

I WORKED IN THE INDUSTRIAL DEPARTMENT

Danuta Woliczko recalls her work in the Statistisches Amt für das Generalgouvernement

I got a job in the Statistisches Amt through a friend who was already employed there. She said there were vacancies and that they were employing everyone who applied. I was employed at once. The Germans did not check my credentials. I was not asked about my education. Even 17-year-old girls who had not finished secondary school were working there, and there were lots of them. I'd completed my first year at University. When the Germans occupied Kraków in 1939 an announcement was posted up in the University calling students to register, as the University was to start classes. I was the first to register for the next year, but later it turned out that the professors had been arrested, as we learned by word of mouth, and the prospect of university studies came to nothing.

There were much older persons who sat behind me at the second table. There were no documents or ID cards. They just put us down in the employees' register. All we got was an insurance card.

I worked in the industrial department. The head of this department, which occupied the entire second floor of the Collegium Novum Building, was a German called Windhäuser. The agricultural department was on the ground floor, I had friends there. I don't remember what was on the first floor, perhaps the commercial department. I didn't have any friends there, and there was no other way of knowing what they did there, curiosity was not recommended. Our boss was Stanisław Róg, who'd come from Warsaw along with the institution. He had a small office on our floor. He was fairly young, not yet forty, and Windhäuser was his superior.

We worked in the department of industrial statistics, which had the largest number of staff. We got data from various businesses and had to enter them on huge sheets. There was not much work at all and quite honestly we didn't know how to fill up the eight hours.

At first I worked in a small room, where there were about five or six of us. Next door was Mr. Róg's office. One day, having nothing else to do, I was reading a book. Suddenly the door was flung open and Mr. Róg came in, so I quickly closed the drawer with the book. He caught me reading a book on a few occasions, and transferred me to the Copernicus Room, where there were about 50 staff, or maybe even more. Reading a book came to an end. You could not read a book in the big hall, because you were

watched. So you could do nothing at all during your working hours, but reading a book was not allowed.

We sat facing each other across the table, about ten or twelve people on either side. The manager of the group sat at the same table. We were supervised by Mrs. Jaglarz, who was Mr. Róg's right hand. She collected up the calculation sheets from us and probably checked them. She must have passed them on to someone. The Germans did not supervise us. I think there were perhaps two counting machines for all of us; you had to do mental arithmetic for the rest of the calculations. Instead of waiting for my turn on the machine I would do the sums in my head.

We started work at 7.30, I think. There was a German porter on duty, and as we came into work he looked at his watch, so you couldn't be late, you were expected to be punctual. I think



*Pracownicy Działu Statystyki Przemysłu.
W drugim rzędzie trzecia od lewej stoi Danuta Woliczko
Staff of the Industrial Statistics Department.
Danuta Woliczko standing third left in second row*



*Jedna z sal Działu Statystyki Przemysłu
A room in the Industrial Statistics Department*

D. Woliczko



*Danuta Woliczko (siedzi pierwsza z prawej)
wśród koleżanek*

*Danuta Woliczko (seated first right)
with colleagues*

the porter had a navy blue suit, but not much of him was visible through the window of his lodge. We did not feel anxious as we entered the building, and it was strange that we were not afraid.

After work we young girls quickly ran out of the building, we'd had enough of sitting still. The people on the benches in the Planty Gardens thought that there must have been a school in the building when they saw so many young people coming out of it. But they could not have known any better, as there was no board or name on it, they couldn't have known it was a government institution.

Actually I didn't have such a bad time in the statistics office. I can't complain: the Germans I came in contact with were very polite to us if they saw us. I never saw Director Windhäuser, he never came into our room. We only knew of him. The Germans we worked with were relatively older civilians who were not called up;* we were not afraid of them.

I had a good time with my Polish friends there. One day one of them founded the White Greyhound Club, bought five badges of white greyhounds and gave us one each. We pinned them to our clothes and wore them. One day someone told us not to wear them, as the Germans would think they stood for some organisation and there would be trouble. I still have my white greyhound. We were not involved in anything.

There was a Volkdeutsche called Stec who used to come into our room and say that even though we were not earning much we were warm, for the wartime winters were very cold. He kept our spirits up. I have a notebook in which I entered my earnings – 125 złoty, paid out in the secretary's office. For that money you could buy a kilo of butter on the black market. It was a miserable pay-packet, in other institutions people earned much more.

I don't know whether any of my colleagues at work was in the resistance. Such things were kept secret. We didn't know about the secret university, either. Some of my friends held a grudge that the secret university enrolled students straight from school, not those who had already started their studies.



Pracownicy Działu Statystyki Przemysłu. Stanisław Róg siedzi w pierwszym rzędzie, Danuta Woliczko (najwyższa) w ostatnim rzędzie

Staff of the Industrial Statistics Department. Stanisław Róg seated in front row; Danuta Woliczko standing in the back row (the tallest girl)

It's strange that nobody was arrested out of such a large group of young people.

I used to take a Kodak camera to work and I think that the pictures made in the statistics office which have been preserved were taken with my camera. No German ever came into our room. Of course there would have been serious trouble if we had been seen taking pictures, but even our boss [Róg] is on those photos, so someone must have asked him to come and he must have been sure that no Germans would come in at that time, and he must have known the Germans very well. His German was fluent and he got on well with the Germans.

The Germans must have known that we didn't have enough work to keep us busy for eight hours. Half the number of staff would have been enough for that amount of work. Why did they employ so many people? I don't know.* Maybe they took as many young girls as possible so as not to take them to Germany for forced labour? It never crossed my mind how many staff there were in the whole building. On our floor there must have been about a hundred. We never wondered why the Germans employed more staff than they needed; considering what

the Germans were like we only wondered why we had such a lot of time to do the work. After the war we never discussed the subject – I never talked about it even with my best friend, whom I met in the statistics office and was friends with until her death in 2000.

I worked in this institution for two or three years. Later lots of people left because of the poor pay. My friend later got me into a job in the canteen of a German factory on the Zabłocie, where the pay was better.

Based on an interview by Bogusław Sławiński and Piotr Köhler,
6 May 2008

*[Translator's note: German civilian officials sent to occupied Poland tended to employ as many indigenous staff as they could as a safeguard against being called up themselves for the front. The more staff they had, the more important they seemed from the perspective of Berlin (or so they thought). This was probably the reason why the Statistisches Amt employed superfluous staff.]



*Pracownice Działu Statystyki Przemysłu
w oknie II piętra od strony dziedzińca
Collegium Novum*

*Industrial Statistics Department staff at
a 2nd-floor window looking out on the court
of Collegium Novum*

D. Woliczko