

Civilian Agency Records

State Department and Foreign Affairs Records

Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State (RG 84)

Poland

The German Army, without a declaration of war and on the pretense that Poland was infringing on German territory, invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Within the week the Polish Army was virtually defeated. On September 17, Russia, having signed a nonaggression pact with Germany on August 23, 1939, invaded Poland from the east. Two days later the German and Russian forces met near Brest Litovsk. On September 27 Warsaw surrendered and the next day Germany and Russia divided Poland. By the end of the month a Polish government-in-exile was established in Paris and it eventually transferred to London.

Danzig was annexed and incorporated into the Greater Reich as well as 32,000 square miles of territory between East Prussia and Silesia. Western Poland was divided into districts: Danzig- West Prussia under Gauleiter Albert Forster and Warth under Gauleiter Arthur Greiser. The rest of German-occupied Poland was designated as Generalgouvernement of Poland and placed under German civil administration headed by Governor General Hans Frank, headquartered in Cracow.

The Nazi occupiers set about subjugating the Poles. First they exterminated many political, intellectual, and religious leaders, and sent many to Germany as slave laborers. To create new living space for Germans, many Poles were resettled (being pushed into Generalgouvernement from the incorporated areas) and German families moved into the emptied lands, and took control of Polish business establishments. Thousands of other Poles, including Jews, were sent to concentration camps and some 50,000 Polish children were sent to Germany to be adopted by German families.

After the German invasion of Russia in June 1941, the Russian-occupied portion of Poland was brought into German control. This meant that the Germans had acquired over 150,000 square miles, over 35 million people, and access to great wealth. The German occupiers brutally exploited Poland's economic resources, confiscating a significant amount of Poland's wealth. By the spring of 1942, it was estimated that 230,000 Polish firms, industrial and commercial, and 187,000 urban properties (urban real estate) had been expropriated in the incorporated area of Poland. In addition, some 2 million Poles were sent to Germany as slave laborers.

During the early stages of occupation, some 3 million Polish Jews were forced

into approximately 400 newly established ghettos. Large number of Jews were also deported from other countries, including Germany, to ghettos in Poland and German-occupied territories further west. Many of these ghettos provided a forced labor pool for the Germany. In 1942, the Germans began a policy of eliminating most of the Ghettos and sending the Jews to extermination camps.

This process began in December 1941, when Jews in the Wartheland began being deported to Chelmno for extermination. This was followed in March 1942, when Jews of Lublin began being deported to Belzec. From July to September 1942, over 300,000 Jews were deported from Warsaw to Treblinka.

Extermination centers were also established at Sobibor, Majdanek, and Auschwitz-Birkenau. By war's end approximately 3 million Polish Jews, some 90 percent of the pre-Final Solution population were exterminated during the war.

Russian forces entered eastern Poland in July 1944 and a provisional Polish Government was established. German forces were finally expelled from Poland early in 1945. ([Note 87](#))

Records of the American Mission to the Polish Government in Exile

General Records 1940-1944 (Entry 3110)

Boxes 1-25

1941

Box # File # File Title or Subject

6 840.1 Jews in Poland-Future Policy Toward

1942

Box # File # File Title or Subject

12 711 Jewish Problem (Violence in Occupied Countries)

711 Persecution of Jews

711 Persecution of the Jews in Nazi Slovakia

711 Jewish Atrocities

711 Jewish Problems

711.2 Blocked Nationals

1943

Box # File # File Title or Subject

16 711 Atrocities

711 War Criminals

711 Jewish Atrocities

711 World Jewish Congress

19 840.1 Bermuda Conference

20 848 UNRRA

1944

Box # File # File Title or Subject

23 711 War Crimes

711 Atrocities

711 World Jewish Congress

711 Jewish Persecution

711 Atrocities (Jewish Situation)
711 Jewish Situation
24 840.1 War Refugee Board
25 848 UNRRA

Classified General Records 1942, 1945 (Entry 3112)

Boxes 1-7

1945

Box # File # File Title or Subject

4 711.6 War Crimes Trials
711.6 Displaced Persons
711.9 List of Looted Property
711.9 Recovery of Polish Property
711.9 Property Looted by Germans
711.9 Safehaven-Works of Art location: 350/67/5/05

Records of the Warsaw Embassy

General Records 1945-1949, 1951, 1954 (Entry 3114A)

Boxes 7-106

1945

Box # File # File Title or Subject

11 711 Displaced Persons
711.5 Polish Jewish Affairs
711.6 Concentration Camps
711.6 Mass Graves
711.6 War Crimes Trials
711.6 Hans Frank
711.9 Restitution of Polish Property
711.9 Restitution of Looted Property
711.9 Claims on Cultural Materials Looted by Germans
711.9 Restitution of Polish Property from Austria
711.9 Polish Art Objects in Germany
711.9 Polish Works of Art-Restitution
711.9 Return of Altar Piece to Cracow
711.9 Restitution of Veit Stoss Altarpiece

1946

Box # File # File Title or Subject

20 711.3 Oatax-Subsidiary of Tokalon Companies-Proclaimed List
711.5 Displaced Persons
711.6 Katyn Forest Incident
711.6 Execution of Greisers
711.6 Trial of German SS Personnel
21 711.9 Restitution of Looted Polish Property
711.9 Restitution Claims
711.9 Restoration of Looted Art

27 848 UNRRA

1947

Box # File # File Title or Subject

37-38 711.6 Displaced Persons and Refugees

38 711.6 War Crimes in Poland

711.9 Property of Count Alfred Potocki [art works]

711.9 Return of Looted Art Objects

711.9 Control of Looted Cultural Objects

711.9 Tripartite Agreement concerning Looted Cultural Property

1948

Box # File # File Title or Subject

62 711.6 Displaced Persons and Refugees

711.6 Polish Displaced Persons Criminals

711.6 German War Crimes and Criminals

63 711.9 Restitution

800 Jewish Situation

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