

## EUGENIA KRASSOWSKA

The second day of the trial

**Expert Witness, Deputy Minister of Education Krassowska, 36 years old, residing in Warsaw, Asfaltowa Street 3, no relationship to the parties.**

**Presiding Judge:** – You have been summoned here as an expert witness in the field of the destruction of education. In your opinion, what was the aim of the education system instituted by the occupant in the Polish territory?

**Expert Witness Krassowska:** – In describing that aim, I would like to refer to and slightly extend the claim made a moment ago by Prosecutor Sawicki. The education system undoubtedly aimed to relegate the Polish nation to the lowest cultural level. However, more was at stake. The goal was to create a situation which would make it impossible for the nation's creative forces to be reborn, for regeneration to take place. The physical destruction of education workers and the destruction of the cultural heritage alone didn't determine the capacity for regeneration. The creation of an education system which pushed the Polish nation to the level of a working force, and which pushed that nation to the stage at which it was impossible to develop the brainpower for any form of a national economy, was the only thing that would exclude the possibility of raising up not only creators of culture, but also consumers of culture. This way, the demand for cultural goods actually decreased. I can see the evidence for that both in the education system itself, and in the methods of execution.

The education system aimed, first of all, to completely disband all universities and all units that allowed didactic and research work, and second of all, to completely disband secondary education, which made it impossible to develop brainpower even at the secondary level. Two-year preparatory courses for vocational schools, which were an ersatz form of secondary education of a kind, were completely disbanded during the 1942/43 school year. Since that time, even this ersatz form of secondary education didn't exist anymore. Teacher-training schools were completely disbanded – thus, even secondary education was in fact condemned to being disbanded in a more distant future. What is more, the teachers from the disbanded secondary schools were forbidden to teach in primary schools for fear of increasing those schools' standards. That is the system – the education regime.

Next, the education standard. The principles we've heard expressed in Frank's diary [read during the trial] were used deliberately, the principles for achieving the lowest standard. All general-education, illuminating subjects were removed from the primary school – history and geography were removed, and the education was in fact limited to reading, writing, and understanding orders.

It is indicative that teaching German was initially permitted, but it was disbanded after several months, since it provided the possibility of social advancement. Polish people shouldn't know German.

Vocational training went through several stages during its development in the course of the occupation. The direction was clear, namely, the continuous decrease of its standard, reducing the education to the level of strictly technical information. They weren't even supposed to be technicians or salesmen, just the assistant workforce. The method was to reduce the time of education in the first-level secondary schools, that is, corresponding to our *gimnazja*, to three, four, and then to two years. What is more, the number of hours for workshop labor in factories was constantly increased, which in fact eliminated the possibility of studying theory. In additional training schools, which were the most popular, studying was also reduced to six or eight hours instead of the mandatory twelve hours a week. In vocational schools, all general-education subjects were removed, and the study of the native language was limited to sales correspondence.

What was extremely interesting in the case of vocational schools was the fact that such a subject as physical education was removed. The aim was not only to prevent intellectual development, but also to inhibit physical development.

Those are very general principles that resulted in an extremely low standard in official schools, stated, as a matter of fact, also in German reports.

Apart from that, I would like to stress one more thing: the close collaboration of the vocational school with the *Arbeitsamtem*, labor offices. The collaboration drew the young people away from school so much that it in fact disorganized the education and reduced it to practical learning of the trade. The students were already being exploited in German factories as they were still learning. That's aside from the constant roundups which intensified the deportation of young people to work in Germany. In 1943, a special ordinance

was even given, interrupting the education in the higher classes of industrial schools mid-year because the students were to be sent to German workshops. Furthermore, there were attempts to reduce the education in the two-year course to one year and a half, or even to terminate it. Interestingly, it was only an intervention in Kraków that led to the revocation of the local authorities' ordinance. I would like to draw particular attention to this fact: an intervention in Kraków led to the revocation of the local authorities' ordinance.

That would be all concerning the most general schooling framework and the attitude towards it. I'll add that the execution of the compulsory education was in fact suspended, which meant that young people were condemned to illiteracy, and what's more, young people over the age of fourteen were forbidden to enter schools.