IZABELLA ROZBORSKA

1. [Personal data:]

Volunteer Izabella Rozborska, aged 35 (born on 1 January 1908), married.

2. [Date and circumstances of arrest:]

I was taken away on 14 [illegible month] 1940 at 2.00 a.m.

3. [Name of the camp, prison, forced labor site:]

Aktyubinskaya Oblast, New Russian region, Oktiabr *kolkhoz*.

4. [Description of the camp, prison:]

The *kolkhoz* we were taken to comprised 50 houses formed form mud, with tiny windows made from several pieces of glass, and floors made of clay. There were stables under the same roof as the dwelling area. In winter, we lived with the hosts and their seven children, in summer – in an old abandoned house with no windows. The house accommodated several Polish families. The surrounding area was grassland with no trees, the tallest bush was up to 60 centimeters high.

5. [Composition of POWs, prisoners, exiles:]

The exiles were mostly women, the wives of militaries with children and mothers, apart from several cottage families – the Ukrainians who were hostile [to us] and who made the situation of the Poles with the local authorities worse. Apart from that, the families were close to each other, even friendly, helping each other out.

6. [Life in the camp, prison:]

Physical labor on the grassland, which included sowing, operating tractors or combine harvesters, or working in the gardens: digging beds, planting, weeding, irrigation, collecting vegetables and taking them to the *kolkhoz*. We labored from 6.00 a.m. until 10.00 or even 11.00 p.m. Only those who went to work in the field got paid: from 50 to 80 decagrams of bread, half a liter of milk from the centrifuge, about a liter of soup for dinner, half a liter of cereals for supper, but not every day. The daily quota was 1.25 – 2 *trudodni* [labor days],

which were paid for in kind during fall (excluding the food consumed at work during summer). Children and elders received nothing. During the first year, we were paid nothing for our work; in the second year, we were paid the whole sum, equal to that of the *kolkhoz* workers (after the amnesty). We couldn't buy clothes the entire time. On the contrary – we would sell our own, or rather exchange them for products.

7. [The NKVD's attitude toward Poles:]

The authorities' attitude toward Poles was deprecating, sometimes even vulgar. There were constant meetings during which it was proven that Poland could not exist, as it was ruled by the lords who treated the poor with cruelty. The Polish Army was constantly laughed at, especially the officers.

8. [Medical assistance, hospitals, mortality rate:]

There was no medical assistance. From time to time, a junior surgeon would come when called for. [Standing] at the door, she would give the diagnosis: *lihoradka* [fever], and she would give some quinine for every disease. The mortality rate was relatively low: out of 70 people, the following died during two years:

Henryk Dutkiewicz from Stara Sól, aged 18;
Mycawka from Sambór, aged 12;
Alina Fiałkiewicz from Stara Sól, aged 3 months;
Wituszyńska from Sambór, aged over 60;
Grindermann, aged 2.

9. [What, if any, was your contact with the home country and with your families?]

Until the German-Soviet war, correspondence was uninterrupted, almost all letters were delivered to us, but those we sent were rarely received.

10. [When were you released and how did you get through to the army?]

Under the amnesty, I was allowed to depart from the *kolkhoz* in the fall of 1941. I reached Guzar in a military transport, and I joined the Women's Auxiliary Service there.

4 February 1943