

MARIE PĚTROŠOVÁ (1919 – 1942)

Marie was born in 1919 and raised in the Czech-Silesian town Frýdek. After graduation from a housekeeping academy, she worked as a dressmaker. Due to her delicate appearance he was nicknamed “toothpick“.

Together with her father Emil Pětroš, a train conductor, she took part in the Czechoslovak resistance.



From March to August 1939 she was involved in illegally guiding civilians and soldiers across the Czechoslovak-Polish border, most often using the mountainous landscape in the Beskydy Mountains. Maria's whole family was involved, her father and her aunt for example accommodated the people before crossing the border. In only one week, from 12 to 18 June 1939, Maria managed to help 30 soldiers escape, until the *Gestapo* started to look for her. It took a while for them to find out her identity. On 18 August 1939, she was arrested by the Gestapo. She was 19 at that time. During the investigation, she acted like a naive girl who liked walking in nature and didn't know about any illegal activities. She was released after a short time.

Five months later she was arrested again. But this time she was pregnant. Despite numerous attempts during investigations and being tortured, she refused to denounce the other members of the resistance. The investigators described her as an arrogant and rude person. As she was pregnant, it wasn't possible to send her to a concentration camp but the *Gestapo* was extremely interested in her behaviour and activities because they didn't believe her and only a lack of evidence made them release her again.

She gave birth to her daughter Milena eleven days after she had been released. She was very weak. On 25 June 1940, another seven weeks later, she was arrested for the third time. She was considered a very dangerous person that continued working in the resistance. It was urgent for the *Gestapo* to get rid of her very quickly. So, Marie was deported to the concentration camp in Ravensbrück. Her child, Milena, stayed and was raised by Maria's parents.

Her parents tried to help their daughter but their effort wasn't successful. On 7 December 1940 Marie arrived at Ravensbrück where she sewed military uniforms. She got weaker because of her poor health, hard work and bad conditions in the camp. She was thinking of her little daughter all the time - she wrote fairy-tales and drew pictures for her. She created a booklet as a birthday present for her daughter.

In 1942 she became seriously ill (meningitis, tuberculosis) and on 17 April 1942 she died. Her family was informed about her death three weeks later.

Story on **MARIE PĚTROŠOVÁ**,

composed by students Hana (CZ), Marinella (GR), Marie W. (GE).

A letter to my daughter

Dear Milena,

I am writing this letter to your future self because I can't be with you to see you grow up.

How are you doing? Did your grandparents take good care of you? Do you live alone or have you found someone? I am curious to know how your life developed during the years when I couldn't be there. Along with my letter I send some pictures for you and some very nice fairy-tales. Hope you enjoy them as much as I do.

I am currently living far away from home. Bad people arrested me for doing good things and now I need to suffer for doing what I did. But it will be alright, I promise.

The story of my life is pretty adventurous. I helped other people escape from our country to Poland. It was a very good feeling - because I was doing something good. They arrested me for this "crime" three times.

If you get into trouble, don't forget that you can always play a little silly woman, it can help you a lot. They have done horrible things to me, just to prove me guilty of that little "crime" of mine.

Right now I am a bit sick from this place, mentally and physically, too, but I keep thinking of you - this helps a lot.

I wish the best of luck to your life. May it be filled with love and joy. Always remember to be truthful and kind. Especially to yourself. And don't forget other people who are in need.

With love

Marie, your mother