

Chiune Sugihara, diplomat who saved WWII refugees, remembered with exhibit, film by [Kirk Spitzer](#) in the [December 9, 2015](#) issue

Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat who saved thousands of Jewish refugees during World War II, is finally getting his due.

An exhibition devoted to Sugihara and Holocaust victim Anne Frank was mounted in Tokyo this fall, and a movie based on Sugihara's life, *Persona Non Grata*, was scheduled for release this month in Japan.

"Sugihara is proof that one person's choice to take action in the face of evil—whatever the consequences—can make a difference," said Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles.

Sugihara was Japan's vice consul in Kaunas, Lithuania, when he defied government orders and issued more than 2,000 travel visas, allowing more than 6,000 people to escape Nazi persecution in Germany and Poland in 1940. He wrote many of the documents by hand during a five-week period, passing the last out of the window of his train after his consulate closed and he was ordered to leave the country.

Many of the refugees traveled to Japan on the visas Sugihara issued, then on to China, the United States, and elsewhere. Sugihara was forced out of Japan's foreign service after the war ended. He spent many years working and teaching overseas until his death in 1986.

Alison Leslie Gold, author of *A Special Fate: Chiune Sugihara, Hero of the Holocaust*, said he was one of the people in history "whose human values trump practicality or their own safety," she said. "Because of them, people like us can see it's possible to swim against the stream, throw caution to the wind, at times of moral crisis." —*USA Today*; added sources