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The Hidden Tragedy (June 13, 1941 in the Fate of the Inhabitants of the Danube Region)

Liliya TSYGANENKO*

Abstract

The events related to the establishment of Soviet power in the Ukrainian Transdanubia region in June 1940 – June 1941 are considered. The arrival of the Soviets on the land of the region turned out to be a fundamental change in the sustainable life of the local population. To consolidate communist power in the Danube River, the Stalinist regime used the existing “experience” which had been accumulated by the system in previous years. Moreover, the “love of advice” had to be knocked out by force, because the communist ideology was not particularly popular in the region. Taking into consideration the proximity to the border, the long stay of the region under the authority of the Romanian administration, the Soviet punitive authorities began a large-scale operation to “clean the territories of undesirable elements” at the end of June 1940. This category included all those who collaborated with the Romanian authorities, as well as individual peasants, owners of workshops and factories, shops and restaurants, pharmacies and residential buildings. People fell into the hands of the Soviet punitive machine, regardless of age and gender, nationality and religion, level of education and profession. Among the representatives of ethnic minorities, the most affected (according to the author) were Jews, Romanians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians and others. Arrests and exile took place in several stages, but the most significant events occurred on June 13, 1941, when during one night in Southern Bessarabia nearly 1,500 thousand people were repressed (the author has archival documents for each name). For many, the “acquaintance” with the NKVD bodies ended tragically – arrests and prison sentences, confiscation of property and deportations, departure to the “labor front” to Siberia, Central Asia. Many of those who were repressed in their time did not return home alive. The modern Ukrainian state has set before civil society the task of naming everyone who has been repressed illegally. Today we have to perpetuate the memory of our compatriots who have been victims of political repression, to bring that memory to future generations and to never allow the horrors of totalitarian regimes to be repeated.

Keywords: *Ukrainian Transdanubia region, Southern Bessarabia, repressions, deportations, sweeping borders, “enemies of the people”*

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Almost 80 years ago, on June 13, 1941, from the territory of the Moldavian SSR, railway cars were pulled into Siberia and Central Asia, which transported tens of thousands of people from their native lands. This was the so-called first wave of deportation of the Moldovan people. However, few people know that not only the inhabitants of the MSSR fell into the millstones of the punitive machine. Residents of the Ukrainian Transdanubia region also found themselves at the epicenter of these events. Doomed to starvation, cold and forced labor, and often death inevitably, the people of the region left their homes and parted with their families. However, the truth about these tragic events for scientists, as in fact, and the general public, remains *terra incognita*. It is time to speak out loud about the genocide perpetrated by the Soviet communist government against representatives of different ethnic groups in southern Bessarabia in the summer of 1941.

On the eve of World War II, the Soviet authorities already had considerable “experience” in carrying out mass punitive operations, victims of which were representatives of different nationalities and denominations. In the grinder of the totalitarian machine were Ukrainians, Belarusians, Poles, Jews, Germans, Russians and more. For many, the “acquaintance” with the NKVD bodies ended tragically – arrests and prison sentences, confiscation of property and deportations, departure to the “labor front” to Siberia, Central Asia. Many of those who were repressed in their time did not return home alive. The modern Ukrainian state has set before civil society the task of naming everyone who has been repressed illegally. Today we have to perpetuate the memory of our compatriots who have been victims of political repression, to bring that memory to future generations and to never allow the horrors of totalitarian regimes to be repeated.

The issue of communist crimes against its peoples has been in the field of view of scientists, politicians, publicists, local historians all over the world for more than ten years. Such Ukrainian scholars as S. Vasylenko,¹ V. Nicolskiy,² V. Danylenko³ and S. Matveyeva⁴ relying on hitherto unknown archival documents, have done much for objective investigation of the events, related to the repression of Bolshevik authorities in Ukrainian lands. Much less attention has been paid to historians of the south of Odessa region, in literature it is mostly known as Southern Bessarabia, Budzhak, and the Ukrainian Transdanubia. Unfortunately, the question

¹ S. Vasylenko, “The Research of Post-War Repressions Against the Peasantry of Ukraine (1944–1953),” *Historical archive. Scientific studies: Collection of scientific works* 15 (2015), 22-28.

² V. Nicolskiy *Repressive activity of the USSR state security bodies in Ukraine (the end of 1920 -1950-ies): Historical and statistical study. Monograph* (Donetsk, 2003).

³ V. Danylenko “Soviet bodies of State security and rehabilitation of victims of political repressions in Ukraine (1950-1980),” *Historical archive. Scientific studies: Collection of scientific works* 17 (2017).

⁴ S. Matveyeva, *Repression and unravelling in Bessarabia (1940-1941, 1944-1945, 1948-1952)*. *Compilation* (Odessa: Atlant, 2015).

of the activities of Soviet authorities in the region at the initial stage of its establishment, as well as the repression, deportation and arrests of the local population by the NKVD bodies, have not yet been the subject of a comprehensive scientific study that reflects the aspects of novelty and relevance of the selected issues.

At the disposal of the author of the publication there are valuable materials from the archives of the Security Service of Ukraine, regional, city and district archival institutions, which allow to reveal the forms, methods, methods of fabrication and falsification of many investigative cases, to reveal the specifics of the repressive activity of the communist authorities in the territory of the Southern Bessarabia. To date, information has been collected on more than 1,500 repressed residents of the region in the period from June 1940 to June 1941 alone.

The main focus of the article is on the events of June 13, 1941, one of the most tragic dates in the history for the inhabitants of the Ukrainian Transdanubia, when the most productive part of the population of the region was destroyed by repression, arrest, deportation, and the part of our generations were broken.

The signing of the Soviet-German Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the entry of German and Soviet troops into sovereign Poland (September 1939) significantly affected the situation in Bessarabia. In the early summer of 1940, the Soviet government expressed the ultimatum of Romania on the transfer of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union. June 28, 1940 after the expiration of the ultimatum, Soviet troops entered these lands.

Already in the first months of Soviet power established in the region, various administrative and economic “innovations” of the Communists were introduced, which led to significant changes.

First, without taking into account the position of the local population and territorial, socio-economic and historical ties, the Soviet authorities divided the Bessarabian lands between the Ukrainian and Moldavian SSR. As a result, part of the Bulgarian and Gagauz settlements found themselves on different sides of the border.

Secondly, a series of administrative reforms have been initiated. Thus, on August 7, 1940, the Ackerman Region was established with a center in Akkerman⁵ December 7, 1940 according to the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR the center of the region was moved to the city of Izmail, and, accordingly, the area was called Izmail.⁶

⁵ *Bulletin of the USSR Supreme Soviet*, 22.08.1940. № 28. [О включении северной части Буковинского и Хотинского, Акерманского и Измаильского уездов Бессарабии в состав УССР], 56.

⁶ *A collection of laws of the USSR and decrees of the Presidency of the Supreme Council of the USSR (1938-July 1956). Decree of the Presidency of the Supreme Council of the USSR dated 07.12.1940.* [О перенесении центра Акерманской области Украинской ССР из

Third, effective changes have taken place in the region's economy. Banks, industrial and commercial enterprises, rail and water transport, communication facilities were nationalized in the region. However, over time, this was not enough for the Soviet authorities, and in the autumn of 1940 another series of orders for the nationalization of private homes, pharmacies and drugstores, commercial enterprises with a profit of at least 6,000 lei, hotels, restaurants, permanent yards, etc. were issued.⁷ In addition, trying to break down and turn into the “silent herd” the largest social group of the region – peasants, the new government began the procedure of nationalization of the land and collectivization of agriculture in the Transdanubia region. For a significant number of peasant families, this meant the confiscation of property and land, work equipment and domestic animals, the arrest and imprisonment of the heads of families and the deportation of its members. The Soviet government did not stand on ceremony: they took out everyone, including pregnant women, young children and the elderly. Unfortunately, many of them could not reach their destination.

To consolidate communist power in the Danube River, the Stalinist regime used the existing “experience” accumulated by the system in previous years. Moreover, the “love of advice” had to be knocked out by force, because the communist ideology was not particularly popular in the region. According to the calculations of the Moldavian researcher Igor Tsau, in the summer of 1940 “... there were only 285 communists of Bessarabian origin, of whom 186 were Jews, 28 Ukrainian, 21 Russians, 21 Romanians. [...] The majority of the population did not consider the Soviet model as the best alternative to the Romanian pre-war regime”⁸. As for the number of communists in the largest cities of the region – Izmail and Akkerman – there were only 23 and 19 party organizations of the Bolsheviks, respectively.

Repressions in the region began with the advent of Soviet power. Initially, the representatives of the former Romanian administration were arrested, who for various reasons remained in the cities. A little later, the authorities began the search and liquidation of the so-called counter-revolutionary elements.

Here is one of many vivid examples of the “justice” of Soviet power. Melnikova Lyubov, 1915, housewife, resident of the city of Izmail. The Communists imprisoned this woman 5 (five !!!) times. And every time the accusations became more absurd. The first time she was arrested on July 12, 1940 as a socially dangerous element, she was sentenced to 5 years of forced labor camps plus two years of deprivation of civil rights. Given the groundlessness of the accusations, Lyubov Afanasevna filed an appeal, and thereby dooming herself to a long “war”

гор. Акерман в гор. Измаил и переименовании Акерманской области в Измаильскую область] (Moscow, State Publishing House of Legal Literature, 1956), 53.

⁷ Izmail Archiv (hereafter cited as IA), box R-470: 1, folder 1: 14, 18, 26, 30, 36.

⁸ I. Tsau, “*Stalin's terror in Soviet Moldova, 1940-1954*”: <http://dacoromania.net/article/stalinist-terror-soviet-moldavia-1940-1953>.

with the authorities, which did not intend to “forgive” Melnikova for such “arrogance” as an appeal. 17. 05. 1941 the court upheld the verdict. In 1947, when the sentence expired, a special meeting at the Ministry of State Security, the woman received another 3 years of exile in the Novosibirsk region, now qualifying as a “particularly dangerous element”. After the end of the next term Melnikova Lyubov is added another three years in prison as a member of foreign intelligence; in February 1952 her prison term was again continued for three years. And only in the second half of the 50’s Melnikova with pulmonary tuberculosis returned to Izmail.⁹

According to our data (not completed yet), only for a year (from June 1940 to June 1941), 1,414 people* were arrested in the Ukrainian Danube, of which 809 are the head of the family, the rest are family members. The largest number of arrested citizens of the region was in the town of Izmail – 317 families, which accounted for almost 40% of the total number of repressed. Among the prisoners are residents of the villages of the Izmail region; most of them were in Kiliya (94 heads of the family) and Sarata (61 heads of the family) districts. According to individual settlements of the region such villages “led”:

Draculya (now the village of Trudovoy, Kiliya district) – 43 families;

Bayramcha (now the village of Nikolaevka-Novorossiysk, Sarata district) – 43 families;

Kytai (now Krasnyi Yar of the Kiliya region) – 39 families.

The analysis of the materials of court cases, taking into account the profession of family heads, suggests that their list is 53 names, among which the most common were: individual peasant; owner of a store, restaurant, mill, pharmacy, former police officers, teachers, doctors, agronomists, engineers, etc.

The ethnic composition of the repressed was also quite motley. Mostly, Ukrainians, Romanians, Russians, Jews fell under arrest. Among others, there were also Bulgarians, Germans, Poles, Moldavians, Greeks, Gagauz, Armenians, Belarusians, Serbs, etc.

Striking in its diversity is the age level of heads and family members: it ranges from 76 years to several months from birth. The NKVD bodies were primarily targeted at men between the ages of 20 and 29 (149 people) and 40 to 49 (133 people). However, the overwhelming majority of those deported by age were... children (!), whose number (from a few months to 16 years old) was 218*.

Recall that the Sovietization of the Akkerman (Izmail) region began almost immediately after the annexation of these territories to the USSR. The largest number of arrests in 1940 occurred in July, August and October. For many residents of the region, the black and terrible date of 1941 was June 13, when just a few days before the start of World War II, a large-scale deportation and “cleansing” of border areas was organized in the region.

⁹ Archival Department of the Izmail City Council (hereafter cited as AVIMR, box 242-T: 3-L, folder 175.

Deportation or forced migration is a form of political repression applied by the state against its citizens using force.¹⁰ In many cases, deportation is only a prelude to the physical destruction of people who are the subject to deportation, or is an element of a more complex repression, when family members who has already been repressed. It was this type of repression that was most characteristic of the Soviet punitive system. Quite often, deportations have been combined with other types of repression, such as deprivation of voting. In fact, deportations were a large-scale historical phenomenon, they were an integral part of the totalitarian state migration system in the USSR, due to a complex combination of political and economic factors. The so-called “kulak exile” and the total deportation of the “punished peoples” during World War II were recognized as the pivotal and determining elements of Soviet deportations.

As we have noted, by 1940 the Soviet authorities already had sufficient “experience” in conducting political repression in their own territories. Issues with the deportation of individual peoples were also not something new to the Communists. As early as 1928-1932, the so-called border-clearing operations were carried out, during which the Koreans, Poles and Finns came under deportation. The next step in the “experience” of deportations was the eviction from the capitals and western borders of Gypsies, Poles, Germans and Finns (1933-1936). Another wave of deportations, which occurred in 1937-1938, was directed against the Kurds, Armenians, Koreans, Iranians and Chinese. The outbreak of World War II coincided with the repression and deportation of Polish citizens, residents of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine.

On May 14, 1941, a large-scale and bloody operation to liquidate the Ukrainian national movement was initiated by resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) and the RNA No. 1299-526ss “On the expulsion of counter-revolutionary organizations in the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR”. The decree provided for the arrest and a 20-year exile to settle in the remote areas of the USSR members of the families of “participants in counter-revolutionary Ukrainian and Polish nationalist organizations”.¹¹ Of those lands that were annexed to the USSR in the early stages of World War II, only the territories of the Baltic states and Bessarabia (the Moldavian SSR and the southern regions of the Ukrainian SSR) remained free from mass repression and deportation. In mid-May, an attack on residents of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian republics began.

For Moldova and the southern regions of Ukraine, preparation for the operation also began in the spring of 1941. Not earlier than April 15, 1941, in the report of the People's Commissar of the NKDB of the USSR P. Meshik to the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) M. Khrushchev on the proposals on liquidation of OUN bases in the western regions of Ukraine stated: “I consider it necessary to apply to the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) and the Council of

¹⁰ A. Yakovlev, (ed.), *Stalin's deportations* (MFD: Mainland, 2005) 6.

¹¹ Yakovlev, (ed.), *Stalin's Deportations*, 215-217.

People's Commissars of the USSR with a proposal to apply the following [...] sanctions:

1. To extend the law on traitors to the Motherland to members of anti-Soviet organizations in an illegal position in the western regions of the USSR, Chernivtsi and Izmail regions of the USSR.
2. The families of illegals, in accordance with the law, repress and confiscate property.
3. The families of the arrested are evicted to remote places”¹²

In early May 1941, taking into account the proposal of S. Goglidze, the authorized representative of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on MSSR, to evict about 5,000 people from the territory of Moldova, preparations were begun for deportation in this region as well. The repressions were aimed at the so-called counter-revolutionary contingent (activists of the bourgeois parties, landowners, individual peasants, policemen, gendarmes, officers of the white, tsarist and Romanian armies; large merchants and homeowners, volost foremen, etc.) and their family members.¹³ In addition, the corresponding operation of the NKVD had a focused ethnic direction - Romanians and Moldovans were subject to deportation.

Explaining his proposal, S. Goglidze noted that “... in the former Bessarabia there were a large number of different bourgeois parties and organizations. After Bessarabia's reunification with the USSR ... party leaders ... fled to Romania. At present, the remnants of parties and organizations, with the active support of Romanian intelligence agencies, have intensified their anti-Soviet activities. ... The greatest activity is shown by:

1. The Iron Guard ... the most conspiratorial organization with terrorist personnel ...
2. Former National Christian or Kuzista party. ... Conducts great organizational work on the creation of counter-revolutionary groups, the recruitment of new members, the spread of anti-Soviet agitation ...
3. Former parties of national liberals and national-tsarivist ... try to organize illegal work.

... I ask for permission to carry out arrests and ... to carry out their evictions to other regions of the USSR”,¹⁴

There was no official reaction to this appeal, however, in early June 1941, the People's Commissar of the NKGB of the MSSR M. Sazykin sent a secret telegram to the Deputy People's Commissar of the NKVD of the USSR V. Chernyshev for information on the preparation of trains for special resettlers: “Train levels are

¹² Yakovlev, (ed.), *Stalin's Deportations*, 190-191.

¹³ V. Passat, *Difficult pages of Moldova's history: 1940s - 1950s* (M.: Terra, 1994) 23.

¹⁴ Yakovlev, (ed.), *Stalin's Deportations*, 206-208.

formed: No. 1, 2 – 90 cars, station Taraclia; ... No. 20 – 38 wagons, station Bolgrad; No. 21, 22 – 103 wagons, Artsiz station ...¹⁵

It is important that scientists have not yet been able to find the basic legislative document that led to the deportation of June 13, 1941. Researcher V. Pasat believes that “this document is unlikely to ever be found”.¹⁶

The next official document relating to the events of the June deportation of 1941 in the Izmail Region is the report of the Deputy People’s Commissar of the NKGB B. Kobulov to Stalin, V. Molotov and L. Beria dated June 13, which refers to the progress of the operation “... to seize participants of counter-revolutionary organizations and other anti-Soviet elements, as well as the eviction of family members of repressed members of counter-revolutionary groups from the MSSR, Chernivtsi and Izmail regions of the Ukrainian SSR”. The document reported on the preparation of lists with 32,423 people, including 6,250 for arrest, 26,173 deportations. The Izmail Region accounted for 3,980 people (or 12% of the total), of which 358 people (5.7%) were subject to arrest, 3,622 people (14% of the total number planned for deportation) were deported.¹⁷

The final directive, published on June 14, 1941, was called the “NKVD Action Plan for the transportation, resettlement and employment of special forces to be evicted from the Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian and Moldavian SSRs”. The publication of this directive after the fact can rightly be considered an example of “the hypocrisy and Pharisaism of the communist government”.¹⁸ In total, more than 30 thousand “Enemies of the people” and almost 47 thousand members of their families were supposed to be taken out of these territories. Prisoners from Moldova were transported to Kazakhstan (Aktubinsk, Karaganda, Kostanai, Kzyl-Orda regions) and the Novosibirsk region. Preparations for the deportation were completed in early June 1941, and the above directive of June 14, 1941 actually it was only a drawn line under the fact that it had already taken place.

It is not entirely clear how the Izmail region, which was a part of the Ukrainian SSR, appeared on the list of territories which was supposed to deport “enemies of the people”. There are no official documents that would shed light on this issue. The above documents officially relate to the territory of Western Ukraine and the Moldavian SSR, but in fact the Danube Ukrainian lands were also included in this process. According to various estimates, from the Moldavian, Chernivtsi and Izmail regions, the Ukrainian SSR 19 (according to other sources, from 22 to 30) thousand people, but not 5 (as planned), was resettled in the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, Komi Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, Krasnoyarsk Territory, Omsk and Novosibirsk Regions.¹⁹

¹⁵ Yakovlev, (ed.), *Stalin’s Deportations*, 208.

¹⁶ Passat, *Difficult pages*, 23-24.

¹⁷ Yakovlev, (ed.), *Stalin’s Deportations*, 210- 211.

¹⁸ Passat, *Difficult pages*, 24-25.

¹⁹ Yakovlev, (ed.), *Stalin’s Deportations*, 186.

So, the “mopping-up” operation began almost simultaneously (at half past two in the night of June 13, 1941) in most of the settlements of the Izmail region. The punitive bodies tried to clearly “put into practice” all the preliminary accusations by the authorities — counter-revolutionary activities, espionage, anti-Soviet agitation, membership in Romanian bourgeois and nationalist parties.

Remembering the previous orders of the authorities to search for and liquidate the OUN bases in Ukraine, the Chekists “found” the OUN members in the Ukrainian Danube region as well. So, on charges of “uniting the cadre of Ukrainian nationalists, spreading anti-Soviet sentiments among the local population”, the resident of the village of Matroska Sklyarenko Andrei and his wife Ekaterina Vasilyevna, who allegedly organized an anti-Soviet speech by Ukrainian nationalists in the village in April 1941, were arrested. The further fate of the family was formed according to the scenario traditional for the NKVD: a man went to Sverdlovsk prison, where he died in the spring of 1942, and his wife and his daughter went to a special settlement in Kazakhstan.²⁰

Among those who were arrested on the night of June 13, 1941, we distinguish several conditional categories. It’s conditional that very often several different positions were united in the prosecution – perhaps, in this way the NKVD men tried to give greater conviction and weight to their sentences. The **first group** included “enemies of the people” and the Soviet regime – former activists of the bourgeois parties, police, gendarmes, officers of the white, tsarist and Romanian armies, city hall workers, village wardens etc.

Varzarov Efim (Martaz, now the village of Rybachye, Tuzlovsky district) – village warden; 8 family members were sent into exile together with him, the youngest of whom was 9 months old.²¹

On June 13, 1941, Irina Belichenko, born in 1895, was arrested, lived in her own house in the city of Izmail on the street Dmitrievskaya. Her husband worked as a commissar of the city police until 1940 and in early July 1940 he was arrested and executed. The woman spent almost a year in constant interrogations, calls to the relevant authorities and then got on the lists for deportation.²²

Georgitsa Andrei Vasilievich, 1886, a peasant sole-man of the village of Doluka (now the village of Bogatoe, Izmail district) was arrested as a member of the liberal party, a secret agent of the Romanian Sigurans. 4 family members (wife and three sons) were repressed together with him. “At night they lifted everyone, put us in trucks. At the railway station our father was taken away and we were stuffed into freight cars and taken to an unknown destination. ... we went to the Kzyl-Kum region, to the Telman state farm. Soon my mother died, leaving me (12 years old) and my brother (16 years old) – recalled a participant in those events, Vasily Georgitsa. “We worked very hard at the state farm There was rotten place, water

²⁰ AVIMR, box 242-T:3-L, folder 208.

²¹ Matveyeva, *Repression*, 67.

²² IA, box R - 470: 1, folder 1: 1, 17.

was brought, snakes crawl ... We often went hungry ... Later we found out that our father was shot in 1942".²³

Klimovskiy Semen, 1885, a large landowner, until 1940 owned 150 hectares of land. The very interesting fact is that Semen Deomidovich was a member of the Tatarbunar uprising and served his sentence in a Romanian prison, but thanks to the ransom he was released. When in the summer of 1940 the Soviets entered southern Bessarabia they first arrested Semenov's father, Deomid. And already on June 13, 1941, together with his wife Vera and son George (2 years), Klimovskiy Semen was sent to the prison. His wife and son were sent to Aktobe region, and he was accused of being the son of a landowner, an officer of the tsarist and Romanian armies, a member of bourgeois parties (NKVD men didn't even bother to indicate which ones – author) hostile to the Soviet regime. After the arrest the family's house was confiscated; later there was located a nursery. As for the fate of Semen Klimovsky, he died of tuberculosis in prison in 1947.²⁴

Krasnoshchek Afanasiy, 40 years old, resident of the village of Safyany (Izmail district). According to the erroneous version of the NKVD men he was a secret agent of the Sigurans, served in the gendarmerie. Together with his family he was sent to Samarkand region.²⁵

Makarie Mikhail, born in 1902, is a native of Ismail. On charges of counter-revolutionary activity the whole family (5 people) was taken out in a freight car, accompanied by the Red Army soldiers of the NKVD to the Pakhta-Aral state farm of the Chimken region of the Kazakh SSR. From there the head of the family was sent to Siberia, for logging. As Mikhail Pavlovich recalled, "due to the lack of all the prisoners we were taken out of the cars and forced to dig graves for ourselves.. ... However, we were lucky, the train came and sent us to Siberia".²⁶

Nereutsa Mefodiy, born in 1898, the resident of Mikhailovka, Sarata district. Arrested by Sarata RO NKVD 06.13.1941 as a wealthy man and a socially dangerous element. Later the prosecution was reprofiled into the anti-Soviet agitation and, in connection with the outbreak of war, Nereutsa was transferred to the Vologda prison, where he was shot by the decision of the Special Meeting in October 1942.²⁷

Pintya Georgyi, 67 years old (!!) at the time of his arrest. They accused him of being a white army officer during the Civil War, then fled to Bessarabia, where he

²³ Archival Department of the Izmail District Council (hereafter cited as AVIRR), folder Georgitsa.

²⁴ Archival Department of the Tatarbunar District Council (hereafter cited as AVTRR), folder 29.

²⁵ AVIRR, folder Krasnoshchek.

²⁶ AVIMR, box 242-T: 3-L, folder 131, 138.

²⁷ Matveyeva, *Repression*, 73.

became a priest and a member of the liberal Romanian party. Georgyi Georgievich did not wait for the verdict – a few days after the arrest he died in prison.²⁸

To the **second category** we included those whom the authorities accused of one of the “mortal sins” of communism – the possession of private property. There are several subgroups here. The most numerous are individual peasants, or in the language of protocols, kurkul. The geography of the arrests is striking in this subgroup: Areshkin Markel (Novaya Nekrasovka, Izmail district), Babi Trofim (Kytai, now the village of Krasny Yar, Kiliya), Bayrak Vasily (Akmangit, now the village of Belolesie, Tatarbunary), Bakumenko Vasily (Akmangit, now village of Belolesie, Tatarbunary), Burlia Petr (Fricatsey, now the village of Limanskoye, Reni), Georgiev Peter (Kairakli, now the village of Loschinovka, Izmail), Georgiev Thomas (Kamchik, now the village of Zarya, Sarata district), Gnidenko Fedor (Izmail) George Gutsu (Frumushika century, now the village of Staroselye, Sarata), Deev Alistrat (Izmail), Zubenko Pavel (Izmail), Poida Alexander (Izmail), Smelyansky Fedot (Broska, Izmail).

Drymov Ivan, 1884, the head of a large family (8 people), who lived in a village Bayramcha (now the village of Nikolaevka-Novorossiysk, Sarata district). By 1940 the owner of 10 hectares of land, for the processing of which he used hired labor. In the summer of 1940 most of the land was taken out off the family, and on June 13, 1941 the family itself, which was evicted to special settlement in Aktyubinsk region, was also deported. As for the head of the family, according to the verdict of the NKVD tribunal by the Odessa region, he was sentenced for 10 years in prison (with confiscation of property) and for another 5 years of deprivation of civil rights for anti-Soviet agitation.²⁹

Lazarev Vasily, born in 1904, the resident of the village of Chishmele (now the village of Ruchey, Tatarbunary district). The accusation was that he was “the son of a large landowner, used hired workers on the farm, and was also a member and the leader of the committee of the national liberal party of the village, mocking the local population” At first all the Lazarevs’ ended up in the Aktyubinsk region and later, in 1943, Vasily was again taken by the NKVD, accused on counter-revolutionary activity, and sent to prison for 8 years. After serving his sentence, Lazarev Vasily was left under police surveillance at a special settlement, and only in 1956 he managed to escape to Moldova.³⁰

Smelyansky Fedot, a native of the village Broska. Arrested like a kurkul (wealthy man). Later his daughter Anna Fedotovna described these events as follows: “The NKVD men came at night. They lifted everyone out of bed, half-dressed and sleepy, loaded onto carts and taken to the station. We drove in the cars for about a month. At the stations, the directors of state farms examined us as slaves – they mostly chose healthy and young people, and no one wanted to take old

²⁸ AVIMR, box 242-T: 3-L, folder 204.

²⁹ Matveyeva, *Repression*, 69.

³⁰ AVTRR, folder 26.

people and children. When we were in Kazakhstan, we were given 200 gr. bread per person and a bucket of water per family. We lived in dugouts. ... In summer the heat was up to +70, in winter frost was up to -40. Then there was a starvation – eating lizards and various animals”.³¹

Among those arrested and sentenced to deportation there were many individual peasants from the Bulgarian villages of the Izmail region (Kamenka, Loschinovka, Suvorovo). Let's mention some names. The village of Tashbunar (now the village of Kamenka): Anton Dyulgerov, 44 years old, deported to the Tomsk Region, the building was transferred to the local collective farm. The village of Kairakliya (now the village of Loshchinovka): Adam and Matey, Slavov, were deported together with their families in the Tomsk Region. The village of Shikirli-Kitai (now the town of Suvorovo): Ivan Ilikchiev, 28 years old, was deported to a special settlement in Kazakhstan with his family (wife, two brothers, daughter and two sons); Ilikchiev Fedor, 51 years old, was subject to eviction for special settlement as kurkul and socially dangerous element; Petro Ilikchiev, 49 years old, ended up with his family in Kazakhstan as a result of deportation; Kalayanov George, 20 years old, accused on anti-Soviet agitation and sent to Kazakhstan with his wife and daughter; their house was transferred to the collective farm, and later there was vocational school No. 42; Sakazly Konstantin, 30 years old, deported to the Shigarsky district of the Tomsk region; Smokov Mikhail – shot shortly after his arrest, later, already in 1947, he was dispossessed of his family, and the house was confiscated as an outpatient.

The **next subgroup of the category** of private owners is the former owners of enterprises, shops, restaurants, warehouses. These are Afonin Porfiry (Sarata, grain stores and warehouses), Balan Ivan (Bayramcha, Sarata district, poultry trade), Borisov Erofei (Izmail, a large perfume and haberdashery shops), Dmitry Vlaev (Bolgrad, creamery), Andrey Degtyarev (Izmail, brick factory), Stepan Doychev (Izmail, bakery), Ivanchenko Kakim (Izmail, bakery), Korzh Semen (Izmail, liquor store), Gabriel Korpusov (Izmail, grain trade), Ivan Saginova (Izmail, restaurant owner). As for the last name – Ivan Saginov, 1891, he was arrested on suspicion of espionage, sent to prison, where in december 1943 he was shot. It is terrible that the death certificate said that Ivan Nikolaevich died of typhus.³²

Among private owners there was another subgroup – the owners of real estate in the form of buildings that they rented out. This category of accused suffered less: these people were taken away (nationalized) from their homes and they were either left in the city or evicted to the nearest villages. However some of them, for example, Berenstein Tina (Reni), Bogomolov Peter (Izmail), Kobets Fedor (Izmail), Paslavsky Nikolai (Izmail), were deported on June 13, 1941.

³¹ AVIRR, folder Smelyanskaya.

³² AVIMR, box 242-T: 3-L, folder 242.

Kobets Fedor, 1879, lived in his own two-storied house in Izmail, rented out part of the premises. During his arrest the NKVD men acted according to the traditional pattern: the family (4 people, the youngest was only a few months old) was sent to Samarkand region and the head of the family was sent to prison, where he died in October 1941.³³

To **the third category** we included representatives of the local intelligentsia – teachers, doctors, agronomists, accountants, engineers and more. Bargutin Leib (Tatarbunary, State Bank Accountant), Bereznjakov Porphyriy (Izmail, Izmailtorg Accountant), Granich Semen (Bolgrad, Doctor-Veterinarian), Gutsan Andrew (Reni, Agronomist), Dmitriev Alexander (Hadji-Kurda, Headmaster), Kobzarenko Mikhail (Shabo, winemaking master), Kostenko Ostap (Nerushay, teacher), Tomov Trifon (Izmail, sub-head of school No. 11, arrested while holding a teaching meeting). Like the rest of those on the June lists, members of that category spent the next part of their lives either in prison or in a special settlement.

Dmitriev Alexander, born in 1901, a native of the city of Beltzy (Moldova). He lived with his wife in the village of Khadzhi-Kurda (now the village of Kamyshevka, Izmail district). He worked as a director of a rural school, and his wife Tatyana Nikolaevna – a teacher. On June 13, 1941 their family as a “socially dangerous element” was deported to Uzbekistan, Samarkand region.³⁴

The fourth category is the so-called family clans. As a socially dangerous element, the Bayraki clan from Akmangit village (now Bilolissya village, Tatarbunarskiy) was deported to the Aktjubinsk region. A large family of Zhigaylo from Kislytsa fell under the rink of repression. Most of the family members (6 people) were deported to the Aktjubinsk region, and the head of the family, Zhigaylo Semen, came to Kazakhstan. As a socially dangerous and kulak element, they were evicted from the village. Shikirli-Kytai (now the village of Suvorov, Izmail), the Ilikchiev family – Theodore and Peter Dmitrovich. Both families (a total of 8 people) ended up in Kazakhstan and their property was transferred to the collective farm. The families of the two Korzh brothers – Semyon and Yakov Zakharovich – were on the deportation lists (14 people).

To **the fifth category**, we referred to the so-called “ours” – those, who from the first day of the emergence of Soviets in the region, or demonstrated their loyalty and even worked in various administrative institutions, or were representatives of the working class – the mainstay of the Communists. Among the archival materials were cases concerning the deportation of Uzun Mykola (the loader of the Reni railway station), Fadeeva Petra (the worker of the Izmail fish factory).

Gonchar Nikita Illich, born in 1884, a farmer from the village Kislytsa, until 1940 he had 5 hectares of land, a couple of horses, its own house. He was arrested

³³ AVIMR, box 242- T: 3-L, folder 98.

³⁴ AVIMR, box 242-T: 3-L, folder 65.

as an “active member of an underground party group, a member of the tsarist party”. It is interesting that Nikita Gonchar was a man loyal to the Soviet authorities, and as early as the summer of 1940 he became a member of the executive committee of the Kislytsa village council and one of the first in the village to join the collective farm. However, this did not save the Gonchar from repression by the communist authorities. Together with his family (six people), on June 13, 1941, they were deported as a “socially dangerous element” to the Samarkand region. Mykita Illich's younger daughter was 5 years old at the time of deportation.³⁵

The Shcherbina Vlas family at the time of arrest consisted of 9 people. The head of the family was 62 years old. The family was poor (as stated in the arrest report), all living together in Izmail in a small two-room house. The reason for the arrest of the whole family was the accusation of one of his sons – Dmitry (17 years old) – of “ties to security and membership in the Cusist Party”. All members of this family were deported to Uzbekistan.³⁶

The sixth, final category includes women who, for various reasons (as a rule, men have been arrested before) were heads of families. Here are some names and examples.

Barbanyaga Anastasia (Izmail, former owner of the restaurant), Belichenko Irina (Izmail, husband – former police officer), Anna Bloshenko (Izmail, arrested as anti-Soviet element), Bondareva Efrosinia (Stara Nekrasivka, peasant woman), Burgoch Nina (Reni, a member of a socially dangerous family), Zhigaylo Anna (Kislytsa, kurkulka), Maria Kolotinska (Tatarbunary, kurkulka), Kupchik Yevgeny (Kiliya, wife of the enemy of the people, sent with an 8-month-old child to Kazakhstan), Ivanov Agafia (Izmail, wife of the enemy of the people), Serenko Paraskovia (Izmail, kurkulka; the man was previously convicted of sabotage).

Anna Bloshenko, who lived in Izmail on Sadovaya Street with her mother, Maria Nikolaevna. At the time of her arrest, she was 18 years old and her mother was 40. On counterfeit charges of anti-Soviet activity, the NKVD authorities, they were evicted to Uzbekistan by the Kzil-Kum state farm of the Farish district of the Jizzakh region.³⁷

Bondareva Efrosinia, single peasant woman, born in 1900, resident of Staraya Nekrasivka village, Izmail district. At the time of her arrest, she was living in her own home with her 3 sons and her daughter, who was only 8 years old at the time of the eviction.³⁸

Bugoch Nina, at the time of her arrest she was only 12 years old. During the operation of the NKVD, she and her parents were arrested and sent to Tiraspol, where echelons were formed for deportation. However, on the way, Nina was

³⁵ AVIRR, folder Gonchar.

³⁶ AVIMR, box 242-T: 3-L, folder 259.

³⁷ AVIMR, box 242-T: 3- L, folder 280.

³⁸ Matveyeva, *Repression*, 67.

simply taken away from her parents and together with the same children sent to the Tomsk region to the Parable Orphanage. She never saw her parents again.³⁹

Daughter Kupchik Yevgeniya, Galina mentioned: “At dawn, the NKVD workers came to the apartment and ordered to get together within 10 minutes, taking with them only the necessary wearables. Then everyone was loaded into the truck. My mother and I were sent in a freight wagon first to Kazakhstan and then to Uzbekistan”.⁴⁰

After the mass arrests, most of the accused were sent for deportation. Some of the arrested, as a rule, the heads of families, remained in the NKVD bodies to dislodge “legitimate grounds” and make arrest records. Some of them were sent to different prisons in stages. Some of them were shot in Izmail. There is evidence that in the twentieth of June 1941 (a few days before the start of the Soviet-German war!!!), over 40 people accused of anti-Soviet activity were shot dead in a Jewish cemetery. Eyewitnesses of the events recall: “For several days, the mutilated bodies lay in the open sky, and among them women and children went in search of their relatives arrested by the Communists. Later they were reburied at the Old- Believers Cemetery”.⁴¹ Among those who were shot was Guslyakov Nifanyi from Izmail. The rest of the names have not yet been established.

Concluding the review of the dramatic events of June 1940 – June 1941, the author states:

- arrests and deportations in the Ukrainian Transdanubia were one of the means of intimidation of the local population;
- the Communist repression and punitive apparatus was well prepared for the ability to "blind the image of the enemy of the people" using traditional methods of slander, denunciation, and torture;
- in the period from June 1940 to June 1941, four waves of repression were distinguished, when the arrests of the population of the region were massive: July, August, October 1940 and June 1941;
- the events of June 13, 1941, were the most horrific in their effects: they led to a significant decrease in the population in the region; forced displacement of part of the inhabitants into the outermost regions of the country; the lives of thousands of our compatriots have been broken and lost;
- terror and repression served as the primary means of ensuring the region's integration into the USSR;
- honoring the memory of those who lost their lives and their broken lands requires further thorough investigation of the crimes of the Communists in the Ukrainian lands.

**calculated by the author*

³⁹ AVIMR, box 242-T: 3-L, folder 21.

⁴⁰ AVIMR, box 242-T: 3-L, folder 119.

⁴¹ AVIMR, box 242-T: 3-L, folder 55.