



JADWIGA CHMIELEWSKA

War Hospital no 3

8 March 1943

On 13 April 1940, the NKVD deported me from Nieśwież, as I was an officer's wife. I worked up until the last day as a teacher in the Nieśwież secondary school.

I travelled in a cattle wagon for ten days, together with 28 other people who were also sentenced to deportation, and during this time we were deprived of water and were not allowed to leave the wagon. After ten days of agony, we arrived in a small Kazakh aul near Petropavlovsk, where we learned that we were to work as farm laborers.

From dawn to dusk, we were forced to perform hard work, either in the fields or in the barns. If anyone – even an old or sick person – evaded work, he or she was denied their food ration. Eleven of us lived in an awful mud hut, the old and the young all together, so it was impossible to get some rest after a long day's work. When we finished work in the fields, we were forced to log the woods. We had to work despite physical exhaustion, and women were forced to perform tasks which were a great strain even on seasoned male workers.

Until the amnesty was proclaimed, I had to bear the torment of overwork, hunger, cramped conditions and primitive, animal-like life. To every enquiry concerning our most basic needs, the NKVD would either not respond at all or respond with offensive [illegible].

Following the amnesty I left for Buzuluk, where on 25 October 1941 I was admitted to the army. I was assigned to the 9th Infantry Division in Margilan, where I worked as an education officer.

I left for Persia with the first wave of emigration. In Tehran I completed a Polish Red Cross course and served my internship in a civilian hospital. Then I worked as a Polish Red Cross nurse in Evacuation Camp no 1, where we received the second wave of emigration. When Evacuation Camp no 1 was dissolved, I was assigned to War Hospital no 3, where I work now.