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## JEWISH UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE: THE DAVID DIAMANT COLLECTION



David Diamant is the pseudonym of David Erlich, a Jewish communist and committed member of the underground resistance during World War II. This collection consists of original documents collected by Diamant over a period of approximately 30 years dealing primarily with the Jewish segment of the French underground resistance; many of the documents originate with communist groups, and some deal with Polish groups. Most of the documents are in French, while some are in Yiddish.

**Date Range:** 1939-1944

**Content:** 1,235 images

**Source Library:** McMaster University

### **Detailed Description:**

The Vichy régime had legal authority in both the north of France, which was occupied by the German Wehrmacht, and the southern "free zone", where the régime's administrative center, Vichy, was located. Vichy voluntarily and willfully collaborated with Nazi Germany and adopted a policy of persecution towards the Jews, demonstrated by the passage of anti-semitic legislation as early as October 1940. The Statute on Jews, which legally redefined French Jews as a non-French lower class, deprived them of citizenship. According to Philippe Pétain's chief of staff, Germany was not at the origin of the anti-Jewish legislation of Vichy—that legislation was spontaneous and autonomous. The laws led to confiscations of property, arrests, and deportations to the concentration camps. As a result of the fate they were promised by Vichy and the Germans, Jews were over-represented at all levels of the French Résistance. Studies show that although Jews in France only amounted to one percent of the French population, they comprised about fifteen to twenty percent of the Résistance. Among these were many Jewish émigrés, such as Hungarian artists and writers.

David Diamant is the pseudonym of David Erlich. He was born 18 March 1903 in Hrubieszow, Poland. He emigrated to France in the 1920s where he remained for the rest of his life.

A Jewish communist, Diamant was a committed member of the underground resistance during World War II; on more than one occasion he was offered safe passage to England but

chose instead to remain in France. After the war he worked initially with the UJRE (l'Union des Juifs pour la Résistance et l'Entraide) and devoted himself to documenting the Jewish resistance by collecting original documents and writing and publishing extensively on the subject. Diamant died in Paris on 24 August 1994.

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The collection has been arranged in the following series and sub-series:

Documents in Yiddish: Leaflets and Internal Documents

Documents of Jewish Resistance Groups and other Groups

- Comité d'action et De Défense de la Jeunesse Juive (CADJJ)
- Forces Unies de la Jeunesse Patriotique
- French Communist Party (PCF); including Groupe Juif
- FTPF and FFI During the Occupation or the Liberation
- TPF and FFI after the Liberation
- Jeunesse Communiste Juive (ou Jeunes Communistes Juifs)
- MOI (Main d'Oeuvre Immigrée)
- Mouvement de Défense et de Solidarité Contre les Persécutions Antijuives et les Déportations
- Mouvement National Contre le Racisme (MNCR)
- Polish Groups
- Union de la Jeunesse Juive (UJJ)
- Union des Juifs pour la Résistance et l'Entr'aide
- Miscellaneous or Unidentified Groups during the Occupation
- Miscellaneous or Unidentified Groups after the Occupation

Documents Relating to Collaboration

- Government of Vichy - Collaboration
- Épuration [Purge]

Documents on Prisons, Prisoners and Deportées

- Specific Prisons or Camps

- Various Provincial Prisons
- Unidentified Prisons or Camps
- Mouvement National des Prisonniers de Guerre et Déportés
- Songs and Poems from Prison
- Documents on Torture, Executions, etc.

French Leaflets: Jews and Jewish Underground Groups

Incomplete and Unidentified Documents [Not Listed]

Other institutions that have material collected by Diamant include the Musée de la Résistance Nationale in Champigny, the Contemporary Jewish Documentation Center in Paris, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

*Source note: World War, 1939-1945, Jewish Underground Resistance collection (David Diamant collection).—[ca. 1939-1945], predominant 1941-1944, The William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University*