



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Never Goodbye, Shelter Shanghai

Lambers, Pauline

Citation

Lambers, P. (2023). *Never Goodbye, Shelter Shanghai*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master Thesis, 2023](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3714764>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

NEVER GOODBYE, SHELTER SHANGHAI

By

Pauline Lambers

A Master's Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities

Leiden University

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Master of Asian Studies: Politics, Society and Economy of Asia

Supervised by Dr. P. van Els

29 June 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Chapter 1: Exile to Shanghai	8
1.1 Consequences of Hitler's seizure of power	8
1.2 Staying or leaving?	10
1.3 The journeys to Shanghai	10
1.4 Expectations and first impressions	12
1.5 Conclusion.....	14
Chapter 2: Life in Shanghai.....	15
2.1 The relationship between the Jewish refugees and earlier Jewish settlers	15
2.1.1 Existing Jewish communities in Shanghai.....	15
2.1.2 The power of relations.....	17
2.1.3 Differences among the groups	19
2.2 The relationship between Jewish refugees and the Shanghainese	22
2.2.1 Social life.....	22
2.2.2 Economic life	25
2.2.3 Cultural life	26
2.3 Conclusion.....	30
Chapter 3: After Shanghai	31
3.1 Rumors of an end to the war.....	31
3.2 The American troops.....	31
3.3 Emigration	32
3.4 Adjustments to their new lives	34
3.5 Lifetime connection to Shanghai.....	35
3.5.1 Lessons from a childhood in Shanghai	35
3.5.2 The Shanghailanders.....	37
3.5.3 Shanghai Jewish heritage.....	37
3.5.4 Visits to (un)recognizable Shanghai	38

3.6 Key messages for contemporary refugee flows	38
3.7 Conclusion.....	39
Conclusion	40
Bibliography	43
Appendices.....	46
Appendix I: Interview Mr. Linden	47
Appendix II: Interview Mrs. Abrams	63
Appendix III: Interview Mr. Nowomiast.....	71
Appendix IV: Interview Mr. Moalem	83
Appendix V: Interview Mr. Nash.....	91
Appendix VI: Interview Mrs. Kracko	100

Introduction

‘The importance of remembering the Shanghai Jewish refugee history today is the human spirit, the strength and what people do to survive, but also how people help each other, out of kindness, and love’.

- Mr. Nowomiast

This quote from one of my interviewees touches exactly on the main aspects of this thesis: European Jewish refugees having their ‘own’ strength and courage to build a life in Shanghai. At the same time, this life is built on the condition of the ‘collective’ benevolence of other people (including the earlier settled Jewish groups in the city and the Shanghainese).

A Jewish community has been present in Shanghai for quite some time. First, the Shanghai Jewish community traces its roots back to the middle of the nineteenth century. These were the Sephardi Jews (Baghdadis), as described by Vermander, Hingley and Zhang, who were mainly from British-controlled places such as Baghdad and Bombay, and some of them greatly contributed to the economic welfare of Shanghai. The second wave were the Russian Jews (Ashkenazi) who fled both the socialist revolution in 1917 and the antisemitic policies of the Soviet political leader Joseph Stalin in the 1920s.¹ The third wave, who are the focus group for this research, arrived after Hitler’s antisemitic persecution of European Jewish people in the late 1930s. Especially after Kristallnacht in 1938, many Jews felt the urge to flee.² Around twenty thousand stateless refugees, mainly from Germany, Austria, and Poland, took refuge in Shanghai, the only place in the world that did not require visas until August 1939. Japanese occupying forces in Shanghai relocated the European refugees to a ‘ghetto’ in the Hongkew district between 1941 and 1945.³ In this district, the newly migrated European Jewish refugees in Shanghai lived among the Chinese and received help from international and local Jewish communities. They remained in Shanghai until about 1950 and then moved to other parts of the world.

The existing literature on the subject of Jewish European refugees in Shanghai is scarce, which is why I have also partly based my thesis on previous graduate theses. There are some memoirs by Shanghai survivors in addition to a small number of studies on the community life of Jewish refugees in the city, such as Kranzler’s book. A few scholars have also examined the flight of European refugees to Shanghai in the context of Japan’s wartime foreign policy. For instance, Bei examines Chinese and Japanese policies on the Jewish refugee issue, while Zhou investigates the more general images of Jewish people that have been built in China. Furthermore, Ristaino’s work

¹ Vermander, Hingley, Zhang 2018, 105.

² Kranzler 1976, 28.

³ Vermander, Hingley, Zhang 2018, 105.

focuses on the Russian community and European Jewish refugees in Shanghai and Ehrlich's book concentrates on the interaction between Jewish and Chinese people, but especially in modern China. Eber also discusses the history of Jewish refugees in Shanghai and their relationship with Sephardic and Russian Jews. However, relations between the Jewish refugees and locals, the Shanghainese in particular, have long been neglected by scholars in the field. More importantly, first-hand witness accounts are often missing or quite limited in the literature. By combining both academic texts and the experiences of Jewish eyewitnesses during World War II, I hope to narrow this gap in the scientific academic literature.

The above insights about the Jewish people who fled to Shanghai, brought me to the research question: Shelter Shanghai: How does the megacity live on in the memories of the Jewish community today? Several additional sub-questions are connected to this question as well: What was the last straw for Jewish refugees to leave for Shanghai? What kind of assistance did they receive during their stay in Shanghai? To what extent does Shanghai continue to play a role in their lives today after leaving China? A thorough examination of this subject requires a combined approach. I first conducted a literature study and then interviewed five people from the Jewish community in Europe and one person from the Sephardi Jewish community (Mr. Moalem):

- Mr. Linden (b. 1936, Berlin) lived in Shanghai from 1939 to 1947. He currently resides in Wayland, Massachusetts, United States of America (USA). His original surname is 'Lindenstrauss'.
- Mr. Nash (b. 1935, Berlin) lived in Shanghai from 1939 to 1949. He currently resides in Sydney, Australia. His original surname is 'Nachemstein'.
- Mrs. Abrams (b. 1932, Berlin) lived in Shanghai from 1939 to 1947. She currently resides in San Francisco, California, USA. Abrams is a fictitious name for privacy reasons.
- Mr. Nowomiast (b. 1944, Shanghai). His family lived in Shanghai from 1939 to 1949. He currently resides in Yardley, Pennsylvania, USA. He changed his surname to 'Newton', but prefers 'Nowomiast' for this thesis.
- Mrs. Kracko (b. 1947, Shanghai). Her family lived in Shanghai from 1939 to 1949. She currently resides in New Rochelle, New York, USA.
- Mr. Moalem (b. 1930, Shanghai). His family lived in Shanghai until 1950. He currently resides in Australia.

I used social media (Facebook) and posted messages in groups to ask if individuals were interested in taking part in my research. Through, for example, the group 'Shanghai Internees and Jewish Refugees Group 1945', I got an email from Mr. Linden and a reaction from someone who gave me the e-mail address of Mrs. Abrams. Furthermore, through the Facebook group 'SHANGHAILANDERS: descendants of Jewish refugees in Shanghai 1938-1947', I got a reaction

from Mrs. Kracko and from a former refugee who put me in touch with Mr. Nash. Moreover, I e-mailed the Sydney Jewish Museum, through which I came into contact with Mr. Moalem. I sent a message to the potential interviewees with an outline of my thesis and formally asked for their willingness to participate. My interviewees all showed interest in assisting me with my research.

With the exception of Mrs. Abrams, I used a semi-structured interview approach, which meant that I prepared a series of potentially important questions in a certain order and used them during the interview, but I sometimes also deviated from this by focusing on spontaneous conversation. I started with personal, often factual questions and expanded this further into open questions. The interviews with Mr. Linden and Mr. Moalem took place on Zoom and Skype, respectively, while those with Mr. Nash, Mr. Newton and Mrs. Kracko took place on the phone. Lastly, the interview with Mrs. Abrams was done by e-mail. I attached importance to the interviewees' right to privacy and anonymity. Apart from Mrs. Abrams, all interviewees agreed to be quoted in this study. The interviews lasted approximately two hours and I took audio recordings which helped me transcribe the interviews word for word.

There are several reasons as to why this research into Shanghai Jewish history is important. First, I added eyewitness accounts to the existing scientific literature by conducting interviews. I believe that interviews are useful for understanding the actions and reactions of the Shanghai Jewish community. While my interviewees mostly confirm the information of the existing scientific literature, the literature often offers a picture without the humanistic perspective. The eyewitnesses' memories provide vivid insights. Second, given how significant time has passed since World War II, many European Jewish refugees who lived in Shanghai have unfortunately already died. Their history can therefore no longer be documented. This is why I am honored that I was able to conduct these interviews and document an important part of history. Third, this history is known to few people. While there is, of course, a distinct difference between the histories of Jewish refugees in Shanghai and during the Holocaust, I believe that the commemorations of both histories fall prey to the same pitfall. As the Shanghai refugees also experienced the need for perseverance, escape, and survival, I argue that Shanghai's Jewish history deserves more attention. In addition, the sociopolitical importance of Shanghai should not be underestimated. Most countries refused entry to Jewish refugees and Shanghai became the only option as a safe haven since no entry visa was required. Finally, from this part of history, one can learn something about the current refugee situation, such as the assistance given to refugees at the time and the European Jewish refugees who managed to settle in a completely new environment, which required courage and resilience.

This history in Shanghai is still fresh in the memories of European-Jewish refugees and thus continues to impact them today. Therefore, this thesis address views before, during and after these refugee experiences in Shanghai. In Chapter 1, I discuss the period before Shanghai. I consider the consequences of Hitler's takeover of power and the connected events that prompted some Jewish people to flee, the possible expectations, and the experiences of their journeys to Shanghai. In chapter 2, I describe the period during Shanghai. Many of Jewish refugees immediately highlight the issue of (in)dependence when thinking about memories of Shanghai: fatefully and gratefully accepting help from the existing Jewish communities in Shanghai and living with the locals (Shanghainese) in Hongkew. At the same time, they recollect the strong will to build up an enclave as a separate group with the prospect of somewhat continuing their lives and preparing for a life after Shanghai. Chapter 3 addresses the time after Shanghai. This review mainly focuses on life after the American troops arrived in Shanghai and the (often difficult) emigration processes to, for example, the USA and Australia. This chapter also examines whether they were able to start a completely new life or were still confronted with their past. Jewish refugees are constantly looking back and forth between the past and the future and they demonstrate the courage needed to usefully survive in Shanghai as not only a stopover, but also a crucial 'shelter port'.

Chapter 1: Exile to Shanghai

This chapter examines the circumstances that made some European Jewish refugees realise that they had to flee from their homeland and they showed courage by following the opportunity to go to an unknown place: Shanghai. The following sections also discuss the refugees' various journeys to Shanghai and their first impressions of the city.

1.1 Consequences of Hitler's seizure of power

Hitler's rise to power and the subsequent anti-Jewish regulations restricted all aspects of European Jews' lives. Mrs. Kracko told me about the accumulation of problems that arose at that time:

In the early thirties, the problem started: Hitler rose to power. [...] Jews were banned; Jews could no longer work and Jews could no longer hold positions. They signed on the windows: 'Juden (Jews) do not go in here' and 'Do not buy from them'. My parents were good, upstanding Germans, law-abiding citizens in a country that they loved. What were they going to do now?

The definition of a 'non-Aryan', as Eber notes, is someone with a Jewish parent or grandparent or someone engaged in the Jewish religion. Their exclusion was proclaimed as a regulation,⁴ and according to Longerich, the Law for the Re-establishment of a Professional Civil Service, isolated even more Jewish people from civil service positions from April 1933 onwards.⁵ In addition, the Reich Flight Tax, a German law against flights from the German Reich, came into effect in July 1933.⁶ Soon, many Jewish people were professionally sidelined, deprived of income, and isolated from public and administrative life.⁷ Mrs. Abrams recalled some of the restrictions to me:

When Hitler became chancellor in Germany, life for Jews got very difficult: non-Jews were not allowed to shop in Jewish stores, Jews and non-Jews were not allowed to get married. Jews were not allowed to employ non-Jews. Jewish children were no longer allowed to attend public schools.

Mr. Linden explained how difficult life became due to the consequences of Hitler:

The Aryan rules stipulated that the Jews should no longer take part in the German economy. [...] The Jews now had to look after themselves. [...] Jews were arrested almost at random; they were put into prisons and treated badly. [...] So, the consequences of

⁴ Eber 2012, 40.

⁵ Longerich 2010, 38.

⁶ Eber 2012, 40.

⁷ Eber 2018, 19.

Hitler's rise to power for the German Jewish community were the worst possible disaster. One of the tragedies is that there were urgently no places in the world for Jews to go.

The Evian Conference in 1938, through which it became clear that no refugees would be taken in by the involved countries, also made the situation of the refugees more desperate.⁸ Events such as the German annexation of Austria, the expulsion of Polish Jewish residents from Germany, and especially the antisemitic brutality of Kristallnacht on 9-10 November 1938, made many Jewish people feel that flight was literally their only way out.⁹ Until then, as Kranzler mentions, most Jewish people remained hopeful everything would pass. Kristallnacht thus really shocked German Jewish residents and caused them to realise that this was no longer their beloved homeland.¹⁰ Mrs. Kracko clearly stated the impact of Kristallnacht as follows: 'Kristallnacht happened on November 9, 1938. [...] My family decided to leave. They could not stay in Berlin anymore'.

Jewish people fled Poland in September 1939 as soon as the German armies arrived and went to the neighboring Lithuania, which was then neutral. However, it was soon occupied by the Russian army,¹¹ as Mr. Nowomiast told me in a conversation:

My parents lived very well until the war broke out in 1939. Hitler attacked Warsaw on September 7, 1939. My parents left on September 1, 1939. [...] They knew that they had to keep moving on because things in Lithuania for over a year had been untenable and awful. The Russians (the Bolsheviks) etc., -things were not good in the situation.

Bei points out that the Jewish refugees could relatively easily go to Shanghai without visas because of its unique status as a city under the control of foreign powers. After the Japanese defeated the Nationalists and drove them out of the city in late 1937, no other country with a presence in Shanghai was given authority to take charge of passport control.¹² Shanghai thus eventually became the only place to go and was the rescue destination of many Jews.¹³ Although no visa was required for Shanghai, a foreign exit visa was often needed, and Chinese consulates outside China made visas obtainable to anyone willing to emigrate.¹⁴ By issuing them exit visas, Consul General Feng-Shan Ho in particular saved thousands of Jews' lives.

⁸ Kranzler 1976, 28.

⁹ Bei 2013, 4.

¹⁰ Kranzler 1976, 29.

¹¹ Eber 2018, 20.

¹² Bei 2013, 5.

¹³ Kranzler 1976, 26.

¹⁴ Eber 2012, 73.

In short, Hitler's seizure of power caused a series of anti-Jewish restrictions and events, with Kristallnacht as ultimately the last straw that caused Jews to flee as quickly as possible to a safe place in the world that accepted them: Shanghai.

1.2 Staying or leaving?

I wondered more Jewish people had not fled to Shanghai and my interviewees shared information with me that is not fully reflected in the scientific literature. In particular, they highlighted the fearful feeling of leaving their familiar, and sometimes luxurious lives behind to enter a new life in the unknown. Others simply did not have the money to make the journeys. Mrs. Abrams agrees that there were diverse reasons for staying in Germany:

The reason that only 20,000 people went to Shanghai were several. Some people did not have the money for the fare, others were afraid of the unknown and others were so well off in Germany, they did not want to leave everything behind and start all over in a strange country, especially the elderly.

In addition, based on the book by Kranzler, many Jewish people, as sometimes strong and stable, upstanding Germans, thought that Hitler's anti-Jewish measures need not be taken too seriously and that it would all end one day.¹⁵ These Jewish refugees waited too long, often with bad consequences, as Mr. Nash told me in relation to his family:

A time factor played a role. Many Jews were still in their homes. My father's father (my grandfather) hesitated, like many other Jews, about the possibility of leaving. Because many of the Jews hoped that the difficulties would all blow away. [...] It turned out that my grandparents were put on trucks and sent to the very first ghetto that the Nazis set up, namely Piotrków Trybunalski.

Moreover, the limited number of Jewish refugees in Shanghai may have also stemmed from a lack of awareness regarding the Shanghai opportunity.¹⁶

To leave the one's once stable, luxurious homeland for the unknown Shanghai took courage, which many people could not muster, and they eventually waited too long.

1.3 The journeys to Shanghai

I discovered that there were several routes that eventually took Jewish refugees to Shanghai. First, Italian ocean liners such as the Conte Biancamano, Conte Verde, and Conte Rosso, sailed back and forth between Italy and Shanghai.¹⁷ The ship routes were almost all the same. Eber mentions that

¹⁵ Kranzler 1976, 26.

¹⁶ Eber 2012, 80.

¹⁷ Heppner 1993, 42.

the journeys went from Trieste or Genoa, with short stops in Venice or Naples and sometimes in Brindisi, to Port Said and the Suez Canal. Moreover, as Eber notes, ships often stopped at Massaua, Aden to Bombay, and from Bombay mostly to Colombo, Singapore, Manila, Hong Kong, and finally Shanghai.¹⁸ Veldkamp claims that the refugees could often simply go ashore at the stops. In the port city of Massaua in Italian Eritrea, people even welcomed the Jews.¹⁹ Mr. Linden recalled to me in the interview that the ‘exotic’ pit stops felt like an adventure:

The journey took several weeks. I know that we went by train from Germany to Genoa, from Genoa to Shanghai, through the Suez Canal, around India, Singapore and the South China Sea, into Shanghai [...] It was a cruise in a way that my parents enjoyed, even though they were leaving their homeland. It was kind of an adventure to see all these places.

As the other interviewees also indicated, the journeys on the ships were largely experienced as luxurious and pleasant.²⁰ Mrs. Abrams also has a positive memory of the journey:

My parents and I left Berlin by train for Italy, where we boarded an Italian ship, which took us through the Suez Canal to Shanghai. [...] We made many stops along the way. The trip on the “Conto Rosso” was fun for me but must have been very difficult for my parents, who did not know what awaited them at the end of the journey. The ship was beautiful, the cabins were very nice and the food excellent.

After about five weeks, the ships arrived at Shanghai.²¹

Furthermore, German ships went from Hamburg and took different routes to Genoa (via Bremen, Rotterdam, and Southampton, with stops in Antwerp or Barcelona).²² Mrs. Kracko told me that her family had arrived in Shanghai on a German ship and that they had even enjoyed the trip:

In March 1939, sixteen members of my family boarded a German ocean liner: a German ship with a German captain and German crew. My grandfather was well-off, and they went first class. [...] It was a ten-week journey from Brenner. My mother always said to me: ‘It was a wonderful journey’. They were treated like first-class passengers. My mother said: ‘It was a honeymoon’. She always joked: ‘It was a one-way cruise’.

Mr. Nash also remembers going first-class, precisely on a German ship:

It took a month to go to Shanghai. [...] Ironically, the ship was a German steamship. There were four shipping lines. My parents had first-class tickets. [...] We left Berlin in April 1939

¹⁸ Eber 2012, 76.

¹⁹ Veldkamp 2017, 56-57.

²⁰ Vámos 2004, 58.

²¹ Veldkamp 2017, 57.

²² Eber 2012, 76.

by train and went through the Brenner Pass (Austria). [...] We went on a boat from Genoa. [...] There were four stops altogether; one was Colombo, then we sailed again to Manila, Hong Kong, and then Shanghai.

Moreover, as Eber describes, Japanese ships coming from Hamburg sailed toward Port Said, with stops in Antwerp, London, Gibraltar, Marseille, and Naples, and from Port Said they followed the same route as the Italian and German ships.²³

Polish Jews often took the route from Poland to Lithuania and then through the Soviet Union to Kobe in Japan,²⁴ which then was a three-day trip to Shanghai.²⁵ Mr. Nowomiast's parents lived in Lithuania in that period and told me that they took the above-mentioned route: 'I don't know how long it took from Lithuania to Russia to Japan. That was by train and then by boat. A week, two weeks'.

In conclusion, although none of the Jewish refugees fully knew where they were going, they courageously boarded large ships on their way to Shanghai with many stops in between, and fortunately these ships were often experienced as pleasant.

1.4 Expectations and first impressions

During my research, I came to realise that when the Jewish refugees arrived in Shanghai, they were in total shock, as they had to deal with stark contrasts to their lives in Europe. They were now confronted with poverty and the city was completely unknown to them.²⁶ Mr. Nowomiast indicated that his family, apart from survival, had no expectations because it seemed to be the only way out for Jewish people to flee from Nazi terror. Mrs. Kracko also experienced a great cultural shock:

My family had no expectations. Shanghai was an open port; that was the point. You were coming to a foreign country; you knew nothing about the people, the different climate, the different weather, the different food. Everything was totally foreign to them.

Furthermore, Halpern claims that there were great concerns about how to proceed in Shanghai.²⁷ Kaufman confirms this by describing that most refugees were disoriented and frightened upon arrival.²⁸ Zhou adds that Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria were forbidden by the Nazis to take valuables with them and were totally dependent on the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC, founded in 1941) and local Jewish community which established relief fund, soup

²³ Eber 2012, 76.

²⁴ Vámos 2004, 58.

²⁵ Heppner 1993, 42.

²⁶ Halpern 2020, 92.

²⁷ Halpern 2020, 92.

²⁸ Kaufman 2020, 205.

kitchens, and public accommodation facilities.²⁹ However, according to Vámos, some Jewish refugees still managed to bring items from home, such as furniture, tools, and even sewing machines,³⁰ as, similarly, Mrs. Kracko told me: 'My aunt was a seamstress, tailor. She packed her sewing machine and the material'. Despite Mrs. Kracko's family being able to bring items with them, they nonetheless left with little money: 'My grandfather took two containers: all the furniture, all the household goods, clothing, and even the piano. [...] My family had hundred dollars with them'. Some Jewish people succeeded in smuggling money, especially via England,³¹ such as Mr. Linden's father: 'My father was able to smuggle some money from Germany to Shanghai through a British Bank, about ten thousand dollars, which was, at that time, a lot'.

Although many of the local Jewish community made great efforts to help, it was not easy to make a living for the refugees and many were quite desperate in the beginning.³² Mr. Linden told me that there was a kind of fear among the Jewish refugees about building a life in such an unknown place:

My parents expressed great concern and fear when they arrived in China because the question was, you know, 'How do we survive here?' [...] There were 20,000 Jews. In the beginning, it was very difficult in Shanghai. [...] It was incredibly crowded and there was not a single white face; everybody was Chinese and they were really concerned about being there. [...] I should add that the entire Jewish community felt a deep sense of despair as stateless refugees, now being totally vulnerable and helpless.

As already described above, Eber states that, until October 1939, the Shanghai Permit System (the revised system was not instituted until July 1940) allowed the refugees to only show a valid passport, the ship ticket, and a visa from the Chinese authorities upon arrival. The latter was not even always a requirement,³³ as Mrs. Kracko explained to me: 'You did not need any special papers; you didn't need a visa. All you needed to show up was your passport and justification'.

While there was relief regarding there being no required process for proper paperwork in Shanghai, none of the refugees had expectations of the city, which created uncertainty and fear upon arrival. Many refugees experienced major culture shock and had to deal with significant contrasts with their homeland.

²⁹ Zhou 2019, 71.

³⁰ Vámos 2004, 64.

³¹ Vámos 2004, 64.

³² Halpern 2020, 93.

³³ Eber 2012, 71-72.

1.5 Conclusion

Hitler's rise to power brought many restrictions and dire events that made some Jewish people realise that Shanghai could be their only salvation from Nazi terror. The journeys to Shanghai were often experienced as pleasant, but once the refugees arrived, they were faced with a lot of unfamiliarity. I conclude from this that, while there was relief that Shanghai had no strict entry requirements, there was still fear and uncertainty among the Jewish refugees about what their lives would be like in this Chinese city.

Chapter 2: Life in Shanghai

This chapter investigates the relationship between European Jewish refugees and (a) earlier Jewish settlers from Baghdad and Russia and (b) the Shanghainese (Chinese people in Shanghai). This chapter considers their similarities and differences, their mutual perceptions and the ways in which they interacted and treated one another. The question is also to what extent European Jewish people managed to build their own lives in Shanghai, and in what respect.

2.1 The relationship between the Jewish refugees and earlier Jewish settlers

2.1.1 Existing Jewish communities in Shanghai

There was not just one Jewish community in Shanghai, but five: Sephardic, Russian, German, Austrian, and Polish.³⁴ The first Jewish communities that existed in Shanghai before European Jewish refugees arrived were the Sephardic Jews, who had been there since 1848.³⁵ Tang claims that the number of Sephardi Jews from Bombay and Baghdad grew to 700 by the 1930s. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, they greatly contributed to the economy of Shanghai,³⁶ which was also facilitated by the 1842 Anglo-Chinese Treaty of Nanjing. This opened five ports in China and guaranteed extraterritorial privileges for foreigners.³⁷ Goldstein describes that the famous Jewish families who had direct trade from India to China and Europe included the Sassoons, Salamons, Hardoons, Ezras, and Kadoories.³⁸ Some became wealthy merchants, and others became leaders of Asian, finance, banking, trade and real estate industries.³⁹ Mr. Moalem, as a Sephardi Jew, told me about the economic activities:

A fair Jewish community started to build up. These Jews were mostly from Iraq, Iran, Yemen and the Middle East. [...] In the early days, Sassoon, who was from India, came to Shanghai and started to trade in opium, silk and other goods that the Chinese had. [...] The Kadoorie family bought real estate and was into the facilities, such as electricity, and made a fortune on that. [...] The other family that was very wealthy, also in real estate, was the Hardoon family. [...] The community, generally, was quite wealth.

³⁴ Eber 2012, 208.

³⁵ Vermander, Hingley & Zhang 2018, 105.

³⁶ Tang 2007, 38.

³⁷ Roland 1999, 145.

³⁸ Goldstein 1999, xiii.

³⁹ Roland 1999, 145.

In addition, the Sephardi community also founded cemeteries, a school,⁴⁰ and synagogues in Shanghai. For example, the first synagogue was Beth El Synagogue in 1887⁴¹ and the Ohel-Rachel synagogue in 1920.⁴² Mr. Moalem recalled to me about his family's experiences with these synagogues:

The Sephardi built the first synagogue. [...] My grandfather was the warder of the synagogue. [...] That school prevailed until 1931, when the community built a much bigger school further down the International Settlement. David Sassoon built a massive synagogue in Seymour Road, formerly Shanxi Bei Lu.

Moreover, at the end of 1920, over five thousand Russian Jews⁴³ escaped from Russia to settle in Shanghai.⁴⁴ Mr. Moalem offered his perspective on the Russian Jews:

In 1917, there was the Russian Revolution. The Jews were persecuted, and many escaped to Shanghai. [...] In the Russian community, there were doctors, lawyers, businesspeople. They integrated very quickly and became quite solid community members. But the Russian Jewish community did not blend with the Sephardi as far as the synagogues are concerned. [...] There is a difference in the way they pray and the way they practice religion. The Russian community was larger than the Sephardi community, but they had their own synagogues. [...] The first Russian synagogue was a two-house structure; the rabbi lived upstairs, and the synagogue was down below. That synagogue is now the Jewish Museum.

Tang highlights that, by the time European Jewish refugees arrived in the city, the Russian Jews moved from Hongkew to the French concession of Shanghai.⁴⁵ I investigated that the Russians have made great contributions to Shanghai, especially culturally. For example, as Tang notes, the Russians organized operettas, ballets, and orchestras, and they also founded their own Shanghai Jewish Club in 1932.⁴⁶

According to Liberman, while the Sephardi and Russian Jews lived side by side in harmony, the two Jewish communities in Shanghai were nevertheless not really connected with one another and did not often unite in joint efforts.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Roland 1999, 146.

⁴¹ Tang 2007, 38.

⁴² Vermander, Hingley & Zhang 2018, 105.

⁴³ Vámos 2004, 58.

⁴⁴ Vermander, Hingley & Zhang 2018, 105.

⁴⁵ Tang 2007, 53.

⁴⁶ Tang 2007, 54-56.

⁴⁷ Liberman 1998, 129.

In summary, before European Jews arrived, the Sephardi and Russian Jewish communities were already living in the city, and each of them had contributed to the city in various ways.

2.1.2 The power of relations

I realised that most of the European refugees were unaware that other Jewish communities existed in the city before they arrived in Shanghai, as Mrs. Kracko confirmed in the interview with me: 'My family was not aware of the Jewish community upon arrival'. To help the recently arrived European refugees, as Liberman adds, the local Jewish community established special joint committees to collect funds and assist in arranging affordable lodging and centers for food distribution in Shanghai. This was also done with the help of the Jewish Joint Distribution (JDC) and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS).⁴⁸ Mrs. Abrams shared her recollections of the Jewish community and the assistance with me:

At the time Shanghai had two large Jewish communities. One was the Sephardic community, mostly Jews from Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries and the other were Jews from Russia. Both communities were very helpful to the fleeing European refugees. The three most prominent Jewish Sephardic families were the Sassoons, the Kadoories, and the Haradoons. They were all philanthropists, and well-established in Shanghai for a long time. Lots of help was received from the Sephardic community as well as from multiple Jewish organizations, like the JDC, HIAS, and others. The JDC supplied lodging and food.

At the end of 1937, increasing responsibility fell on the shoulders of the local Jewish communities.⁴⁹ The Sephardi struggled to cope with the sheer numbers and offer the needed aid.⁵⁰ This general perspective from the literature is confirmed by my interviewees. For example, Mr. Moalem, as a Sephardi Jew, recounted that his father was not able to continue the help:

My father's job was to greet incoming Jews in the city, make them feel welcome, and try to settle them and find jobs for them. When the early refugees came, he was able to do that, but then suddenly there was a huge influx of these refugees and he was not able to arrange that. [...] There were some 18,000 refugees and that was a lot of people to accommodate. My father arranged three large warehouses which he converted into dormitories that accommodated many refugees. They were also supplied with food and other necessities. [...] When the war started, business dropped away immediately, and so the Jewish community couldn't donate the money that they used to.

⁴⁸ Liberman 1998, 118.

⁴⁹ Liberman 1998, 118.

⁵⁰ Meyer 1994, 296.

According to Meyer, in 1938, a Committee for the Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai (CFA) was also established, which allowed all aid organisations to unite under one committee. The refugees could receive shelter, food, clothing, and medical treatment with the money from the local funds.⁵¹ After years of requests from the Sephardi community, the JDC finally agreed to help in Shanghai in the spring of 1941.⁵² As shown in Kranzler's book, Laura Margolis was an important overseas representative of the JDC and was assigned to contain the chaos in Shanghai,⁵³ which Mr. Linden explained to me:

Laura Margolis was in charge of the American JDC. They smuggled money into Shanghai, and they were able to provide medicine and the basic necessities [...] The survival of the Jewish community rests very much on the help that they received. Not only from the American JDC but also from the local Sephardi Jewish community, you know, the well-known Kadoorie family and the Sassoon family to a lesser extent.

After their arrival, the refugees were taken by trucks to a refugee location⁵⁴ with the help of the Jewish community in Shanghai. For example, Kaufman describes how Victor Sassoon made the Embankment Building available as a reception center for refugees and used the basement for providing people with meals. He also used his factories to provide a dormitory and started to employ refugees in his own companies.⁵⁵ Mr. Moalem recalled to me that many buildings were rebuilt to provide assistance to the refugees: 'The community had three huge warehouses and converted them into accommodations with facilities in the northern part of Shanghai'. These shelters were called 'Heime' ('homes' in German) and often literally became people's temporary new home.⁵⁶ Halpern's article has shown that many Jewish refugees often felt ashamed to be dependent on organisations.⁵⁷ Mrs. Kracko told me that her family also received help from the Sephardi community:

The Japanese were the ruling people. They were in charge of the city of Shanghai. Shanghai was split into three concessions: the French concession, the British concession, and the International Settlement. My family went into the International Settlement. They took you by truck to what they call 'Heime'. They gave you food. You had the Sephardi community: [...] they gave money to these refugees who were escaping Germany and Austria.

⁵¹ Meyer, 1994, 297-298.

⁵² Kaufman 2016, 227.

⁵³ Kranzler 1976, 135.

⁵⁴ Veldkamp 2017, 58.

⁵⁵ Kaufman 2021, 203-204.

⁵⁶ Eber 2012, 123.

⁵⁷ Halpern 2020, 94.

In many of these temporary houses, men and women were separated,⁵⁸ and people lived close together, which allowed diseases to easily spread.⁵⁹ Similarly, Mr. Linden stated:

Shanghai was a difficult place to live. [...] The living conditions were very difficult. Men were separated from women in the beginning. [...] It was very crowded.

Some refugees were able to escape the shelters after a short period of time to regain some degree of independence.⁶⁰ Mr. Moalem explained to me that the Jewish refugees often found another place to live: 'The refugees didn't stay in Heime. [...] They stayed there for about a short while and then found accommodation elsewhere'. Vámos claims that the majority of the refugees were poor and went to live in Hongkew, the Japanese-occupied northeastern part of the International Settlement which was partly demolished in the 1937 Battle of Shanghai during the Second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945).⁶¹ Mr. Linden confirmed this claim to me: 'Most of us lived in Hongkew, which was the poorest part of the town'. According to Zhou, the cost of living in this district was not too high as compared with other areas in Shanghai.⁶² Mr. Nash described the living conditions in Shanghai as follows: 'We were able to rent a room. Five meters by seven meters. We shared a toilet with other neighbors'.

Furthermore, as Kaufman notes, Horace Kadoorie provided financial support and employed teachers from the refugee community to teach at the Kadoorie School.⁶³ Mr. Linden also told me about going to the Kadoorie school and discussed the importance of learning English: 'I went to the Kadoorie school. [...] I became bilingual since I spoke German with my parents at home and English in school. My parents also studied English because they knew there was no future in Germany'.

While the Jewish refugees were not aware of the existence of the Jewish communities, they greatly benefitted from the support they received, despite having to deal with sometimes difficult living conditions.

2.1.3 Differences among the groups

The Sephardic Jews, Russian Jews, and European war refugees did not serve as a homogenous group of Jewish residents in Shanghai. Instead, their cultures and traditions differed from one another.⁶⁴ First, I realised that the Jewish refugees from Europe usually arrived in Shanghai

⁵⁸ Vámos 2004, 64.

⁵⁹ Kaufman 2020, 212-213.

⁶⁰ Eber 2012, 122-123.

⁶¹ Vámos 2004, 64.

⁶² Zhou 2019, 52.

⁶³ Kaufman 2020, 210.

⁶⁴ Eber 2012, 37.

without any means to spend, while the two other groups were generally more comfortable financially. Mr. Moalem, as a Sephardi Jew, confirmed this to me:

Life for foreigners, especially for the people who were professionals, was luxurious. [...] I belonged to a sports club. [...] My mother was very social and was involved in a lot of parties and community activities. My father did a lot of charity work. [...] We had a cook and an amah [a nursemaid or maid], and very often we had a private rickshaw driver.

Mr. Linden, one of the European refugees, expresses that the difference in lifestyle created the distance:

The Iraqi Jews were fairly well-off. We did not mix with them at all. Europeans, mostly from Germany and Austria, stucked together pretty much and were very isolated. There was no connection with the Iraqi Jews other than the beneficial help they provided to us.

Mrs. Kracko also indicated to me that European Jewish refugees did not have the same financial situation:

My parents didn't really have contact with the pre-existing groups. They lived in other areas and were wealthy. They lived in big houses. [...] Everybody on the ship was initially helped by the Sephardi community; they gave money to these organisations to help these people until you got your housing and lived on your own.

Secondly, I learned that the refugees who had entered Shanghai after 1937 had to live in a 'designated area' (known as the Shanghai ghetto) in the Hongkew district as 'stateless' Jews untill 1945. The Japanese Proclamation of February 1943 stipulated this condition.⁶⁵ Kaufman describes that the Germans pressured the Japanese to set up a concentration camp for the Jewish settlers in Shanghai, but the Japanese officials had no ill intentions towards the Jewish refugees.⁶⁶ Mr. Nash confirmed to me that the Japanese did not go along with the plan of the Germans: 'The Japanese were allied to the Nazis, whose high-ranking generals were sent to Shanghai to convince the Japanese to kill all of us. But the Japanese did not do that and forced all refugees into a ghetto area'. Jewish refugees able to previously arrange independent accommodation in Shanghai on the outskirts of Hongkew were now obliged to move to this area.⁶⁷

Vámos emphasises that it is important to recognise that this ghetto in Shanghai was different from the ones in Europe.⁶⁸ That is also why Mr. Linden thinks my proposal for 'enclave' is a better substitute for ghetto: 'Some call it a ghetto, but a ghetto has a negative perception, so I think

⁶⁵ Eber 2012, 3.

⁶⁶ Kaufman 2020, 235.

⁶⁷ Liberman 1998, 138.

⁶⁸ Vámos 2004, 66.

enclave is a better word'. As Mrs. Abrams told me, the Jewish people in Europe could be sent to death camps, but the Japanese detested the idea of the Jewish genocide: 'The big contrast between the ghettos in Europe and Shanghai was the fact that the ghetto in Shanghai was a hardship, but nobody feared for their life, while in Europe the ghettos were one step away from the death camps, with millions of people killed'.

Thirdly, the refugees, as Vámos notes, did not live totally isolated. For instance, some were connected with the Shanghainese living the city,⁶⁹ although Mr. Nowomiast explained to me that his family was separated from the rest of Shanghai: 'We were isolated from the rest of Shanghai because we were in a ghetto'.

Vámos points also out that the Shanghainese ghetto was not so strictly guarded as in Europe. Barriers were erected at the checkpoints, where Japanese soldiers, the Russian police, and Jewish vigilantes stood.⁷⁰ However, the Shanghai ghetto had no barbed wire or walls around it, although most people were not allowed to leave the area without a special pass. The Jewish refugees who worked outside the ghetto usually received a pass to travel in and out.⁷¹ This information from literature is confirmed by my interviewees. For example, Mr. Nash recounted to me that his father was able to leave the area for work with the pass:

My father had his luggage business, and he was able to leave the so-called 'designated area', which later became called the 'ghetto', as long as he was back before 5 pm. There were Japanese guards. It was very difficult to leave the ghetto. Only for work.

Other exceptions to leave the ghetto were made for musicians, for example, who often played outside the ghetto, and the refugees sometimes had to leave the ghetto for hospital visits.⁷² From May 1943 to August 1945, Ghoya was the Japanese official responsible for Jewish affairs in the Shanghai ghetto and the distribution of passes,⁷³ and he called himself 'the King of the Jews',⁷⁴ as Mrs. Kracko remembered:

Ghoya was a little Japanese general and he said: 'I am the King of the Jews'. He had control of giving people the pass. He yelled at everybody. My father worked for a British tie factory and he had a pass to leave every day.

⁶⁹ Vámos 2004, 67.

⁷⁰ Vámos 2004, 67.

⁷¹ Liberman 1998, 138.

⁷² Eber 2012, 181.

⁷³ Xu 1999, 237.

⁷⁴ Liberman 1998, 138.

Nevertheless, Eber claims that, apart from this 'pass system', the Japanese authorities did not interfere in Jewish refugee affairs.⁷⁵

In contrast to the situation of European Jewish refugees, Halpern observes that many Sephardi held British citizenship and were interned with other British and American citizens in camps outside of Shanghai.⁷⁶ Mr. Nash shared his recollection of this issue with me:

We were forced to live together when the Japanese took control. But the Sephardi Jews were living in the north of Shanghai. They were put into smaller ghettos. They went too far away, separate from us. I never had Sephardi friends.

In summary, the Jewish refugees had no knowledge of Shanghai, nor that there had been earlier Jewish settlers. Nevertheless, they greatly appreciated these groups. They had even become dependent on them and their help. I noted that wealth played a role in separating the communities. I argue that the relationship between the European Jewish refugees and the existing Jewish community in Shanghai can therefore be described as disconnected and the solidarity and sympathy offered to them was one-sided.

2.2 The relationship between Jewish refugees and the Shanghainese

2.2.1 Social life

The refugees, living together in Hongkew, had many direct interactions with the Shanghainese in the city.⁷⁷ Many Chinese people in Shanghai read about Jewish oppression and the vulnerability due to their stateless status in newspapers such as *Shenbao*.⁷⁸ They linked the fate of the Jews to the fate of their own people under the Japanese imperialists.⁷⁹ The drive and ingenuity which the refugees showed to fit into the Shanghai economy surprised many Shanghainese.⁸⁰ They realised that the Jewish refugees had to deal with poverty in (almost) the same way as them.⁸¹ Mrs. Kracko told me that she will never spoil to this day: 'I am still saying to my children: 'We don't throw away food'. [...] That is how my family managed to survive'. Mr. Nowomiast also discussed dealing with similar circumstances as the Shanghainese and has a positive memory of them: 'The relationship between the Jews and the Chinese was always positive. The Chinese were almost brothers and sisters to the Jews because they were in the same predicament. The predicament was that they were also at the bottom of the hierarchy of people'.

⁷⁵ Eber 2012, 181.

⁷⁶ Halpern 2020, 96.

⁷⁷ Bei 2013, 131.

⁷⁸ Bei 2013, 17.

⁷⁹ Zhou 2001, 107.

⁸⁰ Kranzler 1976, 292.

⁸¹ Veldkamp 2017, 123.

Furthermore, Mrs. Abrams spoke of her gratitude towards the Shanghainese for accepting the Jewish refugees:

The Chinese were very poor in the part of town where we lived, but they accepted us in their midst. [...] The Chinese were friendly and usually very respectful. The Chinese were very gracious though they themselves lived in poverty.

Schwarcz describes how many Jewish refugees saw the difficulties faced by the Shanghainese, including starving children and dead bodies in the streets.⁸² Mr. Nowomiaszt told me that, for him, seeing the Shanghainese suffering remains a somewhat anxious-inducing memory that he still carries with him:

Fear is what I remember. [...] They were just sitting in front of the building with their hands out begging, and if I was walking around, I would be terrified by them. That is a memory that has lasted all these years. That was hard for a very young boy to deal with and understand.

Mr. Linden as a child, almost got used to that image of the Shanghainese:

We grew up in the poorest part of town, but it was very common to see Chinese people begging down to pick up a little cigarette bar. The poor people picked it up and smoked it. It was common to see discarded dead Chinese babies in the street gutters. I got so used to it that it didn't bother me anymore.

However, Bei claims that most refugees did not engage in friendships with their Chinese hosts. Indeed, the Jewish refugees remained a quite separate group since they did not integrate into Chinese society in the city. Most refugees did not attach value to establishing a permanent community in China.⁸³ I think that shows that the Jewish refugees never regarded Shanghai as a permanent base, but rather a temporary shelter. Though the Shanghainese outnumbered the foreigners by more than a hundred to one, the Jewish refugees, as Liberman describes, 'lived among the Chinese masses in splendid isolation and their paths would cross only when our own needs depended on their assistance'.⁸⁴ Mr. Nash concurs that while the Jewish refugees were surrounded by the Shanghainese, many did not develop close contacts with them:

There was nothing that we had to do or wanted to do with the Chinese. Jews had Chinese workers-cleaners, for example. [...] That is the only way I can describe how the Chinese accepted us. We were living in the community not physically, but socially separated.

⁸² Schwarcz 1999, 287.

⁸³ Bei 2013, 128.

⁸⁴ Liberman 1998, 39.

Mr. Linden indicated in the interview that they were taught never to seek confrontation with the Shanghainese. In this way, I believe that many Jewish refugees also unconsciously distanced themselves from their Chinese neighbours in Shanghai: 'We were taught never to engage in any confrontation with Chinese people—to run away if necessary'. Mr. Nowomiast adds a similar experience to this:

There were no friendships with the Chinese; it was neighbourly. The Jews employed some of the Chinese to house them. My mother had a woman who lived with us, actually in a one-room apartment. She was almost like a nanny-someone who helped cook and clean and had that kind of relationship. There was no toilet; the people relieved themselves in a chamber pot. The pots were picked up by the Chinese in the middle of the night.

Moreover, Bei highlights that the Jewish refugees often saw the Shanghainese in their neighbourhood as reliable, obliging, industrious, and talented people.⁸⁵ The Jewish residents recognised that many Chinese people had excellent language skills.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, most of the refugees preferred to study English because they hoped for a life beyond China, such as in the US.⁸⁷ In addition, Mrs. Kracko explained that it was not necessary to learn Chinese because they had built their own infrastructure: 'My family didn't learn any Chinese. [...] There was no need to'.

It was reassuring for the European Jewish to arrive in a society where the local habitants were open to them.⁸⁸ According to Huang, though, some Shanghainese were sometimes xenophobic at the time.⁸⁹ The Jewish refugees understood that this attitude was often part of a resurgence of Chinese nationalism.⁹⁰ For example, Mr. Linden stated to me that his family was judged by their 'white' identity:

They didn't like us; they didn't hate us. They looked at the white people as foreigners who exploited them. I remember very well the fact that we were hated not because we were Jews but because we were white.

When it comes to interactions between the Jewish refugees themselves, according to all the refugees I interviewed, it was generally quite easy to make friends during their stay in Shanghai. They got along well since they lived so close together. I believe that dealing with similar circumstances often created a bond between the refugees. According to Mrs. Abrams, it was not complicated because the refugees could speak the same language with one another: 'Making

⁸⁵ Bei 2013, 132.

⁸⁶ Veldkamp 2017, 124.

⁸⁷ Bei 2013, 131.

⁸⁸ Eber 2012, 208.

⁸⁹ Huang 2016, 13.

⁹⁰ Bei 2013, 133.

friends was easy. Most of us were in the same boat, with the same daily problems. [...] The immigrants amongst themselves spoke German, and we children learned English in school’.

In summary, I believe that although many Shanghainese and Jewish refugees faced different challenges, in some way, they both had to ‘deal’ with a life under Japanese rule. Despite being physically connected, Sino-Jewish interactions were not common. Nevertheless, their mutual perceptions of one another were generally quite positive. Everyone appeared to be able to live within their familiar groups without having to adapt too much. This also had to do with the fact that Shanghai was seen by the refugees as a refuge and the only option to escape the Nazi terror, so they would never commit to a permanent life in the city because they were so purely focused on survival. Socially, the idea that Jewish refugees generally dealt with the same circumstances and spoke the same language made life in Shanghai relatively bearable for them.

2.2.2 Economic life

Furthermore, on an economic level, as Eber notes, there were some Sino-Jewish business collaborations.⁹¹ Bei mentions that the German refugee Ursula Bacon, was taught by the other refugees how to conduct business in Shanghai. The foreigners themselves could even become business owners with the Chinese as partners or compradors.⁹² For instance, Mr. Linden's father had a Chinese co-worker:

My father was able to have a Chinese acquaintance, Mr. Cheng, who told him that there were some business opportunities for him. [...] My father had to start a business association. He was very friendly to us, and we greatly valued the friendship.

The Jewish refugees themselves mainly focused on survival but also tried to build a temporary life.⁹³ Mrs. Abrams explained that doctors were often still able to practice their profession, ‘but they were not familiar with the tropic diseases’. Journalists could also continue to write papers.⁹⁴ Kaufman describes how there were three different German-language newspapers that also contained advertisements for services, such as for butchers and tailors.⁹⁵

However, Tang claims that most refugees could not find work in their own profession and therefore many refugees soon opened shops, restaurants, cafes, and bars in European styles.⁹⁶ Mrs. Abrams told me that her family could find their way into another field of work in Shanghai:

⁹¹ Eber 2012, 208.

⁹² Bei 2013, 132-133

⁹³ Schwarcz 1999, 295.

⁹⁴ Eber 2012, 139.

⁹⁵ Kaufman 2020, 206.

⁹⁶ Tang 2007, 61.

Very few people could perform their professions from Germany. There was no competing with the Chinese laborer who worked all day for a bowl of rice. [...] My mother who had been a housewife in Germany started working as a seamstress, just to make a little money. Her customers were other immigrants.

Mr. Nowomiast acknowledged that most refugees did not earn significant money in Shanghai: 'Maybe some of the Shanghai refugees became wealthy there but not many'. Although there was great poverty, coffeehouses, such as Café Munter, Café Ostro, and Café Hauser were quite popular.⁹⁷ They put up German billboards and sold German food.⁹⁸ For example, Mrs. Kracko recalled to me that her mother worked in a German bakery and that other family members also managed to find work:

My aunt was a seamstress. [...] My father found work in a British hanging light fixture company. My mother found work at a German bakery, like a coffeeshop bakery, 'Vienna Konditorei' was the name of it. My grandfather could find work doing anything mechanical. My mother's mother basically stayed home and cleaned and cooked. Everybody managed to find work and earn some money.

Liberman points out that the Shanghai Jewish refugee community built a civilised haven that no longer even existed in Europe itself.⁹⁹ Mr. Nowomiast adds that the community was self-sufficient:

So, we were living our lives in that small ghetto, but everything was there: nightclubs, restaurants, newspapers, and businesses that Jews established. [...] The Jewish people in Shanghai made the best of the situation. They created a world within a world. [...] They managed to create a life of their own within the borders of Shanghai.

Economically, apart from a few Sino-Jewish collaborations, the refugees managed to build a self-sufficient economic life. Indeed, many people tried to have a profession and earn some money.

2.2.3 Cultural life

Some Jewish refugees became curious about the culture of their surrounding Chinese community.¹⁰⁰ Eber claims that magazines such as *The Gelbe Post* helped the refugees to learn more about Chinese culture and China's political situation.¹⁰¹ Some Jewish refugees felt that the locals had a strange language, and they had to get used to Chinese customs and practices: women

⁹⁷ Eber 2012, 126.

⁹⁸ Kaufman 2020, 206.

⁹⁹ Liberman 1998, 139.

¹⁰⁰ Bei 2013, 17.

¹⁰¹ Eber 2012, 140-141.

who feed their babies in public,¹⁰² women who bind their feet (lotus feet),¹⁰³ children who relieve themselves in the street, people who spit and blow their nose without a handkerchief, people who engage in excessive gambling,¹⁰⁴ and people who celebrate the noisy and colourful Chinese New Year.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, among strongly religious Jews, ritual observance and dietary laws prohibited deep insights into Chinese culture.¹⁰⁶ Mr. Linden described the lack of cross-cultural interactions in relation to food to me: 'In the eight years we lived in Shanghai, we only had Chinese food once'.

Although my interviewees did not specifically address cultural exchanges, I note that interactions between some Shanghainese and Jewish refugees did occur as forms of cultural cooperation. Zhou suggests that the Jewish refugees included many professional musicians, painters, dancers, and film directors. She describes how the refugees' knowledge of European art and culture quickly spread, such as through the lessons they taught to Chinese students at universities in Shanghai.¹⁰⁷ For instance, Xu notes that the violinist and pianist Alfred Wittenberg (1880-1952) fled from Germany to Shanghai in 1939 and became a professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where he worked with Chinese violinists and musical pioneers.¹⁰⁸ According to Zhou, German Jewish refugee Otto Joachim also opened a music studio with his brother Walter Joachim, where they started a band in Shanghai and recorded more than thirty albums in Chinese language.¹⁰⁹

In addition, many Jewish refugees who previously worked in the film industry sector contributed to China's film industry, as Xu explains. Jacob and Louise Fleck, both directors, fled from Austria to Shanghai in 1940 and came into contact with Fei Mu, one of the most prominent Chinese film directors. This collaboration resulted in a Shanghai-produced film called *The Children of the World*.¹¹⁰

Furthermore, Shanghai inspired Jewish refugee artists to create paintings and woodcuts with Chinese subjects. Xu mentions Jewish artist Friedrich Schiff, who fled to China from Austria in 1930 and whose paintings highlighted the contrasts between the upper and lower classes in Shanghai (illustrations 1 and 2).¹¹¹ In addition, the artist David Ludwig Bloch arrived in Shanghai in 1940 and mainly focused his paintings and woodcuts on street life (illustrations 3 and 4). His

¹⁰² Huang 2016, 13.

¹⁰³ Zhou 2019, 62.

¹⁰⁴ Veldkamp 2017, 122-123.

¹⁰⁵ Huang 2016, 13-14.

¹⁰⁶ Schwarcz 1999, 280.

¹⁰⁷ Zhou 2019, 72.

¹⁰⁸ Xu 2007, 73.

¹⁰⁹ Zhou 2019, 72.

¹¹⁰ Xu 2007, 132.

¹¹¹ Xu 2007, 99-100.

most famous woodblock print collection, *Rickshaw* (illustration 4), was first presented in Shanghai in 1942.¹¹²



113

Illustration 1: Painting by Friedrich Schiff.



114

Illustration 2: Painting by Friedrich Schiff.



115

Illustration 3: Woodcut: Ying-Yang series (1948) by David Ludwig Bloch. In Chinese philosophy, Ying and Yang is the balance that relates two opposing forces (in this work: work and free time).



116

Illustration 4: Woodcut: Rickshaw series (1941), Competition for customers by David Ludwig Bloch. Shanghai was recognizable for its rickshaw coolies.

¹¹² Xu 2007, 120.

¹¹³ MutualArt, 2017.

¹¹⁴ WorthPoint, sd.

¹¹⁵ Arts in Exile 2015.

¹¹⁶ Neugebauer 1997.

Generally, the Jewish refugees managed to build a Jewish cultural enclave amongst themselves in Hongkew. For example, in the second half of 1941, there were already at least seventeen music bands¹¹⁷ and various festivals, concerts, and different kinds of evening parties.¹¹⁸ Eber highlights that musicians played at the Shanghai Municipal Symphony Orchestra, and others taught at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. There were also cabarets, variety shows, and solo performances. These could be staged in coffee houses or performed in theatres.¹¹⁹

With this in mind, I was curious to see what role religion continued to play in Shanghai for the Jewish refugees. Culture is namely often shaped by, among other things, religion. Tang claims that religious life in Shanghai continued for many Jewish refugees. For example, some celebrated Shabbat every Friday, and there were weddings, ceremonies, and funerals.¹²⁰ I believe that religion remained important and provided a natural mutual bond among the Jewish refugees.

However, this work claims that basic needs to survive still took precedence in Shanghai, as Mrs. Abrams explained to me: 'Religion was a factor, but it did not take precedence over the everyday struggle for food and other necessities. We celebrated Shabbat as well as all the Jewish Holidays to the best of our ability'. Similarly, Mr. Linden recalled that most people were more focused on surviving than religious life:

Ethnically, we were all Jewish. You had some people who were very orthodox, you had people in between, and you had people who were not at all religious. But there is no doubt that religion brought us together. Jews celebrated Shabbat. Most people did not do that in Shanghai; they were too concentrated on survival. But for the high holidays, young people went to the synagogue. [...] Men were separated from women, but I remember the strong religious atmosphere that existed there, drawn together by the religious beliefs we had.

Furthermore, European Jewish refugees created their own community structures and synagogues. In 1941, the first refugee synagogue 'Emet Ve'shalom' was established on MacGregor Road in Hongkew.¹²¹ Mrs. Kracko told me that her family went to this synagogue:

My family went to the synagogue in Shanghai. [...] I have two tickets from the 'McGregor Rd Shul.' synagogue and on it: 'Bring your own plate and coffee cup.' Commonality...the Jewish community tried to replicate their former lives in Berlin, in Vienna, etc., and opened up new synagogues in addition to the one that was already in existence, Ohel Rachel.

¹¹⁷ Tang 2007, 76.

¹¹⁸ Tang 2007, 250.

¹¹⁹ Eber 2012, 127-128.

¹²⁰ Tang 2007, 62-63.

¹²¹ Eber 2012, 146.d

Eber describes how the refugees also organised a funeral association in 1940 and received their own cemetery that year. A second cemetery was added in 1941 due to the high number of death cases.¹²² Furthermore, the Kadoorie School was quite secular. For instance, the rabbi occasionally taught Jewish children.¹²³ For example, religious services were held on Friday evenings, and Jewish subjects, such as Hebrew, the Bible and Biblical history belonged to the regular school curriculum.¹²⁴

In summary, some Shanghainese and Jewish refugees seemed to come together culturally through music, film, and art, etc. Here, they could mutually learn from one another's influences. The Jewish refugees (actors, actresses, singers, and musicians) were able to continue their musical life. Religiously, the refugees could in principle continue to practice religion, despite the fact that their concentration was again mostly on survival.

Although there was not much interaction between the Shanghainese and the Jewish refugees, they nevertheless sometimes encountered one another on a social, economic and cultural level.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter shows that the Jewish refugees could not survive without the existing groups of Jewish people or Shanghainese in Shanghai. Their ultimately one-way relationship with the existing Jewish communities was often distant from the start, as the Jewish newcomers lived in completely different situations and were not immediately aware of the existence of Jewish communities in Shanghai. The Jewish refugees nevertheless enjoyed the help given to them and depended on these communities.

Furthermore, though Jewish refugees and the Shanghainese in Hongkew lived together for quite some time, there were no major connections between them apart from some social, cultural, and economic interactions. Nonetheless, they both had positive perceptions of the other group and could often rely on one another during the difficult times the two groups experienced.

After their arrival, Jewish refugees began searching for independence, and they succeeded in building a social, economic, cultural enclave. However, this would not have been possible without the interactions with the groups studied.

¹²² Eber 2012, 147.

¹²³ Heppner 1993, 7.

¹²⁴ Kranzler 1976, 391.

Chapter 3: After Shanghai

This chapter discusses the end of the war, the arrival of the American troops in Shanghai, the process of Jewish refugees leaving China, the adaptation to life elsewhere, their lasting connection to Shanghai today, and the European Jews' messages for contemporary refugees' situations in general.

3.1 Rumors of an end to the war

Vámos mentions that the end of the war in Europe led to an increased intensification of the war in the Pacific. For instance, the slow advance of the Allies in the Far East resulted in aerial bombardments in Shanghai.¹²⁵ Furthermore, Veldkamp states that the Hongkew district was vulnerable since there was an important transmission tower and many Japanese soldiers there. Though the Japanese ordered the residents to darken their windows at night, American bombs still fell on Shanghai.¹²⁶ I realised that, for the Jewish refugees, the bombing produced contradictory reactions. As Vámos describes, they wanted the Americans troops to win the war, but at the same time, they also became victims since there were no real air raid shelters in Hongkew.¹²⁷ The simultaneous hope and fear of the refugee inhabitants is confirmed by my interviewees.¹²⁸ For example, Mr. Linden experienced the following:

I remember that there was an American bombing incidentally, in the Jewish area. I remember a lot of dead people. [...] I remember the fear we had when the Americans bombed. We wanted the Americans to win the war, but we didn't like it when they bombed us.

In short, the end of the war was eagerly but anxiously awaited by the Jewish refugees.

3.2 The American troops

The ghetto was officially liberated on September 3, 1945. Mr. Linden explained that he had a positive perception of the American soldiers:

We enjoyed the presence of American soldiers after the war and saw them as our saviours. They treated us like kings. [...] I remember once the navy soldiers invited us to the ship in Shanghai Harbour and we had ice cream for the first time in our lives. [...] Those are little moments that you think about. [...] It showed that the war was over, and we finally passed the difficulty. [...] I think the best time in Shanghai was when the Americans came.

¹²⁵ Vámos 2004, 68.

¹²⁶ Veldkamp 2017, 146.

¹²⁷ Vámos 2004, 68.

¹²⁸ Veldkamp 2017, 146.

Veldkamp notes that when the news of the end of the war arrived, people took to the streets out of joy. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association (UNRRA) also sent shiploads of clothing, food, and medicines to China. The Japanese soldiers ended up in camps and were to be repatriated.¹²⁹ At the same time, however, Hyman describes how the refugees' financial situation quickly deteriorated amid rapid hyperinflation.¹³⁰

The news that millions of Jewish people had been killed in extermination camps in Europe soon reached Shanghai through newspapers such as *The Jewish Chronicle*, as newspapers sent lists of survivors to Shanghai every week.¹³¹ Mrs. Abrams told me about hearing about the tragedy of the Holocaust at that time: 'When the war ended, the news from Europe was devastating. Everybody tried to find family members who had survived the Holocaust and tried to reunite with them'.

In summary, the end of the war resulted in relief at first, but this gradually turned into sadness over the tragedy of the Holocaust and the uncertainty of where to go in the world.

3.3 Emigration

Most European Jewish people did not want or could not return to their country of birth after the horror of the Holocaust in Europe.¹³² As the Maoist armies advanced in Shanghai, it became clear that emigration was the only solution for the Jews.¹³³

The refugees' lack of attachment to Shanghai influenced their decision to leave China once World War II was over.¹³⁴ Halpern notes, many European Jewish refugees had always seen Shanghai as a temporary rather than, non-permanent place to stay, and they set their hopes on the future in another country.¹³⁵ As described in the previous chapter, few tried to understand the Chinese language and culture. Initially, I think that this seems in part to indicate that the Jewish refugees' relationship with Shanghai was not quite strong, but this also may have been more influenced by them having been largely separated from the rest of Shanghai. Instead, they managed to build their own enclave. Great value was attached to learning the English language to help facilitate their future travels to countries such as the US and Australia, as Bei observes.¹³⁶

Hyman claims that 40% of the refugees aspired to settle permanently in the US, while 21% aspired to go to Palestine. In addition, 13% sought to move to Australia or a Latin American country, and

¹²⁹ Veldkamp 2017, 157-159.

¹³⁰ Hyman 2014, 74.

¹³¹ Veldkamp 2017, 160.

¹³² Vámos 2004, 68.

¹³³ Kranzler 1976, 581.

¹³⁴ Bei 2013, 128.

¹³⁵ Halpern 2020, 88.

¹³⁶ Bei 2013, 131.

26% wanted to return to Austria or Germany.¹³⁷ According to Bei, when the Chinese communists took Shanghai in May 1949, most of the former Jewish refugees had already left the city. Mr. Nash echoed this sentiment: 'When the Chinese communists took over China, there was not going to be a single 'Westerner'. We left seven months before the October 1949 communist takeover'. In 1953, there were only 449 Jewish residents in Shanghai, and this decreased to 84 in 1958. Finally, as Bei notes, the remaining Jewish people left the city after the start of the Cultural Revolution, which lasted from 1966 to 1976.¹³⁸

Halpern reasoned that San Francisco became a crucial symbol for Shanghai's Jewish diaspora. Many Chinese at that time fled to San Francisco to escape the communists. Indeed, the population of San Francisco's Chinatown increased from 17,782 in 1940 to 24,813 in 1950.¹³⁹ Mr. Linden described the large influx of refugees into this city to me: 'After we left Shanghai in 1947, we came to the US through the Emigrant Aid. You needed a visa. We came to San Francisco and ended up in Salt Lake City, because there were too many Jews and too many Chinese entering San Francisco'. Mrs. Abrams still resides in San Francisco today.

However, the process of leaving China was not always easy for everyone. Eber claims that there were few ships available at the end of the war. In addition, diplomatic representation was delayed. The US Consulate General only opened in December 1945¹⁴⁰ and the US admission quota system was highly limited.¹⁴¹ The Displaced Persons Act made emigration difficult for the refugees from Shanghai.¹⁴² As Veldkamp describes, it was only after a long time that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the JDC started to help the refugees, but procedures were often long and complicated. Veldkamp mentions that in 1947, people who applied for a visa in Germany in the late 1930s were allowed to come to America as long as they were sponsored by a person in the US who was willing to act as a guarantor for at least two years.¹⁴³ Mrs. Abrams confirmed these emigration difficulties: 'I left Shanghai in June 1947 by ship to San Francisco. The US had a quota system in place and allowed only some people to immigrate to the States. We were only able to obtain a transit visa to the US'. Moreover, Mr. Nowomiast stated in the interview with me about the importance of having connections: 'Some connections were made between my mother and them in San Francisco. They filled out papers and reached their entry point to the US'. In addition, Mr. Linden also remembered the help of various organisations: 'The JDC helped our family arrive in the US. [...] The IAS (International Aid Services) was also definitely very helpful.

¹³⁷ Hyman 2014, 68.

¹³⁸ Bei 2013, 134.

¹³⁹ Halpern 2020, 90.

¹⁴⁰ Eber 2012, 194.

¹⁴¹ Veldkamp 2017, 174.

¹⁴² Ristaino 2003, 259.

¹⁴³ Veldkamp 2017, 174-175.

When we came to Salt Lake City, the Jewish community that welcomed us gave us a house, and after that, my parents got a job’.

In summary, the former Jewish refugees had set their sights on a life outside of rapidly developing communist China. Australia and the US were the most desired destinations, but the emigration process often took a long time and was highly complicated.

3.4 Adjustments to their new lives

Halpern claims that in San Francisco, the United Service for New Americans (USNA, founded in 1940) helped the Shanghai Jewish newcomers settle in hotels, and the refugees often had to deal with a daily subsistence allowance of three dollars until they could resettle elsewhere.¹⁴⁴ The Jewish Council also arranged social gatherings, for instance, to connect the Jewish refugee community of Shanghai with San Francisco's pre-war German Jewish refugee community, which also provided employment opportunities.¹⁴⁵

Despite these immigrants being born or raised in Shanghai, their background was not an obstacle to integration, as Mr. Linden, for example, explained:

I did speak English. I didn't feel at all uncomfortable. [...] I felt very easy to assimilate into American schools in Salt Lake City. [...] I became a citizen and feel very engaged in the American community. We were also active in the Jewish community. [...] I never thought about my passport.

The same sentiment was shared by Mr. Nash in Australia. He also stated that he experienced no problems and even feels completely Australian. He noted that learning English in Shanghai was a major advantage for integrating into Australia:

The positives of growing up in Shanghai were that English was the business and school language. [...] So, there were no problems being educated at Australian schools and universities. Firstly, I am a Holocaust Survivor and a guide at the Sydney Jewish Museum. But yes, I am an Aussie!

I argue that the transition from Shanghai to Australia and the US was generally easier than from Europe to Shanghai. While both were forced journeys, the flight to Shanghai was a lifesaving attempt and the exit from Shanghai was a search for a better life elsewhere in the world. Mr. Nowomias explicates this sentiment to me as follows: ‘My parents were able to integrate and

¹⁴⁴ Halpern 2020,102.

¹⁴⁵ Halpern 2020, 111.

assimilate into the culture. [...] New York was a melting pot for many refugees from everywhere in the 1950s, and San Francisco too. [...] I went to Michigan State University’.

Moreover, I believe that the readiness of the refugees who changed their surnames shows that they wanted to fully integrate and leave the past behind. Mr. Nash told in a conversation with me about this decision: ‘My birth name was “Nachemstein” and after seven years in Sydney, my parents thought that I should change my name. Not because of antisemitism, but because of the migrant attitude’. Mr. Nowomiast also changed his name to ‘Newton’ upon arrival in the US, although for this thesis, his original surname is preferred: ‘My original name was “Nowomiast”, which if you translate it from Polish means ‘New Town’, which is why we changed the name when we became citizens of America’. For Mr. Linden changing his name was apparently also a matter of adaptation and pronunciation: ‘My parents, upon settling down in Salt Lake City, decided to change their last name from the German-sounding name “Lindenstrauss” to the less German and easier-to-pronounce name “Linden”’.

Overall, I think the adjustments to China were much more difficult than integrating into countries such as the US and Australia. This also relates to how the refugees in the latter countries wanted to establish their lives there, and the circumstances were also suitable for this (i.e. the war was over, and they no longer had to live in uncertainty). In Shanghai, however, people had to survive turbulent times and did not see the city as a completely voluntary permanent residence.

3.5 Lifetime connection to Shanghai

3.5.1 Lessons from a childhood in Shanghai

After hearing all the interviewees’ stories about their experiences in Shanghai, I wondered how they look back on their childhood now. For Mr. Linden, it was a relatively normal childhood, but it occurred in an unusual place:

Since I was a child, I did not fully understand the vulnerability under which we lived. I attended school, had friends, and really did not know the difference between how we lived and how others lived elsewhere. I was used to the weekly community shower and the smelly toilet. I also remember there being rats in the house, and I had intestinal worms and a variety of infectious diseases that afflicted the entire community. It was common to see discarded dead Chinese babies in the street gutters. My parents bought boiled water from street vendors. But all those things just seemed natural at the time. All in all, I consider having a reasonably normal childhood but always waiting for the day that we could leave Shanghai and settle in a more pleasant and friendly environment.

This also applies to Mr. Nowomiast, even though he too was aware of the pitiful conditions:

I remember being hungry; I remember my mother giving me anything she could. [...] I guess it could possibly be a relatively good childhood. I went to school, and I had friends. I had two sets of parents that took care of me.

I believe that, for the Jewish refugees, access to Shanghai's open harbor was a matter of luck and the only option for survival. The Shanghai Jewish refugee experience, which Kranzler notes sometimes lasted ten years, dominates their memories and emotions, and they still feel a strong connection with Shanghai.¹⁴⁶ For example, Mrs. Kracko stated: 'Whenever I hear or see anything "Shanghai", it is like my ears pick up. It is a connection'. I even think that the interviews even highlight how former Jewish refugees considered Shanghai as an integral part of their identity. From Mr. Nowomiast' perspective, I deduce that togetherness and cooperation between different groups of people were key factors for survival at the time. Moreover, he used the experience of Shanghai to judge contemporary situations:

I always had an affinity for China. [...] I still have many of these memories right here. [...] The wonderful thing about the Shanghai experiences is that they can show how people help and how people at that time needed it, whether it was American organisations or Jews who helped. [...] I think the importance is in the human spirit, the need for survival, and what people do to survive. [...] That is the message: spirit, kindness, strength, and love.

For the former Shanghai Jewish refugees, the escape from the Holocaust is paramount in their memory of Shanghai. Eber even claims this experience represents a memory of survival, heroism, and defying fate¹⁴⁷ The present work highlights how many of the former Jewish refugees from Shanghai are grateful to the Shanghainese. For example, Mr. Linden explained that to me:

Shanghai was a refuge. So, I was grateful to Shanghai for being available and to the Chinese people for putting up with us. [...] And the Japanese could have killed us, but they didn't. [...] For me, it was a miracle from heaven that happened. [...] I am grateful for having saved our lives. [...] I have many little memories of Shanghai: some good, some not so good. [...] It is a unique experience, and I think it shapes my life a lot. I was among the generation that was very lucky to survive. [...] I consider myself a Holocaust escapee.

The importance of Shanghai can also carry a message for today, what Mrs. Abrams expressed to me: 'All I can say is to be always alert, when it raises its ugly head, and do not believe that you can hide from it. Be a proud Jew and give your full allegiance to Israel no matter where in the world you live'.

¹⁴⁶ Kranzler 1976, 581-582.

¹⁴⁷ Eber 2012, 3.

Despite the difficulties of spending their childhood in Shanghai, or perhaps because of this, most of them remain connected to the city, and luck is paramount in their memories.

3.5.2 The Shanghailanders

Halpern states that the former European Jewish refugees eventually created a ‘micro diaspora’ based on their common feelings and experiences. They had to deal with major cultural differences in Shanghai, living in extreme poverty due to hyperinflation without the protection of a state and being forced to live in a designated area.¹⁴⁸ These former Jewish refugees are called the ‘Shanghailanders’ in the US. Gathering through reunions allows them to share their memories of Shanghai with one another. Mrs. Kracko noted that she attended some Shanghailanders reunions: ‘Through the years there was a reunion every year, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Canada and the very first one was here in New York, in 1987. [...] You know, the older people get older and people die. In 2006 there was a reunion in Shanghai’. Kranzler describes how there is also regular contact between the active associations of former refugees from Shanghai in the US, Israel, and Australia.¹⁴⁹

In summary, some Shanghailanders continue to unite to share and uphold their memories of Shanghai.

3.5.3 Shanghai Jewish heritage

This history in Shanghai is regarded by the Jewish refugees as Jewish heritage, and they claim that it should be passed on to the next generation. Mr. Linden said the following about his Jewish heritage: ‘You cannot forget your past. In general, we still try our children to know about Jewish heritage’. Unfortunately, the reality is that there are few remaining people who lived through Shanghai Jewish history, which Mr. Nash emphasized to me: ‘After about 80 years many Shanghai survivors have passed away’.

I considered that while textbooks often focus on the Holocaust, few people know about Shanghai's role as a refuge base for European Jewish refugees during World War II. For my interviewees, this seems logical, as the tragedy of the Holocaust in Europe occurred on an unimaginably large scale, while “only” 20,000 Jewish refugees fled to Shanghai. Mrs. Abrams stated: ‘I think the reason that the Shanghai experience did not get so much attention, is that it were only about 20,000 people, and though the stay there was not very pleasant it was nothing compared to what happened in Europe’. Although the Jewish refugees in Shanghai were a relatively small community (as compared with Europe), they feel the need to tell their history precisely because the number of eyewitnesses is decreasing over time.

¹⁴⁸ Halpern 2020, 89.

¹⁴⁹ Kranzler 1976, 582.

3.5.4 Visits to (un)recognizable Shanghai

After the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping introduced economic reforms in China in the late 1970s and diplomatic relations between China and Israel were established in 1992, some former Shanghai Jewish refugees (sometimes with their children) returned for a trip to see what Shanghai would look like.¹⁵⁰ From Mr. Nash's story I can deduce that people in Shanghai welcomed the former Jewish refugees tell their story: 'I was invited, very ironically, by the German consulate in Shanghai to come and give a talk'.

While many monuments and historic buildings have not survived the Cultural Revolution, China's subsequent economic boom and continued obsession with growth, the Hongkew neighborhood remains intact.¹⁵¹ Many Chinese city planners realise that increasing numbers of tourists want to see the neighborhood.¹⁵² This idea from the literature is confirmed by my interviewees. For example, Mr. Linden told me about the total transformation of Shanghai, but the preservation of the Hongkew district: 'The change is just enormous. We lived in Hongkew and across the river was a big farmland. [...] So, Shanghai changed enormously with the exception of the Hongkew area'.

In conclusion, in the memory of Shanghai, for the former European Jewish refugees is characterized by luck, chance, togetherness, and survival. Shanghai remains etched in my interviewees' memories, even though they were just children. Shanghai has a impact and this is also evidenced by how the former European refugees are often still eager to return to the city. In addition, they are sometimes in contact with other former European Jewish refugees and do their best to keep Shanghai's Jewish history alive.

3.6 Key messages for contemporary refugee flows

To some extent, the experiences of the Jewish refugees of Shanghai can provide lessons for the refugee situation today, Mr. Linden told me that refugees today are of great value for the development of a country:

Jewish refugees are fortunately no longer a problem because there is a state, Israel, that accepts Jews. [...] The US, fortunately, has a policy of accepting refugees. Every country has right-wing elements that don't want refugees in a way that kept us out of the US for a long period of time. [...] To me, the refugees are an amazing resource. People want to leave a place only if they are motivated. Motivation creates wealth for a country. I know that the Jews in the US worked very hard. The same is true for the Chinese in the US and the people

¹⁵⁰ Bei 2013, 134.

¹⁵¹ Griffiths 2013, 6.

¹⁵² Kaufman 2021, 318.

from Mexico who come to the US. [...] That is why the Jewish organisation supports the refugees, even if they are not Jewish.

Mr. Nowomiast also acknowledged 'helpfulness' as a key factor involving refugees today: 'The real message is to be happy that it never happened to you and if you are in a position to help somebody else, please do it. [...] People want to come to America, and they say: "Sorry you can't enter." That is a big issue when talking about migration or emigration in the world when trying to compare it with the Shanghai Jews saving their lives to go anywhere'.

Moreover, Mrs. Kracko felt that legitimacy also plays an important role: 'It took a long time to finally get those papers to go to the US. It took a lot longer than they expected but my family did everything legally'.

There are many migratory flows occurs today, and the lessons my interviewees can provide from their experiences of Jewish migration to Shanghai are that hard work, helpfulness, and legitimacy are seen as crucial.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter shows that the Jewish refugees in Shanghai could not wait for the war to end and finally move on to a new life outside of China. As they had lived in a kind of 'isolation' from the rest of the world in Shanghai, it was only later that all reports from the home front came out, and this also led to them to not return to the home country. However, the emigration movements often became rather long processes. Experiencing youth in Shanghai has not led to a lesser adaptation in the new country yet. For the Jewish refugees, this is an experience that will always stay with them, whether by staying in contact with fellow Shanghailanders, revisiting Shanghai, or keeping this Shanghai Jewish heritage alive for the next generation(s). Finally, these Shanghai memories can provide lessons for contemporary migration situations.

Conclusion

This study has investigated how Shanghai remains in the memories of the Jewish community today. This research concludes that Hitler's seizure of power and the subsequent anti-Jewish rules and events had many negative consequences, culminating in Kristallnacht. Jews, who were hopeful at first that the anti-Jewish measures would dissipate, then realised the need to emigrate. Leaving would mean great life changes, although, their old lives had long since been limited by being isolated from society as an explicit identity group.

Since no country welcomed the Jewish migrants, their feelings of powerlessness and uncertainty grew. The one place in the world where a visa was not required was Shanghai. The Jewish refugees who dared to make the crossing, experienced the journey (even called a 'cruise') as a great adventure.

The interviews from this study revealed that the 20,000 Jewish refugees came ashore somewhat melancholically and without any expectations. To their surprise, however, they were not the only foreigners or Jewish residents in Shanghai. The Sephardi and Russian Jews not only contributed to the development of the city, through trade or by constructing schools and synagogues, but also supported the vulnerable Jewish newcomers in various ways. The connection between the Jewish refugees and the previously settled Jewish people can be viewed as one-sided but much-needed.

The Jewish refugees also came into contact with the Shanghainese because they lived in the same predicament under Japanese rule. While the Jewish refugees realised that the lives of the Shanghainese were often even harder than theirs, the Shanghainese saw that the Jewish refugees differed from the other foreigners in the city. While they often had positive mutual perceptions of one another, their equally interactions did not indicate a long-term, connected relationship. With the exception of a few related areas, they were mostly living apart from each other.

Although there was a high degree of dependence among the Jewish refugees, this thesis has also shown that there was a strong call for independence: they built an enclave socially (facilitated by living close to one another and dealing with the same daily obstacles), economically (finding jobs and setting up a commercial world) and culturally (through music and synagogues). The Jewish settlers considered it a world within a world, with its own built infrastructure. The refugees clearly tried to make the best of the situation. Nevertheless, one should recognise that this would probably never have been possible without the help of the other groups in Shanghai.

This study also has highlighted the Jewish refugees' hopeful anticipation of American troops, and how the joy of liberation quickly turned to sadness when hearing about the Holocaust and

worrying about finding a new place of emigration. There was also a high sense of urgency because everyone wanted to leave before the communists came to power in China. However, the emigration process was slow and complicated.

This study illuminates how, in retrospect, the refugees were able to take full advantage of their education in Shanghai (i.e., being taught in English), which facilitated their integration into their newly settled countries. The former refugees wanted to build a new life, which sometimes even included changing their last name. Although some of my interviewees indicated that their childhood in Shanghai was reasonably normal, despite living in dire conditions, Shanghai significantly impacts and influences them today. While Shanghai continues to modernise and transform, its Jewish heritage is preserved. The former Jewish refugees feel a strong connection to Shanghai, whether by passing on their Shanghai story to the next generation, revisiting Shanghai, or attending gathering reunions.

Finally, for the former Jewish refugees, who sometimes regard themselves as Holocaust escapers, life in Shanghai is etched into their memories today with mixed feelings of fear, uncertainty, vulnerability, helplessness, oppression, and survival. Most significantly, however, they remember it, as a place of great luck and ‘a miracle from heaven’. This study offers two key takeaways: through the role Shanghai played in bolstering the strength and motivation of the Jewish refugees and the kindness and helpfulness offered by diverse groups from Shanghai, the memory of this city remains strong today.

There are a number of reasons why this research can be considered significant. First, it offers significant academic value by filling the gap in the academic literature on Jewish history in Shanghai. My research consisted of an extensive literature study that was supplemented with interviews. This combined approach enriches the already existing literature (that often does not use eyewitness accounts). Furthermore, this is an urgent topic to address. As significant time has passed since World War II, there are unfortunately fewer eyewitnesses who can retell the story of Shanghai. Through the interviews (which are provided in full in the appendix), I hope to preserve their story before it is too late. In addition, this study offers significant visibility to an important topic which deserves more attention. I believe that it is important for people to learn more about how Shanghai was a crucial shelter for former Jewish refugees. Finally, this research offers timely messages from the interviewees that apply to contemporary migration flows in the world.

It should be noted, however, that the nature of this thesis forced me to shorten quotes from the interviews. Moreover, due to travel constraints (China was closed during the pandemic), it was not possible to go to Shanghai to offer further on the Shanghainese perspective. In addition, I

sometimes used lower-result data, such as the work of master's students, since the literature on this topic is scarce.

Some questions that this research raises for future research include the following: 'To what extent was it possible in the beginning of the war to stay in contact with the Jewish refugees who fled to Shanghai?' 'Was there a reaction to the arrival of the Jewish refugees by the other foreigners in Shanghai?' 'What is the nature of the groups of Jewish people living in Shanghai today?' 'How does the Chinese government influence their religious practice and daily life?' Future research can build on this thesis to respond to such questions up.

In conclusion, the unpredictability and unexpected onset of World War II gave the Jewish refugees in Shanghai shelter the resilience and courage to build a life in the future without ever leaving it behind. The memory of Shanghai is a living dream that has never become a closed chapter, and I find it difficult to even devote a last sentence to it now. That is why I would suggest remembering: 'Open your eye, instead of, Shanghai Goodbye'.

Bibliography

许步曾. (2007). 寻访犹太人：犹太文化精英在上海. 上海：上海社会科学院出版.

Arts in Exile. (2015). *DAVID LUDWIG BLOCH: SCHIRMVERKÄUFER [UMBRELLA SALESMAN], WOODCUT (1948)*. Retrieved from Arts in Exile: <https://kuenste-im-exil.de/KIE/Content/EN/Objects/bloch-ying-yang-schirmverkaeufer-en.html?single=1>

Bei, G. (2013). *Shanghai Sanctuary: Chinese and Japanese policy toward European Jewish refugees during World War II*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eber, I. (2012). *Wartime Shanghai and the Jewish Refugees from Central Europe: Survival, Co-Existence, and Identity in a Multi-Ethnic City*. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter.

Eber, I. (2018). *Jewish Refugees in Shanghai 1933-1947: A Selection of Documents*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Goldstein, J. (1999). Historical Introduction. In J. Goldstein, & B. I. Schwartz, *The Jews of China* (pp. xi-xxiv). Armonk & London: M.E. Sharpe.

Griffiths, J. (2013, November 21). Shanghai's Forgotten Jewish Past. *The Atlantic*, pp. 1-7.

Halpern, S. (2020, January). The Integration of Jewish Refugees from Shanghai into Post-World War II San Francisco. *American Jewish History*, 104(1), pp. 87-114.

Heppner, E. G. (1993). *Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Huang, S. (2016, June 14). Chinese Encounter of Jewish Refugees in Shanghai. *Southern Illinois University Carbondale*, pp. 1-30.

Hyman, E. R. (2014). "An uncertain life in another world": German and Austrian Jewish refugee life in Shanghai, 1938-1950. *University of Maryland, College Park*, pp. 1-94.

Kaufman, J. (2021). *Koningen van Shanghai: Hoe twee Joodse families meebouwden aan het moderne China*. Amsterdam: Prometheus.

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

Liberman, Y. (1998). *My China*. Jerusalem: Copyright Gefen Publishing House Ltd.

- Longerich, P. (2010). *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
- Meyer, M. J. (1994). The Sephardi Jewish Community of Shanghai 1845-1939 and the Question of Identity. *The London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies*. pp. 1-369.
- MutualArt. (2017, September 22). *Asian Market*. Retrieved from MutualArt: <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Asian-Market/241D269DE266C4A0>
- Neugebauer, R. (1997, September 30). Zu LEBENSWEG UND WERK DES KÜNSTLERS DAVID L. BLOCH. Wuppertal, Germany.
- Ristaino, M. R. (2003). *Port of Last Resort: The Diaspora Communities of Shanghai*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Roland, J. G. (1999). Chapter II.A Baghdadi Jews in India and China in the Nineteenth Century: A Comparison of Economic Roles. In J. Goldstein, & B. I. Schwartz, *The Jews of China* (pp. 141-156). Armonk & London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Schwarcz, V. (1999). Chapter III.D.3: Who Can See a Miracle? The Language of Jewish Memory in Shanghai. In J. Goldstein, & B. I. Schwartz, *The Jews of China* (pp. 277-298). Armonk & London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Vámos, P. (2004). "Home Afar": The life of Central European Jewish refugees in Shanghai during World War II. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 57(1), pp. 55-70.
- Veldkamp, J. (2017). *Vrijhaven Shanghai: Hoe duizenden Joodse vluchtelingen in China aan de Holocaust ontkwamen*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans.
- Vermander, B., Hingley, L., & Zhang, L. (2018). *Shanghai Sacred: The Religious Landscape of a Global City*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- WorthPoint. (n.d.). *THREE PRINTS BY SHANGHAI ARTIST FRIEDRICH SCHIFF, 1930S*. Retrieved from WorthPoint: <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/three-prints-shanghai-artist-237601690>
- Xu, B. (1999). Chapter III. C.2: Jews and the Musical Life of Shanghai. In J. Goldstein, & B. I. Schwartz, *The Jews of China* (pp. 230-237). Armonk & London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Zhou, Q. (2019, May 4). Interactions Between the Chinese and the Jewish Refugees in Shanghai During World War II. *Penn History Review*, 25(2), 3, pp.50-88.

Zhou, X. (2001). *Chinese perceptions of the 'Jews' and Judaism: a history of the Youtai*.
Richmond: Curzon.

汤亚汀. (2007). 上海犹太社区的音乐生活 (1850-1950, 1998-2005). 上海: 上海音乐学院出版社.

Appendices

Appendix I: Interview Mr. Linden	47
Appendix II: Interview Mrs. Abrams	63
Appendix III: Interview Mr. Nowomiast.....	71
Appendix IV: Interview Mr. Moalem.....	83
Appendix V: Interview Mr. Nash	91
Appendix VI: Interview Mrs. Kracko	100

Appendix I: Interview Mr. Linden

Date: 09/09/2022

Mr. Linden came across my Facebook post on the Facebook group “Shanghai Internees and Jewish Refugees Group 1945”. Before the interview, he told me the following information:

My family escaped to Shanghai from Germany in 1939 and I grew up there. Because of the War we were unable to leave Shanghai until 1947 at which time we received affidavits allowing us to immigrate to the US. I have many memories about my youth in Shanghai and lots of pictures that my father took while there. I would be happy to provide you with information for your interesting research project if you wish, so please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Personal information questions

- *Do you object if I mention your name in my thesis? Or would you prefer that I process your answers anonymously?*

You may mention my name.

- *Would you like to read the results of my research? If so, I will be happy to send you a copy of my thesis.*

Yes, I would be interested in receiving a copy of your thesis.

- *What is your full name?*

My name is Kurt Linden.

- *When and where were you born?*

I was born in Berlin in 1936, December 27th.

- *Where did both your parents come from?*

I was able to find my ancestors of Germany back to 1750, which is interesting. My father came from Prenzlau, Eastern Germany. My father and mother were married in 1935.

- *What did your father do for a living?*

He worked himself up into a department store as a general manager, buyer. In any case, after he realized that he could no longer make a living in Germany, he and my mother decided to open a small fabric store in Berlin. That was his specialty.

- *Did your mother ever hold a job?*

My mother worked with my father in their store. My mother was a dressmaker and she sold materials. Sometime during the war, she decided to design a Jewish flag.

- *Did your father have to go into the army during World War I? What were the impacts of World War I on your family?*

My father served as an officer in the German army. He was drafted. He was lucky. There were horses there and he had to take care of the horses. One horse kicked him in his stomach, and he went to the hospital and while he was in the hospital, his regiment was called to the Russian front, and they all died. So, my father was the only one who survived.

- *What were the consequences for your family when Hitler became chancellor of Germany? (For example: work, social life?)*

My parents lived in Germany during fairly good times. But gradually the German government and the Hindenburg collapsed. The Nazis came into power and in 1933, Hitler became the chancellor of Germany. Things became really bad for the Jewish community. My father lost his job and things got very bad. Jews were arrested almost at random; they were put into prisons and treated badly. Most importantly, my father lost his job. Jews were being arrested. It was a very bad time.

My mother had a sister and a brother. Her younger brother was sixteen years old at that time and he came home one day, walked in front of the house where he lived and officers stopped him to ask him if he had seen Salomon, which was his name. He said 'no' and he started walking. He knew he was in trouble and that they would arrest him, so he went to the Jugend in Berlin, and they were able to illegally smuggle him out within a few days to what was at that time Palestine. So, he was able to escape to Palestine.

My mother's family was wealthy. My grandfather Bruno Salomon, who also served in World War I, had a store with two stores. He was very wealthy. He was the first person in the town to have a car and a chauffeur. I have a letter from the German government to my father who filed for compensation after he lost his job in Germany in the 1930s. The Aryan rules stipulated that the Jews should no longer take part in the German economy. And therefore, he is not entitled to any compensation even though he played into the system. The Jews now had to look after themselves. It was signed by Heil Hitler.

One of my grandsons went to Germany and he took a picture, and the store is still there. My uncle escaped to Palestine.

My father was a little bit older. He told me stories of when he and his brother-in-law would spend the whole night on the subway in Berlin to stay away from home. So, they would randomly arrest Jews, and they would end up in police stations. There were no concentration camps at that time as far as I know but they were very badly treated. One of his friends was treated so badly that he died.

So, the consequences of Hitlers' rise to power for the German Jewish community were the worst possible disaster. One of the tragedies is that there were urgently no places in the world

for Jews to go. It was almost impossible to get out. In 1939, there was almost a panic to get out, there was just no place to go. Shanghai was like a gift from heaven.

- *Were your mother and father both Jewish?*

Yes, yes of course.

- *Did you study?*

I went to the university in Utah, grew up there and I graduated in 1959 in engineering. I was a good student, I went to graduate school MIT and finally ended up with a PhD in engineering.

- *Where do you live now and for how long do you live here?*

I live in Wayland, Massachusetts. After we left Shanghai on the ninth of August, in 1947, we came to the US through the Emigrant Aid. You needed a visa. We came to San Francisco and ended up in Salt Lake City, because there were too many Jews and too many Chinese entering San Francisco. There was a Jewish community in Salt Lake City that welcomed us. There were more Jews there. We ended up in Salt Lake City, Utah. My father was a mountain climber, so he was happy to be there in the mountains. When I was at MIT, I met my future wife. She is also Jewish, and we got married and ended up living in Boston. During the time of the Korean war, and the Cold War with Russia, they needed engineers. I was not drafted because I was an intellectual engineer. We lived in Boston ever since.

- *Are you or were you married? Do you have children? If so, how many children do you have?*

I am married, we have three children, and we have eight grandchildren.

Reason for departure questions

- *What reasons did your parents have for leaving Germany? Did your parents consider other places? If so, which places?*

They were worried about dying. Nobody knew of concentration camps at that time. They knew there were some camps, but nobody suspected anything like the Holocaust. I remember in Shanghai, after the war, we found out what happened, and everyone was totally shocked. Nobody had any idea what was happening in Germany. Otherwise, they would have left even sooner. The most important reason was just that they were worried about dying.

- *Was Kristallnacht the last straw for your parents to leave Germany for Shanghai?*

Yes. So, in a way, Kristallnacht saved our lives. Kristallnacht came at November 9, 1938, and all the Jewish stores and so on were destroyed. My father had to borrow up his store the next morning. He was threatened to be arrested if he did not bore up even though it was not caused by him. Then he continued operating the store behind wooden panels on the windows. He continued operating the store and he did very well. Many of the Germans supported the Jewish merchants and he did very well at that time. There was absolutely no future. The very next day they booked tickets anywhere out of Germany. He went to a travel agency, and they told

him there was really no place he could go without some kind of visa. There was one place he could go without a visa and that was Shanghai China. He said: "I want three tickets to Shanghai China."

- *Were there any other acquaintances of your family living in Germany who made the decision to flee to Shanghai?*

Yes. My father had two sisters there and one of his sisters said: 'I cannot understand how you can leave Germany. How can you leave the country? You are born here'. She could not understand it. My father said: 'This is the happiest day of my life. You have to find out someday'. In any case, after we lived in Shanghai, for a few months, my father received an urgent letter from his sisters saying: 'Please get us out'. and also letters from other people. When my father arrived in Shanghai, they all lived in what they call 'Heime'. Shortly after his arrival, he received the money transfer from the English Bank in Shanghai. My father was able to have a Chinese acquaintance, Mr. Cheng, who told him that there were some business opportunities for him. He had some money and so he could buy an old Chinese house, bombed out by the Japanese. He fixed it up, rent it out, and made a living that way. So, my father used the money that came into that bank account to do that. But then a year later, in 1939, the Japanese decided to stop the Jewish emigration to Shanghai. My father was able to bring these people to Shanghai only for one reason and that is that he owned some property and people who owned property were excluded from that requirement. He was able to bring his two sisters out from Germany, their daughter (my cousin), my mothers' sister and her husband, and my mother's mother and four other people who were acquaintances. So, he was able to bring eleven people to Shanghai. Only because he owned property during that narrow window of time. So that was like another miracle for those people.

- *What type of people dared to take this step?*

I think it was entirely fear of the German government. Imagine living in a country where the government is hostile to you and want to kill you. Then there was the Wannsee conference, in 1942, where it was pretty much decided that the Jews would be exterminated. We left before that. The people who left Germany left long before they knew there would be any concentration camp. The living was so difficult, it was almost impossible. Most of the Jews in Germany felt that Hitler was so crazy. It was impossible for them to survive there. There is no way this can go on forever, it has to end sometime and of course, they were right initially, but in the meantime, people got killed. I think most of the Jewish community in Germany would have left if they were able to. That is my personal opinion on that. It was really sad that there was no place to go. It was just impossible to leave.

- *What was it like for your parents to leave everything behind?*

My mother was strongly opposed to leaving Germany, her family was there etc., but my father absolutely insisted that would leave and they finally departed in 1939 early and took a boat from Genoa Italy and went from Germany by train to Italy to Shanghai China. They ended up in Shanghai China. I was born in 1936, so when I came in Shanghai, I was a little over two years old. I was a baby, so I do not know anything, but I grew up there until 1947, when we finally get out. So, Shanghai was a difficult place to live.

I was a baby; I only know what my parents told me. My mother was reluctant to leave Germany, my father was less reluctant. Fortunately, his mother passed away the year before. If my fathers' mother had still been alive, I do not believe he would have left. My mothers' mother was still alive. Her father had died. At the time she left, there were no more boats to go over. Many people had difficulty leaving Germany, they were born there, there was a family there, and they owned some things. But things just got so bad that it was just impossible for people to live there anymore by and large. But again, there are many people who were very poor, they just could not get out and they just all ended up being killed.

- *How difficult was it to get visas?*

How was my father able to buy the tickets? He had money. When my father got married, he was forty years old, so he was not a poor man. He had some money and. My father was able to smuggle some money from Germany to Shanghai through a British Bank, about ten thousand dollars, which was, at that time, a lot. That money was able to save eleven lives.

- *Can you tell me about the journey from Europe to Shanghai? (For instance: how long did it take, what were the circumstances etc.)*

The journey took several weeks. I know that we went by train, from Germany to Genoa. From Genoa to Shanghai through the Suez Canal, around India, Singapore and the South China Sea, into Shanghai. At least two weeks, maybe more. It was a cruise in a way my parents enjoyed , even though they were leaving their homeland. It was kind of an adventure to see all these places.

Shanghai impression questions

- *What was your parent's expectation of Shanghai before they fled and was it correct on arrival?*

My parents expressed great concern and fear when they arrived in China because the question was, you know, 'How do we survive here? Who looks after us? How do we get a job?' There were 20,000 Jews. In the beginning, it was very difficult in Shanghai. My aunt who graduated from Heidelberg University said to my father: 'How can you go to Shanghai where dogs eat people in the streets?' I remember my father saying that he and my mother, after they went to Shanghai, went for a walk-through Shanghai. There were thousands and thousands of people

in the street. It was incredibly crowded and there was no single white face; everybody was Chinese, and they were really concerned about being there. The Chinese were just totally neutral to the Jews. But there was great concern about Shanghai.

- *Do you remember your first days of arrival in Shanghai?*

The living conditions were very difficult. Men were separated from women. Individuals were separated by curtains. It was very crowded.

- *Why do you think Shanghai as a city was able to offer this shelter, despite having its own problems during these years, with civil war and foreign concessions?*

Shanghai was occupied by the Japanese. There was a Chinese government, but the Japanese were in military control, so they had the power. They allowed the Jews in. There was widespread corruption in the Chinese government, but the fact that the Japanese had control and the fact that the Japanese wanted to keep the United States out of war provided to sustain the Jewish community allowed to exist.

- *Have your parents always lived in one place in Shanghai? Where?*

The poorest Chinese lived in the International Settlement. Some of the Jews, like my uncle, lived just outside Shanghai, which was a little bit wealthier. Most of us lived in Hongkew, which was the poorest part of the town. The Japanese did invoke a ghetto, in the sense that we were not allowed to leave during the war unless we got a pass from the Japanese administrator.

- *Do you believe that it was Shanghai which saved your life?*

Oh yes, definitely. There is no doubt about it. If we would not have gone to Shanghai, we all would have been killed. Anybody who was a Jew in Berlin or anywhere in Germany was arrested and put into concentration camps and we all know what happened there. There were at least six or seven German government officials who lived in Shanghai during the war. There were some rumours that they would have set up a concentration camp for the Jews in Shanghai, but the Japanese authorities realized that it has nothing to do with war and did not approve of that. So, we were very lucky.

Friendship questions

- *Did you have Chinese friends?*

Some of my friends were not Jewish, they were White Russians whom escaped the communists in Russia. We all played together, and we all went to school together.

- *Did your family receive a lot of help on arrival and if so from whom? What kinds of organizations existed?*

Yes, all the Jewish families received help from the Jewish community, which seems to have been reasonably well organised. I think that help was crucial. I am not sure if people could have survived without that help. Shanghai was a foreign country, nobody spoke English or

German, except the Chinese. The survival of the Jewish community rests very much on the help that they received. Not only from the American JDC, but also from the local Sephardi Jewish community, you know, the well-known Kadoorie family and the Sassoon family to a lesser extent. They provided assistance in providing a synagogue.

- *How much help have you received from the Joint Distribution Committee?*

A lot of money came from the Jewish community in the United States. Laura Margolis was in charge of the American Joint Distribution Committee. They smuggled money into Shanghai, and they were able to provide medicine and the basic necessities and kept it separate from the Chinese. The Japanese, I guess, allowed all that.

- *How easy was it to make friends in Shanghai? For example, how did you deal with the language barrier of the local population?*

The Jewish community was pretty much separated from the Chinese community. The only Chinese words I have learned are swear words that the Chinese used. The Chinese did not like us. Not because we were Jewish, but because we were white. They looked at the white people as foreigners who exploited them. I remember very well about the fact that we were hated not because we were Jews but because we were white. The family of Cheng invited us for a Chinese New Year dinner. In the eight years we lived in Shanghai, we only had Chinese food once.

- *How do you think the Chinese perceived you? Was this perception quite positive or negative?*

I think in general it was positive, but maybe more so just neutral. They didn't like us, they didn't hate us. We were talked in at home and at school to never enter an argument with the Chinese. We were instructed to not get involved because there was some tension there. But on the other hand, I think we were grateful to leave but we realized that the invitation to Shanghai came more from the Japanese than from the Chinese. The Chinese were kind of neutral because the Chinese were not in power. I always looked at the Japanese as saving us. I was personally always very grateful for having been in China. My father had to start a business association. He was very friendly to us, and we greatly valued the friendship. Unfortunately after we left my father was in communication with Mr. Cheng. They were going to start an import-export business together, but Mr. Cheng one day sent a letter saying: 'Please immediately stop writing letters to me because there will be a communist government and that is not good'. We never found out what happened to Mr. Cheng. We feared that he may have been killed because he worked for an American company. We suspect he may have been killed by the communists there.

- *Did you like the idea that there was already a fairly large Jewish community in Shanghai?*

Oh yes, of course. If there had been nobody else in Shanghai they would have been totally lost. The Shanghai Jewish community was very unique. It was a community that existed for only ten years. It started from nothing and then was nothing but in the interim period, the

community of twenty thousand people sustained itself. There were shops, there were barbers' shops, there were restaurants, there were nightclubs and newspapers. Everything was there. Some people were better than others, and some people had nothing, but it was a community that existed pretty much by itself. In Shanghai, it was like a foreign intertie there. It is amazing. You can call it an enclave when the Japanese isolated it during the war. After the war was over, everyone was free. You could do what you want. Some call it a ghetto, but a ghetto has a negative perception, so I think enclave is a better word.

- *What did the very different Jewish groups in Shanghai have in common, and how did their commonalities provide a foundation for the bond they created?*

The only thing they had in common was that they spoke German and were Jewish and were therefore subjected to the 1935 Nuremberg Race Laws that stipulated that Jews legally belonged to a separate race inferior to the Aryan race, and therefore lost certain rights such as their jobs, unemployment compensation, and were subject to a variety of possible legal proceedings such as arbitrary arrests, imprisonment and severe mistreatment by police for arbitrary and unfounded allegations. Many arrested Jews (my father knew some who were his friends) died because of internal injuries received during police detention. They were not allowed to reveal the source of their injuries to anyone. Although most of the Jewish refugees in Shanghai were not particularly religious, I clearly remember that for the holiest annual Jewish religious day of Yom Kippur (the day of atonement for sins committed either knowingly or non-knowingly, individually or collectively) the Shanghai synagogue was totally packed, shoulder-to-shoulder, men separated from women worshipers, in a deeply emotional and religious atmosphere that I, as a child, could not help but notice. That memory has stayed with me to this day and has played a role in my own religious convictions and observances. In answer to your question on commonalities, I should add that the entire Jewish community felt a deep sense of despair as stateless refugees (they lost their German citizenship), now being totally vulnerable and helpless, at the mercy of whatever government decrees or directives that were issued. There were rumours (later proven correct) that high ranking Nazi officials were in Shanghai, intent on totally separating the Jews in a concentration camp just as was the case in Europe. This feeling of total vulnerability and helplessness, coupled by a history of almost two thousand years of antisemitism in Europe, led many in the Jewish community to realize that a Jewish national homeland was the only way that the Jewish People can historically survive. The rebirth of the State of Israel in western Palestine in 1948 finally provided that opportunity, and many of the stateless Shanghai refugees, including some of my relatives, ended up there. The reborn State of Israel, after nearly two thousand years of exile after the Roman destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, is in my opinion, one of the

great miracles of our time, and provides a common thread in the minds of most Holocaust survivors and escapees, including of course, the surviving Shanghai Jewish community.

Daily life in Shanghai questions

- *What did you and your family do for a social life?*

There were friends and my father had a sister, and my mother had her mother there. I think socially, there was no problem. People lived together and get along very well. For myself, I had a few friends, we used to play at school. I never liked school; I was a very poor student at that time. When I was little, I had a girlfriend, she ended up years later in Israel. But I will say that socially, there was a fairly normal existence, because we were separate from the Chinese, with one exception my father had, he had nothing to do with the Chinese community. We were living in the community not physically, but socially separated. My parents only had one Chinese friend. During the war, my parents actually had some Japanese friends. In Japanese occupation, my mother was a dressmaker. She repaired dresses for the Japanese ladies, and they were all friendly and very nice. They did not treat the Chinese so well, but they treat the Jewish community very well. I think socially it was not a disaster.

- *Can you say that you had a relatively good childhood in Shanghai?*

Since I was a child, I did not fully understand the vulnerability under which we lived. I attended school (where classes were taught in English and some in Hebrew), had friends with whom I played as kids do, and really did not know the difference between how we lived and how others lived elsewhere. I was used to the weekly community shower (not having water in our house) and the smelly toilet (there was no sewer system in Hongkew) that was emptied every morning by a street vendor who always smoked a small cigarette butt that he probably picked up on the street. I also remember there being rats in the house, and I had intestinal worms and a variety of infectious diseases that afflicted the entire community. It was common to see discarded dead Chinese babies in the street gutters. But all those things just seemed natural at the time. My parents bought boiled water from street vendors. During the allied bombing raids near the end of the war I crawled into bed with my grandmother (who lived with us), hoping that she could protect me. After the war was over, I remember wanting nothing more than to leave Shanghai as soon as possible. We were taught never to engage in any confrontation with Chinese people – to run away if necessary. I lost part of a tooth when a Chinese kid threw a rock at me. The Chinese mostly hated us because we were white, not because we were Jewish. We enjoyed the presence of American soldiers after the war and saw them as our saviours. They treated us like kings, let us watch movies in the building across the street that they occupied (formerly housed Japanese troops during the war), gave us candy and even let us drink beer. When they took us to the Chinese movie theatre, we urged them to

stand up when they played the Chinese national anthem as everyone was required to do, but they told us we did not have to stand up and should remain seated. All in all, I consider having a reasonably normal childhood but always waiting for the day that we could leave Shanghai and settle in a more pleasant and friendly environment.

- *Did you also learn some Japanese?*

A few Japanese words, but more Chinese. My parents had a Chinese boy who helped them in their store.

- *Did you go to a Jewish school? If so, how well was the education level, and what were the differences with Europe? Which language did you speak?*

I went to the Kadoorie school. They changed the name of the Kadoorie school later to SJAS (Shanghai Jewish Association School), because the Japanese did not like Kadoorie. We spoke German at home but in school, all the classes were thought in English. So, I became bilingual since I spoke German with my parents at home and English in school. My parents also studied English because they knew there was no future in Germany. So, we all became reasonably proficient in English. I remember when we came into this country in 1947, I spoke fluent English but with a very strong German accent, but eventually, that disappeared.

- *How does the spread of war, like Japan's invasion of China, create added danger and uncertainty for Jewish refugees?*

War creates uncertainty and danger for everyone. This is especially true for Jews who live in societies where there is a certain amount of latent antisemitism because of their minority status, and even more so when they are stateless as we were in Shanghai. Stateless refugees have no homeland to return to. Their lives are at the total mercy of countries willing to admit them which, during the war and even after the war, were far and few between.

- *Did you have any fears and uncertainties during your time in Shanghai?*

I remember that there was an American bombing incidentally, in the Jewish area. I remember a lot of dead people. After a few days, you could smell the death. I remember the fear we had when the Americans bombed. We wanted the Americans to win the war, but we didn't like it when they bombed us. I remember being with my mother. We stayed in the basement of the Shanghai jail. It was secure. We run into the shelter. I remember calling my mother to run faster. She could not run as fast as I could run.

- *Was there any difference with the way you lived and the other pre-existing group of Jews in Shanghai?*

There were no pre-existing groups in Shanghai. As far as I know, there were the Iraqi Jews. They were fairly well-off. We did not mix with them at all. Europeans, mostly from Germany and Austria, stocked together pretty much, very isolated. There was no connection with the Iraqi Jews other than the beneficial help they provided to us.

- *How quickly did your family become integrated into Shanghai? Did your family want to adapt your life to your new environment?*

By necessity. They were in the same position as everyone else in the Jewish community. The difference in culture and facility must have been very great for them. I was a kid, but I think it was very hard for them, but it was better than what they left behind. That is how life is. The living conditions were very difficult. There was no water in the house we lived in. Diseases were widespread. I remember I was sick most of the time. So, life was difficult. There were rats in the house we lived in. There were mosquitoes in the summer because the climate in Shanghai is very bad but nevertheless, it could be worse.

Chinese society was different. We grew up in the poorest part of town, but it was very common to see Chinese people begging down to pick a little cigarette bar. The poor people picked it up and smoked it. It was very common to see dead Chinese babies. I got so used to it that it didn't bother me anymore.

- *Were your parents able to practice the same occupation as in Europe? If not, what kind of occupation did your parents do in Shanghai and how did they get a job?*

They did not really get a job. They opened their own store. The first year or so, we helped with the house the Japanese had bombed to fix it up and rent it out and that went on for a couple of years and then there was terrible inflation in Shanghai. The tenants in the house, almost all Jewish by the way, were able to pay the rent. He was forced to liquidate to sell the house. He sold it to a Japanese. After that, we went into the house. There was no water and so on and so forth. We lived there and on the first floor, they opened the store. My mother was a dressmaker and after the war, it became a big building that is there to this day. When the Japanese surrendered in 1945, the Americans joined in. Across the street, a large building full of American soldiers were coming and going back to the United States. My parents had the brilliant idea of converting the dressmaking store into a souvenir shop. My father walked everywhere in Shanghai and bought the old Japanese things they left behind and sold it to the Americans. So, by the time my parents came to the United States, they had enough money to live on their own trip. They did not had welfare. That is how they made their living with the little store.

- *What do you remember about the American troops?*

I remember when the Americans came, they treated us like kings. They invited us into the building across the street and showed us movies and they gave us beer and candy. I remember seeing movies and I could not understand why all the soldiers whistled wherever there was a woman that showed up in a movie. I said: 'Why are they whistling?'

I think the best time in Shanghai was when the Americans came. The American soldiers invited us to a movie, and I sat there and in the beginning of the movie I had to stand up because they played the Chinese national song and showed a picture of Chiang Kai-shek. I stood up and a soldier next to me said: 'Sit down.' I said: 'No, you have to stand.' He said: 'You don't have to stand, you can sit.' So, I sat there and thought 'we were beaten up' but it worked out.

I remember once the navy soldiers invited us to the ship that was in the Shanghai harbour, and we had ice cream for the first time in our life. That was very special. Those are little moments that you think about. The hardships in Shanghai in the harbour, the American, British, and some French, that was like a gift from heaven. It showed that the war was over, and we finally passed the difficulty.

Identity question

- *How did religion serve as an anchor in turbulent times?*

Ethnically we were all Jewish, religious practice to this day. You had some people who were very orthodox, you had people in between, and you had people that are not at all religious. But there is no doubt that the religion brought us together. Jews celebrated Shabbat. Most people did not do that in Shanghai; they were too concentrated on survival. But for the high holidays, young people went to the synagogue. I remember being in the synagogue and I must have been, I do not know, seven, eight, nine years old. Men were separated from women, but I remember the strong religious atmosphere that existed there, drawn together by the religious beliefs we had.

Life after Shanghai questions

- *When you first started going to school in the United States, did you fit in really well with the other children or did you have a hard time at first?*

I had no problems. I did speak English. I did not feel at all uncomfortable. The first years I was a poor student but after that, I tried. I felt very easy to assimilate into American schools in Salt Lake City. The majority of the population was born there, and they welcomed us. I had no trouble at school. My cousin also ended up in Salt Lake City and felt the same way. She ended up moving to Israel in about 1956. I think I benefitted a lot from the school in Salt Lake City.

- *When and why did you leave Shanghai?*

Shanghai was not a very pleasant place. It was a place of survival. There was no Jewish community left there. Although I understand that there were one or two Jews who ended up there. I think that there was one Jewish guy who ended up in the communist army. I did not like Shanghai, I hated it. It was a very tough existence, so everyone wanted to get out almost anywhere in the world. I was in Israel for a group; three times I went there. The times I was

there, there were guys from the United States, but there was a reasonably good group from Australia. So, I know a lot of Jews ended up in Australia after Shanghai. Jews that went back to Germany were very few. My father would never go back to Germany.

- *What organization helped your family arrive in the United States?*

This was the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which functions to this day. They helped not only Jewish communities but worldwide. The IAS (International Aid Services) was also definitely very helpful. When we came to Salt Lake City, the Jewish community that welcomed us gave us a house and after that, my parents got a job.

After the war, the American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee came in and provided cook passes for people. My father took a course on how to learn to drive a car. He took a course on technology. He took classes like that to prepare them for leaving Shanghai. Everyone knew that after the war, there was no future. It was a mad struggle to get out of Shanghai and in the beginning, it was difficult. My parents applied everywhere. They applied to Australia, Canada, and South America. They could not go to Palestine at that time. It was very hard to get out of Shanghai.

- *Are you still friends with the friends you made in Shanghai?*

I never had any friends from Shanghai that I maintain. I know a few people from Shanghai. There is a group of Shanghailanders, but I am not part of that. It is just a separate part of my life.

- *How much do you think Shanghai has changed?*

It is unbelievable. We lived in Hongkew and across the river was a big farmland. We occasionally took a boat to the white pool river and had picnics. So, Shanghai changed enormously with the exception of the Hongkew area. I never have been back to Shanghai, but I have friends who went there. I told my friends to take a picture of the house. Everything was still there, nothing changed. When we were there, there were several million people, it was terribly crowded. The change is just enormous.

- *Do you feel fully American?*

Yes, I do. I became a citizen and feel very engaged in the American community. We were also active in the Jewish community. My wife was born here. I never thought about my passport. My parents, upon settling down in Salt Lake City, decided to change their last name from the German-sounding name "Lindenstrauss" to the less German and easier-to-pronounce name "Linden".

- *The Holocaust is probably one of the most analyzed chapters in recent history. Why do you think that this specific part of Shanghai has been pretty much ignored by the mainstream?*

When people ask me if I consider myself to be a Holocaust survivor I say "No, I am a Holocaust escapee." The Holocaust survivors are those few who either miraculously survived the death

camps or were hidden by Europeans who felt sympathy for their plight. We were lucky enough to have been able to escape from Europe to a land devoid of antisemitism, where for a short period of time, no entry visa was required due to the temporary Japanese occupation. Had there been no Japanese occupation of Shanghai, it is doubtful that a Chinese government would have permitted so many Jewish refugees to settle there under such crowded and unsanitary conditions, especially after the mistreatment that the Chinese people had to endure under the European commercial exploitation. Had the Germans been allowed to set up a concentration camp by the Japanese authorities as they wanted to do, we would all have been either Holocaust victims or Holocaust survivors.

- *In your view, what is the importance of remembering this part of history?*

You cannot forget your past. In general, we still try our children to know about Jewish heritage. I considered my heritage to be Jewish, not German. I consider myself an American Jew. That is my heritage in Salt Lake City. Although I understand from my friends that I have some German traits. In Israel, they call a German Jew a 'Yekke'. A Yekke is a German Jew who is well-organized and who is thrifty. I said: 'Yeah I am definitely a Yekke'. My father was that way and for that reason, I have a lot of information about Shanghai and Germany. When I retired, I am still working by the way. I like working. I am lucky, I am in a technical area. I hope to keep on working. My grandchildren say: 'When are you going to retire?', I say: 'When I get older'. They all laugh. I was among the generation that was very lucky to survive. One of our sons married a girl from Israel. She is also Jewish. Her father is a Holocaust survivor of Auschwitz. He has the number written on his arm. He now turned ninety-five. He has some stories to tell too. I cannot consider myself a Holocaust survivor. He is a Holocaust survivor. I consider myself a Holocaust escapee. We were very lucky.

- *In your opinion, what lessons do the Shanghai Jews' experiences offer for situations involving refugees today?*

Unfortunately, there are so many refugees in the world now. Jewish refugees fortunately are no longer a problem because there is a state, Israel, which accepts Jews, but many countries are not so lucky. Most of the Jews in Israel or not even Europe, are from Africa, Ethiopia, and so on. The United States fortunately has a policy of accepting refugees. Every country has the right-wing elements that do not want refugees in a way that kept us out of the United States for a long period of time. Even in Europe, you have refugees now coming from the Middle East and from Africa. Many Europeans do not like it and also in the United States you have groups of people who are against that. To me, the refugees are an amazing resource. People want to leave a place only if they are motivated. Motivation creates wealth for a country. I know that the Jews in the US worked very hard. The same is true for the Chinese in the US and the people

from Mexico who come to the US. They work so hard. That is why the Jewish organisation support the refugees, even if they are not Jewish.

- *What do you believe we can do to fight antisemitism today?*

Antisemitism only exists in Christian and Muslim communities. You see it in the Far East. You do not see it in China, you do not see it in Africa, except for Muslim influence. So, I see a religious phenomenon that, in my opinion, will never go away. Some of the basic tendencies in Christianity and in Islam are that unless you belong to their religion, you will not go to heaven, etc. Although antisemitism is not terribly widespread, I certainly do not feel uncomfortable in the United States at all. But it may not go away. We have been well welcoming Syrian refugees; refugees that have learned to hate Jews. We welcomed them and helped them. We gave them money, we collect food. We know we are doing the right thing. I think we probably always have to live with antisemitism. It is not so widespread that it presents any problems and I kind of feel that it will never again be such a problem as in the past. I do not think something like the Holocaust will happen ever again for Jewish people.

- *Are there any other parts of this history that are not raised that could be of interest?*

There are a lot of interesting things. Someday I am going to write it down. I don't know if I have left out anything. My father was interviewed in Salt Lake City by a society. He died in 1997, but it was around five years before he died. I was a child in Shanghai, but I guess adults are not alive anymore.

- *What message would you like to leave to people who will read this interview?*

I think gratefulness for having survived the Holocaust. Shanghai was a refuge. So, I was grateful to Shanghai for being available and the Chinese people for having putting up with us. We were foreigners who made an entrance, but they put up with us. They could have killed us, but they didn't. And the Japanese could have killed us, but they didn't. I am very grateful for all of that. For me, it was a miracle from heaven that happened.

I know that growing up in Shanghai is a quite unique experience. I am grateful for having saved our lives. There is no doubt about that. I always have a great positive feeling about the Chinese people in general. I have many little memories of Shanghai: some good, some not so good. There are a lot of things that went on in Shanghai that people do not know about. It is a unique experience and I think it shapes my life a lot. I think that the fact that we escaped from the disaster of the Holocaust, Shanghai provided us with that opportunity. I always have been grateful for that.

Additional information:

After the war, the German border was moved. The Germans were moved out and the Polish moved in. And the same for Poland: Russia took over Poland.

My father rebuilt the whole house with Chinese labour. There is a picture of the workers who worked there to restore the house.

There was a terrible typhon of the 14th of July in 1943 and all the streets were flooded.

The interview of my father by the Utah Historical Society in 1995, when he was one hundred years of age.

Appendix II: Interview Mrs. Abrams

Date: approximately 11/09/2022

I got Mrs. Abrams email address from Ms. Mann and she told me that Mrs. Silberberg can maybe help me with my research on Shanghai. She told me Mrs. Silberberg attended one of the Judaica Thematic Society talks on Shanghai and explained that Mrs. Silberberg had been a child when her family went there, and she went to one of the Jewish schools. Mrs. Mann knew Mrs. Silberberg has appeared in the PBS program on the subject too, and she was sure Mrs. Silberberg would not mind communicating with me. Before the interview, she told me the following information:

I lived in Shanghai for 8 years from 1939 till 1947 and I went to a Jewish school there. As far as friendships with the Chinese, I cannot address that. I had no Chinese friends, but some Jews did. I lived in a very poor section of Shanghai, where most immigrants lived. The Chinese were very gracious and accepted us in their midst, though they themselves lived in poverty. Among the Jewish Community in general there is not much interest in the plight of the about 18000 immigrants who spent the war years in Shanghai. The people who lived there are mostly gone. very few of us are left.

Personal information questions

- *First of all, do you object if I mention your name in my thesis? Or would you prefer that I process your answers anonymously?*

I would prefer if you would process the answers anonymously.

- *Would you like to read the results of my research? If so, I will be happy to send you a copy of my thesis.*

Yes, I would like to read a copy of your thesis.

- *What is your full name?*

My name is Helga Silberberg.

- *When and where were you born?*

I was born in Berlin, Germany, in November 1932.

- *Could you tell me about yourself and describe your background in brief?*

I left Germany with my parents in April 1939 by ship to Shanghai China. I lived in Shanghai till 1947 and went to a British school there. In 1947 I left Shanghai with my parents for La Paz, Bolivia. I lived in La Paz till 1971. I got married in La Paz in 1952 and both my daughter and my son were born in La Paz. In 1971 my husband and children immigrated to the United States. We settled in San Francisco, Ca, where I reside now.

- *Where were your parents born?*
My parents were both born in Germany. My parents met in Berlin and got married in Nov. 1931.
- *Can you tell me a little bit about your family?*
My father was one of nine children. Four of his siblings were murdered in the Holocaust, four survived away from Europe and one died at a young age of natural causes. My mother had one sister. Her parents, sister with husband and daughter were murdered in the Holocaust.
- *How long did you live in Berlin?*
I lived in Berlin till I was 6 years old.
- *What did your father do for a living?*
My father owned a furniture store in Berlin.
- *Did your mother ever hold a job?*
My mother did not work while in Germany, but worked as a seamstress in Shanghai, Bolivia, and the U.S.A.
- *What kind of school did you go in Berlin?*
I attended a Jewish Kindergarten in Berlin, I did not attend school in Berlin, because you had to be 6 years old to attend school.
- *Did the First World War have a major impact on your family?*
My father was a soldier in the German army in World War I. This was long before I was born so I do not know what impact the war had on my family.
- *What were the consequences for your family when Hitler became chancellor of Germany?*
When Hitler became chancellor in Germany, life for Jews got very difficult: non-Jews were not allowed to shop in Jewish stores, Jews and non-jews were not allowed to get married. Jews were not allowed to employ non-Jews. Jewish children were no longer allowed to attend public schools.
- *Did you have to wear the yellow star of David to mark that you were a Jew?*
I did not wear a yellow star in Germany. That law came into effect after I had left.
- *Were your mother and father both Jewish?*
My parents were both Jews, observant but not orthodox.
- *Did you study and are you happy with your choice of study?*
My education was eight years of school in Shanghai, that is all. There was no choice of study. I had to start working at age fifteen and never stopped till I retired as Bank Manager at the age of sixty-three.
- *Are you or were you married?*
I was married, my husband passed away in 2006.

Reason for departure questions

- *What reasons did your parents have for leaving Germany? Did your parents first consider other places? If so, which places?*

The reason for my parents leaving Germany was that they realized that life Germany for Jews was dangerous. Since 1933 when Hitler came to power more and more laws were implemented against Jews. They considered other countries to immigrate to but at the time all doors were closed for Jews fleeing Germany. The only possibility was Shanghai or Bolivia. My father decided on Shanghai because it was a large metropolitan city, and his reasoning was that it would be easier to make a living there.

- *Was Kristallnacht the last straw for your parents to leave Germany for Shanghai?*

Yes, Kristallnacht was the last straw for their decision.

- *Were there any other acquaintances of your family living in Germany who also made the decision to flee to Shanghai?*

One of my father's brothers with his wife and three sons also went to Shanghai.

- *What type of people dared to take this step?*

Many people who decided to take this very courageous step of leaving Germany into the unknown, were people who saw the storm clouds gathering. Many people who stayed did not believe that something like the Holocaust would happen. They had lived in Germany all their lives and served in the German army in World War One.

- *Shanghai had relaxed immigration policies. Why did "only" 20,000 Jewish people make it to Shanghai? Was it fear of living in an unknown country?*

The reason that only 20,000 people went to Shanghai were several. Some people did not have the money for the fare, others were afraid of the unknown and others were so well off in Germany, they did not want to leave everything behind and start all over in a strange country, especially the elderly.

- *What is it like to leave everything behind as a six-year-old girl? And for your parents?*

In those days, children were not included in the political problems, therefore for a 6 years old it was an adventure. For the adults, it was traumatizing. They left everything behind and went into the unknown. People were only allowed to take certain things with them. When packing up their belongings, a German SS man was in the house watching what was packed. Household items, furniture and clothes were allowed, but no valuables. The case was then sealed and sent to the railroad station.

- *Can you tell me about the voyage from Europe to Shanghai? (for instance: how long did it take, what were the circumstances etc.)*

My parents and I left Berlin by train for Italy, where we boarded an Italian ship, which took us through the Suez Canal to Shanghai. I am not sure, but the trip took most probably about two weeks. We made many stops along the way. The trip on the “Conto Rosso” was fun for me but must have been very difficult for my parents, who did not know what awaited them at the end of the journey. The ship was beautiful, the cabins were very nice and the food excellent.

Shanghai impression questions

- *What was your expectation of Shanghai before you fled and was it correct on arrival?*

I had no conception of Shanghai and did not know what to expect.

- *How would you describe earlier Shanghai?*

At the time Shanghai had two large Jewish communities. One was the Sephardic community, mostly Jews from Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries and the other were Jews from Russia. Both communities were very helpful to the fleeing European refugees.

- *How were the first days of arrival in Shanghai?*

When we arrived the passengers were put on trucks and taken to several refugee camps which had been prepared by the Jewish Organizations.

- *Have you always lived in one place in Shanghai? Where?*

When we arrived, my parents were able to find a small apartment, consisting of two rooms and a community bathroom, but a few years later we had to move into one of the many refugee camps. There we lived in a room with another eleven people.

- *Why do you think Shanghai as a city was able to offer this shelter, despite having its own problems during these years, with civil war and foreign concessions?*

The reason we had easy access to Shanghai. It was an open city at the time, and anybody could come and go as destruction due to the Japanese occupation. The Chinese were very poor in the part of town where we lived, but they accepted us in their midst. As far as I know, no refugee was ever harmed by a Chinese. The part of town was called Hongkew. The better parts of Shanghai were the French Concession and the English Settlement. When the Japanese declared a part of Shanghai as the Ghetto, it was in Hongkew. This happened after Pearl Harbour, and at the time all Jewish refugees who had arrived after 1938 had to move into this designated area.

- *Do you believe that it was Shanghai which had saved your life?*

Yes, Shanghai definitely saved my life, and it was a life-time experience.

Friendship questions

- *Did you have Chinese friends, or did you mainly have contact with refugee children?*

I had no Chinese friends. My contact was only with refugee children.

- *How easy was it to make friends in Shanghai? For example, how did you deal with the language barrier of the local population?*

Making friends was easy. Most of us were in the same boat, with the same daily problems. The friendships made lasted a lifetime. After nearly 80 years, I am still in touch with three friends from school. The immigrants amongst themselves spoke German and we children learned English in school. Though we lived amongst the Chinese population, we did not mingle with them. They were much better at learning German and English, than we were at learning Chinese.

- *Were the Chinese friendly for you? Did they welcome you in?*

The Chinese were friendly and usually very respectful.

- *Did you receive a lot of help on arrival in Shanghai and if so from whom? What kinds of organizations existed?*

Lots of help was received from the Sephardic Community as well as from multiple Jewish Organizations, like The Joint Distribution Committee, HIAS and others.

- *How much help have you received from the Joint Distribution Committee?*

They supplied lodging and food. A school was built just for the immigrant children by an Iraqi Jew, Sir Horace Kadoorie. The school started with kindergarten and ended with High School. It was the most important institution for us children.

- *Did you or your parents have friends with the pre-existing groups of Jews in Shanghai (such as the Sephardi or Russian Jews)?*

There was not much interaction between the different Jewish /Communities, though my cousin married a Russian Jewish girl, and many of our teachers in school were Russians. The common language was English.

- *How do you think the pre-existing groups of Jews perceived the refugees from Europe?*

The three most prominent Jewish Sephardic families were the Sassoons, The Kadoories and the Hardoons. they were all philanthropists, and well established in Shanghai for a long time.

- *What did the very different Jewish groups in Shanghai have in common, and how did their commonalities provide a foundation for the bond they created?*

The common bond was we were all Jews. There were several Jewish Youth Groups, including Jewish Boy Scouts and Jewish Girl Guides.

- *Were there many actions against Jews in Shanghai?*

The only action against the Jews who had arrived in Shanghai after 1938, was that they had to move into the Ghetto, which was a part of Shanghai consisting of maybe thirty city blocks. We were not allowed to leave this area unless we received a special permit from the Japanese authorities to do so.

Daily life in Shanghai questions

- *How was it to become stateless refugees in Shanghai?*

We were Stateless Refugees because the Nazi Government revoked the German Citizenship to all Jews.

- *What was your life like in Shanghai? How did the war impact you there?*

Life in Shanghai was very primitive. Cooking on wood stoves, no proper toilette facilities and in the camps, many people in one room. People only had their beds and blankets around the for privacy. Sometimes a tiny table and maybe a chair or two. Food was served from soup kitchens and the quality left a lot to be desired. Fact is that a few people starved to death, but mostly the food was just enough to keep them going.

- *How did your family find a place socially, culturally, and economically in your new locales?*

People learned to make do with what they had. Clothes had to last a long time. Children who outgrew their cloths, wore hand-me-downs.

- *Did you go to a Jewish school? If so, how well was the education level, and what were the differences with Europe? Which language did you speak?*

The teaching language in school was English. Other language taught were Japanese (mandatory due to the Japanese occupation), French and Hebrew. The school system was based on the British School System

- *How quickly did you become integrated into Shanghai? Did you want to adapt your life to the new environment?*

Shanghai was considered by the immigrants as a place to save their lives and hardly anyone considered to stay there.

- *Were your parents able to practice the same occupation as in Berlin? If not, what kind of occupation did your parents have in Shanghai and how they get a job?*

Very few people could perform their professions from Germany. There was no competing with the Chinese labourer who worked all day for a bowl of rice. Doctors worked in their profession, but they were not familiar with the tropic diseases. My father produced and installed screen doors and windows, but once the ghetto was established there were no more customers for that. My mother who had been a housewife in Germany, started working as a seamstress, just to make a little money. Her customers were other immigrants.

- *How was it to learn to live on the streets?*
No Jews lived on the streets of /Shanghai. The organizations made sure that everyone was housed, worst of all in one of the 5 or 6 camps.
- *What do you think is the big contrast between the ghettos in Europe and the Shanghai ghetto?*
The big contrast between the ghettos in Europe and Shanghai, was the fact that the ghetto in Shanghai was a hardship, but nobody feared for their life, while in Europe the ghettos were one step away from the death camps, with millions of people killed. Though the Japanese allied with the Germans, they did not follow the German idea of Genocide.

Identity questions

- *How did religion serve as an anchor in turbulent times?*
Religion was a factor, but it did not take precedence over the everyday struggle for food and other necessities.
- *Did you still celebrate Shabbat or Bar Mitswa? Were there any services?*
We celebrated Shabbat as well as all the Jewish Holidays to the best of our ability. We had Barmitzwahs, but no Batmitzwahs, because at the time it was not customary for girls to have a Batmitzwah.
- *What role did racial identity play in Jews' experiences in Shanghai?*
To the Chinese we were just foreigners, they did not care about our religion.
- *How do you feel if you are marginalized and if you do not have a government to protect you?*
When you are marginalized and do not belong to any country, you feel that you do not belong anywhere. This is the reason why Israel, which was founded in 1948, is so important to Jews in the whole world.

Life after Shanghai questions

- *What happened after the war ended? When did you leave Shanghai? What was the process like of leaving Shanghai?*
When the war ended, the news from Europe was devastating. Everybody tried to find family members who had survived the Holocaust and tried to reunite with them. I left Shanghai in June 1947 by ship to San Francisco. The United States had a quota system in place and allowed only some people to immigrate to the States. We were only able to obtain a transit visa to the US. My father's sister and her family were able to get the necessary permission for us to come to Bolivia.

- *Why did you go to Bolivia instead of the United States or Australia? How long did you stay there?*

I stayed in Bolivia for 23 years. The beginning was difficult. I was 15 years old, did not know Spanish and had to work, because my father was ill, and we needed money to live on.

- *How was your treatment on the ship to Bolivia?*

The ship from Shanghai to San Francisco, was an American troop transporter, with very few amenities. From San Francisco to Bolivia, we flew with different airlines. At that time, it took 3 days to get there.

- *What kind of work did your parents have? Did they easily get a job?*

When we arrived, my father was too ill to work. My mother worked as a seamstress and I started working as a babysitter, later as a salesgirl and then as a secretary.

- *What kind of school did you go to? When you first started going to school in Bolivia, did you fit in really well with the other children or did you have a hard time at first?*

I did not go to school in Bolivia, just learned Spanish by talking and by necessity.

- *Why did you go to the United States?*

We left Bolivia because the political situation in that country has always been very unstable. I left Bolivia in 1971 with my husband and two children. By that time, we owned a store and a house in Bolivia. We sold the house and the store and immigrated to the United States on our own, without any bodies help. We came to the United States so that our children would have more opportunities in their life than Bolivia had to offer.

- *Do you still meet up with your friends from Shanghai?*

I am still in touch with three former school friends from Shanghai.

- *The Holocaust is probably one of the most analysed chapters in recent history. Why do you think that this specific part of Shanghai has been pretty much ignored by the mainstream?*

I think the reason that the Shanghai experience did not get so much attention, is that it were only about 20.000 people, and though the stay there was not very pleasant it was nothing compared to what happened in Europe.

- *What do you believe we can do to fight antisemitism today?*

Antisemitism has been around since the beginning of time. I wish I knew how to fight it.

- *What message would you like to leave to people who will read this interview?*

All I can say is to be always alert, when it raises its ugly head, and do not believe that you can hide from it. Be a proud Jew and give your full allegiance to Israel no matter where in the world you live.

Appendix III: Interview Mr. Nowomiast

Date: 14/09/2022

Mr. Newton came across my Facebook post on a Facebook group and send me an e-mail. Before the interview, he told me the following information:

I was born in Shanghai in 1944...we left in 1949. I am most able and willing to be interviewed by you.....I have been previously interviewed by a well-known historian of this period....and I have totally enjoyed that experience. My parents were fortunate refugees from Poland who lived nine years in Shanghai and had told me everything about those years during which I was born. I can share everything with you via phone. Please let me know a few good dates and times for a phone call....and I'll then send you my cell number....after 12 noon USA time please.....most any day is available....I am retired and sleep late and am mostly at home 90% of the time.

After the interview, Mr. Newton wrote me an e-mail:

Dear Pauline:

It was my pleasure talking to you today....and helping you in some way with your interest and thesis about Shanghai.

I am thrilled that there are young people like you who desire to serve a meaningful purpose by illuminating a part of history heretofore unknown by most of the world.

I could also feel (even through the telephone) that you have a good heart and empathy for the human condition.....Please be proud of that and it will.

serve you well in all you do in life.

If I can help you in any other way, please free to contact me anytime.

Best wishes for your success in everything you undertake, professionally and personally.

Mark

And another e-mail:

Thanks for your nice note.

My conversation with you today was truly talking as if we have been old friends for many years....I really love it like that and I am sure that kindred spirits, like we, gravitate toward one another seamlessly and with great joy.....and with instant love.

The Vibe is there and it runs deeply and is felt strongly.

I will send you Kevin's story as soon as I can....today or tomorrow or sometime very soon....and then I so much look forward to reading your words when you publish your thesis and other stories.

Please be well.....live life to the max.....and never postpone anything that may bring joy to yourself and others.....YOLO!

Best regards,

Marco (the name that friends have always called me)

Personal information questions

- *Do you object if I mention your name in my thesis? Or would you prefer that to stay anonymous?*

Please feel free to use my real name Mark Nowomiast.

- *Would you like to read the results of my research? If so, I will be happy to send you a copy of my thesis.*

Yes, I so much look forward to reading your words when you publish your thesis and other stories.

- *May I ask what your full name is?*

My original last name was "Nowomiast", which if you translate it from Polish means "New Town", which is why we changed the name when we became citizens of America.

- *When and where were you born?*

I was born in 1944 in Shanghai, not a place to give birth to a child at that time but my parents have always wanted to have a child, so they have one.

- *When and where were your parents born?*

My father was born in Warsaw, my mother was born in Pinsk. She was born in 1907. My father was born in 1904. They were born into very wealthy families.

- *Can you tell me something about your family?*

I had two sets of parents and that proved to be valuable later in my life when I lived with my aunt and uncle in Brazil for a while and adapted to a different culture. They were successful. I passed that on to my children. I always remark to people that I was lucky, so fortunate, I was the only child of two sets of parents. My aunt and uncle did not have any children.

- *How did your parents meet each other?*

The two families knew each other so they arranged a marriage.

- *What kind of work did your father do?*

My parents lived very well in Warsaw. My father had a motorcycle business and was more or less a happy rich man.

- *What were the biggest consequences of the German invasion of Poland in 1939 for your parents?*

My parents lived very well until the war broke out in 1939. Hitler attacked Warsaw on September 7, 1939.

- *Do you have children?*

I have two daughters, much older than you. One is forty and the other is thirty-six. They live an hour away and have two boys. I see them less than I could because I cannot go to

them, we do not see each other as often as we would like. But they have their own lives and both live successfully. One is a teacher, and one is a magazine editor. The teacher married another teacher, and the magazine editor married a sergeant adopter. They both live well. I am proud of them and happy for them.

Reason for departure questions

- *What were the most important reasons your parents have to leave Poland? Did your parents consider other places other than Shanghai? If so, which places?*

My parents left on September 1, 1939. My father knew what was coming. Lithuania was too dangerous. My parents were lucky, and they went through the Trans-Siberian railroad all the way to Kobe, Japan. The Japanese did not want anyone of these refugees. They asked: 'What are you doing here?' Because they did not know that the ambassador left Lithuania, who gave all these visas. It was unknown to the Japanese government. Japan was only two or three days. My mother said that they would put them in jail. She said she spent a night in jail. From Japan, they went to Shanghai, which was a free court, a free city. My parents were among the many Jews in Shanghai.

- *When was the last straw for your parents to leave Poland for Shanghai?*

My father has always said to my mother: "Don't have an argument with me because I saved your life three times." Maybe he thought quicker than most people but got out before everyone perished in Warsaw.

- *Were there any other acquaintances of your family who made the decision to flee to Shanghai?*

Everybody else was afraid. They waited for the French and British to help but they never helped. They came from late families too. They found out later. Only the four of them survived.

- *What type of people dared to take this step?*

I can tell you why they waited because in these days you had the same friends. They could live somewhere else; they would be welcomed somewhere else, or they wanted to live where they were successful and doing well and suspecting help from other countries from the German welfare. It did not happen and did not react quickly enough.

- *Can you tell me when your family went to Shanghai?*

The four of us left on September 1, 1939, and on September 7, 1939, they bombed Warsaw.

- *How did your parents prepare for the departure?*

There were so many Jewish people. My parents were educated at a high level in Bonn and since they were wealthy, they travelled a lot. My father spoke six languages fluently. The six languages were Polish, Russian, German, English, French, and Yiddish. They spoke any

of these languages. All of the Jews in Shanghai did not have any language issues and very few of us learned any Chinese. There was no need. Nobody spoke Japanese.

- *How did your parents arrange to be able to go to Shanghai? What was the process like?*

My parents were always fortunate that they had that kind of transit visa. A transit visa is something that does not exist today. You needed a visa to go to many countries. In fact, my parents had a visa to go to Curacao. They got visas to go to Curacao. But they needed an additional visa, a transit visa to get away from Lithuania, and any travel towards whatever direction. And it was the Japanese ambassador of Lithuania who transit the visas for Japan. When they were on the Trans-Siberian railroad to Japan, their final destination was on paper anyway, Curacao. The Japanese send them to Shanghai.

- *Was there much contact with the Japanese?*

The Japanese were viewed as an enemy. They were very strict and harsh with the refugees. At least the Japanese had a good sense of not caring about the German plan for exterminating all the Jews in Shanghai. The Germans wanted to create a plan, 'the final solution' so to speak, as they were doing in Europe. The Germans knew that they were 20,000 Jews living in Shanghai and so they were trying to convince the Japanese government to exterminate them, and the Japanese government did not go along with that.

- *So, you are very grateful now for the Japanese and the Chinese?*

Yes, exactly. During that time, the Japanese were very hard and cool to the Jewish refugees. They were the enemy.

- *Were your parents happy that they were in Shanghai?*

Yes, for sure. Shanghai was totally free at that time until the Japanese took over Shanghai. So, what was their plan and their hope? That was totally survival. From the plan they had to leave Warsaw to the time that they had to leave Lithuania.

- *How difficult was it to get visas?*

My parents were fortunate to receive a visa to get out from the Japanese Ambassador Chiune Sugihara.

- *Can you tell me about the journey from Europe to Shanghai? (For instance: how long did it take, what were the circumstances etc.)*

I do not know how long it took from Lithuania to Russia to Japan. That was by train and then by boat. A week, two weeks. I do not know how long it took. Everybody was relieved to go somewhere that would be safe.

Shanghai impression questions

- *What was your parents' expectation of Shanghai before they fled and was it correct on arrival?*

There was one expectation: survival. There was not anything with a matter of choice. They knew that they had to keep moving on because things in Lithuania for over a year had been untenable and awful. The Russians (the Bolsheviks) etc.,-things were not good in the situation. So just like my father knew. You had to leave.

- *Do you believe that it was Shanghai which had saved your life?*

Exactly. Shanghai saved our lives. Absolutely. The human being survives above all. I was a skinny little boy. When I came to America, I was very thin, and I was undernourished. But now I am a large fat man.

Friendship questions

- *Did you or your parents have Chinese friends?*

Fear is what I remember. What would a young boy be afraid of? The Chinese poor ripples that were begging in the streets. They could not even walk. They were just sitting in front of the building with their hands out begging, and if I was walking around, I was terrified by them. That is a memory that has lasted all these years. That was hard for a very young boy to deal with and understand.

- *Were the Chinese friendly for you and your parents? Did they welcome you in or did the Chinese want to keep you away?*

The Chinese were almost quite brothers and sisters to the Jews because they were in the same predicament. The predicament was that they were also at the bottom of the hierarchy of people. The Jews and the Chinese got along very well, with neutral respect. We helped each other.

- *Did your family receive a lot of help on arrival and if so from whom? What kinds of organizations existed?*

That was from the organizations. It was not the American government, it was the organizations of the Jewish organizations within the United States to help, not the government. So, America does not deserve the hero credit for any of that. There were no friendships with the Chinese; it was neighbourly. The Jews employed some of the Chinese to house them. My mother had a woman who lived with us, actually in a one-room apartment. She was almost like a nanny-someone who helped cook and clean and that kind of a relationship. They were the same kind of animals living in the same conditions. The relationship between the Jews and the Chinese was always positive.

- *Did you or your parents have friends with the pre-existing group of Jews in Shanghai (such as the Sephardi or Russian Jews)?*

No, there was no connection. The Jews individually came from Iraq and so on they settled there. I guess they tried to help behind the scenes by providing food and things like that, but my parents did not have a connection with any of them as most refugees did not. We did not have a direct connection with them.

Daily life in Shanghai questions

- *What did you and your family do for a social life?*

Of course, they became friends with all of the other people in the same position. They knew there was their own kind of community that they formed with people from Poland and Russia, and they were all together. There were nightclubs, there were restaurants, run by Jews, and there were newspapers. Many of our friends also came to New York City and the relationship continued.

- *How did the Shanghai ghetto look like and how did life change for the Jewish people living in the Shanghai ghetto?*

When my parents left Poland, they also left with another couple: my father's brother and his wife. So, we all stayed in the same one-room apartment. With the Chinese lady, a cat, and a son. There was no toilet; the people relieved themselves in a chamber pot. The pots were picked up by the Chinese in the middle of the night.

- *How were the living conditions in the Shanghai ghetto?*

I took training with other children from school. I remember being hungry, I remember my mother giving me anything she could.

- *Did you go to a school? Which language did you speak?*

Yes, the community was very well-formed. The Jewish people in Shanghai made the best of the situation. They created a world within a world. They had schools, shops, newspapers, and nightclubs. They managed to create a life of their own within the borders of Shanghai. I went to a German nursery school at age two and probably at age three or four. I was trilingual in German, Polish, and a little bit of English. I took training with other children from school.

- *Can you say that you had a relatively good childhood in Shanghai?*

I guess it could possibly be a relatively good childhood. I went to school, and I had friends. I had two sets of parents that took care of me.

- *How quickly did your family become integrated into Shanghai? Did your family want to adapt your life to the new environment?*

They adapted as people had to adapt. All of us lived in the same one-room. When they were in Poland, they were rich and lived in houses, and in Shanghai, they had to adapt. As I said, the keyword was “survival.” They did not have any choice.

- *Were your parents able to practice the same occupation as in Europe? If not, what kind of occupation did your parents do in Shanghai and how did they get a job?*

In Shanghai, my father tried to make as much money as he could. I do not even remember all the different things he did. Whether he was driving a truck or selling watches. He did whatever he had to do to survive. My mother used to knit, and she would be paid for each piece knitted. She was knitting slippers. I do not know whom she worked for.

- *How easy or difficult was it to leave the Shanghai ghetto to go to another part of the city?*

When Japan entered World War Two, they put all the Jews in a ghetto, in a square mile area of Shanghai. They were forced to live there. The Japanese were guards there. They only let the Jews out of the community to go to work, otherwise, they were forced to stay there. We were isolated from the rest of Shanghai because we were in a ghetto as I mentioned that the Japanese would not let them out. So, we were living our lives in that small ghetto, but everything was there: nightclubs, restaurants, newspapers, and businesses that the Jews established. That was their life. They did not visit the rest of Shanghai or explore. When the Japanese left, and then it was so different, I guess. Maybe some of the Shanghai refugees became wealthy there but not many, not any at all.

Identity questions

- *How did religion serve as an anchor in turbulent times?*

I am not a religious person today, but you raise the religion that are you being taught. My parents had not much to give me a Jewish education in Shanghai, but when we came to New York I went to Jewish schools. There was no religious celebration or ceremony in Shanghai that I know of. When my mother was in her final days, dying, I was lying down next to her and asked her: ‘Mum, do you believe in God?’ She said: ‘I did believe, I always wanted to believe, and I did believe, but after everything that happened how could anybody believe in God?’ A lot of people say: ‘Where was God during The Holocaust? How can he allow that to happen?’ And they said: ‘God was asleep’. That is why I am a non-believer; I cannot understand that. They were never religious, really. That is very interesting because the Jews are people raised the same way as the Arabs. It is a range of people. So, their religion and their people and their ceremonies are based on religious beliefs. You can be a Jew and still not believe in religion. That is just what my parents did.

Religion becomes the cultural aspect. So, if you ask about religion in our family then celebrate the culture to some of the religious events, the holidays you would celebrate, but not a deep faith, where people are praying every day, like the Hasidic Jews. There was a group of Hasidic Jews in Shanghai. Many of them lived like they always lived. They were praying every day and studied their Torah and all of that. My parents were never part of the religious principles. It was just cultural. So, we had a talk over dinner when I was a boy and that was just cultural. It was not for religion.

- *Do you commemorate your Jewish culture?*

The coincidence is that culture is based on religious practices, but not with a strong hand like the Hassidic Jews have. The strong hand of the teachings of God and the Torah and all of that. While my parents and many of the Jews would not believe in a God but in the traditions that were passed on by their parents. And many of these traditions were based on religion, whether they were believers or not.

Life after Shanghai questions

- *What happened after the war ended?*

We came to America in 1949. My aunt and uncle left in 1947 and they left for Brazil. So, they left a few years before and we left at the end of 1948.

- *What kind of educational background do you have? Did you fit in well with the other children?*

I started school early, at age five. I was very good in school and when I got to university age, I was certain to leave New York because my father in his no-wisdom days moved his family to a bad section of New York City, which is Harlem. That was a neighbourhood in New York that was not well respected. That is where the black people were concentrated. We could not afford something better. So, I grew up from the time I was seven years old in a black neighbourhood. It was a very different cultural experience that most kids will never have. And that become a culture that is part of me to this day. It was very strange, but I adapted to it, and it is part of my life, of who I am. The black people were the underdogs; they were not the favoured people and so by the time I went to university I wanted to badly go away, out of New York City, and I went to Michigan State University. All far away from New York. I was a college freshman first-year college at age sixteen. I was much too young. Being so far away from home for the first time and so I started early and skipped one grade because I was supposed to be smart. I did not have a very successful college career because socially I was a misfit. I was sixteen, I could not even get a date with a girl because the high school girls were older than I was. High school girls were eighteen, I was sixteen. The college girls were eighteen and nineteen. It was a difficult social adaption. I spent most of my career in different jobs, most administrative business jobs.

Never forgot my ability in languages and turned it into a job. So, I spoke Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, and Finnish. I speak four languages; my parents spoke six. Yiddish and Polish as well. Fortunately, people have an infinity and flair for a language, and I was fortunate to be one of those. Can you imagine a combination of languages like that?

I did Spanish in college and was proficient in that. I am retired now. But education-wise and job-wise I was the administration manager, so I was able to be a good one; a people person, I believe. I never forget my other occupation, which was theatre. I have been on 125 different stages in local theatres in Pennsylvania. Musical, comedy, and dramas. Everything; song dance, acting. I have many chapters in my life. I like to talk and tell stories. I also in America here became an actor on stage and that is what I have been doing for twenty years. I pursued that at an earlier age. I would have a more successful working career than I did. I had an administration management job which was the best to support my family. I did not enjoy it but did it to support the family. I never really got paid for theatre at all. I started in 1999. I did 125 shows. But now I cannot even climb on the stage anymore.

I adapted to America and went to school. I had my ups and downs and career supporting the family. On vacation, one time in 2007, I met a woman in Majorca. She was living and working there but she was from Finland, and I met her and could not forget her. So, when I came back home, I quit my job in America and bought a ticket to Majorca and reunited myself with the one I was in love with and then we went to Finland to get married.

- *What was the process like of leaving Shanghai?*

Everyone was delighted. Everyone knew that the Chinese Communist government was coming. Not only that, but most people also wanted to go back to their countries if they could. If they could not, they were looking at places to go and my parents were on a ship to the US, to stay in Paraguay in South America for which they had a visa. Some connections were made between my mother and them in San Francisco. They filled out papers and so on and reached their entry point to the US. So, we never left the US. We came to New York where my mother had some relatives and started our life in New York City where I became an American boy. My father had a motorcycle business, and my mother was a knitter. She supported some of the family's needs in Shanghai by knitting.

- *How long did the journey to the United States take?*

It took a month to go to San Francisco. It was an American ship. I still have the menus from the dinner, they are on my wall, along with some other items. From Shanghai to San Francisco to New York and ends up in Pennsylvania, where my daughter is living now. The boat trip was fine.

- *How much did you like being in the United States?*

The transition to the United States was easier than the transition from Poland to Shanghai. My parents were able to integrate and assimilate into the culture. I was a young boy; I learned a lot of English from the school in Shanghai. New York was a melting pot for many refugees from everywhere in the 1950s, and San Francisco too. They grew up as refugees.

- *Have you ever thought about returning to Shanghai?*

Yes. I have two daughters and they have families, and we were going to go with all of us to Shanghai, but time passed, and the families are too large now and I cannot travel anymore. But I have always wanted to go back. They have a museum in Shanghai with all the names on the wall who went there. I wish I could see.

- *Do you still have a deep affection for Shanghai?*

I always had an affinity for China. I guess it is in my blood, really, it must be. If you come to America, come, and visit and look around my little house and see all the effects of Chinese living. I still have many of these memories right here. So, you are welcome, Pauline. I knew what you meant but I also invite you to come. I have been to Amsterdam twice. That was in the sixties so I am sure I would not see the same Amsterdam.

- *How much do you think Shanghai has changed?*

Shanghai is very Westernized with McDonald's and Burger King and the things that all the big cities in the world have. Very capitalized, even with a communist government. So, I am sure it changed. I am sure that if you go to Shanghai, you will not see anything you would expect.

- *Do you feel fully American?*

I used to be proud to be American, but over the years that has changed in that, and I am not proud at all. I am just happy that I am comfortable and live in a place where I can have a lot of freedom compared to other countries. I was raised here, so I understand it and the language. I lived in Finland for a short time, and I loved that culture and so on, but it is not so hundred percent pure. There is no country that seems to me hundred percent pure. Maybe your country. I mean humanity level if they are empathic towards or only themselves. Capitalism is a very hold up/motivation for people. The wonderful thing about the Shanghai experiences is that they can show how people help and how people at that time need it, whether it was the American organizations or Jews who helped. Whatever it was, people helped instead of closing their eyes. I am now an old man of 78 years old, and I do not remember living in Shanghai. Most of my memories are made by my parents. So, I quote those stories that they told me.

- *The Holocaust is probably one of the most analysed chapters in recent history. Why do you think that this specific part of Shanghai has been pretty much ignored by the mainstream?*

That is a good question. I wish I knew the answer. I can only guess. The United States was not such a wonderful hero during World War Two to the rest of the world. The US was very political, the US refused many ships from Europe, who were trying to escape and send them back to Cuba. The Jews in Shanghai survived a lot because of the interest of various American groups, like the Bay Bridge and other books of Jews in America supporting the refugees in Shanghai. Whatever help was given to the Jews in Shanghai was given by these organizations and they were very helpful in providing food and clothing to get out of Shanghai.

- *In your view, what is the importance of remembering this part of history?*

I think the importance of remembering the Shanghai Jewish refugee history is the human spirit, the strength, and what people do to survive, but also how people help each other, out of kindness, and love. The relationship between the Chinese people and the Jewish refugees was always amicable and they were kind of partners in the same boat. And the help from American organizations. We are not always alone in order to survive; we need the help of others, and it comes from kindness. And the kindness of humans. It is about spirit and that is why people should know about it. It is the most unbelievable thing if someone will knock on your door in Utrecht tomorrow and says: 'You have to leave'. 'Where am I going?' 'Anywhere you can get to. It is no longer safe here, just leave everything and get out'. Just walking out the door they thought that they would come back. When my parents left, they never imagined that they would never come home again. No one could imagine it because we never experienced something like that. The world had not experienced a genocide like that. It was unimaginable. Just be happy that nobody is knocking on your door saying it is dangerous, you got to get out. If you still find a way to survive from being very wealthy and having everything to having nothing. That is the message: spirit, kindness, strength, and love.

- *In your opinion, what lessons do the Shanghai Jews' experiences offer for situations involving refugees today?*

Always try to help your fellow men. America can imagine it. Countries can imagine it kicked out, but the real message is to be happy that it never happens to you and if you are in the position to help somebody else, please do it. That is why I am very much interested in American emigration policies. We have a lot of emigration issues here. They do not seem to be so kind. My relatives in Sweden tell me when you go to a mall, and you look at all of the stores, the mall in Sweden, words in the windows have two languages, Swedish and Arabic. That is how much the effect or influence had on massive immigration in a country.

You have to help people when they need help, especially running away for their lives. People coming to America today, from Mexico, from countries people cannot live anymore because they even have no jobs, or they are under pressure or put in some kind of slavery and end up in some kind of death, so they escape for their survival. People want to come to America, and they say: 'Sorry you can't enter'. That is a big issue when talking about migration or emigration in the world when trying to compare it with the Shanghai Jews saving their lives to go anywhere. Feeling to emigrate to save their life.

- *What do you believe we can do to fight antisemitism today?*

Nothing. I am born in a country of the world. Hitler used the Jews as a tool to nationalize Germany to get them to be so nationalistic and Deutschland Uber Alles. We would be somebody. They are the ones in their way and so by uniting them with that. Historically, the people have always said, well when things go wrong it is the Jews pulling the strings behind the scenes, they take money for themselves and take advantage of others. It is not true. It is just like our former president Trump; he is crazy, but he tells a lie two hundred times and some people start believing that it should be true. There is nothing you can do to stop antisemitism. Just like racism against black people. You are not going to stop it. I wish I had a better answer than I do.

Appendix IV: Interview Mr. Moalem

Date: 17/09/2022

I came in contact with Mr. Moalem (and his wife) through Ms. (Tinny) Lenthén, (Library Manager at the Sydney Museum):

Dear Tinny,

So nice to hear from you and I think Danny would love to be involved. In fact I know it. However right at this moment he is in Wolper Hospital having sustained a really nasty fall and a critical health crisis from which he is now recovering slowly. He is supposed to be coming home next week with full Medical care for about at least 8 weeks while he recovers. I myself have only seen him on Facetime as our eldest daughter had to do all the work as I am profoundly deaf and so I only get everything second hand and hospital visits were limited.

However I know that this is something he would love to be involved in as he was one of the first in Australia to bring this story to the forefront of Jewish History and the Museum by writing his book in 2007 and while going around different organisations lecturing on the subject with photos of that time for a few years prior to that, when virtually no one knew anything about this history and then having travelled at least 3 times to China and been in touch with the Jewish Museum and given them some artefacts from that era.

So by all means please show Pauline my email or better still I will copy her in as I see you have given me the address and know that she is welcome but not just yet and I know that it will give Danny an extra reason to work hard with his Physio and doctors. Also please tell Pauline the other way we could do it is by her talking to him on Zoom which I know our eldest daughter would gladly initiate for them. I know he would hate to miss the opportunity to be able to speak to Pauline it will really give him something to look forward to as well. He is still as passionate about this subject as ever and has still got very vivid memories and recall.

So by all means say yes but I think we have to know more when he comes home on Tuesday how well he is to do this and we will do everything possible to implement her request.

Thank you for your email and we look forward to hearing from Pauline after he comes home next week and I know more.

Best wishes

Ruth Moalem

The first Jews that came to China were from the Silk Road, around 780. They were mostly merchants from the Middle East who travelled to China to trade. Around 780, the emperor's capital was Xi'an (where the terracotta soldiers are). Because the emperor's town got slotted chaotically, he moved up higher up the Yellow River into a town called 'Kaifeng'. He was the emperor at Kaifeng, which is a pretty sort of city. (Mr. Moalem used to lecture at so many places, there were no slides these days.) Kaifeng was a pretty city on the river and the emperor invited the Jews who were in the Silk Road. He was very impressed by the Jews because of their business skills, and he invited them to settle in Kaifeng. A number of them accepted and settled in Kaifeng. The numbers were small to begin with. As they integrated with the Chinese population and more

trade came from Silk Road, the numbers grew quite substantially. They build a synagogue in Kaifeng. The first synagogue was very much like a Chinese temple. The population grew as they intermingled with the locals. That population was quite a mixed population at that time, were they established as a community. The Chinese celebration's colour is red, funerals were white. The first synagogue was very much like a Chinese temple. In 1418, bonds also hit Kaifeng and that temple was worsened away and they build a second temple, which lasted till 1640. The community lived around that central area. The population sort of flourished till 1640.

In 1640, a massive flood massed away the synagogue and much of the community facilities. So, the population scattered and went to the bigger cities and so the Jewish population in Kaifeng was now more or less distributed. The communities around the bigger cities were very small but were very stuck to their religion.

One day, a Chinese gentleman from our synagogue in Shanghai came to our house and said he wanted to pray with us in the synagogue. I was about eleven. So, my father invited him because my father was the warder of the synagogue and prayed with us. He told us the amazing story of Kaifeng. We had no idea about that at that time. From then on, the Jewish community has been researching the life and background of Kaifeng and there is now a registered history of Kaifeng.

After the communists took over, Israel became really frank with China and had a very good relationship. Israel offered the Jewish communities scholarships, took them there to Israel, trained them, and send them back to China, to settle as communities. There are quite a few communities in China now.

Around 1800, the Russians had no grounds that personally touched the Jews. A lot of the Jews escaped Russia and settled in Harbin. Harbin became a very big Jewish centre with a huge Russian community. They build a fundamental synagogue there. Now, there is a museum.

Around 1840, the British and the French, and the Americans wanted to go into China to trade to interrelate with the Chinese people. The emperor refused to trade with them. Trying to trade, the British, French, and Americans declared war on China in 1840, what they called the 'Opium War', because as soon as they were able to get into China, they traded in opium and many other things. Britain got control over Hong Kong and there were concessions in Shanghai. The concessions were in three parts, the northern and central parts were British, the southern part was under French control and the far north of Shanghai was under American control. After about fifty years, the Americans and the British became the International Settlement. French concessions were separate; they did not mingle with the Americans or British.

Especially Shanghai became a big centre of trade. Foreigners started to come and settle in Shanghai. A fair Jewish community started to build up. These Jews were mostly from Iraq, Iran,

Yemen, and the Middle East. They formed a small community and around about 1870, the community became quite substantial and opened up a first synagogue: an old house. They took over the synagogue and they invited my grandfather to become the first warder, to look after the synagogue. He came from Yemen. Later on, they became Westernized. In the early days, Sassoon, who was from India, came to Shanghai and started to trade in opium, silk, and other goods that the Chinese had. He traded in opium; he became a multi-billionaire.

Jews that settled early and became very wealthy were the Kadoorie family. They bought real estate and were into the facilities, such as electricity, and made a fortune on that. The famous Peninsula Hotel in Hong Kong was run by the Kadoories. The other family that was very wealthy, also in real estate, was the Hardoon family. They owned a massive real estate in a central national settlement. Other Jews that came after them, amongst them were many millionaires through the trading and their facilities and so on. The community, generally, was quite a wealthy community.

In 1870, the Sephardi built the first synagogue, which was a two-store home, by the river. My grandfather became the warder. That lasted till 1899, when they build a much bigger synagogue in the northern part of the town and the school. My grandfather went across and became the warder there. Sassoon told him a British curriculum. So, all the children of the Jewish families spoke English and were very fluent because they taught them at school. The ladies of the school gave the children a hot meal at lunchtime, so the children were very well off in that school. That school prevailed until 1931, when the community built a much bigger school further down the International Settlement and also in 1960. David Sassoon (he was related to the original Sassoons that were there) built a massive synagogue on in Seymour Road, formerly Shanxi Bei Lu, in the western part of the International Settlement. It still stands today. It grew enormous. The Jewish school was built in 1931, whereas the synagogue had stood since 1860. So, the school was built later. The school was taught again in English, Senior Cambridge curriculum. Students set for the Cambridge University entrance. Many were successful in gaining access to university because the British at that time dominated a lot of the Far and-Middle East. Those students were accepted everywhere for university entrance. The Jewish school accepted all Jews from the Jewish community, the Russian community, the refugee community and the Sephardi community. It was a very integrated school.

Until 1917, the only Jewish community there was the Sephardi who came from the Middle East. But in 1917, there was the Russian Revolution. The Jews were persecuted, and many escaped from Russia to settle in Shanghai. They went to Tianjin, which is one of the northern cities. Shortly after 1917, the community had built up to something like 60,000, which is quite substantial. In the Russian community, there were doctors, lawyers, businesspeople. They integrated very quickly and became quite solid community members. But the Russian Jewish community did not blend

with the Sephardi as far as the synagogues are concerned. They build their own. The Sephardi run a Sephardi program. There is a difference in the way they pray and the way they practice religion. The Russian community was larger than the Sephardi community, but they had their own synagogues. They went to the Jewish school. In the Jewish school children integrated well. But as far as the synagogue and the religion, they were separate. The first Russian synagogue was a two-house structure: the rabbi lived upstairs and the synagogue was down below. That synagogue is now the Jewish Museum. Very interesting place.

I went back to Shanghai several times. There were no Jewish communities there other than later on, American and foreign businesspeople. They got together and became a sort of Jewish community, expatriated in Shanghai. Not many of them, a couple of hundred. About five years after the communists came, a group of Habbas, mostly came from America. They settled in Shanghai and sort of took over the religious teachings in the synagogue. The bulk of them are ultra ultra-orthodox. The community built a hospital and several synagogues as well. The synagogue became a college.

The two communities were very stable until 1934, 1935, 1936, when the Nazis came into power, and then refugees started to arrive from Europe. My father's job was to greet incoming Jews in the city, make them feel welcome, and try to settle them and find jobs for them. When the early refugees came, he was able to do that but then suddenly there was a huge influx of these refugees and he was not able to arrange that. The community had three huge warehouses and converted them into accommodations with facilities in the northern part of Shanghai. There were three of those that the community built for the refugees. The refugees didn't stay in Heime. Quite a lot of them were professionals, doctors, lawyers, businesspeople, and so on. They stayed there for about a short while and then found accommodation elsewhere. Till the war broke out, which is in 1941, these refugees mingled with the community, and they became part of the Shanghai ghetto community. The children went to the Jewish school, but they did not go to the synagogues. Neither the Russians nor the Sephardi. They had their own prayer groups, and they organized their own arrangements. There were some 18,000 refugees and that was a lot of people to accommodate. My father arranged to purchase three large warehouses which he converted into dormitories that accommodated many refugees. They were supplied with food and other necessities. That carried on till the war started in 1942.

When the war started, business dropped away immediately, and so the Jewish community could not donate the money that they used to. So, my father arranged to get money from the Joint, a Jewish Welfare Group in America. They supplied money to keep going when the war started. In 1942, my family was put into a concentration camp, because we had British passports, and we were aliens to the Japanese. So, my father had to give over the control, all these warehouses, to a

committee of refugees, who took over and they run the place till after the war had completely dispersed the warehouses.

When the Japanese took over Shanghai, the German consul insisted with the Japanese that they gather all the Jews from Europe and put them in their concentration camp and exert them to that in Europe. But the Japanese said: "No." They were not going to do that. The Germans persisted. The Japanese said: "We are not going to kill them; we are not going to put them in concentration camps. We will force them to live in a certain area in Shanghai, which was Hongkew, and it was then that the German Jews had to forego their current residence and go and live in Hongkew, which was a very old part of Shanghai. So, the German Jews had to go into houses that were partly occupied by Chinese families. There was much gravity/crowdy in one room or two rooms and they had to share it with others.

At that time, many people over the years have come back to have a look at where they used to live. We went on a group tour from America, where a lot of people went back to have a look.

The German Jews, refugees rather, were, as I said, forced to live in this Hongkew area. And they had to get passes from the Japanese to go to work if the work was outside the area. From what I could hear, many of the refugees had great difficulties with the Japanese over the sub-summit, going to work and leaving the area for school and whatever else. But still, they survived and lived there till the end of the war. At the end of the war, many of them emigrated to Europe, Canada, Australia, and America. After the communists, also some rushed to Israel. When the communists did take over, a Russian Jewish community panicked because they thought the communists might go back to Russia, because they were White Russians, so they were worried about being sent to Russia. At that time, Israel got its independence in 1948 and so they sent their own ambassador from Israel to Shanghai, and he sent 7.000 visas to the Russian community to get them out of China, to get them away from the communists and the Russians really had a mass of access from Shanghai. After the communists came, not only the Russians left, but the refugees also left and much of the Sephardi community left. They went to Israel, America, Australia, etc. About a year or so, after the communists came, there were very very few Jews in Shanghai. We stayed about two years after the communists came and we were one of the very few Jews that were left in Shanghai. In 1950, we decided the communists did not make us feel very welcome. We were the bourgeoisie, or whatever they call them. So, we decided to come to Australia. My father had a brother here, so he decided to go to Australia to join his brother. We have considered other places, America, Canada, but because my father had a brother here, he decided to come to Australia. After a year, the communists took over, and there were very few jews left in Shanghai, probably a hand full, who were doing business or something there. That was not until a year later or two years later when China opened up trade with America and all the other countries so that businessmen came to

Shanghai to settle. So, the Jewish community was formed till later on. So, that is the story of Jews in Shanghai.

Mr. Moalem showed me a picture: The garden party in the good old days.

The Jewish community was responsible for holding enormous structures in Shanghai. They were all built by people like Sassoons, Kadoories, and so on.

The Bund was a very special place because all the internal trade built their officers and buildings there, and the Sassoons built several buildings, the peace hotel, and had a wonderful band and people went there all the time. It was a city where there were a lot of parties, and a social life.

We had Chinese friends. We as children would play, out in the street or in our gardens and we invited an old Chinese friend to come and play with us. We did not sort of keep them permanently. As we grew up, we had other interests, and we did not stay friends with the Chinese friends we were with as we were young. They did not speak Mandarin; they spoke the Shanghai dialect.

The Sephardi had a lot more money than the locals. We were able to have many luxuries that the locals did not have. Amongst them, we had a cook and an amah, and very often we had a private rickshaw driver. My father went to work on a private rickshaw. They had a wall around their community. It was a very different way of community for security reasons.

My father had a lot to do with the Sassoons because he run the various synagogues and he was also a treasure of the hospital, the Jewish school and the synagogue. He was an accountant. The organization we had in Shanghai, we were very proud of them. There were many millionaires. They helped the refugees and the local community. They build clinics for the health of the people. They build schools, and old-age homes for the Chinese. A lot of Chinese also intermarried. Very often, when they used to have a famine when the crop was not properly harvested, the neighbourhood imported food and distributed it to the locals. The Chinese really loved the Jews because they felt that the Jews did a lot for them. The community was very self-sufficient. Their perception was very positive. We very often mingled with the Chinese, being able to speak a local language, but we did not socialize like the other Jewish people in the community. We just did it on a formalized basis. We just did it on a formalized basis.

We grew up and lived in many communities where Chinese culture predominated and they just accepted us, as part of their cultural daily life.

When I graduated from the Jewish school with my Senior Cambridge, I was offered a scholarship to my team in America. But my parents would not let me go, because we had been in a concentration camp, and she did not want the family to be separated. So, I decided to go to a local university. There were two main universities: a British one, which was in the western part of

Shanghai, and a rural one, which was a French university, in the eastern part of Shanghai. The British university mostly taught languages and art, so I went to the French university. I had to learn French in six weeks, in a hurry. The first time was very difficult, but after I was used to the language, it was quite okay.

Early in the peace after the war, we had a lot of resentment for the Japanese, but as time went on, we had very little to do with the Japanese. Our feelings are now neutral. We do not have any objections to the Japanese.

The Australians were directly involved with the Japanese. There was a lot of resentment, they did not want to have their goods in Australia, etc. It really took a long time, close to fifty years to go over that.

My mother worked for the telephone company as a receptionist and my father was an accountant. Just before the war, she started her own business.

I have not visited Iraq since I was about three years old. My mother took me over there to show me her family and I do not remember much of it. Since then, we have not been back to Iraq. It is because my family was mostly from my father's side leaving out here. He had fifty-four cousins. A big family. When we went overseas, for the first time, we showed it to our children in 1971, we took them out of school. We did not stay in a lot of hotels. We had family in Canada, and various parts of the United States, Israel, and of his wife's mother's family, there were still some who lived in Germany.

English was the universal sort of language because the children learned it at school. But my parents spoke Arabic at home. But when I was very little, they stopped doing that and spoke English after that. We did not speak our home language.

Yes, we practiced religion. My father was the warder of the synagogue, so we regularly had to go to the synagogue. I was in the synagogue quire. We went really regularly. Even when we went to the Jewish school, we went early in the morning, at six, before we went to school. We really practiced the religion in a big way. It is very easy to practice it when you are in a community that is all the same.

Life for foreigners, especially for the people who were professionals, was luxurious. We had everything laid out for us. We had no problems with anything at all. Life was beautiful, we had lots of friends and lots of parties. Our big family all lived very close together. We celebrated the high holidays together, for example, New Year. We had a big family table for thirty people. The mothers just all cooked, and the amahs helped to cook. I belonged to a sports club. I was very good at sport, I played badminton and I became an Australian badminton champion when I was here. I

was ranked sixth in the world, which was quite a high standard. My mother was very social and was involved in a lot of parties and community activities, which were celebrated. My father did a lot of charity work. They spend a lot of money on that community. As I said, they build clinics, and schools, old age homes, and gave them food.

The Americans had a group of 'Shanghailanders'. We went over there and met them. A lot of them settled in America. I met school friends that had settled in America and had not seen me for years. Life for the Jews generally was very luxurious, and highly social.

We bought Chinese things. They were lucky they could bring a lot of things out from China.

Shanghai pretty much was the Paris of the East, because we had a very international population, and not only that, it mixed with the merged elite in Europe and America. It did have that kind of an international flavour. You did not go to a shop to buy clothing. Everything was made by a tailor and very quickly. China is a fascinating country and beautiful scenery. One place I recommend to everyone is Guilin. It is magnificent. I hope one day it will open up so that people can enjoy it because the kind of scenery they have there is very unique.

The world was very small these days, we did not have the technology we have today where everything is instant.

The first time we went to Israel; we had no idea what to expect. Just the melting of the different types of people there, the ancient history, it is like Rome and realized how old it is.

We are now too old to go.

There is a dictatorship in China at the moment and they are not totally hostile to the rest, but I think they were very welcoming to the West, so there is a kind of stand-up relationship between the West and China now. It changed so much. At the time we were traveling and bringing international students to Australia it had opened up with Deng Xiaoping. We were being able to go there eventually and travel. We found that kind of education, of seeing places, more educating than just book learning. They enjoyed it too, very much. We also went to Holland, to Amsterdam. It was beautiful. There is a lot of German history there.

Appendix V: Interview Mr. Nash

Date: 18/09/2022

I got Mr. Nash e-mail address from Mr. Engler. Before the interview, Mr. Nash wrote me this e-mail:

I am a Holocaust survivor at the SJM. I was born in Germany in 1935 and my parents and I were among nearly 20.000 Jews that got entry to Shanghai. I have been a guide at the SJM for 22 years. Peter and Peter E. Engler were active in the Boy Scouts.

Personal information questions

- *Do you object if I mention your name in my thesis? Or would you prefer that I process your answers anonymously?*

You can mention my name, that is Peter Nash (born Nachemstein)

- *When and where were you born?*

I am born in Berlin, Germany in 1935.

- *Where were your parents born?*

My father was born in Prussia and my mother was born in Berlin.

- *How did your parents meet each other?*

My father left his birthplace and came to Berlin when he was sixteen. He wanted to learn a few things about life, particularly as a sixteen years old. After about six years in Berlin, he met my mother. They married a month before Hitler came to power.

- *Can you tell me a little bit about your family?*

- My parents settled in Berlin. He and my mother were living in an apartment block close to the city centre.

- *What did your father do for a living?*

He just started to be educated in what business was all about. I still have a list of where he worked in front of me, namely his business in radio parts. In the 1930s, radios were one of the first things that the Germans, etc. got into.

- *Did your mother ever hold a job?*

No, she just helped my father. She had a sister and a brother, and her parents were still alive.

- *Did World War I have a major impact on your family?*

100. 000 Jews served for Germany in World War I. My grandfather on my mother's side served for Germany in World War I. Also, an uncle of mine, the husband of my mother's sister, served for Germany in World War I.

- *What were the consequences for your family when Hitler became chancellor of Germany?*

It was not just my family; it were all Jewish families. I was born in 1935, two and a half years after Hitler came to power. In that period, all Jews lost their citizenship rights. Jews fought

for Germany in World War I. It was devastating. My parents still kept working. My father was able to continue dealing with his customers. He could leave the apartment they were in, as long as he came back at 5 pm. Every time he was away.

There was an incident when my father was on his way from the apartment. He was warned that the nazis came and were looking for him. He stayed away and he was able to do that. But after a week, he got a message that the nazis had come again and that they would come back. As the years went on, nothing went better, things went worse, just before Kristallnacht in 1938. In the middle of 1938, from that period, many Jews were trying to move to get out. Where can I get entry? My father was one of them. He went to the British consul in Berlin to get entry to Australia or New Zealand, because it was a British group that looked after the entries to Australia and New Zealand from Germany. That failed. He also went to the American consulate in Berlin, and they said: 'Ok, give us your names and we will put you on a waiting list'. The waiting list numbers were very high. I still have the document. That was pretty hopeless. That was not going to happen. He also went to a travel agent. Travel agents at that time were having a burning business. The travel agency he went to said: 'Ok, give us your details and then I will get you to Argentina'. Three weeks later, he got a message from the agents saying: "Sorry that failed." But around the middle of 1938, telegraph messages came from the Far East from Shanghai. The messages said: 'Chose to counter Shanghai.' Why? Because there was no entry visa required. And that is why nearly close to 20.000 Jews made their way to Shanghai. In November 1938 was Kristallnacht, which was terrible. But after Kristallnacht, my father decided that we were going to Shanghai.

Reason for departure questions

- *Were there any other acquaintances of your family living in Germany who made the decision to flee to Shanghai?*

Yes. My mother's mother (my grandmother) and my grandfather, who served in Germany in World War I. My grandfather with all the difficulties was dedicated. He had a heart attack. He managed to come with us to Shanghai. We left Berlin in April 1939. We went through the Brenner Pass, on the train to Austria. We went on a boat from Genoa. Tickets in Berlin were bought for a ship that sailed to Genoa. We went through the Brenner Pass and on that train, there were nazi officers checking to see if any Jew was smuggling items, such as gold, silver, or something. If they caught that with them, they would be sent back to Germany. Ironically, the ship was a German steamship. There were four shipping lines. My parents had first-class tickets. I was three and a half years old.

- *Why did “only” 20.000 Jewish people make it to Shanghai?*

Two-thirds came from Germany and one-third from Austria. A time factor played a role. Many Jews were still in their homes. My father’s father (my grandfather) hesitated, like many other Jews, about the possibility of leaving. Because many of the Jews hoped that all the difficulties would all blow away. After he knew that his sisters and we got to Shanghai, he tried to get entry. He had to go to Poland to get information. Long story short, he didn’t come with us. When we arrived in Shanghai, there was already a letter in the mailbox from my grandfather and grandmother. My father communicated with his father and in December he got letters from his parents, but it had a changed home address. My grandparents were part of over three hundred Jews in Prussia, living close together in a number of towns. It turned out my grandparents were put on trucks and sent to the very first ghetto that the Nazis set up, namely Piotrków Trybunalski. Later on, there were over five hundred ghettos. My father communicated through letters, and they also got letters from our experience in Shanghai and then in April 1941, we never heard from them again. I lost over forty close family members, including my grandparents.

- *How did your parents prepare for the departure to Shanghai? Were they able to take cherished things with them?*

They had to obtain entry visas - which they did. Then they were ready to pack some luggage. We left Berlin in April 1939 by train and went through the Brenner Pass (Austria). Nazi officers were on that train checking to see if valuable items were being smuggled on the trip. My parents avoided that - if not, Jews would be forced back and put into jails. We went on a boat from Genoa.

- *Can you tell me about the voyage from Europe to Shanghai? (For instance: how long did it take, what were the circumstances etc.)*

It took a month to go to Shanghai. There were four stops altogether; one was Colombo, then we sailed again to Manila, and then Hong Kong, and then Shanghai. All we had to do, all the Jews, when they went to Shanghai, was just to get off the boat. There was no passport control acquired, even though China was under Japanese control. The Chinese and the Japanese had a war in 1938. All of Shanghai was under the control of basically five countries: the French, the British, the Americans, and also the Chinese. The Japanese were under control but left the administration of Shanghai to the countries I mentioned.

Shanghai impression questions

- *What was your parent’s expectation of Shanghai before they fled and was it correct on arrival?*
Nobody knew anything about Shanghai. There were thousands of Jews already in Shanghai coming from the areas of India etc. Many of those Jews were very wealthy.

- *How were the first days of arrival in Shanghai?*

We had to settle in Shanghai of course. Every Jewish individual that was able to get to Shanghai, came very little titled. There was such a variety of Germans; of Jews that came and had careers and so on. They had a parent or a grandparent coming with them also and they had to settle. My grandfather died a month after we arrived.

With a lot of difficulties. Meaning: there was a certain small percentage of the nearly 20.000 Jews that were given sleeping quarters and males and females were separated. That was a small percentage compared to the whole number of Jews. Anyone had to think of questions such as: What are we going to eat? and How are we going to eat? There was a Jewish Welfare Group that supplied finances. We settled. Meaning: we were able to find a place. That was also with the financial assistance of the American Jewish Welfare Group. We were able to rent a room. Five meters by seven meters. We shared a toilet with other neighbours. After nearly two years, my father started a luggage business.

- *How would you describe earlier Shanghai? Why do you think that people call Shanghai “Paris of the East”?*

I have never heard that.

Friendship questions

- *Did you or your parents have Chinese friends?*

There were some families that had a closer connection with a Chinese person. It happened. It definitely was not at a high level at all, from my point of view. Quite frankly, we lived amongst the Chinese. Most of them were very poor. In that period, there were some Chinese that came from the county to find work and eat. Every day a minimum of Chinese died.

- *How much help have you received from the Joint Distribution Committee?*

I came to Shanghai when I was not four years old yet and then I went to the Kadoorie primary school. Overall, there were two things that were handy. One was that the business luggage in Shanghai was English, and the school language was English. In December 1941, the attack on Pearl Harbour. After the attack on Pearl Harbour, high-ranking Japanese officers were sent to Shanghai. Then they came to the decision that all the Jews should be rounded up to basic situations. We escaped the war in Europe but then we were in the Pacific war, which lasted three and a half years. So, all the Jews were in Hongkew. It became a ghetto. It was surrounded by material you cannot get through. Businesses could not continue the way they had. The school was able to continue teaching us. That was fortunate, but my father had his luggage business, and he was able to leave the so-called ‘designated area’, which later became called the ‘ghetto’, as long as he was back before 5 pm. There were Japanese guards.

- *How easy was it to make friends in Shanghai? For example, how did you deal with the language barrier of the local population?*

Very easy, because we spoke English. We all learned English. No Chinese or Japanese language.

- *What did the very different Jewish groups in Shanghai have in common, and how did their commonalities provide a foundation for the bond they created?*

Only when the Pacific War was triggered did the earlier Jews in Shanghai connect better with the later Jews - like us.

- *Did you mainly have contact with refugee children or also Chinese children?*

Contact was mainly with other refugee children.

Did you or your parents have friends with the pre-existing groups of Jews in Shanghai (such as the Sephardi or Russian Jews)?

The Sephardi Jews kept together. They set up the opportunity for us to learn English and be educated. The Kadoorie school was amazing, really. It was a big luck that we had.

Particularly as children.

Of all the Sephardi Jews, none of them originally came from Germany. We were forced to live together when the Japanese took control. But the Sephardi Jews were living in the north of Shanghai. They were put into smaller ghettos. They went too far away, separate from us. I never had Sephardi friends. We lived in an apartment block, so we were not close to any Sephardi Jews. Their schools were separated from your schools. That all changed when World War Two ended. After World War II ended, I went to the Jewish school. I had to get on a bus. The Jewish school was in the city area, but Jews like me got there by bus.

- *How do you think the Chinese perceived you? Was this perception quite positive or negative?*

My father had his luggage business, and he had a Chinese worker. So, normal life. There was nothing that we had to do or wanted to do with the Chinese. Jews had Chinese workers-cleaners, for example. They got a little bit of money. That is the only way I can describe how the Chinese accepted us.

- *Did you or your parents like the idea that there was already a fairly large Jewish community in Shanghai?*

They were glad to survive first. And to wonder what happened to the rest of the family. This was the case for every family in Shanghai because the Pacific War ended three months after World War II.

Daily life in Shanghai questions

- *How were the living conditions in the Shanghai ghetto? How do you think hunger and overcrowding impacted the Shanghai ghetto residents? How did your family cope with that?*

The weather was terrible. It was raining, even in the sun times. There were a lot of difficulties because of the terrible climate. Also, by the way, after the Japanese were in control, we lived in an apartment block in Hongkew. It had four levels and then went into the apartment, and we were on the first level. But when the Japanese came into control of Shanghai, Japanese officers took over the first level of that apartment, with was five meters by seven meters and we were lucky. All we had to do was to move to the fourth floor. We did not have any problems with them.

- *How easy or difficult was it to leave the Shanghai ghetto to go to another part of the city?*

It was very difficult to leave the ghetto. Only for work.

- *Do you think that Jewish people were relatively well protected under Japanese occupation in Shanghai?*

The Japanese were allied to the nazis whose high-ranking generals were sent to Shanghai to convince the Japanese to kill all of us. But the Japanese did not do that and forced all refugees into a ghetto area.

Identity question

- *How did religion serve as an anchor in turbulent times?*

Significantly! We were relatively close to the synagogue. I had my Barmitzwah at a movie place. The prayers were normal prayers. I had my Barmitzwah in July 1948: after we were forced to leave Shanghai by the Communists.

Life after Shanghai questions

- *Were you afraid of the bombings when the American troops came?*

I was ten years old when the Americans finally came and bombed the Japanese. They were accurate. Over forty Jews were killed by the bombs from the Americans.

- *What happened after the war ended? How did you come to Australia?*

After World War II ended, my age group got a wonderful life. There was always someone in the family that was going to leave. I had friends. The Americans had a number of ships that went to Shanghai because they won the war, and they were happy to go into Shanghai. They let us come on board on their ships. That was for the first time we had the best meals we ever had. No, not kidding.

We left Shanghai in February 1949. The first stop was Hong Kong. We were in Hong Kong for a week. And then my parents had tickets bought for a sailing on a Chinese boat, very ironic. A

Chinese boat picked us up in Hong Kong and then we sailed south. We only had one stop and then we came further down to Sydney. The boat came late in the evening. It was actually on my father's forty-fourth birthday. I was thirteen and a half years old.

- *Has your family thought of going to Israel after the Second World War?*

Going to Israel was only on the table if countries like Australia, New Zealand, USA etc. failed to accept us.

- *Could you choose the place where you wanted to live?*

Even though my mothers' brother and my grandmother went to San Francisco, my parents felt Australia would be the place to go to.

- *How much did you like being in Australia?*

It was wonderful. It was the best decision my parents ever made. I had to complete my high school education, my parents were able to start a ladieswear business and we settled nicely.

- *When you first started going to school in Australia, did you fit in really well with the other children or did you have a hard time at first?*

No. I had no problems with English. Many others from my age group that came from Europe had some problems with English.

- *What organization helped your family arrive in Australia?*

There was no organization that helped us. All we had to do was to go to the Australian consul in Shanghai to arrange tickets to Australia.

- *Do you still know Jewish people who have continued to live in Shanghai?*

When the Chinese communists took over China, there was not going to be a single 'Westerner'. We left seven months before the October 1949 communist takeover.

- *Do you still meet up with your friends from Shanghai?*

I focus on the Jews and Chinese counterparts. For us, the focus was on the Japanese and not on the Chinese and I am not the only one on that. Because the Chinese just could not increase their way of life or their business. I mean the business language of Shanghai was English. Very few Jews had connections, even though we lived among the Chinese. Sometimes, yes, they came and cleaned your bedroom or something.

- *Did you study at a university in Australia? If yes, how did you experience your study years?*

The positives of growing up in Shanghai were that English was the business and school language. Also, the British Scouts there were positives and 'God Save the King' was played at movies. So, there were no problems being educated at Australian schools and universities.

- *What was your occupation in Australia?*

After twenty years working at Bonds Industries as their textile dyeing manager, I had my own Textile Dyeing Consulting Business in Australia and Overseas. I retired in 2004.

- *Do you now feel fully Australian?*

Firstly, I am a Holocaust Survivor and a guide at the Sydney Jewish Museum. But yes, I am an Aussie!

- *Do you like the Australian way of life?*

Absolutely, absolutely. I have family all over the world. I have a cousin who survived. He is a year older than me. I have been with him three times. He is still in Germany, in Berlin. I lost over forty close family members, including my grandparents. There were three survivors. One was a cousin of mine, a year older than me, and the other two were two ladies who were already aged. Interestingly, my grandparents were put into the first ghetto, years later. My wife and I were founding members of the first Australian Jewish Genealogical. My wife was a very keen genealogist. We travelled together many times, to Europe in particular, the UK, America, etc. My wife passed away seven years ago. We were married for fifty-five years. It was the thing we always did, not only meet up with family but also do some further research, particularly also in Poland. That is what most of life was. Close to over three years, I decided not to go overseas anymore as I travelled enough. There is no need to do any more family research. My birth name was Nachemsteim and after seven years in Sydney, my parents thought that I should change my name. Not because of antisemitism, but because of the migrant attitude. In the 1940s and 50s, I went to movies and so on. I remembered the Nash that was functioning in the 1940s, a car. So, I changed my name from Nachemstein to Nash. My parents did not change their names.

- *Do you still have a deep affection for Shanghai?*

Of course, for all the Jews in Shanghai. Yes definitely. We were lucky with the language. I never stopped talking German, quite frankly, but mostly English. So, English is my second language.

- *Have you ever thought about returning to Shanghai?*

I have been to Shanghai twice. In 2009 or something. I was invited, very ironically, by the German consulate in Shanghai to come and give a talk.

- *How much do you think Shanghai has changed?*

The communists are terrible. Taiwan is the next target that China got. Hopefully, it will not happen. China is heavily involved in Africa etc. Potentially they will be a big problem for Australia.

- *The Holocaust is probably one of the most analysed chapters in recent history. Why do you think that this specific part of Shanghai has been pretty much ignored by the mainstream?*

The Holocaust is the worst human tragedy ever! Six million Jews were murdered - of which a quarter were children. I lost over forty close family members including my father's parents! Only three close family members survived. After about eighty years, many Shanghai survivors have passed away - only two of us are still guiding at the SJM.

- *In your view, what is the importance of remembering this part of history?*

The importance is that we survived, we were lucky to survive. And that we were able to find ourselves in a better place like Australia. It is hardly seventy years.

- *What do you believe we can do to fight antisemitism today?*

All governments over the world must focus and impact on rising antisemitism.

- *In your opinion, what lessons do the Shanghai Jews' experiences offer for situations involving refugees today?*

We had no idea. Basically, we should have known that the Japanese would control, but on the other hand, it was the only place we could get entry. My parents did not have much choice at that time. And that was the same for nearly 20.000 other Jews. Up till October 1941, the Germans almost encouraged you to leave Germany. But that day, it was the final solution. There was the focus on. These are not normal situations at all.

- *Would you like to read the results of my research?*

That would be nice.

Appendix VI: Interview Mrs. Kracko

Date: 21/09/2022

Mrs. Kracko came across my post on Facebook. Before the interview, she told me the following information:

I was born in Shanghai 1947. My family escaped Nazi Germany to Shanghai. 1939-1949. I am living in New Rochelle, NY.

I speak to a senior class every year and tell them my story. I was born in Shanghai, 1947. That is not where my story begins, because you have to go two generations back: from my grandparents. When I talk to these kids or to whoever, I do not make it a history lesson. It is my story, my family's journey, from Germany to Shanghai China to Israel, and then to the United States.

I always start with my grandparents. They both were born in a little town in Germany called 'Labeschine' (which was Germany and after WWII came under the Polish government). Klara and Markus Ruben's family lived close to each other. Both families were good friends, the kids grew up together, everybody was well-known in the neighbourhood, they belonged to the synagogue, they gave to charity, etc. Everything was fine and it was always said that my grandmother Klara and my grandfather Markus Ruben would get married. When they came of age, 1914/1915, they got engaged and had an engagement party.

But then World War I started. My grandfather Markus Ruben served in the German army and fought for the Germans for four years. After four years, Markus came home from war, the wedding was there, and Markus and Klara are now married. What happened was that, because of the Treaty of Versailles, borders changed. My family decided that they would move. The family that was left, moved to Berlin with my grandparents and my grandmother's two sisters.

They set up their household and grandfather has become what they call a 'crypto master'. He opened up a business. He had a very good business, very well-off. He had nearly six employees and life was very good for them. My Aunt Ella (my mother's aunt) and Aunt Lisa worked for him.

My mother, Ruth, had a good childhood. Everything was fine from 1919 into the twenties. My grandfather was a well-off man; he owned property. My mother told me they had their first car on the street, she had ballet lessons, she loved ice skating, she was very good at soccer, etc. Somewhere down the line in the early 1930s, she met my father.

In the early thirties, the problem started: Hitler rose to power. Kristallnacht happened on November 9, 1938. My parents were engaged and married at that time. My mother was the only child, my father had one sister. My to-be Uncle Alfred engaged also. My family decided to leave. They could not stay in Berlin anymore. Jews were banned; Jews could no longer work and Jews could no longer hold positions. They signed on the windows 'Juden (Jews) do not go in here' and

'Do not buy from them'. My parents were good, upstanding Germans, law-abiding citizens in a country that they loved. What were they going to do now?

They went to different agencies. Nothing was available. They went to embassies for different countries. But there was no country that allowed you in. My father-to-be (they were not married yet), and my mother's aunt Ella, found themselves at a German shipping line (Norddeutsche shipping line). The man said: 'I have nothing for you'. What are we going to do? The agent took the phone and called my father again in Germany. He said: 'Mr. Chaim, I may have something for you'. He had sixteen tickets to Shanghai China. To the other side of the world. He said: 'Mr. Chaim, I will give you till the end of the day. If you want the tickets, you have to take all the sixteen world trip tickets. No return, no exchanges, cash only'. So, they went home, and they had a meeting. My grandfather came up with the money, they went back, and they now have sixteen tickets to Shanghai China.

They started to pack up. My grandfather took two containers: all the furniture, all the household goods, clothing, and even the piano. If you are allowed to leave the country, you have to go to the local police station. You have to show them your ticket, you have to have a passport, they stamp all the papers and they put the letter J for Jew on your passport. In the passport, they gave every man the middleman of Jacob and all women got the middle name of Sarah. Sarah is one of our foremothers. So, they went back home and packed up. They had to pack up in front of a policeman. A policeman came every single day and watched them pack up to see what they were taking. My grandfather was well-known in the neighbourhood. They were able to take out whatever they could manage (gold, silver, etc.). My family had hundred dollars with them. This went on till December, January, and February. And on February 28, 1939, my parents got married at my father's home. My mother married Paul Chaim.

In March 1939, sixteen members of my family boarded a German ocean liner: a German ship with a German captain and German crew. My grandfather was well-off, and they went first class. On the ship were my grandparents, Klara and Markus Ruben, my parents, Ruth and Paul Chaim, my father's mother and father (Max and Laura Chaim), Tante Ella, and two cousins. Two other cousins waited for their son, but they waited too long and were killed. They never made it out. It was a ten-week journey from Brenner. My mother always said to me: 'It was a wonderful journey'. They were treated like first-class passengers. My mother said: 'It was a honeymoon'. She always joked: 'It was a one-way cruise'. My family absolutely saved everything. I have a first-class lunch and dinner menu on the ship.

So, now they land in Shanghai. My mothers' uncle and Tante Lisa (she worked for my grandfather at the time in Germany), made it to Shanghai a few weeks earlier. They met in Shanghai. Shanghai

was an open port; open to everybody. You did not need any special papers; you did not need a visa. All you needed to show up was your passport and justification.

This was March 1939. Shanghai at the time entered the Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese were the ruling people. They were in charge of the city of Shanghai. Shanghai was split into three concessions: the French concession, the British concession, and the International Settlement. My family went into the International Settlement. They took you by truck to what they call 'Heime'. They gave you food. You had the Sephardi community: the rich men who made their money being in the Silk Road. They gave money to these refugees who were escaping Germany and Austria. My father, who had money, found a house to rent, and everything moved in there.

You were coming to a foreign country; you knew nothing about the people, the different climate, the different weather, the different food. Everything was totally foreign to them. What these Jews did was set up their own infrastructure. The doctor, the dentist, and my grandfather could find work doing anything mechanical. My aunt was a seamstress, tailor. She packed her sewing machine and the material. All so that she could go out and find work. My father found work in a British hanging light fixture company. My mother found work at a German bakery, like a coffeeshop bakery, 'Vienna Konditorei' was the name of it. My mothers' mother basically stayed home and cleaned and cooked. Everybody managed to find work and earn some money. It was very difficult.

They tried to get out of Shanghai to go whatever in the world and go to the United States. Now it is 1941, and the American troops hit Pearl Harbour and they entered the war. Now borders were closed, you could not get out even if you managed to get the visa or papers to go to another country. No contact with the outside world.

After years went by, life was really pretty bad. I mean, people died of hunger, of diseases. My grandfather Max, my father's father, died in 1941, I think of Malaria, not sure. He was buried in Shanghai. There was a little Jewish hospital, again, equipment was minimal. They could only deal with what they could. Many people died from diseases. Everything was dirty. This is how they lived.

The Japanese allied with the Germans and the Germans said: 'We want to take all these Jews to get them out of Shanghai'. The Japanese had no bad feelings toward the Jews. They did not go along with that. They made that one-mile area called 'Hongkew'. Everybody who was elsewhere had to move into that area. My family moved to a two-room apartment in Hongkew. Chinese people were already living there. Now you had thousands more living in that area and so they lived among the Chinese. Not that they became good friends or anything. Everybody got along because everybody had the same problem. They moved from the International Settlement to Hongkew.

They lived in Shanghai for ten years. 1945: the war is finally over. How did they find out? Because there was no contact with the outside world. Somehow, they found out. My parents woke up early in the morning and people were crying and shouting and dancing in the streets and they went downstairs and asked: 'What is happening? The war is over; the war is over! What to do now?'

Meanwhile, nobody knew anything about what was happening in Europe. Nobody knew about the concentration camps. They put on bulletin boards: 'Looking for my sister. Where is my brother? Have anybody heard of...?' They put up the names of people looking for them.

After the war ended, everybody was looking for a visa to another country. My family could still not go into the United States, which was the goal. The United States made it very difficult to get a visa. You had to be sponsored. My aunt and uncle Alfred had a cousin whom they got in touch with. They got the right papers. They left in 1948 for New York. The Jewish Distribution Committee was very helpful in helping people leave and getting them jobs and things like that. Tante Ella married an Australian man. She lived in the British concession. Because he was Australian, he was able to go home, and she went to Australia. Who was left now? My parents, Markus, Klara, Laura.

I was born in forty-seven. This was two years after the war. Most people had left at this point. Israel became a state in 1948 officially. They took in all refugees, wherever you came. The Jewish Joint Distribution Committee came to everybody that was left and to my family and said: 'We can help you to leave. Here are your three choices: Go back to Germany, you could stay here, or you can go to Israel'. They were not going back to Germany. They did not want to stay in China, the communists had come in forty-five, and they had taken over. They did not want to live under communism. They wanted to go where their family was.

So, they decided to go to Israel. So once again, they packed up everything and in 1949, the rest of the Jews (maybe two hundred) could leave, got on a ship, an Italian ocean liner, and sailed to Israel. Israel helped them there. They went to Banana, which now is an influential beautiful neighbourhood. This is now 1949. We lived in Israel for three years and finally got the proper papers, like the visa and everything. My parents and I got to flow from Israel to London, where we stayed for half a year with my mum and another aunt. We stayed there and finally we flowed to New York City, 1952. My mother's sister and uncle Alfred got u an apartment for us. My mothers' mother Klara died in Israel, and she is buried in Israel. The only two people who stayed in Israel were my Opa Markus and Oma Laura. They made it to the United States a few years later. I did not spoke English before I came to this country, and I do not have an accent.

We now just became great-grandparents. The family line continues.

Maybe 20,000 Jews managed to get to Shanghai. They really lived among themselves. They did not learn Chinese. They were neighbours, but they were not together. Everybody tried to help

everybody else. Again, times were really really hard. People did not do anything away. I am still saying to my children: 'We don't throw away food.' That is the way I brought up. That is how my family managed to survive.

Reason for departure questions

- *Have your parents tried to apply for a visa for other places? If so, which places?*

In the beginning, yes, after Kristallnacht. Yes, they did try. But nothing became available. The goal was always New York because my mother's cousin Else, went to New York in 1935, or 1936. She got there first by herself.

- *Why do you think "only" 20.000 Jewish people made it to Shanghai?*

That is a good question. I do not have the answer for you. I can only speak for my family. In my case, it was sheer luck. MIR Yeshiva Poland happened to find it out also. There was a kind man, and he gave them transit visas to get to Shanghai. His name is Chiune Sugihara.

Shanghai impression question

- *Did your parents have an expectation of Shanghai before they fled?*

No. My parents had no expectations. Shanghai was an open port; that was the point.

Friendship questions

- *Did your family receive a lot of help on arrival and if so from whom? What kinds of organizations existed?*

The woman (Laura Margolis) from the Joint Distribution Committee (the Joint) was very helpful to get money to the refugees. There were many people there who came with no money. They made use of all of that. What we now call in the United States "soup kitchen," with donations preparing food to feed people. My grandfather was pretty well-off. They had money. So maybe they lived a little bit better than the poor people.

- *How easy was it to make friends in Shanghai?*

One-bedroom apartment shared with two families. Yes. They lived so close to each other.

- *Did your parents have friends with the pre-existing group of Jews in Shanghai (such as the Sephardi or Russian Jews)?*

My parents didn't really have contact with the pre-existing groups. They lived in other areas and were wealthy. They lived in big houses. In the very beginning, the Sephardi helped the Jews. Everybody on the ship was initially helped by the Sephardi community; they gave money to these organizations to help these people until you got your housing to live on your own. I am sure there were quite a lot of people who could not find their own housing. They lived in the Heime for many years.

- *Did your parents like the idea that there was already a fairly large Jewish community in Shanghai?*
They were not aware of that upon arrival. It did not have much of an impact on them. The majority of Jews that came from Germany and Austria arrived 1938-1941.
- *What did the very different Jewish groups in Shanghai have in common, and how did their commonalities provide a foundation?*
They had their Jewish religion and backgrounds. And everyone endured the same hardships and therefore looked out for each other.
- *Was there much contact with the Japanese (except for being the guards etc.?)*
No...just the guards etc.
- *Did Jewish identity separate the refugees from the Chinese? In what ways did it help them forge positive relationships with people from different groups?*
Short answer: yes. They lived among each other but in my family's case, not much interaction. The Jewish community and the Chinese had to deal with the same hardships.. living under Japanese control. And it was more difficult for the Chinese.
- *How do you think the Chinese perceived your family? Was this perception quite positive or negative?*
They worked hand in hand because they both lived under the same conditions. You had all the Chinese with the Japanese trouble, and 20.000 Jews are moving into your city. You have all these Jews moving on top of you. They had to deal with the same problem, the same illnesses, the same sickness, etc. The Chinese had taken us in. My family did not learn any Chinese. They knew some words. There was no need to. My father worked for a British company and my mother worked in the Viennese cafe. The community itself set up its own infrastructure. They made their own newspaper, sports clubs, etc. All German. There was a Jewish school taught by British teachers. They had Jewish services, in German of course.

Daily life in Shanghai question

- *How easy or difficult was it to leave the Shanghai ghetto to go to another part of the city?*
The Japanese told them to move to Hongkew. You needed a pass to leave that area. Ghoya was a little Japanese general and he said: 'I am the King of the Jews'. He had the control of giving people the pass. He yelled at everybody. My father worked for a British tie factory and he had a pass to leave every day. There were Japanese guards and you had to show your pass to leave and to show your pass to get out. My mother worked in a café in Hongkew.

Identity questions

- *Did you go to the synagogue in Shanghai?*

Yes, my family went to the synagogue in Shanghai. As I said, my family saved every piece of paper. I have two tickets from the McGregor synagogue and on it: 'Bring your own plate and coffee cup.' They must have served something. In my family, there were no bar mitzvahs. But from speaking to other people, yes, there were bar mitzvahs and there were weddings, etc. They had to deal with what they had. Everybody shared everything. They celebrated birthdays. There were burials.

- *How did religion serve as an anchor in turbulent times?*

Commonality...the Jewish community tried to replicate their former lives in Berlin, in Vienna, etc., and opened up new synagogues in addition to the one that was already in existence, Ohel Rachel.

- *Do you know how it felt for your parents to be marginalized?*

How does being stateless make one vulnerable? At the time, I do not think they thought themselves as being "marginalized," but....being "stateless" is an empty life...where do you belong, where am I going, etc.

- *What role did language play in integrating into Shanghai? How was it used to strengthen identity?*

They were among approximately 20.000 other German-speaking Jews, so they did not have to worry about language. They had learned English in school, and so were equipped with the English language. My father found work first in a British spray-painting company and then a tie manufacturer....where English was spoken. They never needed to learn to speak Chinese...of course, they did learn a few words and phrases here and there.

Life after Shanghai questions

- *You were born in Shanghai in 1947. How was it to grow up in Israel?*

Unfortunately, I have no memory of my early years.

- *Have you ever thought of going back to Israel?*

Been back four times...as a tourist.

- *Did you go to school in the United States? Was it easy for you to integrate? What was your occupation?*

Yes, starting with kindergarten. Again,...I have no memories of my early years. My first memory is fourth grade. Occupation: Secretary at an ad agency in New York City until my kids were born and then later on (when my kids were a bit older) Administrative Assistant at a local Nursery School.

- *Do you still know Jewish people who have continued to live in Shanghai?*
No. By 1952, everyone had left.
- *Do you feel more Israeli, American, or something else?*
American.
- *You are living in New York. Do you live here since 1952? Do you want to stay here? If so, why?*
Grew up in Washington Heights (Manhattan), where many German Jews settled. Got married in 1972....I live in New Rochelle, NY. My family is here...I am not going anywhere.
- *Do you still have a deep affection for Shanghai?*
Oh yes, I really do. Whenever I hear or see anything 'Shanghai', it is like my ears pick up. It is a connection. It is the only way I can describe it to you.
- *Have you ever returned to Shanghai?*
Yes, the first time I came back, 1970. I took my mother and two kids. I have two kids: Jeffrey and Laurie, and we went on a tour. We spent two nights in Shanghai. My second trip was in 2006. There was a Shanghai reunion. We call the Jewish community in Shanghai 'Shanghailanders'. Through the years there was a reunion every year, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Canada and the very first one was here in New York, in 1987. So, throughout the years, there were reunions. You know, the older people get older, and people die. In 2006, there was a reunion in Shanghai. That was amazing. A lot of people went to Australia. My aunt Ella for instance, but she died a long time ago. I took my mother and went to the reunion in Shanghai. We saw the old neighbourhood and the old apartment we had lived. My husband has a business with Chinese people. They invited us to Shanghai. I called the museum and said: 'Hello, I am coming!' and they picked us up and everything and then we were standing by these pictures 'Born in Shanghai.' I was standing there telling my story for like half an hour. That was so interesting.
- *Do you still attend those reunions?*
There are no more reunions. The older people have died so nobody is really taking it over. I am in touch with several people. I am an only child. My second Cousin Helen was also born in Shanghai, seven weeks after me. Our grandfathers were brothers. Her mother and her grandmother were on the ship, one of the sixteen people. Helen and I are in touch with each other all the time. I have a second cousin in California. Her mother and my father were cousins.
- *How much do you think Shanghai has changed?*
Oh my God, the skyline! Hongkew is still Hongkew, but they want to make the buildings more modern. There is a Jewish Museum there now, which is the Shanghai Jewish Refugee Museum.

- *The Holocaust is probably one of the most analysed chapters in recent history. Why do you think that this specific part of Shanghai has been pretty much ignored by the mainstream?*

I don't know. That is a good question. We always say that there are very few people who know about this history. You hear about Auschwitz; you hear about the concentration camps: the Nazi tragedy.

- *In your view, what is the importance of remembering this part of history?*

Again, sheer luck. My father Paul Chaim and Ella Ruben happened to be on that day, in the right place, at the right time. There were no choices anymore at that time. We made it, the family made it. We went to Upper Manhattan, New York City. Everybody wanted to be successful in the rest of the world, Australia, Canada, etc. Everybody moved on to live their life.

- *In your opinion, what lessons do the Shanghai Jews' experiences offer for situations involving refugees today?*

It is getting very political around here. I do not know. I have mixed emotions about that. All I want to say is that my family went through life. A very difficult time. They came out of this. It took a long time to finally get those papers to go to the United States. It took a lot longer than they expected, but they did everything legally. They came into this country legally. All those aliens come illegally. I do not think it is right that they get a driving license or a right to vote.

- *What do you believe we can do to fight antisemitism today?*

Again, I do not have an answer for you. I leave this to the expert. Information now goes much faster. We know what happens. You now have Jewish newspapers and organizations. It is happening again all over the world.

- *Do you object if I mention your name in my thesis? Or would you prefer that I process your answers anonymously?*

OK to mention name.

- *Would you like to read the results of my research? If so, I will be happy to send you a copy of my thesis.*

Sure, beautiful.