Lion Capital

Zoo Acquisition Strategies in Interwar Poland

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Abstract

The Zoological Garden in Poznań was established in the 1870s and maintained a provincial character within the German Empire. After the First World War, the zoo was taken over by Polish authorities and gained the status of national heritage. Nevertheless, it encountered problems with sustainability due to limited funds, as well as with installing its own institutional identity and social legitimacy amidst postwar austerity. This article maps out three key strategies which the zoo devised for making new acquisitions to the collection, namely through specimen exchanges, donations, and captive breeding. Focusing on lions, it demonstrates how these strategies were intertwined. The zoo gained new lion specimens by exchanging other species with German animal trade agents and from donations by circuses, Polish travellers and missionaries. Building a foundation for a lion breeding program, the zoo hoped to increase its bargaining power for further exchanges with international wildlife traders.

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Introduction

In 1921, the zoological garden in Poznań in Western Poland celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The zoo was formally established in 1875 with the formation of the Association Zoological Garden (*Verein Zoologischer Garten*) at a time when the city of Poznań belonged to the Kingdom of Prussia. After a quick calculation, one can easily notice that something does not add up: in 1921 there were still four years until the zoo's golden jubilee. The reason for this mismatch lies in postwar national politics and the economic recession of the 1920s that threatened the zoo with closure. When the Polish administration stepped in in June 1919, they urgently needed to secure financial and material support to keep the zoo operating. An upcoming round-number anniversary was a perfect pretext for gathering funds. In the hopes of drawing public attention to the only functioning zoological garden left in the country after the First World War, the Poles decided to commemorate a more whimsical foundational story of the zoo.

In 1871, the chairman of a local bowling club received a rather eccentric birthday gift in the form of a small animal menagerie. His colleagues bestowed upon him a pig, goat, sheep, cat, rabbit, squirrel, goose, duck, chicken, and peacock – all picked up on the streets of the city – plus a trained brown bear and a monkey purchased from Roma travellers. This haphazard assemblage of animals was initially kept in the restaurant garden of the Stargard-Posener railway station, which after its closure became home to the provincial zoo. The modest collection kept growing, especially after it was handed over to the Association tasked with curating a more intentional zoological collection. In 1880, the zoo kept 250 specimens from 59 different species, and by 1907, the collection had almost quadrupled with over nine hundred specimens from about four hundred species. This growing trajectory was disrupted by the First World War, which had taken a toll on the animals, leaving only 243 specimens from 75 species alive when the Poles took over the zoo. To prevent its liquidation, the new directorship needed to restock the depleted collection and tackle a serious deficit in the budget (over five million Marks) caused by postwar inflation.[1] They used the anniversary to drum up public support for one of the oldest zoos in now independent Poland. Therefore, their decision to commemorate an earlier date of foundation was motivated both by the greater prestige accorded to institutions with longer history, and the need to speed up the celebrations that were geared towards saving the zoo.

As an institution known mostly for public entertainment, the zoo was not a priority for the rebuilding state. It received slim governmental and municipal subsidies that barely covered the budget deficit. The new director, Bolesław Cylkowski (1885–1942), launched a national campaign to save "the only Polish zoo," presented as such to garner public support. He encouraged his fellow citizens to visit the zoo as part of their patriotic duty, and the attendance increased from 184,138 visitors in 1919 to 257,774 in 1920.[2] To tackle the issue of the collection itself, Cylkowski and the Association members issued calls for donations in the local and nation-wide press, including hunting journals. The latter were mostly directed at foresters and landowners, who were asked to deliver any interesting local species to the zoo. Appeals to stimulate interest in native fauna were gaining traction, with charismatic species becoming foci for international wildlife conservation efforts. For example, the free-ranging population of the European bison in the Białowieża Forest was wiped out at the end of the war and the international efforts to save the species from extinction gave impetus to the national campaign to save the zoo.[3] This shift from foreign to native species was dictated by the financial and political circumstances of the last zoo in the country with limited access to international animal trade business.[4] However, this does not mean that the Poznań Zoo switched to displaying endemic species only.

This article explores the ways in which the peripheral institution sustained its exotic animal populations. After all, most people in Europe still associate zoological gardens with charismatic animals such as elephants, giraffes, or lions brought from "faraway" lands. These large, strange, and dangerous creatures serve as the epitome of exoticism that the zoo was banking on from its early days as an institution tightly intertwined with the colonial animal trade.[5] This article specifically focuses on lions kept in Poznań between 1921 and 1935, in order to show how the zoo, which was struggling with its own institutional identity and serious financial difficulties, attracted visitors who expected encounters with exotic beasts. Lions exemplify the ways in which the zoo procured such new specimens, namely, through donations, exchanges, and captive breeding. The focus on one particular species allows me to demonstrate how these three acquisition strategies were interconnected. This kind of overlap often involved the management of other species; therefore, this article also discusses camels that happened to play an important role in the lion acquisition story.

The thrifty ways of stocking and diversifying the collection adopted by Poznań Zoo pre-empted the major shift in the role of the institution toward ex situ species conservation in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Started in the 1960s, the processes of decolonisation limited access to wild-caught exotic animals and necessitated captive breeding as the new standard. Meanwhile, the international networks of zoological gardens allowed for the exchange of specimens between institutions to ensure the genetic diversity of captive populations.[6] As the lion case demonstrates, some zoos already developed similar acquisition strategies during the interwar period to cope with their own peripherality within the global wildlife trade. This exposes the conservationist turn in the zoo politics and practices as similarly dictated by the necessity to sustain captive animal populations, rather than concerns for species loss. In this sense, the economic laws of supply and demand were the determining factors driving the latest zoo reform. In this light, zoo specimens appear as what Nicole Shukin called the "animal capital", or the carnal traffic in animal bodies, their reproductive value stretched beyond the realm of biological life, and their symbolic value exploited for human profit and entertainment.[7] In the zoo, sentient beings were rendered fungible commodities that could be (re)produced, accumulated, and exchanged. Their individual and collective life stories remain fragmented and often unfinished because of this commodification. Therefore, what I call *the lion capital* serves as an example of such species-specific commodification of animal bodies, reproduction, and fungibility: one tailored for institutional rather than species survival. For the directorship of a peripheral institution with not much spending power, the lion capital was an investment into the zoo's future and sustainability.

Bolshevik Camels

By the end of the (purported) anniversary year, several German newspapers circulated information that the Poznań Zoo was closing due to bad management.[8] With limited funds for proper feed and veterinary care, the surviving animals in the zoo were perishing quickly. In March 1921, three lions and two young wolves died from a parasitic infection because they were fed spoiled meat.[9] This was a big loss for a small collection left with only a few large carnivores on display. The only lion left on the zoo grounds was a monument dedicated to one of its former directors, Robert Jaeckel (1851–1907). For the Poles, the bronze statue designed by August Gaul, a Berlin-based sculptor

known for capturing animal life, was a bitter reminder of the institution's golden age under the German director. Polish members of the Association promoted the cause of saving the zoo as a matter of national honour:

> *Like all scientific institutions, zoological gardens are the evidence of the city's culture. Poznań, as the only city in the whole of Poland to have a zoological garden, can be proud of it, and the duty and honour of its citizenry should be not only to provide small subsidies that let it vegetate but rather to equip it so that if our institution cannot outdo other European zoological gardens, it can at least keep up with them.*[10]

Keeping up with European trends meant displaying attractive animals from Africa, Asia, and the Americas. To counter the rumours about the zoo's closure, the management committed to restock the animal collection and promised to bring lions of blood and flesh back to Poznań.[11] Despite the aforementioned calls for more native species to be exhibited, exotic specimens were still highly desired as tokens of political power. Consider this excerpt from one of the many appeals for donations, speculating far-reaching diplomatic networks developed by the Second Polish Republic, and cemented with wild animals donated to the zoological collection:

> *Maybe we will see such inscriptions on its* [the zoo's – M.S.] *fences: royal lion – a gift of Consul X. from Algiers, Bengal tiger – a gift of Consul Y. from Calcutta, jaguar – a gift of deputy Z. from Buenos Aires, polar bear – from the naval school in Gdańsk, Japanese hoopoe from deputy Patek from Tokyo.*[12]

Notice that four out of five species on this wish list are predators, and three are big cats. The "royal lion" is the first animal mentioned as one of Africa's most iconic charismatic species and a must-have in any zoo.

Donations comprised the main source of new specimens, but they were not really coming from consuls and diplomats. In response to the appeals from the zoo's board of trustees, landowners contributed large amounts of domestic fowl and local game species. Exotic animals, which were considered more valuable, occasionally made their way to the collection, too. Yet not all of them were there to stay, as they rather constituted assets that held value for sale or exchange. For example, the Polish-Soviet War of 1920 reaped several camels that had been brought to the war front by the Bolsheviks and

seized by the Polish troops as living war trophies. They were domesticated Bactrian camels used as beasts of burden by the Soviet army.[13] In December 1920, the sixty-first regiment of infantry donated two camels to the Poznań Zoo. The soldiers apprehended the wandering animals near Łomża.[14] In November, Warsaw municipality deposited three more camels, also captured by Polish soldiers, to the only Polish zoo at the time (the Warsaw Zoo did not officially open its gates until 1928).[15] Later on, even more Bactrians ended up in Poznań. In 1925, another Soviet camel went astray across the border near Grodno and was about to be exchanged for draft horses, but instead, the Ministry of Military Affairs decided to send it to Poznań to join his fellow ungulate veterans.[16]

In the zoo, these draft animals were supposed to symbolise exotic wildness. Their tameness was an advantage and soon camelback rides became a new attraction for younger visitors. The zoo is an institution that balances the wildness/domestication boundary to its best advantage. Once, the camels were even employed as a living advertisement for an outdoor performance from which the proceeds went to the zoo (Fig. 1).[17] The play was based on the famous adventure novel *In Desert and Wilderness* by Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916).[18] Its action takes place in Egypt and Sudan, so to promote the performance, actors dressed in Arab-like outfits (sporting fitted white sheets rather than actual gallibayas) led the camels through the streets of Poznań to bring the supposed atmosphere of northeast Africa to the Polish city. It must be noted that the two-humped Bactrian camels are native to the steppes of Central Asia, while one-humped dromedaries would be more suited to depict the pack animals used in the deserts of Africa and the Middle East.[19] Bactrian camels and dromedaries are two distinct species occupying different geographic areas. Just like the novel, the peculiar caravan moving through Poznań exploited colonial tropes about exotic animals and cultures that oftentimes ignore historical and geographical accuracy.

Yet the camels proved not exotic enough for the zoo, or at least their number made them disposable. Additionally, their origin as war trophies raised concerns over the institution becoming a "pinfold for camels."[20] This kind of accidental accumulation of specimens from one species served as a resource for exchanges with German zoos and animal dealers. In 1921, the zoo held a total of seven camels, and Cylkowski concluded: "There are too many of them, we want to exchange them for something else at Hagenbeck's."[21] Kazimierz Szczerkowski (1877–1952), who took over the director's position in 1922, continued his predecessor's plan. He wanted to assemble a more diverse

Figure 1 | Camels on the streets of Poznań, 1932.
Polish National Digital Archive, 3/1/0/8/6885, Common source

collection with iconic animals in order to satisfy the expectations of visitors craving more exoticism. And indeed, he soon managed to exchange the "Bolshevik camels" for lions with the Hagenbeck company. The previous director had approached John H. A. Hagenbeck (1866–1940), the half-brother of the world-famous animal trader based in Hamburg, several times before, but the asking prices (e.g., 80 to 100 Pounds Sterling for a lion) were out of reach for a struggling peripheral institution. It was only once Poznań Zoo was in possession of surplus specimens of interest to Hagenbeck that they could negotiate an exchange.

A pair of lions, sent by Hagenbeck from Amsterdam, arrived in Poznań in January 1922.[22] The big cats settled in the new heated enclosure specially prepared for the noble guests. Each animal required a daily supply of ten pounds of horse meat that underwent veterinary inspection to prevent any infection with diseases that had caused the death of the previous lion residents.[23] After the former fatal incidents, carrion had been eliminated from the carnivores' diet. Szczerkowski was praised for his ambition to revive the zoo to its former

glory – one journalist described him as a man of action with a tenacious spirit: "He wanted lions, there are lions!"[24] Building on this successful exchange, the newly appointed director envisioned starting a lion breeding program on the zoo's premises. This would ensure more specimens that could then be used for further exchanges.

Szczerkowski chose lions because zoologists considered them to breed easily in captivity. In this sense, fertility was the key quality that transformed lions into a "lively capital," and one that rested on their reproductive capacities.[25] Other associated characteristics of individual animals such as gender, age, and origin served as important indicators for their value for the breeding program. For this purpose, a second female lion was purchased from the L. Ruhe company based in Alfeld near Hanover. Unfortunately, the four-year-old lioness turned out to be infertile. Szczerkowski returned her and demanded another specimen as a replacement.[26] This request was quickly accommodated thanks to the fact that the company had just established its own catching and acclimatisation station in Dire Dawa in east Ethiopia that provided a steady supply of lions.[27] But for the Poznań Zoo, this kind of direct purchase was a rare occurrence. The institution mostly resorted to other ways of acquiring lions – beyond transactions with animal traders and specimen exchanges.

Precious Gifts and Lion Pride

In the following years, the zoo gained several new lions from Polish travellers, big game hunters, and missionaries.[28] However, accommodating these generous gifts often proved difficult. Whereas some of the donations resulted from negotiations with owners of big cats that were already kept in the territory of Poland, others required the zoo's active participation in organising their delivery from Africa. In contrast, when animals were purchased from a wildlife trading company, the transportation costs were included in the price, and typically, the trader delivered the specimens directly to the buyer (unless these costs were exceptionally high or when otherwise negotiated). Donations of exotic animals were sporadic, but by the mid-1920s, more Polish adventurers explored the African continent, and they occasionally brought wild animals back with them or sent them to Poland.[29]

In 1926, Father Dawid Drwinga promised to hand over two lion cubs to the Poznań Zoo. The Catholic priest served a mission in Northern Rhodesia (current Zambia) in the protectorate of the British South Africa Company and decided to send the animals to his home country. Local press reported that the benevolent gift still posed logistical difficulties for the zoo, because the receiving institution was burdened with organising transport for the precious animals:

> *From Kotumdue* [Katondwe] *you need to carry the lion cubs to the nearest train station in Sinoia that is eight-days walk away. From Sinoia, take the rail to Salisbury, and from there you can take the long rail route to the east coast to the port of Beira. However, the most difficult task is the sea transport. A glance at the map will allow you to assess the long way around the Cape of Good Hope, along the east coast of Africa to Europe, the more that the transport must be made by a cargo ship sailing far slower than a passenger ship. Difficulties abound* [...].[30]

The Second Polish Republic had no colonial territories in Africa, so organising such transports depended solely on diplomatic relations with colonial powers on the continent (mostly the British and the French) and on commercial enterprises.[31] In other words, bringing the cubs to the zoo required political and financial resources to cover the transport expenses. Finally, after sixty-five days of arduous journey through two continents, the cubs arrived in Poznań. Named *Eryka* and *Cezar*, these two wild-caught youngsters were a perfect addition to the breeding pool carefully assembled by the zoo director. It is unclear how they were captured, but it is possible that their mother was killed and the hunters took the orphans, as was commonly practised by animal traders.

The lion clan in the zoo was thriving thanks to onsite breeding. On 5 January 1927, *Eryka* bore two lion cubs from her union with *Cezar* (there is no information on whether the Rhodesian lions were related to each other). The following month, another lioness named *Gora* gave birth to three cubs. This lioness was entrusted to the zoo by the Medrano-Swoboda circus company from Vienna under the condition that if she were to reproduce, the zoo would give one of her newborns back to the circus. As it turned out, this deal proved beneficial for both parties involved. Finally, in October of the same year, *Wanda* (sometimes called *Manda*), who was purchased from Leipzig, bore three more cubs. Altogether, that gave nine cubs in just one year! With a growing pride of lions in the collection, the zoo was building its bargaining power for further wildlife exchanges.

These cubs were not only born into captivity, they were also born into becoming living commodities. The local press praised the director's resourcefulness, comparing his breeding program to "a wholesale wildlife production," and proclaimed somewhat arrogantly that "at this rate, Congo, Cameroon or Liberia can disappear from the face of the Earth."[32] This statement can be interpreted as a humorous declaration of independence from the colonial wildlife trade dominated by German merchants. It is obviously exaggerated to mask the colonial longings cultivated in interwar Poland.[33] At the same time, imagining lion breeding at the zoo as a "wholesale" business marks animal life as bio-capital.[34] When life itself is a commodity, biological reproduction becomes more obviously collapsed with production. This process is most evident in livestock husbandry, where the animal body is quite explicitly commodified and consumed, whereas exotic zoo animals typically lend themselves to a more romantic vision of noble beasts.

All the newborn cubs were charmingly referred to as "kinglets" (*królewiątka*), a word in Polish containing the word lion (*lew*). Eryka was hailed the first matriarch of the lion kingdom in Poznań. The lioness was represented as a caring and protective mother.[35] Her parenting skills were closely monitored and reported on:

> *The charming big kittens are gaining weight, just as their tender mother Eryka who lets her clumsy cubs leave the warm enclosure into the spacious cage where with admirable patience she watches over her kids teaching them how to walk on their wobbly paws. The fawn coloured Eryka follows the little ones and when she notices that someone gratefully observes such one-of-a-kind lesson from the other side of the bars, she delicately and skilfully picks them up with her jaws and takes them into the enclosure as if she wanted to shelter her most precious treasure from covetous eyes.*[36]

Unfortunately, *Eryka* fell ill just a few weeks after giving birth to *Sułtan* and *Sula*. The local press issued a call from the zoo administration, asking for donations of nurturing bitches to act as surrogates for the hungry lion cubs.[37] Despite the efforts of a team of veterinarians from the university comprised of Dr Jan Starkowski, Dr Edward Lubicz-Niezabitowski, Prof. Dr Stanisław Runge, and Bolesław Witkowski, "the queen" *Eryka* died in March, orphaning her two cubs.[38] Post-mortem examination revealed that she suffered from severe pneumonitis. Despite equipping the large carnivores' enclosure with a heating system, the cold climate proved disastrous for the lioness. Her death is a grim reminder that the commodification of wildlife often requires large amounts

of care work, specialised infrastructure, and knowledge about species-specific needs. The zoo's loss, however, meant a gain for another institution conveniently located on the zoo grounds; *Eryka's* skeleton and her prepared skin replenished the collection of the Natural History Museum that was moved to the former restaurant pavilion of the zoological garden in 1924.[39] In this way, the lioness remained a commodity and a spectacle even after death.

Szczerkowski used the accumulation of young lions to procure other exotic species for the collection. He traded not only with other zoos and wildlife dealers, but also with circuses, which were an important source of exotic specimens for many zoos. Traveling menageries sometimes sold surplus or troublesome animals to local zoos, but transactions in the opposite direction were rare. Generally, circuses preferred buying trained animals from wildlife dealers, but young zoo specimens were also considered. For example, Szczerkowski managed to sell *Sułtan* to the Warsaw-based Staniewski Brothers circus. All the other young lions were exchanged abroad for tigers, leopards, and pumas, leaving only *Cezar* and his daughter *Leda* to "rule" the zoo. This is how this strategy was explained:

> *Exotic animals are usually very expensive so to be able to purchase those wonderful specimens that we currently have, it was necessary to resort to the only solution, namely exchange because otherwise, we did not have enough money for buying all these animals.*[40]

In this sense, captive breeding was a necessary step towards (re)producing and accumulating animal capital as a basis for specimen exchanges.

Nevertheless, donations as a source of new specimens did not lose importance when the zoo invested in captive breeding. They occasionally complemented the breeding plans. In 1929, *Eryka's* successor, the six-year-old *Wanda*, died from internal bleeding during her second labour. After losing the two main breeding females, and giving away all the youngsters, the zoo director came into possession of two more lions from a local aristocrat. In 1928, Jan Władysław Pętkowski brought with him a pair of lion cubs that he had caught during a safari hunting expedition in the Tanganyika territory in Western Africa. *Simbo* and *Leda* lived in his estate in Wola Kożuszkowa, near Poznań.[41] The appeal of cuddly cubs that symbolise superiority, nobility, and leadership made them a favourite accessory for eccentric aristocrats.[42] Hunters recognised lions as territorial animals who protect their family groups, and this social behaviour primed the animal for becoming a symbol of monarchic

Figure 2 | Cover of the magazine *Wielkopolska Ilustracja* (1929) showing Pętkowski's brother with one of the lions, probably *Simbo*. The caption reads: "After countryside holidays… to the Zoological Garden." University of Poznań, Library

kinship and royal power. After one year of their residency in the manor, the grown lions became bothersome. Pętkowski decided to donate them to the Poznań Zoo. When the director visited his estate, accompanied by a custodian from the Natural History Museum, the zoologists were surprised at how tame the lions were: the animals behaved like domestic pets rather than ferocious beasts (Fig. 2).[43] This was good news for them, because docile animals adapt to captivity more easily.

The lion pair was a welcome addition to the zoo collection, because wild-caught specimens increased the genetic diversity of the small breeding pool. The zoologists were aware of the dangers of inbreeding, but they managed the captive lion population without any specified guidelines. When assembling the lion pride at the zoo, Szczerkowski had only considered the individual animals' capacity to reproduce, while leaving out species-specific needs such as the composition of the group and kinship ties. In the end, female animals bore the gendered costs of reproductive labour, which made them more vulnerable to diseases and premature death as evidenced by their higher mortality. The destiny of the newborn cubs was always to be exchanged for other species. In this sense, the lion capital was a form of commodification and accumulation that was pivotal for other acquisition strategies, developed out of the necessity and due to limited access to the global wildlife trade.

Conclusion

In 2021, Poznań Zoo celebrated its one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary, thus, choosing to continue the tradition of honouring an earlier foundation date. For this special occasion, the zoo turned the old pavilion for large predators (Fig. 3) into a museum commemorating the institution's history. Named the Museum of Zoo History and Lion, it also pays tribute to the former feline inhabitants of the enclosure. In the 1920s and 1930s, the building popularly referred to as the lion's house (*lwiarnia*) was used to keep tigers, leopards, and pumas, which the zoo acquired thanks to the lion breeding program. During the interwar period, systematic captive breeding was not yet a common acquisition strategy for most Western zoos, given that it was still legally possible to source exotic specimens directly from their natural habitats. However, for an institution with a small budget and limited access to the colonial wildlife trade,

breeding was one of the thriftiest solutions available at the time. Combined with random donations from missionaries and aristocrats, as well as loans from circuses, captive breeding allowed for accumulating specimens of one species. Initially, exchanges were the only way the Poznań Zoo could access the inventory of European wildlife trading companies. By focusing on lion breeding, the director eventually managed to exchange them for other species, which increased the diversity of the collection and its appeal to visitors.

It is important to mention that Szczerkowski was able to return on this lion capital thanks to his active participation in the meetings of the European zoo directors. German directors had been meeting informally since 1887 in order to share practical knowledge and experiences in institutional management, treating animal diseases, adapting buildings for wildlife, etc.[44] After the First World War, the meetings were resumed in a broader Central-European framework, and Szczerkowski joined this international collaboration early

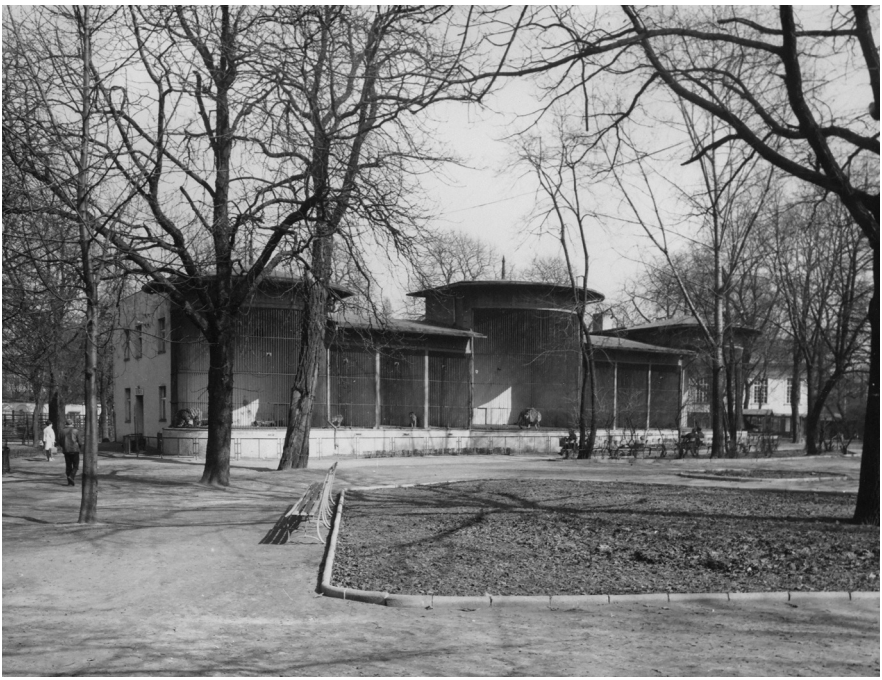

Figure 3 | Pavilion for large predators at the Old Zoo in Poznań, 1968.
© F. Maćkowiak, from the collection of the Municipal Monument Conservator in Poznań, cyryl.poznan.pl

on. In 1935, he took part in the creation of the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens (IUDZG) in Basel, a forerunner organisation of the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA).[45] On the one hand, Polish participation held a symbolic and diplomatic significance, while on the other, it had a practical dimension when it came to acquisitions. Poznań Zoo gained access to an international zoo network that was crucial for finding prospective buyers for the lions and arranging specimen exchanges.

To a certain extent, this peripheral zoo and its ingenious combination of acquisition strategies could be regarded as a precursor to postwar zoo management. After the Second World War, the international collaboration modelled on the IUDZG became the cornerstone for ex situ wildlife conservation. It became the golden standard for accredited zoos, partly because it responded to the same problem the Poznań Zoo had tried to solve with captive breeding: limited access to wild-caught animals. However, it must be noted that Szczerkowski did not use tools such as studbooks to monitor and control the lion breeding program. This element of reproductive technology was first adapted from selective breeding in agriculture for managing captive wisent populations in several European zoos, and by the Polish branch of the International Society for the Protection of the European Bison (ISPEB), which was based in Poznań. Even though the wisent rescue mission coincided with lion breeding and the same people from the Poznań Zoo were involved in both projects, the methods and tools for managing both projects did not overlap. The reason for this discrepancy can be found in the different motives for breeding the animals: lions were treated as fungible commodities, while wisent reproduction focused on ensuring genetic diversity and purity within the captive population dispersed between several zoos across Europe. When generating the lion capital, the breeding pool was limited to the specimens available in the Poznań Zoo.

The immediate purpose of the lion breeding program was the production of living commodities. In this sense, the lion capital approximated the "undead capital" described by Jonathan Saha in relation to working elephants in imperial British Burma as living means of production.[46] By analysing how the Poznań Zoo acquired and bred its lions during the interwar period, this article illustrates how zoo specimens were rendered both lively and undead capital. Additionally, it captures the moment when reproductive labour became critical for such commodification of wildlife, at a time when the global animal trade was starting to lose its footing.

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21 Ibid.
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23 Ibid.
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25 Haraway, Donna J. (2007): *When Species Meet*, Minneapolis, p. 45–68.

26 "Hodowla lwów w Zoologu", in: *Dziennik Poznański*, vol. 68, no. 137, 18 June 1926, p. 4. This new lioness was probably named *Eryka*.
27 Dittrich, Lothar (2007): "Der Import von Wildtieren nach Europa. Einfuhren von der frühen Neuzeit bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts", in: Dagmar Schratter, Gerhard Heindl (Eds): *Tiere unterwegs. Historisches und Aktuelles über Tiererwerb und Tiertransporte*, Wien, p. 44.
28 Załęski, Piotr (2019): "Na zachód od Kilimandżaro", in: *Łowiec Polski*, p. 74–75; Rakowski, Wiesław: "Lew nie tak lew groźny jak go malują", in: *Wielkopolska Ilustracja*, 10 November 1929, p. 23.
29 For example, Ferdynand Ossendowski, an explorer and writer known as the "Polish Kipling", brought two young chimpanzees from French Guinea in 1926 and donated one of them to the Poznań Zoo. Unfortunately, the ape named "Magda" did not acclimatise well and died from pneumonia shortly after arriving to the zoo; see "Nowy nabytek Ogrodu Zoolog. Szympans dra Ossendowskego", in: *Kurjer Poznański*, no. 242, 29 May 1926, p. 2.
30 "Lwiątka z Katomdue", in: *Dziennik Poznański*, vol. 68, no. 132, 12 June 1926, p. 7.
31 This does not mean that the newly rebuilt state had no colonial plans. I describe such colonial longings in relation to zoological collections in: Szczygielska, Marianna (2020): "Elephant Empire. Zoos and Colonial Encounters in Eastern Europe", in: *Cultural Studies,* vol. 34, no. 5, p. 789–810.
32 "Nowe 'Królewiątka Pustyni' w Poznaniu!", in: *Kurjer Poznański*, vol. 22, no. 68, 12 February 1917, p. 6.
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40 W naszem „królestwie zwierząt" (ca. 1929 *Kurjer Poznański*), Poznań Zoo Archive.
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43 Rakowski (1929): *Lew nie tak lew groźny jak go malują*, p. 23.
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45 Klös, Heinz-Georg (1987): "100 Jahre Verband Deutscher Zoodirektoren", in: *Bongo. Beiträge zur Tiergärtnerei und Jahresberichte aus dem Zoo Berlin*, vol. 13, p. 11.
46 Saha, Jonathan (2017): "Colonizing Elephants. Animal Agency, Undead Capital and Imperial Science in British Burma", in: *BJHS Themes,* vol. 2, p. 169–189.