

HELENA SIEŃKO

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Class 7

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My wartime experiences. The attack of the Germans on the Polish partisans

One day of the whole war has stuck in my memory the most. It was in April, Good Friday, 1944. Around 9:00 a.m. we heard loud shots. We learned that they were coming from a neighboring village four kilometers away, just outside the forest. Everyone was very sad because they knew that there was going to be some evil; [they were saddened] all the more because, after all, the feasts of the Resurrection were coming, [which] are supposed to bring joy [and not] pain.

The shooting lasted a long time. Finally, around noon, black smoke rose into the skies. The shots began to quieten. Later, we saw partisans fleeing the forest, heading in the opposite direction. Pale, exhausted, hot, and bloody, they asked for shelter, for help from death at the hands of the German invaders. Then I was squeezed by a great regret in my heart that the enemy was destroying Poles in such a way.

In the afternoon we learned that Polish partisans were quartered in the village of Pawlin. The Germans tracked them down by accident, drove their cars down, and started a bloody, terrible fight with them. The partisans defended themselves until noon, and in the afternoon they withdrew because more and more Germans were coming every hour, while the partisans' numbers were getting smaller.

Usually, the Germans held the village to account, but this time they ended up in this fight and only one building was burned down. Most of the partisans were killed or seriously injured. The Germans killed the wounded in their barbaric custom, and in the evening they left. At night, the friends of the dead buried them, and the next day people went to see the place where so many of our Polish brothers who were striving for the freedom of Poland had died.