

**THE REPORT
ON THE LOSSES
SUSTAINED
BY POLAND
AS A RESULT
OF GERMAN
AGGRESSION
AND OCCUPATION
DURING
THE SECOND
WORLD WAR,
1939-1945**



**A COLLECTION
OF STUDIES**



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SPECIAL
EDITION



*To the citizens of the Republic of Poland – who were victims
of Germany’s aggression and occupation of Poland, 1939–1945*



Editor's Preface



Commemorative plaque to honor the Members of Parliament of the Second Polish Republic who were killed during World War II by the German and Soviet terror, fixed in the main hall of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland at 4/6/8 Wiejska Street in Warsaw.

(Photographs on pp. 6, 10, 12–13, 16 by Maciej Biedrzycki)

An inscription engraved on the middle plaque:

The Sejm of the Republic of Poland in homage to our predecessors, Members of Parliament of the Second Polish Republic who died for Poland during World War II. Their sacrifice and shed blood have not been in vain, becoming the foundation of our country's independence. May the memory of that be always with us because 'the nation that loses its memory, loses its conscience.'

"Altogether, about 1,700 Deputies sat in the Sejm of the Second Polish Republic, of whom almost three hundred died during World War II. Two hundred Deputies were killed at the hands of the German invader, and a hundred fell victim to the Soviet repression. 450 Senators sat in the pre-war Senate. During the war and due to post-war repression, almost one hundred Senators were killed. Half of them died as a direct result of German war operations, and the other half died in the Soviet Union or in the areas occupied by the Red Army.

In total, about 2,050 Deputies and Senators sat in the Parliament during the pre-war period, and about 20 percent of them died before 31 August, 1939. During World War II, about four hundred Members of Parliament died, which constituted one-fourth of the MPs who were alive when the war broke out. The data allows the recognition of Members of Parliament of the Second Polish Republic as a deeply repressed and victimized community at that time, and the invaders' actions as a form of elitocide."

Deputies and Senators of the Second Polish Republic victims of World War II, B. Popławski (ed.), Warsaw 2019, p. 26.

This Report is the result of several years of work by a team of experts from many different fields of science and scholarship – history, demographics, economy, and property valuation. It contains a set of calculations of the value of the losses Poland sustained in many aspects of its public and economic affairs during the Second World War owing to the Third Reich of Germany.

During the years of our work, which were interrupted by the pandemic, we examined the BOW (Biuro Odszkodowań Wojennych, Bureau of War Compensation) records collected and compiled for the Chairman of the Polish Council of Ministers and other archival resources, most of them now in the AAN (Archiwum Akt Nowych, the Polish Archives of Modern Records, Warsaw), including the following collections: Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej (the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare), Ministerstwo Skarbu (the Ministry of the Treasury), and Komisja Historyczna Tymczasowej Rady Zakładu Ubezpieczeń Społecznych (the History Commission attached to the Provisional Council of ZUS, the Polish National Insurance Company). We conducted a search in the collections of Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe (the Central Military Archives) and several other departments of Polish State Archives. We also used the resources of a variety of traditional and digital libraries in Poland and abroad. To make an estimate of the value of Poland's historical losses in the global situation we have today, our economists referred to international databases such as the US Bureau of Statistics and the publications of the World Bank.

This Report is not an academic publication but a summary of the research conducted by our experts, most of whom are affiliated to the best Polish universities. Inspired by a mutual sense of duty to their country, they joined our team to determine the cost Poland has paid for being under German occupation during the Second World War. Our aim is to effect the restoration of the material assets Poland has been robbed of and to raise awareness at home and abroad of the vast and irreparable losses our country suffered during the Second World War. This is why our Report does not review the research done up to now or discuss the bibliography of the subject. We have tried to keep footnotes down to a minimum and write in a straightforward style, steering clear of academic jargon.

Foreword

This report does not close the issue of research into the war losses of Poland during the Second World War, one might even say, that it is an opening, not a closing, balance sheet. The fact that, for several decades, there has been practically no large-scale research on the subject calls for a continuation of our endeavour. Nowadays researchers have access to archival resources which were not available to those engaged in earlier projects to answer the question how much the Republic of Poland lost in outcome of Germany's invasion and occupation of Polish territory. We now have new research methods to verify earlier results. Some of the issues we have examined were of no interest to the Communist authorities of the People's Republic, which treated the forfeiture of private property belonging to Polish citizens as losses affecting individuals, not the Polish State as a whole.

Our team of experts wants the outcome of their work presented in a publication inviting further research and stimulating new undertakings, venturing into new fields of inquiry. We have not managed to find a full answer to every issue; we have not visited all the pertinent archives.

The forthcoming work on Poland's war losses will be managed, coordinated, and supported by a new institution, *Instytut Strat Wojennych im. Jana Karskiego* (the Jan Karski Institute for Research on Polish War Losses), which has just been founded but will help us to continue collecting data on the Polish losses and disseminate information on our findings. One of the Institute's tasks will be to determine the losses Poland sustained in its eastern voivodeships due to the operations of both occupying powers – Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the individuals and institutions without whose assistance, sympathetic attitude, and patience this Report could never have been accomplished.

The compilation and publication of *The Report on the Losses Sustained by Poland as a Result of German Aggression and Occupation during the Second World War, 1939–1945* is Poland's first and indispensable step on the road to obtain the reparations and due compensation which the Polish State has the right to claim for the devastation and injuries it suffered during the Second World War.

The Republic of Poland was the first victim of Germany's aggression and sustained the largest losses in its population and material assets in proportion to all the other countries which Nazi Germany and its allies attacked, and therefore Poland has the full and incontrovertible right to claim reparations and be duly reimbursed. Poland should be compensated on the grounds of an elementary sense of justice and historical truth, and in the interest of genuine reconciliation between Germany and Poland.

The atrocities Germany committed in Poland were exceptionally monstrous. From the very first days of the War, German forces invading Poland indulged in brutal acts of murder, such as burning people alive, and continued to perpetrate such crimes until the end of the German occupation of Poland. The atrocities committed in Poland by the German State appointed officials were accompanied by private crimes such as murder and robbery committed by individual Germans. Apart from its mass murders, Germany wilfully conducted a premeditated policy to starve the people of Poland, leading to the death of millions and serious or even permanent impairment of health of further millions. The legacy of these wrongs and injuries passed down to the next generations inhabiting Poland.

So it is absolutely inadmissible from the point of view of morality and dignity that Germany has paid out compensation of various kinds to 70 countries, but the Republic of Poland has been ignored.

Furthermore, we must not forget that Germany has to a large extent failed to come to terms with its Nazi past and make amends for the crimes it has committed. This is evidenced by the vast numbers of Germans who served as officials under the Third Reich and afterwards continued to participate in public affairs,



both in East and West Germany. We may say that Germany implemented a series of legal measures which effectively amnestied perpetrators. This, too, casts its shadow over relations between Poland and Germany.

Moreover, I must add that contrary to what Germans say, Poland has never renounced its right to reparations from Germany. The unilateral declaration made by the Council of Ministers on 23 August 1953 had no legal effect because it was never published in any of the Polish official gazettes or journals, nor was it ever entered in the United Nations registers. Furthermore, some legal experts assert that it contravened the provisions of the Polish Constitution in force at the time.

I shall recall that on 10 September 2004 the Polish Parliament passed a resolution which says that Poland has not received the financial compensation and war reparations due for the vast amount of destruction and loss of material and non-material assets caused by Germany's aggression, occupation of Polish territory, perpetration of genocide, and by the fact that Germany wilfully deprived Poland of its independence.

This publication is the outcome of the work carried out by the Parliamentary Group for the Estimation of the Amount of Compensation due to Poland from Germany for Damage Caused during the Second World War under the leadership of Mr. Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Deputy to Sejm, and the team of experts involved in the project. But it could have never been published if it had not been for the steadfast support it has received over many years from countless patriotically-minded persons among Poland's authorities as well as the country's public. The first practical step after 1989 to launch an undertaking aimed to draw up an account of Poland's losses due to the Second World War was taken by my late brother Lech Kaczyński during his term of office as the Mayor of Warsaw, when he commissioned the publication of a report on the war damage sustained by Poland's capital city and successfully brought the project to completion.

The Parliamentary Group for the Estimation of the Amount of Compensation due to Poland from Germany for Damage Caused during the Second World War

"Members of Parliament in honour of the fallen Deputies and Senators of Poland"

Chairman: Arkadiusz Mularczyk,
Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland

Members of the Sejm
of the Republic of Poland:

Wojciech Buczak
Waldemar Buda
Tadeusz Dziuba
Barbara Dziuk
Lech Kotakowski

Anna Krupka
Marta Kubiak
Anna Kwiecień
Andrzej Melak
Waldemar Olejniczak

Stanisław Pięta
Stanisław Piotrowicz
Piotr Polak
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Wojciech Szarama
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Andrzej Szlachta
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Szymon Szykowski vel Sęk
Jan Warzecha
Małgorzata Wypych
Krzysztof Zaremba
Sławomir Zawiślak

Senators
of the Republic of Poland:

Andrzej Misiotek
Artur Warzocha



Arkadiusz Mularczyk

Introduction



Photo by Maciej Biedrzycki

Introduction

The present publication, *The Report on the Losses sustained by Poland as a Result of German Aggression and Occupation during the Second World War 1939-1945*, is the outcome of a project carried out by the Parliamentary Group for the Estimation of the Amount of Compensation due to Poland from Germany for Damage Caused during the Second World War. The Group was established by the Polish Sejm in its 8th term, on 29 September 2017, and consists of members of parliament and a team of experts.

The project is the result of a political initiative taken by Jarosław Kaczyński, chairman of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (the Law and Justice Party), who has often said that Poland has full moral and legal grounds to claim compensation from Germany for the effects of the Second World War. Moreover, that the pursuit of friendly relations between Poland and Germany based on partnership must be established on a foundation of historical truth and fair compensation for the war crimes Germany committed in Poland and against its citizens.

The Polish members of parliament and senators working in the Group recognise the need and necessity for an up-to-date description and estimate of the human and material losses sustained by the Republic of Poland as a result of German military aggression and occupation during the Second World War. Furthermore, we hold that the German state has never attempted to make a fair, political, or legal assessment and settlement to make amends and pay due compensation for its policy of the total destruction of the Republic of Poland, and the extermination of its citizens which Germany undertook on the territory of the Republic of Poland.

During the Second World War, Poland sustained the largest human and material losses of all European countries in relation to its total population and national assets. These losses were caused not only by German military operations, but above all, by a German policy of occupation motivated by the conviction of racial



Arkadiusz Mularczyk – Member of the Polish Sejm (lower house of the Polish Parliament) since 2005 for the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th terms; attorney, graduate of the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. In the 2019–2023 term of the Sejm, Vice-President of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Special Legislative Committee. On behalf of the Sejm: member of the National Council of the Judiciary since 2020, – Vice-President of the National Council of the Judiciary; President of the delegation of the Sejm and Senate (upper house of the Polish Parliament) to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; since 2021 Vice-President of the Council of Europe's Committee for the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg; Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for the Estimation of the Amount of Compensation due to Poland from Germany, for Damage Caused during the Second World War. He also serves as Chairman of the Board of the Jan Karski Institute for War Losses.

inferiority of the Polish population. The Germans exterminated people in the occupied territories in a deliberate and organised manner, and intensively exploited Polish society, both through forced labour and the wilful devastation of property, including the complete destruction of Warsaw, Poland's capital city, along with thousands of Polish cities, towns and villages.

To describe the scale of this crime, Rafał Lemkin – in his work *The Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, published in 1944 – proposed the incorporation into international law of the concept of genocidium (genocide), understood as organised action aimed at the extermination of a nation or ethnic group through the planned destruction of its culture, language, national and religious consciousness, the economic basis of existence, and the subsequent deprivation of people's security, freedom, health, dignity and ultimately life.

"Their [the Germans'] way of reasoning appears to be as follows:

An enemy nation under German control must be destroyed, disintegrated or weakened to a certain degree, so that it will not

recover for decades. In this way, in the post-war period, the German nation will be in a situation of biological superiority over other European nations. Since the imposition of a policy of genocide is more destructive to nations than the damage suffered in battle, the German nation will be stronger than the conquered nations after the war, even if the German army is defeated. In this sense, genocide is a new technique of occupation whose aim is to win the peace even if the war itself is lost."¹

The "Lemkin's Convention" (Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide) was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December, 1948. After obtaining the twenty ratifications required by Article XIII, the Convention entered into force on 12 January, 1951.

Racism - a view based on a pseudo-scientific theory assuming the superiority of some human races over others. Racism was condemned in 1948 by the UN General Assembly in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UNESCO in 1961 and 1964, and other international organisations.

The foundations of racist theories were laid by Arthur de Gobineau, the French ethnologist and politician, author of *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853-1855). He formulated - in opposition to the doctrine of egalitarianism (equality) - the thesis of the alleged existence of an 'Aryan race' descended from the Aryans and its superiority over other races. De Gobineau developed the thesis of "racial purity", which constituted the basis for eugenics. According to this thesis, the white race should not mix with other races, as this would entail the degeneration of humanity and the collapse of civilisation. His theories were developed by the German philosopher of British origin, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, in his work *Die Grundlagen des XIX Jahrhunderts* (1899), which described the characteristics of the Teutonic race. On this basis, criteria were created for a racial ideal of the Nordic type (the 'master race', Herrenvolk), to which Jews and Slavs were supposed to pose a threat. These concepts were used in the early 20th century by German racial theorists (e.g. Alfred Rosenberg) to establish the basis of the Nazi system of racial discrimination.

Poland and its people are still suffering from the negative effects of the Second World War on the country's population, economy, infrastructure, and the progress it has been able to make in scholarship, education and culture. Each of the six years under German wartime occupation reduced levels of Poland's development in all aspects of public, economic and community life. Generations of Poles lost the opportunity to accumulate capital as their savings, works of art and cultural assets, as well as their ancestors' valuables were looted by Germany. Today, Poland's status in terms of civilisational growth in Europe and worldwide would have been completely different, had it not been for the Second World War and its aftereffects. For several generations following their wartime decimation, the people of Poland have been forced to undertake a huge effort to raise their country from ruins and restore it in the aftermath of the War.

The Republic of Poland has still not received the full amount of war reparations that the Great Powers meeting in Potsdam decided were due to it. Neither has Poland received compensation commensurate with the losses and damage it sustained during the war years under German occupation.

Millions of Polish citizens who suffered unimaginable physical and psychological injury, often with the loss of all their material assets, have never received individual compensation. Attempts at suing for damages have all been rendered futile as Germany fails to recognise any court decisions taken in countries where it committed its war crimes. Even at the current stage of advancement in human rights protection, Germany is avoiding liability for damages hiding behind the legal defence of jurisdictional immunity. For these reasons, on 15 December 2020, a group of MPs submitted a motion to the Constitutional Tribunal to examine the compliance with the Constitution of the provisions of the law from which the principle of judicial immunity of foreign states is derived in cases of compensation for,

Rafał Lemkin (born 24 June 1900 in Bezwodna, died 28 August 1959 in New York), Polish and American lawyer of Jewish origin, creator of the term "genocide", author of the "Lemkin Convention". He received his doctorate from the Faculty of Law at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów in 1926. He worked as a Deputy Prosecutor in Brzeżany, later as a Public Prosecutor in Warsaw. In 1934, he resigned from the prosecutor's office and started a private legal practise. He became involved in the work of the International Bureau for the Unification of Penal Law and participated in numerous international conferences. Thanks to contacts made at that time, after the outbreak of the Second World War, he obtained a Swedish visa and, in 1940, made his way via Riga to Stockholm, where he lectured at the university. In 1941 he found himself in the United States, where, between 1942 and 1943, he wrote *The Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. He was an advisor to Robert H. Jackson, the chief American prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials, and from 1946 a consultant to the UN Legal Committee. From 1948 to 1951 he taught international law at Yale University as a visiting professor. After his contract ended, he was unable to find a job. Forgotten, he died of a heart attack in 1959, and his funeral was attended by only a few people.

Jurisdictional immunity – a legal principle in international relations specifying that entities of equal standing (states) are not subject to the courts of another (state). In practice, this means, for example, not being able to pursue a claim against a state in the court of another country.

¹ R. Lemkin, *The Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Warsaw 2013, chapter 9 Genocide, p. 112

i. a. war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity.² Indeed, to this day, Polish citizens have had no judicial avenue – whether under Polish, German or international law – to pursue claims against the German state, which perpetrated against them a violation of a number of universal values, such as the right to life, the right to property, the right to dignity. Jurisdictional immunity can not protect the aggressor state from the legitimate claims of the victims.

Germany is still in default in respect of compensation for its systematic, wholesale robbery and plunder of works of art and cultural objects belonging to the Republic of Poland and its citizens. The hundreds of thousands of works of art and cultural objects that Germany seized and stole during the Second World War have yet to be returned.

Ever since the end of the Second World War, the legal successors of the Third Reich have not felt any obligation to compensate Poland or Polish victims for the crimes Germany committed and the damage it caused. There is no sign on the part of Germany of readiness or the will to repair the damage it caused to Poland and its people, or to return the assets it stole. Instead, Germany is challenging its political and legal responsibility toward Poland for the effects of the Second World War. German efforts to-date boil down to a few symbolic gestures and empty words on moral responsibility.

Despite the existence of the possibility to enter a bilateral agreement on reparation and compensation, Germany has been avoiding this option. The protection of German interests and economic resources has proven more important.

Germany's policy on Poland since the end of the War could be summed up as "keep quiet, outwait, forget".

At the same time, the international community had and unfortunately still has no or limited knowledge, or even an erroneous notion of the scale of the war damage and plunder Poland suffered, and its effects on Poland's potential to develop. This general lack of awareness fully justifies the need for a new and detailed reappraisal of Poland's losses as an outcome of the Second World War.

We are fully aware that the huge scale of Poland's war losses cannot be reflected in a quantitative account, because one cannot fully express the extent of the tragedy of war – the deaths and dramas that attended them, often affecting several gen-

² The case was registered in the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Poland under case number K 25/20.




Map 1. Map of Poland

Drafted by Konrad Wnęk

– The Core Lands,
the lost Eastern Territories,
and the border of Poland today



Key:

-  current Polish borders
-  the Core Lands
-  lost eastern territory

1 : 5 500 000

erations. However, for contemporary and future generations, as well as for historical truth, it is necessary to comprehensively and systematically estimate the enormity of the war losses Poland suffered – as far as it is still possible to do so today. The lack of such an account makes it impossible to fully assess not only the losses, but also the real dimension of Poland's achievements after the Second World War up to the present day. It is therefore the responsibility of the Polish State to draw up a war damage account. However, making a full estimate of Poland's losses due to the Second World War has a much broader and certainly no less important reason than just claiming compensation. It is an issue of historical truth and historical justice, as well as the social, ethical, political, and geopolitical aspects affecting many generations. It concerns the aftereffects of the Second World War, the greatest tragedy that Poland has experienced in over a millennium of its history.

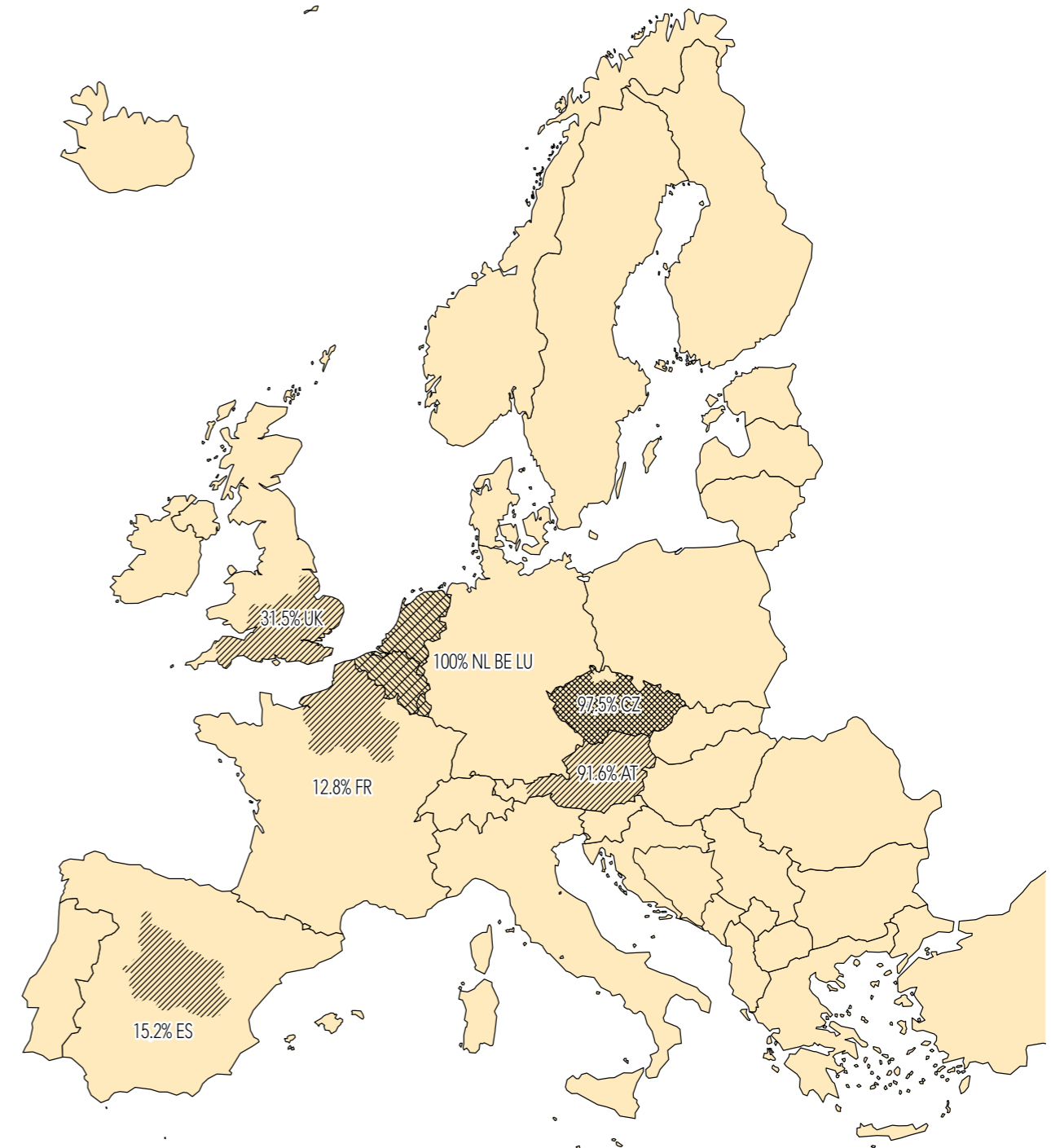
After over a year of work, the Group has compiled this Report, the first publication of its kind since 1947. The Report employs state-of-the-art scientific and methodological instruments to describe and estimate the human, material, and other losses Poland suffered as a result of German aggression during the Second World War.

The human losses sustained in 1939–1945 solely as a result of German aggression have been calculated in this Report for the entire pre-war area of the Republic of Poland, including the lands located east of the Bug River. The Third German Reich is also responsible for the mass murders committed by other nations against citizens of the Republic of Poland in the areas under German occupation.

It should also be emphasised that the German aggression against Poland on 1 September 1939 was followed by an armed attack by the USSR on 17 September 1939. This was a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed on 23 August 1939, in whose secret protocol the Third Reich and the USSR agreed to divide the Republic of Poland into exclusive zones of their influence. From the moment of their entry into the territory of the Republic of Poland, Soviet troops committed atrocities in the occupied territories, murdering not only prisoners of war, but also civilians. Further consequences of the Soviet aggression on the eastern territories of the Republic of Poland were the mass deportations (325–350 thousand) of Polish citizens deep into the Soviet Union, most often to Siberia, the systemic plundering of the occupied territories of Polish state property and the property of private individuals.

Map 2.
Poland's territorial losses compared to the area of selected European countries

Source: Konrad Wnęk



The map compares the extent of land lost by Poland in relation to the area of selected countries in contemporary Europe.

Cf. map A.4.1., p. 479

Following border shifts in the east and west, in 1945, the Polish territory decreased – compared to the 1938 state – by 77.9 thousand km²; it now consisted of only 312.5 thousand km², (previously 389.7 thousand km²). The decrease in territory was the result of the illegal annexation by the USSR of as much as 177.8 thousand km², i.e. 45.6% of the territory of the Republic. After 1945, only 210.8 thousand km² of Poland's pre-war territory remained within its new borders.

Border shifts have therefore not compensated for the lost 77.9 thousand km², which – to illustrate the scale – is today an area comparable to: Austria – 83.9 thousand km², the Czech Republic – 78.9 thousand km², or the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg combined) – 74.8 thousand km².

Pre-war Poland (at the time of the 1931 census) did not require citizens to state their ethnicity, but expected them to declare their religion and language. This meant, in practice, that there were representatives of different ethnic groups in each religious group, which resulted from the centuries-old tradition of openness of the Polish state, which consisted of a variety of ethnic and confessional groups.

We must emphasise that one of the major results of the War for the Republic of Poland was a huge loss in population. According to the data for 1939 compiled by GUS (the National Statistics Office now called 'Statistics Poland'), prior to the Second World War, the population of Poland was 35.3 million; while after the War (in 1946), it was only 23.9 million. Therefore, the Polish state lost over 11.4 million citizens in just 7 years. There were different ways in which this loss occurred. It was not only due to the mass murders, crimes against humanity, and attempt to commit genocide of the Polish people, but also to the changes to Poland's national borders. The territorial shift left part of the citizens of the Second Polish Republic beyond the country's post-war eastern border. These people had no say in the decisions that determined their citizenship. The figure also includes losses such as the victims of the Volhynia massacre which was carried out by Ukrainian nationalists in German occupied and controlled areas. Under international law, the occupying power is accountable for the situation and security of the population in an occupied area.

The material losses Poland sustained under German occupation during the War have been calculated in the Report for areas within the national borders of Poland before and after the Second World War. We have labelled this territory *Ziemie Dawne* (the Core Lands), covering an area of 208,447 km². Therefore, this area does

Occupying Power's Responsibility for Occupied Territories – Article 43 of the 1907 Hague Convention on the Laws and Customs of War on Land: "the authority of the legitimate power having in fact passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all the measures in his power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country," as well as art. 46: "Family honour and rights, the lives of persons, and private property, as well as religious convictions and practice, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated."

not include the territory of the pre-war Republic of Poland east of the Bug River, or the present Western Territories which Poland gained in 1945. This limit to the area covered in the estimate of losses is certainly a simplification. However, it would be practically impossible to obtain reliable, complete data to estimate the losses for the whole area of pre-war Poland, and would certainly require international cooperation.

It must be stressed that a precise evaluation of all the war losses will never be possible. Their scale is so vast that currently, there are no research methods available to calculate some of the types of loss. Another obstacle is the lack of various categories of pre- and post-war statistical data required to obtain a more precise picture of Poland's socio-economic development. An additional difficulty is the fact that much evidence for these war crimes was systematically destroyed with little to no trace.

Of course, it is impossible to assess the effects of the physical and psychological suffering of thousands of children who were orphaned, abducted from their families, displaced or deported to Germany to be culturally assimilated against their will. It is impossible to give quantitative estimates for the traumas and psychological injuries caused by the loss of relatives. We cannot give an estimate for the cost of the mental suffering, injuries and diseases sustained by prisoners-of-war, the prisoners of concentration camps, and the people forced into slave labour. Without doubt, all these factors have had a great impact on the effectiveness and productivity of Polish society, and hence on the magnitude of Poland's lost GDP.

Therefore, the present Report is undoubtedly an underestimate in all the areas it addresses, with its underlying principles rooted in the most conservative estimates possible.

This Report has been drawn up thanks to the commitment and cooperation of the Polish National Foundation. It has been compiled and reviewed by renowned Polish scholars. We have received the active engagement of and assistance from the Bureau of Research of the Chancellery of the Polish parliament; the Institute of National Remembrance; GUS ('Central Statistical Office'), AAN (the Archives of Modern Records); *Archiwa Państwowe* (the State Archives); PZU (the biggest Polish insurance company); and ZUS (the Polish Social Insurance Institution). Until 1989, Poland had a very limited potential to compile a reliable and comprehensive estimate of its war losses. This was due to the imposition of the Communist system on the country which curtailed Poland's sovereignty, giving it little opportunity to compile such an estimate, or effectively and consistently raise the

issue of reparations and war damage, individual compensation and restitution on the international forum. Since 1989, however, there was no political will to conduct a similar large-scale, reliable, and in-depth research to author and publish such a report.

Until the publication of this Report, several state administrative offices attempted to determine Poland's war losses at various times. Work for such a report started in 1942, commissioned by the Polish government-in-exile operating from London. The work for this project was conducted in exile during the War and in Poland after the end of World War II.

In September 1944, the **Ministry of Congress Work (Ministerstwo Prac Kongresowych, MPK)** of the Polish government-in-exile presented a report on its findings.³ In connection with the prospective end of the War and certain Allied victory, the Polish government-in-exile decided to draw up an estimate for the country's losses sustained during the first four years of the War. The preliminary report was ready by September 1944, and the methods used and results obtained served as a reference point for later work.

There was an office handling war compensation attached to PKWN (the Polish Committee of National Liberation, viz. the Communist government imposed on Poland by the Soviets in July 1944). In 1945, it was transformed into **Bureau of War Compensation (Biuro Odszkodowań Wojennych, BOW)** on the grounds of a resolution of 6 January 1945 adopted by the PKWN Council of Ministers. BOW had the status of a central government administrative office, and its purpose was to determine the full war losses Poland suffered materially and in terms of population.

In January 1947, BOW presented its report on the war losses and damage sustained by Poland between 1939–1945 (*Sprawozdanie w przedmiocie strat i szkód wojennych Polski w latach 1939–1945*).⁴

In 1949–1951, (the **Ministry of Finance Commission for the final determination of war damage and losses in the Second World War (Komisja dla ostatecznego ustalenia szkód i strat wojennych w II wojnie światowej przy Ministerstwie Finansów)** performed similar work. This Commission was appointed by the Minister of Finance in September 1949, and in 1951 it presented its findings in a comprehensive study.⁵ Its authors wrote that the analysis and numerical data were compiled for internal use

³ AAN, Ministerstwo Prac Kongresowych Rządu RP w Londynie, sign. no. 2/136/0/2/93.

⁴ AAN, BOW, sign. number 2/291/0/11.

⁵ Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw, KOPON, *Polskie straty biologiczne, kulturalne i materialne poniesione w latach 1939–1945 wskutek agresji hitlerowskiej*, sign. no. GK 917/377.

and, if need be, for publication. Remarkably, this material was never given the status of an official document and is available only as a draft typescript.

In 1967, the Department of Local Statistics of the Central Statistical Office (GUS, 'Central Statistical Office'), presented a report entitled *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabudowie miast i wsi wg stanu w dniu 1 V 1945 r.* (War damage to urban and rural buildings, as of 1 May 1945),⁶ based on the results of the research carried out by the Ministry of Reconstruction. Its authors focused exclusively on the destruction of urban properties and rural homesteads, sustained during and as a result of the War.

In 1973, **KOPON, the German Compensation Commission, (Komisja do Opracowania Problemu Odszkodowań Niemieckich)** presented an analysis drafted for the Polish government.⁷ This commission was appointed by the Prime Minister on 6 May 1970 in connection with the resumption of the war damages issue, which the Polish government planned to put on the agenda for talks with the government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In 2015, in connection with the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, **Poland's Central Statistical Office** compiled a study titled *1939–1945: Pro memoria*.⁸

The most informative document of these studies to estimate Poland's war losses is the **1947 BOW publication**. It is a full and comprehensive document describing the value of Polish war losses. It gives a total loss of PLN 258,432 million at 1939 values. Adjusted for the end of 2021 inflation, this gives the sum of PLN 3,980.189 billion.

Due to the political situation after the War, this document was not disseminated widely, especially on an international scale. Further, this research did not result in the payment of any compensation despite intending to serve as a starting point to assess Polish claims against Germany.

It should be emphasised that individual towns and cities also prepared reports on their war losses. The best-known report is the report on the war losses of the City of Warsaw,⁹ which was drafted in 2004 by *Zespół ds. Oszacowania Strat Wojennych Warszawy* (the Warsaw War Loss Assessment Team), appointed by **Lech Kaczyński**, then Mayor of Warsaw. This report, titled *Straty Warszawy 1939–1945 (Warsaw's Losses 1939–1945)*, gave the

⁶ *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabudowie miast i wsi wg stanu w dniu 1 V 1945 r.*, ed. M. Klimczyk, Warszawa, 1967.

⁷ Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, KOPON, *Informacja wstępna oraz wnioski w sprawie odszkodowań niemieckich i niezatwierdzonych dotychczas innych roszczeń Polski z okresu II wojny światowej*, sign. no. GK 917/51.

⁸ *1939–1945 Pro Memoria*, ed. H. Dmochowska, Warszawa, 2015.

⁹ *Straty Warszawy 1939–1945. Raport*, ed. W. Fałkowski, Warszawa, 2005.

material losses (not including human losses) the City of Warsaw sustained as a result of German aggression during the Second World War, as amounting to 20.74 billion złotys at 1939 values.

In addition to reported losses during the war, Germany has still not concluded a peace treaty with Poland, nor any other agreement to fully regulate settlements related to Second World War losses, including war reparations, individual compensation, or restitution. In the post-War international climate, neither Poland nor Germany could make a decision on the amount or type of war reparations, and how the matter should be settled. Yet, after the collapse of Communism, which led to the unification of East and West Germany in 1990, this matter should have been settled in bilateral relations between Poland and Germany.

In 1945, as the War ended, the Great Powers determined the principles for the settlement of war reparations at the Potsdam Conference. The participants of the Potsdam Conference made Germany liable to make amends to the greatest extent possible for all the losses sustained by all the nations who had suffered at Germany's hands. The Republic of Poland was not a signatory to any of these treaties.

It has to be made clear that the Republic of Poland did not obtain its Western and Northern Territories as a form of war reparation. The westward shift of the border between Poland and the USSR was a decision made by the Great Powers irrespective of reparations, and the territory Poland gained in the west was a form of compensation for the eastern lands it lost to the USSR. Moreover, the area of post-war Poland is smaller than pre-war Poland by about 78,000 km².

Point 4 of the document drawn up on 11 February 1945 at the close of the negotiations between the leaders of the Big Three at Yalta, said the following on compensation in kind from Germany: "On determining the total amount of compensation, as well as its distribution between countries that had suffered as a result of German aggression, the Soviet and American delegations agreed that the total amount of compensation should amount to US \$20 billion and that 50% of this sum would be allocated to the USSR."

Poland was to receive compensation worth 15% of the sum attributed to the USSR, and should have received a repayment US \$1.5 billion, still a negligible amount of compensation in relation to the value of the damage Poland sustained as a result of the War. Polish reparation claims were to be settled through the intermediary services of the USSR. On 16 August 1945, in Moscow, the Interim Government of National Unity (viz. the communist government of Poland) and the government of the USSR

signed an executive order pursuant to the Potsdam settlement on compensation for damage caused by German occupation.¹⁰ Under Art. 1 of this agreement, the USSR relinquished all claims to German property and other assets on the entire territory of Poland, including the part of Germany incorporated in the Polish State. Art. 2 of this agreement determined the amount of reparations due to Poland at 15% of the amount allocated to the USSR.

At this time, the USSR forced Poland to enter an unfavourable agreement for the supply of coal. As of 1946, Poland was obliged to deliver an annual quota of coal to the Soviet Union. In the first year, the amount was to be 8 million metric tonnes, and in the next four years the annual quota to be supplied was 13 million metric tonnes, and 12 million metric tonnes in subsequent years. Importantly, this agreement was accompanied by a secret protocol, in which the price of coal was fixed at preferential rates for the USSR (US \$1.22 per tonne of coal, and US \$1.44 per tonne of coke). These prices were almost ten times lower than the world price for coal at that time. The loss Poland sustained from supplying coal at such a low price has been estimated at US \$836 million, according to the world prices for coal in 1956.

The Soviet Union made the payment of Poland's reparations conditional on the coal deliveries at fixed prices. The effect of this meant that Poland's losses on the value of the coal it exported to the USSR offset the benefits it obtained from reparations. In 1945–1956, Poland's absolute political dependence on the Soviet Union was also accompanied by full economic dependence.

The Soviet Union paid out Poland's reparations in kind – in the form of disused railway assets, ships, equipment and machinery from dismantled German industrial plants and goods supplied from current production in the Soviet zone of occupation. Part of the reparations the Soviet Union sent to Poland was delivered in the form of 6 million copies of the works of Marx, Lenin and Stalin translated into Polish. Poland objected that the estimated value of these reparations was completely unrelated to its real value.

From 16 August 1945 to 31 December 1953, the value of reparations from Germany to the USSR and Poland was estimated at US \$3.0819 billion according to 1938 prices, of which the Polish People's Republic was to receive 7.5%, i.e.: US \$231.1 million.¹¹ The final amount of reparations that Poland actually received was drastically lower than what was initially agreed at Yalta and

¹⁰ *Umowa o wynagrodzeniu szkód wyrządzonych przez okupację niemiecką wraz z protokołami*. Archives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Collection 23, No. 11, vol. 114.

¹¹ Archives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DPT, *Końcowy protokół o dostawach wykonanych dla PRL na rachunek jej udziału w reparacjach z Niemiec*, sign.no. 44/78.

Potsdam In 1947–1989, Poland made numerous unsuccessful attempts to regulate the issue of German compensation due for the Second World War. Nonetheless, Polish citizens did not receive compensation due to the discriminatory legislation of the Federal Republic of Germany, which did not feel obliged to repay this tragic debt to the Polish nation, “on the contrary, the aim of all the German legislation is not to fulfil this obligation.”¹² In practice, the existing political division at the time i.e. the Western world and countries behind the Iron Curtain, made it impossible to settle the matter of compensation. “On the basis of this practice, it can be concluded that the regulation of Germany’s compensation for Poland depends only on political decisions,” and “this is not a legal aspect, nor is it a favour on the part of the aggressor state.”¹³ In practice, the bipolar political division of the world after the end of the Second World War made it impossible to settle the question of reparations.

The final treaty signed in Moscow on 12 September 1990, known as ‘the 2+4 Treaty’, did not mention war reparations and compensation due from Germany at all albeit aiming to close issues related to the Second World War. Again, Poland was not a signatory to this treaty.

After the 2+4 Treaty was concluded (16 October 1991), an agreement was signed between the Polish and German governments, on the basis of which a foundation for Polish-German reconciliation known as *Fundacja Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie* (in German, *Stiftung “Polnisch-Deutsche Aussöhnung”*) was set up. This foundation was granted a fund of 500 million German marks. This amount was to be supplemented by voluntary contributions from German businesses which had benefited from the use of Polish slave labour. **From 1992 to mid-2004, the foundation paid out a total of PLN 731,843,600 to 1,060,689 individuals – each person received an average of PLN 689.97 (EUR 150).** It follows that these payments, like the payments made to victims of the pseudo-medical experiments undertaken in Nazi German concentration camps, were not compensation, but merely a form of token humanitarian aid for Polish citizens who had been victims of the German Third Reich.

It is worth noting that, until 2004, Germany paid humanitarian aid to Western Europeans in amounts per person over ten times higher than for Poles. For historical valuations, it is of critical im-

German industry profited greatly from forced labour and the seizure of private property in occupied countries, either by conducting research on human beings or by supplying the materials needed to exterminate the population. Companies involved included BAYER and IG Farben, forcibly testing various substances on concentration camp inmates, Siemens using slave labour of prisoners, KRUPP, Hugo Scheider munitions factories using prison labour (80% of them died due to the conditions created there), Degussa, manufacturer of Zyklon B, Topf & Söhne, equipment for crematoria. Other companies involved were: from Austria Flugmotorenwerke Ostmark and Steyr-Daimler-Puch, from Germany AEG, Accumulator-Fabrik AFA, Allianz, Audi, BASF, BMW, DEST, Dehomag, Deutsche Bank, Deutsche Bergwerks- und Hüttenbau, Deutsche Wirtschaftsbetriebe, Dresdner Bank, Eisenwerke Oberdonau, Focke-Wulf, Ford Germany, Franz Eher Nachfolger, Heinkel, Hoesch AG, Hugo Boss, Jumo, Junkers, Mercedes-Benz, Messerschmitt, Opel, Porsche, Reichswerke Hermann Göring, Thyssen AG, Volkswagen AG.

¹² Z. Resich, *Międzynarodowa ochrona praw człowieka*, Warszawa: PWN, 1981, p.100–101. See. J. Ciechanowicz, „Odszkodowania wojenne,” *Przegląd Stosunków Międzynarodowych* 1 (1988), p. 40–41; and K. Ruchniewicz, *Polskie zabiegi o odszkodowania niemieckie w latach 1944/45–1975*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2007, p. 148–149.

¹³ A. Klafkowski, “Reparacje wojenne – odszkodowania wojenne,” *Życie i Myśl* 11/12 (1990), p. 37.

portance to consider the passage of time and people’s awareness of the changes which have occurred in all areas of human activity over the last decades. All the calculations and estimates have to be evaluated approximately, because there are too many variables which determine value undergoing change over the period. This can be clearly seen on the stock markets, where the value of specific shares can be checked on a regular basis. The value of other goods is also subject to change although nobody verifies such developments to the same degree of accuracy. With cultural assets, we usually operate on an annual or multiannual basis. So we cannot say that the value of a particular object today is the same as it was in 1939. Such a claim would stand in contradiction to the basic principles of economic calculation.

As regards the loss or destruction of property or goods, it might seem logical to enforce their restitution in kind (*restitutio in integrum*). This might be justified morally and economically if they are returned relatively quickly. If an aggressor requisitioned a locomotive in 1939 and returned it in 1945, he would be returning an older vehicle, but still one that could be used in transportation. But the return of the same locomotive after 80 years would not serve no purpose, as it could not satisfy the victim’s current-day transport needs. So how should the value of losses sustained in 1939 be compensated in accordance with today’s prices?

The following valorisation methods were considered during the preparation of the Report :

The US dollar valorisation method assumes that losses in the value of the dollar in 1939, should be compensated in dollars today.

The gold valorisation method assumes that losses with a value equivalent to the contemporary value of a gram of gold, should be compensated with the equivalent of a gram of gold.

The cost-of-living valorisation assumes that lost or deprived subsistence goods and services should be compensated in a value corresponding to today’s “consumption basket”.

The salary valorisation assumes that income lost in 1939 should be compensated by income at today’s level.

The per capita GDP valorisation assumes that 1939 losses in the value of production per Polish citizen should be compensated by today’s value of production per Polish citizen.

The method of nominal GDP valorisation assumes that losses of, e.g. 50% of the value of production in Poland in 1939, should be compensated by 50% of the value of production of Poland today.

In the Report, we provide an estimate of Poland’s war losses

caused by the German occupation in 1939–1945, in 1938/1939 złoty and US dollars, and in PLN and US dollars at the end of 2021. We index the historical value of the losses with US dollar inflation, as we do not have a complete index of prices in zlotys from before the occupation to today. Since the destruction of Poland during the German occupation was enormous and affected all areas of the state's functioning, from personal losses to consumer goods to state institutions and ownership of produced wealth, the correct determination of the sum of historical losses in contemporary realities is in itself a difficult issue. Therefore, Chapter Nine contains a description of selected methods of valorisation of historical value together with their economic interpretation which will help the reader to understand the scale of the enormity of the destruction suffered by the Polish state and society during World War II.

The following table presents war loss valorisation indicators by the methods listed.

Valorisation method	Period	Valorisation index
US Dollar	September 1939 – 31 December 2021	15.40
US Dollar	December 1938 – 31 December 2021	15.25
Gold	September 1939 – 31 December 2021	40.05
Cost-of-living	1939–2020	39.32
Average salary	1939–2021	58.95
GDP per capita	1938–2021	132.21
Nominal GDP	1938–2021	144.58

Table 1.
Selected methods of valorisation of war losses

Source: Own compilation

Throughout the Report, in addition to the estimated value of buildings and works of art, the “carrier” or unit of calculation of the lost value of our economy over time is precisely the citizens of Poland – as presented by Professors J.J. Sztudynger and P. Baranowski, based on the work of Prof. K. Wnęk.

Table 2 presents the values calculated for Poland's losses caused by Germany during the Second World War. The figures are in billions of PLN, euro and US dollars, at National Bank of Poland (NBP) exchange rates for the end of 2021. The table also shows percentage losses. All the sums listed later in this *Introduction* have been rounded up to the nearest billion, but in the table they are presented to a greater degree of accuracy.

The greatest loss the Polish State sustained was the mass murder of 5.2 million of its citizens by Germany. If these people had lived, they would have continued to work, generating an in-

come of PLN 4,787 billion (€1,041 billion, US \$1,179 billion) by the end of their working lives. This sum accounts for over 77% of the total losses Poland suffered. The next most important item is the loss sustained by the Polish State Treasury and its claims in lieu of the institutionalised plunder caused by the activities of *Emissionsbank in Polen* (the issuing bank the German authorities established in occupied Poland) which are estimated at over PLN 493 billion (€107 billion, US \$121 billion). Material losses amount to PLN 797 billion (€173 billion, US \$196 billion). Polish credit and savings institutions, which were robbed of the funds deposited by their clients, sustained losses estimated at PLN 124 billion (€27 billion, US \$31 billion). In flagrant violation of international conventions, the war and occupation did not spare cultural and artistic property, the value of which is essentially immeasurable, and the values given refer only to their material valuation. They were seized or deliberately destroyed with scientific precision and with the support of Germany's intellectual elite; the value of these losses has been estimated at PLN 19 billion (€4 billion, US \$5 billion).

Table 2.
Summary of the value of Poland's losses suffered from Germany during World War II (in millions)

Chapter	Type of loss	Value in million PLN of 2021	%
2 & 3	Demographic losses	4,786,965	76.95
4	Material losses	797,398	12.82
5	Losses of cultural and artistic heritage	19,310	0.31
6	Losses in banking	89,321	1.44
	Losses in insurance	34,804	0.56
7	Losses to the Polish treasury from the operation of the German <i>Emissionsbank in Polen</i>	492,811	7.92
	Total	6,220,609	100.00

Source: chapters 3-7. Own calculation

When all the individual values are summed up, Poland's total losses amount to

PLN 6,220,609 million

i.e. six trillion, two hundred twenty billion, six hundred nine million PLN
(€1,352,483 million, US \$1,532,170 million)

The history of the German occupation of Poland, and the scale of German atrocities committed against the Polish people is not well known in Europe or in the world. As the last surviving witnesses of these events pass away, the memory of these crimes

is fading. That is why today, many people only associate Poland with the place where the Holocaust of the Jewish people was perpetrated. There is no solid knowledge among the general public of the martyrdom of Poles and other citizens of the Second Polish Republic who were exterminated, deported to concentration camps and exploited as slaves of the “nation of masters”; similarly, the extent of the losses and their consequences for contemporary Polish citizens remains incomprehensible.

It should be strongly emphasised that the international community needs to be made aware of what the real effects of the Second World War were for Poland – what losses Poland suffered, and what war reparations and compensation Polish citizens have (or rather have not) received since the end of the War.

Today, the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany enjoy good political and economic relations. Both countries are members of the UN, the European Union, the Council of Europe, NATO and other organisations working for peace and security in Europe and the world. The people and governments of both countries want to deepen and develop these good relations. That is why we believe the governments of Poland and Germany should sign a bilateral agreement to achieve closure and comprehensively address all issues related to the Second World War.

I would like to express my deep hope that this Report will present the scale of Poland’s losses, and allow both countries to initiate an open dialogue based on facts, leading to this matter being resolved.

The report has been divided into nine main chapters, enhanced by studies on what happened to certain Polish cities, towns, and villages under German occupation.

Chapter 1, *The German occupation of Poland, 1939–1945*, by Włodzimierz Suleja, Paweł Kosiński, Marcin Przegiętka and Tomasz Sudoł, historians from the Institute of National Remembrance. This chapter is a concise description of what happened to Polish citizens on the territories under German occupation during the Second World War, and constitutes a historical introduction to the later parts of the Report.



See Chapter 1, p. 61

Chapter 2, *Poland’s population loss caused by Germany during the Second World War*, by Konrad Wnęk. This chapter discusses Poland’s loss of population between 1939–1945, caused solely by the German state and its agencies. The loss is estimated at 5.2 million people. This figure reflects the number of victims killed by the Germans only; it does not include Polish citizens who were victims of Soviet totalitarianism, and some of the Polish citizens murdered during ethnic cleansing atrocities in Volhynia and other eastern voivodeships of the Second Polish Republic. More precise data is available for those who were killed by the Germans in the Core Lands: 2,172,968 killed in towns and cities, and 586,492 in rural areas. These figures should be supplemented with estimates for those gminas (third-level territorial division) areas, which did not return any data to BOW (approximately 67,559 persons). In other words, a total of 2,827,019 persons were killed in the Core Lands. These victims were Polish citizens, chiefly of Jewish and Polish ethnicity. Poland’s population losses in its eastern voivodships amounted to 2,242,034 persons who were Polish citizens of various ethnicities. In addition to these figures, the Polish Army lost around 150,000 men and officers, and this figure should be added to the total sum. All the above data are estimates; the extent of the extermination and the methods of killing used by the German Third Reich meant that most of the data could not be collected until the end of the War.

Chapter 3, *An economic valuation of human losses sustained by Poland during the Second World War Calculated on the basis of lost wages as a component of GDP*, by Jan J. Sztaudynger and Paweł Baranowski. The authors of this chapter used the value of lost gross earnings to estimate the financial value of human losses resulting from: the deaths and disabilities caused by the Germans, the Germanization of abducted children, and forced labour, in accordance with the generally accepted methodology for the calculation of GDP. Potential lost earnings of the victims were calculated for the whole of their working lives, in consideration of their sex and age. Estimates were based on data published in pre-war government statistics and the figure of 5.2 million deaths (viz. approx. 15% of the population of Poland in 1939), as given by K. Wnęk. The authors estimated the presumable income that victims murdered by the Germans would have earned taking into account the probability of their survival to a certain age, and data for their working activity on the basis of the 1931 population census. This estimate did not take into consideration unborn next generations that could have existed were it not for the



See Chapter 2, p. 101.



See Chapter 3, p. 183.

extermination of their potential parents. This restrictive factor applied in the methodology keeps the estimate down to approximately the minimum calculable value.

Chapter 4, *Report on the material losses sustained by Poland in 1939–1945*, jointly authored by a team led by Mieczysław Prystupa, and consisting of Mirosław Kłusek, Aldona Gózdź, Elwira Laskowska, Zbigniew Brodaczewski, Tomasz Ciodyk, Romuald Gromulski, Wojciech Kiczka and Józef Menes, is dedicated to the extent and specificity of the analysed losses. The losses calculated and presented in this chapter are for the destruction of residential and non-residential buildings in urban and rural areas, buildings of historic value, and buildings used for religious worship and engineering (technical) infrastructure. The authors have taken into account losses and damage suffered by power and other industries, individual manufacturers and small businesses. Other types of damage considered in this chapter were losses resulting from the devastation of agricultural land, the seizure and confiscation of farms and the land belonging to them, the imposition of enforced deliveries of quotas of grain and other agricultural produce (such as meat, milk) to the Germans, and losses caused by the temporary cessation of agricultural production (such as losses due to the interruption of sowing and perennial cultivation).

Further losses were caused by damage due to exploitative felling in the forests, and the destruction of plantations of trees, shrubs and crops. Income was also forfeited due to the destruction and requisitioning of buildings which could have been leased out or rented over a period of five years (1939–1945). The authors also assessed the value of lost and destroyed Polish Army property, viz. its movable assets attached to real estate.

Chapter 5, *Losses of the Republic of Poland in arts and culture during the Second World War*, by Mirosław Kłusek and Tomasz Luterek. This chapter shows that a main aim of the German occupying power was to deprive the Polish nation of its cultural heritage. The Germans pursued a ruthless and systematic campaign of destroying all areas of Polish cultural life: science and education, literature, the dramatic arts, music, painting and sculpture, historic architecture, museums, etc. The nature and scale of this destruction was unprecedented. Poland's losses of its cultural heritage are incomparable to the damage Germany caused in this respect in other countries it occupied. The Hague Convention of 1907 categorically prohibited all occupying powers from seizing, destroying, and wilfully downgrading the value of works of art



See Chapter 4, p. s. 211



See Chapter 5, p. s. 251

and cultural heritage, regardless of whose possession they were in. Poland's diplomatic service presented a proposal in 1995 that Germany should finance a search for works of art and items of cultural heritage looted from Poland during the War, and pay for their retrieval and restitution. Unfortunately, the German diplomatic service has avoided all discussion on compensation due to Poland for Germany's wilful and premeditated destruction of Polish cultural heritage during the Second World War.

Chapter 6, *Poland's losses in banking and insurance sustained as a result of the Second World War*, by Mirosław Kłusek. It discusses the methods and scale of exploitation of the Polish banking and insurance sector. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, Poland had a well-organised network of credit and savings institutions. Their assets are valued at tens of billions of pre-war złoty (Polish currency) in gold. All the assets of Polish banks and other credit institutions on the Polish territories directly incorporated into Germany were confiscated. The confiscated assets were transferred to the *Reichsministerium* (i.e. German Ministry of Finance). Polish credit institutions in the *Generalgouvernement* suffered a somewhat different fate. The Germans only let some of these institutions continue operations – those whose activities could serve the German wartime economy. Polish social security institutions were exposed to huge losses as a result of German occupation. A total and permanent freeze on assets belonging to Polish social insurance institutions was imposed in the *Generalgouvernement* and maintained throughout the period of occupation, depriving Polish account holders of to ability to draw any income from their assets in these institutions. The situation of Polish social insurance institutions in areas of Poland directly incorporated into Germany was much worse. All the loans they had issued were written off and subsequently crossed off the balance sheets.

Chapter 7, *Losses sustained by the State Treasury of the Republic of Poland as a result of war and German occupation during the Second World War, and the operations of the 'Emissions-Bank in Polen'*, by Mirosław Kłusek. This chapter shows the exploitative character of German financial policy on occupied Polish territory, and the losses the Polish State Treasury sustained. Shortly after the cessation of the initial hostilities, at the beginning of German occupation in 1939, the German occupying authorities implemented a vigorous campaign to enforce the collection of Polish citizens' pre-war tax arrears. Fearing German reprisals, Polish debtors quickly settled these arrears. In addition, the German authorities set about col-



See Chapter 6, p. 303



See Chapter 7, p. 335

lecting taxes pursuant to earlier Polish legislation but at increased rates, and imposed new tax liabilities. The German occupying authorities used the revenue gained from taxation to finance their own administrative operations. Another element of German fiscal exploitation on occupied Polish territory was the activity of the *Emissions-Bank in Polen*. This issuing bank was established by the Germans to finance their military operations and the occupation of Poland, and to economically exploit the local population.

Chapter 8, *Estimates of the loss of GDP caused by the German occupation of Poland during the Second World War*, by Paweł Pońsko. This chapter presents the volume of Gross Domestic Product of the Polish state – which was not produced due to the German aggression. The German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 was followed by the Soviet invasion of Poland's eastern territories on 17 September 1939 (in accordance with the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed on 23 August 1939), and then a series of military operations ensued on the territories of eastern Poland after Germany attacked the USSR, followed by the Soviet bombing of Warsaw, and in 1944–1945, the German-Soviet war was fought on occupied Polish territory. These hostilities resulted in massive destruction and looting, not all of which can be attributed to Germany. However, it is self-evident that if Germany had not invaded Poland, there would have been no fighting on Polish territory in 1939–1945. This is the point of departure for Pońsko's presentation of a series of hypothetical scenarios to account for the fall in Poland's GDP and economic potential over the 1939–1945 period, as deduced on the basis of all the losses Poland sustained due to the Second World War.

Pońsko estimates the income Poland lost due to the cessation of production and forfeiture of production resources, and the damage, destruction and looting perpetrated by occupying German forces during the War. His analysis is based on pre-war Polish economic data, which enables him to determine the way in which Poland's GDP had been accrued. Hence, by applying the standard Cobb-Douglas production function, he arrives at three alternative scenarios of GDP growth, based solely on publicly available data. He then applies the data for production losses caused by German occupation to generate a wartime scenario showing the slump in Poland's GDP under and immediately following German occupation. The difference between the counterfactual and wartime scenario gives a measure of Poland's losses due to the cessation of production caused by German occupation. Pońsko's analysis presents a set of possible scenarios showing the value of Poland's irretrievably lost GDP and economic potential over the period from 1939 to 1945.



See Chapter 8, p. 361

Chapter 9, *The current value of Poland's losses caused by Germany during the Second World War*. This chapter gives a tabular presentation of the results of the estimates for Poland's losses discussed in the previous chapters and supplemented by the **methodology for calculating the value of losses**, developed by Mirosław Kłusek and Paweł Pońsko. The authors developed six possible methods for calculating the value of losses, of which they identified the best methodologically sound method of valorisation adopted throughout the Report.

Case studies. In addition to providing the essential facts and figures, we have illustrated the enormity of personal and material losses suffered by the ordinary people of Poland under German occupation during the Second World War. We have supplemented the Report with case studies to illustrate the methods and measures used by the Germans against the Polish population: the wartime losses of Warsaw (case study by Józef Menes), together with the Mensebach Album showing the methodical destruction of the capital; the Piaśnica atrocity (by Tomasz Ceran); the carnage in Wola, a district of Warsaw (by Sebastian Piątkowski); the destruction of the town of Wieluń (by Stanisław Olejnik); the wartime losses of Jasło (by Krzysztof Wnęk); the losses of Nowy Sącz (by Leszek Zakrzewski); the losses of Sokołów Podlaski (by Rafał Dmowski); the losses of Węgrów (by Rafał Dmowski); the village of Sochy and the Zamość region (by Tomasz Panfil); and the annihilation of Michniów (by Konrad Wnęk).

The **Annex** attached to the Report contains the following texts:

On the Soviet occupation of Polish lands in 1939–1941 (Marek Wierzbicki and Paweł Olechowski).

On the crimes of Soviet partisans against citizens of the Second Polish Republic in the Eastern Borderlands under German occupation in 1941–1944 (Paweł Libera).

On the destruction caused by Soviet troops in Silesia (Dariusz Węgrzyn).

On the destruction caused in the so-called Recovered Territories (Mirosław Kłusek).

Main theses of the study: *Legal opinion on the international agreements which give Poland grounds to seek compensation from Germany for damage caused during the Second World War* (by Robert Jastrzębski) Statement made by the government of the People's Republic of Poland at the United Nations on 27 September 1969.



See Chapter 9, p. 399



See Annex, p. 439

International law has ruled that no statutory limitation is applicable to war crimes and crimes against humanity, and that there is no limitation to the right to claim compensation for such crimes. On the grounds of the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907, the resolutions determined at the Potsdam Conference, and Germany's conduct in relation to other states which sustained losses caused by Germany during the Second World War, and with which Germany has concluded agreements and paid out compensation, the German state is bound to compensate the Republic of Poland for damage and losses it caused to Poland during the Second World War. Another argument for Poland's claim for compensation from Germany for damage caused during the Second World War is provided by further applicable acts of international law and Germany's practice of post-war reparations, as well as the discriminatory policy of West Germany against Poland and its citizens, in comparison with other countries which have received much higher compensation from Germany even though their material and personal losses were smaller.

The alleged unilateral declaration of the Council of Ministers of 23 August 1953 on the renunciation of war reparations by the Polish People's Republic contravened the Polish Constitution of 22 July 1952 in force at the time, which ruled that the ratification and termination of international treaties lay within the powers of the Council of State, not the Council of Ministers. The unilateral declaration was forced upon the Polish government under the pressure from the USSR. In addition, according to the minutes of the meeting of the Council of Ministers held on 19 August 1953, the waiver applied only to the German Democratic Republic.

At this point, it should be noted that a potential waiver of reparations to Germany as a whole would have required all four Allied Powers to conclude a peace treaty, because they alone were authorised to amend the Potsdam decisions.

It should also be emphasised that despite a thorough search in the archives conducted by the Parliamentary Group's expert Józef Menes, no document answering to the description of the alleged Council of Ministers resolution was found. No such resolution or any other document on Poland's alleged surrender of rights to reparations or war damages was ever published in any issue of the official journal of laws *Dziennik Ustaw* or the official gazette *Monitor Polski* in 1953–1956. No further details are known of the circumstance of the alleged declaration by the Bierut government, and there are no signatures on the attendance list comprising the 35 names of members of the Council of Ministers. The minutes of the meeting of the Council of Ministers of 23 August 1953 state

that “the Chairman (Bolesław Bierut), notified the members of the Council of the proposals put forward by the Soviet Government to the Government of the Polish People's Republic and read out the resolution of 19 August 1953 taken accordingly by the Presidium.” The resolution of the Presidium of the Polish Government says that “the Government of the Polish People's Republic agrees with the Soviet government's position on the waiver releasing the German Democratic Republic from liability for reparations as of 1 January 1954.”

Bolesław Bierut is alleged to have referred to this resolution as an argument for Poland's waiver of war damages. However, no minutes exist for a Government Presidium meeting of 19 August 1953 in Volume 68 of the Archive of the Council of Ministers, which contains the minutes and resolutions taken by the Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the Government between 18 July and 12 September 1953. Moreover, there are no resolutions dated 19 August 1953. The only documents present in Volume 68 show the minutes of the Government Presidium meetings of 12 August 1953 (Meeting No. 26) and of 22 August 1953 (Meeting No. 27). The numeration of the pages in the minutes for 12 and 22 August is continuous and preserved intact. No such document dated 19 August 1953 has been found in the AAN (Archives of Modern Records).

Taking into account all the circumstances in which the Polish government operated at the time, the decision taken resulted in a clear breach of the sovereignty of the Polish state. Furthermore, there are many irregularities that cast doubt on whether the alleged meeting of the Council of Ministers ever took place at all, and whether the alleged resolution was adopted and entered into the national and international legal system.

Moreover, the statement made by the government of the Polish People's Republic to the UN on 27 September 1969 during the debate on war crimes, contained in the document with reference number E/CN.4/1010, is not confirmation that Poland waived its right to reparations, but on the contrary, it is a declaration of Poland's demand that Germany pay the compensation due to the people of Poland for war damages.



Józef Menes



The war losses of Warsaw, 1939–1945

During the Second World War, Germany destroyed over 80% of Warsaw, leaving the city in ruins. There were four stages in the destruction: (1) during the defence of the city in 1939, (2) during the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto in 1943 and after the ghetto was closed down when the Jewish quarter was demolished, (3) during the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, the largest urban battle fought during the Second World War, and finally, (4) after the capitulation of the Uprising.

It is estimated that urban damage as a result of hostilities in 1939 amounted to 10% of the city; 15% of the city was damaged and demolished during the 1943 Uprising in the Warsaw ghetto and in its aftermath; a further 25% was devastated during the Warsaw Uprising (August – October 1944); and finally, by the end of 1944, the Germans had destroyed another 30% of pre-war Warsaw.¹ The overall destruction amounted to the loss of over 80% of the city's buildings. In numerical terms, 20,408 properties with a total capacity of 92 million cubic metres were devastated or destroyed completely.²

Warsaw's percentage losses due to the Second World War were heavier than the damage suffered by any other European city.

The survey carried out in 1945–1946 by *Biuro Odszkodowań Wojennych* (the Bureau of War Compensation, BOW) for the Presidium of the Council of Ministers established that Warsaw sustained 34.5% of the material losses in Poland's total domestic damage (in the Core Lands).³

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Left: Photo 1.
The ruins of Warsaw petrated by Germany in 1944 (Photo by Wacław Żdźarski, NDA Collections)

¹ Fałkowski, Wojciech (ed.), *Straty Warszawy 1939–1945. Raport*, Warszawa: Miasto stołeczne Warszawa, 2005, p. 368.

² *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabudowie miast i wsi wg stanu w dniu 1 V 1945 r.*, Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1967.

³ AAN, *Sprawozdanie w przedmiocie strat i szkód wojennych Polski w latach 1939–1945*, zespół Biuro Odszkodowań Wojennych przy Prezydium Rady Ministrów, ref. no. 2/291/0/11.



In financial terms, this amounted to 21.9 billion zł at the value of the złoty in 1939.⁴ Valorised at the US dollar parity rate, material losses suffered by the capital of Poland reached 395.8 billion złotych (three hundred and ninety-five billion, eight hundred million PLN).

This sum comprises damage to real estate including historic buildings, industrial facilities, tradesmen's and craftsmen's workshops, urban infrastructure, transport, the equipment and facilities of public institutions, and the contents and furnishings of private households. Detailed accounts were drawn up for BOW by *Wydział Strat Wojennych Zarządu Miejskiego miasta stołecznego Warszawy* (the Department for War Losses of the Board of the Capital City of Warsaw). This department also collected forms submitted by Warsaw residents recording individual war losses (about 80 thousand forms were submitted).

When we look at photographs depicting the sea of Warsaw's ruins in 1945, we should bear in mind that the vast

⁴ Fałkowski, p. 12

Photo 2.
Aerial view of the ruins of the Kierbedź Bridge, after the Germans blew it up in September 1944 (Photo by Waclaw Żdźarski, NDA collections)



majority of the real estate that was devastated did not belong to the Polish State Treasury or Warsaw's municipal authorities. Over 90% of the real estate in pre-war Warsaw had been privately owned.

The losses to Warsaw's industry were an overwhelming blow to the country's and city's economic potential. Before the War, over 40% of the country's large factories had been concentrated in the capital. Losses in this area have been estimated at around 3 billion pre-war zł.⁵ The value of Warsaw's pre-war production rate was not reached in the city's post-war industry and services until the 1950s.

A discussion of the consequences of the War for Warsaw cannot overlook the fact that under German occupation, the city was also the target of several Soviet air raids following the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. The first of these raids occurred a day later, and subsequent ones took place on 13 November 1941 and 21 August 1942. On the night of 1–2 September 1942, Warsaw was bombed

⁵ Fałkowski, p. 408.

Photo 3.
View of the devastation of central Warsaw perpetrated by Germany in 1944 (Photo by Waclaw Żdźarski, NDA collections)

by about 30 Soviet aircraft which dropped nearly 300 demolition bombs. Soviet airmen carried out their biggest raid on the night of 12–13 May 1943. 300 ethnic Poles were estimated to have been killed and 1,000 were wounded. The German Governor of *Distrikt Warschau* issued a public notice that 14 Germans had been killed and bombs had damaged or destroyed about 800 residential apartments. The purpose of the raid was to destroy the Warsaw communication node, but the bombs fell on residential buildings instead of their main target.

Warsaw's human losses were more tragic than its material damage. According to estimates based on the 1931 census,⁶ the ethnic breakdown of Warsaw's residents was as follows: 68.8% ethnic Poles, 30.1% Jews, and under 1 percent Germans, Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. The city's population in 1931 amounted to 1.172 million, and 1.289 million at the outbreak of war in 1939, but no more than 1,000 inhabitants at the time of the German army's withdrawal in late 1944 and early 1945. It was not until after the war, in February 1946, it was only 479 thousand.⁷

According to Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz,⁸ Warsaw's estimated death toll was as follows:

Table 3.
Warsaw's estimated wartime death toll

Circumstances	Estimated deaths
In military operations, Sept. 1939	20,000
Executions and murders	32,000
Extermination of Jews in the summer of 1942	310,000
Extermination of Jews in the spring of 1943	60,000
The Warsaw Uprising, 1944 – combatants	16,000
The Warsaw Uprising, 1944 – civilians	150,000
Deaths in concentration camps	45,000
Deaths during forced labour in Germany	52,000
Total	685,000

Source: Warszawa w latach 1939–1945, Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz et al. (eds.), Warszawa: PWN, 1984, p. 83.

BOW gave very similar data, on which the findings in chapter 2.3 are also based, estimating Warsaw's fatalities at around 700 thousand. As can be seen, those who lost their

⁶ *Historia Polski w liczbach. Ludność. Terytorium*, Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1994, p. 163

⁷ *Historia Polski w liczbach*, p. 155.

⁸ Dunin-Wąsowicz, Krzysztof, et al. (eds.), *Warszawa w latach 1939–1945*, Warszawa: PWN, 1984, p. 83.

lives as a result of military operations constitute the smallest group of victims. This was because the Germans committed murder and war crimes on a mass scale. Their policy of repression was targeted particularly against the Jews and Polish intelligentsia.

Under German occupation, there was also a drastic deterioration in the city's public health, mainly due to the shortage of food and medicine, deliberately caused by the Germans. 165 thousand sustained severe injuries and permanent loss of health.

The ordeal of Warsaw's residents did not come to an end after the capitulation of the Warsaw Uprising. The Germans ordered those still in the city to leave. Over 550 thousand Varsovians and another 100 thousand from the suburbs were evicted and deported to the Pruszków transit camp. According to various accounts, 90–165 thousand of them were sent to labour camps, and over 50 thousand to concentration camps.⁹

Apart from the above, Warsaw also suffered huge losses in other areas, such as its health service, scholarship and education, trade and craftsmanship. Railway stations, bridges, telephone and aviation infrastructure were completely destroyed. The Germans devastated over 90% of cultural objects, historic buildings, including religious buildings, hospitals and health care centres, industrial facilities, railway infrastructure and even the street lighting of the capital (in 98.5%).

After the war, Warsaw needed many years to rebuild, but the continuity of its development had been interrupted both in the social and cultural sphere, and the effects can still be observed today.

⁹ Fałkowski, p.300.

Mensebach's Album

"Land: Polen, Ort: Warschau" (Country: Poland, Place: Warsaw). That was where the photographs we present below were made. They show the planned and systematic demolition of Warsaw the Germans conducted from September to October 1944, in accordance with a decision Adolf Hitler had already taken on 6 February 1944: "Warsaw must be destroyed as soon as the opportunity arises".

The author of these photos was Alfred Mensebach, a German architect from Lissa (viz. the Polish city of Leszno under German occupation). In the summer of 1944, Mensebach was a member of *Technische Nothilfe* (TN), an auxiliary police sapper unit. TN was under orders from Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler. When the Warsaw Uprising broke out, Himmler ordered the city razed to the ground.

During the Warsaw Uprising, TN, Mensebach's unit, carried out a scheduled operation to set fire to and blow up thousands of buildings in Warsaw, including its Royal Castle, the Kierbedź Bridge, the Hale Mirowskie market, the URSUS national engineering works at ul. Skierniewicka 27/29, and many other buildings. It was a carefully planned operation to annihilate Warsaw, especially its cultural heritage. Some of the photographs in Mensebach's album show the mass deportation and killing of Warsaw's inhabitants. Well over a dozen perpetrators who took part in the operation can be identified by name and rank in the TN from the pictures in the album. Some of the photos were taken by Thomas Schmidt, another member of the TN.

The demolition gang which destroyed Warsaw was made up of real individuals, each with a name, not by mythical, anonymous "Nazis." A few pictures taken on 7 October 1944 show the ceremony for the decoration of TN men, who were awarded the *Kriegsverdienstkrenz 2. Klasse mit Schwertern* (War Merit Cross 2nd Class with Swords). These military decorations for the planned demolition of the city of Warsaw, i.e. for "special merit for service under enemy fire and war merit," were conferred on them by Major Sarnow of the *Schutzpolizei* (security police), one of the commanding officers of the German forces sent in to put down the Warsaw Uprising.



Photo 4.
Auftragserteilung an ein Sprengkommando. Major Sarnow, 3.IX.44 [Maj. Sarnow issuing orders to a demolition unit, 3 September 1944] (Institute for Western Affairs collections)

BILDKARTEI <small>DIPLOM-ARCHITEKT</small> ALFRED MENSEBACH <small>LISSA (WARTHELAND)</small>	LAND: <i>Polen</i>	KLASSE: <i>IV</i> <i>IV</i> <i>V</i> <i>VI</i>
	GAU:	ABTLG.: <i>CLAB</i> <i>C</i> <i>g</i>
	ORT: <i>Warschau</i>	GRUPPE: <i>4</i>
	<i>Auftragserteilung an ein Sprengkommando</i>	

POSITIV NR. <i>3386</i>
NEGATIV NR.: <i>194/10</i>
DIAPOSITIV NR.:
FOTOGRAF:
NAME: <i>Diplom-Architekt</i> <i>Alfred Mensebach</i>
ORT: <i>Liessa bei Reichshammer</i>
STRASSE: <i>Am Hauptbahnhof A 24509</i>
DATUM: <i>3. IX. 44</i>
ERHALTEN VON:
NAME:
ORT:
STRASSE:
DATUM:
Diplom-Architekt
BEARBEITER: <i>Alfred Mensebach</i>

Major Sarnow

Buchdr. Thiel, Lissa 32684

Mensebach, a qualified architect who designed buildings for Germany, took part in the planned demolition of buildings in occupied Poland. In March 1945, after the Germans fled Leszno, his album of 137 photographs fell into Polish hands and is now in the collections of the Poznań Institute for Western Affairs. TN, which according to Jürgen Stroop's report consisted of 7 men, also took part in putting down the Jewish Ghetto Uprising in April and May 1943, and in the scheduled demolition of what remained of the ghetto in the aftermath of the 1943 Uprising. The TN demolishers of Warsaw were never put on trial after the War. Each one of them would probably have said, "I was only carrying out orders, and I was never a Nazi!" In Germany, nobody thought of them as contributors to the destruction of Warsaw. Quite on the contrary, TN enjoyed an excellent reputation as an efficient unit for the protection of life and property against natural and man-made disasters, and the effects of war.

In the early 1950s, Otto Lummitsch and Erich Hampe, founders of TN, established the THW (Bundesanstalt Technisches Hilfswerk), a new organisation as an alternative for TN, which is still conducting operations in Germany.



Detail of Photo 5, p. 51

We present Mensebach's photos with translations of the original captions.



Detail of Photo 6, p. 51

Photo 5.
Vorbereitung vor Sprengung des ehemaligen Königsschloßes an der Weichsel, 8.IX.44 [Preparing to blow up the former Royal Castle on the Vistula, 8 September 1944]

Photo 6.
Lissaer TN an dem Fabrikgebäude an der Plocka, 11.IX.44 [TN unit from Lissa in front of the factory buildings on Plocka St., 11 September 1944]



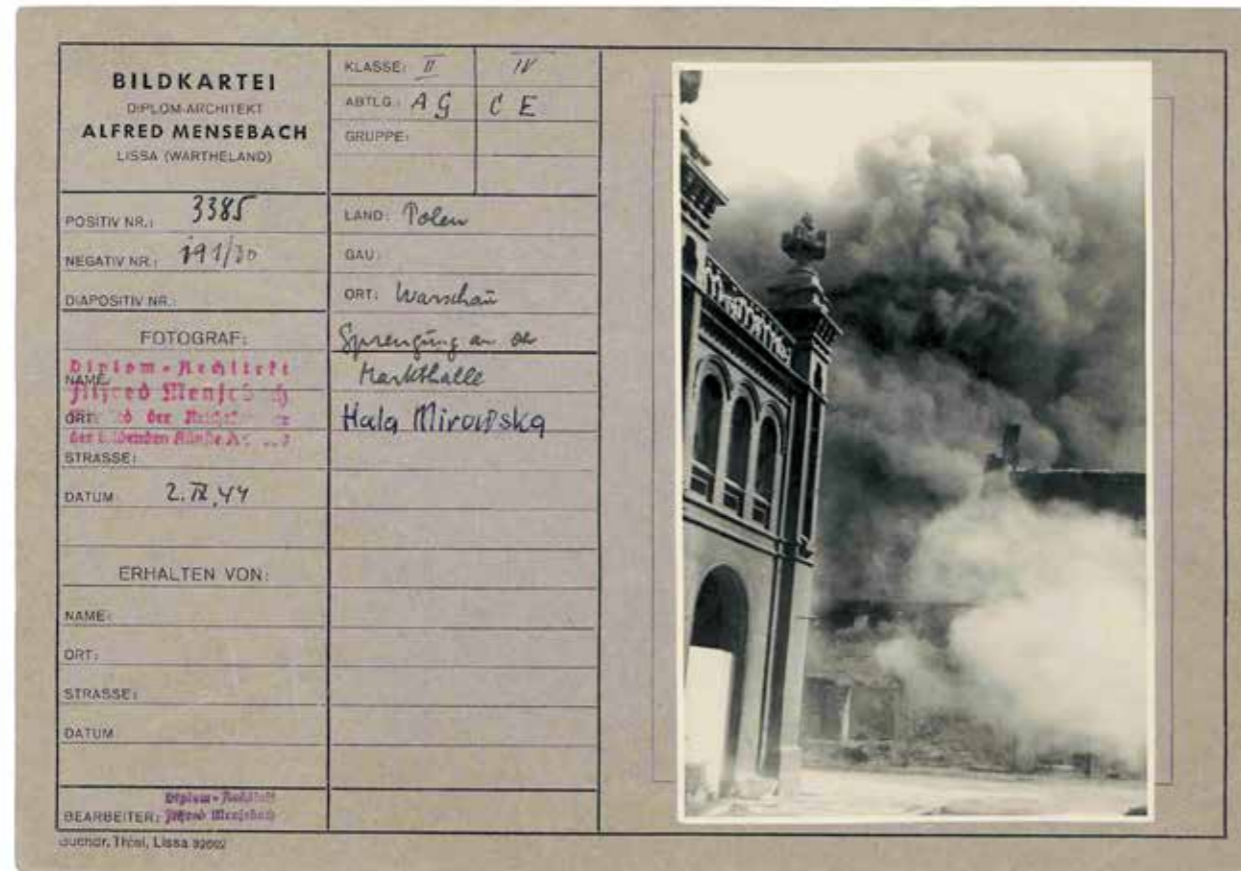


Photo 7.
Sprengung an der Markthalle, Hala Mirowska, 2.IX.44
[Blowing up the Hala Mirowska market, 2 September 1944]



Photo 8.
Sprengung am Feuerwehrturn, 6.IX.44
[Blowing up the fire station tower, 6 September 1944]

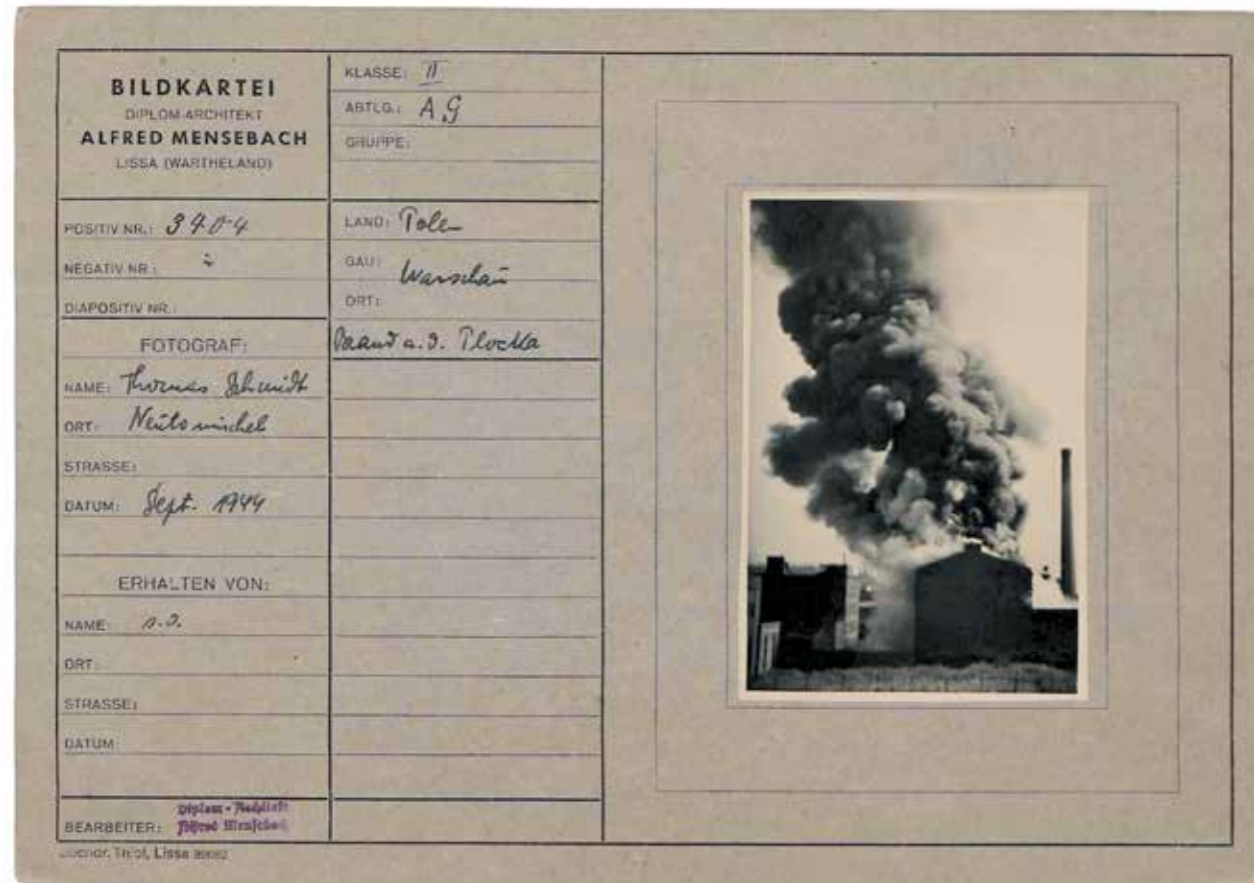


Photo 9.
Brand an der Plocka, Sept. 1944
[Fire on Plocka St., Sept. 1944]

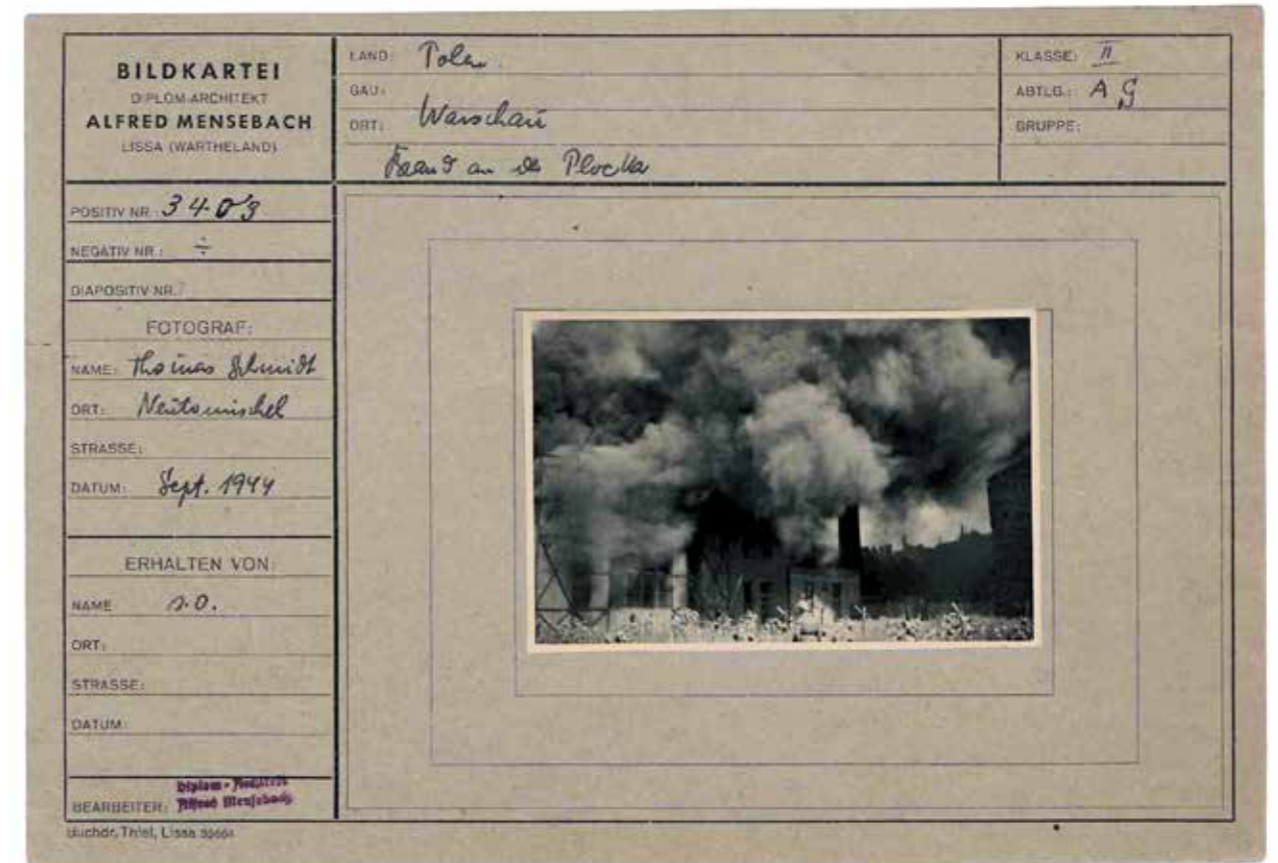


Photo 10.
Brand an der Plocka, Sept. 1944
[Fire on Plocka St., Sept. 1944]

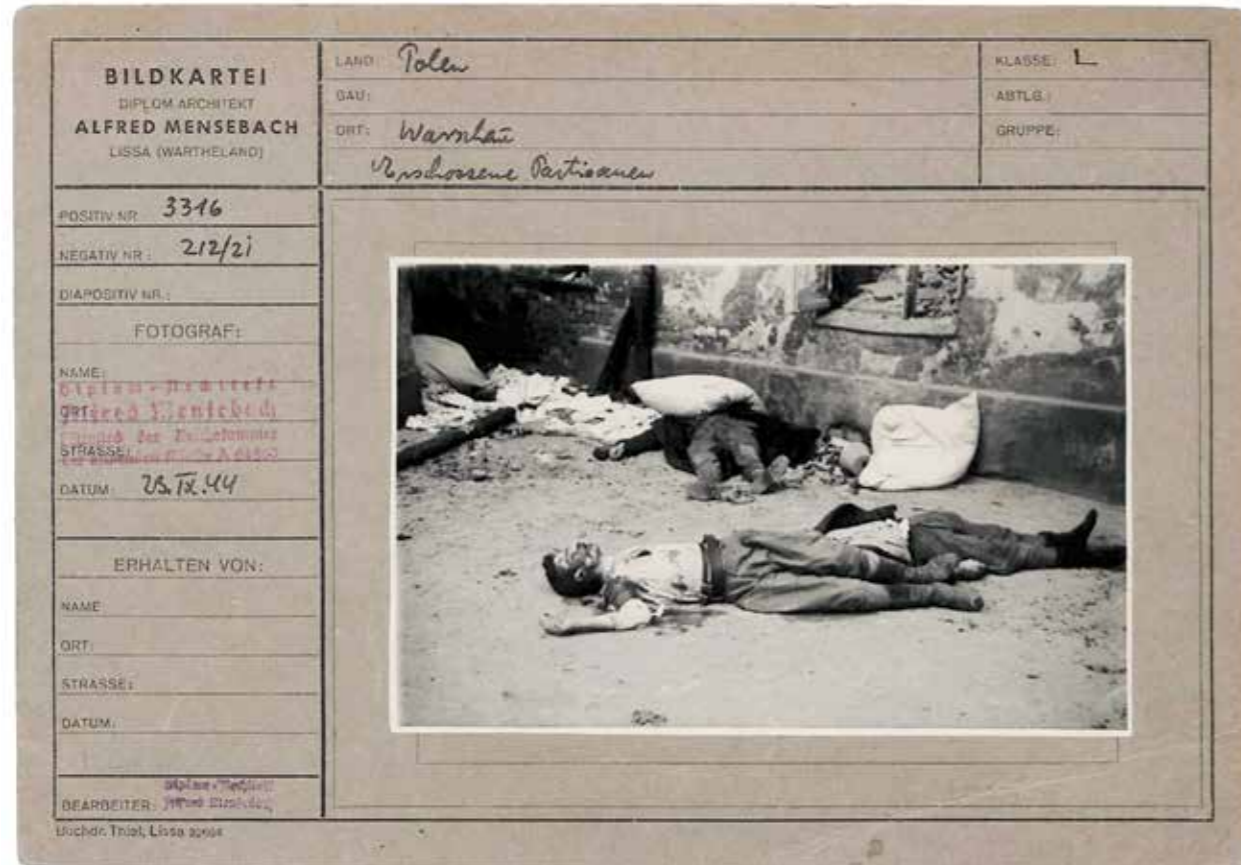


Photo 11.
Erschossene Partisanen, 23.IX.44.
[Bodies of resistance fighters shot dead, 23 September 1944]

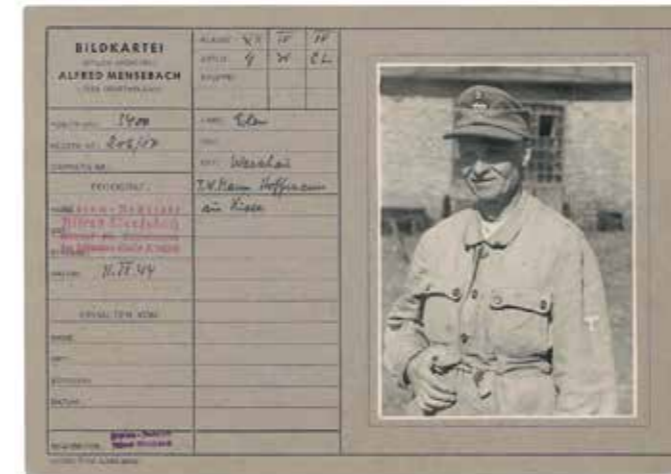


Photo 12.
T.N. Mann Hoffmann aus Lissa, 11.IX.44
[Hoffmann of the Lissa Technische Nothilfe
(technical emergency) unit, 11 September 1944]



Photo 13.
Sprengmeister Sedlag aus Kosten, 7.X.44
[Demolition engineer Sedlag from Kosten,
7 October 1944]



Photo 14.
Sprengmeister Krause, 7. X.44
[Demolition engineer Krause,
7 October 1944]



Photo 15.
Major Sarnow, 7.X.44 [Major Sarnow,
7 October 1944]



Photo 16.
 Ordensverleihung, 7.X.44
 [Decoration ceremony, 7 October 1944]

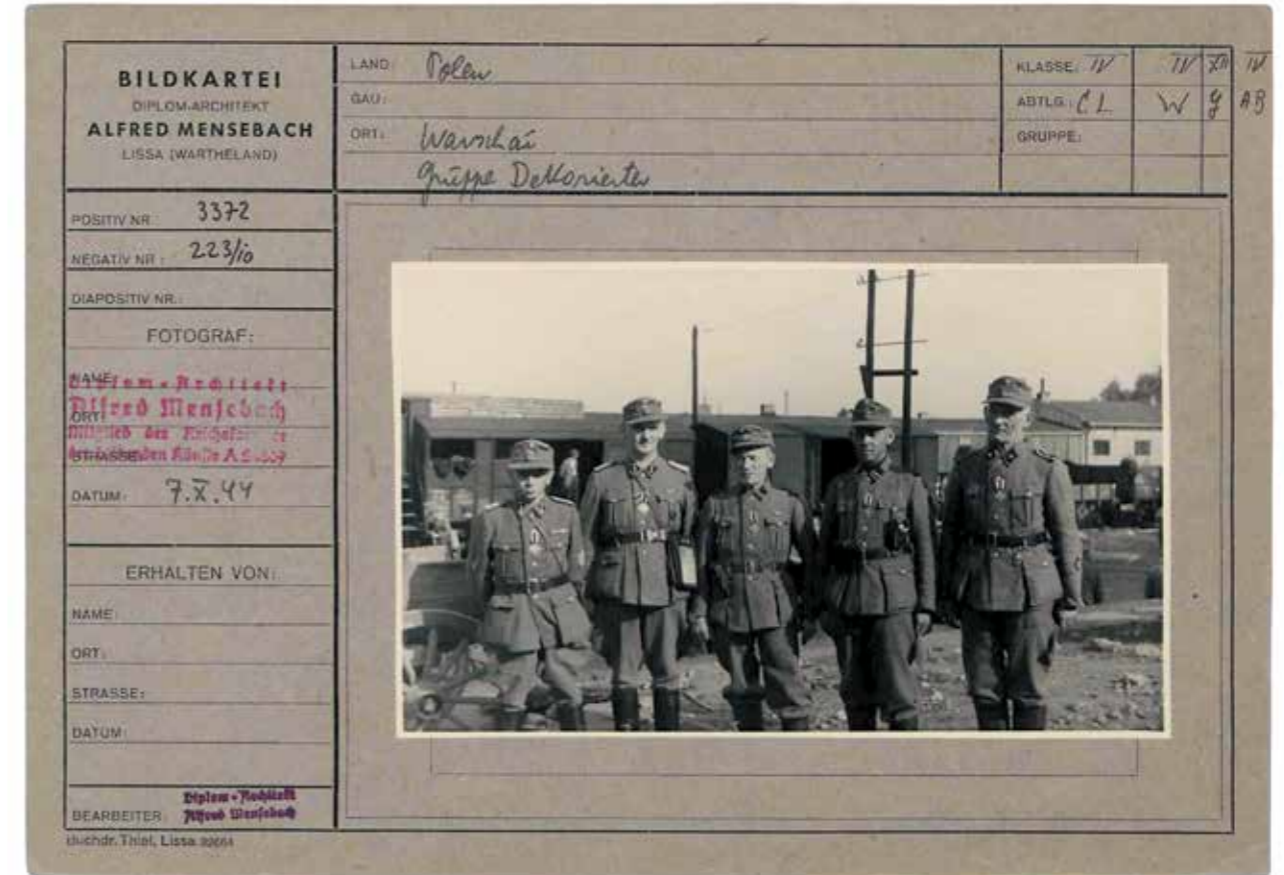


Photo 17.
 Gruppe Dekorierter, 7.X.44
 [Group of men wearing their
 decorations, 7 October 1944]

1

Włodzimierz Suleja
Paweł Kosiński
Marcin Przegiętka, and
Tomasz Sudół

**The German
occupation
of Poland,
1939–1945**



1. 1. The German invasion and administrative division of occupied Poland

Poland was the first country to resist the territorial and political demands of the Third Reich, refusing to grant concessions to Germany which would have resulted in the loss of independence on the international arena and subordination to Berlin. Hitler decided to resolve the conflict which he himself had caused, by military means, and on 1 September 1939 the Wehrmacht invaded Poland without declaring war. In this way, Germany broke a number of international agreements, including the Briand-Kellogg Pact concluded in Paris on 27 August 1928 (which contained the declaration of “renunciation of war as a political instrument”)¹ while the Polish-German declaration of non-aggression, signed on 26 January 1934 for 10 years, was terminated by Germany on 28 April 1939, after Poland received British guarantees of military aid in the event of an attack by the Third German Reich. The military campaign ended with Poland’s defeat, which was partly caused by the Soviet invasion on 17 September 1939. German-Soviet cooperation was a consequence of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, concluded in Moscow on 23 August 1939.²

An event symbolising the German-Soviet brotherhood of arms in aggression on Poland was a joint parade in Brest-Litovsk on 22 September 1939. On 28 September, a German-Soviet treaty on friendship and borders was signed in Moscow, in which a demarcation line was established along the Bug and San Rivers, dividing the respective “spheres of interest.”³ On 5 October, before the last large units of the Polish Army laid down their arms, Hitler took a Wehrmacht parade in Warsaw, and a few

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Left: Photo 1.1.

German policemen hoist the flag of the Third Reich on Wawel Hill in Kraków (1939). For centuries Wawel Castle had been symbolic of the spirit of Poland and its people, and the seat of the kings of Poland. The Germans dubbed Kraków an *Urdeutsche Stadt* (ancient German city) and established the headquarters of the *Generalgouvernement* authorities in it (AAN collections)

¹ Jędruszczak, Tadeusz; and Maria Nowak-Kiełbikowa, (eds.), *Dokumenty z dziejów polskiej polityki zagranicznej*, Warszawa: PAX, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 406–409.

² *Akten zur deutschen Auswärtigen Politik, Serie D (1937–1945), Band VII: Die letzten Wochen vor Kriegsausbruch. 9. August bis 3. September 1939*, Baden-Baden: Imprimerie Nationale, 1956, p. 205–207.

³ *Akten zur deutschen Auswärtigen Politik, Serie D (1937–1945), Band VIII: Die Kriegsjahre. Erster Band. 4. September 1939 bis 18. März 1940*, Baden-Baden & Frankfurt-am-Main: P. Kepler Verlag KG, 1961, p. 127–129.

days later, on 8 and 12 October, he made decisions regarding the occupied territories of Poland, which entered into force on 26 October 1939, ending the period of interim German military administration.

The scope of annexation extended well beyond the territory of Poland which had been within the borders of Prussia before 1914. The annexation covered the Voivodships of Pomerania, Poznań, and Silesia, as well as the western part of Lesser Poland (Małopolska), the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie Basin, the Łódź region, the entire Cuiavia (Kujawy) region, the northern part of Mazovia, the powiat (county) of Suwałki, and part of the Augustów county. The total area of the annexed territories amounted to 91,974 sq. km, which constituted about 25% of the area of the Second Polish Republic (i.e. pre-war Poland). Two new administrative units were created: *Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreußen* with its capital in Gdańsk (the Free City of Gdańsk was incorporated in Germany as well), and comprising Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk and Kwidzyn, which were given the status of *Regierungsbezirke* (Kwidzyn *Regierungsbezirk* comprised some territories already belonging to Germany prior to the annexation); and *Reichsgau Warthegau* with its capital in Poznań, divided into *Regierungsbezirk Posen* (Poznań), *Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza* (Inowrocław) and *Regierungsbezirk Kalisch* (Kalisz) and later *Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt* (Łódź). The remaining parts of the annexed territories were incorporated in two existing administrative units; *Regierungsbezirk Zichenau* (Ciechanów) was joined onto the Province of East Prussia (*Provinz Ostpreußen*), with its capital in Königsberg; while the existing *Regierungsbezirk Allenstein* (Olsztyn) and *Regierungsbezirk Tilsit* were enlarged by the addition of annexed Polish territories (respectively the Działdowo and Suwałki regions). The newly created *Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz* (Katowice) was incorporated in the Province of Silesia (*Provinz Schlesien*), which also contained some areas already belonging to Germany, and *Regierungsbezirk Oppeln* (Opole) was enlarged by the addition of annexed Polish counties. In 1941 this province was divided into *Niederschlesien* (Lower Silesia) and *Oberschlesien* (Upper Silesia).

The remaining areas which went up to the demarcation line with the USSR were not annexed because the population was predominantly *fremdstämmig* (of foreign origin) and the Germans needed to have a zone to which “undesirable” groups (viz. Poles, Jews, and Roma) could be moved from the German Reich proper. At the same time, the German authorities did not intend to accord this area the status of an occupied territory, because it would have prejudiced Germany’s activities from the perspective of international law. So they gave it a French-sounding name,

▶ Republic. Has published a comprehensive outline history of Poland, a biography of Józef Piłsudski; and monographs on the Austro-Polish Provisional Council of State during the First World War, the history of Wrocław since 1945, the events of March 1968 in Lower Silesia, and the Lower Silesian branch of Solidarity.

Paweł Kosiński, PhD – graduate of the University of Gdańsk, from which he obtained his doctor’s degree in 2000. Spent a two-year period of study in Germany (Bonn and Berlin) on scholarships for doctoral students. On graduation worked for the Gdańsk division of Polish State Archives, and subsequently in the Polish Institute for International Affairs, Warsaw. Since 2002 an associate of the Institute of National Remembrance, working on the history of the German occupation of Poland during the Second World War, the history of Gdańsk and Pomerania in the first half of the 20th century, and Polish-German relations over the past century.

Marcin Przegiętka, PhD – graduate of the Nicolaus Copernicus University at Toruń; has also studied at the Freie Universität, Berlin; associate of the Historical Research Office at the Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw. Research interests: Polish-German relations, ▶

Right: Photo 1.2. *Die Verwaltungseinteilung der deutschen Ostgebiete und des Generalgouvernements der besetzten polnischen Gebiete nach dem Stande von Anfang Januar 1940*. Administrative division of the German lands in the East and the *Generalgouvernement of the Occupied Polish Territories*, early January 1940 (Private collection)



the *Generalgouvernement*, (the General Government, initially the *Generalgouvernement für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete*, the General Government for the occupied Polish territories; hereinafter “the GG”), which was put under the German administration but not annexed, yet it was not an independent state. Sometimes it was described as a colony, a war gain, or a *Nebenland* (adjoining region) of the German Reich. The authorities of the GG had their



Photo 1.3. Governor-General Hans Frank (fifth left) in the company of officers of the SA, German police and Zollgrenzschutz border guards, Wehrmacht, and SS, near the German-Soviet border in *Distrikt Lublin*, July 1940. The notice reads, "Generalgouvernement für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete. Grenze 280 m." [Generalgouvernement for the Occupied Polish Territories. Border ahead 280 m] (NDA collections)

headquarters in Kraków (dubbed *Krakau* by the Germans), and Hans Frank was their head. The GG had an area of 95,742 sq. km and was divided into four districts: *Distrikt Krakau*, *Distrikt Lublin*, *Distrikt Radom*, and *Distrikt Warschau* (i.e. Warsaw). A fifth district, *Galizien*, was created on 1 August 1941, following the German invasion of the USSR (22 June 1941), whereupon the area of the GG increased to 142 thousand sq. km.

At the same time, the territory of East Prussia was expanded to include the Białystok area, by Hitler's decree of 22 July 1941. The remaining eastern voivodeships, which had been annexed by the USSR in 1939 and were occupied by the Wehrmacht as of the summer of 1941, were put within the boundaries of *Reichskommissariat Ostland* (the Commissariat for the Eastern Reich Territories), which included Belarusian and Lithuanian areas; and *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, which included Volhynia (Wotyń) and Podolia (Podole). This administrative division of the Polish territories occupied by Nazi Germany remained in force until the entry of the Red Army (1944–1945).

1.2. Principles of German occupation policy

On 22 August 1939, prior to the actual invasion of Poland, Hitler ordered the Wehrmacht commanders "to act brutally! . . . The law is in the hands of the stronger. Act as severely as possible!"⁴ [*Brutales Vorgehen. . . . Der Stärkere hat das Recht. Größte Härte*].⁵ Hitler's intention was to annihilate Poland whatever the cost: "Our aim is to destroy the life forces [of the enemy], not to reach a specific line. Even if war were to break out in the West, the destruction of Poland must be a priority,"⁶ [*Das Ziel ist Beseitigung der lebendigen Kräfte, nicht die Erreichung einer bestimmten Linie. Auch wenn im Westen Krieg ausbricht, bleibt Vernichtung Po-*

▶1918–1939; and the history of the German occupation of Poland, 1939–1945, including the German police and SS authorities. Has published a monograph on road and rail transport in Polish-German relations, 1918–1939. Chairman of the editorial committee of the Institute of National Remembrance's periodical *Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945*.

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Hans Frank (1900–1946) – German lawyer, member of the Nazi Party, war criminal. Governor-General of the Polish territories occupied by Germany, 1939–1945. Sentenced by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg to death by hanging, 1946. Executed on 16 October 1946.

⁴ Płoski, Stanisław et al. (eds), *Okupacja i ruch oporu w dzienniku Hansa Franka 1939–1945*, Vol. I, 1939–1942, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1970, p. 98.

⁵ *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, Vol. XXVI: *Documents and Other Material in Evidence. Numbers 405-PS to 1063 (d)-PS*, Nürnberg, 1947, p. 523.

⁶ Płoski, Vol. I, p.98.

lens im Vordergrund.]⁷ He relegated the responsibility for starting the War to the background: “I will give some propaganda reason to justify the outbreak of war, never mind if it is credible or not. The winner will not be asked whether he was telling the truth or not.”⁸ [Ich werde propagandistischen Anlaß zur Auslösung des Krieges geben, gleichgültig, ob glaubhaft. Der Sieger wird später nicht danach gefragt, ob er die Wahrheit gesagt hat oder nicht.]⁹ These statements by Hitler clearly show his attitude to Poland and its citizens. The result was a brutal war and a cruel policy of occupation.

The Polish territories incorporated in the German Third Reich were to be unified economically and “nationally” with the rest of Germany as soon as possible. On 20 November 1939, they were incorporated in the currency area of the Third Reich, and the customs border was moved to the border between the incorporated lands and the GG. In order to prevent the uncontrolled movement of Polish and Jewish nationals, a border was maintained between Germany in its boundaries of August 1939 and the annexed Polish territories (except for Upper Silesia and Gdańsk).

In a speech delivered in the Reichstag on 6 October 1939, Hitler announced that a “resettlement of nations” [Umsiedlung von Nationalitäten]¹⁰ would be carried out on the occupied Polish territories. He entrusted this task to Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer-SS and head of the German police, who was appointed Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums (Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of the German People). The hardest hit by this resettlement operation, which was promptly launched, were the inhabitants of the Second Polish Republic who lived on the annexed territories, which were to be subjected to Germanisation. A decision was taken to deport Poles and Jews to the GG, and settle East European *Volksdeutsche* (persons with German roots/persons considered ethnic Germans) on the vacated land. Any Poles who remained in the annexed territories were conscripted for military service in the Wehrmacht.

In line with Hitler’s orders of 17 October 1939, the GG was “not to become part of the German Reich nor an administrative district of the Reich”¹¹ [es wird kein Teil des Deutschen Reiches und auch kein Verwaltungsbezirk des Reiches werden]. He also said that

Volksdeutsche – ethnic Germans. Persons with German roots who were inhabitants of countries occupied by Germany were encouraged (often with death threats) to apply for German citizenship. On the grounds of a decree of 4 March 1941, the German authorities in occupied Poland introduced a Volksliste (ethnic German list) split up into four categories, the first two of which were for ethnic Germans who had engaged, to a different extent, in pro-German activities before the War, while the third and fourth categories were for persons with German roots whom the occupying forces considered Polish but a promising material for re-Germanisation.

⁷ Trial of the Major War Criminals..., Vol. XXVI, p. 523.

⁸ Płoski, Vol. I, p.98.

⁹ Trial of the Major War Criminals..., Vol. XXVI, p. 523.

¹⁰ Friedrich, Klaus-Peter (ed.), *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933–1945*, Vol. 4, *Polen. September 1939–Juli 1941*, München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2011, p. 99.

¹¹ Płoski, Vol. I, p.119–120.

1. The German occupation of Poland, 1939–1945

“the administration’s task was not to turn Poland into a model province, nor a state modelled on Germany; neither was it to improve the country economically and financially”¹² [Die Verwaltung hat nicht die Aufgabe, aus Polen eine Musterprovinz oder einen Musterstaat nach deutscher Ordnung zu schaffen oder das Land wirtschaftlich und finanziell zu sanieren].¹³ He went on to say that “a low standard of living is to be maintained in that country, we want to keep it only as a labour resource.”¹⁴ [In dem Lande soll ein niederer Lebensstandard bleiben: wir wollen dort nur die Arbeitskräfte schöpfen]. Hitler granted Frank the freedom to use terror in implementing this criminal occupation policy: “We do not want to do anything there that we do at home.”¹⁵ [Wir wollen nichts dort machen, was wir hier machen!]¹⁶ He also ordered the implementation of a bitter nationalist struggle, cynically announcing that “its methods will not be compatible with our principles.”¹⁷ [Die Methoden werden mit unseren Prinzipien unvereinbar sein!]¹⁸ He did not fail to mention the strategic importance of the GG and said it was to be treated as a “staging ground”¹⁹ [Aufmarschgebiet],²⁰ to concentrate the Wehrmacht, and that was why it was necessary to keep the railway lines and communications network in good condition. The GG was also to allow the German authorities “to purge the territory of the German Reich of Jews and Poles”²¹ [muß ermöglichen, das Reichsgebiet zu reinigen von Juden u.[nd] Polaken].²² Finally, the administration of the GG was to act in the interest of Germany’s war economy, but the costs of its operations would be shifted to the occupied country.

The consequence of the aims of this policy of occupation, both in the incorporated territories and the GG, was the designation of the Polish political, academic, and military elite, representatives of the arts and culture, and clergy as an “undesirable element” which would keep the nation’s spirits up and lead the resistance against the occupying forces. On 17 October 1939, Hitler announced that “the Polish intelligentsia must be prevented from developing into

¹² Płoski, Vol. I, p.119–120.

¹³ Trial of the Major War Criminals..., Vol. XXVI, p. 378.

¹⁴ Płoski, Vol. I, p.119–120.

¹⁵ Płoski, Vol. I, p.119–120.

¹⁶ Trial of the Major War Criminals..., Vol. XXVI, p. 382–383.

¹⁷ Płoski, Vol. I, p.119–120.

¹⁸ Trial of the Major War Criminals..., Vol. XXVI, p. 382–383.

¹⁹ Płoski, Vol. I, p.119–120.

²⁰ Trial of the Major War Criminals..., Vol. XXVI, p. 382.

²¹ Płoski, Vol. I, p.119–120.

²² Trial of the Major War Criminals..., Vol. XXVI, p. 382.

a leadership”²³ [*Verhindern, daß poln. [ische] Intelligenz sich als Führersicht aufmacht*].²⁴ During a meeting attended by Hitler on 22 September 1939, Reinhard Heydrich, head of the security service and security police, one of Himmler’s closest collaborators, spoke about the need to carry out an unrelenting project for the arrest of “noblemen, clergymen, teachers, and legionnaires” (i.e. Piłsudski’s First World War veterans) [*Adel, Geistlichkeit, Lehrer und Legionäre*],²⁵ who were to be imprisoned in concentration camps. On 14 October 1939, at one of the subsequent policy meetings, this time in the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, the Reich’s Main Security Office, of which he was head, Heydrich “addressed the problem of exterminating the Polish leaders” [*auf die Liquidierung des führenden Polentums einging*]²⁶ which “had to be carried out by 1 November” [*bis zum 1. November durchgeführt sein müsse*].²⁷

At the same time, the Germans considered all Polish citizens designated as Jewish as enemies. They confiscated Jewish shops, craftsmen’s and trade workshops and factories almost as soon as they invaded Poland. This project was known as economic “Aryanisation” [*Arisierung*]. Having deprived the Jews of their livelihoods, the Germans still made them pay exorbitant taxes in money and goods. One of the first tasks the German authorities tackled was to “clear out

The Germans set up ghettos, officially known as “Jewish residential areas,” to accommodate Polish citizens classified as Jewish on the grounds of the German racial criteria, and to isolate them off from the rest of society and eventually exterminate them by depriving them of their livelihoods and starving them to death. Later, having the hitherto dispersed Jewish inhabitants concentrated in a fairly small area made it easier for the Germans to send them to the death camps. The German occupying authorities imposed a prohibition on the provision of any kind of aid whatsoever to persons confined in the ghettos. • On 14 January 1941, Ludwig Leist issued the first order in Warsaw on the penalties for helping Jews to leave the ghetto or for failing to report such incidents to the German authorities. Initially, such persons were to be heavily fined, but soon the Germans brought in new legislation to prevent any form of contact whatsoever between those in the ghettos with the outside world. • On 13 February 1941, the same criminal issued an order penalising ethnic Poles for trading with Jews. Such persons would be fined or sent to prison for three months if they could not pay the fine. • On 15 October 1941, Hans Frank signed a decree in which Paragraph 4b said, “Jews who leave their allocated residential area without authority are liable to the death sentence. Persons who willfully harbour such Jews are liable to the same penalty.” • On 10 November 1941, Dr Ludwig Fischer, Governor of Distrikt Warschau, issued an order extending the range of offences punishable by death for helping Jews: “Any person who willfully harbours or assists such Jews by whatever means (e.g. by providing accommodation, maintenance, transportation of whatever kind etc.) will be liable to the death sentence.” • On 28 October 1942, Friedrich Krüger issued another order penalising Jews who left their “residential area” and persons who assisted them. Its paragraph 3 reads, “Any person who knows of a Jew unlawfully staying outside a Jewish residential area and does not report this to the Police will be liable to police security measures.” In practice, this regulation brought in collective responsibility for helping Jews because “police security measures” was a euphemism that generally meant that anyone who provided such assistance would be shot, along with their entire family or all the people who lived in the same house. The German special courts handed down such verdicts on a mass scale, after a hearing which usually lasted one or two minutes. Death sentences of this kind were immediately enforceable and those convicted had no right of appeal.

²³ Płoski, Vol. I, p.119–120.

²⁴ *Trial of the Major War Criminals...*, vol. XXVI, p. 382.

²⁵ Krausnick, Helmut; and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges. Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1938–1942*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1981, p. 69.

²⁶ Krausnick and Wilhelm, p. 87.

²⁷ Krausnick and Wilhelm, p. 88.



Photo 1.4. German police conducting a body search on a Polish citizen of Jewish ethnicity (AAN collections)

the Jews” [*von Juden freigemacht werden*] from the land incorporated in Germany, and concentrate them in ghettos (“Jewish residential areas”) located in large cities. The Jewish inhabitants were restricted in their freedom of movement; they were banned from venturing outside the ghettos. Jews in the GG were compelled to do slave labour. These regulations were to facilitate the subsequent implementation of the as yet undefined “final goal”²⁸ [*Endziel*],²⁹ which it was anticipated would require “a longer period of time”³⁰ [*längere Fristen beansprucht*].³¹

1.3. German atrocities

1.3.1. The 1939 War

Germany’s aggression on Poland was the first campaign of the Second World War, and it was extremely brutal. The Wehrmacht carried out military operations in a ruthless manner. The Luftwaffe’s operations were not limited to military targets but they resulted in a huge amount of damage to the civilian infrastructure (urban and ru-

²⁸ Płoski, Vol. I, p.104.

²⁹ Friedrich, Vol.4, p.88.

³⁰ Płoski, Vol. I, p.104.

³¹ Friedrich, Vol.4, p.88.

Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg (1907–1944) - German colonel, chief of staff of the reserve army, co-organiser and executor of the assassination attempt on Hitler at the Wolf’s Lair on 20 July 1944. He only became involved in the resistance movement when he recognised that under Hitler’s leadership it would not be possible to bring about a revision of the provisions of the „Versailles dictate”. Prior to that, he remained a loyal and dedicated soldier who believed in the racial superiority of the Germans over the Slavic peoples, a belief he repeatedly expressed i. a. in letters to his wife.

On 4 September 1939 he wrote: The population is an unbelievable mob, many Jews and many mongrels. People who feel good only under the whip. Thousands of prisoners of war will do our agriculture a lot of good. They are certainly useful in Germany, industrious, willing to work and thrifty. (Die Bevölkerung ist ein unglaublicher Pöbel, sehr viele Juden und sehr viel Mischvolk. Ein Volk welches sich nur unter der Knute wohlfühlt. Die Tausenden von Gefangenen werden unserer Landwirtschaft recht gut tun. In Deutschland sind sie sicher gut zu brauchen, arbeitsam, willig und genügsam. Harald Steffahn: Stauffenberg. 3. Auflage. Rowohlt:Reinbek bei Hamburg 2002, p. 71.)



Photo 1.5.
Antoni Bartoszek, a restaurant proprietor from Wawer (now a district of Warsaw), murdered by the Germans, 27 December 1939. The German police shot at least 107 persons in Wawer (NDA collections)

ral buildings, places of religious worship, hospitals, etc.). The Wehrmacht cooperated with special task forces of the German security police and security service (*Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des Sicherheitsdienstes*), conducting joint operations targeted at the civilian population. The Wehrmacht's instructions permitted the taking of male civilian hostages and the internment of male civilians aged 17 to 45. They also allowed for the immediate execution of persons suspected of resistance activities; suspects were to be shot in the combat area. The first wave of German mass crimes against Jews also occurred during the campaign of September 1939. The vast scale of the violence committed by Wehrmacht soldiers against prisoners-of-war and civilians was not something German command worried about very much.³²

1.3.2. Repressive and exterminatory operations; the Holocaust

German occupying forces conducted the first repressive and exterminatory operations already in 1939. Security Police and Security Service special task forces were active at the rear of Wehrmacht units, carrying out arrests and executions, often in cooperation with the *Selbstschutz* (lit. Self-Defence), a vigilante organisation whose members were local *Volksdeutsche* under the

³² For crimes committed in the 1939 campaign, see Böhler, Jochen *Zbrodnie Wehrmachtu w Polsce. Wrzesień 1939. Wojna totalna*, Kraków: Znak, 2009. Original German edition: Jochen Böhler, *Auftakt zum Vernichtungskrieg. Die Wehrmacht in Polen 1939*, Frankfurt-am-Main: S. Fischer, 2006.



Photo 1.6.
German *Schutzpolizei* escorting a group of detained Polish men; the GG, most probably February 1942 (NDA collections)

command of SS officers from Germany.³³ *Gestapo* (State Secret Police) offices were established on occupied Polish territories already in the autumn of 1939, and together with the uniformed police (*Ordnungspolizei*) and the SS conducted a reign of terror of exterminatory and repressive operations throughout the duration of the War.

In accordance with guidelines from Berlin, repressive measures were targeted against the civilian population – people involved in the political and community life of the Second Polish Republic, including representatives of the Polish intelligentsia, clergy, and Jews. Repressive measures hit university professors, recognised authorities in various fields of scholarship (arrests in Kraków and Lublin in November 1939, and arrests and executions in Lwów in July 1941). The Third Reich directed its apparatus of terror against the educated classes, those involved in Poland's pre-war political and community life, and the clergy. Repressions were at their most intense during the first year of the War. They began in the autumn of 1939, with Operation *Intelligenzaktion* carried out on the territories incorporated in Germany, and lasted until the spring of 1940. In the GG, repressions culminated in the spring and summer of 1940 with the *Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion* (Extraordinary Pacification Operation), in which the Germans arrested thousands of peo-

³³ See Jansen, Christian; and Arno Weckbecker, *Der „Volksdeutsche Selbstschutz“ in Polen 1939/40*, München: Oldenbourg, 1992.

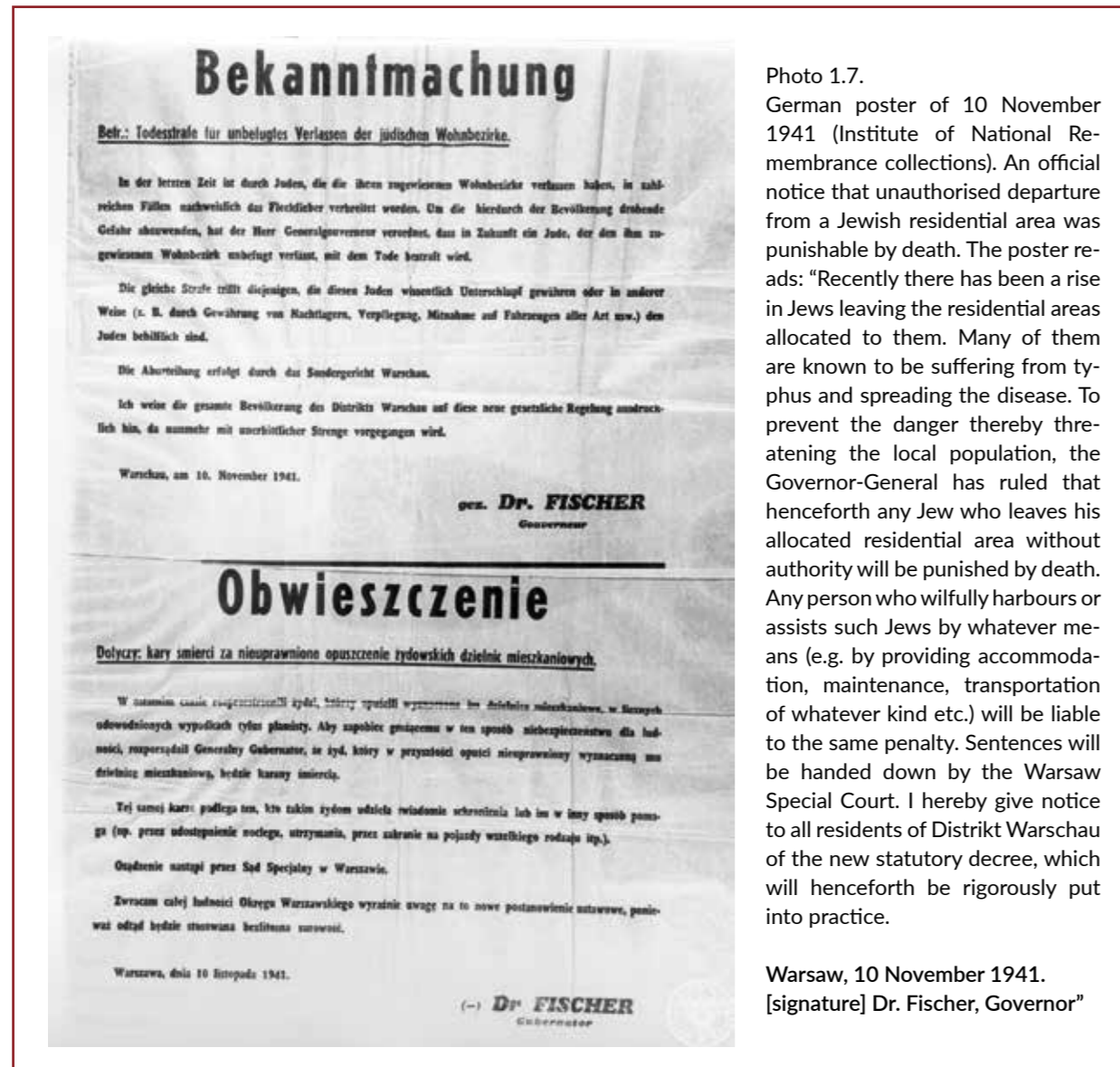


Photo 1.7.

German poster of 10 November 1941 (Institute of National Remembrance collections). An official notice that unauthorised departure from a Jewish residential area was punishable by death. The poster reads: "Recently there has been a rise in Jews leaving the residential areas allocated to them. Many of them are known to be suffering from typhus and spreading the disease. To prevent the danger thereby threatening the local population, the Governor-General has ruled that henceforth any Jew who leaves his allocated residential area without authority will be punished by death. Any person who wilfully harbours or assists such Jews by whatever means (e.g. by providing accommodation, maintenance, transportation of whatever kind etc.) will be liable to the same penalty. Sentences will be handed down by the Warsaw Special Court. I hereby give notice to all residents of Distrikt Warschau of the new statutory decree, which will henceforth be rigorously put into practice.

Warsaw, 10 November 1941.
 [signature] Dr. Fischer, Governor"

ple and murdered them in places like Palmiry near Warsaw,³⁴ or sent them to concentration camps. The Germans also murdered disabled persons (primarily on the annexed territories), on the premise that feeding and keeping people unable to work was an unnecessary burden on Germany's war economy. The terror continued in the following years of the War.

On the annexed territories and in the GG, the Gestapo applied an arbitrary procedure of "protective custody," sending de-

³⁴ Bartoszewski, Władysław, *Der Todesring um Warschau 1939–1944*, Warszawa: Interpress, 1969. English edition: *Warsaw Death Ring 1939–1944*. Warszawa: Interpress, 1968.

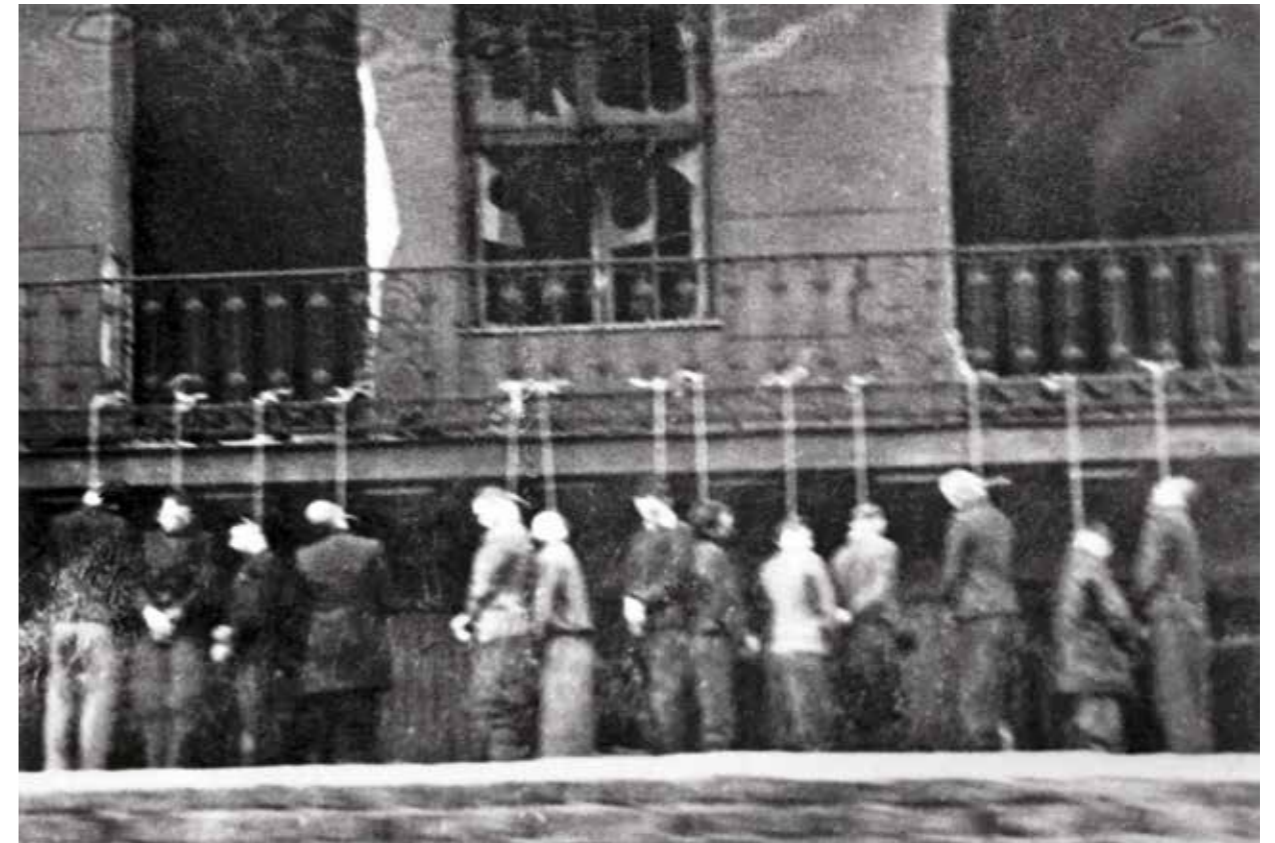


Photo 1.8.

The bodies of 27 prisoners imprisoned by the Germans in the Pawiak jail in Warsaw, and hanged on 11 February 1944 from the balcony railings of a property on ul. Leszno in Warsaw (AAN collections)

tainees to concentration camps without a trial, with the possibility of keeping inmates there for an indefinite period. Such measures hit not only people involved in underground activity, but also those who were not involved at all. People could be imprisoned or even killed on the basis of unverified slander.

A characteristic feature of the conduct of the German occupying authorities was the use of collective responsibility. Anyone caught at random in a street round-up could be murdered in retaliation for the assassination of a German official or for an act of sabotage. Executions were sometimes carried out in public, or were announced by the German authorities on posters which gave the names of the victims; though most executions were carried out in secluded places like forests or gravel pits, and the bodies were buried anonymously in unmarked mass graves.

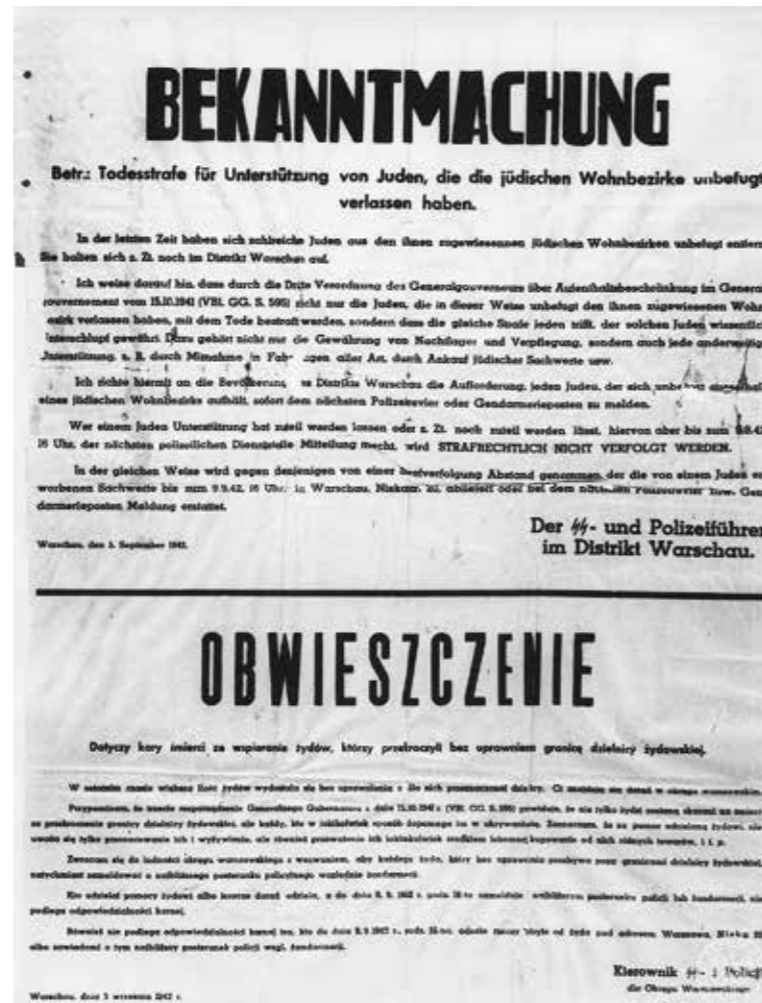
In the very first weeks of the War, the German authorities set up summary courts which sentenced Polish citizens to death for offences such as the possession of firearms (including hunting weapons) or ammunition and other misdemeanours. Criminal provisions against Polish citizens were particularly harsh, with Draconian penalties, including the death sentence, in wide-

Photo 1.9.

German poster of 5 September 1942. An official notice that the provision of assistance to Jews who left a Jewish residential area without authority was punishable by death (Institute of National Remembrance collections).

The poster reads, “Recently a considerable number of Jews have left the residential area allocated to them without authority. They are still at large in Distrikt Warschau. I remind you that the Governor-General’s third decree of 15 October 1941 (Vbl.GG. S. 595) prescribes the death sentence not only for Jews who leave their allocated residential area without authority, but also for anyone who aids and abets them in any way whatsoever. Aiding and abetting Jews means not only providing accommodation and maintenance, but also providing them with transportation of any kind whatsoever, purchasing any goods whatsoever from them, etc. I hereby give notice to the inhabitants of Distrikt Warschau to report any Jew they know of who is at large beyond the Jewish quarter without authority, to the nearest police or security police station as soon as possible. Any person who has been or is still aiding and abetting a Jew but reports the matter to the nearest police or security police station not later than by 16.00 hours on 9 September 1942 shall be exempted from criminal liability. Any person who returns goods acquired from a Jew to the following address: Warszawa, Niska 20, or notifies the nearest police or security police station of the matter shall be exempted from criminal liability.

Head of the Police and SS for Distrikt Warschau. Warschau, 5 September 1942.”



spread use not only for those suspected of participating in the resistance movement, but also for economic offences such as clandestine animal slaughter for private consumption or the black market; and for assisting victims of repressive measures such as Jews or prisoners who had managed to escape from concentration or POW camps. The enforcement of orders issued by the German occupying authorities was supervised by the uniformed police, primarily by the *Ordnungspolizei* (the police and security police). These police forces were also responsible for carrying out street round-ups to provide a constant supply of workers deported to Germany for slave labour; for conducting arrests, and supervising the collection of enforced quotas of agricultural produce which farmers had to deliver.

Polish citizens with Jewish roots were packed together in ghettos or camps, and forced to do slave labour, which often meant they were worked to death, as happened in the camps the Germans set up in the Lublin region in early 1940. The main purpose of German policy on Jews had not yet been determined at the time. Later, the initial plan to concentrate Jews in the Lublin region was abandoned. The final decision to exterminate the Jews was made after the invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941, when large-scale executions were initiated by special task forces of the German Security Police and Security Service. Pogroms and mass executions first affected the inhabitants of the former eastern provinces of the Second Polish Republic.

The most important role in the implementation of the German policy to destroy Polish society was played by the system of camps: concentration camps (Auschwitz, Lublin–Majdanek, Plaszow, Warschau etc.), death camps (Kulmhof, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, and partly Auschwitz and Majdanek), criminal investigation camps, resettlement and transitional camps, as well as forced and special labour camps, under the supervision of the RHSA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, the Reich Main Security Office), the *Inspektion der Konzentrationslager* (Concentration Camp Inspectorate), and the *SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt*, (the SS General Economic and Administrative Office). It was in these camps, from 1942 to 1944, that the majority of the Jews who were Polish citizens met their tragic fate. The rest died in individual or mass executions in their places of residence or ghettos up to 1942. Before the Red Army entered the German-occupied Polish territories in 1944, the German authorities ordered the evacuation of the prisons and camps, and if it could not be done, the inmates were to be shot. These death marches were the last atrocity committed by the retreating Germans. At

Verordnung über die Bestimmung des Begriffs „Jude“ im Generalgouvernement [Decree on the definition of the term “Jew” in the GG] (VBlGG, 1 Aug. 1940, no. 48, p. 231–232)... § 2. “(1) Any person at least three of whose grandparents were of pure Jewish descent is considered Jewish. (2) Any person at least two of whose grandparents were of pure Jewish descent shall be considered Jewish providing that (a) he or she was a member of a Jewish religious community on 1 September 1939, or joined a Jewish religious community after that date; (b) if he or she was married to a Jewish person at the time this Decree came in force or married a Jewish person after that date; (c) if he or she was born out of wedlock after 31 May 1941 as the illegitimate offspring of a Jew and non-Jewish person, in the understanding of Part 1. (3) Any grandparent who was a member of a Jewish religious community shall be regarded as of pure Jewish descent.” The Germans used this Decree of 24 July 1940 to adopt the provisions of the Nuremberg Laws of 15 September 1935 in the GG.

this time, they were trying to destroy all the evidence of the atrocities they had committed since the beginning of the War. Documents produced by the German occupying authorities were destroyed and corpses were exhumed from mass graves and burnt.

1.3.3. Attempts to crush the resistance movement, pacifications, and the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 1943 and the Warsaw Uprising of August–October 1944

One of the most important tasks for both the German military and police authorities in occupied Poland was to crush any form of resistance whatsoever against the occupying forces and to paralyse the Polish people's will to resist. Such operations were aimed at combating the armed resistance units operating on behalf of the Polish Underground State (viz. the Home Army), as well as those not affiliated to the Underground State (the National Armed Forces, the People's Guards, the People's Army, and Soviet units). Operations by the German police, SS and military units to curb armed resistance were retaliatory and usually targeted at the local civilian population, whom the Germans held responsible for the operation of armed resistance units in the given area. The German police and military forces carried out searches combined with brutal interrogations, destroyed or burned residential buildings, plundered goods, and rounded up civilians, who were sent away for forced labour, to labour or concentration camps, or deported. One example of such brutal and cruel German policy was the pacification of Michniów in the Kielce region on 12–13 July 1943. In 1939–1945, hundreds of places in the occupied territories of Poland went through a variety of gruelling experiences at German hands in reprisals for resistance operations in their locality.

The Warsaw Ghetto was the largest ghetto in the GG and in the whole of occupied Europe. In the summer of 1942, the Germans deported most of its inmates to the Treblinka extermination camp. On 19 April 1943, German troops set about the final destruction of the ghetto. The people still inside put up resistance and started an uprising. It was one of the landmarks in the history of the extermination of the Jews on the Polish territories. The German police and SS along with the Wehrmacht were sent

The Germans set up the Warsaw Ghetto on 2 October 1940. It was to serve as "the Jewish residential area" for the Jews of Warsaw and its environs. Living conditions in the Ghetto were tragic, with a very high death rate due to hunger and disease. In 1942, the German authorities started to deport Jews from the Ghetto to Treblinka death camp. By early 1943, there were only 60 thousand out of the 1941 total of 450 thousand inmates still left in the Ghetto, working in factories producing goods for Germany. In May 1943, after the Ghetto Uprising had been crushed, the Ghetto was demolished and the rest of its inhabitants deported to Treblinka and other German death camps.



in to put down the Uprising and demolish the ghetto. After the fall of the Ghetto Uprising, the Germans pulled down the buildings located within the ghetto walls. From the summer of 1943, the Warschau concentration camp operated on the site of the Ghetto and was transformed in May 1944 into a labour camp as a sub-camp of Lublin (Majdanek) concentration camp, holding Jewish prisoners used for demolition work.

For the pacification of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, all the German and collaborationist formations involved - Wehrmacht, police, SS and others - employed exceptionally brutal methods.³⁵ In the first days of the Uprising, they shot tens of thousands of civilians - men, women and children - particularly in the districts of Wola and Ochota (the Wola Carnage). Later, people were executed whenever there was a suspicion of involvement in the Uprising. Other residents of Warsaw were evicted and deported, initially to a transit camp set up for this purpose in Pruszków. Subsequently, male civilians were dispatched to concentration

³⁵ For the methods the Germans used against armed resistance on the Eastern Front, see Hesse, Erich, *Der sowjetrussische Partisanenkrieg 1941–1944 im Spiegel deutscher Kampfweisungen und Befehle*, Göttingen and Zürich: Muster-Schmidt Verlag, 1992.

Photo 1.10. Germans deporting the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto to death camps, April 1943. During the Ghetto Uprising, the Germans murdered over 50 thousand of its inhabitants who were Polish citizens of Jewish descent (Institute of National Remembrance collections, from J. Stroop's album)

camps, and women and children were deported for forced labour. The Germans and their subordinate collaborationist units such as the Russian 29th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS RONA committed numerous atrocities against wounded insurgents and civilians lodged in makeshift first aid stations and hospitals.³⁶ The Warsaw Uprising was a bloodbath which consumed the lives of over 150 thousand Polish victims including children.

About 25% of Warsaw's buildings(both residential and historic edifices) were destroyed during the Uprising.³⁷ When combat finished, what remained of the city was razed to the ground on Hitler's orders, and a plan was implemented to set up a fortress on the ruins of Warsaw.³⁸ The overall war losses of left-bank Warsaw, starting with the air raids of September 1939, amounted to about 85% of its buildings.

Photo 1.11.

Deportation of the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto to death camps, April 1943 (Institute of National Remembrance collections, from J. Stroop's album)



³⁶ For German atrocities during the Warsaw Uprising, see Datner, Szymon; and Kazimierz Leszczyński (eds.), *Zbrodnie okupanta hitlerowskiego na ludności cywilnej w czasie powstania warszawskiego w 1944 roku (w dokumentach)*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1962.

³⁷ Sawicki, Tadeusz; *Rozkaz: zdławić powstanie. Niemcy i ich sojusznicy w walce z Powstaniem Warszawskim*, Warszawa: Bellona, 2010, p. 185.

³⁸ Sawicki, p. 192.

1.3.4. Eviction and deportation (“resettlement”) of Poles and Jews and other methods the German occupying forces used to implement their ethnic policy

The German occupying forces segregated Polish citizens according to Nazi racial criteria which determined the order of persecution: first Jews and Roma as well as Polish leadership groups, then all other Poles, finally those from among the Belarusians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians who resisted against the Third Reich, while only the so-called *Volksdeutsche* were to avoid oppression. According to this classification Jews and Roma were first in line for mass extermination, while ethnic Poles were to be subjected to enforced exploitation as slave labourers, and subsequently “resettled” east to an unspecified destination. Some of the Slavs (Ukrainians, Russians, and Belarusians) and Lithuanians collaborating with Germany would find themselves under special protection, whereas the *Volksdeutsche* were to receive full rights as citizens of the German Reich at some time in the future (depending on their category). The place individuals held in this hierarchy defined the way the German occupying authorities dealt with them, viz. the likelihood of reprisals against them, the confiscation of their property, eviction, and their right to buy food.

According to German plans, the annexed territories were to be Germanised as soon as possible. In order to achieve this, they intended to “resettle” (i.e. evict and deport) all the Jews and most of the Poles to the GG. The authorities of the Third Reich started to implement these plans already in September 1939 by carrying out brutal “wild evictions.” Any Jews who “illegally” returned to annexed areas were punished by death. Almost all the ethnic Poles who lived in Gdynia were evicted. *Volksdeutsche* brought in from Eastern Europe were to be moved to annexed areas cleared of Polish citizens.

When the combat between units of the regular Polish and German armies was over, the Germans tried to implement planned (instead of improvised) evictions, determining the number of Polish citizens due to leave a particular area by a given date. They proceeded with their ethnic policy in this way until March 1941, when the authorities of the GG opposed it because they could not cope with the huge numbers of incoming displaced persons, and the need to keep rail transport free for the forthcoming invasion of the USSR (22 June 1941). Nevertheless, Poles from annexed areas continued to have their property confiscated and



Photo 1.12.
Children from the Zamość region
under SS guard, 1942/43
(Collections of the Zamość branch
of the National Archives)

were placed in resettlement camps, from where many were sent further west into Germany for slave labour.

After the Wehrmacht launched its invasion of the USSR, the German authorities began to draft a *Generalplan-Ost* (General Eastern Plan) to Germanise the GG. They started with mass deportations of the Polish inhabitants of the Zamość region and

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their replacement with *Volksdeutsche*. However, the operation met with such strong resistance from the local population and Polish resistance units that the Germans were forced to suspend it and instead carried out a ruthless pacification (i.e. massacre) in the area.

A particularly notorious atrocity committed by Nazi Germany on racist premises was the abduction of Polish children deemed “suitable for Germanisation” (i.e. children who were blond and blue-eyed). Children who fitted this category were forcibly taken from their parents for adoption in Germany. After the War, only 30 thousand out of around 200 thousand abducted Polish children were located and returned.

1.4. Economic exploitation: looted property, and work for the benefit of the German invader

Under German occupation, the whole of Poland was subjected to total economic exploitation; however, the Germans treated different parts of Polish territory in different ways. Already in the autumn of 1939, the areas which were most advanced economically were annexed, while the remaining areas were turned into the GG. In the summer of 1941, after the Germans invaded the USSR, the economically underdeveloped Białystok region was annexed (incorporated in East Prussia); *Distrikt Galizien*, an area with oilfields and rich deposits of natural gas, was joined to the GG; while poorly developed eastern areas of occupied Poland were joined either to *Reichskommissariat Ostland* (viz. the Baltic states under German occupation) or *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* (German-occupied Ukraine).

For most of the War, there were three currency systems in German-occupied Poland. The reichsmark (German mark) was introduced as the currency in the territories incorporated in the Reich, (27 November 1939 or 1 January 1942),³⁹ and its circulation was administered by the Reichsbank. The złoty, the Pol-

³⁹ Łuczak, Czesław, *Polityka ekonomiczna Trzeciej Rzeszy w latach drugiej wojny światowej*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1982, p. 226.

Jugendverwahrlager Litzmannstadt (Litzmannstadt Juvenile Detention Camp) “She recalls how in the camp they were beaten for the slightest misdemeanour, including speaking Polish. Endless standing to attention was commonplace. They were hungry all the time. The daily dinner ration was 35 g of meat, 107 g of potatoes, and 60 g of groats, all in the form of a soup. Zyta remembers Gienia, who was so scared of the camp’s brutal staff that one night she wetted herself three times. Each time Eugenia Pohl, their overseer, punished her with a flogging. “Gienia had to lie down on a special flogging bench, a wooden board on four wheels, and put her arms up. She had to count the stokes in German and was not allowed to cry. After the second flogging, we carried her back to our room, she was barely alive. We kept watch by her side all night. In the morning, Gienia declared she was going to die. I kissed her and asked her not to do that. A few minutes later, she was dead. It was my first encounter with death.” (*Teraz jesteście Niemcami* [Now you are Germans], Wojciech Olszówka (ed.), Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, p.189).

ish currency issued by Bank Polski, could be exchanged for reichsmarks up to a specified limit (generally 500 zł)⁴⁰ at rate of 2:1.⁴¹ At the same time the Polish banking system was abolished and branches of German banks were opened.⁴² A prohibition was brought on the possession of gold and foreign currencies. Polish and Jewish customers lost all the money they had on current and savings accounts in the banks, but were still obliged to repay the loans they had taken out.⁴³ In 1939, the Germans established *Emissionsbank in Polen*, which as of 1940 issued currency for the GG.⁴⁴ The new “złoty” issued under German occupation replaced the pre-war Polish złoty at a 1:1 rate. Nicknamed the “Młynarka” after Feliks Młynarski, the bank’s governor, or the Kraków złoty, from the very outset the new currency had a lower purchasing power than the pre-war Polish złoty, and depreciated at a rapid rate due to overissue (from 1940 to 1944 circulation rose tenfold).⁴⁵ Polish state-owned banks and Jewish banks were confiscated and other lenders were put under German supervision. Agencies of German banks started operations.⁴⁶ In *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, the Germans kept the Soviet rouble for an interim period; *Notenbank im Ostland*, the issuing bank they established there on 1 April 1943, only controlled its circulation. The *Zentralnotenbank Ukraine*, the issuing bank the Germans established for *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* on 1 June 1942, issued the karbowanez, at a value of 1 rouble. The exchange rate for both of these currencies to the reichsmark was 10: 1. The Polish banking system which had operated on these territories before the War and had been abolished by the Soviets was replaced with a network of German lending institutions established individually for each of these territories, and branches of German banks.⁴⁷

Młynarka (pl. młynarki) - the colloquial name for the banknotes of the German Emissionsbank in Poland. Each of them bore the signature of Feliks Młynarski, an eminent patriot, distinguished economist and banker, who had been vice-president of the Bank of Poland for five years and worked on the Finance Committee of the League of Nations from 1933 to 1935. Hans Frank wanted a separate currency to operate in the General Government, issued by a new institution to be headed by a Pole. The offer - essentially impossible to refuse - was presented to Feliks Młynarski, who agreed after being authorised by the Prime Minister of the Polish Government in Exile.

(For more on the Emissionsbank in Poland, see the chapter on Losses in Banking and Insurance...)

⁴⁰ Kaliński, Janusz; and Czesław Noniewicz, *Historia gospodarcza Polski XIX i XX wieku*, Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2015, p. 149; cf. Kostrowicka, Irena; Zbigniew Landau; and Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Historia gospodarcza Polski XIX i XX wieku*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1984, p. 430.

⁴¹ Deresiewicz, Janusz, *Okupacja niemiecka na ziemiach polskich włączonych do Rzeszy. Studium historyczno-gospodarcze*, Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1950, p. 489.

⁴² Deresiewicz, p. 508–530.

⁴³ Pospieszalski, Karol M., *Polska pod niemieckim prawem 1939–1945 (ziemie zachodnie)*, Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1946, p. 82–83; cf. Karol M. Pospieszalski, *Hitlerowskie „prawo” okupacyjne w Polsce. Wybór dokumentów, cz. I: Ziemie „wcielone”*, Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1952, p. 60–63.

⁴⁴ Skalniak, Franciszek, *Bank Emisyjny w Polsce 1939–1945*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1966, p. 89–99.

⁴⁵ Skalniak, p. 99–107.

⁴⁶ Skalniak, p. 36.

⁴⁷ Łuczak, *Polityka ekonomiczna...*, p. 231; cf. Kaliński and Noniewicz, p. 147; Wierzbicki, Marek, “Sowiecka polityka ekonomiczna na ziemiach wschodnich przedwojennej Polski (tzw. Zachodniej Ukrainie i Zachod-

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The annexed territories underwent a rapid process of enforced absorption into the German economic system. In the GG, the Nazis pursued an economic policy that shifted from extreme to extreme – from initially closing down all the factories and taking their machinery and equipment, raw materials, and products to Germany, to transferring German factories back to the GG when Allied bombing of the western part of Hitler’s Reich exposed German industry to a constant threat. German decision-makers came up with a variety of mutually irreconcilable ideas on what to do with the least developed areas east of the Bug River. The common factor of all German economic policy in occupied Poland was to exploit the conquered territories as much as possible for the war economy.

On the annexed territories, Polish property was systematically confiscated, starting with large agricultural estates. The land, its farming equipment and livestock was put in German hands. An injunction was imposed on Polish peasant farmers prohibiting them from selling or leasing out their farms. All farmland was put under a system of strict control by German agricultural supervisors, who decided i.a. how much of their produce farmers were deliver to the Germans, and how much they could keep for themselves.⁴⁸ In the GG, the Germans did not stop at confiscating about 1 million hectares of land and appointing *Treuhänder* (trustees) for large estates; they also amalgamated a total area of about 212 thousand hectares of peasants’ smallholdings forcefully to create large farming units.⁴⁹ In the two *Reichskommissariate*, the Germans kept the *sovkhos* state-owned farms the Soviets had established, but the *kolkhoz* agricultural cooperatives foundered and were abolished.⁵⁰ The largest farms were taken over by German landowners or put under German trusteeship. The general aim of agricultural policy (until 1943) was to increase production, for the benefit of the occupier, as evidenced by the fact the latter even increased the supplies of machinery, tools and fertilisers,⁵¹ to ensure provisions for the German army and officials. In 1940, the German authorities imposed a system of compulsory quotas of produce (cereals, potai.e.toes, sugar beet,

niej Białorusi) w latach 1939–1941,” *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2009, 8/1 (14), p. 215.

⁴⁸ Deresiewicz, p. 109–202; cf. Kostrowicka, Landau, and Tomaszewski, p. 421–422.

⁴⁹ Jastrzębowski, Wacław, *Gospodarka niemiecka w Polsce 1939–1944*, Warszawa: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza „Czytelnik”, 1946, p. 296–299; cf. Kostrowicka, Landau, and Tomaszewski, p. 422.

⁵⁰ Wierzbicki, p. 224–225.

⁵¹ Jastrzębowski, p. 321; cf. Kostrowicka, Landau, and Tomaszewski, p. 422–424; Czesław Łuczak, *Polska i Polacy w drugiej wojnie światowej*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, 1993, p. 210–229.



milk, eggs, and meat) which farmers had to deliver for Germans (in Germany, those serving on the fronts, and those in the occupied territories). The quantity of produce under these quotas grew systematically, becoming a heavier and heavier burden. Failure to deliver the required amount could make the farmer liable to the death penalty. Some farmers managed to produce a surplus of food, which they sold on a booming black market. The Germans tried to counteract the black market with a variety of measures and Draconian penalties, including the death penalty for illegal animal slaughter.⁵²

On the annexed territories, the Germans confiscated Polish and Jewish industrial property, large commercial businesses, shops and craftsmen's workshops. For an interim period, confiscated businesses were managed by trustees (*Treuhänder*), and later handed over to settlers or distinguished Nazi Party functionaries as rewards for distinguished service.⁵³ The extent of confiscation was somewhat less in the GG, and $\frac{2}{3}$ of the industrial property remained in Polish hands. Nonetheless, the Germans continued

⁵² Kostrowicka, Landau, and Tomaszewski, p. 424–430.

⁵³ Deresiewicz, p. 209–213; Jastrzębowski, p. 306–310.

Photo 1.13.
Germans escorting civilian inhabitants of Bochnia and its environs for execution on Uzbornia hill, 18 December 1939. On that day, 52 persons were shot (Collections of the S. Fischer Museum, Bochnia)



to close down smaller businesses and amalgamate them into large enterprises focused on war production.⁵⁴ Assigned investment funds and relatively good supplies were maintained until 1943, keeping up continuously growing production levels for commodities such as coal, iron, steel, and rolled metal products.⁵⁵ The series of German defeats on the fronts badly hit the consumer goods sector, which was constantly neglected. Industrial production in the GG fell by about 40% over the entire period under German occupation.⁵⁶ In the *Reichskommissariate*, the industrial enterprises the Soviet invaders had nationalised were taken over by German-appointed trustees.⁵⁷

Occupied Poland was the main source of workers the Germans exploited for slave labour. Poles in annexed areas, and all Polish Jews were liable to forced labour. Employment was compulsory for Poles and members of non-Jewish minorities in the GG and the *Reichskommissariate*. The Germans also made Polish POWs (rank-and-file soldiers and NCOs) perform slave labour. Work

⁵⁴ Jastrzębowski, p. 310–316; Pospieszalski, *Hitlerowskie „prawo” okupacyjne w Polsce*, p. 253–255.

⁵⁵ Deresiewicz, p. 218–229; Jastrzębowski, p. 321–324.

⁵⁶ Kaliński and Noniewicz, p. 148; Kostrowicka, Landau, and Tomaszewski, p. 410–413.

⁵⁷ Kaliński and Noniewicz, p. 148.

Photo 1.14.
The bodies of 52 Polish victims shot by the German police on Uzbornia hill in Bochnia, 18 December 1939 (Collections of the S. Fischer Museum, Bochnia)

was obligatory for everyone between the ages of 14 and 70, but often children under 14 were forced to work, too. People were exploited for slave labour in occupied Poland, or sent to work in Germany and other occupied territories over a vast stretch from the Eastern to the Western front. Some 2.5 million Poles were deported to Germany for slave labour.⁵⁸

1.5. Living conditions of the indigenous population in occupied Poland

The living conditions of the indigenous population of German-occupied Poland depended on their place of residence (they were different in the annexed territories, the GG, and the *Reichskommissariate*), and type of employment (agriculture, industry, etc.). Regardless of employment, the inhabitants of annexed areas were the worst off. The situation in the other areas was more diversified. People employed in the administrative institutions of the Polish state, local government, schools, and universities (except for blue-collar workers) lost their jobs. Unemployment rose significantly at the beginning of wartime occupation, affecting a large part of the working class. The German wage freeze policy caused widespread pauperisation among employees. Food rationing, allowing to purchase food legally, were at a near-starvation level having a vastly negative influence on the entire urban population. This was aggravated by the exorbitant prices of food on the black market, where prices were much higher, as there selling outside the card system was punishable by death. The living conditions of the rural population depended on the amount of surplus produce they obtained from their farms. Some large country estates managed by German trustees and prosperous farms occasionally even managed to benefit from wartime conditions, while other farms, forced to work for the German economy, were

⁵⁸ Dzierżanowska, Agnieszka; and Dariusz Pawłowski, "Polacy na robotach przymusowych w Trzeciej Rzeszy (metody rekrutacji, sposób traktowania, liczebność)," *Polska 1939–1945. Straty osobowe i ofiary represji pod dwiema okupacjami*, Szarota, Tomasz; and Wojciech Materski (eds.), Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej. Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2009, p. 152–154; Kostrowicka, Landau, and Tomaszewski, p. 400–401; Łuczak, *Polska i Polacy...*, p. 277–295.

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significantly worse-off. Failure to deliver the required amount of crops was punishable by draconian reprisals, up to and including the death penalty.

1.6. Education and scholarship, culture and the arts

The Germans closed down all Polish education, scholarship, culture or art institutions in the annexed region. The University of Poznań was closed down, and its academic staff were forcibly resettled to the GG. The Polish university was replaced by a German *Reichsuniversität*. All Polish teachers were dismissed and the Polish system of education was replaced with a German system intended exclusively for German children. Polish children could only attend schools, in which they were taught to obey Germans, and obtained the minimum education – a three-year elementary course, designed to teach them to understand orders issued by their future German employers. Polish children were punished for speaking Polish in school, and their education finished at the age of 12, when they were sent to work or deported to Germany for slave labour. However, there were a few local exceptions to this rule: Polish was kept as the language of instruction in the schools in the eastern part of *Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz*. Generally, Polish children were not admitted to education beyond the primary level (except for *Regierungsbezirk Danzig-Westpreußen*). In Pomerania and the eastern part of the Upper Silesian area, they were allowed to attend German vocational schools.

In the annexed territories, public areas were Germanised: the names of cities and streets were changed, public notices in Polish were replaced with German ones, and Polish monuments and memorials were demolished. The anti-Polish campaign also hit the Catholic Church, which was considered a mainstay of Polishness; the Germans murdered numerous priests, monks, and nuns, or deported them to concentration camps, but the final reckoning with the Church was postponed till later.

In the GG, the Germans closed all the Polish secondary schools and institutions of higher education in the autumn of 1939. They were planning to found a German university in



Photo 1.15.

Demolition of the Adam Mickiewicz Monument, carried out by the Germans on 17 August 1940 in the Market Square of Kraków (Collections of the Kraków Branch of the National Archives)

Kraków in the facilities of the Jagiellonian University, which was closed down. The German authorities lowered the level of primary education available to Polish children and limited its scope, forbidding to teach subjects like history, geography, and literature. They kept vocational schools open to train skilled labourers to work for Germany. Ukrainian schools in the GG were kept open and flourished, in *Distrikt Galizien*.

All Polish institutions for scholarship and scientific research in the annexed territories and the GG were closed down. Polish academic publications and Polish publishing in general was stopped. The pre-war Polish press was abolished as well. It was replaced by German propaganda newspapers and magazines colloquially referred to as “the reptile press,” which was published in Polish under German control and circulated in the GG and selected areas in the eastern part of the annexed territories. The people of occupied Poland were deprived of the opportunity to listen to the news on the radio. Polish citizens had their radio receivers confiscated already in the autumn of 1939. Listening to foreign broadcasting stations or disseminating foreign news was illegal and punishable, even with the death penalty. Propaganda loudspeakers nicknamed “barkers” were installed in the streets of towns and cities. Cinemas were also adapted to play an analogous role.

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Polish culture in the annexed territories was meant to cease to exist in the annexed territories, whereas in the GG it was maintained only in an extremely primitive form. The German authorities demolished Polish monuments and plundered private and state-owned art collections. Representatives of the Polish arts and sciences were deprived of the opportunity to continue their work, and many were murdered or sent to concentration camps.

1.7. Summary

Throughout the period under German occupation, Poland suffered an endless wave of violence and atrocities. In 1946, the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg defined the following categories of German atrocities: planning, commencing, and conducting an aggressive war; the murder of prisoners-of-war and civilians; mass extermination in Nazi German concentration and death camps; public executions; random street round-ups of innocent individuals; slave labour; mass deportations and resettlements; wilful destruction of cities, villages, and settlements; the looting of cultural artefacts and movable property; the destruction of national heritage; the Germanisation of non-German individuals; persecution and oppression of individuals and communities on political, racial and ethnic grounds; and the destruction of culture and art. Germany committed all of these categories of crime and atrocity against Polish citizens.



Tomasz Ceran



The Piaśnica Massacre: The first German genocide in Occupied Poland

Left: Photo 1.16.
Exhumation of the victims' bodies, murdered by Germans in the forests near Piaśnica in 1939–1940 (MMG collections)

The German occupation of Poland during the Second World War assumed the form of a genocidal operation as soon as the War started. It is not a coincidence that the term “genocide” was coined in 1944 by Rafał (Raphael) Lemkin, a Polish lawyer with Jewish roots, in a study on Germany’s policy in occupied Europe, particularly in its occupation of Poland.¹ Lemkin was one of the first to realise that Germany’s aim was not only to occupy a given territory but also to exterminate specific national or ethnic groups inhabiting it solely on the grounds of their nationality or ethnicity. The terminology in use up to that time, words like “Germanization,” was inadequate because it fell short of giving an accurate description of the situation, implying that all that Germany intended to do was to impose German cultural models on the people of Poland but let them stay alive. Yet that is not an accurate description of the situation that developed in Poland as soon as Germany invaded and occupied the country in 1939.² In Lemkin’s opinion, the word “Germanization” was “much too restricted to apply to a process in which the population is attacked, in a physical sense, and is removed and supplanted by populations of the oppressor [nation].”³ Before “genocide” became a legal concept in 1948, it was perceived as the new policy of occupation Germany pursued.

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¹ Lemkin, Raphael, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*, Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, 1944. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015005077436&view=1up&seq=11&skin=2021&q1=aim> (Accessed 10-11 Mar. 2022). Passages from Lemkin’s book were published in a Polish translation, but not until 2013. See Madajczyk, Piotr, “Okupacja niemiecka Polski w świetle historycznej teorii genocydu,” *Pomorze pod okupacją niemiecką. Jesień 1939*, Piotr Madajczyk (ed.), Warszawa: Instytut Pileckiego, 2021, 109-130.

² See Mazurkiewicz, Maciej J., *Ludobójstwo Niemiec na narodzie polskim 1939-1945. Studium historyczno-prawne*, Warszawa: IPN, 2021, 393.

³ Lemkin, 80.

Germans started killing the civilian population of Poland as soon as they occupied the country. However, the extent and intensity of the German reign of terror was different in different parts of occupied Poland. One of the biggest German atrocities committed in the initial phase of the War was perpetrated on the territory of the pre-war Voivodeship of Pomerania. Throughout the two decades between the World Wars, Germany called the region separating the Weimar Republic (later the Third Reich) from East Prussia “the Pomeranian Corridor” (*der Pommersche Korridor*) or “the Polish Corridor” (*der Polnische Korridor*). Ever since

the First Partition of Poland in 1772, the position of the Prussian (and later German) State was that “West Prussia” (i.e. the part of Pomerania around Gdańsk) was “German” and had to be in German hands. For the Polish State, access to the Baltic was an indispensable condition guaranteeing its independence. Germany considered the attribution of the region to Poland at the Treaty of Versailles concluded by the victorious Allies after the First World War “the greatest injustice in history” and was never reconciled to the loss.⁴ In September 1939, as soon as Germany occupied Poland, it started the *Entpolonisierung* (“de-Polonization”) of the region by means of physical genocide. One of the reports drawn up in October 1939 by the *Einsatzgruppen* (German security police and security service task forces) said outright that Hitler wanted the Polish part of Pomerania transformed into a German *Westpreußen* as soon as possible. All the German institutions involved concurred that to carry out the task, it was necessary to physically exterminate “those Polish elements which had made a significant

⁴ See Mazanowska, Izabela, and Tomasz Ceran, “Selbstschutz na Pomorzu Gdańskim i Kujawach,” *W cieniu Einsatzgruppen. Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz w okupowanej Polsce 1939–1940*, Izabela Mazanowska, Tomasz S. Ceran, and Marcin Przegiętka, (eds.), Warszawa: IPN, 2021, 15–115.

► (editor); Paterek 1939. *Zbrodnia i pamięć/ Memory and Crime*, Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk & Warszawa: IPN, 201; *The History of a Forgotten German Camp: Nazi Ideology and Genocide at Szmalcówka*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015, *Im Namen des Führers... Selbstschutz Westpreussen i zbrodnia w Łopatkach w 1939 roku*, Gdańsk & Bydgoszcz: IPN, 2014.

Genocide. The term was coined by Rafał (Raphael) Lemkin (1900–1959), a Polish lawyer with Jewish roots, and is derived from the Greek word *genos*, which is defined as “race, stock or kin”; and the Latin verb *caedo, caedere, cecidi, caesum*, “to kill.” The essence of genocide is the annihilation of those who belong to a given ethnic group merely on the grounds of their ethnicity. Lemkin first used the term “genocide” in his 1944 book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*, in which he applied the term “genocide” for the new technique Germany employed in its policy in the lands it occupied during the Second World War. He wrote that genocide need not necessarily mean the instant annihilation of a given nation; instead, it was more of a coordinated plan consisting of various operations. “The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups.” For Lemkin, there was no doubt that Germany conducted such a plan in Occupied Poland. In his opinion, the consequences of genocide, such as the annihilation of a people and the destruction of their cultural heritage, were irreversible, for which the only viable recompense that could be made were reparations. Lemkin’s chief objective was to get the concept of genocide qualified as a new category of crime in international law. On 9 December 1948, the United Nations adopted its Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, sometimes referred to as “The Lemkin Convention.” The Convention defines the crime of genocide as any of a series of acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” The Convention did not mention political groups in the list, because the Soviet Union objected to the inclusion of such an item.

contribution to the Polish cause in any way at all in the past or were likely to support Polish resistance in the future.”⁵

Piaśnica Forest is a 250 sq. km area of woodland 10 km away from Wejherowo, a town near Gdynia. In late September 1939, the German occupying authorities issued an order for the arrest of all the Jews in the region and Poles suspected of pro-independence activities. They were to be transported to Piaśnica for execution. Victims were collected from prisons in the Free City of Gdańsk, which had been incorporated in Germany already on 1 September, Gdynia, Sopot, Tczew, Puck, Kartuzi, and from the railway platform at Wejherowo, and systematically brought to the execution site in the forest. The killings started in late October and continued until early 1940. German firing squads shot large numbers of the local intelligentsia from Pomerania and Kashubia. Only on 11 November, Poland’s Independence Day, 314 Poles were killed. At least 53 priests and religious, including Blessed Alicja Kotowska, a nurse who had served on the front during the 1920 Polish–Bolshevik War, were murdered in Piaśnica. The Roman Catholic Church’s death toll in the Polish part of Pomerania included 51 % of its priests – 323 out of the total of 634 ministering in the region before the War. This was the largest percentage for priests killed on the territories of Poland incorporated in Germany.⁶ In the autumn of 1939, the Diocese of Chełmno lost no less than 214 of its priests.⁷ 50 Polish teachers were also shot in Piaśnica Forest. The Germans killed 1,079 out of the total of 6,244 Polish teachers who had worked in the Voivodeship of Pomerania, and 877 of them were shot in the autumn of 1939.⁸ At Wejherowo,

⁵ Böhler, Jochen, Klaus-Michael Mallmann, and Jürgen Matthäus, *Einsatzgruppen w Polsce*, Polish translation by Ewa Ziegler-Brodnicka, Warszawa: Bellona, 2009, 196. Original German edition: *Einsatzgruppen in Polen: Darstellung und Dokumentation*, Darmstadt: WBG, 2008.

⁶ Jastrzębski, Włodzimierz, *Okupacyjne losy ziem polskich wcielonych do Rzeszy (1939–1945)*, Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Gospodarki, 2017, 201.

⁷ Sziling, Jan, *Męczeństwo – służba – walka. Duchowieństwo diecezji chełmińskiej w latach drugiej wojny światowej (1939–1945)*, Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe (Toruń), 2019, 19.

⁸ Grochowina, Sylwia, “Straty osobowe środowiska nauczycielskiego województwa pomorskiego w roku 1939,” *Wokół strat ludności pomorskiej w latach 1939–1945. Materiały z XVII sesji naukowej w Toruniu w dniu 21 listopada 2007 roku*, Dorota Kromp, Katarzyna Minczykowska-Targowska, and Jan Sziling (eds.), Toruń: Fundacja “Archiwum i Muzeum Pomorskie Armii Krajowej oraz

Einsatzgruppen were German Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police) and Sicherheitsdienst (SD; Security Service) task forces, set up in the summer of 1939. Their tasks was to pacify areas occupied by the German army and to counteract all anti-German groups and individuals in enemy countries behind the lines of combat forces. Five Einsatzgruppen units, numbered I to V, were established in August 1939 prior to the German invasion of Poland, and each of these units was ascribed to one of the invading armies. In September, another Einsatzgruppe, z.b.V., *zur besonderen Verwendung* (“for special operations”), was set up, along with an independent special operations unit called Einsatzkommando 16 (EK16). A total of about 2,700 Sicherheitspolizei and SD men served in the eight Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommando units Germany sent into Poland “for special purposes.” On Hitler’s orders, they were to “destroy the vital forces of the Polish nation.” Each task force was assigned a region of Occupied Poland in which it conducted its own operations to kill Polish civilians in places along a fixed roadmap. Most of their victims were members of the Polish intelligentsia and “leadership class,” as well as any individuals considered likely to join the Polish resistance movement. In November 1939, the mobile task forces were transformed into stationary units. The Einsatzgruppen and other German units are estimated to have killed as many as 60 thousand persons in Occupied Poland in the autumn of 1939. After 1945, most members of Einsatzgruppen were not prosecuted for the crimes they committed, and generally public opinion thought that the war to annihilate entire nations and racial groups did not start until 1941. Nowadays, most historians disagree with such a notion.

the Germans killed practically the entire community of Polish technicians and engineers from Gdynia and its powiat (county), along with the staff of the Polish marine and customs authorities with headquarters in Gdynia, as well as the Polish dockers from the Port of Gdynia.⁹ Gdynia and its inhabitants suffered most severely, for they were perceived by the Germans as a symbol of the independence of the reborn Polish state; in order to erase the traces of the city's Polishness, its name was soon changed to *Gotenhafen* ("The Port of the Goths"). The death pits in the Piaśnica Forests were also used by the German occupiers as a place to murder thousands of victims rounded up and brought by rail from the Reich. These persons were Poles resident in Germany before the War, opponents of Nazi ideology, and German citizens - patients of mental hospitals in Western Pomerania and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, including small children (Polish railwaymen found children's toys left in the train carriages).¹⁰ They were all told that they were being taken to a holiday home at Piaśnica. People from the first transports were killed in the following way: "Two SS men held the mental patients, one at a time, over the edge of the mass grave, where the third SS man shot the victim in the back of the head, and the body was dropped into the pit. There were about 5 to 10 commandos of three men working on a rota. Of course, the patients heard the shots, but were not fully aware of what was going on."¹¹ Elżbieta Ellwart, a Polish woman, saw perpetrators kill a child of two in Piaśnica Forest by smashing its head against a tree trunk.¹² When the whole operation was over, the Germans covered up the atrocity by planting new trees on the site.

In 1942, the Germans launched *Aktion 1005*, an operation to remove the evidence of their atrocities committed throughout Central and Eastern Europe.¹³ In Pomerania, it was carried out in the summer of 1944. The bodies of victims they had killed

Wojskowej Służby Polek," 2008, 102.

⁹ Ceran, Tomasz, "Ofiary zbrodni pomorskiej 1939 – portret zbiorowy," *Rozstrzelana niepodległość. Ofiary zbrodni pomorskiej 1939. Materiały XXIX sesji naukowej w Toruniu z 22 listopada 2019 roku*, Tomasz Ceran (ed.), Toruń: Fundacja Generał Elżbiety Zawackiej. Archiwum i Muzeum Pomorskie Armii Krajowej oraz Wojskowej Służby Polek, 2020, 23-46.

¹⁰ Bojarska, Barbara, *Piaśnica. Miejsce martyrologii i pamięci. Z badań nad zbrodniami hitlerowskimi na Pomorzu*, Wejherowo: Urząd Gminy, 2009, 39.

¹¹ Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg, B 162/20786, Minutes of the interview of Kurt Eimann, 29 May 1962, 196-198.

¹² Bojarska, 48-50.

¹³ See Hoffmann, Jens, „Das kann man nicht erzählen”. „Aktion 1005.” *Wie die Nazis die Spuren ihrer Massenmorde in Osteuropa beseitigen*, Hamburg: KVV Konkret, 2013; Angrick, Andrej, „Aktion 1005”. *Spurenbeseitigung von NS-Massenverbrechen 1942-1945*, Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2018.

on nearly 30 execution sites were burned.¹⁴ In Piaśnica, they brought in 36 prisoners from the Stutthof concentration camp to do the job, which took about seven weeks to complete. Then they murdered the *Himmelkommando* ("Heaven's commando," i.e. the prisoners who incinerated the evidence) and had their bodies burned as well. Local inhabitants remembered seeing a notice with a prohibition on entry into the forest, and also the reek of burning bodies. After the War, an investigation was carried out, and in 1946 the Polish authorities discovered 30 mass graves, 26 of which were exhumed,¹⁵ along with 2 "crematoria," sites where bodies had been burned. 305 bodies were discovered under a layer of quicklime in two of the death pits. The other pits which were dug up were empty. The record of the 1946 exhumation said that "The cause of death was a wound in the back of the head or a chest or abdominal wound from a gun of unidentified calibre. There were several cases where the cause of death was a skull fracture caused by a heavy object, perhaps the recoil pad on a rifle butt. In both cases [a gun wound or a head injury], death was sudden."¹⁶ Some of the victims did not die either of a gunshot wound or of a head injury caused by the impact of a blunt object, but were wounded [in some other part of the body] and choked to death under a layer of earth and other bodies falling on top of them. The description of Body No. 84 ran as follows: "Body of a man wearing trousers, a jacket, and undergarments. No evidence of contusion - on being tapped, the skull gave out a high-pitched sound. A gaping mouth typical of choking."¹⁷ Another mass grave containing charred human remains and two more cremation sites were discovered in 1962.¹⁸ Estimates of the number of victims killed at Piaśnica range from 6 to 12 thousand, yet an observation

¹⁴ Berendt, Grzegorz, "Działalność Einsatzkommando 1005 na Pomorzu Gdańskim," *Kaszubi - Pomorze - Gdańsk. W kręgu pytań o kulturę, historię i tożsamość. Księga Jubileuszowa Profesora Józefa Borzyszkowskiego z okazji 70. rocznicy urodzin*, Cezary Obracht-Prondzyński, Tomasz Rembalski, and Krzysztof Lewalski (eds.), Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski : Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2016, 340.

¹⁵ According to Bojarska, four of the graves were not examined because pressure was put on the members of the commission to conclude their work at Piaśnica and move on to an exhumation project at Rudzki Most near Tuchola. Other sources say that there were 35, or even as many as 46 mass graves at Piaśnica. The latest archaeological excavations have not resulted in a discovery of new graves. See Lademann, Mirosław, *Martyrologium kaptańskie Piaśnicy. Eksterminacja polskiego duchowieństwa katolickiego w Lesie Piaśnickim 1939*, Wejherowo: Wydawnictwo WR : dla Stowarzyszenia Rodzina Piaśnicka, 2012, 9-13.

¹⁶ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [AIPN, Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance], GK 196/221, Protokół oględzin miejsca przestępstwa i ekshumacji zwłok, 22 X 1946 r. [Report on the examination of the site of the crime and exhumation of the bodies, 22 Oct. 1946], 1557.

¹⁷ AIPN, Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy, GK 196/221, Protokół oględzin miejsca przestępstwa i ekshumacji zwłok, 7-22 X 1946 r. [AIPN, Supreme National Tribunal, GK 196/221, Report on the examination of the site of the crime and exhumation of the bodies, 7-22 Oct. 1946], 154.

¹⁸ Bojarska, 74.

made by Barbara Bojarska, the first and only to write a monograph on the Piaśnica Atrocity, still holds. She commented that the results of the research carried out up to that time did not allow even for an approximate estimate of the number of victims, either of those who lived along the Polish stretch of the Baltic coast, or of those deported from Germany to Piaśnica and murdered there.¹⁹

An investigation conducted by the Gdańsk Regional Branch of the Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation (*Okręgowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Gdańsku*) has been in progress since 2011. So far, the investigators have identified the names of about 2,500 Piaśnica victims, including about 1,200 mental patients and nearly 1,300 members of the Polish intelligentsia from Pomerania.²⁰ Previously, the names of only around 900 victims were known. 2,500 identified victims is a staggering figure, albeit certainly not the full count of victims, merely the minimum and the only figure determined and confirmed on the basis of extant, reliable historical sources. Monika Tomkiewicz is working on a new monograph on the Piaśnica murders. Her book will be completed when the investigation and research in over 30 archives in and beyond Poland comes to an end.²¹ Perhaps we will then be able to resolve several issues regarding the Piaśnica Atrocity, for instance the number of victims the Germans brought to Piaśnica from the occupied Czech territories, to which we have been unable to find a satisfactory answer hitherto.²²

The Piaśnica Atrocity was carried out by SS-Wachtsturmbann Eimann, a unit of five hundred stormtroopers and guardsmen created in

Der Volksdeutsche Selbstschutz was a paramilitary organisation of vigilantes - Polish citizens of German origin. It was established by Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler in September 1939. Its official aim was to protect the lives and property of the Germans living in Poland, hence the word *Selbstschutz* ("self-defence") in its name, but in reality the organisation implemented the genocidal purposes of the policy Germany pursued in Occupied Poland. Over 120 thousand ethnic Germans in the 17-45 age group volunteered for service in the *Selbstschutz*. Members were not uniformed but only wore an armband and armed with rifles confiscated from Polish soldiers. The information *Selbstschutz* men had on local affairs was a particularly useful asset for the German occupying authorities. The *Selbstschutz* detained and shot their Polish neighbours, especially the local elite, as well as farmers, working men and the local Jews. They also took part in the eviction of Polish and Jewish inhabitants, did guard duty in German camps of various kinds, and looted Polish property. *Selbstschutz* men committed atrocities on the entire territory of Occupied Poland, but it was only in the northern stretch, the Gdańsk area of Pomerania and Cuiavia (Kujawy), that the regional unit, *Selbstschutz Westpreussen*, turned into an independent execution squad which murdered between 10 and 20 thousand persons, mostly inhabitants of the pre-war Voivodeship of Pomerania. *Selbstschutz Westpreussen* conducted its operations until the close of 1939, and its counterparts in other regions of Occupied Poland continued until the summer of 1940. After the dissolution of *Selbstschutz*, those who had served in it joined the SS or the *Schutzpolizei* (German Security Police). The overwhelming majority of them were never brought to justice, the best example of which was Pomeranian *Selbstschutz* chief Ludolf von Alvensleben, who died in Argentina in 1970.

¹⁹ Bojarska, 60-65. There have been five editions of Bojarska's book hitherto, (1978, 1989, 2001, 2009, 2018).

²⁰ See Tomkiewicz, Monika, "Zbrodnia w Lasach Piaśnickich jako element zbrodni pomorskiej 1939 roku," *Rocznik Polsko-Niemiecki* 2019: 27, 11-29.

²¹ Tomkiewicz, Monika, "Nowy stan badań nad zbrodnią popełnioną w 1939 roku w Lasach Piaśnickich," *Pomorze pod okupacją niemiecką...*, 447-464.

²² Grot, Elżbieta, "Zbrodnie hitlerowskie w Piaśnicy. Stan badań i postulaty," *Acta Cassubiana* 2001: 3, 27-42.

the Free City of Danzig/Gdańsk before the War,²³ Danzig SS men and *Selbstschutz-Westpreussen*, a German vigilante group who took an active part in the massacre of their Polish neighbours.²⁴ In 1968, Kurt Eimann stood on trial in Hannover, and admitted in court that his unit had killed 1,200 mental patients at Piaśnica as well as the "grave-digger" commando. His sentence was only four years of imprisonment, and he served just half of it. SS-Untersturmführer Herbert Teuffel, who had taken part in the interrogation of arrested Polish victims of Piaśnica, was sentenced to the death penalty by the Gdynia court. On the other hand, Gustav Bamberger, who had been deputy mayor of Wejherowo ("Neustadt in Westpreußen," as the Germans called the town) during the War, was again deputy mayor after the War, this time of Hannover.²⁵ The overwhelming majority of the perpetrators of the Piaśnica Atrocity were never brought to justice.

The Piaśnica Atrocity is the most notorious instance of the series of genocidal crimes the Germans committed in Pomerania in 1939, (previously also referred to as the 'bloody Pomeranian autumn'), during which they massacred about 30 thousand victims at over 400 places in the region.²⁶ At this time, the "Heart of Darkness" in German-occupied Poland was the Gdańsk area of Pomerania, as Paweł Machcewicz, creator of the Gdańsk Museum of the Second World War has observed.²⁷ The Piaśnica Atrocity holds a special place and has made a singular contribution to the identity of the Kashubians and people of Pomerania.²⁸ The Piaśnica Atrocity, being part of the Pomeranian Atrocity of 1939, is seen as the inauguration of the policy of genocide which Germany practised in occupied Poland during the Second World War.²⁹

²³ Daniluk, Jan, *SS w Gdańsku. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Gdańsk: IPN, 2013, 98-99.

²⁴ Jansen, Christian, and Arno Weckbecker, *Der „Volksdeutsche Selbstschutz“ in Polen 1939-40*, München: Oldenbourg, 1992.

²⁵ Tomkiewicz, Monika, "Wstęp. Zbrodnia w Piaśnicy," *Przewodnik. Piaśnica. Miejsce niemieckich zbrodni na Pomorzu w 1939 roku*, Mirosław Odyńiecki and Janosz Józefczyk (eds.), Wejherowo: Muzeum Piaśnickie; and Sztutowo: Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie, 2017, 6-7. English edition: "Introduction," *Piaśnica: A Scene of German Crimes In Pomerania In 1939: Guidebook*, Janosz Józefczyk and Mirosław Odyńiecki (eds.), Wejherowo: Muzeum Piaśnickie; and Sztutowo: Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie, 2017.

²⁶ See Ceran, Tomasz, Izabela Mazanowska, and Monika Tomkiewicz, *Zbrodnia pomorska 1939*, Warszawa: IPN, 2018.

²⁷ Machcewicz, Paweł, "Po co nam Muzeum II Wojny Światowej?" Paweł Machcewicz et al., *Muzeum II Wojny Światowej. Katalog wystawy głównej*, Gdańsk: Muzeum II Wojny Światowej, 2016, 10-11

²⁸ Obracht-Prondzyński, Cezary, *Historia Kaszubów w dziejach Pomorza*, Vol. 5: *Dzieje najnowsze (po 1945 r.)*, Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski w Gdańsku 2019, 27 and 952; Odyńiecki, Mirosław, *Moja Piaśnica*, Wejherowo: Urząd Gminy Wejherowo, 2005; *Piaśnica oczyma poetów*, Wojciech Kiedrowski (ed.), Gdańsk: Czec; and Wejherowo: Urząd Gminy 2001.

²⁹ See Ceran, Tomasz, "Zbrodnia pomorska 1939 jako początek ludobójstwa podczas II wojny światowej. i Wiek XX. *Totalitarian and 20th Century Studies* 2020: 4, 80-91.

2

Konrad Wnęk

**Poland's population
loss caused by
Germany during the
Second World War**



2.1 Introduction

The loss of population Poland suffered in 1939–1945 has not been fully examined until now. For 73 years since the end of the War and German occupation, historians did not conduct any extensive research on the effects of the War for the population of Poland. Most of the research articles and expert opinions on this issue emerged immediately after the War, in 1945–1947, when it was hoped that a future peace congress would raise the issue of war damages for Poland's material losses and the murder of millions of Polish citizens. However, the Iron Curtain¹ not only separated Poland off from Western Europe for almost 50 years, but also resulted in the neglect of the question of compensation for its population loss. The lack of detailed analysis was also related to other issues. Objective difficulties were caused by the large scale of enforced migration from the eastern territories of the pre-war Republic of Poland, starting from the deportations under the Soviet occupation following the USSR's invasion of 17 September 1939, to the displacements at the end of the War. The shift of the Polish borders also contributed to the problems with determining population, especially as the first accurate census of the Polish population was not carried out until 1950. An earlier census carried out in 1946 was only a general head count. The Communist authorities in post-war Poland were not interested in scrutinising the atrocities committed in the country's

¹ The term "Iron Curtain" was coined by Winston Churchill in his speech delivered on 5 March 1946 in Fulton, Missouri. In line with the settlement reached at the Yalta Conference (4–11 February 1945), an iron curtain descended across the continent from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, cutting Central and Eastern Europe off from the rest of the continent and leaving it in the Soviet Union's sphere of influence.

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Left: Photo 2.1.
View of the ruins along ul. Okopowa in Warsaw (NDA collections)

eastern provinces under Soviet occupation during the War. Moreover, due to the scarcity of data, the investigation of the truth in this regard was, and still is, a difficult task for any researchers interested in estimating Poland's demographic losses. One of the problems hindering the verification of estimates is the fact that the first post-war census in the USSR was not carried out until 1959, 14 years after the War. It did not entail a question on respondents' place of birth or residence before 1 September 1939.

In this analysis, I have used various sources and research methods to obtain an estimate of Poland's population loss as accurately as possible. However, readers should bear in mind that all the data I give is approximate, because there was, and still is no better way to arrive at a more accurate count of all the Polish victims of the Second World War and the German occupation of Poland. I have tried to obtain the most reliable and realistic figures, without being influenced by earlier studies on this subject, or by making any assumptions in advance. The figure which has become the generally accepted statistic in the history written so far, people's awareness, and memories of the War is 6.028 million, as given in the 1947 report compiled by the Bureau of War Compensation (*Biuro Odszkodowań Wojennych*, BOW) for the Presidium of the Council of Ministers. However, in my opinion, the population loss was not as much as that, notwithstanding its large scale. Even in 1947 there were some who said that this figure was excessive, while various researchers gave data ranging from 3.4 to 6 million. A good synopsis of the current state of research on the issue is available in a book published in 2009 by IPN (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, the Institute of National Remembrance of the Republic of Poland), unfortunately without a specification of the methodology its authors used to arrive at their estimate for the overall losses Poland sustained during the Second World War.² IPN also has a website, *straty.pl*, with important data for the descendants of Polish victims of Germany's occupation of Poland during the Second World War. The figure it gives for victims (deaths and persons who suffered oppression) is 5,096,632 (4,590,403 identified by name and 506,229 unidentified).

The overall figure I give in this Report as the estimate for the total number of Polish citizens killed by the German Third Reich is **5,219,053 (five million, two hundred and nineteen thousand, and fifty-three) persons.**

² *Polska 1939–1945. Straty osobowe i ofiary represji pod dwiema okupacjami*, Tomasz Szarota and Wojciech Materski (eds.), Warszawa: IPN, 2009.

The BOW report does not say what research methodology it used. Only a perusal of its archival materials may throw light on this question; yet, when I examined this point more closely, I concluded that there was no explanation for the method BOW used to account for about 700 thousand victims. This was probably related to the lack of reliable information on the scale of repression against the Polish population in the eastern provinces of the Republic of Poland, which was estimated at precisely this figure, but for political reasons, it was not attributed directly to Soviet operations. In this study, I have calculated the population loss due exclusively to the operations of Germany in occupied Poland, leaving the issue of losses caused by Soviet policy open to further research.

This study has been divided into the following parts: first I present direct population loss; next I consider indirect losses; I then move on to the distribution of population loss in terms of territorial distribution and victims' social and professional status; and finally I conclude with an estimate for Poland's lost demographic potential.

2.2. Direct population loss

2.2.1. The overall figure for Poland's population loss

Poland suffered the highest relative population loss of the Second World War, in comparison to the losses of other belligerents. However, an accurate determination of the number of victims has been and still is a daunting task both for historians and demographers. The basic problem is the mass migration that took place both during and after the War. Difficulties connected with the accurate determination of its scale will continue to make estimates of population loss a debatable issue. Nevertheless, by using new methods and research instruments, I have been able to arrive at a closer estimate of the magnitude of the population loss sustained by the Second Polish Republic.

My basic sources were the BOW data and the figures published by GUS (the Central Statistical Office, now Statistics Poland) on population (births, marriages and deaths) in the interwar period. I have also used data from the 1931 general census for the population distribution by sex, religion, and territorial distribution by powiat (viz. the term for the second-level administrative division on the territory of Poland).

The 1931 census form and the instructions attached to it did not put any restrictions on respondents' freedom to choose a religion. Every person could enter any religion he or she chose. The instruction said, "Enter the religion to which you formally belong, do not enter your private beliefs. Only persons who do not belong to any church or religious association may write 'no religion.'" It was an offence to refuse to complete the census or to exert an influence on another respondent's answers to the census, and offenders were liable to a heavy fine.

In 1931, Poland had a population of 31,915,779.³ Although this is the most accurate figure the state administrative authorities managed to collect in the census of December 1931, in practice, some individuals must have evaded the duty to take part in the census, and hence this figure should be treated as reasonably accurate, but on the small side. Over the next seven years, the population increased by 3.181 million as a result of a natural growth of 3.286 million minus net migration amounting to 105 thousand. Eventually, by 1 January 1939, the population of Poland reached a figure of 34.849 million.⁴ Some sources say that the population of Poland in 1939 was 35.1 million, but this was due to the addition of the population of the Zaolzie region, which was incorporated in 1938.

Religion	%
Roman Catholics	64.76
Greek (Uniate) Catholics	10.45
Orthodox Christians	11.79
Protestants	2.62
Adherents of Judaism	9.76
Others	0.62
Total	100.00

Table 2.1.
Population of the Second Republic of Poland in 1931 according to religion

Source: *Drugi Powszechny Spis Ludności z dn. 9 XII 1931, Statystyka Polski, seria C, 94a, Warszawa, 1938, p. 15.* Percentage distribution calculated by Konrad Wnęk.

Assuming that the population distribution by religion did not change or changed only to a small extent, we may conclude that, in 1939, Poland had a population of 22,569,732 Roman Catholics; 3,642,774 Greek Uniate Catholics; 4,108,275 Eastern Orthodox Christians; 912,020 Protestants; 3,400,119 adherents of Judaism; and 216,074 others. The officially reported average annual population growth in 1931–1939 was 1.2%; however, it was diversified territorially: in the western and southern voivodeships (the first-level administrative territorial division Poland) it was 1.1%, 1.2% in the central area, and 1.4% in the eastern regions.

As many respondents misunderstood the question on “nationality” (viz. ethnicity) in the first census (1921), mistaking it for citizenship, in the next census this question was omitted while the questions on language and religion were kept. Yet since the question on language gave an ambiguous outcome (for example, a large number of respondents in the Voivodeship of Polesie said they spoke “the local language”), the best, albeit not foolproof way of identifying respondents’ ethnicity was by their religion.

³ *Drugi Powszechny Spis Ludności z dn. 9 XII 1931: Statystyka Polski, seria C, 94a, Warszawa, 1938, p. 15.*

⁴ *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1939, Warszawa, 1939, p. 40.*

The German concentration camps (*Konzentrationslager*) operated a penitentiary system which the authorities of Germany introduced to detain, exploit, and exterminate persons they considered a threat to National Socialism. The first concentration camps were established in Germany, at Dachau (1933), Sachsenhausen (1936), Buchenwald (1937), at Mauthausen in Austria (1938), and Stutthof on the territory of the Free City of Danzig (1939). Following the German invasion of Poland, the German authorities started to set up their concentration camps on occupied Polish territory. The first of these was Auschwitz, established on territory incorporated in Germany, which started its operations in May 1940.

The questionnaires filled in and returned to BOW from the majority of the local authorities from the Core Lands (i.e. the territories of central Poland, not counting the land forfeited in the east and territorial compensation in the west), provide the basic data for the determination of most of Poland's population loss caused by Germany. These questionnaires asked for information on deaths caused by the German occupying forces and authorities. The questions on this issue were divided into definite and probable cases. The definite cases were further sub-divided into five categories: whether the victims lost their life (1) in direct combat, (2) due to murder, (3) by being sent to a prison or concentration camp, (4) due to slave labour, or (5) due to disease, exhaustion and hiding from the enemy. The number of confirmed victims was compared with the population figures for individual gmina (viz. third-level) local authorities in 1931, which were the most up-to-date statistics available for all the gmina territorial units.

According to the administrative division of 1 August 1934, the Republic of Poland comprised 602 urban and 3,143 rural gmina territorial units, giving a total of 3,745 administrative units, and 23 municipalities with powiat status. In 1947, there were 2,772 gmina territorial units in the Core Lands, and almost all of them (a total of 2,728 entities, comprising 2,288 rural units, 424 urban units, and 16 municipalities of powiat status) returned loss reports to the BOW. Some of the loss reports were returned jointly by two administrative units.

According to the BOW statistics, confirmed deaths in rural gminas amounted to 498,751, and 2,017,548 in urban gminas. Another 87,741 deaths for presumed murders should be added for the rural areas, and a corresponding figure of 155,420 for the towns, giving a total of 2,759,460. An additional 36,852 estimated deaths should be added to this figure for Jewish inhabitants from gminas which did not report any data. This figure was estimated on the basis of the data for 1921 for these places, assuming an annual increase of 0.94% on the figure for 1931. Another 30,707 was added for victims from gminas which did not reply to the BOW questionnaire. This figure was interpolated using the nearest neighbours method on the basis of the population in 1931.

The total death toll given by BOW for the Core Lands (including the interpolated estimates) was 2,827,019.

It is much harder to estimate the death toll in the eastern voivodeships. This is due to a number of factors. There were two occupying powers, the German Third Reich and the Soviet Union, responsible for the death or deportation of Polish citizens from these areas.

Death camps (also known as extermination camps, German *Vernichtungslager*) made up a separate category intended for the instant extermination of the Jewish population, but in practice, for most inmates, either type of detention meant death. Birkenau, a death camp, was built next to Auschwitz and launched its operations in 1941. In August 1941, the Germans opened a concentration camp in the city of Lublin. This camp is generally referred to as Majdanek, after the city quarter in which it was located. Earlier, in the summer of 1940, the Germans set up Gross Rosen, which was first a sub-camp of Sachsenhausen and as of May 1941 an independent concentration camp. They followed this up in late 1941 with the establishment of new death camps, Kulmhof, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, and the status of Auschwitz changed from a concentration camp to a death camp. In late 1943, Germany started to close down and demolish its death and concentration camps and remove the evidence of the atrocities.

The Soviet policy of mass deportation, which primarily hit the Polish ethnic population of these areas, resulted in a major change in the relative proportions of the various ethnic communities. After the Second World War, the Soviet authorities did not conduct any inquiries or research on population in the region which could serve as a source for prospective estimates. Moreover, in the census the Soviet Union carried out in 1959, there was no question on respondents' citizenship before 1 September 1939.

The mass deportation of Polish citizens for slave labour to Germany caused another problem, because the data available from the German statistics relate to the whole of the Generalgouvernement (GG: the part of German-occupied Poland not directly incorporated in the German Reich), with no division into separate districts. Hence, I had to consider this issue from scratch and make an estimate *ab initio*.

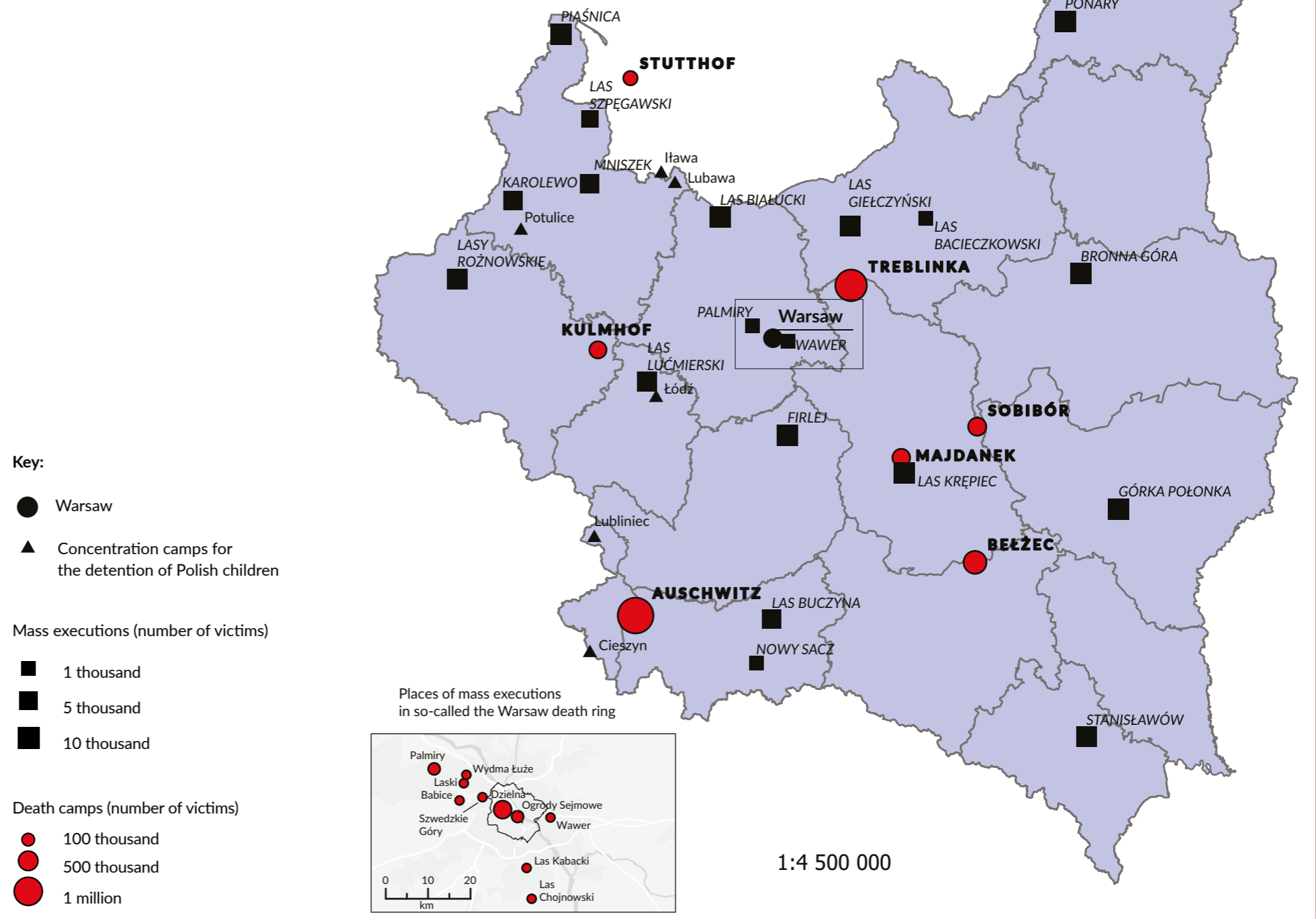
Germany's administrative authorities in occupied Poland left an invaluable record of the scale of its criminal operations – a general head-count census for 1 March 1943.⁵ Given the initial figures for 31 August 1939, the scale of the repressive measures and murders perpetrated by the Soviet Union in 1939–1941, the figures for deportees sent for slave labour to Germany, and for the Generalgouvernement's population in 1943, we can determine the population loss in Distrikt Galizien for this period. This figure can then be applied to obtain a relative estimate for the rest of the eastern territories of pre-war Poland. On 31 August 1939, the eve of the outbreak of the War, the population of the area on which Germany set up Distrikt Galizien in 1941 was 5,223,578; but by 1 March 1943, it had dropped to 4,200,760. The decrease in number 1,022,818 persons, amounted to about 20%, and was caused by the murders perpetrated by the German and Soviet occupying forces, deportations east into the depths of the Soviet Union, and west for slave labour in Germany.

On 31 August 1939, the total population of Poland's eastern voivodeships amounted to 11,782,593. If we assume the same percentage loss throughout the region as in Distrikt Galizien, that is 20%, then after deducting 433,075 for persons murdered or deported by the Soviet Union in 1939–1941, and a further 226,496 for those deported for slave labour to Germany until the end of February 1943, we arrive at a figure of 1,647,554 for the number murdered up to that time in Poland's eastern territories when they were under German occupation.

⁵ *Amtliches Gemeinde- und Dorfverzeichnis für das Generalgouvernement auf Grund der Summarischen Bevölkerungsaufnahme am 1. März 1943*, Krakau, 1943.

Map 2.1.
Extermination sites on Polish territories during the Second World War

Map drafted by Konrad Wnęk.



We still have to estimate the population loss for the remaining 12 months when Germany continued to occupy the region. This can be done by linear interpolation, which gives a figure of 535,457, assuming that Germany's potential for extermination in the region was diminishing all the time due to the continuous drop in population and the gradual retreat of German forces from the region as the German-Soviet front moved westward.

Hence the overall figure for those killed in the eastern territories of pre-war Poland as a result of German occupation amounts to 2,183,011.

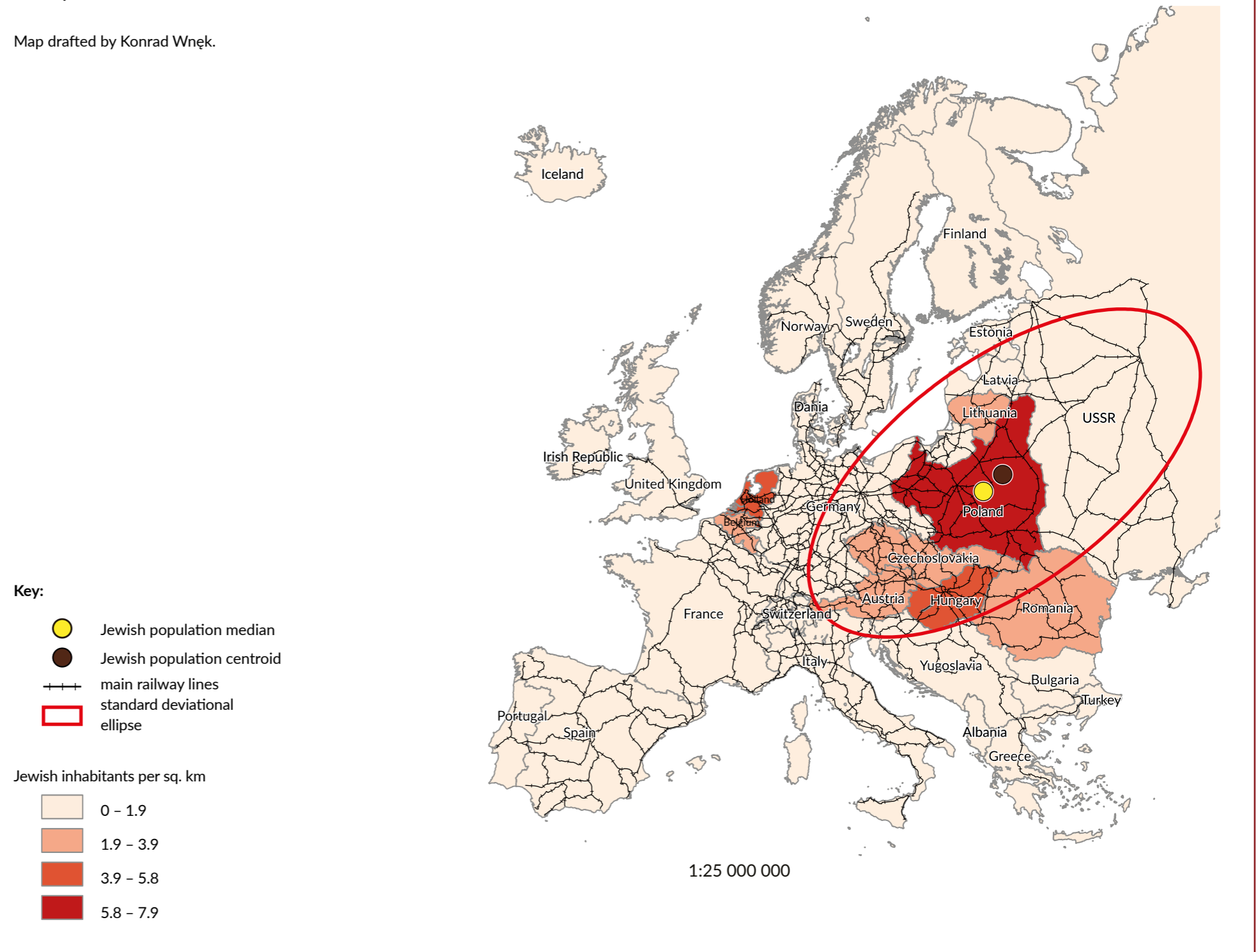
Another issue connected with Germany's occupation of Poland is the legal accountability for the massacre of the Polish inhabitants of the eastern parts of Poland perpetrated by Ukrainian nationalists, known as the Volhynian Slaughter (*rzeź wołyńska*). However, it has to be said that this extermination of the Polish inhabitants of the country's pre-war eastern voivodeships started in 1939 and continued until 1948, and was not limited to the Voivodeship of Volhynia. Yet since the agency accountable for public security of the region's inhabitants was Germany, the occupying power, I decided to add a proportional estimate for these victims to the balance of Poland's population loss caused by the German Third Reich. The figure I added on was for the territory on which the Volhynian Slaughter was committed in the years when it was under German occupation, and hence, it is less than the overall figure for confirmed population loss, amounting to 91,247, due to the operations of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalist and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN-UIA) and presented in the table compiled by Ewa Siemaszko.⁶ Siemaszko's table gives figures for murders committed in particular years as well as for murders not ascribed to a particular year. For my estimate, I took a proportion of the death toll not attributed to a particular year corresponding to the distribution for the killings classified by year. Hence I arrived at an estimate of 59,023 persons killed by OUN-UIA in the years when Germany was accountable for public security in the region.

After adding a figure of 150 thousand for the approximate death toll in the Polish forces, I arrived at an overall estimate of **5,219,053 persons for Poland's direct population loss in 1939-1945 exclusively due to the operations of Germany.**

⁶ Siemaszko, Ewa, "Straty ludności polskiej w wyniku zbrodni ludobójstwa dokonanych w latach czterdziestych XX wieku przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich. Aktualny stan badań," in *Wołyń 1943 - Rozliczenie*, Romuald Niedzielko (ed.), Warszawa: IPN: Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2010, p. 94.

Map 2.2.
Jewish inhabitants in the countries
of Europe in the 1930s

Map drafted by Konrad Wnęk.



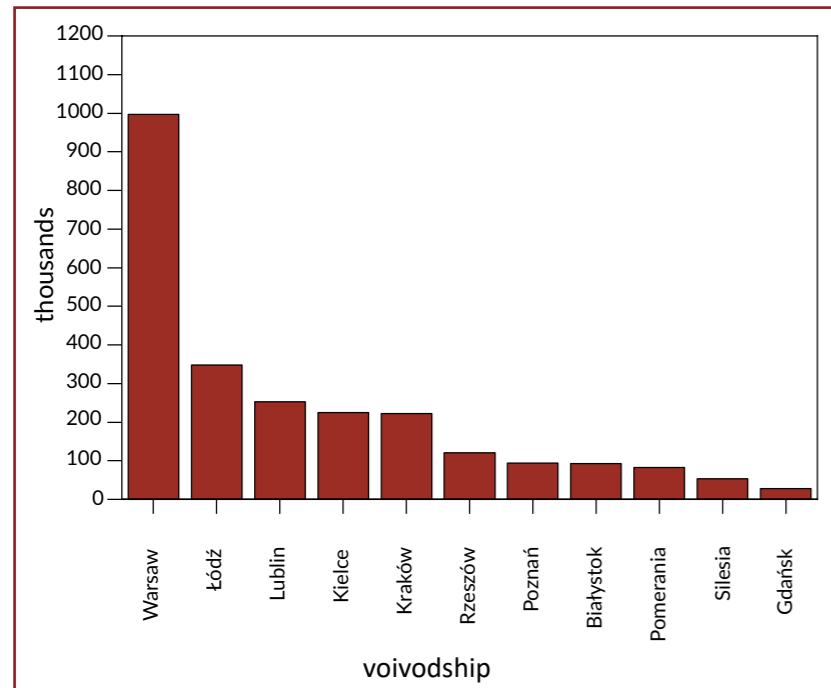
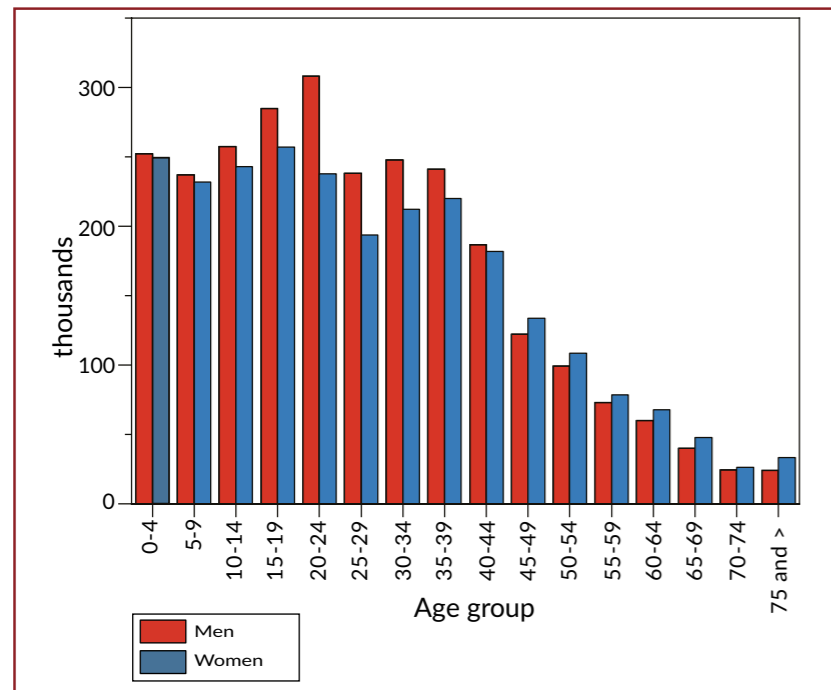


Figure 2.1. Deaths by voivodeship (only for the Core Lands) according to the BOW report



Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.

Figure 2.2. Distribution by age and sex of Poland's death toll, data collected in 1945.

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48. Calculated by Konrad Wnęk.

War usually affects men more than women, and although the Second World War was different in this respect from earlier armed conflicts because of the planned extermination of millions, there were more deaths of Polish men than of Polish women. This was mainly due to the fact that male soldiers constituted the majority in the Polish army, as well as a significant majority in the ranks of

Table 2.2. Poland's population loss caused by Germany during the Second World War

Territory	Victims	Numbers murdered	
Core Lands	irrespective of religion		
	number of deaths according to data from BOW questionnaires	Urban areas	confirmed 2,017,548
			probable 155,420
		Rural areas	confirmed 498,751
			probable 87,741
		Total ^a	2,759,460
	by religion (Judaism and other)		
	estimated deaths in gminas which did not return a questionnaire	Jewish	36,852
		Other than Judaism	30,707
		Total ^b	67,559
Total	Total	2,827,019	
Eastern voivodeships (except for the Białystok region, which has been accounted for in the data for the Core Lands)	Deaths, Jul. 1941–Feb.1944 ^b	2,183,011	
	Volhynian Slaughter (under German occupation)	59,023	
	Total eastern voivodeships	2,242,034	
Polish Army		150,000	
Total population loss		5,219,053	

^a BOW data.

^b Estimated by Konrad Wnęk without BOW data.

Source: calculations by Konrad Wnęk

the Home Army and other underground resistance units. Operations against the Polish intelligentsia, such as *Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion*, *Intelligenzaktion*, *Aktion gegen Universitäts-Professoren*, or the murder of the Lwów University professors, mostly affected men since, at that time, there were more male than female university graduates. In 1931, there were nearly 108 women for every 100 men in Poland while, after the War (in 1946), the ratio of women to men was 118:100. In 1950, after the resettlement of the Polish inhabitants of the former eastern territories, there were still 112 women for every 100 men, while in France, for example, the sex ratio at the time was 108.

Poland's population loss was not uniform across all the age groups, either. Most of those who died were young, able-bodied individuals, who were on the threshold of their professional career and ready to start a family. Several reasons contributed to

this, but two are the most important: firstly, it was mainly young people who served in the army and took part in underground resistance operations against the occupying forces, and secondly, it was the young who were deported to Germany for slave labour, which often ended in their death.

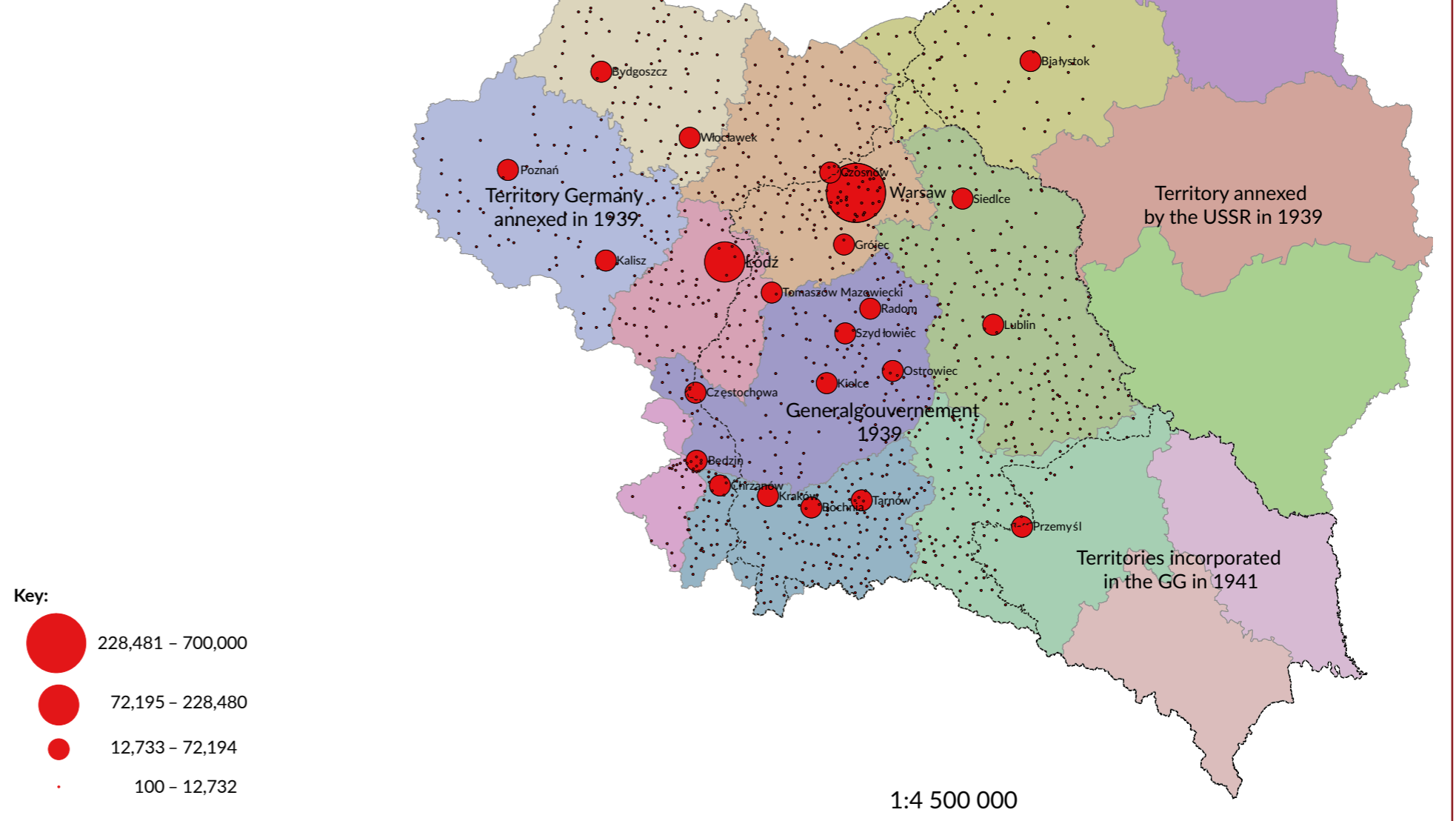
2.3. Territorial distribution of Poland's population loss in the Core Lands

Extant source materials may be used to reconstruct the geographical distribution of Poland's population loss only for the Core Lands, that is those areas which were within the borders of the Polish State both before and after the Second World War. Nevertheless, I decided it would be worthwhile to present these statistics, because they show the extent of the extermination in territorial terms. To present the numerical data, I applied treemapping and cartograms, as these techniques allow for a more detailed analysis and show the huge magnitude of the population loss. The four treemaps below present various aspects of the extermination. The first, Figure 2.3, presents the overall confirmed number of those who were murdered; the next, Figure 2.4, gives the number of those who died as a result of direct military hostilities; the third, Figure 2.7, gives the number murdered in prisons and concentration camps; and the fourth, Figure 2.8, is for victims who died as a result of slave labour. All this data refers to post-war voivodeships, powiats and gminas. The rural gminas are in a paler shade, while the urban gminas are darker. The areas of all the rectangles on the charts are proportional to the death toll caused by specific operations conducted by the German authorities in occupied Poland.

Not surprisingly in view of the enormity of the number of victims in the Warsaw Ghetto set up and subsequently destroyed by Germany in 1943, and the death toll in the following year for the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, the highest population loss was for the Voivodeship of Warsaw, 39.62% of the overall deaths. The voivodeship with the next largest death toll was Łódź (13.85% – this included those killed in the Litzmannstadt ghetto), followed by Kraków (10.06%), Kielce (8.95%), Lublin (8.82%), Rzeszów (4.78%), Białystok (3.73%), Poznań (3.70%), Pomerania (3.27%), Silesia (2.11%), and Gdańsk (1.11%).

Map 2.3.
Mass murder of the inhabitants of the Republic of Poland committed by the Germans during the Second World War (only in the Core Lands, by gminas above 100 victims)

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.
Drafted by Konrad Wnęk.



The population of the Voivodeship of Warsaw suffered even more as a result of direct military hostilities – its loss was 68.14%, more than two-thirds of all the victims of military action in the Core Lands. The Voivodeship of Łódź sustained the second heaviest loss, 6.03%; and the Voivodeship of Kielce came next with 4.20%. The eight remaining voivodeships accounted for just over one-fifth of the victims of direct military hostilities, with the Voivodeship of Poznań with the heaviest (3.89%), and the Voivodeship of Białystok with the least loss (1.56%).

Nearly one in every four (24.51%) of the victims murdered in concentration camps and prisons was a resident of the Voivodeship of Warsaw; almost one in five (19.42%) was from the Voivodeship of Łódź; and one in seven (13.78%) came from the Voivodeship of Lublin. 11.94% of the victims were from the Voivodeship of Kielce; 8.94% from the Voivodeship of Kraków; and 7.96% from the Voivodeship of Poznań. The inhabitants of the Voivodeship of Silesia accounted for 4.26% of those who died in concentration camps and prisons; 4.24% came from the Voivodeship of Pomerania; 3.58% were from the Voivodeship of Rzeszów; 1.01% were from the Voivodeship of Gdańsk, and 0.36% were from the Voivodeship of Białystok.

The majority of the victims who died due to slave labour in Germany came from three voivodeships: Warsaw (42.36%), Kraków (20.73%), and Kielce (11.63%). One in every sixteen (6.18%) was from the Voivodeship of Łódź, and one in twenty (5.00%) was from the Voivodeship of Pomerania. 3.64% of those who died due to slave labour were deported from the Voivodeship of Lublin; 3.48% had been residents of the Voivodeship of Poznań; 2.63% came from the Voivodeship of Gdańsk; 2.19% came from the Voivodeship of Rzeszów; 1.40% came from the Voivodeship of Silesia; and 0.77% were from the Voivodeship of Białystok.

The heaviest death toll due to German atrocities was recorded for the towns and cities. This was due to the fact that most of the Jewish population lived in municipalities. At the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, the German Reich adopted its *Endlösung* policy (the final solution of the Jewish question), thereby passing a death sentence on the Jewish communities in Poland. Repressive measures against the ethnic Polish population, such as the mass execution of hostages and deportation to concentration camps, were targeted mainly at the people in the towns and cities.

Map 2.3 shows the geographical distribution of Germany's mass crimes. For the sake of clarity, I have taken into account only those gminas where a minimum of 100 persons were

The Wannsee Conference was a meeting of high-ranking persons in the Nazi Party and the German government. It was held on 20 January 1942 at Wannsee near Berlin to establish a plan and the methods to be applied for the extermination of the European Jews, and was given a euphemistic soubriquet, *Endlösung der Judenfrage* (the Final Solution of the Jewish Question). The SS was represented by Reinhard Heydrich, head of the RSHA (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, Reich Security Main Office); Heinrich Müller, Gestapo chief in the RSHA; Adolf Eichmann, head of the department for Jewish affairs; Eberhard Schöngarth, head of the RSHA in the GG; Rudolf Lange, commander of Einsatzkommando 2; and Otto Hofmann, head of the SS Race and Resettlement Office. The following members of the German government attended the Conference: Roland Freisler, Minister of Justice; Wilhelm Kritzinger, state secretary in the Reich Chancellery; Alfred Meyer of the Ministry for the Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union; Georg Leibbrandt of the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories; Martin Luther of the German Foreign Ministry; Wilhelm Stuckart of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Erich Neumann of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan; Josef Bühler, for the German administration of the GG; and Gerhard Klopfer, secretary of the Nazi Party. At the Wannsee Conference the final decision was taken to exterminate all the European Jews, the details were worked out for the co-operation and duties of each of the German government agencies, and the plan was implemented in 1942–1943.

murdered. I have presented the numerical data for the largest municipalities in Table 2.3. Warsaw suffered the heaviest toll of inhabitants murdered – 700 thousand during the five years under German occupation. This figure includes the victims of Operation Reinhardt (1942–1943), the 1943 Ghetto Uprising, and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, which brought tragic consequences for the city's civilian population. I have not shown the losses for two important Polish cities, Lwów and Wilno (now Lviv and Vilnius respectively, beyond Poland's borders), as BOW could not conduct its survey there due to the shift of the Polish borders in 1945. The death toll for residents of Lwów alone was over 100 thousand. The death toll for Warsaw was around 700 thousand; and the corresponding figures for other Polish cities were as follows: Łódź, 228 thousand; Kraków, 72 thousand; Lublin, 50 thousand; Białystok, nearly 50 thousand. The death toll for many smaller municipalities was substantial, too, for instance 39 thousand for Częstochowa; 31 thousand each for Siedlce and Kalisz; 28 thousand for Bydgoszcz; and 25 thousand for Kielce.

Table 2.3.
Death toll due to German occupation for the largest Polish cities in the Core Lands

Municipal Gminas	Death toll	Municipal Gminas	Death toll
City of Warsaw *	700,000	Przemyśl	21,020
City of Łódź	228,480	Będzin	20,884
City of Kraków	72,194	Częstków	20,629
City of Lublin	50,137	Tomaszów Mazowiecki	20,359
City of Białystok	49,607	City of Gdynia	18,987
City of Częstochowa	39,183	Chrzanów	17,578
Siedlce	31,350	Ostrowiec	16,464
Kalisz	31,106	City of Włocławek	16,260
City of Bydgoszcz	28,350	Szydłowiec	15,228
Kielce	25,353	Bochnia	14,989
Radom	23,624	City of Poznań	14,413
Tarnów	23,609	Łomża	12,732
Grójec	23,151	Rzeszów	12,397

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.

* In pre-war nomenclature, the term *Miasto* (city) in the official name of a municipality meant that the given city enjoyed the administrative status of a separate powiat.

The BOW data for confirmed deaths in the Core Lands are 2,516,356 persons, 80.18% of whom died in municipalities and 19.82% in rural areas. Figure 2.5 presents the death toll during the Second World War for the largest Polish municipalities (with respect to population). The heaviest death toll was for the large

Figure 2.3 Overall death toll due to the German occupation of Poland in the Core Lands, by voivodeship (V.) and powiat (P.)

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.

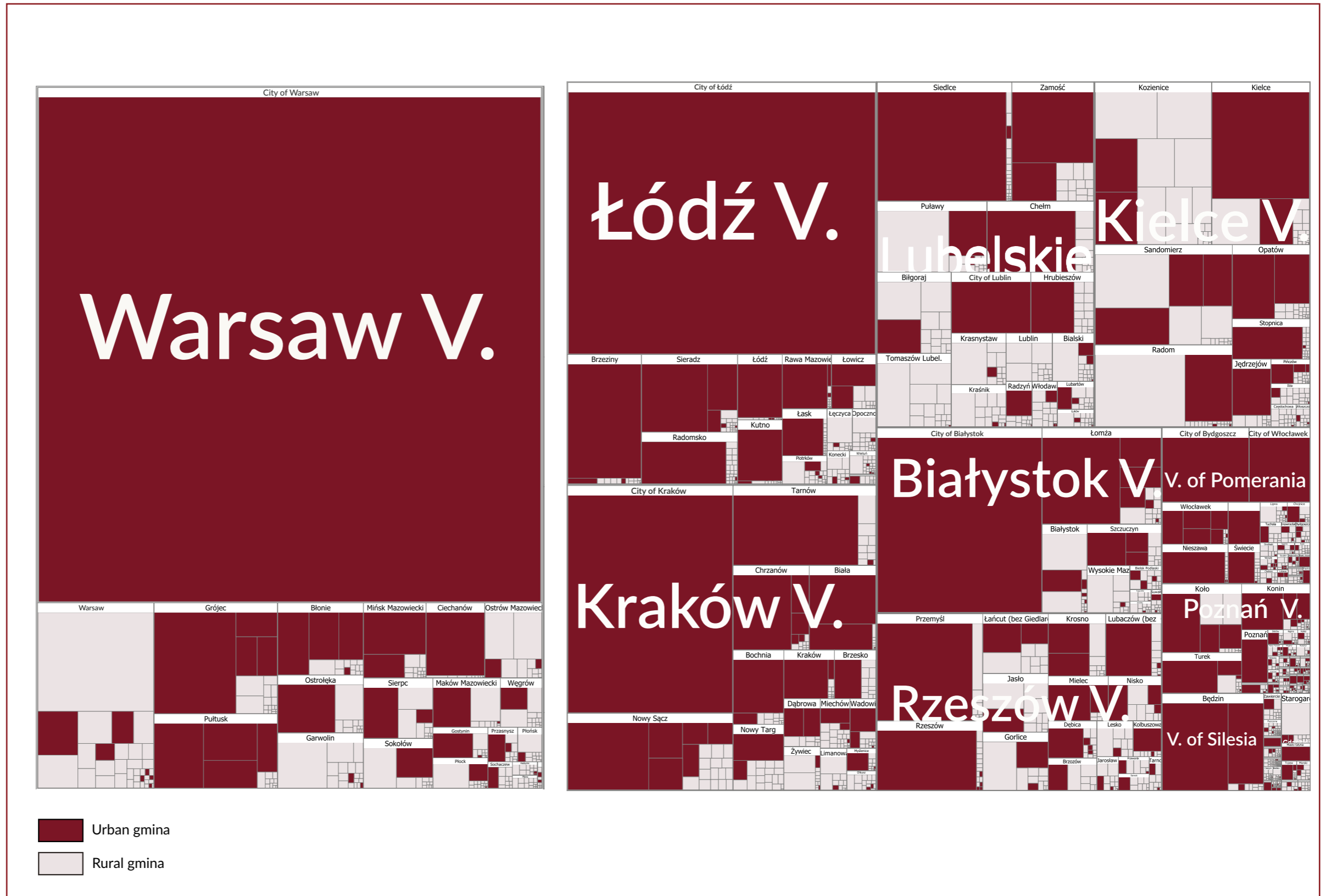
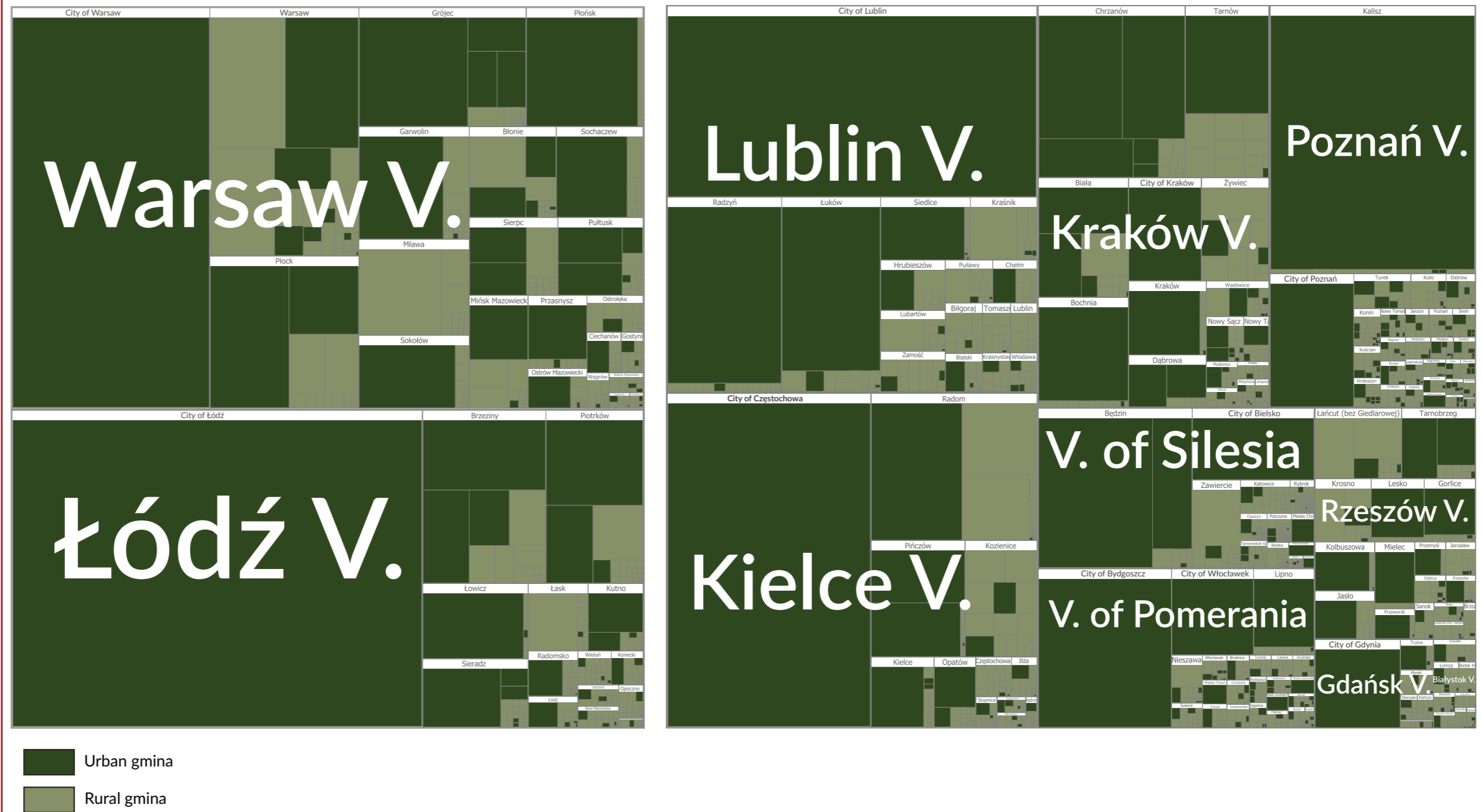


Figure 2.4. Death toll due to direct German military hostilities in the Core Lands, by voivodeship and powiat

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.



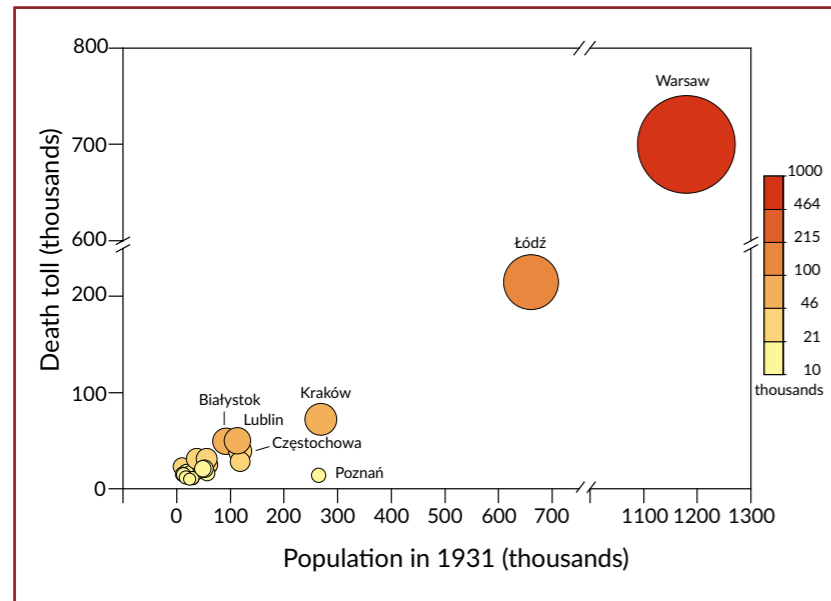


Figure 2.5.
Death toll due to German occupation for the largest Polish cities in the Core Lands

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.

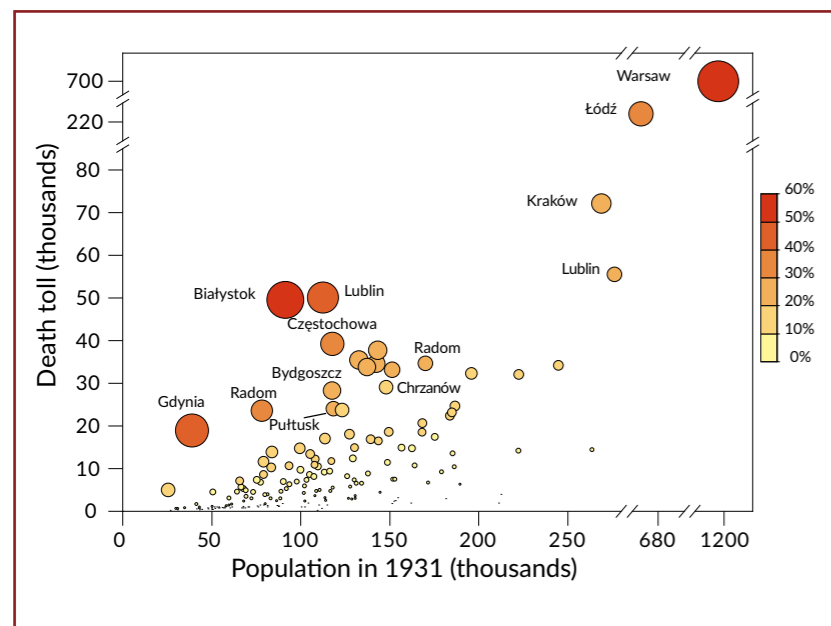


Figure 2.6.
Percentage death toll caused by German occupation during the Second World War, for particular powiats with respect to population in 1931

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.

cities; and Warsaw, Poland's capital, suffered most of all. Poznań was an exception to this rule, with a relatively smaller death toll. This was connected with the specific distribution of Poznań's population by religion, different from the general pattern in other Polish cities, and the enforced resettlement of its Polish inhabitants.

The intensity of the German reign of terror varied depending on the particular area of Poland. There were fewer victims in annexed areas directly incorporated in Germany (Map 2.4). The heaviest death toll was in the central powiats of the GG. However, it has to be borne in mind that, in 1939–1940, there were

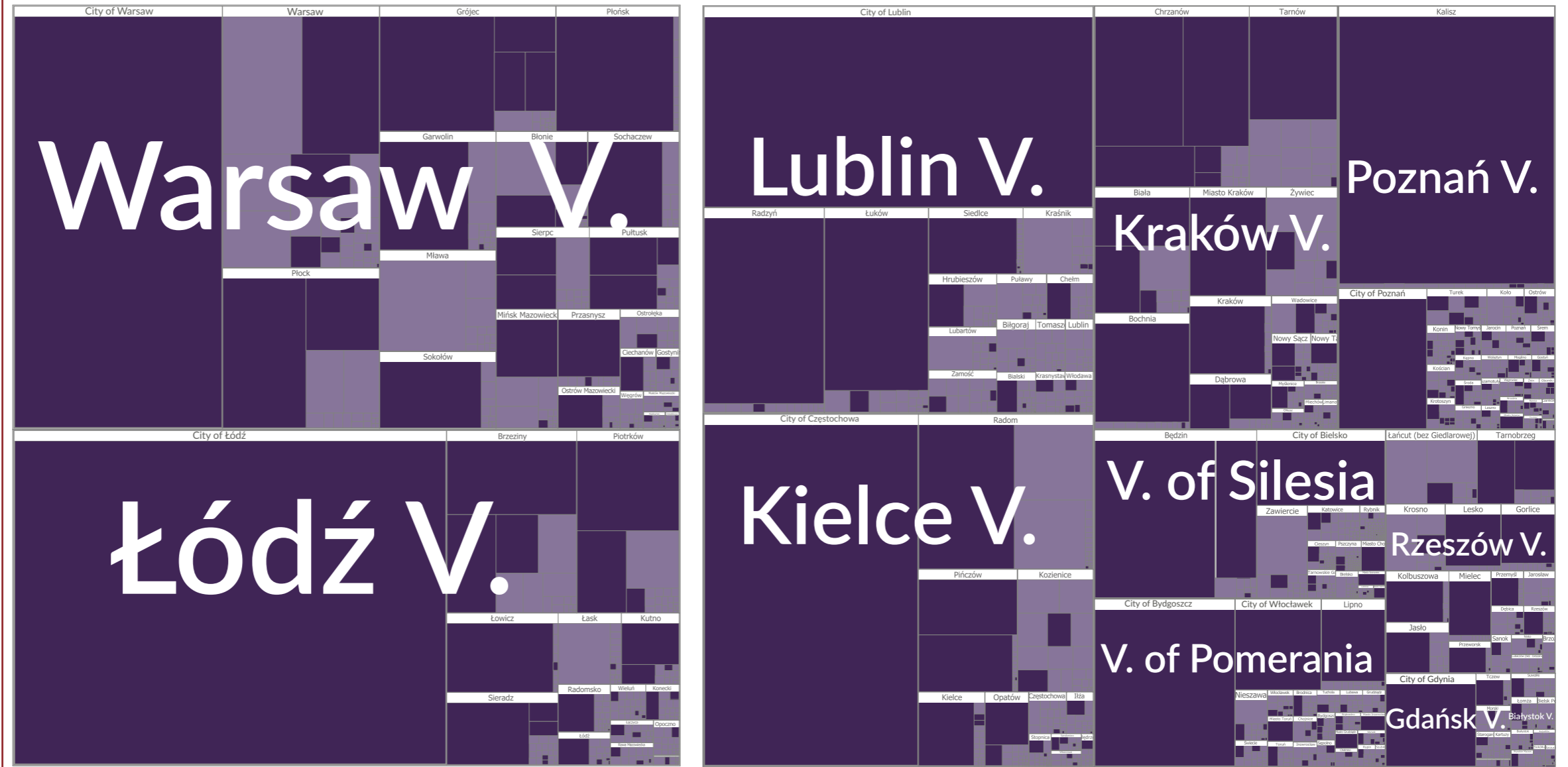


Photo 2.2.
A German police firing squad shooting a group of 52 Poles on Uzbornia hill in Bochnia, 18 December 1939 (Collections of Muzeum im. S. Fischera w Bochni, the local museum of Bochnia)

mass expulsions of the Polish inhabitants of Poland's western territories, which were incorporated in Germany. Those evicted were not allowed to take their possessions, which were plundered. That is why the death toll in the central powiats was significantly higher numerically than those for the western powiats. Some powiats, not necessarily the most densely populated ones, lost over half their population (Figure 2.6). Here are a few examples: Gdynia lost 48.8% of its inhabitants, Białystok lost 54.3%, and Warsaw lost 59.3%. Other powiats were severely though not as drastically affected by the policy pursued by German occupying forces; for instance the population loss for Lublin was 44.6%, 34.6% for Łódź, 33.3% for Częstochowa, 30.3% for Radom, and 26.9% for Kraków. There was substantial population loss also in smaller powiats, such as Koźienice (26.4%) or Grójec (26.7%).

Figure 2.7. Victims of the German occupation of Poland murdered in concentration camps and prisons in the Core Lands, for particular voivodeships and powiats

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.



- Urban gmina
- Rural gmina

Figure 2.8. Death toll of Polish citizens from the Core Lands deported to Germany for slave labour, for particular voivode-ships and powiats

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.



2.4. Social and professional distribution of Polish victims of the Second World War

It is difficult to make an accurate reconstruction of the social and professional distribution of those killed due to the fact that records of the victims the Germans killed in mass executions and those they sent to concentration camps is incomplete. Such data was only collected after the War, and the focus was mainly on highly skilled professionals. We know that the Polish educated class suffered the greatest loss, which was the outcome of deliberate German policy to eliminate the Polish “leadership class” (viz. the intelligentsia), which was perceived as the greatest threat because this group could organise anti-German resistance. Here, it was not only a question of armed resistance, underground military action, or acts of sabotage; the Germans wanted to eliminate

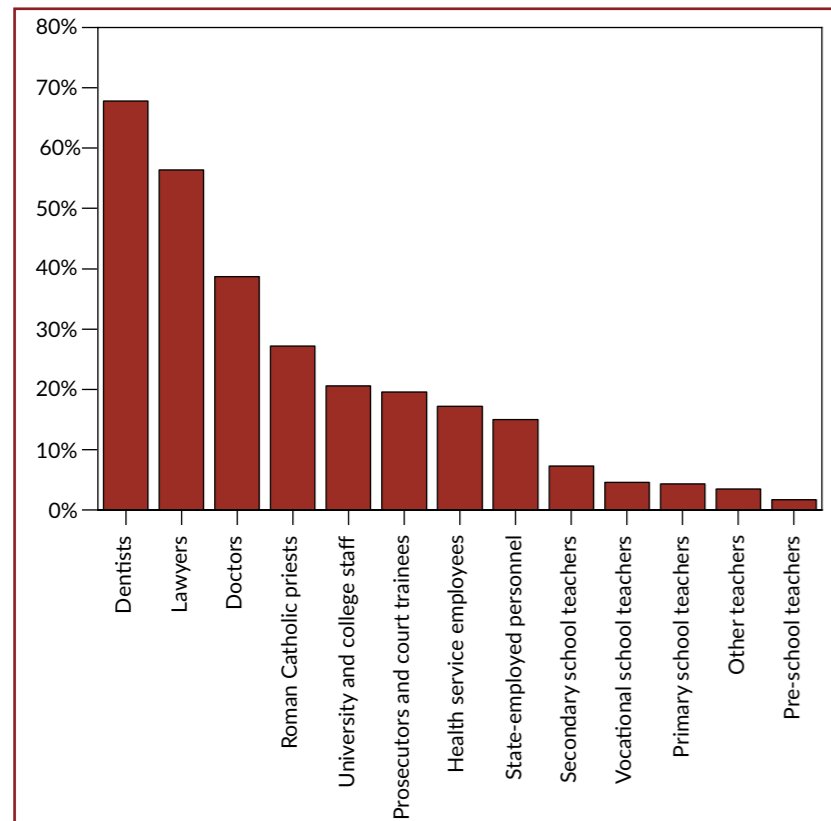


Figure 2.9. Percentage loss sustained by selected professional groups in Poland during the Second World War

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.

intellectual and cultural resistance. This was why they endeavoured to eliminate scientists and academics, teachers, artists, the clergy, social activists, in a nutshell – the elite of Polish society. The data in the BOW reports on the social distribution of those killed is selective, but it provides an insight into the vast scale of the loss suffered by Poland, which was deprived of a significant percentage of its intelligentsia.

Academic centres	Academic staff in 1937/38	Deaths	W %
Warsaw	1,789	387	21.6
Lwów	864	161	18.6
Kraków	669	130	19.4
Poznań	507	113	22.3
Wilno	413	46	11.1
Lublin	63	14	22.2
Other centres*	147	31	21.1
Total (no. of persons)	4,452	882	19.8
No. of full-time academic teaching appointments	2,460	882	35.8

* I have added an estimate for the staff of the Warsaw Academy of Physical Education and the Puławy Agricultural College, which were not considered in the data published by GUS.

Voivodeship	Teaching staff, 1937/38	Deaths, 1939–1945	%
Białystok	3,286	944	28.7
Kielce	7,934	778	9.8
Kraków	6,652	617	9.2
Lublin	5,946	751	12.6
Lwów	6,513	227	3.5
Łódź	7,356	917	12.5
Pomerania	6,244	1,391	22.3
Poznań	7,032	1,021	14.5
Silesia	5,162	624	12.1
Warsaw (City)	3,651	725	19.9
Warsaw	6,979	1,150	16.5
Other	21,395	517	2.4
Total	88,150	9,662	11.0

The professions which sustained the highest loss were dentists (67.8%), lawyers (56.4%), medical practitioners (38.7%), Roman Catholic priests (27.2%), university professors (20.5%), other mem-

Table 2.4. Polish academics killed during the occupation of Poland, 1939–1945. A comparison of deaths with the number of scholars employed in Polish universities and institutions of higher education in the 1937/38 academic year

Source: Walczak, Marian, *Ludzie nauki i nauczyciele polscy podczas II wojny światowej. Księga strat osobowych*, Warszawa: PTP.ZG; Radom: Instytut Technologii Eksploatacji, 1995, p. 814.

Table 2.5. Deaths of Polish teachers in Occupied Poland, 1939–1945, compared to employment figures for the 1937/38 school year

Source: Walczak, Marian, *Ludzie nauki i nauczyciele polscy podczas II wojny światowej. Księga strat osobowych*, Warszawa: PTP.ZG; Radom: Instytut Technologii Eksploatacji, 1995, p. 814.

bers of the legal profession (judges, prosecutors and court trainees, 19.6%), health service employees (17.2%), state-employed personnel (15.0%), and teachers from various types of schools including secondary schools (7.3%). The murder of these professionals was a cruel blow to Polish society, for it is virtually impossible to replace the loss of a doctor or a lawyer quickly. It takes many years to educate and train highly qualified staff for these professions. The loss of Poland's elite interrupted the natural process of self-propagation within the country's professional groups and later made it easier for the Communist system to set in and establish itself. Poland has still not fully managed to reconstruct its elite which Germany destroyed during the Second World War.

2.5. Indirect population loss

2.5.1 Germany's anti-Polish population policy

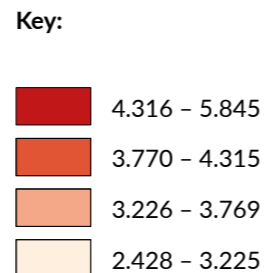
During the Second World War, Polish citizens suffered not only due to direct reprisals in the form of executions, mass murders or imprisonment in concentration camps. The German government wilfully and systematically pursued a policy designed to lead to the biological debilitation of the Polish nation and the total annihilation of the Jews. Germany applied its scientific advancement to achieve this purpose, not only in the production of modern weapons, but also in medicine, the principles of hygiene (or rather their complete disregard), and the principles of population control. The first measure Germany took in its campaign of genocide was to restrict access to food. The starvation rations it implemented were to weaken the population of Poland physically and put it at greater risk of epidemics. Food rations were very small, for the inhabitants both of the GG and the areas incorporated in Germany. Slave labourers from Poland also received rations which did not provide a calorie content high enough for health and survival.

Various administrative restrictions were imposed to limit the natural increase in the population of occupied Poland and lead to a fall in births and a rise in deaths. Restrictions were brought in to make it difficult for Poles to contract marriage; while those who were deported to Germany for slave labour were denied the right to marry at all. In 1943, the German minister for home

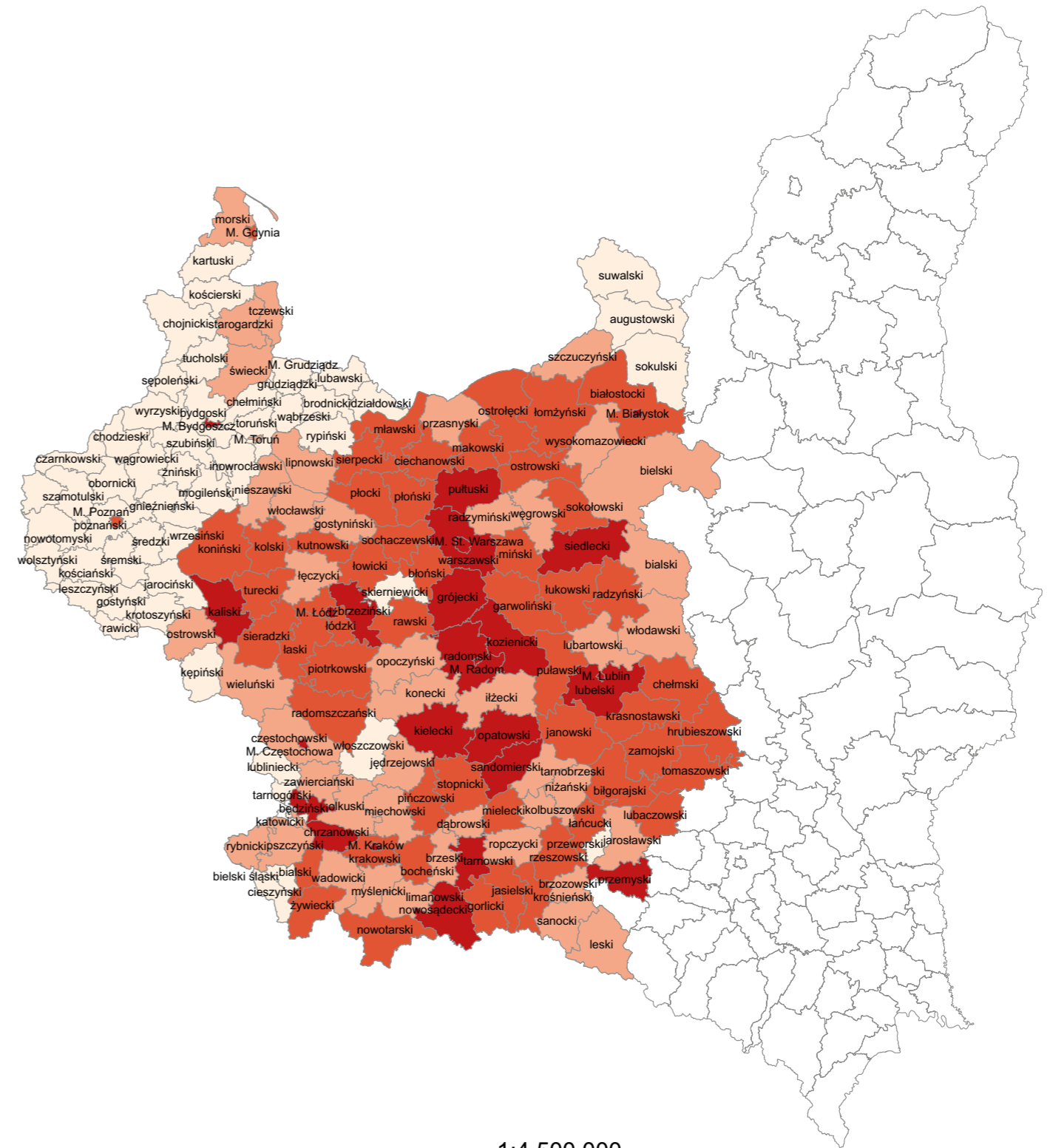
Map 2.4.
Mass murder of the population of the Republic of Poland perpetrated by Germans during the Second World War (data only for the Core Lands for individual powiats*)

* Smaller population losses in the western part of Poland were due to the fact that the population distribution of this region by religion differed from that of the GG and that there were mass deportations of Polish inhabitants from the incorporated territories.

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48
 Drafted by Konrad Wnęk.



logarithmic scale



1:4 500 000

affairs issued a provision for the annexed part of Poland raising the marriage age for men to 25, and 22 for women. In addition, before a registry office could issue a marriage licence to Poles, it had to ask the applicable *Arbeitsamt* [German employment office managing designation for slave labour] if it had any objections to the marriage. Arthur Greiser, the governor of Wartheland [part of annexed Poland], went even further and raised the marriage age to 28 for men and 25 for women. Not much later (10 January 1944), the German minister for home affairs brought in the same provisions for Poles throughout Germany. Polish women were allowed to have an abortion, and in fact were encouraged to do so, but abortion was prohibited for German women.⁷ All these regulations led to a fall in the birth rate, but not as much as the German authorities wanted. Hans Frank called the deportation of slave labourers to Germany a “barrier to the biological growth of the Polish population,” and he was quite right.⁸ Another indirect attempt to achieve such an effect was the decision to send young Poles to Germany for slave labour. Initially, this applied to the 16–25 age group, but later, entire families including children of 10 capable of working were deported, which reduced the age for slave labour down to 10. Table 2.4 shows that the number of deportees was a significant obstacle making it difficult for Poles to contract marriage and have children.

Table 2.6.
Slave labourers from occupied Poland working in Germany, 1941–1944

Date		Polish slave labourers
1941	January	798,101
1941	July	955,545
1942	January	1,085,500
1942	July	1,486,797
1943	January	1,689,907
1943	July	1,925,712
1944	January	1,970,169
1944	July	2,072,048
1944	September	2,125,117

Source: *Der Arbeitseinsatz im Deutschen Reich 1942–1943*; *Der Arbeitseinsatz im Großdeutschen Reich 1943–1944*. Calculations by Konrad Wnęk.

⁷ Pospieszalski, Karol M., *Polska pod niemieckim prawem 1939–1945 (ziemie zachodnie)*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Zachodniego, 1946, p. 174–175.

⁸ Martius, G., “Das Nürnberger Urteil vom 30 September / 1 Oktober 1946 in völkerrechtlicher Beziehung,” *Neue Justiz* 94 (1947).

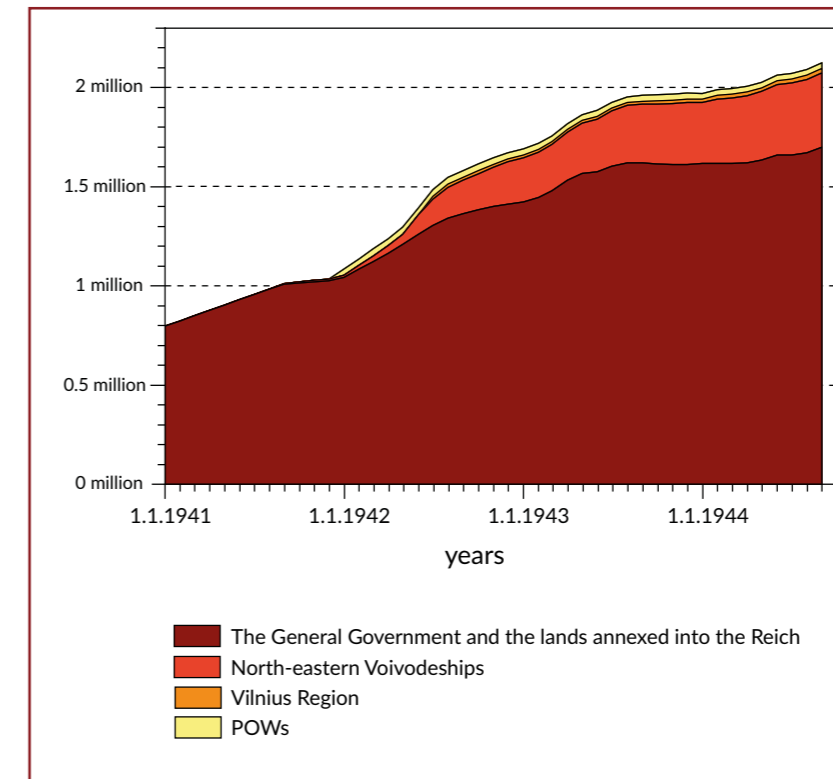


Figure 2.10.
Slave labourers from occupied Poland working in Germany, 1941–1944

Source: *Der Arbeitseinsatz im Deutschen Reich 1942–1943*; *Der Arbeitseinsatz im Großdeutschen Reich 1943–1944*. Calculations by Konrad Wnęk.

The Germans realised that Polish women and young girls were a demographic threat to the “master race.” For example, the governor of Łódź wrote of the advantages of deporting women to Germany: “the aim of these measures is to curtail illegal procreation by racially inferior women and girls by barracking them all together during their time in the Old Reich.”⁹

Another issue is that many Polish women who were slave labourers were forced to have an abortion, and if they refused and gave birth to a child in Germany, it was taken away from them. If the “National-Socialist Welfare” institution deemed the child sufficiently “Aryan,” it was given to a German family to bring up. Children who were declared “subhuman” were placed in special nurseries where most died of hunger, disease, or lack of hygiene. **Infant mortality for Polish babies in Germany was 50%**, and it was artificially induced. Today, it is difficult to estimate the number of Polish children killed in this fully premeditated way, but historians tend to estimate the figure at tens of thousands.¹⁰

⁹ Łuczak, Czesław, *Dyskryminacja Polaków w Wielkopolsce w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej. Wybór źródeł*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1966, p. 220.

¹⁰ Łuczak, Czesław, *Polscy robotnicy przymusowi w Trzeciej Rzeszy podczas II wojny światowej*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1974, p. 189.

2.5.2. A falling birth rate and rising mortality

The demographic policy Germany implemented for the Polish population of occupied Poland led to a fall in the number of births (by as much as 22% in 1943 compared to 1938). This data is for the inhabitants of Poland not including the Jews, who were crowded in ghettos, where the mortality rate was very high, and the fall in birth rate even higher. Table 2.5 presents an overview of the phenomenon.

Table 2.7.
Estimate of the scope of extermination and abduction of Polish children during the Second World War (only Core Lands)

Year of birth	Total number of births in Poland ^a	Births in the Core Lands ^b	Births minus deaths of natural causes ^c	Number of Jewish children murdered ^d	Number of Polish children abducted ^e	Children's deaths due to very high mortality ^f	Number of Polish children murdered ^g
1944	935,767	556,482	470,115	-	1,435	104,270	35,755
1943	937, 217	483, 031	395, 940	1,187	2,392	9,750	75,710
1942	935, 119	519,023	419,697	8,393	3,827	9,750	80,223
1941	922,131	536,187	429,973	17, 198	8,133	9,750	59,595
1940	894,137	549, 449	438, 048	26,282	9,569	9,750	41,471
1939	861, 857	558,087	442,931	35,434	5,741	2,398	33,717
1938	849,900	561,576	444, 004	44,400	10,526	2,398	8,702
1937	856,000	565,607	445,670	44,567	11,004	2, 398	8, 923
1936	892,300	589,592	463,124	46,312	8,133	2,398	14,946
1935	876,600	579,218	453,655	45,365	11,483	2,398	7,639
1934	881, 600	582,522	455,054	45, 505	12,440	1,245	8,412
1933	868,700	573,998	447,270	44,727	13, 875	1,245	1,204
1932	935,000	617,806	480,202	48, 020	16,746	1,245	17,262
1931	964,500	637,299	494,059	49,405	18,181	1,245	21,545
1930	1,022,800	675,821	522,450	52,245	22,488	1,245	51,676
1929	994,100	656,857	506,213	50,621	13,875	2,010	65,638
1928	990,900	654,742	502,815	50,281	11,004	2,010	106,954?
1927	958,700	633,466	484 576	48,457	9,569	2,010	132,839?
1926	989,100	653,553	497,791	49,779	5,741	2,010	191,958?
Total	17,566, 428	11,184,316	8,793,587	708,178	196,162	169,525	964,169?

Key and source

^a *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1939*, Warszawa, 1939; years for the 1939–1944 period estimated using a predictive algorithm based on the 1921–1938 series.

^b Births only for the Core Lands, minus a fall calculated in Szulc, Stefan, "Urodzenia w Polsce w czasie wojny," *Problemy*

1–2 (1946), p. 63, minus Jewish births.

^c Births minus deaths of natural causes according to 1931/32 life tables.

^d The number of Jewish children was estimated at one-tenth of all births, and the generally accepted rate of extermination in the ghettos in 1940–1944.

^e The number of children abducted during various Germanisation drives, estimated by Hrabar at around 200 thousand. Age distribution obtained from questionnaires on abducted children. Data preserved in the AAN questionnaires.

^f Deaths caused by artificially increased mortality, mainly as a result of disease and malnutrition.

^g This figure was the difference between the number of children recorded in the school census of June 1945 and those who died of the aforementioned causes. Deaths for the oldest age groups may be inflated due to the specific circumstances in which this data was collected.

Product	German ration	Polish ration
potatoes	unlimited	90
bread	87.6 kg	57.4 kg
bread rolls	20.4 kg	∅
flour	12.0 kg	4.7 kg
noodles and cereals	12.0 kg	∅
hardtack	2.4 kg	∅
marmalade	9.6 kg	2.9 kg
sugar	12.8 kg	2.5 kg
eggs	176.0 items	25.0 items
butter	13.0 kg	∅
cheese	16.0 kg	∅
bacon	2.6 kg	∅
meat	38.4 kg	4.1 kg

Table 2.8.
Annual food rations for Poles and Germans in the GG in 1942 (kg or number of items)

Source: Madajczyk, Czesław, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, vol. 2, Warszawa: PWN, 1970, p. 73.
∅ – no possibility of legal purchase

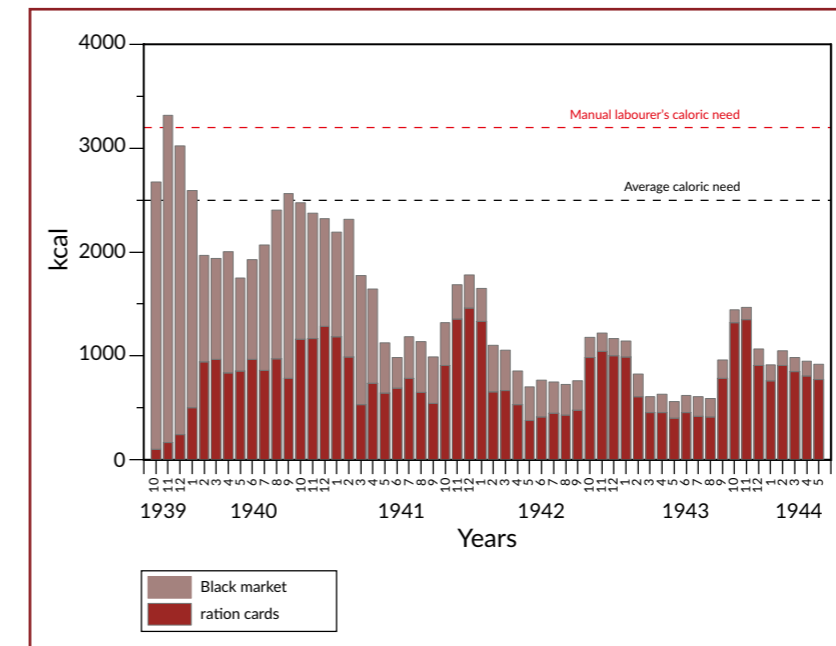


Figure 2.11.
Official food rations and food obtained on the black market in Warsaw, 1939–1944

Source: Madajczyk, Czesław, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, vol. 2, Warszawa: PWN, p. 72.

One of the measures the Germans applied to increase the death rate was the food ration policy for the Polish and Jewish population. Official food rations were below the minimum for survival, and Poles could not buy many food products at all. This applied to vegetables, milk, butter and cheese, and these restrictions were targeted primarily at weakening young children and increasing their mortality. Table 2.6 presents annual official food rations in the GG in 1942, showing quantities far below the caloric needs of a manual labourer.

Poles tried to supplement their rations on the black market which was booming under German occupation (Figure 2.10). This was possible in the initial period of the War, but as of mid-1942, these reserves were exhausted as a result of the more and more brutal German policy against the black market in farm produce and heavier restrictions on access to food. Jews were in an even worse situation. Their rations were only half of the non-German rations, which were starvation rations anyway.

2.5.3. Children abducted to Germany for Germanisation and enforced migration

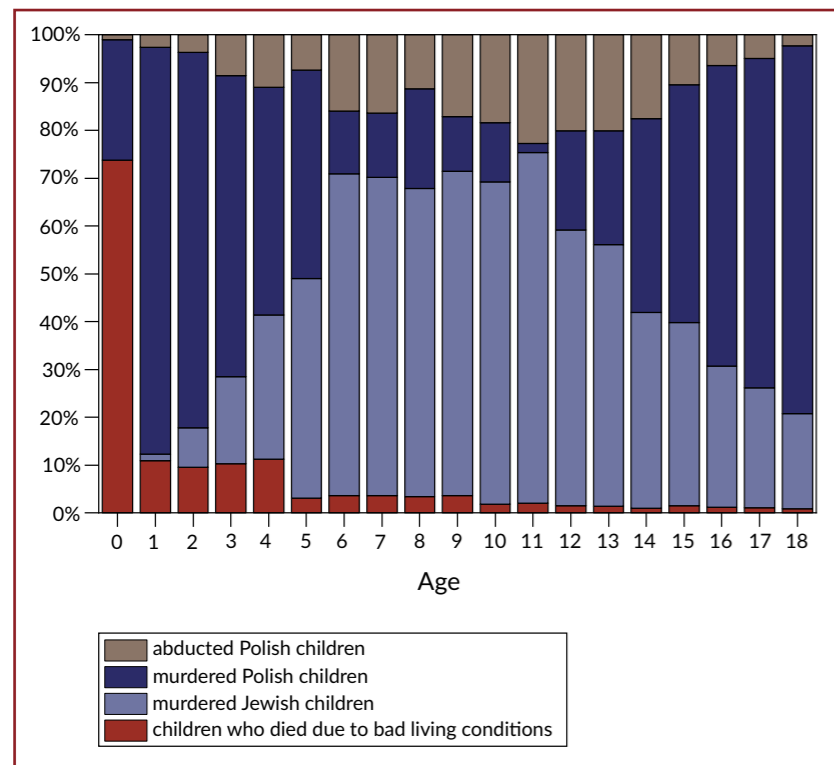


Figure 2.12 The extermination of the young generation in the Core Lands

Source: Table 2.5.



Photo 2.3.

To obtain “racially valuable material,” the German authorities planned and carried out an operation to abduct and Germanise Polish children. They did this on the grounds of their racist ideology and intention to recover “every drop of German blood,” and instigated by the growing demographic costs of the War. The people of Poland as a whole were not aware of the massive scale of this operation until 1943, when news of the Zamość deportations spread. The germs of this policy may be observed already in 1939, when Himmler received a programme drafted by the Nazi Rassenpolitisches Amt (Office of Racial Policy) on how to treat the Polish inhabitants of the former Polish territories from the racial point of view. One of its recommendations was that “racially valuable” children, instead of being “resettled,” should be sent to the Old Reich (viz. Germany proper), to be Germanised and brought up in educational institutions or vetted German families. The abducted children were to be under 8 or 9, which was considered the best age group for successful Germanisation.¹¹ In practice, many of the abducted children were older (see Figure 2.12). A variety of institutions and associations, as well as the German judicial authorities were used to carry out the operation. The best known was the Lebensborn association, which handled the placement of “ra-

Czesława Kwoka (1928–1943), one of thousands of Polish children the Germans deported from the Zamość region. The Germans sent her to Auschwitz. She was 14 when one of the German SS doctors murdered her with a phenol injection (Photo by Wilhelm Brasse. Collections of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)

Umwandererzentralstelle – was a German institution appointed to deport Poles from areas annexed by Germany. It was also responsible for setting up provisional camps to detain Poles and identify and classify “racially valuable individuals.” In 1942, Germany established a branch of this institution in Lublin to handle the deportation of the Polish inhabitants of the Zamość area. It used violence to carry out the deportations and abduct children. In the filtration camps, children were separated from their parents and the “racially valuable” ones were abducted. The rest were kept in dreadful conditions and many were starved to death. Czesława Kwoka was one of the victims of these deportations. She was murdered in Auschwitz in 1943.

¹¹ Hrabar, Roman, *Hitlerowski rabunek dzieci polskich. Urowadzanie i germanizowanie dzieci polskich w latach 1939–1945*, Katowice: „Śląsk” 1960, p. 28.

Age	Double orphans Orphan	Half-orphans	Abandoned	Partly abandoned	With both parents
Under 1	0.34	6.51	0.19	5.54	87.42
1	0.46	7.53	0.32	6.76	84.92
2	0.60	8.78	0.40	7.38	82.84
3	0.74	9.34	0.43	7.57	81.93
4	0.85	10.01	0.45	7.66	81.04
5	1.00	10.81	0.47	7.97	79.75
6	1.16	11.53	0.52	7.65	79.14
7	1.31	12.30	0.55	7.34	78.50
8	1.46	13.16	0.51	7.03	77.85
9	1.63	14.05	0.58	6.70	77.05
10	1.73	14.62	0.56	6.49	76.60
11	1.94	15.84	0.56	6.09	75.56
12	2.09	16.44	0.60	5.84	75.02
13	2.22	17.36	0.58	5.46	74.37
14	2.42	18.66	0.63	5.07	73.22
15	2.51	19.38	0.66	4.69	72.76
16	2.72	20.58	0.64	4.11	71.94
17	3.00	21.41	0.70	3.73	71.16
18	3.12	22.27	0.75	3.33	70.54

Table 2.9. Percentage of orphans and abandoned children in Poland in 1945 by age

Source: Wojtyniak, Józef; and Helena Radlińska, *Sieroctwo, zasięg*.

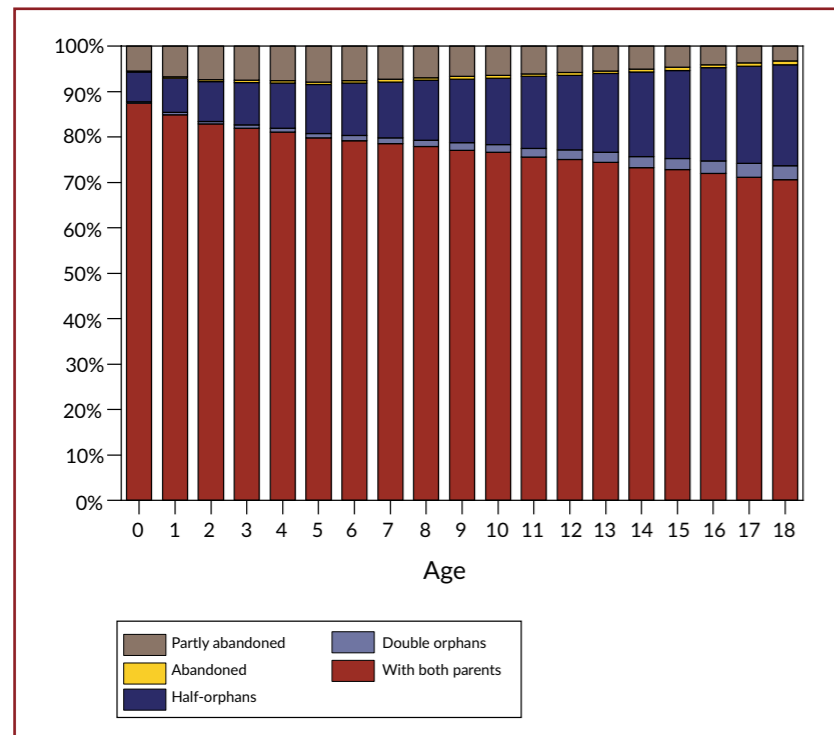


Figure 2.13. Orphaned and abandoned Polish children by age - according to the school census of June 1945 (Core Lands)

Source: Table 2.7.

Photo 2.4.

Information card for a Polish child "evacuee." The reverse has entries such as "political views" and "racial group." Source: AAN, Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej.

cially valuable" children in foster families and welfare homes. Lebensborn forged adoption documents and birth certificates and changed the children's names and surnames. Unfortunately, they carried this out extremely efficiently, so that only 15–20% of the 200 thousand abducted Polish children were ever found and retrieved. German courts deprived Poles of their children by taking away their parental rights and transferring them to German institutions or German nationals. If a couple in which one of the spouses was German and the other was Polish divorced, the German courts always granted custody of the children to the German partner, usually acting on the grounds that the children were being brought up as Poles. In other cases, German courts found other untrustworthy pretexts, for example, the Polish parents were declared insane, and the Jugendamt, the official German foster institution, would be appointed as the children's guardian. Other institutions, such as Heimschule, Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, Deutsche Heimschulen, Umwanderer Zentralstelle and Deutsche Arbeitsfront, helped in this operation.

Deutsche Arbeitsfront – was a German organisation founded on 10 May 1933 after the Free Trade Unions had been disbanded and their property and assets handed over to Deutsche Arbeitsfront. In 1934, it took control of all the professional and workers' associations. It was the largest organisation affiliated to the Nazi Party and had a membership of about 22 million.

Another of the War's outcomes was the mass scale of Polish children who had lost one or both of their parents. Many of even the youngest children were orphans (only 81% to 87% in the under 1– 4 age group still had both parents); the older the children, the greater the number of orphans. Only 70–75% of adolescents still had both parents, most had lost one parent. However, the percentage of double orphans was 2–3%, much higher than what it had been during peacetime.

2.6. After-effects for Poland up to 2020 due to the demographic potential lost as a result of the Second World War

Poland lost inhabitants not only owing to the murder of its citizens during the Second World War, but there were also far-reaching after-effects in the form of a reduced demographic potential. After German occupation, fewer marriages were contracted and fewer children were born. This was due to the fall in Poland's population after 1945. The shortfall between Poland's demographic projection (simulation of population growth based on input data) and the actual figures for 1950 amounts to 12.83 million persons. Thus, as a result of the number of Polish citizens who were murdered, as well as of the shift of Poland's borders and mass migration, the country's base population fell. It took Poland over 50 years to make up for these losses, and it was not until around 2000 that its population reached a similar figure to what it would have been in 1950 if it had not been for the Second World War.

The shortfall was most evident in the number of births. 41.616 million children were born in Poland in 1946–2020, whereas, according to the demographic forecast, the number of births should have been 52.061 million, i.e. 10.445 million more than the actual figure. This was due to three basic reasons: the murder of the cohort of potential parents who could have had children during and after the War, a smaller population of women born between

Deutsche Heimschulen - German boarding schools in the Third Reich.

The **Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle** (VoMi) was a German institution which implemented the migration policy for the concentration of Volksdeutsche communities, i.e. persons with a German ethnic background living beyond the territory of Germany. VoMi arranged transportation and housing for Volksdeutsche Germans resettled from German-occupied territories in the East to the Polish territories annexed and incorporated in Germany. In general, Volksdeutsche migrants were allocated accommodation and farmland belonging to Polish citizens who were evicted and forcibly resettled. The main areas of Volksdeutsche resettlement were "Wartheland" (i.e. Western Poland) and Pomerania. In June 1941 VoMi was put under the authority of Heinrich Himmler, the Reichsführer SS.

Right: Photo 2.5. Page from a list of missing children from the Voivodeship of Silesia and the Dąbrowa Basin. Source: AAN, Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej [Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare]

[Handwritten entry] Office of the Voivodeship of Silesia and the Dąbrowa Basin, Social Welfare Department, Katowice. Received on 1 Nov. 1945.

List 2.

[Typescript]
List of children from the territory of the Voivodeship of Silesia and the Dąbrowa Basin abducted to Germany for Germanisation, up to January 1945.

Sosnowiec.

Entry no. 1. Child's name and surname: Wiesława Krzemieńska, half-orphan (no photograph). Date and place of birth: 26 May 1924, Sosnowiec. Parents' names and current address: Franciszek and Maria, Polish citizens, Roman Catholics; [address] Sosnowiec, Targowa 9. Remarks: [Franciszek, the father] died on 6 December 1944 in Gusen [concentration camp]. Child's place of residence: Trampe über Eberswalde, Graf V. O. D. Schulenburg Schloss-Trampe. Last heard of in the spring of 1944. Snatched by the Germans while on her way to school from ul. Stara 7. Search proceedings instigated by the mother.

Entry no. 2. Child's name and surname: Władysław Zapiór, half-orphan (has a scar near the left ear and speech problems). Photo of child with his mother; he should recognise her. Date and place of birth 25 June 1935, Sosnowiec. Parents' names and current address: Piotr and Michalina, Polish citizens, Roman Catholics; [address] Sosnowiec, ul. Floriańska 36. Remarks: [Michalina, the mother] died in 1942 in Sosnowiec. Child's place of residence unknown. No news. Three Gestapo

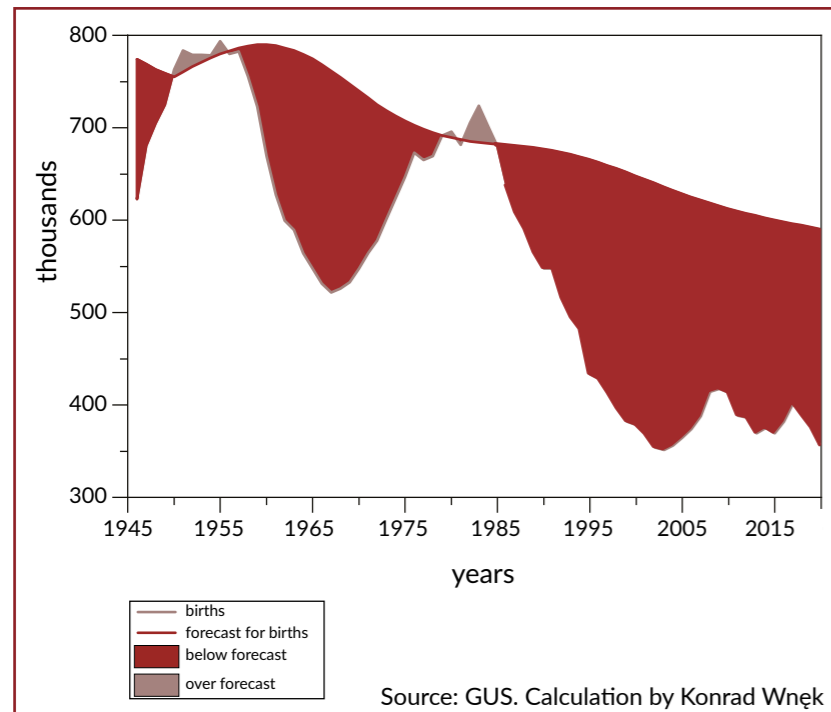
Lp. Imię i nazwisko dziecka	Data urodzenia	Imiona rodziców obecny adres	U w a g i
1. <u>Wiesława Krzemieńska</u> pół-sierota, /fotografii brak/	26.5.1924 r. w Sosnowcu	Franciszek Maria obym. polscy rzym.kat. Sosnowiec, Targowa 9	zmarł 6.12.1944 r. w Gusen Miejsce pobytu dziecka: Trampe über Eberswalde, Graf V.O.D.Schulenburg Schloss-Trampe Czatelnia wiadomości niema 1.44 r. Porwana przez Niemców w drodze do szkoły, ul. Stara 7. Poszukuje matka.
2. <u>Władysław Zapiór</u> pół-sierota /na bliższe kole lewego ucha i trudną wymowę/	25.6.1935 r. w Sosnowcu	Piotr Michalina obym. polscy rz.kat. Sosnowiec, ul. Floriańska 36	zmarł 1.44 r. w Sosnowcu Miejsce pobytu dziecka nieznane Wiadomości nie były odebrane z domu o g. 4.30 rano 19.5.43r przez 3 gestapowców Wzrost 110 cm, ciężyła 18 kg, oczy niebieskie, włosy ciemne, przesyła ul. Żytnia 7, ojciec pobito. Poszukuje ojciec.
3. <u>Gertruda Helena Parkitna</u> o ojcu brak danych. fotografii dziecka brak.	23.3.1943 r. w Koszęcinie	Jan Parkitna obym. polska mat. w Koszęcinie ul. Kozielska.	odebrano dziecko w Koszęcinie 19.5.43 r. niestety NSV do Lubliniec. Wiadomości nie były Miejsce pobytu od 20.3.44 r. w NSV - Spüllingsheim w Cieszynie. Poszukuje matka.

men abducted him from the family home at 4.30 a.m. on 19 May 1943, and subsequently he was snatched from his father's arms in the welfare home on ul. Żytnia; the father was beaten up. Search proceedings instigated by the father.

Koszęcin, Entry no. 3. Child's name and surname: Gertruda Helena Parkitna. No information on father. No photograph of child. Date and place of birth: 23 March 1943, Koszęcin.

Parents' names and current address: Anna Parkitna, Polish citizen, Koszęcin, ul. Kozielska. Remarks: The child was abducted in August 1943 by an NSV [Nazionalsozialistische Volkswohlfart - National Socialist People's Welfare] nurse and taken to Lubliniec. No news. Child's place of residence as of 28 March 1944: NS Säu[g]lingsheim [National Socialist Home for Infants] in Cieszyn. Search proceedings instigated by the mother.

Figure 2.14.
Births in Poland, 1946–2020, based on empirical data and demographic projection



1940–1945, and the loss of Polish citizens who found themselves beyond the country's borders in 1945. Even if we were to assume that most of this shortfall was caused by migration, Germany would still be accountable for 40.5% of the lost births, viz. 4.230 million individuals who were never born but could have been born in Poland, worked in Poland and later started families of their own if it had not been for Germany's invasion and reign of terror in Poland in 1939–1945. If it had not been for German aggression, the synergy effect on Poland's economy would have been even greater.

This estimate should be supplemented with a figure for children who would have been born in Poland in 1940–1944 if it had not been for the outbreak of the Second World War. Taking Stefan Szulc's rather optimistic indexes for the drop in number of births in particular years under German occupation, we get the results presented in Table 2.8.

Thus, another 1.029 million should be added on for lost births in 1940–1944 to the 3.964 million not born in 1946–2020. Hence, we arrive at a figure of 5.259 million who were not born in Poland within its 1939 borders due to German aggression.

Photo 2.6.
Official notice on the search for missing children abducted by the Germans from Łódź. (August 1945) (AAN, Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej [Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare])

List of children the Germans abducted from Polish families for Germanisation

To all the inhabitants of the City of Łódź

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has ordered the compilation of a list of all the missing children in the under 1 – 16 age group abducted by the Germans from Polish families and deported to Germany to be Germanised. The list will provide the grounds for a project to search for the missing children on German territory and their return to Poland. From 20 to 31 August 1945 the [Łódź] Social Welfare Department at ul. Zawadzka 11 will compile the list of children missing from the City of Łódź. We hereby call parents, relatives, acquaintances, Domestic Committees, proprietors and administrators of residential properties, and all persons who can provide information about children abducted from Polish families to report within the designated period to one of the following centres for the registration of forcibly Germanised children and fill in a registration form.

The registration form contains the following questions:

1. a) The child's name and surname prior to the abduction.
b) The child's name and surname given by the Germans.
2. a) The child's address prior to the abduction.
b) The child's address after the abduction.

3. The child's date and place of birth.
4. a) The names of the child's parents.
b) Are the parents still alive?
c) The parents' citizenship.
d) What happened to the parents when the Germans abducted the child?
e) The parents' current address.
5. Name and surname, citizenship, and address of the child's guardian from whom it was abducted.
6. Date of the abduction.
7. Circumstances of the abduction.
8. Last news of the child.
9. Name and surname, citizenship, and address of the person to whom the child is to be returned (parents, siblings, relatives, guardians, welfare institution etc.).
10. List of enclosed documents (the child's photograph, letters, summonses and/or decisions issued by the German occupying authorities, statements made by third parties etc.).

This list does not apply to young people sent to Germany for [slave] labour by the *Arbeitsamt* [German employment agency].

List of registration centres for forcibly Germanised children

1. Social Welfare Department, ul. Zawadzka 11
2. Social Welfare Department, ul. Sędziowska 14
3. Social Welfare Department, ul. Sienkiewicza 102
4. Social Welfare Department, ul. Rzgowska 145
5. Municipal Children's Home, ul. Przędzalniana 66
6. Municipal Children's Home, ul. Aleksandrowska 153
7. Municipal Children's Home, ul. Kopernika 36
8. Municipal Children's Home, ul. Pabianicka 65
9. Municipal Children's Home, ul. Bednarska 15
10. Municipal Old People's Home, ul. Kątna 10
11. Municipal Working Men's Welfare Centre, ul. 28 Pułku Strzel. Kan. 32

SPIS DZIECI
zabranych przez Niemców z rodzin polskich w celu germanizacji

Do wszystkich mieszkańców miasta Łodzi

Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej zarządziło spis wszystkich dzieci w wieku od 0 do 16 lat, zabranych przez Niemców z rodzin polskich i wywiezionych do Niemcy w celu germanizacji.
Spis stanowi podstawę do prac związanych z pozabawieniem tych dzieci na terenie niemieckim i ich powrotem do kraju.
Na terenie miasta Łodzi spis przeprowadza Wydział Opieki Społecznej ul. Zawadzka 11 – w czasie

od dnia 20 do dnia 31 sierpnia 1945 r.

Wzywa się rodziców, krewnych, znajomych, Komitety Domowe, właścicieli, i administratorów domów oraz wszystkie osoby, które mogą posiadać wiadomości o fakcie zabrania dzieci z rodzin polskich w celach germanizacji lub o losie tych dzieci, do ogłoszenia się w czasie trwania spisu do jednego z niżej podanych ośrodków rejestracji dzieci przymusowo niemieckich, celem wypełnienia karty spisowej.

Karta spisowa zawiera:

1. a) Nazwisko i imięna dziecka (przed wywiezieniem),
b) Nazwisko i imięna dziecka (nadane przez Niemców);
2. a) Adres dziecka (przed wywiezieniem),
b) Adres dziecka (po wywiezieniu);
3. Data i miejsce urodzenia dziecka;
4. a) Imiona rodziców dziecka,
b) Czy rodzice dziecka żyją?
c) Przynależność państwowa rodziców dziecka,
d) Co się stało z rodzicami w chwili zabrania dziecka przez Niemców?
e) Obecny adres rodziców dziecka;
5. Nazwisko i imię, przynależność państwowa i adres opiekuna, od którego dziecka zostało zabrane;
6. Data zabrania dziecka;
7. Okoliczności towarzyszące zabraniu dziecka;
8. Ostatnie wiadomości o dziecku;
9. Kogo dziecko wcieli (rodzice, krewni, opiekunowie, zakład) podaj nazwisko i imię, przynależność państwową i adres;
10. Spis doręczonych dowodów: (fotografie dziecka, listy, wezwania i orzeczenia sądownicze, świadectwa osób trzecich i t. p.).

Spis nie obejmuje młodzieży wysłanej przez niemieckie służby pracy do robot.

Wykaz ośrodków rejestracji dzieci przymusowo niemieckich

1. Wydział Opieki Społecznej	ul. Zawadzka 11
2. Ośrodek Opieki Społecznej	ul. Sędziowska 14
3. " "	ul. Sienkiewicza 102
4. " "	ul. Rzgowska 145
5. Miejski Dom Dziecka	ul. Przędzalniana 66
6. " "	ul. Aleksandrowska 153
7. " "	ul. Kątna 10
8. " "	ul. Pabianicka 65
9. " "	ul. Bednarska 15
10. Miejski Dom Starców	ul. Kątna 10
11. Miejski Dom Pracy	ul. 28 Pułku Strzel. Kan. 32

Ośrodki rejestracji dzieci przymusowo niemieckich czynne będą w czasie trwania spisu od godziny 8-mej do 15-mej.

Łódź, dnia 10 sierpnia 1945 r.

Wiceprezydent Miasta
(-) Eugeniusz Ajnenkiel

The centres for the registration of forcibly Germanised children will be open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the days designated for the compilation of the list. Łódź, 10 August 1945

(-) Eugeniusz Ajnenkiel
Deputy Mayor of the City of Łódź

Year	Forecast of birth estimate, 1940–1944	Loss of births	Estimated no. of actual births	% fall in no. of births
1940	894,137	679,920	214,217	24.0
1941	922,131	662,922	259,209	28.1
1942	935,119	713,916	221,203	23.7
1943	937,217	747,912	189,305	20.2
1944	935,767	790,407	145,360	15.5
TOTAL				1,029,294

Table 2.10.
Estimated fall in the number of births in Poland, 1940–1944

Source: Szu'c, Stefan, "Urodzenia w Polsce w czasie wojny," *Problemy* 1–2 (1946), p. 62–63

2.7. Injuries, disability, and serious illness sustained as a result of the German occupation of Poland

Another of Poland's post-war social and demographic problems, alongside the after-effects of the mass murder of its citizens, were the injuries and diseases sustained by its inhabitants, caused by five years of German occupation. Many people were seriously injured or contracted incurable diseases. The most common disease was tuberculosis, which reaped a grim harvest due to the permanent malnutrition of large groups and hard labour, often debilitating and beyond human endurance. Under German occupation, the number of tuberculosis cases in the GG went up by 50%. Another widespread disease was typhus, caused mainly by hunger and poor sanitary conditions. Data collected by BOW indicate the mass incidence of physical injuries that either led to permanent disability or cut short the injured person's life. 217,369 cases of severe injury were recorded in the Core Lands alone. In general, the victims were invalids who needed assistance and rehabilitation which was very difficult to provide in the conditions of a country grappling with the problems of post-war restoration. In addition, there were 151,834 registered cases of patients suffering from chronic diseases contracted as a direct result of the War and German occupation. Over a million were suffering from tuberculosis. Psychiatric disorders were another significant prob-

lem: 8,801 victims were left with a permanent mental condition, and 29,634 were diagnosed with severe mental impairment. The usual cause of these effects were the conditions prevailing in concentration camps and prisons. Many survivors committed suicide in the post-war period because incarceration in a concentration camp left them with mental trauma and unable to adjust to life in a normal world.

Voivodeship	Serious bodily injuries	Seriously ill	Serious bodily injuries (%)	Seriously ill (%)
Białystok	2,269	1,731	1.04	1.14
Gdańsk	1,214	2,690	0.56	1.77
Kielce	4,421	5,291	2.03	3.48
Kraków	9,934	13,309	4.57	8.77
Lublin	5,686	7,154	2.62	4.71
Łódź	12,788	17,850	5.88	11.76
Pomerania	8,921	32,479	4.10	21.39
Poznań	10,717	18,013	4.93	11.86
Rzeszów	6,944	6,629	3.19	4.37
Silesia	4,017	9,057	1.85	5.97
Warsaw	150,458	37,631	69.22	24.78
TOTAL	217,369	151,834	100.00	100.00

Table 2.11.
Victims of serious bodily injuries and serious diseases contracted as a result of the German occupation of Poland (data only for the Core Lands)

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 2/291/0/48.

As in other cases, the largest number of victims who suffered serious damage to their health was recorded in the Voivodeship of Warsaw – 150,458, over 69% of all whose health was impaired. In other voivodeships, cases of serious injury were not so frequent, but usually reached a few percent, and this still translated into thousands of individuals who had Germany to thank for the deterioration of their health. Incurable diseases caused by Germany's occupation policy affected the people of the Voivodeship of Warsaw most of all (37,631 cases, 25% of the total), followed by the Voivodeship of Pomerania (32,479 cases, 21%), the Voivodeship of Poznań (18,013, 12%) and the Voivodeship of Łódź (17,850, 12%).

The number of invalids in Poland's post-war population amounted to about 590 thousand. These individuals could not take up a job, and many of them needed to be in permanent care.

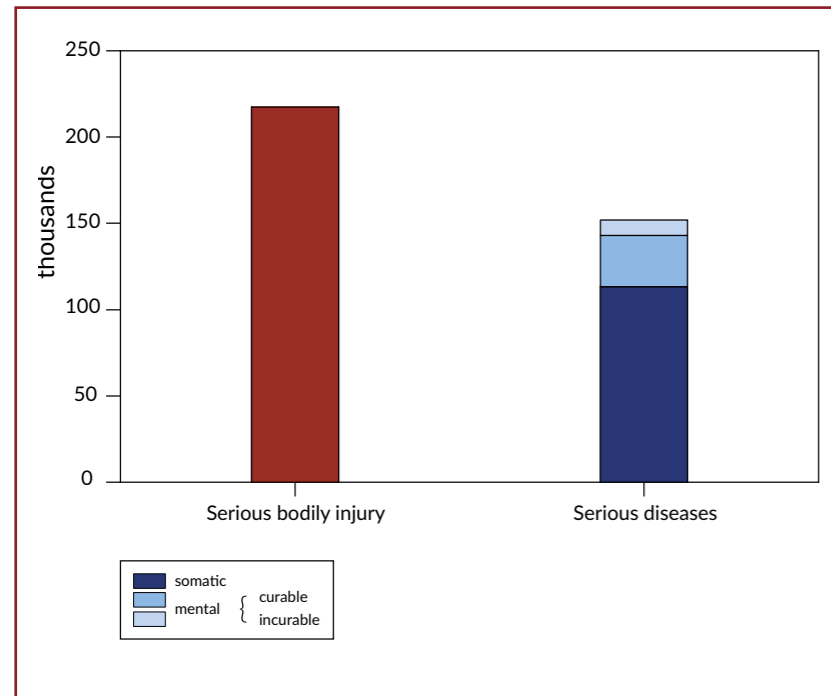


Figure 2.15. Severe bodily injuries, serious illness, and mental disorders caused by the War and German occupation

Source: Table 2.9.

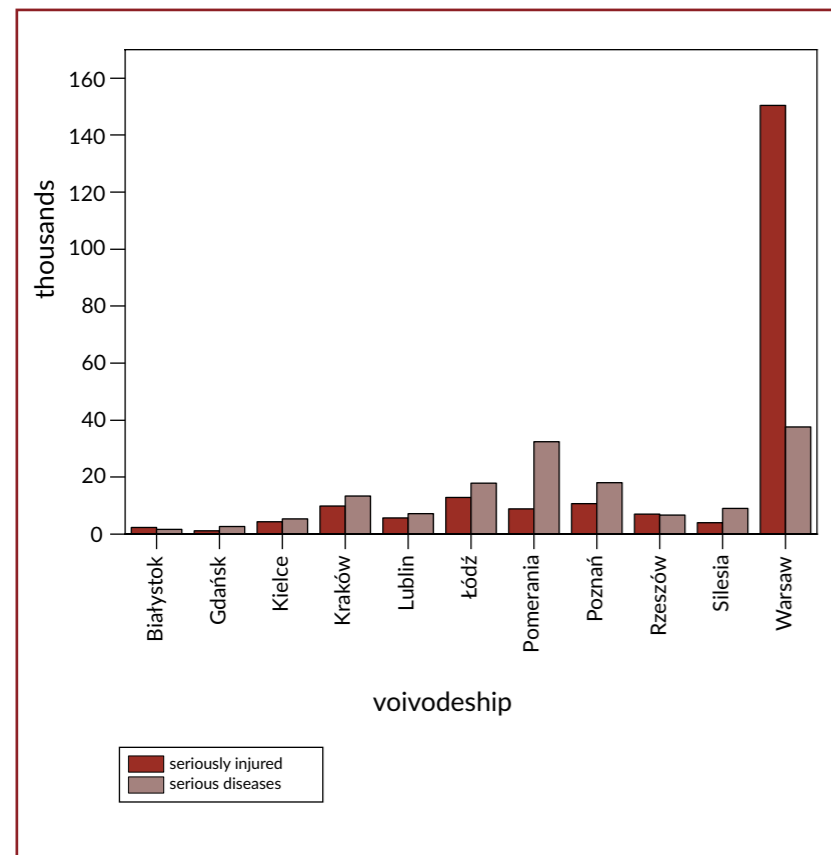


Figure 2.16. Serious bodily injuries and serious illnesses caused by the War and German occupation, by voivodeship

Source: Table 2.9.

2.8 Summary

Poland suffered a huge population loss during the Second World War as a result of Germany's deliberate and consistent policy to devastate the people of Poland biologically and thus, acquire *Lebensraum* ("more space to live") in the east for Germans. As an outcome of Germany's policy, 5,219,053 Polish citizens were murdered, and by the end of the War, the Polish population had fallen about 11.4 million. 80% of the victims of extermination had lived in cities, and 20% had lived in rural areas. The Polish intelligentsia and anybody who could be considered to belong to the "class of leaders," such as social activists, teachers, Catholic priests and Jewish rabbis, lawyers and doctors – anyone capable of organising resistance against the German occupying forces, was on the wanted list and faced repressive measures. The demographic loss sustained by Poland's educated class ranged from 10% to well over 20, 30 or even more percent for various professional groups.

The German authorities of occupied Poland used various political and legal measures to diminish the local population. Although Poland's population was reduced not only by murder *per se*, the imposition of inferior living conditions and deprivation of proper nutrition led to a rising mortality rate, intended in the first place to hit children, about 169 thousand of whom were killed in this way, wilfully and with scientific precision. Another 196 thousand children were abducted from their parents and deported to Germany for Germanisation. Only some 15–20% of them returned to Poland.

In the Core Lands alone, 1.272 million Polish youngsters (under 18) lost their lives, 708 thousand of whom were Jewish. One of the effects of the German extermination plan was a massive scale of orphanhood. Only 77% of Polish children still had both parents alive after the War.

Poland's loss of population potential in 1940–1944 in the form of children who were never born amounted to 1.029 million, giving a shortfall of 4.230 million over the period from 1946 to 2020 and an overall deficit from 1940 to 2020 of 5.259 mil-

Lebensraum, "more space to live," was a concept in Germany's foreign and racial policy based on the premise that Germany would occupy and exploit Eastern Europe as an economic resource for the supply of raw materials, with the prospect of eventually providing extra territories for German expansion and settlement. The idea of a *Lebensraum* was prompted by Germany's experience of the First World War, during which the Allies imposed a naval blockade, effectively preventing the Central Powers from conducting maritime trade to obtain raw materials. According to the German plan, the inhabitants of the territories envisaged as *Lebensraum* were to be resettled to Siberia and eventually exterminated.

lion. About 217,369 persons were seriously injured and 151,834 contracted incurable diseases in Central Poland alone, permanently and significantly weakening the health of Poland's population. 590 thousand were left as invalids in the wake of the War, and over a million had to struggle against its after-effects, suffering from tuberculosis contracted in outcome of the famine wilfully induced by Germany.

The demographic effects of the Second World War and five years under German occupation were and still are a signal obstacle to Poland's economic growth, despite the fact that so many years have passed.

2.9. Annex: Sites of the most heinous German war crimes, mass executions, and special operations (a selection)

During the Second World War, Germans committed very many atrocities on the territory of occupied Poland. They applied the rule of collective accountability, which is banned under international law, and they carried out special operations to exterminate specific groups of inhabitants. They targeted the group of "leaders," potential organisers of resistance to the brutality of German occupation. By this, they generally meant the Polish educated classes – teachers, the clergy, and social activists. Below, I present just a few of the most shocking and notorious crimes committed by the Gestapo, the Wehrmacht, and the Schutzpolizei – all agencies of the German State. This selection aims to show the diverse methods the perpetrators used to commit these crimes and cover up the evidence when the War was coming to an end. I have not considered the victims of the German concentration camps and prisons in the account of these atrocities and the accompanying tables, because they have been described in numerous publications and are generally known to public opinion.

Operation AB, Intelligenzaktion

Intelligenzaktion, which its perpetrators regarded as a *politische Flurbereinigung* (an operation to "clear the ground politically"),¹² was targeted against individuals believed to be capable of putting up fast and effective resistance to the Germanisation of occupied Poland. At least 100 thousand persons are estimated to have been killed in this operation, carried out by special security police task forces known as *Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei* and paramilitary vigilante groups made up of members of the German minority resident in Poland and known as the *Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz*.¹³

The plans for *Intelligenzaktion* were ready even before Germany invaded Poland. The German authorities had been collecting information on potential leaders of Polish resistance, such as teachers, government officials and administrators, clergymen, retired soldiers, judges and lawyers, landowners and industrialists, and social activists irrespectively of their particular walk of life. The Germans thought that if such individuals were exterminated, the people of Poland would have no chance to rally against German occupation, so the "group of leaders" was to be "neutralised."¹⁴

On the annexed territories, *Intelligenzaktion* was implemented from the autumn of 1939 to the spring of 1940, while, in the GG, it was codenamed AB (*Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion* – "Operation Special Pacification") and conducted from May to July 1940. It was a secret operation, executions were carried out in secluded places, and many of the families of victims still do not know what happened to their relatives.

One of the largest acts of genocide Germany committed in occupied Poland was carried out at a place called Piaśnica near Wejherowo in Pomerania. An estimated 12 thousand¹⁵ to 14 thousand people¹⁶ were killed at Piaśnica. Many of the vic-

¹² Łuczak, Agnieszka, and Aleksandra Pietrowicz, *Polityczne oczyszczanie gruntu. Zagłada polskich elit w Wielkopolsce (1939–1941)*, Poznań: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni Przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu. Oddział w Poznaniu, 2009.

¹³ Wardzyńska, Maria, *Był rok 1939. Operacja niemieckiej policji bezpieczeństwa w Polsce: „Intelligenzaktion”*, Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej. Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2009.

¹⁴ *Człowiek człowiekowi... Niszczenie polskiej inteligencji w latach 1939–1945. KL Mauthausen/Gusen*, exhibition designed by Jolanta Adamska-Czerw, Warszawa: Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa, 2009.

¹⁵ Bojarska, Barbara, *Piaśnica – miejsce martyrologii i pamięci. Z badań nad zbrodniami hitlerowskimi na Pomorzu*. Wejherowo: Wydawnictwo BiT (4th edition), 2009.

¹⁶ Grot, Elżbieta M., "Piaśnica. Pomorskie miejsce męczeństwa i pamięci narodowej." *Przeszłość i pamięć. Biuletyn Rady Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa* 4 (17), październik–grudzień 2000, p. 54–64.

tims were members of the Polish intelligentsia, campaigners for the country's independence, or clergymen, in other words, they came from what the Germans called the *Führungsschicht* (the leadership class). The bodies were buried in 35 mass graves, 30 of which were identified after the War, and 26 were examined. The murders were committed in a systematic way: the victims had to line up in a row along the edge of a long pit, then the Germans shot them and they fell into the pit.¹⁷ In the autumn of 1944, the Germans started to remove the evidence, most probably using inmates of Stutthof concentration camp for the task, whose job was to disinter and burn the corpses, after which they were killed themselves.

The second largest extermination site in Pomerania was at Mniszek near Świecie. The first Polish people killed there were arrested already in September 1939 and told they were going to be registered and sent to work. This was how the Germans conducted *Intelligenzaktion*, starting the extermination with the "ringleaders" of the people of Poland. The first executions in the woodland around Mniszek took place in October 1939,¹⁸ with the shooting of the Poles the Germans had arrested and kept in the local prison at Świecie and about a thousand patients from the city's mental hospital. Thereby, the perpetrators were literally killing two birds with one stone, in other words, also carrying out Operation T4, the murder of psychiatric patients and other persons considered an unnecessary financial burden to the German State. The patients who were murdered included a group of 120 children who were told they were going on an outing to the woods. The perpetrators were men from the local Selbstschutz and SS, aided and abetted by the Wehrmacht, which supplied vehicles to transport the victims. The site continued to be used for executions right to the end of the War, albeit from 1941 the numbers killed went down. The same happened in other places where executions were carried out. In 1944, the Germans started to get rid of the evidence by getting Soviet POWs to dig up the bodies and burn them, after which the POWs were killed.

Another site the German Selbstschutz and police used for the mass murder of Polish citizens in 1939 is at a place called Fordońska Dolina Śmierci (Fordońska Death Valley), now within the municipal bounds of Bydgoszcz.¹⁹ Probably around 1,200 persons

¹⁷ Tomkiewicz, Monika, "Zbrodnia w Lasach Piaśnickich jako element zbrodni pomorskiej 1939 roku," *Rocznik Polsko-Niemiecki*, 2019: 27, p. 11–29.

¹⁸ Wardzyńska.

¹⁹ Bator, Stanisław; and Rajmund Kuczma, *Fordon „Dolina Śmierci”*, Bydgoszcz: Muzeum im. Leona Wyczółkowskiego w Bydgoszczy, 1969.

were killed there. Victims were brought to the site in lorries, robbed of valuables, and shot. Just as on other execution sites, a large number of these victims came from the Polish educated class and most of them were teachers.

At Małe Czyste near Chełmno, the local Selbstschutz unit selected a disused opencast sand mine known as Piaskownia for a series of executions. From September to November 1939, they murdered between 400²⁰ to 800²¹ persons under *Intelligenzaktion*. The victims were members of the local intellectual, political, and business elite, as well as social and educational activists. With the approach of the front in 1944, the Germans dug up the bodies and, according to evidence from local people, spent two days burning them.

Germans committed similar atrocities in a wood at Rybieniec near Klamry²² and at Płutowo, the seat of the Alvensleben family.²³ A provisional concentration camp was set up in the stately home at Płutowo for the detention of Poles the Germans considered dangerous. In October and November 1939, about 230 Poles were murdered in a series of executions in a nearby gully. In 1944, the bodies of these victims were exhumed from the mass graves and burned. One of the burial sites, containing 18 bodies and overlooked by the perpetrators of the crime, was discovered after the War.

The most notorious atrocity on the educated class of Kraków, known as *Sonderaktion Krakau*, or more properly as *Aktion gegen Universitäts-Professoren* (Operation against University Professors), was committed by Sturmbannführer Bruno Müller on 6 November 1939.²⁴ The professors were lured into a trap: they were invited to attend Müller's lecture on the position of the German authorities on science and learning, which was to be held in Room 66 of the Jagiellonian University's Collegium Novum Building.²⁵ The Germans arrested the academics of the Jagiellonian University and Mining Academy who turned up. The pretext they gave was that the city's institutions of higher education had started a new academic year without permission from the German occupying authorities. No charges were

²⁰ Wardzyńska.

²¹ Prause, Andreas, *Die nationalsozialistische Okkupation Kulms 1939–1945*, April, 1997. [<http://www.chelmno.info/ns/Kulm1939-1945.pdf>]. Accessed online 23 May 2021].

²² Wardzyńska.

²³ Wardzyńska.

²⁴ Paczyńska, Irena, *Aktion gegen Universitäts-Professoren (Kraków, 6 listopada 1939 roku) i okupacyjne losy aresztowanych*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ, 2019.

²⁵ Gwiazdomorski, Jan, *Wspomnienia z Sachsenhausen. Dzieje uwięzienia profesorów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 6 XI 1939–9 II 1940*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1975 (4th edition).

brought against any of the arrestees, who were taken first to the city's Montelupich prison, and subsequently, to the army barracks on ul. Wrocławska. On the following day, 11 out of the total of 183 arrested were released, and the rest were sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Due to the conditions in the camp, Professor Antoni Meyer of the Mining Academy died on 24 December;²⁶ Professor Stanisław Estreicher, ex-Rector of the Jagiellonian University, died a few days later; followed by several more academics who died over the next couple of days. There were protests on an international scale. Benito Mussolini personally intervened with Hitler on behalf of the professors, which led to the release of the eldest of the arrestees on 8 February 1940. On 4 March 1940, the rest were sent to Dachau and released in small groups over a fairly long time. Kazimierz Piwarski, the last of them left alive, was kept in a concentration camp until the autumn of 1941.²⁷

The Germans committed an analogous, albeit not so widely known mass murder on Polish university professors on 4 July 1941 in Lwów.²⁸ On the night of 3 July, the SS and Gestapo arrested a group of professors of the John Casimir University, the Lwów University of Technology, and the Lwów Academy of the Veterinary Sciences, some with other members of their families and persons who merely happened to be in their residence. They were shot by an Einsatzkommando firing squad under the command of SS-Brigadeführer Eberhard Schöngarth. The other perpetrators were Max Draheim, Walter Martens, Paul Grusa, Hans Krüger, Walter Kutschmann, Johann Maurer and Wilhelm Maurer.

A proscription list of the persons to be arrested was drawn up in advance by Ukrainian students associated with the Ukrainian Nationalist Organisation. A total of 37 persons were shot in the incident, followed over the next few days by the murder of the other individuals rounded up from the professors' residences. On 26 July, the Germans murdered Professor Kazimierz Bartel, who had served as Poland's prime minister for several terms in office.

Later, the series of defeats the Germans sustained on the Eastern front induced them to attempt to destroy the evidence of this atrocity. On 8 October 1943, a Sonderkommando unit dug up the mass grave, exhumed the bodies, and burned them.²⁹ This murder was committed not only to implement the German plan

²⁶ Gwiazdomorski.

²⁷ Gwiazdomorski.

²⁸ Albert, Zygmunt, *Każń profesorów lwowskich – lipiec 1941 / Studia oraz relacje i dokumenty zebrane i oprac. przez Zygmunta Alberta*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1989.

²⁹ Bonusiak, Włodzimierz, *Kto zabił profesorów lwowskich?*, Rzeszów: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1989.

for the genocide of the Polish intelligentsia; there was also an aspect of robbery to it. The professors' property, particularly their rare art collections, were stolen by German officials. The pillaging was supervised by Peter Menten, a Dutch Nazi collaborator with an expert knowledge of the art collections in the city of Lwów. Menten had several train carriages packed with works of art stolen in occupied Poland and transported to Holland. None of the perpetrators of the massacre of the professors of Lwów and the theft of their property was ever prosecuted for these crimes.

Earlier, the Germans executed about 115 Polish citizens at Kumowa Dolina in Chełm. Most of the victims were members of the intelligentsia arrested under *Aktion AB* in the Powiats of Chełm, Krasnystaw, and Zamość. Some of them were tricked into coming to a school building in Krasnystaw, where they were arrested on no charges at all. They were taken to the prison in Chełm, interrogated and tortured, and, on 3–4 July, taken in lorries to a wood called Kumowa Dolina and shot. The murderers were inexperienced SS men who did not bring any combustible materials with them. The following day, they arrived with petrol, which they poured over the corpses and bodies of those who had been seriously injured but were still alive, and burned them all.³⁰

At a place called *szubienica* ("the gallows") in Olsztyn near Częstochowa, the Gestapo, assisted by German military police, conducted a series of mass murders of Polish victims. The first execution took place on 28 June 1940, when 15 prisoners were brought there from Radomsko and Częstochowa.³¹ About 400 persons, mostly inmates from the prison in Częstochowa, were shot there in June, July, and October of 1940. A second wave of executions occurred in February and March 1942, when about 600 Poles and Soviet POWs were shot. 1,968 persons have been laid to rest in 18 collective graves on the site.

Aktion T4³²

Aktion T4, also known as *Aktion E*, was one of the special genocide operations conducted in Nazi Germany. Its aim was to murder mental patients, who were considered "incapable of community life and leading lives unworthy of life" (*lebensunw-*

³⁰ Gałan, Alina E., "„Akcja AB” na Lubelszczyźnie," *Biuletyn IPN* 2003–2004: 12–1, p. 50–54.

³¹ Pietrzykowski, Jan, *Akcja AB w Częstochowie*, Katowice: Wydawnictwo „Śląsk” and Śląski Instytut Naukowy w Katowicach, 1971.

³² Aly, Götz, *Die Belasteten: ‚Euthanasie’ 1939–1945 ; eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, Frankfurt-am-Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2013.

ertes Leben)³³ In occupied Poland, the scheme was launched on the grounds of an order issued by Hitler in October but backdated to 1 September. The office handling the project was located at Tiergartenstraße 4 in Berlin (and hence its name). There were reasons of two kinds for the decision to implement this criminal plan in Poland once the War started: the ideological reasons, to maintain “racial purity” and eliminate individuals who were of no use to the State; and the economic reasons, the cost of keeping such patients in a mental hospital and employing staff to look after them. Another reason was because the Germans wanted to take over the hospital buildings, which they wanted to use as barracks for the SS and other Nazi organisations such as the Hitlerjugend.

Aktion T4 started in occupied Poland practically as soon as the Wehrmacht took control of the Polish territories, and in most places, followed the same course. First, the head of the hospital would be dismissed and a new one appointed, who would sack large numbers of the staff, starting with the Polish management. The people in line for dismissal were those whom the Germans found suspicious. The patients’ food rations were reduced to increase mortality. Next, there were selections of patients due to be killed. Some of the less seriously ill were transferred to other psychiatric hospitals, while those qualified for euthanasia were killed by various methods and means. It was a prologue to the practice of killing individuals deemed “unworthy of life” on the industrial scale later applied in concentration camps. At first, the methods used involved shooting patients or injecting them with a variety of lethal substances, but the Germans wanted far more efficient means. Eventually, it led to the use of poison gases such as carbon monoxide. Patients were gassed by an authorised person, the *Vergasungsarzt* (the gassing physician).

Between 15 September and 20 December 1939, 1,100 patients were killed in Owińska mental hospital (called *Provinzial-Irren-Heilanstalt zu Owinsk* at the time). Some of them were slaughtered in the woods north of Oborniki, and some in Fort VII of *Festung Posen*,³⁴ which was the first place in occupied Poland where the Germans used gas (carbon monoxide) to kill human beings. About 400 persons – the patients and staff of Owińska and others from Poznań – were gassed. The Germans set up a make-

³³ Klee, Ernst, *Auschwitz, die NS-Medizin und ihre Opfer (Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus)*, Frankfurt-am-Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2001.

³⁴ Hojan, Artur, “Komora gazowa w Forcie VII w Poznaniu (początek nazistowskiego ludobójstwa),” *Studia nad dziejami obozów koncentracyjnych w okupowanej Polsce*, Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2011, p. 167–177.

shift gas chamber in Bunker 17 on the premises of Fort VII. They brought in about 50 people at a time, made the door airtight by sealing it with clay, and opened the valve of a cylinder containing carbon monoxide. They then used a peephole to observe what happened inside.

The use of gas to kill mental patients was a success and led to the construction of *Sonderwagen*, “special vehicles,” lorries with a specially converted freight compartment to make it airtight. Carbon monoxide was fed into it from a cylinder, or the lorry’s exhaust fumes were brought in. That was the first confirmed use of exhaust fumes to kill victims.

A series of cover-up devices were applied to hide the truth about patients’ real cause of death, for instance relatives were told that they had been transferred to another hospital, or they were sent fabricated death certificates. Some T4 operators went as far as to erect bogus graves and send families a bill for the funeral and maintenance of the grave. At a later stage, the Germans tried to destroy the evidence by digging up the mass graves and burning the bodies.

One of the places in occupied Poland where a major project was staged for the extermination of mental patients was the psychiatric hospital in Kościan,³⁵ which the Germans took over already by 7 September 1939 and soon changed its name to *Landesheilanstalt Kosten*. It took them just a week, from 15 to 22 January 1940, to take 534 patients out of the institution in lorries converted into mobile gas chambers, gas them, and bury them in the woods around Jarogniewice. A month later, the same fate befell 2,750 mental patients transported from Germany for the purpose.

In 1939–1945 at Dziekanka psychiatric hospital near Gniezno, patients had pharmacological substances applied to render them unconscious. Then, they were put in mobile gas chambers on lorries and taken to the woods, where they were buried in mass graves. According to the hospital’s records, 3,586 persons of several nationalities were murdered in this way.

Another place which was turned into a mass execution site for Poles, most of them from the Powiat of Tczew, was the forest known as Las Szpęgawski near Starogard Gdański. In 1939–1945, the SS and Selbstschutz murdered at least 7 thousand people there.³⁶ 1,692 of the victims were mental patients from Kocborowo psychiatric hospitals, whom the Germans killed under the T4 operation in 1939–1940. Other victims included about

³⁵ Hojan, Artur, *Nazistowska pseudoeutanazja w Krajowym Zakładzie Psychiatrycznym w Kościanie (1939–1940)*, Kościan: Kościańska Oficyna Literacka, 2004.

³⁶ Wardzyńska.

300 patients from Świecie psychiatric hospital and children from a subsidiary institution of Kocborowo at Gniew. These atrocities started already on 13 September 1939, with the shooting of 10 young Poles arrested in Starogard. The next victims were 25 Jews, who were beaten up in the city and their bodies were buried in the forest. In September 1939, the first 150 Polish citizens were buried in Szpęgawski forest, which subsequently turned into a regular execution site for members of the Polish intelligentsia, social activists, and Roman Catholic clergymen. On 16 October 1939, 30 priests from Starogard and another 17 from the Powiat of Tczew were shot there. On 20 October, 54 teachers from Starogard and 44 persons from Pelplin were executed. In 1944, the Germans started to destroy the evidence of their crimes: they dug up the mass graves, used two ovens to incinerate the bodies, dumped the ashes back into the pits and covered them up with quicklime.

In January 1940, another T4 mass murder was committed on the patients of Chełm mental hospital. Following an official inspection on 12 January, an SS unit arrived with machine guns and surrounded the institution. The staff were ordered to go home, and only ten male nurses were made to stay behind. A couple of patients who had recovered were discharged at the last moment. The SS men set up their machine guns outside the entrance way, and ten patients at a time were made to leave the establishment. The patients were mowed down with short bursts fired from the machine guns. The Germans began by exterminating the inmates of the men's ward, then they moved on to the women's ward, but it took them the longest time to deal with the children, who had hidden under their beds. The SS made the children run and used automatic firearms to shoot them from behind. A total of 304 men, 128 women, and 18 children were butchered.³⁷

In June 1942, Gestapo men and officers closed down Kobierzyn psychiatric hospital on the outskirts of Kraków. 80 patients not fit enough to be transported were killed on the spot. The rest – around 500 patients – were sent to Auschwitz and murdered there. The total number killed in Kobierzyn amounted to 900–1,000 persons, including some the Germans had starved to death, as well as some Jews from Skawina, who were made to bury the bodies and were shot afterwards.³⁸

³⁷ Janeczek, Leszek, "Zapomniana tragedia Szpitala Psychiatrycznego," *Medicus* (Lublin) 2020, Vol. 1–2, p. 14–17. Online at <https://medicus.lublin.pl/article/zapomniana-tragedia-szpitala-psychiatrycznego-2/> (Accessed 27 Dec. 2021)

³⁸ Szpytma, Mateusz, "Bezużyteczne życie," in *Od Września do Norymbergii*, Filip Musiał and Jarosław Szarek (eds.), *Z archiwów bezpieki – nieznanie karty PRL*, Vol. 18, Kraków: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2012, p. 50–57.

German health and social workers conducted criminal pseudo-medical experiments on Polish children in a mental institution at Lubliniec. The institution's name was changed to *Medizinische Kinderheilstalt* ("Children's Medical Institution"), but the procedures carried out there were a flagrant violation of medical ethics. The German social welfare organisation NSV (*Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*, the National Socialist People's Welfare) sent children aged from eight months to 18 years to Lubliniec, where they were given barbiturates, chiefly Luminal (Phenobarbital), and their behaviour was observed. Those with a poor constitution usually died within a few days, but some showed a remarkable resilience to this "medication." The death rate for children in the experiment soared; in Ward B, Luminal was administered to 235 children aged from under 1 to 13+, and 221 (94%) of them died of it. Bogus causes of death, such as pneumonia, were entered on their death records. In general, the children in Ward B were disabled, but there were also some who were "racially handicapped" and due for extermination.³⁹

2.9.3. Mass executions and pacification operations

Palmiry, a place on the edge of the Kampinos Forest, 30 km away from Central Warsaw, is one of the most notorious sites where the Germans executed Polish citizens.⁴⁰ It is one of the most gruesome symbols, alongside Katyn, of the mass murder of the Polish people carried out during World War Two.

The first execution known to have taken place at Palmiry occurred on 7 December 1939, when 80 people were shot. Another 70 were shot on the next day, followed by another 70 on 14 December 1939, 40 on 12 January 1940, 80 on 22 January 1940, 11 pre-war social activists on 24/25 February 1940, and 190 on 26 February 1940. By the end of April 1940, between 700 and 900 ethnic Poles and Jews had been murdered on the site.

The next wave of executions in Palmiry started on 14 June 1940. On 20 and 21 June 1940, 358 prisoners were brought to Palmiry from Pawiak prison and murdered. Most of them were members of the intellectual, political and cultural elite (e.g. the politician Maciej Rataj), as well as sportsmen such as Olympic

³⁹ Hrabar, Roman, *Hitlerowski rabunek dzieci polskich: wprowadzanie i germanizowanie dzieci polskich w latach 1939–1945*, Katowice: „Śląsk,” 1960.

⁴⁰ *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945. Województwo stołeczne warszawskie*, Warszawa: GKBZHW. IPN, 1988.

gold medallist Janusz Kusociński. On 30 August 1940, another 87 victims died, and 200 on 17 September 1940.

It is generally believed that the Germans conducted the last execution in Palmiry on 17 July 1941, when they killed 47 persons, although there are statements that they continued to kill Polish citizens on the site and that the last atrocities were committed as late as the beginning of 1944.

The Germans killed a total of over 1,700 Polish citizens in Palmiry.

On 27 December 1939, the Germans executed 114 people at a place called Wawer on the outskirts (now within the city bounds) of Warsaw, in reprisals for the death of two German NCOs in a restaurant belonging to Antoni Bartoszek. They hanged the proprietor of the restaurant on the wall next to its entrance door. The men who were shot were aged between 15 and 70 and had nothing to do with the death of the two Germans. Many of them simply happened to be spending Christmas with relatives in Wawer and Anin. The Germans staged a travesty of a trial before a *Standgericht* (summary court), in which 120 civilians were convicted and sentenced to death. Six of them were “pardoned” and ordered to dig a grave. One of the remaining 114 managed to escape, and a few were wounded but survived. A total of 107 civilians were killed.

Alongside the execution of 51 civilian inhabitants of Bochnia on Uzbornia hill on 18 December 1939,⁴¹ the Wawer atrocity was one of the first German crimes perpetrated on Polish soil in which the Germans applied their rule of collective accountability.

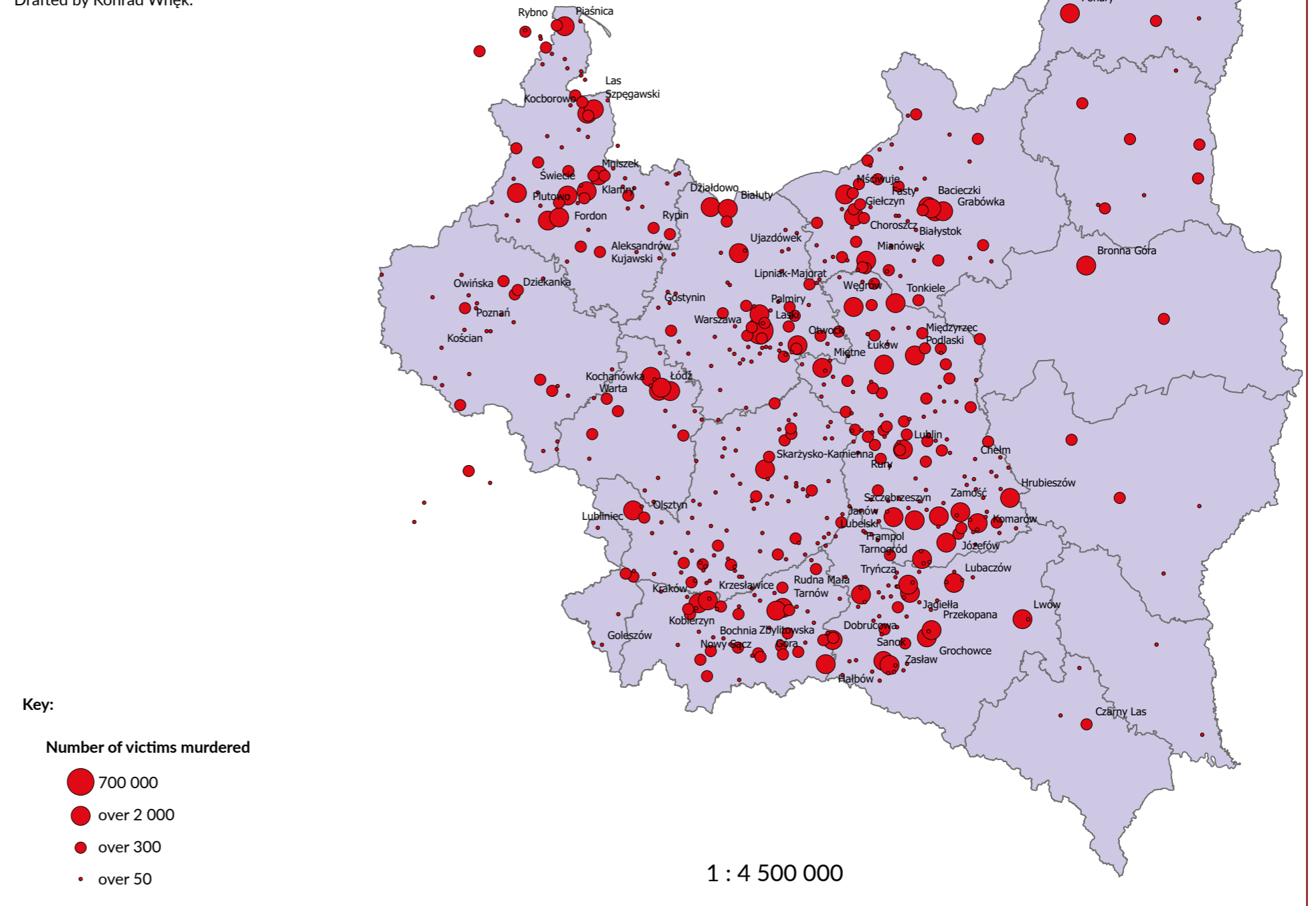
On 1 October 1939, after the surrender of Warsaw, Einsatzgruppe IV, a special operations task force manned by German security police commanded by SS-Brigadeführer Lothar Beutel, entered the city and, in a short time, established itself on the premises of the Polish Parliament. Its grounds turned out to be a good place for the secret execution of individuals the Germans considered dangerous or unwanted. According to the very few witnesses to such incidents, every day at the close of 1939 and in the first days of 1940, 20 to 30 persons were brought there and held for a few hours, after which they would be led out into the grounds and shot, often without a hearing. Dr Ludwik Zamenhof, the creator of Esperanto, is believed to have been one of the persons killed here. Hundreds, or maybe up to a thousand victims are estimated to have been murdered in this atrocity.

⁴¹ Flaszka, Jan, *Bochnia: przewodnik po mieście*, Bochnia: Urząd Miejski w Bochni, 1998.

Map 2.5.

Sites of the biggest war crimes, mass executions, and special actions perpetrated by Germany on the territory of Poland in 1939–1945.

Drafted by Konrad Wnęk.



Las Kabacki (the Kabaty Woods) is one of the points on the Warsaw Death Ring, where executions started almost as soon as the Germans invaded Poland and continued right until the end of German occupation. The first atrocity the Germans committed here was reported by Stanisław Cieślak, a forest ranger who was an eye-witness. In the last days of 1939 and at the beginning of 1940, the Germans brought a total of about 200 people here on eight lorries and shot them. Unfortunately, the victims' bodies were never retrieved because Cieślak, the only witness, died during the War and there was no-one else to locate the place where they were buried. All that was discovered were five collective graves dated to 1941–1943 containing a total of 110 bodies, plus the remains of 21 persons killed in individual executions.

On 6 January 1940 at Szwedzkie Góry in the Bemowo district of Warsaw, an SS unit commanded by Josef Meisinger murdered 96 Polish citizens. They were taken to the place in two lorries, it was the Feast of Epiphany (the Twelfth Night), and bitterly cold (-20°C), which is why the Germans did not manage to get burial pits dug or cover up the bodies with soil. It was not until April that local people buried them and put up a memorial cross.

On the night of 27/28 May 1942, the SS executed 223 Polish citizens in a wood called Las Sękociński near Magdalenka. On the 26th, the local people were told the wood was going to be used for military training and were prohibited from entering it. On the next day, a Wehrmacht unit arrived and dug three pits. The executions started at 3 a.m. on 28 May and continued until 2 p.m. The victims arrived in consignments from Pawiak prison and were shot. The last to be killed was a group of women, some of whom were so ill that they had to be carried to the execution site on stretchers. The shooting was done by German and Ukrainian prison guards from the Pawiak jail. Witnesses said that the firing squad left the site singing.

In 1940–1945, the Germans conducted mass executions at another woodland site, Las Krępiecki near Lublin. The first incident took place on 3 May 1940 and the victims were a group of hostages brought in from Lublin. On 21–22 April 1942, the Germans shot about two and a half thousand Jews from the ghetto at Majdan Tatarski on this site. Later, they murdered Jews from the Lublin ghetto here. Las Krępiecki was also the site for the mass murder of prisoners from the nearby concentration camp at Majdanek prior to the construction of gas chambers there. Staff from the concentration camp used this stretch of woodland to burn bodies brought in from the camp on two trailers attached to a tractor. A couple of lorry chassis were set up on concrete posts to serve as a provisional

hearth. Body burning continued in Las Krępiecki until the autumn of 1943, when crematoria were constructed at Majdanek. The grate which was used for the job is now on display in the exhibition in the State Museum at Majdanek. The total number of victims of various nationalities, though chiefly Jews, Poles, and Russians killed on this site is estimated at about 30 thousand.⁴²

In February 1944, the SS, Wehrmacht, German policemen and their Ukrainian collaborators staged a pacification at another woodland site, Las Janowski near Janów Lubelski. In this operation, they plundered and burned down several nearby villages, Borów, Szczecyn, Wólka Szczeka, Łązek Zaklikowski, Łązek Chwałowski, and Karasiówka. The number of victims murdered during this pacification has been estimated at between 800 and 1,300. The Germans proceeded very methodically: they surrounded the villages one at a time and set fire to the buildings using grenade launchers. Only then did they enter the place and murder every person they came across, brutally casting women, old people and children into the blazing buildings. They bayoneted the children and raped the young women. German soldiers were so dehumanised that in the village of Szczecyn they marched a group of women and children up to the edge of the forest, where they made the boys of 7 and over stand aside and had their mothers watch them being shot.⁴³

The village of Aleksandrów in the Zamość region fell victim to German terror several times during the War. The first atrocity was committed there in August 1942, when Wehrmacht and Gestapo units from Biłgoraj out on a search for resistance fighters surrounded the village and detained all the men between 12 and 60. They burned down three farmsteads and shot one person. In June 1943, the village was again overrun and plundered; some of its inhabitants were killed and some deported to camps at Zamość and Zwierzyniec. Finally, in July of the same year, the village community was destroyed completely. Scores of homesteads were burned down, the rest of the inhabitants were deported, and Ukrainians were brought in to settle in the remaining cottages. A year later, the few inhabitants who managed to escape tried to return and reclaim their homes but most of them were killed. Overall, 300 to 500 persons are estimated to have perished in these atrocities.⁴⁴

⁴² Kuwałek, Robert, "Żydzi lubelscy w obozie koncentracyjnym na Majdanku," *Zeszyty Majdanka* 2003: 23, p. 77–121.

⁴³ *Pacyfikacja wsi Szczecyn „Ku pamięci i przestrodze”*. Zbiór wspomnień świadków pacyfikacji Szczecyna i Wólki Szczekiej przeprowadzonej w dniu 2 lutego 1944 roku, Anna Potocka (ed.), Lublin: Wydawnictwo Polihymnia; and Gościeradów: Gminny Ośrodek Kultury, 2010.

⁴⁴ Fajkowski, Józef, and Jan Religa, *Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na wsi polskiej 1939–1945*, Warszawa: Książka

In 1939–1941, the Germans used Fort Krzesławice near (and now within the bounds of) Kraków for mass executions, mainly of prisoners from the Montelupich prison in Kraków. The biggest killings took place on 14 November and 14 December 1939; 14 and 20 January, 29 March, 29 June, 2 and 4 July and 7 November 1940; and 12 March 1941. The bodies were buried on the site. After the War, an exhumation project was conducted and 29 mass graves containing 440 victims were dug up. Only about a quarter of the victims could be identified.⁴⁵

From December 1939 on, the Germans conducted a series of collective executions of Polish citizens in a wood called Buczyna at Zbylitowska Góra near Tarnów. The first to be killed on this site were 42 Poles brought there from the local Gestapo prison in Tarnów. They were shot on 11 December 1939. The last known execution at this place was on 28 June 1944, and 13 people, mainly from Nowy Sącz, died in it. In June 1942, the first wave of mass killings of the Jewish community in Tarnów started and many of the victims were shot in Buczyna wood, including about 800 children from a local Jewish orphanage. According to a witness, the children were herded into a grave which had been dug earlier and killed with grenades. Buczyna was also the place where Jews from the ghetto in Brzesko were murdered. Out of this group, we know the names only of 12 inhabitants of the village of Jadowniki. The number of those killed and buried here is estimated at 10 thousand: 8 thousand Jews and 2 thousand ethnic Poles.⁴⁶

Thousands of people were killed in mass executions carried out by the Germans in 1939–1945 in Nowy Sącz. The first of these atrocities was committed near the railway embankment already on 7–8 September 1939, when 22 Poles were killed for possessing firearms. The next execution on the site took place on 13 January 1940, and, in July of the same year, 40 persons were shot there for refusing to go to Germany for slave labour. In June 1941, the Gestapo shot a group of about 30 hostages here, and another 60 persons a month later. Only 18 of these victims have been identified. On 21 August, the Germans shot 70 Polish citizens of Jewish extraction, followed by another 64 hostages and 50 Jews all in the same month. The victims of these atrocities came from all classes of society, but it was the intelligentsia who suffered most, for “crimes” such as attempting to cross the border into Slovakia,

⁴⁵ i Wiedza, 1981.

⁴⁵ Wroński, Tadeusz, *Fort Krzesławicki, miejsce masowych egzekucji Polaków w Krakowie w latach 1939–1941*, Warszawa: Rada Ochrony Pomników Walki i Męczeństwa: Wydawnictwo „Sport i Turystyka,” 1981.

⁴⁶ Pietrzykowska, Aleksandra, and Stanisław Potępa, *Zagłada tarnowskich Żydów*, Tarnów: Muzeum Okręgowe: Wydział Kultury i Sztuki Urzędu Miejskiego, 1990.

harbouring members of the resistance movement, helping or hiding Jews, possessing the meat of animals slaughtered illegally, selling bread on the black market, and illegal trading.

In terms of numbers, the biggest atrocity of this kind in Nowy Sącz was committed in April 1942, when the Gestapo and SS killed 400 Jews. The Germans used the list of subscribers of the Maks Rosenfeld Library to hunt down victims who were accused of communist sympathies, even though many of them were still children. Most of these murders were perpetrated on the premises of the Jewish cemetery in Nowy Sącz. About two and a half thousand Polish citizens, Jews and ethnic Poles, are estimated to have died in killings on the cemetery site.⁴⁷

For the entire period the Germans occupied Poland, they used the local cemeteries and graveyards of Bochnia to kill the city's inhabitants and people from nearby villages. The bodies of victims were interred in mass graves on the execution sites: about 100 persons, mainly young people and members of the intelligentsia, were buried in the Krakowskie Przedmieście cemetery; several hundred in four mass graves and ten individual graves or ones containing from two to four bodies in the old graveyard; and over 500 in five mass graves in the Oracka municipal cemetery.

Poles and Jews from Stanisławów (now Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine) and its environs were executed by Germans and Ukrainian policemen at a place called Czarny Las. On 2 August 1941, the local Polish and Jewish intelligentsia were instructed to report to the Gestapo for registration. About a thousand persons did so. Around 30 of them were released, while the rest were savagely brutalised with cat o' nine tails whips and baited with vicious dogs, while the women were gang-raped. Any who were injured were finished off with a pistol. Over 30 were killed in this way. “The rest, about 600 persons, were ordered to undress down to their underclothes and were taken in covered lorries to Czarny Las at Pawełcze near Stanisławów. The victims had to dig their own graves and then strip naked. The Germans used one bullet to shoot three people at a time, and many were buried alive in the mass graves. Local peasants said that, the next day, the earth on the graves was still moving.

On 8 and 9 August 1941, numerous members of the Polish intelligentsia, especially teachers from a variety of schools,

⁴⁷ “Sefer Sandz,” *The Book on the Jewish Community of Nowy Sącz*, Raphael Mahler (ed.), Tel Aviv, 1970, Online at https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Nowy_sacz/nowy_sacz.html. Accessed 27 Dec. 2021; *Pamiętając dla przyszłości. Historia Żydów na Sądecczyźnie. Konteksty – nawiązania – refleksje*, Maciej Walasek (ed.), and Maria Molenda (illustrations), Nowy Sącz: Fundacja Nomina Rosae, 2016.

were arrested on orders from Hauptsturmführer Hans Krüger, the chief of the local Gestapo. A ruse was applied like the one used to arrest the academics of Kraków in *Sonderaktion Krakau*. The teachers were invited to attend a meeting for the beginning of the school year.⁴⁸ The not so credulous ones who did not turn up at the meeting were arrested in their homes. A total of about 300 persons were detained, held first for a few weeks in the local jail and later, on the night of 14/15 August 1941, about 250 of them were taken to Czarny Las and shot. On 11 November 1941, about 50 persons were shot for putting the Polish national flag on the graves of Piłsudski's legionnaires in Stanisławów cemetery.

Czarny Las continued to be used for executions right until the end of the War. The total number of Poles murdered in Stanisławów has been estimated at 860. About 600 Jewish people who were Polish citizens and were murdered in Czarny Las have also been laid to rest there. In addition, the number of victims murdered in the ghetto of Stanisławów has been estimated at around 12 thousand.⁴⁹

In 1968, Hans Krüger was sentenced to life imprisonment for 23 well-documented murders (out of a total of about 12,600 deaths caused by him). He was convicted by a German court in Münster solely on charges for the deaths of Jewish persons, because the court did not consent to bring charges against him for the deaths of ethnic Poles. He was released from prison in 1986 and died in 1988.

Ponary near Wilno (now Paneriai near Vilnius, Lithuania) is the site of one of the biggest mass executions of civilians carried out during the Second World War. In 1941–1944, about 80 thousand Polish citizens of Jewish and Polish ethnicity were murdered there by Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators. It is hard to estimate the precise number of victims because towards the end of the War the Germans tried to destroy the evidence of the atrocities by exhuming the bodies and burning them. In 1940, the Soviet Union had established a fuel base for aircraft on the site, and the Germans used it as the perfect place for the mass execution of Polish citizens, which started already in 1941. Victims were transported to the site by rail. On each occasion, the perpetrators used about 40 carriages, transporting around 3 thousand people.

⁴⁸ Zieliński, Józef, "Szkoła polska w Stanisławowie w czasie II wojny światowej," *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy* 1961 (4): 3, p. 371–380.

⁴⁹ Kamiński, Tadeusz, *Tajemnica Czarnej Lasu*, Kraków: Towarzystwo Miłośników Lwowa i Kresów Południowo-Wschodnich, Oddział Kraków, 2001.

Alternatively, some were brought in lorries, chiefly from the Łukiszki (Lukiškės) prison, which was in the vicinity, and still others, such as the Jews of the Vilnius ghetto, were marched there on foot. Most of the mass killings were done with rifles, and occasionally with machine guns or grenades. To save ammunition, small children were thrown into the death pits alive, or their heads were smashed. In the first phase of the murders, the perpetrators were men from Einsatzkommando 9 under the command of SS-Obersturmführer Schauschürz. Later, members of the Lithuanian police unit Ypatingasis būrys took over the killing under the supervision of their German patrons. The latest estimates give a figure of about 72 thousand Jewish victims, 5 thousand Soviet POWs, 1.5–2 thousand ethnic Poles, 1 thousand communist activists of various nationalities, and 40 Roma people.⁵⁰

2.9.4. Massacres of civilians

The Wola Carnage was carried out in the Warsaw district of Wola over three days from 5 to 7 August 1944 by units of the SS and German police under the command of SS-Gruppenführer Heinz Reinefarth. They massacred upwards of 30 thousand, perhaps as many as 60 thousand civilian inhabitants of Wola.⁵¹ The men were ordered to kill everyone who came within the range of their guns; they were not to take any prisoners.

The massacre started on Black Saturday, 5 August 1944. The commanding officer ordered his men to kill civilians – in their homes and out on the streets and squares, in the basements and yards of their houses. Women and little girls were raped; children were thrown alive into burning houses. Those who tried to flee in panic were mowed down with machine-gun fire; those who sought refuge in cellars were blown up with grenades. Later in the day, people were rounded up in twelve locations in the district and systematically slaughtered.

The Germans murdered most of the patients and staff of Wolski Hospital as well as almost everyone who happened to be on the premises of St. Lazarus' Hospital, which they burned down.

Over 10 thousand inhabitants of Wola were killed on 5 August (according to Reinefarth's data), or according to Polish estimates

⁵⁰ Tomkiewicz, Monika, *Zbrodnia w Ponarach 1941–1944*, Warszawa, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008.

⁵¹ Sawicki, Tadeusz, *Rozkaz zdławić powstanie. Niemcy i ich sojusznicy w walce z powstaniem warszawskim*, Warszawa: Bellona, 2010.

up to 20 thousand (Władysław Bartoszewski),⁵² while Antoni Przygoński put the figure at 45.5 thousand.⁵³

In the afternoon of that day, SS-Obergruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski took over the command of the German units.⁵⁴ He ordered them to spare the women and children but to kill all the men.

On 6 August, German reinforcements arrived. In the afternoon, German and Azerbaijani units stormed the Karol and Maria Hospital at Leszno 136, killing over 100 patients and burning the building. According to Przegoński, about 10 thousand local people were slaughtered that day.

On 7 August, German troops perpetrated more barbaric acts, absolutely prohibited by international conventions. They continued to slaughter the people of Wola and the northern part of Śródmieście. They forced men to stand in front of German tanks, serving as live shields; they raped women; they exterminated the sick and the weak. According to Przegoński, 3,800 local people were killed that day; and the overall death toll for the three days of the massacre was from 30 thousand to 65 thousand civilians.

The Ochota Massacre was carried out in the Warsaw district of Ochota between 4 and 25 August 1944 by SS RONA (the Russian People's Liberation Army), a collaborationist regiment of Soviet citizens numbering 1,700 men under the command of Col. Bronisław Kaminski.

The most heinous crimes perpetrated by SS RONA included atrocities and rapes committed on local people forced onto the premises of the erstwhile Zieleniak street market, where a provisional camp was set up with no food, water, or sanitary facilities; and atrocities committed in the local hospitals, the Kolonia Staszica housing estate, and the Radium Institute. Men from SS RONA committed a total of 700 murders during the Warsaw Uprising. 60 thousand inhabitants of Warsaw were herded into the premises of Zieleniak (now Hale Banacha), 1 thousand of whom did not leave the place alive.

The pacification of Ochota by the Russian People's Liberation Army killed about 10 thousand of the district's inhabitants and destroyed practically all of its built-up areas, which were demolished by the *Vernichtungskommando* (extermination commando).

⁵² Bartoszewski, Władysław, *Dni walczącej stolicy. Kronika powstania warszawskiego*, Warszawa: Świat Książki and Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, 2008.

⁵³ Przygoński, Antoni, *Powstanie warszawskie w sierpniu 1944 r.* Vols. I & II. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1980.

⁵⁴ Bartoszewski, Władysław, *Erich von dem Bach*, Warszawa and Poznań: Wydawnictwo Zachodnie, 1961.

Lipniak-Majorat in the Powiat of Wyszaków was the location of one of the biggest massacres of civilians perpetrated on Polish soil by the Wehrmacht in bloodthirsty retaliation for the Battle of Pecynka which the Polish Home Army resistance force fought against German troops on 28–31 August 1944. The Germans shot innocent civilians from Lipniak-Majorat and neighbouring villages, allegedly for collaboration with the resistance fighters. Whole families were murdered regardless of sex or age, and small children had their heads smashed on tree trunks to save ammunition. About 450 Polish people were killed; the names of 129, including 55 children, have been identified.⁵⁵

2.9.5. Forced labour camps

There were hundreds of forced labour camps on the territory of occupied Poland. They were envisaged chiefly for Polish citizens of Jewish ethnicity, though ethnic Poles were made to work in them as well. These institutions were not specifically mass extermination camps, yet the conditions in them effectively killed many of their inmates, who were forced to toil far beyond the human capacity for work. The proprietor of the largest forced labour camp was HASAG, the company officially known as Hugo Schneider AG, which was established in Skarżysko-Kamienna on the confiscated premises and with the material assets of the Polish state munitions factory Państwowa Wytwórnia Amunicji.

At first, ethnic Poles made up most of HASAG's workforce, but in 1942, the Germans set up a forced labour camp for Jewish workers on the premises to bolster production. The factory consisted of three departments, A, B and C. The worst conditions were in C which produced explosives. It had shifts of 12–14 hours of exhausting work, and all that its workers got to eat was a daily ration of 200g of bread and a bowl of watery soup. The disastrous working conditions which ruined workers' health and the reign of terror exercised by the guards led to a dramatic death rate. Between 20 thousand up to 35 thousand prisoners are estimated to have died. A continuous supply of new workers was sent into the camp. It consisted of whole families, and children under 14 were killed. Diseases such as typhus and diarrhoea were rife and killed many of the prisoners. Physical violence and harassment were so widespread that there were

⁵⁵ Bartniczak, Mieczysław, *Lipniak Majorat oskarża i przypomina 2. IX. 1944*, Ostrołęka: Muzeum Okręgowe w Ostrołęce: Wojewódzki Komitet Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa, 1989.

special places in the camp where prisoners were tortured. These dens were given ironic nicknames, such as “The Little White House”, “The Dance Hall”, or “The Music Hall” where a variety of elaborate cruel practices were meted out. Some workers who came in from outside, usually ethnic Poles, had enough courage to smuggle food into the camp. But it was a very risky undertaking, as Tadeusz Nowak found in April 1943. He was hanged for bringing in extra food supplies.⁵⁶

Table 2.12.

List of the main mass execution sites of Polish citizens perpetrated by the German Third Reich, 1939–1945

	Place	Date	Number of deaths	Operation	Now in (voivodeship or country)
1	Aktion gegen Universitäts-Professoren Sonderaktion Krakau	1939	20	Special operation	Lesser Poland (małopolskie)
2	Aleksandrów	1942–1944	300–500	pacification	Lublin
3	Bochnia	1939–1944	1 thousand	executions	Lesser Poland
4	Chełm, Kumowa Dolina	1940–1944	300	AB	Lublin
5	Chełm mental hospital	1940	304	T4	Lublin
6	Choroszcz	1941	464	T4	Podlasie
7	Dąbie, Kraków	1945	79	war crime	Lesser Poland
8	Dziekanka mental hospital near Gniezno	1939–1945	3,586	T4	Greater Poland (wielkopolskie)
9	Fordońska Death Valley near Bydgoszcz	1939	1.2 thousand	Intelligenzaktion	Cuiavia-Pomerania (kujawsko-pomorskie)
10	Fort VII, Poznań	1939–1944	20 thousand	executions	Lesser Poland
11	Fort Krzesławice near Kraków	1939–1941	440	executions	Lesser Poland
12	Glinnik, Kraków	1939–1945	400–1,300	executions	Lesser Poland
13	Góra Gruszka near Zagórz	1940	115	AB	Lesser Poland
14	Gostynin	1940–1941	132	T4	Mazovia (mazowieckie)
15	Klamry near Chełmno	1939	2–2.5 thousand	Intelligenzaktion	Cuiavia-Pomerania
16	Kobierzyn mental hospital	1942	580	T4	Lesser Poland
17	Kocborowo mental hospital	1939	1,692	T4	Pomerania (pomorskie)
18	Kochanówka	1940–1941	2,200	T4	Łódź
19	Kościan mental hospital	1940	3,284	T4	Greater Poland
20	Kulparków mental hospital	1941–1942	1,179	T4	Lviv, Ukraine
21	Las Kabacki near Warsaw	1939–1945	350	executions	Mazovia
22	Las Sękociński near Magdalenka	1942	223	executions	Mazovia

⁵⁶ Fąfara, Eugeniusz, *Gehenna ludności żydowskiej*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983.

	Place	Date	Number of deaths	Operation	Now in (voivodeship or country)
23	Las Szpęgawski near Starogard Gdański	1939–1944	7 thousand	Intelligenzaktion and T4	Pomerania
24	Laski near Warsaw	1942–1943	300	executions	Mazovia
25	Lasy Chojnowskie near Stefanów	1943	110	executions	Mazovia
26	Lasy Janowskie	1944	800–1,300	pacification	Lublin
27	Lasy Krępieckie	1940–1943	30 thousand	executions, execution site of Majdanek prisoners and Jews from ghettos	Lublin
28	Lasy Lućmierskie near Łódź	1942	100	executions	Łódź
29	Lipniak-Majorat	1944	450	Wehrmacht war crime	Mazovia
30	Łódź ghetto	1942	150	T4	Łódź
31	Lublin Castle	1939–1944	2.5 thousand	Interrogation and torture	Lublin
32	Lubliniec	1939–1945	256	T4	Silesia (śląskie)
33	Lubliniec Medizinische Kinderheilanstalt (mental hospital)	1939–1945	221	pseudo-medical experiments on children	Silesia
34	Lwów, Wzgórza Wuleckie	1941	37	executions	Lviv, Ukraine
35	Małe Czyste near Chełmno	1939	400–800	Intelligenzaktion	Cuiavia-Pomerania
36	Mniszek near Świecie	1939–1944		Intelligenzaktion and T4	Pomerania
37	Nowy Sącz	1939–1944	2.5 thousand	executions and extermination site of Jews	Lesser Poland
39	Obrzyce-Międzyrzecz mental hospital	1942–1945	10 thousand	T4	Lubusz (lubuskie)
39	Olsztyn near Częstochowa	1940–1942	1,968	executions	Silesia
40	Owińska mental hospital near Poznań	1939	1,100	T4	Greater Poland
41	Palmiry	1939–1941	2.2 thousand	AB and executions	Mazovia
42	Piaśnica near Wejherowo	1939–1940	12–14 thousand	Intelligenzaktion	Pomerania
43	Płutowo near Chełmno	1939	230	Intelligenzaktion	Cuiavia-Pomerania
44	Ponary	1941–1944	80 thousand	executions and extermination site of Jews from ghettos	Lithuania
45	Równe	1941–1944	17 thousand	executions and extermination site of Jews from ghettos	Ukraine
46	Rury Jezuickie	1940	500	Intelligenzaktion and executions	Lublin

	Place	Date	Number of deaths	Operation	Now in (voivodeship or country)
47	Rybnik	1939-1945	3,000	T4	Silesia
48	Rybno Kaszubskie	1945	800	death march	Cuiavia-Pomerania
49	Rypin (Skrwilno)	1939-1945	3-4 thousand	Intelligenzaktion and executions	Cuiavia-Pomerania
50	Skarżysko Kamienna (HASAG)	1939-1944	20-35 thousand	forced labour camp	Świętokrzyskie
51	Stanisławów, Czarny Las	1941	1,500	executions	Ukraine
52	Świecie	1939	1,000	T4	Cuiavia-Pomerania
53	Warsaw, Parliament grounds	1939-1940	500-1,000	executions and AB	Mazovia
54	Warsaw, the Ochota Massacre	1944	10 thousand	SS-RONA war crime	Mazovia
55	Warsaw, the Wola Carnage	1944	30-65 thousand	SS war crime	Mazovia
56	Warsaw, Szwedzkie Góry (Bemowo)	1940	96	executions	Mazovia
57	Warta	1940-1941	581	T4	Łódź
58	Wawer near Warsaw	1939	107	execution	Mazovia
59	Wilno (now Vilnius)	1941	380	T4	Lithuania
60	Wydmy Łuże near Warsaw	1942	100	executions	Mazovia
61	Zamość rotunda	1939-1944	8 thousand	AB and executions	Lublin
62	Zbylitowska Góra near Tarnów	1939-1944	10 thousand	executions and extermination site of Jews from ghettos	Lesser Poland
63	Zofiówka	1942	108	T4	Mazovia

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Sebastian Piątkowski



The Wola Carnage: Eyewitness Testimonies

Left: Photo 2.7. Brigade commanders of the Russian National Liberation Army that collaborated with Germany and took part in the pacification of the district of Wola during the Warsaw Uprising (Public Domain)

Tens of thousands of inhabitants of the Wola district of Warsaw were killed in the brutally criminal mass murder committed by the Germans and their collaborationist allies serving under German command. The Wola Carnage imprinted a gruesome scar on the rest of the lives of the few who managed to survive the massacre but lost parents, spouses, children, siblings, friends and acquaintances in the bloodbath. Regardless of whether these eyewitnesses told their stories fairly soon after the events, a few years later, or even decades after the War, their accounts bear a living memory of the macabre atrocities they watched.¹

The people of Wola welcomed the first days of the Warsaw Uprising as a promise of hope. Despite the noise of the fighting going on in the district, the sight of the White and Red Flag, the encounters civilians had with combatants, and the news broadcast by the underground radio and press created an atmosphere of enthusiasm. Not even the warnings spread by word of mouth that the Germans were using men, women, and children as live shields in their assaults on insurgent positions and attempts to break down the barricades damped down the general sense of excitement.² The turning point came on 5 August 1944, when

¹ See Wosińska, Małgorzata, "Trauma rzezi Woli. Przestrzeń doświadczenia granicznego," *Wola 1944. Nierozliczona zbrodnia a pojęcie ludobójstwa*, Eryk Habowski (ed.), Warszawa: Instytut Pileckiego, 2019, p. 53–82;

² Hanson, Joanna K. M., *The Civilian Population and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944*, Cambridge: C.U.P., 2004; quoted after the Polish edition, *Nadludzkiej poddani próbie. Ludność cywilna Warszawy w powstaniu 1944 r.*, Translated by Anna Wiśniewska-Walczyk, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 2004, p. 56–59; Gursztyn, Piotr, *Rzeź Woli. Zbrodnia nieosądzona*, Warszawa: Demart and Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, 2015, p. 49–76

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the Germans implemented Adolf Hitler's order to destroy Warsaw and slaughter all of its inhabitants, beginning with the people of Wola.³

Their extermination was carried out systematically, on a regular schedule. The Germans and their collaborationists would select and cordon off a specific house, and order all who happened to be in to come out. In the yard, the victims would be robbed of their valuables – jewellery, watches, any other items of value they had on them, including garments. They were then driven out into the street, while their oppressors yelled at them, fired their guns, and beat stragglers with their rifle butts. As Ryszard Piekarek recalled,

We had our hands up all the time. They were shooting, beating people with their rifle butts, swearing at people and killing – and there was no one to help us. . . . In my mind's eye I can still see a badly battered railwayman who lived in our house, trying to show his *Kennkarte* to an SS officer. The SS man beat him on the face with his pistol, tore up the *Kennkarte*, and then fired several point-blank shots straight in his face. It was the father of my friend Zosia.⁴

Often, if it was a small group of victims, just a few dozen people, they would be shot in the yard, or in the nearest street. If it was a large group, hundreds of terrified men, women, and children, they would be herded into a place where mass executions were conducted, usually a factory, a square, or the nearby park. In the meantime, the Germans carried out a scrupulous search in the house, firing their guns to open any doors that were locked up. They threw grenades into the basements to kill any people who might have hidden away there. In the final stage of the operation, the house was set on fire, so as to kill the last survivors in the fire or smother them with the smoke.⁵

Wacława Gałka was one of those the German drove out of the house she lived in on Wolska. That morning, she and her husband Szczepan and their two children, their daughter Stanisława aged 16, and six-year-old son Leszek, set out on the road for death. The family and other Polish people were taken to

³ It was an oral order issued by Adolf Hitler on the night of 1/2 August 1944 or in the early morning of 2 August 1944. Przygoński, Antoni, *Powstanie warszawskie w sierpniu 1944 r.*, Vol. 1, Warszawa: PWN, 1980, p. 221.

⁴ Piekarek, Ryszard, "Fragment wspomnień, VIII 1967 r.," *Ludność cywilna w Powstaniu Warszawskim*, Vol. 1: *Pamiętniki. Relacje. Zeznania*, Marian Marek Drozdowski, Maria Maniakówna, and Tomasz Strzembosch (eds.), Warszawa: PIW, 1974, p. 273.

⁵ Gursztyn, p. 81 f.

Kennkarte – German for "personal ID card." All inhabitants of the GG over 15 were obliged to hold a *Kennkarte*.

The SS – abbreviation for die *Schutzstaffel*, the "Protection Squadron" of the Nazi Party. The SS was created in 1925 as a security force to protect Adolf Hitler's public meetings. In the following years it was systematically expanded, becoming a policing organisation within the Nazi Party, with a membership of the most fanatical Nazis specially selected on the basis of physical and psychological criteria. SS men served on the staff of the German concentration camps and in paramilitary units which took part in combat alongside the regular Wehrmacht. After the outbreak of the War, Germany's collaborationists from Bulgaria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Latvia, and the Soviet Union joined the SS. Many of these new SS men had criminal records. They were notorious for their ruthlessness and brutality, and committed numerous atrocities on civilians in German-occupied Europe. In 1947, the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal declared the SS a criminal organisation.

the edge of the nearby park, which was strewn with the corpses of people from neighbouring houses who had been shot earlier. When the Germans fired a volley of shots, Wacława lay motionless on the ground, huddling her son and unaware that her daughter was dead. Soldiers moved about between the bodies, divesting them of any jewellery they had on them and killing off anyone still left alive.

After a couple of hours, perhaps around 12 o'clock (I didn't have my watch), my son Leszek started to cry because his knees had gone numb, and that's when a military policeman shot him. . . . When my son was shot by the military policeman, his blood splattered all over me, so perhaps that's why they took me for dead.⁶

Over the next hours, she could hear more and more people being brought up and killed – she heard the noise of rifle volleys, the screaming and groaning of those who had been hit, and the echoes of stray shots. When evening came, the Germans started shouting, telling those still alive to come out and promising not to shoot them.

I got up, and my husband got up after me. But when he saw that the children had been murdered, he went berserk and shouted, "You've killed our children, kill me too," and stood in the soldiers' way.⁷

They shot him and the other men. Wacława and the other women were taken to one of the buildings. On two other occasions before she was deported to Germany for slave labour, she came up face to face with Germans killing the people of Wola.

On the same day, the Germans drove Wanda Lurie, who was pregnant at the time, and her three children out of the basement of one of the houses and took them and a large group of civilians to the yard of the Ursus factory, where they were made to stand in a column next to a pile of bodies of people who had been shot.

⁶ Translated directly from the original statement, (Minutes of the hearing of a witness Wacława Gałka) "Protokół przesłuchania świadka Wacławy Gałki, 25 III 1946 r.," *Zapisy terroru. Warszawa*, Vol. 2: *Zbrodnie niemieckie na Woli w sierpniu 1944 r.*, Tomasz Stefanek and Leszek Zaborowski (eds.), Warszawa: Ośrodek Badań nad Totalitaryzmami im. Witolda Pileckiego, 2017, p. 317. See also the hard copy and online English version, *Chronicles of terror*, Tomasz Stefanek and Leszek Zaborowski (eds.), Warsaw: Witold Pilecki Center for Totalitarian Studies, 2017. Online testimonial at https://www.zapisyterroru.pl/dlibra/show-content?id=84&navq=aHR0cDovL3d3dy56YXBpc3I0ZXJyb3J1L-nBsL2RsaWJyYS9yZXR1bHRzP3E9R2EIQzUIODJrYSZyY3Rpb249U2ltcGxIU2VhcmNoQWN0aW9uJm1kaXJpZHM9J-nR5cGU9LTlYmc3RhcRzdHI9X2FsbCZwPTA&navref=NGI1OzRhYSAybzsyYyA3cTE7N29kiGh5O2hqIDFINjszZHAgnD-N0OzQzMCAybnk7Mm5mIHcxO3ZtIDE2YzsnXYgNDMxOzQyOCAxNW87MTU3IDE1cDsxNTggMmU7MjJlM2hrOzN-ndCAzZ3c7M2c1IDNoYTsZ2ogM2hsOzNndSAzaDU7M2dlIDNqNTszaWUgMTR3OzE0Zg&format_id=6

⁷ Ibid.

Years later, she said,

In my group there were a lot of children of about 10 to 12, many without their parents. The bodies of those who had been murdered lay scattered about left and right, in a variety of postures. We were told to walk towards the passageway between the buildings. When the first row of four was nearly up to the execution site, the Germans shot them in the back of the neck. As people were made to line up in fours, they were screaming, begging for mercy, praying. I was in the last four. I begged the Germans surrounding us to spare the children and me. One of them asked if I could ransom myself. I gave him three gold rings, but the officer commanding the execution ordered me to join the group about to be shot. I started begging him to spare the children, I said something about an officer's honour. He pushed me away and I fell. He could see I was in the last month of pregnancy. Then he hit and pushed my elder son, telling him to hurry up and calling him "a Polish bandit." I went up to the execution site in the last foursome, holding my three children's hands, the two younger ones with my right hand, and my elder son's left hand. The children were crying as they moved forward. When my elder son saw the bodies, he started shouting that they were going to kill us. Then the butcher behind us shot my elder son in the back of the head, and the next bullets killed the younger children. Afterwards they fired at me.⁸

The bullet hit Wanda Lurie in the neck and exited through the lower part of her skull, ripping a hole in her face. Seriously wounded and paralysed with fear by the horror of what had happened, she spent the next three days lying in the pile of bodies. It was only the thought that the baby she was carrying was still alive and would soon be born that gave her the strength to fight for her life.

The atrocities the Germans perpetrated did not stop at the residential properties. They also went into the hospitals, which were full of casualties and people trying to hide from the monstrosities the Germans were committing. Wanda Łokietek-Borzęcka was one of about a dozen girl guides serving as nurses looking after the wounded in St. Lazarus' Hospital. When the Germans stormed it, she and the rest of the medical staff were driven out

⁸ Lurie, Mściśław. L., *Polska Niobe*, Warszawa: ROLL, 2004, p. 8–9. See also (Minutes of the hearing of a witness Wanda Lurie) "Protokół przesłuchania świadka Wandy Lurie, 10 XII 1945 r.," *Zapisy terroru...* (as in footnote 7 above), p. 130–132, and the English version of this statement in the hard copy and online editions, [https://www.zapisyterroru.pl/dlibra/publication/104/edition/92/content?navq=aHR0cDovL3d3dy56YXBpc3I0ZXJyb3J1LnBsL2RsaWJyYS9yZXRzP3E9THVyaWUmYWN0aW9uPVNpbXBsZVNIYXJjaEFjdGlubiZtZGlyaWRzPSZ0eXBIPS02JnNOYXJ0c3RyPV9hbGwmcD0w&navref=Mzd-jOzM2biAydzyayAzN2c7MzZyIDJwNTsyb20gNjQ7NXQ](https://www.zapisyterroru.pl/dlibra/publication/104/edition/92/content?navq=aHR0cDovL3d3dy56YXBpc3I0ZXJyb3J1LnBsL2RsaWJyYS9yZXRzP3E9THVyaWUmYWN0aW9uPVNpbXBsZVNIYXJjaEFjdGlubiZtZGlyaWRzPSZ0eXBIPS02JnNOYXJ0c3RyPV9hbGwmcD0w&navref=Mzd-jOzM2biAydzyayAzN2c7MzZyIDJwNTsyb20gNjQ7NXQ;); Hanson, p. 47.

into the street, where she saw the Germans killing her colleagues, the nuns, and all the doctors, and afterwards setting fire to the hospital building full of the bodies of patients and those who had been hiding in the cellars. They aimed at her, too, but she survived. After some time, when she tried to crawl out for a place that was safe, one of the soldiers searching the bodies noticed her.

I was lying in a position different from the rest, so I must have drawn his attention because he came up and started kicking me. He ripped off my bracelet and ring, then he sat down, leaning on my legs. He was rummaging about in our bags and cases. After a while he got up, he must have realised I was alive, he stood over me and loaded his rifle. Then he fired two shots at me; I felt the bullets ruffling my hair and got an eyeful of soil. But I was still alive. . . . I don't know how long I lay there for, scared to death. Smoke from the burning hospital was choking me and stinging my eyes.⁹

Wiesława Chełmińska, who was hiding in the hospital basement along with other members of her family and was discovered there by the Germans, was another who may speak of a genuine miracle:

They told me to go into the [basement] ward, where there were corpses stacked up in a pile about one metre high and puddles of blood. Then, they told me and my mother to climb up on top of the bodies. My mother went up first, and I saw an SS man shoot her in the back of the head, and I saw her fall. Then I went up after her, and dropped down before he shot me. He fired and hit me in the right shoulder. About twenty people must have climbed up after me to be shot. A few bodies tumbled down on me, they covered me up completely except for my head.¹⁰

When the Germans set fire to the building and left, Wiesława crawled out from under the pile of bodies. She struggled to make her way through rooms with blazing fires and full of smoke, reaching the hospital's kitchen, where she found the body of her sister, who had been shot along with a group of patients.

⁹ Łokietek-Borzęcka, Wanda, "Relacja, 1966 r.," *Ludność cywilna . . .*, p. 252.

¹⁰ (Minutes of the hearing of a witness Wiesława Chełmińska) "Protokół przesłuchania świadka Wiesławy Chełmińskiej, 7 V 1946 r.," *Zapisy terroru...*, p. 172. Online English version: https://www.zapisyterroru.pl/dlibra/show-content?id=76&navq=aHR0cDovL3d3dy56YXBpc3I0ZXJyb3J1LnBsL2RsaWJyYS9yZXRzP3E9Q2hJUM1JTgybWklQzUIODRza2EmYWN0aW9uPVNpbXBsZVNIYXJjaEFjdGlubiZtZGlyaWRzPSZ0eXBIPS02JnNOYXJ0c3RyPV9hbGwmcD0w&navref=bDQ7a3AgMmc7MjQgMXptOzF6MyBnNTmciAzbmQ7M21tIGo0O2lWIDE0MTsxM2sgZ2o7ZzQ&format_id=6

The scale and course of the atrocities that occurred on 5–7 August 1944 and the following days made those who escaped death in the executions or took shelter in makeshift hideouts and were not discovered by the Germans see Wola as a real picture of hell. Piles of butchered bodies, corpses strewn here and there along the streets, houses set ablaze, and the sound of shots and explosions – it was all so horrific. And the horror intensified at the sight of Germans wandering about the district, along with the other units serving under their command, often boozed up, laughing out loud, singing merry little songs, decorating their uniforms with the watches, jewellery, and items of clothing pulled off the bodies of the slaughtered.¹¹ Those who were hiding encountered women who had been gang-raped and watched their relatives die, and had gone so completely out of their minds that nothing could be done to help them.¹² Some of the residents of Wola were eyewitnesses of insurgents taken prisoner and tortured before being killed. “The sight was horrific,” Anna Sławińska recalled,

iron rods several metres long grabbed from building sites, thrashing about like snakes and making serpent-like sounds. The Germans were yelling, but more ominous than the hoarse shrieks of the oppressors was the silence of the oppressed. They were wearing white-and-red armbands. One had the Polish flag tied under his chin. I couldn't take any more of it – I ran away. I knew what their fate would be, but I never expected I would see it happen in this way.¹³

People who lived in houses not in the first wave of slaughter but with no chances of escape spent whole days and nights in makeshift shelters in the basements. Maria Hoffman, a nun working in an orphanage for girls who hid in the basement of one of these houses, wrote in her diary,

In the shelter the people were pale and deadly worried. In the shaky light of the blue lamps, they looked like spectres from the world beyond. Huddled together, head to head, some sobbing, some swearing, others hushing them . . . Suddenly there's a lady on the steps leading down to the shelter, shouting in a dreadful voice, “Germans!”

¹¹ Sławińska, Anna D., *Przeżyłam to. Wola 1944*, [Warszawa]: Gondwana, 2015, p. 125; Talikowski, Stefan W., “Relacja o przeżyciach mieszkańców rejonu ulicy Elektoralnej i Białej, IV 1963 r.,” *Ludność cywilna* ..., p. 302.

¹² Kicman, Monika, *Pokonać strach. Niemieckie zbrodnie w oczach naocznego świadka*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo AA, 2018, p. 266; Szczesny, Tadeusz Wincenty, “Fragment wspomnień Zawiszaka, IX 1967,” *Ludność cywilna*..., p. 295.

¹³ Sławińska, p. 118.

German collaborationist units – In 1941, Germany started to set up combat units of collaborating Soviet citizens. Those who joined were anti-communists or Soviet POWs who could no longer stand life in a Nazi German POW camp. Some collaborationist units – two Azerbaijani battalions and an extended regiment of Don Cossacks – were used to put down the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. There was also the Kaminski brigade, Russians and Belarusians serving under German command in SS RONA (the Russian National Liberation Army) and fighting alongside German troops. The Germans considered these collaborationist units undisciplined and of no particular military value, likely to engage in criminal activities. During the Wola Carnage as well as in other massacres that occurred during the Warsaw Uprising, the men in these units indulged in numerous crimes committed on civilians, such as mass and individual murders, rape, battery and physical violence, and theft.

She is answered with a moan and a howl from the whole shelter. People are losing their heads, suddenly it's crowded and noisy, children are crying – it looks as if the end has come! . . . Meanwhile, upstairs they're calling, “Come out, the Germans are going to throw grenades in!” Again there's chaos, A human wave constantly surging forward. People discarding their bags, trampling on each other, or lunging forward with enormous items of luggage, knocking others over. At last we're at the exit . . . There, the Germans divest everyone of their rings and watches, and snatch better-looking suitcases.¹⁴

Another indescribable trauma started on 7 August 1944 for those residents of Wola whom the Germans forced to collect up all the bodies strewn over the entire district and burn them. German guards stood by and watched. Years later, Franciszek Zasada, one of the body burners, recalled,

On Monday, we were burning the remains in the field opposite St. Adalbert's [Church]. There were two mass execution sites there, one nearer the Syreny streetside, the other right up against the walls of the houses. There were countless numbers of corpses, like trees. A stack of bodies. Some had been burned already, others were just being set alight, still others were merely singed. The stench of burning was unbearable. We piled up the partly burned bodies along with planks and pieces of wood, then a German poured a liquid on it, and as soon as a lighted match was thrown on it, a huge flame sprang up and engulfed the whole pile. . . . Next, we burned bodies all along Wolska until we reached Młynarska. We were taken into the Bierackis' garden. The grounds and cellars of that mansion were full of unburned and not fully burned bodies, about two hundred of them, and loads of objects. Again, we had to pile them all up. Suddenly, some Germans appeared, escorting an old monk through a hole in the wall of the monastery. He was bent double, lean and bald. Seeing this, a German who was standing next to us laughed and said, “What are you bringing in that youngster for?” They laughed back and replied, “For replication.” And they started to mock and ridicule the old man. They asked for his documents, but he did not have any on him. He was just in his habit. He was asked how old he was and told them he was 83 (if I remember correctly). They made fun of him, and then they told him to run. When he had taken a few steps, they buzzed a volley from their MG's at him. He faltered and slumped down. They took him by the arms and legs, carried him up to the cellar next to the well in the garden, swung him to and fro a couple of times, and

¹⁴ Hoffmann, Maria T., “Fragment dziennika, VIII 1944 r.,” *Ludność cywilna*..., p. 249.

chucked him into the cellar. There his body was burned, along with the others.¹⁵

Murders of this kind were not isolated incidents. Mieczysław Gurbiel, who was a member of the group incinerating bodies at a particular point along Wolska, recalled,

We burned about 300 corpses there. When we had finished the job, the lieutenant who happened to be in the group escorting us pulled a young lad out of our group and said he was a Jew . . . Next, a Ukrainian who was loitering in the street shot him. We burned the body on the pile; I noticed that the boy was still alive as we set fire to him. I don't know his name.¹⁶

Over the next few days, the main route the Germans used to drive civilians out of Warsaw ran across Wola. They took them to Warsaw West railway station and put them on trains bound for Pruszków provisional camp. During the march to the station, murders, thefts, and rape occurred in practically every group of deportees.¹⁷ Jakub Wiśniewski, a fireman who was on duty on the roof of one of the factories, observed the events in the area and said there was a wooden house on the way the deportees took. The Germans put up a notice on it saying "Home for the old and disabled." Jakub estimated that within five days about 500 people – the elderly, invalids, cripples, and people carried on stretchers – must have been accommodated there.

Half an hour before midnight on 11 August, two military policemen came up and threw two incendiary grenades into the house. Suddenly, there was an outburst of screaming, moaning and yelling coming from inside. But the fire spread quickly and soon engulfed the whole

¹⁵ *Pamiętamy o Was... Pamięci 30 redemptorystów zamordowanych w Powstaniu Warszawskim*, Janusz Dołbakowski CSsR, and Marian Sojka CSsR (eds.), Pelplin: Bernardinum, 2000, p. 87–88.

¹⁶ (Minutes of the hearing of a witness Mieczysław Gurbiel) "Protokół przesłuchania świadka Mieczysława Gurbiela, 20 V 1948 r.," *Zapisy terroru...*, p. 238. Online English version: https://www.zapisyterroru.pl/dlibra/show-content?id=88&navq=aHR0cDovL3d3dy56YXBpc3I0ZXJyb3J1LnBsL2RsaWJyYS9yZlXN1bHRzP3E9R3VyYmllbCZlY3Rpb249U2ltcGxlU2VhcmNoQWN0aW9uJm1kaXJpZHM9JnR5cGU9LTYmc3RhcnRzdHI9X2FsbCZwPTA&navref=MnM7MmcgeGI7d3c&format_id=6

¹⁷ (Minutes of the hearing of a witness Mieczysław Krzysztoforski) "Protokół przesłuchania świadka Mieczysława Krzysztoforskiego, 16 IV 1946 r.," *Zapisy terroru...*, p. 207. Online English version: https://www.zapisyterroru.pl/dlibra/show-content?id=573&navq=aHR0cDovL3d3dy56YXBpc3I0ZXJyb3J1LnBsL2RsaWJyYS9yZlXN1bHRzP3E9S3J6eXN6dG9mb3Jza2kmYWN0aW9uPVNpbXBsZVNIYXJjaEFjdGlvbiZtZGlyaWRzPSZ0eXBIPS02JnN0YXJ0c3RyPV9hbGwmcD0w&navref=Z2I7ZnggNDU7M3QgMm47Mml&format_id=6

house. All the people inside were burned to death . . . and any who managed to escape were gunned down by the military policemen.¹⁸

Those who managed to survive the Wola Carnage left Warsaw not only with physical wounds and injuries, but also with a battered psyche. The memory of those horrific days in August 1944 never left them for the rest of their lives.

¹⁸ (Minutes of the hearing of a witness Jakub Wiśniewski) "Protokół przesłuchania świadka Jakuba Wiśniewskiego, 16 III 1946 r.," *Zapisy terroru...*, p. 59–60. Online English version: https://www.zapisyterroru.pl/dlibra/show-content?id=291&navq=aHR0cDovL3d3dy56YXBpc3I0ZXJyb3J1LnBsL2RsaWJyYS9yZlXN1bHRzP3E9V2klQzUIOUJuaWV3c2tpJmFjdGlvbj1TaW1wbGVtZWZyY2hBY3Rpb24mbWRpcmlkcz0mdHlwZT0tNiZzdGFydHN0cj1fYWxsJnA9MA&navref=MTFjOzEwdiAxMWQ7MTB3IDk4Zjs5NXEgNmZsOzZlYyA5OGc7OTVydDk4ZDs5NW8gdnQ7dmUgNXN6OzVyeCA1c3k7NXJ3IDhmOzgzIDk4ZTs5NXAgZHA7ZGlgMTEyOzEwdiAxNDY7MTNwIGF2O2FqIDN2NDszdWMgOGtiOzhpZyAyYTc7MjlvIDV1aTs1dGcgnJf4OzYwcQ&format_id=6

3

Paweł Baranowski
Jan Jacek Sztaudynger

An economic valuation of human losses sustained by Poland during the Second World War

Calculated on the basis of lost wages
as a component of GDP



3.1. Introduction

Left: Photo 3.1.
Polish slave labourers in Germany,
in the Finkenkuhle quarry near
Salzgitter (NDA collections)

The aim of this study is to calculate the earnings Polish citizens lost between September 1939 and May 1945 – German victims during the Second World War.¹ We will carry out this calculation using the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) methodology and consider the following:

- the death toll,
- casualties (persons left disabled or seriously ill as a result of the War),
- children abducted to Germany for Germanisation, and
- slave labourers.

We will calculate the number of victims and lost earnings for Polish citizens of all the ethnicities living in Poland within the country's borders in 1939.

Konrad Wnęk's study in Chapter 2 of this Report estimates Poland's death toll at 5.2 million lives (about 15% of the Polish population in 1939).² We have used the probability of these persons surviving to a given age, and their professional activity (as given in the 1931 census) to estimate the income they would have earned if they had continued to live. In this approach, we treat the individual victim of war as a potential earner whose work contributes to his country's GDP, omitting his individual cost of living.

This is income-based valuation method, therefore our study will not be concerned with the value of victims' lives and health. A cost approach would entail the calculation of the expenses incurred to educate the individual, his cost of living until the end of his education: education, food, clothing, housing costs, etc. A cost approach is not concerned with the victim's age and further life ex-

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Prof. Jan Jacek Sztudynger, Full Professor at the Department of Econometrics at the University of Łódź, head the Department of ▶

¹ Gross earnings, including social security contributions and taxes paid by the employer.

² See Wnęk, Konrad, "Poland's population loss caused by Germany during the Second World War," *The Report on the Losses sustained by Poland as a Result of German Aggression and Occupation during the Second World War, 1939-1945*, ed. Konrad Wnęk, p. 101-171

pectancy if he had not lost his life as a result of the War. Unlike our approach, the cost method does not consider the percentage of individuals who worked professionally. In addition, it is based largely on information which is unavailable for our purpose. For example: the only data we have on household budgets for the period before 1939 is for the city of Warsaw, and this data is not presented in a cross-section at the level (current or prospective) of children's education or of young people continuing their education. Another drawback of the cost method would be the need to adopt arbitrary assumptions on the cost of living and education, e.g. the housing costs of a victim living in his family home in a rural area.

What needs to be stressed, is that our estimates are based on data published in pre-war public statistics, relating to the breakdown of earnings and life expectancy time.³ All of our calculations are based on pre-war data for 1938 or occasionally for earlier years if reducible to a format comparable with 1938 data. In this way, we have avoided creating an imaginary scenario for Poland's post-war development, and considering the potential changes, for example in the breakdown for earnings, if it had not been for the murder of over 5 million Polish citizens. Our point of departure is the death toll as estimated by Konrad Wnęk estimate for the number of Polish citizens forced into slave labour.

Our estimate of the missed contribution to Poland's GDP in terms of the gross pay the Polish fatalities of the Second World War would have earned will take into account their sex, age and economic activity (percentage of employees by age group). We will consider non-agricultural and agricultural workers separately, further sub-divided into self-employed and hired hands. We will compute the probable total earnings (with social security contributions) which would have accrued to war victims during their entire life from 1939 to 2012, taking their life expectancy into account.

In the main variant of our estimates, we will calculate lost earned income for 1938 prices and conditions (or occasionally for earlier years if in a comparable format to 1938 data). However, we shall assume that real pay increased by 1% per annum over the entire period of our calculation.⁴

³ "Polskie tablice wymieralności 1931/32", *Statystyka Polski*, Seria C, fasc. 91, Warszawa, 1938.

⁴ Data regarding the rise in real pay are incomplete, especially in the interwar statistics. An additional difficulty is the 1930s crisis, which makes the average rate of change in wages depend to a large extent on the year taken as the base for calculations. In 1934–1938, the average annual rate of change for real wages in industry amounted to 2.6% (*Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939*, Warszawa, 1939, p. 274). At the end of a slump, the rate of change is usually higher than in a period of economic stability. There is no data for other categories of wages for the pre-war years. For the post-war period, we have data on real earnings from 1955 on, and we shall consider these statistics up to 2012. In this period, the average annual

► Econometrics in 2012–2016, a former member of the Council of the NCN. He received a Ministerial award for his Ph. D. and habilitation dissertations, and the Professor Edward Lipiński Prize, awarded by the Polish Economic Society for his book *Modyfikacje funkcji produkcji i wydajności prac*. Has published 100 research papers including 3 books; and tutored eight doctoral students. Head of 9 central projects on econometric models of economic growth, income inequality, social capital, and European integration. Recently he has been working on social capital: trust in others, readiness to help, and honesty, and their connection with economic growth. He spent one year at the University of Pennsylvania, where he worked with Nobel Prize winner L.R. Klein; and at the University of Bonn.

Estimates will be expressed in pre-war (1938) złoty and for the calculation of the present value of the December 1938 złoty at US dollar parity, the purchasing power of 1 December 1938 dollar was assumed to be equal in December 2021 to USD 19.91 (according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics calculator, at www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm, accessed on 03 August 2022). In 1938, 1 US dollar was worth 5.3 zł (*Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939*, tabl. 46); while on 31 December 2021, 1 US dollar was worth 4.0600 PLN (Table no. 254/A/NBP/2021 of 31.12.2021).

On the basis of these data, we took the index for the current value of the Polish złoty for December 1938 (rounded up) as 15.2518.

3.2. Earnings lost by the fatalities

3.2.1. General principles for the estimation of lost earnings

What were the earnings and employees' and employers' social insurance contributions which would have accrued to those whose lives were cut short as a result of hostilities and wartime occupation? This is the question we have to answer. In this analysis, we examine the consequences of a scenario in which the 5.2 million victims continued to live out their lives "in the natural way" for their life expectancy, i.e. according to the life tables for 1931. We will calculate this on the basis of the widely accepted methodology (also by Eurostat) of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product),⁵ and its income from earnings component. The choice of the GDP method as the basis of our estimates makes our calculations objective and fairly explicit. Yet it also means that income from pensions, disability benefits and other allowances are not allocated to beneficiaries as part of the formal GDP methodology. For the most part, these benefits are financed from contributions paid in from the earnings of persons who are currently working, and

rise in real wages amounted to 2%. On the grounds of these two estimates, we adopted a 1% increase in real wages for our baseline scenario, in compliance with our general principle of moderate estimates (small numbers). In the alternative variant, we give an estimate of real wages lost assuming a 2% annual growth; see Appendix 1.

⁵ For the purposes of this estimate, we assumed that the current principles for the calculation of earnings and GDP and those holding for the period before the Second World War were similar.

hence lost gross earnings cover pensions and unemployment benefits indirectly.⁶

The GDP method disregards persons working abroad, as well as persons who are working but not earning an income from their work. Unfortunately, there are no generally recognised principles in this respect, yet if we decided to withdraw from the GDP standard, we would be risking an excessive margin of arbitrariness. On the other hand, we shall not omit the children who would have been working within a couple of years, but we will ignore those who would not have been working or been unemployed.⁷

Given the available data on labour force participation and unemployment, it appears that nearly 50% of the Polish population did not contribute to GDP, so their deaths did not directly affect the loss in GDP. This feature of our calculation constitutes an obvious downside of this widely recognised and unambiguous cornerstone of the GDP methodology.

3.2.2. Alternative ways of estimating lost earnings

We rejected the calculation of losses in net earnings in favour of the total value of the work done as the contribution to GDP (gross earnings plus social security contributions). Gross earnings include components that are not paid out directly to the employee, but postponed to be paid out in the future (social insurance,⁸ retirement or disability pensions, unemployment benefits) and taxes. This income finances public consumption, that is public access to goods and services such as road maintenance, domestic and external security, maintaining the State administration etc. These and other components of gross earnings make a contribution to GDP, which is an additional formal argument for the application of the gross value.

In contrast to the BOW's approach and method,⁹ which is often used in microeconomic analyses, we will not subtract the costs of living from his potential lost earnings. The formal ar-

⁶ We could apply a formal transfer calculation by deducting pension contributions from the lost gross earnings of working persons and allocating the sum to pensioners and the unemployed, though of course such a transfer would make no difference to the total loss in GDP.

⁷ We determined the number of children who would have been working and those who would not have been working in their future lifetime on the basis of employment figures for the various age groups.

⁸ ZUS, the Polish social security institution, took the time victims were in slave labour during the Second World War into account in their working period, and paid out a benefit to war invalids and other victims in lieu of incapacity for work, which means that the sum corresponding to the lost ZUS contributions was actually paid out by Poland.

⁹ *Sprawozdanie w przedmiocie strat i szkód wojennych Polski w latach 1939–1945*, Warszawa, 1947, p. 38.

gument for this is that our calculations relate to the creation of GDP, not its distribution. The substantive argument is that if we were to calculate and deduct the victim's expenditure, we would have to do the same for the members of his family, if they lost their lives as well. Assuming that the money the whole family would have spent were equal to the income earned by its members (in other words, that the family did not generate savings), this would mean that its annihilation did not bring any losses. Similarly, the value of the savings stream for unemployed pensioners would be negative. What is more, we have no information on the structure of household consumption by age group. Part of this expenditure would have gone on investments such as the purchase of a work of art or durable goods (e.g. furniture). There is no reasonable argument to warrant the deduction of this kind of spending from the human loss. Another argument is the allocation of part of the overheads (tax) on earnings to government investments.

In our calculations, we have not considered discount,¹⁰ nor the interest which would have accrued due to over 70 years of arrears in the paying out of damages. Ignoring discount and interest simplifies the calculation algorithm substantially and bypasses potential discussions and disputes regarding their amount. Moreover, since the discount period would have been shorter than the period of non-payment of earnings, such an approach would reduce the value of victims' lost earnings.¹¹

We have not made any assumptions regarding victims' date of death, since this parameter is unknown for the majority of cases. Our method of calculating lost earnings makes them dependent primarily on the age of the victim, which determines the average number of years which he would have had to work, and not on whether he died in 1939 or 1945. On the other hand, we have taken a maximum time horizon of 70 years,¹² when a person born during the War and treated as its victim would have ended his working life.¹³

¹⁰ BOW calculated the discount, which would clearly have been necessary if the compensation had been paid out in 1947 and the victim had continued to live and work for several years.

¹¹ The economic justification for taking interest into account is as follows: if the lost wages, i.e. the "looted" value of GDP (the contribution lost wages would have made to GDP), had stayed in Poland, they would have got an annual income on the capital. In "Nowa debata o reparacjach," (*IZ Policy Papers* 27 (I), Poznań, 2018: 27 (I)), K. Roth interprets reparations in terms of "open debt," which also shows the viability of considering interest.

¹² The statistical data show an amount of employed beyond the age of 65. We assume that they would have worked no longer than to 70.

¹³ Our estimates are independent of starting date, since all the values we have calculated are based on the value of earnings in 1938, and we have not considered the discount.

Our calculations will be limited to the generation which lost their lives during the Second World War. We will not take into account the next generations which would have been born if their mothers and fathers had not died due to the German occupation of Poland.

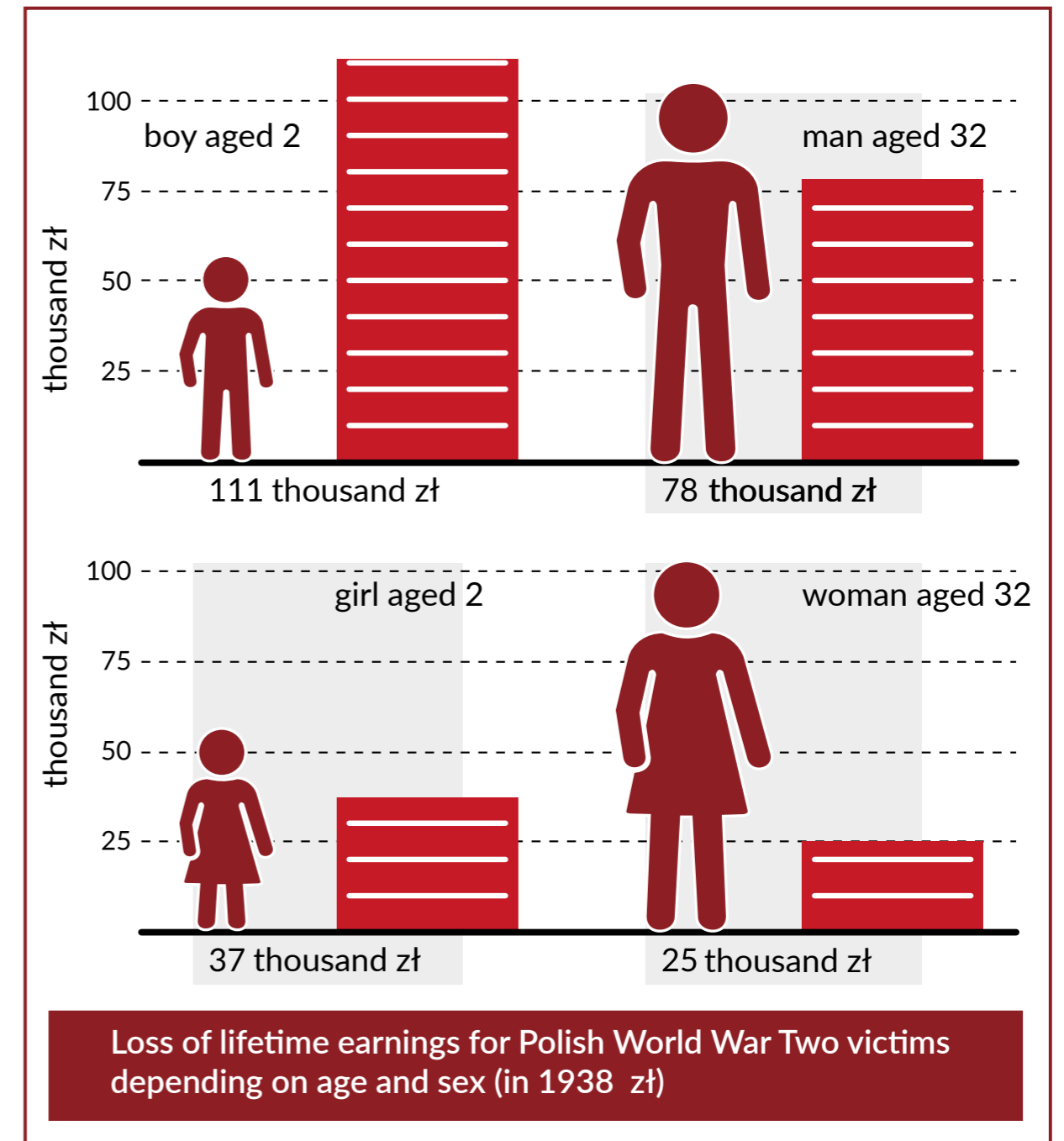
To sum up, we consider the gross wages method the best way to measure the economic and personal war losses contributing to lost GDP. We are going to answer the question how much higher Poland's GDP would have been if it had not been for the loss of 5.2 million lives, and if these people had continued to live, work, and contribute to GDP.

3.2.3. Our method for the estimate of lost wages

The basis for our loss estimate are the victims' lost earnings which would have contributed to Poland's GDP.¹⁴ These losses are the sum total of the pay a representative victim who died due to the War would have received for his work (along with his taxes and social security contributions). We estimate the overall income which 5.2 million Polish fatalities caused by German operations during the Second World War would have earned and which would have gone to build up Poland's GDP – if they had survived and continued working, depending on their age, sex and type of work. We will make our estimate for persons who lost their lives between 1939 and 1945. We calculate their lifetime earnings, that is the sum total value of the work they would have done to the age of 70 if they had continued to live (we assume that all Polish citizens have stopped their professional activities by the age of 70, though in reality a small number of septuagenarians are still working, and in our calculations for each age group we will apply a percentage for those who are actually working, regardless of the official retirement age). Of course, not all citizens contribute to GDP continuously until the age of 70. We emphasise that we are going to determine the number working between the ages of 15 and 69 on the basis of statistical data, in particular, we take into account the small but not zero professional activity of persons aged 65 and over. So, our analysis take into account survival probability, that is the percentage of persons who live to a certain age,¹⁵ and the percentage of persons still working, as an outcome of the fact that a person can only contribute to GDP if he is alive,

¹⁴ We are calculating the value of economic losses (lost earnings) caused by the loss of life, not the value of a human life.

¹⁵ *Rocznik Demograficzny 2018*, Warszawa, 2018, p. 386



and secondly if he is working and earning. Of course, these variables vary over sex and age group. We will make our calculations using the available data for homogeneous groups depending on sex, age and social status (blue-collar workers, white-collar workers, and agricultural workers). Wages along with social security contributions (taking into account sex and type of work) will be calculated by means of the following formula:

Figure 3.1. Loss of lifetime earnings for Polish World War Two victims depending on age and sex (in 1938 zł)

Graphic design by Agnieszka Furyk

$$\sum_t \sum_{age=age0}^{70} Wage_{age,t} \cdot P_{age0,age-age0} \cdot \frac{\overline{Employ}_{age}}{\overline{Popul}_{age}}$$

where:

$Wage_{age,t}$ - average wages by age and occupation type (workers, white-collar workers, agricultural workers), calculated for year t with assumed rate of wage increase (1% per annum),

$P_{age0,age-age0}$ - probability that a person aged $age0$ will survive to age ,

$\frac{\overline{Employ}_{age}}{\overline{Popul}_{age}}$ - employment-to-population ratio by age group, calculated as economic activity rate corrected with 1938 unemployment (Polish official statistics did not indicate official unemployment rate; hence, 8.8% unemployment rate was taken from Mitchell's estimates).¹⁶

This formula is to be regarded as the scenario we will use to create an individual's prospective contribution to GDP. Suppose we had a man, blue collar worker of (age_0) = 25 who worked for 5 years. He would have been performing work for the average wage (plus contributions to social security) for a male blue-collar worker in the 25–29 age group; when he turned 30, his wages would have corresponded to the average earnings for the 30–34 age group until his 35th birthday, and so on, up to the age of 70. We multiply his wages for each year by the probability that this 25 year-old male would have lived up to age P (age) successively for $age = 25, 26$ etc. until $age = 70$ (the professionally inactive and the unemployed do not contribute to GDP in a given moment, however, may do so in the future, provided that they become employed during their life cycle) by sex and the subsequent age groups to which the working persons would belong during their further life. The product of this operation is then multiplied by the employment-to-population ratio (persons who are not working or are unemployed do not contribute to current GDP, but they may do so in the future if they take up work again

¹⁶ Mitchell, Brian R., *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750–1993*, London : Macmillan Reference; New York, N.Y. : Stockton Press, 1998, p. 168.

within their lifetime); and by the respective indices for their sex and the subsequent age groups to which they would have belonged in the future.

Suppose now we had a female white-collar employee who died at the age of 67. She would have been working for just 3 years in the 65+ age group for white-collar females and receiving the average salary for this group. We would then multiply her salary by the probability of her surviving to $age = 68$, $age = 69$ and $age = 70$, and the employment-to-population ratio for women in the 65+ age group.

In our calculation of the value of earnings over the victim's full lifetime according to the type of work performed, we will add up the total earnings for a given type of work (e.g. a blue-collar work). *De facto*, we are assuming that a person employed as a labourer would not have changed his type of work to that of a white-collar employee or an agricultural worker. Given the low social mobility in the period, this assumption may be considered close to the realities of that time. For example, at that time only around 17–24% of the children of farmers who owned smallholdings up to 15 hectares in area, and around 16% of children of farm workers completed 5 classes of primary school.¹⁷ Less than 0.5% of the children of these two groups of employees were admitted to the first year of a course of university education, as compared with over 50% of the children of representatives of the liberal professions.

We will be carrying out all the calculations with respect to the conditions and prices holding for the last year of peace before the Second World War, the only exception to this general rule being the assumption of an annual increase in real earnings of 1%. As Konrad Wnęk's estimates are for age groups covering a five-year period, sub-divided into male and female sub-groups, we will conduct our calculations by age group for the median value in each group, separately for men and women. For example, we shall be taking the starting age of 27 for all victims in the 25–29 age group.

In addition, we shall assume a breakdown for the various professions analogous to the estimated data for the social breakdown of wartime fatalities. 20% of the death toll was accounted for by the inhabitants of rural areas, and 25% by the educated class. Hence, we shall assume that 20% of those who died were agricultural worker, 25% were white-collar employees, and the remaining 55% were blue-collar workers. However, we have not taken the salaries of administrative staff into account because the data available is fragmentary (salaries only for selected clerical

¹⁷ Zieliński, Henryk, *Historia Polski 1914–1939*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1983, p. 310.

jobs, not sub-divided into separate groups for men and women or into age groups; moreover, there is no data for the breakdown of white-collar jobs in terms of senior/junior posts). Neither did we have any data on the income of self-employed businessmen (other than for those working in agriculture).¹⁸ As we explain in Point 3.4. (*Factors ignored in our estimates*), the assumptions we made were on the conservative, “safe” side, that is to say, as a rule they did not overestimate.

3.2.4. Estimates of fatalities' lost earnings: results for lost GDP

Below, we present sample source data (Figures 3.1 and 3.2), and the cumulative results for estimated loss to the Polish economy due to the death toll of the Second World War.

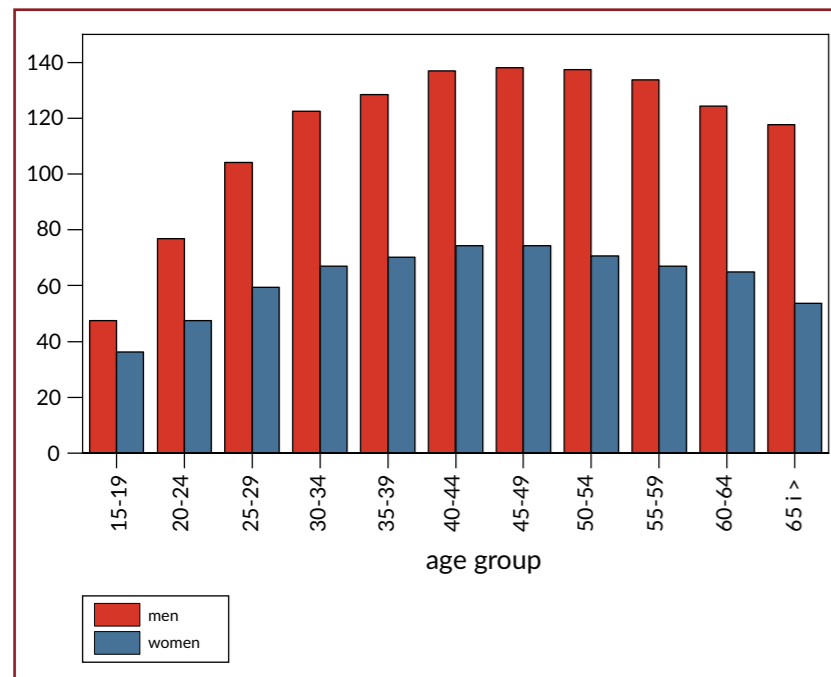


Figure 3.2. Average wages of blue-collar workers, by age group and sex (in pre-war zloty at the 1938 value)

Source: *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1938*, Warszawa, 1939, Table 28, p. 270. Calculations by Paweł Baranowski and Jan Jacek Sztudynger.

¹⁸ With only fragmentary data at our disposal, we may assume that the omission of administrative staff will have a negligible effect on our estimates; however, ignoring the income of self-employed business people, for which we had no data – usually higher than the earnings of other social groups – makes our values underestimated.

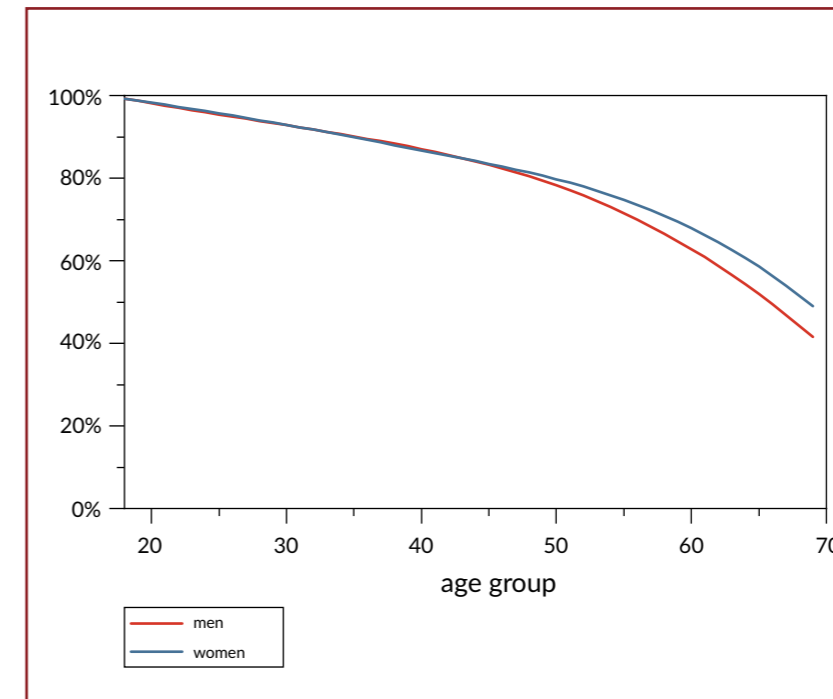


Figure 3.3. Life expectancy for a person of age0 = 15, to a given age, according to sex

Source: *Polskie tablice wymieralności 1931/32*, Warszawa, 1938, p. 4–6. Calculations by Paweł Baranowski and Jan Jacek Sztudynger.

Taking into account the pre-war data for Poland's demographic situation and labour market (wages, assuming an annual rise of 1%, unemployment and professional activity), and Konrad Wnęk's estimates for the wartime death toll, we calculated Poland's lost GDP for 14 5-year age groups, separately for women and men, and for 3 social groups (those working in agriculture, blue-collar workers, and white-collar workers). We present the results of the cumulative calculation by sex in Table 3.1. Our source data on wages are expressed in 1938 prices. However, we also show the values expressed in PLN, December 2021 prices.

Table 3.1 presents the results of the calculation, showing that a death toll of around 5.2 million, brought about a loss to Poland's GDP due to the lost contribution from victims' lost earnings estimated in Polish currency at about 4.3 trillion PLN at the indexation rate and the PLN: \$ exchange rate for the end of 2021. In addition, we may observe that the lost GDP per average male victim is nearly three times higher than the loss for a female victim. This is due to the shortcomings in the calculation of GDP and professional activity we have discussed above, and the fact that women's pay was generally 50% of what their male counterparts earned (Figure 3.1).

No.	Fatalities		Lost lifetime earnings	
	Sex	Numbers	1938 value (billion pre-war złoty)	2021 value (trillion PLN)
1.	Men	2,696,190	216.7	3.305
2.	Women	2,522,863	64.5	0.984
TOTAL		5,219,053	281.2	4.289

Table 3.1.
The Polish death toll and estimated contribution of victims' lost earnings to lost GDP

Source: Wnęk, Konrad, "Poland's population loss caused by Germany during the Second World War," p. 101–171
Calculations by Paweł Baranowski and Jan Jacek Sztudynger.

To summarise:

The value of the lost work which 5.2 million victims would have carried out is 4 trillion 289 billion PLN

if they had survived the Second World War and continued working, and

– the real wages were to increase at a rate of 1% per annum, during the period of their working life, and also

– if the length of their life did not increase (assuming a life expectancy of 50 years in 1931; in fact, life expectancy has risen on average by over 25 years since 1931).

Average loss per fatality	821.8 thousands PLN	202.4 thousands USD	178.7 thousands EUR
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Table 3.2.
Estimated lost GDP due to the average victim's earnings lost during his lifetime (at 2021 prices)

Source: Table 3.1.

The economic loss caused by the loss of a single human life may be evaluated in many different ways using different assumptions. For example, US government agencies have estimated the loss caused by a single death to range from \$ 9.1 million to \$ 11.2 million.¹⁹ It proved difficult to arrive at a sharp economic valuation of a human life even for the American economy, which has a record of at least 50 years of good quality statistics.

Incidentally – in the light of the significant differences in the US valuations, and also of the much lower estimates for our particular case – we should add that a human life is worth much more (both in the tangible and intangible aspects) than that person's wage (contribution to GDP) during his/her period of professional activity.

¹⁹ US Government agencies: the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, Occupation Safety and Health, Department of Transportation, Food and Drug Administration, Health and Human Service set the value of statistical human life in the range \$ 9.1 - \$11.2 millions (V. Kip Viscusi (2019), Identifying the Legitimate Role of the Value of a Statistical Life in Legal Contexts, "Journal of Legal Economics" 25 (1-2) p. 5-28. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/36f80eb4de61910ec1d89552f4aa8ac9/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=31900> [on-line 3.08.2022].

Furthermore, courts of law assessing damages due for the loss of a human life determine them in different ways, depending on the specifics of the given victim, the effects of his/her death on that person's family, and the social losses. To make our economic calculations as unequivocal as possible, we adopted the GDP method based on lost wages.

3.3. Lost GDP due to lost wages of victims who survived the Second World War

3.3.1. Victims with severe bodily injuries (invalids) and the seriously ill (including the mentally ill)

In view of the lack of more detailed data, and – most importantly – information directly from the Polish Social Insurance Institution (Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych, hereinafter ZUS) on the number of persons in receipt of disability benefits immediately after the Second World War,²⁰ Konrad Wnęk's report provides a figure of about 590 thousand Polish citizens with severe injuries and seriously ill.²¹ So we do not have any information on the extent to which these persons were incapable of taking up gainful employment. Therefore, we made a strong assumption that those with severe bodily injuries and the seriously ill could work (according to general employment figures), and earn half of what

²⁰ Letter from P. Jaroszek for the Management Board of Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych (ZUS), to A. Mularczyk MP, Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for the Estimation of the Amount of Compensation due to Poland from Germany, for Damage Caused during the Second World War, 11 January, 2018.

²¹ This figure includes victims with a mental illness and those who were left with an incurable psychiatric condition: Konrad Wnęk, "Poland's population loss caused by Germany during the Second World War," p. 101–171. The fatalities and serious casualties included concentration camp prisoners who were subjected to pseudo-medical experiments. These experiments involved malpractices like surgical limb mutilation, bone fracture without the use of anaesthesia, sometimes recurrently, followed by observation whether or not they healed, the infecting of wounds, and then their treatment, etc. Under the modern ethical principles applicable to scientific research the overwhelming majority of these "experiments" are prohibited, even if carried out on animals. Records of the post-concentration camp syndrome have been published in *Przegląd Lekarski – Oświęcim* (English title *Medical Review – Auschwitz*: online at <https://www.mp.pl/auschwitz/translations/english>. This medical journal has been nominated twice for the Nobel Peace Prize. One of its original team of editors and authors was the distinguished psychiatrist Antoni Kępiński, himself a concentration camp survivor (see Rożnowska, Krystyna, Antoni Kępiński – *Gra z czasem. Portret genialnego psychiatry*, Kraków: WAM, 2018).

healthy persons earned. The other half of their earnings was lost, and therefore we counted it as a loss due to German operations. As Konrad Wnęk's estimate for the number of casualties with severe bodily injuries and the seriously ill makes no distinction between the sexes, we decided to assume that 60% of these victims were male, and 40% were female.

3.3.2. Lost earnings of children abducted to Germany for Germanisation

One of the repressive measures Germany applied against Poland – particularly abhorrent albeit not the cruellest – was the abduction of Polish children. Taking a child away from its parents can lead to the violation of its fundamental needs of security and care, bringing the victim a deep sense of injury due to the forcible removal from his or her family milieu, which will be felt lifelong.

Germany abducted Polish children on a mass scale, not in outcome of a momentary fit of madness, but in a careful, systemically planned operation, in which young children were treated like objects that can be shifted about and transplanted at any time from one home to another.

196 thousand children were abducted. As 15–20% were retrieved after the War, we reduced this figure by 20%, which gave a figure of 157 thousand for the children Poland lost as a result of abduction by Germany.²² We estimated the loss of their prospective wages using the formula given in Point 3.2.3, for their entire lifetime, according to sex and professional activity.²³

3.3.3. Lost wages of slave labourers

In 1939, Governor-General Hans Frank said the following about Poland: "That land is destined to serve as a mass reservoir of manual workers."²⁴ So it comes as no surprise that Poles were one of the largest groups of Germany's slave labourers. Initially, the group targeted for enforced slave labour were the unemployed; later the Germans rounded up random individuals who

²² Wnęk, Konrad, "Poland's population loss caused by Germany..." p. 101–171

²³ For our calculation, we took the age of an abducted child as 8 years (although for children age has little meaning, as the survival rate for children over 1 is high, and therefore the number of years that a new-born child and one aged 14 will be working for in the future is pretty similar).

²⁴ Góral, Jan, "Roboty przymusowe w Piotrkowskiem w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej", *Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne* 4 (2002), p. 145.

3. An economic valuation of human losses sustained by Poland...

happened to be out in the streets and deported them to Germany for slave labour. Slave labourers worked in agriculture, in industry (particularly armaments) and in road and railway maintenance. It is estimated that by the end of the War, they constituted about a quarter of Germany's workforce. One of the result of deportation for slave labour was a fall in the Polish birth rate. One of the aims of Germany's policy of keeping Polish slave labourers in extremely bad conditions was to speed up the biological annihilation of the Polish people.²⁵



Photo 3.2.
Polish slave labourers in Germany
in the Finkenkuhle quarry near
Salzgitter (NDA collections)

Konrad Wnęk's research shows that in early 1941, the number of slave labourers was 798 thousand, rising to 1.086 million in 1942, 1.690 million in 1943, and reaching 1.970 million by 1944. On these grounds, we may arrive at an estimate of 5.743 million man-years of slave labour. For this calculation, we assumed that 15% of the slave labourers lost their lives as a result of overwork, lack of health care, malnutrition, and bad working conditions. We did not take their work into account, as they have been classified as fatalities and treated in Point 3.2.4, which reduces the statistic for slave labour to 4.881 million man-years.

Following K. Wnęk's research, we assume a structure by sex: 70% men and 30% women. Most of them were young people, aged from 15 to 24, and hence this was the age group we took to calculate the lost earnings of slave labourers. For lack of exact data, we assumed that the breakdown by the type of work slave

²⁵ Jan Góral, "Roboty przymusowe w Piotrkowskiem w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej", *Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne* 4 (2002), p. 159.

labourers carried out was similar to the one for fatalities, but we omitted the white-collar category, thereby reducing average earnings estimates across the entire social spectrum.

3.3.4. Estimates of lost earnings of victims who survived the Second World War

Table 3.3.
Number of victims who survived the Second World War and estimate of the contribution of their lost earnings to lost GDP

No.	Victim Group	Number of victims		Lost lifetime earnings	
		(thousands)		billion zł (1938)	PLN billion (2021)
1.	Serious casualties (invalids), serious ill (incl. psychiatric conditions)	Men	354	14.484	220.911
		Women	236	3.092	47.156
		Total	590	17.576	268.067
2.	Abducted children	Men	72	7.830	119.425
		Women	85	3.083	47.024
		Total	157	10.913	166.449
3.	Slave labourers	Man-years (millions)			
		Men	3.417	3.280	50.026
		Women	1.464	0.878	13.400
		Total	4.881	4.159	63.426
Total		-	32.648	497.942	

Source: Wnęk, Konrad, "Poland's population loss caused by Germany..." p. 101–171; Calculations by Paweł Baranowski and Jan Jacek Sztudynger.

3.4. Factors ignored in our estimates

There are many factors which influence the estimate of the value of the work victims of German oppression would have carried out. We were obliged to ignore some of these factors. We had to ignore variables which could not be evaluated due to the lack of detailed data or ambiguity. We also ignored variables subject to quantitative and qualitative changes after the Second World War which would probably have occurred even if the War had not broken out.

The published statistics do not record work done in private households (e.g. unregistered work, such as caring for one's children or carrying out repairs to one's own residential premises and buildings). These parameters are not included in lost

GDP. Moreover, it is difficult to estimate the extent of the informal sector of the Polish economy for the period prior to the Second World War. GUS estimated the contribution of Poland's grey economy to the country's GDP in 2010–2017 at 12–14%. These omissions make our calculations underestimate the real value of the work carried out by the Polish fatalities of the Second World War.

In addition, the data for earnings by sex and age are the entire country, while the victims came mainly from the more developed, central and western areas of Poland, where earnings were higher.²⁶

German repressive measures were targeted primarily against the social elite and educated classes – university professors, teachers, judges and others employed in the judicial system, writers, artists and musicians, as well as doctors, journalists, and the clergy.²⁷ Owing to incomplete information on their salaries and, in many cases, due to the special character of their work, it was not possible to establish a value for their relatively high incomes.

We also assumed that the professional activity of all men and women stopped at the age of 70. In fact, even in the pre-war period, a small number of over-seventies were still working. Similarly, we did not consider young people (under 15) in employment, a phenomenon which did occur before the Second World War. These omitted factors make our estimates conservative, i.e., the losses tend to be underestimated. Furthermore, we did not take into account the economic situation in 1938, for which we had to estimate the value of earnings. Most historical records say that the economic situation in 1938 was in the moderate range,²⁸ so its omission does not make much difference to our estimates.

We also ignored several aspects of Poland's lost demographic potential:

1. the contribution to GDP the victims' (potential) children and future generations would have made,

²⁶ For example, the average weekly wages of a male manual worker in 1935 were 17.20 pre-war zł in the eastern voivodeships, while the average for the entire country was 40% higher (*Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939*, Warszawa, 1939, Table 28, p. 270).

²⁷ *Sprawozdanie w przedmiocie...*, pp. 19–22, 45.

²⁸ Poland's GDP per capita rose rapidly in 1937 and 1938, but only reached a slightly higher level than for 1929; see Skodlarski, Janusz, *Historia gospodarcza*, Warszawa: PWN, 2012, p. 282–289; Maddison, Angus, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*, The OECD Development Center, 2004 <<https://www.worldcat.org/title/world-economy-historical-statistics/oclc/1021323075?referer=di&ht=edit>> (Accessed 20 Feb. 2019).

2. due to the German authorities' pro-abortion policy in occupied Poland and the lack of precise data on this issue,²⁹
3. due to a fall in births in outcome of the German order raising the marriage age for Poles,³⁰
4. the fact that the deportation of young people to Germany led to the breakdown of many marriages and split up couples engaged to be married,
5. the resettlement of Polish citizens of German ethnicity domiciled in Poland in 1939,³¹
6. the fact that life was extremely difficult and hazardous for families of Polish citizens in which some members were identified as Polish and others as German, which probably limited their fertility rate.

In our calculations, we have kept life expectancy at its 1938 level, and assumed a slight (1%) annual rise in earnings. In Appendix 1, we show what would happen if we took a 2% annual rise in earnings, which reflects long-term trends observed in industrialised economies (technological progress, a rise in the percentage of educated employees and a general improvement in health). In Appendix 2, we examine the effects of an increase in life expectancy from about 50 years for 1938 to around 59 for 1950.

- We have not considered the contribution of 400 thousand Polish citizens who were held as prisoners-of-war,³² owing to a lack of information on the length of their imprisonment,³³
- we omitted at least 300 thousand Polish citizens who were repressed by other countries in outcome of the Second World War,
- the method we used to calculate losses from lost earnings disregarded the losses due to the suffering of victims' families, in particular the ordeal of their widows and orphans, as well as the resulting financial liabilities on the Polish state budget for the payment of pensions and other benefits.

To summarise, we omitted a number of factors. This was due to the limited range of statistical data for the period before and after the Second World War, or the lack of hard evidence which could be used for a scenario to determine Poland's so-

²⁹ Wnęk, Konrad, "Poland's population loss caused by Germany..." p. 101-171.

³⁰ Wnęk, Konrad, "Poland's population loss caused by Germany..." p. 101-171.

³¹ Jankowiak, Stanisław, *Wysiedlenie i emigracja ludności niemieckiej w polityce władz polskich w latach 1945-1970*, Warszawa: IPN, 2005, p. 555

³² Kłafkowski, Alfons; and Stanisław Bastowski, *Ekspertyza podstaw prawnych roszczeń indywidualnych o odszkodowania wojenne wykonana przez prof. dr Alfonsa Kłafkowskiego w styczniu 1990 r. celem dochodzenia roszczeń odszkodowawczych przez polskie ofiary wojny*, Warszawa: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza, 2000, p. 31.

³³ The earnings of those who died in POW camps have already been taken into account.

cio-economic development if the War had not broken out. These omissions tended to make our results on the low side of the real loss in earnings, showing that our estimates are cautious and moderate.

3.5. Conclusion

German operations against Poland during the Second World War brought about a multitude of losses for Poland – both tangible and intangible ones. The most serious of the intangible losses were undoubtedly the human losses – the death toll and loss of health of Polish citizens. To estimate the value of these losses, we used the generally acknowledged Gross Domestic Product method, and specifically the method for the calculation of lost wages as a component of GDP. In our opinion, conducting calculations in this way makes them as objective as possible, given that so many years have passed since Germany committed these atrocities.

The basis for our calculations was the number of Poland's war victims and the breakdown of this overall figure, as determined by Konrad Wnęk and Czesław Łuczak. We estimated victims' lost wages, on the basis of data for the breakdown for wages, professional activity, and life expectancy in 1938. We assumed that the real value of wages would rise by 1% each year. We created a hypothetical scenario in which the 5.2 million persons who died survived and continued to live, and work (contribute to GDP), according to pre-war labour market conditions.

On the basis of this methodology, we estimate that the death of 5.2 million Polish citizens brought about a total loss of GDP amounting to 4.289 trillion PLN, the equivalent of US \$ 1.056 trillion or 933 billion EUR (in terms of prices and at exchange rates for the end of 2021). The harm done to Polish citizens by disabilities, diseases, the abduction of children, and slave labour resulted in a further loss of GDP amounting to 498 billion PLN, the equivalent of US \$ 123 billion or 108 billion EUR.

We estimate the overall losses to Poland's GDP due to the death toll and casualties in total lost wages at the sum of 4.787 trillion PLN, the equivalent of US \$ 1.179 trillion or 1.041 trillion EUR.

The fact that in our calculations we ignored the next generations which were not born in outcome of the annihilation of potential parents, in our opinion makes our estimates close

to the minimum value for the methodology we have adopted.³⁴ Also, other victims and losses which we ignored, such as prisoners-of-war, have reduced our estimate of losses of wages due to deaths and injuries.

A similar effect is achieved if we assume that the real rise in wages was only 1% per annum, for an unchanged life expectancy at the 1938 statistic, as we show in our supplementary estimates presented in Appendices 1 and 2. In particular, if we take the rise in real value of victims' wages at 2% per annum, our estimates of losses to GDP will go up by about 33%. In turn, if we extend average life expectancy from around 50 years in 1931 up to around 59 years in 1950, losses in GDP will go up by around 9%.

Appendix 1. A 2% annual rise in real wages

In the foregoing discussion and calculations, we assumed a moderate rise in real wages at 1% per annum. However, in typical economies, long-term productivity increases by approx. 2–3% per annum, while real wages increase by about 1–2%. To avoid speculating what the extent of the rise in productivity (and hence in wages as well) of the victims might have been, we adopted the cautious assumption of a real annual growth in wages of 1%.

However, if real wages were to grow by 2% each year, with all the other assumptions fixed at their previous value, the amount of lost earned income only for the fatalities would increase by 1.399 trillion PLN (around 33%) for 2021. We believe the consideration of the effects of a 2% increase in real wages fully warranted in the light of the post-war rising level of education, technological progress, and growing productivity (see footnote 4).

Appendix 2. An increase in life expectancy to the 1950 level

Average life expectancy has risen significantly – by 25–30 years – over the period for which this analysis has been conducted. In 1931–1932, life expectancy in Poland was 48 years for men and 51 years for women.³⁵ After a lapse of 70 years since the middle of the War, in 2012, in other words the year in which the last victim of the War, a neonate who died in 1942, could still have been contributing to the country's GDP – life expectancy in Poland was 73 years for men and 81 years for women.³⁶

Following the principle of using pre-war data to estimate wage (GDP) losses, in the basic scenario we also based the life expect-

³⁴ This approach is a cautious or conservative strategy, in which the scenario chosen out of several possibilities for the calculation yields a lower estimate.

³⁵ Gawryszewski, Andrzej, *Ludność Polski w XX wieku*, Warszawa: PAN, IGiPZ, 2005, p. 195.

³⁶ *Rocznik Demograficzny 2016*, Warszawa, 2016, p. 386.

tancy data on the pre-war level, i.e., the probability of reaching certain age according to the last available data before 1939 (life expectancy tables 1931–1932). However, if we were to apply the data from the 1950³⁷ life tables, average life expectancy would increase by approximately 8 years for men, and 10 years for women.

The admission of such a life expectancy for all the victims would give an increase in the number of years in which they could have contributed to Poland's GDP. The total sum of wages lost for the fatalities alone would increase by around 9% (385 billion PLN at the value for 2021).

Appendix 3. Comparison of our loss valuation with the BOW estimate

In Table VII of the BOW report,³⁸ *Utraczone nadwyżki produkcyjne osób uśmierconych i dotkniętych kalectwem* (Wages lost due to fatalities and casualties) were estimated at 74.6 billion zł.³⁹ These were the BOW figures for the “capitalised future income, after the deduction of the capitalised future spending for victims killed or partially disabled and hence unable to work – taking into account mortality” and itemisation by occupational structure, sex, and age, as well as average wages for these persons.

The counterpart figure in our valuation is 308.4 billion złoty (at the 1938 value) for fatalities and casualties (severe bodily injuries and serious illness). This amount is over 4 times the BOW estimate. We have explained the reasons for this difference in our report as follows:

- we did not deduct the money victims would have spent;
- we did not use capitalisation: in 1946, when BOW made its loss estimate, most of the compensation was expected to be paid “in advance.” Any compensation paid out now will be in arrears even by as much as 70 years or more (assuming that compensation for victims should be paid out as the wages due to them for the work they did);
- we have taken into account a 1% annual rise in real wages (BOW probably did not consider this).

³⁷ <https://stat.gov.pl/download/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5470/1/1/7/qx1950-2017.xls>, (Accessed 20 Feb. 2019); and the 1931 census; Zasepa, Ryszard, “Polskie tablice wymieralności 1952/1953 roku”, *Przegląd Statystyczny* 4 (1956), p. 333–356.

³⁸ *Sprawozdanie w przedmiocie...*, p. 30.

³⁹ At the value of the złoty on 1 September 1939.



The war losses of Wieluń, 1939–1945

Wieluń, a small town on the pre-war Polish-German border, was the first victim of German aggression against Poland on 1 September 1939. In 1938, Wieluń had a population of 15,689, of which 5,238 were Jews. At 4.40 a.m. on 1 September, the town became the target of a massive air attack conducted by the Luftwaffe, even though it did not have any military objects (there were no Polish troops stationed in Wieluń; it had no military infrastructure, no defence industry or strategically important objects). As a result of three successive attacks with the use of demolition and incendiary bombs, about 160 buildings – 75% of Wieluń's built-up area and about 90% of its historic town centre – perished or burned down. As German witnesses of the tragedy reported, in the aftermath of the air attacks, “not a single stone was left upon another.” The Wehrmacht troops that entered and occupied the town on 2 September reported that everything had been gutted and was in ruins. In 1940, the German architect appointed for the powiat (equivalent to county - Polish second-level administrative unit) wrote that both the inner part of Wieluń and its immediate environs were just a great heap of rubble.

What made the attack particularly tragic was the fact that the Luftwaffe dropped its first bombs in the War on the local hospital, even though it was clearly marked with the Red Cross emblem. The hospital buildings which were bombed included the department of gynaecology and obstetrics and the infectious wards. 32 people were killed, including 26 bedridden patients, several Sisters of Mercy working as nurses, and other hospital staff. **The patients of Wieluń hospital were the first civilian victims of the Second World War**, and the attack on a defenceless town and hospital was the first German war crime committed against Poland in 1939.

Prof. **Stanisław Olejnik** – historian; social activist; and director of the Museum of Wieluń (Muzeum Ziemi Wieluńskiej); founder and president of Wieluńskie Towarzystwo Naukowe (Wieluń Scientific Society). Graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy and History of the University of Łódź, and obtained his doctor's and habilitation degrees from the same university in 1972 and 1996 respectively. Held a professorship at the Piotrków branch of Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, 1997-2005. Author of over 300 scholarly and general publications, including dozens of books. Member of: The Council of Scientific Societies at the Presidium of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Polish Historical Society, Płock Scientific Society, Piotrków Society of Friends of Sciences several.

Left: Photo 3.3. 70% of the town centre of Wieluń was devastated in the German air raid on 1 September 1939 (Muzeum Ziemi Wieluńskiej collection)

The Germans also bombed the early 14th-century Collegiate Church of St. Michael the Archangel, one of the most valuable monuments of Polish church architecture, and then blew up and razed its ruins to the ground (as part of the so-called city clean-up). The same fate befell the historic early 19th-century synagogue, which was damaged by a bomb and subsequently demolished still in 1939.

Other historic religious buildings damaged in the bombing raid included one of the wings of the 14th-century Austin priory and the 17th-century Lutheran Church. Part of the 14th-century Royal Castle (converted in the early 19th century in a Neo-Classical style) was damaged. Wieluń's historic market place with its mid-19th-century town houses and some 16th-century town houses on ul. Barycz were left totally devastated.

Alongside the destruction of the town and its historic substance, its civilians suffered a terrible ordeal. Many inhabitants, particularly in the central part of the town, were caught in their sleep and died as a result of the bombing. Those who tried to run out into the streets were machine-gunned from the aircraft. Numerous witnesses reported that about 1,200 people died in the successive bombings. The exact numbers killed during the raids cannot be determined, because the new German administrators, fearing an epidemic, ordered the immediate disposal of the corpses with no registration, and their burial in mass graves in the Jewish cemetery, or sometimes even in bomb craters.

On the grounds of Hitler's decree of 8 October 1939, the western territories of Poland, including Wieluń and its environs, were annexed and incorporated in Germany. The German racial and ethnic policy was to obliterate all vestiges whatsoever of the region's Polish character.

An anti-Polish operation was implemented, and as of the spring of 1940, it included the mass arrest of groups the Germans considered to have "leadership qualities," mainly the intelligentsia, clergymen, and social and political activists, who were subsequently deported to concentration camps. According to Arthur Greiser, governor of "Wartheland" (the name the Germans gave the annexed territories), the purpose of this operation was "the extinction of the Polish element." The Germans drew up a shortlist of individuals to be killed immediately. It contained the names of about 3 thousand local members of Polski Związek Zachodni (Polish Western Union), Związek Powstańców Śląskich (Union of Silesian Insurgents), Związek Uczestników Powstania Wielkopolskiego (Union of the Greater Poland Insurgents), Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego (Polish Scouting and Guiding Association) and Związek Oficerów Rezerwy RP) Union of Reserve Officers of the Republic of Poland.

On 13 April 1940, over 100 persons were arrested and deported to Dachau concentration camp, and more mass arrests followed on 27 April. 198 persons were arrested in the Wieluń county and sent to Dachau. On 5 June 1940, another group of local inhabitants was sent to Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp. Most of them died there. In October 1941, there were mass arrests of Catholic priests, who were deported to Dachau. Hundreds of people from the town and its county were arrested on 8 March 1942, and scores of them were deported to Auschwitz.

The "resettlement" (i.e. mass deportation) operation the Germans conducted from the spring of 1940 to 1944 hit over a dozen Wieluń families, who were deported to the GG (viz. the eastern part of the Polish territories under German occupation), although in principle "resettlement" was to apply chiefly to the inhabitants of rural areas. In addition, hundreds of Wieluń residents were deported to Germany and occupied France for slave labour.

Wieluń's Jewish community was massacred and completely wiped out in the *Entjudungsplan* for "Wartheland." First the town's Jewish inhabitants were locked up in a ghetto, where the mortality rate was very high due to shortage of food, fuel, medicines and medical care, epidemics of infectious diseases (mainly typhus), and overcrowding. Jews were also victims of public executions carried out by the Germans. In August 1942, all the surviving Jews were herded into the Austin Church and Priory, and most of them were deported to the Kulmhof death camp, while some were resettled in the Łódź ghetto. Over 95% of Wieluń's Jewish community were killed.

Wieluń also lost many of its cultural assets in outcome of German atrocities. Its monuments and national memorial sites were bombed, and the Museum of Wieluń was looted. The town's churches and monasteries were desecrated and robbed of their paintings, sculptures, and liturgical objects, including the 16th-century silver reliquary of the Madonna of Wieluń. Polish and Jewish library collections were annihilated.

Another wave of destruction occurred during combat in Wieluń on 18 January 1945. Several buildings were burned down, including the schools on ul. Rudzka and Krakowskie Przedmieście, some residential buildings on ul. Reformacka and Krakowskie Przedmieście, and a few houses on ul. Palestrancka and ul. Sieradzka.

4

Mieczysław Prystupa
and his team*

Synthesis report on the material losses sustained by Poland in 1939–1945

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4.1. Introduction

This report is a synthesis of 11 partial reports on Poland's losses of various types of property and assets, both movable and fixed, as well as losses in agriculture and forestry, and losses resulting from lost benefits due to the German confiscation of Polish property which could have brought an income.

The value of the losses presented in this report is given according to prices valid on 31 December 2021. Due to the fact that the component reports were written successively over a period of several months, the numerical values of the losses given in them may differ slightly from the values of the losses presented in this synthesis.

This study presents the war losses of the Core Lands, the territory within Poland's current borders before and after the Second World War.

The destruction and confiscation of Polish property, fixed and movable assets, resulted partly from the nature of hostilities, but – to a large extent – it was due to willful devastation. The greatest amount of damage occurred during the German offensive in 1939, and during their retreat in 1944–1945. Warsaw, the capital of Poland, suffered the most, having been systematically devastated and destroyed after the fall of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising (according to some sources, 80% of the buildings were demolished). Particularly huge losses were sustained in architecturally valuable historical buildings. Owing to the nature of the losses we have analyzed, and the limited availability of quantitative data for some of the categories, this is only a preliminary study. The estimated value we give for losses in industry and trade is similar to the market value, in the sense of a highly probable price of particular assets. However, due to the fact that for certain types of property, losses estimated immediately after the War could also have been considered in terms of the reconstruction values or their book values, this problem requires further in-depth research.

First, we present the sources we used to estimate losses. Next, we look at the plan Germany drafted before and during the War to conduct its project to exploit the Polish economy as much as possible for the needs of the Third Reich. Next, we present the methods we used to estimate losses.

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Left: Photo 4.1.
The ruins of Warsaw
(NDA collections)



The following sub-sections present losses sustained by Poland as a result of the destruction of residential and non-residential buildings in cities (4.2.), in rural areas (4.3.), and architecturally valuable historical buildings, churches, and places of worship (4.4.). Losses from the destruction of any other buildings not listed in any of the above categories are in (4.5.). Next, we present the results of our analyses for the magnitude of losses due to the destruction of fixed and movable assets in transportation (4.6.), and the power engineering, industry, and crafts (4.7.). Next, we discuss losses in agriculture (4.8.), forestry (4.9.), and due to the confiscation of buildings which were a potential source of income (4.10.). We estimate the damage caused by the looting or destruction of movable property associated with particular buildings (4.11.), and the property losses of the Polish Army (4.12.). In the last sub-section (4.13.), there is a balance sheet of our results, according to prices from 31 December 2021.

4.1.1. Sources

Our main sources were studies of Poland's losses drafted immediately after the War by BOW, in particular *Sprawozdanie w przedmiocie strat i szkód wojennych Polski 1939–1945* (Report on Poland's war losses 1939–1945), Warszawa, 1947; documents from the AAN in Warsaw; statistical yearbooks compiled by GUS (the Central Office of Statistics, now Statistics Poland), publications from the *Statystyka Polski* series, *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1939*, Warszawa, 1939; *Rocznik Statystyczny 1947*, Warszawa, 1947; *Straty wojenne Polski w latach 1939–1945*, Poznań, 1960; Dariusz Kaliński, *Bilans krzywd. Jak naprawdę wyglądała niemiecka okupacja Polski*, Kraków, 2018; Czesław Łuczak, *Polityka ludnościowa i ekonomiczna hitlerowskich Niemiec w okupowanej Polsce*, Poznań, 1979; *Anlage zu kriegswirtschaftliche Ausnutzung Polens*, Krakau, 1940; and other specialist publications. The loss estimates given in archival documents are in pre-war Polish złoty. We have supplemented the component reports with lists of source materials.

4.1.2 Germany's plan for the plunder and looting of Poland

Poland's industrial war losses were part of the plunder and looting Nazi Germany had planned before. The scheme to appropriate Polish assets was one of the ways Germany intended to Germanise Poland, and was integrated with the planned genocide of Polish citizens – primarily those with Jewish roots. The archival documents and literature on the subject available today provide irrefutable evidence that the plan to seize Polish property and exploit the Polish economy for the needs of the Third Reich, especially its war needs, had been drawn up well in advance, starting in the mid-1930s. German intelligence agents and scientists were systematically collecting detailed data on the Polish economy. Germany was most interested in the leading Polish industries, and especially their technology, potential, and sources of supply. Germany assessed how useful these companies and industries would be for its war effort after their invasion of Poland. Prior to 1 September 1939, the Third Reich was on the verge of economic bankruptcy due to its enormous expenditure on armaments. Germany had equipped its army thanks to credit facilities, mainly from the Reichsbank, but further investment in armaments in peacetime was a threat to its finances. As all the available documents indicate, the outbreak of the Second World War marked the beginning of a criminal economic plan which assumed looting neighbouring countries and turning their citizens into slaves as the cheapest source of labour. This slave labour force was to earn enough to clear Germany's debts and finance its further conquests. This policy was imposed in flagrant contravention of the principles of the Hague Convention, which prohibited the exploitation of an occupied country for the purposes of war. In the first phase of the War, the pillaging was to be carried out by the Wehrmacht. The chief of staff of its land forces had prepared plans for the seizure and removal of Polish assets to Germany.

The grand spree of plunder proceeded in parallel with the occupation of Polish territory. German forces had special units to record all the property of Polish industrial plants and all other resources. A separate unit under the command of Maj.-Gen. Robert Bührmann was responsible for recording the assets and carrying them off. The stolen property was taken to Germany mainly by rail, from collecting points located at railway stations.



Photo 4.2.
The ruins of Central Warsaw
in 1945, following the city's
destruction by the Germans
(NDA Collections)

According to various estimates, over 10 thousand railway wagons full of goods were sent to Germany in September and October 1939 alone. The robbery and transportation of goods to Germany continued in 1940. It is estimated that 262 thousand metric tonnes of iron, steel, and scrap metal; 5 million railway sleepers; and vast amounts of strategic raw materials such as non-ferrous metals, rubber, and diesel oil, were whisked off.

The order to seize and confiscate Polish property was issued shortly after Germany had invaded Poland, and special offices were established to carry out this order. The Central Custody Office East based in Berlin (*Haupttreuhandstelle Ost, Berlin*) was set up on the grounds of the decree issued by Hermann Goering, plenipotentiary for the four-year plan, on 1 November 1939. The task of this office was to administer the sequestration of Polish property, both state-owned and private.

The first months under German occupation were characterised by intense looting. Later, the Germans started to adapt the production of Polish factories to their own needs in armaments, incorporating Polish production into the German production system. A large part of the factory facilities was closed down, having been considered unnecessary from the point of view of Germany's war needs. All major industries, in particular steel mills, coal mines, the Chrzanów locomotive factory, Cegielski's heavy engineering plant, chemical factories, and thousands of smaller businesses, even craftsmen's workshops, were taken over by German

companies. Production of raw materials including anthracite and lignite mining rose under German occupation, both in the territories incorporated into Germany and in the GG. During the September Campaign, the Germans did not bomb the Polish armaments factories, as they assumed these facilities would be useful for them later in the War. For example, Huta Stalowa Wola, one of the most advanced steelworks in Europe, was taken over and amalgamated with the Reichswerke Hermann Göring concern, for the production of 88 mm anti-aircraft guns. Germany increased its armaments production in the GG. The enforced conversion of many Polish factories into armaments plants effectively reduced the practical value of their post-war assets. One of the reasons why war production was located in the GG was that arms factories there were less at risk of Allied bombing than the plants based in Germany. When the front moved nearer Poland, Germany devised a system of planned evacuation, and the destruction of the property they abandoned.

This plan was divided into four stages:

1. The evacuation of bottleneck products and equipment (*Engpaßfertigungen*) in the German economy.
2. The evacuation of the most important machines and equipment – if production were to stop, Germany envisaged that some of the dismantled machinery and equipment would be evacuated, so that it could not be reassembled quickly.
3. The destruction of remaining machines and equipment.
4. General evacuation.

It is estimated that only between June and December 1944, the Heeresgruppe Mitte removed over 150 thousand metric tonnes of equipment and industrial machines from the GG, the Białystok region, and Regierungsbezirk Zichenau (Ciechanów). This evacuation and the destruction of the remaining assets was one of the elements of the "total war" announced by Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels.

4.1.3 Method

The methods we used to estimate losses depended on their type, the Polish legal regulations applicable, and the extent of the available archival information. If the available data provided the appropriate information, we estimated the value of losses in tangible assets at prices held at the time when the assets were

destroyed, sequestered, or confiscated. Similarly, we determined the value of lost income due to the destruction, sequestration, or confiscation of an object bringing income at prices held at the time. To make the estimate in such cases, we applied the “principle of nominalism and valorisation,” as defined in Art. 358 of the Polish Civil Code.

If the source documents gave the value of losses in 1939 prices with no quantitative or qualitative description, or if the description showed that the lost assets differed significantly from their counterparts at the time, the value of these losses was converted into current prices according to US dollar parity, multiplying the “old” value by a factor of 15.40. Only for the estimate of agricultural losses was the conversion into present-day values done by applying the coefficient of change in the prices of representative agricultural produce. We took the value of this coefficient as seven. We present full details of methods used for estimates in our particular component reports.

Aldona Gózdź

4.2. Losses resulting from the destruction of residential and non-residential buildings in cities

The main source I used to evaluate losses for this group of buildings was the publication *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabudowie miast i wsi według stanu w dniu 1 V 1945 r.*

The part on urban buildings in this study considers losses of residential and non-residential buildings (mainly public utility buildings) only if at least 10% of the building was destroyed. According to this publication, approximately 70% of the volume of destroyed urban buildings was accounted for by residential, and about 30% by non-residential buildings.

4.2.1. Method

Due to the specific subject of the valuation, namely the loss of buildings as a result of hostilities, I estimated the loss on the basis of its reconstruction value, as defined in Art. 150 sec. 1 point 2 of the Act of 21 August 1997 on Real Estate Management.

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Art. 151 sec. 1 point 2 of the Act defines the reconstruction value of real estate as the cost of its reconstruction, taking into account the degree of wear and tear. Thus, the term “value of losses in buildings” should be understood as the reconstruction value of buildings, or their parts, destroyed during the Second World War. This overall value, at prices current on the date of the valuation, was calculated as $W_{(W)}$, the sum of the value of losses for Warsaw, which sustained the most damage as a result of hostilities, plus the losses for other cities, which were designated as $W_{(P)}$

$$W = W_{(W)} + W_{(P)}$$

Values for $W_{(W)}$ and $W_{(P)}$ were calculated according to the following formula:

$$W(i) = \Delta Q(i) \times C_{jQ}(i) \times (1 - S_{zt}(i)) \times (1 + W_{kd} + S_a) \times S_n$$

$$i = W \text{ (for Warsaw) or } P \text{ (for other Polish cities)}$$

where

$W_{(i)}$ – value of losses for Warsaw / value of losses in remaining Polish cities

$\Delta Q(i)$ – Number of units of lost volume of buildings in Warsaw/ in remaining Polish cities,

$C_{jQ}(i)$ – average price per unit – cost of reconstruction in traditional (pre-war) technology, 1 m³ of volume of buildings in new condition in Warsaw / in remaining Polish cities, including difficulties relating to work in conditions of reconstruction / renovation,

$S_{zt}(i)$ – degree of technical wear, which is a measure and an expression of impairment resulting from the physical condition of the buildings,

W_{kd} – percentage share in the total costs of the costs of documentation, supervision, preliminary work (studies, analyses, surveying and geotechnical work, etc.), costs related to the development of the construction site (e.g. supply of water and electricity to the construction site),

S_a – coefficient for the destruction of small objects of architecture, the hardening the surface of the yard area, utility connections,

S_n – coefficient for losses in buildings destroyed in less than 10%.

The determination of the parameters necessary for the valuation was preceded by an analysis of the publications containing data on the volume of the buildings before their destruction, the degree of their destruction as a result of hostilities, the type of

materials used to construct the buildings, the facilities and utilities in the given building and its installations, the amount of construction in pre-war Poland, (this information was helpful to estimate the average degree of technical wear).

In my component report, I have detailed the method I used to determine the parameters necessary for the valuation, with reference to specific sources. My chief resources were the 1939 edition of *Mały rocznik statystyczny* and GUS publications from the *Statystyka Polski* series on construction (wall materials) and utility installations, as well as the construction industry in Poland in 1931–1937. To determine average unit prices for the reconstruction of destroyed buildings, I used price lists for the valuation of buildings and structures.

4.2.2. Calculations

Table 4.1. presents a summary of the values of the parameters used in the valuation process, and the intermediate results.

Table 4.1.
Summary of the values of parameters used in the valuation and the intermediate results

	Description	Warsaw	Other cities	Total
1.	Completely destroyed or devastated buildings ^a			
	a) Number	20,408	114,224	134,632
	b) Volume $Q(i)$ [thousand m ³]	92,000	105,968.4	197,968
2.	Average extent of devastation $S_{zn(i)}$	75%	42.3%	57.5%
3.	Lost volume $\Delta Q_{(i)}$ [thousand m ³] (1b) x (2)	69,000	44,825	113,825
4.	Unit price $C_{jq(i)}$ taking into account difficulties connected with work to reconstruct/renovate (for new buildings) [PLN/m ³]	800	611	-
5.	Average wear and tear $S_{zt(i)}$	30%	30%	-
6.	Costs of documentation, supervision, preliminary work etc. W_{kd}	7 %	7%	-
7.	Coefficient for the destruction of small objects of architecture, hardening yard area, utility connections S_a	5%	5%	-

8.	Value of losses ^a [thousand PLN] $\Delta Q_{(i)} \times C_{jq(i)} \times (1 - S_{zt(i)}) \times (1 + W_{kd} + S_a)$	43,304,254	21,474,867	64,779,121
9.	Coefficient for losses in buildings destroyed in less than 10% S_n	1.05	1.05	-
10.	Overall value of losses W [thousand PLN] $W_{(i)} = \Delta Q_{(i)} \times C_{jq(i)} \times (1 - S_{zt(i)}) \times (1 + W_{kd} + S_a) \times S_n$	45,469,467	22,548,610	68,018,077

^a Applies to buildings damaged in at least 10%

Source: *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabudowie miast i wsi...* Calculations by Aldona Góźdz

4.2.3. Results

Table 4.2.
Losses in urban development

	Destroyed or damaged municipal buildings ^a		Average degree of damage (%)	Lost volume (thousand m ³)	Overall value ^b (thousand PLN at 2021 prices)
	Number	Volume (thousand m ³)			
Warsaw	20,408	92,000	75.00	69,000	45,469,467
Other cities	114,224	105,968	42.30	44,825	22,548,610
Total for Core Lands	134,632	197,968	57.50	113,825	68,018,077

^a Applies to buildings with at least 10% damage

^b Including losses in buildings damaged in less than 10%

Source: *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabudowie miast i wsi...* Calculations by Aldona Góźdz

Romuald Gromulski

4.3. Losses resulting from the destruction of residential and farm buildings in rural areas

The value of losses in farm buildings in rural areas was determined on the basis of the publication *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabudowie miast i wsi według stanu w dniu 1 V 1945*. The information in the part of this study on buildings in rural areas applies only to those rural farmsteads where war damage to buildings exceeded 15%.

4.3.1. Method

To estimate the value of losses, I conducted research in rural areas to identify buildings that were 70–80 years old. This research was to determine the breakdown of buildings from that time, and the relation between brick and wooden buildings. I searched for representative residential and farm buildings in a pre-war architectural style and constructed using technology similar to what was used in the pre-war period. I estimated the value of the facilities using the reconstruction cost method, the integrated elements technique, the index technique, and I considered farm facilities (fences, wells, sheds, etc.), and the degree of wear and tear.

I calculated the value of losses on the basis of statistical data for the number of farms with over 15% damage, and for the average degree of destruction per farmstead in a given powiat. I used data from *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabudowie miast i wsi według stanu w dniu 1 V 1945*. I calculated the value of losses per farmstead according to the following formula:

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$$W_{sr} = L_j \times R_j \times W_{jn} \times W_{zag} \times W_{zt} \times W_{zw}$$

where

W_{sr} – value of damage,

L_j – number of units,

R_j – type of unit,

W_{jn} – unit value when new

W_{zag} – development coefficient,

W_{zt} – wear and tear coefficient of the facility before its destruction,

W_{zw} – degree of war damage.

4.3.2. Calculation

I estimated losses in farms and rural homesteads in 160 powiats in 11 voivodeships, according to Poland's administrative division of 1939, with the exception of the Powiat of Gdańsk. On the basis of materials from the inventory carried out by the regional units of the former Ministry of Reconstruction, which constituted the grounds for the GUS statistical study, it was established that in 1939 there were 1,662,506 farmsteads (and 1,804 whose location was not identified and not included in the estimate) in the Core Lands. 339,149 farms sustained damage in excess of 15%, which constitutes 20.3% of their total number. There were also another 4,000 damaged farmsteads whose location was not identified, so they were not included in the estimate. The degree of destruction was determined as a percentage, on the basis of the average index for a given powiat.

The average reconstruction cost of 1 m³ of a farm building was estimated at 192 PLN. Table 4.3. gives the value of losses, and the average value of losses per farm or homestead in particular voivodeships. The overall value of losses calculated in 2021, with the estimates, and valorized for 2021 at the US dollar parity rate amounts to 26,274,074,000 PLN.

Table 4.3. demonstrates the value of losses and average loss per farm in particular voivodeships.



Photo 4.3.
The village of Dzwola near Janów Lubelski, destroyed during the German invasion (Collections of the Michniów Mausoleum)

Voivodeship	Value of losses (thousand PLN in 2021)	Average loss per farm (thousand PLN in 2021)
Białystok	2,994,624	69,042
Gdańsk	546,753	110,668
Kielce	3,937,937	78,657
Kraków	944,391	54,194
Lublin	1,772,126	90,144
Łódź	1,945,074	83,360
Pomerania	1,294,121	93,965
Poznań	2,442,721	69,680
Rzeszów	2,839,401	54,151
Silesia	1,143,689	69,065
Warsaw	6,413,236	112,233
Total	26,274,073	80,469

Table 4.3.
Losses sustained in rural home-
steads in 1939-1945, by voivode-
ship

Source: *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabu-
dowie miast i wsi...*, p. 25. Calcula-
tions by Romuald Gromulski

4.4. Losses resulting from the destruction of historical buildings and places of worship

To determine the value of losses resulting from the destruc-
tion of historical buildings and buildings of religious worship, we
used AAN archival materials, zespół Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki
(the Ministry of Culture and Art collection), ref. no. 387/118.

4.4.1. Method

The data on the losses in historic architecture sustained by
individual voivodeships in 1939–1945 under German occupation
is shown in the table below. The basis for the financial valuation
of losses was the volume of the building, and the unit value, i.e.
the value of 1 m³ of the building, including labour costs. Table 4.4
also provides percentage indexes for the destruction of historic
buildings in individual voivodeships.

Mirosław Kłusek,
Mieczysław Prystupa,
and Zbigniew Brodaczewski

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ish war losses sustained during the
Second World War, history of bank-
ing, ownership changes in Poland
after the Second World War, and
real estate in the first half of the
20th century. Author of numerous
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expert opinions, and other studies
for state administrative units, public
institutions and companies.

The detailed list of Warsaw's losses of architecturally valuable
buildings has been compiled on the basis of archival materials be-
longing to the Ministry of Culture and Art. For the remaining part
of the Core Lands, we have used general summary data from the
AAN, as detailed data are not complete.



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Rzeczoznawców Majątkowych
(the Warsaw Association
of Valuers).

Photos 4.4. – 4.5.
Sochaczew, 29 April 1941.
Germans blow up St. Laurence's
Church (formerly the Dominican
Church). This 18th-century church
was seriously damaged during
German air raids and artillery fire
in September 1939. After it was
blown up, the Germans demolished
the rest of the building and used
the bricks and other materials
to construct a German military
airfield at Bielice. (Collection
of the local museum, Muzeum
Ziemi Sochaczewskiej i Bitwy nad
Bzurą; photographs from the
collection of Leszek Pilaciński)

Voivodeship	Estimated loss (thousand złoty for 1939)	% Loss
Białystok	88,686	60
Gdańsk ^a	96,023	70
Kielce	166,415	34
Kraków	80,855	4
Lublin	73,710	18
Łódź	178,466	33
Pomerania	111,281	18
Poznań	341,640	30
Rzeszów	138,735	32
Silesia	100,857	48
City of Warsaw ^b	1,676,911	92
Warsaw (not counting the City of Warsaw)	199,410	42
Total	3,252,989	43

Table 4.4.
Losses in architecturally valuable
buildings sustained in 1939–1945,
by post-war voivodeship

Source: AAN, Zespół Ministerstwo
Kultury i Sztuki, ref. no. 387/118.
Own calculations

^a Losses in pre-war złoty not counting the City of Gdańsk.

^b After detailed calculations for the needs of this Report.

In our estimate for this Report of the reconstruction value of monuments and historical buildings destroyed during the War, we noted the fact that the inventory and valuation of damage conducted in 1945–1947 did not consider the historic (heritage) value of these buildings. Hence heritage value was not taken into account in the BOW Report (and so there was no data to consider it in the present Report).

Our calculations are a supplement to the 1945–1947 estimates. We used price lists and catalogues of buildings to estimate their reconstruction value, and established that the cost of rebuilding 1 m³ of a historic building is about three times higher than for a structure of no historic value. Therefore, we inferred that the values in Table 4.4 comprise 35% of the reconstruction value of these buildings, i.e. not counting their historic value.

The value of the loss of historical buildings and places of religious worship is estimated at 2,114,442,850 złoty in 1939, and then valorized using US dollar parity (1 złoty in 1939 was worth 15.40 PLN at the end of 2021), which amounts to 32,565,168,666 PLN.



Photo 4.6.
Nowy Wiśnicz, 1940. Germans
destroying the vestments, liturgical
vessels, and furnishings of the local
monastery's church (collections
of the local history society
Towarzystwo Miłośników Wiśnicza)

4.5. Losses resulting from the destruction of other buildings and facilities

Table 4.5 presents the estimated value of buildings, the destruction of which has not been taken into account in other sections of this Report, but which is listed in the 1947 BOW report. The list is for buildings located both in cities and in non-urban areas.

Table 4.5.
Estimated value of damage to buildings not previously taken into account

No.	Category	Losses for buildings (thousand złoty/ thousand PLN)	
		1939 prices	Current prices (2021)
1.	Railway stations, airports, hangars, warehouses, transport buildings (excl. postal service facilities)	664,000	10,226,463
2.	Barracks & other military facilities	628,000	9,672,016
3.	Factories & industrial plants	1,568,000	24,149,238
4.	Storage facilities & gra- naries	350,000	5,390,455
5.	Workshops	260,000	4,004,338
6.	Post offices	39,000	600,651
7.	Other (forestry admini- stration)	40,000	616,052
Total		3,549,000	54,659,213

Source: BOW report..., pp. 51, 59. Own calculations.

4.6. Losses resulting from the destruction of engineering installations and mobile equipment used in rail, road, and waterway transport

4.6.1. Sources

The basic source documents for the estimate of losses resulting from the destruction of engineering installations and mobile equipment used in rail, road and waterway transport were *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1939*; *Rocznik statystyczny 1947*; the 1947 BOW Report; Zamkowska, Stanisława, *Odbudowa i funkcjonowanie kolei polskich, 1944–1949*, Cywiński, Zbigniew, “Straty polskiego kolejnictwa wynikię w czasie II wojny światowej,” *Przegląd kolejowy przewozowy*, 3–9 (1969); and *Straty wojenne Polski w latach 1939–1945*, Poznań, 1960.

On 8 March 1945, the Ministry of Transport appointed a special office, *Biuro Odszkodowań i Likwidacji*, to determine war damage and losses in rail transport and estimate the value of these losses (*Dz. UMK 5 z 5 czerwca 1945*). On 11 April 1945, this office requested all the regional railway directorates of PKP (Polish State Railways) to establish and evaluate their war losses. This data was to form the basis for future peace negotiations and for Poland to apply for war damages.

The basis the new office adopted for the calculation of war losses and damage was the condition of PKP railway lines, buildings, rolling stock and other assets on 31 August 1939, at the value of such facilities and equipment at that time. Its first studies, carried out in 1945–1946, covered only the area of central Poland, while further studies continued until 1949 and the estimates of losses and damage were divided into separate data for central Poland and the Regained Territories (viz. the western and northern territories granted Poland at the Potsdam Conference). To determine the losses in road and waterway transport, I used data from the 1947 BOW report and the 1947 Polish statistical yearbook (*Rocznik statystyczny 1947*).

Zbigniew Brodaczewski

4.6.2. Method

The war losses were calculated in Polish złoty at the pre-war value for 1 September 1939 and valorised to the PLN value for December 2021. The method I have used to estimate losses was subject to the availability of data, especially in terms of magnitude and type of loss.

4.6.3. Results

Table 4.6.
Rail transport losses

No.	Category	Loss (thousand złoty at 1939 value)	Loss (thousand PLN at 2021 value)
	PKP losses in permanent assets		
1.	a) Road repair service equipment	722,920	11,133,908
	b) railway conservation	199,000	3,064,859
	c) rail surface wear & tear	148,000	2,279,392
	d) rolling stock	3,088,000	47,559,214
	e) railway traction equipment	46,000	708,460
	f) mechanical workshop equipment	141,000	2,171,583
	Electric equipment losses		
2.	a) rail traffic	159,000	2,448,807
	b) telecom engineering	61,060	940,403
	c) high voltage power	24,000	369,631
	d) electric traction	20,000	308,026
	e) electrical workshops	4,000	61,605
3.	PKP Road vehicle losses	12,000	184,816
4.	PKP Central Board losses	45,000	693,059
5.	Reconstruction of legal status and measurements	73,000	1,124,295
6.	Local government and private communication losses	465,000	7,161,605
	Total	5,207,980	80,209,663

Sources: *Mały rocznik statystyczny 1939*; *Rocznik statystyczny 1947*; 1947 BOW Report; Zamkowska, Stanisława, *Odbudowa i funkcjonowanie kolei polskich 1944–1949*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Komunikacji i Łączności, 1984. Cywiński, Zbigniew, “Straty polskiego kolejnictwa wynikię w czasie II wojny światowej,” *Przegląd kolejowy przewozowy*, 3–9 (1969); *Straty wojenne Polski w latach 1939–1945*, Poznań, 1960. Calculations by Zbigniew Brodaczewski.

Table 4.7.
Road and waterway transport losses

No.	Category	Loss (thousand złoty at 1939 value)	Loss (thousand PLN at 2021 value)
1.	Road transport	2,060,000	31,726,678
2.	Waterway transport	107,000	1,647,939
Total		2,167,000	33,374,617

Source: Table 4.6. Calculations by Zbigniew Brodaczewski.

4.7. Power engineering, industry, and crafts

The BOW Report was to serve as the point of departure for the assessment of Polish claims against Germany, as its authors write. The data in the BOW Report come from research conducted in the first years after the War, hence the likelihood that some of its figures are underestimates.

Table 4.8 presents losses in the power engineering and other industries, as well as in small industries and businesses, sustained by Poland as a result of German military operations in 1939–1945 (rounded up to the nearest thousand PLN), on December 31, 2021.

Table 4.8.
Losses in the power engineering, industry, and crafts

No.	Category	Losses (thousand złoty at 1939 value)	Losses (in thousand PLN) on 31 December 2021
1.	Installations, machines, and other assets	4,440,000	68,382,000
2.	Raw materials, semi-finished and ready products on 1 September 1939	4,140,000	63,761,000
3.	Seized industrial production	6,126,000	94,348,000
Total		14,706,000	226,491,000

Source: BOW Report. Calculations by Mieczysław Prystupa and Wojciech Kiczka.

Mieczysław Prystupa
and Wojciech Kiczka

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Tomasz Ciodyk

4.8. Agricultural losses

4.8.1. Sources

My loss estimate was based on data from the 1947 BOW Report, source documentation in the AAN related to the BOW's estimate of agricultural losses; books by Czesław Madajczyk, Czesław Łuczak, and Czesław Rajca on the policy of the Third Reich in occupied Poland; and GUS (Statistics Poland) data.

4.8.2. Scope

I have divided losses into the following categories: losses due to the confiscation of farms on territories incorporated into Germany and in the GG, livestock losses, losses due to compulsory supplies (quotas) of agricultural produce, losses due to arable land left fallow in the post-war period, losses caused by a fall in basic crop yields in the post-war period, losses resulting from soil impairment due to hostilities, losses in agricultural machinery and tools, horticultural and special cultivation losses, loss of stocks of agricultural produce held on September 1, 1939.

4.8.3. Method

4.8.3.1. Confiscation of farms

I calculated losses resulting from the confiscation of farms taking into account the area of the confiscated farmland and the length of time for which it was confiscated. These losses involve both expropriated agricultural property, and situations in which the German authorities took farms over and put them under a mandatory management, which effectively left the owner powerless, even if he still had the formal right to his property.

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The expropriation of the property of Polish citizens in rural areas was conducted most of all in the territories incorporated in Germany, particularly in *Reichsgau Wartheland*, an area covering the present-day Voivodeships of Greater Poland and Łódź. Polish farmers were evicted and were to be replaced by Reichsdeutsche and Volksdeutsche from Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, the USSR, and Romania.

Confiscation of agricultural property was applied to a lesser extent in the GG, and affected mainly large state-owned and some private estates. The Germans took over smaller farms for strategic purposes for the army and SS, for afforestation, or as a penalty for non-compliance with the mandatory supply of quotas of agricultural produce. An exception was the Zamość region, where in 1943–1944 the Germans carried out a massive deportation operation, to prepare the area for German settlement.

I treated the loss due to confiscation as the equivalent of the rent the landowner could have collected if he could have exercised his property rights freely. The estimated area of confiscated agricultural land which I took for my calculation amounted to 6.2 million hectares for the territories incorporated in Germany, and 364.5 thousand hectares for the GG, while the average period of confiscation was 3.65 and 2.42 years respectively.

I determined the rent per hectare of agricultural land at 556.15 PLN on the basis of market conditions in the pre-war period (i.e. land prices and interest rates), valorised to the present day price by applying the index of change in basic agricultural prices. I calculated this index on the basis of average prices for 1934–1938 and for 2017, and established its value at seven.

4.8.3.2. Livestock losses

I took the BOW data as the basis for the estimate of losses in livestock (horses, cattle, pigs, and sheep). I applied a general rule that the value of livestock losses corresponds to the value determined on the basis of the current average prices published by GUS (Statistics Poland).

I estimated losses in cattle and pigs by converting the number of animals lost into the equivalent in metric tonnes of meat, and determined the value of the meat. Losses in horses and sheep were determined by taking into account the number of animals and current prices per animal.

4.8.3.3. Compulsory quotas

The data for the quantity of compulsory quotas were based on available materials on the subject. The official prices for which farmers were forced to deliver agricultural produce to the German authorities were many times lower than the market prices. The disparity increased in subsequent years under German occupation. The Germans paid farmers from about 2 times less in 1940, to about 30 times less in 1943 than the free market prices. The settlement for compulsory quotas was not an equivalent exchange of payment for the produce supplied, therefore I followed the BOW approach and treated compulsory quotas as a war loss. Their amount was established on the basis of the value of supplies of individual quota produce, determined on the basis of the average purchase prices of agricultural produce in 2017 published by GUS (Statistics Poland). I considered the compulsory supply of the following agricultural produce: the four basic cereals, potatoes, sugar beet, milk, and poultry.

4.8.3.4. Fallow land

In the first post-war years, a large part of Poland's arable land was unworkable for agricultural purposes due to soil impairment, mines, shortages of manpower, change of ownership following the agricultural reform, and a deficit of draught power and other instruments of production. I estimated these losses on the basis of the GUS data for the area of fallow land, as the equivalent of the rent available for unusable land if it could have been cultivated. I took this rent at 556.15 PLN per hectare, i.e. the same as in the calculation of losses due to confiscation.

4.8.3.5. Fall in yields

I examined the fall in basic crop yields which occurred in the first post-war years for the four basic cereals, potatoes, and sugar beet. In 1947, these crops covered 83% of the cultivated land in the whole country. Losses were defined as the lost harvest value due to lower yields in 1946–1948, calculated on the basis of the average yields obtained in 1934–1938. To calculate these losses, I took the average purchase prices of the principal crops in 2017, as published by GUS.



Photo 4.7.
A German military policeman
escorting the delivery of a compulsory quota of farm produce
(AAN Collections)

4.8.3.6. Other losses

In this group, I considered soil impairment due to hostilities, losses in agricultural machinery and tools, losses in horticultural and special crops, and losses in stocks of agricultural produce on 1 September 1939. These losses are presented in the BOW Report only in terms of their value. I could not establish any quantitative data for them from other available sources. Therefore, I calculated these losses by valorising the sums given in the BOW Report by an index of 7, for the price increase of basic agricultural produce from 1938 to 2017.

4.8.4. Results

I obtained the following results for losses in the individual categories:

Table 4.9.
Agricultural losses

Category	Sum (thousand PLN in 2021)
Confiscation	15,661,500.41
Livestock	13,872,117.03
Compulsory quotas (crops)	4,170,174.75
Compulsory quotas (milk)	1,162,038.00
Fallow land	4,506,062.00
Fall in yields	4,748,989.00
Other	19,945,396.00
Total	64,066,277.19

Source: BOW Report. p. 38. Calculation by Tomasz Ciodyk

4.9. Forestry losses

4.9.1. Sources

The basic source of information on losses in Poland's forestry during the Second World War are the estimates made by the Regional Directorates of State Forests in 1945–1946. They were compiled and processed by the Ministry of Forestry for the BOW Report. Hence, the basic sources I used in this valuation were AAN (BOW, and Ministry of Forestry) records. These materials contain reports, studies, summaries and correspondence, and the data in them is aggregated. Hence, I have not been able to make a detailed breakdown of the losses, or refer to the current prices of individual types of lost income on the date of the valuation.

4.9.2. Scope

I estimated direct losses for tree stand (felled wood), soil, office and technical inventory, forest management plans, resin and its by-products, and wood inventory. Indirect losses were the effects of the long time it took to reforest felled areas, the loss due to a fall in production in the felled areas, the effects of soil impairment, the eradication of wildlife and fish, losses resulting from the stoppage in the industry, and damage caused by insect invasion.

4.9.3. Method

My methodology for the loss estimate was subject to the availability of data, especially in terms of the extent and generic breakdown of the losses. The information I collected allowed me to estimate losses in tree stand and partly in stocks (commercial wood and firewood), at the current prices, which I estimated on the basis of average prices for wood obtained by the Forest Inspectorates for 2021.

The remaining losses were determined by valorising the BOW figures over the 1939–2021 period at the US dollar parity rate. Due to the lack of data on direct losses in private forests,

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I established this value following the BOW estimates, as the average direct loss per hectare of state forests multiplied by the area of private forests.

4.9.4. Calculation

The following parameters were determined to evaluate state forests losses in the tree stand and in part of the stocks of commercial wood and firewood: average price of wood – 217.77 PLN/m³, average price of commercial wood – 232.70 PLN/m³, average price of firewood – 112.11 PLN/m³.

I calculated these losses by multiplying the quantitative losses in the tree stand and in the wood inventory (stocks of commercial wood and firewood) by the respective unit prices. The following results were obtained: losses in the tree stand (74,700,647 m³) – 16,267,559,898 PLN; losses in the inventory of commercial wood (1,740,934 m³) and firewood (1,836,873 m³) together – 611,047,174 PLN. The value of other direct losses in state forests and indirect losses in Polish forests were calculated by valorising the BOW figures, which were estimated values at 1939 prices. The valorisation index was 15.4013 for the change in the value of the Polish currency from late August 1939 to the end of 2021 (Table 4.10).

No.	Type of loss	Loss value (thousand złoty at 1939 value)	Loss value (thousand PLN in 2021)
1.	Soil impairment	21,777	335,390
2.	Office & technical equipment	10,933	168,386
3.	Destruction of forestry management plans	20,335	313,180
4.	Destruction of resin extraction and its by-products	47,836	736,739
5.	Sawdust and wood shavings stock	38,289	589,694
6.	Moneys owed to Polish State Forestry impounded by Germany	15,394	238,635
Total direct losses (without tree stand and commercial wood and firewood stocks)		154,564	2,382,024
Indirect losses		623,400	9,601,170

Source: AAN, BOW; AAN, Ministerstwo Leśnictwa (Ministry of Forestry), PGL Lasy Państwowe.

Table 4.10.
Indirect and direct forestry losses (without losses in the tree stand, commercial wood, and firewood)

Losses in private forests were calculated as the product of the average direct loss per hectare of state forests, (which covered a total area of 3,600,500 hectares), and the area of private forests, i.e. 5,349 PLN / hectare × 600 thousand hectares. This loss amounted to 3,209,400,000 PLN.

4.9.5. Results

Table 4.11 presents the overall forestry losses.

Table 4.11.
Forestry losses

No.	Type of loss	Value (thousand PLN in 2021)
1.	Direct losses in state forests	19,260,632
2.	Direct losses in private forests	3,209,400
3.	Indirect losses in state and private forests	9,601,170
Total		32,071,202

Source: AAN, BOW; AAN, Ministerstwo Leśnictwa (Ministry of Forestry), PGL Lasy Państwowe.

Wojciech Kiczka

4.10. Losses resulting from lost income due to the confiscation of buildings

4.10.1. Sources

I estimated lost income due to the confiscation of residential buildings which could have generated an income over the 5 years of German occupation (1939–1945), and from the confiscation of public buildings.

During the War, the Germans confiscated many residential buildings, especially better-quality ones, depriving rightful owners of the income which could have accrued from them. In the

pre-war period, public buildings were generally not leased or rented out to tenants; they were used by Polish public administrative entities, educational institutions, the health service, institutions and organisations, or for other economic and social purposes. The loss caused by their seizure by the German authorities brought a substantial loss to the Polish State and its agencies, and is therefore an integral and fully warranted part of this Report. The sum of the potential income from renting or leasing premises in such buildings gives a measure of the losses to the Polish State on this account. The rent obtained from a property is the basic source of income from real estate, while additional sources of income may come from fees from advertisements placed on the property, and from its equipment and facilities.

In this study, I have examined the losses caused by the confiscation of residential and public buildings in a broader context. I have considered not only the loss to landlords, but also to other beneficiaries drawing an income from the rental agreements or leaseholds, such as the Polish State Treasury, which was thereby deprived of the taxes and fees due on the property, and other entities which lost income from property management and services.

The basis for this estimate was the data in the second general census (9 December 1931). Information from this census was successively published in various volumes and series of the cyclical publication *Statystyka Polski* issued by GUS. Other sources included Czesław Łuczak, *Polityka ludnościowa i ekonomiczna Niemiec w okupowanej Polsce*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1979; Michał Kaczorowski, *Początki odbudowy kraju i stolicy 1944–1949*, Warszawa: PWN, 1980; and the GUS report *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabudowie miast i wsi według stanu w dniu 1 V 1945 r.*, ed. Marian Klimczyk, Warszawa, 1967.

4.10.2. Method

To estimate the losses, I applied the following procedure:

1. Estimate of market rent at current prices;
2. Estimate of the rented area in residential buildings and the utility area of public buildings before the outbreak of the Second World War;
3. Estimate of the lost values.

4.10.3. Results

Table 4.12.

Losses resulting from lost income due to the confiscation of buildings that could have been leased or rented out

City/Voivodeship	Losses (thousand PLN in 2021)		Total (thousand PLN in 2021)
	Residential	Public utility	
City of Warsaw	2,247,272	274,488	2,521,760
Warsaw (Voivodeship excluding City of Warsaw)	3,071,759	187,595	3,259,354
City of Łódź	6,655,998	299,520	6,955,518
Łódź (Voivodeship excluding City of Łódź)	3,939,401	198,128	4,137,529
Kielce (Voivodeship)	3,711,126	288,455	3,999,581
Lublin (Voivodeship)	1,165,667	142,378	1,308,045
Part of Białystok (Voivodeship)	1,362,170	64,702	1,426,872
City of Poznań	1,288,718	57,993	1,346,711
Poznań (Voivodeship excluding City of Poznań)	4,789,605	215,531	5,005,136
Pomerania (Voivodeship)	1,776,734	79,954	1,856,688
Silesia (Voivodeship)	3,386,842	152,408	3,539,250
City of Kraków	1,291,604	157,761	1,449,365
Kraków (Voivodeship excluding City of Kraków)	1,338,868	104,066	1,442,934
Part of Lwów (Voivodeship)	335,933	41,031	376,964
Total	36,361,697	2,264,010	38,625,707

Sources: GUS *Statystyka Polski* series; Łuczak, Czesław, *Polityka ludnościowa ...*; GUS report *Zniszczenia wojenne...*; Kaczorowski, Michał, *Początki odbudowy...*
Calculations by Wojciech Kiczka.

Table 4.12 presents a list of estimated losses for particular voivodeships resulting from lost income due to the confiscation of buildings which could have been rented or leased out during the 5-year period of the Second World War.

4.11. Losses of movable assets associated with real estate

4.11.1. Sources

My basic sources of information were the BOW Report, GUS publications (the statistical yearbooks for 1939–1945), *Pro memoria*, and *Zniszczenia wojenne w zabudowie miast i wsi według stanu w dniu 1 V 1945r.* I also examined sample post-war questionnaires in which Polish citizens described their losses and insurance policies.

4.11.2. Scope

The scope of this estimate comprises losses of movable assets on urban residential premises which sustained various degrees of damage, together with movables in outhouses; and losses of movable assets in rural homesteads which sustained damage, along with the movables in their outhouses (barns, cowsheds, warehouses, etc.).

4.11.3. Method

The calculation of the value of losses was carried out on the basis of the number of buildings destroyed or damaged. I made a separate calculation for losses in buildings which were destroyed, and buildings which were damaged. I added on an additional 4% to the basic losses calculated for movable assets kept in outhouses. The amount of losses in movable assets depended on the degree of damage to the residential buildings, their structure and standard, which was a derivative of the owner's professional, financial, and social status.

For losses in cities, I took the number of rooms in the residential premises as the criterion determining the building's standard: the greater the number of rooms, the higher the standard of the residence, and the greater the value of the movables in it. I assigned a separate value to the movables in each of the housing categories. For example, I took an average value of 1,400 złoty for the contents of a bedsit, and 50 thousand złoty (at 1939 prices) for a five-room apartment.

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I estimated the number of completely destroyed and partially damaged apartments, and determined the average degree of damage at 35%. I assumed that their movables sustained the same amount of damage. Using GUS information on the breakdown for the size of residential accommodation (the total number of premises and the number of rooms in them), I calculated the value of losses in their movables.

I treated losses in rural areas in a similar way, taking the size of an owner's farm as the criterion determining the standard of his house. I then assigned an average value for the movables to each of the categories, as determined by the size of the farm. For example, I took a value of 450 złoty for farms with an area of 0.1–2 hectares, and 50 thousand złoty for farms with an area of over 50 hectares (at pre-war prices).

I made separate estimates for losses in movables for completely destroyed farms, and for partially damaged farms. The average damage was estimated at 37.5%. I did my calculations using information on the breakdown for the size of farms.

4.11.4. Results

The value of losses in movable assets in residential and non-residential buildings in urban and rural areas amounts to 3,891,840,000 złoty at the 1939 value.

I valorised this sum to its equivalent in December 2021, using the US \$ parity (1 pre-war złoty in 1939 was worth 15.40 PLN at the end of 2021). The total amount of losses estimated in this way amounts to 59,939,395,392 PLN in 2021.

4.12. The Polish Army's losses of tangible assets

4.12.1. Sources

I used the 1947 BOW Report and the document on wartime army losses *Zestawienie strat i kosztów poniesionych przez wojsko polskie w wojnie z Niemcami 1939–1945*, which is kept in the Na-

czelne Dowództwo (Supreme Command) Collection in Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (the Military Historical Office), ref. no. V.500.1/A.78.

4.12.2. Scope

This estimate is of the Polish Army's material losses due to the hostilities conducted by Germany in 1939–1945. Its scope does not include the costs of the Polish Army's organisation, maintenance and material losses sustained by its units operating with the Western Allied forces and with the Soviet Army.

4.12.3. Method

After a critical review of the aforementioned sources and studies, I took the BOW figure for the value of these losses, 5,266,000,000 złoty at 1939 prices, as specified in the individual items in Table 4.13:

Table 4.13.
The Polish Army's losses in tangible assets

Item	Category	Value at 1939 prices (thousand pre-war złoty)	Value in 2021 (thousand PLN)
1.	Air force	931,000	14,338,610
2.	Navy	438,000	6,745,769
3.	Armoured divisions	215,000	3,311,280
4.	Communications	112,000	1,724,946
5.	Other forces	2,538,000	39,088,499
6.	Military engineers' equipment	957,000	14,739,044
7.	Anti-chemical warfare equipment	47,000	723,861
8.	Cartographic equipment and materials	28,000	431,236
Total		5,266,000	81,103,245

Source: BOW Report; Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne. Naczelne Dowództwo (the Military Historical Office, Supreme Command Collection), *Zestawienie strat i kosztów poniesionych przez wojsko polskie w wojnie z Niemcami 1939–1945*, Warszawa, 1946, ref. no.V.500.1 / A.78.

4.13. Final remarks and summary of all the loss estimates

Further detailed research is required to determine the full amount of losses sustained by the Polish economy due to damage and destruction during hostilities and under German occupation. In particular, the following aspects call for further examination: the identification and estimate of the value of all the Polish businesses operating before 1 September 1939, their activities under German occupation, their condition at the end of the War, the reports drawn up by the German occupying authorities, the estimate of losses for individual branches of business and industry, and an overview estimate of economic losses and lost growth potential.

Table 4.14 presents the summary of our results in prices for the end of 2021.

Item	Category	Loss (thousand PLN in 2021)
1.	Residential buildings and parts of non-residential buildings in urban areas	68,018,077
2.	Other buildings (not entered in other items)	54,659,213
3.	Residential and farm buildings in rural areas	26,274,074
4.	Historic buildings and places of religious worship	32,565,169
5.	Engineering installations and mobile assets used in rail, road and waterway transport	113,584,280
6.	The power engineering, industry, and crafts	226,491,000
7.	Agriculture	64,066,277
8.	Forestry	32,071,202
9.	Lost proceeds from destroyed, damaged or confiscated buildings which could have given an income	38,625,707
10.	Movable assets destroyed or damaged in real estate	59,939,395
11.	Polish Army tangible assets	81,103,245
Total		797,397,639

Table 4.14.
Summary of results of the evaluation of material losses sustained by Poland in 1939-1945 as a result of German aggression and occupation

Source: Tables 4.2–4.13.



The wartime losses of Jasło under German occupation, 1939–1945

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, Jasło was the seat of a starosty, a local centre for the oil industry, and an important railway junction. In 1933, a gas plant was established in Jasło for the Roztoki–Mościce pipeline, and in 1936 Państwowe Zakłady Chemiczne (National Chemical Works), established a chemical plant in Krajowice near Jasło.

In 1938, Jasło had a population of 10,556,¹ about 2,500 of whom were Polish citizens of Judaic religion.² In 1939, there were 2,221 buildings in the town, including 1,250 residential houses.³ The rest were public facilities, places of religious worship, commercial and industrial buildings. This list does not include the properties belonging to the paraffin oil refinery and the chemical plant. The principal buildings were the town hall, the starosty, the General Hospital, the District Court, two banking institutions (Bank Polski and Komunalna Kasa Oszczędności - Municipal Savings Bank), the local branch of “Sokół” Polish Gymnastic Society, the local power plant, a commercial mill, the fire brigade, Hotel Krakowski, 8 schools, 4 churches and monasteries, 2 synagogues, and the railway junction facilities.

In the summer of 1944, the eastern front was approaching Jasło. In compliance with Hitler’s order of scorched earth tactics in areas adjoining the front, a campaign of devastation and organised looting began in the town and its environs. In the first days of September, the advancing Soviet offensive stopped around 7–10 km to the north and east of Jasło.

¹ Archiwum Państwowe w Rzeszowie (Polish State Archives in Rzeszów, hereinafter APR), Oddział w Sanoku (Sanok Branch), Akta miasta Jasła 1568–1944, ref. no. 60/1166/0/2/32.

² The 1938 annual record book for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Przemyśl has an entry on p. 75 that there were 2,639 Judaists living in the Parish of Jasło (viz. in the town and its environs - the civil parish of Jasło).

³ APR Sanok Branch, Akta miasta Jasła 1568–1944, ref. no. 60/1166/0/2/21.

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Left: Photo 4.8. Ruins on Kościuszki St., Jasło, 1945, following the destruction of the town by the Germans (Collections of Regional Museum in Jasło, Muzeum Regionalne w Jasle)



On 13 September 1944, the Germans put up a public notice in Jasło, ordering inhabitants to leave the town by 18:00 hours on 15 September.⁴ The order was signed by the “Commander of the German troops”, (Maj. Gen. Otto Obenaus, commander of the 545th Grenadier Division) and Kreishauptmann Dr. Walter Gentz, though their names did not appear on the poster. As all the vehicles in the town had been confiscated and no trains were running, the people had to leave the town on foot, carrying what remained of their belongings or using hand carts. While the enforced evacuation of the civilian population from the front line area was an act pursuant to regulations under the law of war, there was no military justification for the wave of destruction that followed. As of 16 September, the Wehrmacht’s *Bergungstruppen* (mountain rescue troops) set about the “clearance” (i.e. looting) of machinery and tools, non-ferrous metals, foodstuffs, scrap iron (including dismantled railway lines), valuable items of furniture, clothing, bed linen and “any other serviceable goods.”⁵ Jasło was plundered mainly by the 44th *Bergungstruppe* under the command of Capt. Kindermann. The results proved so encouraging that SS-Sturmbannführer Baumann was sent in from Himmler’s staff to coordinate and distribute the proceeds of the looting.

The records of the plunder have survived. They were retrieved by the Americans in 1945, copies were made, and a microfilm versions were handed over to the Polish authorities. Thanks to this, we know the names of the individuals in the units which conducted the looting and destruction, as well as the effects of their work along with its beneficiaries. From September to 7 December 1944, a total of 1,002 train carriages of various goods were dispatched to Germany from Jasło station. The refinery equipment was sent to the *Preußische Bergwerks- und Hütten-Aktiengesellschaft* company in Gleiwitz and Obernkirchen. Consignments of “miscellaneous household goods” were delivered to several local branches of the Nazi Party: 2 train carriages were sent to the Wilhelmshaven branch, 1 carriage to Bremen, 2 to Osnabrück, and 2 to Hanover.⁶ The looting finished in early December, and a unit of pioneers from the 545th Division commanded by Lt. Fink

⁴ The Regional Museum in Jasło has an original copy of the poster, on deposit from Stanisław Lewek, in its collection.

⁵ Wieliczko, Mieczysław (ed.), *Jasło 1944–1945. Dokumenty zagłady i powrotu do życia*, Jasło: Jasielski Dom Kultury. Stowarzyszenie Miłośników Jasła i Regionu Jasielskiego, 2004, p. 18

⁶ A full list of the train carriages dispatched, their contents and destinations is available in the Alexandria Microfilm Collection (mikrofilmy aleksandryjskie, T-77, r.509–628) kept in the AAN (Archiwum Akt Nowych archives) in Warsaw.



Photo 4.9.
Ruins of Hotel Krakowski
on Kościuszki St., Jasło, 1945
(Collections of Regional Museum in
Jasło, Muzeum Regionalne w Jaśle)

joined the operation. What household goods were thought to be of little value and any other combustible items were collected in buildings, doused with petrol, and set on fire. The gutted buildings were blown up with explosives.

The War also brought huge demographic losses to the town. The Jewish community was almost totally wiped out; some were murdered in Jasło (in the Jewish cemetery, on execution sites in Krajowice and Warzyce,⁷ and in Szebnie labour camp). But the vast majority were killed in the Belzec death camp, where about 3 thousand persons were sent from Jasło between 16 and 20 August 1942.⁸ About 400 ethnic Poles from Jasło were killed in action, murdered, or died in outcome of German repressive measures. They came from all classes of society, but the intelligentsia

⁷ Warzyce is known as the Subcarpathian Palmiry (after the village near Warsaw, where similar large scale extermination by the Germans took place). 5 000 victims, not only from Jasło, were murdered in Warzyce in 1940–1944.

⁸ Kuwałek, Robert, *Obóz zagłady w Bełżcu*, Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, 2010, p. 242. The figure of 3 thousand victims is accounted for by the fact that the Germans brought Jews to the Jasło ghetto from the whole county.



Photo 4.10.
Ruins of Jasło Franciscan church,
destroyed by the Germans
(Collections of Regional Museum in
Jasło, Muzeum Regionalne w Jaśle)

suffered most. There are 163 names on the list of teachers and students of the local secondary schools in Jasło who died due to wartime repressive measures.⁹ The number of victims who died in outcome of the hasty expulsion is unknown. Reports say that several people who did not comply with the evacuation order were murdered on the spot, and that there were numerous deaths due to disease and exhaustion.

After the front passed Jasło (17 January 1945), the Municipal Administration carried out a census, which was collected from 17 to 23 February 1945. There were 624 inhabitants in Jasło at the time. A year later the population had grown, but only to 3 thousand. A significant number of those who had survived were forced to find somewhere else to live. Only five undamaged residential buildings remained in the town centre, and 39 in the suburbs. All the rest of the buildings, including all the public facilities, had been completely destroyed.

The oil refinery's losses amounted to 20% of its buildings, 80% of its power facilities, and 50% of its technological equipment. The chemical plant lost half of its buildings and 90% of its technological equipment, and the gasworks lost all of its technological facilities and buildings.¹⁰

Jasło's damage assessment reports could serve as the chief source for the estimated value of the town's material losses. How-

⁹ The list has been published on p. 180–183 in Zieliński, Kazimierz et al., (eds.), *Księga pamiątkowa: stulecie Gimnazjum i Liceum im. Króla Stanisława Leszczyńskiego w Jaśle: 1868–1968*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1968.

¹⁰ Wieliczko, Mieczysław, *Polski przemysł naftowy pod niemiecką okupacją w latach 1939–1945*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2001, p. 174–175.

ever, these documents are incomplete and dispersed, which is why there may be a considerable error in the amounts they give. On the grounds of data in the records of the Municipal Administration, the Starosty (County Administration Office), and the Rzeszów Voivodeship inspectorate for war damage compensation estimated in 1945–1947,¹¹ we arrive at a valuation of 2.747 billion zł revalued for June 2022. This includes the following: private buildings (housing, trade and small businesses) – 723 million zł, movable assets belonging to private individuals – 470 million zł, industrial property – 578 million zł, public administrative facilities – 253 million zł, municipal infrastructure – 343 million zł, educational facilities – 271 million zł, and religious buildings – 105 million zł.

¹¹ APR, Akta inspektoratu odszkodowań szkód wojennych urzędu wojewódzkiego, ref. nos. 59/36/0/19 3/2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2411, 2416. APR Sanok Branch, Akta referatu odszkodowań wojennych Starostwa Powiatowego Jasielskiego, ref. nos. 60/1191/0/11/306, 529–540, 718.

5

Mirosław Kłusek
and Tomasz Luterek

**Poland's losses
in culture and the arts
during the Second
World War**

5.1. Introduction

Germany's plan for the Polish territories it conquered and occupied was to utterly destroy and wipe out Polish culture. The annihilation plan was to be applied in all the fields of Polish cultural affairs – literature, music, the theatre, cinematography, the fine arts, as well as Poland's museums, architectural heritage and monuments. The project was conducted purposefully and consistently and according to plan. Its aim was first to curtail, and subsequently to eradicate Polish cultural life completely. Its scale was absolutely exceptional, even for the Second World War, and the cultural losses Poland sustained are incomparable with the damage Germany perpetrated in other countries it occupied, such as France, Belgium, Norway, or Holland. Only on Polish territory was the destruction of culture part and parcel of Germany's criminal plan to create a *Lebensraum* for the *Herrenvolk*, the implementation of which was the reason why the functionaries of the German Third Reich occupying Poland were so deeply and ruthlessly committed to their project of devastation.

The methods Germany applied to destroy Polish culture may be divided into four categories: the destruction of the products of Polish culture, looting, the extermination of those who created or contributed to Polish culture, and the dismantling of its organising structure. Germany's first and most manifest operation was the removal and physical destruction of the material artefacts of Polish culture. German occupying forces demolished buildings and monuments of key importance for Polish culture, smashed artefacts made of glass and gramophone records of Polish music, sent whole library collections of Polish books to the pulp mills, and burned the contents of archives and rare collections.

The Germans called the confiscation of property belonging to others "securing it," and applied the concept both to whole collections and individual artworks or coins, early printed works, objects of religious worship, regardless of whether they came from national or private collections. Usually, no records were made during such German "securing" operations, nor were any material requisitioning slips issued, so in fact we may treat them as covert looting. On the other hand, the Germans did not bother to conceal the looting of

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Left: Photo 5.1. The Germans remove the dismantled Chopin Monument from occupied Warsaw (1940) (AAN collections)



artworks that went on when they closed down Polish institutions and took over public and private assets. In this way, German officials helped themselves to numerous valuable collections, especially paintings, owned by Polish and Jewish connoisseurs. The same applied to other types of rare collections – antique furniture, china, carpets and tapestries, gold and silverware etc.

The leading role in the robbery of cultural property and works of arts was played by the scientific and research community “Ancestral Heritage” (Forschungs - und Lehrgemeinschaft “Das Ahnenerbe”). Reporting directly to the Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, the head of the German police, it was responsible for the control of scientific and research institutions¹. In the first instance, this mainly concerned prehistoric museum collections. The Germans were primarily concerned with securing excavations and archaeological objects together with scientific documentation at the beginning of the occupation, which were to serve to confirm the Germanness of the Polish lands. The safeguarding operation was led by Peter Paulsen, professor of prehistory at the University of Berlin².

The Operations Unit (Einsatzkommando) under the leadership of Peter Paulsen, officially established by Himmler on 23 September 1939, was directly subordinate to Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA). The first action to loot and export works of art to the Reich took place in Kraków in October 1939. The next stage in the activities of Paulsen’s Kommando was to deploy a special team of a dozen or so people in Warsaw to secure scientific and artistic values (Einsatzkommando zur Sicherung der Werte wissenschaftlicher und künstlerischer Art). Among others, the team consisted of the leading representatives of ‘Das Ahnenerbe’: Prof. Peter Paulsen, Prof. Ernest Petersen, Prof. Eduard Tratz, Prof. Hans Schleif. Paulsen’s Kommando ended its activities in the GG at the end of November 1939. Due to the decree of 22 November 1939, prohibiting the export of cultural goods and works of art outside the GG, the functioning of the Paulsen Kommando ceased to make sense³.

¹ Łuczak, Agnieszka, *Utracone decorum: grabież dóbr kultury z majątków ziemiaństwa polskiego w Wielkopolsce w czasie okupacji niemieckiej w latach 1939–1945*, Warszawa and Poznań: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2011, p. 139; Fuks, Rafał, and Stanisław Kania, “Grabież dzieł sztuki i niszczenie kultury polskiej,” in *Zbrodnie i sprawcy. Ludobójstwo hitlerowskie przed sądem ludzkości i historii*, Czesław Pilichowski (ed.), Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1980, p. 683.

² Mężyński, Andrzej, *Kommando Paulsen. Październik-grudzień 1939 r.*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 1980, p. 10 and 15. Also in a German edition: Mężyński, Andrzej, *Kommando Paulsen. Organisierter Raub polnischer Kulturgüter während des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, Translated by Armin Hetzer, Köln: Dittrich-Verlag, 2000; Łuczak, Agnieszka, *Utracone decorum ...*, p. 139.

³ Fuks, Rafał, “Działalność „Das Ahnenerbe” w zakresie grabieży dzieł polskiej kultury narodowej,” in *Zbrodnie i sprawcy ...*, p. 696-697; Mężyński, *Kommando Paulsen ...*, p. 18; Łuczak, *Utracone decorum ...*, p. 142-144.

The official action to confiscate cultural property in the GG was initiated by a decree of the Governor-General Hans Frank of 15 November 1939 on the confiscation of the property of the former Polish state on the territory of the GG. According to the decree, the confiscation of property was directed by the Trust Office for the General Government. The confiscation of works of art was finally regulated by the Ordinance on the Confiscation of Works of Art in the General Government of 16 December 1939 and the Executive Order of 15 January 1940. These extended the confiscation of cultural goods to include private and church collections. In the case of churches, it was only possible to exclude objects used for the celebration of the liturgy⁴.

For the confiscation of works of art, Hans Frank created the Office of the Special Representative for the Registration and Safeguarding of Works of Art and Cultural Monuments in the General Government (Der Sonderbeauftragte für die Erfassung und Sicherung der Kunst - und Kulturschätze im General-gouvernement), based in Kraków. Kajetan Mühlmann was appointed Special Plenipotentiary, a position he had already held since 9 October 1939 on behalf of Hermann Göring⁵.

Kajetan Mühlmann’s regular collaborators included the following people⁶:

- SS-Hauptsturmführer Sepp Ernst – as chief of staff and head of administration.
- Dr Gustav Barthel – Director of the Municipal Art Collection in Wrocław.
- Dr Josef Mühlmann (Kajetan Mühlmann’s half-brother) – art historian and private scholar from Salzburg.
- Dr Werner Kundlich – Director of the Reich’s Saltworks Museum in Opava (Reichsgau Troppau).
- Dr Erich Meyer – curator of the Municipal Art Collection in Wrocław.

⁴ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [Archives of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN], Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy [Supreme National Tribunal of Poland] 1946-1948 – ref. no. IPN GK 196/295, “Sprawozdanie o zbadaniu całej działalności specjalnego pełnomocnika dla uchwycenia skarbów sztuki i kulturalnych w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie, lipiec 1943 r.” [Report on the investigation of the activities of the Special Plenipotentiary appointed for the appropriation of works of art and cultural heritage in the Generalgouvernement, July 1943]; *Walka o dobra kultury. Warszawa 1939–1945*, Stanisław Lorentz (ed.), Vol. 2, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1970, document 6, p. 411–412; document 10, p. 416-418; document 11, p. 418-419.

⁵ AIPN, Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy ... – ref. no. IPN GK 196/295, “Sprawozdanie o zbadaniu...”; Kobińska-Motas, Elżbieta, “Działalność specjalnego pełnomocnika do spraw zabezpieczania dzieł sztuki i zabytków w GG,” in *Zbrodnie i sprawcy ...*, p. 713–715.

⁶ AIPN, Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy ... – ref. no. IPN GK 196/295, “Sprawozdanie o zbadaniu...”; Kobińska-Motas, p. 716–717.

- Dr Günther Otto – curator of the Municipal Art Collection in Wrocław.
- Dr Anton Kraus – Librarian at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna.
- Rudolf Prihoda – employee of the Museum of Fine Arts in Vienna.
- Dr Karol Pollhammer – official in the Museum of Fine Arts in Vienna.

In addition to his permanent collaborators, the Special Representative has relied on the detailed and professional opinions by the following scientists⁷:

- Prof. dr Hans von Demel – Head of the Egyptian Department of the Museum of Fine Arts in Vienna.
- Prof. dr Dagobert Frey – Full professor of art history at the University of Wrocław, expert on the protection of monuments.
- Prof. dr Artur Haberlandt – Director of the Ethnographic Museum Vienna, specialist in ethnographic issues.
- Dr Eduard Holzmayer – curator of the numismatic collection, expert in coins and medals.
- Dr Kurt Dittmer – Director of the Ethnographic Museum Berlin, specialist for the culture of other nations.
- Dr Josef Mader – Director of a Viennese tapestry manufactory, expert in tapestries, carpets, etc.
- Dr Leopold Ruprecht – Director of the Weapons Collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, weapons expert

In order to quickly and thoroughly take over and secure the works of art, a southern group was formed in Krakow and a northern group in Warsaw. Gustav Barthel was appointed head of the southern group, with Werner Kundlich, Erich Meyer, Günther Otto and Rudolf Prihoda reporting to him. The leadership of the northern group was taken over by Josef Mühlmann⁸.

The boundary between the northern and southern groups was the 51st parallel (degree of latitude). In reality, however, a strict division of labour between the two groups was not observed. On the contrary, where it was deemed advisable, scientists from both groups worked together. This was necessary because the area of the northern group was more damaged as a result of the war effort and often required work to be done quickly to prevent Poles from hiding works of art⁹.

The Germans deposited the confiscated works of art in the GG at the National Museum in Warsaw and the Jagiellonian Li-

⁷ AIPN, Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy [Supreme National Tribunal of Poland] 1946-1948 – ref. no. IPN GK 196/295, “Sprawozdanie o zbadaniu...”

⁸ AIPN, Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy ... – ref. no. IPN GK 196/295, “Sprawozdanie o zbadaniu...”; Kobiarska-Motas, p. 717.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

brary in Kraków. They were photographed and catalogued, while Polish catalogues and inventories of the requisitioned works of art were destroyed by the Germans. The most valuable of these works of art were isolated and assigned the category Choice I (Wahl I). Their list, detailed in the catalogue of the exhibition “Sichergestellte Kunstwerke im General-gouvernement”, included more than 500 items: sculpture, paintings, coins, medals, arts and crafts and old weapons¹⁰.

In Choice II (Wahl II) works of art and cultural goods of lesser importance, not of “absolute interest to the Reich”, were placed. These objects, which were of museum quality, were either at the disposal of Governor-General Hans Frank or were used to furnish and decorate administrative rooms and the private flats of German dignitaries¹¹.

The largest part of the works of art requisitioned by the northern group were sent back to Krakow and left there. Some of them were counted as Choice I and some as Choice II. The remainder of the objects - designated by scholars as Choice III (Wahl III) - were given to architect Köttgen for the purposes of representation in the General Government or to Felix Koper, director of the National Museum, as a deposit¹².

Hans Frank was not satisfied with the Office of the Special Representative and introduced numerous changes to its functions. Above all, he wanted to significantly reduce the position of Kajetan Mühlmann, Göring's protégé. The official pretext was the inadequacy of the Office of the Special Representative and the lack of adequate security for confiscated works of art. Among the most important changes were the appointment of the architect Wilhelm Ernest von Palezieux as an expert on the furnishing of the Royal Castle in April 1942, and the transformation of the Office of the Special Representative for the Registration and Preservation of Works of Art and Cultural Monuments in the General Government into the Office for the Preservation of Ancient Art (Amt für die Pflege alter Kunst) in July 1942. A year later, Mühlmann resigned. However, until the end of the war, he failed to hand over the secured cultural assets, which he was supposed to do officially¹³.

The Germans ruthlessly set about the extermination of individuals who had any say at all on cultural matters. They imposed

¹⁰ AIPN, Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy ... – ref. no. IPN GK 196/295, “Sprawozdanie o zbadaniu...”; Kobiarska-Motas, Działalność specjalnego ...,” p. 717-719; Łuczak, p. 147.

¹¹ AIPN, Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy ... – ref. no. IPN GK 196/295, “Sprawozdanie o zbadaniu ...”; Kobiarska-Motas, p. 717-719.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ Łuczak, p. 151.

a reign of terror, intensifying it especially against scholars, artists, and teachers, who were arrested, beaten and tortured, sentenced to death, or deported to German concentration camps, where most of them died in inhuman conditions. The list of fatalities suffered by Polish culture is vast.

The death rate rose because of the very conditions in which the Germans made Poles live. The number of persons engaged in fostering Polish culture who died during the War was incomparably higher than prior to its outbreak – due to the dire shortage of food, medications, and in practice the abolition of the health service as such.

The last way in which the Germans set about destroying Polish culture was by hitting out against its very foundations. For the space of a few years, they managed to erase all the outward signs of cultural affairs. They closed down all the Polish cultural institutions. Polish citizens who lived on the territory of the General Government were deprived of their museums, public libraries, art exhibitions, an independent press, and uncensored books. Not only works by distinguished Polish writers were suppressed – so were many other books belonging to the world's literary heritage, and the same happened with works of music, drama, and cinematography. A ban was put on radios: any Pole who had a radio set was required “by law” to surrender it. All the universities, colleges of higher education, and secondary schools were closed, and the only education available to Polish children were primary and vocational training schools, which had a very meagre curriculum. There were to be no lessons of the Polish language and literature, no history, geography, Latin or foreign languages in the schools. The war on Polish culture was particularly exacerbated in those parts of Poland which were directly incorporated in Germany, where it was prohibited even to speak Polish in the street.

The Germans accomplished a substantial part of their aim to destroy Polish culture. They reduced Poland's cultural potential; the losses were so huge that the practical possibility of post-war restoration was extremely challenging. In many fields of culture, there could be no continuity from generation to generation. Many of the seniors, qualified individuals with a lot of experience, died without the opportunity of training new recruits in their field. This is what happened in education, music, the dramatic arts, literature, and the museums. For six years, there was no intake of students to the art, drama, and music colleges, which had all been closed down, giving rise to a vast shortfall which it took many years after the War to remedy.

On 15 December 1939, pretty soon after the establishment of a German administrative network, the Germans issued an order for all Polish citizens to surrender their radio sets. It was published in Nos. 13 and 21 of the official journal, *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete* (December, 1939). Paragraph 5 brought in stiff penalties – anyone caught in possession of a radio set, or wilfully damaging it prior to its surrender, was liable to imprisonment. The deadline for handing in radios was set for 25 January 1940. Persons in possession of a radio after that date were to be prosecuted by a special court.

Almost as soon as it occupied Poland, Germany ruled that works of art in public and private collections on Polish territory would be its war loot.¹⁴ This decision was a violation of the articles of the 1907 Hague Convention on the general and qualified protection of cultural assets and works of art. Objects belonging to art institutions were protected under international law, which categorically prohibited the seizure, destruction, and wilful damage of works of art. Occupying forces were not to destroy works of art or historic monuments to raise their military potential, for instance by melting down the metal from artworks to enhance their gun resources. Unfortunately, the realities of Germany's occupation of Poland were at variance with the legal standards and ethical principles observed in the civilised world. Not long after occupying Poland, Germany issued legal provisions which said that all the property owned by Polish citizens on territories which had been directly incorporated in Germany was effectively subject to any decisions the German authorities might care to make, while the property owned by Jews and persons who had been resettled or were fugitives would be mandatorily confiscated. This applied to all manner of cultural and artistic assets as well.

5.2. Methodology

To start with, let us make it clear that our study is limited to the artistic and cultural losses Poland sustained during the Second World War on those parts of its pre-war territory which are within its present-day borders. The cut-off dates for our study are 1 September 1939 and 9 May 1945.

We are fully aware of the specific nature of the wartime cultural losses presented in this study, which are problematic for two main reasons:

The 1907 Hague Convention, to which Germany was a signatory, laid down that historic buildings which were not being used for military purposes were to be spared. Its Article 27 says, “In sieges and bombardments all necessary steps must be taken to spare, as far as possible, buildings dedicated to religion, art, science, or charitable purposes, historic monuments, hospitals, and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not being used at the time for military purposes. It is the duty of the besieged to indicate the presence of such buildings or places by distinctive and visible signs, which shall be notified to the enemy beforehand.” Article 56 expressly prohibits the destruction of cultural assets: “The property of municipalities, that of institutions dedicated to religion, charity and education, the arts and sciences, even when State property, shall be treated as private property. All seizure of, destruction or wilful damage done to institutions of this character, historic monuments, works of art and science, is forbidden, and should be made the subject of legal proceedings.” Germany did not fulfil the obligations it had bound itself to perform with respect to the occupied territories of Poland.

¹⁴ See the Order of 16 December 1939 on the confiscation of artworks in the GG, “Verordnung über die Beschlagnahme Kunstgegenstände im Generalgouvernement vom 16. Dezember 1939,” published in Hans Frank's official journal of orders issued for the occupied Polish territories, *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die Besetzten Polnischen Gebiete*, No. 12 (21 December) 1939, p. 209 ff. <http://dlibra.umcs.lublin.pl/dlibra/plain-content?id=7319> (Accessed 2 Nov. 2019)

1. The problems involved in making a rigid distinction between the two components of culture – the arts and the sciences (scholarship). Taking a narrower approach to the subject, by “cultural losses” we shall mean the following types of loss:

a. objects which were the product or material outcome of cultural activity and creativity, both those which were new or in progress at the time of their loss, as well as those created in bygone times; this group entails individual items as well as groups of items, such as museum, library, and archival collections;

b. material items, instruments, and appliances which were employed to pursue cultural activities. This category encompasses buildings, their furnishings, equipment, and interior decoration, workshops and studios, laboratories, and ancillary materials such as musical instruments, artists’ paints etc.

We found that it was not possible to make a clear distinction between these two domains of culture in every case that we examined. Oftentimes we had to deal with situations involving an overlap, which made it difficult to classify every object according to a strict set of rules. Some cultural objects could be attributed to both groups. For instance, certain works of art or of the applied arts, especially those created in antiquity, could be treated as ancillary instruments which were indispensable for the pursuit of scholarship, yet at the same time they were definitely artworks. Likewise, some buildings could serve both fields of culture.

2. The impossibility of obtaining even an approximate valuation for many of the cultural losses in monetary terms.

It is impossible to give an estimate for the financial value of a lost cultural legacy which was built up over many centuries of a nation’s intellectual and spiritual development. A cultural legacy is far more than just the material collection of “cultural objects;” it also involves the fact that the given society has reached a particular stage in its spiritual and intellectual development. A society’s capability and means to develop is the condition sine qua non for its potential to create cultural objects. A culture is evidenced not so much by the material value of its artefacts, which is merely an external symptom; but rather by the multiplicity and diversity encountered within it; while its creative accomplishment gives a true benchmark of what it has achieved.

For the majority of lost cultural objects, an estimate of their purely financial value would be a small fraction of their total, absolute or ideal “worth,” and such an operation would be useless as a means to gauge the cultural achievement of a given society.



Photo 5.2.
The Muzeum Śląskie (Silesian Museum) building, completed in 1939. One of the principal state-of-the-art buildings in pre-war Poland, with photocells on its front entrance, escalators, air conditioning, and a convection central heating system (The Silesian Library Collections, Special Collections Department)

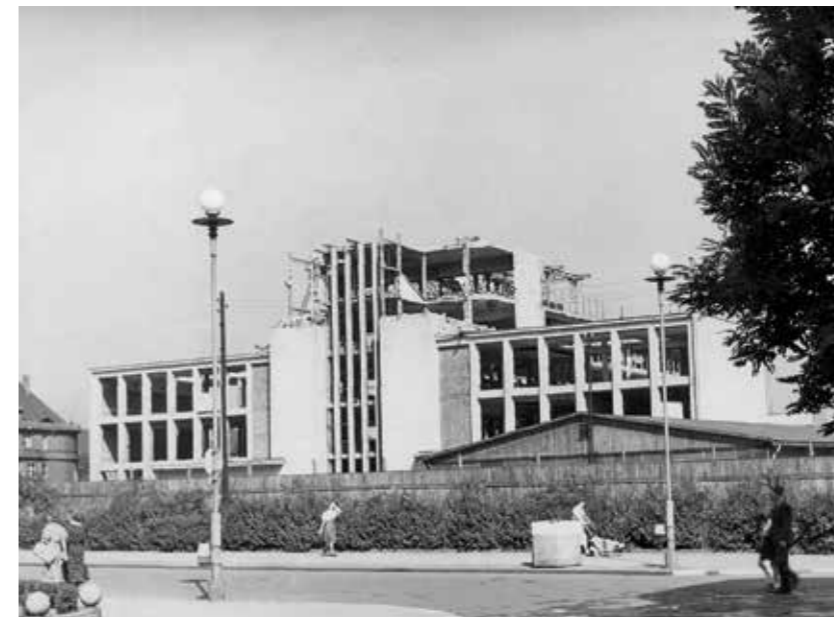


Photo 5.3.
The Germans demolishing the Silesian Museum building (The Silesian Library Collections, Special Collections Department)

Hence, it would be wrong to treat Poland’s losses in the arts and scholarship owing to German military aggression and wartime occupation merely in terms of their monetary value.

Yet, it turns out that an attempt to arrive at such a material measure of lost value is problematic even for those cultural artefacts for which a fairly reliable financial estimate could be obtained by reference to other cultural objects. Hardly any of the lost objects we considered could be fitted neatly into the rigid framework of current price lists on the antiques market.

Apart from the strictly commercial value of the materials that went to make them and the work put into their making, they all had a specific value of their own, their “ideal” value. And it is this non-material value that ultimately determines the rank of a given artefact within a society’s cultural macrocosm. The critical factors at play are emotional, and charged with a varying degree of psychological and/or historical intensity. Emotionally conditioned criteria are responsible for the fact that the purely financial value of the edifice of the original Royal Castle in Warsaw, which had been symbolic of the continuity of Polish statehood, stands in no relation to the enormity of this loss for the nation’s culture as a whole. Such criteria would also give widely different results if an attempt were made to estimate the material value of, say, Jan Matejko’s *Battle of Grunwald* by foreign art valuers, as compared with the value a domestic critic native to Polish culture would be likely to give.

In our opinion, for the reasons we have outlined, it is impossible to give an absolute estimate of the value of lost cultural assets. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Allied Powers were reluctant to give serious consideration to reparation claims in lieu of cultural losses, and eventually refused to admit such claims. For the People’s Republic of Poland, the most important point in the negotiations for reparation was to present the claims for economic losses. As a result, in its diplomatic relations with other countries, Poland has never officially put a full claim for cultural losses on the negotiating table. There has been only one instance, in 1995, when Poland suggested Germany should consider the option to finance the search for works of art and cultural items it had looted and carried off from Poland during the War, and redeem these objects. However, Germany did not respond to the offer and embark on talks. Germany’s failure to respond is a symptom of its unswerving strategy of avoiding discussion of whatsoever kind on making amends for the policy of wilful destruction of Polish culture it conducted during the Second World War.

The chief collection of sources for this study is the data assembled by *Biuro Rewindykacji i Odszkodowań Wojennych* (the Office for Revindication and War Reparations; hereafter BROW) established by the Polish Ministry of Culture and the Arts. Its records are preserved in the AAN in Warsaw, in the *Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki* (Ministry of Culture and the Arts) collection and in the BOW collection. The task of BROW, which operated for over 5 years, was to collect information on the losses Poland sustained in culture and the arts during the Second World War. At the time, the concept



of an item of cultural heritage was narrower than it is today, and entailed only works of art created before 1850. Slightly different rules were applied for certain types of cultural assets, for instance, all paintings, murals etc. created before the close of the 18th century lost due to the War could be declared as losses in painting; but of the missing 19th- and 20th-century paintings, only those could be claimed as losses which were the work of Polish artists recorded “in average publications on the history of Polish art,” or missing foreign works only if the artist could be identified, or if they were of “outstanding value.” In the decorative and applied arts, the only artefacts which qualified for registration as “lost” were “items of artistic value” regardless of style, if created before the mid-19th century, and Oriental carpets and other artworks regardless of the time they were made. Only museums and the owners of coin collections arranged in compliance with numismatic standards could declare numismatic losses. The only military artefacts which could be declared as losses were ones created before 1831, and of those dating to later times, only ones which were in museums or organised collections. Only the loss of heirlooms left by “distinguished Polish personalities” qualified as a “historic souvenir loss.” In the historic architecture category, the only type of structures which could be

Photo 5.4.
The Neo-Classical Church of Our Lady of Częstochowa at Łazienkowska St. 14/16, Warsaw was consecrated on 12 November 1933. The photo shows its ruins after German air raids in September 1944 (during the Warsaw Uprising). The Luftwaffe destroyed it, killing scores of people who had sought sanctuary there, and insurgent and civilian casualties receiving medical treatment in a field hospital set up on the premises. German airmen bombed the church notwithstanding the Red Cross flags clearly displayed on it. All that remained of the edifice was the bell-tower, part of the colonnade, and the tympanum (Collections of the Warsaw Uprising Museum; photo by Karol Pęcherski)

“Order of 16 December 1939 on the Confiscation of Works of Art in the Generalgouvernement.

On the grounds of § 5 Part 1 of the Decree of 12 October 1939 issued by the Führer and Reich Chancellor of the German Reich on the Administration of the Occupied Polish Territories (*Reichsgesetzblatt I S. 2077* [official journal of laws of the German Reich I, page 2077]), I hereby order the following:

§ 1

All works of art in public possession in the *Generalgouvernement* shall hereby be confiscated to accomplish the tasks of public utility, unless they are already subject to confiscation on the grounds of the Confiscation Order of 15 November 1939 for the confiscation of the property and assets of the former Polish State on the territory of the *Generalgouvernement* (*Journal of Orders of the Generalgouvernement*, page 37).

§ 2

The public possession of works of art (not counting works of art and collections thereof which were the property of the former Polish State) shall mean private art collections which the Special Plenipotentiary appointed by me for the listing and protection of works of art and cultural heritage enters in the register for the protection of monuments, [and] all works of art held by the Church except for items required for everyday liturgical use.

§ 3

All works of art in the possession of private persons or the Church are to be reported, along with a full description of the type, condition, and number of items, for the purpose of a determination whether they fall under the category of works of art in public possession as understood by this Order. All persons who have had such works of art in their possession since 15 March 1939 or who have them now in their possession or have been authorised to handle and dispose of such works shall be bound to report them. All persons subject to this legal requirement shall be bound to provide true information when questioned by officials appointed to deal with the matter.

§ 4

In doubtful cases the Special Plenipotentiary appointed by me shall decide which works of art and collections thereof fall under the category of works of art in public possession as understood under § 2 of this Order. He shall also make decisions on the issue of permits allowing for exceptions [to the aforementioned provision], should any such needs arise.

§ 5

Any person who wilfully withholds, alienates, or exports works of art from the *Generalgouvernement* shall be subject to imprisonment. Any person who refuses to provide the information he is bound to submit under this Order, or who submits false or incomplete information shall be subject to imprisonment. The Special Court shall act as the court of competent jurisdiction.

§ 6

The executive provisions needed for this Order shall be issued by the Special Plenipotentiary for the listing and protection of works of art and cultural heritage.

§ 7

This Order shall come into effect immediately.

Krakau (Kraków), 16 December 1939.
[signed] Frank, Governor-General for the Occupied Polish Territories.”

claimed as a loss were “buildings of artistic quality erected before 1850” and “fortifications and defensive structures built before the Congress Kingdom (1815).”

We decided to quote the value of losses in pre-war złoty, in compliance with the BROW valuations.

It is impossible to compile a full list of Poland's losses as regards museum and movable cultural assets. Many museums, especially those in Warsaw, were unable to draw up a precise schedule of their losses because their inventories were purposefully destroyed by the Germans during the War. In several cases the employees of the cultural institutions managed to hide their collections from German barbarism. Unfortunately, even in the case of the surviving inventories, due to the laconic nature of their descriptions (common in the world at that time), there arose a problem of accurately assessing the losses to cultural property. The losses of museum inventories which were gutted by fire and completely destroyed, such as the Warsaw Ethnographic Museum, could not be registered and valued, either. Many of the churches, especially those on territories directly incorporated in Germany, could not draw up a list of their losses because the priests who had ministered in them had been murdered. Furthermore, only scant information is available on works of art which were owned by members of the Jewish community when the War broke out. BROW did not consider these collections at all, because as a result of the almost total extermination of the Polish Jews, no Jewish art collector reported a loss. The same was true of many other private collections, if their owners did not survive the War and their families had no inventories. Hence, this valuation of cultural losses is merely fragmentary, and pertains to those losses for which there are records. It will never be possible to compile a full estimate of cultural losses using current methods of research. Our list of losses is limited only to those which were reported by museums and other institutions, and some of the private collectors. There are no extant records for very many losses, because they could not be registered in view of the complete destruction of the institution in which they were accommodated. Our compilations and valuations of losses can merely give a very approximate idea of the scale of devastation and wreckage, and can only mark the minimum of the cultural and artistic losses Poland suffered.

To conclude this discussion of our methodology, we would like to say that in the following presentation we shall only be referring to the most notorious instances of loss. It is unnecessary to present a more detailed schedule here, since a full cat-

atalogue is accessible on the website of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.¹⁵ At the close of 2018, there were over 60 thousand records in this catalogue, and over 10 thousand of them have additional illustrative data to document the loss. The missing items are classified in the following categories: Foreign Painting, Polish Painting, Sculpture, Glassware, Woven Fabrics, Metalwork, Archaeology, Libraries, etc. New records are still being added to the catalogue.

5.3. Losses in Poland's contemporary culture

5.3.1. Theatre and the dramatic arts

The Germans considered Polish theatres and dramatic arts extremely dangerous. A dramatic performance exerts an influence on theatregoers, especially through the words which are delivered in public, and in an occupied country it may keep the people's spirits up and encourage them to defy the invaders.

Poland's theatres sustained heavy material losses already in September 1939, at the beginning of the War. Most of Warsaw's playhouses, including all four of its Municipal Theatres (Teatr Miejskie), were utterly destroyed in German air raids and artillery fire. The grand historic edifice on plac Teatralny, accommodating Teatr Wielki (the Great Theatre) and Teatr Nowy (the New Theatre), was gutted completely; so was Teatr Letni (the Summer Theatre) in the Ogród Saski park. In addition, all the storage facilities and workshops of Warsaw's Municipal Theatres, which were some of the best stocked facilities of their kind in Europe, fell victim to German plunder and devastation.¹⁶

These losses were particularly acute as regards the loss of costumes, which were housed in 9 rooms containing 87 thousand costumes. Some of the losses, such as royal and medieval costumes, military uniforms, opera costumes etc., were priceless museum exhibits.¹⁷ In addition, the Municipal Theatres lost

¹⁵ <http://dzielautracone.gov.pl/katalog-strat-wojennych> (Accessed 4 Nov. 2019)

¹⁶ AAN, Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki (hereinafter MKiS), ref. no. 387/17, p. 54.

¹⁷ AAN, MKiS, ref. no. 387/43, p. 37–38.

their drama library, music library, and archives, which constituted a unique collection. The two library collections went back to 1783, when the Polish playwright Wojciech Bogusławski was appointed theatre director. They contained collections of scripts and opera music manuscripts, as well as a globally unique set of playbills. The archives were established in 1814, albeit their resources also contained much older items, going back to the origins of Poland's professional theatres.¹⁸ The loss to Polish culture due to the destruction of these collections is vast. The documents relating to the history of the Polish theatre had still to be examined and studied, so their destruction was an irretrievable loss and a heavy blow to Polish culture.

The Municipal Theatres' drama library contained the following items:

1. Play scripts, covering the period from 1783 to 1939 and containing directors' notes and lists of players in the cast. Many of the items, especially in the eighteenth-century collection, were authorial manuscripts.
2. Playbills covering the period from 1787 to 1939, bound in separate volumes for a given year or half-year. This collection included the annals of 18 Varsovian theatres and playbills for performances given by visiting French, German, Italian, and Russian companies; it contained a total of 620 volumes, each holding from 20 to 400 playbills.
3. Sketches of stage sets and costumes created by distinguished designers.¹⁹

The Municipal Theatres' opera library contained the following items:

1. Vintage music scores, covering the period from 1783 to 1831, including over a dozen unique manuscript scores of works by 18th-century composers.
2. Manuscript and printed music scores for the period from 1831 to 1939, including the scores for Moniuszko premières.
3. Instruments which had a museum value (violins, clavichords etc.).²⁰

The Municipal Theatres' archives contained the following items:

¹⁸ AAN, MKiS, ref. no. 387/43, p. 25.

¹⁹ AAN, MKiS, ref. no. 387/43, p. 25–26.

²⁰ AAN, MKiS, ref. no. 387/43, p. 26.

1. Actors' personal files, the earliest going back to 1814 and including many for members of Bogusławski's company.
 - a) 1,800 volumes of vintage records (1771–1863),
 - b) 2,690 volumes of more recent records (1863–1915).
2. General records (concerning administrative matters, buildings, artistic matters).
 - a) 5 volumes of vintage records (1771–1814),
 - b) 1,535 volumes of more recent records (1814–1915).
3. 232 volumes of records for particular productions, including correspondence with dramatists (Stanisław Wyspiański, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Karol Hubert Rostworowski etc.), photographs of actors and scenes, drawings of stage sets.²¹

Apart from the material losses which befell Poland's theatre world as a result of German occupation, there were also artistic losses which can hardly be overestimated, let alone translated into financial terms. As soon as Germany invaded Poland, it closed down all the theatres in the country. Most of their equipment and furnishings were destroyed during the initial period of military combat, and what survived was seized and handed over to German theatres.

All the Polish theatres on the territories directly incorporated in Germany were closed down. Some of these playhouses were turned into warehouses, and the rest were handed over to German theatre companies. The theatres in the GG were closed down on the grounds of a secret circular issued in May 1940 by Hans Frank's propaganda office, and applicable in all the districts. The circular said that only German culture had the right to develop "on the territories now restored to the German Reich, territories which had always rightfully been a German *Lebensraum*." Henceforth, the drama of poetry and ideas could only be German, and the Poles, who had "always lived on the leftovers of foreign culture" could have an inferior kind of theatre, with the use of pornography to cater for the low instincts of the masses, in compliance with the slogan *Verflachung und Erotisierung* (make it shallow and erotic).

The circular banned the performance of a serious repertoire and any plays with Polish historical or folk costumes. The prohibition was intended to erase the people's memory of the Polish nation's historical past and cultural identity. Instead, the circular recommended cheap vaudeville and music hall shows which were to suggest the inferiority of Polish culture yet at the same

²¹ AAN, MKiS, ref. no.387/43, p. 27.

time create the impression that life in the GG was normal. The circular also instructed theatre managers to hire the services of well-known Polish actors, so that "the destruction of the theatre spirit should be done by the Poles themselves."²²

In line with the circular, the German propaganda office removed all the classical dramatists from the repertoire, from Sophocles and Aristophanes down to Shakespeare and Molière, all the foremost Polish writers, and even German dramatists like Friedrich Schiller and Gerhart Hauptmann.

To launch the operations of these cheap vaudeville shows, the German propaganda office required all the members of the acting profession to register. The overwhelming majority, especially the most distinguished individuals, refused. Many actors were forced to go into hiding or take up jobs outside their profession.

To stop the education and training of new actors and theatre directors, the Germans closed down all the drama colleges. Unlike other branches of Polish education, drama colleges found it too hard to operate clandestinely and continue training drama students on an underground basis. A cursory estimate shows that Polish theatres were deprived of about 150 new actors and directors who could have been trained under peacetime conditions.

Unfortunately, the losses in human resources sustained by Polish drama were not limited merely to the discontinuity in training and education. The Germans responded to the boycott on registration by bringing in repressive measures, which intensified in 1941, when a large number of actors and actresses were arrested, and the most distinguished individuals were deported to Auschwitz. A total of 104 members of Związek Artystów Polskich, the Polish Artists' Union, were executed, tortured to death in concentration camps, or lost their lives due to other forms of oppression under German occupation.

A particularly aggravating type of loss suffered by Polish theatres was its enforced artistic decline – a loss which defies numerical estimation. In the first place, the world of the serious theatre was abolished and remained lifeless for nearly six years, which meant that there was a regression in its creative growth and the professional development of Polish actors and playwrights. Secondly, the establishment of low-grade shows was a deliberate German measure to debauch Polish theatregoers and bring down their standards of expectation.

Many of the material losses suffered by Polish theatres were irreparable, too. Irremediable losses included the forfeiture of

²² AAN, MKiS, ref. no. 387/17, p. 55.

Polish costume collections, the library collections of Warsaw's Municipal Theatres and the Municipal Theatre archives (including a rich collection of 18th-century records and a copious set of correspondence with eminent playwrights).

It would be impossible to draw up a full schedule of all the material losses sustained by Polish theatres during the War and under German occupation. The fact that some theatres were completely destroyed along with their inventories rules out the compilation of precise data and the making of an estimate of the losses. All that could be done in such cases (mainly involving Varsovian playhouses) was to draw up approximate estimates on the basis of memorial reconstruction carried out by experts. This applies to the losses of Teatr Ateneum, the theatres located in Galeria Luxenburga etc.

The Polish theatres located in the parts of Poland directly incorporated in Germany, which were converted into German theatres, usually lost their stock of Polish costumes, which were either destroyed or carried off. They also forfeited their stage sets and props for Polish plays. Such practices were usually accompanied by the destruction of a theatre's inventories, which made it absolutely impossible to obtain even an overview of the extent of the destruction. We have no data for the magnitude of the damage suffered by the theatres of Łódź, Sosnowiec, or Grudziądz. Hence, the estimate drawn up by the Ministry of Culture and the Arts in 1947, amounting to 72.766 million pre-war złoty, does not reflect the magnitude of the devastation and is well below the real extent.

5.3.2. Music

The outbreak of the War and German occupation brought a drastic interruption to Poland's music-making and musical affairs. In September 1939, all the main music institutions in Warsaw – its opera house, its philharmonic hall, and part of its conservatoire – were reduced to ruins. The German administrative authorities closed down all the main music schools and academies, thereby stopping the education of new musicians. Warszawskie Towarzystwo Muzyczne (the Warsaw Music Society) and the professional organisation Związek Autorów i Kompozytorów Muzycznych (the Union of Music Authors and Composers) were abolished and their property was confiscated. During the War-

saw Uprising of 1944, the Germans burned down the Centralne Archiwum Fonograficzne (Central Phonographic Archive) building, which held Poland's archival collection of recordings. The destruction of 22 thousand records of folk music was the most deplorable and irreparable loss.

In the GG, public concerts and operatic performances were banned. Music could be enjoyed in public only in cafés and in the streets and squares, providing it was not the work of Polish composers, such as Chopin. Musicians were forced to register, and the best musicians were obliged to perform for Germans. Those who refused to work for the Germans went into hiding or changed their profession.

The repressive measures the Germans introduced against Polish music put a stop to music-making and musical affairs. Composers were deprived of their recipients, and performers with no opportunity to give concerts could not pursue their careers or develop professionally.

The closing down of the music schools stopped the education of new professionals, performers, composers, and musicologists. Further losses were caused by the death of persons associated with the world of music. Like the actors' profession, the music professions lost 90 individuals during the War, including 13 composers, 10 pianists, 11 cellists, 16 violinists, 15 orchestra musicians, 3 vocalists, 3 conductors, 7 music tutors, 8 musicologists, and 4 music critics.

All of Warsaw's music institutions were reduced to ruins. The equipment of Poland's music societies and all types of music schools was devastated or carried off. The country lost its best instruments and the manufacturing establishments that produced them. Its music libraries and archives, such as the music resources of the Krasiński Library in Warsaw, were laid waste. In November 1946, the Music Department of the Ministry of Culture and the Arts estimated the material losses relating to music at 223,442,319 pre-war złoty.

5.3.3. Painting, the graphic arts, and sculpture

Right until the outbreak of the Second World War, Poland's visual arts – painting, the graphic arts, the decorative arts, and sculpture – had flourished. The German occupation put an end to this. The Germans closed down all the Polish exhibition halls and art centres, and most of the exhibits on display in them were looted by

The Polish cultural institution Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie (the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts) was founded in 1860. It collected and exhibited works of art, and promoted and supported young artists. During the Second World War in 1942, the Germans turned the Society's building into a Nazi German propaganda centre known as the *Haus der Deutschen Kultur*. German occupying forces looted the collections exhibited in the Society's gallery. A similar fate befell Instytut Propagandy Sztuki w Warszawie, another Polish cultural institution founded in 1930 and engaged in the promotion and exhibiting of contemporary art, research and documentary work relating to the arts. During the War, the Germans turned it into a Wehrmacht barracks.

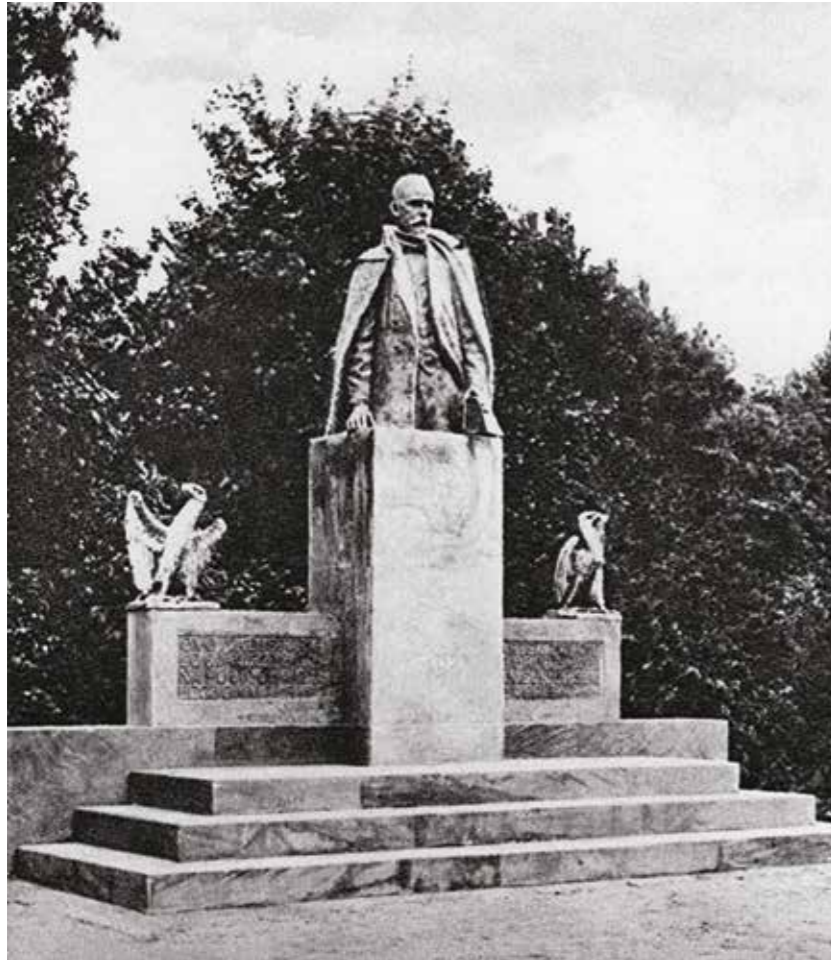


Photo 5.5.
The statue of the Polish novelist and Nobel Prizewinner Henryk Sienkiewicz (by Konstanty Laszczka), in the Jan Kochanowski Park, Bydgoszcz, in 1927. In September 1939, the Germans demolished this monument soon after they entered the city of Bydgoszcz (NDA collections)

the German military and civilian authorities. This was the fate that met one of Poland's chief institutions for the fine arts, Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie (currently known in English as the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts). It was deprived of its collections and turned into a *Haus der Deutschen Kultur* (*House of German Culture*). The same happened to another arts institution, Instytut Propagandy Sztuki w Warszawie (the Warsaw Institute for the Promotion of Art); it was denuded of all of its collections and used as an army barracks for the Wehrmacht.

The Germans put a stop to the evolution of Poland's visual arts by banning public art exhibitions. Polish artists were forced to take up other jobs, because any kind of artistic work within the German administrative framework put them at risk of having to collaborate with the Germans to promote their propaganda. The ban on public art exhibitions brought vast losses to the Polish arts milieu. Polish artists were deprived of the opportunity to compete against each other, which not only prevented the arts from evol-

ing, but in fact brought about stagnation and regression. The ban on public exhibitions deprived Polish society of the opportunity to see what was being done in the arts. All that Polish art lovers could hope for was to see a random street display of low-quality pictures produced commercially, which generally brought down their sense of aesthetic taste.

The closing down of all the art colleges had disastrous consequences for Polish art education. The only type of training the Germans permitted was in a couple of schools for the industrial arts, which provided a very low standard of art education. The Germans regarded the Polish people as "a nation of slaves," and hence were interested in having Poles working only as inferior craftsmen with the most rudimentary training, not as fully-fledged artists.

Before the War, about 175 students graduated from Poland's art academies every year, and another 325 completed their education in the remaining art schools and colleges. Hence, the loss over six years of war and German occupation (including the 1944/1945 school year) amounted to 3 thousand. About 3 thousand young Polish artists who would otherwise have joined the arts milieu and industries connected with the arts were deprived of an education and professional training because of the War and German occupation. However, the losses in human resources went much further than just the accession of a new generation of artists. At least 235 Polish artists (counting only those who were members of the professional associations) lost their lives.

The Polish arts also sustained very substantial material losses. The works of art on display in Polish galleries were looted. The academies and colleges were plundered. The heaviest losses were sustained by the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts. Its well-appointed studios were wrecked and looted already in the first month of German occupation. The Kraków Academy of Fine Arts, the National Institute for the Fine Arts in Poznań and other art colleges suffered as well, though their losses were not as heavy. The destruction of the Warsaw Museum of the Crafts and Applied Arts (Muzeum Rzemiosł i Sztuki Stosowanej w Warszawie), which was completely gutted by fire, was an irreparable blow to the Polish fine arts.

The artists themselves suffered material loss. Any work they had in a studio from which they were evicted was plundered or destroyed, and the same happened during house searches. Nearly all the art studios were wrecked and destroyed during the initial defence campaign of September 1939, the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, and subsequently after its fall, when the Germans set about

the demolition of what was still left of the city. All we know on the grounds of the data collected by BROW is that 95% of the 2 thousand registered artists lost their entire studio equipment, along with all the work they had done. Since on average artists had kept 15 artworks in their studio prior to the War, and each item was worth an average of 250 pre-war złoty, a simple calculation shows that artists' immediate losses amounted to 7.123 million pre-war złoty – not counting the furnishings and equipment in their studios.

To sum up, during the War and under German occupation, Poland's fine arts sustained losses in their artistic, material, and human resources. The artistic and human losses could be made up for only after a long period of intensive and persistent effort to raise artistic standards.

A full schedule of the material losses cannot be drawn up due to the fact that some of the inventories have not been preserved. We have taken into account only the losses sustained by the main art colleges and academies, the chief institutions for the visual arts, and by individual artists due to the destruction of their studios. After the War, the Ministry of Culture and the Arts estimated the overall material losses at 36.6 million pre-war złoty, but this figure is well below the real value of the losses sustained by Polish contemporary art due to the War and German occupation.

5.3.4. Literature

The German aggressors conducted a remorseless and unrelenting war on Polish culture, so it was absolutely natural for them to be deeply committed to combating Polish literature and stopping the Polish message in print from getting across to the public, because it was such a deadly weapon against them.

Almost as soon as the Germans invaded Poland, they suspended the activities of Polska Akademia Literatury (the Polish Academy of Literature), dissolved all the literary clubs and associations, and suspended the publication of all the literary magazines and periodicals. Instead, they launched the publication of semi-pornographic magazines such as *Fala*. No self-respecting Polish writer published in them. The Germans also brought in a restriction on professional writing, whereby only those who were registered by the German authorities were "licensed" to practise as professional writers. However, those who obtained such a licence ran the risk of having to work for the German

propaganda machine, so Polish writers had no option but to go into hiding or take up another job.²³

The restrictions that hit writers hardest were the prohibition on the publication of books in Polish and the confiscation of extant editions and print-runs. Under German occupation, no Polish novels or volumes of poetry could be published officially, and the very few exceptions to the general rule were items published by the German propaganda machine. The Germans decided to erase Poland's entire literary legacy, and wanted to suppress and destroy entire print-runs of Polish books and publications. The general practice in those areas of Poland which were directly incorporated in Germany was the confiscation of all Polish books and publications whatsoever, which were then sent to the pulp mills to be destroyed. In the GG, 2.5 thousand Polish books and publications were suppressed. Such items were confiscated from authors' and booksellers' shelves, if they did not manage to hide them before the German police arrived. The aim of the project was to bring down the general level of education available to Polish people. Nearly all the books that had a literary value fell victim to this confiscation drive, because the Germans put the names of all the "dangerous" writers on the proscription list.

Most of the losses to Polish literature under German occupation were intellectual in character. The ban on the free development of writing not only brought about a very substantial reduction in the creative work of writers, but also attenuated the literary sensitivity of the reading public. Polish readers had access only to books of an inferior quality. Moreover, 56 individuals associated with the literary milieu lost their lives, and most of those who earned their living as professional writers found themselves in a situation of extreme material hardship. Those who died included some of the most distinguished writers and poets, such as Stanisław "Witkacy" Witkiewicz, who committed suicide on 18 September 1939; Józef Czechowicz, who was killed during an air raid on Lublin in 1939; Mieczysław Braun, who died in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942; Bruno Schultz, who was gunned down in the street by a Gestapo officer in 1942; Janusz Korczak, who was killed in Treblinka in 1942, along with his charges from an orphanage, whom he did not want to abandon; Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, who was executed by the German firing squad which killed the professors of Lwów University in 1941; Karol Irzykowski, who died of wounds sustained in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising; and Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, who was killed in the same Uprising. Younger

A uniform and clearly defined list of prohibited Polish books comprising a specific catalogue of works was never published in the *Generalgouvernement*. The provisions of all the executive orders and resolutions issued later were deliberately formulated in a way which facilitated their arbitrary interpretation, allowing the German authorities to make whatever decisions suited them as to what was prohibited and what was permitted.

The Order of 26 October 1939 on the publication of printed matter was published in the Governor-General's official journal of orders for the Occupied Polish Territories (*Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete*, hereinafter VBG, 1939, No. 1, p. 7–8). Four executive orders were issued later to supplement this Order, the first on 26 March 1940 (VBG 1940, Part II, No. 23, p. 184), the second on 5 September 1940 (VBG 1940, Part II, No. 61, p. 487–489), and the third and fourth on 24 October 1940 (VBG 1940, Part II, No. 67, p. 514 and p. 515).

The Order of 31 October 1939 on publications in the *Generalgouvernement* was published in the same *Verordnungsblatt* (VBG 1939, No. 3, p. 19), and its executive provisions were published almost a year to the day later (VBG 1940, Part II, No. 67, p. 513–514).

²³ AAN, MKIS, ref. no. 387/17, p.79.

writers who were killed in the 1944 Uprising included Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński, Tadeusz Gajcy, and Józef Szczepański.

Some Polish writers like Tadeusz Borowski ended up in German concentration camps. Borowski survived, but could not adjust to normal life after the War and committed suicide in 1951.

It is very hard to estimate the material losses suffered by Polish literature. The losses sustained by individual writers are incommensurable, since for many, their entire oeuvre went up in flames and perished during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944.

Nonetheless, an attempt to estimate losses was made after the War. In January 1947, the Department of Literature in the Ministry of Culture and the Arts asked writers to fill in and return a questionnaire concerning their wartime losses under German occupation, and on this basis calculated the overall loss to Polish literature (for authors alive at the time) at about 50 million pre-war złoty.²⁴

5.4. Losses to Old Polish culture

5.4.1. Historic architecture

One of the major points on the German agenda of setting up a “cultural wasteland on the Vistula” was the destruction of Poland’s historic architecture, which had endowed the country’s towns and cities with an idiosyncratic character. The German aggressors wanted to “transform the landscape” to make Polish habitats, especially those in municipalities, look German. The way to achieve this aim was to destroy Polish architecture.

Evidence that there was such a plan and that Germany put it into operation is provided by the fact that already during its invasion in September 1939, Germany “accidentally” shelled and dropped bombs on major historic edifices, such as those in Łowicz. The phenomenon was even more self-evident in Warsaw. Poland’s capital put up defence for several weeks, and the Germans treated it as a military fortress; nonetheless, German pilots and gunners seemed to be especially fond of targeting historic buildings, rather than ones which had

The Pabst-Plan is the name of two schemes designed in 1940 and 1942, or in the wider sense, of the entirety of Germany’s urban designs for the City of Warsaw, drawn up during the whole of its occupation. Friedrich Pabst was appointed chief architect for Warsaw already on 1 October 1939. Under his supervision and on orders from Governor-General Hans Frank, work started already in December 1939 on plans to destroy most of the city’s buildings. Warsaw was to be turned into a minor transit town called *die neue Deutsche Stadt Warschau* (New German Warsaw). It was to be a provincial midget with a population of about 130 thousand working for the needs of the German army. Before the War, the population of Warsaw was about 1.3 million; and the Germans intended to exterminate the “surplus” 90% of its inhabitants in KL Warschau, an on-site concentration camp. Part of Warsaw’s Old Town was to be saved, as evidence of an alleged “continuity of German settlement.” An alternative scheme drafted in 1942 envisaged its complete demolition. Pabst was planning to erect a *Partei Volkshalle* (People’s Party Hall) on the site of the Royal Castle, and to replace Sigismund’s Column with a Germania monument. The 1940 plan, designed by Hubert Groß and Otto Nürnberger under the supervision of Friedrich Pabst, is now preserved in the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance. The 1942 plan, designed by Pabst himself, along with the collection of documents associated with it, is preserved in the Polish State Archives for the City of Warsaw.



a defensive value. Most of Warsaw’s historic sites fell victim to incendiary bombs just before the city surrendered, when it no longer had any means of anti-aircraft defence left. That was when the Luftwaffe carried out a strafing operation, giving its bombs a virtually 100% chance of striking on target. Observers who saw the centre of Warsaw after the city’s surrender viewed a skyline of smoking ruins, the remains left of bombed mansions, churches, and libraries. It was certainly not a chance occurrence, but the implementation of a premeditated plan Germany also employed in the fighting during its retreat in 1945. Wherever the front tarried for a longer while, the outcome was the devastation of architectural heritage. That is how the architectural heirlooms of cities like Poznań were wiped out.

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Photo 5.6.
Ruins of Rynek Starego Miasta (the Old Town Market Place), Warsaw, in 1944, after the Germans had devastated it (NDA collections)

²⁴ AAN, MKiS, ref. no. 387/94, p.15.

Deutsche Stadt Warschau (New German Warsaw). It was to be a provincial midget with a population of about 130 thousand working for the needs of the German army. Before the War, the population of Warsaw was about 1.3 million; and the Germans intended to exterminate the “surplus” 90% of its inhabitants in KL Warschau, an on-site concentration camp. Part of Warsaw’s Old Town was to be saved, as evidence of an alleged “continuity of German settlement.” An alternative scheme drafted in 1942 envisaged its complete demolition. Pabst was planning to erect a *Parteivolkshalle* (People’s Hall) on the site of the Royal Castle, and to replace Sigismund’s Column with a Germania monument. The 1940 plan, designed by Hubert Groß and Otto Nürnberger under the supervision of Friedrich Pabst, is now preserved in the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance. The 1942 plan, designed by Pabst himself, along with the collection of documents associated with it, is preserved in the Polish State Archives for the City of Warsaw.

The demolition of Poland’s historic architecture carried out by German forces was a planned and premeditated operation. Proof of this comes in the way the German aggressors behaved in Warsaw. The systematic destruction of the city’s architectural heritage, which they started during the air raids on the besieged city in September 1939, was continued after its surrender. The Germans put a prohibition on reconstruction or any kind of repair work and securing of the buildings that had been damaged, which only meant that they fell into a more advanced state of dilapidation, bringing about not only the disintegration of their outer walls, but also the ruin of surviving items of their interior decoration, such as stuccowork, murals, fireplaces and mantelpieces, portals etc.

Some buildings which the Germans decided to use, such as the Belweder Palace, were put through a thorough conversion scheme which generally disfigured and obliterated their original features. Other historic structures, such as the Jerozolimskie and Wolskie customs houses, or the 18th-century annexes adjoining the Primate’s Palace, were pulled down. The Germans intended to submit the city to a methodical conversion scheme which they were working on already in the autumn of 1939. It was to be a complete degradation of Warsaw through, annihilation of the best elements of the city’s architectural fabric – those which served as monuments to its Polish past.

One of the steps the Germans took in their “general overhaul” of the city was to raze the site of the Warsaw Ghetto. They implemented similar schemes in other Polish cities, to demolish the Jewish quarters and clear the sites for new German districts. Not a single historic structure was spared in the Jewish areas.

The removal of structures exemplifying features of Polish culture affected the monuments and memorials, too.

The drive to wipe out all vestiges of Warsaw’s historic architecture escalated after the 1944 Uprising. Many structures, especially the Cathedral and churches, had been bombed by the Luftwaffe during the Uprising, but any landmarks still left standing after the Uprising were wilfully and systematically set on fire or blown up in November and December 1944, or the first fortnight of January 1945. The operation was carried out with scientific precision, since it called for the services of specialists who could identify and target structures most cherished and characteristic of Polish culture.

The best example of German intentions and methods is their treatment of the Royal Castle. All that was damaged during the 1939 air raids were the helmets on its towers, part of the roof,



Photo 5.7.
Ruins of the market place of Warsaw's Old Town
(NDA collections)

and one of its rooms. A group of Warsaw architects offered to carry out a provisional repair job to protect the edifice from damage due to snowfall, as winter was approaching, but their offer was rejected out of hand by the German authorities, who were probably already thinking of demolishing the Castle completely. On 10 October 1939, Hans Frank arrived. One of the things he did during his visit to the Castle was to tear the Polish Eagles off the throne, thereby giving a tacit signal that the Castle's interiors could be looted at will. The Germans took the hint and within two months, they not only denuded it of its most treasured artefacts and furnishings, but carried off everything that could be of use at all. The most valuable objects were carted off to Hans Frank's residence in Kraków or distributed to sundry German offices in Warsaw. Other items fell into the hands of individual Germans, who were allowed to help themselves to a "souvenir." By January 1940, all that was left of Warsaw's Royal Castle were its bare walls. German aficionados had stripped it of its wainscoting, stuccos, and even pulled off its plafond decorations.

It later turned out that the devastation of the Castle's interiors was merely an overture to the grand demolition of the entire building. Already in November 1939, the Germans had been drilling holes in the Castle's walls for their dynamite sticks, but for some reason or other they stopped short of blowing it up at the time. They went back to the job later, in September 1944, just before their military retreat. The destruction of the Royal Castle of Warsaw was a fully premeditated operation carried out by Germany. It was destroyed because it was a symbol of Polish statehood, and the purpose of its destruction was to crush the Polish spirit.

Poland's overall material losses of historic architecture devastated and destroyed during the War and under German occupation constitute the country's biggest cultural loss percentagewise. The Germans destroyed 43% of Poland's historic buildings, at an estimated value of 4 billion pre-war złoty. There are two cities at the top of the list of losses: Warsaw, with 92% of its architectural heritage destroyed, and Poznań, with a loss of 52% of its historic municipal fabric. Other cities which sustained heavy losses include Lublin, which lost its cathedral and old city; Tum near Łęczyca, where a Romanesque collegiate church was destroyed; Bydgoszcz, Przasnysz, and Kleczków, all of which lost their Gothic churches; Gniezno, where the cathedral was damaged; Wiśnicz, with the loss of its Carmelite church; Supraśl, whose renowned Orthodox church was damaged; Łowicz, which lost its monastic

buildings; and Rydzyn, where a local country mansion was devastated. Historic Jewish synagogues and places of worship were destroyed in many other towns and cities.

5.4.2. Museums

A large number of Warsaw's museums were damaged during the military campaign of September 1939. The Ethnographic Museum (Muzeum Etnograficzne), the Museum of Industry and Agriculture (Muzeum Przemysłu i Rolnictwa), the Museum of Technology and Industry (Muzeum Przemysłu i Techniki), and the Railway Museum (Muzeum Kolejowe) were all damaged in bombing raids.

As soon as the hostilities of the September campaign were over, German occupying forces started to plunder Polish museum collections. All the museums were closed for the entire duration of the War. The Germans launched a "planned evacuation of museum collections" – in other words an organised project of looting, not only in the largest cities, but also in smaller towns.

The plunder of works of art continued throughout the War, but it was at its most intensive during its first year (1939–1940), and subsequently during the German retreat (1944–1945). The devastation of museum, private, and church collections was conducted on an official basis. Its legal grounds were formulated in the aforementioned order entitled *Verordnung über die Beschlagnahme der Kunstgegenstände im GG* (Order for the Confiscation of Works of Art in the GG) issued on 16 December 1939 by Governor-General Hans Frank. Further provisions were issued permitting the confiscation of works of art, in flagrant contravention of Article 46 of the Hague Convention.

German officials confiscated works of art from Polish collections and sold them on the antiques market. They conducted their operations on a massive scale, which eventually led to several scandals and disciplinary inquiries against the officials involved. We should bear in mind that the Gestapo had a special privilege permitting it to keep the property of Jews and people who were arrested. On the grounds of this privilege, countless works of art and museum pieces were forfeited irretrievably. When the ghettos in the GG were closed down in 1943, priceless Jewish collections, both public and privately owned, were carried off by the Gestapo. The theft of artworks followed a dual course – along the official and private stream.

The victim hardest hit by the “confiscations” was the City of Warsaw. The museum collection in the Belweder Palace was moved to the National Museum, where it was pillaged by Wehrmacht personnel, each of whom helped himself to a “souvenir.” The same fate befell the Łazienki Palace. Some of these items were whisked away already in 1939. One of the Rembrandts was sent to Hans Frank as a present. Warsaw University’s collection of plaster casts of antique statuary ceased to exist. Germans entertained themselves in museum storage facilities, using them as shooting ranges with exhibits as the targets, and smashing any items they happened to miss.

Paintings, statuary, antique furniture and carpets, crystal and glassware, and items made of precious metals were collected in specially appointed repositories for shipment to Germany. One of the largest of these collecting points was located in the Warsaw branch of the National Museum.

On the basis of available records, Poland’s museum losses have been estimated at 470 million pre-war złoty, of which 458.5 million złoty is accounted for by the loss of collections, their fittings and equipment, and 11.5 million złoty by the loss of buildings, not counting historic edifices. This schedule of losses does not include items which were recovered to 1 April 1947. Nonetheless, the figures quoted here should be treated merely as a fraction of Poland’s overall museum losses.

In 1945–1952, the Polish government conducted a restitution drive and its delegates managed to discover the whereabouts of numerous items which had been stolen, and retrieved them. However, their successes did not bring about a major change in the general scale of the losses, as the value of the objects which were recuperated was merely a small fraction of the overall losses sustained during the Second World War. Furthermore, many of the recovered works of art returned to Poland thanks to purchase by the Polish government on the European antiques markets, especially in Berlin and Vienna, not by restoration to their lawful owners. The largest volume of restitution occurred before 1 April 1947, and those artefacts were never entered in the schedule of losses. The Polish Ministry of Culture and the Arts did not register some of the items which had been stolen and were subsequently recovered.

The overwhelming majority of the items which were stolen never returned to their owners. Some appear out of the blue on the international antiques market; others have never been properly identified and continue to grace private and public collections. Some of the items still being sought are masterpieces by Raphael, Agostino Carracci, Annibale Carracci, Pieter Brueghel the Younger, van Dyck, Lorenzo di Credi, and Lucas Cranach the Elder.

5.4.3. Paintings

Poland sustained a very serious percentage loss of its foreign paintings. The German invaders looted Polish collections of very many paintings, and much of what they did not loot they burned or destroyed. Poland’s principal losses in painting include Raphael’s *Portrait of a Young Man*, Annibale Carracci’s *Self-Portrait*, *The Battle of Carnival and Lent* by Pieter Brueghel the Younger, *The Adoration of the Child* by Lorenzo di Credi, *Madonna and Child (The Głogów Madonna)* by Lucas Cranach the Elder, and *The Double Portrait of Martin Luther and Philip Melancton* by Lucas Cranach the Younger.



Photo 5.8. Raphael, *Portrait of a Young Man* (ca. 1510), one of the most valuable works of art the Germans stole from Polish collections during the Second World War (War loss, looted from the collection of the Princes Czartoryski Museum (National Museum in Kraków))

The Germans carried off most of the exhibits they put on display in an exhibition entitled *Sichergestellte Kunstwerke* (Secured Works of Art) in Wawel Castle, dispatching them to Germany at the time when Soviet forces were approaching Kraków. They first sent these items to Lower Silesia, and from there some were taken to Bavaria and Hans Frank's residence at Neuhaus, and some went to Austria. After the War, the Polish authorities managed to recover a considerable number of these exhibits, but many, including the rarest item, Raphael's *Portrait of A Young Man*, have still not been located.²⁵

The pictures confiscated in Warsaw and its environs and assembled in the National Museum in Warsaw, and were not previously taken by the Germans to Wawel, were sent to Germany after the 1944 Uprising. Some were later found in Lower Silesia and Austria, in Schloss Fischhorn near Salzburg. In late 1944, the Germans removed the works of art they had assembled in Muzeum Wielkopolskie (the Museum of Greater Poland) in Poznań and sent them to Saxony, from where they returned to Poland in 1946.²⁶

Alongside the official looting the German invaders carried out, which they called *amtliche Sicherstellung* ("official safeguarding"), they also indulged in individual robberies, perpetrated by Gestapo, SS, and German police officers, on any convenient pretext. Sometimes, they would style such private confiscations as "loans." Incidents of this kind occurred due to the activities of Otto Wächter, Governor of Distrikt Krakau, and other German dignitaries, who took pictures from the National Museum in Kraków and the Czartoryski Museum to decorate their offices and issued receipts for their "loans." In general, however, Germans requisitioning works of art rarely issued anything in writing to acknowledge their "loans," so it has been well-nigh impossible to recover items stolen by private freebooters.²⁷

The private thefts of Polish works of art were not the doing of the German authorities in their official capacity, but rather the work of individuals. In the autumn of 1939, uniformed Germans walked into the Zachęta art gallery in Warsaw and ravaged its display. Each left with an exhibit to embellish his digs. In Kraków, German individuals pilfered the National Museum and the Czartoryski Museum. The losses accrued in this way included the *Queen of Poland* triptych by Jan Matejko, Józef Chełmoński's *Four-in-Hand*, *Girl with the Myrtle Plants* by Stanisław Wyspiański, *Three Cuirassiers* by Piotr Michałowski, *A Street in Munich*

²⁵ Tomkiewicz, p. 8.

²⁶ Tomkiewicz, p. 8.

²⁷ Tomkiewicz, p. 8.

by Aleksander Gierymski, *A Ukrainian Social Evening (Grandma's Story)* by Maksymilian Gierymski, and *Female Nude in the Studio* by Wojciech Weiss.

Warsaw suffered the biggest losses in painting. It would be practically impossible to draw up a full list of the pictures lost by private owners. There are no inventories or other kinds of records to evidence losses from the collections at Jabłonna and Gołuchów, or the Warsaw Krasieński, Zamoyski, Natanson, Raczyński, Rotwand, and Dobrzański collections. Vast numbers of pictures in Warsaw's antique shops were stolen or destroyed, as many people from the countryside who had become impoverished during the War came to Warsaw to sell or safeguard their works of art and other valuables, thinking that the capital would be a relatively safe place. Their deposits, as well as items from the art collections of connoisseurs like Bryndza-Nacki, Albrecht, Herman, Dangel, Berson, and many more, perished during and in the aftermath of the 1944 Uprising.

5.4.4. Statuary

Nearly all of the 30 statues of Adam Mickiewicz on Polish territory were destroyed under German occupation. The same happened to the statues and monuments of Chopin, Wojciech Bogusławski, and Stanisław Moniuszko in Warsaw, the monument of Vladislaus Jagiełło in Kraków, the Kościuszko statues in Łódź and Kraków, and the statues of Copernicus and Prince Józef Poniatowski in Warsaw. The German project of looting and destruction did not even spare roadside crosses, holy pictures and statues of saints. It was particularly vehement in the pre-war Voivodeship of Poznań. Germans destroyed 38 roadside shrines in the Rawicz Powiat, 13 in the Koło Powiat, and another 12 in the Kępno Powiat.

Losses of architectural, tombstone, and church altar sculpture were not merely due to fires and demolition. Germans carried off many of these items, some of which they cut up into pieces.

Poland suffered an exceptionally large number of losses of statuary and sculpture. In many cases, the materials from which they were made, their size and location precluded protection against the effects of warfare. It would be very difficult to draw up a reliable list of these losses, because most items of this kind were not inventoried and had not been examined by scholars. The sculpted components of a building, and the statuary embellishing a church, tended to be treated as "social utility" objects.



Photo 5.9.
The Germans demolish
the Adam Mickiewicz Monument
in the Main Market Square
of Kraków, 17 August 1940
(Collections of the Kraków Branch
of the National Archives)

Many of the museum inventories or card catalogues which could have provided information on such objects were devastated or completely destroyed. The situation was even worse with private collections, which usually had no inventories, or if they did, the descriptions of statuary in them tended to be laconic, with no details. The registration of statuary losses from many locations turned out to be impossible due to lack or inadequacy of topographical inventory lists.

In terms of style, Polish statuary losses were as follows: 6 Romanesque objects, 594 Gothic objects, 17 Renaissance objects, 137 Baroque objects, 16 Neo-Classical objects, and 136 19th- and 20th-century objects. Of the 594 Gothic items, 261 were from East and West Pomerania, 160 from Silesia, 109 from Greater Poland, 41 from Mazovia, and 23 from Lesser Poland. The largest number of medieval items was lost in Pomerania and Silesia. The statuary lost in other regions were fewer in number, but their artistic quality was better.

In Warsaw alone, 27 churches containing numerous valuable statuary were devastated, and 700 historic buildings decorated with fixed and self-standing sculptures were reduced to ruins. Innumerable private and public art collections containing statuary were destroyed during the bombing of the city in 1939, the Ghetto Uprising of 1943, and the 1944 Uprising.

5.4.5. The applied arts

We can only determine a small fraction of Polish losses in the applied arts, largely because such items were not independent objects, unlike paintings or sculpture. Nonetheless, the description of Poland's cultural losses took into consideration the major categories of the applied and industrial arts, as well as those where the losses were particularly heavy.

Owing to German aggression and wartime occupation, Poland lost the overwhelming majority of its historic glassware and ceramics, which was easily destructible due to the fragility of the materials it was made of, and small enough to tempt thieves. They were the most frequently purloined type of cultural goods. Not surprisingly, the losses in historic glassware and china accounted for 80% of Polish pre-war assets in this category. Hardest hit were the private and public collections in Warsaw, where most of the Polish holdings in this category were concentrated.

Huge losses were sustained in the field of goldsmithery, jewellery, and related arts and crafts, since of course precious metals and gemstones have always had a market value quite apart from their artistic quality. Many of the metal objects were melted down, which meant that they were lost for good. Many items were carried off to Germany and only a negligible fraction of them have returned to Poland.

The looting spree did not even spare country churches, many of which held admirable works of art. Alas, very few of these objects had been described in written records, let alone photographed, and hence we cannot draw up a full list of the losses. German church thieves stole communion chalices, monstrances, crosses, reliquaries, paxes, revetments, and even bronze candlesticks. Some of these items were melted down for the metal, like many of the church bells, and some were spirited away to Germany. Only a very few of the Gothic and Baroque candelabra were left in their original places; the overwhelming majority simply vanished without trace.

Many of the historic church bells were lost, too. Germany was in dire need of raw materials for its war effort, and it was remorseless about amassing non-ferrous metal artefacts from the countries it occupied. Church bells were sent by rail to foundries in the heart of Germany, or melted down locally. The procedure peaked in 1941–1942.

Theft of livery badges and other historic artefacts belonging to medieval guilds flourished on a massive scale. These objects, treasured heirlooms handed down over the centuries, fell victim to German requisitioning because they were made of brass, copper or tin and melted down for use in the German war effort.

The lack of inventory lists and photographic records ruled out the registration of all of Poland's losses of items of goldsmithery, artistic metalwork, and historic fabrics. Apart from destroying and requisitioning such items from the main national, museum, and church collections, Germans also burgled private homes, taking objects like expensive tapestries and wall hangings, many of which were family heirlooms.

Wartime hostilities and German occupation also brought huge losses of antique furniture, most of which was abandoned by owners trying to salvage smaller objects, and perished in fires. The greatest amount of damage affected Warsaw – almost all the suites which had embellished the Royal Castle, the Łazienki Palace and the Little White House in its grounds were destroyed, bringing irreparable loss to Polish culture. A similar fate befell antique furniture in many other Varsovian buildings. For the entire duration of the War, transports of the best antique furniture were being dispatched to Germany.

Other places suffered the loss of antique furniture as well. Numerous Polish stately residences were embellished with elegant suites of furniture in diverse styles, imported from Western Europe. Also country houses and manors were furnished with more modest albeit historic suites made in Poland, yet they were not spared in the general scheme to destroy Poland's cultural legacy.

Many objects fell victim to private looting. Under the legal provisions brought in by the German occupying authorities, all Jewish property was taken over by the Gestapo, so numerous suites of antique furniture, especially from Warsaw and Łódź, were dispatched to Germany. From Governor-General Hans Frank down to the individuals at the lowest rung of the German administrative ladder, they all furnished the apartments they took over with items seized from Poles or Jews, and sent the best pieces home as *Kriegsbeute* (war booty).

Again, we cannot give a precise numerical account, even in percentages, of the losses sustained by Poland as regards antique furniture due to German hostilities and occupation. The reason is the lack of inventories to draw up a balance of assets on the day the War broke out. Only the state-owned and largest public collections, such as the residences at Wilanów, Gołuchów, and Łańcut,



Photo 5.10. German soldiers posing for a picture on the ruins of the Tadeusz Kościuszko Monument in Łódź. German occupying forces demolished the monument of this Polish national hero on 11 November 1939, the 21st anniversary of the restoration of Poland's independence (Collections of the Łódź Branch of the National Archives)

had such inventories, yet in most cases even such schedules perished in the general conflagration. This was certainly true of those places which were directly incorporated in Germany. There, all documents whatsoever showing that the properties were Polish, were destroyed. It would be just as difficult to give an estimate of the contents of hundreds of minor country residences and thousands of town houses. All we can say is that for years their proprietors had been accumulating high-quality specimens of Polish furniture-making, which disappeared without trace.

The Germans also embarked on a project to carry off the principal Polish ethnographical collections to Germany. This they did on the grounds of their belief that Poland's folk culture had been borrowed from Germany, so its artefacts had to "return home," i.e. be sent to German museums to back up the claim that the Germanic race had a cultural mission to fulfil, and to justify its *Drang nach Osten* (eastward drive). The prevalence of this view put the ethnographic collections in occupied Poland in great danger.

Quite apart from these plans, Polish folk art was in jeopardy of destruction in outcome of the barbaric methods of warfare employed by Germany. As a result, many invaluable collections perished. In 1939, a large number of specimens were obliterated in Luftwaffe air raids or were wilfully destroyed by the Wehrmacht.

It would be extremely hard to give an accurate schedule of the wartime losses of Jewish religious artefacts, which had been accommodated in synagogues and houses of prayer throughout the country. Many of these items were rare specimens of the deco-



Photo 5.11.
Debris of the collections of the Archives of Modern Records, destroyed by German troops; Warsaw, November 1944 (AAN collections)

rative arts, such as embroidered fabrics, historic silverware, wood carving etc. For centuries, the Jewish communities in Poland had collected the items they used for religious worship and handed them down from generation to generation. Many of the small-town synagogues were full of masterpieces of the decorative arts, which could have been museum showpieces. Alas, their owners did not make a habit of keeping inventories.

The Germans looted Jewish synagogues and houses of all their movable contents, including artistic objects, especially goldsmithery. The same fate befell the furnishings of Jewish houses of prayer. All of their furnishings and movable items – cabinets, curtains, bemas, candelabras etc. – were either stolen or smashed up. The same happened to Jewish exhibits in the national collections.

5.4.6. Archives and libraries

Provincial archives suffered losses already at the beginning of the War. The archival resources of Kutno, Koło, and Puck were burned down during hostilities and the passage of troops. Private collections sustained losses as well. Of the 22 collections in Greater Poland, 12 were devastated or gutted by fires, and the remaining 10 were carried off to Germany. Archives were damaged also during their removal from buildings which the Germans occupied to accommodate troops or offices. Operations for the complete or partial removal of archives affected all the provincial resources.

The hardest hit were the archival collections in Warsaw and Poznań, as well as those in the pre-war Voivodeships of Poznań and Pomerania. The fires that broke out in outcome of the bombing and shelling of Warsaw consumed some of the city's archives. Archiwum Oświecenia Publicznego (the Archive for Public Enlightenment) was completely burned down; a major part of Archiwum Skarbowe (the Treasury Archive) perished; and Archiwum Sądu Okręgowego (the Archive of the Regional Court) was devastated. The archival resources of the Ministry of Military Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform suffered considerable damage.

Other institutions whose archival collections were damaged during the siege of Warsaw in 1939 included the Zamoyski Library, the Przewdziecki Library, the financial institution Towarzystwo Kredytowe Ziemskie (Land Credit Society), the mutual insurance company Zakład Ubezpieczeń Wzajemnych, the GUS (General Statistical Office, now Statistics Poland), and many other official entities, such as Poland's inland revenue office.

The second phase in the destruction that hit Polish archival collections started on 1 October 1939 and lasted to 1 August 1944, i.e. until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. In this period, entire archival collections or their component

List of Poland's main losses of archives (percentage and numerical): The Archives of Historical Records (ca. 80%), ca. 400 thousand items; the Archive for Public Enlightenment (100%), 40 thousand items; school and educational records for the Kingdom of Poland, (late 18th c.– throughout the 19th c.), incl. records of the National Commission of Education (1773–1794), records of the University of Warsaw, and records of the primary and secondary schools of the Kingdom of Poland; the Treasury Archive (100% loss), 30 thousand items; treasury records for the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764–1795); 19th- and 20th-c. treasury records; Bank Polski records, 470 thousand items. Archiwum Główne (the Central Archive) lost 1.6 million volumes (90% of its holdings). The following pre-1975 collections were completely destroyed in fires: registers of the *sądy asesorskie* courts (*curia regis* courts, the Polish counterpart of the King's Bench) kept in the *Metrica Regni Poloniae* (Official Records of the Kingdom of Poland, viz. to 1795); registers of the royal appellate court *Trybunał Koronny* (Tribunal of the Kingdom of Poland, 1578–1795); records of the Commission of Education; part of the court records for the Treasury Commission, the Army Commission; Rada Nieustająca (*Consilium Permanens*, the Permanent Council, 1775–1794); the registers of the following pre-1795 courts: *jurysdykcja marszałkowska* (the marshal's court), *sądy grodzkie* (starost's courts), *sądy ziemskie* (district courts) and *sądy miejskie* (municipal courts) for the following regions: Eastern Mazovia, Podlasie, Sandomierz, and part of the regions of Kraków and Rawa. The following 19th-century archives were destroyed completely: records of *Komisja Rządowa Sprawiedliwości* (the Government Commission of Justice [in the Russian partition of Poland]) and the registers of practically all the courts in the Kingdom of Poland [viz. the Russian zone of partitioned Poland], 1807–1876. The Central Archives of Modern Records lost 1.15 million items (95% of its holdings). Other archival collections with severe losses included the Archives of the [Roman Catholic] Metropolitan Curia of Warsaw, the Zamoyski Archives, and the Archives of the National Library.

parts were carried off from the GG to Germany as spoils of war, or on the grounds of the provenance or territorial designation of the given collection, or even on the pretext of a "loan."

However, the most tragic wave of destruction for the Varsovian archives began on 1 August 1944 and lasted until the end of the War. Eye-witnesses and individuals who tried to save archives reported that the damage that occurred during the actual fighting was relatively small, affecting less than 10–15% of the holdings in particular archives. Yet after hostilities had ceased, the resources that survived were burned down and completely destroyed by the Germans, who set about the systematic annihilation of all the extant archival facilities.

Warsaw's largest archival collections lost all or virtually all of their resources owing to wartime hostilities and under German occupation. The losses were as follows: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (the Central Archives of Historical Records) – ca. 80%; Archiwum Akt Nowych (the Archives of Modern Records) – 95%; Archiwum Skarbowe (the Treasury Archive) – 100%; Archiwum Oświecenia (the Archive for Public Enlightenment) – 100%; and Archiwum Miejskie (the Municipal Archive) – 100%. These figures for Warsaw's archival losses were only slightly improved by the materials which were retrieved during the 1945–1947 effort to find and recover losses.

In the last phase of the War, the Poznań branch of the National Archives sustained very serious damage. During the siege of the city in January 1945, its building and collections were gutted by fire. Also, a large part of the holdings of the National and Diocesan Archives in Płock was lost due to devastation or plunder.

The War and German occupation caused a vast loss of archival materials, making research on Polish history extremely difficult. This is an irremediable loss which cannot be put into financial terms.

The 1949 estimate of the losses to Polish culture due to the destruction of the country's archives during the War and under German occupation quotes a figure of 113.1 million pre-war złoty. The numerical breakdown for the particular periods and types of archival loss are as follows: 15th–18th-century archives – 70 thousand archival units, 19th-century documents (up to the mid-century) – 2.35 million archival units; later documents – 2.25 million archival units; maps and plans – 43 thousand archival units.

The German drive to destroy Polish culture did not spare the libraries, either. In the GG, books were confiscated by German art historians, carried off by German librarians, looted by German soldiers, and subjected to a systematic procedure of destruction car-

ried out by the German occupying authorities.

In 1941, the German authorities amalgamated the National Library and the Krasiński Library, both of which were located in Warsaw, with the Library of Warsaw University, and gave the new institution a new name, *Staatsbibliothek Warschau*. The entire manuscript collection was lodged in the building of the Krasiński Library, and the extirpation of this huge resource was launched on 5 September 1944 with a bomb explosion. A month later, the Germans set fire to the building and all of Warsaw's historic manuscript collections perished in the blaze.

In September 1939, fires devastated many of Warsaw's medical and university libraries. Hardest hit were the university collections in the following fields of scholarship: Classics, German, Sovietology and other academic disciplines practised in the Instytut Wschodni (Eastern Institute), chemistry and pharmacy. At the turn of 1940, the Germans carried off the library collections of the following units of Warsaw University: the Phonetics Institute, the Organic Chemistry Department, the Experimental Physics Department, the Indo-European Languages Seminar, and the Hungarian Institute.

Other, smaller libraries were damaged as well. The large library collections of the Cathedral Chapter of Gniezno and the Płock Seminary sustained losses. The Raczyński Library in Poznań lost part of its holdings in a fire. Well over ten thousand volumes of the Library of the Pelplin Seminary were deliberately destroyed in a fire, and some of its holdings were carried off; many volumes perished because they were kept in unsuitable conditions.

In numerical terms, the losses and damage suffered by Polish libraries were huge, and virtually irreparable in terms of quality. The data collected after the War by the Polish Ministry of Education estimated library losses at approximately 411 million pre-war złoty, of which losses in collections accounted for 339 million złoty; losses in buildings – 30 million złoty, fixtures and furnishings came to 12 million złoty; 10 million złoty in lost professional library equipment, and 20 million pre-war złoty for losses in human resources.

This is the best balance of recorded losses for libraries that we have, but the figures it gives are definitely lower than the real losses.

The library losses registered by the Ministry of Education after the War was limited to losses reported by school libraries, general libraries, some academic libraries, and only sporadically by private libraries. The schedule did not record the losses of specialist libraries and those catering for the interests of specific professions, church libraries etc.

In addition, the Ministry's schedule of losses did not include many libraries which ceased to exist due to the War and the operations of the German occupying authorities, and hence few or no records at all survived to confirm the magnitude of their losses. Likewise, many libraries part of whose collections survived did not have any records of what and how much they had lost. In many cases, the Germans deliberately destroyed such information.

It is impossible to draw up even an approximate estimate for the losses sustained by booksellers' warehouses, book antiquarians, public libraries and lending facilities. In Warsaw and on the territories incorporated in Germany, such amenities forfeited virtually all of their assets. Furthermore, the private book collections owned by lawyers, physicians, scholars and intellectuals ceased to exist. Germany conducted a premeditated campaign to wipe out Poland's resources of books beyond the borders of the occupied country as well. When they occupied France, they left the collections of French libraries intact, but carried off the books housed in the Bibliothèque Polonaise de Paris at 6 quai d'Orléans in Paris, and sent it to Alfred Rosenberg, who was head of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories. In 1939, its collections had amounted to 145 thousand books, 1,000 manuscripts, 12 thousand drawings and prints, 2,800 atlases and maps, and 20 thousand copies of documents relating to Polish history assembled from British and French archives. In addition, there was a collection of periodicals, photographs, coins and medals.

5.5. Approximate estimate of the value of losses sustained by the Polish arts and culture

We considered two methods of determining the true value of the losses to Polish culture. The first was the procedure adopted by BROW, which estimated losses in the arts on the grounds of the average prices current at the time for objects in the diverse types of historic artefacts. We applied art info data for transactions involving cultural assets, and we listed over a thousand types of objects subject to such transactions, arranging them in groups according to the categories and methodology used by BROW.



Photo 5.12. Interior of the Royal Castle, Warsaw, showing the serious damage caused by German air raids and artillery fire in September 1939. In September 1944, German demolition engineers serving in Technische Nothilfe began to blow up all that remained of the Royal Castle (AAN collections)

In this way, we obtained an index for the change in prices which has occurred since the BROW calculations for particular categories, and a general index of price change for all the categories of cultural assets considered by BROW. We obtained an index of 1072%, i.e. prices (expressed in Polish currency) had risen by a factor of nearly eleven over the period from 1939 to 2018.

Unfortunately, this index has an inherent flaw, because it has been calculated on the basis of a comparison with prices for cultural items currently available on the Polish market. The value of such items is much smaller than the value of the cultural assets lost during and due to the Second World War, which the Polish Ministry of Culture and the Arts considered in its post-war estimate. In the first place, most of the cultural assets the Ministry took into account were museum pieces or items belonging to the best collections, in other words they were the rarest and most valuable items in the pre-war Polish collections. They were either carried off as loot or destroyed, and hence are no longer on the current Polish market. Secondly, after the War, many of the best and most valuable cultural artefacts still left in the country were exported illegally, chiefly to Vienna. This business flourished on a massive scale, depreciating Poland's cultural assets even more, on top of the general impoverishment suffered during the War.

Hence, an exact repetition of the BROW method to calculate losses, using current average prices for objects classified in the BROW groups, would not be the correct procedure. The best we could do would be to make a series of individual calculations on the basis of a comparison with current prices on the international

The value of losses in cultural goods could also be estimated on the basis of the gold standard. In 1939, the price of an ounce of gold was US \$35, and had risen to US \$1,282 by the end of 2018. Hence, on the gold standard, the value of 1 pre-war zloty was 36.6 PLN on 31 December 2018. If we used the gold standard to valorise prices, the value of Poland's cultural assets lost due to German hostilities and wartime occupation would be about 45.9 billion PLN on 31 December 2018.

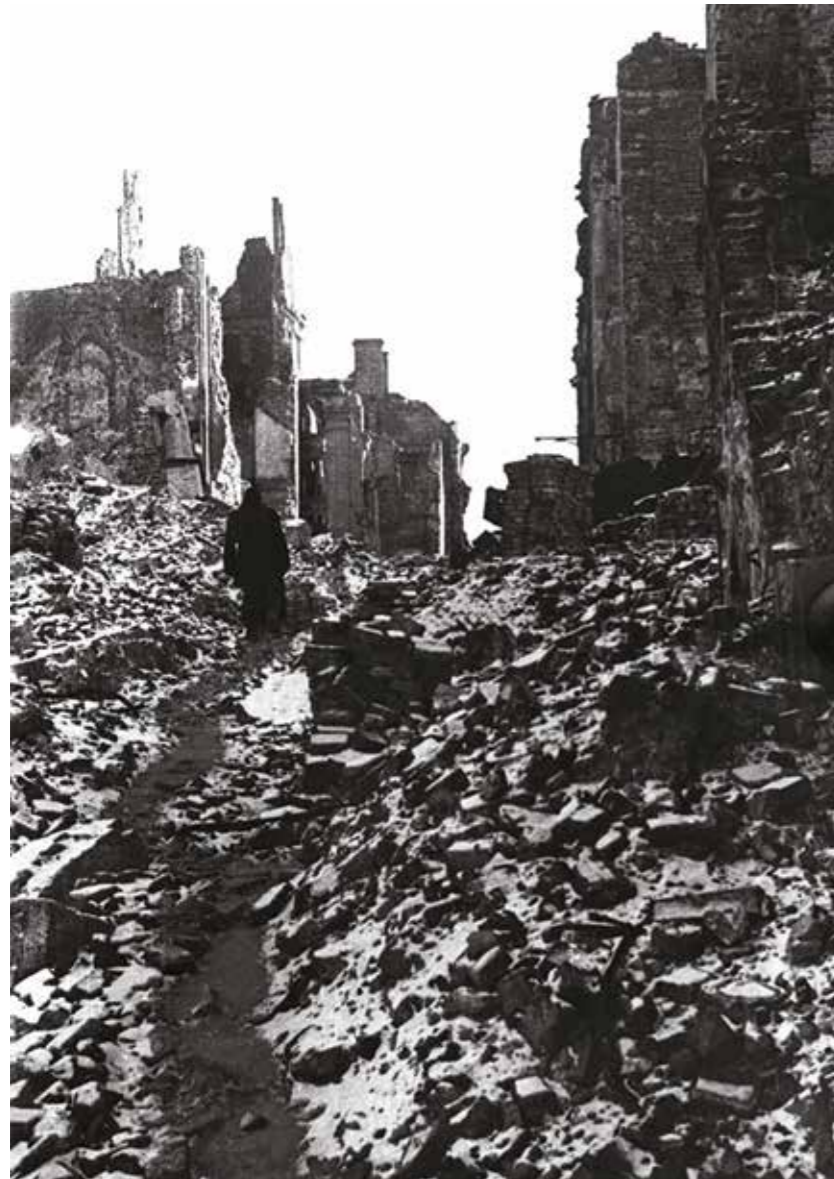


Photo 5.13.
Ruins of Warsaw Old Town in 1945 with the ruins of St. John's Archcathedral (ul. Świętojańska) on the left, after the Germans had devastated the city (Photo by Wacław Żdźarski; NDA collections)

auction market. But even here, we would encounter difficulties. Prices on the art market change at a very fast rate and are different year by year, not only for objects belonging to a particular artistic style, but also for individual objects. It is hard to speculate what the price of a particular object could have been – whether it would have been higher or lower compared to other artefacts created by the same artist. We are not able to give even a rough estimate of the price Raphael's *Portrait of a Young Man*, which was stolen from the Czartoryski Museum, could fetch if it were put up for auction today.

Type of loss	Value (million pre-war złoty)	Value (US\$ million at 1939 \$ - złoty exchange rate)	Value (PLN million for December 2021)
Works of art and art collections	1,208	226.85	18,605
Technical equipment	38	7.13	585
Office equipment	8	1.50	123
Total	1,254	235.48	19,313

Table 5.1.
Value of works of art and cultural assets lost by Poland during the Second World War (classification by type of loss)
Source: AAN, BOW, ref. nos. 10, 11, 14, 19, 148; AAN, Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki (MKiS), ref. no. 17; *Sprawozdanie w przedmiocie strat i szkód wojennych Polski w latach 1939–1945*, Warszawa, 1947.

Category	Value (million pre-war złoty)	Value (US\$ million at 1939 \$ - złoty exchange rate)	Value (PLN million for December 2021)
Museums	446	83.75	6,869
Music, visual arts, and literature	164	30.80	2,526
Cinematography	46	8.64	708
Items of religious worship	360	67.60	5,544
Cultural assets in administrative offices and associations	194	36.43	2,998
Cultural, educational, and military institutions	44	8.26	678
Total	1,254	235.48	19,313

Table 5.2.
Value of works of art, collections, and libraries, and equipment (for cinematography) lost by Poland during the Second World War (classification by category of loss)

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. nos. 10, 11, 14, 19, 148; AAN, MKiS, ref. no. 17; *Sprawozdanie w przedmiocie strat i szkód wojennych Polski w latach 1939–1945*, Warszawa, 1947.

The best measure to obtain a true reflection of the change in the value of cultural goods which occurred in the interval from 1939 to 2018 is the dollar valorisation method. We applied this method to calculate the current value (for 31 December 2018) of the lost cultural goods considered in the BROW computation, the data for which is now preserved in the AAN, in the Ministry of Culture and the Arts and BOW files. Using the dollar valorisation method, we obtained a figure of **1.254 billion pre-war złoty** for the cultural assets lost by pre-war Poland (not counting its eastern territories which were incorporated in the Soviet Union after the War), which was equivalent to **19,313,230,200 PLN (19.31 billion PLN) on 31 December 2021** (Tables 5.1 and 5.2). This estimate does not include the damage and devastation of Poland's historic architecture and other buildings associated with cultural assets. These losses have been discussed elsewhere in this Report.



Leszek Zakrzewski



The losses of Nowy Sącz under German occupation during the Second World War

The German occupation of Nowy Sącz lasted from 6 September 1939 to 20 January 1945, when the Red Army entered the city. When the Germans occupied Nowy Sącz, they installed their military authorities and changed its name to Neu Sandez. On 17 September, they disbanded the Polish municipal authority and set up their own military administration. On 1 November, following the creation of the General Government (26 October), a German civilian administration took over the running of the city.

Before the War, Nowy Sącz had been a powiat (county) municipality, viz. the seat of a starosty. It covered an area of about 16.07 sq. km. 68% of its 34 thousand inhabitants were Roman Catholics, nearly a third (30%) professed Judaism, about 1.3% were Protestants, and 0.6% belonged to the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church. The post-war population census carried out in February 1946 recorded only 23 thousand inhabitants within the new municipal borders, which the Germans had extended to cover an area of 24.25 sq. km.

From 1939 to 1945, German perpetrators murdered 14,500 inhabitants of Nowy Sącz—victims of mass and individual executions, and prisoners or hostages detained in Nowy Sącz jails. This is in fact a very conservative estimate. The victims included almost all of the city's prewar Jewish inhabitants, who were murdered during Operation Reinhard.

We should add all those who died in concentration camps, unfortunately we do not know the exact number. However, we do know that 1,087 individuals born in Nowy Sącz were sent to Auschwitz, 616 of whom were Jewish and 471 were ethnic Poles

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Operation Reinhardt – code-name of the German operation to murder all the Jews from the GG and the Białystok area, conducted in 1942–1943. This project to exterminate Jews was perpetrated by SS special commandos, and most of it was done in three death camps, Belzec, Treblinka, and Sobibor. While carrying out Operation Reinhardt, the Germans also conducted pacifications and destroyed ghettos, massacring their Jewish inhabitants. In the same period, Jews from other parts of German-occupied Europe, Holland, Austria, Slovakia, Greece, as well as Germany itself, were deported to German death camps. Operation Reinhardt, which was conducted under the command of SS-Brigadeführer Odilo Globocnik, finished in November 1943.

Left: Detail of Photo 5.15., p. 301.



(nationality categories according to the German classification). The average survival rate for concentration camp prisoners was 14%, but it should be remembered that this list is not complete and concerns only one of the German concentration camps.

As a result of the War, Nowy Sącz lost almost half of its population, including practically all of its Jewish community. 62% of its prewar buildings were destroyed, together with 3 road bridges and 3 railway bridges. Its largest factory, Warsztaty Główne I klasy, was looted of 90% of its production equipment, and 40% of its buildings and installations were destroyed. The Germans blew up the railway bridges and control room with its safety devices, points, water towers and rolling stock, effectively leaving Nowy Sącz cut off from the rest of the country. Any rolling stock left was taken to Germany. The main pipes running along the Heleński bridge in the city's water supply network were destroyed. The Germans also plundered equipment from smaller production plants and companies, as well as the assets of associations which operated before the War. Cultural losses resulted from the devastation of book collections and the loss of archives. It is impossible to estimate the losses of private individuals whose properties were looted and movable assets stolen.

Photo 5.14.
View of the ruins of Nowy Sącz,
1945 (Collections of Muzeum
Okręgowe w Nowym Sączu)



Nowy Sącz's material losses including municipal and state-owned real estate, historic and private buildings, infrastructure and urban woodland, have been valued at 244 million zł revalued for 2022.

Photo 5.15.
View of the ruins along
Kazimierza St., Nowy Sącz, 1945
(Collections of District Museum
in Nowy Sącz, Muzeum Okręgowe
w Nowym Sączu)

6

Mirosław Kłusek

**Poland's losses
in banking
and insurance
sustained as a result of
the Second World War**

6.1. Losses in banking

Before I evaluate the losses sustained by Polish banking during German hostilities against Poland and Germany's occupation of Poland (1939–1945), I shall give the reader a brief account of what happened to Polish banking under German occupation which will make it easier to understand the causes, range, and magnitude of the losses.

6.1.1. The situation of Polish banking on the territories directly incorporated in Germany

Under the *Polenvermögensverordnung* regulation issued by Hermann Goering on 17 September 1940 on the confiscation of Polish property, all the assets of the three Polish state-owned banks (Bank Polski, Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego and Państwowy Bank Rolny) operating on Polish territories directly incorporated in Germany were confiscated and put under the management of the *Haupttreuhandstelle Ost, Berlin* (the Main Trustee Office for the East based in Berlin; hereinafter HTO). All other Polish credit institutions were to be closed down and put under receivership. Both their assets and liabilities were liquidated. The liquidated assets included tangibles (real estate, equipment, goods), the institutions' own securities, the debts of Germans and citizens of the Czech and Moravian Protectorate, guaranteed and non-guaranteed debts of the local authorities and their associations and companies on territories incorporated in Germany and in addition, the liabilities of foreign debtors and Polish debtors whose property had not been confiscated.

The assets of Polish credit institutions were liquidated by means of a cash payment through the German credit institutions. They were either sold for cash or exchanged for liabilities. The HTO, which operated in the interest of the German Reich,

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Left: Photo 6.1.
Ruins of the Prudential Insurance Building, Warsaw (NDA collections)

became the owner of the assets confiscated from Polish credit institutions and their German creditors, and made the receivers handling the liquidations sell off all the assets as quickly as possible.

One of the things of special interest to the HTO was the real estate belonging to the liquidated credit institutions with buildings on it which could be sold within a short period of time. German credit institutions found such opportunities particularly attractive. Initially, the buildings were leased out with a view to their eventual sale. The office equipment was sold on the basis of its estimated value. If no estimates were available, the HTO sent in an appraiser. Goods confiscated from a liquidated credit institution were sold at the market value.

HTO cleared debts on the principle of selling them off individually or in blocks, and, only as a last resort, agreed to have receivers collect debts directly. This speeded up the job considerably, while debtors' liabilities remained unchanged. Only German credit institutions were permitted to buy up the liabilities, and most of the debts were purchased by credit institutions of the same type as the liquidated Polish institution. The HTO tolerated exceptions to this rule if another type of credit institution offered a better price for the receivables. However, if the debtors of the liquidated credit institution had already become customers of German banks, it was deemed appropriate to sell claims to the institutions in which the debtors had accounts.

Usually, German credit institutions paid in cash for the receivables they bought up. There were other options open, such as mortgage bonds or municipal bonds. Receivers were also instructed to collect debts from foreigners (if such a need arose). To help non-German nationals repay their loans, the Reichsfinanzministerium (German Ministry of Finance) granted the HTO the right to give debtors who wanted to settle their arrears with the receiver a guarantee that they would not be required to repay their debt again in the future, even in the event of a court order.

Receivers handling the liquidation of the assets of the Polish state-owned banks, as well as receivers of other Polish credit institutions, were obliged to transfer the funds remaining after the clearance of all the liabilities to the HTO's account. They were expressly forbidden to invest the money on long-term deposits. All they were allowed was to leave a sum to cover a month's costs of liquidation. The remaining money had to be promptly transferred to the HTO VI /50 account in the Reichskreditgesellschaft in Berlin, where HTO left the money at the disposal of the Reichsfinanzministerium.

6.1.2. The situation of Polish banking in the General Government

In the General Government (GG), German civil authorities took over from the military shortly after German forces occupied Poland. Initially, they did not have a strictly defined plan of action on Polish credit institutions. Their instructions were usually local in nature, except for the cities of Kraków and Warsaw. In Kraków, a number of Jewish and Polish banks were closed down, and major German banks were allowed to set up their agencies in the city. The activities the Germans undertook in Warsaw went much further due to the economic significance of that city. First, they closed down all the Jewish credit institutions, then they removed all the persons they considered Jewish (for the German definition of "Jewish", see Chapter 1.3.2.) from the management boards and appointed supervisors to control the assets of credit institutions, especially in matters related to the availability of cash.

The Germans were fully aware of the importance of credit institutions for business, and from the very outset began to make efforts to restore and rationalise Polish credit facilities in the GG. This task was entrusted to Bankaufsichtsstelle, a German authority directed by Fritz Paersch and set up in 1940 to supervise the credit institutions in the GG.

All the local and foreign credit institutions involved in granting mortgages, banking or savings activities, and all public and private savings banks and credit cooperatives in the GG were put under the authority of Bankaufsichtsstelle. Only Emissionsbank in Poland and Deutsche Post im Osten and its outlets were exempted from Bankaufsichtsstelle's supervisory operations.

As head of Bankaufsichtsstelle, Paersch enjoyed a very broad range of powers. He decided whether a credit institution could start or resume its operations. He could also close down a bank or limit its activities. He was the decision-maker for the disposal of property and the carrying out of a bank's obligations. He had the right to issue orders for the amendment of Polish legal provisions on banking, and to withdraw powers of attorney from persons who had been authorised to represent credit institutions.

In mid-1940, the Germans started to organise their own banking system, and appointed supervisors (*Aufsichtspersonen*) for individual branches of the credit sector, and trustees (*Treuhänder*) for credit companies. The duties of *Aufsichtspersonen* were to control and assess the members of the board and other

authorities of the institutions under their supervision, in all their branches in the GG. The main criterion in their assessments was the extent to which the activities of these credit enterprises complied with German interests. Banks already under the supervision of *Treuhänder* were exempt from control by *Aufsichtspersonen*, who were otherwise empowered to control all types of account books, statements and reports, as well as to attend meetings of the board of directors, and other bodies of the credit institutions they supervised.

An assessment of the contribution Bankaufsichtsstelle made to the reconstruction and development of the credit market in the GG should consider the fact that its main objective was to ensure that the credit institutions operating in the GG served the German wartime economy as best as possible.

6.1.3. The credit system in the GG

There were 5,597 credit cooperatives (*spółdzielnie kredytowe*) in Poland before the outbreak of the Second World War. 1,360 were on the territory of the GG, not counting Distrikt Galizien, which was incorporated later. Before the War, these cooperatives had operated under 10 headquarters, but under German occupation only two were permitted to continue their activities. However, one of them was Centralna Kasa Spółek Rolniczych (Agricultural Credit Union), the most important of these institutions, and it held a special place in the credit policy of the occupying forces. The scope of its activities was expanded, and it was made the central financial institution for the entire cooperative movement in the GG.

Other credit co-operatives were relatively insignificant. About 600 Jewish credit cooperatives were closed down almost as soon as the Germans arrived. Next, the occupying authorities wanted to reorganise the system by expanding a network limited to branches of agricultural credit cooperatives. This was a necessary measure for the implementation of the tasks the GG's Food and Agriculture Department had in store for Polish agriculture. However, it soon turned out that due to the falling demand for farmers' loans, rural cooperatives were forced to limit their activities, and focus on the struggle for survival.

The Germans cut down the number of municipal credit co-operatives to the indispensable minimum. The activities of those they allowed to continue operations consisted mainly of handling existing accounts, and only in a few cases was it possible to ex-

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tend the scope of their work to include new operations. All clerical and employee cooperatives were to be closed down.

Credit associations (*towarzystwa kredytowe*) made up another group of financial institutions, and out of the three rural credit associations, two had their headquarters in the GG, while only 7 out of the 15 urban credit associations found themselves within the GG. There was also a Warsaw-based Credit Association for Polish Industry (*Towarzystwo Kredytowe Przemysłu Polskiego*). Only two of the credit associations, Land Credit Society (*Towarzystwo Kredytowe Ziemskie*) in Warsaw and Warsaw City Credit Society (*Towarzystwo Kredytowe Miejskie Miasta Warszawy*), were of any importance for the Germans. Their mortgage bonds were very popular with buyers, so it was decided not to liquidate them. Other credit institutions did not play a significant role, and were to be liquidated.

There were 26 Polish and 4 foreign private banks at the time, 15 of them in the GG Bankaufsichtsstelle (Banking Supervisory Office) considered this too many, and a partial reduction was to be made for economic reasons. By mid-1940, it was not yet clear which of them would be closed down. The selection was to depend on their balance sheets and Bankaufsichtsstelle's assessment of their financial standing. Those with problems with capital and its acquisition were shortlisted for liquidation. The remaining banks, whose capital had been depleted or lost as a result of the War, were to have it supplemented. The plan for the reorganisation of the credit system was that only two Polish joint-stock banks, Bank Związku Spółek Zarobkowych and Bank Handlowy w Warszawie, would be left in the GG. Bank Związku Spółek Zarobkowych was to be merged with Bank Dyskontowy Warszawski, Bank Zachodni w Warszawie, and Genossenschaftsbank AG. The rest of the banks were to be closed down or taken over by German banks.

The credit institutions in the GG which got the most considerate treatment from the German occupying authorities were the savings banks (*kasy oszczędnościowe*). 353 savings banks had operated in Poland before the War, and 69 resumed operations in the GG. The German authorities were particularly interested in developing them. The local authorities, especially at the powiat level, contributed to a significant rise in payments made into new savings bank accounts. The sum total of funds on them was more than on new deposits in the Polish private banks. Most of the accounts in the savings banks were held by public institutions, and relatively few by private individuals.

Nonetheless, the favourable attitude of the German authorities to the savings banks did not mean that they were pleased

with their number. They wanted only one savings bank per powiat, and only the largest cities were to have a municipal savings bank. By 1943, the Germans had practically completed their plan and only 53 were left out of the original 81 major savings banks. However, the number of branches operating in rural areas went up from 27 to 67 to handle any financial surpluses the local people may have had.

The most important tasks of the savings banks were handling savings and providing credit to local customers, especially small and medium-size businesses. Moreover, the plan was to have the savings banks issue medium- and long-term mortgage loans once the economic situation stabilised.

Analogous activities were being pursued by other local financial institutions of a similar type, the *gminne kasy pożyczkowo-oszczędnościowe* (savings and credit unions operating at the local gmina level). In the summer of 1939, there had been 975 of them in Poland, 570 in areas soon to become the GG. But according to Bankaufsichtsstelle, they were an artificial creation brought into being by the Polish state for political rather than for economic purposes. So they were considered to be of minor importance and earmarked for liquidation or transformation into savings banks or credit cooperatives.

All the banking houses were closed down as soon as German occupation began, presumably because most of them operated on Jewish capital. But it turned out that two new banking houses had to be established to cater for the securities market. These two institutions had a greater impact on the value of covered and other bonds than the Polish prewar private banks.

6.1.4. The value of losses sustained by Polish banking during German military operations and under German occupation, 1939–1945

The January 1947 BOW Report on the losses of Polish banking resulting from the War and German occupation provides only very general data. Its table on losses in public administration, local government, monopolies, insurance, and banks gives a lump sum of 1.258 billion zł for losses in buildings including bank buildings, but it does not specify the losses sustained by credit and savings institutions. Another table on losses in public administration, local government, monopolies, banks, and insurance gives a sum of 50 million zł for bank losses in lieu of furnishings and office

equipment. We may have serious reservations about the sum of 180 million zł quoted in the same table for “bank losses in water and sewerage networks, and local government installations, not covered in other sections.”

We may conclude that the only losses in banking the BOW Report considered were the tangibles – buildings and their facilities, and office equipment. There is no mention of financial losses of any kind. We may conjecture that the BOW Report's reasoning went as follows.

The main objective of the BOW Report was to produce an official statement on the sum total of Poland's war losses in the sense of losses which had a direct impact on Poland's overall economic and cultural affairs. It was not interested in banking assets like treasury bonds, bills of exchange, cheques, bills, bonds and securities, credit on current accounts, funds in other banks etc., which were various types of monetary claims, not goods in the sense of tangible property such as real estate or office equipment, and therefore it did not consider such losses. The loss of a banker's bill or a certificate for a loan was certainly a loss for its owner. However, it was not a loss for the State, it had no effect on the national wealth. At most, it could have resulted in a redistribution of the diverse components of property held by individual members of society, because debts and financial liabilities balanced and cancelled each other out within the framework of the State.

Such reasoning raises reservations. First of all, we should distinguish between the destruction of certificates for financial assets and their plunder by the German occupying power. Instances of destruction did not affect the economic affairs of the country, as I have already said. The State can use its issuing bank to replace destroyed bank bills with a new issue, with no effect on the nation's assets. Yet it was a completely different situation if the same bonds were confiscated by the occupying forces, thereby passing into their possession and subsequently returning to the country's economy, but in exchange for tangible goods produced on the domestic market. In this situation, the Polish State clearly sustained a loss.

Financial assets may only be omitted in the general reckoning of war losses if the funds ignored were used exclusively for domestic transactions. Forfeited assets in gold, foreign currency, and foreign securities should have been estimated and included in the sum total of war losses, because they had a value for the exchange of tangible goods imported from abroad.

The losses I discuss below – losses caused by the War and German occupation – have been derived on the basis of statis-

tical data on credit and savings institutions operating within the borders of the Republic of Poland in 1939 (except for the eastern territories which were incorporated in the USSR).

Data on the losses of, and damage to the operations of credit and savings institutions were compiled mainly on the basis of the results of a questionnaire sent out by the Ministry of the Treasury in January 1947 to institutions of this type. Materials of this type started to be collected already in 1945. However, on examination it turned out that the data assembled at that time had numerous defects and inaccuracies. Many credit institutions did not have any financial books or documents, because their records had been destroyed during the War under German occupation, so they were unable to fully document the losses they had sustained. Such incomplete material could not be used to give a fully substantiated picture of Poland's claims against Germany for the damage and losses suffered by credit and savings institutions. Hence, it was necessary to conduct a new search for records. The work carried out in 1946, when the financial ledgers and documents were reconstructed and documented, made it possible to arrive at a much more accurate estimate of the losses the banks and financial institutions had sustained in the diverse categories of their assets. The material obtained in this way entailed the following:

I. 22 banks, including Bank Polski; two state-owned banks: Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego and Państwowy Bank Rolny; Bank Akceptacyjny; Poczta Kasa Oszczędności; Bank Polska Kasa Opieki; two municipal banks, Polski Bank Komunalny and Komunalny Bank Kredytowy w Poznaniu; Bank Związku Spółek Zarobkowych; Bank Ziemstwa Kredytowego w Poznaniu; 12 private banks including Bank Kwilecki Potocki i Ska. SA w Poznaniu; Bank Francusko-Polski w Paryżu; Bank Amerykański w Polsce; Bank Handlowy w Warszawie; Bank Dyskontowy Warszawski; Bank Zachodni; Powszechny Bank Kredytowy; and Bank Cukrownictwa w Poznaniu.

II. 13 credit associations including 3 rural associations: Towarzystwo Kredytowe Ziemskie w Warszawie; Poznańskie Ziemstwo Kredytowe w Poznaniu; and Towarzystwo Kredytowe Ziemskie we Lwowie; 9 municipal associations: Kaliskie Towarzystwo Kredytowe Miejskie w Kaliszu; Piotrkowskie Towarzystwo Kredytowe w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim; Zachodnio-Polskie Towarzystwo Kredytowe Miejskie w Poznaniu; Lubelskie Towarzystwo Kredytowe Miejskie w Lublinie; Radomskie Towarzystwo Kredytowe Miejskie w Radomiu; Często-

chowskie Towarzystwo Kredytowe Miejskie w Częstochowie; Siedleckie Towarzystwo Kredytowe Miejskie w Siedlcach; Towarzystwo Kredytowe Miejskie w Warszawie; Kieleckie Towarzystwo Kredytowe Miejskie w Kielcach; and Towarzystwo Kredytowe Przemysłu Polskiego.

III. 188 municipal savings banks.

IV. 415 co-operative credit unions (*związkowe spółdzielnie kredytowe*), and the Centralna Kasa Spółek Rolniczych (Agricultural Credit Union).

If we compare the number and individual groups of credit and savings institutions with the pre-war data in *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939*, we observe a disparity between the number of credit institutions that reported damage and losses after the War and the number on record for the end of 1938. The chief reasons for this were as follows:

1. Before the War, a significant number of credit and savings institutions operated in Poland's eastern voivodeships, which were incorporated in the USSR after the War.

2. Under German occupation, a number of credit and savings institutions suspended activities due to German repressive measures or losses suffered as a result of hostilities which consumed all their assets. The institutions involved were municipal savings banks and especially co-operative credit unions. After the War, attempts were made to reactivate these institutions, but the process was slow.

3. Some co-operative credit unions evaded reporting their damage and losses. The activities of these co-operatives had been almost entirely based on community involvement. Their staff were unpaid, so they did not respond promptly to all the instructions they received. In addition, there was a general belief that despite the record of damage, no compensation would be received, and Poland's compensation would be too small in relation to the overall national losses to cover the claims of all the parties. This opinion had also been widespread in 1945 and played a major role discouraging private individuals from registering their losses.

Despite the difficulties, the information collected in the questionnaire of January 1947 provided evidence of serious losses sustained by Polish credit and savings institutions. The 1947 survey resulted in data on large banks, long-term loan associations, and for a large number of local savings banks and credit co-operatives. If it had managed to collect up all the material, it would have only enhanced the data it obtained, but it would not have changed the basic picture.

The losses credit and savings institutions sustained resulted from damage caused during hostilities or as an outcome of operations and orders issued by the German occupying authorities. Combat brought about the destruction, conflagration, or plunder of cash kept in vaults, securities, bills of exchange and bonds. The same befell real estate, movable assets and equipment.

As I have said, Germany closed down all the Polish credit institutions operating in the directly incorporated territories. Fate was just as unkind to the Polish credit institutions in the GG. Their losses resulted from the destruction or pillage of bills of exchange, financial ledgers, pledges and collaterals, as well as from the financial ruin or death of debtors, some of whom were killed.

Item	Balance-sheet categories	Value in millions of pre-war zł
1	Cash, available funds, domestic bonds, funds in Polish and foreign banks	484.8
2	Loans	2,922.3
3	Securities portfolios, stocks and shares	593.9
4	Real estate	152.4
5	W ruchomościach	49.9
6	Movable assets	800.7
	Razem	5,004.0

Table 6.1.
Losses of credit and savings institutions by balance-sheet category and its value

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 174.

Item	Type of institution	Value in millions of pre-war zł
1.	Bank Polski	1,044.7
2.	Two state-owned banks, Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego and Państwowy Bank Rolny	1,677.2
3.	Postal Savings Bank (Pocztowa Kasa Oszczędności)	123.4
4.	Two municipal banks, Polski Bank Komunalny and Komunalny Bank Kredytowy w Poznaniu	254.7
5.	Other banks, including private banks, Bank Polska Kasa Opieki, Bank Związku Spółek Zarobkowych, and Bank Akceptacyjny	654.6
6.	Long-term credit associations (rural, municipal and Towarzystwo Przemysłu Polskiego)	337.2
7.	Local savings banks	792.2
8.	Credit unions and Centralna Kasa Spółek Rolniczych	120.0
	Total	5,004.0

Table 6.2.
Losses of credit and savings institutions by type of institution

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 174.

The fall in profitability credit and savings institutions experienced should also be treated as a war loss. To calculate this loss, I took the average profitability these institutions enjoyed in the last couple of years before the War and the subsequent fall. In general, losses in the form of a reduced income were observed for the entire period until December 1946, the cut-off time for the estimate of losses sustained by credit and savings institutions, although they continued to feel the effects of the War for many subsequent years.

The sum total of losses sustained by credit and savings institutions due to German hostilities and occupation, within Poland's borders of 1939 (except for the eastern territories, which were incorporated in the USSR), amounted to 5.004 billion pre-war zł (Tables 6.1 and 6.2). This amount comprises the sum on record in the balance sheets for 1939, which amounts to 4.002 billion pre-war zł, plus a further 1.002 billion pre-war zł recorded in later balances.

The gigantic volume of the losses presented in these tables stands out clearly when it is compared with the financial condition and business of the same credit and savings institutions prior to the War. The basis for such a comparison is their condition at the end of 1938. Losses due to military operations occurred throughout the entire period of German occupation, reaching a peak during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 and the military operations during the winter of 1944/1945.

According to data for the end of 1938, the overall balance sheet total for the credit and savings institutions which registered war losses in 1947 amounted to 11.059 billion pre-war zł. It follows that the war losses reported in March 1947, which amounted to 5.004 billion pre-war zł, accounted for as much as 45.2% of the 1938 balance sheet total. Cash in vaults, sums available in banks (such as a vista deposits, treasury bills) amounted to 731 million pre-war zł for the end of 1938. The loss in this component of assets, estimated at 484.8 million pre-war zł, accounted for 66.3% of their assets in 1938. Before the War, the institutions which answered the 1947 questionnaire had issued loans (including long-term credit) worth 7.287 billion pre-war zł. They lost a total of 2.922 billion pre-war zł, 40.1% of their pre-war assets.¹

Before the War, the securities portfolio (bonds and mortgage bonds, state loans, stocks and shares of credit institutions), amounted to 1.66 billion pre-war zł. This sum did not include securities issued by the municipal and rural credit associations. The losses sustained during the War in this portfolio were estimated

¹ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 174

at 593.9 million pre-war zł, 35.7% of the pre-war condition. Most of these losses, 395 million pre-war zł, were Polish pre-war securities, and the rest, 198.8 million pre-war zł, were for treasury bonds issued by the GG.²

The deposits held by credit and loan institutions and entered in the 1947 registration scheme organised by the Ministry of the Treasury had amounted to 3.631 billion pre-war zł at the end of 1938. If we subtract 800.7 million pre-war zł for reduced profitability from the overall losses of 5.004 billion pre-war zł, we obtain a sum of 4.203 billion pre-war zł for the real loss. A comparison of the pre-war deposits with the losses leads to the following conclusions: first, the war losses were in excess (115.7%) of the pre-war deposits; second, the losses in pre-war balances alone amounted to nearly 89% of the deposits. The losses sustained under German occupation and at the end of the War amounted to over 1 billion pre-war zł and seriously depleted the growth in liquid assets characterising banking transactions in this period.

Just a few of these comparative figures are enough to show how severe the losses sustained by Polish credit and savings institutions were. The loss of such a large part of their assets, while they still had to honour their liabilities, posed a serious threat to the structure and existence of the entire Polish credit system.

The data presented in Table 6.2 shows that the credit institutions which suffered the most during the War and under German occupation were those operating under the provisions of Polish public law. The joint losses of Bank Polski (the Bank of Poland); the state-owned banks Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego, Państwowy Bank Rolny, and Poczтовая Kasa Oszczędności, and the municipal banks Polski Bank Komunalny and Komunalny Bank Kredytowy w Poznaniu, amounted to 3.1 billion pre-war zł (Table 6.3). A comparison of these losses with the 1938 balance sheets, which amounted to 7.083 billion zł, shows that the losses of the credit institutions operating under public law amounted to 43.7% of their pre-war assets. Losses were far in excess of the deposits paid into the accounts (savings, current, giro, etc.) in these institutions. The deposits amounted to 2.014 billion zł, while real losses were 2.575 billion zł (after the deduction of losses due to reduced profitability), and were equivalent to 127.8% of the deposits.³

² AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 175

³ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 175

Item	Type of loss	Value in millions of pre-war zł
1.	Cash, funds in other banks, Treasury bills, etc.	245.2
2.	Loans	1 974.1
3.	Bonds, stocks and shares, etc.	241.0
4.	Real estate	91.2
5.	Movable assets and equipment	23.9
6.	Losses due to reduced profitability	524.6
Total		3,100.0

The losses of other credit institutions, banks, long-term loan companies, credit co-operatives, and Centralna Kasa Spółek Rolniczych were estimated at 1.904 billion zł. However, this is not the full amount of losses, as several smaller banks did not submit their data owing to technical problems, and were not included in the loss statements prepared in March 1947.

The sum total on the balance sheets for the end of 1938 for the other banks which completed the 1947 questionnaire amounted to 1.376 billion pre-war zł. Their total loss, 654.6 million zł, was 47.6% of the sum total on their balance sheets, and their real losses amounted to 80% of the deposits held in them, which in 1947 amounted to 700 million zł (Table 6.4). Long-term credit companies estimated their losses at a total sum of 337.2 million zł. 225 million zł of this overall sum were losses in long-term loans. The losses of these institutions made up 30.7% of their pre-war assets for loans entered on their 1938 balance sheets (732 million pre-war zł).⁴

Item	Type of loss	Value in millions of pre-war zł
1	Cash, funds in other banks, Treasury bills, etc.	40.0
2	Loans	425.5
3	Bonds, stocks and shares, etc.	49.6
4	Real estate	33.0
5	Movable assets and equipment	9.3
6	Losses due to reduced profitability	97.2
Total		654.6

⁴ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 176.

Table 6.3.
Losses of public law credit institutions based on balance sheet data

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 154, p. 68–78; BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 15, 175; BOW, ref. no. 157, p. 30–31, 34–40; Ministerstwo Skarbu II (MS II; Ministry of the Treasury II), ref. no. 762, p. 414–430.

Table 6.4.
Losses of other banks not included in Table 6.3.

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 16, 117, 129, 176; BOW, ref. no. 157, p. 26–27, 43, 46, 49, 50–53, 59–62, 74–75, 81–84, 89–96; MS II, ref. no. 762, p. 665.

The losses of the local savings banks (*kasy komunalne*) in the 1947 estimate did not include the losses of those which had been established on the territories of Eastern Poland incorporated in the USSR after the War, or of those which had still not been reactivated by March 1947 (Table 6.5). There were 164 local savings banks in the Eastern territories and those not reactivated by March 1947, which meant a 46.4% fall in numbers in relation to the 353 local savings banks (not counting branches) operating in pre-war Poland. The financial condition of the ones in the East incorporated in the USSR was definitely poorer in comparison to those in the rest of Poland. Indirect evidence of this is provided by the sum total of the deposits in them at the end of 1938. The total for all of these institutions in Poland amounted to 747.9 million pre-war zł, of which only 108 million pre-war zł were held in the 7 Eastern voivodeships, viz. 14.4% of all the deposits. Hence, the overall losses sustained by local savings banks should be increased by at least 20% for the non-reactivated ones and those in the East.⁵

Lp.	Rodzaj strat	Wartość w mln zł przedwojennych
1	Cash, funds in other banks, Treasury bills, etc.	166,0
2	Loans	233,9
3	Bonds, stocks and shares, etc.	286,1
4	Real estate	12,5
5	Movable assets and equipment	3,6
6	Losses due to reduced profitability	90,1
Razem		792,2

Table 6.5.
The value of losses reported by local savings banks

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 176.

Only a very small number of credit co-operatives (*spółdzielnie kredytowe*) reported war losses for the total number of such institutions operating in Poland before the War, so there is no data for a comparison of these losses with their pre-war assets. The data in *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939* shows that at the end of 1937 there were 5,319 credit co-operatives in Poland, and the sum total on their balance sheets was 656 million pre-war zł, their cash in vaults and available funds were 57 million zł, their loans were 508 million zł, their securities were 26 million zł, and their savings deposits were 264 million zł. However, only 415 credit co-operatives had reported losses by March 1947, which can be explained by the fact that these institutions were generally small entities and could protect their assets more easily. For the same reason,

⁵ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 176.

it was simpler for them to suspend their operations. Although the difference between the number of these institutions operating before the War and the number of claims they registered is very big, the overall sum of their claim is not very significant with respect to the total value of losses sustained by all the credit and savings institutions put together. The financial condition of the credit co-operatives was modest in relation to other credit and savings institutions.

Along with the Polish credit and savings institutions, their customers suffered severe losses as well, amounting to 914.9 million zł in cash, deposits, and collaterals. Customers' losses owing to the plunder of deposit boxes were estimated by the credit institutions at 33 million zł. This was only the sum for losses where the credit institutions knew how much was in their deposit boxes.⁶ Thus, overall losses amounted to 5.004 billion zł + 0.948 billion zł.

The best way to show the real losses of Polish credit and savings institutions and their customers sustained due to the German invasion and occupation of Poland is to apply the dollar valorisation method (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6.
Final statement of the value of losses (not counting real estate) sustained by Polish credit and savings institutions and their customers due to the German invasion and occupation of Poland (1939-1945), within Poland's 1939 borders not counting its Eastern territories, which were incorporated in the USSR and without loss of property

Item	Type of loss	Value in millions of pre-war zł	Value in millions of US \$, according to the \$:zł exchange rate in 1939	Value in millions of PLN in December 2021
1	Credit and savings institutions	4,851,6	911.1	74,721
2	Customers' losses (cash, deposits, collaterals and deposit box contents where known)	948.0	178.0	14,600
Total		5,799.6	1,089.1	89,321

Source: Table 6.1; AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 177.

On applying the dollar valorisation method to my research results, I conclude that the losses of the Polish credit and savings institutions and their customers, sustained due to the German invasion and occupation of Poland within the country's 1939 borders not counting its Eastern territories which were incorporated

⁶ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 155, p. 177.

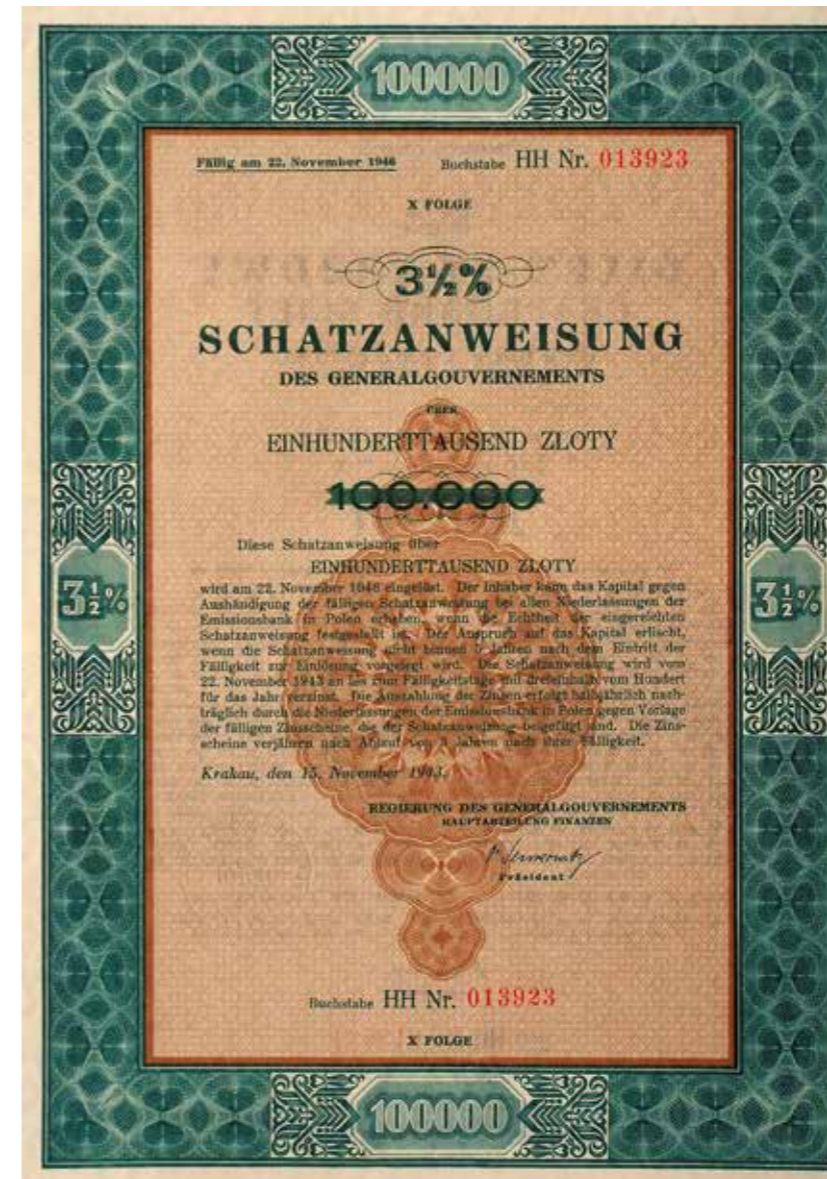
in the USSR after the War, amounted to **5.8 billion pre-war zł**, equivalent to **89.321 billion PLN on 31 December 2021**. This sum does not include losses due to damage to real estate owned by these institutions, which has been discussed in the part of this Report on losses in buildings and other facilities.

6.2. Losses of Polish social security institutions and other insurance companies sustained due to the German invasion and occupation of Poland

6.2.1. Social security losses

When the War broke out in September 1939, social security institutions operated in Poland on the grounds of a social insurance act and regulations on social security for white-collar workers, as well as on the grounds of other legislation regulating certain types of social insurance on the western territories of Poland. These institutions were:

1. social insurance companies and Kasy Chorych Górnego Śląska (Upper Silesia Health Care Funds), for sickness and maternity benefits;
2. retirement, disability and life insurance pension funds: Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych (hereinafter ZUS, the Polish Social Insurance Institution); and other social and life insurance funds: Zakład Ubezpieczenia na Wypadek Inwalidztwa w Chorzowie; Ubezpieczalnia Krajowa w Poznaniu (liquidated on 30 August 1938 and taken over by ZUS), and Branch A of Kasa Emerytalna dla Robotników Kolei Państwowych byłej dzielnicy pruskiej w Poznaniu;
3. supplementary insurance funds for miners' and railwaymen's pensions: Kasa Pensyjna Spółki Brackiej w Tarnowskich Górach, Kasa Pensyjna Pszczyńskiego Bractwa Górniczego w Katowicach, Branch B of Kasa Emerytalna dla Robotników Kolei Państwowych byłej dzielnicy pruskiej w Poznaniu, and Kasa Bratnia Górników w Poznaniu.



Right: Photo 6.2.
A GG treasury bill (AAN collections)

The tasks of social insurers were to evaluate and collect insurance premiums for all the types of insurance benefits: sickness, accident, retirement, and unemployment. Social insurance companies redistributed contributions, keeping contributions for sickness insurance and sending other contributions to ZUS headquarters. ZUS granted and paid out pensions and cash benefits, some through its headquarters, and some through its regional branches.

Funds were transferred through ZUS current accounts in the state-owned banks, Pocztowa Kasa Oszczędności (the Postal Savings Bank), and local credit institutions. ZUS transferred surplus liquid funds to term deposit accounts in state-owned banks,

or created deposit accounts of various types and scope for surplus cash. It only kept enough cash reserves on current accounts to secure its current operations in accordance with its cash policy. The provisions issued by the German occupying authority to regulate credit and financial issues in the GG led to a full freeze on assets owned by social security institutions lasting for the entire period under German occupation. The regulations which were particularly severe included a limit on the amount of pre-war Polish banknotes which could be exchanged for the “zł” currency issued under German occupation; the segregation of bank assets into “old” and “new” business (viz. started before and after the German invasion); a freeze on some bank accounts; the abolition of interest on frozen deposit accounts; the confiscation of a large number of loan assets by means of confiscating the property of pre-war debtors; a ban on servicing loans taken out by municipalities; and an investment deficit in real estate.

The freeze on assets deprived social insurance institutions both of the possibility of liquidating them and of drawing an income from them. The latter was a particularly severe blow, since a large part of the return on assets had served to cover statutory benefits. In 1938, 20% of the income on assets went to pay out benefits, and as much as 34% for retirement pensions and accident insurance. This development was particularly unfavourable for ZUS. Other insurers offered policies with short-term benefits and did not have surpluses which they could have invested in securities, rented properties, or loans.

The situation of the social security institutions in the territories of Poland incorporated Germany was much worse. Shortly after occupying these territories, the Germans established a trust institution called *Haupttreuhandstelle Ost (the Main Trustee Office for the East)*, with headquarters in Berlin. On the grounds of the powers of attorney it held from the German authorities, this institution issued a number of executive regulations on how real estate on this territory should be treated (viz. provisions for the seizure of Polish property), how the claims of companies in German receivership should be settled, etc. Matters related to the liquidation of debts and receivables of Polish property were regulated by a debt ordinance of 15 August 1941, which cancelled the mortgages, financial claims, and pledges to which the Polish State, local government and associations affiliated to local government, as well as other entities in Polish public law were entitled – provided that the debtor’s property was now *beschlagt* (impounded).



This regulation was used as the grounds for the cancellation of receivables due from Polish insurance premiums and from mortgages on debtors’ assets in areas incorporated in Germany. Loans granted by ZUS and other insurers such as Zakład Ubezpieczeń na Wypadek Inwalidztwa w Chorzowie (a company handling accident insurance policies) were cancelled and struck off the mortgage registers.⁷

Photo 6.3.
The ruins of Warsaw, with the Prudential Insurance Building in the foreground (NDA collections)

6.2.2. Estimate of war losses

After the War, ZUS drew up a statement of its war losses, as part of the nationwide BOW operation. ZUS applied the following principles:

1. The determination of war damage for term deposits, loans, and securities considered the extent of damage in the regions in which individual financial institutions conducted their business.
2. The determination of war damage for real estate considered the degree of damage in the given area, as established by experts or committees of experts who sent their findings to ZUS.

⁷ AAN, Komisja Historyczna, ref. no. 12, p. 288.

3. In the determination of war damage for movable assets and material stocks, ZUS assumed their total loss due to looting or total destruction if the real estate in which they were accommodated was destroyed.

4. Receivables from insurance payments due from 31 December 1933 to 1 January 1944 were completely written off because they were irrecoverable and there were no records to substantiate them.

5. Receivables due to social insurance companies for payments from employers, receivables from advance payments of wages and salaries, receivables due from rent and the assets of commissioned funds were written off completely.

6. ZUS made a significant reduction on the claim for its current accounts in banks, in recognition of the losses the banks and credit and financial institutions had sustained in outcome of the defaults on their receivables.

7. Lost assets from the pre-war Polish territories incorporated in the Soviet Union after the War were treated separately.

On the basis of these principles, ZUS drafted a war damage statement which served as the point of departure to show its war losses (Table 6.7). The war losses of other social insurers are presented in Table 6.8.

Item	Type of loss	Value in millions of pre-war zł
1	Fixed term deposit accounts	30.2
2	Securities	57.0
3	Shares	0.7
4	Loans	101.8
5	Real estates	75.7
6	Movable assets and material stocks	11.3
7	Movable assets and material stocks	190.2
8	Debtors	15.6
9	Assets of institutions administered by ZUS	3.5
10	Cash and current accounts in banks	5.0
11	Uninvested surpluses over 5 ½ years	760.6
Total		1,251.6
ZUS losses sustained on pre-war Polish territory except for the regions incorporated in the USSR after the War		1,136.8

Source: AAN, Komisja Historyczna, ref. no. 12, p. 338.

Table 6.7.
Value of war losses sustained by ZUS during the Second World War (1939-1945)

Item	Type of loss	Value in millions of pre-war zł
1	Cash	40.7
2	Deposits	97.1
3	Securities	69.2
4	Payments due for insurance	278.5
5	Debtors	26.8
6	Stocks	10.5
7	Movable assets	31.9
8	Real estates	146.6
Total		701.3

Source: AAN, Komisja Historyczna, ref. no. 12, p. 339.

The war loss Polish social insurance companies found particularly hard was the forfeiture of their material stocks and movable assets, such as the equipment and furnishings for their offices, sanatoriums, hospitals, physiotherapy treatment facilities, analytical laboratories, medical and dental outpatient clinics, dental prosthetics workshops, pharmacies, and their fleet of transportation and delivery vehicles.

Extant records also show that the war losses of Centrala Zaopatrzenia Instytucji Ubezpieczeń Społecznych, an institution handling supplies for social security institutions, totalled 15.932 million pre-war zł, including 300 thousand zł in cash, 777 thousand zł in bank deposits, 35 thousand zł in bills of exchange, 3.131 million zł in lieu of debts for goods received, 10.383 million zł in movable assets and equipment, 1.207 million zł in real estate, and 99 thousand zł in other losses.⁸

Item	Institution	Value in millions of pre-war zł
1	ZUS	1,061.1
2	Other social security institutions	554.7
3	Centrala Zaopatrzenia Instytucji Ubezpieczeń Społecznych (Head Office for the Supply of Social Insurance Institutions)	14.7
Total		1,630.5

Source: Table 6.7, Table 6.8; AAN, Komisja Historyczna, ref. no. 12, p. 340.

⁸ AAN, Komisja Historyczna, ref. no. 12, p. 340.

Table 6.8.
Value of war losses sustained by other social insurance institutions during German hostilities and under the German occupation of Poland (1939-1945), on the territories of pre-war Poland excluding the Eastern territories incorporated in the USSR after the War

Table 6.9.
Total value of war losses (not counting real estate losses) sustained by social insurance institutions on the territory of pre-war Poland (excluding the Eastern territories incorporated in the USSR after the War) due to German hostilities and under the German occupation of Poland (1939-1945)

Table 6.9 shows that the losses of Polish social insurance institutions sustained as a result of German hostilities and under the German occupation of Poland, on the territory of pre-war Poland without its Eastern territories which were incorporated in the USSR after the War, amounted to 1.631 billion pre-war zł. This sum does not include losses through damage to real estate belonging to social insurance institutions.

6.2.3. War losses of insurance companies

When the War broke out in September 1939, there were 34 large and 38 smaller insurance companies operating in Poland. Their war losses include the following:

1. losses in company assets;
2. losses due to the takeover of Polish insurance companies' portfolios by German insurance companies following the direct incorporation of part of Poland in Germany;
3. losses sustained by Polish insurance companies which offered life insurance when the German occupying authorities suspended their right to offer life insurance;
4. other losses due to the disorganisation of business caused by German hostilities and under the German occupation of Poland; problems included difficulties with collecting premiums, forfeiture of existing insurance policies, a fall in new policies, a fall in the profitability of deposits, etc.

The basis taken for the calculation of the value of the war losses were the 1937 balance sheets of all the insurance companies. In 1937, the assets of 34 large and 38 smaller insurance companies totalled approximately 435 million pre-war zł. This sum consisted of securities, receivables from banks and other credit institutions, real estate, debts, mortgages, etc. All these assets were destroyed, except for some of the real estate and some mortgages. The value of the real estate and mortgages which survived was estimated at about 30 million pre-war zł. Therefore, we would expect the value of the lost assets of insurance companies to be (435 – 30) million pre-war zł, that is 405 million pre-war zł.⁹

However, this sum should be corrected for hidden reserves kept in real estate and securities but not shown in the balance

⁹ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 160, p. 1.

6. Poland's losses in banking and insurance...

sheets. Their value was on average around 30% of the value entered on the balance sheet for real estate assets, or approximately 31 million zł. Hence the sum total of losses of insurance companies assets would be (405 + 31) million zł = 436 million pre-war zł.¹⁰ This sum was determined on the basis of the balance sheet value of insurance companies' assets for 1937. This sum may be treated as adequate for 1939 as well, because in 1933–1937 the final balance sheet sums for insurance companies oscillated around an average value of 435 million zł.

Due to the fact that German insurance companies took over the portfolios of their Polish counterparts, Polish companies lost 5 years of annual premiums, reduced by the service costs, which amounted to around 40% (Table 6.10). I took 40% as the cost of obtaining contributions on the basis of the report *Straty zakładów ubezpieczających* (losses of insurance companies) preserved in the BOW papers.¹¹

Table 6.10.

Losses of Polish insurance companies sustained as a result of takeover by German companies when part of Poland's territory was directly incorporated in Germany (in millions of pre-war zł)

Item	Type of insurance company	Annual contributions		Losses sustained over the 5-year period (1939–1945)
		whole portfolio	taken over part of portfolio	
1	Stock insurance companies	33.5	14.3	71.5
2	Mutual insurance companies	7.5	6.0	30.0
3	Smaller companies	2.0	1.8	9.0
4	Public companies (Zakład Ubezpieczeń Wzajemnych, Powszechny Zakład Ubezpieczeń Wzajemnych – voluntary department)	18.2	14.0	70.0
Total				180.5

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 160, p. 2.

On reducing the sum of 180.5 million zł by 40% for the collection of premiums, the final rounded up sum for losses due to the takeover of Polish insurance company portfolios by German insurance companies is 105 million pre-war zł.

The German authorities imposed a prohibition on the sale of life insurance for the entire 5 year-period of occupation, so another loss sustained by Polish insurance companies was the forfeiture

¹⁰ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 160, p. 1–2.

¹¹ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 160, p. 1–4.

of the whole amount of new premiums for life insurance (minus 40% for service costs). The German authorities did allow Polish insurance companies to collect premiums from their old customers, however the wartime situation under occupation made this an illusory mitigation which did not generate any significant income. The annual sum for life insurance premiums (not counting the Italian insurance companies) amounted to 21.1 million zł, which gives a total of 105.5 million zł over the 5 years under German occupation. After deducting 40% from this sum for the cost of obtaining premiums and then rounding up, we get 63.3 million zł as the sum of losses of Polish insurance companies which offered life insurance policies but were deprived of this right by the German authorities.¹²

The most important item in “other losses” which resulted from the disorganisation of business caused by German hostilities and occupation was the loss of investment income. If we treat all the assets of insurance companies as deposits, and take their value as 436 million zł (as we have established) and the interest they generated as 4%, then the losses from the potential return on these deposits amounts to 17.5 million zł. This sum should be rounded up to 25 million zł, due to further losses such as difficulties with collecting premiums and obtaining new insurance customers, additional taxes etc.¹³

Table 6.11.
Total value of losses of Polish insurance companies (not counting real estate) sustained as a result of hostilities and under German occupation on the territories of pre-war Poland excluding the territories incorporated in the USSR after the War

Item	Type of loss	Value in millions of pre-war zł
1	Company tangible assets	436.0
2	Due to the German takeover of Polish portfolios	105.0
3	Due to the closure of life insurance departments	63.3
4	Other losses caused by wartime hostilities and German occupation	25.0
Total		629.3

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 160, p. 1–4.

¹² AAN, BOW, ref. no. 160, p. 3

¹³ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 160, p. 3

The sum total of losses sustained by Polish insurance companies should be estimated at a preliminary figure of 629.3 million pre-war zł, as shown in Table 6.11. Table 6.12 shows the overall total for the losses Polish social insurers and insurance companies sustained as a result of German hostilities and under German occupation (without losses in real estate).

In my calculation of the real value of losses sustained by social insurance institutions and other insurers, I applied the same method I used to calculate the real losses of credit and savings institutions. It is based on the conversion of pre-war zł into US dollars. Table 6.12 presents the final results.

Table 6.12.
Total value of losses (without real estate) sustained by Polish social insurance institutions and other insurance companies as a result of hostilities and German occupation, on the territories of pre-war Poland excluding the territories incorporated in the USSR after the War

Item	Type of loss	Value in millions of pre-war zł	Value in millions of US \$ at the 1939 zł:\$ exchange rate	Value in millions of PLN for December 2021
1	Social insurance	1,630.5	306.2	25,112
2	Other insurance companies	629.3	118.2	9,692
Total		2,259.8	424.4	34,804

Source: Table 6.9 and Table 6.11.

On applying dollar valorisation, my research shows that the overall losses of Polish social insurers and insurance companies sustained as a result of German hostilities and under German occupation on the territory of pre-war Poland within its 1939 borders excluding its Eastern territories which were incorporated in the USSR after the War, amounted to **2.260 billion pre-war zł**, equivalent to **34.804 billion PLN on 31 December 2021**. This sum does not include the losses these institutions sustained from damage to their real estate, which has been discussed in the part of this Report on losses in buildings and other facilities.

BEKANNTMACHUNG

Bauern, meine Geduld ist zu Ende. Ich habe Euch in den letzten Wochen des Öfteren ermahnt, meinen Anordnungen Folge zu leisten.

Ein gewisser Teil von Euch glaubte trotzdem noch, diesen Aufforderungen nicht nachkommen zu brauchen. Dafür habe ich Euch Freitag, den 10. Okt. 1941 die Quittung gegeben:

36 Bauern und der Soltyz aus dem Dorfe Stoczek,

37 Bauern aus dem Dorfe Brzózka, Gemeinde Stoczek,

und weitere 13 Soltyse u. Dorfvertrauensmänner sind in

das Arbeiterziehungslager Treblinka überwiesen worden.

Denselben Weg werden in den nächsten Tagen auch die wandern, die meine Anordnungen betr. Abgaben nach wie vor sabotieren.

Der Kreishauptmann in Sokołów

Gramss

Sokołów, den 10. Oktober 1941

Dokument nr. 190

OGŁOSZENIE

Gospodarze, moja cierpliwość skończyła się. W ostatnich tygodniach często Was napominałem, abyście się stosowali do moich zarządzeń.

Część z Was sądzi jednakże jeszcze mimo wszystko, że nie potrzebuje stosować się do tych wezwań. Za to zdałem Wam w piątek dnia 10 października 1941 rachunek:

36 gospodarzy i soltyz ze wsi Stoczek,

37 gospodarzy ze wsi Brzózka, gmina Stoczek,

oraz dalszych 13 soltyków i mężów zaufania wsi

zostali przekazani do Wychowawczego Obozu

Pracy w Treblince.

Tę samą drogą powędrują w najbliższych dniach także ci, którzy będą nadal moje zarządzenia w sprawie odstawy sabotować.

Starosta Powiatowy w Sokołowie

Gramss

Sokołów, dnia 10 października 1941

Rafał Dmowski

Human and economic losses of Sokołów Podlaski under German occupation

Sokołów Podlaski was bombed several times in September 1939, including on the 1st and 7th, when the town centre was almost completely destroyed. Many people died as a result of the air raids; fatalities included both civilians and Polish soldiers accommodated in a school on ul. Długa.

On 20 November 1939, the Germans amalgamated two pre-war counties, Sokołów and Węgrów, henceforth known as the County of Sokołów and Węgrów (powiat sokołowski-węgrowski), with the seat of its authorities in Sokołów Podlaski. This was the county with the largest area in *Distrikt Warschau*, 2,577 sq.km, and a population of 206 thousand. Its longest serving starost under German occupation was Ernst Gramss, notorious for his personal involvement in numerous pacification atrocities. Units of all the different types of German police were established in the city, with a temporary remand prison on Magistracka St. On 15 November 1941, a penal labour camp known as Treblinka I was set up at Treblinka on the territory of the County of Sokołów and Węgrów. Most of the inmates of Treblinka I were ethnic Poles. In 1942, Treblinka II, an extermination camp the Germans intended primarily for Jews, was set up adjoining Treblinka I.

Sokołów was the site of numerous public executions. Poles were sent to Treblinka concentration camp for resistance to orders issued by the German authorities. There were frequent round-ups in the streets and transports of deportees to Germany for slave labour. On 12 August 1943, the Germans set up a blockade on the streets and about 700 individuals were arrested and deported to Germany as forced workers, and another 100 arrestees were sent to Warsaw. A month later, a further 123 were detained.

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Left: Photo 6.4.

The German starost's poster informing the people of Sokołów that a group of Polish farmers had been sent to Treblinka (Collections of Sokołów's public library, Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna w Sokołowie Podlaskim)

[The poster reads: "Farmers, my patience has come to an end. Over the recent weeks, I have often warned you to comply with my orders. In spite of that, a certain number of you considered they need not do so. In view of that, on Friday, 10 October 1941, I reckoned up with you on this account. 36 farmers and the soltyz [village administrative officer] of the village of Stoczek, 37 farmers from the village of Brzózka in the gmina (civil parish) of Stoczek, and a further 13 village administrative officers and rural representatives have been sent to Treblinka Reformatory Labour Camp. In the next few days, those of you who continue to sabotage my orders will travel down the same road.

[signed] Gramss, Kreishauptmann of Sokołów. Sokołów, 13 October 1941."



The Germans applied a regular system of various types of coercive and penal measures against the town's Jewish community. Jewish properties were plundered and a reign of terror ensued. On 28 September 1941, a ghetto was set up on orders issued by Starost Gramss. The ghetto covered the area between the Piękna, Prosta, and Mała streets, and the Jewish inhabitants of the town and its environs, as well as Jews displaced from Warsaw, Łódź, Kalisz, Pułtusk, Kałuszyn, Wyszaków, Aleksandrów Kujawski, and Sierpc, were herded into the ghetto. At its peak, the population of the Sokołów ghetto was about 7 thousand, although the total number of Jewish inhabitants in the town before the outbreak of the War had been about 4 thousand. On 30 September 1942, the Germans started to close the ghetto down, murdering about a thousand inmates during the operation. The rest were taken to the Treblinka death camp, and the few left in the town were subsequently murdered.

The County of Sokołów and Węgrów was a predominantly agricultural area, with only a few agricultural processing plants which in no way changed its rural character. Hence, the German authorities imposed and rigorously exacted an oppressive system of taxation on local farmers, who were ordered to supply exorbitant quotas of farm produce at well below market prices and ag-

Photo 6.5.
The ruins of Sokołów after a German Luftwaffe air raid in September 1939 (Collections of Municipal Public Library in Sokołów Podlaski, Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna w Sokołowie Podlaskim)

Treblinka I and Treblinka II camps

In 1941, the German occupying authority set up an Arbeitslager (penal slave labour camp) generally known as Treblinka I in the village of Treblinka in the civil parish of Kosów Lacki. Initially, most of the prisoners sent to this camp were ethnic Poles, detained on various charges, such as failure to deliver the compulsory quotas of agricultural produce (as described in the poster presented above), trading on the black market, contempt of the obligation to take up employment, or even for travelling on a bus without a valid ticket. Later on, Jews were sent to Treblinka I as well. Inmates served as an unpaid workforce for the Germans, working in the local gravel pit. About 20 thousand prisoners are estimated to have been confined in Treblinka I, and half of them died. Treblinka I was in operation until 23 July 1944. In 1942, the Germans built a death camp known as Treblinka II in the vicinity of the labour camp Treblinka I. The death camp envisaged for Jewish prisoners was established as part of Operation Reinhardt (see p. 299) and completed on 11 July 1942. Its first consignment of prisoners was dispatched from the Warsaw Ghetto on 22 July and arrived on the following day. On 2 August 1943, its inmates rose up in rebellion, during which about 400 prisoners were killed, while another 400 escaped. By 17 November 1943, when Treblinka II was closed down, about 850 thousand prisoners had been killed there, and about 800 thousand of these victims were Polish Jews (Institute of National Remembrance data).

ricultural labour free of charge to the Germans. As a result of this policy of exploitation, the inhabitants of Sokołów starved. A strict system of food rationing was enforced, and the amount of food allocated on ration cards was very low. In 1940, the daily bread ration per head amounted to 200 grams, as of 1941 it was 250 grams, and in 1942 only 160 grams.

After the War, the human losses of the pre-war Sokołów County were presented as evidence at the trial of Ludwig Fischer, former German governor of *Distrikt Warschau*, and estimated at: 2,135 persons arrested; 309 persons murdered; 6,910 deported for slave labour; and 10,052 sent to concentration camps.

During the Second World War, 30% of the residential buildings and 70% of the public buildings in the town of Sokołów, including its railway station, were destroyed. The degree of damage to the sugar refinery, the town's main industrial plant, was estimated at 45%. The Germans did not even spare the monument of Fr. Stanisław Brzóska, from which two bronze statues of falcons weighing 145 kg were dismantled and carried off.

7

Mirosław Kłusek

Losses sustained by the Polish State Treasury during the Second World War as a result of German war operations and due to the activities of the financial institution Emissionsbank in Polen established in occupied Poland by the German occupying authorities



7.1. Losses sustained by the Polish State Treasury due to German hostilities and the German occupation of Poland

After the Second World War in November 1946, the Polish Ministry of the Treasury (Ministerstwo Skarbu) compiled a schedule summing up Polish war losses: material losses (Table 7.1), tax and monopoly losses (Table 7.2), and human resources losses (Table 7.3), within the scope of its administrative activities, and claims relating to the operations of Emissionsbank in Polen (Bank Emisyjny w Polsce) under the German occupation of Poland. This schedule of losses was drawn up for the territories belonging to the Second Polish Republic which were ascribed to the Polish State within its new post-war borders, i.e. excluding the Eastern territories incorporated in the Soviet Union and the recovered territories.

Owing to the considerable extent of damage to official records, the Ministry used surviving data – tax collection books, tax assessment registers, financial statements, write-off registers, and enforceable titles – to compile the estimate of the amount of tax losses it had sustained. In February 1946, the Ministry commissioned the compilation of a register of Polish tax officers and staff killed in combat or murdered by the Germans, along with a set of data to be sent in by enterprises and institutions subject to the Ministry's authority. However, the register was incomplete. This was particularly evident for the Komunalne Kasy Oszczędności (local Municipality Savings Banks). Out of a total of 220 of these institutions, only one returned a list of human resources losses. A more precise estimate was obtained for material losses. The Ministry commissioned the determination and evaluation of damage to its buildings to Powszechny Zakład Ubezpieczeń Wzajemnych (PZUW, Polish Mutual Insurance Company). The Ministry drew up its own schedule of the damage it had sustained in movable assets such as machines and office equipment, products, and raw materials.

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Left: Photo 7.1.
The ruins of Warsaw after destruction by Germany (NDA collections)

Table 7.1.
Material losses sustained as a result of German hostilities and occupation.
Property administered by the Polish Ministry of the Treasury

Item	Type of loss	Value in pre-war złoty (zł)	Value in wartime currency (złoty krakowski)	Value in Reichsmarks (RM)	Value in US\$
1	Buildings	453,263,217	-	539,077	-
2	Machinery and factory fixtures and fittings	43,416,077	-	-	-
3	Office equipment and movable assets	180,240,501	421,003	2,000	-
4	Cash, foreign currency, assets, savings, receivables, etc.	6,345,959,709	635,723,200	262,099,328	-
5	Products and materials	1,730,121,374	-	-	636
Total		8,753,000,878	636,144,203	262,640,405	636
Total in [prewar+wartime] złoty		9,389,145,081			

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 153, p. 1.

Explanatory notes to Table 7.1

Item 1. – losses include full destruction and partial damage of buildings belonging to the Polish administrative authorities for taxation and state revenues, monopolies, and enterprises subject to the authority of the Ministry of the Treasury, banks and credit institutions.

Item 2. – losses in monopolies and Polska Wytwórnia Papierów Wartościowych (Polish Security Printing Works).

Item 3. – losses sustained by the administrative authorities for taxation and state revenues, monopolies, banks and credit institutions. The office equipment and movable assets of the headquarters of the Polish Ministry of the Treasury, completely destroyed in 1939, were valued at approximately 5 million pre-war zł.

Item 4. – this item includes the value of tangibles deposited in tax offices, cash reserves belonging to the tax authorities, banks, monopolies, savings deposits in Municipal Savings Banks, and other credit institutions, deposits in securities; lost rent due on properties owned by the Polish State Treasury; and loss of revenue due to the German prohibition on banking operations.

Item 5. – the value of goods (raw materials and products) seized by German occupying forces from the Polish authorities for the state monopolies for the production of alcohol (rectified spirits and other alcohols), alcoholic drinks, salt, and tobacco, and the value of goods in customs warehouses confiscated by the German occupying authorities. The Lublin and Poznań Tax Offices submitted statements on the value of the sugar supplies left in their regions. The Poznań Tax Office also recorded the value of sugar production in its region for the entire period under German occupation as a loss not shown in the revenues lost from taxation and monopolies.

7. Losses sustained by the Polish State Treasury...

Table 7.2.
Tax and monopoly losses sustained as a result of German hostilities and occupation

Item	Type of tax	Value in pre-war zł	Value in wartime currency (złoty krakowski)	Value in Reichsmarks (RM)
1.	Direct taxes			
a	Tax arrears on 1 September 1939, collected by Germany	458,176,466	-	-
b	Taxes charged and collected under German occupation, 1939–1945	-	9,685,529,436	-
c	Outstanding taxes (irrecoverable arrears) owed by German taxpayers	-	177,558,756	-
2	Indirect taxes	4,730,004,058	363,372,315	37,891,684
2a	Revenue from duty on flour and cereals	573,078,860	-	-
3	Revenue from monopoly products	2,284,146,975	879,243,976	11,995,189
Total		8,045,406,359	11,105,704,483	49,886,873
Total in [pre-war+wartime] złoty		19,151,110,842		

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no.153, p. 3.

Explanatory notes to Table 7.2

Item 1. – When armed combat between the Polish and German armies ceased in September and early October 1939, the German occupying authorities installed their own tax authorities in occupied Poland. Almost all Polish tax offices had records of pre-war accounts with serious tax arrears, often going back several years. The German occupying authorities briskly set about the collection of tax arrears, which were promptly and fully cleared, mainly in 1940. As a result, Polish agriculture, factory production, industry and commercial businesses were to a large extent deprived of working capital.

Along with the collection of old tax arrears, the German occupying authorities issued new tax assessments, collecting tax in compliance with the provisions of the Polish legislation but increasing tax rates and introducing new liabilities. Tax revenues were credited to the budget of the General Government (GG), which drew from this budget to cover the costs of its own administration. In its post-war schedule, the Polish Ministry of the Treasury entered bad German debts owed by private individuals (mostly by Volksdeutsche) and by German companies, as an item which was contestable from the point of view of compensation and reparation claims.

Item 2. – this point includes revenues from all indirect taxes (beer, sugar, etc.) and from their production, for the entire period of Poland's occupation, according to rates implemented by the German occupying authorities, along with revenues from the duty on monopoly products.

Item 3. – this point includes revenues on production under a state monopoly, by the tobacco industry, the spirits industry, the salt industry, match production, the production of artificial sweeteners, and revenues from the state lottery.

Table 7.2 shows that the losses in taxes and monopolies Poland sustained as a result of German hostilities and occupation amounted to 19,151,110, 842 [pre-war + wartime] zł and 49,886,872 RM. Under German occupation and at the end of the War, the exchange rate was 1 RM= 2 zł, therefore the total value of lost revenue in taxes and monopolies was 19,226,884,586 zł.

The overall material losses in property administered by the Polish Ministry of the Treasury and in taxes and monopoly duties sustained by Poland as a result of German hostilities and occupation amounted to 16,798,407,237 pre-war zł; 11,741,848,686 złoty krakowski (wartime zł); 312,527,278 RM; and US\$ 636.

Item	Losses in Human Resources	Number
I. University and college graduates		
1	Staff holding engineering qualifications in various fields	82
2	Lawyers	351
3	Economists, sociologists, journalists, sales staff, bankers	352
4	Other specialists	69
Total		854
II. Employees who completed a course of secondary education		
1	Technical staff	81
2	Clerks	732
3	Bookkeepers	792
4	Office staff	259
5	Other specialists	431
Total		2,295
III. Blue-collar employees		
1	Foremen in various specialist fields	12
2	Skilled employees	131
3	Semi-skilled employees and craftsmen	524
Total		667
IV. Związek Rewizyjny Spółdzielczości RP / Polish Union of Cooperative Auditors (all specialisations)		142
Total of I+II+III+IV		3,958

Table 7.3.

Human resources losses of administrative staff employed in Polish tax offices, state monopolies and enterprises, banking, credit and insurance institutions, sustained by Poland as a result of German hostilities and occupation

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no.153, p. 5.

This list of human resources losses is incomplete. Many reports had not been sent in by the time the Ministry of the Treasury drew up this statement, and not all of those that had arrived were fully comprehensive.

7.2 Claims arising from the operations of Emissionsbank in Polen

Emissionsbank in Polen (Bank Emisyjny w Polsce), which operated under German occupation, was established on the grounds of Governor-General Hans Frank's order of 15 December 1939 (*Verordnung über die Emissionsbank in Polen*), and started operations on the grounds of the declaration of 2 April 1940 (*Bekanntmachung über die Emissionsbank in Polen*). This bank had the legal status of an entity under public law. Emissionsbank in Polen operated from 8 April 1940 to 18 January 1945, i.e. until the liberation of Kraków from German occupation; and its winding up lasted until 31 January 1950.

Emissionsbank in Polen was the first German bank established on all the German-occupied territories as a German state institution. The Germans established it on the same premises that provided the grounds for the creation of the GG. A separate currency for occupied Poland protected Germany against the depreciation of the Reichsmark, while at the same time promoted the economic exploitation of the occupied territory. The purpose of creating a separate issuing house on the occupied territories was to provide the inhabitants with an adequate number of banknotes, but above all to finance the German occupation of Poland, at the expense of the local people.

The bank's Polish name and the Polish appearance of its banknotes, as well as other factors had only one purpose – propaganda to win the trust of the Polish public. The fact that German was the bank's official language showed that it was a German institution. Like the Reichsbank, which was not subject to the authority of the minister of finance or the minister of the economy, but directly and personally to Hitler, Emissionsbank in Polen was not subject to the government of the GG, but directly to Hans Frank, its Governor-General. Although formally Emissionsbank in Polen was not subordinated to the Reichsbank, in reality it was one of its dependent entities, just as the GG constituted an administrative and economic unit fully subordinated to the German Reich. The dependence of Emissionsbank in Polen was a derivative of the dependence of the GG. Emissionsbank in Polen worked in close

cooperation with the Reichsbank to carry out its basic task – to finance the War and exploit the occupied country economically.¹

Table 7.4 presents Poland's claim against Germany for the operation of Emissionsbank in Polen under the German occupation of Poland. It shows the liabilities of the German Reich and the Reichsbank to Emissionsbank in Polen, which constituted the main part of the assets of Emissionsbank in Polen. Its other assets abandoned in Poland constituted only a small fraction of its overall balance.

The overall amount of Poland's claim on 1 July 1949 against the German Reich and the Reichsbank in respect of Emissionsbank in Polen operating under German occupation was 12,747,192,956.89 zł.

Table 7.4.
List of liabilities of the German Reich and the Reichsbank to Emissionsbank in Polen, as at 1 July 1949 (in 1939 zł)

Item	Type of Liability	Value
I.	<i>Reichskreditkassenscheine</i> (German Reich Treasury credit notes, RKKSs)	22,330.00
II.	<i>Deutsche Post Osten</i> (German Postal Service in the East) cheque account	119,068,771.86
III. Liabilities of the German Reich		
1	<i>Eingelöste Reichskreditkassenscheine</i> (redeemed German Reich Treasury credit notes)	21,895,987.00
2	Foreign currencies and gold	1,727,970.41
3	<i>Altsilber</i> (old silver)	7.26
4	<i>Rubel Noten</i> (Soviet rouble banknotes)	68,859,890.30
5	Cash sent to Germany in coins (silver, nickel, and copper)	10,550,611.22
6	<i>Karbowanez</i> banknotes	8,174.60
7	<i>Behelfszahlungsmittel für die Deutsche Wehrmacht</i> (German Army ancillary payment vouchers)	407,657.20
8	Monies and other valuables sent or taken to Germany by the German occupying forces, institutions, and civilians	895,067,243.38
9	Banknotes issued by Bank Polski	2,021,271,789.00
10	German bills of exchange (free giro account)	5,400,000.00
11	German bills of exchange (interim giro account)	9,493,260,000.00
12	<i>Wehrmachtsverrechnungsscheine</i> (German Army payment tokens)	1,611,599.00
13	Reichshauptkasse, Berlin (German Reich Central Treasury, Berlin)	67,151,907.70
14	Deutsche Reichsbank, Berlin (the issuing house of the German Reich) free giro account balance – 677,933.44 [wartime] zł, interim giro account balance – 211,084.52 [wartime] zł	889,017.96
15	Deutsche Verrechnungskasse Berlin (German Clearing House, Berlin)	40,000,000.00
Total		12,747,192,956.89

Source: AAN, "Bank Emisyjny w Polsce w likwidacji," ref. no. 2, p.54–55
Explanatory notes to Table 7.4²

¹ Skalniak, Franciszek, *Bank Emisyjny w Polsce 1939–1945*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1966, p.61–78.

² AAN, BOW, ref. no. 153, p. 13–14.

7. Losses sustained by the Polish State Treasury...

Item I – At the end of the War, *Reichskreditkassenscheine* (German Reich Treasury credit notes) worth 11,165 RM were in the deposit of Narodowy Bank Polski (the National Bank of Poland) in Kraków, and the German Reich was bound to redeem them.

Item II – The claim against Deutsche Post Osten (the German Postal Service in the East) amounting to 119 million zł is the sum of balances that all the branches of Emissionsbank in Polen held in Deutsche Post Osten. The sum of 119 million zł was obtained as the total of payments made by customers of Emissionsbank in Polen into its Deutsche Post Osten account, in post offices throughout the GG.

Item III/1 – claims amounting to 10,947,993.50 RM (21,895,987 zł) are the sum of the *Reichskreditkassenscheine* (German Reich Treasury credit notes, RKKS) redeemed on behalf of the Reich Treasury. In early January 1945, some of these RKKS were sent to the Board of the Reich Treasury in Berlin via the Reichsbank. Due to military operations, Emissionsbank in Polen did not receive confirmation of receipt and its account was not credited with the equivalent of these RKKS. The rest of these RKKS were taken out of Poland by the retreating German occupation authorities.

Item III/2 – foreign currencies and gold purchased by Emissionsbank in Polen towards the end of its operations, and sent to Berlin. As a result of military operations, Emissionsbank in Polen did not receive acknowledgment of receipt and its account was not credited with this sum.

Item III/4 – claims regarding Soviet roubles, exchanged for *krakowski złoty*, the wartime currency in occupied Poland, in the amount of 344,299,451.50 roubles (68,859,890.30 zł at an exchange rate of 1 zł = 5 roubles). This was the exchange rate used by the German forces of the *Armee Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, which had an exchange rate of 1 RM = 2 zł; hence 1 RM = 10 roubles. Funds resulting from this rouble exchange were taken to Berlin and deposited in the Reichsbank. Copies of the Reichsbank's receipts were found in the records of Emissionsbank in Polen, but officially this money was never paid into the Reichsbank account, and the Emissionsbank in Polen account never received formal remittance for the equivalent of these roubles. The Polish Ministry of the Treasury obtained testimonies from witnesses, Emissionsbank in Polen staff who took part in the transportation of these valuables to Berlin and delivered them to the Reichsbank.

Item III/5 – claims for the return of silver coins belonging to Bank Polski which were delivered to the *Deutsche Gold und Silberanstalt* company of Frankfurt-am-Main (formerly the Roesler company) in Germany. Acting in compliance with an order issued by the German occupying authorities, Emissionsbank in Polen sent a total of 508,283 ten-złoty coins with a nominal value of 5,082,830 zł; 1,197,286 five-złoty coins with a nominal value of 5,986,430 zł; and 2,854,220 two-złoty coins, with a nominal value of 5,708,440 zł. Documents relating to this transfer of silver and payment at a fixed rate were preserved in the records of Emissionsbank in Polen. The weight of these coins was 27,683 kg and 205 grams of pure silver. This is a restitutionary claim. There is also an unsecured debt amounting to 10,550,611.22 zł connected with the transfer of this silver to Germany, submitted as a claim against Germany in the event of the irrecoverability of the silver in kind.

Item III/7 – this claim is for the purchase by Emissionsbank in Polen of auxiliary means of payment, *Kantinengeld* and *Behelfszahlungsmittelf ür die Deutsche Wehrmacht* vouchers issued by the German military to the value of 407,657.20 zł. These payment vouchers were sent to Berlin in early January 1945.

Złoty krakowski (the Kraków złoty) – colloquial name of banknotes in circulation in the GG from April 1940 to early 1945, issued by Emissionsbank in Polen. They replaced banknotes issued by Bank Polski, at a 1:1 exchange rate.

Item III/8 – all monies and other valuables, undelivered transfers, evacuated by order of the German occupation authorities from the branches of Emissionsbank in Polen and its foreign branches; that is everything the Germans removed from Emissionsbank in Polen and its branches.

Item III/9 – a claim for a total sum of 2,021,280,912 zł in lieu of Bank Polski banknotes exchanged for the wartime złoty krakowski currency used in occupied Poland, and sent to Germany. In July 1944, a sum amounting to 1,236,220,800 zł of these banknotes was sent to Germany. The rest was either destroyed or burnt during the Warsaw Uprising. The records of Emissionsbank in Polen provide evidence of what happened to these banknotes, showing that some were deposited in the branch of the Reichsbank in Toruń (under German occupation this city was known as Thorn), from where the Germans took them to Germany ahead of the Soviet offensive. The remaining part of these Bank Polski banknotes was deposited in Tresor Raum 28/29 at the Reichsbank in Berlin.

Item III/12 – in early January 1945, Emissionsbank in Polen collected up a quantity of Wehrmachtverrechnungsscheine military accounting certificates and sent them to Germany. Due to military operations, Emissionsbank in Polen did not receive confirmation of receipt for this transfer, or acknowledgment of remittance of an equivalent to its account.

Items III/10, III/11, III/13, III/14 and III/15– the explanatory notes for these items are below, in the sub-chapter on the clearing surplus.

7.2.1 The clearing surplus³

At the very beginning of its operations, Emissionsbank in Polen opened a giro account in the Reichsbank. This account was a *Freies RM-Konto* (a “free Reichsmark account”) and its original number was 1035; as of 1 March 1941, its number was 2039. This was the account in which the Germans kept the equivalent value of foreign currencies, gold and silver collected up in the GG and sent to the Reichsbank. It was primarily a foreign currency account. At the same time, the Reichsbank opened a złoty account in Emissionsbank in Polen.

Throughout the whole period of Poland’s occupation there were few transactions on the Reichsbank’s złoty account in Emissionsbank in Polen, while business was brisk on the Emissionsbank’s account in the Reichsbank. By June 1940, after just two months, the balance to the credit of Emissionsbank in Polen was 900 thousand RM. Since this account was interest-free, like all giro accounts, the Reichsbank suggested Emissionsbank should keep the entire surplus in excess of the sum necessary

³ AAN, *Bank Emisyjny w Polsce w likwidacji*, ref. no. 25, “Szpica clearingowa,” (summary of records and accounts), 10 April 1946, no pagination.

Deutsche Reichsbank / Wertpapierabteilung
Berlin C 111, Hausvogteiplatz 11

Reichsbankgirokonto: 1/105 in Berlin
Fernruf: Ortsgespräche Sammel-Nr. 164051 · Ferngespräche Sammel-Nr. 164052
Geschäftszeit: 8½–14 Uhr, sonnabends 8–12 Uhr

An die Emissionsbank in Polen
Geschäftsleitung

Bei Mitteilungen an uns stets angeben:
Kontobuch 465, Seite 11 Nr. Einziehung 16.1.45

Betrifft: Sonderkonto

fällig werden:	
Am 1.2.45	5.320.000,-
" 2.2.45	23.450.000,-
" 3.2.45	239.920.000,-
" 6.2.45	10.050.000,-
" 9.2.45	82.990.000,-
" 10.2.45	456.390.000,-
" 14.2.45	13.060.000,-
" 15.2.45	147.480.000,-

Wir werden die Einziehung gemäß Ziffer I 13 der Geschäftsbedingungen am Fälligkeitstage bewirken und den Gegenwert Ihrem Interimskonto 20392 bei der Giroabteilung zur Wiederanlage durch die Geldmarkt-Abteilung überweisen.

Hochachtungsvoll
Deutsche Reichsbank
Wertpapierabteilung

Photo 7.2.
Reichsbank notification of 16 January 1945 regarding the dates of maturity and respective sums of Reich bills of exchange to the credit of Emissionsbank in Polen (AAN collections)

to maintain the liquidity of current payments in German Reich promissory notes or in *Schatzanweisungen des Reiches* (German Reich Treasury bills).

The interest on these promissory notes ranged from 2.375% to 3.5% depending on their term to maturity (from 80-90 days to 15 months). The Reichsbank was to handle the redemption and administration of these bills and transfer the interest on their sale to the Emissionsbank in Polen, into the account of the GG’s settlements institute kept in the Deutsche Verrechnungskasse (German Clearing Office) in Berlin.

On 10 July 1940, Emissionsbank in Polen made its first order for the purchase of 90-day German Reich promissory notes. Sub-

Deutsche Reichsbank / Wehrmacht
Berlin C 111, Hausvogteiplatz

Reichsbankgirokonto: 1/105 in Berlin
Fernruf: Ortsgespräche Sammel-Nr. 164051 · Fern-Nr. 164051
Geschäftszeit: 8¹/₂—14 Uhr, sonnab. 8—12 Uhr

An die
Emissionsbank in Polen
Geschäftsleitung
z.Zt. h i e r

Bei Mitteilungen an uns stets anzugeben:
Kontobuch 465 Seite 11 Nr. Einz. Tag 12. März 1945

Unger Zeichen
Wpa.
Kto. 465/11 Einz.
Hae/12.3.45

Ordnungsnummer 10013

Hierdurch benachrichtigen wir Sie, daß von den in Sammelverwahrung ruhenden Deutschen Reichswechseln fällig werden:

Am 16.3.45	202.740.000,--
" 17.3.45	10.050.000,--
" 19.3.45	20.260.000,--
" 20.3.45	76.770.000,--

Wir werden die Einziehung gemäß Ziffer I 13 der Geschäftsbedingungen am Fälligkeitstage bewirken und den Gegenwert Ihrem Interimskonto 20392 bei der Giroabteilung zur Wiederanlage durch die Geldmarkt-Abteilung überweisen.

Hochachtungsvoll
Deutsche Reichsbank
Wertpapierabteilung

Hae

Wpa. Vordr. 5 Reg. 20. 8. 43

Handwritten notes: eingeg. 13.3.45, Kto. Nr. 165, m. 1 chel.

Photo 7.3.
Reichsbank notification of 12 March 1945 regarding the dates of maturity and respective sums of Reich bills of exchange to the credit of Emissionsbank in Polen (AAN collections)

sequent orders followed at intervals of a few days. On the date of maturity, Emissionsbank ordered new bills for the payment it received. All these promissory notes were issued on commission from a bank called F. Meissner & Co. Nachfolger.

In addition to these operations, Emissionsbank in Polen also engaged in other practices with far more serious consequences leading to what could be described as a clearing surplus. The Reichskreditkassen, the financial institutions operating in the GG prior to the establishment of Emissionsbank in Polen, had been buying “coloured cheques,” (*farbige Schecks*), viz. promissory notes issued to finance the running costs of the military and civil branches of

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the German administration such as the Wehrmacht, the railways, the post office, etc. The costs incurred for the maintenance of the German troops and administration were covered by the import of goods from Germany in a **system of goods clearing** between the German Reich and the GG. When the Reichskreditkassen stopped operations in the GG, this part of their business was taken over by Emissionsbank in Polen.

Emissionsbank charged the Reichshauptkasse account it ran with the money due for its purchase of Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe “coloured cheques” and for transfers on behalf of the war and building industries. The Reichshauptkasse covered Emissionsbank’s receivables with advances rounded up to the nearest million. Reichshauptkasse payments in the settlement system between the GG and the German Reich went to the Deutsche Verrechnungskasse in Berlin, and were payable to the account of the Kraków branch of Deutsche Verrechnungskasse, which then paid Emissionsbank in Polen.

This situation continued with no major changes until February 1941. The Emissionsbank account was balanced fairly efficiently by means of German exports to the GG. However, German exports to the GG started to fall in connection with preparations for the invasion of the Soviet Union and the resulting influx of large numbers of German troops into the GG. As a result, there was a constantly growing surplus in Berlin in the goods clearing system between the German Reich and the GG. It became obvious that the claims of Emissionsbank against the Reichshauptkasse would no longer be regulated smoothly in the future. New measures had to be adopted to cater for the new realities.

The following decisions were made as an outcome of the negotiations between Emissionsbank in Polen and the Reichshauptkasse and other German institutions:

The claims Emissionsbank in Polen had against Reichshauptkasse for the purchase of coloured cheques and for payments covered by Deutsche Verrechnungskasse transfers in the goods clearing system between the GG and the German Reich were henceforth to be paid into an interim account held by Emissionsbank in Polen in the Reichsbank. To collect these payments, Emissionsbank in Polen opened a special account, Interimskonto No. 20392, in the Reichsbank. The Reichsbank used the money accumulating on this account to buy securities which paid interest into the Emissionsbank account. These securities were purchased without the need for Emissionsbank to order each transaction separately; it only had to order the first transaction on the grounds of a general scheme, viz. German Reich promissory

Coloured cheques (*farbige Schecks*) were Reichshauptkasse money tokens which the Wehrmacht in the GG presented to Emissionsbank in Polen. In lieu of these tokens, the GG supplied the Wehrmacht with victuals and other essentials at fixed prices. Emissionsbank in Polen returned the coloured cheques it acquired in this manner to the Reichshauptkasse in Berlin for redemption.

The goods clearing system is a method of accounting for payments due. Instead of making payments on a running basis, the parties exchanging goods and services between each other settle (“clear”) the account on a fixed date. The system is used for clearing accounts by banks and businesses, and in international transactions between countries.



Photo 7.4.
A green Reichshauptkasse money token (Private collection)



[Reverse. "Wehrmacht money token. Issued under payment regulations for the Wehrmacht in countries other than Germany. For use exclusively by members of the Wehrmacht and equivalent institutions. Exchangeable only by such persons in all Wehrmacht ticket offices and payment points, Reichskreditkassen and money exchange points – and subsequently redeemable in the German Reich in the Reichsbank and other German banks."]



Photo 7.5. A red Reichshauptkasse money token (Private collection)

[Obverse: "This cheque is for use in the payment of Wehrmacht travel and other expenses in countries where payment in the local currency is restricted. This cheque may not be used for general payment transactions."]

notes for the first 20 million RM; six-month German Reich Treasury bonds for the next 20 million RM, and so on. Emissionsbank was required to make an appropriate order to re-invest the money obtained from its promissory notes and German Reich Treasury bonds when they matured but in practice this rule was not always

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applied. The Reichsbank gave Emissionsbank an assurance that it would rediscount its German Reich bills on demand, and help Emissionsbank sell its German Reich Treasury bonds.

On the basis of these facts, we know that Emissionsbank in Polen had the following accounts for its transactions with the Reichsbank, the Reichshauptkasse, and the Deutsche Verrechnungskasse:

1. Emissionsbank's giro account in the Reichsbank in Berlin, originally account number Freies Konto Nr.1035 (later Freies Konto Nr.2039), which handled Emissionsbank's claims in lieu of its foreign exchange transactions (the purchase of foreign exchange, gold, silver, etc.).

2. Emissionsbank's Sammelkonto (deposit account) in the Reichsbank in Berlin, which held the securities purchased on behalf of Emissionsbank debited to account no. 1035, (later no. 2039).

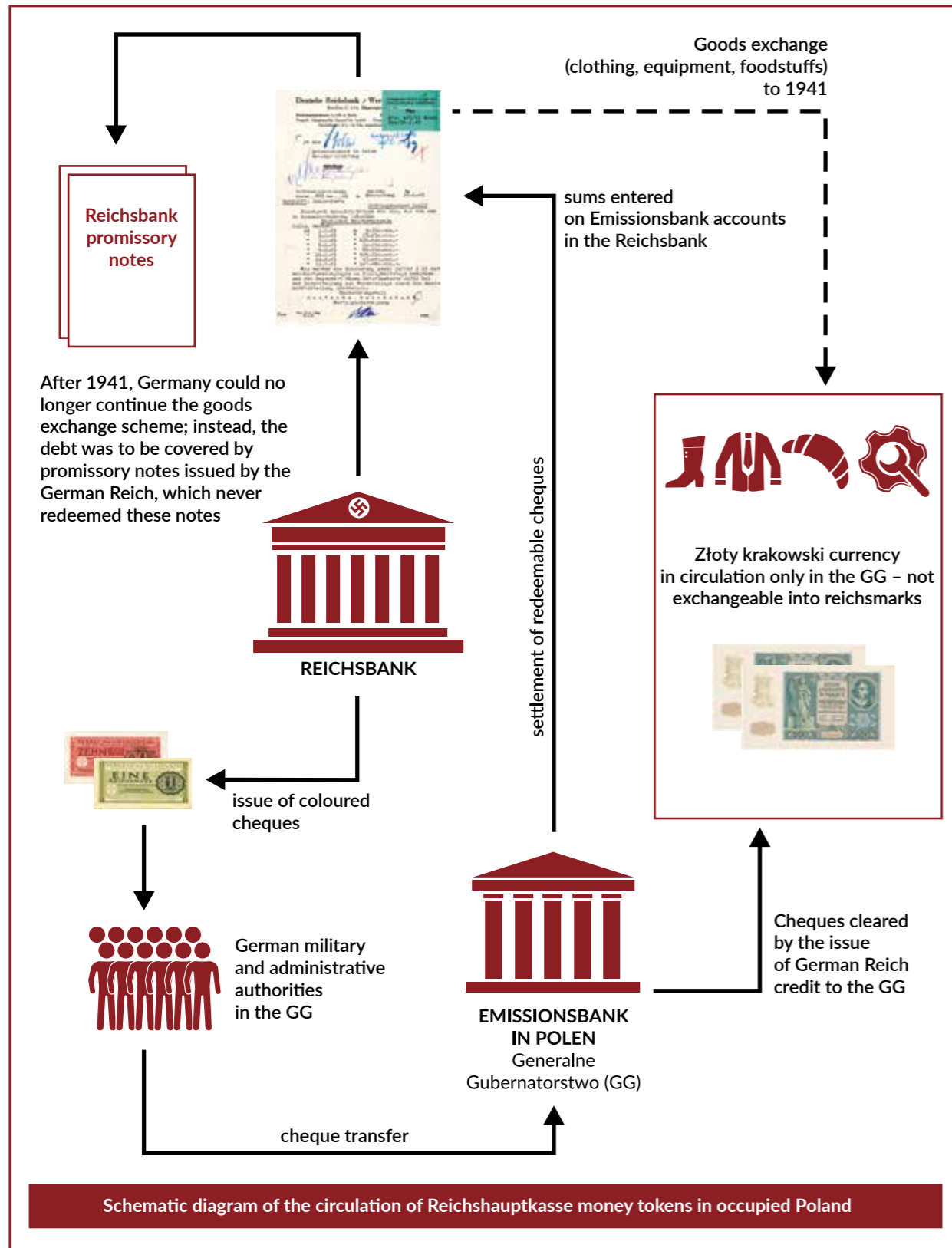
3. The Reichshauptkasse account held in the Emissionsbank in Kraków, for the whole of Reichshauptkasse's debt owed to Emissionsbank (viz. for its coloured cheques, remittances etc.).

4. Interimkonto Nr. 20392, Emissionsbank's interim giro account held in the Reichsbank in Berlin, for payments from the Deutsche Verrechnungskasse in respect of Emissionsbank's purchase of the coloured cheques presented by the Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe.

5. Emissionsbank's Sonderkonto (special deposit account) in the Reichsbank in Berlin, which collected the securities purchased on behalf of Emissionsbank's account and debited to Interimkonto Nr. 20392.

6. The account held by the GG's Verrechnungskasse (Clearing Office) in the Emissionsbank in Kraków, (Konto des Verrechnungsinstituts für rückständige Zahlungen der Deutschen Verrechnungskasse), which handled the interim financing of the institute's payments and its clearing transactions and debts.

All these accounts are recorded in the gross balance sheet for Emissionsbank in Polen in liquidation dated 18 January 1945.



The first payment into the Interimskonto, amounting to 15 million RM, was made on 15 February 1941. Many of the subsequent payments, specified on the balance sheet as *Platzübertragungen auf das Interimskonto Nr. 20392* (transfers to interim account No.20392), were made at intervals of a few days, in round sums, sometimes as much as 60 million RM a time. These payments into Emissionsbank's interim account were not the only way Reichshauptkasse settled its debt. It continued to make transfers to Emissionsbank via Deutsche Verrechnungskasse and the GG's Verrechnungskasse in Kraków, that is through payments made in transactions on the goods clearing system operating between the GG and the German Reich. These transfers did not specify what liabilities they referred to, and they took the form of advances. Presumably they were for the settlement of the Reich's debts for the remittances Emissionsbank sent for the war industry, military construction, road construction, etc.

The assets on Interimskonto Nr. 20392 accumulated year by year (Table 7.5). There are many orders in the Emissionsbank records for the reinvestment of money accruing from German Reich promissory notes and Treasury bonds. The structural changes to the account began in July 1943. To meet the expectations of Emissionsbank, the Reichsbank began to sell its Reich Treasury bonds, starting with those which had the longest time to maturity. At this time, there were Reich Treasury bills worth 4 billion RM entered on Emissionsbank's interim account, but no Reich bills as yet. From that time on, the number of Reich Treasury bills on the account began to fall. All the Reich Treasury bills had been liquidated or sold by 19 August 1944, and the only securities left on the interim account were three-month Reich bills.

The overall balance of accounts for all the transactions between Emissionsbank in Polen, the Reichsbank, the Reichshauptkasse, and the Deutsche Verrechnungskasse shows that in January 1945 there were German Reich promissory notes worth 5.4 million zł on Emissionsbank's free giro account, (Acct. No. 1035 and later Acct. No. 2039 - Table 7.5); and another 9.493 billion zł worth of German Reich promissory notes on the interim account (Acct. No. 20392; Tables 7.5 and 7.6), which gave a total of 9.498 billion zł. All of these securities worth nearly nine and a half billion zł were three-month bills due to mature in April 1945 at the latest.

Left: Figure 7.1. Schematic diagram of the circulation of Reichshauptkasse money tokens in occupied Poland

Elaborated by Mirosław Kłusek and drafted by Agnieszka Furyk.

Table 7.5.

Clearing gap. Balances on the Emissionsbank in Polen interim account and related accounts (million zł)

End of year	Transactions on the Reichshaupt-kasse account	Growth in the clearing gap in Berlin						Amount owed by Reichshaupt-kasse to Emissionsbank in Polen
		Giro account No. 1035 (2039) in the Reichsbank		Interimskonto Nr. 20392 in the Reichsbank		Deutsche Verrechnungskasse	Total	
		Balance	Deposit in promissory notes	Balance	Deposit in promissory notes			
1940	891.31	0.41	1.80	-	-	-	2.21	48.43
1941	2,521.30	0.58	2.20	0.01	1,447.23	-	1,450.02	61.43
1942	2,813.97	0.44	3.00	0.04	3,226.79	40.00	3,270.27	128.00
1943	3,357.99	0.42	5.19	0.36	5,532.43	40.00	5,578.40	44.41
1944	1,492.50	0.63	5.39	0.23	9,351.77	40.00	9,398.02	84.17
Raw (starting) balance to 18 Jan., and finally to 31 Oct. 1945	216.45	0.68	5.40	0.21	9,493.26	40.00	9,539.55	67.26

Source: AAN, *Emissionsbank in Polen w likwidacji*, ref. no. 25, "Szpica clearingowa," (summary of records and accounts) 10 April 1946, no pagination

Item	Date of maturity (1945)	Nominal value [złoty]
1	2	3
1	17 January	18,340,000
2	18 January	84,680,000
3	19 January	77,400,000
4	20 January	274,460,000
5	25 January	199,260,000
6	26 January	127,880,000
7	27 January	182,320,000
8	31 January	46,240,000
9	1 February	10,640,000
10	2 February	46,900,000
11	3 February	479,840,000
12	6 February	20,100,000
13	9 February	165,980,000
14	10 February	912,780,000
15	14 February	26,120,000

Table 7.6.

List of matured bonds payable to the interim giro account (Interimskonto No. 20329), deposited in the Securities Department of Deutsche Reichsbank, as on 17 January 1945

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1	2	3
16	15 February	294,960,000
17	17 February	257,980,000
18	21 February	163,500,000
19	22 February	22,440,000
20	24 February	437,080,000
21	28 February	122,060,000
22	1 March	141,220,000
23	2 March	328,620,000
24	3 March	42,220,000
25	5 March	32,360,000
26	6 March	83,700,000
27	7 March	65,580,000
28	8 March	290,080,000
29	9 March	326,000,000
30	10 March	70,360,000
31	12 March	56,540,000
32	13 March	16,500,000
33	14 March	14,440,000
34	15 March	516,840,000
35	16 March	405,480,000
36	18 March	20,100,000
37	19 March	40,520,000
38	20 March	153,540,000
39	21 March	90,200,000
40	23 March	235,180,000
41	27 March	112,360,000
42	28 March	162,740,000
43	29 March	150,440,000
44	30 March	137,020,000
45	31 March	40,200,000
46	3 April	62,840,000
47	4 April	83,660,000
48	5 April	62,640,000
49	6 April	519,340,000
50	7 April	52,260,000
51	10 April	309,320,000
52	12 April	213,200,000
53	13 April	686,800,000
Total		9,493,260,000

Source: AAN, *Bank Emisyjny w Polsce w likwidacji*, ref. no. 2, p. 191-192; ref. no.

If we are to go by the practice the Reichsbank had followed all along, we should assume that the money obtainable from the bills of exchange due to mature in the first quarter of 1945 was re-deposited in German Reich bills of exchange. Presumably, some of these assets held by Emissionsbank in Polen were in cash in RM, and some were deposited in German Reich bills. The balance of these claims is incontestable. The Reichsbank is the Polish State Treasury's debtor for the claims on the cash in reichsmarks deposited in the free and interim giro accounts. The debt due to the Polish State Treasury for the German Reich bills of exchange deposited in the Reichsbank is the liability of the German Reich. Should the German State for any reason not be willing to redeem the German Reich's bills of exchange, which is very unlikely (because Germany is the legal successor of the Third Reich), then the Polish State Treasury has the right to a recourse claim against the Reichsbank. Proof of this is given in the document of 25 February 1941 issued by the Reichsbank and sent to Emissionsbank in Polen.⁴ In this document, the Reichsbank guarantees Emissionsbank in Polen the right to redeem its bills of exchange in the Reichsbank on demand (*jederzeit*, viz. "at any time"). The Reichsbank's liability is incontestable.

At the end of the Second World War, in view of the political situation there was no possibility for Poland to access the Emissionsbank's account in the Reichsbank. Poland had two options to resolve the problem. One was the exchange of all the złoty krakowski notes issued by Emissionsbank in Polen for notes issued by Narodowy Bank Polski (the National Bank of Poland), with no financial liquidity. The liability would then have fallen on the Polish State Treasury and the National Bank of Poland. However, the government of the Polish People's Republic chose the second option – a part exchange of złoty krakowski banknotes for złoty banknotes issued by the National Bank of Poland, and transferred the entire liability for its losses to the creditors of the Emissionsbank in Polen, which was tantamount to a second loss for the people of Poland.

The last balance sheet for Emissionsbank in Polen shows that 9 out of every 10 notes issued by Emissionsbank went into circulation as a result of its purchase of payment cheques from the German army. This was the money German troops used to purchase goods and services at reduced prices (official prices many times lower than free market prices), and it was the first instance of financial loss sustained by the people of Poland in this respect.

⁴ A copy of this document is preserved in the AAN, *Bank Emisyjny w Polsce w likwidacji*, ref. no. 25, annex no. 5.

They sustained a second loss when 9 out of every 10 Emissionsbank notes put into circulation were not fully redeemed from them.⁵

7.3. Estimated value of losses sustained by the Polish Ministry of the Treasury as a result of hostilities and the German occupation, and due to the operations of Emissionsbank in Polen

The dollar valuation method offers the best way to reproduce the real change in the value of the losses sustained by the Polish Ministry of the Treasury caused by the War and German occupation of Poland, within the territories of the Second Polish Republic (excluding the Polish territories incorporated in the USSR after the War), and by the operations of Emissionsbank in Polen under the German occupation of Poland. On this basis, the total estimated value of losses sustained was **31.998 billion zł**, corresponding to **492.811 billion PLN on 31 December 2021** (Table 7.7). This sum does not include the material and human losses within the scope of the administrative operations of the Polish Ministry of the Treasury.

Table 7.7. Summary list of war losses of the Polish Ministry of the Treasury, and claims arising from the operations of Emissionsbank in Polen during the Second World War

Type of loss	Value in billion zł	Value in \$US billion according to the złoty exchange rate in 1939	Value in PLN billion in December 2021
Taxes and monopolies	19.251	3.615	296.490
Claims against Emissionsbank in Polen for its operations in Poland under German occupation	12.747	2.394	196.320
Total	31.998	6.009	492.811

Source: Table 7.2 and Table 7.4.

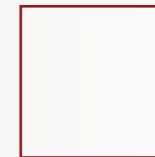
⁵ AAN, *Bank Emisyjny w Polsce w likwidacji*, ref. no. 1, p. 38.

KARTE VON POLEN

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Rafał Dmowski



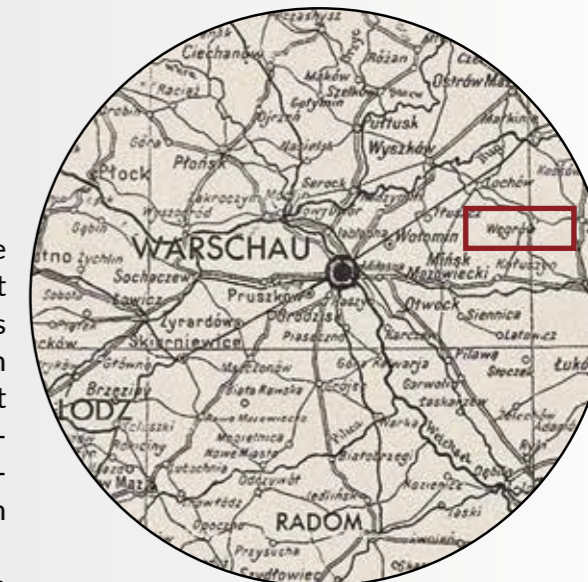
Material and human losses, and economic exploitation suffered under German occupation by the town of Węgrów

The Luftwaffe bombed Węgrów already in the first days of September 1939, despite the fact that there were no Polish army units or military facilities in the town. On 6 and 11 September, over a dozen buildings were destroyed, and many residents lost their lives. As a result of the bombings on 9 September, the roof and historic entrance way of the parish church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary were destroyed.

The Germans promptly launched a project to exploit the area economically. Under the order issued on 21 September, all the local associations were dissolved and their property and assets were confiscated. All the schools were closed down and all motor vehicles were impounded. Local residents were forced to carry out unpaid work for “public” (viz. German) purposes. The owners and occupants of the best properties in the town were evicted and their buildings were taken over for use as German offices and housing for German officials. In September 1941, the municipal authorities were obliged to take down all the church bells and deliver them to the German authorities.

The inhabitants of the town who did not have their own smallholdings or farms starved. In 1940, the daily bread ration for ethnic Poles in Węgrów amounted to just 200g per head, in 1940 it was 250 g, and in 1942 - 160 g. The ration for Jews was just half of that.

Very high taxes were imposed on farmers in the form of obligatory quotas of agricultural produce which were so exorbitant that farmers could not meet them. On 13 April 1943, the mayor of Węgrów was fined 10,704 zł – a huge sum at the time (equal to 164 855 zł/ \$ 40,600 of December 2021) – for the local authority’s failure to deliver the designated egg quota.



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Left: Photo 7.6. “Karte von Polen,” a German map of Poland under German occupation, published in the German newspaper Völkische Beobachter on 12 September 1939.

Above: Insert from the German map showing Węgrów

Millionen lesen den VB., ... und Du?



Photo 7.7.
Ruins of the entrance way to Węgrów parish church after the Germans had bombed it in September 1939. View from the churchyard (Collections of Municipal Public Library in Węgrów, Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna w Węgrowie)

Under German occupation, the inhabitants' health deteriorated significantly due to malnutrition. They contracted infectious diseases, in particular tuberculosis and typhus, so a hospital for infectious diseases was established in Węgrów. The chief physician for the county observed that "the lack of coal and hence of hot water rules out baths and delousing procedures." In a letter dated 28 January 1944 to the town's German commissioner, the mayor of Węgrów wrote that "the municipal staff are living in dire poverty. They are suffering from food and fuel shortages. . . . It is terribly cold in the municipal board's office because of the lack of fuel. . . . I ask you, Sir, to help the municipal employees."

There were numerous acts of terror against civilians; local people were shot in executions; victims of round-ups organised by the Arbeitsamt (the German Employment Office) and the German police were sent to Germany for slave labour. A total of 4,006 inhabitants of the pre-war Węgrów county were sent to Germany as forced workers. From the very outset, there were terror attacks against Jews, and Jewish properties were looted. On 23 October 1939, the German starost ordered "all Jewish businesses to close down, all Jewish trading to stop, and all Jewish goods delivered to the police, on pain of the penalty for default." In 1940, a ghetto was set up in the town, in which there were 8.3 thousand inmates in 1942. On 22 September 1942, German and Ukrainian



Photo 7.8.
Ruins of Węgrów Parish Church after the Germans had bombed it in September 1939. View of the west end of the church (Collections of Węgrów's public library, Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna w Węgrowie)

troops under German command started to close down the ghetto. Around 2 thousand inmates were murdered on the spot and 27 residential buildings along with their outhouses were burned down. The remaining residents of the ghetto were taken to the Treblinka death camp.

During the trial of Ludwig Fischer, former German governor of *Distrikt Warschau*, human losses on the area of the pre-war Węgrów county were estimated at 2,149 arrested, 16,992 murdered, 4,006 deported to Germany for slave labour, and 1,841 sent to concentration and extermination camps.

In May 1944, a special unit, probably Vlasovites (Russians fighting on the German side) arrived in Węgrów, with orders to exhume the corpses of murder victims from the Jewish cemetery and transport them to a place called Piaski, where they were burned. The bodies of murdered ethnic Poles were burned in this makeshift crematorium as well. Work to remove the traces of the crime went on for about three months. The group of Jewish labourers employed for the job were murdered when they had completed the task and their bodies were burned.

On 6–8 August 1944, German demolition squad blew up two mills and a dairy in Węgrów, and retreating German troops destroyed public buildings and mined the town.

8

Paweł Pońsko

**Estimated losses
in Poland's GDP
due the German
occupation of Poland
during the Second
World War**



The aim of this report is to estimate the gap in Poland's GDP, interpreted as an estimate of the loss of income of the Polish State, which was not created due to lost production factors looted or destroyed by the German occupying forces during the Second World War.¹ To make my report as objective and transparent as possible, I have adopted the general principle of using globally accessible databases, supported where necessary by data from GUS (Statistics Poland) publications. I have also used the estimates of losses resulting from German hostilities and occupation of Poland during the Second World War published in the 1947 BOW Report.² I give a detailed discussion of the adjustments I needed to make to the standard assumptions and apply in the sensitivity analysis.

Estimates of Poland's lost resources such as buildings, factories, forests, arable land, works of art, etc., do not exhaust the question of losses suffered by Polish society due to the War, therefore I embarked on a project to estimate the GDP value which Poland was prevented from creating due to German occupation. All the aforementioned resources are used on an ongoing basis to generate wealth. "Wealth" may be understood as the utility from enjoying a work of art like Raphael's *Portrait of a Young Man*, but also as remuneration, that is being paid for one's work, and the capital used for the production of new goods, the value of which is measured by the market price of the finished products. An army which occupies a country and destroys the resources it uses to generate wealth by murdering its people and taking over its capital and hence the income from its use, limits the functioning of its market or prevents the accumulation of human capital by closing down its schools – thereby destroys the stream of added value of

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GDP measures the total financial value of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period.

Left: Photo 8.1. Grain elevators on fire in the Wola district of Warsaw, following a Luftwaffe air raid, September 1939 (NDA collection)

¹ As the methodology I apply in this report is used to estimate Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Polish economy, I treat the terms "GDP" and "national income" interchangeably, even though the definition of Gross National Income (GNI) in national accounts is of course different from "GDP."

² *Sprawozdanie w przedmiocie strat i szkód wojennych Polski w latach 1939–1945*, Warszawa, 1947. Hereinafter "BOW Report."

the society which it is oppressing. To conduct a comprehensive examination of the value stream of prosperity Poland lost through particular channels of economic and social activity, we shall need to have exact time series describing the changes over time in the economic variables of interest to us.

Unfortunately, there is not enough data to carry out an analysis of the economic losses Poland sustained during the Second World War as accurately as, for example, Kalegama (1999) and Ganegodage and Rambaldi (2014).³ Such an attempt would entail a large number of simplifying assumptions or even omissions. Nevertheless, the total value of a society's particular streams of economic activity gives an overall measure of the economic activity entailed in its GDP.⁴ Hence, an estimate of the losses in a country's GDP is an estimate of the total lost value in its economic activity, but without specifying the channels generating value added.⁵ This approach is in line with Olaf de Groot's methodological proposals (2009)⁶ and allows for a comparative analysis with counterfactual scenarios, at least as regards economic growth trends.⁷

8.1. Data and trends in 1929–1938

This report is based on an attempt to reconstruct Poland's GDP using the standard Cobb-Douglas production function (fCD). To carry out the analysis, we require data on production factors

A **sensitivity analysis** determines how different values of parameters or independent variables affect the prediction of a model. In this study, sensitivity analysis refers primarily to the sensitivity of GDP to parameter changes in the Cobb-Douglas function. Alternative counterfactual and war scenarios may also be treated as a form of sensitivity analysis.

A **counterfactual scenario** (counterfactual history) is a hypothetical assumption that certain key historical events did not take place or ended differently than they did in reality, and allows for a scientific answer to the question, „What would have happened if ...?“ In this study, I use counterfactual scenarios based on data available for Poland for 1929–1938 to depict the hypothetical economic growth and development of Poland in 1939–1945 if the War had not occurred.

³ Kelegama, Saman, „Economic Costs of Conflict in Sri Lanka,” *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka. Civil War and Reconciliation*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press; Cambridge, Massachusetts: World Peace Foundation and Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 1999, p. 71–87; Ganegodage, K. Renuka; and Alicia Rambaldi, „Economic consequences of war Evidence from Sri Lanka,” *Journal of Asian Economics* 30 (2014), (C), p. 42–53.

⁴ GDP is not a measure of a society's entire wealth, for example, it does not include the utility from enjoying national cultural heritage, the advantages of a sense of security, etc. However, it is a comprehensive measure of economic activity encompassing all the measurable channels, including agriculture, industry, and services.

⁵ In principle, the Cobb-Douglas function may be applied to calculate the added value of every branch of the economy, but to do this, sufficiently detailed data is needed. In this report, the calculation of GDP allows for a determination of the losses to the Polish GDP stream caused by the loss in production factors (labour and capital).

⁶ de Groot, Olaf J.; Tilman Brück; and Carlos Bozzoli, *How Many Bucks in a Bang, On the Estimation of the Economic Costs of Conflict*, Discussion Papers of DIW Berlin 948, DIW Berlin, German Institute for Economic Research, 2009; published as a chapter in the *Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Peace and Conflict*, Michelle R. Garfinkel and Stergios Skaperdas (eds.), New York and Toronto: O.U.P., 2012.

⁷ See Abadie, Alberto; and Javier Gardeazabal, „The Economic Costs of Conflict. A Case Study of the Basque Country,” *American Economic Review* 93/1 (2003), p. 113–132.

which can be used to calibrate the technology for the presentation of Poland's GDP before the Second World War. The process of economic growth calibrated in this way will enable us to reconstruct a hypothetical path for Poland's GDP during the war years in the form of a counterfactual scenario, given the observed accumulation trends in production factors. The fCD technology will also serve to construct a methodologically consistent wartime scenario. Below, I present the data available on Poland's GDP and production factors.

8.1.1. National income

No statistical surveys were conducted in pre-war Poland for GDP as we define the concept and term today. The data available on the income generated in Poland and how it was distributed is scant. Below, I will discuss the available data, and explain why I chose only the GUS estimates and the Maddison Project Database 2018 for my analysis.⁸

GUS provides estimates of Poland's Gross National Income for 1929, 1935 and 1937, which I present in Table 8.1. In the same publication, GUS gives estimates of the Gross Distributed National Income, which gives a better reflection of the national expenditure, and so is closer to the present-day definition of GDP (Table 8.1). The data presented in Tables 8.1 and 8.2 allow us to create an image of the scale of Poland's national income for 1929–1937; however, it is uncertain whether the GUS data for the period before the Second World War is consistent with GUS data published after the War. The Maddison Project Database (MPD2018) offers two data series for the GDP of Poland for 1929–1938. One of the series, MPD2018-CGDP, reflects comparative purchasing power per capita between countries in a given year; and the second, RGDP, is intended to show the real GDP growth rate for a given economy over time. Since the purpose of my study is to measure the loss of income of the inhabitants of Poland during the Second World War, I shall use the former series as my main source of information on GDP, verified on the basis of the GUS data, to make the information on production factors applicable for a GDP simulation for the subsequent period. By the verification of MPD2018

⁸ Database methodology is described in *Maddison Project Database, version 2018*, Bolt, Jutta; Robert Inklaar; Herman de Jong, and Jan Luiten van Zanden, „Rebasing 'Maddison': New income comparisons and the shape of long-run economic development,” *Maddison Project Working Paper* 10 (2018).

using the GUS data, I mean the calculation of GDP for a population of 34.9 million, the true figure for Poland's population in 1938, not 31 million, which is what MPD2018 gives for that year.⁹ This correction does not diminish the advantages of the data in MPD2018, which provides methodologically consistent data per capita for the years both before and after the Second World War and makes this data accessible internationally.

Year	Billion ZP1937	1929=100	ZP1937 per capita	Billion ZP1938
1929	14,8	100	478	13.8
1935	14.8	100	440	13.8
1937	16.5	111	482	15.3

Year	Current prices Billion ZP	ZP1937 per capita	Billion ZP1938	ZP1938 per capita
1935	13.1	391	14,5	432
1937	16.6	483	15,4	449

An additional source of information on Poland's pre-war national income is provided in the estimates of Polish researchers like C. Klarner, M. Kalecki and L. Landau, and the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) associates. The available time series were constructed using various methodologies, many of them differing significantly from the current definition of GDP, and hence the values they give differ from the real GDP in that period. Tomaszewski and Landau give a full account of the way these estimates were constructed.¹⁰ Table 8.6 shows all the estimates of Poland's pre-war national income, along with the annual growth rate where calculable. The methodology used by M. Kalecki and L. Landau, and by C. Klarner is the closest to today's definition of the GDP. On the other hand, the only full time series apart from MPD2018 for Poland's national income in 1929–1938 is the one calculated by the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) team, but its estimates are undeniably lower than the true GDP.¹¹ However, the growth rates might be useful to extrapolate for the missing years, e.g. for

⁹ MPD2018 uses the figure for Poland's population within its post-war borders for their pre-war estimates. Hence, despite the fact that its estimates of the GDP per capita may be plausible, its GDP stream calculated for the whole country in this way is incorrect for Poland in the pre-war period.

¹⁰ Tomaszewski, Jerzy; and Zbigniew Landau, "Spory o ocenę tendencji rozwoju gospodarki polskiej w latach 1918–1939," *Przegląd Historyczny* 75/4 (1984), 723–746.

¹¹ Tomaszewski and Landau explain why the PAN estimates are lower than the GDP.

Table 8.1
GUS data for Poland's
Gross National Income

Source: *Polska 1918–1988*, Wanda Bohdanowicz et al. (eds.), Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1989 (hereinafter *Polska 1918–1988*). Author's calculation.

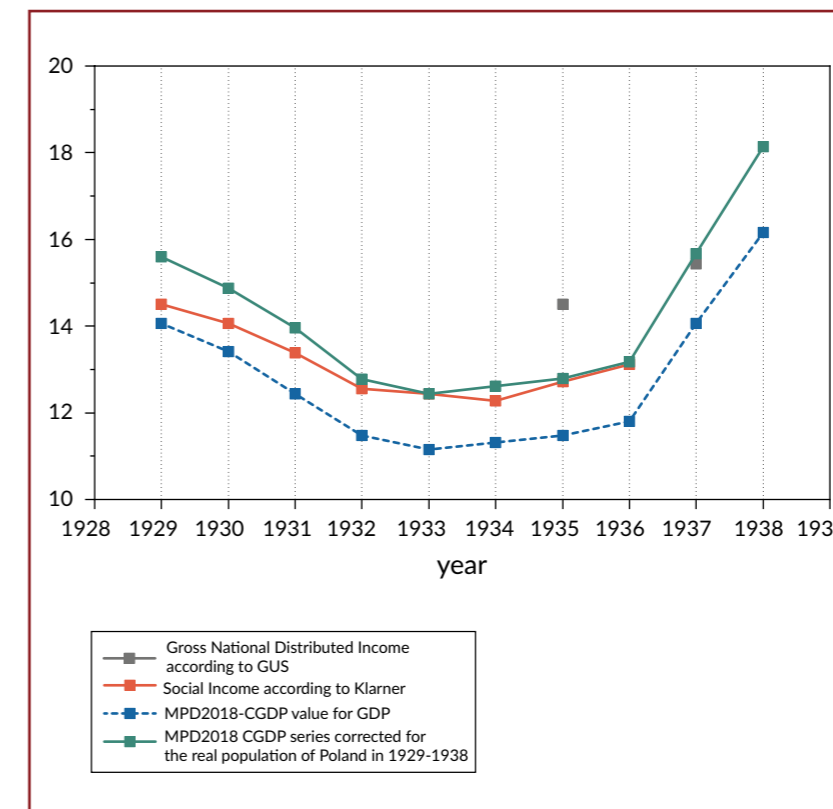
Table 8.2.
GUS estimates for
Poland's Gross National Distributed
Income

Source: *Polska 1918–1988*.
Author's calculation.

1937 and 1938, which are not given in the estimates compiled by C. Klarner or GUS. Figure 8.1. gives a comparative presentation of the data nearest to today's definition of GDP.

GUS estimates the value of the Polish Distributed National Income for 1937 at 15.4 billion pre-war Polish złoty at 1938 prices (hereinafter ZP1938). This value is very close to the MPD2018-CGDP figure adjusted for the real population (15.7 billion ZP1938),¹² and higher than the PAN estimate (13.2 billion ZP1938). The MPD2018-CGDP values for GDP are confirmed by C. Klarner's estimates, especially for 1932–1936, where both series give the same levels for the GDP. The MPD2018-CGDP data suggest a fairly deep slump in 1929–1932, after the higher GDP estimates for the period preceding the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Figure 8.1.
GDP according to the Maddison Project Database 2018 – CGDP; Social
Income according to Czesław Klarner; Gross National Distributed
Income according to GUS



Source: *Zarys historii Polski w liczbach. Społeczeństwo, gospodarka*, Franciszek Kubiczek et al. (eds.), Warszawa: Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, 2012. Maddison Project Database 2018. Author's calculation.

¹² In the rest of this paper, MPD2018-CGDP shall mean the time series corrected for the real population of pre-war Poland.

In addition, the MPD2018 – CGDP data shows a very high rate of growth for 1937–1938, confirming the deep recession in the early 30s, followed by rapid growth probably due not only to an improving economic situation, but also to the construction of Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy (the Central Industrial Area). The double-digit economic growth in these years is confirmed by the double-digit growth rate for industrial production published by GUS.¹³ As the MPD2018-CGDP estimates give a measure of the real purchasing power enjoyed by the average inhabitant of Poland, on the basis of the data we may observe that just before the outbreak of the Second World War, the people of Poland felt a significant improvement in their household budgets. On the other hand, the PAN estimates suggest an earlier, longer period of recovery after the recession, and give a more moderate trend for Poland's economic growth, which seems closer to the GUS estimates for the National Income.¹⁴ The difference in the growth rates of the Polish economy just before the War presented in some of the Polish and foreign sources may be significant for the determination of the average growth trend in 1929–1938. According to MPD2018-CGDP, the average annual GDP growth rate in this period was 2.07%, while the PAN estimates give a value of 1.32%. As the other time series are incomplete and do not cover the years immediately before the War, i.e. those with presumably the fastest annual rate of GDP growth, we shall accept that despite the deep crisis of the 1930s, Poland had a slight positive rate of growth in 1929–1938. Since MPD2018-CGDP estimates continue for the post-war years, while the data on production resources come from GUS, we shall have to determine the extent to which the GDP streams provided by these two sources agree with each other.¹⁵ The value of Poland's GDP for 1938 given by MPD2018-CGDP (18.1 billion ZP1938), should be considered reliable and is confirmed by Klarner's estimates of the Social Income for 1929–1936, by GUS for 1937, and by the GUS value for the growth rate of industrial production in 1936–1938.¹⁶

¹³ *Zarys historii Polski w liczbach. Społeczeństwo, gospodarka*, Franciszek Kubiczek et al. (eds.), Warszawa: Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, 2012, p. 379.

¹⁴ The average rate of growth of distributed national income implied by GUS data for 1935–1937 is 3.2% YOY.

¹⁵ From a technical point of view, the difference in GDP levels calculated using the fCD would be compensated by the TFP index calculated as a Solow residual. Also, the proportion of pay in the production factors would not change for the given flexibility, but for a lower GDP it would be proportionally lower. This would mean that a lower productivity of production factors would make their individual loss give a smaller fall in GDP. This observation is important for the key aspect of the calculations I carry out in this study. Hence, there is a need to determine the reliability of the stream of GDP.

¹⁶ See *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939*, Warszawa, 1939, p. 3.

8.1.2. Productive capital

The data on productive capital is derived from the GUS publication *Polska 1918–1988*, and Table 8.3 presents these values in ZP1938 prices. The available data do not allow us to reproduce the exact time series for capital for 1929–1938, however, they do allow for the calculation of the average annual rate of growth of capital accumulation. As productive capital depreciates year over year, I have used the perpetual inventory method to create its time series in line with the methodology for the estimate of potential output and in accordance with equation 8.1 below:

$$\text{Equation 8.1.} \\ K_t = I_t - \delta K_{t-1}$$

where

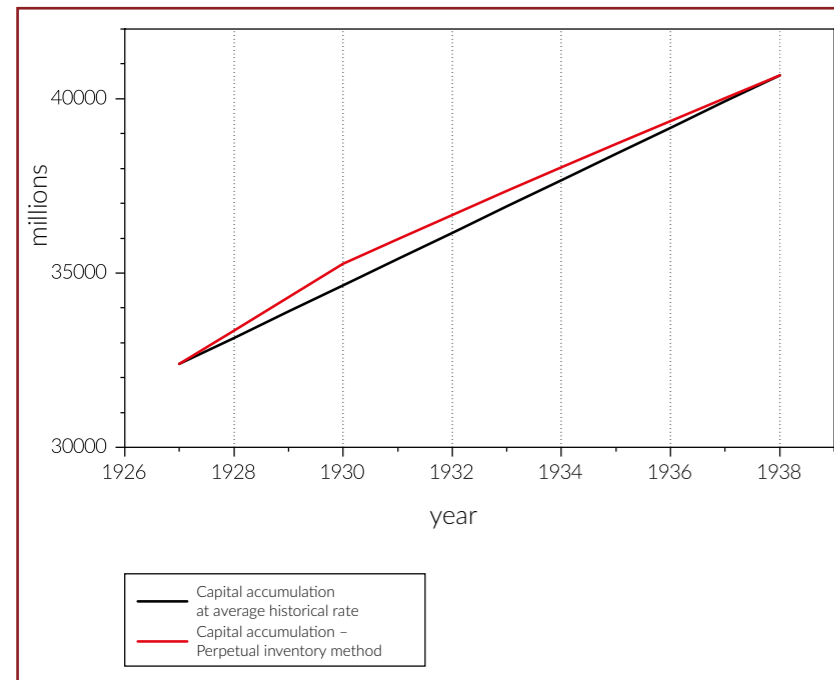
K_t – capital in period t
 I_t – investment in period t
 δ – capital depreciation rate

In addition, GUS estimates the average annual investment level for 1928–1930 at 2,525 million pre-war złoty at 1928 prices, which gives 1,338.3 million ZP1938; and 2,088 million 1928 złoty at 1928 prices for 1931–1938, which is equivalent to 1,106.6 million ZP1938. Moreover, GUS assesses the level of investment in 1937 at 13% of the Gross National Income, from which we can deduce that in that year the GNI amounted to 16 billion pre-war złoty. This information is important, as it shows the consistency of estimates of investment and capital resources with the estimates for the GDP I use in this analysis. Using the data on investment and the assumption that the capital depreciation rate was fixed in 1927–1938, it is possible to reconstruct the capital accumulation trend for the period under consideration according to equation 8.1. These data applied in equation 8.1 give a capital depreciation rate of 1.14%. This estimate seems low considering that in today's economy, the rate of capital depreciation is estimated at roughly 4.5–6.5%, but it does not deviate significantly from the estimate for 1929 given by K. Secomski, who assessed the depreciation of capital at 1,025 million pre-war złoty, which was 1.69% of the capital

The rate of depreciation of capital measures the portion of capital used up for production in a given period of time. In a developing economy, this portion is more than replaced by investments in new capital. In this way, capital increases from one period of time to the next.

stock for that year.¹⁷ However, as the estimate for 1929 is the only observation available and the reconstruction of the whole path of capital accumulation would require additional assumptions, I decided to adopt a constant depreciation rate of 1.14% for the entire period, which I consider a fairly clear and qualitatively reasonable solution.¹⁸ As a result, I obtained the capital accumulation path shown in Figure 8.2. For comparison, I have also shown a capital accumulation path for a constant rate of growth throughout the 1927–1938 period, ignoring investment data. Naturally, in both cases the average rate of growth of capital stock in the Polish economy for 1927–1938 is 2.09% per annum.

Figure 8.2.
Capital accumulation path consistent with equation 8.1, after GUS in ZP1938 million



Source: *Polska 1918–1988*, Warszawa, 1988. Author's calculation

¹⁷ Low estimates of depreciation of capital may be due to their structure, which differs from the one we have today. For instance, a greater share of buildings in capital resources would give a lower rate of depreciation. See Tomaszewski, Jerzy; and Zbigniew Landau, *Druza Rzeczpospolita. Gospodarka, społeczeństwo, miejsce w świecie, sporne problemy badań*, Warszawa, 1977, p. 59.

¹⁸ The rate of capital depreciation taken at 1.14% should be interpreted as the average depreciation rate for the period discussed.

Table 8.3.
GUS figures for Poland's capital stock at the end of 1927 and 1938 (in ZP1938 billion)

Year	Buildings and construction work	Machines and equipment	Transport facilities	Total
1927	28.0	3.2	1.2	32.4
1938	34.2	4.9	1.6	40.7

Source: *Polska 1918–1988*, Warszawa, 1988. Author's presentation.

8.1.3. Labour

The data on the pre-war and post-war Polish population available in the Polish statistical yearbooks are certainly the most reliable and fullest sources of demographic information needed for the reconstruction of the way the national income of pre-war Poland was generated. However, to determine the production factor relating to labour, we need information on the working age population. GUS defined the working age population as the number of persons aged between 15 and 59. *Polska 1918–1988* gives the numbers of working age as 15.593 million in 1921, and 18.882 million in 1931, which is respectively 57% and 59% of the total population at that time. The source of this information is *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939*. Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, GUS did not publish corresponding data for the whole period of the Second Republic of Poland (1918–1939). On the basis of the data for 1921 and 1931, and assuming that the percentage of the number of individuals of working age to the total population was constant, we can estimate the approximate population of working age for the missing years up to 1938. Thus, for 1929–1938 I assumed that the percentage of the Polish population of working age was 59%.

Table 8.4.
GDP and the production factors used to reproduce the process of GDP creation in Poland in 1929–1938 using the standard Cobb-Douglas technology

Year	GDP (ZP1938 million)	Labour force (thousands)	Unemployment rate	Capital (ZP1938 million)	TFP
1927	-	-	0.074	32,390	-
1928	-	-	0.050	33,358	-
1929	15,591	14,233	0.049	34,315	0.847
1930	14,868	14,411	0.127	35,262	0.841
1931	13,960	14,802	0.140	35,966	0.778
1932	12,771	14,913	0.156	36,662	0.713
1933	12,433	15,121	0.167	37,349	0.690
1934	12,615	15,306	0.163	38,029	0.688
1935	12,792	15,490	0.119	38,702	0.665
1936	13,172	15,675	0.118	39,366	0.675
1937	15,671	15,813	0.128	40,023	0.800
1938	18,137	16,066	0.088	40,673	0.884

Source: *Polska 1918–1988*, Warszawa, 1988; Maddison Project Database 2018; Mitchell, Brian, *International Historical ...*. Author's calculation.

GUS reports that in 1921 there were 13.287 million professionally active persons, while in 1931 the corresponding figure was 14.515 million, which was respectively 49% and 45% of the total population (85% and 76.9% of the population of working age). *Zarys historii Polski w liczbach*¹⁹ gives a figure of 15.321 million for the professionally active population in 1931, including persons with no paid employment (retirees, pensioners, capitalists, persons living in shelters for the homeless, and prisoners) or with an undefined or unknown profession. As it is difficult to determine exactly how many of these people actually participated in the production of the national income, this statistic was subtracted from 15.321 million, which gave 14.802 million persons professionally active in 1931.

This calculation determined the labour force participation rate at 78.4%, while the percentage of professionally active persons constituted 46.1% of the total population of Poland. On the assumptions I have given above, the labour force in the pre-war period would have changed in proportion to the change in the entire Polish population.

¹⁹ Kubiczek, p. 169.

The number of employed persons gives a measure of those contributing to the generation of the national income in any given period. GUS estimates the number of unemployed in 1931 at 893 thousand, and the number of persons active professionally at 14.515 million. Hence, the unemployment rate was 6.2%. GUS also provides the number unemployed and registered as non-agricultural workers.²⁰ This figure is estimated at 313 thousand for 1931, which is only 2.1% of the labour force. This means that the unemployment data provided by GUS does not reflect the real economic situation in the period. The 1930s were the time of the Great Depression, which undoubtedly left its mark on the Polish labour market. The downturn in the economy should be clearly reflected in the unemployment rate. An alternative source of information on unemployment rate in 1927–1938 can be found in *International Historical Statistics. Europe 1750–2005*,²¹ which gives an unemployment rate of 16.7% in 1933, the bottom of the slump. For comparison, the figure for 1931 was 14%. The data in Mitchell (2007) seem to offer a better reflection of the condition of the Polish economy for that period of time. In this way, the picture of Poland's economic growth before the Second World War will be decomposed according to the impact of individual production factors on GDP and will correspond to the data available for that period.

In *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939*, GUS published an index showing employment in industry and for contracted employees in 1929–1938. The base year was 1929, i.e. the year when the Great Depression started. The GUS figures for 1933, the worst year in Poland's economic crisis, show a fall in employment for contracted workers to 74%, while for industrial workers it was 63% of the figure for 1929. In 1938, the employment rate for contracted workers returned to a level of 100%, and the rate for industrial workers was at a level of 94% of the employment figures for 1929. Hence, I decided to use an unemployment rate of 8.8% for 1938,²² which I considered close enough to the average unemployment rate over a long period of time. These figures will give an unbiased picture of Poland's lost potential for the generation of its GDP during the Second World War.²³

²⁰ Kubiczek, p. 172.

²¹ Mitchell, Brian, *International Historical Statistics. Europe, 1750–2005*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

²² Mitchell.

²³ Economists often refer to "stylized facts." A "stylized fact" used in the measurement of unemployment and generally accepted as true is the natural rate of unemployment, estimated for the US economy at 6%. On this basis, we may conclude that an unemployment rate of 8.8% seems acceptable for an economy that required major structural changes, including changes in the labour market.

8.1.4. The Total Factor Productivity Trend

To map the trends in Poland's economic development under German occupation, I will need to calibrate the fCD production function to convert the input of production factors into GDP. One of the components of the fCD is the TFP (Total Factor Productivity) trend, the time-variable coefficient of productivity (A_t in equation 8.2), which I will describe in detail in the next chapter. In fact, from a technical point of view, TFP is a measure of what we do not know about the generation of GDP in the economy, and is determined as the residual of the final product calculation, after taking capital and labour inputs into account. For 1929–1938, we have data on the labour factor, the capital accumulation trend, and the GDP time series. Using these data and taking a specific form of the fCD, I determined the TFP series as a Solow residual²⁴ containing information on the variability of the GDP which is not reflected in the data on capital and labour.

To sum up, the TFP index contains all the information about Poland's GDP in 1929–1938 which is not in the data of labour and capital and which supplements the process of GDP creation. In view of the specific nature of the 1930s – the years of the Great Depression – and the fact that we only have the capital accumulation trend available, the TFP index I have calculated contains information on the slower rate of accumulation not only of human capital and technological progress, but also of physical capital. For this reason, apart from reflecting the labour market, it reflects the depth of the slump during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Consequently, the average annual rate of change of the TFP index in 1929–1938 cannot be interpreted as the rate of technological progress of the Polish economy. Especially in this case, the trend in TFP growth should be interpreted as a supplement to what we know about GDP growth, along with the information we have on labour and capital resources. In my simulation for the GDP generation process during the Second World War, with the assumptions on developments in labour and capital resources I have adopted, I will have to transfer the changes in TFP trend in order to make my simulation consistent with the real period for 1929–1938. The average annual TFP rate of growth from 1929–1938 in my calculation is 0.78% YOY.²⁵

²⁴ Epstein, N.; and C. Macchiarelli, "Estimating Poland's Potential Output. A Production Function Approach", *IMF Working Paper*, 2009.

²⁵ An increase in the TFP index of 0.78% YOY is obtained only if we use the MPD2018-CGDP series. If we cali-

8.2. The Polish GDP in 1939–1945: counterfactual scenarios

To determine the amount of income the people of Poland lost as a result of German occupation during the Second World War, we shall need to establish a point of reference to gauge the wealth of Polish society in that period. For obvious reasons, we have only a limited range of data on the actual economic situation of the people of Poland under German occupation. Moreover, we have no data at all on what the economic situation of the people of Poland would have been like if the War had not occurred. For situations of this kind, studies on historical growth trends usually take the average rate of growth for the preceding period. The MPD2018-CGDP data available for Poland for 1929–1938 show an average annual GDP rate of growth of 2.07%. Needless to say, I will apply such a prolonged trend in my main counterfactual scenario. However, since I have additional data provided by GUS, and I want to avail myself of the advantages offered by the fCD and focus on methodological coherence with the wartime scenario, I will apply the fCD and accumulation trends of production inputs for the 1929–1938 period in the counterfactual version of the GDP stream assuming there was no war.²⁶ Nevertheless, I must emphasise that the growth scenarios I will construct in this way for the period under German occupation are not an exact reconstruction of what Poland's economic growth would have been if there had been no war. But they are economically viable illustrations of the GDP trend – assuming that the Polish economy would have continued on the same course of GDP generation it had followed in 1929–1938, as calculated using the fCD.

I drafted two scenarios to show that my assumption of the GDP growth trend continuing from the previous period is absolutely sound economically. The scenario with the pre-war GDP trend continuing assumes an exogenous GDP path, whereas the

brate the production function for the PAN Social Income series or for Klarner's series, we get a negative TFP trend for 1929–1938. This should of course be interpreted as confirmation of the depth of the crisis of the 1930s, not as the lack of technological progress in Poland.

²⁶ The scenario extending the GDP growth trend from 1929–1938 for the following years has also been calculated using the fCD. However, since in this scenario the GDP path is predetermined, the calculation of GDP is not the primary purpose of the fCD, which is used only to illustrate the process.

scenario based on production factor accumulation trends has the GDP calculated as an endogenous variable. To make the final calculation of losses, I will use the scenario which continues the pre-war trend. This scenario implies lower losses than the other counterfactual scenarios. The losses calculated for my second scenario should be interpreted as a sensitivity analysis.²⁷ Finally, and most importantly for the consistency of my report, by using exactly the same theoretical tools for the wartime scenario, I will be able to calculate Poland's losses of GDP due to the devastation caused by German occupation.

8.2.1. Poland's GDP in 1938

A key aspect of this report is the fact that I can compare the sum of economic losses I will be calculating with the results in the 1947 BOW Report. That is why some of the calculations will be carried out with reference to the GDP level for 1938, and hence the unrealistic assumption that there would have been no economic progress in Poland during the war and post-war years, and that the country would have continued to generate exactly the same amount of GDP each year, which would then have been distributed to remunerate the production factors. Thus, I assumed that Poland's GDP was 18.137 billion ZP1938 for each year, in accordance with the data in MPD2018-CGDP for 1938. Yet it should be said that such a "flat" scenario would be an unacceptably low estimate of what the Polish economy would have been able to generate in the sense of GDP. Diverse estimates of Poland's pre-war national income say that in the 1930s, the Polish economy went through a period of recession followed by recovery. Tomaszewski and Landau identify 1936–1939 as the period of recovery following the slump.²⁸ Despite the rapid growth in production at this time, it would be hard to say whether Poland had already entered another phase, viz. an economic boom. A country with a dire need of structural reform, which increases productivity, but with comparative advantages in the form of a cheaper labour force, as well as trade relations with its allies (Great Britain, France, etc.) with capital

²⁷ My counterfactual scenarios should not be interpreted as a forecast of the Polish GDP for the wartime and subsequent years, because I have only used the supply side of the economy to draft them. These scenarios are an illustration of the growth trend of the Polish economy derived using a methodology consistent with the wartime scenario.

²⁸ Tomaszewski, Jerzy; and Zbigniew Landau, *Zarys historii gospodarczej Polski 1918–1939*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza 1999.

An endogenous variable is a variable generated by a model and explicated by the relationships between functions within the model. In this case, the GDP will be calculated as the result of a usage of the production factors, not assumed in advance.



Photo 8.2.
Damaged PZL 37 Łoś bomber
aircraft captured by the Germans
(1939) (NDA collections)

available in the form of foreign investments, would probably have developed at a much faster rate than its 1929–1938 growth trend. So the calculations made using the "flat" scenario should only serve for comparison, as a picture of the absolute minimum of economic losses that Poland suffered under German occupation and after the War.

8.2.2. A scenario for growth depending on trends in production factors

To calculate Poland's economic growth (GDP) during the occupation period as provided by the pre-war data, I drafted a scenario in which growth depends on trends in production factors for continuing trends in the accumulation of production factors. I shall observe that this scenario does not involve any additional assumptions of changes in economic parameters, only those arising from the data for 1929–1938. This data does not contain a full business cycle, which is why we cannot use it to determine the long-term average for Poland's GDP stream. This GDP growth trend calculated using the fCD should simply be understood as economic development at a rate similar to the average rate of economic growth for 1929–1938. The significant qualitative change, compared to the scenario keeping the same annual rate of growth in GDP, is based on the reconstruction of the GDP creation pro-

cess by means of the accumulation of production factors and the calculation of GDP as an endogenous variable in the model. Since Poland was able to maintain a positive trend of accumulation of capital for a whole decade, there is no reason to believe that it would not have been able to continue this trend if the geopolitical conditions had been normal. If the Polish population was growing at an average rate of 1.36% YOY, it would be natural to regard this trend as representative for the years following 1938. Thus, a scenario with growth depending on trends in production factors seems logical and economically a much better fit for a counterfactual scenario for the Polish GDP in the occupation period than, for example, a scenario based on a constant GDP at the 1938 level. However, despite the increase in the stock of production factors, this is not a scenario which describes an economic boom, and certainly not an economy which is catching up with highly developed economies such as those of Great Britain or France. Effectively, the “growth depending on trends in production factors” scenario only reproduces the growth in the fCD arguments for the Great Depression and the subsequent three years of recovery. In other words, it is a very conservative assumption regarding Poland’s economic development. Below, I present the technical aspect of scenario construction using the fCD production function.

8.2.2.1. The Cobb-Douglas production function

In line with the standard application in the literature,²⁹ I shall assume that the Polish economy is characterised by the Cobb-Douglas production function with constant returns to scale. The function is defined in the following formula:

Equation 8.2.

$$Y_t = A_t L_t^\alpha K_t^\beta$$

where

- Y_t – volume of production in period t
- L_t – labour
- K_t – capital
- A_t – Total Factor Productivity, hereinafter TFP

For constant returns to scale, the output elasticities of capital and labour add up to one, i.e. $\alpha + \beta = 1$. Here, the Cobb-Douglas function is used as a calculator, and the GDP levels calculated using it are a deterministic trend resulting from the trends in production factors.

²⁹ Sometimes the CES (Constant Elasticity of Substitution) function is used in similar analyses.

8.2.2.2. Production function parameters

I took the following assumptions for my analysis: standard elasticities $\alpha = 0.67$ and $\beta = 0.33$, which measure remuneration for the production factors. In other words, the parameter $\alpha = 0.67$ means that 2/3 of the GDP is allocated for the remuneration of labour (wages x number of workers), and 1/3 for the rent on capital. These parameter values are taken as the standards on the basis of empirical research.

The parameters of the production function are usually estimated using econometric analysis based on statistical data. However, in order to carry out such an analysis, we need to have time series as reliable as possible for the production factors and for the GDP. As all we have is the capital trend for 1929–1938, we cannot make an unambiguous determination of the production function parameters. Growth accounting will not help us to define the parameters for the Cobb-Douglas function, either.³⁰ The best we can do is to accept the parameters given in the literature, and calculate all the versions of the GDP stream we shall be comparing using exactly the same assumptions.

8.2.2.3. Capital

In the previous chapter, I wrote that I modelled the path of capital accumulation for the period after 1938 in the same way as for 1929–1938, using the perpetual inventory method and assuming a constant annual level of investment and the capital depreciation rate calculated for 1929–1938. The path I obtained implies a rate of capital accumulation lower than the average rate of capital accumulation for 1929–1938, which was 2.09%. If we assumed a constant level of investment and fixed depreciation rates, the rate at which capital would accumulate would be slower and slower, because annual investment would account for a lower percentage of increasing capital stock. That is why the average rate of growth for capital would amount only to 1.46% in 1939–1945, and in later periods it would be correspondingly lower. The decreasing investment share in the GDP stream underlines the conservatism of the scenario of growth depending on trends in production factors. It is hardly imaginable that a country on an economic upturn would not have been able to increase its investment stream in the

³⁰ If turned into a logarithm and differentiated with respect to time, the Cobb-Douglas function can be used to present rate of growth and estimate the parameters for a known rate of change of the TFP, but not of the TFP index. However, even in this case the estimate of α still depends on the rate of change of the TFP.

long term. An assumed constant level of investment is reflected in the ratio of capital stock to GDP. According to available data, in 1929 the K/Y ratio was around 2.2. In 1929–1938, the ratio of capital stock to GDP went up slightly, and in 1938 it amounted to 2.24. As capital resources would accumulate according to equation 8.1 above, and the size of investment would not change over time, the ratio of capital stock to GDP would decrease, and by 1945 it would be 2.13.

8.2.2.4. Labour

In the growth scenarios, after 1939 the labour resources would simply have continued along the average trend for 1929–1938, just as for capital. Hence, I assumed that unemployment would have stayed at the rate given by Mitchell's data, 8.8%. The labour force participation rate would have been constant throughout the period of the simulation, while the increase in the labour force would have been due to population growth, which *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939* gives as an average of 1.36% YOY for 1931–1939. Hence, the workforce of 16.066 million in 1938 would have risen to 17.656 million by 1945, in accordance with this scenario.

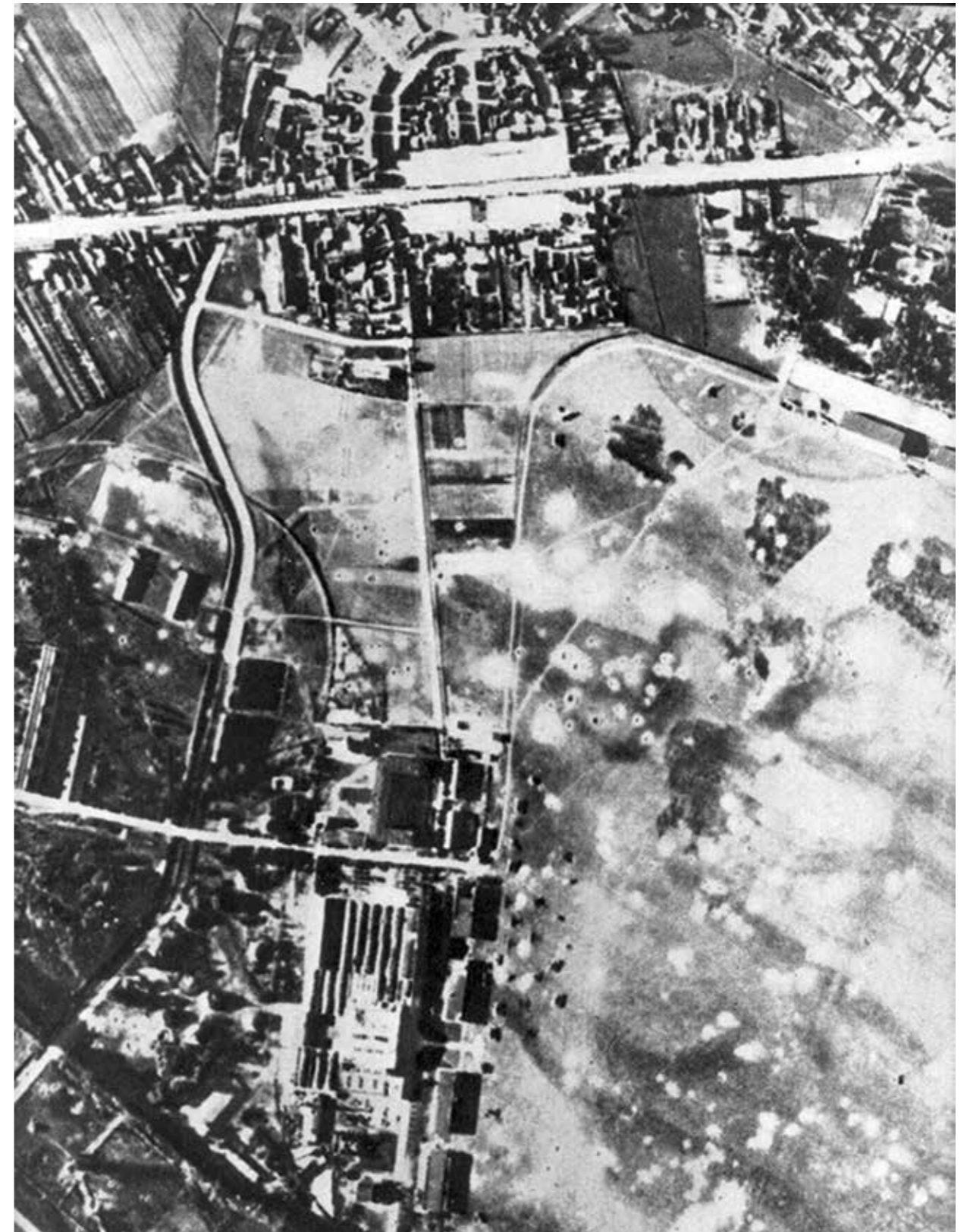
8.2.2.5. The TFP trend

In data for 1929–1938, the TFP index, designated as the Solow residual, rose at an average rate of growth of 0.78% YOY. I did not have a sufficient amount of accurate data on capital stock in the pre-war period, so instead I used the accumulation trend, which made the 1930s recession distinctly visible in the TFP index. I knew the trends for the labour and capital factors in this period, but to obtain a GDP level in line with the MPD2018-CGDP data, it was necessary to assume an annual growth in technological progress as stated above. On this basis, I assumed that after 1938 the rate of change in TFP would have stayed at this constant level.

Usually in current work on estimates of potential GDP, the Hodrick-Prescott filter (HP) is applied to smooth the Solow residual.³¹ However, if these methods are to give an unbiased image of the TFP trend, we must have data from at least one full business cycle, not to mention information on the volatility of produc-

Right: Photo 8.3.
Dęblin Airport after a German raid
(September 1939) (NDA collections)

³¹ Hodrick, Robert J.; and Edward C. Prescott, "Postwar U.S. Business Cycles. An Empirical Investigation," *Journal of Money, Credit, and Banking* 29/1 (1997), p. 1–16.



tive capital, to make the filtered out TFP trend the trend we are looking for, free of the information which should be included in the volatility of production factors. Ultimately, the filtered trend would give an index at a lower level than the TFP path calculated using data for 1929–1938, which of course would not correspond to the GDP for the starting point in 1938. Therefore, by analogy to the other fCD arguments in the scenario of growth depending on trends in production factors, I assumed the TFP trend would simply continue at an annual rate of growth of 0.78%.

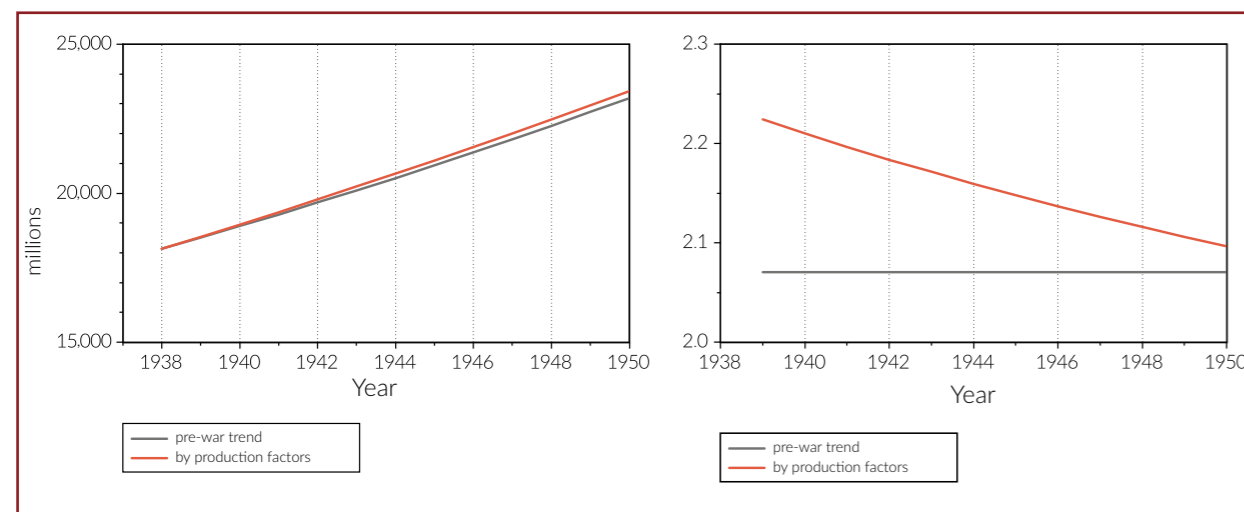
8.2.2.6. GDP

As a result, the level of GDP calculated for 1939–1945 by means of the fCD equation would increase at an average rate of 2.18%, and its subsequent rate of growth would slowly fall. MPD2018-CGDP gives the level of the GDP stream for 1938 as 18.137 billion ZP1938; and on this scenario it would have reached 21.099 billion ZP1938 by 1945.

I have deliberately constructed my counterfactual scenarios on the conservative assumptions which may be directly drawn from the pre-war data. My first scenario is an extension of the annual rate of growth in the pre-war GDP, while the second is the outcome of continuing the trends in production factors for the Great Depression and the first years of recovery. Both scenarios have very similar paths of economic growth for the years after 1938, as determined from the MPD2018-CGDP data for GDP. Figure 8.3 and Table 8.7 show the annual rate of growth in the GDP stream for these two counterfactual scenarios.

Figure 8.3. Counterfactual scenarios showing the GDP level (left) and annual rate of growth of GDP (right)

Source: Polska 1918–1988, Warszawa, 1988; BOW Report; Maddison Project Database 2018; Mitchell, Brian, *International Historical ...* Author's presentation.



8.3. The wartime scenario

I constructed my wartime scenario by setting down several basic principles to keep as close as possible to the data we have available on the damage and devastation perpetrated by Germany during the period of wartime occupation, and to make this scenario methodologically coherent with the counterfactual scenarios.

My counterfactual scenarios use the Cobb-Douglas function with constant returns to scale for the calculation of the GDP. I used exactly the same function and parameters in the wartime scenario to calculate the GDP which Poland could have created despite being under German occupation, given a loss of production factors consistent with the data.

Under German occupation, Poland's factories and production resources were devastated and ruined, Polish culture and scholarship was attacked and ravaged, and – most ominously – the country's educated classes were systematically being wiped out. So, perhaps the greatest loss that Poland suffered in its long-term economic potential was the loss of its human potential. In this expertise, the loss of human capital is not quantified directly, nonetheless it is inherent in the fall in TFP implied by the data. To compare my calculations with the BOW estimates, I drafted a model with a TFP index kept at the 1938 level for the whole period under German occupation and considered only the loss in production due to losses in labour and physical capital.

Since we could hardly speak of an unemployment rate in a country whose rightful owners were being exploited for slave labour or murdered on a mass scale, I adopted an unemployment rate of 8.8% for the entire period of Poland's occupation, solely to keep the wartime scenario consistent with respect to the starting point and the counterfactual scenarios. However, "unemployment rate" should only be understood in the sense of a neutral labour market with respect to the situation in 1938 with no change in the assumptions for the counterfactual scenarios.

I have taken the losses of productive capital under occupation from the 1947 BOW Report, which determined the loss of capital at 39.4% of its pre-war value. Losses in the labour factor are based on Konrad Wnęk's study (see Chapter 2, pp 101–171).

8.3.1. Capital

GGUS gives the data for the capital stock in the Polish economy in 1927 and 1938. Hence, we know the value of actual capital stock at the starting point. According to the BOW estimate, the loss of productive capital under German occupation was **36.307 trillion ZP1938**, which accounted for 39.6% of the pre-war value of capital. On this basis, the endpoint of the scenario was set in 1945. Thus, I took the value of capital stock in 1945 as **24.561 trillion ZP1938**.

8.3.2. Labour

This scenario takes the loss in the Polish population caused by the German occupation as given in Konrad Wnęk's expert opinion of (2022), which speaks of 5,219,053 Polish citizens dead as a result of German occupation in 1939–1945. As there is no way of knowing or calculating the number of fatalities during any particular year of occupation, I have assumed an even distribution of deaths for each of the war years accounting for the loss of Poland's population. Furthermore, since we do know the breakdown of the fatalities by age and sex, I calculated the losses in accordance with the ratio of men to women in the labour force. The pre-war statistics for the Polish labour force were for persons between the ages of 15 and 59. So 3,424,277 persons in the working age group, 1,800,974 men and 1,623,303 women, were killed by the Germans.

The 1931 census cited by GUS gives a figure of 18.882 million persons of working age, of which 47.9% were male, and 52.1% were female. I used the same proportions for 1938, by which time the population of working age had gone up to 20.495 million, 9.817 million men and 10.678 women. Professionally active persons accounted for 46.1% of the total population, and for every 100 working men there were 65.5 working women. This was another statistic reported by GUS. Therefore, men accounted for 60.4% of all the professionally active persons. Hence, in 1938 the labour force consisted of 9.704 million men and 6.362 million women. These figures show that professionally active men made up 98.8% of the total male population of working age. The corresponding percentage for women was 59.6%.

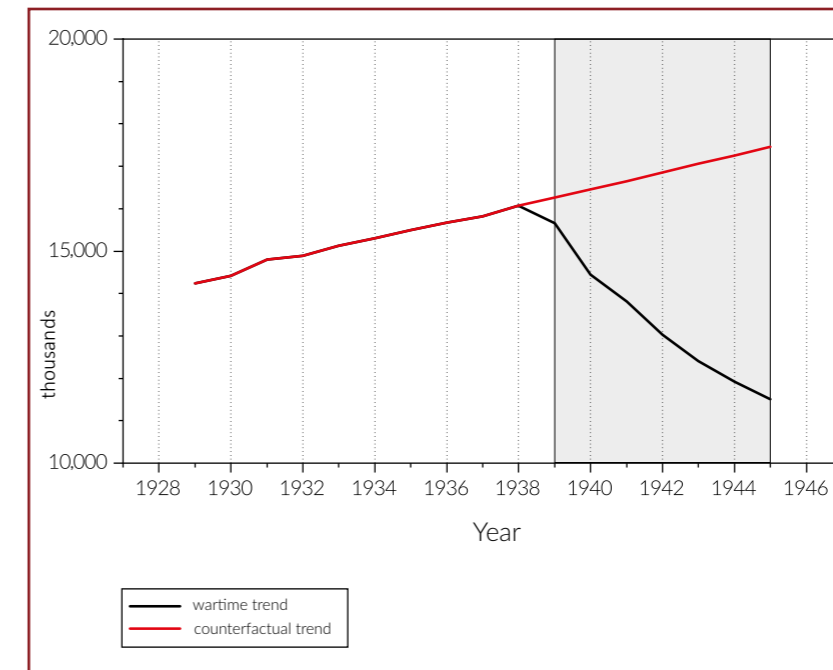


Figure 8.4. Wartime scenario of the labour force following Konrad Wnęk's expertise, compared with the counterfactual scenario

Source: Polska 1918–1988, Warszawa, 1988; BOW Report; Maddison Project Database 2018; Mitchell, Brian, *International Historical ...*; Konrad Wnęk, "Poland's population loss..." Author's presentation.

From the total number of persons in the working age group, I subtracted an equal number of fatalities for each of the war years, up to an aggregate figure of 1,800,974 men and 1,623,303 women. Next, I calculated the labour force resulting from the decline in the working-age population for each of the war years, keeping the percentage ratio of men to women fixed at the 1938 level. Thus, in 1945 there were 7.924 million men and 5.395 million women working. These figures have been corrected for the disabled and chronically ill. We do not have a breakdown by age of the disabled and chronically ill (most of them suffering from tuberculosis), so I did the correction by subtracting a proportional number for each of the war years from the overall figure for the Polish population, keeping the cumulative figure for persons incapable of work consistent with Konrad Wnęk's overall figure.³²

The last correction I did was to subtract the number of persons deported to Germany for slave labour from the number of professionally active persons. I took the numbers lost in particular years from Konrad Wnęk's study and compared with data proposed by Czesław Łuczak.³³ The final outcome was that Poland's labour force fell from 16.066 million in 1938 to 11.2 million in

³² Konrad Wnęk, "Poland's population loss caused by Germany during the Second World War". *Report on the Losses sustained by Poland as a Result of German Aggression and Occupation during the Second World War, 1939–1945*, ed. Konrad Wnęk, Warszawa: 2022, pp 101–171.

³³ Czesław Łuczak, *Polscy robotnicy przymusowi w Trzeciej Rzeszy podczas II wojny światowej*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1974.

1945. Figure 8.4 shows a labour force scenario in line with Konrad Wnęk's expert opinion against the counterfactual scenario.

8.3.3. TFP

In line with my methodology, the TFP trend in the wartime scenario is computed as the Solow residual. However, for a precise calculation, we need to determine the GDP path for the period under occupation. As the GDP path for 1939–1945 is the result of estimates, I have drafted an approximate TFP trend based on data for 1938 and 1945. In 1938, GDP was 18.137 billion ZP1938; while according to GUS in 1945 it was 38.4% of its pre-war value, which gives 6.965 billion ZP1938. The GUS statistic for 1945 was the value of the GDP produced within the new Polish borders using the resources of production factors available at that time. GUS did not give an estimate for the population of Poland in 1945, so I took its figure for 1946, and calculated the labour force in 1945 keeping the proportions for the labour force in the wartime scenario. GUS gave a figure of 23.9 million for the population of Poland in 1946; hence, I calculated the labour force to be 9.109 million. I ascribed the 1938 value for capital per head to each individual working in 1945, thereby obtaining the resources of capital and labour production factors in 1945, together with the GDP level, for which the Solow residual was calculated. Knowing the TFP index for 1938 and 1945, and assuming an even rate of decrease, I could construct a TFP series for the entire period from 1939 to 1945.

8.3.4. GDP in the wartime scenario

Figure 8.5 presents the GDP for the wartime scenario, calculated using the Cobb-Douglas function in line with my assumptions. By 1945, the GDP level had fallen to 8.162 billion ZP1938, with an average annual rate of change of -10.8% YOY. Hence, according to the wartime scenario, Poland's GDP in 1945 amounted to 45% of its 1938 value. The fall is accounted for by the loss caused solely by German occupation.

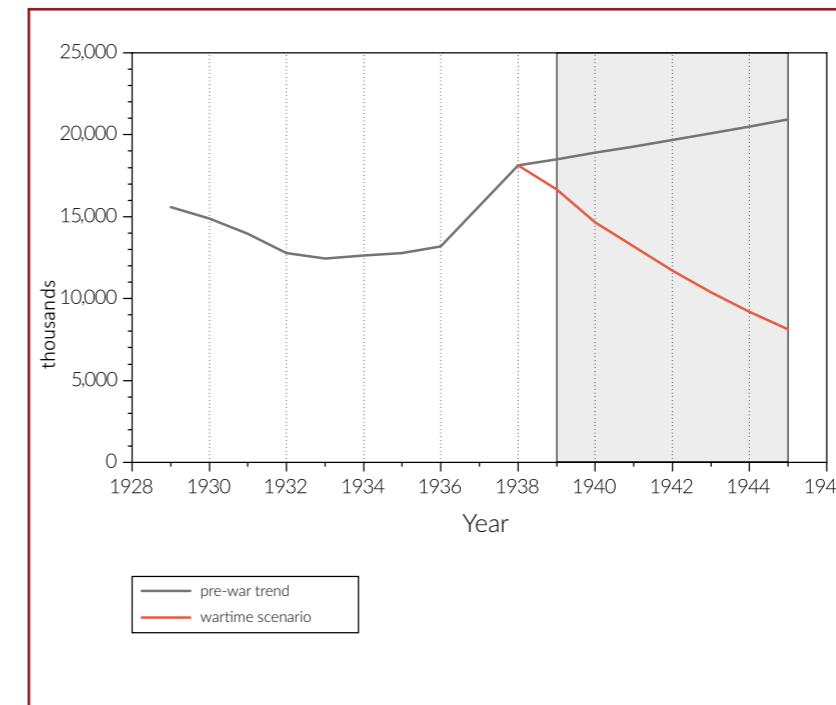


Figure 8.5.
The wartime GDP scenario

Source: *Polska 1918–1988*, Warszawa, 1988; *BOW Report*; *Maddison Project Database 2018*; Mitchell, Brian, *International Historical ...*; Konrad Wnęk, "Poland's population loss..." Author's presentation.

8.4. Value of lost GDP

An economy which is growing faster than its potential would suggest on the grounds of its resources of production factors and rate of technological progress is said to be in the boom stage of its business cycle. By analogy, an economy which is developing at a slower rate than its potential would suggest is in its recession phase. A measure of the depth of the recession or boom is given by the potential GDP, which is usually calculated by applying the fCD with appropriately filtered trends for its arguments. The difference between the real and potential GDP streams is called the output gap, and its measure given relative to the level of potential GDP determines the deviation from the potential trend of economic growth. The integral calculated for a given period over the demand gap determines the value of the GDP stream produced above expectations in a boom period, and below expectation during a recession.

In this analysis, I followed an analogous method to the standard procedure to estimate the GDP gap for the Polish economy caused directly by German occupation, in order to obtain a measure of the amount of destruction to the country's economic potential. The difference between the GDP stream of the counterfactual scenario and the wartime scenario provides a measure of the GDP gap. Below, I calculate the value of Poland's lost GDP for the entire period of the War, from its beginning in 1939 to its termination in 1945. This measure is analogous to the measure of the depth of the recession in the Polish economy caused by Germany during the Second World War.

8.4.1. GDP lost in 1939–1945

To compare the results of this report with the 1947 BOW estimates, I calculated the loss in GDP stream relative to the 1938 GDP level. BOW gives a 1947 discounted value of production lost under German occupation of 26.8 billion ZP1938. A comparison of my wartime scenario with the 1938 level of GDP gives an undiscounted value for the GDP stream lost in 1939–1945 of 42.812 billion ZP1938, which is significantly higher than the BOW figure. However, BOW did not take into account damage other than lost production, while the loss calculated using my method has considered all the economic costs, including the loss of human capital and the disintegration of State institutions, which had an impact on Poland's prospects to make efficient use of its surviving resources. I have also calculated the GDP loss with the TFP index fixed at its 1938 level, which corresponds to the BOW estimate. I arrived at a total undiscounted GDP loss in 1939–1945 due only to loss of capital and labour amounting to 25.224 billion ZP1938.

An assumption that the average growth rate of the Polish economy was maintained under German occupation would naturally make estimates of GDP losses much higher. With respect to the counterfactual scenario with the pre-war GDP growth trend at an annual rate of 2.07%, the total loss of GDP in 1939–1945 would be 53.775 billion ZP1938. On converting this sum to US dollars, and correcting for US inflation, we get the sum of US \$202,009 billion for the end of 2021. At the EUR/PLN exchange rate taken as 4,5994 at the end of 2021, we get 178,319 billion euros. Assuming that the German occupation did not contribute to losses in the productivity of the production factors, in other words that the TFP level remained fixed at its 1938 value throughout 1939–1945, the total GDP loss would amount to 36,187 bil-

lion ZP1938. On converting this sum to US dollars and correcting for US inflation, we get US \$ 135,939 billion for the end of 2021. At a EUR/PLN exchange rate of 4,5994, this amount is equivalent to 119,996 billion euros.

8.4.2. Sensitivity analysis

As it would be difficult to get an exact determination for the elasticity of Poland's GDP with respect to production factors for the pre-war period, I carried out a sensitivity analysis of the results I obtained in my calculations with the Cobb-Douglas equation, by using non-standard values of the α and β parameters, the standards for which are set at 0.67 and 0.33 respectively. Assuming constant returns to scale and α at 0.6, the sum of lost GDP with respect to the pre-war trend would amount to 54.064 billion ZP1938 – a 0.54% change to the final result. A value of α at 0.75 would give 53.650 billion ZP1938 – a 0.23% change. An analogous sensitivity analysis for a sum calculated at a constant TFP would give a 1.04% change in the final value for $\alpha = 0.6$, and a 0.45% change for $\alpha = 0.75$. Thus, the potential differences in loss estimates resulting from an imprecise choice of parameters for the Cobb-Douglas equation would only make a marginal impact on the final results.

8.5. Summary

To sum up: in this analysis I used pre-war data on the Polish economy, which allowed me to reconstruct the process in which Poland's GDP developed prior to the Second World War. On this basis, I applied the standard Cobb-Douglas function, using only available data, to create two versions of a counterfactual scenario for GDP growth. Applying the data available for losses in production factors caused by German occupation in 1939–1945, I created a wartime scenario to show the Polish wartime GDP.

Table 8.5.
Poland's GDP losses, based on available Polish data, calculated for full wartime scenarios

Years	Pre-war GDP trend scenario (ZP1938 billion)	Production factor scenario (ZP1939 billion)
1939–1945	53,775	54,473

Source: *Polska 1918–1988*, Warszawa, 1988; *BOW Report*; *Maddison Project Database 2018*; Mitchell, Brian, *International Historical ...*; Konrad Wnęk, "Poland's population loss..." Author's calculations.

The difference between the counterfactual scenario and the wartime scenario, which gives the GDP gap, is a measure of the wealth Poland was prevented from producing owing to the losses caused by its invasion and occupation by Germany. The value of Poland's irretrievably lost GDP in 1939–1945, calculated for the counterfactual scenario, implies a loss of 53,775 billion ZP1938, which is the lesser of my two results. When converted into US dollars and corrected for US \$ inflation, this sum gives US \$ 202,009 billion for the end of 2021. At a EUR/PLN exchange rate of 4,5994 in 2021, this sum comes to 178,319 billion euros (Table 8.5). However, if calculated in this way, the loss in the GDP stream which the people of Poland were prevented from producing, is not the same as the total value of Poland's wealth lost owing to its occupation by Germany. In particular, my anal-

ysis assumes that the losses were evenly distributed over time, and that the part of the Polish economy which the Germans did not destroy physically continued to work in the same way as it did prior to the War, and that the wealth it created belonged to Polish citizens. But of course this is not what happened: in reality Germany took over a large part of Poland's productive capital. The German authorities occupying Poland deliberately induced inflation by bringing in measures such as a wartime currency, thereby curtailing the purchasing power available to Polish citizens. In consequence, the people of Poland did not have access to the full stream of wealth which I have calculated in the wartime scenario.

8.6. Annex

Table 8.6.
Estimates of Poland's National Income in the period prior to the Second World War

Year	GUS												
	Gross Income		Distributed Gross National Income		Income generated (incl. services)		Net Production		Social Income		GDP-CGDP		Maddison GDP-CGDP corrected for true size of Poland's pop. in 1929-1938
	billion ZP 1938												
	% YOY												
1929	13.8	-	12.0	9.8	14.5	14.5	14.1	15.6	-	-	-	-	-
1930	-	-	11.2	9.0	-	14.1	13.4	14.9	-6.5	-8.0	-3.1	-4.6	-4.6
1931	-	-	10.4	7.3	-	13.4	12.4	14.0	-7.0	-19.1	-4.8	-7.3	-6.1
1932	-	-	9.3	6.6	-	12.6	11.5	12.8	-10.7	-9.2	-6.3	-7.8	-8.5
1933	-	-	9.9	7.0	12.9	12.4	11.2	12.4	6.0	5.9	-0.9	-2.8	-2.7
1934	-	-	10.5	7.3	-	12.3	11.3	12.6	6.2	3.2	-1.3	1.4	1.5
1935	13.8	14.5	11.0	8.9	-	12.7	11.5	12.8	4.8	22.3	3.6	1.4	1.4
1936	-	-	11.7	-	-	13.1	11.8	13.2	6.6	-	3.1	2.9	3.0
1937	15.3	15.4	12.5	-	-	-	14.1	15.7	6.7	-	-	19.2	19.0
1938	-	-	13.2	-	-	-	16.2	18.1	5.8	-	-	14.9	15.7

Source: Polska 1918-1988, Warszawa, 1988; Maddison Project Database 2018.

8. Estimated losses in Poland's GDP due the German occupation...

Year	Pre-war GDP trend (billion ZP1938)	GDP based on production factor trends (billion ZP1938)	Pre-war GDP trend, %YOY	GDP based on production factor trends, %YOY
1938	18.137	18.137	-	-
1939	18.512	18.540	2.07	2.22
1940	18.896	18.950	2.07	2.21
1941	19.287	19.366	2.07	2.20
1942	19.686	19.789	2.07	2.18
1943	20.094	20.219	2.07	2.17
1944	20.510	20.655	2.07	2.16
1945	20.935	21.099	2.07	2.15

Table 8.7.
Counterfactual scenarios

Source: Polska 1918-1988, Warszawa, 1988; Maddison Project Database 2018; Mitchell, Brian, International Historical ... Author's calculations.

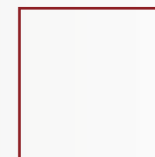
Year	GDP (billion ZP1938)	Labour force (million)	Unemployment Rate	Capital (billion ZP1938)	TFP
1927	-	-	0.074	32.390	-
1928	-	-	0.050	33.358	-
1929	15.591	14.233	0.049	34.315	0.847
1930	14.868	14.411	0.127	35.262	0.841
1931	13.960	14.802	0.140	35.966	0.778
1932	12.771	14.913	0.156	36.662	0.713
1933	12.433	15.121	0.167	37.349	0.690
1934	12.615	15.306	0.163	38.029	0.688
1935	12.792	15.490	0.119	38.702	0.665
1936	13.172	15.675	0.118	39.366	0.675
1937	15.671	15.813	0.128	40.023	0.800
1938	18.137	16.066	0.088	40.673	0.884
1939	16.678	15.653	0.088	38.371	0.843
1940	14.733	14.440	0.088	36.069	0.802
1941	13.284	13.815	0.088	33.768	0.762
1942	11.815	13.035	0.088	31.466	0.721
1943	10.522	12.415	0.088	29.165	0.680
1944	9.365	11.915	0.088	26.863	0.639
1945	8.313	11.500	0.088	24.561	0.599

Table 8.8.
Wartime scenario

Source: Polska 1918-1988, Warszawa, 1988; Maddison Project Database 2018; Mitchell, Brian, International Historical ...; Konrad Wnęk. "Poland's population loss caused by Germany during the Second World War." Author's calculations.



Tomasz Panfil



The Village of Sochy in the Zamość area

The ordeal of the inhabitants of the Voivodeship of Lublin began in late 1942. Many of the residents of villages in the counties of Zamość and Tomaszów were killed, and those who were able to work were forced to do slave labour for German settlers or sent to Germany for the same purpose. Women and old people were taken to transit camps in Zamość, Biłgoraj, and Zwierzyniec, from where they were sent to Majdanek and Auschwitz concentration camps. About 30 thousand Polish children, selected for their "Aryan racial features," were abducted from their parents and deported to be brought up as Germans. 10 thousand of them died, some were taken to German orphanages, while some were adopted, and some were saved by Polish railwaymen from the deportation trains and "redeemed" by Poles or Kashubians. Andrzej Zamoyski and his wife Róża saved some by bargaining with Odilo Globocnik, Commander of the SS and Police (*SS- und Polizeiführer*) for *Distrikt Lublin*. They obtained his consent to set up a temporary home for children from filtration camps.

The brutality of the Germans and the Ukrainian policemen who assisted them evoked a reaction from the Polish underground armed forces. The Battle of Wojda, Operation Wieniec II (which paralysed German communications), the Battles of Zaboreczno and Osuchy, and dozens of other operations, prompted the Germans to reduce these deportations. January 1943 saw the start of the "Ukrainian operation" – Ukrainians were settled in places vacated by Poles who had been deported, creating a strip separating the villages inhabited by Germans from the Polish area, and effectively fuelling Polish-Ukrainian antagonism. Finally, in June 1943, the Germans started the third phase, code-named Wehrwolf – brutal attacks on villages rather than just displacements, and their aim was to weaken the armed underground resistance units.

The start of the Wehrwolf stage was the destruction of the village of Sochy on 1 June 1943. The first Polish information about the Sochy massacre was a telegram to Supreme Command of the Home Army dated 26 June (25 days after the incident). It read "Village of Sochy bombed by German planes, 340 out of 360 inhabitants killed." The only information on the atrocity given by

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Left: Photo 8.4.
The villagers of Sochy murdered by the Germans (1943) (Institute of National Remembrance collections)

the underground bulletin *Informacja bieżąca* of 30 June was that the Germans had carried out “the mass murder of the local population,” but the name of the village was misspelled “Socha”. The next news was in an article in another underground news-sheet, *Prawda*, in July 1943, which said that in early June the Germans had “burned the village of Sochy near Zwierzyniec and murdered almost all the inhabitants (about 300 persons). Aircraft took part in this operation.”

The Home Army’s *Biuletyn Informacyjny* (No. 33 of 19 August 1943) wrote, “German terror reached the quiet village of Sochy near Zwierzyniec with satanic ingenuity and cruelty. 4 platoons of military police cordoned the village off. Eight Me 110 planes gaddled about over the cottages, strafing them with machine guns, dropping bombs, and turning the buildings into a sea of flames. 280 innocent, unarmed peasants, among them women and children, were slaughtered in this operation that the Germans described as a ‘pacification.’ 280 people. All the people down to the last soul.”

Not only the underground press, whose task it was to encourage Poles to fight the invaders, but also the official reports of the Polish Underground State repeated poorly verified data: in a report on “intensified German terror against the inhabitants of the Lublin region” dated August 1943, we read that “the village of Sochy near Zwierzyniec was burned down. Aircraft took part in the operation and almost all of its approx. 300 inhabitants were murdered.”

The next mentions of the Sochy massacre date from 1945–1947. In Volume I of *Terror niemiecki w Zamojszczyźnie 1939–44* (Zamość, 1945), there is an article by Jan Mirski, with the following passage: “On 2 June 1943 the Germans bombed the Polish village of Sochy, employing a dozen or so planes; the rest of the operation, i.e. burning the village down and the murder of hundreds of people, was carried out by the German police.” In the same volume there is a comprehensive account by Kazimiera Świtajowa. She gives a different order for the events (first the German infantry operation, then the air raid, carried out by around 10 planes hunting down people in hiding). This account gives the highest figure for victims: “Over 400 of the approx. 600 inhabitants were killed or wounded. A dozen or so people from other villages, who happened to be in Sochy at the time were also killed.”

In Volume IV of this publication, on Polish subversive and retaliatory operations, there is an account by “Adam,” which begins with a description of the Sochy massacre. It is a factual description, written in the language of a military report: “At dawn on 1 June 1943, the Germans surrounded the village of Sochy and opened machine-gun fire on its defenceless people. Then they ad-

Articles 25, 43, 46, and 55 of the 1907 Hague Convention, to which Germany was a signatory, prohibited the following:

“Article 25. The attack or bombardment, by whatever means, of towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings which are undefended is prohibited.”

“Article 43. The authority of the legitimate power having in fact passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all the measures in his power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country.”

“Article 46. Family honour and rights, the lives of persons, and private property, as well as religious convictions and practice, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated.”

“Article 55. The occupying State shall be regarded only as administrator and usufructuary of public buildings, real estate, forests, and agricultural estates belonging to the hostile State, and situated in the occupied country. It must safeguard the capital of these properties, and administer them in accordance with the rules of usufruct.”

vanced closer, set fire to the buildings, and savagely finished off the wounded. The inhabitants were caught in their sleep and there was no question of any resistance. The destruction was completed by nine aircraft, which flew just over the roofs and treetops, bombed the already burning village, and then strafed it. The whole operation lasted no more than 75 minutes, and the village ceased to exist. About 200 men, women, children lost their lives. The rest were left wounded, seriously burned, or went insane.”



Photo 8.5. The bodies of murdered inhabitants of Sochy (1943) (Institute of National Remembrance collections)

A classic historian (as we might call him) feels an irresistible urge to turn to recognised sources: documents, reports, or the recollections of eye-witnesses. As we learn from the Sochy massacre, none of these traditional sources may give the true number of victims. Their number was only determined reliably by the interaction of archeology with anthropology in an exhumation of the mass graves of the victims, which established that 183 people were killed in Sochy on 1 June 1943. However, even this figure, obtained on the basis of hard evidence, has to be treated with some caution: children’s bones are delicate and decompose quickly, infants have no teeth, which are the most enduring bones. Moreover, bodies subjected to high temperatures decompose faster. The passages I have cited from witnesses’ accounts, army reports, and press articles clearly show how different numerical estimates can be. The discrepancies are significant; the figures range from less than two hundred to over four hundred killed. However, all the accounts concur that German combat aircraft took part. This leads to an incontestable conclusion – that the Sochy massacre was a drastic violation of the provisions of the Fourth Hague Convention, and in particular of its Articles 25, 43, 46, and 55.

9

Paweł Pońsko
Mirosław Kłusek

**The current value
of Poland's losses
caused by Germany
during the Second
World War**

The current value of Poland's losses caused by Germany during the Second World War¹

9.1. Introduction

The determination of the relative change in the value of a sum of money over the time that elapses between a starting point and a final point (i.e. a base year and a reference year) is a complicated matter. There is no single, uniquely “right” way to measure historical worth, and economists use a variety of indexes depending on the context of the problem, often giving several alternative options to obtain an indexation.²

The context of the issue may suggest a preferred measure other than real price (real pay or real cost) determined on the basis of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is the standard index used to estimate real historical worth, yet often interested parties tend to select a preferred index without due consideration of the full consequences of its application for the estimate. The losses Poland sustained during the Second World War due to German barbarity and the vast and unprecedented scale of destruction caused by Germany in literally every aspect of the country's life offer a good example illustrating this observation. In the Polish case, it would not be enough to stop at an estimate of the current value of the losses based on CPI. Today the economic costs of the losses Poland sustained in 1939-1945 are far bigger, so too is the amount of reparations Poland is entitled to claim from Germany.



Left: Photo 9.1. Warsaw. Aerial photograph (ortho-photo map detail), June 1945. The empty white space on the left is the area of the Warsaw Ghetto, which the Germans demolished in 1943-1944. The rest of the built-up area was devastated during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 (Collections of the State Archive in Warsaw)

¹ The authors would like to thank Professors Paweł Baranowski and Jan Jacek Sztaudynger for their invaluable comments.

² Williamson, Samuel H., and Louis P. Cain, “Measures of Worth”, MeasuringWorth, 2022. www.measuringworth.com/defining_measures_of_worth.php (Accessed 4 August 2022). Full information on the indexation of historical worth is available on the Economic History Association website, <https://eh.net/howmuchisthat/> (Accessed 4 August 2022).

In this chapter we present several methods to index the worth of war losses using historical data and generally accessible indexes to calculate changes in worth over time. We will describe several indexes and try to give a brief and simple explanation of the effects of using each of them.

We have referred to available data to compare our indexation for Poland with analogous indexations calculated for the United States and the United Kingdom.³ We have applied a general rule for currency exchange and the price of gold based on the respective values on 31 December 2021, but we used exact exchange rate values where available, e.g. for the U.S. dollar on 1 September 1939, except in situations where the method applied for the conversion called for the use of the average annual value, for instance in the calculation of Poland's GDP. In this case, we used 1938 as the base year because it was the last full year before the outbreak of the War.

9.1.1. The monetary system of the Second Polish Republic

When the First World War broke out, there were different monetary systems on the Polish territories, which were dismembered and under the rule of three different empires. The currency in the Prussian Partition of Poland was the mark (1 mark = 100 pfennigs); the Russian Partition of Poland used the rouble (1 rouble = 100 kopecks); and the currency in the Austrian Partition of Poland was the Austrian krone (= 100 hellers). The monetary systems used by the three Partitioning Powers were based on gold parity, which meant that the banknotes they issued were fully exchangeable for gold in a fixed amount of coins minted from a unit weight of gold, in other words 1 kg of 900 (one nine fine) gold went into 2,790 marks, 3,280 krone, and 1,291,601 roubles. At this time, the currencies in the widest circulation in Europe were the French franc and the other currencies unified with the franc in the Latin Monetary Union. One franc contained 0.290322 g of pure gold; hence 3,444.45 francs were minted from 1 kg of 900 gold.⁴

When the First World War broke out, the gold parity system collapsed. The belligerent countries suspended the exchange of their banknotes for gold and each of them imposed an official exchange rate for their currency.

³ See the information on the Economic History Association's website on the indexation of historical worth, <https://eh.net/howmuchisthat/> [Accessed 4 August 2022].

⁴ Żabiński, Zbigniew, *Systemy pieniężne na ziemiach polskich*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1981, p. 218.

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After the restoration of Polish independence in November 1918, the country's financial authorities set up a unified monetary system, as there were four different monetary and legal systems on the territories of the reunited Polish State. The first legislative measure to regulate the Polish monetary system was the Act of 7 December 1918 founding the National Credit Bank of Poland.⁵ The Polish mark (*marka polska*, the currency previously in circulation on the German-occupied territory of the Russian Partition of Poland) became the legal tender of the restored Republic of Poland. A single currency was finally established across the whole country in 1921–1922, when the Polish authorities assumed power in the country's eastern territories following the Polish victory in the Polish–Bolshevik war.⁶

Subsequent political and economic developments in the Second Polish Republic had a detrimental effect on the stability of the Polish mark, and more and more Polish businessmen started to use the U.S. dollar in their financial settlements and forward transactions. The Polish mark was depreciating at such a fast rate that in 1924 it was replaced by a new currency, the Polish złoty,⁷ which was in parity with the French franc, in other words it contained 0.290322 g of pure gold.⁸ The fact that the złoty was a gold parity currency determined its exchange rate with respect to other currencies, for example 1 U.S. dollar was worth 5.18262 zł.⁹

In 1927 the złoty was devalued and stabilised at a lower level, with the statutory value of its gold parity defined as 0.16879 g. Hence its exchange rates were now 8.9141 zł to the U.S. dollar, 1.71998 to the gold franc, and 43.38025 zł to the pound sterling. The price of 1 kg of gold was 5,924.44 zł. In outcome of its statutory devaluation, the new złoty was worth 1.72 times the 1924 złoty in gold.¹⁰

⁵ *Ustawa Polskiej Krajowej Kasy Pożyczkowej z dn. 7 grudnia 1918 r.; Dziennik Ustaw* (hereinafter *Dz.U.*) 19, Item 56. Online at *Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych* (hereinafter ISAP): <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19180190056> [Accessed 4 August 2022].

⁶ Żabiński, p. 218–221.

⁷ Żabiński, p. 222–223.

⁸ *Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 20 stycznia 1924 r. w przedmiocie systemu monetarnego*, *Dz.U.* RP 1924, No. 7, Item 65, ISAP: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19240070065> [Accessed 4 August 2022]; Żabiński, p. 223.

⁹ Leszczyńska, Cecylia, *Polska polityka pieniężna i walutowa w latach 1924–1936 w systemie Gold Exchange Standard*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2013, p. 119.

¹⁰ *Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 13 października 1927 r. o stabilizacji złotego*, *Dz.U.* RP 1927, No. 88, Item 790, ISAP: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19270880790> [Accessed 4 August 2022]; *Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 5 listopada 1927 r. w sprawie zmiany ustroju pieniężnego*, *Dz.U.* RP 1927, No. 97, Item 855, ISAP: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19270970855> [Accessed 4 August 2022]; Leszczyńska, p. 245; Żabiński, p. 230.

The parity of the złoty fixed in 1927 at 0.16879 g continued to hold until the outbreak of the Second World War, as confirmed by the data for its last official exchange rates before 1 September 1939 for the major currencies and for gold, and published in the announcement issued by the Polish Minister for the Treasury on 12 December 1949. The values it gave were as follows: 1 U.S. dollar = 5.323 zł; 1 pound sterling = 23.10 zł; 1 German mark (1 reichsmark) = 2.123 zł; 1 Swiss franc = 1.206 zł; and 1 g of pure gold = 5.9244 zł.¹¹ Hence the price of one kilo of gold just before the War was still 5,924.40 zł.

9.2. The Price Index

9.2.1. Bretton Woods: a historical overview

In July 1944 the United Nations held a conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in the United States, to establish an international monetary system. The new system was to guarantee stability for currency exchange, prevent competitive devaluation, and promote economic growth. The conference was attended by representatives of 44 countries including Poland. The London-based Polish government-in-exile was represented by its minister for the treasury, Ludwik Grosfeld. The chief creators of the new system were John Maynard Keynes, adviser to the British Treasury, and Harry Dexter White, chief economist for international affairs at the United States Department of the Treasury.

A decision was taken at Bretton Woods to establish two new institutions, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to monitor exchange rates and lend credit from its currency reserves to countries with a balance of payments deficit, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (now a member of the World Bank Group) to offer countries financial support, especially to help them recover after the Second World War and to promote the economic growth of developing countries.

¹¹ *Obwieszczenie Ministra Skarbu z dnia 12 grudnia 1949 r. w sprawie wysokości oficjalnych kursów walut obcych i kruszcu, notowanych ostatnio przed 1 września 1939 r.*, *Monitor Polski* 1949, No. 103, Item 1207, ISAP: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WMP19491031207> [Accessed 4 August 2022].

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The IMF was officially founded in December 1945, when its first 29 member states ratified its Statutes and agreed to have a stable exchange rate for their currencies, regulated with respect to the U.S. dollar (within a 1% range). The value of the dollar with respect to gold was fixed at 35 dollars per ounce.

The Bretton Woods system became fully operational in 1958, when the currencies of the countries which joined it became mutually exchangeable. They settled international transactions in U.S. dollars, and a gold standard was used with the value of the dollar fixed at \$ 35 per ounce of gold. The United States was made accountable for maintaining a fixed price for gold by adjusting the supply of dollars to ensure market confidence in the exchangeability of any of the currencies into gold. The Bretton Woods system was in force until the time when the funds held in dollars by foreign institutions reached a value exceeding the USA gold reserves. When this happened, the United States could no longer meet its obligation to exchange dollars for gold at the fixed official rate. In 1971 the United States went off the gold standard, i.e. it would no longer convert dollars to gold at a fixed value.

Despite the collapse of the system in 1971, the American dollar kept its central position on the currency market, and today international economic institutions still continue to publish figures for the exchange rates of their national currencies and the parity of their purchasing power with respect to the U.S. dollar. Hence the U.S. dollar is a natural choice for an index for the historical purchasing power of the Polish złoty in a situation when the rate of inflation of the złoty is not a viable option.

9.2.2. Assumptions behind the Price Index

The context of the question we are trying to answer and convert a historical value into its present-day equivalent predetermines the choice of an index for the valuation. If we want an answer to the question how much the consumer value of a given set of goods purchased for a specific sum of money in the past would be worth today, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) would be the right index to choose because we are assuming that we are talking about

the same consumer goods.¹² The CPI measures the change in the real purchasing power of the currency for which it is calculated. Knowing that the basket of consumer goods to which it refers remains unchanged over the given period of time, we can calculate the real change in the value of the currency over that space of time; and if we know that the basket of consumer goods is identical for all currencies, we can determine the relative change in the purchasing power of different currencies with respect to each other in the given years. Hence the choice of the CPI to measure historical worth is a good option if we want to estimate

- the price of consumer goods relative to a historical reference year;
- the purchasing price of income measured in terms of the cost of the same basket of consumer goods relative to a historical date;
- the costs a family needs today for its household maintenance on the assumption that the basket of consumer goods required today is identical with what the family needed in the base year for the calculation.

Of course, there is a snag attached to the assumption that the quantity of consumer goods in the basket has not changed since 1939. If we assume that the basket has not changed, we will be able to index the real change in the purchasing power of the currency, but we will not get an answer to the question how much a person would have to spend on consumer goods now to stay at the same consumer level of affluence they would have had in the past on the same consumer basket.

Economic growth and society's rising prosperity means that today the consumer would have a growing need of consumer goods to stay at the same standard of living, average for the given society. He would have to purchase a bigger basket of consumer goods different in quality from what he would have had in 1939. In other words, the indexation of a given monetary sum with a price index would not give a full measure of economic costs, or the alternative cost of the potential for consumption a consumer would lose if he continued to spend his money only on the goods he got for the price of the basket in 1939.

Not all goods are consumer goods, and this applies especially to many of those involved in the indexation of war losses. The CPI would not be a good choice of an index for the calculation of the change in the price of non-consumer goods or assets over

¹² In other words, we are assuming that the change in the quality of say, a household appliance in 1939 and the same appliance in 2021 is exactly the same as the change in the basket of consumer goods for which we are calculating the CPI inflation between 1939 and 2021.

The GDP deflator is an index that measures the price of a basket made up not only of consumer goods but also of all the goods produced by a given economy. The investment deflator refers to a basket consisting of the prices of investment assets and gives a measure of the historical cost of forgone (withheld or lost) investment potential. It measures the *alternative cost*.

time. To obtain an estimate of today's worth of, say, a factory built before the Second World War, it would be better to use the GDP or investment deflator.

The alternative cost of investment, for example, the alternative cost of a factory that was built before the Second World War and produced 10% of a country's industrial output, means the cost of the withheld potential for an analogous investment, which in this case would be the construction of an analogous factory in 2021. The cost of constructing a factory to produce 10% of a country's total industrial output now would be much more than the cost of building such a factory in 1939, as indexed by the CPI.

If we decide to use a price index for war losses, we should select different indexes for specific types of loss. Losses in buildings, factories etc., should be calculated using the GDP deflator, whereas losses in consumer goods such as household furnishings and the cost of living should be calculated using the CPI.

If we try to use the Polish złoty for our price index, we come up against a problem: a discontinuity in the Polish currency before and after the Second World War. The pre-war Polish zloty has never been properly indexed to give an equivalent in Poland's post-war currency. The decree the Polish government issued on 27 July 1949 on new financial liabilities and the valuation of extant debts (i.e. pre-war liabilities which had not been cancelled)¹³ did not consider the real purchasing power of the pre-war złoty with respect to its post-war successor currency. To make up for this lacuna in Poland's economic history, we would have to create a representative basket of consumer goods purchased in Poland before the War and in 1949, the first post-war year for which we have Polish CPI data. We could then use such a basket to account for the change in prices from 1939 to 1949. We would still not know the price series (i.e. inflation rate) year by year, but we could calculate the average rate of inflation over the decade, and then we would be able to index the Polish currency in 1939 with respect to the post-war Polish currency.¹⁴ Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge, a reliable index to convert the real value of the pre-war złoty to its post-war successor currency has never been published. So instead we had to choose a currency with a continuous CPI series since the time before the Second World War and not open to methodological reservations. The currency which best meets these conditions is the U.S. dollar.

¹³ Dz.U. 1949, No. 45, Item 332, ISAP: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19490450332> [Accessed 4 August 2022].

¹⁴ That is, assuming that after 1949 GUS, the Polish government's statistics office, continued to use the same methodology to measure inflation.

9.2.3. The U.S. Dollar Index

To conduct this method for the indexation of Poland's war losses as precisely as possible, we took the last official exchange rate for the Polish złoty to the U.S. dollar on 1 September 1939, when the dollar was worth 5.325 zł. On 31 December 2021 the average exchange rate for the Polish currency to the dollar was 4.0600 PLN to 1 U.S. \$.¹⁵ Due to inflation, on 31 December 2021 consumer prices in the USA were 20.2 times higher than on 1 September 1939.¹⁶ Poland's total war losses in its 1938/1939 currency amounted to 406,947.89 million zł. This sum, indexed for the end of December 2021 and expressed in U.S. dollars, amounts to \$1,532,169.70 million; and converted into PLN, Poland's present-day currency, at the average exchange rate published by NBP (the National Bank of Poland) for 31 December 2021, amounts to 6,220,609 million PLN (six trillion, two hundred and twenty billion, six hundred and nine million PLN). The index implied by this method from September 1939 to December 2021 amounts to 15.4013, and 15.2518 from December 1938 to December 2021.

Table 9.1.
The current value of Poland's war losses using the CPI for the U.S. dollar

Valuation using the CPI for the U.S. dollar			
Human losses		Other losses	
U.S.\$ indexation, Dec. 1938 - Dec. 2021	19.91	U.S.\$ indexation, Sept. 1939 - Dec. 2021	20.20
U.S.\$/zł exchange rate, 1938	5.3000	U.S.\$/zł exchange rate, Sept.1939	5.3250
Total loss, 1938/1939 (zł million)	313,862.07	Total loss, 1938/1939 (zł million)	93,085.82
Total loss, Dec. 1938 (U.S.\$ million)	59,219.26	Total loss, Dec. 1938 (U.S.\$ million)	17,480.91
Total loss, Dec. 2021 (U.S.\$ million)	1,179,055.42	Total loss, Dec. 2021(U.S.\$ million)	353,114.29
PLN/ U.S.\$ exchange rate, 31 Dec. 2021	4.0600	PLN/ U.S.\$ exchange rate, 31 Dec. 2021	4.0600
Total loss at the end of 2021 (PLN million)	4,786,965.00	Total loss at the end of 2021 (PLN million)	1,433,644.00
Indexation on conversion to PLN	15.2518	Indexation on conversion to PLN	15.4013
Total losses on 31 December 2021: 6,220,609.00 million PLN			

Source: Our own calculations, CPI inflation for the U.S. dollar, quoted after the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the exchange rate for the Polish currency after GUS (Statistics Poland) and NBP (the National Bank of Poland).

¹⁵ All the current exchange rates for foreign currencies into PLN are quoted in the average rates given by Table A published by NBP.

¹⁶ The CPI in U.S. dollars quoted after the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

9.2.4. Advantages of the U.S. Dollar Index

After the introduction of the Bretton Woods system, the U.S. dollar, backed by sufficient reserves of gold bullion to cover potential demand, became the currency used for all practical purposes to measure the purchasing power parity of other national currencies. When the system was in operation, the +/-1% margin of fluctuation which had been adopted at Bretton Woods was used to correct exchange rates with respect to the dollar. The International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the two institutions founded at Bretton Woods, treated (and, despite the system's collapse in 1971, still treat) the U.S. dollar as the currency which is used to measure the relative purchasing power of other national currencies.

In line with the fundamentals of economic theory, we assume that the law of one price holds in the analyzed period.¹⁷ This means that the price of goods exchanged on the free international market is the same in all the countries participating in trade (after a correction for the currency exchange rate). Hence, in theory, using the U.S. dollar inflation rate as a method to measure historical worth and applying the exchange rate for the złoty to the U.S. dollar is a good way to calculate the change in the real purchasing power of the Polish currency over the time period we are interested in.

9.2.5. Drawbacks of the U.S. dollar index as a method to calculate war losses

This method gives a measure of the real change in a currency's purchasing power, but not of the value of historical goods with respect to the current situation. This means that

it takes into consideration the change in the quality of the consumer goods, in compliance with the updating of the basket of consumer goods used to calculate CPI inflation in the USA;

it does not take the change in consumer needs into account, in other words it does not consider the change in the size of the basket of consumer goods an individual now needs to maintain the same standard of living;

and it does not give a measure of alternative costs for the income spent on the basket of consumer goods.

¹⁷ The law of one price says that (if other factors such as the cost of transportation, taxes and customs duties are ignored), then the price of every item traded on international markets will be the same in every country which participates in international trade, if all the prices are given in a common currency.

Suppose that in the base year we spent 50% of our total income on a fixed, historical basket of goods, but today that sum accounted for just 10% of all that we could afford. This would mean that in the base year the alternative cost would have amounted to 50%, but only 10% of our total income today. In other words, this method of indexation will not give a measure of the full economic cost of Poland's war losses.

Ever since the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, international economic organisations have continued to describe economic growth and the purchasing power of the various national currencies with reference to the U.S. dollar. The data published by the World Bank,¹⁸ to which the International Bank of Restoration and Development belongs, show that the Polish złoty has been notoriously undervalued relative to the U.S. dollar.¹⁹ In other words, the real difference between the purchasing power of the U.S. dollar and the Polish currency is not equivalent to what their exchange rate would suggest. So if we convert the value of the 1939 złoty to its value in 2021 using the dollar parity method, we are in fact underestimating the real purchasing power of the Polish currency in 2021.

We should also bear in mind that although a price index is relatively stable over time, nonetheless it will change depending on the date selected for the indexation.²⁰ The main factor determining this index is the rate of inflation in the United States in any given year. For instance, in 1939 there was a deflation of -1.42% observed for the USA, whereas there was no change in Poland's CPI for that year. This shows that if we use a foreign currency's CPI inflation rate to make the indexation, which might be indispensable (as in the case of the Polish złoty), it will mean that in fact we are "importing" a foreign rate of change in prices to index the purchasing power of the Polish złoty.

To sum up: there are solid theoretical grounds to apply the U.S. dollar as a reference for indexation, and the method gives a purchasing power parity which is relatively stable empirically, and this is certainly one of its advantages. However, the CPI is the right way to value historical worth only if we are dealing with consumer goods.

¹⁸ The World Bank publishes comparative data for the world's economies in its International Comparison Program (ICP); see <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/icp> [Accessed 4 August 2022].

¹⁹ One of the factors contributing to the underestimation of the currency of a country with a low income per capita relative to another currency (apart from taxes, customs duties, and transportation costs) is the difference in the productivity of its workforce. In 1964 this observation was empirically confirmed and formalized by Balassa and independently by Samuelson, and today is known as the Balassa-Samuelson effect.

²⁰ The change in inflation observed year-to-year is relatively small compared to, say, the potential change in the market price for gold.

9.3. The Gold Index

Traditionally, gold has always been the metal used as a guarantee for the value of paper money, and today it is still in circulation as a popular form of investing capital, for instance at times of market uncertainty. The indexation of historical worth, here the Polish war losses in 1939 złoty, relative to their parity in gold, is a form of indexation relative to an investment of capital. Putting it as simply possible: what would be the value today of Poland's war losses if their equivalent had been used in 1939 to buy gold which was then hidden away until now?²¹ This would be a measure of the economic cost, the cost of withheld potential, the wealth Poland lost which could have been invested in gold if Germany had not destroyed or plundered it.

In this method of indexation we do not need to refer to foreign currencies. We know the 1939 price of gold in Poland, so supposing we bought gold for a sum equivalent to the Polish war losses, at 5.9244 zł per gram, we could purchase 68,690,143,410.64 g of gold. If we sold this deposit in Poland at the price for gold on 31 December 2021, that is 237.3 PLN per gram, we would recover 16,300,171.03 million PLN. The operation would imply a mean annual rate of appreciation in value of 4.60%, in other words we would get an index of 40.05.

9.3.1. Advantages of the Gold Index

Gold has traditionally served as a measure of the value of money. Before the War, Poland resorted to investment in gold and nowadays continues to invest its reserve capital in gold (just as other countries do). We have precise valuations for this type of capital investment in pre-war złoty and in the Polish currency today. There is no need to refer to other currencies; indexation done with respect to gold purchased with a foreign currency (e.g. the American dollar

²¹ Or if Germany converted the equivalent value of all the Polish goods and assets it destroyed or pillaged into gold and kept it until the present time.

on the New York stock exchange, or the pound sterling on the London Stock Exchange) would give fairly similar values to the indexation of the pre-war złoty with respect to gold.²² This is because gold is a commodity which has continuously been in circulation, and its price on the international market is regulated exactly in keeping with the exchange rate for a particular currency. Thus, all currencies are in parity with gold, which is something we do not observe for their real purchasing power. In this sense, using gold as a reference would be an unequivocal, definitive method to index Poland's war losses.

Table 9.2.
The current value of Poland's war losses using the price of gold purchased and sold in Poland

Valuation using the price of gold purchased for the Polish currency and sold in Poland	
Price of gold per gram in 1939	5.9244 zł
Total loss in 1938/1939 (zł million)	406,947.89 zł
Total loss in 1939, expressed in grams of gold	68,690,143,410.64
Price per gram of gold on 31 Dec. 2021 (PLN)	237.30
Total value of gold on 31 Dec. 2021 (PLN million)	16,300,171.03
Indexation (PLN)	40.05
Implied average annual rate of appreciation for the return on the investment at the end of 2021	4.60%

Source: Our own calculations.

9.3.2. Drawbacks of the Gold Index

Gold is a form of capital investment, so its value used to index the pre-war złoty would contain an investment return. Indexation using gold does not give a measure of the purchasing power of a currency; instead it measures the value of the capital invested in gold, so we would not obtain a valuation of the pre-war złoty with respect to today's Polish currency. However, this does not mean that the appreciation in the value of gold over the period of time would render this method useless for the valuation of the

²² The implied multiplier and implied average annual rate of appreciation would be 39.9 and 4.60% for gold bought in New York, and 41.4 and 4.65% respectively for gold bought in London. The differences in the results for the indexations we have described are due to the differences in the exchange rates for the złoty in the two foreign currencies.

assets Poland lost due to the War. The point is that gold is a form of capital investment, and as such it has its own market value, and the diverse national currencies have been in parity with the value of gold over the period from 1939 to 2021, and have maintained mutual parity with one another by adjusting their exchange rates.

Table 9.3.
Valuation of Poland's war losses using the price of gold purchased on foreign markets²³

Valuation using the gold index for gold purchased on foreign markets				
	New York Stock Exchange	London Stock Exchange	New York gold sold in Poland	London gold sold in Poland
1939 złoty exchange rate	U.S.\$ 1 = 5.325 zł	£ 1 = 23.1 zł		
Total loss, 1938/1939 (zł million)	406,947.89 zł	406,947.89 zł		
Total loss in foreign currency, 1939 (millions)	U.S.\$ 76,422.14	£ 17,616.79		
Price of gold per ounce purchased in 1939	U.S.\$ 35.00	£7.72		
Ounces of gold purchased in 1939	2,183,489,661	2,281,967,822		
Price of gold per ounce on 31 Dec. 2021	U.S.\$ 1,829.80	£ 1,347.06	PLN 7,359.54	PLN 7,359.54
Value of gold sold in 2021 (millions)	U.S.\$ 3,995,349.38	£3,073,947.57		
PLN exchange rate on 31 Dec. 2021	U.S.\$ 1 = PLN 4.0600	£ 1 = 5.4846		
Value of gold in 2021 (PLN million)	16,221,118.49	16,859,372.87	16,069,479.50	16,794,233.46
Indexation (PLN)	39.9	41.4	39.5	41.3
Implied average annual rate of appreciation at the end of 2021	4.60%	4.65%	4.64%	4.70%

Source: Ministerstwo Skarbu (the Polish Ministry of the Treasury), MeasuringWorth.com, NBP, our own calculations. The historical price of gold after MeasuringWorth.com, and the modern price of Gold in New York after KITCO.com, and in London after gold.co.uk

²³ Alongside indexing Poland's war losses with the values of the respective indexes for Poland, for the sake of comparison we have also presented analogous indexations for the USA and the United Kingdom.

Once we put forward the case for using gold as a reference for indexation, we immediately evoke the question why not use some other precious metal, e.g. silver, or a completely different form of investment, such as the shares of companies on the S&P500 index, or the treasury bonds issued by a particular country, e.g. Germany, as the reference for our indexation. For the sake of comparison, let's assume that in 1939 we could have invested a sum equivalent to Poland's war losses in companies on the S&P500 index and reinvested the dividend. The average annual rate of appreciation would have been 10.91%, and hence the multiplier would have been 4886.1. By the end of 2021 the sum total of the Polish losses indexed in that way would have amounted to \$373 trillion.²⁴ We are not in favour of creating hypothetical cases on the assumption that it would be possible to invest the full value of the Polish war losses in financial instruments. Gold is a commodity traded by investors and a preferred form of capital investment during a recession. This means that its index may change significantly depending on the date for which a given historical sum of money is indexed.

9.4. The Cost-of-Living Index

If we want to obtain a valuation of a sum of money expressing its consumer value in the contemporary situation and taking into account economic costs and hence the amount of forgone consumption today, we should consider the change in the consumer basket due to economic growth. Our aim is to evaluate how important Poland's war losses expressed in 1939 prices were for its people straight after the Second World War, so we must compare this value with today's level of consumption. This is not the same as indexation done by means of the CPI, which would be the right choice of an index if we were interested in today's value of a given set of consumer goods making up a basket which did not change over time and its refer-

²⁴ Williamson, Samuel H., "S&P Index, 1871 to Present," *Measuring Worth*, 2022.

ence to a currency's real value were the same all the time. If we want to describe how much has to be spent today in comparison to what would have been spent in the past to stay at an average standard of living, the natural choice of an index would be to look at the cost of maintaining a household (or at the cost of living for an individual consumer) then and now.

In this method of indexation, war losses are measured by relative consumer value, that is the relative cost of goods and services such as food, shelter, clothing etc., which the members of an average household would have needed to buy. The bundle of goods necessary to keep their standard of living at the average level has increased over the time span we are interested in. In the context of Poland's war losses, using the cost of living as the reference for indexation will give a measure of the economic costs which make up part of what the people of Poland needed to live at the same standard but were deprived of by German aggression and occupation.

For example, if the Polish war losses calculated for a Polish household amounted to 50% of all the expenditure of its members in 1939 prices, then the valuation of Poland's war losses in relation to the cost of living in Poland would give the sum which Germany, the successor state to the Third Reich, would have to pay back to Poland today to make up for the 50% of the average Polish household's lost purchasing power caused by Germany.

9.4.1. The cost of living in Poland before the Second World War

The historical information we have on the income, budget, and expenses of families living in pre-war Poland comes from a survey carried out by Ludwik Landau in 1935 on a population of 300 working-class families in Warsaw, and data published in the 1939 edition of the Polish statistical handbook *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny* (hereinafter MRS 1939) on working-class families in 1927 and clerical (white-collar) employees in 1932. We have calculated the cost of living for 1938-1939 on the basis of the cost of living index given in MRS 1939 and confirmed by the index published in Michał Kalecki's study.²⁵

²⁵ Kalecki, Michał, *Prace z teorii koniunktury 1933-1939*, Warszawa: PWN, 1962.

The figures for the income of working-class families living in Warsaw in 1935 as reported in Landau's questionnaire²⁶ present the average weekly income for working-class families (depending on the number of persons working, unemployed, and employable in the family).

In 1935,

– the average weekly income of a working-class family living in Warsaw was 24.7 zł, and 8.6 zł per consumer unit;

– the average weekly income of a working-class family living in Warsaw, all of whose members were in employment and none were unemployed, was 28.7 zł, and 10.9 zł per consumer unit;

– the average weekly income of a working-class family living in Warsaw, some of whose members were in employment and some were unemployed, was 30.1 zł, and 7.9 zł per consumer unit;

– the average weekly income of a working-class family living in Warsaw, all of whose members were unemployed and none of them were in employment, was 14.8 zł, and 4.7 zł per consumer unit;

– and the average weekly income of a working-class family living in Warsaw, none of whose members were employable, was 14.5 zł, and 10.6 zł per consumer unit.

The following definitions were used to describe a “consumer unit”: the head of the family was defined as 1.00 of a CU, his wife was 0.85 CU, their child in the 14–17 age group counted as 0.80 of a CU, and a child aged 3–7 was 0.50 of a CU. Assuming that the family consisted of these four persons, this came to 3.15 consumer units.²⁷

MRS 1939 gives data for the budget of a working-class family in 1927 as well as information which is indispensable for an estimate of their cost of living – their spending breakdown.²⁸

²⁶ Landau, Ludwik, *Bezrobocie i stopa życiowa ludności dzielnic robotniczych Warszawy*, Warszawa: Instytut Spraw Społecznych, 1936; *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny 1939*, Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS) 1939, p. 280.

²⁷ MRS 1939, Warszawa: GUS, p. 281.

²⁸ MRS 1939, Warszawa: GUS, p. 281.

Table 9.4.

Typical budget breakdown for a working-class family and a family of clerical workers living in Warsaw in 1927²⁹

Expenditure from the income of working-class and clerical workers' families living in Warsaw			
	Typical working-class family in 1927	Typical working-class family of four in 1938	Typical family of clerical workers in 1932
Total expenditure	100.0	100.0	100.0
Food	63.8	40.6	30.4
Alcoholic beverages and tobacco products	2.4	3.4	2.3
Shelter	6.4	15.2	13.0
Household operations and furnishings	1.9		4.0
Energy (heating and lighting)	4.5	4.2	5.1
Health and personal care	1.5	5.6	3.3
Clothing, footwear, and underwear	10.9	12.3	12.1
Culture and education	3.6	4.3	5.5
Insurance premiums and taxation	3.0	-	8.6
Other expenses	1.3	14.4	10.3
Property and debt repayment	0.7	-	5.4

Source: MRS 1939, p. 281.

The typical annual expenditure for a family of four persons amounted to 2,104 zł. 84.4% of the family income came from the earnings of the head of the family; 8.5% was earned by the rest of the family; and 7.1% came from other income. The family income went on food, shelter, household operations and furnishings, energy (heating and lighting), health and personal care, clothing, footwear and underwear, culture and education, insurance premiums and taxation, expenses incurred on property and debt repayment, alcoholic beverages and tobacco products, and other expenses.

On the basis of the figures given in MRS 1939, 99.3% of the working-class family's annual budget, i.e. 2,089.27 zł out of 2,104 zł, went to cover their cost of living. Hence, the cost of living per person in the family of four amounted to 522.32 zł; and the cost

²⁹ The breakdown for the expenses in a white-collar family is much closer to the breakdown of goods in the consumer basket which nowadays serves as the basis for the calculation of the CPI.

of living per consumer unit was 663.26 zł. The monthly expenses per person were 43.53 zł, and 55.27 zł per consumer unit. On the basis of the cost-of-living index presented in Table 9.5 and MRS1939, as confirmed by Kalecki (1962), the cost of living for a working-class family of four resident in Warsaw in 1938/1939, assuming the same breakdown of expenses as for 1927, was 1,274.46 zł, that is 318.61 zł per person per annum and 26.55 zł per month. The corresponding figures per consumer unit were 404.59 zł and 33.72 zł (Table 9.6).

Thanks to Landau's survey, we can cross-check the calculations for the budget of a working-class family living in Warsaw. Landau gives a figure of 24.7 zł for the weekly budget of a family of four in 1935. This means an annual budget of 1,284.4 zł, which in compliance with Table 9.5 gives 2,140.7 zł for 1927, and 1,305.8 zł for 1938.³⁰ Assuming (as above) that 0.7% of the family budget was not spent on cost of living, the total cost of living for a working-class family of four resident in Warsaw was 1,296.7 zł according to Landau, which is just 1.74% more than the figure we gave above calculated on the basis for the data for 1927 and the index for cost of living.

Table 9.5.
The Cost-of-Living Index for working-class families resident in Warsaw

Cost-of-Living Index for working-class families resident in Warsaw in current prices (zł)																
Year	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Cost Index (a)	62	72	87	100	100	100	92	83	75	67	63	60	58	62	61	61
Cost Index (b)	-	-	-	-	100	100.5	92.1	82.8	74.8	67.5	62.6	60	58	62	-	-

Source: (a) MRS 1939, p. 245 and 248; (b) Kalecki, Michał, *Prace z teorii koniunktury 1933-1939*, Warszawa: PWN, 1962.

The comparability of the data for cost of living in 1938 and 1939 is based on the figures given in *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski. Wrzesień 1939 – Czerwiec 1941* published in London in 1941.³¹ According to this publication, in 1935 the index for cost of living (covering food, clothing and footwear, energy, shelter,

³⁰ The difference between the amount of money a working-class family had for their budget in 1927 and the smaller sum available to them in 1938 was due to the Great Depression, which affected the whole world, and Poland from 1929 to 1935, leaving many people much poorer than they were before.

³¹ *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski. Wrzesień 1939 – Czerwiec 1941*, Londyn: 1941, p. 105.

and the rest of the categories) for working-class families in Warsaw was 60 compared to the index for 1928, which was taken as 100; and 61 in June 1939.

The average annual domestic budget for a white-collar (clerical workers') family of four living in Warsaw in 1932, estimated on the basis of data for May 1932 published in MRS 1939, amounted to 6,173 zł. Their expenses covered food, shelter, household operations and furnishings, energy, health and personal care, clothing and footwear, culture and education, insurance premiums and taxes, alcoholic beverages and tobacco products, expenditure on real property and debt repayment, and other expenses. The breakdown of the family's income was as follows: income earned by the head of the family – 79.1%, income earned by other members of the family – 9.2%, other income – 11.7%.

Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski. Wrzesień 1939 – Czerwiec 1941 published in London in 1941³² gave the following data for the index of the cost of living (covering food, clothing and footwear, energy, shelter, and the rest of the categories) for a family of clerical workers resident in Warsaw in 1929 was 103, and the index for the base year, 1928, was 100; in 1933 it was 70; and in June 1939 it was 63.

Table 9.6.
The Cost-of-Living Index for a family of clerical workers resident in Warsaw (at current prices in zł)

Cost-of-Living Index for a family of clerical workers resident in Warsaw (at current prices in zł)												
Year	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Cost Index	100	103	-	-	78	70	66	64	61	63	63	63

Source: MRS 1939, p. 246.

We still need a value for the cost-of-living index for 1932. We can obtain it on the basis of indexes for the cost of living of white-collar employees and working-class families resident in Warsaw published in the Polish statistical yearbook *Rocznik Statystyczny*. We quote the comparative values for particular years as a ratio in the following way: cost of living for white-collar families / cost of living for working-class families, where the value for 1928, the base year, is 100: 1929 – 103/100; 1933 – 70/67; 1934 – 66/63; 1935 – 64/60; 1936 – 61/58; 1937 – 63/62; 1938 – 63/61; and June 1939 – 63/61. Since we have the 1932 index

³² Reprinted from MRS 1939, Warszawa: GUS, 1939, p. 246; *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski. Wrzesień 1939 – Czerwiec 1941* . . . , p. 105–106.

for the cost of living of working-class families resident in Warsaw, which has a value of 75, we can obtain an approximate estimate for the corresponding index for a white-collar family in Warsaw in 1932, which will be 78.

The annual budget of a family of clerical workers in 1938–1939 amounted to 4,985.88 zł. Table 9.4 shows that 5.4% of it was not spent on cost of living, hence the sum a family of clerical workers spent on cost of living in 1932 was 5,839.66 zł, and 4,716.65 zł in 1938–1939. Hence the monthly cost of living for a family of clerical workers in 1938–1939 was 393.05 zł, and 98.26 zł per person in a family of four.

On the basis of the general population census of 9 December 1931,³³ MRS 1939 gives a figure of 102.3 thousand white-collar (clerical) employees and 296.6 thousand blue-collar employees working in Warsaw. Assuming a proportional breakdown for cost of living, in other words 25.6% for white-collar employees and 74.4% for blue-collar employees, we get an average cost of living in Warsaw, with a monthly value of 79.87 zł in 1938–1939. The results are summarized in Table 9.7.

Table 9.7.
Monthly cost of living in Warsaw, 1938–1939

Monthly cost of living in Warsaw, 1938–1939			
	Proportional breakdown %	Budget (zł)	Cost of living (zł)
White-collar workers	25.6	103.87	98.26
Blue-collar workers	74.4	26.74	26.55
Average		46.52	44.94

Source: Our own calculations.

Table 9.8 gives the cost of living in Poland for 2021 on the basis of GUS (Statistics Poland) data for Polish cities with a population over 500 thousand.³⁴ This table shows the end result of using the Cost-of-Living Index for the valuation of Poland's war losses and compares this sum with the sum which would be obtained if we used the Cost-of-Living Index for the USA for the valuation instead.

³³ MRS 1939, p. 258.

³⁴ *Sytuacja gospodarstw domowych w 2020 r. w świetle wyników badania budżetów gospodarstw domowych*, Warszawa: GUS, 2021. <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/warunki-zycia/dochody-wydatki-i-warunki-zycia-ludnosci/sytuacja-gospodarstw-domowych-w-2021-r-w-swietle-badania-budzetow-gospodarstw-domowych,3,20.html>.

Table 9.8.
Valuation of Poland's war losses using the Cost-of-Living Index³⁵

USA: cost of living for average household, U.S.\$		Poland: monthly cost of living per person in a large city, zł/PLN	
1938 index value	1,452.00	1938 index value	44.94
2020 index value	61,334.00	2021 index value	1,767.00
Average annual rate of appreciation at the end of 2020	4.67%	Average annual rate of appreciation at the end of 2021	4.52%
Indexation for the end of 2020	42.24	Indexation for the end of 2021	39.32
1938 zł/U.S.\$ exchange rate	5.3		
Total loss, 1938/1939 (zł million)	406,947.89	Total loss, 1938/1939 (zł million)	406,947.89
Total loss in currency of indexation, 1938 (U.S.\$ million)	U.S.\$ 76,782.62		
Total loss in currency of indexation, 2021 (U.S.\$ million)	3,243,378.24	Total loss in currency of indexation, 2021 (PLN million)	16,000,821.40

Source: GUS (Statistics Poland), Measuringworth.com, Our own calculations.

9.4.2. Advantages of the Cost-of-Living Index

The Cost-of-Living Index gives a measure of the price of consumer goods, but it also takes economic growth into account (i.e. the quality and quantity of goods needed to support a family). Thus, in terms of consumer goods, it measures the contemporary economic cost of supporting a member of the family in 1939. What this method measures, in terms of indexing the pre-war złoty, is the importance of the expenditure of one złoty relative to the sum total an average person spent on consumer goods in 1939, showing how many złoty a person would have to spend today to purchase analogous consumer goods to what he would have spent on them in 1939.

³⁵ Valuation after Officer, Lawrence H., and Samuel H. Williamson, "What Was the Value of the US Consumer Bundle Then?" MeasuringWorth, 2022.

9.4.3. Drawbacks of the Cost-of-Living Index

The Cost-of-Living Index gives a measure of the relative purchasing power of a household. Indexation of war losses with an aim to calculate real alternative cost in terms of today's reality will consider the change in wealth due to economic growth. However, a society's rising wealth means more than just its growing purchasing power. It will also entail more savings, and that is something we will not get a measure of if we index a historical sum of money with respect to cost of living. In other words, a basket representing the cost of living in Poland will not show the full alternative cost which Germany deprived the people of Poland of during the Second World War.

If we take the statistical data for Poland in 2021 for the indexation,³⁶ we will be indexing Polish war losses in the context of today's reality with respect to the level of consumership (prosperity) enjoyed by an individual living in Poland, which is substantially below the average for Europe, and one of the main reasons for this is because Germany brought about a vast amount of economic and social loss for Poland and its people. This means that if we select this method for our indexation, we will be integrating over a lower path of economic growth due to the Second World War.

9.5. Wages

The U.S. Average Wage Index is the method recommended for the indexation of historical worth in respect of the cost of alternative income lost by war victims. Earnings are an important component of the income a nation has at its disposal, and this was especially true of the Second Republic of Poland, far more so than it is for Poland today. Earnings cover the cost of living as well as financial reserves, that is savings. The Average Wage Index will still not cover all the resources available to a Polish citizen, nonetheless this method gives a far more precise valuation of the cost of withheld income than the Cost-of-Living Index.

³⁶ The data for 2021 are the most recent figures published by GUS for households. A full set of data for households in 2022 will be available in May 2022.

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Wages give a measure of the work put in to produce a given added value, or the time an employee needs to work for to earn the money required to obtain a new product. If we are talking about unskilled labourers, we are assuming that their working skills and productivity per hour of work will remain constant over time, so in fact we will be indexing their wages by the amount of work they do (i.e. their working time). The Unskilled Wage Index will give a measure how much working time a person would have to be paid now to balance up with what he would have been paid to produce the same worth (i.e. doing the same job) in the past. A good example would be the total sum of earnings for the working time which would be needed now to reconstruct and restore the Royal Castle in Warsaw, which Germany devastated in 1939 and ultimately destroyed completely in 1944.

If we apply the Average Wage Index, in other words if our index takes into account the fact that with the passage of time and a country's growth as its economy develops, it will need better-qualified workers, which means that the individual worker's productivity will rise over time. This indexation will then cover not just working time but also earnings for the rising productivity (quality) of the work done.³⁷ Since the aim of the barbaric policy Germany pursued during the Second World War was to wilfully destroy the Polish educated class and social elite, the index which gives a comprehensive and accurate valuation of Poland's war losses in this regard will be the one which covers the whole extent of the human capital Poland lost.

Returning now to the case of the Royal Castle in Warsaw and its reconstruction, if we use the average wage to index the cost of its reconstruction, we will also be taking into account the costs involved in hiring the services of qualified architects and engineers, and the appreciation in the valuation of their qualifications over time.

MRS 1939 gives the average weekly wages of workers on the pension scheme operated by ZUS, Poland's national insurance company, in 1935. Men earned an average wage of 23.9 zł, and women earned an average of 12.4 zł.³⁸ There were 1,624 thousand male employees and 809 thousand female employees. Men worked for an average of 6 months in the year, and women worked for an average of 6.9 months in the year. Hence the average annual earnings for a male employee were 621.4 zł, and

³⁷ In economic theory, at equilibrium, labour is remunerated according to its marginal productivity.

³⁸ MRS 1939, p. 270.

374.48 for a female employee. The weighted mean for the annual pay of both sexes was 539.3 zł, which gives 44.94 zł for the average monthly pay of a blue-collar employee.³⁹

The average monthly salaries of white-collar employees in 1935 were 280.5 zł for male employees, and 170.8 zł for female employees, with men working an average of 9.6 months per annum and women working an average of 9.4 months per annum.⁴⁰ There were 239 thousand men and 103 thousand women working in white-collar jobs. Hence the average annual earnings of male white-collar workers were 2,692.8 zł, and 1,605.52 zł for the women in white-collar jobs. The average earnings for both sexes were 2,365.34 zł per annum, which gives average monthly earnings of 197.11 zł.

Using the number of white-collar and blue-collar workers, we calculated that 87.7% of the 2,775 thousand persons employed in Poland and covered by a ZUS insurance policy in 1935 were blue-collar workers, and 12.3% were white-collar employees. The average monthly earnings across the board were 63.7 zł.

GUS (Statistics Poland) gives an index for nominal earnings for blue-collar employees in the pre-war period, but unfortunately we have no counterpart index for white-collar employees.⁴¹ The base year is 1928 (=100); and the index is 79 for 1935, and 86 for 1938. On this basis, and keeping the above proportions, we calculated the average monthly earnings of Polish employees in 1938 at 69.27 zł.

At the beginning of this sub-chapter we discussed the advantages of the Average Wage Index. Now we come to its drawbacks, one of which is the fact that as regards Poland's war losses, this is still not an index covering the entire extent of the damage sustained by Poland due to the Second World War. From the point of view of economic losses, to obtain a comprehensive valuation of the resources lost by the people of Poland and their potential to generate prosperity, to evaluate the Polish war losses we shall have to look at GDP and use the Nominal GDP Index.

Poland's current level of economic development and the assets available to the average Polish citizen are less than they would

³⁹ On 28 February 1928 the Polish government introduced a regulation binding employers in the industrial sector to report the full data for their workers' pay (wages, rates per hour etc.) to GUS. *Historia Polski w liczbach – Ludność i społeczeństwo*, Vol. 1, Warszawa: GUS, 2003, p. 419. https://stat.gov.pl/download/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5501/34/1/1/historia_polski_w_liczbach_tom_pierwszy_panstwo_spoleczenstwo.pdf [Accessed 5 August 2022]. Dz.U. RP 1928, No. 29, Item 275, ISAP: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19280290275> [Accessed 5 August 2022].

⁴⁰ MRS 1939, p. 276.

⁴¹ MRS 1939, p. 276.

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have been if it were not for the war losses caused by Germany's wartime occupation of Poland. That is why applying the Average Wage Index method would in fact mean indexing Poland's lost worth by integrating over a lower level of resources (and earnings) than would be the case if the country could have developed without the devastation and losses caused by the Second World War.

The relative value of Poland's war losses must be multiplied by a coefficient of 58.95 because the implied annual rate of change (appreciation) in average wages in Poland since 1938 has been 5.03%. Hence, for the end of 2021 the relative value of the income the people of Poland have lost owing to Germany's occupation of their country amounts to 23,989,172 million PLN (twenty-three trillion, nine hundred and eighty-nine billion, one hundred and seventy-two million PLN: see Table 9.9).

Table 9.9.

Valuation of Poland's war losses using the Average Wage (Earnings) Index

	USA average wage per hour in U.S.\$	UK average nominal annual earnings in £	Poland average monthly pay after tax, 2021 (PLN)
1938 index value	U.S.\$ 0.64	£ 161.87	69.27 zł
2021 index value	U.S.\$ 33.39	£ 30,160.00	4,083.44 zł
Average annual rate of appreciation at the end of 2021	4.88%	6.50%	5.03%
Indexation for the end of 2021	52.17	186.32	58.95
1938 zloty exchange rate	U.S.\$ 1 = 5.3 zł	£ 1 = 24.84 zł	
Total loss in 1938 (zł million)	406,947.89 zł	406,947.89 zł	406,947.89 zł
Total loss in foreign currency in 1938 (millions)	U.S.\$ 76,782.62	£ 15,694.10	
Total loss in 2021 (millions)	U.S.\$ 4,005,893.25	£ 2,924,160.79	PLN 23,989, 171.99

Source: GUS (Statistics Poland), Measuringworth.com, our own calculations

9.6. Nominal GDP

The historical data for GDP per capita are based on the research conducted and published by the Groningen Growth and Development Centre (GGDC) at the University of Groningen and the Penn World Tables compiled in co-operation with the University of California San Diego.⁴²

The database published by GGDC may be used to take a historical approach to the comparison of economic growth paths anywhere in the world. In order to estimate the level of economic growth in diverse economies, GGDC uses GDP per capita for the comparison of income per inhabitant in any given year and cross-checks this data with the statistics for purchasing power published by the World Bank within the framework of its International Comparison Program.⁴³ We used this data together with data published by GUS (Statistics Poland) for the population of Poland in 1928–1938 to construct the path of economic growth for the Second Polish Republic. In 1938, the average GDP per capita was 519.68 zł at current prices for that year, and nominal GDP for the entire Polish economy was 18.137 billion zł. We indexed Poland's GDP over the period from 1938 to 2021 as no reliable estimate of the Polish GDP is available for 1939 because of the German invasion in September 1939. The data we used for Poland's GDP *per capita* in 2021 come from GUS (Statistics Poland) and Eurostat.⁴⁴

⁴² Maddison Project Database 2018: <https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-project-database-2018?lang=en> [Accessed 5 August 2022]. The methodology these databases use is described in Bolt, Jutta, Robert Inklaar, Harmen de Jong, and Jan Luiten van Zanden, "Rebasing 'Maddison'. New income comparisons and the shape of long-run economic development, GGDC Research Memorandum," vol. GD-174 (January 2018), Groningen Growth and Development Center, <https://research.rug.nl/en/publications/rebasing-maddison-new-income-comparisons-and-the-shape-of-long-run> [Accessed 5 August 2022]. For version 10.0 of the Penn World Table (PWT 10.0), see <https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/productivity/pwt/?lang=en> [Accessed 5 August 2022]. A full description of the data and calculations to determine the GDP and GDP *per capita* for Poland in 1938 are given in Chapter 8 of this Report.

⁴³ See the website of the World Bank, International Comparison Program (ICP): <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/icp> [Accessed 5 August 2022].

⁴⁴ GUS, *Roczne wskaźniki makroekonomiczne, aktualizacja 7 XII 2021 r.* [Annual macroeconomic indexes, updated on 7 December 2021] see <https://stat.gov.pl/wskazniki-makroekonomiczne/> [Accessed 5 August 2022].

Table 9.10.

Current valuation of Poland's war losses using the Nominal GDP *per capita* Index⁴⁵

Indexation	Nominal GDP <i>per capita</i>		
	USA (U.S.\$ million at current prices)	UK (£ sterling million at current prices)	Poland (zł/PLN million at current prices)
1938 index value	U.S.\$ 672.00	£ 114.84	519.68 zł
2021 index value	U.S.\$ 69,221.00	£ 34,402.67	68,710.00 zł
Average annual rate of appreciation at the end of 2021	5.74%	7.11%	6.06%
Indexation for the end of 2021	103.01	299.57	132.21
1938 złoty exchange rate	U.S.\$ 1 = 5.3 zł	£ 1 = 24.84 zł	1 zł
Total loss in 1938 (zł million)	406,947.89 zł	406,947.89 zł	406,947.89 zł
Total loss in foreign currency in 1938 (millions)	U.S.\$ 76,782.62	£ 16,382.77	
Total loss in 2021 (millions)	U.S.\$ 7,909,181.15	£ 4,907,792.25	PLN 53,804,514.74

Source: GUS, Eurostat, Measuringworth.com, our own calculations. GDP per capita for Poland in 2021 quoted after Eurostat figures published on 5 August 2022.

The sum we obtained by applying the index for the Polish nominal GDP per capita gives the relative cost of Poland's war losses measured as the multiple of the resources used to recover the country's war losses. This index covers the work, capital, and material resources needed to produce the value of Poland's lost GDP. In other words, this index gives a measure of the multiple of the average income which would be needed to purchase the assets and resources the people of Poland were deprived of by Germany. Here "income" means the right of every citizen of the Second Polish Republic to his or her share in the assets and resources of the Polish economy in 1938. The current value of Poland's war losses calculated by this method for the end of 2021 is over 53 trillion PLN (See Table 9.10).

9.6.1. Advantages of the GDP *per capita* Index

In view of the comprehensive nature of Poland's war losses, the GDP *per capita* Index seems to be the best method to obtain a valuation of them. This index will give the economic cost to

⁴⁵ GDP indexes for the USA and the UK after Johnston, Louis, and Samuel H. Williamson, "What Was the U.S. GDP Then?" MeasuringWorth, 2022; and Thomas, Ryland, and Samuel H. Williamson, "What Was the U.K. GDP Then?" MeasuringWorth, 2022.

Poland of its occupation by Germany. In addition, by using the GDP *per capita*, we will obtain an estimate of the share in the assets and resources of the Second Polish Republic for *each of its citizens* and avoid the charge that the GDP of the Second Polish Republic was produced on territories within national boundaries different from what Poland's boundaries are now. In this type of indexation, the Polish lost GDP is attributed to the people of Poland who sustained the loss, not to the territorial area on which it was lost.

9.6.2. Drawbacks of the GDP *per capita* Index

If we obtain a valuation for Poland's war losses using the GDP *per capita* Index, we will not be considering the growth in Poland's population since 1938. Hence we will not be covering the full economic potential of the country's losses due to the War relative to the present day. As with cost of living and earnings, Poland's current level of economic development is lower than what the country could have achieved if it had been allowed to develop without experiencing the devastation and losses it went through because of the War. Moreover, GUS (Statistics Poland) is publishing updated estimates of GDP figures for previous years, so this index may change if the value of Poland's current GDP *per capita* is revised in the future.

9.6.3. The contribution of war losses to Poland's GDP

The usual practice in the assessment of the costs of a conflict is to give the percentage contribution of the conflict to the GDP of the country bearing those costs, alongside giving a quotation for the costs as a sum of money. This is a way of specifying the cost of the potential forfeited or withheld due to the conflict, in relation to the whole of a country's economy (in this case the Polish economy), and may be interpreted as the significance of the war losses for the people of Poland as a whole and the country's entire economy. On the national scale, it will be a measure of the amount of wealth Poland has been deprived of in relation to its GDP. Hence it shows the contribution the war losses would have made to the overall value of the Polish economy (had it not been for the War), and of the share the owners of this lost income would have had in the country's economy. Putting it in a nutshell, supposing the losses were sustained only by part of the Polish

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population, then this measure would show the economic power those persons who sustained war losses had in the Polish economy in 1938.

Hence, if we apply the Nominal GDP Index, we will obtain a valuation for the full economic cost of the Polish war losses with respect to the present day. Thereby we will be discounting the time which has passed since the Second World War and which the citizens of Poland have managed to use to increase their country's wealth despite their war losses and the slow rate of economic growth under the Polish People's Republic (i.e. to 1989).

Table 9. 11.
Valuation of Poland's war losses using the nominal GDP Index

Indexation	Nominal GDP		
	USA (U.S.\$ million at current prices)	UK (£ sterling million at current prices)	Poland (zł/PLN million at current prices)
1938 index value	U.S.\$ 87,400.00	£ 5,454.00	18,137.00 zł
2021 index value	U.S.\$ 22,996,100.00	£ 2,317,054.00	2,622,184.00 zł
Average annual rate of appreciation at the end of 2021	6.94%	7.56%	6.18%
Indexation for the end of 2021	263.11	424.84	144.58
1938 złoty exchange rate	U.S.\$ 1 = 5.3 zł	£ 1 = 24.84 zł	1 zł
Total loss in 1938 (zł million)	406,947.89 zł	406,947.89 zł	406,947.89 zł
Total loss in foreign currency in 1938 (millions)	U.S.\$ 76,782.62	£ 16,382.77	
Total loss in 2021 (millions)	U.S.\$ 20,202,526.39	£ 6,959,983.77	PLN 58,835,101.42

Source: GUS (Statistics Poland), Measuringworth.com, our own calculations. Preliminary GDP estimate for Poland on 27 April 2022 after GUS.

One of the drawbacks of this method of indexation in the context of the Polish war losses is the difference in the territorial extent of Poland before and after the Second World War. The data for Poland's GDP in 2021 are of course right for the country's current territory. Nonetheless, this method can stand up to potential criticism in the sense that it gives an estimate of the value of Poland's right to its wealth in 1938, subsequently lost because of the War, due to the number of its people who were murdered and the vast extent of the material losses sustained on occupied Polish territory. The other drawbacks have been discussed in the paragraph on GDP *per capita*.

9.7. Conclusion

The diverse methods which may be applied to estimate the current historical worth of Poland's war losses mean different things in economic terms:

If the Dollar Index was applied, we would be estimating the change in the purchasing power of the U.S. dollar. The result we got would mean that for every dollar's worth of consumer goods (e.g. for a bicycle) Germany deprived Poland of in 1939, Germany would owe Poland an equivalent sum of money, sufficient to buy the bicycle in 2021;

- for the Gold Index: for every Polish loss worth one gram of gold caused by Germany in 1939, in 2021 Germany would owe Poland an equivalent sum of money worth one gram of gold in 2021;

- the choice of the Cost-of-Living Index would mean that for every Polish loss Germany caused in 1939 worth the money a family needed for its monthly maintenance (including paying its electricity bill and buying new schoolbags for the children etc.) in 1939, in 2021 Germany would owe Poland an equivalent sum of money sufficient to maintain an average family for a month;

- the Average Wage Index would mean that for every sum equivalent to a week's wages Germany took from Poland in 1939, in 2021 it would be liable to reimburse Poland with a sum equivalent to a week's wages in 2021;

- the GDP per capita Index would mean that to compensate Poland for what it seized during the War, in 2021 Germany would owe Poland a sum equivalent to every Polish citizen's share in Poland's national product in 2021;

- and the Nominal GDP Index would mean that as Nazi Germany seized the equivalent of twenty-two times the total value of the Polish Gross Domestic Product in 1938, in 2021 it would be liable to repay Poland the equivalent of twenty-two times the Polish Gross Domestic Product in 2021.

Table 9.12.

Results of indexing Poland's war losses by different methods

Method of indexation	Time period	Index	Current total loss (2021, PLN million)
U.S.\$ CPI	Sept.1939–31 Dec. 2021	15.40 ^a	6,220,609
Gold	Sept.1939–31 Dec. 2021	40.05	16,300,171
Cost of living	1938–2020	39.32	16,000,821
Average Wage	1938–2021	58.95	23,989,172
GDP <i>per capita</i>	1938–2021	132.21	53,804,515
GDP	1938–2021	144.58	58,835,101

Source: Our own calculations

^aWe have indexed human losses starting from December 1938, and therefore the corresponding CPI for the U.S. dollar for human losses is 15.2518. The CPI for the U.S. dollar for all the other losses, which we have indexed from September 1939, is 15.4013. Thus, we have rounded up the coefficient of indexation for all the historical losses to 15.29.

Summary of the Losses Sustained by Poland as a result of German aggression and occupation during the Second World War, 1939–1945

Table 9.13.
Summary of the results of estimated loss value

Chapter	Type of loss	Value in million PLN in 2021	Percentage
2 and 3	Human losses	4,786,965	76.95
4	Material losses	797,398	12.82
5	Losses of cultural heritage and arts	19,310	0.31
6	Losses in banking	89,321	1.44
	Losses in insurance	34,804	0.56
7	Losses of the Polish State Treasury due to the operations of the Emissionsbank in Polen	492,811	7.92
Total:		6,220,609	100.00

Sources: Chapters 3-7. Authors' own calculations.

The total value of losses on 31 December 2021 amounts to:

The result of the estimation in Polish Złotych

6,220,609 million PLN

In words:

Six trillion two hundred twenty billion six hundred nine million złotych

The result of the estimation in Euros

1,352,483 million EUR

The result of the estimation in US Dollars

1,532,170 million USD



The Annihilation of Michniów (1943)

Before the Second World War, Michniów (now in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship) had a population of around 600. On 12 and 13 July 1943, German police forces (including SS Police Regiments 17 and 22), German security police and Gestapo men massacred at least 204 of Michniów's inhabitants, including over 50 women and 48 children. The youngest victim was Stefan Dąbrowa, who was just 9 days old. Like many other victims, he and his parents were burned alive. Those who survived were rounded up and sent to prisons and concentration camps.

This operation against unarmed civilians had all the features of the crime defined under Art. 123 §1 Point 4 of the Polish Criminal Code (war crimes and crimes against humanity), and Art. 3 of the Institute of National Remembrance Act: The Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation of 18 December 1998 (Ustawa z dnia 18.12.1998 r. o Instytucji Pamięci Narodowej – Komisji Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu). Michniów now has a Museum of the Martyrdom of Polish Villages as a tribute to the oppression suffered by Poland's rural areas at the hands of the German invaders.

The world has heard of the massacres the Germans perpetrated at Oradour-sur-Glane in France and in the Czech village of Lidice, but knows little about the tragedy of the Polish capital Warsaw, let alone the crime in the village of Michniów in the Świętokrzyskie region, or about the pacifications of several hundred other Polish villages, whose inhabitants were shot or sent to German concentration camps, had their property looted, and their homes and farms burned down.

Left: Photo 9.2.
German security police just before the pacification started, July 1943 (Institute of National Remembrance collections)

Pages 406–407:
Photos 9.3.–9.6. The German annihilation of Michniów, 1943 (Institute of National Remembrance collections)





Annex



Marek Wierzbicki
Paweł Olechowski

Left: Photo A.1.
To the left Illustration A.1. Joachim Ribbentrop (to the right) (foreign minister of the Third Reich) in conversation with Soviet ambassador Alexander Shkvetsov (on the left) in Berlin before departing for Moscow to sign the border and friendship pact between the two countries in September 1939. (the NAC Collection)

A.1. The Soviet occupation of Polish territory, 1939–1941

1.1. Introduction

The genesis of the Soviet occupation of the eastern part of the Second Polish Republic lay in the agreement concluded by the USSR and the Third German Reich as part of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939. Following the end of the First World War and the collapse of the Russian Empire and the German Second Reich, the USSR and the Weimar Republic entered into cooperation aimed at undermining the political order established by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Despite the differences and political-ideological conflicts of 1935–1938, the idea of German-Soviet cooperation was revived at the beginning of 1939, when Hitler and Stalin saw an opportunity to realise their own political goals at the expense of the Central and Eastern European states. The secret protocol annexed to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact provided for the division of this part of the European continent into a German and a Soviet sphere of influence, with their border running almost through the middle of the Polish state. This meant another partition of Poland, reminiscent of those of the 18th century, in which Russia and Prussia (Germany) played a key role¹.

Hitler's pact with the Soviet Union helped him invade Poland on 1 September 1939; just over a fortnight later – on the 17th – the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east in violation of bilateral and multilateral treaties guaranteeing mutual neutrality and cooperation between Poland and the USSR. Poland's bi- and multilateral treaties turned out to be of not much use. The resistance the Polish Army put up was crushed, and the territory of Poland was split up into a German and a Soviet zone of occupation (not counting smaller areas occupied by the Republic of Lithuania and Slovakia). These developments were formally confirmed in the German-Soviet Treaty on Co-operation and Demarcation, ratified on 28 Sep-

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¹ A. Skrzypek, *Nie spełniony sojusz? Stosunki niemiecko-sowieckie 1917–1941*, Warszawa 1992, s. 5–104.

tember 1939 in Moscow, on the grounds of which the Soviet Union occupied the Polish territories east of a line delimited by the San, Bug, Narew, and Pisa Rivers – a total of 52% of the area of the Second Polish Republic, inhabited by 38% of its population.

The joint army parade of Germany and the Soviet Union held on 22 September 1939 in Brest–Litovsk (Brześć) became symbolic of Germany's military co-operation with the USSR². From 1930 to 1941, the Third Reich engaged in an intensive programme of political, economic, military, and intelligence co-operation with the Soviet Union. The Gestapo, Germany's political police, and the Soviet NKVD held four conferences (at Brest–Litovsk, Przemyśl, Zakopane, and Kraków) for the exchange of experience and information on their efforts to crush the Polish underground resistance movement and exterminate its leaders. This was one of the ways they put the provisions of the secret protocol into practice³.

The Secret Protocol of the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact of 23 August 1939 prescribed that “in the event of the occurrence of territorial and political changes,” East–Central Europe was to be divided into a German and a Soviet sphere of interests, and the boundary between them was to run along the border between Lithuania and Latvia. This meant that Latvia, Estonia, and Finland would be in the Soviet sphere of interest, while Lithuania would be in the German sphere of interest. On the territory of Poland, the line of demarcation between the German and Soviet spheres of interest would run along the San, Vistula, Narew, and Pisa Rivers, that is more or less through the middle of the country, which was tantamount to a Fourth Partition of Poland. As regards South–Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union declared its interest in Bessarabia, a territory belonging to Romania, while Germany stated it had no special interest in the region.

Although the Protocol was to be strictly confidential, the US administration knew its contents already on the day after it was signed, as did Britain, France and Italy. Through contacts at military attaché level the information was passed on to the governments of Estonia, Latvia, and Japan. Neither the Polish government nor the country's military intelligence service received news of it from any of its allies.

Due to the destruction by the Third German Reich of more than 90% of Polish archival documents, we are unable to determine whether the Polish government and military intelligence learned of its existence. We do know, however, that on 5 September 1939, the existence of the protocol was reported in the Polish press.

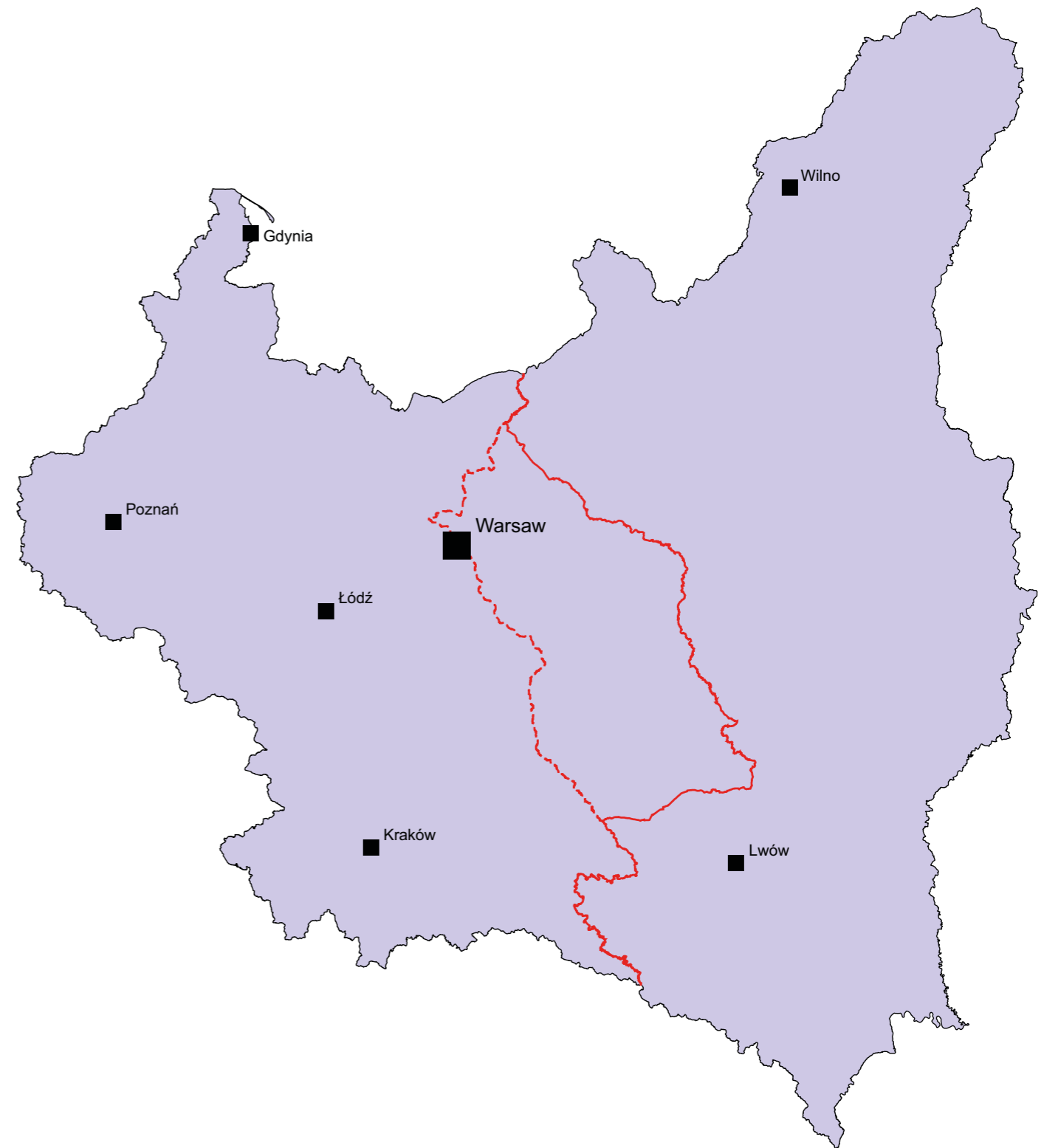
² R. C. Raack, *Stalin's drive to the West, 1938–1945. The origins of the Cold War*, Stanford 1995, p. 39; Cz. Grzelak, *Kresy w czerwieni. Agresja Związku Sowieckiego na Polskę w 1939 roku*, Warszawa 1998, p. 378.

³ Zob. T. Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, New York 2010; H. A. Jacobsen, *Der Weg zur Teilung der Welt*, Koblenz–Bonn 1979, p. 26f.

Map A.1.1
The partition of Poland with the secret protocol to the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact and the final division of Polish territories on 28th September 1939.

Plotted by the author
(Konrad Wnęk).

- Key:**
- Warsaw, capital of Poland
 - Other Polish cities
 - Line of demarcation between the German Third Reich and the Soviet Union arranged in the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact of 23 August 1939
 - Line of demarcation between the German Third Reich and the Soviet Union settled in the German–Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty of 28 September 1939



NKVD of the USSR (*Народный комиссариат внутренних дел СССР*) - the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR, in the years 1917-1946 in charge of maintaining order in the territory of the Soviet state, to which the Civic Militia, border troops, fire brigades and prison service were subordinate. In 1934, the Soviet political police, then called the Main Directorate of State Security, was incorporated. From that year, the NKVD was subordinate to the security service, militia, border protection troops, fire brigade, prison service and labour camps. As the main tool for implementing Stalin's policy of repression, the NKVD became the symbol of all Stalinist crimes committed during the collectivisation of agriculture, the Great Terror and during the Soviet occupation of Polish lands and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe during World War II.

The Brest-Litovsk Military Parade - was held jointly by the Soviet Union and Germany. Pursuant to the provisions of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, on 22 September 1939, in the fortress of Brześć nad Bugiem (Brest-Litovsk), which Germany had taken from Poland on 17 September 1939, was handed over to the Soviet Union. At the official ceremony, Germany was represented by General Heinz Guderian, commander of the German IXth Armored Corpse while the Soviet Union was represented by Semyon Krivoshein, commander of the Soviet Twenty-Ninth Tank Brigade taking over the city on behalf of the USSR authorities. The climax of the ceremony was the "victory parade" of German and Soviet units marching down Lubelska, the high street of Brześć. A reviewing stand festooned with swastikas and red stars was put up in front of the Voivodeship Office, and Guderian and Krivoshein took up their places on it to take the salute. The 45-minute ceremonial march-past has come down in history as a symbol of the co-operation between Germany and the Soviet Union which facilitated the outbreak of the Second World War.

1.2 The aims of the Soviet policy for the occupation of Poland

The aim of the Soviet policy was the liquidation of the representatives of Polish elites, all traces of Polish statehood and incorporation of the occupied Polish areas into the USSR. The first step on this path was the legitimisation of the new order, in accordance with the propaganda thesis of the "liberation" of the Byelorussian, Ukrainian and Jewish populations from the "Polish yoke", through elections to the so-called People's Assemblies of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine. In reality, the assemblies were merely puppet political bodies, set up by means of a fake election, conducted in an atmosphere of coercion and terror. Voting was conducted according to Soviet custom, treating voters to

alcohol and snacks. Officially, the turnout was about 95%, and the votes fell on communist candidates designated in advance. These bodies were set up to make a "request" to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to annex the area of the former eastern provinces of the Second Republic to the USSR. As a result, on 1 and 2 November 1939, the occupied territories were incorporated into the Soviet Union. The northern part, so-called "Western Byelorussia," was incorporated into the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, and the southern part, "Western Ukraine," was incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, both of which were components of the USSR. The fact that Soviet citizenship was forcibly bestowed on almost all the inhabitants of the occupied territories offered a cogent proof of the annexation⁴.

The next step was to integrate the occupied territories with the rest of the Soviet Union by imposing the Soviet administrative, legal, and governmental order on them. The Polish territorial division was adapted to the Soviet model by a name change - voivodeships changed to oblasts, powiats (counties) to raions, and gminas (municipalities) to rural communities. The administrative division of the occupied Polish land was fashioned after the Soviet one. In "Western Ukraine" instead of four existing voivodeships (Lwów, Stanisławów, Wołyń, and Tarnopol) six oblasts were established. In "Western Byelorussia" the previous five voivodeships (Poleskie, Nowogrodzkie and parts of Wilno, Białystok and Wołyń provinces) were replaced by five new oblasts. Part of the Wilno province, including Wilno itself was at that time transferred to Lithuania, and in 1940 in its entirety incorporated into the USSR.

After a short transitional period the Soviets set up their own authorities on the occupied territories - introducing a radical form of nationalisation in the economy, putting public and political affairs under a rigidly centralised system of administration, imposing the Marxist-Leninist ideology on all aspects of public and private affairs, effectively repealing citizens' and human rights, and employing a wide-ranging system of repressive measures as their way of governing the country and controlling society. All this was accompanied by a systematic project to destroy all that still remained of the official and legal institutions of the obliterated Polish State, and the (usually physical) elimination of individuals associated with Polish statehood⁵.

⁴ Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków na ziemiach wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej 1939-1941*, Łódź 1997, p. 48-84; G. Hryciuk, *Polacy we Lwowie 1939-1944. Życie codzienne*, Warszawa 2000, p. 22-23.

⁵ Na ten temat zob. W. Bonusiak, *Polityka ludnościowa i ekonomiczna ZSRR na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w latach 1939-1941 („Zachodnia Ukraina” i „Zachodnia Białoruś”)*, Rzeszów 2006; M. Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Białorusini w zaborze sowieckim. Stosunki polsko-białoruskie na ziemiach północno-wschodnich pod okupacją*

These events were of fundamental importance in the context of later negotiations at international level about the future belonging of the area. The Russians stressed at every step that after the Red Army occupied the area, the inhabitants themselves “asked” to be incorporated into the USSR. It was falsely portrayed that this process was not an incorporation, but an action resulting from the will of the local population.

According to state propaganda, every citizen of the USSR, regardless of his or her nationality, had the full right to enjoy all the of the ‘benefits’ of the new order. In reality, this did not apply to, among others, former government officials, military officers, representatives of the uniformed services, clergy and persons holding any offices during the Second Republic. Soviet propaganda pointed to them as creators and officers of the hostile system, who had to be exemplarily punished. Especially strongly condemned were former military settlers, most often veterans of the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik war⁶. Therefore, even two days before the formal aggression of 17 September 1939, Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR Lavrenty Beria issued an order on the fastest possible seizure of the current documentation and archives of the most important Polish state institutions. On the basis these materials, it was intended to catch all persons holding public functions in the Second Republic⁷.

To curry favour with the local people, the occupying authorities refrained from forcing Russian upon them, instead, they promoted Ukrainian and Belarusian. These were the languages used in the daily newspapers, for public announcements broadcast from loudspeakers in the streets, as well as for all manner of transactions handled by public and state institutions.

The Russification of the region was supposed to take place gradually through the initial Ukrainisation and Belorussianisation of individual areas of social life. However, this was not always successful, especially in the larger urban centres with academic traditions, such as Lwów. At the Polish universities so far, due to the lack of other staff, most classes were still conducted in Polish, although it was required that current paper documentation be filled out in Ukrainian.

sowiecką 1939–1941, Warszawa 2007.

⁶ A. Zapalec, *Ziemia Tarnopolska w okresie pierwszej okupacji sowieckiej 1939–1941*, Kraków 2006, p. 181.

⁷ Dyrektywa narkoma wnutrnisznych spraw SRSR L. Berii pro zawdaniya operatywnych hrup NKWS pry wstupi radjanskich wijsk na terytoriju Zachidnoj Ukrainy ta Zachidnoj Bilorusi, 15 weresnaj 1939 r., in: *Radjanski Orhany Derżbezpeky u vereseni 1939 – czerwni 1941 r. Dokumenty HDA SBU Ukrainy*, Kyjiw 2009, p. 46–49.

Homo sovieticus (Soviet man)
- a term for a man shaped by political activities aimed at creating and moulding an ideal citizen of the USSR, completely subordinated to the state (party organisation). Homo sovieticus was supposed to be characterised above all by a lack of an opinion of his own, an inability to interpret events in depth, and intellectual enslavement. He also showed no desire to travel abroad, outside the USSR and other countries of „people’s democracy”, thus closing himself off from the cultural achievements of the Western world. The only „window on the world” for him was the Soviet media (usually the press and radio, and later television), offering content appropriate to the authorities. He recognised the assumptions of communist ideology as his own, such as class struggle, atheism, domination of the communist party in public life, extreme centralism and control over citizens’ private lives. He was also to accept without reservation the policies of successive ruling teams of the communist party and state. He was to be ready at any time to work for and defend the „socialist homeland”.

Initially, the forced deportations of the Polish population carried out by the occupying forces concerned mainly people connected to the Polish administration and those living in the border strip, delimited between the areas of German and Soviet occupation. As part of the “cleansing” of the area, sometimes whole towns were displaced, usually to Volhynia. A special case was also the city of Przemyśl, which was divided in half along the San River (the part on the right side was administered by the Soviets, while the left-bank buildings fell to the Germans).

At first, the Soviet authorities did not embark on the deportation of the Polish population, except for public officers and people living in the border zone along the line of demarcation between the German and Soviet occupation zones. Occasionally, whole communities were deported in a drive to “purge” the area, and these people were usually resettled in Wołyn (Volhynia)⁸. The city of Przemyśl, which is located on both banks of the River San, was a special case. The right bank was administered by the Russians, while left-bank Przemyśl was under the Germans.

Those Poles who were left were (for the time being) to become Soviet citizens and enjoy their own culture, language, and traditions, just like other national groups in the Soviet Union. From mid-1940, propaganda activities targeted at Polish people promoted Adam Mickiewicz and his works. He was presented as a great Slavic poet who invoked the history of many nations in his poetry. The real aim of these efforts, albeit conducted in diverse languages, was to create a new human type, “Soviet Man”.

Initially in 1939–1941, the Soviet authorities which established themselves on the former eastern territories of Poland limited their war on the Roman Catholic Church to the imposition of a series of taxes on individual parishes. This was meant to limit the scale of the Church’s activities. A certain change came in mid-1940, when not only was the League of Militant Atheists allowed to operate, but the decree that had been in force in the USSR since 1918, liquidating the property rights of religious associations, was also extended to the occupied territories. On its basis, it was possible to take away both temples and movable property, especially liturgical vessels and votive offerings made of gold and silver.

In a sense, the actions of the Soviet authorities towards all Christian denominations had the opposite effect to their earlier intentions. For, amidst the ubiquitous propaganda about the successes and further challenges to the development of communism,

⁸ Bereza, Tomasz, *Przesiedleni znad Sanu – zamordowani nad Horyniem. Losy Polaków deportowanych przez Sowietów z obwodu drohobyckiego w ramach „oczyszczania” pasa przygranicznego (1940–1944)*, Rzeszów – Warszawa, 2020, passim.

Union of the Godless (Союз воинствующих безбожников, Union of Militant Godless) – an organisation established in the USSR in 1925 under the name League of the Godless (since 1929 as the Union). Its aim was to promote atheism and fight against churches and religion. It fought above all against the Russian Orthodox Church, as the largest denominational organisation in the USSR, but also against the structures and initiatives of other confessions. In order to draw society away from the influence of the Church, the Union of the Godless organised numerous propaganda lectures, while in the buildings of liquidated churches it opened museums of atheism. It officially ceased to function in 1947.

a large section of the population found peace precisely in religious buildings. For Poles (Roman Catholics), these were churches, for Ukrainians (Greek Catholics) and Belarusians (Orthodox), orthodox churches, and for Jews, synagogues⁹.

1.3 Propaganda in the age of the occupation

At the time when the Red Army entered the territory of the eastern voivodships of the Second Polish Republic together with soldiers came also officials who were to deal with, among others, propaganda and the legitimisation of the new order in the eyes of the inhabitants. Therefore, as early as on 18 September 1939, in Tarnopil a newspaper called "Słowo Żołnierza" began to be published. Its original version had only two pages, while the content focused primarily on anti-Polish propaganda.

In line with the idea of communist internationalism, it was argued that Ukrainian and Belarussian nations are not enemies of the Polish workers who have also previously experienced a lot of harassment from the state apparatus of the Second Polish Republic. That's why it was emphasised that the Red Army at the time of the invasion on the eastern voivodships of the Polish state, was "liberating" only Ukrainians or Bielorusians but also Poles¹⁰.

Newspapers were also published in Ukrainian and Bielarussian where the Second Republic of Poland was mainly tarnished. The electoral system was criticised, so were the attitude of the state to ethnic minorities or daily living standards. However, the greatest emphasis was placed on the plight of the Ukrainian and Belarussian workers to date, receiving low wages or being deprived of work for political reasons. This social group was persuaded of the imminent justice of universal labour for all citizens of the USSR, regardless of nationality¹¹. However, with the passage of time, the repressive policy of the occupation apparatus and the loss of some of the previously granted positions, especially managerial ones, given to Soviet apparatchiks arriving from the East, reduced support for the occupation authorities among former Polish citizens¹².

The Polish community initially received assurances of equality in the presence of culture and the Polish language in the public space. However, purges in workplaces and state-owned enterpris-

⁹ W. Bonusiak, *Polityka ludnościowa i ekonomiczna...*, p. 396.

¹⁰ *Słowo Żołnierza* nr 1, 18 września 1939 r., s. 2.

¹¹ Zob. M. Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Białorusini...*, s. 45–69.

¹² R. Wnuk, *Za pierwszego Sowietą". Polska konspiracja na Kresach Wschodnich li Rzeczypospolitej (wrzesień 1939 – czerwiec 1941)*, Warszawa 2007, s. 15.

es (mainly on the railways) soon began. It turned out that a qualified Polish railwayman can be considered "foreign" in class terms in the most important jobs in the eyes of the new authorities¹³.

Over the next few months of the occupation the soviet propaganda increasingly more often resorted to comparisons between the Second Polish Republic and the USSR. In each case it was stressed how allegedly successes were achieved in improving things in just over a few months of the New Order.

1.4. Soviet atrocities and repressive measures against Polish citizens

1.4.1 September 1939

Soviet aggression resulted in repressions and crimes against Polish citizens. The Soviet Union was not a party to the 1929 Geneva Convention on prisoners-of-war and implemented a ruthless policy to put down any sign whatsoever of resistance to the invasion. Red Army units treated any manifestation of resistance by Polish Army units as terrorist activity directed against the USSR. For this reason, soldiers and officers of the Polish Army who had been taken prisoner were often shot on the spot, while many others were sentenced to death by the so-called Red Army Military Tribunals acting on a summary basis, ostensibly to comply with legal formalities.

Similar treatment was meted out to all Polish citizens defending their homeland – for example, the 300 or so defenders of Grodno (soldiers, scouts and civilians), who were shot for having defended their city for three days against the Red Army's armoured units.

Defence of Grodno – During the September 1939 campaign. Grodno was supposed to be an important point of Polish resistance against the non-German army, but most of the military units assigned to defend it were quickly sent to the Polish-German front, including to defend Lwów. After the USSR's aggression against Poland on 17 September 1939, the Polish military authorities did not plan to defend Grodno against the Red Army troops, ordering soldiers and officers to withdraw to Lithuania. Despite this, a small number of Polish Army units, individual soldiers and part of the civilian population, especially scouts and schoolchildren, decided to defend the city against the Soviet aggressor. Although formally the defence was commanded by Colonel Julian Siedlecki, and later by Brigadier General Wacław Przeździecki, its initiators were the Deputy Mayor of Grodno, Eng. Roman Sawicki, and the head of the District Supplementary Headquarters, Major Benedykt Serafin, who assembled and prepared for battle some 1500 poorly armed defenders. Before the armoured units of the Red Army reached the city, on 17-18 September 1939, there was a rebellion of communists - sympathisers of the USSR, who tried to take control of the centre with weapons in their hands and paralyse the prepared defence. The quick reaction of the army, police and volunteers made it possible to successfully pacify the diversionary activities. On 20-22 September 1939, the defenders of Grodno fought heavy battles with Soviet armoured-motorised units, destroying at least 19 tanks and 3 armoured vehicles. In retaliation for their own losses and the strong resistance of the Poles, the Soviet army, supported by local communist sympathisers, executed the captured defenders in many places in the city, murdering about 300 of them.

¹³ G. Hryciuk, *Polacy...*, s. 41–49.

Even before the outbreak of the War, the Soviet secret services had been organising supporters of the advent of the new power, who immediately after the aggression of 17th of September formed multiple terrorist-diversion groups and self-proclaimed organs of power, the so-called Revolutionary Committees, undertaking lynchments, murders, assaults, looting and unlawful arrests. Alongside these were robbery and bandit groups, taking advantage of the period of chaos and the disintegration of state authority to get rich at any cost. Two groups of people fell victim to these acts of violence:

- persons closely associated with the Polish state (military settlers, policemen, officers of the Polish Army, civil servants, teachers, political activists),
- people with any property (aristocrats, landowners, clergy, bourgeoisie and relatively wealthy peasants)¹⁴.

The Soviet military and civilian authorities even encouraged the local population to be aggressive towards the “Polish Lords” in order to legitimise their occupation rule in this way. As a result, in September 1939, in the areas occupied by the Soviet Union, approximately 6–7 thousand soldiers of the Polish Army were killed or murdered, and approximately 2 thousand representatives of the civilian population also lost their lives¹⁵. In total, 8–9 thousand Polish citizens perished.

1.4.2 Fate of Polish POWs

During the Soviet invasion, about 240 thousand soldiers and officers serving in the Polish Army were taken prisoner, mainly from the reserve units who had been preparing to fight the Germans in the west and were surprised by the Soviet attack from the east. After the rank-and-file soldiers were released, the remaining 125 thousand of them were handed over to the NKVD's transportation forces and confined in POW camps¹⁶. After several waves of release, in the end of 1939, there were still about 40 thousand Polish POWs left in these camps. In violation of the international law, the Soviets used the men and NCO's, numbering about 26 thousand, for heavy labour on building sites and in

¹⁴ J. T. Gross, *Revolution from abroad. The Soviet conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Byelarusia*, Princeton, New Jersey 1988, p. 35–45.

¹⁵ Cz. Grzelak, *Kresy w czerwieni. Agresja Związku Sowieckiego na Polskę w 1939 roku*, Warszawa 1998, s. 492–513; K. Jasiewicz, *Zagłada polskich Kresów. Ziemiaństwo polskie na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej pod okupacją sowiecką 1939–1941*, Warszawa 1997, s. 71–85.

¹⁶ See Conquest, Robert, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*, New York 1991.

Map A.1.2
Soviet POW camps and execution sites where Polish officers, policemen, and other Polish citizens were held and killed

Opracowanie własne Konrad Wnęk.

Key:

- ▲ Soviet prisons on occupied Polish territory
- Soviet labour camps where Polish citizens were confined
- ✚ Execution sites of Polish citizens

■ POLAND
■ USSR



1:10 000 000

industry, while most of the officers, military police, and policemen were sent to special three POW camps, Starobelsk, Kozelsk, and Ostashkov, as well as to the Minsk and Kiev prisons. They were subjected to intensive interrogations and ideological indoctrination. The prisoners were kept in harsh living conditions; they were undernourished, deprived of any medical care, exposed to cold and nightmarishly crowded (in some camps the bunks for the prisoners were even eight storeys high). The Soviet State declared

Katyn method – during the Katyn massacre, the NKVD torturers developed a special method of shooting Polish officers. Two NKVD-men held the victim by the hands while the executioner shot him in the back of the head with a small weapon. This method ensured that the lives of the executed were effectively taken away and limited the amount of blood at the execution sites. It was developed by NKVD Major Vasily Blokhin, one of the main organisers and executors of this crime. In this way, 14,587 officers of the Polish Army, officers of the State Police, Border Guard and military police were murdered. Initially, a Soviet 7.62 mm calibre Nagant revolvers were used for executions, followed by German 7.65 mm calibre Walther PP pistols. Victims murdered in Katyn were shot over special pits dug in the Katyn forest, where they were buried; in Kharkov and Kalinin (Tver), the crimes were carried out at the NKVD headquarters, and the murdered officers were buried in the outskirts of the city (Kharkov) or 30 km away from the place of execution (Mednoye near Kalinin).

them a “counter-revolutionary element, not likely to re-socialise.” On 5 March 1940, the Politburo of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks under the leadership of Joseph Stalin decided to murder 14,700 Polish POWs held in these three camps, as well as a further of 11 thousand Polish officers, administrators, and fugitives from prisons in Soviet-occupied Poland. The POWs from Starobelsk, Kozelsk, and Ostashkov were murdered in Katyn, Kharkov, and Tver (Miednoje), while the prisoners were exterminated in Minsk (Kuropaty), in Kiev (Bykovnia), Vladimir, and Kherson. The murders were carried out by NKVD men shooting victims in the back of the head. 21,858 Polish citizens, including 7,305 held in prisons on the Soviet-occupied territories (the western oblasts of the Byelorussian and Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republics), were murdered in the Katyn Atrocity¹⁷.

In June 1940, following the Soviet annexation of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, another 5,200 Polish servicemen who had been interned in those countries since September 1939 fell into

¹⁷ Zob. N. S. Lebedeva, A. M. Cienciala, W. Materski (eds.), *Katyn. A crime without punishment*, New Haven 2007.

Soviet hands. In the Soviet nomenclature they were dubbed “internees.” In the spring of 1941, nearly 4 thousand of them were sent for slave labour in places of detention in the Oblast of Murmansk north of the Polar Circle. All those who survived that ordeal were released after the outbreak of the German–Soviet war (22 June 1941), though the dates of their release were different, chiefly because local authorities were reluctant to let their unpaid manpower go¹⁸.

1.4.3 Arrests of Polish citizens

Anyone considered an enemy of the Soviet regime was subject to arrest, especially state and local government officials, policemen, officers of the Polish Army, landowners, military settlers, teachers and clergy. Also included in this category were smugglers, black marketeers/speculators, persons caught in the act of illegally crossing the border, peasant farmers who put up resistance to the collectivisation of their farms, and members of the anti-Soviet underground resistance movement. Arrestees were submitted to torture, long hours under interrogation, confinement in overcrowded prison cells, hunger, cold and no contact with their families. The perpetrators of those repressions did not respect any civil and humanitarian rights of the arrested and detained persons, nor could the latter count on any legal assistance. Those who arrested them had no respect for things like civil or human rights. Most were convicted by a kangaroo court: the Special Collegium of the NKVD of the USSR (*Особое совещание при НКВД СССР*) without the right of appeal. The typical sentence was 3.5 to 8 years’ imprisonment in a forced labour camp.

According to the available Soviet statistics, at least 110 thousand Polish citizens were arrested in 1939–1941, though the figure was probably higher and about 60% of the arrestees were ethnic Poles. In the second year of Soviet occupation, the new authorities turned their attention to Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Lithuanians, who were now arrested in greater numbers. About 1,200 of those arrested were sentenced to death and executed. Whereas 7,305 were murdered in the Katyn Atrocity, at least 10 thousand others were shot after the outbreak of the German–Soviet war when the Soviets “evacuated” their prisons in June and July 1941. Actually, the real cause of this was not so much their inability to clear the prisons because of the rapid advance of German troops, but rather a Politburo decision to seize

¹⁸ W. Materski, *Jeńcy wojenni i internowani w latach 1939–1941*, in: *Polska 1939–1945. Straty osobowe i ofiary represji pod dwiema okupacjami*, editors T. Szarota and W. Materski, Warszawa 2009, pp. 215–226.

the opportunity and get rid of “the most dangerous element” once and for good. In this respect, the operation was akin to the Katyn Atrocity¹⁹.

Earlier, the Soviets had been deporting prisoners convicted to hard labour into the Soviet interior, usually to gulags in Siberia or the European northern part of the Soviet Union beyond the Polar Circle. Those sent to such places were forced to work as slave labourers, as lumberjacks in the taiga forests, miners, or as construction workers who were building roads and railway lines. They worked beyond human strength, were exposed to unbelievable cold, hunger, brutality of the guards and lack of medical care. Mortality among the gulag prisoners reached from a few to more than ten per cent a year, and was particularly high in certain parts of the USSR, such as Kolyma and Vorkuta. The figures for prisoners from the Soviet-occupied part of Poland killed or dead of “natural causes” are estimated at 35–50 thousand, including more than 7,000 prisoners murdered in the Katyn Atrocity. This figure fails to account, however, for either the 15,000 Polish officers – prisoners of war – imprisoned in NKVD special camps and murdered in Katyn, Kharkov, Mednoye, Bykovnia and Kuropaty at the time of the Katyn Atrocity, or the fatalities related to deportations deep into the USSR – at least 15,000 persons counting the 15 thousand Polish officers held in the special NKVD camps and massacred in the Katyn Atrocity and at least 15 thousand more who died as the outcome of deportations into the Soviet interior²⁰.

1.4.4 Deportations of Polish citizens

One of the key instruments the Soviet authorities applied in implementing their policy on the occupied territory of Poland was the compulsory resettlement of people belonging to professions or social groups suspected of anti-Soviet activities. Deportation provided a means of elimination of individuals and communities that did not fit in with the rules governing Soviet society, and served as a deterrent for others. On 5 December 1939, the Politburo took a decision to forcibly resettle Polish ex-servicemen and evict those Polish settlers who had formerly served in the army together with their families. About a fortnight later, Polish foresters and their families were added to the list of those set for deportation. The entire spectrum of human resources available to the occupying authorities – soldiers, policemen, NKVD per-

¹⁹ K. Jasiewicz, *Aresztowania na Kresach Wschodnich w latach 1939–1941*, in: *Polska 1939–1945...*, pp. 227–237.

²⁰ A.Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków ...*, pp. 320–392.

sonnel, Communist Party apparatchiks and activists, along with locals sympathetic to the occupying authorities – they were all engaged in the preparatory work and the deportation itself. On the night of 9/10 February 1940 the deportations started. Deportees were allowed to take only the most necessary things with them fitting into a single suitcase or bundle, and had to leave all the rest of their property behind. Most of it was soon carried off by local people. The resettlement was conducted in extremely hard weather conditions, with temperatures down to minus 40 degrees Centigrade.

The deportees were packed into freight railway cars and set off on a train journey lasting 2–4 weeks in even harsher conditions. Babies, the elderly and the sick died on the way. Their destination were places in the Siberian taiga or the northern region of the European part of the USSR. They were put off the train at special settlements guarded by the NKVD men, in extremely hard living conditions. Usually, they were forced to do extremely hard slave labour felling the forests or working in the mines. About 140 thousand were deported in the first round of resettlement. Over 80% of the deportees were Poles whereas the remaining group was made up of Ukrainians or Belarussians, each representing about 10%²¹.

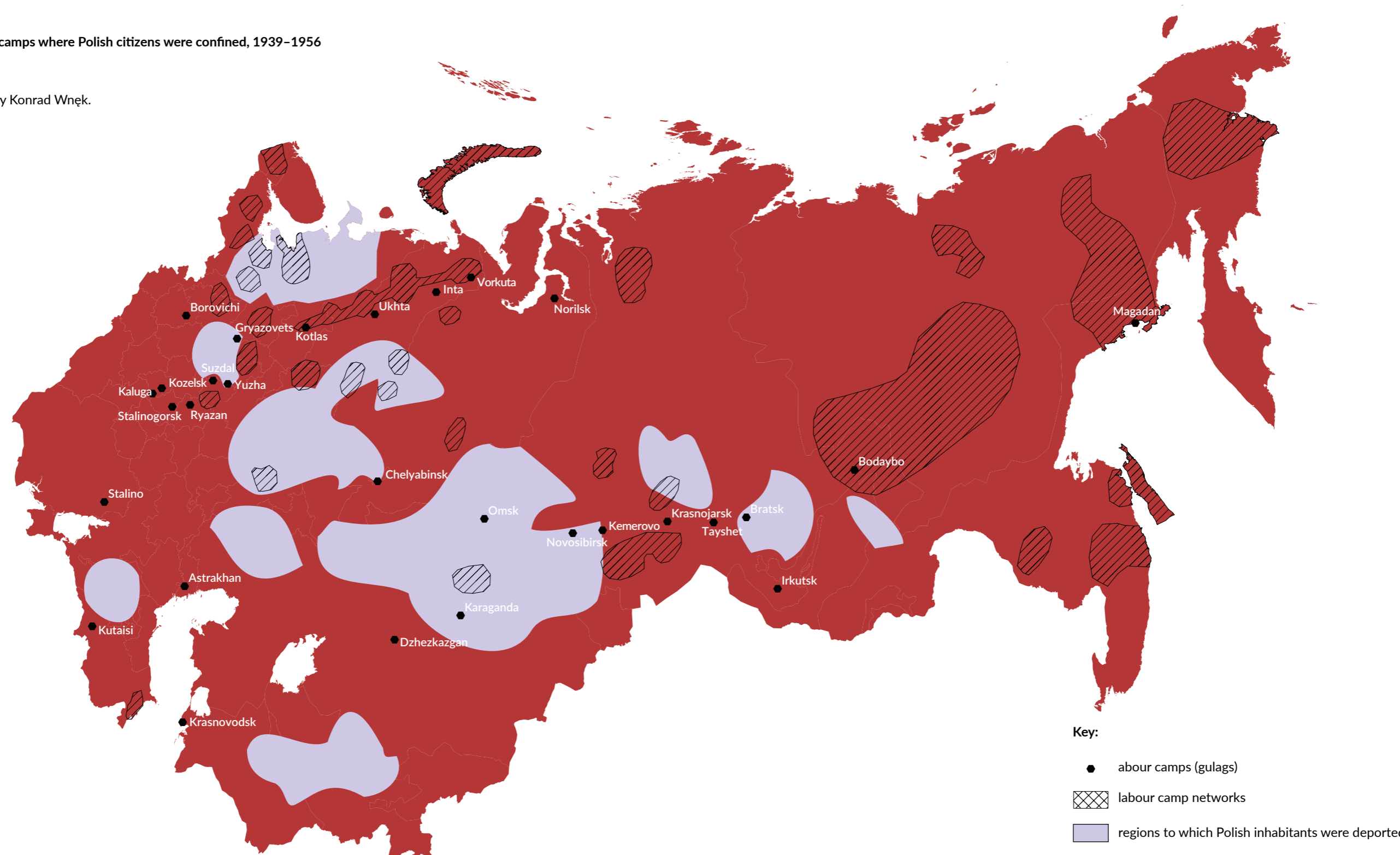
The second round of the deportation was conducted on 13 April 1940 and involved the expulsion of the families of the officers and policemen shot in Katyn as well as in other camps and prisons at that time. Most of the victims were women and children. The Soviet Union applied the principle of collective responsibility, packing them into cattle cars and transporting them by rail to kolkhozes and sovkhoses in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. There, they were left in dire circumstances. The women and older children were forced to do hard labour, for which they were paid a pittance, not even enough to cover the costs of the most basic necessities, such as food. Sometimes the local people were sympathetic to the deportees but more often than not, the new arrivals met with hostility and were treated as rivals competing for the negligible resources of food. About 61 thousand people were resettled in the second phase of the deportation.

The third round of the deportation mainly hit refugees who had fled east from the German zone of occupied Poland, leaving their homes in western and central Poland when combat or the ensuing reign of terror started. Thus a few hundred thousand

²¹ S. Ciesielski, W. Materski, A. Paczkowski, *Represje sowieckie wobec Polaków i obywateli polskich*, Warszawa 2000, p. 15.

Mapa A.1.3.
Soviet labour camps where Polish citizens were confined, 1939–1956

Map drafted by Konrad Wnęk.



- Key:**
- about camps (gulags)
 - ▨ labour camp networks
 - regions to which Polish inhabitants were deported
 - USSR

Scale: 1:26 000 000

inhabitants of the Second Republic of Poland, including two hundred thousand Jews moved to the Soviet zone of occupation, where they encountered a harsh predicament: food shortages, unemployment, and no roof over their heads. The situation was so bad that some of them decided to return to the German-occupied zone. The NKVD registered all of those who wanted to return but instead of letting them do so, arranged rail transportation to take them east. The third phase of the deportation started on 29 June 1940, following the same scheme that the Soviets had already applied twice before. This time, there were 79 thousand deportees, around 85% Jewish, 11% Polish, 3% Ukrainian, and 1% Belarusian by ethnicity²². They were transported in the same conditions as the previous victims of deportations to Siberia and the north of the European part of the USSR, their destinations being 270 special settlements guarded by the NKVD. On the train journey, they suffered from hunger and thirst, and were afflicted by diseases; the diseases were only treated occasionally by doctors admitted to them at some railway stops. Once they reached their destination were made to perform slave labour, just like the victims of the previous two deportations, felling the taiga forests or working in the mines, and living in extremely harsh conditions²³.

When the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic States, Bessarabia and Bucovina in the summer of 1940, its authorities set about clearing the newly acquired territories of real and potential enemies, with preparations for another deportation to Siberia and the North, which started on 21 May and continued until 21 June 1941. On the following day, the German-Soviet war broke out, leaving some of the deportation trains stranded. About 41 thousand Polish citizens were victims of this fourth wave of deportation from the occupied territories of pre-war Poland.

On 30 July 1941, the Polish government-in-exile concluded an agreement for the release of the deportees. Under the Sikorski-Maisky Pact with the Soviet authorities. Polish citizens suffering repressions on the territory of the Soviet Union were to be amnestied²⁴. A total of 325 thousand citizens of the Second Polish Republic had been exiled in four instalments of deportation. About 60% of the overall figure were ethnic Poles, 22% were Jewish, and the rest consisted of persons of other ethnicities (Belarusians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and others). At least 15 thousand of them had died.

²² A. Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków...*, pp. 350–363.

²³ See A. Applebaum, *Gulag. A History*, New York 2003; S. Ciesielski, *GUŁag. Radzieckie obozy koncentracyjne 1918–1953*, Warszawa 2010.

²⁴ A. Głowacki, *Deportowani w latach 1940–1941* in: *Polska 1939–1945...*, pp. 238–246.

GUŁag – аcronym for *Главное управление и справительно-трудоустройственных лагерей и колоний*, “Chief Administrative Office for Corrective Labour Camps and Colonies”, the Soviet system of labour (concentration) camps founded in 1929 and amalgamated with the NKVD in 1934, established and managed by the Soviet political police. Its main purpose was to manage the slave labour of prisoners convicted for political and criminal offences. GULAG provided the Soviet Union with substantial revenues from the mining and extraction of natural resources, the felling of forests, and building investments, e.g. the White Sea-Baltic Canal. Currently, about 30 million victims are estimated to have been confined in GULAG camps in 1929–1987. At least 2.7 million died owing to the climatic conditions, the hard labour, as well as food shortages and malnutrition.

Another 13–16 thousand inhabitants of the Soviet-occupied south-eastern part of Poland had been forcibly resettled into Bessarabia and Bucovina, areas which the Soviet Union seized from Romania in mid-June 1940. Poles probably made up one-third of that figure, while the rest were Ukrainians. More Polish citizens were evicted and forcibly resettled during a campaign to “purge” the border zone of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (this involved the displacement of 35,300 victims) and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (102,800 victims)²⁵.

1.4.5 Conscription into the Red Army

Citizens of the Second Republic of Poland were forcibly conscripted into the Red Army on the basis of the decision of the Soviet occupation authorities to obligatorily grant Soviet citizenship to the inhabitants of the areas officially incorporated into the USSR on 1 and 2 November 1939. Between 1940 and 1941, conscription of men born in several years into the Red Army took place. The upper limit of estimates by researchers dealing with the subject is the conscription of 300,000 recruits-citizens of the Second Republic, among whom Ukrainians were to make up 38%, Poles 33%, Byelorussians 17% and Jews less than 10%²⁶. Their social origin was taken into account during the conscription; the conscription commissions were to enlist only young people from the peasantry, those working in kolkhozes, those from working class and craftsmen. Those deemed unsuitable for the Soviet model or with inappropriate origins were sent to the Red Army's auxiliary units, the so-called “construction battalions”, as they were not allowed to fight with weapons as class suspects. With the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, soldiers with origins in the occupied Polish territories were treated with distrust and were often sent to the construction battalions, where they had to face hard work, difficult living conditions and the hostility of the Soviets. Due to the lack of access to Soviet documents, the exact number of conscripted soldiers is not known, so it is difficult to estimate how many soldiers incorporated into the ranks of the Red Army died in defence of a homeland that was not their own²⁷.

²⁵ E. Kowalska, *Przymusowe przesiedlenia obywateli polskich z Kresów Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej na wschodnie obszary ukraińskiej i białoruskiej SRR oraz Besarabii w latach 1939–1941* in: *Polska 1939–1945...*, pp. 247–252; S. Ciesielski, W. Materski, A. Paczkowski, *Represje sowieckie...*, pp. 16–17.

²⁶ G. Hryciuk, *Victims 1939–1941. The Soviet Repressions in Eastern Poland 1939–1941*, in: *Shared History Divided Memory. Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939–1941*, E. Barkan, E. A. Cole, K. Struve (red.), Leipzig 2007, p. 199.

²⁷ A. Głowacki, *Przymusowo wcieleni do Armii Czerwonej, w tym pełniący służbę w tzw. strojbatlionach*, in: *Polska 1939–1945...*, pp. 253–260.

1.5. The economy, industry and agriculture

A fundamental objective of the USSR authorities was the liquidation of private property, meaning the nationalisation of enterprises and agricultural estates. From the very first days of the 'new order', the Soviet administration set about the collectivisation and nationalisation of landed estates, both those owned by individual owners and those owned by religious associations, businesses and schools. In total, 1 million hectares (an area the size of, for example, Cyprus or Jamaica) were nationalised in so-called Western Belarus and 2 million hectares (an area the size of, for example, El Salvador or Slovenia) in so-called Western Ukraine.

From January 1940, the process of dismantling individual agriculture and replacing it with collective forms of farming began. Collectivisation of specific landed estates was dealt with by local peasant committees, set up in specific villages and towns²⁸.

Collective farms, called kolkhozes or sovkhoses, began to be established. The difference between the two was the form of land ownership included in the unit. In the case of the kolkhozes – officially the owners were still local peasants who had received land allocations from the state. They did, however, form larger collective farms, consisting of the property of many farmers, operating according to an established set of principles.

In the sovkhoses, on the other hand, the entire land area as well as the tools, cattle and farm buildings were state property. The farmers working in them were simply employed as part of a specific sovkhos, without any ownership of the land they cultivated. The new administration paid more attention to creating kolkhozes rather than sovkhoses. In addition to the creation of collective farms under state ownership, there was a desire to emphasise the decisive superiority of the collective economy over the individual economy and, above all, the fact that peasants had formally voluntarily joined this form of land cultivation.

The collectivisation campaign was accompanied by administrative coercion and repressions against resistant peasants. Wealthier farmers, the so-called kulakhs, were subjected to particular persecution, being oppressed by additional taxes and being forced to sell all their crops at discounted prices set by the state. Any expression of dissatisfaction or even passive resistance by the peasants to the Soviet authorities' agricultural policy was punishable by deportation, loss of the farm, imprisonment or financial penalties.

²⁸ M. Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Białorusini w zaborze...*, pp. 314–315.

Industrial plants were similarly dealt with. After the seizure of a particular enterprise, the entire stock was subordinated to a military commissar or so-called factory committees – if the decision was taken by civilian authorities. The idea was that practically every manufacturing workplace was to be nationalised, even if it employed a small number of people. In this way, the Soviets took over not only small sawmills, forestry enterprises, breweries, mills, glass factories, tanneries, paper mills, but also large refineries and mines in the vicinity of the Boryslav Basin. All these establishments (private, state-owned, cooperative) were subject to compulsory takeover by the Soviet state without compensation to the owners.

The people who had been managing the companies up to that point were swiftly removed from their management positions. Newly appointed officials were not selected on the basis of skill or competence – usually, party affiliation was simply sufficient to hold a high position in a particular company. Individuals with a criminal past of a political nature and a stay in prison during the Second Republic were also highly regarded. As communists repressed by the non-communist state, they were set as role models in the new reality.

From December 1939, the nationalisation of trade, commerce and services continued through administrative and economic pressure. Owners of shops, artisanal workshops and service outlets received additional taxes, known as domiary, the amount of which made it impossible to pay. So they had to close their own factories and employ themselves in state-owned trade, craft and service cooperatives. As a result, in the spring of 1940, as many as 90% of the institutions operating in these areas of the economy were nationalised (the alleged food, craft and service cooperatives were in fact subordinate to the Soviet state). The victims of these forced economic transformations were primarily the Jewish population, dominant in private trade and services, and the Ukrainian population, involved in the cooperative Ukrainian movement. Resisters faced administrative penalties and repressions in the form of property forfeiture and prison sentences.

1.6 Public and political affairs and everyday life

The Soviet Union operated a one-party political system, which meant a political monopoly for the Communist Party. Most of the Communist Party members on the former eastern territories of Poland came from the ethnic minorities that had

lived in the country or were ethnic Poles professing Communist ideology, many of whom had served prison sentences in the pre-war period.

No associations or informal groups were allowed to pursue activities in the public sphere if they had an exclusive membership of persons of the same ethnicity. The Soviet authorities saw to it that this rule was strictly observed, perceiving labelling mono-ethnic groups consisting people of just one ethnicity as “nationalists” not complying with the idea of universal equality and co-operation of “all the nations” making up the Soviet people²⁹.

Important changes ensued in the universal educational system. Religious instruction was removed from school curricula, whereas history and geography were adjusted to conform with the way these subjects were taught in the Soviet system of education. The network of educational institutions was reorganised and divided into primary schools offering four years of education, lower secondary schools offering a seven-year curriculum, and secondary schools with a total of ten years of education. In principle, education was to be free and accessible to all students regardless of their ethnic background. The new authorities concentrated on setting up schools with the languages of the minority communities as the language of instruction, though there were also schools with Polish as the language of instruction. However, they operated only in places with a majority population of Poles and taught a syllabus fully in line with the Soviet propaganda of equality for all Soviet citizens regardless of ethnicity.

The curricula obligatory in other Soviet republics were introduced, with Ukrainian or Belarusian depending on the republic and, from the older grades onwards, Russian as the common language throughout the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. A small number of establishments with Russian as the language of instruction, hitherto completely unknown in some areas, were also set up. By the autumn of 1940, 75% of the schools in the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic had Belarusian as the language of instruction. Polish was the language of instruction in just 16.5% of the schools in the region. The teaching in the rest of the schools was conducted either in Russian, Yiddish, Lithuanian, or Ukrainian. 84% of the schools in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic had Ukrainian as the language of instruction by September 1940, with only 12% teaching in Polish, and the remainder teaching in Yiddish, Russian, or Czech³⁰.

²⁹ I. Andruchiw, A. Francuz, *Stanislawszczyzna. Dwadczat burjemnych lit (1939–1959)*, Iwano-Frankiwnsk 2001, p. 16.

³⁰ In the Second Polish Republic in the then Galicia and Volhyn lived a 30 thousand minority of the so

A substantial part of the teaching staff were persons who had taught in the schools in Poland. For the Soviet authorities, they constituted a serious threat to the “right” kind of education of Soviet citizens, but the number of teachers sent in from other parts of the Soviet Union was far from sufficient to take over all the teaching posts. To deal with this problem, the authorities founded new teacher training institutions which were to turn out an entirely new generation of “qualified educators” and teachers within a couple of years.

A key problem which made itself felt particularly at the beginning of Soviet occupation in the autumn of 1939 was the general shortage of essential commodities. It was due to the abolition of the hitherto existing supply chain and production processes. In addition, shortages were exacerbated by the mass buyout of all goods by Red Army officers and their family members. Moreover, when the Soviets decided to alter the rouble to złoty exchange rate, bringing it up to 1: 1 – before September 1939 it had been over 3: 1 in favour of the Polish currency – the new “masters” from the East suddenly turned into tycoons (by Soviet standards), while the local people lost a substantial part of their assets³¹. A restriction was put on the amount of Polish currency which could be exchanged, and in December 1939 it was unexpectedly withdrawn from monetary circulation.

The first period under Soviet occupation was certainly a cultural shock to the inhabitants of what up to that time had been the eastern voivodeships of the Second Polish Republic. Even the subsequent changeovers (in 1941 the area came under German occupation, followed by a reversion to Soviet rule in 1944) did not bring such drastic changes in their everyday lives. By that time, the local people had grown accustomed, so to speak, to life under an occupying power.

1.7. Summary

In September 1939, the Soviet Union furthered its imperially-oriented foreign policy by taking part in the invasion of the Republic of Poland, which led to the end of Polish sovereign rule on the territory of the independent Second Polish Republic. Thereby, the Soviet Union contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War, joining with Nazi Germany to dismantle the

called Volhyn Czechs. See in A. Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków ...*, p. 424.

³¹ M. Wierzbicki, *Soviet Economic Policy in Annexed Eastern Poland*, in: *Stalin and Europe: Imitation and Domination, 1928–1953*, ed. by T. Snyder and R. Brandon, New York 2014, pp. 114–137.

The NKVD's Polish Operation
- was the first and largest operation targeted by the NKVD against a specific national and/or ethnic group living in the Soviet Union. The NKVD applied just one criterion to select victims for this criminal procedure: they had to be Polish, no matter what their social or financial status was, or what political views they held. The pretext the NKVD used to launch its Polish Operation was its alleged discovery of units of the non-existent POW (the Polish Military Organisation), on Soviet territory. On Stalin's orders, an anti-Polish genocidal campaign conducted by the NKVD started in 1937 and continued until 1938, targeting Soviet citizens with Polish roots and Polish Communists who had migrated to the Soviet Union. They were all branded “enemies of the people” and killed in a mass wave of brutal ethnic cleansing. The extermination action was characterised by its size, ruthlessness and brutality of the perpetrators. About 244 thousand Polish individuals or persons of Polish extraction were arrested, and about 111 thousand of them were executed. 23 thousand were sent to the labour camps, and about 100 thousand were forcibly deported to Kazakhstan or Siberia.

order established in Europe by the Treaty of Versailles. Soviet rule on the occupied territory of the Polish State was characterised by ruthlessness and brutality, unmistakably continuing the Polish Operation the NKVD carried out in 1937–1938 within the framework of the Great Terror, when it conducted a campaign of repressive measures against a community of at least 146 thousand Polish inhabitants of the Soviet Union, who were branded “enemies of the people” and about 111 thousand of them were murdered³².

The Katyn Atrocity and mass deportation of Polish citizens into the Soviet interior stand as symbols of the policy of extermination pursued by the occupying Soviet power and reveal the real aims and methods of operation employed by Stalin’s totalitarian state. The ruthless unification of the occupied areas with the rest of the Soviet state, unlimited economic exploitation and mass terror, crimes and repressions turned out to be a tragic encounter for the Polish citizens with a totalitarian, communist dictatorship in its truly cruel form³³.

Although we do not have absolute proof that the Soviet Union coordinated its extermination activities with those conducted at the same time (in the spring of 1940) by Hitler’s Germany, we do know that representatives of the USSR and the Third Reich met on a number of occasions (in Brest, Przemyśl, Zakopane, Kraków). At the same time, in the spring of 1940, they were carrying out the physical liquidation of the leadership layer of Polish society – as part of the Katyn Atrocity and Aktion AB.

The Katyn Lie – in April and May 1940, the Soviet Union murdered 21,857 Polish army officers and policemen it had been holding as POWs, but until 13 April 1990 denied responsibility for the atrocity.

Since April 1943, when the Third German Reich announced to the world that Polish officers were exterminated in Katyn, troops invading the Soviet Union discovered mass graves in Katyn containing the bodies of thousands of Polish officers, and promptly informed world opinion of this. The Soviet government denied culpability and adamantly claimed that this act of genocide had been committed by Germany. The Soviets tried but failed to append Katyn to the list of crimes in the indictment against the Germans who stood trial before the International Military Court at Nuremberg.

However, there was incontrovertible proof that the Polish POWs from the Soviet special camps were murdered in the spring of 1940, that is before the German–Soviet war broke out. Dates on the written records found on the bodies provided the clinching evidence. Letters from their families and newspaper scraps all stopped in April/May of 1940. Naturally enough, records confirming Soviet culpability were preserved in the Politburo and NKVD archives, yet it was not until 1990 that these documents were disclosed.

After the Second World War, the claim that Germany had perpetrated the Katyn Atrocity was stubbornly upheld and propagated by the government of Poland and other countries in the Communist bloc. Nonetheless, the people of Poland were convinced that the Soviets were culpable for the extermination of the Polish intelligentsia at Katyn, Kalinin (Tver), Kharkov, and other places of mass execution.

To hide the truth about this horrific genocide, the Soviets conducted an intensive campaign to spread news of an atrocity committed at Khatyn, a place with a similar-sounding name in Belarus, where German and Ukrainian troops massacred a local community in 1943 and razed the village. The similarity of the place-names was intended to confuse and hoodwink international opinion and persuade people around the world that Katyn was a German crime.

³² L. Viola, *Stalin’s Empire. The Gulag and Police Colonization in the Soviet Union in the 1930s*, in: *Stalin and Europe. Imitation and Domination, 1928–1953*, ed. by T. Snyder and R. Brandon, New York 2014, p.18–43. See T. Snyder, *Bloodlands...*; T. Sommer, *Operacja antypolska NKWD 1937–1938. Geneza i przebieg ludobójstwa popełnionego na Polakach w Związku Sowieckim*, Gdańsk 2020.

³³ T. Snyder, *Bloodlands...* See *Genesis des Genozids. Polen 1939–1941*, K. M. Mallmann und B. Musiał (Hrsg.), Darmstadt 2004.

Paweł Libera

A.2. Crimes by Soviet partisans against citizens of the Second Polish Republic in the Eastern Borderlands under German occupation in 1941–1944

On 22 June 1941, German troops attacked the Soviet Union and by the autumn of that year had reached Leningrad, Moscow, and Kiev. Vast stretches of the Soviet Union, including the eastern voivodeships of the Second Polish Republic which the Soviets had been occupying on the grounds of agreements the Soviet Union had entered with Nazi Germany in September 1939, now came under German rule. The Germans installed their own administrative authorities on the newly occupied territories, which they called *Reichskommissariat Ostland* (the Commissariat for the Eastern Reich Territories) and *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* (the Commissariat for Ukraine). A Polish underground resistance movement was already active in the region, and soon it was joined by Polish underground combat units as well as by a Soviet partisan movement.

The first Soviet underground combat and sabotage units were created already in June 1941, on instructions from the NKVD and the Communist Party, but most of them ceased to operate before the end of 1941³⁴. They were not very important from the point of view of the Soviet war plans, so the Russian underground resistance units operating in the initial phase of the Soviet–German war tended to be maverick groups whose prime objective was survival rather than armed combat. The emergence and growth of Soviet partisan groups did not start until German repressive measures intensified in 1942. Another factor which prompted the development of a Soviet partisan movement was the establishment of the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement and

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³⁴ B. Musiał, *Sowieccy partyzanci 1941–1944. Mity i rzeczywistość*, Poznań 2014, 89–111. (Original German edition: *Sowjetische Partisanen, 1941–1944. Mythos und Wirklichkeit*).

its regional staffs, which the Soviet government set up in May and June of 1942. By this time, there was already a network of Polish underground resistance units subject to the authority of the London-based Polish government-in-exile operating on the territory of the eastern voivodeships³⁵. Initially in 1942, Soviet partisan units did not conduct overtly hostile operations against their Polish counterparts, and there were even instances of a limited amount of assistance and co-operation between them³⁶. Nonetheless, in general the attitude Soviet partisan units took to the Polish community and the Polish underground resistance force was not friendly, clashes with Polish units occurred on a regular basis, and Soviet partisans murdered individuals from the local Polish community suspected of collaborating with the Polish underground resistance movement³⁷.

The situation changed in 1943 and the first half of 1944, by which time there were many Soviet partisan units as well as Polish combat units under the authority of the Polish Underground State pursuing operations on the territory of the eastern voivodeships of the Second Polish Republic. Relations between them varied depending on the region, its geography, the ethnic groups inhabiting the area, and the extent of the activities Soviet partisans conducted in the area. All of these factors put together created a situation where in the north of the region there was a genuine partisan war going on between Polish and Soviet units, whereas in the south there was a limited scope of co-operation between the local Polish inhabitants and Soviet partisan units, which helped and protected Poles against attacks from Ukrainian nationalists. In this part of the region, clashes between Polish and Soviet underground units were much rarer³⁸.

Real combat between the Polish and Soviet underground resistance forces active in the area did not start until diplomatic relations were broken off between the Polish government-in-exile and the USSR (25 April 1943)³⁹.

³⁵ Kazimierz Krajewski has published a synthesis on the subject; see K. Krajewski, *Na straconych posterunkach. Armia Krajowa na Kresach Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej*, Kraków 2015.

³⁶ B. Musiał, *Sowieccy partyzanci...*, p. 585; W. Barabasz, *Armia Krajowa w walce o niepodległość Polski przeciwko radzieckiemu ruchowi oporu na obszarze Zachodniej Białorusi w okresie okupacji niemieckiej (1941–1944)*, in: *Polacy na Białorusi od końca XIX do początku XX wieku*, Vol. 3, T. Gawin (ed.), Warszawa 2019, 455.

³⁷ Z. Boradyn, *Stosunki Armii Krajowej z partyzantką sowiecką na Nowogródczyźnie* in: Z. Boradyn, A. Chmielarz, H. Piskunowicz *Armia Krajowa na Nowogródczyźnie i Wileńszczyźnie*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 96–98.

³⁸ M. Zajączkowski, *Stosunki polsko-sowieckie na Wołyniu 1943–1944 w świetle dokumentów czerwonych partyzantów*, in: *Sowieci a polskie podziemie 1943–1946. Wybrane aspekty stalinowskiej polityki represji*, ed: Ł. Adamski, G. Hryciuk, G. Motyka, Warszawa 2017, pp. 140–143.

³⁹ Z. Boradyn, *Niemen rzeka niezgody. Polsko-sowiecka wojna partyzancka na Nowogródczyźnie 1943–1944*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 88–90, 222–230, *Советский Союз и польское военно-политическое подполье*.

The Naliboki Atrocity

On 8 May 1943, three detachments of Soviet partisans ("Bolshevik", Suvorov and Dzerzhinsky), belonging to the Stalin Brigade, attacked the village of Naliboki. The reason for the attack was the operation in Naliboki of a Polish self-defence unit linked to the Home Army and commanded by Eugeniusz Klimowicz. The self-defence members did not want to surrender or join the Soviet partisans. In the course of the attack, the Soviet partisans murdered about 130 inhabitants, partially burnt the buildings and plundered the livestock.

In mid-1943, Soviet partisans started wide-scale operations to wipe out Polish underground resistance units. These Soviet partisan operations were no longer one-off ventures. By 1943–1944, they had turned into strictly defined actions carried out under orders issued by the top echelons of military command communicating by radio with specific partisan groups. As evidenced by orders issued on 22 June 1943 and subsequent ordinances, not only were Soviet partisan units instructed to drive out Polish resistance units, infiltrate them and sabotage their operations from within, but they were also ordered to assassinate Polish commanders. Soviet documents issued in November 1943 openly said that the task of Soviet partisan units was not only to fight "German occupying forces" but also to "crush the Polish counter-revolutionary nationalist organisations in the western oblasts of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic"⁴⁰.

Many examples of how these instructions were put into practice have been preserved in Soviet records which have been published in Poland, Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. As a rule, "destroying a combat unit" meant disarming the Polish resistance fighters and arresting and killing its commanders. The rank and file were either forced to join the Soviet partisans or dispersed and sent home.

The situation was quite different in the southern voivodeships, which the Red Army entered already in January 1944. Up to that time, there had been very few clashes between the Polish and Soviet groups in Volhynia. More often than not, they had co-operated with one another. Nevertheless, all the time Soviet partisans kept a close watch on what their Polish opposites were doing, and when the right time came, set about the killing of officers in the service of the Polish Underground State⁴¹. In this region, when a scheme was organised and put into practice to disarm and disperse Polish resistance units, it adopted the same model that had been applied in the north.

Zygmunt Boradyn has estimated that during the period under German occupation, in the Nowogródek area alone Soviet partisans killed 500 members of the Polish underground resistance movement and civilians accused of co-operating with the Polish

Апрель 1943 г. – декабрь 1945 г., Т. 1: *Апрель 1943 г. – август 1944 г.* Ч. 1: *Апрель 1943 г. – март 1944 г.*, Под ред. А. Н. Артизова. Москва 2018, pp. 27, 43, 44–45.

⁴⁰ *Партизанское движение в годы Великой Отечественной войны 1941–1945 гг. Документы и материалы*, ред. А. Князьков, Москва 1999, с. 414. See also: Z. Boradyn, *Stosunki Armii Krajowej z partyzantką sowiecką na Nowogródczyźnie...*, 121.

⁴¹ M. Zajączkowski, *Stosunki polsko-sowieckie...*, 143–155.

The Koniuchy Atrocity – The Koniuchy Atrocity On 29 January 1944, at dawn, a large detachment of Soviet partisans attacked the village of Koniuchy in the Lida county. During the attack, a few dozen inhabitants, including women and children, were killed, and at least a dozen were wounded. The partisans burnt down all the houses and livestock. The attack had been prepared and carried out by the joint forces of several units operating in the Rudnik Forest and belonging to the Soviet Lithuanian Partisan Staff. The aim of the attack was the complete liquidation of the village, in which the local Polish self-defence had been active for some time.

Home Army⁴². Losses in the southern voivodeships were not recorded so scrupulously, but they were certainly lower. Subsequent repressions against the Polish resistance movement ensued once the Red Army had entered and established itself on the territory of the eastern voivodeships of pre-war Poland.

Klimowicz associated with the Home Army, which was operating from Naliboki. The members of the self-defence unit did not want to surrender or join the Soviet partisans. During the attack, the Soviet partisans killed about 130 of the local inhabitants, burned some of the buildings, and stole the livestock.

Dariusz Węgrzyn

A.3. Soviet crimes, repression, and robberies committed in Upper Silesia in 1945

Upper Silesia was a region with a mixed population of Poles and Germans. After the First World War and the three ensuing Silesian Uprisings and the Plebiscite, its territory was split up. The eastern part of the region was assigned to the Second Polish Republic, and the other, western part to Germany. The division led to a situation in which on both sides of the border there were Polish and German communities living, as well as those Upper Silesians who did not want to declare a nationality. When Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, the Polish part of Upper Silesia was incorporated in Germany and the German authorities implemented their policy on national and ethnic groups in the area. They created the *Deutsche Volksliste*, the “German Ethnicity List” with four categories, and started to segregate the local inhabitants by classifying them in a particular category depending on how “German” they were deemed to be. This complicated the situation even more. By the turn of 1945, when it was clear that Soviet forces would soon reach the area, there was growing anxiety among Upper Silesians that Soviet soldiers might treat all of them indiscriminately as Germans, which would put them at risk

42 Ibidem, s. 133, 143–170.

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of reprisals. They knew that the Red Army would cross the pre-war border between Poland and Germany and wreak vengeance on civilians for the effects of Germany’s total war in the East. These fears turned out to be pretty close to what actually happened⁴³.

On 11 January 1945, Lavrentiy Beria, People’s Commissar for Internal Affairs (the Soviet equivalent of a minister for home affairs) issued an order which served as the legal grounds for the repressive measures dealt out by the Soviets. The Order for the Purging of Hostile Elements in Areas behind Red Army Fronts was supplemented by another order Beria issued on 6 February and a GOKO (State Defence Committee of the Soviet Union) decision of 3 February. These regulations prescribed the instant “merciless extermination” of captured “terrorists” and “saboteurs”⁴⁴. The NKVD and SMERSH, the Red Army’s counter-intelligence service, were to arrest spies, saboteurs and subversives, terrorists, members of enemy organisations, senior police officers, prison wardens, concentration camp personnel, military commanding officers, prosecutors, investigative judges, magistrates and members of military tribunals, mayors, members of fascist organisations, chief executive officers of large commercial businesses and heads of administrative institutions, newspaper and magazine editors, authors of anti-Soviet publications, soldiers fighting in the armies of countries at war with the Soviet Union and in the so-called Russian Liberation Army, and any others classified as “suspect elements”⁴⁵.

These legal provisions had very serious consequences: any “saboteur” or “terrorist” could be shot on the spot without the need to prove his guilt. Moreover, there were no precise definitions of the concepts as such, so the functionaries of the Soviet institutions of repression could arrest practically anyone, since the catalogue of prospective arrestees was imprecise. NKVD men operating on and in the proximity of Red Army fronts were free to exercise a very broad range of “discretionary powers” and indeed did so. On the grounds of orders which were so imprecise, they could escalate or restrict the repressive measures they applied as much as they felt like⁴⁶.

⁴³ See R. Kaczmarek, *Górny Śląsk podczas II wojny światowej. Między utopią niemieckiej wspólnoty narodowej a rzeczywistością okupacji na terenach wcielonych do Trzeciej Rzeszy*, Katowice 2006.

⁴⁴ *Сталинские депортации. 1928–1953*, составители, Н. Л. Поболь, П. М. Полян, Москва 2005, pp. 596–597.

⁴⁵ *Teczka specjalna J.W. Stalina. Raporty NKWD z Polski 1944–1946*, selected and developed by T. Cariewskaja, A. Chmielarz, A. Paczkowski, E. Rosowska, Sz. Rudnicki, Warszawa 1998, pp. 165–167.

⁴⁶ For a broader presentation see P. Поссекедь, *Арест и освобождение немцев из спецлагерей НКВД/МВД СССР в Германии. 1945–1950 гг. в: Архив новейшей истории России. Том II. Специальные лагеря НКВД/МВД СССР в Германии. 1945–1950 гг. Сборник документов и статей*, под ред. С. В. Мироненко, Москва 2001, pp. 307–310.

The violence against civilians was sparked by the second and third wave of Red Army units moving west, when they passed the front and stopped in the towns and villages they had occupied. For areas which had been on the German side of the border before the War, the arrival of the Red Army marked the Day of Judgement. Nowhere else could this be observed as clearly as in Upper Silesia; on areas east of the pre-war border of the Second Polish Republic, Soviet soldiers were kept under control, but as soon as they crossed that line they were allowed to wreak vengeance on the civilian population. For men serving in the Red Army, Upper Silesians were as good as Germans. It would be hard to give a full list of all the places where they ran rampant, and the number of civilians who lost their lives not during but after the fighting. The most notorious examples are Miechowice, with about 380 killed, and Bojków (Szywałd; German name Schönwald, now a district of Gliwice), where 120 including many women and children were killed. Around 150 persons were shot in the city centre of Bytom (German name Beuthen), and another 100 in places in its environs, now within its municipal bounds. Other places with a grim statistic of civilians killed include Przyszowice, with 50 killed (this place was right next to the old border, on its Polish side); Boguszyce – 200 killed; Zimnice Wielkie – 70 killed; and Kup – 60–70 killed. If the Red Army encountered strong resistance, it would take its revenge on the local inhabitants as soon as it occupied the place. The parish registers of the Roman Catholic churches of Gliwice (German name Gleiwitz) recorded 817 deaths in the first few days following the arrival of Soviet troops. On 26 January 1945, a Soviet officer was killed in Zabrze (German name Hindenburg). Red Army soldiers retaliated by setting the church of the Holy Spirit on fire, which spread to neighbouring buildings. They dragged civilians out of basement hideaways and shot them⁴⁷.

In this part of Upper Silesia, which was in Germany before the War, the Red Army killed 39 Roman Catholic priests, 1 Lutheran minister, 5 Franciscans, and over 80 nuns from various orders and congregations (including nuns from daughter houses and those who died of their wounds or wartime ordeals)⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ B. Tracz, *Podbój Górnego Śląska przez Armię Czerwoną w styczniu 1945 roku*, in: *Tragedia Górnośląska jako barometr współczesnego dyskursu o Polakach i Niemcach?*, Gliwice–Opole 2012, pp. 22–31; M. Patelski, *Śląsk Opolski w 1945 r. – ofensywa sowiecka i jej ofiary z perspektywy podopolskich miejscowości*, w: *Tragedia Górnośląska w miejscowościach podopolskich 1945*, red. P. Górecki, Opole 2015, pp. 49–70; P. Górecki, *Ofiary działań wojennych i polegli żołnierze w Zabrzu w 1945 r.*, Zabrze–Opole 2021.

⁴⁸ A. Hanich, *Księża, zakonnicy i siostry zakonne zamordowani przez żołnierzy Armii Czerwonej w początkach 1945 roku na Śląsku Opolskim*, in: *Pod czerwoną gwiazdą. Aspekty sowieckiej obecności w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w 1945 roku* edited by S. Rosenbaum, D. Węgrzyn, Katowice–Warszawa 2017, pp.225–257.

The exact number of all the victims of operations of this type carried out by Soviet soldiers is unknown. Historians have estimated civilian deaths in the western part of Upper Silesia at around 30 thousand. Several thousand more should be added to this figure for those killed in the industrial part of Upper Silesia (including Bytom, Gliwice, and Zabrze). However, until a comprehensive study is completed on the question, this data should be considered merely as a rough estimate⁴⁹.

Theft and the destruction of property attended the incidents which occurred whenever the Red Army arrived in a place. One of the particularly dangerous practices indulged in by Soviet soldiers was setting buildings on fire. People were so scared that nobody dared to come out and put the fires out. A good example of the destruction is offered by the events in Olesno, a small place in Upper Silesia which the Red Army took in January 1945, after practically no resistance from its inhabitants. By late March, when a Polish administrative authority took over in the town, about 80% of its buildings were estimated to have been destroyed. A total of 24,595 buildings are estimated to have been damaged or fully destroyed in the part of Upper Silesia which had belonged to Germany before the War and was incorporated in Poland when the war finished. The table below shows the percentage losses sustained by the towns and cities of Upper Silesia:

⁴⁹ S. Rosenbaum, *Tragedia Górnośląska*, in: *Leksykon mitów, symboli i bohaterów Górnego Śląska XIX–XX wieku*, B. Linek, A. Michalczyk, Opole 2015, p.299.

SMERSH – acronym for the Russian slogan *Смерть шпионам!* (death to spies!); the Red Army's counter-intelligence service (1943–1946). SMERSH was under the authority of the USSR People's Commissariat for Defence (the Soviet Union's equivalent of a ministry of defence), and the Russian name of its executive board was *Главное управление контрразведки «СМЕРШ» Народного комиссариата обороны (НКО) СССР*. The chief task of SMERSH was to conduct "special methods for the disclosure of spies" (*Специальные Методы Розоблачения Шпионов*).

Military counter-intelligence was always an important tool for terrorism in the hands of the Bolsheviks. On 20 December 1917, they set up the Cheka (acronym for the institution's Russian name, which means "All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Fighting Counter-Revolution and Sabotage"). One of the Cheka's units was a special department to counteract espionage, as well as to exercise control over the Red Army. Over the years, the institution's name and structure underwent several changes but its purpose remained the same – it was to supervise the Soviet army and navy, and keep them loyal and submissive, obediently carrying out orders. The USSR's military counter-intelligence entity was responsible for the entire series of purges that occurred in the Red Army. On 14 April 1943 there was another reorganisation, and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR founded SMERSH, with Viktor Abakumov as its head. The main tasks of SMERSH were to counteract espionage, sabotage, terrorism, and other subversive activities conducted by foreign intelligence; to arrest "enemies of the Motherland" and "anti-Soviet elements" in the army; to counteract desertion and stop self-mutilation among Soviet servicemen; and to conduct investigations and interrogations of detained servicemen and other arrestees. Along with their counterparts in the NKVD, SMERSH men played a leading role in counteracting political and military groups active on Polish territory during the "purge of the rearguard."

SMERSH made a key contribution to the Soviet pacification of Poland at the end of the War. Its involvement is exemplified by the Augustów Round-up (*Obława Augustowska*) of July 1945, an atrocity committed by the Red Army, the NKVD, and selected units of the Polish People's Army (i.e. the Communist military), which caught and killed nearly 600 Poles Polish people. The victims were declared resistance combatants, but no charges were brought against them and no trial was held. The site where the bodies were buried has still not been discovered. SMERSH controlled the entire operation.

Table A.3.1.
Percentage of buildings destroyed in Upper Silesian cities in 1945

City	Percentage of buildings destroyed			
	residential	outhouses	industrial	public
Opole	98	–	43	44
Racibórz	88	85	93	74
Zabrze	45	23.2	70	26
Gliwice	31	38	39	55
Nysa	20.5	–	54	34
Bytom	13	12	15	16

Source: Archiwum Akt Nowych, Ministerstwo Odbudowy Gabinet Ministra. Szkody wojenne w miastach na terenie województwa śląskiego; zestawienia 1945 r. [Republic of Poland Central Archives of Modern Records, Ministry for Restoration, Minister's Office. War damage on the territory of the Voivodeship of Silesia, as registered in 1945], Ref. No. 225.

Alongside murder, sexual violence against women was a phenomenon regularly described in diaries and recollections of this period. It would be impossible to obtain an accurate estimate of the extent of sexual abuse, but witnesses' relations and statements show that it happened on a mass scale. Not even nuns were spared. A notorious case occurred in St. Elisabeth's Convent at Nysa, where a large number of the 139 nuns living there were raped, and 48 were killed in 1945⁵⁰.

The first wave of terror was followed by organised reprisals implemented by units of SMERSH and the NKVD, which conducted regular operations to "purge the environs of the rearward," i.e. arrest suspicious persons. The figures for persons detained do not give a consistent picture. We know that a total of 171,229 persons were arrested from the beginning of the Soviet offensive in January 1945 to 28 March of that year. Arrests continued later but a turning point came on 18 April 1945, when the NKVD issued an order introducing a radical change in the rules which had governed operations up to that time. There was an ease in the severity of the repressive measures were eased and some detainees who were elderly, sick, or unable to work were released. The custom of deporting arrestees to labour camps in the Soviet Union was abandoned in favour of confining them in labour camps established in the locality⁵¹.

⁵⁰ For the more recent publications on the subject, see T. Kruszewski, *Gwałty na kobietach niemieckich w schyłkowym okresie II wojny światowej (październik 1944–8/9 maja 1945 roku) i w pierwszych latach po jej zakończeniu*, Wrocław 2016; M. Gebhardt, *Als die Soldaten kamen. Die Vergewaltigung deutscher Frauen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs*, München 2015.

⁵¹ For the details of the order, see *Архив новейшей истории России. Том II. Специальные лагеря НКВД/МВД СССР...*, pp.16–18; *Teczka specjalna J.W. Stalina...*, pp. 225–228; B. Greiner, *Verdrängter Terror. Geschichte und Wahrnehmung sowjetischer Speziallager in Deutschland*, Hamburg 2010, pp. 64–67.

Another operation the Red Army carried out, apart from the arrests on the grounds of the GOKO decision of 3 February 1945, was the mass "mobilisation" of German men in the 17–50 age group. This was done on the rear of the First, Second, and Third Byelorussian Front and the First Ukrainian Front. "Mobilisation" was purported to act as a deterrent against sabotage and subversive activities, but its real purpose was to collect a large group of men of working age and send them to the USSR for forced labour in Soviet labour battalions. They were to serve as "human reparations." Like the arrests, mobilisation continued until April 1945. No charges were brought against those who were interned or mobilised. According to data in the Soviet records, a total of 77,741 persons (practically only men) were sent to the Soviet Union from Upper and Lower Silesia and East Prussia⁵².

Using Polish, Soviet, and German records, I have managed to compile brief biographical notes for 46,200 of those arrested, interned, or deported to the USSR in 1945, i.e. for 95% of those against whom repressive measures of this kind were applied. 94.6% of them were men of working age. An estimated 75–80% of them were mobilised or detained under the administrative regulations and utilised as "human reparations." Mortality in the group of deportees has been estimated at 25–30%.

The deportation of the menfolk, the sole breadwinners of many Silesian families, not only brought forced labour for them – in some cases until the end of 1949 – but also poverty, fear, and misery to their oftentimes large families, which tended to be large and were left penniless in dire post-war circumstances. In 1945–1947, for Upper Silesians deported to the East, life in labour camps meant toil and starvation food rations, which effectively resulted in a very high death toll. In this period, the only persons the Soviet authorities released were the sick and extremely exhausted, no longer of any use for the Soviet economy. In practice, they were left to convalesce at home. For the Polish authorities, the deportation of the Upper Silesians was a disaster for the economy (the country's workforce for a vital sector of its industry was depleted), socially (many Upper Silesian families were left in dire poverty), and in terms of the national image (these workers were deported on false pretences, after being told they were going to work for a fortnight on tasks near the front)⁵³.

⁵² P. Polian, *Wbrew ich woli. Historia i geografia migracji przymusowych w Związku Radzieckim*, Gdańsk 2015, pp. 238–239.

⁵³ See D. Węgrzyn, *Księga aresztowanych, internowanych i deportowanych z Górnego Śląska do ZSRR w 1945 roku*, volumes 1–3, Warszawa–Katowice 2021.

This deportation was closely connected with another development, the establishment of temporary camps for the detained Upper Silesians, who began to be collected up in them after 12 February 1945 and kept there until their departure for the Soviet Union. The best known of these camps was in a place called Łabędy. First, it was used for the inhabitants of Wielkie Osiedle “the Big Settlement,” and only once a barbed wire perimeter fence was put up it around it were Upper Silesian detainees sent there. This fact shows that Łabędy was an improvised venture. From February to April 1945, successive groups of its inmates were marched to a nearby town of place called Pyskowice, which was at the end of a wide-track railway line (of the type used in the USSR). There they were made to board a freight train and sent off to the East. There was another camp at Łabędy, the dismantlement camp, where the Soviets conducted another of their projects. In this second camp, prisoners were used to dismantle machinery, equipment, and even components of steelworks buildings. The forced labourers who worked in camps of this type – usually women, young people, and elderly men spared from deportation – were kept in these places until the job was completed in the late summer of 1945, when they were released⁵⁴.

No. 2 NKVD Prison at Toszek near Gliwice was an unusual phenomenon on the map of Soviet repressive measures in Upper Silesia. At first, it was under the authority of the Second Byelorussian Front, later of the Red Army’s Northern Group of Forces, and pursued activities from June to December 1945. It was located on the territory of Upper Silesia, but most of its inmates, numbering about 5 thousand, were Germans from Lower Silesia, the city then known as Breslau (and now as Wrocław), Lauban (now Lubań), and Sudetenland, as well as a considerable group from Bautzen in Saxony. Over 3 thousand of its inmates are estimated to have died of hard labour, disastrous conditions, hunger or disease within the relatively short time for which this prison was in operation⁵⁵.

The work to dismantle Upper Silesia’s industrial plants, which the Soviet Union considered part of the reparations due to it, was a key aspect of its policy on the region. On 26 March 1945, the Polish Communist government signed an agreement with the Soviets allowing them to dismantle German industrial plants and ship their equipment east. The dismantled facilities were in areas which passed “from Germany to Poland” but other industrial

⁵⁴ See S. Rosenbaum, D. Węgrzyn, *Obozy sowieckie w Łabędach w 1945 roku*, in: *Łabędy. Dzieje miejscowości i parafii*, red. A. Hanich, S. Rosenbaum, B. Tracz, P. Górecki, Gliwice–Łabędy 2017, pp. 147–184.

⁵⁵ See S. Rosenbaum, B. Tracz, D. Węgrzyn, *„Tiurma NKWD nr 2 Tost”. Sowietkie więzienie w Toszku w 1945 roku*, Katowice–Gliwice–Warszawa 2021.

plants liable to demolition were those which the Germans had installed in places which had been in Poland prior to 1939⁵⁶.

It has to be clearly said that the Soviets paid no attention to Polish protests. They simply went ahead and dismantled any industrial plants they wanted and liked. Practically any industrial facility on pre-war Polish territory could qualify for demolition (dismantling) because the Germans had converted just about every business on Polish soil to serve their wartime economy, in other words the Germans had “developed” it. Demolition The process continued on the so-called Retrieved Territories until August 1945, after which it subsided but did not come to a full stop⁵⁷.

The scale of the demolition dismantlement drive, especially in those parts of Upper Silesia which belonged to Germany before the War, is shown in the orders issued by GOKO for the shipment of practically the entire production resources of large businesses – sometimes even with the components of their factory halls⁵⁸.

One of the demolished entities was a complex of steelworks located in Gliwice and Łabędy. In May 1945, the Polish government totted up the losses incurred by the steel industry in this part of Upper Silesia, which was in Germany before the War and therefore suffered the heaviest toll of dismantlement. The figures are presented in the table below:

Metallurgical works	Percentage of installations shipped out
Gliwice Steel Pipe Production Plant	90
Hermia Steelworks, Łabędy	85
Gliwice Steel Wire Production Plant	75
Gliwice Steelworks and Pressing Plant	60
Julia Steelworks, Bobrek	50
Zabrze Steelworks	50
Łabędy Steelworks and Pressing Plant	50
Andrzej Steelworks, Zawadzkie	20

Table A.3.2.
Losses in the smelting industry in the Upper Silesia region that was part of the Third German Reich before the war.

Source: Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach, Centralny Zarząd Przemysłu Hutniczego [Polish State Archives, Katowice Branch; Central Office for the Metallurgical Industry], Ref. No. 1625, p. 15

⁵⁶ A. Dziurok, B. Musiał, „Bratni rabunek”. *O demontażach i wywóźce sprzętu z terenu Górnego Śląska w 1945 r.* in: *W objęciach wielkiego brata. Sowietci w Polsce 1944–1993*, red. K. Rokicki, S. Stępień, Warszawa 2009, pp.322–323.

⁵⁷ A. Skrzypek, *Mechanizmy uzależnienia. Stosunki polsko-radzieckie 1944–1957*, Pułtusk 2002, p. 80.

⁵⁸ For the full list of resolutions adopted by GOKO in 1945, see *Государственный Комитет Оборны СССР. Постановления и деятельность. 1941–1945 гг. Аннотированный каталог. В 2 томах. Том 2. 1944–1945*, Москва 2015, pp.686–1220.

The dismantling of the power stations at Miechowice, Zdzeszowice, Mikulczyce, and Blachownia brought serious consequences for Upper Silesian industrial plants. Zabrze power station, Silesia's biggest producer of electricity, was dismantled as well. Later, transmission lines, railway rolling stock and tracks were carted off, too. Generally, the wholesale dismantlement of entire production plants did not happen in the part of Upper Silesia in pre-war Poland, albeit particular items of their machinery could be removed. Bankowa Steelworks of Dąbrowa Górnicza forfeited 105 of its machines, while Zgoda Steelworks of Świętochłowice lost 360 machine tools. Two large Upper Silesian chemical plants, the Zdzeszowice coal liquefaction plant and the hydrogenation plant at Blachownia Śląska, (formerly Oberschlesische Hydrierwerke Blechhammer AG), virtually vanished into thin air. Nearly 40 thousand metric tons of machinery and installations were dismantled from the Blachownia plant. The local civilian population was pressed into carrying out the dismantling. Witnesses reported that the job was done chaotically and in a rush, without the right tools or documentation to record such a complex process. Moreover, inappropriate vehicles (sometimes goods trains consisting of open-topped rail cars) were used to transport dismantled items. All in all, the dismantling conducted in Upper Silesia on such a mass scale involved a vast amount of wastage. An intensive process of dismantlement continued in Upper Silesia until August 1945. Bogdan Musiał cites Soviet data for 1947 which say that by 2 August 1945 machinery and equipment worth 235.5 million dollars had been shipped off from "the German territories awarded to Poland"⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ A. Dziurok, B. Musiał, „Bratni rabunek...”, pp. 328–344. O demontażach see also: B. Musiał, *Wojna Stalina 1939–1945. Terror, grabież, demontaże*, Poznań 2012.

A.4. War damage in so called “the Retrieved Lands”

4.1. Introduction

In outcome of the Second World War, Poland lost 180 thousand sq. km, 46% of its pre-war territory, to the Soviet Union, despite the fact that it was in the alliance of countries that won the War. The territorial loss was to be compensated by the incorporation of regions lying to the north and west with a total area of 102,855 sq. km and known henceforth as Poland's *Ziemie Odzyskane* (“the Retrieved Lands”). The net result was a territorial loss of about 77,200 sq. km, nearly 20% of Poland's pre-war area.⁶⁰ We often hear the argument that the territorial loss in the East was offset by gains with a generous bonus because the Retrieved Lands were far more advanced than the territories in the East which Poland lost. This claim is allegedly confirmed by a comparison of the value of Poland's assets in 1939 on the territories ceded to the Soviet Union and the value of the Retrieved Lands. The valuation that was made gave a figure of 31.1 billion pre-war złoty for the value of the assets Poland lost to the Soviet Union, while the value of the Retrieved Lands was estimated at 59 billion pre-war złoty.⁶¹

This evaluation does not give a true picture of the Retrieved Lands. We should bear in mind the devastation these regions sustained during the War, which reduced their value very substantially. In 1974 Hanna Jędruszczak published a table with the first presentation of the overall war damage sustained by the Retrieved Lands.⁶² Her table, entitled *Szacunek wartości majątku narodowego ziem przyłączonych i ziem odstąpionych (w mld zł przedwojennych)* [An estimate of the value of the national assets in the incorporat-

⁶⁰ Chumiński, Jędrzej, *Ruch zawodowy w Polsce w warunkach kształtującego się systemu totalitarnego 1944–1956*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej im. Oskara Langego, 1999, p. 49.

⁶¹ Jędruszczak, Hanna, “Miasta i przemysł w okresie odbudowy,” in *Polska Ludowa 1944–1950. Przemiany społeczne*, Hanna Jędruszczak and Franciszek Ryszka (eds), Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1974, p. 286; Kaliński, Janusz, *Gospodarka Polski w latach 1944–1989*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1995, p. 14.

⁶² Jędruszczak, p. 286.

ed territories as against the ceded territories, in billions of pre-war zł] was later reprinted by Jędrzej Chumiński and Janusz Kaliński.⁶³ Jędruszczak's table gives a smaller value for the contribution the Retrieved Lands made to the national assets, which she estimated at 37.4 billion pre-war zł, i.e. 21.6 billion pre-war zł less than the "official" quotation after the deduction of losses due to devastation and war damage on the "new" territories. Hence, according to these figures, the real difference between the value of the lands ceded to the Soviet Union and the Retrieved Lands was 6.3 billion pre-war zł, not 27.9 billion pre-war zł (Table A.4.1.).

However, the compilers of Table A.4.1. did not give an account of the type of war damage in the Retrieved Lands; neither did they say how they conducted their valuation of the damage sustained in the diverse segments of its economy, which makes the reliability of their results open to criticism. In this chapter I will present the nature and extent of the devastation suffered by the Retrieved Lands in outcome of the War and try to answer the question whether the data presented in Table A.4.1. is trustworthy. In view of the broad range of issues relevant to the question, I will consider the branches of the national economy which sustained the greatest amount of war damage – agriculture, industry, urban buildings, and transport and communication, which constituted 92.1% of the war damage that occurred in the Retrieved Lands (Table A.4.1.). My main sources will be records kept in the AAN (Archiwum Akt Nowych), Poland's chief repository of recent archival records, in its collection of records for BOW (Biuro Odszkodowań Wojennych, the Bureau of War Compensation), as well as for Ministerstwo Przemysłu i Handlu w Warszawie (the Ministry for Industry and Trade, Warsaw) and Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych (the Ministry for the Retrieved Lands).

4.2. War damage in agriculture

Jędruszczak's table gives a figure of 4.5 billion pre-war zł for the value of war damage in agriculture in the Retrieved Lands, which was 36.6% of the total value of agricultural assets on these territories in 1939. The losses for livestock and farm buildings were particularly high.

⁶³ Chumiński, Jędrzej, "Przemysł w PRL – niewykorzystana szansa modernizacji," in *Modernizacja czy pozorna modernizacja. Społeczno-ekonomiczny bilans PRL 1944-1944*, Jędrzej Chumiński, (ed.) Wrocław: Gajt Wydawnictwo, 2010, p. 348; Chumiński, *Ruch...*, p. 50; J. Kaliński, *Gospodarka...*, p. 14.

Map A.4.1
Change of the Polish borders after
1945

Map drafted by Konrad Wnęk.

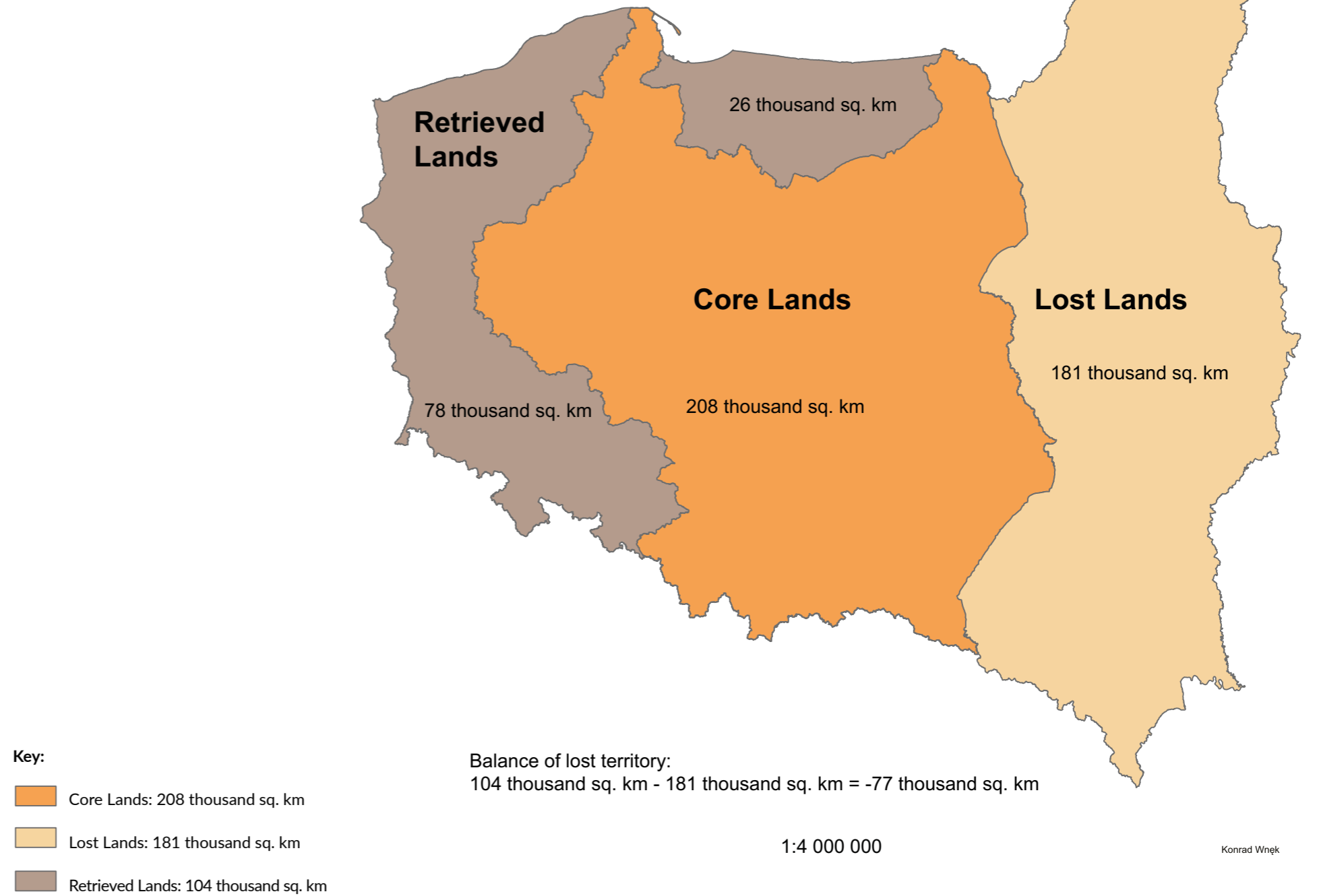


Table A.4.1.
Estimated value of Poland's national assets incorporated and lost after the Second World War (in billions of pre-war zł)

Category	Value in 1939 of assets on territories appropriated by the USSR	Value of assets on territories incorporated in Poland	
		Value in 1939	On deducting losses for devastation
1. Agriculture	12.8	12.3	7.8
2. Forests	3.8	1.6	1.4
3. Industry	2.7	12.9	7.9
4. Buildings (except transport & military buildings)	6.6	16.3	12.2
5. Urban services (water, gas, & power supply)	0.6	2.6	1.9
6. Military buildings	0.9	0.8	0.5
7. Transport & transport buildings	2.9	11.3	5.0
8. Shipping & ports	0	0.4	0.2
9. Postal, telegraph, & telephone services	0.1	0.2	0.1
10. Health resorts	0.1	0.3	0.2
11. Schools & educational facilities	0.3	0.2	0.1
12. Culture & the arts	0.3	0.1	0.1
Total	31.1	59.0	37.4

Source: Chumiński, "Przemysł w PRL – niewykorzystana szansa modernizacji," p. 348; Chumiński, *Ruch zawodowy ...*, p. 50; Jędruszczak, "Miasta i przemysł...", p.286; Kaliński, *Gospodarka Polski w latach 1944–1989*, p. 14.

4.2.1. Livestock losses

The highest losses agriculture sustained in the Retrieved Lands due to war damage were for livestock, estimated at a 96% loss in pigs, 92% in cattle, and 90% in horses with respect to pre-war holdings. The reason why there was such a dramatic fall in livestock was because as the War was drawing to a close and the Soviet front was approaching, inhabitants killed their livestock before they fled the region. The second reason was the extent of the confiscations conducted by Soviet forces once they reached the region.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ AAN, Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych (MZO; Ministry for the Retrieved Lands), ref. no. 1517, p. 12; Kłusek, Mirosław, *Państwowy Bank Rolny w latach 1919–1949*, Warszawa: Muzeum Pałac w Wilanowie, 2013, p. 233; Straszak-Chandoha, Sylwia, *Ziemia obiecane. Rolnictwo Dolnego Śląska w latach 1945–1956 w ujęciu ekonomicznym i historycznym*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, 2021, p. 79.

On entering the eastern territories of Germany which were incorporated in Poland after the War, the Red Army launched a massive operation lasting several months to confiscate livestock, which they treated as the spoils of war. Horses were confiscated chiefly for the needs of the army, while Soviet "war trophy commandos" took all the cattle they happened to lay their hands on. They herded all the stolen cattle together and drove the herds across Poland into the Soviet Union. By the beginning of September 1945, the Soviets had confiscated a total of 506 thousand head of cattle, 206 thousand horses, and 114 thousand sheep.⁶⁵

Things did not get any better until 1947, after eighteen months of the post-war resettlement operation, during which the inhabitants of Poland's Lost Lands in the East were resettled in the Retrieved Lands, bringing a small number of the farm animals they still had left after the War. Some livestock was supplied by UNRRA (the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). By the end of October 1946, the resources of livestock in the Retrieved Lands were as follows as a percentage of the pre-war holdings: cattle – 14.3%, horses – 28.7%, and pigs – 5.9% (Table A.4.2.).

4.2.2. Devastated farmsteads

Rural buildings sustained a considerable amount of damage due to military operations. Thanks to the work of BOW and the information it collected in 1945–1947, we have very precise data available on the devastation of farmsteads in the Retrieved Lands. The register of losses compiled by the departments for post-war restoration in the diverse voivodeships from August to December 1945 provided data for a table showing the extent of the destruction of farmsteads in the Retrieved Lands.

Table A.4.2. Livestock in the Retrieved Lands in late October 1946 compared with 1938

Table A.4.3. War damage to farmsteads, for individual voivodeships and powiats in the Retrieved Lands

Table A.4.3. gives the number, percentage and value of farming facilities damaged or destroyed, and shows that 104,199 farms in the Retrieved Lands had at least 15% of their assets destroyed.

⁶⁵ Musiał, Bogdan, *Wojna Stalina 1939–1945. Terror, grabieże, demontaże*, translated from the German by Ewa Stefańska, Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, 2012, p. 267.

Soviet War Trophy Commandos. On orders issued by Stalin in January 1945, special units tasked with the collection of war spoils were attached to the Red Army entering Polish territory. Each committee of Soviets of People's Commissars set up its own war trophy commando with agents specially trained to identify, collect and supervise the removal of all manner of goods designated as Soviet spoils of war and transport them to the USSR. Soviet War Trophy Commandos had a whole network of warehouses and road and rail facilities to conduct the pillaging and transportation of war booty to the Soviet Union from Poland's Core Lands as well as from the Retrieved Lands. A total of 100 thousand persons were involved in the operation apart from the special agents. The plunder perpetrated by the Soviets did not stop at industry; the Russians carried off whatever they considered valuable, ranging from works of art, furniture, cattle, to track lines disconnected from the railway.

Table A.4.2.
Livestock in the Retrieved Lands in late October 1946 compared with 1938

Voivode-ship	Horses			Head of Cattle						Pigs		
				Total number			Cows					
	1938	1946	1946 to 1938 %	1938	1946	1946 to 1938 %	1938	1946	1946 to 1938 %	1938	1946	1946 to 1938 %
Białystok	31,220	5,857	18.8	68,276	5,895	8.6	37,312	5,812	15.6	106,637	9,059	8.5
Olsztyn	221,765	31,565	14.2	601,003	34,995	5.8	290,850	32,261	11.1	848,938	32,459	3.8
Gdańsk	38,578	10,957	28.4	122,093	12,028	9.8	67,905	11,180	16.5	187,948	11,244	6.0
Szczecin	218,596	60,703	27.8	880,469	92,773	10.5	470,964	80,539	17.1	1,535,467	69,821	5.5
Poznań	68,582	28,208	41.1	281,174	46,706	16.6	146,639	39,478	26.9	418,060	42,576	10.2
Wrocław	192,276	70,931	36.9	1,093,336	213,358	19.5	562,571	163,124	29.0	1,120,581	57,905	5.2
Silesia	85,551	37,392	43.7	426,129	90,695	21.3	230,398	89,779	39.0	592,734	62,810	10.6
Total	856,568	245,613	28.7	3,472,480	496,450	14.3	1,806,639	422,173	23.4	4,810,365	285,874	5.9
Area of Free City Gdańsk	33,425	7,034	21.0	69,188	7,472	10.8	35,909	7,456	20.8	66,742	6,771	10.1
Overall Total	889,993	252,647	28.4	3,541,668	503,922	14.2	1,842,548	429,629	23.3	4,877,107	292,645	6.0

Figures for 1938 after the German data

Figures for 1946 after Ministry for the Retrieved Lands area reports, 31 October 1946

Source: AAN, Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych (MZO, Ministry for the Retrieved Lands), ref. no. 1517, p. 5, 9-12.

Table A.4.3.
War damage to farmsteads, for individual voivodeships and powiats in the Retrieved Lands

Powiat	Number of farms with area under 50 hectares	Number of farms damaged or destroyed	Total losses in thousands of 1939 zł	Average loss per damaged or destroyed farm		Overall damage in the powiat compared to total value of farms (%)
				Loss in 1939 zł	% Loss	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I. Voivodeship of Białystok						
1. Ełk	4,915	1,300	6,500	5,000	50	13.0
2. Gołdap	1,314	510	3,060	6,000	60	25.0
3. Olecko	4,164	2,500	10,000	4,000	40	25.0
Total	10,393	4,310	19,560	-	-	-
II. Voivodeship of Poznań						
1. Babimost	2,316	172	619	3,600	35	2.5
2. Sulęcín	3,728	900	11,070	12,300	85	20.0
3. Gorzów	6,896	2,571	19,025	7,400	70	25.0
4. Gubin	3,205	1,368	8,189	5,900	60	25.0
5. Krosno	6,581	602	3,552	5,900	60	5.0
6. Międzyrzecz	2,080	438	3,635	8,300	80	16.0
7. Piła	4,800	1,356	10,848	8,000	54	15.0
8. Rzepin	4,332	2,985	14,328	4,800	53	36.0
9. Skwierzyna	1,271	234	1,521	6,500	46	9.0
10. Świebodzin	4,699	788	5,437	6,900	50	8.5
11. Strzelce	4,875	465	5,115	11,000	80	7.0
12. Wschowa	1,343	213	426	2,000	15	3.0
13. Zielona Góra	6,630	170	1,496	8,800	63	2.0
Total	52,756	12,262	85,261	-	-	-
III. Voivodeship of Silesia						
1. Bytom (City)	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Bytom	1,158	236	590	2,500	30	6.0
3. Dobrodzień	2,355	235	1,950	8,300	55	5.5
4. Gliwice (City)	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Głubczyce	7,015	1,880	27,824	14,800	85	23.0
6. Grodków	2,890	2,312	10,866	4,700	25	20.0
7. Kluczbork	3,497	335	3,819	11,400	90	9.0
8. Koźle	7,120	3,610	32,490	9,000	50	25.0
9. Niemodlin	4,108	748	6,806	9,100	55	9.0
10. Nysa	5,369	4,295	16,750	3,900	25	20.0

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Olesno	6,228	151	287	1,900	12	0.2
12. Opole	16,279	2,400	26,400	11,000	70	10.0
13. Prudnik	8,419	881	8,017	9,100	50	5.0
14. Racibórz	11,708	2,553	29,870	11,700	60	13.0
15. Strzelce	7,874	445	2,136	4,800	50	3.0
16. Zabrze (City)	-	-	-	-	-	-
17. Gliwice	7,130	5,368	5,368	3,600	40	8.0
Total	91,150	21,572	173,173	-	-	-
IV. Voivodeship of Gdańsk						
1. Elbląg	2,182	332	2,191	6,600	45	7.0
2. Kwidzyn	2,473	1,015	6,191	6,100	35	18.0
3. Lębork	3,796	427	2,604	6,100	40	5.0
4. Malbork	1,036	882	4,498	5,100	35	30.0
5. Sztum	2,057	1,600	12,800	8,000	60	45.0
Total	11,544	4,256	28,284	-	-	-
V. Voivodeship of Wrocław^a						
1. Bolesławiec	5,028	2,324	14,874	6,400	44	20.0
2. Brzeg	3,655	1,114	5,013	4,500	33	12.0
3. Bystrzyca	5,070	-	-	-	-	-
4. Głogów	5,794	735	2,499	3,400	36	5.0
5. Góra	3,715	242	1,113	4,600	62	4.0
6. Jawor	3,167	404	2,020	5,000	57	8.0
7. Jelenia Góra ^b	4,213	-	-	-	-	-
8. Kamienna Góra ^c	3,148	-	-	-	-	-
9. Kłodzko ^d	6,848	-	-	-	-	-
10. Koźuchów	3,601	216	1,210	5,600	58	4.0
11. Legnica	2,946	1,573	12,269	7,800	41	22.0
12. Lubań	5,410	2,969	20,189	6,800	35	19.0
13. Lubin	2,735	420	1,848	4,400	34	5.0
14. Lwówek	6,025	812	3,573	4,400	51	6.0
15. Milicz	5,119	299	1,973	6,600	51	3.0
16. Namysłów	2,452	2,069	2,069	10,000	55	45.0
17. Oława	3,286	1,863	14,718	7,900	40	2.3
18. Oleśnica	4,773	3,872	46,464	12,000	58	40.0
19. Dzierżoniów	2,394	339	1,458	4,300	42	6.0
20. Strzelin	2,972	2,782	21,143	7,600	38	35.0
21. Szprotawa	2,992	600	5,280	8,800	44	9.0
22. Syców	2,749	2,454	25,030	10,200	51	45.0

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Środa	3,536	811	6,488	8,000	40	9.0
24. Świdnica	2,841	103	721	7,000	35	1.3
25. Trzebnica	4,659	979	4,993	5,100	53	11.0
26. Wałbrzych	2,558	-	-	-	-	-
27. Wałbrzych (City) ^e	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	101,686^f	26,980^g	194,945^h			
VI. Voivodeship of Szczecin						
1. Białogard	4,633	400	3,600	9,000	60	52.0
2. Bytów	2,317	419	2,514	6,000	40	7.2
3. Chojna	5,310	2,575	23,175	9,000	60	30.0
4. Człuchów	4,358	1,100	9,900	9,000	60	15.0
5. Drawsko	2,855	482	3,615	7,500	50	8.5
6. Gryfice	4,092	400	3,600	9,000	60	5.5
7. Gryfino	2,603	2,231	20,079	9,000	60	50.0
8. Choszczno	2,995	1,100	9,900	9,000	60	23.0
9. Kamień	3,548	1,296	11,664	9,000	60	20.0
10. Kołobrzeg	4,104	389	2,917	7,500	50	4.7
11. Koszalin	4,648	534	2,803	5,250	35	4.0
12. Łobez	2,605	211	1,107	5,250	35	3.0
13. Miastko	3,102	530	2,782	5,250	35	6.0
14. Myślibórz	3,748	800	6,000	7,500	50	10.5
15. Nowogard	4,835	500	3,000	6,000	40	4.0
16. Pyrzyce	2,369	1,200	12,600	10,500	70	35.0
17. Sławno	7,893	638	2,871	4,500	30	2.0
18. Stupsk	7,945	1,496	6,732	4,500	30	6.0
19. Starogard	4,444	1,398	12,582	9,000	60	18.0
20. Szczecin	804	450	4,387	9,750	65	36.0
21. Szczecin (City)	-	-	-	-	-	-
22. Szczecinek	5,960	500	4,875	9,750	65	5.6
23. Wałcz	4,573	1,681	7,564	4,500	30	12.0
24. Wolin	1,991	579	2,605	4,500	30	12.0
25. Złotów	3,984	524	4,716	9,000	60	7.0
Total	95,716	21,433	165,588	-	-	-
VII. Voivodeship of Olsztyn						
1. Braniewo	2,646	1,761	18,490	10,500	70	45.0
2. Bartoszyce	1,019	297	2,079	7,000	70	20.0
3. Giżycko	3,074	645	1,935	3,000	30	7.0
4. Iława	1,086	360	4,320	12,000	80	27.0

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Kętrzyn	1,637	700	4,200	6,000	60	25.0
6. Lidzbark	4,158	1,941	17,469	9,000	60	27.0
7. Morąg	4,368	1,582	4,746	3,000	30	11.0
8. Mrągowo	4,551	1,000	5,000	5,000	50	11.0
9. Nidzica	3,471	593	4,744	8,000	80	12.0
10. Olsztyn (City)	-	-	-	-	-	-
11. Olsztyn	5,592	2,365	11,825	5,000	50	21.0
12. Ostróda	5,151	1,276	5,104	4,000	40	10.0
13. Pasłęk	2,357	700	7,350	10,500	70	20.0
14. Pisz	5,251	1,283	7,133	5,560	55	13.0
15. Reszel	3,374	376	3,384	9,000	90	9.0
16. Susz	3,556	659	5,272	8,000	80	14.0
17. Szczytno	6,843	1,515	7,575	5,000	50	11.0
18. Węgorzewo	2,979	643	5,144	8,000	80	17.0
Total	61,113	17,696	115,770	-	-	-
Grand Total I+II+III+IV+V+VI+VII	413,965ⁱ	104,199^j	763,021^k	-	-	-

^a Owing to a gap in the BOW archives, we have no data for the Powiats of Wrocław, Wołów, Żary, Ząbkowice, Zgorzelec, Złotoryja, and Żagań in the Voivodeship of Wrocław.

^b Incomplete data.

^c Incomplete data.

^d Incomplete data.

^e Incomplete data.

^f The total number of farms in the Voivodeship of Wrocław came to 131,755 when the data for the missing powiats was added to this figure. AAN, BOW, ref. no. 144, p. 2.

^g The total number of destroyed or devastated farms in the Voivodeship of Wrocław came to 42,654 when the data for the missing powiats was added to this figure. AAN, BOW, ref. no. 144, p. 2.

^h The total value of losses for farms in the Voivodeship of Wrocław came to 329,614 thousand pre-war zł when the missing data was added to this figure. AAN, BOW, ref. no. 144, p. 2.

ⁱ The BOW's cumulative statistics give 449,701 as the total number of farms in the Retrieved Lands. This figure is the result of the BOW's estimate of the data for the missing powiats in the Voivodeship of Wrocław. AAN, BOW, ref. no. 144, p. 2.

^j The BOW's cumulative statistics give 123,793 as the total number of devastated or destroyed farms in the Retrieved Lands. This figure is the result of the BOW's estimate of the data for the missing powiats in the Voivodeship of Wrocław. AAN, BOW, ref. no. 144, p. 2.

^k The BOW's cumulative statistics give 910,384 thousand pre-war zł as the total value of losses for farms in the Retrieved Lands. This figure is the result of the BOW's estimate of the data for the missing powiats in the Voivodeship of Wrocław. AAN, BOW, ref. no. 144, p. 2.

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 144, p. 1–31.

The losses amounted to 763 million pre-war zł. However, these were not the full figures. The overall data recorded for the diverse voivodeships by their respective departments for post-

war restoration show that the number of farms which suffered damage was 123,793, and their losses amounted to 910.4 million pre-war zł.⁶⁶ The discrepancy may be accounted for chiefly by the fact that the data for the Voivodeship of Wrocław quoted in Table A.4.3 was incomplete. However, the figure of 910.4 million pre-war zł was still not a good estimate for the devastation sustained by farms in the Retrieved Lands. The voivodeship departments for post-war restoration did not record damage and devastation of household appliances and furnishings inside residential building; nor did they consider the collective losses villages sustained to their communal, jointly owned or public facilities. Devastation of less than 15% was not taken into account, either.⁶⁷

4.3. Damage sustained by industry

Table A.4.1. gives a figure of 5 billion pre-war zł as the losses sustained by industry in the Retrieved Lands, which made up 38.8% of its value in 1939. The vast scale of the devastation relative to the region's pre-war industrial assets was due not only to combat and the fact that the Germans dismantled and removed some of the industrial installations. The devastation and destruction of industrial facilities in the Retrieved Lands continued after hostilities. The Red Army conducted an official schedule of confiscation as well as an unofficial programme of pillaging. The Soviets treated the property and assets of Poland's Retrieved Lands as their spoils of war. They set up special military and civilian "war trophy units" to search the region for ready products and commodities as well as for installations and appliances which they dismantled and carried off. According to data published by the Central Statistical Administration of Gosplan (Центральное статистическое управление (ЦСУ) Госплана СССР), by 2 August 1945 Soviet war trophy commandos had dispatched over 140 thousand goods wagons full of industrial appliances, ready products, and commodities out of Poland's Retrieved Lands, and another 69 thousand in the period from 3 August 1945 to 1 January 1949.⁶⁸

In August 1945 Hilary Minz, deputy prime minister of the post-war Communist government of Poland, said that by 17 July 1945 the Soviets had dismantled equipment and installations

⁶⁶ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 144, p. 2.

⁶⁷ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 144, p. 1–31.

⁶⁸ For more on Soviet looting in Poland and Europe, see Musiał, p.247–350.

worth 2.65 billion pre-war zł in the Retrieved Lands. This figure is over half the sum quoted in Table A.4.1. and still very far from a credible estimate.⁶⁹

Research carried out by Egon Vielrose gave a result of about 5 billion reichsmarks for the losses in the Retrieved Lands caused by the Soviets dismantling and removing industrial installations and equipment. This sum is equivalent to 10.6 billion pre-war zł at the 1939 exchange rate,⁷⁰ and could mean that the losses the industrial resources of the Retrieved Lands sustained only from Soviet looting amounted to as much as 82.1%, not 38.8%, of their pre-war value. However, we should not forget that during the War Germany had put a considerable investment into the region's industry, particularly munitions, so when the Red Army arrived its total value was much more than it had been in 1939.

The extent of the devastation of the industry in the Retrieved Lands caused by the Red Army may best be illustrated by the situation in Upper Silesia, the most industrialised part of the region. According to an estimate for 1,559 industrial plants in Upper Silesia, the loss due to the official Soviet programme of dismantling and looting was as much as 88% of the damage caused by combat and hostilities in the area.⁷¹

Table A.4.4. shows the percentage losses for the devastation to the various branches of industry in the Opole part of Silesia. This table does not give the data for five of the industrial unions (*zjednoczenie przemysłu*) operating in the area, Rudzkie Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Węglowego (the Ruda Union for the Coal Industry), Zabrzeńskie Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Węglowego (the Zabrze Union for the Coal Industry), Gliwickie Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Węglowego, (the Gliwice Union for the Coal Industry), Bytomskie Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Węglowego (the Bytom Union for the Coal Industry), and Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Fabryk Wyrobów Technicznych i Biurowych (the Industrial Union of Factories Manufacturing Technical and Office Products, i.e. the paper industry).⁷²

⁶⁹ Chumiński, *Ruch...*, p.55.

⁷⁰ Chumiński, *Ruch...*, p.55. Vielrose, Egon, "Wartość budynków mieszkalnych i urządzeń przemysłowych na Ziemiach Odzyskanych," *Gospodarka Planowa 1947*: 1-2 (3-4), p. 15-18. Similar quotations for losses caused by the Soviets are given in Korzon, Andrzej, "Niektóre problemy polsko-radzieckich stosunków gospodarczych w latach 1945-1957," *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej 1993*, Vol. 28, p. 135; Sudziński, Ryszard, "Etapy i kierunki oraz metody i formy ekonomicznego uzależnienia Polski od ZSRR w latach 1944-1989 na tle pozostałych krajów bloku komunistycznego" in *W objęciach Wielkiego Brata. Sowietci w Polsce 1944-1993*, Konrad Rokicki and Sławomir Stępień (eds.), Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2009, p. 66.

⁷¹ Chumiński, *Ruch...*, p.55-56.

⁷² AAN, Ministerstwo Przemysłu i Handlu w Warszawie (Ministry of Industry and Trade, MPIH), ref. no. 1062, p. 3-4.

Table A.4.4.
Percentage devastation of industrial facilities
in the Opole part of Silesia on 1 September 1945,
presented for particular industrial unions

Original Polish name of industrial union	English (unofficial) translation of original name	% Damage
1. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Paliw Syntetycznych	Union for the Synthetic Fuel Industry	100
2. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Nieorganicznego	Union for the Inorganic Industry	95
3. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Nawozów Sztucznych	Union for the Artificial Fertilizer Industry	90
4. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Cynkowego	Union for the Zinc Industry	90
5. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Szklanego	Union for the Glass Industry	90
6. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Kamieniołomów i Wapienników	Union for the Quarries and Lime Industry	80
7. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Maszynowego	Union for the Machine Industry	80
8. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Obrabiarkowego	Union for the Machine Tool Industry	80
9. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Energetycznego Zagłębia Węglowego	Union for the Coal Basin Energy Industry	75
10. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Cukrowego	Union for the Sugar Industry	72
11. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Kotłarskiego	Union for the Boiler-Making Industry	70
12. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Drułu i Gwoździ	Union for the Wire and Nail-Making Industry	70
13. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Części Kutych i Czarnych Narzędzi	Union for the Wrought Iron Tool Components Industry	65
14. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Koksowniczego	Union for the Coke Industry	64
15. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Metali Kolorowych	Union for the Non-Ferrous Metals Industry	60
16. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Celulozowo-Papierniczego	Union for the Cellulose and Paper Industry	60
17. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Materiałów Ogniotrwałych	Union for the Fire-Resistant Materials Industry	60
18. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Miejscowego	Union for Local Industry	50
19. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Papieru Natronowego	Union for the Brown Packaging Paper Industry	50
20. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Roszarń Lnu i Konopi	Union for the Linen and Hemp Irrigation Systems Industry	50
21. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Cementowego	Union for the Cement Industry	50
22. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Fabryk Papy i Materiałów Izolacyjnych	Union for the Tarpaulin and Insulating Materials Manufacturing Industry	50
23. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Dziewiarsko-Pończoszniczego	Union for the Knitwear and Hosiery Industry	40

24. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Hutniczego	Union for the Metallurgical Industry	40
25. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Drzewnego	Union for the Wood Industry	40
26. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Maszyn Rolniczych	Union for the Agricultural Machine Industry	35
27. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Skórzanego	Union for the Leather Industry	30
28. Południowe Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Celulozowo-Papierniczego	Southern Union for the Cellulose and Paper Industry	30
29. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Przetwórczo-Tłuszczowego	Union for the Fat and Oil Processing Industry	30
30. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Jedwabniczo-Galanteryjnego	Union for the Silk and Haberdashery Industry	30
31. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Wyrobów z Blachy	Union for the Sheet-Metal Products Industry	27
32. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Odlewniczego	Union for the Metal Casting Industry	27
33. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Ceramiki Czerwonej	Union for the Brick Industry	25
34. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Chemii Stosowanej	Union for the Applied Chemical Industry	25
35. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Materiałów Wybuchowych	Union for the Explosives Industry	20
36. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Motoryzacyjnego	Union for the Car Industry	20
37. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Konfekcyjnego	Union for the Clothing Industry	10
38. Zjednoczenie Przemysłu	Union for the Gasworks and Water Supply Energy Industry	10
Average percentage of devastation		52.4

Source: AAN, Ministerstwo Przemysłu i Handlu w Warszawie (Ministry of Industry and Trade, MPiH), ref. no. 1062, p. 3-4.

4.4. War damage in urban buildings

Data on the war damage and destruction of real estate in the towns and cities of the Retrieved Lands was collected by the departments for post-war restoration in the individual voivodeships in the period from August to December 1945, and the results were used to compile a comprehensive presentation (Table A.4.5.).

Table A.4.5.
War damage and destruction of real estate in the municipalities of the Retrieved Lands, by voivodeship and powiat.

Powiat	Total number of damaged or destroyed properties	Volume of damaged or destroyed properties (cu. m)	Losses (thousands of pre-war zł)
1	2	3	4
I. Voivodeship of Białystok			
1. Ełk	770	1,161.5	20,900
2. Gołdap	850	1,265	21,800
3. Olecko	430	655	11,700
Total	2,050	3,081.5	54,400
II. Voivodeship of Poznań			
1. Babimost	175	146.1	1,826.9
2. Sulęcín	1,266	1,650	24,915.7
3. Gorzów	1,774	4,860	60,334.1
4. Gubin	2,692	5,627.1	88,210.7
5. Krosno	787	1,809	41,376.5
6. Międzyrzecz	730	1,215	17,842.5
7. Piła	3,175	6,297.6	93,658.8
8. Rzepin	2,926	8,230.2	108,589.2
9. Skwierzyna	644	915	9,376.7
10. Świebodzin	1,739	2,430	29,002.3
11. Strzelce	1,424	2,115	24,218.3
12. Wschów	55	106.7	1,427.6
13. Zielona Góra	53	96.5	1,604.4
Total	17,440	35,498.2	502,383.7
III. Voivodeship of Silesia			
1. Bytom (City)	750	2,430	28,500
2. Bytom	213	457.3	8,483.6
3. Dobrodzień ^a	-	-	-
4. Gliwice (City)	978	3,018	27,119.3
5. Gliwice	204	227.5	3,490
6. Głubczyce	1,630	1,870.2	24,723.1
7. Grodków	585	611.5	6,985.4
8. Kluczbork	633	1,085.8	12,999.4
9. Koźle	115	146.9	1,398.2
10. Niemodlin	293	501.4	5,059.5
11. Nysa	1825	3,779.5	55,650
12. Olecko	353	579.5	13,136.7
13. Opole	463	1,767.5	45,107

1	2	3	4
14. Prudnik	663	900.4	13,822.9
15. Racibórz	2,555	5,130.2	85,707
16. Strzelce	975	903.4	16,947.8
17. Zabrze (City)	193	915.7	11,274.5
Total	12,428	24,324.8	360,404.4
IV. Voivodeship of Gdańsk^b			
1. Elbląg	6,507	7,213	92,329
2. Kwidzyn	1,818	1,801.5	17,937.9
3. Łębork	573	779	19,251.2
4. Malbork	1,235	1,539	12,684.3
5. Sztum	615	774.5	13,400
Total	10,748	12,107	155,602.4
V. Voivodeship of Wrocław			
1. Bolesławiec	1,680	2,538.6	30,466
2. Brzeg	1,570	4,246.3	61,155.4
3. Bystrzyca	0	0	0
4. Głogów	1,994	4,285.7	124,668
5. Górow	197	324	7,024.5
6. Jawor	238	480.1	14,557.7
7. Jelenia Góra	-	-	-
8. Kamienna Góra	32	81	750
9. Kłodzko	-	-	-
10. Kozuchów	1,293	2,374	12,231.7
11. Legnica ^c	1,377	4,045.1	60,851.5
12. Lubań	2,937	2,880.6	48,030
13. Lubin	662	1,633.5	30,067.5
14. Lwówek	336	672	9,566
15. Milicz	435	664.3	7,053
16. Namysłów	739	752.3	8,457.2
17. Oława	283	734.4	12,464.3
18. Oleśnica	1,518	2,475.9	34,912.6
19. Dzierżoniów ^d	-	-	-
20. Strzelin	1,077	1,086.1	18,725.2
21. Szprotawa	1,308	2,576	20,735
22. Syców	668	847.8	5,841.6
23. Środa	246	263.1	3,517.6
24. Świdnica	591	983.5	8,434.7
25. Trzebnica	912	1,059.1	22,749.4

1	2	3	4
26. Wałbrzych	-	-	-
27. Wałbrzych (City)	-	-	-
28. Wrocław (City)	21,620	90,400	1,475,000
29. Wrocław	244	675.3	16,176.6
30. Wołów	2,937	2,886.6	12,860.3
31. Żary	1,670	2,506.7	39,531.4
32. Ząbkowice	933	937	8,113.6
33. Zgorzelec	589	1,170.5	12,246.1
34. Złotoryjai	1,149	1,913.4	27,719.4
35. Żagań	878	1,848.8	21,180.6
Total	50,113	137,341.7	2,155,086.9
VI. Voivodeship of Szczecin			
1. Białogard	385	830.2	12,383
2. Bytów	956	1,028.6	25,340.3
3. Chojna	4,595	4,198.7	75,629.7
4. Człuchów	992	1,440	19,265.1
5. Drawsko	568	1,080.6	10,131.9
6. Gryfice	856	1,255.7	9,284.6
7. Gryfino	1,138	1,453	27,225.7
8. Choszczno	2,070	2,238.8	45,875.2
9. Kamień	532	660	12,560.2
10. Kołobrzeg	2,268	4,062.8	88,976.1
11. Koszalin	997	1,988.5	27,454.4
12. Łobez	609	813.6	9,895.4
13. Miastko	663	821.8	44,855
14. Myślibórz	465	1,016	12,486.9
15. Nowogard	1,213	2,080.4	20,540.6
16. Pyrzyce	1,107	1,197.4	26,773.2
17. Sławno	928	875	9,654
18. Słupsk	1,202	2,055.3	27,489.1
19. Starogard	2,324	4,244.1	69,042.8
20. Szczecin ^e	-	-	-
21. Szczecin (City)	8,600	29,175	565,000
22. Szczecinek	824	1,799	18,973.3
23. Wałcz	1,333	1,578	18,019.2
24. Wolin	1,080	3,200.8	44,837
25. Złotów	260	525	4,987.6
Total	35,965	69,618.3	1,226,680.3

1	2	3	4
VII. Voivodeship of Olsztyn			
1. Braniewo	2,050	2,520	60,993.8
2. Bartoszyce	842	975	9,719
3. Giżycko	1,193	1,252	18,181.7
4. Iława	221	265	3,384.2
5. Kętrzyn	1,204	1,325	17,865
6. Lidzbark	1,043	1,312	17,000.8
7. Morąg	756	967.5	19,204.9
8. Mrągowo	744	905	10,361.7
9. Nidzica	612	735	13,071.2
10. Olsztyn (City)	1,894	3,239	57,486.2
11. Olsztyn	203	243.5	4,017.8
12. Ostróda	1,580	2,025	40,196.3
13. Pasłęk	567	705	11,195.4
14. Pisz	883	1,069.5	12,743
15. Reszel	1,325	1,350	21,438
16. Susz	1,862	2,175	40,443
17. Szczytno	1,287	1,425	22,629
18. Węgorzewo	814	989	11,910
Total	19,080	23,477.5	39,1841
Grand Total I+II+III+IV+V+VI+VII	147,824	305,449	4,846,398.7

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 143, p. 1–21.

- a - No data
- b - Excluding Gdańsk and Gdańsk County. The Free City of Danzig was included in the Core Lands.
- c - Partial data
- d - No data
- e - No data

The total number of buildings damaged or destroyed in the towns and cities of the Retrieved Lands amounted to over 147 thousand, valued at 4,846 million pre-war zł. This figure does not include the losses sustained on property belonging to the military and transport services. It does not cover most of the industrial properties and the buildings on them if the devastation was less than 10%. The sums quoted for value entailed the real estate, its water, gas and power supply, and the value of the buildings not counting furnishings. Historic or heritage value was not considered, either.⁷³

⁷³ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 143, p. 1–21.

4.5. Damage and destruction of transport services

4.5.1. Railways

Damage and destruction of rolling stock

In its estimate of the war losses in rolling stock for the Retrieved Lands, BOW was interested in the value of the shortfall in rolling stock which needed to be made up for to start normal rail services, and this is what Table A.4.6. presents. New rolling stock was to be provided to compensate for the deficit. For its calculation, BOW took the average pre-war prices PKP (Polish State Railways) paid Polish producers for particular items of rolling stock: 400 thousand zł for a steam engine, 520 thousand zł for an electric locomotive, 180 thousand zł for a passenger coach, 12 thousand zł for a goods wagon, and 240 thousand zł for a railcar (rail motor).⁷⁴

Table A.4.6.
Value of the shortfall in rolling stock needed in the Retrieved Lands to start normal rail services

Rolling stock	Unit price in pre-war zł	Number of units	Shortfall in thousands of pre-war zł
1. Steam engines	400,000	2,605	1,042,000
2. Passenger coaches	180,000	8,902	1,602,360
3. Goods wagons	12,000	77,180	926,160
4. Rail motors (railcars)	240,000	113	27,120
5. Electric locomotives	520,000	91	47,320
6. Battery-electric locomotives	240,000	37	8,880
7. Shunter (switcher) locomotives	60,000	98	5,880
Total	-	-	3,659,720

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 132, p. 189.

BOW added a sum of 25.72 million pre-war zł to its estimate of losses in rolling stock for the cost of repairs of the damaged rolling stock in the Retrieved Lands. Hence its overall estimate of losses in rolling stock which had to be made up for before normal services could start on standard-gauge tracks amounted to 3,685,440,000 zł. An additional sum of 45,237,000 zł was estimated for the money required to make up for losses and the shortfall on narrow-gauge lines. Thus, the total estimate for losses and shortfall in rolling stock in the Retrieved Lands came to 3,730,677,000 pre-war zł.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 132, p. 188–189.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 189–190.

Damage and devastation of railway electrification (overhead catenary) systems

In the Retrieved Lands there were 30 main railway depots, 70 subsidiary depots and traction power stations, with 176 buildings used as engine sheds to house a total of 1,557 steam engines when not in service or for repairs and maintenance. Three of the main depots and four of the subsidiaries were destroyed completely during combat operations and the subsequent evacuation. The rest of the railway depots sustained damage to an average of 60% of their value. The value of the electrification systems fully destroyed or seized and carried off from the depots and of missing installations amounted to 16 million pre-war zł (after adjustment for wear and tear).⁷⁶

The damage to railway electrification systems entailed the devastation or destruction of the following types of equipment and installations: mechanical appliances such as turntables, traversers (transfer tables), coal cranes, etc.; and special engine shed equipment including 30 rescue trains. All of these items were either destroyed or seized. Another 42 tool and gear trucks and maintenance trains were destroyed or appropriated. 90 of the 353 water towers in the Retrieved Lands were completely destroyed; the rest sustained a 90% degree of devastation.⁷⁷ A high level of devastation was reported for other devices as well, such as sandboxes, compressor houses, gas terminals, etc., and in the equipment and furnishings of railway warehouses, offices, and overnight sleeping quarters. In addition, the estimate for overhead catenary equipment on narrow-gauge tracks was another 7.6 million zł, giving a total loss of about 24 million pre-war zł for war damage to overhead catenary systems on the entire railway network in the Retrieved Lands.⁷⁸

Damage and destruction of railway repair and maintenance shops

There were 9 main and 41 subsidiary repair and maintenance shops for the overhaul of steam engines, passenger coaches and goods wagons. Table A.4.7. gives the condition of the main facilities, showing the degree of war damage at the time they were taken over by PKP (Polish State Railways).

An average of 40% of the value of the subsidiary shops had been lost due to war damage. Table A.4.8. presents the data for the losses owing to the destruction, devastation, or looting of these facilities.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 193.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 193-194.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 194.

Main repair and maintenance shop	% damage – buildings	% damage – machine tools and other equipment
1. Gliwice electric locomotive repair & maintenance shop	10	100
2. Gliwice carriage repair & maintenance shop	10	100
3. Opole	10	100
4. Wrocław	30	90
5. Oleśnica	10	100
6. Świdnica	10	100
7. Piła	20	100
8. Ostrów	10	100
9. Starogród ^a	40	100

Table A.4.7.
Percentage devastation in the 9 main repair and maintenance shops

^a Change of place-name to Stargard Szczeciński in 1950, and Stargard in 2015.

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 132, p.196.

Table A.4.8.
Equipment losses of repair and maintenance shops on standard-gauge railways in the Retrieved Lands

Equipment	Number of units in stock before the War	Number of units appropriated or destroyed	Value of appropriated or destroyed equipment in thousands of pre-war zł
1. Machine tools	3,256	2,058	82,320
2. Mechanical tools	1,505	820	13,170
3. Tool kits	12,000	8,000	4,804
Total	16,761	10,878	100,294

Source: AAN, BOW, ref. no. 132, p. 196.

The estimate for losses sustained by the facilities for the repair and maintenance of narrow-gauge rolling stock in Lower Silesia and East Prussia was another 13.9 million pre-war zł, which gave a total loss of 114 million pre-war zł for repair and maintenance equipment in the Retrieved Lands.⁷⁹

Damage and destruction of electrical engineering equipment

There were 1,063 rail traffic control stations on the territory of the Retrieved Lands, 957 of which used mechanically (manually) operated devices, and 106 were electrically powered. 7,823 km of tracks were covered by an electromechanical control system. A 40% rate of war damage and destruction was reported for this equipment, amounting to 164 million pre-war zł.⁸⁰ The percent-

⁷⁹ AAN, BOW, ref. no.132, p. 196.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 198.

age damage to the telegraph monitoring and communication devices operating on 11,718 km of the railway lines in the Retrieved Lands was estimated at 50%, which, when multiplied by the value of the devices used per kilometre (9 thousand zł), gave a loss of 48 million pre-war zł.⁸¹

Damage and destruction of railway power supply and overhead catenary systems

The railways on the territory of the Retrieved Lands were serviced by 15 power stations and 25 substations, and had a high- and low-voltage network of 950 km with 40 stations on it. These facilities were worth a total of 10.7 million pre-war zł, and lost 80% of their value due to war damage, which gives a figure of 8.6 million pre-war zł for the losses.⁸²

The Retrieved Lands had an electrically-powered railway line of 175 km running from Wrocław to Zgorzelec. The German data was applied for a cost estimate of its electrification, which came to the equivalent of 87.5 million pre-war zł. Owing to war damage the line lost all of its rolling stock, overhead catenary installations, and power stations – 100% of its pre-war value. The Red Army appropriated 91 electric locomotives and a further 37 battery-electric engines, valued at 56.2 million zł in the section on rolling stock, and if this sum is deducted from the total loss, the resulting loss for the power supply and overhead catenary system on this line was 31.3 million pre-war zł.⁸³

4.5.2. Roads and waterways, aviation, and motor transport

Waterways

There was serious war damage to the waterways of the Retrieved Lands, chiefly in the Oder Basin. In 1939 the resources of the Oder inland waterway fleet were as follows: 640 self-propelled boats and ships with total metric horsepower of 90,095 hp, and 2,695 non-self-propelled vessels with a total tonnage of 988,411 metric tons. The overall value for this fleet was 287.7 million pre-war zł. After the War the Polish administrative authorities took over 72 self-propelled vessels, 28 of which had sunk or had been scuttled, and 708 non-self-propelled vessels, 495 of which had sunk or had been scuttled. Hence the war damage to

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 95, 201-202.

the Oder river fleet was 260.15 million pre-war zł, about 90% of its value before the War.⁸⁴

The inland ports sustained a serious amount of war damage as well. War damage to the 12 electric cranes and 110 other cranes in the resources of the inland ports, as well as to the 22 tipping or dumping devices and other port equipment, valued at 22 million pre-war zł, amounted to 16.5 million zł (75% of the pre-war value). War damage to the wharfs and wet docks amounted to 1.9 million pre-war zł, 4.2% of their value in 1939, which was 45 million pre-war zł. The warehouses and storage facilities sustained war damage amounting to 10.6 million pre-war zł, 56% of their value. The total amount of war damage to the inland ports was 29 million pre-war zł.⁸⁵

The total war damage to artificial waterways amounted to 11.4 million pre-war zł, comprising the following items: damage on the regulated stretches of the Oder – 8 million pre-war zł (5% of the pre-war value), and damage on the regulated stretches of the Gliwice Canal – 3.4 million pre-war zł (2% of its pre-war value).⁸⁶ In addition, there was also war damage to 21 docks and dockyards (80% of their value, amounting to 24 million pre-war zł), containers (5 million pre-war zł, 2% of their pre-war value), and port buildings (5 million pre-war zł).⁸⁷

The BOW records give a total value of war damage sustained in the basin of the Oder of 354 million pre-war zł.⁸⁸ In addition, over 50 bridges on the stretch of the Oder between Koźle and Szczecin had been destroyed and the ruins were in the riverbed.⁸⁹

Roads, aviation, and motor transport

The estimate carried out by the Polish Ministry of Transport (Ministerstwo Komunikacji) shortly after the end of the War, war damage to the roads in the Retrieved Lands amounted to 581.8 million pre-war zł, of which 456.3 million zł were for road surfaces and installations; 85.3 million zł for bridges, culverts, and viaducts; 7.7 million zł for buildings; and 15.3 million zł for office equipment and furnishings. An additional 17.2 million zł worth of damage was recorded for road-building materials and the plants manufacturing them.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ AAN, BOW, ref. no. 137, p.48.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48-50.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁸⁹ AAN, BOW, ref. no.138, p. 3.

⁹⁰ AAN, BOW, ref. no.132, p.102.

BOW estimated war damage to aviation in the Retrieved Lands at 50 million pre-war zł, comprising destruction and devastation of buildings, installations and devices – 40.6 million zł; and aviation, office equipment and materials – 9.4 million zł.⁹¹ When the Germans retreated from the territory, they took with them nearly the entire fleet of cars in the Retrieved Lands and the installations belonging to its motor industry.⁹²

Overall estimate of war damage sustained in transport and communication

BOW arrived at a final estimate for the war damage in all the branches of transport and communication in the Retrieved Lands at 6.286 billion pre-war zł (55% of its value). Table A.4.9. presents the breakdown of the categories for all the types of transport and its infrastructure on this territory considered in the BOW estimate. The BOW overall estimate is practically the same as the figures presented above. We can compare this sum with the estimate BOW made for war losses in transport and communication in the Core Lands, which amounted to 6.945 billion pre-war zł, 54% of the total transport and communication assets in the Core Lands prior to the outbreak of the Second World War.⁹³

Table A.4.9.
War damage for transport and communication facilities in the Retrieved Lands

Facility	Value in thousands of pre-war zł	War damage losses in thousands of pre-war zł	% loss due to war damage
1. Railways	7,082,452	5,131,874	72
2. Roads	2,889,555	581,821	20
3. Waterways & shipping	1,272,910	396,850	31
4. Private transport	148,176	126,341	85
5. Aviation	52,631	50,000	95
Total	11,445,724	6,286,886	55

Source: AAN, BOW, ref .no. 132, p. 113.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 111.

⁹² Ibid., p. 104.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 113.

4.6. Conclusions

The details of the figures I have presented above show that the data for war damage to Poland's national assets in the Retrieved Lands presented in Table A.4.1., amounting to 21.6 billion pre-war zł, should not be treated as an overestimate.

The value of war damage to transport and communication in the Retrieved Lands amounts to 6.3 billion pre-war zł, which is in full agreement with the figure published in Table A.4.1., but the damage to buildings in municipalities is 746 million zł higher than the figure given in Table A.4.1. Data which should be regarded as underestimated are the figures for losses in agriculture and industry. The estimate for agricultural losses in the Retrieved Lands should be more than the 4.5 billion pre-war zł that Table A.4.1. gives in view of the value of farm buildings damaged or destroyed (910.4 million pre-war zł) and the vast extent of the losses in livestock – 96% for pigs, 92% for head of cattle, and 90% for horses. Similarly, the amount Table A.4.1. gives for losses in industry, 5 billion pre-war zł (38.8% of its total value in 1939), must be considered an underestimate, because of the huge extent of the dismantling, appropriation, and removal of industrial installations, ready products and commodities conducted by the Red Army. This is confirmed by the results of the research conducted by Egon Vielrose, which give a figure of about 10.6 billion pre-war zł for the loss caused by the war damage due to the Soviets dismantling and removing industrial technology from the Retrieved Lands. This could mean that the losses sustained by industry in the Retrieved Lands constituted up to 82.1% of its total value in 1939, not the 38.8% Table A.4.1. gives.

To sum up, the value of war damage in the Retrieved Lands amounted to at least 21.6 billion pre-war zł, and hence the real difference in the value of the national assets Poland lost to the USSR and the value of national assets it gained in the Retrieved Lands was 6.3 billion pre-war zł at most. But we should bear in mind that the data which has been presented does not take into account the costs of population loss. The territory Poland lost had a settled population, whereas the Retrieved Lands were virtually abandoned. No account was made of the effects of the disruption in the local and regional logistics network, nor of the losses due to the devastation of rural and urban buildings which sustained less than a 15% loss in value, nor of the social consequences of re-settlement for aspects such as reduced productivity. Therefore it will be perfectly reasonable to say that in view of the costs I have presented and discussed, the territories Poland lost were worth more than the territories which it received in 1945.

Robert Jastrzębski

A.5. Legal opinion on the possibility of Poland seeking compensation from Germany in connection with international agreements for damage suffered during World War II*

I. Theses of the opinion

1. During World War II, Poland suffered the greatest material damage and human losses of all European countries in relation to the total population and national wealth. These losses resulted not only from military activities, but above all from the German occupation policy, in particular intentional and organised extermination of the population living in the occupied territories of Poland, as well as intense exploitation of the Polish society, including forced labour and intentional destruction of property, among others demolition of Warsaw, the capital of Poland.

2. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the Republic of Poland is entitled to seek compensation from the Federal Republic of Germany and the allegation that these compensation claims had expired or had been barred by the statute of limitations is unfounded.

3. Taking into account the content of inter alia the fourth Hague Convention of 1907, agreements of the Potsdam Conference and German actions towards other countries affected by World War II, consisting in conclusion of agreements and payment of compensation, the German state should compensate the damage incurred by the Polish state connected with the World War II period.

* Full text of Legal opinion created by Sejm Bureau of Research on 6 September 2017, written by dr hab. Robert Jastrzębski is available in online version:

<https://www.sejm.gov.pl/media8.nsf/files/KKOI-AR4BNP/%24File/1455%20-%2017%20EN.pdf>

4. According to post-war estimates, losses and material damage to state and private property caused by Germany in connection with World War II amounted to over 258 billion pre-war zlotys. When converted into dollars, it amounted to approximately USD 48.8 billion, using the exchange rate for August 1939, when 1 dollar equalled 5.3 zlotys. Losses in tangible assets were estimated at 62 billion pre-war zlotys – 3.5 times the value of the Polish state's losses from the World War I period (17.8 billion pre-war zlotys).

5. The total biological losses of the Polish society amounted to over 6 million people. In 1946, the number of alive Polish citizens who had suffered damage resulting from crimes and terror of the Third Reich equalled 10 million 84 thousand 585 people.

6. Despite having suffered the greatest losses and destruction during the war beside the USSR, Poland and Polish citizens received cash payments from Germany whose value was not only disproportionate to the damage suffered, but also significantly lower than compensation paid by the FRG to other countries and their citizens. The FRG allocated approximately 600 million German marks for the benefit of Polish citizens, taking into account payments for victims of pseudo-medical experiments and for the Foundation „PolishGerman Reconciliation”. This amount is not even 1% of the amount that the German government allocated after World War II to payment of compensation for citizens of Western Europe, United States, and Israel.

7. Pursuant to Article 3 of the fourth Hague Convention of 1907 concerning the laws and customs of war on land, which was signed also by Germany, a belligerent party shall be responsible for all acts committed by persons forming part of its armed forces. To this day, this obligation has not been fulfilled by Germany in respect of Poland.

8. Following the Potsdam Conference, it was decided that Germany will “be compelled to compensate to the greatest possible extent for the loss and suffering that she has caused to the United Nations and for which the German people cannot escape responsibility”. This provision has not been implemented to this day in respect of Poland. After the Potsdam Conference, the Paris Peace Treaties were signed in 1946. It concerned reparations for the countries of Western and Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa, but it did not include the Polish state.

9. Apart from imposing obligation on the USSR to settle Polish claims from its own share of reparations, the Report on the Potsdam Conference does not include any provision pursuant to which Poland would be entitled to any other direct payments from Germany.

10. In Memorandum of the Polish government submitted during a conference of deputy ministers of foreign affairs in London in January 1947, it was expressly stated: “pursuant to the Potsdam Agreement stating that Germany will be compelled to compensate to the greatest possible extent for the loss and suffering that she has caused to the United Nations – Poland reserves the right to submit further specific requests in that respect”.

11. After World War I, on 31 October 1929 Poland and Germany signed the so-called liquidation agreement, governing the issue of financial and property claims connected with the war and the Treaty of Versailles. The agreement was published in the Polish Journal of Laws. No such agreement has been concluded between Poland and Germany after World War II. However, the Federal Republic of Germany signed separate agreements with other countries concerning compensation – primarily the Bonn convention and bilateral agreements with 12 European countries in 1959–1964 on individual compensation for citizens of these states.

12. The unilateral statement of the Council of Ministers of 23 August 1953 on the Polish People’s Republic waiving its right to war reparations violated the then applicable Constitution of 22 July 1952, since matters connected with ratification and termination of international agreements lay within the competences of the Council of State, and not of the Council of Ministers. This statement was not submitted on the initiative of the Polish government, but on the request and as a result of pressure from the USSR. Moreover, in line with the minutes of the Council of Ministers of 19 August 1953, the waiver concerned only the German Democratic Republic.

13. The Polish People’s Republic (PRL) took many attempts to regulate the issue of German compensation after World War II. This happened, among other things, during the 21st and 22nd session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and was connected with the speech of a Polish delegate who said: “Polish citizens have not received compensation to this date due

to discriminatory legislation of the FRG, and the FRG does not feel obliged to repay this tragic debt to the Polish nation“. For many years, the bipolar political division of the world made it impossible to settle the issue of compensation, which was connected with the existence of two German states and the FRG policy.

14. As A. Klafkowski stated: “International law does not recognise applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity. It also states that there is no statute of limitations for compensation for such crimes”.

15. In the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany, or the TwoPlus-Four-Treaty, signed on 12 September 1990, the issue of war reparations was not covered at all, only the problem of a general closure of World War II was handled. Moreover, Poland was not a party to that treaty.

16. Pursuant to the agreement of 16 October 1991 between Polish and German governments, the Foundation „Polish-German Reconciliation” was established. In total, from 1992 till mid 2004 the Foundation paid 731,843,600 zlotys to 1,060,689 persons, which amounted to 689.97 zlotys per person.

17. The failure to settle the issue of compensation claims for damage suffered during World War II for more than 60 years has led to the vast majority of 10 million 84 thousand 585 victims of crimes and terror of the Third Reich dying without having received any compensation.

18. The content of applicable international legal acts and post-war reparations practice, including discriminatory policy of the FRG towards Poland and Polish citizens in comparison with other countries which suffered smaller material damage and human losses, yet received significantly higher compensation, justifies Poland seeking compensation from Germany for damage suffered during World War II.

A.6. Statement issued by the government of the Polish People's Republic to the United Nations on September 27, 1969.

E/CN.4/1010

English

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Poland

[Original: English]

27 September 1969

I.

The Government of The Polish People's Republic believes that the question of responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity cannot be limited to regulation of the problem of the criminal liability alone of the persons guilty of such crimes, and that the principles of civil liability for damage caused as a consequence of war crimes and crimes against humanity should also be defined in an appropriate United Nation document.

Liability arising out of war crimes and crimes against humanity involves the following sets of elements:

- (a) prosecution of the persons guilty of these crimes;
- (b) compensation to the victims of these crimes.

The first of these points - criminal responsibility for war crimes - has been regulated by the enactments of international law, in particular by the United Nations Convention of 26 November 1968 on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity. The second, on the other hand - the question of compensation or material liability - has yet to be settled in sufficient detail by international law.

The absence of detailed provisions relating to this matter in international law has helped to create a situation preventing the satisfaction since the Second World War of the civil claims of citizens of the Polish State who were victims of the German Third Reich as an aggressor State and one which illegally occupied Polish territory and employed criminal forms of occupation terror against Polish citizens.

The acts of international law - the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907 - and the legal acts connected with the Second World War provide legal grounds for physical persons to claim compensation for war crimes and crimes against humanity of which they were victims.

The civil claims for compensation filed by Polish citizens as a consequence of the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War against citizens of the Polish State have not yet been settled by the Government of the German Federal Republic. The legislation in force in the GFR and its interpretation by the administration and courts in that country have given rise to a number of discriminatory barriers with the result that Polish citizens are unable to press their civil claims arising out of the damage suffered as a result of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The claims of Polish citizens who were victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity embrace civil claims for compensation by:

- (a) The widows, orphans and relatives - the heirs of victims whose death was caused by the extermination policy and terror of the nazi invaders, by persecution in nazi camps, prisons or other places of detention, or outside the camps and prisons as a result of wounds and injuries received or excessive labour.
- (b) The widows, orphans and relatives of victims who died in the circumstances described in (a) above, where they suffered damage and privation as a result of the loss of the family provider.
- (c) Persons who suffered bodily injury or damage to health or damage to their property as a result of criminal treatment by the nazi aggressors.
- (d) Persons compulsorily deported to forced labour in the German Reich or forced to perform slave labour anywhere, for unpaid or only partially paid remuneration and benefits and for

a lower level of earnings than those of German employees in the same category of remuneration as Polish citizens.

- (e) Persons who suffered damage as result of labour in excess of their age or capacity, lack of welfare services, leave, or medical treatment, the employment of children and juveniles, accidents at work.
- (f) Persons who suffered as a result of the loss of employment during the period necessary to acquire professional skills and persons who were forced to leave their homes, workshops or places of employment.
- (g) Persons who suffered complete or partial physical disability as a result of the terror of the Nazi invaders, together with the consequences of experiments dangerous to health or life and the expenses connected with medical care and treatment.

In connexion with the regulations issued in the GFR which exclude the possibility of inheriting claims for compensation, the necessity is emphasized of introducing the principle of inheritability of claims for compensation for damage suffered as a result of war crimes and crimes against humanity if the persons entitled to it have died before obtaining compensation.

In her domestic legislation Poland includes the period of detention in Nazi camps as qualification for pensions and other social security benefits such as free medical treatment, etc.

II

The legislation in force in the German Federal Republic concerning compensation for the victims of Nazi war crimes and crimes against humanity discriminates against the citizens of certain States, Poland among them. Although it admits liability for compensation, it also contains a number of provisions which in effect deny Polish citizens all possibility of seeking compensation from the GFR authorities. This discrimination against Polish citizens among others in its laws on compensation is not only contrary to the universal rules of international law but also the Constitution of the German Federal Republic (article 3, section 3, prohibiting worse treatment of foreign nationals and article 25 on the equality of nations and races). These provisions, and their judicial interpretation in particular, are a continuation of the discrimination practised against other nations and races by the national-socialist régime. Dismissing claims for compensation by Polish citizens the courts in the GFR have frequently in their judgements employed an interpretation of the law which, in essence, justifies the persecutions of the Poles by the Nazi occupation authorities.

In this way the discriminatory nature of the GFR legislation is aggravated still further by its judicial interpretation.

III

Claims by Polish citizens for compensation on the grounds specified in I above have been dismissed by the GFR with the argument that they are subject to prescription and in other cases that they have been filed prematurely.

The defence of prescription is based in the laws and court judgements of the GFR on its domestic legislation, specifically on Bundesentschädigungsgesetz (BEG). However, the question of compensation for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the German Third Reich is not only a matter of the internal law of the GFR. To the extent that it can be regulated by the legislation of the GFR, it has been drafted in BEG in such terms as to prevent suits being lodged in due time and multiply procedural difficulties. The object of the GFR Government is to see that actions for war compensation become subject to prescription and so lapse. International law does not recognize application of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity and from this it follows that there can be no prescription in the case of claims arising out of them.

The GFR Government maintains that claims for compensation on the part of Polish citizens are premature. This putative "prematurity" is, according to the view it takes, connected with the absence of a peace treaty with Germany which could form the only legal basis for settling war compensations. The point must therefore be made that referring the question of compensation in the case of civil claims to a future peace treaty with Germany cannot be regarded as acting in good faith. For this reason the GFR Government bears the responsibility for the lack of political decisions and appropriate legislation which would furnish the grounds for a final regulation of the matter of indemnifying Polish citizens who were victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The claims of Polish citizens on the grounds specified in I above are outstanding and are not subject to prescription regardless of all the relations between the States concerned and of the conclusion of a peace treaty.

In this field the GFR treats the States of Western Europe in one way and those of Eastern Europe in another. Despite the principle professed by the GFR Government that the question of compensation for war crimes and crimes against humanity can only be settled in a peace treaty, it has concluded a number of agreements with the Governments of twelve Western States and with Israel. In these agreements, concluded individually, various issues relating to compensation among other things: for slave labour, have already been settled.

IV

The system of forcible deportation of Polish nationals to labour in the German Reich has been recognized as a war crime within the meaning of both the Statute of the International Military Tribunal and of the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907. From an analysis of the judgements delivered in trials arising from the Second World War it can be concluded that deportation to forced labour and slave labour for the benefit of the German occupant forms grounds for two types of compensation claims.

One is addressed to the German State and it springs from the Fourth Hague Convention which guaranteed the fundamental human rights of individuals on the territory of a State occupied in time of war.

The second claim arises out of the performance of compulsory labour obligations without just reward, above all in enemy establishments. The grounds are also to be found in the Fourth Hague Convention, but the claim is made against German industrial plants and companies. It is the right of individuals although the legal basis is furnished by an act of international law

As regards Polish claims of compensation for slave labour addressed to industrial plants and companies based on the territory of the GFR, IG-Farben in particular, the following needs to be said:

(a) The claims were filed with the competent GFR authorities and the actions were heard in the GFR courts. They were conducted in such a way as to make a settlement impossible;

(b) The defendants included IG-Farben, in other words, a concern which played a certain specific role in the preparation of the aggression against Poland by the German Third Reich and during the Second World War.

The Allied Control Council in Germany- defined the status and liability of IG-Farben in certain legal acts. In 1957 IG-Farben announced that as of 1 January 1968 it would discontinue payment of compensation both to former concentration camp prisoners and to all persons who had been deported and performed slave labour in its plants. On the strength of this decision the trustees of the IG-Farben estate dismissed, among others, over 5,000 claims by Polish citizens who had been prisoners at Auschwitz.

Polish citizens have failed to receive compensation not only from IG-Farben but also from all other business and farming concerns and institutions, including private persons who

played a direct or indirect part in preparing the aggression against Poland and the prosecution of the extermination policies of the Third Reich with regard to citizens of Polish State.

V

In the light of the tragic experience of the Polish people during the Second World War and the rules of international law regarding war crimes and crimes against humanity, the Government of the Polish People's Republic submits the following criteria for determining compensation to the victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity:

- (a) The legal principles of compensation for the victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity should provide for:
 - (i) the non-application of limitations to compensation for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by an aggressor or occupying State;
 - (ii) material liability for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the form of compensation should be regulated by an appropriate act of general international law in a manner ruling out all discrimination;
 - (iii) an aggressor State is materially liable for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by its citizens;
 - (iv) war reparations do not include compensation for war crimes and crimes against humanity;
 - (v) claims on the grounds of damage of this kind are hereditary and are transferred to the heirs of a claimant who died before receiving compensation;
 - (vi) in judging these claims the requirements of equity and good faith should be observed.
- (b) The following persons are entitled to bring civil actions for compensation:
 - (i) the widows and orphans or relatives - the heirs of victims whose death was caused by the extermination policy and terror of an occupant;
 - (ii) persons persecuted in camps, prisons and places of detention illegally organized by an occupying State;
 - (iii) persons compulsorily deported to forced labour and performing slave labour;

- (iv) persons performing forced or slave labour, required to work in excess of their age and capacities, deprived of welfare services, leave and medical treatment; the employment of children, juveniles and disabled persons;
 - (v) persons who suffered damage as a result of the loss of employment during the period necessary to acquire professional skills and persons who were forced by an invader to leave their homes, workshops or places of employment;
 - (vi) persons who have suffered complete or partial physical disability caused by the terror of an invader, together with the consequences of experiments dangerous to health and life;
 - (vii) persons who have suffered damage and physical and mental suffering as a result of criminal treatment by an invader;
 - (viii) prisoners of war who performed slave or forced labour contrary to the binding conventions relating to war prisoners;
 - (ix) survivors of persons who were murdered or died as a result of inhuman treatment by- an occupant, widows, orphans and relatives.
- (c) Claims for compensation arising out of war crimes and crimes against humanity may not be treated as lapsed or premature. For this reason they should be regulated regardless of whether:
- (i) the State which was occupied has or has not concluded a peace treaty with the State which invaded and occupied it or with its successor;
 - (ii) the State which was occupied does or does not maintain diplomatic relations with the State which invaded and occupied it or with its successor.
- (d) Claims for compensation on the grounds of war crimes and crimes against humanity may not be treated on the basis of the internal civil legislation of a given State but of the acts of general international law.

These criteria form only a part of the basic criteria which should be adopted and regulated in the appropriate United Nations act.

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List of abbreviations and glossary of special terms

- AAN** – Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie, (the Polish) Archives of Modern Records, Warsaw
- AG** – Aktiengesellschaft (abbreviation used by German stock exchange companies)
- AK** – Armia Krajowa, the Home Army, the main Polish military and civilian underground resistance movement during the Second World War, the largest resistance movement in occupied Europe, with a peak membership of over 200 thousand (some estimates give a figure of up to 390 thousand)
- ANR** – Agencja Nieruchomości Rolnych, the Polish Agency for Agricultural Property
- APR** – Archiwum Państwowe w Rzeszowie, Polish State Archives in Rzeszów
- BOW** – Biuro Odszkodowań Wojennych, the Polish Bureau of War Compensation
- CES** – Constant Elasticity of Substitution production function
- DPT** – Departament Prawno Traktatowy, the Legal and Treaty Department in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Dz. U.** – *Dziennik Ustaw*, the official journal of laws and statutes of the Republic of Poland
- Dz.UMK** – *Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Komunikacji*, the official journal of the Polish Ministry of Transport
- EUR** – Euro, the currency used in several countries of the European Union, abbreviation €
- FRG** – the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany, 1949–1990)
- GDR** – the German Democratic Republic (East Germany, 1949–1990)
- GECC** – Global Economic Costs of Conflict
- GG** – das Generalgouvernement, the name the German occupying authorities used during the Second World War for the part of occupied Poland not directly incorporated in Germany (variously referred to in English as the “General Government,” “General Governorate,” etc.)
- GDP** – Gross Domestic Product
- Gmina** – the basic (and usually the lowest) territorial administrative unit in Poland
- GNP** – Gross National Product
- GUS** – Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Statistics Poland (formerly known in English as the Central Statistical Office)
- HP** – the Hodrick-Prescott filter
- HTO** – Haupttreuhandstelle Ost, Berlin, the German Main Trustee Office for the East based in Berlin
- IMF** – the International Monetary Fund
- IPN** – Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, the [Polish] Institute of National Remembrance
- IZ** – Instytut Zachodni, the [Polish] Institute for Western Affairs
- KL** – Konzentrationslager, the abbreviation and generic name used by Germany for its concentration camps
- KOPON** – Komisja do Opracowania Problemu Odszkodowań Niemieckich, the Polish Working Commission for German War Compensation
- MPD2018** – the Maddison Project Database 2018
- MPK** – Ministerstwo Prac Kongresowych, the Ministry of Congress Work [of the Polish Government-in-Exile]
- MS** – Ministerstwo Skarbu, the [Polish] Ministry of the Treasury
- MSZ** – Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, the [Polish] Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- NATO** – the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
- NBP** – Narodowy Bank Polski, the National Bank of Poland
- NDA** – Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (NAC), the [Polish] National Digital Archive
- NSDAP** – die Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (the Nazi Party)
- OECD** – the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
- PAN** – Polska Akademia Nauk, the Polish Academy of Sciences
- PKP** – Polskie Koleje Państwowe, Polish State Railways
- PLN** – Polski nowy złoty, the New Polish Złoty, the international symbol for the Polish currency following the 1995 currency reform
- Powiat** – the Polish second-tier territorial administrative unit
- PRL** – Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa, the People’s Republic of Poland (also known as the Polish People’s Republic), 1944–1989, the Polish state under a Marxist-Leninist Communist government imposed by the Soviet Union
- PW** – Politechnika Warszawska, Warsaw University of Technology
- PZL** – Polskie Zakłady Lotnicze, Poland’s largest aviation company
- PZU**, Powszechny Zakład Ubezpieczeń, the largest Polish general insurance company
- RGDP** – Real Gross Domestic Product
- RM** – the Reichsmark, the currency used in Germany from 1924 to the end of the Second World War (1945)
- RP** – Rzeczpospolita Polska, the Republic of Poland
- SA** – spółka akcyjna, symbol designating a joint-stock company on the Warsaw Stock Exchange
- SD** – Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS, the Security Service of the Reichsführer-SS
- SGGW** – Szkoła Główna Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego, Warsaw University of Life Sciences
- SS** – die Schutzstaffel der NSDAP, the Protection Squadron of the Nazi Party
- Starosty** – (Polish *starostwo*), a historical lower-tier territorial administrative unit in Poland, still in use nowadays; its chief administrative officer is known as a *starosta* (the English term is “starost”)
- TFP** – Total Factor Productivity
- UNO** – the United Nations Organisation
- USA** – the United States of (North) America
- USD** – the American dollar, the currency used in the USA, abbreviation \$
- Voivodeship** (also spelled Voivodship) – Polish first-tier territorial administrative unit
- zł., ZP** – złoty polski, traditional name for the currency of Poland
- ZP1938** – the Polish złoty at its 1938 value
- ZP1939** – the Polish złoty at its 1939 value
- ZUS** – Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych, the main social insurance company operating in Poland

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Cover photo: The Royal Castle in Warsaw on fire, 1939 (The National Digital Archives collection)

