

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/10590,The-IPN-quotEconomy-of-the-Third-Reichquot-exhibition-presented-in-Szczecin.html>

21.05.2024, 19:00

12.06.2023

The IPN "Economy of the Third Reich" exhibition presented in Szczecin











- We present how Nazi Germany gained wealth as a result of the occupation of Polish lands after 1939," said Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance Prof. Karol Polejowski at the opening of the exhibition in front of the Szczecin City Hall.

The exhibition, opened in Szczecin on 9 June, presents the causes of today's German economic power and explains the origins of the German "Economic Miracle" after World War II. It shows to what extent the infrastructure and technologies from the time of the Wehrwirtschaft, or war economy, was based on the looting of property and exploitation of people from countries invaded by Germany during World War II.

Slave and forced labor of concentration and extermination camp prisoners and prisoners of war was taken advantage of in this way by

some 90 percent of German companies at the time. These companies include: Continental, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen, Siemens, Bayer, Agfa, Dr. Oetker, Hugo Boss, Allianz, Deutsche Reichsbahn (which took over Polish railroad infrastructure), Lufthansa, Deutsche Bank, IG Farben.

German historian Götz Aly calculated that the goods seized by the Germans would be worth at least €2 trillion today. Many cultural assets stolen across Europe are still in German hands.

The opening of the exhibition presenting the concepts and mechanisms of the economy of the Third Reich was attended by Prof. Karol Polejowski - Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance, and Krzysztof Męciński - Director of the Szczecin Branch of the IPN. Representatives of the Social Association Grudzień 70, Styczeń 71, Border Guard, Prison Service and residents of Szczecin were also present.

In his speech, Prof. Polejowski stressed the significance of the fact that the individual economies of the countries invaded by Germany had been drained by the occupant. This further had an impact on economic development in the post-war period. He also pointed out that the damage and destruction impeded the post-war development of economies, including Poland's.

The bilingual Polish-English exhibition "Economy of the Third Reich" will be on display until the end of June. During the holiday season it will be exhibited in seaside towns.

The exhibition was first presented in Warsaw in January 2023. Subsequently, it could be viewed by residents of Gdańsk, Poznań and Wrocław.

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