

THE INSTITUTE  
OF NATIONAL  
REMEMBRANCE

**GUIDE**

Warsaw 2009

# Our history creates our



The totalitarian regimes, Nazism and Communism, which ruled over Poland and the Poles for half a century, have left a difficult legacy. It is a legacy of crime, hypocrisy, and decades of distorted history. The Polish state and the public at large failed to get over with it in the first years after 1989. This is why the **Institute of National Remembrance (IPN)** was established by an Act of Parliament in 2000.

Its main responsibilities include taking over and providing access to the archives of the Communist repressive apparatus, scientific research and education in the history of Poland in 1939–1989, the prosecution of the perpetrators of crimes committed at the time, and, since 2007, also the verification of vetting declarations.

The **IPN** exercises its responsibilities through its four services: the **Public Education Office**, the **Office for Preservation and Dissemination of Archival Records**, the **Chief Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes** against the Polish Nation, and the **Vetting Office**, all based at the Headquarters. The **IPN** Headquarters in Warsaw co-ordinates the operations of eleven Branch Offices and the Delegations reporting to the relevant Branch Offices.

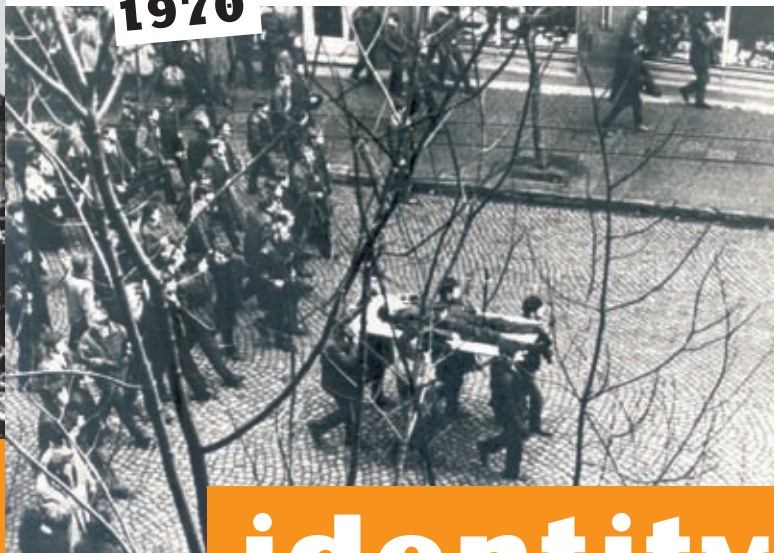
**identity**



1944



1968



1970



1989

W SAMO POŁUDNIE  
4 CZERWCA 1989

Our **history** creates

**identity**

our



1939



1956

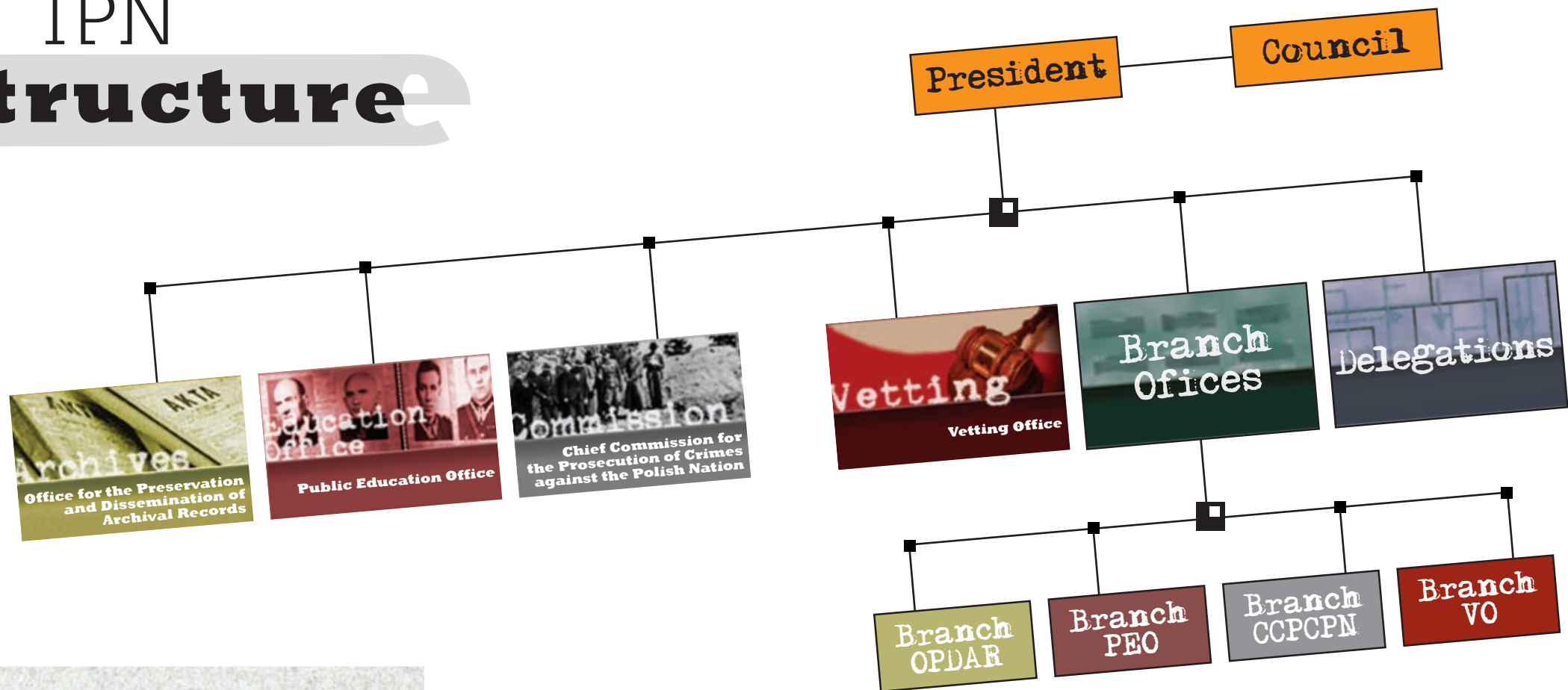


1976



1980

# IPN structure



6

7

For nearly half a century of the Communist rule in Poland, the secret political police, commonly known as *Bezpieka*, built massive archives. They contained not only documents concerning its activities, but also a variety of evidence of the period, reflecting the political, economic and cultural history of post-war Poland.

Therefore archivists form the largest group of the Institute's staff working at its Warsaw Headquarters and at a number of Branch Offices and Delegations. It was them who have carried out the largest archival operation ever in Poland, which involved the taking over of more than 87 kilometres of the **Communist repressive apparatus** files. Currently they are involved in their processing, preservation, and mainly in providing access to them to the persons who were persecuted by the *Bezpieka*, and to researchers and journalists.



Yet the **IPN** is not just the largest Polish archive. It is also a major **educational and scientific institution**, where nearly two hundred historians are involved in research into the recent history of Poland and the dissemination of knowledge on the subject.

The **IPN**'s Public Education Office is **one of the largest publishers** of historical books and it has hosted hundreds of exhibitions presenting various aspects of Poland's history. The "Bulletin of the Institute of National Remembrance", the **IPN**'s monthly bulletin circulated to all secondary schools in Poland, is today the largest historical magazine in the country.

The other autonomous parts of the Institute are the Vetting Office and the Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation. The prosecutors working for the latter have been conducting more than a thousand **investigations into Nazi and Communist crimes**, with numerous living criminals brought to court as a result.

The **IPN** is also active in the **international arena**, its main partners being the Institute's counterparts operating in most of the Central European states.

# Office for the Preservation and Dissemination of **Archival Records**

At the heart of the IPN is its archive, called the Office for the Preservation and Dissemination of Archival Records (OPDAR). It holds more than **87 kilometres of files** produced by the Nazi and Communist repressive apparatus over the years **1939-1989**. This enormous mass of documents is kept in storage facilities situated in Warsaw and in fourteen other cities.

The Institute's archive contains important documents on crimes committed on Polish citizens during **World War II**. However, a much larger resource consists of documents produced by the **Communist repressive apparatus**.

Particularly strong emotions are triggered by materials from what are referred to as **"personal information sources"**, including secret collaborator's (sc) files. A large proportion of the archival resource consists of documents concerning persons whom *Bezpieka* officers called **"figureheads"**. Mainly for political reasons, the persons were under surveillance and also suffered other repressive measures from the Communist security apparatus.

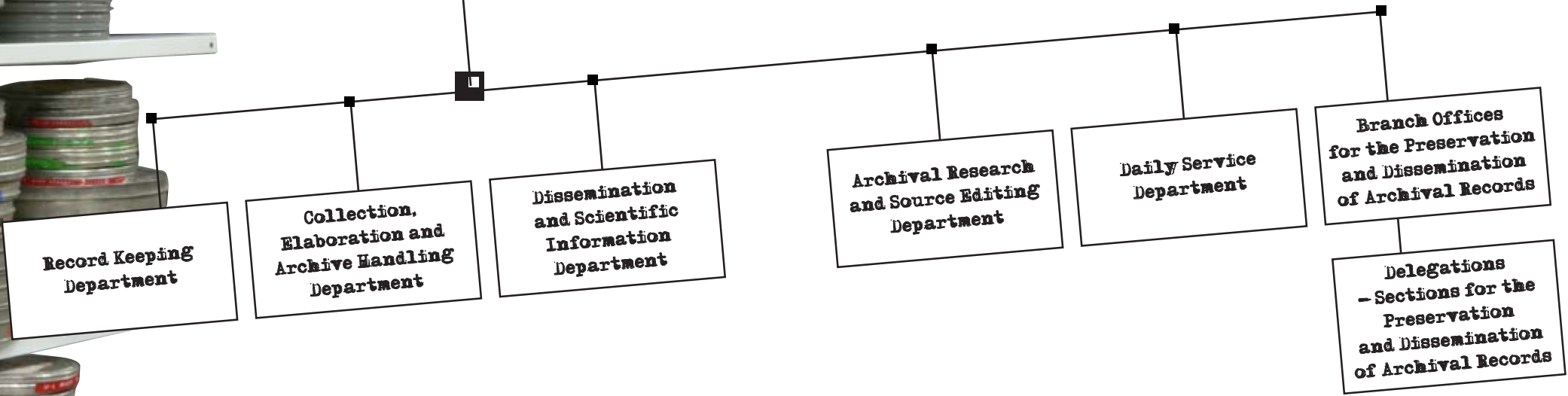
The volume of materials of an administrative nature is equally large, including orders, instructions, reports or minutes of meetings. All those archival materials are an invaluable source to unveil not only the history of secret services in the Polish People's Republic, but also many key events on which no other records have survived.

**Files - records** containing information on several million Poles – form a special part of the archive. The archive also holds **iconographic materials** (such as photographs) and **audio-visuals** (sound and image recordings), which the *Bezpieka* confiscated or produced in the course of its operations.





Several hundred people working for the **IPN** archive service perform the following tasks. Firstly, they **process archival resources** and retrieve requested materials from the stores. Secondly, each year they carry out dozens of thousands of checks in the files and other materials, searching for information for the purposes of authorised individuals and bodies. Archivists also provide access to documents that have survived not only in paper form, but also on microfilms. The number of people interested in the **IPN**'s archival resources has been growing year on year.



It is worth adding that the Institute's archive also **pursues research and popularising activities**. It publishes its own magazine as well as scientifically compiled and edited archival documents.

# Archival Records





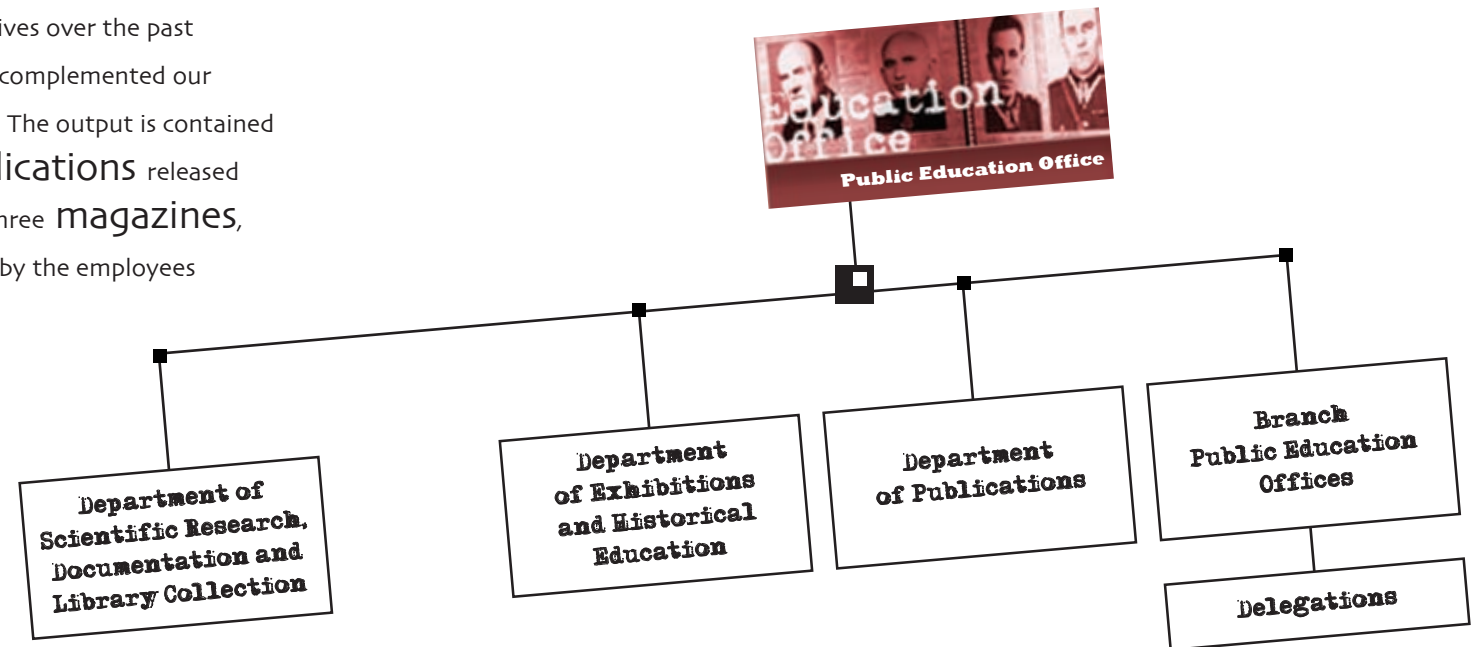
# Public Education Office

The Public Education Office (PEO) pursues its activities in three areas in parallel: **science, education and publishing.**

The scientific activities include undertaking research projects, initiating sessions, conferences, seminars, and supporting individual initiatives and communities, especially veteran circles, in commemorating the recent history of Poland. The educational activity is aimed to promote historical education of Poles and to disseminate the historical knowledge in various forms. The editorial and publishing activities, including ongoing presence on the Internet, are aimed to promote, as widely as possible, the issues tackled by the research and educational departments.

The results of research conducted at the **IPN** archives over the past few years have significantly enhanced and complemented our knowledge of the recent history of Poland. The output is contained in more than four hundred **book publications** released by the **IPN**, in the pages of the Institute's three **magazines**, and in thousands of **articles** published by the employees in the press.

The Institute has hosted hundreds of scientific sessions and seminars, several dozens of which were of an international nature. At the same time, the employees of the **IPN** Public Education Office have managed to make many Poles, especially the youngest generation, interested in the history of our country. This goal was furthered not only by more than two hundred **exhibitions** held since 2000, but also by numerous **talks, open lectures, film shows and training sessions** for teachers. Dozens of film documentaries and theatrical performances have already been made owing to support from the Institute's staff and with the use of its archival resources.

























Meetings with witnesses of history marking major anniversaries in the history of Poland have become a new work formula of the IPN's PEO research staff (combined with public activities and presentation of the results of scientific studies).

Together with the Secretariat of the IPN's President, the PEO research workers have developed four educational websites dedicated to:

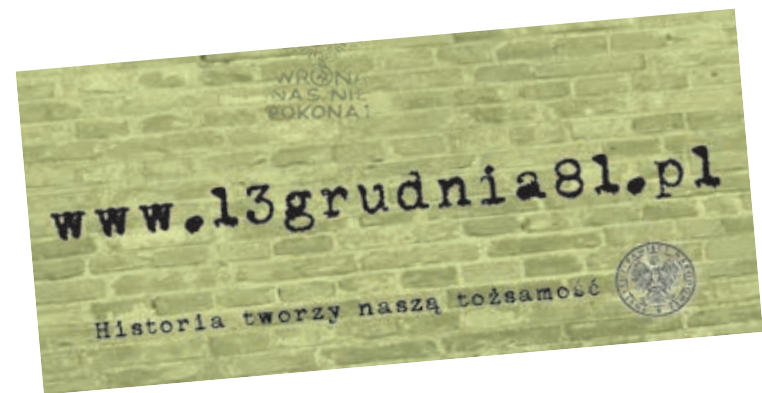
anniversary celebrations, educational websites and other activities of the PEO

- **Martial Law:** [www.13grudnia81.pl](http://www.13grudnia81.pl)
- **March '68:** [www.marzec1968.pl](http://www.marzec1968.pl)
- **Captain Witold Pilecki:** [www.pilecki.ipn.gov.pl](http://www.pilecki.ipn.gov.pl)
- **Solidarity Years 1980-1981:** [www.sierpien1980.pl](http://www.sierpien1980.pl)

In 2009, websites will be launched dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the abolition of Communism and Poland's regaining of independence, and the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

Cultural activities which developed underground, i.e. without consent from the authorities of People's Poland, played an enormous role on the path to independence. It will also be the subject of a dedicated website.

In 2006-2008, co-operation was established with several dailies and weeklies, where historical supplements of published on a cyclic basis, describing major facts from the recent history of Poland.

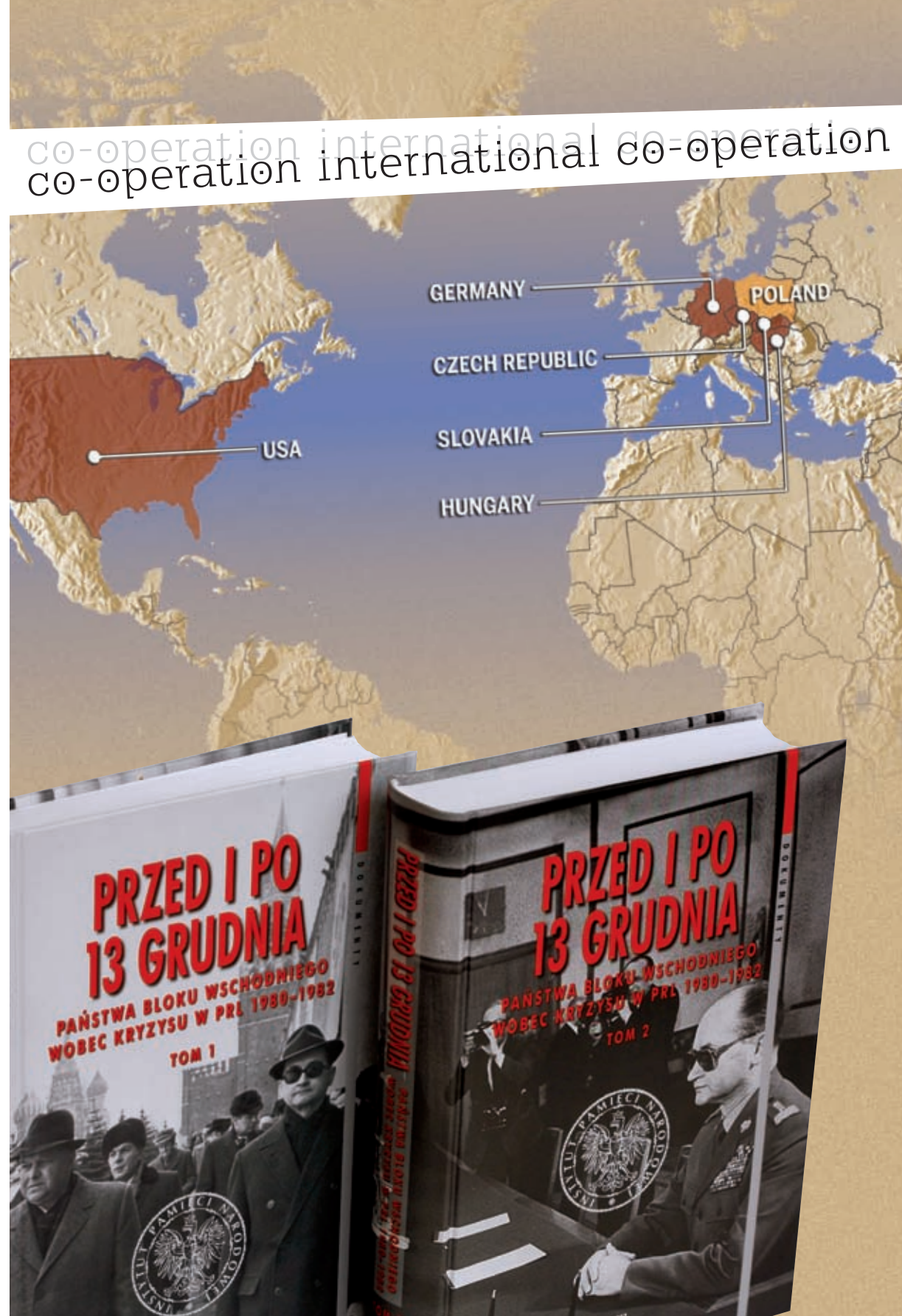


international co-operation international co-operation international co-operation international co-operation international co-operation international co-operation



In the 2006-2008 period, the Institute of National Remembrance co-operated with partner institutions mainly in the **Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, and the USA**. The co-operation involved co-hosting of scientific conferences and undertaking joint research projects. Apart from conferences, the co-operation included projects such as an international edition of the Warsaw Pact documents prepared in a joint effort with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC (the Cold War International History Project). Under the project, the employees of the Public Education Office and the Office for the Preservation and Dissemination of Archival Records are conducting a preliminary survey of the Warsaw Pact materials. Currently the American partner is in the course of translating the first set of documents. A separate volume is scheduled for preparation in 2009 on the involvement of the Polish armed forces in the invasion of Czechoslovakia, dubbed Operation Danube.

Foreign co-operation (with colleagues from partner institutions in Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary) was also an important part of work on a two-volume publication (which appeared in 2006 and 2007) "Before and after December 13th. Eastern Block States and the 1980-1981 Polish Crisis".



# Chief Commission for the **Prosecution of Crimes** against the Polish Nation

Prosecutors of the **IPN** investigation service conduct investigations into Communist, Nazi and other crimes against peace and humanity or war crimes, committed by Communist state officials, and by security bodies of the German Third Reich and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on persons of Polish nationality or on Polish citizens of other nationalities between 1 September 1939 and 31 July 1990. The prosecutors institute criminal proceedings ex officio, and on the basis of criminal allegations filed by victims, individuals and civic organisations.

More than **900 investigations** are pending into Communist crimes committed by Communist state officials, of which 200 concern repressions against the opposition and the Solidarity Trade Union activists in the 1980s. Prosecutors of the **IPN** investigation service are conducting an inquiry into the existence of a criminal association in the former Ministry of Internal Affairs, comprising 44 different leads. One of them is the unlawful activity of the Communist state officials against Polish priests, including the Revs. Jerzy Popiełuszko, Stanisław Suchowolec, Stefan Niedzielak, and Józef Zych. The prosecutors are also inquiring into the fatal assault on the student Stanisław Pyjas on 7 May 1977 in Cracow. Intensive action is also in progress in an inquiry into the death of Grzegorz Przemyk.

In the course of the inquiry, charges have already been brought against 20 former officials of the Communist state. The **IPN** prosecutors have filed a charge sheet against the authors of the martial law led by General Jaruzelski and General Kiszczak.

Investigations are pending into the involvement of Communist state officials into the attempted assassination of John Paul II, the death of the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces General Władysław Sikorski, and the rigged parliamentary elections of 19 January 1947. More than 270 investigations are pending into Nazi crimes and more than 50 investigations concerning crimes of genocide which are not subject to statutes of limitation. The major ones include the investigation into the Katyń crime, which includes measures aimed to identify the personal details of all victims of the crime, and the places of their death and burial.

An investigation is also pending into crimes committed by Germans from the Dirlwanger brigade during the Warsaw Rising, as well as an investigation into the killing of the mayor of Warsaw Stefan Starzyński or into genocide committed in the Warsaw Concentration Camp (Konzentrationslager Warschau).

The efforts of the prosecutors of the **IPN** investigation service have resulted in filing more than 240 charge sheets against about 400 persons, and closing thousands of proceedings with final decisions refusing to start an investigation or closing an investigation. The prosecutors of the investigation service prepare and publish "Crimes of the Past", an account of criminal law issues they have encountered in the course of their investigations.

# The **Vetting** Office

The IPN's Vetting Office has been in operation since March 2007, pursuing the tasks specified in the IPN Act and in the Act on the disclosure of information on documents of the state security bodies from the period 1944-1990 and the contents of those documents. The Vetting Office receives vetting declarations of persons serving or seeking the public functions specified by law. The Office checks whether vetting declarations are true. If a suspicion arises as to their accuracy, the vetting prosecutor prepares vetting proceedings and requests the court to rule that the vetting declaration is untrue. 142,000 vetting declarations were filed with the VO in 2008.

At the Vetting Office, catalogues are prepared and published, containing personal data of employees, officers and soldiers of state security bodies, individuals who held senior positions in the political parties PPR, PZPR, ZSL and SD, and who were members of the Council of Ministers or managers of central bodies of state administration of the Polish People's Republic.

In addition, the IPN's vetting service prepares and publishes a catalogue of persons for whom documents are preserved which testify they were under surveillance of the Communist securities bodies.

The catalogue, posted at <http://katalog.bip.ipn.gov.pl/>, also contains information from the IPN's archival resource on persons holding certain functions in the national and local authorities of the Republic of Poland, as specified by law.

## List of content

Our history creates our identity	2
IPN structure	6
Office for the Preservation and Dissemination of Archival Records	10
Public Education Office	16
Chief Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation	40
Vetting Office	42

EDITORIAL STAFF

.....

TRANSLATED BY

.....

PHOTOS

.....

PUBLISHED BY

Institute of National Remembrance  
ul. Towarowa....., 00-000 Warszawa  
Poland

DESIGN AND TYPESETTING

Katarzyna Dinwebel & Jacek Kotela

PRINT

.....

Copyright © Instytut Pamięci Narodowej  
2009

ISBN 00000000