

**JACOB ROBINSON PAPERS, 1915-1977, BULK 1939-1977
2013.506.1**

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

Title: Jacob Robinson papers

Dates: 1915-1977; bulk 1939-1977

Accession number: **2013.506.1**

Creator: Jacob Robinson
Nehemiah Robinson

Extent: 6.0 linear feet (11 boxes, 1 oversize box)

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

Abstract: Consists of correspondence, identity paperwork, reports, notes, published material, documents, and photographs related to the personal and professional life of Jacob Robinson, a lawyer, diplomat, and Holocaust researcher who immigrated to the United States from Lithuania in 1940. Includes material related to the Institute for Jewish Affairs, which Robinson co-created with his brother, Nehemiah Robinson; to the United Nations; to early reparations treaties; to the Eichmann trial; and to the Holocaust in public policy and international law.

Languages: English, German, Hebrew, Lithuanian

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), Jacob Robinson papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Karin Sibrava-Cherches donated this collection to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2013.

Related archival materials: The collection also includes recorded interviews with Robinson, the typewriter he brought from Lithuania, and name badges he used in various positions. The records of The Institute of Jewish Affairs in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum collection as RG-67.005M (2004.552). The collection also consists of a large number of pamphlets, offprints, and journals written and collected by Robinson, which have been transferred to the USHMM Library.

Processing history: Rebecca Erbelding, September 2014, updated August 2016.

Biographical note

Jacob Robinson was a lawyer, politician, diplomat, and Holocaust researcher. Jacob (Ya'akov ben David) Robinson was born in Seirijai (Serej), one of seven brothers. Although Orthodox, Robinson's father, David, was an early Zionist. Robinson received his traditional Jewish education in Wistytyn (Vishtinets) and Suwalki. Between 1910 and 1914, Robinson studied law at Warsaw University, graduating with the equivalent of a doctorate. Between 1914 and 1915, he served in the Russian army. Taken prisoner in 1915, Robinson spent three years in German POW camps before settling in Virbalis (independent Lithuania), where he founded a Hebrew secondary school in 1919 and directed it until 1922. Having learned Lithuanian, Robinson moved to Kaunas, practiced as a lawyer, and was elected to the Second Lithuanian Parliament in 1923, and was also the coeditor of the Kaunas Yiddish newspaper *Di idische shtime*. During this period, he married Klara Katz. The couple had two daughters: Athalie (b. 1925) and Tamara-Vita ("Vita", b. 1928).

Robinson represented Jewish minorities at the European Nationalities Congress (1925–1933), counseled the Committee of Jewish Delegations, took part in attempts to establish a World Jewish Congress (1927–1936), and came up with the idea of the Bernheim Petition (1933). He represented Lithuania on the German–Lithuanian Permanent Conciliation Committee (1931) and in the Memel case before the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague (1932).

Robinson left Lithuania in May 1940 and reached the United States with his family in December of that year. In February 1941, he founded the Institute of Jewish Affairs (IJA), the research arm of the American and World Jewish Congress, which he directed until 1947. In 1945, Robinson advised U.S. Chief Prosecutor Robert H. Jackson in Nuremberg and co-drafted the "Jewish case" presented to the International Military Tribunal. In 1946, he counseled chief prosecutor Telford Taylor on the Flick Case in Nuremberg.

That same year, Robinson worked for the United Nations as an expert consultant to the team creating and establishing the Commission of Human Rights. In 1947 Robinson became legal adviser to the Jewish Agency at the UN and from 1948 to 1957 he was legal counsel to Israel's delegation. Thanks to his previous experience, Robinson was instrumental in developing the Israeli diplomatic service. In 1952, he drafted the reparations agreement between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). His brother Nehemiah (1898–1964) was also a brilliant lawyer. He was Jacob's close partner and successor as director of the IJA, and drafted the agreements between the FRG and the Claims Conference as well as the FRG's Indemnification Law.

In 1957, Robinson became the legal adviser for the Conference on Material Claims Against Germany, helped establish the research branch of Yad Vashem, and coordinated Holocaust research between several research Institutes (among them YIVO, Yad Vashem, Leo Baeck Institute, Wiener Library, and the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine). Robinson also coordinated the collaboration of these and other Jewish institutions with the prosecution in trials against Nazi criminals. He was also the legal mind behind the prosecution at the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem (1960–1961), serving as special assistant to the attorney general. Robinson edited the Holocaust section for the Encyclopedia Judaica (1971) and several volumes of documentary sources of the Holocaust. He also published several important bibliographic works on international law. Dr. Robinson passed away in 1977. (Source: Omry Kaplan-Feuereisen, Yivo Encyclopedia article on Jacob Robinson; http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Robinson_Jacob)

Scope and content of collection

The Jacob Robinson papers include personal and professional papers created and collected by Dr. Jacob Robinson, mainly as part of his work at the Institute for Jewish Affairs in New York City during and after World War II. The collection largely relates to legal and academic discussions about the Holocaust, war crimes trials, and reparations.

The personal photographs are largely pre-war photographs of the Robinson family in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s, with a few wartime and post-war snapshots and professional portraits.

The personal papers consist of some educational documents and employment papers—as well as passports and identity papers for the Robinson family and for Luba Stone, Jacob Robinson’s secretary who immigrated with the family—but mainly condolence letters from prominent figures and personal friends after the deaths of Vita Robinson (1955) and Nehemiah Robinson (1964).

The professional papers largely relate to Jacob Robinson’s academic work generated for distribution and publication, rather than a large amount of correspondence. The papers include collected clippings, reports, bibliographies, and publication drafts on a wide array of topics related to the Holocaust and to Judaism.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged as three series:

Series 1: Personal photographs, 1915-1977

Series 2: Personal papers, 1911-1977

Series 3: Professional papers, 1925-1977

Indexing terms

Robinson, Jacob.

Robinson, Nehemiah.

Stone, Luba.

Eichmann, Adolf, 1906-1962--Trials, litigation, etc.

Arendt, Hannah, 1906-197--Criticism and interpretation.
United Nations. General Assembly.
World Jewish Congress.
American Jewish Congress.
Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.
Antisemitism.
Holocaust survivors--Legal status, laws, etc.--United States.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Reparations.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Study and teaching.
Restitution and indemnification claims (1933-)
Lithuania--Emigration and immigration--History--20th century.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Personal photographs, ca. 1915-1977

Box	Folder	
1	1-5	Photographs, ca. 1915-1977 (5 folders)

Series 2: Personal papers, 1911-1977

Box	Folder	
1	6	Jacob Robinson curriculum vitae, 1943-1964
1	7	Nehemiah Robinson documents re: University of Berlin, 1925-1926
1	8	Identity papers for Jacob and Klara Robinson, 1923-1977
1	9	Identity paperwork for Athalie and Vita Robinson, 1938-1966
1	10	Identity paperwork for Luba Stone, 1937-1976
1	11	Documents related to immigration, 1911-1955
2	1	Condolences on death of David Robinson, 1935
2	2-5	Condolences on the passing of Vita Robinson, 1955 (4 folders)
2	6	Jacob Robinson address book, ca. 1956
2	7	Birthday wishes, 1959
2	8	Correspondence re: restitution claim for Fanny Wurmbrand, 1960-1967
2	9	Condolences on death of Nehemiah Robinson, 1964 (5 folders)
3	1-4	
3	5	Clippings related to the death of Nehemiah Robinson, 1964
4	1	Documents related to the death of Monty Stone, 1967
4	2	Employment of Luba Stone, 1967
4	3	Birthday messages, 1969
4	4	Jacob Robinson financial documents, 1972-1973
4	5	Correspondence with Ben Halpern (Brandeis University), 1977
4	6	Condolences on the passing of Jacob Robinson, 1977
4	7	Miscellaneous correspondence with the public, 1960-1969

Series 3: Professional papers, 1925-1977

Box	Folder	
4	8	Lithuanian newsclippings, 1925-1928
4	9	Report, in Russian, ca. 1929
4	10	Memel Convention, 1934
4	11	Reviews of Robinson's writings, 1934-1935
4	12	"Is the British White Paper on Palestine 1939 and the Subsequent Measures Consistent with the Terms of the Mandate for Palestine and the Fundamental Intentions of its Authors?" ca. 1940
4	13	Miscellaneous correspondence, 1940s
4	14	Slavonic Encyclopedia article by Jacob Robinson, ca. 1941
4	15	Collected publications and clippings by Robinson, 1942-1946
5	1	"National Minorities in Europe," 1942-1943
5	2	"Were the Minority Treaties a Failure?" acknowledgments, 1943
5	3	"Were the Minority Treaties a Failure?" reactions, comments, reviews, 1943
5	4	Notes submitted to Peace Aims Planning Committee, ca. 1943
5	5	"National Minorities in Europe," 1943-1944
5	6	"Statistics of Jewish Casualties During Axis Domination," 1945
5	7	"Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms," clippings and book reviews, 1946
5	8	Appointment as United Nations Social Affairs officer, 1946-1947
5	9	Letters of acknowledgment for "Human Rights," 1946-1947
5	10	Copy of letter of thanks from Robert Jackson, 1946
5	11	"Palestine and the United Nations: Prelude to a Solution," 1947-1948
5	12	Miscellaneous correspondence, 1950s
5	13	Certificate that Robinson will represent Israel at convention on statelessness, 1950
5 6	14 1	Major statements made by Jacob Robinson in the General Assembly of the UN, 1950-1958 (2 folders)
6	2	"A Bibliography of the European War Crimes Trials," 1951
6	3	Printed copy of agreement between the States of Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany, 1952
6	4	Newsclippings, 1952
6	5	Publications by the Academy of International Law in the Hague, 1952
6 7	6 1	Draft text of the agreement between the State of Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany, 1953 (2 folders)
7	2	Reports of International Law Commission, 1954-1955
7	3	Reports written by Nehemiah Robinson, 1955-1960
7	4	Reports written by Jacob Robinson, 1955-1960
7	5	Newsclippings about WJC reports on Jewish life, 1955-1963
7	6	Appointment as legal advisor to the Israel delegation to the United Nations, 1957
7	7	Newsclippings, 1958
7 10	8 6	Miscellaneous correspondence, 1960s (2 folders)
7	9	"The Claims Conference and Yad Vashem," 1960

7 8	10 1	"Part Four: Specialized Sources of Information on International Organization in Particular," ca. 1960 (2 folders)
8	2	Reports written by Nehemiah Robinson, 1960-1964
8	3	Reports written by Jacob Robinson, 1960-1965
8	4	"The Genocide Convention," 1960-1962
8	5	Newsclippings, misc., 1961
8	6	"Israel v. Eichmann," 1961
8	7	"The National Liberation Movement in Latin America at the Present Stage," ca. 1961
8	8	20 th anniversary of The Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1961
8	9	"Eichmann, master of the Nazi murder machine," 1962
8	10	Draft translation of Kempner review of "Eichmann," ca. 1962
8	11	WJC press releases, 1962
8	12	Newsclippings, 1963-1964
8	13	Robinson's writings related to "The Banality of Evil" by Hannah Arendt, 1963
8	14	"The Warsaw Ghetto and its Historical Significance," 1963
9	1	WJC press releases, 1963
9	2	Clippings re: WJC publications and reports, 1963-1964
9	3	"Ten Years of German Indemnification," 1964
9	4	Reports written by Jacob Robinson, 1965-1970
9	5-6	Reviews of "And the Crooked Shall be Made Straight," 1965 (2 folders)
9	7	"Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany," 1965
9	8	25 th anniversary of The Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1966-1967
9	9	Notes related to seeking witnesses for war crimes trials, ca. 1967
9	10	"Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies" offprints, 1967
10	1	Text of address by Abba Eban, 1967 June 7
10	2	WJC press releases, 1968
10	3	Conference on Captured German Records, NARA, 1968
10	4	"International Law and Organization," 1968-1969
10	5	Text of address by Golda Meir, 1969 Sept. 29
10	7	Miscellaneous correspondence, 1970s
10	8	Handwritten notes in preparation for writing, ca. 1970s
10	9	Reports written by Jacob Robinson, 1970-1977
10	10	Notes in preparation for writing, ca. 1970s
10	11	Jacob Robinson statements at various conferences, 1971
10	12	Notes gathered for preparation of "The Holocaust," 1971-1975
11	1	"The Present Status of International Holocaust Research," 1974
11	2	Projects of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, 1976
11	3	"Pinkas haKehilot," 1976-1977
11	4	Notes for bibliography, "The Holocaust and After," ca. 1971-1977
11	5	Book reviews written by Jacob Robinson, 1941-1970
11	6	Draft of "Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker," undated
11	7	Encyclopedia Judaica section on "The Holocaust"
11	8	Correspondence re: history of the Claims Conference, 1976-1977
11	9	Chapter 7-9: International Law, undated
11	10	Miscellaneous clippings

Series 4: Enlarged materials, 1924-1968

Box	Folder	
12	1	Album of newspaper clippings, 1928-1929
12	2	Album of newspaper clippings, 1934-1935
12	3	Enlarged photograph, undated, ca. 1955
12	4	Certificate awarding the Joseph Andrews bibliographic award to Jacob Robinson, 1968
12	5	Identification badges used by Robinson, United Nations and NARA, 1949-1971
12	6	Empty Folio (Not Digitized)
12	7-9	Newspapers (3 folders)