



Claims Conference ועידת התביעות  
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany



Julius Gens Haggadah.  
Courtesy of Julia Gens

# The ERR Looting of the Julius Gens Collection in Estonia

March 2023

# The ERR Looting of the Julius Genss Collection in Estonia<sup>1</sup>

by Ruth Jolanda Weinberger<sup>2</sup>



Picture (1): “Arbeitsgruppe Estland zur Kenntnis” (For the attention of the Working Group Estonia). TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine, 3676/opys 1, file 123 (October 1942), p. 113.

Julius Idel Genss, an Estonian art collector and art historian, is believed to have amassed as many as 20,000 books and 5,000 artworks.<sup>3</sup> A large portion of his collection was stolen by the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR). This constituted the most important cultural theft from Estonia by Nazi Germany.

This report provides a condensed summary of the surviving ERR documents located at the Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine (TsDAVO). Additional research was conducted in the National Archives of Estonia, the German Federal Archives and in the University of Tartu Library. Invaluable information was provided by Julia Gens, Julius Genss’ granddaughter. Lastly, the few examples of already existing research and literature were consulted.

The report’s structure is threefold: The first part, the introduction, provides a historical overview into the life of Julius Genss as well as of the ERR’s activities in Estonia; the second part is an

<sup>1</sup> The report was initially prepared in 2016/17 and was partially updated in 2021/22.

<sup>2</sup> The report was written in cooperation and with assistance provided by the Gens family.

<sup>3</sup> The Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction referred to 20,000 books. Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. “Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis Occupied Countries.” 8. 1. Supplement (1946): 162.

analysis of the surviving ERR archival documentation; the third and last part focuses briefly on what is known at this time concerning the post-war fate of the collection.

This research report is meant to be a preliminary analysis. There are undoubtedly more documents that would enhance and add to this research, especially ERR documentation that seemed relevant but was not part of the trove of documents scanned in by TsDAVO. Likewise, more research is undoubtedly needed to uncover the current locations of Genss' collection. This summary is therefore intended to be a first step into an examination of one of the more important and valuable collections stolen by the Nazis in Estonia and yet to be returned to the rightful heirs.

## I. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

### a. Julius Genss – The Person

Julius Genss<sup>4</sup> (1887–1957) was a lawyer, art historian, art bibliophile, author, collector, and mentor in Tallinn<sup>5</sup>, Estonia.

Genss was born into a Jewish merchant family in Derpt, today's Tartu<sup>6</sup>, then part of Tsarist Russia<sup>7</sup>, after his father had moved there from Vilnius. In 1911, he graduated with a PhD in law from Tartu University, but his love and interest in art led him to study architecture in Munich between 1911 and 1912. During World War I, Genss lived in Moscow and St. Petersburg, where he became acquainted with Russian artists and poets.



Picture (2): Julius Genss.  
<http://www.restaurator-muenchen.com/bilder/JuliusGenss.jpg>

<sup>4</sup> Julius Genss is sometimes written with one “s”: Gens. Reviewed Nazi documentation, particularly after 1940, referred to Julius Genss with two s’s at the end.

<sup>5</sup> Estonian Tallinn, Russian Tallin, German Reval (until 1918, Revel). <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tallinn> (accessed 28 March 2022). Starting with section “The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) in Estonia,” the report uses the term “Reval” when describing the activities of the ERR in today’s Tallinn. The same is true for Tartu, which is referred to as “Dorpat” in reviewed ERR archival records.

<sup>6</sup> Estonian Tartu, German/Swedish Dorpat; until 1893: Derpt; between 1893 and 1918: Yuryev. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tartu> (accessed 28 March 2022).

<sup>7</sup> The accession of Alexander III marked the beginning of a period of more rigid Russification of Estonia and by 1887, Russian was made the language of instruction, replacing German and Estonian. After an early uprising that was severely crushed, the Russian Revolution of 1917 eventually brought Estonia autonomy. In February 1918, however, German forces entered the country, and on February 24 the Maapäev, Estonia’s National Council, declared Estonia independent. On March 3, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed and sovereignty over the Baltic countries was transferred from Russia to Germany. Germany’s rule lasted only until its capitulation to the Allies on 11 November 1918. Following Germany’s defeat, the Estonian provisional government proclaimed independence, but the Soviets ruled the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk null and void, and on 28 November, the Red Army entered Estonia. Estonia’s counter-offensive was launched in January 1919. The subsequent “war for independence” lasted for 13 months and ended with the signing of the Tartu Peace Treaty on 2 February 1920, whereby Russia gave up its claim to Estonia. In 1921, the Republic of Estonia became a member of the League of Nations. 20 years later, in August 1939, the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union led to Russia occupying the entire country. For more information, see: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Estonia/History> (accessed 28 March 2022) or Sillaste, Kyllike. “Conquest and Survival: An Outline of Estonian History.” *World Affairs*. 157. 3 (1995): 119–23.



Picture (3): Drawing of Genss' library. Dagmar Bette-Punga, 1938.  
Courtesy of Julia Gens.

In 1918, in the early stages of Estonia's war of independence, Genss returned to Estonia and started working as a lawyer. However, his enduring passion was that of an art historian, and soon he developed into an avid collector of art.<sup>8</sup> Between 1918 and 1920, by the time the Peace Treaty of Tartu was signed by the Republic of Estonia and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, Genss was active in the protection of art treasures. In 1919, he was also one of the founders of the first Estonian school of fine arts ("Pallas") and an art society bearing the same name.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, Genss managed the cultural office of the Jewish cultural administration (the organ of Jewish autonomy in Estonia) and was a member of YIVO's council in addition to being a scholarly contributor.<sup>10</sup> From around 1916 onward, Genss started to get involved in bibliography and from the 1930s also in Judaica.<sup>11</sup>

Estonia proved to be a hospitable place for Genss: the February 12, 1925 enactment of the Law on Cultural Autonomy gave Jews the right to cultural self-government as a "nationality."<sup>12</sup> Yet, it should be noted, that despite that freedom, Jews still were faced with restrictions, most notably they were not accepted to state services in independent Estonia.

<sup>8</sup> J. Genss, *Investigator and Propagator of Jewish Art*. Lecture by Leo Gens, son of Julius Genss. <http://restaurator-muenchen.com/julius-genss-investigator-and-propagator-of-jewish-art/> (accessed 27 September 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Idem.

<sup>10</sup> Julius Genss' correspondence with Paul Ariste, Boris Mirwitz, Hirsch Aisenstadt, Jacob Pajenson, Walter Anderson, Samuel Gurin, and Nathan Genss, his brother, on behalf of YIVO for the time period between 1925 and 1930, is preserved in the YIVO Archives. The Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Online Collections; RG1.1: YIVO - Vilna Administration Records; Series III: YIVO Administration; Subseries 4: Correspondence. Folder 397: Estonia. Online at: [https://vlnacollections.yivo.org/?ca=\(\(item.phplid\\_rg-1.1-s3-f397\\*col\\_v](https://vlnacollections.yivo.org/?ca=((item.phplid_rg-1.1-s3-f397*col_v) (accessed 6 October 2021).

<sup>11</sup> <http://yleksikon.blogspot.com/2015/09/julius-gens-genss.html> (accessed 1 June 2017).

<sup>12</sup> See for example: Alenius, Kari. "The Birth of Cultural Autonomy in Estonia: How, Why, and for Whom?" *Journal of Baltic Studies*. 38.4 (2007): 445–62.

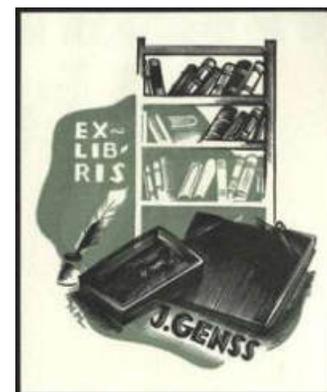
In 1934, the Genss' family moved to Tallinn, where they – according to his daughter – occupied an “enormous” apartment to have enough space for his growing book collection.<sup>13</sup> Each book was marked with a special bookplate: the first bookplate was designed by the Estonian artist Ado Vabbe.<sup>14</sup> After 2,000 bookplates were used, Genss ordered a new edition featuring a lion resting on a book.<sup>15</sup>



Picture (4): Genss' first 1923 Ex Libris designed by Estonian artist Ado Vabbe. Courtesy of Julia Gens.



Picture (5): Genss' second 1928 Ex Libris designed by Boris Krimmer depicting a lion on one of his Japanese netsuke. Courtesy of Julia Gens.



Picture (6): Genss' 1932 Ex Libris designed by Hando Mugasto. <http://hdl.handle.net/10062/24737>

His interest in Jewish art dated back to 1921 when he had traveled to Berlin and met Jewish art collectors and bibliophiles from the society “Soncino”<sup>16</sup>, where he was listed as a member.<sup>17</sup> Genss, coming from within an assimilated Jewish milieu deeply seated within Western European culture and previously unfamiliar with Jewish material culture, including religious and secular decorative art, decided to search for Jewish art in the countries of Eastern Europe.

In addition, following Genss' request, artists from Paris, Warsaw, Vilnius, Palestine, and Russia sent him graphic prints and illustrations. Among them were well known artists such as Marc Chagall and

<sup>13</sup> Gens, Inna. *The Story of a Library* (original title: ИСТОРИЯ ОДНОЙ БИБЛИОТЕКИ), <http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/132/biblio.htm> (accessed 27 September 2021). The YIVO Bleter from 1936, mentions that Genss both maintained an apartment in Tartu as well as a villa in Tallinn, but that he kept his artworks in Tallinn. See: Vaytsman, V. *Yivo-bleter (Vilna)*. 9. 1-3 (January-March 1936): 135-138; *Yedis fun Yivo (Vilna)*. 5-6. 85-86 (May/June 1939). Information taken from: Yiddish Leksikon: <http://yleksikon.blogspot.com/2015/09/julius-gens-genss.html> (accessed 6 October 2021).

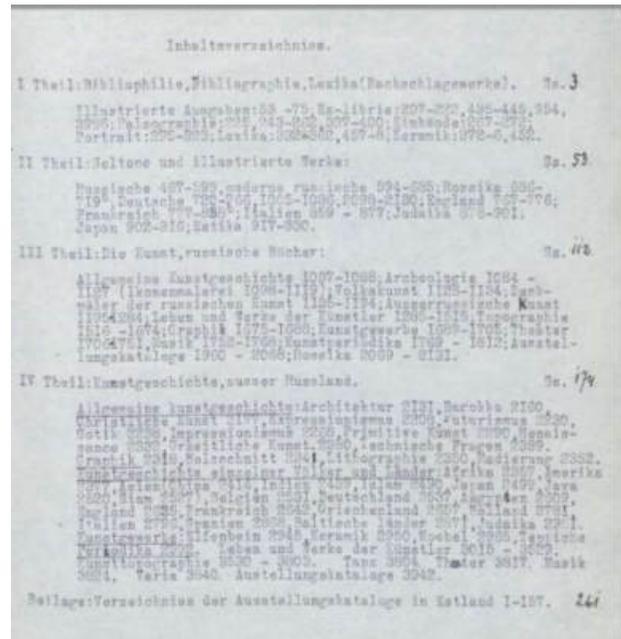
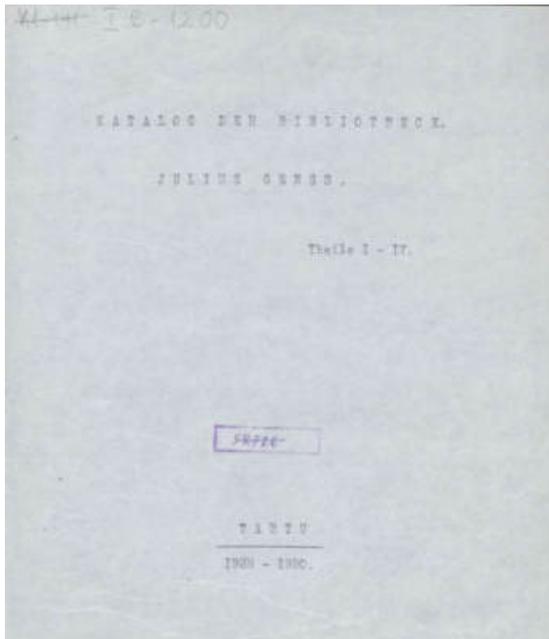
<sup>14</sup> For more information on Ado Vabbe (1892-1961), see for example: <https://kunstmuuseum.ekm.ee/en/syndmus/ado-vabbe-wunderbar/> (accessed 27 September 2021).

<sup>15</sup> The different designs of Julius Genss' ex libris can help determine when the books were purchased.

<sup>16</sup> For more information on Soncino, please see: Bürger, Karin. Sonder, Indes and Ursula Vallmeier. *Soncino – Gesellschaft der Freunde des jüdischen Buches. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Member list of Soncino, please see Soncino-Nachrichten: Beilage zu den Soncino-Blättern, Band I, Berlin 1925-1926, p. 19. <http://restaurator-muenchen/bilder/Soncino.pdf> (accessed 16 January 2016).

Lyonel Feininger. However also lesser-known artists contributed to Genss' collection. Amongst them were artists who survived the Holocaust, such as Nathan Altman and Zygmunt Dobrzycki, but also artists who were murdered, such as Fani Lewowna-Frydman who died in Cracow, and Fiszel Zylberberg who died in Auschwitz. For artists such as Felicia Pacanowska, Necha Gelbersanska, Julius Kroll and Isaak Schorr, there is no information available.<sup>18</sup>



Pictures (7, 8): “Katalog der Bibliothek [von] Julius Genss, Theile I-IV” (Catalog of the Julius Genss library, parts I – IV), Tartu 1928-1930. University of Tartu. <https://dspace.ut.ee/handle/10062/38802>

Between 1928 and 1930, Julius Genss published an overview of his collection entitled *Katalog der Bibliothek [von] Julius Genss, Theile I – IV* (Catalog of Julius Genss, parts I – IV). A copy is preserved at the University of Tartu.

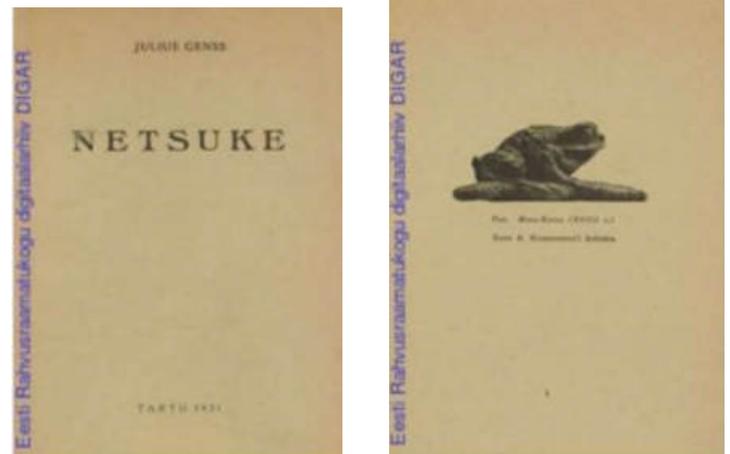
<sup>18</sup> Rabitz, Cornelia. “Julius Genss, Sammler aus Leidenschaft.” *Deutsche Welle*. (30 July 2012). <https://www.dw.com/de/julius-genss-sammler-aus-leidenschaft/a-16096152> (accessed 29 September 2021).

A year later, in 1931, Genss published a catalog presenting the Japanese miniature sculptures in his collection entitled *Netsuke: jaapani pisiplastika reproduktsioone J. Gensi kunstikogust*.

In February 1934, Julius Genss' initiated the exhibition "Jewish Art in Print and Picture" in Tartu in cooperation with Tartu's "Society of Friends of the Jewish Scientific Institute, Estonia," which studied Jewish literature and history. Genss' publication may have coincided with the establishment of a chair in Jewish studies at Tartu University.<sup>19</sup>



Picture (11): "Die Yiddische Kunst in Druck und Bild. Bücher und Kunstwerke v. Julius Genss [Yiddish]" (Jewish Art in Print and Picture. Books and Artworks from Julius Genss), 1934. <https://muuseum.jewish.ce/Culture/catalog%20gens.pdf>



Pictures (9, 10): "Netsuke: jaapani pisiplastika reproduktsioone J. Gensi kunstikogust" (Netsuke: reproductions of Japanese miniature sculptures from the J. Gens art collection), pages 1 and 4. <https://www.digar.ce/arhiiv/en/nlib-digar:185514>

Genss mentioned in his diary that it was vital to prove the existence of Jewish art and that he had collected already some 400 items. He continued by noting, "... to prove the existence of contemporary Jewish art [it] is possible only by a relevant exhibition. I started the organizing work". Genss primarily focused on graphics while acknowledging that the transportation of paintings would have been too costly.<sup>20</sup> An accompanying catalog *Die Yiddische Kunst in Druck und Bild* [Yiddish] (Jewish Art in Print and Picture) was published in Tartu in 1934. Between 1938 and 1939, the Jewish art exhibition

<sup>19</sup> The Department of Jewish Studies played an important role in the greater context of Jewish higher education. The opening of the Department also coincided with the prohibition of admitting Jews to German universities. See: Weiss-Wendt, Anton. "The Soviet Occupation of Estonia in 1940-41 and the Jews." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. 12. 2 (Fall 1998): 308-25.

<sup>20</sup> J. Genss, *Investigator and Propagator of Jewish Art*. Lecture by Leo Gens, son of Julius Genss. <http://restaurator-muenchen.com/julius-genss-investigator-and-propagator-of-jewish-art> (accessed 27 September 2021)

traveled from Tartu to Tallinn and Riga.<sup>21</sup> Between April and May 1938, Genss organized the exhibition *Juudi Graafika*, in which he again exhibited some of his collected works. The exhibition included two works by Marc Chagall, three works by Max Liebermann and a work by Lyonel Feininger, among other artists.

A year later, in June 1939, Genss organized a Sholem Aleichem exhibition in Tallinn and Tartu for which he published an accompanying exhibition catalog that included a Sholem Aleichem biography, translated by the well-known Estonian writer Fiedebert Tuglas.<sup>22</sup>



Picture (12): “Juudi Graafika” (Jewish Graphis), 1938.  
<https://muuseum.jewish.ee/Culture/Juudi%20graafika.pdf>



Picture (13): Friedebert Tuglas behind Julius Genss' desk, 1926.

[https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/401/item\\_DMX\\_QLUCFSMWRAMQIXD3XSGY5PRZTAEEU](https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/401/item_DMX_QLUCFSMWRAMQIXD3XSGY5PRZTAEEU)

Also, in 1939 Julius Genss published his first library catalog: *Katalog biblioteki i sobraniia Yulia Gensa* (Catalog of the library and collection of Julius Gens) [part I. Tallinn, 1939]. The catalog presented detailed notes about his books and periodicals in Hebrew and Yiddish with 1,348 items listed.<sup>23</sup> It was a luxuriously published book on vellum paper, illustrated with reproductions of paintings and objects. A second edition was already in print in 1940 when Estonia became part of the Soviet Union, after which any further work was halted.<sup>24</sup>

Aside from his own catalogs and exhibition catalogs, Genss published numerous works on Estonian, Russian and Jewish art, as well as a *Hagada* (a prayer book used during the Jewish Passover holiday) and *Yidishe bukhtsayebns* (Jewish book illustrations).

<sup>21</sup> Rabitz, Cornelia. “Julius Genss, Sammler aus Leidenschaft.” *Deutsche Welle*. (30 July 2012).

<https://www.dw.com/de/julius-genss-sammler-aus-leidenschaft/a-16096152> (accessed 19 September 2021)

<sup>22</sup> Genss, Julius. *Sholem Aleichem, 1859-1916: Autobiograafilisi märkmeid*. Tallinn, 1939.

<sup>23</sup> Teder, Eric. *Julius Genss and Bibliophily*. [http://restaurator-muenchen.com/bilder/Teder%20Biblio\\_en.jpg](http://restaurator-muenchen.com/bilder/Teder%20Biblio_en.jpg) (accessed 12 January 2016).

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/132/biblio.htm/> (accessed 17 September 2021). Copies of the catalog are preserved in numerous libraries, including in the New York Public Library (NYPL) and the Center for Jewish History, New York.

Overall, his private library encompassed approximately 20,000 books, with about half consisting of art books but also Judaica.<sup>25</sup> According to the recollections of his son, Leo Gens, among his collection were incunabula and plenty of French books illustrated with the 18th century engravings in original. His collection also comprised many paintings by Estonian, Baltic, German, Russian artists and old masters, icons, about 5,000 graphic sheets, 3,000 bookplates, many objects of applied art, as well as Japanese ivories, Chinese ceramics, porcelain and ivory pieces, Netsuke and a miniature collection.<sup>26</sup> In addition, Julius Gens owned the only complete collection of catalogs of Estonian art exhibitions and several thousand ex-libris.<sup>27</sup>



Picture (14): Gens' house on Poe Street, 1927.  
<https://www.muis.ee/museaalView/3325124>



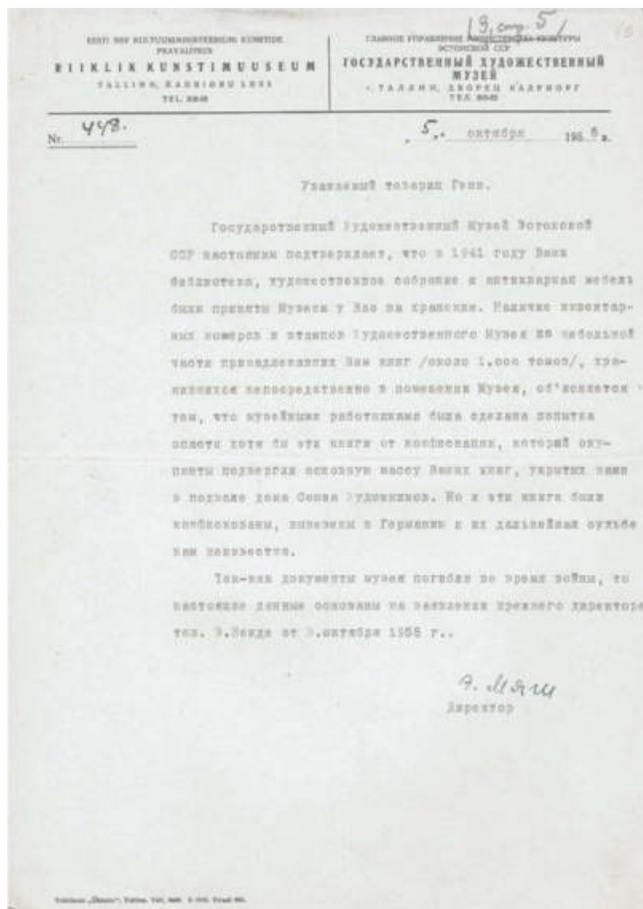
Pictures (15, 16): Courtesy of Julia Gens.



<sup>25</sup> Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. "Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis Occupied Countries." 8. 1. Supplement (1946): 162.

<sup>26</sup> J. Gens, *Investigator and Propagator of Jewish Art*. Lecture by Leo Gens, son of Julius Gens. <http://restaurator-muenchen.com/julius-gens-investigator-and-propagator-of-jewish-art> (accessed 27 September 2021).

<sup>27</sup> Teder, Eric. *Julius Gens and Bibliophily*. [http://restaurator-muenchen.com/bilder/Teder%20Biblio\\_en.jpg](http://restaurator-muenchen.com/bilder/Teder%20Biblio_en.jpg) (accessed 12 January 2016).



Picture (17): Letter from the Estonian Art Museum to Julius Gens from October 4, 1955. Courtesy of Julia Gens.

The collection is considered unique given its “rare bibliophile treasures”<sup>28</sup> and was well known to the Nazis, particular to Alfred Rosenberg, a fellow Estonian. In July 1941, the Gens family escaped Nazi persecution by fleeing to Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Before leaving, according to the memories of his daughter Inna Gens, he packed a few “souvenirs” of his own collection: the best works of art, one book of each nation, the *Koberger Bible* (1483), a book by Albrecht Dürer, and his own edition of the *Song of Songs* which he had illustrated together with the Estonian artist Ado Vabbe.<sup>29</sup>

In anticipation of the Nazis’ arrival in Estonia, on July 4, 1941, and in an attempt to safeguard his collection, Gens handed over parts of his collection to the director of the Estonian Art Museum.<sup>30</sup> The ERR, on the other hand, commonly referred to this handing over as a “donation.”<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. “The Roads to Minsk for Western ‘Trophy’ Books: Twice Plundered but not Yet ‘Home from the War.’” *Libraries & Culture*. 4 (Fall 2004): 363. An earlier version of this article was presented at the conference at the National Library of Belarus, Minsk, on 16 September 2003: “Trofeinye knigi iz Zapadnoi Evropy: Doroga v Minsk cherez Ratibor (Ratsibyzh). Ograblenie bibliotek ERR (Operativnym shtabom Reikhsliitera Rozenberga)” [Trophy Books from Western Europe: The Road to Minsk through Ratibor. Libraries plundered by the ERR (Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg)]. The presentation was available at: <http://restaurator-muenchen.com/bilder/3rdBibliology2005.pdf>. (accessed 25 January 2016) .

<sup>29</sup> Gens, Inna. *The Story of a Library*, <http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/132/biblio.htm> (accessed 27 September 2021).

<sup>30</sup> Letter from the Estonian Art Museum to Julius Gens from 4 October 1955, confirming that Gens handed over his collection in an attempt to safeguard part of his collection. (Courtesy of Julia Gens.)

<sup>31</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 3676/opys 1, file 124 (September 1943), p. 1. (The “donation” encompassed 1,228 of Gens’s volumes, or 1,491 books.)

By the time the family returned to Estonia in 1944,<sup>32</sup> the Nazis, and more specifically the ERR, had ransacked Genss' vast collection.



Picture (18): The “Song of Songs” parchment scroll designed by Genss and artist Ado Vabbe.

<https://www.dw.com/de/julius-genss-sammler-aus-leidenschaft/a-16096152>

<sup>32</sup> J. Gens, *Investigator and Propagator of Jewish Art*. Lecture by Leo Gens, son of Julius Gens. <http://restaurator-muenchen.com/julius-genss-investigatör-and-propagator-of-jewish-art> (accessed 27 September 2021).

## **b. Estonia during Nazi occupation – A Brief Overview**

In 1939, the Jewish population of Estonia numbered about 4,500, or 0.4 percent of the total population.<sup>33</sup> Almost half of Estonia's Jews lived in Tallinn, the capital city. The rest resided in other towns such as Tartu, Valga, Parnu, Narva, Viljandi, Rakvere, Voru, and Nomme.<sup>34</sup> In June 1940, the Soviet Union occupied Estonia and annexed the country in August of that year. At least half of Estonian Jewry left the country during this period.<sup>35</sup> A year later, in July 1941, the Nazis invaded Estonia and it subsequently became part of the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*.<sup>36</sup> The *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, ruled by the *Reichskommissar* Hinrich Lohse, was set up in August 1941. The territory of the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* consisted of four *Generalkommissare*: *Weisruthenien*, *Litauen*, *Lettland*, and *Estland*. Each section was governed by a *Generalkommissar*.<sup>37</sup> The Nazis considered Estonians as the most desirable people among the Baltic countries, attributing to them the highest racial qualities.<sup>38</sup>

Immediately following the Nazi invasion of Estonia, Jews were subjected to harsh measures, including the confiscation of property, the wearing of the yellow star and subsequent internment. Due to the small number of Jews in Estonia, formal ghettos were not created. Only in Tartu were the Jews concentrated and separated from other arrested suspects in two houses, thereby creating a form of ghetto. After a short time, they were transferred to the Tartu concentration camp where most of them were murdered.<sup>39</sup>

By late 1941, the Nazis, with the assistance of Estonia's Self-Defense Force or the Estonian Security Police, acting under the direction of the *Einsatzstab A*, prepared to murder all Estonian Jews. By September 1941<sup>40</sup>, German SS and police units, together with Estonian auxiliaries, started massacring the Jews of Estonia, and by 1943, Jews from all over Europe were sent to forced-labor

---

<sup>33</sup> Weiss-Wendt, Anton. "The Soviet Occupation of Estonia in 1940-41 and the Jews." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. 12. 2 (Fall 1998): 308-25.

<sup>34</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Estonia." Holocaust Encyclopedia. <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005448> (accessed 30 March 2017).

<sup>35</sup> Idem.

<sup>36</sup> Idem.

<sup>37</sup> Dean, Martin (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945. Volume II. Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe. Part B*. Published in Association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012, p. 989.

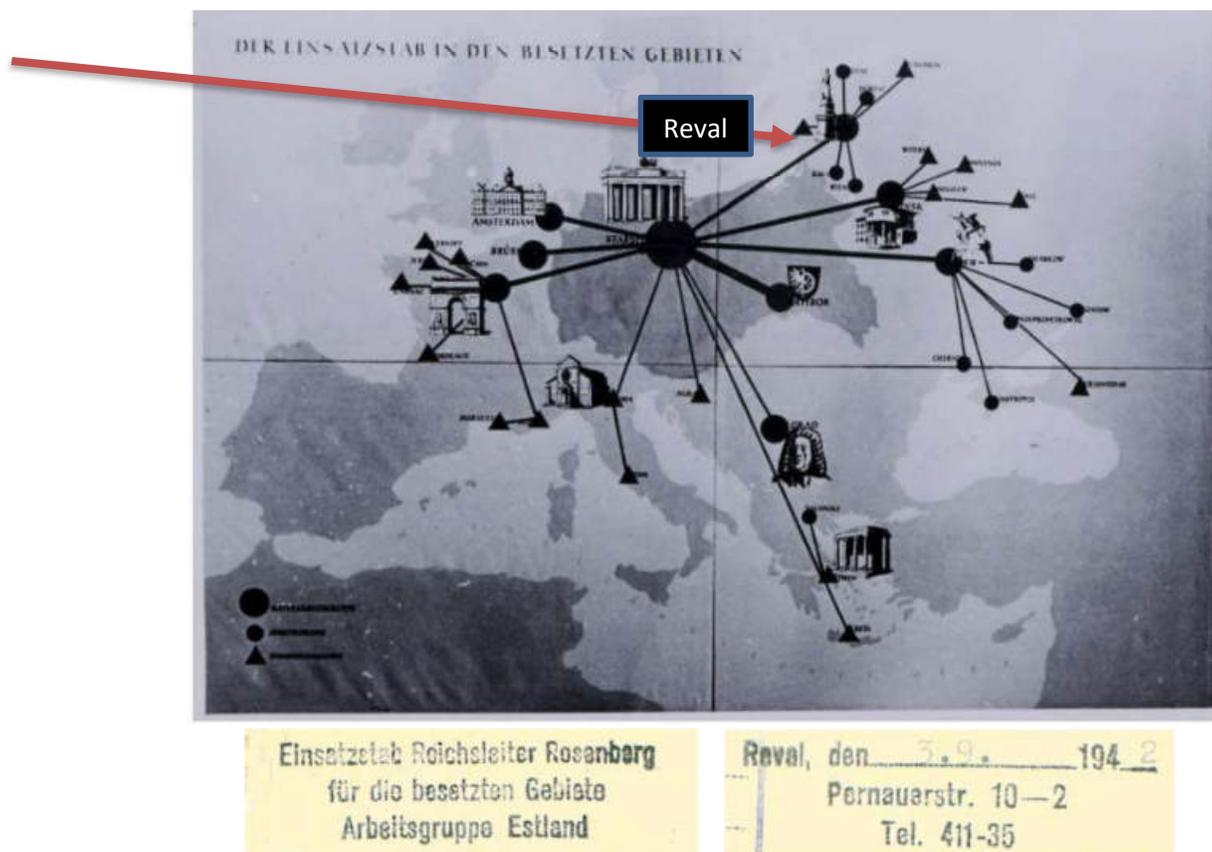
<sup>38</sup> Birn, Ruth Bettina. "Collaboration with Nazi Germany in Eastern Europe: The Case of the Estonian Security Police." *Contemporary European History*. 10. 2 (July 2011): 182.

<sup>39</sup> Dean, *Encyclopedia*, Volume II, Part B, p. 995.

<sup>40</sup> See also statement by Martin Sandberger, SD/SS *Standartenführer* who noted to the Office of Chief Counsel for War Crimes on 19 November 1945, that by September 1941, the decision was made to shoot Estonia's Jews. *Eidesstaatliche Erklärung von Standartenführer Martin Sandberger*. Doc Number No.-3873. Arolsen Archives Online Collection: Persecution action on the "occupied Eastern territory" (Baltic states), reference code: 9034200. [https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/archive/1-2-7-4\\_9034200/?p=1&doc\\_id=82173234](https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/archive/1-2-7-4_9034200/?p=1&doc_id=82173234) (accessed 29 September 2021).

camps inside Estonia, among them the Klooga concentration camp just outside of Tallinn.<sup>41</sup> By February 1942, the German and Estonian security forces had arrested and shot 963 Jews in Estonia. In September 1944 the Soviet Union once again annexed Estonia as one of its republics.<sup>42</sup>

**c. The *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)* in Estonia**



Picture (19): A map showing the activities of the ERR in occupied Europe. Yad Vashem Album Nr. FA1 73/3.  
 Pictures (20, 21): ERR stamps: “Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberger für die besetzten Gebiete. Arbeitsgruppe Estland” (Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg for the Occupied Territories. Working Group Estonia); “Reval, den 3.9.1942. Pernauerstr. 10-12. Tel. 411-35” (Reval, September 3, 1942. Pernauer Street 10-12. Tel. 411-35).  
 TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 3676/opys 1, file 218 (September 1942), p. 104.

<sup>41</sup> Chan, Paul. “Red Stars and Yellow Stars: The Soviet Investigation of Klooga Concentration Camp.” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. 33. 1 (Fall 2019): 197-224.

<sup>42</sup> For more information on the Holocaust in Estonia, see for example: Weiss-Wendt, Anton. *Murder without Hatred: Estonians and the Holocaust*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009; Hijo, T. Maripuu, M. and I. Paalve (eds). *Estonia 1940-1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Tallinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2006; Brin, Ruth Bettina. *Sicherheitspolizei in Estland 1941-1944: Eine Studie zur Kollaboration im Osten*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006.

The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) was created immediately following the invasion of France in late June and early July 1940 and functioned as the main Nazi agency involved in cultural looting in occupied countries during the Second World War. Originally, the ERR was founded as an operational offshoot of *Reichsleiter* Alfred Rosenberg's office of the Führer's Deputy for Supervising the Entire Spiritual and Ideological Training of the NSDAP (*Der Beauftragter des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NSDAP, DBFU*), to which Rosenberg was appointed in 1934. Alfred Rosenberg,<sup>43</sup> himself an Estonian national born to an Estonian mother and Baltic German father in Tallinn, was likewise responsible for the *Hobe Schule* project<sup>44</sup>, a university-level training academy for the future Nazi elite to be established after the war to be based on the Chiemsee in Bavaria. The ERR was to seize libraries, archives, and other research materials from Jews and others considered enemies of the Reich. The loot was needed for the ERR's library and various subject-related institutes of Rosenberg's *Hobe Schule*.<sup>45</sup> With increased Allied bombing, the order was given to remove the main ERR-looted libraries and archival collections to Ratibor, Silesia.<sup>46</sup>

The ERR consisted of the *Stabsführung* (headquarters), various working groups (*Arbeitsgruppen, AG's*) and main working groups (*Hauptarbeitsgruppen, HAG*) which were organized to head operations in each occupied country. On the eastern front, the ERR was organized into three main working groups: *HAG Ostland* for the Baltics, including Estonia, *HAG Ukraine*, and *HAG Mitte* for Belarus and western Russia.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, the ERR was organized in Special Taskforces (*Sonderstäbe*), including for example a Special Library Taskforce or Special Archive Taskforce. In November 1941, Dr. Gottlieb Ney, was tasked with heading the new *Sonderstab Bibliothek der Hohen Schule* (Special Taskforce Library of the Hohe Schule) within the *HAG Ostland* and was thus assigned to survey libraries. He commenced his work in the Baltic countries attached to *HAG-Ostland*<sup>48</sup>, including in

---

<sup>43</sup> After the war, Rosenberg was arrested and tried at the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal. He was found guilty on all four counts of the indictment for conspiracy to commit aggressive warfare, crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity and subsequently sentenced to death. Rosenberg was hanged on 16 October 1946. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Alfred Rosenberg." Holocaust Encyclopedia. <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007123>. (accessed 30 March 2017).

<sup>44</sup> The ERR actively collected materials for several *Hobe Schule* institutes. The Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question, also often referred to as the Institute for Research on the Jewish Question (*Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage, IEJ*), was the only *Hobe Schule* institute that was founded during the war, specifically in May 1940.

<sup>45</sup> For more information, see for example, Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. "Alfred Rosenberg and the ERR: The Records of Plunder and the Fate of Its Loot." *Reconstructing the Record of Nazi Cultural Plunder. A Guide to the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) and the Postwar Retrieval of ERR Loot*. Revised and Updated 2015. Online at: [https://www.errproject.org/guide/ERR\\_Guide\\_Introduction.pdf](https://www.errproject.org/guide/ERR_Guide_Introduction.pdf) (accessed 29 September 2021).

<sup>46</sup> Ratibor (now Polish Racibór) was an ERR research and library center to which the Germans transported more than two million books.

<sup>47</sup> Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. "Alfred Rosenberg and the ERR: The Records of Plunder and the Fate of Its Loot." *Reconstructing the Record of Nazi Cultural Plunder. A Guide to the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) and the Postwar Retrieval of ERR Loot*. Revised and Updated 2015. Online at: [https://www.errproject.org/guide/ERR\\_Guide\\_Introduction.pdf](https://www.errproject.org/guide/ERR_Guide_Introduction.pdf) (accessed 28 March 2022).

<sup>48</sup> Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. "Roads to Ratibor: Library and Archival Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. 19. 3 (Winter 2005): p. 405.

Estonia. In that capacity, he was intrinsically involved in the looting and securing of the Gens collection for the ERR.



Picture (22): "Blick vom Freiheitsplatz" (View from freedom square), Reval [Tallin], February, March 1943. Photo by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg for the occupied territories, HAG Ostland. Film Einsatzstab 46/11. Bundesarchiv Bild 146-2004-231.

(Bundesarchiv\_Bild\_146-2004-231\_Reval\_Freiheitsplatz.jpg)

Two months prior to that, in September 1941, the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR) created the *Arbeitsgruppe Estland* (AG) with its headquarters in Tallinn, then called Reval, specifically in *Pernauerstrasse 10*.<sup>49</sup> The *AG Estland* was under the leadership of Georg von Krusenstjern (1899 – 1989), who had joined the ERR on September 2, 1941, and functioned as its *Haupteinsatzführer* for Reval<sup>50</sup> until February 1943. Krusenstjern, a trained historian and genealogist, was born in St. Petersburg and had fought in Estonia's war of independence beginning in 1918. He later lived in Estonia and since 1939 was involved in the organization of the resettlement of the Baltic Germans from Estonia. His voluntary assignment with the ERR enabled Krusenstjern to effectively continue his intensive research into German-Baltic culture.<sup>51</sup>



Picture (23): Brochure "Tallinn Estlands reizende Hauptstadt" (Tallinn Estonia, charming capital), 1933. Document collection Herder-Institute, Sig. DSHI\_190\_Krusenstjern\_0885.

<sup>49</sup> The report uses the term "Reval" when describing the activities of the ERR in today's Tallinn. The same is true for Tartu, which is referred to as Dorpat in reviewed ERR archival records.

<sup>50</sup> "Hauptarbeitsgruppe Ostland zur Kenntnis: Personenstandsliste" (For the attention of the main working group Ostland: persons list). TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 3676/opys 1, file 234 (October 1941), p. 16.

<sup>51</sup> Krusenstjern had a remarkable career within the ERR: In 1942, he was appointed as head of the *AG Estland*. A year later, in March 1943, he assumed the role as head of the *AG Weißrußland* (Belarus), followed by his appointment as head of section "*Auswertung*" (evaluation) at *HAG Mitte*. In 1944, he continued his career and was appointed head of the main department IV/3, and later, as head of the *Dienststelle Schloss Banz*, an ERR storage facility. By 1945, he worked as the managing director of the *Dienststelle Staffelstein*. After the war, Krusenstjern settled in Munich where he continued his decades of research on the Baltic Germans. The Baltic Homeland Picture Archive Georg von Krusenstjern is preserved at the University of Marburg. <https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/fotomarburg/bestaende/uebernahmen/krusenstjern> (accessed 30 March 2022). See also: Gottzmann, Carola and Peter Hörner. *Lexikon der deutschsprachigen Literatur des Baltikums und St. Petersburg*. Vol.2. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007, pp. 777–779; Hoppe, Jens. "Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation. Dr. Karl Heinz Esser beim Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die besetzten Gebiete." *Mainzer Zeitschrift*. 105 (2010): 187.

At this side was Dr. Karl-Heinz Esser (1912 – 1999), a German art historian. Soon after he completed his art history studies at the University of Marburg, in September 1939 he joined the Wehrmacht. In October 1940, he commenced his work with the ERR, first in France where he played an active role in the seizure of Jewish cultural property.<sup>52</sup> On October 25, 1941, Esser was assigned to the *Sonderkommando des Einsatzstabes bei der Herresgruppe Mitte*. While he was supposed to work in Moscow, Pg. Gerhard Schilde, who headed the *Sonderkommando Schilde*, based in Reval, and Dr. Gerd Wunder, since October 1941 part of HAG *Ostland* in Riga, and previously head of library plunder efforts in Paris through June 1941<sup>53</sup>, reassigned Esser to work in Reval. Esser consequently worked for the ERR in the Baltics between November 1941 and November 1943. There he functioned as the *stellvertretender Leiter der Arbeitsgruppe Estland* (deputy head working group Estonia), busying himself with collecting art treasures, including those of Julius Genss. In 1943, he was promoted to the *Obereinsatzführer* and transferred by the ERR to Brussels.<sup>54</sup>

The AG Estonia numbered 23 people, including 5 women. Early activities by the ERR in Reval, and later in Dorpat, were marked by constant conflicts with competing Nazi organizations, foremost with the SD, the *Sicherheitsdienst*, which at that time had already ‘secured’ vast amounts of Jewish cultural property. Despite these early difficulties, the ERR eventually prevailed as the main Nazi organization to plunder artworks, Judaica and book collections and by the end of 1941, it seized a formerly Jewish club, a theater hall as well as seven adjacent rooms to house its growing library.<sup>55</sup> While some ‘secured’ material was solely destined for the Frankfurt based Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question (*IEG, Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage*), other collections were intended for the ERR offices in Reval and later Dorpat (today’s Tartu), in addition to the Nazis’ envisioned *Reichsuniversität* Dorpat.

<sup>52</sup> Hoppe, *Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation*, p. 183.

<sup>53</sup> Dr. Gerd Wunder later headed the ERR’s research operations in Ratibor. For more information, see for example: Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. *Library Plunder in France by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: Ten ERR Seizure Lists of Confiscated French Libraries*, 2017. <https://www.errproject.org/docs/ERRParisLibraryLists2017.03.01.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2022).

<sup>54</sup> After the war, Esser worked as the director for the Mainz Museums (1952 – 1977). For more information on Dr. Esser see: Hoppe, Jens. “Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation. Dr. Karl Heinz Esser beim Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die besetzten Gebiete.” *Mainzer Zeitschrift*. 105 (2010): 179–199; Idem, „Dr. Karl Heinz Esser. Selbstverständnis und Tätigkeit eines beim Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg tätigen Kunsthistorikers im besetzten Baltikum.“ Gasiór, Agnieszka. Janatkova, Alena and Magdalena Bushart (eds.). *Kunstgeschichte in den besetzten Gebieten 1939-1945*. Cologne: Böhlau, 2016, pp. 275-308; Here, Jens Hoppe noted that “die Aneignung der Bibliothek Julius Genss, einem estnischen Advokaten und Kunstsammler, sollte der Vorbereitung eines Arbeitsaufenthaltes in Leningrad dienen“ (The acquisition of the library of Julius Genss, an Estonian lawyer and art collector, was intended to prepare for a working stay in Leningrad.), p. 258.

<sup>55</sup> “Abschlussbericht per 31. Dezember 1942. Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, HAG Ostland, AG Estland.“ (Final report as of December 31, 1942. Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, HAG Ostland, AG Estland.) TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 3676/opys 1, file 234 (January 1943), p. 408ff.

Anlage zum Bericht über die bei der Arbeitsgruppe Estland, Reval bearbeiteten Judaica

Inhalt der verschiedenen Typen. (siehe auch Tabelle 2)

<u>Typ 1:</u>	ebensojane Enkelkinder	42
	Judaica in russischer Sprache	73
	Abrechnungen = Aufträge	13
	<u>zusammen</u>	<u>128</u>
<u>Typ 2:</u>	Jüd. Synagogen	5
	Medizyna spetsesna	1
	Literatur in jüd. Sprache	149
	<u>zusammen</u>	<u>155</u>
<u>Typ 3:</u>	Literatur in jüd. Sprache	35
	Jüd. Prosajud. Literatur	96
	Judaica in russ. Sprache	15
	Allgemeine jüd. Literatur 18-22 Jh.	6
	Antiquarische Judaica	63
	<u>zusammen</u>	<u>215</u>
<u>Typ 4:</u>	Quittungen	448
	mit Judaica in russischer Sprache	
	<u>zusammen</u>	<u>946</u>

Bericht über die bei der Arb. Gruppe Estland, Reval bearbeiteten Judaica.

Über den v. 3000 verschiedenen Büchern, Kopien und Quittungen werden mitgeteilt:

Logylogatien, Abrechnungen = Aufträge	61
Judaica in russischer Sprache	88
Literatur in jüd. Sprache	184
Prosajud. Literatur in jüd. Sprache	96
Allgemeine jüd. Literatur 18-22 Jh.	6
Quittungen in Judaica in russischer Sprache	511
<u>zusammen</u>	<u>946</u>

Anlage (siehe 2. Tafel 2. Typ)

Reval, den 12. 12. 42

Heinrich  
Lindemann

Pictures (24, 25): "Anlage zum Bericht über die bei der Arbeitsgruppe Estland, Reval bearbeiteten Judaica" (Annex to the Report on the Judaica processed by the Working Group Estonia, Reval); "Bericht über die bei der Arbeitsgruppe Estland, Reval bearbeitenden Judaica" (Report on the Judaica processed by the Working Group Estonia, Reval).

TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 3676/opys 1, file 129 (December 1942), pp. 6-7.

[A typed version of this document is available at: TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 129 (December 1942), p. 11.

Abschrift. 12

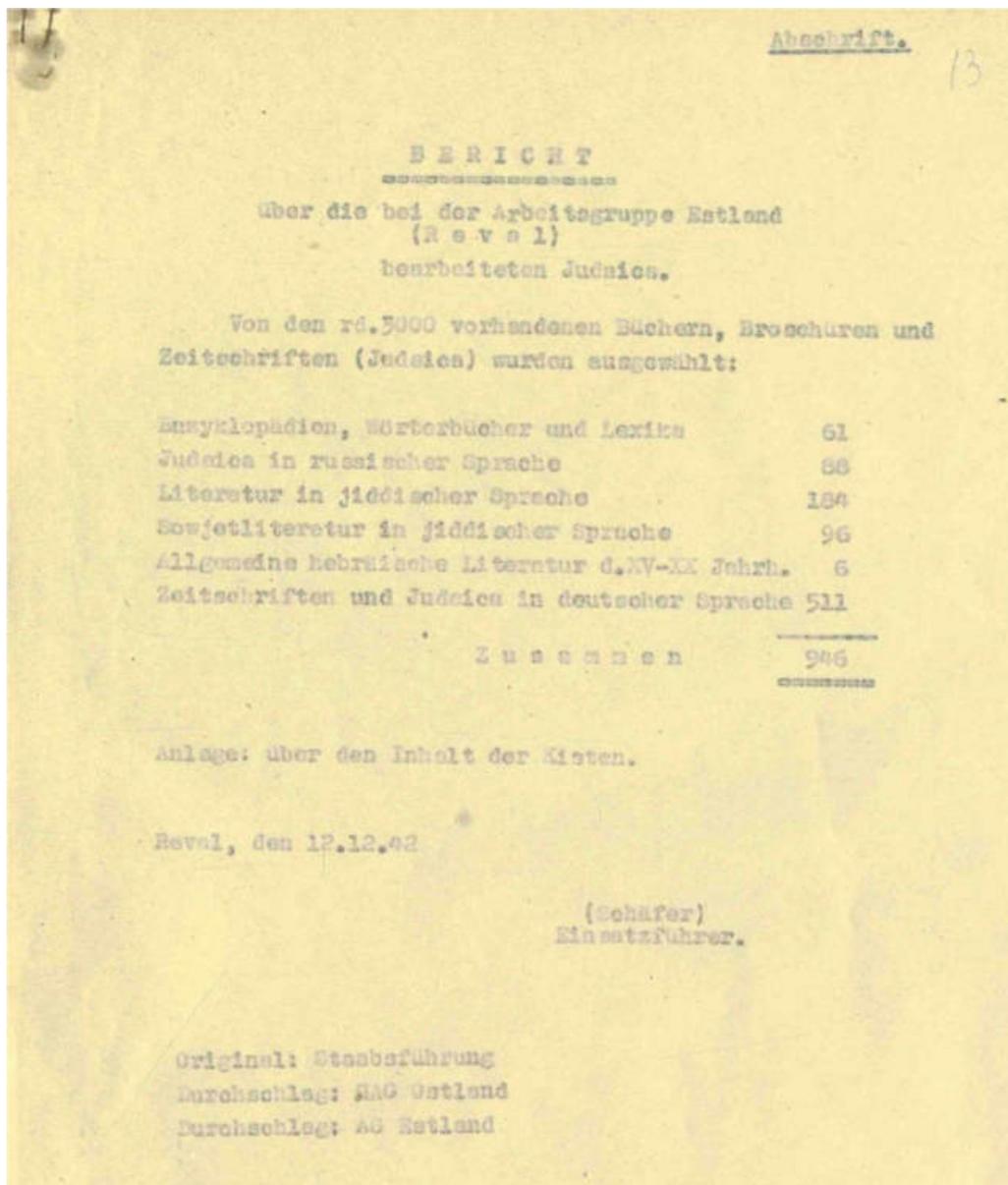
**A n l a g e**  
zum Bericht über die bei der Arbeitsgruppe  
Estland, R e v a l  
bearbeiteten Judaica.

Inhalt der verpackten Kisten für das Juden-  
Institut in Frankfurt.

<u>Kiste 1:</u>	Evrejskeje Enziklopedia	42	
	Judaica in russischer Sprache	73	
	Wörterbücher und Lexika	<u>13</u>	128
<u>Kiste 2:</u>	Jud. Enzyklopädie	5	
	Medycyna apteczna	1	
	Literatur in jidd. Sprache	<u>149</u>	155
<u>Kiste 3:</u>	Literatur in jidd. Sprache	35	
	Jidd. Sowjetliteratur	96	
	Judaica in russ. Sprache	15	
	Allgemeine hebr. Literatur d. XV-XX Jahrh.	6	
	Deutschsprachige Judaica	<u>63</u>	215
<u>Kiste 4:</u>	Zeitschriften und Judaica in deutscher Sprache	<u>448</u>	<u>448</u>
	Z u s a m m e n		<u>946</u>

Original: Staatsführung  
Durchschlag: EAC Estland  
Durchschlag: AG Estland

Picture (26): "Anlage zum Bericht über die bei der Arbeitsgruppe Estland, Reval bearbeiteten Judaica" (Annex to the Report on the Judaica processed by the Working Group Estonia, Reval). TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 129 (December 1942), p. 12.



Picture (27): "Bericht über die bei der Arbeitsgruppe Estland (Reval) bearbeiteten Judaica" (Report on the Judaica processed by the Working Group Estonia [Reval]). TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 129 (December 1942), p. 13.

In March 1942, the ERR office in Dorpat was opened in Gartenstrasse 19. The Dorpat office increasingly gained more importance particularly after Reval fell under heavy Allied bombardment. By April 1942, Dr. Otto Nerling, *Hauptinsatzführer*, as well as head of the *Hauptarbeitsgruppe (HAG) Ostland*, was named the head of the ERR office in Dorpat. Shortly thereafter, in May 1942, coinciding with his assignment to the *Hauptarbeitsgruppe Mitte*, he temporarily assigned Ms Irmgard Mutz to take over. However, soon afterwards, Dorpat's affairs were directed by Georg von

---

This report represents the results of the current best research efforts of the Claims Conference/WJRO and is based upon information obtained by the Claims Conference to date. The Claims Conference makes no representation as to its accuracy or completeness and the report should not be relied upon or used as proof, legal or equitable, as to current or past ownership of the items described within.

Krusenstjern, who at that time held the title *stellvertretender Arbeitsgruppenleiter Estland* and was working in the ERR's office in Reval.<sup>56</sup> Dorpat was centrally located, and its university was envisioned to serve as an *Ostland Universität* or *Reichsuniversität* with German as the language of instruction. The university was intended to function as a research center for the whole Baltic area and to house seized collections that would advance the National-Socialist agenda, including the Genss collection. Yet, while Nazi documents frequently refer to the *Ostland Universität*, in fact the university was opened as Tartu University of the Estonian Self-Government with instruction in Estonian.<sup>57</sup>

In February 1943, the ERR office in Reval closed<sup>58</sup> with Krusenstjern being transferred to Belarus. At the same time the ERR office in Dorpat not only remained active, but starting with early 1943, was no longer just an “*Aussenstelle*” (a side post), but rather as a “*Dienststelle*” (as was Reval prior to February 1943). Dorpat, and not Reval, was seen as the scientific center of Estonia.<sup>59</sup>

By spring 1943, and specifically due to Dr. Karl-Heinz Esser's<sup>60</sup> transfer to the East (*Abberufung zum Ostland*, June 1943), it also initiated the closing of the ERR office in Dorpat.<sup>61</sup> Esser, who had been the assistant head of Estonia's ERR working group, was in fact appointed *Obereinsatzführer* and transferred from the Baltics to the “*Einsatzstelle Brüssel*.”<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> “Abschlussbericht per 31. Dezember 1942. Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, HAG Ostland“ (Final report as of December 31, 1942. Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, HAG Ostland, AG Estland). TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (January 1943), p. 408ff.

<sup>57</sup> “1942-1944 Tartu University of the Estonian Self-Government/Ostland-Universität in Dorpat.”

<https://www.ut.ee/en/university/general/history> (accessed 1 October 2021); The *Reichsuniversität Dorpat* is sometimes referred to as one among the three other *Reichsuniversitäten* (Posen, Strasburg and Prague) that were established and were headed by Bernhard Rust of the Ministry of Science, Education and Culture (*Reichserziehungsministerium*, REM). However, it is generally acknowledged that very little information is preserved on specifically the *Reichsuniversität Dorpat*, only that it was the “least functional.” Hildebrandt, S. “Anatomy in the Third Reich: An Outline, Part 1. National Socialist Politics, Anatomical Institutions, and Anatomists.” *Clinical Anatomy*. 22:883–893 (2009): 885-887.

<sup>58</sup> “Mit meiner Übernahme der stellvertretenden Leitung der Arbeitsgruppe Estland ist es wegen meiner Bindung an die Dienststelle Dorpat und wegen des eingeleiteten Abbaus der Revaler Dienststelle notwendig den eigentlichen Sitz der Arbeitsgruppe Estland von Reval nach Dorpat zu verlegen.“ (With my appointment as deputy of the Estonian Working Group, it is necessary to move the actual seat of the Estonian Working Group from Reval to Dorpat because of my connection to the Dorpat office and because of the initiated reduction of the Reval office.) Verlegung des Sitzes der Arbeitsgruppe Estland. Stellv. Leiter der Arbeitsgruppe Dr. Esser, Obereinsatzführer (Relocation of the headquarters of the Estonia Working Group. Deputy Head of the Working Group Dr. Esser, Obereinsatzführer). TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 123 (February 1943), p. 17.

<sup>59</sup> “Wochenbericht Nr. 59.“ TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (February 1943), p. 538.

<sup>60</sup> For more information on Esser, see: Hoppe, Jens. “Ein Kunsthistoriker im Dienste einer NS-Organisation. Dr. Karl Heinz Esser beim Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die besetzten Gebiete.” *Mainzer Zeitschrift*. 105 (2010): 179–199; Idem, „Dr. Karl Heinz Esser. Selbstverständnis und Tätigkeit eines beim Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg tätigen Kunsthistorikers im besetzten Baltikum.“ Gasiór, Agnieszka. Janatkova, Alena and Magdalena Bushart (eds.). *Kunstgeschichte in den besetzten Gebieten 1939-1945*. Cologne: Böhlau, 2016, pp. 275-308.

<sup>61</sup> Idem.

<sup>62</sup> Idem.



By winter 1944, the collected works of the ERR in Dorpat were ordered to be evacuated to Ratibor.

Picture (28): ERR stamp. TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 123 (June 1943), p. 5.

#### **d. The Looting of the Genss' collection by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR)**

The ERR arrived in Estonia after the Wehrmacht and its competing agency, the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD).<sup>63</sup> Upon arrival in Reval the ERR had to first assert its “right” to Jewish libraries, archives, and art collections. In the case of Julius Genss’ library, a lengthy and highly charged contest emerged as to who could rightfully claim the valuable and important Genss collection. In a report entitled *Bericht über die Ergebnisse der Fahrt nach Dorpat* (Report on the results of the trip to Dorpat), covering the time period from February 4-7, 1942, Dr. Walter Grothe<sup>64</sup>, head of Rosenberg’s *Hobe Schule* library, reported that the SD had confiscated libraries in Dorpat and had therefore taken over the ERR’s main task. He continued by specifically noting the Julius Genss’ library and the SD’s illegitimate claim to it. He concluded by noting that “*Ich habe gegen dieses Verfahren im Interesse der Bibliothek der Hohen Schule Einspruch erhoben.*” (Yesterday, I appealed on behalf of the *Hobe Schule*.)<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> The *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) in Estonia was led by Martin Sandberger, who also led the *Sonderkommando 1a* of the *Einsatzgruppe A*. An organizational chart of the SD *Dienststelle* Reval is preserved in the Arolson Archives Online Collection: Persecution action on the "occupied Eastern territory" (Baltic states), reference code: 9034200. [https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/archive/1-2-7-4\\_9034200/?p=1&doc\\_id=82173207](https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/archive/1-2-7-4_9034200/?p=1&doc_id=82173207) (accessed 29 September 2021). On the role of the *Sicherheitsdienst* and its efforts to confiscate the Genss’ library, including Prof Paul Arriste’s role, with whom Julius Genss was acquainted prior to the war, see: TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 119 (February 1942), pp. 172-173.

<sup>64</sup> The *Zentralbibliothek* of the *Hobe Schule* (ZBHS) was directed by Dr. Walther Grothe and IEJ director Wilhelm Grau. The ZBHS was to become the central research facility for the *Hobe Schule*. In October 1942, the *Hobe Schule* library was moved to Tyrol, Austria, first to the Grand Hotel Annenheim near St. Andrä bei Villach, later to the remote Monastery of Tanzenberg, close to Klagenfurt, Carinthia. Grimsted, *Roads to Ratibor*, p. 404.

<sup>65</sup> “Ergebnis der Informationsreise zur Hauptarbeitsgruppe Ostland des Einsatzstabes Reichsleiter Rosenberg (vom 27.1. – 12.2.1942)“, NS 8/260, fol. 1, vol. 2, p. 11ff; [The report continues by stating “*Das zwischen dem Einsatzstab und dem SD getroffene Arbeitsabkommen besagt eindeutig, dass der SD die Objekte für den Einsatzstab beschlagnahmt, welchen die politischen Akten bis 1933 sowie alle Buchbestände zufallen. (...) Ich weiss nachdrücklich darauf hin, dass der Sonderstab Bibliothek die Möglichkeit haben muss, seine Suchansprüche zu stellen, bevor über beschlagnahmte und bearbeitete Bestände, gleichgültig von welcher Instanz verfügt wird. (...) Besonders krass ist der Fall Genss. Die Bibliothek, welche wertvolle Kunstgeschichtliche Werke, Ingermanand-Literatur und Baltica enthielt, wurde mehrere Teile sind auseinandergerissen. Ein Teil soll für den Einsatzstab nach Reval gekommen sein (?). Ein Teil ist der UB Dorpat überwiesen worden, wovon einige wieder zurückgefordert wurden. Der Rest soll nach Berlin geschafft sein. Demnach wäre die Bibliothek Genss*”

Even a couple of months prior to that, Dr. Karl-Heinz Esser had complained in a letter to Robert Scholz, head of the *Amt Bildende Kunst*, that the Genss library had unfortunately been split into various locations: While the “unimportant”<sup>66</sup> part of the collection had gone to the Estonian Art Museum, a second part had been confiscated by the SD, a third part had been transferred to Dorpat, while a fourth part presumably had ended up in Russia. The ERR’s insistence in gaining control over the Genss library manifested itself in many letters sent from Estonia to their headquarters in Berlin. In one of the letters, dated December 11, 1941, the importance of the Genss collection is emphasized by stating that the establishment of a reference library in the Reval ERR office is



Picture (29): Oil painting of Julius Genss. The painting is still missing. Courtesy of Iulia Gens.

basically unthinkable without the vast Genss library.<sup>67</sup> Two months and a couple of letters and reports later, on February 9, 1942, the ERR Reval office drew up a memo entitled *Ermittlungen in Dorpat über den Verbleib der Bibliothek Genss* (Investigations into the Whereabouts of Genss’ Library in Dorpat) noting that the collection was currently fourfold: while the first part of the collection was held by the Estonian Art Museum, the SD was holding on to two parts of the collection at Dornberg, Schulerstr. 17. The fourth and last part of the collection, which included next to Genss’ book collection also art objects, such as lithographs, icons, drawings, oil paintings, including an oil painting of Genss’ himself, was – according to this memo – as of November 1941 – still in Genss’ old apartment, albeit sealed by the SD.<sup>68</sup>

*in vier Teile zersplittert. Diese Informationen beruhen auf dem mündlichen Bericht Dr. Nerlings. (...)”* (The working agreement between the Einsatzstab and the SD clearly states that the SD confiscates the objects for the Einsatzstab, to which the political files up to 1933 as well as all book holdings fall. (...) I emphatically point out that the Special Library Staff must have the opportunity to make its search requests before any confiscated and processed holdings are disposed of, regardless of the authority. (...) The case of Genss is particularly glaring. The library, which contained valuable works of art history, Ingermanand literature and Baltica, was torn apart in several parts. One part is said to have come to Reval for the operational staff (?). One part was transferred to the Dorpat UB, some of which was reclaimed. The rest is said to have gone to Berlin. According to this, the Genss library would have been split into four parts. This information is based on the oral report of Dr. Nerling.)

<sup>66</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 138 (*no date*), p. 606; see also: 3676/opys 1, file 140 (December 1941), pp. 58-59.

<sup>67</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 138 (December 1941), p. 714; see also: 3676/opys 1, file 140 (December 1941), p. 123.

<sup>68</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 119 (February 1942), pp. 172-173; see also: 3676/opys 1, file 140 (February 1942), p. 121.

By spring 1942 (12 May 1942), a consensus was reached between the SD and the ERR, which stipulated that the SD hand over the Julius Genss collection held in Reval. As noted in a weekly report that covered the time period from May 10-16, the collection contained 4,200 books at that time.<sup>69</sup> A month later, on June 15, 1942, Georg von Krusenstjern, *Haupteinsatzführer* for Reval, traveled to Dorpat to negotiate with the SD the release of about 4,200 books that were held in the SD offices of the *Gebietskommissariat* Dorpat.<sup>70</sup> On July 8, the ERR reported in one of its many weekly reports that 26 boxes were received from Dorpat, yet there is no special mention of the Genss library, although it can be assumed that the collection was part of it. Again a month later, and after some sorting and cataloging of the Genss library by the ERR staff in Reval, the *Sonderstab Bibliothek* assessed that the most valuable items can be found among Genss' art and Judaica collection.<sup>71</sup> In early September 1942, Krusenstjern wrote in a monthly report for August of that year that the preliminary cataloging and ordering of the Genss collection resulted in the creation of 3,125 index cards.<sup>72</sup> However, by October 3, 1942, Krusenstjern was in a position to report that the cataloging had now been completed, covering 4,025 books, not including numerous collective works.<sup>73</sup> This number did not include the works that at that time were still located at the Estonian Art Museum.

In a report on the ERR Reval's "Working Group Leaders Meeting" (*Arbeitsgruppenleitertagung*) on September 19, 1942, Krusenstjern noted that the ERR Reval organized a small exhibition featuring samples of their special fields of work. This exhibition included "Bolshevik" leaflets in Estonian and Russian. The report further noted that the Genss' library by far provided the most amount of objects, including unique samples of old-Russian art, valuable engravings, lithographs, sculptures, old books and bibles, unique Hebraica and Judaica objects, as well as "Jewish" and "degenerated" art.<sup>74</sup>

A quarterly report from October 9, 1942, by the *Generalkommissariat* Reval Abt. II (*Kulturpolitik*, art politics) to the ERR Reval repeated the unique character of the collection, and consequently argued to bring together all various parts of the collection into one main depository, the University of

---

<sup>69</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (May 1942), p. 192.

<sup>70</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (June 1942), p. 203.

<sup>71</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 129 (August 1942), p. 3ff.

<sup>72</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (September 1942), p. 312.

<sup>73</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (October 1942), p. 359.

<sup>74</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (September 1942), p. 317.

Dorpat.<sup>75</sup> Only 10 days later, this was followed up by a letter from the ERR Estonia to the *Stabsführung* outlining how the various parts of the collection, which were categorized as one of the more complete and unique private art collections of the Soviet Union, were gathered as well as by providing suggestions as to its further usage. The letter recapped that the first part of the collection was initially donated by Genss himself to the Art Museum in Reval, amounting to 2,000 books, while the second part was hidden in Dorpat and was subsequently “secured” by the SD. The third part was located in various sites in Reval but “secured” by the ERR, while the fourth part was “secured” by the SD in Reval in Genss’ former apartment located in Rosenkranzstrasse 10. (Genss’ apartment was subsequently used by the Wehrmacht as its officers’ headquarters.)

The letter continued by describing the approximately 5,000 books now in possession of the ERR: According to the description of the books, they consisted of a. fiction (German and French classics; often leather-bound books adorned with gold and crests); b. academic art history collection (in various languages, i.e. Thieme-Beckers’ art encyclopedia in 22 volumes (leather-bound)); c. an art collection (mostly art history books in Russia); d. Judaica (leather-bound books dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century), with a note that Genss brought along part of this valuable collection when he fled to Russia; and e. an art collection (lithographs; engravings, oils [including a self-portrait of Julius Genss], etc.). The letter also established that the famous ex libris collection had not yet been found. At the end of this lengthy analysis on Genss’ collection, the same suggestion was repeated to preserve the collection in one main place: the soon-to-be established *Reichsuniversität* Dorpat (*Deutsche Universität für das Ostland*).<sup>76</sup> This suggestion was strengthened by the fact that the collection – according to the ERR – should not be ripped apart for the benefit of the various ERR offices (i.e. *Hobe Schule*; *Sonderstab Sippenforschung* or for example *Sonderstab Volkskunde*). Duplicates, however, were different; they could be sent to various institutions, pending the approval from the *Reichsleiter*.<sup>77</sup>

This analysis by the *Generalkommissariat* was followed by yet another letter dated with October 28, 1942, in which the *Stabsführung* agreed that the Genss collection should be preserved and sent over to the *Reichsuniversität* Dorpat. To do so, the collection would first be gathered at the ERR office in Dorpat. By early November the Art Museum in Reval agreed to hand over its collection to the ERR office Dorpat amounting to 1,228 volumes, or 18 crates.<sup>78</sup> At the end of the same month, with the intention to finally unify the collection, the ERR office in Reval forwarded to Dorpat 34 boxes

<sup>75</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 218 (October 1942), p. 274 ff.

<sup>76</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 218 (October 1942), p. 273.

<sup>77</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 218 (October 1942), p. 274 ff.

<sup>78</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (November 1942), p. 264.

holding Genss' collection.<sup>79</sup> Yet, it apparently did not include all books since a monthly report from December 1942, noted that there were some remaining items of the Genss collection still to be found in the Reval office. Also in December 1942, a letter to the *Amt Bildende Kunst* referred to the very specialized libraries now available at the ERR offices in Reval and Dorpat, alluding to the Genss library. The letter further reiterated that the Genss library would function as a bedrock for the establishment of the soon to be opened *Reichsuniversität*.<sup>80</sup>

Most surviving ERR documents describe the attempt to first bring together and then keep together the Genss collection as a whole and not to separate it, however, there are letters in between that provide a slightly different view: For example, in mid-December 1942, Krusenstjern suggested that the Judaica collection should be dealt with independently<sup>81</sup>, in addition to individual books being taken out of the collection for specific users, such as Dr. Karl-Heinz Esser<sup>82</sup>, the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum<sup>83</sup>, the *Komintern*-Institute Berlin, the *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* (IEJ; Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question) in Frankfurt/Main, as well as some professional literature which was sent to various offices of the *Reichsleiter*, in addition to some books that were sent to "Riga or Berlin."<sup>84</sup> A final activity report of the *LAG Ostland* from January 15, 1943 referred to some 6,000 books that were held by the ERR office in Dorpat.<sup>85</sup>

In March 1943, Dr. Maurach, then head of Reval's ERR office with the title of "*Einsatzführer*," noted in a weekly report that the ERR office in Reval was still holding on to a number of paintings and art fragments as well as engravings from the Genss collection.<sup>86</sup> Some of the last letters addressing the Genss collection date back to May and June 1943: at that point, the collection – for the most part – was centralized in the ERR's Dorpat office. While the collection was generally cared for by Dr.

---

<sup>79</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (November 1942), p. 267; see also: TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 138 (January 1943), p. 15 (Here there is a mention that the 1,228 volumes consisted of 1,491 books.)

<sup>80</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 140 (December 1942), p. 95ff.

<sup>81</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 218 (December 1942), p. 272. (Please note that the letter indicates that an overview of Genss' Judaica collection is attached; however, this appendix is not in the file.)

<sup>82</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 119 (May 1943), p. 25.

<sup>83</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 140 (January 1943), p. 8.

<sup>84</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (January 1943), p. 408ff.

<sup>85</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (January 1943), p. 408ff.

<sup>86</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 234 (March 1943), p. 558.

Esser, he warned that after his departure for the East (*Abberufung aus dem Ostland*)<sup>87</sup> the collection at the ERR office in Dorpat could be threatened unless it was properly packed and stacked.<sup>88</sup>

The files held at the Ukrainian State Archive regarding Genss don't cover the time period between spring 1943 and fall of 1944, by the time Estonia was once again part of the Soviet Union. Yet, it can be assumed that during this time the main work in acquiring and maintaining the collection had been completed and therefore did not require any special mention in the ERR's monthly or weekly reports.

In March 1944, in anticipation of the Nazi retreat from Estonia, according to a letter by *Obereinsatzführer* Dr. Hans Maier<sup>89</sup> to Pg. Wilhelm Hollberg<sup>90</sup>, books located in the ERR office in Dorpat were to be sent to Ratibor for safe keeping.<sup>91</sup> Aware of the fact that the Genss collection would fall into the hands of the Red Army, the ERR attempted to evacuate its collection to Ratibor in November 1944. Two weeks later, these sixty-one crates were named as one of the priority collections for evacuation. As the Red Army advanced and the German retreat intensified in 1944, the ERR decided by mid-December 1944 to ship the Genss library from Pless to Karlsbad. In the end, it never arrived in Karlsbad:<sup>92</sup> in February 1945, the Red Army found the collection in the echelons of the Pless railroad station.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Dr. Esser was scheduled to leave for the East on 1 June 1943; see: "Abberufung aus dem Ostlande. Ihr Schreiben vom 7.5.1943" (Recall from the Ostland. Your letter from May 7, 1943). TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 138 (May 1943), p. 67.

<sup>88</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, file 138 (May 1943), p. 67.

<sup>89</sup> Dr. Hans Maier first headed the AG Latvia, later the AG Italy.

<sup>90</sup> Prof. Wilhelm Hollberg served as the staff deputy head of department IV/3.

<sup>91</sup> TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 367/opys 1, 137 (March 1944), p. 8. (However, the letter does not specifically refer to the Genss collection.)

<sup>92</sup> ERR monthly report for November by Müller (Pless, 13 December 1944), BArch, NS 30/50, fol. 1, vol. 5, p. 66: "Für Pless hat Pg. Natusch folgende Aufstellung gemacht: a) Zu verladen wären für Ratibor (...); b) Zu verladen wären für Karlsbad: 1) Die Genss'sche Bibliothek ca. 61 Kisten." (For Pless, Pg. Natusch made the following list: a) to be loaded for Ratibor (...); b) to be loaded for Karlsbad: 1) Genss' library approx. 61 boxes.) see also: Grimsted, *Roads to Ratibor*, p. 446.

<sup>93</sup> BArch, NS 30/50, fol. 1, vol. 5, p. 66.

## II) AVAILABLE ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTATION

Several archival records were consulted, foremost the ERR documents located at the Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine (TsDAVO), the main source for this report. Additional archival records, such as records held by the German Federal Archives, were used to fill in certain historical gaps. Yet most other research attempts proved to be of little value to this very specific study, such as the records held at Estonia's National Archive. While the records there contain information on the activities of the ERR in Estonia, and in particular on Georg von Krusenstjern, no information was found on the Genss collection.<sup>94</sup>

### **a. Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine – TsDAVO**

Most of the captured foreign records seized by the Soviets at the end of the Second World War were ordered to be transferred and centralized in Moscow. Nonetheless, Ukraine was able to retain many important German records and fragmentary files created during the German occupation. These included files either left behind by the Germans or captured by Ukrainian authorities during the war or shortly thereafter. Those of ERR provenance or related to ERR activities in occupied Europe are held in three fonds in the Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine (*Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchykh orhaniv vlady ta upravlinnia*, TsDAVO) in Kyiv (Kiev).<sup>95</sup>

As currently arranged in TsDAVO, there are three fonds containing original ERR and related files. Two of them (fonds 3674 and 3676) are specifically designated by name for the ERR, while a third (fond 3206) contains fragmentary files from the Reich Commissariat for Ukraine (*Reichskommissariat für die Ukraine*). The voluminous ERR records held by TsDAVO were acquired by its Soviet-era predecessors from several different sources. Taken together, these materials represent one of the most important surviving groups of ERR records. The ERR files in TsDAVO cover the years 1940-1944. Many of the documents were probably sent from selected ERR units in occupied Europe to ERR headquarters in Berlin, where many ERR records were reportedly destroyed in November 1943 during a bombing raid. It may be that the files preserved were evacuated to Ratibor (postwar Racibórz, Poland), but it is possible that they remained in or near Berlin.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Estonian National Archive: “Materials on Estonia prepared by Georg von Krusenstjern for the organization ‘Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die besetzten Gebiete Arbeitsgruppe Estland.’” (EAA.1414.2.122) [1941-1942] [Note: Most German documents refer to Krusenstjern with a “J”. The Estonian National Archive refers to Krusenstjern with an “I”.]

<sup>95</sup> Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. “Reconstructing the Records of Nazi Cultural Plunder. A Guide to the Dispersed Archives of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) and the Postwar Retrieval of ERR Loot.” <https://www.errproject.org/guide.php> (accessed 27 September 2021).

<sup>96</sup> Idem.

TsDAVO's ERR files are arranged in two separate fonds – fond 3676 entitled as if for the ERR in the occupied Soviet Union and fond 3674 for the ERR in occupied Western Europe. However, as Patricia Grimsted Kennedy has pointed out, the implied distinction in content is erroneous and misleading. The ERR used at least two varying names at different times, but not based on the geographic distinctions suggested by the titles of the TsDAVO fonds. When the ERR began operating in Western Europe in the summer of 1940, it initially used the name “Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die westlichen besetzten Gebiete und die Niederlande” (*Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die westlichen besetzten Gebiete und die Niederlande*), the name assigned to TsDAVO fond 3674. After the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, and the formation of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories (*Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete*, RMbO), also under Rosenberg, in July 1941, the ERR dropped “Western” and “the Netherlands,” and changed the latter half of its name to “for the Occupied Territories” alone.<sup>97</sup>

The surviving ERR documents describing the continuous looting and usage of the Julius Genss collection can be found in Fond 3676, and are available online at: <http://err.tsdavo.gov.ua/> due to sponsorship by the Claims Conference.<sup>98</sup> While these files are not complete and some obvious documents are missing, the surviving documents nevertheless provide an overview of the staggered, but ultimately very thorough looting of this unique collection and the Nazis proposed usage of it.

Some of the documents that are missing are for example the catalog the ERR created of Genss' library in August 1942. If the catalog was to surface elsewhere, including among other files within the State Archival Service of Ukraine, it would provide a valuable insight into the content of the books looted by the ERR, including about 3,125 index cards, or 4,025 books mentioned by October 1942. Equally, if the November 1942 inventory list created by Estonia's Art Museum for the transfer of Genss' art collection to the ERR was to surface, it would provide yet another invaluable puzzle piece. Similarly, a December 1942 report suggested that an appendix dealing with Genss' Judaica collection is attached, however, the report, which is part of the scanned-in documents that are available online, does not include the appendix.

Lastly, in January 1943, the ERR's final report out of Estonia referred to the transfer of several books from the Genss' collection that were sent to various institutions. The appendix mentioned in this report is also missing.

---

<sup>97</sup> Idem.

<sup>98</sup> Fond 3676 is online accessible at: <http://err.tsdavo.gov.ua/fonds/3/>. After their initial online publication, the ERR files were offline for a while, but as of March 2022, are accessible again with specific reference to the sponsorship received from the Claims Conference. Due to the current Russian invasion of Ukraine, the files are being mirrored in Germany.

**b. Bundesarchiv (Federal Archives): BArch NS 8/260 “Kanzlei Rosenberg”  
BArch NS 30/50 “Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg”**

Some fragmentary information on the looting of the Genss library can be found in two folders: BArch NS 8/260 “Kanzlei Rosenberg”<sup>99</sup> and BArch NS 30/50 “Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg”<sup>100</sup>.

Within BArch NS 8/260, folder 1, volume 2 (page 11), the following report, written by Dr. Grothe head of the *Hohen Schule* library, is preserved: *Bericht über die Ergebnisse der Fahrt nach Dorpat*. (4 -7 February 1942). The report is a scathing criticism of the actions taken by the SD in confiscating libraries, among them the library of Julius Genss. The report seems to be a follow-up to a memorandum entitled *Ermittlungen in Dorpat über den Verbleib der Bibliothek Genss*, written on 9 February 1942 and preserved in the State Archival Service of Ukraine.

Besonders krass ist der Fall Genss. Die Bibliothek, welche wertvolle Kunstgeschichtliche Werke, Ingermanland-Literatur und Baltica enthielt, wurde in mehrere Teile auseinandergerissen. Ein Teil soll für den Einsatzstab nach

Reval gekommen sein (?). Ein Teil ist der UB Dorpat überwiesen worden, wovon einiges wieder zurückgefordert wurde. Der Rest soll nach Berlin geschafft sein. Demnach wäre die Bibliothek Genss in vier Teile zersplittert. Diese Informationen beruhen auf dem mündlichen Bericht Dr. Merlings. Ob und wie weit nach nicht beschlagnahmte Büchereien in Dorpat vorhanden sind, entzieht sich meiner Kenntnis. Die Arbeitsvorkommen für die Sonderstäbe Bibliothek und Kunst für Vorgeschichte und Volkskunde sind jedoch so lohnend, daß ihnen die Arbeitsmöglichkeit in Dorpat geschaffen werden sollte.

Picture (30): “Bericht über die Ergebnisse der Fahrt nach Dorpat“ (Report on the results of the trip to Dorpat.) (4 -7 February, 1942). BArch NS 8/260, fol. 1, vol. 2, pp. 12-13.

Within BArch NS 30/50, folder 1, volume 5, a report from December 13, 1944, notably more than a year later than the last recorded mention of the Genss’ library within the files of the Ukrainian State

<sup>99</sup> BArch NS 8/260, fol.1, vol. 2: “Kanzlei Rosenberg. Schriftwechsel betr. fachliche Organisations- und Verwaltungsangelegenheiten des ERR.” (Rosenberg's office. Correspondence concerning technical organizational and administrative matters of the ERR), [1942-1943]. <https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/a6b505e1-4dfe-45c0-b1d3-fe5de3eb62da/> (accessed 17 September 2021).

<sup>100</sup> BArch NS 30/50, fol. 1, vol. 5: “Verschiedenes – vor allem: Erforschung und Bekämpfung des Bolschewismus; Angelegenheiten der Dienststelle Ratibor – Bestände und Personal (Handakten Dr. Wunder)” (Miscellaneous – especially: research into and fight against Bolshevism. Affairs of the Ratibor office - holdings and personnel (reference files Dr. Wunder), [1942 – 1944]. <https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/32f1b60c-915d-4eec-8de2-60d4ea7deb72/> (accessed 17 September 2021).

Archive, a note can be found that the Genss library, consisting of 61 crates, was located in Pless to be shipped to Karlsbad.<sup>101</sup>

- 4 -

Ratibor, die übrigen Ortsgruppen-  
Archive nach Karlsbad kommen oder in  
Pless bleiben.

Für Pless hat Pg. Hatusch folgende Aufstellung gemacht:

a) Zu verladen wären für R a t i b o r :

1) Russische Bücher aus Libsu	41 Kisten	}	Dr.Thomson
2) Aus Waggon Hannover 15527	14 Kisten		
3) Alphabetischer Katalog	2 Kisten		
4) NR- und Westbücherei	37 Kisten		Frl.Feldmann u. Ruhbaum
5) Russische Bücher sig.R. Div.Nr.	6 Kisten	}	Dr.Thomson
Ergänzung und Nachsendung	6 Kisten		
Mitauer Zeitschriften	12 Kisten		Erholung
Sign.K 1-24 Dubletten u.Bücher	24 Kisten		Dr.Thomson
6) Privatgut Piroshkow	6 Kisten	}	Expeditions- barzoke
7) Professor Engel	5 Kisten		
8) Grosse sowj. Enzyklopädie	8 Kisten		Dr.Thomson
9) Dubletten Deutsch	9 Kisten		Frl.Feldmann Ruhbaum
10) Schilder	2 Kisten		Exp.Lager
11) Indische Literatur	1 Kiste		Ruhbaum
	173 Kisten		
12) Smolensker Parteiarchiv Fonds Nr.1-25 /Dr.Mücke	25 Bündel		= 2 Waggonn
13) Unika-Zeitschriften /Erholung			1 Waggon
	Zusammen:		<u>3 Waggonn</u>

b) Zu verladen wären für K a r l s b a d :

1) Die Genss'sche Bibliothek	ca. 61 Kisten	←	
2) Rigauer-Reihe (Erstdubletten)	169 Kisten		
weitere Dubletten	18 Kisten		
3) Dubletten u.falsch sign.Bücher	192 Kisten		
4) Puschkina-Museum	14 Kisten u. 1 kl.Schrank		
5) Lettische Schulbücher	1 Kiste		
Russische Bücher (Schulbücher)	8 Kisten		
Lettische Bücher (Schulbücher)	3 Kisten		
Russische Dubletten	58 Kisten		
weitere lettische Dubletten	25 Kisten		
	549 Kisten		= 3 Waggonn
6) Smolensker Parteiarchiv ausser den Fonds Nr.1-25			ca.3 "
7) Zeitschriftendubletten gebündelt	ca.1		"
	Zusammen		<u>7 Waggonn</u>

Ich bitte, diese Verladelisten zu überprüfen.

Picture (31): "Aufstellung über Bestände, nach Lagerplätzen geordnet." (List of stocks, sorted by storage location). (13 December 1944). BArch NS 30/50, fol. 1, vol. 5.

<sup>101</sup> BArch NS 30/50, fol. 1, vol. 5, p. 60 (ff): Report by Lommatzsch, Stabseinsatzführer to Dr. Wunder et al: "Aufstellung über Bestände, nach Lagerplätzen geordnet." (List of inventories, sorted by storage location). (13 December 1944).

**c. Timeline – Reconstructing the ERR Looting of the Julius Genss Collection based on archival records**

<b>File Nr.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Information</b>
3676/opys 1, file 124 (September 1943), p. 1	4 July 1941	Julius Genss “donated” <sup>102</sup> part of his library (1,491 books), consisting of mostly art books, to the Estonian Art Museum.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (October 1941), p. 7ff	13 October 1941	<i>Tätigkeitsbericht</i> (activity report) from 29 September - 12 October 1941, written by Dr. Speer and Dr. Krusenstjern: Report mentioned that a request was made to the SD to release the Genss collection to the ERR. The report also stated that a day earlier, the Estonian self-administration ( <i>Selbstverwaltung</i> ) made a similar request which was granted by the SD.
3676/opys 1, file 138 ( <i>no date</i> ), p. 606; see also: 3676/opys 1, file 140 ( <i>no date</i> ), pp. 58-59	<i>December (?)</i> 1941	An undated letter from Dr. Esser to Robert Scholz ( <i>Leiter des Amtes Bildende Kunst</i> ) (head, office of pictorial arts) noted that the professional Genss’ library should be transferred to the ERR. Esser further stated that the library was split in many ways, with parts of the collection – the unimportant part, as per the ERR – having gone to the Art Museum. A second part was confiscated by the SD and not yet transferred to the ERR; a third part was apparently transferred somewhere in Dorpat, while a fourth part presumably ended up in Russia. The collection held by the SD, mostly magazines, was deemed very important for the further study of Estonian art monuments. Berlin was asked to intervene.
3676/opys 1, file 138 (December 1941), p. 714; see also: 3676/opys 1, file 140	11 December 1941	The letter outlined the responsibilities assumed by the cultural envoy of the <i>Amt Bildende Kunst</i> (office of pictorial art) in Estonia: among the envoy’s responsibilities were the establishment of a reference library in the Reval ERR office. This task was best carried out by utilizing the exceptional library amassed by Julius Genss.

<sup>102</sup> As noted previously, Julius Genss did not “donate” his collection, rather attempted to safeguard parts of his collection by placing it in the Estonian Museum of Art.

(December 1941), p. 123		
3676/opys 1, file 234 (December 1941), p. 44	31 December 1941	<i>Arbeitsbericht der Arbeitsgruppe Estland</i> (work report AG Estonia): The remainder part of Genss' collection located in his apartment (Rosenkrankzstr. 10) was sealed at the order of the SD. A while back, Genss had initiated that another part of the collection be sent to the Estonian Museum as well as to the University Library in Dorpat. The report noted that research was initiated to get more background information on when and under what conditions these parts of the collection were donated. The report outlined the ERR's interest in unifying the collection and to make it available to the <i>Hobe Schule</i> .
3676/opys 1, file 234 (January 1941), p. 164	8 January 1942	<i>Arbeitsbericht</i> (work report) from 4 January 1942: The report noted that Genss' collection located at the Art Museum should be handed over to the ERR (according to Dr. Esser). It further mentioned that Krusenstjern was in discussion with the SD for the release of its confiscated material, including the Genss collection. Decision by the SD will be dependent on a direction coming from Berlin.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (January 1941), p. 164	10 January 1942	<i>Wochenbericht</i> (week report) from 4 - 10 January: The report referred to the Genss' art collection with a note that the collection was part of the Art Museum in Reval. Dr. Weiss <sup>103</sup> was quoted saying that the collection should be "German" as opposed to "Estonian," but that the topic is of a delicate nature.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (January 1942), p. 166	16 January 1942	<i>Arbeitsbericht</i> (Work report) from 12 - 17 January 1942 (Nr. 3): The report noted that the collection held at Estonia's Art Museum encompassed thousands of books, however, the collection might not be of expected significance. Dr. Weiss suggested to temporarily only loan relevant books, all of which were needed for Dr. Esser's art history study.

<sup>103</sup> Dr. Hellmuth Weiss (1900-1992) was the territorial plenipotentiary for the resettlement into Estonia in 1941. Between 1941 and 1944, he headed the Cultural Policy Department at the Estonian Commissar General (Generalkommissar). Between 1944 and 1945, he served in the Wehrmacht and was taken prisoner of war in 1945. Later he returned to Germany and served as the director for the J. G. Herder Institute in Marburg and was a founding member of the Baltic Historical Commission. Baltic Historical Commission, entry "Weiss, Hellmuth" <https://bbld.de/0000000109092878> (accessed 30 March 2022).

3676/opys 1, file 119 (February 1942), pp. 172-173; see also: 3676/opys 1, file 140 (February 1942), p. 121	9 February 1942	Memo <i>Ermittlungen in Dorpat über den Verbleib der Bibliothek Genss</i> (Investigation in Dorpat about the whereabouts of Genss' library), written by the ERR Reval office: The memo mentioned that two parts of the collection were with the SD (with the first part previously donated by Genss to the Estonian Art Museum); a fourth part was – as of 20 November 1941 – still in Genss' apartment in Reval which was subsequently sealed by the SD. At the time of the memo, there was no agreement with the SD as to the fate of the collection.
BArch NS 8/260, folder 1, volume 2 (10 February 1942), pp. 12-13	10 February 1942	Report entitled <i>Bericht über die Ergebnisse der Fahrt nach Dorpat</i> (Report on the results of the trip to Dorpat): Dr. Grothe (head of the <i>Hobe Schule</i> library) reported that the SD confiscated libraries in Dorpat and therefore took over the ERR's main task. He noted that the SD had an illegitimate claim on Genss' library, consisting of precious arthistory works, Ingbermanand and Baltic literature and that the collection was split into various parts. One part was supposedly in Reval, while another part was sent to the University in Dorpat. A separate part of the collection had been sent to Berlin. Grothe noted that this information was relayed to him by Dr. Nerling and that he raised an objection to these actions: <i>Yesterday, I appealed on behalf of the Hobe Schule.</i>
3676/opys 1, file 123 (May <i>missing</i> [1942]), p. 75	11 May 1942	Krusenstjern noted that v. Seefeldt (SD) seized a number of materials in Dorpat that previously belonged to Julius Genss.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (May 1942), p. 192	12 May 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ) 10 – 16 May 1942: SD handed over the Genss collection (4,200 books) to the ERR (which was stored at Domberg, Schulerstr. 17) together with 185,000 books that were additionally seized by the SD. The ERR started sorting the Genss collection and considered picking out a special piece from the collection to present to Rosenberg himself, however, nothing appropriate could be found;
3676/opys 1, file 234	20 May 1942	Weekly Report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 17 - 23 May 1942, Nr. 21: Krusenstjern visited Estonia's Art Museum in regard to the Genss collection.

(March 1942), p. 198		
3676/opys 1, file 234 (March 1942), p. 201	8 June 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 31 May - 6 June 1942, Nr. 23: ERR launched the examination and organization of the Genss collection now stored at their office.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (June 1942), p. 203	15 June 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 7 - 13 June 1942, Nr. 24: Krusenstjern traveled to Dorpat to negotiate the SD's release of about 4,200 books that are part of the Genss library (stored within the SD offices of the <i>Gebietskommissariat</i> Dorpat, rooms 14 and 20). He requested that the collection be send to Reval.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (June 1942), p. 205- 206	22 June 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 14 – 20 June 1942, Nr. 25: The organization of Genss' library at the ERR Reval office continued.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (July 1942), p. 215	8 July 1942	Weekly Report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 5 - 11 July 1942, Nr. 28: 26 boxes sent from Dorpat arrived in Reval. The organization of Genss' collection continued.
3676/opys 1, file 140 (July 1942), p. 218	14 July 1942	Weekly Report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 12 - 8 July 1942: The organization of Genss' library at the ERR office in Reval continued.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (July 1942), pp. 220-221	27 July 1942	Weekly Report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 19. – 24 July 1942, Nr. 30: The organization of Genss' library at the ERR office in Reval continued.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (August 1942), pp. 224	5 August 1942	Weekly Report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 26. July -1 August 1942, Nr. 31: The organization of Genss' library at the ERR office in Reval continued.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (August 1942), p. 226	2/8 August 1942	Weekly Report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 2 – 8 August 1942, Nr. 32: The organization of Genss' library at the ERR office in Reval continued by Ms Nerling.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (August	9 August 1942	Weekly Report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 9 - 15 August 1942, Nr. 33: The organization of Genss' library continued, and Ms. Nerling (ERR Reval) started the creation of a catalog.

1942), pp. 228-229		
3676/opys 1, file 234 (August 1942), p. 232	16 August 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 16 – 22 August 1942, Nr. 34: The organization and cataloging of Genss' library by Ms Nerling (ERR Reval) continued.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (August 1942), p. 235	23 August 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 23 - 29 August 1942, Nr. 35: The organization and cataloging of Genss library by Ms Nerling continued.
3676/opys 1, file 129 (August 1942), p. 3ff	26 August 1942	A letter by Dr. Gottlieb Ney, head of the ZBHS ( <i>Zentralbibliothek der Hohen Schule for HAG Ostland</i> ) and addressed to the AG Reval, <i>Sonderstab Bibliothek</i> , noted that the most valuable parts of the collection were among the art and Judaica collection. The recommendation was made to unite the collection, but if this was not wanted, parts of the collection should be sent to the ZBHS. This was followed by a listing of books that would be useful for the <i>Abteilung Bibliothek</i> .
3676/opys 1, file 138 (August 1943), p. 588 [p. 590]	31 August 1942	Activity report ( <i>Tätigkeitsbericht</i> ), 8 - 22 August 1942: On 12 August 1942, Esser discussed with Dr. Weiss (Section II, <i>Kulturpolitik</i> ) the future usage of the Genss collection.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (September 1942), p. 312	2 September 1942	Monthly Report ( <i>Monatsbericht</i> ), August 1942: Krusenstjern noted that the Genss collection was now ordered and cataloged, although no decision was made as to its future usage. As of 31 August 1942, 3,125 index cards were prepared.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (September 1942), p. 239	7 September 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 30 August - 5 September 1942, Nr. 36: The organization and cataloging of the Genss library by Ms Nerling continued.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (September 1942), p. 243	13 September 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 6 - 12 September 1942, Nr. 37: The organization and cataloging of the Genss library by Ms Nerling continued.
3676/opys 1, file 234	19 September 1942	Report on the Working Group Leaders Meeting ( <i>Arbeitsgruppenleitertagung</i> ), 19 September 1942: ERR

(September 1942), p. 317		Reval organized a small exhibition featuring a sample of their special fields of work. This exhibition included “Bolshevik” leaflets in Estonian and Russian. According to the report Genss’ library by far provided the most amount of objects, including unique samples of old-Russian art, valuable engravings, lithographs, sculptures, old books and bibles, unique Hebraica and Judaica objects, as well as “Jewish” and “degenerated” art.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (September 1942), p. 243	21 September 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 13 - 19 September 1942, Nr. 38: The organization and cataloging of the Genss library continued.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (September 1942), p. 250	28 September 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 20 - 26 September 1942, Nr. 39: The organization and cataloging of the Genss library by Ms Nerling continued.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (October 1942), p. 359	3 October 1942	Monthly report ( <i>Monatsbericht</i> ), September 1942: The organization and cataloging was completed: the Genss library accounted for 4,025 books (not including numerous collective works).
3676/opys 1, file 234 (October 1942), p. 256	6 October 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 4 - 10 October 1942, Nr. 41: On 6 October 1942, Dr. Weiss (Section II, <i>Kulturpolitik</i> ) and Krusenstjern discussed the Genss library and asserted the ERR’s “right” to the Genss collection located at the Art Museum. The report further noted that the museum will be requested to divest the collection as soon as the <i>Stabsführung</i> will decide on the future fate of the collection. A letter with a recommendation in that regard would be sent to the <i>Stabsführung</i> in the following week.
3676/opys 1, file 228 (October 1942), p. 167	9 October 1942	Quarterly report ( <i>Vierteljahresbericht</i> ) to the ERR <i>Stabsführung</i> for the time period 1 July to 30 September: According to the report, 3,521 books of the Genss’ collection were translated and stored. The report mentioned that the Genss’ library, given its unique character, should stay together as one complete collection within the ERR.
3676/opys 1, file 218 (October	12 October 1942	Letter from Dr. Weiss, <i>Generalkommissariat in Reval</i> Abt. II <i>Kulturpolitik</i> , to the ERR <i>Arbeitsgruppe Estland</i> : The letter mentioned that the collection is unique and recommended

1942), p. 274 ff		to bring together the various parts in one central location: the University of Dorpat. However, to satisfy the requests that had come from the various ERR offices ( <i>Sonderstäbe</i> ), duplicates or books already in possession within the university of Dorpat could be deaccessioned.
3676/opys 1, file 138 (October 1942), p. 207 Also: 3676/opys 1, file 140 (January 1943), p. 34	13 October 1942	Dr. Esser requested the following books from the Genss collection: “ <i>Thieme-Becker, Künstlerlexikon ca. 10 Bände; Handbuch der Kunstwissenschaft, soweit vorhanden (nicht Handbuch der Musikwissenschaften!); grosses zweibändiges Werk über die Zarenschlösser; Garbar, russische Kunst; vorhanden Hefte der Zeitschrift Ikustrom;</i> “
3676/opys 1, file 234 (October 1942), p. 266	19 October 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 11 - 17 October 1942, Nr. 42: The organization of Genss’ art portfolio by Ms Nerling commen218ced.
3676/opys 1, file (October 1942), p. 274 ff	19 October 1942	A letter from ERR Estonia to the <i>Stabsführung</i> made suggestions regarding the further use of Genss’ library with the mention that the collection was categorized as one of the more complete and unique private art collections of the Soviet Union. The letter further noted that Genss had compiled a catalog of his collection. The letter elaborated on the fact that the ERR was able to piece together the spread out Genss collection: The first part was donated by Genss himself to the Art Museum in Reval (Tallinn: Adolf Hitleristr.; The second part was hidden in Dorpat and “secured” by the SD; The third part was in various locations in Reval but “secured” by the ERR; while the fourth part was “secured” by the SD in Reval in Genss’ former apartment located in Rosenkranzstr.10 (the apartment was subsequently used by the Wehrmacht as its officers’ headquarters). According to the letter, the ERR office in Reval held 5,000 books while the Art Museum held 2,000 books. The letter continued with a description of the content of the collection: a. fiction (German and French classics; often leather-bound books adorned with gold and crests); b.

		academic art history collection (in various languages, i.e. Thine Beckers' art encyclopedia in 22 volumes, leather-bound); c. art collection (mostly art history books in Russia); d. Judaica (leather-bound books dating back to the 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> century) [note that Genss brought along part of this valuable collection when he fled to Russia]; and e. art collection (lithographs; engravings, oils [including a self-portrait of Julius Genss], etc.). The letter further mentioned that the famous ex libris collection was not yet found. A suggestion was made to preserve the collection for the soon-to-be established <i>Reichsuniversität</i> Dorpat ( <i>Deutsche Universität für das Ostland</i> ), as opposed to taking apart the collection for the benefit of the various ERR offices (i.e. <i>Hobe Schule</i> ; <i>Sippenforschung</i> , <i>Volkskunde</i> ). Duplicates, however, could be sent to the various institutions, pending the approval from the <i>Reichsleiter</i> , ( <b><i>A copy of the document is part of the appendix to this report.</i></b> )
3676/opys 1, file 234 (October 1942), pp. 261-262	27 October 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 18 - 24 October 1942, Nr. 43: The processing of Julius Genss' book collection (art books and fragments) continued.
3676/ opys 1, file 218 (October 1942), p. 273	28 October 1942	The <i>Stabsführung</i> agreed that both parts of the Genss library should be handed over to the <i>Reichsuniversität</i> Dorpat ( <i>Deutsche Universität für das Ostland</i> ). Duplicate copies could be kept by the <i>Sonderstäbe</i> .
3676/opys 1, file 234 (October 1942), p. 263	31 October 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 25 - 31 October 1942, Nr. 44: The work on Genss' collection was completed.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (November 1942), pp. 391-392	1 November 1942	Monthly report ( <i>Monatsbericht</i> ), Reval, 1 November 1942: The work on the Genss' art papers, <i>Buchfragmente</i> , <i>Kunstmappen und Bilder</i> was completed. Dr. Esser discussed with Dr. Weiss how to transfer the Genss' library to Dorpat.
3676/opys 1, file 140	5 November 1942	A supplement to the <i>Tätigkeitsbericht</i> signed by Dr. Esser noted that the Genss library is being crated at the Art Museum.

(November 1942), p. 115		
3676/opys 1, file 140 (November 1942), p. 115	7 November 1942	Activity report ( <i>Tätigkeitsbericht</i> ) sent to <i>AG Estland</i> : Gens collection was sent to Dorpat;
3676/opys 1, file 234 (November 1942), p. 264	8 November 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 1 - 7 November 1942, Nr. 45: The book collection held by the Art Museum – 1,228 volumes – was being packed and prepared to be sent to the ERR office in Dorpat. Specifically, the report mentioned that Genss' collection was packed on 7 November, filling 18 crates, and was sent to Dorpat.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (November 1942), p. 265	16 November 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 8. - 14. November 1942, Nr. 46: The temporary head of Reval's ERR office, v. Middendorf, noted that the book collection in the ERR office was stamped and packed.
3676/opys 1, file 138 (November 1942), p. 567ff [pp. 571ff]	17 November 1942	Activity report ( <i>Tätigkeitsbericht</i> ), 9 October - 8 November 1942: A letter from Dr. Esser to <i>Stabsführung, Hauptarbeitsgruppe Ostland</i> and <i>Arbeitsgruppe Estland</i> mentioned to immediately transfer the Genss' collection and to crate the collection located at the Art Museum. There is a note that the Genss' collection was crated at the Art Museum on 5 November and that on 7 November the collection was transported.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (November 1942), p. 266	23 November 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 15 - 21 November 1942, Nr. 47: Preparations to transport Genss' collection to Dorpat were completed.
3676/opys 1, file 140 (November 1943), p.14	27 November 1942	Letter from ERR Dorpat to ERR Reval: Letter mentioned that only one inventory list was found (of the three sent by the Art Museum listing their part of the Genss' collection).
3676/opys 1, file 234 (November 1942), p. 267	30 November 1942	Weekly report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), 22 - 29 November 1942, Nr. 48: On 24 November 1942, 34 boxes with Genss library were sent from ERR Reval to ERR Dorpat.
3676/opys 1, file 234	2 December 1942	Monthly report ( <i>Monatsbericht</i> ), Reval, 2 December 1942: All parts of the Genss library from the Art Museum were sent to the ERR office in Dorpat (1,228 volumes);

(December 1942), p. 399		additionally, the ERR office in Reval sent over its own Genss collection in order to make it publicly available; some remaining items in the ERR office in Reval included: “ <i>belletristische Werke, Klassiker, einzelne Bibliographien, Mappen, Bildmaterial u. wenige aktuelle Objekte.</i> ”
3676/opys 1, file 138 (December 1942), p. 565	5 December 1942	Activity Report ( <i>Tätigkeitsbericht</i> ) 9 - 30 November 1942: The mounting and indexing/cataloging of the Genss’ collection from the Art Museum in Reval started.
3676/opys 1, file 119 (December 1942), p. 72	10 December 1942	Memo: “ <i>Bericht über die Bearbeitung der Judaica aus dem Nachlass des Juden Genss</i> ” bei der Arbeitsgruppe Estland, <i>Aussenstelle Dorpat</i> ” - the memo mentioned that the Judaica collection was still complete but that parts of it might be of interest to the <i>Judeninstitut</i> in Frankfurt. ( <b>Appendix 2</b> ) The memo referred to 335 books of the Genss collection that were at that time located at the ERR institute in Dorpat.
3676/opys 1, file 140 (December 1942), p. 95ff	11 December 1942	A letter to the <i>Amt Bildende Kunst</i> regarding the establishment of a specialized library in the ERR offices in Dorpat and Reval as requested by the head of the <i>Sonderstab Bildenden Kunst</i> noted that this is now possible due to the vast library of Julius Genss. Because of the library’s unique character the suggestion was made to preserve the collection for the Eastern area ( <i>Ostland</i> ) and to further preserve it as such at a university library. The Genss library would therefore function as a fundamental bedrock for the to-be-established <i>Reichsuniversität</i> in Dorpat. Meanwhile the books will be arranged the following way: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Art of the Ostland,</li> <li>2. Art in Russia,</li> <li>3. Bolshevik Art,</li> <li>4. European art history (to be used for comparative purposes).</li> </ol> Books that are not used will be crated again in order to make them available for other Reich-German institutes or university libraries.

3676/opys 1, file 218 (December 1942), p. 272	14 December 1942	Krusenstjern suggested to the <i>Stabsführung Abtl. Auswertung</i> to deposit Genss' art book collection with the <i>Reichsuniversität</i> Dorpat. In the meantime, the collection should be made available at the ERR office in Dorpat ( <i>Arbeitsräume der Aussenstelle Dorpat</i> ). Suggestion by Pg. Schäfer that Genss' collection could be of interest to the Frankfurt institute. Krusenstjern advocated to separate the Judaica collection from the remainder of the collection and deal with it independently. (File noted that an overview of the Judaica collection is attached, however, this overview is <u>not</u> in the file).
3676/opys 1, file 140 (January 1943), p. 8	11 January 1943	Krusenstjern requested from the ERR Dorpat office to search for two books from the Genss' library in order for them to be used for research purposes by Mr. Wrangell of the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum.
3676/opys 1, file 218 (January 1943), p. 271	13 January 1943	<i>Stabsführung</i> agreed to send parts of the Genss library to the institute in Frankfurt.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (January 1943), p. 408ff	15 January 1943	Final Report ( <i>Abschlussbericht</i> ) of the <i>HAG Ostland, AG Estland</i> : The report covered the time period, from the ERR's beginning in Estonia until 31 December 1942. The report mentioned the valuable Genss' library (appr. 6,000 books) and noted that in consultation with the <i>Stabsführung</i> the library was transferred to Dorpat and that it is now located in the offices of the ERR Dorpat. Further note that Dr. Esser was using the Genss library for his research. The report also mentioned that some books were sent to Riga and Berlin, as well as to the <i>Komintern-Institute</i> Berlin, the <i>Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage</i> (Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question) in Frankfurt/Main, as well as to various offices of the <i>Reichsleiter</i> . A mention was made that an appendix (#3) showcased these transfers. This appendix 3 is <u>not</u> in the file.
3676/opys 1, file 140 (January 1943), p. 7	16 January 1943	A letter from ERR <i>Hauptarbeitsgruppe Ostland, Sonderstab Bildende Kunst</i> to ERR Estonia, Reval, noted that not all boxes could be unpacked due to a lack of manpower.

3676/opys 1, file 138 (January 1943), p. 15	25 January 1943	A letter from the Art Museum in Reval to the ERR, <i>Hauptarbeitsgruppe Ostland, Sonderstab Bildende Kunst</i> , noted that the Art Museum requested confirmation from the ERR that the books sent on 5 November 1942 consisting of 1,228 volumes, or 1,491 books, arrived. A further note was made that some books were mistakenly sent and were not part of the Genss library. In addition, the letter mentioned that nine further books from the Genss library were handed over to the ERR Dorpat. Likewise, the Museum noted that three copies of the Genss inventory were sent to ERR Reval with the request to receive two signed copies in return. [The inventory is not attached, <u>nor is it among the rest of the files.</u> ] Letter was signed by the head of the Art Museum.
3676/opys 1, file 138 (January 1943), p. 560	27 January 1943	Dr. Esser noted in a letter to the <i>Amt Bildende Kunst</i> that in anticipation of the arrival of the Genss collection from the Art Museum, the collection at the museum was indexed. However, due to a lack of workers, this task was not yet completed.
3676/opys 1, file 138 (February 1943), p. 558ff	5 February 1943	Dr. Esser noted in a letter to the <i>Amt Bildende Kunst</i> that the Genss collection was received from the Art Museum. Although the Art Museum was asking for an acknowledgment of receipt, this can only take place once the collection is mounted and indexed. However, due to a lack of workers, this work could not yet take place.
3676/opys 1, file 138 (March 1943), p. 556	8 March 1943	Dr. Esser noted in a letter to the <i>Amt Bildende Kunst</i> that the mounting and indexing of the Genss' collection could not take place due to a lack of workers. It is however expected that this work will take place in March.
3676/opys 1, file 234 (March 1943), p. 558	11 March 1943	Weekly Report ( <i>Wochenbericht</i> ), Nr. 63 (crossed out and corrected to 10), 7 -13 March 1943: Dr. Maurach, head of ERR Reval ( <i>Einsatzführer</i> ), noted that Reval still held a number of paintings, art fragments and engravings. Most of these objects were from the Genss collection. In a second meeting, the <i>Umsiedlertreuhandgesellschaft</i> would decide on the fate of this collection.
3676/opys 1, file 138 (April 1943), p. 554	2 April 1943	Dr. Esser noted in a letter to the <i>Amt Bildende Kunst</i> that the Genss collection (particularly its art books) was still packed in crates. He further mentioned that it seemed

		likely that the book assembly in Dorpat would take place in the second half [sic. of the year].
3676/opys 1, file 119 (May 1943), p. 25	15 May 1943	Dr. Essser ( <i>Obereinsatzführer</i> ) requested two books from the Genss collection, located in ERR Dorpat, for his familiarization with paintings prior to his departure for the <i>Ostland</i> . [Books in question: Kristeller Kupferstich u. Holzschnitt D 2716; H. Voss D. Material der Spätrenaissance D 2715/II, I];
3676/opys 1, file 138 (May 1943), p. 67	15 May 1943	Dr. Esser noted in a letter to Dr. Scholz ( <i>Amt Bildende Kunst, Bereichsleiter</i> ) that with the Genss collection still in Dorpat, its current organization could not be guaranteed after his departure [ <i>Abberufung aus dem Ostland</i> , 1 Juni 1943] from the office, as well as that the collection's presence in Estonia was overall threatened unless it was properly packed and stacked.
3676/opys 1, file 119 (June 1943), p. 22	7 June 1943	A letter by Dr. Nerling ( <i>HAG Ostland</i> ) stated that among the Genss collection were also eight books that carried his seal. These books had been stamped by the Dorpat university library. According to Nerling, further investigation was necessary, but books that were deemed to be important for the ERR could be transferred to the university.
3676/opys 1, file 124 (September 1943), p. 1	9 September 1943	Mention that the Art Museum in Reval handed over 1,228 volumes (out of 1,491 books) – all art history – to the ERR in November 1942.
NS 30/50, folder 1, volume 5, p. 60	13 December 1944	A report by Dr. Herbert Lommatzsch <sup>104</sup> , <i>Stabseinsatzführer</i> , to Dr. Gerd Wunder et al: “Aufstellung über Bestände, nach Lagerplätzen geordnet.“ The report noted that the Genss library, consisting of 61 crates, was located in Pless and was to be shipped to Karlsbad.

<sup>104</sup> Since 1 November 1942, Herbert Lommatzsch served as head of the section “Auswertung” (evaluation), which included the implementation of Rosenberg’s envisioned *Ostbücherei*. Dr. Gerd Wunder served as his deputy. BArch NS 30/163 provides files by Dr. Lommatzsch on the structure, content and task of the *Ostbücherei*.

#### d. Selected Archival Records

Below, please find a selection of archival records that illustrate and exemplify the work conducted by the ERR in Estonia and its members.

##### (1) "Anlage zum Abschlussbericht 1942. Nr. 3" (Appendix to the Final Report 1942. Nr. 3)

Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine  
 3676/opys 1, file 234 (January 1943), p. 415

Anlage zum Abschlussbericht 1942.  
Nr. 3

---

Ausgeliefertes Material.

14.3.42	3 Kisten Schallplatten ( 680 St.)	<u>Ant Musik, Berlin</u> ✓
28.7.42	Ein Bucken in Frage komender werke Über Sowjetrussland	<u>HAG, Riga.</u> ✓
28.7.42	267 Bd. estn. militaria	<u>Est. Selbstschutts Reval.</u>
17.7.42	Umsiedlerarchivalien	<u>Dr. Soop- Steina- archiv, Reval</u>
4.8.42	Übergabe d. sichergestellten Archive d. Handelshausen Th. Clayhille & Son	<u>Generalkommissariat</u>
12.8.42	Eine Anzahl Dubletten bolschew. Zeitungen	<u>SP, Reval.</u>
19.8.42	Einige Zeitschriften u. Bücher	<u>Major Lubojacki, Beauftragter d. Chef d. Heeresarchive.</u>
7.10.42	"Estilaste rassiline"koostis" (1. Bd.)	<u>Dr. Hüttig, Sonderstab Wissen- schaft (Rassenkunde), Berlin.</u>
17.12.42	Gr. Sowjet-encyklopädie (17 Bd.)	<u>HAG, Riga</u> ✓
30.9.42	Estica ( 1547 Bd.)	<u>HAG, Riga.</u> ✓
30.9.42	232 Bd. Bücher	<u>Sonderstab Volks- kunde, Berlin</u> ✓
30.9.42	2 Kisten Bücher	<u>Antikoninter- institut, Berlin.</u>
23.11.42	Estn. Bolschewistik (Nr. 283-313, ca. 50 Bd.)	<u>HAG, Riga.</u> ✓
Febr. 42	200 Bd. Noten, sichergestellten Sowjetmaterial aus dem Revaler Konseruatorium.	<u>Ant Musik, Berlin.</u> ✓
1941	Propagandamaterial u. Plakate Zeitschriften	<u>Stabführung, Ber- lin.</u>
1941-42	Zahlreiche einzelne Schriftensam- bestände	<u>Amt d. Reichs- leitung, Sonder- stab u. HAG.</u> ✓

Picture (32): TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 3676/opys 1, file 234 (January 1943), p. 415.

## (2) "Anlage zum Abschlussbericht 1942. Nr. 7" (Appendix to the Final Report 1942. Nr. 7)

44  
424

Einsatzstab Wehrmacht Ostpreußen  
für die territorialen Angelegenheiten  
Arbeitsgruppe Ostland

Anlage zum Abschlussbericht 1942.  
Nr. 7.

---

Einsatzorte u. Einsatzstellen, die von der Arbeitsgruppe Ostland  
bearbeitet wurden:

Hevel: 142 Einsatzstellen, davon die wichtigsten Gruppen:

- 7 Archive
- 7 Antiquariate
- 16 Bibliotheken (Stadtbibliothek, Stadtbibliothek;  
Biblioth. d. Sowjetgesandtschaft,  
Biblioth. Barbarus- u. Andreas,  
Marinbibliothek, Biblioth. Genes)
- Friedhöfe
- Gebäude (Schloss Gotthrental, Rathaus usw.)
- Gesellschaften
- 9 Kirchen u. Kirchenbuchstellen
- Kunstwerke
- 18 Museen u. Ausstellungen
- 4 Schulen
- div. bolschew. Schriftsammler
- Theater u. Kulturstätten
- div. Fundstellen von Umsiedlergut (Ruinen d.  
Deutschen Gesandtschaft, Keller  
der DME, Hafenspeicher etc.)

Dorpat: 59 Einsatzstellen, davon die wichtigsten:

- Universitätsbibliothek
- Nationalmuseum Rathhof
- Volkskundearchiv
- loth. Gelehrte Gesellschaft
- Katholisches Museum
- div. Institute
- ed.-bibliothek

Artenburg: 25 Einsatzstellen, davon die wichtigsten:

- Schloss
- Rathaus
- mehrere Bibliotheken
- SP.-Lager
- div. Fundstellen von Umsiedlergut

Baltischport: 5 Einsatzstellen,

Pellin: 3 Einsatzstellen.

Neppel: 5 Einsatzstellen.

Isborsk: 4 Einsatzstellen.

Kegsel: 1 Einsatzstelle.

Picture (33): TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 3676/opys 1, file 234 (January 1943), p. 424.

## (3) "Anlage zum Abschlussbericht 1942. Nr. 8" (Appendix to the Final Report 1942. Nr. 8)

21  
426

Anlage zum Abschlussbericht 1942  
Nr. 8.

---

Sonderatäbe und die von ihnen bearbeiteten Objekte.

---

a) Ständige wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter der Sonderatäbe:

Signenforchung: Dr. Speer  
v. Krauchthorn.

Bildende Kunst: Dr. Speer.

Religionswissenschaften:  
ten: Dr. Winter

Sonderatäb Nr: W. Holiberg

b) Zeitweise beauftragte wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter a. Hilfen räfte der Sonderatäbe:

Signenforchung: -----

Bildende Kunst: Dr. Winter,

Musik: Dr. Boetticher  
Dr. Müller  
Dr. Schone

Volkkunde: Dr. Strobel  
Dr. Weising  
Prof. Dr. v. Spiess  
Prof. Hoberland  
Dr. Thiele  
Prof. Anderson  
Prof. Dr. Weising  
Dr. Kuschel  
Prof. Schlegel  
Prof. Schlegel  
Prof. Schlegel  
Dr. Schlegel  
Dr. Schlegel  
Dr. Schlegel

Vor- u. Frühgeschich-  
te: Prof. Dr. Engel  
Dr. Schmidt  
Herr Schmidt

Hochschule: Dr. Mey  
Dr. Grote

Judeninstitut Frankfurt: Dr. Schiffer

Religionswissenschaften: Dr. Bruchmann  
Dr. Rosenfelder  
Dr. Weede

Hochschule: Prof. Dr. Spehr.

Wissenschaft: Dr. Wittig (Kassenkunde)  
Dr. Meyer  
Dr. Weede

Pictures (34, 35, 36): TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 3676/opys 1, file 234 (January 1943), pp. 426-428.

## (4) "Anlage zum Abschlussbericht 1942. Nr. 8" (Appendix to the Final Report 1942. Nr. 8)

- 2 -

22  
427

Ausstellungen: Pa. Eberbach  
Dr. Hallweit  
Dr. Protzki  
Dr. Prütz

Aufstellung der von dem Sonderstab bearbeiteten Objekte und sonstigen Ergebnisse:

Sippenforschung:  
Sämtliche Kirchen, Kirchenbuchstellen, Archive, Standesämter usw. Bestandsaufnahme, Ordnungarbeiten, Vorschriften zur Arbeit und Beaufsichtigung derselben.

Bildende Kunst:  
Sämtliche altertümliche und kunsthistorische beachtliche Bauwerke (Kirchen, Burgen, Schlösser, Häuser, Denkmäler aller Art), Innenarchitektur, Bilder, Kunstgegenstände, Museen, Denkmalschutz im Lande, Luftschutzmassnahmen, Metallsammlung, Blockadeaktion im Ostland und im Operationsgebiet v. Ingersandland. Bearbeitung des einschlägigen Schrifttums über Baltikum und Russland.

Musik:  
Bekanntmachung mit den Musikschaffern u. den Institutionen dieses Sektors im Lande. (Theater, Konzerte, Musikschulen, Mundfunk, Rundsender, Kreis Künstler etc.) Aufnahme u. Sicherstellung v. Schallplatten sowjetischer- u. national-estnischer Musik.

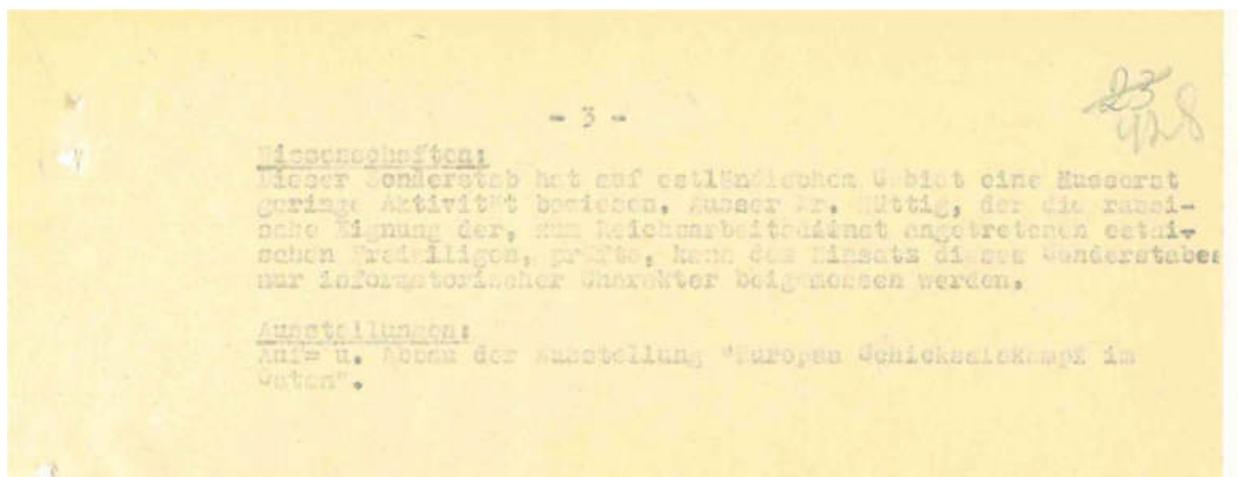
Volkskunde:  
Führungsgänge mit sämtlichen einschlägigen Museen, Instituten, Archiven, Folkloristischen Gesellschaften u. Geländen, Tanz- u. Turngruppen des Landes, Besuch v. Veranstaltungen v. Volksfesten u. Vorführungen. Besuch estnischer u. schwedischer Märker, Studium v. Tänzen, Spielen, Volksbräuchen, Märchen, Sprichwörtern, Sagen und Reimen u. ihre Auswertung in volkskundlicher und politischer Richtung. Übersetzung v. 1370 Kinderspielen u. Reimen, 260 russ. Kinderspielen, ca. 25 Hochzeiten u. anderen Bräuchen, 50 estnischen u. russ. Märchen, ca. 50. Lieder u. Sagen u. ca. 20 Übersetzungen in 610 Seiten aus diversen Zeitschriften.

Vorsu. Frühgeschichte:  
Dieser Sonderstab hat in Estland ausser der Begründung des Instituts für Frühgeschichte in Dorpat, keine wesentliche praktische Arbeit in Angriff genommen. Zwei kurze Besuche Prof. Engels u. seiner Mitarbeiter in Estland hatten vorwiegend zum Zweck und trugen informativem Charakter.

Hohen Schule:  
Durchsicht aller anfallenden Buchbestände auf Material für die Bibliothek der Hohen Schule. Einsatz in sämtlichen grösseren Bibliotheken des Landes u. der sichergestellten Bücherlagern.

Religionsbibliographie:  
Durchsicht von ca. 125 verschiedenen Bibliotheken, Bibliographien, Katalogen, Institute u. Sammlungen auf einschlägiges Material. Verkärtungarbeiten, Titel u. Inhaltsangabe. (Bücher, Carmina, Zeitschriften, Tageszeitungen, Bibliographien, Lexica etc.)

(5) “Anlage zum Abschlussbericht 1942. Nr. 8“ (Appendix to the Final Report 1942. Nr. 8)



(6) Letter written by the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die besetzten Gebiete, Arbeitsgruppe Estland* to the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die besetzten Gebiete – Stabsführung – Abt. Auswertung* (Reval, 19 October 1942).

Source: TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 3676/opys 1, file 218 (October 1942), p. 7.

The letter stated: “In der Anlage erhalten Sie den gewünschten Vorschlag über die Verwendung der vom Einsatzstab sichergestellten Bibliothek des Juden Genss.“ (“Enclosed you will find the desired proposal on the use of the library of the Jew Genss secured by the Operations Staff.) (signed „Leiter der Arbeitsgruppe Krusenstjern.“)

[...]

### Content of the Collection

Belletristik	400
Geschichte	155
Laenderkunde	252
Bibliographie	892
Bibliographie der Kunst	726
Kunstmappen	180
Kunstgeschichte	400

Archaeologie	159
Theater	73
Naturwissenschaften	34
Judaica	261
Zeitschriften	110
Karikaturen	6
Varis	26
Jugendbuecher	72
Wirtschaft	11
Jura	20
Militaria	14
Encyklopeadia	12
Musik	27
Ethnographie	21
Sprachlehre	12
Philosophie	58
Genealogie	13
Literatur	47
Tanz	9
Numismatik	16
Estica	16

---

4023

(7) Abschrift (Transcript) **“Bericht über die Bearbeitung der Judaica aus dem Nachlass des Juden Genss bei der Arbeitsgruppe Estland, Aussenstelle Dorpat.”** (Report on the processing of the Judaica from the estate of the Jew Genss at the Estonia Working Group, Dorpat Branch Office.)

Report on the Judaica processing of the Julius Genss estate by the working group Estland, field office Dorpat, signed by Schäfer, *Einsatzführer* with the original to the *Stabsführung* and copies to *HAG Ostland* and *AG Estland*, 10 December 1942.

Source: TsDAVO - Central State Archive of the Highest Agencies of Power and Administration of Ukraine. 3676/opys 1, file 129 (December 1942), p 72.

“Da der oben genannte Nachlass als geschlossenes Objekt erhalten bleiben soll, galt es, dasjenige Material auszuwählen, das für das Judeninstitut Frd. in Betracht kommen würde. Es wurde demgemäss folgendes zu eventuellen späteren Verschickung zusammengestellt.“ (“Since the above-mentioned estate is to be preserved as a closed object, it was necessary to select that material which would come into consideration for the Judeninstitut Frd. Accordingly, the following was compiled for possible later dispatch.”)

(...)

Deutschsprachige Bücher, Broschüren	96
Enzyklopädie Judaica	10
Jüd. Lexikon, 2 Bde.	
Bibliotheca Friedlandiane (Bd. III + IV = 2Bde.)	4
Evreiskaja Enzyklopedie	17
Allgemeine Enzykloädie in jidd. Sprache (Paris 1934-37)	4
Bibliograpien, Kataloge in verschiedenen Sprachen	85
Judaica in verschiedenen Sprachen (ausser russ. (deutsch, jidd., Hebr.)	12
Literatur in jiddischer Sprache	54
Verschiedene Zeitschriften	24
Judaica in russischer Sprache	17
Verschiedene Antiquitäten (darunter Sanskrit u. Arabisch)	6
Hagadah + Alef – Bet	6
Zusammen	335

### III. POSTWAR WHEREABOUTS OF THE COLLECTION – RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

For many decades, Julius Genss' collection was all but forgotten, other than by his surviving family members. In recent years, however, some new interest was sparked, mostly due to an exhibition at Munich's Jewish Museum. The exhibition entitled *Juden 45/90. Von ganz weit weg - Einwanderer aus der ehemaligen Sowjetunion* (Jews 45/90. From far away - Immigrants from the former Soviet Union) ran from July 11, 2012 until January 27, 2013, and featured among others, Julius Genss' collection and its surviving fragments brought to Germany by his granddaughter in 1991.<sup>105</sup>

The post-war fate of the Genss collection is only partially known: After the Red Army found the collection in the echelons of the Pless railroad station in February 1945<sup>106</sup>, in November 1945, the Soviet Trophy Brigade sent Genss' collection directly to Minsk, Belarus. This was unlike most book and manuscript shipments that were destined for Moscow. Once in Minsk, the collection was placed in the Presidential Library. The then director of the National Library, who was Jewish, successfully argued with the then director of the Presidential Library that the books should mostly go to the National Library and the Library of the Academy of Sciences. Consequently, the books were divided up between these three libraries.

In the early 1950s, an old friend of Julius Genss contacted the family after he had heard that part of Genss' collection was in Belarus. Sergei Petrovich Varshavsky, an art collector himself, consequently further investigated the claim and traveled to Minsk where he was able to locate parts of the collection. On 20 September 1955, according to the memoirs of Inna Gens, Julius Genss received a phone call from Sergei Varshavsky requesting a signed and notarized power of attorney that would allow him to continue investigating the fate of the collection. After some time, again according to Inna Gens, the family received a telegram from the president of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus claiming that if proof could be submitted that the books indeed belonged to the family, the collection could be returned. However, as some of the books were stamped by the Estonian Art Museum, the Belarussian authorities saw it more appropriate to return these 780 stamped books to the Estonian Academy of Sciences rather than to Julius Genss himself.<sup>107</sup>

Subsequently, the family decided to sue both the Academy of Sciences of Belarus as well as the Academy of Sciences in Estonia. In the end, the court ruled that although Julius Genss was the rightful owner of the collection, his claim could not be met since – according to the court's ruling –

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.juedisches-museum-muenchen.de/ausstellungen/ausstellungsarchiv/juden-4590-von-ganz-weit-weg> (accessed 28 September 2021)

<sup>106</sup> BArch, NS 30/50, fol. 1, vol. 5, p. 66.

<sup>107</sup> Gens, Inna. *The Story of a Library*, <http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/132/biblio.htm> (accessed 27 September 2021); Gens, Inna. "Ukradennaia biblioteka." *Iksba. Al'manakh. Proza. Stili. Memuary. Dokumental'nye rasskazy*. 1 (1997): 130–46; Gens, Inna. "Ukradennaia biblioteka." *Korolevskii zhurnal*. 13 (1998): 38–42. quoted after Grimsted, *Roads to Minsk*, p. 363.

both the Academy of Sciences in Belarus as well as the Academy of Sciences in Estonia were 'bona fide' owners. The decision was confirmed by several appeals court rulings, including by a decision handed down by the Supreme Court of the USSR. In the end, the remaining books located in Belarus were evidently scattered among the shelves of the libraries in Minsk, a city – according to Inna Gens – that Julius Gens had never visited and had nothing to do with his life.<sup>108</sup>

Julius Gens' last years "were full of tragic [sic]." According to Leo Gens "...being groundlessly convicted during the period of Stalin's personality cult, Julius Gens was put in prison, from where he was released when he was seriously ill, and he died in 1957."<sup>109</sup> Leo Gens himself was placed under an employment ban and Julius' wife, Bertha, committed suicide.<sup>110</sup>

Julia Gens, Julius Gens' granddaughter who resides in Munich, Germany, and heiress to the vanished collection, noted in correspondence with the Claims Conference in 2016 that the collection is still partially in Belarus (with 6,000 books thought to be in the Academy of Sciences as well as in the National Library, including Gens' own handwritten catalog), while almost 800 books are back in Estonia. A few books with the Gens bookplates that also bear stamps from the Tallinn Art Museum are held in the Rare Book Department in the National Library of Belarus.

Today, according to information provided by the Tallinn Art Museum, the museum only holds one work attributed to the Julius Gens collection: a drawing by Nikolai Triik entitled "Proletarian."<sup>111</sup> According to the Museum's records, this drawing was sold to the institution on March 15, 1941. As per the head of collections, additional archival records are not available due to the fact that a large number of artworks, in addition to many archival records, were destroyed during a fire caused by a Soviet Air Raid in 1944.<sup>112</sup> This statement is in contradiction to Julia Gens who noted in an email exchange that the Museum holds at least one more painting: a portrait of Julius Gens by Aleksander Grinev.<sup>113</sup> Julia Gens further noted that other works, in particular sculptures from Gens' home, can be found in various smaller museums in Estonia.<sup>114</sup>

Likewise, the National Library of Estonia holds books from the Julius Gens collection: according to Larissa Petina at the National Library of Estonia, parts of the Julius Gens collection bearing

---

<sup>108</sup> Gens, Inna. *The Story of a Library*, <http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/132/biblio.htm> (accessed 27 September 2021).

<sup>109</sup> J. Gens, *Investigator and Propagator of Jewish Art*. Lecture by Leo Gens, son of Julius Gens. <http://restaurator-muenchen.com/julius-gens-investigator-and-propagator-of-jewish-art> (accessed 25 January 2016).

<sup>110</sup> Rabitz, Cornelia. "Julius Gens, Sammler aus Leidenschaft." *Deutsche Welle*. (30 July 2012). [<https://www.dw.com/de/julius-gens-sammler-aus-leidenschaft/a-16096152>]

<sup>111</sup> Please see <http://muis.ee/museaalview/1483334> (accessed 19 January 2016).

<sup>112</sup> Email correspondence with Kersti Kuldna-Türkson, Head of Collections Management, Art Museum of Estonia, on 18 January 2016.

<sup>113</sup> Please see [http://digikogu.ekm.ee/eng/no\\_category/newwin-print/oid-19836](http://digikogu.ekm.ee/eng/no_category/newwin-print/oid-19836) for information on this painting on the Art Museum's website. (accessed 21 January 2016)

<sup>114</sup> Some of these sculptures were seen by Leo Gens, Julia Gens' father.

book stamps from the 1930s came to the library, especially the Ivask collection that Genss acquired after Ivask's death. According to Petina, "the study of the collection obtained by the National Library of Estonia has shown that we have got the part of Ivask's collection purchased by Genss."<sup>115</sup> The whereabouts of the remaining 13,000 books, as well as other parts of the collection, are unknown to the family.

In the fall of 2016, Patricia Grimsted Kennedy met in the Belarus Academy of Sciences with the Director and Rare Book Department head to discuss the fate of Genss' library. During this meeting 15 books were identified as having come from the Genss library. In addition, the Director of the Academy Library provided Grimsted with a copy of an unpublished 1945 report about the retrieval of the Genss Library in Silesia which suggests that it was of significant size.

The following pictures were taken by Grimsted in Minsk in 2016 at the occasion of the conference "Lost and Displaced Cultural Valuables: The Belarusian Context".



Lastly, it is also known that the Lodz library holds a partial typescript catalog of Julius Genss' collection (parts 1, 3 and 4) as well as his memoirs. The typescript originally belonged to Julius Genss' friend Julian Weizmann, an antiquarian from Berlin, who fled the Nazis in 1933, but subsequently went back to Poland where he was ultimately murdered in the Warsaw ghetto.<sup>116</sup>

The manuscripts were acquired by the library in 1947, 1951 and 1989.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Petina, Larissa. *The Ownership Marks Collection of Ivask-Genss and Rusi in the National Library of Estonia*. Ownership Marks in Old Books. Collection of Articles. National Library of Estonia: Tallinn 2008, p. 177. (online available at: <http://restaurator-muenchen.com/bilder/Ownership%20Marks.pdf>, accessed 25 January 2016.)

<sup>116</sup> Information provided by the Gens family.

<sup>117</sup> The information was relayed by librarian Pawel Spodenkiewicz to Patricia Grimsted Kennedy on 6 November 2019. According to Grimsted, it is reasonable to assume that some books remained in Silesia after the war and can today be found in Polish libraries. The remainder stock was transported to Minsk in spring of 1945.