

1944

WARSAW RISING

1 AUGUST – 2 OCTOBER 1944

1939

1940

1941

1942

1943

1944

1945

CORE INFORMATION

27.09.1939
19.01.1945

The uprising was the culmination of the actions of the Polish Underground State, whose constituent structures were formed after Poland's occupation by the Germans and Soviets in September 1939. The Underground State organized the country's resistance and its fight for a free Poland. It encompassed both military and civilian sections. Its military arm, established from 1942 by the underground Union of Armed Struggle (Pol. Związek Walki Zbrojnej, ZWZ), was known as the Home Army. The civilian section arranged aid for the victims of the German occupation (incl. Jews), organized underground educational and justice systems and laid foundations for the country's administration after the war.

PRECEDING EVENTS

LAST DAYS OF JULY 1944

In July 1944, as the Soviets advanced towards German-occupied Warsaw, the Poles in the underground Home Army launched their fight for independence, believing the Red Army would offer military support. For the Home Army soldiers the insurrection demonstrated the Poles' aspirations to form a sovereign state after the war. Despite having fought the Germans alongside the Western Allies since 1941, the USSR's leader Joseph Stalin was not prepared to support the Poles, as he was planning to turn Poland into a communist state dependent on the Soviet Union. He therefore withheld military assistance to the insurgents.

OUTCOME

2.10.1944

The uprising ended in the Poles' military defeat and failed to prevent the introduction of communist rule in Poland. Still, it instantly became both a symbol of the Poles' determination to gain independence and proof of the treacherous and inhuman attitude of the Soviets, who refused to help Poland's capital city as it perished. Today the uprising plays an important part in the collective consciousness of Poles as an example of defiance against the evil propagated by totalitarian regimes.



ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING



HOME ARMY

(Pol. Armia Krajowa, AK)

The Underground State's military organization; it accounted for c. 90 per cent of the insurrectionary forces

NATIONAL ARMED FORCES

(Pol. Narodowe Siły Zbrojne, NSZ)

Organisation politically affiliated with right-wing movements

PEOPLE'S ARMY

(Pol. Armia Ludowa, AL)

Military force formed by Polish communists and allied with the Soviet Union



↑ Army courier Bożena Grabowska, *nom de guerre* 'Magda', outside apartment building at 7 Moniuszki Street, north Śródmieście, mid-August 1944. Insurgency posters on wall: 'One bullet, one German' by Henryk Chmielewski, 'Our road to freedom 1939–1944' and 'We are fighting for Unity, Freedom, Independence'. Photograph by Eugeniusz Lokajski, *nom de guerre* 'Brok'. MPW-IN/407

← Poster on wall in Śródmieście during Warsaw Rising: 'Call to Arms in the Home Army's ranks', 9 August 1944. Photograph by Joachim Joachimczyk, *nom de guerre* 'Joachim'. MPW-IP/789



COURSE OF EVENTS

AUGUST 1944

SEPTEMBER 1944

OCTOBER 1944

STAGE I (1–4 AUGUST)

In the first days of the uprising the Poles took control of large tracts of the city, including the central districts of Śródmieście and the Old Town.

In the first few days there was an explosion of euphoria and joy. After five years of humiliation, the Poles could at last raise their flag and sing the national anthem. They quickly started to organize their new state and its institutions. During the uprising there was a fledgling parliament, a postal service, a radio station and even a cinema. A daily newspaper was published, bringing the latest news from the uprising and from around the world, and also featuring debates on the shape of the future independent Poland.

STAGE II (5 AUGUST – 2 SEPTEMBER)

On 5 August the Germans launched a concentrated offensive on the city's western districts of Wola and Ochota, enacting Hitler's heinous order to wipe out the civilian population. In Wola they executed close to 40,000 civilians. After capturing both districts, fighting for the Old Town continued to 2 September.

Wola and Ochota both fell to the Germans by 11 August. The fighting then shifted to the Old Town. After fierce battles that involved air support and heavy artillery the German forces took control of the Old Town on 2 September.

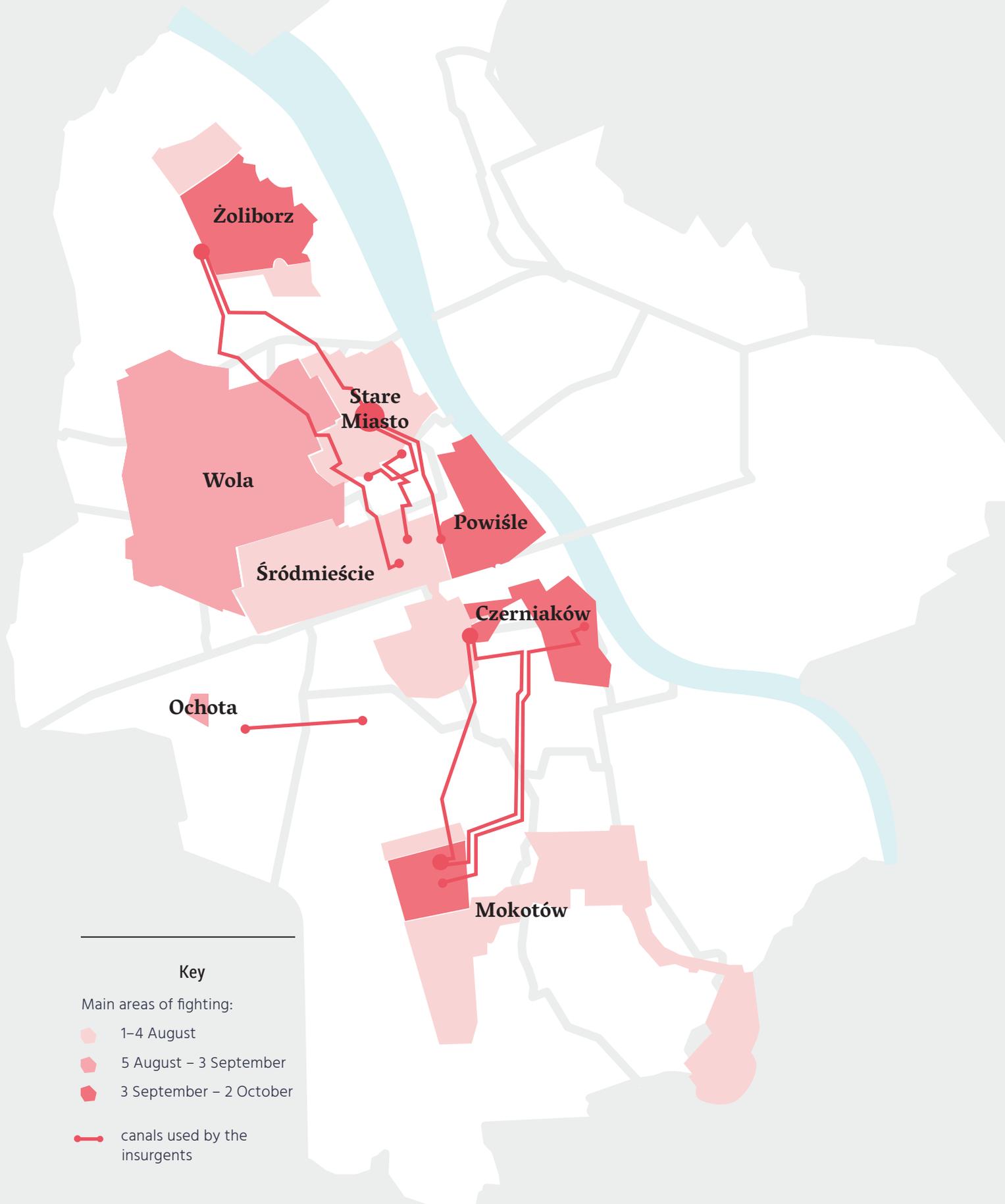
STAGE III (3 SEPTEMBER – 2 OCTOBER)

Having gained control of the Old Town, the Germans continued their main offensive along the riverside districts of Powiśle and Czerniaków. Between 10 and 14 September the Red Army occupied Warsaw's eastern district of Praga and the right bank of the Vistula, but offered no help to the insurgents.

By the beginning of October the Polish fighters still controlled just a fragment of Śródmieście. At this point they decided to capitulate, negotiating the terms. Initially the German command wanted to push the insurgents away from the river, as they were expecting the Soviets to attack from the right bank. In the end, a few hundred soldiers from Polish units serving under Soviet command made it across to the left bank, but they were unable to change the final outcome of the uprising. After the fall of Czerniaków, the Germans suppressed the fighting both in the southern district of Mokotów (27 September) and in Żoliborz to the north (30 September).



MAP OF WARSAW



Key

Main areas of fighting:

- 1–4 August
- 5 August – 3 September
- 3 September – 2 October

— canals used by the insurgents

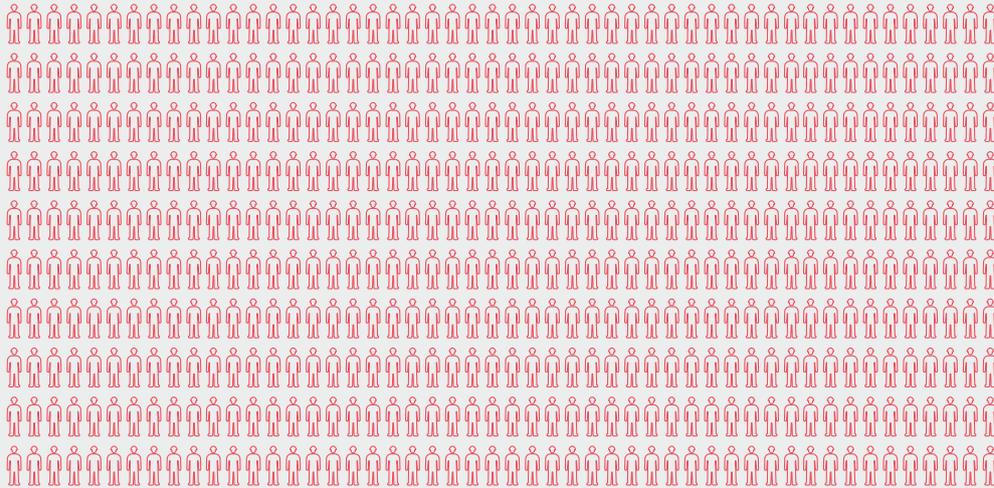


FIGHTERS ENGAGED

INSURGENTS

c. 50,000

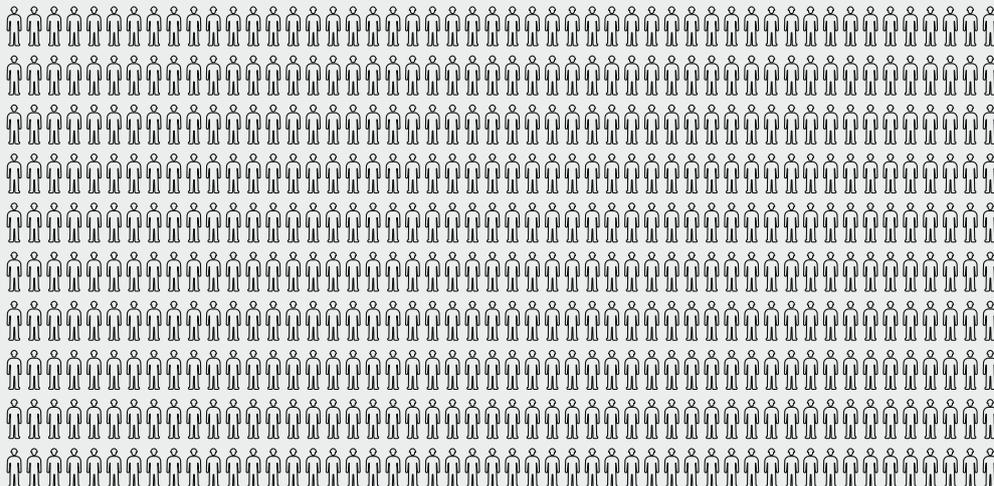
 = 100 soldiers



GERMAN
FORCES

c. 50,000
well-armed

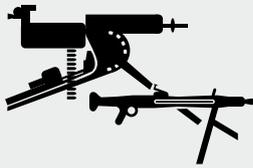
 = 100 soldiers



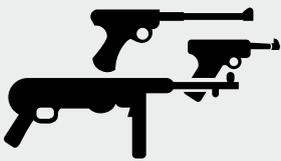


WEAPONS EMPLOYED

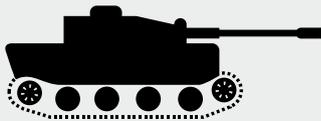
GERMAN FORCES



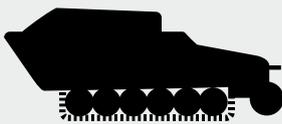
more than
400
light and heavy
machine guns



more than
10,000
semi-automatic guns,
rifles and pistols



more than
100
tanks



more than
120
armoured vehicles



more than
140
artillery guns



more than
200
aircraft and remote-
controlled demolition
vehicles

INSURGENTS



181
light and heavy
machine guns



5,754
semi-automatic
guns, rifles, hand
guns



2
captured
German tanks



3
armoured
vehicles



1
captured
German self-propelled
assault gun

lack of own
air support



CASUALTIES AND LOSSES

 = 100 dead

 = 100 dead

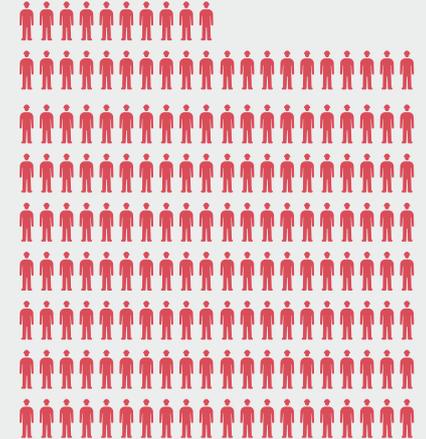
CIVILIANS

130,000–150,000 civilians



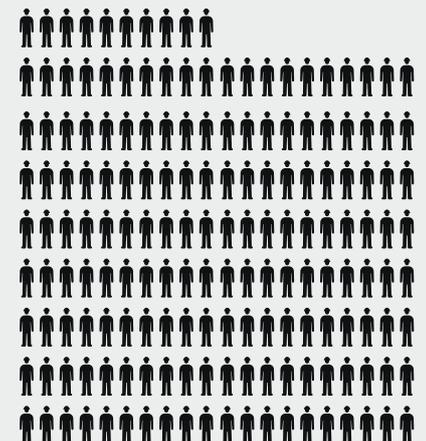
INSURGENTS

incl. c. **17,000** soldiers dead



GERMAN FORCES

incl. c. **17,000** soldiers dead and missing in combat





KEY FIGURES



Gen. Tadeusz Komorowski, nom de guerre 'Bór'

(1895-1966)

Home Army commander



**Col. Antoni Chruściel,
nom de guerre 'Monter'**

(1895-1960)

commander of the Warsaw Rising



Jan Stanisław Jankowski, nom de guerre 'Soból'

(1882-1953)

delegate of the Polish government-in-exile
in the rank of deputy prime minister,
civilian leader of the uprising



**Rotmistrz (cavalry captain)
Witold Pilecki,
nom de guerre 'Witold'**

(1901-1948)

one of the Warsaw Rising's most
outstanding company commanders



PHOTOGRAPHY



Burning PAST (telephone operator) buildings at 37/39 Zielna Street, 20 August 1944. **Photograph by Eugeniusz Lokajski, *nom de guerre* 'Brok'.** MPW-IN/551

<https://www.1944.pl/szukaj-zdjec,strona,1.html/szukaj/PAST#673>



Emerging from sewer in Warecka Street, north Śródmieście, 1 September 1944. **Photograph by Joachim Joachimczyk, *nom de guerre* 'Joachim'.** MPW-IH/4102

<https://www.1944.pl/fototeka/kanaly,64.html#7154>

Photograph taken during Warsaw Rising. View of roofs between Widok Street and Jerozolimskie Avenue, taken from building at 8 Widok Street, looking south, 24 August 1944. **Photograph by Joachim Joachimczyk, *nom de guerre* 'Joachim'.** MPW-IP/1208

<https://www.1944.pl/fototeka/warszawa-zniszczona,99.html#1706>



European Network
Remembrance
and Solidarity



Warsaw
Rising
Museum

יידישער **JEWISH**
היסטאָרישער **HISTORICAL**
אינסטיטוט **INSTITUTE**

Authors

Justyna Majewska

Research Department
Jewish Historical Institute

Karol Mazur

Head of Education Department
Warsaw Rising Museum

Substantive editing

Prof. Jan Rydel

European Network Remembrance
and Solidarity (ENRS)

Coordination

Maria Naimska
Zhanna Vrublevska

ENRS

Graphic design

 RZECZYOBRAZKOWE

Translation

Lidia Polubiec

Posters & Photographs

Jewish Historical Institute (ŻIH)
Warsaw Rising Museum (MPW)
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Infographic developed within the project
*Hi-story lessons. Teaching & learning about
20th-century European history*

It is a multilingual web-based educational project designed for high school and college teachers and students. The aim of the Hi-story lessons is to support the process of teaching and developing a better understanding the 20th-century European history using infographics, animations and interactive timelines displaying a list of events from the 20th century. The choice of impactful dates was made by a number of educational history experts from six countries – Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Czech Republic. All proceedings were held in the spirit of mutual respect of the variety of different opinions and national narratives.

www.hi-storylessons.eu
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