

Jewish Flight from Nazi Germany

Jews gained an escape route to the east after Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression treaty in August of 1939. Both countries invaded, conquered, and partitioned Poland the following month. The U.S.S.R. welcomed all Jews who wished to flee from Nazi-occupied territory, but required them to become Soviet citizens if they desired to stay. Many accepted that offer. Of those who preferred not to become subjects of Joseph Stalin, many traveled across Siberia to China. Shanghai, the most cosmopolitan city in the Far East, became a natural haven for German Jews seeking refuge abroad, because no visas were required to enter or to reside there.

This September 17, 1939, post card from a Jewish family at Wartenburg, East Prussia, Germany, censored at Königsberg, went to family and friends who had fled to Shanghai.

The card was censored at Königsberg; according to Karl Heinz Riemer, the circular violet censor's handstamp was in use only from September 6 until mid-November of 1939. The straight line purple handstamp states: "Authorized by the Army."

