

Tuesday, 29 May 1934

29 May 1934, the school playground of Eliza Orzeszkowa Girls Grammar School in Wilno. Tuesday morning, first lesson. It is warm, almost summer. The students stood under the net, around Bohdziewicz, their professor. They are taking their A-levels in a week's time. Fifteen years later only one of them was alive - the short, stocky girl, the third from the right. The girl sitting sideways on the left, clasping her knees and smiling, a little artificially, is her closest friend. In five years' time, she will be killed by a Soviet bayonet in Grodno. She was a teacher and did not leave her students defending the city. The others – forced exile, Kazakhstan, Siberia, clandestine resistance, forest, ghetto, Ponary. The teacher died in a raid near Oszmiana in 1949. After ten years of clandestine resistance and guerrilla, and five years after the second entry of the Soviets. They broke through the raid, NKVD was closing the loop. He hid in a drainage culvert. They did not find him, but the passing Soviet soldier threw a grenade into the narrow culvert opening. This girl, the only one who survived in 1939, volunteered for live torpedoes. She was short, athletic. In the army recruiting command in Wilno, when her application was accepted, and all students from her year of study at the Stefan Batory University came forward, she was ordered to sit in something like a small wooden cage. She had to try on the dimensions of the cabin; whether she would fit. She did not make it to Gdynia; she was not able to do any training. The youth clandestine movement under the first Soviet occupation followed, then the Home Army – she was a secretary in the staff of General Wilk's staff – after the "Ostra Brama", the forest. In 1945, evacuation to central Poland. She never talked about her clandestine activity until the end of her life.