



TEOFIL WOJEŃSKI

Warsaw, June 1946. Deputy Prosecutor Zofia Rudziewicz interviewed the person specified below as a witness. Having been advised of the criminal liability for making false declarations, the witness testified as follows:

Name and surname	Teofil Wojeński
Date of birth	26 January 1890
Names of parents	Stanisław and Maria
Place of residence	Warsaw, Kruczkowskiego Street 3
Place of birth	Radomsko
Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic
Occupation	supervisor for the Warsaw Educational Region
Education	doctor of philosophy at the University of Warsaw
Criminal record	none

During the occupation, I was the head of the clandestine schooling organization in the Warsaw region; I know the relations in education at that time from firsthand experience. Schools were supervised by the education department in the district, in rural and municipal counties there were German school superintendents. In Warsaw, the school superintendent was Fuhr, a *Volksdeutsch*.

The Germans wanted to limit Poles' education and turn them into qualified workers in the service of Germany. Public schooling was limited both organizationally and with respect to the curriculum, in the following manner:



1. Almost all school buildings were seized by German authorities and for their needs. When the premises were taken over, the school equipment, for example: teaching aids, books from libraries, and so forth, was either destroyed or stolen and removed. Since there were no suitable premises, and the self-government powers were limited, the obligation to complete compulsory education could not be performed, as a result whereof a large number of children did not attend school at all.
2. The curriculum was limited to a considerable extent. Based on the regulations imposed by school superintendents acting directly or indirectly upon the district's orders, the study of the Polish language was limited to learning how to read and write. History and geography were entirely removed from the curriculum. Study of other subjects and physical education were limited to a minimum.
3. School superintendents ordered schools to surrender all previously used handbooks. It was prohibited to use them. A periodical published by Germans titled "Ster" ["Rudder"] was supposed to be the only teaching aid. It was intended to be the source of children's knowledge for the scope of all materials permitted to be taught, which obviously weakened the level of education. In its content, "Ster" was tailored to suit German needs, the children were supposed to forget their Polish identity, for example it was emphasized that they were living in the General Government [Generalne Gubernatorstwo]. This periodical was supposed to give the children the feeling that this was a long-term and permanent condition.

General secondary education was abolished altogether. In November 1939, the district authorities issued an order to close all secondary schools under the pretense of a typhus epidemic, and from then on the German authorities would not allow them to reopen, despite the efforts of schoolmasters. Only secondary vocational schools – technical, trade, sewing, and mechanics schools – were allowed to exist. The level of education in these schools was purposefully reduced by Germans as compared to the pre-war level. All general-knowledge subjects were removed; it was prohibited to teach not only geography and history, but even Polish. This was aimed at training qualified workers and craftsmen and at preventing Polish civic education. The educational system introduced by the Germans also made it impossible for Poles to pursue a scientific carrier.

Since it was impossible to get an education officially, the teachers' organization developed a system of clandestine classes. The Germans wanted to eradicate this. The Ministry of



Education is in possession of materials from which it clearly transpires that the Warsaw Gestapo tried to track down clandestine courses and had developed an entire plan for this purpose. Many teachers were arrested and sent to camps for teaching clandestine courses.

Schoolchildren were forced to perform work for the benefit of Germany: pupils of elementary schools were forced to pick herbs, collect waste, and so on. Pupils of vocational schools had to devote a part of their working time for the needs of the army in German factories.

Teachers were forced to participate in the collection of quotas. This was ordered by the *Kreishauptmänner*, in order to disgrace teachers in the public eye.

Pupils received identification cards that were supposed to protect them against round-ups. In practice, however, these cards were not always honored and it often happened that pupils were taken for forced labor and deported to the Reich.

In connection with the persecution of Polish education, it needs to be emphasized that the Germans arrested hundreds of Polish teachers, a considerable number of whom died on the spot or in camps.