

MARIA MICHALSKA

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"Zorza" weekly

Warsaw

We are reporting [a relative] in connection with the case of those murdered in Katyn – as per the recommended points.

1. Tadeusz Zygmunt Ornatowski:
 - parents' names: Franciszek, Paulina,
 - date of birth: 1 December 1910,
 - place of birth: Krakowiec, district of Jaworów, Lwów Voivodeship,
 - place of residence in 1939: Krakowiec,
 - the camp in which he was interned: Kozelsk.
2. Data concerning education and employment: a student of law [at] Lwów University, a third-year graduate.
3. Data concerning military service: a Second Lieutenant of the Heavy Artillery – Polish Army Reserve, 24. Light Artillery Regiment. On the day of mobilization in 1939 he reported to the mobilization bureau in Jarosław and proceeded to take an active part in military operations. He was not wounded in 1939.
4. Not applicable.
5. Circumstances in which he was taken prisoner: under attack from the Hitlerite forces, he and his unit withdrew eastwards in the direction of Lwów. Once the fighting for Lwów drew to a close, he joined a large group of military personnel that was moving east. In the course of this relocation the said grouping was encircled by Soviet forces and deported deep into Russia. Place of encirclement and location where taken prisoner: in all probability the township of Żmerynka on the Polish-Soviet border.
6. From which camp was correspondence sent: Kozelsk. Six letters:
 - no. I: date [date of postage unknown],
 - no. II: 20 January 1940,

- no. III: 17 February 1940,
 - no. IV: 5 March 1940 – this letter, which is in very good condition, is in our possession. The letter, addressed to Krakowiec, was received by the family on 19 March 1940.
 - On 13 April 1940 the family, i.e. the father, Franciszek Ornatowski, mother Paulina Ornatowska and sister Maria Ornatowska, were deported by the Soviet authorities to Kazakhstan.
 - Letters nos. V and VI were received by the family after they returned from Kazakhstan to Poland in 1945. One letter [was] addressed to a relative in Krakowiec, Jan Kübler. The second letter [was] addressed to a friend in Krakowiec, citizen Ludwik Bieńkowski.
7. Along with the present letter we are sending photocopies of letter no. IV and a photograph [of Tadeusz Ornatowski] in army uniform.
 8. Tadeusz Ornatowski's parents died after the War.

Please note!

Letter no. IV, [a photocopy of] which is attached, [informs us] that the following were detained along with Tadeusz Ornatowski in Kozelsk:

1. Staszek Majuk – a friend from secondary school in Jaworów,
2. Karol Muzyczak.

These persons have not been included in the lists of victims and missing persons which are in our possession.

PS If it would be possible for you to correspond with us in some way, then we sincerely request that you do. We would like to join an organization of Katyn families – if any is in existence. We could provide financial assistance for such an organization.

TADEUSZ ORNATOWSKI

Kozelsk, 5 March 1940

My Dearest and Most Beloved Parents and Maryś!

I received the letter and postcard only on 25 February. I was so worried because I had no news at all from you. So as not to waste the opportunity of writing a letter, I did not write any more to your address, but instead tried to establish communication indirectly, by writing to Ludwik Bieńkowski and Kübler in Krakowiec.

I am now thanking the Lord Above that everything is more or less alright with you, or should I say "was", for the date of your letter – 20 December – is very, very distant and much could have changed over two months. I know that your lot is difficult. I entreat the Lord to keep you where you are, so that one day we will be able to find each other, for some have already received letters from their wives, elderly fathers etc., sent from trains taking them from Poland deep [into Russia]. I am so sorry that you still do not know, having received my second, and perhaps even my third letter (from 20 January and 17 February), that I have finally received yours from December.

In future please number your letters, so that if any one got lost I could ask you to repeat the information contained therein. In mid-February we were allowed to write to the International Red Cross with requests for the provision of information about our loved ones. I too sent a letter, just in case, for I received no word from you. So please do not be surprised if at some point in time you will be asked questions concerning the matter. The fact that I had no news from you for such a long time worried me immensely, especially as friends told me that a battle had been fought with the Germans near Krakowiec, in the village of Morańce.

Now I just ask you to provide some details of how you are coping. I am certain that Father has no means of subsistence, while you, Dear Maryś, also – as the letter seems to imply – have no possibility of finding work and thereby providing assistance. Surely you are forced to sell off certain household items to gain money for purchasing vital foodstuffs. Are you living

in our home, or perhaps in a part of it, with someone else sharing? I know that everything is so expensive back home, and indeed difficult to purchase, so please sell off whatever you do not need that will find a willing buyer, things such as the bicycles, violin, the camera, inessential clothes. If possible, just try to keep one set of my clothes.

In the second and third letters I mentioned a parcel. But I do not know whether the post office in Krakowiec accepts packages addressed to us. If possible, please include only items that won't go bad for at least a month, this because parcels are received with some delay. However this is of very small importance and indeed not wholly necessary – I can get by quite well on my own. Do not send any money, I still have 70 rubles. Please add half a sheet of clean writing paper to your letter.

Two of my friends – Staszek Majuk and Karol Miryczak – are here with me. I saw Brandsteter [?] for the last time in September near Rzeszów; he was alive and well then, but I do not know [where he] is now.

Do not worry if you don't receive any letters from me for a long time, for they travel slowly from here, while if I were to be transferred to another township – which does not appear likely at the moment – I'm certain that the delay would only be greater.

Here we breathe and breathe, and think continuously – and so the days pass. The area is rather healthy, full of forests and orchards, so that life here will be more bearable in the summer. There is so much that I would like to write, but I cannot. You know that I adapt easily to different conditions of living, even if they are tough, and thus my needs are practically none. My motto is to hang on bravely [?], to trust, to wait patiently for what fate will bring. I consider this the most appropriate and practical approach.

Mother, write me about what is going on with your brothers, for they are of German origin, and about [illegible]. Please also send a postcard to Zbyszek and give him my address. I'm attaching a banknote, 20 Polish zlotys, to see if it gets through. For me, our Polish currency is just an unnecessary burden, but it may prove of some use to you. Please inform me whether the money got through and whether the risk is worth taking.

The next letter I'll certainly [?] write in [illegible]. Please write me as often as you can, so that I know what is going on with you, and remember to always number your letters. I entrust you to the care of the Lord and beg Him incessantly to shield you from harm.

Please pass on my greetings to our friends.

I send you all my love and kisses

Your son Tadzik