

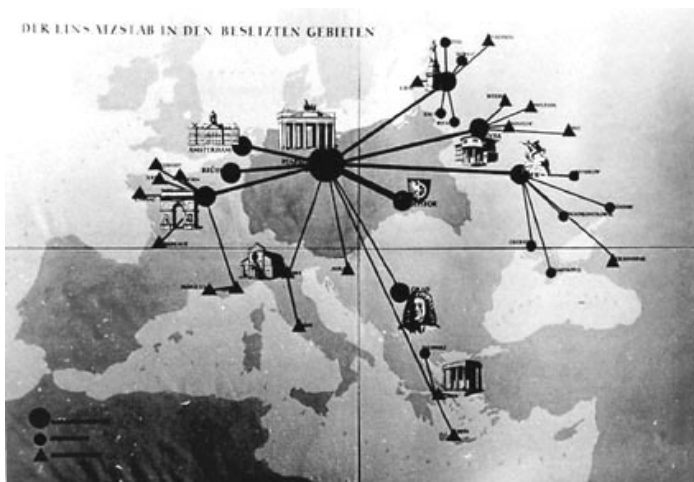
RETURNED FROM RUSSIA: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues

Edited by Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, F.J. Hoogewoud, and Eric Ketelaar
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During the Second World War, various Nazi agencies competed for the plunder of occupied Europe's archival heritage – from key documentation of military intelligence (such as French Deuxième Bureau) and government security agencies to trade-union records, files of Masonic lodges and Jewish Communities, and personal papers of prominent individuals.

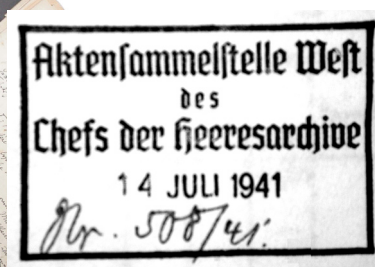
At war's end, the victorious Red Army found some of the most important Nazi hideouts. Many of Europe's captured archives were seized a second time and rushed to Moscow on Beria's orders, where they remained in secret for almost half a century. When the Russian Federation was admitted to the Council of Europe in 1996 it promised to expedite "the return of property claimed by Council of Europe member States, in particular the archives transferred to Moscow in 1945." Since then only five instances of archival returns have been finalised on the basis of the new Russian law – four handled diplomatically to France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, and a fifth, the Rothschild family papers from Vienna, as the first instance of a private family arrangement. This volume brings together for the first time reports by key individuals who took part in the negotiations for the return of those twice-plundered archives.



Plunder of books and archives by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR), one of the several Nazi agencies involved.



German inventories of captured Western European military records held in the top-secret Heeresarchiv branch archival facility in Berlin-Wannsee. Many of the records have recently returned home, but these inventories remain in Moscow.



In the first half of the volume, American historian and archival specialist Patricia Kennedy Grimsted reveals her veritable detective story of the seizure and dramatic fate of those records in Nazi and Soviet hands and the post-1991 political battle within Russia over their restitution.

Patricia Kennedy Grimsted (pictured right) at the remote Sudeten castle of Horní Libchava (Oberleibich) in Northern Bohemia, where she discovered (in 1990) that the RSHA ran a top-secret counter-intelligence centre with captured French intelligence and security archives. Found by Soviet counter-intelligence (SMERSH, literally 'death to spies') in May 1945, they were transported to Moscow in 28 freight wagons in July 1945.



In the second half of the volume, the stories of individual countries are told, with the focus on the returned archives of France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, together with the Austrian Rothschild archives.



Professor Eric Ketelaar, retired Chief Archivist of The Netherlands, examines Dutch Jewish Community records in the stacks of the former Special Archive in Moscow (March 2001).

Appendices present the legal instruments (in English translation) for the return of these five groups of 'displaced' twice-captured archives, and identify the present locations of all of those that have recently come home from Russia, some of them long believed lost. Military and security records, documents from early Masonic lodges for the memory of centuries past, new memorials to those who perished in the war and the Holocaust – all are covered in this book published November 2007.



The last box of Belgian archives leaves the former Special Archive (now part of the Russian State Military Archive) to be loaded on a Belgian Army truck in the convoy across the Continent (May 2002).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Part I—From Nazi Plunder to Russian Restitution (Patricia Kennedy Grimsted)

A. PATTERNS OF NAZI ARCHIVAL PLUNDER AND POSTWAR SOVIET SEIZURE

1. The Reichsarchiv, the Foreign Office and Military Records
2. Archival Loot of the Security Services (RSHA) and Military Intelligence (Abwehr)
3. Archival Loot of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)

B. FROM THE SOVIET 'SPECIAL ARCHIVE' TO RUSSIAN RESTITUTION

4. Soviet Captured Records and the 'Special Archive'
5. Russian versus Soviet restitution

Part II—Twice-Captured Archives Come Home to Western Europe

6. France: The Return of Looted French Archives. The Case of the Library and Archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (Jean-Claude Kuperminc)
7. Belgium: Papieren Bitte! The Confiscation and Restitution of Belgian Archives and Libraries (1940-2003) (Michel Vermote and Jacques Lust)
8. The Netherlands: Dutch Archives Return from Moscow (Eric Ketelaar); Dutch-Jewish Archives Come Home from East and West (Odette Vlessing) In Between a Thousand Files –Data on my Dutch Family (Ruben Vis)
9. Luxembourg: Restitution of Masonic Archives to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (Serge Hoffman)
10. The Rothschild Archive: The Return of the Austrian Rothschild Archives (Victor Gray)

List of Russian Legal Instruments Related to the Return of Displaced Cultural Treasures from the Second World War

Bibliography

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