

STANISŁAWA SOCHA

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Class 2B

1 April 1946

How education looked during the occupation

On 1 September 1939, German forces crossed the Polish border. The terrible battle began, destroying towns and villages. Our monuments were turned to rubble. The enemy wanted more and more to take everything that was ours. And so it happened.

The terrible and hard slavery that all Poles had to experience began. We were [oppressed] and treated like the worst animals in the world. We were taken to labor, which we had to do or we would get whipped, and the skin trembled as if it felt every danger.

Every Pole who was 14 years old had to work because they were considered strong enough to rebuild the foundation of the homeland. We often could hear the lament of crying mothers saying goodbye to their child who was being transported to Germany. Those who stayed with their mothers could attend school but the Germans watched every step of their education, so it went very slowly.

In our village, there was one lady who ran an underground school for young children. Once, children returning from school were stopped by gendarmes who were tracking smugglers. They answered the gendarme's questions boldly, but the Germans, who didn't believe them, began to beat them, and Mrs. Sieradzka was arrested. She was arrested immediately and put away at the Gestapo station. For a long time, Mrs. Sieradzka didn't give any sign until finally, after a year had passed, she sent a letter from Dachau saying goodbye to everyone and writing that she probably would never return.

A sadness remained in us for Mrs. Sieradzka, who sacrificed herself for our brothers and sisters, unaware that she would die for such a good deed. The children honored her memory by praying for her soul and imploring graces for her spirit for this beautiful deed.