

AH
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POLAND

ESCAPES (1207)

The Flight Of A Thirteen-Year-Old Boy.

SOURCE BERLIN: A 13-year-old boy, HARDYN Władysław, born on 1 December 1939. All details about his family are known, but were deleted for security reasons, as his family is still living in Poland. Władysław was a good student and received a good school report upon graduation. He also passed an entrance examination for the gymnasium with the grades of "very good" and "good." He had to give up his plans to continue studying because of his father's sickness. This frustration of his desire to go on studying was the real motive for his flight. Source makes a very alert and intelligent impression. The way he planned his flight without the assistance of a second person indicates - particularly at his age - an extraordinary independence of thought and enterprising spirit. He seems to have been a good student and has a particularly strong ambition to continue his schooling, to learn about and experience everything.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 23 July 1953 - 28 July 1953

EVAL. COMMENT: This is an extraordinarily interesting report to be studied together with Item Nos 8610 and 8609/53, which tell the story of this energetic youngster.

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Władysław is a boy of thirteen years who until recently lived with his father and mother and two younger sisters in BYDGOSZCZ. After summer vacation began, Władysław and his two sisters were sent to visit their uncle (mother's brother) in one of the small localities in Silesia imie Kreise Walbrzych (Waldenburg.)

While visiting his uncle, Władysław had a chance to hear foreign radio broadcasts regularly. They usually listened to Radio Free Europe, in the afternoon and particularly at one o'clock in the morning (there was the least interference at this time and they had the best reception.) Władysław was particularly impressed

by the report of the flight of the Polish flyer and by the story of the flight of a boy just his age which occurred last winter.

Influenced by these reports, Wladyslaw also made the resolve to flee and seek his fortune in America where he believed and still believes that he would be given the opportunity to continue studying.

He turned to no one for advice and made preparations for his flight entirely by himself. He had heard once something about there being possibilities of smuggling oneself on a ship as a means of reaching the wide world. Thus he decided that he must first go to the sea coast. The goal of the first lap of his flight was to be SZCZECIN.

In order that his parents would not notice his disappearance too soon, thus risking being sought after, he decided to take advantage of the trip from his uncle's house back to BYDGOSZCZ, to go on to SZCZECIN. He received money from his uncle for his trip home to BYDGOSZCZ, plus some pocket money, and let them give him generous food provisions for the trip. Since his sisters were to stay in the uncle's place for a longer period, he took only a part of his belongings with him. His sisters were supposed to bring the rest of his things home later.

He bought a train ticket to SZCZECIN and on July 22 travelled through WROCLAW, POZNAN, to SZCZECIN, arriving at SZCZECIN early in the morning on July 23. From there he bought a ticket to ODRA-PORT. In order to cross over to SWINEMUENDE on a ferry, one had to have a special permit (przepustka) as SWINEMUENDE is in the border district. Wladyslaw did not have this. Twice he tried to board the ferry without this permit, but in vain, as the military guards kept a close check. He waited until a new batch of guards came on duty. This time they were more indulgent. One could let a little boy onto the ferry even without a permit, since he "had his heart set on seeing SWINEMUENDE." When Wladyslaw reached SWINEMUENDE, he walked along the sea shore for a while and quite a distance from the shore he came upon the barbed wire entanglements of the border, which he crawled

under at about six o'clock in the late afternoon of 23 July. He was in the DNR near AHLBECK.

As it was raining, he spent the first night in an empty freight car and then began marching westward, after informing himself as to which direction to take "to BERLIN" by looking at a map posted in one of the suburbs of AHLBECK. He spent his second night about eight kilometers from WOLGAST out on a field, and the third night in a hay stack a little ways beyond ANKLAM. When he woke up it was raining and also his food provisions were exhausted. He decided to look for the nearest farm house. Wladyslaw speaks no German at all and had a hard time making himself understood, but was lucky in falling into the hands of kind and helpful people. The family found a neighbor who could speak Polish and with the help of this interpreter, he was able to tell his story. They gave him food, a place to sleep, washed his clothing and collected some money for him. On the next day the helpful German farmer travelled with Wladyslaw to BERLIN. They took a train to East BERLIN, spent the night in a railroad station, and on the next day Wladyslaw walked across the sector border.

End.