

I, Hanna Kashynska, was born on 23 December 1912 in the village of Hlodosi in the Kherson region; I am a Ukrainian. My father, a peasant, was dekulakized in early 1929 and deported to the Far North. Dekulakization took place in a brutal fashion: at night, when the temperature was -30°; people were thrown out into the cold, not allowed to take anything warm with them, even for the children. Ejected from their houses, people were herded at night to the village soviet, where they waited out in the open air until morning. Among them were many people with small children, the elderly, and the sick, all standing in the clothes that they had been wearing, some having managed to grab something with them.

In the morning the dekulakized people were herded in large columns to the railway station twenty-five kilometers from the village. The elderly, the sick, and children died along the way, and their relatives, who wanted to help the dying with their last ounce of effort, were shot on the spot. Near the station the exhausted, naked, and starving waited once again in the open air for transport.

My older brothers and I escaped two hours before the arrival of GPU agents because we were warned by the secretary of the village soviet, who, in the face of this threat, tried to warn whoever could to save themselves. Unfortunately, in keeping with the GPU's plan, very many families were subject to dekulakization (in my raion alone sixty families were targeted, and there were 12 raions); it was thus impossible to warn everyone. For warning people, the secretary was liquidated, and dekulakization took place every night according to plan. and its scale intensified.

For many years my brothers roamed Central Asia and the Ural region, but I remained in the Dnipropetrovsk region, where I lived thanks to purchased documents and worked as a teacher in the village of Obukhivka from 1929 to 1932. In those years I was a witness and co-participant in our people's great sufferings during the introduction of collectivization in Ukraine. I still remember the surnames of many of those who were tortured.

From 1932 to 1937 I studied medicine at the Dnipropetrovsk Medical Institute. I witnessed the mass deaths of entire villages from the artificially induced famine in Ukraine because of the Ukrainians' defiance of the Soviet system and collectivization. Families that I knew well from Obukhivka, where I had taught school, starved to death, every last person, in the space of a few weeks. Keeping in touch with Obukhivka, each day I lost more and more acquaintances, whose entire families were dying.

In the spring of 1933 I wanted to visit a family from Obukhivka, whose children were the best pupils in my class. After disembarking from the steamboat and going ashore, I noticed that there was not a single child near the pier on the Dnipro River (in the past, very many children of different ages would gather every time a steamship arrived at the Obukhivka quay). As well, there was no sign of any kind of labor either in the fields or gardens. The only people walking about were those who worked in the factories in Dnipropetrovsk and received rations there. Arriving at the home of the H. family, who had six children, I did not see anyone either in the yard or at the windows. I entered the house and heard groaning. I draw near [and see] two

children in a bed; one is trying to speak. I recognize the older [girl]; I ask how she's doing. Her answer was: "I'm afraid because rats are crawling over me, and it's been a few days since Tania died, and the rats ate her eyes, and now they're creeping up to me, and mama on the stove with the smaller children fell silent the day before yesterday, and on Sunday some people took Petro and my father away because they died a long, long time ago." I left the house and went to the neighbouring house, where the Shch. family lived. It was empty, the paths were overgrown. A woman walks past the yard and says that everyone on this street had already died in the winter because they had not joined the collective farm and were not allowed [to work] in the factory. I entered the school, there are no children to be seen, no one is running around, the teachers have all left; the only ones left are the principal and a few students whose parents worked at a factory in the city.

I learn that only a few children remain out of my former class of forty-five pupils; the rest have already died. No one is helping, no one from the government is interested, and the population that is still holding on is afraid to help because, for rendering assistance to the unfortunate, they pay without fail with their own lives. In this village the only ones who survived were those who worked at the factory. Villages that were located farther away from the city had died out, one and all.

I return to Dnipropetrovsk and run into a colleague who worked in the village of Vodiane, near Nykopil. She says: "I'm not working, there are no children, no people...only 40 remain out of a population of 5,000, and several hundred people who abandoned the village and moved to the city. Four thousand are left from my village of Hlodosy, which had a population of 25,000; and 21,000 people were either deported or died, with the exception of a handful of people who were lucky enough to escape, but who have to live under foreign passports, under false names, and even change their nationality because there was a very bad attitude toward Ukrainians; they were not trusted and were imprisoned at the very first opportunity.

I remember many surnames of the people who were murdered, deported, and starved to death.

– Hanna Kashynska

*The authenticity of the signature of Ms. Anna Kashynska, written in her own hand in my presence, is hereby certified.*

München – Feldmoching, 10 March 1950

(The signature is certified with a seal, its outer edge is inscribed with the words: International Refugee Organization; in the center of the seal is the inscription: Area 7. Legal Counsellor. D. P. Camp. Sub Area Sohleissheim)

A. Alexandrow, Legal Counsellor, IRO Area 7  
Sub Area Sohleissheim

The Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre (Oseredok), Winnipeg. Pihido Pravoberezhnyi Collection, file 49, fols. 3–5. Original. Typescript