

# Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/5317,The-IPN039s-letter-to-quotEl-Paisquot-regarding-the-misinformation-in-its-story-.html>

04.05.2024, 04:58

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The IPN's letter to "El Pais", regarding the misinformation in its story on the Holocaust of Jews

A graphic featuring the word "STATEMENT" in large, bold, black capital letters. The background is a light gray with a faint, repeating pattern of the IPN coat of arms, which includes a crowned eagle and the letters "IPN".

## STATEMENT

In late June, the Internet website of the Spanish daily "El Pais" published "La policía polaca que facilitó la Shoah" [„Polish Police Force which Helped in the Shoah"], a story by Guillermo Altares, repeating the allegations made in a book devoted to the issue. The IPN contacted the "El Pais" writer, pointing to the errors and distortions in his piece, and insisting that events be presented in historical context and that presentation be based on reliable sources. Below is the full text of the

Institute's message.

Dear Mr. Altares,

Thank you for your interest in the history of Poland during World War II. In your story, you refer to the book by Professor Jan Grabowski, devoted to the force known as the Blue Police (and called Polnische Polizei by the Germans), which during the war operated in the Polish territories occupied by the Third Reich. However, you repeat many of his inaccuracies that grossly distort the facts.

The Republic of Poland was one of the Allied states from the beginning until the end of the war. It fought against the Germans despite the fact that its whole territory was under occupation. When talking about the Blue Police, one should refrain from calling it "the Polish police force" because it was created by the Germans for their own needs. They ordered the pre-war policemen and other civil servants to report for work or face severe penalties. Considered racially inferior, the formation was fully subordinated to the Germans and acted only on their orders. Leaving the ranks without permission carried the risk of being sent to a concentration camp, and losing a weapon could be punished with death. Similar functions were performed in the ghettos by the Jewish Order Police, also established by the occupier to serve a certain purpose. Just as there were no "Polish" extermination camps, only camps created on Polish soil by the Germans – who never asked for Polish consent to establish them – similarly, this Polnische Polizei

was created by the German administration for its own needs in the occupied country, without asking for Polish permission.

Some zealous officers of the Blue Police, obedient to their German superiors, were treated as traitors by the Polish society. They participated in crimes and persecuted their fellow citizens, both of Jewish and Polish nationality, for which several of them got sentenced to death by the underground courts. In today's Poland this is common knowledge, and honouring the Blue Police, which was a German occupation formation, is illegal. Only some of its members collaborated with the resistance (please be reminded that Poland created the largest underground army in Europe, as well as its own underground state). The officers in question, pretending to serve the occupier, were in fact agents of the Polish Underground State, sabotaging the policy of the German administration. A number of them aided Jews, and would later be recognized as Righteous Among the Nations. Only these people – saboteurs in the German service – are honoured today as members of the anti-German underground, operating undercover in navy blue uniforms.

In Western Europe, the words of Professor Grabowski, “Why hasn’t anyone investigated the role of the Blue Police before? It’s inexplicable,” may sound credible, but in fact, they have little to do with reality. In Poland, the name of the formation has always been synonymous with treason. It appeared in articles and books: in 1990, a comprehensive monograph of this formation was published, and in 2016, the Institute of National Remembrance organized a large

academic conference devoted to the issue. Before Professor Grabowski's book was released, the IPN had published *Policja granatowa w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939-1945* [*The Blue Police in the General Government in the Years 1939-1945*], which featured the conference papers. There was never any reason to conceal the truth.

In fact, it was just the opposite – even during the war, Poland announced that traitors in the Blue Police uniforms would be considered complicit in the German crimes. As a result of communism enforced on us after the war, Poland remained an enslaved country – but the authorities dependent on the USSR also had the Blue Police men who collaborated with the occupier and participated in its crimes stand special trials. It was fully in line with the expectations of the society, and in the Polish culture of the following decades the formation officers were presented as villains and the nation's enemies.

Poland did not fight against Hitler from the first to the last day of the war to defend criminals who advanced their careers by participating in crimes against Jewish and Polish fellow citizens.

Grabowski presents the events in his own peculiar way, playing on the Western ignorance of our history. He treats the Jews murdered by the Blue policemen as "victims of Poles", instead of as victims of the German occupation force. At the same time, he ignores the killings of Poles in which the Blue policemen were complicit. How would he classify these people – as victims of some bizarre "civil war", or victims of the German occupier's agency?

Incidentally, the book by Professor Grabowski and the "research methods" he adopted offer no opportunity to confront them with the truth, context or source data. The reader might be interested to learn that some time ago Grabowski invented the number of 200,000 Jews allegedly murdered by Poles during the war, claiming to quote the findings of the renowned Polish-Jewish researcher named Szymon Datner. Yet, Datner never gave such a figure, as ludicrous as it sounds, in his work – which has been confirmed even by the Israeli press.

In your story, you also claim that according to Grabowski, that number might be bigger. Since the original one was pure invention, how can it be a point of reference for a bigger one? By the way, Datner's name has not come up by chance; Jan Grabowski often hints that he's made new discoveries and uncovered facts allegedly hidden or concealed so far. In truth, these "discoveries" are deliberate manipulation of Datner's research, misrepresentation of the work of a man who survived the occupation in Poland. Dismissing a wealth of literature on the Holocaust is painting a partial instead of full picture, and as such, absolutely unacceptable.

Grabowski's critics correctly accuse him of ignoring the historical context and inventing figures, question his reliability in quoting sources, and finally, are dismayed by his outbursts against researchers who challenge his findings. Paradoxically, in the West Professor Grabowski has managed to create his image as a man who fearlessly addresses taboo subjects – although the ones he studies have never been taboo in Poland. The Blue policemen have bad associations, but

our research institutions specializing in the study of the history of the Jewish community never saw any reason to whitewash the crimes of these renegades. In the publications of the Institute of National Remembrance the criminal actions of the Blue policemen towards both Poles and Jews have been addressed many times.

It must be remembered that the Holocaust was a state enterprise of the German Reich, carried out with the use of its own institutions and agencies, including the Blue Police. In each occupied country, the Germans needed people willing to cooperate and help them commit crimes and terrorize the society. The occupation in the East differed from the occupation in the West, and not only in the scope of terror. While in France, for instance, the entire state institutionally cooperated with the Third Reich, the German administration never received such cooperation in Poland. We never crossed that line, and every collaborator automatically became an enemy of the Polish state. Hence, Poland never defended traitors or criminals, and nor does it defend them these days, regardless of the nationality of those who became the tools of German terror.

We respect freedom of speech – and request debate, unbiased approach, presenting facts in historical context, and consulting multiple sources. You are welcome to visit Poland, get acquainted with the scientific publications of the Institute of National Remembrance, and learn more about the history of Poland as it really was.

Attached you will find an English-language pdf brochure on Poland's experience during the war, in which the role of the Blue Police is also

discussed.

Yours sincerely,

Rafał Drabik, PhD.

Institute of National Remembrance

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