



EDWARD DAWIDOWICZ

1. Personal data:

Rifleman Edward Dawidowicz, born on 6 April 1922, student, unmarried.

2. Date and circumstances of arrest:

I was arrested on 30 September 1940 in the "Sokołowski" hotel in Wilno, where I had an appointment with friends in order to discuss the transport of hidden arms.

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

I was imprisoned in the Łukiszki prison in Wilno and in camps on the Pechora River.

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

The prison was overall well organized, but severely overcrowded. Five, six people were incarcerated in one single cell. The prison was located in the center of Wilno. The hygienic conditions were bearable. Only bugs pestered us a little.

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

As far as the nationality of prisoners is concerned, there were Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Czechs, Romanians, Chinese and Japanese. The majority of Poles and Lithuanians were political prisoners. Many people were held on charges of illegal border crossing. I didn't meet many "criminals" in the European understanding of the term. The intellectual and moral standing depended on the type of crime. It was lowest among the indigenous citizens of the Soviet Union. Mutual relations between representatives of all nationalities were good; one can hardly speak of antagonisms under such conditions, when everybody's primary concern is getting a piece of bread.

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

We had to wake up at 4.00 a.m., and we set off for work at 6.00 a.m. Our work consisted of leveling the future route of the Kotlas–Vorkuta railway line. In order to fill 100% of the

quota one had to dig and cart away 5.4 cubic meters of earth or peat. We often had to work waist-deep in water, naked. Meeting 100% of the quota entitled one to 900 grams of bread and a dinner consisting of half a liter of thick soup made of vegetable fat plus a dumpling or a blin. We were issued camp clothes only upon release. As a rule, obtaining clothes or shoes was very troublesome. They were available mainly for the camp officials (*pridurki*). The social life wasn't very developed, and the cultural life was limited to reading a three-month old newspaper every two months.

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

The NKVD were very changeable as to mood. During interrogations, the "investigative judges" frequently resorted to a paperweight and a rubber baton. I myself wasn't subjected to organized Communist propaganda. However, when I left the camp, I came across Communist samizdat materials. One of the leaflets, which was devoted to the situation of farmers in Poland, contained information testifying to monstrous hypocrisy and utter ignorance regarding Polish realities (for instance, it was stated that Polish peasants were sold when they didn't have money to pay taxes).

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

Due to the fact that in some camps there were doctors among the inmates, the medical assistance could be substantial; it was hindered by the lack of medicaments. In camps where the prisoners were entrusted to the care of a so-called doctor (often a shoemaker or a bandit) the situation was very bad.

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

I didn't have any contact with my country.

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

I was released on 30 March 1942. I managed to join the army thanks to a bribe, for which I obtained the so-called military ticket, which at the time was no longer being issued by the NKVD to Poles who wanted to go to the army.

18 February 1943