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Das mehrsprachige Webportal publiziert fortlaufend Informationen zur historisch-politischen Bildung in Schulen, Gedenkstätten und anderen Einrichtungen zur Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Schwerpunkte bilden der Nationalsozialismus, der Zweite Weltkrieg sowie die Folgegeschichte in den Ländern Europas bis zu den politischen Umbrüchen 1989.

Dabei nimmt es Bildungsangebote in den Fokus, die einen Gegenwartsbezug der Geschichte herausstellen und bietet einen Erfahrungsaustausch über historisch-politische Bildung in Europa an.

The Case of Eugenia Pol

12 December 1970 was a tremendously important date for the former prisoners of the camp at the ulica Przemysłowa. It was the day Eugenia Pol was arrested, one of the most brutal supervisors at the children's camp. Why did the arm of justice not seize her earlier? It seems a just question, considering that Eugenia Pol had been living undisturbed for 25 years in her house at the ul. Chełmońska 16A in Łódź, ever since she fled after the liberation of the camp. It seems that she had very influential protection in the administration, somebody who used his or her official function to change her name in the list of inhabitants from Pol (or Pohl in the list of ethnic Germans) to Poll, thus making it difficult to trace her. Who was that mysterious protector? We shall never know.

On 2 April 1974, the trial of then 51-year-old Eugenia Pol before the Wojewodstwo court in Łódź came to an end. The accused was sentenced to 25 years in prison. The former prisoners who attended the trial were disappointed by the verdict – they had expected a life-long sentence, as it had been demanded by the state prosecutor. "Why so short? She was found guilty of several murders, among them that of Urszula Kaczmarek," Apolonia Beda complained.

Should we see Eugenia Pol as a victim of fascist, inhumane propaganda or as a cold-blooded sadist? It is important that Eugenia Pol's mental condition developed mainly during the war. When she came to work at the camp as a "supervisor", she was only 18 years old, the same age as some of the prisoners. What caused the young woman to develop such inhumane and unwomanly instincts – what made her torture small innocent children? Maybe her work at the camp – which was badly paid anyway – was her way to survive German occupation, maybe it was just a job, an ungrateful one, but nevertheless...? A young adolescent woman may have been impressed by the victorious Nazis' ideology: the culture of power, the nationalism of the supreme people.

Every morning a pretty young girl entered the camp gate and changed her civil clothes for the German uniform of a "supervisor" – ipso facto – to that of a myrmidon and executioner. Whether it was an irony of fate, an event or even an anomaly, the fact remains that after the war, Eugenia Pol took on a job as a kindergarten teacher. According to her employers, she was a very good teacher and educator! She had no children of her own and was never married.

Was it a cruel joke of fate or devilish cunning that made her take on that job? Maybe it was an attempt to hide herself – who would suspect a loving kindergarten teacher to be a sadist child murderer? Or was she trying to appease her conscience after the war? It seems that these and other

questions will never be answered. Today Eugenia Pol is almost eighty years old. The former prisoners at the Kolbe Club at the Tatrzańska think that she is still living in Łódź, probably at the Dąbrowa settlement. She was released from prison because of "good conduct". Her punishment was light, but it is said that the other Polish prison inmates gave her a hard time.

Did the crimes she witnessed and took part in cause at least a crack in her heart?