

## **HANNAH KASTAN WEISS PAPERS, approximately 1939-1950 1996.23**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
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### **Descriptive summary**

Title: Hannah Kastan Weiss papers

Dates: approximately 1939-1950

Accession number: 1996.23

Creator: Weiss, Hannah Kastan, 1938-

Extent: 0.2 linear foot (8 folders, 1 oversize folder)

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

Abstract: The Hannah Kastan Weiss papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence, and printed materials documenting the Kastan family of Berlin, Germany, including Hannah Kastan; her father Günter, who performed forced labor at the Monowitz concentration camp; and his parents, Harry and Magdalena Kastan, who raised Hannah as their own child and protected her from deportation. Records include wartime and postwar identification papers, ration tickets, letters written from the Monowitz concentration camp, and immigration documents.

Languages: German, English

### **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), Hannah Kastan Weiss papers (1996.23), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Hannah Kastan Weiss donated the Hannah Kastan Weiss papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1996.

Separated material: Hannah Kastan Weiss also donated five publications (1996.23.1-1996.23.5) and a Star of David badge (1996.23.73) to the Museum.

Related material: Hannah Kastan Weiss also donated her uncle's correspondence from the Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück concentration camps, the Kurt Kastan correspondence (2014.142.1), 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](https://collections.ushmm.org) for further information.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, August 2019

### **Biographical note**

Hannah Kastan Weiss was born on November 23, 1938 in Berlin, Germany, to Günter (1914-1945) and Charlotte Sonja Kastan (née Kogen, 1913-1943?). Günter was born in Breslau to Harry (1891-1949) and Magdalena Kastan (1894-1977). During the Nazi years, Magdalena and Harry Kastan benefited from a protected status because she was born in a Christian family, and Harry Kastan remained free by performing heavy labor in Berlin. After World War II began, Hannah's parents were pressed into forced labor at the Siemens plant in Berlin. Hannah lived with her parents during the weekends and with her grandparents during the week. In March 1943, Hannah and her parents were rounded-up and taken to the Berlin Jewish Home for the Aged, a key assembly point for deportations to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Hannah's grandmother spotted her there and managed to smuggle her out, but Günter and Charlotte were deported. For the rest of the war, Hannah lived with her grandparents, who registered her as their own child. Hannah had to remain indoors and hide whenever there was a knock on the door, but she otherwise led a normal life. Hannah's mother was never heard from again after her deportation, and is presumed to have perished in Auschwitz. Her father was able to smuggle mail to his parents and daughter from the Monowitz concentration camp (Auschwitz III) until January 1945. He was reportedly beaten and then shot to death by an SS guard on February 28, 1945, during the death march from Auschwitz to Germany. In 1947, Hannah and her grandparents immigrated to the United States aboard the *Marine Flasher* and settled in Chicago with the assistance of the United Service for New Americans. Her grandfather died in 1949, and her grandmother died in 1977.

### **Scope and content of collection**

The Hannah Kastan Weiss papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence, and printed materials documenting the Kastan family of Berlin, Germany, including Hannah Kastan; her father Günter, who performed forced labor at the Monowitz concentration camp; and his parents, Harry and Magdalena Kastan, who raised Hannah as their own child and protected her from deportation. Records include wartime and postwar identification papers, ration tickets, letters written from the Monowitz concentration camp, and immigration documents.

Biographical materials document the lives of Hannah, Harry, and Magdalena Kastan in Berlin during World War II and following liberation and their immigration to the United States in 1947. Records

include identification papers, registrations, permissions, exemptions, travel papers, immigration documents, vaccination records, ration tickets, and a photograph of Hannah just after liberation.

Correspondence consists of letters and postcards sent by Günter Kastan from the Monowitz concentration camp (Auschwitz III) to his parents and daughter in Berlin from approximately 1943-1945. The authorized postcards contain brief greetings and reassurances that Günter is well. The clandestine letters relate Günter's worries for his family and news of friends; request supplies such as food, cigarettes, clothing, soap, and writing paper; describe general conditions, work, and holidays in the camp; and ask about his daughter.

Printed materials include a page from a 1947 issue of the newspaper *N.Y. Staats-Zeitung und Herold* containing an article about Hannah Kastan as well as sheet music and lyrics for the protest song *Wir sind die Moorsoldaten*.

### **System of arrangement**

The Hannah Kastan Weiss papers are arranged as three series:

Series 1: Biographical materials, approximately 1939-1950

Series 2: Correspondence, approximately 1943-1945

Series 3: Printed material, approximately 1947

### **Indexing terms**

#### **Personal names**

Kastan, Günter, 1914-1945.

Kastan, Hannah, 1938-

Kastan, Harry, 1891-1949.

Kastan, Magdalena, 1894-1977.

#### **Corporate terms**

Monowitz (Concentration camp)

#### **Topical terms**

Jews--Germany--Berlin.

Jewish families--Germany--Berlin.

Concentration camp inmates--Correspondence.

#### **Geographic Terms**

Berlin (Germany)

United States--Emigration and immigration--History.

#### **Genre Terms**

Correspondence.

Photographs.

Ration books.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series 1: Biographical materials, approximately 1939-1950

Folder	Title
1 of 10	Kastan, Hannah, 1946-1947
2-4 of 10	Kastan, Harry, approximately 1939-1950 (3 folders)
5 of 10	Kastan, Magdalena, approximately 1945-1948
6 of 10	Ration tickets, approximately 1944-1945

### Series 2: Correspondence, approximately 1943-1945

Folder	Title
7-9 of 10	Kastan, Günter, approximately 1943-1945 (3 folders)

### Series 3: Printed material, approximately 1947

Folder	Title
10 of 10	<i>Wir sind die Moorsoldaten: Text und Musik von politischen Schutzhäftlingen Börgermoor 1933</i> , sheet music and lyrics, undated
OS 1	"Grossmutter verbarg Enkelin lange vor Gestapo im Keller," in <i>N.Y. Staats-Zeitung und Herald</i> , September 2, 1947