
Finding aid prepared by Judith Janec
Tauber Holocaust Library
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Title: Hans Arons papers
Identifier/Call Number: 1988.2035
Contributing Institution: Tauber Holocaust Library
Language of Material: Multiple languages
Storage Unit: Archives Box 18
Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet
Date: 1939-1949
Abstract: The Hans Arons collection is comprised of photographs depicting his life and activities in the Jewish ghetto in Shanghai, China from 1939-1945, as well his refugee and identification documents from Shanghai.
Scope and Contents note
The collection documents the experiences of a German Jewish man, Hans Arons, who fled Berlin for the safety of Shanghai, China in 1939. Shanghai was one of the few places in the world at that time that did not require visas, and thousands of German and Austrian Jews spent the war years in the ghetto of Hong Kew in Shanghai.
The collection comprises photographs and documents. Photographs depict individuals and gatherings in Shanghai, China and provide insight into social and cultural conditions there. The documents include refugee and identification cards.
Biographical/Historical note
Hans Arons was born in 1914 in Hanover (Hannover), Germany. He was an only child. In 1918, his mother died, and he went to live with his paternal grandparents in northern Germany. Mr. Arons was schooled in horticulture, in Hanover, and graduated in 1934 as a gardener.
Because of prohibitions against Jews in Germany, it became increasingly difficult for Mr. Arons to find work. He was employed on a farm near Berlin, where the landowner, a Catholic, was sympathetic to Jews. In December 1936, all Jews were ordered off the farm. Mr. Arons was transported to Buchenwald and later to Sachsenhausen. In December 1938, he was released from Sachsenhausen and returned to Berlin. His stepmother had successfully negotiated with the Gestapo office in Berlin for his release and had obtained boat tickets for Mr. Arons to go to Shanghai, China, where he arrived in January 1939. For the next eight years, he lived in the Ward Road Camp for stateless refugees.
In November 1947, Mr. Arons immigrated to San Francisco. He moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico for work, where, in 1948, he joined the US Army. After basic training, he was stationed in Korea, Hawaii, and the Presidio in San Francisco. In San Francisco, he met and married his wife, also a former Berliner. He was discharged from the military in the early 1950's, and settled in San Francisco. Mr. Arons died in 1997.
Related Archival Materials note
See also Hans Arons oral history interviews - OHP.5160.
Conditions Governing Access note
There are no restrictions to access for this collection.
Conditions Governing Use note
There are no restrictions to use for this collection.
Preferred Citation note
Hans Arons papers, 1988-2035, Tauber Holocaust Library, JFCS Holocaust Center, San Francisco, California
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Arons, Hans J., 1914-1997
Buchenwald (Concentration camp).
Sachsenhausen (Concentration Camp).
Holocaust survivors -- United States
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945) -- Personal narratives
Immigration records -- China -- Shanghai
Jewish ghettos -- China -- Shanghai -- Photographs
Jewish refugees -- China -- Shanghai
Jews -- China -- Shanghai -- Photographs
Photographs -- China -- Shanghai
Shanghai (China) -- Social conditions -- 20th century -- Photographs
1. Unidentified group of 7 people undated
2. Unidentified group of young men undated
3. Four men in bunk beds undated
4. Two story building in Shanghai undated
5. Group of men with flags, standing behind Hebrew banner 1945 January 14
   General note
   Handwritten list of names of individuals in the photograph and marked as "Shanghai 14 I 1945."
6. Group of men and women seated in meeting place with Jewish star on wall undated
7. Religious services, Shanghai undated
   General note
   Rear of photograph states: "Hospital room for the high holidays with Cantor Florsheim and male nurses."
8. Group of men and women eating, seated outdoors undated
9. Men and women in dining hall undated
10. Unidentified man at dais with Israeli flags behind him undated
    General note
    A handwritten note in German, partially illegible, appears on the back of the photograph, with a signature Leo Gruenfeld.
11. Meeting of the zionist organization "B'rith Noir Zion" in Shanghai 1946-1947
    General note
    List on rear of photograph of handwritten names of individuals in the photograph, with a "1946-1947, Shanghai." Also a note that reads: "Zionist organization "B'rith Noir Zioni" Habonim - 1940-1947. "Poale Zion" Jewish Labor Party, 269 Kwenmind Road, 4710 Wayside, Hong Kew
12. Group of men and women in aprons undated
    General note
    Handwritten list on back of photograph with names of individuals in the photograph.
13. Group of men standing and seated undated
14. Building with smoke stacks, Shanghai undated
15. Several men in room with bunk beds undated
16. Camp and Kitchen Hospital, Shanghai undated
    General note
    The following note appears on the back of the photograph:
    "Shanghai 1939-1949, 138 Ward road, Camp & Kitchen, Hospital S.R., Hong Kew

Refugee identification card issued by the International Committee for Granting Relief to European Refugees, Shanghai undated
Identification card, Shanghai undated
Jewish Refugee Centre identification card, Shanghai undated
Membership card, Judische Gemeinde Shanghai undated