

RADZINOWICZ FAMILY PAPERS, 1926-1984
2014.213.1

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: Radzinowicz family papers

Dates: 1926-1984

Accession number: 2014.213.1

Creator: Radzinowicz family.

Extent: 11 folders

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

Abstract: The Radzinowicz family collection consists of post-war memoirs written by Anatol Radzinowicz about his experiences in German-occupied Poland during the Holocaust; a diary written in hiding by Zofia Rabinowicz in Bialystok in 1944, after her husband's arrest; pre-war photographs of their birth families (Rabinowicz and Rozenberg families) and post war photographs of their own family; and wartime correspondence from Zofia Radzinowicz's sister, Estera Rozenberg, sent from the Warsaw ghetto and from a French internment camp.

Languages: Polish, German

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), Radzinowicz family papers (2014.213.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Gift of Joanna Nowiński and Małgorzata Lowry, 2014.

Related materials: An oral history interview was conducted with Zofia Radzinowicz by the USC Shoah Foundation in 1998, and is available at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In addition, the donor's also gave a baby sweater, which belonged to their brother Jerzyk, to the museum, which is cataloged under accession number 2014.213.2.

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

Processing history: Finding aid created by Brad Bauer, December 2015.

Biographical note

Anatol Radzinowicz (1911-1994) was born Anatol Rabinowicz in Łódź to Szewel and Sara (née Knorosowska) Rabinowicz on 10 December 1911. His mother owned a successful hat store in Łódź, and Anatol was able to attend the Szkoła Handlowa in Łódź, before going to Prague to study at German University there. Following the German occupation of Prague in March 1939, just as Anatol had completed his studies and received a degree as an architectural engineer, he returned to his native Łódź.

Zofia (Finia) Radzinowicz (1915 – 2007) was born on 24 June 1915 in Łódź to Froim Zryl and Kajla (née Fajngold) Rozenberg, who operated a dry cleaning and laundry business. Zofia had three siblings, a brother Stefan and two sisters, Fela and Estera. The two younger sisters, Zofia and Estera, wished to follow in the footsteps of Fela, who was a microbiologist, and studied at the Hochstein Gymnasium, as she had, but after graduation their further education was interrupted by the outbreak of war.

Anatol and Zofia first met and fell in love in 1936 in Wiśniowa Góra, Poland, while Anatol was visiting during a break from his studies in Prague. Following the German invasion of Poland and the occupation of Łódź in September 1939, they decided to marry, and following their wedding on 1 November 1939, they fled to Białystok, the hometown of Anatol's mother and on the other side of the demarcation line, in the Soviet-occupied part of Poland. Meanwhile, their remaining family members on both sides opted to move to Warsaw, hoping for better conditions there.

In Białystok, Anatol's cousin Nioma found the couple a place to live, in a former orphanage, and Anatol found work as an architect at the Soviet-administered grocery distribution department. Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, however, they were forced to move into the newly-constituted Jewish ghetto, where Zofia was assigned to work as a seamstress in a factory making uniforms for the German army. Anatol was assigned to work as a draftsman at a German-run textile company, where he became acquainted with a Polish man, Tadeusz Bagiński, whose family tried to help Anatol, supplying him with food. The director of the company, a German man by the name of Schroeder, also tried to help Anatol, offering to fill out false Aryanization documents to shield him from further persecution, and writing a letter of reference on his behalf.

As conditions deteriorated in the Białystok ghetto, Schroeder learned of the imminent destruction of the ghetto, and urged Anatol to escape. During the round-up of Jews, Anatol and Zofia sought refuge in the factory and hid in an unused room for a period of time, until she learned she was pregnant, and they sought refuge with the family of Tadeusz Bagiński, who allowed them to live at the home of his mother,

Ludmila. Zofia subsequently gave birth to a son, Jerzy, in 1944. However, Anatol was caught by the Gestapo when he ventured out one day, looking for work, and it was at this time that Zofia, fearing the worst, began writing a diary that was addressed to him, as a way of mourning her loss. When a friend who was in the underground learned that Anatol was still alive, all agreed that it would be best for Zofia to go into hiding elsewhere, which she did, leaving Jerzy with an acquaintance of Anatol's, who had worked with him at the grocery firm during the Soviet occupation. While in prison, Anatol was forced to work with other Jewish prisoners to cover up mass graves, burning the corpses of those who had been murdered, in an attempt by the Germans to hide the evidence of these atrocities before their retreat. Anatol, knowing that such prisoners would likely be executed when their work was finished, managed to narrowly escape from the prison—shot by the guards in his hand as he fled—and hid in a nearby farmhouse, where he was cared for, until the advancing Soviet army liberated that area in July 1944. At that point, Anatol walked back to Białystok and reunited with Zofia, and both learned that their son, Jerzyk, had died during their absence.

After the liberation of Łódź in January 1945, Anatol and Zofia returned to their hometown, learning that they were the only surviving members of their families. Although Anatol never learned what happened to his parents, Zofia learned that her parents had been murdered at Poniatowa, her brother was killed in the Warsaw ghetto uprising, and her sister, Estera had married an older man, Abraham Horenstein, and the two had attempted to emigrate with the help of Honduran visas via Hotel Polski. They were then sent to the Vittel internment camp in France in 1943, waiting for verification of their status, but when that failed to come, they were deported to the Drancy transit camp in April 1944, and then on to Auschwitz on 29 April 1944, where they were murdered on their arrival.

Anatol and Zofia settled in Łódź, where he became a film art director and professor at the Łódź film school. The two changed their last name from Rabinowicz to Radzinowicz at this point, and raised two daughters, Joanna and Małgorzata. At the time when anti-Semitic measures were implemented by the Polish government in 1968, the family decided to emigrate, with Joanna going to the United States, Małgorzata to Sweden, and the parents to West Germany, where Anatol continued to practice his profession in Wiesbaden. Following Anatol's death on 12 March 1994, Zofia moved to Stockholm, to be close to her daughter there. It was not until after Zofia's death (25 May 2007) that the two daughters discovered their mother's wartime diary, their father's memoirs, and their brother's sweater, and through these, began to learn about the history that their parents were reluctant to speak about.

Ludmiła Bagińska, and her son, Tadeusz Bagiński, were honored as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel in 1992.

Scope and content of collection

The Radzinowicz family collection consists of post-war memoirs written by Anatol Radzinowicz about his experiences in German-occupied Poland during the Holocaust; a diary written in hiding by Zofia Rabinowicz in Białystok in 1944, after her husband's arrest; pre-war photographs of their birth families (Rabinowicz and Rozenberg families) and post war photographs of their own family; and wartime correspondence from Zofia Radzinowicz's sister, Estera Rozenberg, sent from the Warsaw ghetto and from a French internment camp.

The Memoirs series contains two typescript texts from Anatol Radzinowicz, "Das Geschenk des Lebens" and "Mój kuzyn Nioma," both numbering approximately a dozen pages, and attributed to Anatol Rattson, a name that he later used. These writings describe various facets of Radzinowicz's experiences in occupied Poland, including the role of his cousin Nioma in helping the newlywed Radzinowicz's after

they fled to Bialystok in 1939, as well as the role of the Bagiński family in sheltering Anatol and Zofia following the liquidation of the Bialystok ghetto.

The Photographs series contains pre-war photographs of the Rabinowicz and Rozenberg families, including childhood images of Anatol and Zofia, family portraits, and images of siblings, while the post-war photographs show them with their two daughters in Poland, primarily between the end of the war and the early 1950s. Also included is a photo of the Bagiński house in Bialystok and the Radzinowicz's two daughters posing with Ludmiła Bagińska in the early 1960s.

The Zofia Radzinowicz series consists of the diary pages that she wrote while in hiding, addressed in the second person to Anatol, who she feared had been killed after his capture by the Gestapo. The Estera Rozenberg series consists largely of postcards sent by her, but often with inscriptions and greetings from other family members and friends, from the Warsaw ghetto in 1940-1941, to a friend in Łódź, Irena Wojdyławska. Also included is a letter that Estera wrote from the Vittel internment camp in France, after she had married Abraham Horenstein and had been sent there in 1943 with a group of other people who were hoping to immigrate to Honduras, but were ultimately unsuccessful. This letter is addressed to a relative in Palestine, and asks him for support, including sending needed clothing.

System of arrangement

The collection is arranged in four series: I. Memoirs, II. Photographs, III. Radzinowicz, Zofia, IV. Rozenberg, Estera. Files are arranged in alphabetical order by folder title within those series.

Indexing terms

Personal names

Rozenberg, Estera.

Radzinowicz, Anatol.

Radzinowicz, Zofia.

Topical headings

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Poland--Białystok--Personal narratives.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Poland--Łódź--Personal narratives.

Jews--Persecutions--Poland--Łódź.

Jews--Persecutions--Poland--Białystok.

World War, 1939-1945--Jews--Rescue--Poland.

Getto warszawskie (Warsaw, Poland)

Jews--Poland--Łódź.

Geographical headings

Białystok (Poland)

Łódź (Poland)

CONTAINER LIST

Memoirs: Anatol Raddson (Anatol Radzinowicz)

- 1 ["Das Geschenk des Lebens," undated](#)
- 2 ["Mój kuzyn Nioma," 1984](#)

Photographs

- 3 [Bagiński family: Photographs of Bagiński family home in Białystok, and of Joanna and Małgorzata visiting with Ludmiła Bagińska, 1963](#)
- 4 [Radzinowicz, Anatol: Individual snapshots \(5\), circa 1930-1951, and class portrait, 1930, and business card \(post-war\)](#)
- 5 [Radzinowicz family, post-war \(12 images\), 1945-1951](#)
- 6 [Radzinowicz, Zofia \(7 images\), 1938-1957](#)
- 7 [Rozenberg family, pre-war \(13 images\), circa 1920-1932, and undated](#)
- 8 [Unidentified, 1929-1930, and undated \(4 images\)](#)

Radzinowicz, Zofia

- 9 [Diaries written while in hiding in Białystok, 1944](#)

Rozenberg, Estera

- 10 [Correspondence sent to Irena Wojdysławska in Łódź, including postcards sent from Warsaw Ghetto, 1939-1941](#)
- 11 [Letter sent from Vittel internment camp, to Abram Skokowski, in Palestine, undated, circa 1943](#)