

Delegatura,

The Polish government-in-exile underground representation in Poland in the period from 1940 to 1945. Heading the Delegatura were a delegat (the government representative, who in 1944 was given the rank of deputy prime minister) and three deputies (who were given the rank of minister). The delegaty, in order of succession, were Cyril Ratajski, Jan Piekalkiewicz, Jan Jankowski, Stefan Korbonski, and Jerzy Braun. Assisting the delegat was a committee made up of representatives of the four political parties on which the government-in-exile was based. By decision of the four coalition partners, the Polish government-in-exile issued two declarations of principle, as well as several appeals to the Polish people and to the world.

The committee, which was an advisory as well as a decision-making body, had various names at different times: Polityczny Komitet Porozumiewawczy (Coordinating Political Committee; 1940-1943), Krajowa Reprezentacja Polityczna (National Political Representation; 1943), and Rada Jednosci Narodowej (National Unity Council; as of January 1944). Its last chairman was Kazimierz Puzak, of the Polish Socialist party. In July 1945, when the Provisional Government of National Unity was established, the Delegatura and the council went out of existence.

The central structure of the Delegatura, which was an executive body, consisted of numerous sections. Their assignments corresponded to the departments of a regular administration. The Delegatura also established provincial, district, and municipal missions, the entire system amounting to an alternate government, rivaling the occupation authorities - an "underground state," with its own systems of education and law and its own armed force, the Armia Krajowa.

Until 1943, the Delegatura did not concern itself with the problem of Jews in occupied Poland, nor did it establish an organization for this purpose. Early that year a Jewish-affairs bureau was set up, headed by Witold Bienkowski,

with Wladyslaw Bartoszewski as his deputy, within the internal-affairs department. The task of this bureau was to organize the Delegatura's activities with regard to the Jewish population, to keep in daily touch with Zegota (the Polish Council for Aid to Jews), and to process material on the fate of the Jews, for transmission to the Polish government-in-exile in London. The delegat himself also dealt with these subjects, as did the Civil Struggle Directorate (Kierownictwo Walki Cywilnej), which had been set up under his auspices. The latter's task was to coordinate popular resistance to the occupying power, and it frequently came out with denunciations of the Nazi crimes against the Jewish population. Thus, in a statement published on September 17, 1942, the Civil Struggle Directorate declared:

For nearly a year now, in addition to the tragedy of the Polish people, which is being slaughtered by the enemy, our country has been the scene of a terrible, planned massacre of the Jews. This mass murder has no parallel in the annals of mankind; compared to it, the most infamous atrocities known to history pale into insignificance. Unable to act against this situation, we, in the name of the entire Polish people, protest the crime being perpetrated against the Jews; all political and public organizations join in this protest.