



The Polish Experience through World War II: A Better Day Has Not Come

By Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm

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The Polish Experience through World War II explores Polish history through the lives of people touched by the war. The touching and terrible experiences of these people are laid bare by straightforward, first-hand accounts, including not only the hardships of deportation and concentration and refugee camps, but also the price paid by the officers killed or taken as prisoners during WWII and the families they left behind. Ziolkowska-Boehm reveals the difficulties of these women and children when, having lost their husbands and fathers, their travails take them through Siberia, Persia, India, and then Africa, New Zealand, or Mexico.

Ziolkowska-Boehm recounts the experiences of individuals who lived through this tumultuous period in history through personal interviews, letters, and other surviving documents. The stories include Krasicki, a military pilot who was on of around 22 thousand Polish killed in Katyn; the saga of the Wartanowicz family, a wealthy and influential family whose story begins well before the war; and Wanda Ossowska, a Polish nurse in Auschwitz and other German prison camps. Placed squarely in historical context, these incredible stories reveal the experiences of the Polish people up through the second World War.

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The Polish Experience through World War II: A Better Day Has Not Come By Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

Ziolkowska-Boehm brings the reader into the hearts and souls of four women who have survived bloody massacres, hardships, deportation, and concentration camps through their oral histories. . . .A heart-wrenching book that should be read by all. (*Polish American Journal*)

Ziolkowska-Boehm's collection of deeply affecting personal and family narratives returns us to the level where individuals are caught up in historical events that changed their lives forever, and tells us how they experienced them. ... During the war years Polish women undertook many difficult tasks to preserve both their families and their nation. Their efforts and perspective are given exposure here in a way that impresses the reader hitherto unfamiliar with their achievements. Ms. Ziolkowska-Boehm is to be congratulated for making their voices heard. (*The Sarmatian Review*)

A remarkable and highly personal account of the human suffering the victims of both Hitlerism and Stalinism had to endure ... beyond comprehension of most Americans. (Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Compelling, readable, and very moving!")

In World War II the Poles suffered oppression and murder from both Nazi Germany and the USSR, which attacked their country and divided it between them in September 1939. The Wartanowicz and Michalak families were deported from former eastern Poland to Soviet labor camps near Archangel or farms in Kazakhstan. Freed after the German attack on the USSR, they left in 1942 with the Anders Army for Persia (Iran) and then scattered all over the world. Reserve Captain, Pilot Witold Krasicki was shot by the Soviets in spring 1940, along with thousands of Polish POWs and other prisoners. His family survived the German occupation in Warsaw, including the two-month Polish Home Army uprising against the Germans in 1944. Wanda Ossowska worked for the Polish resistance, survived brutal Nazi torture, three Nazi death camps, and risked her life to save a Jewish girl. In the author's interviews with the survivors and their relatives, they tell their poignant stories with vivid, personal memories of wartime life and death, as well as their lives in postwar Communist Poland or elsewhere. We should be grateful to Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm who has saved these memories for us. (Anna M. Cienciala, University of Kansas)

Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm has written on a wide variety of subjects. But she writes with particular feeling when describing, as she does in this new book, the heroism and suffering of Poles during the Second World War. These are stories that must be told—and she tells them very well, indeed. (Stanley Cloud and Lynne Olson, authors of *A Question of Honor: The Kosciuszko Squadron? Forgotten Heroes of World War II*)

These accounts of Polish family life in Russian and German camps during World War II describe people subsisting on weeds and horse heads, living sometimes in pig sties. Children watch as fathers and mothers wither and die amidst “the calm of terror.” Bodies are thrown out of running trains. Prisoners shiver in the intense cold of long winters, always hungry, amidst bedbugs that somehow survive even the coldest nights. Meet Wanda Ossowska, interrogated 57 times by the Gestapo, tortured “to the limits of her endurance,” refusing to name names. It's another time, another world, “the true valleys of death,” when even hospitals were “houses for dying”—genocide one by one, or by the thousands (as in the Katyn massacre). These evocative, descriptive accounts become terrifyingly haunting and personally intimate. (Bruce E. Johansen, University of Nebraska at Omaha)

An unforgettable picture of the martyrdom of women and children sent from Poland behind the Urals. A powerful work of art that should be read and re-read. (Karl Maramorosch, Rutgers University)

Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm tells stories that are the substance of history and of dreams. She tells the stories of individuals who are both ordinary and heroic... . The book is an easy read in spite of its spellbinding intensity. (Ewa Thompson, Rice University)

About the Author

Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm is an independent scholar and the author of twenty-three books, including *The Roots Are Polish*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nancy Baumgardner:

The actual book *The Polish Experience through World War II: A Better Day Has Not Come* has a lot associated with on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of gain. The book was authored by the very famous author. The writer makes some research prior to write this book. This particular book very easy to read you may get the point easily after looking over this book.

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