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Leon Shapiro Papers

1939-1984

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Read collection overview

Historian, author, Professor of Russian and Soviet Jewish History at Rutgers University, who helped arrange the escape of Jews from Europe during World War II and was active in several organizations concerned with the emigration of Soviet and Eastern European Jews to Palestine. Papers include biographical materials, correspondence, legal documents, writings, lecture and research materials, statistical data in the world Jewish population before and after World War II, oral history transcripts, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and four photographs.

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Background on Leon Shapiro

Leon Shapiro (1905-1984) was a historian and Professor of Russian and Soviet Jewish History at Rutgers University; author of *The History of ORT: A Jewish Movement for Social Change* ; a 35-year contributor of articles to "The American Jewish Yearbook"; fluent speaker of Yiddish, Hebrew, English, Russian, German, French, and Ukrainian; helped arrange the escape of Jews from Europe during World War II; and an active member in several organizations concerned with the emigration of Soviet and Eastern European Jews to Palestine and other issues related to Judaism.

1905

Born July 14, in Hersun (Korsun, Korsoun, Hersein), Kiev, Russia, to Mark and Freida Scheinblum Shapiro.

1923

Candidate for degree in Social Sciences and Law, University of Kiev.

Imprisoned for anti-Bolshevik activities.

1925

Exiled to Palestine.

1928

Diplome de Licencie en Droit, Social Sciences and Law, University of Toulouse.

1935

Married in Paris to Leorfore Rita Willdorff; divorced in 1940.

1940

Secretary General, Federation des Societes Juives de France, Paris

1941-1949

Research Associate, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, New York.

1941

Immigrated to U.S.

1946

Married Luba.

1954-1956

Assistant Director, Cultural Department, Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

1964-1967

Research Associate, Columbia University Seminar in International Research Methods.

1964-1972

Assistant Executive Director, Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

1968-1978

Professor, Russian and Soviet Jewish History, Department of Hebraic Studies and Soviet/Eastern European Studies Program, Rutgers University.

1972-1973

Adjunct Professor, Queens College, School of General Studies, City College of New York.

1973

Adjunct Associate Professor, Judaic Studies, Brooklyn College, City College of New York.

1974-1975

Adjunct Associate Professor, Academy Without Walls, Haifa University.

1978-1979

Professor, Empire State College.

1984

Died, December 25, New York City.

Scope of collection

The Leon Shapiro papers (1939-1984) pertain primarily to Soviet and Eastern European Jewry before and after World War II and to the formation of the nation of Israel in personal, research, and published materials.

The collection comprises biographical materials, correspondence, legal documents, audio-tapes, four photographs, writings, newspaper clippings, research materials, oral history transcripts, printed materials, and statistical data.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into seven series:

Series 1. Bio-Bibliographical, 1940-1984

Series 2. Correspondence, 1945-1984

Series 3. Subject Files, 1955-1984

Series 4. Writings, 1939-1984

Series 5. Research Materials, 1940s-1980s

Series 6. Oral Histories, 1974-1979

Series 7. Printed Materials, 1949-1985

Series descriptions

Series 1. Biographical and Bibliographical

1940-1984

Shapiro's legal papers and official documents, biographical information, two audio-tape interviews of Mr. Shapiro, newspaper obituaries, and publication lists are in Series 1.

Series 2. Correspondence

1945-1984

Incoming letters and typescript copies of outgoing letters, mostly professional, some personal, are in Series 2, alphabetically arranged. Notable are the letters from Romanian Jews seeking immigration to Israel (1970s). Series 2 also contains a photograph of a painting titled "On Both Sides of the Warsaw Ghetto Wall 1943" sent by the artist, Israel Beinbauer, and three other unidentified photographs, ca. 1931 Vienna.

Series 3. Subject files

1955-1984

Subject files in Series 3 are divided into two sections, arranged alphabetically. The first contains materials related to Shapiro's professional and personal interests, and includes pamphlets and minutes of meetings from the program for Jewish Studies Without Walls, his two audio-tape lectures on the History of Soviet Jewry, a certificate and badge of Honor from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee along with Russian newspaper articles, various committee materials, and independent research projects. The second section is primarily comprised of Rutgers University student papers, correspondence, and lectures.

Series 4. Writings

1939-1984

Handwritten, typescript, and photocopies of various articles about the Soviet Union submitted to the American Jewish Yearbook for publication, along with their printed versions, are arranged chronologically in Series 4. Also present are statistics on the World Jewish Population, correspondence relating to publishing, ORT papers, book reviews, and an audio-tape of the 1980 ORT Rabbinic Scholar Conference.

Series 5. Research Materials

1940s-1980s

Census and other statistical data on the world Jewish population before and after World War II, together with descriptions of French concentration camps and Jewish life in occupied France, are in Series 5 in chronological order. Notable are the materials regarding Irgun, Haganah, and Palestine. This series contains a message to British soldiers dated 1947, other Hebrew documents, newspaper articles, and transcripts of political broadcasts relating to the foundation of Israel. Also in Series 5 there are reference materials on Jewish resistance during the holocaust and in Palestine.

Series 6. Oral Histories

1974-1979

Series 6 contains transcripts and seven audio-tapes from the Lautenberg Oral History Collection of Surviving Eastern European Communities, listed alphabetically. These describe Jewish life before Hitler and Stalin assumed power.

Series 7. Printed Materials

1949-1985

Pamphlets, booklets, articles, and miscellaneous ephemera relating to Soviet and European Jewry and holocaust survivors are in this series.

Inventory

Series 1. Biographical and Bibliographical

1940-1984

Vita and Biographical articles

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Lists of Publications

Box 1: 2

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1940-1945

Box 1: 3

Official Documents: Citizenship, Travel

1929-1946

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Official Documents: Education, Work

1940-1946

Box 1: 5

Obituaries

1984

Box 1: 6

Interview: LS interviewed by Rabbi Seligson on "Message of Israel", audiotape

1980

Box 1: 7

Interview: LS interviewed by Sheila Zucker, WEVD-FM, audiotape

1980

Box 1: 8

Series 2. Correspondence

1945-1984

A - American Committee

Box 1: 9

American Jewish Committee - American Jewish Yearbook

Box 1: 10

American ORT Federation

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B - C

Box 1: 12

D - G

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H - K

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L - Ma

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Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture

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Mon - N

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O - Wol

Box 1: 18

Women's American ORT

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World ORT Union

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75th birthday greetings

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Series 3. Subject files

1955-1984

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1973-1977

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American Council for Emigres in the Professions

1979

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American Jewish Committee talk, Irving

n.d.

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American Joint Distribution Committee--Certificate of Honor

1984

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Association for Jewish Studies

1976

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Brooklyn College

1973

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Columbia University
1965
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Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture
c1982
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National Endowment for the Humanities
1979
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New York Association for New Americans
1975-1978
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ORT Jewish Book Fair, Detroit, packet
1980
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ORT: National Rabbinic Scholar Conference
1980
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Pasternak, Boris, clippings
1958
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Project on 100 Years of Jewish Life in Russia and USSR
1919-1984
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Queens College
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Rutgers: class handouts

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Rutgers: course materials

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Rutgers: Hebraic Studies Department
1973-1977
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Rutgers: Jews in Eastern Europe, Lecture Notes and background materials

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Rutgers: Lectures-Eastern European Jews
1955-1967
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Rutgers (and Queens): Modern Anti-Semitism--Lecture notes and suppl.

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Rutgers: University position--correspondence and documents
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Rutgers: Soviet and East European Program--memos and correspondence
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Rutgers: Soviet and East European Program--reports, lists, etc.
1971-1977
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Schwartz (?), Part I, edited ts draft

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Society for Research on Jewish Communities
1981
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Solidarity
1981-1982
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Stalin-Alliluyeva, Svetlana
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Synagogue Council of America
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Union of Russian Jews
1975-1976

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1963-1980

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Zipperstein, Steven: "First Years of Jewish Odessa" 1978

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Series 4. Writings

1939-1984

American Jewish Yearbook --ms, typescript, and printed versions of LS contributions

1939-1984

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"L'Influence Juive Chez Marcel Proust" --ms; also ms or notes on Charles Plisnier

c.1942

Box 7: 81

"Foyer de la Bibliotheque de la Sorbonne" --dialogue

1962

Box 7: 82

Encyclopedia Judaica articles: correspondence about and typescript

1964-1966

Box 7: 83

"Russian Jewry after Stalin", in Russian Jewry 1917-1967

1969

Box 7: 84

"Passover Restrictions in the Soviet Union", Jewish Telegraphic Agency Passover Release No. 9

1970

Box 7: 85

History of the Jews in Russia and Poland by Simon Dubnow, reissued--biog., intro., and outline history by LS: correspondence., reviews, publicity

1975

Box 7: 86

"Soviet Jewry since the Death of Stalin" --typescript draft and reprint from American Jewish Yearbook, 1979

1978

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History of ORT

1976-1980

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Guide to the Material on ORT's History

1981

Box 7: 92

"Mid-passage--50 Years of ORT: Short Comments"

Box 7: 93

Speech: ORT Rabbinic/Scholar Conference, audiotape

1980

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Speech: "ORT in Jewish Life"

Box 7: 95

Speech: "ORT's Origins"

Box 7: 96

Speech: "Jews and Jewish Communities in Eastern and Central Europe--An Overview"

1980

Box 7: 97

Jews Under Tyranny: The Soviet Union -outline

1980s

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Additional notes re: USSR

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Jewish Life in Russia and the USSR --outline, chapter, ms, corresp.

1983

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One Hundred Years of Jewish Life in the Russian Empire and Under Soviet Rule -outline

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Soviet Russia/Russian Jewry in the 20th Century--lecture notes (?),writing preparation (?)

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1949-1985

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Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Luba Shapiro, Leon's wife, via Michael Wolff and Stanley Radosh, 1986.

Processing Information

Processed by Linda Seidman, December 1986.

Languages:

English, French

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Search terms

Subjects

Europe, Eastern--Ethnic relations--History--20th century--Sources.

Israel--Emigration and immigration--History--Sources.

Israel--History--1948-1967--Sources.

Jews, Soviet--History--Sources.

Jews--Europe, Eastern--History--Sources.

Jews--Migrations--History--Sources.

Jews--Population--History--Sources.

Jews--Soviet Union--History--Sources.

Occupational training for Jews--History--Sources.

Palestine--History--1929-1948--Sources.

Romania--Emigration and immigration--History--Sources.

Rutgers University--Curricula.

Rutgers University--Faculty--History--Sources.

Rutgers University--Students--History--Sources.

Shapiro, Leon--Archives.

Soviet Union--Ethnic relations--History--Sources.

World ORT Union--History--Sources.

Contributors

Shapiro, Leon [main entry]

Genres and formats

Oral histories.

Photographs.

Link to similar SCUA collections

East and Central Europe

Judaica

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Social change

World War II



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