

## WŁADYSŁAW MARYNOWICZ

### 1. Personal details (rank, surname, names, number of field post office, age, occupation, marital status):

Private Władysław Marynowicz, aged 22, high school student, bachelor, Paiforce 120.

### 2. Date and circumstances of arrest or deportation:

13 April 1940 in Kamionka Strumiłowa [now Kamianka-Buzka, Ukraine] (Tarnopol Voivodeship). At night I was woken up by an armed NKVD group; they carried out a thorough search of the flat (to no effect). I was deported in a convoy with my mother, brother, and sister.

### 3. Name of the camp, settlement, prison, or forced labor site:

Chorne settlement, Goloshchekin sovkhoz [state-owned agricultural estate] no. 23, Lebyazhe Raion, Pavlodar Oblast, Kazakh SSR.

### 4. Description of the camp, prison, settlement, etc. (grounds, buildings, living conditions, hygiene):

My sovkhoz is located on an extensive area of Siberian steppe on the Irtysh River. On some maps, these places are marked as "starvation steppes." The ruins of settlements – traces of famine – are evidence of how appropriate this name is. In the empty crumbling mud huts you can still find human skeletons. They are the outcome of the famine of 1927-1931, which the Soviet authorities haven't managed to remove or hide yet. The empty steppe stretches as far as the eye can see, with strips of arable land across it here and there. The local population lives in small wooden and clay cabins, and some families even live in holes dug in the ground.

### 5. Composition of POWs, prisoners, and deportees (nationality, category of crime, intellectual and moral level, mutual relations, etc.):

In the sovkhoz there were about 200 Polish families, deported as families of "political criminals." The Poles accounted for nearly 70 percent, 20 percent were Jews, and 10 percent were Ukrainians. The majority were [illegible] and some prosperous peasants, *kulaks*

[illegible], families of grade crossing attendants, foresters, policemen, manor farm stewards, etc. [illegible] as "oppressors" of the peasants and workers of *panskaya Polsha* ["lordly Poland," a derisive expression common in communist propaganda at that time]. The mutual relations among the deportees were very positive; families helped one another, together struggling with the hardships of life. There was unity and agreement. We fought to eradicate toadying to the Soviet authorities.

**6. Life in the camp, prison, etc. (the course of an average day, working conditions, quotas, remuneration, food, social and cultural life):**

In the sovkhoz we worked hard as earthwork staff, in smithies, in carpenter's shops, in agriculture, etc. The women grazed sheep, built mud huts, or worked in the field. There were times when they were all busy preparing fuel for the winter. What we called "fuel" was dried sheep dung, accumulated in the form of large piles. As for me, at first I worked as a *czarnoroboczy* [unskilled worker], and after completing a course for tractor drivers I drove a tractor. This was menial work, in which, as a Pole, I was exploited. Meeting the quota was out of the question. The tractors were already old and worn out; they often [broke down]. A fuel (oil) quota was established for a particular number of hectares, and you had to cover the cost of additional propellant material at your own expense. Naturally, fuel quotas were established at such a level that you paid out of your own pocket all the time. If they decided that you had plowed the assigned plot of land inadequately, you had to plow it again, at your own expense. If you protested, you were stigmatized as an enemy of the people and you were [sent] in for jail. Polish tractor drivers had no choice because the only person who could exempt you from tractor work was the medical assistant, who didn't care at all about the Poles' health. We worked in the steppe in very hard conditions. Sometimes it happened that there was nowhere to accommodate the Poles [illegible] agricultural work in some branches of the sovkhoz because all the buildings were occupied by the camp's cattle and tractors. In that case, we slept in straw-padded holes that we dug in the ground ourselves. We went to work in the morning, long before sunrise. The lunch break lasted approximately half an hour. We returned to the base at night, only to listen to threats and complaints from the authorities for a long time afterwards. Due to the cold, we slept with our clothes on.

**7. Attitude of NKVD authorities to the Poles (methods of interrogation, torture, punishments, communist propaganda, information about Poland, etc.):**

The NKVD authorities gave us a treatment marked by harassment and scheming. They were strongly hostile towards Poles. As a Pole, you were formally [illegible] to your work, and you were supposed to notify the authorities each time you moved away. If you went to see a doctor when you were ill and didn't get a sick leave because your fever didn't exceed 39 degrees, you were sentenced for *progul* [absence from work] to six months of forced labor, hard and unpaid. Being late for work was often punished with imprisonment. Communism was propagated at every turn, particularly among the children, who were taken away to schools organized especially for this purpose. The Poles were blatantly exploited.

**8. Medical assistance, hospitals, mortality (give the names of those who died):**

The person providing medical care in our sovkhos was an old medical assistant, running a primitive *bolnitsa* [hospital], where he admitted very seriously ill Poles. There were hardly any medicines. What made you exempt from work was total exhaustion and malaria, which meant temporary rest at the *bolnitsa*. Mortality among the Poles was very high. They usually died of tuberculosis (like my sister Jadwiga). The stay in Russia left its mark on many of us in the form of consequences of pneumonia, scurvy, dysentery, flu, etc. Everyone, without exception, suffered from rheumatism. While I stayed at the sovkhos, more than 30 Poles died in one and a half years. I suppose all of them have died by now.

**9. What kind of contact, if any, was there with your country and family?**

I maintained correspondence with the country only in the first months.

**10. When were you released and how did you make it to the Polish Army?**

I was released in September 1941 under the July agreement [the Sikorski–Mayski Agreement of 30 July 1941]. Due to the difficulties caused by the Soviet authorities, I did not make it to the army until February 1942, after a stay in a kolkhoz [collective-owned farm] in southern Kazakhstan.

Encampment, 16 March 1943