

two made the journey over land together. The rest of the group, after traveling 20 hours by air to India, had boarded a train for Amritsar, the home base of the Sikh religion and the site of Golden Temple. Between the bus strike in New Delhi and the difficulty in finding taxis, group members just barely made it onto the train.

Once in the Tibetan part of Dharamsala, called McLeod Ganj, the group found spirituality could almost be found by breathing in the air.

One can hear the chanting from a nearby temple as often as a cow passes along the dirt road. The woman checking her e-mail alongside visitors to one of the many Internet places is likely to be a Buddhist monk, with a red robe and shaved head. Western practitioners of Buddhism walk pensively, fingering wooden prayer beads. "Free Tibet" signs are everywhere, with guesthouses, shops and restaurants all offering political pamphlets on the Chinese occupation and how one can help.

It is said that when travelers need a refuge from the chaos of India, they come to Dharamsala, where it is a tad less disordered.

But that being said, it is still India in all its extremes. It is a place where a beggar with no legs sits on the side of the road against a stunning backdrop of green mountains. There, too, bargaining for an exquisite carpet or piece of jewelry at unbelievably cheap prices will attract a young woman cradling two naked babies in a filthy piece of cloth. She will wait behind you until you complete the transaction; then she'll follow you until you give her a few rupees.

It is a place where upper-caste Indians from the cities come on vacation, and women in their expensive saris must step over the gaping holes in the dirt road and breathe in the stench of sewage, just like everyone else; where a Kodak moment lies around every corner if it's not totally obscured by the piles of trash, much of which, in many other countries, could be recycled.

As Rudi Halbright of San Francisco put it, "Every time we walk somewhere, it's an adventure."

The group arrived Wednesday afternoon, April 4, with the two late members arriving the following morning. Friday was dominated by Pesach preparations – since

no work could be done on Shabbat. Group members pitched in with Jewish and non-Jewish volunteers from around the world to decorate the main building of the Yong Ling School with original artwork and festive paper cutouts, while others chopped garlic, onions, potatoes and carrots.

Everything was finished by 5 pm, and by the time Shabbat candles were lit last Friday at the KhanaNirvana, the arduous trek to get here and the preparation for the seder were all but forgotten.

Dressed in a new white outfit she bought for \$5, Naomi Fine of Oakland said Shabbat was the first time everyone came together as a group. "We were there with those we knew, and those who were strangers, but we all spoke the same language. As the Shabbat candles got brighter, the sunset faded into the mountains. It was magical."

But Shabbat also created a bit of tension. Ohr Olam's goal is to provide an atmosphere in which the most observant and the most secular Jew will both feel comfortable. It's not an easy task.

With the observant Jews needing to eat their last chametz at a particular time, as halachah dictates, as well as a few other logistical matters, there was no way the entire group could compromise on a way to hold morning Shabbat services together.

The Chochmat group conducted its own services on a lawn near the hotel, and later held its own opportunities for mediation.

There were other issues. One rabbi who had come from South Africa to teach all week as part of the Ohr Olam project left after the first day, convinced that the seder and everything else wouldn't be up to his standards.

He attended the Chabad seder instead.

"It's painful, but not surprising," Zak Zaidman said. "We're a deeply Jewish community that isn't orthodox, and when you rub up against each other, this is bound to happen."

That tension – as well as the differences between Ohr Olam and Chabad – brought all the conflicts being played out in the larger Jewish world to this Himalayan outpost. Dharamsala may indeed be a small village in India, but even so, it also represents a microcosm of the Jewish world.

"If we can challenge each other but still continue on and not call each other names and walk away, then I like to believe we can do it anywhere," Zak Zaidman said.

The seders themselves provided an opportunity to bring people together – Israelis and Americans, Orthodox and Renewal, Jews and Buddhists.

The Jewish visitors were struck by the fact that the snow-capped mountains of such beauty, forming the backdrop for their experience, were the same mountains the Tibetan exiles had to cross over.

Two Buddhist monks were attending their first seder. One of the monks, S. Jumba P., said he appreciated the opportunity to learn more about Judaism, as he wanted to continue the Jewish-Buddhist dialogue. And he was moved by Jazzy's reference to the 11-year-old Panchen Lama. The Santa Monica girl had learned about his plight from Kamenetz.

"It was very sad for me," he said. "She is the same age as him."

At one point during Kamenetz's seminar, the author was asked what had happened in Jewish-Buddhist dialogue since that initial group of Jewish leaders met with the Dalai Lama 11 years ago. Although a reunion is in the works, he said, "You're the future of the dialogue. It doesn't have to happen with rabbis and monks. It's happening at all levels."

That dialogue, too, seemed to continue into the wee hours of the morning, as group members got to know each other, talking about themselves and their own personal journeys. As Zak Zaidman put it, "You can't come on a journey like this without cracking yourself open in some way."

Almost everyone remarked on the compatibility of the people who came.

"The highlights for me have been the personal connections both with people in and outside our group," said Halbright.

Judi Stanton of Oakland said that she debated at first about coming to India because Passover is traditionally a time spent with family. But she found the group "so open and supportive, and everyone is sharing in what their journey is. We've become like a family and a community that we can continue to build upon when we get back."

HISTORY IN THE MAKING: FIRST CHINESE JEWISH DESCENDANT FROM KAIFENG SET TO STUDY IN ISRAEL

by Wendy Abraham

On June 28, 2001, a 23-year-old Chinese Jewish descendant from Kaifeng will disembark at Ben Gurion Airport. And when he does, he will make history. Shi Lei, a member of the Shi clan which dates its existence in Kaifeng to as far back as the Song dynasty (960-1279 C.E.), will be the first Chinese Jewish descendant ever to travel to Israel for the express purpose of studying Judaism and Jewish history. Not since the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among the Jews invited two members of the Zhao clan to travel to Shanghai to relearn Hebrew and Judaism back in 1850 has such a concerted effort to promote knowledge of their Jewish heritage been made. After an intensive Ulpan program in Hebrew over the summer, Shi Lei will begin his studies as a special student at Bar Ilan University, the host of this historic event.

This unprecedented trip has been in the making for close to a year, and has gone through many stages. Over a year ago at an SJI Board meeting I proposed the idea of raising funds for getting this particular young descendant to travel abroad to study Judaism if he were to be accepted by a university in the States. I have known the Shi family since 1983, when I first met its patriarch, Shi Zhongyu, while leading a tour for the American Jewish Congress. The grandfather of Shi Lei, Shi Zhongyu had studied at the National Minorities Institute where he had been recognized as being of Jewish descent. He regaled me with many stories of his childhood and memories of family celebrations and rituals connected to Judaism dating to the early 1900s when I visited alone in 1985. One such story involved a memory of his father painting chicken blood over the doorpost of the family's home in Kaifeng in honor of the Exodus from Egypt, about which he knew. This was followed by another tradition which always occurred several weeks later, when his mother would bake cakes of unleavened bread, also somehow connected to the story of Moses.

Shi Zhongyu was the first one to introduce me to Wang Yisha, curator of the Kaifeng Municipal Museum until his death in the early 1990s. The Kaifeng Municipal Museum still houses the only remaining steles which were erected in front of the Kaifeng Synagogue on South Teaching Scripture Lane in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, and which told the story of the Chinese Jews' entry into China and religious beliefs, among other things. There is now a second exhibit, one donated by the Sino-Judaic Institute and the brainchild of its first President, Leo Gabow, which is housed in a special part of the Qingming Shanghe Yuan in Kaifeng.

(continued on page 6)

MAINER HELPS HONOR FATHER AS HOLOCAUST RESCUER

by Jonathan Goldstein



Dr. Monto Ho, of Taipei, Taiwan, and Manli Ho, of Arrowsic, Maine, children of Righteous Gentile Dr. Feng Shan Ho, at the "Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations," Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, where their father was memorialized on January 23, 2001.

by Jonathan Goldstein

What connection can there be between Manli Ho, a Chinese-American woman married to a land surveyor in Arrowsic, Maine, and the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis? Why last month did the State of Israel bring Ms. Ho and her brother Dr. Monto Ho to Jerusalem to formally honor them in partial recognition for their deceased father's activities in Vienna sixty-three years ago?

The sequence of events that brought Manli Ho from Maine to Jerusalem begins in Vienna in 1938. In that year her father, Feng Shan Ho, was a Chinese career diplomat serving in that city as Consul General. Prior to his posting in Vienna he had had virtually zero contact with or knowledge of Jews. In March 1938, however, when Austria was annexed to Nazi Germany, Consul Ho received a crash-course in anti-Semitism, as Austria's 185,000 Jews were subjected to a reign of terror and intense pressure to leave the country. The Nazis were only too happy to see the Jews go, requiring only that the emigres have a legitimate entry visa and evidence of paid transportation to another country.

But where could these persecuted Jews go? Apart from the Dominican Republic, there was not a single country in the world, including the United States, that would open its doors to these hapless refugees. That stance of the international community was reaffirmed in a formal vote at the Evian Conference in France in April 1938.

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FROM THE EDITOR

The almost forgotten story of Ho Feng Shan continues to draw forth interest and new articles. Dr. Jonathan Goldstein was on hand in Jerusalem when Ho's children went to Yad VaShem to see their father's memory honored and he has written a moving account of the ceremony there.

From remembering the past to anticipating the future, we turn to an exciting story by Dr. Wendy Abraham on Shi Lie. Shi Lie is the first Chinese of Kaifeng Jewish descent to study in both Israel and the U.S. Who knows what the impact of this venture will be if—and perhaps it is a big if—Shi Lie returns to Kaifeng to impart Jewish culture to Jewish descendants there.

This issue also has the usual smorgasbord of delightfully tempting articles, just right for your summer—or winter—reading.

Anson Laytner

New address for me: 1823 East Prospect St., Seattle, WA 98112-3307

Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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Many Thanks to:

We wish to express our thanks to Jason Alter who has purchased twelve gift memberships for members of his family and friends. Jason has had a distinguished teaching career in the Far East and at the University of Hawaii, and he continues to be active in writing and publishing. We appreciate the vote of confidence in our work that his generous donation represents.

Jazzy Green, an 11-year-old from Santa Monica traveling with her parents, prefaced the Four Questions by asking guests to pray for Gedhun, the Panchen Lama, who is in line to approve the next Dalai Lama. The youngest Tibetan political prisoner, Gedhun is almost 11 and is under house arrest with his parents in Tibet.

"It's important to remember him because he doesn't have freedom like we have," said Jazzy.

In another variation at the seder, the potato, which was served as the karpas, was dipped in salt, since the water here is undrinkable.

On the second night, Elizheve Hurvich of Mill Valley led a more alternative seder, with two Tibetan Buddhist monks in attendance. Surrounded by the mountains the Tibetan exiles escaped through, she was struck by the similarities between their exodus and that of the Jews, who fled through the Red Sea.

"Our freedom came through the waters, and theirs through the mountains," she said.

SaraHope Smith of San Francisco, who celebrated her 34th birthday on the trip, said she had always felt an affinity for the Tibetans' struggle for freedom.

"It's so potent to be celebrating our freedom here."

The long voyage to northern India began April 1, when 14 people from the Bay Area plus one from Los Angeles set out on a 2-1/2 week journey to celebrate the Jewish festival of freedom in the foothills of the Himalayas. Most of the travelers were affiliated with Chochmat HaLev, the Jewish Meditation Center in Berkeley.

Dharamsala, the home of the Tibetan government in exile, has become a haven for spiritual seekers of all sorts. Westerners seeking enlightenment, Israelis on their post-military sojourn through Asia, hippies who have lost track of where they originally came from and how long they've been here.

The Bay Area group turned out to be seekers of a different sort. All but one are in their early to mid-30s. Most are at some turning point in their careers or, if not, at a point of significant change or transition.

The idea of the trip first came about when Azriel Cohen, a Toronto native now living in Jerusalem, came to the Bay Area in November. Cohen, who was raised Orthodox, is the founder of Ohr Olam, an institute he launched to cater to the huge number of Israelis coming through Dharamsala each year.

Cohen first came to Dharamsala in 1997, on a research mission to find out why such large numbers of Israelis were drawn here. He decided to do something to aid their spiritual quest.

For the past four years, Ohr Olam has been hosting a seder, serving approximately 250 people, mostly Israelis. With the help of some American expatriates who run the KhanaNirvana Community Café here, which hosts weekly Shabbat dinners complete with freshly baked challah, Dharamsala is no longer a one-religion town.

What confirms it is that Chabad moved in two years ago – after successfully operating seders for years to serve the huge numbers of travelers in Katmandu, Nepal, and Bangkok, Thailand.

Those traveling in the region now have their pick of two seders in Dharamsala. Ohr Olam also offers seminars on Jewish teachings of various types, with faculty members ranging from an Orthodox woman educator from a Jerusalem yeshiva to Rodger Kamenetz, author of *The Jew and the Lotus*, who was here for Passover.

Cohen's efforts to establish Judaism in the heart of the Tibetan Buddhist enclave received the Dalai Lama's blessing in 1997, when Cohen and his associates met with him. And when Cohen visited the Bay Area, he received the blessing of Zak Zaidman, who teaches and studies at Chochmat.

Although the initial meeting with Cohen was only exploratory, Zak Zaidman quickly began pondering how a group from Chochmat could make a contribution to the work of Ohr Olam.

"There's a certain openness that we cultivate in Berkeley and San Francisco," he said. "I thought we could bring a piece of our community here, knowing that there would be a lot of Israelis and people exploring their Judaism."

Said Smith of San Francisco, who was also

in the planning stages: "It seems that Israelis can use Buddhism to find inner peace and then connect back to their Jewish soul."

Furthermore, Zak Zaidman recognized that helping Ohr Olam fit into Chochmat's mission. Quoting one of Chochmat's spiritual leaders, founder Avram Davis, Zaidman said, "We're sweetening the root of Jewish," and a lot of that has to do with not just doing it on a local level but everywhere."

Moreover, since Chochmat is also a meditation school, participants study other religious traditions as a means of deep-ending their own. That approach meshed perfectly with plans for an interfaith dialogue in Dharamsala.

When Zak Zaidman began to circulate word of the trip, mainly to those affiliated with Chochmat and Keneset HaLev in San Francisco, he soon had 40 names. By January, the trip was confirmed. As time went on, the group dwindled to 15, the maximum number he could take.

E-mails began to circulate rapidly, discussing practical matters such as what to bring, as well as how to get an extension to file income taxes. The group also met beforehand, to learn about Buddhism and Hinduism.

And then on April 1, the group left San Francisco International Airport, bringing the matzah as well as a Torah.

In *The Jew and the Lotus*, Zak Zaidman had read that the Jewish delegation meeting with the Dalai Lama in 1990 brought a Torah with them, as a gift to the Buddhist leader. Kamenetz wrote that he felt it kept the travelers safe. But the Torah that group brought was a replica. The one carried by the Bay Area group, which is currently used at Knesset HaLev, was not.

"I loved bringing it," Zak Zaidman said. "It's hard to carry, because you can't carry it like a bag, but I never had difficulty in finding people to carry it, and I would see them beaming when they were holding it."

The trip to Dharamsala was not easy, but then traveling in India rarely is. One group member – the writer of this story – was delayed when an engine quite and the plane had to return to San Francisco, causing a day-late arrival in India. Another participant was scheduled to be tardy, so the

winter or summer, the quantities of food prepared far exceeded the needs of even our "extended family." When all the cooking was done, our Chinese *boyka* (Russian parlance for "errand boy"), nicknamed Ivan, would don his white tunic and, laden with baskets of culinary delights, deliver food to certain needy families. That was Mama's way: To give with an open hand.

Here were several factors which contributed to the beauty of Shabbes and Yom Tov in Manchuria. The most important element was the pure joy of being able to observe the mitzvos without fear. For this reason, I think, we celebrated the *Yomim Tovim* (Festivals) with tremendous *hislahavus* (enthusiasm), perhaps to compensate for the years of religious persecution suffered at the hands of the Russians. Another factor was the intense bond my family always had with tradition and heritage. We did not change our "Old Country" ways to suit the environment but rather our environment and neighbors adapted to us and our *minhagim* (customs). The Chinese not only became accustomed to our holidays, but in many cases played an active role in their observance.

No one, for example, had to make his way home on foot after a long Yom Kippur fast: The Chinese would line up their horse-drawn carriages outside the shul to offer the weary Jews a ride. Before Pesach, the Chinese carpenter, clad in a glistening white tunic and with his tool kit over his shoulder, would walk through the streets crying, "Pesach, Pesach" – it was his job to plane down our kitchen work tables, removing the layers of *chametz* and exposing a new surface (which we covered in any case). On Shavuot eve, Chinese farmers went from door to door with wagon loads of newly-cut grass with which we virtually carpeted the house.

No doubt the abundance of help relieved many burdens, but it is unlikely that we would have been otherwise able to welcome so many into our home. The laundry and linens alone represented a mountainous job. The washerwoman came to our home twice a week. She would spend the entire day, from dawn to dusk, scrubbing by hand in the laundry shed and hanging all the clothes and linens on the washlines. But in a sub-zero climate, as one might expect, the wash quickly froze. At the end of the day, she would stack the stiff, ice-laden laundry in baskets and bring it into the house. The fragrance of freshly-laundered, frozen linens melting by the

fireside still lingers in my memory and brings tears of nostalgia to my eyes. Two days later, when the wash had completely defrosted and partially dried, she would return to do the ironing.

Frozen laundry was a signal to the children that Chanukah was not far off. Chanukah was a joyous time of year for us. By December, winter held Manchuria in its icy grip; we were literally snow-bound. Night fell at 3:00 pm, and by 4:00 we were all warmly ensconced around the samovar, with hot drinks and *latkes*. Every year, Papa would carefully hollow out eight potatoes and fill the hollows with olive oil from Palestine, placing a wick in each. Though we could easily acquire a finer menorah, maintaining old family traditions was more important. Reciting the brachos (blessings) Pap would proudly display his primitive creation on the window sill, to fulfill the obligation of "publicizing the miracle." Family and guests all joined in for the traditional singing of Psalms that follows the candle lighting ceremony; the children played dreidl with hand carved wooden tops; Papa told us stories in Yiddish 'til the wee hours of the night; and we all believed this contented life would last forever.

Our dreams were abruptly shattered when Japan invaded Manchuria in the 1930s, and we had our first taste of oppression. The *kehillah* was forced to move on. My family resettled in Harbin, a comparatively large Chinese metropolis, two days' journey by train from Manchuria. The Jewish community of Harbin was quite substantial, numbering around 100,000, and enjoyed total freedom and security. There existed every conceivable Jewish social and religious service, including shuls and yeshivos, an old-age home, a Jewish hospital, a Jewish cemetery, and a "soup kitchen" which was open to the needy public at large and whose sign proudly proclaimed its purpose. *Die Yiddische Biliger Umziste Kuch*. Many of the 700,000 Chinese benefited regularly from this service.

But the idyll that was Jewish Harbin was not destined to last. Though unscathed by the ravages of World War II, the Jews of Harbin saw the handwriting on the wall when Mao began his Long March. In 1950, along with 40 other young couples, my husband and I made our way to Eretz Yisrael to settle down and raise a family of our own.

A happy footnote to this story is the fact that the Chinese graciously allowed the Jewish communities to resell their properties to the local inhabitants and to transfer the funds out of China. It was with their share of these funds that the Association of Immigrants from China in Israel built a beautiful shul in "Shikun Shanghai" near Tel Aviv.

Here are so many dear friends and relatives that are not mentioned here, some who have sadly passed on to the Next World, *zichronam livrachah*, others with whom we still maintain close ties, and others in distant lands with whom we have lost touch over the years. All live on in my heart, but this story is my story: the memories of a small Jewish child of Manchuria.

Seder in India

by Alexandra J. Wall
reprinted from *Jewish Bulletin*, April 13, 2001

A few weeks ago, Zev Zaidman went shopping at Costco to buy what he'd need for Pesach. His purchase: 200 pounds of matvah.

His unleavened bread was then boxed up and distributed among a few of the guests who would be traveling to the seder.

"What could be better than the mitzvah of carrying matzah?" mused Serena Shaw.

Zaidman of San Francisco and Shaw of El Cerrito were about to take part in what was dubbed the "Liberation Journey." Organized by Zaidman's brother Zak, also of San Francisco, the group was bound for a seder here in Dharamsala, the home of Tibetan Buddhism and His Holiness himself, the Dalai Lama.

"Within five minutes of hearing about it, I thought, 'I'll go,'" said Shaw, who is in the midst of studying for her conversion to Judaism.

Last week's first-night seder, which drew a plethora of Israelis as well as visiting Americans, was about seven hours long, largely due to the use of both English and Hebrew, as well as a mix of Chassidic storytelling, singing and vocal percussion. Travelers lounged on pillows on the floor, drinking homemade wine and eating the food prepared in a kitchen that had been made kosher for Pesach.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

50 years ago in 1948 in the western region of China, in the Sing-Jang province in the capital city of Urumchi, then called Di-hua, was a governor named Shin-Shi-Tsai and his self proclaimed title Shin-Du-Ban (Shin the lonely dictator).

I remember hearing people talk about his self-proclaimed Manchurian origin, yet on the front of his office building over the main entrance there was a Magen Dovid (the star of David).

I am very curious about this Shin-Shi-Tsai's true identity; nationality, religion, and the reason for the Magen Dovid over the main entrance.

Please help me to clarify questions above, if you have any information on the subject please send to: aster@earthlink.net.

Leah Baranov

To the editor:

Re Matthew Singer's letter to *Points East*, March 2001, I refer briefly on p. 278 of my *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries*, to the Kaifeng synagogal relic held in Washington at the National Cathedral. The item is one of the two lavers in which the Kaifeng Jews washed their hands and feet before prayer. The two were among the several Kaifeng synagogal items acquired by Bishop William Charles White in the first quarter of the 20th century. One of the lavers is now owned by the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto; the other was given to the National Cathedral a number of decades ago. There are no Hebrew inscriptions on either laver.

Michael Pollack

To the editor:

I recently heard that you mentioned something about the Jews in the Philippines. I am completing a book on the subject, focusing on the more than 1200 European Jews who found a haven there in the 1930's and early 1940's. I would be interested in the information that you have. Thank you.

Frank Ephraim (fephrain@erols.com)

To the editor:

From Hamburg a member sent me a copy of Mr. Ralph B. Hirsch's "Letter to the Editor of *Points East*," which deals with my Meisinger article. I appreciate his comment. For a scholar is is the most normal thing that his statements are discussed or criticized. I don't quite agree with two of his formulations. First I remind you, that I have never done "scientific research" on Meisinger. My text was only a report (in German we say: Referat) on explications, which had been published in print.

1) Hirsch writes: "Matzat claims the rumor of such a plot was invented by a Japanese consular official, Shibata, so as to extract money from Jews anxious to get him to stop the planned anti-Jewish action." But this is not my claim. I cite only the claim of Laura Margolies from Wasserstein's book, page 144: "Margolis suspected that Peretz might be attempting some sort of blackmail. 'Knowing the records of both Mr. Peretz and Mr. Katawa (= Shibata), we all think that they had hoped to get those men present . . . to pay some money to stop this action and that in those negotiations they would make their percentage.'"

2) Secondly Hirsch writes: "Matzat errs. On the very page he cited in her book, Freyeisen quotes an official American investigation that found Meisinger to have been in Shanghai in May 1942."

Of course I knew the citation, which Freyeisen brings on page 470. "Eine Untersuchung der Amerikaner ergab jedoch folgendes Resultat: 'Ihr Mann Oberst Meisinger war im Sept. 1941 und spatter im Mai 1942 in Shanghai.'" "American research gave the following result, Colonel Meisinger was in September 1941 and late in May 1942 in Shanghai." But this sentence was for me of no relevance. Why? From a scientific point of view this short statement is only a claim. In order to convince me, that this is the historic truth, Miss Freyeisen or Mr. Hirsch must put forward more evidence. One would like to hear the name of the witness or witnesses. But a "witness" may lie.

So for me, as a reader of Freyeisen's book, the situation is at the moment the following: Meisinger claims not to have been in

Shanghai in May 1942, the U.S. investigator claims the opposite. How does one prove the truth in such a constellation? In such a Patt situation we say in German: "Aussage steht gegen Aussage." ("Claim against claim.")

It seems to me, that there is a further weakness in Hirsch's argument: He does not cite Freyeisen's statement on page 474: "Ob Meisinger allerdings zur fraglichen Zeit in Shanghai weilte, ist nicht erwiesen." (In English translation: "There is no proof that Meisinger was in Shanghai in that period." – meaning: in May 1942). And Mr. Hirsch writes: "Matzat errs." Why not? Everybody may err.

Sincerely yours,
Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Matzat
Bonn, Germany
wmatzat@t-online.de

To the editor:

In regard to the recent issue of *Points East*, March 2001, I agree that we owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Xu Xin for his extraordinary accomplishments as a scholar of Jews in China. We have even had the pleasure of meeting. However I would like to point out that the "Plan to Settle Jewish Refugees in China" was "retrieved from the dustbin" in our own publication, in 1995! It can be found in the *Occasional Papers of the Sino-Judaic Institute*, Volume 2, (1995).

I know of this because my husband found the Chinese account that had been published in 1993 (the same one Xu Xin refers to) and we hired the Chinese translator (unofficial?) and sent it to the Institute.

An aside: also, subsequently, years later, my husband and I had the good fortune to visit the Yang Ming Shu Wu, the Guo Min Dang historical library in Taiwan and see the actual document in which Chiang Kai Shek gave his signature approving the refugee plan.

Keep up the interesting work.

Respectfully,

Diane Rabinowitz

IN THE FIELD

◆ *Gelbpost* Reissued

Alfred Luk informs us that the *Gelbpost*, a quality newspaper published in Shanghai by an Austrian Jewish publisher, has been reissued in Vienna, Austria. He also states that *Das Neues China*, a magazine published in Berlin, regularly features documents and history of old China.

◆ Exhibition in San Francisco

A Holocaust exhibit, "The Silent Voices", focusing in part on Ho and Sugihara, was on display at San Francisco's Herbst Exhibition Hall at the Presidio this past spring.

◆ German Jews in Tsingtao 1939-41

A list of German Jews in Tsingtao, with birthdates and arrival dates, has been compiled by Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Matzat and is available either from the Points East office or directly from Prof. Dr. Matzat at: wmatzat@t-online.de.

◆ Jewish Studies Association in Japan

The Israeli Embassy in Tokyo recently compiled a list of members of the Japan Association for Jewish Studies. Totally membership is listed at 65 institutions. Prof. Ichiro Nakata of Chuo University, Tokyo, is director of the Association.

◆ Old Commies

An article in the April 5th issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* entitled "China: The Long March" features a number of elderly Jewish citizens of China: Ruth Weiss, Israel Epstein, and Sidney Shapiro. The article, by Daniel Walfish, may be read on the magazine's website: http://www.feer.com/_0104_04/p064current.html

◆ Prof. Pan Guang, Director of the Center for Jewish Studies, Shanghai, and a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute, has published an article in Chinese entitled, "A Brief Discussion of the Jews as Viewed by Chinese in Recent Times," *Quarterly Journal of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences*, pp. 181-188.

◆ Mrs. Mizue Kawashima, a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute who resides in Tokyo, has published an article in Japanese entitled, "The World of the Jews in China: Recent Studies on Kaifeng and its Current Situation," in the *Studies on Jewish Life and Culture*, no. 18 (April 2001), pp. 66-75, published by the Japan Association for Jewish Studies.

Walter Silberstein, 70, Organized Rickshaw Reunion

Born Horst Walter Silberstein in Germany in 1931, Mr. Silberstein fled with his family to Shanghai, an open city, in 1939. He lived there, in Shanghai's French concession, until 1948, attending the Shanghai Jewish School, boxing welterweight on the community team and joining, along with Lange, the Buffalo Patrol of the 14th Boy Scout Troop.

After his family immigrated to Philadelphia in 1948, Mr. Silberstein joined the U.S. Air Force and served during the Korean War.

In 1991, he and Lange began reaching out to other Jewish "Old China Hands" to preserve the Shanghai experience.

Thanks to his genius for organization and communication, the first of four Rickshaw Reunions convened that year in Philadelphia. More than 300 former refugees attended, coming from as far away as Argentina, Germany, Austria and Australia.

Three more reunions followed – in China in 1993, in the Catskills in 1997 and in Philadelphia again in 1999. Mr. Silberstein maintained a list of more than 1,000 Shanghai survivors, and was instrumental in setting up a Web site, the Rickshaw Express Web – www.rickshaw.org – offering information and networking on the Shanghai experience. At the time of his death, he was working on organizing a fifth Rickshaw Reunion in San Francisco in 2002.

Mr. Silberstein, a resident of Center City, died suddenly of a heart attack on Feb. 26. He was 70.

Mr. Silberstein is survived by his wife of 46 years, Nancy; three sons, David, Alan and John; and three grandchildren.

Sholom Aleichem and Shanghai

by Yao Yi-en, Senior Research Fellow, Shanghai Research Institute of Culture and History

reprinted from *Bulletin Igud Yotzeisin*, Nov.-Dec. 2000

I. A Letter by M. Gorky

On April 21, 1910, Maxim Gorky wrote a letter to a writer which reads as follows:

My dear colleague, Your book has been duly received. Having read it, I could not help laughing and crying. What a fantastic book! The translation seems to me to be quite well, and it was done out of love for the author, though in some places the difficulty to convey in Russian the sad and touching humor in the original is felt. I mean it is just felt. I like the book very much. I would say again that this is a great book. It is full of noble, kind and sincere love for the people, which is so rare in the present day. I sincerely wish your book success, and I have no doubt of it. Shaking your hand.

M. Gorky, Capri,
April 21, 1910

The colleague who received this letter was the famous Jewish writer Sholom Aleichem. The book mentioned in the letter was Sholom Aleichem's famous work, *The Adventures of Motle, the Cantor's Son*, the Chinese version of which was published in Shanghai in 1957. The "sad and touching humor" is an important feature of Sholom Aleichem's works. The "noble, kind and sincere love for the people" is the starting point of Sholom Aleichem's creation.

II. Life and Creation of Sholom Aleichem

Sholom Aleichem – that is to say, "Hello there!" – the pen name of Sholom Nohumovich Rabinovich, means literally "peace be upon you." The phrase is used among Jews as a popular greeting. He was born in the Ukraine on March 2, 1859 and died in New York on May 13, 1916. He was only 20 when his first book was published in 1879. During his 35 years of writing, Sholom Aleichem worked very hard and wrote more than 30 volumes of literary works which include novels, short stories, dramas, poems and commentaries. His representative works such as *Tevye the Dairyman*, *Menachem Mendle*, and *the Adventures of Motle, the Cantor's Son* were

of these admirers, who had 3,500 trees planted to commemorate the life of Noel Jacobs. There are still a number of former members of the Jewish Company living in various parts of the world. Undoubtedly they recall the China and the Shanghai that once was, and which remains only in their memories.

Manchuria Memories

by Riva Moiseef Bassin
reprinted from
www.jewishworldreview.com/0298/manchuria1.html, 4/28/01

This story begins in the early 1900s in Manchuria, a dominion of China situated on the Yellow Sea and bounded on the north and east by Siberia and Mongolia. On the border where Manchuria meets its neighboring countries was a small village, also called Manchuria, which was populated by some 30,000 Chinese and Mongolian peasants. It was in this remote, isolated haven that my parents and a handful of other Russian Jewish families sought refuge from the tyranny and brutal anti-Semitism of Czar Nikolai. And it was there that this tiny *kehillah* (community) established a fertile island of Yiddishkeit amidst a surging foreign sea.

Despite the hardships we endured in a climate where winter temperatures often plunged to forty degrees below zero, our community flourished. The remoteness of our village worked to our advantage: the ruling authorities, continually occupied with internal strife, could not be bothered with insignificant outlying towns, and we were therefore free at last to lead the lives we chose without governmental interference. The *kehillah* built a shul, a school and a mikveh, established a *chevrah kadish* (burial society), opened a kosher abbatoir and grocery, and religious communal life proceeded in a manner theretofore unknown.

From an economic standpoint, as well, our destination was wisely chosen. My father, a fur merchant, now had ready access to the vast fur markets of Mongolia, and his business thrived. At the time, Russia and China were jointly and simultaneously constructing the K.V.G.D. – the Great East Chinese Railway – stretching from Siberia all the way to Dairen, a port city on the coast of China near Japan. Situated at the point of intersection of the two railway lines, Manchuria had a distinct commercial advantage.

This strategic location provided another, even greater advantage. A seemingly endless tide of World War I refugees and victims of the Bolshevik Revolution – en route to America, Palestine, or wherever – flowed through our village. *Gemillas chessed* (acting kindly) was a way of life for the Jews of Manchuria, but most traveled on, often with packets of money, clothing and food pressed upon them by members of the *kehillah* to ease their passage.

Our anxiousness to help the war refugees was a reflection of Mama's philanthropic *middos* (character traits). But our ability to accommodate large numbers of them for extended periods was a function of the spaciousness of our house. The family homestead was comprised of a very large residence, and a sizeable farm, where we raised vegetable crops, dairy cows and poultry. Both farm and household help were abundant: Our Chinese peasant neighbors were for the most part poor farmers who eagerly accepted employment in our home in exchange for food or modest wages.

Our house was not like anything one might imagine to have existed at the turn of the century, and certainly not in that remote part of the world. Papa's frequent business trips abroad and his commercial ties with the outside world enabled us to furnish our home in a grand style. Floor-to-ceiling mirrors imported from Belgium, carpets, draperies and chandeliers graced our parlor. How these fragile items survived their journey intact, I will never know. Nor will I know how Papa achieved the near-miraculous engineering feat of providing our house with indoor plumbing!

A massive table stood in our dining room and it was from this spot that Papa would "hold court" each morning. As *Predsedatel* (official representative) of the *kehillah* and an active member of the town council, school and shul committees, Papa was appointed deputy mayor of Manchuria (the mayor was Chinese) and thus he bore a tremendous sense of responsibility towards the villagers. All would seek his advice and counsel on subjects ranging from legal matters to family problems. Only halachic (Jewish legal) decisions were outside his purview: That was Rav Zhuravel's domain. From early morning they lined up in our front hall: The Jews, the Russian gentiles, even the Chinese peasants, awaiting their turn at the table.

While Papa ruled over the dining room,

Mama reigned supreme in the kitchen, in the center of which stood a massive, wood-burning brick oven. Though Mama rarely had to soil her hands with housework, she did love to bake and of course she had to manage the household help. This was not a simple chore as the size of our "extended family" plus numerous and frequent guests made it necessary for food preparation to be undertaken on the scale of a small factory.

In the summer and fall, when produce was plentiful, enormous vats and jars were filled with fruit preserves and pickled vegetables and stored in the cellar, along with vast quantities of potatoes, onions, carrots, which we buried in the earthen floor, all this in preparation for the long winter ahead.

We had a separate cellar exclusively for Pesach utensils. Pesachdik vegetables went directly from the soil of the fields into the soil of the Pesach cellar. A subterranean cold-storage room, dug deep in the permafrost and packed with cakes of ice, was our summer refrigerator for dairy products: Home-made cheese, cream, butter and milk. At the onset of winter, the *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) would make a "house call" and *shecht* fowl by the score – chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks – enough for the entire winter. The women would then clean and *kasher* (kosherize) the poultry and store it in the outdoor meat shed, where nature took over. In no time at all, the shed became one huge walk-in meat freezer.

The day after Purim, the Pesach "factory" went into full operation. The school basement, sealed during the rest of the year, was equipped with an oven and was devoted solely to matzah-baking. The *shmurah matzos* baked by the townfolk were loaded onto the special Pesach wagon, driven by a Jew and used exclusively for Matzah-delivery. Back at home, the Pesach kitchen was a hive of activity. Jewish workers decanted home-made wine from huge glass bottles into smaller, individual ones, while the Chinese scrubbed and polished every inch of the house. We hung Pesach draperies of white hand-embroidered cloth and laid white Pesach rugs, made from the white cotton sacking in which the Pesach *matzah mehl* (matzah meal) was delivered. Even the doormats were changed so that not a mote of *chametz* could cross our doorstep.

Whether it was for Yom Tov or Shabbes,

to a Methodist family. He grew up in Hong Kong, and was a founder-member of the first Boy Scout Troop to be formed in the city. He later served with the Hong Kong Defence Force before moving in the early 1920s to Shanghai, where he was employed by the British-American Tobacco Company. In Shanghai he met a young Russian-Jewish girl, Dora Bogomolsky, whom he married after converting to Judaism. Although he was not a practicing Jew, from that time on, until he left Shanghai in 1949, he was deeply involved with Jewish community affairs.

Jacobs took over the 5th Shanghai (Jewish) Boy Scout Troop as Scoutmaster in 1923. Under his leadership, the troop flourished and was successfully competitive with the other Scout troops in Shanghai. In the summer of 1932, a group of young Jews in Shanghai, some of them former Scouts as well as members of the Shanghai branch of *Betar*, met at an obscure address on Bubbling Well Road to consider the possibility of forming a Jewish unit in the Shanghai Volunteer Corps. The commander of the SVC was approached and he proposed the formation of such an organization. It was decided that the Jewish unit should start out as a platoon in an already existing company. The commander of H Company proposed to take the proposed platoon under his wing.

Noel Jacobs, who was already well-known in Shanghai for his business as well as community activities, was commissioned and designated the platoon commander. RB. Bitker, who had belonged to one of the American units of the SVC and was a decorated veteran of service with the Russian army, and M. Talan, who had been a member of the SVC artillery battery, were appointed as sergeants in the platoon, which was activated on 22 September 1932. Two months later, a second platoon was activated.

On 22 May 1933, the non-Jewish personnel of Company H were transferred, thus making it an all-Jewish unit, the Jewish Company. It adopted as its motto, "No advance without security." The chaplain of the Jewish Company was Reverend Mendel Brown, who was the spiritual leader of the Sephardic community in Shanghai. A photograph of him taken in the mid-1930s shows him wearing the British officers' uniform of that period, and wearing a Ro-

man collar. The Company's uniform was the same as the one worn by the British army in the pre-World War II period except that officers and enlisted wore the appropriate Shanghai Volunteer Corps cap and uniform badges. The Jewish Company wore on the uniform collar metal Magen David ornaments with the letters "SVC" superimposed.

In June the next year, Jacobs was promoted to captain. The company drilled in a building on Foochow Street which the Municipal Council designated for use by all the units of the SVC. Marksmanship training was conducted at a range located in the northern limits of the city next to Hongkew Park. Here there were whitewashed, one-story stone buildings, which served as barracks for the various companies of the SVC which came out to fire their weapons for record. The members of the Jewish Company drilled arduously to ensure that it was professionally competent and able to take up their places alongside their SVC comrades when the Corps was called up for active service. Such training consisted of familiarity with their weapons, setting up sand-bagged and barbed wire defensive positions, bayonet drill, and, most importantly for Shanghai, mob control.

Each of the major powers which had concessions in Shanghai as a result of the Treaty of Nanking – Great Britain, France, the United States – also had military contingents stationed in their concessions. As the Sino-Japanese War surged around Shanghai, the military representatives of these foreign services met, together with officials of the international Settlement Municipal Council, to draw up plans for the defense of the Settlement against Japanese incursions. Included in these plans were options concerning the control of the masses of Chinese who, it was anticipated, would try to enter the Settlement for the protection it would offer. Each of the major powers held extraterritorial rights in their concessions, which meant that invading them would be the same as invading the home country and considered an act of war. Because the Settlement was too large for all the foreign contingents to defend it, the SVC was incorporated into the overall Settlement defense plan and assigned to assist the British troops in defending Sector B, which was rather large and more than the British could handle.

When the fighting in the Chinese section

of Shanghai in 1937 threatened to spill over into the Settlement, the foreign units took up their assigned defensive positions, and the Shanghai Volunteer Corps was mobilized on 17 August, as was the Jewish Company, for a period of three months, taking up pre-designated stations. For this period of active service, 85 members of the Company were awarded the Municipal Council's Emergency medal. In August 1938, the SVC was again mobilized for three days, and Jewish Company personnel reported to their appointed posts.

The two mobilizations were the last times that the SVC was to be called out in defense of the Settlement. In February 1942, the SVC commander issued a special order to all contingents notifying them that by order of the Municipal Council, which was now governed by the Japanese occupation authorities, SVC training was suspended until further notice and that the Corps would not be called upon to function in any way. Later, in September that year, a special order was published by the Corps headquarters notifying its units that "the Council has decided that there is no further necessity for the retention of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps and has approved its immediate disbandment." All weapons had been turned in earlier, and now, after an 89-year existence, the SVC was no more. Foreign nationals, including now-Major Jacobs were interned until the end of the war. His wife and three daughters had earlier been evacuated to the United States.

In 1949, Jacobs left China to return to England to continue working for the British-American Tobacco Company. He retired in 1956 and he and his family finally settled down in New Milton, England, where, as was his wont, he became deeply involved in community affairs there. In 1967, his former Scouts and members of the Jewish Company who had emigrated to Israel sponsored a trip to Israel for Noel and Dora Jacobs, so that they could see their mentor and friend once more and have him see how they had flourished since leaving Shanghai. Reportedly, it was an extremely emotional and happy reunion. Noel Jacobs died in England in 1977 at the age of 79; his wife a few years later.

To honor their former Scoutmaster and Commander of the Jewish Company, volunteers and friends the world over sponsored a memorial forest in Mod-in, Israel, in his name. A stone marker was unveiled on 18 May 1980 in the presence of a group

written in the form of a series of short stories about people of no importance in humorous language. His humor has enabled those people to defy evil and surmount hardships, and convinced them that truth would prevail.

In his speech at the 10th anniversary of the death of Sholom Aleichem, the Russian writer, Lunacharsky, pointed out that: "Sholom Aleichem's laughter and that of others excited by him was a genuine one, a victorious one . . . Sholom Aleichem was one who was expressive of the humorous nature of the Jewish public . . . Together with his heroes, he frequently resolved contradictions in life amidst laughter."

As a writer of humor, Sholom Aleichem, just as Dickens, Mark Twain and Chekhov, enjoys great prestige in the world of letters. His works have been translated into many languages and are very popular all over the world. He and his works were also introduced to Chinese readers long ago. The first writing about Sholom Aleichem was published right here in Shanghai 73 years ago.

III. Shanghai – a city where Sholom Aleichem was introduced the earliest and in the greatest numbers in China.

Early in June, 1921, a report on Sholom Aleichem was carried in the literary supplement *Consciousness of Minguo Daily*, which reads: "Contemporary Jewish writer, Aleichem, is called the Jewish Mark Twain just because his works are very much like those of Mark Twain and their ideas are very similar to each other." The report was written by Mao Dun, a great Chinese writer, under the pseudonym of "P. Sheng" when he was only 25. He wrote to me to confirm this in 1979 in his later years.

Mao Dun was not only the first person to introduce Sholom Aleichem to China, but also the first one to translate his works. His translation of Sholom Aleichem's novel, *The Man from Buenos Aires*, appeared in the *Fiction Monthly*, No. 10 (1921), published by Shanghai Commercial Press. Later on, it was incorporated into the *Fiction Monthly Series*, No. 54 – The Anthology of New Jewish Fiction (1925), and then into a collection of Mao Dun's translation of short stories entitled *Snowman* published by Shanghai Kaiming Publishing House. (The first edition appeared in 1928, and by 1931 the book reached its third edition.)

During the following years, on the initiative of Mao Dun, Sholom Aleichem's works were translated into Chinese and spread far and wide in China. The late famous writer and translator, Lu Yan, made great contributions in this field. He began to translate Sholom Aleichem's fiction from Esperanto into Chinese quite long ago, and his translations of Sholom Aleichem's *Crabchik and Miracle Hashono Rabo* (The Slowpoke Express) were published in *Eastern Miscellany* in Shanghai in 1924 and 1925 respectively.

In 1926, Lu Yan translated *The Selected Jewish Stories* with great enthusiasm, which was published by Shanghai Kaiming Publishing House. To meet the demands of the readers, the second edition of the anthology was brought out in 1927 with a fine cover of new design. Six pieces of Sholom Aleichem's works were included in the anthology, which made up more than half of the total.

After that, more translations of Sholom Aleichem's works appeared from time to time in Shanghai and the rest of China. The veteran writer, Lou Shiye, translated the short story *Three Little Heads* which Sholom Aleichem had written for children. The translation was first published in the *Sea Wind Weekly* of 1929 in Shanghai and then included in *Selections for Rising World Literatures* entitled *The Bridge* brought out by Literature Publishing house in the same year. At least three Chinese versions of *Three Little Heads* have appeared in China.

Almost at the same time when *The Bridge* was published, Zhou Zuoren's translations of Sholom Aleichem's two short stories, "A Pity for the Living" and "Passover in a Village" together with the translator's very long postscript, appeared in the fifth volume of *Yushi* in 1929, a weekly published under the direction and editorship of Lu Xun. In the 1930's the famous translator Fu Donghua published his translation of one of Sholom Aleichem's short stories in *Literature Monthly* of Life Publishing House in Shanghai, and included it in his *Collection of Translated Short Stories* entitled *Outlawed* which was published by the Shanghai Commercial Press.

In 1947, Shanghai Cultivation Publishing

House republished Sholom Aleichem's short stories under the title of *The Happiest Man in all Kodny*, translated by Liu Wugou, the daughter of the famous Chinese poet Liu Yazi. The first edition of the collection had been printed in Guilin during the War of Resistance against Japan. It was the first book of selected works of Sholom Aleichem ever published in China.

There was one thing worth mentioning in the 1940's. The Jewish friends coming to Shanghai as refugees during World War II published Sholom Aleichem's works and wrote articles about him in Russian. I have two books of this kind in my library: Sholom Aleichem's *The Railroad Stories: Tales of a Commercial Traveler* published by Gong Publishing House and *Jewish Writers* published by the Jewish Book Publishing House in 1942. The first piece in the second book is a 28-page long treatise on Sholom Aleichem under the title of "Sholom Aleichem – People's Talent." There might be some other books of this kind which have not yet been discovered. Nevertheless, the fact that the Jewish friends tried their best to get Sholom Aleichem's works published in spite of their hardships and difficulties in exile, fully shows how deeply the people loved their writer.

1. Enormous publicity on Sholom Aleichem.

In 1959, while the people of various countries in the world were marking the centenary of the birth of Sholom Aleichem, memorial meetings were held in Beijing and Shanghai for this outstanding writer. At the commemorative meeting in Shanghai, I gave a speech on the life and creation of Sholom Aleichem. I also held an exhibition of Sholom Aleichem's works and related materials from my collection. In the meantime, newspapers and magazines like *People's Daily* (Beijing), *The World Literature* (Beijing), *Guangming Daily* (Beijing), *The Liberation Daily* (Shanghai), *Academic Journal of Zhongshan University* (Guangzhou) carried commemorative articles or translated works of Sholom Aleichem.

2. Publication of the Chinese versions of Sholom Aleichem's major works.

Tevye the Dairyman came out in Shanghai in 1964 and the second edition con-

sisting of 42,000 copies was printed in 1983. *The Adventures of Motle, the Cantor's Son* was published by the Shanghai Children Publishing House in 1957 and republished in 1982 with a circulation of 36,500. The first edition of *Menachem Mendl* with 70,000 copies was brought out by Jianxi Publishing House in 1980. The autobiographical novel of Sholom Aleichem, *Back from the Fair*, and the novel *Wandering Stars* have also been translated into Chinese in full. Moreover, several collections of Sholom Aleichem's short stories have also appeared, such as those entitled *Selected Short Stories of Sholom Aleichem*, *Tevye Blows a Small Fortune*, *The Old Country*, etc.

3. Introduction of Sholom Aleichem in more varied forms.

Since the 1980's, Sholom Aleichem's works have been continuously included in various collections and reference books with a large circulation. For example, *Trapeza* and *The Penknife* have been entered in the translation series published by Shanghai Translation Publishing House. *The Penknife* has been included in Children's Library – the World Children's Stories. *I Am Well, I Am Orphan* has been made an entry in the *Dictionary of Foreign Short Stories for Appreciation* and was broadcast more than once by the Shanghai Broadcasting Station in the Appreciation of Literature program. The lexicographical work *Sea of Words*, a medium-sized dictionary compiled in Shanghai, has a special entry for Sholom Aleichem. The dictionary has a circulation of 20 million and is almost an indispensable reference book.

I was just a young man when I began to study Sholom Aleichem. How time flies! Now, I have already become an old man with grey hair. It is my great pleasure, however, to introduce in my declining years, directly to our Jewish friends, the initial results in my study of Sholom Aleichem, especially in the memorable year of the 135th anniversary of the birth of the writer. I am eagerly looking forward to the opportunities to give a full presentation of Sholom Aleichem's influence in China to more Jewish friends and show them my collections of Chinese translations of Sholom Aleichem's works and other materials about him.

History in the Making

(continued from page 1)

It is a display of photographs depicting the origins and life of the Kaifeng Jewish community since its entry into China during the Tang dynasty (618-906 C.E.) and is one of the only sources of information about the Chinese Jews at the disposal of the descendants themselves in Kaifeng.

The Shi clan kept copious records of its members through the 17th century, and even as late as the 1980s, Shi Zhongyu was eager to gather as much information about his family's genealogy. Hence, his close work with Wang Yisha. The Sino-Judaic Institute was even able to donate a microfiche of the Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book of the Dead, about which one of the most eminent members of its Board of Directors, Prof. Donald Daniel Leslie, published a key scholarly work, to Kaifeng for help with their research. It was Shi Zhongyu's pride and joy to be able to shed some light on his own family's history and contributions to the Kaifeng Jewish community. He had expressed interest to me early on that one of his children might be able to study more about Judaism in the United States later on. Still, contacts between Kaifeng's Jewish descendants and Western Jews were few and far between over a decade ago.

Shi Zhongyu had two sons and a daughter, Shi Ping, who now makes Chinese-style yarmulkes for my tour groups. His eldest son most unfortunately passed away several years after he himself died in the mid-1990s. While I had only met and gotten very close to Shi Ping, her husband and son, I had never met her other brother, Shi Lei's father. It was this grandchild of Shi Zhongyu's who would hold the key to re-establishing a connection between the Chinese Jews and those in the West.

Shi Lei may well be the only descendant in Kaifeng to both speak English and to have graduated from college, recently receiving his B.A. degree in Linguistics from Henan University. These factors alone made him a prime candidate for study abroad. While the Sino-Judaic Institute readily agreed to the idea, the task remained to find a university which would both accept him and provide enough funding to cover tuition as well as living expenses.

Part two to this story came in the form of Irwin Berg, a New York attorney who met and spoke at length with Shi Lei while on my 1998 tour to China. Having gotten quite close to Shi Lei both during my tour and through frequent letters to Kaifeng over the next few years, Irwin became as convinced as I was about Shi Lei's deep and genuine curiosity about the Jewish portion of his heritage, and made numerous inquiries to various U.S. universities on his behalf. Through their letters, Irwin and his wife Elaine did much towards educating Shi Lei about Judaism and American Jewish life. Shi Lei's interest in Judaism no doubt deepened through his correspondence with the Bergs. Irwin's efforts led to an eventual letter of acceptance by Brandeis University, and a personal letter from its President to Shi Lei in Kaifeng, inviting him to attend. Still, the problem of complete financial coverage remained.

It was not until July of 2000, however, that the final piece of the puzzle began to fall into place. Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, an SJI Board member, former Rabbi in Japan and author of *The Fugu Plan*, mentioned to me that he intended to bring his next tour group to Kaifeng for the first time. After several conversations about what there was to do and see in Kaifeng for Jewish tourists, I mentioned to him that there was one particular descendant who I hoped he could meet, and who we were hoping would be able to study abroad. Without missing a beat, Rabbi Tokayer agreed to meet Shi Lei, and quickly determined he could be of major assistance with such plans. Among his numerous contacts, apparently, was the President of Bar Ilan University, for whom he had managed to arrange a kosher banquet at the Great Hall of the People several years before. In almost no time at all Rabbi Tokayer confirmed that Bar Ilan would be willing to accept Shi Lei as a special student for one year. In addition, everyone on his tour to China agreed to donate money to help subsidize Shi Lei's travels and studies. As it now stands, between Rabbi Tokayer's tour participants, Irwin Berg, and a donation from Jewish Historical Tours of China, what has come to be known as the Shi Lei Fund now nears \$7,000.

Shi Lei received his passport in April and then traveled to Beijing the following month to get a visa to Israel at the Israeli Embassy. Having rarely ventured beyond the city of Kaifeng, the trip to Beijing was

To Build A Physical Entity for the Center for Judaic Studies at Nanjing University

by Xu Xin

The January 1992 establishment of full diplomatic relations between China and the State of Israel further stimulated interest in each other's history and culture. To meet a growing demand for Judaic studies in China and to promote the study of Jewish subjects among Chinese college students, the Center for Judaic Studies at Nanjing University was established in May 1992. Every year more than 200 students take its courses.

Additional achievements of the Center include the compilation of the first Chinese edition of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, an exhibition "Courage to Remember—The Holocaust 1933-1945," viewed by over 80,000 visitors, the convening of the "International Conference on Jewish Studies" attended by more than 60 scholars of whom 40 were from abroad, and finally, in the summers of 1997 and 1999, the Center conducted at Nanjing University three-week workshops on Jewish history and culture for Chinese professors of world history and western civilization. This, in turn, would enable them to incorporate this information into the courses they teach at their home institutions. The workshop will again be held during the summer of 2001. This far-reaching program has been supported by the Samuel Bronfman Foundation, the Rothchild Foundation, the Simon and Helen Scheuer Family Foundation, the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, and the Sino-Judaic Institute.

The Center currently is housed in an office of about 120 square feet. In addition to being the location of the administrative support for the program, more importantly it also serves to house what has become the largest library of *Judaica* in China. The library alone already contains over 3,000 volumes that have been collected and purchased in the past eight years and will be soon joined by an eminent gift of an additional 3,000 volumes. The lack of space is obviously a critical issue. The Center now has the possibility of obtaining space in the Nanjing University-Johns Hopkins University Institute for International Research, a new building scheduled to start in 2002. If successful, the new Center for Judaic Studies facilities will include classrooms, a library, conference room and of-

ices; as well as use of other facilities in the building such as a conference hall, exhibition space, and a reception hall as needed. Additionally, Nanjing University will provide continued underwriting of the Center's annual running fees; support staff; free security services; and expenses normally borne by the University.

Participation in the new Nanjing University Institute for International Research will require the Center for Judaic Studies to raise \$150,000. The University has agreed to appropriately recognize the names of the donors to this new facility.

The Sino-Judaic Institute has undertaken to assist in the securing of these funds for the Center for Judaic Studies at Nanjing University in appreciation for the valuable contribution that Prof. Xu and the Center have made in bringing an understanding of the Jews, their history and culture to the academic community of China.

Your contribution toward underwriting these expanded facilities will reflect your support of the Nanjing Center for Judaic Studies' critical role in cementing the relationship between the Chinese people and Jews around the world.

Checks may be made payable to The Sino-Judaic Institute, a California registered non-profit tax exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

The Jewish Company of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps

by Bemis M. Frank
Chief Historian of the U.S. Marine Corps

[Extracts from a Presentation at the Conference: "China and the Jewish Diaspora: A Comparative Historical Perspective on Acculturation, Economic Activity, Assimilation, Anti-Semitism"]

The Jewish Company of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps existed in the midst of a war in which it had no part – active or otherwise. When Great Britain handily defeated the Manchus in the first Opium War in 1842, one of the elements of the Treaty of Nanking signed between England and China was to open Shanghai to foreign trade in 1843. Merchants from all over the world flocked to Shanghai's International Settlement to open what became thriving businesses. In this group were Jews, mostly Sephardim who came from Cairo,

Baghdad, and Bombay, among them the Sassoon, Kadoorie, Haroon, Ezra, Shannon, and Baroukh families, which were to succeed and prosper in the years following their arrival. The Russian pogroms and the 1917 revolution brought to Shanghai waves of Russian Jews, and between 1932 and 1938, German-Jewish refugees from Nazism enlarged Shanghai's Jewish population to approximately 25,000 by the time World War II began.

On 8 April 1853, when the international Settlement was in its infancy, two meetings were held in Shanghai – one under British and the other under American chairmanship – to consider the establishment of a defense force in the Settlement. That, essentially, was the birth of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps (SVC). Its first challenge came on 3 April the next year when two British residents were assaulted by Manchu troops. On the following day, an ultimatum was sent to the commander of the Manchu forces, giving him until 4 pm that day to move his troops away from the borders of the Settlement. When the ultimatum was disregarded, the Westerners comprising the SVC attacked the Chinese, routing them. This whole event was over in half an hour. It is celebrated as The Battle of Muddy Flat, the first of the battle honors of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps. Some 50 Chinese casualties resulted, with the SVC losing 2 men killed and 15 wounded – two of whom died later of their wounds.

In succeeding years, as the international population of the Settlement grew, the SVC grew larger also, with an international flavor added to its composition. Early on, the Municipal Council of the International Settlement subsidized the SVC, and in the annual reports of the Council are the annual reports of the Corps, which not only provide an annual chronology of the activities of the SVC, but also provide the names and dates the various units joined over the years. In 1938, which is a particularly handy date to use, a now-rare book, I.I. Kounin's *Eighty Five Years of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps*, was published and contains a complete history of the SVC to that date. As of 1938, the Corps had 19 different units, including American, British, Scottish, Portuguese, Filipino, Russian, and Jewish.

The story of the Jewish Company would not be complete without first talking about Noel Jacobs, the first and only commander of the Company. He was born in England

"My layman's impression of this burial site is that it is an old, rather egalitarian, tightly packed, highly regulated and austere looking Jewish cemetery completely surrounded by a high brick wall. However, in spite of the overall uniformity and dignified somberness of its surroundings, General Cohen's tall, black tombstone, topped with the blessing hands symbol of the *Kohanim* and graced with an inscription penned in Chinese characters by the grateful hand of Mme. Sun Yat-Sen, somehow manages to stand out clearly."

We have now sent on this photograph for inclusion in the Sino-Judaic files at the Hoover Institution Archives.

Mr. Alderton further adds some rather poignant memories:

"... I personally remember the General Cohen of my childhood as being a very caring, rather serious-minded and impeccably dressed elderly Jewish gentleman who was treated with admiration, affection and respect by all, including my own late father, who knew him well. Upon contemplating this Sino-Judaic tombstone, I felt that these must have been the exact sentiments of his co-religionists who laid him to rest, as well as those of Mme. Sun Yat-Sen who, on behalf of a grateful nation, graciously composed an epitaph in honor of this great man's memory."

The Trade Diaspora of Baghdadi Jews in China: Prospects for Future Research

by Chiara Betta

The history of Jewish presence in China has in recent years attracted wide-ranging interest from the scholarly world, both in China and in the West. Two major conferences held in the United States and in Germany, the proceedings of which have been published in 1999 and 2000, have helped to refine our understanding of the Jewish experience in the Middle Kingdom from ancient to modern times. In addition dissertations, books and articles from scholars specialised in various disciplines have further broadened and deepened our understanding of Jewish communities in China. Quite significantly, most of the works touch upon the Jewish community of Shanghai which, by now, could be considered as a sub-field of Shanghai studies.

As for Baghdadi Jews in China, recent stud-

ies have, for the first time, provided a comprehensive picture of their sojourn in China between the middle of the nineteenth and middle of the twentieth centuries. Maisie Meyer's dissertation, "The Sephardi Jewish Community of Shanghai 1845-1939 and the Question of Identity" (London, 1994), has presented the history of Shanghai Baghdadis from the perspective of Jewish history. My own dissertation, "Silas Aaron Hardeen (1851?-1931): Marginality and Adaptation in Shanghai" (London 1997) has demonstrated how one of Shanghai's main Baghdadi tycoons constructed a new identity in the Chinese host environment based on the ideals of the Chinese merchant-philanthropist. On a more general level, my work, together with my article "Marginal Westerners in Shanghai: The Baghdadi Jewish Community, 1845-1931" (in *New Frontiers: Imperialism's New Communities in East Asia, 1842-1952*) have proposed a fresh interpretation of Baghdadi Jews as "imagined" Britons in the Shanghai International Settlement. Finally, Caroline Pluss' forthcoming book on the history of the Jewish community in Hong Kong will dissect Sephardi presence in Hong Kong from the middle of the nineteenth century up to the present times.

Notwithstanding the above studies, the Baghdadi communities of Shanghai and of Hong Kong still need to be fully understood in the multi-layered context of the trade diaspora of Baghdadi Jews, which developed in India, present-day Myanmar, Singapore and China under the aegis of the British empire in the middle of the nineteenth century. So far our knowledge is confined to individual communities but we do not possess an overall picture of the Baghdadi experience: we have threads and we need to build a multi-colored tapestry. With these issues in mind, the panel "Maintaining Identities, Changing Identities: The Baghdadi Jewish Diaspora in South, Southeast, and East Asia" was organized by Caroline Pluss for the annual meeting of the American Association of Asian Studies held in Chicago last March.

The four papers presented suggested, from different angles, that Baghdadi Jews reshaped their identities after their encounter with the British empire in a number of different host environments. The first paper, "Baghdadi Jews in India: Communal Relationships, Nationalism, and Zionism as Issues of Identity", was presented by

Joan Roland (Pace University). The paper discussed how Baghdadis moulded their identities in India by attempting to be considered Europeans in the colonial setting of India. In their quest to be Europeans they stressed their Sephardi heritage and grew increasingly distant from the "native" Bene Israel.

In the second paper, "Hong Kong Sephardic Jews: Shaping Transnational Identities", Dr. Caroline Pluss (University of Hong Kong), the organiser of the panel, discussed individual Sephardi personalities with the aim to explore the identity issue among Sephardi Jews in Hong Kong. She argued that Sephardi Jews developed negotiated identities, which favoured their integration in the social and economic landscape of the city.

The third paper "Jewish Identity in Singapore: Cohesion and Dispersion," was presented by Prof. Joan Bieder (University of Berkeley) who has recently undertaken a research project on the Jewish community of Singapore. Prof. Bieder provided a comprehensive presentation of the community from its origins in the 1830s until the present time. During her talk she especially stressed the socio-economic changes and demographic challenges experienced by Jews in Singapore in the last 150 years.

My paper " 'Orientals' or Europeans? Baghdadi Jews and the British Informal Empire in China, 1845-1931," posited that Baghdadis fostered distinct local loyalties in the Shanghai International Settlement. It focused on three distinct issues: the Baghdadis as Orientals, the Baghdadis as imagined Britons; and Baghdadis as "Other" among co-religionists. Finally, the discussant, Dr. Marcia Ristaino (Library of Congress), provided an excellent and innovative interpretative framework for the Baghdadi trade diaspora.

As a whole, it is hoped that in the near future, research will be carried out to study the similarities and differences between the various "nodes" of the Baghdadi diaspora from the middle of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century. In this respect the commercial interstices occupied by Baghdadi Jews as "imagined" Britons should be carefully studied in the light of their relationship with the British empire and with other middleman minorities.

Points East

Points East

made even more exhilarating by the fact that Rabbi Tokayer's connections with the Israeli Ambassador, Itzhak Shelef, paved the way for an advance welcome for Shi Lei by the Embassy staff. Although the Ambassador was out of town the week Shi Lei arrived in Beijing, he sent an e-mail to Shi Lei recently which he holds to be the most precious missive to date. It states:

Dear Shi Lei,

I understand from Rabbi Tokayer that everything has been arranged for your studies in Israel. Sorry I was not in Beijing when you visited the Embassy for the visa. I was in Jerusalem. I wish you success and achievements in your studies.

All the best during your stay in Israel.

Itzhak Shelef
Ambassador of Israel
Beijing

Such encouragement directly from the Israeli Ambassador, coupled with the knowledge that so many people have donated to the Shi Lei Fund for his upcoming studies, has been greatly appreciated by the Shi family. Thanks to all those involved in the effort to send Shi Lei to Israel and the many donors to the Shi Lei Fund, Shi Zhongyu's life work and hopes for his children and grandchildren could not have been better realized.

DONATIONS STILL BEING ACCEPTED

Donations to help defray the costs of Shi Lei's living expenses while in Israel, and travel expenses while in the United States, are still being gratefully accepted. Those interested may make a tax-deductible contribution in any amount by sending a check made out to the Sino-Judaic Institute (with a notation in the bottom left corner for the "Shi Lei Fund") and mailing it to: The Sino-Judaic Institute, 232 Lexington Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

HOW TO BOOK SHI LEI FOR A TALK AT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Since it is anticipated that many people will want to meet Shi Lei when he comes to the United States and learn more about the Chinese Jews, speaking engagements for are being scheduled for him throughout the United States. We anticipate he will be in the States only for the month of

July, 2002. Anyone interested in having Shi Lei speak at their synagogue, academic institution or other organization should contact me directly via e-mail at: wabraham@stanford.edu, or by phone at 1-888-731-3388 from within the United States. A portion of all proceeds will go to the Sino-Judaic Institute to support related programs and research.

Mainer Helps Honor Father

(continued from page 1)

According to Consul Ho's son, who was eleven years old at the time, his father "sensed the plight and persecution of the Jews, and the immense joy of the Austrians at the German entry into their country." Consul Ho began issuing hundreds, ultimately thousands, of Chinese entry visas to any Jew who applied.



Dr. Monto Ho, of Taipei, Taiwan, and Manli Ho, of Arrowsic, Maine, children of Dr. Feng Shan Ho, in front of the China section of the Wall of the Righteous Gentiles, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, January 23, 2001.

by Jonathan Goldstein

Ironically, it was not the Germans who ordered Ho to stop his humanitarian rescue mission. They were only too happy to see Jews stripped of their assets and eased out of Germany. It was Ho's superior, Chinese Ambassador to Berlin Chen Jie, who forbade Ho to issue visas on such a large scale. Eager to cement Chinese ties with Berlin, Chen was fearful of so public and so vast a rescue operation. Chen even sent an unannounced subordinate to Vienna to check up on Ho. It is believed that the demerit, which was entered in Ho's personnel file in 1939 in the Chinese Foreign Ministry, was linked to his insubordinate behavior towards his immediate superior on the issue of the visas. After a long diplomatic career, Ho retired in 1973. He died in 1997 at the age of 96 not knowing the specific fates of the people he helped rescue and certainly seeking no special honor for his activities.

How did Ho's activities come to the attention of the State of Israel? His daughter

Manli, who was born after the war, graduated Smith College, married and moved to Arrowsic, mentioned his heroism in an obituary notice. The information reached the State of Israel's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, known in Hebrew as Yad Vashem. After an extensive investigation, on October 24, 2000, Yad Vashem formally recognized Ho as a non-Jew considered "Righteous Among the Nations." He is one of only two Chinese to be so honored. He joins the company of such well-known "Righteous Gentiles" as Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg. On January 23, 2001, in the Hall of Remembrance at Yad Vashem, in a recognition ceremony carried on three Chinese television stations, Manli Ho and her brother held an emotional meeting with Frieda Rogel, a comrade of Israeli Kibbutz Degania A, who was rescued by Ho's father. "We were the lucky ones not to end up in a concentration camp," Ms. Rogel observed. "We came to Shanghai and we were saved." Manli Ho replied, praising "the genius of the Jewish people... They have pursued the perpetrators and honored the people who have helped." Israeli Justice Yaacov Maltz, Chairman of Yad Vashem's Commission for the Designation of the Righteous, commented that in the "black night" of the Holocaust "there were a few stars, and Feng Shan Ho was one of them." Pan Zhanlin, Ambassador to the State of Israel from the People's Republic of China, the successor regime to Republic of China, which demoted Ho for his rescue activities, acknowledged that "this honor is coming late. Dr. Ho was silent for half a century. We are finally gathered to memorialize him, to remember his deeds and his legacy."

Manli Ho has now returned to Maine. She, her husband, and brother were especially touched by the eulogies by Ambassador Pan and others but feel that, accolades or no accolades, Feng Shan Ho died content. According Dr. Monto Ho, his father "had no idea that he would be honored or rewarded for what he thought was simply the right thing to do. He was a person who stood up for righteousness." Manli adds: "He thought it was the natural thing to do when you see somebody in distress."

Dr. Jonathan Goldstein is Professor of East Asian History at the State University of West Georgia and a summer resident of Glenburn, Maine. This article was written while he was in Jerusalem doing research at Yad Vashem, the State of Israel's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes Remembrance Authority.

BOOK NOOK

Chinese Perceptions of the 'Jews' and Judaism: A History of the Youtai

by Zhou Xun, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001. x, 202 pp. \$40

This extremely interesting and well-written work traces the history of the information concerning Jews available to the Chinese (primarily the intellectual elite) and how in turn their writings about Jews reflected the concerns they had about their own situation. Thus, when there was a fear of loss of cultural identity as the result of Western scientific and technological superiority, Chinese thinkers sought encouragement in the ability of Jews to survive and maintain their identity over the millennia despite persecution and oppression. But when nationalism was urged as a defense against Western imperialism, anti-Semitic images of the 'Jew' as the power behind the Western nations emerged. To Sun Yatsen, trying to forge a nation, the Jews were an inspiration, and what had been at times depicted as ugly, stateless Jews became a wonderful and historical race. Even Yiddish, as the vernacular language of the ordinary people, was seen as a model for the development of a unified vernacular in China. Zionism, too, was treated in a positive light at time but, especially in the post-1949 era, the perception of the 'Jew' as victim shifted and Zionism came to be equated with the enemy. At present, the relations with Israel have been established and there is an active academic interest in the study of Jews and Jewish culture. At the same time, the image of the Jew as a financial wizard has a wide appeal in a society that increasingly moves to a capitalistic mode, and there are opportunistic publishers supplying the public with the "secrets" of Jewish economic and financial abilities that will enable anyone to become rich.

The author handles with a sure hand the account of the changing intellectual and political currents that serve to define the attitudes toward the 'Jew' in a society that for most of its history had no actual contact with Jews. There is much to learn from this fine work, both about Chinese history and the use of the 'Jew' as a metaphor. The book concludes, pp. 167-84, with a translation of some of the writings of Shan Sili, the wife of a Chinese diplomat who lived in Europe at the turn of the century, as an

example of the kind of information concerning Jews that was becoming available to the reading public in China at that time. There are extensive notes and a bibliography of both the Chinese primary sources and secondary studies in many languages.

The Mir Yeshiva: Sunrise on the Eastern Horizon and Torah Rescue Routes

collected and edited by A. Bernstein, J. Forgas and J. Naveh
published by the Prager Center, Israel Heritage Institute
Bnei Brak 5761 (2001)
reviewed by Rena Krasno

This book, written and published in Hebrew, presented some difficulty for me because of its many religious references and expressions, as well as dates expressed in Hebrew letters, forms with which I am unfamiliar.

In August 1941, 300 members of the Mir Yeshiva arrived in Shanghai. Fleeing Nazi persecution, they had completed a difficult voyage by Trans-Siberian railway and steamer from Lithuania to Kobe. After a short stay in Japan, for which they only had transit visas, they sailed for Shanghai where no visas at all were required. Eventually, a small number of members of other Yeshivoth joined the Mir yeshiva: from Kamenets, Kletsk, Lubavitch, Lublin, and Telsh.

In Shanghai, the Mir *yeshivabocher* were heartened by the warm welcome accorded them by a delegation of old-timer Russian Jews headed by their Chief Rabbi, Meir Ashkenazi, a Lubavitcher Hassid. The Sephardi Jewish community also extended invaluable assistance to the newcomers. They put at their disposal the Beth Aharon synagogue, built by a tycoon of Iraqi origin, Silas Hardoon.

This is how Rabbi Zwi Kahana of Mir Yeshiva describes their first day:

"When we came to Beit Aharon and saw with our own eyes its beauty, we burst out singing and dancing with joy. Our celebration lasted till late at night. The synagogue was able to house all the members of our Yeshiva and although we were

crowded we found much happiness within its walls."

Every space in the Synagogue was used for studying and living quarters. Eventually, as additional *yeshivabocher* arrived, space became very tight and local Jews helped rent some extra rooms outside the Synagogue.

Nutrition was a problem, compounded by strict *kashrut* requirements. Shanghai was suffering from wartime shortages, the quality of bread had deteriorated and the Mir students were unaccustomed to eating rice. Nevertheless, many *yeshivabocher* repeatedly laud local Russian Jewish women who spared no effort to provide them with healthy and palatable food. To make up for lack of vitamins, the men were regularly given doses of yeast.

In 1942, Rabbi Ashkenazi published a long 'Declaration' both in English and German for distribution among Shanghai's Jewish citizens. It was entitled: *The Shabbath Meals of the Agudas Yisroel under the Protectorate of the Rev. Rabbi Ashkenazi* and stated in part:

" . . . The center of the Sabbath is the Sabbath-meal with its candle-light, its sanctification by the cup of wine, the plaited Sabbath-Breads, the abundant Sabbath-Meal, the ardent Sabbath-Songs and the words of the Holy Bible, which must not be missing at the Sabbath-Meal . . . The Sabbath-meals are existing for our brothers and sisters from Central-Europe who have found shelter here, who are eating Kosher and sanctify the Sabbath and who are therefore suffering especially from the conditions here.

. . . This wonderful work is threatened by dark sorrows. But it is our duty for all of us maintain this holy work which can now be compared with a diamond in the crown of the Jewish Community . . .

BECOME HOST AT THE SABBATH-MEALS OF THE AGUDAS YISROEL."

As to the acquisition of religious material, the Mir Yeshiva solved the problem by using a cheap lithographic process for copying sacred texts. For the first time in history, Shanghai became an important center of religious Jewish publication among

which; the Torah, the Sidurim, the Mishna, the Shulhan Aroch, the Halacha, Morals and Ethics. Much praise is due to Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi for the success of this endeavor. His work was supported both morally and financially by the Shanghai Ashkenazi Jewish Community, represented by Mr. G. Shifrin.

On February 18, 1943, the Japanese military authorities published a declaration confining all those who had arrived in Shanghai after 1937 to a 'designated area.' In fact, this was a ghetto for European Jewish refugees. Mir Yeshiva was included in this order. The *yeshivabocher* had great difficulty in finding lodgings but – more important to them – succeeded in obtaining from the Japanese authorities to continue their studies at Beth Aharon, outside the confines of the 'designated area.' However, in order to leave the ghetto, they had to wear a round blue metal pin on the lapel of their coat identifying them as residents of the 'designated area.' This created a problem on Sabbath. Did Jewish religion permit them to wear (carry) a pin on Sabbath? After much discussion and references to precedents in medieval ghettos, the rabbis decided that the importance of Torah study on Sabbath outweighed the ban of 'carrying' the pin. Of course, everyone walked to the synagogue on Sabbath and did not use transportation of any kind – this point was not even raised!

The wartime experience of Mir Yeshiva in Shanghai is but a facet of the great turmoil in this city during World War II, but it deserves to be heard.

Mystery of the Kaifeng Scroll

A Vivi Hartman Adventure
Harriet K. Feder
Lerner Publications: Hardcover: 0-8225-0739-0, \$14.95 U.S. (\$20.95 CAN.) Ages 9-12 – Grades 4-7 – Jacketed – 5-1/2 x 8-1/4 – 143 pages

When Vivi and her Arab friend set out to find Vivi's mother, who has mysteriously disappeared, they uncover the secret of an ancient Torah scroll. Harriet K. Feder brings readers a thought-provoking story about friendship and cultural differences, wrapped in a thrilling adventure.

SINO-JUDAICA VOL. 3

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"Two-Gun" Cohen's Tomb in Manchester

by Rena Krasno

Morris Cohen, nicknamed '2-Gun Cohen' was the only foreigner ever to become a member of China's ruling party – the Kuomintang.

As a young man in Canada, Cohen became fascinated with the ideas of Chinese revolutionaries, whose great hero was Dr. Sun Yat-Sen. '2-Gun' met the famous leader in person, and became his lifelong admirer. In recognition of Cohen's devotion, Dr. Sun appointed him his aide-de-camp with the rank of colonel. Cohen helped procure weapons and smuggle them into China for the struggle against corrupt feudal lords.

After Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's death, the Legislative Yuan promoted Cohen to the rank of General and he became a confidant of some of the most powerful men in China, among whom was Dr. Sun's son, Sun Fo. Since his reputation for integrity was unimpeachable, he was entrusted with protection of the government's gold bullion and the purchase of arms, military vehicles and even planes.

The Japanese viewed General Cohen with suspicion and later hatred for the following reason: during the Sino-Japanese war,

Japan was accused of using poison gas against the Chinese population, a fact they indignantly denied. However, Cohen was able to get hold of a Japanese gas cylinder and prove the Japanese officials to be liars – something they never forgot or forgave. During World War II, in 1943, Cohen mysteriously reached Hongkong from Shanghai, in an attempt to rescue Mme. Sun Yat-Sen. Mme. Sun had established there the China Defense League, an umbrella organization for charitable, medical and welfare programs. She was now in danger from the Japanese who had conquered the island. The Japanese authorities soon found out about Cohen's arrival and arrested him. They interned him in a concentration camp, which he survived. Years later, when questioned about his foolhardy Hongkong operation, Cohen explained: "I felt this might be the last service I could do for Dr. Sun."

"Two Gun" had both critics and fans. My father, David Rabinovich, Hon. Secretary of the Shanghai Ashkenazi Jewish Community, met Cohen in Shanghai and mentioned his eagerness to help Jews in critical times of world turmoil. There was no doubt that the welfare of the Jewish people was always very close to Cohen's heart. In fact, he loved both the Chinese and the Jews and often spoke of the similarities between them.

Judith Ben-Eliezer, the beautiful young leader of the Shanghai Zionist organization, *Betar*, knew Cohen well. In her book *Shanghai Lost, Jerusalem Regained* (Steimazky, Jerusalem, 1985), she writes:

"Cohen was very proud of his Jewish heritage. He was touched when he saw the Jewish flag carried high about the *Betar* marchers and, being an uninhibited extrovert, he burst out in loud approval . . . He broke into a broad smile that lit up his face and grey eyes. The transformation was complete. His toughness gave way to warmth, generosity and kindness which were his basic characteristics . . ."

Cohen's admirers quickly come to his defense when some of his actions are criticized. One such supporter is a loyal member of the Sino-Judaic Institute, Michael Alderton of Australia with whom we have the pleasure to correspond. He recently sent us a photograph of "Two-Gun" Cohen's tomb in the Blakely Jewish Cemetery of Manchester. Mr. Alderton writes: