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# Encountering anti-Polonism

W obliczu antypolonizmu



## **Chapter 5 – The war years (1939 – 1945)**

**By the Jan Niechwiadowicz**

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**IMPORTANT**

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## Chapter 5: The truth is lost in war

Polish history for a number of years was written when Poland could not defend herself as even the Soviet-controlled Polish government contributed to the falsehoods. Thus, it must be remembered that most scholars working on the history of Poland post-WWII in the twentieth century did so during the communist era, with many Soviet supporters. There has now been a period of time when Poland has been able to attempt to deal with these lies or distortions. Despite this the media often has not been educated enough and continue to spread these myths, falsehoods and lies.

The single greatest misrepresentation regarding Poland based on EA-P data is how the media describes the Nazi German camps as if they were run by Poles and Poland. You may be wondering when this started. Terms such as *Polish concentration camp* may occasionally be used corrected. A good example is Bereza Kartuska. This was a camp set-up by the Polish government. The following chapter covers the usage in relate to the Nazi German camps.

The timetable of coverage of Nazi camps in German-occupied Poland has shown some patterns. The preparations for switching the blame from Nazi Germans to Poles may have started even before World War Two itself.

As part of their anti-Jewish measures before World War Two, Nazi Germany forced out Polish Jews. At the start of 1939, media in the United States of America promoted knowledge about the camps on the Polish frontier. There is currently no proof of any effect on later media but possible was during 1939-1945.

More interesting is what Americans were reading on 1 September 1939 (i.e., the start date of World War Two). There was a sudden interest in Bereza Kartuska. The victims were Ukrainians, not Jews or Communists. As a result it would appear to be based on Nazi propaganda who likewise omitted Jews from the victims.

To me it seems more likely that Nazi German spread these stores to help justify the invasion of Poland rather than to prepare to transfer guilt for crimes in the Nazi German camps. Current research shows that the *Chicago Tribune* was amongst the most numerous promoting Bereza

Kartuska and has gone on to use “Polish concentration camp(s)” 22 times, when they were Nazi concentration camps in German-occupied Poland. The origin of these stories are primarily Associated Press.

The American media also reported that during the German invasion of Poland, the Germans offered to exchange Polish prisoners of war for alleged German civilians in Polish camps. There are no indications of any affect on media later on.

By early October, media in the USA was again spreading news of alleged Germans being released from Polish concentration camps. This was quickly followed by the oldest known usage of the “Polish camp” issue.

The oldest currently known usage of *Polish* in connection with the Nazi German camps was found in the *Globe-Gazette* (Mason City, Iowa). This article was titled “Jews sent to Polish camp” and describes Germans moving Jews from Poland and Austria to the Lublin area. Clearly, at the start of World War Two, you can argue that people wouldn’t be confused by this, but what about as the war went on and afterward?

The next known issue was late in 1939: *Nazi Poland*. Before the end of 1939, we found the first instance of *Polish concentration camps* despite there being no Nazi German camps set up in Poland at that time.

During the war years, we saw almost all the major issues that have continued until today. See the below table of the currently oldest known issues. Other notable early usages of this term outside the USA include *Gazette*, the first to use the term in Canada (9 December 1940), the *Montgomery Advertiser* in the UK (23 July 1941), and *Southern Cross* in Australia (15 August 1941).

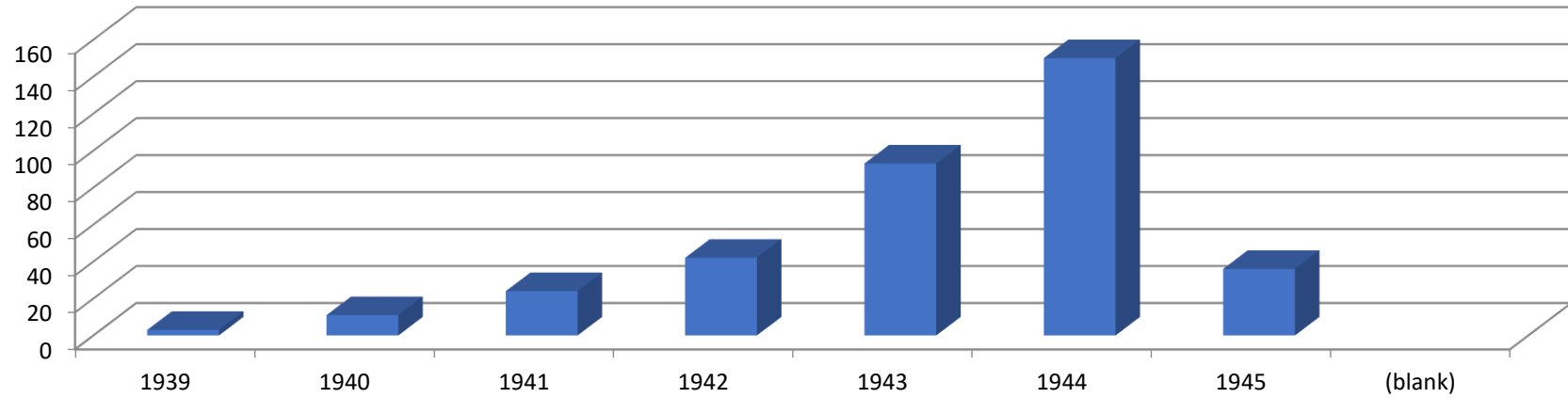
If there is anything more deplorable than the *Polish death camp* term as far as I am concerned, it is moving German camps from outside Poland into Poland. A shocking early example is what Mrs Roosevelt wrote in the “My Day” column published on 25 September 1942 about the conditions in the *Ravensbrück Camp for Women in Poland*.

## Table of oldest known issues

1939	Polish Camp
1939	Nazi Poland
1939	Polish concentration camps
1940	Polish concentration camp
1942	Eastern European concentration camps
1942	Ravensbrück Women's Preventive Detention Camp in Poland
1943	Polish death camp
1943	Polish death camps
1943	Polish extermination camps
1943	Polish labour camps
1944	Polish camps
1944	Polish extermination camp
1944	Polish gas chambers
1947	Polish gas chamber
1947	Polish concentration camp survivor
1949	Dachau in Poland
1950	Polish gas chambers
1961	Eastern European death camp
1961	Theresienstadt, Poland

During the war years, we went from just three pieces of data in 1939 to 11 in 1940 and 24 in 1941, followed by 42 in 1942 and 93 in 1943. For most of the war years, we can see an approximate doubling every year. The largest number was 150 in 1944. This is not surprising, as the news of the Nazi German atrocities became especially known with the liberation of the camps in that year. Strangely, there was a large drop off in 1945 to 36, even considering that it was a partial year.

## Data by War Years

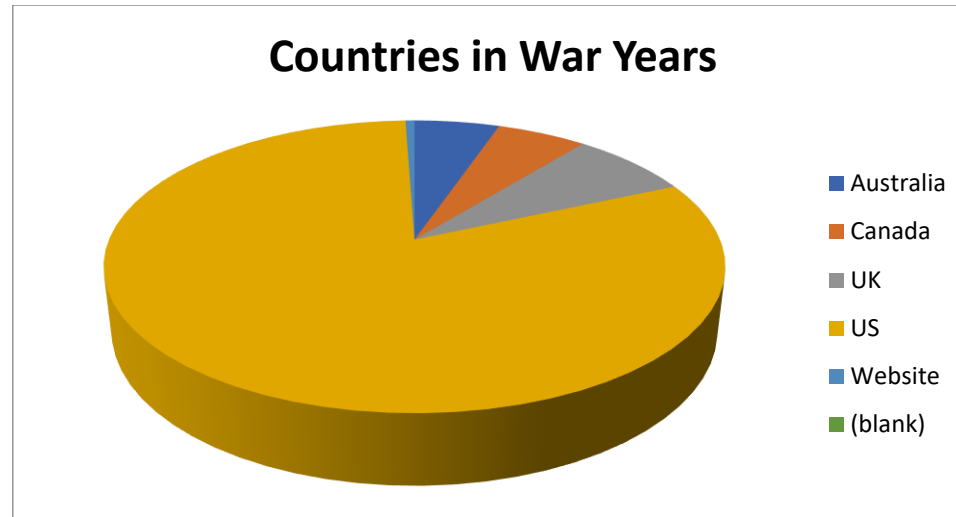


Current data shows that “Polish concentration camp(s)” was the highest in 1940 to 1945 and joint highest in 1939. There was no consistent second throughout WWII, but “Polish death camp(s)” was second from 1943 to 1945.

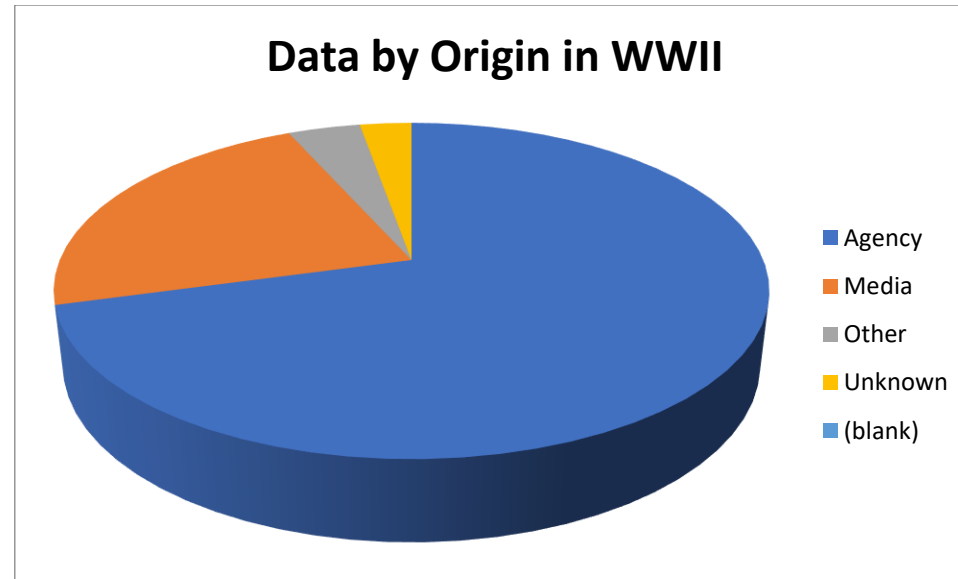
## Data by type

Type	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	(blank)	Grand Total
EC				7					7
GG				11					11
IP					1	24	5		30
NG		1	1	2	1	3	1		9
NZ	1	2			1				4
PC	1		3		1	7	1		13
PCC	1	7	20	18	73	95	16		230
PD					7	11	11		29
PE					1	8	2		11
PG		1		1	4				6
PGC						2			2
PW				3	4				7
(blank)									
Grand Total	3	11	24	42	93	150	36		359

Only four countries have so far been recorded with data in the war years, plus two unknowns, which have been recorded as websites. Not much can be read into this due to our focus on the English language, thus the fact that they are USA (291), UK (27), Canada (20) and Australia (19). Further countries have large internet take-up or, in the USA, large English-speaking populations.



The *Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle* had the most issues, with 14, followed by the *Tampa Bay Times*, with eight. Only 26 media had more than two issues. The bulk of the media only had one issue (154 out of 228 media). To date, monitoring media has been used by those recording these issues. Is this the right way to go? Perhaps the origin is more important. Are news agencies and another syndicate material more important?



Thus, in World War Two, 71% of poor coverage of the Nazi Camps in German-occupied Poland was caused by agencies.

The bulk of the data in WWII was related to “Polish concentration camp” (63) and “Polish concentration camps” (169). This makes up 65% of the known data from that period. The crimes, however, were mostly described as having taken place in Poland or were called “Polish”. It is interesting that Majdanek was the camp mentioned most, followed by Auschwitz.

As a result, the articles mostly imply Polish responsibility for the murderous German action.

German and Polish	148
Polish	93
Nazi and Polish	31
German	36
Nazi and German	19
Nazi, German and Polish	10
Other	7
Unknown	7
Nazi	4
Soviet	3
German and Other	1



Almost 79% of the articles use terms which imply Polish guilt in the Nazi camps and other German atrocities. At least at this stage, the articles also referenced the Germans (60%). The use of “Nazi” was less than 21%, with over half of these also using German. Despite 79% inferring Polish involvement in the Nazi barbarism, only 26.5% are considered as biased against Poland and 69% as neutral.

Some feel that the Jewish media is behind the spread of such misleading terminology such as “Poland’s death camp”, but in the war years that accounted for only 6% of the data.

Out of 262 articles mentioning victims, 165 referenced Jews only as victims. Still, only 69% had Jews as victims. Ethnic Poles were rarely seen as the victims (9.5% in just 25 articles). Modern victim lists include many, but there were no references in the articles studied to disabled, homosexuals, lesbians, LGBT, gypsies, Roma, Sinti, Germans or Ukrainians as victims.

Reporting of the victims made up 81% of the articles studied from World War Two.

Today, the most common claim for the origin of the erroneous term “Polish concentration camp” and similar terms is that the German agency 114 tried to popularize the term to shift the blame for the Holocaust from Germans to Poles. I have yet to see any proof that they even tried. Even if they did attempt to shift the responsibility, is there proof that they succeeded?

## **Summary**

In the war years, the data approximately doubled, caused mostly by news agencies reporting suffering caused by Nazi Germans, with Jews as the victims. Overall, there is currently no clear sign of bias against Poles or Poland.

### 1A. Material

1a1 **Example of articles on Polish camps on the frontier in 1939**

## Polish Frontier Camp Liquidated

Warsaw (WNS)—The camp on the Polish-German frontier at Zbroszyn that has housed 5,000 Jews deported from Germany three months ago will be liquidated soon following an agreement reached between the Polish and German governments. Jewish sources said the expelled Polish Jews possessing real estate or businesses in Germany would be permitted to return in groups of 1,000 and would be given until July 1 to liquidate their property. The Polish government agreed that families of expelled Jews still living in Germany would be permitted to join their husbands and fathers in Poland. A delegation from the Jewish colonization committee left for London to attend the meeting of the Evian Committee on refugees. It will

1a2: Media reporting in 1939 about Bereza Kartuska more than once

Arizona Republic	3
Chicago Tribune	3
Asheville Citizen-Times	2

St. Louis Post-Dispatch	2
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**1a3: Origin of reporting in 1939 about Bereza Kartuska more than once**

Associated Press	24
Chicago Tribune	3
WNS	2
Pennsylvania	2

**1a4: Data from the Chicago Tribune**

Polish concentration camp	16
Ghetto in Poland	9
Polish concentration camps	6
Auschwitz in Poland	6
Polish death camp	4
Auschwitz, in Poland	4
Polish death camps	3
Polish Nazi concentration camp victim	2
Polish camp	2

ghettos of Poland	2
Polish extermination camps	1
ghettos in Poland	1
killing field of Poland	1
Polish prison camp	1
Nazi-era Poland	1
killing fields of Poland	1
Polish labor camps	1
concentration camp of Gross Rosen, in Poland's	1
death camp in Poland	1
Polish slave labor camps	1
Polish-born concentration camp escapee	1
Polish concentration camp victim	1
Polish concentration camp victims	1

1a5: **Example of claims that German civilians were held in Polish camps.**

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**B**ERLIN, Sept. 14—(AP)—The German government, through the Swedish embassy which represents Polish interests in Berlin, suggested today the exchange of several thousand German civilians being held in **Polish camps** for an equal number of Polish war prisoners. The Polish government was reported here to have declined.

1a6: Oldest known example of "Polish camp"

## JEWIS SENT TO POLISH CAMP

German Move Regarded  
as Effort to Establish  
New "Ghetto State"

BERLIN, (U.P.)—Germany is sending thousands of Jews to a "Jewish reservation" in Poland in what was regarded as a move to establish a "ghetto state," it was learned Wednesday.

The entire Jewish population of Mährisch-Ostrau, Austria, and all male Jews of Katowice, Poland, have been forced from their homes and transported to an unknown destination, but which was said to be a "Jewish reservation" on the San river, south of Lublin, Poland. About 10,000 Jews in each city were affected, it was said.

Two thousand Jewish men were taken from Vienna to the same place Oct. 1, and were followed by 1,400 women on Oct. 27. This was reported to be the start of a drive to make Vienna "Jew-free" by March 1, 1940.

1a7: Current oldest “Nazi Poland” – Jewish Telegraphic Agency – 22 December 1939

The entire Suwalki district, in Nazi Poland, has been depopulated of Jews, it was learned here today.

Part of the population, driven into a no-man’s-land, succeeded in entering Lithuania. Some fled to Soviet territory. An estimated 2,700 were transported to the Lublin Jewish “reservation.”

It was learned that a High Commission, with Jewish, Polish and White Russian councillors, will be nominated in Wilno to supervise minority affairs. The Lithuanian Government has agreed in principle to subsidies for refugees in the amount of 50 per cent of sums supplied from abroad. It is estimated that the subsidies will total 250,000 lits monthly.

1a8: Current oldest “Polish concentration camps” – *Daily Independent* (Murphysboro, Illinois) – 28 December 1939

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We suggest to the “German Library of Information” that it send copies of this pamphlet to the residents of Czechoslovakia and to the refugees in the Polish concentration camps, and to the oppressed and persecuted Jews of Germany.

\* \* \*



1a9: Current oldest in Canada – *The Gazette* (Montreal, Quebec) – 9 December 1940

In June there were 300 executions in Warsaw alone; in August the number was even greater; in September among 100 executed were twenty women. These figures comprise only those killed after quasi-legal proceedings. They do not take into account the deaths from torture by the Gestapo, the victims of the prisons and concentration camps who number hundreds if not thousands more. Thousands have died of cold and starvation. The horrors of the **Polish concentration camps** have greatly exceeded any told of Dachau and Oranienburg.

1a10. **Media by numbers in the war years** with at least three issues

<i>The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle</i>	14
<i>The Tampa Bay Times</i>	8
The Philadelphia Inquirer	5
<i>The Chicago Tribune</i>	5
The Jewish Telegraphic Agency	5
<i>The Winnipeg Tribune</i>	5
<i>The Western Mail</i>	4
<i>The Ottawa Journal</i>	4
<i>The New York Times</i>	4
<i>The Des Moines Tribune</i>	4
<i>The St. Louis Star and Times</i>	4
<i>The Fort Worth Star-Telegram</i>	4
<i>The Press &amp; Sun-Bulletin</i>	3
<i>The Brooklyn Daily Eagle</i>	3
<i>The Dayton Herald</i>	3
<i>The St. Petersburg Times</i>	3
<i>The Pittsburgh Press</i>	3

<i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i>	3
<i>The Cincinnati Enquirer</i>	3
<i>The Courier-Journal</i> (Kentucky)	3
<i>The Star Tribune</i> (Minnesota)	3
<i>The Hartford Courant</i>	3
<i>The Austin-American</i>	3
<i>The Indianapolis News</i>	3
<i>The Miami News</i>	3
<i>The Lincoln Star</i>	3