



BOLESŁAW FENC

Second lieutenant Bolesław Fenc, deputy station master at the Poznań Locomotive Shed, 41 years old, married, 101st Workshop Company.

My family and I were deported to northern Ural on the night of 28 to 29 June 1940. Along with a group of 150 people, we were settled in a village in the woods near Sverdlovsk. We were lodged in wooden barracks. Jewish craftsmen and Jewish merchants made up the majority of those with whom I was there. There were also several Polish civil servant families, two Jesuit priests and four Jesuit monks. We were all subjected to forced labor. Consequently, all the people who were able to work, both men and women, had to perform heavy physical labor. Initially, those who evaded their work obligations were punished by the commandant of the settlement with arrest, while once absenteeism decrees had taken effect, they stood trial and received the same punishments as Soviet citizens.

Our work depended on the season of the year. From May to October we would collect resin, and from October to May we would clear forests. The work quotas were set very high, especially for those who weren't accustomed to doing any heavy physical labor. As a result, our earnings were very poor. The life of those who were deprived of any help from outside was very difficult. The money they earned wasn't enough to pay for their food rations.

Our settlement's commandant was the only contact we had with the NKVD. Throughout the time I spent in the village, there were two or three special meetings, the NKVD being involved in their organization, at which we were told that we should forget about our past life, that Poland would never be restored, and that it was necessary for us to discharge all our tasks as conscientiously as we could. Our work, we were told, was our only salvation. Only by doing it really well could we hope to be given a chance to work in our chosen professions.



There was always a female feldsher in our village. Having little experience, this woman offered us some emergency assistance. Those who required serious medical attention were sent either to the health center or to the hospital in the city of Berezovka. A woman called Paszkiewicz died because our feldsher, lacking relevant experience, was too slow in diagnosing the disease from which the woman was suffering as pneumonia.

I corresponded with my wife's family members, who remained in the home country, until the outbreak of the war between Germany and the Soviet Union.

My family and I were released on 28 August 1941. Upon my release, I moved to the nearby city where I worked first as a driver, and then as a mechanic.

At the end of 1941, I went to Samarkand, where in February 1942, following the announcement of the mobilization, I joined the army.

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