



MARIA GOŁĄB

Maria Gołąb, platoon commander, born in Wołyń on 8 September 1902, married.

When the War broke out in 1939, I was in Wołyń, where my husband's regiment was stationed. Being the wife of a military man and a member of the gentry, I was forced to hide together with my under-age son.

We were persecuted from the first days of the Soviet occupation. My flat was completely plundered and demolished, and I was forbidden to live in my own house. I had to remove my boy from secondary school, for the children of Polish Army officers were oppressed. In January 1941 I left for Lwów, where I somehow survived a very heavy winter. The day of the plebiscite was drawing near, and we were constantly instructed as to how to vote (and threatened with consequences if we failed to comply or turn up). The poll was held on 19 March 1941, but I was sick that day. Three armed policemen came to my flat at 10.00 p.m. and took me to the voting station by force. I was compelled to drop a ballot paper into the box in their presence. At 4.00 a.m. on 27 June 1941, I and my son were arrested by the NKVD and subsequently deported to North Ural, to the settlement of *Ust-łowka*, 54th quarter, *Zajenskij* District; the Soviets declared that we had been resettled there for life. After a few weeks, when my son refused to go to the Russian school, I was detained and put in prison, where I received food once a day and was summoned for interrogations (usually at night) every few hours. When after a week of this treatment I refused to testify, they started threatening me, but by then I was indifferent to their attempts at intimidation.

I was released from prison after nine weeks and sent back to the settlement, where I performed hard physical labor in the forests and fields. The Soviets kept repeating that I would die together with my son, "*that accursed Pole*".



After the so-called “amnesty for Poles” in 1941, I was informed by the Polish Embassy in Moscow that I should report to Buzuluk; I did so immediately, and enlisted in the Polish Army.

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