



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Max Nussbaum Papers**

Manuscript Collection No. 705



Collection Summary

Title	Max Nussbaum Papers
Dates	1928-1974
Collection Number	MS-705
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Nussbaum, Max, 1908-1974
Extent	9 linear feet (10 Hollinger boxes, 5 oversize boxes)
Language of the Material	English, German, and Hebrew

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Max Nussbaum (born Moshe) was born in 1908 in Suceava, Bukovina in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire and what is now Romania. He was raised in a German speaking orthodox family but did manage to obtain parental permission to attend secular schools and later the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary in Germany where he was ordained in 1934. He also received a Ph.D. in 1934 from the University of Wurzburg where he graduated summa cum laude. His dissertation was "Kantianism and Marxism in the Social Philosophy of Max Adler." In taking this bold step - writing his dissertation on a living philosopher and professor in Germany - Nussbaum thrust himself into the heady debates rampant at this time in Germany and Austria within the ranks of those who were known as the Austro-Marxists such as Adler, Otto Bauer and others. In this, Marxism was seen as an economic theory with Kantian social theories embedded within. This philosophical edge stayed with Nussbaum throughout his career. Unfortunately Germany changed rapidly for the worse in the years after he received his Ph.D. and Nussbaum was too busy with his community to engage in this debate as much as he would have liked to.

Nussbaum became the Gemeinde Rabbiner (Community Rabbi) for Berlin, 1936-1940. This idea of serving a whole community rather than a specific temple is displayed in his later life with all of the rabbinic and Jewish organizations that he took part in. His congregation came to understand that this was his vision of how a rabbi served his people. Nussbaum also took advantage of his education and lectured across Europe until travel became inconvenient or impossible. He also wrote for the German, Jewish and European press. By the late 1930s he realized that he needed to leave. He was able to secure a position in Muskogee, Oklahoma at Congregation Beth Ahaba through the help of Stephen S. Wise, whom he had met in 1939 at a Jewish-Arab conference in London. Nussbaum and his wife left Germany in 1940. While in Muskogee, Nussbaum taught philosophy at the State University of Oklahoma and was the director of the Jewish Students' Center.

In 1942 Nussbaum was hired by Temple Israel in Hollywood, California, where he spent the remainder of his career. During this time he was in contact with Jewish leaders to get reports from Germany. Chaim Weizmann was his contact in London for information. Nussbaum only learned much later through the Red Cross that his parents had died during the Holocaust, of dysentery and starvation on a transport to a concentration camp. According to those close to Nussbaum, this information haunted him for the rest of his life.

Nussbaum threw himself into international Jewish work after arriving in Hollywood. He was a member of the first United Jewish Appeal (UJA) delegation to Palestine in 1948. In 1958, under the auspices of the UJA, Nussbaum reported on the condition of Jews in Israel, Berlin and Paris. In 1958 he was the chairman of the Los Angeles delegation of the UJA at their conference in Jerusalem. In 1956, 1960, 1964 and 1968 Nussbaum attended the annual Zionist Congress and in 1959 was a World Jewish Congress (WJC) delegate in Stockholm. He continued working with the WJC, attending the 1965 and 1968 World Executive in Strausbourg, France and Geneva, and also as a guest of the British section in London and a participant of the 5th Plenary Assembly. In 1965 Nussbaum visited Germany, always a difficult journey for him, as a guest of the Senate of Berlin. Nussbaum was also the chairman of the American Section of the WJC for four years.

Nussbaum earned and was awarded many accolades. He was the first rabbi to be on Ralph Edwards' "This is Your Life" in 1959, the same year that the California Assembly unanimously passed a resolution commending, "Max Nussbaum for his outstanding career as religious leader, humanitarian and spearhead of interfaith understanding and cooperation." 1959 was a good year for Nussbaum since he also was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. In 1961 he was given a Doctorate of Literature by Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Philadelphia. In 1969 Nussbaum became the president of the Board of Rabbis of Southern California and in 1970 the vice-president of the American Jewish Congress.

Nussbaum was an ardent Zionist his entire life. 1964-66 he was the Chairman of the American Zionist Council and the President of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA). In 1969 he and his wife were

awarded the Brandeis Award by the ZOA.

Much of Nussbaum's work took him away from Temple Israel, though the congregation learned to accept the fact that they were blessed with a high profile rabbi. They were also lucky in that Nussbaum was insatiably intellectually curious. A good example of this was his interest in the Reconstructionist movement. Always in favor of meaningful adult education, Nussbaum started a Reconstructionist discussion group at Temple Israel. This was not seen as unusual by those who knew him. It was yet another display of his unending passion for knowledge.

Rabbi Nussbaum died suddenly July 20, 1974.

Scope and Content	Papers consisting of Rabbi Max Nussbaum's correspondence, writings and sermons.
Arrangement	The collection is arranged in four (4) series: A. Correspondence and Personal; B. Writings; C. Sermons; D. Scrapbooks.
Terms of Access	The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.
Preferred Citation	Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Max Nussbaum Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows: [Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-705. Max Nussbaum Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Provenance	Received from Ruth Nussbaum, Sherman Oaks, Calif., and Temple Israel, Hollywood, Calif., 2003.
Processing Information	Processed by Christine A. Crandall, February 2004.

Index Terms

Subjects	Hollywood (Los Angeles, Calif.) / Jews -- California -- Hollywood / Rabbis
Personal Names	Nussbaum, Max, 1908-1974
Corporate Names	Temple Israel of Hollywood / United Jewish Appeal
Media	Sermons

Series A. Correspondence and Personal, 1928-1974

Extent 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Nussbaum was often a guest and participant in many assemblies of the WJC in the 1960s and the correspondence file in box one folder seven demonstrates this.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. 1. Correspondence, 1944-1963

Box 1. 2. Diary, 1944 or 1945

Box 1. 3. Diary, 1948

Box 1. 4. Sabbatical material, 1968

Box 1. 5. School notebook, 1928

Box 1. 6. Wise, Stephen S., 1940-1949

Box 1. 7. World Jewish Congress. Adolf von Thadden, 1966-1974

Series B. Writings, 1934-1973

Extent 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 8. "Auschwitz."

Box 1. Folder 9. Autobiography.

Box 1. Folder 10. Balfour Declaration. 24th anniversary, 1941

Box 1. Folder 11. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Symposium. "Chosen or Choosing People."

Box 1. Folder 12. "Christian Forerunners of Zionism - Lovers of a Dream" correspondence, 1973

Box 1. Folder 13. "Christian Forerunners of Zionism - Lovers of a Dream" correspondence, 1956

Box 1. Folder 14. "Christian Forerunners of Zionism - Lovers of a Dream" drafts [Hebrew].

Box 1. Folder 15. "Christian Forerunners of Zionism - Lovers of a Dream" correspondence and drafts, 1956, 1959

Box 1. Folder 16. "Christian Forerunners of Zionism - Lovers of a Dream" drafts.

Box 1. Folder 17. "Christian Forerunners of Zionism - Lovers of a Dream" drafts.

Box 1. Folder 18. "Christian Forerunners of Zionism - Lovers of a Dream" drafts.

Box 1. Folder 19. "Christian Forerunners of Zionism - Lovers of a Dream" pamphlet.

Box 2. Folder 1. "Christian Forerunners of Zionism - Lovers of a Dream" [bound volume, German].

Box 2. Folder 2. "Christian Forerunners of Zionism - Lovers of a Dream" [bound volume, German].

Box 2. Folder 3. Inter-faith forum, 1945, 1948

Box 2. Folder 4. "The Jews in Greater Germany."

Box 2. Folder 5. "Kantianismus und Marxismus in der Sozialphilosophie Max Adler." Dissertation. University of Wurzburg, 1934

Box 2. Folder 6. Lag B'Omer.

Box 2. Folder 7. Nazi Germany speeches, 1940-1941

Box 2. Folder 8. Outline of Philosophy. State University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Series C. Sermons, 1932-1974

Extent 3.2 linear feet (8 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note The bulk of this collection consists of Rabbi Nussbaum's sermons. There is one box of sermon notes which are untitled and undated. One half of the first box of sermons are in German and many of the sermon notes are in Hebrew or Yiddish. Nussbaum's sermons are all in English after he moved to the United States in 1940. Many of his initial sermons are in regard to life in Nazi Germany and the condition that Jews were living in across Europe.

Nussbaum often used personal examples in his sermons to demonstrate a much larger point, but occasionally the personal experience spoke for itself. An example of this is a sermon in which he recollects watching the Freidenstempel burn on Kristallnacht in 1938. In this exceptionally moving sermon he relates how Jews in Berlin knew that the restrictions were becoming more constricting and that there were rumors of people being relocated, but he never thought it would come to this. His memories of seeing the firefighters and neighbors watching the temple burn without helping, and in fact being pleased with the fire, was seared into his memory. Only one small Torah scroll was salvaged by a congregation member, which

Nussbaum brought with him to the United States. After this experience Nussbaum realized that he had to leave Germany, but was unable to secure employment until 1940 with Stephen S. Wise's assistance.

Many of Nussbaum's thoughts on Nazism and the war are recorded in his sermons. The remainder of Nussbaum's sermons deal with Zionism, Israel and the role of America in relation to these two realities.

Arrangement

The sermons are arranged chronologically if a date was available and alphabetically if not.

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 3. Folder 1. Sermons [German], 1932
- Box 3. Folder 2. Sermons [German], 1936
- Box 3. Folder 3. Sermons [German], 1937
- Box 3. Folder 4. Sermons [German], 1938
- Box 3. Folder 5. Sermons [German], 1939
- Box 3. Folder 6. Sermons [German], 1940
- Box 3. Folder 7. Sermons, 1941
- Box 3. Folder 8. Sermons, 1942
- Box 3. Folder 9. Sermons, 1943
- Box 4. Folder 1. Sermons, 1944-1946
- Box 4. Folder 2. Sermons, 1947
- Box 4. Folder 3. Sermons, 1948
- Box 4. Folder 4. Sermons, 1949
- Box 4. Folder 5. Sermons, 1950
- Box 4. Folder 6. Sermons, 1951
- Box 4. Folder 7. Sermons, 1952
- Box 5. Folder 1. Sermons, 1953
- Box 5. Folder 2. Sermons, 1954-1955
- Box 5. Folder 3. Sermons, 1956
- Box 5. Folder 4. Sermons, 1957
- Box 5. Folder 5. Sermons, 1958
- Box 5. Folder 6. Sermons, 1959
- Box 6. Folder 1. Sermons, 1960
- Box 6. Folder 2. Sermons, 1961
- Box 6. Folder 3. Sermons, 1962
- Box 6. Folder 4. Sermons, 1963
- Box 6. Folder 5. Sermons, 1964
- Box 7. Folder 1. Sermons, 1965
- Box 7. Folder 2. Sermons, 1966
- Box 7. Folder 3. Sermons, 1967
- Box 7. Folder 4. Sermons, 1968

Box 7. Folder 5. Sermons, 1969
Box 8. Folder 1. Sermons, 1970
Box 8. Folder 2. Sermons, 1971
Box 8. Folder 3. Sermons, 1972
Box 8. Folder 3. Sermons, 1973
Box 8. Folder 4. Sermons, 1974
Box 8. Folder 5. A-F.
Box 8. Folder 6. G-L.
Box 9. Folder 1. M-R.
Box 9. Folder 2. S-Z.
Box 9. Folder 3. Bible class.
Box 9. Folder 4. Eretz Israel, Galut and Chutz La'aretz in their Historic Settings.
Box 9. Folder 5. Goldwyn, Samuel. Memorial service, 1974
Box 9. Folder 6. Israel notes.
Box 9. Folder 7. Robinson, Edward G. Eulogy, 1973
Box 9. Folder 8. Temple Israel sermons, 1950-1951
Box 10. Folder 1. Sermon notes, undated
Box 10. Folder 2. Sermon notes, undated
Box 10. Folder 3. Sermon notes. Untitled, undated
Box 10. Folder 4. Sermon notes. Untitled, undated

Series D. Scrapbooks, 1944-1970

Extent 5 linear feet (5 oversize boxes)

Scope and Content Note Scrapbooks were put together by Nussbaum's secretary Thelma Cohen. These scrapbooks cover much of Nussbaum's time at Temple Israel in Hollywood, Calif. and his work with the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) and the World Jewish Congress (WJC).

Arrangement General scrapbooks are arranged chronologically.

Box and Folder Listing

Box X-468. Folder 1. Scrapbook, 1944
Box X-468. Folder 2. Scrapbook, 1958
Box X-469. Folder 1. Scrapbook, 1960
Box X-469. Folder 2. Scrapbook, 1961
Box X-469. Folder 3. Scrapbook, 1962
Box X-470. Folder 1. Scrapbook, 1962
Box X-470. Folder 2. Scrapbook, 1963
Box X-471. Folder 1. Scrapbook, 1965
Box X-471. Folder 2. Scrapbook, 1967
Box X-471. Folder 3. Scrapbook, 1968

Box X-471. Folder 4. Scrapbook, 1970

Box X-472. Folder 1. United Jewish Appeal. Trip to Europe and Palestine, 1948 February

Box X-472. Folder 2. United Jewish Appeal. Trip to France, Berlin and Israel, 1953 March

Box X-472. Folder 3. World Jewish Congress scrapbook, 1956