A Finding Aid to the
Adolph S. Oko Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 14
Collection Summary

Title: Adolph S. Oko Papers
Dates: 1911-1944
Collection Number: MS-14
Repository: The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator: Oko, Adolph S. (Adolph Sigmund), 1883-1944
Extent: 3.6 linear feet (9 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material: English, Dutch, French, German, Hebrew, Latin, Russian, and Yiddish. The bulk of the collection is in English, with other materials in German, Hebrew, Yiddish, French, Latin, Russian and Dutch.

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch
Adolph S. Oko, librarian, scholar, and philanthropist, was born to Tebel and Mariam Deborah (Popyolek) Oko near Kharkov, Russia on January 5, 1883. Educated in Germany, Oko came to the United States in 1902. After working in the Astor Library, New York, NY in 1905-1906, Oko became librarian of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, which position he held until his resignation in 1933. Under Oko, the Library flourished, outgrowing its quarters twice. Shortly after World War I, Oko went to Europe and acquired some 18,000 volumes for the Library, including the Edward Birnbaum music collection; he also brought to the Library a fine Spinoza collection, the Chinese Jewish manuscripts of Kai-Feng-Fu, and an outstanding collection of incunabula. Oko also helped to start the Hebrew Union College Museum. In 1931, the College awarded to Oko the degree of D.H.L., honoris causa.

Oko and the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College had maintained an uneasy peace for 27 years; Oko found it impossible to remain any longer due to the scandal caused by his second marriage. Oko's first wife, Etta Weisinger, had died in 1924; in 1933 Dorothy Kuhn, wife of a man very active in the affairs of the Hebrew Union College, divorced her husband to marry Oko. Upon Oko's resignation from the College, he and his new wife moved to England, where he completed his Spinoza Bibliography. Oko, a devotee of Baruch Spinoza, was a founder and United States secretary of Societas Spinozana, an organization concerned with Spinoza's life and works, and was a trustee of Domus Spinozana in The Hague, Holland.

The Okos remained in England until 1938, at which time they returned to the United States and Oko joined the staff of the American Jewish Committee. In 1943 Oko became associate editor of the AJC magazine Contemporary Jewish Record, and was serving in this capacity until his death in 1944.

Oko wrote many essays and bibliographies, contributing many articles to the Menorah Journal, of which he was an associate editor. Among the bibliographies he published were his Spinoza Bibliography and works on Solomon Schechter and Kaufmann Kohler.

Though not a man of means, Oko was extremely active in philanthropic work, making use of his reputation as a librarian and scholar and with a talent for persuading friends to provide necessary funds. He made tremendous efforts to rescue colleagues, friends, and their families and friends from Europe before World War II, and was expert at providing funds for impoverished colleagues in a manner that would not injure their pride.

Scope and Content
Documents the career and interests of Adolph S. Oko, librarian of the Hebrew Union College, associate editor of the Menorah Journal and Contemporary Jewish Record, bibliographer, essayist, and philanthropist. The collection consists of personal and official correspondence, notes, and articles and essays by Oko and others concerning his numerous activities.

Arrangement
Organized into five (5) series: A. Personal Correspondence, 1911-1944; B. Spinozana, 1914-1944; C. Menorah Association, 1916-1943; D. Contemporary Jewish Record, 1943-1944; E. Essays and Lectures, 1920-1944.

Terms of Access
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Index Terms

Subjects
Jewish librarians / Jews -- China / Jews -- Ohio -- Cincinnati

Personal Names

Corporate Names
Contemporary Jewish Record / Hebrew Union College / Intercollegiate Menorah Association

Series A. Personal Correspondence, 1911-1944

Extent
1.4 linear feet (3.5 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement
This correspondence is arranged alphabetically by the name of the correspondent or subject of the correspondence, and in chronological order whenever possible.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. A, General, 1916-1944
Box 1. Folder 2. Adler, E. N., 1922-1938
Box 1. Folder 3. Anonymous Fund, 1922-1923, undated
Box 1. Folder 4. Asch, Sholem, 1929-1943
Box 1. Folder 5. B, General, 1917-1944
Box 1. Folder 6. Baumgardt, David and Carol, 1936-1940
Box 1. Folder 8. Bentwich, Norman,, 1931-1941, undated
Box 1. Folder 10. Boyle, Katherine E., 1936-1940
Box 1. Folder 11. Brunner, Constantin and Lotte [Stigter], 1915-1939
Box 1. Folder 13. Buber, Martin, 1936-1944
Box 1. Folder 14. C, General, 1915-1942
Box 1. Folder 15. Chinese Jewry [articles and correspondence].
Box 1. Folder 17. E, General, 1915-1944
Box 1. Folder 18. Elbogen, Ismar, 1924-1942
Box 1. Folder 19. Epstein, Jacob and Margaret, 1924-1939
Box 1. Folder 20. Epstein, Jacob and Margaret, 1940-1943
Box 1. Folder 21. Epstein, Jacob and Margaret, undated
Box 2. Folder 1. F, General, 1917-1943
Box 2. Folder 2. Feibleman, James K., 1935-1943
Box 2. Folder 3. Frank, Waldo, 1925-1942
Box 2. Folder 4. Frank, Waldo, undated
Box 2. Folder 5. Frankel, David, 1932-1941
Box 2. Folder 6. Freed, Abraham, 1924-1928
Series B. Spinoziana, 1914-1944

Extent  0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note  The series contains correspondence, notes for Oko's Spinoza bibliography, and essays and letters concerning Baruch Spinoza by Oko and others.

Arrangement  This series is arranged alphabetically by the name of the correspondent or subject of the material, and in chronological order wherever possible.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 4. Folder 15. B, General, 1925-1941
Box 4. Folder 16. C, General, 1921-1942
Box 4. Folder 17. Carp, J. H., 1925-1936
Box 4. Folder 20. De Casseres, Benjamin, 1925-1931
Box 4. Folder 22. E, General, 1914-1932
Box 4. Folder 23. F, General, 1925-1932
Box 5. Folder 1. G, General, 1922-1940
Box 5. Folder 2. Gebhardt, Carl, 1921-1937
Box 5. Folder 3. H, General, 1923-1951
Box 5. Folder 4. Haight, Gordon S., 1940-1943
Box 5. Folder 5. Hutcheson, David, 1889-1925
Box 5. Folder 6. I-J, General, 1924-1937
Box 5. Folder 7. K, General, 1923-1951
Box 5. Folder 8. Kaufmann, Fritz, 1936-1944
Box 5. Folder 10. L, General, 1915-1942
Box 5. Folder 11. M, General, 1916-1940
Box 5. Folder 12. N-O-P-Q, General, 1917-1936
Box 5. Folder 13. Pollock, Sir Frederick, 1934-1936
Box 5. Folder 14. R, General, 1925-1944
Box 5. Folder 15. Rothschild, Herbert, 1928-1935
Box 5. Folder 16. S, General, 1922-1938
Box 5. Folder 17. Sard, Frederick N., 1926-1932
Box 5. Folder 18. Societas Spinozana, 1920-1932
Box 5. Folder 19. Spinoza Institute of America, 1931-1933
Box 5. Folder 20. T-U-V, General, 1921-1929
Box 5. Folder 21. Thilly, Frank, 1923-1931
Box 6. Folder 1. W, General, 1914-1934
Box 6. Folder 2. Wolfson, Harry Austryn, 1917-1943
Box 6. Folder 4. Notes, A-M.
Box 6. Folder 5. Notes, N-Z and unclassifiable.
Box 6. Folder 7. Other authors, General.
Box 6. Folder 8. Other authors - Ames, Van Meter, 1928
Box 6. Folder 9. Other authors - Boyle, Robert.
Box 6. Folder 10. Other authors - Hitchcock, E. A. and Samuel, 1922-1929
Box 6. Folder 11. Other authors - Maccall, William.

**Series C. Menorah Association, 1916-1943**

**Extent**  1 linear foot (2.5 Hollinger boxes)

**Arrangement**  This material is arranged alphabetically by the name of the correspondent or subject of the correspondence, and in chronological order wherever possible.

**Box and Folder Listing**

Box 6. Folder 13. Aid to Austrian Students.
Box 6. Folder 15. Altkirch, Ernst, 1921-1923
Box 6. Folder 16. Askowith, H., 1918-1921
Box 7. Folder 1. B, General, 1919-1925
Box 7. Folder 2. C, General, 1919-1925
Box 7. Folder 3. University of Cincinnati, 1919-1922
Box 7. Folder 5. Cohen, Elliot E., 1918-1931
Box 7. Folder 6. D-E, General, 1919-1925
Box 7. Folder 7. F, General, 1918-1926
Box 7. Folder 8. Fechheimer, S. Marcus, 1917-1929
Series D. Contemporary Jewish Record, 1943-1944

Extent 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Arrangement This material is arranged alphabetically by the name of the correspondent or author of the article, and in chronological order wherever possible.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 9. Folder 3. Correspondence, General, 1942-1944
Box 9. Folder 4. Correspondence - Salwson, John, 1943-1944
Box 9. Folder 7. Aren't, Hanna-"American Foreign Policy and Palestine".
Box 9. Folder 10. Neumann, Emanuel-"Behind and After the Resolutions".

Series E. Essays and Lectures, 1920-1944, undated

Extent 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Arrangement Biographical essays and lectures are alphabetized by the name of the subject, others by the title when one is provided and by the subject matter when there is no title.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 9. Folder 15. Gebhardt, Carl, 1934
Box 9. Folder 20. Syllabus on "The Jews and the War".
Box 9. Folder 27. "The Yale (Jewish) Exhibit in its Cultural Aspects.", 1940

### MS-14: Adolph S. Oko Papers

#### Subject Tracings

Note: The following list represents a selective guide to the significant subjects and correspondents within the ADOLPH S. OKO PAPERS. References are to boxes and folders; e.g. 2/1 = Box 2, Folder 1. This list should be used in conjunction with the Box and Folder List and the Appendices to this inventory.

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"Judaism and American Ideals and Institutions"
"Christian Europe Today' by Adolph Keller"
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"Lessing and the Life of Reason"
"Martin Luther: Von den Jâ¼den und iren Lâ¼gen"
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"The Prime Need"

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Partial inventory and appraisal of a book collection
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Mischkind, Louis A. - [report on a conference, perhaps of the CCAR]
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