

EDMUND SCHECHTER PAPERS, 1941-1995
1999.A.0276

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington, DC 20024-2126
Tel. (202) 479-9717
e-mail: reference@ushmm.org

Descriptive summary

Title: Edmund Schechter papers

Dates: 1941-1995

Accession number: 1999.A.0276

Creator: Edmund Schechter, 1908-1998

Extent: 3.2 linear feet (6 document boxes and 2 oversize folders)

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

Abstract: The Edmund Schechter papers contain correspondence, reports, articles, press releases, clippings, and scrapbooks documenting Schechter's early writing and speaking career in New York on the topic of North Africa; his military and civil service career at the Office of War Information (OWI), the American Broadcasting Service in Europe (ABSIE), Radio Luxembourg, Radio in the American Sector (RIAS), Radio München under the Information Control Division of the Military Government for Bavaria, and German Radio Operations of the United States High Commissioner in Germany (HICOG); Schechter's defense against claims made during hearings by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations under Joseph McCarthy; and Schechter's membership in and commemoration of the Jewish fraternity Kadimah.

Languages: German, English, Yiddish, Polish, Hebrew, French, Spanish, Italian, Czech

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), Edmund Schechter Papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The Edmund Schechter papers were donated by Gerda Schechter, his widow, in 1999.

Related archival materials: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum also holds a copy of Schechter's 1983 memoirs, *Viennese Vignettes: Personal Recollections*, which can be found in the library's catalog. The Library of Congress holds an oral history with Edmund Schechter, conducted on February 5, 1988 by G. Lewis Schmidt, and a transcript of the interview can be found online.

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, May 2012

Biographical note

Edmund Schechter was born on April 22, 1908 in Vienna, Austria. He joined the Jewish fraternity Masada while in high school and the Kadimah while at the University of Vienna. In February 1938, he published a book, *Kampf um Zion: Die Freiheitsbewegung Israels und der Völker*, promoting militancy in the quest for a Jewish state. In March 1938, after the Anschluss, Schechter fled to Trieste, Italy and then to Paris, France in April 1938. He was inducted into an auxiliary unit of the French military in the spring of 1940, taken prisoner by the Germans, and escaped to Marseille and then to Casablanca. He left Casablanca for Lisbon in May 1941 and then sailed to New York. From 1941-1943 he lived in New York, writing articles and lecturing on Morocco and North Africa. In March 1943, he started work at the Office of War Information (OWI), first monitoring outgoing broadcast for conformity and then as chief of the Italian control desk where he voiced a broadcast under the name Edward Herman to German soldiers in Italy. In the spring of 1944, he was transferred to London on assignment from OWI to the American Broadcasting Service in Europe (ABSIE), where he wrote memoranda providing guidance on how to treat various news subjects. At the end of 1944, he was transferred to Radio Luxembourg where he supervised foreign language broadcasts directed to foreign slave laborers and then to displaced persons. He also made reporting trips to German cities as they were occupied by the Allies and visited the concentration camps at Mauthausen and Dachau. When Radio Luxembourg was returned to Luxembourg authorities in November 1945, Schechter was sent to Berlin to set up an American-controlled radio station in Germany, Radio in the American Sector (RIAS). He returned to the United States briefly in 1946 and obtained his American citizenship. From 1947 to 1950 he served in Munich as Chief of the Radio Control Branch of the Information Control Division of the Military Government for Bavaria. His assignment was to prepare Radio München for transfer to German responsibility. He appointed Rudolf von Scholtz Chief of Radio München in December 1947, and the broadcast station was transferred to Germany in January 1949 and became Bayrischer Rundfunk. In 1950 Schechter took charge of the German Radio Operations of the United States High Commissioner in Germany (HICOG). He served as Chief of the Radio Branch of the Information Division in the Office of Public Affairs where he supervised the five radio stations in the American zone: Bremen, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Munich, and RIAS. In 1955, he returned to the United States, where he worked for the United States Information Agency in Washington, DC as a policy officer for Western Europe. He continued his career in the Foreign Service, with assignments to Rome, La Paz, and Caracas. After his retirement, he lived with his wife,

Gerda, and his son, Peter, in Washington DC where he wrote and lectured on international affairs and the history of Israel and Zionism. His memoir, *Viennese Vignettes: Personal Recollections*, was published in 1983. He died on September 11, 1998.

Scope and content of collection

The Edmund Schechter papers contain correspondence, reports, articles, press releases, clippings, and scrapbooks documenting Schechter's work in New York, Luxembourg, and Germany, his membership and continued interest in Kadimah, and investigations into his loyalty made by Senator McCarthy's subcommittee.

Subject files document Schechter's early writing and speaking career in New York on the topic of North Africa; his military and civil service career at the Office of War Information (OWI), the American Broadcasting Service in Europe (ABSIE), Radio Luxembourg, Radio in the American Sector (RIAS), Radio München under the Information Control Division of the Military Government for Bavaria, and German Radio Operations of the United States High Commissioner in Germany (HICOG); Schechter's defense against claims made during hearings by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations under Joseph McCarthy; and Schechter's membership in and commemoration of the Jewish fraternity Kadimah. They contain correspondence, press releases, memoranda, reports, radio scripts, clippings, speeches, announcements, affidavits, photographs of Konrad Adenauer and the International Military Tribunal, interviews, invitations, song lyrics, and a drawing.

Scrapbooks primarily contain newspaper clippings and memorabilia but they also include documents related to the subject files. Such documents include memoranda and scripts by Schechter from the OWI Italian Desk; guidance for the use of SHAEF material drafted by Schechter while at ABSIE; reporting for Radio Luxembourg by Schechter, including information about concentrations camps and displaced persons; Radio München/Bayrischer Rundfunk listener mail, including anti-Semitic hate mail; HICOG reports, press releases, and memoranda; and other press releases, radio scripts, correspondence, and speeches and presentations by and about Schechter. Newspaper clippings include Schechter's own articles about North Africa, articles about Schechter and the redevelopment of radio in Germany, and articles of general interest on subjects such as the occupation of Germany, concentration camps, the Nuremberg tribunals, anti-Semitism, denazification, the redevelopment of German newspapers, American-German relations, communism, and McCarthyism. The scrapbooks further contain cartoons, membership cards, travel order, wire reports, printed money from Theresienstadt, Buchenwald, and the Alliierte Militärbehörde in Austria, a Dachau concentration camp visitor's pass, Nazi ephemera, and invitations, tickets, programs and menus from cultural events.

System of arrangement

The Edmund Schechter papers are arranged as two series:

- Series 1: Subject Files, 1941-1959, 1966-1969, 1974-1980, 1985-1986, 1990-1995
- Series 2: Scrapbooks, 1941-1956

Indexing terms

Germany (Territory under Allied occupation, 1945-1955: U.S. Zone) – Office of Military Government for Bavaria – Information Control Division.

United States Office of the US High Commissioner for Germany.

World War, 1939-1945 – Propaganda.
Radio broadcasters – United States.
Radio broadcasters – Germany.
Germany – History – 1945-1955.

Luxembourg (Luxembourg)
Berlin (Germany)
Munich (Germany)

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Subject Files, 1941-1959, 1966-1969, 1974-1980, 1985-1986, 1990-1995

Box	Folder	
1	1	ABSIE, Correspondence, 1945
1	2	ABSIE, Press Releases, 1945
1	3	ABSIE, Reporting Guidance, 1945
1	4	ABSIE, Reports, circa 1945
1	5	ABSIE, Scripts, 1944-1945
1	6	HICOG, Clippings, 1950, 1955 (see also OS 1)
1	7	HICOG, Conference, 1950
1	8-9	HICOG, Correspondence, 1952-1955
1	10	HICOG, Press Release, 1951
1	11	HICOG, Reports, 1951-1954
1	12	Kadimah, 150th Semester Celebration Speech, 1958
1	13-14	Kadimah, Clippings and Books, 1969, 1990
1	15	Kadimah, Correspondence, 1983-1984
1	16-18	Kadimah, Kadimah Street in Jerusalem, 1985-1986
1	19	Kadimah, Ze'ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, 1977-1980, 1990-199
1	20	Kadimah, Miscellaneous, circa 1942-1988
1	21-23	McCarthyism, 1953 Affidavits, 1946-1953
1	24	McCarthyism, Clippings, 1953
1	25	McCarthyism, Correspondence, 1953
1	26	"Minorities in Europe," by Dr. Edmund Schechter, circa 1943
1	27	North Africa, Announcements and Correspondence, 1942
1	28-30	North Africa, Articles by Schechter, 1941-1945
2	1	OWI, Italian Section, Correspondence, 1944
2	2	OWI, Italian Section, Scripts, 1944
2	3	Photographs, circa 1946
2	4	Radio Luxembourg, Correspondence, 1945
2	5-9	Radio Luxembourg, Reports, 1945-1946
2	10	Radio Luxembourg, Scripts, 1945
2	11	Radio München, Clippings, 1946-1950 (see also OS 2)
2	12	Radio München, Correspondence, 1947-1950
2	13	Radio München, Interviews, 1949-1950

2	14	Radio München, Invitations, 1948-1949
2	15	Radio München, Press Releases, 1950
2	16-18	Radio München, Reports, 1947-1950
2	19	Radio München, Speeches, 1947-1950
2	20	Report on Newspapers in Postwar Germany, circa 1949
2	21	RIAS, Birthday Drawing, 1946
2	22	RIAS, Clippings, circa 1955, 1974-1976
2	23	RIAS, Correspondence, 1946, 1966, 1985-1986, 1995
2	24	RIAS, Press Release, 1946
2	25	Songs, circa 1959
2	26	Miscellaneous, circa 1942-1995

Series 2: Scrapbooks, 1941-1956

Box	Folder	
3	1	ABSIE/Luxembourg/RIAS/My Articles/Berlin Farewell Book 1, 1941-1946
3	2	Ausschnitt Buch, Munich, 1947-1948
4	1	Allgemeine Ausschnitte 2, 1947-1952
4	2	Allgemeine Ausschnitte 2, Loose Clippings, 1947-1952
5	1	Persönliche Ausschnitte I, 1944-1945, 1952-1954
5	2	Persönliche Ausschnitte I, Loose Clippings, 1947-1954
6	1	Persönliche Ausschnitte II, 1945-1956

Oversize Material

Folder	
OS 1	HICOG, Clippings, 1950, 1955 (see also Box 1, Folder 6) (Not Digitized)
OS 2	Radio München, Clippings, 1946-1950 (see also Box 2, Folder 11) (Not Digitized)