



MIKOŁAJ GBURZ

Mikołaj Gburz, born in 1909, married.

I was arrested on the night of 22 March 1940 as a bandit, for I had been listening to my radio and told my friend that General Sikorski had addressed the Polish nation from London, saying that [the Soviets] intended to deport everyone to Siberia, however that he would get us out, although not those living close to the German border. Some militiaman was eavesdropping at the wooden wall and had me arrested. I was imprisoned in Sambor gaol. The interrogation – extremely unpleasant – was conducted for nine days, consistently between the hours of 9.00 p.m. and 3.00 a.m. During this time they smashed out seven of my teeth, all the time beating me with a wooden table leg. On the ninth day they took me back to my cell on a blanket and threw me inside. One of the NKVD men announced that the Polish spy could now die. I lay there without any medical care for three weeks. I survived only thanks to my friends, who treated me with cold towel compresses. My trial lasted three days and they wanted to give me the death penalty, however all the witnesses – bless them! – conspired to give one and the same answer, and in consequence I was sentenced to five years imprisonment in the Far East.

I received no correspondence from home. I was incarcerated until 10 September 1940, passing the time talking with my co-prisoners. Thereafter the Soviets had me deported to Kharkiv in Russia, where I spent seven months.

The conditions were difficult, with one man to each square meter of cell area. They told us that they would exterminate all the Polish “politicals”. On 22 April 1941, I was deported to Kolyma. [illegible] many of us ended up in the hospital. They tore off our clothes and gave us Soviet clothing instead. With the temperature at minus 70 degrees Celsius, they forced us to work in tattered rags and shoes woven from string. A great many people collapsed, both Russians and Poles. They treated us Poles like dogs.



I was released on 17 March 1942, and enlisted in the Polish Army on 10 August 1942 in Shahrissabz.

The above is a truthful account of my experiences.