

A Borrowed Place

Exploring Hong Kong, Jewish and Refugee histories

Council of the Jewish Community of Shanghai, 1956

ON JULY 26, 2017JUNE 4, 2020 / BY HK HERITAGE / IN JEWISH REFUGEES, SHANGHAI

The Council of the Jewish Community was founded in 1949 for the welfare of China Jewry. When the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) closed its Shanghai office in 1951, the Council took over the administrative work in connection with the global repatriation and resettlement of Jews residing in China.

I've written extracts from the Council's 1956 report below:

Economic Welfare and Relief

Shelter House and Free Meals

During 1956 the Shelter House harboured an average of 14 inmates and dispensed free meals to a daily average of about 23 persons; in the first six months of 1957 the average number of inmates was 13, while the average number of persons was about 13. The cost of supplying two meals daily to each person was approximately Yen 40.00 per month.

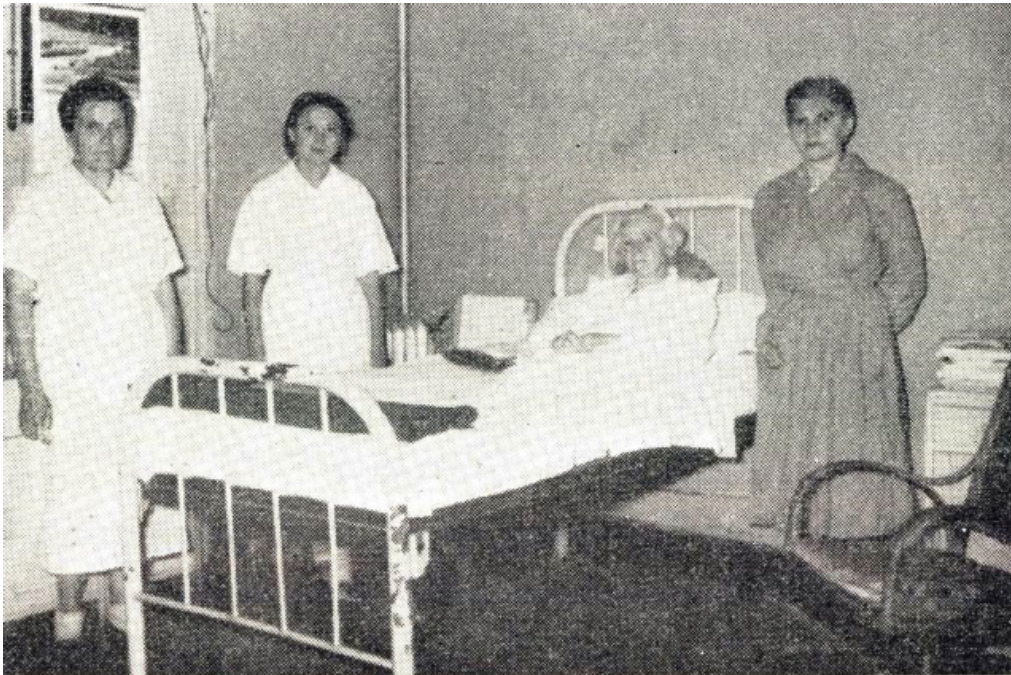
Mr. E Abraham had been acting as Shohet in an honorary capacity up to his departure in November 1956, and was succeeded by Mr. I. Udovich. Mr. & Mrs. G Gleizer acted as supervisors of the Shelter House and Kosher Kitchen.

Seward Road Camp (961 Tung Chang Chi Lu)

The Seward Road Camp is one of the many camps which housed European refugees during World War II. There were 11 inmates domiciled in the Camp during the period under review. The premises are owned by Messrs. E. D. Sassoon & Co., Ltd. Shanghai, and have been used free of charge by the indigent Jews for many years. Mr. H. Lewin supervises the Camp.

Medical Assistance

In order to alleviate the suffering of the mental and chronic cases two nurses are employed in the Shelter House to look after them as before. It must be mentioned that many critical cases have been averted due to the promptness of the United Hias Service in Hongkong in sending the required medicines to the sick. Dr. S. Hocs and Dr. G Rosenkevitch served as Medical Advisors for the Community with marked efficiency.



A room in the shelter ward

Religious and Cultural Activities

Synagogue

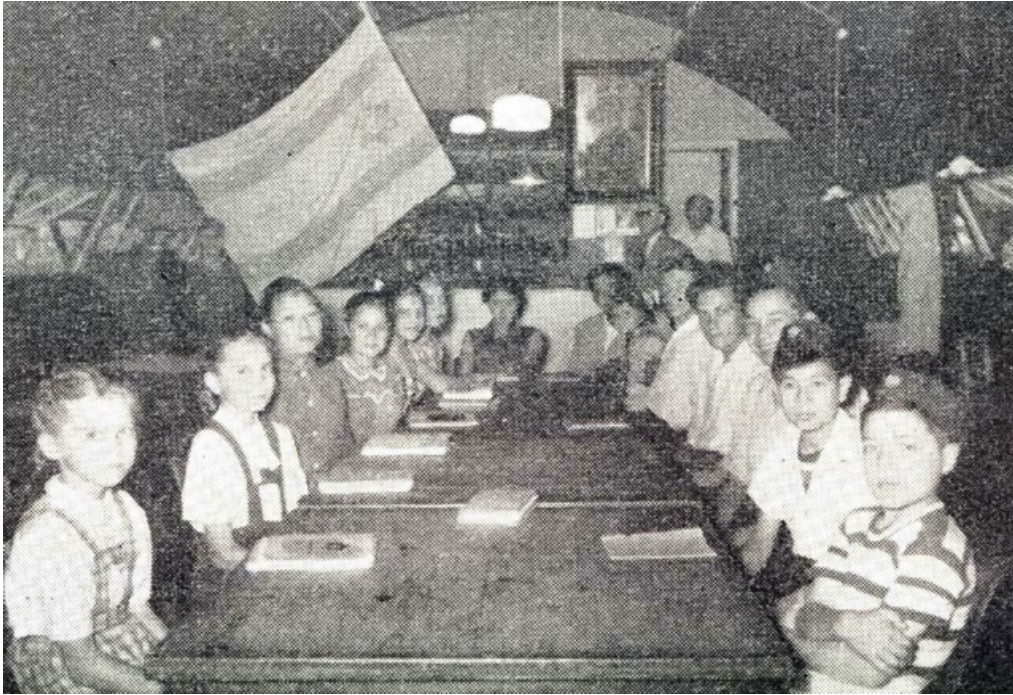
As mentioned in the last year's report after the disposal of the Synagogue on Hsiang Yang Road, services have been regularly held in the new Synagogue at the Shanghai Jewish Centre. In spite of the diminishing number of Jews in Shanghai, attendance in the Synagogue has continued to be gratifying in the circumstances.

Matzoth

As in the preceding four years, Matzoth were baked locally and distributed free of charge to all needy Jews in Shanghai. As in the past, the highest grade of wheat flour was allotted by the Food Administration Bureau and sympathetic cooperation was rendered by the bakery were the Matzoth were prepared in accordance with Jewish rituals. Due to technical difficulties in Tientsin, 250lbs. of Matzoth were

Reading and Recreation Room

Since the closure and liquidation of the Shanghai Jewish Club on December 31 1955 the reading and recreation room has afforded books, periodicals and newspapers to the local Jews. The room has also been used for Hebrew Classes, Children's parties and other activities.



Children attend Hebrew class, 1956

Cemeteries

The four Jewish cemeteries in Shanghai continued in the care of the Council. All graves and memorial stones are constantly kept in good condition under the able supervision of Mr. H. Lewin.



Fa Yuan-Lu Cemetery

Communal Association

By July 1956, the centralised management of the properties and the internal affairs of both the Ashkenazi and the Sephardic Communal Associations had merged into the Council's office. The works in connection with the two communal associations have been handled by the Council staff. The legal entities of the Communal Associations have been preserved. In line with a general decree by the Government, land tax on properties owned by or managed by Jewish organisations has been altered to property tax which has been levied at 18% on rentals received since the fourth quarter of 1956.

Personnel

As the number of remaining Jews in Shanghai gradually diminished, the manifold works of the Council had devolved upon the few members who have been serving selflessly for the welfare of the Jewish Community.

Mr. R.D. Abraham: Mr. R.D. Abraham resigned his membership of the Council on September 1 1956, but continued to give the benefit of his experience and advice up to the time of his departure from Shanghai in November 1956. Any attempt to evaluate his service to the Jewish Community within the limitation of this Report would be hopelessly inadequate. Following the noble tradition of his forebears, he left behind him a record of a life-long devotion to the interests of the community. Whole-heartedly and unobtrusively he identified himself with all aspects of our communal activities, so that every Jewish

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institution, Religious, Cultural, Social or otherwise bears the impress of his work. His long tenure of leadership as Chairman of the Council since its inception in 1949 will always remain a cherished memory. It was under his able captaincy that the Council was steered through difficult times and the care and welfare of our brethren in China enhanced. Every Jew who is or has been in China will remember R.D. Abraham with gratitude and affection.

Mr. Ezekiel Abraham: Equally noted for religious and charitable activities is Mr. E Abraham who served as Hon. Treasurer of the Council until his subsequent departure from Shanghai. During a long period of social work, he gave unstintingly of his time and energy in the cause of communal welfare, and his cheerful readiness to assist any one who applied to him had endeared him to all and has made his name synonymous with selfless service.

Mr. K.I. Kushner: Mr. K.I Kushner served as member of the Council and later succeeded Mr. E. Abraham as Hon. Treasurer. Though his service was brief, his work with marked distinction will be long remembered.

Mr. N.L Schifrin: Mr. N. Schifrin succeeded Mr. Kushner as Hon. Treasurer of the Council. In addition to the many works devolved upon him due to the departure of honorary members of the Council, Mr. Schifrin had inaugurated a Hebrew Class and taught the Jewish children with admirable fervency to see that those children were well-equipped Hebraically. Mr. Schifrin has rendered invaluable services to the community in many facets.

Staff: Mr. A.M Bagg continued in rendering invaluable service up till his departure in March 1957. The Council staff consists mainly of Chinese who have worked many years with the Jewish organisations and have performed their duties to the full satisfaction of the Council.

4 thoughts on “Council of the Jewish Community of Shanghai, 1956”

1. **faith goldman**

Do you have the records from 1957-1958? I have all of the other years from 1952

🕒 **OCTOBER 18, 2018 AT 8:00 PM** [↩](#) **REPLY**

HK Heritage

Hi Faith, Thanks for your email. I'm not sure of our holdings on the Council of the Jewish Community of Shanghai, the best bet

would be to contact our archivist at:

enquiry@hongkongheritage.org she will be able to give you a full account of our records. With best wishes, Amelia

🕒 **OCTOBER 23, 2018 AT 12:07 PM ↔ REPLY**

1. **faith goldman**

Hello again from the widow of Shanghailander Robert Goldman – Faith Goldman. There is one more piece of Robert’s life I have been not able to get. About 30 or so “kids” went to a private school in Shanghai from 1950/51 to 1953. All of the students that went there called it Ms. Cubbins and it was a 2 story Tudor like home in the French section. Ms. Cubbins and her other teachers had been at the British School in 1950. No one has been able to recall the address the school/house was on. It may have had some funding from the Joint. It is important to me as I wanted to know how far away it was for this 11 year old to travel from his home on 146 Kingchow Road. I’ve interviewed and met several of the students. Any thoughts of where to find this information? Thanks, Faith Goldman

🕒 **NOVEMBER 12, 2018 AT 8:46 PM**

2. **faith goldman**

I just sent an email to the archivist and hope to get a reply soon. Thank you for getting back to me. The more authentic paperwork I have from those years 1950-1958, the more alive become the memories of my Shanghai Bob. Thanks for your response. Faith Goldman

🕒 **NOVEMBER 12, 2018 AT 8:28 PM ↔ REPLY**

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