

MARIAN JANOWICZ

1. Personal data (name, surname, rank, age, occupation, marital status):

Corporal Marian Janowicz, born 14 August 1901, cashier, married.

2. Date and circumstances of arrest:

On 10 October 1939 – following a denunciation by a Ukrainian Paweł Dudar, a Jew Munio Lawner, and a Pole Tomasz Stromecki, son of Maska, the latter of whom personally arrested me and handed me over to the NKVD as a State Police agent and as a good Polish patriot and activist, who demanded that Soviet authorities open a Polish school, as after they had entered on 17 September 1939, all the schools were closed within two weeks. I tried to prove that there were 70 percent of Poles in the city, and according to the Soviet constitution, all nations should have their schools and be taught in their native languages.

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

On 12 October 1939, I was taken to a prison in [Kopyczyńce?], where I stayed until 4 April 1940. On that day, I was deported to the prison in Czortków, where I stayed until 17 February 1941, when I was taken to Russia, to the Starobilsk prison. The journey took until 25 March 1941. We would be given 400 grams of bread and two fish, and one bucket of water for the whole wagon, which consisted of 38 people. A thorough search was executed at a stop. We had no firewood [for heating] for seven days. One person froze to death – I don't remember the surname, because it was a joint wagon, but I know he was a Ukrainian from Lwów.

After loading us off in Starobilsk, they put 2,000 of us in a monastery (Orthodox Church). On 4 April 1941, we were called in groups of fifty, from one *statia* – [station number] 54.13 – there were three military men, and [they gave] each 8 years of labor camp. On 6 April, we were taken to Kharkiv.

4. Description of the camp, prison:

On 8 April 1941, we arrived in Kharkiv. They put 160 of us in a 5x7 [meter] cell, where we were stifling from heat. Food was bearable. On 12 April we bathed and left for labor camps.

We arrived in Kozhva on 17 April. Temperatures were 45 degrees below zero, tents [illegible], bunk beds made of round logs, and the food was terrible. On 25 April, they sent us to [illegible] Ust'-Usa, 125 km by foot. On 1 May, we arrived in [illegible], where we worked on drifting logs with boats onto a barge which would ship them to Vorkuta. Food depended on how much you earned – there were quotas set. Bathrooms were open every day, clean underwear was given, there were wooden barracks, heated, but there were vitamin deficiencies and people were suffering from illnesses as a result. The diseases would be treated with fish oil – there were no medicines. If somebody didn't work, they would get 300 grams of bread and half a liter of soup a day.

5. Compositions of prisoners, POWs, exiles:

Nationalities varied: Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Bolsheviks, Chinese, Tatars, and Mongols. The majority (70 percent) were political prisoners, and the other 30 percent were jailed for theft. Mutual relations were unbearable, as Ukrainians and Jews would harass us the most, said our lordship ended, *treba rabotat* [you have to work], not like in the rotten Poland, where we did nothing and still filled our plates, oppressing the Ukrainian people. They called us various names. Actually, two tailors, who worked in the camp, attached white badges to our jackets and trousers as a sign for the police that we were *mordas* [mug faces]. The Bolsheviks were also of hostile attitude towards the Poles.

6. Life in the camp, prison:

In [illegible] Ust'-Usa there was 12 hours of work daily and there were quotas. There were 12 people that had to pull 500 square meters of wood from the water and load them on barges, that was 100 percent [of the quota], which would give them 8 rubles a month, 900 grams of bread [daily?], and soup two times a day. If one didn't have their own clothes, they would be given *telogreikas* and rubber shoes. Climate was unbearable, millions of mosquitoes swarmed around people, biting them to death. It went on for seven weeks. It wasn't even possible to sleep, because the barracks were full of them. We were given mosquito nets to wear on our heads, but it wouldn't help. Then there was a season for tiny flies, even worse than mosquitoes, as they could edge in everywhere and bit terribly.

We worked there until 17 September 1941, where we were released based on a Polish-Soviet agreement and brought back to Kozhva on a ship. We were given provisions for 10 days and

75 rubles for a journey to Buzuluk by train, with a document proving that we were headed from the labor camp to join the Polish army.

7. Attitude of the local NKVD towards the Poles:

During the interrogation carried out by the NKVD, we would be ordered to sit on the edge of a stool and remain so for up to two or three hours, which is impossible. If you budged, you'd get beaten right away. The interrogation usually went on at night, from 11.00 p.m. to 3.00 a.m., and so: *"Kto tebe werbował do [razwiedki?], skolko was było, skolko tiebe za eto płatili, szto ty za dzieło imył"* etc. That's the way it was from 10 October 1939 until 8 August 1941, and they would show me documents that they reportedly found in Tarnopol archive. It was all in Russian though, so I said it wasn't true, because Poles write in Polish. They said they made a handwritten copy. There were surnames I knew in there, but I replied that I didn't work for intelligence and that I didn't know those people. On 8 August 1941, they confronted me with two witnesses, Paweł Dudar and Munio Lawner from [Husiatyn?], who claimed [I] worked for the intelligence service, because they had always seen me around the police and military officers. I denied that, and received a beating right away. When that didn't help, they ordered to shoot me. Two soldiers came and took me downstairs to a basement, made me face the wall and let off a volley. I dropped from fear. The NKVD chief came up to me and asked whether I would start telling the truth, because if I didn't, they would shoot me, and he started to argue with the soldiers that they missed [illegible]. The whole charade began again.

8. Medical assistance, hospitals, mortality:

Medical assistance in Czortków was up to the NKVD, not up to the doctor. If somebody was beaten at an interrogation, the doctor wouldn't come to the cell. I knew one Ukrainian attorney, who was beaten up during an interrogation and died after three days. His name was Slec, he was an attorney from Buczac.

9. Was there any possibility to contact one's country and family?

I had no contact with my family – nor did I receive anything from home when I was in Czortków prison – as a punishment for not confessing to what they charged me with at the interrogation. My family also got deported to Russia, Semipalatinsk Oblast, Kokpekty

region, "Bolshevik" sovkhoz, farm no. 3. I learned that from my neighbor Bronisława Warynuk, who was staying in Tehran. Despite my efforts, I couldn't get in contact with my family nor arrange for them to be brought to Palestine. I had no contact with the country.

10. When were you released and how did you manage to join the army?

On 17 September 1941, I was released from the labor camp following the Polish-Soviet agreement of 12 August 1941. Instead of being handed to the Polish army, we were deported to kolkhozes, to Turkmenistan Oblast, where we stayed for three weeks. We were then sent to the army; the journey took three weeks on the Amu Darya River. Our overseers didn't give us food for three days, stashing everything for themselves. The people, enraged by the situation, pounced on the wagons, and they found large amounts of bread, fish, and flour, while they [the overseers] explained themselves that they didn't know anything about it. They kept on blaming one another. If it wasn't for Captain Maj, all the transport commandants would've been drowned. On 22 December 1941, we arrived in Czardzo [Czardżou?] and were handed over to a kolkhoz immediately (Bukhara Oblast, Szafrykan region [Shaykhan?]). We carried soil onto a field in stretchers. Remuneration: 400 grams of millet, without any salary. On 12 February 1942, a Polish-Soviet drafting commission arrived, and a recruitment process was carried out. The Soviet commission was decisive. I was accepted into the army, we were taken to Kermine, to a rallying point, where we were uniformed after three days, so that we crossed the Polish-Soviet border on 5 April 1942. Rallying point: Pahlevi.