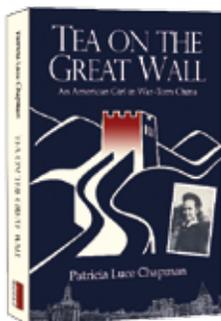


THE LITTLE-KNOWN STORY OF
NAZIS vs JEWS
IN JAPANESE-OCCUPIED
SHANGHAI, CHINA

1938-1945



SUPPLEMENT TO
TEA ON THE GREAT WALL

EARNSHAW BOOKS 2015

"Like Shindler, Wallenberg and Sugihara, the name Shanghai has now become synonymous with rescue and haven in the annals of the Holocaust."

– **Professor Pan Guang**, *"Jews in China: Legends, History and New Perspectives."*

PATRICIA LUCE CHAPMAN

With appreciation for assistance from Historic Shanghai

Tea on the Great Wall is available for purchase at Amazon.com,
Kindle and paper versions.



“What kind of juice don’t they like?”

Sometimes a person is nudged, nudged again, then needled, finally forced, to follow and act on a path they had had no intention of pursuing and not of their own choosing.

I certainly did not choose to be diverted from writing my memoir about growing up in China, into writing about Nazis, a secret submarine trip, poison gas, extermination camps. But in my research, one reference after another about Nazis maltreating Jewish refugees in Shanghai jumped out at me. They interrupted my progress. Finally, I just had to follow where they led me.

I knew about the refugees; one was my governess. I knew what happened at the German school I attended that caused me to leave the school. But I didn’t know what had happened to them after my mother and I left.

I grew up in what seemed to me a normal household, not knowing any other. My father, mother, brother and I lived in a large house with a separate smaller attached house for the Chinese staff. Father was in business, mother was a journalist and society lady, my brother Johnny was a favored tyrant, and there was me.

We had a Butler, Ah Kung, and a Number Two, Lin Sing. Cook had Learn Pidgin Cook to help him. Two coolies, Fo Sun and Elder Coolie, did the dirty work like carrying out trash. Chauffeur Ah Ching and Tailor were indispensable; how else would we get anywhere or have clothes to wear? There were two gardeners: one for the garden around our house, and the other for a farm garden out of town where we grew clean fresh vegetables. There was our beloved Amah named Chiao Kwei who mothered and

managed us.

And there was a series of governesses for me. First Mlle. Matrushka, a pretty young Russian refugee who had escaped from the Communists. Then a Frau Neisser, who smelled unwashed and had dyed crimson red hair. She was followed by Frau Zinner, a crumpled, bad-tempered old lady from whom I learned that some Germans don’t like juice.

Every now and then a bundle of newspapers would arrive for her from Germany; after she read them she would cackle with joy because the Germans were getting rid of the juice.

One day I told my brother that they had some really dreadful juice in Germany; what kind of fruit? I wondered.

“Don’t be so dumb, Sis,” Johnny replied. “It’s the German way of saying “Jews.”

“What’s Jews?” I asked.



In my Kaiser Wilhelm Schule uniform

The Kaiser Wilhelm Schule

I attended the Kaiser Wilhelm Schule from pre-Kindergarten until I was twelve. I loved my school and had many friends. Nina and Renata and I were especially close, playing with our teddy bears during recess. In sports I liked Hans and David. Our Heidelberg-trained teachers loved teaching and were patient with the little American girls -there were two of us.

There were beautiful sweet Christmas programs.



Students exercising in the street near the school.

The Hitler Jugend Changes my School

In 1932 the school began to change. Somehow it was less sweet and warm. Then our Headmaster was replaced by a harsh younger man who immediately taught us to say *Heil Hitler* with our arms raised. We learned a new song: the *Horst Wessel Lied*. I learned that it was the anthem of some group called Nazis:

*Die Fahnen hoch
Die Reien fest geschlossen
S. A. marchiert
Mit ruhig festem schritt...*

(The flag high, the rows tight, S A marches with calm firm steps...)

I learned that S A meant *Sturm Abteilung*, or, Storm Troopers.

A *Hitler Jugend* was formed. Now in addition to regular play and sports in the schoolyard, the boys and some girls wearing the Nazi banners on their arms marched around to military songs and slogans. One of my favorites, blond muscular sassy Hans, became leader of the *Hitler Jugend*.

I asked my parents if I had to Heil Hitler; they suggested that I go along with it and not make trouble unless it became too hard for me. "Maybe it's like the



Hitler Jugend outing, China, 1935

political parties in the States," one suggested, "where people support one party or the other."

Taking their advice, I waved a feeble Heil Hitler when necessary.

The Japanese invaded Shanghai for the second time in my short life: 1937. During the worst of the fighting we all, but for my father, fled to my grandparents' in America.

We returned in 1938. Still just eleven, we needed a new government to protect me on trips around the city. There were Japanese soldiers and barricades at key intersections.

At school I had my first experience with the need to hide my feelings to protect myself or others. There was a class discussion about American history and President Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt, a Dutch name, was to Germans a Jewish name, Rosenfelt. One day when I had stepped out of the classroom some students had drawn a caricature of Roosevelt in chalk on the blackboard. They gave him a huge nose and labelled the drawing "*Rosenfelt, der grosse Amerikanische Jude.*" Roosevelt, the great American Jew.

When I came back in, the students looked at me sort of sideways and giggled. I looked at the blackboard, paused for a moment, then coolly taking the chalk in my hand I drew a large mole with a hair growing out of it and gave him crossed eyes. I would not let them see that they had hurt me.



Fraulein Erika Resek, my new Governess

Jewish Refugees Escape from Europe to find a Haven in Big-hearted Shanghai

There was a group of notably creative and courageous Jewish business leaders in Shanghai. Of these, one, Sir Victor Sassoon, gave fabulous costume parties for children in the international community. We were lucky enough to be included and looked forward to receiving his engraved invitations.

I still didn't know what a Jew was any more than a Christian; I learned about Moses and the Ten Commandments and could recite the names of the first chapters of the Old as well as the New Testa-

ment. And I, as most of the world, was not aware of the on-going persecution of the Jewish people in Austria.

One day a close friend of my father's, Eduard Kann, like Sir Victor a Jewish builder, sought out my father.

"John," he said, "there have been terrible events in Austria."

"More than Hitler's military moves?" Father asked.

"Much more. They are secretly rounding up Jews, forcing them to leave Europe or be sent to a Concentration Camp. More like a Death Camp."

"Don't you have Austrian relatives?"

"Yes. My cousin, Mr. Resek and his wife and daughter have just arrived. They had to give up their beautiful home and were allowed to bring with them only a very limited amount of money. We found and furnished an apartment for them; she is a teacher of operatic voice, he is a designer, and their daughter is just 18 and lovely.

"John," he added, "I think she would be a delightful governess-companion for Patty."

I loved her from the first moment I saw her, and she genuinely cared about me as well.

From Miss Erika I learned about the Hell that Jewish people were being put through in Austria and Germany, and then Poland and Hungary. They were rounding up any Jews they could find, corralling them like cattle.

During my 12th birthday party, November 9, 1938, a phone call for Miss Erika came from her parents. I watched her become weak and pale and suddenly sit down.

Between sobs and gasps for air she told me what she had just been told --- about Krystall Nacht, the night of the broken glass, when Jewish store windows all over Germany were smashed in, the contents destroyed, the owners carted off. She told me later that some 20,000 Jewish men disappeared forever that night.



Secret Anti-Jewish Rallies at School

By January 1939, there were substantive changes at school. There were evening events from which I was excluded. One day another of my favorites, David, came to school with a bandage around his head. He avoided us, just silently went to and from the classrooms.

At first no one would tell me what had happened to him. Then one friend whispered that he had been attacked at the rally the night before.

"What rally? Was I supposed to be there? I didn't know about it."

"No, it was just for the German kids and parents."

"Why was David hurt?"

"Patty, he is half-Jewish."

"So what? Why does that matter?"

"They were showing anti-Jewish movies and giving anti-Jewish speeches." She stopped a minute to breathe. "They got some of the kids so worked up that they ganged up on David. Patty, they tore his ear off!"

I gasped. "There was blood all over his face. And what will they do next?"

"You mustn't tell anyone I told you," she whispered. "This anti-Jewish stuff is supposed to be secret."

"Poor David." I was shocked and bewildered. I didn't know what to do. As promised I didn't tell anyone about it. I tried to understand but was unable to see why wonderful people like David and Erika were being hurt by the Nazis.

On May 1939 at a classroom ceremony I was awarded a prize for hard work and cooperation: a copy of the book *Abenteuer*. A Nazi swastika was stamped inside; and the date, May 20, 1939, written in. A book-plate showed a

spread-winged eagle perched on a swastika and the words "*Gabe des Deutschen Reichs*" (Gift from the German Reich).

While I was proud to be recognized for being a good student, my feelings were deeply mixed. I didn't know what to do about the school now.

What had been an open, innocent, happy school became a place of whispers and men with hard eyes.



My prize from the now Nazi school

Farewell German School, Farewell China

My brother solved my problem. He had filled the precious center-spread of my autograph album with a drawing of a pile of garbage being blown up by TNT. On top of it all was a caricature of Adolph Hitler. Johnny had signed his full name: John S. Potter, leaving off the Jr.

Ignorant of his deed, I shyly gave the album to my adored



Farewell to my lovely friend Erika

Hans, the blond muscular Hitler Jugend boy, for some sweet words.

The next morning the Headmaster called our home before breakfast. He ordered my father, mother and me to appear at the school immediately. What had I done? I didn't know. None of us knew what was wrong.

When we reached the school the Headmaster displayed my autograph album on his desk. It was open to the centerfold. He pointed angrily to the precise, deliberate, insult to Hitler.

My idolized Hans, like a good Nazi, had turned me in to the Headmaster. I almost laughed, but also felt like crying. My first betrayal by a man.

The Headmaster thought that my father, also John S. Potter, was the artist responsible.

Thus the Kaiser Wilhelm Schule ended for me. In the fall and for part of 1940 I attended the Shanghai American School.

It became clear, after terrifying and wrenching experiences with the Japanese conquerors that, even though America was not at war with Japan, we had to leave for our safety. Once again, my father was left behind to manage somehow. Johnny had already gone to school in America.

It was hard to leave everything I loved. This time, possibly forever. Like a robot I packed up what I could that was transportable of my life. I knew that it was too dangerous for me to stay because the Japanese liked to hurt young girls; I was now a shapely thirteen-year-old.

We left for America in November 1940.

I leave China. The Nazis, Jews and Japanese stay.

We lost touch with the Resek family. My father wrote that Erika found a good job with a Portuguese company not at war with Japan or Germany.

Many years later I received a phone call from Erika Resek, now married. She told me that she had a little daughter whom she named Patricia after me. We remained in occasional touch; then our lives

fell apart in different ways, and we communicated only with holiday cards.

One day her daughter called me. Erika had died. I was angry at myself that I had not kept in touch. Pat kindly sent me a memoir that Erika had written about escaping from Austria, living in Shanghai, and going to America.

Her life after we had left interested me greatly. But I began to have trouble taking in a part of what I was reading:

In May 1943, The Japanese published a decree ordering all "Central European Stateless Refugees" (Japan's euphemism for Jewish people) to move to Hong Kew (Hong Kou).... The area designated was about twelve blocks of mostly run-down houses, some of which were already occupied by European refugees who, because it was the least expensive area, had moved there immediately upon arrival. Some 20,000 Central European Refugees were affected by the Japanese proclamation."

I hadn't heard about any of this and became increasingly angry as I read. Then came words that made me shake.

"After the war we learned that the German government wanted the Japanese to follow their example. Namely, to build concentration extermination camps.

Fortunately the Japanese did not follow their plan."

It took some days for me to steady myself enough to consider Erika's words. Then I determined to find out more about the ghastly suggestion. Was it possible?

I began by looking for authoritative information on Nazi-Jewish activities in Shanghai after I had left. Tina Kanagaratnam, CEO of AsiaMedia in Shanghai, said that she had been told as a fact that a proposed extermination camp area was Pudong.

Her Chinese source said that, as a teenager, an adult had told him this, pointing his finger across the river toward Pudong. "Over there," he had said. I became cautiously fascinated. Was it possible?

In another publication I found confirmation that "over there" meant, the east side of Pudong. And then in another I found the specific location: the site for the extermination camps was to be



The site designated for the Concentration Camp, is outlined above Shanghai in the Yangtze River

Chong Ming Island.

I had never heard of Chong Ming Island. Then I found it on a map.

But I wanted more, I needed precision, documentation. I was now completely diverted from my memoir. This unbelievable sequence of events, like a black hole, had sucked me in.

Tina K. suggested that I locate a book by her friend Astrid Freyeisen who had written the hefty, definitive, *Shanghai und die Politik des Dritten Reiches (Shanghai and the Policy of the Third Reich.)*

After reading the relevant sections, I chose to rely on Freyeisen's deeply researched and documented 544-page book as my primary source. She focused on Hitler's policies toward the Jewish refugees in China. Twenty-seven tightly written pages of lists of sources covered the globe. She detailed and footnoted personal and telephoned interviews, books, articles. There were similar documents from German archives.

Other writers told the same or similar stories. These include a memoir by Ernest G. Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, with details that at first I found hard to swallow, but that were confirmed by others. His book, also, was impressively documented, deeply researched and annotated. *The Search for Modern China*, a most valuable well-indexed and documented history by the preeminent authority Prof. Jonathan Spence, confirmed

the Freyeisen details. A *Discussion Paper* by Pan Guang, Professor and Vice Chairman of Shanghai Center for International Studies of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, gave an impeccable, concise account: *Shanghai as a Haven for Holocaust Victims*, which is essential to an understanding of the lives of the refugees from arrival to departure at the end of the war.

Later I found *Shanghaied*, published in 2004 by Green Bag, brilliantly written by Charles Lane of the *Washington Post* and consultant to *Fox News*. *The Fugu Plan* by Marvin Tokayer and Mary Swartz was invaluable in its depth and appealing style. Dr. David Kranzler's *Japanese, Nazis, and Jews* was magnificent. *Shanghai Diary*, a memoir by Ursula Bacon, and *Farewell Shanghai*, a novel by another survivor, Angel Wagenstein, told parts of the story.

The Wannsee Conference “Final Solution:” all Jews were to be exterminated. The Axis gave Nazis access to Jews in Shanghai.

The official Gestapo policy proclaimed the “final solution.” at the Wannsee Conference of January 1932: all the Jews of the world should be exterminated. Gestapo Chief Heidrich Himmler “eliminated” most of the Jews remaining in Germany, and later much of Europe, but couldn't get to those who had escaped from Europe.

This included those like my Resek family who had fled to China. These were out of his reach until Japan's occupation of Shanghai and the subsequent Tripartite Pact of September 27, 1940, linking Italy, Germany, and Japan.

Germany now had the access to the Shanghai Jews that it needed. Nazis poured into Japan, spies and master killers among them. The German Consulate in Shanghai was requested to prepare apartments for some 200 SS and Gestapo officers "in connection with Japanese-American relations" shortly before Pearl Harbor. Now the elimination of the Jews in Shanghai began to be planned.

The following information on the secret meeting announcing the plan to eliminate the Jewish population relies on the testimony of one person, the Japanese Vice-Consul Mitsuo Shibata; on the sudden imprisonment of exactly those Jewish leaders who heard him present the Nazi plan; and on Shibata's being sent back to Japan in shame. Knowing the Nazi way of eliminating a problem, knowing the quality of the Jewish leaders, and after assessing the various elements, I believe it to be true.

Col. Joseph Meisinger, "Butcher of Warsaw," is sent to Shanghai to develop the operation.

Heinrich Himmler, Chief of the Gestapo, sent Colonel Josef Meisinger, who had been chief of



Col. Joseph Meisinger

the Gestapo in Warsaw, Poland, to Japan. His assignment: to eliminate the Jewish people in China. His reputation as the "Butcher of Warsaw" preceded him.

I began to read about Col. Meisinger.

The foreign intelligence section of the police and spy agency RHSA was led by Reinhard Heidrich. Meisinger's actions in Poland, where some 300,000 Polish Jews lost their lives, were so horrifying even to Gestapo Chief Himmler, that he was almost court-martialed and executed. Meisinger's record in Poland showed him as "so utterly bestial and corrupt as to be practically inhuman" according to Nazi General Walter Schellenberg, head of the foreign intelligence section of the police and spy agency. But Meisinger had married one of Himmler's mistresses (or secretary)

in 1941; he was excused and sent by Heidrich to Japan "for a rest" but charged with exterminating the Jews.

In May 1941 Meisinger arrived in Tokyo. A few weeks later he travelled to Shanghai to find his way around, meet the Japanese officials, make initial contacts, study the habits and living arrangements of the Jewish refugees, then returned to Tokyo.

A harbinger of doom, a Nazi submarine slips under the East China Sea

According to Japanese and Jewish witnesses, Meisinger enthusiastically boarded a submarine in Tokyo Bay for Shanghai in July 1942. Travelling with him were two other Nazis.

One was Nazi aristocrat Baron Jesco von Puttkamer. He had been sent to Tokyo and Shanghai previously to assess Shanghai as a secret German propaganda base. He found it ideal. The large foreign population in the Japanese-occupied city, and its access to the rest of the globe, would enable German propaganda to reach beyond Asia into the U.S., Canada, and Latin America.

He opened a propaganda office, the German Information Bureau, in the penthouse of the luxurious Park Hotel and later in a



Adolf Hitler and Baron Jesco von Puttkamer

villa next to the midtown German church. Driving stylishly around town in a horse-drawn carriage and Korean bodyguard, according to Charles Lane, he became well known in Shanghai. He and a colleague, Lothar Eisentraeger (a.k.a. Ludwig Erhardt of the Erhardt Bureau of Spies) set up the largest Nazi public relations headquarters outside of Germany.

In 1942 a series of anti-Semitic articles began to appear in the Chinese press. This was an apparent attempt to turn Japanese officials against the Jewish refugees. But the Japanese, the Nazis found, were unresponsive to the propaganda. So, later in 1942, Meisinger was ordered to leave his Tokyo Headquarters, return to Shanghai, and work out the management of

the Jewish problem with the Japanese directly

Doctor Robert Neumann of Buchenwald

The third Nazi official on the submarine was Dr. Robert Neumann who specialized in medical experiments on prisoners at the Buchenwald Camp along with with Drs. Rose, Hoven, Conrad, Reiter, Eisele, Plaul, and others. His first tests there had been on corpses. Later Neumann conducted vivisections--live autopsies--on them. It was at Baron von Puttkamer's invitation



Used canisters of Zyklom B gas from European death camps.

that Dr. Neumann lectured on his observations of racial physiognomy in 1943 in Shanghai.

Secret canisters of Zyklon B Gas?

The submarine is also said to have carried canisters of Zyklon B gas, the material first used to eliminate humans in Buchenwald, later also used at Dachau and Auschwitz camps. This supply is said to have been found in Shanghai after the

war in the warehouses of two German firms, Siemens and I.G. Farben (Bayer) – manufacturers and distributors of Zyklon B. Dr. Neumann would have known how to use it. Those firms had been actively producing German World War II materiel.

Col. Meisinger and his associates needed time to assess various ways to eliminate the Jewish population. During the hot summer months they proposed and discarded options until they felt that they had found the solution. Then Meisinger called a high-level meeting.

Probable scenario of the secret meeting of German and Japanese Officials for presentation of the Meisinger Plan

This meeting was probably held in the Conference Room of the German Consulate, where safety and privacy could be guaranteed. It occupied space in the Glen Line Building, a large gray building at # 28 The Bund. An enormous black, red and white swastika flew from the upper floors to street level over the entrance.

Meisinger, wearing full dress uniform, his Iron Cross and Bavarian Military Distinguished Service Cross shining among other decorations, rose, said Heil Hitler, and introduced the various members.

Present would have been Vice-Consul Mitugi Shibata and other members of the Japanese

consulate; three members of the *Kempetai* (Japanese secret police); Tsutomu Kubota, (Director, Bureau for Jewish Affairs); Captain Inozuka and other members of the Japanese Landng Party. Nazi officials escorted by von Puttkamer would have been Dr. Neumann; Franz Huber, Gestapo Chief for Shanghai; the German Consul General Wilhelm Stoller; and Lothar Eissentraeger (Ludwig Erhardt) of the Erhardt Bureau of Spies. (It was through Vice Consul Shibata that the gist of this meeting was revealed.)

After introductions and toasts, Meisinger began to speak to the issue. The Jewish refugees, he told the Japanese, were enemies of Germany. In January, Germany had cancelled their citizenship; they were therefore stateless potential saboteurs against Japan as well as Germany. To keep the Axis strong, he asserted, the entire Jewish population (the “pestilence” in Meisinger’s words) of Shanghai had to be eradicated. “*Ausradiert!*” he shouted.

He assured the Japanese that they would not need to be involved; they, the Germans, would do all the detailed work. The Japanese would get the fruits of the German efforts as, naturally, they would inherit everything that the Jews owned and controlled. He proposed a two-stage solution:

The Plan, Stage One:

All Jews would be rounded

up in September, in two months, when the Jews would be celebrating Rosh Hashana at the various places of worship. We would encircle them there so they would have no chance to escape.

Then, still according to Vice Consul Shibata, Meisinger offered the second part of his plan:

Stage Two Options:

A. Strip the Jews of all their belongings and clothing and load them onto huge, old, leaky barges. These would be towed out to sea, the rudders cut, and they, adrift, would starve to death.

B. Send them to work up-river in the neglected salt mines on the Huang Pu River where they would die of exhaustion and starvation.

C. Pen them up in concentration camps to be built on nearby Chong Ming Island in the Yangtze River. There, Dr. Neumann could practice his medicine on them. Meisinger described some of the medical procedures, including vivisection, that Dr. Neumann had conducted on prisoners in Europe. The extermination camps would be built on the European models; he had brought precise blueprints with him.

A True Hero: Mitsuo Shibata

After the meeting Vice Consul Shibata, shocked, ashamed, horrified, could not withhold this information from his Jewish friends.

He secretly contacted a prominent Jewish banker, Ellis Hayim, asking him to gather a small confidential meeting of leaders of the Jewish community immediately.

The next morning a select group gathered at the home of Michael Speelman.

The testimony of those successful and respected leaders is not to be dismissed casually. Present were

--Michael Speelman, prominent Dutch Jewish banker and businessman, Sephardic.

--Ellis Hayim, former President of the Shanghai Stock Exchange, Sephardic.

--Boris Topas, leader of the Russian Jewish community, Ashkenazi.

--Joseph Bitker, leader of the Russian Jewish community with Power of Attorney to assure that aid to the Jewish community was

fairly distributed, Ashkenazi.

--Robert Peritz, leading member of the German Jewish community.

--Fritz Kauffmann, businessman and elegant prize-winning member of the Shanghai Polo Club and the Shanghai Paper Hunt Club, German.

--Dr. Fritz Kardegg, elected to be president of the Jewish community, German.

Shibata outlined the Meisinger plan for eliminating the Jews and cautioned utter silence about the plan while they considered their options. Unfortunately, one member asked someone else close to the Japanese for help; that person could not keep the secret. A few weeks later all the above were imprisoned and tortured in the infamous Bridge House. Boris Topas was thrown repeatedly down the concrete stairs until his back was broken, and his nails were pulled out. Shibata was sent back to Tokyo in shame.

The Shanghai Ghetto

While the Japanese responsible for management of Shanghai would not consider the extermination of the Jews (in contrast, they had had no problem with their massacre of 200,000 Chinese in Nanking in 1937,) they did defer to the Germans in isolating the Jews.

On February 18, 1943 the Japanese issued this edict:



Vice Consul Mitsuo Shibata, Savior of the Jewish refugees in Shanghai

“Designated Area for
Stateless Refugees
18 February, 1943

I. Due to military necessity, the residential and business areas of stateless refugees in the Shanghai area will be restricted to an area within the International Settlement.

II. Stateless refugees presently residing and/or operating businesses outside the area mentioned in the preceding paragraph shall move their residence and places of business inside the above prescribed area by May 18, 1943. Those desiring to buy or sell or rent houses, stores and other installations

located outside the above area which are home and/or business places of stateless refugees shall obtain prior approval of the authorities concerned.

III. Those other than stateless refugees may not move into the area designated in paragraph I. without permission.

IV. Any person who violates this proclamation and interferes with its enforcement shall be liable to severe punishment.

Signed: Commander in
Chief, Imperial Japanese
Army and
Commander in Chief, Imperial
Japanese Navy Shanghai
area.



Thus a Jewish slum ghetto of about three-fourths of a square mile was created. Already living in that tight space were thousands of the White Russian refugees, many of the 1938-40 Jewish refugees, and some 100,000 Chinese. With this edict, many thousands of Jews from Poland and Russia were added to the earlier German and Austrian Jews. The ghetto was strictly isolated by Japanese soldiers under the command of the sadistic Japanese official Kano Ghoya, the “King of the Jews”; they could leave only with special permission.

The survivors have written

vivid descriptions of their lives in desperate poverty during those two years. All mention that the kindness of Chinese helped to keep them alive. Some Chinese offered a little rice; others brought a small potato. Some thread or a bit of cloth were useful in repairing their threadbare clothing; and all brought smiles of encouragement.

Post-War Testimony from Witnesses

The participants in the secret meeting with Shibata at the Speer-man home could not report on it until well after World War II. In the ghetto they were incommunicado; and then, after the U. S. Marines freed them in 1945, they needed to focus on their survival, penniless, in some strange country.

Testifying to the existence of the blueprints for an extermination camp:

--Illo Heppner had seen the camp blueprints on the table of the Judge at the War Crimes Trial of Lothar Eisenträger (Ludwig Erhardt), Chief of German Military Intelligence for China. Mrs. Heppner was working with the American Military Commission in China at the time. She was awarded the civilian Commendation Ribbon for meritorious service after the war when she worked as a USA War Department civilian in Shanghai and Nanking.

--Alfred Dreifuss, author of

books on Nazis and the Jewish experiences in Shanghai, corroborated Mrs. Heppner's testimony.

--Dr. Abraham Cohn, then a physician, saw the blueprints on the desk in an empty hotel room where three German soldiers had talked about them loudly. Dr. Cohn looked them over when the three went out for a drink in the local bar.

Testifying about the Shibata meeting:

--Mitsui Shibata was interviewed by author Rabbi Marvin Tokayer in Japan in the early 1970's; he testified about the meeting with the Nazis.

--Fritz Kaufmann addressed the New York Shanghai Tiffin Club on February 12, 1962, giving details about the meeting. His testimony appears also in the Bulletin of the Leo Baeck Institute 73 (1985).

--Austrian attorney Kurt Redlich corroborated the Kaufmann testimony.

--Robert Peritz and

--Joseph Bitker issued Declarations describing the meeting with Shibata. Peritz stated, in an affidavit given in Aschaffenburg, Germany, 1953, that Shibata told them about the "monstrous plot" against Shanghai Jews.

--David Rabinowitz, at that time Honorary Secretary of the Ashkenazi Jewish community, supported Bitker's testimony in a letter.

--Laura Topas (Popper), the

daughter of Boris Topas, confirmed her father's torture and his report on the critical meeting with Vice Consul Shibata in a November 14, 1994 telephone interview with author Marcia Reynders Ristaino.

Testimony about the canisters of Zyklon B gas:

--In 1947 Moshe Elbaum wrote in the Shanghai *Herald* (*roughly translated*): "The bottles of the gas were found after the war in the warehouses of Siemens and Bayer. These brought the sadly well-known Cyclon Gas."

Hitler's and Himmler's dream of eliminating all the European Jewish refugees in China was denied them by the Japanese not for humanitarian reasons, but for self-interest. One explanation that makes sense to me is that the Japanese expected American Jewish money after their conquest of China that might not come if they complied with the Nazi request and killed all the Jews.

The former Obel Moshe Synagogue

The Resek family, Erika now married to Kurt Meier, came to America after their rescue by U.S. Marines in 1945.

In Shanghai, the Ohel Moshe Synagogue, built in 1927, became the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum. It commemorates the singular haven and time in Chinese and Jewish history where people of Jewish faith were able to escape the fate of so many in Europe. The Museum contains hundreds of historic photographs and artifacts. In 1986, a group of Jews who had taken refuge in Shanghai revisited their former home in the ghetto. With immense gratitude towards the local people for their help, they presented a plaque to the People's Government of the Hong Kou District, inscribed:

"20,000 Jewish refugees survived in Shanghai during the Second World War. To all the survivors and friendly Chinese people we dedicated this plaque."



The Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum

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