



FERDYNAND DUDA

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I was deported together with my family on 12 February 1940 from the village of Kamionki Wielkie, Kołomyja district. At that time all the Polish settlers and some of the Ukrainians were deported from Kamionki Wielkie. We had half an hour to pack our things, and we could take only food. The food, however, lasted us only three days. We were transported across the Polish territories for a week. At that time we didn't receive any food. We received only two buckets of water per day for the entire wagon, that is, forty people. We were transported across the Russian territories over three weeks. On the way we were issued 600 grams of bread a day per person and soup also once a day. We couldn't even lean out of the window, let alone leave the wagon. Only two people from one wagon were allowed to leave it twice a day, and that was only to bring food, water and coal.

In this way we arrived at the station in Kamarchaga, situated 150 kilometers to the west of Krasnoyarsk. Then we were transported 150 kilometers into the taiga, and the temperature fell to forty degrees below zero. Two children died on the way (parents' surnames: Jan Łokcik, I don't recall the other). We came to barracks located in woods and mountains, far away from other hamlets. We worked there felling trees. At first we could buy as much bread as we wanted, but nobody had money. We had to live by our wits in order to buy a piece of bread. Nobody thought about himself but about the children, who were unwell after the journey. In May, when the snow began to melt, we had an epidemic of typhoid fever – 75 percent fell ill. A hundred people died out of a thousand, and the majority of them were young. In summer, workers received 800 grams of bread, and the unemployed – 400 grams. As a result, people used to send even their 12-year-old children to work. Apart from the bread ration, one could get some oat soup at the workers' canteen. We didn't receive any other food. People had to work even if they didn't want to, just to make a living for the family, as there were no other means.



That hamlet was inhabited mainly by Poles and Ukrainians who had been deported there from Ukraine in 1931.

There weren't any NKVD representatives, as they lived twelve kilometers away from us. Only the hamlet commandant came every day. He often organized meetings, encouraged us to work and kept repeating that Poland was lost. It had disappeared into thin air. Work for the Soviets!

The Ukrainians who had come with us lived hand in glove with the Poles, because they were in the minority and knew that even if they had bowed down to the Soviets it wouldn't have helped them. Remuneration was very low, from twenty to a hundred rubles per month, which wasn't enough even to cover food expenses.

On 15 August 1941 the amnesty was proclaimed, and we were told that we were free Polish citizens from then on. Nevertheless, they didn't let us leave. Only half a year later were we allowed to leave for the kolkhozes. I left the hamlet on 30 September and joined the Polish army.