

TERESA MALCZEWSKA

Class 7

Sławatycze

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My wartime experiences

I was only seven years old when the war broke in 1939 and I didn't care about anything except running and playing. I didn't understand anything of the tragedy our country was going through. With curiosity and interest, I watched the German tanks and cars filled with soldiers, not realizing that we had been enslaved and that those soldiers were our enemies and persecutors.

I only understood that in the second year, when they started catching the younger people for labor and carrying them off to Germany. I have three older sisters and now they had to stay hidden all the time. As the youngest, I kind of ran around, but really I was watching the street to see if there was some sort of roundup coming.

Watching didn't help... One day my oldest sister Kostunia was taken even though the whole family cried and shouted. Not even a few weeks had passed when they took away my two middle sisters, Tola and Kazia. I can't describe what was happening at home then! I couldn't sit still at home. It seemed to me like some terrible plague had visited us and killed my sisters. I cried with my parents. Then I understood everything that was happening around us.

After a few days, my two sisters Tola and Kazia came back – the plucky girls had slipped through the Germans' fingers and escaped from the train. I was very happy they had returned, but the distress and the pain that I suffered after they were taken will stay in my memory forever as the worst experience of the war.