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Class 7

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Memories from the Second World War

On 1 June 1944 the German criminals came to Bełżyce to arrange a roundup. They surrounded the town quietly during the night. The hateful thieves showed their helmets at dawn. We went outside and saw them among the crops. When it got brighter, the Germans started to go from house to house in groups and began taking both old and young men. They were rushing these calm to the market square like criminals. Once there, they started checking IDs and dividing people into three groups. One was released, the second one was cuffed and packed onto a truck like a herd of animals, then taken to a prison, the third was taken to Majdanek to work. When they left with the taken fathers, sons and mothers, a great sadness set in. Only the enemy was happy. Even greater sadness set in when one week later the Germans brought in 24 men and executed them near the pharmacy. One of them was only wounded and later escaped. When the Germans left, people ran to the execution site. Mothers were looking for their sons, wives – for their husbands. The deceased were recognized only by their clothes, as their bodies had been tortured beyond recognition. I saw my neighbor, who was later brought home. He looked terrible. His chest was torn open, he had pins under his fingernails, his legs were mutilated, and he was bruised all over. His mother fainted when she saw her son in such state. Today, the place where blood of my innocent countrymen was spilt is a sacred memorial for us. A birch cross, surrounded with greenery and decorated with flowers, stands there as a sign of their suffering. We gather there on the day of national memorials and strengthen our spirit.