

Lawsuit over the crime of genocide committed by the Germans against civilian inhabitants of Kostrzyn on October 20th, 1939

The main objective of the article is to describe the reasons and the course of the mass atrocity committed by German troops against inhabitants of Kostrzyn and neighboring areas (Greater Poland) on October 20th, 1939, and to report on the post-war activities aimed at deeming this atrocity a genocide. The first part of the article, which is the introduction to the presented issue, presents the general characteristics of criminal actions undertaken by the Germans in the course of the „Tannenberg” operation, which was a part of the Generalplan Ost (General Plan East). The assumption of this plan was the preparation of the Lebensraum (living space) for the Germans, in particular through extermination of the upper class of the Polish society. The paper indicates the forms of operations, methods of committing mass atrocities and the subjects responsible for the execution side. The analyzed geographical location is the so-called „Reichsgau Wartheland” where the town of Kostrzyn was located. The article presents historical background of the atrocity in Kostrzyn, its legal basis and the course of the „lawsuit” and execution. The final key part of the study is the description of post-war proceedings from the years 1967-2007 aimed at establishing the circumstances of the atrocity and pointing out the parties responsible for committing it.

Keywords: criminal law, genocide, World War II, German crimes