

## DEPORTATION. RESISTANCE FOR THE SAKE OF SALVATION

Every nation's history has stages full of tragedy and tears. Greeks who had survived one of the most cruel conquests by Ottoman Empire and partially settled in the Russian Empire in search of better fortune, for the first time reaped fruits of protection at the time of Peter the Great and Catherine II. In 20<sup>th</sup> century they had been subjected to repressions, executions and deportations, generated by the epoch of Stalin. Varvara Burnazaki together with her mother Alexandra Nikolau was deported to Kazakhstan from the Black Sea coast of Ukraine four years after the end of the Great Patriotic War. At the moment of deportation Varvara was 50 years old and her mother was aged 70. Two elderly women represented only one family among almost nine thousand families evicted from their own home. Twelve years earlier men were taken from their homes and sent into the unknown. The majority of people repressed in 1937-1949 were charged with Greek partiality, lack of citizenship, former Greek citizenship, and Soviet citizenship acquired through naturalization of former Greek citizens, as well as contacts with Greek consulate or espionage in its favor. Varvara's father Petr Nikolau, a native of the Kherson Governorate just like many of his fellow villagers held Greek citizenship. According to the documents kept in the State Archive of Odessa region, it is established that Nikolau's children were natives of the hamlet Rapatyevo, located in «one of the biggest Greek settlements of the Russian Empire» called Malyi Buyalyk. The years 1918–1920 became absolutely unpredictable for Odessa and its environs. The city had changed hands several times. Only in February 1920 this seaport became ultimately Soviet.

By the middle of the twenties new authority had divided peasants into kulaks, middle peasants and the poor. P.Nikolau, who had his own and rented lands, cattle, and all necessary agricultural equipment, got ascribed to the category of kulaks. Until 1920 a part of his cattle and equipment had already been confiscated, in 1929 he was ousted; as he had money at his disposal, by 1930 he had had a farm again. Greek agricultural artel was founded on the basis of hamlet. Petr Fedorovich rejected such innovations and refused to join artel. He thought that, “Agricultural artel is enslavement of peasants”. Then, as he was a self-employed farmer, he was assigned “a grain procurement target, but he failed to pay it accurately”, and one more time he paid for it with his possessions, i.e. everything was confiscated in favour of the artel.

After second confiscation Petr Fedorovich's sons left for Odessa in search of a job. Men found job in a factory, they became diggers. In the years of the first five-year plan people who performed earth works were called diggers. They were attributed to a privileged group of workers. In spite of all collisions, Nikolau's farm remained one of the tidiest farms in Rapatyevo. In 1933–1937 P.Nikolau was in correspondence with Greek legation in Moscow. It is quite possible that policy of the Soviet Government gave rise to farmer's thoughts about immigration to his historical motherland. December 1937 burst forth and a wave of arrests swept

villages of compact Greek settlement; men were being arrested on charges of espionage. On December 16 Pavel and Vladimir Nikolau, as well as their relative Incaki Mikhail, residing with them, were arrested in Odessa. On Christmas Eve in 1938 P.F. Nikolau, his brother Vasily and nephews were arrested. All Nikolaus were charged with counterrevolutionary propaganda and imposed declarations against the kolkhoz system and contacts with Greek legation in Moscow as a charge. In 1938 menfolk of the Nikolau family were executed. The family was not notified of execution, moreover when in 1940 Alexandra Iosifovna filed a request to prosecutor of the USSR for review of her husband and son's cases, her appeal was dismissed. In 1941 the war started. Alexander Inaki recollects, "... in July Germans reached the Dnieper. We spent all 4 war years in occupation; we lived off our vegetable garden and a farm, to be specific, off everything that was left after German and Romanian soldiers' extortion. On April 1944 Soviet troops came. All young men of the hamlet were taken to labour army. Together with my brother Leonid I worked on reconstruction of the road Odessa-Tiraspol, and later in Moscow region at the station Zheledorozhnaya". In 1948 against the background of aggravation of the political situation and internal problems of the post-war period, a decision on enhancement of punitiverepressive policy against different strata of society was made. Greeks, Turks, and Dashnaks as "political suspects" were evicted from the territory of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Black sea coast of Russia and Ukraine. Unpredictable deportation of 1949 irreversibly changed usual way of life of the deported. In June and July 1949 about 891 families, i.e. 37108 evicted Greeks were received and accommodated in the territory of South Kazakhstan, Jambul, Kyzyl-Orda, Taldy-Kurgan, and Alma-Ata regions. Judging by documents of the AP RK, a considerable number of families, accommodated in rural areas, were in dire need of food. They did not possess personal supplies of products and did not have an opportunity to buy them on the spot. Advance payments given by kolkhozes on account of workdays reduced the need of food only to a small extent. In first days medical care was organized inefficiently; lack of doctors and medicine was evident. 24 fatalities were registered as a consequence of intestinal diseases. In December 1949 in official information of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan leaders suggested that "attention should be paid to bad material status of evicted Greeks, who had recently arrived to Kazakhstan, who at the moment of eviction were not given a chance to sell their movable and real property"; food aid as well as clothing allowance should be provided for them". Gradually policy on deported people started changing. Mass release of former kulaks and members of their families from special settlements was conducted in 1946–1947. In accordance with enactment of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, MVD of the USSR issued an order which stated that "all restrictions are to be removed from former Kulaks from special settlements and passports are to be given according to the standard procedure". Several regions were listed in that order. Kazakhstan was in that list as well. In 1956 edicts of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on liberalization were being issued one after another: in January Poles, deported in 1936, were released from special settlements, later on edicts on Kalmyks, Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, Crimean,

Tatars, Balkars, Meskhetian Turks, Kurds and Hamshenis, Chechens, Ingushes and Karachais followed. However, those who were released from MVD supervision were not permitted to return to places of their former residence. Researchers suppose that “deported nations fell out of process of normal civilized development; development of their culture was severed... Deportation condemned people to low living standards; it decreased, and in particular, eliminated acquisition of education at the level of elementary literacy”. In spite of all trials, Greeks, who had been torn away from their usual habitat, managed to make it in far Kazakhstan. Many of them obtained education, if not children, then their grandchildren did. They have preserved traditions and cuisine. Despite last statistical data, it cannot be said that their native language was lost, as initially, native language of many Greeks living in Ukraine in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century was Russian. Sixty-five years have passed since deportation, but descendants are not aware of true reasons of their ancestors’ deportation from the Black Sea coast of Ukraine, in particular from under study hamlet Rapatyevo. A period in this case could have been put a quarter of century ago. In July 1989 inferences were added to all investigative cases’ files, which informed that all executed and repressed Nikolaus fell within the scope of the first clause of enactment of the President of the Supreme Council of the USSR dated January 16, 1989 “On additional measures for rectification of an injustice towards victims of repressions which took place in 1930–1940es and the beginning of 1950es». Still, they had not been rehabilitated, as request for information about relatives to address bureau of Odessa resulted in negative reply “Undeliverable”. It may seem that human memory is not a reliable source, but accounts of crucial moments of personal life represent significant experimental material for studying social history. Introduction of archival sources, abundant in genealogical information, into scientific use offers new possibilities for sociological and social psychological studies.

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