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

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Points East  
 中國-猶太學院

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**SOMEONE WORTH KNOWING:  
 NORMAN KAPLAN  
 A LINK BETWEEN CHINA & ISRAEL**

by Xu Xin

In 2002, we will witness the tenth anniversary of full diplomatic relations between China and Israel.

The normalization process was long and dramatic. Although Israel was the first Mideast country to recognize New China in 1950, it took nearly 40 years to establish normal relations. During those years, especially after 1956, China ignored gestures from Israel for any formal contacts. Therefore, there were almost no official channels for Chinese and Israelis to contact each other. Although the situation began to improve at the end of 1970's, when China adopted her reform and open-door policies, channels, especially between individuals, still needed to be established.

After the normalization, Reuven Merhav, Israeli diplomat and Director General of Foreign Affairs of Israel, wrote gratefully that a number of personalities and organizations were responsible for this positive outcome. Among those who tried and succeeded in breaking through the deadlock one name stands out: Norman C. Kaplan, a personal friend, a native of Cleveland and currently Chairman and President of Calcol, Inc. He played a significant role in breaching the wall of secrecy.

Twenty-two years ago, when Kaplan studied in a graduate program in theoretical physics at Harvard University, he fell in love with Chinese culture and learned to speak excellent Mandarin without an accent. Because of this, he became friendly with post-doctoral candidate Dan-di Wu, the first Chinese physicist to study at Harvard. (Wu's father-in-law was a highly placed Chinese official.) Both Kaplan and Wu believed that Israel and China should become friends and establish normal relations. Their personal friendship developed so well that two kept in touch after they left Harvard. After a few exchanges, Wu requested that Kaplan provide assistance in establishing channels of communication for his Chinese colleagues to contact Israeli scientists.

Pleased to comply, Kaplan forwarded Wu's letter to Yuval Neeman, then science minister of Israel and also a theoretical physicist whom Kaplan had met at Harvard. Neeman wrote a very warm letter to Wu. However, the reply, had to be sent first to Cleveland where Kaplan lived and then forwarded to Wu because Israel did not have a postal service agreement with China at that time and no letters could be delivered from Israel to China directly. For the next few years, Kaplan played a role in third-party diplomacy and served as a means of the shuttling letters between Israel and China. By so doing, he opened an essential conduit between China and Israel.

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**MEMORIES OF MY FATHER,  
 REV. MENDEL BROWN**

by Henrietta Reifler



Rev. Mendel Brown,  
 Chaplain of the Jewish  
 Unit of the  
 Shanghai Volunteer  
 Force; Fall 1937

Whenever I think about my father, which is quite often, I see his genial smiling face which expressed his optimism, good nature, faith in human nature, and tolerance.

These characteristics served him well when toward the end of World War II he was interned by the Japanese in Shanghai. I was told by several people who were interned with him that his daily optimistic interpretation of the news of the day kept their morale high.

He was a pastoral rather than a scholarly rabbi. Not that he was unlearned in Jewish knowledge, for he was ordained by Jews College, London, England, and received a B.A. degree from the University of London. His holiday sermons were published by the local press and when the owner and editor of *Israel's Messenger*, Mr. N.E.B. Ezra,

died, he became acting editor for a while. Likewise, he served a number of years as editor of the B'nai B'rith newsletter. I think he liked to write, because after retirement he wrote two long articles about the Jews of ancient and modern China for the B'nai B'rith magazine, *The Monitor*. Unfortunately his death in December 1949 prevented him from completing the second article.

A man of peace, he was disturbed by the lack of friendship between the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities. As an Ashkenazi serving a Sephardi community, he was able to act as a liaison and he told me that he considered his greatest achievement to be the friendship that developed between the two communities, especially as they collaborated to alleviate the lot of the refugees fleeing the Nazis.

He also served as a liaison with the non-Jewish community. It was Dean Trivett of the Anglican Cathedral, who brought him the sad news of the death of his beloved youngest daughter, who we later learned died in a hospital in Johannesburg a week after arrival.

A most important part of his ministry was his role as teacher at the Shanghai Jewish School, where he served as head of the Jewish Studies Program and taught the Hebrew classes. I, of course,

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Italy	1
South Africa	1

**TOTAL:** 341

## FROM THE EDITOR

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the Sept. 11 terrorist attack and its aftermath in these pages.

An ancient rabbinic saying declares that the sword comes into the world for three reasons. It comes when a) justice is delayed, b) justice is perverted, and c) when the word of God is misinterpreted.

First there is the obvious justice. The blood of our brothers and sisters cries out for justice against those responsible for this act. Not only that, we owe it to ourselves, our fellow Americans, and our fellow human beings to prevent these people from being able to murder and maim ever again. That is the justice on our side.

But justice is a two-edged sword. If there is justice on our side, there also is justice on their side. Those who perpetrated this violence did so from some sense of grievance. Without excusing those responsible, we must simultaneously strive to understand and address the justice in their grievance. We need to deal constructively with the underlying issues in order to show those who are driven by anger and despair to mistakenly support the terrorists that we are concerned about them. This is the best way to isolate the terrorists and deprive them their population base.

This ancient saying concludes by asserting that violence results when the word of God (literally the Torah) is misinterpreted. If God was invoked in the perpetration of this horrendous act, then God's word has been criminally misapplied. No religion that I know of, and no truly spiritual religious leader, would ever countenance this devastation of humanity.

Whether in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Nigeria or Indonesia, or even here at home, it is time for people of faith, genuinely spiritual folk—which means to be both God-loving and life-loving—to come together to articulate a common message of peace and love, of justice and reconciliation, such as the world has never heard before, and probably never needed as badly.

May the new year be sweeter than the way it began.

Anson Laytner

## Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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## FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE

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

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With the strong recommendation from her second husband, she began writing about her experience, but found herself crying after finishing each passage. Without her knowledge, her husband found an editor to publish her finalized work.

She was initially against publishing it, but was convinced by the editor, who said people should know about her experience.

She deplores the way the Japanese are taught about the war in textbooks.

"I'm very sorry that modern Japanese kids don't know what had happened during the Pacific War," she said, pointing out that they often consider themselves as victims of the war by citing the atomic bombings, rather than recognizing they were aggressors as well.

Chagoll, who organizes annual trips to Auschwitz, where she lost many of her relatives, said she often sees many Japanese tourists there.

"Sometimes I go up to them and say, 'What you must do is learn your own history before occupying yourselves with our history,'" she said. "They reply, 'Why?' So I ask them, 'Do you know the Pacific War?' and they reply, 'Yes, the atomic bomb.'" . . .

The 69-year-old, who lost her childhood in the Japanese camps, is an advocate of children's rights.

"I was never a child," she said. "In the camps, we children had the same lives as adults. We had to behave like adults, but we were kids. And we had to work.

"The biggest humiliation for me was to be no more than an 'empty stomach' rather than a person. You are so hungry that the stomach becomes the principle thought of your whole day," she said. "The second humiliation was being deprived of education. Every child has the right to education."

She produces works aimed at children and lectures on war, racism and abuse. She also visits Belgian prisons as a consultant, dealing especially with young delinquents and criminals.

"I don't want to be a morality teacher," the petite but energetic writer said. "But I'm a rebel. And I hope to remain one."

## Conference • The History of Jewish Diasporas in China • International Symposium May 5 – 9, 2002

Scholars, teachers, research fellows, descendants of Jewish communities in China, and other interested parties are invited to attend the May 5-9, 2002 International Symposium on "The History of Jewish Diasporas in China" sponsored by The Center for Jewish Studies at Nanjing University. The Symposium, which will explore the latest discoveries, achievements, and developments in the study of the history of Jewish Diaspora in China, will be organized by and take place at two locales: Nanjing and Kaifeng.

Participants who intend to submit papers should concentrate their subject on one of the following areas:

- Study of the Kaifeng Jewry
- Study of the history of Jewish Communities in Harbin, Shanghai, Tienjin, and Hong Kong in Modern China
- Relations between the Chinese and Jewish people.
- Future perspectives of Jewish Diaspora in 21st Century China

The first three full days of the conference, in Nanjing, are allotted to scholarly papers and discussions. The fourth and fifth days will consist of field trips to original sites of the Kaifeng Jewish community.

Those interested in attending should contact Prof. Xu Xin by post, fax or email. Those who intend to submit papers are invited to send an abstract of not more than 400 words to the Symposium Secretariat at the address below by October 31, 2001. The program committee will then send each applicant a conference program and visa invitation no later than December 31, 2001.

Optional activities before and after the conference, including trips to visit Jewish related sites in Shanghai, Tienjin, and other cities, arranged as part of the program.

Mail: Prof. Xu Xin, Center for Jewish Studies, School of Foreign Studies, Nanjing University, Nanjing, 210093, China  
Fax: 86-25-8818375 or 86-371-3823769 • Email: xuxin49@jlonline.com or amwyen@public2.zz.ha.cn

in the world, is under Jewish influence," that Jews have "parasitic tendencies" and "flagrantly selfish characters."

The original reports are now in the Political Archives of the German Foreign Ministry. Simon Wachsmuth, whom I had the pleasure to meet in Vienna, has an extensive collection of copies of such documentation.

The report of January 11, 1940, from the Shanghai German Consulate General to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, refers to the increase in the number of European Jewish refugees. It emphasizes that since they have little influence as yet, the dangerous threat they pose has not been fully recognized. Only the police are beginning to adopt an anti-Semitic stand. Criminal acts among Jews have increased and refugee girls work as 'entertainers,' replacing Russian girls by accepting lower payment for their services. The police now have gone so far as to employ German speaking policemen (5 out of 8,000 men).

The report concludes that it is still too early to foresee the influence of Jewish refugees in Shanghai, but is "of vital importance for Germany at this point, that it is now free of a large number of Jews who will draw more of their race away from Europe."

The report of June 30, 1940 from Shanghai German Consulate General to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, refers to the Jewish Press, mainly the *Gelbe Post* and the *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle*. It notes that the *Gelbe Post*, whose policy is seconded by the *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle*, helps Jewish refugees penetrate into Shanghai life by teaching them about the land and the people, the foreign concessions, the mentality of the Chinese. Furthermore, articles are being published about Jews prominent in the arts and sciences. Many are translated both into English and Chinese. One article stresses that Reuter, the founder of the famous news agency, was a half Jew. Going even further, the Jewish press makes hateful remarks about the Germans and the Italians. As a result, the Jews' relations with the British have tightened. This "close brotherhood" even resulted in the British Ambassador inviting representatives of the

Jewish Press to a cocktail party. The British newspaper, *The North China Daily News*, published an article under the 'shameless headline: "Foreign Craftsmen," which concerns mainly Jews.

The report also refers to the Jewish paper *8-Uhr Abendblatt* in which a photograph shows a "Jewish Company in Palestine preparing for an Italian attack." The report indignantly emphasizes the enthusiasm expressed by the Jews for the privilege of fighting alongside the British.

One cannot but be amazed by the German Consulate General's criticism of the Jews' friendly feelings for Great Britain and antagonism towards Germany in 1940!

### Dutch Writer Recounts Flight from Nazis, Japan Prison Hell

by Miu Oikawa Dieter  
excerpted from *The Japan Times*, 20 May 2000

They fled Belgium to escape Nazi persecution. They reached the Dutch East Indies, considered the "promised land" for the Dutch, only to be thrown into Japanese concentration camps.

"We escaped one war to enter another one," recalls Lydia Chagoll, a Dutch-born writer based in Brussels. "In 1940, we left Brussels to escape the Germans. In 1942, we were prisoners of the Japanese in Batavia (Jakarta)."

Chagoll describes her family's ordeal during World War II in a book titled "Une Enfance dans les Camps Japonais" ("A Childhood in the Japanese Camps"). Originally written in Dutch in 1981, the book's fourth edition came out in late March in French.

"We were Jews," Chagoll said in an interview. "My father, who owned a weekly in Brussels, was a well-known antifascist. On May 10, 1940, the government called and said we should go away immediately. It was getting too dangerous."

Her family fled to France, then to Spain and Portugal, witnessing German atrocities

ties on the way. Continuing on to Mozambique and to South Africa, in November 1941 they reached present-day Indonesia, which had been under Dutch rule for 350 years.

In March 1942, Japan occupied the Dutch colony. Her father was taken to a prisoner of war camp, while she, along with her mother and sister, were thrown in an internment camp. She was 11 years old.

An estimated 140,000 Dutch residents were held as POWs or were thrown into concentration camps in the region. About 12,000 of them died in the camps.

She remembers orders given by Japanese soldiers, such as "Kiotsuke!" ("Attention!"), "Rei!" ("Bow!") and "Yasume!" ("Rest!")

"There were long ceremonies twice a day at the camps," she recalled in the interview. "We didn't understand the long speeches because it was all in Japanese!

"There were always problems. Can you imagine thousands of women and children bowing at the same time? We always didn't bow enough or we didn't bow together," she said. "So there were punishments."

Chagoll writes about her wartime experience through the eyes of a child, in plain and simple words. She reveals no hatred or spirit of revenge.

"With hate and revenge, you go nowhere. If you have hate and revenge, you act as they did at that time so you are on the same level," she said. "But I do not forgive, and I do not forget."

Chagoll and her mother and sister were released in September 1945 after being forced to live in five Japanese camps. All four family members were finally able to return together to Belgium in November 1946, 6-1/2 years after they first fled.

Chagoll became a dancer, choreographer and filmmaker, professions she chose because she "didn't have to speak." She buried her wartime experience, as did many people who repatriated from the Dutch East Indies.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

Looking for material on Frank Glass, Saul Eisenberg, Werner Mannheim, Erwin Reifler, Moses Schwarzenberg and Yosef Tekoah. I would appreciate hearing from those who knew these persons and those who might have correspondence, documents, archival records or newspaper articles pertaining to their lives and times.

Dr. Matthias Messmer, Winkelriedstr. 36, CH-9000 St. Gallen, Switzerland  
Matthias.Messmen@unisg.ch

To the Editor:

I was most interested in the article by Bemis M. Frank on the Jewish Company of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps (Points East 2001, 16(2):11-13). I have a photograph of my father (F. Bettelheim) standing on the balcony of our apartment in the Embankment Building, North Soochow Road, which is labeled by him: "As member of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps in British Uniform". It was taken sometime in 1939 when I was three years old and often wondered what that was about. On the same page of the album is a picture of a friend of the family (W. Baruch) in similar uniform. I also vaguely remember my father going off in uniform on some evenings, presumably to meetings of the Corps. I wonder if my father is listed at all and if there are any more details, available about the Corps, especially in the period when my father would have been involved. I also have a nice silver cup and serviette rings awarded to him as: "First Prize for the Best Marksman". I do not know if this was as part of his involvement with the Corps or not, but this seems likely. I could also arrange to have copies made of the pictures, if there is an interest in them for archival purposes.

Yours sincerely,  
Karl A. Bettelheim  
2/40 Carwarp St.  
MacLeod, Vic 3085, Australia  
kabsm@mpx.com.au

To the Editor:

I am responding to Ms. Barnov's intriguing letter to the editor in the July issue of *Points East*.

I cannot tell for certain from your letter whether or when you were in Xinjiang (spelled Hsinchiang, Sinkian, etc., at various times). In any event, I can assure you that Sheng Shih-ts'ai was not in any way Jewish. He was a very devious warlord who played a minor role in Manchuria during the 1920's, graduated from a military academy in Japan, and after spending some time in the Chinese nationalist forces march to power in the late 1920's, ended up in Xinjiang, also known as Chinese Turkestan (the majority of the population there being of ethnic Turkic stock).

Sheng gradually built up his political power by subduing a number of native rebellions against Chinese rule, allying himself at first with White Russian forces and, after several years of struggle with competing Chinese would-be warlords, allied himself with the USSR in 1934. With Soviet support he became in effect their puppet ruler in Xinjiang. This situation continued until about 1942 when, with the Soviets apparently facing defeat by the German armies, he began mending fences with the Chinese nationalists. To shorten this over-long story, he subsequently again made overtures to the Soviets, and the Chinese government removed him from office in 1945 and moved him out of Xinjiang. After a two year interval during which Xinjiang was governed by General Chang Chih-chung, Masud Sabri, a native Muslim who had worked as a senior political deputy to Chang, was appointed the first native governor of the province. Sabri had worked to gain autonomy for the area and his people under the Nationalists, and was subsequently executed by the Communists in 1951. Ironically, the former province has since that time been officially known as the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

I don't know whether the former government headquarters building still exists, or whether I will get to Urumqi (or Wulumuqi, the Chinese rendition of the official name of the capital) again,

but I am certain that with your letter in mind, others may try to find out whether there is still a Magen David to be found on a building. I know that many Russians came through Xinjiang during the 1920s and early '30s, some of whom were probably Jewish and may have settled down for a while. One may even today see the Star of David on old buildings in several parts of the Far East.

Sincerely,  
Arthur Rosen  
Scarsdale, NY  
Artrosen2@aol.com

To the Editor:

I hope that you are having a good summer in Seattle. Here in Philadelphia it's hot and humid, but we muddle through, relying on varied summer reading such as the current issue of *Points East*...

Not conducive to a restful summer, of course, is Wilhelm Matzat's blandly deceptive letter. If you had sent me his letter in time, I might have been able to get a rebuttal into the same issue — as you know, a later correction or rejoinder is only half as effective.

In what form is Matzat's list of German Jews in Tsingtao 1939-41? ("In the field", page 4.) Can it be sent by e-mail? If so, I would appreciate getting a copy. Of course, given the dubious practices Matzat has so amply demonstrated in writing about Meisinger, can one trust anything that he has produced?

By the way, the first item under "In the field" gives a wrong title for "Die Gelbe Post". Too bad, because you had run in your March 2000 issue a correct and detailed citation of that edition, reprinted from my CJES newsletter of 1999. There is a second embarrassing error in the same paragraph, referring to a publication in Berlin supposedly named "Das Neues China". Let me repeat my earlier offer to you, to do an informal review of any material in German before you publish it.

Cordially,  
Ralph Hirsch, Philadelphia, PA  
Hirsch@igc.org

To the Editor:  
Re: "Two-Gun" Cohen's Tomb in Manchester by Rena Krasno

This is just a very short note to say how wonderful it is for me to finally see your pleasantly revealing article on General Cohen printed up on the pages of Points East.

My own research endeavours plod slowly on but every so often I am rewarded with real gems touching upon the life and times of General Cohen. Your own article is one of these and, as such, it will make a significant addition to my growing collection of references which make mention of the General.

Congratulations to all at The Sino-Judaic Institute for publishing such an appealing and informative article about that most significant of Sino-Judaic figures, the truly remarkable General Morris Abraham Cohen.

Kind regards,  
Michael Alderton, Katoomba, Australia

To the Editor:

The reviewer is correct in asserting that the story of the Mir Yeshiva deserves to be heard. Indeed, the entire story needs to be told, not just the one-sided, glorified version published by the orthodox enclave at Bnai Brak.

The behavior of the members of the yeshiva during the Shanghai siege begs the question of what it means to be religious. If being religious means that one is kind to the sick and elderly, altruistic, helpful and considerate towards people in need, in other words, to be decent, a mensch, the members of the yeshiva were the very antithesis of religious. They were selfish to the point of inhuman.

It is to be noted that these men fled, leaving every female member of their families to suffer and burn. Of all these hundreds of women, eight survived.

Among thousands of impoverished, malnourished and frightened people, this small group, with their appalling sense of entitlement, demanded and received special treatment to the detriment of others in serious trouble, including hungry children.

Two of these young men watched my pregnant cousin and her crippled mother drag a heavy bag of coals up many steps to their apartment. Of course, they did not help. As members of the yeshiva, they never performed any manual work at any time, not even under the horrific conditions of the Shanghai ghetto. But, two days later, these same young men came to eat dinner. Because there was not enough food for all, the two women did not eat. The men accepted this as their due. Decent people call this behavior shameful.

It is not surprising that the entire yeshiva survived. They lived off others. They were not exhausted by physical labor and their caloric intake was greater than anyone else's. Without any effort on their part, never contributing to the essential functioning of the ghetto, their food was not only guaranteed, but was supplemented.

The conduct of the members of the Mir Yeshiva in Shanghai is not to be commended, it is to be condemned.

Yours truly,  
Marcia D. Miller, New York, NY

## IN THE FIELD

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Rena Krasno delivered the annual Leo Gabow Memorial Lecture on Oct. 14. Her topic was based on her new book *That Last Glorious Summer 1939 Shanghai-Japan*.

## Norman Kaplan (continued from page 1)

In 1984, at Wu's request, Kaplan personally arranged a meeting between Neeman and the Chinese vice-premier of science and technology. An agreement for scientific and academic exchanges between China and Israel evolved. Since then, direct personal exchanges between the two countries were established. Accordingly, Chinese foreign minister Wu Xueqian made the following statement during his visit to Cairo in 1985: "Israeli experts and scholars are allowed to come to China as individuals to attend conferences held in China." His words publicly legitimized practices that had already taken place, as well as future Sino-Israeli exchanges.

Kaplan also arranged for Wu to visit Hebrew University of Jerusalem and meet Israeli officials privately. In those years, Kaplan not only made connections between Chinese and Israelis, but also generously covered the many expenses of such meetings. He said that he did this strictly as a philanthropist and because, he felt "it's the right thing to do."

Because of these many activities, he won the trust of Chinese and became a trusted messenger. In 1988, during his visit to China, he was arranged to meet with senior Chinese officials. During the meeting, he was informed that China now officially favored full diplomatic relations with Israel. Needless to say, China wanted him to serve as a messenger announce the good news. He understood the importance and wasted no time in doing so.

Learning about it, Chaim Herzog, President of Israel, thanked him and expressed his gratitude. George Bush, then vice-president of the United States, wrote to him personally and said that he was fascinated by Chinese official observations about full diplomatic relations with Israel and wished him to share it with his national security advisor.

The rest of the world soon witnessed public meetings between the Chinese foreign minister and Israeli foreign minister. Two years later, China and Israel set up offices

## BOOK NOOK

### That Last Glorious Summer - 1939 Shanghai - Japan

by Rena Krasno; edited by Tess Johnston

Published by Old China Hand Press in Hong Kong, Nov. 2001; ISBN No. 962-7872-17-2; 177 pages, old 26 black and white and colored photos. Cost in the U.S.: \$19.95; \$3.00 for Shipping and Handling; Tax (For California Residents Only); 20% discount for Sino-Judaic Institute members. The book is available in the U.S. from Rena Krasno, 255 S. Rengstorff, Apt. 106, Mountain View, CA 94040; rena@renakrasno.com

Comments by Prof. Pan Guang: Though I am a historian myself, I marvel again and again at Rena's outstanding ability to preserve her personal, family and old publication records and archives. Her 1992 work about Shanghai, *Strangers Always, A Jewish Family in Wartime Shanghai*, was based on her wartime diaries. Her new book *That Last Glorious Summer-1939-Shanghai - Japan*, that appeared in October 2001, is a prequel to her first book. Once again, Rena collected rare historical data and recreated vivid scenes that took place in the Far East just before the outbreak of World War II.

When she was a teenager, Rena and her family witnessed the drafting of young Japanese into the army, the return of soldier's ashes, the helplessness of good people, the increasing flow of Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi Holocaust and many other significant episodes. Now, after 62 years, we learn about Rena's direct experience, research and lucid analysis of the situation in Shanghai and Japan on the verge of a deadly cataclysm.

Today, in a world of continued unrest and warfare, unremitting efforts must be made to prevent the repetition of such historical tragedy. Seen from this very point, the story told by Rena, one of the last survivors of the Pre-War II generation, is one of true significance to us and to later generations.

### An American Doctor's Odyssey

by Victor Heiser, M.D.

W.W. Norton inc. (NY 1938)

Reprinted by GCF Books Quezon City, Philippines

reviewed by Rena Krasno

Dr. Victor Heiser became the American Director of Health in the Philippines in 1905. At the time, the islands were devastated by smallpox, cholera, bubonic plague, leprosy, beri-beri, dysentery and many other diseases that are curable today.

Dr. Heiser fought against epidemics with all the means available to him. However, it was not always simple to convince the Filipinos of the importance of the rules he prescribed. For example, during a cholera epidemic he insisted that the entire population drink boiled water. He was assured again and again that they were doing so, yet the number of cases did not diminish. Finally, in despair Dr. Heiser sent an investigator to visit spots where new outbreaks of the disease had occurred. The investigator asked people if they were following the boiled drinking water rules, and was assured:

"Yes, we drink boiled water – we take a tablespoon three times a day!"

I began to suspect that Dr. Heiser was Jewish because of his references to the Bible and, in particular to Moses, as "one of the first great sanitarians." He recounts how Moses "laid down a system of regulations for those having leprosy, threatening the Jews with the wrath of Yahweh if they disobeyed. At intervals of seven days the isolated ones were examined by the priests, who attempted to cleanse them. . ."

My supposition of Dr. Heiser's Jewishness was confirmed when I read of Dr. Heiser's trip with a Filipino, Dr. Calderon, on the Trans-Siberian railway. Dr. Heiser tells how cold and hungry they were but were unable to buy any food because he could not communicate in Russian. He writes:

"The thermometer was far below zero, and still we had nothing to eat. Poor Calderon

was nearly congealed . . . When we reached Warsaw I was trying to figure out whether he could be buried there, and what my duties were to a friend under such circumstances.

About seven in the evening an ancient Jew entered the compartment, and I immediately addressed him joyfully in Yiddish. Three hours later, he produced steaming borsch, black bread, and tea. Calderon's face began to resume its natural color, and he was soon able once more to articulate."

One of Dr. Heiser's achievements during his trip to the U.S. was to convince Nathan Straus to donate to Manila a plant for pasteurizing milk.

*An American Doctor's Odyssey* is a fascinating tale of conditions in the Philippines at the turn of the century and how a dedicated Jewish doctor used his knowledge, love of humanity, common sense and humor to combat ignorance and disease.

### Extracts of 1940 Reports of the Shanghai German Consulate General On Jewish Refugees in Shanghai

by Rena Krasno

The February 2001 issue of the Viennese publication *Zwischenwelt* focuses on the subject of "Little Vienna" in Asia. The cover, a woodblock cut by David I. Bloch (a refugee artist in Shanghai), depicts a tired man, leaning on a cane, sitting on a suitcase marked "D.P. NOBODY – ANYWHERE." In the background: a rickshaw and the Shanghai skyline.

In his introduction to extracts from two Shanghai German Consulate General reports, dated 1940, the editor emphasizes that their contents reflect the anti-Semitic perceptions of the Consular staff. Thus, for example, the reports state that it is "self-understood that many real estate businesses are in their (the Jews') hands," that their main occupation is one that "particularly suits them – buying and selling," that the Shanghai press "like everywhere else

## Polish Refugees in Curacao During World War II

translated from the French by Rena Krasno

[Note by translator: By now the story of Japanese Consul Sugihara and Dutch Consul Zwartendijk and their efforts to rescue Polish Jews is well documented. But what about the handful of Polish refugees who did reach Curacao? Here is the translation of a letter from the Hoover Institution collection that throws some light on their fate, so different from that of those who reached Japan and Shanghai.]

Kazimierz Mieczyslaw Eiger  
Quarantaine-Gebouw  
Curacao

September 5, 1942

His Excellency  
The Foreign Minister of Poland  
In London

Your Excellency,

Polish citizens who have been interned since their arrival in the Refugee Camp of Curacao, wish to inform you of the recent sudden changes in their situation. The authorities in Curacao have consented – upon the initiative of the new governor, His Excellency Dr. Piet Kastell – to restore partial liberty to them, as well as to other refugees. They have been granted the right to work under certain conditions, as well as to find lodging in town. All this, it is understood, for a limited stay and valid only until a new visa is acquired. New conditions for their stay are attached hereto in a French translation.

On this occasion, Polish families interned today in the Quarantine Camp in Curacao would like to express to Your Excellency all the gratitude they feel towards the Honorary Consul of Poland in Curacao, Mr. Frederigo G. Mensing. This gentleman has really showed deep concern for them and took innumerable steps to improve their situation with the eventual goal of complete liberty. His efforts were not always successful, the authorities having refused to recognize the point of view that refu-

gees of allied nationalities deserve better treatment than those of undetermined or enemy nationality and having treated them all in the same manner. However, due to Mr. Mensing's perseverance in this matter, and his zeal that are beyond all praise and reflect the nobility of his character, the Polish families are really proud to report these facts to Your Excellency. They would also be very happy if you could transmit their gratitude to Mr. Mensing through official channels.

They would like, at the same time, to inform Your Excellency that their number has now been reduced to three who are waiting for their visas to other countries, mainly the United States. They would be very obliged if Your Excellency could kindly intercede on their behalf through the Ambassador in Washington, who knows their names, so that their visa applications could be processed faster.

Respectfully yours,

In the name of the Polish refugees

Kazimiers M. Eiger

*Conditions for the Liberation of Refugees who arrived on the "Cabo de Hornos," valid as of September 1, 1942.*

1. *Obligation to present oneself to the police every day.*
2. *Choice of lodging to depend on the approval of the police – not on the seaside, nor near the beach, etc.*
3. *Limited freedom of movement, so that those concerned remain within the territory of the island they live on and do not go out between sunset and sunrise.*
4. *Permit to work only when a fixed contract is on hand. Journalistic activity and direct or indirect contacts with the press and radio are forbidden.*
5. *Possession of radios is forbidden.*
6. *Must abstain from all political activity and may not become*

## Points East

- members of any organization or Dutch cooperation, etc.*
7. *All infringing these orders will be sent back to the Quarantine building.*

Willemstad, Curacao,  
September 1, 1942.  
Local Commander of the Police  
Signed: Venema

### Correction

In Wendy Abraham's article on Shi Lei, she mistakenly stated that 1850 was the last time any attempt had been made to teach the Chinese Jews about their religion. In actuality, as she corrected herself, it was the FIRST attempt, followed in the years 1901 and 1906 when the Sephardi members of the Shanghai Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews invited several members of the Kaifeng Jewish community to Shanghai to relearn Judaism.

## Points East

in each other's countries, which paved the ground for the breakthrough.

Kaplan's role did not stop. He contributed funds to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem when he was asked if Hebrew University could help the Chinese to do research on leprosy and other infectious diseases and to study firsthand Israel's legendary advances in the field of irrigation. With his assistance and generous support, a Chinese delegation was able to visit the University in order to study water irrigation techniques developed at the Hebrew University for use in Israel. Their visit included an extensive survey of Israel's agriculture, and focused on irrigation and greenhouse agriculture. Professor Yona Chen at Hebrew University returned a visit to China. The exchanges were highly meaningful. Kaplan's role was soon recognized. In 1988 he was presented with a prestigious sterling silver 60th Anniversary Medallion of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The document says, "The award is presented to you in peace and with the hope of future exchanges in the fields of academics and research between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the People's Republic of China."

Since the normalization in 1992, there seemed no necessity for him to play a continuing role as intermediary between China and Israel. However, his enthusiasm in promoting better relations and friendship remains. He started to invest in China and contributes substantial and practical means of trade. He is very supportive of the study of Jewish subjects among Chinese and has befriended many Chinese scholars of Jewish studies. In 1996, he changed his preset schedule in order to come to Nanjing to participate the first international symposium of Jewish culture co-organized by the Center for Jewish Studies and Tel Aviv University.

Today, Kaplan's business in China is expanding. His company, Calcol, Inc., is doing very well in Chinese cities such as Shengzheng and Beijing. When asked to describe his role in breaking down barriers between China and Israel, Kaplan modestly describes himself as a "messenger boy."

## Rev. Mendel Brown

(continued from page 1)

had attended his Hebrew classes at the Northwest London Synagogue while I was growing up and knew he was very modern for his time for he did not believe in rote learning as was practiced elsewhere but taught a knowledge of Hebrew grammar and the exact meaning of the text. I have learned lately that his former students still remember him with affection and, because of his meaningful interpretation of Judaism, have remained loyal Jews.

Among his many talents, was his ability to serve as an excellent fundraiser which he used to good purpose when raising funds to settle the first refugees arriving from Central and Eastern Europe. Until the arrival of Laura Margolis and Manuel Siegel, sent by the American Joint Distribution Committee, he would visit the camps or "heims" set up in converted warehouses in Hongkew for those who could not afford to rent. I remember accompanying him on one occasion because I wanted to write an article describing the conditions for the *Hongkew Jewish Chronicle*.

I have a photograph of him wearing the chaplain's uniform of the Jewish unit of the Shanghai Volunteer Force. For his services with the unit in 1937 during the Sino-Japanese War, he received two medals from the Shanghai Municipal Council. Then later on he joined the young men of the unit in welcoming the newly arrived refugees and in aiding them to settle in.

To conclude with some personal recollections. In his young days, my father was a good athlete, having played as half back for the University of London soccer team. He likewise played a good game of tennis. His left hand was powerful and he never lost a penny at the grip and punchball machines. I remember that one Easter Sunday he took us children to Hampstead Heath where some gypsies had set up coconut shies. To try his luck, he paid for several balls and knocked down a coconut with each ball. When he wanted to buy another set, the gypsy refused saying he would beggar her.

He was always ready to encourage education. When we were children, he took us

on long walks when he had the time and examined our knowledge of spelling by having us spell the trickiest words he could think of. He was meticulous about the use of good grammar and whenever I misused the case of the pronoun following a preposition in my letters to him, he would correct me. Although a relatively poor man, he sent us to a good private secondary school and, in Shanghai, he paid the expenses for a correspondence course to enable me to sit for an external B.A. degree from the University of London and, as I needed more instruction in French, engaged a tutor for me.

In sum, he was a fine father, whom I remember with great affection and respect; a fine teacher and rabbi about whom I have heard only complimentary remarks.

## VIDEO CORNER

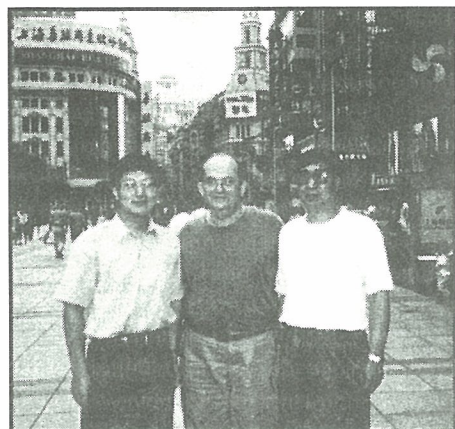
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## Shalom Shi Lei

by Jim Michaelson



The author, flanked on the left by Shi Lei & on the right by Shi Lei's father

It was June 26<sup>th</sup>, my eleventh day in China, and despite the news forecasts of unending, severe drought that preceded my arrival, it has never stopped raining. My wife, Judy, and I had come in by taxi and train from the lush countryside, a greenscape of rice fields, peach orchards, cornfields, and family gardens everywhere. The signage on the roads may have been less than desirable, but the roads were paved, and there were always plenty of friendly people to ask directions from. We had been out in Zhang Jia Gang, 2 hours north of Wuxi, where we had visited her father's family the day before. I wanted Judy to see her father's brothers on this visit, as they were getting on in years, and we did not know when we would be coming this way again. Personally, I wanted to meet these men, get a better sense of who they were, and understand where half of my wife's family had come from. Reflecting on this experience, I began to prepare for our appointment with Shi Lei.

Shi Lei is a member of the Shi clan, whose Jewish roots can be traced back for hundreds of years in China. He is a 23 year old, very well read, very personable college graduate. Fortunately for me, he is also fluent in English, as well as his own native Mandarin Chinese. Although I possess three academic degrees, I also have the rare distinction of being the only student to flunk out of a UCLA Mandarin class. While there were extenuating circumstances, (I travel a lot on business and had trouble making up all the missed classes) let me

just say here that I have not given up Chinese language study and will return to the classroom very soon. Shi Lei and I had started corresponding about a month before, developed a strong friendship and much anticipation over our meeting.

Judy and I had called him prior to his more than 10-hour train ride in from Kaifeng to Shanghai. We decided to meet in front of the Hailun Hotel. Judy and I got there early, but had no idea what Shi Lei and his father, who had accompanied him from Kaifeng, looked like. We had just finished checking out the Hailun lobby again, asking strangers whether they were Shi Lei or not and were on our way out, when two gentlemen came through the doors. It was 5:00 pm when we first saw these two well-armed individuals, with umbrellas in one hand and the ubiquitous Chinese cell phone in the other. Judy approached them first and asked, in impeccable Mandarin, if one of them was Shi Lei. The younger one, who bore a striking resemblance to Dean Cain, the popular American actor from the TV show "Lois and Clark", stepped forward with a smile, and said, "Hello Judy and Jim!" That was Shi Lei! We shook hands warmly all around, and eventually started up the Buxing Jie/ Nanjing Lu looking for a place to sit down and talk. The rain had turned to a very light and pleasant mist. I should explain that Buxing Jie is a wide-open area for shoppers to walk, talk, shop and relax amid the neon signs that put Times Square in New York City to shame.

Across from a giant wide screen TV of approximately 22,000 square feet, broadcasting a Discovery Channel program, with full stereo blaring away and a human river of traffic flowing by, we sat down and talked. We talked about Shi Lei's upcoming trip to Israel, life in Kaifeng, my experiences in Israel, my visit to China, Shi Lei's thoughts about America and Israel, etc. After a few hours of non-stop talking, we became hungry, so we walked down a few blocks, found a restaurant, and invited the Shis for dinner. Refreshed, we walked and talked for a few more hours before we had to call it an evening. When we parted company later that evening, we had all been enriched by our meeting, though saddened at the separation from new friends. The

heavy rains returned as we made our ways back to our respective hotels. The next day Shi Lei boarded a plane for Tel Aviv, while we got on another one for the short hop to Beijing.

Shi Lei and I still correspond regularly. I recently sent him a package, which included photos of our meeting. In Israel, at Bar-Ilan University, he is quite busy with classes, mastering Hebrew, studying Judaica, etc. I am sure his year there will go quickly, and his experiences there will be of great benefit to his community. I hope to see him again soon, perhaps "Next Year in Kaifeng" when Judy and I return to China.

## Remembering Isaac Stern

By Alfred Luk

Isaac Stern was probably one of the most prolific American professional musicians having more than one hundred recordings to his credit and also one of the most celebrated musicians as he gave enormous number of public performances in some of the world's most prestigious music halls.

Born in Kreminiec, Russia in 1920 of Jewish parents (not as reported in Ukraine by PBS), he arrived in US hardly a year old. It is even more worthwhile to learn that he practically grew up learning to play and master the violin in San Francisco, making his debut in San Francisco with San Francisco Symphony when he was 16. At that age, many of teenagers in the San Francisco neighborhood would be busy partying, dating or playing games. The more promising ambient of New York for chamber music lured him to the East Coast and he stepped into the world stage after debut in New York Town Hall in 1937 and Carnegie Hall in 1943.

Apart from his unique and superior interpretation of repertoire, Isaac is best remembered for his unusual interests and patience in inspiring, culturing and teaching young musicians and students in music. It is rather unusual for a professional acclaimed musician of his stature who carved out precious time in his extremely busy schedules to dedicate for the young and untested

talents. This is a very honorable of him to plan ahead in laying down the foundation of future generation of American musicians.

Among his many achievements, saving Carnegie Hall from the demolition blast was one of his proud accomplishments. He was instrumental in leading the restoration project of Carnegie Hall to completion in 1986.

Another of his notable highlights was his visit to China, helping revive the young enthusiasts of Western classical music there. It was well documented in the video "From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern's Visit to China 1979". That title won Academy Award in 1981. The deplorable state of teaching and learning chamber music in China after the Cultural Revolution, when Western classical music was being criticized as decadent, did not discourage Isaac Stern. Rather he patiently demonstrated and shared his savvy in violin to a selective audience of very young and old music enthusiasts. It was enough to rekindle the interests and appreciation of classical music, which was devastated by the Cultural Revolution and ravaged by several civil upheavals of China.

In late 90s, Isaac Stern returned with his son David to see that the fruit of his first visit to China blossomed. Several of the youngsters, whom he personally coached and nurtured in his first visit, now had become very successful musicians in China.

Isaac Stern was not the first but the most recent Jewish musician who enlightened and promoted the knowledge of Western classical music in China in the last century. Before him, his coreligionists from Western Europe, particularly the Austrian and German Jewish professional musicians, came to enrich the mastering of chamber music in China, especially in Shanghai. Such notable names like Wolfgang Fraenkel, Julius Schloss, Alben Berg, Karl Steiner, Fritz Kuttner, Joseph Yasser Polish, and Alfred Wittenberg came to delight the music lovers of Shanghai in the 1930-40s. Like Isaac Stern, they helped to elevate the appreciation and knowledge of chamber music in Shanghai to unprecedented heights.

## Jewish Professors or Lecturers at the Shantung University, Tsingtao

by Prof. Dr. W. Wilhelm Matzat  
translated from German by Rena Krasno

In 1929 Tsingtao was occupied by the Guomindang troops, and the Guomindang regime lasted until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1937. On September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1930, the national Tsingtao University was established. The University comprised two Colleges, divided into seven departments, namely a College of Art and a College of Science. In May 1931, the Department of Education was enlarged to form a separate College. In summer 1932, there were troubles with students, which led to the dismissal of all students. A Committee of Nine For the Rehabilitation of Tsingtao University was then formed by the Ministry of Education. At its first meeting, several important decisions were taken. The name of the University was changed from the *National Tsingtao University* to the *National University of Shantung*. A reorganization was also decided upon. The two Colleges of Art and Science were combined into one College of Art and Science to be opened at Tsingtao. It was further decided to open two colleges at Tsinan, viz. the College of Agriculture and the College of Technology. In the autumn of 1932, the National University of Shantung therefore consisted of 3 colleges. Apparently there were some changes made after 1932, and the College of Technology, or at least a Department of Technology, was also established in Tsingtao, as one can deduct from the appointments of Prof. Igel and Dipl.-Ing. (engineer) Pfeil (see below).

In the years 1933-37, at least five professors or lecturers from Germany taught at the University of Tsingtao. Two of them were Jewish and apparently had left Germany in 1933 or 1934 because of the Nazi regime in Germany. A third professor's wife was Jewish.

The names of both Jewish professors or lecturers are:

1. Prof. Dr. Martin Igel, born 19.1.1879, married, 2 children. Field of

specialty: locomotive construction, mechanical railway station equipment. From 1898-1903, he studied railway machine construction at the Technische Hochschule (technical college) in Charlottenburg. In 1904, he earned his degree of Dr. Phil. in Erlangen. From 1904-09 he was employed in Germany by the Orenstein-Koppel Company and then by Borsigg (manufacture of locomotives), and in the U.S.A. by Baldwin in Philadelphia and Westinghouse in Pittsburgh. From 1909-1933 he worked at the Technische Hochschule in Berlin-Charlottenburg, first as assistant to the chair of railway machine construction. In 1916, he became Privatdozent (university lecturer), in 1919 Titular-Professor and in 1922 senior lecturer. Dr. Igel was appointed to Tsingtao by the Chinese president of the university, upon the recommendation of Dr. Stein, who was already working at the University of Tsingtao.

2. Dr. Phil. Georg Stein, born 4.12.1903 in Dresden, bachelor. Chemist. Arrived in the middle of 1934 to Tsingtao, where he headed the Department of Chemistry at the University. Education of Georg Stein: Volksschule and then the Kirschner Oberrealschule in Berlin. Studied chemistry at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universitaet in Berlin. Last occupation in Germany before his departure: private scientific and business activities.

3. Dipl.-Ing. Kurt Pfeil was married to a Jewish woman. He was born in Prenzlau, 3.12.1907. He studied at the city Gymnasium in Prenzlau from 1914-1926. Further studies at the Technische Hochschule in Charlottenburg from 1926-1932. Specialization: electrotechnical field, especially in the technique of pipe measuring range. Appointed by the university president Chao Ch'i through the intervention of Siemens China Co. In Tsingtao he taught physics and heavy current engineering.

In January 1938, Tsingtao was occupied by the Japanese and they closed the Tsingtao University. Thereupon, the above-named lecturers left the city.

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