

GUGGENHEIM AND SMALI FAMILIES PAPERS, approximately 1900-1989 2016.395.1

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

Title: Guggenheim and Smali families papers

Dates: approximately 1900-1989

Accession number: 2016.395.1

Creator: Guggenheim (Family : Frankfurt, Germany)

Additional creator: Smali (Family : Merkinė, Lithuania)

Extent: 0.5 linear foot (5 folders)

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

Abstract: The Guggenheim and Smali families papers consist of correspondence, memoirs, photographs, and a receipt documenting the Guggenheim family from Frankfurt am Main, Germany, and the Smali family from Merkinė, Lithuania. Correspondence includes a letter written by Malka Pugacka Smali from a Cyprus detention camp in 1947 describing a scene she witnessed in the Kovno ghetto in 1942 in which a little girl's grandmother suggested miracles were still possible. The memoirs were written by Malka Pugacka Smali between the 1950s and 1980s and describe life in Lithuania, the Kovno ghetto, and her immigration to Israel. The photographs depict members of the Guggenheim family in Frankfurt am Main, the Pugacki family in Merkinė, and the Smali family in Israel. The receipt documents a 1939 donation to the World Zionist Organization.

Languages: Hebrew

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), Guggenheim and Smali families papers, 2016.395.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Amnon and Hadara Gonen donated the Guggenheim and Smali families papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2016. Amnon Gonen is the son of Karl and Irene Guggenheim, and Hadara Gonen is the daughter of Malka and Josef Smali. An accretion has been incorporated into this collection.

Related material: Amnon and Hadara Gonen also donated a booklet to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's library: *Lo nishkahekha ha-golah*, DS134 .L62 1944.

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

Processing history: Processed by Julie Schweitzer, June 2018.

Biographical note

Dr. Karl Yehiel Guggenheim was born on January 20, 1906 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He was a member of the Zionist youth movement "Blau Weiss." He graduated from medical school in 1933 and worked briefly as a researcher at a scientific institute in Berlin until he was fired under Nazi rule. He married Irene Milfelder (b. 1910 in Frankfurt am Main, d. 2007), and the couple immigrated to Palestine.

Malka Pugacka Smali (1919-1992) was born in Merkinė, Lithuania, to Daniel Tanchum Pugacki (d. 1941) and Sara Alte Pugacka (nee Garbol). She had six siblings: Shmuel (b. 1913), Miriam (b. 1914), Chava (b. 1921), Itzhak (b. 1924), Mordechai (b. 1924), and Rachel (b. 1933). She attended the Tarbut school and joined the Gordonia Zionist youth organization. In the late 1930's she realized she would likely not be able to immigrate to Palestine, and she became active in the Communist Party and moved to Kovno (Kaunas). She returned home in 1938 to care for her ailing father who died the following year. The Soviet Union invaded and annexed Lithuania in June 1940. Malka found work on behalf of the Communist Party, but when she tried to help Jewish refugees from German-occupied Poland, she was refused permission by the Central Committee in Kovno. She ignored her orders and began helping Jewish refugees in Merkinė. When the Soviet Union started deporting Polish Jews to Siberia, Malka asked to be transferred to Kovno. Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union and anti-Jewish pogroms by Lithuanian partisans, Malka was taken to the Seventh Fort, transferred to the Ninth Fort, and escaped. After the pogroms, she received her last message from her mother who warned her to stay away from the danger in Merkinė. Most of the Jews of Merkinė were executed on September 8, 1941. Malka was confined to the Kovno ghetto in the Slobodka district, worked taking care of the two small children of a Jewish policeman, and became active in the ghetto underground. She smuggled 17 Jewish children out of the ghetto to safe locations and then escaped the ghetto herself. After liberation, Malka helped organize an orphanage for Jewish children in Kovno, and she helped organize surviving Jewish children placed with Christian families in Poland for illegal immigration to Palestine. She sailed for Palestine aboard the *Theodore Herzl*, but the ship was intercepted by the British, and she was confined to Cyprus. She immigrated to Israel in 1947, joined the Kibbutz Kfar Masarik in 1951, and married her childhood friend, Josef Smali.

Scope and content of collection

The Guggenheim and Smali families papers consist of correspondence, memoirs, photographs, and a receipt documenting the Guggenheim family from Frankfurt am Main, Germany, and the Smali family from Merkinė, Lithuania. Correspondence includes a letter written by Malka Pugacka Smali from a Cyprus detention camp in 1947 describing a scene she witnessed in the Kovno ghetto in 1942 in which a little girl's grandmother suggested miracles were still possible. The memoirs were written by Malka Pugacka Smali between the 1950s and 1980s and describe life in Lithuania, the Kovno ghetto, and her immigration to Israel. The photographs depict members of the Guggenheim family in Frankfurt am Main, the Pugacki family in Merkinė, and the Smali family in Israel. The receipt documents a 1939 donation to the World Zionist Organization.

System of arrangement

The Guggenheim and Smali families papers are arranged as a single series.

Indexing terms

Jews--Germany--Frankfurt am Main.

Jews--Lithuania--Merkinė.

Jewish ghettos--Lithuania--Kaunas.

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

Palestine--Emigration and immigration.

Cyprus.

Photographs.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Guggenheim and Smali families papers, approximately 1900-1989

Box/Folder	Title
1 of 5	Correspondence, 1947
2 of 5	Memoir book 1, approximately 1954-1987
3 of 5	Memoir book 2, approximately 1954-1989
4 of 5	Photographs, approximately 1900-1954
5 of 5	Receipt for donation to World Zionist Organization, approximately 1939