Leo Szilard Letters to Gertrud Weiss

Finding aid prepared by Special Collections & Archives
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Leo Szilard Letters to Gertrud Weiss
Identifier/Call Number: MSS 0650
Contributing Institution: Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla, California, 92093-0175
Languages: German
Physical Description: 0.4 Linear feet (1 archives box)
Date (inclusive): 1937-1959
Abstract: The Leo Szilard Letters to Gertrud Weiss collection contains letters written between 1937 and 1959 from Szilard to Weiss. The letters document the development of their relationship during this period and cover a variety of topics, including Szilard's battle with cancer. There are also a small number of letters from other correspondents at the end of the collection. Letters are primarily in German, with some in English.
Creator: Szilard, Leo
Scope and Content of Collection
The Leo Szilard Letters to Gertrud Weiss collection contains letters written between 1937 and 1959 from Szilard to Weiss. The letters document the development of their relationship during this period and cover a variety of topics, including Szilard's battle with cancer. Szilard addresses Weiss by his nicknames for her: Trude, Child, and Ch, for short. Letters are arranged chronologically. The last three folders in the box contain letters addressed to both Gertrud Weiss and Leo Szilard. Correspondents include Louis Szilard, Leo Szilard's father; Szilard's brother Bela Szilard; Dr. Henry Hausner, nuclear metals expert and Szilard's colleague; Dr. Robert Glaser of University of Colorado; Dr. Ben Liebovitz, friend who helped arrange Weiss's visas and travel in the United Kingdom and the United States; and a small number of unidentified correspondents. Letters are primarily in German, with some in English.
Related Materials
English translations of some of the German letters are available in the Lanouette/Szilard Papers, MSS 659, Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego. Translations were commissioned by William Lanouette, author of Genius in the Shadows: A Biography of Leo Szilard, the Man Behind the Bomb, and conducted by Lanouette's research assistant Joseph Ernst.
Gertrude Weiss Szilard Papers, MSS 432. Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego.
Leo Szilard Papers, MSS 32. Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego.
Biography
Gertrud Weiss was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1909. She began studying medicine at the University of Vienna in the 1920s but quit within the first four months to pursue travels in Berlin, where she met Szilard. After several years in Berlin, Szilard convinced her to return to Vienna to pursue her degree in medicine, which Weiss completed in 1936. Compelled by the political climate and Szilard's urgings, Weiss moved to London and then, in 1938, to New York City. There she worked in a hospital until 1950 when she moved to Denver to teach public health at the University of Colorado's Medical School. During this time, Szilard's and Weiss's relationship was conducted almost entirely through letters. Szilard was uninterested in marriage and it wasn't until 1951, when speculations on their relationship threatened Weiss's job, that they considered marriage. They married on October 13, 1951, and Weiss took Szilard's name, though they often lived separately during the years following.
In 1964, they moved together to La Jolla, California, where Szilard was offered a position at the Salk Institute. Szilard died that same year.
Publishing Rights
Publishing rights are held by the creator of the collection.
Acquisition Information
Digital Content
The collection has been digitized with funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) and can be viewed through links in the container list, or by clicking the link below.
Items available online

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Subjects and Indexing Terms
Szilard, Gertrud Weiss -- Archives
Szilard, Gertrud Weiss -- Correspondence
Szilard, Leo -- Archives
Szilard, Leo -- Correspondence

LETTERS

Box 1, Folder 1  1937
                   1937
Box 1, Folder 2  1938
                   1938
Box 1, Folder 3  1939-1942
                   1939-1942
Box 1, Folder 4  1943
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Box 1, Folder 5  1944
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Box 1, Folder 6  1945
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Box 1, Folder 7  1946
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Box 1, Folder 8  1947
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Box 1, Folder 9  1948
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Box 1, Folder 10  1949
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Box 1, Folder 11  1950
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Box 1, Folder 12  1951
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Box 1, Folder 13  1952
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Box 1, Folder 14  1953
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Box 1, Folder 15  Financial documents and related correspondence 1954-1955
                   Languages: English
                   Financial documents and related correspondence, 1954-1955
Box 1, Folder 16  1954
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Box 1, Folder 17  1955
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Box 1, Folder 18  1956
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Box 1, Folder 19  1957
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Box 1, Folder 20  1958
                   1958
Box 1, Folder 21  1959
1959

Other correspondents 1937-1944
Other correspondents, 1937-1944

Box 1, Folder 22

Other correspondents 1948-1953
Other correspondents, 1948-1953

Box 1, Folder 23

Other correspondents 1954-1959
Other correspondents, 1954-1959

Box 1, Folder 24