

AB-Aktion

(*Ausserordenliche Befriedungsaktion*; Extraordinary Pacification Operation), campaign to exterminate Polish resistance leaders in 1940, in order to subdue Polish opposition to the Germans and unnerve the Polish people. The *AB-Aktion* was raised as a war crime at the Nuremberg Trials and the war crimes trials held by the Supreme People's Court in Poland.

The *Reichsverteidigungsrat* (the Reich's military planning committee) planned the *AB-Aktion* during February and March 1940. Hans Frank ordered the beginning of the *aktion* on May 16, 1940, days after the Germans initiated their military offensive in Western Europe. The Germans arrested about 3,500 Poles in the Generalgouvernement whom they considered to be activist leaders and 3,000 suspected of criminal activities. They then massacred the entire group at sites including the Palmiry Forest.

The Nazis had originally hoped to end the *AB-Aktion* by the middle of 1940; it continued, however, into the fall. German military successes in Western Europe probably brought about the extension.

In spite of the Nazis' intentions, the *AB-Aktion* did not achieve its goal of destroying the Polish resistance movement. For a short while, the membership of the resistance organizations was brought down by a third. However, they soon regained their strength and moved on with their activities.