



LUDMIŁA BAUER

Ludmiła Bauer, born on 28 January 1922 in Lida.

On 19 March 1940, my father was arrested for engaging in welfare work as a member of various organizations active on the territory of Poland. On 13 April of the same year I, my mother and my siblings were deported to northern Kazakhstan.

The wagons, known in Russian as *tieplushki* [heated goods wagons], were overloaded with luggage and people. Due to the poor sanitary conditions, there was an outbreak of dysentery. Since I was seriously ill, I was separated from my family and left in hospital. When they discharged me from hospital, I didn't know what to do with myself, for I didn't know where my family was. Finally, after a few days – hungry and exhausted – I found them. Obviously, being a young girl, I was ordered to work in the forest at the *lesopoval* [a tree-felling area].

On 1 September 1940 [1941] the Soviet authorities declared that we were free citizens and that Polish Army units were being formed on the territory of the USSR. We, being the youngest, moved out first. But luck was not on our side! In Tchkalovo the male Polish youths were detached from our group and sent to Buzuluk, while we, the young girls – mainly secondary school students – were taken to a labor camp. The camp was organized in Uzbek kolkhozes. We worked digging a canal, all the while exposed to various proposals made by our “employers”. We trembled at the very thought of nightfall, nominally our time of rest. The drunken Uzbeks would smash our windows and try to break down the door, doing their utmost to get into the barrack. Obviously, we put up resistance. They took their revenge by refusing to give us the 400 grams of flour that we were supposed to receive after finishing work. Finally, one night, we ran away and traveled on foot to the quarters of the 7th Infantry Division.



The question suggests itself: why was my father arrested, and I and my entire family deported? Only because we were Poles. The Soviets wanted to destroy the Polish nation, disperse us throughout the USSR, so that we would submit to their authority and forget about our country, our Homeland.

My family, that is my father, mother and sister, have remained in the USSR under very difficult material conditions.