



## **Guide to the Jews in Shanghai Collection 1933-2002 AR 2509**

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## Summary Information

**Repository:** Leo Baeck Institute  
**Creator:** Leo Baeck Institute  
**Title:** Jews in Shanghai Collection  
**Identifier:** AR 2509  
**Date:** 1933-2002  
**Physical Description:** 0.75 Linear Feet

## Overview

The Jews in Shanghai Collection contains an assortment of original and photocopied documentation of Jews in Shanghai during the 1930s and 1940s. In addition it includes an abundance of personal narratives, newspaper clippings and scholarly articles on this subject as well as on the origins of the Jewish Community in Shanghai.

## Historical Note

Shanghai became a haven for Jews fleeing Nazi persecution because until August 1939 the International Settlement of the city required no visa, financial affidavits or other documents. These refugees became known as "Shanghaianders."

A Jewish community had already existed in the city with the arrival of Sephardic Jews from Baghdad, India and Hong Kong beginning in the mid-1800s. By 1930, their population was estimated to be around 1,000 individuals; many of the Sephardim were well-off economically and owned businesses with some possessing British citizenship. They had two synagogues, a cemetery, a school, a newspaper and in 1934 established the Shanghai Jewish Hospital. Shanghai also had a community of around 10,000 Russian Jews who had emigrated following the Russian Revolutions.

German Jews began emigrating to Shanghai in 1933. In August 1937 the Japanese occupied Shanghai. Due to the increased persecutions by the Nazis in Europe and the annexations of Austria and Czechoslovakia, immigration had swelled by 1939 (estimates vary from about 13,000 to 18,000 refugees). The financial restrictions imposed on Jewish immigrants from Germany meant that many reached Shanghai nearly destitute and several agencies were established to aid the new arrivals, in addition to aid from abroad from organizations such as the American Joint Distribution Committee and others. Most of the refugees settled in the area of Shanghai called Hongkew (Hongkou) due to its lower rents and prices, where refugee housing was established (called "Heime").

The refugees received much support from the Jewish residents already in Shanghai. The Committee for Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai (often called the Speelman Committee) was founded to organize funds to house, clothe and feed refugees and the Beth Aharon synagogue became a reception center and soup kitchen. In 1939, Victor Sassoon, a prominent businessman in the community, established the Embankment Fund, which loaned funds to refugees, allowing them to set up businesses of their own to support themselves; he also donated premises for a Refugee Thrift Shop and housing. In June of that year the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association was begun (formerly the Kadoorie School), which provided education and recreation for the children.

Many of the refugees supported themselves by selling their possessions or by becoming peddlers. Other established small businesses, including tailors, milliners, grocers, and coffeehouses, along with doctors

and dentists. Some small factories produced European-style foods. The Shanghai Jewish Community had several newspapers as well sports and cultural organizations such as the Shanghai Musicians' Association.

In August 1939 some immigration restrictions began to be imposed on Jewish immigrants. In June of 1940 Italy, from whose ports most ships left for Shanghai, declared war, and the immigration from Europe significantly waned. Thereafter the only route left to immigrants to Shanghai was via Lithuania, across the Soviet Union and Siberia by way of Korea or Japan, a route which was cut off the following year when Germany invaded the Soviet Union and the war intensified in the Pacific.

On November 15, 1942, the idea of a restricted ghetto was approved, and announced on February 18, 1943. All stateless refugees who had arrived after 1937 were restricted to a designated area in Hongkew (Hongkou) now called the "Restricted Section for Stateless Refugees." The economic situation for many worsened since they could not leave the section without a pass, often difficult to acquire from the Japanese official Kano Ghoya, of the Stateless Refugees' Affairs Bureau, who termed himself the "King of the Jews."

The ghetto was liberated on September 3, 1945. Most refugees left during the late 1940s, many for the United States or Israel.

## Scope and Content Note

The Jews in Shanghai Collection contains documentation of Jewish refugees in Shanghai, narratives of their personal experiences and general and academic articles on the Shanghai Jewish Community and the history of Jews in China. The collection includes original and photocopied documents of individuals, memorabilia, newspaper clippings, articles, dissertations, lecture texts, notes, lists of former Shanghai refugees, a few photographs and information on archival holdings at other institutions related to Shanghai Jews. Much of the collection consists of photocopied documents.

Documentation on the Shanghai Jewish Community and on individuals will be found in [Series I](#). Such material is composed of copies of official documentation such as identity cards and vaccination certificates, but also includes a few copies of personal letters and a copy of a boy's scouting logbook. In addition it includes correspondence of B'nai B'rith, the Committee for Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai and the American Joint Distribution Committee relating to immigration and refugee assistance. This series also holds papers from a scrapbook for the Shanghai Musicians Association of Stateless Refugees.

The stories of individuals' experiences in Shanghai will primarily be found in [Series III](#), in the form of articles, newspaper clippings, lecture notes and an interview. These include narratives from wealthier members of society, such as businessman William Shurtman who arrived in Shanghai in 1931, as well as of later arrivals who were often less fortunate. Some of the lectures in [Series II](#) also mention personal experiences.

[Series III](#) additionally holds a large amount of articles on the history and development of the Shanghai Jewish Community. Among the topics discussed are the origins of the community prior to the Holocaust, the large wave of immigration following Nazi persecution and its effect on the community, the work of refugee aid organizations, the establishment of the ghetto in Hongkew (Hongkou), and the relationship between the Japanese occupation administration and the Jewish refugees. A smaller amount of articles on the Shanghai Community are present in the conference materials of [Series II](#).

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged in three series:

[Series I: Shanghai Documentation, 1933-1958, 1995-1997](#)

[Series II: Reunions and Conferences, 1939-1947, 1994-2004](#)

[Series III: Articles, Newspaper Clippings and Research, 1944-2002](#)

## **Related Material**

The LBI Library, Archives and Memoir Collection contain many books, archival collections and memoirs that relate individuals' experiences in Shanghai. The collections of the YIVO Archives, also located at the Center for Jewish History, also hold many materials on the Shanghai Jewish Community. For further information researchers should consult the online catalog.

## **Separated Material**

Photocopies of documents already in the collection were removed during processing.

## **Other Finding Aid**

Four catalog cards describe a few items in the collection.

## **Access Restrictions**

Open to researchers.

## **Access Information**

Collection is digitized. Follow the links in the [Container List](#) to access the digitized materials.

## **Use Restrictions**

There may be some restrictions on the use of the collection. For more information, contact:

Leo Baeck Institute, Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011

email: [lbaeck@lbi.cjh.org](mailto:lbaeck@lbi.cjh.org)

## **Preferred Citation**

Published citations should take the following form:

Identification of item, date (if known); Jews in Shanghai Collection; AR 2509; box number; folder number; Leo Baeck Institute.

## **Processing Information**

The collection was reprocessed in May 2013. Documents were arranged by type of material, topic and author.

## Language of Materials

The collection is in English, German, Chinese, Hebrew and a very small amount of Italian.

## Administrative Information

### Publication Statement

Leo Baeck Institute

15 West 16th Street  
New York, NY, 10011

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<https://www.lbi.org>

### Controlled Access Headings

- American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
- Articles
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Committee for Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai
- Correspondence
- Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai
- Guang, Pan
- Hirsch, Claus
- Hongkou Qu (Shanghai, China)
- Identity cards
- Interviews
- Jewish Community of Shanghai
- Jewish refugees
- Jews -- China -- Shanghai
- Jews -- China -- Shanghai -- Exhibitions
- Jews -- China -- Shanghai -- History -- 20th century
- Jews -- Social conditions
- Kauffmann, Fritz
- Lectures
- Lists (document genres)
- Memoirs
- Notes (documents)
- Programs (documents)
- Shanghai (China : International Settlement)
- Shanghai (China)
- Shanghai Musicians Association of Stateless Refugees.
- Shurtman, William
- Tischler, Henry L.
- Typescripts
- Verein Gedenkdienst (1992- )
- Weiss, Wolfgang

### Collection Inventory

Series I: Shanghai Documentation, 1933-1958, 1995-1997

## Arrangement

Alphabetical.

## Scope and Contents

Series I consists of documentation - largely photocopies – of Jews and Jewish institutions in Shanghai. It includes correspondence, personal papers of individuals, and items from a scrapbook for the Shanghai Musicians Association of Stateless Refugees.

The first three folders hold correspondence. A small amount of original administrative correspondence of B'nai B'rith includes a letter to Rabbi Leo Baeck regarding the type of physicians needed in Shanghai along with a list of necessary skills. A larger folder holds photocopies of letters relating to Shanghai immigration and the work of aiding Shanghai refugees. These include some copies of newspaper articles sent with the letters. Most of this correspondence is from representatives of the Committee for Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai. The subjects addressed include the establishment of businesses in Shanghai by immigrants, responses to donations given to aid Shanghai Jews, and a report on professions in Shanghai. A significant amount of correspondence concerns discussion of Jakob Berglas's proposed plan to resettle Jews in Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province in southwest China; this plan was ultimately rejected. Postwar correspondence primarily pertains to the 1958 relocation of the Shanghai Jewish Cemetery; with these letters is also an unidentified list of timelines and correspondents from 1930s-1950s with some information on the community.

Many of the other folders in this series holds copies of documents of various individuals, including of their official papers, such as identity cards, vaccination certificates, passport pages and marriage certificates. Paula Laufer's papers document her brother's attempts to have her join him in Shanghai; due to a missing envelope her immigration paperwork was deemed invalid and she was transported to Minsk on September 14, 1942. One folder (1/5) holds various identity cards and an announcement regarding delegates to the 22nd Zionist Congress; on the backside of Friedrich Melchior's identity card is a farewell letter to Kano Ghoya, the Japanese administrator of the Shanghai ghetto. Related may be an oversized series of caricatures depicting Ghoya by an F. Melchior. Notable is the postwar "Brown Six Logbook" of Claus Hirsch, which records his scouting meetings in Shanghai from 1946-1947, including mentions of scouting activities, games, and sports.

The final folder of this series holds documents, mostly photocopied, from the pages of a scrapbook of the Shanghai Musicians Association. Included are two original photographs of the group, newspaper clippings, a list of members, concert flyers, identity cards for a few members, and a few letters regarding administrative concerns.

## Language of Materials

This series is in German, English, Chinese, Hebrew and a small amount of Italian.

**Physical** 0.2 Linear Feet

### Description:

Correspondence – B'nai B'rith, 1933

Box 1; Folder 1 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n0/mode/1up>

Correspondence – Immigration and Refugee Aid, 1939-1940

Box 1; Folder 2 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n7/mode/1up>

Correspondence – Postwar, undated, 1949-1958

Box 1; Folder 3 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n87/mode/1up>

Hirsch, Claus – Brown Six Logbook, 1946-1947, 1997

Box 1; Folder 4 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n123/mode/1up>

Identity Cards and Announcement, undated, 1941-1946

Box 1; Folder 5 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n170/mode/1up>

Krips, Sonja, 1939-1941

Box 1; Folder 6 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n174/mode/1up>

Laufer, Paula, 1939-1950

Box 1; Folder 7 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n184/mode/1up>

Muller, Henry, 1942, 1996?

Box 1; Folder 8 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n203/mode/1up>

Oversized - Caricatures - "The Former King of Hongkew", after 1945?

Box OS 78; Folder [unknown] (Mixed Materials)

Roubicek, Lisbeth, 1939-1947, 1995

Box 1; Folder 9 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n207/mode/1up>

Shanghai Musicians Association of Stateless Refugees – Scrapbook, 1941-1949

Box 1; Folder 10 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n219/mode/1up>

Series II: Reunions and Conferences, 1939-1947, 1994-2004

## Arrangement

Alphabetical.

## Scope and Contents

Series II contains documents on reunions of former Jewish Shanghai residents and academic conferences on the Shanghai Jewish Community. Two folders hold programs on reunions while the remainder of the series relates to the conference "Flucht nach Shanghai" in Vienna, partially sponsored by the Austrian "Verein Gedenkdiens." Among the conference materials are texts of lectures, which reflect on the personal experiences of various individuals and comment on the importance of Shanghai to them. Some information on the history of Jews in Shanghai, including the establishment of the Sephardic and Russian Jewish communities, is also present.

## Language of Materials

This series is in English, German and a small amount of Chinese.

**Physical** 0.1 Linear Feet

## Description:



Association of Former Central European Refugees from Shanghai – Fifteenth Anniversary – Program, 1964

Box 1; Folder 11 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n271/mode/1up>

Flucht nach Shanghai – Salzburg Conference – Lecture Texts and Programs, 1995

Box 1; Folder 12 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n292/mode/1up>

Flucht nach Shanghai – Salzburg Conference – Newspaper Clippings, Articles, Lists, 1995

Box 1; Folder 13 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n383/mode/1up>

Flucht nach Shanghai – Salzburg Conference – Oversized Poster, 1995

Box OS 78; Folder [unknown] (Mixed Materials)

Flucht nach Shanghai – Salzburg Conference – Shanghai Correspondence and Articles, 1939-1947, 1994

Box 1; Folder 14 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n429/mode/1up>

Rickshaw Reunion, 2004

Box 1; Folder 15 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n491/mode/1up>

Series III: Articles, Newspaper Clippings and Research, 1944-2002

## Arrangement

Alphabetical.

## Scope and Contents

Series III holds various articles and newspaper clippings on the Shanghai Jewish Community during World War II by a number of individuals. These articles include some newspaper clippings from Shanghai newspapers during the 1940s. Most of the articles in this series are written by scholars and researchers on the subject, however some personal recollections may also be found here. Among these are the experiences of Fritz Kauffmann, a businessman at a German firm who arrived in Shanghai in 1931; notes by Herta Shriner; a term paper with personal details and an interview of William Shurtman; and the unpublished *Shanghaier Novellen* by Wilhelm Weiss, which tell the stories of six immigrants (Ilona Golonczy, Michael Kock, Paul Marin, Baron Zalenka, and Karl and Emma Tobias). Among the articles by various individuals is a copy of Laura Margolis's 1944 "Stranded in Shanghai;" Margolis represented the American Joint Distribution Committee in Shanghai and coordinated much of the aid there, especially after the establishment of the ghetto.

Information on research material consists of lists of archival material at other institutions and lists of Shanghai Jews. Among the correspondence of the Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai is a report on the availability of records on Jews in Shanghai in 1994.

## Language of Materials

This series is in German, English and Chinese.

**Physical** 0.45 Linear Feet  
**Description:**

Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai - Correspondence, 1994

Box 1; Folder 16 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n504/mode/1up>

Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai – List of Central European Jewish Refugees who Died in Shanghai 1940-1945, 2001

Box 1; Folder 17 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n515/mode/1up>

Guang, Pan – Articles on the History of Jews in China, undated

Box 1; Folder 18 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n545/mode/1up>

Halevy, Yehuda – Speech Excerpt – Sephardic Jews in Shanghai, 1995

Box 1; Folder 19 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n628/mode/1up>

Kauffmann, Fritz – The Experiences of the Shanghai Jewish Community under the Japanese in World War II (lecture text), 1963

Box 1; Folder 20 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n657/mode/1up>

Lande, Peter – Draft Article and Accompanying Lists of Shanghai Jews, undated, 1946

Box 1; Folder 21 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n674/mode/1up>

Leo Baeck Institute – Shanghai Exhibit, 1998

Box 1; Folder 22 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n688/mode/1up>

Leo Baeck Institute Projects on Austrian-Jewish History – Correspondence and Articles, 1994

Box 1; Folder 23 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n715/mode/1up>

Lists of Archival Holdings – Taipei, Shanghai, Hong Kong and at the Truman Institute Library (Hebrew University, Mount Scopus, Jerusalem), 1989, 1995

Box 1; Folder 24 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n736/mode/1up>

Newspaper Clippings, 1943-1949

Box 1; Folder 25 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n736/mode/1up>

Newspaper Clippings, 1980-1997

Box 1; Folder 26 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n786/mode/1up>

Oversized - Map of Shanghai, undated

Box OSXL; Folder [unknown] (Mixed Materials)

Oversized - Maps of Shanghai and China, undated

Box OS 78; Folder [unknown] (Mixed Materials)

Rosen, Linda – Shanghai: a Haven for Jewish Refugees 1937-1945 (dissertation), 1988, 1995

Box 1; Folder 27 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico01leob#page/n808/mode/1up>

Shanghai Haven (Oral History Institute Project), before 1986

Box 2; Folder 1 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico02leob#page/n0/mode/1up>

Shriner, Herta – Recollections, undated

Box 2; Folder 2 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico02leob#page/n51/mode/1up>

Shurtman, William – Articles and Interview, 1954-1995

Box 2; Folder 3 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico02leob#page/n59/mode/1up>

Tischler, Henry Ludwig – Free Societies of Captives: Toward the Development of a Theory of Restricted Communities (dissertation), 1976

Box 2; Folder 4 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico02leob#page/n137/mode/1up>

Various Authors – Articles and Research on Jews in Shanghai, 1944, 1972-2002

Box 2; Folder 5 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico02leob#page/n213/mode/1up>

Weiss, Wolfgang – Shanghai Novellen, undated

Box 2; Folder 6 (Mixed Materials)

**Digital Object:** <https://archive.org/stream/jewsinshanghaico02leob#page/n313/mode/1up>