Institute of National Remembrance

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The IPN's resources



The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance collects, elaborates on, and discloses materials related to the history of the Polish Nation between 1917 and 1990, i.e. mainly under German and Soviet occupation, and during the communist period. The Institute's collection contains files acquired from the communist repression agencies, and documents of the Second World War occupational authorities. They are now accessible to the victims, journalists, researchers and public institutions.

The Act on the IPN regulates the recording, collecting, storing, processing, securing, making available and publishing of the documents of the communist state security authorities, produced and accumulated between 22 July 1944 and 31 July 1990, as well as the documents of the security authorities of the Third Reich and the Soviet Union, regarding the crimes committed against the Polish Nation and Polish citizens of other nationalities between 8 November 1917 and 31 July 1990. The documents in question pertain to both German and Soviet repressions.

The IPN's archival resources were obtained from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, Chief Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, Office for State Protection, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Justice, common and military courts, common and military prosecutor's offices, state archives, international archives and institutions, and private donations. They include the archives of the Third Reich and communist authorities, records of the UN War Crimes Commission, and many

others.

The Institute preserves and manages these resources in order to make them accessible to researchers and journalists who investigate the intricacies of Poland's complex history and try to shed some light on its obscure aspects. However, the records are also accessible to people seeking information on family members persecuted by the Nazi or Soviet regimes – and for such queries, the Center for Information on the Victims of WWII has been established within the IPN. Anyone can apply for information at archives@ipn.gov.pl or international@ipn.gov.pl.

In addition to locating lost family and educating members of the the public, our resources help prosecute perpetrators of Nazi and Communist crimes and bring them to justice. This is done not only with the help of the Institute's own resources, but also foreign records: cooperation agreements with leading educational and archival institutions abroad – such as the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen – open up vast archives and databases throughout the world.

That said, the Institute's own resources keep growing too: since July 2016, the IPN's Archive has acquired more than a million documents. Not only is that a result of the co-operation with numerous foreign institutions (such as the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York, the Józef Piłsudski Institute of America, the US Holocaust Museum, the Polish Museum in Raperswil or the Pontifical Institute for Church Studies in Rome, to name but a few), but also of generous donations (like the wealth of records obtained from the Polish Falcons of America in

2019). Add to it shrewd acquisitions, and it is no wonder that the Institute's collection is so valued by researchers.

Amounting to over 95 kilometres of files, 39,000,000 photographs, 840,000 microfilms, 1,900 films and 1,100 audio recordings, it certainly should be.

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