



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

**ABRIDGED
VERSION**



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Dear All,

On 1 September 2022, at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the Jan Karski Institute of War Losses presented *The Report on the Losses Sustained by Poland as a Result of German Aggression and Occupation during the Second World War, 1939–1945*. The Report is the starting point for substantive bilateral talks that should lead to an appropriate response from the German Government that will serve both justice and historical truth. The report also provides a basis for an objective public debate, including in the international media, on Germany's failure to resolve the issue of reparations with Poland and the Polish people for the consequences of the Second World War. It should be noted that since the end of the war until today, Germany has not signed a peace treaty or any other bilateral agreement to settle, in Polish-German relations, the issue of reparations, compensation, and redress to Poland for the damage and suffering caused during the brutal War and the devastating German occupation of Polish territory from 1939 to 1945.

Polish victims of the War and their descendants have no legal avenue to seek compensation before the courts. This is an unprecedented and unwelcome situation given the current stage of development of international law and the protection of human rights it affords.

The fact that Poles—unlike representatives of other nationalities—did not and do not have any legal avenues to seek compensation for their loss of health is a clear example of discrimination.

On 14 September 2022, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland passed a resolution calling on the Government to seek compensation for the war damage caused by Germany during the Second World War. The Sejm called on the German Government to



Arkadiusz Mularczyk

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and Government Plenipotentiary for the Compensation of Damages Caused by the German Aggression and Occupation in 1939–1945.

An advocate, graduate of the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. A Member of the Polish Sejm since 2005 and of the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th terms of parliament. In the current term, he was Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Extraordinary Legislative Committee. He was Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for estimating the amount of compensation owed to Poland by Germany for the damage caused during the Second World War. On behalf of the Sejm: he has been a member of the National Judicial Council since 2020, the Vice-Chairman of the National Judicial Council, and Chairman of the Board of the Jan Karski Institute of War Losses Warsaw. He is the Chairman of the Sejm and Senate Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. From 2021–2022, he was Vice-Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

“unequivocally accept political, historical, legal, and financial responsibility” for all the consequences suffered by Poland and its citizens due to the Third Reich’s decision to unleash the Second World War. The resolution was adopted almost unanimously by all parties sitting in parliament. The Sejm of the Republic of Poland declared that the Polish State has never waived its claims against the German state, and that Poland has never received compensation for the losses caused by the German state or for the harm caused to its citizens. The report was forwarded to the German coordinator for cooperation with Poland and to the German Deputy Foreign Minister. I encourage you to read the report thoroughly—an electronic version is available at <https://instytut-stratwojennych.pl/en>.



Arkadiusz Mularczyk
Presentation of the Report
at the Royal Castle in Warsaw,
1 September 2022

On 3 October 2022, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a diplomatic note to the Federal Government of Germany to take immediate steps with an aim to permanently, comprehensively, definitively, legally, and materially settle the consequences of German aggression and occupation.

The Republic of Poland demands:

1. Compensation for material and non-material losses amounting to 6 trillion 220 billion 609 million Polish zlotys.
2. Compensation for victims of German aggression and occupation, as well as their families, for the losses and harm suffered.
3. That the Federal Republic of Germany takes systemic measures to return cultural property seized from Poland and which is currently located on German territory.



4. The return of assets and liabilities of Polish state banks and credit institutions seized by the German state in 1939–1945.

5. The settlement of amounts due resulting from exploitation by the Reichskreditkassen which funded the Third Reich's criminal military efforts, and from the Emissionsbank in Polen's operations.

6. The full rehabilitation of activists of the Polish minority in pre-war Germany who were killed during the war and compensation for the losses suffered by Polish diaspora organizations in Germany.

7. The full and systematic regulation of the current status of Poles and persons of Polish origin in Germany by restoring the status of a national minority, in particular, as regards the teaching of their mother tongue.

8. The appropriate cooperation with the Republic of Poland with respect to commemorating Polish victims of the Second World War.

9. That the German authorities take effective action to present to its own society a true picture of the war and its consequences, especially the harm and damage inflicted on Poland and its people.

The German Foreign Ministry's response to the diplomatic note sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland on 3 October 2022, was brief, condescending, and

Wieluń, 1 September 1939.

The town's buildings were 75% destroyed, while its historic central part was 90% destroyed. The first bombs were dropped by the Germans on the All Saints Hospital, marked with the emblem of the Red Cross. (Collection of the Wieluń Land Museum)



indicative of the German Government's dismissive attitude toward Poland's demands for compensation for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity committed by the Germans, as well as the destruction and plunder of Poland during the Second World War in 1939–1945. The lack of legal, economic, or historical argumentation is puzzling and leads one to believe that the German Foreign Ministry does not know how to resolve the problem that it is faced with. It also indicates that the Federal German State does not intend to abide by the basic rules underpinning human rights or the rule of law and that it believes that the German Reich, of which it is the legal successor, is not responsible for the lawlessness and murder of more than 5.2 million Polish citizens. The German state believes that reparations are not due to Polish slaves deported to Germany for labor, slaves who received no real compensation for years of hard and grueling labor under the German whip. The German state fails to note the approximately 200,000 Polish children who were kidnapped and deported to Germany, most of them parentless and denationalized, living to the end of their days in the belief that they were Germans. The German state also failed, in 1991, to recognize the German killings of Poles who were a national minority in Germany, and refuses to allocate federal funding for the teaching of the Polish language.

The ruins of Warsaw perpetrated
by Germany in 1944 (Photo by
Wacław Żdźarski/NAC collections)



The German Foreign Ministry's position was expressed in three sentences:

- it considers the question of reparations or reparations closed,
- the position on this issue is unchanged, and
- it does not anticipate entering into negotiations on this issue.

The treatment of the Polish Foreign Ministry's diplomatic note concerning human and national dignity in this derogatory manner is not only astonishing, but also reveals that a sense of superiority over neighbors resulting from the failure to settle accounts with its Nazi German past, continues to live on in Germany. It is simply inaccurate to consider the issue of reparations closed, as it was never realistically opened in bilateral relations. In 1945, at the Potsdam Conference, neither Poland nor Germany were parties to the Agreement, and decisions on the fate of both countries were made by the great powers.

The Polish Government has repeatedly raised demands to settle the issue of compensation for the consequences of the Second World War—illegally started by Germany—for the loss of Poland's population, material, and cultural heritage. Germany has avoided

Civilian residents of Bochnia and the surrounding area (52 people) shot by German police on Uzbornia Hill on 18 December 1939
(Collection of the S. Fischer Museum in Bochnia)

resolving this issue both at the level of diplomatic relations between the two countries and in cases of individual demands for compensation from Polish citizens. Contrived explanations were provided that these issues should be settled only after the reunification of Germany since they concern the whole country, not individual German states. The legislation and rulings of the “courts” in West Germany were and are unlawful in that they did not recognize the murders committed against Poles as being caused by racism, and that the affected Poles were treated as subhuman—there were even denials of their genocidal nature. Therefore, we reject the German Government’s position as contradicting the basic principles of international law contained in the Hague Convention, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and, above all, when compared with the sense of justice, basic moral values, and simple decency towards the victims of German aggression, lawlessness, murder, rape, violence, and robbery that was committed against Polish citizens during the brutal war and occupation of 1939–1945.

We demand the return of the seized property and cultural assets, as well as the payment of reparations and compensation both to the Polish state and to individuals or their descendants who were harmed in various ways by the German state.

The issue of settling the question of reparations, compensation, and redress from Germany in Polish-German relations will be raised in all available domestic and international forums and therefore, we ask you to support the efforts of the Polish Government and people for the payment of claims due to Poland by the legal successor of the Third German Reich—the Federal Republic of Germany. I would like to express my sincere hope that both the Report and the diplomatic note to the Federal Republic of Germany will demonstrate the scale of Polish losses and allow both countries to begin an open, fact-based dialogue leading to the resolution of this matter.

With best regards,
Arkadiusz Mularczyk



Resolution No. 51 of The Council of Ministers of 18 April 2023 on the need to regulate, in Polish-German relations, the issue of reparations, compensation, and redress for the losses that Poland and Poles suffered due to the unlawful German attack on Poland in 1939 and the subsequent German occupation

The Council of Ministers, acting pursuant to Article 146 (1) and 4 (9) of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997, declares as follows:

§ 1. Neither in the times of the People's Republic of Poland, nor in the times of the free Republic of Poland that, in 1989, regained the possibility of the sovereign and democratic determination of its fate, did the Government of Poland or the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany close the issue of reparations, compensation, redress, or any other form of compensation for the material and non-material losses that Poland and the Polish people suffered as a result of the unlawful German attack on Poland in September 1939 and the subsequent German occupation.

§ 2. In particular, neither have the Government of the People's Republic of Poland nor the Government of the Free Republic of Poland ever effectively waived or relinquished its claim for reparations, compensation, or redress from the Federal Republic of Germany for losses caused during the Second World War.

§ 3. The Government of the Republic of Poland announces that the issue of reparations, compensation, and redress for losses suffered by Poland and Poles due to the Second World War has not yet been settled between the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany in the form of an international treaty.

§ 4. In view of the enormity of the injustice, suffering, and damage that Germany caused during the Second World War, the Government of the Republic of Poland is of the opinion that the issue of the principles of payment of reparations, compensation, and redress for the losses suffered by Poland and Poles must be settled as soon as possible between the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany.

§ 5. The Resolution comes into force on the date of its adoption.

The Prime Minister
Mateusz Morawiecki

Monitor Polski

Official Gazette of the
Government of the Republic
of Poland, Warsaw, 20 April
2023. Pos. 423

Left. The ruins of Franciszkańska Street in Warsaw (1945) (photo by S. Doktorowicz-Hrebicki/ NAC collections)



The Report in brief

The Report has been drawn up in the the 8th term Parliament of the Republic of Poland of and is a result of the work of Parliamentary Group for Assessment of Compensations Due to Poland from Germany for the Assessment Caused During the Second World War and a group of invited experts.

It was prepared by a team of 33 researchers and specialists from various areas of knowledge and science, including historians, economic historians, economists, property appraisers, archivists, and lawyers. Individual chapters of the report were also subjected to 10 external reviews. At this point, I would like to thank all the authors, reviewers and persons involved in the preparation of the Report.



Left. View of the ruins along Okopowa Street in the center of Warsaw (NAC collections)

Volume I.

The description and assessment of material and non-material losses suffered by the Republic of Poland during the Second World War 1939–1945

Volume II.

Photographic documentation showing the cruelty of German war crimes against the Polish citizens

Volume III.

The list of crime sites prepared based on the research conducted over several decades by the Central Commission for Investigation of German Crimes in Poland

Download the report (EN) → <https://instytutstratwojennych.pl/en>



Consequences of the Second World War for Poland

In the Second World War, Poland suffered **the greatest human and material losses of all the European countries in relation to the total eligible population and national wealth**. The losses were a result of not only military actions, but also the result of German occupational policy, motivated by the belief in the racial inferiority of the Polish citizens. The Germans **deliberately and in an organized manner** exterminated the Polish population in the occupied territories, and intensively exploited Polish society, both through forced labor and the deliberate destruction of property, including the demolition of the state capital Warsaw and thousands of Polish towns and villages.

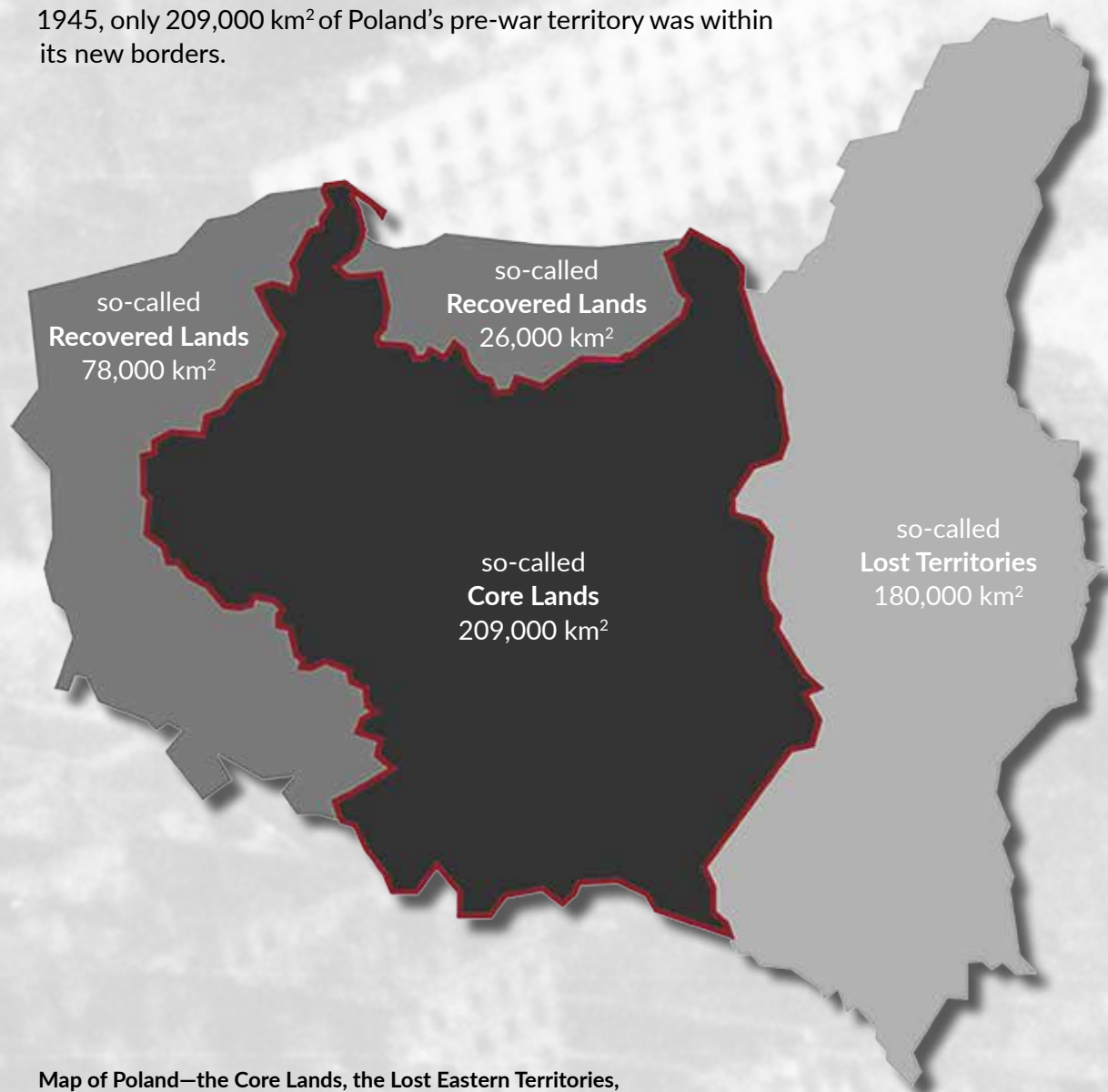
Left. Warsaw's Old Town in 1945 with the ruins of St. John's Archcathedral (Świętojańska Street) on the left, after the Germans had devastated the city (Photo by Wacław Żdźarski/NAC collections)

Below. The German annihilation of Michniów, 1943 (IPN collections)

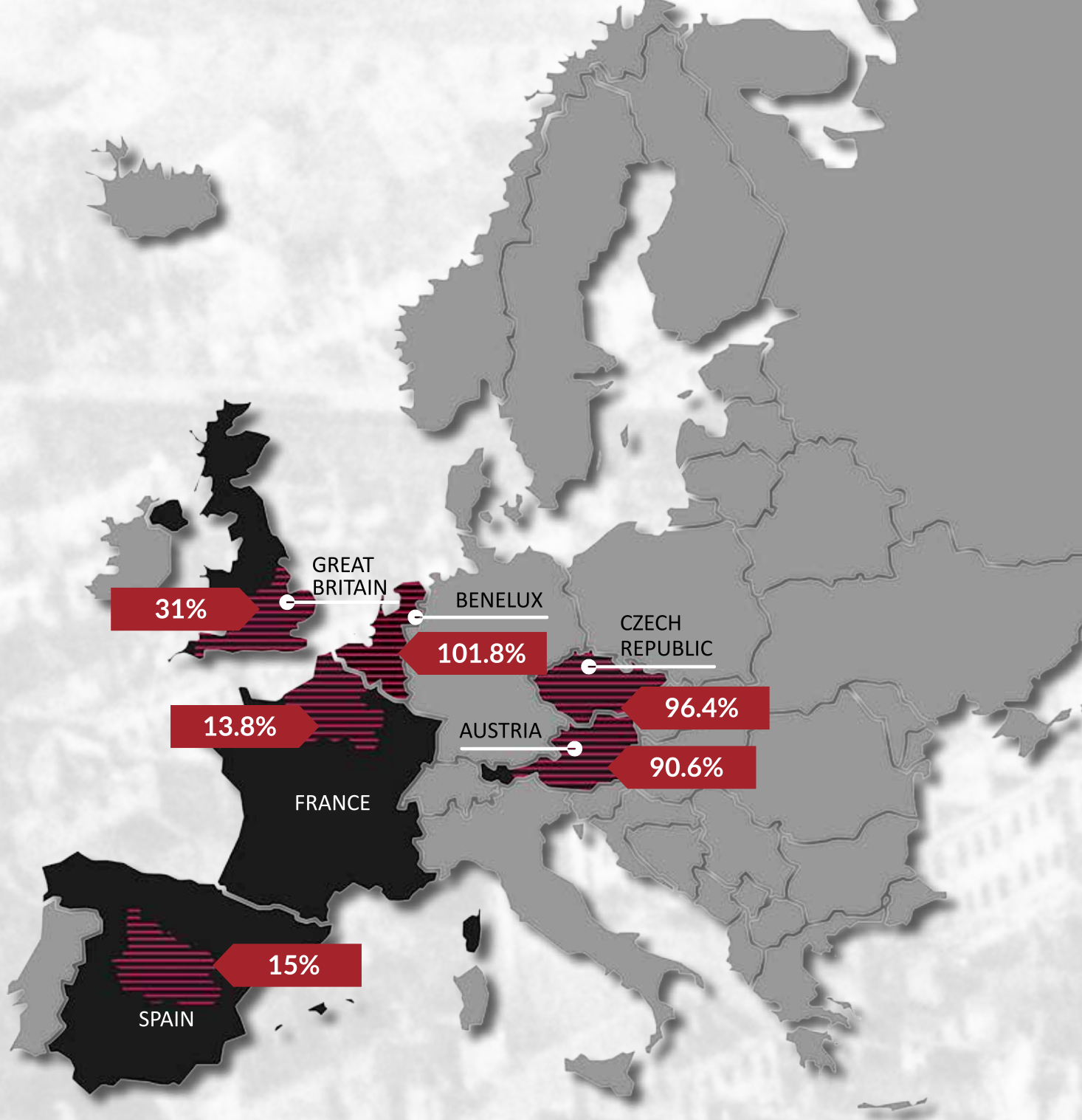


CHANGES IN THE BORDERS

Before World War II, the Republic of Poland covered **389,000 km²**. After border shifts in the east and west, the area of the Republic in 1945 decreased—compared to the state in 1938—by **76,000 km²**; it already consisted of only **313,000 km²**. The reduction in territory was the result of the illegal annexation by the USSR of as much as 180,000 km², or 46.3% of the territory of the Republic. After 1945, only 209,000 km² of Poland's pre-war territory was within its new borders.



Map of Poland—the Core Lands, the Lost Eastern Territories, the Recovered Territories, and Poland's modern-day borders

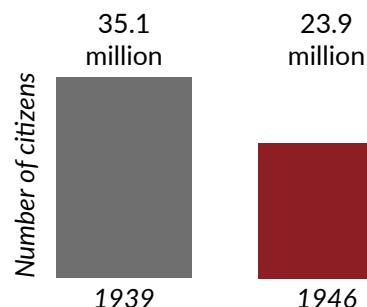


Territorial losses in relation to other countries

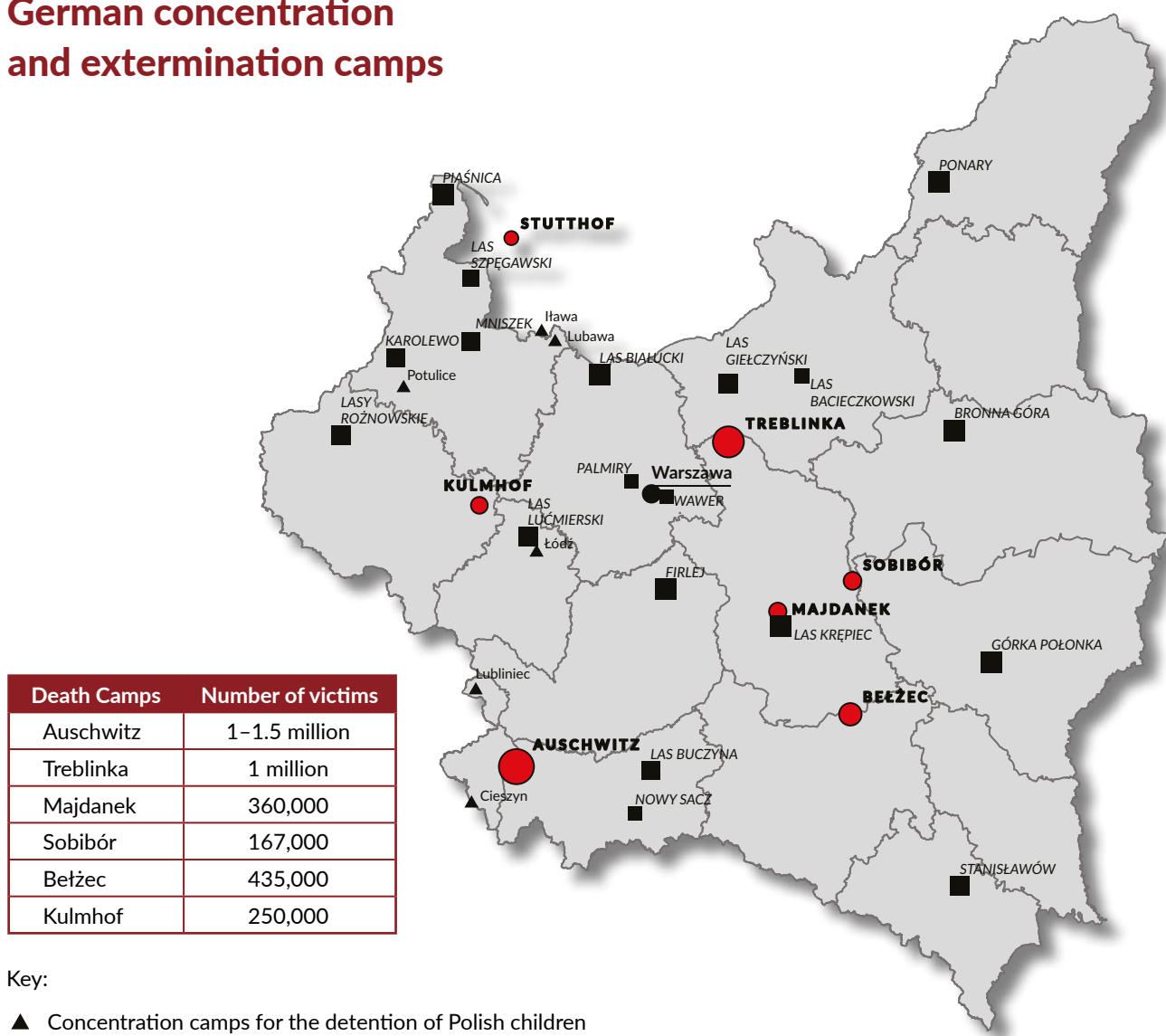
The border shifts did not compensate for the lost 76,000 km², which—to illustrate the scale—today constitute an area comparable to: Austria: 84,000 km², the Czech Republic: 79,000 km², or the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg combined): 75,000 km².

DEMOGRAPHIC LOSSES OF POLAND

In 7 years, Poland lost
over **11,200,000** citizens



German concentration and extermination camps

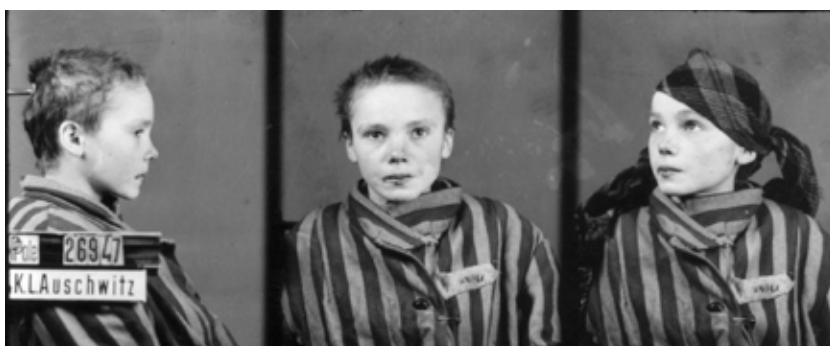


Death Camps	Number of victims
Auschwitz	1–1.5 million
Treblinka	1 million
Majdanek	360,000
Sobibór	167,000
Bełżec	435,000
Kulmhof	250,000

Key:

▲ Concentration camps for the detention of Polish children

■ Mass executions ● Death camps



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

The Germans created an entire system of concentration and extermination camps in occupied Poland.

Concentration camps were even created for Polish children, e.g. in Łódź or Potulice. Pseudo-medical experiments were also carried out on children, e.g. in a psychiatric hospital in Lubliniec.



The Germans treated both Poles and Jews as a racially inferior population who was to be deprived of its elite and culture. They were robbed, exploited economically, and treated as sub-humans.

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

Holocaust of the Jews



At first, Polish Jews were placed in ghettos, cut off from both food rations sufficient to survive and from the outside world, exploited economically, and then, after the decision on mass extermination, they were sent to the extermination camps in Auschwitz Birkenau, Treblinka, Bełżec, Sobibór and Kulmhof.

Verordnung über die Bestimmung des Begriffs „Jude“ im Generalgouvernement

[Decree on the definition of the term “Jew” in the Generalgouvernement] (VBIGG, 1 August 1940, no. 48, p. 231–232)... § 2.

- “(1) Any person at least three of whose grandparents were of pure Jewish descent is considered Jewish.
- (2) Any person at least two of whose grandparents were of pure Jewish descent shall be considered Jewish providing that (a) he or she was a member of a Jewish religious community on 1 September 1939, or joined a Jewish religious community after that date; (b) if he or she was married to a Jewish person at the time this Decree came in force or married a Jewish person after that date; (c) if he or she was born out of wedlock after 31 May 1941 as the illegitimate offspring of a Jew and non-Jewish person, in the understanding of Part 1.
- (3) Any grandparent who was a member of a Jewish religious community shall be regarded as of pure Jewish descent.”

The Germans used this Decree of 24 July 1940 to adopt the provisions of the Nuremberg Laws of 15 September 1935 in the GG.



Starving child in a street in the Warsaw ghetto (IPN collections)



The Warsaw Ghetto was the largest ghetto in the Generalgouvernement (GG) and in the whole of occupied Europe. In the summer of 1942, the Germans deported most of its inmates to the Treblinka extermination camp. On 19 April 1943, German troops set about the final destruction of the ghetto. The people still inside put up a resistance and started an uprising. It was one of the landmarks in the history of the extermination of the Jews on the Polish territories. The German police, the SS, and the Wehrmacht were sent in to put down the Uprising and demolish the ghetto. After the fall of the Ghetto Uprising, the Germans pulled down the buildings located within the ghetto walls. From the summer of 1943, the Warschau concentration camp operated on the site of the Ghetto and was transformed in May 1944 into a labor camp as a sub-camp of the Lublin (Majdanek) concentration camp, holding Jewish prisoners used for demolition work.

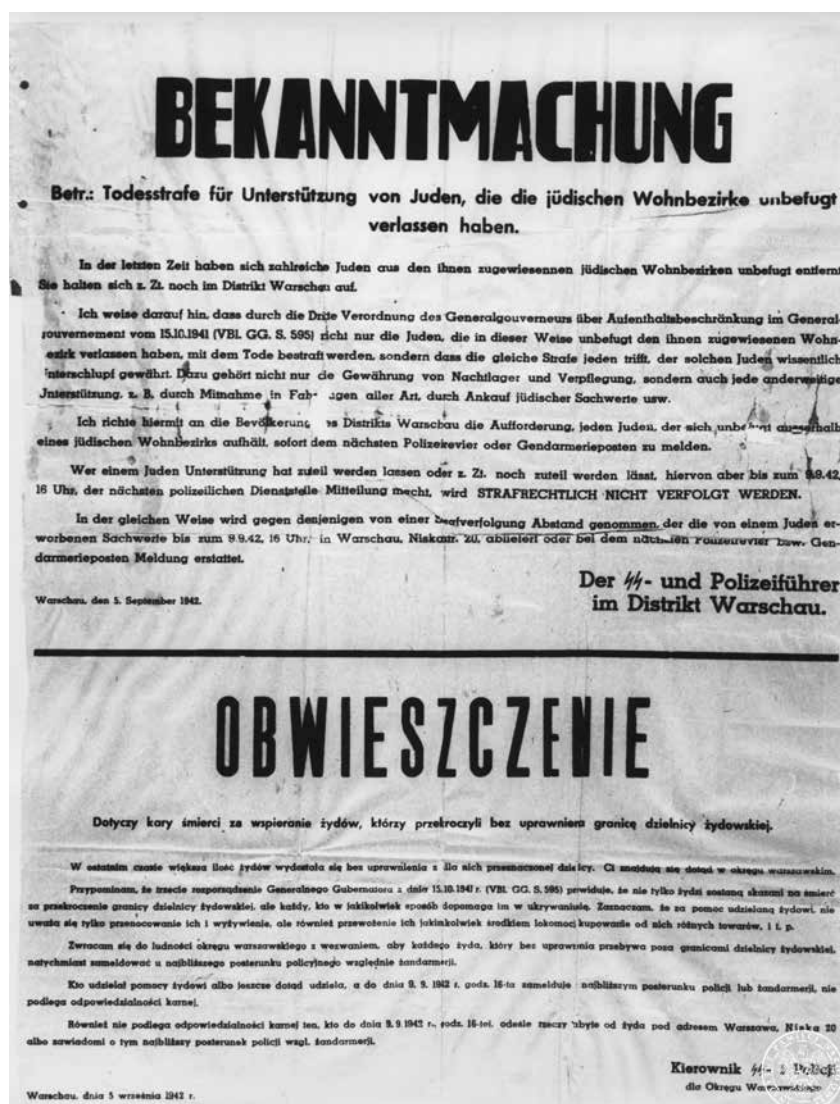
Footbridge connecting two parts of the Warsaw ghetto (IPN collections)

The Germans set up **the Warsaw Ghetto** on 2 October 1940. It was to serve as "the Jewish residential area" for the Jews of Warsaw and its environs. Living conditions in the Ghetto were tragic, with a very high death rate due to hunger and disease. In 1942, the German authorities started to deport Jews from the Ghetto to the Treblinka death camp. By early 1943,

there were only 60,000 out of the 1941 total of 450,000 inmates still left in the Ghetto, working in factories producing goods for Germany. In May 1943, after the Ghetto Uprising had been crushed, the Ghetto was demolished and the rest of its inhabitants deported to Treblinka and other German death camps.



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



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

The poster reads, "Recently a considerable number of Jews have left the residential area allocated to them without authority. They are still at large in Distrikt Warschau. I remind you that the Governor-General's third decree of 15 October 1941 (Vbl.GG. S. 595) prescribes the death sentence not only for Jews who leave their allocated residential area without authority, but also for anyone who aids and abets them in any way whatsoever. Aiding and abetting Jews means not only providing accommodation and maintenance, but also providing them with transportation of any kind whatsoever, purchasing any goods whatsoever from them, etc. I hereby give notice to the inhabitants of Distrikt Warschau to report any Jew they know of who is at large beyond the Jewish quarter without authority, to the nearest police or security police station as soon as possible. Any person who has been or is still aiding and abetting a Jew but reports the matter to the nearest police or security police station not later than by 16:00 hours on 9 September 1942 shall be exempted from criminal liability. Any person who returns goods acquired from a Jew to the following address: Warszawa, Niska 20, or notifies the nearest police or security police station of the matter shall be exempted from criminal liability.

Head of the Police and SS for Distrikt Warschau.

Warschau, 5 September 1942."

After "the final solution of the Jewish question", Poles were to become the next victims of the "master race" as part of the Generalplan Ost.

An anti-population policy was implemented against Poles: extermination through mass executions, placement in concentration camps, pacification of villages, excessively demanding work, as well as limiting marriages, or persuading Polish women to abort pregnancies.



Slave labor

Over **2,100,000** Polish citizens were taken abroad as slave labor, and over **200,000 German enterprises** and farms within the borders of the Reich and in occupied Poland benefited from the work of Polish forced laborers. Each forced laborer worked on average 2 years and 9 months, which gives a total of **4,881,000 working years**.

It is worth remembering that the Polish-German Reconciliation Foundation received funds from the payments of German companies that used the forced labor of Polish workers. In total, the fund paid out **PLN 731,843,000** for **1,060,000 people**, which amounted to an average of **PLN 690** per person (approximately USD 170). This means that these payments, as well as the aid to the victims of pseudo-medical experiments, were not compensatory in nature, but constituted only one-off humanitarian aid for Polish citizens—victims of the Third German Reich.

Polish forced laborers during work
at the Georg mineshaft in Germany.
German propaganda photo
(NAC collections)

- over **2,100,000** Polish citizens were taken abroad as slave labor
- they worked over **4,881,000** working years
- for each forced laborer, the value of their unpaid labor for one month was **USD 250** gross
- on over **200,000** German enterprises and farms



Polish slave labourers in Germany, in the Finkenkuhle quarry near Salzgitter (NAC collections)

German industry benefited greatly from forced labor. The most famous companies involved in this practice include Bayer and IG Farben, Siemens, Allianz, Audi, BMW, Deutsche Bank, Dresdner Bank, Hugo Boss, Mercedes-Benz, Opel, Porsche and Volkswagen AG.

Bayer

IG Farben

Allianz

Audi

BMW

Deutsche Bank

Dresdner Bank

Heinkel

Hugo Boss

Mercedes-Benz

Opel

Porsche

Volkswagen AG


Stolen children

The Germans took and set for Germanisation **approx. 196,000** Polish children. Only 30,000 were recovered. They were taken only because they were healthy, pretty and—according to the reprehensible German criteria, i.e. being—“racially pure”. The massive theft of children by the Germans was not the result of momentary madness, but a **carefully planned systemic action** in which a small child was treated as an object that could be kidnapped and handed over to the fanatical National Socialists.

The Germans took and
selected for germanisation
approx. 196,000 Polish children.
Only 30,000 were recovered.

Information card for a Polish child “evacuee.” The reverse has entries such as “political views” and “racial group.” (AAN, Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej)

Haushaltsvorstand <u>evakuiert</u>		Gau: <u>113</u> <u>100</u>	
Name: <u>Malecki,</u>	Vorname: <u>Mieczyslaw</u>	Konf.: <u>kath,</u>	I/3954
Beruf: <u>ohne</u>	geb.: <u>28.5.1932</u>	in: <u>Theodory, Kreis Lask</u>	Lfd. Nr.: <u>95</u>
deutsch: <u>Theodory, Kreis Lask</u>		deutsch: _____	
Wohnort: _____	Gemeinde: _____	Kreis: _____	
polnisch: _____		polnisch: _____	
Ehefrau: Vorname: <u>Franz</u>	geb.: <u>2.4.1907</u>	in: <u>Theodory, Kreis Lask</u>	
Kinder im Haushalt	männlich: Vorname: _____	_____	_____
	Alter: _____	_____	_____
	weiblich: Vorname: _____	_____	_____
	Alter: _____	_____	_____
Gesamteindruck der Familie: <u>gut</u> — <u>mittel</u> — <u>mässig</u> <small>(nichtzutreffendes streichen)</small>			
Aussiedlung genehmigt: _____		Holzkarte Nr.: _____	Ausges: _____
Verläufig un- gebracht:	am: <u>15.4.44</u>	in: _____	weiter: _____
	am: _____	in: _____	weiter: _____
	am: _____	in: _____	weiter: _____
In Arbeit vermittelt am: <u>28. 4. 44</u>		nach: <u>HPF, Lask</u>	
Im Gau untergebracht am: _____		in: _____	
In das Generalgouvernement ausgewiesen am: _____		nach: _____	



Health impairment and diseases

During the war, **590,000** Polish citizens became disabled not only as a result of direct acts of war, but also because of pseudo-medical experiments and being kept in concentration camps. Over a million people developed tuberculosis mainly due to long-term malnutrition during the occupation.

Medical experiments were conducted by the "SS health service" in the camps Buchenwald, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Ravensbrück, Natzweiler-Struthof, Neuengamme, Mauthausen-Gusen, Dachau and Sachsenhausen. In addition, in the camps Mittelbau-Dora, Gross-Rosen, Stutthof, Majdanek and Flossenburg, some doctors pursued their private interests by conducting pseudo research on euthanasia, malaria, mustard gas and incendiary bombs, infectious hepatitis, sterilisation, poisons, abscess, polygal and phenol, blood coagulation and transfusion; bone, muscles, and nerve regeneration; and bone transplantation.

In 1945, those conducting experiments began destroying documents and killing the medical 'guinea pigs'. However, what remained were witness statements that made it possible to bring charges against the criminals in lab coats.

"The Doctors Trial" was held in Nuremberg from 25 October 1946 to 20 July 1947. Only 20 doctors and 3 assistants faced charges:

- 7 were sentenced to death by hanging,
- 5 were sentenced to life imprisonment, reduced to 15-20 years on appeal,
- 3 were sentenced to 15 or 20 years imprisonment, reduced to 10 years on appeal,
- 1, on appeal, walked free after having had his sentence reduced to time already served, and
- 7 were acquitted.

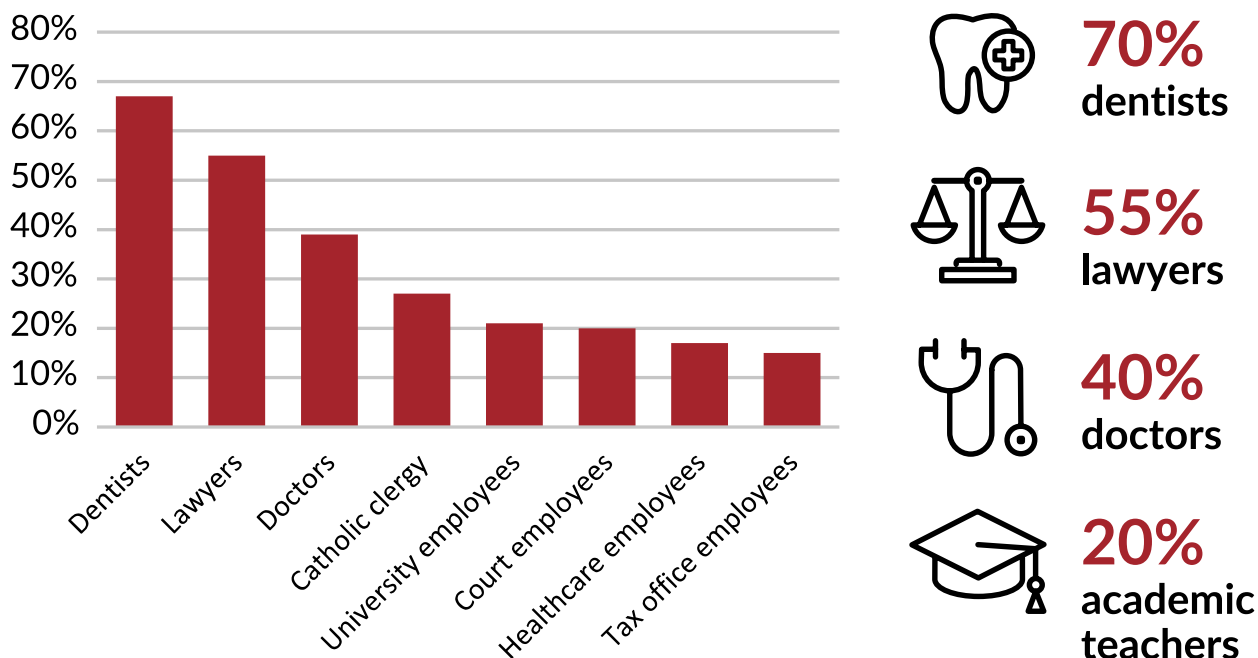
The notorious 'Angel of Death' of Auschwitz Josef Mengele, like many other criminals, never stood trial.

Most Nazi experiments contributed nothing of value to medicine. However, we may never ignore the fact that these experiments were carried out because, if we do, the suffering of thousands of victims will be forgotten.



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

Losses in Polish intelligentsia



The Polish intelligentsia—doctors, lawyers, teachers, clergy, officials—suffered huge losses and—were deliberately murdered as being part of the so-called leadership element. In some professional groups, e.g. among lawyers, personnel losses exceeded 55%, among doctors 40%, and among academic teachers 20%.

Operation “Intelligentsia” (German: Intelligenz-aktion) and AB (German: Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion)

This included eliminating people who could prevent the quick and effective Germanisation of the conquered lands. It is estimated that, as a result of actions carried out by operational groups of the security police (Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei) and paramilitary “self-defense” units of the German minority in Poland (Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz), at least 100,000 persons died.

Piaśnica near Wejherowo was one of the biggest sites of the German genocide during Operation AB in occupied Poland. It is estimated that 12,000 to 14,000 people died here.

Right. Exhumation of the victims' bodies, murdered by Germans in the forests near Piaśnica in 1939–1940 (Gdynia City Museum collections)



Aktion gegen Universitäts-Professoren (Sonderaktion Krakau)

The most infamous crime committed against the Polish intelligentsia in Carcow was the Aktion gegen Universitäts-Professoren, the so-called **Sonderaktion Krakau**. The Germans arrested **193 professors and academic lecturers** of the Jagiellonian University and the University of Mining on the pretext of the arbitrary commencement of the academic year. The professors were transported to the concentration camp in Sachsenhausen, where many died.

Fryderyk Zoll (Junior), Professor of Law,
Rector of the Jagiellonian University
(born 1 February 1865 in Cracow,
died 23 March 1948 in Cracow)



So	Mo	Di	Mi	Do	Fr	Sa	Jan.	Febr.	März	April	Mai	Juni	Juli	Aug.	Sept.	Okt.	Nov.	Dez.
Schutzhaft-Kartei																		
Name: (bei Frauen auch Geburtsname) Z o l l																		
Vorname: Friedrich																		
Schutztag und -ort: 1.2.65 in Krakau																		
Beruf: Prof. U.J.																		
Beschäftigt bei:																		
Familienstand:																		
Wohnung: Krakau																		
Staatsangehörigkeit: Polen																		
Politische Einstellung: Nat. Pole																		
Glaubensbekenntnis:																		
In Schutzhaft genommen am 6.11.39																		
in Krakau																		
auf Anordnung der (Schlichte, Mienenzeichen) Krakau																		
II D Haft Nr.96																		
Aus der Schutzhaft entlassen am																		
nach																		
Grund der Schutzhaft (Hilfsweise Begründung): Aktion gegen Univ. Professoren																		
<i>Fryderyk Zoll</i> 54(4)																		
S. 51. Nr. 50.																		



Photographs of professors and cards from their arrest
on 6 November 1939 during the so-called Sonderaktion Krakau
(courtesy of the Jagiellonian University Archives and "Alma Mater" Journal)

Cracow. Collegium Novum—the building where
professors of the Jagiellonian University and the
University of Mining were arrested (NAC collections)



Tadeusz Szydlowski, Professor of History of Art, conservator (born on 9 June 1883 in Jaroslaw, died on 25 October 1942 in Cracow)

St.	Ma.	M.	Wi.	Je.	Ju.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Ok.	Nov.	Dez.
Schulhoff-Kartei											
Name: (Vor- und Nachname) Szydlowski											
Geburtsdatum: 9.6.83 in Jaroslau											
Beruf: Prof. U.J.											
Beschäftigt bei: 											
Familienstand: 											
Wohnung: Krakau											
Staatsangehörigkeit: Polen											
Politische Einstellung: Nat. Pols											
Glaubensbekenntnis: 											
In Schulhoff genommen am: 6.11.39											
in: Krakau											
auf Veranlassung der (Behörde, Dienststelle): Krakau											
II D Haft Nr. 96											
Für den Schulhoff erstellt am: nach											
Stich der Schulhoff (Widerrechtliche Begründung): Aktion gegen Univ. Professoren											
<i>Tadeusz Szydlowski 44(12)</i>											
G.St. Nr. 38											



Tadeusz Tempka, Professor of Medicine, internist and haematologist (born on 15 October 1885 in Cracow, died on 14 March 1974 in Cracow)

St.	Ma.	M.	Wi.	Je.	Ju.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Ok.	Nov.	Dez.
Schulhoff-Kartei											
Name: (Vor- und Nachname) Tempka											
Geburtsdatum: Tadeusz											
Geburtsort und -zeit: 15.10.85 in Krakau											
Beruf: Lektor/Prof. U.J.											
Beschäftigt bei: 											
Familienstand: 											
Wohnung: Krakau											
Staatsangehörigkeit: Polen											
Politische Einstellung: Nat. Pole											
Glaubensbekenntnis: 											
In Schulhoff genommen am: 6.11.39											
in: Krakau											
auf Veranlassung der (Behörde, Dienststelle): Krakau											
II D Haft Nr. 96											
Für den Schulhoff erstellt am: nach											
Stich der Schulhoff (Widerrechtliche Begründung): Aktion gegen Univers. Professoren											
<i>Tadeusz Tempka 45(1)</i>											
G.St. Nr. 38											

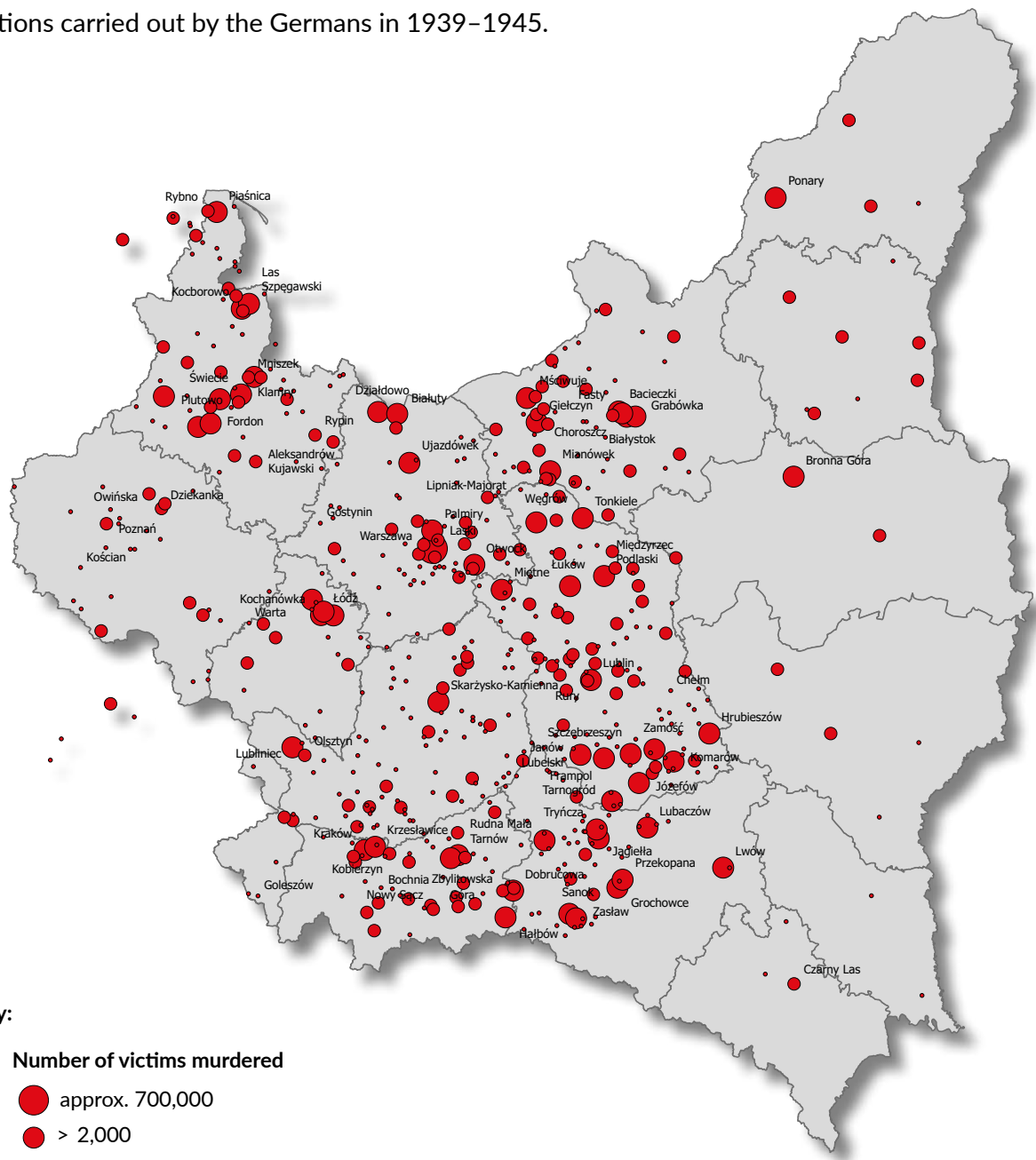


Tadeusz Wazewski, Professor of Mathematics (born on 24 September 1896 in Wagnianka near Czortków, died on 5 September 1972 in Rabka-Zdrój)

St.	Ma.	M.	Wi.	Je.	Ju.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Ok.	Nov.	Dez.
Schulhoff-Kartei											
Name: (Vor- und Nachname) Wazewski											
Geburtsdatum: Tadeusz											
Geburtsort und -zeit: 24.9.96 in Orzynska											
Beruf: Prof. U.J.											
Beschäftigt bei: 											
Familienstand: 											
Wohnung: Krakau											
Staatsangehörigkeit: Polen											
Politische Einstellung: Nat. Pole											
Glaubensbekenntnis: 											
In Schulhoff genommen am: 6.11.39											
in: Krakau											
auf Veranlassung der (Behörde, Dienststelle): Krakau											
I, D Haft Nr. 96											
Für den Schulhoff erstellt am: nach											
Stich der Schulhoff (Widerrechtliche Begründung): Aktion gegen Univ. Professoren											
<i>Tadeusz Wazewski 44(12)</i>											
G.St. Nr. 38											

Total demographic losses caused by Germany

The map of Poland is filled with bloody points of the martyrdom of citizens of the Second Polish Republic, war crimes and special actions carried out by the Germans in 1939–1945.



Key:

Number of victims murdered

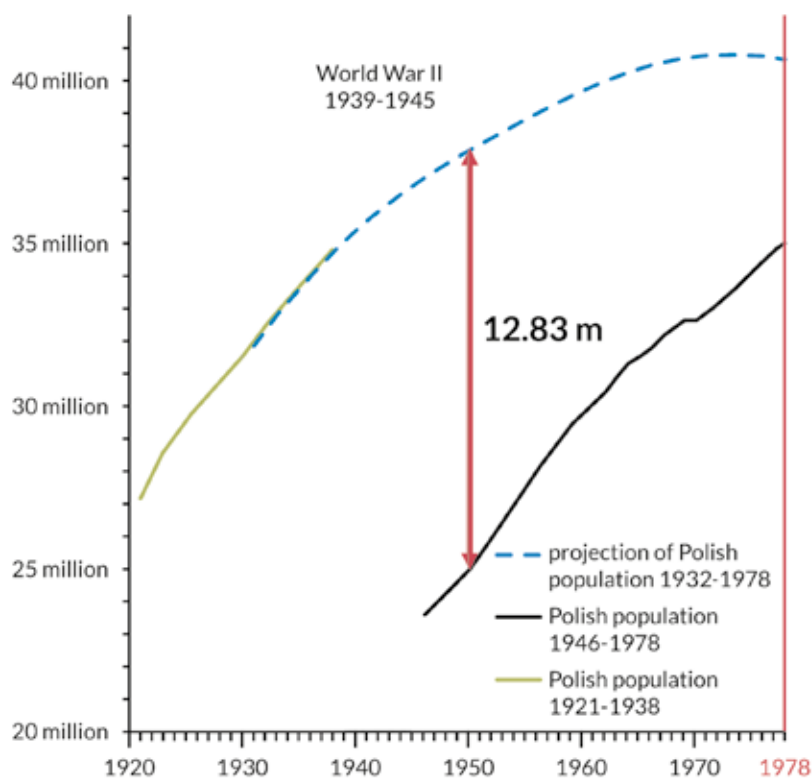
- approx. 700,000
- > 2,000
- > 300
- > 50

The number of Poland's population loss
suffered at German hands
was set at **5,219,000** people.*

21% of which were children under 10.

* Population losses inflicted by the USSR are not included.

33 years of rebuilding Poland's human potential



After the end of the Second World War, the Polish nation needed **33 years** (thirty-three years) to rebuild the human potential to the level from before the war. Computer analyzes indicate, indicate that the number of **35,100,000** citizens was regained only in 1978.

SS troops shoot the Poles arrested in retaliation for an attack on a German police post in Bochnia (18 December 1939) (IPN collections)



Execution of three Poles in Kutno on 9 June 1941 sentenced to death for food smuggling (IPN collections)

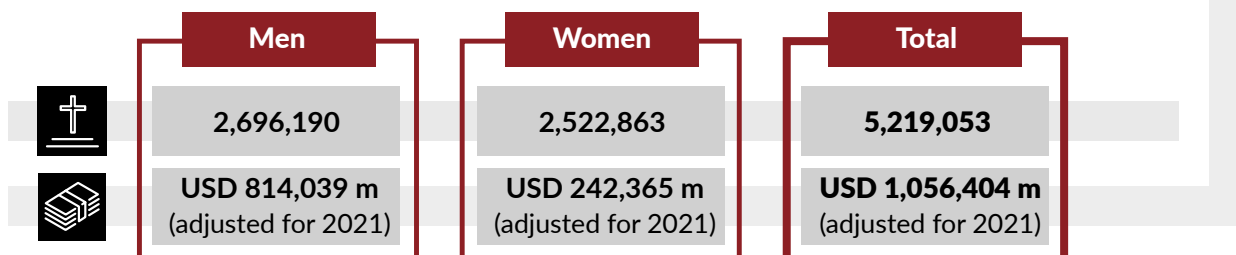
Economic valuation of human losses

The human losses were evaluated only as the loss of remuneration and consequently, the loss of GDP that the victims would have produced had there been no war and these people would have been alive. Remuneration for work is calculated jointly for the entire further life of the killed person, taking into account age and gender.

The average lost salary of 1 fatal victim was estimated at **USD 202,400 (PLN 821,800)** adjusted for 2021.

Remuneration lost

Lost remuneration was estimated at **approx. USD 1.056 billion** as a result of human losses.



The amount of lost remuneration was estimated to be approx. USD 1.056 billion for fatal victims. This is a purely economic appraisal of human life, solely in terms of GDP loss. It does not take into account suffering, broken families, and psychological trauma.

Lost GDP of persons who survived the Second World War

The lost GDP of victims who survived the atrocities of the Second World War was calculated in an analogous way.

It was assumed that **severely injured and seriously ill people** worked (according to general employment rates) and achieved

All amounts in Polish zlotys from 1938 have been adjusted to the value of the US dollar in 2021. If gold had been used as the benchmark for conversion, the resulting amounts would have been many times higher.

	Lost Remuneration of the Second World War (adjusted for 2021)		
	Persons with serious health impairment of diseases	Stolen children	Forced Laborers
Men	USD 54,409 m	USD 29,409 m	USD 12,315 m
Women	USD 11,626 m	USD 11,576 m	USD 3,301 m
Total	USD 66,035 m	USD 40,985 m	USD 15,616 m
TOTAL	USD 122,636 million		

half the productivity (wages) of healthy people. The other half of the salaries were lost, and we included them among the effects of German actions.

196,000 children were stolen. 15–20% were recovered, so the initial number was decreased by 20%, assuming 157,000 as the number of stolen children. Losses of their future wages were estimated over the entire life cycle, broken down by gender and taking into account professional activity.

Forced laborers were employed in many branches of the economy, mainly in agriculture, industry, especially in the arms industry, and in the repair of roads and railroads. It is estimated that, at the end of the war, they constituted about a quarter of the workforce in Germany. Most of the forced laborers were young people aged 15 to 24, so for our calculations, we use the appropriate salary for this age group.

This gives us total amount of **approx. USD 123 billion.**

The villagers of Sochy murdered
by the Germans (1943)
(IPN collections)



MATERIAL LOSSES

The methods of estimating losses resulted from their type and the scope of archival information available. If it was possible, the value of losses in tangible property was estimated **at current prices**, as at the time of destruction, appropriation, or confiscation. Similarly, the value of losses resulting from lost profits was determined at current prices taking into account the condition of the facilities at the time of destruction or appropriation or confiscation. Only in the case of estimating losses in agriculture was the conversion to the present value made based on the rate of change in the prices of representative agricultural products.

Below. The ruins of Warsaw after destruction by Germany (NAC collections)

Total amount of material losses was

USD 196.403 billion



- Residential buildings and non-residential parts of buildings in the cities
- Residential and service buildings in the country



Losses in agriculture



Lost benefits due to the damage or loss of buildings that bring or may bring income



Religious and historical buildings



Polish Army



Infrastructure and movable property in rail, road and sea transport



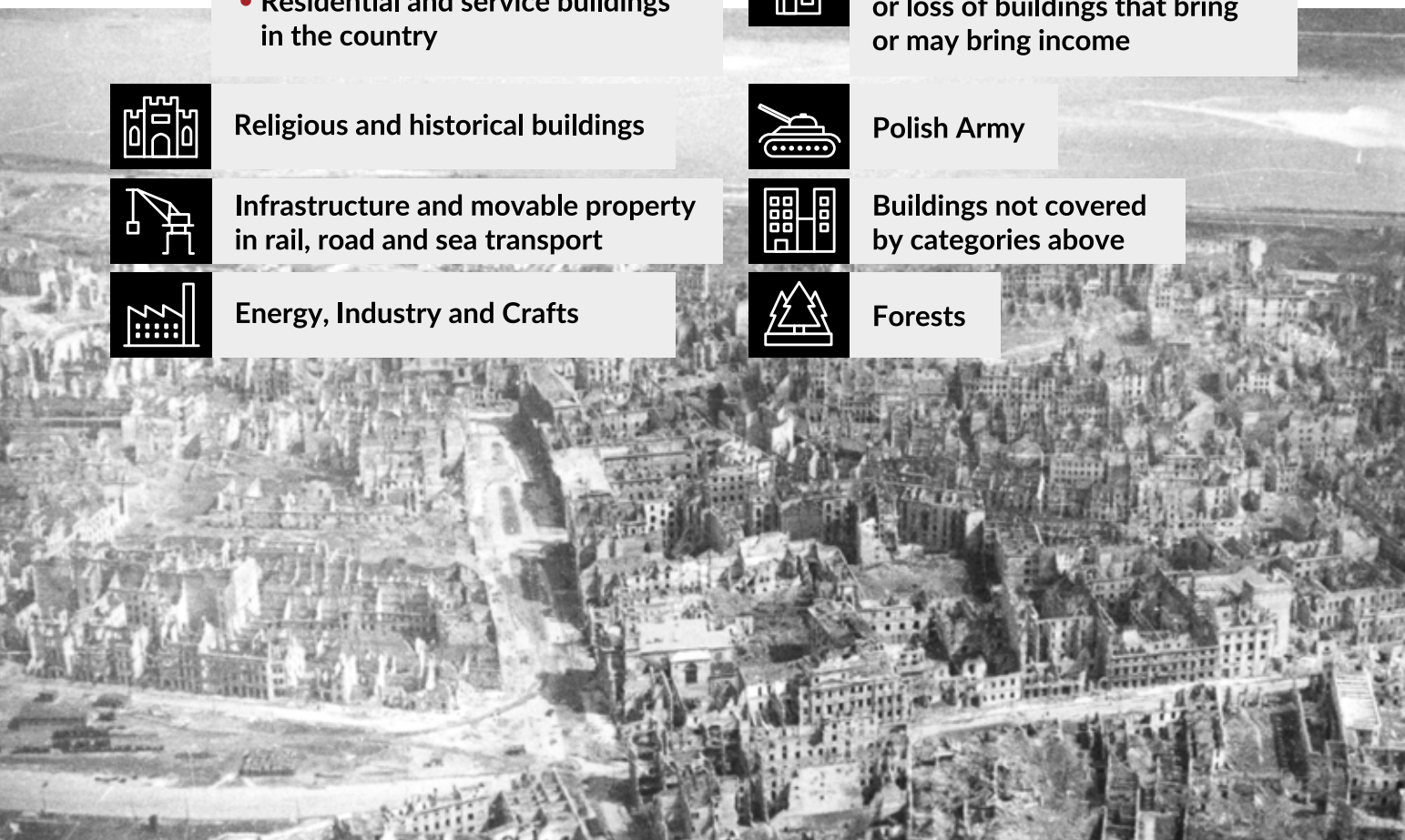
Buildings not covered by categories above



Energy, Industry and Crafts



Forests



LOSS OF CULTURAL ASSETS AND WORKS OF ART

Only in Poland was the destruction of culture part of the criminal plan to prepare a living space for the nation of masters. The main intention of the occupant was to **make Poles a “farmhand nation”, deprived of their own culture and art**. This is why the Germans set about destroying the Polish national, material, personal and organizational heritage with such determination.

As a result of acts of war and German occupation, Poland suffered losses in cultural assets and works of art in the amount of **approx. USD 4.756 billion**

These losses include irreversible damage to museums, music, art, literature, film, religious objects, etc.

The calculation regarding the value of losses incurred in culture and art includes only the minimum documented fragment. Due to the lack of precise data, **the full value of the losses can never be determined**. All estimates and calculations are therefore indicative only and oscillate around the lower limit of the losses that can be determined.

The Germans remove the dismantled **Chopin Monument from occupied Warsaw** (1940)
(AAN collections)



**Raphael Santi,
Portrait of a Young
Man (approx. 1510),**
one of the most valuable
works of art the Germans
stolen from Polish collections
during the Second World
War (War loss, looted from
the collection of the Princes
Czartoryski Museum
(National Museum in Cra-
cow—Czartoryski
Museum collections)



Germany's plan for the Polish territories it conquered and occupied was to utterly destroy and wipe out Polish culture. The annihilation plan was to be applied in all fields of Polish cultural affairs – literature, music, the theatre, cinematography, the fine arts, as well as Poland's museums, architectural heritage and monuments. The project was conducted purposefully and consistently. Its aim was first to curtail, and subsequently to eradicate Polish cultural life completely. Its scale was absolutely exceptional, even for the Second World War, and the cultural losses Poland sustained are incomparable with the damage Germany perpetrated in other countries it occupied, such as France, Belgium, Norway, or Holland. Only on Polish territory was the destruction of culture an integral part of Germany's criminal plan to create

German soldiers posing for a photograph
on the fragments of **the Grunwald
Monument in Cracow**
they destroyed in November 1939.



The monument during the unveiling ceremony
on 15 July 1910 (Photo from the book of Jan
Kopczyński, Mateusz Siuchniński *Grunwald. 500 lat
chwale*, Warsaw, 1960)

The equestrian statue of King Władysław Jagiełło
in Jan Matejko Square, by Antoni Wiwulski, found-
ed by Ignacy Paderewski on the 500th anniversary
of the Battle of Grunwald, in which the Polish-
Lithuanian army inflicted a devastating defeat on
the forces of the Teutonic Order (the Order of the
Hospital of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the German
House) on 15 July 1410. It was destroyed by the
Germans at the very beginning of the war. Rebuilt,
it was unveiled on 16 October 1976.



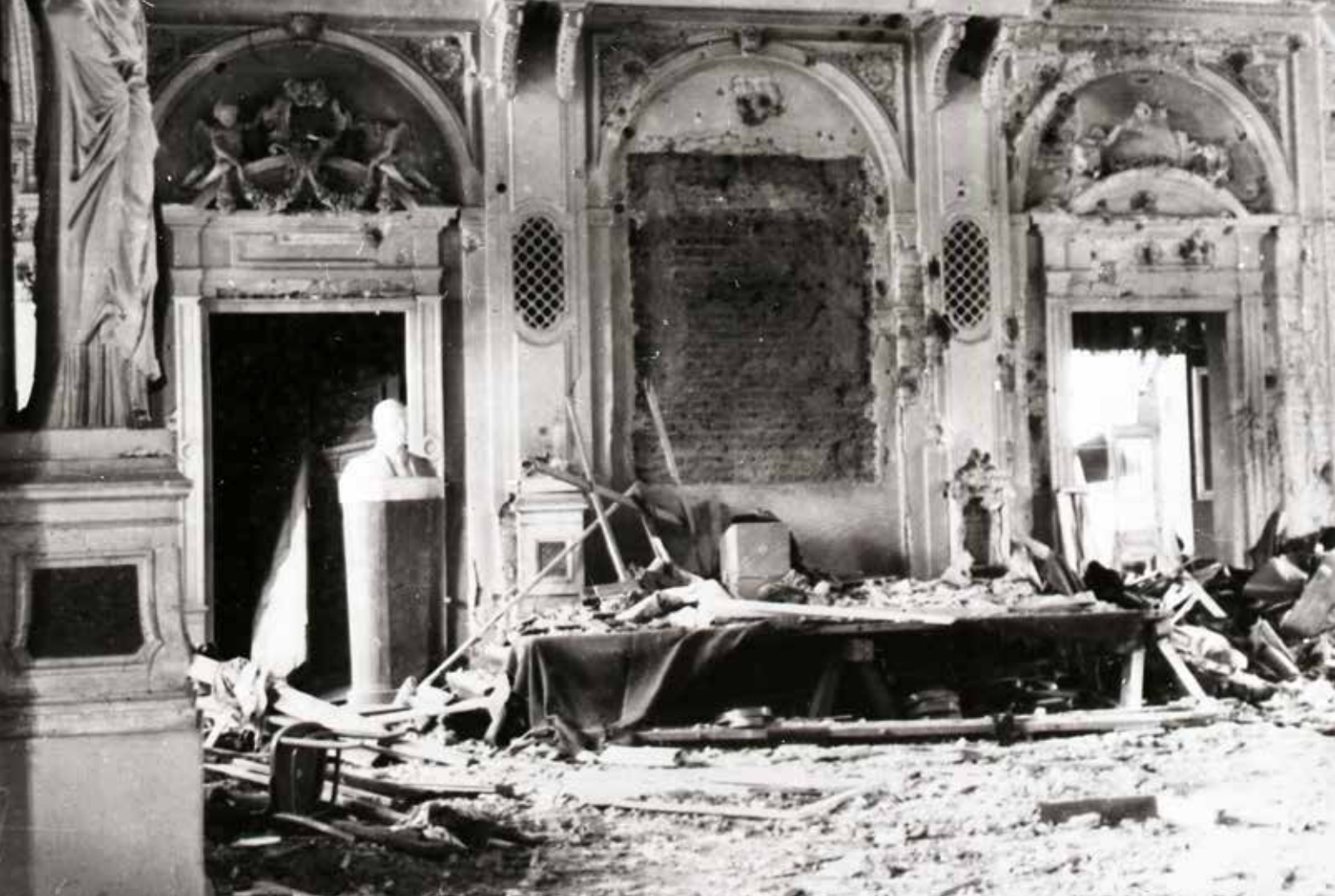
The statue of the Polish novelist and Nobel Prizewinner Henryk Sienkiewicz (by Konstanty Laszczka), in the Jan Kochanowski Park, Bydgoszcz, in 1927. In September 1939, the Germans demolished this monument soon after they entered the city of Bydgoszcz (NAC collections)

a Lebensraum for the Herrenvolk, the implementation of which was the reason why the functionaries of the German Third Reich occupying Poland were so deeply and ruthlessly committed to their project of devastation.

The Germans treated Polish culture very differently when compared to the Germans' attitude towards cultural heritage in occupied Western Europe. In occupied Belgium and France, the Germans protected and preserved monuments and works of art. The "Kunstschutz" - created specifically for this purpose - made sure that the provisions of the 1907 Hague Convention were observed in relation to cultural property in the West, and that French public collections were not looted.

The methods Germany applied to destroy Polish culture may be divided into four categories: the destruction of the products of Polish culture, looting, the extermination of those who created or contributed to Polish culture, and the dismantling of its organizing structure. Germany's first and most manifest operation was the removal and physical destruction of the material artefacts of Polish culture. German occupying forces demolished buildings and monuments of key importance for Polish culture, smashed artefacts made of glass and gramophone records of Polish music, sent whole library collections of Polish books to the pulp mills, and burned the contents of archives and rare collections.

The best example of German intentions and methods is their treatment of the Royal Castle in Warsaw. All that was damaged during the 1939 air raids were the helmets on its towers, part of the



Interior of the Royal Castle, Warsaw, showing the serious damage caused by German air raids and artillery fire in September 1939. (AAN collections)


In September 1944, German demolition engineers serving in Technische Nothilfe began to blow up all that remained of the Royal Castle.

Preparing to blow up the former Royal Castle on the Vistula River, 8 September 1944

[Vorbereitung vor Sprengung des ehemaligen Königsschloßes an der Weichsel, 8.IX.44]

(Institute for Western Affairs collections)

BILDKARTEI		KLASSE	W	TF
URH. U. A. ARCHITEKT ALFRED MENSEBACH (USA, ZWITZERLAND)		ART. G.	AG	CE CL
NEGATIV NR. 3396		GRUPPE		
POSITIV NR. 202/55		LAND	Polen	
DIAPOSITIV NR.		STADT	Warschau	
FOTOGRAF		ORT	Vorbereitung der Sprengung des ehemaligen Königsschloßes an der Weichsel	
TITEL: ALFRED MENSEBACH Architekt Unter der Aufsicht des Hauptmanns H. A. 1944		DATUM	8. IX. 44	
ERHALTEN VON:				
NAME:				
ORT:				
STRASSE:				
DATUM:				
BEMERKUNGEN:		Original: Institut für Westliche Angelegenheiten		





German soldiers posing for a picture on **the ruins of the Tadeusz Kościuszko Monument in Łódź** (by Mieczysław Lubelski). German occupying forces demolished the monument of this Polish national hero on 11 November 1939, the 21st anniversary of the restoration of Poland's independence (Collections of the Łódź Branch of the National Archives)

Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746–1817) was a Polish military leader, engineer and statesman who became a national hero in Poland, France and the United States. He fought in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth's struggles against Russia and Prussia, and on the US side in the American Revolutionary War. As Supreme Commander of the Polish National Armed Forces, he led the 1794 Kościuszko Uprising.

He was a distinguished military engineer, his fortification work contributing to the American victory at the Battle of Saratoga in 1777. He was commissioned to design the fortress of West Point. He was promoted to brigadier general in 1783. In the defence of the 'Third of May Constitution'* he fought as a division commander. In 1794 he led Kosciuszko's National Rising, and after its fall, was taken prisoner by the Russians. Forced to emigrate in 1796, he went to the USA, then settled in Switzerland, where he died in 1817.

*The 'Government Act', called the 'Third of May Constitution', was Europe's first constitution, in today's meaning of the word, and second such internationally (the first being the Constitution of the United States of America, 11 September 1787).



The Tadeusz Kościuszko Monument in Łódź, rebuilt in 1960 (Photo by Ignacy Płazewski, Museum of the City of Lodz)

Monument to Tadeusz Kościuszko standing, on a pedestal with four bas-reliefs: Kościuszko's oath in Cracow's market square, Kościuszko with George Washington, Kościuszko standing with Bartosz Głowacki at a cannon and the signing of the Polaniecki universal.

- On his return to his family estate of Siechnowicze in 1784, Kościuszko reduced serfdom for peasants from four to two days a week, and completely exempted women from doing it.
- In his will of 2 April 1817 he wrote: "Feeling deeply that serfdom is against the law of nature and the well-being of nations, I hereby declare that I abolish it completely and forever in my estate Siechnowicze, in the Brzesko–Lithuanian province, both in my own name and that of its future possessors. I recognise the inhabitants of the village belonging to this estate as free citizens and unrestricted owners of the possessed land. I release them from any and all tributes, corvée labor and personal obligations, to which they were previously obliged towards the owners of this estate. I only call upon them, for their own sake and for the sake of the country, to strive to establish schools and spread education".
- A month before his death, in a letter to Jefferson, Kosciuszko reaffirmed his will from 1798 that the money he had earned in America and found there, after his death, would be used for the liberation and education of black slaves.

roof, and one of its rooms. A group of Warsaw architects offered to carry out a provisional repair job to protect the edifice from damage due to snowfall as winter was approaching, but their offer was rejected out of hand by the German authorities, who were probably already thinking of demolishing the Castle completely. On 10 October 1939, Hans Frank arrived. One of the things he did during his visit to the Castle was to tear the Polish Eagles off the throne, thereby giving a tacit signal that the Castle's interiors could be looted at will. The Germans took the hint and within two months, they not only denuded it of its most treasured artefacts and furnishings, but carried off everything that could be of use at all. The most valuable objects were carted off to Hans Frank's residence in Cracow or distributed to sundry German offices in Warsaw. Other items fell into the hands of individual Germans, who were allowed to help themselves to a "souvenir." By January 1940, all that was left of Warsaw's Royal Castle were its bare walls. German aficionados had stripped it of its wainscoting, stuccos, and even pulled off its plafond decorations. It later turned out that the devastation of the Castle's interiors was merely an overture to the grand demolition of the entire building. Already in November 1939, the Germans had been drilling holes in the Castle's walls for their dynamite sticks, but for some reason or other they stopped short of blowing it up at the time. They went

The Neo-Classical Church of Our Lady of Częstochowa at 14/16 Łazienkowska St., Warsaw was consecrated on 12 November 1933

The photo shows its ruins after German air raids in September 1944 (during the Warsaw Uprising). The Luftwaffe destroyed it, killing scores of people who had sought sanctuary there, and insurgent and civilian casualties receiving medical treatment in a field hospital set up on the premises. German airmen bombed the church notwithstanding the Red Cross flags clearly displayed on it. All that remained of the edifice was the bell-tower, part of the colonnade, and the tympanum (photo by Karol Pęcherski, MPW collections)



back to the job later, in September 1944, just before their military retreat. The destruction of the Royal Castle of Warsaw was a fully premeditated operation carried out by Germany. It was destroyed because it was a symbol of Polish statehood, and the purpose of its destruction was to crush the Polish spirit.

Archives and libraries. Provincial archives suffered losses already at the beginning of the War. The archival resources of Kutno, Koło and Puck were burned down during hostilities and the passage of troops. Private collections sustained losses as well. Of the 22 collections in Greater Poland, 12 were devastated or gutted by fires, and the remaining 10 were carried off to Germany. Archives were damaged also during their removal from buildings which the Germans occupied to accommodate troops or offices.



Debris of the collections of the Archives of Modern Records, destroyed by German troops; Warsaw, November 1944 (AAN collections)

Operations for the complete or partial removal of archives affected all the provincial resources.

The hardest hit were the archival collections in Warsaw and Poznań, as well as those in the prewar Voivodeships of Poznań and Pomerania. The fires that broke out due to the outcome of the bombing and shelling of Warsaw consumed some of the city's archives. Archiwum Oświecenia Publicznego (the Archive for Public Enlightenment) was completely burned down; a major part of Archiwum Skarbowe (the Treasury Archive) perished; and Archiwum Sądu Okręgowego (the Archive of the Regional Court) was devastated. The archival resources of the Ministry of Military Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform suffered considerable damage.

Warsaw's largest archival collections lost all or virtually all of their resources owing to wartime hostilities and under German occupation. The losses were as follows:

- Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (the Central Archives of Historical Records) – **approx. 80%**
- Archiwum Akt Nowych (the Archives of Modern Records) – **95%**
- Archiwum Skarbowe (the Treasury Archive) – **100%**
- Archiwum Oświecenia Publicznego (the Archive for Public Enlightenment) – **100%**
- Archiwum Miejskie (the Municipal Archive) – **100%**.

The second phase in the destruction that hit Polish archival collections started on 1 October 1939 and lasted to 1 August 1944, i.e. until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. In this period, entire archival collections or their component parts were carried off from the GG to Germany as spoils of war, or on the grounds of the provenance or territorial designation of the given collection, or even on the pretext of a "loan".

However, the most tragic wave of destruction for the Varsovian archives began on 1 August 1944 and lasted until the end of the War. Eye-witnesses and individuals who tried to save archives reported that the damage that occurred during the actual fighting was relatively small, affecting less than 10–15% of the holdings in particular archives. Yet after hostilities had ceased, the resources that survived were burned down and completely destroyed by the Germans, who set about the systematic annihilation of all the extant archival facilities.

The German drive to destroy Polish culture did not spare the libraries, either. In the GG, books were confiscated by German art historians, carried off by German librarians, looted by

German soldiers, and subjected to a systematic procedure of destruction carried out by the German occupying authorities.

In 1941, the German authorities amalgamated the National Library and the Krasiński Library, both of which were located in Warsaw, with the Library of Warsaw University, and gave the new institution a new name, Staatsbibliothek Warschau. The entire manuscript collection was lodged in the building of the Krasiński Library and the removal of this huge resource was launched on 5 September 1944 with a bomb explosion. A month later, the Germans set fire to the building and all of Warsaw's historic manuscript collections perished in the blaze.

Other, smaller libraries were damaged as well.

In numerical terms, the losses and damage suffered by Polish libraries were huge, and virtually irreparable in terms of quality.

The data collected after the War by the Polish Ministry of Education estimated library losses at approximately

411 million pre-war zloty.

This is the best balance of recorded losses for libraries that we have, but the figures it gives are definitely lower than the real losses.

The library losses registered by the Ministry of Education after the War was limited to losses reported by school libraries, general libraries, some academic libraries, and only sporadically by private libraries. The schedule did not record the losses of specialist libraries and those catering for the interests of specific professions, church libraries, etc.

In addition, the Ministry's schedule of losses did not include many libraries which ceased to exist due to the War and the operations of the German occupying authorities, and hence few or no records at all survived to confirm the magnitude of their losses.

Likewise, many libraries—part of whose collections survived—did not have any records of what and how much they had lost. In many cases, the Germans deliberately destroyed such information.

It is impossible to draw up even an approximate estimate for the losses sustained by booksellers' warehouses, book antiquarians, public libraries and lending facilities. In Warsaw and on the territories incorporated in Germany, such amenities forfeited virtually all of their assets. Furthermore, the private book collections owned by lawyers, physicians, scholars and intellectuals ceased to exist.

Germany conducted a premeditated campaign to wipe out Poland's resources of books beyond the borders of the occupied country as well. When they occupied France, they left the collections of French libraries intact but carried off the books housed in the Bibliothèque Polonaise de Paris at 6 quai d'Orléans in Paris, and sent it to Alfred Rosenberg who was head of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories. In 1939, its collections had amounted to 145,000 books, 1,000 manuscripts, 12,000 drawings and prints, 2,800 atlases and maps, and 20,000 copies of documents relating to Polish history assembled from British and French archives. In addition, there was a collection of periodicals, photographs, coins and medals.

Of the pre-war holdings, only 40% of the collection returned to the Polish Library, 30% (found in Poland) was given as a deposit to the A. Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw and the remaining 30% was not found.

It is impossible to give an estimate for the financial value of a lost cultural legacy which was built up over many centuries of a nation's intellectual and spiritual development. A cultural legacy is far more than just the material collection of "cultural objects"; it also involves the fact that the given society has reached a particular stage in its spiritual and intellectual development. A society's capability and means to develop is the condition sine qua non for its potential to create cultural objects. A culture is evidenced not so much by the material value of its artefacts, which is merely an external symptom, but rather by the multiplicity and diversity encountered within it; while its creative accomplishment gives a true benchmark of what it has achieved.

For the majority of lost cultural objects, an estimate of their purely financial value would be a small fraction of their total, absolute or ideal "worth", and such an operation would be useless as a means to gauge the cultural achievement of a given society.

Hence, it would be wrong to treat Poland's losses in the arts and scholarship owing to German military aggression and war-time occupation merely in terms of their monetary value.



Bibliothèque Polonaise de Paris, France (Photo by Cancre, Wikipedia, 2011)

The Polish Library in Paris (French: Bibliothèque polonaise de Paris) was a Polish cultural institution established in 1838 by, i.a. Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz and Karol Sienkiewicz as a foundation of the Great Emigration. Its task was to collect books, archives and items of national significance saved from plunder and destruction. It became a documentary center open to Poles and foreigners.

In 2013, UNESCO included the Library, the Paris Historical and Literary Society and the Adam Mickiewicz Museum in Paris in its Memory of the World Register.

LOSSES IN BANKING AND INSURANCE

Losses in Banking

In the territories incorporated into the Reich, all Polish credit institutions were designated for liquidation. In the case of the General Government, Germany allowed only a few banks and credit institutions to resume operations, the rest were closed this resulted in large losses in their assets.

The total amount of losses of Polish credit and savings institutions and their customers suffered as result of acts of war and German occupation is **USD 22 billion**



Treasury Ticket of the Third Reich in General Government (AAN collections)

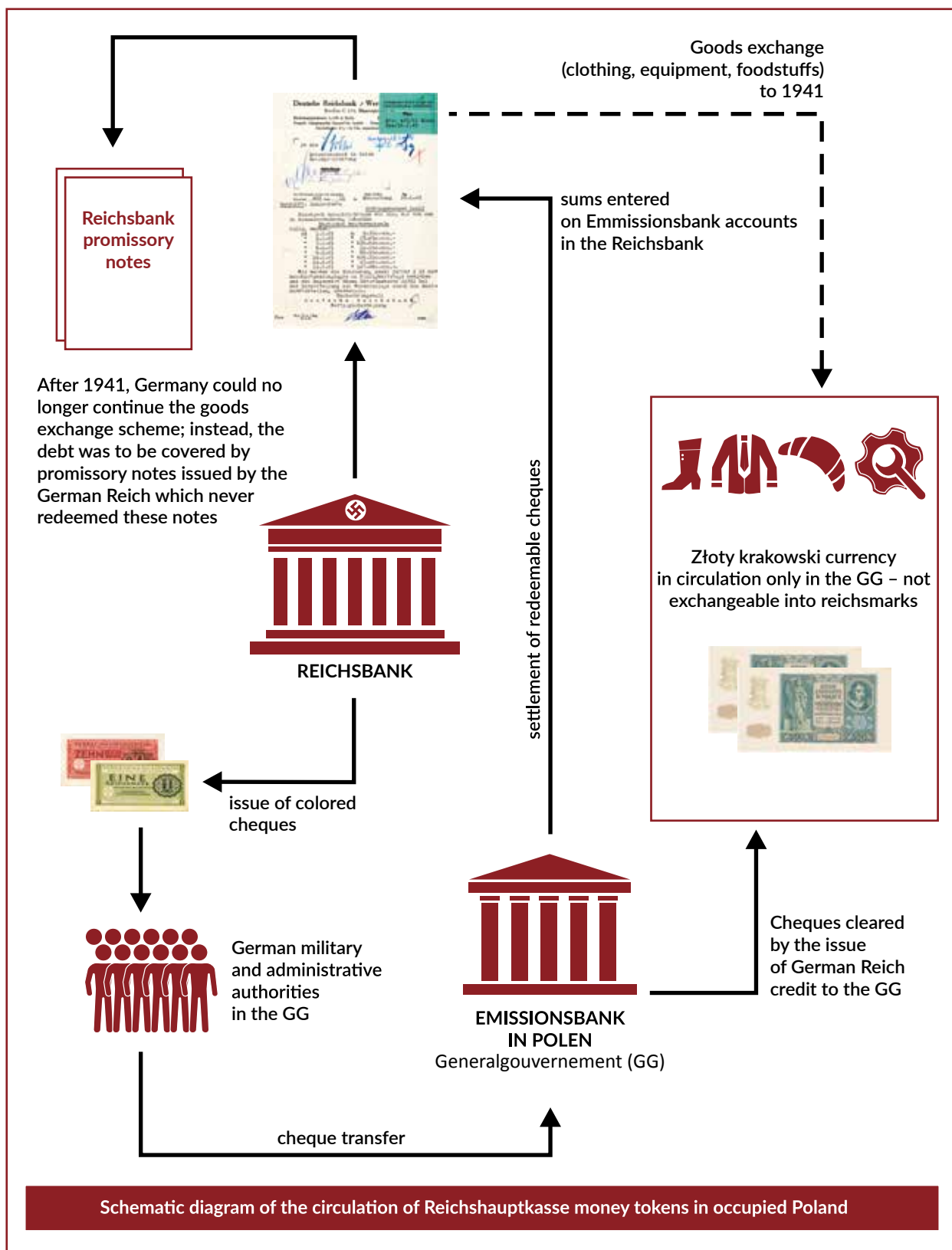
Losses in Insurance

The orders of the German occupier in the General Government completely deprived the social insurance institutions of the possibility to derive income from their assets. In the areas incorporated into the Reich, they were completely deprived of their assets.

The total amount of losses of Polish social security institutions and insurance companies suffered as result of acts of war and German occupation is **USD 8.572 billion**

Right. The ruins of Warsaw, with the Prudential Insurance Building in the foreground (NAC collections)





STATE TREASURY LOSSES

The total value of tax and monopoly losses incurred by the Ministry of the Treasury amounted to **USD 73.027 billion**.

It should be emphasized that taxes and monopoly income collected by the occupant were scrupulously used by the German war economy.

Losses resulting from the occupation of Emissionsbank in Polen, which also used the name of the Issuing Bank in Poland, established by the Germans in the General Government, were also very severe. This especially applies to the maintenance of German military formations in the General Government by the Polish population.

Claims from the activity of Emmissionsbank in Polen were estimated at **USD 121.382 billion**.

The total amount of tax and monopoly losses and losses caused by activity of Emmissionsbank in Polen were **USD 121.382 billion**

A green Reichshauptkasse money token (Private collection)
[Reverse. "Wehrmacht money token. Issued under payment regulations for the Wehrmacht in countries other than Germany. For use exclusively by members of the Wehrmacht and equivalent institutions. Exchangeable only by such persons in all Wehrmacht ticket offices and payment points, Reich-skreditkassen and money exchange points—and subsequently, redeemable in the German Reich in the Reichsbank and other German banks.



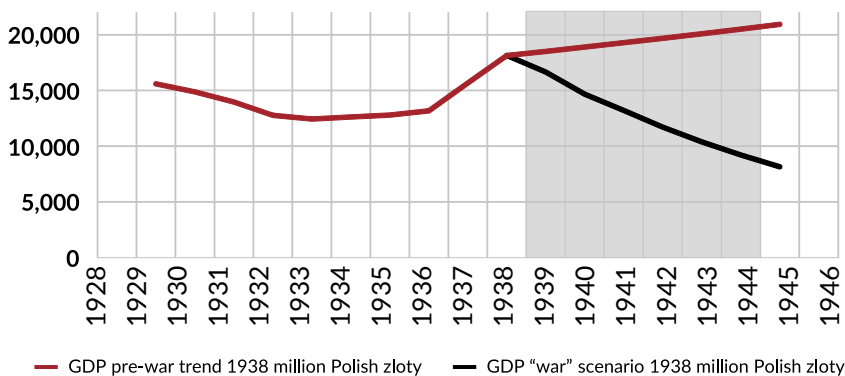
A red Reichshauptkasse money token (Private collection)

[Obverse: "This cheque is for use in the payment of Wehrmacht travel and other expenses in countries where payment in the local currency is restricted. This cheque may not be used for general payment transactions."]



ESTIMATION OF GDP LOSSES

War scenario of Polish GDP with losses caused by Germany during the Second World War



GDP loss and lower level of prosperity after the war

The calculations presented so far concerned documented and quantifiable personal losses and the related lost income, as well as losses in tangible property.

They do not include all the losses incurred and have been calculated using very conservative assumptions. It should be stated that the Report adopts **the minimum calculations obtained using the most restrained approaches and minimizes the final result.** This decision was taken deliberately to avoid any allegations of exaggerating the scale of the claims.

However, we should be aware that it is possible to adopt methodologies that include an extended spectrum of claims. Calculations based on the estimated GDP losses are such a valuation method.

Consequently, the war losses caused by Germany halved the Poles' ability to generate wealth. These losses are irreversible and have determined the fate of future generations of Poles.

VALUE OF LOSSES INCURRED BY POLAND AND CAUSED BY GERMANY

All components of the value of material and demographic losses sum up to the total amount of Polish losses in the amount of **PLN 6,220,609 million** [six trillion two hundred twenty billion six hundred and nine million Polish zloty] which, at the end of 2021, gives **1,532,170 million USD** [one trillion, five hundred and thirty-two billion one hundred and seventy million US dollars].

Adding all components gives the total amount of Polish losses

PLN 6,220,609 million

In words: six trillion two hundred twenty billion
six hundred and nine million Polish zloty

USD 1,532,170 million

In words: one trillion, five hundred and thirty-two billion
one hundred and seventy million US dollars

To compare:

The losses suffered by Poland as a result of German aggression and occupation during the Second World War amount to

**about 125% of the entire European Union budget for
the period 2021–2027**

or 1/3 of Germany's GDP in 2021.

War reparations—Legal conditions

To date, the Republic of Poland has not received the amount of war reparations granted by the decision of the Three Great Powers in Potsdam.

The Final Settlement Treaty—also known as the Two plus Four Treaty—signed on 12 September 1990 in Moscow, did not deal with the issue of war reparations or compensation at all as regards Germany but only with the end of the Second World War. Further, Poland was not a signatory to this treaty.

Despite the German Government's stance that the issue of reparations for non-barred war crimes and crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute (Art. 29) may only be resolved by a peace treaty, the German government has concluded a number of agreements with, for example, the governments of twelve Western European states, but not with Poland.

NO JUDICIAL CHANNELS FOR THE VICTIMS

- **Millions of Polish citizens** who have experienced unimaginable physical and mental suffering, and often lost all their possessions, **have never received any compensation.**
- Attempts of individual redress in Polish and German courts have proven **ineffective.** Germany does not recognize court decisions made in the countries where they have committed war crimes. Even in the current state of development

Right. Aerial view of the ruins of the Kierbedź Bridge, after the Germans blew it up in September 1944 (Photo by Wacław Żdżarski/NAC collections)

of protection of human rights and extending the rule of law in the European Union, Germany continues to evade liability for damages, hiding behind immunity from legal proceedings.

- **Knowledge about Poland's recent history is not widely-held in the common consciousness, nor is there any understanding of the size or scale of its losses or the consequences for the people living today.**
- **To this day, Germany has not accounted for the plunder of the works of culture and art belonging to the Polish state and to Polish citizens.**



Keeping quiet Time-barring Forgetting

Since the end of the Second World War, the legal successors of the Third Reich **did not feel and still do not feel obliged** to compensate for the war crimes and the damage caused. They **do not show any willingness to** compensate Poland or Poles or **return stolen resources**. They question the political and legal responsibility towards Poland for the consequences of the Second World War, and their actions are limited to symbolic gestures and words on moral responsibility.

In the years 1947–1989, the Polish state unsuccessfully made numerous attempts to regulate the issue of German compensation. However, Polish citizens did not receive any because of the discriminatory legislation of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) which did not feel obliged to pay this tragic debt to the Polish nation. Polish experts stated: “on the contrary, all FRG legislation is aimed at not fulfilling this obligation”; “On the basis of this practice, it can be concluded that the regulation of Germany’s compensation for Poland depends only on political decisions”, and “This is not a legal element, it is also not mercy on the part of the aggressor state”.

Despite the existence of such a possibility, Germany **has avoided and is avoiding** regulating this matter in the form of bilateral agreements. Since the end of the war, German policy on Poland can be characterized as a game of **“keeping quiet, time-barring, forgetting”**.

Today we say:
No to keeping quiet
No to time-barring
No to forgetting

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Published by

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
al. J. Ch. Szucha 23, 00-580 Warszawa



**Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Poland**

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Graphic design and typesetting by
Agnieszka Furyk – DjaF

Cover photo
The Royal Castle in Warsaw on fire, 1939 (NAC collections)

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and Jan Karcki Institute of War Losses

ISBN 978-83-66213-82-1 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland)
ISBN 978-83-966961-3-7 (Jan Karcki Institute of War Losses)

Second edition
Warsaw 2023

Printed and bound in Poland by
DjaF, Cracow, www.djaf.pl



<https://instytutstratwojennych.pl>



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ISBN 978-83-66213-82-1

ISBN 978-83-966961-3-7



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