



The Mass Extermination of Jews in German Occupied Poland
(address to the Governments of the United Nations on December 10th, 1942)

In December of 1942, members of the Polish government in exile prepared and circulated a pamphlet drawing attention to the plight of people in Poland. It contained reports of appalling conditions perpetrated by the country's Nazi occupiers.

Entitled *The Mass Extermination of Jews in German Occupied Poland*, it was addressed to "The Governments of the United Nations." Edward Raczyński's name appears at the end of the pamphlet.

Initially, the concerns of the government-in-exile focused on the harm that the occupiers (Hitler's troops in Poland) were causing to the country itself. The Nazis were attempting to "reduce the [Polish] population to virtual slavery and ultimately to exterminate the Polish nation."

Then, in 1942—and continuing after the date of the "Extermination" report—the occupiers did other things:

Most recent reports present a horrifying picture of the position to which the Jews in Poland have been reduced. The new methods of mass slaughter applied during the last few months confirm the fact that the German authorities aim with systematic deliberation at the total extermination of the Jewish population of Poland and of the many thousands of Jews whom the German authorities have deported to Poland from Western and Central European countries and from the German Reich itself.

The Polish Government consider it their duty to bring to the knowledge of the Governments of all civilized countries the following fully authenticated information received from Poland during recent weeks, which indicates all too plainly the new methods of extermination adopted by the German authorities. (Pages 1-2)

...
It has been reliably reported that on the occasion of his visit to the General Government of Poland in March, 1942, Himmler issued an order for the extermination of 50 per cent. of the Jews in Poland by the end of that year. After Himmler's departure, the Germans spread the rumor that the Warsaw ghetto would be liquidated as from April, 1942. This date was subsequently altered to June. Himmler's second visit to Warsaw in the middle of July, 1942, became the signal for the commencement of the process of liquidation, the horror of which surpasses anything known in the annals of history. (Page 3.)

...
It is not possible to estimate the exact number of Jews who have been exterminated in Poland since the occupation of the country by the armed forces of the German Reich. But all the reports agree that the total number of killed runs into many hundreds of thousands of innocent victims—men, women and children—and that of the 3,180,000 Jews in Poland before the outbreak of war, over a third have perished during the last three years. [Germany invaded Poland in September of 1939.] (Page 7.)

This public-domain map depicting the Holocaust in Poland during WWII (1939-1945)—by Poeticbent and online via Wikimedia Commons—reflects a snap-shot of Nazi-Germany's occupation of Poland. It shows:

- where the Nazis created Jewish ghettos;
- where they built major forced-labor and concentration camps;
- where they located extermination (death) camps;
- where they committed mass atrocities; and
- where they located major deportation routes.



As the Polish government-in-exile was reporting, Hitler's Third Reich had taken over Poland.

Nations who received the "Mass Extermination" pamphlet responded quickly. On the 17th of December, 1942, a group of countries issued a Joint Declaration by Members of the United Nations. Here is what it says:

The attention of the Belgian, Czechoslovak, Greek, Yugoslav, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norwegian, Polish, Soviet, United Kingdom and United States Governments and also of the French National Committee has been drawn to numerous reports from Europe that the German authorities, not content with denying to persons of Jewish race in all the territories over which their barbarous rule has been extended, the most elementary human rights, are now carrying into effect Hitler's oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe.

From all the occupied countries Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality to Eastern Europe. In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German invader are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labor camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions. The number of victims of these bloody cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women and children.

The above-mentioned governments and the French National Committee condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination. They declare that such events can only strengthen the resolve of all freedom-loving peoples to overthrow the barbarous Hitlerite tyranny. They reaffirm their solemn resolution to insure that those responsible for these crimes shall not escape retribution, and to press on with the necessary practical measures to this end. (See footnote 45, at page 2174, of Modern Genocide: The Definitive Resource and Document Collection [in 4 volumes], edited by Paul R. Bartrop and Steven Leonard Jacobs.)

Two-and-a-half more years would pass, with continuing atrocities against the people of Poland and those millions of individuals living in Polish concentration camps, before the war was finally over in May of 1945.

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Map of Occupied Poland

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