

*The patriotism of Polish students under Prussian rule at the turn of the 19th
and 20th centuries in memoirs and fiction*

Summary

During the second half of the 19th century, the authorities of the German Empire started implementing the process of the total Germanisation of Poles under the Prussian rule. Germanisation of schools was to play the key role in the process. The Polish language was systematically eliminated from school programmes, and German was introduced in its place. In school, the students were brutally punished if they communicated in Polish. The school falsified or concealed important Polish historical events and tried to raise Polish children and young people as loyal Prussian citizens. However, Polish students did not give in to the pressure. Despite bans and the policy of repression, they continued to use the Polish language in school. They withstood Prussian indoctrination and nurtured the Polish national spirit which they had learnt from their families, as well as the Catholic faith. They tried to learn about the true history of Poland. When school authorities ordered that prayers and religious education take place in German, the children objected with school strikes. The greatest number of the strikes took place throughout parts of Poland under the Prussian rule in 1901 and 1906. The children from Września in Wielkopolska in 1901 showed the greatest determination. Despite being tortured by their German teachers, they remained faithful to the Polish identity and Catholic faith. The generation of students who were to undergo Germanisation not only did not give in to it, but also contributed substantially to the Poland's ability to regain independence in 1918.

Keywords: the Prussian Partition in the 19th and 20th centuries, children and students in the 19th and 20th centuries, defending Polishness in the 19th and 20th centuries, school strikes in the 19th and 20th centuries.