



Points East

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

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Eric Kisch's Shanghai Story

By Kevin Ostoyich

Excerpted from *American Institute for Contemporary German Studies*, www.AICGS.org, 24 October 2017

...After the Anschluss the German anti-Jewish laws were imposed in Austria quickly and severely. Jews had their properties and belongings confiscated and were subjected to public humiliation. Eric explains, for example, that when his Aunt Emmy and her cousin Edith graduated from the medical school at the University of Vienna, their “graduation present” was to be [ordered] on their knees [to scrub] the pavement with toothbrushes while [...] being spat on.” While Aunt Emmy was able to escape to America, Eric’s family was not and stayed in Vienna. In the spring of the Anschluss, on May 29, 1938, Walter and his brother Dr. Ernst Kisch exited a tram near the apartment building where the Kisch family lived, and someone said “Na ja, die zwei seien Juden.” (“Hey, those two are Jews.”) They were then apprehended by the Gestapo, put on a truck, and incarcerated. The brothers then spent the next nine months in Dachau and Buchenwald performing slave labor...

It had long been a mystery to Eric [Kisch] how his family managed to get the money to pay for this passage. The only way to be released was to show proof of passage out of the country. The problem was that Jewish assets were being confiscated, and this was the case for the Kisch family as well.

It was not until much later (in the 2000s), after Eric’s stepmother died, that he found a carbon copy of a letter that solved the mystery. On September 9, 1958, after having received his first reparations payment from the Austrian government, Walter sent this letter with accompanying check to a company in Amsterdam. Walter was making good on the money that had been advanced to his father, Alfred, to pay for the passage to Shanghai for Walter and Ernst. The proof of this passage had been the condition for their release from Buchenwald. In March 1939, Walter and Ernst embarked on their journey to China. Walter settled in Shanghai, and Ernst joined an American mission hospital in Shaanxi Province in Northwest China. Eric remembers his uncle, Dr. Ernst Kisch, as having been “a mysterious person, who would show up a couple of times a year wearing a tropical pith helmet and bringing a jar of fresh eggs or some sort of farm produce which we were completely starved of in Shanghai.”¹

In Shanghai Walter Kisch established a leather-goods retail store known as The Handbag in the French Concession. The store was designed by Walter’s cousin, Oscar Steiner. It was very upscale with lots of glass and mirrors and high-end merchandise on display.

In August 1939, Walter petitioned the Shanghai Municipal Council for permission to allow Grete and Eric to come to Shanghai despite a prohibition on the entry of more refugees. His request was denied.² Eventually, though, the influx of refugees resumed and Grete, Eric, and Grete’s mother, Anna Prossnitz (née Deutsch) made the long journey

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Jew-ish Outreach Planned by Israeli Ministry

By Noa Landau and Chaim Levinson

Excerpted from *Haaretz*, 27 March 2018

A committee appointed by Israel’s Diaspora Affairs minister says that there are some 60 million people around the world with an “affinity” to Judaism or Israel. The committee says that among them there are communities that could be brought to Israel and converted to Judaism. The committee’s recommendations call for reaching out to these communities and introducing them to content related to Israel and Judaism.

In response to the report, the ministry said that the committee’s recommendations have not yet been adopted and their goal is to strengthen ties with those who feel an affinity to Israel and not to push for mass conversions to Judaism.

The committee was set up in 2016 by the ministry to examine Israel’s policies towards the “large communities” that in recent years, according to the report, have asked for recognition from Israel, ties with the Jewish state, aid and even citizenship.

The committee handed in its recommendations to the government on Sunday, calling for formulating a plan to identify those who have certain links to Judaism but are not currently eligible for immigration under Israel’s Law of

Return, and introduce to their communities to the study of Judaism, Hebrew language and Jewish and Israeli culture, as well as creating a new framework for bringing appropriate individuals, groups and entire communities to Israel for conversion. The recommendations were partially revealed by *Haaretz* last year and the project would, if accepted by Israel’s government, kick off in 2019.

The committee’s report said Israel faces an “unprecedented strategic opportunity to bring these groups closer to the Jewish people through a clear program open to those interested in joining the Jewish people.”

However, the committee said, despite the “massive growth in [the aforementioned] communities and groups” over the past two decades, Israel is ill prepared to address to them and there is no official authority “investing significant resources or regularly dealing and researching” them.

The committee on “Israel’s ties with communities around the world with an affinity to the Jewish people” presented its report to the cabinet, which is set to discuss the recommendations at a later date.

The committee was established in 2016 by the Diaspora Affairs Ministry, which is headed by Education Minister Naftali Bennett, the chairman of the Habayit Hayehudi [Jewish Home] party. The committee’s goal was to recommend a policy to the government concerning the “large communities” that have asked Israel for rec-

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Important Notice to Readers About PE Archives

All readers of Points East may now access back issues of this journal as the result of a decision by its Managing Board.

To access the archives, go to the “Members’ Section” on the far right of our website homepage (www.sino-judaic.org) and click on “Archived Issues.” The username is “member” and the password is “Gabow”—in honor of the late Leo Gabow, SJl’s founding president.

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FROM THE EDITOR

In the course of my thirty plus years of affiliation with the Sino-Judaic Institute, I have met some amazing individuals, especially SJI's "founding fathers," some of whom sadly have died.

In this issue, we note the passing of two more giants in our field, although it is likely that readers will not have heard of either of them since neither was a scholar in the field of Sino-Judaica.

Rather, both were educator activists. One, Jerry Gotel, is considered by many to be the foreign originator of Jewish Studies in China (as opposed to Xu Xin being the indigenous founder of the field in China). The other, Stephen Freedman, was new to the field. As provost of Fordham University, he had just learned about the Kaifeng community and was exploring how Fordham's Beijing site might be able to assist in their education when he died suddenly of a heart attack. Their deaths, coupled with that of Chan Suijeung's, which was noted in a recent Points East, were untimely and their presences will be sorely missed. May their memories used by us for good.

Turning to another subject, I noted that Uganda's Jewish Abayudaya community marked a significant milestone when its first-ever Taglit-Birthright group visited Israel.

Taglit-Birthright is a nonprofit that offers free 10-day heritage trips to Israel for participants with at least one Jewish parent or who have converted to Judaism. The organization is funded by private philanthropists and Jewish organizations, and also receives about a quarter of its funds from the State of Israel. So why not, I wonder, shouldn't we try to arrange the same for some Kaifeng Jewish young people?

Anson Laytner

ATTENTION SJI MEMBERS

Dues will increase
beginning January 2019

Points East

Anson Laytner, Editor

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FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE

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<u>Country</u>	<u>Total</u>
United States	139
Canada	7
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England	8
Australia	4
Japan	2
Germany	2
South Africa	1
Taiwan	1
Total:	197

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sino-Judaic Institute,

I have researched and written about my Jewish family history in Singapore. My cover story in Asian Jewish Life attracted attention because I included a family portrait of Albert Einstein posing with my family at Menasseh Meyer's estate on his fund-raising tour for the Hebrew University.

A marvelous and unexpected result of the public attention has been to be connected with archival film footage I never knew existed. The British Huntley Archives has film footage of my family from 1931-2 on their Siglap Estate. Recently, I was referred to new footage of a boat leaving Singapore for Hong Kong. One title card reads "Repulse Bay with the Weills". I have been searching for the connection between the Weill family and my family. When I learned that Sophie Weill married Harry Odell, I wondered if perhaps Harry Odell is the filmmaker, since he founded a film company (and theater) in Hong Kong. The film is more professional than an amateur home movie.

So far, the two people we have possibly identified in the Hong Kong film from my family are: Lester Goodman and Ned (Nathaniel) Clumeck.

I am hoping to find descendants or friends of the Weill/Odell families or historians who have any insight into the film footage and/or possible connection to my Singapore family.

Below are the links to relevant HUNTLEY FILM ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE:

1. Boat trip to Repulse Bay, Hong Kong to visit the Weill family, 1930's: <http://www.huntleyarchives.com/film/6357>

2. Frankel/Clumeck family on their Siglap Estate, Singapore, 1931-2 (approx.): <http://www.huntleyarchives.com/film/97286>

3. Scenic footage of arrival in Singapore harbor, including "Lester Looking Warm" (possibly Lester Goodman), 1920's:

<http://www.huntleyarchives.com/film/97281>

Please email me directly with any leads: ginsburg10@gmail.com

Thanks so much.

Lisa Ginsburg

To the Editor:

In the July 2018 issue of Point East Jordan Paper has provided us a very provocative article concerning the Kaifeng Jews. There is much to ponder and dispute but here I hope others will rise to the challenge. I just want to point out numerous historical errors in the article.

The Jesuits did not "invent" Confucianism; an astonishing comment by one who identifies himself as a 'Sinophile.'

The "English" did not "designate the Dalai Lama ...to be the ruler of Tibet." The institution of Dalai Lamas began in the 15th century and was well established before the first Englishman arrived.

Tibet did not "conquer much of China" in the 8th century. They conquered the land north of Tibet (present day Qinghai and Xinjiang) but never got east of Chengdu or Xi'an.

The Tibetan Central Administration (not "government in exile") does not "claim most of China" but asserts that the boundaries of Tibet encompass the areas of ethnic Tibetan inhabitation meaning the Tibetan Autonomous Region, parts of western Sichuan, Qinghai and Gansu. Moreover this political entity is not "under the nominal rule of a Buddhist abbot." The Dalai Lama has retired from political activities and in more than 40 years of studying Tibet I have never heard him referred to as a Buddhist abbot.

Falun Gong never "tried to take over the government." In 1999, in response to critical coverage in the media and harassment by local officials, 10,000 practitioners demonstrated in Beijing to gain official acceptance, nothing more.

Sincerely,

A. Tom Grunfeld, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus
Tom.Grunfeld@esc.edu

Jordan Paper responds:

1. "The Jesuits translated san-jiao ("Three Teachings") as "Three Religions," thus creating a religion "Confucianism" as a translation of rujia (ideology of the civil service system) on a par with Buddhism and Daoism.

2. "Lama" is universally translated as "Abbot." Tibet was traditionally ruled by a king, not an abbot at a single monastery. Furthermore, the primary spiritual prestige went to the Panchen Lama, but the English in their desire to add Tibet to India when they controlled it and to resist the control of the Qing Empire sought to move that prestige to the Dalai Lama, and change Tibet from a kingdom to a theocracy. China still recognized the Panchen Lama as the superior Lama.

3. Perhaps you might wish to read a history of the Tibetan empire in the 8th-9th centuries, including the extent of the Chinese territory they temporarily held (maps displayed by the Free Tibet movement show a Tibet that includes much of China).

4. When the Falun Gong encircled the Chinese parliament building, as well as several provincial ones simultaneously, rather foolishly, they said no one could go in or out until they were given the govern-

ment – that did not make the government happy with them. At that time, their Chinese language website claimed that since their leader was God, appointed by aliens from outer space, he was the automatically the true ruler of China.

In The Field

• Dr. Shalom Salomon Wald

The prolific Dr. Shalom Salomon Wald, a Senior Fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPi) in Jerusalem, has had two articles published recently on Jews and China. One, entitled "Encounters Between Chinese and Jewish Civilizations," appeared in Education About Asia (vol. 23 no. 2, 2018) and the other, a review of James Ross and Song Lihong (eds.), The Image of Jews in Contemporary China, was published in Place in Modern Jewish Culture and Society: Studies in Contemporary Jewry, (vol. 30, 2018).

• Shanghai Refugee Exhibit in Baltimore

Dr. Bev Friend has alerted us to the fact that the Jewish Museum of Maryland in Baltimore, 15 Lloyd Street, Baltimore, MD 21202, will be getting a major exhibit from the Shanghai Refugee Museum to be displayed February 3 -11, 2019. The museum's website at <http://jewishmuseummd.org/> is full of information about interesting future programs.

• How Liberal Jews Celebrated Sukkot in Asia

Rabbi Nathan Alfred, who is based in Singapore, sent in this summary of how Sukkot was celebrated by World Union for Progressive Judaism communities across the Asian continent this year.

At the United Jewish Congregation in Hong Kong, their Sukkah frame survived the lashings of Typhoon Mangkhut, which swept through the city before Yom Kippur. Luckily there was no s'kach covering on top of the Sukkah at the time! With the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival coinciding with Sukkot, the paper lanterns decorating the sukkah served a dual purpose this year! For the last several years the Jewish Community of Japan has given Sukkot in Tokyo a local twist. Erev Sukkot saw their Sukkah full to bursting as congregants enjoyed a multi-course Japanese buffet dubbed "(More than) Sushi in the Sukkah". The children decorated the Sukkah with Japanese lanterns and colourful origami cranes, which they inscribed with the names of Ushpizin, guests that they would like to visit them in their Sukkah.

The United Hebrew Congregation in Singapore held a miniature-Sukkah building competition in their Religious School... Once again a Sukkah was built in the jungle amid great humidity, and for the first

time Shacharit prayers with a Torah reading were held in the Sukkah on the morning of the first day...

Kehilat Shanghai celebrated Sukkot with Tov! their new religious school that numbers thirty-six students spread over four age levels.

For photos see <https://wupj.org/news/2018/10/9902/sukkot-in-asia-5779/>
Rabbi Alfred also notes that from January 24-27 2019 there will be an Asia Progressive Judaism Summit in Singapore. See: <https://www.uhcsingapore.org/apjs Summit2019> for details.

Eric Kisch's Shanghai Story

(continued from page 1)

to Shanghai. On the way to Shanghai, they got a train from Vienna to Genoa. While staying in a hotel in Genoa as they waited for their voyage on the Conte Biancamano, Grete received a telegram from her uncle instructing her to visit a bookkeeper in the city, who would help her. Grete went to the man's address, knocked on the door, and said, "I am Grete Kisch, niece of Pepi Deutsch." The man let her in, directed her into another room, locked the door, got down on his knees, and told her that he loved her uncle and would help her; however, he implored her not to say anything to anyone about their meeting, for if it were to be found out he had helped Jews, he could be killed, and his family imprisoned. He then opened his wallet and gave her all he had. With this money, Grete, Eric, and Anna were able to subsist until their ship departed.

Grete's brother Ernst Prossnitz had made it from Austria to Australia. He was able to get permission for his mother to come as a dependent widow (given that her husband had recently died). So when Grete, Eric, and Anna arrived in Shanghai, Anna then traveled on to Melbourne, Australia via Japan. In Shanghai the Kisches lived in a comfortable apartment in the French Concession on the Rue Maresca. Grete helped Walter in the store, and the family was able to secure the services of an amah (a Chinese domestic) to look after the young Eric. Walter, Grete, and Eric were joined in Shanghai by Walter's aunt, Tante Lina,³ and her two daughters. The daughters had married two brothers, one of whom was Oscar Steiner, the man who designed Walter's store. Another of Walter's cousins had also made it to Shanghai with his wife. The family lived in comfort; however, Eric's parents started to experience marital strife. This was kept from the boy.

Life took a decided turn for the worse in 1943 when the occupying Japanese forces declared that all stateless refugees who had arrived after January 1, 1937 (meaning, in practical terms, the Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria, and Eastern Europe) had to move into the Hongkew section of Shanghai, which Eric describes as having been "the worst, bombed-

out slum of the city." After the proclamation, the stateless Jews—including Eric's family—were forced to give up their dwellings and businesses for pennies. Making matters worse, landlords in Hongkew set rents at exorbitantly high rates knowing full well that the Jews were now compelled to live there. The Handbag was no more, and the Kisches had to move from their comfortable apartment in the French Concession to a cramped, one-room apartment in the Designated Area. Here the family was joined by Tante Lina. Walter was unemployed, and the family depended on meals provided by a soup kitchen sponsored by the Joint Distribution Committee and started to sell their belongings. The Hongkew experience took a great psychological toll on Grete. Later, in Australia after the war and her divorce from Walter, Eric asked his mother why she always kept so much food in the house for just the two of them. Her answer: "After Shanghai I promised myself I would never go hungry again."

Eric attended an English-speaking school known as the Shanghai Jewish Youth School. This school had been founded by the Kadouries, one of the wealthy Sephardic Jewish families. Eric enjoyed his schooling in Shanghai. He did not participate in many activities outside of school, however, and took no interest in sports. He had a few friends but was somewhat reserved as a child...Like most other Shanghai refugees, he and his family had little to no interaction with the Chinese inhabitants of Shanghai and the Japanese occupation soldiers.

As the war progressed, his family increasingly had to go down into their cellar during air-raids. He explains that they would put a rucksack with their provisions on the dirt floor of the cellar. Eric would then lie on top of the rucksack, Grete would lie on top of Eric, and Walter would lie on top of both Grete and Eric. Eric remembers after these raids, he would go out and collect shrapnel. He remembers well the time the Americans accidentally bombed the Designated Area on July 17, 1945. One of Eric's friends had been playing on a balcony in an apartment building, when his mother came and took him down to the cellar. Their apartment was right next to where the bombs hit. When they went back up to their apartment after the raid was over, they saw the balcony littered with shrapnel; had the mother not fetched her son, he would have been "ripped to shreds." Walter was part of the first-aid brigade and helped out after the bombing. Eric explains that his father had served during the First World War, so "he was probably not too much of a stranger to this sort of carnage." Within a month of that awful raid, the Americans dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Japanese surrendered. Eric remembers much jubilation in the streets and a quick disappearance of Japanese soldiers from Shanghai. In the year that his family stayed in Shanghai after the war, two memories stick out in Eric's mind: The first is his having unknowingly served as a "pimp" for American sailors by leading them to night-

clubs for coins. He remembers while celebrating his twenty-first birthday in Australia, his mother asking him, "Eric, did you ever notice that always the doors were opened by women?" It then dawned on him that his services on behalf of the gleeful Americans had been somewhat less than pure. The second memory is his finding discarded crates of oranges in the docks near the American ships. Most of the oranges were rotten, but Eric sifted through them, "rustled up a rickshaw, loaded it up with as many crates as would fit with me on board and went home back to Hongkew. And [...] that was the first time we had ever seen fresh fruit. [...] And to me, to this day, Sunkist is a holy brand!"

The Kisch family had never viewed Shanghai as a permanent home; they wanted out as soon as possible. A return to Austria was out of the question. Eric explains, "Shortly after the war ended, the full extent of the devastation of the Holocaust began to be revealed. And the death camps and the millions killed, and families that just literally disappeared off the face of the earth." Given that Grete's brother Ernst and other family members were already in Australia, the Kisch family decided to go to Australia. Ernst sponsored the family, and since the Australian government was opening up the country to immigrants, the migration process was fairly easy. The family left Shanghai in July 1946 on the U.S. troop transporter the General Gordon to Hong Kong, where they waited until late November 1946. They then flew from Hong Kong to Singapore (with a stop in Bangkok) on a DC3 and then from Singapore to Sydney, Australia, on a Sunderland Flying Boat. They eventually arrived in Melbourne on November 26, 1946.

The Shanghai experience was not something that Eric and his family spoke much about in Australia. In the 1960s Eric moved to the United States in order to attend graduate school at Columbia University. As Eric pursued his studies and then his career as a market researcher, Shanghai did not factor largely in his mind. In fact, the Shanghai past did not really start to grab hold of Eric until the deaths of his parents: Walter in 1983 and Grete in 1993. After their deaths, Eric received documents and photographs pertaining to their lives. These documents lay dormant in the Kisch basement until Eric was asked by his cousin, Alice, in 2001 if he would speak about his experiences to a Children of the Shoah group in Melbourne. It was at this time that Eric's wife, Sue, went down to the basement, brought up the bins with the documents and said, "Now's the time to go through them." As Eric started to go through the documents, he read an account that Grete wrote about her time in Shanghai. Alongside this brief memoir were photographs and the telegram Grete had received from her uncle about going to see the man in Genoa, who proceeded to give her all the money from his wallet. This telegram inspired Eric to start his quest to find documents to "validate his memories" of Shanghai. Given that he had been so young while his family lived in Shanghai,

most of his “memories” are collections of stories that had been told to him while he was growing up in Australia after the Shanghai experience. It has become very important for him to “validate” these memories with historical documents and spread awareness of this history to others. He now characterizes this quest as an “obsession”...

As Eric has been inspecting documents and lecturing on the history of the Shanghai Jews, he has been confronted with the meaning of that history. History, after all, is not about memorizing dates and events, but rather finding meaning within them. Eric thinks the history of the Shanghai Jews has a meaning, the knowledge of which will enrich anyone who learns about it. He believes “it is a very worthwhile story to tell people, even though it’s from the perspective of just our family. [...] It is an amazing story [...] of survival for a huge number of people, and it’s one that has influenced me personally, and if I can make [others] feel some degree of empathy to what went on there and get [others] on a journey of study and learning, then it is worthwhile.” To Eric the meaning of the Shanghai history starts simply with the acknowledgement that it happened. He points out that not many people know that approximately 20,000 Jews found haven in Shanghai when the rest of the world closed its doors to them. Eric believes it is important to remind people that he and others actually survived. The destruction of the Holocaust is important to remember but so too is the survival from it. Although Eric is not a particularly observant Jew, he still holds Passover, the festival of freedom, very dear. He explains, “I won’t eat bread [during Passover], not for liturgical or theological reasons, but somehow as a symbol that we survived this horrendous time, and [to] never forget that we were fortunate enough to do that.” The memory of Eric’s Shanghai past finds symbolic expression every year in the matzo he consumes.

For Eric, the lessons of the past should inform one’s actions in the present. Specifically, the history of Shanghai Jews should be broached in current discussions about immigrants and refugees. Eric sees clear parallels between his family’s refugee history and the anti-immigrant and anti-refugee rhetoric of today. For this reason he feels he has “a duty to speak out”: “The details I have gained by studying [this history] I feel have enriched my life and my understanding of this past. [...] It has made me very mindful of what’s going on [today]. [For] once a refugee you see them everywhere. And my heart bleeds for all of them”...

Notes

1. After his years as a mission doctor in China, Ernst went briefly to the United States. Feeling disrespected in New York, where his medical credentials were not readily transferable, Ernst signed up to work for an American mission hospital in Kaesong, South Korea, in June 1950. Three weeks after he arrived, the North Koreans invaded and he was captured. After having saved many lives of his fellow prisoners, he died of malnutrition in captivity.

2. The correspondence regarding Walter’s unsuccessful attempt in August 1939 is to be found on the fourth microfilm reel of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, RG-62.001M, “Selected Records of the Shanghai Municipal Archives, 1930-1947.”

3. Tante Lina Winkler was the sister of Walter’s mother, Emma.

Professor Kevin Ostoyich served as a Visiting Fellow at AICGS in Summer 2017. He is chair of the Department of History at Valparaiso University (Valparaiso, IN). His research on the history of the Shanghai Jews is being sponsored by a research grant of the Sino-Judaic Institute and the Wheat Ridge Ministries – O.P. Kretzmann Memorial Fund Grant of Valparaiso University.

A Comment on Prof. Jordan Paper’s Article “Is Anti-Judaism Behind the Present Difficulties of the Kaifeng Jews?”

By Shalom Salomon Wald

Prof. Paper shows, not for the first time, that it is misleading to look with Western eyes at the current “difficulties” of the Kaifeng Jewish descendants (a euphemism for the official suppression and prohibition of their largely foreign-imported Jewish beliefs and rituals). It is absolutely wrong to look for anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic motives in China, as some activists have done in Israeli and other media. There was and is no anti-Judaism in China, on the contrary there is sympathy and respect for the thousands of foreign Jews who visit China as well as the Chabad rabbis who look after them (and who, by the way, always refused to have any contact with the Kaifeng descendants). There is also a vibrant interest in Jewish and Israeli history and culture in Chinese universities, as Dr. Hochstadt rightly reports in his “Summary of the Special SJI Management Board Meeting” in the same edition of Points East. I have experienced this myself more than once when I visited China as a Board member of the Israeli NGO SIGNAL- Sino-Israeli Global Network and Academic Leadership. Prof. Paper’s explanations of the so-called “difficulties” demonstrate his vast knowledge of Chinese history, culture, politics and patterns of thought – few Jewish experts can compete with him. He suggests that Chinese officials may be open to hear foreign Jewish explanations of the Kaifeng Jewish experience. He also hopes that Israel might quietly put a good word in for the Kaifeng descendants. It is unlikely that Israel will do anything of the sort. China is entering the Middle East in giant steps. It wants to play a role in the Israeli-Palestinian conundrum but a few days ago was reported to have offered military aid to Syria’s Assad

and it gives political, economic and security support to Iran that publicly threatens Israel every week with destruction. China will have to cope with conflicting objectives, like all great powers. It is crucial for Israel to be heard in Beijing. Its Chinese agenda is loaded. It would not be wise to add Kaifeng to this agenda.

One of Prof. Paper’s comments touched me, and another one annoyed me. He explains how the wide-spread hostility to Jews that he experienced in his younger years in the United States opened his eyes to China. He learned that such hostility could not be found in China. This is exactly what happened to me. I am a Holocaust survivor and understood already as a small boy that the Chinese never did to us what Europe had done. Paper’s and my attachment to China are rooted in the same emotions.

And what annoyed me? I quote: “I refuse to use the term ‘anti-Semitism’ because in Israel the Ashkenazim call the Palestinians anti-Semitic, while the Ashkenazim are not Semites, but the Palestinians are, hence ...the term nowadays defies logic”. What a jumble of misunderstandings! First, the term “anti-Semitism” has a clear definition agreed by the United Nations and adopted by more than twenty member countries. It means hate and defamation of Judaism, Jews and the Jewish state. It targets only Jews and nobody else. It applies double-standards to Jews and nobody else. The term does not “defy logic”, on the contrary. Second, “THE Ashkenazim” (Prof. Paper’s black sheep in some of his writings) and “THE Palestinians”? The Israeli government, composed of both Ashkenazim and Sefardim (or better Mizrahim) sharply criticized recent statements of the Palestinian President which were openly anti-Semitic. The United States condemned them with equal vigor and called them anti-Semitic. Palestinian media and schoolbooks make not only anti-Israeli but crass anti-Semitic comments, not always, but repeatedly. This is beyond dispute. The translations of Palestinian texts distributed by MEMRI make it abundantly clear. But I also know Palestinians who are not anti-Jewish and do not belittle the Holocaust. It is the generalization, the double “THE” in Prof. Paper’s text that makes one feel uncomfortable. Then Prof. Paper opens a Pandora’s Box: “Ashkenazim are not Semites”. He resuscitates the old story – call it calumny, phantasy, hoax – that European Jews are not offspring of the Jews of Judea but of a long forgotten Turkic speaking tribe roaming the steppes of South-West Asia, the Khazars. Jehudah Ha-Levi

mentioned the legend in the 12th century, Arthur Koestler repeated it in 1976 and the anti-Zionist leftist Shlomo Sand spread it widely in his 2008 book *When the Jewish People was Invented*. Each of the three had a different ideological motivation. What are the facts? During the last decade, more than a hundred recognized scientists from different countries invested a great amount of scientific research to clarify the genetic origin of the Jewish people. Except for one maverick scientist, there is universal agreement among scientists that the Khazar story is nonsense. The main scientific research media, e.g. the *American Journal of Human Genetics* and *Nature* have published these peer-reviewed results. Most of the mainstream Jews, Ashkenazim like Sefardim, are genetically related and of Near Eastern origin. Conversions to Judaism have taken place during most of Jewish history. This is genetically visible, but the South-West Asian Khazars were not involved. Alas, this has not put the myth to rest. Shlomo Sand, translated into Arabic among many other foreign languages, is a hero all over the Muslim world. Visitors can hear the slander wherever Muslims reside: Israel is illegitimate because the Israelis did not originate in their land, they are of European stock. The myth has turned into a political weapon. Serious Jewish scholars should be most careful not to spread it. A last comment about Prof. Paper's "the Palestinians are (Semites)". Yes, they speak Arabic, one of the three still living Semitic languages. The other two are Hebrew and Amharic (Ethiopian). But language and ethnic origin are not the same. Whereas "anti-Semitic" has a clear definition, see above, "semitic" should be used only as a linguistic term. Outside linguistics the term is not only woolly but treacherous. It brings back the Nazi's racist ideology.

Dr. Shalom Salomon Wald is Senior Fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute in Jerusalem. He works on the history of Jewish Civilization and the links between the Jewish People/Israel and China and India.

Dr. Paper responds:

Dr. Wald prefers that the word "Semitic" be limited to its linguistic usage; accordingly, it should be noted that Yiddish and Ladino are not Semitic languages.

Jew-ish Outreach Planned

(continued from page 1)

ognition, aid, and sometimes even citizenship...

According to the report, these groups include descendants of Jews who are ineligible for the Law of Return, such as Jewish converts; communities who claim to be Jewish but still need to undergo conversion such as the Falash Mura (Beta Israel) from Ethiopia or the Bnei Menashe from India; descendants of forced converts in Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, South America and the southwestern U.S.; descendants of Eastern Europeans who hid their faith under communist regimes; communities in Africa and Asia that claim a more distant connection to the Jewish people; and groups around the world with "a desire for an ideological and spiritual affinity."

As part of the attempts to estimate the number of people who could possibly be involved, the committee sketched out five "circles of affinity." The first group is the Jewish "core" with over 14 million people who are commonly recognized as Jews.

The second group is comprised of nine million people who qualifying for Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return, including their family members. The third group includes the more than five million people who can be considered "distant relatives" of Jews.

The fourth group includes some 35 million people who have "declared their affinity to the Jewish people," such as the descendants of communities that were forced to abandon their Judaism. The fifth and last group is the largest, about 60 million people, described as having "future potential" as "descendants of Jews, descendants of forced converts, and additional communities with an affinity to the Jewish people but are not currently declaring so or are unaware of it."

The committee recommended establishing a special unit in the Diaspora Ministry that later become a government authority and a national research institute to gather information on the communities and establish contact with them. As a first step, the unit would focus in the next two years on a pilot program among the communities of descendants of forced converts, which is the largest group with an affinity, according to the report...

In the medium term, from 2019 through 2021, the committee recommends the Diaspora Ministry open channels for "dialogue and discussion" in Israel and overseas concerning the "dramatic importance of the growing reality in which the circles of the Jewish people include more and more of those who are not Jews or entitled to [become Israeli citizens under] the Law of Return."

The report further recommended establishing a government website to digitize the information, including the possibility of

genealogical databases, and to distribute information on Judaism, Israel and the Hebrew language. They would also offer the possibility of visits to Israel and studying here, as well as information on Israeli law and regulations – as well as the possibility of conversion to Judaism through the official conversion system.

The Diaspora Ministry should also encourage academic research on the matter along with training the communal leadership of the groups, the committee said. In addition, the communal leaders should be brought to visit Israel and be offered academic courses and full degree programs. Participation in programs such as Birthright or the Jewish Agency's Masa program would be considered for the groups, or perhaps the establishment of a new program designed specifically for such groups – a sort of Birthright for the descendants of forced converts.

In the long term, starting in 2022, the committee recommended that the government train specific employees in all Israeli diplomatic missions around the world to be responsible for the ties with these communities. In addition, the Population and Immigration Authority in the Interior Ministry would have to be brought into the picture to arrange special entry permits and visas for these communities to visit Israel, and study and work here.

In response to the report, a statement said that..."The committee found that there is an unprecedented opportunity to build cooperation with these communities and thus to turn them into a strategic asset for the Jewish people and for Israel in the international community. The committee does not at all recommend working for the conversion or immigration of these communities. The Diaspora Ministry has received the report and initiated a government discussion to consider the committee's recommendations."

BOOK NOOK

Review of *A History of the Kaifeng Israelites: Encounters with Israelites in Chinese Literature* by Tiberiu Weisz (Outskirts Press 2018)

Reviewed by Quentin Brand

Reprinted from *Kyoto Journal* 92

This intriguing monograph tells the story of the Kaifeng Israelites whose origin has been shrouded in mystery and a matter of some controversy since they first appeared under Western eyes when Matteo Ricci met one of them in Beijing in 1605. Their history was recorded in four stone stelae, first translated by Bishop White, an Anglican missionary working in China, in 1924. Ac-

cording to White and the bulk of scholarly opinion since then, the Kaifeng Israelites had existed in China since some time in the Northern Song Dynasty (960 – 1127CE).

Weisz contends that contact between the Hebrews and the Chinese started probably sometime around 980BCE. If this is true, Israelite presence would have left traces in the historical records kept by the Chinese since their earliest dynasties. Where other commentators, both Chinese and Western, ancient and contemporary, have failed to find such traces, Weisz claims to have found records of very early interaction between the two civilisations. Here he takes us through the evidence, from the very earliest *shī jīng* (Book of Poetry) to the stelae themselves.

Part of the problem, he asserts, is that ancient Chinese historians and commentators had no characters with which to describe the Israelites, and furthermore, that where such traces of the Israelites' presence did exist, they have been hidden by mistranslations and misconceptions, and, crucially, in linguistic changes occurring throughout China's long history. Weisz offers new translations of hitherto largely ignored, misunderstood or mistranslated characters in the literature, in particular the character *yóu*, and the collocation *zhui ji*, and new interpretations of the literature based on those translations.

The character *yóu* in classical Chinese means something like 'as', 'like' 'similar to', and the combination *yóu rén* was frequently (mis)understood as meaning 'like this person', 'like this man'. Weisz contends that this character stood for the Jewish religion, and that the combination actually means 'Jew'. He traces it through several canonical works of Chinese historiography and literature, carefully unpacking the real meaning from the accumulation of misreadings. The collocation *zhui ji* appears in the *shū jīng* (Book of Documents), where it is used to describe a "strange headdress" worn by a people beyond the far Western reaches of the Chinese Empire. Weisz asserts that this is in fact either a description of the *payot*, the earlocks worn by Orthodox Jews, or the *mitznet*, the turban worn by the Jewish high priest when serving in the Tabernacle. However, when the Book of Documents was rendered into simplified characters in the 1950s, these rather obscure characters were changed to the more well-known *duō xū*, which are close synonyms in Chinese, but which more accurately means "lots of whiskers." Subsequent scholars working from modern editions of the Classics have therefore missed these references to the Israelites. "This simple substitution greatly

impacted the story of the Kaifeng Israelites. It altered the meaning of the text, changed the historical context and more worrisome, erased the identification of the tribe," writes Weisz. Weisz lays out his theory with meticulous readings of classical Chinese texts in the light of Jewish culture, displaying the most awesome erudition and deep understanding of Chinese culture as he does so. In this he is extending his earlier work on new translations of the Kaifeng stela (2006) and a comparative study of Chinese and Hebrew cultures (2008).

The problem, as I see it, is a certain circularity in his argument. The character *yóu* quite uncontroversially stands for "Jew" or "Jewish" in modern Chinese. Lin Yu Tang in his dictionary of 1972 assigns this meaning to the character, and it has this meaning in the vernacular. Weisz finds the evidence because he is looking for it, but there are dangers inherent in reading our present knowledge into the past. Likewise, Weisz's method of cultural comparison might be regarded by some as an illuminating practice but by others as the worst kind of Orientalism. When he implies that Laozi's famous description in chapter 80 of the *dào dé jīng* of the ideal kingdom could be a description of the Kingdom of Israel during the time of King Solomon; and that Laozi must have "incorporated several of Solomon's sayings in his writings" because he is known to have journeyed to the West and may conceivably have encountered Jews there (ignoring the facts that the *dào dé jīng* is believed to have been composed before Laozi's legendary journey and that Laozi himself is an entirely mythical figure), one feels that Weisz's enthusiasm for his theory has got the better of his caution as a historian.

Weisz's book is nonetheless fascinating, especially for students of Classical Chinese, for readers interested in Jewish or Chinese culture, and for anyone with an interest in preserving cultural identity when living for an extended period in an alien culture.

Quentin Brand lives and teaches in Taiwan

Interview with Vera

Schwarzc, author of *In The Crook of The Rock: Jewish Refuge in a World Gone Mad* (Academic Studies Press 2018)

Reprinted from the *Academic Studies Press*, www.academicstudiespress.com.

Our latest interview is with Vera Schwarzc, author of *In the Crook of the Rock: Jewish Refuge in a World Gone Mad — The Chaya Leah Walkin Story*, and vice-president of the Sino-Judaic Institute. Vera Schwarzc was born in Romania and became an historian of China and a poet in the United States. For the past four decades she taught

at Wesleyan University and Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her work was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship, a Fulbright Fellowship, a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and a Lady Davis Fellowship. Schwarzc is the author of nine books about Chinese and Jewish history, including *Bridge Across Broken Time: Chinese and Jewish Cultural Memory* (Yale University Press, 1989), which was nominated for the National Jewish Book Award, and *Colors of Veracity: A Quest for Truth in China and Beyond* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2014). She has also written six books of poetry, including most recently *The Physics of Wrinkle Formation* (Antrim House, 2015). For more information about her work, visit between2walls.com.

Focusing upon the life of Chaya Walkin—one little girl from a distinguished Torah lineage in Poland—this book illustrates the inner resources of the refugee community that made possible survival with dignity. Based on a wide variety of sources and languages, this book is crafted around the voice of a child who was five years old when she was forced to flee her home in Poland and start the terrifying journey to Vilna, Kobe, and Shanghai. The Song of Songs is used to provide an unexpected and poetic angle of vision upon strategies for creating meaning in times of historical trauma.

Academic Studies Press: When you started this project with Chaya Leah Walkin, you hadn't originally intended to write the book *In the Crook of the Rock*. What made you decide to give additional historical context to Chaya Leah's memories and insights?

Vera Schwarzc: I consider myself a historian with a moral mission: I try to recreate not only what happened in the past, but I also seek to evoke the complexity of history's "living flavor." I have done this again and again in writing about Chinese intellectuals who had been victims of Mao's Cultural Revolution. Chaya Leah's memories had an additional magnetic pull on my moral imagination: As a daughter of Holocaust survivors, I had to attend to her uniquely vivid voice. Each voice matters as the ranks of survivors diminish daily.

To bring that voice to life was a tough narrative challenge which pulled me forward and helped to craft a consciously different angle of vision upon the Shoah, upon China's trials in the 20th century, upon Japan's political machinations, upon the way American Jews responded to survivors coming onto these shores after the war. I had to dig beneath conventional

historiographies to see the ravages of war and dislocation through a child's eyes. This perspective, in turn, reshaped my understanding of a world gone mad in the 20th century...a world which still colors our perceptions today.

ASP: One of the major questions of this book is whether we learn from history. Considering the refugee crises happening worldwide today, what can we learn from Chaya Leah's refugee story?

VS: Two years ago, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announced that the number of asylum-seekers and displaced persons around the world topped 60 million. That figure continues to grow in a frightening manner. Chaya Leah's refugee story has much to add to the global conversation about how to "help" these people in dire need. She experienced the terrors of this predicament from within, as a child cast from country to country starting at the tender age of 5. This book portrays the dread of the refugees as well as the extraordinary inner resources that enabled them to survive with enhanced dignity.

As world leaders wring their hands about what to do for displaced persons, Chaya Leah's story reveals how much creativity, unity, faith and resourcefulness was actually unearthed from within the refugee community during the worst years of the war. There may be more to be learned from refugees than we ever imagined possible. Chaya Leah and her family did more to help others during the Shoah and after than portrayals of helpless refugees would have us believe. The history of Jewish refugees in China and Japan as I wrote it shows us both the pain of displaced persons as well as their towering courage and love of life that triumphed under harsh circumstances. This is why chose the title for this book: In the Crook of the Rock—because being a refugee means being in a hard, hard place. Yet, it is in the crook of the rock that the tender dove finds shelter, there she sings her sweetest song.

ASP: In writing this book, it seems you use your background in East Asian languages and history not just to provide historical context—you also borrow Chinese terms, often in comparison with Yiddish terms, to express concepts that don't always have exact English translations. Likewise, poetry is another conduit for expression in this book. Considering all these elements, can you speak about the use of language to express trauma and experience? What are its capacities and its limits?

VS: How much trauma words can contain and express has been a much-debated subject both before and after the Holocaust. By navigating disparate linguistic universes (both when I grew up in Romania and later as a China historian), I have found a wealth of expressions for grief and joy that are unique to each culture. For example, "endurance" is an especially suggestive ideograph in Chinese: (ren)—depicts a knife over the human heart. Chaya Leah did not know this character but lived its connotations in a way that even Chinese readers can identify with today.

VS: My goal is to challenge the reader's imagination and thought by using a varied lexicon for the deepest, ineffable human emotions. When we are jarred out of our conventional vocabulary we come closer to both history and poetry. The sparse, carefully sifted language of poetry often contains more information about historical trauma than volumes of academic scholarship. It is my hope that the poetic language used in my book brings readers gently and deeply into the inner world of refugees and survivors.

ASP: More specifically, can you speak about your inclusion of poetry from Jewish writers and refugees, and from the Song of Songs, in this book?

VS: Poetry has been a passion and an avocation for me for several decades. Yet its inclusion in this book is more than an act of personal pleasure. I want the reader to hear and see the unexpected aspects of the past and present alike.

Who would have imagined a book about the trauma of war and dislocation to be woven together by the words of the most ancient love song in the Bible? King Solomon's "Song of Songs" depicts the unabashed courting of a man and a woman—which the rabbinical commentators also envisage as a tapestry for the complex bond of affection between the Jewish people and their Creator. No matter what reading you take, the words soar with an affirmation of life, while nodding eloquently toward fear as well.

VS: These verses allowed me to surprise myself and my readers and to open up an unexpected window onto the creativity, scholarship and even eros that colored the life of Jewish refugees in Japan, in China and even after the war. Art and poetry have a unique power to take apart and re-compose our view history. This is a totally surprising lesson I learned from Chaya Leah and from the pointillist painter George Seurat.

An Interview with Chabad Shlucha (Emissary) Dina Greenberg

By Molly Resnick

Excerpted from the *JewishPress.com*, 4 July 2018

Lubavitch shluchim (emissaries) move to all sorts of exotic places in their effort to ignite Jewish souls around the globe...To learn what it's like teaching Judaism in the most populous city in the world (24 million people), The Jewish Press recently spoke with Dina Greenberg. Greenberg—the daughter of shluchim and the sibling of nine others—runs the Shanghai Jewish Center alongside her husband.

The Jewish Press: How does a girl raised in Cleveland, Ohio, wind up in Shanghai, China?

Greenberg: In 1998, shortly after I got married, my husband brought home a report from Chabad headquarters, where he was working, that stated that the Jewish community in Shanghai was requesting a permanent Chabad presence. Very nonchalantly, he showed it to me and asked, "What do you think?"

I said to him, "You're kidding, right? There are Jews in China?" There were several other shlichus (emissary) options available to us, but this one was the most intriguing.

How does a frum (observant) couple move to a place that, at least initially, has no daily minyan, no mikveh, no Jewish schools, etc.?

The [Lubavitcher] Rebbe taught us, "Be'makom sh'ein ish, hishtadel liyov ish." (In a place where no one is behaving properly, strive to behave properly.) He wanted us to make sure that Judaism is thriving in every corner of the globe and demanded that each of us share our knowledge with others.

He also often mentioned that [sharing Jewish knowledge] is not just the job of Chabad; it's required as part of the mitzvah of ahavas Yisrael (love of the Jewish people). Every Jew should try to influence his surroundings positively wherever he or she may be, bringing the light of Yiddishkeit (East European Jewish culture) to that place and thereby bring our world closer to the ultimate goal, which is Moshiach (the Messiah).

What kind of Jews do you service in Shanghai?

There are over 2,000 Jews living in

Shanghai. It's a very international and transient community. We service consular personnel, professors, students (we have an NYU in Shanghai), businessmen, executives of large companies, startups... We really have the whole gamut. And by now we have three Chabad centers in Shanghai.

Each one has its own infrastructure, but we all work together. We each have between 50 to 100 people every Friday night, and on Yamim Tovim (festivals) we have triple that amount – at least 150. On Pesach and Rosh Hashanah, we prepare for 600.

What do you do for kosher food? How about chalav Yisrael (strictly kosher) milk?

Our motto is, "If you don't have it, find a way to get it or make it." Our children learn to be happy with whatever we can improvise.

We bring in a shochet (kosher butcher) for the chickens, and for meat, we import from Uruguay.

We don't have chalav Yisrael products since there isn't sufficient demand for it. But we make soy yogurt – which is delicious – and we have almond milk. Chabad of Beijing once made a chalav Yisrael milk run, so that was a tremendous simcha (joy), but it only lasted a short while.

How do you manage your children's chinuch (education)?

We actually have a full-time gan (kindergarten) that goes till 1st grade. The numbers range from 20-50 children depending on the number of families we have in a particular year.

After graduating the gan, our children go to a special school online for shlichim's children who live in far-off places. They sit before a computer, in a live classroom, for about six hours a day.

The students actually become very connected to each other because everyone is in a similar situation – no Jewish school, no Jewish friends in the area, etc. – and they share with each other things that are going on in their Chabad Houses during recess.

Our children's ages range from 19 to one-and-a-half, and the four high-schoolers are already away from home, k"h, learning abroad in England, Israel, and the U.S.

Weren't you concerned before moving to China that you wouldn't be able to

raise frum (observant) children?

So this is where our fundamental strength comes from. We sincerely believe that, as the Rebbe's shlichim, we have the Rebbe's beracha (blessing) for all our needs, and that includes succeeding in raising our children in a Yiddishe and Chassidishe environment, even in Shanghai.

Actually, our children are, baruch Hashem (thank God), very strong in their Yiddishkeit. Because they live on shlichus, they have the opportunity to overhear answers to questions they might not feel comfortable asking. They hear discussions about Yiddishkeit, emunah (faith), Moshiach, mitzvos (commandments), and they have the answers right in front of their eyes just by virtue of being on shlichus.

One day in Hebrew school the subject of belief in G-d came up, and our nine-year-old actually started explaining to children her own age that Hashem created the world and that each one of us has a special mission in this world. It was a truly a beautiful moment!

Do your kids speak Chinese? Do you? If yes, how do family members and friends react to hearing you speak the language?

We all speak Chinese – or at least enough to get by – and everyone gets a kick out of hearing us speak it. They're always asking our kids to say different words in Chinese, and the best part is that we have our own secret language.

The truth is, though, that our main language doesn't have to be Chinese because we are servicing an international community and the primary languages are English, Hebrew, and even French, believe it or not.

I've heard that many Chinese people touch your children's head when they walk down the street because they've never seen curly or red hair before. Is that true?

We definitely stick out! When we stop to watch people doing an activity like Tai Chi, for example, very quickly everybody turns around and watches us!

For centuries there was a Chinese Jewish community in Kaifeng. Have you ever come across descendants of this community? Are there any remnants of it?

Today there are only descendants of Kaifeng Jews who have some vague distant memories that they have Jewish

ancestry. I don't know how many and I've never met any of them. Kaifeng is far from Shanghai. Unfortunately, there's no real Jewish presence in Kaifeng anymore. They've completely assimilated.

China is a communist country and communism historically has not been friendly to religion. Is the government okay with Chabad operating in Shanghai?

The state recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam. The practice of any other faith is formally prohibited but tolerated. So they allow foreigners to practice their religion privately, and we are very careful to respect their policies of not proselytizing or missionizing. Only people with foreign passports can attend our functions.

We once met a young Chinese girl who had a Jewish boss and became very interested in Yiddishkeit. She very much wanted to attend our functions but [we couldn't let her] because she was Chinese. Eventually, though, she went to Israel, became a ger tzedek (convert), married an Israeli, and had two children. They all ended up spending a wonderful Shabbos with us in China – totally legally – as they all had foreign passports by that time.

As a shlucha in Shanghai you must have some highly unusual stories. Can you please share one or two?

When we first arrived in Shanghai in the summer of 1998, we informed all the hotels, consulates and stores that catered to foreigners about our upcoming High Holiday events. I guess we were a somewhat "too visible" because the government became suspicious, and one day the inevitable happened. We heard a knock at the door.

We had built a sukkah on the 29th floor of our building complex, and the government demanded to know: How dare we build an illegal house of worship. My husband replied, "As a sign of good faith, we will immediately take the structure down." Baruch Hashem, it was the day after Simchas Torah (a Jewish holiday right after Sukkot) [and thus was no longer needed--Ed.]

But a beautiful relationship began between us and the government. We respect their wishes and operate according to their rules and, in turn, they help us function the best way we can under the circumstances.

Any other interesting stories?

Well, we speak Chinese, but people don't always understand what we mean. For example, one Pesach we finished making the chicken soup and were putting up rolls of gefilte fish to cook. We asked the kitchen help to take the pot off the fire and let it cool.

I must have turned away for a second because the next thing I know the Chinese worker is telling me proudly that he took care of my soup. "To save space, I even combined both of them together!" he said.

So into the chicken soup had gone the gefilte fish and into the garbage went both! Things like that do happen and we have to take a deep breath, smile, laugh it off, and move on.

Any inspirational stories?

Well, when we first arrived, people were worried that we were going to try to turn them into people that look and act like us. So I felt that maybe we should go easy, at least in the beginning. So I decided for my ladies "Lunch and Learn" program, I would not address subjects they were worried about, specifically taharas hamishpacha (family purity practices).

So I spoke about candle lighting, chalah, yamim tovim... everything except mikveh (ritual bath). I said to myself, "If these ladies stick with me the entire year and see we are teaching out of love and not trying to force them to do anything they don't want to, I'm sure during the last class they'll be ready to hear about the special beauty of mikveh."

So that's what I did. But when I finally raised the topic at that last class, a woman suddenly started crying. "Oh no, what have I done?" I thought. "Maybe they weren't ready, after all."

When I looked at the woman, she blurted out, "How dare you?" At that point, I was ready to go under the table, but she continued: "How dare you keep this treasure to yourself all year? Why didn't you tell us about it? And why didn't anyone tell me before I got married? Do you know how many years our relationship could have been enhanced had I known? How I could have connected to Hashem?"

From then on, every single year we have a "spa for the soul" celebrating the mitzvos of the Jewish woman – specifically mikveh.

What would you say is your biggest challenge as a shlucha in Shanghai?

...One of the greatest is constantly cov-

ering our growing budget. Every Chabad center is independent, so we have to fundraise to cover the costs of our extensive activities. Baruch Hashem, we are very grateful to the wonderful partners that Hashem constantly sends our way.

Another challenge is being far from family. I think the hardest thing for my children is missing out on family simchos (celebrations), bar and bas mitzvahs, weddings, etc. but baruch Hashem with the advent of Skype we're able to tune into them virtually, and we try to make it as exciting as we can.

Any regrets at having moved to Shanghai?

Absolutely not! Baruch Hashem, we can see the blessings of being on the Rebbe's shlichus every day and we look forward to continue growing so we can finish our mission and end up in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) with Moshiach (the Messiah).

**Visit the
Sino-Judaic Website
www.sino-judaic.org
to read detailed histories
of Jewish life in China,
learn about Jewish Studies
programs in China, access
back issues of Points East
and Sino-Judaica
and more.**

Growing Up Rich, Jewish and Shanghainese

By Max Sullivan

Excerpted from The Sundial, <http://sundial.csun.edu/2017/11/author-shares-her-life-as-a-jewish-girl-in-shanghai/>, Nov 13, 2017

Esther Shifren lived the opulent life of a young Jewish girl. Her father owned six horses and her home contained 24 bedrooms. That abruptly ended during World War II when a foreign army rounded up her community.

Shifren shared her story of growing up as a fifth generation Jew in Shanghai, China to an audience of a "Women in the Jew-

ish Experience" class in Jerome Richfield Hall Wednesday morning.

Shifren's great great grandfather shipped silk, cotton, and opium to China from India in the 1800s. He moved to Shanghai in 1841 when it became an international enclave with no visa requirements as part of China's concessions after being defeated in the First Opium War by Great Britain and sparked China's century of humiliation.

"My father always told me that we were the first Jewish family in Shanghai in that era," Shifren told the audience. "In the 8th and 9th century there were Jews from Persia who traveled on the Silk Route... and Kaifeng became a thriving Jewish center and the Chinese welcomed the Jewish people who eventually assimilated and there are still Jews in Kaifeng today"...

A century later, China's humiliation climaxed when Japan occupied the country in the Second Sino-Japanese War that began in 1937. When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, the Japanese war expanded to include the United States and the allied powers in Europe.

The day after Pearl Harbor the Japanese came into the colonized area of Shanghai and began to send citizens of allied countries into internment camps, according to Shifren.

"There were only three Jewish families in my [internment] camp," Shifren said. "They had orders to kill us because we were British."

Shifren also spoke about colonial life in Shanghai and bustling alleyways filled with shoemakers and bucket showers. She moved to Israel in 1951 and then to South Africa in 1956 where she lived for 26 years before coming to the United States.

Lecturer Elaine Goodfriend, who teaches courses in history, Jewish studies, and religious studies said she wanted to bring somebody to the class who provided diversity in the Jewish historical experience.

"It is interesting to note that when you teach Jewish history that there is more of a focus on Jews of European background and it is interesting that she is a Jew of Middle Eastern [Sephardic] background," Goodfriend said.

Shifren wrote an autobiography that includes her time in Shanghai and in the Japanese internment camp titled "Hiding in a Cave of Trunks."

Hold the Hummus, Bring on the Rice

By Michael Harel

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It seems that Chinese tourists love Israel, but the food? Perhaps not so much.

In an effort to provide more familiar foods for Chinese tourists, Israel's Tourism Ministry invited four Chinese master chefs to Israel to teach local hotels how to prepare authentic Chinese food. Workshops were held this week throughout the country, in Tel Aviv, Herzliya, Tira and Tiberias, with more than 400 chefs registered for the master classes.

If there was more Chinese food in Israel, said Chinese master chef David (ZhenNing) Lv, who led the Tel Aviv workshop at the Dan Gourmet Fine Culinary Arts Cooking Centre, then more Chinese tourists would come to visit... "If Israeli chefs can make Chinese food, then Chinese tourists will be much more happy and can stay a longer time here," said Lv.

Chinese tourism to Israel has been increasing rapidly, with more than 100,000 Chinese tourists traveling to Israel in 2017, compared with 80,300 in 2016 and 47,000 in 2015, said Efrat Groman, a representative from the Tourism Ministry who joined Tuesday's master class in Tel Aviv.

Tel Aviv receives the largest number of Chi-

nese tourists, said Groman, as they want to understand Israel's success at high-tech.

Chinese tourists also want to catch a glimpse of Israel's agricultural know-how and visit historical and nature sites, as well as get a taste of Jewish history and culture, which they find fascinating because of its similarity to their own, added Groman.

Israeli food is not adapted to the Chinese palate, said Groman, and Chinese tourists have a hard time digesting the typical Israeli offerings. "Some Israeli hotels have a corner providing Chinese food especially for Chinese tourists," she said. "We hope to see that all around the country and in all hotels."

At the Tel Aviv master class on Tuesday, the Israeli chefs surrounded chef Lv, watching carefully while he prepared 11 dishes. Lv stood at the center of the room, describing his actions in Chinese, explaining which spices to add, how to finely slice each vegetable, and the optimal way to stir the ingredients. A translator then described what he had said into Hebrew...

The classes "opened the minds of the students," said Raviv Schwartz, the manager of Dan Gourmet. "Israeli chefs are not used to the taste of Chinese food," said Schwartz. "But even if they're not used to it, they need to be able to make the best flavors for the tourist."

Lv was certain that Israeli chefs were up to the task. "The local chefs are very highly

qualified and learn very fast," he said.

Anat Soffer, from the Anat Soffer Studio Levashel cooking school, said she attended the workshop "to learn, to see, and to enjoy Chinese food, which we don't know a lot about. It's a good chance to taste and learn from a Chinese chef."

For Shalom Kadosh, the award-winning head chef from Jerusalem's Leonardo Plaza Hotel, the workshop made sense, as he's noticed the rise in Chinese tourism. "It started with groups of six, then 14, and now we have groups of 40, 50 and 60," he said. "It's very important tourism and we want to give them the food they want."

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In Memoriam Stephen Freedman Global Education Innovator

Fordham University Provost Stephen Freedman, Ph.D., whose commitment to local and global academic partnerships enhanced Fordham's reputation in New York City and around the world, died suddenly on July 2 at his home in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. He was 68.

Freedman joined Fordham in 2007 as senior vice president for academic affairs and chief academic officer. He was appointed provost in 2010.

As provost, Freedman oversaw the operations of the University's nine schools as well as the Fordham Libraries, Fordham University Press, WFUV, institutional research, prestigious fellowships, and Fordham's efforts in international education.

A professor of ecology and evolutionary biology in addition to his role as provost,

Freedman was instrumental in forging the Bronx Science Consortium—a research partnership between the University, the Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Yeshiva University, the Bronx Zoo/Wildlife Conservation Society, Montefiore Medical Center, and the New York Botanical Garden. The consortium offered numerous hands-on opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to collaborate with some of the top researchers in the world.

Further abroad, he oversaw the progress of Fordham's new London Centre campus, set to open this fall. In December 2017, when the University signed the lease on the new space, Freedman noted the many possibilities for scholarship beyond the traditional semester abroad.

Freedman traveled extensively on Fordham's behalf, overseeing the University's international programs—and developing new ones. In May, he led the first Fordham Faculty Research Abroad Program at Sophia University in Tokyo. That same month, he celebrated the 20th anniversary of Ford-

ham's Beijing International MBA (BiMBA) program in China.

Just prior to his death, he had been exploring with the Sino-Judaic Institute and several Jewish organizations how to utilize formal educational programs to improve the condition of the Kaifeng Jewish descendants.

A native of Montreal, Freedman earned a B.S. from Loyola of Montreal, an M.S. in environmental studies from York University in Toronto, and a Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology from the University of California at Irvine. He also completed the United Nations Graduate Study Program in Geneva.

He spent nearly his entire career at Jesuit Universities; for 24 years he was at Loyola University of Chicago, where he taught biology and served as dean of Mundelein College. From 2002 until 2007, he was academic vice president at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.

Freedman is survived by his wife, Eileen; his sons, Zac and Noah; and his grandson Aaron.

In Memoriam
Jerold 'Jerry' Gotel
 Pioneer of Jewish Studies in China

Jerold 'Jerry' Gotel, who died in London in October 2017, was a pioneering Jewish educator and historian, who, among other things, helped to return Jewish learning and Jewish culture to the place of its destruction in eastern Europe, and almost single-handedly created Jewish studies in China.

He was born in January 1946 to Holocaust survivors in New York City. He received a Yeshiva education before studying at Brooklyn College, and later at Pembroke College, Oxford, and the Sorbonne in Paris.

It was an unusual path to take for a man raised in the Orthodox world of Yiddishkeit, but Jerold was unusual, and he took New York City with him to Europe; in the 1980s he established an American restaurant on what was then the wasteland of London's south bank. Visitors to this gloomy area were surprised to see, twinkling from the window of a converted Victorian house, a neon sign: American Bar and Grill. This was Studio Six, the first of his successful restaurants, although East of the Sun, West of the Moon, whose menu was based on a fusion of Asian and eastern European cuisine, inspired by an historical Jewish community living in China – which only he had heard of – was not the success he hoped. But if Jerry dreamt and lost, he laughed; he knew too much history to be hurt by small things.

If restaurants were his business, scholarship was where his heart lay. In the early 1980s, his passion for Jewish history led to his becoming involved with the nascent Spiro Institute, later the London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC). His encyclopedic knowledge of traditional Judaism and Jewish history, and his electric personality, made him a superb teacher. As the Spiro Institute developed a Modern Jewish History program at schools such as Eton, Harrow and St Paul's

Boys School, Jerry became integral to its teaching. He taught adults and students all over the country.

Besides teaching British children and adults, Jerold and his colleagues were asked by Sir Martin Gilbert, whose visa had been revoked, if a dozen teachers, each going once a year, could go to Russia and to teach Jewish history to refuseniks. Jerry's allocated subject was Zionism. He gave lectures in Moscow and St Petersburg in private homes. But he was betrayed and hauled into KGB headquarters where, after an uncomfortable interview, he was told to be a tourist. Jerry's charisma was often effective in thwarting the bureaucrats of the former Soviet Union. He was proud that his exploits were written up in a Russian newspaper, where he was accused of propagating nationalism amongst the minorities. He also took children from deprived backgrounds to the death camps, to teach them about prejudice.

As the LJCC developed an overseas program, Jerry was perfectly positioned to become its director. He began to mastermind teacher training about the Shoah in Poland. When the International Task Force for Holocaust Education was created (now known as IHRA), the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office asked Jerry to be part of the British delegation. He pioneered the first ever Task Force seminar. The object was to train teachers in those countries where the Shoah had occurred, but had little education around the subject. This was phenomenally successful; and it took a man of great resilience and optimism to do it. Some of today's members of the Polish delegation were originally trained by Jerry.

The success of Jerry's work led to further seminars in the Ukraine and Belarus. The LJCC would bring in experts from the Holocaust Museum in Washington, Yad Vashem, the Wansee House in Berlin, and the Anne Frank House in Holland. Jerry also helped to pioneer the very successful tours program, taking adult students of Jewish history to sites throughout Europe.

Fifteen years ago, the Hong Kong expatriate Jewish community decided to commemorate

Yom Ha'Shoah. They had borrowed exhibits from the Sydney Holocaust Museum, but had no educator. Jerry stepped up, and was surprised to discover that a thousand Chinese people a day were coming to see the exhibition. It was at that time that he met Xu Xin, Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Nanjing. This marked the beginning of Jerry's last great work.

In the past 17 years, he was at the forefront of Jewish education in China. His legacy at Henan University, where he was an associate professor at the Centre for Jewish Studies, includes more than thirty students with PhDs in Jewish history; twelve with jobs in Chinese universities; the Shalom Library, the biggest collection of books in China on Jewish history; study of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust; and the institution's Centre for Jewish and Israel Studies, which has become the research base for Israel Studies designated by the Chinese Ministry of Education. Jerry was very proud of his Chinese students, and exceptionally fond of them.

Jerry was a founder trustee of the International Centre for Jewish Studies, created in 2016 to continue and develop this work in China and the wider East Asian region, following the merger of the LJCC into JW3.

Jerry adored his children Jared and Natalie, and was very close to them. Natalie describes her father as "larger than life. He left a powerful impression on everyone who met him. His passion for knowledge and living made him outspoken, energetic, magnanimous, bold, defiant, inspiring, argumentative and, of course, he was always right. He was never a spectator, always impatient and could not help being the life and soul of many occasions".

His background had made him a wanderer, but he loved London, where he died, a year ago in October.

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