

ALEXANDER BACHNÁR PAPERS, approximately 1940-2002 2004.104.2

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

Title: Alexander Bachnár papers

Dates: approximately 1940-2002

Accession number: 2004.104.2

Creators: Bachnár, Alexander, 1919-

Extent: 0.5 linear foot (15 folders)

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

Abstract: The Alexander Bachnár papers consist of correspondence and biographical, photographic, and printed materials documenting Bachnár's forced work on Sixth Labor Battalion (VI Prapor) in Slovakia during World War II, his confinement to the Nováky labor camp for Jews, his participation in armed resistance with partisans, awards he received for his wartime service, and his work as a journalist after the war.

Language: Slovak, 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 if item), Alexander Bachnár papers (2004.104.2) United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Alexander Bachnár donated his papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2004 and 2017. The accession formerly cataloged as 2017.416.1 has been incorporated into this collection.

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

Related materials: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum also hold an oral history interview conducted with Alexander Bachnár in March and April 2017 (2011.438.68). An oral history interview conducted with Bachnár on May 23, 1996 that forms part of the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive can be viewed onsite at the Museum.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, January 2018

Biographical note

Alexander Bachnár (born Bachner) was born on July 29, 1919 in Topolčany, Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia) to painter Jakub Bachner and his wife Františka Bachner (née Steckauer). He attended the Pedagogical School in Bratislava until anti-Semitic measures forced him out. He was drafted into the Sixth Labor Battalion (VI Prapor) in February 1940 and transferred to the Nováky labor camp for Jews in June 1942, where he performed manual labor, taught children, and served as the camp's primary school director. When the Slovak National Uprising began and the Nováky labor camp was liquidated in August 1944, Bachnár participated in the uprising, took command of a Jewish partisan group, and took part in the fighting in central Slovakia. He, his sister Ela, and his father were the only members of their large family to survive the Holocaust. After the war, he worked as a journalist and editor for *Bojovník*, the Pravda printing house, the daily *Práca*, and at the Institute of Health Education. He was fired from both Pravda and *Práca* for political reasons and expelled from the Communist Party in 1968 or 1969. He served as Secretary General of the National Anti-Fascist Committee from 1989-1995.

Scope and content of collection

The Alexander Bachnár papers consist of correspondence and biographical, photographic, and printed materials documenting Bachnár's forced work on Sixth Labor Battalion (VI Prapor) in Slovakia during World War II, his confinement to the Nováky labor camp for Jews, his participation in armed resistance with partisans, awards he received for his wartime service, and his work as a journalist after the war.

Biographical materials include certificates, correspondence, lists, speeches, and an interview documenting Alexander Bachnár, his forced work on the Slovak Jewish labor battalion, his confinement to the Nováky labor camp, his military service with partisans, awards he received for his wartime service, and his work as a journalist after the war. This series also includes an identification card issued at the Nováky labor camp to Gizella Bachnerova, Bachnár's sister-in-law, who was later shot into an open pit in Kremnica with her two sons.

Correspondence includes three letters to Bachnár from former students at the Nováky labor camp, a letter to him from the family who helped his partisan unit during the war, and a postcard from Erich Roth who was imprisoned at Majdanek to his aunt Lotte Gross.

Photographic material include photographs and copies documenting Nováky and other Jewish labor camps, the partisans with whom Bachnár fought, the Jenis family in Skýcov, the Mauthausen memorial, and Bachnár's daughter Alexandra Tothova. Nováky Jewish Council members depicted include Ervin Dick, Emanuel Fürst, Dr. Braun, Dr. Mandler, Dr. Neumann, Dr. Špira, Juraj Spitzer, Elo Gross, Ivan Székely, Pavel Weinwurm, Ing. Löwenbein, Ferdinand Goldstein, Mr. Rosenbaum, Tibor Pethö, and

Imrich Rosenthal. Partisans depicted in the photographs include Major Zorich, Imrich Muller, Edita Ernst, Jan Schönfeld, and Vojtech Friedmann. This series also includes a list of descriptions of photographs, at least one of which is included in this series. Many of the photographs appear to have been taken by Juraj Spitzer.

Printed materials include a 1947 postcard from the State Museum of Auschwitz, a clipping celebrating Bachnár's 50th birthday, a post-1989 clipping listing Bachnár as a reactionary element, and a 1965 clipping from the Polish daily newspaper *Głos Pracy*.

System of arrangement

The Alexander Bachnár papers are arranged as four series:

- Series 1: Biographical materials, 1942-2002
- Series 2: Correspondence, approximately 1943-1945
- Series 3: Photographic material, approximately 1940-1995
- Series 4: Printed material, 1947-approximately 1990

Indexing terms

Bachnár, Alexander, 1919-

Nováky (Concentration camp)

Jews--Slovakia--Topolčany.

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

World War, 1939-1945--Concentration camps--Slovakia--Nováky.

World War, 1939-1945--Conscript labor--Slovakia--Nováky.

World War, 1939-1945--Underground movements--Slovakia.

World War, 1939-1945--Participation, Jewish.

Holocaust survivors--Slovakia.

Newspaper editors--Slovakia.

Bratislava (Slovakia)

Slovakia--History--1918-1945.

Topolčany (Slovakia)

Skýcov (Slovakia)

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Biographical material, 1942-2001

| Folder | Title |
|---------------|--|
| 1 | Awards and testimonial, 1947-1949, 1964-1974, 1995 |

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|---|---|
| 2 | Employment records, 1961, 1970 |
| 3 | Labor battalions and Nováky labor camp, 1942-1944 |
| 4 | Military and partisan records, (1945), 1980 |
| 5 | Speeches and interview, approximately 1995-2002 |

Series 2: Correspondence, approximately 1943-1945

| Folder | Title |
|--------|--|
| 6 | Former students, approximately 1944 |
| 7 | Roth, Erich, 1943 |
| 8 | Slovak household that helped Bachnár's partisan unit, 1945 |

Series 3: Photographic material, approximately 1940-1995

| Folder | Title |
|--------|--|
| 9 | Jenis family in Skýcov, approximately 1945 |
| 10 | Mauthausen memorial, 1990s |
| 11 | Nováky and other Jewish labor camps, approximately 1942-1944 |
| 12 | Partisans, approximately 1940-1995 |
| 13 | Tothova, Alexandra, approximately 1990 |
| 14 | Descriptions of photographs, approximately 1954 |

Series 4: Printed material, 1947-approximately 1990

| Folder | Title |
|--------|--|
| 15 | Printed material, 1947, 1965, 1969, approximately 1990 |