

saw that things were good, and decided to remain there. With the outbreak of WWII and the Japanese government's involvement alongside Nazi Germany, the community's businesses were affected and the concerns of the Jewish population gradually increased. However, the Japanese authorities endeavored to treat them well and to give them a sense of security.

Thus, the founder of the community, Rahmo, like the rest of the Jews, chose to remain in Kobe: it was just difficult to give up property and land. When the war intensified, the Nazi German government wanted to open an embassy in Kobe, and for this purpose to demolish the synagogue there. However, the Japanese government refused to go along with this.

German officers began to appear in the streets of Kobe, in an effort to investigate the activity of Kobe Jews who had helped smuggle thousands of Jews from Eastern Europe and hide them in their homes, after they had obtained transit visas to Japan from the Japanese Consul in Lita, Sugihara (who was later declared a



On the main road in front of the synagogue-Picture taken in the 1950's. From right to left: Rahmo Sassoon, Olga Josue, Renee Sassoon (wife of Rahmo) and Fadila Moche
 הרחוב הראשי בקובה בשנת ת-50, ליד מבנה בית-הכנסת; המנצולמים, מימין לשמאל:
 רחמו ששון, אולגה יוסיו, רנה ששון (אשתו של רחמו) ופדילה משה.

righteous gentile by Yad Vashem). Due to the growing concerns of community members, Rahmo painted the gold letters appearing on the façade of "Ohel Shlomo" synagogue in a dark color so that the location of the synagogue would be less conspicuous to the Nazi officers walking about the city. But the Chief of Police in Kobe assured Rahmo Sassoon that he would protect the Jews and offered to restore the letters to their original gold color – which he did.

As a rule, the Jews received comparatively good treatment at the hands of the Japanese authorities. The Japanese Consul

in Lita, Sugihara, helped some 5,000 Jews to find refuge in Japan, despite the fact that Japan was an ally of Nazi Germany. His actions were contrary to the Japanese government's official stand and thus he was deposed from office. At the same time, a large number of Japanese rulers believed that the Jews had access and contacts to various sources throughout the world, as well as a considerable influence which could be beneficial for Japan. Many Japanese people expressed their sympathy for the Jews, particularly after the atom bombing of their country. They identified with the suffering of the