

ITA DIMANT PAPERS, circa 1932-1998
1998.A.0258.2

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
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Descriptive summary

Title: Ita Dimant papers

Dates: circa 1932-1998

Accession number: 1998.A.0258.2

Creator: Dimant, Ita, 1918-2010

Extent: 1.5 linear feet (2 boxes and 1 oversize box)

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

Abstract: The Ita Dimant papers include correspondence, photographs, personal documents, a diary, and memoirs relating to Ita Dimant's experiences in hiding under false papers and in a labor camp in Germany. The collection includes false identification documents, correspondence between Ita and her family and wartime and post-war correspondence with the Brust family, who helped protect Ita. Also included are photographs of Ita's family and her diary, in Polish, kept during her time as a forced laborer in Germany as well as English, Polish, and Hebrew editions of her memoir, based on her diary.

Languages: Polish, Yiddish, German, English, Hebrew

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), Ita Dimant papers (1998.A.0258.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Jacob Dimant donated the Ita Dimant papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1998 and 2014. The accessions previously numbered 1998.A.0258 and 2014.207.1 have been incorporated in this collection.

Separated material: Oral histories and testimonies (2013.341.1-.3) and an object (2016.561.1) were catalogued separately.

Related material: The Museum holds a collection related to Ita's husband, Simcha Dimant (1993.34.2). The Museum's Library holds a copy of *Moja cząstka życia* (DS135.P63 D57 2001) and *A Diary of the Holocaust* (DS135.P63 D56 1993), by Ita Dimant, based on her diary.

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

Processing history: Morgan Voth, February 2019

Biographical note

Ita Dimant (née Rozencwajg, 1916-2010) was the daughter of Rabbi Jacob Jehuda Rozencwajg, the rabbi of Jeziorna, a village near Warsaw. Rabbi Rozencwag's first wife Ita had three half-sister Haia, Fryda, and Henia, who were married by the time of the German invasion. After the death of his first wife, Jacob married Faiga (d. 1920) and they had three daughters, Malka, Ita, and Huma. After Faiga's death, her father married a third time to Esther and had a daughter, Menuha, and two sons, Yeheskel and Shimon. Ita left home at the age of 17 and went to live with her uncle Mendel Miodownik and his family in Warsaw.

After the occupation of Warsaw Ita got a job assisting her cousin Sara, who was a nurse in the Jewish hospital. When the hospital was closed by the Germans in the fall of 1940, Ita asked her uncle's permission to open a kindergarten in his apartment. He agreed, and soon Ita had thirty children between the ages of four and seven in her program. At the end of 1941 the school was closed temporarily when the apartment house was excluded from the boundaries of the ghetto, but Ita succeeded in reopening it in the new quarters. In February 1941 Ita's father and his family were relocated from Jeziorna to the Warsaw ghetto. Ita took a night job as a nurse in order to supplement the family's meager resources. She also arranged for her father to get a work permit. During a wave of deportations in mid-August of 1942, Ita fled to Częstochowa, with a leader of Gordonia Zionist youth underground, Aaron Gepner, and used false papers forged by Gordonia. Ita was recruited by them to serve as a courier because of her Polish appearance. Ita was based at the Gordonia kibbutz in Częstochowa and traveled under the false identity of Genowefa Zawadzka.

On September 22, 1942, SS troops surrounded the Częstochowa ghetto. Ita managed to escape by claiming she was a Pole from Kraków who had wandered accidentally into the ghetto. While on a train out of Częstochowa, Ita befriended a Pole name Stefan Gromul who, not realizing her Jewish identity, invited her to visit when she returned to Częstochowa. After a period of travel that took Ita to Minsk, Lukow, Parczew, and other locations, Ita returned to Częstochowa and became a boarder at the Gromul home. Ita contributed to the family's finances by purchasing food from neighboring peasants and exchanging it for goods with Jews in the ghetto. On a number of occasions, especially on Jewish holidays, Ita smuggled herself into the ghetto and stayed overnight.

In February 1943 a neighbor of the Gromuls became suspicious that Ita was Jewish. Ita hid temporarily in the ghetto until she could arrange to go to Warsaw and obtain a false birth certificate. Upon her return she went back to the Gromuls. At the end of June 1943, when the SS began the liquidation of the Czestochowa ghetto, an announcement was made promising a reward to anyone who would turn in an escaped Jew. Fearing denunciation, Ita went to live with the family of Henryk Brust, a member of the Polish socialist party, whom Ita had met while delivering a message to a Jew who was hiding in their home. A short time after moving to the Brusts', Ita was forced to appear at the local police station to prove her Polish identity. After an interrogation, the German police concluded she was not Jewish, but decided to send her to forced labor in Germany along with other Polish men and women. On July 20, 1943 Ita was sent to Göttingen, Germany, and from there to a small farm in Kertslingerode. During her two years on the farm she kept a diary, which she wrote on used margarine wrappers.

After liberation on April 11, 1945 Ita went to work for the American army. She met a Jewish chaplain, Rabbi Marcus, who arranged for her to join Kibbutz Buchenwald in Geringshof. Ita sailed with the first group of Kibbutz Buchenwald members and immigrated to Palestine, arriving in Haifa on September 8, 1945. A few months later she married Simcha Dimant (born Symcho Dymant, 1913-1983) a fellow member of the kibbutz. Upon Ita's recommendation, the family of Henryk Brust was honored as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 1980.

Scope and content of collection

The Ita Dimant papers include correspondence, photographs, personal documents, a diary, and memoirs relating to Ita Dimant's experiences in hiding under false papers and in a labor camp in Germany. The collection includes false identification documents, correspondence between Ita and her family and wartime and post-war correspondence with the Brust family, who helped protect Ita. Also included are photographs of Ita's family and her diary, in Polish, kept during her time as a forced laborer in Germany as well as English, Polish, and Hebrew editions of her memoir, based on her diary.

The diary was written, in Polish, by Ita on used margarine wrappers during her time as a forced laborer on a farm in Germany from 1943-1945. In her diary Ita writes about her life before the war and her experiences during the war including her time in hiding and as a forced laborer. The series also includes a Polish transcript of the diary as well as a Polish, Hebrew, and English edition of the memoir Ita wrote after the war, based on her diary.

Correspondence includes wartime and post-war correspondence between Ita and the Brust family, who helped protect Ita during the war, as well as correspondence between Ita and her family, mainly Nachman Miodownik. This series also includes school correspondence to Nachman and letters from Stanley Krayewski and Genia Ita.

Subject files include false papers, documents relating to Ita's efforts to recognize the Brust family as Righteous Among the Nations, and pre-war, wartime, and post-war photographs of Ita's family including her cousin Frieda, uncle Mendel Miodownik, and Stefan Gromol, whom Ita met during the war. Photographs also include images of the Warsaw ghetto including Ita with the preschoolers in the kindergarten she established in the ghetto. False documents include a birth certificate, identification cards, and working papers under Ita's false identity of Genowefa Zawadzka.

System of arrangement

The Ita Dimant papers are arranged as three series.

Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1937-1982

Series 2: Writings, 1943-1998 and undated

Series 3: Subject files, circa 1932-1970s

Indexing terms

Person:

Dimant, Ita, 1918-2010.

Topical Subject:

Jewish ghettos--Poland--Warsaw.

World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives.

Geography:

Warsaw (Poland)

Genre/Form:

Correspondence.

Diaries.

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1937-1982

Box/folder	Title
1.1-1.2	Brust family, 1942-1944 (2 folders)
1.3-1.4	Brust family, 1971-1996 (2 folders)
1.5-1.7	Dimant, Ita, circa 1937-1939 (3 folders)
1.8-1.9	Miodownik family, circa 1937-1939 (2 folders)
1.10	Miodownik, Nachman, 1938
1.11	Miscellaneous, 1939-1945
1.12	Post-war, 1945-1982

Series 2: Writings, 1943-1998 and undated

Box/folder	Title
3	Diary, 1943-1945
1.13	Diary transcribed, undated
1.14-1.16	Memoir, 1965-1998 (3 folders)
2.1	Memoir in English, 1993

2.2	Memoir in English, undated
2.3	Memoir in Hebrew, 1993
2.4-2.6	Memoir in Polish, undated (3 folders)

Series 3: Subject files, circa 1932-1970s

Box/folder	Title
2.7	False identification documents, 1943-1944
2.8	Righteous Among the Nations, circa 1970s
2.9	Photographs, 1932-1971