MASHA ROLNIKAITE PAPERS, circa 1930s-2015 2006.436.3

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: Masha Rolnikaite papers

Dates: circa 1930s-2015

Accession number: 2006.436.3

Creator: Rolnikaite, Masha, 1927-2016.

Extent: 15 boxes; 9 oversize boxes; 1 book enclosure; 2 oversize folders

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW,

Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The Masha Rolnikaite collection consists of correspondence, documents, manuscript texts, newspaper clippings, and other related materials, concerning the life and literary career of Masha Rolnikaite (1927-2016), the Lithuanian-born chronicler of the Holocaust, whose best known work was her account of her time spent in the Vilnius ghetto, titled "la dolzhna rasskazat"" (I Must Tell).

Languages: Russian, Yiddish, Hebrew, Lithuanian, German, Polish

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), Masha Rolnikaite papers (2006.436.3) United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: The Masha Rolnikaite papers contain two accessions donated by Masha Rolnikaite in 2006 and Vitaly Romanenko in 2016.

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

Related materials: Sketches of a fellow concentration camp inmate by Esther Lurie: Portrait of Masha Rolnik, Leibisch concentration camp, 1944 (1995.A.0989.8); the Mikhail Lev collection, 1940-2008 (2011.12 / RG-68.118).

Processing history: Processed by Assia Kovriguina, Brad Bauer, David Axelrod, 2016-2017; revisions and additions by Aleksandra B. Borecka and Vadim Altskan, 2017; finding aid updated by Katelynn Vance, August 2019.

Biographical note

Masha Rolnikaite (1927-2016) [alternately known as Mascha Rolnik, Mashe Rolnikayte, M. (Mariia), Rol'nikaïte], was born as Mariia Grigor'evna Rol'nikaïte on 21 July 1927 in Memel, present-day Klaipeda, Lithuania. Her father, Hirsch Rolnik (1898-1973), was an attorney who earned his law degree with a thesis about constitutional law in the Baltic States, and she grew up in Plunge, Lithuania. When Vilnius was transferred to Lithuanian control, however, the family opted to move there, and it was there they were living when World War II broke out, and the city was first occupied by Soviet troops in June 1940, and following the invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany in June 1941, by the Germans.

During this latter period, Rolnikaite and other members of her family were forced into the Vilnius Ghetto, and it was there that she began keeping the diary that she would ultimately publish. Due to the danger of keeping a written diary, she was forced to memorize her entries for a time, and some entries that she later was able to write down were either destroyed in the camps where she was interned, or she destroyed the remaining originals herself, after they were published in the post-war years.

During the occupation, her father, endangered both due to his Jewish background but also because of his work as an attorney defending Communists, fled ahead of the German forces, and survived the Holocaust, as did her older sister, Mira. Her mother, Taiba, and younger siblings, Rajele and Ruwele, as well as over 40 other relatives, perished during the Holocaust. Rolnikaite, following her internment in the Vilnius ghetto, was transferred to Strasdenhof, a camp affiliated with the Kaiserwald concentration camp in Riga, Latvia. She was later transferred to the Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig, where she was liberated by Soviet troops in early 1945.

Following the war, she reconstructed her wartime diaries from memory and surviving fragments, compiling them in Yiddish into three volumes. She studied as a long-distance student at the Maxim Gorki Institute of Literature, earning a degree in 1955. In the early 1960s, she translated her diaries into Russian and Lithuanian, and censored versions were then published, under the title of *Ia dolzhna rasskazat*,' (I Must Tell), first in Lithuanian (1963), and then Russian (1965), and then other languages, including French and German. In the early 2000s complete, uncensored, versions of this work were published, as was a sequel of autobiographical essays.

Rolnikaite married a Russian, Semyon Savelyevich Tsukernik (born 1922), in 1959, and the couple settled in Leningrad (St. Petersburg), where she lived the remainder of her life. She died in St. Petersburg on 7 April 2016.

Alternately known as: Rolnikayte, M. (Mashe) Rolnikayte, Mashe Rol'nikaïte, M. (Mariia)

Rol'nikaĭte, Mariia Grigor'evna Rolniķ, Mashah Рольникайте, Маша ראלניקייטע ,מ

Scope and content of collection

The Masha Rolnikaite collection consists of correspondence, documents, manuscript texts, news clippings, and other related materials, concerning the life and literary career of Rolnikaite (1927-2016), the Lithuanian-born chronicler of the Holocaust, whose best known work was her account of her time spent in the Vilnius ghetto, titled "la dolzhna rasskazat"" (I Must Tell).

The correspondence series includes various letters written by and sent to Masha Rolnikaite. These include Boris Galperin son of Dmitry Galperin and survivor of the Kovno ghetto; Mira, Masha's older sister and survivor of the Vilna ghetto; and Yaakov Bunka, a Jewish Lithuanian sculptor who lived and worked in Plunge, Lithuania, and includes Masha Rolnikaite's review of the book of *Yaakov Bunka Plunge: Pages of the History*; as well as readers, publishers, and various institutions.

The correspondence of Ilya Ehrenburg and Masha Rolnikaite include articles and speeches written by Ilya Ehrenburg; Rolnikaite's recollection about her first meeting with Ilya Ehrenburg in 1961; the introduction written by Ilya Ehrenburg to the French edition of *I Must Tell*; memoirs about Ilya Ehrenburg written by Arthur Khavkin, 1970; memoirs about a meeting with Ljuba Michailowna Kosinzewa (Ehrenburg's widow) and Irina Erburg (Ehrenburg's adopted daughter) written by Arthur Khavkin, 1967- 1970; a translation of Arthur Khavkin memoirs in Yiddish; a translation of the response written by Irina Ehrenburg and published in the Yiddish newspaper *Naye Presse* regarding the transfer of the Ilya Ehrenburg archives to Yad Vashem Museum's archives, 1988; fragments of memoirs of meeting meeting with Ilya Ehrenburg and Lyubov Kozintseva (Liubov Kozintsova) in 1940 with translation, 1989; newspaper clippings and articles about Ilya Ehrenburg published literary journals; and two photographs of Ilya Ehrenburg.

The Holocaust testimonies and articles include Zverstva w Ponarakh (Crimes in Ponary) amd My ne sdavalis (We did not surrender) by Yuliy Farber; "Kak Vam Zhivetsya" (How do you do) by Kszisztof Konkolewski about Maximilian Kolbe; "Plen" (Captivity) by Sonya Anvaer, Soviet POW; Table of contents of a Soviet publication of the selected testimonies about the Holocaust, including an excerpt from Rolnikaite's article; "Testimony about life in Fascist Captivity," by Lev Ruzhetsky, 1944, a 7th grade student in Odessa; Margarite Aliger – Ilya Ehrenburg poetry; "Babiy Yar" poem by Yevgeny Yevtushenko and poetic responses by Aleksey Markov "Moy Otvet (My response), response poem by A. Yakovlev and Samuil Marshak to Markov; "Shtetale Belz" poem in Russian by unidentified author; a "I was 15" from the Shmerke Kaczerginski collection in Yad Vashem which contains excerpts from the diaries of children from the Vilna ghetto (Yitskhok Rudashevski, Gabik Hellere, Masha Rolnikaite); a letter from David Fishman, an American Jewish historian, with a manuscript; "Songs from Camps and Ghettos" Shmerke Kaczerginski" with the dedication to Masha Rolnikaite written by Nechama Lifshitzaite, a Lithuanian Jewish vocalist and a translation of the song into Russian. Also included are articles by Christine M. Pabst and Manfred Wieninger regarding Anton Schmid, a rescuer of Jews from the Vilna ghetto; correspondence between Pabst, Wieninger, and Rolnikaite; "Stena Placha," a poem by I. Kushkin (student at school #180 in St. Petersburg); "unpublished facts" and other notes for various publications, corrections, clarifications, preparatory and research materials, and translations of newspaper articles.

System of arrangement

The Masha Rolnikaite papers is arranged in nine series.

- Series 1: Correspondence with Authors, Family, Friends, Readers, and Institutions, circa 1950s-2000s
- Series 2: Biographical Materials, circa 1950s-1990s
- Series 3: Manuscripts, Shorts Stories by Masha Rolnikaite, circa 1960s-2000s
- Series 4: Collected Materials from Holocaust Survivors, Authors, and Institutions, circa 1940s-2000s
- Series 5: Notebooks, Diaries, and Loose Leaf Notes, circa 1950s-2000s
- Series 6: Photographs, Albums, Scrapbooks, and Slides, circa 1930s-2000s
- Series 7: Scrapbook, 1939-1988
- Series 8: Newspapers and Magazines, circa 1950s-2000s
- Series 9: Awards and certificates, 2003-2006

Indexing terms

People:

Aleksandrovna, Kira.

Aliger, Margarita, 1915-1992.

Anvaer, Sonya.

Belousov, Alexander.

Bunka, Yaakov.

Druker, Irma.

Eckert, Christina.

Ehrenburg, Ilya Grigoryevich, 1891-1967.

Ehrenburg, Irina.

Farber, Yuliy.

Fishman, David.

Friedman, Avrora.

Galperin, Boris.

Hellere, Gabik.

Jadwiska, Jadwige.

Jonaitis, Henrikas.

Jugeborg, Keil.

Kharkin, Arthur Moiseevich.

Kolbe, Maximilian, 1894-1941.

Kosinzewa, Ljuba Michailowna.

Kozintsova, Liubov, 1900-1970.

Lev, Mikhail, 1917-2013.

Lifshitzaite, Nechama.

Manurova, Milya.

Marshak, Samuil, 1887-1964.

Meyer, Hershel D.

Pabst, Christine M.

Piepka, Jan.

Rabin, Iosif, 1900-1987.

Razumny, Mark, 1896-1988.

Rolnikaite, Masha, 1927-2016.

Rudashevski, Yitskhok, 1927-1943.

Ruzhetsky, Lev.

Schechtman, Eli, 1908-1996.
Schmid, Anton, 1900-1942.
Tsukernik, Semyon Savelyevich, 1922-?
Vershinin, Michail.
Wieninger, Manfred.
Yevtushenko, Yevgeny, 1932-2017.
Zapruder, Alexandra.

Corporate:

Auschwitz (Concentration camp)
Buchenwald (Concentration camp)
Majdanek (Concentration camp)
Mauthausen (Concentration camp)
Ravensbrück (Concentration camp)
Sachsenhausen (Concentration camp)
Strasshof (Concentration camp)
Stutthof (Concentration camp)

Topics:

Concentration camp inmates
Holocaust survivors--Lithuania.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Personal narratives.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Poetry.
Jewish authors--Soviet Union--20th century.
Jewish women in the Holocaust--Lithuania--Pictorial works.
Jews--Lithuania--Vilnius--Diaries.
Women concentration camp inmates.
World War, 1939-1945--Concentration camps--Liberation.

Geography:

Lithuania.

Lithuania--History--German occupation, 1941-1944.

Russia.

Vilnius (Lithuania)

Genre / Form:

Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.)

Correspondence.

Manuscripts.

Photographs.

Poems.

Songs and music.

Slides.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Correspondence with Authors, Family, Friends, Readers, and Institutions, circa 1950s-2000s

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1.3	Bunka, Yaakov, circa 1980s; in Russian
1.4	Eckert, Christina, Germany, 2001-2002; in German
1.5	Eduardas and Mira, Masha Rolnikaite's nephew (son of Mira), circa 1970s-1980s; in
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1.9	Friedman, Avrora, friend of Masha Rolnikaite, 1969, 1979; in Russian
1.10	Galperin, Boris, son of Dmitry Galperin, survivor of the Kovno ghetto, circa 1970s; in Russian
1.11-12	Galperinas, Dmitry, survivor of the Kovno ghetto, 1969-1991, undated; in Russian
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6.14	la Prishla Tibe Mama, 1995

8.4-6	Dolgoye Molchanie, 2 nd draft, manuscript
8.7-8	Svadebni Podarok manuscript
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10.14	Ernst Lemmer Goebbels: Journalist, Nazi Informer, Revenge Minister, 1964; in
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Series 6: Photographs, Albums, Scrapbooks, and Slides, circa 1930s-2000s

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14.15	St. Petersburg Jewish Center, 2002
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Series 7: Scrapbook, 1939-1988

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Series 8: Newspapers and Magazines, circa 1950s-2000s

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20.2	France-Soir, December 22, 1966
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20.4	Komjauimo Tiesa, 1953-1973
20.5	l'Humanité, December 15, 1966; December 24, 1966
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20.9	Neue Zeit, June 29, 1967; July 2, 1967
20.10	Sonntag, November 19, 1967
20.11	Newspapers and newspaper clippings, circa 1950s
20.12	Newspapers and newspaper clippings, circa 1960s
20.13	Newspapers and newspaper clippings, circa 1970s
20.14	Newspapers and newspaper clippings, circa 1980s
21.1	Newspapers and newspaper clippings, circa 1990s
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22.2	Posters, 1966, 1967, 1975
15.1	Magazines and journals, 1965-1991, undated
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