CENTER FOR INFORMATION ON THE VICTIMS OF WORLD WAR II

OF THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE – COMMISSION FOR THE PROSECUTION OF CRIMES AGAINST THE POLISH NATION

Photo from the collection of Stanisława

Poles deported to the village of Berezovka, Kazakhstan, 1940

Dear Readers,

One of the primary objectives of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), according to the preamble to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation dated December 18, 1998, has been "to ensure remembrance of the enormity of the number of victims, the losses and damages suffered by the Polish people during World War II and after it ended". This legacy has both a collective and an individual dimension. Hardly any families in Poland have not experienced repressions on the part of either the German or the Soviet occupiers in the past, and almost every family had to face the death of a loved one during that time.

The fate of many individuals remains a mystery until today. It is for that reason that the Institute for National Remembrance has been supporting documentation projects aimed at gathering knowledge about the fate of Polish citizens living in the shadow of the two great occupying powers. Our research is still far from complete, even though we have already managed to obtain information about millions of people.

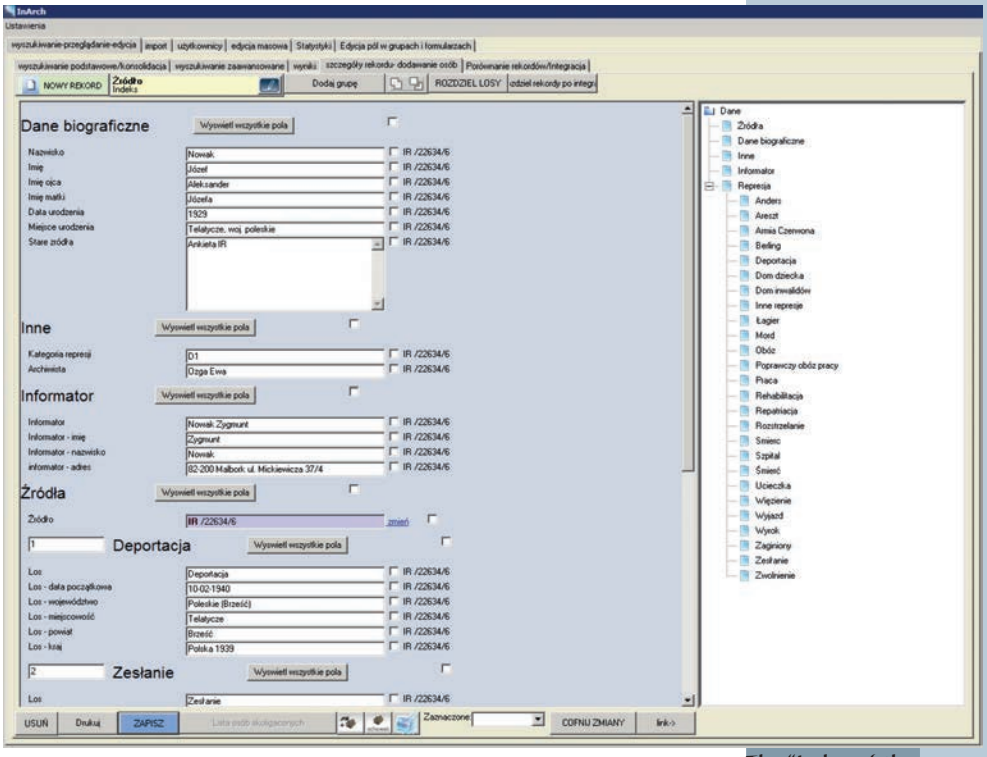
Knowledge of the history our ancestors is a valuable commodity. Our very identity is shaped by our past – not just in a collective sense, but also individually, since every family has its own legacy.

Łukasz Kamiński, PhD
President of the Institute of National Remembrance

Graves of the individuals murdered by Russian forces during their retreat from Lviv, 1941

Photo: AIPN

„Bearing in mind the need to ensure the remembrance of the enormity of the number of victims, the losses and damages suffered by the Polish people during World War II and after it ended", as stated in the preamble to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation dated December 18, 1998 (Dz. U. [the Journal of Laws] for year 1998, No. 155, item 1016), at the beginning of the year 2014, pursuant to the decision of Łukasz Kamiński – President of the Institute of National Remembrance, the Center for Information on the Victims of World War II has been established within the Office for the Preservation and Dissemination of Archival Records.



The "Index of the Repressed" Database

The primary task of the newly established entity is to disseminate information on the victims of Nazi German and Soviet repressions during World War II and following the end thereof on the basis of the archival records which remain in the possession of the Institute. Most of those who apply to the Institute are the victims of oppression who wish to establish evidence of this fact, individuals seeking information on their lost relatives as well as researchers specializing in the history of World War II. The establishment of the Centre has made it possible

for the procedures on the release of information and access to archival records to become streamlined.

The Centre also strives to obtain new documents related to the repressions which have taken place in the past. The International Tracing Service (ITS) database in Bad Arolsen (Germany) as well as the "Index of the Repressed" online and internal databases acquired by the Institute from the KARTA Centre constitute an invaluable addition to the Institute inventory, register and records. The Institute remains the sole administrator of these useful applications.

The Centre for Information on the Victims of World War II is run by a team of experienced employees of the IPN Archive. During their queries they do not limit their search exclusively to the resources of the Institute, providing the interested parties with suggestions on other archival resources – both domestic and international – which may contain information on the missing individuals.

Victims of the German occupation

Documents pertaining to the repressions and crimes perpetrated by Nazi Germany against the Poles and other nations in years 1939-1945 remain part of the resources collected by IPN's predecessor – Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against the Polish Nation, subsequently taken over by the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation. The Archive of the Chief Commission contains a total of 3 500 running metres of inventories, files and records.

The documentation includes both the materials produced by the security authorities and bodies of the Third Reich, including the Reich Ministry of Justice (Reichsjustizministerium), the Reich Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Auswärtiges Amt), the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei), the Reich Security Head Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt), the State Secret Police (Geheime Staatspolizei) as well as documents prepared by the Chief Commission itself and by various international institutions, including, inter alia, the United Nations War Crimes Commission

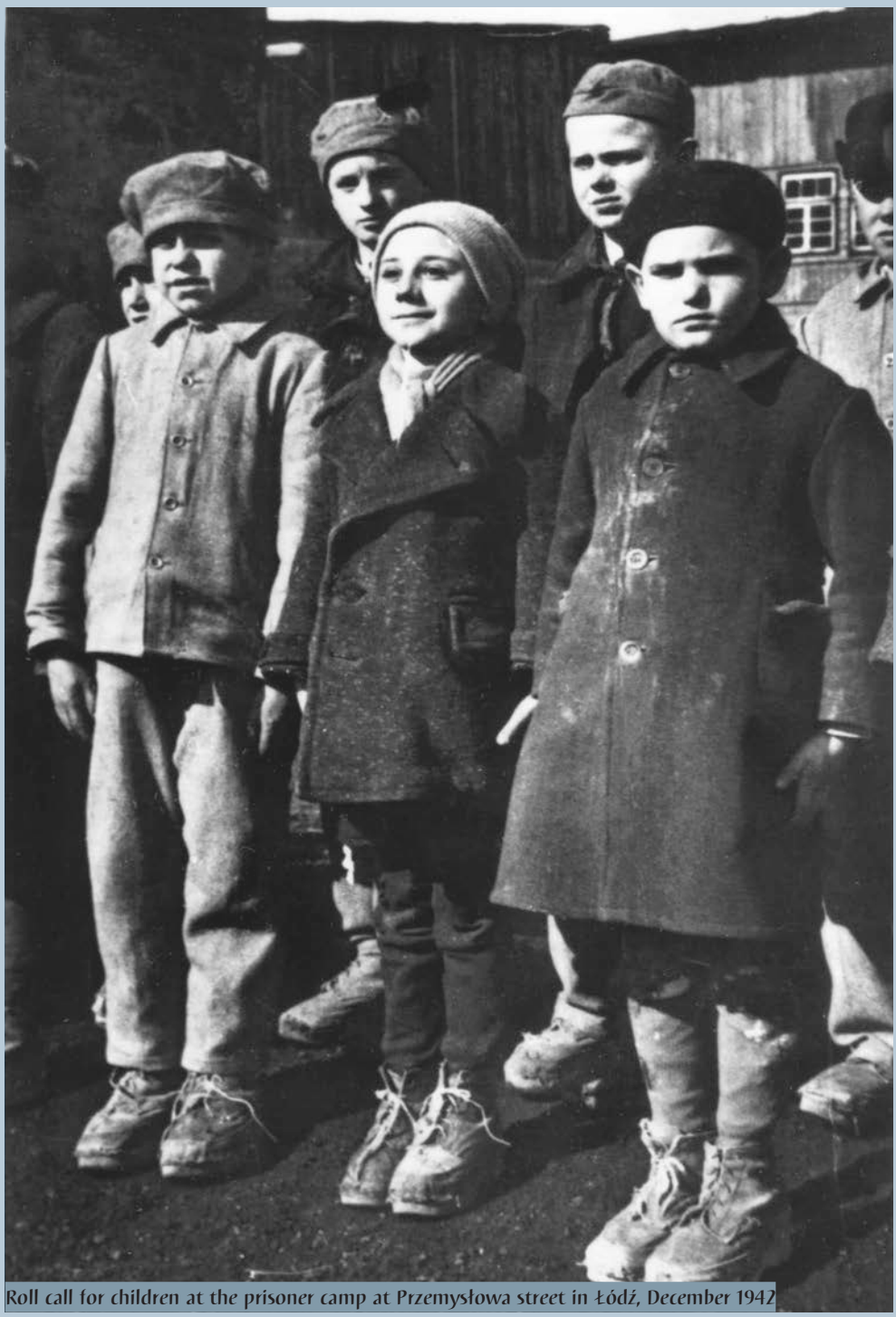


Photo: AIPN

Roll call for children at the prisoner camp at Przemysłowa street in Łódź, December 1942

Photo. AIPN

Jewish labourers during body search, Warsaw 1943

and the US Nuremberg Military Tribunals. The documents referred to above are supplemented by archival materials obtained by the Chief Commission as a result of multipartite cooperation with international institutions and Polish state archives as well as materials provided by private individuals.

The records acquired from the Chief Commission contain many priceless documents, such as the report on the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto prepared by Jürgen Stroop, the journal of governor-general Hans Frank or the diaries of Johann Paul Kremer, an SS physician working at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. The collected archival materials have been used, inter alia, in the course of the trials which have taken place following the end of World War II before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg as well as in the course of criminal proceedings before the Supreme National Tribunal (including the trials of Rudolf Höss and the personnel of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp). Other documents of extraordinary value are the original materials from the Auschwitz-Birkenau, Buchenwald, Dachau, Gross-Rosen, Mauthausen, Mittelbau, Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen concentration camps as well as the collection of prison files from the period between 1944 and 1956 which contain, inter alia, the prisoner's personal records of cavalry captain Witold Pilecki.

Apart from German-language documents, the archives also contain the records from criminal proceedings initiated pursuant to the decree issued by the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) issued

Photo. Stanisław Dąbrowiecki / AIPN

Rudolf Höss in the dock before the Supreme National Tribunal in Warsaw, March 1947.

Beschreibung.

(Die zutreffenden Angaben sind zu unterstreichen)

1. Größe: 1 m 60 cm
2. Gestalt: (stark, untersetzt, schlank. schwächlich).
3. Schulterneigung: (schräg, waagerecht).
4. Gesicht: (Farbe, Form, Fülle).

.....

5. Stirn: (sehr hoch, sehr niedrig, zurückweichend senkrecht, vorspringend).
6. Haar: (Farbe: hell-, mittel-, dunkelblond, -braun, schwarz, rot, grau, graugemischt, weiß).
7. Bart: (Farbe: hell-, mittel-, dunkelblond, -braun, schwarz, rot, grau graugemischt, weiß),
   Form: Schnurr-, Spitz-, Vollbart.
8. Auge: (blau, grau, gelb, hell-, dunkelbraun, schwarzbraun).
9. Augenbrauen: (wenn vom Kopfhaar abweichend, gefärbt): .....

   Form: .....

   Fülle: .....
10. Nase: Rücken (eingebogen, gradlinig ausgebogen, winkliggebogen, wellig), Besonderheiten (Vorsprung, sehr groß, sehr klein, sehr dick, sehr spitz, aufgestülpt, schief [nach rechts links], stark sichtbare oder verdeckte Nasenscheidewand, Adler-, Trinkernase).
11. Ohren: (sehr groß, sehr klein, sehr schmal, drei-, viereckig, rund, oval, abstehend, sehr anliegend).
    Ohrläppchen, (zwickelförmig, rechtwinklig, bogenförmig, freihängend, durchlocht, durchrissen),
12. Mund: (sehr kleln, sehr groß, dünne Lippen, aufgeworfene Lippen).
13. Zähne: (vollständig, lückenhaft, auffallend groß oder klein, schräg gestellt, falsches Gebiß oben oder unten, Füllungen).

Photo. AIPN

Identification card of a person arrested by the Gestapo, Gdańsk 1942

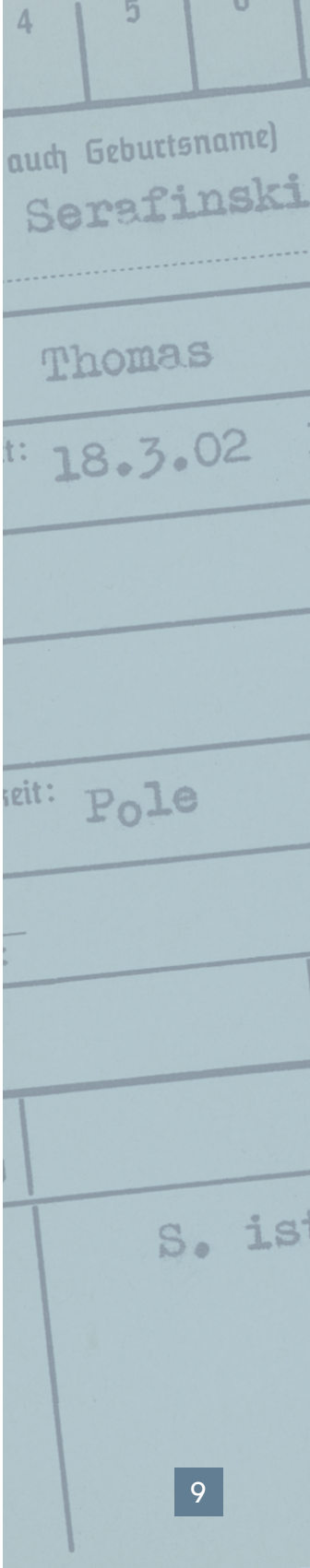
on August 31, 1944 (decree on the punishment of fascist and Nazi criminals guilty of murder and persecution of civilians and prisoners of war as well as of the traitors of the Polish nation) as well as prosecution files of cases which have been suspended or discontinued pursuant to the said decree and the evidence against Nazi criminals and persons accused of collaborating with the occupying power. Of particular significance within this group of archival materials are – among others – the documents pertaining to the trial of Erich Koch, the former Gauleiter of East Prussia, as well as to individuals sentenced for making public statements on the truth behind the Katyn massacre.

In years 1945-1988, the Commission has collected documentation which remains unique on a global scale, comprising approximately 900 fonds, 270 historical inventories, 20 auxiliary inventories (including, inter alia, the personal files of Nazi war criminals – approximately 1 000 000 files in total – used for the purposes of preparing applications for extradition as well as indictments in criminal proceedings before the Polish courts), 1800 microfilms, about the same number of banners and posters as well as 120 000 photographs. The electronic database of the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen serves as a valuable supplement to the inventory, register and records of the Institute.

The Database of the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen

The International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen has been established in order to conduct search and registration operations with respect to individuals who went missing during World War II. Since the commencement of its operations – which has taken place even before the hostilities have ceased – the Service has been collecting various documents which, today, make up a massive resource comprising 26 000 running metres of files. The process of digitalization of these materials has begun more than a decade ago, facilitating access to the resources in question through a dedicated database. IPN remains the only institution in Poland – and one of only a few in the world – which has access to the full version of this unique application.

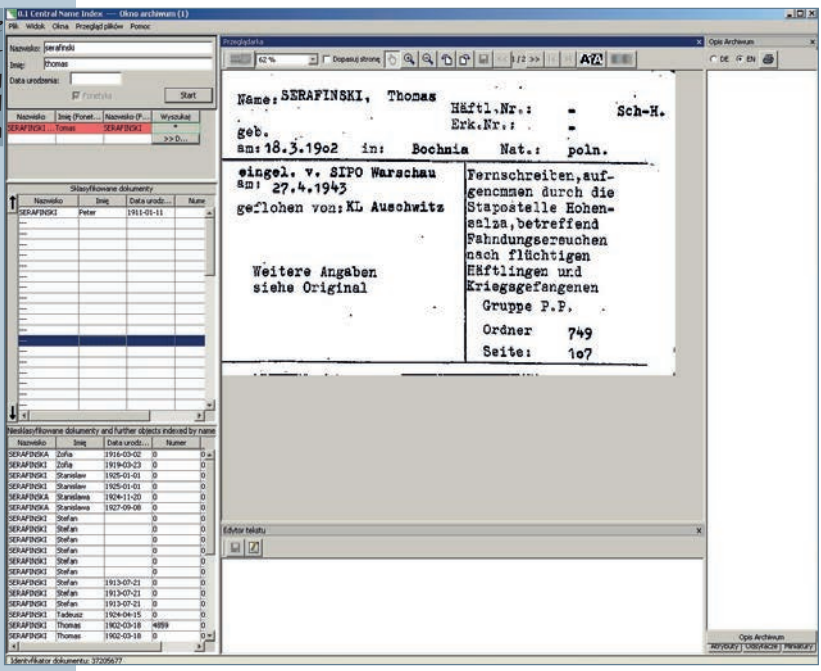
Access to the application in question was made possible due to the fact that on March 7, 2000, the Republic of Poland signed the 1955 Bonn Agreements, being the only country of the former Soviet bloc to have done so; another important factor has been the amendment of the said Agreements on May 16, 2006, which conferred upon all treaty signatories the entitlement to gain access to the digital copies of the Bad Arolsen archives. In 2007, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



of the Republic of Poland decided to provide the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw with the digitalized version of the materials obtained.

The database of the International Tracing Service consists of three sections. Section one contains scanned documents pertaining to individuals detained in prison facilities and concentration camps in the Third Reich and in countries occupied by the Germans. The second section comprises materials pertaining to foreign nationals registered and employed within the German territory during World War II. These material include employment documentation, residence registration cards, civil registry office files and so forth. The third section contains post-war materials on the so-called displaced persons (DPs) i.e. refugees who were forced to leave their countries of origin during the war. The documentation in question contains information on their stay in transit camps, the aid they have received and their subsequent fate, i.e. repatriation or emigration.

The Database of the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen



The application contains records referring to the fate of more than 17 000 000 people. The Central Index of Names – a digitalized inventory which forms the basis for every query in the database – contains approximately 50 000 000 files, making the database an extremely valuable tool for every query.

Victims of the Soviet occupation

Information on the fate of Polish citizens in the eastern regions of the Second Polish Republic and in the USSR in the period between 1939 and 1956 can be found in the so-called eastern files archive located in the IPN Headquarters, comprising over 30 running metres (i.e. 2249 archival units of printed copies and nearly 700 archival units of digital copies of the documentation obtained from a variety of institutions, including the Main Information Centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Russian National Military Archive in Moscow, the Separate State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine in Kiev, the Lithuanian Special Archive in Vilnius or the Archive of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs. These materials are supplemented by 2.84 running metres (549 archival units) of documentation dedicated to Soviet oppression against both the Polish nation and other nations in the period between 1939 and1956, collected and provided

Refugees in the Eastern Borderlands, September 1939

Photo. AIPN

Polish POWs in Soviet captivity in 1939

Photo. AIPN

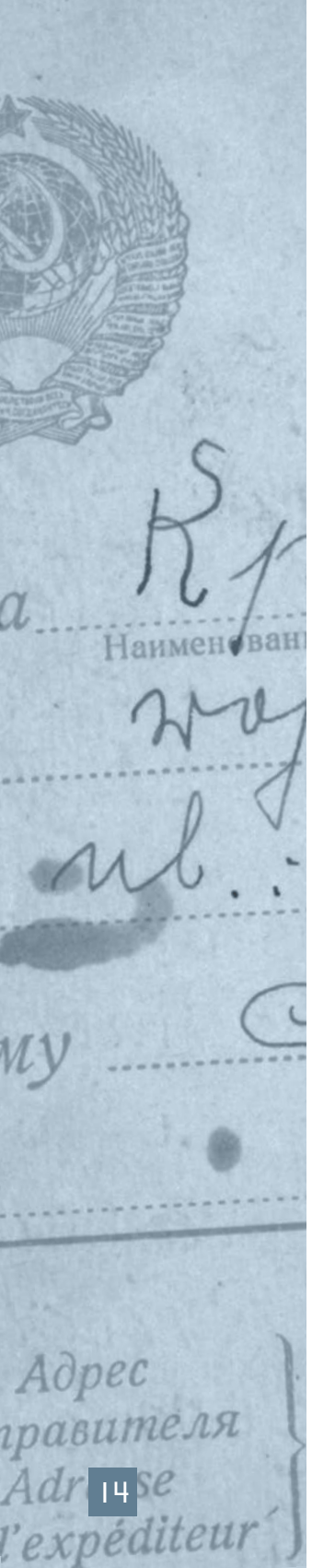
Photo. AIPN

Identification photograph of an individual persecuted by Soviet authorities

to the Institute by Mr. Jędrzej Tucholski, investigator of the Katyn Forest massacre and a long-time employee of the Institute, as well as by 4.85 running metres (569 archival units) of materials pertaining to the massacre in Katyn which the Institute has received from the Polish Underground Movement Study Trust London.

The archival records of the Institute in Warsaw contain documents prepared by the Red Army, the security bodies and authorities of the USSR as well as of individual Soviet republics – the Belorussian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian republics. The archives in question contain a plethora of extremely valuable and fascinating documents, such as the list of Polish citizens interned in Lithuania (including State Police officers and soldiers of the Border Protection Corps – KOP), documentation of criminal and investigative proceedings instigated against Polish citizens (pertaining, inter alia, to members of Polish independence movements operating within the territory of the Second Polish Republic), reports of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) dedicated to the activities and liquidation of Polish underground organizations or the quantitative records of railway transports of Polish POWs held in Kozielsk, Ostaszków and Starobielsk.

The most substantial – and most significant – acquisition in recent years has been the documentation provided by the KARTA Centre. Pursuant to the agreement concluded on April 30, 2013 between the

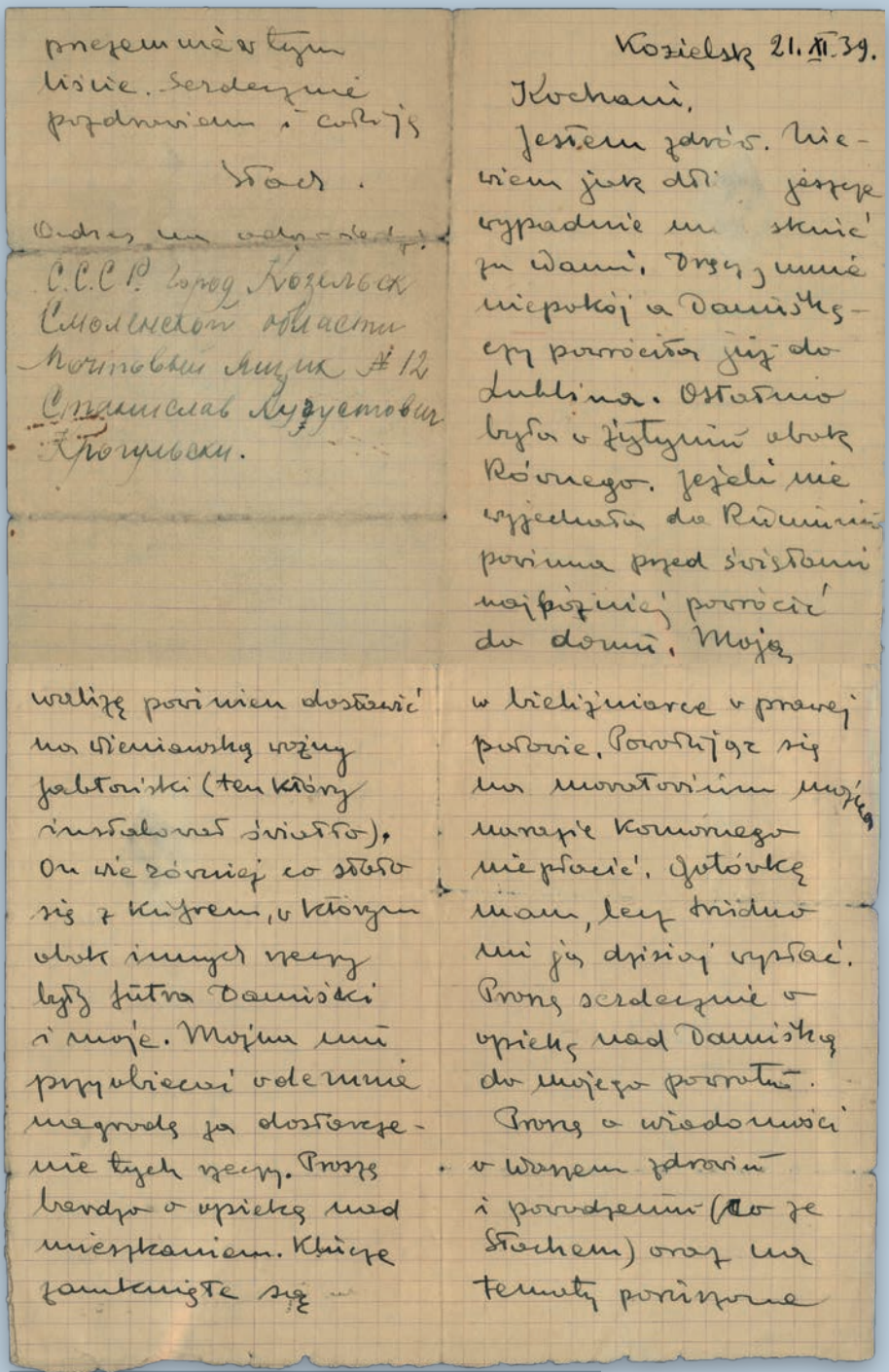


Institute of National Remembrance and the KARTA Centre, the Institute has taken over the control of the "Index of the Repressed" research programme pertaining to the documentation of the fate of individuals (both Polish nationals and citizens of other countries) persecuted by the Soviet authorities after September 17, 1939. The archival records of the Institute in Warsaw now contain, inter alia, more than 30 000 original personal surveys collected in the course of implementation of the "Index of the Repressed" programme, copies of documents from the archives of the "Memorial" Society in Moscow (a Russian non-governmental organization dedicated to documenting and disseminating information on the victims of communist-era political repressions), including press articles and lists of persons, registration forms and surveys for the "Book of Victims of the Siberian Exiles Association" as well as numerous copies of lists of persons from the Eastern Archive.

The "Index of the Repressed" Database

The idea for the establishment of the "Index of the Repressed", a comprehensive, digital database of the individuals persecuted in the Soviet Union, first appeared in January 1988, a few weeks before the Eastern Archive – one of the agendas of the KARTA Centre – has commenced its activities. The primary objective of the Index has been to collect and preserve various testimonies of individuals who have found themselves under Soviet occupation, in prisons, labour camps or in exile – statements, diaries, letters, photographs, keepsakes and so forth. Initially the information had been collected mostly in the form of personal surveys, filled in by the victims of Soviet oppression or their families, as well as on the basis of information found in the testimonies and memoirs collected in the Eastern Archive. At a later stage, the decision to establish an electronic database was adopted. Digitalized data derived from personal surveys as well as from source materials found in post-Soviet archives which were being acquired from the 1990s through the "Memorial" Society in Moscow have formed the basis of the so-called internal database – the "Index of the Repressed". At present, this database contains approximately 1 200 000 records.

Verified biographical notes containing basic personal information, information on the forms of oppression the given individual has faced in the USSR as well as reference numbers of archive sources in which the given individual appears have been published by the KARTA Centre in subsequent volumes of the "Index of the Repressed" publishing series. In years 1995-2013, a total of 21 books divided into 29 volumes have been published. From September 2001 onwards, verified infor-



przezemnie w tym
liście. Serdecznie
pozdrawiam i całuję

Stach.

Adres na odpowiedź:

С.С.С.Р. Город Козельск
Смоленской области
Почтовый ящик № 12
Станислав Лузустович
Крогульски.

Kozielsk 21.XI.39.

Kochani,

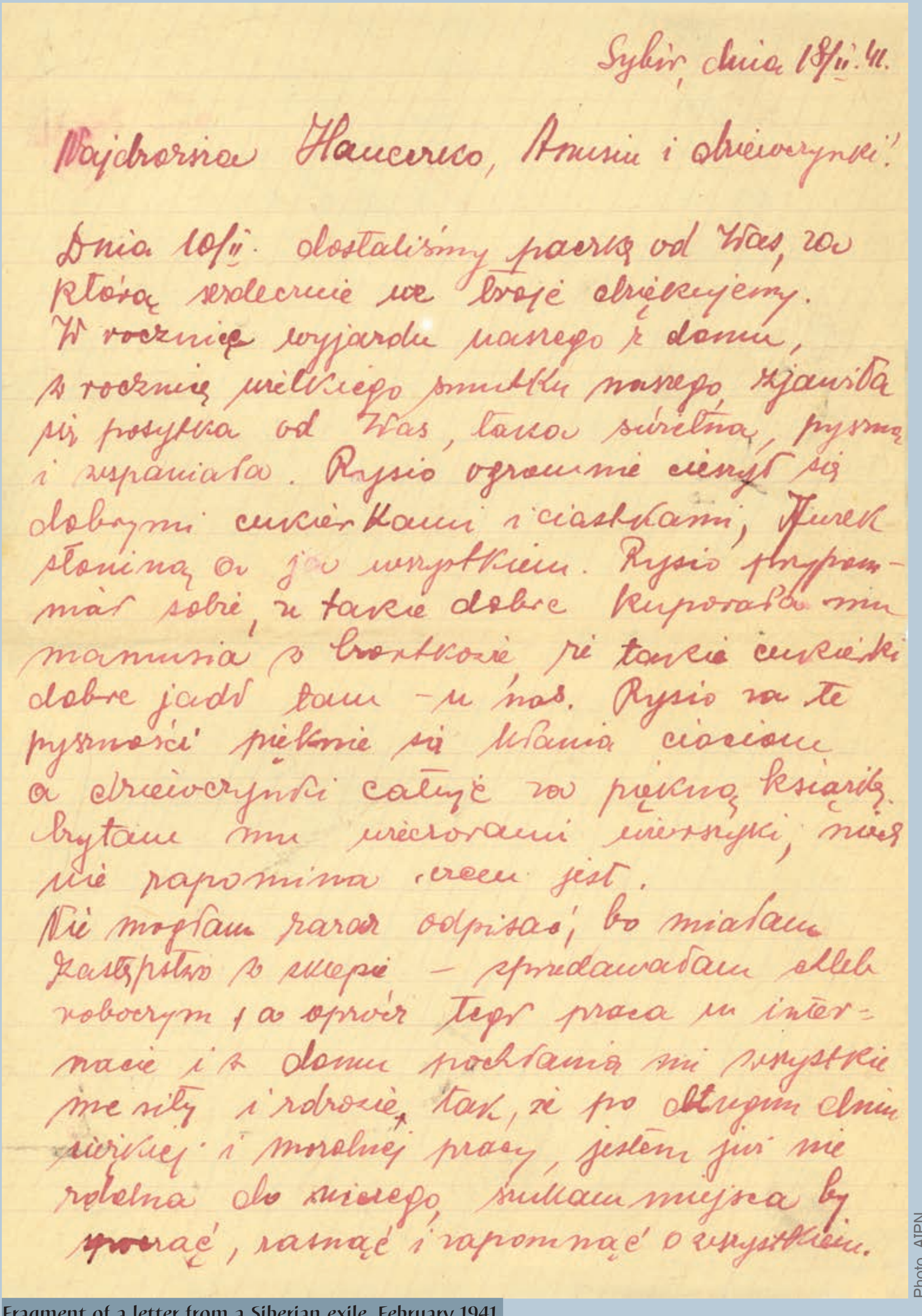
Jestem zdrów. Nie-
wiem jak dłi[illegible] jeszcze
wypadnie m[illegible] skuć
za Wami. Dręczy mnie
niepokój a Damiśkę-
czy powróciła już do
Lublina. Ostatnio
była w Żytyniu obok
Równego. Jeżeli nie
wyjechała do Rumunii
powinna przed świętami
najpóźniej powrócić
do domu. Moją

walizę powinien dostawić
na Wieniawską ważny
fabtoński (ten który
instalował światło).
On wie również co stało
się z kufrem, w którym
obok innych rzeczy
były futra Damiśki
i moje. Można mu
przyobiecać odemnie
nagrodę za dostarcze-
nie tych rzeczy. Proszę
bardzo o opiekę nad
mieszkaniem. Klucze
zamknięte są

w bieliźniarce w prawej
połowie. Powołując się
na moratorium można
narazie komornego
nie płacić. Gotówkę
mam, lecz trudno
mi ją dzisiaj wysłać.
Proszę serdecznie o
opiekę nad Damiśką
do mojego powrotu.
Proszę o wiadomości
o Waszem zdrowiu
i powodzeniu (co ze
Stachem) oraz na
tematy poruszone

Photo. AIPN

Letter from a Polish POW detained in Kozielsk, November 1939

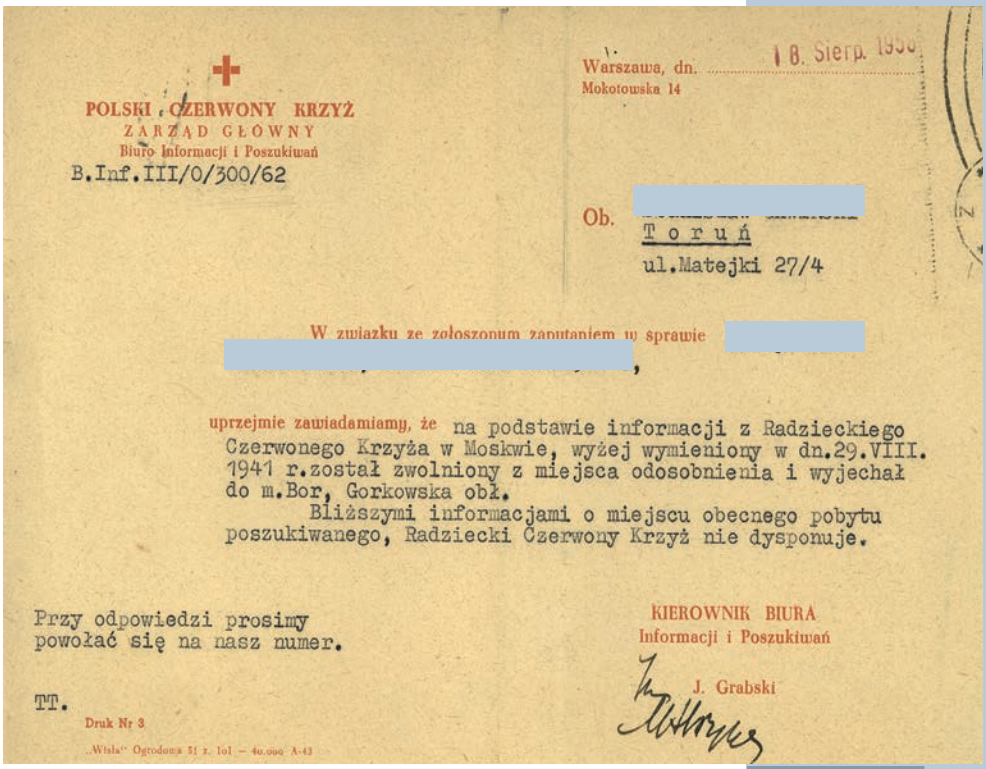

Sybir, dnia 18/II.41.

Najdroższa Haneczko, Aniu i dzieciaczynki!

Dnia 10/II. dostaliśmy paczkę od Was, za którą serdecznie we trójkę dziękujemy.
W rocznicę wyjazdu naszego z domu, w rocznicę wielkiego smutku naszego zjawiła się posyłka od Was, tako serdeczna, pyszna i wspaniała. Rysio ogromnie cieszył się dobrymi cukierkami i ciastkami, Jurek słoniną a ja wszystkiem. Rysio przypomniał sobie, że takie dobre kupowała mu mamusia w Brzeżkowie, że takie cukierki dobre jadł tam – u nas. Rysio za te pyszności pięknie się kłania cioci a dzieciaczynki całuje za piękną książkę. Czytam mu wieczorami wierszyki, wcale nie zapomina czem jest.
Nie mogłam zaraz odpisać, bo miałam zastępstwo w sklepie – sprzedawałam chleb robotnikom, a oprócz tego praca w internacie i z domu pochłania mi wszystkie me siły i zdrowie, tak, że po długim dniu fizycznej i moralnej pracy, jestem już nie zdolna do niczego, szukam miejsca by spocząć, zasnąć i zapomnąć o wszystkiem.

Photo. AIPN

Fragment of a letter from a Siberian exile, February 1941



POLSKI CZERWONY KRZYŻ
ZARZĄD GŁÓWNY
Biuro Informacji i Poszukiwań
B.Inf.III/0/300/62

Warszawa, dn. 18. Sierp. 1956
Mokotowska 14

Ob.
Toruń
ul.Matejki 27/4

W związku ze zgłoszonym zapytaniem w sprawie

uprzejmie zawiadamiamy, że na podstawie informacji z Radzieckiego Czerwonego Krzyża w Moskwie, wyżej wymieniony w dn.29.VIII. 1941 r.został zwolniony z miejsca odosobnienia i wyjechał do m.Bor, Gorkowska obł.
Bliższymi informacjami o miejscu obecnego pobytu poszukiwanego, Radziecki Czerwony Krzyż nie dysponuje.

Przy odpowiedzi prosimy powołać się na nasz numer.

KIEROWNIK BIURA
Informacji i Poszukiwań
J. Grabski

TT.

Druk Nr 3

„Wisła" Ogrodowa 51 z. 101 — 40.000 A-43

Photo. AIPN

Application from the Polish Red Cross in Warsaw concerning the provision of information on the fate of a person deported to the Soviet Union

mation on repressed persons derived from printed editions as well as from two unverified documents – the so-called Ukrainian list (prisoners executed on the basis of the decision of the Soviet authorities issued on March 5, 1940) as well as the Schedule of cases investigated by NKVD authorities of Western Ukraine and Belarus (a list of arrested individuals against whom inquiries have been started in years 1939-1941) have been made available in the "Index of the Repressed" online database. From 2008 onwards, the database also includes biographical notes prepared on the basis of credible sources collected in the "Index of the Repressed" internal application: personal surveys, certificates obtained through the "Memorial" Society, materials which were copied in the 1990s by the Military Archival Commission, the documentation of the Bureau of Information and Search of the Polish Red Cross, the Siberian Exiles Association etc. The "Index of the Repressed" online database, available at www.indeksrepresjonowanych.pl, currently contains over 316 000 records.

The final journey...

Photo. AIPN

How to apply for information?

You can obtain information on the victims of Nazi German and Soviet repressions by writing to the following address:

The Institute of National Remembrance
Office for the Preservation and Dissemination of Archival Records
02-699 Warszawa, ul. Kłobucka 21
with a following note:„Center for Information on the Victims of World War II"
or by e-mail: *ofiary@ipn.gov.pl*

In addition, please do not hesitate to contact the employees of the Centre:

Mr. Janusz Piwowar – director (German repressions),
phone: +48 22 566 25 61
e-mail: janusz.piwowar@ipn.gov.pl

Mr. Jacek Ryżko (German repressions),
phone: +48 22 566 25 74
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