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Memories of the German occupation

In the early morning, the golden ball of the Sun came out from beyond the horizon and lit the entire area and with sunlight all people and animals woke up. It was 1 September 1939. I noticed something strange on that day – instead of going into the fields, as they do every day, the farmers gathered in groups and told one another some important news, but you could see from their sad faces that this was something very sad. The women also walked around in groups and quietly wept.

Every now and then an explosion could be heard, and at night you could see the glows of burning settlements. Every day the explosions seemed to draw nearer, and the glows became more widespread and clear. We could hear the noise made by German bombers circling over Brześć, Biała Podlaska and Wisznice, until one day they started bombing us too. One of the bombs fell near my home and killed a 12-year-old girl who grazed cattle.

In the meantime, the German troops invaded Poland and caused great havoc as they bombed and burned towns and villages. Then, in a few days' time, German troops came to Wisznice – no more explosions could be heard, since they took over all of Poland at that time.

At first, the Germans treated Poles well, but after a few months, they started taking our young people to Germany as forced laborers, and then they started shooting people for any small offence, or taking them to Auschwitz and Majdanek. So there was hardly any family where nobody died due to the German actions, be it close or distant family members.

I still remember a terrible moment in which the Germans murdered Poles. In 1943, 30 hostages were brought to Wisznice and shot in front of all the people. At first everyone thought they were some criminals, but after a while it turned out that these men were not guilty of anything. Since then, I started to feel terrible hatred for the Germans.

And so, for five years, Poland had to be in bondage of this bloodthirsty nation, which persecuted our people. It was only in 1944 that Poland was liberated by the Soviet nation and that great enemy, which wanted to conquer the whole of Europe, was defeated.