



WER IST WALTER?

International Perspectives on
Resistance in Europe during
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Edited by

Elma Hašimbegović, Nicolas Moll and Ivo Pejaković

Resistance with Words and Weapons: Michał Borwicz and the Resistance in the Lemberg-Janowska Camp

Markus Roth

The definition of resistance to the National Socialists' regime has been disputed for decades. The core question is how narrowly or broadly the term may or should be defined.¹ A general answer to this question is nearly impossible, as resistance is a reactive term. Depending on which area of Nazi politics one examines, one will deal with different forms of resistance. At best, any action that runs counter to the declared goal of the National Socialists in the respective area could be defined as resistance. According to this, where the National Socialists were interested in dehumanising the persecuted, resistance was already everything that helped preserve the dignity and humanity of the victims.

In his fundamental study of resistance in Nazi concentration camps, Hermann Langbein provided the following broad definition of resistance: "In the camps people were supposed to be morally broken, even physically destroyed. Every action that could raise morale and help to preserve life was directed against the masters of the concentration camps."² This concise definition is also the basis for this discussion of Michał Borwicz's activities in Lemberg-Janowska camp and beyond. Borowicz's actions are exemplary for showing the close connection between literature, documentation and active struggle as different forms of resistance against the National Socialist perpetrators and their helpers.

1 Wolfgang Benz, *Im Widerstand. Größe und Scheitern der Opposition gegen Hitler* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2018), 16–22.

2 Hermann Langbein, ... *nicht wie die Schafe zur Schlachtbank. Widerstand in den nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1985), 57.

From Kraków to Lemberg-Janowska Camp

Michał Maksymilian Borwicz was born in Kraków as Maksymilian Boruchowicz on 11 October 1911, into an assimilated Jewish family.³ Even before the war, literature and political commitment played a major role in his life. Borwicz studied Polish philology at Kraków's Jagiellonian University; politically he was involved in the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*) and in the Zionist movement Poale Zion. Before the war, he appeared in public mainly with literary reviews, essays and the 1938 novel *Rasa i miłość* (Race and Love).

News of the mobilisation in Poland, due to fear of a German attack, reached him in Geneva in late August 1939, where he was taking part in the Zionist Congress. Like Emanuel Ringelblum and other participants, Borwicz made his way back to Poland. However, the travellers had to take a detour via Italy, Yugoslavia and Hungary in order to avoid German control. A few hours before the start of the attack, on the night of 31 August to 1 September, Borwicz crossed the Polish border and finally reached Lviv on the same day. On the evening of 1 September, he set off for Kraków as an army reservist. However, the Polish authorities and the military were in chaos and disintegrating. Many officials left their posts in a hurry. Borwicz was unable to find a unit that he could join. He and a friend were able to reach Zamość, 270 kilometres southeast of Warsaw. There, he first experienced the German invasion on 13 September, then a little later, after the German withdrawal, the Red Army's entry on 26 September. The Red Army stayed in Zamość until the beginning of October 1939. The area was assigned to the Soviet side in the so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939, which divided Europe into spheres of influence between the German Reich and the Soviet Union. Border corrections to the agreement and the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty then led to the withdrawal of the Red Army.⁴

3 Klaus Kempfer, *Joseph Wulf. Ein Historikerschicksal in Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2013), 77-78, 88, 94-97, 100-104, 116; Barbara Breysach, *Schauplatz und Gedächtnisraum Polen. Die Vernichtung der Juden in der deutschen und polnischen Literatur* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005) 84-87; Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record. Jewish Holocaust Documentation in early Postwar Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 209-210; Michał Jagiełło, "Brama pamięci", *Odra*, no. 4 (2013): 43-46.

4 Stefan Gąsiorowski, "Maksymilian Boruchowicz w Lwowie w latach 1939-1943", in *Stosunki Polsko-Żydowskie. Tom 2: Kultura. Literatura, sztuka i nauka w XX wieku*, ed. Zofia Trębacz (Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2020): 134-135.

Borwicz joined the withdrawing Soviet troops, like many other Jews, and went to Lviv. There he was initially busy finding an apartment and procuring supplies. At first, he was active in a Polish literary association, but its activities in Lviv, which was now occupied by the Soviets, soon had to be stopped. Borwicz tried unsuccessfully to flee to Lithuania. After returning to Lviv, he was able to escape the waves of Soviet deportations to Siberia. But these always hovered over him as an impending danger.⁵

After the German attack on the Soviet Union and invasion of Lemberg⁶ in summer 1941, Borwicz lived underground, where he was active against the occupiers. At the end of 1942, however, he was arrested by the Germans for attempting to smuggle weapons into the Lemberg ghetto. He was imprisoned in Lemberg-Janowska camp, from where he continued his underground activities and maintained contact with resistance groups outside the camp. Among other things, he developed close contact during this period with the *Żegota*, the Council for the Support of Jews, which, supported by the Polish government in exile, provided help to persecuted Jews in Poland by procuring false identities, ration cards and other documents, as well as organising accommodation and help for Jews living in hiding.⁷

The Lemberg-Janowska camp – A brief history⁸

The Janowska camp was part of the forced labour camp system in the Galicia district, which was annexed to the General Government after the attack on the Soviet Union. The camp, which was set up by the district's SS and police leader in May and June 1942, was intended to be both a labour camp and a transit camp. The Lviv Jews were to be selected here. Those able to work were still needed, and were to be sent to this or other camps; all others were to be deported to Bełżec extermination camp and murdered there.

5 Gašiorowski, "Maksymilian Boruchowicz", 136-141.

6 Lemberg is the German name of Lviv, which was already used under Habsburg rule. When referencing the German occupation, I use the German name.

7 Gašiorowski, "Maksymilian Boruchowicz," 146; Beate Kosmala, "Ungleiche Opfer in extremer Situation. Die Schwierigkeiten der Solidarität im okkupierten Polen," in *Solidarität und Hilfe für Juden während der NS-Zeit. Regionalstudien 1: Polen, Rumänien, Griechenland, Luxemburg, Norwegen, Schweiz*, eds. Wolfgang Benz and Juliane Wetzels (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 1996), 50-56.

8 Thomas Sandkühler, "Das Zwangsarbeitslager Lemberg-Janowska 1941-1944", in *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager – Entwicklung und Struktur*, eds. Ulrich Herbert, Christoph Dieckmann and Karin Orth (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1998), 606-635.

The Janowska camp was designed to hold 10.000 prisoners, but in March 1943, a high of around 15.000 prisoners had been reached. Janowska was more than just a transit and work camp. It was also the site of the mass murder of the Jewish population. Thousands of people were shot in the camp itself on the terrain of the so-called sand hill (*Piaski*), so that the mass murder and thus their own potential fate were constantly in front of the work prisoners in the camp.⁹

Those Lemberg Jews whose lives were temporarily spared and became prisoners of the camp, when they were able to work, were rented out by the SS to numerous companies in the city, including armaments companies and Wehrmacht companies. They left the camp in columns in the morning and were led to their workplaces, from which they returned to the camp in the evening. This arrangement directly impacted the possibilities and forms of resistance. The organisation of forced labour opened up more opportunities to establish contact – directly or through intermediaries – with groups outside the camp. In addition, leaving the camp every day offered scope for the smuggling of cash registers or even weapons, although the risk of detection by the controls was not low.

From May 1943, the SS began preparing to dismantle the camp. First and foremost, this meant that mass shootings of prisoners began again. Just on 25 May 1943, around 2.000 prisoners were shot. In addition, traces of mass crimes in the Janowska camp were to be removed. Therefore, from June 1943, a specially formed working brigade of Jewish prisoners had to exhume the bodies of the murdered and burn them completely. Finally, in November 1943, SS men surrounded the camp and murdered most of the remaining prisoners. However, the camp was not fully evacuated until 19 July 1944, immediately before the Red Army entered the city. Previously, from time to time, a few Jews were brought to the camp and many of them were killed.

Against this background, the camp's prisoners had little room for illusions about their own fate. It seemed clear that the only way to survive was to survive as long as possible and then find opportunities to escape. For the latter, some saw armed struggle against the perpetrators as a prerequisite. For many, surviving for as long as possible meant not only defying the physical challenges – hunger, possible illnesses, exhaustion from hard

9 Sandkühler, "Das Zwangsarbeitslager Lemberg-Janowska", 606-635; Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941-1944. Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996), 331-337. The following history of Janowska is based on Sandkühler and Pohl.

work. It also meant maintaining the psychological strength needed to be able to even think about life beyond the camp, planning strategies and not being completely overwhelmed by the misery.

On the sense and methods of armed resistance in the camp

The activities of Borwicz and his fellow prisoners in Lemberg-Janowska were not only directed outwards, but also gained great importance within prisoner society and moved between the poles of active struggle on the one hand and maintaining and raising morale through literature on the other. While the benefits of moral or literary resistance for the inmates in the camp could be seen and felt immediately, armed actions and their limits and possibilities were disputed and were the subject of heated discussions. Moreover, there was not just one united resistance in the camp, different groups were active, be it with different political orientations or for practical reasons, since they were in different external working brigades. These different groups did not come together until the liquidation of the Janowska camp, so that the resistance in Lemberg-Janowska was significantly weaker in contrast to Auschwitz and other camps.

This involved questions and risks that were not without controversy within prisoner society. Borwicz documented a dispute about the chances and risks of armed resistance in his report on the Lemberg-Janowska camp, published in 1946: When the prisoners had to fear that current events would break off contact with the outside world and with it the possibility of smuggling weapons that had already been paid for into the camp, fellow inmate Artur fundamentally questioned armed resistance. Artur vehemently opposed the argument that one's dignity should be preserved, even if the fight seemed hopeless: "You're talking rubbish," he blurted out in an annoyed whisper, 'as if you were writing a stupid story about the camp you wanted, but never saw a real camp. As if you are looking at yourselves, not with your eyes, but with the eyes of one who lives in freedom and between this and that business regrets that the Jews (good heavens!) are deprived of their dignity.'"¹⁰

10 Michał Maksymilian Borwicz, "Die Universität der Mörder", in *Nach dem Untergang. Die ersten Zeugnisse der Shoah in Polen 1944-1947. Berichte der Zentralen Jüdischen Historischen Kommission*, eds. Frank Beer, Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel (Berlin: Verlag der Dachauer Hefte/Metropol Verlag, 2014), 105. The original account was published 1946 with the title *Uniwersytet zbirów*.

According to Artur, such acts of resistance have no effect, since the environment is so permeated by anti-Semitism that any possibility of the Jews reacting would be interpreted negatively. Artur said that they, like sheep, go in silent passivity to the slaughterhouse; if they let their desperation run wild, it was Jewish whining; finally, if they resisted, they would be accused of “Jewish impertinence”.¹¹ In any case, such acts would be quickly forgotten. When a Jew killed an SS man with a knife some time ago, this quickly receded into the background in view of the Jews hanged by the SS in revenge, who hung on balconies in the city for days: “The hanging set an example.”¹²

Artur was not open to arguments against this. Some objected that such acts of resistance, which primarily have a symbolic meaning but less direct practical success, were not only aimed to have an external effect. Rather, acts like this also fulfilled an important function internally, as a fellow inmate objected: “The Germans not only force decent people to conspire, but also to solitude. That’s why I think “demonstrations” are necessary. At least for giving the lonely a message every now and then that they are not alone.”¹³

Artur, who harshly rejected such attitudes, finally formulated his motivation for a gun-in-hand resistance, which ultimately wasn’t that different from that of the others: “I want, you know, to defeat these bastards. Don’t just shoot at them, shoot them. That is the difference. And while the prospects are bad, you can’t waste an opportunity. Maximum number of weapons and maximum preparation. So that it’s not just a shootout for your vanity, forgive me... dignity, but that the bastards pay as dearly as possible.”¹⁴ While some people thought that fighting for the sake of fighting, as a sign to those around them and for posterity, seemed to suffice as motivation, Artur demanded in the preparation as well as in the implementation, not to fight for a symbolism, but for a victory. There seems to have been no discussion of using the weapons only to prepare an escape from the camp. The internal disagreements, the lack of weapons, and finally the early liquidation of the camp meant that armed resistance was only discussed and no fighting took place.

11 Borwicz, “Die Universität der Mörder”, 105.

12 Ibid., 105.

13 Ibid., 106.

14 Ibid., 107.

Literature and resistance in the Lemberg-Janowska camp

But things looked different when it came to resistance with words and the role of literature. Certainly, activities in this area could also be characterised as demonstrative acts to protect the dignity of the persecuted, but their immediate benefit was noticeable for everyone involved, so that the literary activities in the Lemberg-Janowska camp did not seem to have been equally controversial. From other places, especially from ghettos, Borwicz reported after the war, there were discussions whether cultural and literary events were permissible in the face of persecution and mass murder. Such discussions took place, for example, in the Warsaw and Vilnius ghettos. Concert events in Vilnius, for example, were rejected by some as irreverent. In early January 1942, in view of the mass murders of Jews in Vilna that had previously been carried out, opponents of the concert wrote on posters: “You don’t hold concerts in a cemetery!”¹⁵

And yet such cultural resistance existed in numerous ghettos, including all major ghettos: Warsaw, Łódź, Vilna, Białystok, Kaunas, Riga and others. It was not just professional authors, well-known actors and actresses and other artists who were involved here. Activists who carried out political underground work and later prepared armed forms of resistance also got involved. And in addition, many laypeople, young and old, wrote and recited their texts for the edification of others in private circles and cafés. Resistance groups organised cultural evenings for their people. For all of this, those involved often accepted a great deal of risk and some deprivation; this type of resistance was so important to them and their listeners. Word and weapon, to put it this way, went hand in hand and supported each other. This is also evidenced by the great importance of songs, often specially written songs, in the partisan movements.¹⁶

15 Michał Maksymilian Borwicz ed., *Pieśń ujdzie ciało... Antologia wierszy o Żydach pod okupacją niemiecką* (Warszawa: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna przy Centralnym Komitecie Żydów w Polsce, 1947), 25.

16 Gudrun Schroeter, *Worte aus einer zerstörten Welt. Das Ghetto in Wilna* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2008); Andrea Löw, *Juden im Getto Litzmannstadt. Lebensbedingungen, Selbstwahrnehmung, Verhalten* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006), 208-210; Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *Getto warszawskie. Przewodnik po nieistniejącym mieście* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2001), 515-608; Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University Nebraska Press, 1996), 215-227; Borwicz, *Pieśń ujdzie ciało...*, 13-16.

Literature as a form of resistance and a means of documenting what was happening in the ghettos and camps was so important to Borwicz and many of his fellow camp inmates that during the war, he helped publish an anthology of underground poetry and wrote his account, *Literatura w obozie* (Literature in the Camp). Finally, after the war, he used the opportunities available to him to publish literary works of Holocaust literature that had come into being during the events themselves.¹⁷

Borwicz dates the beginnings of his own literary work in the camp to January 1943. While clearing snow with a working brigade outside the camp, verses suddenly came to his mind, which he continued to work on in his mind while he was working until the first stanza was finished. He was finally able to secretly write them down on an old piece of paper that he found. He then worked on other stanzas in the same way. Borwicz reports that many works were certainly created in the camp that the poets kept to themselves or only shared with close confidants. Many of these works are undoubtedly lost forever through the death of their authors.¹⁸

Through persistence and fortunate circumstances, Borwicz was finally able to create a stage for the authors and their works so that they could be shared by many. The cleaning brigade he worked in had found an abandoned apartment where they could gather and warm up briefly. After a while, Borwicz was able to persuade the foremen to let them use this apartment for literary evenings as well: “But they finally gave in. Not because of my powers of persuasion, which have very limited power against the harsh logic of the camp. They are more likely to succumb to the longing that slumbers in all of us to put into words a catastrophe that we have lived through, to try to put it into words.”¹⁹ These evenings soon became a success that was appreciated by all. The dimly lit room, whose windows were draped with cloaks for safety, was packed with people. After a brief introduction by Borwicz, the poets presented their works; short papers and non-literary texts were also read and discussed. The success was so resounding that Sunday was the premier and a repeat took place on Wednesday. In the women’s barracks, too, they sought to take their minds off the suffering in the

17 Barbara Breysach, *Schauplatz und Gedächtnisraum Polen. Die Vernichtung der Juden in der deutschen und polnischen Literatur* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005), 85-87.

18 Michał Maksymilian Borwicz, *Literatura w obozie* (Kraków: Centralny Żydowska Komisja Historyczny przy Centralnym Komitecie Żydów w Polsce – Oddział w Krakowie, 1946), 12. The following is based on this book. Only direct quotes are cited in the footnotes.

19 *Ibid.*, 15.

evening. In her report, written during the war, Janina Heschel, who was in Lemberg-Janowska when she was 11 or 12, remembers those evenings that would have been distracting for a moment, but without completely ignoring the terrible reality.²⁰

It didn't stop there. To put it bluntly, literature conquered the entire camp. In one department, for example, a novelist read to fellow inmates from a story about camp life that he was working on. Meanwhile, an inmate kept watch to warn of impending danger. In addition, literary evenings were organised in barracks, which were even covered by the Jewish *Ordnungsdienst*.²¹ In the technical office, prisoners secretly made copies of poems that had been written in the camp and were circulating there, as well as of classics from Polish literary history, the words of which, like those of some hits and folk songs, sometimes took on a completely new meaning through the new reality of the camp. "It is not the words that added something to the situation, but the situation has added something to the words,"²² Borwicz put it. As a rule, however, most of the works may have been passed on orally. The literary evenings described by Borwicz were the exception; by rule many poems were quietly read to the bystanders or those marching around a small group at work or on the march there or back to the camp.

Borwicz, himself a trained philologist, urgently warned against discussing the literary value of the works created in the camps, in the ghettos or elsewhere under high pressure of persecution in isolation: "One thing is certain: None of them may be evaluated without considering the conditions in which they were created."²³ Borwicz captured the conditions under which prisoners wrote literature in a few words: "One wrote in moments of cold and hunger. Between one execution and the next, between one series of lashes and the next."²⁴ Therefore, short forms of literature such as the poem naturally dominate. Since writing material was scarce, there are many poems in simple form, with short stanzas whose verses rhyme, as

20 Borwicz, *Pieśń ujdzie ciało...*, 36.

21 The Jewish Order Service (*Ordnungsdienst*) was set up on the orders of the German occupiers. It was responsible for maintaining internal order in numerous ghettos and some camps. In many places, the *Ordnungsdienst* was also involved in rounding up people for deportation. The behaviour of many members of the *Ordnungsdienst* in this regard, as well as widespread corruption, led to harsh criticism within Jewish society even at the time.

22 Borwicz, *Literatura w obozie*, 38.

23 *Ibid.*, 68.

24 *Ibid.*, 44.

they were so much easier to memorise – whether for a lecture in the camp or for transmission afterward.

The form gave way to the content, sometimes even this was not so important, but the mere presence of literature in the camp was enough to lift prisoners up: “A supporting arm of a compassionate friend whose mere presence forces you to ‘pull yourself together.’”²⁵ First and foremost, literature looked after the psyche of the prisoners, raised them up a bit morally and gave expression to their suffering and longings. In this way, it counteracted the psychological oppression and dehumanisation that the National Socialists intended to occur in the camps and ghettos. Sometimes, it allowed them to draw new strength and confidence. Many prisoners apparently valued these cultural activities so highly that they accepted the enormous risks associated with them. Literature and culture were bridges back to the prisoners’ pasts, where, unlike in the camp, they were able to lead a normal and self-determined life. And they were bridges to a longed-for future in which they would be free again. This bridging function of cultural activities in the camp was of central importance for many prisoners.

In addition to literature’s intellectual importance, which should not be underestimated, it fulfilled other functions, some of which were closely linked to armed forms of resistance. On the one hand, it explicitly served to document what was happening in the camp. “This goal,” writes Borwicz, “was almost self-evident. The situation dictated it.”²⁶ The unprecedented personal experience was not only to be recorded, but these texts were also to be smuggled out of the camp so that some of them could still be used as educational material during the war, and some only afterwards. This happened with the help of various contacts with the outside world.

The political resistance, which wanted to arm itself for an armed struggle, also benefited from the literary life in the camp. The literary evenings in barracks, for example, offered resistance fighters the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas without arousing the suspicions of security service or spies. Because unlike conspiratorial political meetings, literary evenings were generally accepted and therefore not threatened by denunciations, while some saw political or armed resistance as an unnecessary danger for everyone. In this way, resistance fighters minimised the risk of being discovered in the shadow of the literary evenings. In addition, the smuggling

25 Ibid., 22.

26 Ibid., 25.

of literature could lower the inhibition threshold and be the gateway to arms smuggling. Those who had just started to work conspiratorially and were willing to take certain risks were less frightened by this step than someone who had never smuggled anything into or out of the camp. And finally, numerous personal 'overlaps' testify to the particularly close connection between literature and resistance in the Lemberg-Janowska camp. Leading figures in the armed struggle were poets themselves – in addition to Borwicz, these included S. Friedman and A. Laun, among others.²⁷

But the smuggling of texts and documents did not stop there. Together with others, Borwicz organised the escape of the twelve-year-old girl Janina Hescheles from Lemberg-Janowska camp. She had lived in various hiding places in Lemberg but had been caught and had to live in the ghetto. From June 1943 until her escape in October 1943 she was a prisoner in Janowska. There, she joined the circle of literati; writing and reciting poems. This is how Borwicz became aware of her and made the decision to help her escape from the camp. Active support came from the Kraków Council for the Support of the Jews around Maria Hochberg-Mariańska and others who cared for the girl in Kraków. There she was supposed to write about her time in Lemberg-Janowska to describe the camp and the crimes there from the perspective of a child. After the war, when Borwicz was working in the Kraków branch of the Jewish Historical Commission, he set about editing Janina Hescheles' notes for a publication. In 1946, the book was published under the title *Oczyrna dwunastoletniej dziewczyny* (Through the Eyes of a Twelve-Year-Old Girl).²⁸

Epilogue: From Poland to Paris

The organised escape of Janina Hescheles points to Borwicz's later work, in which resistance with word and weapon as well as documentation continued to play a major role. After escaping the camp, Borwicz kept up his resistance work. He was a member of the Polish Socialist Party and the only Jewish commander of a regional partisan unit in the Miechów District

27 Wassili Grossman and Ilja Ehrenburg, eds., *Das Schwarzbuch. Der Genozid an den sowjetischen Juden* (Reinbek: Rowohlt Verlag, 1995), 180.

28 Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego, 303/V/425/H 5528; Arolsen Archives, T/D-464 173; Preface of Maria Hochberg-Mariańska in: Janina Hescheles, *Oczyrna dwunastoletniej dziewczyny* (Kraków: Wojewódzka Żydowska Komisja Historyczna w Krakowie, 1946), 9–15.

in northern Kraków.²⁹ He was also in contact with the resistance movement in Auschwitz, namely the Socialists under Józef Cyrankiewicz, one of the leaders of the Fighting Group in Auschwitz (*Kampfgruppe Auschwitz*). Again, Borwicz devoted himself not only to the political and armed struggle, but also to literature. During this period, he wrote his report on literature in the camp and continued to collect literary works, mainly poems, about persecution and resistance, a small part of which he published in an underground publication.

Naturally, journalistic activities remained very limited during the German occupation of Poland. After the liberation, however, that changed abruptly. Borwicz took over the management of the Kraków Jewish Historical Commission, in which Joseph Wulf and Nella Rost were also active.³⁰ They published numerous diaries, memoirs and literary works in rapid succession. The latter had an exceptionally high status in the Kraków Jewish Historical Commission, which can primarily be attributed to Borwicz's special commitment. He was now able to seamlessly continue his activities in the camp and underground. As early as 1946 he published three books – his text about literature in the camp, written before the liberation, his memoir about Lemberg-Janowska, which he characterised as the university of murderers and under the title *Ze śmiercią na ty* (With Death by You), a collection of poems from Lemberg-Janowska and from the partisan unit. The large anthology of poems, *Pieśń ujdzie cało...* (The Song Will Escape Undamaged...), came the following year, in which numerous poems by more than 70 authors are collected. Since Borwicz saw it as something like a kind of lyrical documentation of the Holocaust,³¹ he focused on works that were created during the persecution and thus bear witness to it with immediacy. Moreover, the poems covered a wide range of topics – persecution, self-assertion, resistance, mass murder and the attitude of the non-Jewish Polish population. This important anthology, which, together with the significantly thinner brochure on which it is based, can be seen as a core text

29 Kempter, *Joseph Wulf*, 78. For the following, see Kempter, *Joseph Wulf*, 85, 88, 94-97, 100-102. Joseph Wulf came from Krakow and was active in a Jewish resistance group there. He was arrested and deported to Auschwitz in 1943. After the war, he worked for the Jewish Historical Commission before emigrating with Borwicz in 1947. Wulf later lived in Berlin, where he published numerous documentaries on the Holocaust.

30 Jockusch, *Collect and Record*, 84-120.

31 Among other things, he writes in his introduction that the works are a valuable source for investigation, not least because of the fact that they exist and were created in a specific place at a specific time. Borwicz, *Pieśń*, 40.

of Polish-Jewish Holocaust literature, which was expressly published for a Polish non-Jewish readership.³²

However, these bustling activities after the end of the war only lasted for a short time. The Stalinization of Poland seemed to repel Borwicz and awaken the feeling that he was also personally threatened. When he travelled to Sweden on behalf of the Jewish Historical Commission in early 1947, he heard of an imminent trial against him, which was to focus primarily on his activities in the non-communist underground. He never returned to Poland. According to another account, Borwicz was warned of his arrest by Józef Cyrankiewicz, the then General Secretary of the Polish Socialist Party and Prime Minister, whom he knew from his underground activities under German occupation.³³ In June 1947 he travelled on from Sweden to Paris, where he set up the Center for the Study of the History of Polish Jews (*Centre d'Études de l'histoire des Juifs Polonais*) together with Joseph Wulf, of which Borwicz became scientific director. In this function, too, he advocated for a broad view of the events. At a conference in November 1947, he advocated for considering the Holocaust as an unprecedented event and for developing new methods of historiography such as oral history, since traditional methods were no longer sufficient. During this time, Borwicz and Wulf drafted several book projects, which, however, came to nothing. A short time later, there was a dispute between the two and Wulf left the institute in 1950. Borwicz continued his work and sought academic recognition. In 1953 he received his doctorate from the Sorbonne on a topic that had accompanied him for many years: Jewish writing under German rule.³⁴ Despite all his activity, Borwicz remained an outsider in academic life. Nevertheless, he continued his work on the Holocaust in general, its literature, and the history of Jewish resistance in particular. Together with a few other survivor historians he was one of the pioneers of Holocaust historiography and the research of Jewish resistance. Borwicz was never able to build on the brief heyday of his journalistic work in the early postwar years in Poland as he would have liked. He died in Paris at the end of August 1987.

32 Breysach, *Schauplatz*, 85-87.

33 Vgl. Jagiełło, "Brama pamięci", 44.

34 Michał Maksymilian Borwicz, *Écrits des condamnés à mort sous l'occupation allemande (1939-1945). Étude sociologique* (Paris: Edition Presses Universitaires de France, 1954).

WER IST WALTER?

Resistance against Nazism, fascism, occupation and collaboration occurred throughout Europe during World War II. But how much do we know about this history in other European countries? Gathering 32 contributions and case studies on the history of this resistance, as well as on its transmission after 1945, especially in museums, the present book is an invitation to look at resistance in Europe in an interdisciplinary, international, transnational and comparative perspective. It is the result of the international research project “Wer ist Walter? Resistance against Nazism in Europe” which gathered historians, curators and other researchers mainly from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France and Germany.



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evz Remembrance
Responsibility
Future

on the basis of a decision
of the Bundestag



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