

**UNRRA SELECTED RECORDS AG-018-037:
SOUTH WEST PACIFIC AREA OFFICE (SWPAO), 1944-1949**

2016.138.1

RG-67.052M

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
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Descriptive summary

Title: UNRRA Selected Records AG-018-037: South West Pacific Area Office (SWPAO)

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The finding aid for the materials housed at the United Nations can be found at:

https://archives.un.org/sites/archives.un.org/files/files/Finding%20Aids/2015_Finding_Aids/AG-018-037.pdf

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed, see archives catalog at collections.ushmm.org for further information.

Processing history: Finding aid adapted from inventory provided by the United Nations Archives and Records Management Service by Aleksandra Borecka July 2016

Administrative history

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was an international relief agency, largely dominated by the United States but representing 44 nations. Founded in 1943, it became part of the United Nations in 1945, and it largely shut down operations in 1947. Its purpose was to "plan, co-ordinate, administer or arrange for the administration of measures for the relief of victims of war in any area under the control of any of the United Nations through the provision of food, fuel, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities, medical and other essential services". Its staff of civil servants included 12,000 people, with headquarters in New York. Funding came from many nations, and totaled \$3.7 billion, of which the United States contributed \$2.7 billion; Britain \$625 million and Canada \$139 million. The Administration of UNRRA at the peak of operations in mid-1946 included five types of offices and missions with a staff totaling nearly 25,000: The Headquarters Office in Washington, The European Regional Office (London), the Twenty-nine servicing offices and missions (2 area offices in Cairo and Sydney; 10 liaison offices and missions in Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Trieste; 12 procurement offices in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Cuba, India, Mexico, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela; 6 offices for procurement of surplus military supplies in Caserta, Rome, Honolulu, Manila, New Delhi, Paris, Shanghai), the sixteen missions to receiving countries (Albania, Austria, Byelorussia, China, Czechoslovakia, the Dodecanese Islands, Ethiopia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Korea, the Philippines, Poland, Ukraine, Yugoslavia), and the Displaced Persons Operations in Germany.

UNRRA cooperated closely with dozens of volunteer charitable organizations, who sent hundreds of their own agencies to work alongside UNRRA. In operation only three years, the agency distributed about \$4 billion worth of goods, food, medicine, tools, and farm implements at a time of severe global shortages and worldwide transportation difficulties. The recipient nations had been especially hard hit by starvation, dislocation, and political chaos. It played a major role in helping Displaced Persons return to their home countries in Europe in 1945-46. Its UN functions were transferred to several UN agencies, including the International Refugee Organization and the World Health Organization. As an American relief agency, it was largely replaced by the Marshall Plan, which began operations in 1948.

The South West Pacific Area Office (SWPA) was established to serve two main purposes: (1) to formulate and carry out plans for the relief and rehabilitation operations which were undertaken by UNRRA and (2) to procure relief and rehabilitation supplies in that area and to help in the recruitment of qualified personnel for service with UNRRA. Policies and plans for relief throughout the Far East were laid down by the Committee of the Council for the Far East (CCFE) which met at Lapstone, near Sydney, in February 1945. The SWPA office was established in Sydney (Australia), on 3 December 1944, and covered the area of East Indies, the Philippine Islands, New Zealand, the Islands of the Eastern Indian and Western Pacific Oceans, Thailand, French Indo-China, Malaya and Burma. Branch offices were also established in Manila (Philippines) in July 1945, Melbourne (Australia) and Wellington New Zealand) in December 1945. Frank S. Gaines was appointed Director of the SWPA Office in December 1944 and in May 1946 he was replaced by Major General H.H. Cannon, who, in turn was succeeded by H.H. Wiedersehn in April 1947. The SWPA office closed 30 June 1948. The functions of this office were as follows: (1) To obtain information with regard to conditions in liberated and occupied territories in the South West Pacific Area and to formulate plans for the Administration's activities in those territories and to make recommendations to the Director General for their implementation; (2) To maintain liaison and to negotiate such agreements and arrangements with the appropriate military authorities in the South West Pacific Area as necessary for the planning and conduct of relief and rehabilitation operations in that area; (3) To develop working arrangements for the utilization of contributions of member governments; (4) To develop supply sources and to arrange for the procurement of supplies; (5) To cooperate with and provide such facilities and information as necessary for the proper functioning of the Committee of the Council for the Far East and for the standing technical sub-committees; (6) To maintain liaison and cooperate with civil and military representatives of the Australian and other member governments, particularly governments of territories in the South West Pacific Area which had been liberated, as well as with representatives of intergovernmental agencies; (7) To cooperate with voluntary relief agencies all over the world as well as agencies within the South West Pacific Area and make arrangements for their participation in relief and rehabilitation operations; and (8) To cooperate closely with the China Office in the planning and activities of that office.

[Source: Original finding aid of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)]

Scope and content of collection

Selected files of the UNRRA Headquarters Office-Subject Files: Mainly files on the displaced persons and general war relief matters.

System of arrangement

Selected records arranged in two series:

1. Displaced Persons (S-0528-0592) , 1944-1949
2. General war relief matters (S-0528-0595), 1944-1949

Indexing terms

Person Name:

Osóbka-Morawski, Edward.

Lehman, Herbert H. (Herbert Henry), 1878-1963.

Corporate Name:

United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration--History.

International Refugee Organization.

United Nations--Employees and officials.

Genre/Form:

Telegrams.

Correspondence.

Geographic name:

Europe--Emigration and immigration--History--20th century.

Austria--Social conditions--20th century.

China--Social conditions--20th century.

Philippines--Social conditions--20th century.

Poland--Social conditions--20th century.

Manila (Philippines)

Sydney (Australia)

East Asia.

Topical Term:

World War, 1939-1945--Civilian relief--United States.

World War, 1939-1945--Refugees.

World War, 1939-1945--Civilian relief.

War relief--United States--History--20th century.

International relief.

Refugees--Legal status, laws, etc.--Austria--History--20th century.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Sources.

CONTAINER LIST

Note: Due to the EAD project of the United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (UN-ARMS), some of the boxes have been assigned to new series.

This description is based on the finding aid compiled by the United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (Holder of originals). The original finding aid are located at:
https://archives.un.org/sites/archives.un.org/files/files/Finding%20Aids/2015_Finding_Aids/AG-018-037.pdf

S-1421 Headquarters Office - Subject Files 1943-1949 [Selected files, 1944-1949]

Box	Folder	Title
S-0528-0592	S-1421-0000-0038	Displaced Persons-Mission to Far East 1944-1949
	S-1421-0000-0042	Displaced Persons-Austrian Refugees 1944-1949
S-0528-0595	S-1421-0000-0076	General Matters-Poland 1944-1949
	S-1421-0000-0082	General Matters-Monograph on History of Sydney and Manila Offices-New Zealand 1944-1949
	S-1421-0000-0083	General Matters-Monograph on History of Sydney and Manila Offices-New Zealand 1944-1949
	S-1421-0000-0084	General Matters-Monograph on History of Sydney and Manila Offices-New Zealand 1944-1949