

**JAŠA ALTARAC PAPERS, approximately 1915-1964
2002.438.1**

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

Title: Jaša Altarac papers

Dates: approximately 1915-1964

Accession number: 2002.438.1

Creator: Altarac, Jaša, 1934-

Extent: 0.5 linear foot (1 box)

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

Abstract: The Jaša Altarac papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence, Mermer-Oniks business records, photographic materials, and a newspaper documenting the Altarac family in Belgrade; their Holocaust itinerary of flight, imprisonment, deportation, and hiding through Skopje, Pristina, Kavaja, Kamza, and Tirana; and Mayer Altarac's marble business Mermer-Oniks.

Languages: Serbian, Albanian, Italian, German, English, French

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), Jaša Altarac papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Jaša Altarac donated the Jaša Altarac papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2002.

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

Related materials: Jaša Altarac also donated a plaque, handkerchief, slide rule, eyeglasses and case, drafting kit, travel clock, embroidered dress, purse, and fountain pen to the Museum.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, November 2014, revised October 2019

Biographical note

Jaša Altarac was born in 1934 in Belgrade to Mayer and Mimi (nee Finci) Altarac. Mayer was an architect from Sarajevo, and Mimi was born in Brčko. In April 1941, the German army bombed Sarajevo while Jaša's family was visiting his grandmother for Passover. The house was destroyed, and his sister Lela and grandmother were killed. Jaša's family returned home to Belgrade in July, and Jaša's father was forced into hard labor. The family fled to Skopje but were recognized, so they fled again to Pristina, under Italian occupation. They were imprisoned in Pristina and eventually deported to Kavajë, Albania, in June 1942, where they had to check in every day at the police station. After the Italian capitulation in September 1943, the Altarac family left for Tirana. They were hidden by Atif and Ganimet Toptani at their country estate in Kamza from February to August 1944. They returned to Tirana when the Germans came near the estate. In September of 1944, after Albania partisans took control of Tirana, the Altarac family returned to liberated Belgrade. They relocated to Israel in 1948.

Scope and content of collection

The Jaša Altarac papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence, Mermer-Oniks business records, photographic materials, and a newspaper documenting the Altarac family in Belgrade; their Holocaust itinerary of flight, imprisonment, deportation, and hiding through Skopje, Pristina, Kavaja, Kamza, and Tirana; and Mayer Altarac's marble business Mermer-Oniks.

Biographical materials include identification papers, travel permissions, labor documents, and false identification papers documenting Mayer, Mimi, and Jaša Altarac in Belgrade, Skopje, Pristina, Kavaja, and Tirana. This series also includes the notebook the Altarac family used to record the signatures of Italian police in Kavaja proving that the family reported to the police station daily.

Correspondence includes Red Cross inquiries from Mimi Altarac seeking information about Frieda and Andrija Barta and about Esther, Ana, and Leon Finci as well as two letters from Albert Altarac, Mayer Altarac's brother, to Gavro Navon and Mario Altarac in Pristina. This series also includes postwar receipts for money sent to Palomba Finci, Hajima Altarac, and Joska Herman in Vareš-Majdan, Mostar, and Sarajevo.

Mermer-Oniks records include prewar building documents, commercial correspondence, letterhead, and tax payments as well as postwar surveys of quarries documenting Mayer Altarac's marble and granite business. Mayer was one of the most prominent architects in prewar Belgrade. He discovered several sources of marble and other stone in Yugoslavia and used the stone from his quarries in his architectural projects.

Photographic materials include loose family photographs and pages from a family photo album documenting the Altarac family in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Pristina, Kavaja, Kamza, and Tirana, as well as

vacation photos from Bled, Makarska, Planica, Postojna, and Split. Photographs include the Altarac family while imprisoned in Pristina and while living at the “red house” in Kavaja, Jasa Altarac’s class portrait from Kavaja where he attended school under a false Muslim identify, and photographs of the family during hiding in Kamza and Tirana. This series also includes two photographs of Jaša Altarac’s wife, Enica Frances, and her family from Skopje. They were rescued during the war by Dr. Tode and Lala Hadjimitkov, taken to Tirana, and went into hiding. Albanians Zonda and Hamdi Kasapi later helped them escape arrest and hid them in the remote village of Zaliheri.

The newspaper is the May 9, 1945 issue of *Borba*, the Yugoslav communist party organ.

System of arrangement

The Jasa Altarac papers are arranged as five series:

Series 1: Biographical materials, 1922-1964

Series 2: Correspondence, 1941-1947

Series 3: Mermer-Oniks records, 1933-1946

Series 4: Photographic materials, approximately 1915-1960

Series 5: Printed materials, 1945

Indexing terms

Jews--Serbia--Belgrade.

Jewish refugees--Macedonia.

Jewish refugees--Albania.

Hidden children (Holocaust)--Albania.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Yugoslavia.

Jewish children in the Holocaust--Yugoslavia.

Jewish children in the Holocaust--Albania.

Jewish architects--Yugoslavia.

Albania--History--Axis occupation, 1939-1944.

Yugoslavia--History--Axis occupation, 1941-1945.

Yugoslavia--History--1918-1945.

Belgrade (Serbia)

Skopje (Macedonia)

Pristina (Kosovo)

Sarajevo (Bosnia and Hercegovina)

Kavajë (Albania)

Kamëz (Albania)

Tirana (Albania)

Photographs

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Biographical materials, 1922-1964

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Altarac family, 1942-1943
1.2-1.3	Altarac, Mayer, 1922, 1941-1948, 1956, 1964 (2 folders)
1.4	Altarac, Mimi, 1941-1942

Series 2: Correspondence, 1941-1947

Box/Folder	Title
1.5	Altarac, Albert, 1941-1942
1.6	Altarac, Mimi, 1943, 1946
1.19	Receipts, 1945-1947

Series 3: Mermer-Oniks records, 1933-1946

Box/Folder	Title
1.7-1.8	Building documents, 1937-1940 (2 folders)
1.9-1.10	Commercial correspondence, 1933, 1938-1941, 1946 (2 folders)
1.11	Letterhead, approximately 1940
1.12	Survey of quarries, 1946
1.13	Tax payments, 1939-1941

Series 4: Photographic materials, approximately 1915-1960

Box/Folder	Title
1.14	Family photographs, approximately 1915-1960
1.15	Individually described photographs, approximately 1929-1944
	8. Studio portrait of Jaša and Lela Altarac, approximately 1941
	11. Italian Carabinieri outside Pristina prison; photo by Moshe Mandil; approximately 1942
	13. Italian Carabinieri outside Pristina prison; photo by Moshe Mandil; approximately 1942
	14. Jewish children (including Jaša Altarac) with one of the Italian "Carabinieri" in Pristina prison; photo by Moshe Mandil; May 10, 1942
	15. Altarac family in their cell in Pristina prison; photo by Moshe Mandil; May 10, 1942
	16. Altarac family in their cell in Pristina prison; photo by Moshe Mandil; May 10, 1942
	17. Altarac family in courtyard of Pristina prison; photo by Moshe Mandil; May 10, 1942
	18. Altarac family in courtyard of Pristina prison; photo by Moshe Mandil; April 17, 1942
	19. Jewish refugee children in Pristina prison (Jaša Altarac standing in overcoat, Gavra Mandil sitting to the far right); photo by Moshe Mandil; April 1942
	20. Jewish children in the "red house" in Kavaja, Albania; 1943
	21. Residents of the "red house" in Kavaja, Albania, where Altarac, Mandil, Azriel, and other

	families lived; August 13, 1943
	22. The children of the "red house" in Kavaja with their tutor, an Italian soldier, who had been a teacher before the war; photo by Moshe Mandil; 1942
	23. Altarac family in a field in Kamza, Albania; 1944
	24. Jaša Altarac and his mother in a field in Kamza, Albania; August 1944
	25. Altarac family in orchard in Kamza, Albania; 1944
	26. Studio portrait of Altarac family; approximately 1946
	27. Altarac family in front of Toptani estate in Kamza, Albania; August 1944
	38. Women in Purim costumes (Mimi Altarac second from left); 1929, Sarajevo
	40. Sculptor sculpting a bust of Mimi Altarac; 1931
	42. Enica Frances's parents, Vinka and Mois Frances; Tirana, Albania; approximately 1944
	43. Enica Frances's family (Enica in white sweater) and the Muslim Albanian family who hid them; July 6, 1943, Tirana, Albania
	Marble ashtrays made by Mayer Altarac, approximately 1939, Belgrade, Yugoslavia
1.16-1.17	Photo album pages, 1932-1948 (2 folders)

Series 5: Printed materials, 1945

Box/Folder	Title
1.18	<i>Borba</i> , 9 May 1945