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Shanghai: A Refuge During the Holocaust / Teacher’s Guide

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Jews & Chinese have encountered each other for a thousand years or more. Jewish traders went to China along the Silk Road in the ninth century. Jewish merchants arrived in the 12th century, settling in China’s southeastern coastal cities as well as in the interior, and later in Manchuria. In the twentieth century, they were followed by Jewish refugees fleeing the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian Civil War and later the Nazi persecution.

The exhibit Shanghai: A Refuge During the Holocaust addresses this last, though relatively brief encounter, when some 18,000 European Jews found sanctuary in the open port city of Shanghai. This period represents a crucial historical moment in both Chinese and Jewish history. Following the Opium Wars, China was forcibly opened up to the West, and to international trade and influences. With the rise of Nazism in Germany and Austria, came the Nazi policy of making Europe Judenrein – free of Jews. European Jews fled in large numbers, many of them to Shanghai. Shanghai saved more Jews from the Nazi Holocaust than all the commonwealth countries combined.

Shanghai became that meeting place, a point of intersection for both communities at a critical moment in time. The encounter did not end in Shanghai. The winds of change that followed the end of World War II and the rise of Chinese communism affected both Jewish and Chinese Shanghaiers alike. Members of both communities found themselves uprooted. Many emigrated to North America. Those that came to Canada, and Vancouver in particular, found themselves neighbours once again.

About the Teacher's Guide

The guide is divided into seven chapters that trace the history of the Jews in Shanghai. The first two chapters, Judenrein and Escape from Europe, explore the origins of this history in Nazi-occupied Europe. The third chapter Why Shanghai? addresses the indifference of the world community during the first phase of the Holocaust. The final chapters: The Jews of Shanghai, Jewish Refugee Life, The Hongkew Ghetto and Cultures Meet in Shanghai deal with life in Shanghai: social, cultural and political.

Each chapter has a double-page spread, intended for student readers, which features background information, primary documents and photographs. Teachers are encouraged to photocopy these pages for their students' use. Each chapter also includes suggested activities and discussion questions for teachers.

The chapters may also be used as part of a Jigsaw Reading Activity, in which the students become experts in one part of the information and teach it to others. Teachers can use all or any number of the chapters to divide among an equal number of student expert groups.

A timeline, glossary and resources are listed at the back of the guide. Teachers are welcome to borrow any of the listed books and videos.
1 Judenrein: Making Europe Free of Jews
From 1933 to the winter of 1940-41, the Nazi's goal was to make Europe Judenrein - "free of Jews". To accomplish this, the Nazis planned to conquer Europe and force all Jews to emigrate.

As the Nazis occupied more territory, the numbers of Jews that came under their control increased dramatically. Austria was annexed in March 1938 and Czechoslovakia fell shortly afterwards. With the invasion of Poland in September 1939, two million Polish Jews came under Nazi control. In 1940 the Jews of western Europe - Holland, Denmark, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Norway and Finland - all followed.

The sheer numbers of Jews under Nazi control, made their plan unmanageable. Also, there were few countries willing to admit Jewish refugees. At the Evian Conference convened by US President Roosevelt on July 6, 1938, to discuss the problem of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria, 32 countries, including Canada, refused to accept any further refugees.

After Kristallnacht, the Nazi organized riot against Jews, on November 9 - 10, 1938, German and Austrian Jews became increasingly desperate to leave. Some fled to eastern and western Europe, only to be caught up later in the expanding net of Nazi occupation. From 1933 to 1939, those who could, emigrated to Palestine, the United States, Latin America and Shanghai.

By the end of 1941 the Nazi policy against the Jews had changed from expulsion to genocide. On October 23, 1941, the Nazis closed all borders. By December, The Final Solution, to exterminate all Jews, was in place and the mass deportations of Jews to concentration camps had begun.
CLASSROOM PHOTOGRAPH
Best friends Eveline Rosa Berger (1st row, second from right) and Rita Warburg (2nd row, second from left), shown here in their grade one classroom at the Jewish Community School in Berlin, 1935. Both girls fled to Shanghai with their families in 1939.

POSTCARD
Postcard received by the Gottfried family from the American Consulate in Vienna, August 12, 1938. Placed on a long waiting list for the United States, the family was forced to flee to Shanghai instead.
Discuss

- What message do you think the Evian conference sent to Nazi leaders? Do you think that the Nazis interpreted the world's reluctance to admit Jewish refugees, as tacit approval for the Final Solution? Explain.

After the Holocaust, many people resolved to be more alert to the early signs of genocide in the world.

- Do you think that the NATO response in Kosovo may have been influenced by the world's inaction during the Holocaust? Explain.

Compare Judenrein and Ethnic Cleansing

- How are they alike and how do they differ?

- Consider the issues of ethnicity, human rights, dislocation, motivation and the world's response.

Activity

During the first phase of the Holocaust, when Jewish children were removed from public schools, the Jewish community was forced to establish their own schools, like the one in the photograph. Imagine what would happen if diversity was outlawed in your school. What would be lost?

- Design a poster or write a poem, valuing the diversity of your own school.

- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper outlining your arguments in support of our integrated school system.

Hate Groups in Canada Today

White Power and Aryan Nations groups in Canada today believe in a separation of the races and claim the Pacific Northwest as their homeland. Groups such as these often say that they are not against other races but that they are just pro-white.

- Compare the ideas to the Nazis' Judenrein policy. Why do such ideas persist today?
2 Escape
From Europe
After Kristallnacht, Jews became even more desperate to leave Germany and Austria. Many of the thousands of Jewish men, who had been imprisoned in the concentration camps of Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen, were released on condition that they emigrate immediately. This left much of the responsibility for securing visas and travel tickets in the hands of Jewish women.

But getting out was not easy. Emigration took on the character of escape. Jews made the rounds, from one foreign embassy to another, in the hope of getting an entry visa to any country that would have them. They lined up before dawn at immigration offices and were lucky if they left penniless, but with a short term passport and instructions to use it as soon as possible.

The Nazis "Aryanized" Jewish businesses, transferring them to Aryan-German ownership, and levied high taxes, that had to be paid before permission to leave was granted. Jews were forbidden to take anything with them besides a suitcase of clothes, a 10 mark note ($2.50) and nothing valuable like bonds or jewelry. The contents of each suitcase had to be listed, for approval at the border.

Most Jews left Europe by ship. Many of the shipping lines, like the Lloyd Triestino, charged excessively high rates. Second class was booked six months in advance and many Jews bankrupted themselves to buy a first-class ticket. Later emigrants who made their way to Shanghai, often took the overland route by train through Russia.

The first group of Jews to go to Shanghai, left from Austria in August 1938. By 1939 about 2,000 Jews a month were pouring into Shanghai. All told, about 18,000 Jews made their way to Shanghai. What had been a trickle of Jewish refugees, quickly became a flood.

By 1939, about half of the Jews in Germany and more than two-thirds of Austrian Jews, had managed to escape.
**TAX CERTIFICATE**

This Tax Clearance Certificate was issued on August 18, 1938 by the Finance Office in Vienna. It certifies that Manfred Gottfried paid the taxes required to emigrate. The certificate is stamped with the Nazi eagle and swastika.

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**CONTRACT TO PURCHASE TICKETS**

The Gottfried family signed this contract to buy tickets aboard a Lloyd Triestino Ship. They sailed for Shanghai from Genova, Italy, on January 26, 1939. Documents like this were often used as proof of emigration, to secure the release of Jews, imprisoned after Kristallnacht.
LIST OF POSSESSIONS

A list of clothing and personal possessions, that Nadia Kaplan was permitted to take with her. Written in Lithuanian and Russian, dated September 17, 1940. She and her family fled from Lithuania to Japan, via Russia.

Unfortunately, the suitcase was stolen from the baggage compartment of the train, and the family arrived in Canada with only their summer clothes.
Diary Entry

Imagine the experience of being forced to leave Nazi Germany, on very short notice.

- Write a diary entry describing your feelings about leaving and the process of getting out.

- Consider waiting at immigration offices and embassies, paying taxes, buying travel tickets, packing and leaving friends and family behind.

- How does this help you understand the experiences of refugees today?

What Would You Take?

Divide the class into family groupings. Members of each group assume the roles of parents, grandparents and children.

You are desperate to leave and can only take a single suitcase and a small amount of money with you. All valuables will be confiscated at the border. What would you take? Decide as a family. Draw up a list and share it with your classmates.

- Discuss your feelings and the criteria used to select the items. Read a Holocaust survivor memoir, or if possible, interview a recent refugee, to learn about what they were able to bring with them.
3 Why Shanghai?
Why Shanghai?

Shanghai saved more Jews from the Nazi Holocaust than all the commonwealth countries combined. Located thousands of kilometres from Europe, Shanghai became a beacon of hope at a time when there were few countries in the world prepared to accept the refugees. Shanghai was the only place that did not require an entry visa.

Jews went to Shanghai only after the rest of the world had refused them. On July 6, 1938, US President Roosevelt convened the Evian conference to discuss the problem of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria. Thirty-two countries, including Canada, refused to accept any further refugees.

Canada’s immigration policy was ethnically selective. Preference was given to British, American and European immigrants. At the bottom of the list were Jews, Asians and Blacks. Similarly, in the United States, the Johnson Immigration Act of 1929 gave preference to refugees from Nordic countries and imposed restrictions on others. Britain also had restrictive quotas and barred entry into Palestine. Canada admitted only 5,000 - 8,000 Jews from 1933 - 1945, the worst record of any large non-European country. By comparison, the city of Shanghai accepted 18,000 Jewish refugees.

After Britain defeated China in the 1842 Opium War, Shanghai was opened up to international trade. The Treaty of Nanking forced China to give up control of Hong Kong and to open five of its ports, including Shanghai, to foreign commerce. Shanghai became an international city and an open port, ruled by eleven countries, including Britain, the United States and France.

In 1937, Japan captured Shanghai and took control of the harbour. From December 6, 1938, Japan opened Shanghai’s harbour to Jewish refugees, despite the attempts of Britain, the United States and France to restrict their entry. However, by August 1939, Japanese military authorities closed the port to any further immigration.

I almost took my life last week. Only this news, that one can get easily to Shanghai, kept me from doing it.

—Helen Hilsenrad
In trying to leave Germany, William Frensford kept a list of consulate phone numbers ranging from Britain and the United States to Guatemala and Liberia. Listed on this page are Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba and China. He left for Shanghai in August, 1936.
Discuss

There are 14.5 million refugees in the world today. Over half of them are children.

- What is the difference between an immigrant and a refugee?

- Why do you think the world’s doors were closed to Jewish refugees fleeing Europe?

Research Canadian Immigration Policies

Research the role of racism in Canadian immigration policies during this century.

- Consider the Chinese Head Tax, the Komagata Maru, refugees from the Holocaust, and the repatriation of Japanese Canadians.
- Compare this to the more recent reception of Bosnian, Rwandan and Kosovar refugees.

Share a Family Artifact

Examine the diary entry with its list of consular phone numbers. Explain the importance of such an ordinary artifact in helping you understand the plight of refugees.

- Select a letter, photograph, document or other artifact, that your family has saved.
- Interview a family member about the artifact.
- Explain its meaning or importance for your family. Share the artifact and the story it tells about your family, with your class.

Compare Push–Pull Factors

For what reasons do people become refugees and how do they decide where their new homes might be? To help answer these questions, examine the "push and pull" factors that affect all refugees. Compare the experiences of Jewish refugees in Shanghai to the contemporary example of the El Salvador refugees in Canada which follows.

El Salvador Refugees

Eduardo with his wife and infant child, left their home in El Salvador because of the political situation. Their lives were threatened and they felt they had no future in the place they called home. The decision to leave was very difficult and one that was forced on them. They made their way to Mexico where they were forced into a refugee camp. Faced with deportation back to El Salvador, Eduardo and his family went into hiding. He visited as many foreign embassies as possible, searching for a new home, a haven for his family. One morning they discovered that Canada was accepting government sponsored refugees from El Salvador. In a few weeks they found themselves in Saskatchewan, in the middle of winter.

Push factors help explain the reasons to why people feel they must emigrate.

- What was happening in Europe to cause Jews to be fearful of their livelihoods and personal safety?

Pull Factors help explain the destination chosen by immigrants.

- What made Shanghai, China the destination for so many European Jews?
- What were the "push and pull" factors in Eduardo’s family story?
- What hardships do you think Eduardo and his family faced in making Canada their new home?
The Jews of Shanghai
The Jews of Shanghai

Sephardic Jews

Sephardic Jews came to Shanghai from Baghdad in the mid-nineteenth century, as merchants and traders. Prominent members of this community included the Abraham, Hardoon, Kadoorie and Sassoon families, who prospered, built schools and synagogues and later became generous benefactors to the European refugees fleeing the Holocaust. By 1941 there were approximately 600 Sephardic Jews in Shanghai.

Russian Jews

The second immigrant wave came as Ashkenazi Jews from Russia fled the pogroms of 1906 and the 1917 Russian revolution. They established themselves as middle-class trades people and formed their own synagogues and schools. By 1941 there were 4,000 Russian Jews in Shanghai.

European Jews

European Ashkenazi Jews fleeing the Holocaust came in three waves. German Jews began to arrive in Shanghai in 1933, after Hitler’s rise to power. Typically, they were well educated doctors, academics and musicians, who settled in the French Concession. They set up professional practices, opened small businesses, joined some of Shanghai’s many orchestras, organized cultural activities and operated their own German language radio station. However, many lived in overcrowded shelters, called Heime, suffered poor nourishment and disease and were dependent on help from the Sephardic and Russian communities and relief organizations. The German-Jewish community in Shanghai eventually numbered about 17,000.

Even after Japan banned any further Jewish immigration in August, 1939, some refugees still managed to reach Shanghai between 1940-41. Amongst them were 350 students and teachers from the Mir Yeshiva in Poland. This scholarly religious group was one of the only theological schools to survive intact. The yeshiva contributed greatly to the spiritual life of the Jewish community in Shanghai.
List of Emigrants in care of the Hilfsfond

Hilfsfond fuer Deutsche Juden, Shanghai

Report of the activities of the "Hilfsfond fuer Deutsche Juden"
(Relief Fund for German Jews), Shanghai, 1936-1938.

List of Emigrants

This lists the occupations of some of the German refugees who were housed in the Hilfsfond Heime (shelter), Shanghai, October 1938.

Here I was, a Jewish refugee from Warsaw, sailing alone to what seemed like the ends of the earth in search of some small refuge. Perhaps Shanghai, a city of many millions, could somehow squeeze in another few hundred, or even a thousand, and thus save them.

– Zorach Warhaftig
Diversity

Although the Jews of Shanghai, shared a common religion they were a diverse community. Diversity is about how we are the same and how we are different. Diversity is about our individual characteristics; our racial and ethnic backgrounds, the religions we follow, our gender, the languages we speak, our abilities, where we were born, our family make-up, one's sexual orientation and other personal traits. Diversity is about how our personal traits influence how we think and behave, what beliefs and values we hold, the traditions and customs we follow, how we communicate with other people.

The Wong family and the Kaplan family are the same in that both families immigrated to Canada. The two families are different from one another because they practice different religions. When we see photographs of the two families, when we hear their family stories we can see that they are of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. The Wong family is of Chinese ancestry. The Kaplan family is of Jewish background.

- Is the Wong family the same as all families who are Canadians of Chinese ancestry?
- In what ways are Canadians of Chinese ancestry similar to each other?
- In what ways are Canadians of Chinese ancestry different from each other?
- Is the Kaplan family the same as all families who are of Jewish background?
- In what ways are Canadians of Jewish background similar to each other?
- In what ways are Canadians of Jewish background different from each other?
5 Jewish Refugee Life in Shanghai
Jewish Refugee Life in Shanghai

Arrival

 Refugees arriving in Shanghai found a teeming, city of four million Chinese citizens and one million foreign residents, including an already established Jewish community. Shanghai opened its doors to some 17,000 German Jews and 1,000 Polish Jews between 1938-41. The new refugees quickly outnumbered the existing Jewish community of Sephardic and Russian Jews. As ship after ship of refugees continued to arrive, the Jewish community's resources became severely strained. At one point the chairman of the Shanghai Municipal Council, tried to prevent the arrival of more refugees.

Religious and Cultural Life

 Despite the harsh conditions of poverty, hunger, disease, and the unfamiliar tropical climate, Jewish cultural life flourished. The Hongkew Ghetto boasted 52 Jewish newspapers and featured many coffee houses, beer gardens, theatre and musical performances. By 1941 there were five synagogues including: the Beth-El, Shearith Israel, the Ohel Moishe, the Ohel Rachel, Beth Aharon and the New Synagogue. There were several Jewish schools, including the Kadoorie School established by the Sephardic philanthropist Sir Horace Kadoorie. Children joined sports groups, Boy Scout troops and celebrated Bar Mitzvahs.

Housing

 The Jewish community organized quickly to establish shelters and schools. Beth Aaron Synagogue was turned into a reception centre and kitchen, feeding 600 refugees a day. Refugee camps were set up, but soon became overcrowded. The Sephardic benefactor, Victor Sassoon, donated the Embankment Building as a “heim” or refugee shelter. It had dormitories and a common dining room.

Relief

 Many refugees left professional careers in Germany and Austria and arrived penniless in Shanghai. Making a living was extremely difficult. Some learned new trades but many remained unemployed and were forced to sell their personal possessions in order to feed and house their families. Many were dependent on American and European relief organizations and local community support for survival. The American Joint Distribution Committee provided medical help, food kitchens and housing. ORT provided work training. Each refugee received about $3.30 monthly.

Finding out about the Holocaust

 When peace came to Shanghai, so did the realization of what had happened in Europe. Anger and anguish were intense as people realized the extent of their losses. Refugees mourned the loss of family members and the destruction of entire Jewish communities.
Immigrant Telephone Book
German language advertising from the Shanghai Immigrant Telephone Book,
November 1939.

Kristallnacht Commemoration
The first known commemoration of Kristallnacht took place in Shanghai one year after the event on November 9, 1939.
TUBERCULOSIS BARRACK

Refugees with tuberculosis were treated in this barrack of the Ward Road Hospital, Shanghai.

TAILORS IN THE HONGKOW GHETTO

Three tailors eke out a living making clothing repairs in a dormitory established by the Joint Distribution Committee.
Chart Challenges Faced by Refugees

There are 14.5 million refugees in the world today. Over half of them are children.

- What were the challenges faced by Jewish refugees in Shanghai? Consider climate, culture, economy, politics and religion.
- What assistance did they receive? Compare their situation to the challenges faced by Kosovar, or other refugee groups. Develop a comparative chart.
- Imagine that you are an aid worker. How could you forecast, understand and meet the needs of refugees in future crises?

Write About Hope in the Face of Despair

Faced with hardship and loss, the refugees often demonstrated hope, strength of spirit and a determination to carry on. Jewish refugee life in Shanghai was a relatively safe and culturally rich.

So we were young and we had a lot of social life. First of all, we all lived very close together. In one flat there would be a family in every room, and entertainment was abundant. There was a lot of talent there: singers and actors, all sorts of comedians, and cabaret artists. Outside there were bands and you went dancing. You didn't have any money and not much to eat, but you had a lot of social life.

Ilse Adler in Far From Where?

Similarly in today's world, refugee camp life can include the positive forces of people helping each other, cultural and religious life, births, marriages, schooling and employment. Find a current example of this in the newspaper. Imagine yourself in a similar situation and write a poem or diary entry of hope, in the face of despair.
6 The Hongkew Ghetto
Shanghai was an international city, divided into four districts. The Chinese quarter was administered by China, had only Chinese residents and was closed to foreigners. The Japanese quarter, administered by Japan, was closed to Jewish refugees. The most prosperous part of the city, the French Concession, was home to the original Sephardic Jewish community. After the Nazi occupation of France, this district also became closed to Jewish refugees. The International District or Settlement was administered by eleven countries, including Britain and the United States. Hongkew was a district within the International Settlement.

In 1937, Japanese forces fought the Chinese and seized control of Hongkew. Japanese passes were then required to enter and leave Hongkew. However, Hongkew remained a functional part of Shanghai with thousands of people coming and going every day.

By 1938, Hongkew started to swell with the rising tide of Jewish refugees, fleeing Nazi Germany and Austria. On August 21, 1939, Japan banned any further Jewish immigration but some refugees still managed to reach Shanghai between 1940-1941.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941, Japan interned British, American and other "enemy nationals" in camps on the outskirts of Shanghai. Sephardic Jews were exempt because they held passports from neutral countries. At first German and Austrian Jews were also exempt, because technically, they were considered to be allies of Japan. However, their passports were marked with a "J" to identify them as Jews.

On February 18, 1943, Japanese authorities ordered all refugees, who had arrived since 1937, into "The Designated Area for Stateless Refugees" - a fifteen block area of Hongkew, known as the Hongkew Ghetto. The Ghetto was soon crowded with refugees from Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. By 1944, sanitary conditions were poor and malnutrition and disease were rampant. About two thousand refugees died from scarlet fever, typhoid and malnutrition.

Japanese Captain K. Inuzuka, who was in charge of Jewish Refugee Affairs and the Hongkew Ghetto, favoured closer ties between Japan and Germany. He supported the Nazi plan to eliminate Jews, known as the "Final Solution." A Nazi official visited the Ghetto to arrange for the extermination of the Jews. However, the Japanese never followed through with this plan. The reasons are unclear. Japan may have feared, what they believed to be, the economic or political power of Jews internationally.

In August 1945, atomic bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrendered and its occupation of China ended. On September 3, 1945, the Hongkew Ghetto was liberated by the Americans and the war was finally over for the Jewish refugees of Shanghai.
PROCLAMATION
Concerning Restriction Of Residence and Business of Stateless Refugees

(1) Due to military necessity places of residence and business of the stateless refugees in the Shanghai area shall hereafter be restricted to the undermentioned area in the International Settlement:
- East of the line connecting Chongqing Road, Macpherson Road, and Dent Road;
- West of Yangtsepo Creek;
- North of the line connecting East Seward Road, Macpherson Road, and Wanyue Road; and
- South of the boundary of the International Settlement.

(2) The stateless refugees at present residing and carrying on business in the districts other than the above area shall move their places of residence and business into the area designated above by May 18, 1943.

Permission must be obtained from the Japanese authorities for the transfer, sale, purchase, or lease of the houses, shops, or any other establishments which are situated outside the designated area and now being occupied or used by the stateless refugees.

(3) Persons other than the stateless refugees shall not remove into the area mentioned in Article 1 without permission of the Japanese authorities.

(4) Persons who will have violated this Proclamation or obstructed its enforcement shall be liable to severe punishment.

Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Japanese Army in the Shanghai Area,
Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Shanghai Area,
February 18, 1943.

PROCLAMATION
Proclamation issued by Japanese authorities on February 18, 1943, ordering Jewish refugees into "The Designated Area for Stateless Refugees," known as the Hongkew Ghetto.
Activities & Discussion

Research Ghettos

Read the description above of the Hongkew Ghetto and the survivor descriptions which follow.

**Hongkew Ghetto**

At that time there was no proper drainage system and when they had the typhoons everything was flooded. We had to walk in the water. We couldn’t drink the water, we couldn’t eat raw fruit. You could eat nothing raw because they used raw sewage as fertilizer on the fields. – On the ground you would find dead babies wrapped in these bamboo mats. There were beggars without limbs. For me it was a terrible experience.

Hilda Weiniger in *Far From Where?* by Antonia Finnane.

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**Warsaw Ghetto**

The gate to the courtyard remains open, because our whole street has been quarantined. But the food grows scarce because no one is allowed in or out beyond a certain point. Are we going to die? I wonder each night as I lie in bed. Often I hear a young boy cry out in pain from an apartment above us. ... One night I hear nothing. Maybe he is better. But in the morning they carry him away. He died of typhus, and he was only fourteen.

Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, *The Old Brown Suitcase.*

What are some of the similarities described by the survivor of each ghetto?

- Research the Warsaw Ghetto in your library. Despite the difficult living conditions, the Hongkew Ghetto cannot be compared to the desperate conditions of those in Nazi-occupied Europe.
- Compare the restrictions, living conditions and the final outcomes of both ghettos. Write a brief analysis or design a comparative chart.
7 Cultures Meet in Shanghai
Shanghai was a cultural meeting place for Chinese, Europeans, Jews and Japanese. Their relationships were often complex and influenced by race, class and politics.

Jewish refugees came into daily contact with Chinese shop keepers and an underclass of beggars and rickshaw drivers, but had little interaction with the wealthier, more educated Chinese classes. Unlike other foreigners in Shanghai, the Jewish refugees had much in common with their Chinese neighbours, including poverty and powerlessness.

The majority of Chinese Shanghaiers were too poor and uneducated to communicate with foreigners. Language and poverty was a barrier. Much of the contact between Chinese and Jews centred around commerce. Jewish and Chinese Shanghaiers met in the open vegetable markets and in small shops. Many Jewish families employed Chinese governesses or nanny's, known as Omahs, to care for their children. Jewish musicians trained Chinese musicians in western music. Jews and Chinese Confucianists found that they shared many of the same values, such as respect for family and education. When Jews were forced into the Hongkew Ghetto, they often traded homes with Chinese families displaced by the Jewish influx.

Both the Chinese and Jewish communities were under the control of Japanese officials and soldiers. Chinese and Jewish Shanghaiers saw Japan as the common enemy. As an ally of Germany, Japan was seen by Jews as a potential threat and by the Chinese as a more real and immediate threat. The Chinese suffered Japan's occupation and persecution more directly. Japanese racism was directed mostly towards the Chinese.

Jews were fairly well treated by both Chinese and Japanese. Neither China nor Japan had had a history of anti-Semitism in their cultures, although, some anti-Semitism was beginning to seep into Chinese and Japanese intellectual thought during this period.

After the war, there were political changes which affected both the Jewish and Chinese communities. The rise of Chinese communism caused all Jewish Shanghaiers and many Chinese to emigrate. Shanghai Jews did not have Chinese citizenship, so after the war most left for Israel or North America. Yet for many, the cultural encounter did not end in Shanghai. Many Jews and Chinese found themselves neighbours once again in Vancouver, an ocean away from their first cultural meeting place, Shanghai.
89 Jewish Refugees Arrive Here From War-Torn Shanghai

By SIMMA MILNER
(Pictures on Page 3)

Vancouver looked like paradise at 1 a.m. today to 89 weary travellers from the Orient.
They are Jewish refugees from Shanghai who have been in flight for the past 11 years.
The group of 43 men, 37 women and nine children had been without food or sleep for three days.
Their air flight from Shanghai to Seattle started Wednesday. It is their second escape from holocaust since 1939.

And the sight of the fresh green trees of B.C. was enough to make them forget momentarily their tragic stories, and dreams of new lives and new homes in America.

"The trees are the most beautiful thing I have ever seen," said Mrs. Wilhelm Pollak. "I never thought I would ever see a green like that again on the earth."

And as the convoy of three busses brought her closer to Vancouver from Seattle where the plane landed, she and her husband and others around her told their stories.

They were stories of chains and bondage, gas chambers and slave labor camps; stories of how they built homes four times in the past decade and four times saw them destroyed.

THEY DON'T FEAR FUTURE
But Mr. and Mrs. Pollak are not afraid of the future.

"We know that anything can be put through now will be little compared to what happened from the time of Hitler until Wednesday, when we packed to the tune of cannon shots and gunfire," said the Pollaks.

The attractive Viennese woman smiled wistfully, then shuddered as she recalled their first real contact with Hitler's terror.

"I was still a bride. We had been married four months when they came and took my husband away to Dachau in Poland. Within a few minutes they destroyed our beautiful little home."

Mr. Pollak carried the story on from there and told how it was in the camp for five months. There were 40,000 Jews in there when he came and 400 when he left.

UNBELIEVABLE HORRORS
He started to tell of the gas chambers and other horrors but stopped by saying:

"But you would never believe it... you can't even imagine it."

Please Turn to Page Two
See "Refugees"
Attitude Towards Immigrants

Research has demonstrated that immigrants and refugees have contributed much to Canada in the way of skills and economic benefits. However, public opinion does not always reflect this research.

Do your own research by contacting groups in your community that provide services to refugees, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees in Ottawa. Interview a refugee worker or someone who has been a refugee. Find out why refugees flee their homelands and what challenges face them in Canada. Use these answers to develop ideas of ways in which individuals and communities can support new refugees.

Immigration Issues in the Media
Gather newspaper articles and/or record the discussion on radio and television about immigration issues. Identify and discuss the attitudes reflected by these sources and compare them with your own attitudes.

Write a letter to a newspaper editor, design a poster or produce a short video segment listing contributions made by immigrants and refugees to Canada.

Roots and Routes
This activity requires students to have some knowledge about their family history. All of us come from immigrant backgrounds with the possible exception of the First Nations People. You will be asked to share your immigrant background with the group. Research your family background by finding the answers to the following questions. To assist you in telling your story, please bring along an artifact, anything that might act as a visual aid in the telling of your immigrant story.

- When did the first member of your family arrive in Canada? You can look at both sides of your family and approximate the time of their arrival.
- From what part of the world did your family come from?
- For what reasons did they come to Canada?
- Do you have a story about your family immigrant background that you can share with others?
- What are some common reasons for immigration to Canada?
- What are some common immigrant experiences?
Glossary
Timeline
Resources
Glossary

AMERICAN JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE
American Jewry's overseas relief and rehabilitation agency, established in 1914. The "Joint" foresaw the need for the mass emigration of German Jews as early as 1930. It helped provided emergency aid, ran child care centres, hospitals and trade schools.

ANSCHLUSS
German term meaning union. Refers to the German annexation of Austria on March 13, 1939, to which there was no Austrian resistance.

ARYANIZATION
Nazi expropriation of Jewish businesses and property, for which Jews received little or no compensation.

ASHKENAZI JEWS
Jews from Europe whose customs and roots can be traced to medieval German Judaism. They often spoke a hybrid form of German called Yiddish.

CONCENTRATION CAMP
Immediately after coming to power in 1933, the Nazis established camps to imprison perceived enemies of the state. The SS operated 1,800 labour, prison and transit camps throughout Europe. Six of them were built exclusively as death camps.

EMIGRATION
The act of leaving one's own country for another.

FINAL SOLUTION
Nazi code name for the plan to destroy the Jews of Europe.

GENOCIDE
Term coined in response to the Holocaust, meaning the destruction of an entire people.

HOLOCAUST
The destruction of some 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their followers in Europe between the years 1933 - 1945. Other individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered grievously during this period, but only the Jews were marked for annihilation. The term Holocaust - literally meaning 'a completely burned sacrifice' - suggests a sacrificial connotation to what occurred. The word Shoah, originally a Biblical term meaning widespread disaster, is the modern Hebrew equivalent.

JAPANESE OCCUPATION OF CHINA
The second Sino-Japanese War began in 1931, when Japan invaded Manchuria. In 1937 Japan defeated China at the battle at Marco Polo Bridge, near Beijing, captured Peking, Tienstin, Shanghai and the capital city of Nanking, where terrible atrocities were committed against the Chinese. By 1940, Japan occupied most of the eastern coast. In 1945, Japan was defeated in World War II and its occupation of China ended.
KRISTALLNACHT
German for "Night of Broken Glass." A riot organized by the Nazis on the night of November 9-10, 1938, during which Jewish synagogues, stores and homes in Germany and Austria, were looted and destroyed and about 30,000 Jewish men sent to concentration camps.

NAZI
German acronym for the National Socialist German Workers Party.

OPIUM WAR (1839-1842)
Before the Opium War, China had tried to restrict foreign trade and block the importation of opium from British India. After its defeat to Britain, China signed the Treaty of Nanking, giving up Hong Kong to Britain and opening five of its ports to British commerce. This was the first of the "Unequal Treaties" which gave foreign nations special privileges and rights in China.

ORT
The Organization for Rehabilitation and Training, known as ORT, ran schools and provided training programs for Jewish refugees.

PEARL HARBOUR
American naval base in Hawaii that was attacked by Japanese forces on December 7, 1941. This prompted the entry of the U.S. into World War II.

POGROM
Russian meaning attack. Refers to an organized riot and massacre of Jews with the complicity of the authorities.

RICKSHAW
Light two-wheeled hooded vehicle drawn by man or men to transport passengers.

SEPHARDIC JEWS
Jews of Spanish or Portuguese descent who were expelled in 1492 and 1510 during the Inquisition. Most settled in North Africa, Greece, Italy, Turkey and the Netherlands.

SWASTIKA
Symbol of the Nazi Party, which appeared on Nazi flags and uniforms. A cross with equal arms, each of which is bent at a right angle.

SYNAGOGUE
A place of worship for Jews.

VISA
An endorsement on a passport or separate document, which permits the holder to enter or leave a country.

YESHIVA
School for religious scholars specializing in studying the Hebrew bible and Jewish law.
Converging Histories Timeline

1842—Britain defeats China in the Opium War. The Treaty of Nanking forces China to open five ports, including Shanghai. Extraterritorial rights are granted to Britain, rights that are later extended to other Western powers.

1850s — The first Sephardi Jews arrive in Shanghai from India. Prominent among them is the Sassoon family. In 1850 Elias Sassoon opens the first Jewish Office in Shanghai.

1851-1864—The Taiping Rebellion: 20 million lose their lives in an unsuccessful revolt led by Hung Hsiu-ch'üan against the Manchu Chi'ing Dynasty.

1880—Sir Elie Kadoorie arrives in Shanghai to work for the Sassoon Company. The Kadoories become an important and wealthy Sephardi family in Shanghai.

1894-1895—China loses more autonomy after being defeated by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War. Drawn by economic opportunity, Russian Jews begin settling in China.

1904-1905—After Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War, a number of Russian-Jewish soldiers decide to stay in China rather than face antisemitic pogroms at home. The first Ashkenazi congregation is founded in Shanghai in 1907.

1910—The Sephardi community of Shanghai, which now numbers over 700 members, constitutes itself as the Shanghai Community Association under the leadership of D.E.J. Abraham.

1912—Dr. Sun Yat-sen becomes the first president of China. When Sun dies in 1916, China sinks into the chaos of the Warlord Period.

1917-1921—Stateless White Russians and Jews, fleeing the Russian Revolution and pogroms, arrive in Shanghai. By 1924, the Russian-Jewish population of Shanghai reaches 1000.

1920—Dr. Sun Yat-sen assures the Shanghai Zionist Association of his support for a Jewish homeland. The Sephardic Ohel Rachel Synagogue is established in Shanghai.

1922—Albert Einstein arrives in Shanghai on the day it is announced he has won the 1921 Nobel Prize for physics.
1927—Dr. Sun Yat-sen dies of cancer. Beth Aharon Synagogue is founded with financial help from Silas Hardoon.

1928—Chiang Kai-Shek establishes a new National Government of China in Nanking and marches on Peking, putting an end to the Warlord period.

1930—Civil war breaks out between Chiang Kai-Shek’s Nationalist forces and the Chinese Communists.

1931—Japanese forces invade Manchuria. A year later the Japanese establish the Manchuko Puppet State in Manchuria, and launch the first military attack on Shanghai. A 120-man Jewish company is attached to the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, a British Army unit.

1937—The outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. By November, Shanghai is occupied by the Japanese. In December, Japanese forces capture Nanking, the national capital. The Rape of Nanking takes place from December to March, 1938. 260,000 to 350,000 Chinese are murdered by Japanese forces.

1938—Kristallnacht occurs in Germany and Austria, November 9-10. The pogrom drives thousands of Jews to Shanghai, an open port that requires no entry visa. By the end of 1939, 17,000 German and Austrian Jews find refuge in Shanghai.

1939—Japanese authorities close the port of Shanghai in August to further immigration. The Second World War begins in September. On November 9th, the Jews of Shanghai hold the 1st commemoration of Kristallnacht.

1941—Despite the ban on immigration, the last of the 1000 Polish Jews arrive in Shanghai, several hundred of whom are Yeshiva students. The total count of Jewish refugees fleeing Europe for Shanghai reaches 18,000.

1943—A proclamation is issued by the Japanese in February, restricting all stateless refugees (all Jews who arrived after 1937) to the Hongkew Ghetto.

1945—Japan surrenders on August 14, ending the Second World War.

1948—The State of Israel is founded on May 14.

1949—The Chinese Communist People’s Liberation Army enters Shanghai at the end of May. The People’s Republic of China is founded on October 1.
BOOKS

Cornwall, Claudia. *Letter From Vienna: A Daughter Uncovers Her Family’s Jewish Past*  
A Vancouver writer’s quest to unearth her family’s roots. Tells the story of her family’s efforts to flee the Nazis. For those members fortunate enough to escape, Shanghai became a temporary home. Grades 10-12.

Finnane, Antonia. *Far From Where?: Jewish Journeys From Shanghai to Australia*  
Traces the stories of Jews who immigrated to Australia from Shanghai. Begins with their pre-war lives, traces their escape to the “open port” of Shanghai and finally, to their arrival in Australia. Grades 10-12.

Grebenschikoff, I. Betty. *Once My Name Was Sara: A Memoir*  
Ventnor: Original Seven Publishing, 1997 (3rd ed.).  
Born in Berlin, 1929, Ilse and her family faced increasing discrimination after the Nazis took power. One of the many anti-Semitic measures was the law requiring all Jewish females to take the last name “Sara.” Traces her escape to Shanghai. Grades 7-12.

Heppner, Ernest G. *Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto*  
Insightful and detailed account of Heppner’s life in Germany and Shanghai. While Shanghai was a port of refuge, life was not easy: over two thousand Jews died in the ghetto between 1938-1948. Grades 11-12.

Kaplan, William with Shelly Tanaka and Stephen Taylor. *One More Border: The True Story of One Family’s Escape from War-torn Europe*  
Vancouver: Groundwood Books, 1998  
The Kaplan family’s escape from Nazism is told through text and illustration. Their journey takes them from Europe to Japan and finally, Canada. A lesson in what open and closed borders can mean to people during a time of crisis. Picture book. Grades 4-6.

Kranzler, David. *Japanese, Nazis and Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945*  
New York: Yeshiva Press, 1976  
An authoritative account of the Jewish experience in Shanghai during the Holocaust. Regarded as the best historical work on this period. Grades 11-12.

Krasno, Rena. *Strangers Always: A Jewish Family in Wartime Shanghai*  
Born into the Russian Jewish community of Shanghai in 1923, Rena recorded her experiences in a diary during the Japanese occupation. Tells about her life in Shanghai and how Russian Jews helped those fleeing the Holocaust. Profiles a young woman who befriends people of different ethnic backgrounds. Grades 7-12.
Pan Guang et al. The Jews in Shanghai
Outlines the development of the Jewish community in Shanghai; the arrival of Jews from Nazi Europe; Jewish life in Shanghai; and Jewish Chinese relations. Includes photographs, maps and documents. Grades 8-12.

Ross, James R. Escape to Shanghai: A Jewish Community in China
A journalistic history of the Jewish refugee community in Shanghai. Grades 10-12

Rubin, Evelyn Pike. Ghetto Shanghai
Evelyn escaped Nazi Europe due to the strength of her mother’s love and determination. Describes how her mother carved out a life for her family despite the many obstacles and restrictions. Grades 8-12.

Tobias, Sigmund. Strange Haven: A Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai
Memoir and coming-of-age story of a young Jewish boy in Shanghai. Daily life for the refugee community, which was often difficult, is richly described. Grades 8-12.

Tokayer, Marvin and Mary Swartz. The Fugu Plan: The Untold Story of the Japanese and the Jews During World War II
Japanese plan to settle Jews in China as Japanese agents. Mistakenly believing in the power of a World Jewry, the Japanese believed that Jews could convince the United States to support Japan’s expansionist policies in the Far East. The plan was never realized. Provides one explanation for why Shanghai was open to Jews. Grades 10-12.

Warhaftig, Zorach. Refugee and Survivor: Rescue Efforts During the Holocaust
Story of the rescue of thousands of Jewish refugees from Poland. The author tells of the rescue efforts in which he was involved, including Shanghai. Grade 12.
VIDEOS

A Place to Save Your Life
From 1938 - 1941, 17,000 Jews traveled to Shanghai, seeking refuge from the growing horror of the Nazi terror. Tells the story of the Jewish refugee community of Shanghai. Makes use of interviews, current and archival film footage and personal photographs. colour 0:52 min.

Exile Shanghai
Documentary that looks at the Sephardic, Russian and Holocaust refugee Jewish communities of Shanghai. Six members of the various communities are interviewed, bringing the sights, sounds and people of Shanghai to life. 4:35 min.