CSUZ93097-A (Archives). Topics: Russians—China; Jews—China; China; Russia.

Wallenstein, Gerd D.; Papers, 1821-1994; 1 oversize box. German-American engineer; resident in China, 1939-1947. Summary: Memoirs, obituaries, maps, drawings, and calligraphy, relating primarily to the Jewish community in China during World War II. Language: English. Year: 1821-1994. Item CSUZ95019-A (Archives). Topics: Jews—China; Germans—China; World

War, 1939-1945—China; World War, 1939-1945; China; Germany; Engineers

Sino-Judaic Institute collection, 1917-1993; 3 ms. Boxes, 1 oversize box. Hoover Institution Archives.

Summary: Memoirs, letters, personal identification documents, financial reports, by-laws, printed matter, and photographs, relating to Russian, Polish and European Jews, and Jewish communal organizations, in China, especially in Shanghai. Includes photocopy of a register of Polish citizens in China maintained by Polish consular officials from 1934 to 1942. Collected by the Sino-Judaic Institute.

In English, Russian and Polish. Language: English. Year: 1917-1993. Item CSUZ93031-A (Archives). Sino-Judaic Institute. Topics: Jews—China; Poles—China; Shanghai (China); China; Poland; Russians—China; Russia.

Krasno, Rena; Miscellaneous papers, 1915-1995; 1 oversize box. Hoover Institution Archives. Russian resident of Shanghai, China. Summary: Memoirs, letters, clippings, reviews, photographs, pictorial book, and miscellany, relating to the Russian Jewish community in Shanghai during the 1930s and 1940s. In Russian and English. Language: Russian. Year: 1915-1995. Item CSUZ94036-A (Archives). Topics: Russians—China; Jews—China; Shanghai (China); Russia; China.

Krol', Moise i Aaronovich, 1862-1942; Writings, 1922-1940; 1 ms. box.. Hoover Institution Archives. Russian socialist, ethnographer and journalist; member, Constituent Assembly, 1918; subsequently emigre.

Summary: Relates to revolutionary movements in Russia, especially the Partiiia Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov, the Russian Revolution and Civil War in Siberia, Russian emigre life in China and France, and Jewish and other ethnic groups in Russia. Includes the unpublished second volume of the memoirs of M. A. Krol', Stranitsy Moe i Zhizni (first volume published, New York, 1944).

Mainly in Russian. Language: Russian. Year: 1922-1940. Item CSUZ88018-A (Archives).

Topics: Revolutionists—Russia; Socialism—Russia; Partiiia Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov; Soviet Union—History—Revolution, 1917-1921; Siberia (Russia)—History—Revolution, 1917-1921; Russians—China; Russians—France; Jews—Russia; Ethnology—Russia; Russia; Soviet Union; China; France.

Erman, Irma C.; Papers, 1939-1991; 1 ms. Box. Hoover Institution Archives. German-American author.

Summary: Correspondence, writings, and printed matter, relating to the history of anti-Semitism and to Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution. Includes two plays dramatizing the actions of Paul Gruninger, a Swiss police captain, and Mitsugi Shibata, a Japanese official, in saving the lives of Jewish refugees in Austria and China, respectively, during World War II.

In English and German. Language: English. Year: 1939-1991. Item CSUZ78036-A (Archives).

Topics: Gr uninger, Paul, 1891-1972; Shibata, Mitsugi, d. 1977; Anti-Semitism—History; Refugees; World War, 1939-1945; World War, 1939-1945—Jews; Austria; China.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

As a Cohen researcher for some years now, and one who was fortunate enough to have been in the great man's company on a number of occasions during the course of my Hong Kong childhood, I would very much appreciate the opportunity to say some words to your readers about a book review which appeared in the March 1998 edition of *Points East*. I am, of course, referring to your selection of extracts from Hillel Halkin's review of the biographical work titled *Two-Gun Cohen* and penned by the magazine reporter, Daniel S. Levy.

I would have to say from the outset that I did not appreciate a lot of what Mr. Halkin had to say about my late father's good friend, General Moishe Abraham Cohen. But my disappointment is not directed at Mr. Halkin, for I am willing to concede the fact that much of what he wrote by way of a review was very much in keeping with the spirit of Mr. Levy's book; a work which is, in itself, an unbelievably mean-spirited account of a celebrated Jew.

Having my own boyhood memories to cherish, I sympathize with Mr. Halkin's joyless feelings when he admits to being confronted with the realization that Mr. Levy's recent portrayal of Two-Gun Cohen bore little resemblance to his own childhood impressions of a Jewish legend. However, I am not left similarly disillusioned from my reading of Mr. Levy's account. This is because I can find no evidence in the 500 or so items in my bibliography of references to General Cohen which prove, as Mr. Levy would have us believe, that the Two-Gun Cohen of my own childhood was ever a congenial liar, a pimp, a fair-ground pick pocket, a child sex offender, a frequent visitor to brothels, a sufferer of gonorrhoea, a glutton, a blowhard and a womanizer.

However, there is no shortage of evidence to confirm the fact that, while he was alive, General Moishe Abraham Cohen was greatly respected throughout the Jewish Diaspora as an uncommonly decent man who had led an extraordinarily interesting life. His Chinese associates, for their part, admired this compassionate Jew as a supreme organizer with a dynamic personality and a dominating will; rare qualities

indeed, and ones which he quite clearly utilized to great effect in the service of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, *The Father of Modern China*.

I should image that Mr. Levy's overwhelmingly negative assessment of General Cohen's character stems, in great part, from the author's uncritical acceptance of anti-Semitic slanders which were primarily designed to curtail the pro-Chinese activities of a *meddlesome Jew*. This unsympathetic biographer even rakes up material which was publicly ridiculed in its day, and dismissed out of hand, at that time, as being nothing more nor less than "scurrilous trash."

But forceful personalities like General Cohen, willing to champion unpopular causes, have inevitably had their detractors as well as their admirers. When rumours surfaced, during October 1943, that the General was to be repatriated to Canada as part of a P.O.W. exchange scheme, senior government officials received briefings from their ill-informed minions suggesting that this player on the world stage was merely "a notoriously unreliable 'gunman' with a string of convictions in Canada." But after arriving on the streets of Montreal, General Cohen found himself among people who knew him far better than that. Here he was personally welcomed by the president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, and feted by more than 500 leading members of the local Jewish community, all of them anxious to catch a glimpse of this legendary Jewish general in the Chinese army. In their estimation he was a folks-mensch. This is truly an instance of where I would place my trust in the collective judgment of 500 ordinary Jewish men and women long before I paid any attention to the self-serving assessments of personally ambitious individuals.

I would appeal to my fair-minded fellow readers of *Points East* to do likewise; and I would further implore you all to think twice before you joined Mr. Levy in dancing so disrespectfully on the grave of a truly remarkable Jew.

Yours sincerely, Michael Alderton, P.O. Box 395, Katoomba, NSW 2780, Australia

Dear Editor,

My name is Daniela Piacente. I am a university student, preparing my graduating thesis "The Story of a Family in the Jewish Diaspora." My grandmother was Russian and her name was **Lubov Marcovna Kligman**. She was born in Harbin, the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 1909. Her parents were Marc Kligman (born in Kiev in 1876, died in Shanghai in 1943) and Sima Weismen (or Weisberg) (born in Odessa in 1880, died in Shanghai in 1945).

As I am trying to rebuild my grandmother's family, I would like to receive more detailed information about Jewish life in Shanghai and Harbin. I know she graduated in Journalism and she worked in a newspaper office in Shanghai. If it is possible, I would like to receive some information about her job. She married an Italian man, **Giovanni Piacente** (born in Bitontoibari, Italy, on June 10, 1907) in 1934 or 1935 and left Shanghai for Italy. If anyone has any materials or copies of articles, certificates of marriage or birth, etc., please send them to me. Thank you for your help.

Daniela Piacente, Via Prato 19, 82030 Foglianise, (Benevento) Italy

To the editor:

A cousin of some degree, name of **Herbert Leisten** was born in Berlin-Wilmersdorf Brandenburg, Germany on February 3, 1917, the son of Oskar and **Henrietta (Breslauer) Leisten**. I heard of this branch about two or three years ago and learned that Herbert left Berlin and migrated to Shanghai/Hongkew, China in the late 1930s. I later learned that both of his parents also escaped from Germany, settling in Shanghai/Hongkew.

Herbert Leisten left China sailing to the U.S. on the vessel *Marine Adder* and entered the port of San Francisco on January 8, 1948. I do have his naturalization application and a copy of the ship's passenger list including the information. He then settled in Denver, Colorado where he married. No children were born to the couple, both of whom have since died.

### THE JOURNAL OF INDO-JUDAIC STUDIES NOW AVAILABLE

The first issue of The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies is now available. To order, make a check payable to "Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies" in the amount of \$15 in Canada and \$15 US elsewhere, and send it to: The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies, c/o Department of Religious Studies, University of Saskatchewan, 9 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, Sask. Canada S7N 0W0.

Issue #1 contains articles by: Norbert Samuelson, Bibhuti S. Yadav, Gary J. Jacobsohn, Jael Silliman, Nathan Katz, and Maurice S. Friedman, as well as book reviews by Brian Weinstein, Joan G. Roland, Shalva Weil, and Kenneth P. Kramer.

Articles for submission and books for review should be sent to: The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies, c/o Dept. of Religious Studies, DM302, Florida International University, University Park, Miami, FL 33199.

In my further search I have learned that his mother Henrietta Leisten (nee Breslauer) also migrated to the U.S. settling in Denver with her son. She was born in August 1898 in Berlin, Germany and was the daughter of Abraham Breslauer. She died on April 4, 1957 in Denver, having lived there for three and one-half years according to her death certificate which listed her as a widow.

I am now searching for information on Herbert's father and Henrietta's husband **Oskar Leisten**. Did he also leave Shanghai or is it possible he died there? I do know that Herbert's naturalization application dated in 1952 shows **Oskar Leisten** was living at that time and the ship's passenger list includes name and address of nearest relative as Oskar Leisten, 961 Seward Road, Shanghai, China.

I am especially interested in obtaining names of the parents of Oskar Leisten in order to correctly place this branch on our family tree. I am told that both Oskar and Henrietta were musicians.

Any information and/or direction would be greatly appreciated. Please advise if there are any costs which I will be happy to pay.

Sincerely, Jean M. Korn, 309 Glen Lane, Elkins Park, PA 19027

To the editor:

Seeking any information on the following families to add to my family tree: **Leff, Sekely, Piliavin, Tatok, Heissman, Zatkun.**

All of these families came from Harbin, China and settled in Los Angeles, CA.

My cousin Waldemar Heissman married Sarah Piliavin who was born in Harbin, China in 1910. Other Piliavin family members are: Vera, Manja, Aaron, David, and Lazar.

### **Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries**

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. 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.

Please contact: Logan M. Lockabey, P.O. Box 4278, Newport Beach, CA 92661. Tel: (714) 631-7845. E-mail: jtb146a@prodigy.com.

To the editor:

I am the granddaughter of Emile Widler born in Jaffa, Palestine in 1882. He went to school both in Palestine and Shanghai going back and forth. He studied chemistry in Germany, then lived most of his adult life in Shanghai as a cotton expert for the Shanghai Cotton Testing Company and owner of the Fine Arts Store in his apartment at 1147 Bubbling Well Road.



I am looking for his brother Ned's family. Ned was born in Singapore and had British citizenship. Sadly Ned died young in Shanghai. He did photography and died from a chemical reaction. His wife's name was Nancy, a Russian Jew and they had one daughter named Ethel born about 1926. Ethel married a Christian United States serviceman. They had a child born in Shanghai in 1946-47. Ethel immigrated to the United States and her mother followed. The rest of the Widler family has not been seen or heard from them since.

The State Department says they won't give me any information because I do not know Ethel's married name and the exact dates of her birth. I would appreciate any information about Ethel that would help locate her and her child.

I would like to find Ethel for my great aunt living in Netanya, Israel; they were school chums at the Shanghai British Municipal School.

Sincerely, Diane Widler Wenzel, 1-541-926-8146, 2820 - 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.W., Albany, OR 97321

### **Points East**

To the editor:

I read about your institute on JewishGen, and wonder if I can ask for help on my genealogical research.

My great-great grandfather was an emissary (SHADA "R) from Hebron, Jerusalem and Tiberias to India and China around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rabbi Moshe Joffe was probably on three missions, at least from the Holy Land to India and China. One of his objectives was to find the legendary river Sambation and find the Ten Tribes, the missing tribes of Israel. On his second mission he wrote back (to Rabbi Joseph Swartz of Jerusalem, the letters were cited on Schwartz's book, English version about Palestine published in the US circa 1851) about hearing in Calcutta from Abdallah Sasoon's employee about a river in China which corresponded with the Sambation legend and intended to go there.

On the next mission he disappeared, died somewhere on his tour and I've been trying to find where and when he did die, or the place of his grave. His third trip to India and probably to China was around 1850, and in the Montefiore Census of Jews in Jerusalem in 1856 his wife is registered in the list of widows, and his children in the orphans list.

Is there any source about a Rabbi from the Holy land visiting Jewish communities in China, or dying there around 1850?

I shall appreciate your help very much as I think I covered almost any other way.

Sincerely, Aviva Neeman, P.O. Box 48010, Tel Aviv 61480 Israel; Tel 972-3-6992813, Fax 972-3-6993852; e-mail: aneeman@netvision.net.il.

### **IN MEMORIAM**

The Sino-Judaic Institute offers its condolences to the Chairman of its Board of Directors, Art Rosen, and to his wife, Marianne, on the death of their son Jonathan, zichrono l'vracha. "May the Omnipresent One comfort you together with all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem."

### **Points East**

arrived in Shanghai. It was sent to the bottom of the ocean by allied bombers.

Shanghai proved to be a very hostile city. The Chinese people hated all white people, and with good reason. For years they had been subjugated to almost inhuman standards by the English colonialists. Human dignity and the individual's personal honor and self respect were the highest priority of Chinese citizens. In order to rule China with an iron fist, England degraded these priorities unforgivably. The common Chinese was not educated enough to distinguish between an Englishman, a Frenchman or a German. To them, they were all white devils and they hated all accordingly. Completely unaware of this situation, approximately 20,000 European refugees entered Shanghai in less than a year's time.

It is easy to understand that this sudden and enormous influx of mostly penniless whites into their already vastly overcrowded economy did not make the Chinese population any more sympathetic to our needs. The first year was miserable. We were housed in partially destroyed factory buildings with blankets and bed sheets serving as walls between the individual families. Those who were completely destitute depended for food on the charity of the Shanghai Jewish community (a source that dried up quite soon), the International Red Cross and the efforts of the American Jewish communities.

My wife and I were again fortunate in getting jobs that enabled us to live in confined, yet total, privacy. Harriet worked as a waitress and I got a job with a well-established White Russian advertising agency in the French sector of the city. One of the biggest customers of this agency was the German "Bayer Aspirin" Company. It soon became my job to write ads in German and to design packages for Bayer aspirin. Needless to say, my boss never let Bayer know that their advertising had been done by a German Jew. He got a big chuckle out of it.

Then came Pearl Harbor! The Japanese, who until then were only one member in the international community of nations that together governed Shanghai, took over

militarily. They immediately imprisoned the American, English and French armed forces and put them into prisoner of war camps on an island opposite Shanghai. At the same time they established a so-called "district," squeezing all the European refugees into a section of Shanghai that was practically destroyed by the recent Sino-Japanese war. The district became an internment camp with no visible barbed wires, but many people who tried to leave without a special military permission were shot on the spot. As I did not get such a special permit, I lost my job with the ad agency. From then on, times became really rough for all of us. For all practical purposes there were no jobs available in the district as there was no industry. While the Japanese had to provide food and shelter, however inadequate and insufficient, for their prisoners of war, they did not have such obligation towards us, as Germany had declared all of us stateless, thus nullifying the protection of the Geneva convention.

The living conditions in our refugee camps deteriorated to the point where camp guards became a necessity. Although I despised that kind of work, when you are hungry long enough, you take any kind of job that provides you and your family with at least the minimum of your daily necessities. So I became a camp guard. Restrictions and new military orders made life in the district more and more difficult. Occasional beatings by individual Japanese soldiers were endured by many refugees. However, they were not condoned by the military command. In fairness to the Japanese government, I have to state that they stopped the Shanghai Nazis from building gas ovens like the ones at Auschwitz where they intended to kill all the European Jewish refugees. The Japanese would not have that happen under their command.

With the war going in the wrong direction for the Japanese, our food rations became smaller and smaller. Although we had a hospital in the district, medical supplies were completely drying up and babies as well as adults died by the hundreds because of dysentery alone. My father-in-law was one such victim.

The news reports on the progress of the war were all dictated by the Japanese command, and so far as we knew, they were winning all over the place. The few short-wave radio receivers the emigrants had were destroyed by military order. Anyone caught listening to foreign broadcasts was liable to be shot. Even their own civilian population did not know how the war was really progressing and they were as surprised as we were when General Chenault's "Flying Tigers" first appeared in the sky over Shanghai. Their target was a tall military transmission tower the Japanese had recently installed right in the center of our district, obviously figuring that the allied command would not dare to bomb this facility and risk so many European lives. Well, they had figured wrong! One cloudy morning we heard a whole string of planes coming right at us, laying a path of destruction through our district, culminating with the total collapse of that radio transmitter. The price we had to pay was high, as almost 50 of our own people lost their lives and hundreds were hurt and crippled. However, that was war, and we, the fortunate survivors, did not argue or complain.

During the next few weeks we could set our watches to the appearance of the "Tigers in the Sky." When not a single Japanese fighter went up to challenge the aggressors, we knew that the tide of war had turned against Japan. While the Japanese did not fully acknowledge in the official news reports that Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been atomic bomb targets, we became convinced that there finally was hope for freedom and a new life.

Then the long, long wait began. Our living conditions improved dramatically in a very short time, but it took us two full years to finally come to the United States, and then only under the special provisions of being declared "displaced persons." When our ship, the President liner "*Marin Lynx*," steamed under the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco one early morning in May 1947, all of us were on deck crying and embracing each other along with many of the American crew members. At that moment it did not matter at all that between the two of us we had a capital of \$2.50 to start a new life in a foreign country. By the grace of the Lord, we had made it!

promoted to an officer's rank and decorated with the Iron Cross of the First Order. His lifelong priorities were his personal honor, his pride in being a German and last, but by no means least, his family. It was because of his strong nationalistic sentiments that he could not – and would not want to believe – that the German people would allow their honor to be so criminally degraded, and that they therefore would not follow the teachings of that madman, Adolf Hitler.

In spite of all my arguments with my father, he never even considered leaving "his Fatherland." Much later in life I learned that, when the Nazi SS men knocked on his door, to take him and my mother to the concentration camp, he managed to put a bullet through his brain. Mother was taken away, and we could never find any trace of her whereabouts, a fate she shares with most of my relatives . . . .

The political situation was rapidly deteriorating, with open daily beatings and attacks on Jewish citizens by uniformed Nazi mobs, with no police protection whatsoever. The Jews became an open and free target for anyone to hunt. Shops marked with swastikas were vandalized and looted in broad daylight with owners and employees chased away and warned never to return. Because of this condition it became increasingly difficult for a Jew to get a job or to hold on to his present one.

As I could not see any future for myself in such a Germany, I prepared to leave by bicycle for France. The year was 1933 and I was 21 years old. On New Year's Eve, however, fate provided another of those miracles for me. Ready to leave Berlin the very next morning, I had gone to a big New Year's party, not to celebrate the coming year, but to collect a bill from the organizer of that party for some art work I had done. To make a long story short, I never got that money, but at that party I met a girl – and fell so hard for her that I postponed my departure for France.

It was 1933 and Hitler had become Germany's official leader. At that time, and to give the Jewish community of Berlin a much needed cultural outlet, an organization called The Jewish *Kulturbund* was created. It was to provide monthly changing opera and theater productions, as well as film shows of non-political interests. This organization was fully sanctioned by Nazi officials as they were going to use its existence as a powerful propaganda tool, sup-

posedly proving to the outside world that the Jews of Berlin had all the cultural amenities as any other minority group. With my professional training as a stage painter, I had little trouble getting a job with the *Kulturbund*. A short while later I was able to secure a job for my girlfriend as a costume tailor for the actors. The work at the *Kulturbund* was most interesting, but also very demanding. Sixteen to 18 hour workdays were the norm, not the exception. I had to be on the stage at 6:00 a.m. each morning to help prepare the sets for the day's rehearsal for next month's production. Then it was back to the studio to construct and to paint the sets for the next play. Late in the afternoon the stage had to be cleared and prepared for the current evening's production. In the evening I worked as a stagehand and practically never hit the sack before midnight.

I worked at the *Kulturbund* from its inception in 1933 until the day of our departure for Shanghai in 1939. During all of those years we were, of course, constantly looking for a chance to get out of Germany. One such chance offered itself when the government of Brazil contacted the Berlin Jewish community, asking for young, strong and healthy agricultural workers to help in the development of their huge "Brasilica" project, offering free land and several head of livestock to the prospective new farmers. The Jewish community immediately set up an agricultural training center on a privately owned farm located approximately 300 miles from Berlin. Their goal was to provide at least some basic agricultural knowledge and practical experience to young, strong and healthy people.

Harriet and I, not yet married, applied for this course. We were accepted and, cautiously taking a one-month leave of absence from the *Kulturbund*, traveled to the ranch. To our dismay we soon found out that we were considered already too old for their training program. After a few very demanding weeks, we were made to leave the ranch. Rather dejected, we returned to Berlin and to the job at the *Kulturbund*. Less than two weeks later, the news reached us that after our forced departure from the ranch, an armed band of Nazis had raided it and killed and butchered every single soul there.

In March of 1937 we finally got married, and that partly because it became known that married couples had better chances for emigration.

I saw Hitler on several occasions, mostly while he was making propaganda speeches. I freely admit that his oratories had an almost demoniacal appeal to all of his German listeners, and if I were not, of necessity, standing on the other side of the fence, I might have fallen for it too.

In 1938 the chances for even well-to-do people who could buy their emigration became increasingly slim, as practically all nations of the world, including America, had erected immigration quota systems, which by that time, were completely filled for years to come. Still, thousands of people were standing in line, on a 24-hour basis, in front of the very few travel agencies, where sometimes tickets were available to such exotic places as Shanghai, China. Our whole family took turns standing in line for several weeks in order to get in front of such a travel agency window. Frankly, at that time we had no idea how we would ever pay for such enormously expensive tickets.

Just then another miracle happened to all of us. Stamp collecting was my older brother's hobby. Over the past 15 years he had built up an international correspondence and stamp exchange with many likewise interested people. He suddenly remembered a Gentile man in Hamburg with whom he had traded stamps for many years and who owned a travel agency. He took a chance and traveled to Hamburg, to meet that man for the first time in person. My brother returned with eight tickets in his pockets, five for himself and his family, three for my father-in-law, Harriet and myself. These tickets had to be paid for within six weeks or they would lose their validity. There was no way that even our combined family efforts could come up with the kind of money needed for these tickets. In desperation we contacted Harriet's uncle in Switzerland, who we knew was pretty well off.

Well, we got the money in time and paid for the tickets. We learned much later that we were on the very last ship to leave the continent with European Jewish refugees aboard. Four weeks later we arrived in Shanghai with only the clothes we were wearing and one handbag each. The other meager belongings that the Nazis permitted us to take out of Germany were supposed to be loaded on the same ship we were traveling on, but were rerouted because of a recent Nazi order to transport all travel baggage on German ships only. The ship that carried our possessions never

## CHINA NOTES

♦ **New Research Effort in Hong Kong:** Dennis Leventhal, Chairman of The Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong (JHS), reports that a post-doctoral Fellow of the Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, has been commissioned to research the social history of the Jews of Hong Kong. The financial grant for this one-year program, with an option for extension to a second year, was shared equally between The Incorporated Trustees of the Jewish community of Hong Kong and the Centre of Asian Studies. The scholar-in-residence who is performing this research is Dr. Caroline Pluss, a Swiss anthropologist and sociologist. The end result will be published by the JHS, with year 2000 as the target for publication.

♦ **E-mail Access to Hong Kong's Judaica Library:** E-mail queries on the contents of the archive of the Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong (JHS) should be addressed to:

<mailto:jcclib@hk.super.net> > jcclib@hk.super.net — attn: Ms. Brenda Yi, Librarian. This archive takes the Jewish experience in Hong Kong and China as its area of specialty, and is housed in East Asia's only dedicated Judaica library which was founded by the JHS and is now located in the new Jewish Community Center (JCC) facility on 70 Robinson Road, next to Hong Kong's 97-years old Ohel Leah Synagogue. A web site for the JCC, to include a hyperlink to the library, is in the planning stage.

♦ **A Jewish Community in Shanghai** has been established with over 200 people. The address is: C.I.T.S. Building, B'nai Yisrael, 1277 Beijing Rd, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, Shanghai, China 200040 (behind the Portman Ritz Carlton).

♦ **Rickshaw Reunion Newsletter:** Walter H. Silberstein, a World War II refugee in Shanghai and now a U.S. citizen, has established an address data base, which by now has the names of nearly 1,000 former Shanghai residents. He also has an e-mail list with 130 names and an Internet Web to which he invites people to contribute articles. This indefatigable gentleman has organized two successful Rickshaw Reunions of ex-Shanghaianders in Philadelphia and in

the Catskill Mountains (New York).

Mr. Silberstein can be reached at 826A, Lombard St., Philadelphia, PA 19147. WHS@MAIL.MED.UPENN.EDU. A *Shanghai Home Page*, with an attached Chat Room, is on the Internet. The web site address is : WWW.RICKSHAW.ORG. Articles, write-ups, announcements can be sent to: Rene Willsdorff, via e-mail at: RENEW@BEST.COM.

Mr. Silberstein is anxious to add new names and addresses to the lists he already has on hand. He requests everyone to "check your list of Shanghai friends, if you feel that some of them might not be on my list, send me their addresses. When in doubt: send it anyway. If I already have it nothing is lost."

♦ **\$450 Million Israeli Venture in China:** The Dead Sea Works and the Eisenberg Group of Companies have finalized an agreement with the Chinese authorities to construct a potash plant in China at an estimated investment of \$450 million. The new plant, which will be constructed in Golmud in the Qighai region, will be jointly held by the two companies and the Chinese government, which will own two-thirds of the joint venture. The plant is to employ 1,400 workers and to have an annual production capacity of 800,000 tons.

♦ **Shanghai Street Map:** Joseph Cohen has the pleasure of informing our readers that he has published a revised detailed map of Old Shanghai, a special issue commemorating the return of Hong Kong to China on July 1, 1997. The new map recalls the old and new names, important buildings and landmarks. An index detailing old and new names and a brief explanation of the pictorials appears on the reverse side.

The Hongkew ghetto area, additional pictorials and a serial number has been added. These colorful maps are laminated. Map size is 40cm x 28.5 cm. Prices for the maps include registered mail, packing and handling: Europe, USA, Canada: 1 map = US \$10; 10 maps = US \$85; 20 maps = US \$160. Australia, China: 1 map = US \$12; 10 maps = US \$100; 20 maps = US \$190.

Israel: 1 map = NIS 30; 10 maps = NIS 255; 20 maps = NIS 480.

Send orders and check by registered mail to Joseph Cohen, 13 Shai Agnon, Apt. 3, Kiryat Yam A, 29015, Israel. Also obtainable from Jack H. Cain, 3770 Mosswood Drive, Lafayette, CA, USA. Tel (510) 283-0263. Estimated delivery time: 2-3 weeks.

♦ **Old Shanghai Jewish Website:** A new site covers the Shanghai Jewish refugee experience and is for the pleasure and interest of former Shanghaianders, their families and friends: <http://www.bnairbrithwest.org/rickshaw/>

♦ **The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center**, based in Israel, is holding its Second International Congress in Israel, June 15-18, 1998. Among the sessions are several dealing with Iraqi Jews in China and elsewhere. Follow-up conferences are planned in the US: one at UCLA on October 18<sup>th</sup> and another at Columbia on October 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Center has an excellent web page: < <http://www.BabylonJewry.org.il> > and e-mail: < [babylon@babylonjewry.org.il](mailto:babylon@babylonjewry.org.il) >. It can also be reached at 83 Hahagana St., P.O. Box 151, Or-Yehuda 60251, Israel; fax: 972-3-5339936; tel: 972-3-5339278-9.

♦ **Beijing Jewish Community Website:** Kehillat Beijing's Website may be visited at: [www.gorpbrothers.com/sinogogue](http://www.gorpbrothers.com/sinogogue).

Among the features of the new site are: — A compendium of Jewish resources in Beijing — Info about Jewish communities elsewhere in China and East Asia — The story of Kehillat Beijing — Information about Shabbat and Holiday services — Location of services (pinyin; the Chinese characters are coming soon)

♦ **Successful Advanced Hebrew Course:** Ten years ago, no Chinese in Shanghai knew Hebrew. This summer, 10 Shanghaianders received their diplomas from an Advanced Hebrew Course sponsored jointly by the Israel Consu-

late of Shanghai and the Center for Jewish Studies, Shanghai (CJSS).

Three Hebrew courses had previously been given in Shanghai to popularize the study of modern Hebrew among Chinese. Students from those classes enrolled in this advanced course. Among them were graduate and undergraduate students from colleges, research fellows from institutes, employees of joint venture corporation, staff from a tourist company and government offices. All completed the courses and earned their certificates.

The CJSS promises to continue its efforts to offer Hebrew classes at all levels to meet the demand.

♦ **Visit the Website of the Chinese Judaic Studies Association:** <http://www.oakton.edu/~friend/chinajews.html>

### Picture This: Jewish Hong Kong

by Amy Gendler

The photographer and social anthropologist Frederic Brenner and members of the Hong Kong Jewish community have been engaged in a series of creative workshops centered around Jewish identity in Hong Kong with a view to creating a book.

For the past twenty years, Brenner's mission has been to document Jewish life at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This monumental project has taken him to over 40 countries on six continents, comprising the most extensive and diverse record of Jewish life ever created by a single artist.

Hong Kong is the ultimate community to be included, and the Hong Kong project is his most collaborative work to date. The photograph and book will capture a moment in time of this diverse and transient international Jewish community. The book will include: 1. The community portrait which Frederic Brenner will shoot in February 1999, at the edge of the Hong Kong Harbour. The premise for the "big click" is the last Purim of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Hong Kong. As such, we will create and challenge the identities we have built here, in this most post-modern of societies. 2) Chronicles of the remarkable "journeys" which have brought us here. 3) Family portraits of some of the community's mainstays. 4) A "cast of characters." 5) Text, photographs, diagrams which decipher the connection between this particular Jewish community and the Chinese environment in which it thrives.

### The Sugihara Story

(continued from page 1)

sergeant, there was only one subject in which he was qualified to instruct the other students - military training. Most likely he was employed simultaneously at the Harbin Gakuin and at the Consulate for some sort of military training, while at the same time pursuing his language studies at the Institute. This supposition is supported by the fact that in March of 1924 (exactly two years after discharge from the Army) he was promoted to the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant, indicating that he was doing some additional army service during his years at Gakuin. Also he must have continued his study of Russian in the interim two years, for it is absolutely incredible that he could attain the mastery of Russian language attributed to him in only one year of study.

Levine notes that one of his teachers may have been Ilarion Ivanovich Gogvadze (not Govaze, as in the book). Surely, Sugihara did not acquire native Russian proficiency from Gogvadze, who was a teacher of accounting and whose speech had Georgian overtones. More important is the fact that the 1926 Harbin Directory does not even list him as a member of the Gakuin faculty, though apparently he joined the staff at a later date. While not mentioned in the book, Sugihara probably learned Russian from another teacher listed in the Directory - N.P. Avtonomov, who was unquestionably the best teacher of Russian and Russian literature in Harbin and one that would command a premier place among Russian teachers anywhere.

Upon completion of the course at the institute, Sugihara received an appointment in the Foreign Service (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and spent some time in Tokyo before returning to Harbin, assigned to the Japanese Consulate. His precise duties at this time are unclear, except it is apparent that he was expected to build up close relations with the Russian (emigre) community. In December 1924 he married a young Russian girl, Klavdia (not Klaudia as in the book) Semyonovna Appolonova, simultaneously converting to Russian Orthodox faith. He was christened Sergei, and adopted the patronymic Pavlovich, after the name of the priest (Pavel) who christened him.

Sugihara met Klavdia when she was sixteen, working as a waitress. Before the revolution her family belonged to the

landed gentry, but in 1918 their estate was confiscated by the communist regime. Escaping eastward from the persecution by the Bolshevik government, Klavdia's father served as a colonel under Ataman Semyonov, many of whose men were viciously anti-Semitic and took part in numerous pogroms as they retreated across eastern Siberia and the Maritime Provinces. Many "White Russian" emigres arrived in Harbin destitute and ill-prepared for productive employment. Often the families relied on the youngsters to earn enough money to keep the family from dire poverty and Klavdia's employment as a waitress was typical.

The marriage to Klavdia fit very well into Sugihara's clandestine assignment, to build up his expertise in Russian language, psyche, politics, and to expand opportunities for gathering information on and in the Soviet Union. It is not surprising, therefore, that the entire Appolonov family were housed in a large apartment provided to Sugihara by the consulate. As reported by Sugihara's sister, who spent some time in the couple's home, they entertained frequently, giving lavish parties for 50 or more people. On such occasions the Japanese intelligence officers could meet Russians who, knowingly or not, provided information to the Japanese. Such parties were expensive, and there is no question that the cost was paid by Sugihara's employers. Sugihara was reported not only to be a good host, but apparently entered fully into the "spirit" of Russian eating and drinking.

Hillel Levine was not able to determine what Sugihara was doing in Harbin during the period from 1924 to 1931. A former co-worker of Sugihara, Giichi Shimura, interviewed by Levine in 1994, said simply "Sugihara and I did a lot of bad things together," but declined to describe their activities any further. Somehow they were connected with other well-known Harbin Japanese agents, such as Nakamura, another Japanese married to a Russian woman and a convert to Russian Orthodox faith, who posed as a barber while employed by the Japanese Gendarmerie and Colonel Kenji Doihara, Chief of the Military Mission, both involved in various unsavory operations such as trafficking in drugs, prostitution, blackmail and kidnapping. Though precise relationships between Sugihara and these agents are not known, he moved in the Harbin Japanese intelligence circles, which controlled a number of Russian undercover agents in Manchuria as well

ing he was needed on criminal charges. With Mrs. Friedmann's permission, he sent his "case" to the Gestapo. John was then transported from Germany back to Linz, Austria, where he arrived on the evening of November 5, 1938.

He still has in his possession the original postcard (with stamp pre-paid by his mother) from the Buchenwald camp commander. Here is the translation:

From: Commander of the Concentration Camp Buchenwald  
To: Mrs. Rudolfine Friedmann, Vienna II, Leopoldgasse 5/19  
Stamp: Postcard (prepaid reply), Vienna 11/4/1938

Weimar-Buchenwald, 11/8/1938  
To: Mrs. Friedmann, Vienna  
In response to your card of 10/4/1938, we wish to inform you that your son was handed over to the Criminal Police in Linz on 10/15/1938.  
The Camp Commander Koch S. S. Standardbearer

It seems like a miracle to John to be freed from the horrors, abuses, tortures and humiliations he had suffered and witnessed in the concentration camps. He traveled to Vienna where his mother had been living with friends, and remained there illegally until November 9. There was great unrest in Vienna with noisy Nazi demonstrations on the streets. John decided to return to Voecklabruck, took the 9:30 p.m. train, and traveled all night arriving at 6:00 a.m. at his destination. His landlady informed him that the police had been looking for him and she had told them that he was in Vienna. By astonishing coincidence, John had unknowingly escaped the outrages of Kristallnacht by passing a quiet night on the train.

Now John knew that he had to leave Nazi-occupied lands immediately. He learned that passage could be obtained to Shanghai, China, where no visa was demanded nor proof of capital. Long queues formed in front of a travel office that was selling tickets to Shanghai. Before that a passport had to be obtained which also meant waiting for days in line. When John had to declare his profession in his passport, he wrote "mechanic," although in reality he had never been one. His work had mostly been confined to selling linoleum flooring. He decided upon "mechanic" because when he was 18, his mother had given him an old car that required frequent repairs. When this was necessary he watched the

garage mechanic work and often helped him out. He was observant and skillful, and learned a great deal.

With much effort and luck, John managed to secure passage to Shanghai. A notice at the Jewish organization in Vienna (Kultusgemeinde) warned would-be passengers that Shanghai was a filthy city overrun by rats with people dying in the streets. However, nothing could deter those determined to flee the Nazis.

John and a friend boarded a luxury liner the "Victoria" in Italy and proceeded on a circumvolved journey to Shanghai. Mrs. Friedmann was unable to leave with her son but came some months later, in February 1939, by bribing the travel agency porter with all her jewelry.

When John arrived at the famous Shanghai waterfront, the Bund, he was amazed to see the skyscrapers and cars. Where were all the rats and dead people in this modern metropolis? The procedure of disembarkation went very smoothly and quickly. Representatives of the local Jewish communities awaited the new arrivals and they were bused to the Embankment Building whose owner, a Sephardi Jew Sir Victor Sassoon, had placed an entire floor at the disposal of refugees from Europe. There they were very well treated. First John worked in the kitchen as an assistant to the kosher butcher (January - August 1939) and later he obtained a job with The China General Omnibus Company in the International Settlement (October 1939 - 1942). One of the largest shareholders of the bus company was a wealthy Sefardi Jew, Ellis Hayim, and through his good offices John started working on the maintenance of double-decker buses.

After Pearl Harbor, the Japanese took over all "enemy national" (British, U.S. and Netherlands) businesses. John was allowed to continue working for a transition period and then dismissed as Japanese employees took over. He then obtained employment for three other car companies.

In February 1943, the Japanese Army and Navy authorities in Shanghai published a proclamation relegating all refugees who had arrived in Shanghai from Europe since 1937 to a *Designated Area* (actually a ghetto). Passes could be obtained with great difficulty to leave this area. However, John had no problem since he had a pass from the Japanese Datsun company in the French Concession. His job con-

sisted in removing motors from confiscated "enemy" cars of all brands, overhauling them and transferring them into Japanese vehicles.

In the meantime, he managed to help his mother open a small stall, where she sold bananas (for a penny each!) and other items. His mother lived in the ghetto in the so-called Alcock Heim.

When the war ended John obtained positions with the U.S. Armed Forces working both in Shanghai and Nanking. He received excellent recommendations from the India-China Air Transport Command (Shanghai), the Army Advisory Group (Nanking), The Shanghai Port Facilities Ordnance Service Center. As soon as he obtained a visa to the U.S. in 1949, John Friedmann left for the United States where he became a proud citizen.

*Note: All John Friedmann's documents have been photocopied by S.J.I. and handed to the Hoover Institute Archives, as well as a videotaped interview.*

### Flight to Freedom John and Harriet Isaack 1939 - 1947

On August first and second of 1980, my wife Harriet and I attended a reunion of former Shanghai refugees in San Francisco, California. That meeting brought together more than a thousand people from all over the world — people, who had not met or seen each other for over 35 years. It was a happy, but also a very nostalgic affair. It brought back memories that had been blanketed by the pressures of starting a new existence in a foreign country.

The guest of honor and main speaker at that reunion was a man, who had grown up as a teenager with all of us in Shanghai. He was a former Secretary of the Treasury, the Honorable Michael Blumenthal, so to speak, "one of our boys who really had made it big."

Well, how did it all happen? To begin with, I would like to give you some insight into my personal background. I was born in 1912 and grew up as the youngest of three children in a good, middle-class Jewish family in Berlin, Germany. My father was a strict but loving man. During the first World War he became one of the very few Jews in the Kaiser's German army who was

of most university libraries there. "They simply don't have the books," he says. He thinks his chances of landing a professorship in the United States are slim as well.

But he keeps one eye on his goal of translating the Bible. After attending a seminar in computer-assisted research at Princeton University last summer, he started developing his own data base of ancient Hebrew words and grammatical structures, to reduce the repetitive work of analyzing texts for sentence structures.

"I hope through the manipulation of this data base, new features of dialects could be uncovered," he says. "If it is successfully constructed and administered, it might also have use for the whole Hebrew Bible."

In the meantime, Mr. Chen says, he will wait for the time and money to begin translating the Bible. "There are 1.2 billion people in China right now," he says, "and none of them knows about Noah's ark."

## Old China Hands

by Tess Johnston

For any Old China Hands or researchers who want us to look up businesses, families, friends, addresses, neighbors, schools, churches, clubs, etc., we have our ever fruitful *Hong Books* (for all China) and *Shanghai Directories* for the most of the years 1928 to 1949. If you come to Shanghai we can also share with you our 200+ detailed strip maps of the French Concession and the International Settlement. In addition, we made a list of all the Western gravestones, both Jewish and Christian, that we could find here and can, upon request, photograph gravestones or buildings, or just photocopy directory entries and send them to you.

There is no charge for any of this, but we do ask something in return. We are constantly searching for material for our Old China Hand "archives," which we use in research for our books and which help us to answer queries. The more we have in stock the more we can help our reader, our researchers – and ourselves.

In addition, we especially treasure (and use) mss. And personal narratives, letters, diaries, newspaper clippings, old maps, photos, club cards, dance cards, name cards, theatre and concert programs, anything that adds pieces to the mosaic of

expatriate life in China in the past hundred years. We are totally dedicated to our subject matter, and to leaving this small historical record for future generations. Our collection grows yearly, but we can never have enough.

Note: We'd rather not have to return items (other than mss.) so if the original is too precious, send us a laser-printed (or other high-tech) photocopy. If we use an item in our books we always acknowledge the contributors in our accompanying text. Until 1999 you can fax or phone Tess at 86-21-6471-6459, or write to: Tess Johnston, Lane 1487/50 Huaihai Zhong Lu, Shanghai 200031, China, (e-mail: omega@fudan.edu.cn).

### OLD CHINA HAND ORGANIZATIONS

Here are some organizations dealing with Old China Hands, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Please let us know if you have the names of any additional organizations of this sort.

Alumni Association  
Peking American School  
90A Harvey Road  
Chadd's Ford, PA 19317

Alumni North China American School  
C.P.O. Box 1660  
322 Center Street  
Berea, KY 40404

American Far Eastern Society of So. California  
Attn: Joe Levoff  
19224 Hamlin St., #6  
Reseda, CA 91335

The China Connection  
Attn: Oscar V. Armstrong  
4831 Drummond Ave.  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815-5428

China Society of So. California  
Dr. Grace Lee  
13142 Dewey St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90066

Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai  
Attn: Ralph Hirsch  
3500 Race St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-4925

Igud Yotsei Sin  
Association of Former Residents in China  
13 Rhov Gruzengerg  
Tel Aviv, Israel

## Points East

Old China Chums  
Attn: Igor Grebenschikoff  
1 Bligh St.  
Northridge NSW, Australia 2063

UMA News Bulletin  
Attn: Jorge Remedios, Editor  
845 Tournament Dr.  
Hillsborough, CA 94010

Old China Hand Resources, Ltd.  
Attn: Tess Johnston  
Shaoxing lu 27  
Shanghai 200020, China  
e-mail: erh@uninet.com.cn

## From Buchenwald to Shanghai

The Story of John (Hans) Friedmann  
by Rena Krasno

John (Hans) Friedmann was born in a small town in Slovakia in 1913. He was an only child. His father, who was an electrician by profession, soon moved his family to Vienna. When John was 13, his parents divorced and he was brought up by his mother, a very plucky and enterprising woman who always managed to support herself and her child.

In 1930, when John was a teenager, he moved with his mother to an Upper Austrian town of 6,000 people called Voecklabruck. They were the only Jews there but both were very well accepted and John had many friends, with some of whom he has contacts until today.

In 1938, Hitler invaded Austria and shortly thereafter an order arrived from Linz for John's arrest. A gendarme he knew well in Voecklabruck came reluctantly to pick him up and did not handcuff him, as was obliged to do, until the last moment when it could not be avoided. Neither his mother's landlady, nor anybody else in Voecklabruck appeared to understand why this nice young man was taken away like a criminal. John's destination - unknown to him - was the Dachau concentration camp and later Buchenwald.

Mrs. Friedmann did her utmost to arrange her son's release. She sought help from an old friend, who happened to be a criminal police official. (Here one should note that the Gestapo and the police were two distinct organizations). Mrs. Friedmann's friend came up with the idea to obtain John's release from Buchenwald by claim-

## Points East

as on the Soviet side of the border.

Japanese occupation of Manchuria and establishment of Manchukuo presented a new opportunity for Sugihara. In the early spring of 1932 he was posted as the Director of the Manchukuo Foreign Ministry in Harbin. His real assignment was to expedite the sale by the Soviet Union of the Chinese Eastern Railroad (CER) to Japan. Before long he was involved in organizing a variety of pressures on the Soviet government, such as mass public demonstrations against the Russian owners, arrest of Soviet top personnel administering CER, and gathering of intelligence on the Soviet bargaining positions. He was successful, not only in forcing Russia to sell the railroad, but to sell it for Y140 million, less than half of the original asking price of Y300 million.

The sale agreement was executed in March 1935; in July Sugihara left his position with the Manchukuo government, and returned to his first place of employment, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo. Even though formally his employers in the interim years changed several times, it is clear that all these were stepping stones (training ground as it were) to the career objective he chose in 1919, namely diplomatic and intelligence services. It was not unusual that these services were combined for covert information gathering activities.

At the completion of his assignment in Manchuria, his marriage to Klavdia became an obstacle to promotion. An amicable divorce followed, and in fact Sugihara continued to correspond with Klavdia in the postwar years. In Tokyo he married Yukiko Kikuchi. There are a number of ambiguities connected with this marriage which are not explored by Levine. According to Yukiko's memoirs her marriage was not prearranged by her parents (as was the custom of the day) but was an independent choice of the couple after she was introduced to Sugihara by her older brother. The date of their first meeting is not given. Sugihara's official resume gives the official date of the divorce as December 30, 1935, the date of his marriage to Yukiko as April 7, 1936, and the birth date of their oldest son is given as mid-September 1936. If these dates are correct, the spectacular speed of events, his courting of Yukiko, their marriage and the birth of their son, is a speed altogether uncharacteristic of such family affairs in Japan of the 1930s.

There is one more mysterious "coincidence." When Professor Levine asked Klavdia (in his 1994 interview in Australia) "What did he call you?," she replied "Yukiko." It appears that even prior to 1935 Sugihara knew that his wife's name would be "Yukiko." With all due respect to his intellectual abilities, it is not likely that he possessed supernatural powers of clairvoyance. More likely, the name of his wife, Yukiko, was on his mind years before the official marriage date.

This account of the Harbin "connection" of Sugihara, is a remarkable piece of research. Unfortunately it is marred occasionally, when Levine adds trivial details to "authenticate" the story, only to fall prey to an overactive imagination. Here are some examples.

The author has Sugihara "leave the Gakuin complex and amble down Uchastkovaya street" (page 56). While the Institute was eventually located on that street, the 1926 Harbin Directory lists the address as No. 7, Second Krugovaya St., Modyagou behind the Hippodrome, some 5 kilometers from Uchastkovaya. If indeed Sugihara walked all the way from the Institute in Modyagou to Uchastkovaya, it was no "ambling down." It is more interesting to speculate on why the original location of Harbin Gakuin was so far away from the center of town. Most likely the location was chosen to keep a very low profile and to conceal the activities of the students from curious Western observers. The Institute moved to Uchastkovaya only when the Japanese "came out of the closet" in Harbin.

In this "ambling walk" Sugihara passes through "Novogrod" (he means Novogorodnaya street), and then the slums of "Nachalovska" (meaning Nachalovka) which would be an unlikely and out of the way place to visit, unless he went to see Nakamura who operated a barber shop there. Levine mentions "pristam" (meaning pristan), and his walk along Kitayskaya, passing the Synagogue – which was absolutely impossible, as there never was a Synagogue on Kitayskaya street. It is also peculiar that Sugihara would choose to stop in front of the Eskin Brothers store window, for there were a number of other displays that would be more likely to attract Sugihara's attention.

Levine also states that "the man who initially selected the site on which to build Harbin was a Jew from Western Russian

named Shidlovsky...." This is sheer fantasy! What is worse, Professor Levine attributes this erroneous information to a paper of mine. However, on careful reading one would find that the paper says the following: "While most Russian sources identify A.I. Shidlovsky, an engineer employed by CER, it now appears that M.V. Grulyov, a Jew who converted to the Russian Orthodox faith and later reached the rank of General in the Russian Army, selected the site during an earlier expedition to the region." How, from this statement, can one conclude that A.I. Shidlovsky was a Jew from Western Russia is beyond my understanding.

So much for the Harbin "connection." While it has no direct bearing on the issuing of visas to Jews in Kaunas, it is nevertheless an important part of the Sugihara story. First, it explains how Sugihara became an expert on Russian language, and on Russian mentality and lifestyle. Second, it establishes Sugihara's early connection with the Japanese intelligence services concerned with Russian-Soviet affairs. It also connects Sugihara with anti-Semitic Russian milieu of Harbin, which was his "home and hearth" for some 15 years. How much of the anti-Semitism rubbed off on Sugihara is hard to tell, but those who knew him in Japan in the late 1940s, after the way, believe that his natural predisposition was anti-Semitic. How does this tally with saving thousands of Jews by issuing to them Japanese transit visas, presumably against his Government's orders? This is the key question which makes the mystery surround the Sugihara story so fascinating. To answer this question we must trace Sugihara's diplomatic service after he left Harbin and his activities and life after resigning from the Japanese Foreign Service.

II. During the fifteen years Sugihara spent in Harbin he became one of Japan's top experts on the Soviet Union. In the process he acquired a command of the Russian language (at the level of a native speaker), married a Russian woman, converted to the Russian orthodox faith, changed his name to Sergei Pavlovich and maintained a Russian family life-style, even to the point of matching his Russian companions in their capacity for vodka. Moreover, he participated in deep undercover intelligence operations against the Soviet Union and, during 1932-1935, established himself as an able diplomat and a tough negotiator with the Russians in the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railroad (CER). These

accomplishments attracted the attention of the Japanese Foreign office in Tokyo.

He returned to Tokyo in 1935, divorced from his Russian wife, no longer using his Russian name, a loyal son of a family with Samurai traditions (on his mother's side), married to a Japanese woman from a well educated family with a modern outlook — now fully qualified for a brilliant career in the diplomatic service. In 1936 the Japanese Foreign office appointed him to be the interpreter at the Moscow Embassy, but the Soviets refused to extend him a diplomatic status. They were intimately familiar with his Harbin record, both in intelligence work and in the railroad negotiations: he was enough of an expert on Soviet affairs to disqualify him.

Hillel Levine, in his book, *Search of Sugihara*, gives little information on Sugihara's activities during 1936-7. The story picks up in 1938 with an important cable from the Japanese Embassy in Paris to the Foreign Office in Tokyo, requesting Sugihara's visit to Paris for a secret assignment. One can speculate that such a request was made for one of two purposes: either there were high level negotiations between the Japanese and the Soviet governments, requiring a presence of a top Soviet expert, or there were discussions between the Japanese and the anticommunist Russian organizations in Paris (of which there were many). In either case, it is likely that the meetings in Paris played an important role in Sugihara's subsequent postings and assignments. Shortly after the Paris meetings Sugihara was sent to Finland to serve in the Japanese Legation there. Within a short time after his arrival, the Second Secretary, a Mr. Izumi, was exposed as a Soviet spy and the Minister in Charge of the Legation was transferred to another diplomatic post. Sugihara became Acting Minister, a post he held until 1939, when he was instructed to close the Legation in Helsinki and to establish a new Consulate in Kaunas, capital of Lithuania.

At the time, Lithuania was still formally independent (though in the Soviet sphere of influence) and Sugihara's posting in Kaunas provided the Japanese with political and military intelligence on the activities of the Russians in the area. There are some indications of the nature of his activities in the memoirs of Polish intelligence agents operating in the area at the time (see *Bulletin*, No. 344, April 1996, *Justice for the Angel of Curacao* by Ernest G. Heppner). Still, much is unknown about

what he did in Kaunas during that year.

The story of the stranded Jewish refugees in Lithuania (and to some extent in Poland) during the spring and summer of 1940 is well documented. A small escape window opened to them when the Dutch consul in Kaunas agreed to issue a non-visa visa to the Jewish refugees. He agreed to stamp their passports with the following: "*The Consulate of Holland hereby confirms that entry of strangers in Surinam-Curacao and the other Dutch possessions in America does not require a visa*". Stamped with an official stamp and signed by the Consul, this constituted a visa to a final destination. According to Japanese regulations, a transit visa could be issued to individuals who had travel documents to final destinations which required travel via Japan and who had entry permits for the country where they were going. The Curacao visa was such a document. This was a major break-through, though still another hurdle remained. Would the Russians honor these transit visas and allow the refugees to exit Lithuania and travel across Russia and Siberia to the Pacific, to board a ship for Japan in Vladivostok? Without the Russian travel documents both the Dutch and the Japanese visas were useless. The reticence of the Soviet government to allow foreigners to travel in their country has been long a matter of record. Now, with war clouds over their Western border and uncertainty about the Japanese military intentions vs. the Russians in the East, would they allow thousands of foreigners (Jews at that!), some of them Russian speaking, to travel for almost a fortnight across their land and then exit (probably to the West)?

What could provide such motivation? One factor could be MONEY. The cost of travel by train across the country and a stay over in Moscow for transfer to the Trans-Siberian Railroad was about \$200.00 per person. Estimating (conservatively) some 5000 individuals (a family often traveled on one document and one visa, but for the purpose of travel each member of the family counted) this operation would bring the Russians one million dollars, a not unattractive sum to a government starved for foreign currency. "Greasing the palm" of the local Intourist and NKVD personnel also could be helpful, but since the final decision was made in Moscow and not in Kaunas, I doubt that bribery played a major role in this decision.

Another factor that would have been attractive to the Russian NKVD and its intel-

ligence operations, is the "cover" such a group could provide for moving a number of its agents from Eastern Europe to the West. Zorach Warhaftig, in his book, provides some evidence for this. I quote: "...the applicants were called in for screening by an official of the NKVD ... Two students from the Grodno yeshivah informed me that during their screening, which had taken an hour or two, they were asked about those who organized the emigration ... One of the two yeshivah students also told me (that) the NKVD had suggested to him that he might act as their agent, whatever his destination. The issue of an exit permit was made dependent on his acceptance of the offer, but he claimed to have declined. Yet it did not seem to me that this was an unqualified refusal ..."

Another case in point is that of an employee of the Polish Joint Distribution Committee who was allowed by the Russians to travel back and forth across Russia, accompanying groups of refugees. This "cooperation" by the Russians undoubtedly had an intelligence *quid pro quo*. Originally this person had an American immigration visa — but upon his arrival in Japan this visa was withdrawn by the US authorities. The man was stuck in Japan, where he remained for the rest of his life. Quite likely the price of his residence permit in Japan was his becoming an informer for the Japanese intelligence agencies about his knowledge of Soviet collaborators.

Most likely, the motivation for issuing the Russian visas was not a single factor — it was a money making proposition, it provided a possibility of planting a number of additional undercover Soviet agents abroad (in different countries), and it presented an opportunity for some individuals to make a little private profit on the side.

Curiously, a number of individuals claim credit for influencing the Russian decision about issuing the visas. Dr. Warhaftig describes his negotiations about these visas. Recently published documents of Polish intelligence agents working in Lithuania at the time also claim some credit for arranging the Russian visas. And Mrs. Sugihara claims considerable credit for her husband. Apparently Sugihara contacted the Soviet Consul-General. The Soviet diplomat promised cooperation with safe passage for the refugees indicating that they were ready to issue Russian transit visas if the Japanese ones were issued first, and

lost weight. Despite this, he was always optimistic and wrote poems and songs and even composed an "Anti-Fascist-March."

In 1945, after the capitulation of Japan, the forces in Shandong were transferred to the north-eastern part of the country and Dr. Rosenfeld, being irreplaceable, was named Adviser to the General Command of the United Democratic Armies-Northeast. English and American journalists who knew about him, reported that he was an excellent organizer who was able to smuggle much needed goods (for his forces) into Allied planes.

However, it seems that the doctor was looking for more action and he succeeded in convincing his superiors that he is needed at the front. He became commander of the First Medical Brigade and again he operated under heavy shelling without taking any respite. But after the capture of Peking and Tientsin he had to stop. He was suffering from very high blood pressure and disturbances of the heart rhythm. The army sent him to a sanitarium in Tientsin and there he requested that the Central Command discharge him from service as he wished to go to his homeland to see his relatives. Before he left, he was visited by Liu Shaoqi - who later became President of China - who thanked him most warmly. Also, Chen Yi - who became Foreign Minister - was there to see him off.

What Dr. Rosenfeld had meant by Homeland, was the State of Israel. He arrived in this country some time in 1949 and passed away not long afterwards.

## Bringing the Hebrew Bible to the Chinese

By Michael Crissey  
reprinted from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 31, 1997

Chinese and Hebrew are among the oldest living languages, but they have rarely interacted. The Old Testament and some other works have been translated into Chinese, but almost always from an English translation that was done first.

Yiyi Chen, a graduate student at Cornell University, wants to bridge the two languages more directly. He is already winning acclaim in Israel for his direct translations of Israeli literature into Chinese. But he faces more than a few obstacles in his

goal of eventually translating the bible into Chinese directly from the Hebrew. Not the least of them is that most universities in his native China are not clamoring for Hebrew scholars.

Raised in Tianjin, a city 90 miles south-east of Beijing, Mr. Chen was the second of two sons in a family of scientists. His father is a physicist and his mother an engineer. His older brother is pursuing a Ph.D. in organic chemistry at Michigan State University.

"I am the one in the family who rebelled," says the 26-year-old Mr. Chen. "I didn't like science." He enrolled in a law program at Beijing University in 1991 but quickly decided that he didn't want to be a lawyer, either.

Then he signed up for university's fledgling four-year program in Hebrew language and literature, designed to produce translators and interpreters for Chinese diplomacy. The program had been started only a year earlier, in response to requests from both the Chinese and Israeli governments, which had just established diplomatic relations.

### An Israeli Teacher

Mr. Chen's first professor, Chen Titiun, one of two Israelis whom the university brought in for the program, would not let Mr. Chen and his colleagues speak anything but Hebrew in the classroom.

After three years of study, however, Mr. Chen found himself bored with translations. He didn't want to be an interpreter or a teacher, either. He applied to 10 American universities that offered graduate studies in Hebrew. When Cornell admitted him and offered a scholarship, he took it.

But he needed a translation course to finish his undergraduate degree. So Dr. Titiun gave him a short novel, *Three Days and a Child*, by A.B. Yehoshua, one of Israel's foremost novelists, and set him to work.

"When I started reading the novel I said, 'I personally don't find this story interesting,'" Mr. Chen said. "But the more I translated it, the more I wanted to know about him and his background."

Two months after Mr. Chen finished his translation, he learned that Dr. Yehoshua was planning a visit to China. Dr. Titiun and Mr. Chen persuaded the Israeli Em-

bassy in China to sponsor the printing of 2,500 copies of Mr. Chen's 100-page translation. In 1995, the book earned Mr. Chen an award from the Tel Aviv-based Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature in 1995.

That same year, Mr. Chen won a grant from Cornell to travel to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He spent 35 days in Israel immersed in the Hebrew language, studying ancient Hebrew texts and visiting archaeological sites. He also got to meet Dr. Yehoshua.

Since visiting Israel, and Egypt as well, Mr. Chen has decided to push his work beyond translations of modern Hebrew. He wants to show the roots of Hebrew culture to Chinese readers by translating the entire Hebrew Bible into modern Chinese.

In China there are already many Bibles translated from Hebrew to English to Chinese, Mr. Chen says. Many of the previous translators, he says, were missionaries, trying to convert rather than inform. For his purposes, he says, he needs to produce a new translation.

Mr. Chen, who is an atheist, says he is not trying to convert anyone with his planned translation. Rather, he hopes that the allegories and the history of the Bible will help Chinese people understand the development of Western thought.

"In China, everyone knows one piece of classic literature," Chen says. "For most of Western civilization, that classic is the Bible. It is a piece of literature that has become part of your mindset."

For now, the first translation from ancient Hebrew to Chinese will have to wait. "It is a huge job, which would need a lot of scholars, and that takes time and money," Mr. Chen says. "Right now it isn't practical."

"My awareness of livelihood has urged me to differentiate between idealistic study and the food on the table," he adds. "It seems to me that in order to survive either in China or the United States, science is much more practical than Hebrew."

### Unsure About Plans

Mr. Chen has two years of study left on his Ph.D. He says he doesn't quite know what he will do after that. He is reluctant to return to China, because his research would be stymied by the limited resources



## Next Year in Beijing? Seder Night with a Difference

by Joseph Ruben, Virtual Jerusalem News ([www.virtualjerusalem.com](http://www.virtualjerusalem.com))

A Passover in Beijing, China - Amongst 280 of Our Closest Friends Beijing, China (April 11, 1998) - Last night, in a grand ballroom at the Kempinski Hotel, Beijing, was the first annual JOINT Seder for the entire Beijing Jewish Community. Co-sponsored by the Kehillat Beijing Congregation (representing the Diaspora) and the Israeli Embassy, this event was spectacular. Well planned, long in advance, notification went to majority of the Jews living in or visiting Beijing and those from other parts of China. Consequently, over two hundred and eighty people attended to share in a traditional service. From old to young, from business leader to student, from Israeli to North American, it was incredible to be amongst our people. Ashkenazi to Sephardic, to Chinese Jews, Reform to Orthodox, it was a tribute not only to the organizers but also to everyone in attendance because we put all of our differences behind us and celebrated together as Jews.

Present were visitors getting a small taste of China to ex-patriat residents, some of these have been here since Deng Xiaoping opened the door to foreigners in China. An honored participant was Sidney Shapiro - who was not only the oldest Jew there at 82 but also the only one who became a citizen of mainland China! He is a famous writer and historical figure who also wrote many books on Judaism in China.

The room was exquisite. There were twenty-five tables with a turntable in the center of each table. On it was a Seder plate (with everything down to the lamb's shank). Beside this were two Sabbath candles, the greens, salt water (for dipping), a stack of imported matzot, horseradish, home-made haroset, two beautiful flower arrangements, a pitcher of water, and larger bowl (for washing our hands). Upon sitting down, at least at our table (#15), the table for 20-year old students, teachers, and business people, many of us joked about not knowing what to do with all of the silverware laid in front of us. So accustomed we had become to eating every meal with chopsticks. On one hand, reaching for a glass of Carmel wine from Israel seemed so natural, so much like being at my mother's table. On the other hand, the reality was that my Mom and Dad, Dorry

& Alek Korn, were halfway around the world, in Toronto. For the first time in my life, I would not be at the table with my Bubbie Birdie Steele, and that the rest of the family were going to be at a service that wouldn't start for another nine hours. My father Harvey, my sisters, brothers, their children all were in my heart but were so far away. Toronto is over twelve thousand kilometers east and twelve time zones behind. The meal itself was a pleasant surprise. There were latkas, gefilta fish, matzot ball soup, and other pleasant surprises. The only thing missing was the egg in salt water. Yet, other small details were attended to. Near the end of the meal, out came two plates crammed with homemade macaroons. They were delicious.

In many ways, the whole evening was so surreal. Almost three hundred people getting together to participate in something dear to our hearts, so far away from most of our roots. In China, it is easy to become accustomed to bulk masses of people in close proximity - to be immersed in such a large population has its charms but is usually grating, and very tiring. Last night was special. The large group, in fact, made a usually deep-rooted, personally shaped event all the better. We connected in harmony as a large family.

Stepping out the door, we returned to our respective lives in China - to our homes, our environments, but . . . we still have matzot because they had it at the greeting table. Another example of the comprehensive forethought that went into this event, Jerusalem matzot, were on sale at the door. At .85 RMB per kilo box (about \$15.00 CND), it seemed relatively expensive to matzot bought in Canada, but to have access to this in Beijing is a bargain at triple the price. It must have cost a fortune in shipping. Clearly the organizers were not motivated by profit - their hard work, devotion, love, care and attention were a selfless mitzvah that touched so many. This writer is proud to be involved with the Kehillat Beijing Congregation. It meets every Friday at the Capital Club, Athletic Center, third-floor ballroom, at 7:00 p.m. If you are going to be visiting Beijing, and wish to attend service, please feel free to join us. Or, you can e-mail Elyse Beth Silverberg at [eslvrbg@public3.bta.net.cn](mailto:eslvrbg@public3.bta.net.cn), if you would like.

## Dr. Jakob Rosenfeld

*Dr. Gerd Kaminsky (Vienna) participated in the recent Colloquium organized by Monumenta Serica in Skt. Augustin (Germany) from Sept. 21-26. He presented a paper on Dr. Jakob Rosenfeld, a Jewish refugee from Austria in China during World War II. Dr. Rosenfeld eventually became a Brigadier General in Mao Tse Tung's armed forces. Dr. Kaminski's paper was entitled: "The Chinese General practitioner, Dr. Jakob Rosenfeld - the Man and the Myth." Dr. Kaminski also screened a 45 minute documentary on the subject: "I was a Chinese General."*

*Enclosed are extracts of an article for the Bulletin of Igud Yotzei Sin, written by Dr. Gerd Kaminsky, who is the Director of the Boltzmann Institute fuer China Forschung in Vienna. The translation from German into English is by Kurt Maimann of Tel Aviv who added a few personal comments.*

*Rena Krasno*

Jakob Rosenfeld was born in Lemberg in 1903. He studied medicine at the Vienna University and after he became a doctor worked, among others, at the hospital of the Vienna Jewish Community. Being a Social Democrat, Dr. Rosenfeld was involved in anti-fascist activities and thus in May, 1938 - after the "Anschluss" - he was sent to a concentration camp (it is not quite clear if he was sent to Dachau or to Buchenwald). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1939 - after being released - he left for Shanghai, China. There he did very well in his practice; however, he was also much affected by the misery of the Chinese population and so in 1941, disguised as a German missionary and assisted by the mediation of an Austrian by the name of Heinz Schippe (Grzyb), who was in the Underground. He crossed the lines to join the Communist New Fourth Army. This army was in dire need of experienced medical staff. The reception given him by Marshal Chen Yi and Political Commisar Liu Shaoqi at army headquarters in Yangcheng overwhelmed him. . .

Dr. Rosenfeld worked day and night to organize the medical services of the Fourth Army which was stationed at Shandung. He shared his rations - which if issued on special occasions, consisted of dry bread, soup and eggs - with the soldiers in his outfit. He also used his meager wages to buy nutritious food for the wounded and thus it was not surprising that he himself

Sugihara started stamping and signing the transit visas.

Issuance of such visas would be routine and would not require approval in Tokyo if only a few individuals were involved and if the final destination documents were authentic. Faced with a flood of thousands of refugees requesting transit visas, most of them holding questionable final destination visas (not even one of the refugees holding visas for Cuacao is known to have traveled there), Sugihara had to ask Tokyo for instructions. Apparently most of his queries went unanswered. However, he had at least two documents to guide him in his decisions. One was a telegram from the Foreign Ministry to him which stated that " . . . in the case of the refugees you need to be careful that you can issue transit visas only to ones who already have permission from the country of their destination . . ." Taking this instruction literally, the holders of the Curacao "entry" visas were entitled to a Japanese transit visa.

Sugihara's decision was further supported by the Japanese policy statement, issued in December 1938, regarding Jewish refugees, which stated, among other things:

*"We will treat the Jews living in Japan, Manchuria, and China at present with fairness, in the same manner as we treat other foreigners and we will not take special measures to reject them."*

*"We will treat the newly arrived Jews to Japan, Manchuria, and China fairly, generally within the regulations controlling the entry of foreigners."*

*"We will avoid making special efforts to invite Jews to Japan, Manchuria, and China. But this policy does not include people who are worth using, such as capitalists and technologists."*

Reading between the lines, the Japanese officials interpreted this policy as follows: — do not discriminate against the Jews, even the refugees, for we need the goodwill of Jews in the West, particularly in the USA, and while not encouraging massive immigration, admit those Jews who can help the economy in the countries under our control.

While the Foreign Ministry cable and the policy statement may not have amounted to clear guidelines, Sugihara felt that in issuing the visas he did not act contrary to

his government's interests. It is estimated that he issued about 2000 visas and that in addition approximately 3000 forged Japanese transit visas were obtained by the refugees.

In August 1940 the Soviet Union formally annexed Lithuania and ordered all foreign interests to be handled through their Moscow consulates. Thus the Japanese (as well as all the others) had to close the Kaunas consulate and Sugihara received orders to proceed via Berlin to Prague. He left Kaunas on September 4, and spent about a week in Berlin making contact with high nazi officials and with some former Polish intelligence agents employed by him in Kaunas. His service in Prague was short lived — just about five months — because the German authorities objected to his intelligence activities there.

In February 1941 he was assigned to the consulate in Koenigsberg, but under pressure of the German authorities he was again reassigned, this time to Bucharest. His whereabouts from September to December 1941 are uncertain — some sources suggested that he returned to Japan for home leave, but this was not confirmed by official documents. It is known that he arrived in Bucharest on December 21, 1941 and remained there until his arrest by the Soviet occupation forces in the fall of 1944. His assignment in Bucharest was to maintain a watch on the White Russian community there and on its contacts with various foreign governments.

After his arrest by the Red Army, he and his family have been held in Soviet prisons for almost two years, apparently under "relatively benign" conditions. His return to Japan was approved by the Soviet authorities in the summer of 1946, but for some reasons he did not arrive there until the spring of 1947. Some Russian documents indicated that he passed through Vladivostok, where books and "seven notebooks" were confiscated by the Soviet authorities. Examination of these notebooks may shed some interesting light on his activities in Europe during the term of his consular service there.

Shortly after his return to Japan he was ordered to submit his resignation, and in May, 1947, received a sum of money as severance pay and was given an annual pension. The reason he was ordered to retire is not clear. The Ministry sources suggest that he was let go as part of the general staff retrenchment after the war.

Sugihara believed that he was being punished — unjustly. In later years his family insisted that he was fired because of the "Lithuanian incident," apparently referring to his issuing visas to the Jewish refugees.

Difficult years followed his dismissal — the retirement pay was not adequate to support his family and he held a number of odd jobs to earn additional income. For a brief time around 1951 he was employed at the Ponve Department Store in Tokyo. Leo Hanin, who also worked for the Ponves at the time, remembers Sugihara. His comments are quoted by Levine as follows:

*"Hanin remembers Sugihara as dour and depressed, a difficult man to approach, he felt himself above others but had lost face . . . Sugihara's lifesaving acts on behalf of Jews were known at the time . . . but Sugihara did not want to discuss them . . . On one occasion he did explain what he did as the 'finger of God.'"*

In 1960 Sugihara again changed his identity — he insisted on being called Sempo Sugihara. Using this name he was employed by a Japanese trading company to represent them in Moscow. He seems to have been very successful at this job and he lived in Moscow until 1975 making occasional visits home to Tokyo. Given the nature of the relations between Japan and USSR at the time, the deep suspicion which pervaded the relations between the USSR and the outside world, and Sugihara's previous experience as a Japanese expert on the Soviet Union, it is most likely that his job involved at least as much intelligence activity as commerce.

In 1968 he was nominated for election by Yad Vashem in Israel to Righteous Gentile, but because his case was somewhat controversial this honor was bestowed on him only in 1985. By 1975, because of his old age and failing health, Sugihara returned to Japan where he led a sheltered life, spending most of the time in trying to reconstruct his family roots. He died on July 31, 1986.

One of Hillel Levine's prime objectives was to find out "what made Sugihara tick," what were his motives for issuing thousands of visas to Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis. While realizing that we shall never know the answer for sure, the temptation to speculate about it is hard to resist. Levine feels frustrated because there are so many contradictory patterns of

Sugihara's behavior. Yet, I believe that these appear to be contradictory only when viewed from the Western cultural perspective. His acts seem much less contradictory when viewed from the Japanese perspective of the Bushido code of conduct. This code of the Samurai class merges the ideals of martial spirit with Confucian ethics, such as loyalty, virtue, compassion, and politeness (etiquette) in personal relationships. When viewed from this perspective, Sugihara's actions as a "warrior" intelligence agent, fulfilling his obligation to the state in a dangerous mission, do not necessarily conflict with being polite, and on occasion even kind to people in distress. In trying to understand Sugihara's motives for issuing the visas to the Jewish refugees, Levine compares him to two other righteous Gentiles — Wallenberg and Schindler. He promptly concludes, quite correctly, that the motivations of these individuals and the circumstances surrounding their activities were entirely different from those of Sugihara.

There is another case of a Righteous Gentile that, at least in its formal circumstances, is quite similar to that of Sugihara. This is the case of Aristides de Souza Mendes, Portuguese Consulate General in Bordeaux, who in June 1940 issued visas to an estimated 10,000 Jewish refugees fleeing from the Nazis in France. He did so against explicit orders from the dictator-President of Portugal, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, and paid a heavy price for his humanitarian act. Dr. Mendes was recalled to Lisbon, dismissed from his diplomatic post, stripped of his pension and barred from practicing law. The once wealthy aristocrat was left destitute and died in poverty in 1954. Not only was Dr. Mendes disgraced by the Salazar government, but in 1945, when he appealed for reinstatement, his application was dismissed and the credit for assisting the refugees was given to another diplomat, who in fact issued no visas.

Eventually, a long suppressed report by the Portuguese Foreign Ministry revealed that Dr. Mendes, who said that he acted out of deep conviction as a Christian, had been discriminated against because he was a descendant of Marranos (Jews who were forced to convert to Catholicism at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but who for some time thereafter secretly practiced traditional as-

pects of Jewish religion). The Mendes case appears to parallel closely the case of Sugihara, who also declared that he acted, as he said "... according to my sense of human justice, out of love for mankind ...."

One troubling question remains: was Sugihara dismissed from the Foreign Service for cause? There is no question that he was dismissed ... but why? His wife says that it was because of the "Lithuanian incident." What was this incident? The first impulse is to attribute it to the issuing of the visas to the Jewish refugees. But that is not at all clear. Most of Sugihara's activities in Kaunas dealt with intelligence work and it is not at all impossible that there may have been problems related to his relationships with the Soviet intelligence services. A former co-worker with Sugihara, still in his Harbin days, told Levine that Sugihara was suspected by the Japanese army and military police of working for the Russians ... as far back as 1935.

Did Sugihara make it possible for agents recruited by the Russian security services in Kaunas to reach Japan and then also the West? Was there any other collaboration with the Russians? Was he recruited by the Russians during his internment in POW camps after his arrest in Bucharest? Why did the Russians allow Sugihara to reside in Moscow for some 15 years from 1960 to 1975? Was he perhaps a Japanese Kim Philby or Donald MacLane, (Soviet moles in British Intelligence who sought refuge in Moscow in the 1960s)? While some of these questions may not have direct bearing on his actions in issuing visas in Kaunas, they are legitimate questions if we are to understand Sugihara's complex personality and motivations. We shall never know the entire story — but a thorough search of the Soviet NKVD archives and interviews with old retired Russian intelligence agents could be most fruitful in shedding additional light on Sugihara's activities and personality.

To readers who had the patience to get to this point I owe an explanation — why all this recycling of information about Sugihara? If one accepts the view that "history is distillation of rumor," a view propounded by Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) writing about the French Revolution, then one can accept my answer: all I was trying to do is to "distill" some old rumors!

### From Shanghai to Berlin (continued from page 1)

I attended the Kadoorie school for 3 years. I was in a class only for girls and 3 of our pupils were Chinese. My kindergarten teacher, who later became my classmistress, was "Auntie Fee," Felicitas Lewinsky Sarne. The instruction medium was English. We had to speak to each other in English during breaks. Our drawing teacher was the only teacher who spoke German also to us, although he knew English very well.

Most of the refugees helped each other. My mother assisted with sewing and repairs to clothing, people exchanged recipes, worn clothes were passed on from one to another particularly between children; older children baby-sat the younger ones and many elderly people played the role of grandparents. Thus it came about that Leopold Maas, who was a composer, prepared for me an illustrated book of children's verses and songs.

From our balcony I would enjoy observing the street; for example how rickshaw coolies bought hot boiling drinking water. My father never wanted to ride a rickshaw. He found it shameful to have oneself pulled by a running man. In the lane behind our house was a small balloon factory that belonged to a Chinese and once I was allowed to peek in since I used to play with the owner's two children. My father had good relations with his Chinese boss, my mother shopped at the market for Chinese vendors. Otherwise, we had little contact with the Chinese people. I remember how on stifling summer nights we walked past Chinese huts and I would wonder how one could sleep on such hard and narrow benches. In the heavy subtropical heat, the benches would be placed outside the huts at night and people would sleep on them. I myself slept on two suitcases over which a mattress had been placed; my parents used a narrow bed and my baby brother (born in 1945) was kept for a long time in his carriage.

When we went to the city we always had to carry inoculation certificates because there were health controllers on street corners. If one did not carry a certificate, one was forcefully inoculated. Although we were allowed to drink only boiled water and carefully handled all our food, we had to take many precautions against disease spread by lice, cockroaches and other in-

sects. In spite of all precautions, I would have died of dysentery if not for a direct blood transfusion from my father ordered by our pediatrician, Dr. Mosse. I had lost a great deal of weight and was only skin and bones. My father's blood was compatible to mine and I survived. My father wanted to give the good doctor his only valuable possession, a gold watch, but Dr. Mosse refused to take either the watch or money.

Since my parents reached Shanghai in April 1939, they belonged to a small group of illegal German anti-fascists. In their group were, among others, Johannes (Hans) Koenig, Walter Czollek, Berthold Manasse, Jacob (Peneira) and Annemarie Fass, Genia and Guenter Nobel, Max Lewinsohn. Later, after the 1945 liberation by the Americans, they contributed to the formation of a committee called *Gemeinschaft der demokratischen Deutschen in Shanghai* (Association of Democratic Germans in Shanghai). Many refugees from various circles and different views soon joined them.

After the war, we joined the first group of German and Austrian Jews who returned to their countries after the war. Our ship, the U.S. troop carrier, "Maryne Lynx," left Shanghai on July 25, 1947 and reached Naples after about 4 weeks, on August 16. From there, 295 Germans (among whom my 2-year-old brother Peter was the youngest passenger) were taken by cargo train to Berlin. We arrived at the Goerlitzer Station on August 21. In the train, the men had tied ropes along the open sides of the wagons so that little children would not fall out. We had some straw to sleep on. My mother opened from time to time food cans that the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association) had provided. She warmed the food over a small alcohol burner. Our main nourishment during the trip were dry cookies.

My father found work in Babelsberg, where in 1951 my sister Vera, and in 1953 Rita, were born. My father died in 1967. My mother still lives in Potsdam.

As soon as we got resettled in Germany, my father wanted me to experience a traditional German "school beginning." Although I had already attended school for 2 years in Shanghai, he had me photographed with a borrowed school satchel on September 1, 1947. At first, to the delight of my classmates, I answered my teacher in English, but later I managed also in German. Since I read very willingly and with much expression, the teacher would occasionally send me to read aloud to another class. Perhaps that was the reason I later chose to be a teacher, a profession I still pursue with much enthusiasm.

## BOOK NOOK

### My China. Jewish Life in the Orient 1900-1950

By Yaakov Liberman. Jerusalem & California, Judah L. Magnes Museum & Gefen Publishing House. 245 pp. NIS70.

Reviewed by Alex Auswaks in *Jerusalem Post Magazine*, 27 March 1998

"Perhaps never before in the history of Jewish communities were Jews leaving a Diaspora situation without a preceding or an accompanying tragedy. Here, it was happening in China. Without pogroms or threats, abuses or even signs of anti-Semitism, thousands of Jews from China were voluntarily closing down their centers, dismantling their social and rehabilitation institutions, their schools, hospitals, synagogues and organizations and emigrating to the land of their dreams, to the newborn State of Israel ... leaving homes which had been comfortable havens for three generations, leaving without a glance back, with no regrets, but also with no bitter memories and no sorrow. And where else were the young men and women of Betar or Maccabi able to liquidate the galut (the lands of Jewish dispersion) not by crawling under barbed wire fences or climbing over the barricades, but by marching onto the decks of awaiting planes and vessels, with their flags flying and their bands playing? This indeed was a unique ending to a chapter of Jewish wanderings."

Thus writes Yaakov Liberman in his highly personal memoir of his life in the three Jewish communities of China: Harbin, Tientsin and Shanghai, in two of which he played an important part.

The communities were totally self-reliant financially as well as spiritually. No rich overseas Jews sent major gifts of money in return for having their names inscribed wherever. China Jewry had its own rich and its own poor, who prayed together and went to school together. There were homes for the aged built from local resources. There were sports champions who de-

feated all comers. Problems had to be resolved with the Japanese and other communities.

Yaakov Liberman tells how it all came about, and it is a story, were it known, that would give all Jews a sense of pride. (Yaakov Liberman is an Israeli citizen now living in California. He lectures on China's second Jewry.)

### Bible in Modern China The Literary and Intellectual Impact Monumenta Serica Monograph Series Vol. XLIII

Edited by Irene Eber (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Sze-Kar Wan (Andover Newton Theological School), Knut Walf (University of Nijmegen) in collaboration with Roman Malek (Institut Monumenta Serica)

Contents include: The Bible in Early Seventeenth-Century China — Nicolas Standaert; Linguistic Aspects of Translating the Bible into Chinese — Lihi Yariv-Laor; The Interminable Term Question — Irene Eber; The Bible Translations into Miao: Chinese Influence versus Linguistic Autonomy — Joakin Enwall; The Bible in Twentieth-Century Chinese Fiction — Lewis S. Robinson; Mythopoeic Warrior and femme fatale: Mao Dun's Version of Samson and Delilah — Marian Galik; Wu Ching-Hsiung's Chinese Translation of Images of the Most High in the Psalms — Francis K. H. So; Twenty years of Studies of Biblical Literature in the People's Republic of China (1976-1996) — Gong Liang; "The Sickness God" — The Sickness Man: The problem of Imperfection in China and in the West — Wolfgang Kubin; General Index with Glossary. Place order with: Steyler Verlag, Postfach 24 60, D-41311 Nettetal, Germany; Tel: 02157/12 02 20; Fax: 02157/12 02 22.

### Kudos to Points East

"An extremely high standard is being maintained." Dr. Maisie Meyer

"I appreciate the timely articles and the help the Institute has been to me."

Mrs. Victor Shainock

"I really enjoy your publication." Mr. Ken Robbins