

JAN BRZOWSKI

Jan Brzozowski, 48 years old, farmer residing in the Vilnius region.

I worked in Poland for 14 years. On 7 March 1941 at 1.00 a.m. a dozen or so Soviet [illegible] soldiers arrived, arrested me and sent me to prison in Wilejka, where I spent three months. The conditions [were] awful. [There were] 70 people in small cells.

[I remained there] until the Soviet-German war. After its outbreak, they deported 1,200 people [from among us] to a prison in Kazan, of whom about 450 people were executed along the way. We were herded along about 300 km on foot without water and bread.

The Soviet authorities applied the most horrendous tactics, but the Poles lived well among themselves despite the specter of death. The Soviets urged them to denounce their friends and neighbors, promising them release in return.

Prison life was the most awful in terms of hygiene and medicine—this led to people dying every day. Within seven months, 26 people died in my cell, [which was] ten percent [of the total number in the cell at the time].

Throughout my time in prison, I did not have any news [about what was happening] with my family, [nor] with the homeland.

On 10 August 1941, under the Polish-Soviet agreement, they released [me], gave [me] 60 rubles and a train ticket to Totskoy, where I joined the Polish army.

After the Soviet army entered Polish territory in 1939, an election was ordered to take place [about] annexing the Polish territories to Russia. This was carried out in a compulsory manner, under the threat of being arrested and deported to Russia. The delegates who were chosen were people who had been rejected by society and imprisoned for the longest period. One such surname was on the list.

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