

IRENA MAROŃ

Class VIb

Łopuszno, 14 October 1946

In 1939, Poland was invaded by German armies, dressed in green uniforms and with swastikas on their caps and sleeves – our enemy Germany, the bad neighbor from the west. The day of 1 September was sunny. The sun's rays made the whole world look golden. The Polish nation was very sad, and tears flowed down the faces of Poles, burning as if trails of sparks, and their faces clouded over.

Trucks full of Germans arrived in Łopuszno. German could be heard everywhere in Łopuszno, while Polish and Polish songs fell silent. They took up residence in the palace of squire Dobiecki. The first thing they did was to trample the Polish banners and defile our white eagle – they literally stabbed it through with a sword. They then hung up their own flag with a swastika.

They tormented the defenseless Polish nation terribly. Not a day passed without them bringing in a truck full of Poles. They placed these people in the dungeons that were under the building of the gendarmerie, where it was very cold and dark. Moans and cries could be heard daily, however those who were free could not defend the prisoners, for they would have met the same fate. Many times the gendarmes would lead out these captives and set dogs – Alsations – upon them, and the animals would tear their clothes and even rip off pieces of flesh. They forced us Poles to look at this, and laughed just as the Jews had laughed at Jesus.

It was difficult to take when the Germans pulled people out of their homes, half-dressed. Once, they dragged out daddy, saying that he was a partisan, and proceeded to torment him terribly. They took him back home with his hands tied behind his back with a thick rope, and did not allow any of us to come out of the house. They dug up the entire backyard and told daddy to tell them where he kept his weapon, but daddy had no weapon and was completely innocent. They then led him behind the copse and told him to dig a hole. Daddy did not obey, and so the oldest of the butchers shot and killed him. One day, uncle, mother and I went to exhume daddy. When we dug him up, we broke down in tears, but this did not change anything. We could not bring him back to life. We placed his body on the cart and took him

to the cemetery, where we buried him and erected a cross. The period of German rule was very difficult for us.

Some time later, Gestapo trucks drove through Łopuszno and headed straight for Skatka. A miracle once occurred: a girl had a dream in which she was instructed to wake up her parents, and also to take the icon of the Mother of God and cover herself with it. When she got up and told her parents, they laughed, however she took the icon and went off. She covered herself with it. The Gestapo men arrived a short while later and herded everyone into one of the houses, which they then doused with kerosene and set ablaze. The whole village was aflame, but she lived to tell the tale of the German crime. Only those survived who managed to flee to the forest – and the girl. The Mother of God shielded her with her cloak.

A great many patriots who loved their homeland, Poland, died in the war. We, the Polish children, went through a terrible time. The Germans drove us out of our beautiful school with Venetian windows. We and our teacher were forced to wander from hole to hole and from one humid room to another. We breathed in the moldy dust. Our teacher taught us whatever she was able to. The Germans confiscated all our study aids and books, and ordered that we hand over the rest to the Inspectorate. Our class teacher gave the better books to us, and packed up the less valuable ones and sent them to Kielce. It is difficult to find words to describe the German crimes.

But the time finally came when a new Poland started to grow. May God help her!