

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



**PHOTOGRAPHIC
DOCUMENTARY**



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Content warning!
This book contains disturbing
images inappropriate for
sensitive readers and children.

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Foreword

Dear Reader,

Three generations have passed since the end of the Second World War. Fewer and fewer witnesses of those times live to tell the story. Now, the obligation of remembrance must be passed on to the next generation, and the same goes for our duty to retain the truth about the war and care for that essential truth as the foundation of peace.

The Second World War, sometimes rightly called 'the second apocalypse', had and continues to have terrible ramifications. We must be aware that those horrible times determined our contemporary Europe. The borders of many European countries, including Poland's, the death of millions of people, our quality of life, and the loss of opportunities for development were all direct consequences of that war.

The apocalyptic magnitude of World War II followed from the fact that the German Reich wanted not only to conquer and dominate other countries but even to annihilate entire nations, as happened with the Jewish people. However, according to the German Generalplan Ost, millions of Polish children, women, and men were also marked for slaughter. The handful of remaining survivors were designated to be slaves to the 'master nation'. This genocidal policy, to an incomparably greater extent, was adopted towards the peoples inhabiting Eastern Europe. German racism had a clear geographical vector.

German occupation varied depending on place. In this respect, Poland was treated in an exceptionally brutal manner. It must be remembered that in the General Gouvernement and further east, it was a crime even to pass a slice of bread to one's Jewish neighbors. In retribution, cruel death awaited, such as the burning alive of an entire community in order to 'pacify' villages. It also needs to be recalled that Germany is responsible or at least co-responsible for every crime committed in the occupied territory of prewar Poland.

The Republic of Poland did not yield to the Third German Reich. Our country did what had to be done. Poland went into a dramatic and unequal battle against the absolute evil that had set out from Berlin. The German Reich was not able to increase its potential any further without waging war. However, it encountered resistance, and the defensive war in September 1939, as well as Poland's fight against the invader, largely contributed to the German Reich losing time, strength, and means to seize Moscow and turn Europe into its Lebensraum.

The awareness of what World War II, and what totalitarianism was - both in its Nazi-German and Soviet-Communist iterations, is an essential prerequisite for avoiding the demons of the twentieth century in our times. By keeping the memory of the war alive, we pay tribute to its victims but also take care of future generations.

Realizing both the significance of the subject matter and the passage of time, we need to make continuous efforts to show the realities of the war - just as it was. Just the way our ancestors saw it. Just the way the German invaders waged it.

There is no shortage of drastic photographs in this Album because the war brought to our land an unprecedented level of cruelty and terror. The Album shows only the stark truth, even if it is shocking. However, this collection of images is merely a small part of the full extent of the terror and brutality that marched toward us from behind our western border. The photographs are sometimes blurred and out of focus, but they show in full sharpness the ruthlessness of the German invaders as well as the suffering of helpless victims.

Zbigniew Herbert said: "As usual, chronicles exalt the death of knights and heroes, but consistent with Homeric tradition, they pass unmoved by the piles of unnamed victims." This Album is an attempt to change that view. It shifts the focus away from the well-known figures from history books, but this does not mean the Album does not show heroes. It definitely does – the heroes of the atrocious everyday reality in which they had to live, give witness to humanity, and very often – die for it.

Many photographs are heartbreaking. One of the most shocking images is the despair of a thirteen-year-old girl kneeling over the dead body of her sister, just a year older. The teenage girl was killed a moment earlier by machine-gun fire from a low-flying aircraft. The tragic scene was captured on film by the American photographer Julien Bryan. In a single frame, he managed to illustrate the heartlessness and deliberateness of German evil. Photographs like this make us realize the importance of researching history. The need to get to the truth. All too often we repeat the phrase 'millions of people died' too lightly, as if they were mere numbers. Yet, it has always been about individuals, their stories, and their personal tragedies. We must bring them back to mind and do them justice.

There are so many other photographs that could not fit into this Album. One that I can still remember is the image of Bronisława and Adam Kowalski, one of many families that were brutally murdered on December 6, 1942, in Ciepeliów Stary and Rekówka. Helping the Jewish people was their only crime. That was enough for the German sadists to murder them all, including their little children.

The Album could not omit the Poles who provided aid to the Jews. Today, these brave people give us hope that even in the darkest times we can still be humane. There is a striking contrast between ordinary Polish people who could resist the German authorities despite great risk, and ordinary German people who not only supported Hitler en masse, but also participated in criminal acts. It is enough to recall the Wola massacre in Warsaw. Tens of thousands of Polish residents were murdered by ordinary German people: military policemen, police officers, and auxiliary units.

It is inconceivable that a person like Heinz Reinefarht, who headed the units that massacred the Wola residents, was never held accountable for his crimes, but instead he was back in grace in German society soon after the war. As soon as 1951, Reinefarht was elected mayor of the town of Westerland. Just like most war criminals, he lived to a ripe old age, enjoying a peaceful normal life among his German neighbors. Reinefarht managed to avoid punishment not because there was no evidence of his crimes. He got away with them because there was not enough determination on the part of Germans to settle accounts with the past.

Meanwhile, the faces of victims captured in the photographs look at us, calling for remembrance and justice. After all these years, their call is still valid. Memory should not be taken for granted. We all know how little it takes to forget. Oblivion is tempting because it is easier and lifts the heavy burden of facing the truth and settling accounts. Forgetfulness enables the guilty to shun responsibility. That is why the entire Report, and this Album must put a stop to indifference.

Apart from a sea of human suffering, the Album also depicts some examples of irretrievable material losses: ruins of residential buildings, looted artworks, plundered churches and historical sites, stolen property, and library collections either burned down or scattered. The theft was well-planned by the Nazi authorities. It must also be remembered that some ordinary German people participated in the crimes and looting as well, taking countless valuable goods to Germany as they tried to escape the approaching frontline.

The photographs assembled in this Album should also stimulate us to think about how different Poland would be today if we had not had to start practically from scratch after the war, from the ruins, as rising from the rubble cost so much human strength and time. So much pain. So many tears.

The last part of the Album is a review of various remembrance sites commemorating war crimes. It is incredibly moving to see in how many ways people tried to express what is beyond words. From enormous, monumental shapes through modern statues to modest roadside crosses – symbols of martyrdom and victory despite death.

The photographs alone are not enough to understand those times but without such documentation, without hundreds of other images, it is more difficult to grasp what the Germans actually did in the occupied Polish territory. Moreover, the photographs reduce the risk of historical and moral blindness, which always reopens the door to evil.

The striking truth that emerges from the collected photographs hurts, even from the safe perspective of several decades. The truth is shocking and deeply moving. Yet we cannot look away. And we cannot let the people responsible for the war crimes to evade that truth.

I believe that every nation should be free to shape its own future in accordance with its dreams. In the past, the wheel of our history had been slowed down and even turned back by our neighbors, but never before did our very existence hang by a thread so perilously as it did during World War II.

This Album and the whole Report on war losses are like a journey to the heart of darkness. They provide tangible proof of German war crimes committed in Poland. German crimes, which have essentially gone unpunished, and basically without compensation. These images do not belong in the archives. They must be etched in the minds and hearts of all of us. Without it, we can never dream of a fairer world and a better future for Poland and our neighbors.

Prime Minister of Poland

Prologue



During the interwar period, casting doubt on the arrangements of the Treaty of Versailles was common in Germany, as it was believed that Germany and Soviet Russia were the Great War's biggest losers. The frustrating reality of that defeat grew more robust with the onset of a severe economic depression that engulfed the country in 1929. In these circumstances, a radical and revanchist National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), headed by Adolf Hitler, started to gain more and more support among the Germans. The party spread blatantly racist, welfare, and retaliatory ideologies. Before the party came to power in 1933, it had already enlisted seven hundred thousand members. In the elections held in 1932, the NSDAP won the support of 37 percent of voters, becoming the major political force in the Reichstag. The party's candidate for president of the German Reich finished second in the presidential race, reaching a similar percentage of voters' support. Soon afterward, in 1933, the National Socialists seized total control. The Nazi Party became the only legal political organization. Adolf Hitler took absolute power, and a national referendum held on August 19, 1934, confirmed Hitler's dictatorship as *Führer* of Germany. As the western powers watched passively, Hitler quickly began to pursue the objectives he had been explicitly promoting for many years, the goals specified in his book *Mein Kampf*. Drawing on eugenics' racist theories, he claimed that the Aryans should be recognized as the master race, with the Germans as the superior population. Slavic peoples were deemed the most handicapped of the Aryan cast and deserved to be turned into nothing else but a slave workforce. Jewish people were to be entirely eradicated from German-dominated Europe. Hitler openly claimed that he intended to build the Greater Germanic Reich and expand 'the living space' (*Lebensraum*) for the Germans, particularly in eastern Europe. In just six years since taking absolute power in Germany, the Nazi Party managed to build a strong army, militarize the Rhineland, and incorporate Austria, the Czech Sudetes, and the Klaipėda Region into the Third Reich. The remaining part of Czechoslovakia was turned into a dependent protectorate. Although Germany failed to draw Poland into its political orbit, it successfully reached an agreement with the Soviet Union. The first victim of the Soviet-German machinations, crowned with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed on August 23, 1939, was going to be Poland.

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Left: Photo I. Revisionist and racist program of the National Socialists was extremely popular with the Germans in the 1930s. Photo: candidate for the President of the Reich, Adolf Hitler, in a car passing through the crowd of avid supporters in April 1932 (NAC Collections)



Photo II.
Hitler attends his party celebrations,
walking through an alley formed by the SA
(*Sturmabteilung*) banners, the paramilitary
wing of the Nazi Party (1934)
(NAC Collections)



Photo III.
Chancellor of the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler, during one of his many
public appearances (1937) (NAC Collections)

Right: Photo IV.
Hitler reviews the Order Police (*Ordnungspolizei*) parade (1937)
(NAC Collections)





Photo V.
Austrian and German customs officers dismantle a border barrier following
the Austrian Anschluss in March 1938 (NAC Collections)

Right: Photo VI.
Enthusiastic welcoming of Hitler arriving in Linz by supporters
of the annexation of Austria into the Third Reich (1938) (NAC Collections)





Photo VII.

From 1935 on, first the United Kingdom and then France adopted the policy of 'appeasement', making concessions to the Third Reich and fascist Italy. The intention was to satisfy further demands pressed by Hitler and prevent the outbreak of war in Europe. The most spectacular manifestation of the policy was the conference of the four European powers in Munich, during which the powers agreed to the German annexation of Sudetenland, which belonged to Czechoslovakia. Photo: arrival of the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, (second right, in front of the honor guard) at the conference in Munich, on September 29, 1938 (NAC Collections)



Photo VIII.

Hitler inspects barbed wire entanglements along the border between Czechoslovakia and Germany, accompanied by military officers (1938) (NAC Collections)



Photo IX.

The Führer of the Third Reich in German-occupied Prague on March 17, 1939 (NAC Collections)



Photo X.

Policy of the Third Reich toward Poland in late 1938 and early 1939 balanced between threats and persuasions to join an alliance. Eventually, all German efforts came to nothing. The Polish government sought peaceful relations with Germany but at the same time refused to alter the status of the Free City of Danzig and compromise Polish sovereignty. Germany made one of the last attempts to persuade Poland to change the decision during the visit of Joachim von Ribbentrop to Warsaw on January 25, 1939, on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the German-Polish declaration of non-aggression. Photo: (foreground from left) the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Józef Beck, Polish President Ignacy Mościcki, and the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop (IPN Collections)



Photo XI.

Faced with a threat from Germany, Poland bet on an alliance with France and Great Britain. Photo: Chief of the Imperial General Staff of Great Britain, General Edmund Ironside, during talks with Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły and Polish General Staff officers in July 1939 (NAC Collections)

“The destruction of Poland shall be the primary objective. Our war aim does not consist in reaching certain lines, but in the physical destruction of the enemy. (...) Be hard, be without mercy. (...) The law is on the side of the strong. We must act more brutally than the others, (...) our war must be the war of annihilation. I have placed my SS Totenkopf division in readiness – for the present only in the East – with orders to them to send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women, and children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus shall we gain the living space which we need.”

(Excerpt from Adolf Hitler's *Obersalzberg* speech of August 22, 1939)



Photo XII.

Poland's strong objection to Germany's territorial and political claims led to a rapid shift in German policy and alliance with the Soviet Union. The Germans sought a guarantee that after their invasion of Poland, the Soviet Union would not form a coalition with any countries in western Europe but join in the attack on Poland. Photo: reception of the Foreign Minister of the Third Reich, Joachim von Ribbentrop, (dark coat, light hat in his hand) at the airport in Moscow on August 23, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo XIII.

Officially, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a non-aggression treaty. However, the most significant terms were delineated in a secret protocol that concerned the partition and annexation of sovereign European countries: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and Romania. Photo: Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Vyacheslav Molotov, signs the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact on the night of August 23 and 24, 1939. Background: Joachim von Ribbentrop (crossed arms) (IPN Collections)

Right: Photo XIV.

Under the German-Soviet Pact, more than half of Poland's territory was to be annexed by the Soviet Union. Photo: Joseph Stalin shakes hands with Ribbentrop after signing the Pact, cementing the alliance between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union (IPN Collections)



1

September 1939



September 1, 1939. The beginning of the German invasion of Poland brought about harsh times of unprecedented injustice, terror, and extreme violence that spanned five years. Criminal acts committed by the *Wehrmacht* began with terrorist artillery shelling and aerial bombardment of civilian targets scattered throughout Poland. On the very first day of the war, the town of Wieluń was bombarded and 1,200 people were killed. Soon afterward, other towns suffered the same terrible fate: Działoszyn, Sulejów, Janów Lubelski, Frampol, and above all, the capital city of Warsaw, ruthlessly destroyed by German air raids and shelling during its brave several weeks' defense. German forces paid no respect to Red Cross emblems on hospitals and deliberately destroyed historical objects and residential areas. According to historians, during the September Campaign, the *Luftwaffe* dropped bombs on 158 Polish towns and residential complexes. In most of these locations, there were no military units, and they were of no strategic importance. It is estimated that over ten thousand Polish civilians were killed in the aftermath of the aerial bombing. The *Luftwaffe* also strafed the columns of refugees, killing hundreds of women and children. *Wehrmacht* units did not even spare the towns and villages that had not put up any resistance. During the invasion, German forces burned down several hundred villages. In the occupied areas, the soldiers of 'the knightly *Wehrmacht*' (as some post-war apologists would say), shot civilians on their own initiative. German troops also executed civilians in retaliation for their own defeats or to punish them for the operations of Polish forces fighting the invader. Moreover, captured Polish Army soldiers fell victim to Germans, as did the members of local civil guards, even though they were in uniforms, labeled with national symbols, and protected by international agreements. It is estimated that the German invader murdered at least 1,500 captured Polish soldiers. The largest single massacres of prisoners of war were perpetrated in the towns of Zakroczym, Ciepielów, Zambrów, and Śladów, where each crime claimed dozens of lives. At that time, German soldiers began to execute so-called 'instant pogroms'; during which they persecuted and murdered local Jewish people in the occupied areas.

The ally of the Third Reich, the Soviet Union, invaded Poland on September 17, 1939. The march of the Red Army was strewn with numerous war crimes. It is assessed that the Red Army killed 2,500 Polish soldiers and police officers as well as at least several hundred civilians. War crimes were approved by the Soviet command, as they even encouraged local ethnic minorities to murder Polish soldiers and other officials of the Polish State.

Left: Photo 1.1.
German bomber Heinkel He 111
drops bombs on Warsaw
in September 1939
(IPN Collections)

Photo 1.2.
German battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* shells
a Polish military post on the Westerplatte
Peninsula (IPN Collections)



1. Sept. 1939 Uhr 4.45 Schulschiff „Schleswig-Holstein“
eröffnet das Feuer auf die von den Polen zur Festung
ausgebaute Westerplatte im Danziger Hafen

Foto-Sönnke
M 108



Photo 1.3.
German troops and officers stage breaking down a border barrier between Poland and the Free City of Danzig in Kolibki near Gdynia as part of a propaganda campaign (NAC Collections)



Photo 1.4.
German soldiers during the battle of Westerplatte (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.5.
German battle stations during the capturing of Gdynia on September 14, 1939
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.6.
Buildings set on fire in Sochaczew, a town taken over by German troops
on September 19, 1939 (IPN Collections)

Photo 1.7.
Adolf Hitler greets German soldiers while
they cross a river in Poland. A frame from
a Nazi propaganda film 'A Campaign in
Poland' (*Feldzug in Polen*) (NAC Collections)





Photo 1.8.
Destroyed vehicles on roads in the vicinity of Młodzieszyn and Sochaczew
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.9.
Bodies of Polish soldiers killed in the village of Buraków near Łomianki
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.10.
Front air gunner in a German bomber flying in the direction of Warsaw
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.11.
Aerial photograph of German airplanes bombing Polish targets
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.12.
Polish town in flames after being bombed by German airplanes
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.13.
Burnt buildings after *Luftwaffe* aerial bombing on the market square
in Ropczyce (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.14.
Polish convoy wrecked by Germans (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.15.
Burning oil tanks in Drohobycz (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.16.
Destroyed and burned buildings along a street in Pińczów after a battle
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.17.
Tragic consequences of a German air
raid on civilians in Warsaw. Kazimiera
Kostewicz kneels over the body
of her 14-year-old sister Anna, killed
a moment earlier with an aircraft gun by
a *Luftwaffe* pilot (Photo by Julien Bryan,
IPN Collections)



Photo 1.18.
Two nurses from the Saint Sophia Hospital in Warsaw cover the dead bodies of casualties killed in a *Luftwaffe* air attack on a residential building on the corner of Żelazna and Nowolipie Streets (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.19.
Dead bodies of people killed in an aerial bombing of Warsaw (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.20.
Town of Złoczew after the massacre carried out by the *Wehrmacht* in the first days of the war. About two hundred Poles and Polish Jews were murdered and almost 250 houses and outbuildings were burnt
(IPN Collections)

“I remember that there was a teenage girl among the injured. She was shot in the back so drastically that her guts popped out of her belly. I also remember seeing a dead body of a woman and a little child climbing all over her. The child was no more than a year and a half. When I picked up the child, one of the German soldiers crashed his head with a rifle butt.”

(Testimony by 18-year-old Janina Modrzejewska, resident of Złoczew)



Photo 1.21.
German soldiers interrogate Polish war refugees
(IPN Collections)



Photos 1.22.-1.23.
Polish war refugees returning home on the route of marching German troops
(IPN Collections)





Photo 1.24.
Group of Polish civilians, residents of Gdańsk, arrested by Germans
(NAC Collections)



Photo 1.25.
Wehrmacht soldiers escort Polish civilians detained in Częstochowa
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.26.
Several dozens of Polish hostages, out of almost two thousand people captured by Germans at the beginning of the occupation of Bydgoszcz. Altogether, around 600 to 800 Poles were executed (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.27.
Hostages at the Old Market Square in Bydgoszcz on September 9, 1939. In the middle: canon Fr. Kazimierz Stepczyński, who will be murdered by Germans in less than a month (IPN Collections)

Photo 1.28.
Polish hostages immediately before
the execution at the Old Market Square
in Bydgoszcz on September 9, 1939.
Behind them, dead bodies of other
hostages shot first lie on the ground
(IPN Collections)





Photos 1.29.-1.30.

September 12, 1939, in front of the church in the town of Końskie, Germans rounded up about fifty Jews and ordered them to dig graves for Wehrmacht soldiers, fallen in combat against the Polish Army. Because of a sudden commotion, German troops started to shoot wildly, killing twenty-two Jewish men (IPN Collections)





Photo 1.31.
Most of the captured Polish Army soldiers were deported to prisoner-of-war camps. This was also the fate of the defenders of the Polish military post on Westerplatte (in the photo) (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.32.
Taking away captured defenders of the Polish Post in the Free City of Danzig on September 1, 1939. All captives were soon, contrary to international law, summarily court-martialed, convicted, and executed for partisan activities (IPN Collections)



Photos 1.33.-1.34.
Soldiers of the 74th Polish Infantry Regiment captured near the village
of Ciepielów on September 9, 1939 (IPN Collections)





Photos 1.35.-1.36.
 Mass execution of several dozen soldiers of the 74th Polish Infantry Regiment was one of the most horrific crimes the *Wehrmacht* committed on captured Polish troops in September 1939. Photos: bodies of shot POWs. The corpses lie in a ditch along the road between the villages of Lipsko and Ciepielów (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.37.
Column of Polish POWs from the Pomeranian Army force-marched down a street in German-occupied Grudziądz, September 5-6, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.38.
Column of Polish POWs captured near the town of Kutno while marching to the rear on September 20, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.39.
Wehrmacht troops against a background of burning houses near Grudziądz
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.40.
Buildings in flames in the village of Kamion near Wyszogród after being
attacked by German troops of the 4th Panzer Division on September 18, 1939
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.41.
Buildings on fire in an unknown Polish town during the 1939 war campaign
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.42.
Destroyed buildings in the vicinity of Radom (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.43.
Aftermath of German shelling: dead cows lying in a meadow, either in Lipno
or Sierpc district ('powiat') (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.44.
Hitler surrounded by staff officers watching the siege of Warsaw
(NAC Collections)



Photo 1.45.
Germans bombard Warsaw's West Train Station
(NAC Collection)



Photo 1.46.
Buildings in flames on Krakowskie Przedmieście Street in Warsaw during
German air raids and bombardments, September 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.47.
Burning buildings in Warsaw (presumably
in Nowy Świat Street) after heavy air raids
and shelling on September 25, 1939
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.48.
German airplanes above besieged Warsaw (IPN Collections)

“The fire was all around. A burning smell was penetrating my nose. Clouds of smoke billowed in the yard, in the hall, and in apartments, and completely covered the skies. A sunny morning turned as dark as gloomy dusk on a cloudy day. Flights of German bombers were circling low. Every few minutes we could hear a deafening roar – the sound of a bomber lowering its flight, followed by another one, and then the third, the tenth... Again and again, the loud roar was pierced by a swish, and then everything began to shake and there was an explosion.”

(Memoirs of Józef Dąbrowa-Sierzputowski)



Photo 1.49.
Street in Warsaw after German aerial bombing and artillery bombardment
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.50.
Ruins of residential buildings in Łomżyńska Street in Warsaw (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.51.
Destroyed restaurant building on the corner of Jakubowska and Estońska
Streets in Warsaw, September 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.52.
Inside a destroyed building in Nowy Świat Street in Warsaw (IPN Collections)

Photo 1.53.
Operating room in a Warsaw hospital
(Szpital Praski) destroyed by German
bombing on September 8, 1939.
(Photo by Julien Bryan/ IPN Collections)

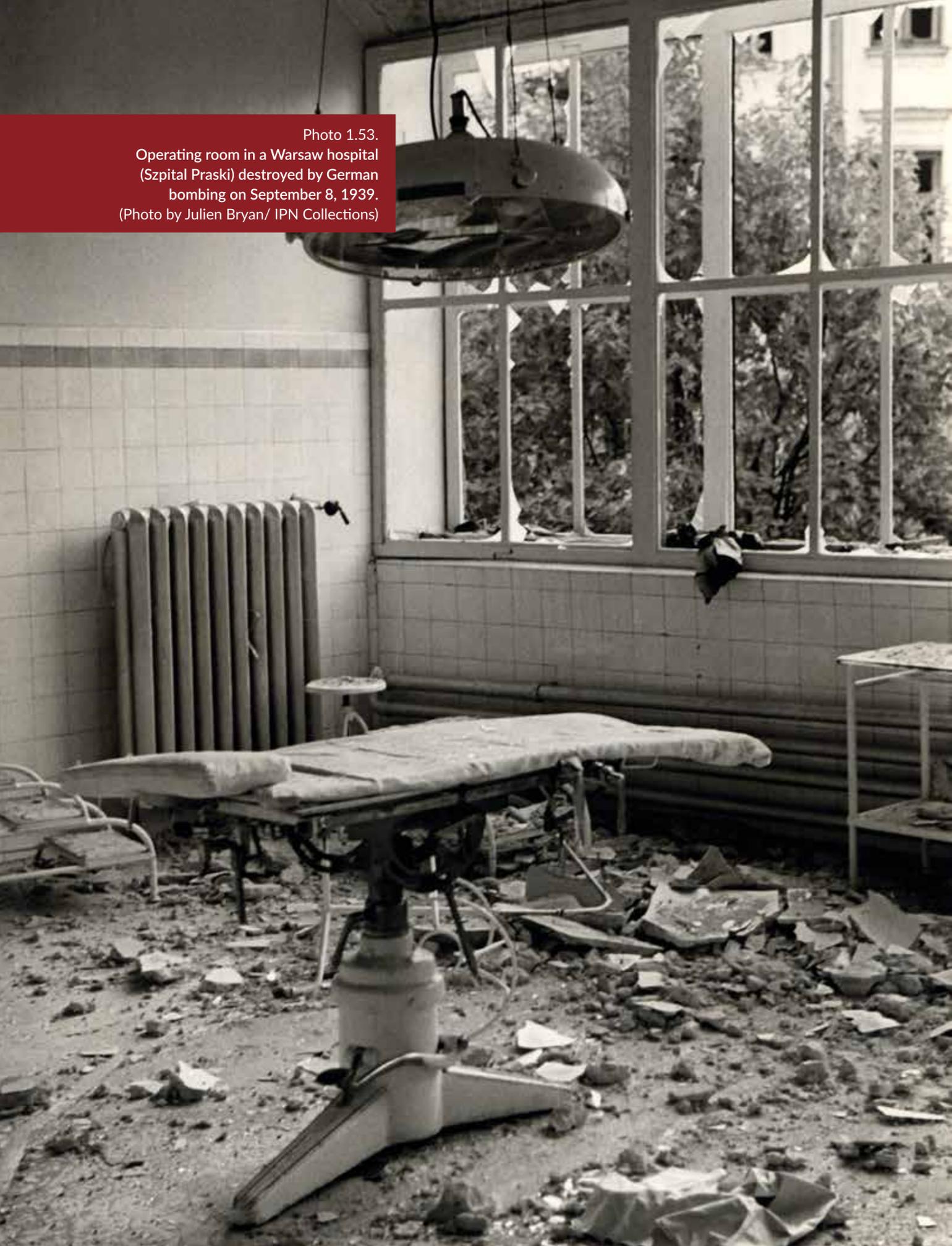


Photo 1.54.
People pray at the altar in bombed All Saints Church at Grzybowski Square
in Warsaw. A massive hole in the floor left by a bomb, smashing through
the roof and falling into the vault, is seen in the foreground (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.55.
German soldiers during a morning attack on a residential complex (Grochów II),
Warsaw, September 25, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.56.
Ruins of burnt residential buildings on both sides of Siedzibna Street
in Warsaw (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.57.
Royal Castle in Warsaw, the official residence of Polish
President, destroyed by Germans during the siege of the capital
(NAC Collections)

“In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state, the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R. shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narev, Vistula, and San. The question of whether the interests of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish state and how such a state should be bounded can only be definitely determined in the course of further political developments. In any event, both governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly agreement.”

(Excerpt from the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939)

Photo 1.58.
September 17, 1939. The Soviet Union invaded Poland, already fighting a war against Germany. Photo: Soviet infantry marching in a column after entering the Polish territory (IPN Collections)

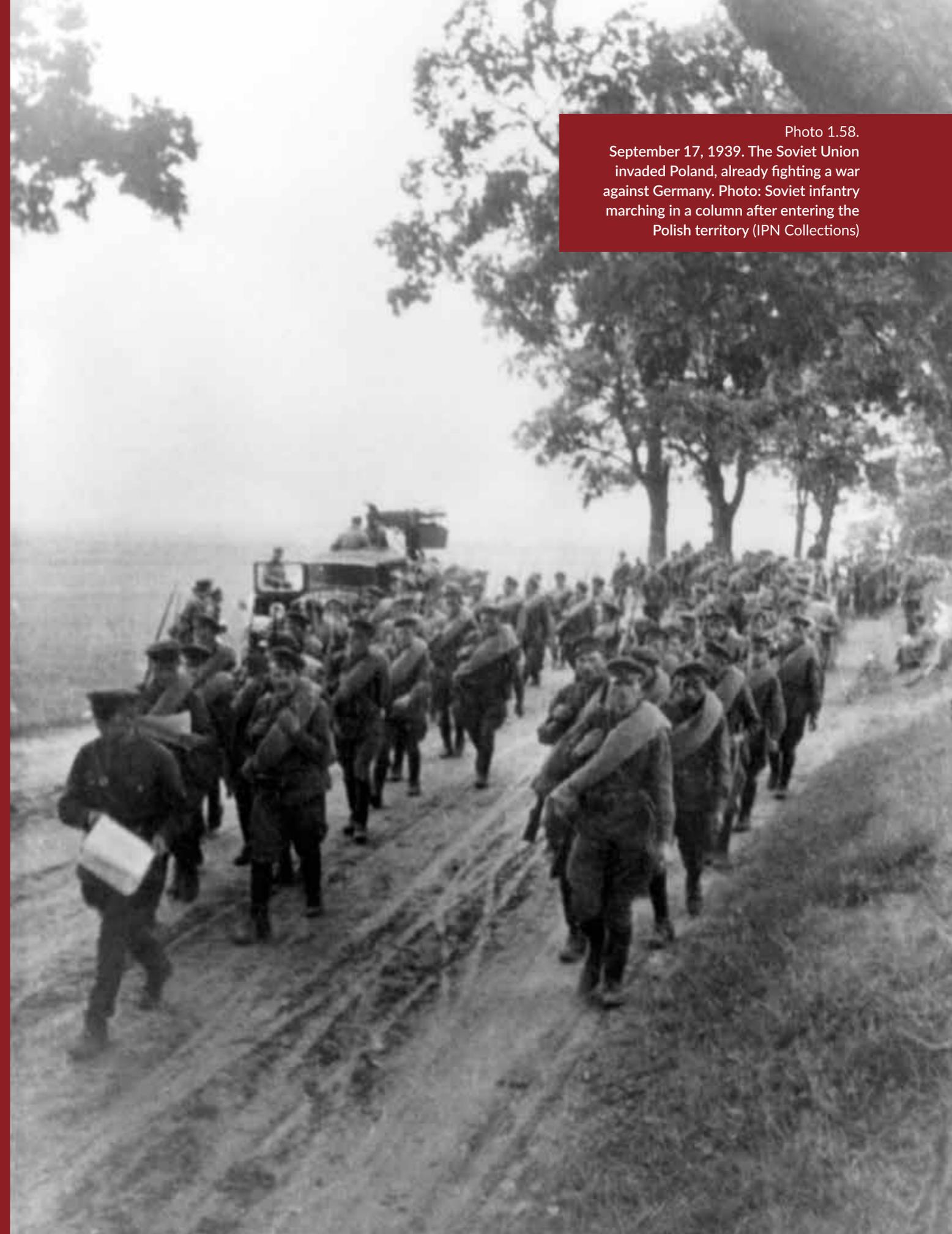




Photo 1.59.
German and Soviet troops on the demarcation line, preliminarily agreed on
in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (September 1939)
(NAC Collections)



Photo 1.60.
German and Soviet
military units meet
close to the town of
Stryj on September
20, 1939
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.61.
Following the arrival of Soviet units at their positions, *Wehrmacht* units re-
treated westward. Photo: Germans handing over Stryj, a town in Stanisławów
Voivodeship (currently in Ukraine) to the Soviets on September 22, 1939
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.62.
Two Germans and a Red Army
officer in conversation in
Brest-Litovsk on September
22, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 1.63.
Establishing the demarcation
line between German and
Soviet military units in Brest-Li-
tovsk. First from right: Com-
manding Officer, 19th Army
Corps, General of Panzer Army,
Heinz Guderian
(IPN Collection)



Photo 1.64.
Crowning the military and political alliance between the Third Reich
and Soviet Union, military parades were staged in many Polish towns.
Photo: German-Soviet military parade in Brest-Litovsk, September 22, 1939
(IPN Collections)



Photo 1.65.

Joachim von Ribbentrop (right) talks with the Soviet Ambassador to Berlin, Alexander Schkwarzew (left), before boarding a plane to Moscow to sign a boundary and friendship treaty between the Third Reich and Soviet Union, September 1939 (NAC Collections)

“The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the U.S.S.R. consider it as exclusively their task, after the collapse of the former Polish state, to re-establish peace and order in these territories and to assure to the peoples living there a peaceful life in keeping with their national character. (...) The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the U.S.S.R. regard this settlement as a firm foundation for a progressive development of the friendly relations between their peoples.”

(Excerpt from ‘The German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty’ with secret supplementary protocols signed in Moscow on September 28, 1939, by Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov)

2

**Extermination
of the Polish Elites**



For Germans and Soviets alike, the fundamental extermination objective was to destroy the Polish elites. Even before the war broke out, proscription lists had been compiled by the German authorities, including the names of prominent Polish people who were to be killed or imprisoned. They were political and social activists, priests whom Germans hated in particular, as well as members of the cultural, academic, and artistic elites, uprising veterans (fighting in both Greater Poland and Silesian insurrections), and local leaders who earned respect among their communities and could possibly organize underground operations against Germans in the future. This criminal plan was given the code name 'Intelligentsia Action' (*Intelligenzaktion*) or – to put it euphemistically – the action of 'cleansing the political ground'. The operation was directly carried out by security police task forces (*Einsatzgruppen*) supported by the members of *Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz* – paramilitary units comprised of German minority members living in Poland. The mass murders were committed particularly in the Polish territories that had been directly annexed into the Third Reich: Pomeranian, Silesian, and Greater Poland Voivodeships; part of Łódź Province, Suwałki Region, northern and western parts of Mazovia, as well as western parts of Kraków and Kielce Voivodeships. Altogether, from the beginning of 1940, German invaders murdered there approximately fifty thousand Polish citizens. Of the remaining territories of occupied Poland, a *General Gouvernement* was formed, where German forces continued the extermination of the Polish elites in separate regional special operations, notably in the Extraordinary Operation of Pacification called the 'AB Action' (*Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion*). Between May and July 1940, approximately 3,500 prominent members of the Polish elites were killed, including many politicians, intellectuals, artists, and athletes. Mass executions carried out near the village of Palmiry at the edge of Kampinos Forest became the notorious symbol of those atrocious crimes.

Parallel to the Germans committing mass murders, the Soviets were executing a similar plan. In the spring of 1940, Soviet officials approved the murder of Polish prisoners and POWs. Apart from career servicemen and police officers, they subsequently killed reserve officers, who were part of the Polish intellectual elite. Altogether, in the Katyn massacre, the NKVD executed at least 14,587 prisoners of war and 7,305 Polish citizens detained in prisons. The victims were buried in several locations in present-day Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, such as Katyn, Kharkiv, and Kyiv.

Left: Photo 2.1.
Czesław Lorkowski, Polish teacher from Bydgoszcz. Photo taken before the execution by *Selbstschutz* in the 'Valley of Death', Fordon, November 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photos 2.2.-2.3.
Members of a security police task force (*Einsatzgruppe*) operating in Polish territory during a mass murder operation (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.4.
Souvenir photo of the members of *Einsatzgruppe* who shot twenty Poles against the wall of the Leszno prison on October 21, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.5.

Activists of *Selbstschutz* operating in Łobżenica, at a monastery (Missionaries of the Holy Family, Górka Klasztorna), where they committed horrible atrocities. Fifth from left: Harry Schulz, a 29-year-old *Volksdeutsch*, Deputy Chief of a local *Selbstschutz* unit. Altogether, in October and November 1939, the unit murdered around 200 citizens of Łobżenica and its neighboring towns, including several dozen Catholic priests (IZ Collections)

“Then they brought in the Jews and Anna Jaworska. They tied to each of her legs a strong rope and ordered two groups of Jews, five in each group, to pull at the ropes in the opposite directions. *Selbstschutze* told the Jews that if they did that, they would be released. The woman begged for her life (...). She screamed at the top of her voice. I remember her last words: „Jesus, Mary! People, what are you doing to me?!” Schultz hurried the Jews. Then the woman was torn apart, and entrails ran from her body. Schultz kicked the gory shreds of her torn body and the ropes into a ditch. Right after that, the Jews were shot on the spot.”

(Eyewitness account by Jan Topor about the *Selbstschutz* crime committed in Górka Klasztorna on November 22, 1939)



Photos 2.6.-2.8.

From the first weeks of the occupation, Germans set up temporary concentration camps and prisons, incarcerating thousands of Poles arrested as part of 'political ground cleansing' targeted at the Polish intelligentsia and patriotic circles. Some of them were murdered. Others were put in concentration camps or other prisons. Only a few were released. Photo: arrested Poles, including some priests detained in Fort VII in Toruń (IPN Collections)





Photo 2.9.
Members of *Selbstschutz* executing Poles in
Barbarka Forest near Toruń. It is estimated
that about 600 people were murdered there
(IPN Collections)



Photo 2.10.
Mass execution of Poles by German invaders in Rudzki Most Forest,
fall of 1939. In the foreground: Fr. Piotr Sosnowski, dean of Tuchola Deanery
(IPN Collections)



Photo 2.11.
SS officer reads out death sentence to Poles in a Jewish cemetery in Szubin
on October 21, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.12.
Volksdeutsche execute Poles in Rudzki
Most, fall of 1939
(IPN Collections)



Photo 2.13.
Two teachers from Bydgoszcz a moment before execution in the
'Valley of Death', Fordon, October 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.14.
Teachers from Bydgoszcz are walked to a place of execution by members
of *Selbstschutz* in the 'Valley of Death' (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.15.
Germans prepare Polish citizens for a mass execution in an unknown place
in Poland (AAN Collections)



Photo 2.16.
Members of *Selbstschutz* and the SS during the execution of two Polish civilians, Lubawa, December 7, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.17.
Execution held in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, December 7, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photos 2.18.-2.19.
Execution of a Polish restaurant owner, Aleksander Kurowski and a Jewish merchant, Mordechaj Słodki, Freedom Square in Konin, September 22, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photos 2.20.-2.21.
Execution of a Catholic priest, Fr. Roman Pawłowski, St. Joseph Square, Kalisz, October 18, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.22.
Einsatzgruppen death squad executes Poles
on the market square in Kórnik, October
20, 1939 (IPN Collections)





Photo 2.23.
Germans walk Poles for execution under the walls of the Leszno prison,
20 October 1939. On that day, *Einsatzgruppen* squads shot twenty convicts
(IPN Collections)



Photo 2.24.
Death squad member finishes off a wounded Pole (IPN Collection)



Photo 2.25.

Taken in 1945, the photo shows the exhumation of forty-one citizens of Pabianice murdered by Germans in Wiączyński Forest near Łódź on December 14, 1939, as part of the campaign to eliminate the Polish intelligentsia (IPN Collection)



Photos 2.26.-2.27.

Post-war exhumation of mass-murdered Poles who were arrested during the *Intelligenzaktion* in Poznań. Wypalanki Forest near Stęszew (1945) (IPN Collections)





Photo 2.28.
Molenda Forest near Tuszyn was the site
of mass executions in the vicinity of Łódź.
Photo taken during a post-war exhumation
(IPN Collections)



Photos 2.29.-2.30
After the war, mass graves were uncovered in Molenda Forest and the bodies of 101 victims were exhumed. Germans must have overlooked the remains while they were covering up tracks of mass executions carried out in Poland (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.31.
Skull uncovered in Molenda Forest with a bullet hole visible in the back of the head (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.32.
Victims of the *AB-Aktion* from the Warsaw District transported to the execution site near the village of Palmiry at the edge of Kampinos Forest (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.33.

It is estimated that from December 1939 to July 1941, Germans shot in Palmiry approximately 1,700 Polish citizens, including many prominent members of the Polish political, intellectual, and cultural elite. Along with the Katyn massacre, the Palmiry massacre is one of the most important symbols of the Polish intelligentsia martyrdom (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.34.

German police officers lead Polish women to be shot in Palmiry (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.35.
Post-war exhumation of the victims of German murders in Palmiry. Photo: body of Andrzej Świetlicki, a prewar activist of the National Radical Camp Falanga and the leader of the National Radical Organization (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.36.
Prayer book and two photographs of a little girl were found during the exhumation in Palmiry. Across the back of the photograph, it is written 'Palmiry Witold Karnawski, 17.07.1941' (IPN Collections)



Photo 2.37.
Mummified heart with a visible bullet exit hole found during the post-war exhumation in Palmiry (IPN Collections)

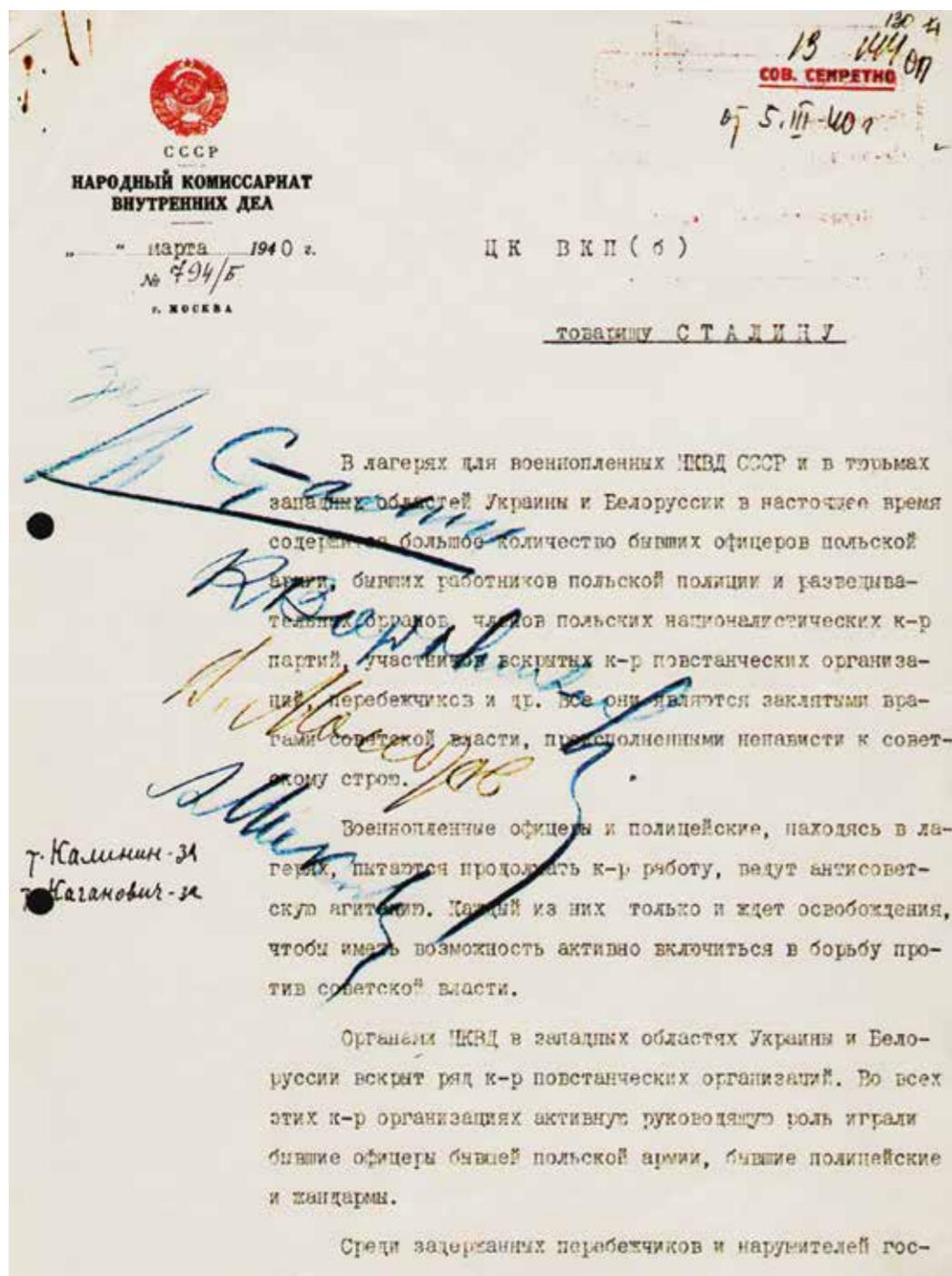


Photo 2.38.

One of the results of the German-Soviet alliance formed in September 1939 was the cooperation between the Gestapo and the NKVD to suppress the Polish independence movement. Subsequently, they almost simultaneously carried out the mass murders of Polish elites. Photo: motion put forward by Lavrentiy Beria, approved by the Soviet Politburo members, to murder approximately twenty-six thousand Polish citizens detained in Soviet prisoner-of-war camps and other prisons (Public domain)

“A large number of former officers of the Polish Army, employees of the Polish Police and intelligence services, members of Polish nationalist, counter-revolutionary parties, members of exposed counter-revolutionary resistance groups, escapees and others, all of them sworn enemies of Soviet authority full of hatred for the Soviet system, are currently being held in prisoner-of-war camps of the USSR NKVD and in prisons in the western provinces of Ukraine and Belarus. (...)”

In view of the fact that all are hardened and uncompromising enemies of Soviet authority, the USSR NKVD considers it necessary: (...)”

to try them before special tribunals: the cases of the 14,700 [people] (...) being held in prisoner-of-war camps, together with the cases of 11,000 [people] (...) who have been arrested and are being held in the western provinces of the Ukraine and Belarus (...) and apply to them the supreme penalty: shooting.”

(Excerpt from the motion put forward on March 5, 1940, by the People's Commissar for the Internal Affairs of the USSR, Lavrentiy Beria, to the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union - Bolsheviks)



Photos 2.39.-2.40.

Tragic fate of both daughters of General Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki became emblematic of Nazi-Soviet cooperation in the mass executions of Polish patriots. The elder daughter, lieutenant Janina Lewandowska (left), was murdered on April 22, 1940, by the NKVD in Katyn. The younger one, Agnieszka Dowbor-Muśnicka (right) was executed on June 20 or 21, 1940, in Palmiry (MPWL Collections)



Photos 2.41.-2.42.
Hundreds of corpses
of Polish officers
exhumed from death pits.
In the Katyn Forest alone,
the NKVD murdered
roughly 4,400 Polish
prisoners of war
(BN Polona Collections)



3

Terror of Occupation



An integral part of the grim day-to-day reality of Poles living under the German occupation was retaliatory executions which were carried out in response to Polish resistance actions. The victims of executions were usually random people. Every single assault on a German citizen or a sabotage action cost at least twenty Polish lives. For killing one government official – 50 people had to die. For rail sabotage – between 100 and 150 people lost their lives. The invader's objective was to inspire terror and paralyze the Polish population. Victims were shot or hanged in public places, often in a crowded spectacle. People were forced to watch the macabre, with onlookers including children as well. A particularly high number of reprisal executions, Germans carried out in Warsaw, the city with the highest record of Polish underground actions. The massacres were given a lot of publicity by spreading information through megaphones and posting notices. The biggest German retaliatory operation was a series of mass street executions carried out while suppressing the Warsaw Uprising. Historians estimate that in the Wola district alone, German forces murdered from 30,000 to 65,000 men, women, and children, including the patients and personnel of three local hospitals. Similar executions were carried out in many other districts in Warsaw, including Ochota, and in the so-called police district.

Germans also took revenge on Polish villagers, particularly those who lived in the areas where partisans were particularly active such as the provinces of Lublin and Kielce. On the territory of present-day Poland, German military and police forces perpetrated about eight hundred village pacifications, murdering twenty thousand people. In almost eighty pacifications, they burned down either all or most farmhouses, killing all men or all captured people, irrespective of age and gender.

The principles of criminal liability enforced by German authorities broke all fundamental laws of civilized society. The death penalty was used as punishment for numerous offenses, e.g. possession of weapons, aid to POWs, hiding Jews, attempts to escape forced labor, or evading *Baudienst* work, which was obligatory labor for the Building Service. Frequently, death was the punishment for illegal slaughter, food smuggling, or failure to deliver a quota of agricultural produce.

Left: Photo 3.1.
Preparing an execution
in the prison yard in Tarnobrzeg,
December 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.2.
Two members of the 'White Eagle' underground organization, Jarosław Krzyszkowski and Fryderyk Piątkowski, hanged on a lamppost in Bochnia for attacking a German police post (December 1939) (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.3.
In retaliation for a Polish underground action, Germans shot around fifty residents of Bochnia and its vicinity, including twenty-nine people held at the local Municipal Court jail. Photo: group of condemned persons immediately before their execution, December 18, 1939 (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.4.
Senior SS and police officers together with the Governor of the Kraków District, SS-Gruppenführer Otto Wächter, waiting for the execution of Polish civilians (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.5.
SS troops shoot the Poles arrested in retaliation for an attack on a German police post in Bochnia (December 18, 1939) (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.6.

In response to the death of two German non-commissioned officers, who were killed in a restaurant in Wawer near Warsaw, Germans hanged the owner, Antoni Bartoszak, at the entrance to his restaurant. Then they shot 107 random people in a mass execution (December 27, 1939) (IPN Collections)

“They were lying there, side by side. My husband’s face was massacred beyond recognition. His eye was smashed, and his nose flattened. The fur collar of his coat was shredded into pieces. He was lying there, shrunk as if he were in terrible pain. He was already cold. I knew he was dead. But my son was lying down straight, with a hat still on his head, and his eyes wide open as if he were about to stand up. To me, he seemed alive. I unbuttoned his shirt. His body was still warm and sweaty. I started to wipe his skin and rub it frantically, desperately wanting to bring him back to life. I was waiting for a miracle. Then people started to gather. Everyone was overwhelmed with untold despair. People were running around, mad with anguish. They were crying, howling with pain and helplessness. They swore revenge. And I was left by myself, aching and desolate, stricken in a way that no human words can express.”

(Account by Janina Przedlacka who lost her husband and son in the execution in Wawer)



Photo 3.7.
 Doctor checking the pulse of one of the two men shot in the prison
 in Tarnobrzeg (December 1939) (IPN Collections)



Ilustracja 3.8.
 Public execution of Wincenty Pelaga in front of the Town Hall in Pleszew
 for the illegal possession of weapons (April 3, 1940) (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.9.

Round-up ('łapanka') in front of a post office in Myślenice in retaliation for an alleged attempt to attack the post office. The captives were executed in Fort 49 'Krzyszawice' on April 29, 1940 (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.10.

Public execution of ten men carried out by SS and Gestapo officers in Sosnowiec on April 8, 1940 (IPN Collections)

Photo 3.11.
On July 16, 1940, in reprisal for the death
of a German policeman, Germans shot
twenty hostages in Olkusz. On July 31st,
they conducted a pacification action in
the town (shown in the photo) known as
'Bloody Wednesday' when hundreds of
men were brutally harassed and tortured
(IPN Collections)





Photos 3.12.-3.14.

In June 1941, near the town of Gostynin, a German military policeman was killed in unclear circumstances. In reprisal, German officials decided to shoot twenty Poles, ten from Gąbin and ten from Gostynin. Photos: execution of ten Poles in Gąbin on June 15, 1941 (IPN Collections)





Photos 3.15.-3.17.
Execution of ten Poles in Gostynin on June 15, 1941 (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.18.
Execution of three Poles in Kutno
on June 9, 1941, sentenced to death
for food smuggling (IPN Collections)



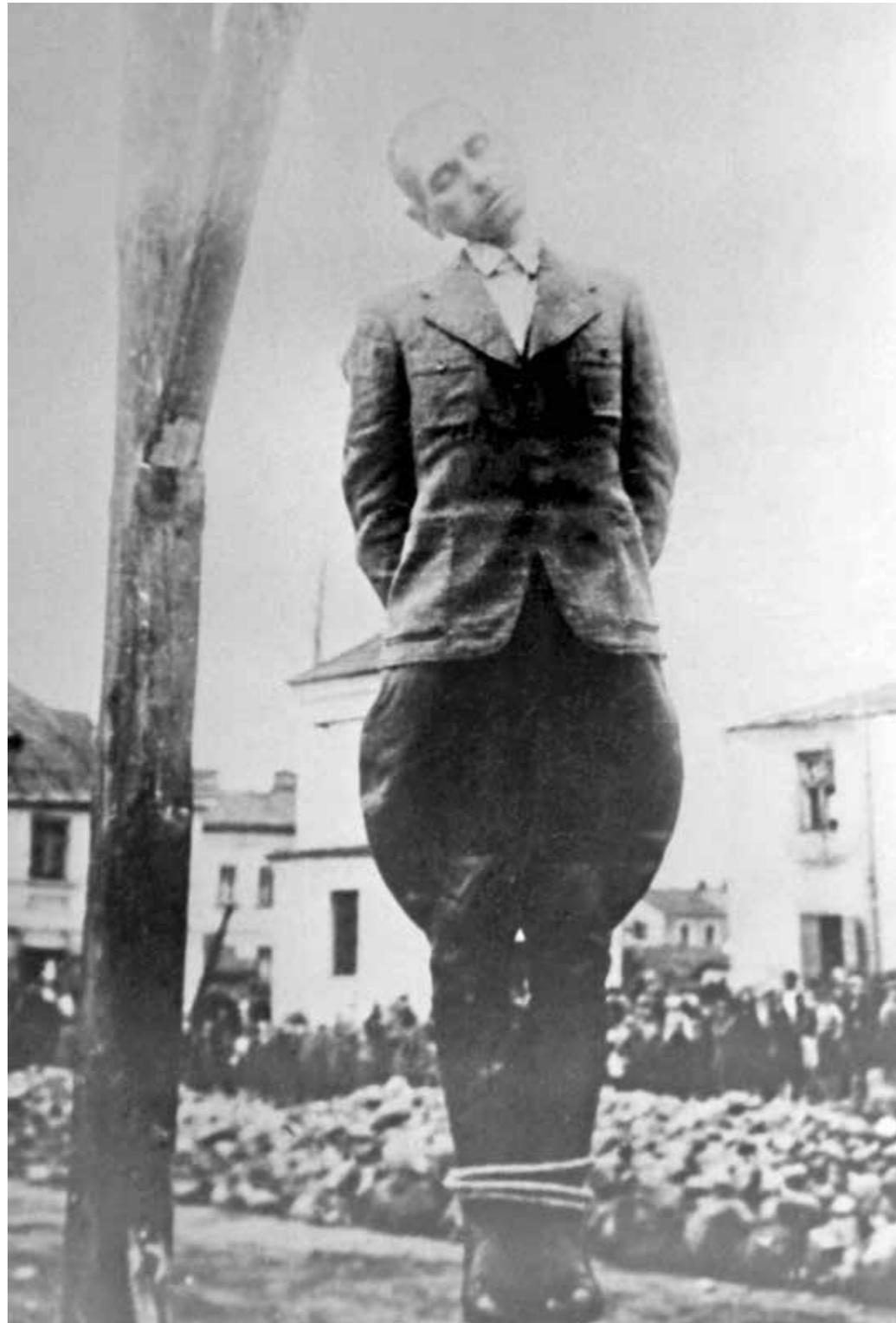


Photo 3.19.
Public execution in Kutno carried out as a warning to the Polish people who were forced to come and watch the macabre spectacle (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.20.
Dead bodies of Wilhelm Czarnecki, Kalikst Perkowski and Piotr Sand, lying on a wagon after being removed from the gallows (IPN Collections)



Photos 3.21.-3.23.

On June 17, 1941, in the town of Sanniki, German functionaries hanged Roman Śniadecki, sentenced to death for smuggling food (IPN Collections)

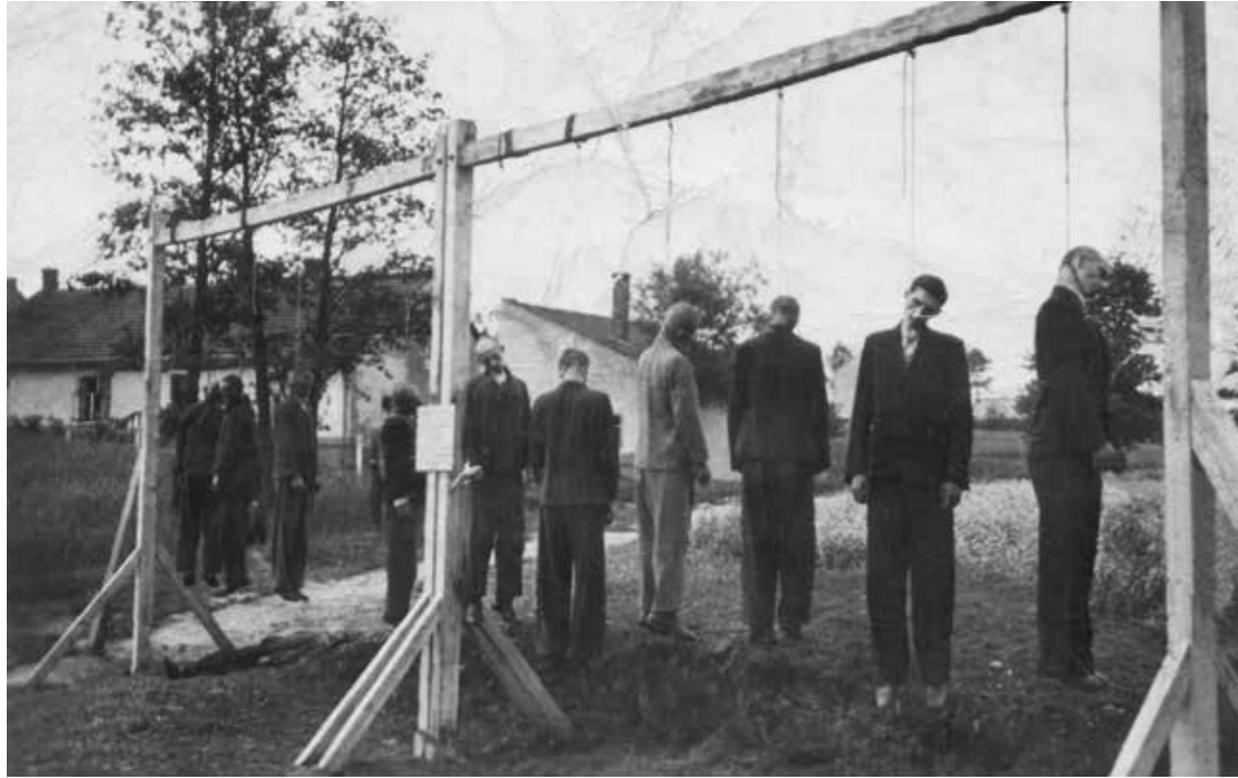




Photo 3.24.
On June 26, 1942, in Kraków Płaszów, German troops executed seven random Poles by publicly hanging them in retaliation for derailing a military train (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.25.
Moment of removing a dead body from the gallows by the officers of the Jewish Order Police, who were forced by Germans to carry out the execution in order to incite anti-Jewish feelings among the Polish population of Kraków (IPN Collections)



Photos 3.26.-3.28.
Corpses of eleven Poles hanged in public at Wola Duchacka in Kraków on July 1,
1942, in reprisal for the death of a criminal police officer (IPN Collections)

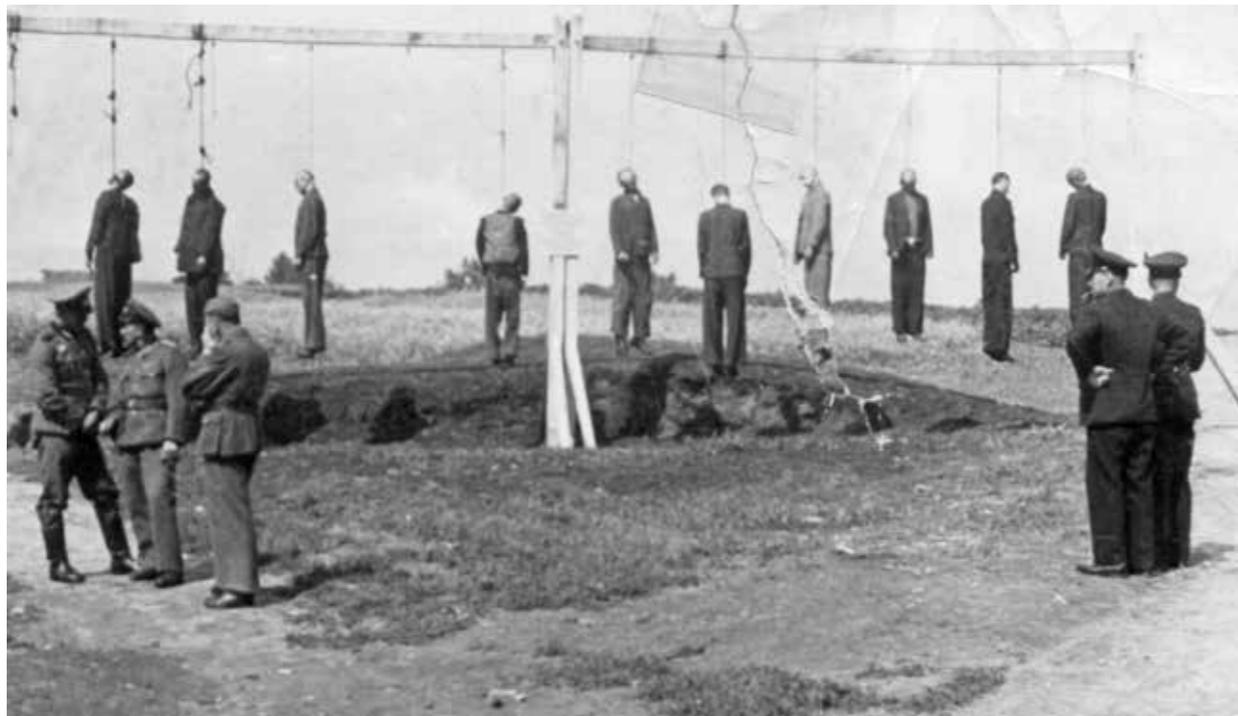




Photo 3.29.
Public execution of eleven Poles hanged by the German police in the village of Dmenin on July 17, 1942, in retaliation for the death of a *Volksdeutsch*, who in fact had been stabbed by an intoxicated acquaintance (IPN Collections)

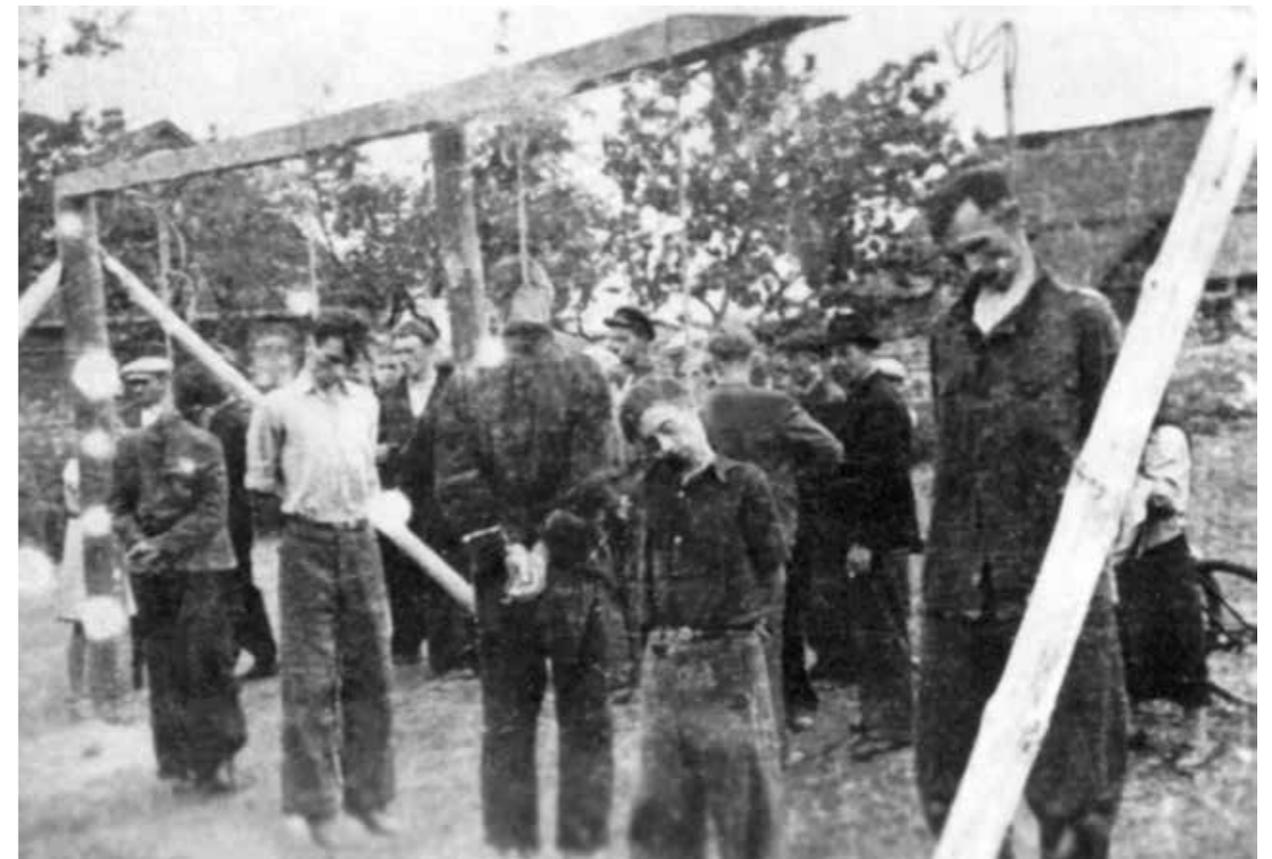


Photo 3.30.
12-year-old boy among the people executed in Dmenin (IPN Collections)



Photos 3.31.-3.32.

Execution carried out in the village of Tuchorza on July 9, 1942. Fifteen prisoners from Fort VII in Poznań were killed in retaliation for shooting a German military policeman (IPN Collections)

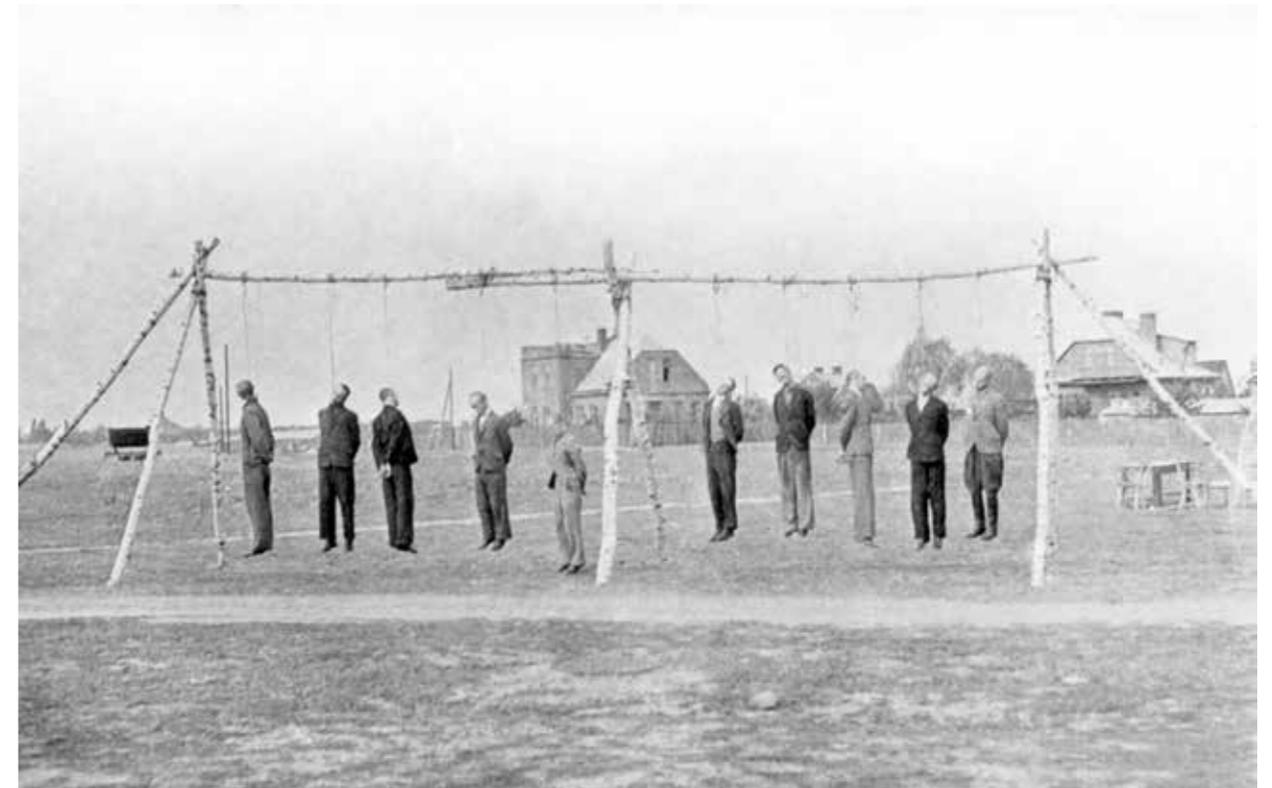


Photo 3.33.

In October 1942 Germans hanged fifty Poles in four public places in Radom. The Poles had been involved in underground activities and stealing weapons from the local arms factory. The photo shows one of the gallows placed in Radom-Wacyn (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.34.
Dead bodies of ten prisoners from the Pawiak prison hanged near the railroad
in the district of Szcześliwice in Warsaw on October 16, 1942 (IPN Collections)



Right: Photo 3.35.
Three men hanged by Germans in Łódź (IPN Collections)

BEKANNTMACHUNG OBWIESZCZENIE

Durch das Standgericht der Sicherheitspolizei sind am 17.11.1943 wegen Teilnahme an verbotenen Organisationen und Waffenbesitzes nach §§ 1 und 1 der VO. zur Bekämpfung von Angriffen gegen das deutsche Aufbauwerk im Gen. Gov. vom 1.10.1943 zum Tode verurteilt worden:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zioliński Stefan, | geb./ur. 6.8.1892 |
| 2. Engelholm Zygmunt, | " 20.4.1895 |
| 3. Nowak Leon, | " 20.1.1898 |
| 4. Bleganowski Kazimierz | " 21.2.1900 |
| 5. Ekielski Henryk, | " 29.6.1894 |
| 6. Majorek Stanisław, | " 23.3.1909 |
| 7. Flaszczynski Franciszek, | " 1.1.1897 |
| 8. Senkowski Bronisław, | " 25.7.1905 |
| 9. Kulowicz Mieczysław, | " 10.12.1906 |
| 10. Wisniewski Karol, | " 4.10.1908 |
| 11. Czarniecki Leonard, | " 19.4.1907 |
| 12. Doczkał Karol, | " 29.11.1868 |
| 13. Muciejewski Mieczysław, | " 31.8.1911 |
| 14. Kubaj Aleksander, | " 9.10.1904 |
| 15. Gogola Edward, | " 13.1.1911 |
| 16. Ruciński Stanisław, | " 21.7.1899 |
| 17. Kloc Ryszard, | " 26.5.1909 |
| 18. Grabalski Jan, | " 21.10.1885 |
| 19. Gulowski Maksymilian, | " 22.1.1891 |
| 20. Ruciński Marian, | " 21.7.1899 |
| 21. Pawłowski Bolesław, | " 29.6.1916 |
| 22. Słaskowski Antoni, | " 1.6.1879 |
| 23. Płszkiewicz Mieczysław, | " 4.3.1913 |

Przez sąd garnizonowy Policji Bezpieczeństwa zostali w dniu 17.11.1943 r. za udział w zakazanych organizacjach i posiadanie broni na podstawie §§ 1 i 2 zarządzenia o zwalczaniu wykroczeń przeciw dziełu odbudowy w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie z dnia 2.10.43 r. skazani na karę śmierci:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 24. Raczkowski Mieczysław, | geb./ur. 25.6.1910 |
| 25. Jaskulski Antoni, | " 25.2.1903 |
| 26. Duński Marian, | " 10.3.1918 |
| 27. Kowalski Jan, | " 17.7.1903 |
| 28. Jabłonski Henryk, | " 17.11.1895 |
| 29. Bolczak Franciszek, | " 4.10.1858 |
| 30. Szałk Stanisław, | " 8.5.1900 |
| 31. Gdowiak Józef, | " 5.4.1894 |
| 32. Matusiak Daniel, | " 15.7.1885 |
| 33. Killer Konstanty, | " 26.9.1900 |
| 34. Anikiewicz Tadeusz, | " 9.4.1924 |
| 35. Dombrowski Stanisław, | " 5.5.1925 |
| 36. Grabski Józef, | " 28.6.1908 |
| 37. Luc Franciszek, | " 18.4.1913 |
| 38. Duza Paweł, | " 16.10.1916 |
| 39. Dombrowski Franciszek, | " 15.8.1912 |
| 40. Borkowski Konstanty, | " 17.11.1909 |
| 41. Gołpiowski Jan, | " 15.4.1896 |
| 42. Kowalski Witold, | " 22.10.1900 |
| 43. Gajda Feliks, | " 10.2.1891 |
| 44. Jasński Kazimierz, | " 13.2.1897 |
| 45. Przybysz Józef, | " 22.1.1885 |
| 46. Ciurlik Eugeniusz, | " 15.11.1892 |

Von diesen habe ich am 18.11.1943 die unter Ziffer 1.) bis 20.) Genannten in Żyrardów erschossen lassen, weil dort durch polnische verkehrliche Elemente am 14.11.1943 1 deutscher Soldat erschossen wurde und 1 Volksdeutsche durch Schüsse verletzt worden sind.

Weitere 20 Verurteilte, und zwar die unter Ziffer 21.) bis 40.) aufgeführten Personen, habe ich gleichfalls am 18.11.43 in Grodzisk öffentlich erschossen lassen, weil dort am 18.10.43 1 Reichsdeutscher heimtückisch ermordet und 1 Soldat verwundet worden ist.

DIE VERURTEILTEN ZU ZIFFER 41.) SIND FUER EINEN GNADENERWEIS IN AUSSICHT GENOMMEN.

Sollten jedoch in den nächsten 3 Monaten im Bereich der Kreishauptmannschaft Sochaczew Gewalttaten, insbesondere Uebertätten auf Deutsche, Angehörige der mit dem Grossdeutschen Reich verbündeten Staaten oder im Interesse des Aufbauwerkes im GG. arbeitende Nichtdeutsche begangen werden, so wird – sofern der Täter nicht sofort ergriffen wird – das Urteil auch an diesen für einen Gnadenerweis in Aussicht genommenen Verurteilten vollstreckt werden.

Ist die Tat von kommunistischen Elementen begangen, so werden aus dem Kreis der obenangeführten Personen Kommunisten, ist die Tat von sonstigen irregulierten Elementen begangen, so werden von den Obenangeführten diejenigen, die diesen politisch nahestanden, von dem Gnadenerweis ausgeschlossen.

Es liegt deshalb in der Hand der nichtdeutschen Bevölkerung,

- durch sofortige Festnahme
- oder Veranlassung der Festnahme der Täter
- oder durch Einwirkung auf ihnen bekannte irreguliere Elemente
- oder durch Anzeigen verdächtiger Personen

dafür zu sorgen, dass das Urteil an den für einen Gnadenerweis in Aussicht genommenen Verurteilten nicht vollstreckt wird.

Warschau, den 20. November 1943.

DER SS UND POLIZEIFÜHRER
IM DISTRIKT WARSCHAU.

Z wyżej wymienionych objętych liczbą od 1.) do 20.) kazałem w dniu 18.11.1943 r. w Żyrardowie rozstrzelać, ponieważ tamże został przez szkodliwe elementy polskie zastrzelony 1 żołnierz niemiecki i dwie osoby przynależności niemieckiej przez strzały tranżeni.

Další 20 skazani, i to osoby wymienione pod liczbą 21.) do 40.), kazałem również publicznie rozstrzelać w Grodzisku w dniu 18.11.43 r., ponieważ tamże w dniu 18.10.43 r. 1 obywatel niemiecki został w nieczny sposób zamordowany i 1 żołnierz tranżony.

SKAZANI ORJĘCI LICZBĄ OD 41.) DO 46.) SĄ PRZEWIDZIANI DO ULASKAWIENIA.

Gdyby jednak w ciągu najbliższych 3 miesięcy na obszarze starostwa powiatowego Sochaczew miały zdarzyć się akty gwałtu, szczególnie napady na Niemców, obywateli państw sprzymierzonych z Rzeszą Wielkoniemiecką albo niemieców, pracujących w interesie dzieła odbudowy w Generalnej Gubernii, to za wypadek – gdy sprawca nie będzie natychmiast przytrzymany – wyrok będzie również wykonany na skazanych, przewidzianych do ulaskawienia.

Jeśli czyn jest dokonany przez elementy komunistyczne, to z liczby wyżej wymienionych będą wykluczeni komunisti z aktu ulaskawienia, jeśli natomiast czyn jest dokonany przez inne elementy, wprowadzone na błędą drogę, to z wyżej wymienionych będą wykluczeni z aktu ulaskawienia te osoby, które były politycznie przybliżone tymie.

- Leży zatem w rękach ludności niemieckiej
- przez natychmiastowe przytrzymanie
- lub spowodowanie przytrzymania sprawców
- lub przez wywieranie wpływu na znane jej, a wprowadzone na błędą drogę elementy
- lub przez dokonanie doniesień na osoby podejrzane

przyczynić się do tego, by wyrok na skazanych z przewidzianych do ulaskawienia nie był wykonany.

Warszawa, dnia 20 listopada 1943 r.

DOWÓDCA SS I POLICJI
NA DISTRYKT WARSZAWSKI



Photo 3.37.
Removing dead bodies following an execution in Warsaw
(AAN Collections)

Left: Photo 3.36.
Notice about the execution of forty Polish hostages in the Warsaw district
(BN Polona Collections)



Photo 3.38.
Dead bodies of ten Poles shot in Blich, Łowicz, on May 23, 1943
(AAN Collections)



Photo 3.39.
Ten Polish hostages shot on November 25, 1943, in Tomaszów Mazowiecki
in retaliation for an attack on German officials (AAN Collections)

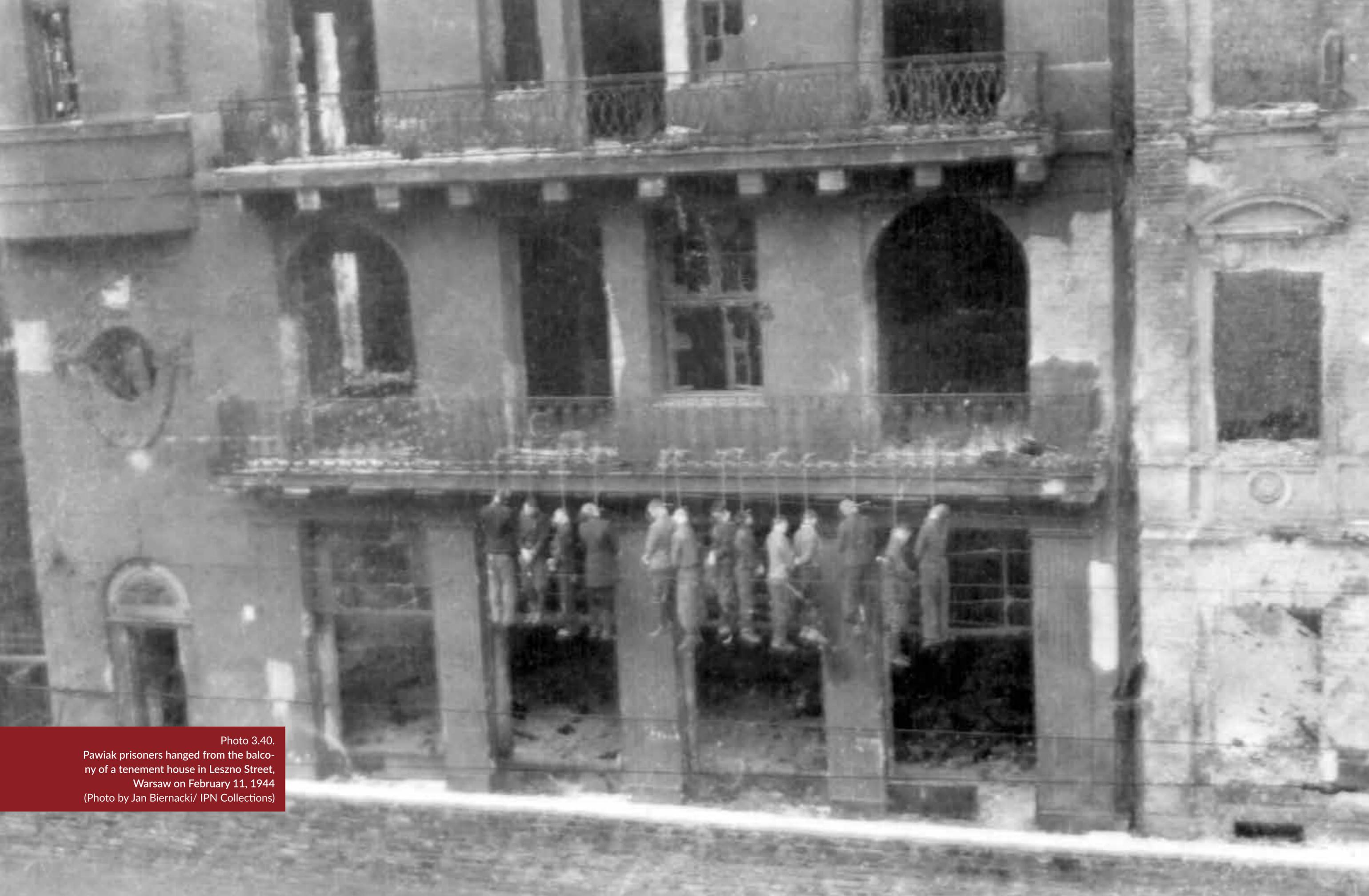


Photo 3.40.
Pawiak prisoners hanged from the balcony of a tenement house in Leszno Street, Warsaw on February 11, 1944
(Photo by Jan Biernacki/ IPN Collections)



Photos 3.41.-3.42.

Village farmhouses burned during the pacification of Skalka Polska on May 11, 1943, during which ninety people were murdered (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.43.
German policemen stand near burning farm-
houses during the pacification of Michniów,
July 12–13, 1943 (IPN Collections)





Photo 3.44.
Burning houses in Michniów during the village pacification by the German police and SS (IPN Collections)

“When Germans came to my house, they started to scream at us to lie down on the floor. I, Bronisława Materek, began to plead for mercy, but they paid no heed to my pleas and screamed at us to lie down. When I, Bronisława Materek, lay down and the four children lay down next to me, one of the Germans set up a machine gun on the legs and shot at us lying on the floor. Then they left, but because my son, Władysław Materek, hadn't been killed and was groaning with pain, one of the Germans returned and shot him in the head. I, Materek, wish to note that I saw and heard everything very well because I had been only injured. (...) As it turned out, my son Ignacy was also alive. He was only wounded. I communicated with him in sign language to learn if he was able to go with me. He signaled that he was. Then I and my son crawled out of our house into the courtyard and hid in tall grass. Right after we crawled out of the house, a new group of Germans came to set it on fire.”

(Eyewitness account of Bronisława Materek, victim of the German pacification of the village of Michniów)



Photo 3.45.
German policemen and a *Volksdeutch* during the pacification of Michniów
(IPN Collections)



Photo 3.46.
Germans carry looted property during a village pacification (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.47.
German policemen stand next to the dead bodies of the Poles shot during the pacification of Michniów. In total, 204 Poles were murdered, including 102 men, 54 women, and 48 children (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.48.
Remains of Eugeniusz Krogulec and his family murdered during the German pacification of Michniów (IPN Collection)

Photo 3.49.
German policemen watch burning farm-
houses in a pacified Polish village
(IPN Collection)





Photo 3.50.
Village of Jamy near Ostrów Lubelski burned down by Germans in March 1943
(AAN Collections)

Photo 3.51.
Pacification of Jamy was a retaliatory act in punishment for a partisan attack on a Turkmen collaborationist group that was stationed in the village. Germans and their collaborators killed over 150 Jamy villagers. Photo: completely charred body of one of the victims (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.52.
Dead bodies of Poles shot during the pacification of the settlement Ostrówek near Lublin (April 1944) (IPN Collections)

Photo 3.53.
Dead bodies of women and children massacred during the pacification of the village of Jamy near Ostrów Lubelski (IPN Collections)





Photos 3.54.-3.56.
 Dead bodies of the Poles executed by Germans during the pacification of the village of Sulbiny (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.57. 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)



Photo 3.58. Murdered insurgents of the Warsaw Uprising (IZ Collections)

“We were stopped in front of the factory gate and split into small groups, arranging us in fours, with no regard to sex or age. I was put together with my children. Then we were ordered to go toward the middle of the factory yard. On the way, I saw piles of killed men, women, and children. When we drew close to the place of execution, the Ukrainians, under the command of an SS officer, fired a shot to each of us individually, from a pistol to the back of the skull. They shot at such close range that the revolver could be felt on the neck. I could hear constant screams, groans, calls for help, prayers, etc. (...) Seeing what was happening, I proposed to the Ukrainian who was escorting me that he hide me and my children for gold and money, which he agreed to. Once my valuables had been taken, when I was retreating towards the exit, the criminals’ commander, the SS officer (who earlier on had taken part of my ransom), kicked my son Wiesław, shouting in German: “Polish bandit”, and shot him dead in front of my eyes. Then, the Ukrainian shot the two younger children I was holding by the hand, one in front of the other, such that they both died from a single bullet. I was shot in the neck. I fell on my side. Because of severe hemorrhaging, I couldn’t see what was happening, although I heard shots and the screams of people murdered after me. (...) Going back to my own case, after I had been injured, four men who were shot later fell on my body, one of them taking a very long time to die, and attempts were made a few times to finish him off. I laid like that for three days.”

(Wanda Lurie’s testimony about the mass shooting of civilians at the Ursus factory at 55 Wolska Street in Warsaw on August 5, 1944, during which her three children were murdered: Wiesław, aged 11, Ludmiła, aged 6, and Lech, 3½ years old)



Photos 3.59.-3.60.
Basement of the Jesuit monastery at 61 Rakowiecka Street in Warsaw with the remains of priests and civilians murdered on July 2, 1944, by SS troops (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.61.
Remains of patients of insurgents' hospital at 7 Długa Street in Warsaw, murdered by German troops on September 2, 1944 (IPN Collections)



Photo 3.62.
Exhumed remains of Father, Edward Kosibowicz, prior of the Jesuit monastery in Rakowiecka Street in Warsaw, murdered by Germans on August 2, 1944 (IPN Collections)

4

**Extermination
of Polish Jews**



From the first days of the occupation, the Jewish community became the target of German persecution, harassment, and humiliation. The Jews were deprived of their property, forced to wear armbands with the Star of David, and eventually were moved to ghettos. In total, in the occupied Polish territories, German authorities set up over 600 ghettos and the Jews were not allowed to leave them on pain of death. The largest ghettos were established in the cities of Warsaw (450,000 residents) and Łódź (200,000 residents). Inside the ghettos, the living conditions were appalling, with overpopulation, famine, and outbreaks of diseases. Up until 1941, twenty to thirty percent of people living in the ghettos perished. The Jews were also gradually exterminated in numerous labor camps. Grueling work, malnutrition, and lack of medical care resulted in extremely high death rates. In all probability, in the spring or summer of 1941, the German authorities decided on the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question' (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*). After experimenting with various methods of mass murder, Germans selected gas chambers as the most effective means of killing people. It was the same method they had tested before on Polish and German psychiatric patients. On December 8, 1941, even before the ignominious Wannsee Conference (during which the Germans allocated responsibilities for the logistics and execution of the master plan to exterminate the European Jewry), in Chelmo nad Nerem (Kulmhof), the Germans started the first extermination camp in the history of mankind. Approximately 150,000 victims were murdered in mobile gas vans, the vast majority of whom were Polish Jews. The following year, as part of Operation *Reinhard* in the *General Gouvernement*, the Germans established three more extermination camps in Belżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka, but this time they were equipped with purpose-built gas chambers. In addition, the concentration camps KL Lublin-Majdanek and KL Auschwitz-Birkenau were used to exterminate the Jewish population. During several months of the murderous operation, about 1,850,000 Jewish people were murdered, most of them were prewar Polish citizens. The mass extermination of Polish Jews continued until the very end of the war and claimed approximately three million lives. In contrast to Western Europe under occupation, in conquered Poland, the German law provided for the death penalty for any aid to the Jewish population. Historians estimate that about 300,000 Polish Jews survived the German occupation, some of them in the Soviet Union, others in concentration camps, and tens of thousands were saved by Poles, of whom about a thousand were murdered for doing so.

Left: Photo 4.1.
German policemen fake a body search of an elderly Jew in occupied eastern Greater Poland (1941)
(IPN Collections)



Photo 4.2.
Germans force the Jews from the town of Szczepieszyn to 'frog jump' (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.3.
Jews from Szczepieszyn pose for the camera in humiliating postures they were forced to assume by Germans (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.4.
German policemen cut the sidelocks of Hersz Laskowski, son of the Rabbi of the Jewish Religious Community in the town of Warta (1940) (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.5.
Jews from Raciąż are forced by Germans to clean the town streets (1939)
(Photo by Hermann Baltruschat/ IPN Collections)



Photo 4.6.
Jewish men are supervised by an SS officer during one of the German
anti-Jewish actions (1939) (Photo by Hermann Baltruschat/ IPN Collections)



Photo 4.7.

Forcing the Jews to perform menial labor such as cleaning streets, served the purpose of both humiliating them and showing their alleged aversion to order and hygiene as part of an antisemitic propaganda campaign (IPN Collections)



Photos 4.8.-4.9.

Germans pose for the camera with the Jews cleaning the streets of Warsaw in the background (NAC Collections)





Photo 4.10.
Deportations of Włocławek Jews to the *General Gouvernement*
at the turn of 1939 and 1940 (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.11.
Long column of Jews led by Germans to the newly established ghetto
in Sieradz. In official German terminology, the ghettos for the Jews were
euphemistically called 'Jewish Housing Districts' (*jüdische Wohnbezirke*)
(IPN Collections)



Photos 4.12.-4.13
Relocation of Jewish people within the ghetto in Sieradz. The area previously
populated only by several hundred people was packed with two thousand
Jews from Sieradz and the neighboring areas (IPN Collections)





Photo 4.14.

In all probability, the photo shows a posed image of German police officers arresting a Jew who had been hiding outside of the ghetto (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.15.

SS trooper leads a captured Jewish man who tried to avoid being transported to the ghetto in Kutno (Photo by Hermann Baltruschat/ IPN Collections)

Photo 4.16.
Crowds of Jewish people wait at the bridge
over Zgierska Street, connecting two parts
of the ghetto in German-occupied Łódź
(Ghetto Litzmannstadt) (IPN Collections)





Photo 4.17.
Ghetto inhabitants in the occupied Łódź in 1941
(Photo by Kürbitz/ IPN Collections)



Photos 4.18.- 4.19.
All inhabitants of the ghettos established by German authorities in conquered Poland were ordered to wear badges with the Star of David under threat of most severe sanctions. Photo: Jewish people trading in the ghetto in Łódź
(Photo by Kürbitz/ IPN Collections)





Photo 4.20.
Footbridge connecting two parts of the Warsaw ghetto (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.21.
Street traffic and trade in the Warsaw ghetto (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.22.
Young women sew clothes in one of the workshops in the Warsaw ghetto (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.23.
Execution of ten Jews
in the city of Zduńska
Wola on May 21, 1942
(IPN Collections)



Photo 4.24.
German police officers prepare for the execution of a Jewish man from the
Łódź ghetto. The man stands over a grave which he probably dug himself
(IPN Collections)



Photo 4.25.
Victims of an execution in a Jewish cemetery in Łódź (IPN Collections)

“The sight of people dying in the streets is impossible to forget. I lived close to my office, and every morning, as I walked the short distance between Krochmalna Street and Grzybowska Street, I came across corpses, all stark naked, thrown out by the families or the people at whose place they had lived; they were thrown out so as to avoid either the costs or repressive measures. Alternatively, they were the bodies of those in the throes of death. (...) Meeting emaciated children and seeing people dying and already dead, day in, day out, could blunt your sensitivity. Once, I spoke to a psychiatrist in the ghetto and asked him how it was possible to just walk past all this. He explained to me that it was a standard symptom, and that seeing these things every day meant it was impossible to react the way a normal person would.”

(Excerpt from Zygmunt Warman's testimony of January 24, 1947, during the Warsaw trial of Ludwig Fischer, former governor of the Warsaw district of the *General Gouvernement*)

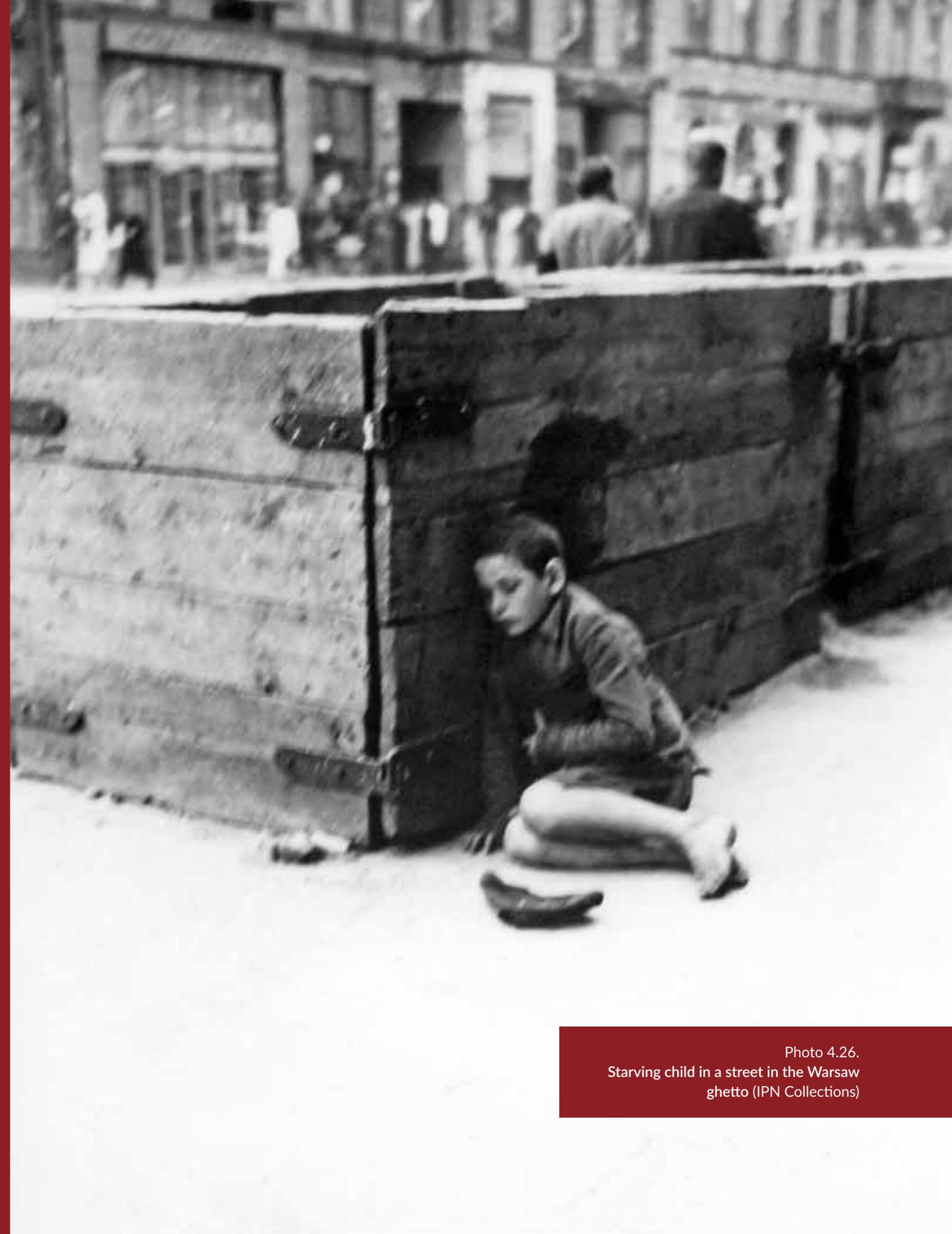


Photo 4.26.
Starving child in a street in the Warsaw ghetto (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.27.
Employees of a Jewish funeral parlor collect the corpses of people who starved to death in the Warsaw ghetto (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.28.
Dead body of a Jewish woman who starved to death, in a box on a hearse (IPN Collections)

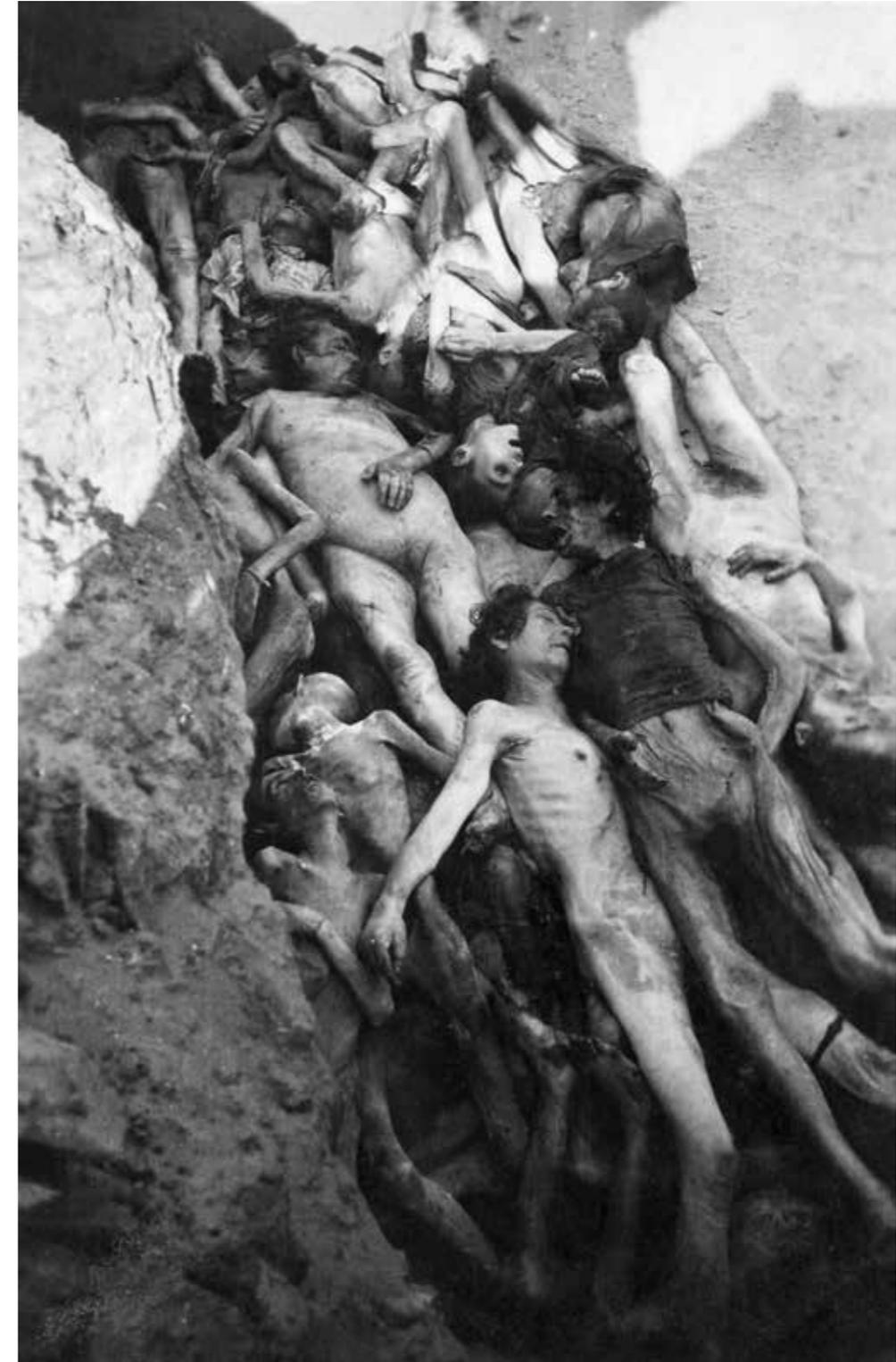


Photo 4.29.
Collective grave with the corpses of Jews who died in the Warsaw ghetto, in a Jewish cemetery in Okopowa Street (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.30.
German police patrol going through Jewish residents' houses
(a retouched image) (NAC Collections)

OGŁOSZENIE

Do przeprowadzenia zarządzonego przez Dowódcę SS i policji w dystrykcie Krakau wysiedlenia Żydów z Wieliczki, ogłaszam co następuje:

- 1) Dnia 27. 8. 1942 rozpoczyna się w Wieliczce wysiedlanie Żydów.
- 2) Każdy Polak, który w jakiegokolwiek formie przez swoją działalność akcję wysiedlenia naraża lub utrudnia, względnie w takim celu udziela pomocy będzie rozstrzelany.
- 3) Każdy Polak, który w toku, lub po wysiedleniu, Żyda przyjmie, albo ukrywa, względnie przy tym pomaga, będzie rozstrzelany.
- 4) Każdy Polak, który bez zezwolenia wstąpi do mieszkania wysiedlonego Żyda, będzie jako łupieżca rozstrzelany.
- 5) Wystawianie na ulicach podczas akcji jest wzbronione. Okna winny być zamknięte.
- 6) Osoby, które w czasie od 15. 8. 1942 od Żydów jakiegokolwiek przedmioty za pieniądze lub bezpłatnie objęły, mają je zwrócić do dnia 1. 9. 1942 u właściwego burmistrza lub wójta za potwierdzeniem odbioru.

Przekroczenia będą surowo karane.

dnia 22. 8. 1942.

Der Kreishauptmann:
Dr. SCHAAR

Photo 4.31.
Notice put up by the German authorities, threatening the Poles with death penalty should they help the Jewish people in hiding (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.32.-4.33

During the German occupation, thousands of Poles, heedless of the threat of the death penalty, helped the Jewish people. They hid Jews in their houses and farms and provided them with food, medical aid, and spiritual support. Around one thousand Poles paid the highest price: one of their own lives and the lives of their family members. The Ulma Family of Markowa is one of the symbols of the ultimate sacrifice. Józef and Wiktoria (above) and their children (below)
(MSz/ MPRŻ Collections)



Photo 4.34.

On March 24, 1944, Germans found out the whereabouts of eight Jews hidden by the Ulmas: the Goldmans, the Didners, and the Grünfelds. The Jewish families were executed, together with all the members of the Polish family: Józef and his wife Wiktoria in advanced pregnancy, and their six children. Above: photo of the Jews from Markowa, stained with blood, found at the Ulmas' house after the massacre
(MSz/MPRŻ Collections)



Photos 4.35.-4.37.

Poles murdered by Germans for offering help to Jews:
Zofia Krasuska with son Feliks Bogusław 'Bogus' from the village
of Tworki (above left), Marianna Lubkiewicz from the village of Sadowne
(above right), and Józef Pruchniewicz from Biecz (below)
(ISiM Collections/ Teresa Olton and the Pruchniewicz Family Collections)



Photo 4.38.
Jewish children found shelter and rescue from death in care centers run by
female religious congregations. The photo shows a Jewish girl dressed in
a checked coat amidst Polish children during a walk in occupied Warsaw
(AZSFRM Collections)



Photo 4.39.
Jews executed in the Jewish cemetery in Biłgoraj in 1942 (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.40.
Jewish boy shot during a mass execution in Biłgoraj (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.41.
SS-Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler and the *Gauleiter* of Wartheland, Arthur Greiser, visited the Łódź ghetto on June 6, 1941, where they first discussed exterminating 'unable to work Jews and Gypsies' in the Wartheland (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.42.
 One of the participants of the Wannsee Conference (a meeting during which the Germans outlined the technical and organizational details of the extermination of Jews) was Hans Frank's deputy governor of the *General Gouvernement*, Josef Bühler, (second from left). He demanded to 'solve the Jewish question' as quickly as possible (NAC Collections)



Photo 4.43.
 Head of SS and police in the Lublin province, Odilo Globocnik, was directly responsible for Operation *Reinhardt* — the extermination of Jews from the *General Gouvernement* and Białystok District. In the photo (first from right) with the Governor-General, Hans Frank (NAC Collections)



Photo 4.44.
Deportation of elder and sick Jews from the Łódź ghetto to the Kulmhof
extermination camp (1942) (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.45.
Group of Jewish
children during a mass
deportation from Łódź
to the extermination
camp (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.46.
Jewish women led down a ghetto street during a mass deportation
(IPN Collections)



Photo 4.47.
Hundreds of Jews walking to the train station Łódź-Radogoszcz (*Radegast*), the 'loading platform' for transporting Jews to extermination camps (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.48.
Loading Jews from the Łódź ghetto into a train carriage at *Radegast* station (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.49.
Doomed Jews get off a narrow-gauge train in Powiercie, from where they will be transported to the Kulmhof extermination camp (IPN Collection)



Photo 4.50.
Group of Jews led to the Treblinka death camp during the liquidation
of the Warsaw ghetto (1942) (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.51.
Ghetto residents are chased to freight cars at the *Umschlagplatz* before being
transported to the Treblinka extermination camp (1942) (IPN Collections)

The little station Treblinka

*On the line Tluszcz-Warsaw
From the Warsaw-East station
Railways leave
And go straight...*

*And the trip lasts sometimes
Five hours and three quarters
And sometimes lasts
The whole life until death...*

*And the station is very small
And there grow three fir trees
And there is a simple inscription
Here is station Treblinka.*

*There is no cashier
No baggage man
Not for a million will you get
A return ticket...*

*No one is waiting on the station
No one waves a handkerchief
Only a silence hangs
And greets with deaf emptiness.*

*And the station's pillar keeps silent
And the three fir trees keep silent
And the black inscription keeps silent
That this is station Treblinka.*

*And only hangs from once
(An advertisement anyway)
A worn out old inscription*

"Cook on gas".

(Poem by Władysław Szlengel, written in the Warsaw ghetto in December
1942. Translated from Polish by Dr. John Nowak and Halina Birenbaum)



Photo 4.52.
Decision to liquidate the Warsaw ghetto
led to the uprising, which lasted
from April 19 to May 16, 1943
(IPN Collections)



Photos 4.53.-4.55.
Liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto by SS troops
commanded by Jürgen Stroop (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.56.
Dead bodies of Jews who were probably shot during the suppression
of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto (IPN Collections)



Photo 4.57.
Residents of the Warsaw ghetto led by SS troops during the final liquidation
of the Jewish district in Warsaw (IPN Collections)

5

**Extermination in
Camps and Prisons**



The major objective of Nazi Germany was – as Hitler succinctly put it during the conference with *Wehrmacht* commanders on August 22, 1939 – ‘to destroy Poland completely’. Hitler implied more than the liquidation of the Polish State. His intention was to annihilate the Polish nation altogether. Hitler’s criminal design was going to be executed by means of mass terror and constant dread and implemented mainly through a complex system of camps and prisons. As many as five thousand camps, intended by the German authorities in occupied Poland for the civilian population alone, were not only the sites of imprisonment or enforced isolation, but also served as centers of systematic extermination of their inmates. Although it is hard to determine the accurate numbers, it is estimated that approximately 1,500,000 Poles lost their lives in German-operated camps, prisons, and jails. The very first German camps, to be set up in occupied Poland as early as September and October 1939, were transition camps used by the security police during the *Intelligenzaktion* operations. Later, such camps were repurposed as prisons and incorporated into the system of five hundred facilities, operating in the territory of Poland under the *Gestapo*’s authority (Secret State Police). The most dreaded were Fort VII in Poznań, Żabikowo Camp, Fort VII in Toruń, Lublin Castle, Zamość Rotunda, Radegast prison in Łódź, Montelupich prison in Kraków, and Pawiak prison in Warsaw. In occupied Poland, the invader also established concentration camps. In 1940, in the town of Oświęcim, KL Auschwitz was built. One year later, KL Majdanek opened in Lublin while in Brzezinka (Birkenau) a concentration camp began to be constructed as the extension of the Auschwitz installation. In 1942, a concentration camp in Kołdyczewo (north of Baranowicze) was set up. In 1943, KL Warschau received its first inmates in Warsaw. A year later, KL Plaszow started to operate on the outskirts of Kraków. Concentration camp inmates were wasted by atrocious living conditions, severe malnutrition, and hard work. They also died in executions and as a result of pseudo-medical experiments. Over time, the German authorities expanded the purposes of the concentration camps, with their chief raison d’être being the source of slave labor. Tens of sub-camps sprang up then to meet the needs of German industry. Originally, the prisoners of the concentration camps were mainly Poles. From 1942 on, tens of thousands of people of Jewish, Romani, and Sinti origin started to be transported to the camps. Those who were deemed ‘unfit for work—women, children, the elderly, and the sick – were instantly murdered in gas chambers. The rest were marched off to the camps, where most perished due to grueling work and extremely bad living conditions.

Left: Photo 5.1.
Jadwiga Heigelman, prisoner of *Kinder-KZ Litzmannstadt*, a concentration camp for Polish children in Łódź (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.2.
Prisoners at roll call, running out from the main building of the German Order Police and Gestapo prison in Łódź (*Radegast* prison) (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.3.
Most of the *Radegast* prison personnel consisted of pre-war local Polish citizens of German descent (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.4.
Execution of a prisoner at the *Radegast* prison (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.5.
Inmates of the *Radegast* Prison during roll call (1943) (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.6.
Roll call at the Security Police Prison and Educational Labor Camp at Błonie,
Inowrocław (Photo by Hermann Baltruschat/ IPN Collections)



Photo 5.7.
Prisoner led to
interrogation by
the Gestapo at the
police prison in
Inowrocław (Photo
by Hermann
Baltruschat/ IPN
Collections)



Photo 5.8.
Labor camp in
Inowrocław was
notorious for
trained dogs which
were specially
drilled to torment
or kill prisoners.
The sign over the
kennel read: 'Ken-
nel. Terror of Poles'
(Photo by Hermann
Baltruschat/ IPN
Collections)

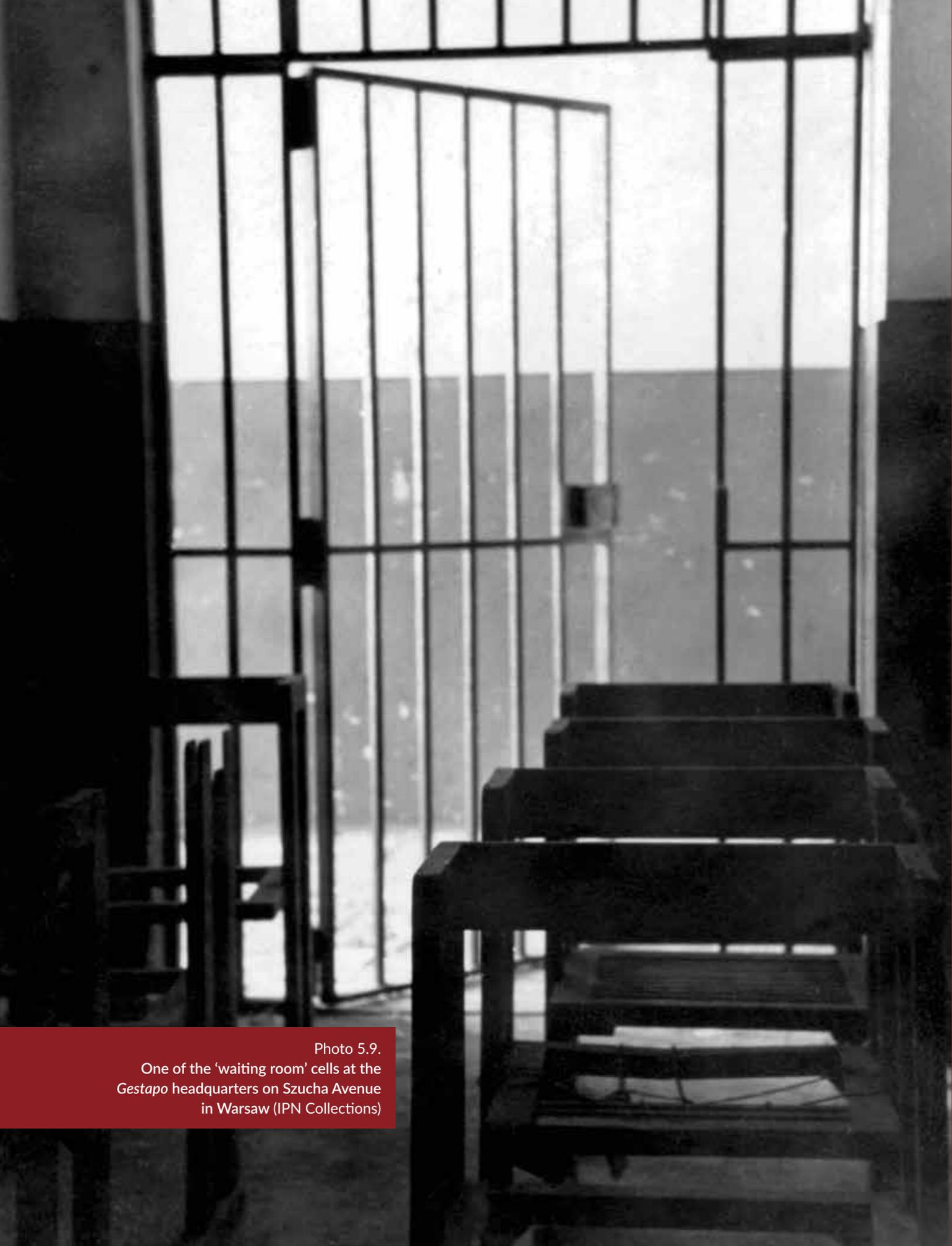


Photo 5.9.
One of the 'waiting room' cells at the
Gestapo headquarters on Szucha Avenue
in Warsaw (IPN Collections)

“At the end of January 1940, I was arrested at my flat (I lived at the above address), following a denunciation. During the search, a radio and illegal underground publications were discovered. I was taken to the Pawiak prison. After three weeks, I was sent to Szucha Avenue for a forced interrogation. I was interrogated in torture room 257, which was arranged in the following way: in a rather big room, three large tables stood with iron legs. There were some sort of iron shackles attached to them into which the prisoner had to put his legs so that they would not move. Two *Gestapo* men held the victim by the back of his head, and two others pulled and twisted his arms back. The immobilized prisoner was beaten by an executioner with leather whips with leaden caps. Such whips hung all over the room, on special hooks. During the beating, a *Gestapo* man was leaning over the victim, extracting statements and firing questions. While I was interrogated, a *Gestapo* man knocked out three of my teeth with the butt of his revolver. I was interrogated three times.”

(Excerpt from the testimony of Stefan Wyglądała on March 30, 1945)

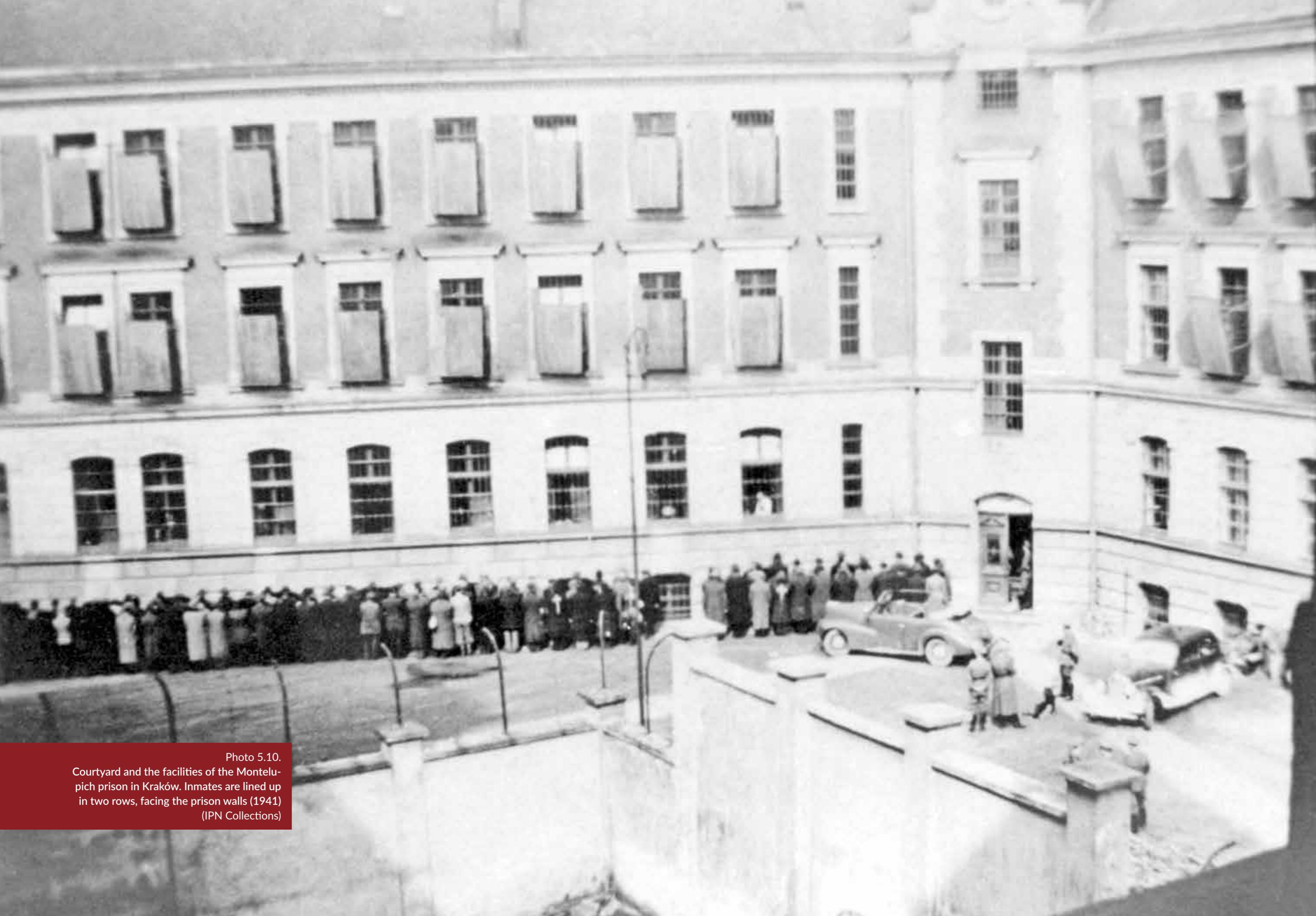


Photo 5.10.
Courtyard and the facilities of the Montelupich prison in Kraków. Inmates are lined up in two rows, facing the prison walls (1941)
(IPN Collections)



Photos 5.11.-5.13.
Exhumation of victims held in the Montelupich prison and in St. Michael's Monastery in Kraków, subsequently killed by Germans in Fort 49 'Krzyszowice' (IPN Collections)





Photos 5.14.-5.15.
Lagerkommandant (Camp Commandant) of Kinder-KZ Litzmannstadt (Łódź)
Karl Ehrlich during an everyday roll call (IPN Collections)



Photos 5.16.-5.17.
Łódź camp presumably held from 2,000 to over 3,000 Polish children.
It is estimated that about two hundred children died, mainly due to infectious
diseases and harsh living conditions (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.18.
Group of female prisoners at the *Kinder-KZ*
concentration camp for children during
a roll call. In the back: one of the cruelest
guards Eugenia Pohl. After the war, she was
sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment
(IPN Collections)





Photo 5.19.

Group of arrested Poles on their way to a train station in Ostrzeszów, from where they would be transferred to a concentration camp. Maria Golusińska took the photo, heedless of the risk of death or deportation to a concentration camp (Photo by Maria Golusińska/ IZCollections)

“I felt for a piece of bread in my pocket. It had been there for several hours, that is why it seemed stale to me. I didn’t feel hungry anyway and I foolishly believed they would give us some food in the morning. So I threw the bread into a toilet bucket. (...) Other people transported with me must have done the same because there were a lot of bread pieces in the bucket. It was stuffy in the room with so many people sleeping, and a lot of prisoners were talking in their sleep. (...) Suddenly, I heard some noise coming from the outside, like a rustle or scratching against the barrack wall. What could it be? (...) I was absolutely petrified because I could suddenly see over a dozen heads and hands along the whole wall. (...) They were terribly starved, and they all lunged toward those buckets, those tin toilet buckets for our physiological needs, where we had tossed the bread. (...) I was deeply shocked. Only then did I realize what real hunger meant, as it was stronger than revulsion at dirt, feces, and all excrement. Survival instinct made the people forget what these buckets were for. Hunger, this Horseman of the Apocalypse, wrought havoc in the camp. I was absolutely devastated by what I saw because it started to dawn on me what was going to happen to us. The bread that I threw into the bucket, but also other pieces of bread tossed into paper bins when I was a child, would be my worst nightmare.”

(Excerpt from the memoir of Kazimierz Fiedorow, prisoner 35409, of his first day at KL Auschwitz)



Photo 5.20.
Entrance gate to the main
camp, KL Auschwitz I
(photo from 1946)
(Photo by Stanisław
Łuczko/ IPN Collections)



Photo 5.21.
Barbed wire fence and Block 11 ('Death Block') with the wall where prisoners
of KL Auschwitz I were lined up for execution (photo from 1946)
(Photo by Stanisław Mucha/ IPN Collections)



Photo 5.22.
Heinrich Himmler and SS officers monitor the progress of work on the expansion of the concentration camp in Monowice (Auschwitz III) located at the IG Farben plant (July 17-18, 1942). Concentration camps were not only extermination camps but also sources of slave labor for German farms and factories (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.23.
Female prisoners of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau at work on camp grounds
(Photo by Kamann/ IPN Collections)

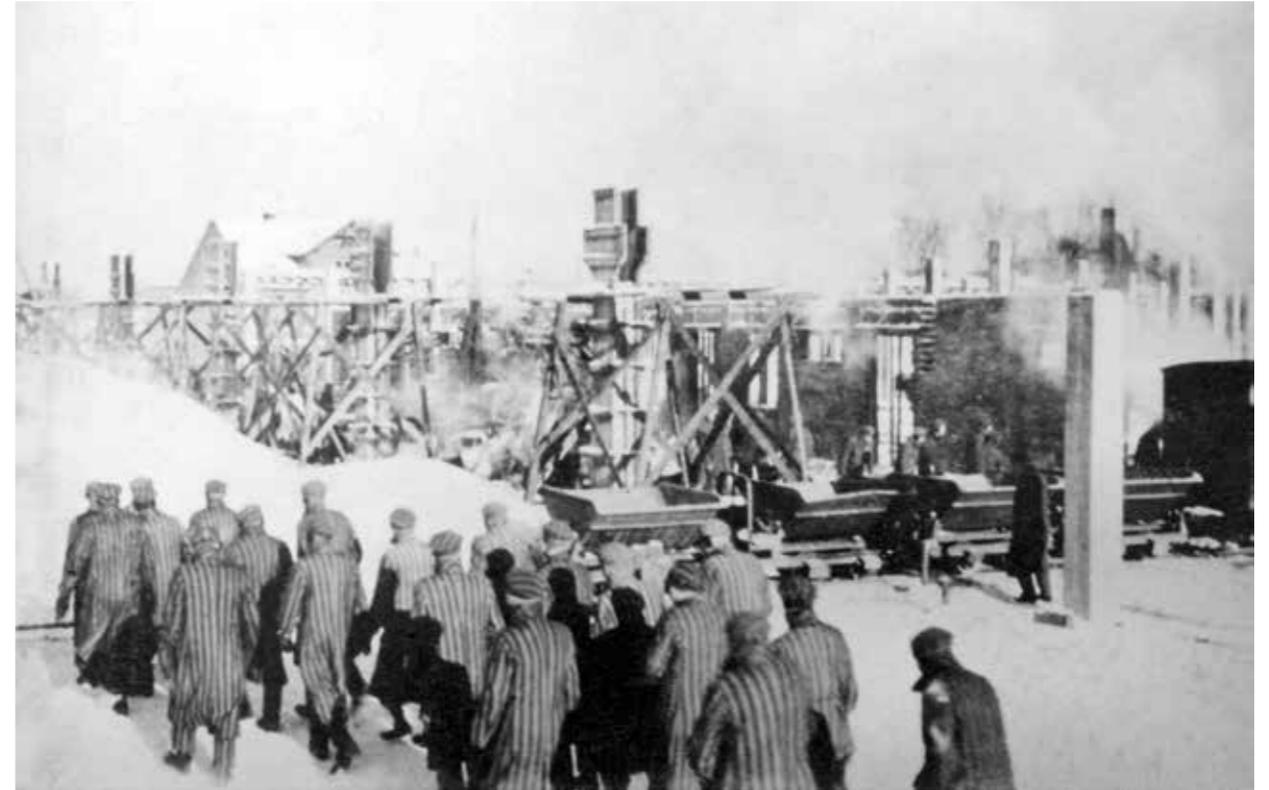


Photo 5.24.
Column of prisoners walking to work, probably at KL Auschwitz III Monowitz
(IPN Collections)



Photo 5.25.

Between 1942 and 1944, forty-seven sub-camps and *Aussenkommando* (external work camps) of KL Auschwitz were set up. They were mainly established adjacent to large farms and production plants to exploit the slave labor of prisoners. Photo: sub-camp of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau in Trzebinia (post-war photo) (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.26.

Part of the labor camp in Trzebinia (post-war photo) (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.27.

Crematorium building at the labor camp in Trzebinia (post-war photo) (IPN Collections)

“An SS officer came and picked up two children on Mengele’s orders. They were my favorites, Guido and Nino, barely older than four. One of them was hunchbacked. Two or three days later, the SS officer brought the children back, mutilated in a perverse way. They had been sewn together at the back like Siamese twins. The hunchbacked child and the other twin were sewn together at their backs and wrists. Mengele had also connected their veins. Their wounds were suppurating because they were dirty. You could feel the terrible smell of gangrene. They screamed all night.”

(Excerpt from Vera Alexander’s testimony about experiments conducted on children by doctor Josef Mengele in KL Auschwitz)



Photo 5.28.
Four naked girls (two pairs of twins) on whom doctor Josef Mengele conducted pseudo-medical experiments (June 1942) (IPN Collections)

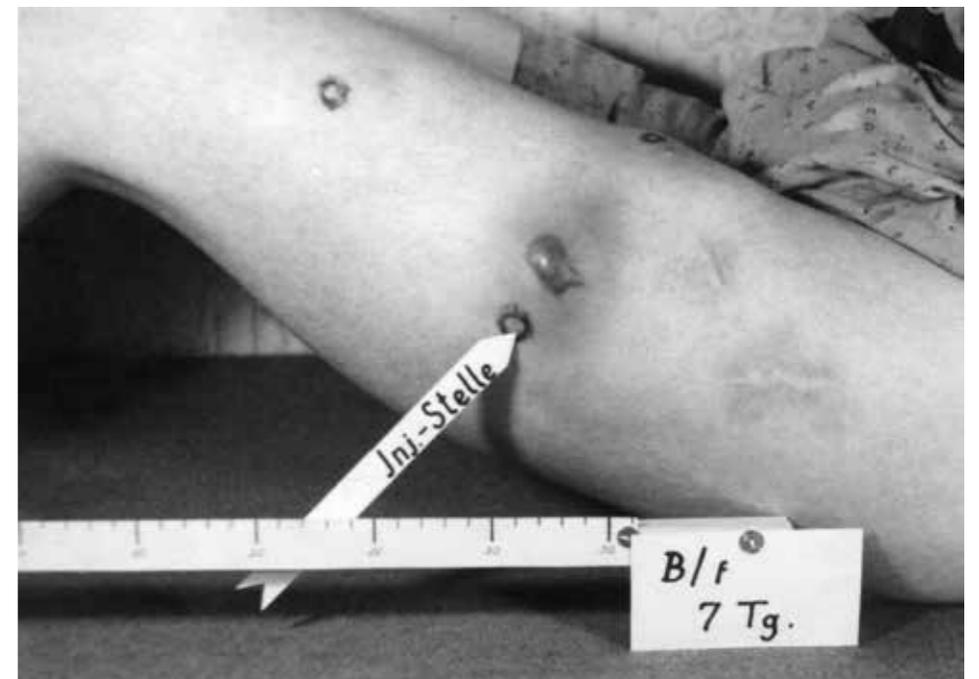


Photo 5.29.
Results of a pseudo-medical experiment conducted by Germans on KL Auschwitz prisoners. The experiment’s objective was triggering off phlegmon (bacterial infection) – purulent inflammation of connective tissues (IPN Collections)

Photo 5.30.
Construction of gas chambers at Crema-
torium II or III in KL Auschwitz II-Birkenau
(Brzezinka) (1942-1934). Each gas chamber
had the killing capacity of two thousand
people on a one-off basis (IPN Collections)

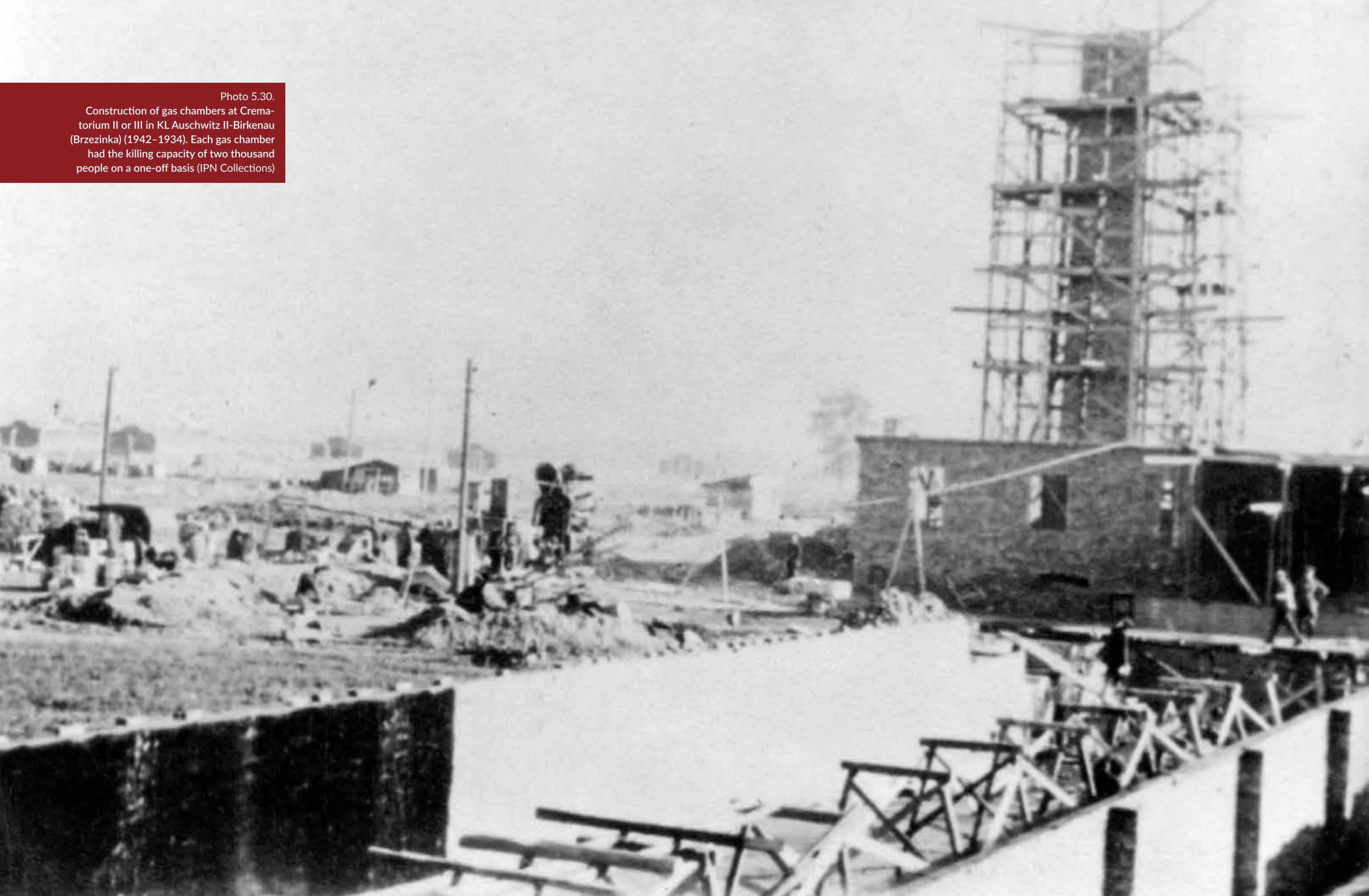




Photo 5.31.
Selection of Jews on the unloading ramp along the railroad siding inside
the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in May 1944 (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.32.
Group of Jewish men
classified as 'fit for
labor' and sent to the
concentration camp
(IPN Collections)



Photo 5.33.
Jewish women and children designated to be killed instantly in gas chambers
at the KL Auschwitz II-Birkenau death camp (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.34.
Elder woman with three children directed
from the unloading ramp to the gas cham-
ber during the selection conducted
by German officials (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.35.
Shoes piling up at a storehouse in the former KL Auschwitz death camp (post-war photo) (Photo by Stanisław Mucha/ IPN Collections)



Photo 5.36.
Hair of the prisoners of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau stored by Germans in a camp warehouse (Photo by Stanisław Kolowca/ IPN Collections)

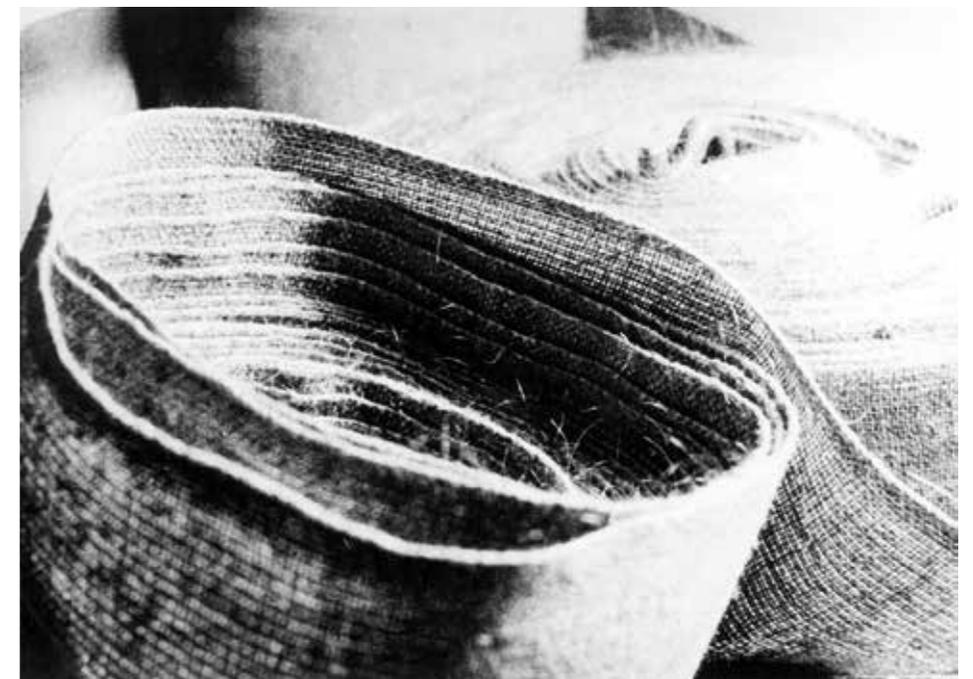


Photo 5.37.
Rolls of rugs made of cut hair of women murdered at KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (IPN Collections)

Photo 5.38.
Corpses of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau inmates
discovered in a barrack after camp libera-
tion by the Red Army (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.39.
Group of Jewish children behind a barbed
wire fence just after the liberation of
KL Auschwitz-Birkenau in January 1945
(IPN Collections)



Photo 5.40.
Terribly emaciated
15-year-old boy, a former
prisoner of the concentra-
tion camp, being carried
out of a building in
KL Auschwitz
(IPN Collections)



Photo 5.41.
Two young female pris-
oners with frostbitten feet
in a hospital room found
after the liberation of
KL Auschwitz
(IPN Collections)



ACHTUNG!  **UWAGA!**

Lagergelände!
Stehen bleiben!
Fotografieren
verboten!
Es wird ohne Anruf
scharf geschossen!

Teren obozu!
Stać!
Fotografowanie
wzbronione!
Bez ostrzeżenia
bedzie zastrzelony!

DER KOMMANDANT

Photo 5.42.
Warning sign on a fence of KL Majdanek,
a concentration camp on the outskirts of
Lublin: 'Attention! Photography prohibited!
Trespassers will be shot without warning!
(PMM Collections)



Photo 5.43. Entrance gate to KL Majdanek (1943) (PMM Collections)



Photo 5.44. Camp workshops at KL Majdanek (1943) (PMM Collections)



Photo 5.45. Prisoners of the Majdanek concentration camp at work (PMM Collections)



Photo 5.46. Guard posts at the KL Majdanek concentration camp (PMM Collections)



Photo 5.47.
Camp kitchen
barrack behind
a barbed-wired
fencing at
KL Majdanek
in Lublin (PMM
Collections)



Photo 5.48.
Barbed-wire double fence at the Majdanek camp. Background: sheds of gas
chambers (PMM Collections)



Photo 5.49.
Poles living in the vicinity of the Majdanek camp at the crematorium furnaces
upon discovering the scale of German crimes. Near the furnaces: remains
of KL Majdanek's prisoners (July 1944) (PMM Collections)



Photo 5.50.
Ruins of the Warsaw ghetto and the KL Warschau concentration camp established in 1943, where about twenty thousand people were murdered, mostly Jews and Poles. Polish people were killed in mass executions (IPN Collections)



Photo 5.51.
Female prisoners of KL Warschau liberated on August 5, 1944, by Home Army soldiers of the *Zośka* Battalion (Public domain)



Photo 5.52.
Post-war exhumation of prisoners murdered by Germans in Gęsia Street where KL Warschau was located (1946) (IPN Collections)



“The heads (...) of the victims were thrown into baskets, as if beets or swede, and were taken to the third floor of the maceration plant. Here they were prepared and then used in the local Anatomy Department, where some of them are found until now, or were sent to various universities in Germany. Throughout the (...) German occupation, the corpses of Polish convicts were used here for scientific purposes, and this happened with the consent and on the order of the then head of the Department of Anatomy, Prof. Hermann Voss, originating from Leipzig.”

(Józef Jedynkiewicz, employee of the Institute of Descriptive Anatomy in Poznań)

Left: Photo 5.53.
During the war, Germans often used dead bodies of murdered prisoners for research in anatomical institutes across the Third Reich. Photo: vat filled with human heads at the Institute of Anatomy in Gdańsk, where the production of soap from human fat was tested (IPN Collections)

6

**Expulsions
and Slave Labor**



For the Third Reich, the territory of occupied Poland was a testing ground, on which the biggest ethnic cleansing operations in the history of Europe were carried out. The German authorities intended to exterminate or expulse most of the Polish population from all occupied Polish territory. In accordance with Nazi racial ideology, Poles were considered *Untermenschen*. In their place, it was planned to bring in several million German colonists from across Europe. The barbaric operation's major architect was Heinrich Himmler, appointed Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood. Yet, the major organizer of the mass expulsions of the Polish population was Adolf Eichmann. The first targets of mass expulsions were Poles living in the areas annexed by the Third Reich. As a result, over 360,000 people were evicted and then moved to the *General Gouvernement*, which served as a temporary 'reservation for Poles'. The evictees had to leave their houses or apartments within twenty to thirty minutes and were allowed only one piece of hand baggage, not heavier than 25-30 kilograms. They were specifically forbidden to take any valuable possessions. After houses and farms were cleared of Polish residents, German colonists could immediately move in. One of the tragic occurrences accompanying the mass expulsions of Poles, special selections of children deemed racially valuable and fit for Germanization separated parents from their offspring often forever. In total, during the occupation, German functionaries kidnapped about 200,000 Polish children, of whom only 30,000 to 40,000 returned to Poland after the war. Poles were also evicted from their homes and resettled in the *General Gouvernement*: over 100,000 people were expelled from the Zamość region, another 171,000 – from the areas that the German officials turned into exercise grounds for the military, and over half a million – from Warsaw after the fall of the Uprising in 1944. Another factor contributing to the reduction of the Polish prewar population was mass deportations to forced labor in Germany. In the *General Gouvernement*, street roundups (*tapanki*) – manhunts for random people carried out by the police forces – were used as a major tool to obtain a free labor force. In the Polish lands incorporated into the Reich, Poles were forced to abandon their homes through administrative methods. If they refused to leave, they risked being sent to a concentration camp. Altogether, around 2,125,000 Poles were deported to Germany to forced labor.

Left: Photo 6.1.
Expulsion of Polish villagers from
their houses and farms
(IPN Collections)



Photo 6.2.
Himmler welcomes German colonists on a bridge in the city of Przemyśl,
as they arrive from the eastern areas of Poland occupied by the Soviet Union
(NAC Collections)



Photo 6.3.
Adolf Eichman was responsible for the organization
of mass forced deportations of Poles and Jews to the
General Gouvernement from the lands incorporated
directly into the Reich (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.4.
Higher SS and Police Leader in the *General Gouvernement*,
Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, coordinated mass expulsions
and pacifications in the Zamość region (NAC Collections)



Photo 6.5.
Eviction of Polish farmers from a village in Greater Poland (IPN Collections)

“I was expelled on November 9, 1939, at 10 p.m., from my house at 26 Wrocławska Street. They expelled me, because it was primarily about me as Professor of Poznań University, and also my 75-year-old mother, who was very sick, weak, and half-paralyzed. (...) On the day of eviction, three troops entered my house, with combat helmets on and bayonets mounted on rifles, and handed me a written order to abandon my apartment within fifteen minutes. (...) What was characteristic of the German troops was their brutal behavior, banging the rifle butts against the floor, the officer whacking his riding whip on the table. (...) It was difficult to dress a very sick woman with her completely paralyzed leg. To hurry us, they aimed a rifle at her. When aiming at her didn't make the right impression, they rolled her down from her bed, onto a carpet and ordered me to carry one end of the carpet, while those two troops held the other end. (...) They told me to give up all my money and a savings book. They body searched me, took away my wallet, confiscated money, and left 100 zloty for each of us. (...) What proved to be difficult for me later was the fact that I couldn't take any suitcase with clothes because I had to carry my mother and my both hands were occupied. In this way, I left my house with only the clothes on my back. (...) Ironically, the troops were interested in the fate of a little canary that belonged to our housemaid. Here, they behaved in a humanitarian way and ordered me to leave some food for the bird.”

(Account of expulsion by a Vice Principal of Poznań University, Dr. Tadeusz Silnicki, at the trial of Arthur Greiser in Poznań)



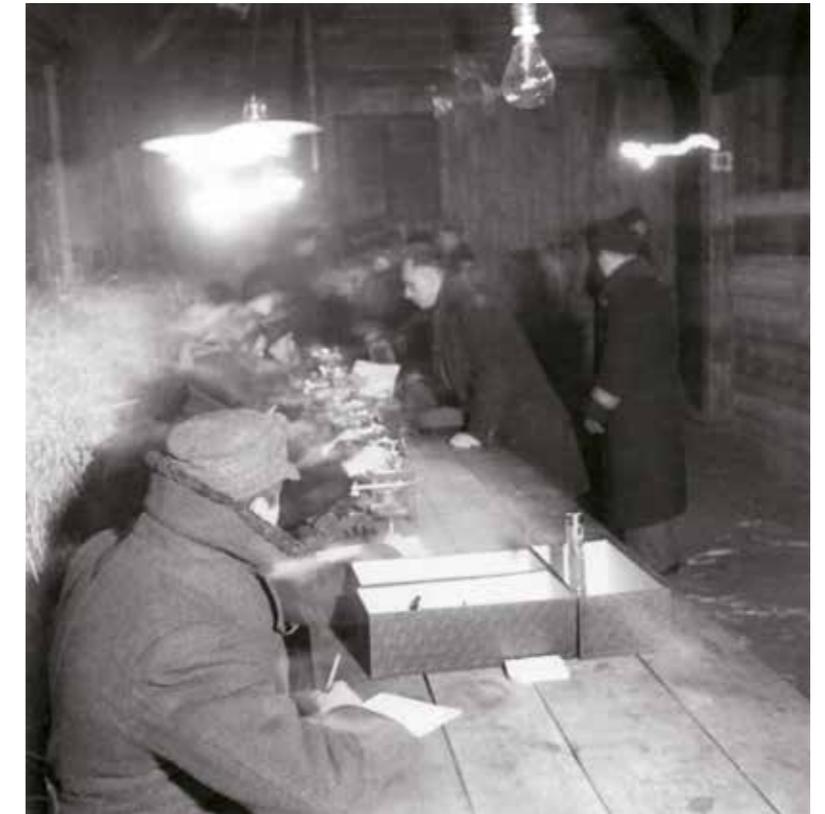
Photos 6.6.-6.7.
Mass expulsions in occupied Greater Poland at the turn of 1939 and 1940
(IPN Collections)



Photo 6.8.
Eviction of Poles from the village of Burzenin (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.9.
Guard at the entrance gate to the resettlement camp in Główna Street
in Poznań (IPN Collections)



Photos 6.10.–6.11.
Registration of evicted Poles
in the resettlement camp in Główna
Street in Poznań (IPN Collections)





Photo 6.12.
Crowd of expelled Poles on arrival at the
transit camp in Łąkowa Street in Łódź
(IPN Collections)



Photo 6.13.
Polish family arriving at a transit camp (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.14.
Registration of Poles at the resettlement camp in Kopernika Street in Łódź
(IPN Collections)



Photo 6.15.
Newly arrived evicted Poles are searched in an unidentified transit camp
in Łódź (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.16.
Column of expelled Poles leaves Łódź and heads for the *General Gouvernment*
(1940) (IPN Collections)

Photo 6.17.
Poles evicted from their homes near the town
of Żywiec on their way to a train station
(Photo by Józef Maćkowski/ IPN Collections)





Photo 6.18.
Polish family expelled from their home in the vicinity of Jeleśnia, escorted by German military policemen to a rallying point (September 1940) (Photo by Opek/ IPN Collections)



Photo 6.19.
Evicted Poles at a rallying point where they await further orders from Germans (September 1940) (Photo by Opek/ IPN Collections)



Photo 6.20.
Polish family left with few belongings after being evicted from their farm in Sola (September 1940) (Photo by Hartmann/ IPN Collections)



Photo 6.21.
Expelled Poles read a warning sign near the resettlement camp in Potulice
(IPN Collections)



Photo 6.22.
SS officers in the concentration camp in Potulice. Since February 1, 1941,
the camp served as a collecting camp for Polish families expelled from
Pomerania and directed to the *General Gouvernement* (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.23.
Concentration camp in Potulice surrounded by barbed-wire fencing (IPN Collections)

“What other nations can offer in the way of good blood of our type, we will take, if necessary, by kidnapping their children and raising them with us.”

(Heinrich Himmler’s speech to SS generals in Poznań at the end of 1943)



Photo 6.24.
Mirosław Radoszyński, abducted from his parents in a resettlement camp and selected for Germanization (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.25.
Wanda Sowińska, abducted from her parents in a resettlement camp and selected for Germanization (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.26.
Elżbieta Karnecka, abducted from her parents in a resettlement camp and selected for Germanization (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.27.
Arrival of Volhynian Germans in Gostynin in 1940 (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.28.
Family of German colonists wait to be allocated a house seized from Poles (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.29.
Group of Germans from Eastern Europe during the resettlement operation in the occupied Polish territories (NAC Collections)



Photo 6.30.
Kreisleiter of Radomsko gives some *Volksdeutsche* documents confirming their German citizenship (NAC Collections)



Photo 6.31.
German colonists view a house in Greater Poland, from which the Polish owners were earlier evicted (IPN Collections)

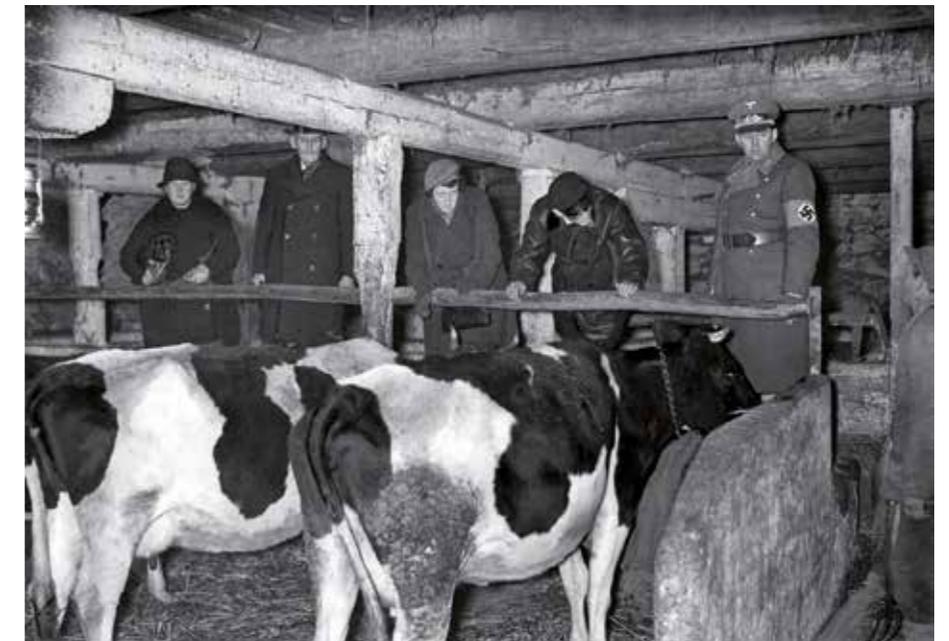


Photo 6.32.
German colonists look at a barn and cattle seized from Polish farmers (IPN Collections)

Photo 6.33.
Eviction of Poles from the Zamość region in
the winter of 1942/1943 (IPN Collections)



“Prosecutor Szewczyk: The witness mentioned that during his period of incarceration, a transport of children from the Zamość region was put to death using lethal injections. Can the witness provide any details about how this was carried out?”

Witness: I saw everything through the window of Hall 8 in Block 20. The window opened onto the courtyard between Blocks 20 and 21, that is the infectious diseases and surgical blocks. I was convalescing after a bout of typhus fever, and my bed was near the window. This happened either in the beginning of March, or towards the end of February 1943. A few dozen children aged between 8 and 12 were led into the courtyard. They were brought in by Klehr and another SS man, who made them stand against the wall of Block 21. The children were at ease and waited some two hours for their execution. While they were waiting, an SS man took one of the boys and sent him to Block 28, where — as I later learned — the child was employed as a runner, and thereby survived. The children had no idea that they were waiting to be killed; they played around and threw snowballs at each other. At around 1.00 p.m. they were led out through the side exit to Block 20, undressed in the laundry room next to the Baderaum [bathroom], and thereafter taken to the dispensary — where Klehr was waiting — and done away with by means of phenol injections. The only trace of them was a pile of children’s clothes and shoes, which our personnel later took to the dressing room. That is all that I know regarding the matter.”

(Excerpt from the testimony of Mieczysław Kięta against former KL Auschwitz guards, given on November 27, 1947)

Right: Photo 6.34.
Fourteen-year-old Czesława Kwoka was one of two hundred children deported from the pacified Zamość region to KL Auschwitz. After three months in the camp, she was put to death by a lethal injection of phenol (Public domain)





Photo 6.35.
Poles arrested in a street round-up (*łapanka*) in Piotrków Trybunalski
(IPN Collections)



Photo 6.36.
Random people caught in a round-up in Piotrków Trybunalski (AAN Collections)



Photo 6.37.
Young people caught in 'łapanka' in Cianowice Commune,
Miechów District, about to
be sent to forced labor
in Germany (AAN Collections)



Photo 6.38. Mothers bewail their sons and daughters deported from Pabianice and sent to forced labor in Germany (1943) (IPN Collections)



Photo 6.39. Young man reads the decree of Governor-General Hans Frank concerning the deportation of Polish civilians to forced labor in the Reich (April 1940) (NAC Collections)



Photo 6.40.
Propaganda poster encouraging Poles to leave for Germany to work: 'Their poverty is over. They are going to work on farms in Germany.' (NAC Collections)



Photos 6.41.-6.42.
Polish men and women awaiting
departure to the Reich to forced
labor. German propaganda
photos (1943) (NAC Collections)





Photo 6.43.
Handing out shoes to a Polish forced laborer in a labor camp in the Reich.
German propaganda photo (1943) (Photo by Karl Schultz/ NAC Collections)



Photo 6.44.
Group of Polish laborers entering a bathhouse at a labor camp in Germany.
German propaganda photo (Photo by Karl Schultz/ NAC Collections)



Photo 6.45.
Polish male and female workers sit on benches at a labor camp in the Reich.
German propaganda photo (October 1943) (NAC Collections)



Photos 6.46.-6.48
 Polish forced laborers during work at the Georg mineshaft in Germany.
 German propaganda photo (NAC Collections)





**Chodźmy na roboty
rolne**

**do
Niemiec!**

Photo 6.49.
Propaganda poster encouraging Poles to go
to work on farms in the Reich: 'Let's go to
work in agriculture. Enroll immediately with
your Wójt.' (NAC Collections)

Zgłoś się natychmiast u Twojego wójta



Photos 6.50.-6.51.
Polish female workers in the Reich doing farm work. German propaganda photo (May 1940) (Photo by Haine/ NAC Collections)



Photo 6.52.
Polish female workers having a meal in the Reich. German propaganda photo (May 1940) (Photo by Haine/ NAC Collections)



Photo 6.53.
Governor of the Kraków District, Otto von Wächter (fifth from right),
talks with Polish forced laborers inducted into *Baudienst im General
Gouvernement* (Construction Service in the General Government), working
in the vicinity of Sanok (NAC Collections)



Photo 6.54.
Recruitment of Poles to the Construction Service was carried out on the
principle of compulsory conscription and evading the service carried severe
penalties, including the death penalty (NAC Collections)

7

Destruction and Looting of Cultural Heritage



The German occupiers immediately embarked upon removing all visible traces of Polish national identity from the public space, looting art objects, and barbarically destroying Polish cultural heritage. The most radical measures were taken in the Polish territories directly annexed by the Third Reich. In the first place, all signs and inscriptions written in Polish were removed, while place-names were Germanized. Generally, Polish was banned from public offices and institutions. Furthermore, a methodical operation was launched to destroy without any exceptions all Polish monuments, including tombstones with engraved Polish state and patriotic symbols. Moreover, in the *General Gouvernement*, the German occupying forces destroyed several dozen monuments, including the most important statues in Kraków and Warsaw. Germans seized all Polish museums, libraries, and archives. Some collections of great cultural value to the Polish nation were deliberately destroyed, while others were looted. Dedicated panels of German art experts operated in the Polish lands directly incorporated into the Reich, hunting for the most valuable treasures of art held by Polish museums, or kept in palaces, nobility estates, and private homes in order to confiscate them. A similar operation was conducted in the *General Gouvernement* by an Austrian, Kajetan Mühlmann, appointed by Hermann Göring as Special Plenipotentiary for the Securing of Artistic Treasures in the Occupied Eastern Territories. In Warsaw (in both National Museum and Wilanów Palace Museum) and Kraków (in the Jagiellonian Library), the German authorities set up warehouses for confiscated artworks looted from various collections that belonged to the Polish State, the Church, or private collectors. It was planned that the most valuable artifacts stored in the warehouses would be taken to Germany after the war. In fact, in the first six months of the occupation, the collections were plundered, with many artifacts handed over to German cultural institutions or private persons. In this way, the Polish State and its people were rapidly and thoroughly deprived of the most valuable artworks, some of which the Polish government agencies have been striving to recover to this day.

Left: Photo 7.1.
Adam Mickiewicz Monument in the Main Market Square in Kraków destroyed on the orders of the German occupying authorities (August 17, 1940) (IPN Collections)



Photo 7.2.
Remains of a destroyed pedestal of the Tadeusz Kościuszko Monument
in Freedom Square ('Plac Wolności') in Łódź (November 1939) (IPN Collections)



Photo 7.3.
German troops
pose for
a photograph
at the toppled
statue of Tadeusz
Kościuszko
in Łódź
(IPN Collections)



Photo 7.4.
Tadeusz
Kościuszko Mon-
ument, destroyed
by Germans,
was restored
after the war,
and returned to
the same loca-
tion,
becoming one of
the most charac-
teristic land-
marks of Łódź
(IPN Collections)



Photos 7.5.-7.7.

Series of images depicts the demolition of the Adam Mickiewicz Monument in the Main Market Square in Kraków in August 1940. After the war, the monument was restored using some of the figures found and recovered from a scrapyard in Hamburg in 1946. The unveiling of the monument took place on November 26, 1955, on the 100th anniversary of Adam Mickiewicz's death (ANK Collections)





Photo 7.8.

General Gouverneur of occupied Poland, Hans Frank, personally ordered the blowing up of the Frederic Chopin statue. Its elements were cut into pieces with blowpipes (AAN Collections)



Photo 7.9.

In retaliation for removing a plaque in German from the Nicolas Copernicus Monument by a Grey Ranks scout, Aleksy Dawidowski, the Governor of the Warsaw District, Ludwig Fischer, ordered the removal of the Jan Kiliński Monument from Krasieński Square in Warsaw. The photo shows the preparations to dismantle the monument in March 1942 (IPN Collections)

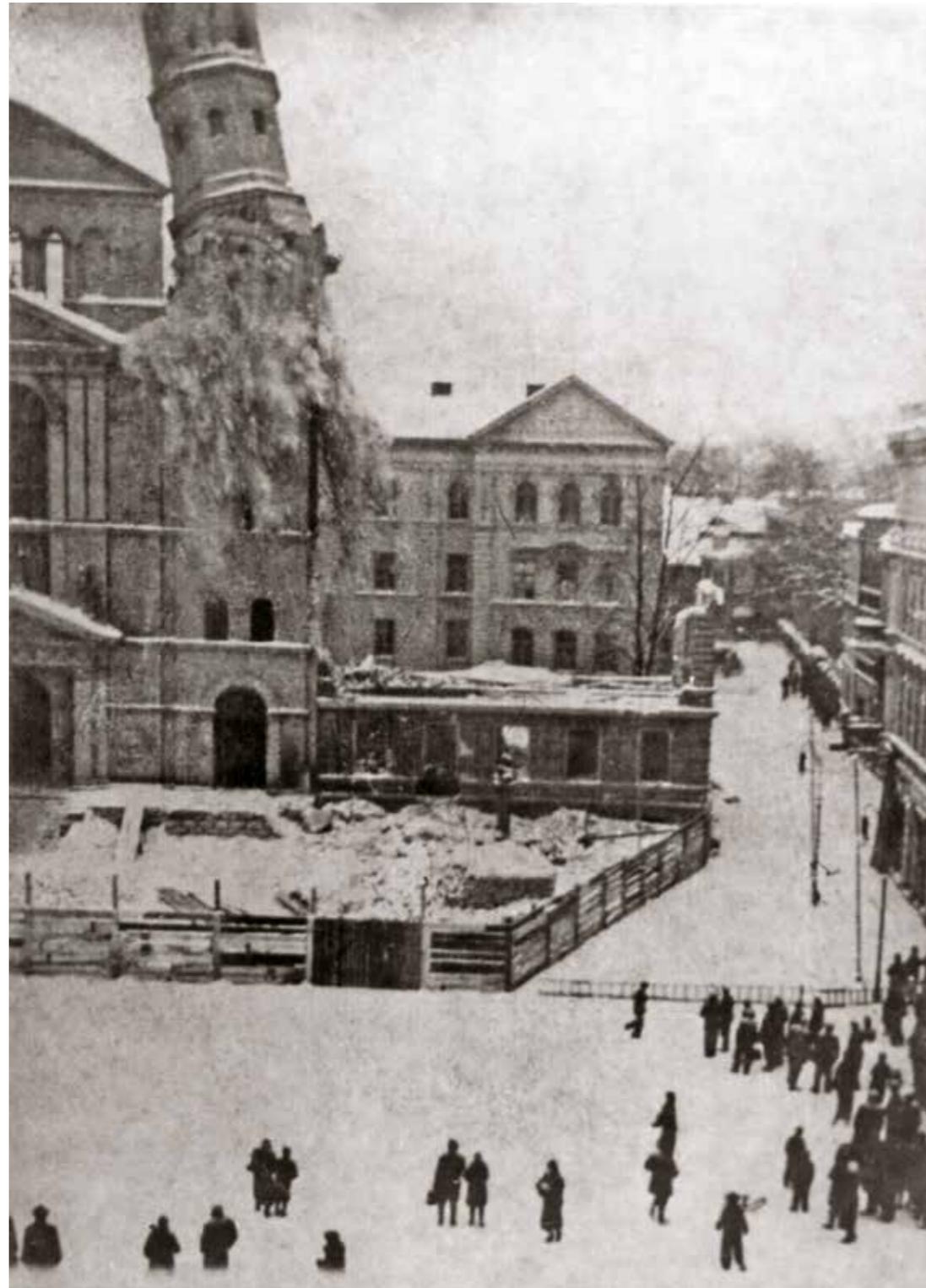


Photo 7.10.
Destruction of St. Ignatius of Loyola Church – a former Jesuit church
in Bydgoszcz (1940) (IPN Collections)



Photo 7.11.
By orders of the German authorities, a historical bell tower in Siedlce was
demolished in 1941 (IPN Collections)



Photo 7.12.
Demolition of a shrine in the vicinity of Żychlin (IPN Collections)



Photo 7.13.
Pawówek shrine (present-day part of Konin) pulled down by German occupiers (IPN Collections)



Photo 7.14.
Roadside cross toppled by Germans (IPN Collections)

Photo 7.15.
Destroyed statues from the Wejherowo
Calvary, found after the war (IPN Collections)





Photo 7.16.
Warehouse filled with Polish books, confiscated by German authorities, stored in St. Michael's Church in Poznań. In that place alone, three million volumes were assembled, in a massive heap 50 meters long, 6 meters wide, and 4 meters high (IZ Collections)

“Arthur Greiser (...) is indicted for: (...)

IX. Acting to the detriment of the Polish State and society, particularly the civilian population that inhabited the lands under his authority, through the organization and supervision of an action to destroy the Polish cultural heritage by:

- 1) liquidating or destroying all Polish academic, cultural, and educational institutions, all the press, radio, film, and theater;
- 2) liquidating or destroying the network of Polish public schools (elementary schools, high schools, and universities), and all Polish collections, archives, and libraries;
- 3) liquidating or destroying historical buildings and monuments of Polish culture and art or transforming them to the extent that they no longer served the Polish culture; introducing cultural restrictions for the Polish population and relegating their native language solely to private relations, and eradicating the Polish language from public and academic life altogether.”

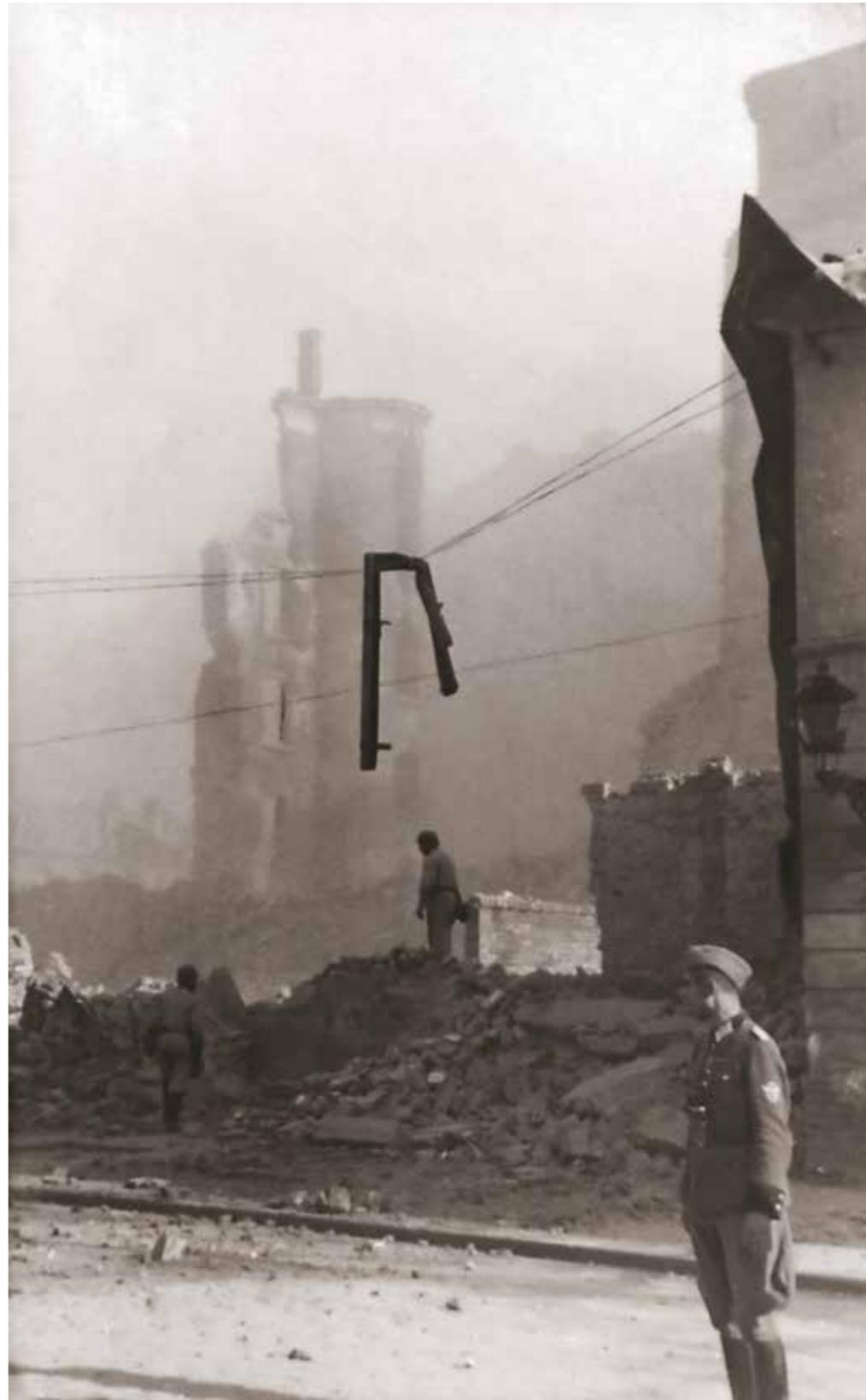
(Excerpt from Arthur Greiser indictment, the Supreme National Tribunal in Poznań)

“The destruction of Warsaw by the Germans provokes far-reaching observations. Among the ruins and rubble, one can clearly notice that the most severe damage was done to infrastructural and industrial equipment (...) in the same category there are also historical sites: castles, palaces, churches, and monuments. How to explain the intensity of the destructive force those German criminals used toward ancient monuments? The answer can be found in the ideas they propagated. The nation stays alive only if its culture stays alive. This must be the rationale for the destructive intensity. The destruction of Warsaw is an attempt to destroy the Polish nation.”

(Opinion of General Conservator of Historical Monuments 1945–1957,
Professor Jan Zachwatowicz)



Photo 7.17.
Planting explosive charges by German sappers to blow up what was left of the
Royal Castle in Warsaw (1944) (IZ Collections)



Photos 7.18.
-7.20.
Images depict
the methodical
destruction of
Warsaw in 1944
by *Sprengkom-
mando*, which was
part of Technical
Emergency Help
(*Technische
Nothilfe*), a Ger-
man auxiliary po-
lice organization
(IZ Collections)





Photo 7.21.
Interior of Warsaw's Public Library in Koszykowa Street burned down by the retreating Germans in 1945 (post-war photo). The library used to hold unique collections of books and archives donated by Polish noble families (BN Polona Collections)

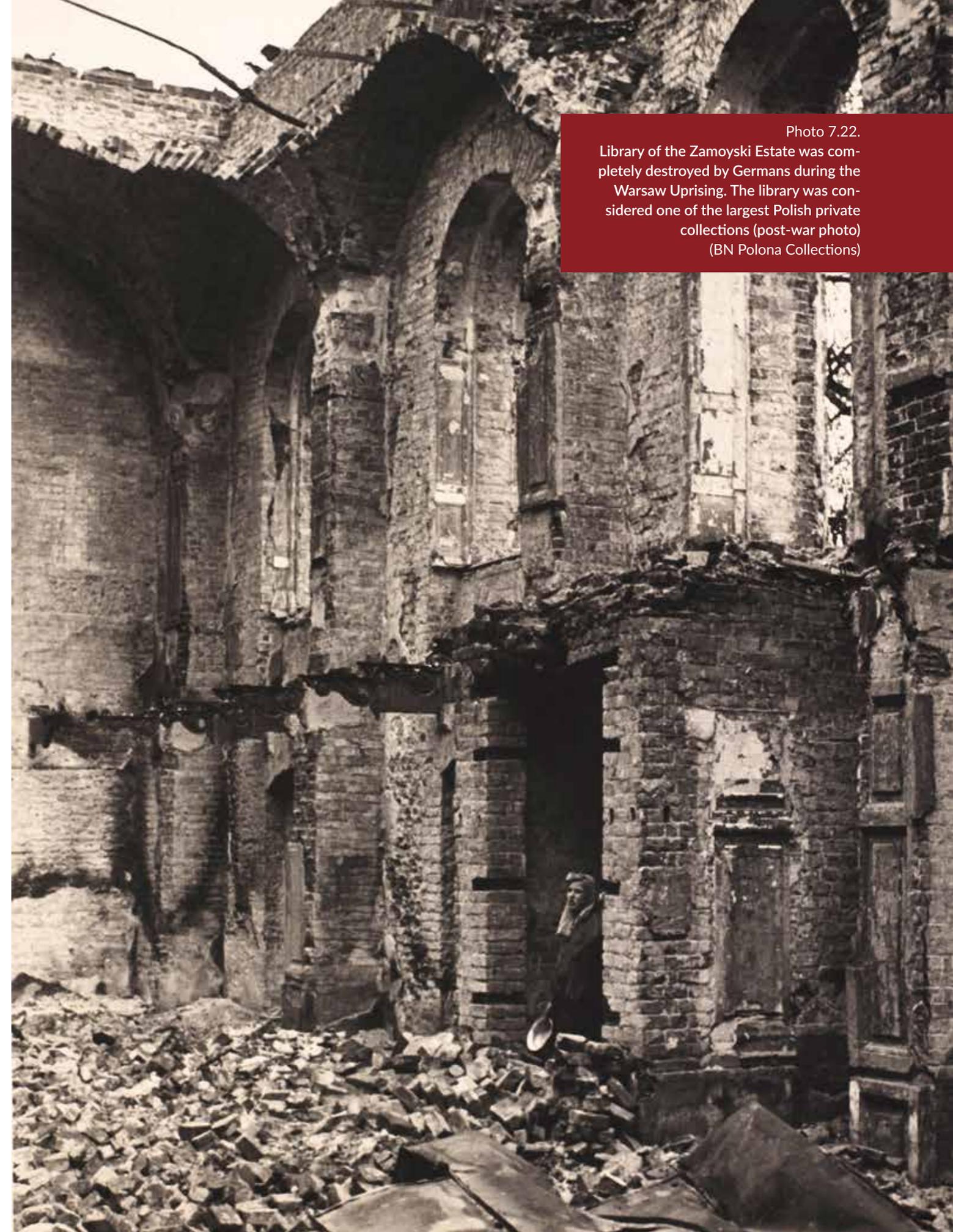


Photo 7.22.
Library of the Zamoyski Estate was completely destroyed by Germans during the Warsaw Uprising. The library was considered one of the largest Polish private collections (post-war photo) (BN Polona Collections)



Photo 7.23.

Almost the entire historical urban substance of Warsaw was destroyed by the German invader during the Second World War. The photo shows part of the former Warsaw ghetto with St. Augustine's Church that survived only because it served as an ammunition and explosives depot (post-war photo) (IPN Collections)



Photo 7.24.

Ruins of St. Florian's Church in the district of Praga in Warsaw (July 1945) (IPN Collections)



Photo 7.25.
Toppled statue
of King Sigis-
mund III Vasa
on Castle Square
in Warsaw
(post-war photo)
(IPN Collections)

“It can already be seen that apart from top-quality artworks already well-known in Germany (e.g. Veit Stoss' altarpiece and Hans Kulmbach's paintings on wood from St. Mary's Basilica in Kraków, paintings by Rafael, Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt from the Czartoryski collection, and several artworks from the National Museum in Warsaw), there is not much else here that could enrich the German collections of great art (painting and plastic arts). Far richer and more multifaceted are the Polish collections of handicrafts: artifacts fashioned from silver and gold (usually of German origin, mainly from St. Mary's Church and the Wawel Cathedral), Gobelin tapestry, weaponry, porcelain, furniture, bronzes, coins, valuable parchment manuscripts, books, etc. For Polish collections center mainly on the above-mentioned domains, besides their national art, in particular from the nineteenth century, which is of little value. (...) However, I would suggest reserving three of the most important paintings from the Czartoryski collection: Rafael, Leonardo, and Rembrandt, which are currently at the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum in Berlin, for the *Führermuseum* in Linz.”

(Excerpt from Dr. Hans Posse's report; the man who was responsible for the theft of artworks in German-occupied Europe)



Photo 7.26.
Portrait of a Young Man, painted by Raphael Santi in 1514, is the most valuable work of art looted during the Second World War from the Polish collections. Before the war, it was owned by the Czartoryski Museum in Kraków (MKiDN Collections)



Photo 7.27.
The Beautiful Madonna from Toruń, made ca. 1395, looted from the Church of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist in Toruń (MKiDN Collections)



Photo 7.28.
Gothic chalice from 1480, looted from St. Mary's Basilica in Kraków (MKiDN Collections)

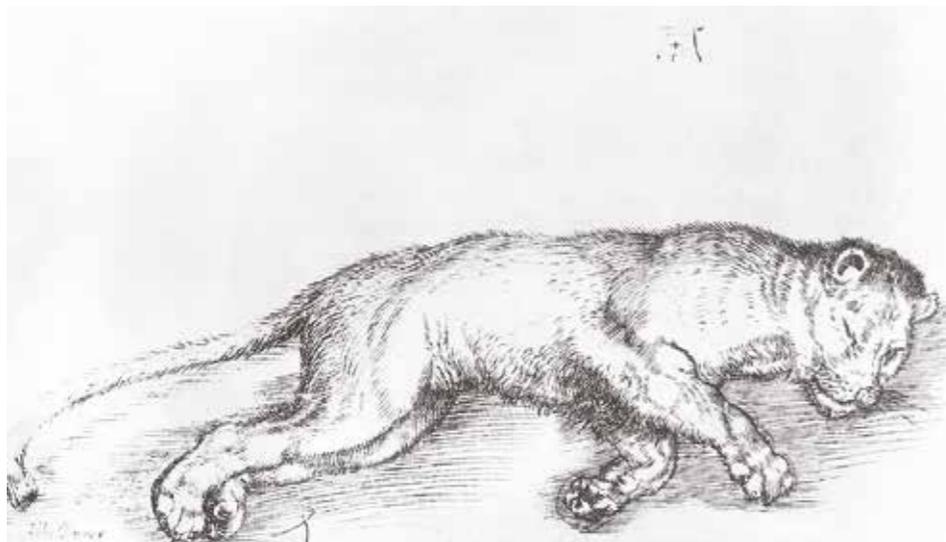


Photo 7.29.
The Sleeping Lioness, a drawing by Albrecht Dürer, looted by Germans in 1939 from the Warsaw University collection; it has never been found (MKiDN Collections)



Photo 7.30.
Portrait of the Artist's Wife by Leon Chwistek (before 1933) – a painting looted from the J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art in Łódź (MKiDN Collections)



Photo 7.31.
One of the drawings looted by the German invader at the turn of 1944 and 1945 from the Wilanów Palace and never recovered. It depicts the Head of an Apostle from the *Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci attributed to Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio (MKiDN Collections)



Photo 7.32.
Red-figure rhyton in the shape of a ram's head, ca. 480 BC, signed by potter Brygos, looted from the Gofuchów Castle collection (MKiDN Collections)

8

Corpus delicti 1945



After the German occupation ended, Poland was left in a catastrophic condition: Warsaw was razed to the ground, and many cities, towns, and villages lay in ruins. Road and rail infrastructures were destroyed, industrial plants devastated, and farms plundered. However, the most severe loss of all was that of human life. Until the very last hours of the occupation, the Germans committed mass atrocities against the Polish population. Above all, they murdered prisoners whom they were unwilling or unable to evacuate. The first massacre of this nature was conducted on July 22, 1944, in Lublin. Just before the retreat, German functionaries shot about 300 Polish and Jewish prisoners in Lublin Castle. Unfortunately, the same gruesome scenario kept repeating over and over. However, the bloodiest crime was committed in the *Radegast* police prison in Łódź. On the night of 17 and 18 January 1945, German butchers shot and burned about 1,500 prisoners (some were burned alive).

Soon after the Germans had been driven from the country, the Polish state authorities launched investigations to assess and document the magnitude of Nazi barbarity. Across the country, officials secured all kinds of evidence of crimes, retrieved from *Gestapo* torture chambers, prisons, and concentration camps. These were documents that the Germans failed to destroy before retreating, various instruments of torture, or the remnants of blown-up gas chambers and crematoriums. A search went on for clandestine sites of mass executions, from which hundreds of bodies were later exhumed and subsequently buried with honors. Unfortunately, it was often impossible to identify the victims and reliably estimate how many people had been killed. As early as 1942, the German authorities launched a massive operation under the codename '1005', with the aim of hiding and covering up their crimes. The operation was supervised by Paul Blobel who discovered the most effective way of disposing of thousands of human bodies while he had been experimenting at the Kulmhof extermination camp. Bodies were first dug out from death pits and then burned on iron grills or giant pyres made of alternating layers of corpses and firewood. Any remaining bone fragments were crushed in purpose-built mobile grinding machines. Ashes were then either buried in the ground or dumped into rivers. Death camps used similar procedures, but they also had large crematoriums capable of destroying hundreds of human bodies daily.

It is estimated that approximately 5,200,000 Polish residents, including about 3,000,000 Jewish people, fell victim to the German terror.

Left: Photo 8.1. Family of a Pole murdered by the Wehrmacht in 1939, after exhuming his remains in the forest near Janowiec Wielkopolski in June 1945 (IPN Collections)



Photo 8.2.
Demolished railway viaduct in Zamość (IPN Collections)



Photo 8.3.
Ruins of a train station in Zamość (IPN Collections)



Photo 8.4.
Ruins of town
houses in Asnyka
Street in Jasto
(IPN Collections)



Photo 8.5.
Demolished school building of the Blessed Yolanda Girls' Gymnasium
in Lenartowicza Street in Jasto (IPN Collections)

Photo 8.6.
Destroyed residential tenement buildings
(kamienice) at the Old Town in Warsaw
(June 1945) (IPN Collections)



Photo 8.7.
Ruins of town houses in Świętojańska
Street at the Warsaw Old Town, a historic
part of the city (June 1945)
(IPN Collections)



“Damage of someone else’s property, if it is a premeditated act, is a self-evident, indubitable, unquestionable evil. Such was the evil the Germans did to Poland. Poland was destroyed by fire and dynamite, in a scheduled and premeditated act. The destruction was carried out intentionally, in a deliberate, well-designed, systematic and methodical manner. It did not happen by chance, on a sudden impulse, or in the frenzy of battle. If that was an impulse, or a frenzy, it continued, uninterrupted, through the 5 and a half years of the occupation...”

(Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Ethical Grounds for Retribution and Compensation*, Warsaw 1945)



Photo 8.8.
Residential buildings in Smocza Street in downtown Warsaw,
leveled by the Germans (July 1945) (IPN Collections)



Photo 8.9.
Ruins of the Warsaw Old Town (July 1945) (IPN Collections)



Photo 8.10.
Modern building of the Warsaw Main Railway Station, put into service in 1939,
was razed to the ground by the Germans (July 1945) (IPN Collections)



Photo 8.11
Ruins of town houses in Rozbrat Street in Warsaw (June 1945) (IPN Collections)

Photo 8.12.
Bodies of prisoners murdered by
the Germans on July 22, 1944, in Lublin
Castle, which served as a prison during
the occupation (IPN Collections)



“First I saw an iron gate wide open. Inside of the prison, rubble and human corpses were still smoldering, with smoke rising here and there. In the yard, there was a pile of human bodies, with their clothing and hair burned off – those were the inmates who, having sensed the fire, knocked out a hole in the prison wall and jumped down onto the yard in front of the building to save their lives. And once there, they were all mowed down by murderous bullets fired by degenerate executioners.”

(Excerpt from an account by Jan Wypijewski, a former prisoner who was on the grounds of the burned down *Radegast* prison in January 1945, looking for his lost inmate friend Jan Wesołowski)



Photo 8.13.
Charred bodies of prisoners murdered on the night of January 17-18, 1945, on the grounds of the *Radegast* prison in Łódź (IPN Collections)



Photo 8.14.
Remains of the last 47 prisoners of the Kulmhof Death Camp, murdered and burned by Germans in a granary on the night of January 17-18, 1945
(IPN Collections)



Photo 8.15.
Dead body of a chained Polish prisoner murdered by Germans in Żabikowo near Poznań in January 1945
(IPN Collections)

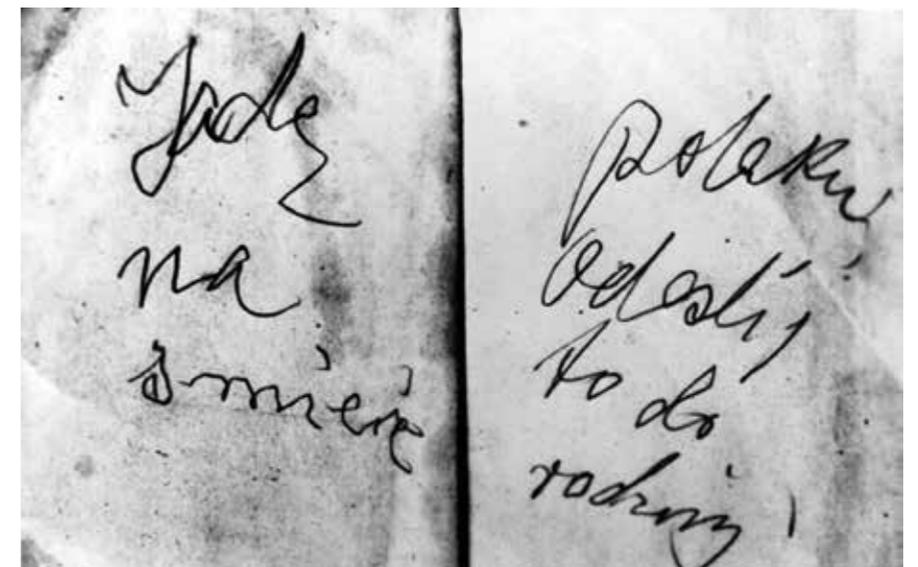


Photo 8.16.
Sheet of paper with a handwritten note: 'I am going to death. Pole, send it to family' that belonged to Albin Pabisiak murdered by Germans in Żabikowo in January 1945
(IPN Collections)



Photo 8.17.
German prisoners are forced to look at
human remains in the crematorium
of the KL Lublin concentration camp
(PMM Collections)



Photos 8.18.-8.20.
Exhumation of murdered residents of Nowy Sącz
in Biegonice in March 1945 (MONS Collections)





Photos 8.21.-8.22.

Exhumation of the victims' bodies, murdered by Germans in forests near
Piaśnica in 1939-1940 (MMG Collections)



Photo 8.23.
Exhumation of fifty-five inmates of the
Kalisz prison, murdered on January 19,
1945, in a forest near Skarszew
(IPN Collections)





Photo 8.24.
Post-war funeral of fifty-six Poles murdered by Germans in 1939 during the 'Bloody Sunday' in the prison in Inowrocław (IPN Collections)



Photo 8.25.
Cemetery in Rudawa, a post-war funeral of thirty victims of the Radwanowice village pacification carried out by Germans in July 1943 (IPN Collections)



Photo 8.26.
Funeral of twenty-three victims murdered by Germans in Żarki during the occupation (February 1945) (IPN Collections)

9

Remembering
the crimes



Remembrance of the crimes committed by the Germans on the Polish population during the Second World War is vital not only for showing proper respect to the people who paid the highest price, one of their own lives, but also for making sure that future generations will not have the slightest doubt who the oppressor was. It is all the more important because nowadays people tend to be reluctant to talk about suffering and injustice; the same can be said about cultivating the truth about German crimes and restoring the memory of the people who suffered and perished just because they were not Germans. Sadly, all too often martyrology is sneered at.

The Poles have not forgotten the German crimes. Back in 1944, when the war was still fought, the very first martyrdom museum was set up at the former concentration camp at Majdanek. Later, similar museums opened to commemorate the German terror in concentration camps, prisons, police jails, and extermination camps. Thousands of memorials and commemorative plaques have been built or affixed at execution sites, in cemeteries, churches, and public spaces to bear witness to the inhuman tragedy of Polish residents, irrespective of their nationality, age, and gender. It is estimated that in the territory of present-day Poland, there are as many as 50,000 execution sites, where either individual people were killed, or mass massacres were conducted by the Germans.

It was the perpetrators who were most interested in the crimes against innocent victims being forgotten. In Poland, not only dedicated governmental institutions – national and local – but also thousands of ordinary people help cultivate the memory of both German terror and the martyrdom of the Polish citizens who were repressed or killed during the horrors of World War II.

*Left: Photo 9.1.
Mass graves of Polish people
murdered by Germans
in Rożnowski Forest near
Oborniki, Greater Poland
(Photo by KP)*



Photo 9.2.
In Piaśnica Forest, Germans committed one of the greatest acts of genocide
in Gdańsk Pomerania (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.3.
Collective grave for victims of mass executions in the forests north-east
of Świecie, near the towns of Mniszek and Grupa (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.4.
Execution site commemorated with
a monument and
eight symbolic
graves in the Dąbki
forest administra-
tive division near
Gniewkowo,
Kuyavy-Pomerania
(Photo by KP)

Photo 9.5.
Latest memorial (installed in 2019)
to the victims of German terror in
Szpęgawski Forest near Starogard Gdański
(Photo by KP)





Photo 9.6.
Symbolic gravestones at the 'Valley of Death' in Fordon near Bydgoszcz,
the site of mass executions of the Polish intelligentsia (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.7.
Unveiled in 2009, Station XII of the Bydgoszcz Calvary is the most poignant monument of the Way of the Cross at the 'Valley of Death' in Fordon (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.8.
Bronze low relief on the monument of Station XII is a reproduction of the original photograph taken by a German executioner, depicting three Bydgoszcz teachers being marched off to execution in the 'Valley of Death' in Fordon: Władysław Bieliński, Medart Męczykowski, and Antoni Olejnik (Photo by KP)



Photos 9.9.-9.13.

Performance 'Night and Fog' staged on the grounds of Fort VII – Museum of Greater-Poland Martyrs, commemorating the victims of *Konzentrationslager Posen* on the 80th anniversary of its establishment (2019) (Photo by KP)





Photo 9.14.

Unveiled on October 20, 1945, the plaque on the Town Hall wall in Kórnik commemorates fifteen Poles shot six years earlier (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.15.
Outdoor installation 'Memory of Wood' set up in 2019, on the 80th anniversary of the massacre on the market square in Kórnik (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.16.

Commemorative plaque in honor of fifteen residents of Mosina and vicinity, shot by Germans in the market square on October 20, 1939 (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.17.

Tomb in Zakrzewski Forest near Poznań (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.18.

Grave of the victims of the Zgierz Massacre and mass executions in Lućmierski Forest near Łódź, renovated in 2022 (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.19.
Palmiry Cemetery comprising the graves
of over two thousand Poles murdered
by Germans in Kampinos Forest and the
vicinity of Warsaw (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.20.
Góra Komornicka Cemetery near Działdowo, Warmia-Masuria, laid out on the site of mass executions of Polish citizens in 1940–1943 (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.21.
Memorial in a parish cemetery in Działdowo, next to the eleven mass graves of Soldau concentration camp victims (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.22.
Zaspa Cemetery in Gdańsk; the remains of at least several thousand victims of German terror rest there, including the prisoners of KL Stutthof and victims of mass executions carried out in Gdańsk Pomerania (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.23.
Memorial of the Defenders of the Polish Post Office in Danzig in Zaspas Cemetery in Gdańsk (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.25.
Mural at Executed Hundred Square in Zgierz, painted in 2022,
on the 80th anniversary of the Zgierz massacre (Photo by KP)

Left: Photo 9.24.
Renovated in 2008, a memorial to the Executed Hundred in Zgierz,
commemorating the largest public execution carried out by Germans
in the territories directly incorporated into the Third Reich (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.26.
Memorial in Grabówka, Podlasie, honoring thousands of Polish citizens
shot by Germans in local forests (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.27.
Memorial in Baciezki Forest, Białystok, commemorating victims
of mass executions (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.28.
Memorial by the church wall
in Gąbin, Mazovia, where
on June 15, 1941, Germans
shot ten Poles in a retaliatory
action (Photo by KP)



Photos 9.29.-9.30.
Collective prison cell and an isolation cell in the former Gestapo Detention Center at 25 Szucha Avenue (now the Mausoleum of Struggle and Martyrdom in Warsaw) (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.31.
Wreaths laid by a brick wall in the prison yard in Rakowiecka Street in Warsaw; bullet holes can be seen in the wall where Germans murdered six hundred inmates on August 2, 1944 (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.32.
One of about 160 common-design commemorative plaques designed by Karol Tchorek ('Tchorek Plaques') in 1949 to commemorate places of struggle and martyrdom across Warsaw. Photo: plaque on the wall of a building at 27/35 Marszałkowska Street (Photo by KP)

Photo 9.33.
'Death Gate' to Auschwitz II-Birkenau,
the former German concentration and
extermination camp (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.34.
The most infamous
symbol of the Ger-
man concentration
camps: the gate to
the main Auschwitz
I concentration
camp with its *Arbeit
macht frei* sign
(Photo by KP)



Photo 9.35.
Remains of a cre-
matorium building
in the Auschwitz
II-Birkenau concen-
tration camp, which
used to house
a gas chamber and
furnaces to burn
human bodies
(Photo by KP)





Photo 9.36.
 'Gate Monument', part of the Struggle and Martyrdom of the Polish Nation
 and other Nations Memorial located on the grounds of the former
 KL Lublin concentration camp (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.37.
 Barbed wire double fencing and a guard tower at Majdanek (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.38.
 Gas chamber in the KL Lublin concentration camp (Photo by KP)

Photo 9.39.
Monumental memorial on the grounds of
the former German instant extermination
camp in Belżec (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.40.
Symbolic nameless gravestones surrounding the burial site of the ashes of
800,000 Jewish people murdered in the Treblinka instant extermination camp
(Photo by KP)



Photo 9.41.
Execution site of the inmates of the Treblinka I forced-labor camp (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.42.
Building of Ulma-Family Museum of Poles Who Saved Jews in World War II
in Markowa, Subcarpathia (Photo by KP)



Right: Photo 9.43.
Deportation Memorial at Radegast Station in Łódź, commemorating departures
of prisoners to the Kulmhof and Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps
(Photo by KP)



Photo 9.44.
Two graves in a forest near the Widoń settlement,
Kuyavy-Pomerania, commemorating Poles from
Włocławek executed in the fall of 1939.
(Photo by KP)



Photo 9.45.
Commemorative cross to honor three Poles executed
in 1939 in a forest near the village of Węgierskie,
Greater Poland (Photo by KP)



Photo 9.46.
Memorial and a mass grave holding the remains of fifty-eight
Poles – men, women and children – the victims of the
German pacification of Jasinowo, Podlasie, in 1943
(Photo by KP)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAN –	The Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie)
ANK –	The National Archives in Kraków (Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie)
AZSFRM –	The Archives of Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Warsaw (Archiwum Zgromadzenia Sióstr Franciszkanek Rodziny Maryi w Warszawie)
BN Polona –	The National Library Polona (Biblioteka Narodowa Polona)
IPN –	The Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej)
ISIM –	The Pilecki Institute (Instytut Solidarności i Męstwa im. Witolda Pileckiego)
IZ –	The Western Institute in Poznań (Instytut Zachodni im. Zygmunta Wojciechowskiego)
KP –	Konstancja Pleskaczyńska
MB –	Maciej Biedrzycki
MKiDN –	The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego)
MMG –	The Gdynia City Museum (Muzeum Miasta Gdyni)
MONS –	The District Museum in Nowy Sącz (Muzeum Okręgowe w Nowym Sączu)
MPRŻ –	The Ulma-Family Museum of Poles Who Saved Jews War II in Markowa (Muzeum Polaków Ratujących Żydów podczas II wojny)
MPWL –	The Museum of Greater Poland Uprising in Lusowo (Muzeum Powstańców Wielkopolskich im. Generała Józefa Dowbora Muśnickiego)
MSz –	Mateusz Szpytma
NAC –	The National Digital Archives (Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe)
PMM –	The Majdanek State Museum (Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku)

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