

ABSTRACT -

[Editor's Note: The following is an abstract of the unpublished dissertation by Dr. Heinz Eberhard Maul on *Japan and the Jews, Study on the Policy of the Empire of Japan towards the Jews* during the period of National Socialism 1933-1945. A copy of this manuscript has been deposited in the SJI collection at the Hoover Archives of Stanford University.]

Despite a traditional belief in racial equality, the Japanese policy towards the Jews during the period of Nazism was one of ambiguity, combining maintaining a distance from and a tolerance towards foreigners. Japan also tried to utilize the alleged Jewish abilities (alleskonner) for the benefit of Japan's militaristic expansionism. Finally, for Tokyo, the Jewish encounter became a problem due to the enormous influx of Jewish refugees into Asia and the massive pressure applied by Japan's Nazi ally to solve the problem its way. The Japanese policy towards the Jews, unlike that of the Nazis, was free of any trace of repression leading toward extermination. For European Jews, the Japanese empire was a temporary haven.

Sino-Judaica Vol. 3

We are pleased to announce the appearance of Sino-Judaica: Occasional Papers of the Sino-Judaic Institute, vol. 3 (2000); 232 Lexington Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025; \$20 to members, \$25 to non-members.

Volume 3:

A Study of the Evidence of Jews Entering into China (translated from Wenwu 1991.6, pp. 74-80), by Lin Meicun

Eight Centuries in the Chinese Diaspora: The Jews of Kaifeng, by Erik Zurcher
Identity Discourse and the Chinese Jewish Descendants, by Mathew A. Eckstein
Revealing the Holocaust through Oral History: The Necessity of Interviewing Survivors, by Steve Hochstadt
The Shanghai Ghetto: Two Accounts of Refugees in China, by Patricia Kalman

Volumes 1 and 2 are still available.

Vol. 1 (1991): \$9 to members, \$15 to non-members.

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Volume 1:

Radhanites, Chinese Jews, and the Silk Road of the Steppes, by Nigel Thomas.

The Role of Confucian and Jewish Educational Values in the Assimilation of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, Supplemented by Western Observer Accounts, 1605-1985, by Wendy Abraham.

The Confucianization of the Chinese Jews: Interpretations of the Kaifeng Stelae Inscriptions, by Andrew H. Plaks.

Delving into the Israelite Religion of Kaifeng: The Patriotic scholar Shi Jingxun and his Study of the Origins of the Pluck-

ing the Sinews Sect of Henan, by Kong Xianyi.

Volume 2:

The Rise of Silas Aaron Hardoon (1851-1931) as Shanghai's Major Individual Landowner, by Chiara Betta.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the Jews, by Rena Krasno.

The Shanghai Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews, by Donald D. Leslie & Maisie Meyer.

A Plan to Settle Jewish Refugees in China, by Bi Chunfu & Ma Zhendu (eds.)

Three Prominent Sephardi Jews, by Maisie Meyer

Willi Tonn: The Fighting Scholar of Shanghai, by Weiyan Meng.

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Points East

中國-猶太學院

Vol. 15 No. 3
Fall, 2000

A Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute

THE LAST EMPRESS

by Orli Azulai-Katz

excerpted from *Bulletin-Igud Yotzei Sin*
June/July 2000

The place of honour in the impeccably cared for home of the Israeli ambassador in Beijing, Ora Namir, belong to two sculptures: those of the Goddesses of Health and Poverty. When Ora bought them in an antique shop during her trip to one of the remote provinces of China, she did not even know what they represent. She just fell in love with their beauty and decided to add them to the collection of sculptures she purchased during the four years of traveling all over China. Now her collection had grown into a veritable self-styled museum in the spacious drawing room of her residence in the capital's center. Dozens of sculptures made of bronze and wood grace the museum: smiling faces, sad faces, faces in pain and anguish. And an orange-painted, twelve-armed Buddha watches over them from aside.

Ora is busy these days, packing her beloved sculptures in crates, specially ordered for them to travel with her back to her home in Israel, now that her four-year diplomatic service in Beijing draws to an end.

"I feel that I have exhausted myself to the end here," she says, "and I hanker for home. I miss all my friends in Israel. I miss Israeli culture."

I spent six days with Ora Namir in Beijing, and when I was literally falling off my feet, she continued running on. Ora tries to utilize all her remaining time in Beijing to tie up loose ends. She meets and entertains as many people as possible, goes to farewell banquets and parties thrown in her honour by local officials and colleagues, members of the Beijing diplomatic corps.

People in Israel don't know about it, but *The Beijing Daily*, a newspaper with the largest circulation in China, recently rated ambassador Namir among the 10 most famous persons in the country.

When Namir walks in the gigantic Tiananmen Square, many recognize her and come up to shake her hand. "Yi Selieh (Chinese for Israel) - good!" "Good Yi Se-lieh!" they say to her, and she gives them a broad smile.

She has a style of her own and an impressive personality," says deputy foreign minister, Zhe Fading, "she has a lot of political experience, and I can say that the historical visit of our president to Israel is in more than one way a result of her endeavour. During the four-year term of her service in Beijing, she had certainly advanced our relationship with Israel tremendously.

(continued on page 8)

HANS J. ARONS' STORY

by Patricia Kalman

[Editor's Note: In 1991, while doing research about the Jews of Kaifeng, Patricia Kalman stumbled upon a story concerning Jewish refugees interned in Shanghai during World War II; she had not heard about this aspect of the war before and had difficulty finding information about that community. After inquiring at a San Francisco Holocaust oral history project near where she lived, she learned that there were many Shanghai refugees living in the San Francisco Bay Area. To better understand what happened, she decided to capture their stories through interviews. She also has personal connections to Shanghai which made this story more meaningful. Her husband's parents met and married in Shanghai after the war and hoped to remain there and raise a family. However, after the political climate changed, they left for the United States. Ms. Kalman and her husband visited Shanghai in 1986 in search of his parents' roots. The following are selections from a collection of these oral histories which she plans to publish.]

Hans J. Arons was born on September 1, 1914 in Hanover, Germany. After his mother died when he was four, his father moved to Berlin and Hans was sent to live with his grandparents in a small town called Weener, in the northern part of Germany. Weener had a Jewish community of about thirty families, and his grandfather was the president of the synagogue for thirty-six years. Hans attended Jewish school, high school and then went on to study horticulture at the Israelitische Gartenbauschule in Ahlem near Hanover. In 1934 he passed his gardener's examination under the Nazi Horticulture Commission. This interview took place on November 14, 1991 on the eve of the Louisiana election for governor.

Anti-Semitism grew and grew in Germany. You could see it. You could feel it. I was twenty years of age and I wanted to go to Palestine. Many of my friends already left for Palestine and I thought that with my profession - I'd like to go there too. I visited my father in Berlin and I asked him to give me money. But it didn't happen. He said, "I won't give you any money. You're not going to Palestine. Hitler is not going to do anything to the Jews." But he was wrong. He was an officer in the First World War on the Russian front. He thought that Hitler (would do) nothing to the Jews in Germany, whatsoever. At that time it was 1934.

I went to work for a gentile farmer in a place called Jastrow. Many other Jewish people also worked for this Catholic farmer. We did plowing and other things. We were treated nicely until the Nazis came in September before the High Holy Days.

We had no idea that they were coming. The Nazis knew where we were because we had to be registered wherever we went in Germany. And they found out that on this particular farm this

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SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	311
Israel	14
China	12
England	11
Canada	6
Hong Kong	5
Australia	5
Germany	3
Taiwan	2
Japan	2
Indonesia	1
Italy	1
South Africa	1
Switzerland	1
TOTAL:	375

FROM THE EDITOR

This year, the seasonal rush of Jewish holy days combined with our moving to a new house to produce an especially chaotic time. It took many weeks to get my computer up and running, to find the files I needed, etc. etc. Nonetheless, finally, I was able to get this new issue of *Points East* together for your reading pleasure.

However, the joys of the holidays and the excitement of moving were overshadowed by the sad and painful developments in Israel/Palestine. Having worked, in my own way, for peace and reconciliation between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs, I had high hopes for what Prime Minister Barak might be able to accomplish. Never had an Israeli government been so open to Palestinian claims.

Instead of standing on the brink of peace, Israelis and Palestinians now stand on the brink of renewed war, seemingly as far apart today as they were during the original intifada. Sadly, there are strong forces in both nations that apparently prefer to continue hostilities rather than to resolve their differences – no, who must have it all their way or risk having nothing in the long run.

It is times such as these that make me wish I were a fundamentalist Christian. Why?! Because only they can look at the current bloodshed, with the risk of an ever-widening war, on the eve of the true beginning of the new Christian millennium, and see in this tragic situation the hope of "Armageddon" and the "Second Coming." Would that I could see any hope in so pointless a conflict! But, to paraphrase my mother-in-law, when you consider the alternative, what can one do but continue to have hope?

So, my prayer for the new year is that the violence and killing will end and that both parties will return to the negotiating table soon and take things up where they left off. May the Palestinians get their long-delayed state; may Israel gain its long-sought security and peace; may Jerusalem become a true "City of Peace," shared God-knows-how; and may both people live long and prosper.

Anson Laytner

Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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Points East is published three times a year, in March, July and November.
Deadlines for submitting material to be included in these issues are January 15th, May 15th and September 15th.

FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE

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

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Points East

This is an important reference tool divided into four distinct subject areas:

I. **Traditional Chinese Awareness of Jews:**
Chinese Research on Jewish Diasporas in China, by Xu Xin.

An Investigation of the Date of Jewish Settlement in Kaifeng, by Wei Qianzhi, translated by Roger Des Forges.
New Trends and Achievements in Chinese Research on Ancient Chinese Jews, by Wang Yisha, Translated by Albert E. Dien.
An Overview of Chinese Oppressions of and Attitudes Toward Jews Before 1949, by Xiao Xian.

II. **Memoirs**

Shanghai: A Woman's Eyewitness Report, by Illo L. Heppner.

The Relations Between the Western European Refugees and the Shanghai Resident Jews, A Personal Memoir, by Ernest G. Heppner.

Growing Up Jewish in Manchuria in the 1930's: Personal Vignettes, by Alexander Menquez (pseud.).

On Being a Jew in China: A Personal Memoir, by Israel Epstein

My Developmental Years in China: Josef Tekoah, Interview conducted by Steve Hochstadt.

From Berlin to Tianjin, by Heinz Dawid.

III. **Research Guides:**

Cemeteries of the Kaifeng Jews, by Phyllis Horal.

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

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

Polish, Russian and U.S. Consular Records from Shanghai about Jewish Refugees: An Interim Report, by Jonathan Goldstein.

IV. **Bibliography**

The Chinese Jews and the Jewish Diasporas in China from the Tang period (AD 618-906) through the Mid-1990s: A Selected Bibliography, by Frank Joseph Shulman.

Frenchtown * Shanghai – Western Architecture in Shanghai's Old French

Concession

by Tess Johnston & Deke Erh; \$58.00
reviewed by Tess Johnston

We truly think *Frenchtown * Shanghai* is our best yet. We think it is a fitting swan song for the Erh-Johnston team. The book is loaded with Deke's gorgeous photographs of the old villas and lane houses of Frenchtown and, thanks to the contributions of Old China Hands, we have a plethora of old photographs and documents to liven up the story. In sum, we think the book brings you the best of the Concession and of the Westerners who lived there.

Also in the works:

Shanghai, Summer, 1937 – The Second Shanghai War, a collection of black and white press photos by Malcolm Rosholt, first published in 1937 and seen nowhere since. And, in cooperation with Rena Krasno, author of *Strangers Always*, her second Shanghai-themed book: *The Last Glorious Summer: Shanghai to Japan, 1939*. This is a first-person narrative based on her experiences and incorporating letters from her father, who remained in Shanghai that last leisurely summer.

Am Rande der Geschichte – Mein Leben in China

(On the Periphery of History – My Life in China)

by Ruth Weiss

Zeller Verlag, Osnabruck, ISBN 3-535-014900 DM8.

reviewed by Rena Krasno

Ruth Weiss, born in 1908, was the only child of a well-to-do Jewish family in Vienna. As a young woman, she was particularly drawn to Chinese history and culture. In 1933, she decided to travel to Shanghai, remain there 6 months and work as a free-lance journalist.

In Shanghai, Weiss 'fell in love' with the Chinese people and ended up spending most of her life in China. She soon became friends with a circle of left-wingers, among them: Rewi Alley, Agnes Smedley, Dr. George Hatern and Mrs. Sun Yat-Sen. She studied Chinese and wrote articles for Chinese and foreign newspapers. She fought against social injustice in China,

which she and her group attributed to Confucianism and the excesses of the Chiang-Kai-Shek regime.

In 1937, Weiss moved to Chengdu (capital of Sichuang Province) where she worked as secretary, teacher and lecturer. She continued her journalistic and literary work. She married her Chinese fiancé, Hsu An, who later left China to pursue studies in the U.S.A. After 6 years in Chengdu, Weiss was offered a job in China's World War II capital, Chungking, where she remained till 1945. She then returned to Shanghai.

In the meantime, Hsu An had fallen ill with tuberculosis and Weiss decided to visit him in the U.S.A. There she obtained a position in the United Nations Secretariat. Two children were born to her and her husband. In 1951, Weiss returned with her children to China. Her husband refused to join her and they later divorced.

In her book, Weiss speaks openly about China and the Cultural Revolution. She is an admirer of Chou Enlai. Her memoirs record her extraordinary life.

Alltagsleben und Kulturaustausch-Deutsche und Chinesen in Tsingtau 1897-1914

is in both German & Chinese languages.

The Deutsches Historisches Museum-German Historical Museum, Berlin followed its earlier scholarly and tremendously successful publication about Tsingtau (filled with illustrations and old photos), now has issued another publication on Tsingtau. This later title carried no illustrations but focused on the little known yet extremely strong cultural exchange and interaction between Germans and the Shantung residents.

Limited copies are issued, only some 250 copies are still available and they are only on sale on the Deutsches Historisches Museum's website: www.dhm.de. Postal address: Deutsches Historisches Museum-GmbH, Zeughaus, Unter den Linden 2, D-10117, Berlin.

tion and 5 days later I was handed Shipping Certificates for my entire family, with the right to use another liner a month later, should we not be able to make the trip on August 4. Fortunately, we were allowed to pay the shipping line in German marks, which in any case we would not have been permitted to take out of Austria.

On July 20, 1938, I picked up my passport at the Chinese Embassy. It had a stamped visa written in Chinese characters. It was valid for entry anywhere in Nationalist China. I found out later that neither a passport, nor a visa were required for disembarking in the International Settle-

ment in Shanghai. However, should landing in Shanghai have proved to be impossible, the Chinese visa would have enabled us to disembark anywhere else in China. This was a real possibility since Japan was in an undeclared war with China.

We had 10 days left to make all pre-departure arrangements. We gave up our beautiful apartment, sold our furniture and moved to my parents. One day before our departure, on July 28, I finally received from the Laender Bank the amount of foreign currency we were permitted to take out of Austria: 4 English pounds and 2 shillings for our entire family.

BOOK NOOK

The Jews of China. Volume One: Historical and Comparative Perspectives. Edited by Jonathan Goldstein, concluding essay by Benjamin I. Schwartz. [Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1998. 352 pp. Hard cover \$69.95, ISBN 0-7656-0103-6; paperback, \$29.95, ISBN 0-7656-0104-4.] reviewed by Yulia Egorova reprinted from *The China Quarterly*, #162, June 2000

This book is the result of the conference entitled "Jewish Diasporas in China: Comparative and Historical Perspectives" held in 1992 at Harvard University's John K. Fairbank Center for East Asian Research. It begins with an introduction by Jonathan Goldstein, which offers a survey of the history of Jews in China and sets the stage for the following articles. The collection can be divided into two main groups: one which deals with the Jews of Kaifeng and the other which focuses on the Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jewish communities of China.

The first part of the book describes the old Jewish community of Kaifeng. Papers by Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, Irene Eber and Andrew H. Plaks acquaint us with various cultural features of the Kaifeng Jews and examine the impact the Chinese environment had on them. They also concentrate on the problem of identity in this Jewish community, demonstrate how it was viewed in Chinese society, and contribute to the discussion on Chinese perceptions of Jews and Judaism in general. Wendy R.

Abraham introduces the reader to the history of Western contacts with the Jews of Kaifeng. Michael Pollak focuses on Western responses to the discovery of this community and considers this event from the perspective of the history of Western Messianic expectations and the discourse on the Lost Tribes of Israel.

One section of the book is devoted to comparison with the Bene-Israel (see Shirley Berry Isenberg's article) and Cochin (chapters by Barbara C. Johnson and Nathan Katz) Indian Jews. Contributors stress the commonality of destinies of Indian and Chinese Jews who never experienced anti-Semitism in their respective countries, and at the same time demonstrate the divergences in the patterns of their functioning in local societies. Katz's article, which examines the religious practices of the Jews of Cochin and Kaifeng in the context of their relationship to Hindu and Chinese religious cultures, should be appreciated by the students of comparative religion.

Papers that constitute the second and the third parts of this volume focus on the fate of different Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jewish communities of China. Articles by Joan G. Roland and Chiara Betta deal with Baghdadi Jews. Lane Earns concentrates on the links between the Jewish communities of Shanghai and Nagasaki. Dennis A. Leventhal's essay describes the Hong Kong Jewry and touches upon the question of the perceptions of the Jews in that city. Zvia Shickman-Bowman and Boris Bresler dis-

After I arrived in Shanghai, I could now take upon myself the responsibility to urge my parents, other relatives and friends, who had nowhere else to go, to leave everything behind, get the shipping tickets and come to Shanghai as soon as possible. Within a few months I saved 9 of my relatives and a dozen acquaintances.

[A taped interview in which Sebastian Steiner relates his experiences has been deposited in the Sino-Judaic collection at the Hoover Institution (Stanford) archives Rena Krasno.]

Discuss the history of the community of Russian Jews in Harbin. Most of these articles explore the economic activities of the communities under survey and contribute to the discourse on trading minorities in Asia. Xu Buzeng and Harriet P. Rosenson highlight the work of Jewish residents of Shanghai who had a different occupation, music.

Essays by Maruyama Naoki and Pan Guang cast light on the development of the Zionist movement in China. Vera Schwarcz offers a deep analysis of the experiences of Orthodox Jewish survivors who in the 1930s and 1940s took refuge in China. Benjamin I. Schwartz in his concluding essay summarizes the main questions relating to the history of Jewish-Chinese encounters.

The articles presented in this collection cover a wide range of topics relating to the field of Sino-Judaica and are informative and well-researched. This book is a valuable contribution also to theoretical issues in the study of the diaspora communities and cross-cultural interactions. It will be of great interest both to the students of Chinese and Jewish history.

NEW PUBLICATION:

Volume Two of *The Jews of China, A Sourcebook and Research Guide* edited and with an Introduction by Jonathan Goldstein, (E. Sharpe, Inc., 80 Business Park Drive, Armonk, NY 10504, \$69.95)

IN THE FIELD

◆ Sugihara Officially Acknowledged

In a gesture that was more than half a century overdue, Japan's Foreign Minister Yohei Kono formally apologized to the family of Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese diplomat who saved thousands of Jews during World War II. Kono unveiled a copper plaque at the ministry's Diplomatic Record Office in Tokyo honoring Sugihara's achievements. F.M. Kono told relatives: "Regrettably Mr. Sugihara's achievements have been neglected for too long. He is an inspirational figure who made a brave, humane decision under the most extreme circumstances."

◆ Thane Synagogue Renovation Completed

Ezra Moses happily reports that the 120 year old synagogue in Thane, India has had its ceiling replaced and been generally renovated and beautified. A dedication ceremony was held on 23 September 2000 (3 Elul 5760), attended by the Consul General of Israel and over 500 guests. Plans for the future include rebuilding the mikvah (ritual bath) and opening a community center. 40% of the Jews of India, whom Mr. Moses says now number 5,500, live in the city of Thane.

◆ Boris Bresler Fund Established

The Boris Bresler family is pleased to announce that the Boris Bresler Fund for the Jewish Experience in China and the Far East (JECFE) has been established in conjunction with the Magnes Museum. The fund will facilitate the processing of the Boris Bresler papers and other materials and the continuation of the JECFE Program. If you are interested in making a contribution to the Fund in his

memory, make your check payable to "Magnes Museum-Boris Bresler Fund" and send it to the Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell Street, Berkeley, CA 94705.

◆ China/Judaic Connection Ceases Hard Copy Publication

The China Judaic Studies Association, which publishes the China-Judaic Connection, has announced that its newsletter will only be available online as of the summer of 2000. The Association had its origins in the friendship that developed between Professors Jim and Beverly Friend and Prof. Xu Xin. Through the Friends, Prof. Xu Xin developed a deepening interest in Jewish subjects and, with the Association's help, established the Chinese Judaic Studies Association in Nanjing. Dr. Beverly Friend has ably run the American end of the operation since her husband's untimely death and was instrumental in helping to fund publication of a Chinese version of the Encyclopedia Judaica, Chinese translations of modern Hebrew literature, and teacher seminars and exhibits on Jewish themes. The China/Judaic Connection newsletter is now only available on the internet at: <http://servercc.oakton.edu/~friend/chinajews.html>

◆ Jewish Museum to Open in Harbin

The Mayor of Givata'im, Efi Shtanzler, and his assistant, Yehiel Wasserman, spent a week in Harbin where they signed an agreement strengthening economic, technological, educational and agricultural ties between the two cities. During the visit, it was decided that the former Jewish school building, now a Korean school, would be turned into a museum on the history of Jews in China. Chinese local au-

thorities will do the renovations and remodeling work, Givata'im authorities will collect historic material from former Harbin residents now living in Israel. Shtanzler also got a list of all the Jews buried in Harbin, whose graves are now within one cemetery. This list will be published on the Israel-China Friendship Society website.

◆ List of Refugee Deaths in Shanghai Prepared

A name list of refugees who died in Shanghai has been prepared by the Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai (CJES), based on lists published in the *Aufbau* newspaper in 1946 and supplemented from other sources. The list is to be posted on the CJES website, which is in the process of being established. Until then, queries regarding deaths in Shanghai may be sent to Ralph Hirsch of the CJES at Hirsch@igc.org.

◆ Book News from the China/Judaic Connection

China/Judaic Connection reports that Xu Xin and his wife, Kong Defang, have translated Martin Gilbert's the *Dent Atlas of Jewish History* (1993 edition). Not only does the Chinese version reproduce the 132 maps that trace Jewish history from 2000 BCE to the present; but Gilbert wrote a special preface to help Chinese readers understand the subject better. The book was published in June 2000 by the Shanghai People's Publishing House.

Xu has also been granted a fellowship by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture to research and prepare a Chinese language textbook on Jewish history and culture.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

My name is Denise Gaberman and I am an NYU graduate student doing an oral history project on Russian Jews from Shanghai. I am interested in any information leading up to a contact with Russian Jews that lived in the Shanghai community from 1920-1940s and now reside on the East Coast and specifically in the tri-state area (New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut).

I am also looking for people that may have known my grandfather Macky Gaberman, who worked for the Shanghai Bus Company and American Navy and supposedly led 500 stateless Jews to Israel. Or my grandmother, Barbara Gaberman, that was interned by the Japanese.

Sincerely,
Denise R. Gaberman (SMTP: pttu@hotmail.com)

SJI SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

Planning a fundraising event? Organizing a meeting or celebration? If your Jewish educational, religious or cultural group has a need for a speaker on a truly unique subject, contact the Sino-Judaic Institute. Possible lecture topics include:

- The Chinese Jews of Kaifeng
- The Jews of Shanghai
- Jewish Life in Harbin and Tianjin
- Sino-Israeli Relations

A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Sino-Judaic Institute.

For more information, contact:
SJI President, Prof. Al Dien
(650) 323-1769
232 Lexington Drive
Menlo Park, CA 94025
e-mail: aldien@leland.stanford.edu.

Kaifeng Project Announced

Hebrew Union College is involved in a major project to record all the Kaifeng texts in CD form!

Estimated to take one and a half to two years, the disks will sell for \$25 to \$50 and will include all the 50 plus texts in their library and additional materials from other holdings which include the Torahs at the Bridewell Library, SMU, the American Bible Society, and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

In Search of Jewish Traditions and Communities A Journey to India Jan. 10-26, 2001. Indian Republic Day Extension Jan. 26-28, 2001

In January 2001, Dr. Kenneth Robbins, an authority on Indian history, art, culture and religion, will lead a tour of India, including four sites where Jews settled in ancient times: Mumbai (Bombay), Cochin, the Konkan coast and Ahmedabad.

Lectures and discussions will concentrate on subjects such as: Jews and Ghandi, the Bene Israel tradition of female leaders and the Kerala Malbari Jews who came to India two millenniums ago. Ancient synagogues and cultural Jewish sites will be visited.

The tour group will also be able to personally meet members of local Jewish communities. They will speak to artist Esther David, who is the author of *The Walled City*, a story of three generations of Jewish women in an Ahmedabad family. They will visit renowned artist collector Amit Ambalal's magnificent house and studio, designed by the famous Jewish architect Bernard Kohn.

For more details contact International Ventures & Travel Inc., 551 Fifth Avenue, Suite #1923, New York, NY 10176; 212-557-5886.

The Portuguese in China

by Sasson Jacoby
excerpted from the *Uniao Macaense Americana Bulletin*
July/August 2000

Two years ago, after about 150 years, the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong was handed back to China with much fanfare broadcast around the world – publicized mainly because Beijing had promised the booming financial and commercial center a policy of "business as usual" for the next 50 years. On December 20, 1999 it was the turn of the tiny Portuguese enclave of Macao to become China's second Special Administrative Region on the Hong Kong model.

Far less publicity was accorded this time because Macao was generally considered somewhat of a backwater compared to its giant neighbor. Macao, as it is spelt in English (Macau is the local spelling), was actually the oldest European settlement in the Far East. It was leased to Portugal in 1557, one year before Elizabeth I succeeded to the throne of England. It is only 15 sq. km. in area, made tip of the city and two offshore isles, with a population today of about 450,000. The Chinese called it A-Ma-Kao (Bay of A-Ma, the patroness of seafarers). It is located at the western end of the Pearl River estuary, 40 miles east of Hong Kong, 65 miles from Canton. The return of Macao 442 years after its leasing was, in effect, the last piece in the Chinese mainland jigsaw. Taiwan of course is the third piece of the puzzle – but that is another story that doesn't concern us now. However, Beijing's most publicized policy of "One country, two systems," originally proposed for Taiwan, is still not acceptable there.

Over the centuries Macao endured wars and revolutions, but it survived because it sidestepped involvement in the quarrels between the British and the Chinese imperial authorities over trade and opium smuggling. For the Portuguese it was a case of neutrality at all costs. Recently I read a book about the history of China's treaty ports in which the author described how a British sea captain, one John Weddell, arrived in Macao in 1636. He reported that he found Portuguese "well ensconced and neither they nor the Chinese particularly welcoming." Which only shows that the canny Portuguese knew how to keep on the good side of the Chinese. It took 48

In Japan, Gottfried's foreign appearance attracted the mockery of native children in Japan, but later in the U.S., his Japanese behavior and manners aroused undue attention and criticism.

"My Japanese identity," he explained, "was more obvious than my German one. I didn't even know where Germany was on the map, didn't know Germany's history nor her recent past, and I knew almost nothing about my relatives. All the years in Japan, my mother was afraid to mention her family's anti-Nazi activities. As a child, I started inventing a past for myself. Within me was an emptiness which I tried to fill, which I am trying to fill till this very day." Professor Paasche explained it was "hell" to be a Japanese-educated German in the U.S., a country that had till recently considered both Germany and Japan as mortal enemies.

When the Cold War started, Maria Paasche's relatives still lived in communist East Germany. As a result, the Paasche family in the U.S. became suspect. They were constantly under F.B.I. surveillance. John and Maria had great difficulty in obtaining employment. To survive, Maria, the General's daughter, worked as a cleaning woman. John became an ordinary laborer. Finally, in the 1970's, he found a job in the Library of Congress' section dealing with China.

When Gottfried learned for the first time about the Holocaust, he was stunned. "Who are those dreadful Germans responsible for such horrible crimes?" he wondered. "What is my connection with them?" He still knew nothing about his parents' past.

In due course, Gottfried Paasche married an American Jewish woman, Carole Levin. They have three children. In 1985 they left the U.S. for Canada. As a teen-ager, their daughter, Sarah, visited Israel and lived in Givat Yaarim, a Yemenite *moshav* (collective settlement). She loved the Yemenite family who 'adopted' her. She enjoyed their way of life, their food. In 1986, searching for her roots, Sarah went to Germany where she met 80 members of her German family. She joined the German Jewish feminist movement. As time went on, she became more and more drawn to Judaism and returned for a while to Israel to pursue Judaic studies. Eventually she became a Reform Rabbi – a fact of which her grandmother Maria Paasche was very proud.

John Paasche died in 1993. Maria Paasche died seven years later in a Jewish Home in San Francisco.

Shanghai Snatchings

by Joseph P. Weber

"I thought those dishes looked familiar" said Paula, my future mother-in-law, "but of course by the time I realized that it was too late. My fine chinaware was gone."

What happened was, unfortunately, all too common. Paula, her husband Dr. Gustav Silbermann, and their two daughters, Tessie and Reni, had left their native Berlin as a result of Nazi persecution and arrived in Shanghai in 1939. At that time they could still take a few household goods with them, something that was not possible for my parents, sister Magda and myself. We were allowed to take only one suitcase and ten marks per person.

The dishes dilemma: The Silbermanns lived in Honkew, a Shanghai suburb, among a mixture of German and Austrian/Jewish refugees and Russians who, for their part, had escaped to China following the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. Returning home one day Paula noticed a hefty Russian woman coming out of the front door, carrying a basket full of fine china dishes. "Would you like some help?" "Sure, thank you very much." Paula seized one side of the basket and helped carry the heavy load to a waiting rickshaw. Soon she realized that the precious chinaware had actually been her own.

Because of the widespread poverty in China there was a lot of theft and shoplifting going on. By law all groundfloor dwellings had to have iron bars protecting their windows. Some of the fancier homes sported decorative wrought iron work and I had the opportunity to design some of these while working as an architectural draftsman. There was no air conditioning and people slept with the windows open during the hot and humid subtropical summers. Thus it was easy for a thief to steal clothing and other articles with a long, thin bamboo pole.

Streetcars and buses were usually crowded. A Chinese friend took special precautions to safeguard a large wad of banknotes by securing it with a safety pin on his left inside breastpocket. Over his jacket he wore a long robe, buttoned Chi-

nese style along the ride side. The thief must have sensed the contents by the contours of the bulge. With a small coin sharpened to a razor's edge, held between fore and middle finger, he took advantage of the thick, swaying mass of passengers and, cutting through several layers of clothing, deftly slit the underside of the breastpocket. Soon the packet holding the banknotes slid to the floor and it was easy for the agile thief to pick it up and melt away unnoticed.

On busy Nanking Road I saw a bicycle rider reach into an open streetcar window and snatch an elegant hat right off a man's head, disappearing nonchalantly into the crowd.

These are but some of my memories of that wonderful, terrible and exotic city of Shanghai.

The First Austrian Jewish Refugee Family in Shanghai

by Sebastian Steiner

After my wife agreed to leave Austria for Shanghai, I had to apply for a passport. It was issued to me on July 4, 1938, and was valid until December 31st. It included the words: "Valid for all countries of the earth" and "Single exit from and return to the German Reich." Pre-conditions were: I had to obtain an entry visa to another country, and also swear in the name of my entire family that we would never return to Germany for the rest of our lives. I consented wholeheartedly to the latter demand since I had no desire to see Nazi Germany again.

The Chinese government still had an Embassy in Vienna and I decided to request an entry visa to China for my family. Two other persons were there. We all filled out forms, left our passports and were told to return in several days.

Since my visa request had not been rejected outright, I immediately went to the Italian shipping line, Lloyd Triestino. There were few travelers interested in going to China at the time and I was received very politely. The agent showed me a plan of the luxury liner "Conte Rosso," due to sail on August 4. Not only did we receive good advice for the most convenient cabins (we were two adults and two children), but the clerk even contacted his head office in Trieste to request half fare for the children. I made a down payment for the reserva-

Immigration Bureau here is unusually busy as all alien arrivals must go through a very severe examination and their visas must be in perfect order or they will be detained." The article continued, "Some of them speak a little English and all seem to breathe a new freedom in this Western land. None feel like discussing their experiences for the reason that they left relations behind and they know the arm of Hitler is long and that he never hesitates at reprisals."

Within the next 10 months, approximately 20 passenger ships came from the port city of Yokohama carrying escaping Jews, before the port city of Yokohama carrying escaping Jews, before the port was closed due to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. This was the only remaining route for Jews to emigrate from Germany to the United States.

They spent a month in transit, first by train to Korea, through Poland, Russia and Siberia, then on to Japan, where they boarded a ship across the Pacific that would eventually bring them to the U.S. in a month or longer. The last ship, which came in May 1941, was shortly before the German invasion of Russia. Between August 1940 and May 1941, about 20 ships of the Japanese N.Y.K. shipping line made the transpacific crossing to Seattle, and it is estimated that they carried more than 1,000 refugees to these shores.

Although some of the passengers of that first voyage previously met for 40th and 50th anniversary celebrations, this was the first time attempt to locate all who made the crossing before it closed in 1941. Reunion organizer and passenger Ernie Stiefel started the reunion with a short speech.

"Five of us came on the first boat on Aug. 3, 1940: Fred Adler and Carrie Reibman, Ernie Schlesinger, Fred Hirschel and myself. Others came in the months following," Stiefel said. "This is the day to reminisce about the trip, celebrate our 60 years in the United States and talk about our life experiences in this country."

Reibman, 11, her brother Fred Adler, 14, her father Moritz Adler, who had worked

in the textile business in Germany, and her mother all arrived together. "We came here with nothing," said Reibman. "When we got here, my father fell in love with Seattle."

An article in the Aug. 4, 1940, issue of the *Seattle Times*, said, "When someone asked what they thought of Hitler, young Alfred drew himself up very straight and said: 'We are Jews!'"

Schlesinger arrived when he was 14 with his father Karl and his mother Katherine. His father had been working for a bank for 60 years and they had lived in Hildesheim before they came to Seattle.

In the same *Seattle Times* article about the Adlers, it discussed the Schlesingers' saying, "Karl, standing beside his luggage, in a new country at an age when most men are thinking of retirement, was asked to tell of the things that forced him to leave Germany. His silence was more eloquent than words could have been. He stared and then, after a few words, without humor, he shrugged. 'We do not wish to say,' his son said in English, hurriedly. 'We do not wish to say, please.'"

Many of the immigrants said they had never heard of Seattle when they arrived.

"It was a trip into the unknown," said Walter Oppenheimer. He said that his first memory of Seattle was of his feeling that he could say anything he wanted and that Seattle was a great place.

"I was welcomed by the Jewish community," said Ernie Stiefel, who came to America alone. "They found me a job." He said that he earned \$12 per week to start. "If I wouldn't have made this journey, I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you," he said.

"I think everyone here has done their share to make this a better world," said Oppenheimer. He said that the group was unusual because, despite their hardships, they worked hard and got an education. "I'm very delighted that we could have this group together," he said. "Immigrants do make a difference."

The Paasche Family

by Rena Krasno

In *Points East*, vol. 15, No. 2 of July, 2000, I wrote a short article about Maria Paasche. It aroused the interest of several readers who contacted me for more details, which unfortunately I did not have at the time. Since then, however, I was delighted to read in the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* (dated 22.9.2000) a long article on the subject by Eilat Negev. I have now translated and condensed part of it for our readers.

It will be remembered that Maria Paasche was a German gentile, the daughter of General Kurt von Hammerstein, who had unsuccessfully planned to kill Hitler. He was not caught, but the Nazis always treated him with suspicion. In spite of personal danger, von Hammerstein secretly informed his daughter, Maria, whenever Nazis planned anti-Jewish actions. She would then urgently warn Jews to hide. Maria later married a Jew, John Paasche, a student of oriental languages. During the war, they moved from Germany to Japan.

Four children were born to the Paasches in Japan: a son, Gottfried, and three daughters. For the purposes of his article, Eilat Negev interviewed Gottfried (age 63), now Professor of Sociology at York University, Toronto, Canada.

"In reality, I was a Japanese child with blond hair and blue eyes," Gottfried Paasche explained. "Japanese was my first language. I knew nothing about Germany nor my family there."

"The Japanese were suspicious of my parents and the Nazi German community boycotted us. We lived in poverty. My father supported us with difficulty by obtaining translation work. My mother, who had experienced hunger in World War I, taught our family how to survive. I remember how she showed us which edible mushrooms we should pick . . . Often, because of the lack of food, our mother was forced to send us to live with other families. Once, she even put us in an orphanage."

Negev writes: "The Paasches wanted to leave Japan as early as 1941, as did many of their anti-Nazi friends, but because of their German nationality many countries denied them an entry visa." Finally, in 1948, they managed to emigrate to the U.S.

more years for the British East India Company to establish a "factory" (trading station) in Canton, and even then only under terms of considerable restriction.

After the Portuguese revolution of 1974, Lisbon tried hard to convince China to take Macao back, but Beijing refused for reasons of their own. Two years later, however, Portugal was allowed to withdraw Macao's status as a province and it became a local government. The Portuguese in their worldwide colonial rule never assumed the "white man's burden" as did the English, and their style was more gentle and relaxed; they did not frown on intermarriage with local populations, thus minimizing racial problems. It is as well to note that the Japanese did not even occupy Macao during the Pacific War.

Which all brings us back to the thousands of Macanese Portuguese living outside of Macao, in Hong Kong and Shanghai. By all accounts there were some 3,000 Portuguese in Shanghai where they lived with other foreigners as neighbors – in schools, business and especially in recreational and sporting circles. These Portuguese represented some four centuries of race mixtures: Latins from Lisbon, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos and even from Portuguese Goa in India. None reached financial wealth of the leaders of our Baghdadi community, nor of the Europeans, but they were well represented in salaried positions in the city's numerous commercial and banking establishments.

By 1945, with war's end, various foreign communities began to break up, they included the Portuguese as well as the three Jewish ones: Baghdadis, the Russians and the German and Austrian refugees who found in Shanghai a sanctuary from Nazi persecution. By contrast, the Portuguese presence in Hong Kong remained for another half-century.

In Israel, Russian Jewish immigrants established the Association of Former Residents in China [*Igud Yotzei Sin*] 48 years ago, the Sephardi Division joining it in 1996. Then I began to ponder about the fate of the Portuguese who had left Shanghai. When the Old China Hands group held a reunion in Las Vegas in 1996, I noticed that the leading spirit behind it was Mario J. Machado of Los Angeles. The name rang a bell, and just a few months ago I wrote to him. I told him of the activities of the IYS and wondered why such a group was

not formed by Portuguese expatriates from China. In his reply he confirmed that the Portuguese did have such an organization headed by Frederic A. Silva based in San Francisco.

My later contact with Silva bore fruit: he even sent me a book he had written about the history of the Macanese Portuguese and his dealing with the Portuguese expatriates now spread all over the world.

The activities of these two China-born Portuguese was an eye-opener, and I realized that those Portuguese scattered all over the world have finally faced their Macanese identity and that they were proud of their heritage. I also realized that the Shanghai Portuguese and the Jews there had an affinity which both had never realized. The IYS and the Portuguese are both pursuing the same goals – of keeping their sense of community, maintaining communications with each other and preserving their history and heritage.

I had some inkling of this affinity as a young man, when I realized that many of the names of Macanese Portuguese were Jewish. Names like Pinto, Lopez, Perez, Fonseca, Carvalho, and Castro, among others, were those borne by many of the Jews who, in the 15th century, were forcibly converted to Catholicism in Portugal. These so-called Marranos still faced discrimination at home and many preferred to become crewmen in the ships manned by the adventurous Portuguese explorers who were instrumental in founding colonies stretching from the Americas and Africa to the Far East. It was obvious that many of these Macanese had Jewish forebears. Names don't die off easily.

I had an experience in reverse shortly after the 1974 Portuguese coup when my young tourist bureau escort in Lisbon casually told me that he had 'Jewish blood' in his veins. "How can that be?" I asked him, "Your name is Igracias." "Well, he said, when the Jews were converted, many shed their former names and took on non-Jewish ones: Igracias, he said, means "church."

One of my fondest memories of growing up in Shanghai in the 1920's was of life in the Quinsan Garden area of Hongkew. My earliest recollection was of our Chinese-style house in a lane off Quinsan Road in an area populated by many Sephardi Jews (the Russian Jews then lived mainly in the Wayside section of Hongkew), Portuguese

and a variety of other nationalities. As children, it was of course ideal in that even if our parents did not mix, that certainly wasn't the case with us.

As our family grew, we moved out to nearby No. 18 Yuhang Road in the midst of what was known as "Little Tokyo" because of the preponderance of Japanese. Our next-door neighbor was a three-generation Portuguese family headed by Mr. Santos (more of him later) while across the street in two newer houses there lived, separately, two Portuguese spinster sisters. As a young lad, I recall how my father would never fail to tip his hat when he met either of the two elegant ladies or Mrs. Santos on the street.

Our relations with the Santos family were amicable; their married son lived with them and congratulations came when their first grandson, Vitor, was born. Mr. Santos lost no opportunity to strut up and down the street with the baby in his arms. It so happened at this time we had a pet red rooster in our backyard. Initially it was meant for the pot, but for some reason he was allowed to live and we all loved to feed him and listen to his morning call. Not so with Mr. Santos, and our relations with the old gentleman became somewhat tense. Finally, one morning, we heard him bellowing from his back balcony overlooking our yard: "I say, Reverend Jacob (my father was a rabbi), do something about your bloody cock!" Asked what was the matter, Mr. Santos, generally not an irascible person, replied: "He wakes me up too early and he also wakes up Vitor." He continued to complain about the "bloody cock" which never failed to cause endless hilarity among us kids.

My father would patiently explain: "I try to talk to him in Arabic, English and Shanghainese, but it doesn't help. Even A-Chan (our Cantonese cook) speaks to him in Cantonese. What more can we do?" But the day came when the matutinal clarion call of our venerable chanticler was silenced – we found him dead one morning. A few days passed – quiet on the Santos front. Then one morning, the call came: "What happened to that bloody cock?" Dad replied: "He just dropped dead!" This time all we heard was a loud grunt of satisfaction. In the end it was my mother who was the big winner. A-Chan cut off the rooster's spurs, then took them to a jeweler who joined them with a gold band, affixed a gold pin and my mother wore it as a brooch for years to come.

All went well and our Hongkew neighborhood led a placid existence. Came 1931, the Yangtze River burst its banks at Hankow and there were floods along 1000 miles; I celebrated my bar mitzvah; most importantly the Japanese invaded Manchuria and in January 1932 the hostilities reached Shanghai and lasted until May. Our family, together with many others who included our Portuguese neighbors, left Hongkew and took refuge on the other side of Soochow Creek. We moved to a home near Seymour Road and from then on we lost contact with our Portuguese neighbors, who like others of their community mostly found homes elsewhere. Those who remained until August 1937 when Japanese-Chinese hostilities again broke out, were forced to move out in their turn.

After graduation, my contacts with the Portuguese in school ended for the time being, but briefly renewed when, while holding a couple of odd jobs, I decided to attend a secretarial school headed by Miss Figueriredo. She was a formidable-looking Portuguese spinster who turned out to be somewhat of a martinet, but a most efficient teacher. It proved to be helpful shortly afterwards when I became a reporter for *The China Press* where I could boast of being virtually the only touch-typist and shorthand writer.

It must have been sometime in 1939 that the Clube Lusitano moved to much improved premises in the French Concession, and I got a call one day from its secretary inviting me to attend and report on the opening festive banquet. I happened to be the only reporter at the rather swank banquet, but my report was certainly the best appearing in the next morning's papers. The other not-so-conscientious reporters made do with the Portuguese secretary's telephoned version of the event.

Another Portuguese-Jewish connection came to my knowledge only recently in Israel after a lapse of more than half a century. After the war's end in 1945, the Shanghai Jewish School was short of teachers and was forced to employ some locally-educated staff, among them a Portuguese mathematics tutor. A colleague of mine at the New Israel's Messenger told me that the teacher, named Da Costa, "was simply wonderful; I hated math, but under his

tuition I came to love the subject . . . he was patient and explained things so clearly that I ended up with high grades in that subject when I passed my Cambridge School Certificate exams." I also learned recently from another person that the Shanghai Jewish Theatrical Association frequently rented the hall at the Clube Lusitano to stage its plays there.

During the war years I had rather a close relationship with two Portuguese, Guido Botelho and Johnny Aldeguer, whose older brother, Tom, had been the local correspondent of Reuter's news agency. What was common to us was that there was no trace in our manner of that which many foreigners in Shanghai could not hide in their dealings with the Chinese and other Asians, coupled with the fact that we could all speak the local Shanghai dialect.

Growing up in a cosmopolitan Shanghai with its mix of varied religions, I felt comfortable as a Jew during the Christmas season. There was no tension about wishing a "Merry Christmas" to our Portuguese and other Christian neighbors. Later on, we were only amused when our Chinese neighbors would wish my father "Melly Klismus" to which he would reply "Same to you." So it was with Guido and Johnny. It was no problem when they invited me to come with their families to Christmas Eve Mass, as they were observant Catholics. There were about four such occasions at the St. Pierre Cathedral on Avenue Dubail, and I knew that they appreciated my attendance. They understood even more when I explained that some Jews would invite their Christian friends to their Passover seders.

Friendships such as these came to swift end with the war's end and the various foreign communities disintegrated, their members seeking new lives abroad. I later learned the Botelhos were to emigrate to Brazil, while the Aldeguers planned to leave for Hong Kong. For these two families of Portuguese descent it was the end of a four-century-old saga; as to myself, it was the end of a history that lasted, by comparison, a mere century.

[Sasson Jacoby is Editor of the Igud Yotsei Sin (*New Israel's Messenger*) of Jerusalem, Israel.]

On Josef Meisinger

by Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Matzat
 excerpted from *StudeO* (Studienwerk Deutsches Leben in Ostasien e.V.), April 2000
 translated from German by Rena Krasno

[Note: Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Matzat is the President of Studienwerk Deutsches Leben in Ostasien e.V. Contributions to the journal are mostly from Germans who formerly lived in East Asia. Some are 'Old China Hands.' His article is in response to one written by Hans-Waldemar Crome on his family's experiences in Japan.]

In the last issue of *StudeO* (Dec. 1999, page 16), we published extracts from the memoirs of the Crome family which support the thesis that Josef Meisinger, who was Police Attache in Tokyo from 1941-1945 (but de facto a Gestapo representative), had murdered "hundreds of German emigrants." This statement has upset some people, and rightly so. To open the discussion on this subject, I should like to state my preliminary thesis: Crome's contention is wrong.

. . . It cannot be denied that before Meisinger and his wife arrived in Tokyo in April 1941, he had committed crimes in Poland. Until April 1941, he was Commander of the Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police) of the Warsaw District. After assassinations (or attempted assassinations) on German citizens, Meisinger always had dozens of Polish hostages shot and Jews deported to concentration camps. This earned him the sobriquet 'The Butcher of Warsaw.' That is why he was extradited to Poland after the war and executed in the summer of 1947. Thus justice was served.

Meisinger's transfer to Tokyo appears to have been a demotion. It seems that Himmler was so horrified by Meisinger's actions that he wanted him shot (Freyeisen 466, Wickert 363), but Heydrich supposedly intervened on his behalf and he was shipped off to Tokyo. There he apparently considered himself responsible not only for Japan, but also as Gestapo Chief for entire East Asia – which included Manchuria and Japanese occupied China. His duty was to "supervise the activities of all Germans in the Far East, to ensure their loyalty to the Party and the Fuehrer, and to punish those who displayed half-hearted loyalty or disobedience" (Wasserstein 91).

"Change into your overalls and clean up this driveway and everything in the garden. Today is Friday." I said, I know. So, after that was finished, he said, "Change and sit down in the kitchen and eat the soup with the maid." It was Friday evening. This was an Orthodox family. I forgot their name right away – I don't want to remember. Because, when I saw from the kitchen the living room and the dining table set up with the candles and everything for Shabbos on Friday evening, and I see the boys with the yarmulkes come in, and I sit there with the maid and eat my soup? No! [He slaps his knee].

I waited a little while until everything was set up for Friday evening service. The lady went to bless the candles but before she did that I stood up and I said, "Hold it right here! You are not going to bless the candles tonight. I tell you because you have forgotten that you hired a Jewish refugee from the Holocaust in Germany. And you tell him to sit down with the maid and slurp down the soup? No! I didn't want to spoil your Shabbat," I told them. "But, I do not want to work for you. I do not want to sit around the table here. You call now, the chairman of the Jewish committee of Albuquerque, to take me to a hotel!" And they did. And I left the place. It was the first experience I had here in America.

I saw an ad in the paper. They were looking for a man at the Chicken and Broiler Farm outside of Albuquerque on the highway. I had a little bit of money in my pocket and I went down there. I arrived there with my suitcase and everything. I had called them first and they said, "Yes, come out." They gave me a nice room and some nice things to eat. I worked there but not too hard, just feeding the chickens and so forth. So I worked there several months and then I got bronchitis. I could not work in the chicken coop because the chickens could catch it. I didn't know that but I learned this. So, what should I do? He said I could build a cesspool. A cesspool? I didn't know at that time what it was. But I found out! I worked there several days at the cesspool. My cold got better and I said, "I've had enough of this here." I told the boss I want to leave.

I called a taxi and I went downtown to the YMCA. I got a room and a job in a pharmacy, which was Jewish, to pack some stuff in the basement. I worked there for a little bit of money, not too much. Albuquerque is not a town to make big money. Actually,

I worked for peanuts. Next door was a recruiting sergeant from the United States Army and we became friends. He said to me one day, "Why don't you join the Armed Forces?" I said, I? Why should I join the Armed Forces? He said, "You get work, you get your teeth fixed, you get your medical, you get clothing, you get everything, and your monthly pay." I didn't know. He came again around me and asked me and I said okay. I made my I.Q. test with native Indians in Albuquerque. When I finished that, I had to go to basic training, to Fort Ord.

Then, after I finished basic training I had to go overseas. I was asked where I wanted to go by the officer of our area. I said I'd like to go to Germany. He said, "No, you cannot go to Germany. You are Jewish. We won't send any Jewish boys because you will go to your hometown. You will say 'Hey, you! I am a U.S. Army soldier. You have done something to my ancestors! I'll give you this.'" [He holds up a fist]. That was out. So I had to go to Korea. I was 16 months in Korea, on the line. And then in Honolulu. Then to the Presidio. After two and a half years I discharged as a staff sergeant. I married my wife and worked as a gardener for 14 years. Later I had a wholesale flower business.

In 1988, I was visiting (in Germany) with my wife, this particular place where my grandparents lived with my aunt. We were invited by the city and mayor and the working circle. Fifty years after the burning of the synagogue there was a remembrance reunion. This city invited Jewish people that are now living in Argentina, Peru, Israel, Holland the United States. There were 36 people – people I grew up with that came to this reunion. I can't tell you . . . this was *really* something that they did there. This was not the Nazis anymore. This was a new generation. It was after 50 years, remember. When we came together . . . I can't tell you . . . I saw these people that I grew up with, Jewish people . . . I cannot tell you more than that!

In 1938, my grandparents with my aunt, were taken out of this house to the transport area where they take the German Jews from this small town. Everything in that house was demolished, destroyed, or the Nazis took it. My grandparents died a natural death in Berlin and were buried in what was formerly East Germany. My aunt vanished in concentration camp, the sister of my father. And so did my mother's brother

and his family from Dusseldorf, and a young cousin who was just married. Everyone was done away. This was it.

It . . . is . . . absolutely, when you read all this, when it comes to your mind, when you ask me these questions, it is absolutely horrible! It is not visible that I say what human beings can do to torture people . . . people cannot make a picture of it. They don't know what really has happened in Germany and in Austria, in Poland in the Warsaw ghetto, in Russia, in the Ukraine, in Babi Yar where they took them naked and set them down and put them in the ravine. You probably know about that. This is absolutely . . . I . . . I cannot understand today, at my age, how human beings can be that beastly . . . absolutely *beastly!* It's . . . I cannot describe . . . what . . . a person, a human being can do to some others.

I had a tattoo on my arm, but now it's gone. I had it done away with by a doctor when I went into the United States Army. I could have kept it you know but . . . I had it right here. Still, I can feel it.

To Freedom Via Seattle

by Jessica Davis
 excerpted from *The Jewish Transcript*
 August 25, 2000

On the morning of Aug. 3, 1940, shortly after the fall of France, a Japanese passenger liner, the Hikawa Maru, docked at Pier 89 in Seattle, bringing with it a group of 82 German and Lithuanian Jewish immigrants. Some of those who arrived in Seattle settled here; others had destinations in other parts of the country and South America. About 60 of the new arrivals stayed temporarily at the Frye Hotel. The National Refuge Commission assisted the immigrants in making their temporary stay free from worry and helped them make the points of their final destinations.

The ship they traveled on is Japan's only surviving ocean passenger liner. It was a 24,700-ton vessel and is currently acting as a museum in Yokohama, Japan.

In the Aug. 9, 1940 issue of *The Jewish Transcript*, an article about their arrival said, ". . . those proposing to come to America must cross Siberia and take passage on some line that crosses the Pacific. The U.S.

We have to leave. You have to go to Shanghai, we have a ticket for you, and we go to Cuba, Havana." We couldn't get a ticket together. It was the only chance to get out. I hadn't seen my other family at all because if the Nazis see you they pick you up and take you back to the concentration camp.

I had to travel to Jastrow where I was registered at the police station. I asked about the farmer I worked for. "They are no more alive," they said. I was scared to death and said nothing. Then, I gave them all of my papers from Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. They did not let me keep anything from the camps. I got my passport and went back to Berlin.

When I came out of the concentration camp, my father told me any Jew could leave Germany but they had to pay high finance money to the German Reich. That's what my father did. He had money and he had to pay for my stepmother, for me, high finance payment. Many didn't have that money and did not know what (was) going to happen. We could not get anybody else in the family out of Germany. Nobody. My grandparents, my aunt . . . gone.

I left Germany from Berlin the 25th of December, 1938. It was a Christmas holiday and everybody went on vacation. My father brought me to the train and he bought me a big newspaper. I had a cap on because they shaved off all my hair at the concentration camp. And I went into this compartment on the train and there were lots of Nazis, high officers, sitting there. I hated to say anything and I did not. I did not want to make any conversation with these people. Then one of the officers, the Nazi, started talking to me. "Sir, you're going north on vacation?" I said yes. "It's a nice time now." I said yes, it's a nice time. "Where you going?" "To Munich" "Oh, it's a beautiful town! We were also there." I didn't say where I was really going. Then the conversation was finished and I looked at my newspaper. My heart was very fast.

When we came to the station after Munich we had to transfer the train. We went to the border to be inspected again by the Nazis. They inspected me, nothing. We went on a Yugoslavian train which went to Italy and we were picked up by the Jewish community of Trieste. I had a very nice big room and good food. Also I got a little bit of money from relatives from Holland in the bank in Italy and I went to Rome, Naples and Venice to see all that before I

went on this boat to go to Shanghai. There were people from Austria and other places on the boat.

The first stop on the Suez Canal was Port Said. I went to a Jewish store and asked him what was the best way to go to Palestine from there. He asked where I was from and I told him. He said, "You can't go there. The British will pick you up and put you in a camp!" So, I went back to the ship and we went through the Suez Canal to the port of Aden.

I will never forget this. We went that night to a small town. It was very warm in the evening and shops were open. A shop had Jewish Arabs. One man gave me a yarmulke and he put a prayer book in front of me. He put the Shema Yisrael in front of me and said, "Read this!" And I read it. He said, "Oh, so you are Jewish!" I said of course I am Jewish. Then, he asked me if I had come out of a concentration camp and I told him, "Yes. I want to go to Palestine." He said, "No way! The British are going to get you!" At that time the British were very uneasy about Palestine. So, he packed up a big box of clothes and things for me and I went back to the ship.

We arrived in Shanghai in 1939 and were placed in a former Chinese school which was remodeled as a camp where we slept. We fixed up this camp for incoming refugees with toilets, a big kitchen and other things. The American Joint Distribution Committee gave us money to fix it up.

More ships with refugees came in. Somebody said eighteen thousand. German, Austrian, Polish, all kinds of Jewish refugees came into Shanghai. Russians were there from the 1917 Revolution. The Russians had businesses.

In the beginning we were well taken care of. We had a hospital and good doctors. We had a school called the Kadoori School. The conditions were not excellent but we made the best of it. I worked in the big kitchen and started to learn to cook. This was all strictly Kosher. Rabbi Ashkenazi, Victor Sassoon and other groups in Shanghai helped us with this particular issue. So, time went by with our work, with our pleasure, we had all kinds of things to do in Shanghai. In 1941, Pearl Harbor started and then we didn't have much food anymore, mainly red beans and rice.

Once I had a barber, a Chinese, a very nice man. He spoke good English. And he invited us for the Chinese New Year. It was the only time I went with the Chinese. Chinese New Year to them was different for us. It was very nice, but otherwise we did not go too much into the Chinese population. Other people, as far as I know, worked for Chinese companies. And some people learned to speak good Chinese, too.

I found out that my parents arrived in New York in '41 and sent me an affidavit (to join them). But it was too late. In November they started the war. All ships were gone and we couldn't go away. I was stranded in Shanghai for eight years.

At the time of the Japanese invasion in Shanghai, there was a Japanese official by the name of Ghoya. He was very tricky to the Jewish community. [Ghoya controlled the people's ability to leave the Jewish ghetto.] Ghoya said to a Jewish refugee, "You are a grave digger. A very honest profession. I give you a new pass. But first, you bring me a list of customers!" [laughter] "A grave digger!" Ghoya was not very pleasant. He spit on people. To be a volunteer with the Pao Chia, we had to be okayed by this Ghoya!

The 'Pao Chia' was an organization for refugees where many of us were appointed to go on the street, like policeman. We had to wear this particular arm band [he still has his and puts it on] and go on the street so that nothing happened to anybody. We were Jewish men; we were all volunteers. We didn't have any guns. We were only keeping order, you know. Nothing happened. By the end of the war, 1945-46, I quit working for the Joint and I went to the American forces to work for them. They hired refugees to do the work the American boys didn't want to do anymore. I had to learn to drive motor vehicles, and I did. I was very well paid but later Chiang Kai-shek kept the dollars and gave us Shanghai money. In 1946 they opened the consulate in Shanghai again, and I got my paper to go to the United States. In 1947, in November, I left on the Liberty ship for San Francisco.

I got from the office here in San Francisco, from the Jewish community office, a ticket to go to Albuquerque to do some Jewish people's garden work. I went on a Friday and the Jewish community chairman brought me to this place. The man of this particular place told me right away,

Wasserstein describes possible punishments as follows: "Several suspect Germans were kidnapped and placed on board German blockade runners that sailed from Japan to Europe." Here he mentions "several" Germans who were not murdered but – in case the ships eventually did reach Europe and were not captured – were drafted into military service and sent to one of the fronts.

In fact, Gestapo people in Japan and China operated in host countries, had no sovereign rights and thus could not arrest anybody. This could only be accomplished if they convinced the *Kempetai* (Japanese secret police) that the German in question was a "dangerous person." The easiest accusation was one of espionage, like in the case of Dr. Ivar Lissner in Harbin, because the Japanese during the war had a hysterical fear of spies – as did the other totalitarian dictatorships (on the biography of Lissner, see Wasserstein 229-230). Or, one produced false accusations, as in the case of the journalist Werner Crome. There is no doubt that Meisinger was a monster and a potentially dangerous threat to all Germans living in Japan and China, as Erwin Wickert emphatically describes in his memoirs.

. . . Maul (*Dr. Maul, author of a dissertation on Japan and the Jews. See bibliography. R.K.*) was able to see Japanese lists which included foreigners imprisoned by the *Kempetai* until 1945. Among them were some 25 names of German, Austrian, Swiss and French citizens. During the war, in all of Japan, there were some 100 German Jews who, however, had arrived before 1938. Meisinger also attempted to damage their situation. Maul describes in his dissertation the Frank case. (*The Sino-Judaic Institute has obtained for its archives at the Hoover Institution, Stanford, the entire Frank family files. R.K.*). In the years 1938-1941 Japan did not accept any European Jewish immigrants, only those on transit to the International Settlement in Shanghai, where more than 16,000 survived the Third Reich.

In his book "Secret War in Shanghai," Wasserstein describes the espionage and counter-espionage organizations of all the foreign powers represented there. It comes as no surprise that everyone spied on everyone as did the "friendly" Axis powers Japan and Germany. There is no doubt that the Japanese and the Gestapo in Shanghai

also put in place Jewish immigrant collaborators.

What makes Crome's claim so unbelievable, is the statement that Meisinger had "killed hundreds of German emigrants." The word "emigrants" could only refer to the some 16,000 Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria. In the meantime, voluminous memoir literature about their fate has been published. Had the "hundreds of these emigrants" in Shanghai been killed by Meisinger, this would surely have been described in detail in these books. The big standard work on this theme is that of David Kranzler (see p. 21). It includes extensive records of facts and names and – imagine! – neither Meisinger nor any other Shanghai Gestapo people are mentioned anywhere!

. . . Crome's statement that Jewish victims were summoned from Shanghai to Tokyo is also incorrect. Jewish emigrants in China lost their German citizenship at the end of 1941, and they were thus stateless. Meisinger had no possibility to summon stateless refugees to any place.

It follows that Meisinger had not killed a single Jewish refugee between 1941-1945.

. . . A second widely spread undocumented story is that Meisinger had planned to liquidate all Jewish emigrants in Shanghai, but that the Japanese authorities did not agree to do so. This legend has two sources. The Jewish emigrant and communist Alfred Dreifuss, who returned after 1945 to the DDR, writes in his memoirs (published in Leipzig in 1979) about Meisinger and his consorts: "On the occasion of an espionage case handled by the American Military Court in 1946/47, the author of this report who had worked as a reporter for the emigrants' press and witnessed the proceedings, had the opportunity to see the records of the agreements between the above-named and the Japanese, as well as sketches for the construction of a gas chamber for the emigrants in the island of Pootung on the Huangpu River" (republished in Adolph and Merker, 1998, p. 430). The difficulty, however, is that there is no documentation supporting this oral claim.

. . . The second source for this legend is a report that Japanese Vice-Consul Shibata produced in 1942. He was a member of the Jewish Affairs Bureau, that included

only Japanese. One representative each from the army, navy and airforce, the Consulate and the Shanghai Council participated. Likewise in 1942, another committee was created that represented all Jewish groups. Its members were: Fritz Kauffmann, Robert Peritz, Joseph Bitker, Ellis Hayim, Michael Speelman, Boris Topas, Dr. Felix Kardegg. One day in June or July 1942, Shibata secretly called a meeting of this committee. It took place at Speelman's home. Kranzler (p. 478-79) was the first to publish this story, in which he evaluated notes made later by Kauffmann, Bitker and Peritz which – as often happens in such cases – seriously contradict one another. Shibata disclosed to the participants that the German Consulate, particularly the Commercial Attache Puttkammer, was pressing the Japanese to "isolate" the Jews either in the Hongkou section of the city, or on an island in the Yangtse Delta. (Most probably the Puttkammer in question was Baron Jesco von Puttkammer, who had nothing to do either with the Consulate or with the Gestapo. He was the head of the German Information Office). Shibata advised those present to make high Japanese authorities in Shanghai or Japan aware of these plans, so that their execution could be prevented. After this so-called Emergency Meeting, Fritz Kauffmann contacted Curt Brahn, a German Jewish businessman, who came to Shanghai shortly after World War I. Kauffmann did not know that Brahn was a Japanese agent, who betrayed everything to the Japanese Gendarmerie. Thereupon the Gendarmerie imprisoned all participants in the meeting for several weeks. (*Actually they were kept for much longer periods. Boris Topas, was singled out and tortured for 10 months in the infamous Bridge House. He came out a physical and mental wreck. R.K.*)

In Kranzler's description, one notes that neither Meisinger nor other Gestapo people, nor murder plans were mentioned.

. . . Wasserstein (p. 144) quotes from the memoirs of Laura Margolies, the representative of the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, that after this Emergency Meeting Peritz visited her and told her that a Japanese action was forthcoming. They had recently developed a plan whereby Jewish emigrants would be loaded on ships, taken to sea and drowned. (Margolies mistakenly calls Shibata 'Katawa.' Wasserstein repeats this wrong name.)

Research made during the last decade shows (Freiseisen 470-75) that some of the participants of the Emergency Meeting were dubious figures. Peritz was supposedly a Japanese informant and, Laura Margolies called him a Jewish emigrant from Germany with a very bad reputation (Wasserstein 144).

... Shibata apparently always had money problems and was a minor blackmailer and crook. The story of the supposed meeting of Meisinger with the Japanese members of the Jewish Affairs Bureau in June 1942, where Meisinger proposed the liquidation of Shanghai Jews, was invented by Shibata, perhaps together with Peritz. The motive, Laura Margolies suggests, was that both had apparently hoped that the participants in the so-called Emergency Meeting would negotiate with the Japanese of the Jewish Affairs Bureau and pay them to stop the planned anti-Jewish action. Both hoped to reap financial profit (Wasserstein 144) from these dealings. . . . Shibata was transferred to Japan.

... Meisinger was not in Shanghai in May, nor in June or July 1942. According to an investigation after the war he stated that he was there only in May and September 1941, as well as in the autumn of 1944 (Freiseisen 470).

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The Last Empress

(continued from page 1)

Namir attributes such a complementary attitude towards her to the fact that from the very beginning she wanted to be an ambassador only to China and no other country. "This captured their hearts," she says, "another reason is that she served as a minister in Rabin's government, a person held in high esteem by the Chinese."

The secret of Ora's success at social events lies in her spontaneous and hearty behaviour. She says what she thinks, even if her words do not always agree with what the guests would like to hear. She says that it was this attitude of hers that is responsible in building up of two-way confidence. "They know that I speak to them the way I do, because I love them and care for China."

It is said that even the President Jiang Zemin has a special attitude towards Namir. "When I meet him at social events, he shows a tremendous friendliness towards me," she says, "he is a warm person and makes you feel that he has all the time in the world for you. He is the head of one of the Five Great Powers, but he makes his guests feel that he speaks and listens to everyone of them personally. He was mayor of Shanghai during the Second World War, when 30,000 Jews found shelter in his city, and he remained a friend of the Jews till this very day."

"How did the ambassador idea emerge?"

"I never thought of becoming an ambassador. The necessity to work within the strict framework of protocol is not my religion. China, too, did not impress me too much during my first visit there. It was during my second visit as the head of the delegation to U.N. Women's Conference that I fell in love with China. I realized how fascinating the country is. When the Israeli primary election results were announced, I knew that this is what I wanted."

"Did you consult your friends?"

"Since the day my husband passed away, I consult only myself and make decisions alone. I went to Barak (then foreign minister) and told him that I wanted to quit the Knesset and go to China. He was shocked and said that my leaving will be a loss to the party, as there was none to do the things

I did. I told him that there is no vacuum in politics. He asked, 'why China of all countries?' I answered: 'This is a country to my taste.' 'We'll try,' he said."

"I was offered Brussels, London, Tokyo," she continued, "but I persisted: 'it's China or nothing!' In those days a seat in the Knesset rated higher than a position of an ambassador to China. This was my trump card: I will vacate my place in the Knesset in exchange for the position of an ambassador to Beijing."

"Did you have any difficulties due to your being a woman ambassador?"

"For a woman it is always more difficult to get around than for a man, but in my case it was quite the opposite. My being a woman helped me in my capacity of an ambassador, especially as an ambassador of a country with a strong army."

In comparison to the posh farewell banquets, receptions and parties thrown for and by Ora Namir, her parting from Beijing will be marked by her Israeli colleagues by no more than a modest *lehayim* in the embassy library. This less than cool goodbye clearer than anything wraps up a stormy four-year period of a tense relationship between the ambassador and a good part of her staff. Ora Namir always drew enemy fire – even in China.

Hans J. Arons Story

(continued from page 1)

particular Catholic hired a lot of Jews. They showed up on motorcycles and rounded us up. We had to go in double-time to the police station which was a few miles away. We were placed in a cellar and treated very badly. The next day we were brought to the train to the new concentration camp, Buchenwald. I was for 15 months doing hard labor.

We started Buchenwald. It was opened and we had to build it up. Our work was to chip bricks and rocks for the road work and new buildings. We did not know what we (were) building. Later we found out. We helped build the gas chambers.

I got sick. They had no hospital there. At that time, in 1936, they transferred me in the winter to another concentration camp, Sachsenhausen, near Berlin. They had a so-called hospital and I was entered there. The commander of this concentration

camp visited this hospital and asked me what kind of a profession I have. I said I studied gardening. "Gardening? A Jew a gardener!" he shouted. "They cannot even handle a shovel!" I said, "Sir, I can prove it when I get better!" I wanted to show him what a Jew could really do! And he jumped with his boots and he said, "I am going to test you when you get better." And it happened so.

When I got better, I had to work on some gardening with some other young people outside the camp area where these officers of the Nazis lived. There were some young Jewish teenagers who started a havaruh to go to Palestine. They were also caught by the Nazis and brought to this particular concentration camp. And these young people, I had to show what to do. We worked together and did what we could do in a very good way. It was very well done. When it was finished, I was placed in a so-called *potato kitchen* and didn't have to go outside and do any hard work. What I did in the potato kitchen? I peeled potatoes for the famous Potato Peel Soup that we got in the evening in the concentration camp.

There were other people – gentiles such as bible readers, Catholics and others the Nazis didn't like. They worked with us. So, we were working, working, working, everyday out and in. In the morning early we got some black coffee and some bread. And this was it till the evening. So, then in the evening we didn't do anything. We went to sleep. We had a bunk or we laid on the straw on the floor. And that was a day in the concentration camp.

In the beginning, and I have to stress this, it was not so bad. But after the 9th of November, Kristallnacht, the Crystal Night, when the masses came in, it was terrible. Absolutely frightening! The Germans, or the Nazis better I say, in a very drastic order by the Fuhrer Adolph Hitler, were to bring Jewish people into the concentration camps; destroy their synagogues and whatever and whatnot. So the ninth of November, the tenth of November 1938, was a very, very bad day for us in the concentration camp.

There were many tortures. One torture was done by the inmates themselves. In the morning when we would have to stand in line in front of the commander of the concentration camp, some of the elderly people lost their nerve. As you probably

know, the fences around the concentration camps had high voltage wire and they ran into this and burned up. That is what happened to many Jewish people, they lost their nerve. Elderly people mainly. They had a pit with a big board across it. This pit was full of chalk and you had to sit down there and do your business. And when you weren't liked by one of these Nazis – they were always watching us, you know – they pulled you into this big mess and you drowned in there. Another thing was, they had gallows, but not gallows where you were hanged. They bound you up, put you up and took away what was under your feet and you were hanging by your arms for hours. After a while you were loosened again, and you slumped down on the floor. You were not dead, but you were weak from hanging, you know. This was another torture.

There was a big block where you had to strip down to your pants and one of the guys had a whip and you had to lay over that (block) with your head down, and they whipped you until almost all the blood came out of you. God thanks nothing happened to me on this particular issue.

I felt that as a young man I could survive. But you did not do anything against what the Nazi command has written down. If there was someone I could help . . . maybe under certain circumstances, but it was prohibited. Anything you could do for another prisoner you got punished for. The Nazis administered punishment but the kapos who mainly came from Austria were worse than the German Nazis. There were really very bad. They had rifles. If someone did not follow up in a march into the woods, they pushed them to the ground. Forget about it! You cannot turn back to help them. [His voice begins to rise.] No way! God forbid! No way . . . I do not know what they did with the dead, I only know that you didn't see them anymore.

You never knew from day to day what would happen to you. You didn't hear anything from the outside world. You have your own feeling of what will be the next thing but you really don't know. They might kill you. Nobody knew. NOBODY KNEW what the Nazis were going to do [he shouts].

On the 14th of December, 1938, I went to sleep and early in the morning the kapo came to my bunk and said, "You go home!" I couldn't believe it! And the people I knew

from my barrack, they came running to me and said, "You go home!" I was in a daze. They brought me a bundle of stuff that I had. It was a coat and some pants. He brought me that and my shoes and I had to get quickly dressed. We had these striped uniforms and whatever, you know. And I felt into the jacket. I had a golden ring from my grandparents. Before I entered the concentration camp I knew that they take everything away from you, so I stuck this in the lining. When I got the stuff to put on, I felt something and the ring was there. So, I got dressed and then we had to stand in line. There were several that were released, not I alone.

The commander of this concentration camp, Sachsenhausen, with a stick in his hand and a whip, you know, he said, "You are released now from this concentration camp. *Arbeit Macht Frei*. The Work Makes Free!" And he said, "Wherever you go, you are not to say anything of what you have seen or what you have done, or what happened to you in the concentration camp. If you do talk to other people about the concentration camp, the Gestapo has a long arm. They'll catch you and bring you right back!" Now, I was there from 1936 to December the 14th, 1938. So this was it. I got out near Berlin. In 1938 there were still a lot of Jewish organizations and they knew when somebody from the camp would be released. I had to take the train to go to the place of my parents. When I told them where I had to go, they knew exactly how much it would be. They gave me the money and I didn't have to pay it back.

My father was a sick man so my stepmother went to get the tickets to go out of Germany. It was 1938. She got two tickets for themselves to go to Cuba, Havana. And for me to go to Shanghai.

When I came home I saw the lifts and suitcases ready and I heard my father shouting. A Nazi in full uniform came down, a high officer for the Nazis. He bought the furniture for cheap money. They had to do away with it and the Nazis bought it. I was hiding from the Nazis in a niche beneath the stairs.

After the Nazi left, I went upstairs. I rang the bell. The mother of my stepmother came. She was not Jewish. She opened the door and said, "Hans is here!" My father kissed me, my stepmother too. Then my father took me and said, "You see all this?"