

2011

Community in Exile: German Jewish Identity Development in Wartime Shanghai, 1938-1945

Alice I. Reichman
Claremont McKenna College

Recommended Citation

Reichman, Alice I., "Community in Exile: German Jewish Identity Development in Wartime Shanghai, 1938-1945" (2011). *CMC Senior Theses*. Paper 96.
http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/96

This Open Access Senior Thesis is brought to you by Scholarship@Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in this collection by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

CLAREMONT McKENNA COLLEGE

**COMMUNITY IN EXILE: GERMAN JEWISH IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT IN WARTIME SHANGHAI, 1938-1945**

SUBMITTED TO
PROFESSOR ARTHUR ROSENBAUM
AND
DEAN GREGORY HESS
BY
ALICE REICHMAN

FOR
SENIOR THESIS
ACADEMIC YEAR 2010-2011
APRIL 25, 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE FLIGHT FROM THE NAZIS AND ARRIVAL IN A FOREIGN LAND.....	7
CHAPTER TWO LIFE AND CONDITIONS IN SHANGHAI.....	22
CHAPTER THREE RESPONDING TO LIFE IN SHANGHAI.....	38
CHAPTER FOUR A HETEROGENEOUS COMMUNITY: DIFFERENCES AMONG JEWISH REFUGEES.....	49
CHAPTER FIVE MAINTAINING A CENTRAL EUROPEAN IDENTITY: GERMANIC CULTURE COMES TO SHANGHAI.....	64
CHAPTER SIX YOUTH EXPERIENCE.....	80
CHAPTER SEVEN A COSMOPOLITAN CITY: ENCOUNTERS AND EXCHANGES WITH OTHER CULTURES.....	98
CONCLUSION	108
DIRECTORY OF REFERENCED SURVIVORS.....	112
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	117

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my reader, Professor Arthur Rosenbaum, for all the help that he has given me throughout this process. Without his guidance this thesis would not have been possible. I am grateful for how understanding and supportive he was throughout this stressful year. I would also like to thank the community at Claremont McKenna College, especially the History department faculty, who have taught me so much.

I would like to give a special thanks to Professor Steve Hochstadt at Illinois College, who graciously provided me with unpublished transcripts of numerous interviews that he conducted with survivors of the Shanghai Ghetto, which serve as a backbone of this entire project. I also thank Professor Hochstadt for giving me advice on ways to approach the subject.

Lastly I would like to thank Daniel Hoesterey and my parents, Susan Hatcher and Henry Reichman, for their encouragement and for believing in me.

INTRODUCTION

The sinking feeling of realizing the finality of leaving and the dread of uncertainties ahead. Now there was no turning back. They were cast loose, poor, without a country and with a one-way ticket to an unpredictable, frightening place on the other side of the world. That was what was going through their minds. What would become of them? They were no longer Germans, but what were they now?¹

Between 1938 and 1940 approximately 18,000 Jews from Central Europe went to the Chinese city of Shanghai to escape Nazi persecution. After Hitler came to power in Germany he began to implement anti-Semitic legislation, hoping to remove Jews from all aspects of German life. In mid-1938 thirty-two countries met in Evian, France to discuss the plight of the Jews in Germany. After meeting for a week, the countries present decided to keep their doors closed to the desperate Jews seeking refuge elsewhere. England took in only 3,00 refugees between 1933 and 1941. Canada and Australia only accepted about 5,000-6,000 refugees each in the years after the Nazis took power, as did South Africa. Central and Latin American nations admitted about 80,000 frantic refugees between them. The United States failed to expand its small immigration quota, and between 1933 and 1939 incredibly refused even to fill the quota. Even after *Kristallnacht*, when the level of danger present to Jews living in Germany became painfully obvious, the United States only filled two-thirds of the quota for German and Austrian citizens.² German Jews, desperate to leave the country, went from embassy to embassy trying to obtain visas but were continually refused.

¹ W. Michael Blumenthal. *The Invisible Wall: Mystery of the Germans and Jews, a Personal Exploration*. Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998, 376.

² Berl Falbaum, comp. *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*. Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005, 15.

However, one city was open and willing to accept the refugees: Shanghai. Typically through word of mouth or information from travel agencies, refugees desperately seeking asylum discovered that Shanghai was an open port and one could immigrate there with no visa or passport.³

The city had been ravaged by war during the 1937 Sino-Japanese hostilities, which continued elsewhere in China to 1945. For three months Japan and China were engaged in brutal fighting in and around Shanghai, during which shipping was cut off and the ports were closed. When the Chinese military retreated from Shanghai, the Japanese military occupied the Chinese sections of the city. Hongkew, where most of the Jewish refugees would eventually settle, was now reduced largely to rubble and under the control of the Japanese Special Naval Landing Party.⁴ Prior to the Japanese takeover, the Chinese Nationalist Government was in charge of passport control, yet after 1937 the Nationalist passport office closed and no other nation in Shanghai took over this responsibility. With no passport control, entry into Shanghai was completely unrestricted until 1940, when permit and funding requirements were established to curb the growing number of refugees.⁵

Shanghai was a peculiarly international metropolis, divided into three separate areas occupied by foreign powers: the British and Americans controlled the International Settlement, the French ran the French Concession, while the Japanese controlled Hongkew and after 1937 all Chinese areas of the city.. Although foreigners controlled the city, the

³ Ibid.

⁴ Avraham Altman, and Irene Eber. "Flight to Shanghai, 1938-1940: The Larger Setting." *Yad-Vashem Studies* 28 (2000), 13.

⁵ Ibid., 10-12.

population was largely Chinese. The population of the city was a mosaic of nationalities, including Americans, British, French, Japanese, Russians, Jews, and Chinese. It was within this foreign enclave that the refugees made their home and forged their own independent refugee Jewish community.

The story of Jewish refugees has already been told numerous times, both by historians and in the memoirs of survivors.⁶ This thesis does not aim simply to retell the story of the refugees' journey and their time spent in exile. Although numerous memoirs describe the experiences of particular individuals, none of the secondary literature attempts to describe and analyze the impact of exile through the testimony of survivors, and to this point no general work on the subject has been based on a relatively systematic reading of the primary material found in memoirs and interviews. This thesis aims to fill that void. Relying on extensive memoir literature and survivor interviews,⁷ this work seeks to explore how this remarkable experience transformed the sense of identity of members of this Central European Jewish community.

⁶ The most notable and comprehensive histories of Jewish refugees in Shanghai are: David Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis, & Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*. New York: Yeshiva University Press : Distributed by Sifria Distributors, 1976; Marcia R. Ristaino. *Port of Last Resort: the Diaspora Communities of Shanghai*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001; Wiedemann ..., and Altman, Avraham, "Flight to Shanghai." There have also been two interesting films on the subject: *Shanghai Ghetto*. Directed by Dana Janklowicz-Mann and Amir Mann. Rebel Child Productions, 2002. DVD and *The Port of Last Resort: Zuflucht in Shanghai*. Directed by Paul Rosdy and Joan Grossman. 1998. DVD.

⁷ The primary memoirs relied upon are: W. Michael Blumenthal. *The Invisible Wall: Mystery of the Germans and Jews, a Personal Exploration*. Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998; Ernest G. Heppner. *Shanghai Refuge: a Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993; Fred Marcus, Audrey F. Marcus, and Rena Krasno. *Survival in Shanghai: the Journals of Fred Marcus, 1939-49*. Berkeley, CA: Pacific View Press, 2008; and Sigmund Tobias . *Strange Haven: a Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999 – although there are other memoir references. Additionally this thesis relies heavily on numerous oral history interviews, most of which come from the Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project.

What did exile in Shanghai feel like for the refugees? How did they handle and react to the circumstances of their new surroundings? In what ways did their common exile unite the group and bring about changes in personal identity?

Although the experiences vary dramatically among the different people, the evidence suggests a two-fold transformation. First, the refugees became far more conscious of their identity as Jews. For some this meant becoming more religious, but for most this meant coming to terms with a Jewish-self in a cultural sense. Secondly, in Shanghai the refugees began to redefine their identity in the context of a global system, dominated by England and America, and hence came to identify with these cultures as they moved away from their prior German identity. However, at the same time the community held on to cultural institutions from their homeland, but made these institutions their own by adapting them to their community needs and to their new international surroundings.

Chapter one describes the historical attachment and patriotism of German Jews to the state of Germany, and explains how exile produced a dramatic break with their previous identity as Germans and Austrians. This created a void, and most refugees began the extremely complex search for a new identity. The chapter then introduces the pre-existing Jewish community that greeted the refugees upon arrival and which offered them assistance based on a common Jewish heritage. Being welcomed based on their Jewishness began the process of adopting a Jewish identity as positive.

Chapter two outlines the conditions in Shanghai and how the refugees felt about their new home and the experience of poverty, starvation, and, after 1941, re-confinement in a ghetto. Chapter three then addresses how the refugees coped with their new

circumstances and the efforts the community made to create a normal life for themselves, despite the circumstances.

The fourth chapter explores the makeup of the refugee group, and the tensions and differences among its members. The refugees came from different religious, economic, and political backgrounds, which impacted their adjustment in Shanghai. Additionally, this chapter makes clear that no two refugees had the same experience in Shanghai, and that adjustment and reaction to their surroundings varied. This chapter's theme is in part developed through a close examination of the experiences of three rather different individuals.

Chapter five shows how the community persevered and merged elements of their prior life into their new surroundings. The refugees established institutions similar to those they had in Berlin and Vienna, such as cafes. Similarly they extended elements of their previous cultural and intellectual life, creating a thriving German language press and performing German theater and music.

Chapter six discusses the particular experience of the youth, and explains how in general youth had a much easier time in Shanghai than did their parents. It not only explores the youth attitude towards their time in China, but also the tremendous effort by the community to provide the children with as much of a normal life as possible. The final chapter explores how the international makeup of Shanghai influenced the refugees, and how interactions with other cultures sometimes changed personal identity and values.

Although the German Jewish refugee community lasted in Shanghai for about a decade, and many stayed in the city for several years after the end of the war, this thesis focuses solely on the experiences of the refugees during the war, from 1938-1945.

Concentrating specifically on the refugees from Central Europe, the thesis also largely avoids consideration of a smaller group of Polish Jews, overwhelmingly Orthodox in religion, who arrived in Shanghai in 1941.

The work relies heavily on interviews conducted with refugees, largely in the United States. Since most were conducted in the 1990s, only those who spent their younger years in Shanghai were still alive. Thus, these interviews may disproportionately reflect the perspective and experiences of the youth, with little input from older refugees. Also because most of those interviewed immigrated to the United States after their time in Shanghai, the perspective of those who chose to settle in other places, such as Palestine, is lacking.

Despite these limitations, the sources relied upon were incredibly detailed and provided enough material to thoroughly investigate the emotional impact and identity shifts that took place in Shanghai. Through the words of the survivors, it is evident that “Germans and Austrians created a surprisingly vibrant system of education for the young, developed a varied cultural life with libraries, art, theatre, music, and cabarets, engaged in a strong religious revival and stimulated for the first time a fresh sense of Jewish identity in many of the highly assimilated Jews.”⁸

⁸ Blumenthal, W. Michael. "W. Michael Blumenthal Speech." In *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*, edited by Berl Falbaum. Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005, 16.

CHAPTER ONE

Flight from the Nazis and Arrival in a Foreign Land

Shanghai had the name, it had a bad name, it was the worst place to go... We heard rumors of people, you know, poverty, illness, disease, death, and these refugees being thrown in the middle of it. But Shanghai was sort of the, the, the last stop. I meant it was at the bottom of the hill. Oh you know, only the, the people who had no place else to go, they went to Shanghai.⁹

The majority of German Jews who fled to Shanghai did so only after *Kristallnacht* in 1938, when they finally realized there was no hope for them in Germany and they could not find any other place that would accept them. In 1933, almost immediately after coming to power, the Nazi Party began to implement anti-Semitic legislation. On April 1, 1933 a nation-wide boycott of Jewish stores was followed by the disbarring of Jewish lawyers, firing of Jewish physicians, and exclusion of Jews from German universities.¹⁰ In 1933 thirty-seven percent of the Jews in Germany had already left the country, fearing the growing anti-Semitism.¹¹ However, a large number of Jews failed to see the Nazi anti-Semitic laws as threatening enough to compel their departure. Many thought that German anti-Semitism would be short-lived; others did not have the resources to escape.

The reluctance to leave Germany was not surprising. Although levels of religious observance and political orientations varied, most German Jews believed they had assimilated into German society and considered themselves, above all else, Germans. Although Jews amounted to only about 1% of Germany's population, about a half million

⁹ W. Michael Blumenthal. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 3, 1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Berlin, 5.

¹⁰ Saul Friedlander. *Nazi Germany and the Jews: the Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*. Vol. 1. New York: HarperCollins, 1997, 19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

people, Jews were active participants in almost all aspects of German culture and society.¹² Jews were publishers, novelists, poets, playwrights, theater directors, actors and actresses, concert pianists, conductors, sculptors, and painters.¹³ Jewish scientists, including Albert Einstein, brought fame to Germany, and during the years of the Weimar Republic, five of the nine Nobel Prizes awarded to German citizens went to those of Jewish heritage.¹⁴ Although Jews made up less than 10% of the population of turn-of-the-century Vienna, “62 percent of the lawyers, half the doctors and dentists, and 45 percent of the medical faculty were Jews, as were between 51.5 and 63.2 percent of professional journalists.”¹⁵ Similarly, Jews made up only 5 percent of the population of Berlin, but paid more than 30 percent of the city’s taxes,¹⁶ illustrating how prosperous the Jewish community was. Historian Amos Elon has even written of a “Jewish love affair with Germany.”¹⁷

And German Jews had reason to believe that their contributions to German society and culture would be acknowledged by the state. At the start of World War I the German emperor called for unity, saying "I recognize no parties anymore, but only Germans."¹⁸ Jewish individuals and organizations met this inclusion with active patriotism. Numerous German Jews willingly served in the German military during World War I; about 10,000

¹² Walter Schatzberg, and Jehuda Reinharz, eds. *The Jewish Response to German Culture*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985, 86.

¹³ Amos Elon. *The Pity of It All: a History of the Jews in Germany, 1743-1933*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002, 275.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 52,

¹⁵ Yuri Slezkine. *The Jewish Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, 50.

¹⁶ Elon, *The Pity of It All*, 259.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁸ Marion A Kaplan. *Jewish Daily Life in Germany: 1618-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, 267.

Jews volunteered immediately for active duty at the start of the war.¹⁹ At the conclusion of the war over 100,000 Jewish men,²⁰ one fifth of the entire Jewish population of Germany, had served in the German military.

Due to their long history of German patriotism, many German Jews believed they would be protected by their German background. One refugee describes his father's attitude towards the anti-Jewish laws:

My father had served, had been decorated on the, on the Western Front in World War I. And he couldn't believe that the various measures, the successive deprivations and limitations of the right to work and so on, were aimed at him, and he ignored them all. For instance, Jews were not supposed to have a short-wave radio, and we had big short-wave radio, and listened to it frequently. And he went about and frequented the same restaurants and clubs that he always did and although there were signs by that time on the doors, "*Juden unerwünscht. [Jews Unwanted.]*"²¹

As late as November 1938, the night of *Kristallnacht*, close to fifty percent of Germany's Jews remained in the country, despite five years of increasingly restrictive legislation.²² "That so many Jews stayed in the country of birth reflected not so much lethargy but the lingering conviction that the horrors were transitory," Amos Elon concludes. "Baffled, incredulous, shocked, many refused to believe that the nearly two-thousand-year-old Jewish presence in Germany was coming to an end."²³

¹⁹ Elon, *The Pity of It All*, 293.

²⁰ "Fighting for the Fatherland: The Patriotism of Jews in World War I," Leo Baeck Institute World War I Exhibition, December 31, 2008, <http://www.lbi.org/WWI/ExhibitWWIHome.html>.

²¹ Ralph Hirsch, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 22, 1994, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Shanghai, 3.

²² Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 62.

²³ Elon, *The Pity of It All*, 400.

But the horrors of *Kristallnacht* convinced the remaining Jews that they had no future in Germany. Belatedly, they desperately sought a way out. By now, few places were willing to accept the refugee Jews; the most desirable destinations, such as Britain and the United States, enforced strict immigration quotas that they were unwilling to expand to take in the desperate Jews. Additionally “exit taxes effectively depleted Jews of their remaining resources, further diminishing their chances of finding another country to accept them.”²⁴ Unable to acquire permits to these more desirable places, the refugees had to look elsewhere and many found that the only place to go was Shanghai.

Shanghai was not a desirable destination; only refugees with no other options headed there. The city was widely viewed as an “unknown entity,”²⁵ and a common reaction to the suggestion of emigration to Shanghai was “who had ever heard of anyone but criminals going to Shanghai?”²⁶ Shanghai had the reputation as “the most pleasure-mad, rapacious, corrupt, strife-ridden, licentious, squalid, and decadent city in the world,”²⁷ which frightened the prospective German emigrants. This reputation created an extremely negative view of Shanghai, as Blumenthal explains:

Occasionally, there was talk of a few hardy souls having fled to Shanghai, a wild city in China reputed to be by far the worst place of all. I remember hearing lurid tales about horrid diseases and unfortunate sick arrivals living in misery without enough to eat. Shanghai, everyone agreed, was clearly at the bottom of the list.²⁸

²⁴ Marcia R. Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort: the Diaspora Communities of Shanghai*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, 100.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁶ Ernest G. Heppner. *Shanghai Refuge: a Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, 28.

²⁷ Stella Dong, *Shanghai: The Rise and Fall of a Decadent City*. New York: William Morrow, 2000, 22.

²⁸ W. Michael Blumenthal. *The Invisible Wall: Mystery of the Germans and Jews, a Personal*

Jewish leaders in Germany worked to dissuade Jews from going to a place where they believed there were no options. In Germany Julius Seligsohn, a member of the Reich Association of Jews in Germany, warned that in Shanghai “there is no way for them to earn a living,” declaring dramatically that “it is more honorable for a Jew to die a martyr in Central Europe than to perish in Shanghai.”²⁹ However, Shanghai was the only place in the world that people could reach without a permit. Since the Opium War in 1842 Shanghai had been an open treaty port, controlled by foreign powers, where free entry was possible for refugees. As the situation for Jews in Europe grew ever more desperate, Shanghai became the last resort for those seeking to flee Germany.

The flight to Shanghai began after *Kristallnacht*, but a second wave came the following year when German police began arresting Jewish men and putting them in concentration camps. German officials told the imprisoned Jews that they could leave the camps only if they left the country immediately upon their release. Although many refugees feared Shanghai and may have been talked out of going there earlier, with no other choice, families bought tickets to Shanghai in increasing numbers. In 1938 1,374 Jewish refugees immigrated to Shanghai, but in 1939 the number jumped to 12,089.³⁰

For the most part, those who went to Shanghai were the last to leave Germany. Most of the German Jews who immigrated to Shanghai had remained in Germany until the very end, rather than leaving earlier. Some simply lacked the resources to emigrate, but the majority had chosen to endure increasing discrimination for years because they so closely

Exploration. Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998, 373.

²⁹ Quoted in Deborah Dwork, and Robert J. V. Pelt. *Flight from the Reich; Refugee Jews, 1933 - 1946*. New York, NY: Norton, 2009, 138.

³⁰ Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 103.

identified with their German heritage. Thus, as opposed to the German Jewish refugee groups that left Germany earlier, the German Jews in Shanghai typically identified themselves more strongly as “Germans.” Some were completely non-observant Jews, while others were more religious, but almost all considered themselves German before Jewish.

In the years prior to their flight to Shanghai, anti-Semitism in Germany led many Jews to question their loyalty to the German state. One elderly Jew, too old to leave, wrote that he had awakened “from the beautiful dream of assimilation” to a nightmare.³¹ “My principles about Germany... are beginning to wobble like an old man’s teeth,” declared a prominent professor who had previously declared himself “German forever, a German ‘nationalist.’”³²

The complete rejection of Jews by German society, which forced the refugees to move to Shanghai, also compelled them to reconsider their identities. All refugees, especially those who had been interned in a camp prior to their departure, had to acknowledge that they had been rejected by Germany and thus could no longer consider themselves fully German. Before leaving for Shanghai Ralph Hirsch’s father considered himself first and foremost a German, but Hirsch recalls that after leaving Germany his “father had vowed that he’d never set foot on German soil again.”³³ The refugees were “confused about having been Germans,” explains former refugee W. Michael Blumenthal.

³¹ Elon, *The Pity of It All*, 401.

³² Ibid.

³³ Hirsch Interview, 18.

“They abhorred the German government but remained wedded to German culture. They knew their identity as Germans was shattered but could not yet grasp what that meant.”³⁴

The Austrian Jews had a different experience than did the German Jews. Although there was a long history of political anti-Semitism in Austria, dating back to the late nineteenth century, anti-Semitic laws modeled after the Nazi Nuremberg statutes were implemented only after the Anschluss over the course of just six weeks.³⁵ Alfred Buchler, a Viennese refugee, explains that

While the Nazis had been in power in Germany since 1933, the effect on Jews in Vienna was far stronger than ever it had been in Germany. So that right from the beginning a large number of Vienna Jews tried to emigrate. The rate, as we once worked out from the data, was ten times as high as that from Germany in the previous years.³⁶

Austrian Jews had less time to consider emigration and had to find a way out immediately; they did not have time to wait and apply for visas. Like the Germans, for many Austrian Jews, Shanghai was the only hope for flight from Nazi territory.

Despite the circumstances that compelled them to leave, the voyage to Shanghai was for most a pleasant experience. The majority of the refugees came by ship;³⁷ large Italian liners, primarily the *Conte Biancamano*, *Conte Verde*, and *Conte Rosso*, traveled

³⁴ Blumenthal, *The Invisible wall*, 376.

³⁵ Dwork, *Flight from the Reich*, 122.

³⁶ “Interview with Alfred Buchler,” The Alfred Buchler Collection, Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, California, 1.

³⁷ The refugees who arrived prior to June 10, 1940 came by sea. The small number arriving between June 11, 1940 and December 7, 1941 came by land across Russia and Manchuria. For more details see: David Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*. New York: Yeshiva University Press : Distributed by Sifria Distributors, 1976, 86-9; Zuroff, Efraim. "Rescue via the Far East: The Attempt to Save Polish Rabbis and Yeshivah Students, 1939-41." Museum of Tolerance: Multimedia Learning Center. <http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/site/pp.asp?c=gvKVLcMVluG&b=394985>.

back and forth between Italy and Shanghai and brought thousands of Central European refugees to the shores of China.³⁸ “For people who grew up in the beginning of the twentieth century, when there were no airplanes... that you could take... if one traveled outside of Germany, which very, very few people did, you had to have some money,” W. Michael Blumenthal explains. “But your horizon was limited to this place in Europe, and the notion that you would go into the Orient, China, India, for people like my family was just, it was another world.”³⁹

Despite the excitement, there was the constant underlying fear about what was awaiting them in Shanghai. Many were arriving with no or very limited funds, no connections -- just their new status as stateless refugees, along with the horror stories about widespread poverty, disease, and the inability to make a living that they had heard awaited them in Shanghai.⁴⁰ Most were frightened about arriving in Shanghai, and tried to focus on the hope that their stay would be temporary and that they could soon emigrate to a Western country.

Pre-existing Jewish Community

The shock of arriving in an alien city was partly alleviated by the response of the small pre-existing Jewish community in Shanghai, which consisted of two distinct groups both of which had little in common with the new arrivals from Germany. Approximately

³⁸ Heppner. *Shanghai Refuge*, 42.

³⁹ Blumenthal Interview, 9.

⁴⁰ Fred Marcus, Audrey F. Marcus, and Rena Krasno. *Survival in Shanghai: the Journals of Fred Marcus, 1939-49*. Berkeley, CA: Pacific View Press, 2008, 9.

1,000 Sephardic⁴¹ Jews from Baghdad, as well as 4,000 -8,000⁴² Russian Jews, already lived in Shanghai by 1937.

The majority of the Baghdadi Jews living in Shanghai originally emigrated from Baghdad; many fled the Middle East due to religious intolerance. Most initially went to India, where stable British control offered the fleeing merchants numerous economic opportunities. There the Jewish community developed a strong association with the British, a relationship that continued in Shanghai.⁴³ In Bombay the Baghdadi Jews developed thriving businesses, and sought to expand their firms to other treaty ports. The Baghdadi merchants quickly realized the economic potential of Shanghai; the city offered special advantages and security to foreign merchants, as well as an open treaty port. Additionally, since there was no fully authoritative government, the Jewish community had an unprecedented opportunity to rise to prominence.

The Jewish migration to Shanghai began in 1845 when the Sassoon family, one of the most influential and wealthy Jewish families, opened a branch of their firm in the city.⁴⁴ The Sassoons made their fortune dealing in cotton, silk, and most importantly opium. In the mid-19th century the firm conducted business in Judeo-Arabic, a form of Arabic written with Hebrew letters, although it would later change and conduct business in

⁴¹ Some scholars refer to these Jews as “Baghdadi;” others choose to refer to them as “Sephardic.”

⁴² Maisie J. Meyer, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Whangpoo: a Century of Sephardi Jewish Life in Shanghai*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003 states there were 6,000-8,000, however David Kranzler in “Japanese, Nazis, & Jews” asserts there were only 4,000.

⁴³ Meyer, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Whangpoo*.

⁴⁴ Chiara Betta, "From Orientals to Imagined Britons: Baghdadi Jews in Shanghai," *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 4 (2003.)

English.⁴⁵ Since, for the most part, only Jews spoke this language, most of the employees were Jewish. Thus, when the firm opened in Shanghai it brought with it several Jewish employees from Bombay.

Initially the Sassoon firm employed most of the Jews in Shanghai, but eventually the community branched out and created other successful businesses. Several of these new Jewish companies also dealt in opium and cotton, while other Jewish families established lucrative banks. Baghdadi Jews became some of the wealthiest and most successful importers and exporters, as well as moneychangers.⁴⁶ Additionally, wealthy Jewish merchants owned large portions of Shanghai real estate and became very involved in the various Shanghai government associations. For example, Silas Aaron Hardoon sat on the councils of the Shanghai Municipality, French Concession, and the International Settlement. Although there were numerous wealthy families in Shanghai, including the Kadoories, the Hardoons, and the Ezras, the entire Baghdadi Jewish community was not wealthy. However, the large Jewish companies employed less well-off Jews and thus none were destitute.⁴⁷

In Shanghai the Baghdadi Jews closely associated themselves with the British. Starting in the 19th century the British consulate gave protection to all employees of the Sassoon firm, and Sephardim could apply for British citizenship. Eventually, the British expanded this protection and about one third of Baghdadi Jews were classified as citizens

⁴⁵ Sarah A. Stein, "Protected Persons? The Baghdadi Jewish Diaspora, the British State, and the Persistence of Empire," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 1 (February 2011): 88, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/ahr.116.1.80>.

⁴⁶ Irene Eber, "Overland and By Sea: Eight Centuries of the Jewish Presence in China," *Chinese Journal of International Law* 4, no. 1 (2005): 245-6, <http://chinesejil.oxfordjournals.org/content/4/1/235.full>.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 246.

or “British Protected Persons.”⁴⁸ The first Baghdadi immigrants spoke English as a second language, but by the 1930s it was the primary language of the community and Baghdadi children went to English speaking schools.⁴⁹ Most members of the community lived in the International Settlement, which was partially controlled by the British and was where all the British citizens lived. The Anglicization of the Baghdadi Jewish community would ultimately have a major impact on the Jewish refugees, as the Baghdadi Jews, who funded many of the relief and cultural organizations, would mandate that these institutions conduct their business in English.

The other group of Jews already living in Shanghai was the Russian Jews, the majority of whom fled Russia before the Holocaust to escape oppression and to search for greater economic opportunities. Most came following the Bolshevik Revolution in October of 1917. Ultimately the Russian Jewish community grew larger than the Baghdadi Jewish community; by the 1930s it numbered between 4,000 and 8,000 people.

Although some of the Russian Jews were merchants and businessmen, upon arrival many were poor and far less educated than the Baghdadi Jews. The community never acquired the wealth or prominence of the Baghdadi Jews (only about 1-2% could be considered wealthy), but many were able to achieve some economic success in Shanghai.⁵⁰ Some owned small shops or worked as subcontractors in the trade industry, while others

⁴⁸ Stein, “Protected Persons?,” 85, 89.

⁴⁹ Eber, “Overland and by Sea,” 247.

⁵⁰ David Kranzler. *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*. New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1976, 61.

were salesmen and professionals; there were also many musicians. Most lived in the French Concession, but the poorer Jews lived in Hongkew where housing was cheaper.⁵¹

The Baghdadi and Russian Jews had little in common and rarely associated with one another. A Baghdadi Jew, Jacoby Sassoon, says “the Baghdadi community was very clannish. They kept to themselves... They mixed very little with the Russian Jews.”⁵² The Baghdadi Jews aligned themselves with the British, were assimilated into the British community, and were much wealthier than the Russian Jews. Although both groups were Jewish, their customs, from weddings to circumcision ceremonies, differed greatly, as did the wording of their prayers. Baghdadi Jews were adamant about distinguishing themselves as a different group of people than the Russian Jews, and thus referred to themselves as the “Baghdadi Jewish Community of Shanghai.”⁵³

Although there was considerable distance between the two communities, the Baghdadi Jews offered assistance to the Russian Jews when they came to Shanghai. The Baghdadi community was instrumental in providing enough financial assistance to the Russians to enable them to build a sustainable community. When the Nazi refugees arrived the Baghdadi Jews once again came to the assistance of their co-religionists, and the Russian Jews similarly contributed. The assistance provided by the pre-existing Jewish communities, especially the aid from the wealthier Baghdadi Jews, made survival possible for most of the refugees.

⁵¹ Eber, “Overland and by Sea,” 248.

⁵² Jacoby Sasson, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 24, 1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Beijing, China, 16.

⁵³ Meyer, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Whangpoo*, 38.

What made the pre-existing Jewish community, which had little in common with the incoming Central European Jews, feel responsible for taking care of these Jewish refugees? When the refugees began pouring into Shanghai the two Jewish communities did not question whether or not to offer aid; it went without doubt that they would rise to the occasion. The primary reasons that the Baghdadi community offered this assistance was the community's deep religiosity, its identification with the Jewish "race," as well as the desire to maintain their high social status. The Russian community also strongly identified with the Jewish "race" and believed in Jewish moral values.

The Baghdadi Jews were Orthodox, meaning that they closely observed Jewish customs. All meat was kosher, no work was performed on the Sabbath, and study of the Torah was highly valued. In Judaism charity, or *Tsedakah*, is extremely important. From a young age children are taught to give charity; every Baghdadi home had a *tsedakah* box into which family members dropped coins. In the Torah, the Jewish holy book, there is a commandment that "you shall open your hand to your brother, to your poor and needy in your land."⁵⁴ The *Tur*, known as "the people's law book" of Judaism explains the importance of *tzedakah* in the Jewish faith: "The dispensing of charity according to one's means is a positive precept which demands greater care and diligence in its fulfillment than all the other positive mitzvot of the Torah." Furthermore, in the *Mishneh Torah*, the great medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides maintained that "one's first duty lies toward his poor relatives, then toward the needy of his own town, and finally toward those of other towns."⁵⁵ Despite their many differences, both the Russian and the Baghdadi Jews still observed the same holidays, based on a common heritage. Thus, to the Baghdadi

⁵⁴ Philip Birnbaum. *A Book of Jewish Concepts*. New York: Hebrew Pub.1975, 244.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 521.

community, their arriving co-religionists were their “relatives” and their primary duty was to take care of this refugee community. Similarly the Russian Jews respected the Jewish value of *Tsedakah*, and all members of both communities actively offered assistance, through direct financial donations, participating in fund-raising events, or sometimes even welcoming homeless refugees into their homes.

Although the Baghdadi community was charitable, its assistance was not entirely selfless. The Sephardim were wealthy and accepted by the international community. Many were British citizens and members of exclusive clubs. Shanghai was a place where there was no blatant anti-Semitism and Jews had extensive power; for example, there was usually at least one Jewish representative in the government of the International Settlement. The Baghdadi Jews feared that the large influx of poor Jews would stir up anti-Semitism. People would look down on Jews begging in the street, and would begin to place this stereotype on Jews in general. The Sephardim did not want the term “Jew” to be associated with poverty or with putting strain on an already fragile economy, so partly to maintain their own prestige they sought to help their fellow Jews.

Since the refugees were offered aid based on their “Jewishness,” many came to identify increasingly as Jews because that was the basis on which they were surviving. Indeed, such identification had begun for many before emigration, as Nazi discrimination compelled the Jewish community to make their “Jewishness” more central to their identities. Rejected by everyone except other Jews, many of the Central European Jews developed closer ties to Judaism, in some cases as a religion in others as simply an ethnic or cultural tradition, and a more favorable view of being a “Jew.”

Many were greeted upon arrival with a sign saying “Welcome to Shanghai. Now you are no longer Germans, Austrians, Czechs, or Rumanians, now you are Jews, only Jews. The Jews of the whole world have prepared a home for you.”⁵⁶ This laid the foundation for adopting a Jewish identity rather than one based on nationality.

⁵⁶ Meyer, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Whangpoo*, 208.

CHAPTER TWO

Life and Conditions in Shanghai

We moved out of our little apartment into the attic of a house where six or seven other families lived. The conditions were deplorable. The roof leaked into the attic; the house didn't have any heat. We were insufferably cold in the winter and unbearably hot in the summer. We had only one light bulb, and we enjoyed neither privacy nor a place to bathe... the stench was overwhelming.⁵⁷

When the Jewish refugees arrived in Shanghai they discovered a world completely different from the one they had left:

As the *Potsdam* [boat] slowly eased into the muddy, winding Whangpoo River, total silence fell over the passengers. We were horror-stricken. At first, the countryside was flat farmland dotted with villages, but all along the shore we saw mounds of rubble. As we came closer, we saw a large power plant, oil storage tanks, wharves and warehouses (call *godowns* in Shanghai) lining the shore, but behind them, as far as the eye could see, nothing but buildings in ruins.⁵⁸

When the new arrival debarked, those with family or friends already in Shanghai were greeted and taken away to their new homes. These individuals were lucky enough to live in either the French Concession or the International Settlement, among the wealthier European population of Shanghai. They remained largely separate from the rest of the refugee population until 1943, when the occupying Japanese established a ghetto. However, the situation was quite different for the majority without resources or contacts. Ernest Heppner arrived with his mother with only “two German marks – about 80

⁵⁷ Berl Falbaum, comp. *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*. Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005, 111.

⁵⁸ Ernest G. Heppner. *Shanghai Refuge: a Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, 37.

American cents.”⁵⁹ Fred Marcus also “left Germany with ten marks apiece in cash in our pockets, the equivalent of about \$2.50. (One could take only that much currency out of the country.)”⁶⁰ Fortunately, these unlucky refugees were greeted by the various Jewish relief committees and taken to their new temporary “homes,” but still the experience was jarring:

We were taken on trucks like animals to, to camps. At, first, first to one camp, which was the, the “Embankment...” which was right close to the pier. So this was the first step. And from there, people were then sent on to other camps. We landed in Chaoufoong Road camp.⁶¹

These camps, known as “*Heime*” (*heim* means “home” in German, “*heime*” is the plural form) were established in Hongkew by the relief organizations. For most, the *heime* were transitional centers until housing elsewhere could be acquired. However, for some unable to find work the *heime* became a more permanent refuge.

Heime

The conditions in the *heime* were deplorable; there was little to no privacy, food was scarce, and disease rampant. When Susie Friedlander arrived at the Chaoufoong Road Camp her family was “separated, my father with other men, and my mother and I with lots of other women, in large, plain, hall-like rooms with beds which were just consisting of a, a tent, a place to sleep.”⁶² Fred Marcus was taken in a flatbed truck to the Ward Road *heim*, a “red brick school house converted into a refugee shelter... This became our first domicile

⁵⁹ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁰ Fred Marcus, Audrey F. Marcus, and Rena Krasno. *Survival in Shanghai: the Journals of Fred Marcus, 1939-49*. Berkeley, CA: Pacific View Press, 2008, 9.

⁶¹ Martin and Susie Friedlander. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 21, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Tamarac, Florida, 18.

⁶² Ibid.

since leaving the luxury ship. We were put into a large classroom, Room 17 on the second floor. Here some 58 people were housed in double-decker bunk beds. The only private storage was under the bed.”⁶³ When a family arrived in a *heim* they were split up, men in one room and women in another, which lowered morale among the residents.

Although only 5-10% of the refugees lived in the *heim*, a far greater number relied on their resources for support. In addition to offering room and board to poor refugees, low-cost or free meals were served in the *heim* kitchens. A Kitchen-Fund committee was created to raise funds from the wealthier refugees and pre-existing Jewish community to help feed the poor in *heim* kitchens.⁶⁴ In 1939 two meals were served each day in the *heim*, but by 1940 this was reduced to just one meal per day. Since many of the refugees could not afford to eat elsewhere, some were forced to subsist solely on that single meal each day.

Additionally, medical services were offered at many of the *heim*, including a complete medical hospital with one hundred beds in the Ward Road Heim. These medical clinics treated over 66,000 cases and administered 12,000 vaccinations in 1939 alone.⁶⁵ Since a large number of German Jewish doctors were among those who fled to Shanghai, there were far more physicians than necessary to staff the hospital and clinics. Despite some financial assistance, the hospitals were largely underfunded.

TABLE 1

Jewish Refugee Camps (*heim*) and Their Populations - April 1939

⁶³ Marcus, *Survival in Shanghai*, 12.

⁶⁴ Ralph Harpuder. "Oh, Those Deplorable Heime." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. <http://rickshaw.org/heime.htm>.

⁶⁵ David Kranzler. *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*. New York: Yeshiva University Press : Distributed by Sifria Distributors, 1976, 299.

	Males	Females	Children	Total
Wayside Camp.				
150 Wayside Road	144	118	22	284
Ward Road Camp				
138 Ward Road	584	80	7	671
Chaoufoong Road Camp				
680 Chaoufoong Road	359	288	44	691
Kinchow Road Camp				
100 Kinchow Road	504	162	38	704
Aerocrete Camp,				
Pingliang Road	40	1	0	41
Alcock Road Camp,				
66 Alcock Road	50	40	0	90
Total	1,681	689	111	2,481

SOURCE: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Military Records Branch, Shanghai Municipal Police Dossier 5422A, Divisional Officer Report, “D” Division, Apr. 8, 1939.⁶⁶

Hongkew

Hongkew, a section of Shanghai under Japanese control, was the area where most of the refugees settled. This part of the city lay in ruins, as much of it had been leveled during the Sino-Japanese war in 1937. The fighting, coupled with the “scorched earth” policy of the retreating Chinese forces, left the district in ruins. With the retreat of the Chinese the Japanese occupied the Chinese sections of the city, including Hongkew.

The scene in Hongkew was like nothing the refugees had ever witnessed. Ernest Heppner offers a description:

Hongkew was partially destroyed by bombardments during the Japanese invasion of China in 1937 and during the retreat of the Chinese army...In crowded Shanghai this was now the only area where land or partially demolished buildings were available at prices some of the refugees, or the

⁶⁶ Published in Marcia R Ristaino. *Port of Last Resort: the Diaspora Communities of Shanghai*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, 121.

relief committee, could afford. Thus most refugees congregated in these bombed out slums.⁶⁷

Although Shanghai now was safe from the fighting, large areas of China were completely devastated; in some cities bombs and artillery fire destroyed up to 90% of the infrastructure.⁶⁸ Over one million Chinese refugees came streaming into Shanghai and, like the Jewish refugees, settled in the cheapest area: Hongkew. Chinese beggars filled the streets and dead bodies commonly littered the lanes. In 1939 alone, 110,173 exposed corpses were collected off the streets in Shanghai.⁶⁹ On the city's streets "bodies of tiny Chinese babies wrapped in straw mattings, rags, and occasionally a red blanket" were a not uncommon sight. "Sometimes a slippered little foot protruded from the gruesome parcel, sometimes a miniature hand rested stiffly on the earth."⁷⁰ Heppner saw how

every morning coolies pushed carts around the city to gather up, depending on the weather, sixty to eighty corpses from the streets. I was particularly disturbed to see the bodies of many babies and children among them. These were often baby girls whose parents either did not want them or could not feed them and lacked money for a funeral. After one cold spell, 534 dead bodies were picked up. At the collection center they were piled up and burned. Seeing these frozen corpses, we came to the frightening realization that we were totally dependent on the Jewish relief organizations for food and shelter. We were living in a society where only one's extended family would care for a person; no one else would. Those who left their villages lost the protection and care of their families. Whoever got sick and died might as well do so in the street, where the sanitation crews would pick up with body.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 39.

⁶⁸ Wen-hsin Yeh. *Wartime Shanghai*. London: Routledge, 1998.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth J. Perry *Shanghai on Strike: the Politics of Chinese Labor*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993, 113.

⁷⁰ Rena Krasno. *Strangers Always: a Jewish Family in Wartime Shanghai*. Berkeley, CA: Pacific View Press, 1992, 76.

⁷¹ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 52.

Sigmund Tobias reports that when his father “first arrived in Shanghai the refugees reported the dead bodies to the police. The corpses were then collected, and those who made the report had to pay for pickup.”⁷² Thus, the refugees learned to ignore the rotting bodies until someone came to collect them. Although Hongkew was ugly and miserable, for many it was the only affordable place to live, as rent was up to 75% lower than in other sections of the city.⁷³ Often the small houses in Hongkew, built to hold a single family, housed several refugee families at once, each in a separate “room.” Typically these separate rooms were merely partitioned off sections of a larger room.⁷⁴ Although families had to live in tight quarters with little privacy, it was far better than life in a *heime*.

Disease

Disease was rampant in Shanghai, especially in Hongkew and the *heime*, and the refugees were particularly vulnerable to viruses unknown in Europe. Poor sanitation and close living quarters, coupled with the summer heat meant that virulent diseases spread rapidly throughout the community:

You had leprosy and you had typhoid, you had smallpox, blackpox, diseases that I've never heard of before. You had to be so careful. You couldn't go barefoot, because you would catch what they called Hong Kong foot. At one time there was some fish that they were selling. It wasn't herring, but it tasted like herring to most people, and you know, Jewish people generally speaking like herring. My father didn't like herring, and I didn't like herring at that time. We were the only ones who didn't get sick, everybody else got what they called liver worm. Don't ask me what that

⁷² Sigmund Tobias. *Strange Haven: a Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999, 22.

⁷³ Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis, & Jews*, 116.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 118-9.

really is today, but it wasn't critical, I mean, it wasn't a fatal disease, but it was very uncomfortable. Dysentery, amoebic dysentery.⁷⁵

The refugees sought to protect themselves against these various illnesses. According to Ernest Culman, "Smallpox, cholera, typhoid, typhus. Those were the primary things. And even though, through my father who insisted that we had that done, I was inoculated every six months, I still caught either typhus or typhoid, whatever you get from bites of an insect."⁷⁶

Examination of interviews and memoirs of former refugees show that most members of the community got sick at some point during their stay in Shanghai and, as previously mentioned, there were several medical facilities where the refugees could seek care.

Sanitation

The refugees were forewarned about economic conditions in Shanghai, but none were prepared for the tropical climate and the unsanitary and crowded living conditions. During the summer months it was unbearably hot and diseases spread quickly. The refugees

experienced the beginning of our first Shanghai summer, with temperatures of 95 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit and extremely high humidity. Although the window was open, there seemed to be no ventilation in our room, and air movement was stifled by our mosquito netting. Lying on narrow couches, we fanned ourselves, but breathing was difficult. After a while sweat ran down our bodies in little rivulets, soaking the sheets and wetting the

⁷⁵ Ernest E. Culman., Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Oct. 18,1997, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Rockville, Maryland, 15.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 13.

coaches. It was just a matter of time until the couches were moldy, making the nights even less bearable.⁷⁷

Refugees not only remember fighting the terrible weather but also insects and pests. “The summers were awful... very hot and sticky, and [there was] no real escape from it, because you lived in these crowded quarters and you hated to go to bed because you couldn’t sleep. And you hated to go to bed because, it was a constant fight with vermin and so on.”⁷⁸

In addition to the excruciating summer heat, and freezing cold winters, occasional typhoons would flood entire streets in Hongkew. Many refugee homes would flood, which put these individuals at an increased risk of contracting one of the many diseases common in Shanghai.

The refugees in the poorer neighborhoods did not have the amenities they enjoyed in Germany and Austria. There was no running water in the homes and all water, purchased from vendors, had to be boiled to kill germs. One refugee describes the process of obtaining water:

The hot water shop was full of Chinese men, the tops of their bodies naked, washing themselves with the hot water they had purchased. These were the Coolies who did the lifting and pushing of the heavy cargo of goods which made up most of the traffic in Ward Road. There were no trucks, not many cars, and only a few bicycles in our street. I gave the hot water vendor my remaining bamboo token, and bought 2 more with the money Rashid’s mother gave me. I had brought a large thermos bottle, which he filled, I left the steam filled room for my return trip. This hot water would be used by my mother and me for washing ourselves... Another use for the hot water was to kill the bedbugs. Every Sunday we would take the wooden beds out onto the street, and pour hot water over the joints where the material was nailed onto the wooden boards. The bedbugs would come crawling out, and I would spear them with a small knitting needle.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 55.

⁷⁸ W. Michael Blumenthal. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 3, 1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Berlin, 20.

⁷⁹ Paul Berg. "Hot Water." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed March 20, 2011.

Accustomed to modern plumbing, the refugees were shocked that many of their new residences lacked showers and flush-toilets, and they were disgusted that they had to relieve themselves in buckets:

On many a hot summer's night as we stood by the window of my parent's bed-sitting-room, overlooking the street and the little village opposite, we watched as around 2 or 3 am every morning without fail, the "honey cart" drew up to collect the contents of the "jam pots," or more correctly "horse buckets" ("mah-dong") as the Chinese call them. The coolie pushing his little box shaped, wooden vehicle in front of him, to fully savour the odour of his valuable cargo, would on approaching the unsewered houses of the village, start hollering his traditional signal call, whereupon doors would open in quick succession and the ladies of the various homes would hand over the day's production. After the buckets go emptied, the women went to work, cleaning and scrubbing them with water and special bamboo brushes. And cleaning them they did, with a vengeance!⁸⁰

In Europe the majority of these Jewish refugees had been part of the middle class,⁸¹ and adjusting to these primitive living conditions posed more than just the challenge of survival in a strange and harsh environment. Adjustment demanded much sacrifice and suffering, but also compelled the refugees to reconsider much about how they lived and who they really were.

The War Begins

http://rickshaw.org/hot_water.htm.

⁸⁰ H. Peter Eisfelder. "Chinese Exile: My Years in Shanghai & Nanking, 19th Century-1986." ME 999, Leo Baeck Institute, LBI Archives, 33.

⁸¹ Kaplan, Marion A. *Jewish Daily Life in Germany: 1618-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, 307.

In December of 1941, the Sino-Japanese conflict expanded, as Japan went to war in the Pacific against Britain and the United States, which dramatically changed the situation in Shanghai. Quickly following the Pearl Harbor attack, the Japanese occupied the entire city of Shanghai, with little resistance. The refugees now lived in what they believed to be enemy territory, as the Japanese were allied with Germany. Some feared that Japan would take actions against the Jews similar to those taken by Germany. Sigmund Tobias remembers that his

parents and other adults continuously discussed what Japan's entry into the war meant for us and for the progress of the war. Some people felt that nothing much had changed because Hitler could not work with any government for very long, and certainly not with an Asian government like Japan's. Problems between the new allies were sure to arise and might actually help the refugees. Others were frightened that the Germans would pressure the Japanese to persecute us, just as the Nazis had.⁸²

In November 1942, less than a year after Pearl Harbor, Japan began the process of interning enemy nationals in Shanghai. By the summer of 1943 the entire British and American populations of Shanghai were interned in camps and their bank accounts frozen.⁸³ Although as "stateless refugees" the German and Austrian Jews were not interned with the British and American nationals, expansion of the war had a devastating effect on the community. Many of the Baghdadi Jews, who had been instrumental in providing assistance to the needy refugee community, were British citizens and were interned and others lost their businesses and bank accounts. Thus this important financial assistance was no longer available to the needy refugee community.

⁸² Tobias, *Strange Haven*, 41.

⁸³ Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 187-9.

Additionally, prior to Pearl Harbor the Jewish refugees had received significant amounts of aid from international Jewish organizations like the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC.) When the Japanese took over Shanghai, the JDC was providing the Shanghai refugees with (US) \$30,000 a month, which helped feed about 8,000 refugees and house close to 2,500.⁸⁴ With Japan and the United States at war, there was a break in communication, which ended the import of aid from friends, family, and most importantly relief agencies in the United States. The JDC attempted to convince the State and Treasury Departments to allow them to communicate with representatives in Shanghai, but they were refused. Unwilling to send an unauthorized cable, the JDC ceased sending relief to Shanghai.⁸⁵

With the Baghdadi Jews interned and relief aid from international Jewish organizations shut off, the Jewish refugee population in Shanghai was left to fend for itself. The poverty and terrible living conditions that the Jews faced in Shanghai quickly worsened. The closure or Japanese takeover of foreign-owned firms resulted in many of the refugees losing their jobs. Unemployment quickly increased at the same time the money to care for the unemployed diminished.

As the already impoverished Jewish community grew even poorer, inflation in Shanghai grew tremendously, rendering much of the money the Jews did have nearly worthless.

⁸⁴ Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis, & Jews*, 458.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 461-2.

TABLE 2
Cost of Living Index for Shanghai Workers, 1936 - 45

<i>Year</i>	<i>Index</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Index</i>
1936	100	1941	827
1937	119	1942	1,994
1938	151	1943	7,226
1939	198	1944	47,750
1940	428	1945	6,058,103

SOURCE: *Jiefangqian de Shanghai wujia* [Commodity prices in pre-liberation Shanghai] (Shanghai, 1961), p. 330.⁸⁶

Henry Rossetty, a musician lucky enough to have a job during this period, describes in an interview how price inflation affected his income:

Interviewer: It sounds like you always had enough money from this job to, or is that not true?

Rossetty: No, it was an inflation, and we got our salary fourteen days in advance, because the next day we had to spend it, otherwise it was not worth any more. They had four or five different currencies, when they went up to the billions, they started a new one again.

Interviewer: I see. So your salary started off as a lot, but then it wasn't.

Rossetty: We had to spend it the next day, otherwise we couldn't buy anything anymore.⁸⁷

After the war in the Pacific began the lives of the refugees became considerably more difficult. Not only did poverty increase and conditions worsen, but also the refugees were afraid that the Japanese would collaborate with the German anti-Semitic agenda; they were once again living in fear.

⁸⁶ Found in Perry, *Shanghai on Strike*, 113,

⁸⁷ Henry Rossetty, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 8, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Laguna Hills, CA, 11.

Establishment of Ghetto

On February 18, 1943 the Jewish community's plight worsened when the Japanese issued a proclamation establishing a Jewish ghetto in Hongkew. The full text was published in Jewish newspapers:

PROCLAMATION CONCERNING RESTRICTION OF RESIDENCE AND BUSINESS OF STATELESS REFUGEES

- I. Due to military necessity, places of residence and business of stateless refugees in the Shanghai area shall hereafter be restricted to the under mentioned area in the International Settlement. East of the line connecting Chaoufong Road, Muirhead Road and Dent Road; West of Yangtzepoo Creek; North of the line connecting East Seward Road and Wayside Road; and South of the boundary of the International Settlement.
- II. The stateless refugees at present residing and/or carrying on business in the district other than the above area shall remove their places of residences and/or business into the area designated above by May 18, 1943.
Permission must be obtained from the Japanese authorities for the transfer, sale purchase or lease of rooms, houses, shops or other establishments, which are situated outside the designated area and now being occupied or used by stateless refugees.
- III. Persons other than stateless refugees shall not remove into the area mentioned in Article I without permission of the Japanese authorities.
- IV. Persons who will have violated this *Proclamation* or obstructed its reinforcement shall be liable to severe punishment.

Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Japanese Army in the Shanghai Area.
Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Shanghai Area.
February 18, 1943.⁸⁸

The term "stateless refugees" was defined as those refugees who "...arrived in Shanghai since 1937 from Germany (including former Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, former Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, etc.) and have no nationality at present."⁸⁹ Although the proclamation did not specifically say "Jews," the definition of "stateless refugees" made clear who the proclamation affected. The entire Central European Jewish

⁸⁸ Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis, & Jews*.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

population of 18,000 was forced to move into one region of Hongkew that was less than one square mile, which already had close to 10,000 Chinese occupants. This was twice the population density of Manhattan today.⁹⁰ Fred Marcus describes the Proclamation's impact in his journals:

Like a bolt from the blue, the Japanese issued a Proclamation, one that established the infamous Shanghai Designated Area. They ordered the refugees to move by May 18, 1943 to a specific area, bordered by certain major streets, as was described in the newspapers. They did not need to establish any fences or walls to keep us prisoners, because it was very simple to recognize that every Caucasian leaving the area was a refugee. (The Chinese in the area could come and go as they pleased.) All the Japanese had to do was to place signs at the intersections leading out of the Designated Area with the words: 'Stateless Refugees Are Prohibited to Pass Here Without Permission.' It was a rather fiendish scheme on the part of the Japanese that they did not put us in a camp. They simply restricted our freedom, our liberty, and our mobility without assuming responsibility for feeding or clothing us, or for providing us with medical care. We were on our own.⁹¹

Jews living in sections of Hongkew outside of the designated zone as well as those living in the French Concession or International Settlement had quickly to find housing within the defined territory. This proved very difficult, as there was intense competition for the available homes. Chinese homeowners hiked up rents, knowing that the Jewish population had no choice but to move there. Many families were forced to share rooms, and the population density and living conditions were terrible.

Historian David Kranzler explains that the “move to the ghetto imposed tremendous economic, physical and, above all, psychological burdens on the refugee community.”⁹² The relocation to the ghetto had catastrophic effects on the economic well-

⁹⁰ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 113.

⁹¹ Marcus, *Survival in Shanghai*, 21-2.

⁹² Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis, & Jews*, 543.

being of the community. Numerous refugees had jobs outside of the designated area, but in order to leave the ghetto they had to apply for a pass. At first the passes were not too difficult to obtain, and lasted for three months, however by the end of 1944 they became extremely difficult to renew. Ultimately “more than three-hundred refugee businesses outside of the designated area were forced to close; most received little in return for the sale of their businesses... hundreds of refugees lost their jobs.”⁹³ The already high level of unemployment skyrocketed, making the relief efforts even more difficult.

During the ghetto period living conditions declined dramatically. Food was hard to come by and hunger was pervasive. A large number of refugees relied on the one daily meal available in the *heime* kitchens. The food served in the kitchens was very basic, typically a soup or stew, and on better days a person might be given one egg or stewed fruit.⁹⁴ Even those who were able to purchase some food had few options, as food in the area was hard to come by:

As the war continued flour also became scarce and was often rotten. We sometimes found worms in the flour, and when my mother bought a sieve to sift it she discovered clumps of unrecognizable junk; we never dared to guess what these clumps were. Baking with the flour did not remove all of the crawling bugs because we occasionally found ugly worms in the loaves of bread bought from the bakery.⁹⁵

The close quarters and poor quality of food resulted in an increase in illness. Weakened immune systems meant that diseases such as typhoid spread quickly through the community. Illnesses in many cases made conditions in the homes even more unbearable.

⁹³ James R. Ross. *Escape to Shanghai: a Jewish Community in China*. New York: Free Press, 1994, 198.

⁹⁴ Marcus, *Survival in Shanghai*.

⁹⁵ Tobias, *Strange Haven*, 78.

“Most of the refugees had picked up intestinal worms... sometimes the worms could actually be seen in the stool. Since few people in the ghetto had toilets with running water, the diarrhea was especially sickening because we could see the worms wriggling in the smelly toilet buckets.”⁹⁶

Poverty during the ghetto period was so terrible that some refugees, in desperation, resorted to begging,⁹⁷ while others even sold the clothes off their back. “Eventually there were inmates who could no longer leave the Heime because they had neither shirts nor shoes to wear. Cut up burlap bags served as pants.”⁹⁸ The winter of 1943 was especially harsh, and some refugees found themselves freezing as they had sold most of their clothing. During the ghetto period there were 1,700 reported deaths among the German and Austrian Jews of Shanghai. Additionally, thirty-one Jewish refugees died in the final months of war when the Americans bombed the city.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ibid., 86.

⁹⁷ Ross, *Escape to Shanghai*, 174.

⁹⁸ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 88.

⁹⁹ Lena Williams. "800 Refugees at Reunion Recall Life in the Ghetto of Shanghai." *The New York Times*, September 6, 1985.

CHAPTER THREE

Responding to Life in Shanghai

Nothing demonstrated more clearly the drastic change that had taken place in our lives than the sight of us dressed in our good, heavy European clothing, the women still adorned with fashionable hats and gloves, waiting in line with tin pots in hand for our next meal.¹⁰⁰

Life in Shanghai was a complete departure from what the refugees were used to. Leaving Europe meant leaving behind jobs, homes, possessions, and often loved ones. It also meant arriving in a completely unknown land where they did not speak the local language, Chinese, or the main language of commerce, English. In Europe most of the refugees had been part of the middle class; however, in Shanghai crowded humid rooms replaced their comfortable German homes.

Employment

Upon arrival in Shanghai the refugees had to undergo the hard task of finding work. This proved very difficult for a variety of reasons. The refugees arrived during a time of terrible economic depression. The Sino-Japanese War had destroyed much of Shanghai, and the constant influx of Chinese refugees from outside the city increased competition for the few available opportunities. Some of the earlier arrivals were able to open shops and restaurants with money loaned by relief agencies, but as the number of Jewish refugees quickly increased, these loans were no longer possible.

Many of the refugees had occupations in Germany or Austria that were “non-transferable;” a bank owner had to leave his bank behind; a lawyer could no longer

¹⁰⁰ Ernest G. Heppner. *Shanghai Refuge: a Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, 41.

practice in the specialty in which he was trained, under a very different legal system. The refugees who had the least trouble finding employment in Shanghai were those with more practical and marketable skills. A seamstress could make money repairing clothes and a hairdresser could still cut hair while in Shanghai.

These employment changes resulted in a type of “power shift,” as many who held less desirable jobs in Central Europe now possessed more marketable skills in Shanghai. With the exception of medical professionals, those in the “professions,” including professors, judges, and bankers, were forced to learn a new skill set, take a “lesser” job (one that might require less specialized knowledge), or be unemployed. And even for those in medicine, as previously noted, there were fewer opportunities for work than there were medical professionals among the refugees. The refugees had once been members of a highly stratified society in Europe but in Shanghai they were placed on more of an even “playing field.” Those who had worked in the professions, and prided themselves on their high-level position, wealth, or level of education, could no longer describe themselves in those terms. W. Michael Blumenthal describes this phenomenon:

I saw people who had had large jobs in Berlin or wherever in Germany, and I saw people who had, came from environments where they had nothing, lived somewhere on Oranienburgerstrasse and the father was a tailor and he was a waiter, cope with the adverse, cope with adversity, cope with the very difficult environment that existed there. And I saw that once the deck was reshuffled, thoroughly reshuffled, they could all, everybody was at the same level, they're both in the camp, they both had nothing, there was no way of telling who'd come out on top. As a matter of fact, more often than not the guy who had been a waiter would come out on top.¹⁰¹

For refugees who had been closely wed to their titles, the loss of occupation created another type of identity crisis. Although many Jewish professionals had lost their jobs, as

¹⁰¹ W. Michael Blumenthal Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 3, 1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Berlin, 18.

long as they remained in Germany, most hoped this was temporary. However, with the flight to Shanghai, they were forced to accept that this loss had become permanent and they had to find other ways through which to identify themselves, as they could no longer do so based on their previous occupation or social class.

Changes in Family Structure

Occupational changes also dramatically affected family structure. Jewish families in Central Europe were strongly based on a patriarchal structure, even in families where the women were employed outside of the home. The Nazi restrictions largely impacted occupations held by men, and men were deprived of the “commercial or professional careers from which the entire family derived status.”¹⁰² Thus, even before arrival in Shanghai, familial power was beginning to shift into the hands of the women. W. Michael Blumenthal remembers that in Berlin his father’s bank went bankrupt and his “family lost their money... My parents, [went] from, I would say, upper middle income level, [and] suddenly had no money. After some trial and error and what to do my mother opened a store for ladies’ accessories in the west of Berlin... my father helped in that store, but fundamentally my mother ran it.”¹⁰³

This shift intensified in Shanghai where it was nearly impossible for “the successful lawyer, manufacturer, or store owner to recreate the economic basis of familial authority,” thus dealing a “further blow to paternalistic self-esteem.”¹⁰⁴ Arnold Fuchs’

¹⁰² Steve Hochstadt. "The Social History of Jews in the Holocaust: The Necessity of Interviewing Survivors." *Historical Social Research* 22, no. 314 (1997), 269.

¹⁰³ Blumenthal Interview, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Hochstadt, “The Social History of Jews in the Holocaust,” 269-70.

father “didn’t have a trade that he could pick up and continue on, something that was needed for everyday life.”¹⁰⁵ However, his mother was a professional hairdresser, which was transferrable to Shanghai, and thus his mother no longer relied on his father financially, resulting in a power shift.

She had brought all her, she brought a big box with all her utensils and her tools, and even though the situation was bad, women always went to the hairdresser. I mean, they had to have their hair shampooed and it was something that people used to do. You went, you know, you didn’t jump in the shower in the morning and wash your hair. It was different. So she was able to make a living and she certainly saw the potential for her to be independent. She didn’t have to sit there.¹⁰⁶

Not only could power in the family shift from men to women, but also from parents to children. Since the schools operated in English, children learned English quickly. This meant that the youth had a much easier time integrating into Shanghai society, where English was the main language of commerce. Few people outside the refugee community spoke German, so knowledge of English meant that the youth could communicate more easily with the non-refugee population. Many parents had to rely on their children to help do basic daily tasks, such as buy groceries and negotiate prices for water. This was instrumental in shifting the power structure within families. “Most younger persons, like me, had to mature early,” Charles Klotzer recalls. “Having command of the English language and being the only wage earned in the family, plus the particular dynamics in our family and the advanced age of my parents, made it natural for me to be in charge of

¹⁰⁵ Arnold Fuchs Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 18, 1997, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Gorham, Maine, 35.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

family affairs.”¹⁰⁷ Additionally, once the youth graduated from school and began to look for work, they had an easier time finding opportunities because of their grasp of this international language. Thus, in many families the children became the main breadwinners.

Otto Schnepf’s story illustrates how this shift played out in some families:

During that period I was sixteen years old. And that’s amazing really, in a sense... I was very dominated by my father in Vienna, I got many, many negative messages about my being stupid, and my not being capable, and so forth, which many, many fathers do. I was not the type of son that my father wanted... so I accepted that I was stupid, I guess, for awhile, because I, fact is, I almost failed my entrance examination to the gymnasium in Vienna, and I was very poor at mathematics, and you know, which was sort of dumb! And, well, you know, there are many interpretations one can put on those things, in no way absolute, but my...my one interpretation is that through this breakdown and through this emigration, my father simply lost power. And he was no longer a figure of power. So I got out from under that, and I suddenly was very good in school, you know, so that may have been ugly truth. But, so, it’s interesting in this context that by that time, and I was considered a very strong, an important element...

As it turned out, I earned quite a lot, and I, I overdid it completely way beyond what was necessary, I’m sure. And I just took on this responsibility basically. And then, so I was, I became the money, main money-earner, you see, of the family.¹⁰⁸

Difficulty Coping with Life in Shanghai

The refugees had to become accustomed to a completely different standard of living and were forced to adapt to life without many things that they had taken for granted in Germany. Many rose to the challenge and did their best to handle their new surroundings. However, others became terribly despondent and had trouble or completely

¹⁰⁷ Charles L. Klotzer, *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*, ed. Berl Falbaum (Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005), 104.

¹⁰⁸ Otto Schnepf, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 7, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Los Angeles, CA.

failed to cope with the circumstances. Former refugee W. Michael Blumenthal recalls one such person:

What turned out is that the fellow who had been the editor of a large newspaper, for example, did not have the inner resources within himself to cope with the situation that he faced, which meant not just that he remained poor, there were, everybody was poor, but that he degenerated as a, disintegrated as a person and as a personality. Stopped to wash, became obsessed with eating because he was starving, and became really a pitiful, pitiful human being. Whereas the other guy somehow, you know, it's like the guy in his jail cell who exercises, who always tries to keep fit, you know, tries to keep fit, tries to go out and hustle, do things, and so forth.¹⁰⁹

Ernest Culman came to Shanghai with his father, who had been a prominent doctor in Berlin. Upon arrival his father grew depressed:

My memory of my father in Shanghai is seeing him seated in a chair, mouth half open, most of the day. So terribly depressed that he could not support his family. And his dream had been to send my brother and I to the finest colleges in Germany. All his dreams just collapsed one right after the other, and he couldn't cope with it. Other people were able to cope with it, but he couldn't or he didn't. I don't know.¹¹⁰

Many of the refugees who were unable to cope were those who lived more permanently in the various *heime*. Ernest Culman's father was one of those people, even though he was one of the few professionals who came with a job that was transferable to the new surroundings.

The difficulty in coping with the surroundings, loss of work, and changes in power relations, resulted in an increasing number of divorces among refugees. Ernest Heppner explains that "the general atmosphere of hopelessness caused some errant behavior that

¹⁰⁹ Blumenthal Interview, 18.

¹¹⁰ Ernest E. Culman., Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Oct. 18, 1997, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Rockville, Maryland, 30.

resulted in an increase in the numbers of divorces... quarrels and fights were unavoidable in these close living quarters.”¹¹¹ Arnold Fuchs recalls the difficulties between his parents that led to their eventual split:

My parents had a rough time with each other and I can't tell you exactly how long, how many months into living at Chaoufoong Road, my parents split up... They broke up. It was difficult, I was, I mean, they were living in this one room with maybe four, at least four other couples and there were, and there was no place to go to have a discussion in private other than walk around in the evening [unclear]. They walked around and screamed at each other, and it was, I listened to that and concerned and I was afraid. It was hard. It was traumatic.¹¹²

Gender Differences

In general women adjusted to life in Shanghai more easily than their male counterparts. Women typically had fewer ties to their occupations in Europe and were less involved in the German economy.¹¹³ Many of the men had professional careers that they were unable to practice in Shanghai, which had been an important part of their identity. This identity loss left many feeling worthless and depressed. Fewer women had been professionals and thus did not have to come to terms with this particular identity issue. In fact, women more often than men had jobs and skills that were transferable to Shanghai and thus were able to integrate more easily into this new society. W. Michael Blumenthal remembers that his mother “was doing all right” but that his father “wasn't doing much of anything.”¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 85.

¹¹² Fuchs Interview, 9-10.

¹¹³ Kaplan, Marion A. "Jewish Women in Nazi Germany: Daily Life, Daily Struggles, 1933-1939." *Feminist Studies* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 579-606. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178020>, 592.

¹¹⁴ Blumenthal Interview 21.

Another important factor influencing this gender difference was that often the flight from Germany represented a traumatic and sudden break for the men, while many women had long anticipated the need to emigrate. Typically women were more likely than men to recognize the growing danger of the Nazi Party. Historian Marion Kaplan explains that “although less integrated than men into work and culture, women were more integrated into their community... Women’s constant contacts with their own and other people’s children and the community probably alerted them to the warning signals that come through interpersonal relations – and they took those signals very seriously.”¹¹⁵

Often women recognized the rising tide of anti-Semitism and thus pushed their husbands to emigrate, but the men refused. “He laughed at me and argued that such an insane dictatorship could not last long,” one woman recalled of her husband’s response to her plea to emigrate. “He was so certain there would be a positive outcome.”¹¹⁶ Many men thought that the Nazi Government would be short lived and that the good German people would rise up and overthrow them. However, *Kristallnacht* showed that the general German public supported the anti-Semitic policies, and the subsequent internment of Jewish men in concentration camps demonstrated how bad things really were. Many of the men who went to Shanghai had been placed in the concentration camps, and emigration was their only route out of the camps. These men who went to Shanghai to escape incarceration were forced to come to terms with their rejection from German society almost instantaneously, while women often had acknowledged this rejection and separation from the German nation for much longer.

¹¹⁵ Kaplan, “Jewish Women in Nazi Germany,” 593.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 594.

The populations in the various *heime* as well as numerous survivor interviews demonstrate this gender difference. In survivor memoirs and interviews many people reference male adult figures becoming depressed and failing to cope with the new life in Shanghai.¹¹⁷ Examination of populations in the *heime* seen in Table 1 (page 25) shows that in April of 1939 there were 40% more men than women living in the various *heime*.

Restoration of Normal Life

Although some individuals had difficulty coping with their new circumstances, others adjusted more readily to the changes and, despite the circumstances, managed to maintain as much of a “normal” life as possible. “Although the shock of transition from comfortable, well-to-do conditions in Europe to a far more primitive existence was understandably great,” recalls Heppner, “most of the refugees retained their optimism and good spirits.”¹¹⁸ Although the refugees experienced a traumatic shift in location and standard of living, for most members of the community typical daily life continued. The Jewish refugees stayed actively involved in cultural activities, attending plays, musical concerts, and even comedy shows. They also played games to entertain themselves. Henry Rossetty remembers how “during the day I played chess with my drummer, and the chess figures I made myself out of this yarn.”¹¹⁹ Others recall gambling and playing games such as poker and roulette. The journals of Fred Marcus illustrate the numerous activities in which the refugees participated. He writes of going to parties and movies, reading books

¹¹⁷ Examples include Blumenthal Interview and Culman Interview.

¹¹⁸ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 84.

¹¹⁹ Henry Rossetty, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 8, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Laguna Hills, CA, 19.

from the library, and attending lectures, including one on physics and another on Chinese culture.¹²⁰ Some adults attended English language lessons, while others went to the Gregg Business School or took dance lessons.

In addition to attending functions and participating in activities, refugees socialized at cafés and bars. They established friendships, and many commonly gossiped among themselves. “Everybody knew everybody, and there was more gossip going on than you can possibly imagine. Gossip was the main entertainment,” remembers one woman.¹²¹ Several refugees even recall a “Miss Shanghai” beauty pageant held in one of the European style nightclubs.¹²² People fell in love and there were many marriages.¹²³ Even during the ghetto period, wedding ceremonies were performed. Many young boys were Bar Mitzvahed and babies had *brises* (circumcision ceremonies.)

Celebration of Jewish holidays continued and often even became important to refugees who had not actively celebrated in Germany. These celebrations were typically community activities that fostered group camaraderie. The German refugees had large Purim celebrations and attended services for Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah. Hanukkah was important to the refugees, and although many people did not have menorahs to light Hanukkah candles, community celebrations helped people maintain Jewish traditions:

¹²⁰ Fred Marcus, Audrey F. Marcus, and Rena Krasno. *Survival in Shanghai: the Journals of Fred Marcus, 1939-49*. Berkeley, CA: Pacific View Press, 2008, 72-3, 82

¹²¹ Lisbeth Loewenberg, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 21, 1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Shanghai, 17.

¹²² Westheimer, Susan, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 8, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Newport Beach, CA.

¹²³ Numerous interviews and books mention marriages in Shanghai. One specific interview is Loewenberg who says “people did get married all the, constantly, I mean, people did get married” p. 7.

Fortunately, there were a number of Hanukkah activities that took place almost each year which enabled children to partake in the “Festival of Lights.” Many of the functions were sponsored by the more well to do Baghdadi Jews including the Kadoories. For the adult audience, there were larger performances and plays held in local movie theaters and in the Heime, with some of the most popular entertainers on stage.¹²⁴

While many refugees found themselves traumatized by their situation, the common plight of having to adjust to new conditions helped others forge a new community based on their common heritage.

¹²⁴ Harpuder, Ralph. "Hanukkah Some 60 Years Ago; The Ghetto Era." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/some_60_years_ago.htm.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Heterogeneous Community: Differences Among Jewish Refugees

The Shanghai Jewish community was a microcosm of world Jewry with its various internal clashes between Zionist and non-Zionist, observant and secular, [and] reformed and orthodox.¹²⁵

Despite their common persecution and refugee status, the German Jewish population of Shanghai was far from a homogenous community. Although both the Austrians and Germans came from similar cultural heritage and both spoke German, there were tensions between the two groups. “It was terrible in Shanghai, the Yeckes¹²⁶ and the Austrians. I never knew it before, I never experienced it before. They were like enemies at times,” former refugee Doris Grey remembers. “Some of the people, I don’t know, some times they were, they envied each other, because one was a little better off than the next one.”¹²⁷ “Ex-Germans criticized ex-Austrians for their sloppy ways,” recalls W. Michael Blumenthal, while “the Austrians laughed at them for their Prussians affectations.”¹²⁸ Each nationality even hosted its own soccer team, and the two had “a sport rivalry that was akin to that of the Yankees and the Red Sox and the Giants and the Jews,” explains Leo Meyer, a member of the Berlin soccer team.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Anthony Hughes. "Sport and Jewish Identity in the Shanghai Jewish Community 1939-1949." *International Sports Studies* 22, no. 1 (2000): 43.

¹²⁶ Yeckes is a slightly derogatory term in reference to German Jews.

¹²⁷ Doris Grey, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 26, 1991, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Laguna Hills, CA, 44.

¹²⁸ W. Michael Blumenthal. *The Invisible Wall: Mystery of the Germans and Jews, a Personal Exploration*. Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998, 383.

¹²⁹ Lena Williams. "800 Refugees at Reunion Recall Life in the Ghetto of Shanghai." *The New York Times*, September 6, 1985.

Within the community there was a wide range of religious observance from Orthodox to completely secular, and there was often animosity between national, religious, or political groups. Many of the Jews looked down on those who had converted from Judaism. “Even the assimilated Jew, like my father, looked down very much on a Jew who converted,” explains former refugee Melitta Colland. “You stayed what you were born, and that’s it.”¹³⁰ While the more “assimilated” Jews looked down on the Orthodox, “the Orthodox felt superior to both [the Germans and Austrians], and disapproved of the assimilated Jews’ un-Jewish habits.”¹³¹

Zionism was another cause of conflict in the community. Not only were there tensions between Zionists and non-Zionists, but also different Zionist groups were at odds with one another. “The Betar [a Right-wing militaristic Zionist group] was very aggressive and would often cause con-, what you call, confrontations with Zionist groups, like for example, typically like Poale Zion or Hashomer, that were left-oriented Zionist groups.”¹³²

The wide range of family backgrounds, experiences and affiliations in Shanghai can be explored through examination of the stories of three individuals: Sigmund Tobias, W. Michael Blumenthal, and Alfred Zunterstein.

Sigmund Tobias

¹³⁰ Melitta Colland, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Sept. 20, 1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Portland, Maine, 31.

¹³¹ Blumenthal, *The Invisible Wall*, 383.

¹³² Alfred and Eva Zunterstein, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, May. 28, 1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Salzburg, Germany.

Sigmund Tobias left Berlin at the age of six and remained in Shanghai for ten years. Although Tobias was born in Berlin and lived in Germany, his parents were Polish immigrants and he considered himself Polish. Tobias's parents decided to flee Germany following *Kristallnacht*, but his father had immigrated to Germany illegally and as a stateless refugee he was unable to get a visa to leave the country. He tried to cross the border into Belgium, but several days after he left for Belgium a "printed postcard arrived stamped with a huge swastika; my father's name was typed into a blank space on the back. The card informed us that he was a prisoner in the Dachau concentration camp."¹³³ They were informed that he could be released from Dachau only if he would leave Germany immediately. So Tobias writes:

My mother took me along to make the rounds of many consulates hoping to find someone who would give us a visa, even a temporary one, to get my father released from Dachau. We were refused everywhere.

In the waiting room of one consulate we overheard some people whispering that no visas were needed to enter the city of Shanghai in China. We had never heard of Shanghai before, but once my mother learned that the rumor was actually true she booked a passage on the next ship to China.¹³⁴

His father went to Shanghai and five months later Tobias and his mother left Germany. They travelled to Italy and then went on a luxurious Italian ship and arrived weeks later in Shanghai. Tobias's father and a friend had taken out a long-term lease on a house and were renting rooms to refugees. This and another leased property became the family's source of income.

¹³³ Sigmund Tobias, *Strange Haven: a Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 3.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

Although almost all of the refugees in 1939 were from Central Europe, Tobias and his family spent time with the small group of refugees from Eastern European backgrounds. The family did not socialize with the Central European Jews:

Even though some of the people living in our house were born in Germany and Austria, we did not have very much to do with them outside of the usual daily greetings. All of our friends were originally from Poland and other Eastern European countries.¹³⁵

Although the German and the Polish Jews sought refuge in the same foreign city, longtime tensions between the two groups remained:

When we were among friends my parents often made fun of the Jews from Germany and of their habits. German Jews were always called *yeckes* behind their backs... On Yom Kippur I often prayed for forgiveness for all the bad things I had said about *yeckes* throughout the year, but since everyone in the yeshiva also made fun of *yeckes*, just the way my parents did, I joined them in poking fun at the German Jews as soon as the Day of Atonement was over.¹³⁶

When Tobias and his family first arrived in 1939, there were very few Polish refugees in Shanghai; most refugees with a Polish background were from families like the Tobiases, who had actually moved to Shanghai from Germany. However, this changed in 1941 with the arrival of approximately one thousand Polish refugees in Shanghai.¹³⁷ These new refugees were very different from the German refugee community; not only did they speak Yiddish instead of German, but most were Orthodox. Over 400 Talmudic students,

¹³⁵ Ibid., 82.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 82.

¹³⁷ The history of their flight from Poland through Lithuania and subsequent journey to Shanghai, has already been well documented, and, this paper will not cover the details of this journey. For more information on this subject see both David Kranzler. *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*. New York: Yeshiva University Press : Distributed by Sifria Distributors, 1976, 347- 335. and Marcia R Ristaino. *Port of Last Resort: the Diaspora Communities of Shanghai*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, 138-144. which have good accounts of the journey. Additionally, the article "Rescue via the Far East: The Attempt to Save Polish Rabbis and Yeshivah Students, 1939-41" by Efraim Zuroff is a strong piece on the subject.

faculty members, and rabbis were among those who arrived in Shanghai that year. The entire Mirrer Yeshiva (a rabbinical school), the only yeshiva to survive the Holocaust completely intact, was among this new group, as were two smaller groups of yeshiva students who were Chassidic Orthodox Jews.

Members of the Mirrer Yeshiva looked and dressed much like the other refugees, except that their heads were always covered by a hat or skullcap. But the Lubavitcher and Lubliner Chassidim looked very different from anyone else in Shanghai. Outdoors, in any kind of weather, their heads were always covered by large black hats, under which a skullcap could often be seen sticking out. The Chassidim never wore neckties, and their clothing consisted of dark pants and caftans rather than jackets... Their tsitsis, a garment worn by men with fringes on its four corners, usually could be seen sticking out of the slit in their caftans. The Chassidim shaved their heads, but were bearded and had long sidelocks that were sometimes tied up and tucked behind their ears...After their arrival, it was pretty funny to see the Chassidim dressed in their traditional garb being pulled through the streets of Hongkew in rickshaws.¹³⁸

The yeshiva students continued to live much as they had while in Poland, studying full-time, and receiving aid from various Jewish organizations.. Most of the German refugees had nothing to do with the yeshiva students, but Tobias became fascinated by them. He enjoyed discussing Talmudic questions with the students and decided he wanted to join them. “When I told my parents that I wanted to go to the yeshiva and drop out of the Kadoorie school [in which he was initially enrolled], they became angry and would not even talk about it.”¹³⁹ Tobias persisted, but his “mother kept repeating that she had not left her home in Poland for Berlin and then escaped to Shanghai only to have me return to the

¹³⁸ Ibid., 38.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 47.

life of a yeshiva student as if we lived in a Polish shtetl.”¹⁴⁰ However, the yeshiva school had an advantage:

My parents had often told me that in Poland yeshiva students were so poor that they were forced to rely on the charity of others to survive. The opposite was now the case in the ghetto. While most of the refugees went hungry the families of the yeshiva students bought milk, butter, bottles of cream, and most of the available kosher meat. They appeared much healthier than the rest of us. It was now taken for granted that the yeshivas were receiving money from America.¹⁴¹

In the fall of 1942 Tobias began to attend the Mirrer Yeshiva. He explains the likely reason for his parents' change of heart: “I realized that their worry about having enough food for me must have helped to convince them to let me leave the Kadoorie school. They must have hoped that the yeshiva would share some of the money being sent to them once I became a full-time student there.”¹⁴²

Throughout the war, Tobias spent almost all of his time at the yeshiva and was preoccupied by his Talmud studies. He recounts that during the summer of 1945, when there were air raids on Shanghai, “there were a lot of things on my mind . . . I was afraid of the bombardments and worried about my dysentery and about how little money my parents had left. But in the back of my mind lurked my approaching bar mitzvah.”¹⁴³ Despite the circumstances – poverty, disease, war – he remained focused on religious studies. He became so religiously observant that even though his family was Orthodox and kosher, “prodding my parents to practice every requirement down to the last detail caused

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 56; A shtetl was a small Jewish community, a village or town, in Poland and Russia. See Yehuda Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl*

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 79.

¹⁴² Ibid., 57.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 90.

arguments at home."¹⁴⁴ For example, he did not want his father to walk more than four steps without a skullcap on his head. Tobias did not play any sports, "have friends who were not religious or... do anything that did not deal with prayer or study of the Talmud."¹⁴⁵

Tobias's religious beliefs were dealt a serious blow following the war. "Shortly after the war's end news that millions of Jews had been killed in German concentrations camps trickled into Shanghai... shudders of fear and horror rattled through the ghetto."¹⁴⁶ "After the news about our family in Europe reached us, it was hard for me to think of God as merciful. My confusion often turned to anger and I usually skipped over those words in my prayers."¹⁴⁷ After the departure of the yeshiva students, who were among the first to leave Shanghai, Tobias began to "hear a great deal of anger and resentment at the yeshivas."¹⁴⁸

Many refugees were now saying that the people in the yeshivas were hypocrites who hid their greed with religion, yet did not care if the other Jews in the ghetto lived or died¹⁴⁹ ... It was confusing to hear how angry people were at the yeshivas, and I sometimes felt ashamed to have joined one... I was flooded with mixed feelings... My faith was shaken when the news first reached us in Shanghai about the extermination of my aunts, uncles, cousins, and the six million other Jews. Now it became even more

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 71.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 74.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 93.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 98.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 112.

¹⁴⁹ For a different view of the assistance from the American Orthodox community see Kranzler, David. "Orthodoxy's Finest Hour: Rescue Efforts During the Holocaust." Review of *The Response of Orthodox Jewry in the United States to the Holocaust: the Activities of the Vaad Ha-hatzala Rescue Committee, 1939-1945* by Efraim Zuroff. *Jewish Action*, Fall 2002.

difficult to remain religious when I heard what was being said about the people I had admired so much.”¹⁵⁰

Tobias went to the United States and

broke away from Jewish religious organizations entirely. During college I was active in Hillel (Jewish college students organization) but never entered a synagogue voluntarily though, in order to please my parents I joined them for the High Holy Day services at their Orthodox synagogue. I am amused to recall that during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur I was more interested in the latest scores of crucial final season, or World Series baseball games that coincided with the High Holidays than in the prayers.¹⁵¹

Tobias did not join any Jewish congregation for close to thirty years. He and his wife “regularly contributed to appeals for Israel and for secular Jewish organizations, but did not join or contribute to any religious ones.” Tobias notes “there is a huge contradiction in my Jewishness. I feel like one of the most Jewish people in the world, but trying to make me feel guilty so that I would return to the faith is repugnant to me, and has made me avoid any contact with Jewish organized religious groups, and even most Jewish organizations.”¹⁵²

Although Tobias largely lost faith in God, he remained connected to his Jewish identity.

W. Michael Blumenthal

W. Michael Blumenthal’s background and experience in Shanghai were completely different from that of Sigmund Tobias. Blumenthal was born in Oranienburg, Germany in

¹⁵⁰ Tobias, *Strange Haven*, 112-3.

¹⁵¹ Tobias, Sigmund. "Fear, Faith, and Community." *Berkshire Jewish Voice* 19, no. 1 (2010). <http://www.press.uillinois.edu/wordpress/?p=7137>.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

1926, and moved with his family to Berlin around 1930. Blumenthal explains that his parents were

Totally un-Jewish, they knew little of things Jewish, they never went to the synagogue, they did not belong to the Jewish community, and, and they were always somewhat embarrassed, I think, about their Jewishness and, in fact, had many opinions about Jews which border on the anti-Semitic, I believe. That's strong. So obviously they weren't anti-Semites, my parents, but they shared the same prejudicial views about some types of Jews, put it that way. And there would be expressions in the family, *Jüdische Manieren*, those are a pejorative term for a certain type of Jewish man, is to be too loud, too aggressive and so forth.¹⁵³

Due to the Nuremberg laws, Blumenthal's parents were forced to send him to a Jewish school in Berlin, which is where he had his "first exposure to Jewish religion and the traditions that were totally absent in [his] family."¹⁵⁴ It was at this point that Blumenthal began to identify himself as a "Jew" and accept that Jewishness (although not necessarily Judaism) was a part of his heritage, a trend that would continue in Shanghai during the ghetto period. He says that "during that period beginning maybe in '37 and certainly in '38 as far as I was concerned, I would say my perspective changed, clearly because I was amongst nothing but Jewish children. It changed, first of all I learned some Hebrew, which I never knew before... I learned to sing some songs and say the blessing and stuff like that."¹⁵⁵

Blumenthal and his family left on a boat for Shanghai following *Kristallnacht*. However, Blumenthal's arrival in Shanghai was very different from that of many of the other Jewish refugees:

¹⁵³ Blumenthal, W. Michael. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 3, 1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Berlin, 2.

¹⁵⁴ Blumenthal, *The Invisible Wall*, 342.

¹⁵⁵ Blumenthal Interview, 4.

My parents...had about three hundred U.S. dollars when they arrived in Shanghai, which put them into the monied class as compared to those who had nothing...who arrived literally totally destitute in Shanghai, and then, hence were sent on a truck to Hongkew and to a camp. Whereas we got into rickshaws and instead of going that-a-way, we went this-a-way, we went to the left rather than the right, and went to the International Settlement and the French Concession and found a room where to live, which means we were better off.¹⁵⁶

While many Jews were living in destitute conditions in Hongkew immediately upon arrival, Blumenthal was lucky enough to live in a “fairly large” room in the French Concession, which separated him from the rest of the refugee community.¹⁵⁷

Blumenthal, likely because of his parents' money and his accommodation in the French Concession, attended the Sephardic Jewish School instead of the school created specifically for the refugee children. Unlike other refugee children, Blumenthal was not a member of the Jewish Boy Scout troop. “I didn’t want to belong to the Jewish [Boy Scout] troop [which] my parents considered to be not quite as good.”¹⁵⁸ He was welcomed into the Third Troop of the Boy Scouts, which consisted of French, British, and Russian boys. Blumenthal was very proud to be a member of the Third Troop, as it was a sign of acceptance into a higher social stratum than that of the other refugees.¹⁵⁹ The conditions Blumenthal lived in before 1943 serve as stark contrast to the situation suffered by the Jews in Hongkew, especially those in the *heime*.

Blumenthal’s situation changed dramatically after the 1943 Proclamation, which established the designated zone for stateless refugees. He, like all the other German Jewish

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 5.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 16.

refugees living outside the accepted area, was forced to move. Until this point he had been separate from the other refugees, enjoying a higher quality of life. However, after the Proclamation his family was forced to sell their house in the French Concession and move into cramped quarters in the ghetto.

We got for what would have been a reasonable apartment, I mean, *you* wouldn't consider it reasonable, but by refugee standards it was, on the Rue Maresca... we got, on Chusan Road, a room out back, no bathroom or anything, we had to go down, a communal kitchen where everybody in the house cooked, and there were maybe eight families in the house and one kitchen where they cooked.¹⁶⁰

Before the establishment of the ghetto Blumenthal worked in a Swiss Chemical Factory, which was located outside of the designated area. After the Proclamation Blumenthal, like all other refugees who worked outside of the area, had to apply for a pass to leave the ghetto. At first he continued working at the factory, but eventually obtaining a pass became too difficult and he was forced to leave his job. He then joined the many other Jewish refugees who were unemployed. After his move into Hongkew Blumenthal became part of the “ghetto culture,”¹⁶¹ as he now lived among and interacted with the other Jewish refugees and participated in Jewish cultural activities.

Alfred Zunterstein

Alfred Zunterstein was a Viennese Jew who migrated without his parents to Shanghai in October 1938 when he was just sixteen. In Austria Zunterstein's father was a socialist, and he was influenced by his father's political persuasion. He actively fought against the rise of fascism in Austria. “I was a member of the Betar for a long time and the

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 23.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 24.

Betar had training camps... and they had very intense training, because the Betar had the Haganah... [which] was more military... We had not only this training in boxing and judo and jiu-jitsu... and also had long night marches.”¹⁶² Nazis would often try to interfere with Betar activities, but Zunterstein fought back:

We had a summer camp at Velden am Worthersee... they’d (young Nazis) come at night and they’d make noises and we had to go out and kind of shove them out of the way and, and on some of the trips we made into the Wienerwald, you know, marches we made, we ran into Nazis, and we had to have a little physical, what you call shuffle, and so on... I remember one time we got in and found out that there were about eight or ten Hitler youths sitting in there. So we got into a shoving fight with them.¹⁶³

During the Nazi takeover of Austria he tried to resist. “There were a lot of people fighting against it... on Friday we were still demonstrating and at ten o’clock we got news that the war was lost.”¹⁶⁴ Immediately following the Nazi takeover Zunterstein decided he needed to leave the country and immediately sought a way out. A relative of his was already living in Shanghai and “he wrote a letter and he said, ‘If you have any need to go somewhere, come to Shanghai, because it’s a free port, and the war is over and things are safe and they actually do need qualified people to work here.’”¹⁶⁵ So Zunterstein decided to leave; however, his family insisted on staying behind. Several months later his family realized the danger of living in Austria and went to join him in China.

Zunterstein was able to find a job immediately upon arrival in Shanghai and also quickly became active in the Shanghai Volunteer Corps (SVC), a voluntary militia set up

¹⁶² Alfred and Eva Zunterstein, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, May. 28,1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Salzburg, Germany.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

by various countries to protect their trade missions in Shanghai. The SVC was in charge of defending the International Settlement.¹⁶⁶ A Jewish Company of the SVC formed in 1932 and the “Jewish Company took full part in day and night policing operations”¹⁶⁷ during times of local riots. Zunterstein was a perfect candidate for service in the SVC. “I’d been in the Betar... I had training in boxing and jiu-jitsu, and he [a recruiter] thought I’d be just the right guy, you know, to be in the Shanghai Volunteer Corps.”¹⁶⁸ Zunterstein enjoyed his time in the SVC. “I was so proud, you know, I’d come home and I had a rifle, [laughs] you know, a rifle and a steel hammer and a bayonet, and I felt like a, you know, like I was somebody.”¹⁶⁹ Additionally he thought that the military aspect of the SVC would be beneficial. “I thought that the military training, you know, was so important for a person in my situation, because you never knew what could happen, you know. I wanted the military training.”¹⁷⁰ Zunterstein participated in the SVC from several months after his arrival to when the Japanese disbanded the SVC in 1942 following Pearl Harbor.

After the proclamation he joined the *Pao Chia*. The Foreign *Pao Chia* was organized in September 1942 “as part of the city-wide plan for self-policing and collective responsibility imposed by the Japanese on the city.”¹⁷¹ When the ghetto was established the Jewish *Pao Chia* became responsible for guarding the exits of the restricted area and

¹⁶⁶ Martin Sugarman. "Hagedud Ha-Sini: The Jewish Company of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, 1932-42." *Jewish Historical Studies* 41 (2007): 183.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹⁶⁸ Zunterstein Interview.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis, & Jews*, 493.

ensuring Jews did not leave the area without a pass. Zunterstein was selected as a youth leader of the Youth *Pao Chia* because of his experience in the SVC. As a leader he had slightly more freedom during this period and “got out several times without having a pass.”¹⁷²

Zunterstein continued to participate in boxing and even became a Chinese boxing champion. While living in Shanghai he met his wife, Eva Zunterstein. Eva’s flight to Shanghai was unique in that her family fled Germany soon after the Nazis came to power and settled in Italy. Although a German Jew, Eva arrived in Shanghai fluent in only Italian. The two met at the Jewish Community Center and married in Shanghai.

Juedische Gemeinde: A Uniting Community Organization

To unite the community and help the refugees deal with the pressures and conditions in Shanghai, a Jewish religious and cultural body was created. The establishment of the *Juedische Gemeinde* dramatically helped create a definitive community as the Jewish refugees now had an overarching agency to govern their lives. Although there were divisions among various Jewish factions, the *Juedische Gemeinde* brought members of different groups together to create a unified Jewish community organization.

¹⁷² Zunterstein Interview.

The *Juedische Gemeinde* was formed in October 1938, and held its first democratic election for members of the board on June 29, 1941. The organization aimed to serve both the religious and secular needs of the all members of the community.¹⁷³

It didn't matter whether you were a holy-roller Hasidic or a secular Zionist, the *Kehilla* [*Gemeinde* in Hebrew] was the organization that made sure there was a Jewish place to be born, kosher meat to eat, Jewish schools, marriage and death certificates, and all other Jewish community matters.¹⁷⁴

The *Juedische Gemeinde* also had a legal department that operated an arbitration board, and the Jewish refugees were considered under the “jurisdiction” of this Jewish body. “Disputes were brought to this court, and arbitration was binding on the parties involved, though provision was made for appeals. The arbitration board became the legal backbone of our community.”¹⁷⁵ Having an all-inclusive governing body helped create a cohesive Jewish community.

¹⁷³ For more information on the formation and activities of the *Juedische Gemeinde* see Kranzler, *Japanese Nazis, & Jews*, 410, 415.

¹⁷⁴ Samuel Iwry. *To Wear the Dust of War: from Bialystok to Shanghai to the Promised Land - an Oral History*. Edited by L. J. H. Kelley. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004,108.

¹⁷⁵ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 92.

CHAPTER FIVE

Maintaining a Central European Identity: Germanic Culture Comes to Shanghai

Out of the rubble a new settlement emerged. Entire streets and lanes were cleared and the houses rebuilt with material from the ruins. Grocery stores and delicatessens, sidewalks cafes, and tailor shops opened. An area of several blocks around Chusan Road became known as “Little Vienna.”¹⁷⁶

Despite the differences among the refugees, they worked together to create a viable community and cultural life. The Jewish refugee community attempted to ignore the hardships and instead live as they would have under better circumstances. Although many of the refugees had distanced themselves from their German national identity, they continued to hold on to familiar German social and cultural customs. The refugees recreated institutions from their homeland and adapted them to their new surroundings.

Within just two and a half years, entire streets in the Hongkew section of Shanghai were completely rebuilt in the style of Berlin and Vienna. Amid Chinese and Japanese storefronts, an increasing number of stores with signs in German arose throughout Hongkew. Refugees rented storefronts using loans from Sir Victor Sassoon and created a familiar neighborhood. Some of the first businesses to open catered to the basic needs of the refugees, including “Alex Fessler’s European hair salon, Springer’s Broadway Shoes, and Hans Schwarz Quick restaurant, the first German-style restaurant in Hongkew.”¹⁷⁷ Other businesses that arose to meet refugee demand included a butcher shop, grocery stores, “tailors who turned old suits and shirts inside out and Flickschusters (cobblers) who

¹⁷⁶ Ernest G Heppner. *Shanghai Refuge: a Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, 84.

¹⁷⁷ James R Ross. *Escape to Shanghai: a Jewish Community in China*. New York: Free Press, 1994, 25.

could salvage torn shoes and soles.”¹⁷⁸ Margit Hirsch’s father opened a used furniture shop in Hongkew¹⁷⁹ and Siegbert Wollstein remembers frequenting a German pharmacy.¹⁸⁰

Cafes were some of the most successful European style businesses created in the Hongkew area. A “café culture” developed and, as Blumenthal explains, cafes were “where we went and that’s where [we] got information... [and] met other refugees.”¹⁸¹ The refugees recreated familiar European cafes in a completely new environment. “There were great many cafés, and particularly the Viennese brought with them the institution of the *Kaffeehaus*,”¹⁸² Ralph Hirsch recalls.

I learned to appreciate various types of *Torte* and so on. Some of them managed remarkably well to get ingredients to be able to bake *Linzertorte* and *Sachertorte* and all those other good things that the Viennese have contributed to civilization. I remember that sometimes my parents went to join their friends and shared a piece of *Torte*, or something like that.¹⁸³

The most popular cafés were Café Louis on Bubbling Ward Road, the Roof Garden, which James Ross describes as a place where refugees “spent the afternoons drinking tea and discussing current events,”¹⁸⁴ and Zum Weissen Roessl (The White Horse.)

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 71.

¹⁷⁹ No Title, 1929-1992; Margit Hirsch Collection; ME 1052; Leo Baeck Institute.

¹⁸⁰ Siegbert and Werner Wollstein, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, July 28, 1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 36. Other notable businesses included a cigar store, a stationery shop and a shuttle service that ran a car between the Garden Bridge and Wayside Road. More information about various businesses established by the refugee community can be found in several books, notably Ross, *Escape to Shanghai*.

¹⁸¹ W. Michael Blumenthal. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 3, 1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Berlin, 13.

¹⁸² Ralph Hirsch. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 22, 1994, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Shanghai, 15.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ross, *Escape from Shanghai*, 227.

The atmosphere in these cafes was similar to those found in Vienna; sometimes performances took place in the cafes, while other times refugees could seek solace in a book or gossip with a neighbor. For many, European style cafes became an escape from the harsh conditions of Shanghai. Because of this, refugees flocked to cafes; one of the founders of Café Europe recalls that the café was “a booming place.”¹⁸⁵ Not only were cafes where the refugees could connect with one another, these new businesses also provided jobs for some of the refugees. Their owners were fairly well off compared to their fellow refugees, and other refugees got jobs as cooks or waitresses.¹⁸⁶

The rise of the cafes also illustrates the modifications the refugees made to familiar institutions in order to establish German businesses in an unfamiliar setting. Refugees worked to create familiar German and Austrian foods, but often were forced to improvise ingredients based on the availability of items in Shanghai. Items that were difficult to obtain included butter, milk and coffee. Additionally, due to sanitary conditions raw fruits and vegetables were inedible, so all dishes that included these ingredients had to be cooked. Popular German products unavailable in Shanghai were recreated; for example, one refugee made *Sarolli* chocolate to replace *Sarotti*, a popular chocolate in Berlin unavailable in Shanghai.¹⁸⁷ Despite the difficulty of obtaining select items, the refugees

¹⁸⁵ Fanny and George Borenstein, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, February 22, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Del Ray Beach, FL, 9.

¹⁸⁶ Susan Westheimer, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 8, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Newport Beach, CA, 8.

¹⁸⁷ Susanne Wiedemann. 2006. *Transnational Encounters with "Amerika": German Jewish Refugees' Identity Formation in Berlin and Shanghai, 1939-1949*. PhD Dissertation, Brown University. Providence, Rhode Island: ProQuest/UMI. (Publication No. 3227968.), 230.

worked to make these cafes and the items served in them as similar to what was found in Europe as possible.¹⁸⁸

The establishment of German language lending libraries was a very important achievement for the refugee community. Since there was widespread unemployment, access to books was important for many people who had little else to do. Additionally, it was another way to stay reconnected to their prior European life. There were several libraries, including one at the Shanghai Jewish Club, some smaller establishments in the *Heime*, and larger for-profit libraries created by refugee businessmen. Owners of these paid lending libraries purchased books from refugees who brought them from Germany and also bought pirated German language books from Chinese merchants.¹⁸⁹ A bookmobile even opened in the Ward Road *Heim* and served over 1,000 refugee patrons.¹⁹⁰

Extension of Central European Cultural Activities into Shanghai

The refugees found it important to bring cultural activities from Germany and Austria and reestablish them in Shanghai. As terrible as the conditions got, the refugees turned to familiar cultural institutions for entertainment, as well as relief from their surrounding environment.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Lisbeth Loewenberg, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 21, 1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Shanghai, 10.

¹⁹⁰ David Kranzler. *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*. New York: Yeshiva University Press : Distributed by Sifria Distributors, 1976, 398.

The Press

The Central European Jewish refugees created a thriving press, which not only illustrates the intellectual nature of the refugees and their desire to remain connected to their homelands, but also shows the heterogeneity of the group.

When the refugees began to arrive in Shanghai there was one Jewish paper, *Israel's Messenger*, which was published in English for the Baghdadi Jewish community. The incoming refugees, for the most part, spoke little English and thus there was a demand for the creation of a German language paper. The first paper published by a German immigrant was the *Shanghai Woche*, which first appeared on March 30, 1939, one month after the publisher Wolfgang Fischer arrived from Berlin. The paper contained reports about world news and politics, specifically news about events in Europe, as well as articles about sports, theater, film, and other cultural activities in Shanghai. The *Shanghai Woche* solicited advertisements from the growing number of European establishments in Shanghai, and advertisements for Jewish cafes, restaurants, bars, and shops were scattered throughout the paper.

Two articles that appeared in The *Shanghai Woche* are particularly notable and illustrate the type of articles published in the paper. One titled "Wither the Jews," by Dr. Alfred Schwartz, discussed the question of where the Central European Jews should emigrate to after the war. In the article he suggests that only Jews with some sort of professional training should go to Palestine, as its small population likely could not absorb more individuals. He suggested that the general Jewish population in Shanghai should settle in English speaking nations like the United States, Canada, and Australia. Dr.

Schwartz “naively believed that the economic advantages would surely prevent these countries from rejecting Jewish refugees.”¹⁹¹

Another article to appear in the *Shanghai Woche* was titled “Immigration – a Problem,” submitted by an anonymous writer. In the article the author claims that the large number of refugees from Germany and Austria had created a problem for the already established European communities. However, “he optimistically urged his readers not to despair, things could only get better, Shanghai today (1939), was a city of millions, with enormous energy and many opportunities.”¹⁹²

There were also more niche papers, such as *Die Gelbe Post*, a monthly of a more intellectual nature that focused heavily on refugee life in Asia, and sought to introduce refugees to Asian culture. Willy Tonn, a sinologist, contributed China-related articles, and German translations of Chinese literature.¹⁹³ There were also several medical journals, including the short-lived *Medizinischen Monatshefte*, and a monthly journal called the *Journal of the Association of Central European Doctors*, which published articles not only in German but also in English and Chinese.¹⁹⁴ A sampling of the large number of Jewish refugee papers includes: *Shanghaier Morgenpost* (1941), the *Acht-Uhr-Abendblatt* *Shanghaier Abendzeitung* (*The Shanghai Evening Paper*, 1941), *Die Laterne* (1941 - ?)¹⁹⁵,

¹⁹¹ Livni, Itamar. "The German Jewish Immigrant Press in Shanghai." In *At Home in Many Worlds; Reading, Writing and Translating from Chinese and Jewish Cultures*, 273-83. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009, 276.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 281.

¹⁹⁴ Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis & Jews*, 367.

¹⁹⁵ Livni, “The German Jewish Immigrant Press in Shanghai,” 276-7.

and the *Gelbe Post (Yellow Post)*.¹⁹⁶ At one point there were three German language Jewish daily papers.

Each of these papers contained information about events in Shanghai, articles about culture and literature, and news about the war in Europe. Issues explored in the papers include the terrible conditions in the Ward Road *Heim* and the low-quality of food. One article in the *Acht-Uhr-Abendblatt Shanghaier Abendzeitung* “deplored the problem of families expelled from the shelter because of money shortages.”¹⁹⁷ Regular columns that appeared in *Die Laterne* include “The Free Mind,” and “From our Cultural Creativity.”¹⁹⁸

The longest running and most successful paper was the *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle*. Introduced by editor Ossie Lewin in May of 1939 as a weekly, it became a daily morning paper soon after. The *Chronicle* was the only paper to receive sanction from the Japanese after Pearl Harbor and thus for several years was the only refugee paper. Refugees remember Lewin very differently – some recall him as a strong advocate for free speech, while others criticize him for being too “friendly with the Japanese.”¹⁹⁹ According to Ralph Hirsch, Lewin

again and again challenged the Japanese censorship and was thrown in jail repeatedly. One of, sort of a controversial figure in the community, but, you know, a great crusading journalist. I didn't know him, I was aware of him, he was my parents' generation. And he obviously was very dedicated to the principle of a free press, and he was willing to go to jail for it, which he did a number of times. And I think a lot of, a lot of people, including my parents, thought he might have been better advised to be more circumspect in his challenging, challenges to the Japanese. But he kept doing it, and

¹⁹⁶ Tang Yating. "Reconstructing the Vanished Musical Life of the Shanghai Jewish Diaspora: A Report." *Ethnomusicology Forum* 13, no. 1 (January 2004): 106.

¹⁹⁷ Livni, “The German Jewish Immigrant Press in Shanghai,” 276.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis, & Jews*, 365.

every so often the paper would be suspended for a day or a week, but it always came back.²⁰⁰

However, since the Jews considered the Japanese the enemy, many believed that any newspaper able to pass the strict Japanese censorship must be catering to the Japanese agenda. Historian Itamar Livni concludes that Lewin's "private printing press, the generous loans which he obtained, his so-called neutral political stand, gave him the reputation of a collaborationist and traitor."²⁰¹ However, one can understand his dilemma; had he not accommodated Japanese demands his paper surely could not have continued.

The ability of a small, impoverished community to support such a large press shows the refugees' dedication to continuing intellectual enterprises. Additionally, the vast number of publications reflects the differing interests of those in the community.

Performing Arts

While in Europe, Central European Jews were known to frequent "theaters and concert halls in numbers far greater than their proportion of the population."²⁰² The refugees brought their passion for the arts with them to Shanghai. Among the relatively small number of refugees were many talented composers, singers, actors, directors, and comedians. These artists created a thriving arts scene, which proved "extremely helpful in enduring more easily the unfortunate fate in Shanghai."²⁰³ Ralph Harpuder's recollection

²⁰⁰ Hirsch Interview, 14.

²⁰¹ Livni, "The German Jewish Immigrant Press in Shanghai," 283.

²⁰² Walter Schatzberg, and Jehuda Reinharz, eds. *The Jewish Response to German Culture*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985, 86.

²⁰³ Harpuder, Ralph. "Tribute to the Artists; Their Talent and Devotion Helped Us Survive." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/tribute_to_the_artists.htm.

of the arts in Shanghai illustrates the level of importance performances played in the daily lives of the refugees:

Living in a very small one room flat (apartment) on Kwenming Road, my parents and their visiting friends often talked about the performing arts while having a cup of ‘*Aufgewaermten*’ *Kaffee* (twice brewed coffee) and cracking some unshelled peanuts. It was indeed a more pleasant subject to discuss than the daily grind in the ghetto. Thus, names of actors, singers, and dancers, yours truly so often heard mention became as the years progress, etched in my memory.²⁰⁴

Ernest Heppner estimates that there were “more than sixty plays produced”²⁰⁵ in the years after the community formed, both classic plays, and original works written by refugee playwrights. Ernest Culman recalls seeing “Fledermaus” and “Carmen,” as well as “several of the other Viennese operettas.”²⁰⁶ Harpuder remembers watching “operettas like ‘*Die Csardasfurstin*,’ by Kalman, ‘*Die Dreigroschenoper*,’ by Brecht and Weill, and ‘*Der Graf von Luxemburg [The Count of Luxemburg]*’ by Leher and more” and that these performances “brought back fond memories from back home.”²⁰⁷ These performances were held in theaters throughout Shanghai, as well as various *heime*, cafes and bars, and even at the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School. Even during the ghetto period, when poverty was widespread and food was hard to come by, much effort was put into

²⁰⁴ Harpuder, Ralph. "European Jewish Artist Society." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/european_jewish_artist_society.htm.

²⁰⁵ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 86.

²⁰⁶ Ernest E. Culman. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Oct. 18, 1997, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Rockville, Maryland, 16.

²⁰⁷ Harpuder, “Tribute to the Artists.”

performances. Culman remembers that his neighbor was employed painting the backgrounds for the various plays and operas that took place in Hongkew.²⁰⁸

In addition to plays, there were variety shows,²⁰⁹ cabarets,²¹⁰ and even several very popular refugee comedians.²¹¹ According to Harpuder, “most every refugee who was an adult during the war years in Shanghai will remember the two giants of comedy, Herbert Zernik and Gerhard Gottschalk.”²¹² Zernik began his career in Shanghai as a bar singer, but eventually became one of the city's most popular comedians. Historian James Ross says that “in the great tradition of Jewish comedy, Zernik drew his best material from the sorrow around him. His jokes about the filth and insects in the camps, even about the women who made their living as prostitutes, turned tragedy, at least for a few moments, into laughter.”²¹³ Similarly, Gottschalk drew his material from his surroundings. Harpuder recalls that “Gottschalk, using his wit and talent, took advantage of that which surrounded him in the Hongkew Jewish Ghetto and produced skits that made us laugh and forget our miseries.”²¹⁴

Music also lifted the spirits of the refugees, and performances enriched life in Shanghai, especially in the *heime* and the ghetto. It is estimated that there were at least two

²⁰⁸ Culman Interview, 13.

²⁰⁹ Harpuder, Ralph. "Siegfried Sonnenschein." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. <http://rickshaw.org/sonnenschein.htm>.

²¹⁰ Martin and Susie Friedlander. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 21, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Tamarac, Florida, 21.

²¹¹ Harpuder, Ralph. "Gerhard Gottschalk." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 13, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/gerhard_gottschalk.htm.

²¹² Harpuder, “Tribute to the Artists.”

²¹³ Ross, *Escape to Shanghai*, 86.

²¹⁴ Harpuder, “Gerhard Gottschalk.”

hundred twenty professional musicians among the Jewish refugees.²¹⁵ Musicians who could play dance music found work in Shanghai's bars, cafes, and nightclubs, entertaining not only the refugee community but the population more broadly. Musician and former refugee Henry Rossetty came from Berlin to Shanghai with the other members of his German four-piece band. The band quickly got hired playing dance music at Wing On, a "big roof garden with dance,"²¹⁶ situated in a department store in the International Settlement, and later worked playing music at a bar.²¹⁷ Rossetty was instrumental in forming a union for the musicians employed in the various bars and dance halls throughout Shanghai. He describes the union in an interview:

Rossetty: Bars and dance halls, and our band, five people, organized a musicians' union.

Interviewer: I see, tell me about that.

Rossetty: Because the people didn't like to play much, to pay much for musicians. So we said the minimum wage is the equivalent of two bottles of beer.

Interviewer: Minimum wage for one day?

Rossetty: Ja. So two bottles of beer, that was the minimum wage.

Interviewer: And was that accepted by the night club owners or the . . . ?

Rossetty: Ja, ja, they accepted it, because they did need music.²¹⁸

In addition to dance music a refugee chamber orchestra was formed under the direction of Dr. Erich Marcuse. Many famous Central European musicians, such as pianist Ferdinand Adler, Miriam Magasi, and Robert Kohner performed in the orchestra.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ Henry Rossetty. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 8, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community (Oral History Project, Laguna Hills, CA, 13.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

²¹⁹ Ross, *Escape to Shanghai*, 85.

Famous composers Siegfried Sonnenschein and Harry Hauptmann gave recitals in music halls, as well as in the *heime*.²²⁰ The various Central European musicians organized a club called the European Jewish Artist Society (EJAS), under the direction of Ossie Lewin. .²²¹ The EJAS organized numerous concerts throughout Shanghai, most commonly in the Broadway Theater, and advertised these performances in the various Jewish newspapers. Even during the ghetto period, when music had to pass Japanese censorship, the demand for music continued.²²²

Like the Central Europeans, the Polish Jews while in Europe held the performing arts in high regard. In Poland and territory occupied by the Soviet Union “Yiddish performances had a special significance for the Jewish audience, because these theatrical events remained the only possible way of expressing Jewish identity ...attending a Yiddish theater performance... was paramount in transforming the [Jewish] cultural identity”²²³ After World War I especially, Jewish theater flourished in the Polish lands. The Polish refugees brought their passion for Yiddish music and theater with them to Shanghai. In the early 1940s the Polish refugees established a venue for performances of Yiddish theater and music.²²⁴ Rose Shoshano, a Polish refugee who arrived in 1941, “organized a troupe

²²⁰ Harpuder “Siegfried Sonnenschein,” and Harpuder, Ralph. "European Jewish Artist Society." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011.
http://rickshaw.org/european_jewish_artist_society.htm.

²²¹ Harpuder, “European Jewish Artist Society.”

²²² Yating, "Reconstructing the Vanished Musical Life of the Shanghai Jewish Diaspora: A Report."

²²³ Shternshis, Anna. *Soviet and Kosher: Jewish Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006, 105.

²²⁴ Yating, "Reconstructing the Vanished Musical Life of the Shanghai Jewish Diaspora: A Report," 109.

for the presentation of Yiddish theatre pieces, concerts, and evening entertainment.”²²⁵ Popular Yiddish folk singer Raja Zomina was among the Polish refugees and performed a variety of Yiddish songs, Chassidic songs, and songs from Palestine.²²⁶ The Polish refugees, who tended to be more religious than their Central European counterparts, hosted many religious celebrations that featured Yiddish music. There was even a Yiddish cabaret performed in the Ward Road Heim.²²⁷

Although for the most part the Polish and the Central European Jews maintained separate communities, music was something that seems to have brought the two groups together. The performing arts remained important during the ghetto period among both the Central and Eastern European refugee communities, and during this time the two groups increasingly united over music. During the ghetto period the Shanghai Musicians Association of Stateless Refugees (SMA) formed, which had both Central and Eastern European members. The SMA helped musicians gain employment, most notably with the Shanghai Innkeepers’ Association.

Many Jewish celebrations featured performances by both Polish and Central European musicians. For example, in the Purim celebrations held in 1944, a youth chorus performed songs in German and Yiddish (as well as English.) Another concert in March 1942 featured Raia Zomina, the Polish singer, accompanied by Siegfried Sonnenschein, the famous German pianist.²²⁸ The Brit Trumpledor (also known as Betar), a Jewish

²²⁵ Ibid., 110.

²²⁶ Ibid., 114.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid., 110.

organization, held a “Halutsim Ball” in June of 1941. Examination of the program shows performances by Raia Zomina, as well as Alfred Buchler, an accordionist from Vienna. [See Image #54]²²⁹

A large number of fundraisers featuring musicians were performed during the ghetto period, and some featured musicians of both Central and Eastern European descent. During the extremely difficult winter of 1943-44, the Jewish performers held concerts to support the “Jewish Winter Help.” Artists from theater troupes and cabarets, as well as those that performed pop music and folk music performed solos.²³⁰ In a single night one could see performances by both a German band and a Yiddish speaking Cantor.

Sports

Sporting events were important to the refugee community and always drew large crowds. One former refugee wrote, “sports were the highlight of my life” in Shanghai.²³¹ The most prominent sports organization was the Jewish Recreation Club (JRC). The JRC sponsored several competitive teams, which played teams from all over Shanghai. The most famous and most successful team was the soccer team. The JRC began in 1912, many years before the influx of Jews fleeing Hitler, and was a place where the Baghdadi and Russian Jews spent time and cooperated with one another. However, the sports scene changed with the influx of highly talented refugees, including professional soccer players

²²⁹ The Alfred Buchler Collection, Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, California.

²³⁰ Yating, "Reconstructing the Vanished Musical Life of the Shanghai Jewish Diaspora: A Report," 113.

²³¹ Alfred Kohn, *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*, ed. Berl Falbaum (Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005), 113.

and an Olympic boxer. The refugees quickly began to take over the sports scene, with most of the spots on competitive teams going to refugee athletes.

Soccer and boxing were probably the most popular sports among the Shanghai Jews. The Jewish League sponsored numerous athletic teams, including eight soccer teams and a competitive boxing league. The professional teams competed with the top teams from all over Shanghai. There were also multiple amateur leagues for the general Jewish population. Teams competed in handball, hockey, chess and gymnastics, to name a few.

Jewish refugees often spent the little money they had to buy tickets to athletic events and cheer on the Jewish sports teams. Over 1,500 fans could show up to cheer on their teams and favorite players. Children and teens, fascinated by the athletes they idolized on the field, spent much time in the afternoon and on weekends participating in friendly athletic competition. Attending athletic events was also an important activity that encouraged community involvement and was something to look forward to and enjoy, despite the terrible conditions of Shanghai. In fact, historian David Kranzler has suggested that for some "sports achieved the status of obsession rather than as a mere pastime."²³²

For at least one refugee, sports were key to his psychological response to the conditions of exile. "When I got beaten up by White Russians," recalls Charles Klotzer, "I said, I've got to defend myself. I wanted to learn judo. Nobody knew judo. A friend of mine was a boxing instructor. He was also a dance instructor. And I started training and became part of a boxing team."²³³ Until the Japanese banned it in 1943, boxing attracted

²³² Quoted in Anthony Hughes, "Sport and Jewish Identify in the Shanghai Jewish Community 1938-1949," *International Sports Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2001, p. 47.

²³³ Klotzer, Charles, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Sept. 4,1993, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish

significant numbers of Jewish youth and was especially popular with Zionist groups such as Betar, which valued athletic ability as preparation for possible military activity.²³⁴

The establishment of German cultural institutions in Shanghai demonstrates the community's perseverance and the refugees' unwillingness to accept cultural deprivation because of the Nazis. The German Jews realized that they did not have to support the German government or consider themselves German nationals in order to continue to appreciate their culture. They refused to give up their appreciation of Beethoven, Brahms, or Goethe just because they fled the German land. They made German cultural life their own by performing classics in their own theaters and reading novels in their own institutions. The refugees created "a little community there with a remarkable intellectual component that reflected the culture of German-speaking Jewry while retaining their dignity, showing immense courage and the raw capacity and will to survive."²³⁵

Community Oral History Project, Chicago, Illinois.

²³⁴ Hughes, "Sport and Jewish Identity," 49.

²³⁵ W. Michael Blumenthal, *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*, ed. Berl Falbaum, Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005, 103.

CHAPTER SIX

Youth Experience

It was a good time, with all the *tsuris* [trouble], it was a good time... because we were young!²³⁶

Young people had a unique experience in Shanghai and had a much easier time adjusting; many even fondly remember their time in China. Youth had fewer ties to the fatherland than did their parents and, having undergone harassment for much of their lives, did not have happy memories of Germany. Sigmund Tobias recalls that “in Berlin a gang of teenage boys wearing the uniform of the Hitler Juden (youth) often lay in wait for us after classes... once we left the building they tried to corner us and would curse, kick, spit, and throw rocks or garbage.”²³⁷ The children had been forced out of school and clubs based on their “Jewishness,” but upon arrival in Shanghai their status changed. Unlike their parents, who had lost their jobs and had to start over, the children arrived and went to schools and joined clubs just like those in which they had participated in Europe. Thus the children did not have to undergo the same identity shift that many of the adults underwent. As a result, the youth generally had a more positive experience in Shanghai.

Historian James Ross writes about the experience of one refugee, Gerd Heimann, explaining that “Gerd couldn’t imagine a place with more mystery and adventure than Shanghai. He could never understand why his parents and the other old people complained so much about the heat, filth, and insects and talked so often about Berlin. His strongest

²³⁶ Fanny and George Borenstein, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, February 22, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Del Ray Beach, FL, 51.

²³⁷ Sigmund Tobias, *Strange Haven: a Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 1.

memory of Germany was not so happy.”²³⁸ On a similar note, Arnold Fuchs describes how children were able to deal with the situation in Shanghai far better than their parents:

The children had their own dorm [in the *Heime*] ... Yeah, I liked the idea of being in a dorm with other boys... So I took to life quite nimbly out at Chaoufoong Road. But the adults did not, the adults were, it was a horrendous problem. I would observe, and this is first hand observation, people having, what would you call it, a nervous breakdown, I suppose is a non-professional way of saying they had uncontrolled outbursts and had to be restrained. It was simply, you know, the heat and the tension and the living together, closely together.... But to me, hey, I had a good time.²³⁹

“In spite of the austere and primitive conditions that befell on our dear parents, and the struggle for them to put food on our table, life for us youngsters at the time was relatively easy,” explains former refugee Ralph Harpuder. “We were not shortchanged in our education, recreational and group activities, like the Boy Scouts that we remember so well to this day.”²⁴⁰

The Kadoorie School

One of the richest elements of cultural life in Shanghai was the system of education afforded to refugee youth. In Germany and Austria, education was very important to Jewish families. In fact, there was an “overrepresentation of Jews in elite education” and “widespread schooling is one of the key phenomena of post-feudal Jewish social

²³⁸ Ross, *Escape from Shanghai*, 42.

²³⁹ Arnold Fuchs. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 18, 1997, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Gorham, Maine, 9.

²⁴⁰ Harpuder, Ralph. "Shanghai Boy Scouts." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/shanghai_boy_scouts.htm.

history”²⁴¹ in Germany and Austria. In Europe many Jewish families moved to cities so their children might have easier access to schooling.²⁴² Many adult refugees were highly educated and sought to recreate the same level of education for their children. Since the refugees saw Shanghai as a temporary place of exile, they wanted to prepare their children for life in the West, not Shanghai or China. The Jewish community wanted to create “an environment to shield the children as much as possible from poverty, war, and the dangers of Shanghai,”²⁴³ and affording a “normal” education was important in creating a favorable environment for the children.

Although several Jewish refugee children, especially those from wealthier families, attended non-Jewish schools, the great majority attended institutions established specifically for the refugees. The largest and most famous of the Jewish refugee schools was the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School, also known as The Kadoorie School after its Baghdadi Jewish financier. The school exemplified collaboration between the Baghdadi and refugee communities and became a cultural center of the community. When Jewish refugees began to pour into Shanghai, the Jewish school already in existence for the Baghdadi and Russian Jews did not have the facilities to accommodate the large number of students. It became obvious to the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association (SJYA) that a new school was essential to facilitate the influx of refugee children. Horace Kadoorie²⁴⁴, an

²⁴¹ Viktor Karády, *The Jews of Europe in the Modern Era: a Socio-historical Outline* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), 101.

²⁴² Marion A. Kaplan, *Jewish Daily Life in Germany: 1618-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 202.

²⁴³ James R. Ross, *Escape to Shanghai: a Jewish Community in China* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 152.

²⁴⁴ Horace Kadoorie was a businessman and philanthropist. He made his fortune in Shanghai in banking, real estate, and rubber. His family had previously made major contributions to the field of

extremely wealthy Baghdadi member of the Baghdadi Jewish merchant community, was sympathetic to the refugees, especially the children. As one refugee put it, Kadoorie wanted “to see in the immigrant children’s eyes once more the happiness and contentment that partially disappeared due to the emigration and the resulting inferiority complex.”²⁴⁵ His compassion and dedication towards the refugee youth led him to found a school for the children on par with those in Europe.

The Kadoorie School opened on November 1, 1939 after it was able to acquire a school building on Kinchow Road in Hongkew. In 1941 the school was forced to return the building to the Chinese and had to find a new location. Despite this setback, Kadoorie raised enough funds to acquire a new even more attractive building and the school reopened on January 2, 1942, after the Japanese occupation of all of Shanghai.²⁴⁶ Although the school was located outside of the designated Jewish ghetto, Japanese officials readily allowed Jewish children to leave each day to attend school. The Kadoorie School initially served 380 students, but by the time it reopened there were almost 600 students and 17 teachers.

One of the most notable aspects of the school was that all of the courses were held in English, despite the fact that most of the children spoke German. This was because

education, including establishing the Ellis Kadoorie Public School for Chinese Students. He was one of the foremost donors to the Jewish refugees, and actively participated in the efforts of the various relief organizations. See Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 122. Other philanthropic contributions he made included founding The Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre at the University of Hong Kong. Source: The Kadoorie Institute – Shek Kong Centre, <http://www.hku.hk/kisk/indexin.htm>. More information about his actions after the war can be found in the Time Magazine article “Asia: Big Brothers.”

²⁴⁵ Annie F. Witting, "Letter (Shanghai, January 4, 1940)," in *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China*, ed. Irene Eber (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 51.

²⁴⁶ David Kranzler. *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*. New York: Yeshiva University Press : Distributed by Sifria Distributors, 1976., 390-1.

Kadoorie was a British patriot. The Baghdadis had long “traded successfully under the British flag and were proud to be identified with the development of the British Empire.”²⁴⁷ Historically the Shanghai Baghdadi Jews made “a conscious effort to adopt the British lifestyle”²⁴⁸ and they identified themselves as British. Kadoorie therefore believed it was important that the refugee children learn English and attend a school modeled after the British system. The English language was also commonly used in Shanghai; one refugee recalls “many Chinese talked to us in a mixture of English, some Chinese, and lots of gestures.”²⁴⁹ Since the Jewish refugees spoke a variety of languages including German, Polish, Russian, and Yiddish, learning English not only allowed the refugees to communicate more easily with the Chinese and Japanese but also among themselves.

The classes at the SJYA School were rigorous and similar in content and quality to those found in Britain.²⁵⁰ The curriculum was predominantly secular and prepared students to pass the Senior Cambridge examinations.²⁵¹ The school covered seven grade levels, and offered courses in secular as well as religious subjects, including art, geography, writing, recitation, reading, composition, grammar, scripture and Hebrew.²⁵² Because many Jewish academics were forced to emigrate from Europe, there were many highly qualified teachers

²⁴⁷ Maisie Meyer, "The Sephardi Jewish Community of Shanghai and the Question of Identity," in *From Kaifeng--to Shanghai: Jews in China*, ed. Roman Malek (Nettetal: Joint Publication of the Monumenta Serica Institute and the China-Zentrum, 2000), 353.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 347.

²⁴⁹ Tobias, *Strange Haven*, 32.

²⁵⁰ No Title, 1929-1992; Margit Hirsch Collection; ME 1052; Leo Baeck Institute.

²⁵¹ Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis & Jews*, 391.

²⁵² *Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School Report Card*. In *The Jews in Shanghai*. Shanghai: Shanghai Pictorial Publishing House, 1995.

in Shanghai. Lucie Martwich, a schoolteacher from Berlin, served as headmistress and also taught French language and music. The majority of teachers were of German origin, but there were also Russian instructors, as well as British and Chinese.²⁵³

The Kadoorie School created a healthy environment so that youth would feel comfortable in Shanghai. Since the food offered in the refugee camps was of poor quality, a prominent Baghdadi Jew, Victor Sassoon, decided to allocate funds towards feeding the children. The school offered lunches that were more nutritious and significantly more appetizing than the food provided to refugees in the refugee homes and camps. The school encouraged youth to be active in the Jewish faith and on Friday evenings held Shabbat services in which the youth participated. Additionally, the school sponsored several Jewish festivals, including a Purim celebration where the children dressed up to celebrate the holiday.²⁵⁴

Ernest Culman remembers that “we had a lot of fun in school, under all those conditions. A lot of camaraderie, the teachers and students both.”²⁵⁵ The children did what children would do anywhere, and Culman recounts one of the jokes his school class played on a teacher:

Before the singing class we collected waste paper baskets from several classes and stuffed the piano with it. He [the teacher] comes in there, we’re standing quietly in the back, those of us who can’t sing, and he starts hitting the keys, nothing came out, he opens up the piano, realizes what went on,

²⁵³ Ross, *Escape to Shanghai*, 151.

²⁵⁴ Ralph Harpuder, *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*, ed. Berl Falbaum (Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005), 75.

²⁵⁵ Ernest E. Culman, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Oct. 18, 1997, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Rockville, Maryland, 26.

gets furious and kicks us out of the room, which is exactly what we wanted.²⁵⁶

Other Institutions of Education

In addition to the Kadoorie School, the Jewish community of Shanghai established several other primary schools for refugee children. The largest school after the Kadoorie School was the Freysinger Elementary and Middle School, started by Ismar Freysinger in 1941. Freysinger, a former principal and teacher in Germany, hired seven experienced German teachers and enrollment ultimately reached 200 students.²⁵⁷ A refugee who attended the Freysinger School recalls that “an additional and important subject, Jewish history, was included in the Freysinger curriculum”²⁵⁸ but not at the Kadoorie School. The curriculum at the Freysinger School was more Jewish-oriented than at the Kadoorie School, but it still offered a strong secular education.

Other schools available to Jewish refugees included several kindergartens established throughout Hongkew, including the Komor Committee Kindergarten and the Mrs. Alexander Kindergarten.²⁵⁹ Another was Kindergarten Wonderland, “a private nursery school in the French Concession owned by refugees.”²⁶⁰ Several elementary school classes were also held in the refugee camps. Near the end of the war the Children’s

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ross, *Escape from Shanghai*, 152.

²⁵⁸ Harpuder, *Shanghai Remembered*, 69.

²⁵⁹ Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis & Jews*, 395.

²⁶⁰ Margit Zippert Sarne, *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*, ed. Berl Falbaum, Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005, 172.

Welfare Section of the Kitchen-Fund, a refugee committee that helped the Jewish community established kindergartens at two of the camps. “The parents were mostly residents of the camps and it enabled the children to be in a free environment to learn and play.”²⁶¹ A former teacher at the school noted that the board “showed foresight in not only helping the children but also the staff it hired which was generally composed of teenagers. The classes included general knowledge, pedagogic (the history and styles of kindergartens taught by a specialist from Germany), and first aid taught by a medical doctor.”²⁶² The staff at these schools also made gifts by hand for children on their birthdays to try and give them a semblance of a normal life.

Youth Clubs

To supplement schooling, Jewish children in Shanghai could choose from numerous extracurricular activities. The Kadoories established an after school club which, according to one refugee, was “in every way like a British youth club.”²⁶³ Children attended the club three times a week in the afternoon, and there they were able to take classes in such subjects as English conversation, French language, cooking and music. Additionally, at the after school club children were able to play sports, including football, jiu-jitsu, and boxing.

A popular extracurricular activity for Jewish youth was involvement in the Boy Scouts. In Austria and Germany many of the refugee children had belonged to

²⁶¹ Ibid, 174.

²⁶² Ibid, 174.

²⁶³ Witting, *Voices from Shanghai*, 51.

organizations similar to the Boy Scouts that stressed the importance of outdoor activities. “One such organization in Germany, similar to the boy scouts was called Jugenschaft. This group of teenagers enjoyed hiking, campfires under the stars, and singing.”²⁶⁴ These youngsters had taken their scouting seriously, and upon arrival many of the young Jewish refugees were eager to participate in a scouting group. The British Boy Scouts Association was already well established in Shanghai under the direction of Commissioner A.H. Gordon, and the association immediately welcomed the Jewish refugees into the scouts.²⁶⁵

The largest Jewish scout group was the Thirteenth Shanghai Rovers, which consisted primarily of Jewish refugees of German and Austrian descent. Until 1943, when the Japanese authorities confined Jews to a ghetto in Hongkew, the Thirteenth Rovers traveled all over Shanghai. The group held a summer camp at Millington Camp, which was managed by four teenage Rover Scouts. One of these Rover Scouts explained:

Much imagination was necessary to develop and maintain activities that would keep children of all ages off the streets...Some of the children had little opportunity to see grass or trees. Millington Camp, a magnificent estate belonging to the British Boy Scouts Association, provided camping facilities. With the aid and supervision of a single medical volunteer, Dr. Mario Herbst, a few of us Rover Scouts supervised camping activities for more than 100 youngsters.²⁶⁶

The Boy Scouts succeeded at lifting the spirits of many young refugee boys in Shanghai. One refugee scout recalled how “in the troop, we formed close friendships,

²⁶⁴ Harpuder, “Shanghai Boy Scouts.”

²⁶⁵ Harpuder, *Shanghai Remembered*, 75-6.

²⁶⁶ Ernest G. Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge: a Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 74-5.

hiked, worked for badges, and played games.”²⁶⁷ The scouts published a book, “Our Songs,” which was “a twenty-seven page booklet containing forty-six popular English and German Boy Scout songs.”²⁶⁸ The youngsters sang the songs often and with enthusiasm. The scouts created a youth community and provided youngsters with a close-knit group of friends. Through scouting many boys were able to get away from the bustle and grime of the city and explore the outdoors. Since the Boy Scouts Association was similar to organizations in which many of the youth had participated in Europe, it made the transition to Shanghai much easier for the young refugees.

Other extracurricular activities for youngsters included several Zionist Youth Groups, including the Betar of the Revisionist movement and another one that was part of the Labor Zionist movement. Susanne Goldfarb, a member of the Betar organization, explained that “it was a social thing for us. Everybody belonged to Betar, it was down the street, and that's what you did.”²⁶⁹ However, many youth were turned off by the militant aspect of Betar. “I strongly support the Zionist Goal of forming a Jewish homeland and considered joining one of the Zionist groups in Shanghai,” recalls Sigmund Tobias.

I attended one meeting of the Betar, a militant Zionist group supporting the most extreme resistance bands fighting in Palestine, such as the Irgun and Stern bands... There was a militaristic atmosphere at the Betar meeting; the khaki uniforms of the members were accompanied by marching, saluting, stomping of feet, and clicking of heels. Even though they saluted the Zionist flag with the Star of David, I was uncomfortable at the meeting; in my

²⁶⁷ Henry S. Conston, *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*, ed. Berl Falbaum (Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005), 32.

²⁶⁸ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 74.

²⁶⁹ Susanne Goldfarb Interview, Oral Histories: Wisconsin Survivors of the Holocaust, Wisconsin Historical Society, Interview by Jean L. Lettovsky, Madison, WI., 7 Feb. 1980 and 8 Oct. 1980, 29.

mind's eye I saw the Betar members as a Jewish Hitler Jugend. I rapidly left the meeting and never returned for another one.²⁷⁰

Although some youngsters were turned off by organizations like Betar, others enjoyed the community element of the organization.

As noted earlier sports were very important in the refugee community, and that was certainly true among the youth. An organization called the Junior League allowed youth to compete recreationally in the most popular sports.²⁷¹ The sports scene became a place where children could spend time with their Jewish peers, and get away from the hardships of life in Shanghai. One former refugee said, “we played soccer every Saturday and Sunday in one of the camps, with major rivalries among the teams that helped make life seem a little more normal.”²⁷² Another man, when recalling his participation in a Shanghai Boxing Club said, “I must confess that the exercise and training instilled in me a measure of self-confidence.”²⁷³ This same young man also regularly attended dance lessons, which is representative of the vast number of athletic activities that the youth undertook while in Shanghai.

Alternative Education

²⁷⁰ Tobias, *Strange Haven*, 117.

²⁷¹ Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis & Jews*, 394.

²⁷² Alfred Kohn, *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*, ed. Berl Falbaum (Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005), 112.

²⁷³ Charles L. Klotzer, *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*, ed. Berl Falbaum (Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005), 103.

Although the Jewish schools in Shanghai were extensive, the Kadoorie School only offered a primary education up until the age of fourteen, and most of the other schools only taught elementary courses. This meant that there were a large number of teenagers out of school, most without work. The Jewish Community came to their assistance as well, and offered plenty of educational and extracurricular opportunities for these older youth. Some of the refugee camps offered programs, including a workshop for girls at the Kinchow camp. The workshop, directed by Mrs. Kann, taught approximately sixty girls how to make knitted goods. In 1941 two trade schools were established. Mr. Blaut, the director of a Jewish Community Center in Shanghai, set up an apprentice workshop at a refugee camp that taught various trades to older youth as well as adults without work. A German engineer served as the primary instructor.²⁷⁴

The other major trade school was established by ORT, an international Jewish organization that specialized in training youth in a variety of trades. ORT was an acronym for Society for Promotion of Labor, and its Shanghai branch began in 1941 when a representative of the organization arrived in the city. Chaim Rozebes, the Russian ORT representative, got together with Russian refugees, as well as some German refugees and Sephardic Jews, to found the trade school. Initially some members of the pre-existing Jewish communities were apprehensive about competing with the Chinese in physical labor, for fear that it would change the status of the Jewish community, could create hostile relations with the Chinese, and that Chinese shop owners would not hire Jewish workers. The fear was eventually overcome and the ORT school proved highly successful. It eventually offered 21 courses for youth between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one,

²⁷⁴ Ross, *Escape from Shanghai*, 153.

including classes that prepared students to become locksmiths, carpenters, electro-fitters, fashion designers, dental technicians and gardeners. Enrollment averaged between 150 and 200 and reached a high in 1944 when there were over 500 students.²⁷⁵

In cooperation with the Guild of Craftsmen, the ORT opened a Complementary School for Apprentices in 1943. ORT was especially remarkable in that it was one of the few places where Eastern European and Central European refugees worked together to establish a joint organization.

A more academic organization for teenagers was the SJYA ex-scholars club. It was a club for older youth who had already graduated from the Kadoorie School. It met on the Kadoorie School premises where the youth could hear lectures and participate in discussions and performances. Many youth also used their time in the club to play games and socialize. For those who had not yet perfected English, there were also English classes.

Youth Experience in Shanghai

Even years later, many of those who experienced their formative years in Shanghai warmly remember their time in the city and considered Shanghai an exciting adventure. As one refugee says, “all of this was nothing but fun.”²⁷⁶ Since the children had fewer ties to Germany, and fewer pleasant memories, they were more open-minded upon their arrival in Shanghai. Susanne Goldfarb explains that she did not mind the poverty as much as her parents did. She “never felt a deprivation of material things... none of us children felt any

²⁷⁵ Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis & Jews*, 395-6.; See also Ross, *Escape from Shanghai*, 153, 201.

²⁷⁶ W. Michael Blumenthal. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 3, 1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Berlin, 10.

material deprivation, those who were young, because we didn't know of anything better."²⁷⁷

Using their imaginations, children managed to make the best of their situation.

Goldfarb recalls:

We had no toys you know, so we'd stuff our own dolls and make dolls and make our own houses, dollhouses, and once my friend, Doris, this one came over and she still talks about this, she thought it was so funny, and she looked in this crate which I had made as a dollhouse, my own little private dollhouse, and there was a cockroach and she said, "What's that?" and "That's my doll's dog." And it was the most natural — now she laughs about it. We created our own fantasies — we had to. There was nothing — the world outside was — for myself, I created my own semblance of order.²⁷⁸

Other children recall making homemade versions of games such as “Shanghai Millionaire,” a board game identical to Monopoly except with Shanghai streets.²⁷⁹

Shanghai was a city of excitement and intrigue for the children. Ernest Culman recalls the children jumping up and down in the destroyed buildings in Hongkew and claims that “everything became a game! It was exciting!”²⁸⁰ James Ross writes:

Gerd's days that summer of 1939 were filled with excitement unlike anything he had experienced in his ten years growing up in Berlin... In the afternoons, the boys played in Wayside Park, flying high on the sturdy swings and trying to jump from one swing to the next. They also shot marbles together in the dirt... He was entranced by all of Shanghai's odd and macabre sights and characters.²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ Goldfarb Interview.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁷⁹ Culman Interview, 15.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ Ross, *Escape from Shanghai*, 39-41.

The children were fascinated with the strange sights and sounds of Shanghai. Youth tasted new and different food, and watched the people who seemed so foreign and exciting. Ernest Heppner recalls hearing “about the infamous opium dens and soon had our first opportunity to visit them.”²⁸²

Older youth, including teenagers and young adults, also generally had a good time in Shanghai. Like teenagers anywhere, youth in Shanghai dated and socialized. George Bornstein remembers: “I, I had women. It was like, like Hollywood, for me it was Hollywood. If I were going with a girl more than a week, they said, ‘He’s already hooked already.’ Had to get rid of her. It, it, it was a good life.”²⁸³ Many of the youth who came of age in Shanghai met their life-long partners through the Shanghai social scene.

Clubs for teenagers, such as the Tikvah Club, became popular places for socializing. Ernest Culman, a member of the Tikvah Club, recalls that the club met at night in one of the classrooms at the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School. He remembers “we weren’t supposed to have alcohol in there, but what they didn’t know didn’t hurt us. We used to bring in vodka and Coke and mix it, put a big sign on the vodka bottle, ‘water,’ and you know, we didn’t get [too] rowdy.”²⁸⁴

One notable influence Shanghai had on youth is that many remember growing up very fast and becoming independent at a young age. Arnold Fuchs cheerfully remembers his youth in Shanghai:

I found plenty of time to organize a group of boys and we would go into the ruins and we would pick lattice, make them, shape them into Roman swords

²⁸² Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 53.

²⁸³ Bornstein Interview, 51.

²⁸⁴ Culman Interview, 28.

and develop two sides, and one would, one would defend and the other, the castle, and the other would storm the castle, and we had great times. I practically said hi to my parents once a day or so and, because they, they considered that I was probably going to the dogs. [laughs] But, you know, they lost control of me and I had a good time.²⁸⁵

W. Michael Blumenthal similarly recalls that “by the time I’d spent a year or two in Shanghai, I knew all about gambling and prostitution and drugs and, you know, it was all there. Horse racing, dog racing, trading in slaves, it was all there. And being curious and adventurous all my life, I wanted to learn about it all, and I did.”²⁸⁶ With active nightclubs, opium dens, and widespread prostitution, it was easy for youth to quickly become acquainted with aspects of life that they would not so easily have learned about in Central Europe.

Since school ended earlier than it did in Germany and there were few opportunities for higher education, youth often had to seek work at a much younger age than they would have in Europe. As noted earlier, many youngsters became the breadwinners of the family, placing more pressure on them than they would have felt in Europe. In this respect the youth had to grow up more quickly than they would have living elsewhere.

Although youth generally had a pleasant experience, some older youth resented their lack of higher education. One such refugee is Ernest Culman.

Our education lacks. Whatever education I have had over and beyond that is from my own reading and so on. I’ve never had any formal college education. I attended some college courses, more for the fun of it than for anything else. So I feel that I lost a lot. I mean, obviously if the Nazis wouldn’t have taken over in Germany, being the son of a physician, upper middle class physician, I would have gone to college and I would have been a professional. If we would have come to the States directly in the early ‘30s, instead of when we did, actually the same thing would have been true.

²⁸⁵ Fuchs Interview, 9.

²⁸⁶ Blumenthal Interview, 14.

And even coming here from Shanghai, my parents were so concerned about making a living that they saw to it that we immediately went to work. We supported our parents.²⁸⁷

Youth Identity Development

Youth were heavily influenced by their time in Shanghai and their time in exile had a tremendous impact on their personal identities. Although many refugee adults increasingly identified themselves as Jewish and moved away from their German identity towards one favoring the United States and Great Britain, this was especially true for the youth. They had fewer ties to Germany and thus were more open to adopting a refugee, Jewish, and Anglo-American identity.

The lives of youth revolved heavily around the Jewish refugee community; they had Jewish friends, most attended Jewish schools where they learned Jewish history and often Hebrew, and many joined Jewish clubs. The schools celebrated Jewish holidays, introducing those who had not been religious in Europe to Jewish traditions. Since Jews from various backgrounds went to school together - Zionist and non-Zionist, orthodox, conservative, and non-religious, Poles, Austrians and Germans— the youth more often crossed cultural lines and socialized with children from different backgrounds. What all the youth had in common was often solely their Jewish heritage, which resulted in many of the youth identifying with that heritage to create a common bond.

These children for the most part had been identified by German society as Jewish for as long as they could remember or for at least a large portion of their formative years, as many were young children when Hitler came to power. Parents who had distanced

²⁸⁷ Culman Interview, 11.

themselves from Judaism had lived for many years ignoring Jewish culture, but the children had been unable to do so. They had been persecuted based on a Jewish identity and called Jews for four or five years before they left. They had to deal with a Jewish label for a large portion of their lives, so it was easier to come to Shanghai and say “I am a Jew” than it was for their parents, who may have minimized any connection to Judaism for thirty or forty years.

“For the older generation, having done with the past was a process that proceeded in slow motion and would not be complete until years later,” but the youth adapted more quickly and easily adopted a new identity.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Cosmopolitan City: Encounters and Exchanges with Other Cultures

Viennese pastries in European-style cafes, the backdrop of the Shanghai skyscrapers that reminded many of the Manhattan skyline, and Chinese rickshaw drivers maneuvering through crowded streets and past Camel cigarette advertisements: this mélange of images and symbols stands as the epitome of Shanghai.²⁸⁸

Although the Jewish refugees held on to much of their German heritage and socialized primarily with other refugees, they “knew their identity as Germans was shattered but could not yet grasp what that meant.”²⁸⁹ In the process of developing a new identity they were heavily influenced by their cosmopolitan surroundings. Prior to the establishment of the ghetto some of the refugees lived in the International Settlement and interacted with the British, French, Japanese and the Chinese, who constituted the majority of the population.²⁹⁰ In Shanghai there was a unique blending of cultures, and English and Chinese elements could be commonly seen side by side. [See Image #71] Additionally, the refugees viewed their time in Shanghai as a temporary refuge, and most desired to emigrate to the United States or Great Britain. Thus the refugees sought to incorporate British and American qualities into their identities to prepare them for their future home. Historian Susanne Wiedemann explains that there was a “merging between the diverse

²⁸⁸ Susanne Wiedemann. 2006. *Transnational Encounters with "Amerika": German Jewish Refugees' Identity Formation in Berlin and Shanghai, 1939-1949*. PhD Dissertation, Brown University. Providence, Rhode Island: ProQuest/UMI. (Publication No. 3227968.)

²⁸⁹ W. Michael Blumenthal. *The Invisible Wall: Mystery of the Germans and Jews, a Personal Exploration*. Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998, 376.

²⁹⁰ This thesis addresses solely the relationships between the Chinese population and the influence of American and British culture on identity. For more information on the relationship between the refugees and the Japanese see: David Kranzler. *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*. New York: Yeshiva University Press : Distributed by Sifria Distributors, 1976.

cultures in Shanghai” and thus “German Jewish culture did not exist in isolation but was the distinct product of encounters and exchanges with other cultures and peoples.”²⁹¹

Relations with the Chinese

Within the unique international setting that was wartime Shanghai the Jewish refugees encountered and interacted with the Chinese population. Most work on the history of Jews in Shanghai asserts that the Jewish community remained culturally separate from the Chinese.²⁹² However, the testimony of former refugees, as well as documents and artwork from the time period, demonstrate that this was not always true. Although most Jews both socialized and interacted primarily with other refugees and spent more of their time in European institutions, many did have relations with Chinese residents. Refugee children and Chinese children would often play with one another in the lanes.²⁹³ Interactions with their Chinese neighbors, as well as witnessing Chinese culture and poverty, had a tremendous influence on the refugees’ experience in Shanghai and even their attitudes towards themselves.

Jewish refugees and Chinese residents commonly interacted within an economic setting, often doing business with one another and sometimes even collaborating on business ventures. Although I was unable to find accounts of such relationships from the Chinese side, many of the Jews entering into business relations with Chinese merchants or

²⁹¹ Wiedemann, *Transnational Encounters with "Amerika,"* 168.

²⁹² Renata Berg-Pan. “Shanghai Chronicle: Nazi Refugees in China” in Jarrell C. Jackman and Carla M. Borden eds., *The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation 1930-1945*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983, pp. 286-88.

²⁹³ Ernest G. Heppner. *Shanghai Refuge: a Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, 85.

who hired Chinese workers found the experience mutually beneficial. Siegbert Wollenstein who worked with a Chinese paper wholesaler, was convinced that the relationship between the groups was more collaborative than exploitative:

I must say, we had good experiences with Chinese people. The Chinese were, over these last hundred years, they all used to be exploited by all the foreigners who were in here with their colony of Jewish refugees. They knew they were not, they knew they would not be exploited by us, and once a Chinese knew that, he was your friend. In this respect, we had various good experiences with Chinese people.²⁹⁴

Not only did Jewish refugees and the Chinese do business together, but also some Chinese merchants employed Jews. Martin Friedlander worked with a Chinese man to supply cheap meat to the *heime* kitchens. Later during the war another Chinese man employed him in his business.²⁹⁵ Ernest Heppner, who acquired a job in a Chinese bookstore selling English language books, remembers working with his Chinese coworkers:

Now I was part of the bookstore staff and regularly had my lunch with the rest of the employees. At first I had serious misgivings, because many Chinese were suffering from communicable diseases and because everyone around the table dipped his or her chopsticks into the common bowl. Yet the variety and quality of the northern Chinese cuisine prompted me to forget my anxiety and enjoy the food. I became as proficient in the use of chopsticks as the Chinese and agreed with them that the Western way of eating with a fork and knife was barbaric and utterly uncivilized.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ Siegbert and Werner Wollstein, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, July 28, 1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁹⁵ Martin and Susie Friedlander, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 21, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Tamarac, Florida, 30-1.

²⁹⁶ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 61.

Others, unfamiliar with their new environment, sought help from their more experienced Chinese neighbors. Friendly Chinese would willingly teach the refugees methods to get rid of bugs, or ways to deal with the cold winters. “I can only say the best of them [the Chinese]” said Doris Grey. “Their mentality, in the beginning, it was hard to digest it, so to speak... [but] you get used to it, and at the end... they were very helpful. We lived among the lowest class of the Chinese, but they helped us. They showed us how to make coal out of dirt and water, how to use the Japanese oven.”²⁹⁷

A relatively small, but ultimately influential group of refugees became very interested in Chinese culture. Willy Tonn, a German refugee, founded an educational program in 1940 called the Asia Seminar, which hosted a faculty of sixty and taught classes in sixteen Asian languages. Fred Marcus describes going to lectures on the Chinese people, their history and culture, including one on “Chinese Festivals” and another titled “A Cultural History of China.”²⁹⁸ Otto Schnepf studied and learned Chinese, and ultimately several Chinese hired him as an English language tutor. Ernest Culman also recalls studying Chinese in school under the instruction of a Chinese teacher.²⁹⁹ Three notable individuals who became interested and involved in Chinese society were Wolfgang Fraenkel, David Ludwig Bloch, and Jakob Rosenfeld.

Wolfgang Fraenkel lived in Shanghai from 1939 to 1947 and became actively involved in the Chinese musical scene. Born in Berlin, where he studied piano, music

²⁹⁷ Doris Grey, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 26, 1991, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Laguna Hills, CA, 49.

²⁹⁸ Fred Marcus, Audrey F. Marcus, and Rena Krasno. *Survival in Shanghai: the Journals of Fred Marcus, 1939-49*. Berkeley, CA: Pacific View Press, 2008, 75.

²⁹⁹ Ernest E. Culman, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Oct. 18, 1997, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Rockville, Maryland, 25.

theory and conducting, Fraenkel had been an officer in the German army during World War One and then studied law and worked as a judge until 1933 when all Jews were removed from public office. He then worked as a musician and composer until he was detained in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Berlin in late 1938.

Unlike many of his contemporaries who performed primarily European music in European cafes and clubs, Fraenkel taught composition and musical theory to Chinese students at the Shanghai Conservatory.³⁰⁰ He helped establish several entirely Chinese orchestras and ensembles, and he at least twice was a guest conductor of the "Chinese Youth Orchestra."³⁰¹ He studied Chinese music and incorporated Chinese musical styles, as well as Chinese poetry into his compositions.³⁰² He also gave private musical lessons. One of his students, Zhou Guangen, later became one of China's leading pianists. His Chinese students reported that Frankel's teaching gave them a deeper understanding of music. "Frankel ...supported a kind of Chinese music that would always remain conscious of Chinese tradition and aim at a synthesis of contemporary Western and traditional Chinese sources."³⁰³

In the nine years that David Ludwig Bloch lived in Shanghai he created over three hundred woodcuts, most depicting the daily life of the Chinese. [See Image #2, 71-79] Bloch was born in 1910 in Germany and became deaf as a child. He went to art school in

³⁰⁰ Utz, Christian. "Cultural Accommodation and Exchange in the Refugee Experience: A German-Jewish Musician in Shanghai." *Ethnomusicology Forum*, Silk, Spice and Shirah: Musical Outcomes of Jewish Migration into Asia C. 1780-c.1950, 13, no. 1 (June 2004): 119-51. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20184469>, 127.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 136.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 135.

Munich until the Nazi persecution forced him to flee to China. While living in China Bloch became fascinated with his Chinese surroundings and empathized with the plight of the Chinese people. He created numerous woodcuts depicting the life of the poor in China. His artwork meticulously shows Chinese life in close detail. Images of Chinese coolies, beggars, and children were common subjects. Bloch created his works on the street, sketching among the Chinese population. Not only did Bloch draw Chinese subjects and work in a Chinese environment, but he also signed his artwork with both a German and a Chinese signature. During his time in Shanghai, Bloch was heavily influenced by his Chinese surroundings, and he not only forged friendships with Chinese but also fell in love with a Chinese woman, who was also deaf, and eventually the two married.³⁰⁴ In later years in America he drew numerous depictions of the concentration camps and of the Holocaust.

Arguably the Jewish refugee who became most actively involved with his Chinese surroundings was Jakob Rosenfeld, an Austrian doctor. After witnessing the persecution of the Chinese by the Japanese army, Rosenfeld decided to join Mao's Zedong's New Fourth Army in 1941. Rosenfeld, who became known as "General Luo" in China, was one of the few foreigners to make it into the upper ranks of Mao's revolutionary army; he became Commander of the Medical Corps.³⁰⁵ He became known in China as a hero, operating on wounded soldiers and training dozens of Chinese doctors in modern medicine. He was

³⁰⁴ Bloch, David L. *Holzschnitte, Woodcuts; Shanghai 1940-1949*. Sankt Augustin, Germany: Institut Monumenta Serica, 1997 and Bloch, David L. "Light in the Shadows - David L. Bloch." Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed March 11, 2011. <http://library.rit.edu/depts/archives/deafhistory/bloch.htm>.

³⁰⁵ Pan Guang. "Jews in China: Legends, History and New Perspectives." Web. 11 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.cjss.org.cn/newa1.htm>>.

named health minister in the Communist army's provisional government in 1947 and was ultimately elevated to the rank of general. Rosenfeld returned to Austria in 1949, but finding life in Europe dissatisfying, he attempted to return to China the following year; however, since he did not have a visa he was unable to reenter the country and instead settled in Israel, where he died just two years later.³⁰⁶

Although the economic and sanitary conditions that the refugees faced were deplorable, and during the ghetto period many suffered from severe malnutrition, the poor Chinese had it even worse than the Jewish refugees. Chinese people froze to death on the streets, were severely beaten by the Japanese soldiers, and some even crippled themselves or their children to help them earn more money as beggars. For some refugees the starving Chinese people on the street made them realize that their situation could be worse.

Relations with the Chinese broadened the horizons of the refugees who had not been exposed to cultures outside of Europe and in many cases made them more open and understanding of others. "Shanghai taught me that life is full of people that seem strange to you, because they look different," Michael Blumenthal would later recall,

some have a beard, some do not, some dress differently, some talk differently, some come from exotic areas that you've never heard of before, but fundamentally, though they come from different cultures and have different ways of thinking, fundamentally their basic desires and wishes are pretty much the same. And you have to be open to people regardless of skin color and culture and learn about them and take them the way they are.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ "Jewish Doctor Turned 'Buddha Savior' under Mao," Ynetnews, November 22, 2006, section goes here, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3330950,00.html>.

³⁰⁷ W. Michael Blumenthal. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 3, 1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Berlin, 19.

Influence of British and American Culture

The refugees viewed Shanghai as a “waiting room” and most sought to settle eventually in the United States and England. Both these nations controlled the International Settlement and there was significant Anglo-American influence in Shanghai. English was the primary language of commerce, and buildings in the International Settlement were built in an American style.

Interest in these English-speaking countries and cultures resulted in many developing an English or American international identity. Walter Abish even writes that he was “infatuated with England and anything even remotely pertaining to England.”³⁰⁸ The Jews immersed themselves in American and British culture. Refugees frequented foreign English language films. Fred Marcus writes in his journal about seeing *Babes in Arms*, *Gone with the Wind*, *King Kong*, *Good-bye Mr. Chips*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Northwest Passage*, and *Mutiny on the Bounty*.³⁰⁹ They also listened to American radio and music. A biographer describes one former refugee’s obsession with American culture:

The splendor of the Orient, however, could not compete with a street vendor’s offering— American comic books. Young Peter’s imagination raced as he was carried away to fantasies of other worlds and into the future. Peter also listened to American jazz on Shanghai radio and watched first run Hollywood movies over and over again at his friend’s father’s movie theater. There, in the ancient land of China, Peter Max became more

³⁰⁸ Walter Abish. *Double Vision*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004, 67.

³⁰⁹ Marcus, *Survival in Shanghai*, 139.

Interestingly many of the directors of popular American films, such as Michael Curtis (Mikhail Kertesz), the director of *Casablanca*, were Jewish refugees who had fled to the United States from Central Europe in the early 1930s. Thus many of the scenes were influenced by the directors’ former lives in Europe. Source: Kati Marton. *The Great Escape: Nine Jews Who Fled Hitler and Changed the World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.

immersed in contemporary American iconography than most children living in the U.S.A. at the time.³¹⁰

Additionally, their adoption of the English language illustrates the refugees attempt to integrate these cultures into their identities. Heppner explains his dedication to learning English:

I never had any formal English-language lessons, but I discovered a pleasant way to augment my reading and improve my English. I went to see American movies. To make them more attractive to the non-English-speaking population, the movies had Chinese subtitles and were accompanied by a handbill giving a synopsis of the story in several languages... there I saw, trying to understand the dialogue, comparing it with the printed synopsis. It was an unusual way to learn a language perhaps, but I found it both expedient and successful.³¹¹

The degree to which the refugees incorporated English into their environment can be seen in the advertisements of Jewish shops. [See Image #43-7] Most advertisements in the Jewish publications listed the store names in English. Even a program for a Zionist fundraiser [See Image #54] was written in English, although it catered primarily to a Central European audience. A telltale sign of the incorporation of Anglo-American culture into their lives is that the famously popular Viennese restaurant, which had been named *Zum Weissen Roess* in Austria, became *The White Horse* in Shanghai.³¹²

Most of the children attended schools based on the British school system where English was the language of operation. Culman even tells how at the end of the year in The Seward Road School students had to take exams that were sent directly from Cambridge,

³¹⁰ Peter Max would become famous as a popular artist in the 1960s and 1970s. "Peter Max Biography." Official Peter Max Website. Accessed April 4, 2011. <http://www.petermax.com/artbio.php>.

³¹¹ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 64.

³¹² Wiedemann, *Transnational Encounters with "Amerika"*, 216.

and were the identical tests taken by children living in Great Britain. He further recalls how he studied British culture in school. "First we learned English history, English literature, Shakespeare. We put on Shakespeare plays in school, or parts of it. 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' I got the part of Puck in 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'"³¹³ Although children could continue to study German culture and read German literature and poetry, they became highly acquainted with British culture as well.

As previously noted, many of the children joined the Boy Scouts, which was a British organization. There they sang English songs and participated in popular English activities. Some older teens even joined the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, an organization of the international community (primarily the British), including Ernest Heppner for whom "it felt good wearing the British uniform."³¹⁴ Although the adults went to American movies, the youth, because they spoke English far better than their parents attended these films in far greater numbers. Since the youth learned English, they were far more prepared for their future life in the English-speaking countries the refugees sought to settle in than were their parents.

Importantly, the refugees supported the British and Americans in the war, and were rooting against their former homeland. This contributed to the refugees growing identification with America or England instead of Germany.

³¹³ Culman Interview, 26.

³¹⁴ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 76.

CONCLUSION

Lessons about the strength of the human spirit, about hope and courage and giving your best even when times are darkest, about the importance of community, about dignity and cultural heritage, about our Jewishness, about ourselves.³¹⁵

The Jewish community in Shanghai did not dissolve immediately after the war; the majority of the refugees were unable to immigrate to other nations until 1948 or 1949. Quotas remained in effect in foreign nations and the refugees had to wait until their quota number was called. During this period of waiting the refugees continued to pursue cultural activities and even created a more vibrant life after the war since there were more available resources and no Japanese censorship. However, by 1949 the once vibrant Jewish community had dispersed and the majority of the refugees settled in the United States and the new Jewish state of Israel. Yet the identity development that took place in Shanghai, as well as the common rediscovery of a Jewish awareness, stayed with many of the survivors well after departing China.

“The Shanghai refugee community, short-lived as it was, had existed under an extraordinarily difficult set of circumstances and had much to be proud of,” Heppner recalls. “Many refugees who had been estranged from Judaism rediscovered it and became conscious Jews again.”³¹⁶

Ernest Culman and his family, who lived in the French Concession prior to the establishment of the ghetto, moved from a wealthier area into Hongkew so as not to feel isolated from this developing community. “In Hongkew you had the whole Jewish

³¹⁵ W. Michael Blumenthal, *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*. comp. Berl Falbaum, Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005, 17.

³¹⁶ Ernest G. Heppner. *Shanghai Refuge: a Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, 178.

community,” Culman explains. “Your neighbors were Jews, or refugees like yourself, and I think that was what they [his parents] felt, that they should live within the Jewish community so as not to be so isolated.”³¹⁷

The ghetto period then brought the entire community together in one small region of the city, and even those who had previously remained distant from the Jewish refugee community joined this culture and community. “A new chapter in our life began when we were finally required to move to Hongkew,” recalled Gertrude Kracauer. “Gone was the cosmopolitan hustle and bustle, the mixture of people, the feeling of a big energetic, albeit foreign city. Now we became part of the Hongkew community.”³¹⁸ Living in an entirely Jewish community helped many overcome the differences and tensions that had existed between various groups before the war, and most notably it brought many of the refugees closer to their Jewish heritage. “Jews from many religious backgrounds – Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and nonobservant – had their ties to basic Jewish traditions renewed by being thrown together in such close proximity.”³¹⁹

“Even the most assimilated European Jews, crowded together with other Jews in the confines of Hongkew, joined in the life of the Jewish community.”³²⁰ Ross tells of one former refugee who believed that “Hongkew seemed like one big, extended

³¹⁷ Ernest E. Culman., Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Oct. 18,1997, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Rockville, Maryland, 20-1.

³¹⁸ Berl Falbaum, comp. *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*. Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005, 127.

³¹⁹ Marcia R Ristaino. *Port of Last Resort: the Diaspora Communities of Shanghai*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, 209.

³²⁰ Ross, James R. *Escape to Shanghai: a Jewish Community in China*. New York: Free Press, 1994, 131.

family.”³²¹ Highly assimilated Jews, as well as those who had converted to Christianity, blended into this Jewish society in Hongkew and many began to participate in Jewish institutions and events.³²² Historian Marcia Ristaino keenly notes that “being Jews put them in touch with a tradition, networks, resources, and an encompassing identity that was sustaining even in the worst of times.”³²³ “For many Jews, living in the Hongkew ghetto with all its hardships and misery was satisfactory in another respect: it was living in a real Jewish community,”³²⁴ reminisces Heppner.

Not only did the experience of Shanghai create a heightened Jewish awareness, but many took lessons learned in Shanghai to heart and were influenced by their experiences there for the rest of their lives. “Shanghai was a school for life. A hard school, but in ways a beneficial one all the same,” notes Blumenthal. Gerald Bigus in an interview attempts to explain how Shanghai changed him:

I really don't know what, Shanghai made some changes in myself... it made me maybe more understanding [pauses] you know, of human nature... you become more cosmopolitan. You become, I mean, more, I would say, wise of living and of dying... and you learn, people from other cities, other behaviors... you learned more than your would, otherwise might not [have] don't at home, you know. Maybe you become more tolerant.³²⁵

Blumenthal recalls a similar way his experience in Shanghai influenced his outlook:

I learned a lot about life in a, in an exciting sense, I mean, in tasting all there was to offer, but also in getting a perspective on, on how things happen to people, you know?... I think the most valuable lesson I learned

³²¹ Ibid., 155.

³²² Ibid., 140.

³²³ Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort*, 275.

³²⁴ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 178.

³²⁵ Gerald Bigus, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June. 9,1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Laguna Hills, CA.

in Shanghai... [is that] power and position is transitory. It can be here today and gone tomorrow. And above all I learned what counts is not who you are and whether you are *Herr Doktor or Herr Professor Doktor...* that's just names, words. It's your inner resources that matter.³²⁶

Melitta Colland even goes so far to say, "I'm grateful, I personally am grateful to Hitler, because he pushed me out of becoming a very middle-class, very narrow-minded little nothing. Because that is the feeling I have now, that I would have grown up to be, in that type of life that we lived in Vienna."³²⁷

Ultimately the temporary refuge of Shanghai had a tremendous influence on the refugees, and despite the terrible hardships they had to endure, it is one of the few relatively positive stories about the Holocaust, as most of the refugees who went to Shanghai survived, which they likely would not have in Europe. It is a story of triumph perseverance, and camaraderie:

The environment or set of circumstances produced a closely-knit community and a microcosm of Jewish life that flourished in an alien and hostile environment. The bonds of friendship among many who shared this experience did not end when the refugees left Shanghai; they have lasted to this day, across oceans and continents.

I am very proud to have been a part of this unique community, which existed for just about one decade. It developed and disappeared before our eyes, but it taught my wife and me the priorities for an ethical and moral way, a Jewish way of life.³²⁸

³²⁶ W. Michael Blumenthal. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 3, 1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Berlin, 18.

³²⁷ Melitta Colland, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Sept. 20, 1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Portland, Maine, 28.

³²⁸ Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 178.

Directory of Referenced Survivors

Bigus, Gerald: Gerard Bigus was born in Berlin. His family owned a gentlemen's clothing store, which was destroyed in *Kristallnacht*. He was fourteen years old when his family left Berlin in April 1939 and went to Shanghai. In Shanghai Bigus became an apprentice in the radio trade, passed his journeyman's exam, and worked in radio repair. His father died just before the war ended. After the war, Bigus worked for the U.S. Army as a warehouseman and for a hospital as a stock clerk. In December 1948 he and his mother sailed for Israel, where he served in the army. In 1958 they moved to the United States. Gerard Bigus lives in California with his wife, also a refugee who went to Shanghai.

Blumenthal, W. Michael: *(See pages 56-9 for his early history and experience in Shanghai.)*

Blumenthal left China for San Francisco in 1947. In 1952 he became a naturalized US citizen. He graduated from UC Berkeley with an undergraduate degree in international economics in 1951 and then received a PhD from Princeton in economics. He served as a board member for several major corporations and became president of Bendix International. In 1961 he became Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs in the Kennedy administration. President Carter named Blumenthal Secretary of the Treasury of the United States in 1976. Blumenthal played an important role in establishing a relationship between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China. After he left government he continued to work in the private business sector. In December 1997 he became the director of the Jewish Museum Berlin. Today he remains director of the museum, and is also a member of several economic advisory boards.

Buchler, Alfred: Alfred Buchler was born in Vienna in 1927. He and his parents were some of the last Central European refugees to immigrate to Shanghai when they left Austria in March 1941. Buchler was a musician and took up the accordion when he arrived in Shanghai. Although Buchler was a religious Jew, he attended the St. Francis Xavier's Catholic School. His father had a textile business in Shanghai and his mother did some sewing for extra money. In Shanghai he forced his parents to come with him to an Orthodox Synagogue every week. He was a member of the Boy Scouts and later the Tikvah Club. He left Shanghai for the United States in 1947 and he enrolled at the University Colorado, Boulder that same year.

Colland, Melitta: Melitta Colland (born Sommerfreund) was born in Vienna on November 24, 1917. She went with her mother Sarah to Shanghai in the summer of 1939, and met her brother there who had immigrated there in late 1938. Upon arrival Colland started her own dress shop, but after the war started she lost the business and had to move to Hongkew. In 1944 she married Dr. Bruno Meyerowitz, a refugee from Germany. In September 1945 the two had a daughter. The family left for Panama in 1947, and soon

afterwards moved to the United States and settled in Connecticut. She passed away September 1, 2001.

Culman, Ernest: Ernest Culman was born December 2, 1929 in Liegnitz, Germany. He and his family went to Shanghai in June 1939. His father had difficulty establishing himself as a doctor, so his family and some friends started a luncheon business. Later his mother baked cakes and worked as a seamstress. Culman attended the Shanghai Jewish School, then after 1942 the Kadoorie School. He had his Bar Mitzvah in Shanghai. After the war, Culman apprenticed in camera repair. The family left Shanghai in January 1947 for San Francisco, and settled in Baltimore. Culman continued in camera repair, was drafted during the Korean War, and later became a manager with Industrial Photo and Pen Camera. He and his wife live near Washington, D.C.

Fuchs, Arnold: Arnold Fuchs was born in Breslau in 1928. His father was Jewish, his mother was not. He and his family immigrated to Shanghai in April 1939 and soon after arrival, his parents divorced. He then moved with his mother into a Catholic compound. He attended St. Francis Xavier School. He later worked as an apprentice to a dental technician, and after the war for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Fuchs and his mother sailed as part of a transport of 106 refugees from Tientsin to San Francisco, then across the U.S. in a sealed train, and sailed further to Bremen in 1950. They were able to come back to the U.S. in 1951. He became a practicing psychologist in Maine.

Friedlander, Martin and Susie: Martin Friedlander was born in 1913. He left Berlin for Shanghai in April, 1939. He worked supplying food to the Jewish camp kitchens in Hongkew, as a parachute rigger for the American Army, and as an interior decorator. Susie Friedlander left Berlin with her parents in March 1939, at the age of 14. They met in Shanghai after the war and were married after coming to the United States in 1949. They now live in Florida.

Goldfarb, Susanne: Susanne Goldfarb (born Susanne Hafner) was born in Vienna on February 17, 1933. She and her family fled to Shanghai in 1939, where she went to the Kadoorie School and participated in the Betar Zionist organization. She and her family left Shanghai in 1949 and went to Israel. She immigrated to New York City in 1953. In 1969 she and her husband moved to Madison, WI and Susanne worked with the University of Wisconsin's Office of Foreign Students and Faculty until her death in June 1987.

Grey, Doris: Doris Grey was born in Hindenburg, Upper Silesia, in 1912. She studied nursing and worked in Breslau, before moving to Berlin and becoming head nurse at the Krankenhaus der Jüdischen Gemeinde. In Berlin, she married William Cohn. On May 5,

1940, they left Berlin for Shanghai. She worked at the Emigrants Hospital in the Ward Road Heim as head nurse, while her husband continued his work as an art dealer. In January 1947 they left Shanghai for the United States. After becoming widowed, she married Benny Grey, who survived the war in the Soviet Union. They live in California.

Harpuder, Ralph: Ralph Harpuder immigrated to Shanghai from Berlin when he was four years old. There he attended the Kadoorie School and was a member of the Boy Scouts. After the war he moved to the Los Angeles where he worked as an environmentalist for Los Angeles County for 26 years. He is now a freelance writer and maintains a website about the experience of the Jewish refugees in Shanghai.

Heppner, Ernest: Ernest Heppner was born in 1921 in Breslau in Germany and left for Shanghai with his mother in 1939. He married his wife in Shanghai in 1945 and then worked as a civilian employee for the U.S. Advisory Group to the Chinese Armed Forces. He settled in Indianapolis, where he gave speeches and wrote articles about the Holocaust and racism. He died in 2001.

Hirsch, Ralph: Ralph Hirsch was born in Berlin on December 2, 1930. He and his family left Berlin in October 1940 by train to Moscow, and then with the Trans-Siberian Railroad to China. They settled in Hongkew and Hirsch attended the Kadoorie School. His father worked occasionally for the Joint Distribution Committee and as an accountant for some refugees' small businesses until the war ended. His mother opened a hat shop, and when that did not succeed, a candy store. In May 1947, the family left for the United States. Hirsch is a city planner and lives in Philadelphia and in Germany. He founded and directs the Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai, an organization of former Shanghai refugees.

Klotzer, Charles: Charles Klotzer was born Lothar Gustav Gabriel Klotzer in Berlin on November 1, 1925. His father served in World War I, and was connected with the theater in Berlin. His mother ran a toy store. His father was arrested in June 1938, sent to Buchenwald, and was released when his mother procured tickets to Shanghai. The three sailed to Shanghai in March 1939 and Klotzer's sister went to England on a work permit. In Shanghai Klotzer attended the Kadoorie School, joined the Boy Scouts and the Tikvah Club. He worked manufacturing paint. After the war, Klotzer worked for Charles Jordan, head of the Shanghai office of the Joint Distribution Committee. In December 1947 the Klotzer family came to the United States and settled in St. Louis. Klotzer wrote for several newspapers and then founded the St. Louis Journalism Review. He lives with his wife in St. Louis.

Lowenberg, Lisbeth: Lisbeth Loewenberg and her mother went to Shanghai in 1940, when she was eighteen. Her father had already sailed there in 1939. He died in Shanghai

of cancer in 1942. She worked in Shanghai as a secretary. There she married Bruno Loewenberg from Berlin, who had spent thirteen months in Buchenwald. He ran a lending library on Ward Road. In 1948 they immigrated to the United States and settled in San Francisco, where Bruno opened a bookstore and Lisbeth worked for Collier's magazine. Lisbeth Loewenberg lives in San Francisco.

Marcus, Fred: Fred Marcus was born in Berlin in 1924. After his mother's death in 1938, he and his father went to Shanghai and arrived in 1939. He and his father initially lived in one of the *heime* in a room with 50 other men, but they were able to move out once they sold some of their possessions. After the war he worked at the Cathay Hotel as a receptionist. He immigrated to the United States in 1949, shortly before the Communist takeover. He became a Jewish educator in Northern California, and then moved to Denver, Colorado where he taught Jewish education to adults and also worked as a travel agent before his death in 2001.

Rossetty, Henry: Henry Rossetty was born Rosenfeld in Berlin in 1905. His father, Eugene Rosenfeld, was an opera singer. Rossetty became an electrician and then a bandleader in Berlin until 1933. In 1939 he and his wife and three other band members took a Japanese ship from Italy to Shanghai. Two days after arrival Rossetty and his band found work. Rossetty sailed to the United States after the war and went to work in Chicago. Eventually they settled in southern California. Rossetty died in December 1992.

Schnepf, Otto: Otto Schnepf was born in Austria in 1925. He and his parents immigrated to Shanghai in 1935. He got an undergraduate degree at St. John's University in Shanghai in 1947 and after his immigration to the United States he studied at UC Berkeley, where he got his PhD in 1951. He spent two years at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing from 1980 to 1982 and is now active in the area of Science Policy, especially concerning China. He taught for thirteen years at the Technion in Haifa, Israel before moving to the United States to teach chemistry at the University of Southern California where he is still a member of the faculty as an emeritus.

Sigmund, Tobias: *(See pages 51-6 for his early history and experience in Shanghai.)* Tobias is now a distinguished Research Professor at University at Albany SUNY, and has extensively written on educational psychology, instructional technology, and other topics related to education.

Westheimer, Susan: Susan Westheimer (born Salomon) was born in Berlin in 1922, and lived in Neukölln. Her mother owned a small business in Berlin. Her married sister sailed to Shanghai first, then Westheimer and her mother took the Trans-Siberian Railroad across Asia in March 1940, and sailed from Manchuria to Shanghai. The day after she arrived, she began work as a waitress in the Café Windsor. She got married soon

thereafter to another refugee. Later she worked as an assistant to a Chinese doctor, until she and her family were forced into the Designated Area in 1943. After the war's end she worked for the U.S. Army then went back to waitressing. In 1948, after getting a divorce, she sailed to the United States with her mother. After living in Chicago and New York, Susan Westheimer got remarried and moved to California. She now lives in the Los Angeles area.

Zunterstein, Alfred: (See pages 59-62 for his early history and experience in Shanghai.) After the war Zunterstein worked in Shanghai for the U.S. Air Force as an aircraft mechanic. He and his wife left Shanghai in 1949 and lived in Wyoming for 7 years before moving to the Seattle area, where he worked for Boeing. Later he became a metal sculptor. He died on June 11, 2005.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Abish, Walter. *Double Vision*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.

The Alfred Buchler Collection, Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, California.

Bacon, Ursula. *The Shanghai Diary*. Seattle: Milestone Books, 2002.

Barnett, Robert W. "Shanghai's German Refugees Face Uncertainties." *Far Eastern Survey* 8, no. 21 (October 25, 1939): 251-53.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3021659>.

Barnett, Robert W. "Starvation, Boom, and Blockade in Shanghai." *Far Eastern Survey* 9, no. 9 (April 24, 1940): 97-103. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3021273>.

Benger, Kurt, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 8, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Long Beach, CA.

Berg, Paul. "Hot Water." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed March 20, 2011.
http://rickshaw.org/hot_water.htm.

Bigus, Gerald, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June. 9, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Laguna Hills, CA.

Bloch, David L. *Holzschnitte, Woodcuts; Shanghai 1940-1949*. Sankt Augustin, Germany: Institut Monumenta Serica, 1997.

Bloch, David L. "Light in the Shadows - David L. Bloch." Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed March 11, 2011.
<http://library.rit.edu/depts/archives/deafhistory/bloch.htm>.

Blumenthal, W. Michael. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 3, 1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Berlin.

Blumenthal, W. Michael. *The Invisible Wall: Mystery of the Germans and Jews, a Personal Exploration*. Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998.

Borenstein, Fanny and George, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, February 22, 1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Del Ray Beach, FL.

Colland, Melitta, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Sept. 20, 1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Portland, Maine.

- Cope, Elizabeth W. "Displaced Europeans in Shanghai." *Far Eastern Survey* 17, no. 23 (December 8, 1948): 274-76. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3021615>.
- Culman, Ernest E., Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Oct. 18,1997, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Rockville, Maryland.
- Diaries of Hans Jacoby., 1938-1946; DM 70; Leo Baeck Institute.
- Eber, Irene, ed. *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Eisfelder, H. Peter. "Chinese Exile: My Years in Shanghai & Nanking, 19th Century-1986." ME 999, Leo Baeck Institute, LBI Archives.
- Falbaum, Berl, comp. *Shanghai Remembered: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe*. Royal Oak, MI: Momentum Books, 2005.
- Friedlander, Martin and Susie, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Feb. 21,1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Tamarac, Florida.
- Fuchs, Arnold, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 18,1997, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Gorham, Maine.
- Ginsbourg, Anna. *Jewish Refugees in Shanghai*. Shanghai: China Weekly Review, 1940.
- Goldfarb, Susanne Interview, Oral Histories: Wisconsin Survivors of the Holocaust, Wisconsin Historical Society, Interview by Jean L. Lettofsky, Madison, WI., 7 Feb. 1980 and 8 Oct. 1980.
- Good Men in Dark Times: A Story of Moral Heroism, 1938-1995; John G. Stoessinger Collection; ME 1446; Leo Baeck Institute.
- Grey, Doris, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 26,1991, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Laguna Hills, CA.
- Gruenberger, Felix. "The Jewish Refugees in Shanghai." *Jewish Social Studies* 12, no. 4 (October 1950): 329-48. Accessed October 11, 2010. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4464912>.
- Hakol* 4, no. 1 (Autumn 1949). Sino-Judaic Institute Collection Box 4, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford, CA.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "Shanghai Boy Scouts." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/shanghai_boy_scouts.htm.

- Harpuder, Ralph. "Business in the Shanghai Ghetto." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/ghetto_business.htm.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "Chanukah As Celebrated in Shanghai in 1945 and 1947." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. <http://rickshaw.org/chanukah.htm>.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "European Jewish Artist Society." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/european_jewish_artist_society.htm.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "Gerhard Gottschalk." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 13, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/gerhard_gottschalk.htm.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "Hanukkah Some 60 Years Ago; The Ghetto Era." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/some_60_years_ago.htm.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "Oh, Those Deplorable Heime." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. <http://rickshaw.org/heime.htm>.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "Provision Stores in Hongkew." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 8, 2011. <http://rickshaw.org/provisions.htm>.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "Purim in the Shanghai Ghetto." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. <http://rickshaw.org/purim.htm>.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "Siegfried Sonnenschein." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. <http://rickshaw.org/sonnenschein.htm>.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "Tribute to the Artists; Their Talent and Devotion Helped Us Survive." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/tribute_to_the_artists.htm.
- Harpuder, Ralph. "Typhoons in Shanghai." The Rickshaw Express Web. Accessed April 10, 2011. http://rickshaw.org/Typhoons_in_Shanghai.htm.
- Heppner, Ernest G. "Personal History." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed December 09, 2010. http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_oi.php?ModuleId=10005589&MediaId=4018.
- Heppner, Ernest G. *Shanghai Refuge: a Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.
- Hirsch, Ralph, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 22, 1994, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Shanghai.

- Horowitz, Rose, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 28,1991, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Los Angeles, CA.
- Iwry, Samuel. *To Wear the Dust of War: from Bialystok to Shanghai to the Promised Land - an Oral History*. Edited by L. J. H. Kelley. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- "Jews in Shanghai Joyous; 15,000 Whom Japanese Put in Ghetto Mark Rosh Ha-Shanah." *The New York Times*. September 10, 1945. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Klotzer, Charles, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Sept. 4,1993, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Chicago, Illinois.
- Krasno, Rena. *Strangers Always: a Jewish Family in Wartime Shanghai*. Berkeley, CA: Pacific View Press, 1992.
- Krasno, Rena. *That Last Glorious Summer, 1939: Shanghai-Japan*. Hong Kong: Old China Hand Press, 2001.
- Kracauer, Gertrude. *Memories and Images of My Shanghai Years*. New York: Leo Baeck Institute.
- Loewenberg, Lisbeth, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 21,1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Shanghai.
- Marcus, Fred, Audrey F. Marcus, and Rena Krasno. *Survival in Shanghai: the Journals of Fred Marcus, 1939-49*. Berkeley, CA: Pacific View Press, 2008.
- Matzdorff, Gary, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, Oct. 16-17,1999, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Philadelphia.
- No Title, 1929-1992; Margit Hirsch Collection; ME 1052; Leo Baeck Institute.
- Pelcovits, N. A. "European Refugees in Shanghai." *Far Eastern Survey*, 21st ser., 15 (October 23, 1946): 321-25.
- Raymond, Jack. "295 German Jews from Shanghai Return to Resume Life in Berlin." *The New York Times*, August 22, 1947. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Rossetty, Henry, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 8,1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Laguna Hills, CA.
- Sasson, Jacoby, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 24,1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Beijing, China.

Schnepp, Otto, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 7,1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Los Angeles, CA.

Shanghai Haven, 1938-1945; Rothstein, Arthur and Kelen, Leslie; ME 237; Leo Baeck Institute.

Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School Report Card. In *The Jews in Shanghai*. Shanghai: Shanghai Pictorial Publishing House, 1995.

Shapiro, Sidney, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 26,1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Beijing, China.

Srulowitz, Louis. "My Story, 1922-1992." MS 1329, Leo Baeck Institute, New York.

Sumner, Ruth. Interview by Steve Hochstadt, April 17,1991, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Tampa, FL.

Tobias, Sigmund. "Fear, Faith, and Community." *Berkshire Jewish Voice* 19, no. 1 (2010). <http://www.press.uillinois.edu/wordpress/?p=7137>.

Tobias, Sigmund. *Strange Haven: a Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

Westheimer, Susan, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, June 8,1990, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Newport Beach, CA.

Wollstein, Siegbert and Werner, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, July 28,1989, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Zunterstein, Alfred and Eva, Interview by Steve Hochstadt, May. 28,1995, Transcript, Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, Salzburg, Germany.

Secondary Sources

"About the Centre." The Kadoorie Institute – Shek Kong Centre. December 10, 2010. <http://www.hku.hk/kisk/indexin.htm>.

Altman, Avraham, and Irene Eber. "Flight to Shanghai, 1938-1940: The Larger Setting." *Yad-Vashem Studies* 28 (2000): 51-86.

Bauer, Yehuda. *The Death of the Shtetl*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

- Bell, Dean P. *Jewish Identity in Early Modern Germany: Memory, Power and Community*. Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2007.
- Ben-Rafael, Eliezer. *Jewish Identities: Fifty Intellectuals Answer Ben Gurion*. Boston: Brill, 2002.
- Betta, Chiara. "From Orientals to Imagined Britons: Baghdadi Jews in Shanghai." *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 4 (2003): 999-1023.
- Biale, David, ed. *Cultures of the Jews: Modern Encounters*. Vol. 3. New York: Schocken Books, 2002.
- Bickers, Robert. "Shanghailanders: The Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai 1843-1937." *Past & Present* 159 (May 1998): 161-211. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/651233>.
- Birnbaum, Philip. *A Book of Jewish Concepts*. New York: Hebrew Pub., 1975.
- Boas, Jacob. "The Shrinking World of German Jewry, 1933-1938." *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 31, no. 1 (1986): 241-66.
- Clifford, Nicholas. "Safe Haven? Foreign Exiles in Old Shanghai." Review of *Port of Last Resort: The Diaspora Communities of Shanghai* by Marcia Ristaino. *H-Asia*, July 2003. <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=7940>.
- Cohen, Steven M., and Gabriel Horenczyk. *National Variations in Jewish Identity: Implications for Jewish Education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999.
- Cohn, Hans. *Risen from the Ashes: Tales of a Musical Messenger*. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2006.
- Dong, Stella. *Shanghai: The Rise and Fall of Decadent City*. New York: William Morrow, 2000.
- Dwork, Deborah, and Robert J. V. Pelt. *Flight from the Reich; Refugee Jews, 1933 - 1946*. New York, NY: Norton, 2009.
- Eber, Irene. *Chinese and Jews: Encounters between Cultures*. Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008.
- Eber, Irene. "Overland and By Sea: Eight Centuries of the Jewish Presence in China." *Chinese Journal of International Law* 4, no. 1 (2005): 235-56. <http://chinesejil.oxfordjournals.org/content/4/1/235.full>.

- Elon, Amos. *The Pity of It All: a History of the Jews in Germany, 1743-1933*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002.
- "Epilogue - David L. Bloch." Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed March 11, 2011. <http://library.rit.edu/depts/archives/deafhistory/bloch-epilogue.htm>.
- "Fighting for the Fatherland: The Patriotism of Jews in World War I." Leo Baeck Institute World War I Exhibition. December 31, 2008. <http://www.lbi.org/WWI/ExhibitWWIHome.html>.
- "Flight and Rescue: From Eastern Europe to the Far East - A Remarkable Story of Survival." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed March 11, 2011. <http://www.ushmm.org/frexhibit/history.htm>.
- "Flight and Rescue." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed March 12, 2011. http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/flight_rescue/index.php.
- Fraenkel, Josef. "The Jewish Press of the Diaspora." *Jewish Social Studies* 26, no. 4 (October 1964): 215-26. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4466108>.
- Friedlander, Saul. *Nazi Germany and the Jews: the Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*. Vol. 1. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.
- "German and Austrian Jewish Refugees in Shanghai." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007091> (accessed March 10, 2011).
- Gilbert, Martin. *Atlas of the Holocaust*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1993.
- Goldberg, David T., and Michael Krausz, eds. *Jewish Identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.
- Goldstein, Jonathan. *The Jews of China*. Vol. I. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999.
- Goldstein, Jonathan. *The Jews of China*. Vol. II. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999.
- Guang, Pan, ed. *The Jews in Shanghai*. Shanghai: Shanghai Pictorial Publishing House, 1995.
- Guang, Pan. "Uniqueness and Generality The Case of Shanghai in the Annals of Jewish Diaspora." In *From Kaifeng--to Shanghai: Jews in China*, edited by Roman Malek. Nettetal: Joint Publication of the Monumenta Serica Institute and the China-Zentrum, 2000.

- Hannah, Norman B. "Vienna in Shanghai." *Asian Affairs* 2, no. 4 (March/April 1975): 246-63. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30171372>.
- Henriot, Christian, and Wen-Hsin Yeh. *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun: Shanghai under Japanese Occupation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Hochstadt, Steve. "A History of the Jews in Shanghai." The Sino-Judaic Institute. Accessed February 13, 2011. http://www.sino-judaic.org/index.php?page=shanghai_history.
- Hochstadt, Steve. "The Shanghai Jewish Youth Association." Reading, Children and War: Past and Present, Salzburg, October 1, 2010.
- Hochstadt, Steve. "The Social History of Jews in the Holocaust: The Necessity of Interviewing Survivors." *Historical Social Research* 22, no. 314 (1997): 254-74.
- Hoffman, Eva. *Shtetl: the Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
- Hughes, Anthony. "Sport and Jewish Identity in the Shanghai Jewish Community 1939-1949." *International Sports Studies* 22, no. 1 (2000): 42-53.
- Isaacson, Walter. "How Einstein Divided America's Jews." *The Atlantic*. Dec. 2009. Web. <<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/12/how-einstein-divided-america-apos-s-jews/7763/>>.
- Jackman, Jarrell C., and Carla M. Borden. *The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation, 1930-1945*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983.
- "Jewish Doctor Turned 'Buddha Savior' under Mao." Ynetnews. November 22, 2006. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3330950,00.html>.
- Kaplan, Marion A. *Jewish Daily Life in Germany: 1618-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Kaplan, Marion A. "Jewish Women in Nazi Germany: Daily Life, Daily Struggles, 1933-1939." *Feminist Studies* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 579-606. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178020>.
- Karády, Viktor. *The Jews of Europe in the Modern Era: a Socio-historical Outline*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004.
- Kartomi, Margaret, and Andrew D. McCredie. "Introduction: Musical Outcomes of Jewish Migration into Asia via the Northern and Southern Routes C. 1780-1950." *Ethnomusicology Forum*, Silk, Spice and Shirah: Musical Outcomes of Jewish Migration into Asia, 13, no. 1 (June 2004): 3-20.

- <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20184464>.
- Katz, Bernard S., and C. Daniel Vencill. "W. Michael Blumenthal." In *Biographical Dictionary of the United States Secretaries of the Treasury: 1789-1995.*, 24-29. Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 1996.
- Kranzler, David. *Japanese, Nazis & Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*. New York: Yeshiva University Press : Distributed by Sifria Distributors, 1976.
- Kranzler, David. "Orthodoxy's Finest Hour: Rescue Efforts During the Holocaust." Review of *The Response of Orthodox Jewry in the United States to the Holocaust: the Activities of the Vaad Ha-hatzala Rescue Committee, 1939-1945* by Efraim Zuroff. *Jewish Action*, Fall 2002.
- Kranzler, David. "Restrictions against German-Jewish Refugee Immigration to Shanghai in 1939." *Jewish Social Studies* 36, no. 1 (January 1974): 40-60.
- Kremer, Roberta, ed. *Diplomat Rescuers and the Story of Feng Shan Ho*. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies : University of Minnesota. 1999.
<http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/exhibitions/rescuers/assignmentVienna.html>.
- Lang, Harry G., and Bonnie Meath-Lang. "David Ludwig Bloch." In *Deaf Persons in the Arts and Sciences: a Biographical Dictionary*, 39-41. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995.
- Livni, Itamar. "The German Jewish Immigrant Press in Shanghai." In *At Home in Many Worlds; Reading, Writing and Translating from Chinese and Jewish Cultures*, 273-83. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009.
- Malek, Roman, ed. *From Kaifeng--to Shanghai: Jews in China*. Nettetal: Joint Publication of the Monumenta Serica Institute and the China-Zentrum, 2000.
- Marcus, Lotte. "Commentary on Visa Question." Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies : University of Minnesota. August 8, 2003.
<http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/exhibitions/rescuers/commentary.html>.
- Marton, Kati. *The Great Escape: Nine Jews Who Fled Hitler and Changed the World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.
- Mendelsohn, Ezra. *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.
- Meyer, Maisie J. "Detailed Shanghai History." The Sino-Judaic Institute. Accessed October 12, 2010. http://www.sino-judaic.org/index.php?page=shanghai_history.

- Meyer, Maisie J. *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Whangpoo: a Century of Sephardi Jewish Life in Shanghai*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003.
- Meyer, Maisie. "The Sephardi Jewish Community of Shanghai and the Question of Identity." In *From Kaifeng--to Shanghai: Jews in China*, edited by Roman Malek. Nettetal: Joint Publication of the Monumenta Serica Institute and the China-Zentrum, 2000.
- Peh Ti, Weh. "A Peek Backwards into the Jewish Community of Shanghai." *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1992, 149-63.
- Perry, Elizabeth J. *Shanghai on Strike: the Politics of Chinese Labor*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993.
- "Peter Max Biography." Official Peter Max Website. Accessed April 4, 2011.
<http://www.petermax.com/artbio.php>.
- "Polish Jewish Refugees in the Shanghai Ghetto, 1941-1945." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *Holocaust Encyclopedia*.
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005589> (accessed March 10, 2011).
- Pollak, Michael. *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries: the Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980.
- The Port of Last Resort: Zuflucht in Shanghai*. Directed by Paul Rosdy and Joan Grossman. 1998. DVD.
- Poy, Vivienne. "The Jews in China: an Enduring Friendship between Two Ancient Cultures." Speech, Soloway Jewish Community Centre, Ottawa, Ontario, October 2, 2002.
http://sen.parl.gc.ca/vpoy/english/Special_Interests/speeches/jews_in_china_021002.htm.
- Rhee, Song N. "Jewish Assimilation: The Case of Chinese Jews." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1st ser., 15 (January 1973): 115-26.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/178190>.
- Ristaino, Marcia R. *Port of Last Resort: the Diaspora Communities of Shanghai*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Ross, James R. *Escape to Shanghai: a Jewish Community in China*. New York: Free Press, 1994.
- Rubin, Evelyn Pike. *Ghetto Shanghai*. New York: Shengold, 1993.

- Sakamoto, Pamela Rotner. *Japanese Diplomats and Jewish Refugees: a World War II Dilemma*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998.
- Schatzberg, Walter, and Jehuda Reinharz, eds. *The Jewish Response to German Culture*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985.
- Schwarcz, Vera. *Bridge Across Broken Time; Chinese and Jewish Cultural Memory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Scott Ury. "Who, What, When, Where, and Why Is Polish Jewry? Envisioning, Constructing, and Possessing Polish Jewry." *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 205-28. doi:http://.
- Shanghai Ghetto*. Directed by Dana Janklowicz-Mann and Amir Mann. Rebel Child Productions, 2002. DVD.
- Shternshis, Anna. *Soviet and Kosher: Jewish Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
- Slezkine, Yuri. *The Jewish Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Stein, Sarah A. "Protected Persons? The Baghdadi Jewish Diaspora, the British State, and the Persistence of Empire." *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 1 (February 2011): 80-108. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/ahr.116.1.80>.
- Strauss, Herbert A. "Jewish Emigration from Germany; Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (II)." *LBI Year Book* 25 (1980): 313-61. leobaeck.oxfordjournals.org.
- Sugarman, Martin. "Hagedud Ha-Sini: The Jewish Company of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, 1932-42." *Jewish Historical Studies* 41 (2007): 183-208.
- Tokayer, Marvin, and Mary Swartz. *The Fugu Plan: the Untold Story of the Japanese and the Jews during World War II*. New York: Paddington Press, 1979.
- Utz, Christian. "Cultural Accommodation and Exchange in the Refugee Experience: A German-Jewish Musician in Shanghai." *Ethnomusicology Forum*, Slik, Spice and Shirah: Musical Outcomes of Jewish Migration into Asia C. 1780-c.1950, 13, no. 1 (June 2004): 119-51. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20184469>.
- Wiedemann, Susanne. 2006. *Transnational Encounters with "Amerika": German Jewish Refugees' Identity Formation in Berlin and Shanghai, 1939-1949*. PhD Dissertation, Brown University. Providence, Rhode Island: ProQuest/UMI. (Publication No. 3227968.)
- Wiedemann, Susanne. "'Bobby Soxers,' Chewing Gum, and Spencer Tracy in Exile:

- German Jewish Refugees Encounter American Culture in Shanghai." In *Exile and Otherness: New Approaches to the Experience of the Nazi Refugees*, by Alexander Stephan, 67-95. Oxford: P. Lang, 2006.
- Williams, Lena. "800 Refugees at Reunion Recall Life in the Ghetto of Shanghai." *The New York Times*, September 6, 1985.
- Wischnitzer, Mark. "Jewish Emigration from Germany 1933-1938." *Jewish Social Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 1940): 23-44. doi:www.jstor.org/stable/4615124.
- Yating, Tang. "Reconstructing the Vanished Musical Life of the Shanghai Jewish Diaspora: A Report." *Ethnomusicology Forum* 13, no. 1 (January 2004): 101-18.
- Yeh, Wen-hsin. *Wartime Shanghai*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Zhang, Yingjin. *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Zuroff, Efraim. "Rabbis' Relief and Rescue: A Case Study of the Activities of the Vaad Ha-Hatzala (Rescue Committee) of the American Orthodox Rabbis, 1942-1943." Museum of Tolerance: Multimedia Learning Center. <http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/site/pp.asp?c=gvKVLcMVIuG&b=395035>.
- Zuroff, Efraim. "Rescue via the Far East: The Attempt to Save Polish Rabbis and Yeshivah Students, 1939-41." Museum of Tolerance: Multimedia Learning Center. <http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/site/pp.asp?c=gvKVLcMVIuG&b=394985>.
- Zuroff, Efraim. *The Response of Orthodox Jewry in the United States to the Holocaust: the Activities of the Vaad Ha-Hatzala Rescue Committee, 1939-1945*. New York: Michael Scharf Publication Trust of the Yeshiva University Press, 2000.