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**Records of the Department of
State Relating to the Problems of
Relief and Refugees in Europe
Arising from World War II
and Its Aftermath
1938-1949**



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General Records of the Department of State

Record Group 59

RECORDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
STATE RELATING TO THE PROBLEMS OF
RELIEF AND REFUGEES IN EUROPE
ARISING FROM WORLD WAR II
AND ITS AFTERMATH
1938-1949

The 70 rolls of this microfilm publication reproduce State Department decimal files 840.48 and 840.48 Refugees and are part of the General Records of the Department of State (Record Group 59). These records relate to two difficult problems facing the United States from 1938 to 1949: (1) how to handle relief measures in a Europe in the throes of political conflict and war and (2) how to deal with refugees displaced by persecution and fighting and unable to return home in the war's aftermath. The State Department's interest and involvement with relief efforts began before the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939 and continued after the war ended in May 1945.

Rolls 1-18 (decimal file 840.48) constitute State Department records documenting the general problem of calamities, disasters, and relief activities in Europe. Major topics covered in this file include State Department assistance to the American Red Cross in shipping drugs, medical supplies and equipment, and other relief supplies to Europe; wartime relief efforts for the civilians of occupied countries; postwar relief activities of the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations, the President's War Relief Control Board, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), and C.A.R.E. (Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, Inc.); former President Herbert Hoover's visit to Europe and Asia in March and April 1946 as chairman of the President's Famine Committee; and overall relief aspects of European reconstruction, better known as the Marshall Plan.

Rolls 19-70 (decimal file 840.48 Refugees) deal with the problem of European refugees. The early part of the file contains material documenting U.S. concern for political and Jewish refugees in Germany and Austria before World War II. This concern led the United States to call for a conference to discuss the situation. The meeting, known formally as the Intergovernmental Meeting on Political Refugees, took place at Evian, France, from July 6 to 15, 1938. During the meeting the numerous participating countries decided to establish a continuing body, the Intergovernmental Committee for

Political Refugees, to be located in London. This file contains documentation on U.S. participation in the Intergovernmental Committee, and, beginning in September 1939, documents the problem of European refugees all over the world. File 840.48 Refugees also contains materials documenting Department of State cooperation on the refugee problem with other agencies of the U.S. Government, other governments, and private organizations. For the period after the war, file 840.48 Refugees contains information on Displaced Persons (DP's) and refugees from communism in Eastern Europe. Special topics include the settling of Jewish refugees in Santo Domingo at the Sosua Settlement by the Dominican Republic Settlement Association (1940-45); the trip of Linton Wells through Angola (May-August 1939) to examine that area for possible settlement of refugees; the smuggling of refugees, particularly Jewish refugees, out of Europe to all parts of the world; illegal Jewish migration to Palestine; the establishment and liquidation of the Polish refugee camp at Santa Rosa, Mexico; reports on refugee camps in Kenya; the activities of the War Refugee Board, including its weekly reports of activities and news and the appointment of special War Refugee Board attaches to U.S. missions; the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Refugees and Displaced Persons at Allied Force Headquarters; the flight of Baltic refugees to Sweden in the face of Soviet annexation of their countries; the liquidation of the Emergency Refugee Shelter at Oswego, N.Y.; problems resulting from the forced removal of Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia; postwar repatriation of refugees; and liquidation of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (1947).

The records, consisting of unbound documents, are mostly instructions to and despatches, telegrams, and airgrams from diplomatic and consular officials. The despatches are often accompanied by enclosures. In addition to official exchanges between the Department of State and its field representatives, there are notes exchanged between the Department of State and foreign diplomatic and consular representatives in the United States, memorandums by officials of the Department, correspondence and memorandums exchanged with other agencies of the U.S. Government, and correspondence with private firms and persons.

The Lists of Documents, or "purport lists," for the records dated 1938-44 are available on rolls 387, 573, and 643 of National Archives Microfilm Publication M973, Purport Lists of the Department of

State Decimal File, 1910-1944. In June 1944, the purport lists were replaced by a purport card index. Those lists and cards give brief abstracts of most of the documents reproduced in this publication and serve as a finding aid to the documents. The arrangement of the entries in the lists and cards corresponds generally to the arrangement of the documents in the file. The purport cards for records dated 1945-49 are not yet available on microfilm.

From 1910 to 1963 the Department of State used a decimal system for its central files, assembling and arranging individual documents according to subject and assigning decimal file numbers. The decimal file consists of nine primary classes numbered 0 through 8, each covering a broad subject area. The records reproduced in this publication are in Class 8, Internal Affairs of States. Each country, continent, or geographical area has been assigned a two-digit number; Europe was assigned number 40. At the time of the Evian Conference in 1938, the Records Branch of the State Department decided to index and place all refugee-related documents in file 840.48 Refugees as a subfile of file 840.48 (calamities and disasters in Europe).

These file numbers are followed by a slant mark (/). Numbers following the slant mark were assigned chronologically by date of receipt to individual documents as they were indexed; e.g. in decimal file number 840.48/3276, "3276" indicates the 3,276th document received. Documents that are not in chronological sequence are out of order because their numbers were assigned by the filing date rather than the date of receipt.

Starting in July 1944, the numbers after the slant mark reflect the date the record was created; e.g., a document dated November 20, 1944, would be numbered /11-2044. Documents dated as early as 1939 but not indexed until after July 1, 1944, were also assigned date numbers; e.g., a document dated May 5, 1939, would be indexed /5-539. In some instances documents have alphabetical or fractional suffixes, indicating that the documents were indexed years later.

The file contains documents that were security classified by the State Department and documents received from and classified by foreign governments or other Federal agencies. Documents that are still

classified are not available. The National Archives and Records Service does not have authority to make reproductions of classified documents available to researchers. Documents that remain classified were removed from the file and replaced by a withdrawal notice that identifies the document and indicates the reason for its removal. Some documents appearing in the Lists of Documents were missing from the files at the time they were transferred from the State Department; in some instances, chargeout cards are found in place of the missing documents. The chargeout cards and withdrawal notices were filmed where they appear.

Related Records

Other segments of the decimal file that may include information on the topics covered by the publication include the following:

740.00116EW	Illegal and Inhumane Warfare
8**.4016	Race Problems
8**.48	Calamities. Disasters
8**.48 Refugees	Refugees
840.50 Recovery	European Recovery (The Marshall Plan)
840.50 UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
867n.01	Government in Palestine

The ** should be replaced by the appropriate country number.

Other records of the Department of State in the National Archives that may contain related information are those files maintained by the different offices and officials of the Department, referred to by the State Department as "Lot Files." Among those most likely to include related documentation are: Intelligence Reports, 1941-61; Records of the Office of the Assistant Secretary and Undersecretary of State - Dean Acheson, 1941-50; Records of the Policy Planning Staff, 1947-53; Records of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee and its successor, the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee, 1944-49; Records of Harley A. Notter, 1939-45; Records of World War II and Postwar Conferences, 1943-45; Records of the Central European Division, 1944-47; and Records of the Personal Representative of the President (Myron C. Taylor) to Pope Pius XII, 1942-50.

Documents relating to relief and refugees may also appear in Record Group 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State. In addition to documents that will not be found in the decimal file, the records of diplomatic and consular posts may also contain copies of enclosures to despatches that are missing from the central files and are not available on this microfilm publication. Record Group 84 includes materials on the Polish refugee camp at Santa Rosa, Mexico. Additional material on the problems of relief and refugees can be found in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y., and the Harry S Truman Library, Independence, Mo.

David A. Langbart wrote this introduction and arranged the records for filming.

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