

Psychoanalytischer Verlag. Storfer failed in his attempt to follow Sigmund Freud to London, and instead left for China in December 1938. In Shanghai, Storfer maintained his connection with the psychoanalytic movement. The high standards of the *Gelbe Post* were universally praised.

In October 1939, Storfer announced that his monthly would become a weekly and eventually a daily. The first *Gelbe Post* daily appeared in March 1940.

The *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle* now faced stiff competition. Two new Viennese journalists were hired: Dr. Ladislaus Frank and Mark Siegelberg. While the circulation of the *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle* increased, the *Gelbe Post* was running into trouble. It became evident that Storfer had made a mistake in turning his paper from a monthly to a daily. Evidently, culture and not day-to-day journalism was his real field of interest. The worry about his newspaper contributed to the deterioration of his health. He died in September 1940. Recently reprints of the 1939 *Gelbe Post* monthly issues became available in Berlin. For details contact: e-mail: bestellung@nusadua.de.

In the meantime, the *Schanghai Woche* became an evening paper and was renamed the *Acht-Uhr-Abendblatt*. Three other papers appeared: the *Tribuene*, the *Laterne* and the *Juedische Nachrichten Blatt*. In 1941, some publications regrouped. The *Acht-Uhr-Abendblatt* joined the *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle*, and a Berlin journalist, Guenter Lenhardt founded the *Shanghai Herald*, hiring Frank and Siegelberg away from the *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle*.

In July 1941, Dr. Frank left the *Shanghai Herald* and founded the *Schanghai Morgenpost*, which became a leading refugee newspaper. Among its writers were renowned journalists such as Dr. F. Friedlander, Lothar Brieger, the economist Dr. W. Dawison, the Breslau music critic, M. Hausdorff, the sinologist Dr. W. Tonn and journalists who had worked at the famous *Ullstein Verlag*. The *Shanghai Herald* was an immediate success.

When the Pacific War broke out and the Japanese occupied Shanghai, censorship was the order of the day and many newspapers could not survive. Almost immediately, the *Schanghai Morgenpost* was closed by the Japanese authorities. The *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle* managed to

survive in stormy waters. It closed in October 1945.

New publications appeared: *The Shanghai Echo* and *Die Neue Zeit* (published twice a month). At the end of December, *Die Neue Zeit* editor-in-chief, Dr. Ladislaus Frank took over its operation and the paper became a daily renamed *Shanghai Journal*. Almost at the same time, *Juedische Nachrichten* changed its name to *Jewish Voice*, edited by Ludwig Schaefer.

The Japanese occupation tolerated no freedom of speech or expression. All newspapers functioned within a very tight framework and went from crisis to crisis. Condi-

tions in the Hongkew ghetto were deplorable: poor housing, lack of food and hygiene. Constant worry and tension added to the burdens borne by newspapermen. Not earning enough to exist, most wore threadbare clothing. Efforts to raise funds to help them out failed. An attempt was made to organize paid lectures, but the Japanese Stateless Refugee Bureau soon forbade all such activities. As a result, many of the best known refugee journalists did not survive the war in Shanghai. Among them: Storfer, Dawison (who committed suicide), Lenhardt, Feldmann and Selmansohn. Malnutrition and a constant struggle for the survival of their papers had taken their toll.

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Points East

中國-猶太學院

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LITHUANIA HONORS A HOLOCAUST RESCUER

by Jonathan Goldstein, Professor of History
State University of West Georgia

The original version of this article was published in *Polin* and is reprinted with permission.*

In the summer of 1940, in the Lithuanian capital city of Kovno (Kaunas), a Dutch gentile businessman did truly amazing things to assist literally thousands of stranded Jews. What was the role of Jan Zwartendijk (1896-1976) in the Kovno rescue episode? Why has Lithuania now recognized him for courage fifty-nine years after the event?

The Kovno Episode

By late 1939, under the terms of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, Germany had completed its occupation of western Poland while the Soviet Union took over eastern Poland. By May 1940 at least 10,000 Jews had fled from those occupied zones into neutral Lithuania. On June 15, 1940 the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania and five weeks later accepted its "request" to be annexed into the U.S.S.R., a procedure that was completed by August 5.



Jan Zwartendijk, 1940. Photo from V.R.M. Administraticios Departamentas [Credit: Central State Archives of Lithuania, Vilnius]

The Polish Jews who had fled to Lithuania precisely to escape Soviet rule felt especially vulnerable and desperate during the annexation process. By July virtually all consulates in Kovno, the Lithuanian capital, were in the process of closing. Panic set in among the Jewish refugees. At the point Jan Zwartendijk, voluntarily and at great personal risk, took on a role which quickly evolved into the rescue of the Jews.

Since May 1939 Jan had represented Philips, the Dutch electronics manufacturer, in Lithuania.¹ In May 1940 the Germans overran Holland and a Dutch Government-in-Exile, technically a resistance organization, was established in London. L.P.J. De Decker, the Dutch Ambassador to the Baltic states who was based in Riga, Latvia, suspected the then-Dutch consul in Kovno of pro-Nazi sympathies. In June 1940 he asked Zwartendijk to take over in Kovno as consul in Lithuania representing the Dutch Government-in-Exile. In spite of the fact that Zwartendijk had no diplomatic experience and a wife and three young children in Kovno, he readily accepted this potentially risky assignment.

(continued on page 5)

CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS

by Professor Xu Xin, Director,
Center for Jewish Studies, Nanjing University

[A three-week workshop on Jewish History and Culture was successfully held at Nanjing University, Nanjing, China, from July 11-30, 1999, in the Teaching Building of the Sino-American Studies Center of Nanjing University-Johns Hopkins University. The Sino-Judaic Institute was one of its funders.]

To promote the study of Jewish subjects among Chinese, various projects and programs arose as a logical outgrowth of the work in Judaic Studies carried out by Chinese scholars for the past 10 years. More than 100 books on Jewish subjects have been published in Chinese. Knowledge of Jewish history, Judaism, culture and people is increasing. However, to bring newly available information to a wider audience, especially to the younger generation currently studying at Chinese universities and colleges, special effort is required. Only a few universities and colleges in China have ever had Jewish programs.

To reach students, one must reach their teachers. This workshop on Jewish history and culture was specifically designed to train Chinese professors who lead courses in subjects such as world history or western civilization. The goal was to present reliable, accurate, and concrete knowledge of Jewish history and culture through intensive study, facilitated by Jewish scholars from outside China. This, in future, would enable local professors to incorporate information of Jewish history and culture into the scope of their courses, passing on the knowledge to their students. The first workshop of this kind was held at Nanjing University in 1997. This was so effective and useful that the second was organized and presented in the summer of 1999.

Participants

We invited 33 Chinese scholars to attend the 1999 session and provided them with scholarships. Although the original design called for a class of 20, the planners enlarged the study group because of increased interest and demand. Twenty were instructors or research fellows from 19 institutions in 13 provinces in China. Because the organizer received a large number of applications from graduate students, we invited 13 Ph.D. or MA candidates from some of the best-known universities in China. This desirable group of potential scholars and teachers will most likely become college instructors or research fellows in Chinese institutions upon graduation.

In general, the average age of the students (32) was younger than that of the first group two years ago (36). Their previous knowl-

(continued on page 7)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Featured Articles
 Lithuania Honors a Holocaust Rescuer 1
 Changing Hearts & Minds 1

In the Field 3

Letters to the Editor 4

Articles
 Rosh Hashana Services at Ohel Rachel Synagogue 3
 Visas for Life 5
 Luis de Almeida 8
 My Early Years 10
 Jewish Life in the Second Half of the 1950's in China 12
 Strangers in a Strange Land 16
 Bicycle 19
 Jewish Refugee Press in Shanghai 19

Book Nook 17

Video Corner 18

SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	309
China	12
Israel	14
England	11
Hong Kong	5
Canada	6
Australia	5
Japan	2
Germany	3
Indonesia	1
South Africa	1
Taiwan	2
Switzerland	1
Italy	1
TOTAL:	373

FROM THE EDITOR

As far as I can recall, no article has inspired as much controversy among our readers as did Prof. Zhang's on the commercial character of the Jewish people. As a Jew, I was both honored and offended by the article; but as someone who has lived in China, I can both understand the author's assumptions and appreciate the extent of his learning and positive appreciation of the Jewish people.

Jews everywhere are particularly sensitive to allegations made in any quarter about our presumed financial acumen. (I should be so lucky!) It hearkens back to the medieval European Jewish experience when Jews had few economic options other than trade and money-lending, for which they then were persecuted by both populace and potentates. Still later, in the modern era, racial anti-Semites based their hatred on these ancient grudges and invented the myth of the Jewish plot to seize economic and political control of the world. Ironically, those who most often perpetuated this myth were those actually seeking economic and political control themselves. It is no wonder then that even well intended words of praise, albeit of an overly general nature, inspire loathing not love in Jewish circles.

However, looking at the Jewish experience from afar, as Prof. Zhang has done, can yield some fairly objective truths: for example that many Jews are relatively successful economically; or Jewish tradition does treat wealth positively, i.e. that wealth is a divine gift which one ought to use wisely for the good of one's family and community. One can understand and respect this outsider's perspective on Jewish survival—to say that it has taken tenacity, intelligence, and skill (including financial skill) to survive is truly a compliment. It may be hard to accept, given that it presses a Jewish hot button, and given that it does build on traditional European negative stereotypes, but it is clear that the author has amity, not enmity, in his heart.

The lesson in all of this, it seems to me, is that in order to truly understand one another, we must listen to uncomfortable perceptions and misperceptions, learn how to respond to each in an appropriate way, and build our relationships from there. True dialogue cannot be other than this; otherwise it is only platitude.

Let me close by wishing those of our readers who observe the Jewish calendar belated wishes for a good and sweet new year.

Anson Laytner

Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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Bicycle

by Joseph P. Weber

In my native Austria, I practically grew up on a bicycle. One of my earliest memories: Father, bicycling to the main square of our village, with me sitting on the rear luggage rack and my sister Magda on a little seat in front. I was four and my sis a year younger. The year was 1926.

Our lives were uneventful until 1938 when Nazi Germany seized Austria and we had to flee for our lives, leaving our modest general store and household goods behind. Father, Mother and we two children became stateless refugees and ended up in Shanghai, facing an uncertain future, along with 20,000 other displaced persons.

Our eight-year stay in China was hard to endure, especially for Father who had no usable skills he could apply in this strange city. It was easier for my sister who, at age sixteen, became a waitress and thus helped to supplement our family's meager rations.

Over time I held about twenty different jobs which became a sort of continuation of the sudden interruption of my formal schooling. In order to get the various jobs, I bought a cheap bicycle of Japanese manufacture. Before World War II anything made in Japan was a joke and this bike was no exception. The frame was actually made of thin gas pipes.

One of the jobs I was fortunate to get was in the French Concession, several kilometers from Honkew, the Japanese occupied suburb of Shanghai where the bulk of the refugees lived. A Russian-Jewish architect had hired me as a draftsman and very generously invited me to share "tiffin" (lunch) with his family.

This was a welcome addition to my skimpy diet of soybean curd, rice and bread, and not much else. Thus, I became acquainted with Russian dishes: Piroshki, zakuski and blini, all very delicious and very rich.

After one such especially heavy meal, I began to feel bilious as soon as I mounted my bike to embark on my long homeward journey. When I turned into Avenue Joffre, the French Concession's main avenue, I had to suddenly throw up, barely managing to dismount. Bent over in great distress, I retched into the gutter, with heaving convulsions shaking my aching body. Somehow I made it home on my poor, soiled bicycle.

The word Typhoon is derived from the Chinese "Dai Fung," or big wind. We experienced several of these during our Shanghai sojourn. Chinese merchants advertised their wares through characters painted on vertical fabric banners jutting out over the sidewalks, with holes cut in them for the wind to blow through. In spite of this precaution a powerful typhoon would tear them off their fastenings, blowing along roof tiles, bamboo fences and other debris.

The worst part were the floods. Shanghai (Shang Hai means "over the ocean") was built just above sea level and the Wang-Poo river easily spilled over the embankment, flooding the streets. I was once trapped in one of these floods, far from home. Water soon reached the axles of my bicycle and I had to stop pedaling since I kept bumping into submerged traffic islands. I pushed the bike all the way home though the muddy water – it took many hours fighting the heavy downpour coming at me almost horizontally, driven by the strong gale.

In order to get to work by a more direct route I once took a shortcut through the Chinese Inner City. It was very crowded, with a smelly and noisy sea of humanity filling the streets. Suddenly I collided with a rickshaw coming in the opposite direction and my cheap bicycle broke promptly in two, with the front wheel rolling across the street and landing in the gutter. Immediately I found myself surrounded by a ring of gawking natives who doubtlessly relished the spectacle of a "foreign devil" being in trouble. The size of the mob was growing rapidly and I became plenty worried about my fate.

Eventually a Chinese policeman appeared and the rickshaw coolie reported his version of his run-in with the evil foreigner. He played the role of the innocent victim to the hilt, complaining loudly in an impressive singsong describing his ostensible injuries and appeared to be in great pain. In a few minutes a well-dressed Chinese pushed his way through the throng: "I am Dr. Li Pei Woo from the "Fragrant Flower" hospital and I saw the whole thing happen. I will be happy to testify against this foreign criminal – here is my business card." I was able to follow most of the proceedings, having learned an adequate amount of the Shanghai dialect.

The cop, maintaining a serene attitude during the entire episode, motioned to the

coolie and me to follow him to the police station. There, after more dramatics and impressive manifestations of pretended pain and injury, we agreed on an adequate recompense – fortunately I had sufficient funds on me.

I was released and returned home, clutching the broken bicycle parts to my chest. My method of transport? A rickshaw, of course.

Jewish Refugee Press in Shanghai

by Rena Krasno

At the end of the 1930's when a stream of European Jewish refugees began to flow into China, only one German language paper existed in Shanghai: the *Ostasiatische Lloyd*, a semi-official organ of the Hitler regime. There were several well-established English papers, such as the *North China Daily News*, *The China Press*, *The Shanghai Times* and *The Shanghai Evening Post* and *Mercury*, but many refugees from Austria and Germany knew no English. Consequently, the refugees had to found their own newspapers.

The first newspaper issued by German refugees was the *Schanghai Woche* (Shanghai Week) founded by Wolfgang Fischer in January 1939. It was first printed by the *Shanghai Times* and later by the *China Press*. Articles centered mainly on problems encountered by the refugees in Shanghai, but there was also some coverage of politics, economics and art.

Some weeks later, a competing weekly appeared: the *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle* published by Lewin, Kasstan and Horwitz. The editorial board consisted of: Josef Eisler, Alfred Kahn, Dr. Alfred Dreifuss and later the well-known Berlin journalist, Dr. Fritz Friedlander.

Almost simultaneously two small papers were tentatively published but did not survive: *Ward Road News* and the *Juedisichgemeindeblatt*.

Perhaps the most important refugee publication in Shanghai was the monthly *Gelbe Post*. Its editor, Dr. A.I. Storfer, was well-known both in Switzerland and in Germany for his work at the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and *Ullstein Verlag* (publishing company). He had been a close associate of Dr. Sigmund Freud and founded the Vienna

BOOK NOOK

E. My Developmental Years in China . . . Interview with Yosef Tekoah, conducted by Steve Hochstadt . . . 98

F. From Berlin to Tianjin . . . Heinz Dawid . . . 110

III. Research Guides

A. Cemeteries of the Kaifeng Jews . . . Phyllis Horal . . . 123

B. The Hebrew University's Research Project on Jewish Communities in Modern China . . . Irene Eber . . . 127

C. New Information on Shanghai Jewish Refugees: The Evidence of the Shanghai Municipal Police Files, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. . . . Marsha R. Ristaino . . . 135

D. Polish, Russian, and U.S. Consular Records from Shanghai About Jewish Refugees: An Interim Report . . . Jonathan Goldstein . . . 152

IV. Bibliography

A. The Chinese Jews and the Jewish Diasporas in China from the Tang Period (A.D. 618-906) through the mid-1990s: A Selected Bibliography . . . Frank Joseph Shulman . . . 157

B. Contributors . . . 183

C. Index . . . 187

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VIDEO CORNER

The Canadian Series: Morris "Two-Gun" Cohen – a critical review
by Michael Alderton, Katoomba, Australia

This documentary, though visually very rewarding and revealing, was accompanied by a commentary which was uninspiring, harmfully speculative, ill informed, inaccurate and downright defamatory.

Simply put, the very revealing and accurate historical images which we see on the screen do not match the uncomplimentary and highly speculative commentary which we hear through the soundtrack. And the documentary makers fail miserably in their promise to provide us with that "improbable road map" which is meant to explain how their version of the subject, as a "drifter with a shady past, seldom more than one step ahead of the law," finally ends up as the sole Westerner, walking solemnly and with military bearing, at the head of the funeral procession of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, that most universally revered figure in modern China.

Perhaps the documentary makers had misled themselves right from the very beginning of their account when they wrongly assumed that a young Morris Cohen had, during September 1910, been fairly convicted of theft, and subsequently sentenced to serve out one year's hard labour at the Prince Albert Penitentiary in Saskatchewan. However, a careful reading of the Saskatoon newspapers of the day quite clearly show that this impressively confident Jewish young man was certainly no common pickpocket, and, what's more, the readily available records further show that he was out of the Prince Albert Penitentiary within 9 days of commencing a one year sentence there.

But the makers of this documentary seem to be single-minded in their attempt to paint the worst possible picture of the young Morris Cohen. For example, when their researchers stumbled upon a sheaf of documents relating to the land dealings of a certain Morris Cohen, they milked their seemingly fortuitous find for all it was worth. Unfortunately, this particular Morris Cohen was not the designated subject of their documentary, but he was in fact merely a contemporary, a long term resident of Calgary and founder, in that city, of Paramount Oils Limited. But from this pile of irrelevant documents, sloppy researchers have assiduously extracted a couple of

lines alleging "fraudulent and wrongful conduct" on the part of this other Morris Cohen; an allegation which was, incidentally, roundly dismissed when it came before the courts. But is this simply a case of mistaken identity combined with a misinterpretation of the documents on the part of the documentary researchers, or is it a piece of carefully crafted defamation. That is something which I will leave up to others to decide on.

What I do know, however, is that the documentary makers were irresponsible in the extreme to have repeatedly flashed up on the screen selected portions of a document purporting to be a list of "Convictions Registered Against Morris Cohen." It would have been patently obvious to any objective researcher that this document, bearing no official letterhead and no signature, is riddled with clearly identifiable errors and deliberate misrepresentations. Many viewers of the documentary would have indeed noticed this fact for themselves had they been provided with the opportunity to view the document in its entirety. In fairness to General Cohen's reputation, and in order to avoid misleading their audience, the documentary makers had an obligation to explain why such a defamatory document had been compiled by members of a city police force some two and a half years after its subject had left Canada for China. They might also have told us what purpose this cooked up document was intended to serve, and have then provided us with some indication as to who had requested it in the first place.

Like that list of alleged "Convictions Registered Against Morris Cohen," which it seems to rely so heavily upon for insights into the character of its subject, this potentially interesting documentary is polluted by a commentary which is similarly riddled with errors and misrepresentations, and, what's more, these are far too numerous for me to begin listing them here.

My advice to anyone truly interested in trying to unravel the fabulously interesting life and times of the enigmatic General Morris Abraham Cohen is to carefully study those amazing historical images which, in themselves, reveal much about the true character and achievements of their subject; but in doing so, turn off the sound, and proudly marvel in silence at the fascinating exploits of this celebrated Canadian Jew.

IN THE FIELD

♦ Call for Photos

Prof. Pan Guang has issued a call for photos. Four years after publishing the album *The Jews in Shanghai*, the Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai (CJSS) will begin to compile a sequel volume *The Jews in China*. Although the Center has many photos about Jews in Shanghai, it is in urgent need of photos about Jews in Hong Kong, Harbin, Tianjin (Tientsin), Hailar, Tsingtao, Mukden (Shenyang), and especially in Dairen, Manchouli (Manchuria), Tsitsihar, and any other Chinese cities. If original photos are sent and are needed back, the Center will copy and return them. All contributors will be acknowledged in the album. Although the Center seeks the photos by the end of October, interested parties can let Prof. Pan know if photos will be sent later. His address is c/o CJSS, 622/7 Huai Hai Road (Middle) #352, Shanghai 200031, China. Tel: 86-21-64313464; Fax: 86-21-53510041; e-mail: gpan@srcap.stc.sh.cn

♦ Dr. Feng Shan Ho Honored

Dr. Feng Shan Ho, a little known diplomat rescuer of Austrian Jews at the beginning of the Holocaust, is remembered through a special exhibition called *Visas for Life*. Opening on October 17, 1999 at the Vancouver B.C. Holocaust Education Centre and running through December 20, the exhibit will later travel to the United Nations in New York, where Dr. Ho will be posthumously honored for his humanitarian efforts. The Vancouver showing is co-sponsored by the Holocaust Education Centre and the Chinese Cultural Centre. A bi-lingual monograph will be available for purchase from the HEC. (See article in this issue.)

♦ Holocaust Studies in Nanjing

According to the *China/Judaic Connection*, Prof. Xu Xin and Dr. Peter Black, senior researcher and historian at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, have developed a syllabus for teaching the Holocaust at the college level in China. Prof. Xu will pilot the course at Nanjing University later this year.

♦ Gabow Papers Donated

Rena Krasno reports that she recently had the opportunity to visit Bess Gabow, widow of SJI Founding President Leo Gabow. The reason for the visit was to enable Rena to study Leo's comprehensive papers and to put together a selection of them for donation to the Hoover Institution's Archives, where SJI keeps its special materials on Jews in China. Leo's papers on file include: 2 on Kaifeng (with photographs, articles, letters and remarks), 1 on meetings held in Shanghai in the 1920's regarding aid to Kaifeng Jews (including copies of minutes and other documentation), and 1 on Jews in Shanghai.

♦ Jakob Rosenfeld

Beth Hatefutsoth, the Nahum Goldman Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, in Tel Aviv, recently opened an exhibit on the life of Jakob Rosenfeld, a Viennese doctor who made a name for himself in China. The opening ceremony was attended by the ambassadors of Austria and China, and keynote speakers were Dr. David Alexander, director general of the Museum, and Prof. Gerd Kaminski, of the Austrian Association for Research on China.

♦ Miscellaneous

Long time SJI member Gertrude Serata of Hawaii died at the age of 91 in June. As her daughter wrote: "Until her death she was interested in everything and was an avid reader and thinker." May her memory be a blessing.

Rabbi I. Harold Sharfman, president of the (U.S.) Orthodox Rabbinical Association, addressed city and government officials of Kaifeng on the occasion of a visit by city officials from sister city Kiryat Motzkin, Israel. According to the *Yeshiva University Alumni Magazine*, Dr. Sharfman is writing a book on "K'ai Feng-Fu and its ancient Hebrew Temple of Purity and Truth."

Rosh Hashana Services at Ohel Rachel Synagogue-Shanghai

by Rena Krasno

Jeffrey Bernstein is General Manager of *EverReach Logistics* in Shanghai, China. He informed us that two Rosh Hashana services were held this year at the Ohel Rachel Synagogue, one in the morning and one in the evening. Lubavitcher rabbis officiated. Men, women and children attended. A meal followed Friday services. The Shanghai community *torah* was kept in the ark throughout Rosh Hashana Shabbat. It is important to point out that the Ohel Rachel Synagogue was opened **only** for Rosh Hashana. After that it was closed to the public. Other services and Yom Kippur prayers took place in a hotel. Mr. Bernstein described the Shanghai Rosh Hashana celebration in an e-mail to his parents who live in California. They kindly agreed to share its contents with our readers.

"Happy New Year to you from the other side of the world. We wish you all a happy and healthy New Year, filled with many momentous 'firsts.'

We started with a first in Shanghai. The Ohel Rachel Synagogue (one of Shanghai's 7 original synagogues) was opened to the Jewish community for Rosh Hashana services. This is the first time since 1949 that Shanghai Jews could celebrate the High Holidays in their own house of worship.

As we walked past the ivy covered walls of the building that had not been used a Synagogue for the past 50 years, the strong symbolism of the moment struck us. Although the outside walls were darkened by layers of soot, the inside was bright and clean, displaying its old grandeur for the holy days. We are grateful that the Shanghai City's Bureau of Education, who occupied the building, had respected its original architecture and carefully preserved the original state of its interior.

It was exciting to be part of this important day. We felt we were experiencing history in the making."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

Re: *Points East*, Vol. 14, No. 2, July, 1999, Discussion of Commercial Character of Jewish People by Zhang Qianhong

I was somewhat disquieted by the article referenced above.

While I am sure Professor Qianhong has positive feelings in his heart for the Jewish people, the article, in my opinion, is empirically defective and full of outmoded stereotypes. I do not think the article should have been afforded the space or apparent importance which it received in the publication to which I have subscribed for more years than I can remember.

For example: "For them here, money is not just an economic concept but also holds a rich meaning in religion, society, ethnicity and history . . ." The thesis of the article is that, for Jews, money has been a necessary evil which they have elevated into a fulcrum for success.

The typical line of reasoning is followed that Jews were somehow forced into the business of "money." I am concerned not about the Professor's kavana (intention), but rather the underlying precepts which seem to drive his conclusions.

The article is truly difficult to criticize in that Professor Qianhong makes many statements that one might consider supportive and fair-minded. Nevertheless, there is, without question, an ingrained philosophy essentially based on ignorance.

Very truly yours,

Clifford A. Rieders, President
Herbert Rieders Foundation
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Williamsport, PA 17701
717-3423-8711, Fax 717-323-4192

To the editor:

I take the liberty of writing you after having read the piece by Prof. Zhang Qianhong, "Discussion of Commercial Character of the Jewish People," in the July issue of *Points East*. Let me not beat around the bush: the article displays a profound ignorance of Jewish history and it pains me to think that this is the level of knowledge of a Chinese university professor. [Al Dien's] brief introduction is far kinder than I have allowed myself to be and I agree wholeheartedly with [his] observation that there is need for translations of materials that will counter the Western stereotypes which have entered China along with other elements of Western culture.

As a practical measure, may I suggest that the Sino-Judaic Institute sponsor the publication of a book of sources (in Chinese translation) of Jewish history and culture? What I have in mind is a number of volumes based on the model of the "Sources of Chinese Tradition"/"Sources of Japanese Tradition" published by the Columbia University Press in the early '60s. Such a publication could bring light where today there is apparently too much darkness about the Jews among Chinese intellectuals. I would much appreciate knowing your thoughts about such a project.

Sincerely yours,

(Prof.) Avraham Altman
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Mt. Scopus, Jerusalem
Israel 91905

Al Dien Responds:

Let me say that I share your opinion that the article reveals an unfortunate bias concerning the relationship of Jews and money. I thought the article an important one precisely because it expressed the views of a member of the intellectual class in China in attempting to counteract the blatant and gross stereotypes which are currently there, being in large part brought to that country along with the influx of Western ideas, literature and attitudes. It does not help to say that these stereotypical views of Jews are considered positive ones and that in the present "get rich" climate there, Jews are taken as role models in the popular works which flood the market.

Prof. Zhang attempts in his article to provide a historical rationale for the plight in which the Jews have found themselves over the centuries, but in so doing he appears to accept much of the very bias against which he rails. In that situation it is important for the members of the Sino-Judaic Institute to be aware of the situation in China, and to redouble our efforts to present a broader and fairer picture of Jews and Judaism to the Chinese public. Toward that end we have supported the summer workshops on Judaism organized by Prof. Xu Xin for teachers of world history at Chinese universities, subsidize translations of important works into Chinese, and have recently mounted a popular exhibit in Kaifeng on the history of the Jews in that city. Of course, we still have a long way to go.

BOOK NOOK

The Good Man of Nanking – The Diaries of John Rabe, Alfred A. Knopf. New York. 1998

reviewed by Rena Krasno

John Rabe was born in Hamburg in 1882. In 1909, he went to Shanghai where he married his German childhood sweetheart. In 1911, after working for a Hamburg firm, he joined the Siemens Company in Beijing. In 1931, he became director of the Siemens branch in Nanking, which at the time was capital of China. In 1934, Rabe joined the NSDAP (Nazi) party. Totally absorbed in his self-imposed mission to save the Chinese in Nanking from Japanese atrocities, he did not seem to grasp Hitler's ideology and objectives.

Rabe's obsession was to create in Nanking a safety zone for Chinese citizens, similar to that which had been established in Shanghai by the French Jesuit Pater Jaquinot. After sending his family to safety, he remained alone to face Japanese bombings and ground attacks. In his diaries, which Rabe painstakingly maintained until 1946, he described his wartime experiences, his fight to help save Chinese lives. He carefully listed all the Japanese atrocities he witnessed or heard from reliable sources. Rabe wrote directly to Hitler asking him for intervention on behalf of the Chinese convinced that "a single word from him, and only from him, would have the greatest possible effect on the Japanese in helping establish our proposed neutral zone, and he will speak that word!" Rabe was wrong. He never received a reply from Hitler.

As far as Jews are concerned, several items in his diaries may interest our readers. On October 22, 1937, Rabe mentions a certain Herr Woltemade who arrived from Shanghai after an 18-hour drive. His driver was an "allegedly German chauffeur" who turned out to be a Jew. The problem: can a car driven by a Jew bear an identifying swastika flag for protection against Japanese attack?

In his cable to the Berlin Foreign Ministry, Nanking German Legation Councilor Hinrich also asked if German Jews living outside of international settlements (such as existed in Tientsin and Shanghai), could fly the Reich swastika flag for their own protection. Legation Councilor Hinrich

noted that he knew that "in general there should be only a limited extension of protective measures to Jews living abroad." However, he added that conditions in China were special stating: "In practice, then, we are left with no other means by which to make the property of German nationals of Jewish blood recognizable than by displaying the German flag." Herr Hinrich requested a reply by return mail. The deputy state secretary of the Reich Interior Ministry responded that he could find no objection to Hinrich's suggestion. Still, just to be sure, he wanted to submit the matter "to the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor."

The reply came as follows:

"The Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor have decided against granting German nationals of the Jewish race permission either to display our national flag because of the warlike confusions in China, or to make themselves recognizable by the wearing of armbands of a similar nature. It is the Fuehrer's view that German nationals of the Jewish race can protect themselves and are adequately marked by displaying white flags or armbands, on which, if necessary, their association with the Reich can be indicated in German or some other foreign language."

This correspondence shows that officials at the Foreign Ministry and even the Reich Interior Ministry were more lenient in their treatment of "German Nationals of Jewish blood," than were the Fuehrer and the Reich Chancellor.

On March 16, 1938, Rabe and his family returned to Germany. He had spent some 30 years in China. On June 7, 1946, Rabe was denazified by the British Denazification Commission in Berlin. Their decision read:

"Despite your having been the deputy local leader in Nanking and although you did not resign from the NSDAP on your return to Germany, the commission has nevertheless decided to grant your appeal on the basis of your successful humanitarian work in China . . ."

In 1949, Rabe died in poverty in Berlin.

Jonathan Goldstein, *The Jews of China. Volume Two: A Sourcebook and Research Guide* (NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999); Price \$69.95; ISBN 0-7656-0105-2

[This is an eagerly awaited companion volume to *The Jews of China, Vol. One, Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, both of which are based on the 1992 Harvard Conference of "Jewish Diasporas in China."]

Contents: Volume Two

The Sino-Judaic Bibliographic Tradition: An Introduction and Overview . . . Jonathan Goldstein . . . vii

I. Traditional Chinese Awareness of Jews
A. Chinese Research on Jewish Diasporas in China . . . Xu Xin . . . 3

B. An Investigation of the Date of Jewish Settlement in Kaifeng . . . Wei Qianzhi. Translated by Roger Des Forges . . . 14

C. New Trends and Achievements in Chinese Research on Ancient Chinese Jews . . . Wang Yisha. Translated by Albert E. Dien . . . 26

D. An Overview of Chinese Impressions of and Attitudes toward Jews before 1949 . . . Xiao Xian . . . 33

II. Memoirs
A. Shanghai: A Woman's Eyewitness Report . . . Illo L. Heppner . . . 49

B. The Relations Between the Western European Refugees and the Shanghai Resident Jews: A Personal Memoir . . . Ernest G. Heppner . . . 57

C. Growing Up Jewish in Manchuria in the 1930s: Personal Vignettes . . . Alexander Menquex (pseud.) . . . 70

D. On Being a Jew in China: A Personal Memoir . . . Israel Epstein . . . 85

E. My Developmental Years in China . . . Interview with Yosef Tekoah, conducted by Steve Hochstadt . . . 98

²² 1957-58 report, p. 23

²³ 19556-56 report, p. 7

²⁴ 1956-57 report, pp 13-14

²⁵ 1955-56 report, pp 7-8

²⁶ 1957-58 report, p. 16

²⁷ 1958-59 report, p. 11

²⁸ 1958-59 report, p. 11

²⁹ 1958-59 report, p. 12

³⁰ Tang Pei-jia, *Jews in Shanghai*, Shanghai Sanlian Book Store, 1992, p. 274

³¹ Tess Johnston and Deke Erh, *God & Country, Western Religious Architecture in Old China*, Old China Hand Press, Hong Kong, 1996. It should be on page 124, but no page number is given in the book.

³² It should be on page 125

³³ 1958-59 report, p. 16

³⁴ T. Kaufman, *The Harbin Jewish Cemetery*, Bulletin, No. 337, Igud Yotzei Sin in Israel, p. 24

³⁵ Ibid., p. 25

³⁶ Letter from Xiao Tongyan to Mr. Kaufman, *Israel-China Voice of Friendship*, No. 17, p. 11.

Strangers in a Strange Land

by Debbie Slevin
excerpted from the *New Jersey Jewish Standard*, 4 June 1999

When the sound of breaking glass that was Kristallnacht reverberated throughout Jewish homes in Germany in 1939, a small number of Jews were fortunate enough to book passage via Genoa to Shanghai, China. Dr. Sigmund Tobias, now of Teaneck, NJ, was among them. In his recently published memoir, *A Strange Haven*, told from the view of a teenage boy being thrust into a new and vastly different culture, Tobias chronicles those years of displacement, and paints a picture of life for the approximately 16,000 Jews who weathered the storm of World War II in a foreign land.

For Tobias, a distinguished scholar in the educational psychology program of the graduate school of education at Fordham University, the book was a real departure. "It was my first attempt at something non-technical," he said. "The first version was written when I was a professor in China and returned [to the United States]. I wanted to capture what it reminded me of, what I saw."

Two years passed after the first draft before Tobias rewrote the book from the perspective of a 16-year-old, close to the age he was when his family left Shanghai. "When I did it this way," Tobias says of the manuscript, "I got a terrific response . . . I finished in close to a year," although, he laughingly admitted, he did many rewrites.

Raised as an Orthodox Jew, and educated in Shanghai at the Mirrer Yeshiva, a Polish school famous for talmudic scholarship that relocated to Shanghai, Tobias felt distanced from his upbringing as a result of the Holocaust. He writes: "When the awful news dribbled in, one bit more horrible than the next . . . my mother asked one of my teachers in the yeshiva, 'If there is a God in heaven, how could he allow . . . the most religious part of the Jewish community to be slaughtered like that?' My teacher answered, 'If you slap someone, you slap him in the face.' I did not understand that answer, and it did not comfort me or my parents . . . After the news about our family in Europe reached us, it was hard for me to think about God as merciful . . ."

Tobias went on to a distinguished career. He has been identified as among the 25 most published scholars in leading journals in educational psychology and educational research. He has served as a distinguished faculty fellow at the Naval Personnel Research and Development Center in San Diego, California and visiting professor at the Shanghai Institute of Education in China, among other posts. But it was a trip to Israel that rekindled his interest in his years spent in Shanghai.

"After speaking at an international meeting in Jerusalem, my wife and I visited the Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv," he writes. "In the lobby . . . we noticed an announcement for photographs and memorabilia dealing with the Jews in China . . . I realized that the exhibit featured our refugee community in Shanghai . . . I was stunned to recognize myself in the first row [of a photograph of a gym class]. When I was preparing to go to China as a visiting professor, I was flooded by recollections of not just our life in Shanghai, but also my childhood in Berlin, which had been dormant for some time . . . It was unsettling to suddenly be swept by life-like images dating back almost half a century."

The book is filled with poignant stories and images that capture the essence of those days of displacement. But it also tells the

story of a people determined to maintain their lives and traditions. Tobias, who became a yeshiva student only after his family moved to Hongkew, the area designated for the Jewish ghetto in Shanghai, recreates a world where food and clothing were scarce, disease was rampant, the cold was bone chilling, but the practice of Judaism survived. He writes of his bar mitzvah and the holiday celebrations. "On the day before Passover, . . . a huge metal cauldron [was] placed on a bunch of bricks in back of Oihel Moshe [the synagogue] . . . People took turns placing their pots and pans, tied together with sturdy ropes . . . into the cauldron . . . of boiling water." He describes in detail how the yeshiva students made matzohs by hand for the seders that took place both at the yeshiva and in the homes of the refugees.

Tobias' eyes glistened with tears as he haltingly recalled a story from the final days in Shanghai. "Between '48 and '49, the Israeli government sent three little boats [into Shanghai] . . . Any of the Jews who wanted to could get onto the boats and go to Israel . . . They were tiny little chartered boats . . . I have this vivid image of these three little ships sailing up the Yangtze River with Israeli flags." The last group of refugees left China between 1950 and 1951. The book tells how they were taken to the west coast of the United States, and traveled cross-country by rail, with the doors nailed shut, only to be put on a boat for Europe when they reached New York.

Tobias is proud of his fellow refugees and cites their accomplishments. Michael Blumenthal served as Jimmy Carter's secretary of the treasury and Peter Max is an artist with worldwide recognition.

He is also incredibly grateful to the Chinese people of Shanghai. "Although we were foreigners, the Chinese were kind. They were unaware of anti-Semitism and puzzled by why so many Jews lived in the poorest part of town . . . We were kept in a ghetto . . . but we were not treated badly," he said. In an address given during his stay as visiting professor in Shanghai, Tobias reflected, "Even though our life here during the Second World War was not easy, we realized how lucky we were to have found shelter in Shanghai when we heard about Auschwitz, Belsen and Treblinka . . . I am grateful to the Chinese people for letting us live among them peacefully during that terrible time."

Visas for Life: Dr. Feng Shan Ho and the Rescue of Austrian Jews

"I thought it only natural to feel compassion and to want to help."
Dr. Feng Shan Ho

This exhibit, on display from October 17 – December 20 at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, tells the little known story of diplomat rescuer Dr. Feng Shan Ho. Through his efforts at the Chinese Consulate in Vienna, Ho was responsible for saving thousands of Jews in Nazi-occupied Austria during 1938 and 1939. He did this without the authorization of permission of either the Chinese government, or the Chinese ambassador in Berlin.

It is only recently that this important diplomat rescuer has been publicly recognized. The exhibit *Visas for Life: Dr. Feng Shan Ho and the Rescue of Austrian Jews* will travel in April, 2000 to the United Nations in New York, where Ho will be honored for his humanitarian efforts.

Born on September 10, 1901, in rural Yiyang in Hunan Province, China, Ho was helped by the Norwegian Lutheran Mission and educated in their schools. In 1932, he earned a Ph.D. in political economics at the University of Munich, graduating Magna Cum Laude.

Dr. Feng Shan Ho was posted as First Secretary to the Chinese legation in Vienna in the spring of 1937. Following the Nazi occupation in 1938, all foreign embassies and legations in Austria were closed. Ho got orders to dissolve the legation and set up a consulate general. In May 1938, Ho was appointed the Chinese Consul General in Vienna.

Ho recalled: "Since the annexation of Austria by Germany, the persecution of the Jews by Hitler's 'devils' became increasingly fierce. There were American religious and charitable organizations which were urgently trying to save the Jews. I secretly kept in close contact with these organizations. I spared no effort in using any means possible. Innumerable Jews were thus saved."

Ho practiced a "liberal" visa policy, issuing visas to any and all who asked. Shang-

hai was under Japanese occupation and a visa was not required for entry. But a visa, as proof of destination, was necessary for Jews to be allowed to leave Austria. Word spread, and by September 1938 there were long lines of desperate refugees seeking lifesaving visas at the Chinese Consulate. For the next two years, the compassionate Chinese Consul General in Vienna issued visas to all Jews who requested them. By July 1939, transit to Shanghai via Poland and Russia was curtailed. In August, the Japanese began to close the doors of Shanghai to further Jewish emigration. In May 1940, Consul General Feng Shan Ho left Vienna. There was little more that he could do.

In 1973, after four decades in the diplomatic service, Feng Shan Ho retired. He devoted himself to writing, to his Church and community. In 1990, Ho wrote his memoirs, "Forty years of My Diplomatic Life." On September 28, 1997, he died at his home.

Lithuania Honors a Holocaust Rescuer

(continued from page 1)

Zwartendijk's work almost immediately entailed the even more dangerous task of rescuing Jews. In July 1940 Pessla Lewin, a former Dutch citizen who was now a Polish refugee living in Lithuania with her husband Isaac and son Nathan, took the gamble of writing to De Decker, who was still the Dutch ambassador. She requested authorization to emigrate to the Dutch West Indies. She learned that no visa was required but that she would need a landing permit from the local governor. Such permits were only rarely issued. Nevertheless the ambassador tried to help by inscribing in her Polish passport, in French, the statement that "for the admission of aliens to Surinam, Curaçao, and other Dutch possessions in the Americas, an entry visa is not required." This stipulation, dated July 11, 1940, came to be known as a "Curaçao visa." It gave the impression of being as good as a visa since it omitted the key phrase that a landing permit was required. On July 22, Isaac Lewin approached Zwartendijk in Kovno. According to Lewin, Zwartendijk, "after seeing what De Decker had done, copied (the

Curaçao visa) into my Lithuanian safe-conduct pass."² Armed with this documentation, Pessla and Isaac Lewin, plus her mother and brother who were still Dutch citizens, went to the Soviet and Japanese consuls in Kovno and were routinely issued seven-to-fifteen-day transit visas allowing them to pass through each of those countries. The Japanese consul was Sugihara Chiune, who has been featured in movies and is far better known than Zwartendijk. Without Zwartendijk's fictitious destination visas, however, neither Sugihara nor his Soviet counterpart would have been able to issue one single transit visa through their respective territories.

Unaware of the Lewins' experience, Nathan Gutwirth, a legitimate Dutch citizen then residing in Telz (Telsiai), Lithuania, asked Zwartendijk on July 24 if several of his fellow students, non-Dutch citizens, could accompany him to Curaçao. Zwartendijk volunteered to help, providing the same notation he had given the Lewin's. Gutwirth conveyed this information to Polish Zionist leader, and later Israeli Minister of Religious Affairs, Zorach Warhaftig. Warhaftig made inquiry of Zwartendijk, who let it be known that he was willing to give a "Curaçao visa" to anyone who asked.

Thus, with Zwartendijk's help, the Lewins' single-family trip rapidly became a mass exodus of beleaguered Jews. Within hours, dozens of petitioners were lined up at Zwartendijk's Philips office, which is today part of the Red Cross hospital on Kovno's main downtown thoroughfare. Zwartendijk originally had received De Decker's concurrence to issue phony visas only for a few of Gutwirth's friends. But Zwartendijk went on to write approximately 1,300 visas by hand between July 24 and 27 and another 1,050 with the help of a rubber stamp between July 29 and August 3, when the Soviets took over Zwartendijk's office, obligating him and his family to return to Holland. The highest known visa number is 2,345, issued to Elisasz Kupinski and his family.

In reality, not a single Jew showed up in Curaçao. This is not surprising because Zwartendijk had made it clear to the recipients of his "Curaçao visas" that this notation would not allow them entry. They understood very well that the "Curaçao

visas" were a ruse to get out of the U.S.S.R. and, they hoped, as far as Japan, where they could try their luck at various consulates to get visas for other countries. About half of the roughly 2,200 refugees who reached Japan with Zwartendijk's visas succeeded in moving on to the United States, Palestine, and other final destinations.³ Those not so fortunate were shipped by the Japanese government to Shanghai, the only place on earth just prior to the Holocaust where a Jew, or anyone else, could legally walk ashore without any documentation whatsoever.⁴ Within a year of the Kovno exodus Lithuania was overrun by the Nazis. The remaining Jews of Lithuania were almost entirely annihilated. The thousands of Jews who escaped with the help of visas from Zwartendijk would almost certainly have been murdered had they remained in Lithuania.

When Zwartendijk and his family returned to Nazi-occupied Holland in 1940, he was interrogated by the Gestapo about another matter but miraculously managed to avoid arrest. The only explanation for this seems to be bureaucratic inefficiency. Had information on Zwartendijk's Kovno activities become available to the Gestapo in Holland, he would have been in deep trouble, not only as a member of a resistance organization but, even more seriously, as the savior of thousands of Jews.

Zwartendijk's Motivation

What motivated a Dutch businessman with a wife and three children to almost instinctively join a resistance organization and then partake in a dangerous scheme to rescue Jews? Because of the necessity for Zwartendijk to destroy all his consular files, there are few documents that can cast light on this question. One clue emerges in a letter from Zwartendijk in Kovno back to Philips headquarters in Eindhoven in Nazi-occupied Netherlands. Zwartendijk speaks obliquely of trying to help folk who were "in de puree," a Dutch expression carrying the connotation of people "in hot water" or literally "in the soup." Even this reference, however, casts little light on the motivation behind Zwartendijk's altruism.⁵

One possible motivation would be religious faith. The Calvinist citizens of Le Chambon sur Lignon, almost in the

shadow of Vichy, the capital of pro-Nazi France, sheltered many thousands of Jews throughout the war due to a deeply held Calvinist faith and first-hand historical acquaintance with religious intolerance. Was Zwartendijk also motivated by that belief system? According to his oldest son, who as a child witnessed the events in Kovno, that was not the case. That son wrote on December 29, 1998:

My father was not religious in the sense of participating in religious activities or going to church. His parents had been strong Protestants, included toward the socially liberal side. He himself never felt comfortable with organized religion and never went to church. I think he could be described as a "humanist seeker" in his beliefs. In his younger years he was greatly interested in Eastern religions, judging from the books he owned, as well as in the Sufis, the Rosicrucians, and various other groups with mystical overtones. But he was never a member of such a group that I know of. He just picked his own path through their literature.

I believe what guided him in Kaunas was a set of strong personal convictions about what for him was right and what wasn't. He always stuck to his own code without hesitation or compromise, even if that occasionally got him into trouble. But he did not have the slightest inclination to lecture anybody about his values, nor even to discuss them. He just did what he felt he ought to do, period. No discussion or commentary called for, before or after.⁶

Perhaps the most telling evidence of Zwartendijk's selflessness is that between 1945 and his death in 1976 he never spoke about or made any attempt to publicize or glorify his role. Until the year he died he still did not know how many people he aided had actually made it out. Conversely, most of those whom he rescued did not know his name and referred to him sobriquets such as "Mr. Philips Radio" or simply as "the angel of Curaçao." Some thought "Philips Radio" was his actual name. In 1976, through the efforts of Shanghai survivor Ernest G. Heppner and others, Zwartendijk was finally located. Several days before his death he was notified by historian David Kranzler of the

Points East

magnitude of his rescue mission. On October 6, 1997, through the efforts of Heppner, Kranzler, Israeli diplomat Moshe Yegar, and others, Zwartendijk was finally recognized as "'righteous among the Nations" by Yad Vashem, the State of Israel's official Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority.⁷

Finally Lithuania, the site of Zwartendijk's rescue mission, also has chosen to commemorate his work. On June 4, 1999, on the grounds of the Jewish State Museum in Vilna (Vilnius), the present-day capital of Lithuania, three stone monuments were dedicated in his memory. They bore



Yiddish (left) and Lithuanian (right) language memorial stones
[Credit: Jonathan Goldstein]

Lithuanian, Yiddish, and English inscriptions acknowledging his work. Emanuelis Zingeris, chairman of the Lithuanian Parliament's Committee on Human Rights, organized and conducted the ceremony. Other participants included Dalia Kuodyte, director of Lithuania's Genocide and Resistance Research Centre; Lithuanian presidential advisor Julius Šmulkyšty; Vilna City Councilman Alexandras Rutenbergas; Sholom Krinsky, Lithuania's only rabbi; and the Dutch and Israeli Ambassadors to the Baltic states, Lodewijk van Ulden and Oded Ben-Hur. In addition to tributes to Zwartendijk given by the aforementioned Lithuanian officials and foreign ambassadors, his oldest son, Jan, sent the following message which was read at the dedication ceremony in English and translated into Yiddish for the benefit of the handful of Jewish Holocaust survivors present:

To my thinking, this is an occasion for the Jewish community to commemorate my father's role and to celebrate the fortunate effect he had on the lives of so many. As family members we can only be appreciative observers of the event which you set in motion. Some time,

Points East

the scheme showed remarkable tact and consideration in providing a satisfactory new site, divided from adjacent plots by a strip three meters wide, in undertaking the transfer and re-burial of the remains strictly in accordance with Jewish religious laws (no work was done on the Sabbath).²⁵ The final re-erection of 559 monuments in the new cemetery was completed in November 1957. The final touches, to lay a central road, plant 170 saplings, coat the main iron gate and the side gate, and oil-paint the windows and doors of the chapel, were effected to give the cemetery an orderly appearance. The address of the new cemetery site is Chin Lin Chwang.²⁶ I have no further information about the fate of the cemetery.

In Shanghai, the Council was first informed by the authorities that no further burial should be effected in any of the Jewish cemeteries which were all in the city district. A separate plot in a public cemetery was allotted to the Council for future burials. Then, the Council was asked to transfer the four Jewish cemeteries in Shanghai to a new site some 15 km. from the city limit in 1958. The first cemetery to be removed was the Wei-ming Lu (ex Baikai Road) Cemetery, founded in 1917. This was the biggest Jewish cemetery in Shanghai, consisting of 1,692 graves. The dismantling of monuments and exhumation of remains started on September 26, 1958 and was completed on November 10, 1958. The remains were then transferred to the new site and re-interment of the same was completed on December 3, 1958. Because of the colossal size of most of the monuments, the removal of the stones to the new cemetery took several months. By the end of June 1959, about 500 monuments were re-erected.²⁷ The second cemetery to be relocated was the Ting-hai-kong Lu (ex Point Road) Cemetery, founded in 1940 for the use of Central European refugees during world War II. This consisted of 834 graves. Dismantling of monuments and exhumation of remains started on November 2, 1958 and were completed on November 12. Re-burial in the new cemetery was completed in five days, from November 15-20. The transfer of monuments took a little more than a month, having started on December 7, 1958 and ended on January 11, 1959. Re-erection of monuments of all 834 graves was completed on April 12, 1959.²⁸ The removal of the other two cemeteries, the Hwang-pe Lu (ex Mohawh Road) Cemetery, founded in 1862, consisting of 304 graves, and the Fah-yuan Lu (ex Columbia Road) Cemetery, founded in 1941, consist-

ing of 873 graves, had not yet commenced by June 1959. Most likely, they were removed in 1960's after the Council was liquidated.

According to the Report, "The allotted land for the new Jewish cemetery is big enough to hold the graves from all the four Jewish cemeteries. After all the graves are centralized in the new cemetery and re-erection of monuments completed, a hedge will be made around the boundaries of the new cemetery, while trees will be planted along the main roads and cross-paths."²⁹ I have no idea if this plan was ever fulfilled. The address of the new site of the cemetery is Gi'an Public Cemetery, Wei-jia-jiao, Western outskirts of Shanghai.³⁰ The report itself does not provide the exact address of the new site of the cemetery. Tess Johnston, an old China hand, found some stones of Jewish graves in 1996. She described them: "Most are in fragments, a few are complete. Some serve as a courtyard's paving stones, some are scattered in a field. No one knows where the bodies are, as the Jewish cemeteries (and all other foreign ones) were long ago destroyed. We have no idea how these heavy stones wound up in the countryside."³¹

Some samples of writing on those stones areas follows:

Solomon Ruben Ninny born in Hong Kong 29 November 1866, departed this life in Shanghai 27 November 1922 (text also in Hebrew with Star of David on the stone); Isaac Samuel Perry departed this life on 5th ADAR II 5687, March 9, 1927 (text also in Hebrew with Star of David on the stone); Madaleine, wife of E. H. Elias, departed this life on July 13, 1925; Emma Gould, fell asleep 19 June 1916; Gregory Pisarevsky 16 November 1939, 39 years (text also in Hebrew)³²

The Harbin Jewish Community was asked to move the Jewish cemetery to a new site some 17 km. from the old cemetery district. Eight hundred and fifty four graves were transferred to the new cemetery with the sympathetic assistance of the local government. During the transfer, religious rites were observed. A small house was built on the new cemetery for religious requirements. Of the 44 graves, 130 monuments were re-erected according to the report. It was hoped that the remaining work would be completed in 1959.³³ Obviously, the work was continued.

According to a report by Teddy Kaufman, President of the Israel-China Friendship Association and a son of the leader of the Harbin Jewish Community, Dr. Abraham Kaufman, the new cemetery is located 46 km. away from the city. Six hundred monuments and gravestones were found erected in the new cemetery in 1994 when he visited there. According to his account, there are 876 graves in the new Jewish cemetery now. Eight hundred fifty-three graves had been transferred from the old Jewish cemetery. Twenty-three graves had appeared since 1958, the year of the transfer, till November 20, 1965.³⁴ Among those who were buried there were Zalman ben Leib Hashkel, the first Harbin rabbi and Rabbi Gaon Aharon Moshe ben Shmuel Kiselev, the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish communities of the Far East.³⁵ In the Fall of 1996, the new fence and gate of the Harbin Jewish Cemetery were completed.³⁶ It is perhaps the only completed Jewish cemetery in today's China.

¹ 1955-56 report, p. 9

² Ibid., p. 3

³ 1958-59 report, p. 2

⁴ Annual Report of the Council of the Jewish Community of July 1955-July 1956, Hoover Institution Archives, p. 11

⁵ Ibid., p. 15

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ 1958-59 report, p. 19

⁸ Boris Bresler, *Harbin Jewish Community (1898-1958)*, Bulletin, No. 337, Igud Yotzei Sin in Israel, p. 15

⁹ 1955-56 report, p. 5

¹⁰ 1955-56 report, p. 2

¹¹ 1957-58 report, p. 15

¹² 1955-56 report, pp 6-7

¹³ Ibid., p. 7

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ 1956-56 report, p. 9

¹⁶ 1956-57 report, p. 5

¹⁷ 1958-59 report, p. 17

¹⁸ 1958-59 report, p. 16

¹⁹ 1955-56 report, p. 9

²⁰ T. Kaufman, p. 24

²¹ 1957-58 report, p. 18

(from 1956 on)
 N. L. Schifrin.....Treasurer
 (died in 1957)
 E. S. Haridon.....Treasurer
 G. Raymond.....Member

Jews in Harbin

The Harbin Jewish Community (HEDO) was the official Jewish organization in Harbin and its adjacent areas such as Dalian, and Hailer. Most Jews were originally from Russia. The HEDO was well organized with the able administration. In the 1950's, it continued to carry on many charitable works independently though it had a close relation with the Council of the Jewish Community in Shanghai.

The Shelter House in Harbin housed inmates. Free meals were distributed to the inmates and to dependents of the community. Low-priced meals were served in the Jewish dining room to people with small means. Medical care was granted to the needy. Doctors were called to attend the sick regularly.

Before their departure, indigent migrants, irrespective of their destinations, were provided with clothing and monetary assistance. The HEDO also took care of the Jewish cemetery in Harbin. The 1958-59 committee consisted of seven members:

S. N. KanerChairman
 A. S. Ossinovsky.....Treasurer
 Z. L. Agranovsky.....Secretary
 B. A. Abkin.....Member
 S. I. Topaz.....Member
 L. V. Zygalnitzky.....Member¹⁷

The Jewish population in Harbin District was 153 by the end of June 1959, then the largest Jewish community in China. The Harbin Jewish Community was the only one which was able to keep its synagogue building by the end of 1950's. Daily services continued to be held in the synagogue with large attendance for the Sabbath and holidays prayers by 1959.¹⁸ Children's parties on Purim and Hanukkah were still organized.¹⁹ The Jewish Community of Harbin stopped functioning on November 20, 1965,²⁰ which marked the official end of the 100-year-old community.

Jews in Tientsin

The Tientsin Jewish Community was always the smallest among the three major

Jewish communities in China because of its location. In the 1930's the Jewish population reached more than 2,000, the highest in history. However, Jews in Tientsin organized earlier.

The Tientsin Hebrew Association, founded in 1904, served all Jews in the city and looked after Jews in nearby areas such as Tzingtao and Beijing. In the mid-1950's, the Jewish population dropped to 130. By June 30, 1958, there were 32 Jews remaining including children. Due to the shrinking population and difficult financial status, the Association decided to sell its synagogue building in 1955. The deal was closed in May 1955. With the anticipated departure of all Jews in the Tientsin District, the liquidation of the Tientsin Hebrew Association was suggested early in 1957. On September 27, 1957, application to close down the Association was filed with the local authorities and a notice published in the Tientsin newspaper. The liquidation was completed in January 1958. This ended a benevolent Association which had existed for over half a century.²¹ Before the final close of the Association, one Sefer Torah was sent to Israel and useful archives were sent to the Council in Shanghai for safe keeping and future reference. The welfare of the remaining Jews was taken over by the Council.

Conclusion

The remaining Jews in China, through their Councils, had very close ties with world Jewry. Jewish organizations such as the American Joint Distribution Committee, the United Hias Service, and Immigration Office in Israel, just to name a few, extended facilities and assistance to them though they no longer maintained offices in China. The prompt and sympathetic response to the Council's needs from the AJDC was instrumental in the maintenance of the manifold works of the Council. Individual Jews such as Lord Horace Kadoorie and his family rendered invaluable services to the Jews in China during this period.

The benevolent and charitable works done by such Jewish organizations and individuals comforted the lives of those remaining. The Chinese people and the Chinese government were certainly hospitable to the Jews in China and rendered necessary assistance towards the work of the Council. In a quotation from the Council's report, "It must be mentioned that the Chi-

nese people and the Chinese People's government have been both generous and kind to the Jewish residents and the Jewish Communal Associations in China. Special consideration and respect have been consistently shown to our religious requirements by the authorities. This Council takes pleasure to place on record its sincere gratitude to this great nation."²²

The history of Jewish diaspora in modern China, which lasted for about 100 years, almost came to a complete halt by the end of 1950's. Once the most dynamic Jewish community in Far East, it was no longer active. By 1966, when China started its Cultural Revolution, only a few elderly Jews remained and eventually died in China.

Issue of the Jewish Cemeteries

Over 5,000 Jews who died in China were buried in the Jewish cemeteries of Shanghai, Tientsin, and Harbin in about 100 years. Many people are concerned about the fate of those burial grounds. From the reports, I got first hand information concerning the issue in question.

Before the mid-1950s, all Jewish cemeteries in Shanghai, Tientsin, and Harbin were intact. The Jewish Community in each city took a good care of them. "All graves and memorial stones are constantly kept in good condition."²³ However, the metropolitan growth and development of those cities necessitated the removal of the Jewish cemeteries to new sites. The removal thus became inevitable.

Tientsin was the first city to make such a request. Agreement between the Jewish community and local government agency for transfer of the Jewish cemetery and reburial of the remains was reached in June 1956. The removal of the 567 graves started on July 25, 1956 and was completed on September 13, 1956. Exhumation and the subsequent re-interment were done in the presence of 10 Jews, so besides the 6 members of "Hevra-Kadisho" who were always present, other members of the community were invited to form a "Minyon," and remained there from dawn until sunset. A new Chapel was erected at government expense at the new site, and consecrated with appropriate ceremony on November 25, 1956 in the presence of 35 members of the Tientsin Community.²⁴ According to the report, the government agency responsible for the realization of

my brother and sister and I will go to Lithuania together and admire your handiwork.⁸

¹ Virtually the complete official record of Philips' presence in Lithuania in 1939-40 has been preserved in Lithuania's Central State Archives in Vilna. These are mainly finance ministry documents pertaining to Philips-Lithuania. They bear original tax stamps and photos of Zwartendijk and his wife. I am grateful to archives Director Riorardas Cipas and Deputy Director Grazine Sluckaite for making these documents available to me. The Kaunas Regional Archives, Juozas Rimkus, Director, also contains some commercial and finance ministry documents from 1923-41 and old telephone books from the years 1939-40.

² Isaac Lewin describes the episode at length in his memoir *Remembering Days of Old: Historical Essays* (New York: Research Institute of Religious Jewry, 1994), pp. 171-76.

³ Dutch governor Kasteel, of Curaçao and Surinam in 1942, later became ambassador to Israel. When asked by Zorach Warhaftig if he would have accorded the phony visa holders asylum had any of them actually reached Curaçao, Kasteel replied, according to Warhaftig, that he "would have forced the ship back into mid-ocean, as had the American and Cuban authorities in the case of the *St. Louis*." Zorach Warhaftig, *Refugee and Survivor: Rescue Efforts During the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1998), pp. 104-05.

⁴ Until 1941, when the Japanese slammed the gates of Shanghai shut, having earlier kept them open, this city was the only place on earth where anyone could simply walk ashore. For eyewitness testimony, see Ernest G. Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), p. 40.

⁵ Excerpts of letter from J. Zwartendijk, Kaunas, To Philips head office, Eindhoven, July 5, 1940, courtesy Jan Zwartendyk. Zwartendijk's eldest son, Jan, has shortened his name to Zwartendyk.

⁶ e-mail: Jan Zwartendyk to the author, December 29, 1998, courtesy Jan Zwartendyk.

⁷ On the efforts of Heppner, Kranzler, and others, see: letters from J. Zwartendyk and Ernest G. Heppner in the *Jewish Post and Opinion*, (Indianapolis), April 30, 1976, p. 2; Ed Stattman, "Japanese granted Dutchman denied laurels for saving Jews," *Jewish Post and Opinion*, June 21, 1995, p. NAT 4; Ed Stattman, "Dutchman to be honored for 1940 rescues," *Jewish Post and Opinion*, May 8, 1996, p. NAT 2; Letter: Mordechai Paldiel, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, to Jan Zwartendyk, State College, PA, October 7, 1997, copy to author; and Phyllis Braun, "Yad Vashem gives Righteous Gentile His Due," *Arizona Jewish Post* (Tucson), May 1, 1998, pp. 1, 8.

⁸ e-mail: Jan Zwartendyk to the author, June 2, 1999.

* [Copyright Jonathan Goldstein 1999. Used here with the author's permission. His books include *The Jews of China and China and Israel, 1948-98*, both published in 1999. The State of Georgia Commission on the Holocaust and the Sino-Judaic Institute underwrote the basic research for this article, which was completed while the author was Visiting Scholar at the Oxford (Eng.) Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.]

Changing Hearts and Minds

(continued from page 1)

edge about Jews and Judaism was higher than in the past although it was still limited. We discovered that their English language proficiency was also higher this time though a few of the participants were still weak in vocabulary and oral communication.

Leaders

While the first workshop was led by two scholars — Jeffrey Schein, Professor at the Cleveland College of Jewish Studies, and Jerry Kutnick, Associate Professor of History and Jewish Thought and Director of the Division of Continuing Education at Gratz College — this time we had a distinguished faculty of three. A husband and wife supplemented each other's work. Stanley J. Schachter, Senior Rabbi of B'nai Jeshurun Congregation, Pepper Pike, Ohio, and Chairman of the Cleveland Congregational Plenum, was joined by his wife Lifsa Schachter, Professor and Director of the Center for Jewish Education at the Cleveland College of Jewish Studies, and Samuel Heilman, Professor and Chair of Jewish studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Prof. Heilman taught a Jewish history course while the Schachters co-taught a course of Jewish culture. These courses complemented each other in examining Jewish history and culture from varied viewpoints. The history course covered topics such as the birth of the Jewish people, exile and Diaspora, from temple cult to the people of the book, Ashkenazim and Sephardim, the modern era, migration, and modern Zionism and the rise of Israel. The intention was to give participants a general overview of Jewish history.

The Jewish culture course provided a window into the evolving traditions of Judaism. It was organized around two main units. The first, instructed by Lifsa Schachter, explored the religious way of life, as it developed both historically and conceptually, in order to reveal the core ideas, values, and goals of Judaism. The second unit, conducted by Rabbi Schachter, focused on the foundation texts that define and shape Judaism. Beginning with the written and oral Torahs, these documents also included later texts that

became part of the classical traditions of Judaism. The culture course also referred to the interaction between Judaism and other aspects of the Western tradition and to the ways in which Judaism and Christianity differ.

Methodology

With the goal of the workshop in mind, the instructors had total freedom in subject and methodology, and spent time in intensive preparation. Before coming to China, each instructor worked out a detailed syllabus and prepared a reading anthology, which was not only used during the seminar but also was given to the participants for further reading and to facilitate their own teaching.

Six hours per day were devoted to instruction: three for history and three for culture. The history class was taught on topics rather than on strict lineage, giving a general background and an all-around picture of each issue. The culture class was equipped with video tapes, overhead projector, and Jewish artifacts, and with various activities such as setting up Passover seder, blowing shofar, binding teffilin, Hebrew reading and Jewish singing. The intention was to provide the participants with as tangible and concrete knowledge of Jewish culture as possible. Some discussion sessions were structured to provide feedback.

To assist in learning Hebrew, an Ulpan (Hebrew class) was set up in the evening, three times a week. This Ulpan made it possible for the participants to acquire knowledge of the basic Hebrew vocabulary which appears regularly in Judaic studies. Voluntary participation evening programs also included viewing over a dozen video tapes which supplemented the formal classes. Films from Jewish history to Jewish life, from Holocaust to Middle-East conflicts were shown. These not only strengthened the regular teaching, but also enriched the cultural knowledge of the participants.

Based on the needs of the participants, due attention was given to Israeli affairs, especially to life in the state of Israel, the middle-east conflicts, and the peace process. Besides lectures by our instructors, the organizer invited Joseph Kostiner, an Israeli Middle-East expert from The Moshe

Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies and the Department of Middle Eastern and African Studies of Tel-Aviv University, to give a special talk on the Middle-East peace process: background and developments. His lecture provided an overall view of the peace process and was highly appreciated by the participants. Fortunately, Kostiner was touring China, giving similar talks at a number of Chinese institutions in Beijing and Shanghai.

Various activities—including outings and weekend tours—were organized to bond instructors and participants.

The Consulate General of Israel in Shanghai was very supportive. Vice Consul Shlomi Kofman, participated in the opening session and lectured at the workshop. He was kind enough to bring and freely distribute a number of materials on Israel and Zionism and video tapes to be viewed by all. These many activities increased interest in and understanding of Israeli issues.

This session was better prepared with teaching materials than the earlier seminar had been. A number of books in Chinese had been ordered and distributed free among the participants. They included the Chinese edition of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, *Anti-Semitism: How and Why*, and *Cactus in the Desert-Sketch of the Jews*. The Sino-Judaic Institute in the U.S. generously covered the cost of those books.

Survey of the Workshop

In order to access effectiveness of the workshop, a final survey was conducted.

According to this survey, most participants came with little knowledge of Jewish history and culture. What they did know was very abstract or stereotyped concepts about Jews and Judaism, things they heard from the Bible or Holocaust. Few had ever heard Jewish classic works such as *Mishna*, *Talmud*, *Midrash*, or commentaries. One participant said that he had known "not much about Jews and their history" before attending the workshop even though he had been to Israel for more than a year as an interpreter for a Chinese company.

The participants stated how pleased they were that the workshop did a good job and systematically provided a great opportunity

for them to learn about Jewish history, Judaism, culture, customs, and people. After a three-week training period, they have some concrete concepts about Jews, the dynamic aspects of Judaism, Jewish experiences throughout history, and Jewish contributions to the world civilization in general and to the Western civilization in particular.

When asked to list some improvements or changes they would make in the program, the participants answered that they have had a deeper understanding of topics such as: who Jews are, what makes Jewish history unique, meaning and inspiration of Judaism, the Jewish viewpoints, Jewish contribution to the world, the social consciousness and justice of the Jewish people, causes of anti-Semitism and persecutions, the meaning of Zionism, Jewish values, meaning of Jewish holidays, continuity and developments of Jewish history and culture, etc. Those various answers not only reflect different needs and perspectives of the participants but also show the wide ranges the workshop covered.

After these three weeks, many have had their appetites whetted and state that they want to learn more about Jews and their heritage and to deepen their understanding on Jewish history and culture.

Obviously, the three-week workshop provided a rare and unique opportunity for Chinese scholars to learn about Jewish history and culture without going abroad. To absorb information about Judaism from celebrated and experienced Jewish professors is special. Jewish and Chinese scholars spending three weeks together offered Chinese scholars a chance to have direct, concrete contacts with Jewish culture. It was the first time for many participants to meet Jews in person and have direct contacts with them. In their words, they not only learned about Jewish history and culture, but also "touched and tasted Jewish life."

The participants wish that the organizers would keep in touch with them after the workshop and assist them in their teaching and research by providing materials, some basic Jewish books, and further learning opportunities.

LUIS DE ALMEIDA—JEW, MERCHANT, JESUIT, AND DOCTOR

by Alfred Luk
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In 1492, when Spain was in the yoke of the Spanish Inquisition, no less than half of the population of Spanish Jews took refuge in Portugal. Many of them at the time harbored the thought of taking up temporary residency in Portugal, whose language and culture resembled closely that of their native land, and they had the illusion that there would be a reversal of the decree within their life time.

Their hopes were shattered when, five years later, Portugal under Dom Manoel reversed an earlier order protecting the resident Spanish Jews and native Portuguese Jews. From that point, all Jews were compelled to leave Portugal within ten months. Unfortunately the ships assigned to carry them to other destinations were deliberately limited to a small number, so that only pathetically few Jewish families were evacuated.

When the deadline for their departure passed, many panic-stricken Portuguese and Spanish Jews had all their possessions and properties confiscated. Their rights as residents and citizens of Portugal were forfeited. Their belongings became the property of the royal family of Portugal unless they were willing to convert to Christianity.

Rather than facing the humiliation of being forced into abandoning the faith of their forefathers, some chose to commit suicide along with their loved ones. Others felt that suicide would completely annihilate their entire family tree. Chief among their concerns was the desire to place their offspring out of harm's way, and so they swallowed the bitter pill of conversion.

The environment in Portugal in which these Marranos or converted Jews found themselves was very oppressive. At the same time, able young men in Portugal were in great demand as the discoveries expanded the boundaries of the Portuguese empire. Portugal's small population was becoming greatly burdened by the need

Over 90 percent of them were of Russian origin. Since both the USSR and China were communist countries, it would make no difference for them to remain in China. On the other hand, formal Russian subjects presently holding Soviet passports needed clearance from the Soviet Citizens Association and the Soviet Consulate General. "This particular clearance was difficult to obtain in the north of China, particularly in Harbin. After an exit permit was granted, it was often canceled one or two days before the intended departure date. No reason was given for such action, and the person, having liquidated his business and personal affairs, was left to sit and meditate until his final fate was decided some months later."⁸

However, most of these people left China after the relations between the USSR and China became hostile in the early 1960's. Unfortunately, no official documents to tell the exact number of those departing were available.

The shrinking of the community size, inevitably interfered with the religious and cultural life of the people. Though religious life continued, it became difficult for the Jews to maintain the cost of the synagogues. The Tientsin Jewry was the first to sell their synagogue building in order to dispense the Community running cost and relief.⁹ The Shanghai Jewish Community sold its last synagogue building in 1956 for the same reason. However, the religious life did not stop. The Shanghai Jewish Center, originally the Shelter House, served as the house of prayer for the Jews in Shanghai. Synagogue services were maintained on Sabbaths, holidays and other important days at the end of 1950's. Free matzot was baked and distributed to all prior to Pesach.

Jewish cultural activities, such as publishing newspapers, and organizing performances, halted. The Shanghai Jewish Club, (which was first established in 1930's and served as one of culture centers for Shanghai Jewry) closed its doors on December 31, 1955. Over 30,000 selected books from the Club's library were shipped to the Ministry for Education and Culture in Israel as a gift. However, a reading and recreation room was created in the Shelter House, making newspapers, magazines and remaining books accessible to every Jew in Shanghai.

Tasks of the Council of the Jewish Community

The major daily task of the Council was to look after the welfare and relief of the remaining Jews. The Council distributed monthly cast grants, provided free meals, paid coal-allowance during the cold season to needy cases, ran a shelter house, and maintained a camp for refugees. The Council also afforded educational facilities for the remaining Jewish children. Another task of the Council was to provide assistance for migrants: to get waivers to Israel from the Jewish Agency for all without regard to age and financial status, to obtain exit permits from Chinese authorities, and provided necessary funding for migrants before their departure.

The Council was also in charge of issuing "Ghetto Letters" and "Death Certificates" for Central European Jews who had been confined in Shanghai's Restricted Area during 1943-1945 under Japanese occupation and who claimed restitution from the relevant German and Austrian governments and municipalities. Those documents were issued by hundreds, annually.

Jews in Shanghai

The Shanghai Jewish Community, once the most dynamic and prosperous in China, shrank dramatically. Most refugees who came to the city between 1937-41 left because they did not originally intend to stay in China but had no other alternatives at the time. Well-established Jewish families in the city, such as the Sassoons, the Kadoories, had transferred their business elsewhere. The Sassoons established business in Bahamas. The Kadoories made Hong Kong a permanent residence and built up its enterprises there.

In the mid-1950s, the Jewish population was further reduced to about 150, less than .5 percent of the population in 1945. More than half of those remaining Jews were from Russia, and at that historical moment, these preferred not to return. The ever-worsening financial situation of the Jews in Shanghai made many of them depend for their livelihood on relief from the Council. For the first time, many Jewish organizations found it hard to meet these expectations. They had reached the end of their resources and were closing down. One example is the Medical Trust Fund in Shanghai which discontinued operation and handed the balance of its cash reserves

to the Council in January 1956. The Council began to use the services of governmental clinics for its members in 1956.¹⁰

By July 1956, the Ashkenazi and the Sephardic Communal Associations merged and transferred the management of their properties and internal affairs to the Council's office. The unification of all Jewish organizations in Shanghai, originally decided upon in 1953, was fulfilled. The Sephardic Association made donations aggregating to 43,000 yuan to the relief fund of the Council in July 1956.¹¹

The New Synagogue on Xiaong Yang Road, which was built in 1941, served as the only operating synagogue in Shanghai for years. However, because "the expense of maintaining the large premises in the face of dwindling attendance and growing financial need among the local Jewish population could no longer be justified,"¹² it was decided to dispose of the synagogue building. The transaction was concluded in July 1956, and the buyer was the House and Land Control Bureau of the Chinese People's Government which offered a high price.¹³ Several Torah Scrolls and a quantity of religious books owned by the local community were shipped to the Ministry for Religion of Israel as a gift.¹⁴

However, religious services continued on Sabbath and holidays in the prayer hall established at the Jewish Center after the disposal of the synagogue building. Matzot were prepared in accordance with Jewish rituals and distributed free of charge to all needy Jews in Shanghai. They even sent matzot (in hundred pound lots) by train for the remaining Jews in Tientsin prior to Passover.¹⁵ Jewish education was not neglected. A Hebrew class was inaugurated in 1956 to teach all those who so desired the fundamentals and beginnings of Hebrew.¹⁶

In face of the reduced number of Shanghai Jewry, the work of the Council devolved upon a few members. The Council staff consisted mainly of Chinese in those years.

The major figures of the Council in the late 1950s were as follows:

R. D. Abraham.....Chairman (resigned in 1956 prior to his departure from Shanghai)
Ezekiel Abraham.....Treasurer (resigned and left Shanghai in 1957)
P. I. Yudavich.....Chairman (from 1956 on)

Jewish Life in the Second Half of the 1950's in China

by Xu Xin

The Jewish Diaspora in modern China started in the second half of the 19th century when China was forced to open its doors to Western powers. Tientsin (now spelled as Tianjin), Harbin, and Hong Kong became major harbors for Jews. More than 40,000 Jews, worldwide, came to China for a safe haven or for business.

Sephardic Jews originally from Baghdad and Bombay established businesses in Shanghai in the second half of the 19th century and had built up a very prosperous Jewish community by the beginning of the 20th century.

Ashkenazi Jews from Russia and other Eastern European countries arrived in Harbin after the pogroms and 1917 Revolution at the beginning of the century. Their numbers grew so quickly that they reached around 12,000 by the year 1920, making the Jewish community in Harbin the largest in the Far East at the time.

During the Holocaust, about 20,000 European Jewish refugees swarmed Shanghai. China became a destination for thousands of Jewish refugees from countries under Nazi rule. After W.W.II, especially after the Communists took power in 1949, most Jews left China. However, a few thousand remained and lived in Chinese cities for another 10 years before their final departure.

What was the situation for those who remained?

In 1998, I had an opportunity to conduct research in the U.S. At the Hoover Institution archives, I uncovered valuable documents about Jewish life in Shanghai, Tientsin, and Harbin. This information enriches our knowledge about the disappearance of Jews in China during the late 1950's and is the basis for this article tracing Jewish life in China 1956 to 1959.

Over-All View

The second half of the 1950's was a special time in Jewish/Chinese history. It was an end rather than a continuation of a specific life. Radical changes within Chinese society made it difficult for Jews to lead meaningful lives or to build up their businesses in China. Jews who had entered

China at different historical times and for varied purposes agreed that it was time to leave. And so they departed by thousands annually.

By the mid-1950's, the total number was less than 1,000. Because of this decline, various Jewish organizations established earlier were either diminished or merged.

When the American Joint Distribution Committee closed its Shanghai office in 1951, the Council of the Jewish Community (first created in Shanghai in 1949 after the founding of the People's Republic of China and registered with the Foreign Affairs Department of the Shanghai Military Committee on September 1, 1950 as a voluntary charitable organization for the welfare of China Jewry) took over the administrative work of repatriation and resettlement. The Council became instrumental in organizing the remaining Jews in China. It was responsible for the welfare of the Jews throughout China. By July 1956, the centralized management of the properties and the internal affairs of both the Ashkenazi and the Sephardic Communal Associations, which had been handling their own affairs separately for the previous 50 years, finally merged into the Council's office. The works in connection with the two communal associations were handled entirely by the Council staff although legal entities were preserved.¹

The Council not only represented the Shanghai Jewish community but also represented the Jewish communities in Tientsin and Harbin. It was in charge of the general budget and migration affairs of these communities and its annual reports include all the communities. It took over complete responsibility for the welfare of the remaining Jews in Tientsin after liquidation of the Tientsin Hebrew Association in 1958.

The economic and financial status of the majority of the remaining Jews steadily worsened during the period under review because most were planning to leave. Their priority was no longer to establish lives and businesses in China but the many details of emigration. This was reflected in the increased average spending of the Council.

The total amount of monthly relief in various forms (cash assistance, free meals, institutional care for the aged, and medical relief) dispensed by the Council increased by about 35 percent between June 30,

1955 and July 31, 1956 while almost 25 percent of the Council's clients throughout China left or died during the same period.² Between 30 and 50 percent of the remaining Jews received cash relief monthly from July 1958 to June 1959.³ Many Jews who formerly were able to maintain themselves had to apply for help. In numerous cases, the amount had to be increased, since those who previously had supplemented their income by the sale of personal belongings came to the end of their resources and had to depend for on Council assistance.

The departure rate remained high, over 25 percent each year. From 1955 to June 1956, 283 Jews left China. Among them, 113 were from Shanghai, 139 from Harbin, 15 from Tientsin, 7 from Dalian, and 10 from Tsingtao (now spelled as Qingdao). Though destinations for them were various 13 countries plus Hong Kong), statistics showed that the number one destination was Israel (131 Jews), followed by the USSR (90 Jews). The detailed destinations were as follows:

Australia	13
Belgium	11
Brazil	8
Canada	6
England	1
France	3
Germany	4
Hong Kong	8
Israel	131
Malaya	1
Poland	1
Switzerland	5
USSR	90 ⁴

By June 30, 1956, the exact number remaining in China was 519, according to information given by the Council of the Jewish Community in China.⁵

The distribution and position of those Jews were 171 in Shanghai; 233 in Harbin and Hailer; and 115 in Tientsin and nearby areas. Among these, the majority (409) originally came from Russia and were considered USSR citizens. Only 110 originally came from other countries.⁶ Three years later, the population reduced further to almost 50 percent. There were 251 in total (72 in Shanghai, 26 in Tientsin, and 153 in Harbin).⁷

Points East

Points East

to provide the manpower to administer and hold so vast an area. The Portuguese authorities had to draft crew members of their galleons and settlers for their colonies, from among desperados, petty criminals and Marranos. Other than the captain, the navigator, the carpenter and the friar, the Marranos provided much of the needed skills, craft and the knowledge necessary to serve on the galleons, and upon landing to serve the colonies and outposts. Many Marranos, sensing a better future elsewhere, answered the call for their service.

Few documents detailing the accomplishments of these Marranos in the Portuguese Asia ever surfaced to the reach the laymen. If it was not for the well documented record kept in the archives of the Society of Jesus, even this fabulous account of the most unusual Marrano would have remained hidden and faded into history. It was his being a Jesuit that probably preserved the record of his career as a doctor, a merchant, and finally as a Jesuit in Portuguese Asia. Had he been born a Christian in Portugal, he would undoubtedly have long been regarded as a legendary figure.

In an effort to restore some of the recognition long due to the Portuguese Marranos for the important roles played in the Portuguese empire in the East, this writer thought that by unfolding the saga of Luis de Almeida, his readers might catch a glimpse of the best of the lot. From the following account of the life of de Almeida, one can project the lives of many of his kind, and thus could appreciate their role in the rise of the Portuguese empire.

The dramatic life of Luis was intertwined with Macanese history, in which he played a role as merchant in the Macau-Nagasaki silk-for-silver trade and as doctor and Jesuit missionary in both Japan and Macau.

Despite the devastation which befell his family and friends, who suffered confiscation of their properties as well as torture and humiliation, he overcame the deep rift between the Portuguese Christians and Jews. He put behind him all the bitterness and grief, and proved to the world that even in such a demoralizing atmosphere, a man of his noble character could turn the silk-for-silver trade into such a profitable operation. He would later bequeath

all the wealth he had accumulated from the trade to the underprivileged. In a more dramatic move, he entered the Society of Jesus and efficiently applied his precious medical knowledge as a doctor in support of the Jesuits in 16th century Japan.

Luis de Almeida was born to a respected family of Marranos, and completed his medical studies in Lisbon. The promise of riches in China and the Spice Islands lured him to the easternmost borders of the Portuguese empire. However, there is scarcely any information on his early life before his reaching Asia.

In the days before Macau was officially designated by the Portuguese as their base in China, Luis de Almeida was a business partner of Duarte da Gama and he had already made several business trips to Japan. As a sharp and farsighted businessman, he invested wisely in the Macau - Nagasaki trade. Through the effort of Luis, the Jesuits in Macao participated in the same extremely lucrative trade, providing substantial capital for the Jesuit to fund various missions to Japan and China.

Through numerous dealings with the Jesuits, Luis became deeply involved with the work of the Jesuit missions. Seeking neither recognition nor reward for themselves, many Jesuits were themselves sons of wealthy and even noble families, who abandoned their family inheritance in the service of God. Most Jesuits at that time were graduates in academic studies (the sciences, art and even engineering) and in theology. They offered their services to faraway lands where the culture and language were completely alien to them. It was their nobility of purpose that made gradually Luis aware of his own desire to become one of them.

Then in 1556, the year preceding the founding of Macau, he acted in a most dramatic and legendary fashion, by donating his immense fortune to the Jesuit missions in Japan, simultaneously dedicating the rest of his life to the Catholic Apostolate.

Luis de Almeida's contribution to the benefit of medical knowledge in the 16th century Japan was phenomenal. His pioneering work in introducing Western medicine to Japan was instrumental in allowing it to

flourish there. He founded a hospital for the poor in Funai, which was a landmark in the history of medicine in Japan. Luis' introduction of European surgery and his patient instruction to his assistants in the hospital had far-reaching implications, and his appreciation and understanding of Chinese herbs, which he imported, created a successful blending of Eastern and Western medicine in treating the Japanese. He was responsible also for arranging the financing of the Funai hospital as well as for soliciting funds from the Portuguese traders in improving the service there.

As a Jesuit missionary, he was equally successful and accomplished. In 1562, de Almeida arrived on a Portuguese nau (galleon) in Yokosuka to negotiate an agreement with the local Daimyo (the military and administrative chief of the region) Omura Sumitada. Luis displayed his diplomatic brilliance in reaching agreement within a few days with Sumitada. In the summer of the following year, 1563, after receiving instruction from Luis, Sumitada became the first Daimyo to be baptized a Christian together with twenty of his nobles. In 1576, again as a result of the labors of Luis de Almeida, the Daimyos of Arima and Amakusa were also baptized.

It was also partially due to the effort of Luis that Nagasaki became the long-time trading post of the Portuguese in Japan until they were expelled.

It is not easy to understand how one man could accomplish so much in so many different fields in one lifetime. His brilliance in conducting hugely successful business, his deep appreciation and respect for the Chinese and Japanese culture, and his farsightedness in introducing Chinese and Western medicine to 16th century Japan were all examples of his many accomplishments, no less than his great generosity and devotion to the people he served. He was one of the few who overcame the barriers of religion, race and class, and worked towards one goal, for the love of God and mankind.

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My Early Years

Boris Katz Interview, April 21, 1989, Shanghai, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project.

edited by Steve Hochstadt, History Department, Bates College, Lewiston, Maine, August 31, 1999

I was born in 1923. My father was a small merchant. He worked in a factory where they made clothing. I think he had a stall in the open marketplace where he could sell odds and ends. They were always connected with tailoring, household industry of some sort. My mother would take white sheets and dye them in different colors, and sometimes the room was strung completely like a maze with ropes draped over with these cloths that were drying. They would barter with peasants for produce. I think she knew how to make soap. This goes back to experiences in the Ukraine during the time of famine, when they had to be very enterprising.

In the latter part of the 1920's, [my parents] considered leaving. This is during the Stalin regime, at the end of the New Economic Policy. I can recall the night search by the KGB who came to our house. They found some letters from my mother's brothers in the United States, who sent us packages once in awhile. But these secret police got hold of some of the letters and pretended to invent some political connection.

After the search that night, they called my father in for questioning at the police department, and the next memory is that he wasn't there. He and his friend, the head of the other family with whom we lived, took off to the Far East to pave the way for us to follow them a few months later. I remember a policeman coming up on a motorcycle one day looking for my father. They told him he went south to Baku or someplace.

People didn't own houses in those days, but if you have somebody else move in, they pay you something.. My father was already gone and I remember the other family moving in. There was five or six hundred dollars that my mother hid under the house outside in the yard. On the morning when we were all set to leave, she went to get the money and it was gone. She also cooked a lot of chicken and food,

and after two or three days she had to throw most of it out, because there was no refrigeration and it all spoiled.

Eventually the time came for us to leave and I remember getting on the train and getting to Vladivostok after fourteen days. I knew that we were going to Shanghai, and as I was lying on the top bunk, I started singing a little song. In Russian, Shanghai and *chai*, which is tea, rhyme. So I was saying to myself, "When we get to Shanghai, we will drink *chai*." My mother's face appeared at the bunk and being usually a very kind woman, she said if I didn't stop that she would kill me. If some stranger would hear about it, we would be dead.

We waited a whole month in some farmhouse outside Vladivostok, and the view of the bay was also an impression I carried with me after that, beautiful vistas, mountains, and the sea. We ate practically nothing but fish. Then we got on a train and proceeded toward a little town near the border of Manchuria. There was a lot of planning and a lot of people who cooperated with this venture and who obviously must have been paid something. A woman whose house we stayed in was also part of those who helped us out. While we were there, a soldier came in, in full Communist Army uniform, the long coat with the cap and the star, and threatened to expose us to the authorities. Turned out that this was the brother of the woman who sheltered us, and this was his way of getting his kicks. Nothing happened, except my mother burnt all our documents, so we had no shred of evidence who we were.

One day I found myself being carried on the back of a Chinese guide. There were two or three guides, because it's not only my mother, my mother's sister and myself, but the other family, the mother, a daughter and a son. And so it took a night, a day, and a night to get across the hills between the Soviet Union and Manchuria. I think we went by horse-drawn cart, just like farmers, as close as we could get to the border. Then in dead of night with no moon, they had to run, that was the only time that they ran fast and I heard dogs barking in the background. Then I don't remember how we got to Harbin. We joined up with my father and the other man joined his family. They had already rented the apartment

Points East

in preparation for us.

That was Harbin, Manchuria, a very chaotic time, just sheer anarchy. One morning a gang showed up in our apartment. Several Chinese men and one or two Russians. They came in, they went through the drawers and pretended to find a gun in the drawer of the living room and threatened us, condemning us for having this weapon, which was totally false. Now this other man had a son who was about eighteen years of age, and they grabbed him and started to walk off with him. My mother, bless her soul, a short, dumpy, plump woman, a wonderful Jewish mother, you know in the best sense, started to challenge them and asked them if they had a warrant of arrest, and proceeded to go after them, yelling at them all the way. They went down an alley where the car was waiting, and I could see it from the window. By the time they were almost at the car, she physically grabbed this young man and took him away from them and saved his life. That's my mother. The men didn't know what to do, but this little woman did that. This is the supreme example of the courage that she had. But she exhibited courage in the long term, because life was a tough struggle and she worked very hard and died at a relatively early age from cardio-vascular problems, and was buried in Shanghai.

So we lived in Harbin for six months and we left about September of 1931. Three weeks after we left, Japan invaded Manchuria. We came to Diaren and got on board ship, and it took three days to get to Shanghai.

We lived in [an] apartment. Those same two families lived in one apartment, which was right across the fence [from the] Shanghai Jewish Club, where I used to play ping pong with my friends. Then I made friends with the family whose father was a black American married to a Chinese woman, who had two little boys with whom I made friends. I found out what Christmas was from them. This father was a fine jazz musician, played the piano. He was head of the band in the Cathay Hotel, in the Peace Hotel, as you call it now.

Downstairs there was the workshop with large tables. My father and Ochakovsky as

Points East

his partner would cut the lining and the materials for neckties. That's when they set up Hollywood Neckties trademark. Between 1932 or so until 1939 or 1940, there was a lot of tension between those two households. My family moved out of the house into 1270 Avenue Joffre. That was a relief to my mother, to me, and to my aunt. My father was too busy to worry about it.

Soon the war got closer. By 1937 the Japanese were close to Shanghai. We could see the fires and the dogfights and sometimes the shrapnel. A Chinese plane exploded in downtown Shanghai, near the Great World Theater, that big square that we were in.

I would go to school in a rickshaw. It's incredible that there weren't any more casualties and fires and deaths. Of course, it got much worse after Pearl Harbor in 1941. By that time I'd already graduated from the Shanghai Jewish School, transferred to the Public and Thomas Hambry School for boys, to finish up my high school education, and then applied to the Henry Lester Institute. And I worked hard. I always did my best, and I was pretty much at the top of the class. That was between '31 and '39.

I became active in the Zionist organization, in the B'nai B'rith later on, that's already in the war period. I'm getting to December '41. By that time I was already enrolled in the Henry Lester Institute. Good labs and good instructors, and connection of the curriculum to London University, for it was like an overseas campus.

We had a little Pearl Harbor off the Bund here. That morning, on December 7th, 1941, we heard explosions that were pretty massive. There were the warships of various kinds, the French, the British, the American, all parked outside on the Bund. The Japanese decided this was [the] appropriate time to take over.

There was a huge Italian tourist liner, 22-thousand-ton "Conte Verde," that had its route between Italy and Shanghai and other parts in between. They were supposed to be allies of the Japanese. The captain refused to cooperate, to give up his ship, or to collaborate with the Japanese, and he scuttled it in the river. It sank into 60 feet of water and lay down, and was

there like a beached whale with its structure facing the other side of the river. It lay there from '41, perhaps to '44.

In the meantime, the war was going on. The Japanese became short of metal. They stripped the streetcar tracks in the streets. Avenue Joffre had railroad cars and the tracks and it was all stripped by the Japanese. They stripped radiators from apartments. The metal street signs were replaced with wooden street signs. Fences were stripped, every piece of metal they could lay their hands on within reason. At that time the British, French, Americans, all the allied nationals were rounded up and taken to half a dozen camps on the outskirts of Shanghai. We stateless families lucked out. They didn't bother us, we could live where we were living.

My aunt was busy with the tailoring part, she was in charge of the workshop. That's when the nature of my father's work changed a bit. He was trading more or less. And then inflationary times set in too. It was a very difficult time. People would buy boxes of soap and hold onto them, and then sell them. We never starved, we managed to survive. There was always food on the table. There were so many peddlers! Refugees brought their belongings, their household. Invariably my mother would ask them in, give them a cup of tea and soup.

In the meantime, I was going to school. They changed the name, I used to know the Japanese name, Institute of Engineering for Greater East Asia, or something like that. We were taught Japanese for two years. It was a modern Japanese which had an alphabet, and we could write some, could speak some. But the rest of the subjects were in English. The Allied instructors were replaced with Japanese. And that lasted 'till 1944 when the Japanese were in bad shape. They gave us all graduation certificates in Japanese. I still have it. The only thing I can read is my name on it.

Now we get back to that beached whale, that ship that was there. In the meantime, they started to work on it, attach poles on it, maybe a couple of hundred, so that they could lift it up. Then one day, they mustered up as many boats of all kinds, motor boats and launches and anything that moved on water. And they had like a tug

of war. Each of these was tied onto a mast, to give them enough leverage. They gradually raised this vessel, the hulk. It was like out of *Gulliver's Travels*. By that time, the war was almost over. There were frequent air raids by B29's of the surrounding area. I never really went into Hongkew, maybe once or twice. I knew that there was a lot of suffering.

Before the war we were active in B'nai B'rith. B'nai B'rith was a very respectable organization in town. It had an aura of something magical, this was what Jews did in the United States. [After 1944] I got pretty busy with Betar, the conservative wing of the Zionist movement, formed by a man named Jabotinsky. It was a pretty monolithic, authoritarian type of philosophy. And then the very handy slogan, "A land without a people for a people without a land." By that time, we began to find out what horrors happened in Europe. So most of us wanted to go. We had training. We marched around and held banners, sang songs, and saluted the flag and so on.

When the war was over, a conflict developed because the leaders of Betar felt that those who were true Zionists had no business belonging in B'nai B'rith. I was already 20, 21, 22 years of age. That's when it dawned on me that I didn't care for that kind of Zionism. We don't want a dictatorship. We had debates, discussions and so forth.

When the war was over, I applied to Haifa Technion. I was accepted on the condition that I start over again. It means that two or three years would be wiped out because I didn't know the language. And if I'd pay 1000 British pounds. Fortunately I was accepted at Berkeley. And that's how I left in '47.

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