

Country Name: **BELARUS**

<b>Looted Judaica and Judaica with Provenance Gaps in Country</b>		Yes
<b>Existing Projects</b>	N/A	
<b>Overview</b>	<b>Looted Cultural Property Databases</b>	
	<b>Publications</b>	<p><i>Jewish Cultural Objects held in Belarus</i></p> <p><u>Sources:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <i>Jewish Documentary Sources in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus: A Preliminary List</i> (in English), edited by Dorit Sallis and Marek Web (JTS), 164 pp. 1996.</li> <li>(2) <i>Jewish Documentary Sources in Belarus Archives: A Guide</i> (in Russian), edited by Mark Kupovetsky, Eduard Savitsky, and Marek Web (RSUH, Committee on Archives and Records Management of Belarus, JTS, YIVO), 543 pp., 2003.</li> <li>(3) Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. "The Road to Minsk for Western "Trophy" Books: Twice Plundered But Not Yet 'Home from the War'". <i>Libraries &amp; Culture</i> 39.4 (2004), pp 351-404.</li> <li>(4) Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. <i>Documenting the Plunder of Judaica: Perspectives from Remaining Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)</i>. Paper presented at the Holocaust Era Assets Conference (<a href="http://www.holocausteraassets.eu/">http://www.holocausteraassets.eu/</a>), Prague, 26-30 June 2009.</li> </ol> <p>In the autumn of 1945, an estimated 1,200,000 books were shipped to Minsk. As Grimsted notes "Half a million of those books had first been confiscated from 'enemies' of the Nazi regime in France, the Benelux countries, and former Yugoslavia, along with another half million plundered from libraries in Belarus and other Soviet republics. Found by Red Army trophy brigades in the spring of 1945 in warehouses in a Kattowitz (now Polish Katowice) suburb, 54 freight cars were shipped to Minsk. However, the full documentation about their retrieval and that shipment in the fall of 1945 is still classified in the Russian Ministry of Defense Central Archive (TsAMO) in Podolsk." (Grimsted, Documenting the Plunder.)</p> <p>Research on these books is still missing, with evidence of only one shipment which dates back to November 1945.</p> <p>According to librarians working at the National Library of Belarus (NBB), many of the trophy books, but in particular Hebrew and Yiddish books that reached the Library after the war, have not been identified or otherwise been catalogued. Grimsted notes that "Many more books still await identification in a NBB Reserve depository across the city from the main library, among them a still unknown quantity of Judaica from many sources that survived the Holocaust, reportedly including some from Jewish communities in Yugoslavia. Some of the still-uncatalogued Judaica reserves were deposited for several decades in an abandoned church in a village outside of Minsk, but when the building was restored to the Church after Belarus independence, the books were moved into a reserve section of the main library; many have still</p>

		<p>not been identified as to provenance.” (Grimsted, p. 362)</p> <p>Some other books, according to Grimsted, might have been transferred to the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow or Leningrad, while others were transferred to incineration facilities outside of Minsk. Additional rumors indicate that some of these books might have ended up in Israel, after a Jewish librarian managed to remove a number of the books in the 1970s and 1980s before he emigrated to Israel.</p> <p>Specific library collections held by NBB include the Library of Jewish Societies of France (<i>Bibliothèque “Efim Pernikof”</i>) and books that belonged to prominent French Jewish families, such as those of the Rothschild family (which are located in the NBB rare book department catalogue). Moreover, some books stemming from Yugoslav Jewish communities have also ended up in Belarus, as well as “a few books from the Jewish Sephardic Community in Salonica, a prime ERR target in Greece.” (Grimsted, p.369) Furthermore, it is assumed that a large part of the Julius Genss book collection is in Belarus. (For more information on the Genss collection, please see section on Estonia.)</p> <p>It is important to note that it is not clear how many books are still to be found in the libraries of Belarus, or how many were brought to other archives and libraries in the years following the end of World War II.</p> <p><i>Looted French Libraries:</i>  <u>Source:</u>  (1) Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. <i>Library Plunder in France by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: Ten ERR Seizure Lists of Confiscated French Libraries</i>. An original Internet publication sponsored by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), 2015. (The paper will be available at: <a href="http://www.errproject.org/additional_studies.php">http://www.errproject.org/additional_studies.php</a>)</p> <p>The rare book department at the National Library holds books with identifying ex libris’ or other markings from over 100 libraries that were seized by the ERR from France. (p.10) This includes 90 individual personal French libraries with ex libris’ or other markings and 10 institutional libraries, all of which coincide with listings on ERR seizure lists.</p> <p>In 2011 the Belarus National Library published a CD ROM edition entitled <i>French Autographs in the Holdings of the National Library of Belarus</i>, displaying the title pages of 65 books from Paris with autographed dedications by and/or to famous French politicians, writers, and other cultural leaders, with images of those individuals included. (p24)</p> <p>(p.25) According to Grimsted, “clearly the Belarus library is proud to have such a valuable collection of autographed volumes by such famous French writers and statesmen such as Marcel Proust, Louise Weiss, Georges Clemenceau, and Léon Blum, among many others, including numerous members of the Rothschild clan. Librarians in Minsk today consider them “compensation” for their wartime losses, with no possible thought of return to their homeland.”</p> <p><i>Dutch objects held in Belarus</i>  <u>Source:</u>  (1) Ketelaar, Eric. “The Return of Dutch Archives from Moscow.” <i>Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe</i></p>
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	<b>Information from Other Sources</b>	<p><u>Source:</u></p> <p>(1) Yuri Dorn, Coordinator of Jewish Heritage (Research Group in Belarus)</p> <p>There are several Jewish religious artifacts in various archives and museums in Belarus. Among others, objects can be found in the State Museum of History and Culture of Belarus in Minsk.</p> <p>Mr. Dorn visited the museum's storage in 1996 and discovered at least four Torah scrolls, including some silver adornments for these Torah scrolls, as well as several sets of Shabbat candlesticks, Chanukiot, Tefilin and Humashim which are kept in the archive. At the time, the preservation of these Torah scrolls was less than satisfactory, resulting in the loss of several chapters or making some letters not viewable.</p> <p>Moreover, there are two Torah scrolls in the State Historical Archive of Belarus; one Torah scroll is located in the Historical Museum of Mogilev, and one is located in the Historical Museum of Vitebsk. (There is no information as to whether these scrolls are kept properly.)</p>
	<b>Historical Commission</b>	<p>No.</p> <p><u>Source:</u></p> <p>(1) Dean, Martin. "The Plundering of Jewish Property in Europe: Five Recent Publications Documenting Property Seizure and Restitution in Germany, Belgium, Norway, and Belarus". <i>Holocaust and Genocide Studies</i> 15 (1), 2001, pp 86-97.</p> <p>According to Martin Dean, the research "<i>Nazi Gold</i>" from Belarus: <i>Documents and Materials</i> by V. I. Adamushko, G. D. Knatko, et al., (Minsk: National Archive of the Republic of Belarus, 1998) focuses on property seizure and restitution.</p>
<b>Selected Bibliography</b>	<p>→ Please note that the general literature may also contain information on the specific country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kupovetsky, Mark. Savitsky, Eduard. Web, Marek. (ed.) <i>Jewish Documentary Sources in Belarus Archives: A Guide (in Russian)</i>. Moskva: Rossiiskii gos. gumanitarnyi universitet, 2003.</li> <li>▪ Dean, Martin. "The Plundering of Jewish Property in Europe: Five Recent Publications Documenting Property Seizure and Restitution in Germany, Belgium, Norway, and Belarus". <i>Holocaust and Genocide Studies</i>, 15.1 (2001), pp 86-97.</li> <li>▪ Felcher, Anastasia. "Reportage: Small exhibits, major steps: four post-Soviet Jewish museums." <i>East European Jewish Affairs</i>, 2015, Vol. 45, Nos. 2–3, 312–320.</li> <li>▪ Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. "The Road to Minsk for Western "Trophy" Books: Twice Plundered but not Yet 'Home from the War'". <i>Libraries &amp; Culture</i>, 39.4 (2004), pp 351-404.</li> <li>▪ Waligórska, Magdalena. "Jewish Heritage and the New Belarusian National Identity Project. <i>East European Politics and Societies and Cultures</i>, Vol. XX Nr X, 2015.</li> </ul>	
<b>Notes</b>		