

Jews and began offering refugees free medical treatment, food and dwellings.

The relationship of the Jews with the locals was purely of a business nature. On the other hand, Avner Sassoon explains that from the social aspect, it was easier for Jews of Middle Eastern origin, such as those from Halab, to foster social contact with the Moslem committee in Kobe, because they shared a similar culture, and of course a common language.

There was hardly any distinct anti-Semitic activity in Japan. Owing to the locals' lack of knowledge about the Jews, the latter were usually perceived merely as "foreigners", like other residents who were not native Japanese.

After their defeat in the WWII, says David Moshe, the sense of humiliation in Japan was so great, that any foreigner found there was regarded by the Japanese as though he had won against their country!

Establishment of "Ohel Shlomo" Synagogue

After the War, Rahmo Sassoon pursued his business and at the

same time assisted the American Occupation Forces in Japan. His cousin, **David Sassoon**, established there David Sassoon & Co., which was the biggest supplier to these forces during the post-war period. He had a Syrian passport - Syria was officially neutral during WWII – and as such he served as a go-between the Japanese and the American military forces.



Around 1969. Right to left: Rahmo Sassoon (with the plan of the new synagogue), Olga Josue and Ezra Choueke. (Fourth person not recognized)

מיסיון לשמאל : רחמו שסון, אולגה ג'וסה, עזרא שוויקה ואדס ג'וסף אחוזים בקרקעות בית הכנסת החדש בסוף שנות השישים

At the end of the 1960's, after Rahmo had sold the rights in the parcel of land to his brother **Edmond**, the Jewish community leaders chose this as the ideal location for building a new synagogue. This was after the former synagogue in the city had been destroyed by air bombings during WWII.

The province chosen was "**Kitano-cho**", in which the current synagogue is located. The region contains not only a synagogue but a cluster of religious structures, including a Russian Orthodox church, a Catholic church and a Moslem mosque, all of which are located on a hill overlooking the city of Kobe, within walking distance from the business center and close to "Kobe Club".

The funding required for building the synagogue was raised from contributions. **Victor Kelly**, who came to Kobe in 1935 from Burma, helped with this project.

The opening ceremony of Ohel Shlomo Synagogue took place on March 10, 1970 - attended by Japanese religious figures, public officials and other local dignitaries.

From its early days, the synagogue reflected the prosperity and generosity of its founders – merchants engaged in the textile, silk and pearl trade. At first, the building housed not only a synagogue but also a Hebrew School. In 1971, the synagogue was registered with the Japanese