

# THEY WILL DRIVE US OUT AND KILL US

THE FATE OF THE CHILDREN  
OF ZAMOŚĆ REGION ON THE 80TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF AKTION ZAMOŚĆ.



**muzeum  
dzieci  
polskich**  
ofiar totalitaryzmu

## **They will drive us out and kill us.**

The fate of the Children of Zamość region on the 80th anniversary of Aktion Zamość.

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**THEY WILL  
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**THE FATE OF THE CHILDREN OF ZAMOŚĆ REGION ON THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF AKTION ZAMOŚĆ.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,


On the 80th anniversary of the conclusion of Aktion Zamość, we remember one of the most tragic chapters in the history of Poland during World War II. As part of the commemoration of the inhabitants of the Zamość region who were subjected to a brutal mass resettlement operation organized by the German occupiers, the Museum of Polish Children - Victims of Totalitarianism has prepared an exhibition, the catalog of which we have the honor to present to you. Both the exhibition and the accompanying publication focus primarily on the issue of the martyrdom of the youngest victims of the operation - the Children of the Zamość region.

As time passes relentlessly, they, who were once children and are now the last witnesses of those events, are passing away. Their accounts, as well as those of their relatives, friends and neighbors, form a dramatic picture of the suffering of people whose fate, by the will of the occupying forces, were deprived of their loved ones, their homes, and then transported in inhumane conditions, incarcerated in transit and concentration camps, subjected to ruthless selection, and sent for Germanization or forced labor. For many victims, death was their fate - death the repression of their family villages, during transportation in cattle cars, from cold or exhaustion, death from torture, or in gas chambers.

The Testimonies of the Survivors are not only an account of the war, but also of many adult Children of the Zamość region, who, due to the trauma of war, were unable to return to their homeland for years and confront their painful past. It is around such testimonies that the presented story revolves. The title phrase „They will drive us out and kill us” was also drawn from them, often repeated in the accounts of the victims of Aktion Zamość, an expression of fear and helplessness, concern for their loved ones, and uncertainty about the future.

Director and Staff  
The Museum of Polish Children - Victims of Totalitarianism

# FOR A PEACEFUL DEATH...



"Once a sick five-year-old boy was brought to the hospital. His mother was by his side. He was already in agony. The mother, I noticed, was very anxious, but was embarrassed to say that the child had not been baptized. I looked at the child, he was dying, but he couldn't pass away. I took some water, baptized him, and the child peacefully passed away".

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Text source:

Account of Sister Stefania Fedorchuk. *Dziecko w historii. Sytuacja dziecka w odrodzonym państwie polskim*, ed. E. J. Kryńska, A. Suplicka, Ł. Kalisz, Białystok 2020, p. 113.

Photo source:

Jan Tchórz, a 2-year-old transport survivor (Institute of National Remembrance).



German plan for the resettlement of the Zamość region (National Archives in Lublin).




German settlers in a transit camp in Łódź (Institute of National Remembrance).

„Secretary of State Krüger informs that Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood Reichsführer SS Himmler designates the counties of Zamość and Lublin as the first settlement areas. During his visit to Lublin, the Reichsführer confirmed that SS and police bases are the best framework for settling Volksdeutsche. Of particular importance in this regard are the so-called SS and police estates”.

*Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium SS. A Collection of Polish and German documents from the Nazi occupation period, edited by Cz. Madajczyk, Warsaw 1979, vol. I, pp. 129-130.*

# AKTION ZAMOŚĆ.

DISPLACED:  
80,000 WOMEN AND MEN  
30,000 CHILDREN



Aktion Zamość was part of the Generalplan Ost (General Plan East). From November 27/28, 1942 to August 1943, the Germans expelled the Polish population from the villages and towns of Zamość. This is how the first settlement area in the General Government, the so-called bastion of Germanhood, was created. Polish families were replaced by German settlers. The operation covered 43% of the villages of the Zamość region. One-third of the Poles (110,000) were expelled. It was planned to settle 98,000 Germans in their place.

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Photo source:  
Ceremonial welcoming of German settlers (National Archives in Zamość).



Rescued children in an orphanage in Łaskarzew  
(Institute of National Remembrance).



Farmers from the Ruszów colony fleeing from resettlement  
(National Archives in Zamość).

**Testimony of SS man Joseph Scharenberg, member of the Kitów repression group, December 11, 1942.**

„The village was surrounded by a few soldiers, while most of the soldiers were busy searching houses and killing people. I must point out that before the operation began, we were warned that we must not disobey orders. We all knew what disobeying an order meant. It had to be that way. The order was: (...) Two are to enter each house. All people are to be shot on the spot. With a heavy heart, we went to the first house. (...) There we found a family of five. They spoke German. They were Poles, evacuated from Poznań. We were reluctant to carry out the order and asked the group's commander, Sergeant Höffner. Only upon his insistence did we carry out the order. We told the people to lie on the floor, and we shot them. I shot an 18- to 19-year-old girl and a 12-year-old child”.

*Zamojszczyzna - Sonderlaboratorium SS..., vol. II, p. 391.*



# SPECIAL SS LABORATORY – SONDERLABORATORIUM SS.

10,000 CHILDREN WERE MURDERED  
4454 CHILDREN WERE GERMANIZED

Wyszczególnienie dzieci.  
Wyszczególnienie z Zamojszczyzny.

Nazwisko i Imię	dat I i G misyjcy zabranej przez Niemców z Górcza /wiek dzieci / wiek matki	dat I i G misyjcy zabranej przez Niemców z Górcza /wiek dzieci / wiek matki
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2. Abramnik Teodor	17.	17.
3. abuchowicz Maria	5.	5.
4. Alama Anna	15.	15.
5. Aleksandrak Maria	15.	15.
6. Antoniak Marta	6.	6.
7. Antoniak Leocadia	15.	15.
8. Antoniak Agata	15.	15.
9. Antoniak / imienia brak/	15.	15.
10. Bucynska Teofilia	15.	15.
11. Baraboska Stanislaw	10.	10.
12. Baraboska Teresa	6.	6.
13. Bessak Kozja	11.	11.
14. Bessak / imienia brak/	15.	15.
15. Bielska Josef	15.	15.
16. Bielska Amataja	15.	15.
17. Bielska Helena	16.	16.
18. Birczyk Stefania	16.	16.
19. Birczyk Stefania	16.	16.
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"The enraged German began to say something and suddenly there was a group of Germans around us and we were taken to the school. We were afraid and couldn't move; our legs trembled. They brought us into the school, where the room was full of Germans. We were terrible afraid, and we were not allowed to go anywhere. (...) We were herded behind the wires and treated like animals. In Zamość, behind the wires, children were taken from their parents and placed in separate barracks. Older women were assigned to (watch over) the children. Each woman was responsible for ten children. It became a hell; children, infants cried inhumanly. The elderly women were helpless. What could be expected of them when they themselves needed care?"

Source of quote:

"Source of the quote: Testimony of Lucyna Targońska, née Niściór (Niścior), b. 1926, Zamojszczyzna - Sonderlaboratorium SS. Zbiór dokumentów polskich i niemieckich z okresu okupacji hitlerowskiej, ed. Cz. Madajczyk, Warsaw 1979, vol. II, p. 368.

Photo source:

General Governor Hans Frank visiting Zwierzyniec (National Archives in Zamość).

Excerpt from a list of displaced children from the Zamość region (National Archives in Zamość).

Rescued children in an orphanage in Łaskarzew (Institute of National Remembrance).



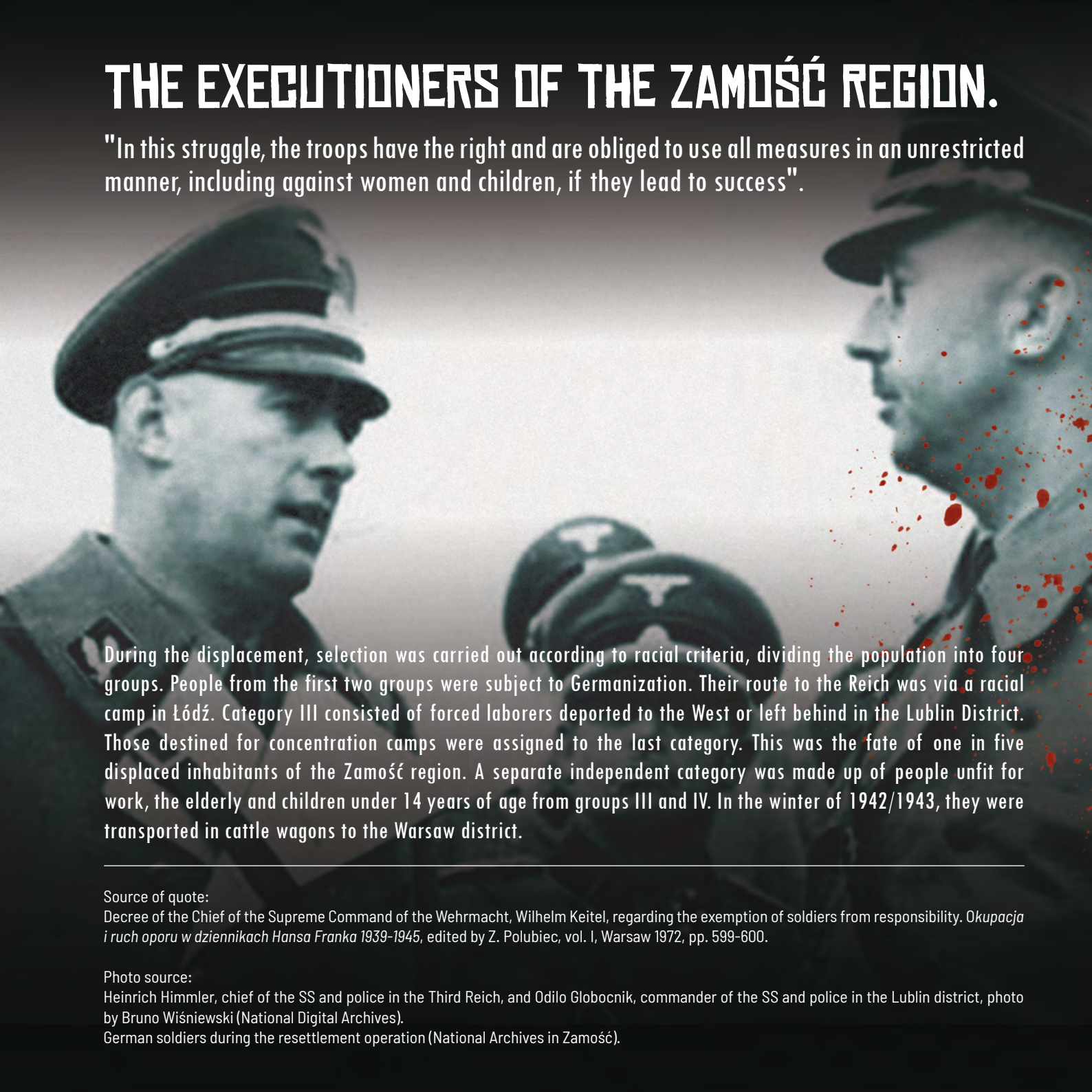
A resettled village in the Zamość region (National Archives in Zamość).

"In June 1943, during the repression, the Germans surrounded the village and began to drive people out; in reality, it was only women with children and the elderly. The men were in shelters and in the woods. Several Germans came in (...) asking about daddy, and ordered mommy, my sister 3-year-old Irena, and me to leave the house. I remember they didn't allow us to take anything. They didn't allow us to take anything from the wardrobe or the cupboard. The Gestapo officer said to my mother, snatching the blanket from her hands - "you won't need anything soon". What happened in the village is indescribable. Amidst shouting, screams, and beatings, they drove women, children, and the elderly like herds of cattle".

Testimony of Barbara Kuźmińska. AIPN, BU 2535/1072, k. 13.

# THE EXECUTIONERS OF THE ZAMOŚĆ REGION.

"In this struggle, the troops have the right and are obliged to use all measures in an unrestricted manner, including against women and children, if they lead to success".



During the displacement, selection was carried out according to racial criteria, dividing the population into four groups. People from the first two groups were subject to Germanization. Their route to the Reich was via a racial camp in Łódź. Category III consisted of forced laborers deported to the West or left behind in the Lublin District. Those destined for concentration camps were assigned to the last category. This was the fate of one in five displaced inhabitants of the Zamość region. A separate independent category was made up of people unfit for work, the elderly and children under 14 years of age from groups III and IV. In the winter of 1942/1943, they were transported in cattle wagons to the Warsaw district.

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Source of quote:

Decree of the Chief of the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht, Wilhelm Keitel, regarding the exemption of soldiers from responsibility. *Okupacja i ruch oporu w dziennikach Hansa Franka 1939-1945*, edited by Z. Polubiec, vol. I, Warsaw 1972, pp. 599-600.

Photo source:

Heinrich Himmler, chief of the SS and police in the Third Reich, and Odilo Globocnik, commander of the SS and police in the Lublin district, photo by Bruno Wiśniewski (National Digital Archives).

German soldiers during the resettlement operation (National Archives in Zamość).



Resettlement camp in Zamość (Institute of National Remembrance).


### **Testimony of Waław Skuratowicz from the camp in Zamość.**

The „UWZ Lager in Zamość” hospitably opened its barbed wire gate before us. We were assigned to barrack No. 14, which was empty and without windows. At the entrance, a two-year-old boy was sitting on the stairs. Upon seeing us, he stood up and with an innocent smile that only a child can have in such conditions, he reached out his dirty little hands towards us. The barracks had neither mattresses nor boards with which to cover the windows. That first night was hard. The wind was blowing through the entire barracks, and although we were warmed up in the bathhouse, we shivered from the cold and couldn't sleep. In the morning, bursts of deep, chesty coughing filled the barracks. Everyone was coughing”.

*Zamojszczyzna - Sonderlaboratorium SS...*, vol. II, p. 411.

# THE BEGINNING OF A CHILD'S DISPLACEMENT.

## RESETTLEMENT CAMP IN ZAMOŚĆ.



"And it could not die, I remember this child, as it was dying. Oh, it was terrible. (...) She lay in rags on the bunks, dying in the barracks. She was born in Skierbieszewo, and the parents were taken away with this little child and there they separated them, and left the child with someone. And there were many such children. And then she carried them out under the barracks somewhere and laid them down. They were taken out under the barracks and there was already someone older lying there. There they piled the dead and took them to the cemetery in Zamość".

Source of quote:

Account of Waclawa Wójcik (Węclawik) about Martusia Szewerowa, a several-month-old girl displaced from Skierbieszów, who died at the turn of November/December 1942 in the camp in Zamość due to exhaustion and starvation. *Byliśmy w transportach dzieci z Zamojszczyzny*, introduction and elaboration by B. Kozaczyńska, Warsaw 2017, pp. 56-58.

Photo source:

Resettlement camp in Budzyń-Kraśnik (Institute of National Remembrance).  
Resettlement camp in Zamość (Institute of National Remembrance).



Officers of the Resettlement Headquarters in Łódź responsible for crimes in the Zamość region (Institute of National Remembrance).

### **An account by Zygmunt Węclawik, a prisoner of the camp in Zamość.**

„Going to the toilet in the evening was also forbidden. Jaroszyńska forgot about it. She went out. She didn't come back alone. The unconscious woman was dragged by her hair by Schütz. The crushed face, battered body – she did not resemble Jaroszyńska. Schütz dragged the lifeless body of the woman by her braid. He walked down the long corridor all the way to our room. He threw her over the threshold like a dead dog. Then he leaned over and yelled: „No! You won't go out in the evening ever again!' He threw a few curses as a farewell and slammed the door in fury. He left. Everyone tended to the unfortunate woman. They washed her battered face. They applied ice. It didn't help. She died by morning. They carried her out. The children cried all day. The women cried. The men fled to other rooms. They couldn't listen. They wanted to forget”.

„They caught Bartosiak. He approached the wires. He was carrying bread for the children. He wanted to throw it over the fence. Schütz followed him from the town. He recognized him. He caught him near the barbed wire. (...) Schütz pulls out a gun. He shoots. Low, in the stomach. Let him struggle longer. Bartosiak collapses into the snow (...). Schütz leans over. He smiles cynically at his victim: „No, you will never run away from the camp again” (...). Beside the shot man, his wife writhes in pain. She holds his head. The children hug his legs. They kiss them. Mrs. Bartosiak rises. She kneels beside the shot man. She shouts at Schütz as he departs: „May hell take you, you vile murderer”.

# HE DIDN'T SLEEP IF HE HADN'T KILLED.

"Schütz is becoming more vile with each passing day. A sadist. He laughed while his victim was dying. The sight of the SS man's muscular figure and his enormous dog spread terror throughout the camp. They said he didn't fall asleep unless he had killed or beaten someone. He wandered around the camp day and night. He was looking for a victim".

"Everyone knew what it meant when "Ne" was wearing black gloves. One blow with the mysterious glove crushed the face and knocked down the strongest person. Many died this way".

"A boy died in the pool. He tried to go to No. 10. He was running to his mother. "Ne" - Schütz caught him by the hole".

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The merciless torturer of the camp in Zamość was its SS-Scharführer commander, a boxer born in Łódź — SS-Scharführer Artur Schütz, known as "Ne". Prisoners described him as a sadist who cruelly tormented his victims. According to witnesses, he would knock down prisoners with a single blow.

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Source of quote:

An account by Zygmunt Węclawik, a prisoner of the camp in Zamość. *Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium SS...*, vol. II, Warsaw 1979, pp. 363-365.

Photo source:

Officers of the Resettlement Headquarters in Łódź responsible for crimes in the Zamość region (Institute of National Remembrance).



Krystyna Trzeźniewska, b. December 8, 1929. Displaced from Majdan. She died in Auschwitz on May 18, 1943  
(Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum).

**Account of witness Jan Szczepanowski about the killing of children from the Zamość region with phenol injections in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.**

"When in Birkenau, I saw how before Christmas 1942 (...) a transport arrived from the Zamość region with men, women and children. (...) The age of the children ranged from 9 to 14. There were 48 boys. (...) The block leaders and , kapos' divided the 48 boys from the transport among themselves, trying to save them. In this way, the boys survived for about 5-6 weeks (...). In the camp, the Germans spread the rumor that the boys would go for masonry training. As I found out, these boys were transported by the Germans to the camp in Auschwitz to block 13, where they stayed for about 2 days, after which they were killed with injections and burned".

*Zamość - SS Sonderlaboratorium....*, p. vol. II, p. 421.



# BEHIND THE BARBED WIRES OF AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU.

"Families and individuals classified in Group IV due to their racial value will be transferred to Birkenau as a workforce".

The displaced from the transit camp in Zamość were transported in cattle wagons to Auschwitz-Birkenau in three transports: December 13 and 16, 1942, and February 5, 1943. Among them were children, the youngest being 8 years old. Of the 1,301 registered displaced persons, 82% died. The children died of exhaustion, in gas chambers, or were killed with injections of phenol into their hearts. Newborns born in the camp were also murdered in this way.

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Source of quote:

Guidelines of SS-Obersturmbannführer H. Krumei regarding the classification of displaced persons in the Zamość camp on November 21, 1942, *Zamojszczyzna - Sonderlaboratorium SS...*, vol. II, pp. 175, 177.

Photo source:

Auschwitz-Birkenau, photo by L. Zielaskowski (National Digital Archives).



Michalina Pietryko (Petryko), b. November 9, 1929. Displaced from Majdan. She died in Auschwitz on August 14, 1944 (Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum).

**Account of Maria Ślązak, née Niewiadomska (13 years old), a girl from Warsaw, prisoner No. 84107.**

„We were travelling for a long time. Finally the train stopped and we saw the sign “Auschwitz”. (...) They opened the wagons. There were lots of Germans in SS uniforms, with dogs and riding crops. They were shouting: «Raus, raus! Schnell, schnell!» Segregation. Women and children were separated from the men and older boys. Dogs barking, SS men shouting, cries and weeping of those separated. Beaten, pushed, we were driven through the gate to a huge empty barracks. There was no floor, just beaten earth sprinkled with chlorine. Almost white. A stinging, burning smell. They closed the door. Terrified and exhausted, we lay down wherever we could. Despite these terrible experiences, I fell asleep. In the morning, we were awakened by a scream. (...) We were driven to the barracks again. They ordered us to undress completely and shaved our heads. Then we were herded to the bathhouse. After the bath, naked and barefoot, we stood on the concrete floor all day and night. Finally, we were given clothes. Then they registered us and assigned numbers, which from then on became our surnames. They gave us scraps of cloth with a red triangle and a number printed on them. We were divided into blocks – mothers separately, children separately, elderly women separately, and women without children to another block. And so, at the age of 13, I became a political prisoner. It is impossible to describe life in a concentration camp. Besides, the name itself is telling enough. To this day I remember the terrible hunger, the cold, the hours-long assemblies. “The , death processions’ of people being herded to the crematoriums and the smoke coming out of the tall chimneys of these , death factories’ then the horrible smell... And also the piles of horribly emaciated rotten human corpses and the rats running around”.

J. Mazurczyk, K. Zawanowska, *Dzieciństwo i wojna*, Warsaw 1983, pp. 177-178.

# CHILDREN FROM THE ZAMOŚĆ REGION IN AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU.



Lucyna Białek  
Kamila Borys  
Salomea Kostrubała  
Czesława Krajewska  
Maria Krajewska  
Czesława Kwoka  
Maria Lis  
Emilia Lis  
Marianna Ostasz  
Michalina Pietrynko (Petrynko)  
Anna Węclawik  
Salomea Węclawik  
Zofia Wróbel

Photo source:

Few surviving photographs of children from the Zamość region in Auschwitz-Birkenau (Archives of the National Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum).



Funeral of Zamość region victims in Kałuszyn (Institute of National Remembrance).

**Account of Marianna Socha, née Probodiak (13 years old), displaced from Sitańce, transported to the transit camp in Zamość** in December 1942, then to Sobolew, and later to Żelechów. She survived the war with her entire family.

„The train stopped briefly on a side track, and at that moment, Red Cross nurses appeared. They started calling us to the windows and serving coffee. Whoever had a dish of some kind took some coffee for later. The Germans quickly ordered the nurses to move away and the train continued on its way. We had been traveling for two days without food and drink. We were feeling more and more cold, our bodies were becoming numb and drowsy. I don't even remember how the second night passed. The train stopped in front of the Dęblin bridge over the Vistula, and the Germans opened the wagons and told us to get out. (...) Then they went inside and searched for dead bodies. Luckily, in our wagon, there was only one dead baby, whom the mother held in a blanket to her breast, pretending that the baby was alive. Several small dead bodies were brought out of other train wagons and hastily buried them near the tracks. And once again the train continued its journey”.

*We were in the transports of children from the Zamość region..., pp. 70, 74-75.*

# TRANSPORTS OF HORROR.

"During the transport, we were saved from freezing by our oldest sister. We were huddled together in a tight group. Marysia covered us with pieces of clothing on us, no longer needed by those frozen. At the station in Siedlce, we were a pile of stench. They pulled us out from under those rags. Fecal matter was flowing down the sides of the wagons, children in heavy winter clothes, infested with insects".

In the cold winter of 1942/1943, the Germans transported children up to the age of 14 from the camp in Zamość to the Warsaw district in cattle wagons. They found shelter in Polish homes and orphanage preschools prepared by the Main Welfare Council. This was the fate of 5321 children and elderly people. For some, it was their last journey.

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Source of quote:

Account of Janina Zielińska (née Malec), born in 1938. Nie było kiedy płakać. Losy rodzin polskich wysiedlonych z Zamojszczyzny, introduction and elaboration by B. Kozaczyńska, Siedlce 2014, pp. 57-58.

Photo source:

Similar wagons were used to transport children from the Zamość region. Transport of displaced persons in the Warsaw district, 1944 (public domain).



Funeral of victims from the Zamość region in Siedlce (Institute of National Remembrance).

**Account of Zofia Jadwiga Wójcik, resident of Siedlce.**

„When I entered the house, I saw two boys, dirty, starved and crying. They cried because my mother, who had four children of her own, wanted to take only one, but they cried out so loudly that she had to take both, as they could not be separated. Especially since the Germans had already separated them their family, because, as they later recounted, they took their father first, probably to Germany, and their mother and little sister, in her arms, were assigned to another group, no one knows where. (...) The first thing was to feed them, and then to wash and dress them. Their clothes had to be burned because they were infested with lice. They cried for a long time, holding hands, and we couldn't get any information from them. They slept together, as they certainly wouldn't allow themselves to be separated. It was only on the second day that they slowly began to tell us what the displacement and the long journey in cattle wagons were like during severe frosts. It was from them that we learned about the dead children who had not endured the hardships and were lying in the morgue, and would be buried in Siedlce”.

J. Mazurczyk, K. Zawadowska, *Dzieciństwo...*, p. 299.

# SIEDLCE AGAINST GERMAN BESTIALITY.

"The funeral of the 20 deceased turned into demonstrations by Poles against the German orders. The day before the funeral, the coffins were displayed in the parish church in Siedlce. The church was overcrowded many hours before the funeral. Crowds gathered in front of the church. About 3 to 4 thousand people were present. The funeral ceremonies were performed by the bishop, who conducted them briefly as ordered. The coffins were carried throughout the city by young Poles, and the crowd remained relatively calm. The church ceremony was attended by school children. Almost the entire Polish intelligentsia of the city was represented. Among them were also Polish officials in German service".

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Source of quote:

An account of the funeral (actually 23 victims, including 12 children). Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium SS..., vol. 1, pp. 381-382, 384.

Photo source:

Funeral of victims from the Zamość region in Siedlce, February 3, 1943 (Institute of National Remembrance).



Camp in Zwierzyniec (Institute of National Remembrance).

**Account of Wanda Cebryk, caregiver of the orphanage preschool in Zwierzyniec.**

"Their [the children's] experiences became apparent in drawings, games, and songs. They drew the camp with the wires cut and the gate open, people escaping, and children shooting at the Germans, always with a large rifle or a revolver. They sang songs with their own lyrics, such as: «On Christmas Day, the joy of all creation, parents from the camp return, they will shoot the Germans for their torment" and others expressing mostly longing for their parents. Young children often repeated „Mommy, daddy come back, oh mommy daddy, where are you»".

*Zamojszczyzna - Sonderlaboratorium SS...*, t. II, p. 429.



# IN THE BARRACKS OF ZWIERZYNIEC.

20,000 PEOPLE WERE IMPRISONED, INCLUDING 7,000 CHILDREN.  
NEARLY 200 OF THE YOUNGEST PRISONERS PERISHED.

"Displaced persons from the Biłgoraj powiat were driven to a camp near Zamość, and then, due to the overcrowding of the Zamość camp, to Zwierzyniec. The camp in Zwierzyniec is a square fenced with barbed wire, without any buildings. The conditions in the camps are terrible, the mortality rate (especially of children and the elderly) is immense".

Source of quote:

Information on repression operations. *Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium SS...*, vol. II, p. 128.

Photo source:

People displaced from the Biłgoraj powiat (National Archives in Zamość).



Children from an orphanage in Zwierzyniec (Zamojskie Museum in Zamość).

**Official memo regarding the approval for the release of children under the age of 6 from the camp in Zwierzyniec.**

"The Gruppenführer agreed to Count Zamoyski's proposal that children under the age of 6 be released from the camp and entrusted to Count Zamoyski for placement in a kindergarten. The local office will communicate the approval of this proposal to Count Zamoyski and discuss the details of the release (...) SS-Hauptsturmführer Hahn was tasked with establishing contact with Count Zamoyski. On the basis of a conversation held on July 23, 1943, with the secretary of the Zamoyski estate administration in Zwierzyniec, it was determined that that there was no knowledge of Count Zamoyski's proposal. However, they would inform Count Zamoyski about the approval granted by the Gruppenführer and then inform the local office".

*Zamojszczyzna - Sonederlaboratorium SS...*, vol. II, pp. 121-122.

# THE ZAMOYSKIS COME TO THE RESCUE OF DYING CHILDREN.

"But the most profound impression that I can't shake off was made on me by the children in the estate hospital. There were about forty of them here today, aged up to five. They are mostly suffering from typhus and measles. In small, hastily put together wooden beds, they lie in pairs, emaciated, resembling corpses rather than living beings".

bruz się zobowiazana przed  
kimi podziękować Państwu za troski  
serdeczne dziękuję. Jestem niewymownie  
wdzięczna za pomoc i za łaski Pana  
Hrabiego który jest tak czuły i ma tak dob-  
re serce jak wspaniały. Pani Hrabini która  
jest Matką i opiekunką tych dzieci która  
jest jedyną na całym świecie a więc  
Państwa, zebowia. To jest Etyka i jak na  
początku i z tym serdecznie



Heir Jan Zamoyski rushed to the rescue of the dying children from the Zwierzyntec camp. As a result of negotiations with the SS and police commander for the Lublin district, Odilo Globocnik, more than 480 children were freed from the camp. These found care in an orphanage preschool run by the Heir's wife, Róża Zamoyska, née Żółtowska, known as the angel of kindness.

Source of quote:

Memories from Zamojszczyzna. Z. Klukowski, *Zamojszczyzna 1918-1943*, vol. I, Warsaw 2007, pp. 369-370.

Photo source:

Children from an orphanage in Zwierzyntec with their caregiver Wanda Cebrykow, spring 1944 (National Archives in Zamość).

Letter to the Zamoyski family expressing gratitude for taking care of the children (National Archives in Zamość).

Jan and Róża Zamoyski with the children (Zamoyski Family Archive).



German repression units used Red Cross ambulances in displacement operations (Museum of the Biłgoraj region in Biłgoraj).

**Account of Wanda Cebrykow about the repression of the village of Sochy.**

"On June 1, 1943, the Germans surrounded the village of Sochy near Zwierzyniec in a tight ring, then burned it down and bombed it. From our place, we could see a big red glow and smoke. Among the victims of this bloody massacre, during which residents died in the fire or from Nazi bullets, there were even small children. "Get up, Kasia, why aren't you getting up, get up, Kasia - you're lying dead!" - the words of one of the unfortunate mothers still ring in my ears to this day".

*Zamojszczyzna - Sonderlaboratorium SS...*, vol. II, p. 429.



Victim of the repression of the village of Sochy (Institute of National Remembrance).

"GET UP, KASIA, WHY AREN'T YOU GETTING UP, GET UP, KASIA – YOU'RE LYING DEAD!"

# REPRESSION OF VILLAGES.

SOCHY – 185 MURDERED [45 CHILDREN]

KITÓW – 164 MURDERED [28 CHILDREN]

BIAŁOWOLA – 51 MURDERED [17 CHILDREN]

"The Germans rushed into apartments, killed people and set buildings on fire. Houses were occupied one after another, terrified people fled, and then without exception and without mercy, men, women, and children were killed. Pregnant women, babies at their mothers' breasts, and children running with their parents were killed. Some of them knelt begging to be spared their lives, but this did not move the savage tormentors. People were thrown alive into the fire, the wounded were beaten. And there were some among the Germans who did this with sadistic delight and laughing devilishly".

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Source of quote:

Account of Wanda Cebrykow and Kazimiera Świtajowa. *Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium SS...*, vol. II, p. 397, 429.

Photo source:

Victims of repression of the village of Białowola (National Archives in Zamość).

German repression units used Red Cross ambulances in displacement operations (Museum of the Biłgoraj region in Biłgoraj).



KL Lublin (Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe).

### **Jerzy Kwiatkowski's recollections of the prisoners in Field III of the KL Lublin.**

"Unexpectedly, the water supply in the entire camp was cut off. During the evening assembly, the Germans announce that anyone who uses water for drinking or washing will be punished with death. Women were deprived of the opportunity to wash diapers, there was no water to drink despite the heat reaching 35 degrees in the sun. The air in the wooden barracks was heated like in a baker's oven. (...) The consequences of the camp authorities' decision quickly became apparent. Elderly women were lying on the ground in the assembly square, and every day, I counted 8-10 corpses, even though these people were neither beaten nor starved".

J. Kwiatkowski, *485 dni na Majdanku*, Lublin 1988, pp. 165-175.

### **Felix Siejwa's account of the women from the Zamość region at Majdanek.**

"They selected the younger and prettier girls, emptied the last rows of beds, and behind the empty zone, they staged disgusting orgies in front of all residents: parents, sisters, brothers. The enslaved women did not even try to defend themselves. (...) Given a choice between food or death by starvation, they chose the former, often to feed their siblings or sick parents".

F. Siejwa, *Więzień III pola*, Lublin 1964, pp. 94-101.

# THEY WERE DYING, EVEN THOUGH NO ONE WAS SHOOTING AT THEM — KL LUBLIN.

"One day I sat down near a block of flats and from my pocket I took out dust, crumbs from the bread I ate yesterday, and ate them like chocolate."

Fields III, IV and V in KL Lublin were allocated by the Germans for the population displaced during Aktion Zamość in the summer. Some of them lived in the open air. Lack of access to drinking water and dramatic sanitary and hygienic conditions led to a high incidence of disease. The longer their stay in the camp, the higher the likelihood of death. In August 1944, the Germans sent those capable of work for forced labor to the Third Reich and villages in the Lublin district. The sick were sent, among other places, to St. John's Hospital in Lublin, where out of 299 patients sent there, 155 died, most of them under 12 years old.

Source of quote:

Account of Janina Buczek-Róžańska, a prisoner of KL Lublin. *Przemoc, poniżenie, poniewierka. Wspomnienia z przymusowych robót rolnych 1939-1945*, selected, compiled and with an introduction by L. Staszyński, Warsaw 1967, p. 24.

Photo source:

Anna Rempa (age 6) displaced from the powiat of Biłgoraj, prisoner of KL Lublin. Within a month of being released from the camp, she died at St. John's Hospital in Lublin (Institute of National Remembrance).



Female victim of the repression of the village of Sochy  
(Institute of National Remembrance).

**Account of Anna Pawelczyk, one of the few survivors of the repression of Kitów.**

"I then began the search for my mom. I searched for her among the bodies, turning each one over. In the dark night, I found my mom. I don't know how I could recognize her in the dark, but you always recognize your mom. I recognized her by her vest. I shouted – mommy, mommy, the Germans are gone, they have already gone! I couldn't believe that I was alive, and someone else wasn't. I remembered that there was a handkerchief in her breastpocket, I took it out, and it was wet with blood. I realized that mommy was dead".

*Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium SS..., vol. II, p. 390.*

**Account of Janina Małek, a prisoner of KL Lublin, as reported by Jan Gut.**

"We were all herded into the square. We stood there for a long time, and then they divided us into the already partially inhabited barracks. There was nothing to eat. Diseases started spreading. My little one fell ill. I didn't know what to do, and then they came. They gave him some injection, and in a short time, I realized that they had killed my son. I went crazy... I walked with my dead son in my arms, thinking he was asleep, that he would wake up. He never woke up again. They forcibly took his lifeless body and threw it into the furnace with the others. I despaired greatly, forgetting that I was soon to have another baby. But they remembered it. Just like with my son, they gave me an injection... I had a miscarriage... They took him from me as well and also burned him in one of the furnaces. I fell ill with some disease, and I probably would have shared the fate of the children if it weren't for the order to place the sick in the hospital...".

*Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium SS..., vol. II, p. 404.*



# MOM...

"It was decided to gas the children from the repressed areas of Hrubieszów and the Zamość region and send the mothers to work in Germany. Previously, false rumors were spread that the children would be put under the care of the Red Cross, to nurseries and the Jordanowski gardens. When persuasion failed, they started forcibly taking them away (...). On the field, there was crying and sobbing. Mothers, mad with despair, fled with their children. The SS and capos caught them. I saw Hoffman in an SS uniform struggling with a peasant woman who held her baby tightly, refusing to give it away (...). I saw how at one point Hoffman snatched the child and threw the bloody, presumably already lifeless body into the car".

"If a child is taken from a mother, she desires with all her strength to die because the pain is unbearable, but at the same moment, she desires to live with all her strength to save it. Such a paradox crushes the soul. The baby is an anatomical part of the mother, so it's like an amputation without anesthesia".

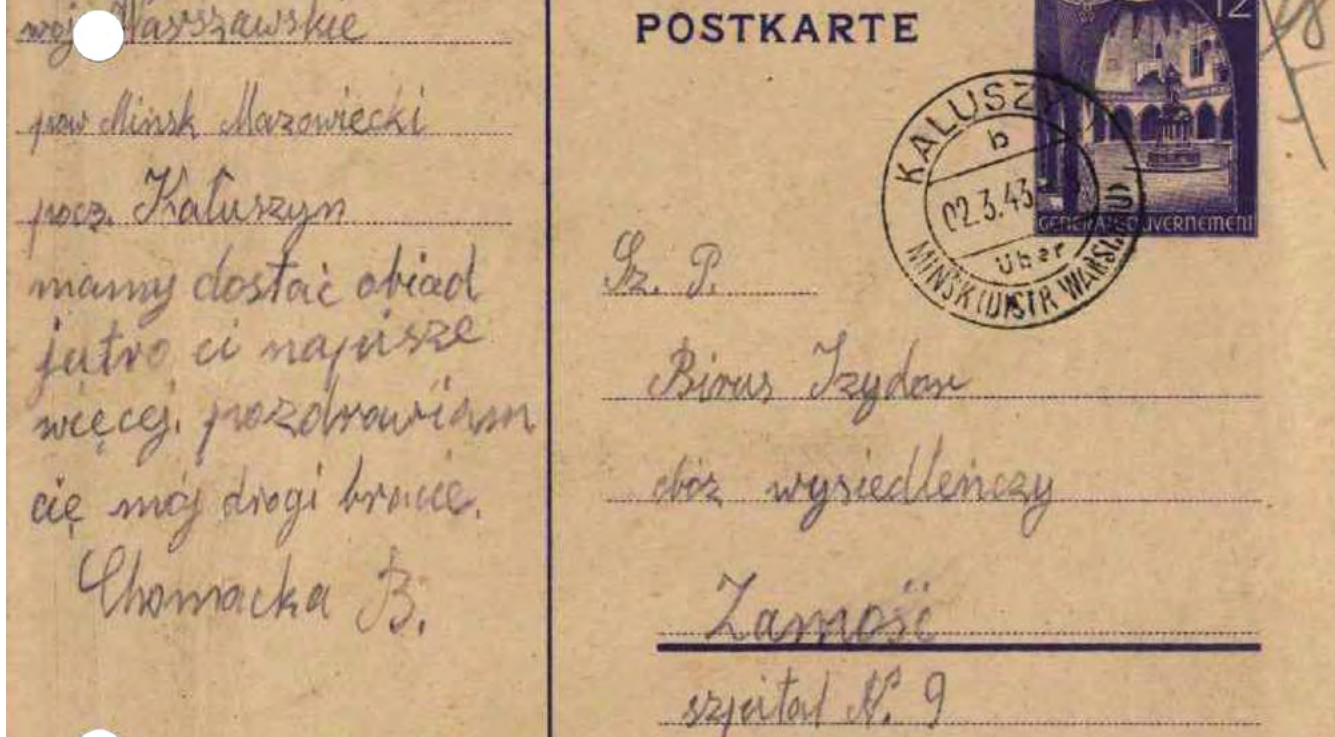
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Source of quotes:

Testimony of Kazimierz Wdzięczny, witness to the separation of children from their mothers in July 1943 at KL Lublin. AIPN, BU 2535/45, k. 4;  
A. Janko, *Mała zagłada*, Krakow 2015, p. 174.

Photo source:

The seizure of Polish children in the Zamość region (public domain).



#### **Notice accompanying H. Krumej's document on the classification of prisoners in the camp in Zamość.**

"To give your children the opportunity to develop freely, they must be placed with relatives (grandparents or people incapable of work) in another area of the General Government. You do not need to worry about their future. You will be given the opportunity to support your children and family members with money that you will earn in Germany in sufficient quantity. If you want to write to your children and relatives, write the first letter to Umwandererzentralstelle (...) Litzmannstadt Adolf Hitler-Strasse 133, from where you will be informed about the whereabouts of your children and family members or where incoming letters will be delivered to your children. Although the separation from your family will be painful at first, you will be granted the opportunity to spend a vacation with them as a reward for a job well done. The fact of being sent to work in the Reich cannot be changed, but there is a possibility that as a reward for a job well done, you may be reunited with your Family sooner than you think".

*Zamojszczyzna - Sonderlaboratorium SS...*, vol. I, p. 179.

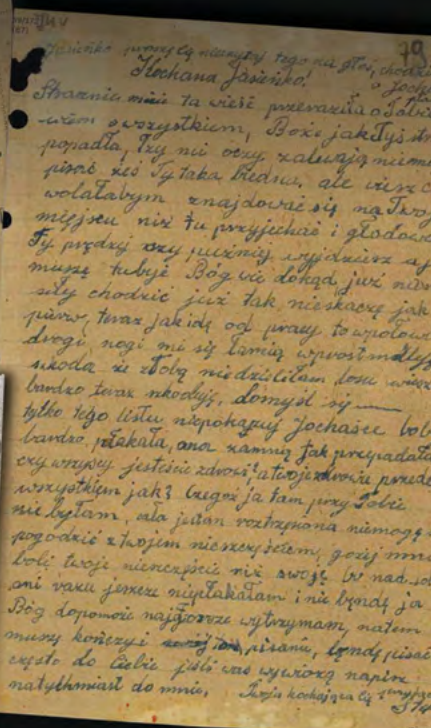
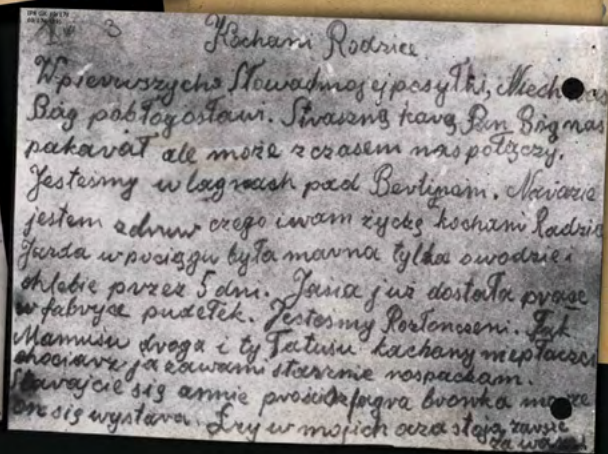
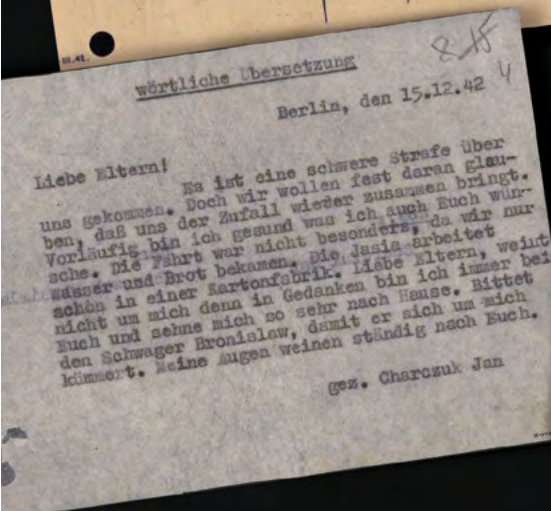
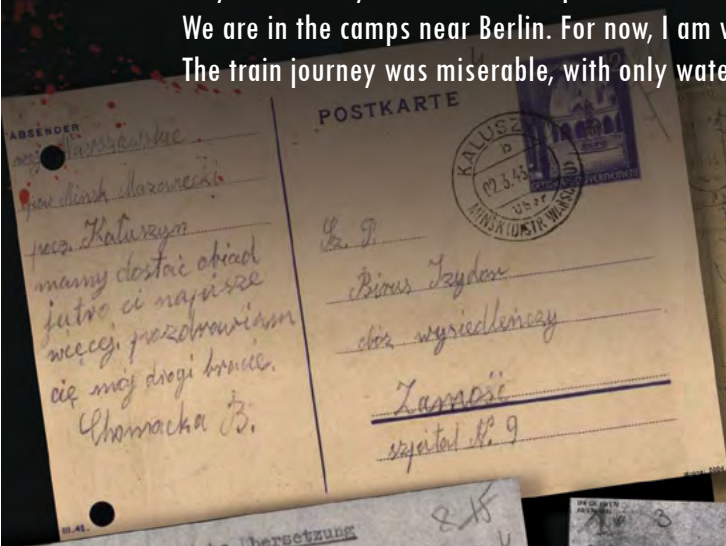
#### **Excerpt from a letter by Teresa Loncz (Zamość, June 11, 1943).**

"(...) submit applications for our release, perhaps they will release us because now it doesn't take much effort to get out. However, once they take us deep into Germany, it will be difficult. I send these letters in the city because if I'd try sending them through the mailing office here, they wouldn't reach you. They check the letters and if they don't like something, they tear up the letter and throw it in the trash. I'm also responsible for cleaning the mailing office, so every day I see many destroyed letters and postcards in the trash. It's not worth sending anything through the mailing office, so if you want to reach me, write to Halina's address because I visit her quite often, and I will pick it up from there".

Private correspondence of Poles displaced from the Zamość region to the Reich and GG, AIPN GK 69/172, pp. 66-67.

# "WE ARE IN THE CAMPS OF BERLIN." LETTERS FROM THE DISPLACED.

"My beloved Parents,  
May God bless you. The Lord has punished us severely, but perhaps over time, He will reunite us.  
We are in the camps near Berlin. For now, I am well, and I wish you the same.  
The train journey was miserable, with only water and bread for 5 days..."



Text source:  
Letter from Jan Charczuk to his parents. AIPN, GK 69/174, k. 3.

Photo source:  
Letter from Jan Charczuk to his parents (Institute of National Remembrance).  
Letter from Stefania Frankowicz (Institute of National Remembrance).  
Letter from Bronisława Chomacka (Institute of National Remembrance).



Transport of children to the camp on Przemysłowa Street (Institute of National Remembrance).

“The conditions in the camp were very harsh (...). There wasn’t enough food and children suffered from hunger. The sanitary conditions violated all hygiene principles. Hunger, cold, excessive labor and hygienic conditions were the reasons for the high mortality rate among children. Several thousand children from different parts of Poland had at some point been imprisoned in the camp. I met children there from Chełm Lubelski, the Zamość region. Among the children from the Zamość region were toddlers about three years old”.

Account of Jan Sierpień, an employee of the camp on Przemysłowa Street, AIPN, GK 165/377, p. 8.

# CHILDREN OF THE ZAMOŚĆ REGION IN THE CAMP ON PRZEMYSŁOWA STREET IN ŁÓDŹ.

“The transport that took place in June 1944 is particularly etched in my memory. It was on 6th June 1944 when a transport of 10 trucks arrived in the camp with children from the Zamość region. I saw one of the guards kill a little boy. He pulled his victim, who was about 10 years old, out of the wagon by his hair and banged his head against the edge of the sidewalk (...). I know that this transport stayed in the camp for only a few hours. The next day there was no trace of these people”.

Source of quote:

Minutes of the hearing of witness Czesława Werner. AIPN, GK 503/106, vol. 14, vol. 23-23v.

Photo source:

Transport of children to the camp on Przemysłowa Street (Institute of National Remembrance).

The first assembly of children after their arrival at the camp on Przemysłowa Street (Institute of National Remembrance).





Easter at the orphanage preschool (Institute of National Remembrance).

**Account of Irena Opitz (née Nogas).**

"Our farm, after the Germans fled, was taken care of by my grandmother (my mother's mother). It was destroyed and looted. (...) Every day we awaited our parents. Some residents from the camps had already returned. Various news was reaching us. A gypsy woman, taking advantage of our naivety, prophesied that they would return on a May evening. May and June passed. It was only when a resident from our village returned from Auschwitz (sick and weakened, she lived only a short time) and told us about the circumstances of our parents' death that we began to lose hope, still in disbelief. They did not return".

*Byliśmy w transportach dzieci z Zamojszczyzny..., p. 50-51.*

**Account of Wanda Cebrykow, a caregiver from the Zwierzyniec orphanage preschool.**

"The camp had been burned down. Today, pines and firs are rustle there. The forest rustles! After the Liberation, the "Caritas" organization took care of the children. Some were fortunate enough to find their parents, others were placed in orphanages. For a long time, parents came to reclaim their children. How difficult it was to tell a father, a mother, a family – that the child is not alive, that the graves are there in the cemetery. May their memory be honored! In my spare time I visit the graves of children and the camp area. With my friend Stefania we reminisce about our past, look at the surviving photographs".

*Zamojszczyzna - Sonderlaboratorium SS..., vol. II, p. 430.*

# WE MUST LEARN TO LIVE.

"When his birth mother embraced him and started kissing him, he brutally pushed her away and began scratching away every kiss. Tchórzyn's mother experienced this terribly. After all, not only Janek was taken away from her. Her two daughters were being kept in Germany in terrible conditions".

The release of children from the hands of the occupiers and their placement in hospitals, orphanage preschools, and foster families initiated the process of adapting them to the post-war reality. The Main Welfare Council and its regional counterparts were responsible for coordinating the aid efforts, providing food, medicine, and clothing. All of this was done to restore health and smiles to the children's faces.

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Source of quote:

Jan Tchórz's account (then 2 years old) of meeting his biological mother. M. K. Piekarska, M. Piekarski, *Syn dwóch matek*, Warsaw 2016, p.105.

Photo source:

Little "Niunia" identified as Janina Kuziak, taken care of by the Zdzioch family, 1945 (National Archives in Zamość).



DO  
Referatu Opieki Społecznej  
przy Starostwie w Zamościu

W dniu 8/VIII. 1947 r Ldz. 628 Oddział Polskiego Czerwonego Krzyża w Zamościu przesłał do Referatu Opieki Społecznej przy Starostwie spisy w 4 ch egzemplarzach dzieci wywiezionych przez Niemców z prośbą o zlecenie Gminam aby dostarczyły wykazów wywiezionych dzieci. Ponieważ do dziś niemy żadnej informacji co do wywiezionych dzieci, Uprzejmie proszę o przychylne załatwienie powyższej sprawy.

Pełnomocnik Zarządu Głównego PCK  
na Oddział Zamojski

*[Signature]*  
/Lewinski Jerzy./

Starostwo Powiatowe  
w Zamościu  
Data otrzymania 25 lutego 1948  
Data załatwienia 01.01.33/47

"Letter from the Polish Red Cross regarding the search for children designated for Germanization (National Archives in Zamość)".

**Account of Maria Rusek from Klementowice.**

"On May 2, 1943 I was registered in Lublin. I was then 2 years and 8 months old. Since then, I started to remember the first unfamiliar faces, subsequent events, and orphanages. First in Lublin, then in Kijany, Bystrzyca and again in Lublin. Finally, I was taken to be "raised".

It was a difficult service for a child, beyond my strength, in exchange for a meager piece of bread. Those were terrible years. Fate did not spare me any misery: hunger, disease, homelessness, and oppression. I survived the war, orphanhood and the camp. I experienced the human hand clenched in hatred, striking without mercy. I experienced both human cruelty and the kindness of completely unknown people.

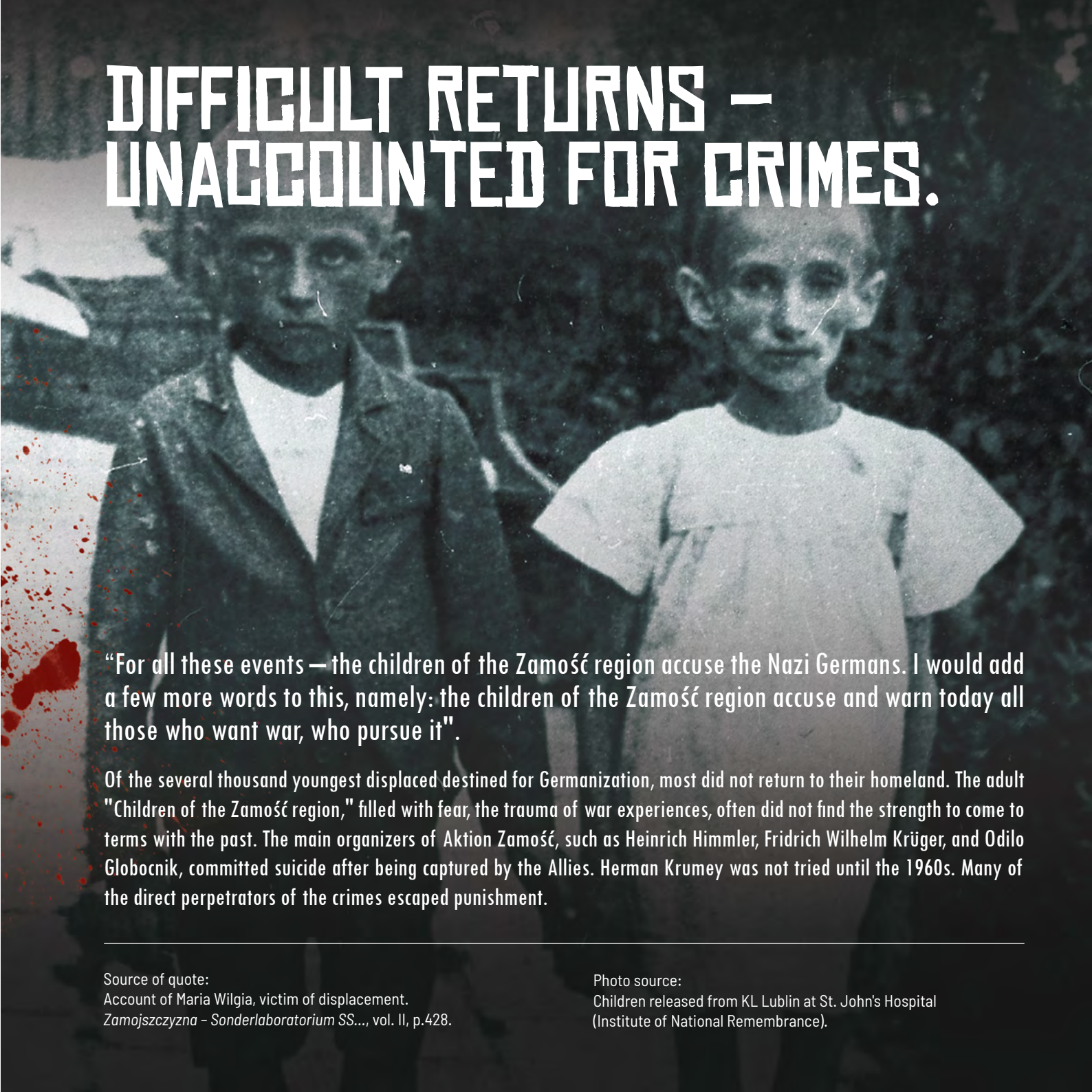
I am alive. I am 46 years old. I am a teacher. I am writing because I want to tell others about the suffering of the children of the Zamość region. I want the struggle and martyrdom of our families and our suffering to be preserved in our country's memory. Sometimes I think that for young Poles, our wartime past is a tremendously foreign and distant historical event. And it seems like only the Zamość wind whispers about our tragedy from half a century ago.

In my hometown, there is no sign of remembrance of the described event. At the place where freedom fighters died, there sways a field of life in the summer. On the site of my family cottage stands a modern house of strangers to whom my fate is foreign and unknown".

Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na wsi Polskiej w latach 1939-1945. Wspomnienia, pamiętniki i relacje w opracowaniu redakcyjnym S. Durleja i J. Gimitruka, Warszawa 2008, pp. 318-319.



# DIFFICULT RETURNS – UNACCOUNTED FOR CRIMES.



“For all these events — the children of the Zamość region accuse the Nazi Germans. I would add a few more words to this, namely: the children of the Zamość region accuse and warn today all those who want war, who pursue it”.

Of the several thousand youngest displaced destined for Germanization, most did not return to their homeland. The adult “Children of the Zamość region,” filled with fear, the trauma of war experiences, often did not find the strength to come to terms with the past. The main organizers of Aktion Zamość, such as Heinrich Himmler, Fridrich Wilhelm Krüger, and Odilo Globocnik, committed suicide after being captured by the Allies. Herman Krumey was not tried until the 1960s. Many of the direct perpetrators of the crimes escaped punishment.

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Source of quote:  
Account of Maria Wilgja, victim of displacement.  
*Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium SS...*, vol. II, p.428.

Photo source:  
Children released from KL Lublin at St. John's Hospital  
(Institute of National Remembrance).

**Archives:****Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance:**

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Voivodship Office of Public Security in Łódź. Photos of members of the KWP (Underground Polish Army).

Voivodship Court in Łódź. Prosecutor's file in the case against Eugenia Pol/Pohl.

A collection of photographs.

**Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Archives:**

A collection of photographs.

National Archives in Lublin:

Union of Armed Struggle - Home Army, Lublin District.

**National Archives in Łódź:**

Disability Pension Office in Łódź.

**National Archives in Zamość:**

Records of the Wysokie gmina, powiat of Zamość.

Main Welfare Council - Polish Welfare Committee in Zamość.

District Office in Zamość.

A collection of photographs.

**The Zamojskie Museum in Zamość:**

A collection of photographs.

**The Museum of the Biłgoraj region in Biłgoraj:**

A collection of photographs.

National Digital Archive

Photographic Archive of Lech Zielaskowski.

Cracow-Warsaw Press Publishing House.

**Zamoyski family collection through the Museum of Old Photography:**

A collection of photographs.

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Museum of Old Photography,

The Zamojskie Museum in Zamość,

The Museum of the Biłgoraj region in Biłgoraj:

The National Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum

As well as the Zamoyski family.

EN DE UA





Ministerstwo Kultury  
i Dziedzictwa Narodowego

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Rzecznik  
Praw Dziecka  
Mikołaj Pawlak



Mecenas Muzeum Dzieci Polskich  
- ofiar totalitaryzmu