

Polish Refugees in Câmpulung-Mușcel During World War II
(Abstract)

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Keywords: Poland, Romania, Polish Refugees, Câmpulung-Mușcel, World War II.

The following article focuses on the subject of Polish refugees who found themselves in the territory of neighbouring Romania in September 1939, due to the turmoil of war. After the German invasion (1 September 1939) and that of the Soviets (17 September 1939), the government of the Second Polish Republic, Polish military units and the multitudes of civilians accompanying them were forced to cross the southern border of the country and move into Romanian terrain. The soldiers and members of government were interned. In total, about 50,000 refugees found themselves in Romanian territory. They were quartered in various places from Banat through to Wallachia, and as far as Dobrogea. In Câmpulung-Mușcel, an internment camp for Polish soldiers existed from September 1939 to March 1940. In this place Polish refugees spent the entire war, in numbers of anywhere from a few dozen to as many as several hundred at a time.

One person who stayed in Câmpulung-Mușcel was long-serving functionary of the MSW (Ministry of Internal Affairs) Security Division, Stefan Szyborski, who died in 1941 and was buried in the local cemetery. A Polish preschool and school were in operation and in the summer there were musical concerts. The Commander in Chief of the Polish army, Marshal Edward Śmigły-Rydz was lodged in a special place in the nearby town of Dragoslavele from the autumn of 1939. In December 1940 he escaped from his place of internment and found himself in Budapest, where he lived under a false name. From there he managed to enter occupied Poland. Most of the Polish refugees left Câmpulung-Mușcel for their home country after the end of the war in Europe. Those who did not want to return to a country ruled by communists emigrated to Great Britain, the USA and South America.