she was moved to the Gestapa prison at 16 Sterlinga Street, where she was murdered.

The Kaszyńscis orphaned four children: Zbigniew (13), Maria (11), Barbara (5) and Stanisław (2). After their mother had been arrested, the children were taken care of by Cecylia Sotar, Karolina Kaszyńska’s friend, and then by some relatives from Brudzew (Maria – Elekora Kaszyńska and Konstanty Kaszyński, Barbara – Jadwiga Królikowska and Aleksander Królikowski, and Stanisław – Jadwiga Kaszyńska and Stanisław Kaszyński). Having spent six months with the Pietraszeks, Zbigniew worked in the fields to make a living. In 1946, guardians of the Pietraszeks, Zbigniew moved to the Gestapo prison at 16 Sterlinga Street, where she was murdered.

On May 23, 1994, the Regional Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation – Institute of National Remembrance in Łódź launched an investigation into the murder of Kaszyński. In 1996, the investigation was suspended by decision dated May 15, 1996.

Stanisław Kaszyński, the man who remained faithful to his beliefs until the very end, is still remembered in the local community. In 1991, a monument devoted to him was unveiled in the Rzuchów Forest, near the graves of Polish hostages shot by Germans on November 15, 1939. The monument includes a plaque with the following inscription: “In memory of Stanisław Kaszyński, secretary of the Chełmno-on-Ner Commune. On November 16, 1903, murdered by Nazis on February 28, 1942, in Chełmno, near the church, for his attempt to inform the world about the crimes committed against the Jewish population.”

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Sieprawska Danuta, „Stanisław Kaszyński wobec eksterminacji Żydów w obozie zagłady w Chełmnie nad Nerem”, in [f.s.] Kto w takich czasach żył w Chełmnie? Prace kulturowe, 2014, no. 20, pp. 228–231.

From the beginning of the 19th century, the village of Chełmno located on the Ner was the seat of the Commune Office. After Poland regained independence in 1918, the Chełmno-Commune was located in the Kolo District in the Lodzi Province (and from 1938 in the Poznań Province). During the interwar period, Chełmno had about 500 inhabitants (there were over 4,000 inhabitants in the whole commune, including 200 of German nationality). In the 1930s, there was also one Jewish family in Chełmno; the Roskowscis.

The commune administration included a Commune Council (in rural communes, such as Chełmno, communes consisted of 12 people) and a commune head who formed the Commune Board together with a deputy commune head, two councillors and a secretary (clerk). From 1939 to the outbreak of the Second World War, the position of the secretary of the Chełmno Commune was held by Stanisław Kaszyński, whose fate was inextricably linked with the fate of the victims of the death camp established by Germans in the village in the autumn of 1941.

Stanisław Kaszyński was born on November 16, 1903 in Brudzew, as a son of Andrzej and Marianna née Gołębowska. Having passed school-examinations, he worked for some time as a clerk in Białystok, and then – as was already mentioned – as the secretary of the Chełmno-on-Ner Commune. In 1929, Stanisław married Karolina Posłowska (b. October 20, 1909), daughter of restaurant owners from Babak, graduate of one of the lower secondary schools in Warsaw.

As an educated man, Kaszyński was a highly respected member of the local community. Apart from the purely official activities related to his position, he also got very actively involved in the activities of a number of organisations operating in the commune. He was the first chief of the volunteer fire department established in Chełmno in 1918, and he was involved in the operations of the local branch of the Air and Chemical Defence League (Liga Obrony Powietrznej i Przeciwgazowej, LOPP). The branch authorities had their seat in the building of the Commune Board. The composition of the branch’s board changed, however, the position of its secretary was always held by Stanisław Kaszyński. The branch was engaged in other things, annual collections of money in order to support the development of the Polish air force; other forms of its activity included talks and lectures. Kaszyński frequently gave speeches on public holidays and on other occasions. The commune secretary was also a member of an amateur theatre group created by the “Regional Youth Club in Przybyłów.”

After the hostilities ceased in 1939, Chełmno, under its German name Kulmhof, became part of the Reichsgau Wartheland created from sections of the Polish territory annexed to the Third Reich (it was still located in the Kolo District, renamed Kreis Warthebrücke, in-Regierungsbezirk, Hohenstein). Germans were appointed to all the highest positions of the local government. The administrative head of the Chełmno Commune became Volksdeutsch Konrad Schulz, who had been the Head of the DVP (Deutscher Volksverein in Polen) unit in his home.
village of Sobótka before the war, and Kaszyński was replaced as secretary by a certain Kluge. Kaszyński and two other Poles remained in the office on lower positions.

In the early autumn of 1941, SD officer and leader of the SS-Sonderkommando SS-Hauptsturmführer Herbert Langer came to the village. He had murdered about 110,000 mentally disabled patients as part of the so-called "euthanasia" in the psychiatric hospitals in the East Prussia. Kaszyński was to become the centre of the extermination of Jews from the Chełmno, Brudzawa and from nearby Dąbie, he decided to inform the world about the death machine operating in the village. As an intelligent man, he was probably aware that even an indirect attempt to help the Jews murdered in Kaszyński might have tragic consequences for his whole family. Thanks to the fact that he spoke German and that the only telephone available in the village could be found in the presbytery used by the commune authorities and the camp's administration, he could follow the Sonderkommando's activities on a regular basis.

We do not know how Kaszyński started his cooperation with the Polish Underground State. In the Kolo District, there were structures of the Union of Armed Struggle (Związek Walki Zbrojnej, ZWZ). In February 1942, the Kolo District of the ZWZ-AK, which arrested Kaszyński in his workplace and locked him in the mansion's basement. Then the body was buried in an unknown place in the Rzuchów Forest.

A tragic fate also befell Stanisław Kaszyński's pregnant wife Karolina. She was questioned by the Gestapo, and after several searches of the Kaszyński House she was arrested on the charge of disseminating hostile information, and taken to the women's prison at 13 Galarzka Street in Lodz (where she stayed from February 22 to June 15, 1942). Then...