

Chiune Sugihara & the British Contributions for Rescuing Jewish Refugees in Lithuania in 1940: Two Kinds of Safe Conducts



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1. Refugees came to Lithuania since Sep. 1939

01.09.1939 Outbreak of WWII

West Poland occupied by Hitler, East by Stalin

War Refugees came
from Poland:

a) Soldiers

b) Peasants from
Suwalki Region

c) Religious Jews
from East Poland

d) Bourgeois



Jewish Refugees came from Poland to Lithuania

There were several Yeshiva schools in East Poland, which brought up future rabbis (religious leaders)
On 17.09.1939, Soviet occupation of East Poland
Soviets denied the freedom of religion



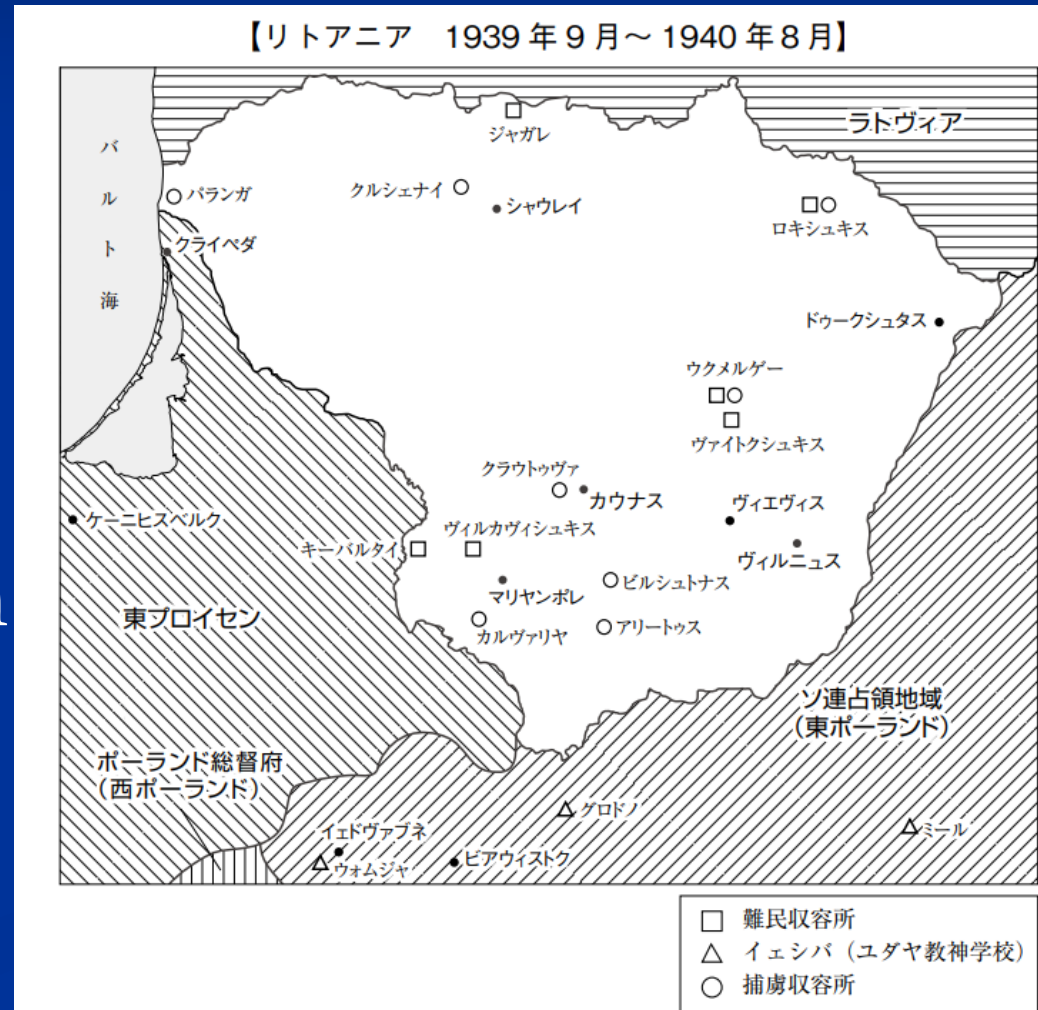
Shutdown of Catholic & Orthodox monasteries
& Jewish Yeshiva schools

Religious leaders be liquidated or deported
Orthodox Jews decided to run away to Lithuania,
which guaranteed the freedom of religion

2, The Lithuanian Government Received more than 30,000 Refugees from Poland in 1939-40

The Lithuanian Rescue activities

- a) Establishing
 - 6 Refugee Camps
 - 8 POW Camps
- b) Supply of Food
Clothes, Medical
Care, & Education
- c) Support for
Emigration to
Foreign Countries



Most of Refugees didn't keep passports.

Lithuanian Refugee Acceptance Process

- 1) Making refugee lists
- 2) Issue of Refugee certificates: Possibility of living in the Camps & accepting food and clothes
- 3) Issue of Safe Conducts **Leidimas** for refugees, who would like to leave Lithuania

The Safe Conducts: Substitutes for their passports
the other side of the conduct: Issue of Visas

Some Refugees got **Zaswiadzenie** (Certificate in Wartime) from the British Consulate-General.

~~Poselstwo
Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej
w Kownie
Légation de Pologne
à Kaunas~~

Nr. 10-132 7.40

Zaświadczenie niniejsze zostało wydane wobec braku
książeczek paszportowych i uprawnia do wyjazdu za granicę.
Le présent certificat est délivré vu le manque des livrets
de passeports et autorise de se rendre à l'étranger.

Zaświadczenie Certificat

Uważa się niniejszym, że
Il est certifié par le présent que, ci-dessous

WARHAFTIG ZORACH

Rok urodzenia 2. II 1906 *two sixty*
Date de naissance
Miejsce urodzenia Wólka *Wólka*
Lieu de naissance
Stan *żonaty* *marie*
Etat civil
Zatrudnienie *adwokat* *avocat*
Profession
Wzrost *średni* *moyenne*
Taille
Twarz *podług* *oblong*
Visage
Włosy *ciemne* *noirs*
Cheveux
Oczy *ciemne*
Yeux
Znak szczególne */*
Signes particuliers

Podpis posiadacza
Signature du porteur

Z. Warhaftig

okazał w tutejszym Urzędzie dowody, stwierdzające, że jest obywatelem polskim.
a produit dans cet Office des preuves constatant qu'il est citoyen polonais.

Data 16 LIP. 1940
Date juillet



H. B. M. CONSUL
for H. M. Minister
Signature charged with the protection
of Polish interests.

Zaswiadczenie

(Certificate: Safe
Conduct) for
Zorach Warhaftig
Issued by the British
Consulate General in
Kaunas. Because the
consulate was the
charge de affairs of
Polish Exile Gov. in
London
Written in Polish

The Lithuanian and the British Contributions

Lithuanian Gov. received them without refusal provided refugee camps, and offered accommodation, food, clothes, medicine, and other important facilities including Safe Conducts.



The British Consul

-General Thomas

H. Preston ? issued

Zaswiadczenie certificates for the refugees, who didn't keep any passport or other identification.

2, Refugees during the Soviet Annexation of Lithuania in Summer 1940

Lithuania: under the Soviet occupation in Jun.
annexed by Stalin in Aug. 1940.

If the refugees couldn't leave there up to the end of 1940, they had to become the Soviet citizens.
Freedom of Religion wasn't approved in USSR.

Refugees, who couldn't accept the Soviet regime such as Jewish Rabbis and Yeshiva students, wished to immigrate to other countries. Asked diplomatic missions in Kaunas to issue visas.

3, Jap. Transit Visas issued by Chiune Sugihara

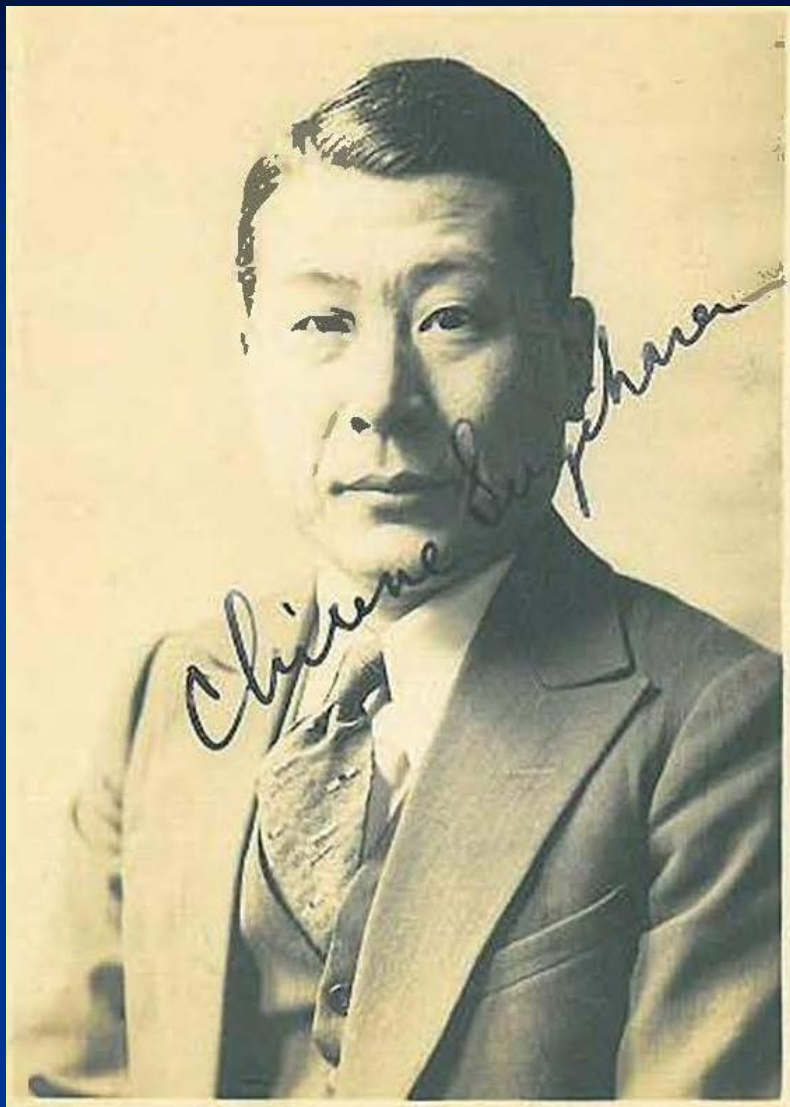
There was no state receiving refugees in WW II.

Those Refugees visited Jap. Legation in the middle of Jul. and asked to issue the Jap. visas. Consul Sugihara set conditions

for the Jap. Transit Visa.

- a) Hold a visa for his/her final destination
- b) Tickets & Travel Expense for the destination

Dutch Consul Jan Zwartendijk, issued Curaçao “visa” for the refugees. Condition a)



Chiune Sugihara



Jan Zwartendijk

The Jewish Refugees would have sought support from the US Jewish Funds.

The Joint Distribution Committee, New York, raised funds in the USA, and supported Jews in the German occupied Europe.

Moses Beckelman, JDC Delegation to Lithuania, would have promised more than one thousand refugees, who didn't have money, to arrange the travel expense. Condition b)

Sugihara decided issuing transit visas late in July.

4, The JDC Fell into Difficulties in Lithuania

In August 1940, the Process of Nationalization had begun in Lithuania.

The JDC safe-deposit box in the Centralinis ZYDU Bankas, Kaunas, was frozen by Stalin. Beckelman couldn't withdraw the funds from the account (deposit box).

The Refugees received few supports from the authority. The JDC NY gave up the support. Beckelman received Jap. transit visa from Sugihara on 17.08.'40 to withdraw his office from Vilnius.



Sugihara's Refugee List in Feb.1941

In the List, issued Jap. visas for refugees: 2140
 No.1890, only an American issued on 17.08.1940
 Moses Beckelman, paid 10 litas to Sugihara

NN	NATIONALITY	N A M E	ENTRANCE OR TRANSIT	DATE OF VISA	SASHO BIO	BIKOO
1862	Polnisch	Aleksandrowicz Maks.	Transit	17/VIII	2	
1863	"	Aleksandrówicz Ignacy	"	"	2	
1864	"	Lieberfrojnd Henryk	"	"	2	
1865	"	Lieberfrojnd Marcin	"	"	2	
1866	"	Pecyna Motel	"	"	2	
1867	"	Tempelhof Mieczyslaw	"	"	2	
1868	"	Gringauz Izrael	"	"	2	
1869	"	Mendelson Manas	"	"	2	
1870	"	Gasner Hersz	"	"	2	
1871	"	Wolchajm Boruch	"	"	2	
1872	"	Pinkus Henryk	"	"	2	
1873	"	Pinkus Leja	"	"	2	
1874	"	Sobolewski Henryk	"	"	2	
1875	"	Fisz Szloma	"	"	2	
1876	"	Ofman Paulina	"	"	2	
1877	"	Wernik Hena	"	"	2	
1878	"	Kolanski Aleksander	"	"	2	
1879	"	Horodysz Mowsza	"	"	2	
1780	Federman Saul	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx
1880	"	Federman Saul	"	"	2	
1881	"	Milrom Srul	"	"	2	
1882	"	Bernsztejn Zeld	"	"	2	
1883	Lithuanien	Adamaite Elena	"	"	2	
1884	Polnisch	Nelkenbaum Lejba	"	"	2	
1885	"	Kuperman Icchok	"	"	2	
1886	"	Cukier Majer	"	"	2	
1887	Tschechoslov.	Rach Rudolf	"	"	2	
1888	Polnisch	Frydman Jakob	"	"	2	
1889	"	Frydman Boruch	"	"	2	
1890	U.S.A.	Beckelman Moses	"	"	10	
1891	Polnisch	Zelmanowicz Jenta	"	"	2	

Moses Beckelman (1906-55),
A Social Worker from New York City
Dispatched to Vilnius in 1939 as a representative
of the JDC:
The Joint
Distribution
Committee,
New York,
Supported
Funds for
Jews all over
the World.



Beckelman negotiated in Moscow with the US Ambassador in Sep. to thaw the account and to make those refugees leave from USSR to Japan.

Beckelman succeeded.

The Soviet Conditions:

Pay 170 US dollars each for a Trans-Siberian Railway ticket (higher tourist rate).

Beckelman asked NY to raise funds for refugees.

The USA took economic sanctions against Soviet, after the Winter War (Soviet-Finnish War 1939-40)

In August 1940, Lithuania was a part of USSR.

The JDC withheld the remittance either.

The *Vaad Ha-Hatzala*, Jewish Orthodox Rescue Committee, continuously supported in Lithuania.

The US Jewish organizations negotiated with the government and removed the ban in Nov. '40.

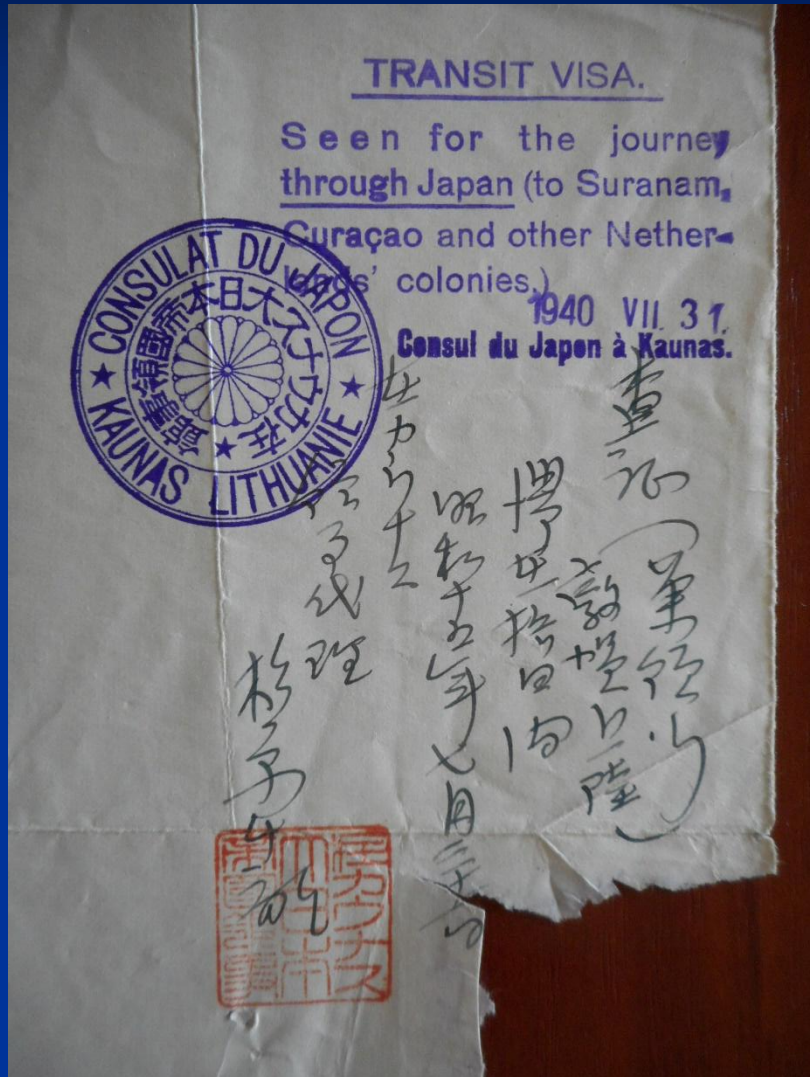
5, Refugees got into Trouble in Traveling to Japan

Rich refugees: 500-700 departed Kaunas in Sep.
uneventfully arrived in Japan in Oct. & Nov. '40.

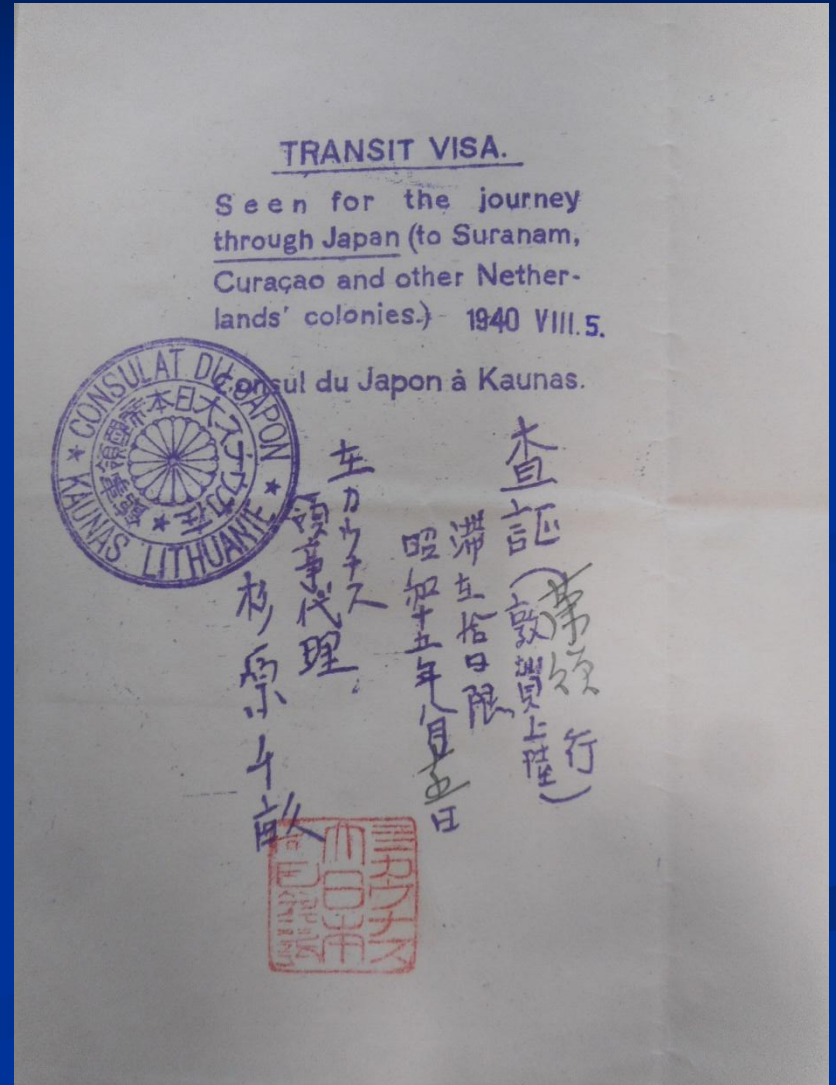
Poor refugees (including Yeshiva students, Rabbis,
& their families): 1500-1600 departed with Jap.
visa between Dec. '40 & the end of Feb. '41.

Some of them were refused entering Jap., because
of the lack of travel expense or false visas.

Lithuanian Special Archives, Vilnius (Lietuvos ypatingasis archyvas)

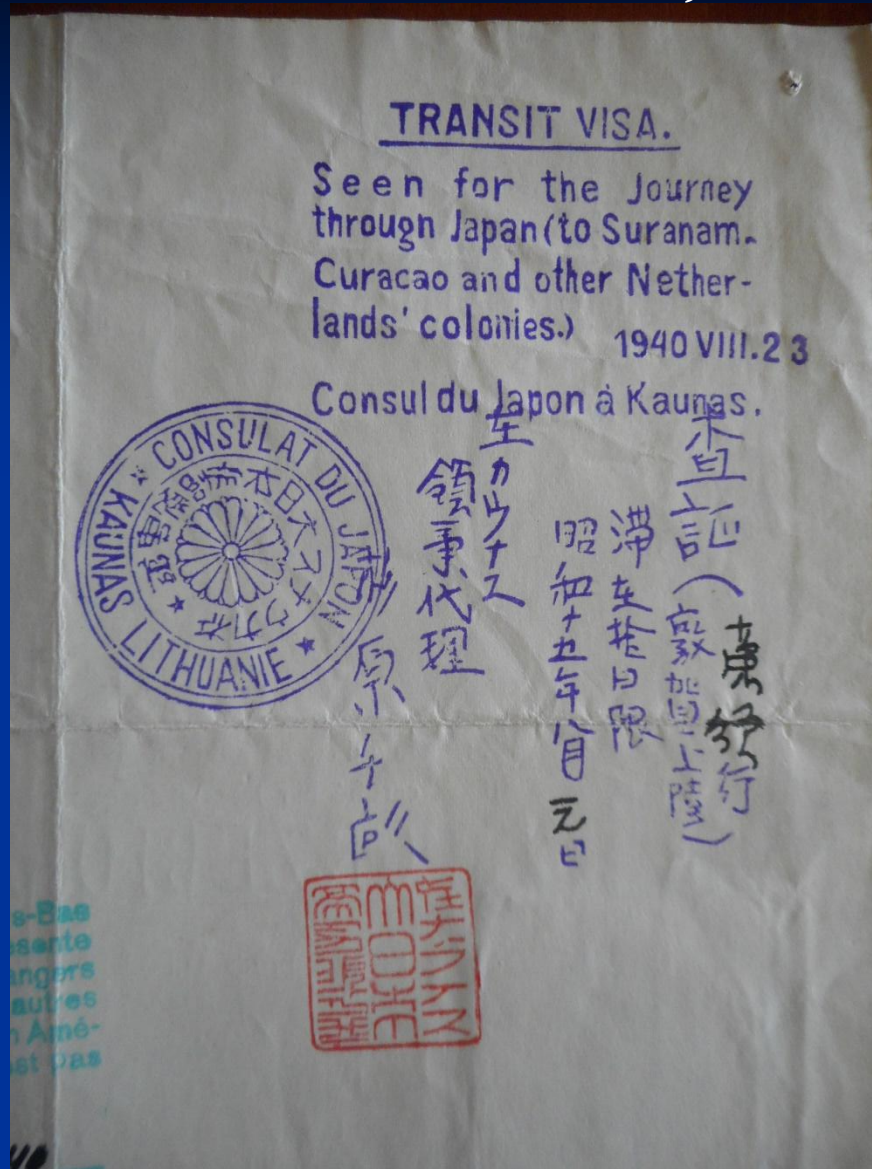


Real Sugihara Visa



False Sugihara Visa 1

Lithuanian National Archives, Vilnius



False Sugihara Visa 2

The Jewcom, Kobe stood guarantee for refugees, who didn't have enough expense or official visas.

In spring 1941, more than 1,500 refugees were stranded in Kobe.

The JDC supported their living expense, obtained visas to USA or Canada, & paid their tickets.

Kobe Holiness Church supported refugees.
Setsuzo Kotsuji, Reformed Presbyterian, later converted to Judaism, helped extending their visas.



Kobe Holiness Church distributed apples
among Refugees

28.07.'41, Jap. invaded Southern French Indochina
01.08. USA carried out Embargo on Oil Export
& stopped any (including JDC) remittance to Jap.
In August, most of US citizens left Jap.

1,098 Jewish refugees were isolated in Jap.

The Jap. Gov. deported those refugees
to Shanghai (under the Jap. Control) in Aug. '41.

08.12.'41, Outbreak of the Pacific War

Most of the refugees were isolated in Shanghai
up to the end of WW II

6, The Final Result: Emigration from Lithuania

2,000-2,200 refugees arrived in Japan

1/3: Rich Jews Travel expense paid by themselves

1/3: Yeshiva students, Rabbis & their families

1/3: the Other Jewish and Non-Jewish refugees

The US Jewish Funds supported 2/3 refugees

Total: 272,000 \$ (194 \$ each)

**The Refugees were rescued by
Lithuania, Japan, USA, and UK.**