

Anna Mass' Document



This is my membership card of Union of Polish Patriots. It was a political organization founded in March 1943 by Polish communists in the USSR.

We spent with my father four years in Komi. Then Wanda Wasilewska, UPP leader, finally arranged for us to be released from Komi. In 1944 people were going where they wanted. Some went to Central Asia, and that was really stupid. From the northern climate into the sweltering heat, to Tashkent. And some didn't survive that change of climate. We decided we wouldn't go to Asia but closer to Poland, so Ukraine at most. At first we worked on a farm, or rather a kolkhoz, in Ukraine. Near Bakhmach [small town 100 km north-east of Kiev]. It was two hours' way to town. Because there were no horses following the German occupation, we drove cows. You yoked a pair of cows and they pulled the cart. We were hungry as usual, I tried to milk a cow in the field. But either I didn't know how or she didn't want to give milk to a stranger. In fact, they don't use boiled milk there. It's melted milk, they call it 'toplyenoye.' [Russian for heated] When you take milk out of the bread oven, there's a skin of butter on the surface. Melted butter and brown milk. I didn't like it.

Ukraine was beautiful. I loved to sing. And they sing so much there. Like the lead singer, the 'zapevaylo' they call him. It's like in the army: one soldier starts to sing and the others follow. The same thing happened there. One girl sings first, the others follow. A strong alto is the first voice. I was a soprano, but such a powerful one I had to be the first voice because otherwise I drowned the soprano out. Overall, to be honest, I received no harm from the Ukrainians. But I don't like them. I don't like them for the UPA gangs and all that. Though they didn't harm me... But when I hear that we [the Poles] don't love the Russians, I think to myself: my God, you don't have to like your neighbor, but you have to live in harmony with him, and we can't do that.

And finally, in 1946, we went to Poland.