



MARIAN CIEPLIK

1. Personal data:

Cadet Sergeant Marian Cieplik, born on 24 February 1894, elementary school teacher (schools superintendent), married.

2. Arrest:

6 December 1939. Reason: Polish nationality, suspected membership in Polish military organizations.

3. Name of the camp, prison:

Prisons in Buczacz and Czortków, deportation for forced labor to Ural, Sverdlovsk Oblast, Beryozovsky region, Pyshma [illegible], quarter 38.

4. Description of the camp:

Crude, wooden building, deplorable housing conditions (bugs and lice).

5. The composition of exiles:

Poles and Jews. Category of crimes: the Poles were imprisoned for membership in Polish organizations or as former soldiers. The women – as wives of regular officers. The Jews from Germany were kept on charges of espionage, and the Jews from Poland for attempting to cross the border.

Intellectual level: some intelligentsia, some half-educated persons, and some illiterate. The members of the intelligentsia included priests (Jesuits) – Father Haniewski and Father Wacław Kołodziejczyk – and an elementary school teacher, Antoni Pankiewicz, a teacher from Katowice with a wife and two daughters.

The women included: Aniela Łubieńska, the wife of a regular cavalry captain with her children and mother Leonia Potocka; Jadwiga Lewicka, the wife of a military physician from



Jarosław; Anna Zarembina, the mother of the chief director of the State Monopoly from Warsaw (a paralytic).

The intelligentsia had an unwavering faith in regaining freedom and victory. We held secret meetings to talk about Poland and current events. People helped one another in need and also at work. The priests celebrated Mass on Sundays, holidays, and national commemorative days. These services were attended only by the intelligentsia, as the others couldn't be trusted – there were cases where the NKVD was informed about the meeting place, and then the NKVD would storm in, interrupt the Mass and hold the priests responsible.

6. Camp life:

The daily routine varied, as it depended on the time of year. In summer we began work as early as at 4.00 a.m., sometimes 6.00 a.m., and in winter at 7.00 a.m. In summer we worked for twelve hours, and in winter for eight. The working conditions were very hard. We logged the woods to obtain timber for use as building material and firewood. We collected resin and conducted earth works. We received very low remuneration, for instance for felling a tree, cutting it into 8.5 meter long pieces, burning thin branches and putting the thicker ones aside, two people could earn 40 kopecks. As regards incising the bark to obtain resin secreted by the trees, one had to make two incisions each in 3,200 trees in order to earn some four rubles. The food was meager, completely devoid of fat, and consisted of half a liter of runny barley soup or four–six tablespoons of groats. As for bread, we received from 40 to 60 decagrams per person.

7. The NKVD's attitude towards Poles:

The NKVD was very hostile towards the Poles. Very often we had to attend night meetings, where the NKVD or the militia chief would proclaim that we would remain in exile to the end of our days, and that we would never set eyes on Poland again. "You must work and die here. This is your home and your grave." Lagging behind at work was punished with *katorga* [penal labor] or death. Only those who ran a temperature of at least 39 degrees could be exempted from work. A temperature of 38 degrees didn't entitle one to skip work. This applied both to the men and the women. Punishment depended on the whim or mood of a given NKVD officer. A jail was available on site. It was a dark, windowless little cell, where one had to stay



from three to ten days. Prisoners could also be tried by the court, which would first impose a fine, and then sentence the individual in question to three–six months in prison. We didn't receive any clothes, and the Russian authorities didn't organize any cultural life whatsoever. Interrogations took place at night and usually lasted until dawn. After the interrogation one had to go to work, and then was interrogated again when the next night came; in this way, they wanted to extort a confession of guilt.

8. Medical assistance, hospitals, mortality rate:

The medical assistance was limited to a simple diagnosis of whether one was sick or not. The examination was conducted by a woman who had never even been a nurse. Once in every six months a medical board would arrive to determine whether the prisoners were fit to work, but all results were positive.

The following people died in the camp: 1. Maria Paszkiewicz, 42 years old, the wife of the teacher from Katowice; 2. Anna Zarembina, 65 years old, a resident of Warsaw; 3. Father Haniewski, Jesuit, a theology professor from Krakow; 4. Jesuit Friar Górski, 55 years old; 5. Ewa Łubieńska, 5 years old, a soldier's daughter.

9. Was there any possibility to get in contact with one's country and family?

We could exchange correspondence with the parts of Poland occupied by the Russians and the Germans, but to a limited degree.

10. When were you released and how did you manage to join the army?

I was released on 20 November 1941. I was called up to the Polish Army by the Polish Delegation in Bukhara, and conscripted on 13 February 1942 in Kermine.