

## MARIA PARCZEWSKA

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

Volunteer Maria Parczewska, 41 years old, nurse, married.

### 2. Date and circumstance of arrest:

On 14 June 1941 at dawn, we (my husband, two children and I) were ordered to pack within an hour, our home was searched and then we, without my husband, who was separated from us and put on a different train, were ushered into another train at the Nowo Wilejka station. "You are being expelled from the city of Wilno" was all that we were told.

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

Molotovski sovkhos, Shipunovo raion, Altai Krai.

### 4. Description of the camp, prison etc. (grounds, buildings, housing conditions, hygiene):

The sovkhos was located on the steppe. We lived in one-room homes, very cramped ones. They were three meters long and four meters wide and intended for two families, seven people. We were given buckets, and some got beds. The hygienic conditions were bad. There were no baths or toilets. We were allowed to wash our clothes once in 10 days. The canteen was dirty, the food cheap and very poor. The skilled workers got better food.

### 5. The composition of POWs, prisoners, exiles (nationality, category of crimes, intellectual and moral standing, mutual relations etc.):

The deportees were mostly farmers from the environs of Wilno and Łomża – Poles. The intellectual standing was very poor. The morale was good. Especially the people from the environs of Łomża were brave and supportive. Mutual relations were good. The only ones we distrusted were those who had social ties with the representatives of the authorities (the local teacher).

### 6. Life in the camp, prison etc. (daily routine, working conditions, work quotas, remuneration, food, clothes, social and cultural life etc.):

The work started at 7 a.m. and continued, with an hour-long dinner break, till dusk. The elderly were ordered to do lighter work. The healthy could easily fill the quotas. Care was taken so that the quotas would not be raised. There were no work-free days. There was no possibility of buying clothes. Only once we were given some percale, two meters per person. There was no social or cultural life. On holy days, we assembled to pray together (during working hours). We were forced to attend an anti-air defense course and to work overtime for the benefit of the *Krasnaya Armiya* [Red Army]. We participated in collections for the *Krasnaya Armiya*, but stated expressly that our donations were to go to the Polish army, which they promised.

**7. The NKVD's attitude towards Poles (interrogation methods, torture and other forms of punishment, Communist propaganda, information about Poland, etc.):**

The attitude of the NKVD was upright. They avoided disturbances. Any descriptions of Polish social homes, work protection, social insurance were heard very unwillingly. The propaganda was mainly aimed at young people. The work was paid, but they didn't allow for any rest. The intellectual standing of the authorities was very low, [illegible].

**8. Medical assistance, hospitals, mortality rate (give the names of the deceased):**

There was no medical aid. There was only a feldsher, hardly literate. They didn't stop us from assisting the exiles, they even gave us some medicines and dressings. The local people also received our aid and were very grateful for it.

**9. [Was there any chance to get in contact with one's country and family?]**

There was no contact with the country or with families.

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

On 26 October 1941 all exiles were released. Shortly before, the NKVD representatives informed us about the amnesty and collected declarations on the choice of place of residence. On that occasion, they gave a very friendly speech and asked the exiles to speak up. The exiles only talked about their willingness to fight the Germans.

After my release, I came to Farab together with other Poles from various raions of the Altai Krai. They let us out there, and then wanted us to go by barges to the Aral Sea. They asked

and threatened us. Our transport was well organized (something of a novelty) and refused. After 10 days of harsh outdoor camping some left for Bukhara, others moved to rented private lodgings. I worked there as a volunteer nurse with a doctor from the headquarters of the Southern Staff of the Army until it was closed down. Then, I was directed to the army in Guzar by an army plenipotentiary.

I'd like to stress that our transport was the first one to refuse to sail by barges down the river Amu Darya. The army plenipotentiary, Captain Dąbrowski, encouraged us to get on the barges. We telegraphed the staff to ask for instructions. The NKVD authorities were told that we were to wait for instructions from our authorities.

The discipline during transport was ensured by the group commanders and the transport's own "gendarmerie" (about 100 young men). The discipline was very good. No one dared to move without the permission of the transport's commander. The commander of the transport was generally trusted; he was very active, helpful and brave in talks with the authorities (Lieutenant Jan Piszczek).

28 February 1943