

Conditions and Politics in Occupied Western Europe, 1940-1945 from The National Archives, UK

Additional Resources

- Introductory essay by Michael Stenton, Clare Hall, Cambridge
- Essays by leading scholars on key subjects
- Film excerpts
- Chronology search
- Links to related web resources
- Picture Gallery

Features

- Print and email
- Search tips
- Athens and Shibboleth authentication
- Usage Statistics
- Free Technical Support
- Free Training

Functionality

Basic Search

Advanced Search by

- Document number
- Document type
- Language
- Department
- Section
- Subject
- Title

Browse six indexes

- FO 371 File Number
- Persons
- Organisations
- Senior Officials
- Document Type
- Language

Search term highlighting

Fuzzy Search

Limit by date

Limit by section

Online

An online, searchable database of primary source documents from the British Foreign Office 1940-1945

External editor:

Professor Rod Kedward, University of Sussex

Conditions and Politics in Occupied Western Europe, 1940-1945 is an electronic, fully text-searchable publication of British Foreign Office information files gathered from across German-occupied territories following the collapse of peacetime diplomacy. The collection contains more than 22,000 items in nearly 1,000 British Foreign Office files as well as newly commissioned thematic essays by leading scholars which have direct links to the documents mentioned.

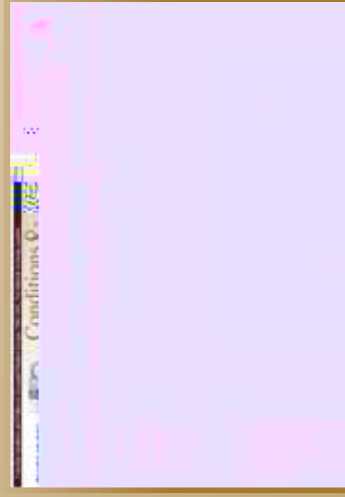
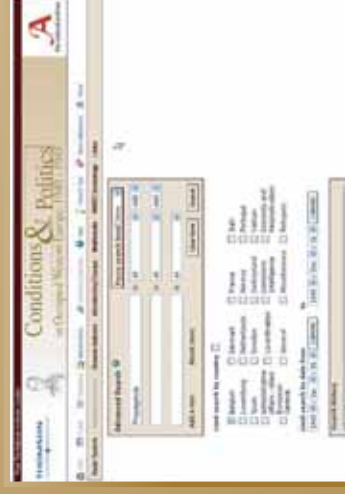
'The scope of the collection is vast, and it is difficult to describe its contents briefly without doing an injustice either to the quantity or the quality of the material in it.'

Professor Roy. A. Austensen, Illinois State University, on the microfilm collection

This collection offers those investigating conditions in Europe during World War II a unique source of invaluable information collected from papers received in the Foreign Office.

The collection includes photographs, maps, illustrations, plans and sketches. Within the multi-media section there are also excerpts from an SOE 1946 film, *Now it can be told* from the Imperial War Museum, London which visually illustrates the work of SOE personnel. A detailed chronology not only allows users to search specific key events from the period but also contextualise their document by cross-searching parallel results from the chronology.

With access through browse indices of FO 371 file numbers, sections, countries, Senior Officials, language and document type, in addition to full-text searching of the files themselves, this digital archive is essential for studies in 20th Century British and European History, Second World War Studies, Conflict Studies, International Politics and Propaganda.



Conditions & Politics in Occupied Western Europe, 1940 - 1945



British Foreign Office files from
The National Archives, UK

General Editor:
Professor Rod Kedward, University of Sussex

An online, searchable archive of primary source
documents for historical research

www.thomsonlearning.co.uk

A Thomson Learning Digital Research Collection

For further information and a free trial contact:
tlemea.enquiries@thomson.com
or visit www.galeuk.com/conditions

Customers in US and Canada can contact
1-800-877-GALE.
Other regional offices can be found at www.gale.com/world

Thomson Learning
High Holborn House
50/51 Bedford Row • London WC1R 4LR UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7067 2500 • Fax: +44 (0) 20 7067 2600
tlemea.enquiries@thomson.com

Conditions & Politics

in Occupied Western Europe, 1940 - 1945

These authoritative primary sources on life in Europe under Nazi occupation meet current research and teaching interests in international relations, propaganda, intelligence gathering, and the cultural history of warfare.

Close first-hand information gathering and reporting form the backbone of the materials, taken from the working papers of the departments within the Foreign Office (FO) specialising in occupied countries throughout the Second World War.

Ambassadorial dispatches, representations of foreign diplomats, telegrams, letters from British diplomats abroad, memoranda, minutes and news cuttings are included. They reveal a complex web of information sharing and appraisal as the government sought to understand local sentiment and political and social conditions in both occupied and neutral countries, leading to Britain and its allies turning the tide of German expansion and ultimately freeing Europe from occupation.

Among the events and perspectives documented here are:

- German attempts to win over important groups in occupied countries
- The reaction to, and effect of, the German occupation
- The propaganda struggle in both occupied and neutral Europe
- Collaboration in France and the emergence and growing success of resistance
- The repercussions of the German invasion of Russia
- The plight of the Jews – suppression, emigration, concentration camps
- Emigration to Palestine: policy and practice
- Normal diplomatic information from neutral countries whose access to Europe played a vital role in the creation of the Allies' policies

Main features and benefits of this resource online

- Original government documents, frequently annotated with civil service commentaries and instructions on replies
- Specially-commissioned thematic essays by leading scholars allowing teachers and students to search document sets via hyperlinks
- Many new indexes to assist discovery and speed up research
- A searchable chronology of WWII, contextualising the events described in the FO papers
- Multimedia: a training film on the operations of the SOE (Special Operations Executive) in France

* images reproduced by kind permission of The National Archives, UK



The FO 371 files

From April 1940, as the German conquest progressed, British diplomatic posts were closed in Paris, Oslo, Copenhagen, The Hague and Brussels meaning normal diplomacy and channels for information in Western Europe were no longer possible. German censorship and the collapse of Britain's spy network led to the Foreign Office being forced to find new ways to source intelligence materials, of which the FO 371 files are the product.

Reports, or reasoned compilations, were sent directly to the Foreign Office in London from diplomatic posts in Barcelona, Lisbon, Geneva, Tangier, Berne, and Stockholm. These reports were then distributed to the relevant department where commentaries and minutes were written about them. This additional analysis by Foreign Office civil servants provides further evaluation of high importance to historians, in particular the criticism of reports from other Ministries and departments.

Value of Conditions and Politics in Occupied Western Europe

'If the neutral countries were a channel of communication, they were also a filter of sensitive facts whose anxiety not to give offence to Germany and whose dislike for Nazism must be understood' (Michael Stenton, Introduction)

The selection principle of this collection was to provide the British interpretation of political activities within countries which were subject to German control and intimidation and to monitor morale and conditions in neutral nations. Neutral countries were imperative for enabling Britain's ability to see into Europe and to plan profitable Allied action based on this information. Examples include propaganda materials from Switzerland and documents detailing the Spanish attitude to the war and the German pressure on Spain.

Introduction and Essays

The Archive includes an introductory essay and four commissioned essays on key topics with direct links through to the documents. These essays provide a scholarly analysis of some of the important issues and offer an accessible introduction for students unfamiliar with this archival material.

Introduction by Michael Stenton, Clare Hall, University of Cambridge

Thematic essays linking directly to the original documents:

Life in Occupied France, 1940-1944: An overview of attitudes, experiences and choices, Professor Rod Kedward, University of Sussex

Norway Under German Occupation, 1940-1945, Dr Chris Mann, Senior Lecturer, Department of War Studies, Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst

The Benelux Countries During the Second World War: Between Collaboration, Accommodation and Resistance, Dr Dirk Martin, Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society, Brussels

The Departments of the Foreign Office, Dr Michael Stenton, Clare Hall, University of Cambridge