

Israel Liberman



My father, Israel Liberman, was born in 1898 in Bialystok, Poland, in an Orthodox Jewish family. My father had a traditional Jewish education and also finished secondary school. He spoke both Yiddish and Polish. Later, in Harbin, he learned Russian and a little bit of English. In 1920, my father decided to go from Poland to America, but the route he took was unusual. He traveled via Russia to China. He stopped in Harbin because he lacked the money to go on. At that time, Harbin could be considered a Russian town; Russian was the most widely spoken language. The Jewish community in Harbin was quite large. My mother, Anna Yasinover, was born in 1893 in Ananyev. She only had an elementary education. My parents married in 1920. I was born in Harbin in 1923, and I was an only child. I lived there until 1938 and went to the English school. My parents spoke Yiddish among themselves and Russian and Yiddish with me. We had a very cozy, comfortable four-room flat. We read newspapers in Russian, English, and my father read in Yiddish. In China, my father wrote articles for American newspapers and he received an honorarium. In 1938, we moved to Shanghai after fascist organizations appeared in Harbin. My father opened a print shop, and he had orders from the Polish Embassy in China to print an advertising catalogue, because Poland wanted to recover trade with Japan and China. Father was in Poland preparing the catalogues on September 1, 1939. We never saw him again. We had been waiting for permission to go to the USA and we got it at the end of 1939. My mother believed Father return from Poland and that he would not find us

if we left for the USA, so we stayed in Shanghai. I met my future husband, Paul Zauer, in 1942. My relatives did not like it that he was Russian, and his relatives did not like it that I was Jewish. To us, it did not matter. We were going out for almost two years, and our parents accepted it in the end. My husband and I were married for 44 years. The national question was never a cause of quarrel or difference of opinions between us.