JEWISH REFUGEES IN SHANGHAI (1933-1941)

chronicles the story of thousands of European Jews who fled to China to escape Nazi persecution.

This exhibit is a collaborative community effort to share information about the unique experiences of Jewish refugees in Shanghai during World War II.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 1 – FRIDAY, SEPT. 30

EDITH O’DONNELL ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY BUILDING AUDITORIUM
ON THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS CAMPUS
Historical Background

In the 1930s, as Jewish refugees attempted to escape persecution and war in Europe, they had few options partially due to immigration restrictions imposed by many countries. The city of Shanghai was one of the few exceptions. Although there had been a small Jewish presence in Shanghai for decades, from 1933 to 1941 Shanghai accepted significant numbers of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi-occupied regions. Most refugees were from Germany and Austria, but a significant number were students of the famed Mir Yeshiva, that had been relocated from Poland to Lithuania, the only yeshiva in occupied Europe to survive the Holocaust. In the “Designated Area for Stateless Refugees” in the Ti Lan Qiao historic area of Shanghai, Jewish refugees lived harmoniously with local Chinese, overcoming numerous difficulties together. Though living conditions in Shanghai were often severe, most of the refugees survived, and many went on to lead remarkable lives. David Kranzler, a Holocaust historian, described it as the “Miracle of Shanghai.”

A visa was not required to enter Shanghai, under Japanese control at the time, but it was an indispensable document for Jews desperate to leave areas in Europe under Nazi control. Essentially, the visa to Shanghai was the “exit visa” for Jewish people to find their way to other countries and escape Nazi Europe. Because of help offered by Dr. He Fengshan (Ho Feng Shan), the consul of the China’s embassy in Vienna, Austria, and Chiune Sugihara, the consul of the Japanese embassy in Lithuania, roughly 18,000 European Jews found sanctuary in Shanghai.

Today, in the Ti Lan Qiao Historic Area, the original features of the Jewish settlement have been well preserved, sustaining this legacy of Shanghai’s Jewish past.

Dr. He Fengshan (Ho Feng Shan, 1901-1997), the consul general of the Chinese government’s consulate in Vienna from 1938 to 1940, issued visas to a large number of Jews desperately seeking a way to escape Nazi-occupied Austria. It is unknown how many visas He Fengshan issued, but given the fact that he issued 1,908 visas to Jews during the first six months at his post, the actual number is believed to be in several thousands.

Chiune Sugihara used his position as vice-consul at Japan’s diplomatic mission in Kaunas, Lithuania to issue life-saving transit permits for Jewish families fleeing Poland after Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union invaded in 1939. He helped an estimated 1,000 Polish Jews escape to Shanghai.
“Jewish Refugees in Shanghai (1933-1941)” is a traveling exhibition which brings together photos and personal stories, from the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum. Located in the former Ohel Moshe Synagogue in the Ti Lan Qiao Historical Area, the museum has played a significant role in educating local and international visitors about the compelling stories of Jewish refugees in Shanghai. The 40 panel exhibit highlights historical content and biographies of many “Shanghailanders” who escaped Europe and made Shanghai their temporary home.

**Schedule of Events**

**Thursday, Sept. 1 – Friday, Sept. 30**  
“Jewish Refugees in Shanghai (1933-1941)”

Openings Ceremony with a Private Reception

**Thursday, Sept. 1, 5:30-7 p.m.**

Opening Ceremony with a Private Reception

**Saturday, Sept. 10, 7 p.m.**

Lecture by Prof. Pan Guang, “The Jews in China”

Dr. Pan Guang will introduce the history of “Jews in China”— how the culture and tradition of immigrant Jews drew upon and was enriched by China, and how they exerted their influence on the China's cultural and social life.

Dr. Pan Guang is vice Chairman and professor of Shanghai Center for International Studies, dean of Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai (CJSS) and vice president of Chinese Association of Middle East Studies. He has lectured around the world and published books and articles on topics including “The Jews in China,” “The Jews in Asia: Comparative Perspective,” “The Jews in Shanghai” and “The Political and Cultural Impact of the Holocaust.”

**Sunday, Sept. 18, 4 p.m.**

Film Screenings: “A Gift of Life” and “Shanghai Ghetto”

A screening of two short documentary films about the stories of Jewish refugees in Shanghai will be followed by a discussion with Dr. Mingdong Gu, director of Confucius Institute, and Dr. Nils Roemer, director of Ackerman Center of Holocaust Studies at the University of Texas at Dallas.

**Sunday, Sept. 25, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.**

“Wind from the East” Concert

A Chinese folk music concert presented by UT Dallas Confucius Institute's Folk Music Band and the art troupe from Beijing Normal University.

*All Events will be held in the Edith O'Donnell Arts and Technology Building Auditorium, except for the Film Screenings on September 18, which will be in Davidson Auditorium (JSOM 1.118).*