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THE FALL OF MONUMENTS
OF THE GENTRY CULTURE IN 1945–2015

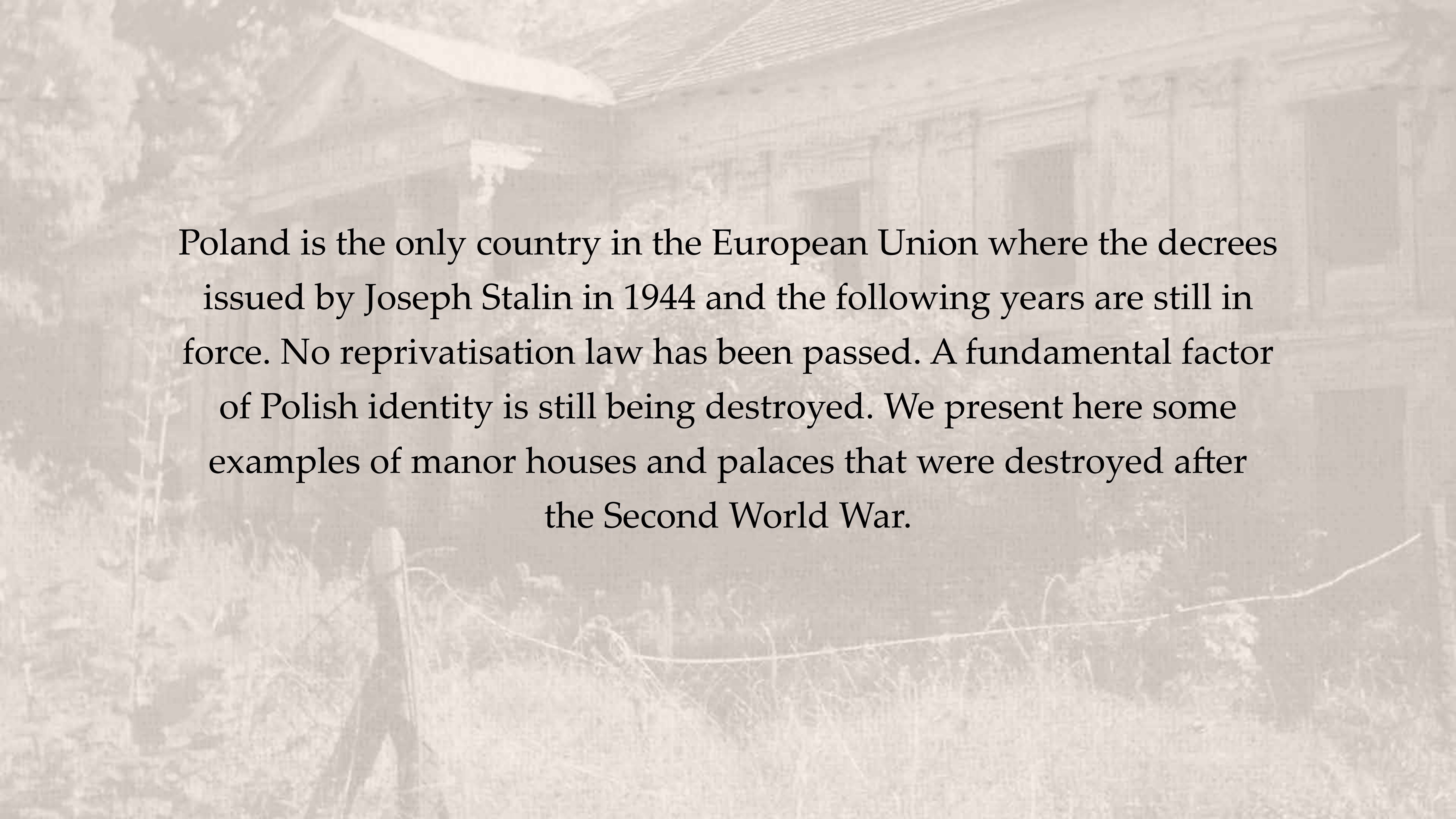
Warsaw 2015



◀ In Prymusowa Wola (Łódź Province), the Agricultural Production Cooperative “Zgoda” devastated the manor house and the park. The state as for 1996...



◀ The same manor house of the Domański family in Prymusowa Wola — the state as for 2006.



Poland is the only country in the European Union where the decrees issued by Joseph Stalin in 1944 and the following years are still in force. No reprivatisation law has been passed. A fundamental factor of Polish identity is still being destroyed. We present here some examples of manor houses and palaces that were destroyed after the Second World War.



- ▲ Garlica Murowana (Małopolska Province) (1975).
- ▶ Garlica Murowana (2006).

In 1939, there were almost 20,000 manor houses and palaces in Poland, including 4,000 buildings located in Eastern Borderlands that were cut off by a new border.

In the register of monuments created by the National Heritage Board (Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa, NID) in 2014, there were 4,823 buildings; 1,823 buildings were located in the Western, “Recovered Territories.”

THE LEGACY OF THE POLISH LANDED GENTRY: MANOR HOUSES, PALACES—3,000 BUILDINGS.

Referring to the original state, 150 rural manor houses and palaces that still exist in Poland have preserved the architectural and historical character. It is less than 1% of the total as for 1939.

In Poland, there is not a single complete manor and garden layout, with green infrastructure, that has survived the period of the Polish People’s Republic. A centre for research and documentation of the gentry, their residences and practices does not exist.

NO.	STATE OF MANOR HOUSES AND PALACES IN 2014	OVERALL NUMBER	CONTINUATION*
1	Empty and undeveloped, ruined	1,970	0
2	In the hands of local governments (schools, kindergartens, orphanages, health centres and nursing homes, cultural centres, communal flats)	440	8
3	Registered offices of farming enterprises (companies, cooperatives, horse studs), businesses and universities	58	6
4	Pensions, hotels, conference and training centres	180	15
5	Private houses owned by new owners	170	12
6	Residuary parts (Polish: resztówki) of divided estates that are in the hands of pre-war owners or were reclaimed after 1989 by their descendants	98	44
7	Museums or relocated to open-air ethnographic museums (as reconstructions)	64	64
8	Objects owned by the church institutions	20	1
	IN TOTAL	3,000	150

* "Continuation" means that the manorial character of residence has been preserved or reconstructed.



◀ The Renaissance manor house built in the 16th century in Graboszyce (Małopolska Province). It is empty, dilapidated and falling into decay. Photo by M. Rydel (2009).



◀ Miłonice (Łódź Province, Krośniewice Commune). Demolished in 2009, it was one of the most precious Baroque wooden manor houses built in the 18th century in Poland. Photo www.eksploratorzy.com.pl.



◀ Kozńiewo Wielkie (Mazovia Province). It is one of the most precious Baroque wooden manor houses in Poland. Abandoned. Still, it can be preserved! Photo by M. Rydel (2012).



◀ Bęckowo (Podlaskie Province). The Baroque manor house of the Klimontowicz family built in the 18th century. After the First World War, it was owned by Rajmund Skarzyński, who would be killed by the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) in 1940. After the Second World War, it was owned by the school. Although the manor house is a private property since 2001, it is still empty.



◀ From 1639 to 1944, Żytno was the property of the Siemieński family. It is one of the most beautiful manor houses in Łódź Province. It was destroyed by the school accompanied by the commune. Photo by M. Rydel (2010).



▲ Żytno (Łódź Province) the property of the Siemieński family built in the beginning of the 19th century (1937).

▶ The property in 2010.



◀ Nadzów (Małopolska Province). The modest manor house of the Wielogłowski family, built in 1806 according to the design by Jakub Kubicki, is vanishing! Photo by M. Rydel (2007).

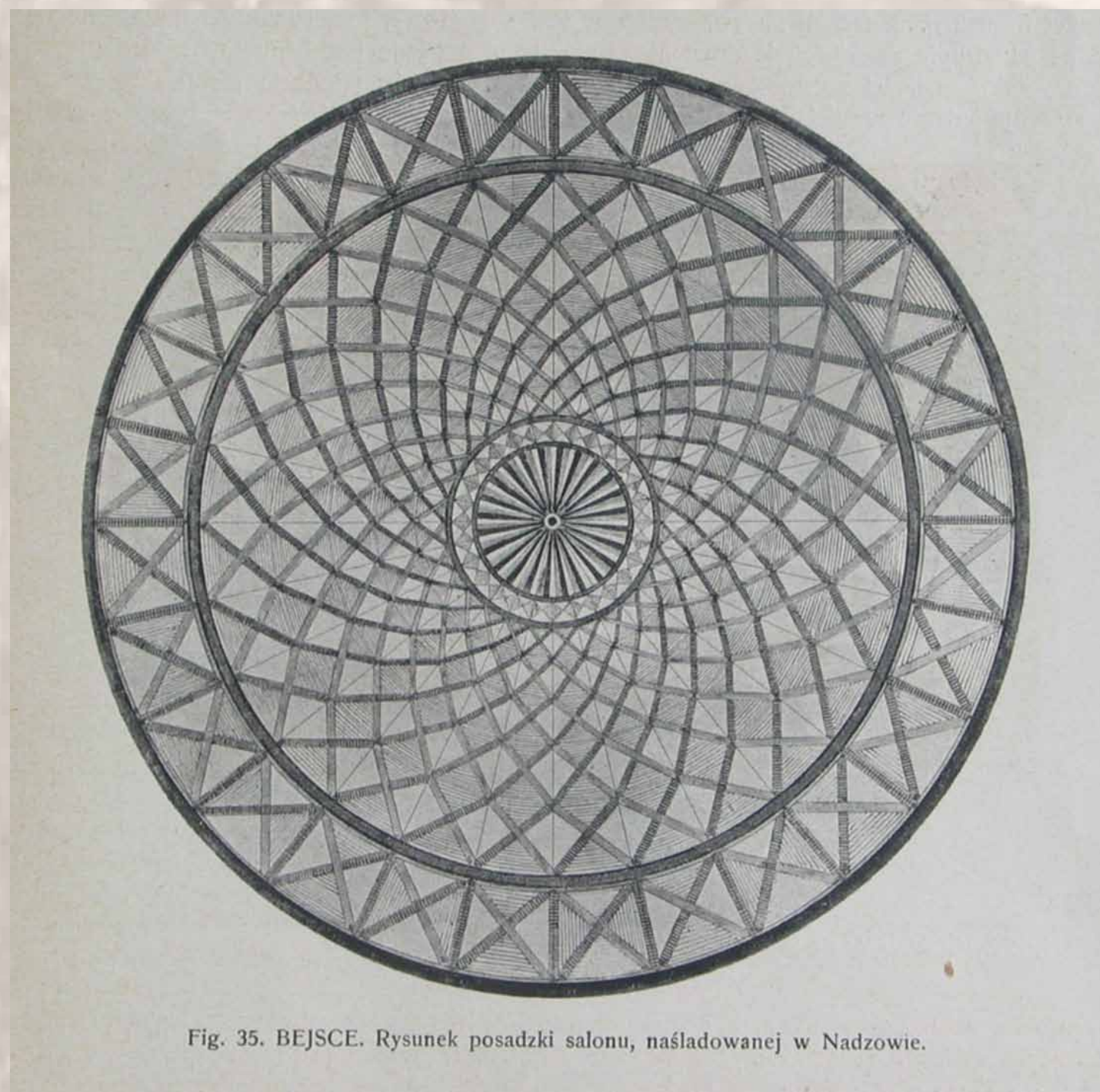


Fig. 35. BEJSCE. Rysunek posadzki salonu, naśladowanej w Nadzowie.



- ◀ The destroyed living room of the manor house in Nadzów (2012).
- ◀ The floor surface in Nadzów is (or was) the copy of the floor in the palace located in Bejsce.



◀ The manor house with corner extensions of the Zagajewski family in Dąbie Kujawskie in 1982.



◀ Dąbie Kujawskie. The same manor house in 2005.



◀ The palace in Mordy (Mazovia Province) which the Przewłocki family has been trying to regain for years. The palace is not far from its fall. Photo by M. Rydel (2012).



◀ The Baroque gate of the palace in Mordy. Photo by M. Rydel (2012).



◀ Sobieszyn (Mazovia Province). The palace of the Kicki family designed by Piotr Aigner, one of the most famous architects in the 19th century, is falling into decay. Photo by M. Rydel (2005).



◀ The manor house in Głupice (Łódź Province) was situated in the old park. The descendants of Julian Walicki, the last owner, cannot regain the house due to the lack of a reprivatisation law. Photo by A. Dyszyński (2005).



◀ Głupice. Photo by
A. Dyszyński (2005).



◀ The manor house of the Niemojewski family in Lasocin (Świętokrzyskie Province). In the 1970s, it was still in good condition.



◀ This is how it looked in 2009.
Photo by M. Rydel.



◀ The palace in Nawra (Kujawy-Pomerania Province), built in 1798–1805 and designed by Hilary Szpilowski for Konstanty I. Kruszyński, used to house a wonderful library of the Kruszyński / Szczaniecki family (1938).



◀ Today, it is empty and dilapidated (2012).



◀ Skomorochy Duże (Lublin Province). From 1397 to 1944, it was the property of the Skomorowski family. In the tympanum, there is the Skomorowski family coat of arms “Nałęcz”. In many villages in Poland, approximately 2,000 manor houses—the foundations of Polish identity—are vanishing. Photo by M. Rydel (2014).



◀ Niedźwiedź (Kujawy-Pomera-
nia Province). The manor house
of the Kucharski and then Miecz-
kowski families in 1936 and 2007.



◀ Niedźwiedź — side view of the manor house. Before 1939, there was a famous private museum of the Mieczkowski family. Photo by M. Rydel (2005).



◀ Niedźwiedź (near Kikół, Kujawy-Pomerania Province). The manor house built in the 19th century. Photos from 1990 and 2010 (source: Wikipedia). The fall of Polish manor houses continues.

An excerpt from the letter written by a granddaughter of the owner of Kupientyn property: “My grandparents owned the property in Kupientyn, near Sokołów Podlaski. After the war, everything was taken away from them and my grandfather spent three years in quarries for having been a member of the Polish Home Army (Armia Krajowa, AK). The Agricultural Cooperative came into ownership of the manor house and converted it into flats. Our family was not informed about the possibility to buy the manor house from the cooperative that went into liquidation. The property, that is the manor house of 590 square metres and the park of 2.4 hectares, was bought by some random people for 4,500 zlotys. In the notarial act, they undertook to renovate the manor house within three years. Unfortunately, to this day they have not done anything and the manor house is falling into decay. I informed the conservators in Siedlce and Warsaw, but that is no use. The law allows to destroy monuments... I could no longer look peacefully at it, so I filed a motion with the Prosecutor’s Office, but it did not initiate proceedings.

Best wishes, Katarzyna [...] née Hryniewicz (14 October 2009).”



◀ Bachorza, near Sokołów Podlaski. In 1995, Irena Zaleska-Oleksiak, a daughter of the pre-war owner, Teofil Zaleski, requested that the manor house be returned. To no effect. Photo by M. Rydel (2004).



◀ In Kurowice (Podlaskie Province), there were a beautiful manor house and a park of the Krasiński family. Photo by M. Rydel (2004).



◀ The manor house in Toporów (Podlasie Region) – the achievements of Agricultural Production Cooperative “Wólka Nosowska” in the Podlasie Region.



- ▲ The manor house owned by Józef Chrzanowski, who was killed by the Germans in 1939 because he did not want to sign the Deutsche Volksliste. The state of the manor house as for 1994.
- ▶ It has been under “repair” since 2005?! Photo by M. Rydel (2014).





▲ Kotlin (Wielkopolska Province). The manor house with corner extensions of the Mukułowski family; until 1944, it was the property of the Chłapowski family. Photo from 1911—L. Durczykiewicz.



▲ Photo from 2009—M. Rydel.



▲ Janowice (Łódź Province, Łęczyca District). Built in the late 19th century, the manor house was the property of Jan Łoskowski, the son-in-law of painter Józef Chełmoński (1935).



▲ For many years, the grandchildren of Chełmoński were trying to regain the house that would be sold for 10,000 zlotys to a businessman from Łódź in 2005. Photo by Tomasz Szwagrzak / www.zamkilotdzkie.pl (2009).



◀ Siennów (Małopolska Province). The manor house of the Wolski family was destroyed, only a football field is left in the eighteenth-century park that was cut down. Photo by M. Rydel (2009).



◀ Siennów.
Photo by M. Rydel (2009).



From the report issued by the Supreme Chamber of Control
(Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, NIK) in March 2010:

“In the assessment of the Supreme Chamber of Control, it was illegal to seize historical properties by the Polish state on the basis of the decree of the Polish Committee of National Liberation (Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego, PKWN) on the agricultural reform.

In the assessment of the Supreme Chamber of Control, public owners of historical monuments demonstrate gross negligence in terms of their management. This situation does not bode well for a few residential cultural assets and will result in the disappearance of palaces, manor houses or historical parks from the Polish landscape.”



◀ 1920s, 1930s – “manor style” – Wrzosey, Bełchatów District. How long will the empty manor house survive? Photo by J. Frydrychowski (2007).



◀ The manor house of the Grodzicki family built in 1930 in Kazanie (Kuyavia). A typical example of manor style in danger of extinction. Photo by M. Rydel (2005).



◀ Some manor houses can only be seen in the picture. The wooden manor house in Leszczyń Księży (to the north of Płock) was destroyed in the 1980s. A watercolour by T. Osiński.



◀ Jerzy Szaniawski, a writer, was born in 1886 in the manor house in Zegrzynek, near Warsaw. With a break, he lived and wrote there in the years 1939–1950. It is also this manor house where he died in 1970.



◀ After 1945, being oppressed for not having submitted to the Communist regime, he lived in poverty. After his death, the neglected manor house burnt down... only the stairs remained...



◀ Kików (Świętokrzyskie Province). On the left—the ruins of the manor house; on the right—a new school. Here, children are taught respect for the Polish history. (Source: www.dwory.cal.pl).



◀ Attention! Yet another way to destroy Polish manor houses has been discovered. Hotels, restaurants and conference centres, which present only to some extent the atmosphere of the Polish manor house, are few and far between. The majority was adapted according to the taste of a honky-tonk owner!



◀ The inside of a “real manor house.”



◀ The manor house in Dłużniewo (Mazovia Province) converted into a restaurant. Of course, “dworek” (Polish for “manor house”) in the name of the restaurant has nothing in common with a manor house. Photo by M. Rydel (2005).



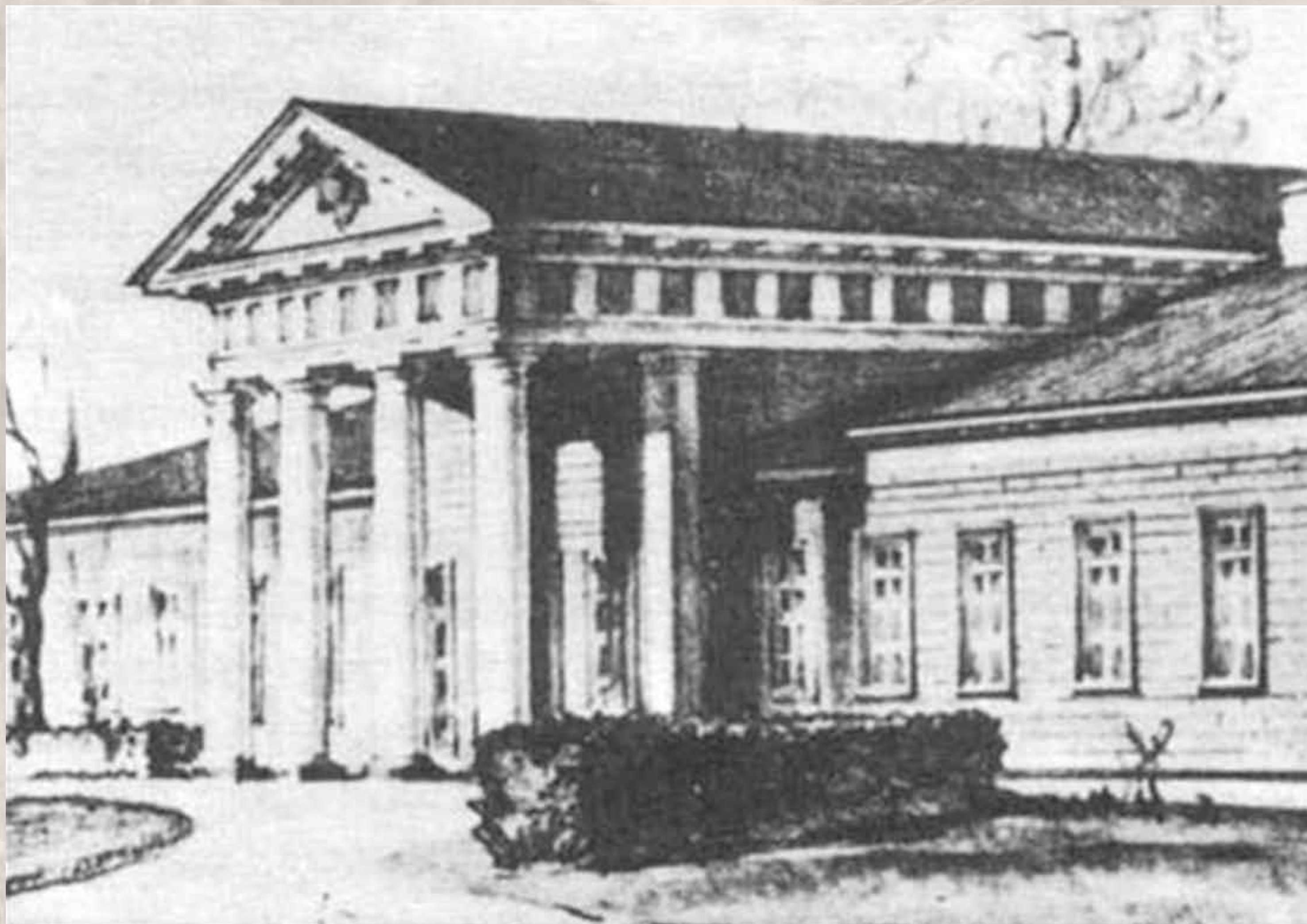
THE FORMER EASTERN BORDERLANDS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND



◀ The manor house owned by the Witkiewicz family in Rudamina (Lithuania), located behind the Polish border, is disappearing. Photo by M. Rydel (2005).



◀ The same manor house painted by Stanisław Witkiewicz in 1883, Dwór w Urdominie [The manor house in Rudamina]. The place of birth of Jan Koszczyc-Witkiewicz, an architect.



◀ The project of the manor house for the Radziwiłł family in Radziwiłłmonty, near Nesvizh (Belarus), by an Italian architect, Carlo Spampani, was realised in 1785.



◀ The manor house in Radziwiłłmonty still existed in the 1960s. In 2013, there were only the remains of the portico. Photo by M. Rydel (2013).



◀ This is how the manor house of the Puzyna family located in Hremiacze, near Brest (Belarus), looked ca. 1914.



◀ ...and this is how the manor house in Hremiacze looked in 2000. Photo by Józef Puzyna.



▲ The manor house in Dukszty (Lithuania) was built in 1820 for the Biegański family. Later, it was the property of Tomasz Zan (the grandson of Tomasz Zan, a philomath). At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, many artists created their works here, for example Jan Rustem (a student of Marcello Bacciarelli) or Józef Weysenhoff. Photo from 1936.

▶ Photo by M. Rydel (2005).





◀ Pawłów (the former Lwów Province, today Ukraine). Built ca. 1923, the manor house of the Ujejski family is decaying; the park was cut down. Nearby, there is a cemetery with the grave of Kornel Ujejski, the author of a patriotic poem, *Chorał* [Chorale]. Photo by M. Rydel (2012).



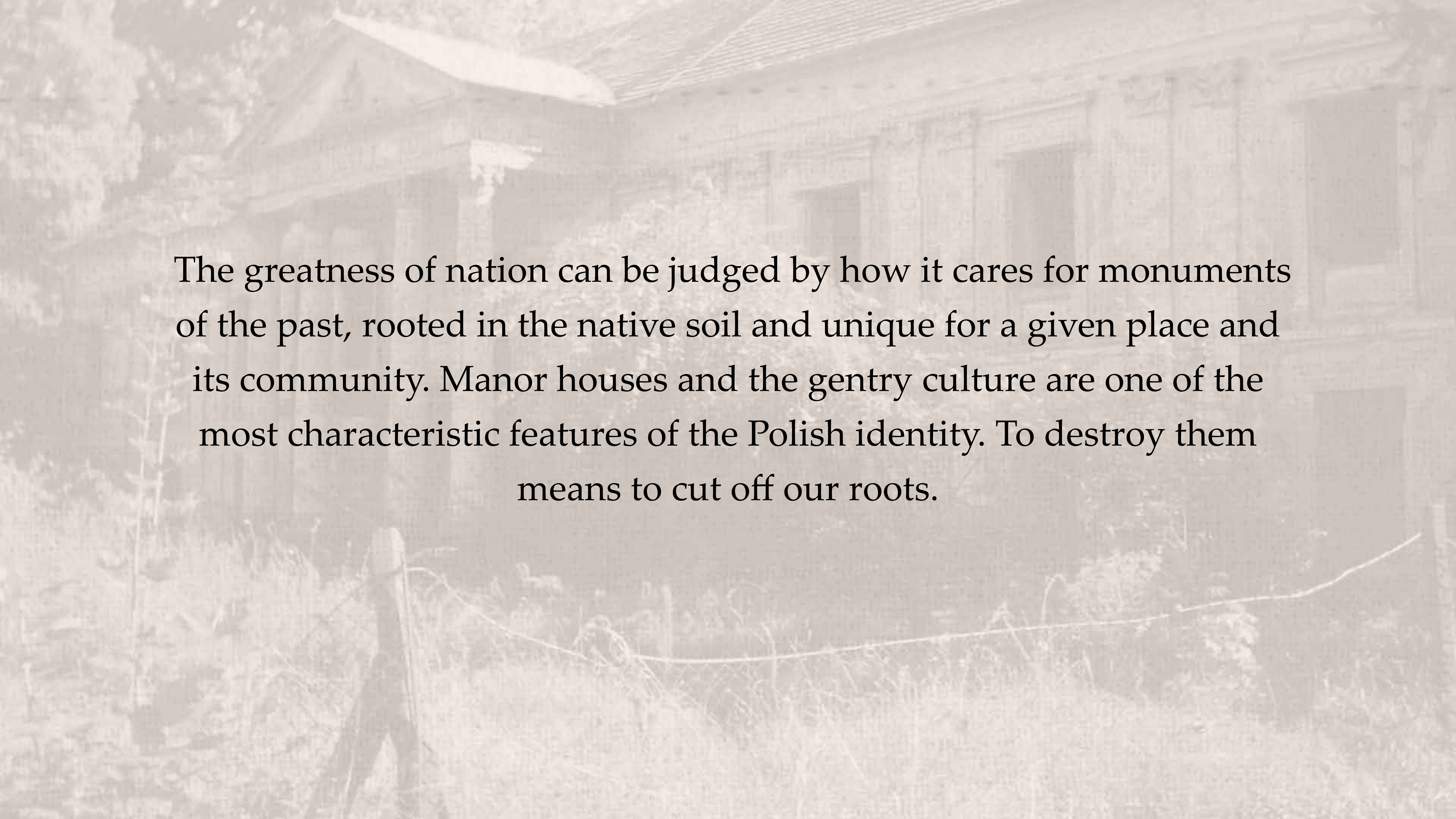
◀ The nineteenth-century, wooden manor house of the Reytan family in Hruszówka (Belarus). Empty, destroyed. Photo by M. Rydel (2013).



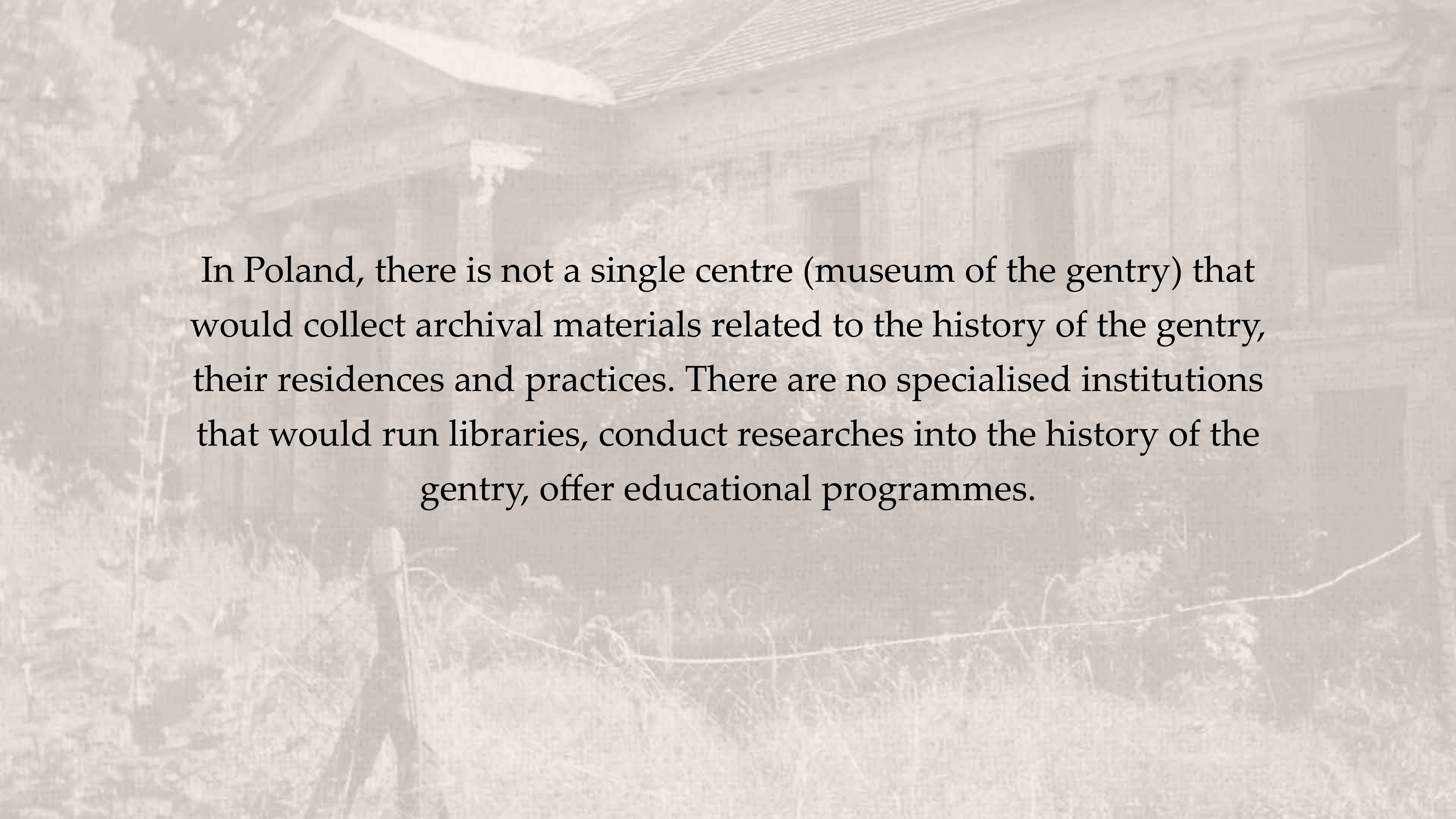
◀ Hruszówka (the former Nowogródek Province, today Belarus). The manor house of the Reytan family and two outbuildings are falling into decay. Nearby, the tomb chapel of the Reytan family is still standing. Photo by M. Rydel (2013).



◀ Hruszówka. The neo-Gothic tomb chapel of the Reytan family. It is dilapidated, empty and close to collapse. Photo by M. Rydel (2013).



The greatness of nation can be judged by how it cares for monuments of the past, rooted in the native soil and unique for a given place and its community. Manor houses and the gentry culture are one of the most characteristic features of the Polish identity. To destroy them means to cut off our roots.



In Poland, there is not a single centre (museum of the gentry) that would collect archival materials related to the history of the gentry, their residences and practices. There are no specialised institutions that would run libraries, conduct researches into the history of the gentry, offer educational programmes.



THE POLISH LANDOWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Embraces descendants of the former landowners. It actively struggles for the observance of ownership rights and recovery of landed properties or (when impossible) for the compensation. It tries to cultivate manorial traditions as well as high culture and encourage the rescue of the remains of landowners' residences. The Polish Landowners' Association keeps documentation of the state of manor houses and palaces built in Poland.

