

clearly visible along Nanjing Road. Poet Karl Heinz Wolff describes the peasant wisdom of a Chinese bricklayer, who shrewdly stretches out his workday in order to gain a little more income, even though he *could* work faster and more efficiently. Willy Tonn, a Sinologist by training, describes the daily life of the Chinese and their interactions with Westerners, although he never mentions Jews. Meylekh Ravitch, a Polish-Jewish tourist passing through Shanghai in 1935, feels and communicates the pain of the rickshaw puller. In "Miniatures" the Polish-Yiddish short story writer Jacob H. Fishman (1891-1965) contrasts the lives of impoverished Chinese with those of affluent, but not necessarily Jewish, Westerners.

A fourth category of memoir hints at a topic which is largely unexplored in this volume but which might well become Professor Eber's next research project: Jewish *acculturation into* Chinese society. Jacob H. Fishman's short story "A Wedding" [1947] describes a German Jew's serious love affair in Shanghai with an impoverished neighbor who is not only an ethnic Chinese but also a poor carpenter's daughter. The boy's parents have reluctantly accommodated to the marriage of their daughter to an Orthodox Eastern European Jew. But their son's potential marriage to a Chinese is more than they can handle.

It is unclear whether Fishman's prose sketch is fact or fiction. Regardless of the "truth" of his narrative, the phenomena

of intermarriage and acculturation to Chinese culture unquestionably *did* occur within Chinese-Jewish society, notably in the case of the Baghdadi Jewish immigrant Silas Aaron Hardeen. Polish-born Lazar Epstein (1886-1979), writing in the *Peking and Tientsin Times* of October 21, 1931, advocated Jewish acculturation. He pointed out that in the West immigrants by the second generation knew the language of their new homelands and contributed to culture there. Jews in China, by contrast, lived on cultural "scraps from Europe...Does China lose by this lack of cultural intercourse? Probably not, but the permanent Jewish resident here does. He...has sunk no roots into the soil where he shall probably spend all of his days, and his children's theirs." Lazar's son Israel Epstein goes further than his father in a commitment to China. He throws himself into the nascent Chinese Revolution, meets Mao, writes a biography of Song Qingling, edits *China Reconstructs* magazine, and ultimately becomes a Chinese citizen and a member of China's National People's Consultative Congress, one of the highest honors any Chinese can receive.

What we have in the Eber anthology, therefore, is a beautifully illustrated literature of exiles and *migrants* rather than a literature of *immigrants* who will become a part of a new motherland. The immigrant rather than the migrant experience, while a vital part of the Jewish experience in China, is beyond the scope of Eber's anthology. Eber and the University of Chicago Press are to be con-

gratulated for publicizing these testimonies to one facet of the Sino-Judaic experience.

Jonathan Goldstein  
University of West Georgia/Harvard University Fairbank Center

#### NOTES

[1] See Eber's articles "Kaifeng Jews: The Sinification of Identity," in *The Jews of China*, vol. 1, *Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. J. Goldstein (Armonk, N.Y., 1999), 22-35; "The Hebrew University's Research Project on Jewish Communities in Modern China," in *The Jews of China*, vol. 2, *A Sourcebook and Research Guide*, ed. Goldstein, 127-34; and "China and the Jews" in *China and the Jews*, ed. V. Gilboa (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 7-11.

[2] Raoul David Findeisen, Gad C. Isay, Amira Katz-Goehr, Yuri Pines, and Lihi Yariv-Laor, eds., *At Home in Many Worlds: Reading, Writing, and Translating from Chinese and Jewish Cultures. Essays in Honour of Irene Eber* (Wiesbaden, 2009).

[3] Quoted in Carsten Schapow's review of *Voices from Shanghai* in *Journal of World History* 21, no. 3 (September 2010), 555.

[4] Ernest Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge* (Lincoln, Neb., 1994), p. 40. Translated into German by Roberto de Hollanda as *Fluchtort Shanghai: Erinnerungen 1938-1948* (Bonn, 1998).

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# Points East

THE SINO-JUDAIC INSTITUTE 中國猶太研究院 מכון סיני יהודי

Vol. 26 No. 1  
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A Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute

## AN UNLIKELY CHINESE-JEWISH COLLABORATION IN 1903

by Scott D. Seligman

excerpted from *The Forward*, February 4, 2011

On a spring evening in 1903, in New York City's Chinatown, a line snaked down Doyers Street from the Chinese Theatre as Manhattan played host to an improbable coming together of two immigrant communities: Chinese and Jews. They were queuing up for a Chinese-organized benefit performance for victims of the Kishinev pogrom that, the previous month, had killed 49, injured 500 and left 2,000 Jewish families homeless in the Russian provincial capital...

Newspapers across the nation editorialized and preachers of all creeds condemned the violence. Even Theodore Roosevelt expressed indignation. Jews, however, organized most relief efforts. No one expected aid from the Chinese, who despite living cheek-by-jowl with Jews on the Lower East Side had never taken much notice of them. Many Chinatown residents were barely able to scratch out a living of their own.

So it was a surprise when Joseph Singleton, a Chinese businessman, offered to arrange a benefit for Kishinev victims. One of a quartet of Chinese who spearheaded the effort, 49-year-old Singleton had arrived in New York 20 years earlier. A Sunday school teacher, he had taken an Anglo-sounding name, had adopted Western dress and had cut off his queue — the signature pigtail worn by Chinese during this era. He had gone into banking and cultivated many powerful government officials and business leaders.

Closely allied with Singleton was Guy Maine, superintendent of the Chinese Guild at St. Bartholomew's Church. The son of a Bible teacher, he provided legal aid to Chinese victims of crime who found it difficult to get law enforcement from the police or justice from the courts. Dek Foon was a salesman, bookkeeper and restaurateur. And Jue Chue dealt in Chinese and Japanese imports. One of the wealthiest Chinese in the city, he was sometimes

## THE EVOLUTION OF SINO-ISRAELI RELATIONS

by Peter Berton

reprinted with permission from the *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2010)

### Relations Between the Israeli and Chinese Communist Parties<sup>1</sup>

According to Professor Aron Shai of Tel Aviv University, in the 1940s, a curious relationship between the Communist parties of China and Israel evolved. Shortly after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Israeli Communist party held its first party congress since the country became independent. Invitations were sent to Communist parties all over the world—including China's. The congress took place at the height of the Chinese Civil War, and therefore no Chinese delegates came to Israel to participate. Nevertheless, there were some interactions between the two parties. Israeli Communist party leader Meir Vilner and two of his associates visited China in September 1956 and several Israeli Communist women's delegations attended international meetings in China. However, after the celebrated Bandung conference in 1955, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had already decided that maintaining ties with the Arab world was more important than any contact with Israel, and the relationship with the Israeli Communists lapsed.<sup>2</sup>

### Covert Non-Official Relations

In 1950, Israel was one of the first countries to recognize the regime of Mao Zedong, but the Chinese did not reciprocate that recognition until 1992. The US role in keeping Israel away from the Chinese has been ably chronicled by the Israeli scholar Yitzhak Shichor.<sup>3</sup>

Relations between Communist China and the Soviet Union deteriorated in the late 1950s, leading up to the border skirmishes of 1969. This presented an opportunity for the United States to establish relations with Communist China. After Vietnam moved into the Soviet camp and invaded Cambodia, Beijing's ally, the Chinese decided to teach Vietnam a lesson. This incursion

### SJI Obtains Bequest

The Sino-Judaic Institute is extremely pleased and fortunate to acknowledge a generous bequest made to us by long-time SJI member Lynne (Roslyn K.) Elson of San Diego. This gift, on the order of \$30,000, is very significant for our small organization and, properly stewarded, it will help us fund centers of Jewish studies in China and assist the Jewish community in Kaifeng for many years to come. Our gratitude is owed to Lynne, for making this generous donation (would that we could have thanked her while she was alive), and to her children, Lee Elson and Terri Binder, for facilitating this bequest. Our condolences to you both, but know that through this wonderful bequest, the memory of your mother will live on through SJI's work.

(continued on page 4)

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## SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	179
China	21
Israel	15
Canada	14
England	7
Australia	4
Germany	2
Japan	2
South Africa	2
Indonesia	1
Switzerland	1
Taiwan	1

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
249

## FROM THE EDITOR

With this new volume, *Points East* passes the quarter century mark. The Sino-Judaic Institute is, I believe, one year older. It is hard to believe. During these 25+ years, inspired founding members have passed away, dedicated board presidents and directors have come and gone, and our membership has changed, but one thing has remained constant: SJI's mission. Over the years, our focus has sharpened as China has opened up and developed but our commitment remains unchanged.

If mission lies at the heart of any organization, then funding is its lifeblood and volunteers are its muscles.

Recently, we were blown away to receive a wonderfully generous bequest from the estate of Lynne Elson, a longtime SJI member. To continue my analogy, this gift was like getting a blood transfusion because it gave new energy to SJI. To state things baldly: the more funds we have to work with, the more good we can do in China. If more SJI members act as Lynne did, just think of the impact SJI could have in Kaifeng and on Jewish studies and research in China!

But this is only half the story. A body needs muscles and SJI also needs more volunteers to serve on its committees, on its board, and for various other projects. If you have any interest in exploring volunteer work with SJI, please email me and we'll see how your talents may best be put to use.

In the meantime, please enjoy volume 26, issue 1. *Anson Laytner*

### "The Jews of Kaifeng"

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Anson Laytner, Publisher

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Letters to the Editor and articles for *Points East* may be sent to:

**Preferred Form:**  
e-mail: [Laytner@msn.com](mailto:Laytner@msn.com)

or to: Rabbi Anson Laytner  
1823 East Prospect St.  
Seattle, WA 98112-3307

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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: Steve Hochstadt, Treasurer of the Sino-Judaic Institute, Illinois College, 1101 W College Ave., Jacksonville IL 62650.

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## BOOK NOOK

### *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China.*

Translated, edited and with an introduction by Irene Eber  
Chicago, IL, and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008  
142 pp. \$29.00; £15.00  
ISBN-13: 978-0-226-18166-0; ISBN-10: 0-226-18166-9  
reviewed by Jonathan Goldstein  
reprinted from *China Review International*

Since the demise of Harvard University professor Benjamin I. Schwartz over a decade ago, Irene Eber, the Louis Frieberg Professor Emerita of East Asian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has emerged as the preeminent Sino-Judaic scholar educating us about both ancient and modern Chinese Jewish communities. Eber is of Galician Jewish stock, was educated in Sinology at the Claremont Graduate School, and has both the linguistic and analytical tools to describe this complex historical interaction in a nuanced and scholarly way. She is fluent in Yiddish (her mother tongue), as well as biblical and modern Hebrew, classical and modern Chinese, English, German, Polish, and other languages. She delivered papers about Harbin, Kaifeng, Shanghai, and Tianjin Jewry at Harvard University's 1992 "Jewish Diasporas in China" conference, at which Professor Schwartz was the Senior Scholar. She contributed to both published volumes of essays which emerged from that symposium. She also wrote the introduction to the exhibition catalog of rare Sino-Judaica which Harvard showcased at that conference.[1] A major commemorative volume of the works of other Sinologists was published in Eber's honor on her eightieth birthday, December 29, 2009. [2]

Eber remains vigorously productive. One expression of that vitality is this anthology which was published in 2008 under the overarching title *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China*. A scholar of lesser abilities might have shied away from as daunting a task as translating, editing, and commenting on German, Polish, and Yiddish writers in China before, during, and after the Second World War. Hopefully the next edition of this sourcebook will include the originals of these valuable but arcane documents. For this volume Eber has selected twenty-five vignettes. They include published and unpublished poems,

letters, extracts from diaries, and short stories written between 1935 and 1947. Her selections seem to fall into four categories, each with a slightly different perspective on Jewish cultural self-perception and perception of the other. A first category of memoir examines flight from adversity and fear of perpetual of exile but with minimal or no reference to China itself or even to Judaism. A second includes memoirs which deal exclusively with Jewish life in Shanghai. A third comments significantly on the life of Shanghai's impoverished Chinese, rather than its Jewish, population. A fourth category of memoir explores Jewish acculturation into Chinese society.

The first category of memoir is the refugee perspective on his or her flight from Hitler. German emigrant Michael W. Blumenthal has noted elsewhere that Shanghai was "the very last choice to escape Nazi terror...never the first choice." [3] A journey to this port of last resort involved an arduous overland trip or a somewhat easier passage by sea, both of which became almost impossible after Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. Nevertheless, by a variety of means, thousands of Central and Eastern European Jews managed to reach Shanghai. The city admitted these refugees not because of a self-conscious policy of Holocaust rescue but rather because of bureaucratic inertia. Although technically Chinese, much of Shanghai was in a precarious state of governance, or non-governance, under various administrations which included a committee of foreign consuls. Until the Japanese seizure of Shanghai, there were no visa requirements for entering this place. Breslau refugee Ernest Heppner, also not represented in this volume, marveled as he passed through a deserted Shanghai embarkation hall that "no one asked for our papers...here Jews could just walk ashore." This was at a time when most of the world was barred to Jewish immigration. [4]

The first category of memoir included in Eber's volume explains personal flight from adversity and fear of perpetual of exile with minimal reference to China itself, or even, in most cases, to Judaism. Polish Rabbi Simka Elberg (1915-55) sees Shanghai simply as another port-in-a-storm, after Poland, Lithuania, and Japan have successively "spat" him out. An anonymous and presumably non-Jewish poet bemoans the generic plight of the Polish refugee without ever mention-

ing Shanghai. Journalist Kurt Lewin (1908-50) writes a generalized paean to anti-Fascism and another to the postwar refugee experience. Neither piece refers to China or Judaism. From the safety of her bedroom, Lotte Margot observes a Chinese beggar child on the street at four o'clock in the morning. Margot's reality, however, is more grounded in the Shanghai dance hall known as the "Majestic" than in the poverty in front of her own home. In "The Lament of My Mother," "A Letter", and "Sun in A Net," Polish-Yiddish poets Yosl Mlotek and Mordechai Rotenberg dwell on the themes of despondency and personal loneliness. Neither poet mentions China or Judaism. Annie F. Witting (1904-71), a middle-class German, arrives happily in Shanghai in 1939 and thereafter feels no adversity other than her husband's ill health. She is supported by her brother in South Africa and enjoys what Annette Eberly, a historian of Jewish life in Manila, calls "the good life out there." Shoshana Kagan (1895-1968), a Yiddish actress from Poland, is overcome with feelings of loss and depression. These feelings deepen (as with Witting) at a time of personal loss, namely her husband's death in 1945. As far as Shanghai is concerned, it is "a dirty, disgusting city." In summation, this first category of memoir says nothing substantial about the either impoverished host culture in which these refugees were immersed or about Judaism.

A second category of memoir deals exclusively with Jewish life in Shanghai. Alfred Friedlander describes a festive Chanukah celebration. Yehoshua Rapoport laments the difficulties of re-establishing Yiddish culture in Shanghai and his disappointment when affluent permanent residents of Shanghai are not generous enough to impoverished refugees. Yoni Fayn and Herbert Zernik lament the suffering of Jews in the Shanghai Ghetto. Zernik, an actor, satirizes Kanoh Ghoya, the Japanese commandant of the ghetto. Both Fayn and Zernik, like Rapoport, make scant reference to the suffering of the Chinese population. Hermann Goldfarb (1942) invokes the theme of "the wandering Jew" and makes no reference to China.

A third category of memoir *does* attempt to say something meaningful about the life of Shanghai's Chinese, rather than its Jewish, population. In "Shanghai" (1942) Yosl Mlotek contrasts Shanghai's decadent affluence with its poverty, both

during three years in the Army, I hardly ever touched a keyboard. Coming home, I was delighted that I could still read music and play, which helped me to get my first teaching job. For their pleasure and mine, I play the piano for senior retirement residents during their lunches. Music has been a precious part of my life, not a burdensome drudgery.

Well acquainted with the U.S. and East Asia, I have been a Korean War GI, an elementary-school teacher in California, and a psychology and education professor at universities in America, China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Singapore for over 30 years. Chinese and other Asians where I have taught do study diligently. That is mainly because their societies have pyramid educational systems that determine children's futures through serial, gate-keeping examinations beginning as low as 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Most Asian parents do the best they can for their children; none from the many families I know well are as hysterical and hard-hearted as Chua, such as thrusting her daughter out into the freezing outdoors and threatening to burn the children's toys, and calling them "garbage" for dissatisfying her. Every year I taught in Hong Kong, the very few who aced the final secondary-school exam with perfect marks told the press that their parents gave them positive support and did not have to pressure them to excel. What fuels study zeal and grades for ambitious youths in Asia and America is gaining admission into an elite university, such as Beijing, Tokyo, Harvard, Stanford and MIT.

While American youths can attend school and graduate from high school with minimal proficiency and enter higher education, Asians can only envy the educational opportunities of America. In the U.S. 70% of the college-aged population are enrolled in higher education compared to fewer than 20% in Asian nations. Besides the constricted enrollment, Asian students aim their sights to their societies' best universities as ranked in order of difficulty to be enrolled and their graduates' job prospects. Understanding what their youths face, Asian parents are predominately encouraging and helpful. Only the foolish apply the Tiger Mother approach. A Hong Kong lady told me that her father beat her hard whenever she brought home a grade less than "A," which made her so fearful of tests that her schoolwork suffered.

My latest book, "Raising and Teaching Children for Their Tomorrows," (Tate

Publishing) contradicts Chua's philosophy and tactics. Demanding absolute obedience through fiat, punishment, and the restriction of activities, Chua's authoritarian-dictatorial management style makes youths highly dependent on their masters and often leads to rejection (as Lulu did), paranoia, depression, and suicide. Rather, I strongly recommend the authoritative-engaging style, which is based on a constructive, future-oriented perspective and positive caregiver-child attachment and interactive dialogue. My book also examines the indulgent-permissive and neglectful-indifferent management styles, which create their own problems. It also considers possible management shifts, such as turning from dictatorial to indulgent as Chua seems to claim how she handled Lulu at the end of her book. Key concepts, such as attachment and social interaction, are discussed with many examples and in a chapter that analyzes and compares the childhoods, education, and lives of notable individuals, such as Sandra O'Connor, JFK, Mae West, and Adolf Hitler. The final chapter compares America's lowly-rated educational system with those of nations that many studies commend as having the world's best teachers and student achievement, such as Finland, Singapore and South Korea.

Albert Yee is a retired professor of psychology and a member of the Board of Directors of the Sino-Judaic Institute. For more information, go to: <http://albertheyee.tateauthor.com>.

### Leading Chinese Officials and Academics in Israel to Strengthen Bilateral Ties

January 19, 2011 by e/P, Jewish Philanthropy

As part of the ongoing efforts to enhance Sino-Israel relations, a delegation of 10 prominent Chinese academic leaders and officials visited Israel this week for intensive dialogue and briefings with their Israeli counterparts in government, academia and policy-making circles. The program is the result of a partnership between the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and Project Interchange, in cooperation with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Led by Professor Yiyi Chen, of Berkeley, Peking University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the study tour is intended to strengthen bilateral ties, with a special focus on Israeli strategic affairs, the peace pro-

cess, Iran and Israel study programs in China.

This mission is the culmination of an intensive immersion seminar in Shanghai in late December, when 35 Chinese policymakers, government advisors and academics met with leading Israeli scholars to explore Israeli politics, history and culture.

"The seminar offered a forum for an open, frank conversation about important issues of mutual interest for China and Israel," said Sanford R. ("Sandy") Cardin, President of the Schusterman Family Foundation. "It was an especially important exchange because the people present have a direct hand in shaping Chinese policy toward the Middle East."

The study tour portion of the program brings this prominent Chinese delegation to Israel to explore areas for future collaboration and potential joint initiatives. The trip includes meetings with influential figures across the political and social spectrum, including Israeli, Palestinian and Israeli Arab leaders. In addition to senior-level meetings with their counterparts at Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the delegation will traverse much of Israel, including Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the Northern border and the Dead Sea for a first-hand look at Israel "beyond-the-headlines."

The Schusterman Family Foundation first became involved in efforts to enhance Sino-Israel relations in 2009 by sponsoring two seminars, one at Peking University and one at Shandong University, for more than 130 senior academics, journalists and think tank scholars. Leading Israeli professors joined both seminars, marking the first opportunity for Chinese scholars of Israel, the Middle East and Judaism to communicate and engage with Israeli scholars.

While much progress has been made in Sino-Israel relations since 1992 when the two countries established diplomatic ties, much work remains to strengthen the bilateral relationship, which the Chinese still view as part of the overarching Sino-American relationship. Indeed, despite interest in Jewish culture, Middle East policy and even Hebrew language, few Chinese scholars have ever traveled to Israel, and Israel is rarely, if ever, the explicit subject of scholarly research. This trip to Israel is a natural extension of the Schusterman Foundation's ongoing relationship with Project Interchange, whose outstanding seminars in Israel for influential American leaders the Foundation has long supported.

The seminar in Israel ran through January 21, 2011.

## IN THE FIELD

### ♦ Kaifeng Update

As reported in our last issue, Eric Rothberg was replaced within a month of his leaving by a new Israeli teacher Eran Barzilay. The new school, called Beit Tikvah, was established to disassociate its members from the "messianic" influence of the Yiceleye school's founders. Beit Tikvah is in a different building with a place for the teacher to sleep and shower, and also a "sanctuary". There is a computer and a projector. There is the possibility that another teacher from Hong Kong could replace this teacher at the end of a year.

The new school is doing very well and most of the students from the Yiceleye School stayed back have now joined the Beit Tikvah School. On Fridays, from 10 to 20 members celebrate Shabbat. About 40 came to a Hanukkah celebration. The families that have joined include the Zhao, Li, Ai, and Gao families.

Rothberg continues to teach the group online via Skype once per week on the weekend. In addition, he has arranged for a teacher from Taiwan to offer weekly classes. This teacher converted to Judaism and offers fluent instruction in Chinese.

His newest idea is to try to bring several young Kaifeng Jews to the States to attend community college, improve their English and in so doing get a step up academically and ultimately economically. It would also be an opportunity to introduce them to American Jewish culture and society. Look for an article on this in a future issue.

### ♦ CCTV Launches Series Walk into Israel – A Land of Milk and Honey

At the end of July, the Israeli Embassy and IsCham Beijing hosted an event to launch CCTV's documentary series *Walk into Israel – The Land of Milk and Honey*.

The event took place at the National Center for the Performing Arts. Around 450 people attended including Israel's Ambassador Mr.

Amos Nadai, CCTV's Vice President Gao Feng, foreign diplomats, CCTV staff and other guests.

Walk into Israel – The Land of Milk and Honey is the first comprehensive television series about Jewish civilization and the State of Israel. The project is part of CCTV's landmark documentary series *The Road to Civilization: Record of Experiencing Worldwide Civilizations*. The 12-episode high definition series is now being broadcast by CCTV-2, followed by other leading CCTV channels.

The series explores the history of the Jewish nation, how Jews have survived throughout the Diaspora, what lies behind the legendary city of Jerusalem, as well as many other interesting aspects.

"This is the most important television series ever produced in China about Israel and the Jewish People, and it offers the viewer a historical, comprehensive and systematic introduction to Jewish civilization and Israel," said Guy Kivetz, Director of Communications and Public Diplomacy at the Embassy of Israel in Beijing.

The project of planning, filming and producing the series took about two years and was strongly supported by the Embassy of Israel in China. Qi Kejun was the chief director and commentator of the series. See the series online at: [http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFA+events/Around+the+world/Documentary-Road\\_Jewish\\_Civilization.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFA+events/Around+the+world/Documentary-Road_Jewish_Civilization.htm).

### ♦ Chabad Celebrates 25 Years in Asia

Chabad of Asia, formerly known as Lubavitch In The Far East (LIFE), is celebrating its 25th anniversary in the region with a number of events through September 2011. The official celebration began on 28 November with the dedication of the Roving Torah.

The torah was commissioned by Rabbi Mordechai Avtzon to commemorate his 50th birthday and it evolved into a community event. The torah was finished in the presence of the Hong Kong

Jewish community at a lunch at the Community Centre. The Roving Torah then danced with the torahs from Ohel Leah Synagogue and a procession began from there to its new home at the Chabad House. A Chinese marching band escorted participants through the botanical gardens and at Chabad House the traditional Hakafot took place.

The celebration continued through Chanukah with menorah lightings across the region and a Gala Dinner is planned for January. There are other events planned for the US and Israel and the 25th year will culminate in September with a Chinese Auction. However, as Goldie Avtzon noted, "Everything we are doing this year is part of the celebration".

### ♦ Ohel Leah Synagogue Welcomes New Rabbi

Hong Kong's Ohel Leah's Trustees approved the selection committee choice of Rabbi Asher Oser as its new Rabbi.

Rabbi Oser and the Rebbetzin were warmly greeted on arrival in Hong Kong on 12 October, at a special welcome dinner held at the Jewish Community Centre.

Rabbi Oser is a resident of Sydney, Australia. He previously served congregations in the US, in Connecticut and Rhode Island. His last appointment before arriving in Hong Kong was as Rabbi of Beth Sholom Synagogue, Providence, Rhode Island, where he served since 2007.

Rabbi Oser studied in yeshivot in Israel and was ordained by Yeshiva University in New York. He holds degrees from the University of Sydney and McGill University also. His wife Rachel is a high school science teacher. They have two young sons, Mordechai and Aryeh.

### ♦ Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival in Macau

The 11th Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival (HKJFF) spilled over into Macau for the second year, with the screen-



ing of three films at the University of Macau campus.

This year, the HKJFF pushed a China theme, showing the Chinese-made animated *A Jewish Girl in Shanghai*, on 18 November, to an audience of about 600 people, most of them from local schools, both Chinese and international. This was followed by a Q&A session with director Wang Genfa and writer Wu Lin and the largely student audience asked a number of thought – provoking questions. On 22 November, the Festival screened the documentary *Shanghai Ghetto*, to provide some background historical information to *A Jewish Girl in Shanghai*.

These screenings were organized by Glenn Timmermans, of the Department of English at the University of Macau, in collaboration with Howard Elias and the Board of the HKJFF and the event was sponsored by the University of Macau.

Timmermans said that while Macau does not enjoy a Jewish population anything like that in Hong Kong, there is very real interest in matters Jewish among the local population and his aim is to bring films to Macau on a Jewish theme, especially those about the Holocaust or with other educational value, to raise awareness of Jewish history and values in that city. This screening was the centerpiece for what the organizers hope will be a growing festival in the years to come.

#### ♦ Call for Papers

June 14-17, Nanjing University will host an “International Symposium on Monotheism and Postmoderism.” Deadlines are for a 200 word abstract to be sent to Zhenhua Meng at [ijsnju@gmail.com](mailto:ijsnju@gmail.com) with the full paper submitted by April 30, 2011. They will be published in a volume following the conference.

#### ♦ China Trip Announced

If you — or anyone you know — is interested in a fascinating Judaic Tour of China to be led by Prof. Xu Xin, scheduled for next October 10-26,

see <http://www.china-usa.org/jewsofchina> and/or contact Ken Lubowich at [jewsofchina@china-usa.org](mailto:jewsofchina@china-usa.org).

## TO THE EDITOR

Dear Rabbi Laytner,

I am a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute. My father was born in Harbin in 1918. Therefore, I read the letter to the editor from Rita Elegant with much interest. I spoke to my second cousin in Haifa, Israel, who did not leave Harbin until 1950. She was able to help me better connect all the persons mentioned in the letter.

I then e-mailed Rita Elegant, and then spoke to both her and her daughter on the phone. We are related through the Levitsky family, but very distantly. However my cousin in Israel is related much more closely, they are second cousins. I have put them in touch with each other.

I sent Rita Elegant and her daughter Alissa a copy of my book of photos that I took in Harbin, when my wife and I visited in 2007 with Professor Xu Xin.

I wanted you to know what came about, because you printed her letter in Points East. I certainly enjoyed making the connection with a distant relative with a Harbin connection.

Thanks,  
Dan M Levitsky DDS  
[dlevitsky@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dlevitsky@sbcglobal.net)

Dear Rabbi Laytner:

The correct number of Jewish refugees from Western and Central European countries who managed to come to Shanghai during the 1930s is 18,000 not 30,000 as stated in the above article.

Best Regards  
Liliane Willens  
[lwillens@verizon.net](mailto:lwillens@verizon.net)

## An Unlikely Chinese-Jewish Collaboration in 1903

(continued from page 1)

called “The J. Pierpont Morgan of Chinatown.”

All successful men, they had much in common. All spoke English well and had opted to live their lives in America. They wished to rid Chinatown of vice and to improve the lots of their compatriots, of whom 7,000 lived in New York in 1900. Three had married white women, and at least three were Christians, which was true of only a small minority of Chinese in America. And they were deeply opposed — like all of America’s Chinese — to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and subsequent legislation that had ended most Chinese immigration into the United States and denied them citizenship.

They were also members of the Chinese Empire Reform Association, a group established by exiled Chinese intellectuals K’ang Yu-wei and Leung Kai Chew to promote constitutional monarchy in China; a New York chapter with Singleton as its head was established in 1902. It was in the name of the association that Singleton offered assistance to the Jewish relief effort...

On the night of the show, Maine spoke first and declared strong sympathy between Jews and Chinese, “as both had been persecuted.” New York rabbi Joseph Zeff, an early Zionist, focused, in Yiddish, on Russian atrocities against both groups. A “Mr. Rosenthal” — probably Zionist author Herman Rosenthal — praised the Chinese organizers and expressed indebtedness to them. And Leung, on his first visit to the United States, called Kishinev “a recurrence of the wild slaughter of Chinese in Blagovestchensk,” referring to an atrocity committed by Cossacks in a Manchurian town two years earlier, in which 5,000 Chinese were drowned.

The actors, who donated their services, were prevailed upon to give three performances in the 500-seat auditorium to satisfy all comers, and enjoyed a record number of curtain calls. The play, a drama titled “The 10 Lost Tribes,” was not about destruction of the Kingdom of Israel, but rather subjugation of Chinese by the Manchus in the Ch’ing Dynasty.

confusion. A Harvard graduate and Yale law professor, she is the daughter of Chinese immigrants from the Philippines and a Catholic in a family that adheres to Jewish traditions. Ignorant of China and Asia, she says she often feels like an outsider in America and finds little to enjoy in life. Reading like cries for help, her writings reveal possible signs of obsessive compulsive personality disorder. While regretting her driven mentality and how it affects her children as well as gullible readers of her works, I am repulsed by the chutzpah publicity she and Penguin Press have generated for their bestseller.

In one example of how Chua’s parenting works, she related a tussle with her seven-year-old daughter, Lulu, who was practicing a difficult piano piece. Chua wrote that she worked “nonstop” with Lulu “drilling each of her hands separately” and then trying to put the two parts of the piece together. After a week of this, Lulu had had enough. The little girl “announced in exasperation that she was giving up and stomped off.” Chua persisted as follows:

“Get back to the piano now,” I ordered.

“You can’t make me.”

“Oh yes, I can.”

Back at the piano, Lulu made me pay. She punched, thrashed and kicked. She grabbed the music score and tore it to shreds. I taped the score back together and encased it in a plastic shield so that it could never be destroyed again. Then I hauled Lulu’s dollhouse to the car and told her I’d donate it to the Salvation Army piece by piece if she didn’t have “The Little White Donkey” perfect by the next day. When Lulu said, “I thought you were going to the Salvation Army, why are you still here?” I threatened her with no lunch, no dinner, no Christmas or Hanukkah presents, no birthday parties for two, three, four years. When she still kept playing it wrong, I told her she was purposely working herself into a frenzy, because she was secretly afraid she couldn’t do it. I told her to stop being lazy, cowardly, self-indulgent and pathetic.

At that point Chua’s husband (Jed Rubinfeld, a highly respected Yale law professor) stepped in. He told me to stop insulting Lulu — which I wasn’t even doing, I was just motivating her — and that he didn’t think threatening

Lulu was helpful. Also, he said, maybe Lulu really just couldn’t do the technique — perhaps she didn’t have the coordination yet — had I considered that possibility? “You just don’t believe in her,” I accused. “That’s ridiculous,” Jed said scornfully. “Of course I do.” “Sophia (the older daughter) could play the piece when she was this age.” “But Lulu and Sophia are different people,” Jed pointed out. “Oh no, not this,” I said, rolling my eyes. “Everyone is special in their special own way,” I mimicked sarcastically. “Even losers are special in their own special way.”

Eventually — after so much yelling that Chua lost her voice — Lulu learned to play the piece as her mother demanded, and Chua wrote that the girl felt triumphant about it. “Western parents worry a lot about their children’s self-esteem,” she concludes. “But as a parent, one of the worst things you can do for your child’s self-esteem is to let them give up. On the flip side, there’s nothing better for building confidence than learning you can do something you thought you couldn’t.” Unfortunately, Chua does not realize that tormenting a child like that to perform on the spot, even if successful and tempered later, can breed lasting resentment and ugly memories.

Also in her own words, here’s another example of Chua’s parenting as her Lulu’s Bat Mitzvah approached:

Even though I’m not Jewish and the Bat Mitzvah was Jed’s terrain, Lulu and I went to battle here too. I wanted her to play the violin at her Bat Mitzvah. I had in mind Joseph Achron’s “Hebrew Melody,” a beautiful, prayerful piece that Lulu’s old friend Lexie had told us about. Jed approved; Lulu didn’t.

“Play violin? At my Bat Mitzvah? That’s ridiculous! I refuse,” Lulu said, incredulous. “It’s completely inappropriate. Do you even know what Bat Mitzvah means? It’s not a recital.” Then she added, “I just want to have a big party, and get lots of presents.” That was said to provoke and enrage me. Lulu had heard me railing for years against spoiled rich kids whose parents spend millions of dollars on their Bat Mitzvah parties, cotillions, or sweet six teens. The truth is that Lulu has a strong Jewish identity. Unlike Sophia (or for that matter, Jed), Lulu had always insisted on observing Passover rules and fast on Yom Kippur. For her, even more than for Sophia, the Bat Mitzvah was an im-

portant event in her life, and she threw herself with a passion into learning her Hebrew Torah and haftarah portions. I wouldn’t take the bait. “If you don’t play the violin,” I said calmly, “then Daddy and I won’t throw you a party. We can just have a small ceremony — it’s the ritual that’s important, after all.” “You have no right!” Lulu said furiously. “That’s so unfair. You didn’t make Sophia play the piano at her Bat Mitzvah.” “It’s good for you to do something that Sophia didn’t.” I said. “You’re not even Jewish,” Lulu retorted. “You don’t know what you’re talking about. This has nothing to do with you.” Six weeks before the date, I sent out Lulu’s invitations. But I warned her, “If you don’t play the ‘Hebrew Melody,’ I’ll cancel the party.” “You can’t do that,” Lulu said scornfully. “Why don’t you try me, Lulu?” I dared her. “See if I’ll do it or not.” I honestly didn’t know who’d win this one. It was a high-risk maneuver too, because I didn’t have an exit strategy if I lost.

Apparently, Lulu won. Chua’s manner is both authoritarian and mercurial, for as she holds fast to her demands, her daughter speaks her mind. Instead of arguing back and forth, tyrannical parents typically resort to physical punishment. However, words can cut deeply and hurt more than blows. Although she understood Lulu’s counterviews, which reasonable parents would accept, the tiger mother said, “I wouldn’t take the bait” and she resorted to a high-stakes ultimatum that failed. Consulting two rabbis, I learned that youths do perform musically at reform Bat Mitzvahs. Exasperation with Lulu contrasts with Chua’s appreciation of her older daughter’s full compliance to whatever Chua directed. Amy and Jed should realize that it is the compliant, quiet ones that are most liable to become misfits and suicides when away from home, as at college.

Ethnically Chinese myself, 4th-generation American versus Chua who is 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, I am highly troubled by her dogmatism, even when she tries to backtrack from hard to soft. Why does learning the piano or violin mean having to become a concert hall star? As a kid, after nine years of piano lessons I could play Beethoven sonatas and in school orchestras. Teachers were strict but positive and encouraging. My parents and I enjoyed the music and there was no need to pressure me to practice. At college and

to sleep over at friends' homes and pressuring them to excel at music lessons.

"When I read *The Wall Street Journal* article about her book, I expected it to feel more familiar than it did, because I have a Chinese mother," Mates-Muchin said. "But it was very extreme." <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704111504576059713528698754.html>.

Noah Leavitt and Helen Kim, sociologists at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash., had a similar reaction to Chua's book and the passionate reaction to it in media and blogs all over the country.

The duo recently concluded in-depth interviews with 37 Asian-Jewish couples as part of a two-year research project on how Asian-Jewish couples navigate their cultural identities, and they report that they did not find the level of discipline Chua describes.

"We talked to a lot of different kinds of families — Chinese and other Asian, straight and gay, East Coast and West Coast — and we found nothing close to the way Amy portrayed the way she mothered," Leavitt said. "We met a number of their kids, and they didn't complain about anything like that."

It's true that the children of the couples they interviewed "were very involved in lessons and homework and other programmed activities of upper-middle class life," Leavitt said, but he and Kim, his Korean wife and co-researcher, attribute that to class as much as to cultural background.

When it comes to parental expectations, it's hard to tease out the Asian from the Jewish component, he said. Both cultures prize academic excellence and hard work. But children are subject to a myriad of influences, as are their parents, and after a certain point, causality becomes murky.

"When you hear my name, you think: Hebrew first name, Chinese last name — I should have been a neurosurgeon who plays the violin," Dafna Wu joked.

Wu, raised in Brazil by her Shanghai-born father and Ashkenazi Jewish mother, is a nurse practitioner in San Francisco who raised three daughters with a Jewish lesbian partner.

"I think culture informs everything," she said. "All of us have lots of stories, and they all inform who we are."

Many factors contribute to the make-up of a hard-driving mother, Wu said, including immigrant status, how one was parented oneself, and the desire to keep up with the Joneses — "or the Steinbergs, the Wongs or the Rodriguezes," she added.

"I don't think there's such a thing as a Tiger Mom any more than there is a Jewish Mother," she said. "They're both stereotypes, and stereotypes are based on some truth, but it's dangerous to generalize. It borders on racism."

A generational difference is at work, too, said Diane Tobin, director of Be'chol Lashon (Hebrew for "In Every Tongue"), a San Francisco-based organization that supports racially and ethnically diverse Jews. The organization is cooperating with Leavitt and Kim on their research project.

"With the older generation, it's probably more of a typical immigrant thing," Tobin told JTA. "Being in America moderates their behavior."

Oakland resident Felicia Wu, 63, experienced the full force of the first-generation Chinese Tiger Mom.

Her parents were both born in China, and even though she grew up in Westchester County, a suburb of New York City, her upbringing was strictly Old World.

"I was not allowed to have sleepovers. I couldn't go away to camp like my friends. There were many things I wished I could have done," Wu said. "We were expected to excel, to always get A's. And I always did. If so-and-so's kid got into Harvard, I heard about it from my parents."

Wu went to Cornell University (her sister went to Harvard University), became a physician and married a Jewish doctor — a Chinese and Jewish dream match, perhaps.

She vowed to raise her two children without the strictness of her own upbringing.

Is she pleased with how things turned out? Yes and no. "Now, I wish we'd

been a little stricter," she said. "My daughter is not as respectful as I'd like her to be."

Wu said she is surprised that Chua maintained the kind of strict discipline associated with first-generation Chinese families despite the fact that she grew up in the Bay Area and married a Jewish man. "I would have thought she'd be more Westernized in her sensibilities," Wu said.

Was Felicia Wu a Tiger Mom? "No, she's a pussycat," said her husband, John Citron.

What about Mates-Muchin? "I'm a Jewish mother, and so was my mother," the rabbi said, noting that her mother converted before marriage, and she and her sister grew up in San Francisco's Reform Congregation Shearith Israel.

And what about sociologist Kim? Does Leavitt expect that she'll turn into a Tiger Mom with Aryeh Zakkai, their 2-year-old son?

"I don't know," he mused. "She's definitely the tough one. But she's also the fun one."

## Tiger Moms: A Response

by Albert Yee  
based on his written statement to the Asian American Psychological Association

Out of nowhere roared Amy Chua and her portrayal of what it means to be Chinese and how the Chinese raise their children. Capped by TIME magazine Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> cover and write-up, frenzy erupted over her book, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, and *Wall Street Journal* op-ed (Jan. 8), "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior." Insisting that she is a model Chinese parent, Chua claims her harsh, punitive methods of raising her children to be perfect students and musicians show why Chinese youths excel academically and musically. Pitting childrearing patterns into the polar opposites of Chinese dominance versus American indulgence, she claims that Chinese parents hector their kids as she does and makes American parents her straw man. Her self-perception of always seeking perfection, which she says comes from being a true Chinese, broadcasts identity

## The Evolution of Sino-Israeli Relations

(continued from page 1)

ended disastrously for the Chinese and exposed the obsolescence of Chinese military equipment. They then decided to modernize their armed forces, and here Israel came into the picture.

After the 1967 Six-Day War, the Israelis found themselves holding vast stockpiles of Soviet-made weaponry, which they had captured from defeated Arab armies. Chinese military equipment was also Soviet-made, and secret talks began between the Chinese and the Israelis. In the end, the Israelis modernized and retrofitted thousands of Chinese tanks. To balance this covert relationship with the Israelis, the Chinese gave \$1 million to Arafat and raised the status of the PLO office in Beijing to that of an embassy. When the revamped new tanks were paraded on China's National Day in October 1984, no mention was made of their origin.<sup>4</sup> Still, Beijing was not ready to recognize Jerusalem. Nonetheless, unofficial ties between the two countries continued to develop. By 1990, both countries had unofficial missions in Beijing and Tel Aviv. Around the same time, the vice president of Beijing University sought American help to establish Hebrew-language instruction at the university; in the meantime, a number of Chinese students were sent to study Hebrew in Jerusalem.

### Full Diplomatic Ties

The gradual dissolution of the Soviet empire and the opening of the Madrid Conference in 1991, convened in an attempt to initiate dialogue between Israel and its Arab neighbors, convinced China that the time was ripe to finally recognize the Jewish state. Thus, in 1992, forty-two years after Israel had recognized China, it granted full diplomatic recognition to Israel. This was heralded as answering "the need to bring together the world's two oldest civilizations." In the aftermath, three Israeli prime ministers and two presidents visited China. The organization of former residents of China in Israel, the Igud Yotsei Sin, took the initiative in creating the Israel-China Friendship Society, which puts out a bi-monthly bulletin called "Israel-China Voice of Friendship." Sino-Israeli ties continue to develop, especially in the agriculture, military, and hi-tech fields.

After the benefit, which raised \$280 (about \$7,100 in 2011 dollars), Singleton threw a banquet at Mon Lay Won — popularly known as the Chinese Delmonico's — an upscale Chinatown restaurant. Among the guests was Yiddish theater actress Bertha Kalish, the "Jewish Bernhardt." Exactly what was served that night is not recorded, but at a similar dinner for prominent Jews, despite the location, pork and shellfish had been notably absent. It appears the Chinese hosts tried, within their limited understanding of Jewish dietary laws, to make their Jewish guests comfortable, and that the Jews — some of whom were observant — did their best to meet them halfway.

Denied citizenship, the Chinese were trying to build alliances, and to the extent that Jews had already entered the power elite, this effort included them. Targets of anti-immigrant prejudice themselves, Jews were obvious allies. The Jewish press had opposed the Chinese Exclusion Act from the start, and Jews had spoken up during the debate preceding its permanent extension in 1902. Max Kohler, former U.S. assistant district attorney, had called Chinese exclusion "the most un-American, inhuman, barbarous, oppressive system of procedure that can be encountered in any civilized land today." For Jews, exclusion was not only a moral issue but also a pragmatic one, because what had been done to Chinese could also be done to Jews. If pogroms continued, more would seek refuge in America. In the year following the Kishinev riot, Jewish emigration from Russia rose by more than 60%...

Proximity and shared victimhood notwithstanding, an alliance between the two groups never really developed much beyond these efforts, and the event was forgotten before long. But even if all it amounted to was a single night when one persecuted people reached out to another, it was no less an extraordinary — and unexpected — gesture of solidarity.

Scott D. Seligman is a writer, historian, retired corporate executive, a career "China hand" and author of *Dealing With the Chinese*; *Chinese Business Etiquette*; with I-chuan Chen, *Chinese at a Glance*; and with Sasha Gong, *The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Cookbook*.

Chinese students are currently studying agricultural technology in Israel, while the Israeli Training Center at the Beijing Agricultural University holds seminars led by Israeli experts for Chinese students from across the country. Israel's Ministry of Agriculture, in partnership with its Chinese counterpart, has established three experimental farms in China. These provide an opportunity for Israeli research and development in genetic manipulation and the formation of new seed varieties. The farms also teach the Chinese about advanced irrigation and cultivation technology in an attempt to create a sustainable agricultural industry. This is particularly important in arid areas.

Military cooperation continued after the establishment of diplomatic relations between Jerusalem and Beijing. However, the plan to develop an AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) reconnaissance plane never came to fruition. The project was based on Israeli hi-tech avionics, which were to be installed in a Soviet-built transport plane. The Pentagon objected to this transaction, even though it did not involve the transmission of any US technology, fearing that it would endanger the security of Taiwan.<sup>5</sup> Israel had to pay a heavy fine for breaking the contract, and relations with China soured for a number of years.<sup>6</sup> However, military cooperation was given a boost after September 11, 2001, and especially after several incidents of terrorist acts by Chinese Muslim extremists, which led Beijing to approach Jerusalem for state-of-the-art surveillance and anti-terrorist equipment. The cooperation became even closer in preparation for the Beijing Olympics of 2008.

In 2004, Prime Minister Olmert led a delegation of over one hundred Israeli businessmen on a visit to China. This trip included Harbin, where Olmert's parents lived in the 1920s and '30s, before settling in Palestine. Bilateral trade continues to develop, especially in the hi-tech fields of information technology, telecommunication, electronics, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, solar energy, life sciences, and environmental protection. There are currently almost one thousand Israeli firms operating in China. Another aspect of the Sino-Jewish connection is the manufacture of kosher foods for the over-\$10 billion kosher food market in the United States and

also for the market in Israel. A small “army” of bearded, awkwardly dressed Orthodox *kashruth* inspectors is spreading all over China, as five hundred Chinese factories are currently engaged in producing kosher foodstuffs. Many non-Jews consider kosher as a gold standard for quality. This is especially important when a number of products of Chinese origin turn out to have caused health problems.<sup>7</sup> A kosher restaurant opened in Beijing to cater to the local Jewish community, but also in anticipation of the large number of Jewish tourists who came to watch the 2010 Olympics held in China.<sup>8</sup> Yet another link between China and the Jews is the brisk adoption of Chinese girls by childless Jewish couples in the US.<sup>9</sup>

### The Einstein Exhibit Fiasco

When Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Israel in 2000, he toured the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. As an engineer, he was particularly fascinated with the archives of Albert Einstein. Einstein, who was one of the founders of the Hebrew University, along with Sigmund Freud, Chaim Weizmann, Martin Buber, and the university’s first president, Judah Magnes, bequeathed his archives to the university. Jiang mentioned to his host that along with other world-famous scientists, Einstein’s picture adorns all Chinese schools; there would be great interest in China in an exhibit from Einstein’s archives. His host, then president Hanoch Gutfreund, happened to be a physicist and the head of the Einstein archive. The Israelis agreed to send an exhibit from the archive to China and to other countries. As the touring Einstein exhibit reached Singapore, the Chinese authorities asked for the display notes, so that they could be translated into Chinese. The Israelis were then flabbergasted when the Chinese demanded that several items be taken out of the exhibit. The first was a caption that noted the fact that Einstein was a Jew. The other items referred to his relationship with Zionism and Israel, his being one of the founders of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and the fact that upon Chaim Weizmann’s death, he was offered the presidency of Israel, which he declined. It is hard to identify the locus of that seemingly incomprehensible Chinese decision, but in a totalitarian system, strange and stupid decisions are often made. The Israeli authorities naturally refused the Chinese demand, and the

exhibit went to Taiwan instead of Communist China.<sup>10</sup>

### Antisemitism and Philo-Semitism in China

The word for Jew in China, *Youtai*, has no pejorative connotations, even though the radical of the character for *you* denotes an animal. That in itself says something about the way in which Chinese see themselves—as culturally superior to others. The indigenous Jews of Kaifang were well regarded, and there is no record of antisemitism against them. In fact, the first seeds of antisemitism were planted in China at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Christian missionaries, and almost a century later by White Russians and the Nazis. After the Opium War, when Jewish merchants arrived along with those of other nationalities, the Chinese made no distinction between Jews and other foreigners.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the Chinese Republic, was well disposed towards the Jews and in his famous treatise, “The Three People’s Principles,” he praised Zionism as an inspiration for the Chinese Nationalist movement. In a 1920 letter to the *Israel Messenger*, organ of the Baghdadi Sephardic community in Shanghai, he repeated his admiration and support for Jewish independence: “Though their country was destroyed, the Jewish nation has existed to this day . . . [Zionism] is one of the greatest movements of the present time. All lovers of democracy cannot help but support wholeheartedly and welcome with enthusiasm the movement to restore your wonderful and historic nation, which has contributed so much to the civilization of the world and which rightfully deserve [sic] an honorable place in the family of nations.”<sup>11</sup> Dr. Sun also saw a parallel between the persecution of the Jews and the humiliation of the Chinese people during the era of Imperialism.

Similar sentiments comparing Zionism and the Chinese Nationalist movement can be found in the journal *Dongfang zazhi* [Eastern Miscellany], an influential intellectual journal published in Shanghai in the pre-Communist era.<sup>12</sup> More specifically, an article in 1928 cited five reasons why the Jews would be successful in their nationalist aspirations:

- the cohesive force provided by both nationalism and religion;
- the tenacity that was built up in two

thousand years outside their homeland and was more recently displayed in their pioneering recolonization;

- their two thousand years of literacy;
- their technical expertise; and, most important,
- their nationalist movement, which conformed to the general trend of the contemporary world.<sup>13</sup>

Some virulent antisemitic articles also appeared in the Chinese press, most of them translations from English, White Russian, Japanese, and German sources. In contrast, although not as well known as the Japanese consul in Lithuania, Sempo Sugihara, Dr. Ho Fengshan, the Chinese consul in Vienna, saved hundreds of Jews from the Holocaust by issuing visas between 1938 and 1940. In March 2001, Fengshan was honored by Yad Vashem (Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority). Further proof of the absence of native Chinese antisemitism was later demonstrated by the welcome given by the general public and local Chinese publications to the Jewish refugees.

The Balfour Declaration, which promised Jews a homeland in Palestine, was generally lauded by the Nationalist Chinese government; however, when the vote for the partition of Palestine came up in the United Nations, the Chinese Nationalist representative abstained. The reason for the abstention and for China’s not having voted against partition, as did almost all Asian countries, was probably its desire to please the United States and also possibly because of the presence of millions of Muslims in China.<sup>14</sup> When the Chinese Communists came to power, they followed the lead taken by Chinese Nationalists in dealing with Israel in the context of official sympathy for the Arabs. When a market economy emerged in China after years of repression and atrocities by the Red Guards and the Gang of Four, the Chinese began to encounter Jews among the thousands of foreign businessmen, journalists, diplomats, and academics—but without paying any particular attention to their ethnic or religious origin. In spite of the pro-Arab stance of the government, the Chinese continue to view the Jews with admiration and try to emulate certain Jewish traits, which they believe will lead to economic success.

The three most recognizable Jews in dent

of China, who saw inspiration for China in the Zionist effort to build a homeland for the Jews in Palestine.

The Chinese view of the Jews as smart and powerful is, of course, an exaggeration, and even a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it promotes admiration, and on the other, it creates surprise and suspicion, especially when the well-worn canard about Jewish world domination is translated into Chinese and becomes widely circulated. In times of uncertainty and socioeconomic crises, the historical tendency has been to look for outside scapegoats. Throughout history, Jews have been victimized as a result. Such a scenario is unlikely in twenty-first century China. There is every indication that Jews and the Jewish state will continue to be looked upon as the other ancient and great civilization from whom much can be learned. The Chinese will continue to respect the Jewish people’s history of adaptation on the road to modernity.

Peter Berton is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Relations at the University of Southern California. He is an authority on the interaction between and rivalry among major players in the Asia-Pacific region, international negotiation behavior, territorial and maritime disputes in East Asia, and geopolitics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Professor Berton lived in Harbin from 1928 to 1941. His memoir, “Growing Up Jewish in Manchuria in the 1930s,” was published in Vol. 2 of Jonathan Goldstein (ed.), *The Jews of China*, under a pseudonym, Alexander Menquez. He is also the author of over 150 books, chapters, articles, and book reviews.

### Notes

The author would like to express his gratitude to William Bikales (Beijing), Professor Jonathan Goldstein (West Georgia State University), Leonfrid Heyman (Haifa), Dr. Alfonz Lengyel, and Professor Stanley Rosen (Director USC East Asian Studies Center).

<sup>1</sup> For further reading on Sino-Israeli relations, see Jonathan Goldstein (ed.), *China and Israel, 1948–1998: A Fifty Year Retrospective* (Westport, CT, 1999); Dr. Shalom Salomon Wald, *China and the Jewish People: Old Civilizations in a New Era* (Jerusalem, 2004); and Yitzhak Shichor, “The U.S. Role in Delaying Sino-Israeli Relations: Two’s Company, Three’s a Crowd,” *Jewish Political Studies Review*, XXII:1–2 (Spring 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Aron Shai, “The Israeli Communist Party’s Policy toward the People’s Republic of China, 1949–1998,” Goldstein, op.cit., pp. 83–94.

<sup>3</sup> Yitzhak Shichor, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> Yitzhak Shichor, “Israel’s Military Transfers to China and Taiwan,” *Survival*, XL:1 (Spring, 1998), 68–91.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Goldstein, “A Quadrilateral Relationship: Israel, China, Taiwan, and the United States since 1992,” *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, XII: 2 (October 2005), 177–202.

<sup>6</sup> See Sameer Suryakant Patil, “Understanding the Phalon Controversy,” *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, II:2 (2008).

<sup>7</sup> Ching-Ching Ni, “‘Made in China’ Label Teams up with the Kosher Symbol,” *Bulletin of the Igud Yotzei Sin* [Association of Former Residents of China], *English Supplement*, No. 397 (October–November 2008), pp. 62–63.

<sup>8</sup> Hana Levy Julian, “Kosher Food Comes to Beijing Just in Time for the 2008 Olympics,” *ibid.*, No. 396 (July–August 2008), p. 26; “China Goes Kosher as Exporters Use Rabbis to Reassure Consumers,” *ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>9</sup> Albert H. Yee, “Adoption of Chinese Children by Jews: Affirmation of Sino-Jewish History,” *Points East*, XXII:1 (2007), 9–12.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Goldstein, “Einstein and Sino-Israeli Ups-and-Downs,” *Points East*, XVII: 3 (November 2002), 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Israel Messenger*, journal of Baghdadi Jews in Shanghai, June 4, 1920, as quoted in Maisie Meyer, “A Great Leap Forward? Maisie Meyer unravels the complexities of Sino-Jewish relations,” *Jewish Quarterly*, No. 197 (Spring, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Xiao Xian, “An Overview of Chinese Impressions of and Attitudes toward Jews before 1949,” Jonathan Goldstein, *The Jews of China*, (Armonk, NY, 2000), Vol. II, pp. 33–46.

<sup>13</sup> Yu Songhua, quoted in Xiao, *ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>14</sup> Xiao, op.cit., p. 40.

<sup>15</sup> Pan Guang, *The Jews in China* (Beijing, 2005), p. 169.

<sup>16</sup> T. Kaufman, “Establishment of a Jewish Historical and Cultural Center in Tianjin,” *Israel—China Voice of Friendship*, No. 67 (August–September, 2009), p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Mooney, “In China, a Growing Interest in All Things Jewish,” *The Chronicle for Higher Education*, August 11, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Beverly Friend, “A Spiritual Journey: Dedication of Glazer Judaic Institute at Nanjing University,” *Points East*, XXII: 1 (2007), 8–9. Reprinted from the China-Judaic Studies Association website, [www.oakton.edu/~friend/chinajews.html](http://www.oakton.edu/~friend/chinajews.html).

<sup>19</sup> Mooney, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> Jamie Fleishman, “Chinese Professor Discusses Judaism and Confucianism,” *Brandeis Hoot Community Newspaper*, August 9, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Mooney, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Wald, op. cit.

<sup>23</sup> “Anne Frank’s Story Makes a Strong Impression on Hong Kong,” *Bulletin of the Igud Yotzei Sin*, op. cit., p. 52; Shani Brownstein, “Anne Frank Exhibition in Hong Kong,” [www.ohelleah.org](http://www.ohelleah.org); “Anne Frank Exhibition in China: From Hong Kong to Beijing,” [www.annefrank.org](http://www.annefrank.org).

<sup>24</sup> Ariana Eunjung Cha, “Sold on a Stereotype: In China, a genre of self-help books purports to tell the secrets of making money ‘the Jewish way,’” *The Washington Post*, February 7, 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Richard McGregor, “Chinese Buy into Currency War Plot,” *The Australian*, September

27, 2007. This article is a review of Song Hongbing’s *Currency Wars*.

<sup>26</sup> In Japan, for example, where there is no antisemitic attitude toward the Jews, a whole series of anti-Jewish conspiracy books appeared as the Japanese economy grew in size. Almost every bookstore had a special Jewish corner, but antisemitic books were published primarily because they sold well, and not because of antisemitic attitudes on the part of the Japanese. Two books by leading antisemitic author Masami Uno, *If You Understand the Jews, You Will Understand the World* and *If You Understand the Jews You Will Understand Japan*, have sold more than one million copies. But Uno himself claims that he has no animosity toward the Jews.

<sup>27</sup> Tali Raveh, “Jewish Tales: Key to Chinese Success,” *Israel Culture*, August 30, 2006.

## The Sino-Jewish American Tiger Moms Experience

by Sue Fishkoff

excerpted from the *JTA*, January 25, 2011

OAKLAND, Calif. (JTA) — Rabbi Jacqueline Mates-Muchin earned two A’s, one A-plus and one A-minus during her first semester at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

When she told her Chinese grandfather, she was disappointed but not shocked by his response.

“He said: ‘You got an A-plus, but an A-minus, too,’ ” recalled Mates-Muchin, 36, now the associate rabbi of Temple Sinai in Oakland.

Mates-Muchin, whose mother is second-generation Chinese-American and whose father is the son of Austrian Jewish immigrants, recognizes a lot of her own childhood in “Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother,” Yale University professor Amy Chua’s controversial book about raising her daughters with traditional Chinese norms of strict discipline.

Mates-Muchin’s parents, both physicians, expected her and her four siblings to get good grades and go on to graduate school. But the expectation was stronger from the Chinese side of the family, she says, as was the insistence on respect for elders...

But like other children of Chinese-Jewish couples interviewed by JTA for this story, Mates-Muchin sees a lot of exaggeration in Chua’s description of her heavy-handed approach to child rearing, which included forbidding her children

China are Karl Marx, Albert Einstein, and Sigmund Freud. *China Jewish Culture*, a Chinese-language magazine claiming to be the *Sino-Jewish* [sic] *Cultural Research Magazine*, published, on its inside front cover, pictures of what it claimed to be the twenty-five most prominent Jews in history—some of them clearly not Jewish, and a few others with tenuous, if any, Jewish connections. The first three mentioned above are followed by Pablo Picasso, Christopher Columbus, Henry Kissinger, Franz Kafka, Steven Spielberg, Itzhak Perlman, Paul Samuelson, Andy Groves (co-founder of Intel), Isaac Asimov, Ariel Sharon, Larry Ellison (co-founder and CEO of Oracle), Isaac Levitan (Russian-Jewish landscape painter), Marcel Dassault (founder of Dassault aviation and Dassault industries in France), Michael Bloomberg, Marc Aurel Stein (Central Asia explorer), Steve Ballmer (CEO of Microsoft), Yitzhak Rabin, Imre Kertesz, Alan Greenspan, George Soros, Jacques Offenbach, and Dale Carnegie. (The intention was probably to include Andrew Carnegie, though neither Carnegie was Jewish).

It has been reported that when a Chinese finds out that someone is a Jew, he is likely to mention the word Einstein. This pro-Jewish attitude on the part of the urban Chinese may be partially attributed to the Chinese fear of home-grown Islamic terrorists. Whatever the cause, pro-Jewish and pro-Israel sentiments are abundant when we look at the internet in China, despite the persistent pro-Arab stance of the government.

### Research in the Jewish Field and Restoration of Jewish Historical Sites

Dr. Pan Guang, Dean of the Jewish Research Center in Shanghai, declared that Jews in China are a “hot topic” for academic research, mass media, television, and movies.<sup>15</sup> Dr. Pan, who is also a professor at the Shanghai Center of International Studies and Institute of European and Asian Studies at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, is the most important person in China in promoting the study of Jews in China, Judaism, and Israeli history. He was the first Chinese academic to recognize the importance of Sino-Jewish and Sino-Israeli relations, and he was the organizer of the first Jewish research center in China, and serves as the dean of that center. A man of

multiple interests, he is also the vice-chairman of the Chinese Association of Middle East Studies, director of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization research center in Shanghai, and a senior adviser on terrorism to the mayor of his native city. He is also an adviser to many organizations outside China. He is responsible for organizing numerous conferences, and is the author of many publications, including the latest in 2008, *Jewish Studies in China* (in Chinese).

After the establishment of relations with Israel, the Chinese authorities decided that Jewish heritage in China should be preserved. Moreover, they encouraged former Jewish residents of China in Israel, the United States, Canada, Australia, and other countries to visit their one-time homeland in order to help in the economic development of China through investment and joint ventures. Research centers for the study of Jewish history and culture were established within the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Shanghai and Harbin. Synagogues, Jewish community centers, and cemeteries were restored (at a time when Jewish cemeteries continued to be desecrated in Europe). Because of the tremendous growth in the population of Harbin from a few hundred thousand Chinese and foreigners before the revolution to some ten million today, the Jewish cemetery was relocated to a rural area outside the city and is being maintained by the provincial authorities. The “New Synagogue” in Harbin was converted into a dance hall after the Jews left Harbin in the 1950s, but was later refurbished to serve as the museum of Jewish life and culture.

Plans are presently underway to restore the synagogue on Nanjing Road in the center of Tianjin along the lines of the synagogues in Shanghai and Harbin. It is noteworthy that the synagogue is the only extant structure among the other buildings that housed Jewish communal activities. The Chinese municipal authorities hope that this restoration will increase tourist traffic to Tianjin, one of the largest cities in northeastern China, and help in the development of economic relations between China and Israel.<sup>16</sup>

### The Study of Hebrew, Judaism, and Israel

Beginning in the 1990s, Chinese scholars came to the United States and Great Britain for graduate studies in Judaism,

as well as Jewish history and culture. Upon their return, they began to teach courses in Judaica at several Chinese universities. Their interest in Judaica, however, was largely accidental.

Professor Xu Xin of Nanjing University, for example, became interested in Jews when he stumbled on the work of Saul Bellow after the latter received the Nobel Prize for Literature. His interest was further stimulated by a visiting Jewish American professor of literature, who invited him to come to America to start graduate work in Jewish studies.<sup>17</sup> Upon his return via Israel, Xu began to teach a few courses on Judaism which led to the establishment of a Jewish studies center in Nanjing in 1992. Thanks to financial assistance from a Jewish philanthropist and other Jewish foundations, that institution was transformed into the Glazer Institute for Judaic Studies in 2006.<sup>18</sup> Some two hundred students are presently taking courses at the institute, and its library today boasts the largest Judaica collection in China. In 1989, Professor Xu took a leading role in establishing the China Judaic Studies Association. One of his major scholarly works was the translation into Chinese of the abridged *Encyclopedia Judaica*. For his efforts to promote Judaic studies in China, he was awarded an honorary doctorate at Bar-Ilan University in 2003.

Another influential figure in Judaic studies is Professor Fu Youde. A specialist on the philosopher George Berkeley, he also accidentally discovered Jewish studies when he was invited to work on a project to translate the works of Baruch Spinoza into Chinese. In 1992, he took up the study of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at Oxford, and later at Leo Baeck College in London, one of the foremost centers for Jewish learning.<sup>19</sup> Fu Youde first established a small center of Judaic studies at Shandong University, in Jinan, fittingly, the birthplace of Confucius. In 2003, this grew into the Center for Interreligious Studies, which has a staff of over twenty professors and researchers. Fittingly, he began the comparative study of Confucianism and Judaism, which he developed in numerous lectures in the United States and England.<sup>20</sup>

Both Xu Xin and Fu Youde have found the study of Judaism, besides its intrinsic value, to be of importance for contemporary China for other reasons. Xu

says that “without an understanding of the Jews, you cannot understand the Western world.” Fu admires the fact that “the Jews have modernized themselves materially...while maintaining their cultural identity.” However, he laments that fact that because of their pursuit of materialism, the Chinese have lost their identity or “Chineseness.” He even indicts Chinese youth for being inhumane or “soulless.”<sup>21</sup>

Besides Nanjing and Shandong, Hebrew and Judaic courses are also taught at Beijing University and several other Chinese institutions of higher learning. There are still relatively few Chinese professors in the field, but their numbers are augmented by visiting professors or language instructors from Israel and the United States. Chinese specialists on Judaism and Israel, though small in number, have a substantial outreach through teaching, translations of Yiddish and Hebrew literature, organizing workshops, conferences, exhibitions, cultural exchanges, and the publication of hundreds of books and articles. Some of them, alongside analysts specializing in Middle Eastern (including Israeli) affairs who may not have training in Jewish studies, may also be called upon to advise the party leadership. The wider Chinese audience learns about Jews and Israel from newspapers, television, movies, and increasingly, the internet.<sup>22</sup>

Although several unauthorized translations of Anne Frank’s diary circulated in China in the 1980s and ’90s, an official exhibit opened in Hong Kong at the end of 2007 and was visited by no fewer than six thousand people. More importantly, there were special sessions for teachers, who incorporated this material, and information about the Holocaust in general, into their curriculum. The exhibit then proceeded to the National Library in Beijing, where it ran for several months.<sup>23</sup>

### The Emphasis on Making Money “the Jewish Way”

Deng Xiao Ping’s exhortation that “to be rich is glorious” has sent the Chinese in search of books on how to achieve that aim. About a third of all books published in China today deal with business and entrepreneurship, and a good portion of those identify the Jews as holding the key to success in business. For a generation of Chinese who slaved in ob-

solete state enterprises under the slogans of Mao Zedong, it is understandable that they would now want to find a shortcut to becoming capitalists.

Some of the representative titles in promoting the Jewish connection to success are: *The Legend of Jewish Wealth*, *The Eight Most Valuable Business Secrets of the Jews*, *The Jewish Road to Wealth*, *The Secrets of the Jews*, *How to Be a Jewish Millionaire*, *Jewish People’s Bible for Business and Managing the World*, *The Ancient and Great Jewish Writings for Getting Rich*, *Jewish People and Business: The Bible of How to Live Their Lives*, and *The Jews’ Business Wisdom and the Art of Proper Behavior According to the Talmud*. The headline on one of the covers of the *Shanghai and Hong Kong Economy* magazine read: “Where Does Jewish People’s Wisdom Come From?”

Entrepreneurial Chinese English-speakers put many of these books together, and some books, like *Jewish Entrepreneurial Experience and Business Wisdom*, by William Hampton, are complete forgeries. That volume, smartly packaged in red and gold, was billed as a bestseller in the United States. According to Hampton’s biography, he was one of the first graduates of Harvard Business School’s Ph.D. program in business administration, an editor at *Business Week*, and a professor of business and philosophy, with years of experience in Jewish studies. William Hampton does exist and he was a bureau chief for *Business Week*, but as a specialist on automotive affairs, with no connection to Harvard, no professorship, and no knowledge whatsoever of Jewish affairs.<sup>24</sup> Some of these books cite sound business practices that have little to do with Jews or Judaism, and some even falsely quote the Talmud. This demonstrates to what extent the Chinese hunger for a possible short-cut to becoming rich.

Having a possibly more deleterious effect on the admiration of all things Jewish in China is the surprise bestseller by Hongbing Song, *Currency Wars*. True to most conspiracy theories, the book covers Waterloo (which does have a connection to the Rothschild banking family), and continues with a hodgepodge of topics, such as the crash of the Japanese bubble economy, the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98, and environmen-

tal degradation in the developing world. These topics have precious little to do with the Rothschilds, who, incidentally, are no longer major players in the financial world. The book also attracted attention among Chinese officialdom, and the author was swamped with offers to write other books.<sup>25</sup> What effect this will have on the Chinese perception of the Jews is hard to measure or predict, especially at the time of an economic crisis, or general downturn in the economy.<sup>26</sup>

Another example of an attempt to emulate the Jews is the publication of a series of ten children’s books, *The Secret to the Jews’ Success*, which stress Jewish morals such as respect for elders, hard work, and quick-witted thinking.<sup>27</sup>

### Conclusion

The relationship between the People’s Republic of China and Israel is a thorny one. First, in the era of Maoism, there was an ideological need to side with the Arabs against Israel, which was cast as the “running dog of Imperialism.” Second, in the era of market economy, the Chinese hunger for oil forced the government to continue that policy. In the era before recognition of Israel, the Chinese turned to the Jewish state for the secret transfer of Soviet-made military equipment. After the recognition of Israel in 1992, Chinese leadership was attracted to Israel because of its state-of-the-art military technology, its advances in agriculture in arid areas, and the general high level of its science and technology.

This description of the Sino-Judaic connection over centuries would be incomplete without noting important similarities between Chinese and Jewish values (first articulated by Spinoza), between Judaism and Confucianism, and between the Chinese and Jewish Diasporas. An important characteristic of this relationship is the fact that the Chinese, lacking a Christian or Islamic tradition and attitude toward the Jews, were unique in their philo-Semitism, in spite of external sources that tried to plant seeds of antisemitism. The present Chinese attitude toward the Jews as being smart, powerful, and holding the secret to success in business is also one of admiration for having endured two millennia of exile and persecution, and having retained their traditional values. This was the view of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, the first presi-