

**THE PAPERS  
OF  
Gideon Kaminka (1904-1985)**



The "Clock House," Herzl St., Haifa. The first modern office building built in the neighborhood of Hadar HaCarmel. Designed by Kaminka, 1934-36

**The Architectural Heritage Research Center**

Department of Architecture and Town Planning

The Technion – Israel Institute of Technology

(Arrangement & Description by Shira Wilkof, July 2017)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>SCOPE AND CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>CONTAINER LIST</b> .....	<b>6</b>
	<b>SERIES I: PUBLIC ACTIVITIES</b> .....	<b>6</b>
	Subseries I: Haifa Municipal Matters .....	<b>6</b>
	Subseries II: The Progressive Party .....	<b>7</b>
	<b>SERIES II: PROFESSIONAL MATERIAL</b> .....	<b>7</b>
	Subseries I: Projects (subject folders).....	<b>7</b>
	Subseries II: Building Permits .....	<b>8</b>
	Subseries III: German-Jewish Retirement Communities.....	<b>8</b>
	Subseries IV: Photos of Projects by Kaminka and Others.....	<b>9</b>

## FINDING AID

### 1 DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

**Creator:** Gideon Kaminka (1904–1985)

**Title:** The Papers of Gideon Kaminka

**Dates:** ca. 1925–1981 [bulk: 1940s–1960s]

**Abstract:**

The materials in this collection reflect the activities of Dr. architect Gideon Kaminka, a Vienna-born Israeli architect and planner, local politician and activist within the Central-European émigré-community. Holdings include K.'s activities in Palestine/Israel, mainly in the city of Haifa, where K. resided for five decades, and was engaged in architectural commissions, urban planning, and urban politics. The collection contains visual and textual materials concerning K.'s architectural projects, ranging from commercial and public to residential projects. It also includes materials concerning K.'s public career as a city council member on behalf of the Progressive Party, and an advocate of the German-speaking émigré community. Holdings further include a small collection of photographs of projects by Kaminka and others. Despite his high public profile in Haifa and within the German-speaking émigré community in Israel, K. seems to have escaped the scholarly radar. An additional collection of K.'s papers can be found at the [Haifa City Archives](#).

**Subjects:**

National Socialism ; Jews -- Germany -- History -- 20th Century ; Jews -- Austria -- Vienna -- History -- 20th Century ; Architecture, Modern -- 20th Century -- Europe ; Architecture, Modern -- 20th Century -- Philosophy ; Architecture, Modern -- 20th Century -- Israel ; Palestine -- Emigration and Immigration -- 20th Century ; Zionism

**Languages:** German; Hebrew; English

**Quantity:** 2 Boxes (35 Files)

**Repository:** The Architectural Heritage Research Center, Department of Architecture and Town Planning, The Technion – Israel Institute of Technology

## 2 BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE



Gideon Kaminka

Dr. Gideon Kaminka (1904-1985) was an Austrian-Israeli architect and politician. Born in Vienna, K. was the son of Aharon Kaminka, an Orthodox Rabbi, who headed the Israelite Alliance in Vienna. K. was an active Zionist from a young age, and joined the Zionist *Blau-Weiss* youth organization.

Between 1923 and 1927, K. studied architecture at the *Technische Hochschule* in Vienna. He then continued on to doctoral studies, and in 1930 he completed his dissertation on “The Regular City Plan in Thirteenth Century East Austria”. In 1933, after several years of gaining professional experience in the architectural offices of Josef Franks and Oskar Wlachs, K. immigrated to Palestine. Prior to immigration, he visited Palestine twice: in 1926 and 1929.

Settling in Haifa, K. completed his first project in 1936: “The Clock House,” a modern office building centrally located on Herzl St., Haifa, which became a city landmark. For five decades, K. and his family resided on the second floor of the building, and he maintained his office on the first floor. During these years, he designed various public, residential, and commercial buildings in and around Haifa. He was well known within the German-speaking community in Haifa for his design of the Doctors House and the chain of retirement houses for the community’s elderly.

Additionally, K. was highly engaged in local politics. During the pre-1948 period K. was among the leaders of the Jewish neighborhood of Hadar HaCarmel, and he served on its residents’ committee. After 1944, K. chaired Haifa’s planning committee. From 1950, and for the following 28 years, he was a member of the city council and a representative of an independent local liberal party (on behalf of the Progressive Party). K. was also active within the German-speaking émigré community on the national level, and was engaged in the activity of H.O.G.O.A (The Association of German and Austrian Immigrants in Israel). In 1980 he published an autobiography, *Schwieriges Israel: Erinnerungen, 1939-1979*.

### Further Reading

Kaminka, Gideon. *Schwieriges Israel: Erinnerungen, 1939-1979*, Zürich: JudaicaVerlag, 1980.

Warhaftig, Myra. *They Laid the Foundation: Lives and Works of German-Speaking Jewish Architects in Palestine: 1918-1948*. Tübingen/New York, N.Y: Wasmuth, 2007. pp. 342-347.

“Architekten im Exil 1933-45/Gideon Kaminka,” KIT, <https://kg.ikb.kit.edu/arch-exil/346.php>

### 3 SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The collection reflects the professional and public work of K., spanning from 1930s Mandate Palestine to 1980s Israel. There is no record regarding the receipt of the collection in the archives, and it seems to contain only a small part of his complete oeuvre. The original filing system has been mostly kept intact.

There are two main parts in this collection. The first one includes K.'s professional work. It contains a partial selection of subject files organized according to K.'s architectural commissions between the 1930s and 1960s. These include textual and visual materials spanning from legal documents and correspondence to maps, plans and handwritten sketches and drawings. Especially notable are the materials concerning the retirement houses for the older generation of the German-speaking émigrés in Haifa and its nearby suburbs. The second part includes materials concerning K.'s public activities as a city council member, a member of the Progressive Party and his advocacy work on behalf of the German-speaking émigré community in Palestine/Israel.

**Note on the marking of files:** File titles with consecutive Arabic numbers all belong to one original folder, which was then separated due to its size. Titles written in quotation marks reflect the original file name given by the creators of the collection themselves and were preserved in this way in order to reflect the original intention and manner of organization.

#### **SERIES I: Public Activities**

This series contains materials concerning K.'s political and public activities, mainly from the 1940s and 1950s. Materials concerning Haifa municipal matters cover the pre-1948 activities of K. in connection with his membership in the Committee of Hadar HaCarmel, a Jewish neighborhood characterized by a high number of German-speaking émigrés. These include minutes, correspondence and reports, as well as materials concerning the work of the Committee of Hadar HaCarmel's Planning Commission. The series also includes various documents related to urban and regional planning spanning from the 1930s to the 1950s, such as reports by the municipal engineering department, and various documentations regarding the Haifa Master Plan (1954). It also includes materials concerning the activities of the Progressive Party on both local and national levels and K.'s work in connection with the H.O.G.O.A (The Association of German and Austrian Immigrants in Israel). These include correspondence, documentations, reports as well as clippings from German-language local periodicals, the Progressive Party bulletin and the general Hebrew press.

#### **SERIES II: Professional Work**

Materials in this series include subject folders containing K.'s architectural commissions from the 1940s until the late 1970s, all located in Haifa and its environs. These include residential, commercial, and public facilities. Especially notable are the materials concerning the Clock House, designed by K. and the retirement homes for the Central European-émigré community in the Haifa area. The folders include ample textual, architectural and legal material concerning the projects. The building permits include legal, architectural and cartographic materials concerning various projects. The series includes a collection of photographs of architectural projects by K. and perhaps by others as well (some photographs are unidentified).

## 4 CONTAINER LIST

### SERIES I: PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

#### Subseries I: Haifa Municipal Matters

Folder/Box	Title	Date
B1/F1	"Annual Reports", Engineering Dpt., City of Haifa, 1936-1945 (1)	1936-1940
B1/F2	"Annual Reports", Engineering Dpt., City of Haifa, 1936-1945 (2)	1940-1945
B1/F3	"Annual Reports", Engineering Dpt., City of Haifa, 1936-1945 (3) [original folder]	1936-1945
B1/F4	Haifa Master Plan 1954 (1)	1954
B1/F5	Haifa Master Plan 1954 (2) [original folder]	1954
B1/F6	Haifa Master Plan: Preliminary Report, 1953 (1)	1953
B1/F7	Haifa Master Plan: Preliminary Report, 1953 (2)	1953
B1/F8	ועד הקהילה העברית, חיפה "סקירה על הפעולות בשנת תש"ז-תש"ח" ("Review of the Activities in 1947-1948", The Hebrew Community Committee, Haifa	1948
B1/F9	"ועד הדר הכרמל - וועדת התכנון" Committee of Hadar HaCarmel: The Planning Commission (1)	1943-1948
B1/F10	"ועד הדר הכרמל - וועדת התכנון" Committee of Hadar HaCarmel: The Planning Commission (2)	1943-1948
B1/F11	"ועד הדר הכרמל - וועדת התכנון" Committee of Hadar HaCarmel: The Planning Commission (3)	1943-1948

## **Subseries II: The Progressive Party**

<b>Folder/Box</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
B1/F12	“The H.O.G.O.A” and the Progressive Party (1)	1930s-1960
B1/F13	“The H.O.G.O.A” and the Progressive Party (2)	1930s-1960
B1/F14	“The Progressive Party” (1)	1950s
B1/F15	"The Progressive Party" (2) [original folder]	1950s

## **SERIES II: PROFESSIONAL MATERIAL**

### **Subseries I: Projects (subject folders)**

<b>Folder/Box</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
B1/F16	Migdal Insurance Building (The Clock House), Haifa (1)	1965-1981
B1/F17	Migdal Insurance Building (The Clock House), Haifa (2)	1934-1977
B1/F18	Migdal Insurance Building (The Clock House), Haifa (3)	1936-1960s
B1/F19	Migdal Insurance Building (The Clock House), Haifa (4)	1934-1960s
B2/F1	Franz Levi House, Haifa (1)	1940s-1950s
B2/F2	Franz Levi House, Haifa (2) [original folder]	1940s-1950s

B2/F3	Other Project Materials	1925-1974
-------	-------------------------	-----------

### **Subseries II: Building Permits**

<b>Folder/Box</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
B2/F4	Building Permits 1936-1970 (1)	1936-1970
B2/F5	Building Permits 1936-1970 (2)	1936-1970
B2/F6	Building Permits 1936-1970 (3) [original folder]	1936-1970
B2/F7	Building Permits, 1970-1977 (1)	1970-1977
B2/F8	Building Permits, 1970-1977 (2) [original folder]	1970-1977

### **Subseries III: German-Jewish Retirement Communities**

<b>Folder/Box</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
B2/F9	"Reut" Haifa and Kiryat Bialik: Plans and Photos (1)	1960s
B2/F10	"Reut" Haifa and Kiryat Bialik: Plans and Photos (2) [original folder]	1960s
B2/F11	"The Doctors House", Haifa: Plans and Photos	1960s
B2/F12	"Parents House", Haifa: Plans and Photos	1960s



B2/F13	Unidentified Project Materials	n.d.
B2/F14	Collected Materials on Projects by Others	c. 1960s

**Subseries IV: Photos of Projects by Kaminka and Others**

<b>Folder/Box</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
B2/F15	Unidentified and Misc. Photos (1)	c.1950s-1960s
B2/F16	Unidentified and Misc. Photos (2)	c.1950s-1960s