

BIRNBAUM Mieczysław Markus (1889–1940), literary pen-name “M. Binom”, underground pseudonym “Mołotok”. He was a journalist, a writer, a translator and an officer in the Polish Army. He was born on 8th June 1889 within the territory of Austria-Hungary, the son of → Abram Ber Birnbaum and Chinda Gołday née Ejzenberg.

He graduated from the government Boys’ Gimnazjum in Piotrków. During his high studies and at university, he belonged to the SDKPiL (using the pseudonym “Mołotok”). In 1907, he was arrested for revolutionary activity and was exiled.

During World War I, he served in the Russian Army and, in 1917, he organised Polish troops in Iași, co-founding the II Polish Corps. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Polish Military Union on the Romanian Front in Iași. Together with B. Nakonecznikow-Klukowski and W. Czuma, he belonged to the delegation which negotiated, with the Soviet Union, consent for the corps to march across the Dnieper River. He was editor of the “Legionista”.

Following the capitulation at Kaniów (11th May 1918), he worked in the organisation which recruited for the formation of General L. Żeligowski’s 4th Division. He managed the political and press section of the Recruitment and Agitation Organisation in Kiev and organised the Polish Division in the Austrian Army. Together with Col. Cz. Rybiński’s Mikuliński detachment, he took part in the march from Jarmoliniec to relieve Lwów. During the fighting, he was taken prisoner by the Ukrainians. After his release, he served in the 4th Riflemen Division and took part in all the fighting with the Ukrainians.

In the Polish Army, he was head of the political department of the Second Section of the Ministry of Military Affairs. As someone trusted by Józef Piłsudski, he participated, as an expert, in the Polish Army High Command’s peace negotiations in Borysław, Mińsk and Riga. In 1919, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. In 1921, he transferred to the reserve (to the infantry officer corps – No. 1 District Cadre).

Until September 1939, he worked as a columnist, writer and translator. (He translated, among others, the works of Izaak Babel and Yevgeny Zamiatin). He wrote an article entitled *The Press as an Enterprise* (“Praktyczna Wiedza Przemysłowa” 1930, Nos. 2/3).

Mobilised in 1939, he was taken prisoner by the Soviets and held in a POW camp in Kozielsk. In 1940, he was murdered by the NKVD and was buried there. (Since

2001, it has become a Polish War Cemetery.) Among his decorations are Virtuti Militari Cross 5th Class, the Cross of Valour, the Golden Cross of Merit, the 1918-1921 War Memorial Medal and the Decade of Regained Independence Medal. He was posthumously promoted to the rank of captain by the President of the Republic of Poland Lech Kaczyński.

Łoza, *Czy wiesz kto to jest*, p. 49; *Kawalerowie Virtuti Militari*, p. 113; *Katyń. Księga cmentarna*, p. 38 (here, a different date of birth is given - 10th June). - Z. Bartczak, *Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Bolesława Chrobrego w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim*, Piotrków Trybunalski 2005, p. 258; A. Paczkowski, *Prasa polska w latach 1918–1939*, Warsaw 1980, pp. 456, 496. - *Rocznik oficerski rezerw 1934*, pp. 14, 810; - APŁ Piotrkowski Gubernialny Zarząd Żandarmerii 26/1906 k. 741, 742, Zarząd Żandarmerii Powiatów Częstochowskiego i Noworadomskiego 31. - APCz, group No. 58 (birth), No. 359/1898 (delayed).

Andrzej Kuśnierczyk