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newsletter until his death in September 2006, responding to the original mandate of those Polish-Americans who so eagerly wanted to connect with their culture and to convey the self-esteem and the rich cultural heritage of Poland to their children and their future generations. □

Shanghai from 7

early 1930's was small, about two to three hundred people. They lived mostly in the French concession of the city. They were mostly connected with companies, such as, the Polish Import and Export Co., and the Far Eastern Textile Company. Polish Catholic missionaries often stopped in Shanghai on their way to various missions in the Chinese interior, such as, at the Urumqi Catholic Mission in the western Xingjiang province where there was a large Slavic community. Other Poles went to Shanghai during that early period took up professional positions there, such as, at the Shanghai's St. Mary Hospital and the mostly Russian attended Public Thomas Hanbury School, otherwise known to us Shanghai residents as "PTH". Thus, in the early part of the 1930's the Poles in Shanghai lived a stable and comfortable life. There were a few Polish restaurants and the Polish Club sponsored dances, lectures, political discussions, poetry reading and other social events.

4. Things changed in the late 1930's after the Japanese encroachment in Manchuria. After the Japanese took over from the Russians the railroads and other interests, the thousands of Polish professionals had to leave Manchuria, especially from the city of Harbin. Shanghai was a natural choice for most of them and the number of Poles there jumped from a mere couple of hundred to a couple of thousand. Since there was already a large Russian community in Shanghai, the newly arriving Poles received a lot of help from them and close ties with them. But, unlike the Russian refugees who had no diplomatic representation, the Poles initially enjoyed the presence of a Polish Consulate who represented them. But, it was short-lived because of the outbreak of WWII after the Polish government went into exile in London and the Poles in Shanghai became 'stateless'.

5. During the summer of 1941, a new wave of Polish refugees arrived in Shanghai. They came from the yeshivas, or centers of advanced Talmudic learning, in Poland and Lithuania, recognized by many worldwide as institutions of learning fostering "authentic Judaism". An international effort was mounted during the war to rescue the hundreds of rabbis and their yeshiva students from the Holocaust and found refuge for many of them in Shanghai. The ones that managed to land in Shanghai were only able to do so through the help of "Japan's Schindler", the Japanese Vice Consul, Sugihara Chiune at Kaunas in Holland, who defied his instructions from Tokyo and issued transit visas to those

scholars and allowed them to pass through Japan on their way to Shanghai. A thousand or more of them Jews were able to obtain visas and because of their presence those Polish Orthodox Jewish scholars made Shanghai one of the world's leading centers of Jewish studies. Among the refugees registered with Polish authorities during the 1940-1941 period included the famous Mirrer yeshiva, the most complete yeshiva to escape Nazi Europe, and members of the yeshivas of Kletsk, Telsh, Lublin, and Lubavitz. While the original intention of the refugees was to stay in Shanghai for six months and then emigrate to the U.S., only the few of the famous rabbis made it in 1941. A few managed to go on to Canada, but the majority of the Orthodox group could not leave and stayed in Shanghai until after the end of the war. As stated earlier, their presence in Shanghai made the city one of the most active centers of Jewish studies in the world. For this learned Polish intelligentsia, Shanghai became a temporary way station in which to survive and weather the war years.

6. When time came for the Polish refugees to be moved into the ghetto, most of them being the yeshiva rabbis and students, they resisted. They argued that they were not in fact stateless since there was an internationally recognized Polish government in exile in London. The Polish Embassy in Tokyo had moreover established a Committee of Relief for Polish Citizens with a counterpart organization in Shanghai, the Polish Aid Society. But, when Japan followed the lead of her Axis allies, Tokyo declared the Polish state non-existent and ordered the Polish embassy closed in the summer of 1941. The embassy staff then evacuated to Shanghai where they were able to board a neutral vessel and proceeded to Lourenco Marques for internment. But before he left, the Polish ambassador, Tadeusz Romer, set up a body called the Polish Consular Commission to represent the Polish government in exile. The Polish Jewish leaders were then able to petition that Commission for help to exempt them from being transferred to the ghetto.

7. Then followed a curious situation for the status of the Poles in Shanghai. The Nazis had established a new government in Poland that was subordinate to the Germans. Therefore, Poles associated with the old Polish state who had arrived in Shanghai before 1937 might have been candidates for internment along with Allied nationals.

After all, the Japanese had accepted the evacuation of the Polish embassy from Tokyo and Polish officials from Shanghai and considered the Poles to be anti-Axis but not really enemy nationals. Taking that view, the Japanese grouped the pre-1937 Polish residents together with the Russian and other Slavs who had arrived before 1937 as belonging to a group not slated for internment. Since the Russian refugees did not have to move into the ghetto, the pre-1937 Polish residents, including the Jewish refugees among them, escaped from being moved into the ghetto. Things were, of course, not very clear-cut. The Japanese were very flexible when it came to the Polish Jews. The rabbis and yeshiva

students were granted repeated extensions on their move into the ghetto until they could find suitable housing there, and that did not happen until 1944.

8. Still, of all the refugee groups, the Polish Jews put the most resistance to the move into the ghetto. When the yeshiva students learned that they were to be moved into the ghetto in Hongkew, a hundred of them protested forcefully to the Jewish organizations coordinating the move. Some Polish refugees were determined to resist the move and even preferred to go to jail. A few did go to jail and died there after contracting typhus. The recalcitrance of the Polish Jews did not endear them to the Japanese or the other European Jews. The different levels of religious commitment among the European Jews also created tensions among them. The Polish and Baltic Jews, with their yeshivas and Talmud Torah learning centers, were the most devout, a fact that impressed the Russian Jewish community, but tended to set them apart within the Hongkew (ghetto) Jewish community. With their advanced religious training and devotion, these Orthodox Jews considered themselves guardians of "authentic Judaism" and as such superior to the other Jewish groups in Shanghai. The differences in their religious services and food preparation also divided the Poles from German and Austrian Jews, as did their Yiddish language and culture.

9. Finally, why Shanghai, China? That is because Shanghai became a Treaty Port in the mid 19th century after China lost the opium war to England. The city became one of the first five Treaty Ports where foreign powers (England, France, Germany, and the U.S.) enjoyed extraterritorial privileges. The city of Shanghai was divided into a French sector, called the French Concession, and an International Settlement where Britain and America had a franchise to rule over it. The city became an open-city in that anyone could go there without a visa. That is why it became a haven for European refugees fleeing persecution in Europe throughout the 1930's and 1940's. When the Japanese began to encroach on China in the late 1930's they began to occupy areas outside of the International Settlement and the French Concession. After she attacked Pearl Harbor, her forces moved in and took over the whole city. As a result, up to 35,000 to 40,000 foreigners including millions of Chinese came under their control and occupation.

I hope that you find this information interesting. I have heard a number of testimonials by survivors of the Shanghai ghetto, but from a very few Chinese. Here is a bit of that history not from a survivor of that ghetto, but from a Chinese who lived near it and saw what had happened first-hand. In fact, I attended a high school that happened to be located inside the ghetto. I had to go there every day and pass by that Garden Bridge where I had to get off the bicycle as I passed by the sentry on the bridge. I knew what it was like in the ghetto. It was almost like going into a very poor section of a European city, I thought.

Best regards.

Bill Chiang

P.S. I got most of the above information from an excellent book, entitled, "PORT OF LAST RESORT - Diaspora Communities of Shanghai" by Marcia Reynders Ristaino, Stanford University Press, 2001. □

cafes, pubs and watching various performances or seeing the art exhibition.

Outskirts

Despite the fact that there's a lot to do in Poznań, I suggest that you organize a tour to nearby towns which will familiarize you with various historical moments and traditions. You might choose to move around by Trasa Kórnicka (a vehicle route which circles Poznań), which, to my mind, is one of the most fascinating.

First of all, the town of Kórnik is a cool destination. You'll be able to drop in on the Dzialynskis Castle that is located here, as well as the arboretum which surrounds the castle. In addition to this, you'll have a chance to spend a bit of your time at a lake.

Next "must-see" place is Rogalin, located 20km south from Poznań, which was once owned by the Raczyński Family. This baroque-classical residence is now a part of the National Museum that hosts the works of famous Polish artists, including Jan Matejko, Jacek Malczewski, Stanisław Wyspiański, Julian Fałat, and Olga Boznańska, among others. Rogalin is also well-known for its natural features of historic importance, i.e. Dęby Rogalińskie (Oaks of Rogalin), which are placed on the land of Rogalin Landscape Park.

Trasa Kórnicka (by way of Kórnik) then brings us to Puszczykowo, which is a small town located just outside Poznań. It is located on the edge of the Wielkopolski National Park as well, and so it has so much to offer to tourists. Not only are you capable of enjoying yourself in the forest, but you are also able to see many historical buildings, mainly from the beginning of the 20th century, and have fun at the Arkady Fiedler Museum. Arkady Fiedler is renowned for his journeys and essays he wrote describing his expeditions and what he actually found interesting about them.

Speaking of Wielkopolski National Park, is another area you should see. Whether you want to breathe the fresh air or you want to chase the animals, you can certainly enjoy yourself here. The most exciting part of the Park is Góreckie Lake, located right in the middle of the Park. Next to it, there is the headquarters of the Directorship of the Wielkopolski National Park with a museum inside the building. From there, you can go by "Greiserówka," which is a pad built during the Second World War that ultimately connects two cities that lays on the opposite edges of the Park. It derives from the name of the actual governor of the Third Reich, Arthur Greiser, who governed the Reichsgau Wartheland.

The last stage of the journey around Poznań is Szreniawa where you can find the ultimate amber of its kind, the National Museum of Agriculture and Agricultural and Food Industry. The exposition includes steam engines, farm wagons, timber-made monuments, forest bee-keeping devices, etc. This is an amazing place that will remind you of the technological advancement of the 21st century. It will also make a strong impression on those who have never imagined how people were able to deal with ordinary activities a few decades ago.

Besides the above, you can also go to Gniezno, Ostrów Lednicki and other places that will surely impress you with their historical background.

All in all, there is really a lot to experience inside of Poznań, and around the capital of Wielkopolska. It is up to you as to what you would like to do and enjoy. My description is only a mere encouragement to potentially bring you to Poznań. As I wrote in my prior column, the city is easily accessible and it has flight connections with major European airports. What's more, it is really convenient to get to Poznań from Berlin by train. After all, you never know what you can expect from a Polish city after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the accession to the European Union. Enjoy your vacation! □

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Janek's Corner - Poznań from 4

Malta is definitely going to be a cool experience. It is quite a big area with animals typical for various environmental zones. To get to the zoo, you can take a narrow-gauge steam train which is totally awesome. You'd better take care of your head as the train is designed for kids mostly.

After sight-seeing, you should definitely enter the night life of Poznań. This opens quite a big door since there are plenty of pubs and clubs that will have you entertained till the following morning. Most of them are located in the very center of the city, but you should also sneak into Stary Browar which is a shopping mall with an "art courtyard." Not only can you shop here, but you can also have fun in the cinema,