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ARCHIVES OF THE PRUSSIAN STATE LIBRARY IN BERLIN IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE JELENIA GÓRA DEPARTMENT OF THE STATE ARCHIVES IN WROCŁAW

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In the Jelenia Góra department of the State Archives in Wrocław is stored a small part - consisting of 60 archival units - of the current records (*Registratur*) of the Prussian State Library in Berlin (*Preußische Staatsbibliothek*) from the years 1939-45. It is a remnant of the office of the Berlin library's catalogue and acquisition departments, which operated in the foothills of the Karkonosze mountains in the last months of the Second World War. It consists of rather accidental drafts and correspondence, which German librarians, who left the Jelenia Góra facility in spring 1945, did not evacuate to the West. It is in no way representative of the off-site centre in Jelenia Góra - it documents the work of librarians transferred there only to an extent. Instead, it gives an idea of the problem of completing the library collection during the war, which is valuable information about German cultural policy at that time. The purpose of the following remarks is - first of all - to present the content of the archival fonds "Prussian State Library Department in Jelenia Góra"

and to indicate its historical value; secondly, to discuss issues that complement our knowledge on the Berlin library's war activities in the field of acquisition; thirdly - perhaps most importantly - it gives us clues for further archival inquiries.

Work on securing collections began before the outbreak of the Second World War, due to fear of French and English air attacks at the Prussian State Library. In the last days of August 1939, selected European and Oriental manuscripts and the most valuable cartographic collections were transferred to specially protected shelters in the basement of the Ministry of Economy. Extensive operations were undertaken in the spring of 1941 when the first Allied bombs fell on the Berlin library building at Unter den Linden. From September to November 1941, a significant part of European and Oriental manuscripts, music collections, incunabula, and other materials classified as *rarissima* were taken from Berlin. In the following months, along with the increasing threat of Allied air attacks, it was decided to expand the scope of evacuation. In the summer of 1942, the most valuable old prints were taken from the library. They found shelter in Hessian, Saxon, and Silesian monasteries, churches, palaces, castles, and unused adits (mining passages). By mid-1943, around 800,000 volumes had left Berlin. The third phase of the evacuation began after the carpet bombing in Hamburg at the end of July 1943. The intensive work lasted almost until the end of the war, and the last transports left Berlin in March 1945. The collections were often transferred together with the entire departments they belonged to and the department's employees. In the spring of 1944, the general director, Hugo A. Krüß, who managed the library from Görlsdorf and Luckau, left Berlin. Off-site departments of the Berlin library were established in many centres, based on the principle of scattering valuable collections for protection. A significant part of the cartographic collections was in Neugersdorf at the foot of the Erzgebirge, and the employees of the music collection department went to Rühstädt in Brandenburg. The largest department in terms of the number of employees, was created in Jelenia Góra (then Hirschberg). From

April to July 1944, the employees of acquisition and catalogue departments were transferred together with their current records (including files from the interwar period, as well as those created after 1939), nearly two thousand volumes of subject catalogue and bibliographic aids. Mandatory copies of books and journals sent to the Berlin library were sent on to Jelenia Góra. Work under the direction of Rudolf Juchhoff and Eugen Paunel was carried out in the buildings of the local municipal archives and museum. In February 1945, the department was dissolved, and most of the books, files, many volumes of the subject catalogue and the accessions books and other materials located in Jelenia Góra were transported to Berlin and other temporary storage facilities by April 1945. According to Werner Schochow, a researcher of the history of Berlin's library, part of the materials was left in place "to avoid the impression that the department was completely dissolved".¹ These materials, left in Jelenia Góra - as Schochow supposes, intentionally - or not taken for other reasons, constitute, as indicated above, a rather random collection.² It consists of fragments of the current records (*Registratur*) of the catalogue and acquisition departments, drafts, correspondence with private institutions (mostly with antiquarians who "legalised" the stolen items), as well as military and police authorities of the Third Reich, mainly from 1939-1944. The files left behind by the Berlin librarians, despite the Schochow

- 1 Werner Schochow, *Bücherschicksale. Die Verlagerungsgeschichte der Preussischen Staatsbibliothek: Auslagerung, Zerstörung, Entfremdung, Rückführung. Dargestellt aus den Quellen*, Berlin-New York 2003, p. 149. The author does not provide the source dossier for his suppositions.
- 2 Kurt Tautz, *Die Preussische Staatsbibliothek in Hirschberg im Riesengebirge zur Zeit des zweiten großen Krieges 1944-1945. Blätter der Erinnerung*, Opladen 1950. It is worth adding that most employees from Jelenia Góra were sent to Berlin between 10 and 27 February, although some left the city later. The last librarians left Jelenia Góra on 19 August 1945. In addition to materials from the archives, about 17,000 volumes remained, which were sent to Berlin in 1965. Schochow estimated the total number of books left in Jelenia Góra at around 22,500. A German historian pointed out that dictionaries and encyclopaedias were not returned to Germany, but were divided between various Polish scientific institutions. According to Schochow, at least one hundred volumes were included in the University of Warsaw Library resource: "Weitere mindestens 100 Bücher sind heute im Besitz der UB Warschau", Schochow, *Bücherschicksale...*, p. 150.

supposition, were probably transferred to the archives in the form of scattered, loose files without proper arrangement.

There is not much information about the collection in the guide to the Jelenia Góra archive.³ In 2003, Werner Schochow published a book on the war history of the Berlin library, describing the Jelenia Góra archives. Contrary to the actual state, he noted that “they are in a very poor condition”, and “isolated from the main Berlin collection, on the spot they serve nobody”.⁴ He rated the historical value of materials as relatively low. He deemed them to be files documenting the completion of collections (by way of purchase, exchange, or delivery in the form of a mandatory copy). He underestimated the files’ value regarding the collaboration of the Berlin library with military and police authorities (“this includes various materials documenting the proceeds of unwelcome political books confiscated by secret police or the army, objects robbed in Russia and other occupied areas in the East”).⁵ His work reveals only a superficial knowledge of the materials described. In fact, these files provide interesting information on the functioning of the Berlin library in relation to supplementing the collection and the cooperation of the library with the police and military authorities of the Third Reich.

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- 3 Czesław Margas, *Archiwum Państwowe w Jeleniej Górze. Przewodnik po zasobie*, Jelenia Góra 1984. There is no mention of the archive in *Archiwalny biuletyn informacyjny. Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu i jego oddział terenowy w Jeleniej Górze*, Warszawa 1955, or *Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu. Przewodnik po zasobie archiwalnym*, Wrocław 1996.
 - 4 “Sie [die zurückgelassenen Berliner Geschäftspapieren - J.K.] sind in sehr schlechtem Erhaltungszustand und nützen vor Ort [...], isoliert von den Hauptakten und in Unkenntnis der Berliner Aktenführung, niemandem”, p. 114. He stated with considerable reproach: “Es ist bislang nicht gelungen, selbst dieses, seines Zustandes wie seines Inhaltes wegen in Jelenia Gora kaum verwertbare Material zurück zu erhalten... Lediglich eine Benutzung vor Ort ist der deutschen Seite zugestanden worden”, *ibidem*, p. 150. He asked rather passionately: “Wie lange will man dort [in Polen - J.K.], wenn schon Bücher nicht zur Disposition stehen, selbst interne Geschäftsgangsakten der PSB aus den 1930er/1940er Jahren, die in Hirschberg niemandem nützen, noch zurückbehalten”, *ibidem*, p. 225.
 - 5 “Historischen Wert besitzen zumal jene Akten, die die Zweige der Erwerbung (Kauf, Tausch, Pflicht, usw.) dokumentieren. Dazu gehören diverse, über die Gestapo oder die Wehrmacht laufende Vorgänge zur Beschlagnahme politisch mißliebiger Titel; ferner auch solche über Beutematerial aus Russland und anderen besetzten Ostgebieten”, Schochow, *Bücherschicksale...*, p. 150.

The collection's order and structure suggest that when labelling the collection, the archive employees were not familiar with the library's structure and the competences of individual offices, nor with the content of the documentation itself. The files are mixed up, and the names given to individual archival units are often misleading. In the archival unit marked with reference number 1, "Orders and loose prints regarding librarianship", there are works by Joris Vorstius, a librarian, author of books and articles in the field of bibliography and history of libraries, and one of the publishers of *Bibliographie des Bibliotheks- und Buchwesens* working in the Berlin library department in Jelenia Góra during the war. Under number 3, "Berichte (works on the library resource in the department in Jelenia Góra)", there are two draft journals concerning the work of the library in the second half of 1944. The first is a draft from mid-October 1944, circulating among and informing publishers about the provisions on sending a mandatory copy to the Prussian State Library. It was reported that the restrictions introduced by the post, consisting of delivering parcels only in the area of one hundred kilometres, did not apply to journals and newspapers, the collection of which was necessary "for the purposes of documentation and subsequent research".⁶ The second, undated draft (probably from the second half of 1944) contains a project to create a city library in Jelenia Góra.⁷ The folder also contains letters from the period after the end of the war: a letter from the management of the Jelenia Góra unit to the new German city authorities appointed on 8 May

- 6 "Die Weiterlieferung [...] ist für Zwecke der Dokumentation und künftiger Forschung unbedingt nötig", Draft letter from the management of the Jelenia Góra department of the Prussian State Library to publishers, Jelenia Góra, 14 October 1944, Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu, Pruska Biblioteka Państwowa Oddział w Jeleniej Górze [Wrocław, Prussian State Library, Department in Jelenia Góra, III] 1 (all quotes from archival sources, unless otherwise stated, come from these fonds. The archive reference numbers are signed with Roman numerals, pages with Arabic numbers).
- 7 "Bei der Zerstörung öffentlicher und privater Bibliotheken und der Einschränkung der deutschen Bücherproduktion fällt den vom Luftterror verschonten Städten die Aufgabe zu, durch Ordnung und Mehrung ihrer Bibliotheken die entstehenden Lücken zu schließen und Bücher der Öffentlichkeit zur Verfügung zu stellen", second half of 1944, III, 2.

1945, asking for permission for the department to continue working until they established contact with the library management so that reports from ongoing inventory work could be submitted to the new Polish staff.⁸ It is worth mentioning that this proves there was good cooperation between the Polish authorities and German librarians, who dealt with cataloguing collections, arranging them on shelves, and other library objects.⁹ The unit marked with reference number 4, “Bibliothek (correspondence of the City Board in Jelenia Góra regarding library matters)”, contains materials of various provenance from the municipal city library in Jelenia Góra and the Prussian State Library. The first group includes files illustrating the process of ordering office supplies: for example, a letter of intent from Berlin publishing and printing company Otto Schwartz & Co. sent in November 1941 and directed to the head of the municipal city library in Jelenia Góra, presenting the offer of library forms (pp. 19-20), along with sample forms (pp. 22-27). Under the same reference number, we find a reference book regarding the activities of German civil authorities during the First World War. The list is not dated, and it is not known whether it included items that were in the municipal city library or whether they were transported from Berlin to Jelenia Góra. It seems likely that the census was prepared in Berlin and was supposed to be a kind of pattern for librarians developing the war collection created in September 1939.

The two main groups of files contain correspondence regarding the mandatory copy (5-14, 23, 24, 27, and part of 25 and 28) and files illustrating the process of obtaining by the Berlin library of manuscripts and prints during the war (15-22).

Along with the transfer of the acquisition department to Jelenia Góra, correspondence regarding mandatory copies was sent as well. Files preserved in Jelenia Góra can be divided into three groups. The first consists of official prints from 1936-1944. These

8 III, 3-4.

9 Reports from 1, 16 June; 2, 12 July 1945, III, pp. 5-7, 10-20.

are bulletins, reports, periodic publications, including catalogues, occasional publications, other studies commissioned by state and local government institutions, the press of German military units and allied forces, newspapers published in prisoner-of-war camps. In the Jelenia Góra collection, these materials are mixed up - not all the files were kept in chronological order. 1941-42 marks an important turning point. In the pre-war period and the first years of the war, a mandatory copy of official prints was sent to the library on an ongoing basis, and the book employees usually did not have to send reminders. As the files stored in the Jelenia Góra archives show, sometimes the parcel was supplemented with additional information, e.g., about restricted access due to the secret nature of the publishing house. The financial section of the General Government, the main government of the Polish lands under German occupation, when sending budget plans for 1943 to the Prussian State Library, stated that the shipped volume "should be kept locked and not available to the public".¹⁰ Letters sent in subsequent years of the war (often in the form of a postcard or on the back of a letter from Berlin librarians) more and more frequently contained information about the impossibility of fulfilling the obligation imposed on publishers. This was due to the lack of material resources (paper savings) and staff shortage. Usually, according to the analysis of the Jelenia Góra archives, the degree of work (e.g., final draft, project, files) and the place of their storage (e.g., archives or library) were indicated. It was sometimes added that these materials would be re-reviewed and published after the war. Although it does not seem very interesting, the correspondence highlights observations, informing us about the state of publishing and deteriorating conditions. The testimonies are interesting because they come from the German state and its local government institutions. For example, the mayor of Berlin's Tempelhof

10 "Ich bitte deshalb, den Band unter Verschluss zu halten und nicht der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich zu machen", Krakow, 17 August 1942, XI, p. 828. This kind of remark also concerned the semi-annual reports of the internal department management in the head of the Warsaw District office.

district, in a letter from July 1942, informed the management of the Tempelhof district office will not be issued. They should not be expected to resume within the foreseeable future”.¹¹ Simultaneously, the main department of the Berlin Company Health Insurance (*Betriebskrankenkasse*) also explained that the newsletter’s suspension was “due to lack of people and the need to save paper”.¹² The high mayor (*Oberbürgermeister*) of Szczecin, also in July 1942, announced that the city’s statistical office would not publish its reports until the end of the war. He added that the manuscript of the report was submitted to the company’s archives.¹³ Not long after, the mayor of Neurode im Eulengebirge (currently Nowa Ruda) announced that due to the lack of paper, the reports of the Neurode city office would not be published during the war. However, he added, “Whether publications will be possible after the war is impossible to predict today”.¹⁴ In January 1943, the Mayor of Bischofswerder (now Biskupiec) wrote that no further articles on the city’s history would be published: “After the end of the war, it was planned to prepare a second part of the city’s history, but today it is not possible to predict whether it would be accomplished”.¹⁵ In April 1943, the Academic Foreign Affairs Office at the University of Bonn (*Akademische Auslandsstelle*) reported that publications could not be sent until after the war: “the current headmaster has been appointed to the army. All office publications have been hidden and cannot be accessed. Nothing is left but to ask to send

- 11 “Weitere Jahrgänge des Verwaltungsberichts der Bezirksverwaltung Tempelhof sind nicht erschienen. Fortsetzungen sind in absehbarer Zeit nicht zu erwarten”, XI, 384.
- 12 “Während des Krieges werden infolge Personalmangels und mit Rücksicht auf die notwendige Papiereinsparung Geschäftsberichte nicht aufgestellt”, XI, 388.
- 13 XI, 404.
- 14 “Im Hinblick auf die Papierknappheit konnten die Verwaltungsberichte nicht mehr im Druck erscheinen [...]. Ob nach dem Kriege wieder Veröffentlichungen möglich sein werden, lässt sich heute noch nicht voraussehen”, XI, 478.
- 15 “Gedacht war, nach Beendigung des Krieges, den II. Teil der Stadtgeschichte anfertigen zu lassen, doch ist heute noch nicht übersehbar, ob es sich wird durchführen lassen”, XXIII, 34.

publications after the war”.¹⁶ In May 1943, the mayor of Weinheim reported that publishing the historical journal *Weinheimer Geschichtsblatt* “would be possible only after the end of the Second World War”.¹⁷

The second group of files related to the mandatory copy that was supposed to be sent to the Berlin library, kept in the Jelenia Góra archives, consists of letters from military authorities. Here are some examples. At the end of October 1943, the High Command of the Armed Forces (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*) informed the archives about the next issues of the journal *Soldatenbriefe zur Berufsförderung*. By the end of 1943, it was intended to publish four volumes on zoology, botany, chemistry, and genetics in the agriculture series. The series contained articles for self-study and was addressed to soldiers to enable them to prepare for final high school exams, master exams, and entrance exams to higher vocational schools after the war.¹⁸ In November 1943, the translation and training department of the High Command of the Armed Forces sent one copy of German-Slovenian, Turkmen, Hindustani, Georgian, and Persian pocket dictionaries. It was also noted that “this publication is for military service” and could not be made available to common readers.¹⁹ In November 1943, the Ministry for Occupied Eastern Areas sent the previously published issues of the magazine *Казачьи ведомости* (*Kazach'i vedomosti*).²⁰ In November 1944, it reported that the previous editions had been out of print and that the publication of the journal *Казак* (*Kazak*), the press body of the Cossack State

16 “Der bisherige Leiter der Akademischen Auslandsstelle befindet sich im Dienst bei der Wehrmacht. Sämtliche Druckschriften der Auslandsstelle sind provisorisch und unzugänglich untergestellt. Es bleibt also nur übrig, dass Sie Ihre Anforderung nach Kriegsschluss wiederholen”, Bonn, 27 April 1943, XXIII, p. 82.

17 “Das Heft 19. und weitere Jahrgänge des Weinheimer Geschichtsblattes sind noch nicht erschienen; deren Erscheinen ist leider erst nach Beendigung des zweiten Weltkrieges möglich”, 3 May 1943, XXIII, p. 5.

18 XXIV, p. 23. Edelgard Bühler and Hans-Eugen Bühler, *Der Frontbuchhandel 1939-1945. Organisationen, Kompetenzen, Verlage, Bücher - Eine Dokumentation*, Frankfurt am Main 2002, pp. 197-198.

19 “Die Ausarbeitungen [dienen] nur dem militärischen Dienstgebrauch”, XXIV, p. 20.

20 11 November 1943. XXIV, p. 19.

(*Kosakenlager*, Казачий стан, *Kazachiy stan*), had been suspended. It was assured that subsequent editions of the new journal, *Казачья земля* (*Kazach'ya zemlya*), created after the relocation of some Cossack troops to northern Italy in July 1944, would be sent to the library on an ongoing basis.²¹ Many of the magazines distributed by the army did not reach the Berlin library. On 22 October, the editors of the *Luftwaffe im Südosten* magazine, published in Vienna, reported the suspension of publication of the magazine: “the editorial rooms were damaged during one of the last bombings”.²² At the same time, they announced that airmen fighting in the South would receive *the Balkan - A. Z.* magazine, which would henceforth be addressed to all types of armed forces.²³ In November 1944, the Reich Commissariat for Occupied Norwegian Areas (*Reichskommissariat für die besetzten Norwegischen Gebiete*) informed the library that the entertainment magazines issued for soldiers fighting on the Northern Front were out of print.²⁴

The third and final group consists of bulletins and newspapers published in prisoner-of-war camps and sent to the library. Correspondence concerning this matter is mixed with letters regarding other publications in the folder marked with reference number 28 (“Correspondence regarding the acquisition of official publications”). At the end of 1944, the librarians of the Berlin library intensified their efforts to supplement the war collection. They sent letters to the commanders of prisoner camps asking them to send the library newspapers and brochures issued in stalags and offlags. For example, on 14 November 1944, a commander located in the Fallingbostal Stalag XI B received a letter saying: “Please send the numbers issued so far and send those that will appear in the future on a regular basis. If individual issues were no longer available,

21 Berlin, 21 November 1944, XXIV, p. 3.

22 “Die Redaktionsräume wurden bei einem der letzten Luftangriffe schwer bombengeschädigt”, XXVIII, p. 44.

23 XXVIII, p. 50.

24 XXVIII, p. 48.

please provide information on this matter”.²⁵ Single issues were usually sent to Jelenia Góra, with a letter informing them that the rest were out of print or printing was suspended.²⁶ Sometimes, more detailed reports were sent. At the end of December 1944, the prisoner-of-war camp in Villingen (Stalag V C) in Schwarzwald received a report that it was impossible to send the newspaper *Espoir* published there. As the headquarters informed, “all copies were destroyed as a result of enemy actions”.²⁷ On 11 January 1945, the commandant of Stalag II D in Stargard reported that he could only send the first issue of the camp newspaper *Il Ruscello*. Shortly after it was published, he wrote, Italian prisoners of war were sent to work and became subject to civil authority. “The first issue is the only and the last issue at the same time”.²⁸ A similar case was reported by the commander of the Stalag VIII B in Cieszyn, in which the newspaper *Il Piffero* was published. In this case, too, Italian interned soldiers had become subject to civilian authority.²⁹

It should not be forgotten that the files found in the Jelenia Góra department of the State Archives in Wrocław constitute only a small part of the correspondence sent to the acquisition department. In spring 1945, the rest, as already mentioned, were taken to Berlin. There is no trace of an exchange of letters regarding the mandatory copy of fiction, scientific literature, etc. Only a small part of the letters preserved in the collection was written in Jelenia Góra or sent there. For the most part, we are dealing with documents from before 1944, which were later transported to Jelenia Góra from Berlin. Although they do not provide information on the working conditions of German librarians in Jelenia Góra, the files give an idea of their determination in attempts to gather as many

25 “Die Staatsbibliothek [...] bittet darum, ihr die bisher erschienenen Nummern zu überweisen und sie für die regelmäßige Lieferung der künftig erscheinenden vorzumerken. Sollten einzelne Stücke nicht mehr verfügbar sein, wäre der Staatsbibliothek mit kurzem entsprechenden Bescheid gedient”, XXVIII, p. 17.

26 XXVIII, pp. 1-15.

27 Sämtliche Exemplare [wurden] durch Feindeinwirkung vernichtet, XXVIII, p. 24.

28 “Die erste Nummer ist dadurch die einzige und letzte geblieben”, XXVIII, p. 21.

29 XVIII, p. 22.

documents illustrating war operations as possible. The letters that came to the library also shed light on social moods that indicate the growing wave of defeatism. It is worth noting that parcels also arrived at the Berlin library address after the end of the Second World War. The head of the Jelenia Góra Municipal Archives, Eugenia Triller, in a letter from the end of 1949, probably addressed to the regional authorities, pointed out that the institution she was managing had received a parcel sent by the Swiss Ethnographic Society. The recipient was the Prussian State Library:

it raises various doubts. [...] Today, when more than four years have passed since the end of the war, a letter in German addressed to an institution that does not exist, arrives [...]. Is the scientific society, *Gesellschaft für Volkskunde*, unaware to this day about shifting borders and that the Silesia region returned to the motherland?³⁰

As mentioned, documents kept in folders marked with reference numbers 15-22 may serve as an example on manuscripts and prints coming to the Berlin library apart from the mandatory copy. Some of the titles given by archivists are misleading. This applies to the volumes of “Correspondence with bookstores and other institutions on matters related to the purchase of publications” (15-18) and “Correspondence with foreign institutions regarding matters related to acquisitions” (19-20), which include, among other things, letters exchanged with the military and police authorities of the German state. Folder no. 21, *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, correspondence regarding library acquisitions as spoils of war in Russia*, contains information on books confiscated by German military troops in the Soviet Union and then sent to the Prussian State Library. Volume No. 22, entitled *Wehrmacht-Sichtungsstelle (Beutenakten)*, collects files about books and manuscripts taken in other European countries under German occupation. These files can be divided into two categories: correspondence with civil institutions and correspondence with military and police authorities of the German state.

30 AP Wrocław, Archiwum Miejskie w Jeleniej Górze, IX, p. 69.

The first includes letters on doublets (exchanged with libraries of German and West European universities, scientific institutions, and diplomatic service in the Second World War). In many cases, the items offered to the Berlin library could have been stolen. Such suspicions concern, among other things, a package of thirty-five books on religious matters sent in March 1942 by the Library of the Ministry of Science and Education (*Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung*) as a gift (*Geschenkgabe*).³¹ This group also includes correspondence with German, French, Belgian, Dutch, and Danish antiquarians (among others, the Amsterdam company Swets en Zeitlinger, Berlin's Hans Hartinger Nachfolger, Kiel's Lipsius und Tischer, Munich's Theodor Ackermann, in Paris: Libraire E. Droz. Livres d. Livres d' Érudition français et étrangers, Libraire Rive Gauche, Libraire Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Prague's K. Andresche Buchhandlung). There is a noteworthy letter from the Copenhagen antiquarian, Einar Munksgaard, who in February 1940, barely a few weeks before the arrival of German soldiers in Denmark, offered the Berlin library his services. "I thought", he wrote to the library director, "that you might be interested in books about war, coming out in both neutral and hostile countries. I allow myself to send a list of outgoing publications in the Scandinavian countries".³² There is no information in the files on whether Spree decided to cooperate with Munksgaard.

The second category of files kept in the Jelenia Góra archives of the Prussian State Library consists of materials presenting the acquisition of books confiscated by the military and police authorities of the Third Reich. Below, I describe selected documents, indicating the types of institutions, ways of obtaining books, etc. It should be remembered that only a small part of the documentation remaining in Jelenia Góra illustrates the illegal acquisition

31 XIX, 42, book index, 43.

32 "Da ich mich denken konnte, dass die im neutralen Ausland und im feindlichen Ausland erschienenen Kriegsbücher für Ihre Bibliothek Interesse haben, erlaube ich mir, Ihnen anbei eine vorläufige Liste über skandinavische Publikationen zu senden", XVII, p. 139.

of the Berlin library in accordance with international law (this is evidenced primarily by the signs on the sent letters bearing order numbers). The materials stored here, although they do not allow us to explore the full scale of the activities of all the authorities of the Third Reich involved in the robbery of works of art, give an idea of the cooperation of librarians with the army, police, and other institutions of the German state. They also indicate places where further searches should be carried out in the archives of individual institutions. However, due to incomplete documents, it is impossible to assess the extent to which Berlin library employees took part in trafficking illegally acquired manuscripts and prints. The German historian Cornelia Briel made a thorough study of the Jelenia Góra files in her important and valuable work on Reich's Exchange Office (*Reichstauschstelle*).³³ She recalled that both the Exchange Office and the Prussian State Library were largely supplied with books that had been stolen.

As the Jelenia Góra files show, the confiscated works were sent to the Berlin library via various military institutions. Sometimes, books were sent directly by the commanders of individual units. For example, at the end of January 1940, the head of the archives under the command of the 21st Army Corps stationed in Wielkopolska sent "a certain number" of books in Georgian and Polish about sports. He also included French novels - "those of political significance", he declared.³⁴ The package either did not include a list of the books sent, or it is missing in the Jelenia Góra archives. Less than two weeks later, the head of the acquisition department, Al-

33 Cornelia Briel, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet. NS-Raubgut, Reichstauschstelle und Preußische Staatsbibliothek zwischen 1933 und 1945*, Berlin 2013. The author, researching everything in detail and often referring to individual books, was not always able to see the deeper meaning of the problems discussed. In many places, she also assumed that the files from Jelenia Góra were complete. Hence, it is necessary to review at least a few of her theses. Briel also conducted research in the archival files preserved in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin without reflecting on the state of their completeness. The German historian did not take the trouble to research other archives, especially military archives, to verify her hypotheses.

34 Eine Anzahl von Büchern; "einige französische Romane, von denen einer politische Bedeutung hat", XV, p. 128.

exander Schnütgen, acknowledged the receipt of confiscated books in Georgian, Polish, and French sent by the command of the 21st army corps stationed in Wielkopolska. A response draft has been preserved in Jelenia Góra.³⁵

Much more often, however, this was done by the Sichtungsstelle that specialised in reviewing and pre-assessing the value of confiscated materials. Thanks to this, as evidenced by the files from the Jelenia Góra collection, books from all occupied European territories were sent to the Berlin library. This group includes mostly letters from 1942-1943. The book package was accompanied by a short cover letter, usually beginning with the words: “Among the confiscated materials, the items described below are sent” or “Assuming the library would be interested in (or because of the value), the following seized materials are sent to be included in the collection”.³⁶ The operational area (“Ostraum”, “Westraum”, “Südraum”), country of origin, and language were given. Only one book in Polish was found: the second volume of the botanist Krzysztof Kluk’s, *Roslin potrzebnych, użytecznych, wygodnych, osobliwie krajowych albo które w kraju użyteczne być mogą, utrzymanie, rozmnożenie i zażycie* (*The maintenance, reproduction and usage of plants that are necessary, advantageous, convenient, indigenous or locally useful*). We do not know where it was stolen from. It was probably not included in the Prussian State Library collection, and it is not in the catalogue of the Berlin library (which also records items considered to be war losses). Briel has studied this correspondence. Although she had to have been aware that the files preserved in Jelenia Góra are only part of the documents depicting the circulation of robbed books,

35 XV, p. 127. Contrary to Briel’s supposition (ibidem, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet...*, p. 292), the grammar of Georgian, Chechen, Kumykan, Buryat, Agulan, Nogaj, and Kabardian languages was not sent directly from the front, but via the Supreme Command of the Land Forces. The cover letter attached to the parcel was sent in mid-November 1942 from the main headquarters of the Supreme Command, XXI, p. 1.

36 “Aus beschlagnahmtem Material wird das in den Anlagen näher bezeichnete übersandt”; “In der Annahme dortseits bestehenden Interesses wird zum dortigen verbleib beifolgendes Beutegut übersandt”.

she tried to give the impression that only the volumes described on the files in Jelenia Góra were sent to the Berlin library. As a result, her calculations, based on materials only partially preserved, may drastically understate the scale of the robberies. It is worth quoting a longer passage here:

In December 1940, the Wehrmacht Supreme Command transferred [...] a collection of French legal texts. A total of 22 volumes, some of which may have been included in the collection. The next letter came a year later, dated January 8, 1942, together with it the Prussian State Library received two works robbed in Greece. These certainly were not included in the collection. Another work submitted was a Dutch collection of laws [...], which was sent to the library on 27 October 1942.³⁷

Based on these facts, Briel concluded that “from 1941 or 1942, employees of the acquisition department acted in accordance with the recommendation that robbed works should not be included in the collection”.³⁸ Her unspoken observation about the relatively small number of deliveries and her claim that books stolen by Wehrmacht were not included in the collection any more were based on an accidental fragment of the documents of the institution that did not determine the German cultural policy. A possible confirmation of this hypothesis would require intensified searches in military archives. This would be feasible because the files of the *Sichtungsstellen* are largely preserved and stored in the Freiburg im Breisgau department of the German Bundesarchiv (*Abteilung Militärarchiv*). Briel did not carry out research in military archives.

37 “Im Dezember 1940 überwies das Oberkommando der Wehrmacht [...] eine Sammlung französischer Gesetzestexte [...] – insgesamt 22 Bände, von denen möglicherweise einige akzessioniert wurden. Das nächste Schreiben in der Akte ging ein Jahr später ein und datiert vom 8. Januar 1942. Mit ihm erhielt die Preußische Staatsbibliothek zwei in Griechenland geraubte Werke, die nun schon nicht mehr akzessioniert wurden. [...] Das nächste überstellte Werk war eine niederländische Gesetzessammlung [...], die am 27. Oktober 1942 an die Preußische Staatsbibliothek abgesandt wurde”, Briel, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet...*, pp. 291–292.

38 Briel, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet...*, pp. 292–293.

Publications and books were also shipped to the Berlin library via military libraries. In June 1942, according to files preserved at the Jelenia Góra department, twelve books in Czech arrived in Berlin, which were doublets of the military library in Prague (reference numbers were in the letter informing about the shipment).³⁹ In June 1943, the head of the library network at the command of the German army in the Netherlands sent eight books in Dutch (as in the case described above, reference numbers were also noted down).⁴⁰ Other military institutions were also involved. For example, in March and April 1941, a shipment containing more than two hundred books from the “small French library which was taken over” was sent to the Prussian State Library from the Aviation Academy.⁴¹ In the files preserved in Jelenia Góra, I did not find traces of cooperation with other military libraries. When describing the mediation of military libraries, Briel takes the position that only a dozen or so volumes were sent to the Prussian State Library in this way.⁴² As in the case described above, confirmation of this assumption would require research in German military archives.

The Jelenia Góra archives also contain files documenting book packages from the Berlin department of Abwehr, which reviewed the confiscated publications. In February 1940, a dozen or so books in Chinese and Russian were sent to the Berlin library. As reported in the letter, “foreign postal items taken over by confiscation may be available to the State Library”.⁴³ The Chinese-English chemical dictionary and Russian ABC’s were registered as donations (“dona”) and received reference numbers. The other books, the English-language guide for Chinese language teachers and the *Children’s Worship Book* published in Chinese, were forwarded, after

39 XX, p. 71. Briel, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet...*, p. 294.

40 XIX, p. 110.

41 XV, 56-57, book index 57-66. According to Briel’s study (eadem, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet...*, p. 264-265) they were not included in the collection.

42 Briel, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet...*, pp. 292-293.

43 “Der Staatsbibliothek können aus beschlagnahmter Auslandspost die nachfolgenden Werke zur Verfügung gestellt werden”, XV, p. 9.

a telephone consultation with the Berlin Abwehr, to the oriental departments of the Reich Exchange Centre.⁴⁴ On 29 May 1941, other books confiscated in France were sent from the Berlin department of the Abwehr reviewing confiscated publications. Three volumes (1, 5, 8) of the Paris world exhibition report *Exposition internationale des arts et techniques dans la vie moderne*, (1937). *Rapport général* are especially interesting. Reference numbers were not provided.⁴⁵ In all probability, they were included in the library collection. In the Berlin library's catalogue, under reference number 4, "Ooa 13/65", we find the three volumes indicated above. However, this cannot be confirmed: these copies, according to the information contained in the electronic catalogue of the State Library in Berlin, were lost during the war (*Kriegsverlust*). In all likelihood, this means that the illegally acquired volumes, which were essentially a war loss for France, were considered to be the Berlin library's own losses. On 12 June 1941, according to the files in Jelenia Góra, the German intelligence service operating in France via the Berlin mission, sent one hundred and twenty volumes of *Bulletin des lois de la République Française*, which had been confiscated.⁴⁶ On a sheet of paper attached to the letter, it is written that "these volumes have been deposited in a manuscript deposit and will not be processed yet".⁴⁷ Based on this note, Briel concluded that the management of the Prussian State Library slowly ceased to be interested in the books they received from military, police, and other institutions did not include them in their collections and waited for post-war decisions.⁴⁸ It seems much more likely that they did not know what to do with such a large number of volumes. It must be assumed that the remark was related to *Bulletin des lois...* and not war acquisitions at all.

44 XV, p. 9. Cf. Briel, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet...*, p. 288.

45 XV, p. 7.

46 XV, p. 2. *Spis skonfiskowanych tomów* [List of the confiscated volumes], pp. 3-5.

47 "Die Stücke sind zunächst im dermaligen Handschriftenmagazin gelagert worden und werden bis auf weiteres nicht verarbeitet", 17 June 1941, XV, p. 1.

48 Briel, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet...*, p. 288

The documents gathered in Jelenia Góra show that German librarians did not just wait for packages with confiscated literature. They were actively involved in the acquisition of manuscripts and publications. Hermann Fuchs, an employee of the Berlin library during the occupation of France, can serve as an example. He was the head of the library protection department (*Bibliotheksschutz Department*) under the military command in France (*Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich*). Briel described Fuchs's activities, his contacts with Parisian antiquarians and booksellers, and ways of obtaining interesting books from the Prussian State Library.⁴⁹ In the Jelenia Góra collection, Fuchs's correspondence from November 1940 to February 1944 is under reference number 16 (pp. 79–248). One of the first tasks entrusted to Fuchs was to take good care of the shipment of books confiscated in France on the basis of Otto's list ("Ouvrages retirés de la vente par les éditeurs ou interdits par les autorités allemandes"), a list of prohibited books developed by the German ambassador in occupied France, Otto Abetz, in cooperation with French publishers.⁵⁰ At the beginning of December 1940, the head of the acquisition department Alexander Schnütgen sent Fuchs a list of books that the Prussian State Library was interested in acquiring. The history of how the books were to be shipped by Fuchs is very interesting. According to the files preserved in Jelenia Góra, after arriving in Berlin, the confiscated publications meant for the Berlin library were most probably taken over by the Reich Main Security Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*). It was not until May 1942 that the employees of the latter informed the libraries about the shipment of books from France. They insisted on picking up two boxes as soon as possible, "because the warehouse is already overloaded". Paul Geißler, who studied and filed the confiscated books, wrote with a pencil on a letter from RSHA: "The package is already being labelled. The books only partially overlap with *Otto's list*."

49 Ibidem, pp. 265–282.

50 Natalie Zemon Davis, *Liste Otto. The Official List of French Books Banned under the German Occupation, 1940*, Cambridge 1992.

However, these are not the best boxes prepared for us by Fuchs”.⁵¹ We do not know what happened to the remaining works that were confiscated. In December 1941, the aforementioned Schnütgen, in a letter to the head of the Reich Exchange Center, confirmed the library’s activity in this area. He declared that “he would like to receive bibliographic aids and other publications issued by antiquarians and booksellers, as well as one copy of all books that did not end up in the library as a mandatory copy”.⁵² There is no trace of confirmation in Jelenia Góra that he received them.

Among the institutions subordinate to the Reich Main Security Office, it is worth noting the Secret State Police (*Geheime Staatspolizei*, Gestapo) – the correspondence with which is preserved in the Jelenia Góra archives. In the first days of July 1941, the Königsberg Gestapo, via the Central Trust Office East (*Haupttreuhandstelle Ost*), asked the Berlin library whether they were ready to take over volumes confiscated from the employees of the Polish consulate in Königsberg. It is impossible to determine whether a list of books was attached to the shipment, but we know there were a box and three chests. However, there was one condition: the Berlin library was to cover shipping costs.⁵³ Just a few days later, the library replied and accepted incriminated books.⁵⁴ The books were sent, but the Berlin library did not pay postage. In January 1942, the Central Trust Office sent an admonishment to the Berlin library, indicating the need to reimburse the Gestapo for shipping costs in the amount of 36.60 marks.⁵⁵ A few further examples can be given.

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- 51 “Die Sendung ist bereits im Hause und in Bearbeitung. Die Bücher decken sich nur z. T. mit der ‚Liste Otto‘, es handelt sich nicht um die besten von Dr. Fuchs für uns bestimmten Bücherkisten”, Briel (eadem, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet...*, p. 267), was wrong when stating that boxes reached the Berlin library in May 1943. It happened a year earlier, XVIII, p. 16.
- 52 “Nach wie vor möchte die Erwerbungs-Abteilung bei der Sortierung der Bücher einmal die bibliographisch-buchhändlerischen Hilfsmittel, die sich bei ihnen befinden, und weiter vorerst je ein Stück aller Bücher des Sortiments, die nicht in einem Pflichtverlag erschienen sind, überwiesen erhalten”, XVII, p. 24.
- 53 XVI, p. 343.
- 54 XVI, p. 342.
- 55 XVI, p. 340.

Berlin librarians actively cooperated with the secret police by sending lists of desired titles to the Gestapo. In January 1942, the Berlin department of the secret state police sent a letter to the library, along with a dozen or so prohibited foreign books they had ordered, in which they apologised they were not able to fulfil their task because from “the list sent on 29 October 1941 the following copies were available”.⁵⁶ Similarly, in January 1943, in a letter sent to the Berlin Library, it was reported: “attached are seven ordered books”.⁵⁷ Except for one book, which turned out to be a doublet, all the books received reference numbers. The Prussian State Library also received books stolen and confiscated without prior order. For example, in March 1942, the Berlin Gestapo received thirty-two brochures from the Vienna Gestapo.⁵⁸ The fate of publications in Yiddish and Hebrew requires further investigation. In July 1941, the Berlin Gestapo informed the library about the shipment of four books confiscated by the Nuremberg-East Tax Office (*Finanzamt Nürnberg-Ost*). Nuremberg officials decided to keep them “because of their antiquity and probable bibliophile value”. Berlin library employees were asked to help evaluate them. They added that “these four books were probably of Jewish property”.⁵⁹ The fate of these books is unknown. Briel hypothesised that “it is not yet clear whether the Reich Main Security Office sent the so-called Judaica and Hebraica to the Prussian State Library”.⁶⁰ The case undoubtedly requires in-depth research, especially since in 1945, as Briel herself writes a few paragraphs below, in the American occupation zone (Marburg, Offenbach), several thousand books taken away from Jewish owners were secured and sent to the Berlin library during the war.⁶¹

56 XVIII, p. 190.

57 “Anliegend übersende ich sieben der gewünschten Druckschriften”, XIX, p. 46.

58 XVIII, p. 183.

59 “4 Bücher [...], die vom Finanzamt wegen ihres Alters und ihres etwaigen bibliophilen Wertes zurückbehalten wurden [...]. Die vier Bücher stammen wahrscheinlich aus jüdischem Besitz”, XVIII, p. 193.

60 “Es ist noch ungeklärt, ob das Reichssicherheitshauptamt sogenannte Judaica und Hebraica an die Preußische Staatsbibliothek weitergeleitet hat”, Briel, *Beschlagnahmt, erpresst, erbeutet...*, p. 210.

61 Ibidem.

The correspondence between the Berlin library and the Central Customs Office in autumn 1939 testifies that books taken away from Jewish owners were sent to the Prussian State Library (and, at the same time, showed that other institutions of the German state were also engaged in this). In October 1939, customs officers in Düsseldorf informed the Berlin library: “We have here confiscated Jewish and Hebrew books”. The Office requested them to assess the value of several volumes, some of which, among others, was the Hasidic prayer book, *Siddur Sefat Emet* and the correspondence of Walter Rathenau.⁶² In November 1939, the Prussian State Library replied that “the library is not interested in them. Please take care of their destruction”.⁶³

The review of the Berlin correspondence with the military and police authorities of the Third Reich cannot lead to general conclusions. The files preserved in Jelenia Góra refer only to a certain part of the activity of the acquisition department, and they should be interpreted together with the files preserved in Berlin, as well as archives of institutions involved in the theft of books and, more broadly, works of art. Despite this, they reflect certain tendencies and clues about the German policy of stealing cultural goods during the Second World War.

It is worth adding that under No. 2 (according to the inventory), one can find further editions of the monthly *Unsere Staatsbibliothek* issued by the Berlin library. The journal included news on the library’s current work, activity reports, data on acquisitions of the war collection created in September 1939 (modelled on the collections of the wars 1870–71 and 1914–18), information about library employees serving on the war front (fronts), and their letters. Particularly interesting is the regular article “From our soldiers” (“Von unseren Soldaten”). In the December issue, we can read the account of Walter Bonnke (“From old Poland”):

62 XVI, p. 335.

63 “Die aufgeführten beschlagnahmten jüdischen und hebräischen Schriften [kommen] für die Staatsbibliothek nicht in Betracht. Ich bitte deshalb, ihre Vernichtung veranlassen zu wollen”, XVI, p. 334.

I immediately started to collect all kinds of news and notifications (e.g. regarding mobilization, air attacks, announcements of the main command to civilians). However, my backpack is not the best place to store this kind of documents [...]. I hope that if I get a vacation, I will be able to bring it all with me [...]. In addition to the Warsaw University Library, I found two more libraries in the city, but I couldn't visit them because nobody could tell me where the gate keys were. They look undamaged. One of them is located in a building in which a foreign embassy is located [...], the other one in the Old Town square, where there are beautiful houses, completely undamaged.⁶⁴

In the January 1940 issue, we find information about attempts to learn Polish. E. Bielefeld reported:

Metoula-Sprachführer fills an important gap because for many weeks we have been stationed in small groups in villages and we are in constant contact with the Polish-speaking population, and we have no other choice but to constantly translate. After all, it's interesting how this or any other German word sounds in Polish. A small booklet is always at hand, all soldiers look it up.⁶⁵

It was not common among the Berlin library employees to be interested in Polish affairs. We read in a letter by Otto Dimde:

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- 64 "Ich habe mich auch gleich an das Sammeln von Plakatanschlägen u. ä. gemacht und einiges, wie z. B. die polnische Mobilmachungsbekanntmachung, den polnischen Aufruf zum Luftschutz und die Bekanntmachungen des Oberbefehlshabers an die Zivilbevölkerung erhalten. Nun ist ja mein Tornister ein schlechter Aufbewahrungsort für diese Plakate [...]. Hoffentlich bekomme ich mal Urlaub, dann bringe ich sie mit [...]. Außer der Warschauer UB habe ich in der Hauptstadt noch zwei Bibliotheken ausfindig gemacht, aber nicht besichtigen können, weil mit niemand sagen konnte, wer den Schlüssel zum Tor besitzt. Sie scheinen aber beide unversehrt zu sein, weil die eine sich in einem Hause befindet, dessen obere Etagen von einer fremden Gesandtschaft bewohnt werden, [...], und die andere am Alten Markt mit den schönen Häusern, die überhaupt nicht durch die Beschießung gelitten haben", *Unsere Staatsbibliothek. Monatliche Mitteilungen*, 13 December 1939, pp. 1-2.
- 65 "Der kleine Metoula-Sprachführer ‚Polnisch‘ fällt eine große Lücke aus, denn da wir nun schon seit viele Wochen in kleinen Gruppen auf Dörfern und Gütern verteilt leben und in stetem Verkehr mit polnisch sprechender Bevölkerung stehen, sind wir immer wieder mal auf Verdolmetschung angewiesen. Außerdem reizt es ja an sich, zu wissen, wie dieses oder jenes deutsche Wort auf Polnisch heißt. Das kleine handliche Büchlein liegt stets griffbereit und ist bereits - auch von den Kameraden - viel benutzt worden", *Unsere Staatsbibliothek. Monatliche Mitteilungen* 15 January 1940, p. 1.

After all that we saw in Poland, everything in the homeland is a thousand times better than in Poland. There is a lack of the most basic things there, not enough water, salt, sugar, or electricity. The conditions in which Poles live cannot be compared with German ones. A simple German lives in his hut like a prince [...]. There is still a lot to do in Poland if this country was to be equal with Germany to some extent.⁶⁶

In turn, Karl Wuttig wrote: “We visited a German colony on the Vistula river, listened to the stories of local farmers who had not seen Germany for five generations. It is surprising that they have kept such a clear knowledge of German. Their homes, compared to Polish homes, are real jewellery boxes”.⁶⁷ The author of the letter was not interested in whether the Germans living in Poland were subject to occupational rigours or were treated as citizens of the Reich. In general, when comparing living conditions in occupied Poland and Germany, he did not notice the war regime.

To conclude, it should be said that reference numbers 26–27, 29–60 (and part of 25) contain files of very different provenance, some of which are only slightly connected with the war history of the Berlin library and its department in Jelenia Góra. Most often, these are documents brought to Jelenia Góra by employees; e.g., I assume that this is the case with the list of doctoral dissertations in Erlangen and Tübingen in the interwar period, reference number 25, short stories by Manfred Bökenkamp, and correspondence regarding the publication in C. Bertelsmann Verlag Gütersloh (reference number 34

66 “Nach allem, was wir in Polen gesehen haben, ist es in der Heimat tausendmal besser als in Polen. Dort gab es nicht die primitivsten Dinge, weder genügend Wasser, Salz, Zucker noch Beleuchtungsmittel, Das Leben der polnischen Bevölkerung lässt sich in keiner Weise mit dem der Deutschen vergleichen. Der einfachste deutsche Mensch lebt in seiner Hütte wie ein Fürst [...]. IN Polen gibt es also noch sehr, sehr viel zu tun, wenn dieses Land dem deutschen einigermassen angeglichen werden soll”, *Unsere Staatsbibliothek. Monatliche Mitteilungen* 17 February 1940, p. 1.

67 “Am Sonntag haben wir eine deutsche Siedlung an der Weichsel aufgesucht und uns von den Bauern, die seit fünf Generationen Deutschland nicht mehr gesehen haben, von ihren Erlebnissen erzählen lassen. Man muss sich wundern, dass sie die deutsche Sprache sich so rein erhalten haben. Ihre Häuser sind gegenüber den polnischen reine Schmuckkästchen”, *Unsere Staatsbibliothek. Monatliche Mitteilungen* 19 March/April 1940, p. 1.

“Manuscripts and leaflets on various issues”), current documentation (e.g., vacation applications, reference number 30 “Index of Books”), draft versions of the acquisition journal (section “Krieg 1939”, “Ys”, reference number 29, “Index of Books”).

A fairly accidental collection of documents on the wartime fate of the Jelenia Góra department of the Prussian State Library in Berlin, which remained at the foot of the Sudetes mountains after 1945, provides valuable information on supplying new items to the collections of the Berlin’s library in the era of the Second World War, and, in this context, German cultural policy in general. It also encourages students to study fragmentary or scarce archives that seem not to promise much but may help to increase our knowledge about the fate of Polish libraries and book collections in 1939–45.

Translated by Alicja Rosé

SUMMARY

In the Jelenia Góra department of the State Archives in Wrocław is stored a small part – consisting of 60 archival units – of the current records (Registratur) of the Prussian State Library in Berlin (Preußische Staatsbibliothek) from the years 1939–45. It is a remnant of the office of the Berlin library: catalogue and acquisition departments which operated in the foothills of the Karkonosze mountains in the last months of the Second World War.

The first main group of files contain correspondence regarding the mandatory copy (5–14, 23, 24, 27, partly 25 and 28). Along with the transfer of the acquisition department to Jelenia Góra, correspondence regarding the mandatory copy was sent as well. Files preserved in Jelenia Góra can be divided into three groups: concerning the official prints from 1936–1944, correspondence with the military authorities, bulletins and newspapers published in prisoner-of-war camps. The second main group consists of files illustrating the process of obtaining by the Berlin library of manuscripts and prints during the war apart from the mandatory copy (numbers 15–22). These files can be divided into two categories:

correspondence with civil institutions as well as military and police authorities of the German state.

The aim of this article is firstly to present the archival fonds “Prussian State Library Department in Jelenia Góra” and to indicate its historical value; secondly, to discuss issues that complement our knowledge on the Berlin library’s war activities in the field of acquisition; thirdly - perhaps most importantly - to show clues for further archival searches.

KEYWORDS: Second World War; cultural policy of the Third Reich; Prussian State Library in Berlin; Off-site centre in Jelenia Góra (Hirschberg)