

[CfA: The Holocaust and Asia: Refugees, Memory, and Material Culture](#)

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Monday, March 28-Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Application deadline: Monday, February 1, 2021

The Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum invites applications for a research workshop entitled *The Holocaust and Asia: Refugees, Memory, and Material Culture*. The Mandel Center will co-convene this workshop with **Kimberly Cheng**, Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, New York University, and **Ran Zwigenberg**, Asian Studies, History and Jewish Studies, Pennsylvania State University. The workshop will take place at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's David and Fela Shapell Family Collections, Conservation and Research Center.

The workshop is scheduled for **March 28-April 6, 2022**. In the event that it is impossible to convene during those dates due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the workshop will be held in a hybrid format consisting of a series of short online sessions in advance of an in-person program convened at the Museum to be scheduled in the Summer of 2022.

In recent decades, the Holocaust has occupied an increasingly prominent place in Asian cultures of memory. Chinese intellectuals have called the Cultural Revolution their "Holocaust," and both China and Japan have found and commemorated their own "Schindlers" (Ho Feng-Shan and Sugihara Chiune). Partition refugees in India/Pakistan have compared themselves to Jewish refugees, and memory activists across Asia have invoked Holocaust analogies in the region's never-ending history wars. Yet the Holocaust's impact on Asia was not just cultural. Many Asians witnessed the Holocaust firsthand, and tens of thousands of Jewish refugees fled through Asia. In Asia, these Jewish refugees appeared as poor white Europeans, challenging Asians' conceptions both of the figure of the Jew and of the white man; both for Jews and Asians, their encounters with one another as racial others brought stark questions of identity, race, racism, gender, class, and colonial entanglements to the fore. Whether in the realm of exchange between refugees and local populations, or in mutual learning about the place of artifacts in commemoration, the circulation of material culture only served to deepen these divides.

Surveying the Holocaust-related myths and historical realities in Asia writ large (from China and Japan through Central Asia to Iran), this workshop explores Jewish and Asian involvement in the Holocaust and its memory. Our workshop examines the limits of the term "Holocaust" and its applicability across histories and cultures to account for the multifaceted ways the tragedy has reverberated beyond Europe. In doing so, we intend to delimit the existence of an Asian sub-field or an "Asian turn" within Holocaust studies.

To identify the main lines of inquiry of this burgeoning field, the workshop will consist of presentations and roundtable discussions led by participants along three thematic tracks: 1) the

experiences of refugees, 2) Asian cultures of memory, and 3) material culture. Daily sessions will be led by participants, as well as discussions with Museum staff and research in the Museum's collections. The workshop will be conducted in English.

How to Apply

Applications are welcome from scholars affiliated with universities, research institutions, or memorial sites and in any relevant academic discipline, including anthropology, archeology, art history, Asian studies, Eastern European and Eurasian studies, genocide studies, geography, history, Jewish studies, law, literature, Middle Eastern studies, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, religion, Romani studies, and others. Applications will be accepted from scholars at all levels of their careers, from PhD candidates to senior faculty. Scholars working in Asian academies, as well as scholars from underrepresented backgrounds in the field, are particularly encouraged to apply.

The Mandel Center will reimburse the costs of round-trip economy-class air tickets to/from the Washington, DC metro area, and related incidental expenses, up to a maximum reimbursable amount calculated by home institution location, which will be distributed within 6–8 weeks of the workshop's conclusion. The Mandel Center will also provide hotel accommodation for the duration of the workshop. Participants are required to attend the full duration of the workshop.

The deadline for receipt of applications is **Monday, February 1, 2021**. Applications must include an abstract of no more than 300 words outlining the specific project that the applicant is working on, plans to research, and is prepared to present during the program; and a short bio. The application form is available at www.ushmm.org/research-workshops

Museum Resources

The Museum's National Institute for Holocaust Documentation houses an unparalleled repository of Holocaust evidence that documents the fate of victims, survivors, rescuers, liberators, and others. The Museum's resources include approximately 110 million pages of Holocaust-related archival documentation; library resources in over 60 languages; hundreds of thousands of oral history, film, photo, art, artifacts, and memoir collections; and the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database, which contains about 11.5 million name records and over 44,000 list records. In addition, the Museum possesses the holdings of the International Tracing Service (ITS), which contains more than 200 million digitized pages with information on the fates of 17.5 million people who were subject to incarceration, forced labor, and displacement as a result of World War II. Many of these records have not been examined by scholars, offering unprecedented opportunities to advance the field of Holocaust and genocide studies.

The Museum's Asia-related collections include:

- Collections from [Kazakhstan](#), [Kyrgyzstan](#), [Uzbekistan](#), the [Polish government in exile](#), and the [Anders Army](#) related to the fate of Soviet and Eastern European Jewish evacuees in Central Asia
- Collections from the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](#) and the [Koreshige Inuzuka Papers](#)
- Records of various refugee and immigrant aid organizations, such as the [Central Information](#)

[Bureau for Jewish War Sufferers in the Far East](#) and the [Far Eastern Jewish Central Information Bureau \(DALJEWICB\) Harbin-Shanghai](#)

- Records from the [Shanghai Municipal Archives](#), including those related to [Jewish refugee emigration](#)
- Records from the British government's [India Office](#)
- Records from the [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration's China Office](#), [India Mission](#), [Philippine Mission](#), and [Southwest Pacific Area Office](#)
- The [United Nations War Crimes Commission Records](#)
- Photos from [Central Asia](#), [Southeast Asia](#), [China](#), and [Japan](#)
- Oral histories of survivors and refugees who lived in the [Dutch East Indies](#), [India](#), [the Philippines](#), [China](#), and [Japan](#)
- Numerous small and mid-size personal collections of letters, memoirs, photos and personal documents, oral history interviews, and artifacts of Jewish refugees in Central, South, and East Asia, such as the [Sara Kupinski Cohen Collection](#), the [Adolphe and Raechel Dikker Collection](#), the [Nacht Family Papers](#), the [Siegmond Sobel Collection](#), the [Joan Kent Finkelstein Collection](#), the [William Weeg Family Papers](#), the [Anatole Ponevejsky Papers](#), and the [Pilpel Family Papers](#), among many others

Participants will have access to both the Museum's downtown campus and the [David and Fela Shapell Family Collections, Conservation and Research Center](#). To search the Museum's collections, please visit the [collections catalog](#).

For More Information

Direct questions to **Krista Hegburg, PhD**, Senior Program Officer, International Academic Programs Division, Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, at khegburg@ushmm.org.

This Call for Applications is available at www.ushmm.org/holocaust-asia.