A Finding Aid to the
Richard L. Rubenstein Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 685
Richard L. Rubenstein was born on January 8, 1924 in New York City to Jesse George Rubenstein and Sarah Fine Rubenstein. Rubenstein attended the College of the City, New York, 1940-1942, and was a student at the Hebrew Union College from 1942-1945. In 1946 he received a B.A. from the University of Cincinnati. Disillusioned with Reform Judaism, Rubenstein received his Master's of Hebrew Literature in 1952 from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America where he was also ordained as a rabbi. Desirous of furthering his theological knowledge, Rubenstein attended Harvard Divinity School and received a Master's of Theology in 1955 and a Ph.D. in 1960. His thesis was titled "Psychoanalysis and the Image of Evil in Rabbinic Literature." Psychoanalysis has remained an important topic throughout his career.

Rubenstein's career as a rabbi was short-lived. His first position was at Temple Beth Emunah in Brockton, Massachusetts, 1952-1954. He moved on to Temple Israel in Natick, Massachusetts from 1954-1956. Rubenstein then took on the position of Assistant Director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation and chaplain to the Jewish students at Harvard University, Radcliffe and Wellesley, 1956-1958. From 1958-1970 he was the Director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation and chaplain to the Jewish students at the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie-Mellon University and Duquesne University. After these jobs, Rubenstein remained in academic positions.

After leaving Pittsburgh, Rubenstein went to Churwalden, Switzerland as a visiting lecturer at the Albert Switzer College in the summer of 1963. In 1964 he returned to Pittsburgh as the Charles E. Merrill Lecturer in the Humanities at the University of Pittsburgh until 1969, when he became an Adjunct Professor of the Humanities. While there he taught courses on French Existentialism and Twentieth Century European Literature. In 1970 Rubenstein took a position as professor at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida in the Religion Department. He taught classes on Religion and Society, Freud, Hegel, Modern Judaism and the Holocaust. In 2001 Florida State University's Religion Department created the Richard L. Rubenstein Chair of Religious Studies in his honor.

After many years at Florida State University as a Distinguished Professor of Religion, Rubenstein assumed the presidency of the University of Bridgeport, in Bridgeport, Connecticut in 1995. He stepped down in 1999 and became the director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, as well as remaining a faculty member.

Throughout his career, Rubenstein has been active in academic and socially conscious organizations. From 1981 to 1992 he was the president of The Washington Institute for Values in Public Policy, a public policy research institute. He was also involved with the Professors World Peace Academy, The New Ecumenical Research Association, and the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, among many others. He was also on the Advisory Council to the Unification Church International.


Richard Rubenstein is married to Dr. Betty Rubenstein and has three children, Aaron, Hannah, and Jeremy.
fact, the two merge in his writing, such as in After Auschwitz. What made Rubenstein's work so questionable to many was his incorporation of many new ideas into old arguments, such as bringing psychoanalysis together with historical research. Rubenstein is also credited with the fusion of Judaism and the "Death of God" theory. The "Death of God" theory was popularized by existentialist philosophers mainly in a Christian context. Rubenstein broke new ground with his writings, and later expanded the context to a more universal paradigm by incorporating Asian religious thought.

The breadth of Rubenstein's academic work can also be gauged from the correspondence files. His interaction with scholars such as Raul Hilberg and John Roth and writers such as William Styron show the fascinating but less dramatic side of academic research and philosophical reasoning. Styron was inspired by Rubenstein's writings and this influence came through in Styron's book Sophie's Choice. Other important correspondence includes Rubenstein's work with the Professors World Peace Academy, the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, and the Washington Institute. Each of these organizations was socially and academically concerned with the diplomatic and military direction that world leaders were pursuing and its effect on culture and religion. Contained within these files are proof of the influence that Rubenstein had on these organizations, as he climbed to leadership positions in all of the groups, and the influence they had on him.

Rubenstein is associated with the International Unification Church and became one of its most outspoken defenders, giving it legitimacy to the academic and political world through his stature. He has had several meetings with Reverend Sung Myung Moon and is perhaps one of the most coherent and comprehensive writers on the Unification Church. Rubenstein believes that new religions, particularly Asian religions, face the same backlash that all religions face as they confront the status quo. He was adamant that these new movements were not cults any more than established religions are.

Through an examination of the files in the collection, it is apparent that Rubenstein had a wide diversity of interests and concerns. He is respected as a major scholar in several fields, though his ideas have remained vital to American Jews. The intersection of the Judaism of his youth and his later academic and personal insights make for an interesting reconciliation of the old world and the new. His article, "Studying at Hebrew Union College," and his book Power Struggle relate these experiences and thoughts (23/5, 22/1).

**Arrangement**

The collection is divided into four (4) series: A. Correspondence; B. Writings; C. Personal; D. Audiovisual Recordings.

**Terms of Access**

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

**Preferred Citation**

Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Richard L. Rubenstein Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-685. Richard L. Rubenstein Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Provenance**

Received from Richard L. Rubenstein, Bridgeport, Conn., 1995.

**Processing Information**

Processed by Christine A. Crandall, July 2002.

**Index Terms**

**Subjects**

Biblical scholars / Holocaust (Jewish theology)

**Personal Names**

Rubenstein, Richard L.

**Corporate Names**

Florida State University / Unification Church

**Media**

Photographs

**Series A. Correspondence, 1941-1994, undated**

**Extent**

6.4 linear feet (16 Hollinger boxes)

**Arrangement**

The series is arranged alphabetically.
Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1941
Box 1. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1952-1953
Box 1. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1957
Box 1. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1958
Box 1. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1959-1964
Box 1. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1965
Box 1. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1966-1967
Box 1. Folder 8. Correspondence, 1968
Box 1. Folder 9. Correspondence, 1969 January-May
Box 1. Folder 10. Correspondence, 1969 June-December
Box 2. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1970
Box 2. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1971
Box 2. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1972 January-June
Box 2. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1972 July-December
Box 2. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1973
Box 2. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1974
Box 2. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1975 January-July
Box 3. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1975 August-December
Box 3. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1976 January-June
Box 3. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1976 July-December
Box 3. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1977 January-March
Box 3. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1977 April-December
Box 3. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1978
Box 3. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1979
Box 4. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1980
Box 4. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1981
Box 4. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1982 January-June
Box 4. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1982 July-December
Box 4. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1983 January-June
Box 4. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1983 July-December
Box 4. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1984 January-July
Box 5. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1984 August-December
Box 5. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1985
Box 5. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1986
Box 5. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1987 January-July
Box 5. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1987 August-December
Box 5. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1988 January-July
Box 6. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1988 August-December
Box 6. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1989 January-July
Box 6. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1989 August-December
Box 6. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1990
Box 6. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1991
Box 6. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1992
Box 7. Folder 3. Advisory Council to the Unification Movement International [Prague], 1990
Box 7. Folder 5. Alonso, Marcelo, 1982-1984
Box 7. Folder 8. America and the Future of Theology Conference [Atlanta, Ga.], 1965 November 18-20
Box 7. Folder 10. Anti-Unification Church, 1981-1983
Box 7. Folder 13. Autobiographical Theology, 1980
Box 7. Folder 15. Berenbaum, Michael, 1989
Box 7. Folder 17. B'nai B'rith District No. 5, 1970-1972
Box 8. Folder 2. Brockton, Massachusetts, 1953
Box 8. Folder 7. The Center for the Study of Southern Culture and Religion, 1979 February 28
Box 8. Folder 20. Davies, W.D., 1976
Box 8. Folder 21. Dissolving Alliance correspondence, 1986
Box 8. Folder 22. Emory University, 1966-1967
Box 8. Folder 25. Europe trip, 1983
Box 8. Folder 27. Fleischner, Eva, 1977
Box 9. Folder 1. Florida State University, 1970
Box 9. Folder 6. Florida State University exams, undated
Box 9. Folder 8. Freedom rally [Seoul, South Korea], 1985
Box 9. Folder 16. Hebrew Union College, 1941
Box 9. Folder 19. Hillel Summer Institute, undated
Box 9. Folder 22. Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, 1992
Box 9. Folder 23. The Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace [Seoul, South Korea], 1991
Box 12. Folder 1. P-T, General.
Box 12. Folder 2. Paulus Gesellschaft International [Florence, Italy], 1975
Box 12. Folder 5. Paris trip, 1988
Box 12. Folder 6. Personal, 1970
Box 12. Folder 10. Poland trip, 1965
Box 12. Folder 13. Professors World Peace Academy, 1982
Box 12. Folder 14. Professors World Peace Academy [South Korea], 1982
Box 12. Folder 17. Professors World Peace Academy, 1983-1984
Box 12. Folder 18. Professors World Peace Academy [Japan], 1984
Box 13. Folder 7. Radical Theology Seminar, 1971
Box 13. Folder 11. Scotland lecture, 1965
Box 13. Folder 12. Seoul, South Korea, 1994
Box 13. Folder 13. Sh’ma, 1992
Box 15. Folder 1. Strait, Glenn Carroll. Regarding Religion and Public Policy, 1980
Box 15. Folder 4. Tallahassee letters. Florida State University position, 1970
Box 15. Folder 7. Thailand trip, 1991
Box 15. Folder 8. Tikkun, 1986-1987
Box 15. Folder 9. Trepp, 1975
Box 15. Folder 10. Tomei, Joseph, 1982
Box 15. Folder 11. Udoff, Alan, 1988
Box 15. Folder 12. Unification Church in Great Britain, 1985
Box 15. Folder 13. United Theological Seminary [Barrytown, N.Y.], 1986
Box 15. Folder 21. Washington Institute, 1983
Box 16. Folder 3. Washington Institute, 1984

Extent  4.4 linear feet (11 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement

The series is divided into two (2) subseries: 1. Articles, Drafts, Speeches; 2. Notes.


Extent  3.2 linear feet (8 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement  The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 17. Folder 2. After Auschwitz drafts.
Box 17. Folder 3. After Auschwitz errors.
Box 17. Folder 4. After Auschwitz proposal.
Box 17. Folder 5. After Auschwitz publicity.
Box 17. Folder 8. Age of Triage: Fear and Hope in an Overcrowded World draft.
Box 17. Folder 10. Age of Triage: Fear and Hope in an Overcrowded World publicity.
Box 18. Folder 1. Approaches to Auschwitz: The Holocaust and its Legacy excerpts.
Box 18. Folder 5. The Cunning of History draft.
Subseries 2. Notes, 1950-1979

Extent 1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 25. Folder 1. Christian Thought Since Kant.
Box 25. Folder 2. Church History, 1952-1953
Box 25. Folder 3. Cohen, Herman.
Box 25. Folder 4. Education papers. Jewish Theological Seminary of America.
Box 25. Folder 5. Epistle to Romans. Harvard University.
Box 25. Folder 7. Exams. Florida State University.
Box 25. Folder 8. Gilson, Gabriel.
Box 25. Folder 10. Hegel, George Wilhelm Friedrich. Harvard University, 1957
Box 25. Folder 15. Jewish Theological Seminary qualification test.
Box 25. Folder 17. Luther, Martin.
Box 25. Folder 19. Medieval Philosophy.
Series C. Personal, 1950-1988

Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 28. Folder 2. Awards.
Box 28. Folder 5. Publicity. Articles.
Box 28. Folder 6. Publicity.
Box 28. Folder 7. Rubenstein, Betty, 1988
Box 28. Folder 8. Rubenstein Family.
Box 28. Folder 9. Rubenstein, Nathaniel Ephraim, 1950

Box and Folder Listing

Item VT-607. Age of Triage, 1983 March 3
Item VT-608. "Can We Comprehend the Holocaust?" Symposia in Judaica, 1984 February 19
Item VT-609. "Holocaust.".
Item VT-610. "The Holocaust and the Human Future: Lessons to be Learned.".
Item VT-613. Rubenstein, Richard, 1988 June 21
Item VT-614. Rubenstein, Richard, undated
Item VT-615. "Wars of Religion of the Twenty-first Century.", 1991 January 11