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# HELD NO HOPE

BY MARIA MIKORSKA

THE FACTS OF THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF POLAND



SPRING HELD NO HOPE



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BY  
MARIA MIKORSKA

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## PREFACE

The reader of these pages should realise that a strange impression awaits him. Many of the statements made here will seem the product of a sick imagination.

But all are true. The facts here presented were many times verified and—after the war—will be attested by witnesses.

All are true—in spite of the lies of German propaganda, which, using its publications, wireless, etc., using also many newspapers of terrorised neutrals (Swiss and Swedish), tries to persuade the whole world that in conquered Poland the German rule is severe but just, and that the country is being developed.

Do not believe them—they lie.

In conquered Poland rages the most terrible terror known in history, the most inhuman persecutions.

Do not be astonished when the few strangers who succeed in visiting occupied Poland show you quite another side of the picture. They do not know the truth. The German authorities show them only what they want to show, and the inhabitants did not tell them real facts, even if they were able to speak alone with Poles. The Poles must be very careful: one incautious word by this stranger and they run the risk of being shot dead.

There was in Poland no Press, no radio, no news. To collect material necessary for these few pages the author travelled for many months up and down the whole country, on foot, on a bicycle, in carts, on lorries, in trains, day and night—through towns, villages, fields, and

forests. So she was able to gather many facts on the spot. But few people could or would do likewise.

That is why if what you read may often seem to you quite unreal in its horror—remember, in spite of all, it is true.

\* \* \* \* \*

In his famous book *Hitler Speaks* Rauschnigg relates that Hitler confessed to him his project to destroy and annihilate the Polish nation, that he also spoke of terrible methods which he proposed to use.

Probably no one who read these words before the war believed them, no one thought that such terrifying plans could be realised. No one knew at that time what Germany really was, and no one could imagine that all human feeling would disappear from the hearts of a whole nation.

The eyes of the world were opened with a brutal shock.



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## I

### THE GERMAN ARMY RULES IN POLAND

THE last bastion fell. The ruins of Warsaw surrendered. The German army entered the capital. There was no longer a foot of free country. The period of German rule in Poland began—it was the military rule. This period had the following distinctive phases:

1. Polish people showed a great spiritual force and unusual vitality. Stunned by the terrible disaster, tortured by the incessant bombardments, scattered, ruined, they tried to pull themselves together, tried to strengthen their morale.

Seeing the brutal conquerors trampling the Polish soil underfoot they clenched their teeth and prepared for a spiritual fight, for a moral resistance, without compromise, without the least thought of yielding. Immediately after the terrible struggle, in which were employed methods of warfare never before known in the history of man, they were ready for an even more difficult fight—the spiritual fight.

They never doubted themselves for a moment. They believed in the justice of their cause, they believed in the victory of truth and freedom.

Preparing themselves to suffer everything the future might bring, they tried at the same time to find some means of supporting themselves. The war had thrown the majority of the people of the towns and great part of the country people out of their ordinary employment, and they were forced to look about for something new.

The ruin of the normal economic life opened the way for many substitute occupations. Each, however, of a commercial type. Such, for instance, as the transport of food by bicycle or on human shoulders to starving Warsaw or other cities, food which was more easily obtainable and cheaper in the country districts, and thus to make a small profit on the transaction; the primitive transport and peddling from house to house of materials and clothes, so much needed in bombed cities and villages, and which could be obtained from unbombed Lodz; the dangerous but profitable business of smuggling through the demarcation line to the Russian-occupied part of Poland; the removal of the debris of the ruined houses, etc., etc. People whom the war had deprived of estates, incomes, often even homes and clothing, snatched at every opportunity to find a means of livelihood. All alike, the workless officials, journalists, artists, labourers, etc., hoped that the war would be over quickly. That helped them to endure.

2. The second distinctive sign of this period was a great many abuses by German officers and men. The scale of these varied considerably. There were bloody persecutions. For instance, in Kościan the parish priest and 134 citizens were killed for no reason.

In Inowroclaw drunken German officers rushed into the prison, where were 70 old and very honourable Polish civilians, serving as hostages. To amuse themselves the barbarian officers fired at these men as though they were a target, and killed all of them.

Sometimes they also shot defenceless children, such as for instance when, on the high road near Grojec, an armed German motor-cyclist was going full speed towards Warsaw. A ten-year-old farm boy ran from one side of the road to the other about fifteen metres in front of the motor. The soldier stopped. Quietly he took down his gun, aimed

carefully, and fired. The child groaned and fell down. He was dead. The German soldier is well trained—never misses: especially defenceless children.

It is necessary to add that when a delegation asked General Kessler to put a stop to these abuses he declared that he could not forbid his soldiers to amuse themselves.

There were, besides bloody persecutions, robberies also. Under military rule gangs of N.C.O.s pillaged Warsaw, other towns, and parts of the country. They went to private houses for perquisition, and took away everything which seemed to have any value, silver ashtrays as well as the furs of the mistress of the house, food as well as jewellery.

3. The third sign of this period was that the conditions in the country showed a perfect picture of chaos. No precise orders or laws were promulgated: anything which succeeded was permitted. The military rule interested itself only in a few problems of the life of the country—those only which concerned directly or indirectly the army—and neglected the others.

That is why at this time the Polish people seemed to be caught very tightly in a net, but its meshes were not yet very fine.

## II

### CHAOS CONTINUES

A RAIN of laws, dispositions, prohibitions, restrictions, and difficulties began to fall on the country when the military rule changed over to the civil rule. Chaos continued: conditions in one town or in one community might be quite different to those in a neighbouring village, or in a neighbouring district. There were naturally many reasons

for this, but the principal one was the will of every German commandant *Landrat*, etc., to show to the Polish people the greatness of his power, and that he alone set the limits of his command.

It is needless to add how great a difficulty this chaos was to the economic activity of the people, and what a help it was to every abuse of the Germans.

#### ROBBERIES ARE BETTER ORGANISED

At the same time individual looting turned into systematic and official pillage of the country. The Germans took out of Poland everything it was possible to load on to lorries: implements of war as well as agricultural machinery, food as well as furniture, cattle as well as bedclothes or saucepans. In many towns stores, even toyshops, were emptied. Robberies under pretence of revisions continued, only more systematically. Money in the banks was confiscated, owners receiving only \$1.50 weekly. To conceal it at home was prohibited under grievous penalties.

#### THE GESTAPO RAGES IN POLAND

The Gestapo occupied the towns and districts from west to east. Once settled in, they began methodical cold persecutions, methodical efforts to wipe out the Polish people. In conformity with Hitler's plans they started to destroy the Polish nation—past, present, and future.

#### THE DESTRUCTION OF EVERY TRACE OF POLAND'S PAST

It was necessary to annihilate everything which would remind the Poles of their ancient greatness, glory, and power, everything which would testify to the existence of the thousand-years-old Polish culture, everything which would demonstrate Polish merit in the world of science.

Then, by order of the authorities, were pulled down and destroyed in Poznan and Cracov the monuments of Adam Mickiewicz, famous Polish poet; in Gniezno the monument of King Boleslaw, in Poznan, Cracov, and Łódz the monuments of Kościuszko, the monument of President Wilson, and the splendid monument of Grunwald, given in former times by Ignacy Paderewski to the town of Cracov, etc., etc.

On the other hand, German lorries took out from the museums, libraries, universities, private galleries, etc., whole collections of pictures, sculptures, coins, etc., every precious print and book. It is impossible to give the dimensions of this robbery—it is sufficient to say that not one museum, not one collection, not one scientific institution, not one library was able to escape from it.

At the same time, not satisfied with this pillage, the Germans set fire to the remaining Polish libraries. Here are examples of their barbarian methods:

Eighty-year-old Professor B. D. of Poznan spent his life collecting books, and loved them like his own children. The Germans forced the old man to assist when all the volumes were made into a pile and burned. The professor could not bear it and died of a heart attack. His wife, a woman of seventy-six years of age, was evicted from the town within twelve hours.

To the seminary in Plock the Germans sent an order that every priest must leave the building within ten hours, after which they drove all the Jews of the town together and forced them to tear the crucifix from the wall of the seminary and to profane it. Later they also burned the books of the library.

Every trace of Polish historical and cultural past was violently effaced.

THE DESTRUCTION OF EXISTING POLISH LIFE. PROFESSIONAL  
PEOPLE ARE KILLED OR CARRIED AWAY

Then the Germans, desiring to disorganise the Polish people, resolve to destroy the upper and professional classes and annihilate every element which might uphold the vitality, energy, and patriotism of the nation.

In the country the persecutions started with the landed gentry. Hundreds were shot down, obviously the most important. Many were not only killed but tortured to death, such as, for instance, in Rypin, where such terrible tortures were inflicted upon prisoners that an old officer (*Landsturm*) stationed there said: "I cannot stand this Gestapo system any more. I am German, and desired the defeat of the Poles, but I am not an executioner and my nerves are already broken. It is beyond human endurance to see fingers cut off or flesh torn from bones."

The fact that the most part of the gentry of this district were killed did not satisfy the Germans: they also persecuted the women. Here is an example. In Sadlowo lived a family composed of the parents, a twenty-year-old boy, eighteen-year-old daughter, and two small children. Father and son were arrested, and killed after being tortured. The unfortunate widow had to suffer greatly from the so-called *Treuhaender* (German administrator of the confiscated estate). Once in the garden she heard a shot. Running home as quickly as possible she found her daughter lying down bleeding: the *Treuhaender* had attempted to violate the girl and being resisted he fired without hesitation, severely wounding her.

The despairing mother wanted to send for a doctor, but the German forbade her to take her own horses.



She ran on foot. Arriving back with the physician she found the house empty: no daughter, no German, no children. The latter soon came back: driven out by the *Treuhaender* they took shelter in a peasant's house. The daughter was only found a week later, buried under a stack of corn. Many symptoms indicated she was buried alive.

A pregnant woman, Mrs S., came to the authorities in Rypin asking for a permit to send her imprisoned husband some food and clothes. She was pushed about, and even beaten.

The people from the country were also carried away to Germany. For instance, in the district of Lipno all the landed gentry, men and women, were convoked for a meeting, at which the Germans told them that they did not know how to administer estates, and they must be sent away to learn. They were all dispatched at once, without the possibility of taking even an overcoat from their houses. All these men were carried to East Prussia, and there made to break stones on the roads.

The clergy too were persecuted. Priests were arrested *en masse*, and often shot dead. It happened frequently that nobody was left in the church to exercise the sacerdotal functions.

German cruelty pursued not only the gentry and clergy but also the professional people in the towns. In Bydgoszcz alone 6000 were shot dead. On some days the streets literally ran with blood.

In Silesia and in Poznanian thousands and thousands of lawyers, doctors, tradesmen, artisans, etc., were killed.

It is impossible to enumerate all the victims: according to Germany's own statistics, in the occupied territories in six weeks 25,000 persons were murdered, 40,000 imprisoned and sent to hard labour.

It is however impossible to wipe out an entire stratum of a nation; but it is quite possible to dispossess it and to lower it.

This began simply by stealing Polish property. For instance a German from Berlin came to a well-known restaurant in Gdynia and stated that this business pleased him and therefore he would take it, but as he did not wish to wrong the owner he would pay a just price for it. After which he gave the magnificent sum of ten dollars, and took over not only the business but also the private apartment of the proprietor.

The same thing happened in a large drapery store, when a German woman took it over, paying the equally munificent sum of fourteen dollars.

The same system was employed in Poznan, but only at the beginning. Later on the conquerors did not bother to offer any excuse. (A typical illustration of "honest German" mentality may be seen in the case of a good German journalist who, meeting one of his Polish colleagues in the street of Gdynia, showed him a bulging wallet, saying, "I only rob the Jews, never the Poles"—actually using the word "rob.")

Acts of this kind happened on a large scale in the western districts, and from time to time in the centre of the country. At last the German authorities—in order to legalise *faits accomplis*—issued a series of laws which suppressed all immovable Polish property in the west districts, and limited the possibility of handling one's movables and enterprises, allowing the Germans to confiscate them at any moment.

THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL  
LIFE

Wishing to destroy the Polish nation it was necessary—besides terrorisations, persecutions, and economic devastations—to make all cultural and intellectual life impossible. So the entire Press, without exception, was suppressed. Only papers printed in German and Polish for propaganda purposes were published, equally bad in their subject-matter and form.

Not a single really Polish word was printed any more; not a single really Polish word was heard on the stage, from the lecturer's chair, etc. Every theatre, concert hall, even cinemas, were closed. The books of the reading-rooms began to be confiscated.

The *Kulturtraeger* try to change Poland into a savage country.

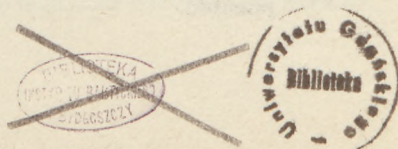
THE GERMANS TRY TO RUIN THE POLISH FUTURE:  
YOUTH IS DESTROYED

It is not enough to destroy an existing nation, it is also necessary to provide against its regeneration. The German authorities concerned themselves with the destruction of future Poland—that is to say, Polish youth.

First, under any pretext, they sentenced young girls and boys to death, as for example in Bydgoszcz and Katowice, where hundreds of girl scouts under fifteen years of age, and in many other towns boys of twelve and fourteen, were killed.

In Bydgoszcz 136 schoolboys died like heroes: standing before their executioners they sung the national anthem.

Other children were carried away to concentration camps: in the so-called "Camp of the Dead," in Hohenstein, in one shed alone lived three boys: two of fourteen years, one of twelve.



## NO STUDY FOR POLES

The youth in the country was no longer able to study: every school was closed. From time to time, with noisy propaganda, one part was open for five or ten days, after which it was quietly shut again for many months.

Naturally the high schools were also closed, and the deportation, and their death from ill-treatment, of a great part of the Polish University professors is well known to the whole world.

The Germans said often officially: "Study is needless for boot-blacks or street-sweepers. And no higher professions shall be open to the Poles in the future."

In their biological war against the Poles the Germans have a powerful ally in hunger and starvation, and they do not hesitate to employ this weapon with the utmost cruelty. The Germans are well aware of the fact that a starved opponent is less dangerous, because he lacks the strength to persevere in the struggle.

Recapitulating the characteristics of this period we can corroborate in the economic sphere:

- (a) Complete chaos, with every day less freedom for individual movement, action, or initiative;
- (b) Systematic devastation of the country.

In the national sphere, continually better organised persecutions tending to destroy Polish people and Polish life:

(a) *Past:*

Destruction of monuments, museums, libraries, etc.

(b) *Present:*

1. Murders of gentry, priests, lawyers, doctors, professors, teachers, etc., and all decent elements.
2. Depriving the Poles of their property.
3. Making all cultural and intellectual life impossible.

(c) *Future:*

1. Killing Polish youth.
2. Cutting off every possibility of study.

## THE DEGENERATION OF GERMAN MORALE

Hitler's plans were realised with great precision. Besides facts accomplished by sanguinary methods, and with a definite aim, there took place in Poland more and more abuses and cruelties done for the simple pleasure of inflicting torture.

It is necessary to understand that the German of to-day is no longer the German of 1914. From the beginning of this war up to the present day it is possible to notice among the Germans in Poland exceptional degeneracy, astonishing and abnormal confusion of feeling.

It can be proved by this example. In Kaminsk, shortly after their arrival, the Germans convoked every boy who before the war belonged to the *Strzelec* society. They were placed in a row, after which the soldiers, taking heavy clubs, amused themselves by crushing the young men's heads and inflicting on them the most ghastly death.

A few minutes later the same—the very same—soldiers with smiles were giving chocolates to the children of the town.

Another proof is the proceedings against the Jews. They are not always marked by fury, often by cold sadism. For instance in Mszczonów the Jews were taken from their houses and killed on the threshold. In P. all the Jews were driven together to the market-place, stripped and left naked, men, women, and children, for hours, while an officer with three men visited all the houses. Later the officer came back, and taking a dirty piece of wood proceeded to the most brutal and most intimate examination of the unfortunate men and women. In public!

During the transport of coal in Warsaw an old Jew was killed because he could not carry a very heavily loaded wheelbarrow.

In Pulawy, at a temperature of 30° Centigrade of frost one night, the Gestapo ordered the Jews to leave the town at once on foot, and they sprinkled them with water. On the journey three old Jews froze to death, the others arrived at Opole at sunrise. In the afternoon the same Gestapo officers came and began again to torture the evicted men, beating them for two hours with whips.

For many years the Hitlerian theory has been rammed into German brains that Jews are not human beings—gipsies are not human beings—Poles are not human beings—the circle of these not human beings widened, and accordingly lessened the limits of humanitarian feelings in German hearts.

On the contrary, the conviction increased that to the *Reichsdeutsch* nothing in the world is prohibited, and especially in a conquered country. Therefore Gestapo, army, and officials gave full vent to their appetites. They did not deny themselves any abuses.

#### THE HEROIC POLISH NATION

It is impossible to enumerate all the cruelties. The Polish people suffered but did not submit, did not accept any compromise. During this period the Germans were looking for some possibility of co-operation with the Poles. They planned to create a Polish Government, which would help to persuade the world that the Poles desired to remain with the Reich.

But among the many millions of Poles it was impossible to find a Hacha, to find a man who, for his own profit or for fear of persecution, would consent to tarnish the honour of the nation—by working with the enemy.

In all the country a tempest of cruelty raged—but the people did not yield.

### III

## THE TERRIBLE WINTER IN POLAND

### THE PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY

FOR weeks at a time rumours circulated—sometimes even confirmed by the Germans—that one part of the country would be incorporated in the Reich and the other would form a so-called *Restgebiet*. What character would this *Restgebiet* have? Would it be a buffer state or a protectorate? Nobody knew, as also nobody knew which districts would be joined to which.

Frontiers were often delimited and changed from October 1939 to January 1940, when they were definitely settled. From this time the crossing of the frontier began to be extremely difficult, because permission had to be obtained from Berlin.

### THE ABNORMAL SEPARATION CREATED DIFFICULTIES

This unnatural separation influenced economic life very strongly. The frontiers were settled according to German greed: all the most fertile districts going to the Reich, and, for instance, Warsaw being cut off from all points which formerly supplied the capital with food.

Important commercial and financial movements in normal times joined Warsaw with the biggest Polish industrial town, Lodz. Now the demarcation line ruined this activity.

Beside all this there were many difficulties for people, the northern frontier passing very near the capital. The inhabitants of, for instance, Nowy Dwor (a suburban

settlement) working in Warsaw had the choice of leaving their employment or their homes, because it was impossible to obtain a permit to cross the frontier.

THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE IN THE TERRITORIES  
INCORPORATED IN THE REICH. ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES

From now on entirely different conditions prevailed in the Polish territories incorporated in the Reich from those in the indeterminate *Restgebiet*, called now "Government General."

In the part belonging to the Reich the chaos in the administration was much less, even though it did exist. Severe control of commerce and production was quickly imposed. But even those products which were not yet subject to restrictions could not find purchasers, because of lack of currency.

In the incorporated territories the mark was established as the standard currency, but the exchange was very disadvantageous to the inhabitants. That is why the amount of actual cash circulating in the country was much too small.

The sale of agricultural products met with the greatest difficulties, not only for the above-mentioned reasons but also because all export, even from one district to another, was prohibited. In consequence the prices of goods, and especially of food, etc., were two or three times less in the Reich territories than in Government General, but the producer could not sell his crop and the buyer in the town could not buy it.

THE INHUMAN EVICTIONS

Naturally all these orders and prohibitions concerned only that part of the population who remained relatively



free, and could lead their own lives and carry on their own business.

The expression "their own" is not exact. We know that Polish ownership was suppressed in the territories incorporated in the Reich.

People deprived of their property were banished from their place of residence, but at the beginning this was never done *en masse*. The human evictions, which bereft thousands of people of their all, raged principally in December, January, and February, and were the chief characteristic of that period.

At this time frosts of from 20° to 30° Centigrade ravaged the country, and the expulsions and the way they were carried out were without a trace of human feeling.

Unfortunate people forced to leave their home, and driven to a life of extreme misery and vagrancy, were made to suffer all sorts of cruelties and all sorts of unnecessary petty annoyances.

#### THE TERRIFYING METHODS OF EVICTION: PEOPLE TORTURED BY PETTY ANNOYANCES

In Gdynia and Poznan, in many instances, people were forced to leave their homes at twenty minutes' notice, with permission to take with them only what they could carry, but neither money (10 marks only) nor jewels.

In two cases in Poznan they were ordered to leave their apartments between 8 and 10 P.M. But, in spite of having two hours' time, the people were obliged to work in the dark, because the Germans had cut off the electricity.

Once, also in Poznan, the order to leave the houses at seven o'clock in the morning was posted up on the city walls eleven hours beforehand—that is to say, at eight o'clock at night—although no one was allowed in the street

until 5 A.M. next day—just two hours before the order came into force.

During the expulsions from the district of Jarocin a seventy-year-old and sick woman wanted to take a blanket with her to put on the floor of the cattle trucks (generally used for the evicted). The Germans confiscated it, forcing her to travel in the terrible frost without any covering.

#### THE TRAINS OF DEATH

On 16th December 1939, with 18° Centigrade of frost, a train stopped in Skierniewice. It was a goods train with hermetically closed cattle trucks, full of people evicted from Poznan. They had been twenty-eight hours *en route*, during which time they had never been permitted to get out. They received neither food nor drink, not even water—nothing at all. In a truck where there were 23 women, 12 men, and 10 children, there was only one bundle of straw in the way of bedding, and before leaving every rug, even a fur coat, had been taken away by the German soldiers. The unfortunate people did not know where they were being sent. This train was followed by many others.

In the middle of December a train full of people expelled from Gdynia stopped in Siedlce. They had travelled in hermetically closed carriages for four days and five nights, with a temperature of 20°–25° Centigrade of frost. During all this time they also did not receive food or drink. On arrival it was found that six persons were dead and one child had been born. In any case the Germans did not permit any help to be given. On the Siedlce station an old railway porter tried to give the unfortunate people some fresh water: guards shot at him. A woman who on the same station tried to get out of the

train to get some food for her child—dying of hunger—was shot dead.

In the first days of February, with 35° of frost, a goods train with hermetically closed cattle trucks arrived at Otwock. When it stopped a few people who were on the station were shocked by a terrible cry coming from the train: "Help! Help! Nearly all our children are already dead, the others are dying! For five days and six nights we have been without food! Help!"

It is impossible to describe the voices of these half-crazy mothers whose children had frozen to death in their arms.

In this train there *were sixty frozen children*. Women on the station tried to give the tortured people some hot tea: they were beaten and driven away by the German soldiers.

The train started slowly, with an accompaniment of heart-breaking cries: "Help!!!" This word "Help" echoed for a long time among the trees of the Otwock forest.

When the train arrived at Lublin nearly all the children were frozen to death—deliberately killed by the Germans.

The most impressive thing was to see at Otwock these soldiers, probably simple peasants from Bavaria or Saxony, who could see women and children dying and allow no one to help them. No order could have prevented them from turning their backs and moving a few yards away and pretending to see nothing. They might at least have kept some trace of human feeling in their souls. On the platform of this little station one needed great force and great faith to keep a belief in human nature.

In February a goods train arrived at Cracow. When the cattle trucks were opened *nobody* came out. There were inside—*only dead bodies*.

## IN THE TOWNS

In Lodz people evicted from their home were first shut up in ruined factory buildings. Inside there were 10°–20° of frost, and within twelve days forty-five children and three old men froze there.

In Lodz the following event occurred. A worker's wife just started to give birth to a child, when two German officers arrived at her home and ordered her to leave the house at once. The husband and the midwife begged for permission to remain there till the child was born. The Germans asked how long it would be. And when, naturally, it was impossible to say exactly, they insisted upon taking the woman out. She was loaded with her bed on a lorry and carried to the above-mentioned ruined building, where, in 15° of frost, she gave birth to the child, who, of course, died at once.

In a very poor district of Włocławek an order was given to the people to leave their homes and everything they possessed. Despairing, they did not carry out the order and remained at home. Then the Germans set all the district on fire and so forced the population to leave.

## EVICTIONS FROM THE COUNTRY

People were banished not only from the towns but also from the country districts. From the manor houses the gentry were generally driven away by lower officials with very brutal procedure, and often in quite senseless fashion. Here is an example: Dorota M., a six-months-old baby, was arrested on a special written order. It is necessary to add that the child had not the same name as its mother, and no mistake was possible. When the Gestapo arrived the nurse (the mother was out looking in the hospitals for the wounded father) tried to persuade the Germans that

it was stupid to take a baby to prison. Seeing that her protests were useless she asked to be taken with the baby. The officer answered that he had no order to arrest the nurse and he would not do it. After which he took the child away.

At last the authorities permitted the nurse to be imprisoned with the baby. After a few days' imprisonment in Racot they were put on an evacuation train and sent to the east.

After a long journey in freezing cold, and without food, they were released in an empty field, and finally the nurse arrived on foot at Warsaw with the baby in her arms.

#### THE CAMP OF CRUELTY

In another part of Poland (near Kutno), after having arrested the men of the better classes, the German authorities suddenly imprisoned the women and children, sending them to the concentration camp near Lodz. This camp, full of upper and professional class people, was notorious for its terrible conditions. The people had not even straw, and slept on the bare cement, with  $15^{\circ}$  C. of frost. The sheds were so overcrowded that no one could change his position during the night. That is why a seventy-three-year-old Lady W. got sores on her back, by lying too long upon it, and at last died—like many others.

Not only the gentry, but every month more peasants were evicted from their homes.

#### INDIVIDUAL EVICTION AND INDIVIDUAL FLIGHTS

Besides the mass expulsions thousands of families were evicted individually. They were often robbed by the Germans during their journey. For instance, people from Wabrzesno were stripped in Plock under pretence of examination. The soldiers stole even their boots.

Other families in the territories incorporated in the Reich were fleeing from their homes. They did so (1) to avoid the terrible danger of evacuation trains, which meant death for children, (2) to save more of their personal belongings, (3) to avoid separation from their family.

#### THE SEPARATION OF FAMILIES

In many districts (Lodz, etc.) the father was sent to one place, the mother to another, and the children separated from both.

On 22nd March there arrived at Cracov a train with 1100 children, from two to fourteen years of age. They had been taken away from their parents, who had no hope of discovering them. A baby who is now only two and does not know its own name!

#### THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF TRAGEDIES

There are thousands and thousands of such examples, and nobody who hears of them, nobody who reads these words, can imagine the immensity of this tragedy. It is one thing to read a statement that 80,000 people were evicted from Gdynia and 100,000 from Poznan, and another to see these faces drowned in tears, these shivering bodies, the half-crazy eyes of mothers whose children have frozen to death in their arms, frozen because the Germans prohibited anyone from giving them a glass of hot tea. The despair of these women, who saw help so near and were unable to reach it! And yet another to hear men in the cattle trucks trying to break open the closed doors with their bodies in order to get out and bring help to their loved ones dying in the train.

This despair and this tragedy are impossible to explain and impossible to describe. They must be seen.

## THE FATE OF THE EVICTED PEOPLE

The Poles driven away were sent to the Government General, sometimes to a town or village (generally very poor and quite unable to support these unfortunate people), but most frequently they were released and put out of the train at night in an empty field, far from human habitation, helpless and half-frozen.

It is impossible to describe the misery of all these people, which increased every day.

## THOSE WHO REMAIN IN THE REICH

The people who still remained in their homes (in the territories incorporated in the Reich) had no longer any security and the German authorities persecuted them with all sorts of annoyances: for instance, they must defer to any officer, N.C.O., or official, and give way to him. When a tradesman from Plock did not do so, two soldiers trampled him underfoot and beat him till he fainted.

If anybody in Poznan left his house for a few hours he was obliged to give up the key, thus allowing the Germans to confiscate the apartment at any moment.

In the small town of G., in the so-called *Warthegau*, it was prohibited to go out after 5 P.M., prohibited to light the apartment, and even to talk there after 9 P.M., and—worst of all—it was prohibited to lock any door, so that the Gestapo could come in at any time.

And the Gestapo officers liked to amuse themselves: for instance on Christmas Eve, 1939, they ran through the streets of this town shooting at the closed windows of the houses and pursuing the women. They caught at last a thirteen-year-old girl (an only child), dragged her out of her house, and violated her, after which they put five bullets into her and threw her on the dunghill, like a dead dog.

In Piatek at the end of December sixty-five persons were killed, nobody knew why—probably for the same reason which was given to Lady H. when, weeping, she asked the Gestapo why her husband was shot dead: “He was a Pole—that is enough,” said the Nazis.

In the Polish territories incorporated in the Reich the people lived under savage terror, in indescribable fear of eviction, that is of torture, death, or—in the best case—extreme poverty.

#### THE GOVERNMENT GENERAL AND ITS ECONOMIC SITUATION

Thousands of beggars, thousands of people banished from their homes, overran the Government General. Everyone thought it would be easier to live there.

In the Government General Polish property existed in principle, and restriction and control were perhaps a little less. But the chaos and administrative incoherence were much greater, the cost of living and scarcity enormous. The economic situation and—if it is still possible to call it so—the economic life were catastrophic. For instance the building companies, which after bombardment ought to have had many opportunities, did not work on a big scale because the authorities confiscated from them all material of more than \$100-150 value. The factories were closed, with the exception of those which worked for Germans only, and those—very few—which, thanks to the cleverness of their owners, received from the Germans the necessary raw materials.

The lack of raw materials was the first of three principal reasons for stagnation. Secondly, every bank account being blocked the businesses had no money to start their activity. Thirdly, many kinds of production were entirely prohibited.



Another difficulty in the economic life was that the wages of the workers and artisans were fixed by the authorities, and the employers had no power to reduce or increase them. The result was that a profitable business could not give more money to its people, who often left it, preferring to set up on their own. For instance a shoemaker who had increased the wages of his assistant was fined 1000 zl.

And on the contrary an employer whose business was doing badly could not reduce the wages, even if the employees, agreeing to earn less, were willing to contribute to the maintenance of the undertaking.

The salaries of clerks and magistrates were also brought down to a very low level. For instance a great part of them were reduced by more than half, and it is necessary to add that the cost of living increased three to five times.

#### COST OF LIVING

The German authorities fixed the maximum prices for every article of primary necessity. To charge more was prohibited upon pain of death. That meant if somebody bought bread for five cents above the fixed price he and the seller ran the same risk.

In spite of this severity all these orders remained quite sterile. The fixed prices were so low that every article mentioned in the orders immediately disappeared from the legal commerce, to become an object of widely extended illegal traffic.

The fixing of prices when food was being carried away to Germany, and the lack of it increasing every day, resulted in a very small number of people, who still had much money, being able to buy nearly everything, but others—thousands and thousands—starved in the cities.

## MISERY AND HUNGER

There were ration cards for food, but the rations were very small and very irregularly obtainable: for instance up to April fats were not even once distributed.

Here are examples of poverty in Warsaw: a little boy of nine months was nourished only with spongy brown bread and hot water. Another one, a child of five years, in the depths of winter did not eat anything hot, even tea, for two weeks.

## THE LACK OF CLOTHING

Besides foodstuffs, control was exercised over many other articles and goods. For instance all textile materials, etc. It was necessary to have special permission to buy clothes, or even a pocket-handkerchief. But to ask for this permit was dangerous. A Polish doctor requested a so-called "boot-card" and received it fairly easily, only his name and address were noted. He bought the shoes at a low price and was very satisfied, but the next day a commission arrived at his house and confiscated all the other boots which he had at home, leaving only the new pair. The authorities decided that more than one pair was too much for a doctor in Poland.

At last, free and uncontrolled trade was possible only in children's toys, stationery, porcelain, jam without sugar, and a few other things.

## DISEASE WITHOUT HELP

Besides poverty and a disastrous economic situation the country was ravaged by disease. Struggle against it was very difficult for many reasons:

1. In the towns, pipes being damaged, the water was infected, indeed in some cases there was no supply at all.
2. Thousands of buildings were ruined, and those still

standing were terribly overcrowded: sometimes six families lived in one apartment.

3. By reason of German control, soap was almost unobtainable.

4. For the above-mentioned reasons there was a great lack of clothes and underwear. Many people lost their possessions in the bombardment and fire, others—the evicted—had theirs stolen.

5. There was lack of medicines. Many chemists being ruined, in numerous districts it was impossible to find even aspirin.

In spite of noisy German propaganda, the hygienic conditions in Poland were perfectly terrible during this period.

#### LIVING IN FEAR

Moreover, in spite of all that has been said, the people in Government General lived in constant fear:

1. Fear of arrest. It was absolutely impossible to understand for what reason persons were imprisoned: sometimes they were politicians, sometimes very simple and ordinary workers, both men and women, often even children. No amount of care or good behaviour could keep one free of arrest.

2. Fear of being shot dead. The shooting of many people took place every night in the Parliament Garden. Besides that every prostitute considered diseased was killed, just like anyone who stole more than once, though the thefts in this year of terrible poverty were perfectly understandable.

3. Fear of special events like the following: in the middle of February the Gestapo came one day to two big and overcrowded cafés in Warsaw and arrested all the women (many of them of the best society) in spite of the protest of their husbands. They were taken to the

hospital for venereal diseases and there were submitted to a humiliating examination, after which some were set free. What happened to the others nobody knows.

4. Facts like the following: in February and March even more frequently young girls disappeared from their homes, from the streets, etc. Some time later, in the German propaganda papers, reports appeared saying that these girls were in Germany, working in rural districts. It was much too emphatic to be true, and many attestations proved quite the contrary. Here is an example which really happened:

On 17th March a nineteen-year-old girl (daughter of an official) was going through the Warecka Street. A motor-car stopped suddenly behind her near the sidewalk. Immediately two N.C.O.s sprang out and caught the girl by the shoulder, pulling her into the car. Two other terrified women were already inside.

They were at once driven at full speed to the suburbs, where in the German barracks they found sixty other young women assembled in an empty room.

Warning them that a false declaration would be punished by death, officers began the identification of the women. In spite of threats the official's daughter gave a fictitious name and address. All the married women were released, the others were stripped, washed, their hair dressed, manicured, etc. Three *Volksdeutsch* women (Germans living in Poland) watched the unfortunates and told them they would be given to the officers, for the reason that they belonged to the capital. Those who were brought in from the villages would be for the soldiers.

Every ten minutes one of the girls, quite naked, was pushed towards the end of the building to certain officers' rooms. When the turn of the official's daughter arrived the *Volksdeutsch* pushed her into the hall, ordering her to

go to the left. The girl, benefiting by a moment when the *Volksdeutsch* turned her back, seized an overcoat, which was hanging there, and ran to the right instead of to the left.

She found herself in a big empty room with closed windows. It was on the first floor. She broke the panes and, regardless of the danger, got out, slipped down the gutter-pipe, and ran to the suburban street.

Nobody pursued her. Perhaps the Germans did not notice her escape, perhaps they did not want to attract public attention—at any rate they neither shot nor arrested her, and she arrived home clad only in an overcoat.

This fact is strictly true, the writer has spoken with the girl in question.

5. Fear of still more frequent abuses. Here are examples. Once at 11 P.M. three Gestapo officers arrived at a Jewish apartment in Marszalkowska Street. They found there a young seventeen-year-old boy, his mother, his sister, their cousin, and a servant. The Germans pushed them all into the same room and stripped them, after which they beat the servant, saying that she was not to serve the Jews. Later they threatened the boy with a revolver and forced him to masturbate in presence of the four women. It would be difficult to find a better example of German degeneracy.

In March 1940, in the suburbs of Warsaw, a German soldier shot a twelve-year-old boy dead without warning while he was trying to scrape some coaldust together at a place where previously the population had been allowed to do so. Half an hour later this soldier quietly ate his dinner in a near-by restaurant, not in the least troubled by his deed.

On 23rd March a German patrol on a corner of N. Swiat and Ordynacka streets arrested a man for being in the

street at a quarter past eight, which was the curfew-hour. They beat him, trampled him underfoot, and jumped on his chest with their heavy iron-shod boots.

The Massacre of Wawer is well known: two drunken German soldiers were killed there in a brawl with drunken *apaches*. The Gestapo arrived a few hours later and shot dead 128 absolutely innocent persons (the true culprit had escaped long before), a few from Wawer and Anin (suburban settlements), the majority dragged out of passing trains. Among the victims were twelve boys under fourteen years of age.

#### THE LAND OF TEARS

Into the Government General, ravaged by poverty, disease, and inhuman terror, the Germans drove every day thousands of broken-hearted people. Every day the despair in this small part of Poland increased. Life became morally heavier every day. Thousands of families had their fathers, or husbands, or sons in German concentration camps, and in February trains of returning prisoners began to arrive in Warsaw. Trains of dying skeletons. Their wounds and their appearance told better than their tongues the truth about certain concentration camps in Germany.

For instance, in Hohenstein, in one shed where there were 350 men 51 died within three weeks, from infection of undressed wounds, from fever, and from—beating. For they were beaten with rubber truncheons often several times a day.

In the whole camp they suffered from hunger. For the one and only meal a day they had received 80 litres of milk for 6000 men. It was supplemented with water and with bits of cabbage.

It is impossible to relate their saga of suffering. They

travelled five days in frost without food and drink, and about 12 per cent died. No one could get out of the train without help. Many were wounded at the moment of leaving the station in East Prussia: to make them hurry the Germans stuck them vigorously in the back with bayonets. And they were all people sent home on account of severe illness. They arrived at Warsaw with fresh wounds.

Beside misery, hunger, disease, terror, and anxiety for their loved ones, the Poles suffered terribly from the lack of accurate news. The real Press did not exist. There were however German propaganda papers. The people did not believe a word of them, but the abundance of false news of enemy victories oppressed the population. To have a wireless, to listen to the news, to repeat it, etc., was prohibited on pain of death. The result was that the country was inundated with a flood of rumours. The impossibility of knowing the truth about the situation of the Allies, this life of utter uncertainty, was a very heavy, perhaps the heaviest, burden for the Poles.

As it was impossible to shut up a whole nation in prison, or concentration camps, the Germans changed the whole country into a dark gaol.

In spite of this the Polish people never gave up. Their sufferings united them, their sufferings forged a unity, which is difficult to picture if one has seen only the Polish *emigré*.

#### IV

### THE SPRING GIVES NO HOPE

TERROR INCREASED DURING THE OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST  
In the spring the German methods in Poland became more and more brutal every week. The terror increased. The reason is to be found in the situation in the West.

Preparing the offensive, the Germans wanted to terrorise the Polish population and in this way to guard themselves against any tendency to insurrection during the conflict.

That is why the number of arrests, executions, etc., in Poland increased in the weeks before the offensives against Norway, against Holland, Belgium, France, against Great Britain, and during the first period of them.

Then as before the persecutions were directed principally against the professional classes, and all the best elements in the country, but often the men in the street as well as more important persons became the victims of German rage. On 5th September a thousand persons were arrested in Warsaw alone.

The number of executions increased, and the reasons were more and more futile. For instance, a man knew that his acquaintance had a revolver, and did not go to the German authorities to denounce him. When this was discovered—the man was shot dead.

“Every attempt at the smallest resistance to German wishes will be punished by death” was said once in German official circles. This promise was strictly maintained.

#### THE REICH NEEDS WORKERS

One sometimes asks oneself who will remain alive in this unfortunate country. Because at this time, besides arrests, executions, etc., a new calamity began to ravage the occupied territories. Deportation of men and women into Germany, which took place seldom in the autumn, more often in winter, in spring and summer became terrifying, and were the most characteristic signs of this period. The reason is also to be found in the Western situation. The Reich was fighting and needed more and more men to work in the munitions factories, in the fields, etc. Then



it seized slaves in Poland, as in former times the slave-drivers seized them in Africa.

#### MAN-HUNTING

In February an order was given that 10 per cent of the Polish population from the Government General were to go to Germany as labourers (this number is equal to a general mobilisation of soldiers).

First the Germans tried to encourage people, with propaganda, to go voluntarily, but quickly they changed this system to the brutal method of "man-hunting," threatening everybody: according to the above-mentioned order every man from 16 to 65, and every woman from 16 to 50, was obliged to work for the Germans—with the exception of persons having legal contracts confirmed by the authorities.

People were taken out from their houses, seized on the road, hunted in the streets. Here are examples of methods used.

In Sochaczew, during the first levy, the women of the middle classes were especially sought; among others a pregnant wife was taken away.

In Grodzisk Mazowiecki, a father and mother were carried away and five small children remained without anyone to look after them.

In the same town the Germans took away the parents and left a baby with a seventy-five-year-old grandmother, quite poor, and unable to take charge of a child.

It is necessary to add that, following the German decision, the salaries of the Polish workers in Germany were not only very small, but, also, could be reduced according to the ideas of their masters. If they judged them not able enough, physically or mentally, the salary would be suppressed. That is why the families remaining in Poland could never count for certain on help from relations carried away.

For the women the danger was greater, because they were often sent first to field work and later to brothels. This is known:

(1) From information given by a German officer recruiting people in Sochaczew. He was especially looking for young girls (16-20) and when one said to him that women of 28-30 years were surely stronger and better workers, he answered, "That is true, but these girls will be sent first to agricultural districts and later to soldiers' brothels, and they must be fairly young."

(2) To the village of Stokruski a girl came back from such a house. She was able to return because she was infected and very ill.

(3) The same thing happened near Wloclawek.

(4) A group of women from Pomorze succeeded in sending some news of themselves to their family.

In the towns whole blocks of houses were surrounded by soldiers and every man found inside was at once carried off to Germany, often without being able to say good-bye to his family.

#### LIFE OF HUNTED BEASTS

The Polish population were frightened to death by the danger of deportation. The knowledge of what the Poles in Germany had to suffer (even quite young men died from overwork and starvation) increased the dread.

When these cruel deportations *en masse* began, after a few days of shock the population tried to hide themselves. During weeks of the most implacable man-hunting, people in the towns did not go out at all. Small children were sent out from time to time to get some food.

The Germans seized men, women, and youths in the streets. Gunfire sounded often among the houses, and they shot for the most futile reasons—even without reason.

The life of the Polish people began to be the life of

hunted beasts. Like wild beasts in their lairs they hid themselves in their houses, in empty buildings, in ruins. Like wild beasts in the forests they tried to slink about in the larger towns. They changed their addresses, escaped, returned, changed their name, changed their appearance.

It was no better in the villages. There the nights were the most dangerous: when press-gangs arrived, seizing people. To avoid them, every evening all the young people, male and female, left their houses and hid themselves in the forests, in the willow-beds on the river-banks, in the bushes.

“The Poles are not human beings,” said Hitlerian propaganda. Indeed the Poles were no longer human beings—they were pitilessly hunted animals.

This awful life of terrified animals, these deportations—the extent of which can be judged by the fact that, during only two weeks (10th–24th August), 20,000 persons were caught and carried away from Warsaw—were the most characteristic signs of this period (spring and summer).

The moments of relaxation were short and seldom. The tension of terror and man-hunting was all but unchanging.

#### THE ABUSES CONTINUE

It is necessary to add that all the abuses mentioned in former chapters, every individual persecution, every annoyance, every robbery, continued—thanks to the soldiers, to the officials, and most of all to the Gestapo.

Nobody was safe for a moment night or day.

#### THE LACK OF CLOTHING, OF HABITATIONS, OF MEDICINES AND HOSPITALS

Also there continued the aforementioned control of all production and commerce. Then the lack of clothes for the population increased every week.

The cold started early this year and people were already suffering greatly from it.

There continued also the confiscations for the benefit of Germans who were being evacuated from Germany to avoid the danger of British bombardments.

That made a lack of habitations in the Government General, because the number of repaired houses was smaller than the number of buildings which, damaged during the fighting and the winter, now fell into ruins. Then the Poles, whose number in Government General increased so considerably, had often to live in overcrowded hovels.

There continued also the spread of disease and lack of medicine, and the lack of hospitals, which for the most part were reserved for Germans only.

#### FOOD GOES TO GERMANY

There also continued the export of food to Germany: corn, cattle, vegetables, fruit, fats, etc., etc., were carried away *en masse*. And at the same time the famine in Government General increased.

In 1940 not only the harvest failed, but also an order of the Governor General forced the producers to send all their crops to the authorities, retaining for themselves only an amount strictly indispensable for their own necessities.

The situation was more difficult because the districts which now form the Government General are among the most barren in Poland, and we must remember that into these districts thousands of people evicted from the western part of Poland were driven.

These people were without hope: for such a number of homeless men, women, and children no efforts could procure help enough. There were families, formerly rich, who during this summer fed themselves principally on

berries secretly gathered in the forests. And what will happen in the winter?

Besides all this the ordinary population of the Government General were now generally workless and often destitute. And it was no longer possible to supplement the family budget by selling something, because everything of value had been sold a long time ago.

The cost of living still increased—the population slowly starved.

#### EVERY DAY THE DEVASTATION IS GREATER

But the Germans were not touched by the poverty of the Poles. The devastation of the country (mentioned in former chapters) also continued:

(a) Thousands of acres of forests were cut down at random.

(b) At first the public collections, etc., were robbed, now even private property was taken by the Germans, who tried now also, in Government General, to deprive the Poles of everything of any value. In February the authorities ordered the population to register everything more than ninety years old: furniture as well as pictures, jewellery as well as stamps, books as well as lace, etc. Now a new order demanded the delivery of all these articles.

(c) Besides that the confiscators (following a special order of the Governor-General) began to seize the private jewellery, gold and silver objects, etc., etc.

(d) We know from a former chapter that in the western districts of Poland the Polish immovable property no longer existed. Now a certain tendency to suppress it also in the General Government began to be evident. Many orders had indirectly this aim although they apparently concerned quite other objects.

THE *VOLKSDEUTSCHE* IN POLAND AND THEIR BASENESS

A glaring contrast to the half-starved Poles was presented by the Germans from Germany—that is officers, soldiers, officials, etc., and the so-called *Volksdeutsche* (Germans living for years in Poland and therefore Polish citizens). The latter especially excited in Polish hearts an unimaginable amount of bitterness and hate, which can never be forgotten. The behaviour of the *Volksdeutsche* in Poland presented a terrifying picture of vileness and depravity.

Living in Poland for many years, even many generations, having (in spite of German lies) all their just rights (schools, societies, etc.), treated very well by their neighbours, Polish peasants—who by nature have a tendency to good-neighbourliness—the *Volksdeutsche* paid back with bloody wrongs and baseness: (1) They threw hand-grenades at civilians: for instance in Lwowek a German girl, Fryda K., cast one among some refugees. (2) They tried to humiliate people: going to their neighbours' houses and abusing the peasants because they were Poles. Even small German children ran after their Polish school-fellows, insulting them. (3) They helped the Gestapo to arrest, to execute, to shoot the Poles, spying on them and denouncing them as much as possible.

The Gestapo often publicly thanked the *Volksdeutsche*, saying that its work in Poland could never have been done without them.

Not contenting themselves with thanks, the authorities created a privileged situation for the *Volksdeutsche*. The whole population in Poland was classified as follows:

- I. *Volksdeutsche*—having all the prerogatives.
- II. Minorities—having all possible facilities.
- III. Poles—work-fodder.
- IV. Jews—pariahs.

There were also the top-dogs: the *Reichsdeutsche* (German citizens from Germany), the officials, the army.

Every German in Poland lives easily and luxuriously. It was possible to recognise them at first glance: richly dressed, well-fed, they had often a scoffing smile in face of the poverty of the Poles.

The Germans had shops for themselves only, to which entrance was prohibited to the Poles, and where nearly all foodstuffs were obtainable at very low prices. Their ration cards even allowed them three times more than those of the Poles. They had all facilities to get special permits and to engage in illegal commerce—that is to enrich themselves, profiting by Polish misery.

This is why Polish hatred of the *Volksdeutsche* increased day by day.

#### THE GERMAN AIMS IN POLAND

The tendency to assist and support the *Volksdeutsche* is easier to understand if one knows the German aims concerning Poland. They were settled by Governor-General Frank as follows:

1. The Nazis will establish in Poland their citadel for centuries.
2. The Germans will never leave the country. The Vistula is a German river and must remain German.
3. The Polish State will never be re-established.

#### FURTHER DESTRUCTION OF POLISH LIFE, OF OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY. THE ATTEMPT AT DISLOCATION OF NATIONAL UNITY

To attain these aims set forth by Frank the Germans continued to drag down and disorganise the Polish nation. For instance, by supporting by all possible means the existing minority and of creating a fictitious one.

They continued to destroy every trace of Poland's cultural and historical past and to ruin every opportunity of study for the Polish youth.

The public and high schools are still non-existent, in spite of German declarations to the contrary. Some training schools were open, but the lower ones only, because the Germans confess more and more frankly that in their opinion the Poles are only "work-fodder" and all higher education is useless for them.

They also continued the struggle against all cultural elements; lately it was ordered that every painter, sculptor, actor, stage manager, journalist, man of letters, musician, composer, singer, editor, bookseller, even antiquarian and photographer, had to register himself. Those who did not were no longer able to exercise their professions and those who did were spied upon by the Gestapo.

#### GERMANISATION GOES ON

But it was not enough to destroy Polish cultural and national life, it was also indispensable to set up in this country—"which must be quite Germanic"—appearances of German life. The efforts to Germanise the country, which up to the spring were relatively feeble, now began to be hurried on.

Once more the activity began with noisy propaganda. The trumpets of Dr Goebbels' assistants endeavoured to persuade the whole world that the Polish soil had always been Germanic, that Germany had fought for a thousand years to recover her ownership, that all attainments of civilisation are due to Germany. This propaganda employed every day more and more newspapers, also the wireless, cinemas, lectures, books, etc.—the whole apparatus of lies.

The propaganda did not recoil before any lie, neither



the most subtle nor the most shameless. It affirmed categorically, and did not bother about any argument as to its words.

#### POST-FACTUM ARGUMENTS

Instead of looking for these arguments in the past the Germans decided to create them in the future. And here the role of propaganda finishes, and here the rôle of the authorities in the occupied country begins. Their intention was to create proofs for the screaming propagandá.

1. They tried brutally to give the country a Germanic appearance: changing the names of towns, villages, streets, squares—even surnames—from Polish to German. Some Polish names can no longer be used: for instance if anyone said the word *Wawel* (the Polish name of the Royal Castle in Cracov) he would be fined 500 zlotys.

2. But the outward appearances are not sufficient: an artificial Germanic life has to be created. The German statistics admit that the number of *Volksdeutsche* in the Government General did not reach 1 per cent of the population. To increase this number thousands and thousands of Germans are still being settled in Poland: for instance, 62,000 in the district of Poznan only.

They are carefully separated from the Poles. *Herren-volk* must not live with the conquered people. They have special districts in the towns, special trams, special "German Houses," special hotels, cafés, restaurants, etc., special theatre performances, lectures, concerts, etc.—all to increase their Germanic feelings.

But Germanic feelings now mean Nazi feelings. That is why in every town the Party settled branches, and every branch tended to Germanise the country.

Recapitulating: in spring and summer this Germanising pressure became overwhelming:

1. Abroad: it tried to persuade the whole world that the basin of the Vistula has been for centuries German territory.

2. Inside the country: it destroyed the last traces of Polish life and tried to set up instead a fictitious German life.

#### THE POLISH PEOPLE IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER

What was the reaction of the Polish people? What had it lately to suffer?

From all that has been said about the period of spring and summer one can note:

1. The terror increased on account of the Western offensive. The Germans tried to terrify the Poles and so to ensure themselves from eventual attack from the rear.

2. Man-hunting, deportations of thousands and thousands of people to Germany, reached an inconceivable figure. The Poles began to be no longer human, but hunted beasts. This was the most characteristic sign of the spring and summer period.

3. Poverty and misery ravaged the country more and more every day.

4. Abuses and speculations of the *Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche*, army, officials, etc., oppressed the population heavily.

5. Overwhelming Germanising action was spread throughout the country. This was the second characteristic sign of this period.

This is a summary of what the nation had lately to suffer. Its heroism, its moral force, its ability to resist have been mentioned many times in former chapters. But it must be said once more that, in the oppressed country, the people's characters grew stronger with suffering, that there were no desertions, no treachery. Every class of the nation—peasants, labourers, professional class people,

gentry, clergy, etc., etc.—all equally stuck to their posts to the end.

It is necessary to underline the fact that even after the collapse of France, which was a terrible blow for the Poles, there was no movement, no tendency, to collaborate with the conquerors. And after such a grievous, crushing, and unexpected blow this tendency would have been perfectly comprehensible.

The spiritual heroism which the Polish nation showed in this moment was a tacit expression—the only possible one—of a vote of confidence in the Polish Government in London, the expression of willingness to carry on this most difficult fight in Polish history, the expression of unbroken belief in victory.

#### GERMAN OPINION OF POLISH RESISTANCE

The best testimony to Polish resistance is the opinion of a high German official who said to a Swiss in Berlin: "Till now we always found in every conquered country groups of people who, for their own profit, or sincere conviction, consented to collaborate with us. Only in Poland we could not find anybody for this purpose. Neither terror nor *sui generis* bribery could change the attitude of the Poles. Against such inflexibility we are powerless. It is not possible to organise a country really well without any help from the inhabitants. That is why in Government General there still exists the chaos which so much irritates the authorities in Berlin.

"The Führer gave up any plan for a buffer state or protectorate. A nation with such a strong feeling of liberty and such a power of resistance cannot be subjugated or broken in, it can only be smashed and wiped off the face of the earth. If not—it will remain an eternal danger."

These authentic words of a German, words half full of hate and half of admiration, are the best proof of the valour shown by the Polish people, there in their unfortunate country, where suffering forged character, where suffering forged a hitherto unknown unity, where, in spite of every persecution, the belief that, "As long as we live Poland shall not perish," becomes still more strong.

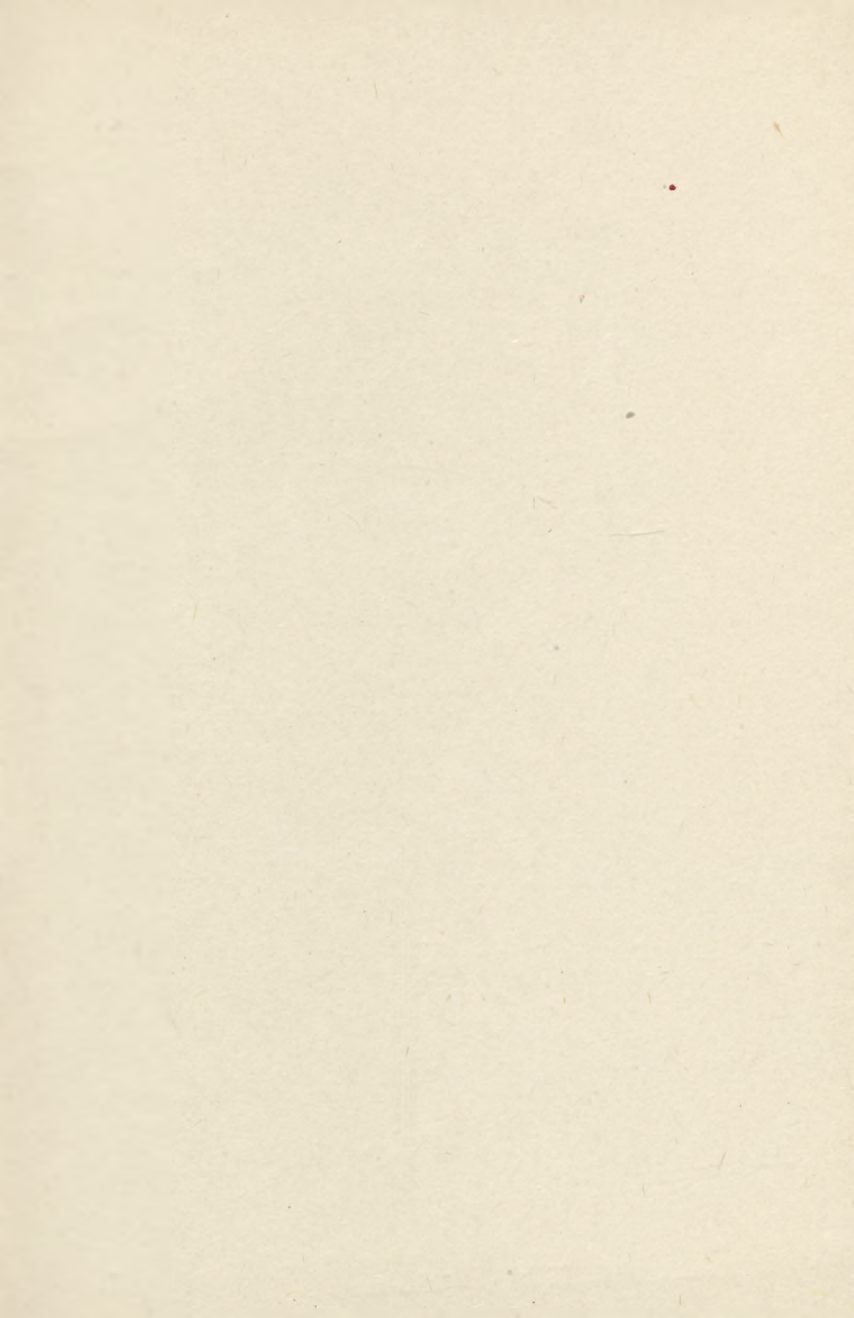
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This is a picture summarising the results which followed the treacherous attack of the modern Huns against Poland, a picture of most brutal methods of rule, still applied by the conquerors.



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