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Child forced labour: an analysis of ego documents throughout time

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This article centralises a unique collection of ego documents created under Communism in which Polish former child forced labourers articulate their war experiences. A comparative analysis of them with recent testimonies reveals that these ego documents offer a more nuanced depiction of Germans and display richer information on the specific working conditions and daily routine for children than the contemporary ones. A comparative reading of the archival testimonies with their published equivalents shows how the streamlining of a publicly acceptable version of the past under Communism went both ways, that is, at times foregrounding the propaganda content of autobiographical wordings, but also at other moments downplaying this element. The collection increases our understanding of child forced labour experiences during the Second World War, specifically the ways in which children perceived that experience, and offers insights into the negotiated appropriation of Communist ideology at the individual level.

Keywords: children; forced labour; Second World War; Poland; testimonies; censorship

Introduction

Former forced labourers from Central and Eastern Europe did not receive any financial compensation for their war employment for a long time and are assumed not to have been given a place in public remembrance during Communism. However, a collection of autobiographies by, and interviews with, Polish former forced labourers was composed in the 1960s and 1970s. The environment in which this collection could arise was specific to Poland and unique in Central and Eastern Europe. After 1956, Polish researchers received more autonomy than their colleagues in other Warsaw Pact countries, and the regionalised science landscape favoured research on Polish–German relations to be undertaken in Poland's borderlands. Moreover, Polish humanities nurtured their tradition of autobiographical sociology founded by Florian Znaniecki in the early 1920s. The view of these ego documents on forced labour created under Communism has long been that they are saturated with propaganda.¹ This article, however, points to their unique value in answering questions on interpersonal relations and everyday life routines. If analysed with the circumstances of its rendition, and in comparison with recent ego documents, the collection enables us both to deepen our knowledge about child forced labour and to evaluate the adaptive potential of Communist ideology on remembering the self.

I. Polish child forced labour

After Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, the Polish territory under German control was divided into two zones. Whereas about 40% was incorporated into the German

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Reich, the rest was transformed into the General Government. Policies towards the inhabitants of these zones at first differed significantly, but with time practices converged. In the annexed territories, policies were targeted at Germanisation and discrimination against, or deportation of, undesired inhabitants.² On 1 April 1940, a compulsory service regulation (*Dienstpflichtverordnung*) obliged everybody over the age of 12 to work.³ After a measure issued on 26 October 1939 had prescribed the employment of Polish citizens aged between 18 and 60 in the General Government, the minimum age threshold was lowered to 14 years on 14 December.⁴ The problem caused by these violations of the German Youth Protection Act (*Jugendschutzgesetz*) prohibiting labour for persons under the age of 18 was solved by a decree on 1 September 1941 calling the provisions inapplicable to Polish children.⁵ Practices went beyond the legal framework, as children aged between 13 and 15 in a weak state of health were also considered eligible, and children deported with family members could work from the age of 10 upwards.⁶ Unemployed Polish citizens in the annexed territories and in the General Government needed to register at the employment-exchange service (*Arbeitsamt*) and could be called up for work.⁷ Later, the police also organised razzias in streets, at public gatherings and in schools⁸ and sent recruits to transit camps (*Umsiedlerlager*), also called Poles' camps (*Polenlager*).⁹ After a race examination, children were divided into those entitled for Germanisation and those to be sent off for forced labour.¹⁰

In the spring of 1942, these policy measures resulted in the 10 to 14 year age cohort being massively recruited. East Prussian farmers complained that two 10-year-olds were not 'a proper equivalent' of one male adult.¹¹ Their complaint touches upon an important aspect of child forced labour. Until the age of 12, children were entitled to limited schooling, but after that age no legal measure foresaw differences in the workload for children and adults.¹² The amount of work children needed to perform was arbitrarily set in an undocumented negotiation between trustees and employers.

Like their adult counterparts, Polish child workers needed to obey a long list of police orders. They had to wear a 'P' sign knitted on their clothes, could not leave their lodgings after the curfew, had limited access to public transportation, only received holiday in exceptional cases and suchlike.¹³ Disobedience was punished and could lead to being sent to a work re-education camp (*Arbeitserziehungslager*) for children under the age of 16, or a concentration camp for teenagers.¹⁴ Whereas Zofia Bigorajska claims that 35% of the authors of autobiographies about forced labour, including adults and children, report having been sent to such camps, Feichtlbauer estimates it happened to one out of 20 workers.¹⁵ This discrepancy may indicate that those who were sent to camps later felt a stronger need to write down their experiences than other forced labourers.

Estimates about the number of Polish child forced labourers are necessarily imprecise. Herbert Ulrich states that 5.7 million foreign workers were active in Germany in August 1944, of which 1,659,764 were Poles.¹⁶ In a more recent work, Mark Spoerer estimates that, out of a total of 13.5 million foreign workers, there were 1.6 million Polish Prisoners of War, forced labourers and concentration-camp prisoners, and 1.5 million Soviet and Polish child forced labourers.¹⁷ Two-thirds of the approximately 1.6 million Polish forced labourers were employed on farms, with the others working mainly in industry.¹⁹ Among the German provinces, Brandenburg was the most popular destination, with 162,391 Polish forced labourers on 30 September 1944. It was closely followed by Eastern Prussia, with 144,511, including about 20,000 children.²⁰

Decree (*Anordnung*) Nr. 51 from 1 October 1940 anticipated the employment of Polish women between the ages of 16 and 20 with some knowledge of German and an 'acceptable racial appearance'.²¹ The age category was widened, with the result that in mid-1944 9519

Polish female domestic servants between the ages of 14 and 35 were officially registered.²² Whereas some domestic workers came to be treated as family members, practices we would nowadays labelled trafficking were also evident.²³

II. Polish child forced labour remembrance

The topic of enforced foreign-labour compensation appeared on the German political agenda in the early 1990s. The Foundation of Polish-German Reconciliation (Fundacja 'Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie', FPNP) was established in order to distribute 732 million Polish zlotys to former camp inmates, forced labourers, prisoners and children between 1992 and 2004.²⁴ In 1998, the threat of American court cases demanding financial compensation for wartime forced labour from those German industries that had employed forced labourers served as a trigger for increased political engagement. The Foundation for Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (Stiftung für Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft, EVZ) was made responsible for bringing historical justice in the form of financial compensation to those forcibly employed in wartime industry. As former labourers from Western Europe had already received financial compensation, the initiative was specifically designed for the so-called 'forgotten victims' from Central and Eastern Europe.²⁵ Statistics of the EVZ show that former children were an important category of compensation receivers. With the help of EVZ's Polish partner, the FPNP, 59,641 women and 49,075 men who had been children between the ages of 12 and 16 during the Second World War and were still alive at the beginning of the twenty-first century received compensation because they had been camp survivors, forcibly employed in the industry or belonged to deported families.²⁶ In addition, some former children of the 68% of all Polish forced labourers who had been employed in the agricultural sector received minimal compensation.²⁷

In order to shed light on the specific characteristics of mostly undocumented labour experiences, EVZ and FPNP representatives financed the gathering of autobiographical texts and interviews, which were analysed narratively for the articulation of war and disbursement experiences.²⁸ Filipkowski pointed out that the disbursement process created a collective identification among former Polish forced labourers who received compensation payments, which enabled them to interpret and utter their individual war experiences.²⁹

It is assumed that the topic of Polish Second World War forced labour was not touched upon during Communist times. That it nevertheless received public attention in the 1960s was a consequence of the specific way the Second World War was remembered in Poland. Whereas before the Thaw, the official Polish narrative on war memory had focused on the Soviet victory over Fascism achieved by the Soviet Army and Polish forces battling at its side, the Second World War came to be presented as a united struggle of all Polish fighters against Fascism who had fought for their Motherland, a definition extendable to different social groups, after 1956.³⁰ Moreover, the image of an unsafe Polish-German border caused by the absence of a post-Second World War Peace Treaty was considered a nationalising tool to secure Poland's borders and to outline the necessity of Soviet protection.³¹ By the mid-1960s, these evolutions had made the suffering of the ordinary Pole, surrendered to the violence of Germans, into an archetype of national identification.³² Child war survivors were presented as personifications of the nation's vulnerability:

Since the dawn of history, children have always been the greatest wealth of a nation, its hopes and its future. In all the many wars, even the most barbarian, there was a concern for the preservation and protection of children. These unwritten moral laws were respected. The crime committed against children by Hitler's own brand of fascism is the dirtiest stain on the conscience of mankind.³³

Three institutions supported the proliferation of this mix of martyrology with messianism by means of research and heritage projects.³⁴ In the mid-1960s, the veterans' association The Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację, ZBoWiD) established a commission investigating the possibility of making financial claims on the West German authorities.³⁵ Although German courts announced that claims could only be considered after a Polish-German Peace Treaty had been signed, and members held suspicions that this state body was using their case in order to incite anti-German feelings, the efforts of the commission resulted in the first writing contest about forced labour. Organised in co-operation with the Trade Union of Farm Workers (Związek Zawodowy Pracowników Rolnych) in 1964, the contest gathered 350 testimonies, of which 30 were published, including two from former child forced labourers.³⁶

In the wake of the twentieth anniversary of the End of the Second World War, the Head Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland (Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, GKBZH) commissioned research and organised writing competitions in order to document German war crimes.³⁷ Fragments of the 359 autobiographies of former forced labourers from the 1965 writing competition survive in two publications by Zofia Bigorajska, containing three testimonies from former child forced labourers from East Prussia.³⁸ Bigorajska's editorials proliferated the myth of innocent children violated by Germans and aimed at mobilising readers against the German archenemy:

Let these memories and materials once again remind us what Nazism was. Let them remind Western European factory owners, landlords and farmers that their prosperity today is based on, among other things, the torment and tears of a Polish child, on the adversity of a Polish girl brutally separated from her family and homeland, on the slave labour of adults and children, young boys and girls.³⁹

The Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom (Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walki i Męczeństwa, ROPWM) was a governmental organisation advising authorities on the way the Second World War should be remembered on former sites of struggle, such as concentration camps, and with reference to the suffering of civilians. It played an important role in arrogating to ethnic Poles the concentration-camp experience. In 1967, for example, it successfully advocated for a state resolution being passed in the Polish Parliament in which concentration camps became recognised as places where people of various nations had heroically suffered without any reference to the Holocaust being made.⁴⁰ Significant disapproval against the way the Second World War was officially represented can be found in the Pastoral Letter of the Polish bishops to their German Brothers sent on 18 November 1965. Besides being an invitation to the celebrations of Poland's 1000-year anniversary of Christianisation in 1966, the letter aimed at breaking through barriers of mistrust between Poland and Western Germany regarding recognition of the Polish-German border and reconciliation for crimes committed during the Second World War.⁴¹

Interest in the Second World War diminished in the 1970s, when Edward Gierek tried to offer Poles a better future instead of a eulogised national past. More methodological autonomy and regional perspectives within the historiographical discipline could now flourish.⁴² An interesting example of this is the follow-up writing competition on forced labour the GKBZH organised in co-operation with the Olsztyn Research Centre in 1970. In the early post-war period, this state-financed institution had been charged with the mission to repolonise the lands that had formerly belonged to German East Prussia.⁴³ The director of the newly founded German Studies department, Bohdan Jerzy Koziełło-Poklewski, was born in 1934 in Eastern Poland and deported with his mother to Germany

for forced labour, after which he had moved to Olsztyn.⁴⁴ He felt affinity with the topic and published both selections of the gathered ego sources and his analysis of these.⁴⁵ The Centre's engagement can be explained by the fact that publishing testimonies of Poles who had been forced to work on German lands and had stayed there afterwards legitimised the sovereignty switch of the region after the Second World War. But, in contrast to Bigorajska, Koziełło-Poklewski aimed to give a wide spectrum of forced labourers' memories including their 'most subjective opinions and interpretation of facts'.⁴⁶

After a bilateral agreement was signed with West Germany over the Oder-Neisse border in December 1970 – which made the border line *de facto* unchangeable – and the border with East Germany had been opened in 1972, more Poles started to look differently at their Western neighbours. The stereotype of the eternally evil German gave way to a fascination with Western lifestyles and the further unravelling of the German past of part of the Polish territory.⁴⁷ In the summer of 1974, for example, the Wrocław branch of the Studenckie Koło Naukowe Historyków (The Student's Research Association of Historians) conducted 60 interviews in the former province of East Prussia, among which nine were with former child forced labourers.⁴⁸

Although the Polish writing competitions and interview project from the 1960s and 1970s gathered a higher number of testimonies than the recent German initiatives, one should not overestimate the place former forced labourers were given in Polish public remembrance under Communism. Concentration-camp prisoners especially benefitted from the Holocaust being purposely ignored, since they could be presented more easily as resistance fighters for the national cause and also had their representatives among the post-war political elite.⁴⁹

III. Methodology

From the ego sources originating in the 1960s and 1970s ego that documented former forced labour, I was able to gather 31 ego sources (of which 22 were archived, 22 published, and 13 both) of former child forced labourers.⁵⁰ The collection underwent a three-fold comparison. On a primary level, archived ego documents were compared both with the published analyses of Steinert and Filipkowski and with eight more recent testimonies.⁵¹ Comparing testimonies from Communist and post-Communist times allows the unravelling of differences in historical contexts and the way narrators transmit knowledge of their past experience in these contexts.

On a second level, the findings were compared with studies comparing eyewitness testimonies over time. After Henry Greenspan had discovered the consistency of early and later post-war testimonies, other scholars have come to similar conclusions.⁵² Comparative studies of testimonies composed by Jewish child war survivors throughout the post-war period have also been conducted. Following psychological research on child eyewitnesses in court, child accounts are no longer dismissed out of hand; instead the focus is now on the strengths and weaknesses of these accounts. This has encouraged historians researching the Holocaust to focus on child agency in acting and post-action narrating, instead of perceiving children as pure objects in historical events and of narratives.⁵³ The fact that there are shortcomings in children's use of language and references to time and place cannot be a reason to overlook their rich descriptions of interpersonal relations and everyday life conditions. These descriptions contribute greatly to the reconstruction of a fuller picture of life during the Second World War.⁵⁴ Boaz Cohen and Rita Horváth, for example, discovered how attached Jewish children in concentration camps were to their peers in the struggle for survival.⁵⁵

Comparing the testimonies of child forced labourers over time has additional potential. In contrast to the early post-war Jewish ego sources, the Polish collection was created under a Communist regime. My analysis allows for an evaluation of the changing relationship between the individual and ideology under Communism. My third level of analysis – a meticulous comparison of articulations of the self in archived and published ego documents – pinpoints the degree of individual appropriation of ideology and the level of critical detachment from proposed ideologised content.⁵⁶

IV. Similarities in Polish child forced labour narratives over time

Although everybody's forced labour experience was different, it is possible to discern narrative patterns in the way individuals gave meaning to what they experienced during the war. While comparing ego documents from the 1960s and 1970s with recent interviews, there is a surprising recurrence of narrative patterns. The way people recall their child forced-labour experience happens to be consistent over time, regardless of the different time contexts in which the testimonies were created.

Polish former child forced labourers narrate their leaving of home for an often unknown destination as a painful rupture of their life path causing them to grow up in a world with unfamiliar social rules.⁵⁷ Czesław Łuszczyński, for example, was transported from his village Modlin in Mazovia to the transit camp in Działdowo. He recalls how he awaited his race examination in a dorm: 'The night was just a frightening blur. Why did my mother ever give birth to me? How could someone as stupid as me be working for a German? I saw my whole life flash before my eyes.'⁵⁸

After children had been selected for labour, most were exhibited at a local market. Many narrate in detail the experience of being offered for sale like cattle, as this exemplified the humiliation that was to accompany their later labour experiences.⁵⁹ Halina Chybińska's description points to the fact that the selling was especially difficult for children, as they were wanted the least: 'Of the whole transport only a few were left – all children. Nobody wanted to buy us. Every farmer took one look at us and walked away.'⁶⁰ Halina recalled doing her utmost to be selected. She wanted to be the good girl, she wanted to be chosen, as if they were picking teams for a football match. Finding herself in an extremely unfamiliar situation, she dealt with it by adopting behaviour and expectations from a situation that she *was* familiar with as a child – namely, playing a game and wanting to impress.

References to humiliation reappear throughout the testimonies.⁶¹ Franciszek Parda described how he was treated as a non-person while digging trenches in 1944 against the advancing Red Army: 'Forced labourers were treated more strictly. Trench-digging took place even in pouring rain, which led to landslides/subsidence. Tragic accidents frequently occurred, involving people being buried alive.'⁶²

Concern for the family is the fourth similar element characterising the earlier and recent testimonies.⁶³ Any news from or about family members deeply affected the way they endured living conditions. Antoni Strózkowski lost his mother and brother in a short period of time. Here he recalls how learning of their deaths led to him losing his inner strength:

From a letter sent to a friend, I found out that my mother had died [...] I was informed that they had tried to send me a telegram, which might have given me a chance to attend the funeral. Unfortunately, the municipality commissioner did not permit a telegram to be sent, saying that even if I had gone it wouldn't have brought my mother back to life [...] I lost my appetite. [...] Shortly after, I received a second letter, which contained an extensive

description of the death and burial of my mother, as well as the news that on 20 April [1944] a letter had arrived from the Stutthof concentration camp reporting the death of my brother. [...] This news completely destroyed me.⁶⁴

These experiences, the absence or presence of family members, either plunged them into their deepest depressions or provided them with their greatest moments of happiness. Henryk Szczubelek, for example, dedicates the apotheosis of his autobiography to the visit of his mother:

I wrote a letter home that I was sick. A week after my illness, I was pasturing the cows [...] At a certain moment, I look up and see a woman approaching. When she reached us she stopped. I would never have guessed that this could be my mother. Only when she stood close to me and said 'Heniak' did I recognise her. During the year and a half we had spent apart she had changed so much that I even could not recognise my own mother. Poles were not allowed to go to Germany. But, fortunately, my mum was able to reach me.⁶⁵

While describing their daily life, these Polish former child labourers pay a great deal of attention to the limited amount of food they received, the inadequate hygienic conditions they endured, and the beatings they received for breaking the rules.⁶⁶ Narrators often link their description of harsh conditions to the strategies they developed in order to improve their situation. Janusz Bieniewski recalls his recovery in hospital after an inguinal hernia surgery: 'I got hold of most food when a German died. In time, I developed the knack of intuiting which German was about to die.'⁶⁷

Zygmunt Wtulich was driven by a French Prisoner of War to a bathing house for delousing and made use of that opportunity to steal some bread:

At some point lice crept in. There were no sanitary conditions, and we spent the night in different ways. At the very end of our stay something had to be done about this. We were in Grabnik not far away from Elk. It was decided that we would all be driven to a military bathhouse in order to have the lice steamed out of us. The bathhouse was closed; we could not bathe. [...] On the journey back to our camp, the Frenchman was ordered to bring some bread with him. [...] Of course, a few loaves of bread disappeared.⁶⁸

Henryk Szczubelek spent time in a work re-education camp (*Erziehungslager*) after having been disobedient to his superiors. The intensive beatings were intended to change Henryk's young but remarkably resistant mind: 'The doctor sent my companion home. Although I suffered even more, my young body somehow survived all the torturing.'⁶⁹

Both Steinert and Filipkowski observed narrators who do not speak about 'the Germans' in general terms, but offer a whole range of attitudes displayed by their superiors.⁷⁰ While Steinert explained that this surprising fact was due to most interviews being conducted by Germans or being financed with German money⁷¹, Filipkowski is of the opinion that time and the compensation payment process had led to reconciliation.⁷² However, earlier autobiographies offer similarly nuanced evaluations of the different Germans Polish former forced labourers encountered during the Second World War. Even Bigorajska felt obliged to admit:

The writers are objective. If they met even very modest signs of human kindness, they record it. They recall employers, and even gendarmes and police officers, who did not beat them, but who, on the contrary, showed human instincts of compassion and warned against impending danger.⁷³

Franciszek Parda described what happened after he had invited a Polish colleague working at the farm next door to visit him in his sleeping stable:

An SS-man approached me and with a tug pulled me out of my bed onto the floor, and then set about beating me with a broom. He beat me for a long time, until the broom fell into pieces [...] When my employer saw me in the morning, he turned pale: 'What did these devils do to you?'⁷⁴

Zygmunt Wtulich recalled how his owner encouraged him to escape:

There were four brothers from around Płock who worked very hard, because they wanted to return to their families, and the Germans constantly repeated, 'Let's finish this and then you can go back to your mother.' I told them, 'Look, this is absurd, they won't let us go.' [...] At some point, they got very angry with me and told the German who was in charge of us (an old man, very good-natured, about 70 years old) that I don't work, and that I incite others to misbehave. He came up to me: 'You filthy cur! What do you think you're up to? You don't do anything – you just stir up trouble! You filthy cur, you'll be shot!' And he took out a pistol from his holster and led me into the woods. But in the woods he said, 'You're lucky, you filthy cur, that it's me you're dealing with, because if you were with Kozłowski, he would have shot you.' Kozłowski was a very bad man, who beat anybody he could. This old man [...] told me to run off and fired several times in the air.⁷⁵

Janina Jasionowicz, a domestic servant in Olsztyn, remembered the owner of the house had 'treated me as if I were his/her own child [...] I experienced good conditions – they liked me very much, despite the fact that they were prejudiced against Poles'.⁷⁶

The ability to see something positive in their experiences is a seventh narrative element common to both older and recent testimonies.⁷⁷ Narrators express at great length, for example, their faithfulness towards the adults they had put their trust in. Halina Chybińska was initially employed together with Polish Prisoners of War who had defended Poland in September 1939:

In mid-June 1940 the sad message came that they were taking our officers to a concentration camp [...] and so came the day of separation from our guardians, who were everything to us because of their courage. They instilled us with Polishness. They replaced our fathers. They were our teachers against enemies...⁷⁸

Antoni Strózkowski described his deportation and the initial phase of his forced labour experience as an opportunity to explore the world:

Essentially, I was very sad to leave my family and everything I'd been through from the first days of life. However, somewhere in the depths of my soul there was the desire to see the world. It was just a thirst for adventure.⁷⁹

Older and more recent testimonies often pay attention to the different ways in which Polish former child forced labourers tried to resist the treatment they faced or to escape their place of employment.⁸⁰ Many more narrators nurtured escape plans than were able to realise them. Zygmunt Wtulich, for example, built his whole narrative around such plans, but only succeeded when his farm owner offered him that possibility.⁸¹ Out of the collection of 31 testimonies from the 1960s and 1970s, only Zygmunt Szydłowski managed to escape from his labour camp in Ełk. The description of his successful flight to Kuźnica takes up half his testimony and is dominated by fear.⁸²

The final similarity in the testimonies is the importance narrators place on the articulation of their experiences. Filipkowski states that the compensation payments facilitated narrators' ability to articulate their war experiences as members of a newly created social group.⁸³ Earlier ego documents, however, reveal that during Communism, their experiences were already a discussion topic within families and at isolated public gatherings.⁸⁴ Stanisław Olcha, for example, preceded his autobiography (entitled 'With the P-sign') with the commentary:

I had a difficult time deciding [whether to send in an autobiography]. The reason for this is the fact that, as a man not of the pen, I thought I wouldn't cope with so difficult an undertaking, and wouldn't meet the required standard. However, under pressure from my family, whom I had often told fragments of my experiences, I decided to gather these fragments together and put them down on paper [...] The title of this story and the first letters of each chapter are invented and drawn by my oldest daughter, a pupil in the 6th class of primary school.⁸⁵

Many of the narrative patterns marking the testimonies of Polish former child forced labourers that I analysed here do not significantly differ from the ones uttered by Polish adult former forced labourers. However, particular aspects in the testimonies of Polish former child forced labourers reveal the uniqueness of children's experiences and perceptions. Certain horizons of experience were specific to children. As such, former child forced labourers' descriptions of their work (for instance, Henryk Szczubelek's description of pasturing cows) and their treatment in re-education camps, serve to enrich our historical knowledge. Furthermore, at the level of perception, the testimonies of former child forced labourers are instructive. The children appear to have been desperately looking for ways to copy, or compensate for, some of the social relations they had previously known and were familiar with; deprived of the usual adult guidance while they were still growing up, or indeed any sense of familiar, predictable, imitable social norms, they naturally felt disoriented. Missing their real fathers, they imbued Polish Prisoners of War with this role. They longed for their mothers and were grateful to be treated as children despite in fact being forced domestic servants. At other moments, they understood and made sense of their situation differently from the way adults did. The children developed specific coping strategies, such as narrating being sent into forced labour as a kind of adventure, or describing the selection procedure preceding forced labour almost as though it were a game.

V. Differences in Polish child forced-labour testimonies over time

While the testimonies of Polish former child forced labourers are, on the whole, consistent over time, the testimonies gathered in the 1960s and 1970s nevertheless differ considerably from the recent interviews in six aspects. Similar to the conclusions of Laub and Bodenstab, we observe an evolution in the understanding of an ego document as a narrated biography both on the side of interviewers and narrators.⁸⁶ The earlier ego documents were never composed with the aim of being fully biographical. Competition instructions encouraged writers to streamline their life stories into a desired format. In 1970, Antoni Strózkowski, for example, wrote: 'In accordance with the wishes of the competition organisers, I begin my story with the circumstances in which I was called to work in former East Prussia and my stay there [...] This is only the halfway point of my epic.'⁸⁷ The archived transcriptions of the nine interviews conducted with Polish former child forced labourers in 1974 are not as accurate as today's transcriptions, with the interview questions often simply being erased from the transcript. Reading them consecutively, however, one can reconstruct part of the questionnaire the interviewers used. Questions centred around factual information about the employer, their contact with other forced labourers, as well as with local East Prussian inhabitants, and resistance activities. The autobiographies from the 1960s and 1970s are generally much richer than the interviews conducted in 1974 in terms of the authors' perceptions and emotions related to the forced-labour experience. Nevertheless, the interviews do offer a great deal of insight into the contacts Polish former child forced labourers had with local inhabitants, and shed light on the first post-war experiences of the interviewees, aspects I will come back to in Part VI of this article.

Whereas Steinert highlighted that the humiliation child forced labourers encountered during their time labouring was remembered in greater detail than the actual work they had performed, Filipkowski came to the conclusion that the liberation was given more attention than the forced-labour daily routine.⁸⁸ The recent testimony of Stefan Kulesza illustrates this. Because Kulesza had revealed little about his working experience during

his free narration at the beginning of the interview, the interviewer asked him – on page 103 of the transcription – to describe a typical day of work. Stefan answered: ‘It was a day like every other day (laughs). For example, this is also unusual because I had a five-hectare farm, and others had a 50-hectare one.’

Only after further encouragement from the interviewer does Kulesza start to describe how he fed the animals before eating breakfast, accompanied the cows to the meadow, worked on the field and took care of the horses.⁸⁹ Whereas detailed answers on specific questions about work routine can be found in transcripts from the Archive ‘Forced Labour’, recent published testimonies leave us only with small fragments about working experiences.⁹⁰ In Janusz Bieniewski’s autobiography from 1970, on the contrary, a detailed work description follows chronologically after the narration of his deportation and selection for forced labour. On page 5 of his autobiography we read: ‘From today we had to start working [...] That day it was threshing wheat. Everybody was given their own job to do. I had to pass sheaves to a German, who threw them into a thresher. For a 15-year-old boy, the work was hard and tiring. At 1 o’clock in the afternoon [...]’

This was followed by a detailed description of the rest of his day.⁹¹ In various places throughout the testimony, detailed information about the actual activities forced labourers needed to perform is provided. Given the high dependency of child forced labourers on their superiors, these testimonies allow us to deepen our knowledge about the different forms such work could take. Communist times have thus left us with an unexpectedly rich collection of documents shedding light on the working conditions of individual Polish child forced labourers. Grzegorz Krzywoniuik’s move from repairing railway tracks in Kurki to being a carpenter in an Olsztyn factory forms the constitutive element of his narrative and the evaluation of the working conditions takes up one third of his text.⁹² Franciszek Parda detailed the livestock of the 90-hectare farm in Ebenfelde he joined (25 cows, eight horses, about 50 sheep, chickens and geese) before giving a meticulous description of his daily work routine: getting up at 3 a.m. in order to milk the cows and take care of the horses, preparing breakfast for the whole crew at 7 a.m., and then going out to the field for ‘ploughing, harrowing, weeding beet etc.’⁹³ The compensation payments are perhaps what motivated the former forced labourers to relate what was special about their war experiences, whereas earlier narrators found it necessary to provide information about their work routine. Another explanation could lie in the fact that the earlier autobiographies were gathered with the unrealistic aim of claiming financial compensation, whereas the recent interviews were conducted after many people had already received such compensation.

A third difference lies in the way narrators situate their social position. Although Steinert pointed out that narrators articulate solidarity with forced labourers and Prisoners of War from different nationalities, Filipkowski described how former forced labourers today engage in a competition of victimhood with other survivors.⁹⁴ In ego documents from the 1960s and 1970s, narrators display a remarkable relativism towards the position they had been in and stressed that others suffered more than they did, whether because they had other obligations, experienced bigger losses, or had a harder time before or after the Second World War. Zygmunt Szydłowski, for example, observed how ‘Jews were treated in a barbaric way’ in the ghetto in Kuźnica. While in forced labour, Zygmunt tried to help out Italian Prisoners of War, whom he considered to have been in a worse position: ‘When we managed to get hold of some food, we brought it to the Italian prisoners of war. We received from them other things or money, which they’d somehow got hold of. With this smuggling of food we tried to help them.’⁹⁵

Kazimierz Cywiński relates the shattering of his hand: ‘Because of that hunger and misery, many threw themselves into the machine. I also tried to end my life in this way, but a colleague noticed and pulled me out, so I shattered only my right hand.’⁹⁶ This Polish former child forced labourer put what happened to his hand into perspective in order to indicate that others experienced far greater losses.

Authors also indicate that the war period was preceded by, or followed, time periods that need no idealisation. Maria Skwarczewicz evaluates her forced labour experience by putting it into a wider biographical context. She recalled in 1965:

We lived in poverty. When I was seven years old, my parents started being persuaded to send me into service, grazing cattle – in fact, I could already do this, because for two years I had been grazing my own. And grazing cows was not easy [...] watching and making sure they didn’t do any damage. Because I know what was waiting then – a scolding from my employer, if not a beating. No one asked whether I was cold or hungry. It was hard to think of school [...] This lasted for seven years. When I was fourteen, I started heavier work just like every adult. And it was under these conditions, when I was barely 16, when the Germans began to transport [people] for work.⁹⁷

Czesław Łuszczynski hinted at the end of his 1970 autobiography that his forced labour experience had helped him out in the difficult early post-war period: ‘I had traveled a long and arduous route – but not in vain. A horse stayed with me. The household was very happy. Selling the horse, I created food reserves for my parents.’⁹⁸

The fact that the compensation payment process was handled differently at different times is also responsible for the testimonies varying significantly. Although financial compensation did not give interviewees a feeling of historical justice – as the money came too late, was too little and was perceived to have been distributed arbitrarily – it made many open to the idea of reconciliation.⁹⁹ References to compensation or reconciliation are usually absent from the earlier testimonies. Eugeniusz Ekstowicz nevertheless hints at a common early post-war practice: ‘I lost my health here, I lost my hand during forced labour, so they had to give me a farm. Because I was a slave, I took a 10 ha farm in Kuklin.’¹⁰⁰

As many people inhabiting East Prussia had left the region for Germany at the end of the Second World War, local farms were often empty and easily accessible for the forced labourers who had stayed behind. When the housing situation later became less clear due to the migration of people to the new Polish borderlands, it was not uncommon for settlers to seize the property of local inhabitants who had not left for Germany.¹⁰¹

Another difference lies in the way narrators name the experiences they went through. Whereas in contemporary interviews, former forced labourers describe what they experienced as ‘forced labour’, authors of the 1960s and 1970s use various wordings. Grzegorz Krzywoniuk wrote that he ‘was deported as a free worker (*Freiarbeiter*)’, Bronisław Górecki that he was part of ‘a slave work force’ and Janusz Bieniewski that he was a ‘property farm worker’.¹⁰² These differences point to the initial absence of a shared marker and to the later homogenisation of self-articulated identity. This observation runs parallel to Laub and Bodestab’s suggestion that public Holocaust awareness had stimulated interviewees to identify as Holocaust survivors.¹⁰³

Narrators articulate the way they live with their war memories in the post-war period differently. Contemporary interviews point to irrational fears and obsessions, such as nightmares and paranoia.¹⁰⁴ This sensitivity to psychological suffering has not always existed. The Eichmann trial in 1961 gave an opportunity for the voices of Holocaust survivors to be heard, after which a victim-based Holocaust counter-narrative started to interact with the various national, mostly heroic, narratives of war memory in Western

countries. In the 1980s, ex-combatants from the Vietnam War and American feminists successfully lobbied for the recognition of experiences of war and sexual abuse; the concept of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was born and, with it, a remedy for its cure. Psychological health could be regained through memory-work therapy, i.e. uncovering non-verbal war memories.¹⁰⁵ After the collapse of Communism, these tendencies influenced the memory work of former forced labourers interviewed within the framework of the disbursement issue. Authors of earlier testimonies, however, only refer to the physical consequences of their forced labour. In the introduction to *Gdy byliśmy literą 'P'*, Władysława Pietruczuk-Kurkiewiczowa wrote that in almost 50% of the 359 testimonies sent in for the 1965 writing competition, authors mention 'a bad, or even catastrophic, state of health'.¹⁰⁶ Henryk Szczubelek, for example, added a note to his autobiography: 'Please take into account when reading my work my lack of much education [. . .] I received one souvenir: the loss of my health caused by being tortured at such a young age.'¹⁰⁷

VI. Differences between archived and published ego documents from the 1960s and 1970s

The writing competition of 1970 and the interviews conducted in 1974 were archived in their entirety. A comparison with the publications of these sources enable us to unravel the decisions made in bringing some autobiographies to print while withdrawing others, as well as in adjusting or censoring the autobiographies before publishing. Four types of autobiographies were not sent out for print. Most likely because the working conditions of the forced domestic servants Eugenia Ekstowicz and Janina Jasionowicz were much better, the editors decided not to publish them. Eugenia Ekstowicz, for example, reported she did not feel well because she was 'screamed at', but also mentioned that she 'ate very well, I ate the same as the landlords. I ate as much as I wanted, five times a day [. . .] For Christmas, she [the landlady] out of her own will knitted me a dress, a shirt, stockings and socks.'¹⁰⁸

Other testimonies were left unpublished for technical reasons. In 1974, Leopold Wawrzyniak answered the interviewer's questions mostly with one- or two-sentence answers. The editors may not have considered it worth transforming his interview into an autobiographical text for publication.¹⁰⁹ Nor did Bronisław Górecki's concept of an autobiography as an abstract historical essay satisfy the editor's expectations.¹¹⁰

An interesting ego document left unpublished reveals that Władysław Zapadka had worked for a local farmer in East Prussia who 'knew Polish better than German. His Polish was broken, [the local dialect] Masurian.'¹¹¹ The local people inhabiting the East Prussian German borderland were called Warmiaks and Masurians. Before and during the Second World War, many of them held only local, and no national, identifications.¹¹² Whereas all kinds of Germans were allowed to exist in the competition publications, it was much more problematic to hint at the fact that local landowners might have had unstable feelings of national belonging, or could even have sympathised with Polishness while at the same time pragmatically exploiting Polish forced labourers. Although there were attempts during the war to keep Polish forced labourers separated from local East Prussians who sympathised with Poland, this did not always turn out to be possible.¹¹³ Masurians and Warmiaks often appear in the archived testimonies, but aspects of their behaviour are erased from their published versions.¹¹⁴ Let us return to the case of Zygmunt Wtulich, whose farm owner helped him to escape. Although the archived text does not provide clear evidence whether that local farmer identified himself as a German, Masurian

or Warmiak, we know that he was around 70 years old, and that Wtulich elsewhere in his archived, but not published, autobiography emphasised: ‘I encountered affection and compassion from elderly people, from Warmians and Mazurians, but the really old ones.’¹¹⁵ Part of a sentence from the archived escape episode was censored in the published version. Wtulich wrote originally: ‘The old guy told me, “You know that we will defend ourselves against the Communists tooth and nail in order to prevent them from coming here.” (He told me to run off and fired several times in the air).’¹¹⁶

If the cuts had not been introduced, readers might have come to the conclusion that there had been local farmers in East Prussia during the Second World War who spoke Polish but were against Communism.

Maria Libor may have noticed that some of her expressions were left out of her published testimony. Asking her ‘Could you sense a difference in how you were treated by Germans [who had migrated to East Prussia during the war – MV] and by Warmians?’, the interviewer expected a positive answer, which would have enabled them to portray the Warmians as the good Poles who had helped out Polish forced labourers despite German hegemony. Instead, Maria answered: ‘Yes, but also among these Warmians [. . .] but they were here and they stayed here. One of these Warmiaks only recently emigrated [to one of the post-war German states] – I couldn’t even look at her. There are several families that until today, oh . . .’¹¹⁷

According to Maria, locals had not always made a difference in the way she had been treated during the war, and war antagonisms between locals and former forced labourers had co-constituted post-war life. Such an opinion suggested Communists had been unable to fulfil their propagandistic aim of transforming former East Prussia into a socially coherent part of the Polish People’s Republic.¹¹⁸ Presenting the Polish annexation as a logical historical development, Polish state doctrine depicted the local Warmian and Masurian inhabitants as Germanised Slavs who had lost their Polish consciousness under foreign rule, but were happy to reawaken it after the lands they owned had finally returned to Poland. In reality, Polonisation policies aimed at the homogenisation of the province’s inhabitants caused local inhabitants to feel exclusion because of their limited language skills.¹¹⁹ The reality of everyday life in early post-war Warmia and Masuria needed to be camouflaged or censored.

Furthermore, the depiction of the liberation at the end of the Second World War underwent thorough censorship. As the keystone in the legitimisation of Communism, the myth of the liberation ran that Soviet soldiers conquered the Germans and brought freedom and happiness. In reality, however, Red Army soldiers often treated locals simply as Germans. The murder and rape of women, as well as the torture of civilians, are narrated in great detail in contemporary interviews.¹²⁰ Most of these aspects are absent in earlier testimonies, which is a clear sign autobiography writers and interviewees had self-censored their narratives. We find nevertheless small archived references that contradict the liberation myth and were meticulously eliminated in the publications. Leon Bednarczyk, for instance, had answered the question ‘How were you treated by the military Soviet authorities?’ as follows:

Well, of course, it was the front line. Army commanders treated us well, they asked us where we were from, what we do and everything was okay. But a common soldier, well, this was the front line, so it’s all vodka and girls. As for the leaders, it was all good. But if a common soldier got drunk, you had to run away – he could shoot. Liberation was as it should be.

In the published version, Leon’s text reads: ‘Liberation! Different things happened in those hot days. Of course, it was the front line. Army commanders treated us well, they

asked us where we were from, and everything was okay. But a common soldier, well, this was the front line.'¹²¹ Leon had carefully self-censored his wording. He had used the word 'liberation' but had put it tactfully only at the end of his answer. He had called the people he met 'common soldiers' (not 'Soviets', the 'Red Army' or *suchlike*), which enabled him to explain, or excuse, their behaviour ('girls' and 'vodka' are his euphemisms of choice) as being normal for the time and situation back then. In the published version, however, the word 'liberation' is put right at the start and emphasised with an exclamation mark. Moreover, his indirect references to rape and misbehaviour are erased.

A close reading of archival documents and published autobiographies makes clear that adjustments were also performed in the other direction. Surprisingly, the 1982 publication contains fragments that have been made less propagandistic than the original testimony fragments from the 1970s. Solidarity protests had opened more room for freedom of speech, which seems to have rendered outdated the archived autobiographies from the 1970s. At the end of the autobiography of Janusz Bieniewski, we read the following: 'We are surrounded by Soviet officers. They ask where we are from. We answer. We kiss each other happily. Liberation! The end of fascism! Down with war!'¹²² In the published version only the following remains: 'We are surrounded by Soviet officers. They ask where we are from. We answer. We kiss each other happily. Liberation!' Editors erased references to Fascism. The myth of Soviet victory over Fascism had legitimated Communism in the early post-war period, but had already lost much of its appeal following detotalitarisation after 1956; by the 1980s this myth appeared unpublishable.¹²³ The priorities of publishers thus changed over time. Initially, archived content was adjusted to the dominant narrative under Communism. Later, however, wording that sounded too Communist was erased from autobiographies in order to offer what might have been considered a more authentic reading.

Conclusion

Eyewitness testimonies from former child labourers are a gateway to answering unresolved questions on the impact of social relations and routine during the Second World War and lead to a broader historical understanding. Comparing a unique but forgotten collection of archived ego sources from Polish former child forced labourers composed in the 1960s and 1970s with recent interviews, and historicising the socio-political surroundings of the gathering, articulation and preservation of testimonies for both time periods, enables us to evaluate the specificity of child forced-labour testimonies over time. The most striking conclusion is that most of the autobiographical narrating is consistent over time. This research finding runs parallel to insights gained from recent Holocaust studies, but causes us to reassess our assumptions about the successful indoctrination of individuals and the marginalisation of their war experiences under Communism. Communist times have left us, for example, with remarkably good sources on interpersonal relations with German superiors, which indicates that authors were stubbornly reluctant to conform to the initial aim of these official writing contests: propagation of the idea that these superiors were arch-enemies. In addition, testimonies of Polish child forced labourers offer insights into the specific coping strategies children developed, ranging from imbuing Prisoners of War with the roles of missing fathers, to perceiving the selection process for forced labour as if it were a game.

Recent public awareness of the child forced-labour experience causes interviewees to identify as witnesses to history. The current narrative method, as opposed to the question-invoked interview method employed previously, reveals painful experiences in greater

detail. Two differences, however, especially speak in favour of the earlier testimonies. Firstly, their unexpectedly rich descriptions of daily work routines under forced-labour conditions deepen our knowledge about child forced labour, while recent testimonies only offer such information in the background of the narration. As child forced labourers were often given different jobs to the ones adults were, such as pasturing cows, these earlier testimonies enrich our historical knowledge. Secondly, the humble social positioning of the authors is deprived of the competition of suffering that marks contemporary narratives composed in a changed medical context.

A compared reading of archived with published testimonies offers unique insights into the negotiability of ideology at the level of the individual under Communism. Information about the role of the local inhabitants of East Prussia during forced labour and about the liberation underwent serious and fluctuating censorship, increasing but also decreasing the ideological content depending on the time context.

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Notes

1. Filipkowski, "Biographische Narrative polnischer Zwangsarbeiter," 211.
2. Sosnowski, *Dziecko w systemie hitlerowskim*, 110.
3. Kozięło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Dzieciństwo i młodość ze znakiem "P"*, VIII.
4. Konieczny and Szurgacz, *Praca przymusowa Polaków pod panowaniem hitlerowskim*, 320, 325.
5. Sosnowski, *Dziecko w systemie hitlerowskim*, 139.
6. Hrabar, *Hitlerowski rabunek dzieci polskich*, 76; Łuczak, *Polscy robotnicy przymusowi*, 64.
7. Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 40.
8. Hrabar, *Hitlerowski rabunek dzieci polskich*, 78; Mendel, *Zwangsarbeit im Kinderzimmer*, 11.
9. Kozięło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Dzieciństwo i młodość ze znakiem "P"*, IX.
10. Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 103; Pilichowski, *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich*, 673; Hopfer, *Geraubte Identität*.
11. Kozięło-Poklewski, *Zagraniczni robotnicy*, 133.
12. Bigorajska and Pietruczuk-Kurkiewiczowa, *Cierń mojej młodości*, 10; Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 278.
13. Kozięło-Poklewski, *Zagraniczni robotnicy przymusowi*, 56–7.
14. Bigorajska and Pietruczuk-Kurkiewiczowa, *Gdy byliśmy literą "P"*, 10; Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 178.
15. Bigorajska and Pietruczuk-Kurkiewiczowa, *Gdy byliśmy literą "P"*, 12; Feichtlbauer, *Forced labor in Austria*, 84.
16. Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter: Politik und Praxis*, 271.
17. Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz*, 222 f.
18. Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 28.
19. Łuczak, *Polscy robotnicy przymusowi*, 76.
20. *Ibid.*, 77; Sakson, *Od Kłajpedy do Olsztyna*, 105.
21. Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 109.
22. Harten, *De-Kulturation und Germanisierung*, 312; Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 112.
23. Mendel, *Zwangsarbeit im Kinderzimmer*, 11.
24. Fundacja "Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie," "Historia wypłat," Fundacja, <http://www.fjnp.pl/wypłaty/robotnicy.php> (accessed January 3, 2014).
25. Goschler, "Vom asymmetrischen Tauschhandel," 16–18.
26. Esch, "Durchsetzung, Praxis und Deutung," 113. Between 2001 and 2006, FPNP distributed over 975 million Polish zlotys among political prisoners, concentration-camp survivors and

- forced labourers. Between 2001 and 2005, the Austrian Fund Versöhnung, Frieden und Zusammenarbeit distributed 155 million Polish zlotys. See Fonds für Versöhnung, Frieden und Zusammenarbeit, <http://www.versoehnungsfonds.at> (accessed December 10, 2014).
27. Esch, "Durchsetzung, Praxis und Deutung," 91. See also Fundacja "Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie," "Historia wypłat," Fundacja, <http://www.fnpn.pl/wypłaty/robotnicy.php> (accessed January 3, 2014).
 28. The collection of the Online Archive "Forced Labor," <http://www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de/>; Fundacja "Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie," *Zachować pamięć*; Filipkowski and Madoń-Mitzner, "You Can't Say it Loud;" Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*.
 29. Filipkowski, "Biographische Narrative polnischer Zwangsarbeiter," 206, 212–13.
 30. Wawrzyniak, *ZBoWiD i pamięć drugiej wojny*, 192.
 31. Kiwerska, "W atmosferze wrogości," 48, 53; Dudek, "Wybrane czynniki historyczne," 19. The Oder-Neisse border line had been set in Potsdam in 1945 under the condition that it would be recognised by means of an international Peace Treaty. The peace treaty did not follow, and while the Polish People's Republic signed a bilateral agreement with East Germany on the acceptance of the border in 1950, it was only in December 1970 that a similar bilateral agreement was signed with West Germany. Internationally, the Oder-Neisse border was accepted in 1990.
 32. Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm*, 331.
 33. Foreword of Janusz Wiczorek in Hrabar, Tokarz and Wilczur, *Kriegsschicksale polnischer Kinder*, 7.
 34. Wawrzyniak, *ZBoWiD i pamięć drugiej wojny*, 264–5; Habielski, "Przeszłość i pamięć historyczna," 105.
 35. Ruchniewicz, *Polskie zabiegi o odszkodowania*, 157. First Polish publications about forced labour include: Lemiesz, *O niewolniczej pracy*; Rusiński, *Położenie robotników polskich*.
 36. Staszyński, *Przemoc, poniżenie, poniewierka*; Wawrzyniak, *ZBoWiD i pamięć drugiej wojny*, 228. The original testimonies could not be traced back.
 37. Nowinowski, Pomorski, and Stobiecki, *Pamięć i polityka historyczna*, 204–5; Pilichowski, "Działalność Głównej Komisji," 245–9; Kozięłło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Dzieciństwo i młodość ze znakiem "P"*, XII. The initiative led to a descriptive text about the deportation of Polish civilians to Germany and their employment there being published in the bulletin of the Head Commission (see Datner, "Wywóz ludności polskiej"), followed by publications extending their coverage of these aspects to certain Polish regions in later issues of the bulletin. See also Boczek, Boczek and Wilczur, *Wojna i dziecko*; Łuczak, *Polscy robotnicy przymusowi*; Seeber, *Robotnicy przymusowi*; Szurgacz, *Przymusowe zatrudnienie*; Wnuk, *Dzieci polskie oskarżają*; Wnuk and Radomska-Strzemecka, *Dzieci polskie oskarżają*.
 38. The scarce biographical data in the published testimonies makes tracing back archival testimonies in the Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance impossible.
 39. Bigorajska and Pietruczuk-Kurkiewiczowa, *Gdy byliśmy literą "P"*, 15. See also Bigorajska and Pietruczuk-Kurkiewiczowa, *Cierń mojej młodości*, 12.
 40. Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm*, 332.
 41. Dudek, "Wybrane czynniki historyczne," 27.
 42. Řezník, "Transformations of Regional History," 234–5.
 43. Fras, *Materiały pamiętnikarskie*, 7–9.
 44. Muzeum Warmii i Mazur, "Bohdan Jerzy Kozięłło Poklewski," Muzeum Warmii i Mazur, <http://muzeum.olsztyn.pl/wieczory-zamkowe-cykl-quot-zyciorysy-quot,423> (accessed December 10, 2014).
 45. Kozięłło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Dzieciństwo i młodość ze znakiem "P"*; Kozięłło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Ze znakiem "P"*. In the latter, a testimony of a former child forced labourer from the Western Institute in Poznań from 1946 is also included: Archive of the Western Institute Poznań, Archiwum Zakładu Badania Dziejów Okupacji Hitlerowskiej, Dział II, Wspomnienia, IZ Dok.-205-Ru-6 (1.7.1946).
 46. Kozięłło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Dzieciństwo i młodość ze znakiem "P"*, XII. See also Radowska and Kozięłło-Poklewski, "Praca przymusowa."
 47. Sakson, "Niemcy w świadomości społecznej Polaków," 415; Koszel, "Między dogmatyzmem i pragmatyzmem," 94.
 48. Fras, *Materiały pamiętnikarskie*, 106 f.
 49. Filipkowski, "Biographische Narrative polnischer Zwangsarbeiter," 165–6.

50. Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 24. A child forced labourer is a person who was younger than 18 years of age when starting forced employment. I based my selection criteria on the definition of forced labour according to the International Labour Organisation in the 1930s.
51. The Online Archive “Forced Labor” created during the research of Alexander von Plato and others, and financed by the EVZ, contains five interviews of former child forced labourers in East Prussia, and the book *Ostpreussen. Wspomnienia Polaków wywiezionych na roboty przymusowe do Prus Wschodnich w latach 1939–1945*, financed by FPNP, contains three testimonies of former young forced labourers.
52. Browning, *Collected Memories*; Greenspan, *The Awakening of Memory*; Laub and Bodenstab, “Twenty-Five Years Later;” Filipkowski, “O relacjach byłych więźniów kacetów;” Michalic, “The Aftermath and After.”
53. Goodman and Schaff, “Over a Decade of Research.”
54. Michlic, *Jewish Children in Nazi-occupied Poland*, 16.
55. Cohen and Horváth, “Young Witnesses in the DP Camps,” 9.
56. Hellbeck, “Everyday Ideology: Life during Stalinism.”
57. Filipkowski and Madoń-Mitzner, “You Can’t Say it Loud,” 75; Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 148. Beata Halicka undertook a first attempt to compare written testimonies of inhabitants of Western Poland published under communism with the original archived manuscripts. See Halicka, “Mein Haus an der Oder.”
58. The Olsztyn Research Centre (Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Wojciecha Kętrzyńskiego w Olsztynie, OBN) Special collection (Zbiory Specjalne, ZS), R-119, 1970 competition, testimony of Czesław Łuszczynski, 14.
59. Filipkowski and Madoń-Mitzner, “You Can’t Say it Loud,” 75; Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 149–54.
60. OBN ZS, R-90, 1970 competition, testimony of Haliba Chybińska, 3.
61. Filipkowski and Madoń-Mitzner, “You Can’t Say it Loud,” 80.
62. OBN ZS, R-81, 1970 competition, testimony of Franciszek Parda, 10. See also: OBN ZS, R-90, 1970 competition, testimony of Halina Chybińska; she titled her autobiography “Gdy byliśmy podludźmi” [When we were subhumans].
63. Filipkowski and Madoń-Mitzner, “You Can’t Say it Loud,” 76; Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 153.
64. OBN ZS, R-95, 1970 competition, testimony of Antoni Strózkowski, 54.
65. OBN ZS, R-74, 1970 competition, testimony of Henryk Szczubelek, 17.
66. Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 157–62.
67. OBN ZS, R-87, 1970 competition, testimony of Janusz Bieniewski, 13.
68. OBN ZS, PTH R-381; R-382, 1974 interviews, Zygmunt Wtulich, 8.
69. OBN ZS, R-74, 1970 competition, testimony of Henryk Szczubelek, 11
70. Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 183, 190.
71. *Ibid.*, 190.
72. Filipkowski, “Biographische Narrative polnischer Zwangsarbeiter,” 211.
73. Bigorajska and Pietruczuk-Kurkiewiczowa, *Gdy byliśmy literą “P”*, 12.
74. OBN ZS, R-81, 1970 competition, testimony of Franciszek Parda, 6–7.
75. OBN ZS, PTH R-381; R-382, 1974 interviews, Zygmunt Wtulich, 6–7. For the published version see Kozięło-Poklewska and Łukaszewicz, *Ze znakiem “P”*, 392.
76. OBN ZS, PTH R-421, 1974 interviews, Janina Jasionowicz, 1; R-422, 1974 interviews, Janina Jasionowicz.
77. Filipkowski and Madoń-Mitzner, ‘You Can’t Say it Loud,’ 79; Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 191.
78. OBN ZS, R-90, 1970 competition, testimony of Halina Chybińska, 12.
79. OBN ZS, R-95, 1970 competition, testimony of Antoni Strózkowski, 21.
80. Filipkowski and Madoń-Mitzner, ‘You Can’t Say it Loud,’ 79; Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 174–80.
81. OBN, ZS, PTH R-381; R-382, 1974 interviews, Zygmunt Wtulich.
82. OBN ZS, R-84, 1970 competition, testimony of Zygmunt Szydłowski, 29–44.
83. Filipkowski, “Biographische Narrative polnischer Zwangsarbeiter,” 204.
84. See also Szacka, “II wojna światowa w pamięci,” 91.
85. OBN ZS, R 95, 1970 competition, testimony of Stanisław Olcha, 3–4. See also: OBN ZS, PTH R-382; R-381, 1974 interviews, Zygmunt Wtulich, 17–18.

86. Laub and Bodenstab, "Twenty-Five Years Later," 427.
87. OBN ZS, R-95, 1970 competition, testimony of Antoni Strózkowski, 3.
88. Filipkowski and Madoń-Mitzner, "You Can't Say it Loud," 77; Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 152.
89. The Online Archive "Forced Labour," "Transkrypt: Kulesza, Stefan," Archiv-ID ZA211, 103–7.
90. See for example Irena Chrzanowska and Eugeniusz Starczewski in *Fundacja "Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie," Ostpreussen*, 42, 44, 148, 151.
91. OBN ZS, R-87, 1970 competition, testimony of Janusz Bieniewski, 5–6. For the published version see Kozięło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Ze znakiem "P"*, 26–7.
92. OBN ZS, R-33, 1964 competition, testimony of Grzegorz Krzywoniuk.
93. OBN ZS, R-81, 1970 competition, testimony of Franciszek Parda, 3–4.
94. Steinert, *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit*, 195; Filipkowski, "Biographische Narrative polnischer Zwangsarbeiter," 182.
95. OBN ZS, R-84, 1970 competition, testimony of Zygmunt Szydłowski, 2, 20–1.
96. Kozięło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Dzieciństwo i młodość ze znakiem "P"*, 36.
97. *Ibid.*, 145.
98. OBN ZS, R-119, 1970 competition, testimony of Czesław Łuszczynski, 30.
99. Filipkowski, "Biographische Narrative polnischer Zwangsarbeiter," 213.
100. OBN ZS, PTH R-378, 1974 interviews, Eugenia Ekstowicz, 145.
101. *Sakson, Stosunki narodowościowe na Warmii*, 164.
102. OBN ZS, R-33, 1964 competition, testimony of Grzegorz Krzywoniuk, 1: "Freiarbeiter;" R-123, 1970 competition, testimony of Bronisław Górecki, 1: "Niewolnicza siła robocza;" R-87, 1970 competition, testimony of Janusz Bieniewski: "Byliśmy majątkowymi robotnikami rolnymi."
103. Laub and Bodenstab, "Twenty-Five Years Later," 427.
104. Filipkowski and Madoń-Mitzner, "You Can't Say it Loud," 78.
105. For more information on the construction of war trauma and its impact on individual war memories see: Venken, "Bodily Memory," 152–3.
106. Bigorajska and Pietruczuk-Kurkiewiczowa, *Gdy byliśmy literą "P"*, 14.
107. OBN ZS, R-74, 1970 competition, testimony of Henryk Szczubelek, 32.
108. OBN ZS, PTH R-378, 1974 interviews, Eugenia Ekstowicz, 2; R-421, R-422, 1974 interviews, Janina Jasionowicz.
109. OBN ZS, PTH R-442, 1974 interviews, Leopold Wawrzyniak.
110. OBN ZS, R-123, 1970 competition, testimony of Bronisław Górecki, 5.
111. OBN ZS, PTH R-392, 1974 interviews, Władysław Zapadko, 1.
112. *Traba, Wschodniopruskość*, 41.
113. Kossert, *Preussen, Deutsche oder Polen?*, 291–2.
114. *Sakson*, "Mazurzy a Polacy ze znakiem "P"."
115. OBN ZS, PTH R-381; R-382, 1974 interviews, Zygmunt Wtulich, 4.
116. OBN ZS, PTH R-381; R-382, 1974 interviews, Zygmunt Wtulich, 6–7. Published version: Kozięło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Ze znakiem "P"*, 392.
117. OBN ZS, PTH R-399, 1974 interviews, Maria Libor, 5. Published version: Kozięło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Ze znakiem "P"*, 169–71.
118. After the Second World War, the biggest part of East Prussia became part of Poland. Of the 36,999 km², Poland received 23,489 km².
119. Rezník, "Transformations of Regional History," 226; Kossert, *Ostpreussen*, 358.
120. Filipkowski and Madoń-Mitzner, "You Can't Say it Loud," 77; *Fundacja "Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie," Ostpreussen*, 48.
121. OBN ZS, PTH R-404, 1974 interviews, Leon Bednarczyk, 39. Published version see Kozięło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Ze znakiem "P"*, 23.
122. OBN ZS, R-87, 1970 competition, testimony of Janusz Bieniewski, 24. Published in: Kozięło-Poklewski and Łukaszewicz, *Ze znakiem "P"*, 38.
123. Wawrzyniak, *ZBoWiD i pamięć drugiej wojny*, 168–9.

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