

Plundered Jewish Property in Paris (1942–43)

Abstract

As the Nazis forced Jews out of their homes and communities, encouraging neighbors along the way to ostracize their Jewish friends, personal property was auctioned off to the highest bidder. These photos capture the extent to which Jewish homes were plundered. The first image shows stolen kitchenware and the second a number of plundered children's toys. The photos were taken by the ERR [Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg], the unit that carried out the plundering, while their loot was stored in a Paris department store. Stolen from Jews in France after the country's capitulation in June 1940, the items here were to be sold, often at half their real market value or less. From a salt-shaker and china set to a porcelain doll and handcrafted rocking horse, these items once belonged to families and held a personal meaning to their original owners. As historians have sought a way to understand the extent to which Germans and other Europeans raided the homes of Jews for valuable goods, important questions remain: to what extent were these items used to buy support for the Nazi regime as the war intensified? How did businesses and individuals profit from the sale of these goods? Did all Germans know they were buying stolen goods? Insurance brokers, moving companies, auctioneers, and assessors all found lucrative new opportunities with the growing number of vacant homes and property after the deportation of Jews across Europe. Auctions were publicly advertised, and the provenance of these items must have become increasingly obvious as the number of Jewish residents dwindled in each city.

Source



Bundesarchiv, B 323 Bild-0311-050
Foto: o.Ang. | 1942/1943 ca.



Source: Original caption: Photos taken by the ERR. Pictures from Paris (transport and storage), c. 1942/43. Photographer unknown. Bundesarchiv B 323 Bild-0311-050; B323 Bild-0311-065.

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