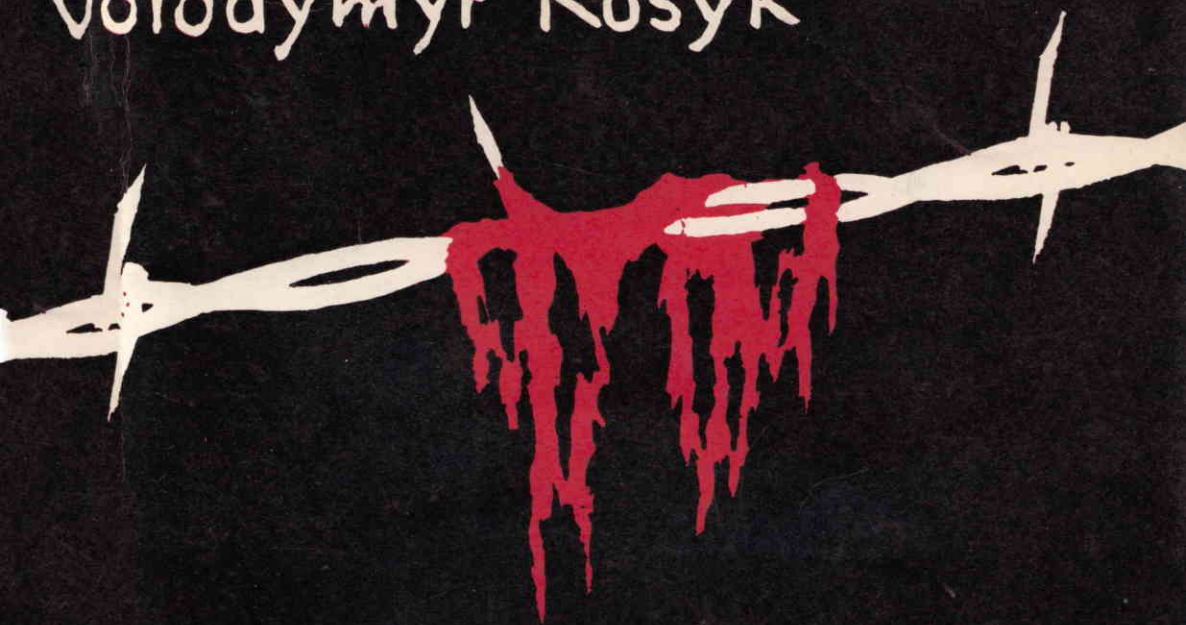


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CONCENTRATION
CAMPS
IN THE
USSR





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FOREWORD

It is difficult, if not impossible, for people living fairly comfortably in well-ordered and free conditions in the West to imagine the misery of people herded together in squalid surroundings behind barbed wire in concentration camps set up by a ruthless dictatorial regime in this supposedly enlightened age. How can a man who lives in a home of his own, does a regular job, earns sufficiently to maintain his family, and is able to enjoy his leisure in the way that pleases him, understand the horrible plight of countless millions of people quite like himself who, though they have not committed any crime at all, are forcibly torn away from their homes, their families and their native land; who are deprived of their possessions, deported thousands of miles away into the impassable primeval forests, bogs and snow wastes of Siberia and are thrown into lice-ridden concentration camps for long years of exhausting forced labour, because they are deemed to be a potential danger to the cruel regime of the Kremlin clique, who is afraid of the slightest whiff of free thought? —

Human words are too feeble to describe the abyss of degradation into which ordinary men and women have been thrown by the cynical power-drunk heirs of the Russian Tsars. At times even the life of beasts of burden under the worst master, seems preferable to the pitiful lot of human beings endowed with the precious gifts of soul and reason, suffering under the heartless Russian Communist slave-drivers.

The present book, which is made available to the public of the free world, makes an attempt to outline in the given space the main facts about the concentration camps in the Bolshevik Russian "prison of peoples", known as the "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics". The traditions of slave labour in Tsarist Russia are traced and their rich flowering in the "Communist" Russian Empire in its various periods is described in some detail. Particular attention is paid to that extremely important aspect, so little understood in the West, namely the use of the concentration camp system by Moscow to suppress the national liberation movements of the Ukrainian and other enslaved peoples. An attempt is made to estimate the number of the victims of the concentration camp regime in the USSR.

It is hoped that this study may lead to a better understanding of the evil in the Russian Bolshevist system which is advocated by people such as the notorious Hangman of Ukraine and Hungary, Nikita Khrushchov, and recommended as the epitomy of justice and humanitarianism to the rest of mankind.

The present publication is part of the collected reports and documents published under the title "Russian Oppression in Ukraine".



C H A P T E R I

SLAVE LABOUR IN TSARIST RUSSIA AND IN THE USSR

The existence of slave labour and of concentration camps in the Soviet Union, though it is a question on which there can be no doubt, continues to be an obscure matter and one which is far removed from the majority of people who have the good fortune to be free. It is difficult to imagine that about 10 per cent of the population of the prison of nations which goes by the name of Soviet Union are interned in slave labour camps. And it is even more difficult to realize that the overwhelming majority of these prisoners were and are persons who belong to the peoples subjugated by Russia.

Few people know exactly who these prisoners are, or why they are in the camps, or what their nationality is. Russian emigrants, relying on the ignorance of the free world, spread fairytales about "the millions of Russians living in the concentration camps." They do so for two reasons: in the first place, in order to make the world believe that there is neither discrimination nor national oppression in the Soviet Union, and that the Russian Communist regime does not treat the Russians with favouritism and does not persecute the peoples it rules (the non-Russian peoples) to the death; secondly, in order to make the world believe that, apart from the peoples of the Baltic countries, the other peoples are "peoples of Russia," or quite simply Russians. These two reasons, though they seem to be contradictory, prompt the Russian emigrants to make exaggerated statements and protestations whenever the truth is made known. Proud of the conquests and of the strength of Soviet Russia ("never before has Russia been so powerful, never before has she made the whole world tremble"), they have one objective in mind in acting thus: namely, to prove that Russia is not responsible for the advance of Communism; to prove that it is not Russia but "international Communism" which is a menace to the free world; to prove that Communism has not become the instrument of modern Russian imperialism, and to endeavour to preserve the conquests of Soviet Russia after the possible downfall of Communism.

Russia Has Always Availed Herself of Slave Labour

Slave labour came into being in Russia with the expansion of the Russian (that is to say Muscovite) state and with the conquest of neighbouring peoples: Siberia, Turkestan, the Caucasus, Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic countries, Finland, etc. As a rule such conquests were accompanied by the ruthless massacre of the innocent local population and the deportation to Russia and later to Siberia of prisoners condemned to slave labour, which consisted in the building of towns, roads and canals. In the 17th century the system of slave labour had practically already reached its peak under Tsar Peter I.

To quote but one example, — after the defeat of Ukraine, the ally of King Charles XII of Sweden, in the war against Russia, Peter I gave orders that the remnants of the Ukrainian resistance were to be destroyed by the deportation of Ukrainians to Russia. According to the Russian archives cited by Russian and Ukrainian historians, during the years 1721 and 1725 at least 20,000 Ukrainian prisoners perished during the construction of the Ladoga Canal and the town of St. Petersburg (now Leningrad).¹⁾ About the same period, more than 10,000 Ukrainians perished during the construction of the fortress of Derbent on the Caspian Sea, and about 60,000 during the construction of the fortifications along the shores of the Sea of Azov.²⁾ As can be seen from the report submitted to the Russian Senate by Colonel Cherniak in 1722, the prisoners died as a result of the inhuman conditions which they had to endure in the camps and on the sites where they worked.³⁾ “The Tsar — so W. H. Chamberlain writes — employed the methods which have been frequently practised since those days by the Soviet government with the aim of breaking down the resistance of the Ukrainians and of the other recalcitrant peoples.”⁴⁾

Since the days of Peter I, slave labour — “katorga” — has never ceased to exist in Russia. There is no difference between the slaves of former times and those of today: they are persons who belong to the conquered and recalcitrant peoples and have been sentenced for political crimes, and about 20 per cent of the total number are Russians who have been sentenced under common law, or, likewise, for disloyalty to the regime.

“The New Era”

The old tsarist system of slave labour fell into decay in 1917 as a result of the Communist coup d'état. For some years, or, to be more precise, during the “militant Communism,” it was not replaced, although internment camps were set up a few months after the coup d'état. The Russian Bolshevik army and the Cheka undertook to liquidate the enemies of Russia and of the new regime by shooting them.

Nevertheless, slave labour could be foreseen from the beginning of the "new era" in Russia. But in conformity with Communist ideas and phraseology, the Russians this time changed its name and also its definition. The old system of slave labour was abolished, but in 1919 the term "corrective labour" was introduced. In March that same year the Congress of the Bolsheviks approved the programme of the Party, in which it was stated that "labour is the principal method of correction." Subsequently, in April 1919, the President of the Executive Committee of Soviet Russia, M. Kalinin, signed the decree "On the camps for corrective labour in R.S.F.S.R." (that is to say, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic).⁵⁾

It is interesting to note that at that time the Soviet Union did not yet exist. Ukraine, Georgia and other states were constantly at war with Russia. These states, even after their occupation by the Russian Communist army, were not incorporated in the Russian Federation. They remained independent, as it were, under the Soviet regime enforced by Russian bayonets, until 1924, the year of the compulsory adoption of the constitution of the U.S.S.R.⁶⁾ Actually, their status was that of Russian satellites. But the laws adopted by the government of Russia were automatically applied in the occupied states.

It is a generally accepted fact that the first real Russian concentration camp was set up in 1923 on the islands of Solovetskiye in the White Sea.⁷⁾ This is not, however, quite correct. This camp was probably the first one to which, from 1922 onwards, the new Russian regime sent prisoners whom it regarded as dangerous. In fact, one cannot say for certain whether the first camp was established in 1922 or in 1923. Certain authorities on the subject and former internees affirm that prior to 1922 there were already about a hundred small concentration camps in Soviet Russia.⁸⁾

The Solovetskiye Islands

The Solovetskiye islands or Solovki — the name given to several islands, which include Greater Solovetskiy, Anser, Muksolma, Greater Hare, Lesser Hare, Konde and Vroniye — first appear in history from the end of the 16th century onwards, when the Monastery of St. Zosim and St. Savatyi was founded. Under Tsar Ivan the Terrible the Solovetskiy Monastery became a strategic point in the expansion of Russia towards the north. The kremlin (kremlin=citadel) of the Solovetskiy island was encircled during the years 1584 to 1596 by a huge bulwark which was insurmountable. Thus this island became the main base of the Russian fortifications in the north.

These islands and their monastery soon became the place to which the tsars had the enemies of Russia deported. And this place of prayer became a place of penitence for the "infidels," not of God but of "Holly" Russia. In the cells and dark, damp dungeons of the Kremlin, prisoners had to atone for their "crimes" towards "Holy" Russia, or else die under the dreadful conditions that prevailed there.

One of the first prisoners in this early concentration camp was the last commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Cossacks of the Zaporozhian Sich, Petro Kalnyshesky. Since she was unwilling to tolerate any remnants of independence in Ukraine, Russia decided to suppress them and to transform Ukraine into a Russian province. Catherine II issued an order to the effect that the Ukrainian Cossacks were to be disarmed and that their encampments were to be destroyed. After having captured their leader by a trick, she had their main camp encircled by surprise by 65,000 of her soldiers and by 50 cannon. Those who did not want to perish in the volley of the Russian cannon and guns were thus obliged to surrender. Kalnyshesky was sent to the islands of Solovetskiye.⁹⁾ He remained a captive in the dungeon of the citadel from 1775 to 1801. Released at the age of 110, he had neither the courage nor the strength to return to Ukraine and died on the islands in 1803. Ukrainian prisoners who were interned there during the years 1922 to 1941 could read on the wall of the church the inscription in Russian above his tomb: "Here lie the remains of the servant of God, Petro Kalnyshesky, commander-in-chief of the army of the Zaporozhians, once dangerous, deported to this monastery by order of Her Imperial Majesty, the Empress Catherine II, for expiation. He expiated and died on July 26, 1803."¹⁰⁾

The case of the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Cossacks, who at that time represented the only rampart of Ukrainian independence, which had already been limited, is indeed symbolical: crime, punishment and expiation. "Holy" Russia was indeed very severe towards this old Ukrainian.

The number of persons imprisoned in the citadel of Solovetskiye up to the time of the Communist coup d'état in Russia ranged from 10 to 30. Until 1919 the monastery remained under the administration of the Russian monks. In that year they left the islands and fled to London.¹¹⁾ From 1922 onwards the monastery was once more reopened to receive new prisoners, this time far greater in number.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I.

- 1) M. Hrushevsky, *A History of Ukraine*, New Haven, 1941, pp. 298-301.
- 2) D. Doroshenko, *Istoriya Ukrayiny* (History of Ukraine), pp. 393-394.
- 3) M. Hrushevsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 376-377.
- 4) William H. Chamberlain, *The Ukraine — a Submerged Nation*, New York, 1944, p. 24.
- 5) A. Mykulyn, *Kontsentratsiyni tabory v sovyets'komu soyuzi* (The Concentration Camps in the Soviet Union), Published by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, Units Abroad, 1958, p. 27.
- 6) Vasyl Hryshko, *Experience with Russia*, New York, 1956, p. 78. Cf. R. Yaremchuk, *L'Ukraine en droit international*, Louvain, 1954.
- 7) *Le procès des camps de concentration soviétique*, Paix et Liberté, Paris, p. 23.
- 8) A. Mykulyn, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- 9) Velyka *Istoriya Ukrayiny* (Great History of Ukraine), Lviv-Winnipeg, 1948, p. 550. Cf. Roger Tisserand, *L'Ukraine*, Paris, 1933, p. 171.
- 10) S. Pidhainyi, *Ukrains'ka intelihentsiya na Solovkakh* (The Ukrainian Intelligentsia in Solovki), 1947, p. 9.
- 11) *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

C H A P T E R II

THE ARBITRARY NATURE OF RUSSIAN LAW

Cheka — GPU — NKVD — MVD — KGB

At the outset, that is to say until 1923-1924 when the Soviet Union was founded, the question of setting up a vast system of concentration camps did not arise. Since the Russians hoped that the introduction of the Soviet regime in the occupied countries¹⁾ would be affected as easily as in Russia thanks to the passive attitude of the masses, they did not consider it necessary to exploit the internees in the camps economically. On the whole, undesirable Russian or foreign elements and, above all, the nationalists of the occupied countries were ruthlessly shot.

The law and its administration of the prisons and camps, from December 20, 1917, to February 6, 1922, remained in the hands of the VeCheka (Extraordinary Pan-Russian Commission), the military and police organ, acting in the service of the Council of Russian Commissars (that is to say Ministers) in order to combat counter-revolution, espionage, speculation and brigandage in Russia proper. The authority of the Cheka was extended to the non-Russian territories with the conquests carried out by the Russian Communist Army.

It is obvious that during this period Soviet repression was directed above all against the former big landowners, the capitalists and the tsarist functionaries in Russia, and subsequently, with the occupation of the neighbouring states, against the same persons, further against the members of the armed forces and of the national administration of these states.

On February 6, 1922, the Cheka was replaced by the OGPU (United State Political Administration), and the concentration camp system began to assume a clear and definite form.

On November 15, 1923, the Russians established a Juridical Body in the service of the OGPU with authority to arrest, deport, confine in a camp, or shoot any person arbitrarily, solely on the strength of an administrative decision.²⁾ Thus began the first stage in the development of the Russian Communist concentration camp system.

The second stage commenced about the middle of 1934 with the foundation of the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs).

On July 10, 1934, the GUGB (Chief Directorate of State Security) was formed to take the place of OGPU. This new organ was incorporated in the NKVD and, consequently, the NKVD assumed the administration of the concentration camp system. As confirmed by official Russian documents, on November 5, 1934, the Special Conference (Osoboye Sovyeshchaniye or OSSO), consisting of the People's Commissar (Minister) of the NKVD, his deputies and the public prosecutor of the USSR, was founded and placed in the service of the NKVD. This "Conference" was in reality a committee, entrusted with the administration of the arbitrary Russian laws, which was vested with the authority "to enforce the law, by administrative means, interdiction of residence, deportation, incarceration in a corrective labour camp for a period of up to 5 years."³)

It was the OSSO which, without trial and in the absence of the accused, passed sentences based on the reports of NKVD agents and in this way filled the concentration camps with prisoners. The sentence was as a rule 5 years internment, but the OSSO always extended it for another 5 years. Actually, from 1936 onwards, the OSSO passed sentences ranging from 5 to 25 years.⁴) The ordinary, special and military courts only concerned themselves with legally defined cases in which the guilt of the accused was evident and was proved in the formal way. If an examining magistrate had any doubts about a case, he passed it on to the OSSO.

The NKVD was renamed in March 1946 and since then has been designated as the MVD (Ministry for Internal Affairs). But this change of name did not bring about any change in the Russian police system. An official Russian document states that "the OSSO, subordinate to the Ministry for Internal Affairs (MVD) is authorized to impose on persons who are a social danger imprisonment in a corrective labour camp."⁵) Thus the OSSO continued its existence and its work. In May 1956, certain Western newspapers published the statement made by the President of the Supreme Court of the USSR to the effect that the OSSO had been suppressed on the strength of the decree issued on December 1, 1953.⁶) But this decree had not been made public, and it is questionable whether credence can be given to the statement made by the President of the Supreme Court.

Another organ of the secret police was created at the same time as the MVD in 1946: namely the MGB (Ministry for State Security). Some of the prerogatives of the MVD were transferred to the MGB, and in this way the entire concentration camp system was divided into two main categories: the camps where discipline was more or less slack and which were supervised by the MVD, and the camps where discipline was severe and which were supervised by the MGB.

After the death of Stalin, MVD chief Beria, hoping to win the struggle for power, unified the two ministries. His liquidation brought with it the reorganization of the two organs by the so-called "collective leadership," and the administration of the secret police passed into the hands of the KGB (Committee of State Security), where the key positions were given to the friends of Khrushchov. Subsequently, the

functions of the all-powerful MVD began to diminish, the supervision of the concentration camps passed to the public prosecutor of the state, and the special troops of the MVD came under military authority and then under the authority of the KGB. Finally the MVD was deprived of its function of ensuring the protection of important economic and strategic objectives (this function was assigned to the KGB) and all that it retained was control of the militia, the fire-brigades, the issuing of passports, registration of births and deaths, and various other minor functions.

In January 1960, on the strength of a decree of the Supreme Soviet, the MVD of the Soviet Union was liquidated and its functions were transferred to the Ministries of the Interior of the national republics. Moscow was quick to announce the "liquidation" of the MVD, without, however, stating that the most important prerogatives of the MVD had long since been transferred to the KGB. But the decree of the Supreme Soviet, contrary to all expectations, did not mean an extension of the rights of the national republics or the democratization of the political regime of the Russian imperium.

The KGB, a terrible police instrument, has by degrees assumed the importance and the role of the former organs of terrorism.

Arbitrariness under the Tsars

The arbitrary nature of Russian laws did not come into being with the advent of Bolshevik power. The Russian Communists merely developed the arbitrariness practised in Russia by the tsarist government.

"An authoritarian state at all times" — so a book on the conditions of freedom in the USSR states — "Russia has always been characterised by a large measure of administrative interference in the life of its inhabitants, and in particular by the practice of administrative deportation or administrative internment. Without going back to the days of serfdom, when every landowner had the right to deport his peasants to Siberia, it is interesting to note that during the last decades of tsarist rule the system of administrative deportation was based on the 'provisions relative to the measures for state and public security' of 1881, which accorded to the Ministry of the Interior the right to deport to 'distant regions' of Russia or of Siberia, for a period of 5 years, persons suspected of seditious activities. This practice constituted the basis of the repressive measures of the regime with regard to political opposition."")

Obviously it was the political opposition of the nations oppressed by Russia which was hit hardest by these measures.

Lenin, who himself had been deported to Siberia, designated the law of 1881 as "one of the most stable, basic laws of the Russian Empire." The Russian opponents of the tsarist regime — and Lenin,

too, was one of them — demanded “that the police should not be able to imprison people without a trial and that the functionaries should be severely punished for every arbitrary arrest...”⁸⁾

And now to quote two examples which will serve as a comparison to illustrate the arbitrary nature of the tsarist regime in Russia when dealing with a Ukrainian and with a Russian offender. By order of Tsar Nicholas I, the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) was arrested and imprisoned in a fortress; he was subsequently deported to Central Asia where he spent 10 years for having written “seditious poetry in the Ukrainian language.”⁹⁾ “Seditious” because the Ukrainian poet had openly attacked the despotism of the tsars and Russian imperialism, because he had related in his poems the sufferings and hardship that Ukraine was obliged to endure, and because he had expressed the conviction in these poems that Ukraine should be free. To the sentence passed on him, the tsar added in his own hand: “Prohibited from writing and drawing.” Taras Shevchenko was sentenced to banishment for life, but Tsar Nicholas I died and the poet's friends succeeded in obtaining his release from Alexander II. Shevchenko's health had been undermined to such an extent during his deportation that he died soon after his release.¹⁰⁾

The founder of the new regime in Russia V. I. Lenin, had himself been sentenced to deportation, not for “seditious” poetry, but for a matter which was more serious, — namely, for revolutionary activity. But, strange to say, he did not suffer the fate of the Ukrainian poet.

Amongst the documents preserved in the Lenin Museum in Moscow there are some personal letters which he wrote to his wife Krupskaya during his deportation. In one of them he wrote as follows: “You ask me how I spend my time? I work a lot. Sometimes I go hunting... and in the evenings we play chess.” And Krupskaya, who went to see Lenin and spent some time with him, said in her memoirs: “Life in Shushenskoye¹¹⁾ was very cheap. For the money that Lenin received from the state — eight roubles a month — he was able to have a clean room, three meals a day and also get his clothes laundered. The peasant with whom Lenin stayed during his deportation used to kill a sheep every week, and Lenin had meat for his meals every day. Milk, eggs, bread and vegetables were provided by the peasant free of charge. Lenin had a servant... In his room there was a large library and he used to receive a lot of letters every day... for he was in charge of the edition of newspapers in St. Petersburg and abroad...”

Russian Laws Are Applied to the Whole World

We have already mentioned the fact that the extension of the power of the Cheka to the neighbouring territories (non-Russian) went hand in hand with the conquests effected by the Russian Communist army. This holds good not only for the Cheka but also for all the other subsequent Russian police and juridical organs. Proof of

this fact can be seen from a secret Russian document. In an account of the system of the Soviet concentration camps we are told that in Kaunas (Lithuania) "after the arrival of the Red Army and the installing of a Communist government, the Commission for Internal Affairs on November 28, 1940, issued an order, No. 0054, about which there could not possibly be any doubt:

"The Soviet Code is applied to the whole world and, above all, wherever the Red Army arrives, the citizens are immediately judged by their past and by the actions committed by previous generations."¹²⁾

The arrogant and abusive violation of international rights and of the rights of mankind practised by Russia since 1917 can be traced to the fact that the Russian government in its criminal imperialism found for its action a basis, a tool, an explanation and a justification — with which the Communist ideology provided it. Under the cloak of Communism, of international Communist solidarity and of the "world revolution" of the proletariat, Russia succeeded in developing her policy of expansion in such a way that most people were unable to comprehend whether it was a question of international Communism or of Russian imperialism.

It is futile to look for a distinction regarding the nationalities or a national and racial discrimination in the Russian laws. These laws are called "Soviet" laws, a term which is misleading. They are the same for all the Soviet Republics, and all the nationalities come under the provisions of these laws, both in theory and in practice.

According to the certificates received by released prisoners and according to the testimony given by former internees, the commonest reasons for sentences are the following: K.R. — membership of a counter-revolutionary organization (15 to 25 years); K.R.D. — counter-revolutionary activity (5 to 10 years and 25 years); P. Sh. — persons suspected of espionage (10 to 25 years); S.V.E. — hostile social elements, S.O.E. — dangerous social elements, and S.N.E. — untrustworthy social elements (sentences for these three categories vary, in general from 5 to 25 years).¹³⁾

About 90 per cent of the internees in the Soviet camps are political prisoners, sent there for the reasons mentioned above, or, sometimes, for no given reason. Sentences for counter-revolutionary activity, espionage, treason, diversionism, sabotage, anti-Russian and anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, membership of a secret nationalist, revolutionary or military organization, are passed in accordance with Article 58 of the Russian Penal Code, which comprises 14 paragraphs. All political, social, cultural or national activity directed against the interests of Russia and of her regime is regarded as a "counter-revolutionary crime." Article 58 contains a precise definition of a counter-revolutionary crime, namely as follows:

"58—1 — Every act tending to overthrow, to shake or to undermine the power of the Soviet workers and peasants and of the governments of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics, of the republics of the

Union and of the autonomous regions — established by these soviets in conformity with the Constitution of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics and with the constitutions of the republics of the Union, or tending to shake or undermine the external security of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics and of the economic, political and national conquests of the proletarian revolution, is regarded as a counter-revolutionary crime.

By virtue of the international solidarity of the interests of all the workers, the same acts are likewise regarded as counter-revolutionary when they are directed against any workers' state which is not part of the Soviet Union (June 6, 1927/R.D. No. 49, art. 330)".¹⁴⁾

In view of this law it is easy to comprehend why the Russians have the audacity to deport or sentence the Ukrainians, the Hungarians or other peoples on their own territory. In this respect it must above all be borne in mind that the text of Article 58 quoted above is taken from the Penal Code of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, that is to say of Russia proper and not from that of the Soviet Union, for the latter has no penal code of its own. The basic laws applied to the whole of the Soviet Union and to the entire world are the laws of Russia. For propaganda purposes these laws are sometimes translated into the language of one of the Soviet Republics. As can be seen from the text of Article 58, the Russian Penal Code provides for penalties not only for Russia but also for the whole of the Soviet Union and for every person arrested, irrespective of nationalities. The order issued by the NKVD, No. 0054, mentioned above, was issued in conformity with the Russian laws.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II.

- 1) By the terms *occupied countries* or *occupied peoples* we mean Ukraine, the Baltic countries, the Caucasus, Byelorussia, etc., that is to say all the countries of the USSR with the exception of Russia proper.
- 2) Big Soviet Encyclopedia (in Russian), Moscow, 1939, Vol. 41, p. 209.
- 3) Decision of the Central Executive Committee. (Ts.I.K.) No. 283, Compendium of Laws of the USSR., No. 35, Moscow, July 19, 1934.
- 4) A. Mykulyn, op. cit., pp. 35-36.
- 5) Yevtikhiyev and Vlasov, Administrative Law of the USSR., Moscow, 1946, pp. 244-245; cited in "Le procès...", op. cit., p. 16.
- 6) Saturne, Bulletin de la Commission Internationale Contre le Régime Concentrationnaire, No. 7, March-May 1956, p. 3.
- 7) Les conditions de la liberté en U.R.S.S., Editions du Pavois, Paris, 1951, pp. 17-18.
- 8) V. I. Lenin, Complete Works (in Russian), Vol. 7, Moscow, p. 153.
- 9) Vasyl Hryshko, op. cit., p. 35.
- 10) Cf. Roger Tisserand, op. cit., p. 229.
- 11) Quoted from A. Mykulyn, op. cit., p. 41.
- 12) "Le procès...", op. cit. p. 29.
- 13) Cf. Elinor Lipper, Onze ans dans les bagnes soviétiques (Eleven Years in the Soviet Convict-Prison), Paris, 1950, pp. 34-35.
- 14) Penal Code of the R.S.F.S.R., translated by Jean Fonteyne, Editions E.C.A., Brussels, 1951, p. 36.

C H A P T E R I I I

THE NUMBER OF PRISONERS

A Secret Plan

The existence of slave labour as a means of social reconstruction and reform in the Soviet Union was not concealed as a secret until about 1929. But even up to 1933 it was mentioned in official Russian texts. For instance, the Small Soviet Encyclopedia in 1929 gave the following definition of a concentration camp: "Concentration camp: place of isolation for prisoners-of-war, hostages and persons who are a social danger, who have not committed criminal acts but whose isolation is necessary in order to safeguard order and as a measure of social defense."¹⁾

Volume VIII of the same Encyclopedia, published in 1931, states that the Solovetskiy Monastery is "actually a concentration camp."²⁾

From 1935 onwards the Russian authorities deny the existence of slave labour camps. In that year Molotov angrily wrote "it is time to put an end to the fairytales about slave labour in the USSR."³⁾ And the Big Soviet Encyclopedia, published in 1935, suddenly gives another definition of concentration camps: "A concentration camp is a special place of detention, created by the fascist states, regimes of barbarism and of oppression of the peoples, which constantly increase the number of prisoners: the ordinary prisons no longer suffice for them."⁴⁾

Why this change? What had happened in the meantime?

It can be assumed for certain that during the period from 1928 to 1931 the Russian Communist authorities elaborated a secret plan, the aim of which was, firstly, to liquidate all the elements hostile to the Communist regime and to Russia, to put into concentration camps and to deport all persons suspected of nationalism (with the exception of Russian nationalism, the only nationalism which is permitted in the Soviet Union), undesirable, dangerous persons suspected of counter-revolutionary activity, etc.; and, secondly, to employ the prisoners and deportees in the framework of the economic development of the USSR.

This leads us to assume that three factors must have played a principal part in the realization of the Russian plan: a) the slave labour of the prisoners in the concentration camps; b) the slave labour of the deportees in the undeveloped regions; and c) compulsory collectivization.

In 1928 Moscow began to carry out the first Five-Year Plan. "It was at that time that millions of 'kulaks' (small land-owners) were 'liquidated as a class' and transformed into slave workers. In March 1931, at the 6th Congress of the Soviets, Molotov stated that over a million deportees from the rural areas were employed in felling wood in the forests of the north. On June 1, 1934, at the 7th Congress of the Soviets, Molotov affirmed that of the 5¹/₂ million peasants declared 'kulaks' in 1929, there were only 140,000 left. That is to say, more than 5 million, according to official statistics (and probably more), had been liquidated by death or by deportation. It was on March 26, 1928, that — in the framework of the Five-Year Plan — the first decree was issued prescribing 'the use on a large scale of the work of the prisoners.' On May 21, 1928, an official circular of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR recommended 'the general employment of the work of individuals under the provisions of measures of social protection' in order to 'realize a series of economic projects by reducing expenditure considerably'."⁵)

The Number of Prisoners

Our assumption is irrefutably confirmed by the enormous increase in the number of victims from 1928-1929 onwards.

According to the statistics drawn up by a Russian, Alexander Ouralov, the number of prisoners during the years 1922-1941 was as follows⁶):

- 1922: 6,000 (officers, functionaries of the former regime, priests);
- 1927: 140,000 (white guardists, priests, former members of anti-Bolshevist parties);
- 1930: 1,500,000 (kulaks, businessmen established after the NEP, technicians of bourgeois origin and white guardists, priests, bourgeois, aristocracy, etc.);
- 1932: 2,500,000 (peasants);
- 1936: 6,500,000 (peasants, workers, intellectuals of working-class and peasant origin);
- 1938: 11,500,000 (the same categories as in 1936);
- 1941: 13,500,000 (workers, peasants, intellectuals of the former regime).

These figures must be regarded as approximate and as lower than the actual figures. Other experts estimate that in 1941 the number of prisoners was about 18 million (Ukrainian sources) and in 1957 about 23 million.⁷)

In addition O. C. Pfeiffer states in his book on Siberia⁸) that the Soviet Russian authorities admitted in 1935 that at that time there

were between 5 and 6 million prisoners in the camps. B. Souvarine is of the opinion that as early as 1937 there were at least 15 million prisoners, and according to V. Kravchenko⁹⁾, the figure mentioned by high-ranking functionaries of the Kremlin in 1938 was 15 million. According to the calculations of S. Schwarz¹⁰⁾, there were 10 million prisoners in 1939.

For the period 1944-1945 Kravchenko estimates 20 million. Mme E. Lipper quotes an admission made by the functionaries of the NKVD, according to which the total number of prisoners in 1948 was 12 million, the decrease in the total number being due to the famine during the previous years. The British Member of Parliament Stokes stated in December 1948 that the Soviet Union at that time had more than 17 million prisoners destined for slave labour.¹¹⁾ The Spanish Communist El Campesino expressed the opinion "that by the end of 1948 one could affirm that in Russia about 19 million Russians (that is to say, citizens of the USSR — Editor's note) and about 4 million persons of various other nationalities — Germans, Japanese, members of people's republics, etc. — had been deported or exiled."¹²⁾ In December 1949 a member of the US government gave the total number of prisoners in the Russian camps as 13 million.¹³⁾ A source of information closely connected with the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) estimates that in 1950 the number of prisoners was 15 million.¹⁴⁾

The Israeli journalist J. Margolin, who was interned in Soviet camps from 1940 to 1945, estimated in 1951 that the number of prisoners was 10 million.¹⁵⁾ But whereas Joseph Scholmer states that during the years 1950-1951 the total number must have been 15 million, V. Andreyev, former inspector of Russian concentration camps from 1934 to 1941, affirmed in 1951 that "there must be between 12 and 14 million, possibly 15 million persons in the camps,"¹⁶⁾ and G. Yershov, former colonel of the Red Army and commandant of the repatriation camps for Soviet subjects after the war expressed the opinion that the figure of 15 to 17 million was more exact for the year 1951.¹⁷⁾

O. C. Pfeiffer in his book published in 1952 accepts the figure of 20 million as the most likely figure for 1951-1952.¹⁸⁾ During the years 1953-1955 the number of political prisoners alone was 10 million, according to the estimate of a former German prisoner, B. Roeder.¹⁹⁾ U.S. News and World Report stated in 1956 that D. Dallin estimated the number of prisoners at that time between 12 and 15 million, but that other estimates put the figure for 1956 at 25 million.²⁰⁾

The main fault of the statistics drawn up by Ouralov and other writers is that they endeavour to give this multi-national mass of prisoners in the Russian camps a nationally Russian aspect, and Ouralov classifies this mass according to social origin in conformity with the Russian Communist method.

Nationality of Prisoners

We affirm — and we shall prove by testimony — that 80 to 90 per cent of all the prisoners in the Russian concentration camps were and always are persons of foreign nationality: Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Byelorussians, Georgians, Armenians, inhabitants of Turkestan and members of other nationalities of the Soviet Union, further, Poles, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Chinese, Koreans, and Germans, etc.

15 to 20 per cent (from World War II onwards only about 10 per cent) are Russians. Of the 80 to 90 per cent non-Russians in the camps, 55 to 60 per cent are Ukrainians; thus the Ukrainians continue 45 to 50 per cent of the total number of prisoners in the Russian camps. The majority of Russians in the camps are criminals and persons sentenced under common law.²¹⁾ The prisoners of other nationalities are all political prisoners, with the exception of about 5 per cent who have been sentenced as criminals.

These facts are frequently denied by Russian emigrants and by certain circles in the West who prefer to regard the population of the Soviet Union as Russian, or else as "Soviet population," in order to eliminate from discussion any national question which might serve to demonstrate the existence of Russian imperialism and the domination of the Russians over the other nations in the Soviet Union. Even the work of the International Commission Against the Concentration Camp Regime (C.I.C.R.C.), which has its headquarters in Brussels, is all too often affected by this tendency.

We shall begin the series of testimonies with the statements made by witnesses at the lawsuit brought by David Rousset against the Communist paper "Les Lettres Françaises" (in Paris, November to December 1950) and in proceedings instituted against the Soviet concentration camps by the C.I.C.R.C. in Brussels from May 21st to May 26th, 1951.

The first witness in the lawsuit in Paris, cited in a book edited by "Paix et Liberté," was Mme Elinor Lipper, a German, "an out-and-out socialist," who in 1937 "was more and more convinced that the only country of the true liberation of man was the USSR." That year she went to Moscow and some months later was arrested and imprisoned. She left the Soviet Union in 1948 after having spent eleven years in prison and concentration camps there. In keeping with her socialist faith, she stated before the judges in Paris: "...I was in the Soviet camps with Soviet citizens, and no one was released during the war except criminals sentenced under common law."²²⁾

"Soviet citizens" — an amorphous mass, without an individual countenance! Nevertheless in her book which appeared in Paris in 1950, Mme Lipper also mentioned other nationalities: "What I resented more than anything else was a powerless comparison which oppressed one's heart whenever one saw these Russians (evidently she also

meant the Ukrainians and the Byelorussians by this — Editor's note), these Caucasians, these Tatars, these Mongols, these Siberians, these tribes from Central Asia. . ."²³) That was in 1943. In the course of her captivity Mme Lipper learnt that there were also Germans, Austrians, Rumanians, Hungarians, Finns, Latvians, and Jews in the camps. She obviously encountered Ukrainians, but she did not learn to distinguish them from the Russians.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III.

1) Small Soviet Encyclopedia (in Russian), Vol. 3, Moscow, 1929, p. 190.

2) Ibid., Vol. 8, 1931.

3) V. Molotov, *The Struggle for Socialism*, Moscow, 1935.

4) Big Soviet Encyclopedia, op. cit., quoted in "Le procès...", op. cit., p. 20.

5) "Le procès...", op. cit., pp. 21 and 30.

6) A. Ouralov, *Stalin in Power*, p. 185.

7) Cf. *La Nation Géorgienne*, Paris, 1958, No. 18, p. 4.

8) O. C. Pfeiffer, *Siberien (Siberia)*, Safari-Verlag, Berlin, 1952, p. 92.

9) V. Kravchenko, *J'ai choisi la liberté (I Chose Freedom)*, Paris, p. 411.

10) S. Schwarz, *Les ouvriers en Union Soviétique (The Workers in the Soviet Union)*, Paris, p. 54.

11) Cf. O. C. Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 91.

12) "Le procès...", op. cit., p. 89.

13) Quoted by O. C. Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 92.

14) *The Ukrainian Review*, London, No. 4, 1958, p. 22.

15) "Le procès...", op. cit., p. 107.

16) *Livre Blanc sur les camps de concentration soviétiques, Commission Internationale Contre le Régime Concentrationnaire (White Book on Soviet Concentration Camps, International Commission Against the Concentration Camp Regime)*, Paris, p. 102.

17) Ibid., p. 107.

18) O. C. Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 102.

19) Bernard Roeder, *Der Katorgan (Katorga)*, Cologne-Berlin, 1956, p. 35.

20) *U.S. News and World Report*, Washington, June 1, 1956.

21) Cf. *Communist takeover and occupation of Ukraine*, Special Report N. 4, U.S. House of Representatives, H. Res. 346 and H. Res. 348; U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1935, p. 24.

22) "Le procès...", op. cit., pp. 43 and 45.

23) Elinor Lipper, op. cit., p. 79.

C H A P T E R I V

TESTIMONY BY FORMER PRISONERS

Mass Arrival of Ukrainians

Mme Lipper gives an account of the mass arrival of the Ukrainians in Kolyma in 1944, 1945 and 1946: "We constantly saw hundreds of young girls, who were between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one and had been sentenced to ten years detention in a camp according to Article 58, paragraph 1, on account of high treason, arriving in Kolyma. They came from Western Ukraine and had been accused of having belonged to the organization of the "Bandiorovtsi")... The Soviet officers who interrogated these girls broke their collar-bones and kicked them with boots until they collapsed, spitting blood, and were taken to the prisoners' hospitals in Kolyma. There they died, with a medallion of the Virgin Mary on their poor, battered chest and hatred in their eyes. Later, in 1946, we saw women and girls arriving in Kolyma whom the Germans had deported from Ukraine to Germany, where they had been obliged to work in the munition-factories. They had later got on trains taking them back to the USSR and had been happy to return to their country. No accusation was formally brought against them and they were not tried before a judge. It was not until they reached Magadan that they were told that they had been sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in a camp for high treason."2)

We should like to point out that during the years 1944-1946 not only Ukrainian women were arrested but also men, the latter in even greater number than the former.

But even the mass arrival of new Ukrainian prisoners failed to make Mme. Lipper realize that the Ukrainians and the Russians do not constitute one nation, but are two entirely different nations.

The other witnesses in the lawsuit in Paris do not give any precise or valid information on the nationality of the prisoners. Each of them talks about his compatriots, in spite of the fact that their number might have been comparatively insignificant (Spaniards, Czechs, Jews,

Poles), and about the amorphous mass of the other prisoners. There are only two witnesses who tried to give some picture of the entire composition of the prisoners. George Ostroverkhov, who was interned in concentration camps from 1936 to 1941, stated that in his opinion, and as far as an estimate is possible, "of the total number of prisoners in the camps, 10 per cent were not Soviet subjects, 20 per cent were Jews, 50 per cent were Russians, and the remaining 20 per cent belonged to other nationalities of the Soviet Union."³) His statement is entirely wrong as regards the percentage of Russians, as we shall see later on. The other witness, formerly a fanatical Spanish Communist who fought against General Franco, called Valentin Gonzales and known as El Campesino, even dared to commit the following grave error before the French judges: he regards everybody who lives in the Soviet Union as Russians, which led him to say that at the end of 1948 "one could affirm that there were about 19 million Russian deportees and exiles from Russia and about 4 million persons of other nationalities" from countries outside the USSR.⁴)

G. Homiakov, a Russian, stated during the proceedings instituted in Brussels: "I was in Solovki from 1927 to 1929, but then I was sent to the camp in Komi. There were literally millions of kulaks who had been deported to concentration camps. At Solovki, in 1927-1928, there were about 20,000 prisoners. At Komi, from 1929 onwards, 200,000. I knew this for certain..."⁵) G. Homiakov was arrested in Leningrad and all the time he was a prisoner, he worked in the camp administration.

L. Golubovitch, whose nationality is not indicated but whom the International Commission against the Concentration Camp Regime (C.I.C.R.C.) makes out to be a Russian, was arrested in Minsk (Byelorussia), where he was a secretary at the Special College, to be more exact the OSSO, and was interned in a camp from 1935 to 1940. He was arrested after a nationalist organization, to which one of his comrades belonged, was discovered in Byelorussia. G. Golubovitch stated: "When this organization was discovered, several important functionaries were arrested and I, too, among other persons, because I had been connected with him" (that is to say, the comrade in question). Having been a functionary of the NKVD prior to his arrest, Golubovitch was in a position to give the following precise details: "Everything happened in waves. For instance, they started persecuting the kulaks. The camps were then filled with kulaks. In 1932, they started arresting the so-called cutters, that is to say the peasants who cut the corn in the fields. For example, a woman who was starving and took two or three ears of corn when passing a cornfield, was arrested and sent to a camp. In such cases the persons concerned were regarded as coming under the penal law. The kulaks, however, were political prisoners. In 1937-1938 it was the turn of the Trotsky-ists"...⁶) But this former functionary of the Russian state is slightly mistaken. The "cutters" were sentenced on the strength of the "Decree for the protection of socialist property" of August 7, 1932, by administrative decision and seldom by courts of justice. The theft

of ears of corn, like the secret grinding of grain, was regarded as sabotage of the harvesting plan and liable to punishment on the strength of Article 58, paragraph 7. This paragraph provided for two penalties: death or deportation to a concentration camp.

B. Podolak, whose nationality was not mentioned, is said to be a Russian in the report of the C.I.C.R.C.; he was arrested in 1935 for counter-revolutionary activity. He was a professor of history of literature at the University of Kharkiv (Ukraine), and from the contents of his deposition one can assume that he is a Ukrainian professor, but C.I.C.R.C. refrains from stating this point precisely. This lack of precision appears to us to be premeditated, just as does the fact that one carefully avoided producing testimony coming from the circles of the numerous Ukrainian emigrants. B. Podolak stated: "I was arrested in November 1935 in Kyiv. In July 1936... I was sentenced to five years detention in a concentration camp, without a trial and on the strength of the decision of the Special College of the NKVD in Moscow. After that, together with a group of considerable size consisting of Ukrainians, most of whom were professors, young people working at universities and intellectuals in general, though there were also labourers amongst them, I was sent to Vorkuta."⁷)

Mme J. Kovalska, a German, remained in Kolyma from 1938 to 1948. Her general survey of the prisoners is as follows: "The first wave of those who peopled the camps of the region (of Kolyma) consisted of political prisoners: Trotsky-ists, kulaks, and persons who had violated the law on collective property. From 1937 to 1938 the new wave of prisoners consisted of the so-called counter-revolutionaries who were in actual fact liquidated in the course of the two years which they spent in the camps, the same cannot be said of the Poles, for an amnesty was introduced in their favour the moment a Polish army was formed on Russian territory. During the second and third year of the war, the contingents of prisoners who arrived at the camps consisted mainly of persons accused of offences against discipline. During the second year... most of the prisoners were persons sentenced as collaborators. After the war the first new arrivals were members of the Vlasov army. The Bandera men, who already arrived at the camp looking like galley-slaves, were subjected to even worse treatment than the Vlasov men. And they were liquidated within a short time."⁸)

I. Ratmirov, a Russian arrested in 1931, worked in the camp at Gornoshorsk in Siberia as a doctor: "The situation, from the medical point of view, was worst at the beginning of 1938. I can quote the following figures to you: of 28 to 29,000 prisoners, 5,000 died during the month of April in 1938; the reason for this was that numerous prisoners were sent to our camp who had previously been confined in prisons in south Russia and also in Turkestan and in the Caucasus. These persons were used to other climatic conditions... I remember one man aged 108, who had been sentenced to 10 years detention and who was sent to our camp from the Caucasus."⁹) If one bears in mind

the fact that to every imperialist Russian south Russia means Ukraine, then one will realize what nationality the prisoners, to whom I. Ratmirov is referring, were.

G. Petrov, a Russian mill-director who employed numerous prisoners for the benefit of the state, remained in the USSR until 1950: "From 1936 to 1940 these prisoners were for the most part intellectuals and peasants from Ukraine and from Central Russia."¹⁰) The term Central Russia probably means the Central Soviet Union, which is, however, by no means the same thing from the point of view of nationality.

V. Andreyev, a Russian, was an inspector of concentration camps from 1934 to 1941. When a member of the tribunal of the C.I.C.R.C. asked him whether there were a large number of non-Russians in the Soviet camps, Andreyev replied: "There is a considerable percentage, above all since the occupation of Poland, the Baltic countries, North Bukovina and Bessarabia. There are also a number of Chinese prisoners who crossed the frontier in order to escape persecution." He, too, was afraid to say something which might bring up the subject of the national question in the USSR, and for this reason he preferred to consider all the population of the Soviet Union as Russian.¹¹)

J. Sad, a Czech, was arrested in Carpatho-Ukraine in 1945, along with 2,500 other men and women. They were taken to the camp of Junkom, at Donbas, Ukraine. J. Sad stated: "There were numerous foreigners amongst us, namely Dutchmen, Spaniards, Greeks, and Hungarians, but, above all, Poles, and the Czechs, Slovaks and Ukrainians constituted the majority in the camp." In the same region, according to his statement, there were four other camps. In one of these camps the prisoners during the years 1945 to 1948 were mainly nuns and Jewish women. The nuns were of Hungarian and Ukrainian nationality.¹²)

This brings the first of our series of testimonies to an end. We should like to add that the C.I.C.R.C. has in the meantime endeavoured to be a little more objective by emphasizing beneath the text of the report by the Investigation Committee that, as regards the repressive measure applied in the case of the "kulaks" and "under the other (permanent) counts of indictment, the Ukrainian population in particular was badly hit."¹³)

Solovki from 1922 to 1938

"The camp in Solovki, known as the Soviet Union in miniature, was the barometer of the home and foreign policy of Moscow: when the wave of terrorism increased, the number of prisoners also increased, and when terrorism decreased, the number of prisoners also decreased"¹⁴) — thus writes a former Ukrainian prisoner, S. Pidhainyi, who was confined in this dreadful camp from 1933 to 1938. He divides the history of Solovki into four periods.

1922-1927: The camp comprised all the Solovetskiye Islands and was organized on the lines of the military prison camps during the era of the civil war in Russia. This administrative structure was maintained until 1933. The prisoners there during the years 1922 to 1927 included above all functionaries of the former regime, priests, leaders and members of groups of anti-Communist and anti-Russian partisans, and criminals. Whereas the first two and the last categories consisted almost entirely of Russians, the other two categories were represented by various nationalities. As a rule, the Russians constituted at least half the total number of prisoners, which at that time was not yet very large. The Ukrainians were not very numerous: they included for the most part officers of the national Ukrainian army, leaders of partisan groups and of anti-Russian partisans, as well as priests.¹⁵⁾

1927-1932: This was a very grim period. The prisoners endured "terrible punishment and tortures." The composition of the prisoners in this camp of death and terrorism suddenly changed. The Russians at that time were commencing the realization of the first Five-Year Plan and of their secret plan. But Ukraine and the Caucasus still continued their struggle against Russia and her new regime. "Prior to my evacuation from the camp (September 25, 1929) — writes one of the survivors — the criminals were not very numerous; most of the prisoners were Ukrainians — peasants (such as counter-revolutionaries), as well as priests and teachers."¹⁶⁾

"Numerous students from Kyiv and Katerynoslav (Ukraine) arrived at the camp — writes another former prisoner. — They told us that after the secret organization — the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine — was discovered, a large number of young Ukrainians were shot. They were executed not in hundreds but in thousands. The others, that is to say those who were sent to Solovki, were sentenced to 10 years each."¹⁷⁾

S. Pidhainyi, for his part, gives the following testimony: "When I arrived at the camp there were already a large number of Ukrainians there, members of the secret revolutionary organizations. Tens and probably hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians who were shot or deported attest to the fact that at that time there was a formidable national resistance in Ukraine. It was, for instance, an established fact that one-third of the workers of a big factory in Kremenchuk were arrested because they were members of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine. And this was not by any means an isolated case. The prisons and the concentration camps were full of Ukrainians, members of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, of the National Ukrainian Centre and of the Ukrainian Military Organization."¹⁸⁾

A Ukrainian peasant testifies as follows: "In 1928 I was employed on the construction of a road (to one of the islands of Solovki), together with 12,000 other prisoners. In the course of the winter about 10,000 Ukrainians and Cossacks from the Don region died. They were replaced by prisoners who had just arrived from Ukraine."

"In 1931, when there were no longer thousands but millions of Ukrainians, Cossacks from the Don and Kuban regions, Caucasians and other nationalities from the occupied countries, in north Russia, and when it became essential to accomplish the first Five-Year Plan at any price, the project of constructing a canal between the White Sea and the Baltic Sea was conceived. Several thousand prisoners were thereupon transferred from Solovki to the mainland, where the majority of them perished during the construction of this canal."¹⁹⁾

1932-1937: Up to 1933 the camp in Solovki did not undergo any change. The main bulk of the prisoners worked on the mainland until May 1933. After the completion of the White Sea-Baltic Sea canal, the survivors of the "dangerous" category, which included former prisoners from Solovki and also new prisoners, arrived in Solovki. In 1933 and at the beginning of 1934 a new group of prisoners also arrived there: members of the Communist Party, Communist writers and intellectuals. From 1929 to 1932 they had still been in power.

During the years 1933 to 1937, the camp in Solovki resumed its former aspect of the years 1926-1927. In this period, as in the preceding one, the overwhelming majority of prisoners were Ukrainians: peasants, intellectuals, doctors, writers, poets, men of science and students. The second largest group consisted of nationalities from the other occupied countries: Tatars from the Crimea and from Kazan, Turkmens, Tadzhiks, Uzbeks, Armenians, Georgians, Finns, Germans, Byelorussians, Poles, and Azerbaijanians. There were also some Russians, as well as French, Japanese and American prisoners.²⁰⁾

1937-1938: In June 1937 the camp in Solovki was turned into "Solovki Special Prison, administered by the Chief State Security Department." The internees were no longer designated as Z.K. (zaklyutchonnyye = prisoners) but as L.S. (lishonnyye svobody = persons deprived of liberty). In 1938, however, the prisoners were transferred to the mainland; the prison ceased to exist and construction of a military naval base in its stead was commenced.²¹⁾ The Russians were now preparing for war.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV.

- 1) The "bandiorovtsi" in Russian, or "banderivtsi" in Ukrainian, is the name given to the members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, under the leadership of Stepan Bandera. The term is also often applied to Ukrainians who are not members of this nationalist organization but who take part in the anti-Communist and anti-Russian fight. In October 1959, Stepan Bandera was poisoned by agents of Moscow in Munich, West Germany.
- 2) Elinor Lipper, *op. cit.*, pp. 239 and 242.
- 3) "Le procès...", *op. cit.*, p. 74.
- 4) *Ibid.*, p. 89.
- 5) Livre Blanc (White Book), *op. cit.*, p. 32.
- 6) *Ibid.*, pp. 43 and 48.
- 7) Livre Blanc, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
- 8) *Ibid.*, pp. 120 and 121.
- 9) *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- 10) *Ibid.*, p. 83.

C H A P T E R V

THE SOVIET SYSTEM IS DIRECTED AGAINST THE PEOPLES OF THE OCCUPIED COUNTRIES

Persecution of the Ukrainians

There seems to be no doubt at all about the fact that up to 1927 the Russians constituted half and, in some cases, the majority of the prisoners in the camps. But up to that year the total number of prisoners was only about 200,000. And we also know that the persecution of the occupied nations (non-Russian) commenced with the advent of the Red Russian troops in these countries (1918-1921).¹⁾ Up to about 1927 the fate of the enemies of Russia and her regime in the occupied countries was as a rule decided in the prison cellars by shooting them in the back of the neck, or else by shooting them outside the prison-building, as is stated in the testimony given by a former French Communist, Maurice Laporte. From 1920 to 1923 he visited Moscow on several occasions, and on August 9, 1921, he had a conversation there with the Communist ex-dictator of Hungary, Bela Kun, who crushed a peasants' revolt in Ukraine (in 1921). Bela Kun told him:

"I never parleyed with the rebels. Whenever I arrived in a district which had taken up arms rather than accept requisitions, I had the villages in question surrounded by machine-guns. Having taken this precaution, we then set fire to the houses. Thus, all those who did not wish to be burnt alive proved a ready target for our bullets. In this way I achieved some interesting results."²⁾

The passive resistance of the Ukrainians never ceased. Their armed resistance ceased temporarily in 1925, but in 1927 they were already preparing new insurrections. But then the persecution and liquidation

¹⁾ Ibid., pp. 136 and 138.

²⁾ Ibid., pp. 136 and 138.

³⁾ Ibid., p. 185.

⁴⁾ S. Pidhainyi, op. cit., p. 8.

⁵⁾ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁶⁾ Ibid., p. 13.

⁷⁾ E. Chykalenko, *Solovets'ka katorha* (Katorga in Solovki), Warsaw, 1931, p. 30.

⁸⁾ S. Pidhainyi, op. cit., p. 13.

⁹⁾ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰⁾ Ibid., pp. 21-26.

¹¹⁾ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

of the kulaks began, and a new wave of terrorism descended on the population of Ukraine and of the other occupied countries. The Russian government formed special units consisting of 25,000 Communists, who proceeded to liquidate the kulaks by either shooting the peasants and their families, or else deporting them to the regions of north Russia or Siberia. Thus, in 1928, the Ukrainians already constituted the majority of the prisoners in the camps.

But Russia's desire for revenge was not yet satiated. After the discovery of secret anti-Russian organizations in Ukraine and because of the permanent opposition of the Ukrainian peasantry, Moscow, in 1932, proceeded to confiscate all the supplies of grain and, on August 7, 1932, promulgated the notorious decree "on the protection of socialist property," in order to prevent the peasants, who were already starving, from gathering any grain still in the fields, which as a result of compulsory collectivization had become the property of the state. The results of this measure were immediate.

"True, a correspondent of the "Socialist Courier" — so "Saturn" states in its edition No. 6 of 1956 — had already pointed out that the victims of the famine of 1932-1933 numbered 5 million ("Sotsialisticheskiy Vestnik," No. 9 of May 10, 1934), but an American socialist and pro-Bolshevist, Harry Lang, who returned horrified from a stay in the USSR, was informed by a high Soviet functionary and published the fact in the New York paper "Forward" that at least 6 million people had died of starvation in Ukraine; he reported that 40 per cent of the population had disappeared in certain regions of Ukraine and Byelorussia; the relief organizations counted as many as 140,000 deaths in the German peasant settlements alone ("Forward" of February 19, 1936, and following numbers). A disillusioned American Communist, Adam J. Tawdul, learnt from Skrypyuk that at least 8 million persons died of famine in Ukraine and in the North Caucasus; Balitski, the head of the GPU in Ukraine, estimated that there were 8 to 9 million victims in Ukraine alone; and Lovin, the director of a tractor works in Chelyabinsk, told Tawdul that over a million persons had died of starvation in the Ural, beyond the Volga³⁾, and in West Siberia ("New York American", August 18/19, 1935)."⁴⁾

In a White Book on the famine of 1932-1933, experts on this question affirm categorically that "the famine was confined to the regions which were opposed to collectivization," that is to say Ukraine, the North Caucasus (the region of the Kuban, where the population was predominantly Ukrainian), and the regions of the Volga and of Kazakhstan (where the Russians were definitely in the minority). The Russian ethnographical territories **did not experience the famine.**"⁵⁾ On the contrary, there were foodstuffs **in abundance in Russia.**⁶⁾

Moreover, a secret document, signed by Stalin and Molotov, provides us with proof as to whom Moscow's repressive measures were directed against. This document contains a secret directive, dated May 8, 1933, intended to normalize the deportation of the

population of the Soviet Union. The directive demands "approval of the deportation of the population of the following regions: Ukraine — 24,000 families; the North Caucasus — 6,000 families; the region of the Lower Volga — 4,000 families; central black earth region — 2,000 families; the Ural — 1,000 families; Byelorussia — 5,000 families; Bashkir — 1,500 families; the Trans-Caucasus — 1,500 families; Central Asia — 1,200 families. A total of 46,200 families."") As can be seen, Ukraine tops the list; of the 46,200 families to be deported, it was to furnish more than half. At the same time, it is also significant that Russia proper was spared; not a single family was to be deported.

The Russians in the Concentration Camps Before the War

Countless testimonies could be produced to prove that just before World War II the number of Russians in the concentration camps did not amount to more than 15 to 20 per cent of the total number of internees. The former prisoner A. Mykulyn states that "the purges in the days of Yezhov considerably augmented the total number of prisoners in the camps and also the percentage of Ukrainian prisoners. For instance, towards the end of February 1937, in two days alone, five cattle-trains containing 7,000 prisoners, of whom 75 per cent were Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians and Turks, etc., arrived at the transit camp in Kotlas (in Russia). During the same period, in two weeks alone, 18,000 prisoners, of whom 13,000 were Ukrainians, passed through this transit camp on their way to the camps in Ukhto-Petchorsk, Vorkuta and elsewhere."⁸)

Another former prisoner, who spent five years, from 1933 to 1938, in concentration camps, affirms categorically that in the camps in which he was detained "the national composition of the prisoners was as follows: 39 per cent Ukrainians, 15 per cent Russians, and 46 per cent other nationalities (Byelorussians, Poles, peoples of the Caucasus and of the Orient, etc.). Of the 15 per cent Russian prisoners, only 1.5 per cent were political prisoners, the rest were criminals. 99 per cent of the Ukrainian prisoners had been sentenced for political offences or on the strength of the decree of August 7, 1932 (for having cut off ears of corn). There were also a large number of intellectuals, men of science, functionaries and students from Ukraine, but the majority of the Ukrainian prisoners were peasants and workers. It is an established fact that of the 300,000 prisoners employed on the construction of the White Sea-Baltic Sea canal, two-thirds were Ukrainians."⁹)

The Camps After the War

A new wave of terrorism descended on Ukraine and the other occupied countries after the war. We have already cited some

testimony on the period up to about 1946. In order to complete the picture, we should now like to quote some other testimonies which confirm the preceding ones. We should also like to add that the composition of the camps during the war did not undergo any significant changes, with the exception of the arrival of the Poles, most of whom were, however, later released and called up to serve in the Anders army. Moscow continued to release certain categories of prisoners sentenced under common law. But the political prisoners remained in captivity.

Referring to the period after the war, a former German prisoner who was released recently, states that in one of the camps in Kolyma, where he was interned from 1945 onwards, the Ukrainians constituted 40 per cent of the total number of prisoners.¹⁰⁾ A German prisoner-of-war, interned in a camp in Norilsk, testifies that in this camp there were 4,000 prisoners, of whom 80 per cent were Ukrainians. They included officers and soldiers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). "The Ukrainians in the concentration camps lead secret activity and always helped foreigners, — so this former prisoner-of-war states. — The MVD, convinced that it was only the Ukrainians who were capable of putting up a resistance, constantly regarded them as suspects. If it were not for the Ukrainians, there would be no insurrections in the camps, for the Russians are not capable of such initiative and, in any case, immediately report the matter to the MVD. The secret agents of the camp administration are for the most part Russians or criminals of other nationalities."¹¹⁾

According to another former prisoner, in 1947, 8 to 10,000 Ukrainians arrived at a camp in Karaganda; they included numerous young people of 15 years of age, who were later released but prohibited from leaving the district of Karaganda. This same prisoner learnt that the town of Karaganda and the neighbouring towns were built in 1930 by deportees from Ukraine and from the Volga regions (Volga-Germans). In 1939 the Russians deported to this region Poles and Bulgarians, who came from Western Ukraine. In 1941 Koreans were brought here, and later the peoples of the Caucasus. In 1945 the Poles and Bulgarians were released.¹²⁾

The Russian policy towards the occupied nations during the post-war period has been excellently characterized by Joseph Scholmer, a former prisoner and the author of the famous book on Vorkuta.

"The struggle waged by the Kremlin for over thirty years against the efforts of the non-Russian peoples to obtain their national independence has not been able to crush their desire to be free. The Soviet leaders have long since abandoned their attempts to win the support of the Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, and of the peoples of the Caucasus and of Central Asia for their regime. In the case of the small nations, genocide provides a "solution" to the national problem... But as regards the Ukrainians, the peoples of the Baltic countries and the other nations, the main aim is to exterminate the intellectuals, most of whom are in the camps and whose families have been deported to Siberia and to Central Asia."¹³⁾

The Camps Since 1950

We should now like to quote some testimonies on the composition of the concentration camps during the most recent period, that is from 1950 to 1956 and 1957.

It must, however, be pointed out beforehand that names such as Vorkuta or Norilsk, known to the public of the free countries, are not the names of a single camp, but of an administrative centre. In Vorkuta, for instance, there are more than 60 concentration camps, in Taishet 54, in Krasnoyarsk more than 100 (with 2 to 3,000 prisoners in each camp), in Norilsk 40, in Karaganda and Kingir 60, in Kemerovo 50, in Irkutsk 60, in Pot'ma 17, in Prokopievsk 37, and in Inta 7 camps. We have only mentioned ten of the most important administrative centres, but about two hundred altogether are known to exist in the west.

Vorkuta (Autonomous Republic of Komi). In 1955-1956 there were about 150,000 prisoners here. Camp No. 6 contained 3,000 persons, of whom 1,600 were Ukrainians, most of them sentenced to 20 to 25 years. They included 150 former members of the 1st Ukrainian Division, which fought side by side with the Germans against the Russians; the remainder were for the most part persons sentenced on account of revolutionary anti-Communist activity, for participation in the Ukrainian nationalist movement, or for having been members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). Of the 4,000 Ukrainians transferred to Vorkuta from Karaganda in 1953, 80 per cent were "Banderivtsi." They organized the insurrection in camp No. 3 in June 1955.

In camp No. 2 there were, in 1950, 2,500 prisoners, most of them Ukrainians, but also some persons from the Baltic countries and some Germans. The Russians were only few in number.

In camp No. 9/10 there were at that time 1,200 prisoners, of whom 700 were Ukrainians. There were also Byelorussians, Estonians, Lithuanians, but no Russians in this camp.¹⁴⁾

In a women's camp in Vorkuta, where there were 1,800 prisoners, "half of them were Ukrainians, 150 Germans, whilst the remainder included persons from the Baltic countries, in particular from Latvia and Lithuania."¹⁵⁾

In 1956, 1,100 women-prisoners from the camp in Gritchakhtin, of whom 800 were Ukrainians, were employed on the railway from Vorkuta to Talai.

Ust-Ukhta (Autonomous Republic of Komi). In this region there are 30 camps with approximately 3,000 prisoners in each camp.

Ust-Vym. This region is dotted with camps. In the period under review there were altogether 22 camps here. The majority of the political prisoners consisted of persons from the Baltic countries and Ukrainians. Between 1945 and 1949, about 30,000 prisoners perished in these camps.¹⁶⁾

Vozhayel (Autonomous Republic of Komi). There are 12 camps in this region and the prisoners include persons from the Baltic countries, Ukrainians, Germans and Russians.

Ural. In the central region of the Ural there are several camps which actually have up to 50,000 prisoners; most of them are Ukrainians, persons from the Baltic countries, Tatars, peoples from the Caucasus, Chinese, Hungarians and Poles, but there are also a small number of Rumanians, Germans and Yugoslavs. In 1953 the camp in Fabrichnoye contained 5 to 8,000 prisoners.

Perm (with the region of Solikamsk). In the whole region there are 50 camps, each with 1,000 to 1,500 prisoners, the majority of whom are Ukrainians, persons from the Baltic countries and Caucasians. From 1955 to 1957, for example, there were in one group of camps about 2,200 Latvians, 850 Lithuanians, 500 Estonians, 1,400 Germans and 2,100 Ukrainians. Russians are not mentioned in any of the testimonies. The death-rate in these camps was extremely high as a result of gas-poisoning (many of the prisoners worked in the chemical industry), tuberculosis, malnutrition and various diseases. The witnesses affirm that in these camps there were numerous prisoners whose arms and legs had been broken by NKVD men.

Taishet (between Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk, East Siberia). Up to 1955 there were 54 camps in the vicinity of the town, but 8 of them were then abolished. The other 46, and 10 of them were camps for women, for the most part contained Ukrainians, but recently persons from the Baltic countries and other nationalities have also been sent there. The Russians are not very numerous. A former prisoner of camp No. 5110/37 states that there were a large number of Ukrainians there who had been sentenced "for having struggled for a free Ukraine independent of Russia." According to this witness, the Ukrainians constitute an organized group and do not enter into contact with the Russians. In camp No. 215/1 practically all the prisoners were Ukrainians and there was not a single Russian. After their release, the prisoners are forced to settle in this region permanently.

Krasnoyarsk (East Siberia). A former woman-prisoner states that from 1954 to 1956 she was in the women's camp No. 235, close to the railway-station of Reshota. The Ukrainian women-prisoners constituted 70 per cent of the total number of political prisoners in the camp. After the big strike in December 1954, the prisoners who had been sentenced under common law were transferred to another camp. The same witness was previously in several other camps. We consider it appropriate to reproduce her statement on the subject of the political discussions which she had with other prisoners:

"I discussed the Russian Bolshevik system not only with political prisoners but also with "free prisoners" and with criminal elements. All the Ukrainians without exception held the opinion that this system should be abolished. They regard it as a coercive and transitory system, and for this reason it must be combatted. The Russians confine themselves solely to criticizing certain aspects of

the system, but in the end recognize it as their system. The Ukrainians whom I got to know in the camps not only reject the Bolshevik system, but also do not wish to have anything in common with Russia and, as they emphatically stress in every discussion, are fighting for the liberty of the Ukrainian nation and for the independence of their state. The long years spent in the concentration camps in no way change their attitude. On leaving the camp they are still as fierce enemies of Bolshevism as they previously were."

The majority of prisoners in Krasnoyarsk, who are extremely numerous (the single complex No. 235 contains about 55,000 prisoners), are Ukrainians, followed by Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Georgians and other peoples of the Caucasus. There are also some Germans, Japanese, Koreans, Spaniards, Dutch and Mongols.

Norilsk (north Siberia). In 1954 there were in one camp alone, situated on the banks of the River Yenisei, as many as 3,000 Ukrainians, who came from every province in Ukraine: Chernyiv, Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipropetrovsk.¹⁷) In the other camps the Ukrainians were equally numerous. According to the witnesses, it was they who, in June 1953, organized the strike and the insurrection in Norilsk. And according to the same witnesses, the "Banderivtsi" of Norilsk were secretly in league with the camps in Karaganda.

One of the witnesses, who took part in the riot in Norilsk, stated that "within a radius of 38 miles there were numerous camps like that of Norilsk. General Semenov, absolute ruler of more than 120,000 prisoners, administered all these camps. They were filled mainly with foreigners: Germans, Japanese, Chinese, Hungarians, Rumanians, Poles, Czechs, Ukrainians, French, Italians, Yugoslavs, Caucasians and persons from the Baltic countries. There were hardly any Russians amongst the prisoners."

Karaganda (in Kazakhstan). In each of the large camps in Karaganda there are between 8,000 and 10,000 prisoners. The Ukrainian prisoners are most numerous in all the camps. There are also a number of smaller camps. In camp No. 9 there were 1,200 prisoners, of whom 50 per cent were Asian people. In camp No. 16 there were also 1,200 prisoners. The majority of them were Ukrainians and Germans.

Pot'ma (Autonomous Republic of Mordovia). Prior to 1955 there were 36 separate camps, but since then their number has dropped to 17 (these are above all camps for women). The total number of prisoners of both sexes is estimated at 200,000 of whom 95 per cent are political prisoners. In 1954 camp No. 6 in Yavas contained 2,000 female prisoners, of whom 1,600 were Ukrainians and included a large number of former members of the women's units of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). The others had been sentenced for actual or alleged contact with Ukrainian partisans. Women who had unfortunately given a little water to a partisan were as a rule sentenced to 25 years. In camp No. 5110/33, in 1954, there were over 2,000 women-prisoners, and 70 per cent of them were Ukrainians.

The remainder included Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Hungarians, Rumanians, Russians, French, Poles, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Czechs, and 20 Germans. In camp No. 11 in Yavas there were only Ukrainian women.

Prokopievsk (Kemerovo region in West Siberia). Most of the camps here are special camps. In camp No. 525/1 there were, during the period under review, 300 high-ranking Hungarian officers and a group of German officers; in camp 525/2, Cossack officers who had fought on the side of the Germans against the Russians; in camp 525/5, former Soviet prisoners-of-war in Finland, numbering about 3,500 (some Russians amongst them, too), all of them destined to be exterminated, as the prisoners of camp 525/6 had been. Camp 525/7 contained 3,000 female prisoners, most of them Ukrainians. The officers of the Kalmuck corps which also fought on the side of the Germans against the Russians were confined in camp No. 525/8. In camp 525/9 there were 2,000 Ukrainians and Cossacks; in camps 525/10 and 525/11 there were 11,000 Ukrainians and Caucasians. In addition to these 11 camps, there were also 26 camps with the number 247 in this region.

Abez-Inta (Autonomous Republic of Komi). This is a complex of camps with the numbers 388/1 — 388/20; there are thus 20 camps in this region. In the vicinity of Inta there are 7 special camps with 30,000 prisoners, of whom 6,000 are women. According to formal testimony, the national composition of one of these camps during the period under review was as follows: 800 Ukrainians, 500 Latvians, and 400 prisoners of other nationalities. But not a single Russian. Prisoners who are released are, however, prohibited from leaving the region.

63 miles from Vorkuta there is an isolated camp known as "**Khalmer-yu**" (the valley of a thousand winds), which is reserved exclusively for Ukrainians and Germans.

It is also an established fact that in the camps in **Polombe** (in Asia) the Ukrainians likewise constitute 50 per cent of the total number of prisoners.

Lastly, we should like to mention the camps in **Kolyma**, in the Far East. In 1951 there were 1,100,000 prisoners confined in the camps here and 80,000 so-called "free" prisoners. In 1956 the number of prisoners confined in the camps increased to 2,300,000. Other sources, however, affirm that during the same period and also later there were 3,500,000 prisoners in the camps in Kolyma, not counting the so-called "free" prisoners. But the different testimonies agree on the fact that the Ukrainians constitute 54 per cent of the total number of prisoners. There are few Russians in these camps; the remainder of the total number consists of persons from the occupied countries in the USSR. "The morale of the Ukrainians is very high; they are well organized and true believers — so one witness states. — The "Banderivtsi" predominate amongst them. All the Ukrainians openly manifest their anti-Russian attitude and oppose the occupation of Ukraine by the Russians. Prisoners of all nationalities, with the

exception of the Russians, have a profound respect for the Ukrainians and hold their opinion in esteem..." In 1954 the prisoners of these camps wrote two letters to the United Nations; one was sent by the official post, the other by secret means, but both letters fell into the hands of the MVD, who, after an investigation, sentenced a Ukrainian to death.

Another important testimony is the statement made by a German prisoner-of-war: "In all the camps in which I was interned more than 50 per cent of the prisoners were Ukrainians. They may have been more numerous in some camps than in others, but they always constituted at least 50 per cent of the total number of prisoners. The number of Russians is incomparably less. A large percentage of the prisoners consists of persons from the Baltic countries. The majority of Ukrainians are between the ages of 24 and 70. It is an established fact that the same percentage of Ukrainian women is to be found in the camps reserved for the female prisoners. All the Ukrainian political prisoners are persons accused of "political brigandism," that is to say they have been sentenced for having actively supported or sympathized with the national Ukrainian movement and the struggle for the liberation of Ukraine. They come from every region in Ukraine and from every social class. But whatever their birth and origin, they form a true family in the spiritual sense. Naturally, the Russians are aware of this fact and their reaction is apparent in an aggravated form of Russian chauvinism with regard to all that is Ukrainian, and this applies not only to the Russians in the camp administration but also to the Russian prisoners."¹⁸⁾

The Testimony of Joseph Scholmer

One of the most important testimonies on the national composition of the camps is undoubtedly that of a former prisoner of Vorkuta, the German doctor Joseph Scholmer. In his famous book on the camps of Vorkuta (1950-1953) he says that camp 9/10 contained 3,500 prisoners, of whom 1,700 were Ukrainians. The other large groups were: Lithuanians approximately 800, Latvians 300, Russians 300, Germans 190, Estonians 200, and Jews 70. The smaller groups consisted of 25 Armenians, 30 Georgians, 20 Poles, 20 Rumanians, 15 Soviet Greeks, 10 Hungarians, 10 Austrians, 8 Chinese (members of Chiang Kai-shek's army), 6 Japanese, 7 Finns, 3 Yugoslavs, 2 South Koreans, 2 Dutch and 1 American. There were also small groups of Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kirgiz, Turkmens and Mongols, etc.¹⁹⁾

On the subject of the Russians in the camp, Joseph Scholmer writes as follows: "At the beginning of my stay in camp 9/10 I had little contact with the Russians. The Germans, the Ukrainians and the prisoners from the Baltic countries warned me that there were numerous spies for the administration amongst the Russian prisoners. Even in the concentration camps the **Russians are the representatives of Russian oppression.**"²⁰⁾

A labour brigade to which Joseph Scholmer was assigned consisted "almost exclusively of Ukrainians and of persons from the Baltic countries, some of them former partisans captured whilst fighting."²¹⁾

One day, this brigade, on returning from work to the camp in Vorkuta, encountered a column of Ukrainian women who were guarded by soldiers armed with Lewis guns. "The majority of them were young girls, whose faces bore all the traces of complete exhaustion after the day's hard work. In their eyes, which sought their husbands, brothers and friends amongst our number, there was an expression of curiosity, sadness and longing for a life which they would never experience. They were girls and young women in their best years, — those years in which they have the right to love, to give birth to children and to be happy. But they knew that by the time the door to freedom was opened to them, they would be old.

— Why are they in the camp? — I asked the man next to me, — a former Ukrainian partisan.

— Because they brought us bread when we were in the woods."²²⁾

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V.

- 1) Cf. Investigation of Communist Takeover and Occupation of the non-Russian Nations of the U.S.S.R., U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1954.
- 2) Maurice Laporte, *Les mystères du Kremlin* (The Secrets of the Kremlin), Paris, 1928, pp. 183-4.
- 3) That is to say in the German settlements.
- 4) "Saturne," op. cit., No. 6, January-February 1956, p. 30.
- 5) and 6) The Black Deeds of the Kremlin, A White Book, vol. 2, Detroit, 1955, pp. 68, 627, 629, 630.
- 7) Secret directive of May 8, 1933, No. P. 6028.
- 8) A. Mykulyn, op. cit., p. 45.
- 9) O. Kalynyk, Concentration Camps in the USSR, *Ukrayinskyi Samostiynyk* ("Independent Ukrainian"), No. 110, Munich, 1952.
- 10) A. Mykulyn, op. cit., p. 163 (testimony No. 5).
- 11) Ibid., p. 165 (testimony No. 16).
- 12) Ibid., p. 165 (testimony No. 2).
- 13) Joseph Scholmer, *Opposition and International Resistance in the Soviet Union*, Report to the International Conference on the Future of Freedom, Milan, September 1955; quoted by "Saturne" (English edition), No. 6, 1957.
- 14) A. Mykulyn, op. cit., pp. 117-159, 184 and 189-190.
- 15) Adolf Silde, *The Profits of Slavery*, Stockholm, 1958, p. 33.
- 16) Ibid.
- 17) All the testimonies quoted here and later are taken from two books: A. Mykulyn, *The Concentration Camps in the Soviet Union* (in Ukrainian), published in 1958, pp. 171-193, and Adolf Silde, *The Profits of Slavery*, Stockholm, 1958, pp. 25-171, as well as from free Ukrainian periodicals, in particular "Shlyakh Peremohy" ("The Way to Victory"), Munich, No. 5 and No. 38, 1956.
- 18) "Shlyakh Peremohy," op. cit., No. 5, 1956.
- 19) Joseph Scholmer, *Die Toten kehren zurück* (The Dead Return), Cologne-Berlin, 1954, pp. 122-124.
- 20) Ibid., p. 142-143.
- 21) Ibid., p. 119.
- 22) Ibid., p. 90.

C H A P T E R VI

THE RUSSIANS AND COMMUNISM

The Russians in the Camps

"The national resistance groups — so Joseph Scholmer writes — are characterized on the one hand by hostility towards the regime and, on the other hand, by hostility towards the Russians. The Ukrainians have always hated the Russians on account of the oppression to which they have been subjected by the latter for three hundred years. Amongst the Poles the memory of the revolts of the 19th century is still alive... The peoples of the Baltic countries never forget the Russian tsarist oppression to which they were subjected... They are all confronted by a regime in which the main body of the functionaries is again composed of Russians. The Russian resistance groups naturally cannot be anti-Russian; their opposition to the regime is the result of their striving for individual freedom."¹)

Elsewhere Joseph Scholmer rightly affirms that "there is no secret Russian movement which might be large, organized and co-ordinated in the Soviet Union today."²)

"The Russian resistance groups — he adds — without being 'national,' are naturally classified under the category 'national' as a result of camp-life: the Russians as Russians are compromised by those of their compatriots who, identifying themselves with the regime, are employed in numerous advantageous jobs in the camp administrations. Thus, the camp is 'a Soviet Union in miniature,' in which the 'government' seeks to rule the peoples with the aid of the Russians."³)

In this connection Joseph Scholmer quotes an example which is indeed both significant and striking:

"A Russian teacher was summoned to appear before the camp commandant.

— You are Russian, aren't you. Don't you want to help to introduce the Russian system in the camp and take the Ukrainians, the people from the Baltic countries and the Germans in hand?

The teacher said no, he did not. To which the commandant replied:

— I do not understand you. You are well aware of the role which the Russians have to play in the Soviet Union. This Communism is ours, — it is a Russian Communism.

"All those who accept such proposition are identifying themselves, even in the camp, with the Stalinist system. And when these Russians act thus not for personal reason but because of their "Greater Russian and Stalinist" convictions, then they knowingly or unknowingly provide a fertile soil for the realization of the old ideas propagated by Dostoyevsky with regard to Russia's mission.

— The Russian people — so a representative of this social category told me — will have to suffer still more. But in the end they will lead the world to a great, new epoch. The Communist society of the future will be the merit of the Russians."⁴⁾

Hence it is natural that the majority of the Russian prisoners collaborate with the MVD and the camp administration.

"Among the 3,500 prisoners in the camp ^{9/10}—so J. Scholmer writes on this subject — there were about 120 spies of the administration who were known to the resistance organizations. The majority of them were Russians. Naturally, it would be wrong to regard them as inferior beings because of their activity; their character is neither better nor worse than that of members of the other nations. The MVD has a good reason for generally working with the Russians: among them there are numerous Communists who are loyal to the Party line and who, in spite of having been sentenced, see no reason to be disloyal to the regime. Even in the camps they remain politically the same as they previously were. For example, a captain of the frontier guards is sentenced to 15 years in a camp for some omission or other in his duties. But that is no reason why he should become an enemy of the regime..."⁵⁾

The political prisoners react strongly to all international events. During discussions they always form two opposing groups, one composed of Russians, the other of members of the other nationalities. "Even from 1950 onwards — ex-prisoner A. Kniazhynsky states — the Russian prisoners assessed events in the light of the egoistic advantages of the Russians. They were hostile towards the other prisoners, very often denounced them, and on every possible occasion maltreated them regardless of the laws of solidarity in force amongst the political prisoners..."⁶⁾

The Russian Emigrants and the Soviet Union

It would be erroneous to believe that the Russian emigrants are not aware of the real state of affairs in the Soviet Union, which is clearly obvious from the national composition and proportion of the prisoners in the camps. They are only too well aware of it, and that is why they constantly try to mislead the free world and, above all, political circles by every possible means.

The chief means to which they resort is to present the entire question from the international and humanitarian aspect: "International Communism is oppressing Russia" (by the word "Russia" they mean all the Soviet Union), "The Russian people are suffering under

Communism," etc. The Russians who, like their fellow-countryman, the philosopher N. Berdyayev, acknowledge that "Bolshevism is a realization... of the Russian idea and that is the reason why it has triumphed" in Russia are indeed few in number.⁷⁾ N. Berdyayev says that to the Russian intellectuals "Bolshevism replaces and fulfils the functions of tsarism."⁸⁾ The same Russian philosopher affirms not without reason that "the Russian emigrants are not sufficiently aware of the fact that in the case of the Russian problem it is by no means a question of a small group of Bolsheviks who happen to be in power and who can be overthrown, but of a new and infinitely large class of persons who have now become the rulers of the country and cannot be easily overthrown. The Communist revolution has, above all, materialized out of Russian life..."⁹⁾

The second means to which the Russian emigrants resort in order to mislead the free world is to present the entire question of the Soviet Union from the Pan-Russian aspect: "The Soviet Union — is Russia (territorially so to speak), the peoples of the USSR — are Russian peoples; there exists one unity and one Russian patriotism amongst these peoples; a separatism amongst them is non-existent and unthinkable; only the Western Ukrainians are not content, but a Ukrainian separatism only exists amongst the emigrants."

It was probably reflections such as these regarding the peoples of the occupied countries (the non-Russian peoples) of the Soviet Union which prompted the Russians living in the United States, on August 2, 1958, to send a resolution to President Eisenhower which was adopted at a meeting "of the representatives of 23 Russian organizations" and in which they requested the American President to direct the policy of the United States against the independence aims of the peoples oppressed by Russia in the USSR.

"The Russian people — so this resolution stated — are a nationalist and patriotic people, as was proved by their conduct during World War II.

"As long as the policy of the United States is characterized by the trend to disintegration (of the Russian empire, — the Editor), the Russian people, in spite of their hatred of the Communists, will never be able to have confidence in the United States, and, in the event of a war against the West, will nevertheless be forced to support the Soviet government.

"Certain attitudes on the part of the United States, namely those which support the separatist emigrant groups in their territory and the separatist propaganda disseminated by the broadcasting station subsidized by the government of the United States, are serving the interests of the Communists in the USSR.

"As loyal citizens of the United States and as persons who know Russia and her people, we consider it our duty to draw your attention to the fact that it is imperative that the United States should change their policy regarding the Russian question and should once and for all refrain from supporting the said separatist propaganda."¹⁰⁾

How much truth is contained in the affirmations of the Russians and

their western friends can be seen from the testimonies cited in this book. The most striking point about these affirmations is that the Russian Communist imperialists propagate the same ideas, although they use a different terminology: "the Soviet Union is a monolithic country; the Soviet peoples are united by an unswerving friendship; guided by the great Russian people, the other peoples of the Union have dealt bourgeois nationalism a deadly blow."

The Russian emigrants are determined to safeguard the empire at any price, even at that of an unhealthy imperialism. Not only are they prepared to reject the idea of the national individuality of the peoples and their right to independence, but they also manifest an insufferable claim to speak in the name of all the nations of the Soviet Union, with the exception, maybe, of the Baltic peoples, whose independence is too recent to be artfully denied.

In their desperation and in order to facilitate their task of distorting the truth and political reality and to give a semblance of truth to their affirmations, the Russian emigrants resort to a third means: in their campaign they employ persons who claim to be members of foreign nations (non-Russians) but who in reality are Russians born in the occupied countries of the empire, and also renegades. To this same end the Russians found fictitious organizations overnight, as it were, and give them names that are misleading, as for example "The Ukrainian Liberation Movement," "The Ukrainian Federalists," "The Anti-Communist Block of National Minorities," etc.

These "organizations" without members have been used and continue to be used by the Russian emigrants for the purpose of duping political circles in the West and obtaining — incidentally, with great success — every kind of aid, including financial aid.

The true nature of these organizations is, incidentally, disclosed to us by a former "Ukrainian federalist," Ivan Chaplynsky-Sas:

"As a former member of the Executive Committee of the Ukrainian Liberation Movement (UVR) I declare that this movement is non-existent as a Ukrainian organization for there is not a single Ukrainian who belongs to it. This so-called movement to this very day does not number any members at all. It only consists of Ivan Cheremys, who poses as the Executive Committee of the UVR, Piotr Sencha-Zalesky, and a newcomer, Feodor Karpov-Romanovsky. The first of these three persons can neither read nor write Ukrainian, the second affirms openly that he was not, is not and never will be a Ukrainian, and the third is a man of no strong character, either politically or morally. I had already learnt certain things about these persons but I did not want to reach a decision until I had met them and got to know them. An opportunity to do so presented itself in 1957."¹¹)

After this encounter, Ivan Chaplynsky-Sas simply left the notorious "movement," a fact which did not however help him to be accepted in other Ukrainian political emigrant circles.

In January 1958, when the Ukrainian emigrants (over 2 million in the free world) celebrated the 40th anniversary of the proclamation of the National Ukrainian Republic, a certain "Anti-Communist Bloc

of National Minorities," hitherto unknown, published an "appeal" in Paris which was directed against what the Russians call "the emigrant separatists." In this "appeal," the Russians, hiding behind a fictitious organization, had the audacity to affirm that "neither in former Russia nor in the Soviet Union was or is there any national oppression."¹²)

That oppression of the peoples, to the extent of forbidding the use of their national languages, existed in the tsarist empire is proved beyond all doubt by historical facts and documents. And it likewise exists in the Soviet Union. One of many proofs is the constant repression, the victims of which are either sent to concentration camps or deported.

Facts Revealed by Figures

And it is for this reason that we stress the question of the national composition of the prisoners in the Russian camps to such an extent.

The Russians constitute about 40 to 45 per cent of the total population of the USSR, and according to the statistics for 1959, this percentage is probably even higher, namely more than 55 per cent. Let us set aside the question of doubt as to the accuracy of the official figures for 1959 and confine ourselves to saying that if one accepts the idea that there is no national oppression in the Soviet Union and that all the nations of the USSR put up an equal resistance to the Communist regime, then at least 40 per cent of the prisoners in the concentration camps must be Russians (or even 55 per cent if the Russians really are so numerous). But actually the Russians only constitute 10 to 15 per cent of the total number of prisoners in the camps.

The Ukrainians constitute about 21 per cent of the total population of the Soviet Union. Thus, logically, if they were treated in the same way as the Russians and if they put up a resistance to the Communist regime which equals that put up by the Russians, the Ukrainians should constitute about 21 per cent of the total number of prisoners in the concentration camps. The testimonies cited, however, prove that actually they constitute at least 45 to 50 per cent of the total number of prisoners.

According to official Soviet statistics, there were 31,200,000 Ukrainians in the entire territory of the USSR in December 1926. If we take 2 per cent as the natural rate of increase in population per year, then in 1939 (before the war) there should have been 39,500,000 Ukrainians in the USSR. But statistics reveal that there were only 28,000,000. Hence, the loss in Ukrainian population from 1926 to 1939 amounted to 11,500,000 persons. During the same period the population of the Soviet Union increased from 147 million to 170 million; thus, whilst the Ukrainian population decreased by 10 per cent, the Russian population increased by 27.2 per cent.¹³)

The other nationalities (apart from the Ukrainians and the Russians) constitute about 34 per cent of the total population of the USSR, and the percentage of prisoners of these nationalities in the camps is about the same.

A Decrease in the Total Number of Prisoners?

Whereas in 1955 the total number of prisoners in the camps, according to our estimate, was at least 19 million, in 1958, if one can believe the information which reached the West, they numbered about 11 million. But in May 1957 the deputy public prosecutor of the USSR, Kudriavtsev told an American professor that from March 1953 onwards the Soviet government had released 70 per cent of the prisoners and that the concentration camps would soon be abolished completely.¹⁴⁾

In this respect the Russians are certainly over-anxious to pose as "democrats" and as "humane." According to prisoners who worked as personnel of the MVD and the GULAG, a distinction was made between two categories of prisoners on the administrative cards: "prisoners of the first category" and "prisoners of the second category." But the head departments of the GULAG and the MVD never designated the second category as "prisoners" except in the provisional dossiers, which were liable to be destroyed at any time. That is to say, if the temporary documents were destroyed, the official card-index would never give the exact total number of prisoners in the camps, since the second category was not included in the list. The prisoners explained that in resorting to this double card-index system, the Russian Communists, since they fear the possibility of a war which they might lose, are doing their utmost not to leave any unnecessary traces of their inordinate and illegal employment of the huge manpower in the concentration camps and in this way seek to diminish their responsibility in this respect.¹⁵⁾

They are likewise over-anxious to cover up and to deny the crimes perpetrated against prisoners and also against the peoples of the occupied countries. For instance, many of the persons deported in Stalin's day, once they were in Siberia, were forced to write requests to the authorities in Moscow asking the latter "to be good enough" to permit them to stay in some region or other for 10, 15, or 25 years, or for the rest of their life, according to the sentence pronounced by the OSSO.

Khrushchov, since he is more artful and cunning than Stalin, does not need the OSSO: he simply makes things more difficult for the people in Ukraine and the other occupied countries; he introduces special regulations regarding studies and employment, in schools, universities and factories, and accordingly hundreds of thousands of young people register as "volunteers" for work and endure cold and

hunger in the vast "virgin regions" in Siberia and elsewhere, since they simply have no other alternative. Khrushchov's methods are more subtle than Stalin's.

At the beginning of 1960 the Russian authorities affirmed that there were no longer any political prisoners in the USSR. Could that be possible? Certainly not, for the simple reason that the dictatorship in Russia could not permit itself such a luxury either from the political or economic point of view. Without its regime of terrorism and of repression, the empire would cease to exist. Without forced labour, its economy would be ruined, and the realization of certain technical and military plans would be impossible. All the declarations made by Moscow on the subject of forced labour are intended to create the illusion of the democratization and humanization of the regime and to conceal the true system more effectively.

Furthermore, the fact must be borne in mind that forced labour is not merely the labour performed by the persons confined behind the barbed wire of the concentration camps. In the Russian empire the deportees, too, have always constituted another category of persons obliged to execute forced labour. And for some time now, there has also been a third category, that of the persons "released" from the camps.

True, a certain number of camps have been dissolved since 1953, in particular in Vorkuta, Inta, Ust-Vym, Ust-Ukhta, Pechora and in Central Asia, but none of the large complexes of camps have been abolished completely. It is not a question of doing away with the system of forced labour, but merely of reorganizing it. And this reorganization, which commenced in 1953-1954, is characterized by the transfer of part of the labour-power in the camps beyond the barbed wire fences, or simply by removing the barbed wire; the convicts remain in the same place, they are supervised by the civilian authorities and thus become so-called free workers, or, to be more precise, "free prisoners." The system of forced labour of the Russian empire has in reality merely undergone a change of form but not of principle. And this explains the decrease in the total number of prisoners in the concentration camps.

Mention must also be made of the notorious Soviet amnesty, demanded most emphatically by the prisoners in the course of strikes and insurrections. The Russian government has indeed promulgated three amnesties: in March 1953, in April 1954, and in September 1955. But their application has always been very restricted, and for this reason the prisoners continued to express their discontent.

It was probably prior to promulgating the second amnesty that the Russian government, fearing lest disturbances might endanger the economy of the empire, worked out a plan to reorganize the concentration camp system and forced labour in general. A. Kniazhynsky, a former prisoner, states in his book "In the Heart of the USSR" that in the spring of 1954 the MVD officers in one of the camps in Taishet informed the prisoners as follows: "You are all

amnestied. All of you. But this amnesty will not be as simple as the preceding one, in which case one was satisfied with handing out certificates and giving those concerned permission to leave. No, this one will have to be drawn up like amnesties are in every state, even in the capitalist states. It will be necessary to pass through the first stage and then through others. During the first stage the authorities will proceed to divide the punitive places into three categories." Constantly consulting a small book edited especially for them by Moscow and classified as strictly confidential, the officers then proceeded to specify that "in order to improve the punitive means and methods" the camps would be divided into three groups of different systems: light, normal and severe. The prisoners would be assigned to these groups in the camps according to the nature of the crime that they had committed. In the first group there would be neither guard nor convoys, and the prisoners themselves would be responsible for order and for discipline when working. The second group would remain guarded, but the transfer of the prisoners to the camps of the first group would be facilitated. The camps with a severe regime would continue to be "camps for forced labour."¹⁶

Since 1953 a certain number of prisoners, sentenced to terms of imprisonment up to 5 years and, in some cases, up to 10 years, in particular invalids, old persons, minors, and women with small children, have been released with permission to return to their respective countries. From 1954 onwards, the number of releases increased. Some prisoners were released after completing their sentence (a fairly large group of persons sentenced to 10 years in 1944-1945), whilst others, far less numerous, were amnestied. Of all those "released," however, only a very small proportion were given permission to return home; the majority were sent to places of detention, or were transferred to the regions of deportation (Siberia, Kazakhstan).

Upon arriving in their respective countries, the released prisoners of the first group generally find it extremely hard to cope with the insurmountable difficulties which are deliberately increased by the local administration and Party, composed as a rule of Russian settlers. They are obliged to report their arrival to the local militia, whose task it is to check their movements. Very often, however, the militia refuses to register them and to issue a passport to them, without which domicile and employment are prohibited. In that case the unfortunate person is obliged to leave the place in question at the end of three days. He has no other alternative but to return to the place from which he has come. And such cases happen very frequently in Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania and in the other occupied countries.

Those who receive permission to stay are, however, not much better off. They are regarded by the local authorities as "untrustworthy" and as suspects, and they are refused most types of employment. Information received from Ukraine confirms the fact that former prisoners live in great poverty and misery and only manage to survive because the people share the little they possess with them.

Like those who are refused permission to take up their domicile there, they soon leave Ukraine again and rejoin those of their comrades who have been released but prohibited from leaving the region to which they have been assigned.¹⁷⁾

In addition, former prisoners residing in their own country again are very often re-arrested, and these persons, deprived of all rights and constantly suspected, are then sent back to the concentration camps once more on the strength of a new sentence.

The second and largest group of "released" and "amnestied" persons consists of the prisoners who are obliged to remain in the same place or else are transferred to the regions of deportation. They sign contracts with the same concerns for which they worked as prisoners under guard, or else with the state concerns and farms in the region to which they are deported. In both cases these contracts force them to remain in the place in question for a certain number of years or for the rest of their lives.

These facts show only too plainly that the Russian government, by resorting to innumerable means of coercion, has hit upon a new form of serfdom with the aim of ensuring the recruiting of a labour force needed for the economic exploitation of the uncultivated and undeveloped regions and also for the war-industry, and that it is determined to achieve this aim by reducing the number of prisoners confined behind barbed wire and forcing the peoples of the occupied countries, in particular of Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic countries, to go "voluntarily" to those regions where the execution of economic plans demands the employment of huge labour-force

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VI.

- 1) Joseph Scholmer, *Die Toten kehren zurück* (The Dead Return), op. cit., p. 193.
- 2) Ibid., p. 195.
- 3) Ibid., p. 196.
- 4) Ibid., p. 197-198.
- 5) Ibid., p. 198.
- 6) A. Kniazhynsky, *In the heart of the USSR* (in Ukrainian), New York, 1959, p. 156.
- 7) Nicholas Berdyayev, *The New Middle Ages*, Otto Reichl Verlag, Tübingen, 1950, p. 69.
- 8) Ibid., p. 99.
- 9) Ibid., p. 97.
- 10) *Novoye Russkoye Slovo* (New Russian Word), of August 14, 1958, New York.
- 11) *Rusalka* (The Nymph), No. 3, 1958, quoted in "Shlyakh Peremohy," op. cit., No. 44, 1958, p. 6.
- 12) *Russkoye Voskresenye* (Russian Sunday News), Paris, No. 98, Feb. 1, 1958.
- 13) *Vasyl Hryshko*, op. cit., p. 151, and *The Black Deeds...*, op. cit., pp. 128-129.
- 14) Cf. "Saturne," op. cit., No. 4, 1957.
- 15) A. Kniazhynsky, op. cit., p. 104.
- 16) A. Kniazhynsky, op. cit., p. 204-205.
- 17) Cf. *Homin Ukrainy* (Echo of Ukraine), Toronto, Canada, No. 7, 1957, and "Shlyakh Peremohy," op. cit., Nos. 22 and 44, 1957.

C H A P T E R VII

PREPARATION OF INSURRECTIONS

A Chronological List of the Insurrections

It is erroneous to assume that the strikes and revolts in the concentration camps began after the death of Stalin in consequence of the confusion which that event produced. A long time before the death of this despot insurrections were already making themselves felt to a marked degree in the Russian concentration camps. Thanks to the testimony given by former prisoners, in particular by former Japanese, German and French prisoners of war, it is now possible to give a general and exact survey of the strikes and insurrections which have occurred in the camps.

- 1946: insurrection in Kolyma;
- 1947: new insurrection in the camps in Kolyma;
strikes and insurrection in the camp at Ust-Vym;
insurrection in Dzhezkazgan (region of Karaganda);
insurrection in Karaganda;
- 1948: insurrection in the camps in the west Arctic Circle;
- 1950: insurrection in Salekhard, near Vorkuta;
in the winter, strike in the women's camp No. 015 in Taishet;
- 1951: strike in the camps in Kolyma;
insurrection in Dzhezkazgan (region of Karaganda);
insurrection in Karaganda;
- 1952: in the spring, insurrection in the camps in Krasnoyarsk;
in June, insurrection in Molotov and Sosvetskaya (Ural region);
in the summer, insurrection lasting seven days in Vozhayel;
in the autumn, insurrection in Karaganda;
- 1953: in May, three-day strike in Kingir;
strike and insurrection in Kolyma;
May-August, strikes and insurrections in Norilsk and in the other camps on the Yenisei-Stroy;
in June, strike and insurrection in Karaganda;
strike in Fabrichnoye (Ural region);
insurrection in Dzhezkazgan;
in July, four-day strike in Kingir;
in the summer, strike and riot in Vorkuta;

- 1954: in January, strike lasting several days in Kingir;
 in May, riots in Taishet;
 May-June, strike and insurrection in Kingir;
 strike in Revda, near Sverdlovsk (Ural);
 strike in Muyka (Sakhalin);
 in July, strikes and insurrections in several camps in Karaganda;
 strike in the camp on Lake Balkhash and in the camp at Sherutay Kura;
 in the summer, strikes in the camps in Kazakhstan (40,000 strikers in Karagash);
 strike at Inta;
 strike and revolt in Kolyma;
 October-December, strikes and insurrections in the camps in the region of Krasnoyarsk;
 in August, insurrection in Vozhayel;
 strike in Taishet;
 strikes and insurrections in the camps on the Yenisei-Stroy;
- 1955: in January, strike in Taishet;
 in June, strike and insurrection in Vorkuta (camp No. 3);
 strike in Solikamsk (Perm region);
 in the summer, wave of strikes and insurrections in the Far East: Magadan, Muyka, Kharbin and Tsitsikar (Manchuria);
 insurrection at Pot'ma;
 in September, new strike in Vorkuta;
- 1956: March-April, strikes and riots in the Japanese and Chinese camps near Taishet;
 in April, insurrection in Krasnoyarsk and Tomsk;
 in the summer, insurrections in the camps in Sverdlovsk, Irkutsk and Maritime Kray;
- 1957: in September, strikes in the camps in the region of Vladivostok, Chelyabinsk and Sverdlovsk.

We have only been able to give an exact list of the strikes and insurrections up to the end of 1957, but there is no indication whatever that the active struggle of the prisoners has abated since then. The reorganization of the camps resulted in a strict division of the prisoners; and prisoners from free countries were now isolated in the special camps and no longer had any contact with the other camps. Since 1958 the number of prisoners released has become less and less in the West, and hence little information is available.

There is no denying the fact, as is indeed stressed by the CICRC, that "the strikes which have undermined the Soviet concentration camp system in the course of the past years represent an entirely new phenomenon." One can truthfully say that never before have such events occurred. It is therefore important to know how they came to arise, who organized them and how they proceeded.

The Situation Prior to 1948

Prior to the insurrections, the political prisoners lived under dreadful moral conditions due to the terrorism inflicted on them by the administration and by the criminal prisoners. The latter, encouraged by the administration, practically dominated the camps and terrorized the political prisoners. The CICRC, after a close study of the statements made by former prisoners, comes to the conclusion that "every element of resistance was nipped in the bud as a result of the terrorism exercised by the administration on the one hand and, on the other, by the "common law" prisoners. Moreover, before these events, the Russian concentration camps "strongly resembled extermination camps both as regards the inhuman treatment inflicted on the prisoners and the high death-rate."¹⁾

"Misery and despair — so the bulletin in the CICRC states — even exceeded the limit of that suffering in which coma becomes agony and torpor sometimes yields to violent convulsions." It was during this period, that is about 1947-1948, that, according to the CICRC "a new element made itself felt in the general situation. More or less organized groups began to be formed amongst the political prisoners, and these groups now commenced acting according to a certain method. Their main objective was to break down the dictatorship of the criminals in order to gain a strong and definite influence on all the political prisoners."

"Likewise from 1948 onwards, the treatment to which the prisoners were subjected began to change. Medical care became more adequate, conditions as regards hygiene in the camps improved, and the food rations increased and were of better quality. Of course, hunger did not disappear completely. The most fitting description of this change is perhaps contained in the words of a German prisoner released from a camp in Vorkuta: 'From 1948 onwards, hunger ceased, that is to say the big hunger, as it was called there; the little hunger continued until 1953.' At the same time, the regime in the camps became more severe (the barracks were locked at night, bars were put across the windows, and numbers were stitched on the garments worn by the prisoners, etc.)."²⁾

In 1948-1949 the camps were reorganized according to different categories (isolation camps, special camps, reformatory labour camps, etc.) and in some of them the prisoners sentenced by common law were separated from the political prisoners. But in the majority of the camps their domination over the political prisoners continued for some time.

The first changes which were introduced in the camps after the war were not due to the goodwill of the Russian authorities. These changes were preceded by several big revolts in Kolyma, Karaganda, Komi and in the Far North. It was in about 1946, not in 1948, that the political prisoners became aware of their importance although their political organization at that time was only in its earliest beginnings.

Nevertheless, in the course of the various insurrections which took place during this period, the prisoners, determined to burst asunder their fetters, already acted according to a definite plan.

The first big revolt of which we have any record, took place in a camp in Kolyma. "I witnessed the insurrection in Kolyma in 1946 — a former prisoner has stated. — It lasted three days. The fire brigades were called in to put it down. Since they failed to do so, the guards fired on the insurgents with machine-guns. Seventy men were killed. I do not know how many wounded there were, for they were immediately taken away. The Bolsheviks were extremely indignant at the resistance of the prisoners. Since they were not able to find out who the leaders of the insurrection were, they shot every sixth prisoner."³⁾

A year later another insurrection broke out in the complex of camps in Kolyma. But in this case we only have an indirect testimony, that of a German prisoner who was in Kolyma from 1948 to 1955. He has incidentally confirmed the fact that the Ukrainians constituted the most important national group in the camps. Here is his statement on the insurrection of 1947:

"The insurrection of 1947 broke out in the mines in Gorki. It very rapidly assumed huge proportions. After having killed all the guards, the prisoners armed themselves, left the camp and marched in the direction of the town of Magadan, attacking all the camps en route and liberating the prisoners. In this way the number of insurgents, equipped with weapons which they had taken from the guards, increased progressively. The tribunals, formed by the insurgents, sentenced all the agents and informers of the administration to death. The advance on Magadan increased in force and the insurgents got as far as the gates of Palatka. But the Bolsheviks had hastily summoned reinforcements of troops, and not far from Palatka the insurgents were finally defeated."⁴⁾

Similar insurrections broke out in 1948 in the camps in the Western Arctic Region. The prisoners of one of the camps north of Vorkuta armed themselves, left the camp and marched towards Vorkuta, but they were defeated en route.⁵⁾

The Revolutionaries in the Camps

It was no mere coincidence that the revolts in the camps began in 1946. In his book "The Profits of Slavery," A. Silde very rightly affirms that "from 1945 onwards the deportees and internees did not consist solely of persons who had previously been designated as 'peaceable inhabitants' but, in equal measure, of a number of active anti-Soviet elements. Thousands of persons were engaged in a desperate and open struggle against the invader and the enemy of the nation, thousands were involved in this unequal and relentless struggle, but, since the numbers of the enemy were superior, they were captured."⁶⁾

The revolutionaries of various nationalities, once they arrived in the camps, constituted the nucleus of political resistance and organization. With the advent of new groups of partisans, captured in 1946 and during the following years, the political activity of the prisoners expanded and increased in significance.

In order to give readers some idea at least of the situation in the USSR during this period, we should, by way of example, like to give a brief account of the struggle of the Ukrainians against the Russians and the Communists, a factor which sheds light on the part played by this national group in the strikes and insurrections in the camps.

Numerous documents and testimonies published in the Soviet and Polish press behind the Iron Curtain as well as by the Ukrainians in exile prove that after the Russians reoccupied Ukraine again in 1943-1944 a partisan war was waged there on a large scale for many years. Up to 1947 the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (U.P.A.) had at its disposal heavy armament captured from the German troops. Supported by the entire population and allied in its campaign with other national partisans, the U.P.A. was able to ward off the special troops of the MVD and the Polish army successfully. In May 1946 the Russians launched a big offensive against the Ukrainians, in the course of which hundreds of soldiers of the U.P.A. were taken prisoners. But this offensive was virtually broken by the attack of a single detachment of the U.P.A. against the tank column of the commander-in-chief of the offensive, General Moskalenko of the MVD army. The General and several high-ranking officers were killed. A year later another detachment of the U.P.A. killed the Polish Deputy Minister of War, General Walter Swierczewski, in a combat.⁷⁾ The military losses suffered by Poland in the war against the U.P.A. on the Ukrainian territory ceded to Poland are estimated for the period up to 1949 at 30,000 dead.⁸⁾ The losses of the Russians in Central and Western Ukraine during the same period were at least three times as high. In 1947, Russia, desirous of liquidating the U.P.A. for good, signed a military pact with the Communist governments of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, according to which the troops of these three states were to undertake joint action against the bulk of the forces of the U.P.A. who were operating in the region of the Carpathians.⁹⁾ At the same time a big offensive was launched throughout Ukraine. In the course of all these operations the Russians succeeded in taking several thousands of U.P.A. soldiers prisoner, without however being able to break the armed resistance of the Ukrainians completely. The Ukrainian partisans who had been captured were sentenced to 10 to 25 years' detention in a concentration camp.

In 1945, 1946 and 1947 the Russians also proceeded to undertake large-scale deportations of Ukrainians, some of whom were sent to the regions of deportation, whilst others were put in camps. The latter included soldiers and officers of the U.P.A. who had been demobilized since 1945, as well as members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). The OUN was the main organizer of the U.P.A.,

created in 1942, and played an important part in the armed struggle of the Ukrainians against the Nazis.

Naturally, the fighters for the independence of Ukraine, whether they were soldiers of the U.P.A. or members of the OUN, were determined not to give up the fight which they had taken up years ago. For now, as previously, this fight was a grim and desperate one. Every freedom-fighter was prepared to die for the independence and future freedom of Ukraine. Exemplary idealists and fierce enemies of the Russian imperialists and of their Communist system, they had no intention of abnegating their principles and of becoming, at the orders of the enemy, docile prisoners without souls. Far away from their country, in the camps, they still continued their fight.

After the mass-deportations of the Ukrainian population the general staff of the U.P.A. issued an appeal to the deportees:

"Wherever you are, in the mines, the forests or the camps, always remain what you have formerly been, remain true Ukrainian, and continue our fight, which is already amazing the whole world. Keep your Ukrainian soul even under the hardest conditions and believe in our victory... By your ardent love of liberty and your hatred of the occupant kindle the flame in the hearts of your Ukrainian comrades and of the other oppressed peoples."¹⁰

With the mass-arrival of former soldiers of the U.P.A. and members of the OUN in the camps, the resistance of the political prisoners began to be organized. It was by no means easy to organize this resistance, not only because of the terrorization to which the prisoners were subjected, but also because of their profound apathy. At the cost of their lives, the Ukrainians endeavoured to break down the terrorism of the administration and of the criminals and to shake the political prisoners out of their apathy, by arousing their confidence in their own strength, and subsequently organizing them and making them capable of fighting for the amelioration of their lot.

The Struggle Against the Criminals

The first stage of the large-scale fight of the Ukrainians against the MVD was the action intended to eliminate the spies of the administration and break the tyranny of the criminals. The bulletin of the CICRC supplies us with some very accurate information on this subject:

"Of the conditions which prevailed prior to the outbreak of the strikes and revolts, the unexpected changes introduced in the concentration camp system after 1948 and the development of secret activities proved to be as significant as the death of Stalin and the undermining of the administrative authority which this event caused. The most striking proof of this is the fact that the first big eruption occurred some considerable time before the death of the dictator,

namely in 1952 in Karaganda.”¹¹) This violent action, recorded by the investigators of the CICRC, was certainly not the first of its kind, but it was undoubtedly one of the most important. But the CICRC ascertains that the Ukrainians, “the majority of whom were former partisans who had fought against both the German troops and the Red Army at one and the same time,” engaged in a fierce struggle in the camp in Karaganda, in 1952, against the gang, composed mainly of criminals, which ruled the camp and, by arrangement with the administration, not only imposed discipline on the other prisoners but also maltreated them and systematically robbed them. “This struggle developed into a veritable insurrection,” which eventually put an end to the dictatorship of this gang of criminals. “After this incident the authorities sought to break down the influence of the Ukrainians which henceforth was clearly in evidence, by sending them to camps in different regions.”¹²)

“The observations of repatriated Japanese prisoners, which have been gathered and recorded by Herbert Passin, are particularly interesting in this respect. According to these witnesses, the crucial moment in camp No. 13 in Taishet arrived on May 5, 1954, when fifteen Ukrainians who had taken part in the organization of the strikes in Norilsk were transferred to this camp. So far the prisoners at camp No. 13 had been terrorized by a prisoner who had been sentenced under common law as a criminal. The newcomers immediately set about changing this situation. “This tyrant tried to put up a resistance — so the report states — but one evening he was given such a castigation that he was taken to hospital and never appeared in camp No. 13 again.” In another camp a French prisoner assisted in incidents of a similar nature.

“A similar struggle was waged by the political prisoners against the confidential agents of the administration amongst the convicts. In this respect, too, the testimony given by Japanese prisoners is extremely informative. At camp No. 5 in Norilsk, where, on May 7, 1953, a big strike broke out, about twenty Ukrainians, who had been transferred to Norilsk after the riots in Karaganda, took over the leadership of the political prisoners and killed four men who had been known to be spies of the administration. This deed served to undermine the control exercised by the administration on the prisoners and made them realize the fact that the Ukrainian nucleus represented a powerful force.

“The testimony of the prisoners who were released and returned to Japan is entirely corroborated by other prisoners who were also released from Norilsk and crossed the Iron Curtain at the other end of the Soviet empire. An officer of the German army, who was interned in special camp No. 383/4 from December 1950 until the

middle of June 1953, states that former Ukrainian partisans who were transferred from Karaganda to Norilsk at the end of 1952 organized a systematic offensive in order to destroy the network of informers by means of terrorism. In the camp in which this officer was interned, two spies of the administration were killed but the administration was unable to discover who had killed them. On another occasion former Ukrainian partisans, at the spot where they were working, attacked a group of six men; they killed four and badly wounded the other two; the two men who had been wounded refused to disclose the identity of the attackers to the authorities since they were terrified of the audacity of these partisans."¹³)

Political Guidance and Leadership of the Prisoners

The strikes and revolts and even the actual armed insurrections which followed on the first phase of the struggle of the Ukrainians were all spontaneous, but they were nevertheless carefully planned and organized. A political guidance and leadership was formed in the midst of the political prisoners, or, rather, to be more correct, it was set up by the heads of the secret Ukrainian movement in collaboration with the other revolutionaries. On this subject Paul Barton of the CICRC writes that the strikes "were led in an extremely firm manner by secret committees which were unknown to the strikers themselves. The specifications of claims submitted by these committees to the representatives of the administrative authorities were only made known to the strikers by degrees. It appears that in certain camps, at least, the strike committees were obliged to act in such a manner not only in order to give the strike a better chance to succeed, but also in order to train the bulk of the prisoners to overcome their fears."¹⁴)

Paul Barton then refers to the problem of the former Ukrainian partisans, soldiers and officers of the U.P.A., who — as he stresses — "in many of the camps were the main organizers of the strikes."¹⁵)

"As is known, a powerful secret army, the U.P.A., was formed in Ukraine during the war and fought in turn against the German and the Soviet troops. It continued its operations for years and years, but in the end the armed forces of the government succeeded in destroying the bulk of its troops. At the present time the majority of the former combatants of the U.P.A. are prisoners in the concentration camps scattered throughout the Soviet Union. Of all the political prisoners, they represent one of the best organized elements and also the most resolute when it comes to action."¹⁶)

It is correct that large numbers of former combatants of the U.P.A. were deported to the Russian camps, but one must not deduce from this fact that the activity of the U.P.A. ceased from then onwards. In 1947 the Supreme Command of the U.P.A. was obliged to demobilize

some of its troops and to change the tactics of its operations completely. A second change in this respect occurred in 1950, and since then the partisan war is conducted solely by small but very mobile units. "The fact that the partisans in Ukraine and in the Baltic countries have been obliged to reduce the intensity of their fight during the past years does not, however, mean that the national resistance and opposition has in any way weakened; the reason for this is that, without material aid from the West, a partisan war cannot continue indefinitely" — so Joseph Scholmer states when stressing that the determination to rise up in revolt and to liberate themselves is clearly evident among the peoples of the occupied countries of the Soviet Union.¹⁷⁾

Nevertheless, from time to time, the operations of the U.P.A. exceed the scope of a small partisan war. In the summer of 1958, for instance, strong detachments of the U.P.A. by way of reprisals attacked the garrisons in three big Ukrainian towns, — Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia and Ternopil.¹⁸⁾ An American journalist, Paul Maskill, who himself had a chance to talk to the leaders of a group of Ukrainian partisans in Ukraine, states that "in spite of more than ten years of bloody purges and deportations of hundreds and thousands of Ukrainians, the striving for independence in Ukraine is still very active and is growing in force. Students and other young nationalists are being trained to take the place of the partisan leaders who have either been killed or deported to Siberia during the past years."¹⁸⁾

The National Idea and International Solidarity

Interesting testimony on the ideology of the Ukrainian nationalists is supplied by an Austrian, Karl Fischer. "One of the witnesses heard by the investigators of the CICRC, an Austrian socialist, Karl Fischer, had an opportunity to have long talks with former Ukrainian partisans during his detention in the prison at Aleksandrovsk. He describes this experience in a work at present in preparation. To indicate their political tendency, these men, who incidentally were all very young, contented themselves with showing that they were Ukrainian nationalists. They gave proof of a systematic hostility as regards the Greater Russians. But this hostility was less strong than their guiding idea which consisted in extolling the solidarity amongst all the prisoners, whoever they might be. They themselves set the example in this respect. Their own conduct, according to Karl Fischer, was such that it could have served as a model. According to Karl Fischer's testimony, the main activities carried on by these men in the camps and prisons consisted in liquidating the dictatorship of the criminals amongst the prisoners, in eliminating the spies of the administration and in rendering the incorrigible Stalinists harmless."¹⁹⁾

"In this respect it is interesting to recall the ideas of certain theoreticians of the U.P.A." — writes Paul Barton. "They affirmed that after a certain time the totalitarian system would inevitably lead

to the complete degeneration of all the living forces of society. In organizing partisan groups not only in East Ukraine but also in the territories which had previously belonged to Poland, they proposed to mobilize political intelligence and the Western sense of organization in order to carry the resistance movement into the very heart of the Soviet Union. The young persons trained by this movement who are today conducting the fight in the Soviet camps and prisons are probably not aware of these early plans."²⁰)

This last assumption on the part of Paul Barton is not correct. For the combatants of the U.P.A. and the members of the OUN know very well what they are fighting for. Moreover, the idea of collaboration between all the nations is not new to them. It was likewise the Supreme Command of the U.P.A. and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) which in 1943 organized the first big conference of the representatives of the oppressed peoples of East Europe and Soviet Asia. The collaboration and the solidarity of the peoples of the occupied countries in their fight against the Nazis and the Russians was part of the plan elaborated at this conference.

In addition, the pamphlets written and published in secret in Ukraine were circulated not only amongst the combatants of the U.P.A. but also among the civilian population. With regard to the ideas of the theoreticians of the U.P.A. we should like to quote the head of the political department of the general staff of the U.P.A., P. Poltava. In a pamphlet published in Ukraine in 1950 and intended to counter the propaganda disseminated by the Soviet government against the Ukrainian nationalists, P. Poltava wrote:

"We Ukrainian nationalists are not chauvinists. In fighting for an independent Ukrainian state we are only fighting for the realization by the Ukrainian people of the same rights which the majority of nations in the world long since possess... We want to live in friendship and collaboration with all the peoples of the world, including the Russian people, if they set up their national state on their ethnographical territory. We are not fighting against our neighbours as such but only against all the imperialist forces which are oppressing or intend to oppress us.

"We Ukrainian revolutionaries and insurgents are fighting firstly, for the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state on Ukrainian ethnographical territory, with a just political and social regime...; secondly, for the reformation of the Soviet Union according to the principle of national independence for all peoples of the Soviet Union...; thirdly, for the complete realization of the idea of national states for all peoples in the world and for the elimination of all imperialism from international life...; fourthly, for a true democracy — as opposed to dictatorship and totalitarianism of every kind, and for the freedom of expression, of the press, of meetings, and of ideologies...

"We believe that we can achieve our aim by effecting a national revolution and social liberation both in Ukraine and also in the countries of the other peoples of the USSR. We exhort all the peoples of the USSR and all the working-class masses to join with us in the fight which will bring about the destruction of the Bolshevik regime... It is also our aim to form a common revolutionary front of the peoples of Ukraine, Byelorussia, of the Baltic countries, of the Caucasus, of Central Asia, of Siberia, and of the peoples of Central and Southeast Europe. The revolutionary forces of Ukraine, Byelorussia, of the Baltic countries, of the Caucasus and of certain peoples of Southeast Europe are already joined together in the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations for a common fight on the basis of the political platform which we propagate."

The pamphlet concludes with an appeal to the oppressed peoples of the Soviet Union asking them to unite and to rise up in revolt "for national and social liberation and for the disintegration of the USSR into national independent states."²¹)

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VII.

- 1) Paul Barton, *Le mécanisme des grèves dans les camps de concentration soviétique* (The mechanism of the strikes in the Soviet concentration camps), CICRC, Bulletin No. 4, 1955, p. 19.
- 2) Paul Barton, *Les transformations du système concentrationnaire soviétique* (The changes in the Soviet concentration camp system), "Saturne," op. cit., No. 6, 1956, pp. 35-36.
- 3) A. Silde, op. cit., p. 214.
- 4) *Za samostiynu Ukrainu* (For Independent Ukraine), Publications by the Units Abroad of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, 1957, p. 113.
- 5) Paul Barton, *Les transformations...*, op. cit., p. 35.
- 6) A. Silde, op. cit., p. 175.
- 7) See *Communist Takeover...*, op. cit., p. 31.
- 8) A report on the Ukrainian territories under Communist Poland, published in the German paper "Die Welt" on October 7, 1958; quoted by "Shlyakh Peremohy," No. 44, 1958, p. 6.
- 9) *Communist Takeover...*, op. cit., p. 31.
- 10) "Surma", official organ of the Units Abroad of the OUN, No. 3, 1949.
- 11) Paul Barton, *Les transformations...*, op. cit., pp. 41-42.
- 12) Ibid.
- 13) Paul Barton, *Le mécanisme...*, op. cit., pp. 21-22.
- 14) Ibid., p. 22.
- 15) Ibid., p. 23.
- 16) Ibid., p. 22-23.
- 17) Joseph Scholmer, *Opposition and International Resistance*, op. cit.
- 18) Cf. an article from Vienna, published by the Tarantel-Press agency, Berlin, August 1958.
- 19) Long Island Sunday Press, October 5, 1958; quoted by the Ukrainian daily "Svoboda" ("Liberty"), No. 195, October 10, 1958.
- 20) Paul Barton, *Le mécanisme...*, op. cit., p. 23.
- 21) P. Poltava, *Khto taki banderivtsi ta za shcho vony boriut'sia* (Who are the Banderivtsi and for what are they fighting), publications by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, Kyiv-Lviv, 1950, pp. 7, 15-18, 19-20, and 29-30.

C H A P T E R VIII

AN ACCOUNT OF THE STRIKES AND INSURRECTIONS

The Bloody Strike of Norilsk

An excellent account of the events in Norilsk which commenced on May 7, 1953, with a strike and ended on August 11, 1953, with a ruthless massacre of the prisoners, is given by Herbert Passin, an investigator of the CICRC.¹⁾ His account of the strike of Norilsk, which preceded the insurrections in Vorkuta and East Berlin, is based on statements made by Japanese internees at the time of the strike, who were either in camp No. 5, where the strike began, or else in camps No. 3 and No. 4 in Norilsk itself, or in camp No. 5 in Kayerkan.

"When events commenced, the prisoners numbered several thousand and among them were a few hundred foreigners, Japanese, Hungarians, Koreans, Chinese, Germans, Czechs and Italians. As in the majority of political camps in this region, here, too, the largest national group was that of the Ukrainians. Of the latter, some twenty had previously been implicated in the disturbances in Karaganda in 1952 and had only recently been transferred to Norilsk. They seem to have formed the nucleus of the strike, its guiding and driving force.

"One night soon after their arrival, four prisoners who were known to be informers in the pay of the administration were killed. It was never discovered who killed them. The most significant fact, however, was that they had been killed by blows dealt with a pickaxe, and this appeared to indicate a certain complicity on the part of the guards, for every prisoner on returning to the camp was submitted to a rigorous search and all tools, according to the camp regulations, had to be handed over to the overseers. It thus needed some very skilful organizing or else some very extensive complicity to smuggle a pickaxe into the camp. This method of disposing of informers had various aims and far-reaching consequences. It undermined the control of the administration as regards the affairs of the camp; it caused alarm amongst the helpers and agents of the administration and put them on their guard; and, lastly, it made the other prisoners realize the daring and efficiency of the Ukrainian nucleus.

"On the eve of the strike the main job on which camp No. 5 was engaged was the erection of a six-storey tenement-house in the immediate vicinity of the camp. This task was carried out together with prisoners from camps No. 4 and No. 6 (the latter a women's camp)... Since they were working on the same building-site as the women and since, like most of the latter, they were also Ukrainians, the prisoners of camp No. 5 established regular contact with the prisoners of camp No. 6. They constantly communicated with each other by means of bits of paper wrapped round stones and tied up with string, which enabled one to throw them quite far... In order to avoid the risk of any one individual being caught in the act, entire groups of prisoners would all throw their stones simultaneously. Thus, even if the overseers got hold of one of these notes, they did not know exactly who had written it.

"On May 7th, at about noon, several of the prisoners threw messages to some of the women who were working in the brick-yard. One of the messages accidentally fell into the area which prisoners were not allowed to enter. Stretching out their arms through the barbed wire or else using sticks, some of the men hastened to retrieve the note. One of the sentries ordered them to move back. But instead of obeying him, several of them went on trying to retrieve the note... Thereupon the sentry raised his rifle and fired, wounding one of the prisoners in the arm... Another prisoner was slightly wounded in a finger...

"A group of prisoners accompanied the two victims of the shots to the overseer's office and demanded that the sentry in question should be punished. In answer to the overseer's refusal to punish the sentry, they retorted that even if they were prisoners, they had, however, certain rights. Eventually, they dispersed again fairly peacefully; but their anger persisted, as was soon to become evident. Next day, May 8th, the day-gang went off to work... but they loafed about and did not do much work. The same thing happened again on May 9th. Then, that same evening, the night-shift decided that they would all go on strike. The prisoners began to feel that a firm will had now taken charge of the whole affair... When its turn came round, the day-shift did not go to work. This opposition rapidly spread to special camp No. 4... and to camp No. 10, as well as to the women's camp, No. 6."

The strike continued. The threats of the administration proved ineffectual. A group of prisoners "went to the camp commandant and requested that someone should be sent to Moscow to discuss their demands." Thus, "on May 13th a high-ranking officer of the camp combine of Norilsk arrived in order to investigate the situation; but he was unable to restore order; that same evening, a general arrived by plane from Krasnoyarsk in order to make another attempt to settle the situation; according to some of the prisoners, the person in question was Major-General Panikov, head of the Yenisei-Stroy camps who had his headquarters in Krasnoyarsk." But he was equally unsuccessful.

"On the following day, a high functionary of the MVD, who also had the rank of major-general and whom the prisoners assumed to be "Beria's assistant," finally arrived from Moscow in order to undertake negotiations. He requested the prisoners to name their "representatives" who were to draw up a petition. The strikers thus saw themselves placed in an embarrassing position. They did not know exactly who were the leaders and did not want to expose anyone to possible reprisals. Thrusting his way through the prisoners, a young Ukrainian stepped forward out of the crowd and offered to act as their spokesman. But Beria's assistant refused to negotiate with him and demanded that all the "representatives" should step forward. A rapid discussion now took place amongst the prisoners, who chose seven or eight persons whom they "entrusted with the task of explaining" the common demands without presenting them as "representatives" or as persons "responsible" for the movement. The envoy from Moscow was nevertheless willing to negotiate with them.

"A list of demands prepared by the secret committee was submitted. The text had been drawn up in a secret meeting in which the rest of the prisoners had not been allowed to participate, and they had therefore not been able to express their approval or disapproval. Nevertheless, when they learnt which demands had been formulated, they were extremely proud of and satisfied with the task that had been accomplished... At first, the MVD man appeared to be extremely conciliatory... The watchword was passed round to end the strike and to await results. In camp No. 4 the same type of conciliation also put an end to the strike.

"After an interval of some days, however, the prisoners began to realize that the authorities were playing a double game with them. On May 20th... about half the prisoners were moved out of camp No. 5 — some of them to camp No. 4 and others to a new camp situated about a mile further south... The general impression gained by the prisoners was that this was a manoeuvre to isolate the leaders. Our witnesses could hear the sound of machine-guns quite plainly in the direction in which the group of prisoners who were being transferred had been taken. This shooting was also heard by the prisoners in camp No. 4. The rumour spread in camps No. 5 and No. 4 that the victims numbered several score. The general conviction was that the Ukrainian agitators, who constituted the most uncompromising element, had been isolated in order to be subjected to special repressive measures, or else to be shot en masse. To judge from the noise of the machine-guns, they were massacred immediately. A similar "purge" was also carried out in the other camps which had been involved in the strike.

"On the following day, the prisoners who had remained at camp No. 5 gave vent to their indignation by starting another strike... A little after midnight — that is to say in the early hours of the morning of May 22nd — the guards started bolting shed B-2. Some of

the prisoners who were not yet asleep heard them, however, and warned the rest of their companions. Since they realized that this was no doubt a measure to isolate the huts from each other and to re-establish the complete domination of the authorities, they at once took action and, having smashed the windows of the hut, began to disperse throughout the camp; they then proceeded to break all the bolts on the other huts and called to the inmates to come to the rescue ...The prisoners, by this time in full revolt, were now the masters in the camp. The guards were kept in awe outside the camp, and all intervention on the part of the authorities was completely disregarded. The watchword was passed round to organize internal activity in the camp, but no one knew exactly from whom these orders came."

"In the evening of May 22nd a strong military unit entered the camp by the main gateway. A group of prisoners who happened to be near the office of the camp commandant advanced to meet the soldiers... and began to parley with them... Another group of prisoners took up their position behind the first group in order to cover their retreat, thus revealing both military experience and an organized solidarity.

"Next day, May 23rd, at nightfall, the authorities began deploying the troops that were to re-establish their control over the camp. Soldiers surrounded the camp, all the exits were blocked, and troops spread out the whole length of the camp enclosure.

"Negotiations were resumed between the authorities and the prisoners. When the latter refused to yield, a company of soldiers entered simultaneously by the gateways at the front and the back of the camp and formed a semi-circle as they advanced into the camp. The strikers were thus huddled together on the road between the bake-house and the store-house. The company of soldiers who, beyond the barbed wire, were deploying in the direction of the hospital now began firing above the heads of the crowd. But this did not seem to produce the expected result. Thereupon, the unit that had entered by the gateway at the back of the camp took cover in the angle formed by the camp buildings, whilst the unit that had entered by the front gateway opened fire on the mass of the prisoners. Scores of them were killed on the spot. A number of mental patients, who were probably seized with panic on hearing the shooting, got caught in the firing and seem to have shared the fate of the others. The prisoners seemed to be completely stupefied by this point-blank firing; without offering the least resistance they allowed themselves to be driven in a body towards the camp prison.

"Whilst these events were taking place in camp No. 5 the strikes which had been started in the other political camps in the region of Norilsk pursued their course. Most of them were in the nature of

sympathy strikes. From camp No. 4, where the movement had taken a course similar to that of camp No. 5, the resistance spread to camps 2, 3, 6, 10 and 25 in Norilsk itself and also to two mining camps, one in Kayerkan (No. 5) and the other near to Dudinka. The conflict assumed the proportions of a general strike amongst the political prisoners.

"At Kayerkan, in camp No. 5, the Ukrainians seemed to have taken the situation in hand. It is reported that before the strike itself began, they proceeded to kill a number of informers who were in the pay of the authorities and had been instructed by the latter to mingle with the prisoners.

"It is likewise reported that at camp No. 10 the prisoners, after having seized possession of automatic firearms, rifles and pistols, locked up the commandant of the camp in the prison and kept him there as a hostage. According to the truck-drivers from whom the Japanese internees obtained this information, a veritable battle took place between the armed prisoners and the troops. The insurgents, encircled on all sides, were finally overcome and ruthlessly massacred close to the main entrance to camp No. 10.

"Several Japanese who had been transferred from camp No. 5 to the new camp, which as yet had no number, heard the sound of shooting and cries in camp No. 6 (the women's camp) as they were passing close by.

"The main centre of resistance proved to be camp No. 3 where the strike lasted until August 11th but was confined to this camp solely. The prisoners here daringly took control of the camp and made themselves the masters and blocked all the entrances by setting up barricades... The inhabitants of the town nearby as well as the prisoners of the other camps in the vicinity gave proof of their solidarity with this action by throwing supplies of food and cigarettes over the fences surrounding camp No. 3 whenever they passed by. The besieged on their part drew up tracts stating their side of the question in the conflict and they used kites in order to disseminate them. Hence, very mysteriously, tracts in which the demands of the strikers were enumerated made their appearance in the town of Norilsk itself.

"It was not until August 11th that the authorities, after having exhausted all other means of action, decided to resort openly to force. At about 11 o'clock that evening troops surrounded the camp and opened fire on all the camp buildings. The shooting then continued sporadically until 6 a.m. on August 12th.

"The Japanese reports estimate the casualties in camp No. 3 at about 1,500 dead and wounded of a total number of about 2,500 prisoners. The removal and hospitalization of the victims took three days."

The Strike at Vorkuta

The facts of the strike in the camps at Vorkuta are probably best known to the free world thanks to numerous testimonies published by the press and, above all, thanks to Joseph Scholmer's book. We shall therefore confine ourselves here to giving an account published by the Units Abroad of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists:

"The insurrection in the camps at Vorkuta was most carefully prepared and organized. In order to be able to carry out this insurrection simultaneously, the secret leadership of the Ukrainian nationalists formed leading groups in each camp. The insurrection started with strikes during the night of July 19th to 20th, 1953, which spread to 50 mines in Vorkuta. The secret committee of the Ukrainian nationalists anticipated that the cessation of work in the pits would prove a serious loss as regards supplies of coal and might even bring industrial production in the region of Leningrad and Shcherbakov to a standstill. The prisoners in mines No. 1 (about 8,000 persons) and No. 7 were the first to go on strike. About 100,000 prisoners took part in the insurrection which commenced three days after the arrival in the camps at Vorkuta of numerous Ukrainian groups from the camps in Karaganda. The secret committee of the OUN issued political watchwords demanding the immediate cessation of Russian occupation of the countries in the USSR, the cessation of mass-arrests and of the extermination of the Ukrainian population and of the other peoples oppressed by Russia, the liberation of all innocent prisoners, a revision of all sentences, and the improvement of conditions in the camps."²⁾

"The insurrection was ruthlessly crushed with much bloodshed. In addition, the Russian authorities arrested a large number of Ukrainian prisoners and either sentenced them to death or else to imprisonment for life. Countless other Ukrainians were transferred to the camps in Kolyma and Kingir."³⁾

We have reprinted this information because it comes from OUN circles. The investigations of the CICRC have ascertained that the average prisoner, and we are referring in particular to the prisoners from the West and to the Russian prisoners, "was unable either to participate in the decisions or to comprehend the mechanism of the movement." The majority of the prisoners evidently did not know the identity of the organizers, a fact which has given rise to certain errors in the testimonies which have been published in the West.

"Indeed — so Paul Barton writes — the American John H. Noble, who was released in January 1955 from Vorkuta, where he had taken part in the strike at camp No. 3, was convinced that the strike in his camp was led by the former attaché to the Soviet embassy in Paris, Gourévitch.⁴⁾ In reality, however, Gourévitch had long been known to the members of the secret network as a dangerous informer in the pay of the police. The moment the strike broke out, he was driven into a corner and was informed that either he consented to present the

strikers' demands to the authorities and in doing so, took upon himself all the risks which this involved, or else he would be killed on the spot (it goes without saying that this ultimatum was, of course, presented to him by an intermediary and not by one of the secret leaders themselves); he chose to live, and after having accomplished his mission with a heavy heart, he disappeared without a trace. Hence to regard him as the leader of the movement is certainly an illusion for there is a vast difference between the conspirators and those who carry out their orders."⁵⁾

The Insurrection at Kingir

On May 16, 1954, the big strike and insurrection began at Kingir in Kazakhstan. A former German prisoner-of-war commented as follows on the strike in the special camps No. 392 and No. 3 at Kingir:

"Events in Vorkuta in 1953 were only a first beginning. By 1954 the secret leaders had drawn a lesson as to how to conduct the other strikes and insurrections more effectively and with more daring and resoluteness..."⁶⁾

According to the testimony of former German prisoners, the camp at Kingir was divided into three sections by high walls. One of these sections was occupied by women-prisoners. The male prisoners included numerous former anti-Russian partisans from the countries occupied by Russia in the Soviet Union. The Ukrainians constituted 60 per cent of the total number of prisoners.⁷⁾ The terrorism of the administration was exercised by means of numerous spies and informers. The Ukrainians, however, organized a defense system against these spies and killed more than a hundred of them in one year. This action enraged the camp administration, who thereupon increased its provocations.⁸⁾ Thus, on May 16, 1953, exactly a year before the big insurrection, the guards opened fire with machine-guns on a column of prisoners. The prisoners retaliated by a strike lasting three days. In July 1953, a sentry killed a woman-prisoner. The result of this new provocation was a strike which lasted several days. The same thing also recurred in January 1954, when a sentry killed one of the male prisoners.

Determined to subdue the political prisoners, the administration had 600 new prisoners, all of them sentenced under common law, brought to the camp in April 1954. But the leader of these criminals, a man known as "Gleb," no doubt knew what they might expect if they fell in with the unreasonable demands of the administration; hence, one evening, he went to the leader of the resistance committee, a Ukrainian by the name of Anatol Zadorozhny, and told him that some of his men had received orders from the "operative section" (MVD) to provoke a quarrel between the political and the criminal prisoners, but that he had decided to ally himself with the political prisoners and to join forces with them. It was the intention of the

administration in the first place to provoke disturbances and then request the troops of the MVD to intervene in order to massacre the political prisoners "legally." Such was the vengeance of the camp administration. After a long discussion the Ukrainian leader eventually consented to accept the help of the criminal prisoners in the planned insurrection.⁹)

On May 16th the criminals were the first to take action, followed immediately afterwards by the political prisoners. More than 2,500 prisoners hurled themselves against the walls which divided the camp into sections and against the barricades. The walls were destroyed in several places and 4,500 male and 3,500 female prisoners were reunited. The insurgents drove all the guards out of the camp and liberated the 400 prisoners locked up in the camp prison, which was known as the "isolation ward."

During the night of May 17th to 18th, however, detachments of the MVD army entered the camp and attacked the section occupied by the women-prisoners. The men-prisoners put up a fierce resistance. But towards morning the troops managed to drive them out of the section and immediately afterwards they began to remove the corpses of 76 prisoners who had been killed during the night. The haste with which the authorities got rid of the corpses was regarded by the prisoners as proof that the administration had called in the troops without the permission of the higher authorities. In reply to this illegal action the secret committee, under the leadership of Zadorozhny, gave orders for the strike to begin. At the suggestion of the secret Ukrainian committee, a committee consisting of representatives of all the nationalities in the camp, was formed at the same time. This international committee was headed by a Russian, Colonel Kuznetsov, who had been liberated from the camp prison. The prisoners demanded that a representative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party should be sent from Moscow, that those who had taken part in the massacre of May 17th should be punished, and that a medical commission should be formed for the purpose of examining the dead and the wounded, since some of them had the marks of bullets on their bodies.

Two days later, General Bychkov, deputy commandant of the GULAG (head administration of camps) in Moscow, and General Dolgikh, deputy chief prosecutor, arrived at the camp. Anatol Zadorozhny, however, demanded that a representative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and not of the MVD should be sent from Moscow. To which the generals in question replied that the Central Committee had sent them and would not be sending anyone else. The prisoners then submitted a petition containing 16 points. The generals accepted it, gave various assurances and requested the prisoners to resume work. Next day the prisoners went back to work on the building-sites again. The administration took advantage of their absence to bring in an MVD detachment into the camp and to

repair the walls that had been destroyed. When the prisoners returned to the camp they were informed by the officers that the soldiers on the look-outs had orders to shoot without warning at anybody who approached the walls.

The prisoners were dumbfounded at the attitude of the authorities. Suddenly, the women began singing one of the songs of the Ukrainian partisans: "Rank after rank march the partisans..."

On all sides the prisoners hurled themselves against the walls in a fierce assault, whilst the machine-guns fired on them. In a few seconds the walls were once more broken down.

"It was a dreadful sight" — so a Hungarian, who was released from Kingir, stated. "Flares lit up the camp and the machine-guns were firing from every look-out. Special troops arrived on the scene and the terrible massacre of the night of May 16th to 17th was repeated. More than 100 persons, men and women, were killed, but the other prisoners did not abandon the fight. On the morning of May 20th we again demanded that the MVD troops should be withdrawn from the camp. And that same day, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, they actually left the camp. And now began the period of negotiations which lasted until the night of June 25th to 26th, 1954."¹⁰)

From the moment that the MVD troops left, the camp was entirely in the hands of the prisoners and was administered by them. Red Cross flags were hoisted on the roofs of the canteens. The leader of the secret Ukrainian committee, A. Zadorozhny, gave orders for weapons to be made.

"During the whole of the time — so Dr. Varkony relates — the demands of the prisoners were constantly given out by loudspeakers. The Ukrainian women, on their part, disseminated tracts, made "grenades" of bottles and explosives, put up barricades to ward off any possible attacks, and looked after the wounded. The men were busy making weapons..."¹¹)

Meanwhile, the MVD broadcast the news by radio from Kingir that the prisoners in revolt were committing atrocities and murders and that they were a danger to the town. The prisoners replied with a message relayed by their own broadcasting station, which had been in operation since June 18th, asking the civilian authorities of the town to send a delegation to the camp in order to verify the allegations made by the MVD. The prisoners were naturally astonished when a delegation composed of engineers, overseers and factory-workers actually arrived at the camp. They were allowed to inspect the entire camp and satisfy themselves that order and discipline prevailed there. Nevertheless, the MVD insisted that it was necessary to evacuate part of the town on the pretext that mines had been laid there by the insurgents.

The news and messages broadcast by the insurgents' wireless station were picked up in Alma Ata and in Karaganda (300 miles away from

Kingir). The prisoners in Kingir also sent a message to the International Red Cross asking for help.¹²⁾ But this message was probably never picked up in any free country.

When news of the strike at Kingir reached the camp in Dzhezkazgan, 15 miles away from Kingir, the 14,000 prisoners there likewise went on strike and formulated demands which were identical with those of their comrades in Kingir. The authorities of the camp tried to convince them that "the prisoners in Kingir had been betrayed to the Americans and that one should mistrust them."¹³⁾

During the whole of this time the MVD was reassembling troops round the camp. The town had been partly evacuated. Planes constantly flew over the camp and watched the preparations that were being made by the besieged. On June 24, 1954, General Bychkov ordered the prisoners, by means of loudspeakers, to surrender and leave the camp. The insurgents refused to do so, however, before a representative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party had been sent from Moscow to accept and satisfy their demands.

During the night of June 25th to 26th, 1954, General Bychkov gave order to attack. Seven tanks and 2,000 soldiers raided the camp. By the light of flares, the soldiers, covered by the tanks, fired incessantly on the prisoners and, advancing on foot, wounded countless prisoners with their bayonets. The wireless transmitter belonging to the insurgents was located in a room in the women's barracks. The operator, on learning that the tanks had arrived, cut the arteries in his hands but continued to transmit a message on the short wavelengths — "SOS! SOS! Save us, we are being massacred..." — until he died.

At about 7 o'clock in the morning — according to a former German prisoner — 500 Ukrainian women and girls, linking arms, marched in the direction of the advancing tanks. Since they were unarmed they hoped to stop the advance of the tanks. But the MVD men — most of whom were drunk — merely accelerated and drove their tanks into the ranks of the women..."¹⁴⁾

Dr. Varkony, the Hungarian prisoner who witnessed this scene, states:

"No cries were heard, — the only sound was that of bodies being crushed and bones being broken..."¹⁵⁾

The soldiers partly occupied the huts and continued their massacre until half-past eight in the morning. At 9 o'clock Anatol Zadorozhny gave orders to the prisoners to cease their resistance. He was led away at once, together with the other members of the international committee, by the MVD men. They were all sentenced to death by a tribunal in Alma Ata. That same day 1,600 prisoners were taken away in cattle-trains and transferred to Kolyma.

Thus ended the insurrection in Kingir. But the bloodstains, which were still visible in the camp for months afterwards, were evidence of the fight which the prisoners had put up for their human rights.

The Consequences of the Strikes and Insurrections

The demands on the part of the prisoners in the various complexes of camps, which were drawn up by the secret committees, only varied very slightly. On the whole, they comprised two kinds of demands: specific demands, pertaining to the prisoners, and general demands, concerning the peoples of the occupied, subjugated countries.

Of the demands of the first category, mention must be made of the following: revision of sentences, amnesty for prisoners who were still minors and for the aged, extension of the amnesty to political prisoners, improvement of the food rations, a working-day of 8 hours, removal of bars from the windows of the huts, improvement of working conditions, increased pay, removal of the numbers sewn onto the garments worn by the prisoners, and the right to correspond with one's family more frequently and in one's national language, etc.

The second category of demands included those which were purely political: cessation of mass-deportations of individuals and peoples, permission for the deportees to return to their respective countries, abolition of the principle of collective responsibility, cessation of the occupation of the countries of the peoples of the USSR by the Russians, and a guarantee that reprisals would not be applied in the case of persons who had participated in the strikes and insurrections in the camps.

In some camps the prisoners attached especial importance to the political aspect of the strike or insurrection. In one of the camps in Vorkuta, for instance, the secret committee, in order to stress the political importance of the strike, hoisted the flag of each nation subjugated in the USSR and also of the nations of Europe, America and Asia on the main building in the camp, thus emphasizing the solidarity of the peoples of the whole world in the fight for liberty and for national rights.¹⁶⁾

In spite of their ruthless measures of repression, the Russian authorities were nevertheless obliged to make some concessions to the prisoners. They proceeded to introduce a few slight improvements which alleviated the lot of the prisoners somewhat. In most of the camps the political prisoners were now no longer obliged to wear a number on their backs. The bars were removed from the windows. In some camps the working-day was cut down to eight hours. The food rations improved slightly. But these small concessions in no way changed the general situation in the camps.

On the contrary, even if instructions were issued by Moscow which were apparently intended to alleviate the lot of the prisoners, they were in most cases merely illusory and served propagandist purposes. Actually, it all depended on the camp authorities. An example of the attitude of the administration can be seen from the following account by the investigators of the CICRC:

“(At Taishet) on May 5, 1954, a new phase commenced. Fifteen Ukrainians, who had taken part in the organization of the strikes at Norilsk, were transferred to camp No. 13. This measure was part of the official policy of dispersion in the case of the leaders of the strikes. For the first time the prisoners in Taishet received news of what had been happening in other camps, and for the first time they encountered prisoners who did not hesitate to defy the administration. The latter, moreover, dreaded the arrival of these new prisoners and during the first few months took good care to spare them all troublesome work. In the months that followed, plenty of changes took place in camp No. 13 at Taishet. These changes were of various kinds. In the first place there were positive modifications in the regulations concerning camp-life, working conditions and the application of penalties. Then there was a change in the actual manner of applying the regulations; for example, there existed in theory certain written principles pertaining to the protection of the prisoners, but in practice these principles were usually disregarded by the camp officials (for instance, a day of rest for the prisoners once a week, but if the overseers wanted certain quotas fulfilled, they simply disregarded this regulation and forced the prisoners to go on working without a break). After the arrival of the Ukrainians in camp No. 13 and their assumption of the leading role (amongst the political prisoners), these regulations were observed to the letter.”¹⁷⁾

But, for all that, a strike broke out in the camp at Taishet in January 1955, a fact which leads one to assume that the administration of the camps always reverted to the traditional Russian methods again.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VIII.

- 1) Quatre-vingt-seize jours de grève dans les camps de Norilsk, Bulletin d'information de la CICRC (Ninety-six days strike in the camps at Norilsk, Information Bulletin of the CICRC), No. 4, 1955, pp. 29-37.
- 2) A. Mykulyn, *op. cit.*, p. 200.
- 3) *Ibid.*, p. 202.
- 4) “New York Times,” April 6, 1955.
- 5) Paul Barton, *Les transformations...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.
- 6) A. Mykulyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.
- 7) *Ibid.*, pp. 206-212.
- 8) 500 Ukrainian Martyred Women, Statement of Dr. Varkony, New York, 1956, p. 22.
- 9) A. Mykulyn, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
- 10) 500 Ukrainian Martyred Women, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- 11) *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 12) A. Mykulyn, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
- 13) *Ibid.*, p. 210.
- 14) *Ibid.*, pp. 211-212.
- 15) 500 Ukrainian Martyred Women, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- 16) Adolf Silde, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
- 17) Les modifications du régime à l'intérieur des camps de Taishet du printemps 1953 à novembre 1954 (The modifications in the internal regime of the camps at Taishet), Information Bulletin, CICRC, No. 5, 1955, pp. 26-27.

C H A P T E R IX

SLAVE LABOUR AS AN ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTOR

The Economic Importance of the Camps

In addition to their determination to exterminate the hostile and undesirable elements in the camps, the attitude of the Russian Communist authorities towards the prisoners was also to a very large extent influenced by another factor, — namely the economic importance of the camps. The fact must be borne in mind that the camps in the USSR constitute an integral part of the Russian Communist colonial economy. A former English prisoner in Vorkuta, W. E. R. Piddington, the author of the book "Russian Frenzy," has in a few words very aptly defined the importance of the concentration camp system to Moscow: "If one were to liberate all the political prisoners in the concentration camps, the Soviet economic system would collapse."¹

This is only too correct. With the aid of gratuitous labour, or practically gratuitous, as represented by the bulk of the prisoners, Moscow has built towns, railways, roads, aerodromes, canals, and factories. Industrial production is based entirely on the raw materials raised or extracted by the prisoners. The war-industry, partly secret, only employs the labour-power in the camps. Consequently numerous camps are secret ones, and probably no one ever leaves them. Secret camps are located in the following regions: Kolyma (Balygychan), Urals (Vanserat), Franz Joseph Land (island in the Arctic Ocean and a base for Arctic aviation), Irkutsk, Kazakhstan (special secret camps), Kazalinsk (region of the Sur-Darya), Krasnoyarsk (Mirnoye), Mingechaur (Azerbaijan), Salekhard, Taldy and Tannu-Tuva. These isolated camps are strongly guarded and some of them are situated in prohibited zones. Access to these entire regions is forbidden to all Soviet citizens, whether civilians or military personnel, unless they have a special permit issued by the head authorities in Moscow.

Hundreds of thousands of prisoners are employed on the erection of military bases (Byuhiuke, the island of Vaygach, Bering Islands, the Kuriles, the island of Ptichiy, Sakhalin, and Salekhard). At Kuybyshev and Tbilisi prisoners have built subterranean aerodromes

and are employed in tunnelling an entire complex of labyrinths underground, which are to serve as depots for arms, ammunition and strategic products. In these two regions several subterranean factories have been erected and others are at present being built. In Kuybyshev the prisoners are employed in building an entire subterranean town, complete with dwelling-houses. Large subterranean factories and huge sites for depots have also been erected at Kungur, where an anti-atomic shelter has probably also been completed.

The prisoners also work in the mines, extracting uranium (Andizhan, Kolyma), raising coal (Aktyubinsk, Vorkuta, Sverdlovsk, Irkutsk, Karaganda, Kuznetsk, Chelyabinsk, Krasnoyarsk, Tula, Tashkent), and iron (Birobidzhan, Kolyma). The camps supply the labour for the heavy industry (Irkutsk, Kuznetsk, Sverdlovsk, Magnitogorsk, Molotov, Chelyabinsk), for the oil industry (Aktyubinsk, Astrakhan, Baku), and for the light industry (Abez, Vorkuta, Irkutsk, Sverdlovsk, Molotov, and Magnitogorsk, etc.).²⁾

One can thus draw the conclusion that the economy of the USSR is based to a considerable extent on slave labour: on the one hand, on the work of the prisoners in the concentration camps, and, on the other hand, on the work of the so-called "free" prisoners and the deportees. It is on the basis of this labour potential that Moscow draws up its economic plans and realizes them in an authoritarian manner by dividing them in the first place between the camp complexes and the combines, and, secondly, between the various republics. Any delay in the plan automatically implicates the responsibility of the camp administration. Hence, in order to fulfil the quotas of the plan imposed, the camp commandants entirely disregard the internal regulations of the concentration camps.

The Towns of Prisoners

Geographers state — and, in fact it is Moscow's boast — that during the past twenty years numerous new towns have sprung up in the Asian region of the Soviet Union and that in others the population has increased considerably. This impetus of urbanism does not puzzle most people, for they simply put it down to "the progress effected by the Soviet government."

Prior to 1926 there was only a single town beyond the Urals — namely Tashkent — which had a population of over 250,000. Today the population of Tashkent numbers 912,000, and there are several other towns with a population of over 250,000: Sverdlovsk 779,000, Omsk 581,000, Novosibirsk 886,000, Chelyabinsk 689,000, Karaganda 397,000, Kemerovo, Prokopyevsk, Stalinsk, Khabarovsk — all upwards of 250,000, and Vladivostok about 300,000.³⁾

Norilsk, Karaganda, Vorkuta, Magadan, Dudinka, Prokopyevsk, Komsomolsk-on-the-Amur, and many other more or less important towns have sprung up as if by magic. They were formerly only small

villages. The secret of their growth lies in the concentration camp system: for they are the towns of prisoners. Almost all the towns beyond the Urals, from the smallest to the largest, have developed and have increased in population thanks to this system.

The example of the town of Norilsk gives us an idea of the birth and development of the towns in Siberia, Kazakhstan and the Far East and also helps us to understand the connection between a complex of camps and the demographic changes in this part of the Russian colonial empire. The data given on the following pages is taken from a report by Herbert Passin, professor at the University of Ohio, and from an article by a German observer and former prisoner, Karl Heinrich, which was published in the journal "Das Parlament."⁴)

Norilsk is situated near the mouth of the River Yenisey, in North Siberia. It was already known to be inhabited in the days of the tsars but the region had not as yet been explored. During the years 1917 to 1923 Norilsk was only a small village. With the development of the concentration camp system, the number of inhabitants in Norilsk also increased, and by 1946 the population already numbered 50,000, although the place itself still retained the character of a village. Today it is a large town with over 300,000 inhabitants and an economic centre of the so-called Yenisey Construction Directorate or Yenisey-Stroy, although official statistics put its population at 109,000.

The region of Norilsk possesses a vast wealth of rare and precious metals: nickel, copper, cobalt, platinum, gold and iron. In addition, there are also large reserves of high-grade coal, clay and gypsum. The nickel deposits are probably the largest in the whole of the Soviet Union. There are more than 30 nickel works and factories in Norilsk, of which the most important is the nickel foundry, composed of a smelting works, or, to be more correct, of two foundries, and a refinery, producing 400 to 500 tons of nickel daily.

In addition, the combine at Norilsk produces copper, cobalt, coal, explosives and dynamite, etc. The wealth of iron reserves constitutes a basis for the development of the heavy industry in the future. In this region there are several secret factories, known by the numbers 25, 26 and 476, to which access is prohibited for all prisoners or former prisoners. The personnel there consists entirely of free Russian workers.

Moscow decided to develop this region about thirty years ago, after a scientific expedition had investigated conditions there. But the economic exploitation of this region, uninhabited and uninhabitable under the existing conditions, presented considerable difficulties. Man-power was needed for labour, and there were not even routes affording access to this region and a means of transporting workers, apparatus, tools and provisions there. In addition, since climatic conditions in this region are extremely severe, all attempts on the part of Soviet Russian propaganda to attract settlers by promising them advantages and benefits were of no avail. Nobody had any desire to go and live in the Arctic region where the winter is long and almost unbearable for human beings.

But the Russian government solved the problem in one blow, and the NKVD was instructed to carry out the plan. Thousands of prisoners from the concentration camps were now sent to Norilsk. There they lived like animals and were treated like animals. Many of them died, but each year, in summer, new contingents arrived. From 1945 onwards, thousands of prisoners arrived in Norilsk every year. Up to 1949 the death-rate was extremely high. And needless to say, it went hand in hand with a sudden boom in the economy of the region.

From 1940 to 1953 the town of Norilsk expanded continuously. New contingents of prisoners were constantly arriving in the camps there, and thousands of prisoners who had served their sentence were released on the interdictory condition that they did not leave the region but remained in Norilsk.

By 1953 the population of Norilsk already numbered more than 300,000 inhabitants, not counting the sentry units, the troops of the MVD and the prisoners confined in the camps. The following figures show the composition of the population of the town itself:

| | |
|---|---------|
| former prisoners | 225,000 |
| voluntary and compulsory settlers | 60,000 |
| members of the administration | 15,000 |

The Ukrainians constitute the majority of the former prisoners and also of the prisoners interned in the camps.⁵⁾

The immigrants or settlers arrived in Norilsk during recent years when the town was already sufficiently equipped to receive them. The majority of them appear to have been peasant-women who were attracted by the promises of financial advantages and by the possibility of finding a husband there. Before coming to Norilsk, the immigrants sign a contract for a fixed period, in which the conditions of their stay there are specified. In 1947 there were only 6,000 women as compared to 140,000 male prisoners in the camp complex of Norilsk; and in the town itself there was probably about one woman to every 15 men at that time. Later the proportion was 1 to 8, and it is an established fact that in 1953 it was 1 to 4 in Norilsk. A very large number of the women went there to settle for good. The exodus of women to such regions is explained by the fact that in some parts of the USSR women constitute the majority of the population and thus have difficulty in finding a husband.

Not far from Norilsk (75 miles to the north-west) in the port of this region, Dudinka, likewise a town of prisoners, with 40,000 inhabitants; the remainder of the population is composed of prisoners interned in the camps, who frequently work on the same building-sites and in the same factories as the "free" workers. In 1953 camp No. 1 of this complex (12 miles from Norilsk) had 2,000 prisoners, camp No. 2 (20 miles from the town) 3,500 prisoners, camp No. 3 (close to the town) 3,000 prisoners, camp 4 and 5 (on the outskirts of Norilsk) 3,000 and 5,000 prisoners respectively, the women's camp No. 6 (close to the town) 3,000 prisoners, and the penal camp at Kayerkan (12 miles from

Norilsk) 1,000 prisoners. In addition, there are numerous other camps in the vicinity of these two towns.

The total number of prisoners in the camps at Norilsk was estimated in 1947 at 140,000 to 150,000. In 1953 this number was reduced to 100,000, and in 1954-1956 to 50,000 as a result of the release of those prisoners who had served 10-year sentences.

The main change in the status of the town of Norilsk was undoubtedly effected in 1953. In that year, Norilsk, having developed into a modern town with wide streets and multi-storeyed houses and buildings, was officially conceded the status of a town and the right to a seat in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The administration of the town passed from the MVD to the Ministry of Non-Ferrous Metals. There was a slight increase in the number of settlers who arrived there. For reasons unknown, the non-Soviet prisoners were transferred from Norilsk to other camps.

The inhabitants of the town of Norilsk lead a miserable life. Owing to the steady increase of criminality, the housing problem has reached the stage of a crisis. Numerous families are unable to live together on account of lack of accommodation. The average inhabitant lives in tumbledown and shabby dwellings, since the fine, modern houses are reserved for the elite of the town, the functionaries and members of the MVD or KGB, who, as elsewhere in the Soviet Russian empire, constitute the new aristocracy. And it is this aristocracy which rules the town.

Moreover, the region of Norilsk was and continues to be a prohibited zone, inaccessible to everyone who is not armed with a special permit.

Similar conditions exist in all the other towns built by prisoners. Inta, a town in the Komi ASSR with a population of 45,000 in 1955, was a remote village prior to World War II. It is now an industrial town in a mining region, where climatic conditions are very severe. Without slave labour, its development would have been laborious and limited. There would have been very few persons willing to settle voluntarily in either Inta or Norilsk.

The town of Inta is very well run; there is a good bus service, and there are many eight-storeyed houses in the residential area, a swimming bath, a theatre and a club for the new aristocracy, the functionaries of the MVD and KGB, the members of the administration and their families.

A fairly large number of prisoners were released in the region of Inta and Abez in February 1955; it is estimated that they constituted 80 per cent of the total number of prisoners. But they were immediately obliged to sign a contract of work which forced them to remain in the same place, to work in the same coal-mine or on the same building-site. Thus, their release actually brought no alleviation of their lot; they were regarded as free, but they had not even sufficient means to go and live in the town. And hence they have remained tied to the mine, to the building-site or to the camp.

In order to permit certain "released persons" to obtain a dwelling in the town, the government grants loans up to 15,000 roubles (old currency) per person. But it costs between 60,000 and 120,000 roubles to build a small house. And not being in a position to build a house, former prisoners are obliged to content themselves with a wretched hut, and the money they earn is spent on buying the bare necessities of life, — food and clothes.

The above-mentioned system of loans is the second means by which the authorities tied down the former prisoners to the place of their internment, for it takes them many years to pay off this debt if they accept a loan. On the other hand, many of them have been accused of wasting money lent by the state and have accordingly been sentenced to imprisonment in a camp once more, this time for life. Towards the end of 1955, many of the prisoners who had been released at the beginning of the year were imprisoned in the camps once more on various pretexts.⁶⁾

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IX.

- 1) 500 Ukrainian Martyred Women, op. cit., p. 101.
- 2) See Livre Blanc (White Book), op. cit. Documents sur l'importance économique des camps de concentration soviétiques (Documents on the economic importance of the Soviet concentration camps), pp. 207-210.
- 3) Narodnoye khozyaystvo SSSR v 1959 godu (The National Economy of the USSR in 1959), Moscow, 1960, pp. 35-39.
- 4) "Das Parlament" ("The Parliament"), Vol. XXIII/56, January 6, 1956, pp. 346-356.
- 5) Ibid., p. 348.
- 6) Cf. A. Silde, op. cit., pp. 50-53.

C H A P T E R X

CONCLUSION

The Opposition of the Subjugated Peoples

In relying on facts pertaining mainly to the Ukrainian nation when writing this pamphlet, we had no intention of disparaging the importance of the other non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union, or of giving readers the impression that it is only the Ukrainians who put up a resistance or who are obliged to suffer the persecutions inflicted by the Russians and the local Communists. We merely wished to give priority to the Ukrainian question here because it is probably least known and least understood in the free world and also because the Ukrainian people is the second largest people in the Soviet Union after the Russians. The solution of the Ukrainian question in the sense of national independence would, in our opinion, constitute a solid basis for the independence of the other peoples in and outside the USSR and would contribute towards peace in this part of the world.

The solidarity of the oppressed peoples is more concrete and real than one imagines and it is manifested most strongly in the camps. A common fate unites these peoples to such an extent that their joint efforts have made big insurrections, organized in the interests of all the prisoners, possible.

The common feature which characterizes the prisoners of the occupied and oppressed countries is their rejection and their hatred of Communism, the realization of which is inevitably accompanied by Russification and the destruction of man's soul and of the national character.

"The word 'hatred' — so A. Silde writes in his book — does not suffice to express all the hatred felt by the Latvians towards the Russians — this is what those who have returned from Vorkuta and Taishet say... This hatred has been provoked by the Russians who are regarded as foreign oppressors"; it goes without saying that exactly the same feelings are harboured by all the other peoples of the occupied countries of the USSR.¹⁾

The Russification and the colonization by the Russians of the occupied countries, in particular of the Baltic countries, have been

carried out by force to such a degree that they have provoked a strange yet comprehensible reaction on the part of former prisoners or deportees who return to their native country. A Latvian, for instance, once he returns to his own country does not want to stay there: "I do not like being here. I only encounter Russians here. One might as well go back to Siberia. There we did, at least, have a kind of international town, built by us — Latvians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Poles, Germans and others. And there were no Russians there."²)

The Baltic countries cannot forget the year 1940. In that year the Russians deported about 15 per cent of the population and subsequently continued their policy of subjugation and colonization. Almost half the population of the Baltic countries is now in Siberia, in the concentration camps or as "free" workers under the interdiction to return to their own country. In his book on Vorkuta, Joseph Scholmer mentions the fact that the Estonian prisoners do not speak any Russian at all even though they have been in the camps so long. They refuse to learn a single word of this language, and the guards are thus obliged to learn some Estonian so as to be able to give orders when supervising the work of the prisoners. But such incidents do not occur solely in the camps. The official organ of the Red Army, "The Red Star," stated that the Georgian and Armenian soldiers and non-commissioned officers, as well as those of other nationalities refuse to learn the Russian language since they maintain that it is sufficient if they know their own national language.³) Similar incidents have also been reported in Ukraine.

The national composition of the camps obviously differs according to regions and camp complexes, and though the Ukrainians are most numerous in practically all the camps of the Soviet Union, the percentage of prisoners of other nationalities varies considerably. For instance, in the majority of camps belonging to the Norilsk complex, the most important national groups after the Ukrainians were the Georgians, Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians.⁴) Next in order of size came the Germans, Chinese, Poles, Crimean Tatars, Chechen-Ingush, Jews, and, lastly, the Russians. But whereas in camps 1, 2, 3 and 6, the Ukrainians constituted the majority, in camps 4 and 5 the prisoners from the Baltic countries were most numerous. In the women's camp, No. 6, the national composition was as follows: 2,600 Ukrainians, 200 Russians, 150 prisoners from the Baltic countries, 30 Poles, 6 Germans, 2 Japanese, and a few women of other nationalities.⁵) In the camps at Pechora second in numerical importance after the Ukrainians were the peoples of the Caucasus, third the Russians, followed by the Baltic peoples, the Japanese and the Chinese.⁶) Camp 525/9 of the Prokopyevsk complex was reserved for the Caucasians, and in camp No. 19 in Karaganda the majority of prisoners were members of the Asiatic peoples.⁷) In the camp at Kirov the Russians came third in numerical importance.⁸)

In addition to the secret leadership of the resistance movement which in its activity includes both the prisoners in the camps as well as the "free" population (former prisoners, deportees, voluntary

settlers), there are also political groups formed voluntarily by the prisoners for the purpose of discussing problems concerning political opposition. Each nationality usually appoints a confidential person at the meeting of the group and in this way contacts are strengthened and mutual understanding can be developed. It is obvious that the initiative as regards this political activity (which must not be confused with the secret revolutionary leadership, whose members are not known to the prisoners) is usually taken by the national group which is the largest in the camp and depends on the intellectual capacity of the leaders.

The first insurrection in the Vorkuta camp complex (in 1948) was led from the military point of view by a Moslem from the Caucasus, Mecheyev, a former colonel of the Red Army who had taken part in the battle of Stalingrad and received the decoration of a "hero of the Soviet Union."⁹)

The 25 million Moslems of the Soviet Union, as well as the other peoples of the Caucasus, of the Baltic countries, of Byelorussia and of Ukraine have, as a result of the policy of Russification and oppression, become fierce nationalists. B. Roeder, a clear-sighted observer who spent several years in the concentration camps, stresses that the nationalism of the peoples oppressed by Russia must not be confused with other nationalism, for their nationalism "is a progressive and not a retrogressive element."¹⁰) In reality the nationalism of these peoples is nothing but a patriotism aroused to the extreme by foreign domination and Communism, accompanied by compulsory Russification and Russian colonization. The objectives of this nationalism are liberty, national independence and social justice.

The remarkable thing is that all the insurrections and all the major revolts on the part of the peoples in the Soviet Union have taken place outside the Russian ethnographical territory, with the exception of the sailors' revolt in Kronstadt (1921) and even these sailors, incidentally, were "recruited from the shores of the Black Sea, that is to say from Ukraine."¹¹)

It is an established fact that the Soviet Union has experienced a partisan war and insurrections in Ukraine, which we have already mentioned above, insurrections in Georgia (1921, 1922, 1924 and 1927), and revolts in the other Soviet Republics in Europe and Asia prior to the war (except in Russia); it is also an established fact that there have been revolts and demonstrations on the part of the population of the occupied countries since the war (Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, the Baltic countries, and Turkestan), and it is furthermore an established fact that the partisan war has not ceased in Ukraine, the Caucasus and the Baltic countries since World War II.

Anyone who has studied political reality in the Soviet Union without accepting a priori the ideas preconceived in Moscow ("Soviet man") or in the West ("Russian man"), will, like B. Roeder, inevitably arrive at one conclusion as regards the real state of affairs: "The oppression of the national minorities and the kolkhozes represent the most vulnerable spot in the Soviet system."¹²) The camps are striking

proof of this fact: the overwhelming majority of prisoners are persons who have fought against either national oppression or the kolkhoz system. The only point on which the conclusion drawn by B. Roeder must be corrected is that the peoples oppressed by Russia are not "national minorities," but, rather, complete national entities which probably constitute the majority of the population of the USSR. We use the word "probably," for the official Soviet statistics state that the Russians constitute the majority (about 55 per cent), but there is every reason to suppose that the statistics of the Kremlin are falsified in favour of the Russians.

Terrorism in the Soviet Union is engendered not only by the imperatives of the Communist ideology but also — and above all — by the fact that the minority cannot dominate the majority without applying violence and injustice.

Over 30 Million Persons Have Died in the Camps

The object of this survey is to show that the prisoners in the Russian camps cannot be regarded or represented as an amorphous mass without national characteristics. The overwhelming majority of them are silent fighters for definite and real ideas. They are in the camps not as a result of social persecution on the part of the Communist regime, but as a result of national persecutions on the part of the Russian regime.

Russian laws are formulated according to the Communist terminology, that is to say according to the social criterion, but these laws are applied according to the national appurtenance of the alleged or real delinquents.

During the years 1932 and 1933, for example, about 70 per cent of the private property of the farmers in Ukraine was forcibly collectivized, whereas in Russia during the same period collectivization did not exceed 50 per cent by any means; indeed, according to some estimates, almost 90 per cent of the private property in Ukraine was collectivized during this period, as compared to only 30 per cent at the most in Russia.¹³⁾

Why then is it necessary to resort to mass-deportations of the Ukrainian population, to exterminate the Ukrainian people and to sentence them to slave labour? Why did Moscow consider it necessary to let 6 to 7 million Ukrainians starve to death in 1932-1933?

When we talk about the total number of prisoners in the camps at certain periods, we must not forget that we are referring to living prisoners. There are also others, namely those who have died in the camps. As regards the death-rate in certain camp complexes we have several testimonies, but there are few estimates pertaining to the camps as a whole.

Thus, for example, L. Golubovich, a former functionary of the OSSO and an inspector of the administration of the BAMLAG (complex of the camps in the Baikal-Amur area), who was arrested and

sent to one of the camps that he had previously administered, stated that in 1935-1936 about 25 per cent of the officially registered prisoners in the fourth section of the BAMLAG died.¹⁴⁾ Mme. Lipper, who spent the years from 1937 to 1948 in various concentration camps, has testified that "the death-rate of 30 per cent amongst the prisoners who worked in the gold-mines (in Kolyma) remained constant and no one was concerned about it."¹⁵⁾

For the year 1938 we should like to quote the testimony given by I. Ratmirov, a former prisoner in the camp at Kuznetsk, where he worked as a doctor: he affirms that during the month of April 1938 there were 5,000 deaths amongst the 28,000 or 29,000 prisoners, which leads us to assume that the average death-rate was about 16 per cent. In the camp at Karaganda, according to the testimony of Erich Müller, the death-rate during the period 1941 to 1947 was 30 per cent.¹⁶⁾ For the years 1946 to 1949 we have the testimony of M. Reek, who during this period was interned in the camps in Karelia: "According to my estimate, about 60 per cent of the prisoners died in the course of internment" in this complex of camps.¹⁷⁾

We should also like to quote the testimony of N. Antonov, a former prisoner and high functionary in the camps at the same time. He was employed on the construction of the canal linking the White Sea and the Baltic Sea and was in charge of 5,300 prisoners. "When I arrived at the canal site — he stated before the CICRC — there were 260,000 prisoners. I know that the death-rate was 700 every day. Each day about 1,500 new prisoners arrived at the camp. Thus there was no shortage of labour. The prisoners who died were replaced immediately. Towards the end there were nearly 1 million persons in my camp."¹⁸⁾

It was on the subject of this same canal that Vyshinsky wrote as follows: "The canal between the White Sea and the Baltic Sea is a living example of the principles of the Soviet system of corrective labour which surpass beyond compare all the most 'perfect,' most 'humanitarian' and most 'cultural' inventions and innovations of any bourgeois state."¹⁹⁾

Reliable estimates on the death-rate in the camps as a whole vary very considerably. V. Andreyev states that the head of the guard section of the GULAG (Head Administration of the Camps) in Moscow said to him in 1934: "Strange things appear to be happening. I have the impression that all the camps in the Soviet Union have reached an agreement to shoot 8 to 10 per cent of the population of the camps during these last two months."²⁰⁾ This percentage is not complete, for one must add to it the percentage of prisoners who died in the course of work, in the hospitals and huts, as a result of illness, malnutrition, etc.

According to J. Margoline, the death-rate for the camps as a whole varied between 5 and 10 per cent,²¹⁾ but in our opinion his estimate is too low. On the contrary, information received from Ukrainian political circles states that in 1953 the Russian authorities imposed a death-rate of 20 per cent of the total number of prisoners for the camps. If this death-rate of 20 per cent was not reached in a camp, the

commandant of the camp in question received orders to fire on the prisoners.²²⁾

An important testimony regarding the camps in Kolyma is the statement made by an Austrian survivor who worked in the card-index department of the Kolyma camp complex during the years 1947 to 1955.²³⁾ He disclosed that during this period 9 million prisoners arrived in the camps. Assuming that the MVD kept the number of prisoners in this complex down to about 2 million, this would mean that about 6 to 7 million persons died in 8 years in Kolyma, taking into account the possible releases.

It is interesting to note that the official Russian statistics give the number of inhabitants of the entire administrative region of Magadan as 240,000 for the beginning of 1956.²⁴⁾ This fact proves that the Russian statistics pertaining to the population of the Asian part of the USSR are completely false.

After studying the various testimonies and comparing the statistics on this subject, without claiming that our figures are exact we think we are justified, however, in giving the following approximate estimates on the total number of prisoners and deaths in the camps:

| Year | Total Number approximately | Deaths | |
|------|-------------------------------|---------|----------------|
| | | Period | Approx. Number |
| 1927 | 200,000 | 1922-27 | 300,000 |
| 1930 | 2,500,000 | 1927-30 | 900,000 |
| 1933 | 4,500,000 | 1930-33 | 1,300,000 |
| 1936 | 7,500,000 | 1933-36 | 1,900,000 |
| 1939 | 12,500,000 | 1936-39 | 2,800,000 |
| 1941 | 14,000,000 | 1939-41 | 1,800,000 |
| 1945 | 18,000,000 | 1941-45 | 6,500,000 |
| 1948 | 19,000,000 | 1945-48 | 8,500,000 |
| 1951 | 16,000,000 | 1948-51 | 4,500,000 |
| 1955 | 12,000,000 | 1951-55 | 2,200,000 |
| 1956 | 14,000,000 | 1955-56 | 600,000 |
| 1958 | 11,000,000 | 1956-58 | 1,300,000 |
| | | | 32,600,000 |

Whilst on the one hand the number of deaths in the camps may possibly appear incredible, other experts, basing their arguments on sound calculations, are of the opinion that during the same period, that is from 1922 to 1958, between 50 and 60 million, or, possibly, even more than 60 million prisoners died in the Russian concentration camps.²⁵⁾

Although the figures given by us may, of course, include some errors, they nevertheless give a general picture of the tragic fate of the peoples oppressed by Russia and Communism during the past forty years. The average percentage applied in our calculations to the

camps as a whole varies between 5 and 15, and we do not think this by any means an exaggeration. The figure of 32 million must be considered as an approximation and in all probability less than the actual figure, which is not known.

If one takes into account the national composition of the population of the camps and the fact that the internees of Russian nationality enjoy preferential treatment, one is obliged to draw the conclusion that of the 32 million deaths since 1922, the deaths amongst the Russian prisoners have not exceeded 5 million. The remaining 27 million represent the deaths of Ukrainian prisoners (about 14 million), peoples of the Caucasus, of the Baltic countries, of Asia and of the satellites.

The political prisoners in the Soviet Russian camps are well aware of the reasons why Moscow has deprived them of their liberty and has deported them to the camps. They also realize only too well why they are more numerous than the Russians. Moreover, we can ascertain the reasons if we read the letter which the Ukrainian political prisoners in the camps in Mordovia sent to the United Nations towards the end of 1955.²⁶) In this letter, which was also intended for the whole world, the prisoners not only explain their unhappy lot but also define their attitude to the political problems:

"The Ukrainian people, like so many other peoples, has been crushed under the heel of Red Russia, which has deprived it of its fundamental human rights. We have been put into camps and mercilessly sentenced to 10 or 25 years' imprisonment, not for brigandism, as they (the Bolsheviks) inform the public opinion of the world, nor for arson, murder or treason, but for having demanded, as does every freedom-loving people, the application of our lawful rights in our territory. For this reason we raise the following questions: does the civilized world know under what conditions we are living, and not only we prisoners but also our entire people? Does the civilized world know that after we have served our sentence we shall be forcibly deported to the "virgin regions" of Kazakhstan, of the district of Krasnoyarsk, to the far north, whilst at the same time it is affirmed that the persons who go to these regions are volunteers and members of the komsomol...?"

The prisoners of the special camps in Mordovia have formulated a number of demands: social assistance for the families of the victims of the ruthless regime, human rights for former prisoners who return to their native country, permission, so far withheld, for former prisoners to return to their own country, suspension of mass-sentences of 25 years, etc., etc. They likewise demand external help and an investigation of conditions in the concentration camps of the Soviet Union by an international commission.

The long years of internment have not broken their spirit, and their fight attests to an unshaken faith and hope:

{ "We shall not despair for we know that our aspirations for liberty are justified by the laws of Nature and we are convinced that the entire civilized world will give us its cooperation..."

Will their hopes be in vain?

Karl Heinrich, a former prisoner in Norilsk and, from 1954 onwards, interned in various camps in the region of Taishet, affirms that after the first strikes, the will to resist was even greater amongst the prisoners than it had previously been, but that they constantly raised the following questions: "Does the outside world know that we are organizing strikes? Does it know our will? Does it at least support our fight by propaganda? Will it help us to gain liberty?"²⁷⁾

A. Knyazhynsky states that the hopes of the prisoners were based on the eventuality of a war between the West and Russia. "The prisoners believed that the democratic countries, after the destruction of brutal German imperialism, would wage war on the enemy that was even more dangerous than national socialism... The prisoners were unwilling to believe that the West would allow itself to be duped by the Fifth Columns... The events of the war and post-war years, as for example the enthusiastic reception given to the Soviet officers in London, were regarded by them as a political necessity. They assumed that these tactics would soon be abandoned and would be superseded by a policy of open hostility and, subsequently, the liquidation of the greatest danger to peace in the world. The prisoners refused to believe that the West would miss its big chance of a victory over Bolshevism..."²⁸⁾

The incomprehensible policy of the Western powers, a policy full of unpardonable mistakes, drove them to despair to such an extent that, in the words of a former prisoner, they felt this despair like a physical pain.

They Demand Freedom and Independence

Actually, it does not suffice merely to comprehend the real situation in the Soviet Union, as represented by the national composition of the prisoners and events in the camps.

For obvious reasons, one must above all have a clear and definite policy towards the subjugated peoples in the USSR. A policy that is not directed against the lost freedom and the interests of these peoples. A policy of liberation, which alone can prevent the outbreak of a third world war. And this policy of liberation must be based on support for the national revolutionary movements in the countries of the Soviet Union. This seems all the more imperative to us since the rulers of Moscow intend to subject the free countries to the fate of the countries which they now occupy.

It is not merely a question of understanding, of sympathy and of justice towards the nations enslaved by Russia and Communism, but also of gaining the friendship of these nations in order to succeed in frustrating Moscow's plans.

Joseph Scholmer's statements on this subject are extremely explicit and since they are based on the direct contact which he had with reality in the USSR, we should in conclusion like to repeat them:

"The situation (in the Soviet Union) today is comparable to that of 1941, when the war against the USSR broke out. By exploiting the social and national tension which existed at that time, Hitler would easily have been able, with the combination of military intervention, to overthrow the Soviet system. His 'programme of liberation' should have been approximately as follows:

- a) national independence for all peoples of the Soviet Union;
- b) land for the peasants;
- c) factories for the workers;
- d) free elections for a new government.²⁹⁾

...The Ukrainians in 1941 clearly manifested their will to fight their oppressors. But it transpired that Hitler had no intention of liberating Ukraine; he merely wanted to replace the Soviet system with another system of oppression.

— Our country — so a Ukrainian officer told me — was ready to mobilize 5 million soldiers for the fight against Bolshevism; to supply first-class fighters, who were well trained and were resolved to destroy Bolshevism at all costs. With these 5 million men there would have been no retreat at Moscow and defeat at Stalingrad. Bolshevism would have been a thing of the past. But, of course, these 5 million men would have had to know for certain that they were fighting for the freedom of their country and not for a new form of enslavement.

They decided to become partisans; partisans on two fronts, — against the Soviets and against the Germans. And nothing could be more characteristic of the tragedy of their position. They fought as long as they could, — heroically, for years, and in a situation without issue from the political and military point of view.³⁰⁾

It is understandable that the sympathies of the Ukrainians are today with the Americans, namely for two reasons:

In the first place, the Americans are the only ones who succeed in dealing with the Soviet Union; in the second place, they are not interested in refusing us our independence. They have given sufficient proof of their respect for the right of the peoples to govern themselves. And there is no reason to suppose that they would apply other principles in our case.

Ukraine is waiting for a war, for it knows that without a war the attainment of its independence will be impossible... On the day of revolution, countless partisans will take up once more the arms that they have hidden away, and Ukraine will be transformed into one vast revolutionary conflagration.

— Arms! We need arms and nothing else — is what they constantly affirm. — We shall do the rest!

And those who know them are well aware that their words are to be taken seriously.”³¹⁾

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER X.

- 1) Ibid., p. 195.
- 2) Ibid., p. 196.
- 3) Krasnaya Zvezda (“The Red Star”), of August 22, 1958.
- 4) Herbert Passin, *Der Streik von Norilsk* (The strike of Norilsk), “Das Parlament,” op. cit., p. 348.
- 5) Karl Heinrich, *Wir streikten in Norilsk* (We went on strike in Norilsk), “Das Parlament,” op. cit., p. 360.
- 6) A. Mykulyn, op. cit., p. 146.
- 7) Ibid., p. 170.
- 8) Ibid., p. 134.
- 9) Bernhard Roeder, op. cit., p. 31.
- 10) Ibid., p. 163.
- 11) Maurice Laporte, *Les Mystères du Kremlin*, Paris, 1928, p. 186.
- 12) Ibid., p. 194.
- 13) *The Ukrainian Review*, vol. 5, No. 2, 1958, p. 24.
- 14) *Livre Blanc* (White Book), op. cit., p. 41.
- 15) Elinor Lipper, op. cit., p. 98.
- 16) *Livre Blanc* (White Book), op. cit., p. 63.
- 17) Ibid., p. 116.
- 18) Ibid., p. 144.
- 19) *From prisons to educational institutions*, Moscow, 1936, p. 10.
- 20) *Livre Blanc* (White Book), op. cit., p. 101.
- 21) *Le procès...*, op. cit., p. 107.
- 22) *Pour l’Ukraine Indépendante* (For an Independent Ukraine), op. cit., pp. 105-106.
- 23) V. Monteil, *Les Musulmans soviétiques* (The Soviet Moslems), Paris, p. 129.
- 24) V. H. Udovenko, *Dalnyi Vostok* (Far East), Moscow, 1957, p. 222.
- 25) “La Nation Géorgienne” (“The Georgian Nation”), No. 18, Paris, 1957.
- 26) Cf. *They Speak for the Silent*, *National Review*, New York, August 1, 1956.
- 27) Karl Heinrich, op. cit., p. 361.
- 28) A. Knyazhynsky, op. cit., pp. 147-148.
- 29) Joseph Scholmer, *Die Toten...*, op. cit., p. 249.
- 30) Ibid., p. 125.
- 31) Ibid., pp. 127-128.

A P P E N D I X 1

UKRAINIAN PRISONERS' APPEAL TO U.N.O.

Far more moving than the many accounts of conditions in prison camps of the USSR is this appeal to the civilised world, printed below, received from Ukrainian internees in the small "autonomous" Republic of Mordovia, situated south of the middle course of the Volga.

The appeal to the United Nations in the attached letter to Ukrainians in the free world was written on cloth, then worn as part of the clothing of a released internee, and was so smuggled out to the West. The authenticity of the documents translated here is not in question.

The reader will see that the spirit of the Ukrainian prisoners, former members of the Ukrainian Resistance, remains unbroken, their hope for the future of their country undiminished. Perhaps the knowledge, or at least the belief, that their compatriots in the West are gradually convincing the free world of the dangers of the inhuman Soviet system and of the urgent necessity of persuading Russian Communists, by compulsion if necessary, to stop the policy of annihilating the other nations held by a cruel fate within the USSR — perhaps it is this that helps to keep the morale of these unfortunate prisoners so high.

AN OPEN LETTER

**To the United Nations, Human Rights Commission, and to the
Entire Civilised World**

from the Prisoners in Camps in the USSR

We, the prisoners in the Mordovian special camps, wish to bring the following statement to the attention of the entire civilised world.

We, Ukrainians, are in favour of any movement whose aims are freedom and truth; we advocate cultural progress in all walks of life, and we stand behind self-determination for all nations, including the United Ukrainian State.

We have no desire to exaggerate the facts of the situation that has long existed in Ukraine. We do not ask for mercy or pardon. We demand our right to live under laws that should be recognised by the entire civilised world — the world of twentieth-century civilisation. This civilisation has been spearheaded by a number of humanitarian elements, from small groups to national leaders. They include the great world-wide organisation, the United Nations.

Б. ДИПТИНУ БУЛ

3. ОТКАЗ СУЩЕ СЪЩАТОТО МНЕНИЕ НА ПОСЛЕДОВАТЕЛНИТЕ НАУЧНИ РАБОТНИЦИ
ПОСЛЕДОВАТЕЛ

[illegible]

- [illegible]

On the reverse side: facsimile
of the letter addressed to Ukrainians in the free world.

Дорог А. А.

[illegible][illegible]

Уже в 1940-е годы в нашей литературе появились первые произведения, посвященные истории белорусского государства. Под чужими именами (Яким Чарняк, Чародейко) издавались произведения белорусских писателей, в которых описывалась история белорусского народа.

[illegible][illegible]

Б-байте усароз, долог, дум
Не забубайте нас - а думайте

УКБ дійсною мішкою - політбазою
модерністичну спецтеорію.

Алжир
5.8.55 р.

Our Ukrainian nation, like a number of other nations, has come under the conquering heel of Red Russia. We have been deprived of the basic rights of existence. We have been driven into camps, with severe sentences of from ten to twenty-five years — not for criminal acts, as the Bolsheviks maintain before the rest of the world; not for arson, treason, or murder; but because we, like every freedom-loving people, demand our lawful rights in our own land.

The question therefore arises: Does the civilised world know about the conditions prevailing not only among us prisoners, but throughout our country? Does the civilised world know that, when we have served our sentences, we are exiled to the so-called virgin lands of Kazakhstan, Krasnoyarsk, and the Far North — while they proclaim that it is volunteers and members of the Komsomol who go out to those areas?

Can the civilised world conceive of Ukrainian sovereignty without a Ukrainian army, and without the Ukrainian people? If Ukraine is sovereign — and she should be — why is there no army composed exclusively of Ukrainians? Why do Ukrainians serve their terms in the army beyond the borders of their country? Why are military units composed of Russians and other nationalities to whom the interests of the Ukrainian people are alien, if not directly hostile, stationed in our country? If we are traitors and if our punishment is just, why were we tried by “people’s” or “military” courts, whose composition is certainly not Ukrainian? Why do we not serve our terms on Ukrainian territory, which was ravaged by the last war and is in need of reconstruction? Why do we have to work at the cultivation of wild, remote lands and forests, when there is such a need for our forces at home?

Does the civilised world know that, over the mass burial sites of the prison camps, new camps and cities are built, canals are dug, and stadiums are erected, in order to obliterate the traces of these crimes? In Abez’ (Komi ASSR), Camps 1, 4, and 5 stand on former cemeteries. At Zavod 5 in Leplya (Mordovian ASSR), the first and second polishing shops, the technical laboratory, and the forge were erected on human bones. Does the world know about the mass executions of prisoners who only demanded their rights as political internees? (At Mine 29 in Vorkuta, Attorney-General Rudenko was in charge of the firing squads.) Is it known that, in Kingir (P. O. Box 392, Colonies 1 and 3 Kazakhstan), men and women demanding their lawful rights were charged by four tanks and crushed by them?

Does the civilised world know that Ukraine has suffered starvation for thirty-eight years, in addition to the artificial famine of 1933; that Western Ukraine has been inundated by floods, and that the people have been condemned to death by starvation, with no hope of aid from “humanitarian, peace-loving” Communist Russia? This at a time when millions of tons of grain are exported abroad for propaganda purposes, when all sorts of foreign delegations visit model collective farms (special display models) and factories in the USSR.

In the postwar period (1945-55), Russia has raised the level of light and heavy industry beyond the prewar level. This was accomplished by a toll of millions of prisoners. Those prisoners raised the issue of improved living conditions — an improvement essential for any creature that breathes air (after between nine and eleven hours of work in the mines, the prisoners were shut up like cattle in close, stinking barracks furnished with the well-known “slop buckets”). Some of the prisoners were shot, others were crushed by tanks. Many of them received additional sentences of from ten to twenty-five years and were put in jail, where they are to this day.

This is addressed to the civilised world of the twentieth century — a century of education and progress. We feel certain that anyone who reads these lines will experience revulsion and contempt for the “just and humanitarian” Communist Party of Russia and the crimes committed against the nations it has enslaved.

We are not discouraged, because we know that our will for freedom is founded on natural law, and we believe that the entire civilised world will uphold us in our cause.

RESOLUTIONS

Bearing in mind the foregoing points, we, the prisoners in the Mordovian special camps, have adopted the following resolutions:

I

a. A commission should be appointed for precise verification of the facts as we have stated them: that Attorney-General Rudenko and Deputy Minister of the MVD Maslennikov were distinguished by the cruelty of their conduct in Vorkuta and Noril'sk in 1953, and in Karaganda in 1954.

b. The fact that Camps 1, 4, and 5 in Abez' (Komi ASSR) and Zavod 5 (Mordovskaya ASSR) were built on cemetery grounds should be verified. Similar cases are not hard to find — there are forty-four such camps in this area.

c. We demand that the cemeteries be put in order, that the buildings and plants on them be razed, and that memorials be erected to the dead, as a symbol of perpetual shame to the Red slavedrivers. Since members of all nationalities of the world are numbered among the dead, a special international organisation should be established for the purpose of erecting these memorials.

d. We demand comprehensive social security for the orphans, widows, and parents (if they are not fit for work) of these victims of cruel injustice; also for those persons and their families who have suffered complete physical disability in camps and are unable to provide for themselves and their families.

e. Since an entire family is held responsible for an offence committed by one member (they are all subject to exile, deportation, confiscation of property) and a man's grandson as well as his son may suffer because of an act he himself committed, there have appeared castes of "reliables" and "unreliables." The "unreliables" live under constant oppression, persecution and misery. We therefore demand that these people be given back their rights as human beings, that they receive social security, and that they be permitted to return to their countries.

f. We demand that all persons who have served out their sentences be permitted to return to their native lands. We protest against the passing of sentences of up to twenty-five years on a mass basis, because such a sentence is a sentence for life.

g. All persons who underwent a second trial and were then transferred from camp to jail because of their participation in camp strikes or in any other form of mass or individual protest against the violation of their rights as political prisoners should be released from jail and their sentences annulled.

h. All desert lands, pits, mines, and forests that became part of the USSR after their discovery or cultivation should belong to the nations whose sons and daughters worked on them and strewed them with their bones.

II

a. We demand the establishment of an international control commission charged with the fair distribution of aid earmarked for underdeveloped countries and for disaster areas (including the USSR).

b. We are wholeheartedly in favour of extending aid to all those who need it — regardless of their nationality, religion, race, or political convictions. But we cannot agree that bread should be torn from the mouths of the starving and sent abroad as aid, when it is really for purposes of propaganda. This is done in the Soviet Union, at a time when millions of people are starving.

III

a. Whereas every criminal act against the enslaved nations is perpetrated with the knowledge of the Politburo and of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, we demand that the entire ruling class of the Soviet Union, be brought before international justice.

b. Yezhov, Beria, Abakumov and others, whose execution was ordered by the security organs in order to deceive people at home and abroad, cannot be held responsible for everything, because crimes against the enslaved nations continue to be perpetrated.

IV

We, Ukrainians, make the following demands on purely national grounds:

a. All Russian nationals shall be required to leave Ukrainian territory. They shall not be permitted to return until such time as Russia abandons her dream of denationalising, assimilating and eventually devouring Ukraine — until she ceases to regard herself as Big Brother. It is a distortion of reality and of historical fact to speak of “the union of Ukraine with Russia.” Ukraine has always been cruelly enslaved by Russia.

b. We concede the right of other nationals — unless they have been sent by the Russian Government for aggressive purposes — to live on Ukrainian territory, enjoying equal rights with the Ukrainian people. Russians may live there only when they begin to be governed by general standards of morality.

c. As long as there are armed forces in the world, the only units stationed in Ukraine are to be composed exclusively of Ukrainians and under the command of Ukrainians; all soldiers and commanders not of Ukrainian extraction are to be withdrawn beyond the borders of our country. This also applies to the administrative and security organs of the MVD.

d. Anyone who violates the laws of Ukraine is to be tried before a Ukrainian people's or military court; if convicted, his sentence will be served within the national borders.

Note: We request that the citizens of the world be informed of this letter by the United Nations, Human Rights Commission.

We have signed with initials and pseudonyms, so as to forestall any possible consequences.

(Signed by initials and pseudonyms of five deputies from the women's column and eight deputies from the men's column of prisoners.)

September 30, 1955.

A P P E N D I X 2

TO THE UKRAINIANS IN THE FREE WORLD

Dear Friends:

We wish to take advantage of this opportunity to tell you briefly what the Bolsheviks say about you — our political émigrés of the last decade — in their so-called lectures and in recent articles in the press. We would also like to give the Ukrainians abroad who are not indifferent to our fate some idea of the conditions prevailing among political prisoners in special Soviet camps since the war.

Lectures on Ukrainian affairs are delivered by important officials in the Mordovian Party, and not by members of the administration of local special camps. The main point in what they have been saying about you is roughly as follows: Although the number of Ukrainian political émigrés in the last decade has been small, the group is torn by dissension and split into many parties. They are politically short-sighted, and they no longer enjoy popularity among their people, whose support they have lost. They are not fighting for anything real — just for the capital letter “U”. The Bolsheviks cite the names of our most prominent political leaders abroad, calling them “the most despicable traitors of the Ukrainian people.”

Lectures on Ukrainian affairs have recently been discontinued. The reason may lie in the prisoners’ dignified reaction to the Bolsheviks’ tendentious distortion of historical facts. These lectures, held at unexpected times, caused us spiritual anguish. But at the same time, they were a welcome event, because they allowed us to think (correctly, we hope) that our position in international politics had improved and that the Bolsheviks were therefore intensifying their propaganda efforts in the pertinent direction. Political prisoners of other nationalities in the Soviet Union envy us without rancour, and they hope that we did not rejoice in vain.

Among recent printed works attacking us, the first place is occupied in the libraries of the Mordovian special camps by the brochures of Halan (*Selected Works*, 1954), of Belyayev, and of M. Rudnitskiy (*Under Alien Banners*). They are permeated with monstrous, unparalleled venom, bigotry, and hatred for everything Ukrainian and non-Communist.

Entire chapters in these libellous sheets are devoted to you, our political émigrés of today. Emphasis is placed on internal disorder, dissensions, the struggle for power, the lust for gain, and political immaturity. Our attitude towards all forms of Bolshevik propaganda is the same. We are convinced that the written and the spoken word in the Soviet "prison of nations" is hopelessly slanted. We firmly believe that, with the benefit of past experience, you will do your duty with honour — a moral duty imposed by the nation upon its political émigrés; that your years in exile will not prove to be time lost; that you are using this time to good advantage; and that you will return to Ukraine with your forces undiminished and with an awareness of all important theories successfully practised in Europe and the rest of the world, so that our nation may benefit from them. We believe that your long sojourn abroad will not diminish your longing for your country and that it will not make you want to live abroad for the rest of your lives.

And now a few words about living conditions among political prisoners in Soviet special camps during the postwar years. The basic features of the Bolshevik prison-camp system have not changed. Almost all of the special camps are in areas where the climate is severe (Kolyma, Taymyr, Siberia, Komi, Kazakhstan). Sentences for political crimes vary in length from five years (for a single attempt, as they say in jest, at "suspect" thought) to twenty-five years in so-called corrective labour camps, and from fifteen to twenty years of penal servitude. In the immediate postwar period, famine, unendurably hard labour, and appalling sanitary conditions took a toll of thousands of political prisoners.

Again in 1948 a so-called strict regime was introduced in the special camps. The iron-barred barracks were locked at night. Correspondence was restricted to two letters per year. No one was permitted to keep cash. There were penal barracks. Prisoners were not allowed to wear their own clothes but had to wear prison uniforms with numbers on the back; they were not allowed to take notes from books, to engage in handicrafts, to assemble in large groups, and so forth. All this was coupled with twelve hours at hard labour and a deliberate increase in the work norms.

The unbearable living conditions brought about uprisings in certain camp centres — Vorkuta in 1953, Norilsk in the spring and summer of 1953, and Kingir (Kazakhstan) in 1954. Over forty thousand prisoners of different nationalities took part in the uprisings. In suppressing them, the enemy used all kinds of weapons, including tanks. At the cost of several thousand comrades killed or wounded, we brought about the abolition of the stricter regime and the introduction of an eight-hour day.

In the last few years the Bolsheviks have paraded their humanitarianism before the world. They issued decrees that also pertained to political prisoners, but most of them were not put into effect on a comprehensive scale (the decree releasing invalids from special camps, the "probationary" release of political prisoners who had

served two-thirds of their terms). Following their release from special camps, prisoners can usually expect to be exiled to Siberia for an indefinite period.

In September of this year, an amnesty was declared for political prisoners who had collaborated with the Germans during the war. The official Bolshevik term for our nationalist prisoners is "**Banderivtsi**" or "Ukraino-German Nationalists," and the amnesty does not apply to us — another proof of the perfidy of the Bolshevik system.

For the sake of the truth, we want to say in conclusion that we hold the name, Ukrainian political prisoners, in deep respect and that we have, generally speaking, gained favour and recognition from political prisoners of other nationalities.

God bless you, dear friends. Do not forget us, and keep in mind your return to Ukraine.

UKRAINIAN WOMEN
Political Prisoners in the
Mordovian Special Camps

Mordovia, 5 October, 1955.

A P P E N D I X 3

Kuzma Kazdoba
(Australia)

DEPORTATION TO THE NORTH **Reminiscences of a Former Prisoner**

S e n t e n c e

...One day in March 1930, after eight months' imprisonment in Pervomaysk, my father and I were summoned from our cell to appear before the superintendent of the jail, with all our belongings. This summons was the first during the eight months that we had been in jail. We were conducted down a long corridor by two sentries. I walked abreast of my father and glanced at him from time to time, hoping to discover from him where we were being led to. But my father walked as in a dream, his eyes staring in front of him. Deep in my heart stirred a tiny hope that we might be set free, and my thoughts, already flew homewards. We were led to an iron door. The sentry ordered us to leave our belongings in the corridor. The first sentry opened the door and ordered us to enter. In the room, at a table sat two employees of G.P.U. One of them took a paper from a folder and read: "Prokhor Serhiyovych Kazdoba, born in 1867 in the village of Harbuzynka of Yelysavethrad district and Kherson province, and his son Kuzma Prokhorovych Kazdoba born in 1907 on the farm estate Novyy Stavok belonging to Harbuzynka village council, Yelysavethrad district, Kherson province!" After looking keenly at us, he took the folder and went into an adjacent room. The guards ordered us to stand with our faces to the wall and to keep our hands behind us. In this fashion we stood for about an hour.

At last the doors of the adjacent room opened and we were ordered to enter. This room was larger, with leather-covered walls and a carpet on the floor. Above a large table hung the pictures of Lenin and Stalin. At the table sat an official of the G.P.U. In front of him was a folder. At the side of the table sat the official of the

G.P.U. who had brought in the folder and another person in civilian clothes who read out: "Prokhor Kazdoba and his son Kuzma Kazdoba?" Father replied "Yes." Then the civilian ordered father to step nearer to the table and to hold his hands behind him. I stood behind my father. The senior official of the G.P.U. asked father "Are you a counter-revolutionary?" Father was silent. Then he asked again angrily: "Are you a counter-revolutionary?" But father did not answer, only moved his head. Then the official asked whether my father was arrested in 1920 by CHEKA. Father replied: "Yes." "In January 1921 you were brought before the Tribunal Court in Bratske, for taking part in the revolutionary activities against the Soviet regime and were sentenced by the Tribunal to death. The Tribunal changed the death sentence to 10 years imprisonment in Odessa's jail with confiscation of all property." Father again replied "Yes." "In 1923 you were released from jail owing to an amnesty. In 1924, together with your family, you were deprived of civil rights. In August 1929 you were arrested by G.P.U. and confined in Pervomaysk prison." Father acknowledged these facts. I, standing behind him, saw that his calloused hands trembled from nervous tension. Then the official ordered me to stand beside my father and said to me: "In 1924 you were deprived of civil rights, in July 1929 you were refused enrolment in the Red Army, as being politically unreliable and in August 1929 were arrested with your father and imprisoned." I agreed and the official passed the folder to the civilian, who began to read: "By the sentence of the Pervomaysk District Closed Court, as politically and socially dangerous persons, proved by their taking part in 1918-1919 rebellion against the Soviet Power, Prokhor Kazdoba and his son Kuzma Kazdoba are sentenced to deportation for life into "special camps" in remote parts of the U.S.S.R. All property belonging to Prokhor Kazdoba becomes the State's." Father addressed the senior G.P.U. official in a nervous voice: "What are you exiling my son for? He is young and is not guilty of anything. Allot me the hardest penalty but spare my son." I glanced at my father and shuddered. His eyes were flashing with fury, his face was tense. He took a step nearer to the table but the guards held him back and we were led away. We were not taken back to our cell but into the prison yard. We were ordered to join a group of about thirty peasants under arrest. Then the guards led us through the prison gates to where eight carts were waiting for us, guarded by soldiers of the Red Army, militia and Komsomol members of Blahodatne district. These new guards took us over following the prison's roster. We were seated in the carts and then driven through the streets of Pervomaysk. On each side of the carts rode armed militia and Komsomol*) members. People from their houses and passers-by watched us. Many women waved their white headcloths in farewell and wept. Frightened girls gave us covert glances but some of the men hurried past us averting their eyes.

*) Young Communist League.

On the Bandurka Railway Station

We were driven eastwards, past Pidhorodne Station to a small station in the steppe, Bandurka, which was situated over 16 km. from Pervomaysk. The wheels sank deep into the black soil, sodden with melting snow, making it difficult for the horses to move. But still it was easier for them than for us. I sat in deep thought, still hearing the cruel words of the sentence. O, God, how terrible it was for me. I was driven from my native country by armed force, with no opportunity even to take leave of those dearest to me — my sister Oksana and Lydia, my brother Mykhaylo and their children, my other relatives and friends. My thoughts turned to a little grave in a small steppe cemetery, where lay in eternal sleep my dear mother and second brother, Polikarp. I wanted to stand at their graves and tell them of my misery, of my banishment for life, caused by the same hand which had brought about their early deaths.

I looked for the last time on our steppes, where my childhood and youth had passed. The spring sun and melting snow on the fields somehow raised my spirits. For a moment I seemed to forget my cruel fate and rejoiced, after eight months' imprisonment, to be able to breathe in the fresh air. My father was silent, he did not speak once during the journey, he was lost in thought. I tried to rouse him, but he did not appear to hear me. Three elderly peasants, from somewhere near Pervomaysk, who were on our cart were overcome with grief. Two of them were crying, the third, the youngest let his eyes wander across the steppe whilst he talked incessantly about his son Mykola. After about three hours, we arrived at the station Bandurka. The horror that I saw there made me regret our jail, however wretched it had been.

The station was enclosed by barbed wire. We were taken over by new guards and led behind the wire. There stood a train of 15 goods carriages, guarded by Russian G.P.U. from the North. As the Russian occupants had no confidence in Soviet Ukrainian G.P.U., they had to send their own. G.P.U., militia and Komsomol members from time to time brought here cartloads of arrested peasants and their families. Barefooted and clad in rags, they were cast out into the snow. There were elderly, middle-aged and young people, children and even infants. Some of the women had families of five or six children, the eldest would be no more than 13 or 14 years. Some families were without fathers, they having been arrested earlier. Under foot the snow was mixed with soil forming a spring mud. Mothers held in their arms the youngest children, the rest stood in that swamp, their feet, their hands and their faces blue with cold. They gathered around their mothers and held onto the rags, which the Muscovite invaders had given them instead of their own clothes. These little prisoners dragged at their mothers and cried: "Mother, mother, let us go home. I am cold and my head is aching. Mother, mother, I am hungry." Some of the mothers lost self-control and tore at their

ragged and their hair. Others cried and lamented, begging God to take them and their children from this world of misery.

Our group from the jail was kept apart. I was examining those who had been brought earlier when suddenly my heart stood still. In the crowd was my sister Anna alongside her husband Cheremukha, from the village of Harbuzynka. She held in her arms the baby twins Olga and Nadia; the eldest Maria, who was fourteen, and Andriy stood by her. They were all crying and looking in our direction. The two eldest, Maria and Andriy, began to walk towards us but the guards turned them back. I pointed them out to my father. He rushed forward but the guard intervened and father, pale as death, came to a halt. Motionless, as a statue, he kept looking at his daughter and grandchildren. The blood vessels on his forehead and hands were swollen. It was the first time in my life that I had seen my father in such a condition. I tried to speak to him, but he appeared not to hear me. At last he cried out: "Oh, God, what were the children taken for? They are too little to be guilty of anything. Lord, take pity on the children."

The guards ordered our party to close in on the carriages and in doing so we came closer to the crowd of arrested peasants, only about twenty steps separated us. My eyes from time to time found among them relatives and friends. In the crowd stood Trokhym Kazdoba from Blahodatne, my father's youngest brother, who was nearly sixty. I saw friends from the villages Blahodatne, Harbuzynka, Konstantynivka, Marianivka, Mykolayivka, and from estates Shkur-lativ, Druha Mykolayivka, Novyy Fontan and Metelytski. I saw Roman Skoryk and his son Gregory, Moysey Lytvynenko, and son Panteley-mon, Lukian Pyshenin with two sons — Dmytro and Mykhaylo, Vasyl Dashko, Fedir Serdiuk, Fedir Zubenko, Hryhoriy Pleskaniuk with two sons Mykola and Peter, Vasyl Koval, Afanasiy Oplachko, Victor Buhay, Andriy Cheremukha, Yosyp Salahor with his brother Zotiv, Drahon, Zekoba with his son Leonid, Skrepyl, Maksiutenko and many others. They were all there with their families.

In the meantime the sons of Muscovy in the uniforms of the G.P.U. had received more loads of arrested Ukrainian families. Finally they closed the gates and began counting off 50-60 people and locking them into the dirty damp railway carriages. Plank-beds were built on both sides of these. In the middle of the carriage stood a stove but there was no trace of firewood. Just then my sister Anna walked up the plank, leading to the carriage, with her six children. She carried two in her arms and the other four walked behind her. They were crying bitterly and waving with their little hands to us. At last the turn came for me and my father. Ours was the fourth carriage from where my sister was with her children. Father did not take his eyes off their carriage. He twice tried to approach it, but each time the guards turned him back. Then father approached an official of G.P.U. but the latter brutally rejected his request. The G.P.U. official called our names according to a roster. Father with his head bowed, walked up the plank. Then I was called. Walking up the plank, I took leave in my heart of the azure sky, of my native land. Once more glanced

around me, my eyes met those of my eldest brother Mykhaylo, who was standing on the other side of the barbed wire fence. He was crying and waving to me. I stood still and waved back. "Get on" yelled the guard and with a blow on my shoulders from his rifle butt he forced me into the carriage. Here I leaned on the stove and cried bitterly, as if sensing that I would never see Mykhaylo again. And so it happened. Half a year later my brother with his wife and three children, Ivan one year, Mykhaylo, three, and Joseph, five years, were exiled to remote Siberia. After seven years of forced labour he died in 1937 in Stalinsk (earlier known as Novo-Kuznetsk).

My father standing beside me asked me why I was crying. It was my first breakdown in all the eight months of our imprisonment. The guard began to close the doors of our carriages. We all pushed towards the door to take a last look at the rays of the setting sun, at our sky and our land. Then it grew dark in the carriage and only the clattering of the locks was heard. For a while deep silence reigned in the carriage, broken only by the weeping of the children. Underneath the carriage, around it and on top we could hear the guards. We heard some official in charge give orders about shooting on sight. Then the shrill whistle of the train sounded above us. The carriage jerked and slowly began to move. Something ached inside us, we all kneeled in prayer, begging God to help us sometimes to return to our country, even if only to die. After a while my father raised himself from his knees and stood beside me. His tears rolled down my face: "My son, now their victory over us is complete," he said and tightly pressed my head to his breast. In July 1932 my father died in jail in Vologda.

The wheels of the train turned, carrying their miserable load onwards, to what fresh horror?

The Journey to the North

Our train had been travelling for two or three hours, but my father and I were still standing by the iron stove. Near us stood two peasants, who had been taken from the jail with us. They were also without families. We four were pushed into the carriage later, after the families had taken over all the available plank beds. We only knew three families here: Roman Skoryk, a distant relative of my father, from the village of Harbuzynka, Hryhoriy Pleskaniuk and Fedir Zubenko from the village of Marianivka. They told us in detail of the liquidation activities: that the arrests were made at night, the G.P.U. and militia taking all the clothes, leaving only the rags. If there were no rags, the arrested people were given some and ordered to put them on. In one hour, they were taken to Blahodatne. To this place families with children were brought from all the district. They were kept in locked schools and large farm buildings which had been confiscated earlier. There was such a shortage of space that one could not lie down. Thus sitting on the floor they spent one week there on

bread and water. Skoryk, Zubenko and Pleskaniuk spoke with gratitude about the peasants of Blahodatne who frequently brought some food for all the arrested. The children especially were helped by having some cooked food. I listened to them, but still had in mind my sister Anna with her baby twins and the four elder ones around her. The mothers and children exhausted by the events of this dreadful day slept at last. We also felt great weariness and crept under the shelves to rest having eaten nothing all day. Some families had with them some nourishment but the majority did not have even a piece of bread. Lying on the filthy floor under the shelvings, my father could not sleep for a long while. He was heart-broken about the six grandchildren on the train, also about those grandchildren who were still at home. His son, my brother Mykhaylo whom I mentioned earlier, had three children all under the age of five years, his daughter and my sister Oksana had two daughters and one son about ten. At any time they too might be exiled. To the back of our train were attached two big sleeping carriages for armed guards and G.P.U. officials. They were heavily armed, having even machine-guns.

We travelled all night very quickly without stopping. The first morning of our journey came and daylight began to creep through the cracks in the doors and the sides of the carriage. I crept from underneath the plank beds. Mothers sat on the bunks and cried. They needed warm water to wash their babies and their clothes. However there was no water in the carriage. In the middle of the carriage stood a bucket covered with a linen sheet, as toilet. One bucket for 58 people including children. From early in the morning there was a queue for it. Some of the young girls crept into the corners of the carriage and bitterly wept, as they did not have the courage to come near the bucket. Some time before midday the transport was stopped in an isolated spot. We each received a portion of bread, about 10 ozs., and a bucket of water per carriage. The water was more important than bread. Then the transport moved on. Evening came and still we travelled. The bucket was overflowing and the floor was covered with human excrements. At last the transport stopped again in a lonely spot. The guards opened the door and ordered us to empty the waste bucket. The second night passed as the first. And the second day of the journey differed in nothing from the first. Tears did not dry on the faces of the mothers and children. We travelled all the time behind locked doors. Once every 24 hours we were each issued with a piece of bread and a bucket of water per carriage. The waste bucket was emptied out at isolated spots. Apart from this no one was allowed to leave the carriage.

After four days we reached Moscow, the capital of this red inferno. Here the snow still covered the ground and one could still feel the morning frost. Our transport was directed to a remote goods station. In our carriage some babies had become sick. The mothers tearfully begged the guards for medical help or drugs. Their requests were turned down with oaths. In Moscow we were given soup from salted putrified fish and a small piece of dark bread per person. Besides

water, we also received some firewood. The guards informed us that we were nearing colder areas. Then the train moved off again to the North.

The Death of a Baby

The sick babies lay on the plank bed, breathing deeply. Their faces were red from fever and their lips were dry. Their mothers sat beside them in despair. Thus passed one night. In the morning one of the two babies died. The little body lay motionless on the bunk. The young parents did not cry any more. From time to time only their shoulders trembled convulsively. It was their first child. We were all grief-stricken and no one spoke in the carriage. The presence of the dead body frightened the rest of the children, who tried to hide behind their parents.

Late in the morning our transport stopped in a forest. Again followed the same procedure: emptying of the buckets, rationing bread, fish and water. The two men who emptied the bucket were ordered to remove the dead baby. I will never forget this removal of the dead body and the grief of the parents.

My father lay most of the time underneath the bunk. He told me that he did not have the strength to look at the sick children deprived of any help.

"It is the same in all carriages. Oh, Lord! Anna and her babies perhaps," and he stopped. Later he tried to persuade me not to despair about our circumstances for we did not know what lay ahead of us.

Two days had passed since we left the capital of the U.S.S.R. We stopped in Yaroslavl. The last two days and nights were the hardest. The air in the carriage was foul. After the soup, made from salted fish, thirst tormented us but there was no water. The majority of the children contracted diarrhoea. The parents again sought medical help, but their request was rejected.

Again the train was stopped, not at a station but on the track, on a high embankment not far from a bridge across the River Volga. The doors were opened for handing out our bread and water. The temperature outside was about 25°C below freezing point. Looking down the embankment we could see people crossing the frozen river by horse sledges and on foot. They were all warmly clad in sheepskin coats, felt boots and warm caps. Anxiously we looked at each other; where were we being taken in our light attire and with our sick children? Fear of the unknown gripped us. The doors were again closed, the bolts clattered and our train moved off further into the North. It moved very slowly because of the snowdrifts. Next day after Yaroslavl, we stopped at a small crossing in a forest. For the first time in our journey we received 15 whole uncut 2 lb. loaves of bread per carriage, also half a herring per person and the usual bucket of water. As the transport moved slowly northwards we could feel the bitter

cold creeping in. We stopped again in Danilov. When the doors were opened by the guards we saw the Northern winter — the snow was very deep and a sharp frost prevailed. Here we received bread, but this time were not issued with water.

They Wanted Snow — Got Bullets

After Danilov we passed through a dense endless forest. After a while we stopped at a clearing. The doors were opened and we were ordered to empty the bucket. We all were thirsty, the mothers and children begged for some snow. The younger people taking advantage of the fact that the men with the bucket had not returned, jumped from the carriage with bowls and buckets. Not less than fifty of the young men tried to fill their vessels with snow in the vicinity of the train. Just as I also moved to do the same, shots were fired behind us, but we did not think that they were being fired at us. But as the bullets whistled past me I looked up and saw the guards running from the last two carriages and shooting at us. In the carriage women screamed.

"Kuzma, help me!" I turned. It was Peter Pleskaniuk, my friend from the village Marianivka. A bullet had pierced his chest. His blood marked the snow with dark red spots. But at that moment we thought only of saving our own lives. I sprang to the door of the carriage. Someone's strong hands snatched me and lifted me, like a small child, into the carriage. It was my father. To our carriage came running a dishevelled drunken guard. He fired two more bullets into the carriage but they went above us. The doors were slammed, the bolts clicked and the train rolled away.

We felt as if only death lay before us, and fear lay upon us. The tragic despair of Peter Pleskaniuk's parents, his brother Mykola and sister Raya moved us all.

We left behind us on the snow not only young Pleskaniuk but also wounded men from other carriages. My father begged me to be more careful in the future and I said to him: "Father, I would never have thought that you were so strong." My father looked at me and said: "That was a different strength — that of a parent." And he placed his hand on my shoulders. The further we went North, the less the doors were opened and water issued. Hunger and thirst tormented not only the children, but also us adults. Another two-year old child died from diarrhoea. The body was carried out somewhere in the forest. All the mothers cried, even some of the fathers.

In other carriages people were going through the same agony. And what of the other numerous transports directed by G.P.U. from Ukraine to the far North, to Ural, Siberia and Kazakhstan?

The Night of Separation

One late evening our train stopped. Through the gaps in the carriage we could see that we were in a large goods station. We sat

silently in the dark. Only the sick children's cries and heavy breathing broke the silence. After midnight movement was heard near the train. Suddenly the doors were opened, letting in the cold wind and frost. At the door appeared two G.P.U. officials. One of them held a piece of paper and he turned to us: "In half an hour everybody is to be ready for detainment. Mothers are to take their children with them." Then he went away, leaving the other in the doorway. From him we learned that we were in Vologda. After a while the first official returned and announced that we would be called according to a roster and the person called had to come out immediately. Men over 60 and boys of 15-16 had to stand on the right, women, girls and children on the left and all other men from 17 to 60 had to remain inside the carriage.

My father was over sixty, so he had to go out and I had to remain inside. My father turned to me: "My son, this is a hard moment. We are being separated. But I believe that we shall see each other again. Keep well and do not forget me."

The old men and boys were called out first. My father's turn came. We heard: "Prokhor Kazdoba." Father made the sign of the cross over me and said: "I leave you to the care of the Almighty. Keep well and do not forget your old father." He kissed my forehead and quietly walked down the plank. He turned to the left and walked briskly along the train. Standing near the door of the carriage, I could not understand where he had gone. But fifteen minutes later I saw him again. He was returning to the group of elderly people. I was appalled. He was in his summer jacket with some sort of a scarf around his neck. I called out: "Father, you'll die of cold. Where is your sheepskin coat?" "I found Anna and covered the children with it," he retorted. Behind me someone called out, "Catch, Prokhor!" and over my head a coat was flung. Father picked it up from the snow and called out: "Thank you Roman!" I turned and saw Roman Skoryk behind me. When he had seen my father in his suit only, he had snatched his overcoat from the plank bed and thrown it to father, leaving himself his old sheepskin coat only.

During the calling out of old men and young boys, women were bidding good-bye to their husbands and elder sons and the children to their fathers and brothers. In the carriage there was crying and screaming of women and children. Then the women's and children's turn came to leave. The women took off their warmer clothes and put them on the children, especially the sick ones. Then they proceeded to leave the carriage, into the snow and frost. The majority of them were dressed in spring clothes and light shoes. Many children had rags wound around their feet. Many of the mothers were very lightly dressed as they had given most of their clothes to the children. There were also women of over 60 years of age.

When the G.P.U. had finished calling out the people from the carriages, there were not less than 1500 people on the snow. The majority of them were children. In the confusion many children and mothers lost each other and these were screaming and waiting. Then numerous horse-sledges arrived. The mothers and children were

placed on them and were immediately driven away. Many families were separated in this confusion, the cries and screaming became louder, mixed with the curses and shouts of the guards.

The older men and younger boys were formed into a marching group and under G.P.U. guards and militia were walked off somewhere into the forest.

We who remained sat in the locked carriages. I cannot express in words my suffering during those moments. I felt that my mind would not be able to endure it, that I would go insane.

We Are Disembarked

In our carriage there were left 18 men. Among them were Roman Skoryk, who was separated from his wife Lukeria, his son Hryhoriy and his daughter Vira, and Fedir Zubenko, also separated from his wife and his only son, a small boy. Both were in despair. "Oh, Lord! Why are we punished? Why are the children taken away from us? What will become of them?" They could not find peace in the carriage. They either lay down on the berths or got up again.

At dawn, 25 men and older boys from other carriages were added to us. We were given a piece of bread each and some warm water and once again our transport moved on northwards. I lay down on the plank bed where my father had lain. To me it was sacred. I felt very lonely. Suddenly my thoughts flew home to the wide steppes of Kherson. I saw myself with my father, walking across the wide green corn fields and father was saying to me: "My son, these are your fields, when you grow up you will replace me. Remember, the soil needs a peasant's sweat. But for your hard work, the fields will repay you, they will give you a good harvest. And for us peasants a good harvest is the hope and joy of our lives." My childish heart was filled with joy by the green fields with many bright flowers. I was happy and joyful, when my father said that all this was mine. He was happy too. While walking, he held my hand, the hand of his youngest son. He knew that I would support him in his old age.

With a sudden jerk the train stopped. The picture of my happy childhood days vanished. I opened my eyes to dread reality. I was lying on the planks of a prisoners' carriage on the tenth day of a journey to an unknown destination. I visualized my father and heard his last words of farewell: "Keep well my son, do not forget me." I covered my eyes with my hands and cried: "Oh, Lord! How can I help him?"

I was ready to break under the strain. It was stifling under those planks, so I crawled into the middle of the carriage. At that moment there was a knock on the door and from outside an order for detainment was given. At last we had arrived somewhere. After a while voices were heard outside the carriage, prisoners were evidently being unloaded from other carriages.

Then came our turn. We heard the rattling of the lock, the doors were flung open and three people appeared, of whom one was in

G.P.U. uniform and two were in civilian clothes. But the latter were also G.P.U. officials, judging by their healthy faces and good clothes. One of the civilians held a piece of paper in his hand from which he called our names.

We came out from the carriage into God's daylight. It was a wonderful day, the sun showed it was midday. Not far from our carriages stood four horse-sledges and several militia. We were ordered to assemble in groups of ten beside each horse-sledge. Later the men from three more carriages were disembarked, making about 150 of us from four carriages. We evidently belonged to a second party, the transport had eight carriages, and the first party must have been already directed somewhere while we were still locked up in the carriages. The station of our detrainment was Vozhega on the railway line Vologda — Archangel.

Near the sledges we were checked again and handed over to the militia who began to arrange us into a marching column. But before we were marched off a one horse-sledge drew up, in which a uniformed G.P.U. official stood. On his tabs were two stripes of distinction. The militia and the guards stood at attention. The big "fish" after some words with the G.P.U. men turned to us slaves and addressed us as "Special Settlers." Thus we learned what we had become. "According to the plan of appropriate authority, you have been brought here from the Ukraine as enemies of the Soviet Government. The Northern country has taken pity on you and received you. You must justify yourselves through work. The Soviet Government does not punish you, but trains you to become worthy citizens. You will work in the forest and belong to the Mishutino forestry on the River Yemba."

Further, we learned from this Soviet official that our working week would be 6 days of ten hours each day, and Mondays would be our rest days. Our work would be without pay, as all the cleared forest was to be used for building "Special Settlements." These settlements would be built in time by us and would become our permanent places of residence, to which our families would be brought.

"You are under the orders of G.P.U.," continued the official "and must carry out all the instructions of the commanding officer. Those of you who do not carry out orders will be severely punished. Those who attempt flight will be imprisoned. You will receive your food through the commanding officer of the special settlements." At the end the official repeated loudly and clearly: "You are under the command of G.P.U. and are 'Special Settlers'." We all stood there as if rooted to the spot. The words "permanent place of settlement" rang a death knell in our ears and with it all hope vanished.

Marching to Our Destination

Before us lay 100 km. to be made on foot. We marched in double file, with two of the sledges with militia at the head of the column and two at the rear, on each of which was a huge dog.

We marched through Vozhega. It was a small community with 40-50 houses, most of them on the Eastern side of the railway track. Vozhega was a district centre of executives of G.P.U. and militia. Before the headquarters of militia we were stopped for a short time, the commander of the militia and about twenty of his men walked along our column, looking closely at us.

Then our column moved eastwards by a narrow snow-covered path, through a pine and fir forest. In the forest the snow was about 2 metres deep. Luckily for us there was no big frost. I marched beside Roman Skoryk. The sun set but we still marched, weary, with lagging steps.

It was almost dark when we came to a small village of about twenty cottages in a forest clearing. We were ordered to stop and wait in the street. Someone touched my shoulder. I turned and saw my uncle Trofym Kazdoba. I was overjoyed to see him. He told me that he had noticed me at the station but had not been able to approach me as he was in the rear part of the column.

We were ordered to form groups of ten for distribution for our night's rest. In my group of ten there were besides my uncle and myself, Roman Skoryk, Afanasiy Oplachko, Fedir Zubenko, my uncle's friends from Blahodatne, Vasyl Verbyn, Mykhaylo Priatko, Lapyn and two more, whose names I do not remember. The guard took us to a poor householder, who was told that he was responsible for us till the morning. We received 300 grams of bread and half a fish with plenty of warm water. After supper we longed for a good rest in the warm cottage, after such a long journey in the crowded goods train. Our host told us to lie on the boards, five persons on each. No one understood what he meant by boards or where we should find them. Our host repeated his request but no one moved. At last my uncle asked him what the boards were. The host pointed to two large boards near the ceiling. If one sat on them one's head would touch the ceiling. After this explanation we climbed up a ladder to these boards. The host explained that when the temperature fell to 45-50°C below zero, he took the cow and his horse into the room and the family slept on these boards as it was warmer there.

We lay down on these bare boards and being exhausted soon fell asleep. But we did not sleep for long. We all woke up more or less at the same time because something was biting us. It proved to be bed bugs, so we did not rest well that night.

In the morning we finished our bread with warm water and then by order of the guards moved on. This time I walked with my uncle. The weather was calm and there was only a slight frost. We walked the whole day without any rest and were more tired than the day before. In the evening we came to a village of about 30-40 houses. The inhabitants of this village were not pleased to see us. We were again grouped in tens and taken to the houses. This time my group was taken to a better family. The owner told us that the country was poor, that the only vegetables grown were potatoes and even of potatoes they did not have enough, that no wheat grew there, that many people had never seen white bread, that sugar, salt, tea and

tobacco could be obtained only with difficulty, the same also applying to clothes, which were home-woven.

He told us also that the poor local inhabitants were troubled by the coming of new settlers, because the shortage of food would be greater.

In the evening we again received some bread and half a fish per person. The night passed quietly as we were not troubled by bed bugs.

The third day of our marching did not differ in any way from the first two. In the evening we again stopped in a village. We were ordered to be ready for further marching at daybreak, so that we might reach Mishutino forest centre — our working point in daylight.

The fourth day of marching completely exhausted us. Our feet almost refused to move. But we comforted ourselves with the thought that it was the last day of our marching and that we would then be able to rest.

Towards the evening we approached the village Mishutino. Here we were met by the commanding officer and G.P.U. men. He looked at us, at our light torn attire and asked how we hoped to work in the forest in winter clothed thus. These were the first humane words we had heard from an official. Someone answered that we had not thought about this as we had been brought by force.

We were billeted with villagers as before. During the distribution of bread the guards informed us that in the morning we would be moved to a camp about 15 km. from there. There we should live and from there we should be marched to lumber-cutting work.

At Our Destination

Next morning, the fifth day of marching, we were gathered near the forestry headquarters, and after being given the usual bread and half a fish we were divided into two groups. The group where I, my uncle, Roman Skoryk, and friends were was sent into the forest first. We crossed the River Yemba which flowed into the Voga, a tributary of Northern Dvina. About 8 km. from the "camp" we turned from the road into a narrow path, covered with snow through which we frequently fell.

In the afternoon we came to an old wooden hut. This was our "special camp." It was covered with snow so deep that the windows could not be seen and only the upper part of the door appeared above the snow. We cleared the snow from the windows and the door and were then admitted into this hut one by one. My turn came also. I saw a small corridor with three doors, one on the right, one on the left and one at the end. A militia official instructed me to go through the left door and I entered a low room with two rows of wooden bunks on one side of it, on which we were ordered to sit side by side. When the first part of the hut was filled, the official admitted people into the other part. Each part of this barrack had a little window. In the middle of the hut stood a clay stove, about 1,5 m. long, 1 m. high and 1 m. wide. Above the stove hung a tin cover. In two corners of the ceiling were two outlets of about 15-25 cm. for smoke. When the fire burned in the stove, the smoke collected near the ceiling and went out

by these two holes. This was a "Russian black stove." A quarter of the walls and the ceiling were covered with soot, like the inside of a chimney.

We made a fire, which burned through the night, warming us and drying our rags. I slept on the upper bunk and above me stood a cloud of smoke. The boards were covered with dry moss, which smelt mouldy. Our two militia guards remained in the corridor.

In the morning of the next day "comrade" Krylov, the G.P.U. commander, and five armed guards arrived to remind us once more that we were under G.P.U. command and would be responsible to him for breaking any regulations. He also introduced us to the timetable of our working day. We had to get up at 5 a.m., march to working points and begin work at 6 a.m. Have our lunch between 12-1 and work further till 6 p.m. At 7 p.m. we would be supplied with food and checked through and at 10 p.m. retire for the night. During our stay in the hut and during work we were guarded by two militiamen. At work we were to be under brigadiers, which were selected by the G.P.U. When we were in the hut we would be permitted to walk out from it to a distance of 50 paces only, beyond that was a prohibited zone.

After this the commander read out our rations: For a day's work a special settler would receive 450 gms. (1 lb.) of bread, 40 gms. (1½ ozs.) of peeled grain, 40 gms. (1½ ozs.) of fish, 5 gms. (⅙ oz.) of sugar and 7 gms. (¼ oz.) of salt.

We were divided into groups of 15 and were given tools for felling trees.

The Dread Slavery

That afternoon, without being given any food we were driven to working points. The brigadier went on skis, ahead of us. We however dragged on through the deep snow. Some had wound rags around their shoes, many had torn boots through which the snow penetrated. After an hour we stopped in a dense pine-fir forest. We began to work. First we cleared the snow from the trees, then cut the tall pines and firs which fell into the deep snow. We cut off the branches, removed the bark and stacked the trunks into piles. The branches and smaller wood were cut for firewood. There was no set amount of work that we had to do but we worked very hard.

In such a way began our slavery. We thanked God that the frost was not too severe, otherwise, badly clothed and exhausted through malnutrition, as we were, we would not have come through this ordeal. In addition, tormenting thoughts about our families and their fate never left us.

The armed brigadiers demanded from us thorough work. Two guards walked from one group to another, watching us and on the alert for any attempts at flight. But both they and we knew that any attempts of flight at this time of the year were impossible. The forest paths and the whole forest were covered with snow and any roads through it were guarded by militia and Komsomol members.

When at 7 p.m. we returned to our hut we hurried to start a fire. The ceiling, black with soot, filled us with disgust. There were always evening and morning roll-calls as in a prison. Of our daily food supply: the bread was ropery, the grain was of bad quality, the 40 gm. of salted dried local fish was often decomposed. The sugar was always brown, the 5 gm. did not fill one teaspoon. The piece of salt was of a grey colour.

When we left for work it was still dark and when we returned from work the dusk had set in.

The Easter Divine Service

So came Easter-time — in the far North, in exile. Palm Sunday was very hard for us. Heavy snow was falling incessantly, covering us in the forest, making our hard work more difficult. Then came Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We returned from work physically exhausted and depressed. After the evening roll-call we all resolved not to go to work the next day, Easter Sunday. Whatever should happen to us for this defiance, we were prepared to meet, but we all wished to observe Christ's Resurrection Day. It was certain that for not going to work our daily ration would be withheld.

After the hard day's work I soon fell asleep. But later I felt somebody waking me up, and opening my eyes I saw my uncle Trofym. "Get up, Kuzma," he said in a trembling voice. "Judging by the stars it is near midnight — the time of Christ's Resurrection."

There was stillness in the hut. I could hardly hear the words from the Bible that someone was reading. I caught the familiar odour of burning wax candles, which woke in me nostalgic memories about beautiful Easter-time at home. I raised myself on my elbow and looked around our hut. Three small candles were burning in the middle of the room, around them were gathered about half of us, the rest were joining them. I rose and stood with them. One of us, Zotiv read almost in a whisper from a small Bible, which he had brought with the candles from home.* We all stood and prayed, while tears rolled down our faces. We were no longer people who lived in Ukrainian villages and farms. In the dim light we looked more like phantoms: dark, thin, tired and in rags. Having read the Bible, Zotiv took out of his bag a big swede, peeled it, cut it into small pieces and placed them on the end of the boards. Then after reading a few more passages from the Bible, he uttered three times in a whisper: "Christ is Risen!" "He is risen indeed!" We answered, choking back our tears. Then Zotiv shared with each of us a piece of swede...**

...The Monday came like all the other Mondays, our rest day, free from work. At seven o'clock in the evening we received our rations. Many consumed theirs before reaching their bunks.

*) He was a reliable peasant about 50-55 years old, blind in one eye. He had lived on a farm at Kaminnyy Potik on the River Mertvovody, about 10 km. from my home.

**) Which took the place of our traditional Easter cake, "Paska."

Tuesday awaited us with its hard labour — all day without a piece of bread. We rose with the thoughts: what awaited us for our refusal to work on Sunday?

At six o'clock, the commanding officer Krylov appeared. His shouts and cursing of God and religious observance of rites nearly deafened us. Then full of rage he asked us why we had not appeared at work. We did not answer. This further enraged him, but we remained silent. A militia officer answered for us, that our refusal to work had been because of Easter Sunday. This brought further shouts from Krylov, that religion and its rites were merely narcotics and were quite without meaning and stupid; and threatened that should we refuse again to work, he would punish us twice as severely.

We were then driven into the forest. Unending days of ceaseless labour stretched before us again. There was no hope left to us, our doom was sealed.



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