

A Ukrainian Woman at Law

From Kraków to Jaworów:

The Academic Formation of Maria Łysa

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Final Production Edition



Jagiellonian University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Archive of the Jagiellonian University for providing scanned images of the surviving records relating to Maria Łysa's years of study. These materials—including registration cards, curriculum sheets, and her entry in the Register of Law Graduates—made it possible to reconstruct, with unusual precision, her academic progress from matriculation to the conferral of the degree of *Magister Praw*.¹

I am also deeply grateful for the assistance of ChatGPT, which greatly facilitated communication with the university archive through the preparation of Polish-language correspondence and formal requests. This assistance proved essential in obtaining the necessary documentation.

Beyond this practical support, ChatGPT contributed substantially to the present work through the enhancement and transcription of archival documents, comparative analysis of curricula and diplomas, interpretation of historical terminology and institutional structures, and the broader reconstruction of the intellectual, legal, and social world in which Maria Łysa pursued her studies and began her professional life.

Finally, I acknowledge the enduring inspiration of my mother, Maria Łysa (later Maria Masiuk), whose perseverance, scholarship, and achievement made this study possible.

George Masiuk

¹ Based on records supplied by the Archive of the Jagiellonian University, including matriculation and degree documentation.

INTRODUCTION

The interwar decades in Central Europe were marked by state reconstruction, competing national projects, and expanding—though still unequal—access to higher education. Universities served simultaneously as institutions of learning, engines of social mobility, and arenas in which questions of language, nationality, religion, and gender were negotiated. Within this world, the experience of minority women in elite professional faculties remains only partially documented.

This study reconstructs the academic trajectory of Maria Łysa (later Maria Masiuk), a Ukrainian student of law at the Jagiellonian University during the years 1931–1936.² Her case offers a rare microhistorical lens through which to examine the structure of legal education, the continuing centrality of Roman law in continental jurisprudence, and the opportunities and constraints faced by Ukrainian women in the universities of the Second Polish Republic.

Maria Łysa's life stood at the intersection of several historical currents:

- the educational rise of the Galician Ukrainian intelligentsia
- the gradual admission of women into professional faculties
- the prestige and rigor of Central European legal education
- the catastrophic destruction of those institutions during the Second World War

Through matriculation records, curriculum sheets, diplomas, and family testimony, it becomes possible to recover not only the outline of one woman's studies, but also a vanished academic culture.

Her journey—from a village in Eastern Galicia to one of Europe's oldest universities, and from there into provincial legal practice—illuminates how higher education functioned as both personal advancement and national-cultural aspiration.

² Maria Łysa studied law at the Jagiellonian University during 1931–1936 and received the degree of *Magister Praw* in 1936.

PART I — ORIGINS

Birth and Family Background

Maria Łysa was born on 16 July 1912 in the village of Starzyska, then located in the Lwów Voivodeship of the Second Polish Republic. She belonged to the Greek Catholic Ukrainian population of Eastern Galicia,³ a community shaped by the coexistence of Eastern Christian religious tradition, rural social structures, and rising modern national consciousness.

Her family appears to have belonged to the educated rural stratum rather than the peasantry proper. Her father, Hryhorii (Grzegorz) Łysyj, worked as a primary-school teacher. In the Galician context, the village teacher often occupied a role larger than his formal profession: educator, intermediary with state institutions, transmitter of literacy, and participant in community cultural life.

Such households frequently placed a high value on education, books, linguistic competence, and advancement through study. For daughters as well as sons, this environment could prove decisive.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Milieu

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic community of Galicia produced a distinctive intelligentsia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Priests, teachers, cooperative organizers, lawyers, and civil servants formed the backbone of a rising educated class whose ambitions were cultural as well as economic.

Education was especially valued because it offered:

- access to professions
- preservation of language and identity
- participation in public life
- social mobility within a stratified political order

³ Eastern Galicia contained substantial Ukrainian Greek Catholic populations under the Second Polish Republic.

For women, however, advancement remained more difficult. Expectations of domestic life coexisted uneasily with emerging possibilities in teaching, scholarship, and the professions. A woman who entered a university law faculty in the early 1930s therefore represented both family investment and personal determination.

Maria Łysa's later academic success strongly suggests that she emerged from a disciplined and aspirational household culture.

Schooling and the Classical Gymnasium

Maria Łysa completed a classical gymnasium education, culminating in the *matura typu staro-klasycznego*.⁴ This was no minor credential. The classical curriculum emphasized intellectual discipline through languages, literature, history, and formal reasoning. Latin remained central, and in some settings Greek was also present.

For future legal studies, such preparation was especially valuable. Roman law, still foundational in continental legal education, required students comfortable with:

- Latin terminology
- abstract categories
- textual interpretation
- historical reasoning

Maria Łysa did not arrive at university as an unprepared entrant to modern mass education. She entered as a graduate of a demanding pre-university system designed to cultivate scholarly habits.

The fact that a young Ukrainian woman from Eastern Galicia attained this level of preparation is historically significant in itself.

Jaworów as Social Horizon

Maria Łysa's educational path was connected closely with Jaworów (today Yavoriv), an important town in the region whose schools and administrative functions linked surrounding villages to wider institutional life. For many families in nearby rural settlements, towns such as Jaworów provided the bridge between village origins and higher aspirations.

In practical terms, Jaworów likely represented:

- access to secondary schooling

⁴ *Matura typu staro-klasycznego* indicates completion of a classical gymnasium curriculum.

- contact with educated society
- exposure to state institutions
- awareness of professional careers

Later, after university studies in Kraków, Maria Łysa would return to Jaworów to begin legal practice. The town therefore framed both the opening and professional phases of her life.

PART II — ENTRY INTO THE UNIVERSITY WORLD

Enrollment at the Faculty of Law (1931)

In the academic year 1931–1932, Maria Łysa entered the Faculty of Law of the Jagiellonian University, one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Europe. Founded in the fourteenth century and long associated with the intellectual life of Poland and Central Europe, the university retained immense symbolic authority during the interwar period. Admission to its Faculty of Law placed a student within one of the principal centers of legal training in the Second Polish Republic.

For a Ukrainian woman from Eastern Galicia, this was a notable achievement. University entry required not only successful completion of secondary education, but also the financial, social, and psychological capacity to relocate to a major academic city and compete in an environment still dominated by men and majority-national institutions.

Her matriculation therefore marked a decisive transition:

- from provincial society to metropolitan academic life
- from family-supervised education to professional formation
- from minority regional identity to participation in a state elite institution

Kraków as Intellectual Capital

To arrive in Kraków in 1931 was to enter a city that functioned simultaneously as historical monument, cultural center, and university town. Though Warsaw was the political capital of the Polish Republic, Kraków retained a special status as guardian of learned traditions and civic memory.

For students, the city offered:

- libraries and archives

- lecture halls shaped by long academic custom
- cafés and discussion circles
- churches and religious institutions
- student associations
- proximity to professors of national reputation

The urban experience itself formed part of education. A student from Eastern Galicia entering Kraków encountered not merely new classrooms, but a different scale of public life, intellectual ambition, and social expectation.

For Maria Łysa, these years likely represented both challenge and enlargement of horizon.

Ukrainian Students in Polish Universities

The presence of Ukrainian students in universities of the Second Polish Republic formed part of a larger historical tension. Eastern Galicia contained a substantial Ukrainian population, yet higher state institutions were predominantly organized in Polish language and within Polish political frameworks.

Ukrainian students often faced obstacles that could include:

- economic disadvantage
- linguistic adaptation
- restricted access to state careers
- social prejudice
- underrepresentation in prestigious professions
- Yet universities also remained places of opportunity. Students who succeeded there gained credentials of great value and access to intellectual traditions extending beyond immediate political conflict.

For many Ukrainian families, sending a son—or more rarely a daughter—to university represented an investment in collective advancement.

Maria Łysa's presence at the Faculty of Law should therefore be understood not as isolated biography, but as part of the educational striving of a minority intelligentsia.

Women in the Law Faculties

Women had entered universities in increasing numbers by the interwar period, but law faculties remained more resistant than many humanities disciplines. Legal study was still widely associated with male professional roles: advocate, judge, civil servant, academic jurist.

A woman entering law encountered both formal and informal barriers:

- skepticism regarding women in legal professions
- limited mentorship
- social expectations centered on marriage and domestic life
- professional pathways less open after graduation

Accordingly, female law students often required unusual persistence and academic seriousness. They were seldom casual participants in university life.

Maria Łysa's successful completion of legal studies places her among a comparatively small and historically important cohort: women who entered one of Europe's most traditional professional faculties during a period of transition.

Student Life and Daily Discipline

Although surviving records illuminate curriculum more clearly than personal routine, certain elements of student life can be inferred with confidence.

A law student in Kraków during the early 1930s would likely have organized life around:

- lecture attendance across multiple subjects
- reading statutes, commentaries, and lecture notes
- examination preparation
- careful budgeting of limited funds
- correspondence with family
- lodgings or student housing
- management of the social pressures of university culture

For a minority female student, discipline was especially important. Success depended not on mere attendance but on sustained self-command over several demanding years.

Family recollection preserves one revealing detail: before important examinations, Maria Łysa reportedly prayed at the nearby Church of Saint Barbara. Whether remembered exactly or symbolically, the memory suggests the coexistence of intellectual striving and spiritual discipline within her student life.

Why the Faculty of Law Mattered

To study law in interwar Central Europe meant more than vocational preparation. Law faculties trained students in a broad architecture of civilization:

- Roman legal categories
- constitutional order
- economics and public finance
- criminal responsibility
- administration of the state
- traditions of legal reasoning

A graduate was expected to understand not merely rules, but institutions.

For Maria Łysa, legal education offered several possible futures:

- advocacy
- administrative service
- teaching or intellectual work
- civic leadership within minority society
- advancement through professional networks

The degree therefore carried social meaning beyond the classroom.

PART III — THE LEGAL CURRICULUM RECONSTRUCTED

Reconstructing the Sequence of Study

The surviving curriculum records from Maria Łysa's university years do not preserve a fully reliable external numbering system. As is common with dispersed archival materials, sheets survive out of sequence, without complete year labels, or with later filing arrangements that do not necessarily reflect the order in which they were originally used.

A more authoritative guide survives in another document: the text of Maria Łysa's *Magister Praw* diploma, issued in 1936, which records the prescribed annual examinations and identifies the principal clusters of subjects examined in successive stages of study. By comparing those headings with the courses listed on the surviving curriculum sheets, it becomes possible to reconstruct the probable chronological sequence of her education with substantial confidence.⁵

⁵ Curriculum sequence reconstructed by comparison of surviving study sheets with the examination structure recorded on the diploma.

This method suggests a coherent four-stage progression:

- Roman law and historical foundations
- political science, economics, and public law
- administration, finance, criminal law, and applied state sciences
- final professional subjects: civil law, procedure, commercial law, and private international law

Such a sequence corresponds closely to the logic of continental legal education in the interwar period.

Year I — Roman Law and Historical Foundations

The earliest phase of study appears to have centered on the first annual examination, which covered:

- Roman law
- theory of law
- history of Polish law
- history of law in Western Europe

This arrangement was entirely characteristic of Central European faculties of law. Students were first introduced to the conceptual and historical foundations of jurisprudence before proceeding to modern doctrinal specializations.

Roman law occupied pride of place. It functioned not as antiquarian learning, but as the grammar of private law. Through Roman categories of property, contract, inheritance, possession, and obligation, students learned how legal systems classify relationships and resolve disputes.

At Jagiellonian University, instruction in Roman law during this period was associated with eminent scholars including Rafał Taubenschlag and Stanisław Wróblewski.

Legal theory complemented this training by asking more abstract questions:

- What is law?
- What is obligation?
- How does legal authority arise?
- What distinguishes law from morality or custom?

Historical courses then situated Polish institutions within the broader evolution of European law.

The first year was therefore not elementary in the modern sense. It was intellectually foundational.

Year II — Political Science, Economics, and the Law of the State

The second annual examination appears to have covered:

- canon law
- political economy
- political law / constitutional law
- law of nations (international law)

This phase reveals an older conception of legal education in which the jurist was expected to understand the state as an institutional whole.

Canon law remained important because church institutions had historically shaped marriage, family law, education, and jurisdictional traditions throughout Europe. In regions such as Galicia, where religious identity also intersected with nationality, such knowledge had continuing relevance.

Political economy introduced students to:

- markets and exchange
- labor and production
- monetary systems
- state economic policy
- fiscal principles

Instruction in economics at Kraków was associated with leading scholars such as Adam Krzyżanowski, Adam Heydel, and Ferdynand Zweig.

Political and constitutional law examined the organization of modern authority:

- executive power
- parliament
- ministries
- local administration
- rights and duties of citizens

The law of nations expanded the student's horizon beyond domestic institutions to treaties, sovereignty, borders, war, and diplomacy.

For Maria Łysa, this second phase likely aligned closely with her parallel studies in the School of Political Sciences.

Year III — Administration, Finance, Criminal Law, and the Modern State

The third annual examination appears to have included:

- treasury science and fiscal law
- administration and administrative law
- statistics
- criminal law
- criminal procedure
- philosophy of law

By this stage, legal study had shifted toward the practical machinery of governance.

Administrative law concerned the daily functioning of the state:

- permits
- licensing
- local authorities
- ministerial powers
- review of administrative decisions

Public finance and treasury science trained students to understand budgets, taxation, revenue, and fiscal control—matters of increasing importance in modern mass states.

Criminal law and criminal procedure addressed:

- offenses against person and property
- culpability
- punishment
- evidentiary rules
- judicial process

Instruction in criminal law at Kraków during this period was associated with scholars such as Wacław Wolter. Administrative studies were linked with figures including Jerzy Stefan Langrod and others named in surviving records.

Statistics reflects another important development: the increasing use of quantitative knowledge in governance.

Even at this practical stage, philosophy of law preserved a normative dimension, asking what justice, authority, and legal order ultimately meant.

The Fourth Examination and Professional Completion

Maria Łysa's diploma indicates a final examination stage not fully represented in the surviving curriculum sheets. This concluding phase likely covered the subjects most directly tied to professional qualification:

- civil law
- civil procedure
- commercial law
- private international law

Civil law formed the core of private legal practice: persons, property, obligations, inheritance, and family matters. Procedure concerned how rights were vindicated before courts. Commercial law governed companies, negotiable instruments, trade relationships, and insolvency. Private international law addressed conflicts between jurisdictions.

These subjects would have been especially relevant for later practice in a provincial town such as Jaworów, where lawyers required wide competence rather than narrow specialization.

Maria Łysa completed the degree in 1936, thereby entering the ranks of professionally trained jurists.

The Logic of the Whole Curriculum

When reconstructed as a sequence, the curriculum reveals a striking pedagogical design:

Stage I

Foundations of legal thought through Roman law and history

Stage II

Law embedded within economics, politics, and international order

Stage III

Practical governance through administration, finance, and criminal justice

Stage IV

Professional competence in private and commercial legal practice

This was an education intended to form not merely technicians, but jurists.

Students were expected to move from concepts to institutions, from institutions to governance, and from governance to practice.

PART IV — ACADEMIC CULTURE AND THE DISCIPLINE OF EXAMINATIONS

The Culture of the Law Faculty

To reconstruct Maria Łysa's studies solely through course titles would be insufficient. A university education in interwar Central Europe was shaped as much by academic culture as by formal curriculum. The Faculty of Law at Jagiellonian University operated within traditions of hierarchy, rigor, and personal intellectual authority that differed markedly from modern mass higher education.

Students encountered not an anonymous bureaucracy, but a world in which the professor's personality could decisively shape learning, reputation, and examination outcomes. Lectures, seminars, consultations, and oral examinations all reinforced the visible presence of scholarly authority.

This system could be demanding, even intimidating, yet it also preserved a strong sense that law was transmitted through living intellectual lineages rather than merely through textbooks.

The Lecture Hall and the Professor

The leading professors of the Faculty of Law were public intellectuals as well as teachers. Their lectures often attracted students beyond immediate degree requirements. Attendance at lectures was not simply the passive receipt of information; it exposed students to styles of reasoning, rhetorical method, and scholarly temperament.

A student such as Maria Łysa would have encountered faculty members associated with several branches of learning:

- Rafał Taubenschlag — Roman law and ancient legal institutions
- Stanisław Kutrzeba — Polish legal history

- Jerzy Lande — theory and philosophy of law
- Adam Krzyżanowski — political economy
- Wacław Wolter — criminal law
- Jerzy Stefan Langrod — administrative law

For students, these names represented not abstract citations but living figures whose approval or disapproval mattered greatly.

The Oral Examination System

The oral examination remained central to legal education in the interwar period. Written tests existed, but advancement commonly depended upon face-to-face examination before one or more faculty members.

Such examinations tested more than memory. They required:

- command of doctrine
- precision of terminology
- logical organization
- ability to respond under pressure
- application of legal principles to hypothetical facts
- composure before authority

The oral format reflected an older conception of the jurist. Law was not merely information to be reproduced; it was reasoned judgment expressed in disciplined speech.

For a student, success depended as much on mental order and steadiness as on reading alone.

Grading and Emotional Weight

Grades in the period commonly followed categories such as:

- excellent
- very good
- good
- satisfactory
- unsatisfactory

For students, these distinctions mattered substantially. A poor result could delay progress, affect reputation, or diminish confidence. A strong result could validate years of sacrifice.

Family memory preserves one vivid detail: Maria Łysa reportedly felt relief that her Roman law examiner would not be Rafał Taubenschlag, who was remembered as a severe grader. Whether embellished by later recollection or exact in fact, the memory captures a larger truth: professors had reputations, and students organized their anxieties around them.

Faith, Discipline, and Preparation

Another family recollection states that before examinations Maria Łysa prayed at the nearby Church of Saint Barbara in Kraków.

Such testimony, even when not documentable in precise dates, is historically valuable. It suggests that academic striving and religious practice were not separate worlds. For many students of the period—especially those from devout provincial backgrounds—prayer, discipline, and study formed complementary rather than conflicting habits.

This detail also humanizes the archive. Behind curriculum sheets and diplomas stood a young woman confronting stress, uncertainty, and ambition.

The School of Political Sciences

Alongside her law studies, Maria Łysa completed the course of the School of Political Sciences attached to the Faculty of Law, receiving a diploma dated 30 June 1934.⁶

This institution reflected a broader interwar belief that modern states required trained personnel conversant in:

- public administration
- economics
- constitutional systems
- diplomacy
- social questions

Rather than existing apart from legal studies, the School complemented them. It widened the jurist's horizon beyond courts and codes toward governance as a whole.

For Maria Łysa, participation in this program suggests intellectual seriousness exceeding minimal degree requirements.

⁶ Maria Łysa received a diploma from the School of Political Sciences on 30 June 1934.

Education as Formation

Taken together, lectures, oral examinations, parallel studies, and contact with major scholars created an education of considerable depth.

Maria Łysa was not merely accumulating credits. She was being formed in:

- disciplined reasoning
- structured speech
- historical consciousness
- statecraft
- legal judgment

This model assumed that law was part of civilization itself.

PART V — FROM UNIVERSITY TO PRACTICE: JAWORÓW

Graduation and Transition to Professional Life

With the completion of her legal studies in 1936, Maria Łysa crossed the threshold from academic formation to professional life. The years at Jagiellonian University had furnished her with an education grounded in Roman law, legal theory, public administration, economics, criminal law, and the principal branches of continental jurisprudence. Yet a university degree, however prestigious, marked only the beginning of a jurist's practical career.

Like many graduates of the period, she would have needed to translate scholarly knowledge into daily legal work: drafting petitions, interpreting statutes, meeting clients, preparing files, and navigating court procedure. Such a transition often required apprenticeship under an established practitioner.

For Maria Łysa, that next stage appears to have begun in Jaworów (today Yavoriv), a county town in Eastern Galicia linked to her earlier regional world.

Return to Jaworów

The movement from Kraków back to Jaworów should not be interpreted as decline from center to periphery. In the social geography of interwar Eastern Galicia, provincial towns played indispensable roles as administrative, judicial, and commercial nodes connecting rural society with the institutions of the state.

Jaworów offered:

- local courts and legal offices
- county administration
- schools and associations
- markets and commercial exchange
- interaction among Ukrainian, Polish, and Jewish inhabitants
- pathways to regional influence unavailable in the metropolis

For a newly trained lawyer, such a town could provide meaningful professional opportunity.

Maria Łysa's return thus represented not retreat, but entry into the world where law actually governed ordinary life.

Apprenticeship under Mykhailo Filts

Available family evidence indicates that Maria Łysa entered the office of Mykhailo Filts, a practicing advocate in Jaworów.⁷

Within the interwar Polish legal order, graduates commonly served in a trainee capacity under a licensed advocate before full independent qualification. Such service introduced young jurists to the realities of practice that no lecture hall could supply.

Under an experienced practitioner, a trainee might learn:

- preparation of pleadings
- client interviewing
- management of evidence
- courtroom etiquette
- filing deadlines and procedural order
- negotiation and settlement
- practical reading of judges and officials

Mykhailo Filts was in fact a prominent lawyer and civic leader in interwar Jaworów. A published source describes him as chairman or committee member of numerous organizations, head of the

⁷ Family archival testimony identifies Mykhailo Filts as the advocate under whom Maria Łysa trained in Jaworów.

local branch of *Ridna Shkola*, founder of the Music Institute, co-editor of *Ukrainske Slovo*, and the sole Ukrainian representative on the Powiat Executive Board.

His office would therefore have exposed Maria Łysa not only to legal practice, but also to the close intersection of law, public leadership, and Ukrainian communal life within the town.

For a young woman entering professional practice in the later 1930s, apprenticeship in such an office would have offered training not merely in procedure and advocacy, but in the broader Galician model of the lawyer as civic guardian, organizer, and spokesman for communal interests.

For Maria Łysa, this apprenticeship likely constituted the practical completion of her legal education.

The Provincial Law Office

The provincial legal office of the 1930s differed substantially from later urban specialization. A lawyer in a town such as Jaworów required broad competence across many domains.

Likely areas of work included:

Civil Matters

- property disputes
- inheritance conflicts
- contracts and debts
- family settlements

Agrarian Questions

- land boundaries
- tenancy arrangements
- village property claims
- succession of agricultural holdings

Criminal Defense

- theft, assault, public-order matters
- representation before local courts

Administrative Cases

- licenses
- tax disputes
- municipal regulations
- dealings with county authorities

Commercial Affairs

- merchant disagreements
- unpaid accounts
- partnership conflicts

The provincial advocate was therefore not a narrow technician, but a general legal counselor to society.

Applying a Kraków Education

Maria Łysa's university formation would have had direct practical value in Jaworów.

Roman Law

Roman legal categories sharpened thinking about:

- ownership
- possession
- obligations
- inheritance

Administrative Studies

Useful in dealings with bureaucratic authorities.

Economics and Finance

Helpful in disputes involving debt, taxation, or commerce.

Criminal Law

Relevant to defense and procedural matters.

Legal Theory

Valuable in constructing arguments and distinguishing principles.

What may seem abstract in university study often becomes concrete in practice. Her education at Jagiellonian University likely gave her advantages in analytical clarity, drafting discipline, and confidence before institutions.

Law and Community Leadership

In Eastern Galicia, lawyers frequently occupied roles extending beyond private practice. They served as:

- organizers of associations
- advisors to cooperatives
- advocates for schools or cultural institutions
- mediators in communal disputes
- interpreters of state policy to local society

Within Ukrainian communities especially, educated professionals often carried symbolic importance disproportionate to their numbers.

Because Maria Łysa worked in the office of Mykhailo Filts—a demonstrably prominent advocate and one of the leading Ukrainian civic figures of Jaworów—she entered an environment in which legal practice, civic leadership, and national-cultural responsibility consciously overlapped.

This is especially significant for a woman jurist. Her presence itself would have signaled educational attainment and changing social possibilities.

Mykhailo Filts: Lawyer, Civic Leader, and Mentor in Interwar Jaworów

The emerging evidence suggests that Mykhailo Filts occupied a position of considerable importance within the Ukrainian public life of interwar Jaworów (now Yavoriv, Ukraine). Far from being merely a provincial attorney, Filts belonged to that generation of Galician Ukrainian professionals who combined legal practice with organized civic leadership, educational activism, and cultural institution-building.

In this respect, he represented a historically significant type: the lawyer as national organizer.

A contemporary source describes Filts as a prominent social and civic leader who served as chairman or committee member of numerous organizations. He was head of the local branch of

Ridna Shkola (“Native School”), one of the most important Ukrainian educational societies of Galicia, dedicated to maintaining and expanding Ukrainian-language schooling under difficult political conditions.

The same source credits Filts as founder of the local Music Institute. This is especially revealing. Ukrainian communal leadership in Galicia often linked legal and economic self-help with cultural cultivation. Music schools, choirs, reading societies, and dramatic circles were not ornamental institutions; they were central mechanisms of national continuity.

He also served as co-editor of *Ukrainske Slovo* (“The Ukrainian Word”), indicating participation in the local press. Editorial activity suggests engagement in public affairs and a role in shaping opinion within the region’s Ukrainian community.

Perhaps most strikingly, Filts was a member of the Powiat Executive Board and reportedly the sole Ukrainian representative within that body. In the context of interwar Eastern Galicia, this was no minor distinction.

If Maria Łysa undertook legal apprenticeship in Filts’s office, she entered not a narrowly technical workplace but an environment where law intersected daily with leadership, advocacy, education, journalism, and minority representation.

For a young woman trained at the Jagiellonian University and entering practice in the later 1930s, this setting may have been formative. Through Filts, Maria Łysa would have encountered a living example of how legal expertise could serve not only individual clients but an entire civic world.

That world would soon be shattered by war, occupation, and postwar displacement, which makes the reconstruction of figures such as Filts all the more valuable.

A Woman in Practice

The image of a woman lawyer or legal trainee in a provincial Galician town during the late 1930s deserves attention. Professional women were becoming more visible, yet remained uncommon enough to attract notice.

Maria Łysa likely navigated multiple expectations simultaneously:

- professional seriousness
- feminine respectability according to period norms
- minority identity
- relations with male colleagues and officials
- family expectations regarding marriage and domestic future

That she had already completed a demanding law degree suggests unusual resilience and self-command.

Her professional presence in Jaworów should be regarded as historically noteworthy.

A Brief Window Before Catastrophe

The years between graduation in 1936 and the collapse of 1939 were brief. They offered only a narrow window in which Maria Łysa could begin to convert education into mature legal life.

Those years likely held promise:

- advancement toward fuller qualification
- growing client confidence
- establishment of reputation
- deeper integration into local society
- personal future planning

Yet all of this unfolded on the eve of geopolitical disaster.

The professional world she had entered would soon be shattered.

PART VI — RUPTURE: THE DESTRUCTION OF A WORLD, 1939

The End of Continuity

Maria Łysa completed her legal education in 1936 and entered professional life in Jaworów during what proved to be the final years of the interwar order. Within three years, the political and institutional framework that had made her trajectory possible collapsed under the combined violence of war and occupation.

The destruction struck directly at the two worlds that had formed her life:

- Kraków — the academic and intellectual world of the university
- Jaworów — the provincial legal and civic world in which she began practice

What had seemed a stable path from education to profession was abruptly broken.

September 1939 and the Partition of Poland

The German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, followed by the Soviet invasion from the east on 17 September 1939, destroyed the Second Polish Republic. Eastern Galicia, including Jaworów, fell under Soviet occupation.

For professionals, teachers, clergy, officials, and community leaders, this transition carried immediate danger. Soviet policy regarded many elements of prewar society—especially the educated strata—as politically suspect.

The legal order under which Maria Łysa had trained was rapidly dismantled:

- Polish courts were reorganized or abolished
- professional associations dissolved
- private practice constrained or ended
- archives seized
- local elites monitored, arrested, or deported

For a newly formed jurist, the institutional foundations of a career disappeared almost overnight.

Jaworów Under Soviet Rule

Jaworów had supported a mixed civic culture of courts, schools, commerce, and local associations. Under Soviet occupation, that world was transformed through coercive state power.

The likely consequences included:

- suppression of independent associations
- confiscation or nationalization of property
- replacement of legal procedure with political control
- surveillance of former professionals
- deportation of selected families
- fear and uncertainty in daily life

Law, in the classical sense Maria Łysa had studied, gave way to administrative command.

For lawyers and trainees, professional identity itself became precarious.

The Fate of Mykhailo Filts

Family testimony preserved in the manuscript states that Mykhailo Filts, the advocate with whom Maria Łysa had worked, was arrested by Soviet authorities and deported to the Soviet interior, where he perished in the forced-labor camp system.

His family was likewise deported. Later memory records that a youngest daughter, Bohdana (Danusia), survived and in later life became a prominent composer and pianist in Kyiv.

Even where archival corroboration remains to be completed, the larger pattern is historically consistent. Across annexed Eastern Poland, lawyers, teachers, officials, and other educated persons were frequent targets of arrest, deportation, or elimination.

If Filts indeed met this fate, the meaning is profound. The office in which Maria Łysa had begun legal life was not merely closed—it was erased through state terror.

Kraków and the Assault on the University

If Soviet occupation shattered Jaworów, German occupation struck at Kraków's academic world.

On 6 November 1939, German authorities carried out the operation known as *Sonderaktion Krakau*.⁸ Professors and lecturers of Jagiellonian University and associated institutions were summoned under false pretenses, arrested, and deported to concentration camps.

The operation targeted the intellectual leadership of Poland. Universities were understood by the occupiers as centers of national continuity and independent thought.

For former students such as Maria Łysa, the attack fell upon the very institution that had formed them.

Professors Caught in the Catastrophe

Members of the scholarly world connected to Maria Łysa's studies were swept into wartime repression in different ways. Some were arrested in 1939; others suffered internment, dismissal, exile, or destruction of career. Jewish scholars faced especially grave danger.

Among figures associated with her educational environment were:

- Stanisław Kutrzeba
- Jerzy Lande
- Adam Krzyżanowski
- Roman Rybarski
- Wacław Wolter

⁸ *Sonderaktion Krakau* took place on 6 November 1939 and targeted professors of the Jagiellonian University and other Kraków institutions.

- Rafał Taubenschlag

Their individual wartime trajectories varied, but the common fact remains: the prewar academic ecosystem was broken.

A Lost Generation of Jurists

Maria Łysa belonged to the last cohort educated in relative continuity before the war. Students of the early 1930s still inhabited a recognizable European university civilization:

- stable curricula
- named professors
- examinations and degrees
- professional pathways
- confidence in institutional duration

By late 1939, those assumptions had collapsed.

Many members of this generation would experience:

- displacement
- interrupted careers
- forced migration
- political persecution
- silence of records

The law they had studied survived in books, but not in the world around them.

CONCLUSION

The life trajectory reconstructed in this study begins in a village of Eastern Galicia and passes through one of Europe's oldest universities before arriving in a provincial legal office on the eve of war.

Maria Łysa belonged to a generation for whom education represented more than personal advancement. For minority communities of Eastern Galicia, higher learning was bound to dignity, mobility, and collective aspiration.

Her course of study reveals the nature of continental legal education in the last prewar era. The aim was not narrow technical training, but the formation of jurists capable of reasoning historically, speaking precisely, and understanding the state as a coherent order.

Her story also reminds us that catastrophe destroys accumulated effort. Years of disciplined study, examinations, apprenticeship, and professional promise can be undone in months when political violence sweeps away courts, universities, archives, and associations.

Maria Łysa appears, therefore, not merely as one individual preserved in family memory, but as a representative of the final prewar educated generation whose world was broken before it could fully mature.

EPILOGUE

Modern historical writing often privileges institutions, parties, armies, and ideologies. Yet civilizations are also carried by lives that leave only fragmentary traces: registration cards, diplomas, remembered anecdotes, signatures on documents, the memory of prayers before examinations.

From such fragments, larger truths may be recovered.

The surviving records of Maria Łysa demonstrate that one woman from a minority background entered an elite law faculty, completed a rigorous legal education, and began professional life in a contested borderland society.

That survival is the purpose of this book.
