

HERBERT KLINE PAPERS, 1934-1946
2016.391.1

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

Title: Herbert Kline papers

Dates: 1934-1946.

Accession number: [IRN 538521].

Creator: Kline, Herbert.

Extent: 1 box (0.5 linear foot)

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

Abstract: Correspondence, documents, and photographs, related to the work of American documentary filmmaker Herbert Kline, and in particular his work on films documenting political crises in Europe in the late 1930s and early 1940s, including the film "Crisis," which treated the subject of Czechoslovakia during the Sudeten crisis of 1938. Includes scripts, correspondence with film companies, letters of reference, news clippings, and other materials related to the production and distribution of "Crisis," as well as material related to a film about the Spanish Civil War, "Heart of Spain" and a subsequent production set in Mexico, "Forgotten Village," on which he collaborated with John Steinbeck.

Languages: English, Spanish.

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), Herbert Kline papers (2016.391.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Purchase, 2016.

Related archival materials: Another collection of Herbert Kline's papers, containing material related to other film projects, can be found at the Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries, Syracuse, NY, <http://scrc.syr.edu>. Another collection of the papers of Rose Harvan are part of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives at the Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives (http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/tamwag/alba_276/), New York University, and include material about the film "Forgotten Village."

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

Processing history: Brad Bauer, September 2016.

Biographical note

Herbert Kline (1909-1999) was an American documentary filmmaker, best known for his works about the Spanish Civil War and the rise of Nazism in Europe, including his 1939 film about the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, *Crisis*.

Born in Chicago on 13 March 1909, as Herbert Klein, he was raised in Davenport, Iowa, and left home as a teenager to explore places that interested him throughout the United States. During the Great Depression, he became interested in the plight of the working class, and became involved in leftist political circles in Chicago and New York, becoming the editor of *New Theater* magazine, and being one of the first to publish and stage the plays of Clifford Odets. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, he left for Madrid, in support of the Loyalist forces, and it was there that he teamed up with Hungarian photographer Geza Karpathi to make his first film, *Heart of Spain*, and in 1937 he collaborated with photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson on a second film set in Spain, *Return to Life*.

Sensing the unfolding political threat from Nazi Germany in Czechoslovakia, he left for Prague in 1938, and working with Czech cameraman Alexander Hackenschmied (later Hammid), he made the film *Crisis*, which depicted the Nazi takeover of the Sudetenland. Kline gained access to Nazi rallies by pretending to be a Nazi-party member, and Kline later recounted the irony that he, as a Jewish American and an anti-fascist, had storm troopers following his commands and carrying his film equipment. When *Crisis* was released in the United States, it proved to be his most successful documentary, and was named one of the National Board of Review's 10 best films of 1939. Kline's subsequent films included *Lights Out in Europe*, an account of the German invasion of Poland, *The Forgotten Village*, which depicted the struggle to provide basic health care in an isolated Mexican village, a film on which he collaborated with John Steinbeck, and *My Father's House*, a 1947 documentary about Holocaust survivors. Kline was blacklisted in the United States during the 1950s as a result of his leftist political affiliations, and did not resume filmmaking until the 1970s. One of his later films was *Walls of Fire*, a work about Mexican muralists Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros.

Kline met Rose Margaret Harvan (1916-1992?) while both were in Spain. Harvan was the daughter of Slovak immigrants who had settled in Pennsylvania, and after working as a dental technician in New York, went without her parents' knowledge to join the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain. The two married in 1939, and she accompanied Kline during the period when he was filming *Crisis* in

Czechoslovakia. Upon returning to the United States, the two settled first in New York, and then Los Angeles. They worked together on the film *The Forgotten Village*, but subsequently divorced, and Kline later married Josine Ianco-Starrels, with whom he had two children, and from whom he was later divorced. Kline died in Los Angeles on 5 February 1999.

[source: obituaries in Los Angeles Times, New York Times, and The Independent, and oral history interview with Rose Harvan's brother, photographer George Harvan, <http://www.albany.edu/jmmh/vol3/harvan/interview/harv1.htm>]

Scope and content of collection

Correspondence, documents, and photographs, related to the work of American documentary filmmaker Herbert Kline, and in particular his work on films documenting political crises in Europe in the late 1930s and early 1940s, including the film "Crisis," which treated the subject of Czechoslovakia during the Sudeten crisis of 1938. Includes scripts, correspondence with film companies, letters of reference, news clippings, and other materials related to the production and distribution of "Crisis," as well as material related to a film about the Spanish Civil War, "Heart of Spain" and a subsequent production set in Mexico, "Forgotten Village," on which he collaborated with John Steinbeck.

Material related to the Spanish Civil War includes various drafts, treatments, and script fragments of the two films that Kline made in Spain in 1936-1937, various draft texts recounting individuals and events he encountered in Spain. Also included are clippings and reviews of Kline's films, a letter from the Spanish ambassador to the United States, sent to the ministry of propaganda in Madrid, commending Kline's film "Heart of Spain," and some of the materials in the "Photographs" series, although not definitively identified, depict individuals that Kline and Rose Harvan likely knew in Spain.

The materials related to the film *Crisis* include correspondence and documents related to the production of the film, reviews, and various drafts of portions of the script, including the text of the narration, as well as telegrams sent during production, typescript texts of Kline's experiences during the filming, and photographs from Czechoslovakia during that period, including some that may depict scenes recorded in the film.

The remaining materials consist of fragmentary documents and ephemera, some of which relate to Kline's later productions, such as *The Forgotten Village*, his wartime experiences, and his relationship with Rose Harvan. Included are photographs that are largely unidentified, but which appear to depict Kline and Harvan in Spain and Czechoslovakia. Also included is a telegram from German filmmaker Max Ophüls, sent to Kline on 3 August 1941, and announcing his escape from Nazi-occupied Europe and his arrival in New York with the words "Tuesday New York So Happy."

System of arrangement

The Herbert Kline papers are arranged in four series, in rough chronological order: I. Spanish projects, 1936-1938, II. Crisis, 1938-1939, III. Other materials, 1934-1946, and IV. Photographs, circa 1936-1946. Files are arranged within the series in alphabetical order by folder title.

Indexing terms

Kline, Rosa Harvan.
Harvan Chellas, Rosa.

Documentary films--Production and direction.
Documentary films--Political aspects.
Sudetenland (Czech Republic)--Ethnic relations.
Sudetenland (Czech Republic)--History--20th century.
Spain--History--Civil War, 1936-1939--Motion pictures and the war.

CONTAINER LIST

- Spanish projects, 1936-1938
- 1 Correspondence: Letter from Spanish ambassador to the United States, Fernando de los Rios, regarding film, 1937
 - 2 Film treatment: "Blood in Spain" ("Heart of Spain"), undated, circa 1936
 - 3 Film treatment: "Steel Battalion," undated, circa 1936
 - 4 Film treatment: "That Spain May Live," undated, circa 1936-1937
 - 5 Film treatment: Untitled, circa 1936
 - 6 General: includes letter to Kline from John Sherman, of Medical Bureau and North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, 1938, "will" of Isaac Bronstein, undated, and text of "Song for Spanish Democracy" by Thomas Hurley.
 - 7 News clippings: including review of "Heart of Spain," undated, and "Spanish Diary," by James Neugass, *New Masses*, 1938
 - 8 Radio address: Typescript text of address by Kline, directed to Hollywood, for broadcast over Radio EAQ2, Madrid, Spain, undated, circa 1936
 - 9 Script: "Heart of Spain," text of commentary by Kline and David Wolff, 1936
 - 10 Writings, miscellaneous: Prose text, of various vignettes of Spain during Civil War, circa 1936-1938
- Crisis, 1938-1939
- 11 Contract, between Kline and Alexander Hackenschmied, 1 November 1938
 - 12 Correspondence about, 1938-1939
 - 13 Expenses, 1938 and undated
 - 14 Letters of recommendation, safe conduct, Czechoslovak, 1938
 - 15 Notes, diary, regarding production of film, undated, circa 1938
 - 16 Publicity: general, 1939 and undated
 - 17 Publicity: Interview with Kline (typescript), Film Forum, 9 March 1939
 - 18 Publicity: Interview with Kline (typescript), WINS radio, New York, 18 March 1939
 - 19 Reviews (news clippings), 1939
 - 20 Reviews (report about), undated, circa 1939
 - 21 Scenes: lists and lengths of, undated, circa 1938
 - 22 Script: commentary read by Vincent Sheean
 - 23 Script: dissolves
 - 24 Script: foreign language texts and superimposed titles
 - 25 Script: sound
 - 26 Telegrams sent during production, 1938-1939
 - 27 Writings: various typescript texts, describing experiences during filming, undated

Other materials, 1934-1946

- 28 Correspondence: Burstyn, Joseph, 1941
- 29 Correspondence: various, 1941 and undated
- 30 Film treatment: proposed Latin American film project, 1939
- 31 Forgotten Village: telegrams, mostly from J. Burstyn, relating to censorship of film, 1941-1942
- 32 Harvan, Rose: correspondence, 1934-1946, and marriage certificate, 1939
- 33 Military and wartime service, 1943
- 34 News clippings and ephemera, 1938-1941 and undated. Includes concert programs, articles about filmmaking and propaganda, printed invitations currency.
- 35 Ophüls, Max: telegram to Kline, announcing arrival in New York from Europe, 1941
- 36 Writings: "Expose No. 9," by H.H. Burger

Photographs, undated, circa 1936-1946

- 37 Czechoslovakia
- 38 Harvan, Rose, undated, circa 1936-1946
- 39 Kline, Herbert, undate, circa late 1930s
- 40 Unidentified. May include photos taken by Rose Harvan, circa 1941.