

JULIUS KÜHL COLLECTION, 1929-1982 1988.003 (RG-27.001)

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Julius Kühl collection

Dates: 1929-1982

Accession number: 1988.003 (RG-27.001)

Creator: Kühl, Julius, 1913-1985

Extent: 3.0 linear feet (6 boxes)

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The Julius Kühl collection consists of photocopies of documents relating to the life and career of Dr. Julius Kühl, a diplomat employed at the Polish embassy in Bern during the War and, his assistance to hundreds of Jews fleeing Nazi tyranny. Records include general correspondence, telegrams, articles and clippings, reports and pamphlets, miscellaneous reports, Professor Penkower's interview with Dr. Reuben Hecht, a Treblinka report, and Dr. Kühl's autobiographical report.

Languages: German, English, French, Polish, Hebrew, Italian, Yiddish, Danish, and Dutch

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open for use, but is stored offsite. Please contact the Reference Desk more than seven days prior to visit in order to request access.

Reproduction and use: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

Preferred citation: Julius Kühl collection (1988.003), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Julius Kühl donated his photocopied collection to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in the 1980s.

Custodial history: Julius Kühl donated his photocopied collection to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum shortly after the United States Holocaust Memorial Council opened its offices in 1980. Council staff transferred the collection to Robert Wolfe at the National Archives and Records Administration for safekeeping until the Council was able to properly store the papers. Mr. Wolfe returned the collection to the Council shortly before the Museum opened in 1993. The location of the original papers is unknown.

Processing History: Revised, Julie Schweitzer, July 2019

Biographical note

Dr. Julius Kühl (Juliusz, Yehiel, 1913-1985) was born in Sanok, Poland (Galicia at the time). He moved to Switzerland and studied economics and the University of Zurich. At the outbreak of World War II he received a position at the Polish legation, which remained loyal to the Polish government-in-exile and was supervised by Aleksander Ładoś. Kühl was charged with aiding Polish soldiers in Swiss internment camps and Polish refugees from German-occupied countries, most of whom were Jewish or of Jewish descent. Kühl, Stefan Ryniewicz, and Konstanty Rokicki supervised an illegal market of Latin American passports used by Jewish refugees to claim neutrality and exemption from deportations. The group became known as the "Bernese Group" or "Ładoś Group." Kühl saved hundreds of Jews by aiding them in obtaining passports and visas, aiding their passage into Switzerland, and working with Jewish organizations and prominent rescuers, including Isaak and Recha Sternburch. After the war, he received letters of praise from Jewish organizations, the British embassy, and the American military. He left the foreign service following the communist takeover in Poland, moved to the United States in the late 1940s, and then relocated to Canada where he ran a successful construction company. In 1980 he moved to Miami. He and his wife Yvonne Weill had four children.

Scope and content of collection

The Julius Kühl collection consists of photocopies of documents relating to the life and career of Dr. Julius Kühl, a diplomat employed at the Polish embassy in Bern during the War and, his assistance to hundreds of Jews fleeing Nazi tyranny. Records include general correspondence, telegrams, articles and clippings, reports and pamphlets, miscellaneous reports, Professor Penkower's interview with Dr. Reuben Hecht, a Treblinka report, and Dr. Kühl's autobiographical report.

General correspondence relates principally to Julius Kühl's wartime service at the Polish embassy in Bern, and his efforts in cooperation with Jewish and other refugee organizations on behalf of refugees and internees in wartime Europe. A small amount of correspondence is from the postwar era. The material includes, but is not limited to, information about efforts to rescue Jews from Poland, Hungary, and Romania; attempts to send medical equipment and clothing to occupied Poland; work aimed at locating the whereabouts of refugee relatives in occupied France; and assistance to Jewish internees in Switzerland. The collection contains correspondence with or about prominent rescuers such as Saly Mayer, the Sternbuch family, and Raoul Wallenberg.

Telegrams from Kühl's work at the Polish embassy in Bern relate to his role in assisting refugees and internees. The wartime cables document his work with Jewish and other organizations concerned with refugee affairs. The subjects of the cables include, but are not limited to, urgent pleas for immigration permits and passports, decisions of governments on entry permits for Jews, information about the

deportation of notable citizens, attempts to finance the education of refugee children, and the hiding of children in gentile homes. Most of the postwar cables concern the whereabouts of Jews who were released from liberated camps.

Articles and clippings from Swiss, Jewish, and international newspapers and magazines relate to Jewish affairs in Europe and Palestine (later Israel). The topics of the articles include, but are not limited to, living conditions of Jewry before and during World War II, the history of the Jews in France, the treatment of Jews in Germany and Poland, wartime anti-Semitism in Switzerland, the Nuremberg trials, and Kühl's embassy work in Bern.

Printed and typed reports and pamphlets collected by Kühl document refugee organizations, Jewish issues, the Holocaust, and emigration to Palestine. The prewar material pertains to the persecution of Jews in the USSR, Jewish emigration to Palestine, and a legal case concerning the forgery of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in Bern, Switzerland. Reports and pamphlets from the war include detailed descriptions of Jewish life in Poland, Romania, and Hungary; the Jewish resistance in France; the life of internees in camps; the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; Auschwitz; and Jewish rescue efforts. The postwar documents contain information about refugee aid and displaced persons.

Miscellaneous reports primarily relate to the fate of Polish Jews. The collection includes information about the judgment on the regulation of private property in Poland, Jewish property in Poland, the General Government, diplomatic passports, Nazi arrest-warrants, visitor permits for the camps, relief organizations, Jewish transports, child refugees, Hungarian Jews in Auschwitz, the fate of Dutch and French Jews, Jewish publications from Palestine, restitution, and the Swiss-Israelite Association.

Professor Penkower's interview with Dr. Reuben Hecht relates to Reuben Hecht's work for the New Zionist Organization, Vaad Hatzalah, and Irgun Berit Zion to rescue Jews and assist them with emigration to Palestine. The interview provides details on talks with Vaad Hatzalah, the Catholic church, and Sam Woodson, a U.S. intelligence agent.

The Treblinka report is by Jankiel Wiernitz, a former prisoner who worked as a craftsman in Treblinka. In the report, Wiernitz describes living conditions and the murder of Jews and Roma and Sinti, the treatment of inmates by Germans and Ukrainians, everyday life, John Demjanjuk, the rape of Jewish women, and the preparations of the camp uprising that led to Wiernitz's escape.

Dr. Kühl's autobiographical report describes his life, including details about his birth, his family in Galicia, his years of studies in Switzerland, his service with the Polish legation in Bern, his mother's deportation to and rescue from Siberia, the rescue efforts of prominent individuals including the Sternbuchs and Papal Nuncio Bernadini, and his emigration to Canada after the war.

System of arrangement

The Julius Kühl collection is arranged in eight series:

Series 1: General correspondence, 1937-1982

Series 2: Telegrams, 1941-1962

Series 3: Articles and clippings, 1933-1982

Series 4: Reports and pamphlets, 1931-1979

Series 5: Miscellaneous reports, 1929-1979

Series 6: Interview with Dr. Reuben Hecht by Professor Penkower, 1982

Series 7: Treblinka report, undated

Series 8: Dr. Kühl's autobiographical report, undated

Indexing terms

Personal Names

Kühl, Julius, 1913-1985.

Topical Terms

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)

World War, 1939-1945--Jews--Rescue--Switzerland.

Refugees, Jewish--Switzerland.

Refugee camps--Switzerland.

Geographic Names

Switzerland.

Genre

Photocopies.

CONTAINER LIST

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Series 6: Interview with Dr. Reuben Hecht by Professor Penkower, 1982

Box/Folder	Title	RG reference
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Series 7: Treblinka report, undated

Box/Folder	Title	RG reference
6.22	Treblinka report, undated	RG-27.001*07

Series 8: Dr. Kühl's autobiographical report, undated

Box/Folder	Title	RG reference
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