

The project's objective is to examine the reality of occupation in the area of General Government (GG) through the prism of judgments of German special courts. Out of a part of the Polish territories captured in 1939 which were not directly incorporated into the Third Reich, the German occupant created the General Government under the leadership of Hans Frank. In the GG territory a duality was introduced in the area of the judiciary, *i.e.* division into German and Polish courts. As a part of the German judiciary, among others, special courts were established, which followed the pattern of special Courts founded in Germany already in 1933. Those were courts of one instance competent in criminal matters, adjudicating in panels of three professional judges, applying German criminal law in modified criminal proceedings.

The task of special courts was to “pursue assaults on the safety and authority of the Reich and the German nation, as well as life, health and property of citizens of German nationality.” They were initially created in Częstochowa, Wieluń (the court was then moved to Piotrków Trybunalski), Kielce, Cracow and Radom. Then, their structure and seats were modified, by creating such courts also in Warsaw, Lublin, Rzeszów, Zamość (moved to Chełm), Lviv, Stanisławowo and Tarnopol.

Special courts in GG enforced German criminal law and adjudicated in criminal, economic (e.g. illegal slaughter, black-market trading) and political matters (*e.g.* illegal possession of a radio receiver, spreading false news, or in relation to the police regulations adopted in relation to Jews). Judgments of special courts have not been so far subject to any comprehensive research, although their exploration will enable conclusions on not only the legal but also factual position of the population. The case-law will allow to explore not only the quantitative but also the qualitative dimension of the examined phenomena and, for example to answer the question to what extent Poles, when committing economic offences, were motivated by greed and to what extent they were forced by the food ratios lowered by the occupant, and if the practice of particular courts in GG differed from one another, for example, as to the degree of penalty imposed on defendants of different nationality.

The main object of the research is case-law – preserved judgments of special courts in GG. In addition, the investigations will cover the model of special judiciary in GG, administrative structure and organisation of those courts, criminal procedure before the courts and their personnel – judges and prosecutors. The sources for the investigation are located in Polish, German and Ukrainian archives.

The effect of the research will be not only primary findings on the operation of special courts in GG. It is also my aim to compare them within the GG borders and to juxtapose special courts in GG against special courts of the Third Reich. Implementation of the project will enable to fill a serious gap in science – an issue which is essential from the point of view of the activities of the occupation system of justice in Poland and the occupant's policy in the territory of GG as well as everyday life of the population.