

## Gilberto Bosques Saldivar, The Mexican Schindler

When I teach my lesson on the Holocaust, I am often astounded by some of the reactions I get from my students. This semester one of my students, after the Holocaust lesson, wrote a paper about a little-known hero of that terrible time in history: A Mexican diplomat named Gilbert Bosques Saldivar, aka “The Mexican Schindler.”

In 1939 Saldivar was Mexico’s Counsel General in France. When France was defeated by Germany in 1940, he was sent to represent his country in the Nazi puppet state of Vichy France. There he directed consular employees to issue Mexican visas to anyone who wanted to flee to Mexico. He also rented a castle and a summer holiday camp in Marseilles as safe houses to shield refugees from the Nazis while they waited transport to Mexico, for under international law these places were Mexican territory and the Germans had no authority there. Approximately 40,000 visas were issued, mostly to Jews and Spaniards who were refugees from fascist Spain. Only in recent years has Saldivar’s heroism been recognized. Stories like this must be remembered.