



ADAMCZYK KAROL

The 6th tank unit

I was arrested on 19 September 1939 at the train station, being a railway stationmaster. The arrest was carried out by the NKWD task force that arrived in Brzeżany on an armored train.

After being led out of my flat, I and my family (my wife and four children) were put in front of an execution squad. I was given three minutes to indicate the weapons warehouse and hidden soldiers. They threatened to kill my family within one minute of my refusing to carry out the order. After that time (I refused to carry out the order), they took my family away and I was put in the prison-van to be executed. However, kicks and punches, several dozen in number, turned out to be the only punishment they meted out. I was reunited with my family in our flat, which the Soviets searched, and then, following the practice they were known for, I was beaten in the presence of my loved ones – allegedly for shooting the Red Army soldiers as commandant of the Railway Defense Training. I was taken to the prison in Brzeżany, where I was subjected to interrogations that stretched over a four-month period. For the first interrogation, at 2.00 p.m., I was taken to the bathhouse (I was ordered, supposedly for lack of chairs, to get into a bathtub filled with cold water) where I was ‘being examined’ for two hours, receiving a lot of brutal blows. The next interrogation took place two days later, at 4.00 a.m. I was told I was being taken to the Siemianowski castle to be executed for my refusal to reveal the truth. Upon arrival, with gun barrels pointed at me, I was asked if I pleaded guilty. I answered that I didn’t. When the command ‘fire’ was about to be given, one of the ‘komandirs’ stepped forward and stopped the execution.

In the prison I was subjected to 18 similar interrogations, a confrontation with other witnesses on 13 January 1940, and a trial on 15 January. The verdict: a death sentence. My defense counsel turned to Stalin with a clemency appeal, which I was granted after a year of waiting. In accordance with Stalin’s decision, which was read out to me on 8 January 1941, I was sentenced to eight years in *ispravitel’no-trudovye lagery* in the Far East as a *sotsialno opasny element*.

On 9 January 1941 I was taken to the prison in Tarnopol, to cell 35. Under normal circumstances the cell housed 16 prisoners, but there were 112 of us – one man next to



another. Filth. Lice. Sleeping on one's knees. We received food twice a day: a 'tea' in the morning, a soup and 250 grams of bread at noon. There were already 24 sick people lying in the cell, mostly students, from 13 to 16 years of age, imprisoned for their involvement in the Czortków uprising. Senior Sergeant Stanisław Wojnicki, from the 55th Infantry Regiment, died there. After several interrogations he completely lost consciousness, his whole body was covered with wounds.

From Tarnopol I was transferred to the prison in Kiev. There were 27 of us traveling four days in a prison van with a capacity for 8 people. On the way we were given about 400 grams of bread, two herrings and half a liter of water for 24 hours.

In Kiev I was robbed, having been left with nothing but tattered pants and rubber boots. My shoes were stolen too. They gave me a prison coat. Then I was transferred from Kiev to Kharkiv – the prison conditions were quite bearable, but I shared the cell with 'men off the street' to whom I had to give part of my food rations. Once, when I refused, they beat me so severely that I wasn't able to get up from my bed for nine days. From Kharkiv I was taken to the Lubyanka prison in Moscow, where one had to sit on the ground for three hours before noon and for two hours in the afternoon (we weren't allowed to stand up). The light was on for only one hour in the evening. But it was never off at night.

From Moscow to the prison in Vologda. The prison was on the grounds of the former monastery, with the cells located underground. The place was damp. There was even water there. Cells were filled to overcrowding – disease and death. Up to 10% of all prisoners were dying daily because of exhaustion and starvation.

21 days to get from Vologda to the Gulag camp in the north. The Ural taiga in the vicinity of Ivdel. Searched a dozen or so times a day, we were traveling in freight cars filled with lime – 46 people per car. Food rations: 250 grams of bread, 150 grams of fish and half a liter of water per day. The temperature was 25 degrees Celsius below zero and the car windows (with bars) were open. On the way I saw two Bolsheviks and one Pole die in my car. They died of hunger or from cold. The Pole, called Tarnowski, was from the area around Nowogródek.

In the Gulag camps at Pelkino: work in the forest – four woodpiles a day. They had to be felled, rolled and arranged into a pile, with the temperature dropping to 35 degrees Celsius below zero. It was freezing in the barracks. Food rations literally: herring soup, 250 grams of



bread. I was usually kept in solitary confinement as an *odkazyk* (one who defies orders). In the vicinity of Ivesykov [?], in June 1940, I was harvesting hay. Working and resting in the so-called *nakomarniki*, we were enveloped in clouds of gnats and tiny little flies. In May 1941 I fell ill with dysentery, running a fever of 40 degrees Celsius. I was lying on the ground from morning to evening. Once the work was over, my colleagues took me to the hospital. They told me later that my face had been turned into a crust of gnats.

Following the outbreak of the Bolshevik-German war, the Poles were kept apart from the rest of the prisoners, and often starved to death. Of 240 Poles, 35 died. Many of them drowned in the Lozva river while extracting floating wood, including Kubisz from Silesia and Marymont from Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. A road technician from Nadwórna died in the bathhouse in Ivdel.

I think that the way in which I was treated stemmed from the fact that as a social worker and board member of a number of organizations operating in the eastern parts of pre-war Poland, I didn't get on well with the Ukrainians and the local scum. They informed on me to the Bolshevik authorities, who, treating me with their calm sadism, multiplied crimes of which, according to them, I was the perpetrator, and demanded that I give away the names of officers and other members of the organization.

On 27 [month and year illegible]