

JAKOB ALTARAS PAPERS, approximately 1900-1943 1989.53.2

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: Jakob Altaras papers

Dates: approximately 1900-1943

Accession number: 1989.53.2

Creator: Altaras, Jakob, 1918–2001

Extent: 0.6 linear foot (1 folder, 1 book enclosure)

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

Abstract: The Jakob Altaras papers consist of one copy print of a photograph of Jakob Altaras with a group of Jewish refugee children in Split, Croatia just before their departure for Italy in April 1943, two copy prints of a photograph identified as a synagogue in Laubach in 1936, and one copybook that appears to contain copies of business letters written by Max Stein and H. Hirsch Nachfolger in Ruppertsberg (near Laubach) between 1900 and 1920.

Languages: German

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: (Identification of item), Jakob Altaras papers (1989.53.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Jakob Altaras and the Jewish Community of Giessen donated the Jakob Altaras papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1989, 1990, and 1991. The

accessions previously cataloged as 1989.53.1, 1990.118.1, 1990.118.11, and 1990.118.12 have been incorporated into this collection.

Related materials: Jakob Altaras and the Jewish Community of Giessen also donated a number of objects (1989.236, 1990.118.2 through 1990.118.6, 1990.118.11 through 1990.118.21, 1990.201.1, and 1991.168.1 through 1991.168.2) and publications (1990.118.7 through 1990.118.10) to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed, see archives catalog at collections.ushmm.org for further information.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, October 2017

Biographical notes

Jakob Altaras (1918-2001) was born in Split, Croatia and was the youngest of six sons of Leon Altaras. His medical studies in Zagreb were interrupted by the war, and he joined the Partisan resistance movement in Croatia. He saved Torah portions and other sacred objects from the Split Synagogue when it was set on fire; he smuggled a group of 33 Jewish children from Croatia to safety in Villa Emma near Modena, Italy; he illegally entered the Rab (Arbe) concentration camp to smuggle out photographs which were later used by the Commission for War Crimes in Yugoslavia; and he served as a surgeon in hospitals for Jewish partisans in Bari, Italy. After the war, he completed his medical studies and practiced and taught medicine in Zagreb. Altaras was politically persecuted and forced to leave Croatia in 1964 when he began investigating the 1945 death of his brother Silvio Altaras at the hands of the communist regime of Yugoslavia. He worked in Zurich, Switzerland for two years before settling in Giessen, Germany, where he served as the president of the Jewish Community of Giessen.

Scope and content of collection

The Jakob Altaras papers consist of one copy print of a photograph of Jakob Altaras with a group of Jewish refugee children in Split, Croatia just before their departure for Italy in April 1943, two copy prints of a photograph identified as a synagogue in Laubach in 1936, and one copybook that appears to contain copies of business letters written by Max Stein and H. Hirsch Nachfolger in Ruppertsberg (near Laubach) between 1900 and 1920.

Jakob Altaras guided a group of 33 refugee children to Villa Emma, near Nonantola, Italy, by ship to Trieste and then by train via Venice and Bologna in April 1943. The copy print depicts the refugee children, Jakob Altaras (top right corner, between the door and window), and additional members of the Jewish community of Split including Rabbi Avraham Altaras (to Jakob's left, next to the shutter), Jachiel Kamchi (below Avraham), Marcus Finzi (far right, below the window), Vittorio Morpurgo (top center), Iso Hermann (to Morpurgo's left), and Moritz Levi (to Morpurgo's right). When Germany began occupying Italy in September 1943, the monks of the nearby Nonantola Abbey helped the children reach Switzerland, and all survived. The children are identified as Sarina Attias, Moritz Attias, Lea Altarac, Ella Atarac, Buni Altarac, Lezo Altarac, Albert Albahari, Josef Danon, Sarina Brodski, Moric Danon, Reli Gaon, Zlata Gaon, Tina Gaon, Bela Grof, Velimri Halpern, Marcel Hoffmann, Lotica Israel, Sida Israel, Albi Israel, Lezo Kaweson, Flora Kajon, Leone Kajon, Aron Koen, Rikica Levi, Leone Levi, Sida Levi, Charlotte Markus, Israel Maestro, Jokov Maestro, Giuseppe Papo, Danko Sternberg, Zdenko Schmidt, and Nelli Schlesinger.

The two copy prints of a photograph of nine people and a cow in front of a building are described as depicting a synagogue in Laubach, Germany in 1936.

The copy book is difficult to read but appears to contain copies of business letters written by Max Stein and H. Hirsch Nachfolger in Ruppertsberg (near Laubach) between 1900 and 1920.

System of arrangement

The Jakob Altaras papers are arranged as a single series.

Indexing terms

Jews--Croatia--Split.

Jewish refugees--Croatia.

Jews--Germany--Laubach.

Split (Croatia)

Laubach (Germany)

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Jakob Altaras papers, approximately 1900-1943

| Box/Folder | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1.1 | Copy prints, approximately 1936 and 1943 |
| BE 1 | Copy book, 1900-1920 |