

Gammalsvenskby is the only Swedish settlement to the east from Finland, founded in 1782. In the past of Gammalsvenskby the history of the Soviet Union, Sweden, the international communist movement and Nazi Germany combined in a bizarre form. And even when the ploughmen of the Kherson steppes did not leave their native village, the great powers themselves visited them with the intention to rule forever. The history of colony is viewed through the prism of the theory of “forced normalization” and the concept of “changes of collective identity”. The author intends to study the techniques of forced normalization and the strategy of the collective resistance.

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In the Forge of Stalin Swedish Colonists of Ukraine in Totalitarian Experiments of the Twentieth Century

Andrej Kotljarchuk

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Cover Picture: Unknown children from Gammalsvenskby, ca 1917. Arvid

Norberg's private collection

In memoriam of my teacher,
Professor Alexander Mylnikov
(1929–2003)

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Abbreviations

ARAB *Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek* (Labour Movement's Archives and Library) Stockholm, Sweden

BSSR *Belarускаia Savetskaia Satsyialistychnaia Respublika* (Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic)

DAKhO *Derzhavnyi arkhiv Khersonskoi oblasti* (State Archives of Kherson Oblast) Kherson, Ukraine

DAOO *Derzhavnyi arkhiv Odeskoi oblasti* (State Archives of Odesa Oblast) Odesa, Ukraine

GARF *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (State Archives of the Russian Federation) Moscow, Russia

GESTAPO *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Secret State Police) Nazi Germany

GPU *Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie* (State Political Directorate) Soviet Union

GRU *Glavnoe razvedyvatel'noe upravlenie* (Main Intelligence Directorate) Soviet Union

GULAG *Glavnoe upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei i kolonii* (Main Directorate of Corrective Labor Camps and Labor Settlements) Soviet Union

Comintern *Communist International*

ECCI *Executive Committee of the Comintern*

KGB *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* (Committee for State Security)

KP(b)U *Komunistychna Partyia (bil'shovykiv) Ukrainy* (Communist Party of Ukraine)

KMA *Kvinnliga Missions Arbetare* (Female Missionary Workers)
Sweden

Komsomol *Vsesouznyi Leninskii Kommunisticheskii Souz Molodezhi*
(All-Union Leninist Young Communist League)

KNS *Komitety Nezamozhnykh Selian* (Committees of Poor Peasants)
Soviet Ukraine

MTS *Mashinno-Traktorna Stantsiya* (Machine and Tractor Station)
Soviet Union

MGB *Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti* (Ministry of State Security)

MVD *Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del* (Ministry for Internal Affairs)

NAS *Riksarkivet* (National Archives of Sweden) Stockholm, Sweden

NKVD *Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del* (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs)

OSOVIAKHIM *Obshchestvo sodeistviia oborone, aviatsionnomu i khimicheskomu stroitel'stvu* (Society of Friends of Defense and Aviation-Chemical Construction) Soviet Union

RGAKFD *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv kinofotodokumentov*
(Russian State Documentary Film and Photo Archives) Krasnogorsk,
Russia

RGASPI *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi archiv sotsialno-politicheskoi istorii* (Russian State Archive for Social and Political History) Moscow, Russia

RSFSR *Rossiiskaia Sovetskaia Federativnaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika* (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic)

SBU *Sluzhba Bezpeki Ukrainy* (Security Service of Ukraine)

SKP *Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti* (Communist Party of Sweden)

SS *Schutzstaffel* (Nazi Protection Squadrons)

TASS *Telegrafnoe agenzstvo Sovetskogo Soiuzu* (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union)

TsDAGO *Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromadskykh obiednan Ukrainy* (Central State Archives of the Public Organizations of Ukraine) Kyiv, Ukraine

TsKNM *Tsentralnyi Komitet natsionalnykh menshyn* (Central Committee for the National Minorities) Kharkiv, Ukraine

TsK KP(b)U *Tsentralny Komitet Komunistychnoi Partii (bil'shovyky)* (Central Committee of Communist Party of Ukraine)

TsK VKP (b) *Tsentralnyi Komitet Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (bolshevikov)* (Central Committee of All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks)

USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

URSR *Ukrainska Radianska Sotsyalistychna Respublika* (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

VKP(b) *Vsesoiuznaia Kommunisticheskaia Partia (bolshevikov)* (All -Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks)

ZAGS *Zapis Aktov Grazhdanskogo Sostoyaniya* (Soviet Civil Registry Office)

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116. The schoolgirl Lilja Malmas with her grandmothers Emma Malmas and Anna Utas. Zmiivka, 1983. – Private collection of Lilja Malmas.

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The history of Gammalsvenskby is a unique field for investigating totalitarian political technologies. Until today the Swedish agricultural colony on the Dnieper coast not far from its' fall into the Black Sea is the only Scandinavian settlement in Eastern Europe. I was lucky to get access to the empirical material in Ukrainian and Russian archives and did my field studies in Zmiivka/Gammalsvenskby and on Gotland, interviewing the last generation of Swedish-speaking colonists of Ukraine (*svenskbyborna*). I would never forget your hospitality and your wonderful Swedish dialect!

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assisted with ideas, literature, language check and comments and what names I have not mentioned here. No one is forgotten!

Many thanks to Birgitta Utas (*Föreningen Svenskbyborna*) and Arvid Norberg (*gammalsvenskby.se*) for the permission to use copies of illustrations from their collections and the museum of *Svenskbygården* in Roma, Gotland.

Preface

This monograph is a result of the research project which was supported in 2007–2009 by the foundation for Baltic and East European studies (*Östersjöstiftelsen*) and Södertörn University. The field studies in 2004–2006 were supported by the Swedish Institute. In 2010–2011 the project was supported by the Baltic donation and Umeå University, and finally the edition of the book was supported by the Department of History, Stockholm University.

Combining the research with teaching at three different universities and caring for two babies and one teenager was a challenge. Therefore first of all I would like to thank my lovely wife Katja for all the support you gave me. This book would never have been written without you and our kids.

For my own part, this project was a new kind of research that was focused on Scandinavian minorities and state-run violence in Stalin's Soviet Union and the topic which can be defined as *Norden behind Norden*. I am continuing to work with this theme within my recent research project "Soviet Nordic minorities and ethnic cleansing on the Kola Peninsula" (*Östersjöstiftelsen*).

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Tumba, August 2014
Andrej Kotljarchuk

Introduction

How to write the history of Stalinism?

In the process of explosive impact moulding a blast wave, arising in the combustion of the explosive charge changes the mould, giving it the desired shape. As a result, the mould is plastically deformed taking the shape of the die cavity, on which it has been arranged

”Die forging”, Great Soviet Encyclopaedia

The vast majority of post-Soviet studies of Stalinism abound in power makers, international relations and statistical research, beyond which the fate of the individual is often lost. This book presents a local study of Stalinism on the material of the Swedish colony in Ukraine. The author is not going to search for an answer to the question “Why?” The main research question is: In what way and with what tools did the Soviet government carry out the cultural-linguistic and socio-political transformation of the Swedish colonist community in Ukraine? Within the theoretical framework provided in the works of Michel Foucault and Alberto Melucci the author analyses the techniques of forced normalization used by the Soviet state in order to reorient the cultural and linguistic identity of a Swedish ethnic group in the Soviet Union.

Under the influence of the monumental work by Solzhenitsyn’s ‘The Gulag Archipelago’ the period from 1917 to 1953 is often seen in post-Soviet historiography as a chain of continuing and growing terror. This concept, in my opinion, is permeated with the Marxist philosophy that stresses the continuous character of historical development. Marxist’s absolute priority given to the cause-and-effect relationship and the ‘laws’ of historical development has led to a tendency to look at Stalinism through the prism of political continuity.

The example of the Swedish colony illustrates the opposite phenomenon, showing that the Stalinist regime employed different political strategies. The latter remark suggests variability and discontinuity of Stalin’s policies. In the

1920s the government launched an experiment to make from foreign colonists of the Russian Empire a loyal minority of Soviet Ukraine. In the early 1930s, under the auspices of the Communist International (Comintern) and Swedish communist party (SKP) an international project on building a base in the village for the future leaders of communist Sweden was carried out. The different experiments of forced normalization continued in interwar period and during World War II.

All the projects of Stalin's regime were of totalitarian nature; however, coercion was not the only method of social engineering. The goal was common; however the means to put it into effect were not always reduced to terror. Michel Foucault talks about the amazing ability of the authorities to improve forced normalization by soft measures of control, micro-penalties and rewards.¹ For example, in the Swedish village the 1920s policy of indigenization was implemented without mass violence. Despite the considerable literature and historiography of the Stalin period, we still know very little about what happened in the years of indigenization, collectivization and Great Terror in the back country. The Slavic peasants did not leave memoirs. Their voice was not heard by researchers, and their memory has not become a part of national memory.

In contemporary Ukraine the history of ethnic minorities is on the periphery of academic research. In Sweden, the fate of the Scandinavian colony in the Soviet Union belongs to the category of exotic and distant stories that do not have any direct relation to Nordic history. Most of the surviving written sources on Soviet policy in the countryside come from the authorities, making it difficult to do research from below, since the reaction of the population remains largely unknown. Fortunately, the distinctive features of legal culture and behavioural practices of Swedish colonists provide an excellent opportunity for expanded micro historical analysis. The memoirs, recollections and interviews of witnesses, collective petitions of the Ukrainian Swedes have been used to the highest possible extent making it possible to overcome the existing source-study misbalance. As a result, it was possible to trace, according to Aron Gurevich, the response of 'the silent majority'.² This book tells the story of the interaction of Swedish farmers with political power, who did not want to accept their distinctive collective identity.

¹ Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish. The birth of the Prison*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

² Гуревич А.Я. *Средневековый мир: культура безмолвствующего большинства*. Москва: Искусство, 1990.

Historical background: a Swedish colony on the Dnieper River

The Swedish agricultural colony on the banks of the Dnieper, not far from its mouth in the Black Sea is the only Scandinavian settlement in Eurasia to the east from Finland. The colony was founded in 1782 in *Novorossiia* (New Russia) by a group of 965 immigrants from the Baltic island Dagö. Today the island is known as the island of Hiiumaa and belongs to Estonia. New Russia was a new-born political and administrative term denoting an area north of the Black Sea which was at the end of eighteenth century conquered from the Ottoman Empire by the Russian Empire. In 1791 a dozen of Swedish soldiers, prisoners of Russian-Swedish war, were sent to settle in the village. The village of *Zmiivka*, known until 1945 as *Staroshvedskoe*, located on the right bank of the Dnieper River in the Kherson region of Ukraine. According to the 2001 Ukrainian census from 3500 villagers 111 were of Swedish ethnicity.³

Recent archaeological studies show that Scandinavians settled on the island Dagö in the times of Vikings.⁴ The Swedish *Guta Saga* (from the beginning of the thirteenth century) reports that this island served as a transit point for Viking expeditions.⁵ If we look at the map of the Baltic Sea from the early modern period more closely, we can notice a remarkable detail. While the lands around the Baltic Sea are inhabited by different ethno-linguistic groups, almost all of the islands (from the Danish island of Bornholm at the coast of Poland to the Åland Islands in Finland) are settled by Scandinavians. The coast of modern Estonia also was an object of Swedish colonization since Viking times. In the period of the Sweden's Greatness, the ethnic factor together with religion had a significant geopolitical importance. The motto of the foreign policy of early modern Sweden *Dominium Maris Baltici* meant gaining political and economic domination in the Baltic Sea region.⁶ Without doubt, the ethnic Swedish population of the Eastern Baltic facilitated the implementation of such an expansionary policy.

In 1561–1721, the Dagö islanders were subjects of the Swedish king. The farmers of early modern Sweden were free and were part of the political nation that was an almost unique case in European history. A fraction of free Swedish farmers assembled in the *Riksdag*, providing a real impact on the political development of the country. During this early modern period the

³ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, www.ukrcensus.gov.ua, accessed 2014.01.12.

⁴ Markus, Felicia, *Living on another shore: early Scandinavian settlement on the North-Western Estonian coast*, Diss. Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2004.

⁵ *Guta saga: the history of the Gotlanders*, Christine Peel (ed.), Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London, London, 1999, 4-5.

⁶ Rystad, Göran, "Dominium maris Baltici – dröm och verklighet: Sveriges freder 1645–1661", *Mare nostrum*, Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 1999, 95-105.

Swedish farmers of Dagö had clearly-cut rights and duties and elected their deputy to the Riksdag. They also often travelled for work in Stockholm. The island constituted a separate administrative unit of Sweden, led by the governor.⁷ Social control over the parishioners was implemented by the Swedish Lutheran Church. Thus at that time the Dagö-Swedes were well integrated into the political and ecclesiastical structure of Sweden.

After the 1721 Nystad treaty the free Swedish farmers of Dagö province requested that the new Russian government confirms their old Swedish privileges. The Russian authorities did confirm the personal freedom of Swedish farmers, but refused to free them from taxes and workloads. In 1780 Karl Magnus Stenbock, the new landowner confirmed old privileges of Swedish farmers, but noted that the next year new terms of the legal agreement would be proposed. This caused mass protests of the Dagö Swedes, which appealed to the central government of Russia. As a result of a conflict the Dagö Swedes were voluntarily resettled to the Black Sea area, where a settlement was planned for them.⁸ Probably Stenbock, who knew personally Grigory Potemkin, the governor-general of *Novorossiia*, was the one who suggested solving of conflict by the resettlement of the Dagö Swedes to the sparsely populated Black Sea region.⁹ March 8, 1781 Empress Catherina II issued a degree in which she states that:

Deigning the resettlement of the Swedish peasants of the manor of Hohenholm [Körgessaare] to New Russia, who received the freedom from the former Master of the Teutonic Order and privileges and resolutions from the Swedish monarchs, confirmed by their present landowner Count Stenbock. He adds that the term of his engagement of the peasants lapsed after February of the present year. Thus, they must leave his lands. We are ruling to resettle these Swedish peasants, in total around 1000 persons female and male, to New Russia province in order accept them as state peasants of the local establishment. Therefore, the chancellery of Reval general-governorate is obliged to announce this will to all peasants, to compile their census and support them in the resettlement. Prince Potemkin, the governor-general of New Russia, Azov and Astrakhan, will be responsible for the fulfilment of the resettlement, for setting and allotting favourable state lands, for settling them and for their supplying.¹⁰

⁷ Hedman, Jörgen, "Några drag ur Dagös historia under den svenska tiden 1563-1710", *Kustbon*, 1984(41):1, 12.

⁸ *Антифеодальная борьба вольных шведских крестьян в Эстляндии*. Сборник документов под ред. Юлиуса Мадисона. Таллин: Ээсти раамат, 1978, № 70; Bobyleva, Svitlana, "The Russian State and Swedes in New Russia", *The Lost Swedish Tribe: Reapproaching the history of Gammalsvenskby in Ukraine*, Piotr Wawrzeniuk & Julia Malitska (eds.), Södertörns högskola, Huddinge, 2014, 40-46.

⁹ *The Lost Swedish Tribe: Reapproaching the history of Gammalsvenskby*, 29-31.

¹⁰ Cited in: *The Lost Swedish Tribe: Reapproaching the history of Gammalsvenskby*, 30.

In the spring of 1782 a group of Swedish farmers from Dagö reached their destination. Despite the fact that they were already subjects of Russia, the frontiersmen were given the status and benefits of foreign colonists. In 1805–1806 three German colonies were additionally set up on the territory of the Swedish colony of *Staroshvedskoe*.¹¹ In 1782–1917 *Staroshvedskoe* was a part of New Russian (later Kherson) guberniya of the Romanov's Empire. In 1918–1991 the village was part of the Kherson district of the Soviet Ukraine. The Russian name of the settlement together with its' German name *Altschwedendorf* was the official name of the colony since its' founding until 1915. During this period the Swedish colony was the administrative centre of 'Swedish colonist district', which also included three neighbouring German colonies. In 1926–1939 the Swedish colony had three official names: Ukrainian *Staroshvedsk'e*, Russian *Staroshvedskoe* and Swedish *Gammalsvenskby*. In Sweden, the village is still known as *Gammalsvenskby* (older version *Gammelsvenskby*). In Soviet and Swedish sources of the twentieth century the population of the colony was known in Russian as 'staroshvedy' (literary Old Swedes) and in Swedish as 'svenskbyborna'.

A legal culture of the Kherson Swedes – after their resettlement in the southern frontier of Russia – was significantly different from the strategy of collective resistance of Slavic peasants and Cossacks which often preferring an ax to a pen. The political realities of Sweden taught farmers to take a more active social stance. Any group of Swedish farmers could apply with a collective complaint or a request, so called *supplika*, to the supreme power. The authorities were obliged to consider this appeal and make a decision.¹² The Swedes of Dagö many times successfully used this provision in the seventeenth century to protect their rights.¹³ This factor will play an important role in the history of the Swedish colony in the Ukrainian steppes.

Socially and economically, the Kherson colonists were individual farmers and as foreign colonists they had a considerable degree of self-government and institutions of economic freedom in the Russian Empire.¹⁴ The church of *Gammalsvenskby* was the first Lutheran parish of *Novorossiia*, which functioned from 1782 till 1929. Swedish colonists brought to the Ukraine the runic calendars and liturgical books, among them such valuable editions of

¹¹ Котлярчук А. С. "Немцы Украины в судьбах шведской колонии на Днепре", *Вопросы германской истории: сборник научных трудов*. Днепропетровск, 2007, 27–35.

¹² Berglund, Mats, *Massans röst: upplopp och gatubräk i Stockholm 1719-1848*, Diss. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, Stads- och kommunhistoriska institutet, 2009, 44-45.

¹³ Koit, Jakob, "De svenska dagöböndernas kamp för sin fri- och rättigheter 1662–1685", *Svio-Estonica*, 1951:10, 50-153.

¹⁴ Шрадер Т. А. "Шведы в Украине: борьба за сохранение идентичности", *Радловский сборник: Научные исследования и музейные проекты МАЭ РАН в 2007 г.* Санкт-Петербург: МАЭ РАН, 2008, 104–108; Malitska, Julia, "People in between: Baltic islanders as colonists on the steppe", *The Lost Swedish Tribe*, 61-85.

the Bible as *Karl XI: s bibel* and *Karl XII: s bibel*. In Scandinavia reading the Bible in your mother tongue was the basis of primary education. Perhaps, therefore, the vocabulary and grammar of the dialect of Ukrainian Swedes retained a number of archaic features which disappeared in modern Swedish, for example, plural verbs.¹⁵

Recent research shows that the colonists of Gammalsvenskby had a high degree of ethnic self-consciousness. Since the middle of the nineteenth century inhabitants of the village established long-lasting contacts with the Kingdom of Sweden and Swedes of the Grand Duchy of Finland. A number of Swedish cultural institutions (a school, a church, a library, a choir) were built in the late nineteenth – early twentieth century thanks to the Scandinavian aid in the village and as consequence the colonists received ‘an inoculation’ of modern Swedish nationalism.¹⁶

The older generation of colonists even today consider themselves Swedes and they are fluent in the mother tongue in its dialect (*svenskbymål*) and standard (*rikssvenska*) forms.¹⁷ In this sense, the migration of the Swedish population to the east differed from the mass emigration of Swedes to North America. There, over three or four generations of Scandinavians were assimilated in the English-speaking environment.¹⁸

During the 20th century, the tiny Swedish community became the subject of a series of social experiments on the part of the different political regimes. The aim was to change the collective identity of the colonists and to instil loyalty to the new authorities. In the time period 1923–1929 in the village

¹⁵ Маньков А. Е. "Село Старошведское (Gammalsvenskby) и его диалект. Результаты исследований 2004–2006 гг.", *Шведы: Сущность и метаморфозы идентичности*. Сборник статей под ред. Т. А. Тоштендаль-Салычевой. Москва, 2008, 294–314; Маньков А. Е. "Диалект села Старошведское: обзор морфологии", *Мир шведской культуры: Сборник статей*, Москва: РГТУ, 2013, 55–105; Mankov, Aleksandr, "A Scandinavian Island in a Slavonic Linguistic Environment. The Dialect of Gammalsvenskby: Nouns (Paper 2)", *International Journal of Slavic Studies*, vol. 3:1, 2014, 120–170.

¹⁶ Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, "Tradition and the past: The Swedes of Alt-Schwedendorf 1782–1852", *Voprosy germanskoi istorii*, Dnepropetrovsk, 2007, 12–19; Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, "En resande i svenskhet. Herman Vendell i Gammalsvenskby 1881", *Personhistorisk tidskrift*, 2009:2, 149–164; Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, "Formering till modernitet: Gammalsvenskby genom finländska och rikssvenska ögon 1836–1904", *Historisk tidskrift för Finland*, 2010, (95): 2, 249–267; Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, "Resedagbok och fosterländsk mobilisering. Herman Vendells resa till Gammalsvenskby och Nargö 1881", *Historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier*, 2010:85, 91–106; Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, "The making of Gammalsvenskby 1881–1914: identity, myth and imagination", *The Lost Swedish Tribe: Reapproaching the history of Gammalsvenskby in Ukraine*, Piotr Wawrzeniuk & Julia Malitska (eds.), Södertörns högskola, Huddinge, 2014, 89–110; Шрадер Т. А. "Шведы в Украине: борьба за сохранение идентичности", 104–108.

¹⁷ Mankov, Aleksandr, "A Scandinavian Island in a Slavonic Linguistic Environment. The Dialect of Gammalsvenskby: Nouns (Paper 2)", 120–170.

¹⁸ Blanck, Dag, "Constructing an Ethnic Identity: The Case of the Swedish-Americans", *The Ethnic enigma: the salience of ethnicity for European-origin groups*, Peter Kivisto (ed.), Philadelphia: The Balch Institute, 1989, 134–152.

under the guidance of Ukrainian *Tsentral'nyi Komitet Natsional'nykh menshyn* (Central committee for national minorities, TsKNM) the politics of the 'indigenization' was implemented with the aim of transforming former foreign colonists of the Russian Empire into a loyal ethnic minority of the Soviet Ukraine.

In 1929–1938 after the mass emigration of virtually the whole village (888 persons) to the historic fatherland under the control of the specially created in Sweden *Gammalsvenskbykommittén* (Old-Swedish Committee) – a new large-scale experiment was undertaken. The aim of this experiment was to fully integrate the 'archaic' Swedes into modern society through their transformation into successful Swedish farmers. Inspectors appointed by the Committee were monitoring all the aspects of the integration of the 'lost generation' into Swedish society. The emigrants were denied a separate settlement in Sweden and they were dispersed throughout the country to undergo "instruction of the Swedish norms of activities of economic nature and the everyday kind".¹⁹

The colonists who disagreed with this policy (around 250 persons) returned home in 1930–1931. There in the village which was renamed by *Chyrvono-Shveds'ke* (*Krasnoshvedskoe* in Russian or *Röd Svenskby* in Swedish) during seven years under the auspices of the Comintern and the supervision of the Swedish Communists, the experiment on implementing the first Swedish kolkhoz in the Soviet Union took place. During the Great Terror 22 villagers were arrested by the Soviet secret police (NKVD), accused of spying for Sweden as members of a fictitious espionage organisation. The Great Terror was followed by the abolition of all the national institutions: the minority council, the Swedish kolkhoz, the school, the library and the parish.

Stalin's project of forced normalization was interrupted by World War II. During the war Swedish colonists accepted the status of *Volksdeutsche* and the germanization of the population of *Altschwedendorf* took place.²⁰ In 1943 all villagers together with their German neighbours were evacuated to Germany by the Nazi occupation forces. In 1945 about a hundred of the returning Ukrainian Swedes were deported by the Soviet authorities to the Komi autonomous republic – a Finno-Ugric region in northern Russia. The government decided to settle all former *Volksdeutsche* in the Gulag area alongside other enemies of the Soviet state until further notice. The main purpose

¹⁹ Wedin, Anna, *Gammalsvenskbybornas emigration till Sverige 1929. En studie i svenskhet och etniskt ursprung*, Unpublished c-thesis supervised by Andrej Kotljarchuk, Södertörns högskola, 2007.

²⁰ Gaunt, David, "Swedes of Ukraine as 'Volksdeutsche', the experience of World War II", *Voprosy germanskoi istorii*, Dnepropetrovsk, 2007, 239-250.

of the displacement and isolation of the “special contingent was to make them true Soviet citizens”.²¹

Today the colonists and their descendants are concentrated to the Ukrainian village of *Zmiivka*, on the Swedish island Gotland and in the Canadian province of Alberta. In Sweden they are amalgamated into the association of fellow-countrymen *Föreningen Svenskbyborna*. At the expense of the association a museum of the native village was built on Gotland and the annual commemoration day of 2nd August was introduced when the descendants from Sweden, Ukraine and Canada meet each other in the town of Roma.

Theoretical framework

This book is focused on analysing the configuration of the new borders and the strategies of the collective resistance of Swedish colonists of Ukraine. The history of Gammalsvenskby under Stalin is viewed through the prism of the theory of ‘forced normalization’ of Michel Foucault and the concept of ‘changes of collective identity’ of Alberto Melucci.²² By the thoughts of Foucault and Melucci, the author intends to study the techniques of forced normalization used by the Soviet state. The goal was a reshaping of the collective identity of Ukrainian Swedes. The technology of forced normalization is a process that can be divided into three phases: conceptualization, implementation, and results. Each phase has its own specific motives and mechanisms that reflect on the three following dimensions:

- Configuration of the new borders: administrative and geographical, social and political, historical, cultural;
- New normative standard: political, social and economic, cultural and linguistic;
- Implementation of the new collective values: through propaganda, education, work practices, cultural life and compulsory political rituals.

²¹ See: Kotljarchuk, Andrej, ”Tvångsnormaliseringens teknik och kollektivt motstånd. Ukrainasvenskar i Gulagarkipelagen”, *Historisk Tidskrift*. 2011:1, 3-24.

²² Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish. The birth of the Prison*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979; Foucault, Michel, *Power, knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*, Colin Gordon (ed.), New York: Pantheon, 1980; Foucault, Michel, *The essential Foucault: selections from essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, Paul Rabinow & Nikolas Rose (eds.), New York: New Press, 2003; Melucci, Alberto, “The process of collective identity”, *Social movements and culture, under redaction*, Hank Johnson & Bert Klandermans (eds.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, 41-63.

The political power, according to Foucault, is one of the most important aspects of the meeting between state and society, which govern interpersonal relations and its' changes. The difference between the old identity standard and new requirements serves as a ground for conflicts and changes of the collective identity.²³ The conditions of the totalitarian state intensify the technological effect; not granting the common actors any choice and making them participate in the project. According to Foucault, it is low-efficient to look for the explicit logically ordered economic purposes in the activities of the authority. Each of the political regimes has their own different technologies, but only one common purpose of submission and most popular method – violence. The level of violence increases under the totalitarian governance that allows large-scale forced actions towards its' citizens.²⁴ This later leads to the radicalization of the relationship between government and its' citizens and simultaneously serves as a litmus test for the analysis of the objectives and results of forced normalization.²⁵ Foucault emphasizes that the mechanisms of forced normalization by the state are best studied at the local level. He thought the strategy of collective resistance was the less studied element of forced normalization. Foucault notes that the resistance does not express a viable alternative outside the power, but is a part of collaboration of the interaction between power and its' subjects in order to continue to function furthermore. Resistance, according to Foucault, is not a manifestation of external alternative power, but rather the process of searching for a new model of coexistence. The aim of the state is to use maximum power to favour a change to a collective identity and to behavioural practices and this comes to be a source of conflict. From this perspective, the resistance should be seen as a natural opportunity for potential changes in the relationship between government and its subjects.²⁶

The ideological principles of the Soviet leadership went back to the German philosophy of scientific socialism. The founders of the modern Communist movement Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels created a philosophical system that claimed to be the discovery of social laws of historical development. The Soviet theorists of Marxism-Leninism as no one else believed in the ability to predict the future and to build it. Bolsheviks created the propagandist concept of *svetloe budushchee* (bright future) which was incomplete without the idea of creating a new man.²⁷ Subject transformation of man in its various contexts acquired fundamental sound during the reign of Stalin.

²³ Schaanning, Espen, *Fortiden i våre hender: Foucault som vitenshåndtør*, Bd. 2., Oslo: Unipub, 2000, 444-447.

²⁴ Foucault, Michel, *Power, knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977; The essential Foucault: selections from essential works of Foucault*.

²⁵ Nilsson, Roddy, *Foucault: en introduktion*, Malmö: Égalité, 2008, 83-91.

²⁶ Schaanning, Espen, *Fortiden i våre hender: Foucault som vitenshåndtør*, Bd. 1, 357-360.

²⁷ Магочий П. Р. *Історія України*. Київ, 2007, 458-459.

Suffice it to recall the doctrine Ukrainian educator and the secret police officer Anton Makarenko by re-running social adolescents construction of young prisons as a platform to rehabilitate inmates. The centre of new pedagogical experiment was in Ukraine. Under authority of the GPU Anton Makarenko established the Dzerzhynsky labour commune for homeless children in Kharkiv and Pavel Sudoplatov a colony in Pryluki. The Ukrainian educator and the GPU officer Matvei Pogrebinsky published in 1929 a book about the training of young criminals, under a remarkable title 'Fabrika ludei' (Factory of human beings).²⁸

According to Joachim Klein, the Soviet idea of *perekovka* (re-forging) was extremely popular in the legal and political discourse of Stalin's regime and tirelessly advocated in literature and in public life. The Bolsheviks believed that ordinary people remained very much behind progressive consciousness of the party and Komsomol members. Therefore not only prisoners had to be re-educated, but the entire Soviet population, who almost all of them in the 1930s were bearers of 'old' pre-revolutionary roots, views and habits.²⁹ The collectivisation has also been seen as forced through joint work to make a conservative farmer into a *kolhoznik* – a collective farmer and an aware builder of socialism.³⁰

The grand experiment of the Stalinist regime to create a 'new man' was undoubtedly known by dissidents. For example, Lydia Ginzburg wrote in 1942 in her diary:

The political regime abruptly raised the question of the historical problem of how to turn subjective human beings into loyal citizens. The State required that all individuals doing what the state wanted.³¹

Laura Engelstein notes in this connection that the example of the Stalin's dictatorship is "instructive as a test case for Foucault's discursive hypothesis, which locates to authority and coercive power of the disciplinary mechanisms in the production of knowledge and the implementation of scientifically legitimated norms".³² Despite the official rhetoric that the Soviet state did 'everything in the name of the ordinary human being, for the benefit of the ordinary human being', Stalin's government could be characterized by an

²⁸ Погребинский, Матвей, *Фабрика людей*. Москва: Огонёк, 1929.

²⁹ Клейн И. "Беломорканал: литература и пропаганда в сталинское время", *Новое литературное обозрение*. 2005. № 71, 231–262.

³⁰ Дюран Д. *Коммунизм своими руками. Образ аграрных коммун в Советской России*. Санкт-Петербург, 2010, 64.

³¹ Зорин А. "Лидия Гинзбург: Опыт примирения с действительностью", *Новое литературное обозрение*. 2010. № 101, 32–51.

³² Engelstein, Laura, "Combined underdevelopment: discipline and the law in imperial and Soviet Russia", *Foucault and the writing of history*, Jan Goldstein (ed.), Oxford, Cambridge, 1994, 225.

extremely functional approach to man as a 'cog' in the machinery of the state. The epigraph of the introduction was not chosen by accident. It is a fragment of an article about the invention of an explosive method of forging and about stamping production in the Soviet Union from the Great Encyclopaedia. Like the Nazis, the Bolsheviks believed in radical changes and coercive measures in order to unify private and public life.

Sources, method and previous studies

The present study is based on archival sources from Sweden, Ukraine and Russia, most of which introduced into scientific use for the first time. At *Riksarkivet* (National Archives of Sweden, NAS), there are two sets of documents, which are the most interesting for the research. In the first instance there are the materials of *Socialstyrelsen* (National Board of Health and Welfare of Sweden), which contain correspondence with the village dwellers, lists of individuals re-emigrating to the Soviet Union, documents of *Arbetarnas Svenskbykommitté* (Workers' Swedish Village Committee), and papers by the Soviet consulate in Stockholm. *Utrikesdepartementet* (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden) records containing materials of the Swedish Embassy to Moscow about the situation in the village, correspondence bringing back of Swedish communists and some other villagers from the Soviet Union to Sweden, collection of Soviet and Swedish newspaper publications about Old Swedes. In the second instance, there are archives of *Gammalsvenskbykommittén*, later known as *Gammalsvenskbystiftelsen* (Council on the affairs of the Gammalsvenskby settlement). This collection includes official records, correspondence with the Committee, with the colonists in Sweden and in the Soviet Union, handwritten memoirs, printed books and media publications. *Arbetarrörelsens arkiv* (Labour Movement Archives of Sweden, ARAB) kept the protocols of the Swedish Communist Party, which contain discussions on the measures to be taken by the Party in relation to the ideological work with the Ukrainian Swedes. The collection which is also relevant for this research is *Biografica* that includes autobiographies of Swedish leftists who worked in Gammalsvenskby. Access to this material was granted by the executive committee of *Vänsterpartiet* (The Left Party of Sweden).

Within the vast collection of material on the history of colony kept at *Derzhavnyi arkhiv Khersons'koi oblasti* (State Archives of Kherson oblast, DAKhO) the criminal cases of the Soviet secret police GPU–NKVD–MGB–KGB is of great value. Access to these records is complicated. Fortunately, due to the democratization process, materials on the rehabilitated residents of Gammalsvenskby were transferred from the regional archives of the *Sluzhby*

Bezpeki Ukrainy (Ukrainian Security Service, SBU) to the State Archives of Kherson oblast. Based on powers of attorney from relatives in Ukraine and Sweden, the author got authorization to work with these criminal cases. In addition, the State Archives of Kherson oblast contains a complex of documents of the Soviet government authorities, including the protocols of the Gammalsvenskby national rural council, Swedish church and school records, documents of Beryslav and Kherson district executive committees for national minorities, orders of the central government of the Ukrainian SSR. Among other Ukrainian archives the records of which were used are *Derzhavnyi arkhiv Odeskoi oblasti* (State Archives of the Odessa oblast, DAOO) and *Tsentralny derzhavnyi arkhiv hromadskikh ob'ednan' Ukrainy* (Central State Archives of the Public Organizations of Ukraine in Kyiv, TsDAGO).

The archives of the Communist International being part of the *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii* in Moscow (Russian State Archive for Social and Political History, RGASPI) include the archives *Communist Party of Sweden*. This collection contains personal files of the Swedish communists, in particular, those who worked in Gammalsvenskby. By virtue of the powers of attorney of the relatives residing in Sweden the author gained access to these files. As a result of the archival investigation the volume *O staroshvedskikh poseleniakh na Ukraine* (About the Swedish Settlements in the Ukraine) was uncovered at RGASPI. This confidential file was kept by the officials of the *Skandinaviska ländersekretariatet* (Secretariat for Scandinavian countries) and contains different materials highlighting Soviet and Comintern's politics towards Ukrainian Swedes. The author used also a number of files from *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv kinofotodokumentov* in Krasnogorsk (Russian State Film and Photo Archive, RSFPA), *Respublikanskii arkhiv obshchestvenno-politicheskikh dvizhenii i formirovaniia Komi* (Komi Republic Archives of the Political Movements and Organizations, RGAOPDF) and *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (State Archives of the Russian Federation, GARF). In addition to archival material the author used as publications of Soviet, Swedish and international media of the time, documentaries, posters and photographs from various digital resources.

Unfortunately, most sources reflect the view of the government on the processes taking place in the Swedish colony. It was, therefore, important to determine how Swedish colonists personally treated the experiments carried out in their village. In this sense, Gammalsvenskby is a wonderful place for field studies. Dozens of villagers were interviewed by Swedish and Ukrainian journalists after the 'discovery' of the village in the late 1980s. In 2004–2008 the author worked with the informants in Ukraine (Kherson region), Sweden (Gotland and in Stockholm) and Russia (Syktyvkar and Vladivostok). The target group was an older generation of colonists born in 1919–1933. At least five people from Gammalsvenskby left memoirs –

something unique among farmers in Ukraine and Russia.³³ Two natives of the village – Jan Utas and Sigfrid Hoas published documentary novels on the history of the Swedish colony.³⁴ In 1954–2009 *Föreningen Svenskbyborna* published a series of commemorative books with a variety of materials on the history of the Swedish colony in Ukraine.³⁵

In his book ‘Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia’ the British historian Orlando Figes shows the importance of oral testimonies and memoirs in the reconstruction of the history of Stalinist repressions. Figes analyses, in particular, the memories of the children–victims whose voices were frequently ignored in previous historiography. Figes stresses that oral history is virtually the only way to study terror and its consequences for human life through the prism of the victims’ perception, not through authorities’ interpretation.³⁶ Swedish historian Kristian Gerner in his review of the book by Figes notes that eyewitness accounts are so often dressed in a suit borrowed from classical literature about the Gulag that requires very careful approach to them.³⁷ Understanding the importance of source problems, Figes, nevertheless, believes that testimonies selected by him have more value than literary memoirs. Indeed, oral testimonies can be subjected to cross analysis, verified by data from archives and by interviews of other witnesses. Thus, it is possible to separate individual evidence of the past from those acquired after reading literature templates. The informants, whom I worked with, are mostly low-educated farmers. As a rule, they have not read classic works by Solzhenitsyn or Shalamov. Probably the Gulag literature has had little influence on the content of their testimonies. Of course, in their stories there are tricks of memory, confusion and elementary mistakes. For example most of my informants believe that they were deported to Siberia, although the Komi

³³ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*. Unpublished manuscript, 1938, NAS. Utrikesdepartementet 1920 års dossiersystem. P 1534; Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*. Unpublished manuscript, <http://www.svenskbyborna.com>, accessed August 2, 2010; Högevik, [Hinas] Johannes, *Detta är mitt liv*, Handskrivet manuskript; *Albers family genealogy, 1700's – 1992*. Ed. by D. M. Albers. Brigham Young University, 2005. Family Archives Collections, <http://lib.byu.edu/digital> accessed August 2, 2010; Knutas, Andreas, *Mitt liv i korta sammandrag*, Handskrivet manuskript.

³⁴ Utas, Jan, *Vi från stäppen.*, Stockholm, Wahlström & Widstrand, 1938; Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1959; Hoas, Sigfrid, *Banditer i byn: min barndoms äventyr i Gammal-Svenskby*, Stockholm, Ev. fosterlandstiftelsen, 1959; Hoas, Sigfrid, *Banditer i byn: och andra texter om Gammal-svenskby*, Stockholm, Alvina, 2009.

³⁵ *Svenskbyborna. 25 år i hemlandet*, Jan Utas & Sigfrid Hoas (red.), Visby, Sylve Norrbys bokhandel, 1954; *Svenskbyborna 40 år i Sverige: jubileumsskrift*, P. Kr. Annas (red.), Visby, 1969; *Svenskbyborna 50 år i Sverige: jubileumsskrift*, Jan Utas (red.), Visby, 1979; *Svenskbyborna 70 år i Sverige: jubileumsskrift*, Segerdahl – Visby, 1999; *Vems är du? Svenskbyborna 80 år i Sverige*, Katarina Hedström (red.), Klintehamn, Gotlandica, 2009.

³⁶ Figes, Orlando, *De som viskade: tystnad och terror i Stalins Sovjet*, Lund: Historiska media, 2009, 684–686.

³⁷ Gerner Kristian, ”Viskningarnas samhälle”, *Axess*, 2008:3, 68–69.

Republic is in Europe. Many of the names and dates are not consistent with archival documents. However, the testimonies of old people bear witness of what is most important, how victims reacted to the state-run violence.

In Sweden there is an extensive, mostly popular, literature on the history of Gammalsvenskby,³⁸ as well as linguistic and ethnographic publications.³⁹ The Stalinist time period has been explored fragmentarily and almost exclusively without using Ukrainian and Russian archives. In post-war Soviet Union the only Swedish settlement in the country was forgotten. A small-numbered group of Kherson Swedes (about 150 people) who survived the Great Terror, World War II and post-war deportation has not been taken into account as a separate ethnic group in the censuses. Therefore the Swedish village was unknown to Soviet academic centres for Scandinavian studies. In independent Ukraine the village gained fame at the regional level only at the end of the 1990s and became popular nationwide after an official visit to Zmiivka in October 2008 of the Swedish royal couple. However, only a few publications on the history of the Soviet period of the Swedish colony have been written before the start of our project in 2006 by Ukrainian archivists and ethnographers.⁴⁰ The history of Ukrainian Swedes is still on the periphery of post-Soviet research and the interpretation of events is often full of inaccuracies.

The methodology of this study is based on a micro historical approach. With this approach, not thousands of separate individuals, but rather an isolated and cohesive national community is under the researcher's microscope. The micro historical method allows the researcher to significantly reduce the scale of observations and thus to focus on a particular social group, but first

³⁸ See as example: Blomberg, Harry, *Babels älvar*, Stockholm, Wahlström & Widstrand, 1928; Utas, Jan, *Ung främling*, Uppsala, Nyblom, 1961; Runwall, Anders & Hagert, Bertil, *Svenskarna från Ukraina: ett reportage om svenskbyborna*, Vällingby: Harrier, 1981; Hedman, Jörgen & Åhlander, Lars, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna i Ukraina*, Stockholm: Dialogos, 2003; Tysk, Karl-Erik, *Gryningsljus: Gammalsvenskby i blickpunkten*, Skara: Skara stiftshistoriska sällskap, 2007.

³⁹ See as example: Neander, Herman, *Gammal-Svenskby*, Stockholm, Geber, 1912; Karlgren, Anton, *Gammalsvenskby: land och folk*, Uppsala, Svenska landsmål och svenskt folkliv 27, 1929; Tiberg, Nils, *En sägen från Gammalsvenskby i historisk belysning*, Göteborg, 1932; Karlgren, Anton, *Gammalsvenskby: uttal och böjning i gammalsvenskbymålet*, Svenska landsmål och svenskt folkliv 56, Stockholm, Norstedt & söner, 1953; Loit, Aleksander & Tiberg, Nils (eds), *Gammalsvenskbydokument*, Uppsala, 1958.

⁴⁰ Чумаченко Г. "Шведське поселення на Півдні України", *Народна творчість та етнографія*. 1997. № 2-3, 101–110; Коник Ю. О. "Реєміграція шведського населення Херсонського округу в 1929 р. За документами державного архіву Херсонської області", *Південний архів. Історичні науки*. Вип. 9. Херсон, 2002, 62–64; Голобородько Ю. "Гіркий біль правди", *Реабілітовані історією. Херсонська область*. Ред. А. О. Бабич. Херсон, 2005, 303–306.

after having processed a massive complex of written and oral sources.⁴¹ Thus, there is an opportunity to explore the totalitarian technologies of the Soviet regime through the example of a homogeneous social group, rather than in terms of thousands of unrelated individuals.

Micro history does not mean ignoring a macro-historical perspective. On the contrary, through the past of the Scandinavian settlement in Ukraine amplitudinous pages of European history are revealed. Stalinism like Nazism is a Europe-wide phenomenon. This means that the history of Stalinism could not be grasped outside the international communist perspective. In the past of the Ukrainian Swedes the history of the international communist movement, of democratic Sweden, of Stalin's Soviet Union and of Nazi Germany combined in a bizarre form. And even when the ploughmen of the Kherson steppes never left their native village, the great powers themselves visited them with the intention to rule forever.

On the outline of the book and practical matters

The book examines the time period when Joseph Stalin was at the height of his powers, after his appointment to the post of general secretary in 1922 before his death in 1953. The four chapters of the book correspond to the four projects of Soviet power of forced normalization of Swedish colonists. The first chapter is devoted to a Soviet Ukrainian experiment of 'indigenization' policy in Gammalsvenskby, the second – the international communist project of *Röd Svenskby*, the third – the Great Terror and the elimination of the national institutes of Swedish colony, the fourth – Second World War and the deportation of villagers to the Komi Gulag. Contents of the book are accompanied by maps and illustrations, many of which are published for the first time. Discussion on previous research is limited to minimum.

Apart from the main text, there are two appendices. The first one is a list of Ukrainian Swedes – victims of the Great Terror. Unfortunately, most of these names are absent in electronic databases of the Soviet terror's victims, in particular the database of Memorial with over 2.6 million names of victims of the Stalinist terror. The second appendix is a list of the NKVD officers and prosecutors responsible for the organization of the Great Terror in Gammalsvenskby. This list is incomplete due to the principles of available inquiry documentation of the NKVD which often do not contain first names. However, the author considers the publication of this appendix essential.

Residents of Gammalsvenskby are mentioned in the sources in Russian, Ukrainian, Swedish and other languages in various terms. In this book the

⁴¹ Levi, Giovanni, "On Microhistory", *New perspectives on historical writing*, Burke, Peter (ed.), Cambridge: Polity, 2001, 97-119.

English translation of the most common Ukrainian Russian and Swedish term in the records for “Old Swedes” (*staroshvedy* or *gammalsvenskbyborna*) is used as well as a translation of the modern Swedish term *Ukrainasvenskar* (Ukrainian Swedes). The personal names of Kherson Swedes are known in the sources in their corresponding Russian, Ukrainian and Swedish forms. For this book the Swedish form is chosen, which is based on the proper names of colonists in their Swedish passports issued for all the colonists in 1929.

Personal and geographical names as well as official Ukrainian and Russian terms are transliterated from the Cyrillic script in accordance with the simplified version of the US Library of Congress system. Certain exceptions were made for well-known persons and cities. The abbreviations of Soviet institutions are based on the practice of the modern Russian and Ukrainian languages. Geographical names are given in the form they have in their present-day location in Ukraine, Russia, Finland and Sweden. One exception is made for Gammalsvenskby – an official Soviet name of village in 1926-1939; because the village is known today outside Ukraine under this name.

According to the first all-Soviet census of 1926, almost the entire adult population of Gammalsvenskby was literate in Swedish, many colonists had good verbal, writing and reading skills in Russian, Ukrainian and German.⁴² In their correspondence to Sweden colonists used exclusively the Swedish language. In correspondence with the Soviet authorities they used Russian, sometimes with minor inclusions of Ukrainian phrases. Translation of quotations from the Swedish, Russian, Ukrainian and other languages to English is done by the author of this book.

⁴² *Короткі підсумки перепису населення України 17 грудня 1926. Національний і віковий склад, рідна мова та письменність населення. Статистика України. Серія 1. Демографія. Т. 5. Вип. 2. Харків, 1928, tablitsa 9.*

Chapter 1. Gammalsvenskby versus Staroshvedsk'e. From foreign colonists of the Russian empire to the ethnic minority of Soviet Ukraine

We did not go on a crusade to Ukraine to conquer it, we crusaded to liberate it. We laid down our lives having failed to reach the goal, but we did not shed our blood for nothing, our ideas of the great free Ukraine were not killed by the bellow of the cannon and bullets of Tsar Peter, Ukrainian people accepted them ...Ukraine, crushed under the heel of Tsar Peter and his successors could not give us thanks for the spilled blood and goodwill, it could only give us eternal rest.

From a collective statement of Gammalsvenskby National Village Council
to the Ukrainian Soviet government
October 17, 1928.

1.1. A new historical canon and a vision of the future

The view of the Soviet power on the past and future of the Swedish minority is reflected in a number of official documents, primarily intended for government officials and party careerists, who were involved in the program of nation building. The Soviet concept of the 1920s nationalities policy was taken shape under a new interpretation of history. The opposition in Russian empire versus the Soviet Union played the key role here. "A prison of nations" – with this notorious characteristic Lenin defined the status of minorities in the empire of Nicholas II.⁴³ The autonomy of the Grand Duchy of Finland and the Tsardom of Poland, the privileged status of foreign settlers,

⁴³ Ленин В. И. "К вопросу о национальной политике", *Полное собрание сочинений*. 5 издание, Москва, 1969, Т. 25, 66.

the freedom of minority associations after the October 1905 manifest were not taken into account by the Bolshevik leaders.

Pre-revolutionary Ukraine was regarded by the Ukrainian communists as a colony of the Russian empire in which the “the capitalists pursued a predatory policy of oppression of nations and escalation of conflicts”.⁴⁴ The Soviet Ukrainian authorities claimed that the discrimination caused “a forced delay of cultural development of both the Ukrainians and of ethnic minorities of the country”.⁴⁵ The 1917 Revolution “transformed Ukraine from a tsarist colony into an independent republic, equal among equals”.⁴⁶ Admission of the significance of the inter-ethnic relations issue was believed by the Ukrainian Bolsheviks “to be one of the factors of triumph victory of Soviet power in Ukraine”.⁴⁷ Therefore, the concept of ‘equality of all minorities’ and of ‘national liberation’ became the key terms of Soviet nationalities policy in Ukraine.

A negative feedback of the role of tsarist Russia was typical for the pre-revolutionary national concept of Ukrainian history, which received an official recognition in the 1920s. In the public discourse of Soviet Ukraine such conspicuous figures of Russian history as Peter I and Catherine II, turned into negative personae. Leaping ahead, it should be noted, that the Ukrainian Swedes quickly adapted to the change of the historical canon. In collective appeals of colonists the name of ‘Mother Russia’ was substituted by ‘Mother Ukraine’. Addressing the new government, the colonists put emphasis on the contribution of Swedish soldiers of Karl XII in the struggle for liberation of the Cossack Ukraine from Russia. The colonists did not spare Catherine II from the blackwash either, claiming that they, as well as Ukrainians, were the “victims of the tsarism, exiled by the Empress to disappear from the face of the earth”.⁴⁸

The stance of the Soviet Union of opposition against the rest of the world became a significant component in the official concept of the country’s future. The October Revolution, as interpreted by the Bolsheviks, symbolized the end of bourgeois history. The first socialist state in history was to demonstrate to the whole world the solution of the issue of inter-ethnic relations. Lenin’s nationalities policy disturbed the plans of “the Ukrainian bourgeoisie and nationalist intelligentsia who, disguising under the national flag, made

⁴⁴ *Радянське будівництво серед нацменшостей УСРР (Тези доповіді А. Буценка на IV Сесії ВУЦВК)*. Харків: Видання оргінстру ВУЦВК, 1928, 3.

⁴⁵ *Радянське будівництво серед нацменшостей УСРР*, 3.

⁴⁶ *Радянське будівництво серед нацменшостей УСРР*, 3.

⁴⁷ *Ukraine: A short sketch of economical, cultural and social constructive work of the Ukrainian socialist soviet republic*, Charkiv, 1929, 70.

⁴⁸ Коник Ю. О. ”Реєміграція шведського населення Херсонського округу в 1929 р. За документами державного архіву”, 62-64.

use of the issue of inter-ethnic relations as a bargaining chip”.⁴⁹ The Bolsheviks denied conventional state structure suggesting social dominance of the so called ‘titular nation’ (majority of republic population) and discrimination of small-numbered minorities deprived of autonomy.⁵⁰

The alternative to nationalism was the Lenin’s concept of self-determination and equality of all the nations. A positive example of such self-determination for Lenin was Scandinavia:

In 1905, as you know, Norway seceded from Sweden in face of vehement protests from the Swedish landlords, who threatened to go to war against Norway. Fortunately, the feudalists in Sweden are not all-powerful as they are in Russia, and there was no war. Norway, with a minority of the population, seceded from Sweden in a peaceful, democratic, and civilised way, not in the way the feudalists and the militarist, party wanted. What happened? Did the people lose by it? Did the interests of civilisation or the interests of democracy, or the interests of the working class, suffer as a result of this secession? Not in the least! Both Norway and Sweden are countries that are far more civilised than Russia is – incidentally, precisely because they succeeded in applying in a democratic manner the formula of the ‘political self-determination’ of nations. The breaking of compulsory ties strengthened voluntary economic ties, strengthened cultural intimacy, and mutual respect between these two nations, which are so close to each other in language and other things. The common interests, the closeness of the Swedish and Norwegian peoples actually gained from the secession, for secession meant the rupture of compulsory ties.⁵¹

The Lenin’s formula of ‘political self-determination’ became an ideological justification for the creation of the Ukrainian SSR. A borderline situation of the republic gave the local Bolsheviks’ nationalities policy an international aspect.⁵² Speaking at the first ‘Ukrainian conference on work among national minorities’ Panas Butsenko noted that “millions of people in the West are looking to our nationalities policy”.⁵³

⁴⁹ *Ukraine: A short sketch*, 70.

⁵⁰ Ленин В. И. “О праве наций на самоопределение”, *Полное собрание сочинений*, 5 издание, 257-320.

⁵¹ Lenin, Vladimir I., “On the Question of National Policy”, *Collected Works*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972, vol. 20, 217-225.

⁵² Mace, James E., *Communism and the dilemmas of national liberation: national communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918-1933*, Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Mass., 1983, 215.

⁵³ *Первое всеукраинское совещание по работе среди национальных меньшинств 8-11 января 1927 г. Стенографический отчет*. Харьков, 1927, 7. Panas Butsenko (1889-1965) – Ukrainian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1918. Secretary of the Presidium of the Ukrainian government. Arrested by the NKVD in 1937 in Tobolsk and sentenced to the death June 10, 1938. The sentencing decision was changed to ten years in prison. Rehabilitated. Died in Moscow.

The Soviet government paid close attention to the situation with minorities in neighbouring Finland, Latvia and Poland; the states emerged, like the Soviet Union, after the collapse of the Russian Empire. Thus, the support of minority rights was supposed to demonstrate to the Ukrainians the successes of Lenin's nationalities policy. Creation in Ukraine the Polish autonomic territories was opposed to discrimination of the rights of Ukrainian minority in Poland. The Soviet Ukrainian government stated: "Unlike the Polish landowners which are *polonizing* the Ukrainian peasants, we are not *ukrainizing* the Poles. Our goal is to reach complete ethnic and racial equality and free development of all nationalities".⁵⁴ Against this background, establishing the rights of the Swedish minority gained important political value. The establishment of Swedish minority rights in the USSR is in contrast to the imagined discrimination of Swedes and Sami in Finland, where, as one of the designers of Ukrainian nationalities policy put it, "ethnic minorities are under horrendous oppression".⁵⁵

Karl Marx' idea of world revolution played an important role in the new nationalities policy.⁵⁶ In 1922, an ethnic component disappears from the names of the country. From the construction of Soviet Russia the Communist party switches to the establishment of supranational Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The federal structure of the country was to become a model of the future 'World-Wide Soviet Union' – the global Communist federation. In this regard, the Karelian autonomy, the Finnish national districts of the Leningrad region, the Norwegian national council in Murmansk district and, finally, the Swedish village in Ukraine were seen as the 'piedmont' of Soviet Scandinavia.⁵⁷ For this reason, Finnish was thrust upon the people of Eastern Karelia, but the majority of the population did scarcely understand this language.⁵⁸ In Ukraine, the Greek-Hellenes of Mariupol were

⁵⁴ Якубова Л. Д. "Національне адміністративно-територіальне будівництво в УСРР (20-ті – перша половина 30-х рр. XX ст.)", *Проблеми Історії України*. Вип. 12. Київ, 2004, 205.

⁵⁵ Глинский А. Б. *Национальные меньшинства на Украине*. Харьков: Центриздат, 1931, 5,31; Глинський А. *Досягнення і хиби в роботі серед національних меншостей*. Харків: Пролетар, 1931, 4-5, 29. For the nationalities politics in interwar Finland and the Sami and the Swedish minorities see: Nyssönen, Jukka, 'Everybody recognized that we were not white': *Sami identity politics in Finland, 1945-1990*, University of Tromsø, Diss. Tromsø University, Tromsø, 2007; Hämäläinen, Pekka Kalevi, *Nationalitetskampen och språkstriden i Finland 1917-1939*, Helsingfors: Schildt, 1969; Forsgård, Nils Erik, "En nationell strategi", *Historisk tidskrift*, 2002(122):2, 209-219.

⁵⁶ Калакура О. Я. *Поляки в етнополітичних процесах на землях України у XX ст.* Київ, 2007, 165–175.

⁵⁷ Martin, Terry, *The affirmative action empire: nations and nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2001, 8-9, 50-51.

⁵⁸ Анттикоски Э. "Стратегии карельского языкового планирования в 1920-е и 1930-е годы", *В семье единой: Национальная политика партии большевиков и ее*

encouraged to learn Modern Greek, an incomprehensible language for them – the language of Communist Party of Greece.⁵⁹ The party leadership of Kherson district counted on the development of literary Swedish language, rather than Gammalsvenskby dialect. In some way the Ukrainian SSR was to become a micro model of a World's Socialist State.⁶⁰

According to the plan of indigenization, the nationalities policy in Ukraine was to be implemented in two ways: 'ukrainization' and 'indigenization'. The main purpose of ukrainization (actually de-russification) was ousting the Russian language from the public life of the republic. The ukrainization policy was targeted primarily at the ethnic Ukrainians. It was carried out openly as an historic revenge, as previously "the tsarist policy was directed at elimination of Ukrainian culture and language".⁶¹ Within ukrainization it was assumed that the minorities would refuse to speak Russian in public and would master, along with their mother tongue, the Ukrainian language.⁶² The purpose of indigenization was to support the national rights of all the minorities. Several ethnic groups in Ukraine (Greeks, Czechs, Serbs, Bulgarians and Assyrians) did not have their cultural institutions in the Russian Empire and were subjected to russification. Ensuring their rights meant implementation of the state program on the creation of national institutions almost from scratch: literary language, school, administrative autonomy and media. Solving these problems demanded large human and material resources, the Bolsheviks relied on reciprocal loyalty of the minorities to the new regime. The authorities implied that schooling and propaganda in their mother tongue would make involvement of ethnic groups of the rural population in the process of socialist construction easier. However, unlike other small-numbered minorities of Ukraine Swedes established their own national institutions as far back as in the time of the Russian Empire. The latter meant that the Soviet slogans of nationalities policy were originally unattractive for the Swedish minority.

осуществление на Северо-Западе России в 1920–1950 годы. Под ред. Т. Вихавайнен и И. Такала. Петрозаводск, 1998, 207–222.

⁵⁹ Якубова Л. Д. "Мовна проблема та її вплив на етнокультурне життя українських греків (середина 20-х – 30-і рр. XX ст.)", *Український історичний журнал*. 2004. № 2, 121–132.

⁶⁰ *Радянське будівництво серед нацменшостей УСРР*, 3.

⁶¹ *Ukraine: A short sketch of economical, cultural and social constructive work*, 70.

⁶² *Німці в Україні 20–30-ти рр. XX ст. Збірник документів.* Кер. кол. упоряд. Л. В. Яковлева, В. В. Чирко. Київ: Інститут історії України НАН України, 1994, 6–10.

1.2. The main political actor

Carrying out the decisions of the XII congress of the VKP(b) on new nationalities policy, the Ukrainian government (All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee) established in 1924 a special state body with the right of legislative initiative – *Tsentral'nyi Komitet Natsional'nykh menshyn* (Central committee for national minorities, TsKNM). The Ukrainian Bolsheviks believed that a new organ would be a powerful instrument against chauvinism and would help get over the distrust of the Soviet power among the foreign colonists. They think that during the Civil War in Ukraine the representatives of 'western minorities' did not support them, but preferred a neutral position. Now the policy of indigenization was expected to increase loyalty to the Soviet regime. The Ukrainian leadership knew that, unlike the Jewish or Polish minorities the Germans and Swedes belonged to the privileged groups of tsarist Russia. Therefore slogans aimed to get over the consequences of discrimination of anti-Semitism and russification did not work in this case. In relation to these groups of the population, the focus was on favourable economic policy and propaganda of the advantages of Soviet way of life.⁶³

The TsKNM included representatives of all the large ethnic groups of the republic.⁶⁴ The first chairman of the Commission was the Russian Bolshevik Mikhail I. Lobanov.⁶⁵ The Presidium of TsKNM included vice chairman Jan Saulevich on behalf of the Polish population; vice chairman A. A. Levin on behalf of the Jewish population; vice chairman Sava G. Yali represented the Greek population; and vice chairman Seraphim I. Mitsev – the Bulgarian minority.⁶⁶ The coordination of the policy among Swedes was delegated to Joseph F. Haftel, the TsKNM secretary and representative of the German minority.⁶⁷ In practice however, the inspections to Gammalsvenskby village

⁶³ Радянське будівництво серед нацменшостей УСРР, 3-9.

⁶⁴ Якубова Л. Д. "Центральна комісія національних меншин (ЦКНМ) при ВУЦВК та її місцеві органи", *Проблеми історії України: факти, судження, пошуки*. Київ, 2005. № 14, 329–365.

⁶⁵ Mikhail I. Lobanov (1887–1937) – Russian and Ukrainian Bolshevik. Head of the TsKNM. He was arrested during the Great Terror and executed February 27, 1938. Rehabilitated.

⁶⁶ Sava G. Yali (1895–1938) was born in a Greek family of Mariupol region. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1918. Vice Chairman of the TsKNM. He was arrested during the Great Terror, in course of the 'Greek operation', and executed February 7, 1938. Rehabilitated; Serafim I. Mitsev (1890–1938) was born in Berkovitsa, Bulgaria. The lawyer by education. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1918. Vice Chairman of the TsKNM. He was arrested during the Great Terror in Kharkiv, and executed April 11, 1938. Rehabilitated.

⁶⁷ Joseph F. Haftel (?–after 1935) – Secretary of the TsKNM. He was a representative of the German minority. In 1935 he was arrested by the NKVD.

council were headed by Jan Saulevich.⁶⁸ Apart from the central body, TsKNM branches were set up at the local level: guberniya and the district committee for ethnic minorities.

TsKNM's first meeting held on May 3, 1924 showed that the authorities hardly knew anything about the minorities which lived on their territory, the ethnographic boundaries and population numbers. Vice chairman, Jan Saulevich admitted that TsKNM members at first "worked groping their way, had inaccurate information about the amount of ethnic minorities, areas of their residence in the territory of the republic".⁶⁹ Therefore, before establishing national districts and village councils it was decided to collect basic information. First and foremost, the TsKNM was to determine the ethnographic map of Ukraine, Identifying places of dense habitation of minorities. In this regard, TsKNM members were supposed to make a survey of nationalities areas. To explore the nationalities policy *Kabinet z vivchennia natsional'nykh menshyn* (Laboratory for Studies of Ethnic Minorities) at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences was created in 1929, led by Professor Eugene Rikhlik.⁷⁰ Another institution, *Kafedra z natsional'nykh pytan'* (Department on the Inter-Ethnic Relations) was established at the Institute of Marxism in 1926 in Kharkiv.

A high-ranking officer of the Soviet secret police of GPU and the vice chairman of TsKNM Jan Saulevich, believed in the new nationalities policy, which should be of creative nature.⁷¹ The program of 'united front of nationalities' proposed by him, presupposed a radical administrative reform in the republic, the withdrawal of ethnic communities from a traditional influence of the church, formation of national Komsomol and VKP(b) nucleus.⁷² At the end of 1924, the Odessa bureau and the Kherson committee of TsKNM were established. The Odessa bureau consisted of three staff members, representing the interests of the German, the Bulgarian and the Jewish populations. The Kherson committee also had three people on staff, representing

⁶⁸ Jan Saulevich (Jan Sauliewicz, 1897–1937) was born in Belarus in a family of Polish nobility. Member of the KP(b)U since 1924. Vice Chairman of the TsKNM. He was arrested during the Great Terror, in course of the 'Polish operation', and executed September 22, 1937. Rehabilitated;

⁶⁹ *Первое всеукраинское совещание по работе среди национальных меньшинств*, 25.

⁷⁰ Eugene Rikhlik (1888–1937) was born in the village of Vilshanka, Zhytomyr region in a family of Czech colonists. Studied the Slavic languages and literatures at the universities of Kiev and Berlin. Since 1917 – associate professor at Kiev University. Head of the Laboratory for Ethnic Minorities at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. He was arrested in 1931 as 'a Czech spy' and sentenced June 15, 1931 to ten years in prison. Died in the Gulag. Rehabilitated.

⁷¹ Рубльов, О., "Ян Саулевич (1897–1937): біографія 'хрещеного батька' Мархлевського району у контексті репресій 1930-х років", *Історія України: Маловідомі імена, події, факти. Збірник статей*. Вип. 34. Київ, 2007, 143–176.

⁷² Калакура О. Я. *Поляки в етнополітичних процесах*, 175–179.

the German, Jewish and Polish minorities.⁷³ No one was responsible for the local Swedish minority. Misalignment between large-scale tasks and modest resources became a major problem for TsKNM. The enormous work of coordinating the nationalities policy rested on the shoulders of the Commission having only 140 people on staff in the whole Ukraine.⁷⁴ The decision to establish regional branches of TsKNM caught the local authorities flat-footed. The administration of Kherson did not have a clear picture of the ethnic mapping of the district and did not see the point in new administrative reform. The local party leaders considered New Nationalities Policy to be a temporary political manoeuvre necessary to win over the ethnic minorities living in the countryside. In addition, national districts were not separated from the system of local governing bodies, which did not allow TsKNM to be the leading conductor of nationalities policy at the local level. The delegates of the first All-Ukrainian conference on national minorities' issues mentioned some problems of great concern at local level stating that "the turning point in the attitude of local authorities to ethnic minorities' activities has not come so far".⁷⁵ The nationalities policy, apart from TsKNM, was supervised by various governmental bodies – from the GPU to the Ukrainian People's Commissariat of Education. As was typical for the Soviet system, duplication of institutions and blurring of responsibility did not contribute to effective fulfilment of the assigned tasks.

1.3. A new socioeconomic landscape

On 29 of November, 1922, an agrarian reform approved the first Land Code of the Ukrainian SSR, providing the redistribution of land on the socialist principles of equality among all members of the rural community. The agrarian reform was carried out the following year; the land in the Swedish community was divided equally among 950 residents based on 2.78 dessiatins (ca 3.04 hectares) per capita. As a result, 40 families of wealthy colonists of Gammalsvenskby who owned an average of 60 dessiatins (65.6 hectares) of land were seriously affected having lost much of their allotments. They were also denied traditional concession of the lands of the former Orthodox Bizyukov monastery, the possessions of which came to the state, under the 1920 decree 'On the nationalization of all former state-owned, crown, mon-

⁷³ Дізанова А. В. "Политика коренизації у 20-х – 30-х рр. XX ст. (на матеріалах південного регіону України)", *Науковий вісник Ізмаїльського державного гуманітарного університету*. Вип. 24, 10.

⁷⁴ Якубова Л. Д. "Центральна комісія національних меншин (ЦКНМ)", 343.

⁷⁵ *Первое всеукраинское совещание по работе среди национальных меньшинств*, 41-42.

astery, town and landed estates'.⁷⁶ The families of poor as well as middle farmers, on the contrary, benefited from the land reform, getting additional allotments. Viktor Utas (born 1913) recalled that before the reform his middle-wealthy family owned an allotment of 30 hectares of land and received of 33 hectares of land for the use and was absolutely delighted by this.⁷⁷ The 1922 Land Code established four legal forms of land use: companionship, communal, strip holding and mixed.⁷⁸ The 1922 Code liquidated private ownership of land and selling it was banned. Thus, the Soviet authorities deprived prosperous economies of colonists' opportunities for future extensive development.

Most Swedes preferred individual farming choosing a strip holding form of land use. Some wealthy families, such as the family of Johan Buskas, who owned a mill and a tractor, were forced to unite with relatives, creating a companionship form of land use. This form of labour also became popular among the local poor farmers.⁷⁹ In 1920 the *Komitet Nezamozhnykh Selian* (Committee of Poor Farmers, KNS) or *Kombed* in Russian were established on a governmental initiative. In Ukraine, in contrast to Russia, KNS functioned until 1933. Economic tasks of KNS were targeted at raising the living standards of the poorest peasantry. The government explicitly counted on the poor, providing KNS with a free seed fund and assigning horses to treat fields.⁸⁰ The KNS of Gammalsvenskby included 70 households and the council received 15 hectares of land in free collective rent from the state.⁸¹ Thus, the agrarian reform reflected a class doctrine of the Bolsheviks. Authorities sought to enlist sympathies of the poorest farmers and to provoke a class struggle in the consolidated community of the Kherson Swedes.

1.4. A new administrative–territorial landscape

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Ukrainian lands of the Russian Empire did not have a special status and were part of the 12 guberniyas (governorates), which in turn were divided into 102 uyezds and 1989 vo-

⁷⁶ Utas, Jan, *Vi från stäppen*, 165–167.

⁷⁷ Hedman, Jörgen & Åhlander, Lars, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna i Ukraina*, 147.

⁷⁸ Козырева М. Э. "Немецкие районы Юга Украины как национальные административно-территориальные единицы 20–30-х гг. в оценках советского государства и немецкого населения", *Немцы России и СССР: 1901–1941 гг.* Москва, 2000, 298–304.

⁷⁹ DAKhO (State Archive of Kherson Oblast), fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 558.

⁸⁰ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 32.

⁸¹ DAKhO (State Archive of Kherson Oblast), fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 558, ark. 85–93.

lost'.⁸² The 1871 administrative reform to unify the division of the Russian Empire led to the abolition of the special Swedish colonist district and formation of Gammalsvenskby volost' in its place, which became part of the Beryslav uyezd of Kherson guberniya. However even after the liquidation of the colonist district Gammalsvenskby was often called a colony and its' inhabitants – colonists.⁸³ On the eve of the 1917 revolution Gammalsvenskby volost' counted 5,595 inhabitants. The largest settlement was an Orthodox Grigoriev Bizyukov monastery with the village, where 910 Ukrainians lived. The volost' administrative centre of Gammalsvenskby numbered 718 Swedes. The volost' also included the German colonies of Kostyrka (707 residents), Mikhailovka (460 residents), Zmiivka (401 residents), the Ukrainian village of Dreymalovka (280 residents), a Jewish colony of Novo Beryslav (174) and about 20 small German farmsteads.⁸⁴

In the mid-1920s the population of Soviet Ukraine was more than 29 million people. Ethnic minorities accounted 20 percent of the population. Of the total Soviet Germans 40 percent lived in Ukraine. More than 300,000 of them settled down in the agricultural colonies in the south of the republic.⁸⁵ Apart from the Germans Ukraine was a home for ethnic Russians, Jews, Poles, Moldovans, Bulgarians, Greeks, Czechs, Belarusians, Tatars, Albanians, and Swedes. Nevertheless, the first Soviet administrative reform in 1923 completely ignored the ethnic principle. The reform replaced the three component system of the empire 'guberniya – uyezd – volost' by the Soviet four-component scheme 'guberniya – district – rayon – village council'. The territory of Ukrainian SSR divided into 9 guberniyas, 530 districts and 706 districts.⁸⁶ In 1925, guberniyas were annulled; the district system subsisted until September 1930. In 1923 the Gammalsvenskby Village Council was created. It formed part of the Beryslav rayon, Kherson district, Odessa guberniya. Apart from the Swedish colony the village council included two German villages: Kostyrka (Klosterdorf) and Mikhailovka (Mühlhausendorf), as well as the Ukrainian-populated settlement of Kutsaya Balka and the sovkhos Chervony Mayak (former territory of Bizyukov monastery).⁸⁷ Part of the Gammalsvenskby volost' entered a new Dreymalovka village council,

⁸² *Адміністративно-територіальний устрій України. Історія та сучасність*. Київ: Геопринт, 2002.

⁸³ *Немцы Херсонщины. Аннотированный перечень дел Государственного архива Херсонской области (1919–1930)*. Ред. А. Карпова, А. Шинкаренко. Одесса, 2002, 3.

⁸⁴ *Список населенных мест Херсонской губернии*. Александрия, 1917, 126-127.

⁸⁵ *Короткі підсумки перепису населення України 17 грудня 1926. Національний і віковий склад, рідна мова та письменність населення*, tablitsa 9.

⁸⁶ *Материалы по районированию Украины. Низовое районирование на 1 января 1924 г.* Харьков, 1924.

⁸⁷ *Отчет Херсонского окружного исполнительного комитета советов за 1922–1923 гг.* Херсон, 1923, 233-235.

which, apart from Ukrainian village included the Jewish colony of Novo Beryslav and German colony of Zmiivka (Schlangendorf).

Gammalsvenskby retained as the centre of the village council and its' historical name yet in the Ukrainian form: *Staroshvedsk'e*. The neighbouring German colonies were renamed during World War I and received new Slavic names. The Soviet authorities did not revoke the imperial decision of 1915 and retained the Slavic names of the German colonies as the official names. The reason for this was probably that the German names associated with the 1918 Austrian–Hungarian occupation of the region. It is noteworthy that none of the three major German colonies became the centre of the village council. Besides the German Catholic village of Kostyrka the Swedish village council included the German Lutheran colony of Mikhailovka, the inhabitants of which had been in conflict with the Swedes for many years. Year after, a new administrative reform based on ethnic criteria started. In the course of its implementation the map of the Soviet Ukraine was redrawn again in 1924–1928. It housed Moldavian autonomy, 25 national (German, Polish, Russian, Bulgarian, Jewish and Greek) districts and 1007 national village councils. The national councils constituted 10 percent of all village councils in the republic.⁸⁸

A large-scale project to create national autonomies was heated with aspirations of the world revolution. The commissar of education of Ukraine, and a prominent figure of the Communist International Mykola Skrypnyk, explained the reason for the establishment of national autonomies as follows:

A small cell of any nation, liberated as a result of workers' struggle, will form the basis of national liberation movements of all the peoples in Ukraine and would be an example of national liberation for the whole nation of our large country, and perhaps for the whole world.⁸⁹

The 'final solution of the national question' came from the idea to give ethnic character to local governing bodies in order to involve isolated groups of the foreign colonists in the building of socialism.⁹⁰ The new reform started with the Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars decree of 29 of

⁸⁸ *Ukraine: A short sketch of economical, cultural and social constructive work*, 74.

⁸⁹ Cited in: Якубова Л. Д. "Національне адміністративно-територіальне будівництво в УСРР", 176–177. Mykola Skrypnyk (1872–1933) – Ukrainian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1900. Head of the Ukrainian government (1918). Minister (People's Commissar) of Education (1927–1933). In June 1933 he was removed from the ministerial position by the personal order of Stalin as 'wrecking nationalist element'. He committed suicide July 7, 1933.

⁹⁰ Козирева М. Е. "Особенности wprowadzenia політики коренізації в німецьких районах України в 20–30-х рр.", *Вопросы германской истории*. Т. 1. Дніпропетровськ, 1998, 136–142.

August, 1924 ‘On selection of national districts and village councils’. The decree included an important addition for the Old Swedes. The minimum amount needed to create a national village council was reduced from 1,000 to 500 residents:

In order to place the Soviet power nearer the people, urgent should be taken to expand the network of village councils by separation of all settlements having 1000 or more residents, and for ethnic minorities – 500 inhabitants.⁹¹

This step meant to give the go-ahead for the creation of Swedish administrative autonomy and the work on defining the boundaries of compact habitation of minorities and proving new national administrative–territorial units was carried out.

By 1926 the Kherson district constituted 19,365 square kilometres. The territory incorporated 1032 settlements inhabited by 565,865 people, including 476,137 people (84 percent of the population) living in the countryside. 77.4 percent of the district's population were ethnic Ukrainians, 11.9 percent – Russians, 6.5 percent – Jews, and 2.7 percent – Germans. In the Beryslav rayon there were 30,285 people, of which 75 percent lived in countryside. The Swedes made up 4 percent of the rural population of the Beryslav rayon.⁹²

In the course of the administrative–territorial reform, called by the VKP(b) ‘national zoning’ the Beryslav area underwent major changes in 1924–1928. On the territory of former Swedish volost’ five independent national village councils were formed: one Swedish, three German and one Jewish. Part of the Beryslav district was assigned to the Jewish national district of Bolshaya Seydemenukha (from 1927 – Kalinindorf).⁹³ The Jewish area included the nearby colony of Lvovo and Yakovlev Agricultural College.⁹⁴ The Swedish national village council of Gammalsvenskby was established in 1926. The population of the village council was 1,100 people of which 900 persons or 81.8 percent of the enter population were ethnic Swedes. Summarizing the results of reform, the TsKNM was proud to report that the Swedish minority of the republic covered the national autonomy

⁹¹ *Итоги работы среди национальных меньшинств на Украине. К 10-й годовщине. Октябрьской революции.* Харьков: ЦКНацмен при ВУЦИК, 1927, 70.

⁹² Calculated by the author on a basis of *Короткі підсумки перепису населення України 17 грудня 1926. Національний і віковий склад, рідна мова та письменність населення.* Т. 5. Вип. 2. Харків, 1928.

⁹³ Фельдман Д. З., Панов Д. А. *Бурные годы Тихого поля в Новороссии: Два века еврейской колонии Сейдеменуха. Историко-генеалогическое исследование.* Москва, 2009.

⁹⁴ Пасик Я. *Калининдорфский еврейский национальный район.* URL: <http://www.evkol.nm.ru/kalinindorf.htm>, accessed July 22, 2014.

with one hundred percent.⁹⁵ In 1926–1928 the decision was taken to establish two new settlements within the Swedish national village council: *Nysvenskby* (New Swedish Village) and *Svenskåker* (Swedish Field). The new settlements were created on the lands nationalized by the state and were designed for the younger generation of colonists. The village of Nysvenskby was built after a model plan of a socialist village, the agrarian version of the then popular project of a socialist town.⁹⁶ Principles of socialist planning included a systematic character of building, simple housing standards and a high level of public hygiene. Authorities sought to win over the young generation of colonists, showing them the advantages of the Soviet way of life. The Soviet Swedish experiment was not unique; the neighbouring German colonies Zmiivka, Kostyrka and Mikhailovka also got their socialist concomitants, namely, Grünewald, Neu-Kostyrka and Neu-Mikhailovka.⁹⁷

The Nysvenskby settlement was built during a time period of two years, 17 km west of the maternal colony. The village consisted of two wide streets, converging in the centre, where the school and an administrative building were built. All the houses had the standard building plan and equal living space and facilities. The outbuildings included a toilet. Due to a broken artesian well the settlement was given a collective system of water supply; along the streets water fountains were installed. The new village was inhabited by 53 families of young farmers, who had moved voluntarily, as well as three resettles, which had moved in the early twentieth century under the Stolypin resettlement program and had come back after twenty years in Siberia.⁹⁸

In 1926, Nysvenskby was visited by the right-wing Swedish politician and journalist, the son of a farmer, Per William Anner (1886–1968). His description of Nysvenskby are among the most positive impressions of a trip to the Soviet Union. Anner noted that the houses of the village had been built by the residents themselves; however, all the work was carried out under a single plan and under the supervision of the chief of construction. The Swedish visitor appreciated the availability of a water-supply system, dams for irrigation, the well thought out street plan. A Spartan standard of socialist dwelling caused no criticism of the bourgeois politician either:

It certainly was not a palace or villa, but a modest one-story house with thick and solid walls of mud and straw. We called at a couple of houses. They were

⁹⁵ *Итоги работы среди национальных меньшинств*, 20–21.

⁹⁶ Меерович М. Г., Коньшева Е. В., Хмельницкий Д. С. *Кладбище соцгородов: градостроительная политика в СССР 1928–1932 гг.* Москва: РОССПЭН, 2011.

⁹⁷ *Список залюднених місць Херсонської округи на 1 січня 1928 р.* Херсон, 1928.

⁹⁸ Hedman, Jörgen & Åhlander, Lars, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna i Ukraina*, 148–151.

a little bit small, but nice, clean and cosy. In the houses of the peasants there were sewing machines, simple furniture and utensils.⁹⁹

In 1927 there were 212 inhabitants in Nysvenskby, whereas the population of the settlement of Gammalsvenskby reduced to 692 people.¹⁰⁰ The residents of the new settlement were exempt from taxes for 10 years and were deferred from military service. This project significantly improved the relations of the Old Swedes and the Soviet government.¹⁰¹ On the one hand, the administrative reform of the 1920s destroyed the historically established territorial and socioeconomic system of Gammalsvenskby volost'. On the other hand, the creation of a national village council contributed to ethnic consolidation of the Old Swedish community and created, as we will see, further opportunities for organizing legal collective resistance.

1.5. A new cultural–linguistic landscape

The All–Soviet 1926 census showed that almost the entire adult Swedish population of the Ukrainian SSR (741 people) were literate. 482 people were able to write in two languages: Russian and Swedish. Ten Swedes were able to read and write in German, as well as in their mother tongue. Worst of all was the case with the Ukrainian language. Only three ethnic Swedes mastered the Ukrainian language.¹⁰² The Soviet census results reflected the cultural and linguistic situation in the Russian Empire. Prior to 1917, the Old Swedes lived in the Romanov Empire – a huge country where Russian, Swedish, Finnish, Polish and German all were administrative languages. The multinational empire with its capital city in St. Petersburg, including the Grand Duchy of Finland, Karelia and the Kola Peninsula, had a significant Scandinavian minority and in a sense was partly Nordic.¹⁰³ The Swedish companies

⁹⁹ Annér, Wilhelm, *Hört och sett i Sovjet-Ryssland*, Svenska andelsförlag, Stockholm, 1926, 163–166.

¹⁰⁰ DAKhO, fond 306, opys 17, sprava 331.

¹⁰¹ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 16.

¹⁰² *Короткі підсумки перепису населення України 17 грудня 1926. Національний і віковий склад, рідна мова та письменність населення*. Table 9. The literacy rate of the Kherson Swedes was one of the highest in Ukraine. For comparison, only 48.9 percent of ethnic Ukrainians and 30.7 percent of Moldovans were literate.

¹⁰³ Sohn, Ole, *De drog mod Øst: danskeres udvandring til Rusland og Sibirien 1864 til 1919*, Høst, København, 2002; Jangfeldt, Bengt, *Svenska vägar till S:t Petersburg: kapitel ur historien om svenskarna vid Nevans stränder*, Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1998; Engman, Max, *Petersburgska vägar*, Esbo: Schildt, 1995; Engman, Max, "Finnar, finländare och svenskar: nationalskolor och mångspråkighet i Petersburg", *Historisk tidskrift för Finland*, 1999 (84), 168–205; Jentoft, Morten, *De som dro østover. Kola-nordmennenes historie*, Oslo:

were actively working on the territory of Russia.¹⁰⁴ The mother of the last Russian tsar, Maria Fyodorovna was born Princess Dagmar of Denmark. Emperor Nicolas II himself repeatedly visited Finland, Sweden and Denmark and spoke Danish.¹⁰⁵ In short, despite the status of foreign colonists, the Old Swedes were not foreigners in the Romanov Empire. The victory of the Bolsheviks led to the fact that the Swedish colony settled within the territory of Ukraine – the republic, not related to Scandinavia and carrying out the policy of ukrainization. The new political reality set the Old Swedes in a difficult position of searching for new collective identity.

As a branch of the VKP(b) the Communist party of Ukraine (KP(b)U) was the only regional political organization of the Soviet Union which had a central body – a political bureau. The Soviet nationalities policy was subordinated to the political bureau of KP(b)U and the Ukrainian government. The planned ukrainization of the state and party apparatus in Ukraine was to be completed by January 1, 1926.¹⁰⁶ It was supposed that by that time all national village councils would have switched to the native language in internal documentation and to use Ukrainian in correspondence with central authorities in Kharkiv. In May 1926 the Ukrainian government adopted the decree ‘On securing the areas inhabited by national minorities’ professionals and skilled workers who know minorities’ languages’.¹⁰⁷ Taking into consideration the importance of the minority issue, the personnel of national units were exempt from mandatory knowledge of the Ukrainian language. Under the July 6, 1927 Ukrainian government decree ‘On the equality of languages and on the promotion of Ukrainian culture’ in ethnic areas the state bodies were to use the minority language.¹⁰⁸ However, in practice, it looked a little different. The authorities of Beryslav or Kherson district did not know Swedish and carried out correspondence with Gammalsvenskby in Ukrain-

Gyldendal, 2001; *Шведы на берегах Невы*. Сост. А. Кобак и С. К. Эммрих. Стокгольм, 1998.

¹⁰⁴ Björklund Jörgen, “From the Gulf of Bothnia to the White Sea: Swedish direct investments in the sawmill industry of Tsarist Russia”, *The Scandinavian economic history review*, 1984, (32):1, 17-41; Johansson, Anders, “Swedish enterprise and immigrants in the Baltic region of imperial Russia”, *The Baltic countries 1900-1914: proceedings from the 9th Conference on Baltic Studies in Scandinavia, Stockholm, June 3-6, 1987*, 245-261, Stockholm, 1990; Johansson, Anders, “Swedish branch factories in imperial Russia, 1885-1917”, *Imperial power and development: papers on prerevolutionary Russian history: selected papers of the Third World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies*, Don Karl Rowney (ed.), Ohio: Columbus, 1990, 151-174.

¹⁰⁵ Корнева Г. Н., Чебоксарова Т. Н. *Любимые резиденции императрицы Марии Федоровны в России и Дании*. Санкт-Петербург, 2010.

¹⁰⁶ Дізанова А. В. “Политика коренизації у 20-х – 30-х рр. XX ст”, 8-11.

¹⁰⁷ Козорог С. Б. “Грецькі національні райони на півдні України у 20-30-ті роки: проблема створення та ліквідації”, *Південна Україна*. Вип. 1. 1998, 193-198.

¹⁰⁸ Чирко Б. “Национальные немецкие районы и сельские советы”, *Немцы Украины. Материалы к энциклопедии*. Вип. 7. Москва, 2002, 160-163.

ian. At the same time, the Swedish village did their documentation and responded to the requests of a superior authority exclusively in Russian. This situation was typical for many national autonomies in the Ukraine. They retained the Russian language in paperwork, despite the legal norms.¹⁰⁹ There were different opinions on the progress of ukrainization within the state apparatus. Speaking at the first national conference on the work of national minorities the vice-chairman Joseph Haftel called upon the state apparatus to abandon the idea of forced ukrainization of minority areas, but rather adapt Soviet institutions to public service in their native language.¹¹⁰

Impressive successes were achieved if to believe the Soviet statistics. In 1929 62.5 percent of police departments in the German national districts functioned in German. By 1929, 309 newspapers and magazines were published in Ukraine in the minority languages. The Soviet Constitution and Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR, like many other laws, were published in the languages of minorities. To open the only Korean school in Kharkiv teachers from Vladivostok were discharged. In 1925 the Ukrainian government obliged the post offices to ensure receipt of telegrams in national languages, even those written in Latin script.¹¹¹ The most difficult task was to secure national rights to small-numbered ethnic groups. There was a deficit of teachers and educational literature was unavailable. In the areas densely populated with minorities the amount of children did not allow the opening of native schools. Therefore, by initiative of the Ukrainian government the minimal number of pupils in class for native school was reduced.¹¹² This made it possible to open a second Swedish school in Nysvenskby in 1926. As the policy of indigenization advanced, 90 German, 88 Jewish, 10 Polish, 2 Swedish and one Armenian school were opened in the Kherson district.¹¹³ In total, as of 1929, Ukraine had 786 Jewish, 628 German, 381 Polish, 74 Bulgarian, 16 Greek, 15 Czech, 10 Armenian, 10 Tatar and 2 Swedish schools with native language of instruction.¹¹⁴ By its scale the Ukrainian nationalities policy had no precedents in interwar Europe.

In 1921 the Ukrainian government was determined to introduce Ukrainian as a mandatory subject in all schools of the republic. However, in 1923 the minority schools were exempted from compulsory study of the Ukrainian language and got the right of an independent choice of a second language for

¹⁰⁹ Козирева М. Е. "Особливості впровадження політики коренізації в німецьких районах України в 20–30-х рр.", 139.

¹¹⁰ *Первое всеукраинское совещание по работе среди национальных меньшинств*, 128, 174.

¹¹¹ Глинский А. Б. *Национальные меньшинства на Украине*, 40-67.

¹¹² Weinstein, Harold R., "Language and Education in the Soviet Ukraine", *The Slavonic Yearbook*, 1941:20, 136.

¹¹³ Москаленко В. "Были ли на Херсонщине школы нацменьшинств?", *Взгляд*. 14.07.2005.

¹¹⁴ Глинский А. Б. *Национальные меньшинства на Украине*, 61.

teaching: Ukrainian or Russian.¹¹⁵ As a result, the school of Gammalsvenskby continued to use Swedish and kept Russian as a subject. This was due to Russian having a higher status in southern Ukraine as well as to the lack of skilled teachers of Ukrainian. Thus, the expected changes suggested by the government were not implemented and like in tsarist times, teaching in a Swedish school was conducted in Swedish and Russian.

The status of the Ukrainian language in the national areas remained low. The Ukrainian communists were definitely concerned about the situation. The leadership of the republic rendered support to ethnic minorities' schools and did not foster ukrainization, hoping for a general decline of the Russian-speaking element of the population. One of the authors of the policy of indigenization Mykola Skrypnyk showed his resentment with the situation in Greek-residence areas, where only 26.5 percent of schools functioned in the native language, only 1 percent – in Ukrainian, and 72.5 percent – in Russian. According to Skrypnyk, this meant that:

Within the 12-year period of proletarian dictatorship we have a shameful score: 3/4 of Greek children are not taught in their mother tongue, and, on the contrary, the policy of denationalization and russification is on the march.¹¹⁶

Therefore, on October 26 in 1926, the Ukrainian People's Commissariat of Education takes the decision to make the study of Ukrainian compulsory, as well as the native language and Russian. For the Swedish community the new decision meant a dramatic transition to another linguistic standard. It was assumed that during the four years of primary school, the younger generation of Old Swedes would master three languages simultaneously. In practice, the adventurous policy turned into a psychological stress for children. Pupils of elementary school, whose mother tongue was an ancient Swedish dialect, were forced to simultaneously study three literary languages: Swedish, Russian and Ukrainian. A secondary Swedish school did not exist, but had existed in tsarist Russia and this reduced the national policy of Soviet power. Those who sought to continue education, switched to the seven-year school in the neighbouring village of Zmiivka where the primary language of instruction was German!

In 1926, the Ukrainian government decided to provide all the schools of ethnic minorities of the republic with textbooks free of charge in the native language. The Ukrainian People's Commissariat of Education developed a plan of printing of a set of textbooks for ethnic minorities' schools.¹¹⁷ On June 25, 1926 in Kharkiv the special publishing house *Ukrderzhnatsmenvi-*

¹¹⁵ *Итоги работы среди национальных меньшинств*, 17-29.

¹¹⁶ Cited in: Козорог С. Б. "Грецькі національні райони на півдні України у 20–30-ті роки: проблема створення та ліквідації", 195.

¹¹⁷ *Итоги работы среди национальных меньшинств*, 73.

dav (Ukrainian State Publishing House for National Minorities) was founded. Over five years, this printing house prepared and published textbooks in 15 languages. Among them were books in German, Yiddish, Polish, Czech, Latvian and Estonian. The *Ukrderzhnatsmenvidav* even prepared and published textbooks for three Assyrian schools in Ukraine.¹¹⁸ At all that, the interests of the Swedish school were ignored and schools of Gammalsvenskby were using 'bourgeois' literature from Sweden. The authorities suddenly realized their mistake only after the decision of Old Swedes to return to their historical homeland. The Ukrainian People's Commissariat for Education appealed in August 1928 with a request to the Soviet embassy in Stockholm:

Ukraine is home to a small group of Swedes who are centred in two colonies. Since they preserved their mother tongue the Narkomos [People's Commissariat for Education] seeks to ensure their cultural needs in their native language, for which two schools with nearly 200 children are functioning ... Work of these colonies is complicated by the lack of educational and other literature. In Ukraine it is impossible and inexpedient to issue Swedish literature due to low demand for this literature, thus we have to buy such literature abroad. We would be much obliged to you if you send us a list of fiction books, so far, as well as , informative, science fiction, political educational and periodicals, which, in your opinion, meet the conditions of work in our Soviet schools and political institutions and determine the terms and conditions of its acquisition.¹¹⁹

Until the 1929 emigration the Swedish schools had not been provided with Soviet textbooks in their native language. The cultural policy of indigenization, which aimed 'to break distrust' between the Soviet government and Swedish colonists, failed. On the one hand, the government granted the Swedes administrative autonomy, but on the other hand, the promised support for the development of native culture diverged from reality. Slogans alone were not enough. Swedish colonists belonged to a privileged group of subjects of the Russian Empire. The Ukrainian government failed to convince the colonists of the advantages of the Soviet nationalities policy which fostered sentiments of emigration.

Formally the Swedish settlement in Kherson guberniya in the Russian Empire was the administrative centre of the Gammalsvenskby volost'; until 1871 Swedish colonists' district. Despite the name, a long time the elected positions in the local administration were taken by the candidates from the

¹¹⁸ Глинський А. *Досягнення і хибі в роботі серед національних меншостей*, 1931.

¹¹⁹ Чирко Б. В. *Національні меншини в Україні (20–30 роки XX століття)*. Київ, 1995, 110–111.

German majority of the volost'.¹²⁰ Only in 1899, after merging with the German Catholic colony of Klosterdorf, the Swedes managed to elect to the office of volost' chairman their candidate Mats Buskas.¹²¹ The appointed offices of colonist administration were usually occupied by the representatives of Ukrainians and Russians. For example, in the first half of the nineteenth century the scribe of Russian and German languages in the Swedish colonist district was Pavel Krakovsky, a Ukrainian who came from Austrian Galicia. Krakovsky married a Swedish girl and became the founder of the local Ukrainian–Swedish family of Krakovsky.¹²²

An important part of Soviet cultural policy among the rural population was the campaign against illiteracy. Established in 1923 the so-called *Liknep* or *Likbez* in Russian was an official campaign of the elimination of illiteracy of adults. The state founded association *Get' Nepis'mennist'* (Down with illiteracy) arranged thousands of adult schools and courses. In 1927 these classes were attended by more than 2 million Ukrainians, including more than 700,000 women.¹²³ Apart from teaching literacy the *Liknep* program included lectures on political topics. However, the *Liknep* in Gammalsvenskby never started for one simple reason – there were no illiterate adults in the village at all.¹²⁴

1.6. The creation of a new social hierarchy and a new cultural and educational policy

In the national periphery the Soviet indigenization policy implied the prerogative right for ethnic minorities to holding public office.¹²⁵ One of the leaders of the Soviet state was Leon Trotsky who came from a family of Jewish colonists in Kherson guberniya. Among the organizers of the Soviet power in the republic were the first secretary of the Communist party of Ukraine, a former German colonist Emmanuel Kviring and chairman of the Ukrainian Soviet government, a Bulgarian Christian Rakovsky. New policy

¹²⁰ Немцы Херсонщины. Аннотированный перечень дел Государственного архива Херсонской области, 3.

¹²¹ Котлярчук А. С. "Немцы Украины в судьбах шведской колонии на Днестре", 30.

¹²² Hedman, Jörgen & Åhlander, Lars, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna i Ukraina*, 54.

¹²³ Реент О. П., Коляда І. А. *Україна між світовими війнами (1914–1939)*. Київ, 2004, 347–348.

¹²⁴ Херсонский уездный отдел народного образования. Доклады. 1921, л. 15, справа 26, опys 1, DAKhO.

¹²⁵ Mace, James E., *Communism and the dilemmas of national liberation: national communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918-1933*; Martin, Terry, *The affirmative action empire: nations and nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*.

staffing principles made it possible for the Old Swedes to have administrative careers. At the same time, thanks to the implementation of the minority rights program, the Bolsheviks solved the problem of the generally rather passive peasant population of the borderlands. They sought to maximize involvement in the construction of socialism and to form a loyal elite amongst former foreign colonists. However, in the candidate selection national criteria did not mean that the Bolsheviks ignored a class approach. The first chairman of the Swedish National Council was Petter J. Knutas (born 1894), the 30-year-old poor farmer, who had been supporting the Red Movement since the Civil War.

In 1920, the government of Soviet Ukraine, relying on the doctrine of class struggle, established a new administrative body parallel to the village administration body – *Komitet Nezamozhnykh Selian* (Committee of Poor Farmers, KNS). It included the poorest horseless strata of the peasantry. During the difficult conditions of the Civil War and War Communism the KNS were in charge of implementing of *prodrazkladka* – a state campaign of confiscation of grain and other agricultural produce from the rich farmers for a nominal fixed price. Unlike Russian *kombeds*, the Ukrainian KNS acted until 1933 and were treated as a pillar of Soviet power in affluent German and Swedish colonies. The children of KNS members were exempted from tuition fees at schools.

In 1925, KNS were divested of administrative functions, but continued to operate as an economic and political organization. The political task of the KNSs was to limit the impact of well-off peasants – the *kurkuls* (the Ukrainian term for kulaks) on the village community. KNS, along with the village council, was responsible for the collection of government bonds for industrialization.¹²⁶ The dominance of the KNS members in the village council, 'beggars' according to the well-off colonists, caused sharply negative reaction of rich farmers. And that was part of the strategy of the Soviet regime. The village council and KNS were in charge for self-taxation and governmental bonds campaigns, the main target of which was again wealthy colonists. The KNS of Gammalsvenskby was not confined to the native village only. The KNS members visited nearby German colonies with red flags, where they performed the self-taxation propaganda campaign for the need of socialist industrialization.¹²⁷

The creation of a new social hierarchy in Gammalsvenskby was carried out through a wide representation of KNS members in local administration and deprivation of voting rights for the so-called 'ex-citizens' or *lishentsy*

¹²⁶ Протоколы заседаний старошведского сельсовета. No. 2, 7, 22, 1928, справа 31, опус 1, фонд R-311. DAKhO.

¹²⁷ Протокол заседания старошведского сельсовета. No. 19, 11.09.1928, справа 31, опус 1, фонд R-311. DAKhO.

(disenfranchised persons). The KNS chairperson and members were, as a rule, elected to the village council. In 1926, KNS members amounted to 11.1 percent of the Gammalsvenskby village council. On average, among the other national village councils of Ukraine this figure was much higher, 35.2 percent.¹²⁸ The list included about twenty people by 1926. Among them were Pastor Kristoffer Hoas, the former soldiers of the White Army, as well as the well-off peasants – owners of mills and those who used hired labour. The disenfranchised citizens could not elect and be elected to village councils. The number of so called ‘non-voters’ in 1926 amounted to 5.4 percent of the adult population of the Swedish village council.¹²⁹ Thus, the Soviet government managed to reduce drastically the traditional influence of the wealthier farmers on Swedish community administration. At the same time, the poorest peasants who had no chance for a career before the 1917 revolution, were promoted to administrative positions. Cardinal changes in the social hierarchy escalated class conflicts in a once unfragmented ethnic community.

The first KNS chairperson was Andreas Annas (1901–1978) who also served as the village council auditor. He grew up in a poor family and was the first young boy in the Swedish colony to be conscripted to the Red Army. During his military service in 1922–1925 Andreas mastered the Russian language, having attended different courses of political education. Service in the Red Army was a school of socialization which made Andreas Annas into an outspoken supporter of the Soviet system:

We moved into beautiful and well-built barracks in the town of Bryansk. Everything was fine. We got a uniform, blankets and mattresses, and the food was a good: cabbage soup, potato soup, porridge with meat. During the 18 month long Red Army service I had a lot of different positions. First, I served in the infantry as a carpenter, then was responsible for the delivery to the kitchen. Then I served in the field artillery, where I had three-month artillery and one-month signaller's courses. Finally, I became the groom of the battalion commander. Our salary was 75 kopecks per month, and at all that everything – housing, clothing, tobacco, matches and underwear – were free. After the demobilization we had the right to wear the military uniform. At the end of my service I was the only Swede in the regiment. However, there was no discrimination by ethnicity at all, no matter whether you are Russian, German, Swedish, Greek or Turkish; everybody is addressed by name adding the Russian word ‘tovarich’ [comrade].¹³⁰

¹²⁸ ”Сравнительные результаты выборов в нацсельсоветы”, *Итоги работы среди национальных меньшинств на Украине. К 10-й годовщине Октябрьской революции*. Харьков. 1927, 33.

¹²⁹ ”Сравнительные результаты выборов в нацсельсоветы”, 33.

¹³⁰ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 37.

In his memoirs, Annas describes the Ukrainian–Swedish community of the 1920s through the prism of class struggle. It is significant that in the memoirs written in Sweden, the author thanks “Comrade Stalin and Russian government for permission to return to their homeland”.¹³¹ He shows his negative attitude to the activity of pastor Hoas including the group of ‘the rich’ who supported the pastor. According to Annas, the priest ignored the interests of the poor, distributing aid from Sweden only among the wealthy farmers. In protest, Andreas sent several letters of protests to Sweden, pointing out the unfair distribution of humanitarian aid in the village.¹³² Annas sincerely believed in the huge merit of Soviet power to solution of the issue of inter-ethnic relations. Describing the ordeal of Ukrainian Swedes in Sweden, sharp ethnic conflicts in Tsarist Russia, he presented the Soviet Union as a state that solved the problem of ethnic discrimination:

As a result of the revolution in Russia, the political power passed to the Soviet people, and the small nationalities got their revenge taking an equal place with the Russian and Ukrainian nations. Thus, in our area Swedes, Germans, Russians and Jews worked together in peace.¹³³

Interestingly, Andreas Annas did not follow the Swedish Communists agitation and did not return to the Soviet Union, despite the calls of villagers. “The best thing we have got in Sweden – is freedom – so Andreas Annas summarized his reasons for refusing to return to Ukraine.”¹³⁴

The Bolsheviks rightly considered young people were the main source from which to nurture a new elite. In 1921, in one of the non-residential houses in the village a *selbud* (community centre) was opened. *Selbud* was a main educational and cultural institution of interwar Soviet Ukraine in the rural area. The authorities believed that *selbud* could be a real alternative to the church. The Gammalsvenskby community centre had a reading room, a theatre hall and rooms for different circles. The cultural and educational circle had 50 members in 1924. Approximately 90 percent of the participants were young people under 30 years of age. 70 percent of the circle members were women.¹³⁵

Nevertheless, direct maintenance of *selbud* was shifted to the local budget. Taking into account the wishes of the people and fulfilling the Party's decisions, the Kherson department of people's education allows the circle members to stage plays in the Swedish language. The repertoire could

¹³¹ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 4.

¹³² Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 40–43.

¹³³ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 20–21.

¹³⁴ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 51.

¹³⁵ DAKhO, fond 413, opys 1, sprava 26, ark. 15.

hardly be called Soviet. One of the first performances of the Swedish amateur theatre was of a play based on the national romantic Swedish-Finnish author Zacharias Topelius work 'Fågel Blå'.¹³⁶ In 1925, the reading room started a subscription to the Kherson district newspaper *Chervony Selianin* (Red Peasant) and the Soviet central newspaper *Krestianskaya Gazeta* (Peasant Newspaper). In 1925, the villagers subscribed individually to 139 copies of Soviet newspapers.¹³⁷ Thanks to these subscriptions, most Swedish families were well informed about the changes in Soviet policy.

The school was the second most significant centre of the new cultural policy. Opened in 1922 on the basis of colonist school, a new 'labour school of the first grade' was assigned to the balance of the Gammalsvenskby council.¹³⁸ The prefix labour signified the purpose of replacing the classical teaching methods with the so-called 'laboratory methods', combining theoretical education and everyday labour duty. The Bolsheviks believed working together would instil collectivism and socialist moral in children of individual farmers. One of the main theorists of the new school policy Nadezhda Krupskaya, a wife of Vladimir Lenin, noted in this regard as follows:

In organization of school life productive labour of children should play a dominant, leading role. Here, of course, the most important thing is the choice of labour activity. And fetching water and chopping wood require physical effort, and collecting medicinal plants, and drawing a poster, and making arrangements for the school museum, and picking mushrooms and twigs – all this is labour ... Labour at the centre of learning in the school curriculum. Labour as an integral part of life of the school community, work as a teaching method.¹³⁹

In the 1920s the Swedish school had four teachers. All of them were natives of Gammalsvenskby who educated before the 1917 revolution. There were Kristoffer Hoas, a graduate of the Russian-German pedagogical seminary in Sarata; Petter Malmas, a graduate of the Russian pedagogical seminary; Julia Buskas, an alumnus of the Swedish gymnasium in St. Petersburg; and accountant Gustav Utas. The teachers of the labour school were to become a conduit of totalitarian ideology and the school – a workshop of Sovietisation of the younger generation. Thus, the government took strict control over the teachers. The teachers at the Swedish school became public servants – workers of the Kherson department of people's education. Kristoffer Hoas trans-

¹³⁶ DAKhO, fond 413, opys 1, sprava 392, ark. 36-42; Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1959, 169.

¹³⁷ Протоколы общих собраний Старошведского сельсовета, 1925, ark. 4, sprava 13, opys 1, fond 306. DAKhO.

¹³⁸ DAKhO, fond R-311, opys 1, sprava 31; fond R-313, opys 1, sprava 40.

¹³⁹ Крупская Н. К. *Педагогические сочинения в 10 томах*. Т. 3. Москва: Издательство Академии педагогических наук, 1959, 29–30.

lated 'The Internationale' into Swedish and it came to be performed at the start of each school day.¹⁴⁰

Teachers were called on to fix the 'defects' of the traditional religious education of Swedish farmers. The regime set out to replace politically unfit and religious teachers with educators loyal to the Soviet system. Swedish was kept as the language of instruction at school. The authorities, however, vied for changes in the content of the curriculum and in teaching methods. The insurmountable barrier to effective control remained the language of instruction. None of the inspectors of the Kherson department of people's education spoke Swedish; therefore, numerous supervisions of schools were limited to formal measures.¹⁴¹ Teachers were allowed to use textbooks sent from Sweden as a charity. However numerous images of Swedish kings and Lutheran churches raised anxiety among school inspectors. The Kherson department of people's education decided to resolve the issue by supplying the school with Soviet textbooks in Swedish. This was never fulfilled, and later permission was given to the Swedish school to use the existing textbooks with the prerequisite to scissor out all religious and royalist illustrations.¹⁴²

Over a short period of time the Soviet regime managed to change the balance of power in the social hierarchy of the Swedish community. However, in the conditions of individual farming, wealthy peasants continued to maintain economic levers of influence on the community. They owned mills, tractors and farm machinery; the poor borrowed money from the rich farmers. All that naturally caused concern with the authorities.¹⁴³

Despite all efforts, the results of Soviet policy to take up Soviet cadres among the locals were less than modest. In the second half of the 1920s the Swedish council remained the only national village council in Ukraine, where none of the residents were members of the *Komsomol*, candidates or members of the Communist Party!¹⁴⁴ The Kherson authorities had to admit that:

The Swedish colonists take no interest in socialist construction ... their children are under the influence of religious parents and on religious festivities do

¹⁴⁰ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundrad till nu*, 171.

¹⁴¹ "Попередні висновки про обстеження еміграційного руху серед шведів Старо-Шведської сільради Бериславського району Херсонської округи, 1928", Нариси з історії Бериславщини. Випуск 3. Херсон-Берислав. 2003.

¹⁴² Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundrad till nu*, 170.

¹⁴³ ДАКХО, фонд R-311, опус 1, справа 40, арк. 34.

¹⁴⁴ "Сравнительные результаты выборов в нацсельсоветы", *Итоги работы среди национальных меньшинств на Украине. К 10-й годовщине Октябрьской революции*. Харьков. 1927, 33.

not attend school. The school is kept neatly and is decorated [Soviet flags and posters] annually, but children are not involved in social work.¹⁴⁵

Moreover, the children of colonists were also sceptical of Soviet slogans. The schoolchildren of Gammalsvenskby altered the lines of the text of the Internationale and instead of the original refrain: "Stå upp! Stå upp förtryckta skara, Som trälar utan ro och rast"! – were singing a text with anti-Soviet content: "Stå upp! Stå upp förtryckta skara som rövar bondens sista häst"!¹⁴⁶

Formally accepting the slogans of cultural policy of the Soviet government, the colonists did not seek to sovietise, preserving the traditional way of life. This conflict situation was typical for the German colonists and other 'western' minorities of the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷ In fact, the community of the Kherson Swedes tried to build their relationship with the new government on the basis of Russian imperial model. The Swedish settlers were among the most loyal subjects of the Romanov Empire. In return, the state recognized the settlers' right to their own, isolated character of inner life. However, this model did not fit into the Soviet system with its' purpose of radical change not only of social order in society, but also of private life.

1.7. A new gender policy

The government of the Russian Empire had a male face; women were deprived of suffrage, and hardly ever participated in the legal political life of the country. According to the Bolshevik concept, the October revolution liberated women from the oppression of the patriarchal family and the capitalist state and opened the way for them to government posts. However, only the call for liberation did not actually work. Most of the women of the country were illiterate and largely kept to conservative and religious views. The women's issues were solved 'from above' by the totalitarian regime, without waiting for the initiative of the masses. "Every housewife has to learn to manage the state – this piece of Soviet propaganda determined the official approach to solving women's issues. The key method was educating the female population, including selecting suitable candidates for political work.

¹⁴⁵ "Акт обследования работы Старошведского сельсовета членом бюро национальных меньшинств тов. П. К. Гельбиг", 2.05.1928. DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 558, ark. 85-95.

¹⁴⁶ Arise, ye prisoners of starvation, the whole world of hungry and slaves!/ Arise, ye prisoners of starvation, one who robbed a farmer, took his last horse! Cited in: Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundrad till nu*, 170.

¹⁴⁷ See: Дёнингхаус В. *В тени Большого брата. Западные национальные меньшинства в СССР 1917–1938 гг.* Москва: РОССПЭН, 2011.

The Bolsheviks were hoping for a positive feedback of the female population of the Ukraine and massive involvement of colonist women in socialist construction.¹⁴⁸ The progressive nature of Soviet decrees was determined by the left-wing ideology of feminism. The leaders in international communism Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg, became the Soviet ideal of the new woman.

The major practitioner of Soviet gender policy was Alexandra Kollontai – her mother was Finno-Swedish, her father Ukrainian.¹⁴⁹ During the Civil War, she led the Commission of the Communist Party of Ukraine for agitation and propaganda among women. Later she headed the political department of Zadneprovski division of the Red Army operating in the area of the Swedish colony. In 1919, on the recommendation of Lenin, Kollontai was appointed Commissar of agitation and propaganda of the Ukrainian SSR. In 1923 she became the first female Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in history, representing the Soviet Union in Norway and later in Sweden. The image of Kollontai, the first woman in the world to become a government minister, was largely used by the Soviet propaganda to show the achievements of gender policy.

In 1919–1934, the departments for work among women were part of central and local committees of the Bolshevik Party. Known in Ukrainian as *Viddil robotnits i selianok* (Department of female workers and farmers) or *Zhenotdel* in Russian, the women's department was a main governmental body for emancipation of women. The first sign of emancipation, in the party's opinion, was mass participation of women in the government.¹⁵⁰ Thus in 1925, for the first time in history of Gammalsvenskby two women were elected to the village council.¹⁵¹ In 1926–1927 women already constituted 11.1 percent (3 persons) of the Swedish national village council, which was a higher than average index of village administration members in Ukraine.¹⁵²

The local women's department was headed by Klara Newronis, the teacher of the German school of Zmiivka, a member of KP(b)U and former

¹⁴⁸ Журженко Т. Ю. *Социальное воспроизводство и гендерная политика в Украине*. Харьков, 2001, 81.

¹⁴⁹ Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952) was half-Swedish, half-Ukrainian by origin. Her mother Alexandra Massalin was a Swede from Finland, see: Björkegren, Hans, *Ryska posten: de ryska revolutionärerna i Norden 1906-1917*, Stockholm: Bonnier, 1985, 113; her father Mikhail Domontovich was a Ukrainian Cossack nobleman and a general of the Russian imperial army.

¹⁵⁰ Юкина И. И. "Феминизм в СССР", *Гендер как инструмент познания и преобразования общества. Материалы международной конференции*. Москва, 2006, 154–162.

¹⁵¹ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 19.

¹⁵² "Сравнительные результаты выборов в нацсельсоветы", *Итоги работы среди национальных меньшинств на Украине. К 10-й годовщине Октябрьской революции*. Харьков. 1927.

fighter of the division of the Latvian Red Riflemen. It was Klara Newronis who for several years had been responsible for the policy of emancipation in Gammalsvenskby. However, her liberal lifestyle and radical views on sex and marriage repelled patriarchal and religious Swedish women.¹⁵³

On May 24, 1925 the first conference of women of German and Swedish nationality of the Gammalsvenskby village council was held. The Swedish colony at the conference was represented by three deputies, Lydia Utas, Carolina Knutas and Efelina Tinis. There were three principal questions on the agenda:

- Our internal and external situation;
- Involvement of countrywomen in the socialist construction;
- Socialist movement and children's movement and participation of a mother in it.

A report on the first and second issues was made in German by an employee of the guberniya women's department Comrade Bergner. She noted critically that "our women are lagging behind the Russian women [sic!]. Women in the West won their rights, their influence on social life. Our women are 65 percent passive".¹⁵⁴ Bergner concluded that finally the party turned its face to the villagers, and from now women should take the most active part in social work. In response, the 18-year old Swedish girl Efelina Tinis took the floor and said: "We need to give our children knowledge, to pull them out of the darkness of ignorance and to give more support to our school".¹⁵⁵ As we see avoiding the debate on the status of women, the representative of Swedish women focused on the non-controversial school education issue.

Another representative of women's movement in Gammalsvenskby Lydia Utas (born 1906) was actually the only girl in the colony who accepted communist ideas and become an active builder of a new life. Being in Sweden, she offered the Communist Party of Sweden to render a voluntary assistance in propaganda among female newcomers from Ukraine.¹⁵⁶ On returning to the Soviet Union, she joined the Komsomol and occupied the prestigious post of the head of the Swedish kolkhoz dairy farm. Nevertheless, the gen-

¹⁵³ Malm, Gösta, *Svenskbyborna: en redogörelse*, Stockholm, Seelig, 1939, 45.

¹⁵⁴ "Протокол конференции женщин немецкой и шведской национальности Старошведского сельсовета, 24.05.1925", DAOO (State Archive of Odesa Oblast), fond P-1, Одесский губернский комитет, орус 1, sprava 1558, ark. 78-79.

¹⁵⁵ "Протокол конференции женщин немецкой и шведской национальности Старошведского сельсовета, 24.05.1925", ark. 79.

¹⁵⁶ Arbetarrörelsens arkiv (ARAB). Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna. Protokoll politbyrå 1927-1931. Volym A 3:1. RE 5/1.

eral results of the Soviet policy of emancipation of Gammalsvenskby women were not very impressive.

The Soviet regime had nothing to offer the Ukrainian-Swedish women, except representation in local administration and propagandist meetings. For example, on March 8 1928, a solemn meeting for women dedicated to the International Day of Women – Workers and Peasants was held. In the course of the meeting the women of Gammalsvenskby once again made a promise to be actively involved in all aspects of building of socialism.¹⁵⁷ The inspection of Gammalsvenskby by the inspectors of the central Ukrainian government stated absence of real work among women and pointed out that women's movement was exclusively restricted to formal meetings.¹⁵⁸

A powerful alternative to the Soviet gender policy was the Swedish mission of *Kvinnliga Missions Arbetare* (Female Missionary Workers, KMA) which acted in Gammalsvenskby in 1895–1929. At the initiative of KMA's representative and priest's wife Emma Hoas (nee Skarstedt), a kindergarten was opened and handicraft circles for young girls started in Gammalsvenskby.¹⁵⁹ In 1922, the Swedish Red Cross opened a medical clinic for twenty patients in the village, where Dr Johann Tauberger and Paramedic Ivan Surov worked together with the nurse Emma Hoas.

The aid of Sweden made the Soviet slogans on protection of motherhood and childhood irrelevant. The goals proclaimed by the Bolsheviks were put into effect in the Swedish colony by the representatives of Sweden, which radically undermined the efforts of the Soviet authorities to introduce to the public consciousness the idea of 'the progressive gains of the Great October Revolution'.

¹⁵⁷ "Протокол заседания старошведского сельсовета". No. 9, 8.03.1928, sprava 31, opys 1, fond R-311. DAKhO.

¹⁵⁸ "Попередні висновки про обстеження еміграційного руху серед шведів Старо-Шведської сільради Бериславського району Херсонської округи, 1928", *Нариси з історії Берислащини*. Випуск 3. Херсон-Берислав. 2003.

¹⁵⁹ Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, "Formering till modernitet: Gammalsvenskby genom finländska och rikssvenska ögon 1836-1904", *Historisk tidskrift för Finland*, 2010, (95): 2, 262-266.

1.8. A new religious standard

Svensk jag föddes, svensk jag är,
Som en svensk jag tänker.
Och det bästa, Gud beskär,
Sveriges land jag skänker.
Jag den jord, mig livet gav
Älska vill intill min grav.

Kristofer Hoas “Jag är svensk!” (I am a Swede!), Gammalsvenskby 1912.

The history of the Gammalsvenskby parish had a happy start. In 1783, by order of the governor Grigory Potemkin, the Finno–Swedish pastor Johan Adolf Europeus with his family arrived at the colony.¹⁶⁰ In 1787, at the expense of Potemkin’s donations the first Lutheran church in New Russia was built in the Swedish colony. However, upon the expiration of the five-year office Europeus left the colony, and the Swedish parish was left for decades without a pastor. Nevertheless, the Swedish church continued to be the centre of spiritual life of the colonists. Services were held in Swedish with religious books printed in Sweden. Swedish children were taught at the parish school in Swedish. From 1787 to 1839, the permanent preacher and teacher of the school was the colonist Mats Magnusson.

In 1795 the population of the Swedish colony was reduced with up to 140 people due to starvation and disease. The demographic crisis led to colonies of German immigrants being based on the territory of the Swedish colony in 1804–1806. After 55 years of complete isolation the Old Swedes came into contact with their fellows in *Norden*. In 1836 the central Swedish-language newspaper of Finland *Helsingfors Tidningar* published ‘Excerpts from a letter to the editor written from the town of Kherson’ written by the local chemist and Finnish Swede Anton Isaac Newman:

Not far from Beryslav there is the so-called Swedish colony, which consists of 40 families, or 208 adults, not counting children. They welcomed me warmly and friendly and told me with bitterness in voice, that the Germans were our neighbours, and it was the Russians, who had settled them by force on our land. Older people came from Finland [sic!] and the others were born here, but preserved the language and customs of their ancestors so well that you would have thought that all this was happening in Finland. They are distinguished by an unusual piety, but, unfortunately, they do not have a priest.

¹⁶⁰ Johan Adolf Europaeus (1748–1802) was born in the Karelian village Parikkala, which 1721–1917 belonged to Russia. He studied theology in Sweden, at *Åbo Akademi*. After the studies he returned to Russia. In 1777–1783 Europaeus was a field pastor of the Russian imperial army in Novorossiia.

In the village there is a small ancient church, where every Sunday and on all festivities the divine service takes place led by one old man. I invited three men and two women from the colony to my home to the divine service in Swedish in which they participated with deep enthusiasm and with tears in their eyes. They knew the melody and texts of old and new psalms, and their manner of performance was exactly as we hear today in Finland. They pleaded to help them to engage a pastor.¹⁶¹

In one of the first descriptions of the colony a number of the features, which will be decisive for the history of Gammalsvenskby were mentioned. First, we note the religiousness of the inhabitants and their desire to preserve the Swedish language and religious rites. Secondly, the conflict with the Germans forced the colonists to seek protection of the Nordic countries. Initially the place of the newfound homeland was the Grand Duchy of Finland. Only at the end of the nineteenth century as a result of close contact and significant financial assistance the role of the historical homeland shifts to Sweden. For Swedish intellectuals the colony in the east became ‘the lost tribe’, a patriarchal paradise – a tiny island of native Swedish culture that was unspoiled by modernization and capitalism. Swedish travellers were amazed that Ukrainian Swedes had not lost the medieval skills of writing in runes and that they used the early modern books of the times of Sweden’s Greatness.¹⁶² However, the things that in the era of romanticism were viewed as an advantage in the era of nationalism came to be seen as a deviation which needed correction. A long isolation led to serious differences in liturgical practice of the Kherson Swedes and the Swedish church.¹⁶³ The divine service of the Kherson Swedes was based on the 1695 edition of *Karolinska Psalmboken* (book of psalms). Metropolitan Sweden as long ago as in 1819, moved to a new book of psalms, *Wallinska Psalmboken*. This book of psalms never become widespread in the Swedish-language Lutheran parishes of the Russian Empire, nor in Finland, Estonia nor Ukraine. For worshipping and teaching children to read the Old Swedes used the so-called *Karl XII-s bible*, the early modern edition of the Bible published during the reign of

¹⁶¹ ”Utdrag ur ett bref till Redaktionen, daterat staden Cherson d. 3/15 dec. 1836”, *Helsingfors Tidningar*, no. 9, den 1 februari 1837, 2-3.

¹⁶² Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, “Tradition and the past: The Swedes of Alt-Schwedendorf 1782-1852”, *Voprosy germanskoi istorii*, Dnepropetrovsk, 2007, 12-19; Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, ”En resande i svenskhet. Herman Vendell i Gammalsvenskby 1881”, *Personhistorisk tidskrift*, 2009:2, 149-164; Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, “Formering till modernitet: Gammalsvenskby genom finländska och rikssvenska ögon 1836-1904”, *Historisk tidskrift för Finland*, 2010, (95): 2, 249-267; Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, “Resedagbok och fosterländsk mobilisering. Herman Vendells resa till Gammalsvenskby och Nargö 1881”, *Historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier*, 2010:85, 91-106; Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, ”The making of Gammalsvenskby 1881–1914: identity, myth and imagination”, *The Lost Swedish Tribe*, 89-110.

¹⁶³ Wawrzeniuk, Piotr, “Tradition and the past: The Swedes of Alt-Schwedendorf 1782-1852”, 17.

Karl XII. However, in 1917 this official edition of the Bible owing to the archaic language was replaced in Sweden with a new text, the so-called *1917 års kyrkobibel*.

In 1832–1922 the Gammalsvenskby parish was administrated by St. Petersburg Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church that was actually a German Lutheran church in Russia. In 1860 an independent Lutheran parish of Altschwedendorf was created. It covered the population of Gammalsvenskby, the two neighbouring German villages, the Swiss colony of Osnova, the German settlements of Dornburg and Askaniya Nova. New parish borders resulted in a significant predominance of a German population among the believers.¹⁶⁴ The patron of the Altschwedendorf parish was the richest landowner of Kherson guberniya Friedrich von Falz–Fein (1863–1920) – the founder of Askaniya Nova, the first biosphere reserve in Europe. The personal friend of Emperor Nicholas II and powerful aristocrat Friedrich von Falz–Fein was of German descent. Therefore most pastors of the parish were also of German origin.¹⁶⁵ The attempts of various pastors from Sweden who visited Gammalsvenskby to in order to introduce the modern Swedish religious books of rite in the beginning of the twentieth century, failed to succeed.¹⁶⁶

The centre of the parish, despite its name, was the church of the German colony of Schlangendorf. The dominance of German priests in church life led to the dominance of the German language in the Swedish church of Gammalsvenskby and approval of the rites of German church. The Swedes perceived it as a threat to their national identity and it was a cause of conflict with the neighbours – Germans.¹⁶⁷ In 1885, at the expense of donations from the Swedes in Sweden, in the Grand Duchy of Finland and in Northern America a team of Ukrainian builders led by Semion Sokolan built a stone Swedish Lutheran church. The steeple of the new church was a half metre higher than the German Lutheran Church of Schlangendorf. With the construction of their own temple the religious conflict with local Germans and their priests reached its climax. Swedes boycotted German divine services, refused confirmation of children by the German pastors.¹⁶⁸ Wealthy colonists preferred to send their children for secondary education in the Swedish gym-

¹⁶⁴ Князева Е. Е. *Лютеранские церкви и приходы на Украине XVIII–XX вв.* Исторический справочник. Часть II. Санкт-Петербург, 2003, 282–283.

¹⁶⁵ Князева Е. Е. *Лютеранские церкви и приходы на Украине XVIII–XX вв.* Исторический справочник. Часть II. Санкт-Петербург, 2003, 282–283; "Förteckning över präster som tjänstgjort i byn", in: Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 184.

¹⁶⁶ Isberg, Alvin, *Svensk lutherdom i österled: relationer till ryska och baltiska diasporaför-samlingar och minoritetskyrkor 1883-1941*, Univ., Uppsala, 1982, 22-23.

¹⁶⁷ Wawzeniuk, Piotr, "Resedagbok och fosterländsk mobilisering. Herman Vendells resa till Gammalsvenskby och Nargö 1881", 96-97.

¹⁶⁸ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 7.

nasium of St. Petersburg, ignoring the German schools in the neighbouring area.¹⁶⁹ In their turn, the German pastors of the parish were often forbidden to hold divine services by Swedish and Finno-Swedish priests who came to the colony.¹⁷⁰ In 1905 Gammalsvenskby church council applied for the Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia in St. Petersburg to be transferred the parish house from the German church to Gammalsvenskby, but were rejected. Another attempt made by the Archbishop of Sweden Johan August Ekman to separate the parsonage into German and Swedish parishes did not succeed either.¹⁷¹ The existence in one parish of the two impressive stone temples was not taken into account; and the stand of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Leningrad remained unchanged: the Gammalsvenskby parsonage was a joint German–Swedish parish.

After the 1917 revolution the Gammalsvenskby parish, as part of the Odessa district of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia, experienced difficult times. The church building was nationalized and then given by the Soviet state for free use by the religious community. Thus the temple ceased to belong to the Evangelical Lutheran parish. The Soviet government also nationalized the building of the Swedish school, built in 1913 with donations collected in Sweden.¹⁷² In 1921, religious education in the Gammalsvenskby School was forbidden. The pupils had to cut all the illustrations related to religion from the textbooks.¹⁷³

The Bible chairs were substituted by antireligious propaganda. The latter became the responsibility of local teachers. Primitive forms of Soviet propaganda led to conflicts between parents and teachers. For example, the teacher offered the children to pray that God would send a package of caramels, and then came the conclusion: “You see, there are no caramels, and then there is no God”.¹⁷⁴ The teachers who were believers faced a dilemma: to disobey the authority or to lose a job. In 1927, for secreting going to church the teacher Julia Buskas was fired.¹⁷⁵

The Bolsheviks tried to create competition with the traditional Lutheran calculus in the form of a new, ‘revolutionary’ calendar. The principal anniversary dates of the Soviet calendar became February 23 – *Red Army Day*; March 8 – *International Day of Women – Workers and Peasants*; May 1 – *International Day of Workers* and November 7 – *Anniversary of the October*

¹⁶⁹ Jangfeldt, Bengt, *Svenska vägar till S:t Petersburg: kapitel ur historien om svenskarna vid Nevans stränder*, Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1998, 252.

¹⁷⁰ Källgren, Carl, ”Upplysningen om Gammel-Svenskby”, *Ord och Bild*. 1898. Sjunde årgången, 18-24.

¹⁷¹ Isberg, Alvin, *Svensk lutherdom i österled*, 10-31; ”Gammalsvenskby”, *Nordisk familjebok*, vol. 35. Stockholm. 1923, 1211-1212.

¹⁷² Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 156-157.

¹⁷³ Hoas, Kristoffer, ”Skolförhållandena i Ukraina”, *Svensk Läraretidning*, 1930:1, 16.

¹⁷⁴ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 171.

¹⁷⁵ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 177.

Revolution; and July 6 – *Day of Soviet Constitution*. On the main Soviet holidays adult villagers were obliged to assemble in the village council building for the grand general meeting. The meetings were normally held under the scenario developed by the authorities. The village council premise was decorated with Communist symbols, banners and posters on the theme of the day. At the beginning of the meeting a lecturer acquainted the colonists with the meaning of the new holiday, then the greeting telegram was read, after which on behalf of the village council the reciprocal obligation before the State was taken. The Soviet ritual did not cause any particular enthusiasm with the Swedish farmers, and the shorthand reports of the sittings reflect minimal interest of the population in this form of social life. For example, at the meeting of February 23, 1928 in honour of the 10th anniversary of the Red Army a telegram from the 115 Infantry Regiment was read to the colonists. After that a single word ‘approved’ ended the meeting. On July 6, 1928 at the ceremonial meeting on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the Soviet Constitution was held. After the report the Swedish colonists, most probably having confused this holiday with May 1st, expressed “solidarity with the international proletariat” and undertook a commitment to “cope with seeding of the autumn gore”.¹⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the new calendar became a sore point in relations between the authorities and the Old Swedes. According to the curriculum, the Soviet school worked on Sundays, mainly in order to prevent the involvement of children in the church service.¹⁷⁷ School holidays were timed to the holiday dates of the Soviet calendar and did not coincide with the major Christian feasts. Thus, the power went to fundamental change of the course of life of Swedish colonists. May 1st the villagers celebrated the foundation of the colony in 1782. Traditionally on this day, the entire population of the colony came out with a church procession to the steppe, where religious services in the open air were celebrated. However, according to the 1918 Soviet decree ‘On the separation of church from state and school from church’, celebration of religious rites in the open air could be allowed only with written permission from the local authorities. In the end, a compromise was reached, and right down to emigration to Sweden each year on 1st of May the residents of the colony came out into the field to celebrate the anniversary of the colony. However, the festive divine service was restricted to a modest performance of spiritual psalms.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ “Протоколы заседаний старошведского сельсовета”, 1928, справа 31, 40, опys 1, фонд R-311. DAKhO.

¹⁷⁷ Солончук Е. А. “Раскулачивание в немецких районах Одесского округа: зима–весна 1930 г. (по материалам спецсводок окружного ГПУ в партийные органы)”, *Немцы Одессы и Одесского региона*. Одесса, 2003, 225.

¹⁷⁸ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 11.

In 1922, the Episcopal Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia decided to recognize the Soviet government. Being in a difficult financial position, the German bishops of Russia asked the Swedish church for help.¹⁷⁹ The help was rendered which increased the chances to solve the question of an independent Swedish parish in the Soviet Union. On September 15, 1922 Archbishop of the Church of Sweden Nathan Söderblom laid hands on Kristoffer Hoas in the Cathedral of Uppsala.¹⁸⁰ For Hoas as an individual who had not received a theological education, an exception from the canonical rule was made. The new pastor of the Swedish Church was intended “to serve in Gammalsvenskby and Southern Russia”.¹⁸¹ Kristoffer Hoas (1877–1941) was a leader of the community of the Kherson Swedes, the author of patriotic poems and of the anthem of the colony. One of the most educated people of the community, a graduate of the Russian–German seminary in Sarata; he had worked as a teacher of the Swedish language, history and geography for 33 years. He visited Sweden several times, had good contacts with many Swedish organizations and was the chief designer of modern national identity of the Ukrainian Swedes. The main task of the new pastor was to integrate the church of Gammalsvenskby into the Swedish church. Introduction of a new religious standard was dictated by several factors:

- unification of local rituals with rituals of the Swedish Church
- creation of a separate Swedish parish and the removal from the church rites of numerous German elements
- achievement of a compromise between the administration and the parish.

At the end of 1922, upon ordination Hoas was suspended from teaching. However the Soviet decision had little impact on the authority of the pastor. Hoas represented in Ukraine such influential international organizations as the Swedish Red Cross and *Riksföreningen för svenskhetens bevarande i utlandet* (National Society for the Preserving of Swedish Identity Abroad). The pastor was an intermediary of distribution of all the humanitarian and financial aid coming from Sweden.¹⁸² His wife, a Swedish citizen Emma Hoas (nee Skarstedt, 1869–1952) had worked as a missionary in Gammals-

¹⁷⁹ Kahle, Wilhelm, *Geschichte der lutherischen evangelischen Gemeinden in der Sowjetunion, 1917-1938*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974, 247-251.

¹⁸⁰ Nathan Söderblom (1866–1931) – Archbishop of the Church of Sweden. One of the founders of the Universal Ecumenical movement (“Life and Work movement”). In 1930 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

¹⁸¹ “Gammalsvenskby”, *Nordisk familjebok*, vol. 35. Stockholm. 1923, 1211-1212.

¹⁸² Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*. 1938, Utrikesdepartementet 1920 års dossiersystem, P 1534, f. 17, 12-48. NAS.

venskby for over 30 years as an employee of KMA. In 1900 by her initiative, the first kindergarten in a rural are in Ukraine was opened. Emma Hoas served as a deaconess, a nurse, taught labour and handicrafts. She made a great contribution to the development of the countryside and enjoyed unquestioned authority among the villagers.¹⁸³

A precedent of ordination of a Soviet citizen created by the Swedish church caused a sharp conflict between the new pastor and the legitimate minister of Gammalsvenskby parish a German priest Woldemar Schlupp (1876–1973). Schlupp in his appeal to Arthur Malmgren, the General Superintendent of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia, stressed that Sweden had no canonical authority to open its parish in the territory of the Soviet Union and that the new pastor had not received a proper theological education. The ordination of Hoas was recognized invalid.¹⁸⁴ However, after Hoas' written appeal to Nathan Söderblom the conflict was settled. The representative of the Swedish Red Cross in Russia John Tuneld addressed Malmgren with a personal request to recognize the jurisdiction of the Swedish church over the parish in Ukraine.¹⁸⁵ Being in a bad need the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Leningrad changed its original decision and recognized ordination of Hoas. Schlupp finished his office in Gammalsvenskby and left for the German colony of Ludwigstal and later moved to Germany.¹⁸⁶

Soviet authorities were well aware of the religious conflict between the Swedes and the German Lutherans and first considered the Swedes as extremely religious sectarians.¹⁸⁷ However, after monitoring the situation the authorities unexpectedly decided to support the Swedish church. On May 5, 1923, Gammalsvenskby Church Council appealed to the Kherson district executive committee for religious affairs requesting registration of a separate parish. In the petition, signed by twenty members of the church council, it was emphasized that:

The population of the Gammalsvenskby colony are all Swedes without exception, and therefore does not understand the German language, which is why

¹⁸³ Wawrzeński, Piotr, "Formering till modernitet: Gammalsvenskby genom finländska och rikssvenska ögon 1836-1904", 262-266.

¹⁸⁴ Kahle, *Geschichte der lutherischen evangelischen Gemeinden in der Sowjet-union, 1917-1938*, 247-251.

¹⁸⁵ About John Tuneld and his activity in the Soviet Union see: Jangfeldt, Bengt, "John Tuneld och svenska kyrkan i Petersburg: en studie i filantropisk och industriell aktivism", *Det evigt mänskliga*, Anders Björnsson (ed.), Stockholm, 1996, 141-170.

¹⁸⁶ Isberg, Alvin, *Svensk lutherdom i österled*, 51-54; Kahle, *Geschichte der lutherischen evangelischen Gemeinden in der Sowjet-union*, 247-251.

¹⁸⁷ DAKhO, fond 306, opys 1, sprava 13, ark. 124.

we want to form a congregation which is independent from the German, with Swedish liturgical language.¹⁸⁸

In fact, six Ukrainian families, Krakovsky and Ryabov and a number of mixed Swedish– German families lived in the village. And, most importantly, the adult population of the Swedish colony understood German well. The petition was met, and on 26 May 1923 the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran parish of St. John was registered, however with one small exception: the GPU did not approve the candidacy of Jacob Hoas to a position of a churchwarden as “a politically unreliable person”.¹⁸⁹

Thus, the problem which had not been solved in the Russian Empire was solved by the Soviet regime. Decisive in the positive solution was the fact that the Soviet legislation provided the members of the religious community the right to decide independently what parish to belong to. However, there was another reason. Thus, the Ukrainian villagers of Gammalsvenskby were rejected registration of the Orthodox parish; the Kherson synagogue was closed and converted into a cinema theatre.¹⁹⁰ Meeting the needs of the Old Swedes, the government followed the *divide et impera* principle. Division of the parish into Swedish and German could cause escalation of internal conflict. In this way, the authorities expected the overall weakening of the position of the Lutheran Church. As a church minister Kristoffer Hoas was disenfranchised, lost the right to the allotment and food cards. He had no right to leave the Kherson district without special permission of police. However, the discrimination of the priest had little impact on his financial standing and social status. As pastor of the Swedish Church, Hoas received a very good annual salary of 3000 rubles.¹⁹¹

On September 18, 1923 the Gammalsvenskby village council adopted a resolution to evict pastor Hoas and his family from the parish house on the grounds that the same building housed the school. However, the initiative of the local administration came to nothing. On January 5, 1924 the village council received a secret circular of the secret police GPU of with the claim to denounce the prior–adopted resolution. Security reported that “the information on eviction of the pastor reached Sweden,” and the Soviet ambassador in Stockholm Valerian Dovgalevsky testifies concern that “this fact can be overblown by the Swedish press, not in our favour”.¹⁹² As it can be seen,

¹⁸⁸ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 1377, ark. 104.

¹⁸⁹ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 1362, ark. 1.

¹⁹⁰ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 6, sprava 39; Sarwe, Wilhelm, *Bland Rysslands folk: i missionens och Röda korsets tjänst 1882-1922, del. 3, Gammalsvenskby*, Stockholm, Svenska Missionsförbundet, 1929, 250.

¹⁹¹ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundrad till nu*, 173; Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 156. The teacher annual salary at that time was about 300 rubles.

¹⁹² Гейко, Сергей, “Факт может быть раздут”, *Гривна-СВ* (Hryvna-SV), July 20, 2007.

the factor of foreign policy played a crucial role in the conflict of the Swedish pastor and local authorities.

The defeat of the village council administration definitely strengthened the authority of the priest with the local population. The Odessa bureau of TsKNM stated that:

The impact of the pastor with the villagers of Gammalsvenskby is massive ... The colonists take no interest in socialist construction ... youth are fully under religious influence of their parents and priest.¹⁹³

In 1929, the Kherson district in their report to the republican government acknowledged that they failed “to acuminate class relations between the Swedes since the pastor wields influence and settles all disputes”.¹⁹⁴ Using his strong social position and public authority Kristoffer Hoas gets down to radical church reform to unify the local sacramental tradition with modern Swedish canon. Instead of German rite he introduced Swedish divine service, confirmation, wedding and burial procedure, all according to the norms of *svensk kyrkoordning* (Swedish canonical law). He began to serve in the temple in bright Swedish *mässshake* (chasuble). Prior the priests had been dressed in traditional German black chasubles (*talar*) and Geneva bands (*beffchen*). Early modern liturgical books were disused. They were replaced by the Swedish 1917 edition of the Bible and the book of Psalms in the 1819 edition. Most parishioners supported the reform. However few mixed Swedish–German families came under the jurisdiction of the German parish. Innovations caused some believers to protest. They found, for example, in new priest vestments ‘pure Catholicism’.¹⁹⁵

In 1926 Pastor Hoas consecrated a new house of worship in Nysvenskby. Jacob Hoas, who had previously failed to go through facings of secret police, was finally appointed churchwarden. Gustav Hoas was appointed organist of the new house of prayers.¹⁹⁶ Thus, the problems which the parish had been facing for a century were solved under the Soviet governance. Paradoxically, but under the control of the theomachy regime, Kristoffer Hoas not only founded an independent Swedish parish, but also expanded its administrative boundaries. The key reason for the success of reforms was that the measures taken by the pastor to modernize the Lutheran rites, were in line with the

¹⁹³ “Акт обследования работы Старошведского сельсовета членом бюро национальных меньшинств тов. П. К. Гельбиг”, 2.05.1928. DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 558, ark. 85-95.

¹⁹⁴ “Информация Херсонского окрисполкома управлению делами ЧК УССР, 16.02.1929”, DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 109, ark. 21.

¹⁹⁵ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 172-174.

¹⁹⁶ Annér, Wilhelm, *Hört och sett i Sovjet-Ryssland*, 163-166.

Bolsheviks' hope to establish new churches loyal to the Soviet system inside the old confessional systems. During that period with the tacit support of the GPU the so-called *obnovlentsy* (believers of the 'renovated' Orthodox Church) was formed within the Orthodoxy which was loyal to the Soviet system.¹⁹⁷ The established of the new church caused harsh conflicts between old 'tsarist' and new 'pro-Soviet' Orthodox denomination. The same strategy was applied by the GPU for the German and Swedish Lutheran parishes of Gammalsvenskby.¹⁹⁸

1.9. A mass exodus to Sweden in 1929 and the strategy of collective resistance

The indigenization program was one of one of many striking Soviet campaigns. Poor results were camouflaged with impressive statistics, such as 100 percent coverage of the Swedish population of Ukraine with native administration and education. After only five years upon the start of the campaign the Ukrainian communists were already reporting to Moscow on the final solution of the issue of inter-ethnic relations. However, it did not comply with reality. The Kherson district government in a secret dispatch to the government of Ukraine reported that there was no actual progress in socialist construction in the Swedish colony.¹⁹⁹ The Soviet slogans were not appealing to the colonists since a humanitarian aid was regularly sent to Gammalsvenskby from Sweden. That gave the colonists relative independence and enabled them to resist to Sovietisation. In 1926–1928 alone the colony received food aid from various Swedish organizations in the equivalent of 14,602 rubles, a good deal of money.²⁰⁰ On the Red Cross and KMA money the community could run an ambulant clinic and a kindergarten. When the local authorities demanded that the Swedish Lutheran parish pay 3000 rubles for the church in rent annually, the required amount was paid by a philanthropist, a Finland-Swede Olof Johansson.²⁰¹ When in 1927 due to lack of funds the local administration had to close the school in the village of Nysvenskby,

¹⁹⁷ Шкаровский М. В. "Обновленческое движение в Русской Православной Церкви XX века", *Церковная история XX века и обновленческая смута*. Москва: Индрик, 2000, 5-50.

¹⁹⁸ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 1377, ark. 132-142.

¹⁹⁹ Коник Ю. О. "Реєміграція шведського населення Херсонського округу в 1929 р. За документами державного архіву Херсонської області", *Південний архів. Історичні науки*. Вип. 9. Херсон, 2002, 61.

²⁰⁰ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 159.

²⁰¹ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 180.

it was Sweden stepped in to help again. The *Riksföreningen för svenskhetens bevarande i utlandet* offered to pay a teacher's salary from its funds, and Kherson did not object.²⁰² As a result, the local authorities got used to solving all the problems of the colony at the expense of Sweden. When due to the crop failure of 1927 the Old Swedes asked about tax cuts, an unknown member of district administration rejected with the following argument: "You wanted autonomy? Yes, you did. Now, comply with demands or get the hell out".²⁰³ Too late the authorities realized their mistake, acknowledging that the aid from Sweden in the eyes of the colonists created an impression that, only Sweden cares about them.

The second important factor was the formation in 1926 of the national Swedish village council. Here, the Bolsheviks shoot at their foot: enabling the colonists to have their own administration and to separate from the German contributed to further ethnic consolidation and mobilization of the Swedish community. The official status of the Swedish council empowered the colonists to set up claims not on behalf of a society but on behalf of the local Soviet administration. Collective petitions to the government were discussed at general meetings of the village council and registered as local authority's official acts. Before the trip to Moscow the deputies of the community Kristoffer Hoas and Johan Buskas received from the village council a letter of attorney which notably stated that "Under the protocol 15 on June 30, 1928 Swedish village council authorizes Kristoffer Hoas and Johan Buskas to represent the interest of Gammalsvenskby and negotiate the case of voluntary emigration with all the responsible institutions".²⁰⁴

The 1927 bad harvest led to the economic crisis. In the spring of 1928 drought destroyed crops again, and the colonists were anxious of the coming hunger which could be equal to that of 1922. All that took place against the background of rising taxes. A strict tax inspector of Beryslav district Comrade Zubinsky became the talk of the town among the colonists.²⁰⁵ In the spring of 1928 to survey the situation the colony was visited by O. Ohlson, a representative of the Swedish Embassy in Moscow. The envoy was believed to be campaigning in favour of immigration.²⁰⁶ In fact, Ohlson in his report stood against the emigration of colonists to Sweden and proposed one-time food aid to villagers.²⁰⁷ The immigration initiative came from the colonists. Moreover, they began to turn to Soviet institutions with immigration issues

²⁰² Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 181.

²⁰³ Sarwe, Wilhelm, *Bland Rysslands folk: i missionens och Röda korsets tjänst 1882-1922*, 263.

²⁰⁴ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*, 48-49.

²⁰⁵ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*, 40.

²⁰⁶ Коник Ю. О. "Реєміграція шведського населення Херсонського округу в 1929 р. ", 60.

²⁰⁷ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 178-179.

having no official consent from Sweden. To the question of the relevant authority: “Do you have any official document from Sweden?” the colonists naively replied: “There is no written consent, but what Mother would not open her arms to her children”.²⁰⁸

On June 30, 1928 at a general meeting of the Swedish village council the first collective emigration appeal to the government of Ukraine was made. On July 13, 1928, the three deputies Johan Buskas, Gustav Hoas and Andreas Sigalet handed in the text of the appeal in Kharkiv. The document was signed by 492 residents, virtually the entire adult population. A lawyer's office in Beryslav helped the colonists with preparing a competent application.²⁰⁹ Imperfection of Soviet nationalities policy was chosen as the main reason for immigration to Sweden:

We recall that the Gammalsvenskby is the only Swedish settlement in the Soviet Union. Recently, we have come to realize that our children cannot get the desired education in their native language. At first glance, the Soviet government gave the minorities the same rights all citizens enjoy. However, we must admit that this is not so. We have not received textbooks in our language. There are no competent teachers to work with senior students, alumnus of our Swedish school. Admitting the overall good attitude of the Ukrainian republic to minorities, we nevertheless have, to find a way out of the situation at hand. Therefore, on behalf of 240 Swedish families we are asking for a permission to leave Ukraine for our native country, Sweden. We are hoping for a free issuance of passports and fair assessment of the households.²¹⁰

The Ukrainian leadership panicked. Not individuals but the whole village on behalf of its' council's decision, including the poorest peasants were going to leave the country. It was an open declaration of fiasco of the Soviet class approach. In the case of emigration, Ukraine would lose its entire Swedish minority. Moreover, it was the nationalities policy – the pride of the Ukrainian Bolsheviks – that became the target of the colonists' criticism. On July 26, 1928, two weeks after the appeal had been passed; the Kherson district authorities received an order of the deputy head of the Ukrainian government Oleksandr Serbichenko.²¹¹ The Ukrainian government categorically opposed the emigration of the Gammalsvenskby residents and enacted the local au-

²⁰⁸ Sarwe, Wilhelm, *Bland Rysslands folk: i missionens och Röda korsets tjänst 1882-1922*, 261.

²⁰⁹ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*, 42.

²¹⁰ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 184.

²¹¹ Oleksandr Serbichenko (1890–1938) – Ukrainian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1907. Deputy Head of the Ukrainian government. He was arrested during the Great terror and executed January 14, 1938. Rehabilitated.

thorities “to urgently take all necessary measures to eliminate the tense situation in the Swedish colonies”.²¹²

In the summer of 1928, several groups of propagandists arrived at the colony. At first the propaganda was carried out by German communists, Alfred Eichorst and Klara Newronis, the residents of neighbouring villages. Then the task of counter-emigration propaganda was carried out by Swedes Paul Söderman, Erik Karlsson and Anders Gustafsson, students of Comintern schools in Moscow.²¹³ Their campaign also gave zero results. Moreover, in private conversations, Anders Gustafsson confirmed that “in Sweden, without a doubt, you will have a better life than here in Russia [sic!], but please, tell no one about it”.²¹⁴ The member of the Kherson executive committee Comrade Bezborodko had been agitating in the colony for almost a year. He supposedly managed to talk nine families out of immigrating to Sweden. They were of mixed Ukrainian-Swedish descent, Krakovsky and Ryabov, which were defined by Bezborodko as “Russian families, who has been living among Swedes since the date of their arrival in Russia [sic!]”.²¹⁵

In July 1928 the colony was visited by the central government delegation led by the head of the secret political department of GPU in Ukraine Ivan Slin’ko.²¹⁶ He urged the colonists that Sweden would not give their children a decent education and encouraged them to stay at home: “How can you leave for a capitalist country now when Ukraine has become free?”²¹⁷ At a separate meeting with the poor farmers Slin’ko tried to convince the latter that there was no country in the world which would give such benefits to the poor as the Soviet power did. However, in a private conversation this high secret police officer expressed his sympathy for Sweden:

I am Ukrainian. I gave half of my life to the struggle for Ukraine, its language and culture. I understand your feelings. I know that the Swedish blood was shed for freedom of Ukraine during the time of Karl XII. And we appreciate this contribution.²¹⁸

On August 6, 1928 the Ukrainian government made a decision to refuse the village council’s application. On August 10, the oral denial was brought to

²¹² DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 102, ark. 60.

²¹³ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*, 40; Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammal-svenskby och svenskarna*, 72.

²¹⁴ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 43.

²¹⁵ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 109.

²¹⁶ Ivan Slin’ko (?-1937) – Ukrainian Bolshevik. Deputy Head of the Secret Political Department of GPU in Ukraine. Arrested by the NKVD in 1937 and executed October 21, 1937.

²¹⁷ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 180.

²¹⁸ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*, 44.

the colony by the delegation, which included the German communist P.K. Gelbich, a member of the Odessa bureau of TsKNM, Comrade Bukalov, the first secretary of the Beryslav Party committee; and Comrade Kikich, the Kherson inspector of TsKNM. Gelbich began his speech in German, but was stopped by indignant remarks of the Old Swedes that they did not understand German. After that Gelbich had to continue his speech in broken Russian. He started his speech as follows:

I have travelled the whole world and have never seen such stubborn people as you Swedes. I responsibly declare to you that even if the King [of Sweden] would come for you, you will not go anywhere from here. This is nonsense – dreaming about the country that you have never seen! You are Ukrainian subjects and the Ukrainian government denied you. Go and work!²¹⁹

The colonists responded in terms of Soviet propaganda: “We are not the subjects; we are free citizens of the Soviet Union and have the right to self-determination”.²²⁰ When Gelbich asked the colonists who initiated the emigration they emotionally replied: “Go to the cemetery and ask our ancestors, those who lie in the ground! It was they who started it all!”²²¹

Thus, the conversation of the TsKNM’s representative with the Old Swedes developed an emotional tone. The Swedes regularly asked for a confirmation note with the exact wording of the reasons of the refusal. Gelbich vaguely replied that the written version had not been received so far. To the question of the reason of emigration, the colonists responded:

We are abandoned. Nobody [among the authorities] knows Swedish. We cannot teach our own children in Swedish and in Sweden we will be able to learn ourselves and to get good teachers for our children. Here we are losing our language. Our children know neither Russian nor German or Ukrainian. We are pleased with the Soviet government, but let us go to our homeland.²²²

Teacher Gustav Utas emphasized that there was no educational literature in Swedish in the Soviet Union. Another teacher of the Swedish school Petter Malmas continued:

²¹⁹ Sarwe, Wilhelm, *Bland Rysslands folk: i missionens och Röda korsets tjänst 1882-1922*, 254-255.

²²⁰ Sarwe, Wilhelm, *Bland Rysslands folk: i missionens och Röda korsets tjänst 1882-1922*, 255-255.

²²¹ Sarwe, Wilhelm, *Bland Rysslands folk: i missionens och Röda korsets tjänst 1882-1922*, 255.

²²² “Протокол заседания Старошведского сельсовета № 16, 14.08.1928”, DAKhO, fond R-311, opys 1, sprava 31.

The situation of our children is dire. Studying Swedish, they are unable to continue their education, as there are no educational institutions in Swedish in the country.²²³

On the claims of the high-school teachers the district head Bukalov blurredly remarked that “training of teachers is the main focus of our future activity”.²²⁴ As a result of the heated debate the village council general meeting in the presence of high officials pointedly voted for proceeding with emigration. In the negotiations with the Soviet regime the colonists chose a remarkable strategy. The colonists knew that emigration from the Soviet Union was not formally banned by the Constitution and claimed for legalization of their relationship with the government. Emphasis was made on the problems of native education in the atmosphere of general loyalty to the Soviet regime and Ukraine.

Two days after the departure of the delegation from the colony the village council general meeting approved a new appeal to the Ukrainian government, the text of which was delivered in Kharkiv this time by six deputies. The application of August 19, 1928 was signed by 368 residents of the colony. There were such unsophisticated lines:

As a confirmation of the revival of Ukrainian culture and the language and to the blessed memory of Lenin – the greatest freedom fighter, we, Swedes, kindly ask you to meet our desires to be reunited with our homeland. Everything in nature complies with physical laws. A drop of water goes into the sea, and only there, in the arms of mother, it finds its peace. And so we, a small group of Swedes ejected to an alien soil, aspire to come back to our land, to reunite with our congeners. With bated breath, we are listening to the voice of our elder sister, Ukraine, discharged from millennial hibernation: I am free now and you will be free. I do not want to hold you anymore. Go there where you're hoping to meet your fortune.²²⁵

On September 1 1928, the head of the secret political department of GPU in Ukraine Karl Karlson paid an unofficial visit to the colony.²²⁶ In the conver-

²²³ ”Протокол заседания Старошведского сельсовета № 16, 14.08.1928”, DAKhO, fond R-311, opys 1, sprava 31.

²²⁴ ”Протокол заседания Старошведского сельсовета № 16, 14.08.1928”, DAKhO, fond R-311, opys 1, sprava 31.

²²⁵ Sarwe, Wilhelm, *Bland Rysslands folk: i missionens och Röda korsets tjänst 1882-1922*, 256-257.

²²⁶ Karl Karlson (born as Eduards Ogriets, 1888–1938) – Latvian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1906. From 1925 to 1929 – Head of the Secret

sations with the Swedes the high security policeman tried to find out who had initiated the emigration. As a former Latvian Red Rifleman he confessed to the colonists that he was of Latvian origin, although judging by his pronunciation it was obvious for colonists that he was not Russian. He told them that “he sometimes was desperate to see his relatives and friends in Latvia, but as soon as he thought about the capitalism there, the desire disappeared”.²²⁷

On September 13, 1928, the colony was visited by a new commission headed by the deputy head of TsKNM Jan Saulevich and the GPU officer Ivan Slin’ko. This time, the authorities had abandoned the tactics of pressuring and overwhelmed the Swedes with lucrative proposals, promising that from now on everything will be different. The Old Swedes were promised a permanent quota representation in the All-Ukrainian Supreme Council, a national gymnasium, a hospital equipped to the latest standards and cancellation of all tax debts. However, the general meeting of the village council again in the presence of officials voted for emigration.²²⁸ The September Commission stated the failure of nationalities policy and inaction of local authorities. The Commission noted:

We observe the failure of class struggle in Gammalsvenskby, which lost its positions in the frontline of national consolidation. If the local authorities managed to split the Gammalsvenskby community in hostile camps, the question of emigration would not be on the agenda. And finally the pastor and the kurkuls consolidated the village on a national basis.²²⁹

The district authorities were blamed of having the wrong approach to the colony as a rich ‘kurkul’ settlement and following unfair tax pressure. The absence of officials who spoke Swedish was also the local authorities’ fall. They patronized the tendency to Germanize the Old Swedes, and did not give Swedes access to the representative bodies of the Supreme Council. However the primary error of the local authorities made was believed “that they allowed activity of the Swedish Red Cross and its representative, pastor in Gammalsvenskby, as well as the activities of other Swedish organizations. The work of Swedish organizations in the colony was treated by the local authorities with unconditional tolerance and out of control”.²³⁰

Political Department of GPU in Ukraine. He was arrested during the Great terror and executed April 22, 1938.

²²⁷ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*, 43.

²²⁸ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 186-191.

²²⁹ Попередні висновки про обстеження еміграційного руху серед шведів Старо-Шведської сільради Бериславського району Херсонської округи, 1928.

²³⁰ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 102.

The GPU in Ukraine considered the emigration ban as a justified measure taken to prevent the growth of immigration sentiments, and urged the district authorities to create immediately the conditions “that could affect the elimination of these sentiments”.²³¹ In the autumn of 1928 the district authorities for the first time provided a significant financial assistance to the colony. They equipped the ambulatory clinic and arranged the reading room with new books at the expense of the district budget. Baby food was organized and some of poor peasants were employed at the different factories in Kher-son. However, it was too late. In early October 1928 the colony received humanitarian aid from Sweden again – 1000 pounds of wheat.²³²

On October 25, 1928 the colonists refused to sow winter crops and sowed their fields only partially due to pressure from.²³³ The Kherson district stated in a panic:

Gammalsvenskby village council does not follow the orders of the Soviet power, for example on planting the forests and exterminating ground squirrels. The poor borrow money from the kurkuls, promising to give it back in Sweden.²³⁴

On October 17, 1928, the Ukrainian government received a third collective petition of colonists, confirmed by 394 signatures. About 100 adult colonists abandoned their hope for success and did not sign the petition. The Gammalsvenskby residents expressed their gratitude to the governmental commission for visiting them, reminding, however, that they were looking forward to a response as before.²³⁵ The new strategy of community leaders in correspondence with the government was to try to elicit sympathy of the Ukrainian patriots. Therefore, the text of the petition was full of flowery compliments to the Ukrainian culture and language, quotes from Soviet newspapers and books with references to the historic union of Sweden and Ukraine in times of King Karl XII and Hetman Ivan Mazepa. Referring to the Vikings and soldiers of Karl XII, the colonists emphasized the contribution of the Swedes in the liberation of Ukraine “from the shackles of siblings of Catherine II” and asked to repay them with “the generous act of return to the bosom of their dear common family”.²³⁶ The petition, written in Russian

²³¹ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 102.

²³² DAKhO, fond R-311, opys 1, sprava 31, ark. 1.

²³³ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 109, ark. 21.

²³⁴ DAKhO, fond R-311, opys 1, sprava 40, ark. 34.

²³⁵ Malm, Gösta, *Svenskbyborna: en redogörelse*, 47-48.

²³⁶ “Заявление граждан населенных пунктов Старо-Шведского сельсовета, Бериславского района, Херсонского округа в Совнарком Украины. 17.10.1928”, DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 526, ark. 106-107.

by a third party, which abounded with Ukrainian phrases and lexical errors, particularly due to a Ukrainian influence on the Russian language, ran:

Their [Old Swedes] stay in Ukraine did not go unrewarded. For the hospitality and shelter they leave you back a high ideal to love Ukraine as they love Sweden, having preserved the language and culture, traditions, customs of their ancestors for the 146-year stay on a foreign land. Love Ukraine, since 'kokhannia do ridnoi Maty' [love to the dear Mother] is guarantee of bright future [sic!] and might and strength, and glory, and protection and prosperity and development of the Ukrainian nation. In view of the above stated, they have the honour to request the Council of People's Commissars of Ukraine, if it has not been done yet, to come to negotiations with the Swedish government to accelerate the reply. They trust that the Council of People's Commissars of Ukraine will respond sympathetically to their request for permission to leave for Sweden, which will favour to consolidation of friendly relations and will become a bridge of understanding between the two nations.²³⁷

In early November 1928, Pastor Kristoffer Hoas and the colonist Johan Buskas left for Moscow with Sweden as the final destination, using the visa invitation of Herman Geijer (1871–1943), the director of *Landsmåls- och folkminnesarkivet* (Swedish Archive for Dialects and Folklore, ULMA) in Uppsala.²³⁸ The Kherson district gave them passports and did not object to their trip, hoping that the pastor's departure would weaken the position of supporters of exodus. However, the opposite happened the other way around.

Hoas' idea was to put the Ukrainian government in Kharkiv and the Soviet central authorities in Moscow up against each other and to find partners interested in the emigration of the Old Swedes. Apparently Moscow did not know exactly how long the Old Swedes live in Ukraine and believed that the colonists had moved to the Kherson region from Sweden. Soviet Red Cross discussed with its' Ukrainian branch "sending of Swedish colonists back to their homeland, Sweden".²³⁹ Hoas managed to establish a cooperation with the Moscow office of the influential American organization 'Joint', which at that time was as an unofficial U.S. representative to the Soviet Union. A subsidiary corporation, 'Agro-Joint', had since 1924 been involved in the creation of Jewish agricultural colonies in the Soviet Union. Joint carried out a series of investment projects in Ukraine. In Moscow Hoas made use of his

²³⁷ "Заявление граждан населенных пунктов Старо-Шведского сельсовета Бериславского района Херсонского округа в Совнарком Украины. 17.10.1928", DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 526, ark. 106-107.

²³⁸ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 109, ark. 21.

²³⁹ "Переписка Секретариата Президиума Союза Обществ Красного Креста и Красного полумесяца СССР с Центральным Комитетом Общества Красного Креста Украинской ССР об отправке на родину шведских колонистов", State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), fond R-9501, opis 1, delo 100. July 13–September 25, 1929.

contacts with his fellow countrymen. He met with Samuel Lubarsky, head of 'Agro-Joint's' Moscow office and a native of the Kherson guberniya.²⁴⁰ As a representative of Joint Lubarsky personally travelled to the Beryslav area in order to find suitable lands for Jewish colonies and knew the perfect location of Gammalsvenskby well. He immediately agreed to buy all the lands and the houses of Gammalsvenskby and promised all needed support of Joint when the Old Swedes emigrated.²⁴¹

Another personal contact of the Kherson Swedes in Moscow was Olga Kameneva – the chairman of the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS). She was the daughter of Jewish colonist of the Kherson guberniya, the sister of Leon Trotsky and the first wife of Lev Kamenev. Hoas and Buskas did not succeed in meeting Olga Kameneva.²⁴² However, they left a written petition of the village council requesting immigration to Sweden to Robert Stilmark – the head of the department of Scandinavian countries of VOKS. Stilmark was supportive of the idea of emigration and promised to send the petition to Olga Kameneva and to the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs Georgy Chicherin.²⁴³ Thus, the Old Swedish leaders took advantages of the conflict of interests of the central and Ukrainian governments and gained their influential supporters in Moscow.

At the end of December 1928 Kristoffer Hoas and Johan Buskas arrived in Sweden. On January 18, 1929 they held their first meeting with the Minister of Social Policy of Sweden Sven Lubeck (1877–1941) who supported the idea of emigration.²⁴⁴ Painstaking work began on lobbying the project. Within eight months during 1929 Hoas and his secretary Fjodor von Kieseritzky wrote about 2000 letters (10 letters a day on average) to various Swedish and Soviet institutions, organizations and individuals.²⁴⁵ Maintaining in this way a constant contact with the village, the pastor continued to supervise the actions of the colonists from Scandinavia, informing them about all the measures the Swedish government took. Hoas' motto for the

²⁴⁰ Samuel Lubarsky (1878–1938) was born in the Ukrainian town of Oleksandryia in a Jewish family. He studied agronomy at Kiev Polytechnic Institute. In 1926–1937 he was a head of the central office of Agro-Joint. Arrested by the NKVD in March 1938 and executed September 1, 1938. Rehabilitated.

²⁴¹ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*, 46–47.

²⁴² Olga Kameneva (nee Bronstein, 1883–1941) – Russian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1902. Chairman of the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS). She was arrested in March 1935 and executed September 11, 1941. Rehabilitated.

²⁴³ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*, 47.

²⁴⁴ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*, 49.

²⁴⁵ Fjodor von Kieseritzky (1901–1946) was born in Dorpat/Tartu in a German family. In 1917 he left Russia for Sweden for studies of oriental languages at Uppsala University. He was a teacher at Uppsala technical school. His wife was Anna Maria Hoas, the daughter of Pastor Hoas.

struggle to emigrate came to be: 'Everybody or no one'.²⁴⁶ On February 16, 1929 Deputy Chairman of the Kherson district Comrade Grushevenko reported to the Ukrainian government that: "The emigration sentiments put down their roots so deep that the re-election of the village council was a failure, the colonists did not want to vote and approved only one provision of the agenda – emigration".²⁴⁷

On February 25, 1929 the village council received a telegram signed by the State Secretary of Ukrainian government Yuri Erazmovich Yavorsky in which it was reported that the republican government did not object to the residents of Gammalsvenskby moving to Sweden.²⁴⁸ The decision of the Ukrainian government was dual: those who wished to emigrate were proposed to submit individual applications, for issuing a passport a huge fee of 240 rubles was charged. For mixed German-Swedish and Swedish-Ukrainian families departure was completely rejected. To prevent the spread of immigration sentiments in the area, local authorities had to ensure "broad nondisclosure of the case".²⁴⁹ However, it was not specified how it could be done on the territory of compact settlement of German and Swedish colonists. The answer did not satisfy the Gammalsvenskby village council who insisted on departure of all the inhabitants of the colony. The feedback of the community was instantaneous. On February 28, 1929 the land department of the Kherson district received a collective application of Gammalsvenskby with 492 signatures on refusal to obtain the spring sowing fund and reluctance to sow the fields. The children of the colonists stopped attending school.²⁵⁰

On February 22, 1929 at the joint sitting of the Parliament and the Government of Sweden, the Ukrainian Swedes were granted entry into the country.²⁵¹ Two weeks later, the colonists received a letter from Sweden informing them about the happy decision and already on March 25, 1929 the rayon authorities of Beryslav received a collective statement from the Old Swedes on renouncing their land allotments.²⁵²

On April 25, 1929 the Kherson authorities in an urgent dispatch to the Ukrainian government asked for instructions in relation to the Swedish colonists who blackmailed the Soviet regime. The colonists demanded the issuing of passports for free, their immediate departure by train along the route

²⁴⁶ Hoas, Kristoffer, *Gammal-Svenskby*, 49.

²⁴⁷ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 109.

²⁴⁸ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 109; Yuri Erazmovich Yavorsky (1890–1970) was born in Mykolaiv, in a family of Ukrainian Cossack nobility. Member of the KP(b)U since 1920. State Secretary of the Ukrainian government. He was arrested during the Great terror and sentenced to 8 years in prison. Rehabilitated.

²⁴⁹ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 109, ark. 22.

²⁵⁰ Коник Ю. О. "Реєміграція шведського населення Херсонського округу в 1929 р", 62.

²⁵¹ Malm, Gösta, *Svenskbyborna: en redogörelse*, 272.

²⁵² DAKhO, fond R-311, opys 1, sprava 40, ark. 1.

Kherson–Tallinn and free meals during the journey. With unconcealed irritation the Kherson official wrote to Kharkiv:

The Swedes are demanding more and more. They are constantly coming to the district government and are always putting in new claims. The district strongly opposes to issuing the kulaks free passports. The Swedes are frustrated and say to us that our government [Sweden's!] agreed with yours and you are frustrating the departure. If you continue to deny our demands we will have to choose the way our ancestors used: we will take the horse carts and during Easter move on foot to Sweden.²⁵³

On March 13, 1929, the chief of the personnel department of the Kherson district Comrade Zelennikov arrived at the colony. At the general meeting in the village he informed the colonists that the decision on the collective-departure ban was final and that emigration was permitted solely for the citizens of Swedish descent. He stressed that: "Every citizen – Swede who wants to immigrate to Sweden, will have to submit the application individually. The passports will be issued upon receipt of applications".²⁵⁴ Thus, the Ukrainian government hoped to avoid domestic political scandal if the whole Swedish community departed abroad collectively. The Ukrainian leadership strategy was to delay the individual issuance of the costly passports, hoping that some colonists would change their minds and stay.²⁵⁵

However, due to the intervention of the Kremlin and Sweden these plans went awry. On June 6, 1929 in Moscow at the meeting of the Politburo of the VKP(b) led by Stalin a decision on the immediate immigration of all inhabitants of Gammalsvenskby to Sweden was made.²⁵⁶ The report on the agenda 'On Swedish settlers' was prepared by the deputy minister of foreign affairs Maxim Litvinov and the member of the politburo Jānis Rudzutaks.²⁵⁷ After discussions it was decided to meet the requests of the government of

²⁵³ Докладная записка председателя Херсонского окружного исполкома тов. Закодырина СНК УССР от 25.04.1929. DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 109, ark. 33-33 verso.

²⁵⁴ Докладная записка председателя Херсонского окружного исполкома тов. Закодырина СНК УССР от 25.04.1929", DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 109, ark. 33.

²⁵⁵ The cost of passport issue was 240 rubles per adult. At the same time, the real estate valuing of the houses in Gammalsvenskby were assessed by the state at average price of 450 rubles. DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 109.

²⁵⁶ Кен О. Н., Рупасов А. И. *Политбюро ЦК ВКП(б) и отношения СССР с западными соседними государствами*. Кн. 1. 1928–1934. Москва: Европейский Дом, 2000, 696-697.

²⁵⁷ Jānis Rudzutaks (1887–1938) – Latvian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1906. Member of the Politburo of VK(b)P. He was arrested during the Great Terror and executed July 29, 1938. Rehabilitated; Maxim Litvinov (born as Meir Mojszewicz Wallach-Finkelstein, 1876–1951) – Russian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1898. Member of the Politburo of VK(b)P. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Second People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs).

Sweden and release the Swedish colonists from the country. The standpoint of the Ukrainian leadership was ignored.

On June 12, 1929 Comrade Bukalov, the first secretary of the Beryslav party committee, arrived at the colony, and unexpectedly announced that the Soviet government allowed the mass emigration of the colonists by free collective passports. Visa, transport and meal costs were going to be covered by the Swedish Red Cross.²⁵⁸ Border and customs control was passed by the colonists in Kherson sea port. Hoping to leave for Sweden together with all the travellers the Ukrainian–Swedish and Swedish–German families of Gammalsvenskby also came to the port. However, despite having a passport and visa to Sweden, they were stopped by the Border Guard. On July 22, 1929 the Old Swedes singing religious psalms left Kherson on the Turkish steamer *Firuzan*, taking a route to the Romanian port of Constantia. The relatives and neighbours seeing them off, one woman died of a heart attack. In their long journey through Central Europe and Germany the colonists were accompanied by a Swedish delegation of twelve people, who had come to Ukraine with the sole purpose of meeting the Kherson Swedes. The Swedish delegation included Red Cross employees, two medical doctors, four nurses and journalists of leading Swedish newspapers.²⁵⁹

1.10. Concluding remarks

The Swedish farmers' resistance strategy was successful. Several key factors should be singled out. First, the Old Swedes claims were collective. Firstly, the petitions to the government were signed by virtually every adult in the population of the colony. Secondly, the actions of the colonists were pertinacious. For over four months new collective petitions on emigration were drawn up and handed over to the Ukrainian government, regardless of the constant refusals. Sparing no expense, the community sent their deputies to Kherson and to the capital of Ukraine Kharkiv, as well as to Moscow and to Stockholm to lobby the issue. Thirdly, the claims of the community were legally compliant, drawn up on behalf of a legal entity of the local administrative body. In the fourth place, the radicalization of the protest should be stressed, which was manifested by the colonists regarding the land allotments, the seed fund and school attendance. In their resistance the Ukrainian

²⁵⁸ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 172.

²⁵⁹ Annas, Julia, "Den stora och långa resan hem till Sverige", *En bok om Estlands svenskar*. Del 3 B, *Estlandssvenskar berättar: dialekttexter med översättning och kommentar* av Edvin Lagman & Viktor Aman. Stockholm. 1990, 105-113.

Swedes showed they were well oriented in the domestic political situation and administrative structure of the Soviet Union. They successfully made use of the slogans of Ukrainian nationalism, the conflict of interest of republican and central Soviet leadership, and in the interest of the influential American corporation of Joint. Finally, the intervention of the Swedish government who supported the idea of emigration played a decisive role. However, without a firm stand of the Gammalsvenskby community such an intervention was unlikely to happen.

The results confirm the hypothesis of flexibility and variability of the Soviet policies of nationalities and religions. For example, a rigid religious policy of the government towards some confessional groups was combined with serious concessions to the Swedish Lutherans. How could these differences be explained? Most probably such concessions reflect the inability of the Soviet regime to dictate their terms to the strong, consolidate and cohesive community of the Ukrainian Swedes. The independent farmers, who had good and close relations with Sweden and a high level of internal solidarity, demanded a continuous dialogue with the government. Mass emigration sentiments in the former foreign colonies of the Kherson district made local authorities exercise extreme caution and the central authorities constantly demanded that emigration sentiments were suppressed. From this perspective, the Swedish settlements were in a privileged position compared to the neighbouring Ukrainian villages.

Our case confirms the research of Kate Brown on the Polish minority of Soviet Ukraine. Indeed, the 1920s nationalities policy of the Bolsheviks demonstrated the weakness rather than strength of the regime.²⁶⁰ A foreign-policy aspect was a key incentive of tolerance of the Soviet state towards 'western' minorities. The Kremlin was interested in creating a favourable impression of the nationalities and religious freedom abroad. For this reason, the central government stopped the eviction of pastor Hoas from the parish stopped eviction of Kristoffer Hoas from parish sanctioned by the local authorities. In 1926 Gammalsvenskby was visited by the right-wing Swedish politician William Anner, who was impressed by the religious freedom of ethnic Swedes. Immigration sentiments of the Ukrainian Swedes were fed, on the one hand, by atheistic propaganda. On the other hand, ecclesiastic reforms carried out in Gammalsvenskby gave a favourable impression on the Soviet authorities abroad. The unification of religious life which was done in Gammalsvenskby enabled the Ukrainian Swedes to become full members of the Lutheran Church of Sweden. This fact certainly contributed to the rapid integration of the majority of the Kherson immigrants into Swedish society.

²⁶⁰ Brown, Kate, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland*, Harvard University Press, 2005, 139.

The partial results of the Ukrainian indigenization policy were confirmed by the Swedish inspection of the colonists' children. Surprisingly for Swedes the children showed good knowledge of spoken and written Swedish. Moreover the inspectorate also noted the children being fluent in the Ukrainian language.²⁶¹ Owing to the policy of indigenization, the Old Swedes in Sweden related more to Ukraine than to Russia, as they had done before. Nevertheless, the first project of the Soviet regime to change the traditional way of life and culture of the Swedish colonists failed. On July 20, 1929 the church of Gammalsvenskby conducted the last divine service in Swedish. The Soviet authorities allowed the colonists to take the bells and holy vessels to Sweden. On July 23, 1929 the Old Swedes left Soviet Ukraine for Sweden.

²⁶¹ Thomée, Per, "Redogörelse för skolan vid Svenskbyförläggningen i Jönköping läsåret 1929-1930", *Berättelse över Gammalsvenskbykommitténs verksamhet*. Stockholm, 1930, bilaga 4, 5.

Chapter 2. A Little Red Sweden in Ukraine. The 1930s Comintern Project in Gammalsvenskby

2. The Main Political Actors

2.1. The Comintern and Swedish Communist Party

Snart dagas det bröder se Östern i guld
[Soon the brothers will see the East in the Gold]
Swedish Communist Party's slogan on 1 May 1931.

In 1926, the Secretariat for Scandinavian countries was founded in order to ensure communication of the Comintern with Scandinavian Communist parties, and to monitor, to make reports and control the implementation of the resolutions of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The Secretariat that acted until 1935 was the instrument of amplification of the control of the ECCI over communist parties of Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Island.²⁶²

The imposition of power by the Comintern was one of the main reasons for the division of the Swedish Communist Party in the fall of 1929; the most serious one in the history of the movement in Sweden. The split was catastrophe for the communists loyal to the Comintern. Hugo Sillén who led the pro-Comintern fraction retained only 4,000 out of 16,000 members of the SKP.²⁶³ The pro-Comintern Party members lost the publishing house *Frams*

²⁶² Björlin, Lars, "För svensk arbetarklass eller sovjetisk utrikespolitik?: den kommunistiska rörelsen i Sverige och förbindelserna med Moskva 1920-1970", *Sovjetunionen och Norden – konflikt, kontakt, influenser*, Sune Jungar & Bent Jensen (eds.), Helsingfors: FHS, 1997, 214.

²⁶³ Kennerström, Bernt, "Sprängningen av Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti 1929" *Från SKP till VPK – en antologi*, Sven Olsson (ed.), Lund: Zenit, 1976, 82-105; Gogman, Lars, *I skuggan av Stalin. Lokala konsekvenser av 1929 års sprängning av Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti*. Unpublished MA-thesis, Stockholm University: Dept. of History, 1991, 2-13; Bolin, Jan,

Förlag, main newspaper *Folkets Dagblad Politiken*, most of the syndicates, and all the parliament members. The majority of the Party followed their leader Karl Kilbom into a new Swedish Communist Party, independent from the Comintern. However, with the help of the financial aid from Comintern, the SKP could retain the lost base and the mass media. From 1930 the pro-Comintern fraction had got at their disposal the publishing house *Arbetarkultur*; newspapers *Ny Dag*, *Norrskensflamman* and *Kalmar-läns Tidning*; periodical for youth *Stormklockan*; women's movement magazine *Arbetskvinnornas Tidning*; and theoretical magazine *Kommunistisk Tidskrift*. The association *Sovjetunionens vänner* controlled by the Party published their own magazine *Sovjetnytt*.

In 1930/31 for the New Year vacation, the delegation of the SKP visited Moscow discussed the split of the Party as well as the ways for getting out of the crisis with the Comintern leaders. Sven Linderot and Paul Thunell were the heads of the Swedish delegation. The Comintern was represented by Finnish Communist leader Otto Kuusinen, Norwegian Communist leader Peder Furuboth, Finno-Swedish communist Allan Walenius, Germans Wilhelm Pieck and Hans Pfeiffer, as well as one of the Soviet leaders Osip Piatnitsky (Josel Taršis). According to the Comintern, the Swedish Communist Party acted as a Social-Democratic one, "in isolation from the masses".²⁶⁴ Actually, the work with peasantry in Sweden had never been under the influence of the Communists. But this fact was not taken into account by the Comintern. The formal promoter of Gammalsvenskby project was Allan Walenius – the director of the Comintern library and the head of the Scandinavian section at the *Kommunisticheskii universitet national'nykh men'shinstv Zapada imeni Marchlewskogo* (Communist University of the National Minorities of the West).²⁶⁵ He had nightlong discussions with the Swedish communists regarding the bright future of Gammalsvenskby.²⁶⁶ This well educated person and the former leader of the Young Communist League of Sweden made part of the most influential theoreticians of the communism

Parti av ny typ?: skapandet av ett svenskt kommunistiskt parti 1917-1933, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Diss. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2004, 368-369.

²⁶⁴ Lundberg, Urban, *En fokusering och tre punkter – en studie av SKP:s försök att vinna arbetarklassen åt kommunismen under perioden 1929-1935*. Unpublished C-thesis in history, Stockholm University: Dept. of history, 1994, 36-40.

²⁶⁵ Allan Wallenius (1890–1942) – Swedish speaking Finn, one of the most prominent leftist intellectuals of Scandinavia. In 1930–1935 the director of the Comintern library at Lenin's Party School in Moscow. He was arrested in 1935 and died in the Gulag.

²⁶⁶ Personal file 284 – Björn Hallström (Гальстрём Бирн), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaja partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943), RGASPI.

in Scandinavia.²⁶⁷ In the interwar Sweden, his books and articles on various issues related to socialism, the USSR and the Comintern were published regularly.²⁶⁸

The SKP delegation to Moscow brought back to Sweden a resolution on the plan action to make peasants into supporters of their policy:

The agrarian question has not been taken into account. This is because the party has insufficient manpower and the members do not understand the agrarian question sufficiently. The Party must obtain an agrarian program, and the work among agricultural workers and small farmers should be actively pursued.²⁶⁹

Therefore, former Gammalsvenskby villagers residing in Sweden became the testing ground for the agrarian work of the SKP. The large part of protocols of the SKP Politburo from 1930s is lost, as the situation in the Party was critical and many members were persecuted by the Swedish secret police *Statspolisén*. The SKP organization in Stockholm by 1930 included only circa 500 members. However, even few available documents prove that Gammalsvenskby played an important role in the politics of the new Party. At least six of fifteen members of the political bureau of the SKP including Party leaders Hugo Sillén and Sven Linderot took immediate part in the case of the Old Swedes. Under the Party's initiative to work among the colonists and to spite the official state lead committee *Arbetarnas Svenskbykommitté* was created. Kasper Gustafsson, Hilmer Fredriksson (the secretary of *Sovjetunionens vänner*), Carl Bengtsson and Gunnar Sedin formed part of it. By the SKP's decision on February 23, 1930 two experienced propagandists Kasper Gustafsson and Viktor Nilsson were chosen to work with Old

²⁶⁷ Mustelin, Olof, "Allan Wallenius – biblioteksman, publicist och revolutionär", *Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland*: 59, Helsingfors, 1984, 269-389.

²⁶⁸ See: Wallenius, Allan, "Ett socialistiskt centralbibliotek i Skandinavien", *Zimmerwald: socialistisk månadstidskrift*, 1919(1):8, 457-562; Wallenius, Allan, *Kampen mot religionen*, Stockholm: Sveriges kommunistiska ungdomsförbund, 1922; Wallenius, Allan, *Helvetets himmelsfärd*, Stockholm: Fram, 1922; Wallenius, Allan, *I järnhälens tid: kampdikter*, Stockholm: Fram, 1925; Wallenius, Allan, "Ture Nerman som 'bolsjevik'", *Kommunistisk tidskrift: månadsskrift för marxistisk-leninistisk teori och praktik*, 1931, mars-april, 150-154, 182-186; Wallenius, Allan, "Hungriga grisar i den svenska opportunistens köksträdgård", *Kommunistisk tidskrift: månadsskrift för marxistisk-leninistisk teori och praktik*, 1931, mars-april, 107-116; Wallenius, Allan, "Stalins brev och de skandinaviska partierna", *Kommunistisk tidskrift: månadsskrift för marxistisk-leninistisk teori och praktik*, 1932, februari-mars, 40-48; Wallenius, Allan, *Svenskarna i Finland och nästa krig, några revolutionära synpunkter*, Sveriges kommunistiska parti, 1932; Wallenius, Allan, *Stalinkanalen: hur bolsjevikerna skapar människor och framtid*, Göteborg, Sovjet Unionens vänner, 1933.

²⁶⁹ Lundberg, Urban, *En fokusering och tre punkter – en studie av SKP:s försök att vinna arbetarklassen åt kommunismen under perioden 1929-1935*. Unpublished C-thesis in history, Stockholm University: Dept. of History, 1994, 36-37.

Swedes.²⁷⁰ The members of the committee and propagandists were in contact with the Swedish authorities, and carried out active propaganda to involve colonists in Communist activities visited the temporary camp of Swedish colonists in Jönköping. In addition, candidates for Party work and activists for women's movement (Lydia Utas) were chosen among the former villagers.²⁷¹

A number of colonists along with the Party agitators went on tours around the country. For example, on 14 May 1931, Swedish colonist Johan Knutas held speech along with the well-known Party agitator Fritjof Lager in the park of the town of Spånga.²⁷² With the support of the *Svenska Freds-och Skiljedomsföreningen* (Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society) the veteran of World War I Kristoffer Matsson Utas went on a tour of Sweden with lectures on antimilitary topic. However, at the request of the official *Gammalsvenskbykommittén* his lectures were forbidden. Director of the *Gammalsvenskbykommitté* Gösta Malm explained for Kristoffer Matsson Utas the reason to ban his lectures in following way: "Our main goal is that you through practice on Swedish farms prepare yourself to work on the ground and become a competent Swedish farmer".²⁷³

On the one hand, participate in various promotional companies of leftists irritated the government and some media of Sweden. The right-wing newspaper called agitators the agents of Soviet secret police *Cheka*. On the other hand, information materials about the villagers' desire to get back to the USSR became a regular topic in the Communist press, playing an important part in the Party public debates with the publications of the Social Democrats and the Communists led by Karl Kilbom.²⁷⁴

It was the SKP that initiated the villagers' formal request for getting a visa permission to return to the USSR. In the telegraph address to Secretariat for Scandinavian countries the Central Committee of the SKP requested, "To support an application about visa issuing for entering the USSR, to empha-

²⁷⁰ Politbyråmötet. Protokoll nr 7. Den 23 februari 1930, l. 4, Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna. Protokoll politbyrå 1927-1931. Volym A 3:1. RE 5/1. Arbetarrörelsens arkiv (ARAB). Viktor Nilsson was the author of several works on the history of agrarian issue in Russia. In 1953 he became one of the leaders of the Maoist movement in Sweden, see: Handlingar från KFML, UA 15/06, vol. 1-3, ARAB. In 1931 Kasper Gustafsson and his wife Hildur Gustafsson were sent by the SKP to the USSR in order to head the socialist construction in Gammalsvenskby.

²⁷¹ Protokoll över Politbyråns sammanträde fredagen den 30 januari 1931, l. 2-3, Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna. Protokoll politbyrå 1927-1931. Volym A 3:1. RE 5/1, ARAB.

²⁷² Affisch "Tillbaka till Sovjet-Unionen. Föredrag hålles torsdagen den 14 maj kl. 4 e. m. (Kristi himmelsfärdsdag) i Spånga Folkets park av svenskbybon Johan Knutas. Dessutom föredras Fritjof Lager över ämnet Sovjet-Unionens diktatur eller Sveriges demokrati. Diskussion", ARAB. Gamla samlingen. Vol. 11737. Bild nr. XXL 1931:008.

²⁷³ Gammalsvenskbykommittén 1929-1930. SE/RA/420084. Vol. 8. Tidningsurklipp. NAS.

²⁷⁴ Ramstedt, Jonas, *Utsagningsobjekt eller Stamfränder: rapporteringen om Ukraina-svenskar i vänsterpress 1929-1931, ur klass- och nationalitetssynpunkt*, Unpublished c-thesis in history supervised by Andrej Kotljarchuk, Södertörn University, 2007.

size the political value of the return of the Old Swedes to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic".²⁷⁵ As a result, adviser of the Secretariat for Scandinavian countries Aino Kuusinen prepared a memorandum which has been supported by leading staff members of the Comintern: Osip Piatnitsky, Otto Kuusinen, Dmitri Manuilsky and Sergei Gusev (Jakov Drabkin).²⁷⁶ For Comintern the Gammalsvenskby project was interesting not only because of the SKP. The future Swedish kolkhoz was an ideal site for work placement of the young Swedish communists who were taught within the Comintern schools. Information about successes of the socialist construction in *Röd Svenskby* could be made public abroad through the Radio of Comintern and its printed press. That was the usual practice for the Comintern. A group of Scandinavian communists was sent by the Comintern to educate members of the collective fishery *Polarstjerna* in the Norwegian village Tsypnavolok on the Kola Peninsula. After that the Norwegian communistic newspaper *Nordland Arbeiderblad* has published the article about the prosperity of Soviet–Norwegian anglers.²⁷⁷ Many Nordic communists were working at the Finnish kolkhozes of Ingria and Karelia.

It is difficult to say whether the decision to return to the Soviet Union was independent. This version supports by a fact that Ukrainian Swedes did not receive a permission to settle in Sweden in separate village and were resettled in different places of the country. Experienced and successful Ukrainian-Swedish farmers resented the fact that they were sent to the practice to Swedish farmers in order to learn 'more advanced' Swedish way of agriculture. Despite the knowledge of the language difficulties of adaptation combined with homesickness and missing of remaining relatives in Ukraine. As known the mix Ukrainian-Swedish families were not allowed to leave the Soviet Union. Mixed Swedish-German families where the head of the fam-

²⁷⁵ Memorandum regarding the Ukrainian Swedes prepared by Aino Kuusinen, referent of the *Skandinaviska ländersekretariatet*: Дело *О старошведских поселениях на Украине* (About the Swedish Settlements in the Ukraine), fond 495, opis 31, delo 153. RGASPI; Aino Kuusinen (nee Turtiainen, 1886-1970) was a Finnish communist, employee of the Comintern and agent of the Soviet Military Intelligence Service. She was married to Otto Kuusinen, co-founder of the Communist Party of Finland and one of the leaders of the Communist international movement. She was arrested by the NKVD in 1937 and sentenced to 8 years in prison. Returned to Finland in 1965. Aino Kuusinen did not mention the Ukrainian Swedes in the memoirs, see: Kuusinen, Aino, *Vi skola nästan alla dö*, Helsingfors, 1972.

²⁷⁶ "Сообщение скандинавского лендерсекретариата относительно старо-шведских эмигрантов в Швеции т. Пятницкому, Мануильскому, Гусеву и Куусинену", Доклады скандинавского лендерсекретариата ИККИ о положении в Швеции. Дело *О старошведских поселениях на Украине* (About Swedish settlements in Ukraine), fond 495, opis 31, delo 153, l. 158. RGASPI.

²⁷⁷ Kotljarchuk, Andrej, "The Nordic Threat: Soviet Ethnic Cleansing on the Kola Peninsula", *The Sea of Identities. A century of Baltic and East European Experiences with Nationality, Class, and Gender*, Norbert Götz (ed.), Södertörn University Academic Studies, vol. 60, Stockholm: Elanders, 2014, 56.

ily was a Swede, received permission to leave the Soviet Union for Sweden. But Swedish women married to Germans, and adult children of mixed marriages remained in the Soviet Union. Thus the mass immigration to Sweden led to the separation of families. However the external factor also has played its role. The Swedish communists were active in campaigning of the Old Swedes for return to the Soviet home.²⁷⁸ SKP issued an optimistic special note to the Swedish colonists explaining the meaning of kolkhoz:

You ask if you get pigs and chickens and have them as your own. Of course, you will get them if you buy them. It is only the land that is collective. Not houses and gardens. You write about the tractor ... Now there are 20 tractors in Röd Svenskby. There are even those who can repair them.²⁷⁹

2.2. The Soviet government

On December 25, 1929 the first group of about 20 colonists led by Wolde-
mar Utas and Petter J. Knutas left Sweden for the USSR. On September 11,
1930 the second group of about 40 colonists left Stockholm for Leningrad.
They brought with them a tractor bought for the money collected by the
Swedish workers. On August 17, 1931 the last group of about 180 colonists
left Sweden for the USSR.²⁸⁰ In 1929, as a result of the negotiations of the
Swedish government with the Soviet government and on the base of the po-
litical bureau of the VKP(b) decree number 83 dated of 6 June 1929, the
whole village went to Sweden.²⁸¹ The information about Old Swedes depar-
ture to Sweden got international response;²⁸² and provoked strong emigration
aspirations among the other ethnic minorities of the Ukraine. In the fall of
1929 around 11,000 of German colonists (mainly the Mennonites) from the

²⁷⁸ "Åter till Sovjet", *Smålands Allehanda*, den 13 november 1929.

²⁷⁹ Hedman, Jörgen & Åhlander, Lars, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna i Ukraina*, 217.

²⁸⁰ "Возвращение старошведов в СССР", Правда (Pravda), September 14, 1930;
"Старошведы возвратились в СССР", Правда (Pravda), August 24, 1931

²⁸¹ *Политбюро ЦК РКП(б)–ВКП(б). Повестки дня заседаний*. Т. 1. 1919– 1929. Москва: РОССПЭН, 2000, 696–697; Кен О. Н., Рупасов А. И., Самуэльсон Л. *Швеция в политике Москвы. 1930–1950-е годы*. Москва: РОССПЭН, 2005, 34–35; For the Swedish edition see: Ken, Oleg, Rupasov, Aleksandr, Samuelson, Lennart, *I stormaktspolitikens periferi: Sverige i Moskvas politik under 1930-talet*, Stockholm: Carlssons, 2011.

²⁸² See as example: "Swedish colonists return from Ukraine", *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, July 27, 1929; "900 Swedes in Russia to be repatriated; Soviet Aids Plan to Move Villagers in Gratitude for Red Cross War Work", *New York Times*, June 27, 1929; "900 exiled Swedes back from Russia", *New York Times*, August 2, 1929; "Swedish colony home after a 150-year exile", *New York Times*, September 15, 1929.

Southern Ukraine and the Crimea after having sold all their belongings, went to Moscow with a view of approaching German and Canadian embassies for getting visa permission. As a result of the negotiations between Germany and the USSR in the end of 1929 around 6,500 German colonists got permissions to leave the USSR. The struggle of the German peasants was continued also in 1930.²⁸³

The Kremlin considered the emigration as a special kind of class struggle by German colonists and insisted on the Ukrainian authorities' ability to stop inflow of the German colonists to Moscow. In February 1930 the issue of the mass emigration was discussed while the plenum of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, whereby the resolution for the local authorities was elaborated "to neutralize those anti-Soviet actions".²⁸⁴ Only the intensified guarding of the border restrained mass migration of the Ukrainian Poles to Poland in winter time of 1929–1930. The Polish authorities were right to note the direct link between the emigration aspirations of the Ukrainian Poles and "the organized mass emigration of the Swedish colonists".²⁸⁵ That is why the return of Swedes back to the USSR could be used as a powerful ideological tool in the anti-emigration propaganda. Indeed, one of the first articles in the Kherson newspapers covering this topic considered the return of the Swedes back to the USSR as a lesson for German colonists.²⁸⁶

On 5 January 1930, the leading newspaper of the Kherson region *Naddniprianska Pravda* informed about beginning of the total collectivization and the liquidation of the kulaks as a social class. According to the decision of the regional Party committee 100 percent of the homesteads should had been collectivized until 1 March 1930. "We have time limits of less than two months, not a single hour, not a single minute should be wasted, every hour is a unit for counting" – that was written in the newspapers to warn its readers.²⁸⁷

The actual process of collectivization proved extremely difficult because of the powerful resistance of the German colonists. In the reports of the GPU, the situation in the southern Ukraine was described as very close to

²⁸³ Dyck, Harvey Leonard, *Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia 1926-1933*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1966, 163-174; Осташева Н. В. *На переломе эпох. Мennonитское сообщество Украины в 1914–1931 гг.* Москва, 1998, 162–165. Both authors do not see the connection between the emigration moods of Soviet Germans in late 1929 with the mass emigration of Swedish colonists to Sweden.

²⁸⁴ Ченцов В. В. "Коллективизация", *Немцы Украины*, Ред. С. И. Бобылева. Москва: Общественная Академия Наук российских немцев. 2002, 101–105.

²⁸⁵ Бруски Я. "Большой голод на Украине в свете документов польской дипломатии и разведки", *Европа*. Т. 6. № 21. 2006, 106.

²⁸⁶ Юнгштурм "Тільки радвлда й компартія – наши друзі. Шведські емігранти вернулися до Старошведська", *Наддніпрянська Правда* (NP). 21 января 1930.

²⁸⁷ *Наддніпрянська Правда* (NP). 5 января 1930, 1.

rebellion.²⁸⁸ In the series of colonies spontaneous women's uprisings and mass denials to work took place. In spring of 1930, many fields remained idle. The corruption existed in the Stalinist state. It has made possible for the German colonists to bring back their relatives sent to Siberia using bribes. Several false certificates were issued by the local authorities in Siberia about the facts of mistakes, stating that not kulaks, but poor peasants of German origin from Ukraine had been deported. The ethnic Ukrainian peasants appraised the unite action by German colonists in the following way "the Soviet authorities are afraid of Germans".²⁸⁹

In the described conditions, the benevolent foundation of a Swedish kolkhoz could be a powerful argument of the Soviet propaganda. To illustrate the idea it is useful to mention the session of the political bureau of the VKP(b) of 21 June 1931 and the resolution taken to consider the resettlement of 77 peasant families from Poland into the Soviet Ukraine as "very useful for organizing at least one good, even better model kolkhoz. That would destroy the bourgeois press propaganda in Poland".²⁹⁰ Similar ideas were at work in the resolution about creation of a Swedish kolkhoz. The idea about creation in the USSR of the exemplar kolkhozes on the base of the emigrant groups was not new. Since mid-1920s in the Tambov region, an American kolkhoz existed established by returners from the USA.²⁹¹ In 1928 Jews, natives of Beryslav district, re-emigrants from Palestine, founded in Crimea the collective farm Vivo Nova, which in Esperanto means 'new life'.²⁹² Altogether by 1932 there were circa 30 foreign kolkhozes in the USSR employing more than 5,000 emigrants.²⁹³

The negotiations on bringing Old Swedes back to the Soviet Ukraine were carried out by the Soviet ambassador to Sweden Alexandra Kollontai who had talks with the Prime Minister of Sweden Carl Gustaf Ekman and Foreign Minister Fredrik Ramel.

According to Alexandra Kollontai:

²⁸⁸ Graziosi, Andrea, "Collectivisation, révoltes paysannes et. politiques gouvernementales à travers les rapports du GPU d'Ukraine de février-mars 1930", *Cahiers du monde russe*, 1994: 35, 438-472.

²⁸⁹ Солончук Е. А. "Раскулачивание в немецких районах Одесского округа: зима-весна 1930 г.", 217-233.

²⁹⁰ Кен О. Н, Рупасов А. И. *Политбюро ЦК ВКП(б) и отношения СССР с западными соседними государствами*. Кн. 1. 1928-1934. Москва: Европейский Дом, 2000, 526-527.

²⁹¹ Курьлев А. Ю. "Опыт трудовой деятельности российских ре-иммигрантов в сельском хозяйстве в 1920-е годы на примере первой Ирской коммуны ре-иммигрантов из Америки," *Проблемы социального и гуманитарного знания*. Ред. Н. Б. Вахтин. Санкт-Петербург, 1999. Вып. 1, 403-437.

²⁹² Хиллиг Г. "Забытый опыт построения коммунизма в Крыму", *Еврейский обозреватель*. Октябрь 2008. № 19/182.

²⁹³ Gustafson, Anders, *Svenska sovjetemigranter: om de svenska kommunisterna och emigrationen till Sovjetunionen på 1920- och 1930-talen*, Linköping: Nixon, 2006, 17.

Fooled by Swedes the Old Swedes left their kolkhoz in Ukraine [inaccuracy], and could not, of course, to get on in Sweden, brought up on Soviet moral and the rights of the working people. They have become 'buzz' in Sweden, to quarrel with the local authorities, to criticize everything, put in a Communist and left socialist press complaints on bourgeois lifestyle in Sweden and would return home – to the Soviet Union ... They visited me, almost daily begging to send them back into the Union. Very angry at the Swedish wire, willingly speak in Russian with our staff; they have a miserable experience being in the strange country.²⁹⁴

At a meeting with Prime Minister of Sweden Carl Gustaf Ekman Kollontai demanded the Swedish government financing the return of colonists adding that the Soviet Union is not interested in re-emigration and does it purely for the sake of friendly relations with Sweden:

Speaking friendly we, that is my government, is not interested in their return, we have not driven them from their homes. And we have enough population in the Soviet Union. Moreover as I heard among Old Swedes are many restless, unruly elements.²⁹⁵

Carl Gustaf Ekman replied:

But they are actually not Swedes – Prime Minister interrupted me – they are Russian people, their habits, and attitudes are not ours. But we will not go into the details searching for reasons why they came to Sweden. We turn to the practical issue. You can tell your government that we would ask Moscow for permission to return these unfortunate people to their land. On the material matter, we would agree with you.²⁹⁶

Most of the Old Swedes remained in Sweden. Only about 250 of the 888 emigrants returned to the Soviet Union. About 70 colonists chose Canada, having left to live in Alberta where their relatives already owning the farms.²⁹⁷ In democratic Sweden unlike the Soviet totalitarian state implementations of large social projects take a long time. To support the families of Old Swedes monetarily and to buy for them farms the government of Sweden organized a national fundraiser. As a result of donations made by ordinary Swedish citizens at time of the global economic crisis a considerable

²⁹⁴ Коллонтай А. *Дипломатические дневники*. Т. 2. 1922–1940. Москва: Academia, 2001, 42–43.

²⁹⁵ Коллонтай А. *Дипломатические дневники*, 42–43.

²⁹⁶ Коллонтай А. *Дипломатические дневники*, 13–14.

²⁹⁷ Rudling, Per, Anders, "Ukrainian Swedes in Canada: Gammalsvenskby in the Swedish-Canadian Press 1929-1931", *Scandinavian-Canadian Journal*, 2005:15, 75.

amount of 934,594 Swedish crowns has been collected.²⁹⁸ Using this funding *Gammalsvenskbykommittén* provided in 1931–1938 all the remaining in Sweden colonists by farms. The delay in the departure of colonists who would return to the Soviet Union has been associated with the legal procedure of the state allowance. The issue of funding of re-emigration was discussed by the Swedish Parliament.²⁹⁹ The *Socialstyrelse* (National Board of Health and Welfare) denied about 30 applications on funding of travel expenses made by the Old Swedes who already accepted the citizenship of Sweden. The Swedish government explained the former residents of the Stalinist dictatorship that:

Like any citizen of Sweden, you dispose of complete freedom and – under personal responsibility – you can travel to any foreign country, in what you want, so you will not encounter any obstacles on the Swedish side to leave the country at any time and return at own expense to the Soviet Union.³⁰⁰

The emigration from Scandinavia in the Soviet Union was not anything unusual. In 1926–1936 Sweden had left about 400 Swedish workers, the so called *Kirunasvenskar*.³⁰¹ In early 1930s on the direct ferry line between Stockholm and Leningrad worked two companies, one Soviet and another one Swedish. Through Sweden about 15,000 of Finnish emigrants from North America immigrated to Soviet Karelia.³⁰² Transportation of American Finns from the port of Gothenburg and then to Arkhangelsk carried out by the Swedish Shipping Company.³⁰³

All practical matters of organizing the re-emigration from the Soviet side were responsibility of the consul Vladimir Smirnov and the ambassador Vik-

²⁹⁸ V. P. M. över Gammalsvenskbykommitténs Nationalinsamling den 4/4 1930, Socialstyrelsen Handlingar angående utlänningsärenden 1920-1938. Handlingar rörande Gammalsvenskbyborna 1929-1931. F II:2. 1402. NAS.

²⁹⁹ *Riksdagens protokoll vid lagtima riksmötet år 1930, Första kammaren*, Stockholm: Riksdagen, 1930, 104-120.

³⁰⁰ Socialstyrelsen. Handlingar angående utlänningsärenden 1920-1938. Handlingar rörande Gammalsvenskbyborna 1929-1931. F II:2. 1402. NAS.

³⁰¹ Eneberg, Kaa, *Förnekelsens barn: svenskarna som drog österut*, Uddevalla, 2003, 135-146.

³⁰² Такала И. Р. “В поисках Эльдорадо. Североамериканские финны в довоенной Карелии”, *Вопросы истории Европейского Севера*. Петрозаводск, 1993, 91–110; Кангаспуру М. “Финская эпоха советской Карелии”, *В семье единой: Национальная политика партии большевиков и ее осуществление на Северо-Западе России в 1920–1950-е годы*. Петрозаводск, 1998, 123–156; Golubev, Alexey, Takala, Irina, *The search for a socialist El Dorado: Finnish immigration to Soviet Karelia from the United States and Canada in the 1930s*, Michigan State University Press: East Lansing, 2013.

³⁰³ Коллонтай А. *Дипломатические дневники*, 88.

tor Kopp.³⁰⁴ Kopp, ethnic German from Crimea and former Soviet ambassador to Sweden, prepared the report for the Kremlin about Old Swedes. Having perused all the circumstances of the matter he proposed “to let in the Soviet Union this group of colonist with the compulsory condition of the financial aid to be provided by the Swedish government”.³⁰⁵ Indeed, the Swedish government funded the return of the colonists back to the USSR. Before the giving permission to leave Sweden for the second group of colonists the Swedish government wanted to see how the first group of returnees settled down in Gammalsvenskby. Nevertheless left Swedish and the Soviet press launched a propaganda company, claiming that the Old Swedes allegedly detained in capitalist Sweden specifically, not wanting them to return to their socialist homeland.³⁰⁶

The final decision about re-emigration of Old Swedes was taken in Moscow at the very highest level. On 15 June 1930 the Politburo of the VKP(b) led by Stalin responded positively to Kollontai’s request “about letting in 40 Swedish colonists”.³⁰⁷ However, the visa issuing by Vladimir Smirnov to the colonists who already adopted Swedish citizenship was accompanied by issuing consular certificates that entering the USSR by the Swedish colonists had been approved only “on condition of their benevolent joining the kol-khoz”.³⁰⁸

The re-emigration by Swedes became a hot topic for the Soviet mass propaganda. TASS informed regularly about the circumstances of return by the Swedes. This news was also covered by the leading newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, and as well as newspapers of Ukraine and the special edition for Soviet Germans *Rote Zeitung*.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁴ Vladimir Smirnov (1876–1952) was an ‘old Bolshevik’ and the consul of the USSR in Stockholm with Swedish as a second native language. His mother Wirginia Nygren was Finno-Swedish. Before the 1917 revolution he was university lecturer at Helsingfors University (Helsinki). He was married to Karin Strindberg, the daughter of the famous Swedish writer August Strindberg. Smirnov had good connections within Swedish political and cultural circles. He died in Stockholm. See: Дашков, Ю. *Его знали под именем Паульсон. Документальная повесть о В. М. Смирнове*. Москва: Издательство политической литературы. 1984.

³⁰⁵ Кен О. Н., Рупасов А. И., Самуэльсон Л. *Швеция в политике Москвы. 1930–1950-е годы*. Москва: РОССПЭН, 2005, note 37.

³⁰⁶ Ramstedt, Jonas, *Utsagningsobjekt eller Stamfränder: rapporteringen om Ukrainasvenskar i vänsterpress 1929–1931, ur klass- och nationalitetssynpunkt*,

³⁰⁷ *Политбюро ЦК РКП(б)–ВКП(б). Повестки дня заседаний*. Т. 2. 1930–1939. Москва: РОССПЭН, 2001, № 128.

³⁰⁸ Socialstyrelsen. Handlingar angående utlänningsärenden 1920–1938. Handlingar rörande Gammalsvenskbyborna 1929–1931. F II:2. 1402. NAS.

³⁰⁹ See as example: “Обманутые шведские колонисты хотят вернуться в СССР”, *Правда*, August 12, 1929; “Возвращение старошведов в СССР”, *Правда*, September 14, 1930; “Старошведы возвратились в СССР”, *Правда*, August 24, 1931; “Выселившиеся из СССР шведские крестьяне стремятся обратно”, *Известия*, December 5, 1929; “Rückkehr

The propagandist book ‘Dva goda v Evrope. Pochemu krest’iane sela Staroshvedskogo vernulis’ iz Shvetsii’ (Two years in Europe. Why did peasants of Gammalsvenskby return from Sweden) – was published.³¹⁰ Film studio *Sovkinozhurnal* shoot in 1930 a short-length documentary film ‘Obratno v SSSR’ (Back to the USSR).³¹¹ This topic was attractive enough for Ukrainian filmmaker Alexander Dovzhenko who planned to produce a film telling the story of Old Swedes.³¹² Thus, due to the interest shared by the powerful political forces the routine case of the return of the Old Swedes to the USSR was blown up into the proportions of the big international project.

2.3. Configuration of the new boundaries

2.3.1. A new historical canon and new vision of the future

The point of the international communist movement as to the past and the future of the Swedish colony in the Ukraine were highlighted in the series of Communist publications of 1929–1931. All the texts were addressed in the first instance towards the performers of the new project, i.e. Swedish communists and the Comintern employees. In December 1929 an unknown author from the Comintern made an analytical report *Das Alt-Schwedisches Dorf*.³¹³ In the report the history of the Swedish colony was analysed as a stake for class struggle and exploitation. Rich peasants (*Grossbauer*) like Johan Buskas who owned large plots of land turned the poor peasants (*Kleinbauer*) into their farm-hands, making them working for next to nothing. They were assisted by Lutheran pastor, who also belonged to the exploiters’ class. The 1917 October Revolution annihilated the exploitation, and justice as to the land ownership was set as a rule. The Soviet power lib-

schwedischer Emigranten ein Schlag gegen die pfäffische Konterrevolution”, *Rote Zeitung*, September 5, 1931.

³¹⁰ Васильев Мих. *Два года в Европе. Почему крестьяне села Старошведского вернулись из Швеции*. Ленинград: Прибой, 1931.

³¹¹ ”Обратно в СССР. Выступление в доме крестьянина группы шведов-колонистов вернувшихся из Швеции”, *Совкиножурнал* № 4/267. 1930. *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv kinofotodokumentov* (Russian State Documentary Film and Photo Archives, RGAKFD), file 2107.

³¹² Dovzhenko, Alexander, *The poet as filmmaker. Selected writings*, Marco Carynnyk (ed.), Cambridge: MIT press, 1973, 168.

³¹³ “Das Alt-Schwedische Dorf”, fond 495, opis 31, delo 153, ll. 146–158. RGASPI.

erated the poor Swedish peasants, but capitalistic Sweden turned them into slaves again:

The land was distributed to all in same proportions excluding the priest who was not given land. That was surely the reason for his stomach-aches. That is why the pastor launched propaganda for going to Sweden, but the kulaks were the most interested supporting Party in this matter. In Sweden the victims of the Swedish nationalist propaganda became slaves of the landowners. The Swedish working class and the Communist Party came to the rescue of the cheated peasants. Now the colonists are ready to go back to the Ukraine by foot. If they are given permission to re-emigrate, the kolkhoz will be created there not only for Swedish dwellers of the village, also Germans and Jews will join. The new life will put an end to nationalism and will be based upon principles of the working solidarity and fraternity.³¹⁴

On 23 January 1930 the political bureau of the SKP entrusted the propaganda group with the preparation and publishing of the brochure dedicated to the 'Svenskby's affair'. In the judgment of the political bureau, this edition was supposed "to help our comrades to gain understanding of those matters".³¹⁵ The book 'Svenskbyskandalen' (The Swedish village scandal) was printed in 1930.³¹⁶ Gustav Johansson was the author of the book; he was at the same time a leading left-wing journalist and the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Ny Dag*. Johansson considered the story of the village as the Comintern report did, through the prism of class struggle and the leading position of the clergy in the village. The first months of the colonists in Sweden were seen as an example of capitalist exploitation and bourgeois cynicism. However, notwithstanding their conservatism the poor colonists quickly realized they made a mistake and declared their wish to go back to the USSR. They approached the SKP for help (in fact the Party agitator aimed to make propaganda work among the Ukrainian Swedes). The Party could not leave 'the victims of the nationalist propaganda' without any help and created the *Arbetarnas Svenskbykommitté* (Workers' Swedish Village Committee). The funds were raised for the purchase of a tractor. The first group of colonists already went back to the Ukraine where "the world of old tradition gave place today to kolkhoz in Röd Svenskby, a little part of the great Soviet socialist construction".³¹⁷

After the return the brochure to be used for ideological work was published. The author of propaganda work *Dva goda v Evrope* used an alias

³¹⁴ "Das Alt-Schwedische Dorf", fond 495, opis 31, delo 153, ll. 157–158. RGASPI.

³¹⁵ Protokoll 7. February 23, 1930, f. 4. Protokoll politbyrå 1927–1931, Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna. vol. A 3:1. RE 5/1. ARAB.

³¹⁶ Johansson, Gustav, *Svenskbyskandalen*, Stockholm, Arbetarkultur, 1930.

³¹⁷ Johansson, Gustav, *Svenskbyskandalen*, 35.

Mikhail Vasiliev and most probably, it was Maria Andrievskaia, a journalist of the Soviet peasant magazine *Lapot'*.³¹⁸ The style of the brochure was plain and simple, the booklet was cheap (3 kopecks only), and the print run counted 150,000 copies. Therefore, the target audience was extremely large. The book was made as set of interviews by the author of three peasants who came back, namely Greis Albers, Petter J. Knutas and Alvina Knutas. However, their names in the book were russified. The books contained a lot of false information and errors. However, that was not a concern for the author. The main task of the book was to create a clear Marxist version of the past, present and future of Gammalsvenskby. According to the author, the Swedish colony was founded by the colonists from the metropolitan Sweden as "life in Sweden was hardly possible, famine and poverty one century and a half before drove out from Sweden the first group of desperate and brave men to Russia".³¹⁹ The colony became rich:

If compared to an average Russian village, the Swedish colonists had their own hospital, school, library house and their one national minority village administration. However, notwithstanding this apparent prosperity the hidden class struggle showed in the village. As here, within this little piece of the Soviet land the kulaks were extremely resistant to give up.³²⁰

Under the version by the author, the actual reason for emigration to Sweden was the collectivization and the kulaks were active to struggle against it. In fact, the resolution about emigration and departure of the colonist from the USSR was made before the launch of collectivization campaign in the Kher-son Oblast. The plan for emigration was elaborated by 'the agent of capitalists': pastor Hoas and the kulaks.³²¹ The author employed the commonplace for Soviet propaganda subject of the class struggle in the village. The emigration is considered as a special kind of class struggle, as the reaction of the kulaks to collectivization. The kulaks also had their alliances: the clergyman, religious members of the community and poor but evil men called *podkulachniki*.³²² The stay of colonists in Sweden is depicted in the gloomy and hyperbolized way. The situation of a farm hand in Sweden is almost the

³¹⁸ Масанов И. Ф. *Словарь псевдонимов русских писателей, ученых и общественных деятелей*. Т. 1. Москва 1956, 229.

³¹⁹ Васильев Мих. *Два года в Европе. Почему крестьяне села Старошведского вернулись из Швеции*. Ленинград: Прибой, 1931, 3–4.

³²⁰ Васильев Мих. *Два года в Европе*, 4–5.

³²¹ Васильев Мих. *Два года в Европе*, 5–6.

³²² *Podkulachnik* – a Stalinist neologism means a person aiding the kulaks. This political label was used in the 1930s to designate those poor and middle-wealthy farmers who sided with kulaks in their opposition to collectivization and therefore persecuted by the Soviet regime as class enemies.

same as of an animal. According to Petter J. Knutas, the landowner Axtorp made the Old Swedes to drink water out of the drum filled with the cows' urine. Alvina Knutas told that in Sweden she delivered directly on the farmyard without any obstetrical help, at the same time in Soviet Gammalsvenskby all women were delivering at the local hospital. If needed, they could stay there for a long time, and could afford not work thanks to allowance from the state for bringing up a child.³²³ In Sweden, the colonists became 'slaves' and experienced inhuman drudgery, sleeping being their sole entertainment. Petter J. Knutas conclude: "I left Soviet Russia as a simple, underdeveloped peasant, but in Sweden I became a revolutionary".³²⁴

The author of *Dva goda v Evrope* emphasizes the fact that already being in Sweden the colonists took an active part in the communist movement. For example, the column of Ukrainian Swedes took part in the first of May demonstration in Stockholm in 1931:

The 1st May Day demonstration in Stockholm in 1931 was remarkable by a big banner among numerous posters and banners written in white letters on a red canvas: 'We demand permission to leave Sweden for the Soviet Union!' This banner has got the friendly support of all demonstrators. The banner was carried in front of column of 100 peasants from Gammalsvenskby who gathered in Stockholm from all parts of Sweden, to declare its demand to the government of Sweden to return back to the Soviet Union.³²⁵

Hungarian left political refugee in Sweden László Szücs left a vivid and partly propagandist testimony of the 1931 Stockholm demonstration:

One column of demonstrators carried the banner: 'We demand our return to the Soviet union!' These people came with pitchforks and scythes and sang the Internationale. I joined them. They spoke Swedish and Russian. And they had some copies of the Swedish edition of 'And Quiet Flows the Don' written by Sholokhov. These people were Swedes which it seems since Peter I times lived near Kherson, on the Dnieper River. In 1929, as I learned from them, they fled from collectivization, but now would return back to the USSR. The demonstration's organizer Petter Knutas, farmhand, who joined the Communist Party of Sweden, told me:

'For two years we went there in a vicious circle – in the slavery. Poverty. Powerlessness. Landlessness. And there, on the Dnieper River, we left a true gold coast, excellent humus lands and red flag on the village council house. How the devil has brought us here – do not ask. Foolishly, leave the life on

³²³ Васильев Мих. *Два года в Европе*, 13.

³²⁴ Васильев Мих. *Два года в Европе*, 11.

³²⁵ Васильев Мих. *Два года в Европе*, 13.

the banks of the Dnieper; we went to look dead in Sweden. The capitalists would make us knuckle under here. But two Russians helped us recover’.

‘Who are these Russian?’

‘This is Gogol with his ‘Taras Bulba’ and Sholokhov with his ‘And Quiet Flows the Don’ – replied Petter Knutas and continued:

‘Here, in the slavery and poverty, we read these books again, and realized that we missing home, our true home – the USSR’.³²⁶

The aim of the socialist construction was allegedly formulated by the Old Swedes who returned to the USSR in the address ‘To the workers of the Soviet Union and the whole world!’ in which the Old Swedes promised, “to correct a big mistake made under the influence of the priest letters and kulaks propaganda and to struggle together with all the kolkhoz peasantry for the total collectivization, for the liquidation of kulaks as a class”.³²⁷ The aspiration to share the ‘bitter experience’ of emigration with the workers of the USSR was emphasized in a special way. In the end of the address according to the norms of the Soviet political culture of that, time toasts for the Party, its leader comrade Stalin and the world revolution by the proletariat were all written. In this way, the creation of the kolkhoz was the price the colonists had to pay for their mistake. On August 24, 1931 on the front page of *Pravda* a large article ‘Old Swedes have returned to the USSR’ was published. The leading Party newspaper cited the address ‘To the workers of the Soviet Union and the whole world!’ and described the stay of Old Swedes in Sweden as two years of ‘humiliation and political powerlessness’. *Pravda* stressed that “now the Swedish colonists would prove their loyalty to the Soviet land by the active construction of Swedish kolkhoz”.³²⁸

Upon return of the first group of Swedes to the village in January 1930, in the premises of the club (in the building of the former Swedish church), an international meeting was arranged with German and Jewish neighbours. Swedish communist Paul Söderman (‘comrade Lindroos’) opened the meeting. Next, who took the floor was Petter J. Knutas, admitted into the members of the Communist Party in Sweden. The speakers repeated the main thesis of the Party instructions, expressing their confidence in forthcoming return of the remaining colonists excluding kulaks to their Motherland. The farmer and member of the Communist party of Sweden, Woldemar Utas said in particular:

³²⁶ Прийма К. И. *Тихий Дон сражается*. Ростов-на-Дону, 1983, 352.

³²⁷ Васильев Мих. *Два года в Европе*, 16.

³²⁸ “Старошведы возвратились в СССР”, *Правда*, August 24, 1931.

For a short time being in Sweden we have on our own skin experienced what the capitalist exploitation is. Now we truly understand that only the Soviet government and Communist Party are our friends ... We will make everything to help the Party to correct the mistake we have committed.³²⁹

Then the representatives of the German and Jewish populations of Gammalsvenskby village council took the floor, welcomed the return of Swedish colonists to home. The tone of a mistake being committed by immigration to Sweden was used in the short-length film 'Back to the USSR'. The subtitles claimed that the Swedes wanted "to correct our mistake we took decision to go back to the Ukraine with a view of creating the first Swedish kolkhoz".³³⁰

Thus, the ideas made widespread by the Soviet propaganda contained the following principles of the future organization of Röd Svenskby:

- foundation of kolkhoz as non-alternative socio-economic basis for all Swedish villagers, which was to function as an outpost of solid collectivization of the southern Ukraine;
- cultural revolution, where the values and customs of traditional agrarian society were turned upside down;
- leading role of Swedish Communist Party and the Comintern in the construction of the socialist Gammalsvenskby.

2.3.2. A new administrative and geographical landscape

The changing of the names of the settlements was the important instrument of the Soviet politics. New names were symbolic ones and served as a core for building a new Soviet identity. The Bolsheviks actively used the practice of the changing names of the settlements, especially if those names were connected with the *ancien régime*. In 1924, the capital city of the former Russian Empire was renamed into Leningrad (City of Lenin), despite the fact that Lenin neither was born there, nor grew up. It is well known that the old name of the city was associated with the names of Saint Peter and Peter I. The same year an industrial centre of the Southern Ukraine Iuzovka named after Welsh businessman and founder of the city John Hughes was renamed

³²⁹ Юнгштурм "Тільки радвлда й компартія – наши друзі. Шведські емігранти вернулися до Старошведська", *Наддніпрянська Правда* (NP), January 21, 1930.

³³⁰ "Обратно в СССР. Выступление в доме крестьянина группы шведов-колонистов вернувшихся из Швеции", *Совкиножурнал* № 4/267. 1930. *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv kinofotodokumentov* (RGAKFD), file 2107.

to be Stalino. In 1926 the other centre of the Southern Ukraine – Ekaterinoslav (literally Glory of Catherine II) was renamed Dnipropetrovsk. A number of other imperial geographical names in southern Ukraine were renamed as well: Konstantinograd renamed to Krasnograd; Alexandrovsk – Zaporizhia, Elisavetgrad – Zinov'evsk (in honour of Zinov'ev, a Soviet Party leader); Olviopol – Pervomaisk and Bakhmut – Artemivsk (in honour of Artem, a Bolshevik revolutionary figure).

Since 1926, the Swedish name of the village, Gammalsvenskby, got an official recognition and was used by the local authorities besides the Ukrainian name of the village. However, the historical name included the adjective “old”, and that was not suitable in the light of the construction of new world. On 5 February 1931 the newspaper of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine *Radians'ke selo* in the article ‘Pane Hooz vasha sprava prohrana’ (Mister Hoas, your action is lost) informed that Swedes came back to the Ukraine not to rebuild the historical Gammalsvenskby, but to create a modern Red Swedish Commune.³³¹

On 16 February the same newspaper in the brief article ‘Staro-Shvedsk'ke stae Chervono-Shvedsk'kym’ (Gammalsvenskby becomes Röd Svenskby) wrote that at the session of the village soviet of Gammalsvenskby the decision to change the name of the village.³³² The Swedish communist press also popularised the new name of the colony.³³³ On 21-22 March 1931 *Ny Dag* published the reportage series ‘Röda Svenskby är stadd i snabb utveckling’ (Röd Svenskby is under rapid development) describing the successes of communist construction and the Soviet nationalities policy towards Ukrainian Swedes.³³⁴ In the letters to the Secretariat for Scandinavian Countries, the secretary of the Party unit of Gammalsvenskby Edvin Blom wrote the return postal address in Russian in the following way: *USSR, Beryslav rayon, Red Swedish village*.³³⁵ The decision about changing of the name was taken by the authorities, but according to the Soviet, political culture the initiative should had come from below. The very first time a new, revolutionary name

³³¹ “Пане Гооз ваша справа програна!” *Радянське село* (Radians'ke selo), February 5, 1931.

³³² “Старо-Шведське стає Червоно-Шведським.” *Радянське село* (Radians'ke selo), February 16, 1931.

³³³ See: “Röda Svenskby är stadd i snabb utveckling”, *Ny Dag*, den 21 februari 1931; “Svensk sovjetarbetare berättar om Röda Svenskby just nu”, *Ny Dag*, den 4 april 1931; “Röda Svenskby hälsar SKP”, *Ny Dag*, den 14 maj 1932; “Kamrat Blom berättar om Sovjets land”, *Stormklockan*, nr. 7 (1932), 2.

³³⁴ “Röda Svenskby är stadd i snabb utveckling”, *Ny Dag*, den 21 mars 1931, [forts.] den 22 mars 1931.

³³⁵ Personal file 99 – Karl Andersson (Андерсон Карл), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943), RGASPI.

appears in the book 'Two Years in Europe'. To answer the final remark by the author: "The address should be written Kherson region, Staroshvedskoe". The Swedish colonists allegedly confidently replied: "No, that's wrong; you should write Krasnoshvedskii kolkhoz".³³⁶

However, the initial wishes of the colonists were corrected. Taking into account the mission of the Swedish communists, the kolkhoz got the name of the Swedish Communist Party. The choice of the name for the collective farm was not accidental. The chosen name was meant to emphasize the special status of the kolkhoz, the activities of which have been carried out under the auspices of the international communist movement. It should be noted that the new name of the village disappeared along with the international communist project and from 1934 to 1945 in all known sources, the historical name of the village *Staroshvedskoe* reappeared. In addition to the name, the village was given back its administrative status of the national Swedish village council, the only one within the Ukraine and the Soviet Union. This was a breach of the Ukrainian law, as the minimum demographic norm for creating of the national council were 500 persons.³³⁷ At the same time the number of the Swedes who came back, including also the families of the Swedish communists did not exceed 300 persons. The like decision was dictated by the political importance of the project, as well as by the hope to attract new members to the Swedish colony. In 1930–1932, an active correspondence was carried out between the Old Swedes who went back to the USSR and those who preferred to stay in Sweden. For example, Petter J. Knutas wrote the following in the letter to Andreas Annas (30 November 1931):

I live a hundred times better than I lived in Sweden. I am glad to be free from the Swedish plague. We are working in our kolkhoz or artel as we call it. Damn priests continue to poison the people and those who are ignorant still believe them, but they will never deceive us again. We have a cinema with sessions four times a month and we pay only seven rubles 50 kopecks from the whole village ... At October Revolution Day we had a holiday, we organized a banquet in the church, roasted two calves, and then watched movies. We need more workers. Come back, because we are building socialism, even for those who remained in Sweden. Welcome home!

Andreas Annas
Röd Svenskby
Swedish Communist Party kolkhoz.³³⁸

³³⁶ Васильев Мих. *Два года в Европе*, 16.

³³⁷ Глинский А. Б. *Национальные меньшинства на Украине*, 31.

³³⁸ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 60–61.

Before 1932, the letters of the Soviet Swedes to their village mates in Sweden were describing the successes of the new life and contained an open call to return to the home.

2.3.3. Creating a new hierarchy

The status of the national Swedish village council responded well to the Soviet politics of indigenization. This politics provided in the USSR since 1923 gave advantages to the representatives of the ethnic minorities to occupy the administrative positions within the framework of the created national autonomies. In 1926 in Gammalsvenskby the Swedish village council was created, the first one and the only one in the USSR. In this way for the first time in its history, the Swedish colony was administratively separated from the neighbouring German settlements and got an explicit ethnic status. This enabled Swedes to occupy all the administrative positions and, which is even more important, to take and represent decisions taken at the local level. All the correspondence of the inhabitants of Gammalsvenskby with the Soviet authorities concerning the emigration to Sweden was drawn up as official requests of the local organ of power to the regional and central authorities. Moreover, pastor Kristoffer Hoas and farmer Johan Buskas who went to Sweden to prepare the emigration were granted a special permission certified by the local authorities and enabling them to act as the representatives of the local Soviet authority of Gammalsvenskby.

Upon return to the USSR, the status of the Swedish national council was re-established in disruption of the norms of the law now in force. The power positions were distributed between the Gammalsvenskby Swedes and the Swedish communists who came to the village to intensify the construction of socialism. In this way, ethnic Swedes took again the leading posts in Gammalsvenskby. The Swedish communist Edvin Blom became the secretary of the Party unit and the chairman of the village council. Johan Utas was elected the chairman of the kolkhoz; soon he was replaced by the communist Petter J. Knutas. The secret agent of the GPU Alexander Knutas became the secretary of the village council. Swedish communist Karl Andersson became the agronomist of the machine and tractor station (MTS) of Beryslav, rendering services to the kolkhoz. Hugo A. Lauenstein was appointed the head of the village reading room. He subscribed to German Communist magazines and conducted political education of the colonists, in Swedish.³³⁹

Series of other remarkable differences can be detected in the distribution of power in the Swedish village before the emigration and after it. Before

³³⁹ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85, ark. 122.

1929 in the village, there were no members of the Communist Party and Komsomol. The inspection carried out in August 1928 by TsKNM noted that there is no interest towards the socialist construction on behalf of the village dwellers and children are under strong religious influence. The inspection also noted that the inhabitants were highly influenced by pastor Kristoffer Hoas.³⁴⁰ Hoas was the official representative of the Red Cross of Sweden in Ukraine. Through him, all the alimentary and monetary assistance from Sweden was distributed in Gammalsvenskby. The Swedish Red Cross also supported the village dispensary. As a commissioner of the Red Cross, the pastor carried out negotiations with all the Swedish public servants coming into the village as well as with the local authorities. The attempt to limit the pastor authority was not successful and after the diplomatic intervention, the local authorities had to bring him back all his real estate. Under the farming, economy conditions the rich peasants, owners of the mills and biggest plots of land exercised considerable influence on the poor part of the population. After the re-emigration, the situation changed drastically. The pastor did not return to the USSR, the church was closed and changed into a club. The main part of the colonists preferred to stay in Sweden. While staying in Sweden several villagers joined the Party influenced by the agitators of the Swedish communist party. Woldemar Utas, Petter J. Knutas, Petter E. Utas and Irja Buskas were among them.³⁴¹ In 1931 the Party cell of Gammalsvenskby had 16 members.³⁴²

The important task of the Soviet politics was the preparation of the young shift of the Communist contractors.³⁴³ In the short term, the Komsomol unit was created in the village. The new Komsomol members were offered high-ranking positions within the local hierarchy. Lydia Utas became head of the dairy farm. Sigfrid Utas was appointed teacher at the Swedish school. The sport interest group also worked under his guidance. Sigfrid Utas became the first champion of the Ukraine in highway cycle track.³⁴⁴ The tractor driver Johannes Knutas got a position of a team-leader; he also became a head of the local section of Osoviakhim – the Soviet paramilitary youth organization.³⁴⁵ In this way throughout a very short period, the authorities have

³⁴⁰ DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 558, ark.85-94; fond R-2, opys 4, sprava 105, ark. 21.

³⁴¹ Personal file 231 – Irja Buskas (Бускас Юрий), Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943 (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943) RGASPI.

³⁴² ”Röda Svenskby är stadd i snabb utveckling”, *Ny Dag*, [forts.] den 22 mars 1931.

³⁴³ Прилуцький В. І. ”Молодь у суспільно-політичному житті УСРР (1928 - 1933 pp.)”, *Український історичний журнал*, 2002:4, 60–81.

³⁴⁴ Анатолий Андреев, ”Херсонец – первый чемпион по велоспорту”, *Гривна-СВ* (Hryvna-SV), February 17, 2006.

³⁴⁵ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 268.

changed the social hierarchy of the Swedish community, where the active participants in the communist movement found themselves in the most favourable situation.

In accordance with the Bolshevik program of *smychka* the Soviet government through their consul in Stockholm Vladimir Smirnov offered Swedish communists to make “list out of 15 Swedish comrades wishing to enter the USSR for building there the first Swedish kolkhoz”.³⁴⁶ There is no information whether the list was ever made. But a group of Swedish communists eventually came to Gammalsvenskby. This group included Comintern employees who came to Gammalsvenskby for different kind of inspections, and students of the Comintern schools sent to the Swedish kolkhoz to undergo their summer scholarship. Some of them were sent directly by the SKP. There were also some impostors, Swedish communists who came to the village on their own from the other regions of the USSR, after having learnt the information from newspapers. The most part of them came into the village together with their families or created families in the village. The archival records reveal the following Swedish communists who worked in the village: Edvin Blom, Karl Andersson, Hugo Albert Lauenstein, Karl Ture Gräås, Kasper Gustafsson, Hildur Gustafsson, Karl Sigfrid Holmström, Gunnar Blomberg, Erik Karlsson (party nickname Karl Johansson), Paul Söderman (party nickname Karl Nils Lindroos or Comrade Lindroos) and Erik Petersson. Two well-known SKP members William Heikkinen (party nickname Edward Wallin) and Björn Hallström (party nickname Red Björn) also planned to settle in Gammalsvenskby, but they did not reach the village.

Young student at the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West in Moscow Gunnar Blomberg undertook an internship in Gammalsvenskby. In the spring of 1929 he was sent to the colony for the campaigning against the colonist’s emigration to Sweden. Then he worked in the North Caucasus with Finnish and Swedish working immigrants from the United States. In early 1931, Blomberg was again sent to Gammalsvenskby to assist the first group of re-emigrants. In 1977, he remembered:

45 Old Swedes returned home and received from the Soviet state back their houses, as well as all necessary staff. Soon, they were joined by other settlers. Soviet authorities helped them with seed, machinery and other things. Those people who were settled in Gammalsvenskby before [Jewish colonists] were forced to cede them [Old Swedes] their homes. Thus, the Soviet government

³⁴⁶ ”Autobiografi för Karl Oskar Andersson”, DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85, ark. 100; *Smychka* – a Stalinist neologism, which means linkage between city and village.

was very humane and friendly, despite the fact that the colonists were the cause of many troubles.³⁴⁷

The biographies of the communists who worked in Gammalsvenskby show that the Comintern and the SKP carefully selected the best candidates. Erik Karlsson and Paul Söderman originated from peasant families, a rare case for the members of the SKP.³⁴⁸ Karl Andersson was an experienced agronomist, who worked for long periods of time in Denmark.³⁴⁹ The communist Hugo Albert Lauenstein was a blacksmith, and this profession was in high demand in the kolkhoz.³⁵⁰

Swedes who came to the village from Karelia work before in the greenhouse centre near Petrozavodsk. They learnt from the Soviet press about the socialist project in Gammalsvenskby and came to the village along with the families independently of each other. They were Edvin Blom, Ture Gräs and Karl Sigfrid Holmström. All of them emigrated from Sweden to Karelia where under guidance of the Finno-Swedish communist Edward Gylling when the construction of the Soviet Nordic republic was under way.³⁵¹ They

³⁴⁷ Hermansson, C. H., *Kommunister: en intervjubok. Första boken*, Stockholm, Arbetarkultur, 1977, 63-64.

³⁴⁸ Personal file 84 – Paul Söderman (Сёдерман Пауль), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943) RGASPI; Söderman Paul, UA 6/1, Biografica 1933–1953. F12. Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna. ARAB; Personal file 9 (vol. 1-2) – Erik Karlsson (Карлссон Эрик), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943). RGASPI.

³⁴⁹ Personal file 99 – Karl Andersson (Андерсон Карл), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943), RGASPI; "Autobiografi för Karl Oskar Andersson", fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85. DAKhO.

³⁵⁰ Personal file 341 – Hugo Albert Lauenstein (Лауенштайн Гюго Альберт), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943), RGASPI.

³⁵¹ Edvard Gylling (1881–1938) was a Swede from Finland. Finnish and Soviet politician. Member of the Social Democratic Party of Finland. Class comrade and friend of Otto Kuusinen. In 1910–1918 – Associate Professor of Statistics at Helsingfors University (Helsinki). Member of Finland's Parliament in 1908–1910 and 1911–1918. Head of the Central Bank of Finland (1918). Since 1920 in the Soviet Union. Head of the Karelian autonomous socialist republic. In 1935–1937 – Research Fellow at Institute of International Economics in Moscow. He was arrested during the Great Terror and executed June 14, 1938. About him: Eneberg, Kaa, *Knuts ask och kejsaren av Karelen: om den svenska Rysslandsfebern*, Stockholm: Hjalmarson & Högberg, 2007; Sahlström, Anna-Lisa, *Den sista fursten: en berättelse om Edvard Gylling*, Helsingfors: Söderström, 2009; About the Stalinist experiment in Karelia, see: Baron, Nick, *Soviet Karelia: politics, planning and terror in Stalin's Russia, 1920-1939*, London: Routledge, 2007.

were the members of Swedish Party cell in Petrozavodsk, created in 1923 by the Finno-Swedish communist Arthur Usenius.³⁵² Karl Sigfrid Holmström published a number of articles in the Swedish press about the success of the Soviet socialist construction, agriculture and gender policy.³⁵³

The Stockholm Party organization sent to head the socialist construction in Röd Svenskby the chairman of the *Arbetarnas Svenskbykommitté* Kasper Gustafsson, who had been working with the Ukrainian Swedes since the very moment of their arriving to Sweden. His wife Hildur Gustafsson, also a Party member, was supposed to lead the women movement in the village:

Our party organization in Stockholm suffered considerable losses. Two of our oldest and most loyal party comrades, Kasper and Hildur Gustafsson, emigrated. Affected by the economic crisis Comrade G. was thrown from the workplace and could not find work in the 'People's Home' [Sweden]. But our friends in the Soviet Union have not forgotten, with what courage a couple of Gustafsson in the Bolshevik style rushed into the breach to defend the rights of the Old Swedes. Taken this into consideration, they were asked to move to Röd Svenskby, in order to participate in socialist construction, the case for which they have been dreaming for years. Kasper left Sweden first. And on Wednesday October 21st came the turn of Comrade Hildur. Many party members came to the ferry to say goodbye. But it was not sad farewell. Yes, we lost two fine comrades, but we know that they are very enthusiastic and do all the best on their new positions to implement the idea of socialism. In this work we wish them only one thing – good luck!³⁵⁴

However, by the time Gustafssons arrived to Gammalsvenskby, the Swedish communists from Karelia had already taken all the senior positions. As a result of the conflict between Kasper Gustafsson and Edvin Blom, the Gustafsson family couple left Gammalsvenskby within several months for Leningrad.³⁵⁵

³⁵² Arthur Usenius (1888–1937) was a Swede from Finland. Finnish, North American, Swedish and Soviet leftist. Member of the Social Democratic Party of Finland. Member of Finland's Parliament in 1917–1918. Vladimir Lenin illegally lived in Usenius' apartments in Helsinki in 1917. Since 1920 – in the Soviet Union. One of the leaders of the Soviet Karelian autonomy. In 1929-1930 – Head of Karelian Electro State Company. He was arrested in 1935 and executed November 27, 1937.

³⁵³ Gustafson, *Svenska sovjetemigranter*, 47-50.

³⁵⁴ "Till Röda Svenskby för att delta i socialismens byggande", *Arbetar-Kvinnornas Tidning*, 1931:5-6, 8.

³⁵⁵ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85, ark. 81.

2.4. Holodomor and the strategy of collective resistance

Within the created totalitarian system, the power counted on the quick and radical change of the collective identity of the peasants. In 1930 in the work 'K voprosam agrarnoi politiki v SSSR' (On the matter of the agrarian policy in the USSR) Stalin emphasized that the "collectivization will create a new type of a peasant which psychology ploughed up by the tractor".³⁵⁶ However, the resistance of the Swedish community amended this process.

It seemed from the beginning that the Swedish colonists ideally suited for the construction of the prosperous kolkhoz. Re-emigrants did not have their own land, cattle and real estate. In this way, the material ground for resistance to the collectivization process was absent. Consequently, the Swedes lacked kulaks and there was no need for dispossession and deportation. The state helped the Swedish community and credit of 85,000 rubles was allotted for redemption of the houses and their subsequent repairs, as well as purchase of the cattle. Thanks to the Comintern, the kolkhoz received the team of specialists. The tractors and the trucks of the Beryslav MTS were available for the kolkhoz. Several young Swedes were apprenticed free of charge as tractor and harvester drivers. The excellent black earth of the Kherson area and the availability of Dnieper River for irrigation provided for the high economic efficiency of the agricultural production. The Swedish communist press painted an optimistic picture of the future of Röd Svenskby. For example, in the reportage from April 1931 there were the following enthusiastic lines:

The wide and long street runs between the white and beautiful mansions. In the centre of the village is the former church, Hoas dopey temple, but on its tower is the red flag now, a symbol of new times above the Nya Svenskby. Swedish kolkhoz has got a name of Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti. The kolkhoz owns 765 acres of land. The state allocated a loan of 100,000 rubles for the purchase of livestock and agricultural machinery. The district government has provided an agronomist and tractors, as well as seeds for the next harvest. The former church is today the people's house, which is equipped with a stage, theatre props and the most modern cinema. In the village there is a reading room with a Swedish library, a Swedish school, shop, medical centre, department of the Red Help and Osoviakhim. The next is a huge program of planting vineyards and orchards and the electrification of the village. 'Never again Sweden'— say those who returned in waiting of the remaining 200 people still held by the government of Ekman [Carl Gustaf Ekman].³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ Сталин И. В. *К вопросам аграрной политики в СССР: Речь на конференции аграрников-марксистов 27 декабря 1929 г.* Москва: Государственное Издательство, 1930, 8.

³⁵⁷ "Svensk sovjetarbetare berättar om Röda Svenskby just nu", *Ny Dag*, den 4 april 1931, 1, 8.

Barely two years later, another Swedish communist who worked in Röd Svenskby expressed a more pessimistic view:

The machines and the tractors crack one after another, there are no spare parts, and fuel is scarce. The soil has been exhausted. The plan for the state grain procurement is not practicable. Instead of horses, hungry cows are used; as a result, the kolkhoz obtains a quantity of milk in the range of 12–13 litres per day from 20 cows. The food is beyond criticism. The people live on the verge of famine and work only under the most rigid control.³⁵⁸

Without own pastor a part of Gammalsvenskby Swedes started actively visiting a German Lutheran church of the neighbouring village of Zmiivka/Schlangendorf. This is an interesting fact, taking into account the old painful conflict between the Swedish and German parishioners who fought for the divide of the parish since the middle of the 19th century. After the arrest in 1933 of the last German pastor Friedrich Lang, the role of the spiritual preacher was assumed by Swedish women Alvina Hinas. In 1935, she was arrested for religious propaganda. In 1937 she was arrested again and executed.³⁵⁹

Notwithstanding the fact that the young people appreciated the cinema, many persons of the older generation were reluctant to enter a new club, as they believed in “the ghosts who settled there”.³⁶⁰ The new Swedish school also had some problems. To struggle against religion the school of Gammalsvenskby like other schools was open on Sunday and on Lutheran holidays. However, the parents tried to keep the children home those dates using any pretext for that. None of the three teachers of the former elementary school of Gammalsvenskby went back from Sweden. No professional teachers could be prepared for the sole Swedish school within the USSR. No Soviet textbooks in Swedish were available. The Swedish communists Edvin Blom and Kasper Gustafsson as well their oldest daughters Siri Blom and Vilma Gustafsson worked as schoolteacher without any pedagogical education. Later on the graduates of the 7-years school Sigfrid Utas and Maria Utas (nee Terenina) joined them. In the beginning of 1932 while visiting Moscow Blom offered a teacher’s job to one of the most educated members of the SKP Björn Hallström. After becoming unemployed in Sweden, Hallström sent a letter with the request of his appointment as a teacher of the Swedish school in Röd Svenskby to Comintern to the address of Allan

³⁵⁸ “Svenskarna leva på svältgränsen i Gammalsvenskby”, *Borås tidning*, den 4 augusti 1933.

³⁵⁹ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 20-21.

³⁶⁰ Interview with Astrid Lauenstein Bragnum (born 1936), Stockholm. May 10, 2008.

Walenius.³⁶¹ But the older Party comrades talked him out of this idea referring the famine in the Ukraine not covered by the newspapers. Gustav Johansson told Hallström that “the picture he would witness could make a counter-revolutionary out of him, as he would doubt the right of the Soviet policy and of the Communism”.³⁶² In this way, the Swedish school turned out to be without any qualified teachers and necessary literature and could not function normally. The first inspection of the new school found its work unsatisfactory. The children were taught with the use of the old pre-revolution literature, reading Swedish books with the portraits of the Swedish Royal family. The pupils could only speak Swedish, and did not understand either Ukrainian or Russian:

When I [inspector] asked one student: “Why did not you take and do not read a Soviet newspaper instead”. The answer translated by his teacher was: ‘We are tired to read about socialist competition and polytechnic schools.’³⁶³

As many other collective farms of the Kherson area the Swedish kolkhoz did not fulfil the exaggerated target for the State grain quota of 1932. As a result the kolkhoz of the *Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti* was put on a ‘black list’. Whole stock of grain from the kolkhoz and the households, including the sown fund for the next crop of 1933 was confiscated. The deliveries of alimentation to the local shop were stopped. The kolkhoz members stopped to receive products in exchange for workday units. The specialists servicing the kolkhoz ceased to be paid wages.³⁶⁴ In the end of 1932, the famine came to the village. People survived eating potatoes, fishing in the river and hunting for gophers in the steppe. Virtually all the valuable goods brought from Sweden were sold: bicycles, sewing machines, clothes.³⁶⁵ Under the conditions of the *Holodomor* the residents of Gammalsvenskby were confronted with the dilemma whether they should seek assistance with the Soviet power or in Sweden?

The members of the local Party unit approached the regional committee of the party in Odessa with the request of being rendered emergency assis-

³⁶¹ Personal file 284 – Björn Hallström (Гальстрём Бирн), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943), RGASPI.

³⁶² Hallström, Björn, *Jag trodde på Stalin*, Stockholm, Harrier, 1952, 72-73.

³⁶³ “Голова районного бюро комуністичного дитячого руху Гімервер про роботу шкіл Бериславського району”, 25.07.1932. DAKhO, fond 306, opys 1, sprava 279.

³⁶⁴ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359.

³⁶⁵ Interview with Matilda Norberg (born 1919), Roma. August 1, 2008.

tance to the village on the verge of famine. The request was refused.³⁶⁶ That meant that the Swedish communists were not able to help the Gammalsvenskby.

Records of local authorities present a grim picture of mass famine in the Kherson area. In the neighbouring with Gammalsvenskby Ukrainian village Tyahinka by spring 1933 there were cases of swelling pupils from hunger, 50 percent of children did not attend school.³⁶⁷ In the village of Zahradivka April 1933 “there were 13 unburied corpses ... people walking around with bags and busy collecting food and collect grass. They killed and ate all the dogs and cats ... in the house of Ms Fedorchenko the corps of dead child found”.³⁶⁸ Despite the total silence of famine and cannibalism in the Soviet media to hide cases of mass death of people in the neighbouring villages was impossible. In their letters to relatives in Sweden the colonists reported that great hunger completely extinct Ukrainian village of Mala Lepetykha.³⁶⁹ In 1933, in this village really were cases of mass death from starvation.³⁷⁰ In a conversation with a member of the Beryslav district party committee, comrade Kabakova, Hugo A. Lauenstein said that “he does not like the Soviet regime. The authorities arrested people – is it communism and freedom? People are dying by dozens of famine – is this democracy?”³⁷¹

The conflicts between the Swedish communists started. Kristina Sigalet witnessed a quarrel between Hugo A. Lauenstein and Edvin Blom. Lauenstein cursed Blom and said that “the worms will have eaten him alive for luring them into such a terrible place”.³⁷² As a result of a quarrel with Edwin Blum Hildur and Kasper Gustafsson with children left the colony and went to Leningrad. Far from idyllic relations were also relations between the communists arrived from Sweden and colonists. Farmers rightly criticized the communists occupied all the administrative positions in parasitism: “paunchy but do not want to work”.³⁷³ The colonists respected only the Swedish communists working within agriculture – agronomist Andersson and blacksmith Lauenstein. Old Swedes critiqued the active participation of

³⁶⁶ *Німці в Україні 20–30-ти рр. XX ст.* Збірник документів. Кер. кол. упоряд. Л. В. Яковлева, В. В. Чирко. Київ: Інститут історії України НАН України, 1994, № 82.

³⁶⁷ Піддубняк В. Г. *Жниво Молоха: Голод 1932–1933 рр. на Херсонщині*. Херсон, 2006, 58.

³⁶⁸ Піддубняк В. Г. *Жниво Молоха: Голод 1932–1933 рр. на Херсонщині*, 54.

³⁶⁹ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 262.

³⁷⁰ Піддубняк В. Г. *Жниво Молоха: Голод 1932–1933 рр. на Херсонщині*, 58.

³⁷¹ Personal file 99 – Karl Andersson (Андерсон Карл), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943), RGASPI.

³⁷² Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 264.

³⁷³ Interview with Matilda Norberg (born 1919), Roma. August 1, 2008.

the Swedish Communists led by the ‘red devil’ Edvin Blom in the dekulakization of German neighbours.³⁷⁴

As Göran Leth has shown in his study, the mass famine in Ukraine has received considerable attention in the Swedish press. For example only the liberal newspaper *Aftonbladet* published in 1932, about twenty articles on the topic of hunger in the Soviet Union.³⁷⁵ The main source for publications was the German, British and American news agencies. Swedish right-wing and liberal media associated famine with forced collectivization, and stressed the attempts of Soviet regime to conceal all the facts of famine and cannibalism in Ukraine.³⁷⁶ The left-wing media of Sweden, by contrast, denied the famine calling it ‘temporary food shortage.’ The Communist newspaper *Ny Dag* condemned “false publication of bourgeois press”, telling the readers that “the harvest of 1932 in Ukraine – the best in recent years”.³⁷⁷ In 1933 the *Kommunistisk tidskrift* informed the Swedish readers about the great success of collectivisation in Ukraine and the agricultural growth by 74 percent since 1931.³⁷⁸

Both the Swedish communists and Old Swedes sent critical letters to Sweden. On 19 March 1933 on behalf of SKP Gunnar Granlund informed the ECCI that Hugo A. Lauenstein in letters to his mother-in-law “writes openly counter-revolutionary things directed against the Soviet Union and especially against Svenskby”.³⁷⁹ Freelance Alma Braathen visited Gammalsvenskby during her trip to the USSR in July 1932.³⁸⁰ The series of her reportages quite neutral in general were published in Sweden.³⁸¹ However, in her private talks with some dwellers of the village she promised them help in the

³⁷⁴ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 264-265.

³⁷⁵ Leth, Göran, ”Den svenska pressen och Den stora hungern: mänskliga rättigheter i spänningsfältet mellan politik och journalistisk form”, *Kommunismens ansikten: repression, övervakning och svenska reaktioner*, Anu-Mai Köll (ed.), Eslöv: Östlings bokförlag, 2005, 85-140.

³⁷⁶ ”Ryska bönder drivas till svältdöden. Få inga livsmedelskort – kannibalism i Ukraina?”, *Aftonbladet*, den 6 december 1932; ”Sovjet söker dölja nöden. Grusjevskij rapporterade sanningen – och föll i onåd”, *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, den 23 augusti 1933.

³⁷⁷ Leth, Göran, ”Den svenska pressen och Den stora hungern: mänskliga rättigheter i spänningsfältet mellan politik och journalistisk form”, 109.

³⁷⁸ ”Uppbyggandet av kollektivshushåll i Sovjet-Unionen”, *Kommunistisk tidskrift: månadskrift för marxistisk-leninistisk teori och praktik*, 1933, juli-augusti, 117-120.

³⁷⁹ Personal file 341 – Hugo Albert Lauenstein (Лауенштайн Гюго Альберт), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaja partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943), RGASPI.

³⁸⁰ Alma Braathen (1906–1967) was a Swedish journalist. In 1932-1933 – Correspondent of *Vecko-Journalen*. From 1939 to 1967 – Correspondent of *Dagens Nyheter* in the Soviet Union and the Near East. Her penname “Brodjaga” means “vagabond” in Russian. About her: Petersson, Birgit, *Brodjaga - luffare och journalist: en biografi över Alma Braathen*, Gidlund, Möklinta, 2014.

³⁸¹ Braathen, Alma, ”Sanningen om Gammalsvenskby. Vecko-Journalen medarbetare hos dem som övergavs Sverige för Sovjet”, *Vecko-Journalen*, 1932 (45), 22-25, 30.

matter of the re-emigration.³⁸² In the end of 1932 Braathen has published in Swedish press an excerpt from the anonymous letter of Swedish colonist women with distress call from Ukraine:

My best wishes, good mistress, I would ask you to give advice, how we could return again to Sweden, do we need the Swedish permission to enter, or not, however we do not ask for any financial help, and we, our families are willing to go to Sweden by our own costs ... We would never go hungry if They had not taken all the corn from our kolkhoz. The harvest was good this year, but they only demanded more and more corn, collected everything and removed it by the tracks. Even after They have taken out the entire year plan was not implemented, and now we're miserable, sitting without bread and fast. It is so cold outside that the owners do not let the dogs out into the yard, but we, the poor people are forced to go out into the steppe to collect and thresh frostbitten ryegrass.³⁸³

Being in a critical situation the Swedish villagers used a resistance method applied by their forefathers during centuries. It was based on collective legal address to the highest power in case of bad conditions or conflict with local authorities. The method had been used many times by Gammalsvenskby people in the early modern Kingdom of Sweden, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. There are approximately fifteen earlier examples of collective letters to the authorities written from 17th century to 1946 there the Swedish villagers presented various arguments for their sake. Since January 1933, the kolkhoz members started secretly discussing the option of the second emigration to Sweden. They also considered other possibilities. One idea was to ask for help the German Consulate in Odessa. Some Swedes did not believe to the legal emigration to Sweden and opted for the illegal crossing of the Soviet-Romanian border. On one of the meetings, Julius Hansas declared that "I will not die in this kolkhoz as I hope to get to Sweden through Bessarabia".³⁸⁴

Several Swedish women sent the letters to relatives in Sweden with the stories about the critical condition in the village and begging for help. The lines from one of such letters are cited below:

We have sinned against Sweden and Swedes had showed the greatest ingratitude. But we did not know what we did, gripped by a debilitating nostalgia for the native home. There is no food in the village, no kerosene. There are only

³⁸² "Протокол допроса Александра Христиановича Кнутаса 8.03.1933", DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85, ark. 7-8.

³⁸³ Braathen, Alma, "Tjekans hand över Gammalsvenskby", *Vecko-Journalen*, 1933 (19), 21.

³⁸⁴ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 131.

Communist books and other debris at the shop to buy. Yes, if you are Christian, you have to forgive us. Please, think about our innocent little kids.³⁸⁵

As a result, a virtual mass media bomb exploded.³⁸⁶ On 2 March 1933 *Aftonbladet* published an article ‘Djurkadaver och potatisskal mat i Gammalsvenskby’ (Animal carcasses and potato peelings – food in Gammalsvenskby) in which told about “terrible famine and the extremely difficult situation of the indigene inhabitants and Swedish communists”. On 3 March 1933 the oldest conservative daily *Norrköpings Tidningar* published an article ‘Nya nödrop från fränderna i Svenskby’ (New cry for help from the compatriots in Svenskby) strictly criticizing the Communist project.

Mass media scandal was led to the diplomatic interferences. In May 1933 members of the Polish parliament, Ukrainian politicians Milena Rudnitska and Zenon Pelensky sent a letter to the president of the League of Nations, the Norwegian left politician Johan Ludwig Mowinkel. They state that the catastrophe is going on in Soviet Ukraine, the famine having no equal in history. However, the Soviet Union denies the famine and the League of Nations did not take any action. Western-Ukrainian politicians have emphasized that “among the victims of famine are representatives of the peoples of Europe: Swedes, Latvians, Estonians and Poles”.³⁸⁷ Eric Gyllenstierna, the ambassador of Sweden in Moscow approached the German ambassador Fritz von Twardowski with a request to investigate the situation in Gammalsvenskby through the German consulate in Odessa. The Swedish embassy also planned to commission a voyage to Gammalsvenskby by a Norwegian entrepreneur Toller to clarify the real contour of things.³⁸⁸ A threat of the serious international scandal became real for the Kremlin. It should be noted that the USSR denied the existence of the Ukrainian famine, and there was no information available in the Soviet press. The Soviet government was aware of the publications in the Swedish press, most probably through their embassy in Stockholm. On 13 March 1933, the Politburo of the KP(b)U dis-

³⁸⁵ ”Nya nödrop från fränderna i Svenskby”, *Norrköpings Tidningar*, den 3 mars 1933, 7.

³⁸⁶ See: ”Djurkadaver och potatisskal mat i Gammalsvenskby”, *Aftonbladet*, den 2 mars 1933; ”Nya nödrop från fränderna i Svenskby”, *Norrköpings Tidningar*, den 3 mars 1933; ”Gammal-svenskbybor har deporterats av Sovjet! Tjekans process mot svenskättlingarna ny Vickers-affär”, *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, den 3 augusti 1933; ”Ryssarna låta svenskbybor svälta ihjäl. Den svenske agronomens vedermödor”, *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, den 4 augusti 1933; ”Svenskarna leva på svältgränsen i Gammalsvenskby”, *Borås Tidning*, den 4 augusti 1933; Braathen, Alma, ”Tjekans hand över Gammalsvenskby”, *Vecko-Journalen*, 1933 (19), 20-21.

³⁸⁷ Марочко В. І. ”Дипломатія замовчування: Ставлення західноєвропейських держав до Голодомору 1932–1933 рр. в Україні», *Голод-геноцид 1933 року в Україні*. Київ, 2000, 154–158.

³⁸⁸ Diverse biträde åt utläningar Gammal-Svenskby boar, 1930-mars 1956. Del. III. Utrikesdepartementet 1920 års dossiersystem. P 1534. NAS.

cussed the situation in the Swedish colony as a separate item of the agenda of their session. The Odessa party committee was given instruction to urgently take steps with the view of the complete liquidation of the cases of famine in Gammalsvenskby. The chief of Ukrainian GPU Vsevolod Balitsky was commissioned “to take measures on the immediate stopping the leakages of the information about cases of famine in Staroshvedskoe abroad”.³⁸⁹ GPU was always quicker to strike, and already on 8 March, the first arrests were made in the Swedish colony.

In the beginning of March the list of the Swedish villagers who wanted to leave for Sweden, was made in Swedish in two copies and sent from the post offices of cities of Kakhovka and Kherson. The list was addressed to Pastor Kristoffer Hoas. About 60 adult villagers signed the list, including two communists from Sweden: Karl Andersson and Hugo A. Lauenstein. The letter from Kakhovka was caught by GPU and today is kept at the State Archives of Kherson Oblast.³⁹⁰ The letter sent from Kherson reached the addressee and today is kept at the National Archives of Sweden.³⁹¹ The Soviet secret police was totally surprised that the list about re-emigration to Sweden was signed virtually by all the dwellers, including local members of the Communist Party and Komsomol, as well as some communists from Sweden. Petter J. Knutas replied to the GPU investigator Bobal to the question why he, while being a communist, signed such a list: “I signed because there are no supplies to the shop and lately I have been eating potatoes without peeling them, and I don’t have any bread anymore”.³⁹² Mattias Norberg argued “there is no need for kolkhozes, we keep working but we do not have bread, we are hungry, it is better to run an individual farm”.³⁹³ During the interrogation, Alvina Hinas explained the reason why she had signed a list to Sweden as follows: “Yes I signed, because we have no bread to feed children, who all the time cry and ask me for food”.³⁹⁴ Investigators explained such ‘anti-Soviet attitudes’ of the locals by their kulak origin. This explanation was harder to provide in case of the Swedish communists. Thus, the 47-year-old worker and veteran of German revolution a Swedish citizen Hugo

³⁸⁹ ”Постанова політбюро КП(б)У 'Про село Старошведське'. Особлива папка рішень політбюро КП(б)У. Протокол № 106”, *Tsentralny derzhavnyi arkhiv hromadskikh ob'ednan' Ukrainy* (Central State Archives of the Public Organizations of Ukraine) TsDAGO, fond 1, opys 16, sprava 9, ark. 189; Vsevolod Balitsky (1892–1937) – Ukrainian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1913. In 1933–1938 – Head of the GPU/NKVD in Ukraine. He was arrested in July 1937 and executed November 27, 1937. Not rehabilitated.

³⁹⁰ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85, ark. 11-12.

³⁹¹ Diverse biträde åt utläningar Gammal-Svenskby boar, 1930-mars 1956. Del. III. Utrikesdepartementet 1920 års dossiersystem. P 1534. NAS.

³⁹² DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85, ark. 40-41.

³⁹³ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85, ark. 36-37.

³⁹⁴ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 20-21.

A. Lauenstein stated to the GPU investigators: "I signed the list because there was need for that. My personal opinion is that the emigration activities are not criminal ones, moreover, when the villagers starve".³⁹⁵ Karl Andersson who made the list declared "as to me personally, I had no plans to go to Sweden, but here my situation is too bad, I don't get any wages for 3 months and that is why I have to leave".³⁹⁶

In 1933, the Kherson secret police does not practise tortures, however, according to the Swedish Communist Andersson "the mental stress was on the verge of human strength".³⁹⁷ The interrogations took place at night and affected the sleep of all prisoners dumped in the collective jail. Following the principle "who does not work shall not eat" the arrested people were a subject for daily forced labour:

We received 400 grams of bread per day in winter only 150–200 grams and prisoners had to fulfil the prison ration by physical labour. The work took place in the desert, about 7 km from the Kherson prison, and lasted from 5 am to half 10 pm. The way to and from working place was by foot.³⁹⁸

Despite the measures taken by the GPU, the information about arrests in Gammalsvenskby reached Sweden. Magazine *Vecko-Journalen* published an article by Alma Braathen "Tjekans hand över Gammalsvenskby" (The Cheka hand above Gammalsvenskby) with the detailed story of the arrests in the Swedish village.³⁹⁹ On 3 July 1933, *Dagens Nyheter* told about the fate of one of the arrested Swedish communists Karl Andersson. On 3 August 1933, the biggest newspaper of Sweden *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* published a detailed critical report about the GPU trial against Old Swedes under the title: "Gammal-svenskbybor har deporterats av Sovjet! Tjekans process mot svenskättlingarna ny Vickers-affär" (Gammalsvenskby dwellers have been deported by the Soviets! Cheka process against Swedish descendants is the new Vickers trial).⁴⁰⁰ On 4 August 1933 *Borås Tidning* printed a material "Svenskarna leva på svältgränsen i Gammalsvenskby" (Swedes live on the brink of starvation in Gammalsvenskby).

In the summer of 1933 the Soviet government began to provide aid to certain categories affected by the famine in the rural area of Kherson. Food

³⁹⁵ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85, ark. 21-22.

³⁹⁶ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85, ark. 78-79.

³⁹⁷ "Svenskarna leva på svältgränsen i Gammalsvenskby", *Borås Tidning*, den 4 augusti 1933.

³⁹⁸ "Svenskarna leva på svältgränsen i Gammalsvenskby", *Borås Tidning*, den 4 augusti 1933.

³⁹⁹ Braathen, Alma, "Tjekans hand över Gammalsvenskby", *Vecko-Journalen*, 1933 (19), 20-21.

⁴⁰⁰ "Gammal-svenskbybor har deporterats av Sovjet! Tjekans process mot svenskättlingarna ny Vickers-affär", *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, den 3 augusti 1933; In March 1933, six British engineers, employed by the company "Metropolitan-Vickers," were arrested by the GPU in Moscow on a charge of wrecking and espionage.

packages were provided to the relatives of the Red Army's soldiers and for party members. German colonists received the humanitarian aid from German charitable organization *Brüder in Not*, which distributed through a German consulate in Odessa.⁴⁰¹ Special charitable organization for Ukrainian Swedes has not been established. While left newspapers of Sweden kept silence about the starvation in Gammalsvenskby the right-wing press discussed practical issues to help the Old Swedes. It was recommended to send individual remittances in foreign currency, which could be a good course to realize through state-run trade agency *Torgsin*.⁴⁰² Old Swedes survived due to the conflict of interests of various Soviet institutions. While the secret police would limit all the contacts with foreign countries, Torgsin called Swedish, Czech and German colonists to ask their compatriots for the help.⁴⁰³ With the permission of the Soviet leadership Torgsin organized advertisement campaign in western media, calling citizens of western countries to send their relatives and compatriots money.⁴⁰⁴ Special grocers, which sold goods for hard currency, were opened by Torgsin in Kakhovka and Kherson. Therefore, the Old Swedes could buy for the currencies received from Sweden the badly needed alimentary products in Torgsin's shops in Kakhovka and Kherson. Alvina Hinas wrote to Sweden after receiving a pound sterling from Gothenburg: "It was an angel of God who came to this Easter with a gift to us. For a pound sterling, we got 8 rubles 84 kopecks to buy food".⁴⁰⁵

Due to the help from Sweden Gammalsvenskby could survive the famine without a single death, as distinct from the neighbouring Ukrainian and Jewish villages. Gustav Annas remembers:

In a terrible 1933 the famine did not affect us too much. We had got the food parcels from our countrymen in Sweden and from the Swedish Red Cross. We had a large family; my mother gave birth to eleven children. The parcels from Sweden saved many villagers, including my parents. It was not a case for unlucky Ukrainians; they did not get any help. Moreover, the authorities con-

⁴⁰¹ *З історії голодомору на Херсонщині у 1932–1933 рр.* Добірка документів. Херсон: Державний архів Херсонської області, 2003, 26–31.

⁴⁰² "Nya nödrop från fränderna i Svenskby", *Norrköpings Tidningar*, den 3 mars 1933; Torgsin was state-run hard-currency agency with stores that operated in the USSR between 1931 and 1936. Their name was an acronym of 'torgovlia s inostrantsami', which means trade with foreigners.

⁴⁰³ *Німці в Україні 20–30-ти рр. XX ст.* Збірник документів. Кер. кол. упоряд. Л. В. Яковлева, В. В. Чирко. Київ: Інститут історії України НАН України, 1994, № 87.

⁴⁰⁴ Марочко В. І. "Торгсин: золота ціна життя українських селян у роки голоду (1932–1933)", *Український історичний журнал*. 2003. № 3, 90–103; Осокина Е. *Золото для индустриализации. Торгсин*. Москва: РОССПЭН, 2009, 146–165.

⁴⁰⁵ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 264.

fiscated all the food, took practically everything to the last crumb. They had only an option – to die on starvation.⁴⁰⁶

26 April 1933 member of the Swedish Parliament and farmer Gustaf Olsson wrote a letter to the Foreign Minister Rickard Sandler to make him for the sake of arrested Swedish citizens Karl Andersson and Petter E. Utas. According to Gustaf Olsson, he got a letter sent from Gammalsvenskby by Kristina Utas with an account of the arrests in the village.⁴⁰⁷ The mass media campaign and the diplomatic interference made by Sweden have changed the original plans of GPU. The state planned a big show trial. Police officers of the Kherson district arrested seven men and summoned more than twenty villagers for interrogations. The prosecutor of Beryslav Roman Rudenko demanded 12 years of jail and the confiscation of property for the arrested men.⁴⁰⁸ However, only four persons were convicted by the special counsel of the GPU to 3 years of exile, but without property confiscation. Communist Karl Andersson was released under the court resolution and left for Sweden.⁴⁰⁹ With the assistance of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs his wife Maria Andersson (nee Utas), a Soviet citizen, was given a permission to get a Swedish citizenship and migrated to Sweden. However, Petter E. Utas had to face another destiny. 18 June 1933 Petter E. Utas who was sentenced to 3 years of prison sent from the Kherson prison a letter of help to the Swedish government written by him personally in Swedish.⁴¹⁰ In spite of the support of a powerful politician Gustaf Olsson, he was denied the right to go back to Sweden. Being since 1931 the citizen of Sweden Petter E. Utas visited in 1932 the Soviet Union as interpreter and translator for the group of Swedish communists. During the visit he was arrested by the GPU, then released but without a Swedish passport with the explanation that nobody had taken his Soviet citizenship, and he was not allowed to refuse the citizenship. Petter E. Utas was forced to stay in Gammalsvenskby. In 1937, he was arrested again and ‘disappeared’. In fact he was executed out-of-court by decision of a so-called *troika* (a three-man meeting of the local chief for NKVD, the party secretary and the prosecutor). The General Prosecutor's

⁴⁰⁶ Interview with Gustav Annas (Zmiivka). Published in: Піддубняк В. Г. *Жниво Молоха: Голод 1932–1933 рр. на Херсонщині*, 80.

⁴⁰⁷ Diverse biträde åt utlänningar Gammal-Svenskby boar, 1930-mars 1956. Del. III. Utrikesdepartementet 1920 års dossiersystem. P 1534. NAS.

⁴⁰⁸ Roman Rudenko (1907–1981) was the prosecutor of the Beryslav district in 1933–1937. In 1944–1953 he was the Chief Prosecutor of Ukraine. 1953–1981 he was the General Prosecutor of the Soviet Union. He is well known for acting as the Soviet Chief Prosecutor at the trial of the major Nazi war criminals in Nuremberg.

⁴⁰⁹ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 9, sprava 85.

⁴¹⁰ Utas, Petter, ”Till Sveriges Regering”, den 18 juni 1933. Diverse biträde åt utlänningar Gammal-Svenskby boar, 1930-mars 1956. Del. III. Utrikesdepartementet 1920 års dossiersystem. P 1534. NAS.

Office of Ukraine rehabilitated him only in 1999.⁴¹¹ The place of his burial is still unknown. In a letter to the ECCI, the head of the Beryslav Party committee Comrade Antonov, in broken Russian language tried to blame the Swedish Communists in all the failures:

Arrived from Sweden in the village Gammalsvenskby district of Beryslav, kolkhoz of the Swedish Communist Party Comrades Karl Andersson, a member of the party, and Lauenstein Hugo, a party member, found themselves in favourable working conditions that we have created for them. We gave them a separate house for residence, the MTS employed them and paid a good salary of 200 rubles per month, from the kolkhoz they received flour, butter, and Comrade Blum left them 30 chickens. They should just work and strengthen the kolkhoz. But Andersson engaged in recruiting Swedes to immigrate to Sweden. The list for emigration that was written by him and signed by Swedes now is in the Kharkiv GPU. Andersson arrested. ... Lauenstein suggested that there is more democracy abroad than in the Soviet Union. In addition, he is demoralizing the kolkhoz work. Bureau of the party district committee of Beryslav, having heard the reports of the head of the GPU and the party secretary of Gammalsvenskby decided: Expel from the Party Comrades Andersson and Lauenstein ... Following this decision, we sent a member of the Bureau on five days [to Gammalsvenskby] for mass political work and would report that we reached 100 percent plan of sowing and 100 percent plan of subscription for loans. Please be informed.⁴¹²

Receive particulars about the Swedish communists' crimes in Gammalsvenskby the ECCI has created a special commission headed by Estonians Richard Mehring and Hilda Zonberg, who was born and grew up on Dagö.⁴¹³ As a result of the investigation Hugo Lauenstein, activist of the 1918 German revolution a turned into a criminal, who robbed a jewellery store in Germany. His lifestyle was considered bourgeois since his wife was the owner of cafe, and they have a comfortable apartment in Stockholm. So, for familiar to every Soviet citizen scheme the communist idealist was turned into provocateur. Leader of the Communist Party of Sweden Sven Linderot demonstrating independence gave a positive letter of reference to the disgraced communist:

⁴¹¹ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359.

⁴¹² Läge på Altschwedendorf – Письмо секретаря Бериславского РКП Антонова в Скандлендерсекретариат Коминтерна от 25 мая 1933 г. Personal file 99 – Karl Andersson (Андерсон Карл), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943), RGASPI.

⁴¹³ Richard Meering (1900–1938) – Employee of the ECCI. Member of the Communist Party of Estonia since 1920. He was arrested during the Great Terror and executed September 1, 1938. Rehabilitated; Hilda Zonberg (1893–1938) – Head of the Secretariat of the ECCI Personnel Department. She was arrested during the Great Terror and executed January 8, 1938. Rehabilitated.

Nothing wrong can I say about his [Lauenstein] activity [in Gammalsvenskby] ... He went to the Soviet Union, to the Swedish village in Ukraine at the invitation from local comrades and with the consent of our Party.⁴¹⁴

However, the general line was never questioned and in the failure of the Swedish Red commune the ECCI accused the Swedish communists. Beryslav committee expelled Karl Andersson and Hugo Lauenstein from the Party. After a careful official investigation, the personnel department of the ECCI approved the decision. The Party membership cards of the both communists were withdrawn and are today kept in Moscow.⁴¹⁵

The fates of the Swedish communists after the Comintern project were different. Erik Petersson and Björn Hallström left the Party after the return from the USSR.⁴¹⁶ Almost all the Communists, their wives and grow-up children upon return to Sweden remain silent as to their life in the Ukraine. Karl Andersson was the only one to break the rule, and he was soon expelled from the Party. He gave series of the interviews to the Swedish media and disclosed the catastrophic situation in the Gammalsvenskby and the famine in Ukraine. In October 1933 the magazine *Sovjetnytt* published the article 'Agronom Andersson och Röda Svenskby' (Agronomist Andersson and Röd Svenskby). The authors stated that thanks to Karl Andersson, the bourgeois press demonized the Soviet Union and the collective farm project in Röd Svenskby. As a result, a division occurred in the section of *Sovjetunionens vänner* in Varberg where Andersson had 'personal accomplices', as it was decided a committee would be created that interviewed the agronomist as to the content of the above publications. Members of the committee published a report in which they accused Andersson of lack of professionalism:

Andersson argues that the famine is going on in Ukraine. He also said that despite all difficulties in 1933 Ukraine had a record harvest for the last 42 years. How this his statement is correlated with information about the people starv-

⁴¹⁴ Personal file 341 – Hugo Albert Lauenstein (Лауенштайн Гюго Альберт), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943), RGASPI

⁴¹⁵ Personal file 341 – Hugo Albert Lauenstein (Лауенштайн Гюго Альберт); Personal file 99 – Karl Andersson (Андерсон Карл), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943), RGASPI.

⁴¹⁶ Personal file 270 – Erik Petersson (Петерсон Эрик); Personal file 284 – Björn Hallström (Гальстрём Бирн), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943) RGASPI. Erik Petersson. Biografica 1933–1953. Björn Hallström. F12. Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna. ARAB; Biografica 1933–1953. F12. Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna. ARAB

ing in Ukraine? In fact, he sold himself to the capitalists. Was it not his job as an expert agronomist to improve soil quality and racial management of the agriculture?⁴¹⁷

As we see the report demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of repressive nature of the Stalin's regime by the Swedish communists. Unlike Andersson Hugo Lauenstein evade public statements in Sweden on the Soviet system. However, in private conversations, he claimed:

We left Sweden being the fanatical Communists, but now I do not even want to hear about communism. Unhappy Old Swedes who returned to the Soviet Union. We were shocked by what we saw and experienced in the most 'free' country in the world.⁴¹⁸

Emil Norberg (born 1924) remembers Lauenstein:

When we returned to the Soviet Union, they [Swedish communists] followed us in order to help us build a kolkhoz. But in 1933 we were left without grain. After that they all went home. One of them usually visited our house. He was a German. He told that he will offer all the communists in Sweden to go to sea in a box. Only there they will be able to live in the kolkhoz.⁴¹⁹

Björn Hallström published in 1952 the book "Jag trodde på Stalin" (I believed in Stalin) convicting the Soviet regime.⁴²⁰ Karl Sigfrid Holmström took Soviet citizenship and disappeared in the years of Great Terror. His daughter Göta Holmström (born 1917) since the beginning of 1990 has been trying to clarify the fate of his father. The last time her matter was discussed in a petition in the Swedish Parliament in 2010.⁴²¹ For young Comintern students Erik Karlsson and Paul Söderman their work in Gammalsvenskby was a starting point of a long successful career. Those two communists enjoyed the full confidence on behalf of the Comintern and Soviet government. In 1933 Söderman became a chief editor of the Swedish Communist leading newspaper *Ny Dag*. In 1936, he took the post of the leader of the Party campaign on the assistance to the Republican Spain. In 1940 he became a chief of the SKP Publishing House *Arbetarkultur*.⁴²² In the 1930s Paul Söderman accomplished in Scandinavia and Germany special mission of a courier of

⁴¹⁷"Agronom Andersson och Röda Svenskby", *Sovjetnytt*, 1933 (10), 8-9.

⁴¹⁸ Annas, Andreas, *Livet i Gammalsvenskby*, 60.

⁴¹⁹Tysk, Karl-Erik, "Äventyrsresa till Gammalsvenskby i juli 2003", www.svenskbyborna.com, accessed July 23, 2010.

⁴²⁰ Hallström, Björn, *Jag trodde på Stalin*, Stockholm, Harrier, 1952.

⁴²¹"Kirunasvenskarna. Motion till Riksdagen.", 2010/11: FP1186. Gunnar Andrén (FP), www.riksdagen.se, accessed June 22, 2011.

⁴²² Söderman Paul, UA 6/1, Biografica 1933–1953. F12. Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna. ARAB.

the foreign section of the GPU/NKVD. His Swedish passport is kept in Moscow.⁴²³ During the Second World War Paul Söderman was one of the organizers of the Communist resistance in case if Sweden would be occupied by the Nazis.⁴²⁴

Erik Karlsson worked as agitator among Norwegian lumbermen of the Arkhangelsk region. He became docent, rector of the Scandinavian sector of the Comintern Party School and the head of the Scandinavian broadcasting of the Radio of Comintern.⁴²⁵ After World War II he made an excellent political career in Sweden. During several years, he was a Party secretary, a deputy of the Swedish Parliament. Karlsson was considered the Party expert on the peasantry matters and the Soviet Union, in particular, author of the first books in the history of the Swedish communist movement on the agrarian matters.⁴²⁶ He died in 1970 glorified as “one of the most known Party members, a true Leninist and theoretician of the communism”.⁴²⁷ Finally, the leader of the Röd Svenskby commune Edvin Blom remained an active Party member until his death in 1953 from tuberculosis, being at the same time, by a twist of fate, the owner of his own farm.

In 1934 no Swedish communist remained in the village. A Swedish girl Signe Kaskela met the Holmströms in Karelia where she worked at a factory with Svea and Göta Holmström:

They told of terrible distress, they had even lacked bread, although Ukraine was one of Russia's most fertile areas. However, collectivization had come up hard, and despite the severe drought collective farms must still provide the required quantity of grain to the state... Svea had scurvy and was bleeding from the gums, and had bruises on her legs. Göta was also starving, but not as badly as her sister was.⁴²⁸

The local Swedish communists were expelled from the Party for their support of the re-emigration. Soon the authorities changed the leading staff of

⁴²³ Personal file 84 – Paul Söderman (Сёдерман Пауль), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943) RGASPI

⁴²⁴ Sjösted, Jonas, ”Tystnande motståndsmän”, *Västerbottens-Kuriren*, den 4 maj 2009.

⁴²⁵ Personal file 9 (vol. 1-2) – Erik Karlsson (Карлссон Эрик), *Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii* (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, *Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943* (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943) RGASPI.

⁴²⁶ Karlsson, Erik, *Jordbruksfrågor i svensk politik*, Stockholm, Arbetarkultur, 1936; Karlsson, Erik, *Lantarbetarna: löner, arbetstid, bostäder*, Stockholm, Arbetarkultur, 1936; Karlsson, Erik, ”Sovjets budget och Sverges”, *Kommunistisk tidskrift: månadsskrift för marxistisk-leninistisk teori och praktik*, 1935, mars, 60-62.

⁴²⁷ Erik Karlsson. *Biografica 1933–1953*. F12. Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna. ARAB.

⁴²⁸ Kaskela, Signe, *Under Stalins diktatur*, Göteborg, Tre böcker, 1990, 26.

the village to replace them with ethnic Ukrainians. Makar Shurduk became the secretary of the Party unit, Dmytro Krakovsky was appointed as chairman of the village Soviet, Leonid Shevchenko became the head of local Komsomol.

2.5. Concluding remarks

This chapter explores virtually unknown aspects of the development of Gammalsvenskby during the early 1930s. It shows how a disillusioned group of 250 former Gammalsvenskby villagers who returned to the USSR in 1930-1931 became a piece in a propaganda game orchestrated from the USSR and the leftists in Sweden. The state decided to settle all re-emigrants in their former village and to buy back the houses already occupied by Jewish and German peasants. The village was renamed Röd Svenskby and the only Swedish kolkhoz in the Soviet Union was founded. The main purpose of the settlement was to make a laboratory for Scandinavian socialism from the Old Swedish rural community. A grand project was set in motion, where new boundaries and terms and not the least – new hierarchy was created within a short space of time. This included a new vision of past, a new image of the oppressed and the oppressors, the introduction of a collective farm as a way of proceeding towards the bright Communist future, new linguistic practices, along with a number of other novelties. It is difficult to say whether the decision to return to the Soviet Union was independent. This version supports by a fact that Ukrainian Swedes did not receive a permission to settle in Sweden in separate village and were resettled in different places of the country. Experienced and successful Ukrainian-born farmers resented the fact that they were sent to the practice to Swedish farmers in order to learn ‘more advanced’ Swedish way of farming. Despite the knowledge of the language difficulties of adaptation combined with homesickness and missing of remaining relatives in Ukraine. As known the mix Ukrainian-Swedish families were not allowed to leave the Soviet Union. Mixed Swedish-German families where the head of the family was a Swede, received permission to leave the Soviet Union for Sweden. But Swedish women married to Germans, and adult children of mixed marriages remained in the Soviet Union. Thus the mass immigration to Sweden led to the separation of families. However the external factor also has played its role. The Swedish communists were active in campaigning of the Old Swedes for return to the Soviet Ukraine.

It is also difficult to judge what the end of the international Communist project in Röd Svenskby would be if not for the Holodomor. Until 1933, the authorities could within an extremely short period of time fundamentally

change the customary way of life of the Ukrainian Swedes. The first stage of the forced normalization of the Swedish villagers brought considerably results. However, the resistance of Swedes altered the process of change. The severe alimentary policy of Kremlin that brought about the famine was rather manifestation of weakness than the strength of the Soviet state. The modest economic results of the kolkhoz production irritated the authorities, especially compared with the high rate of the budget expense for the agricultural sector. However, if the ethnic Ukrainian peasant were left alone to face this calamity followed by the massive mortality, the Swedish villagers had far better chances for survival. This was not only because of the international status of the Swedish kolkhoz. Despite the strict order given to the local authorities to immediately take steps to deal with the famine in the village, the Soviet authorities or the Comintern had done nothing in order to help Gammalsvenskby. The rescue came again from Sweden, but it was organized by the peasants themselves. They used the same strategy as was tested throughout centuries and that enabled Old Swedes to survive the emergency without any human sacrifice. Nevertheless, those who were convicted for 3 years in 1933 for the organizing of mass emigration to Sweden were arrested again in 1937–1938 and executed (except for Alexander Knutas who died in prison in 1935). The Holodomor and the mass arrests put an end to the project of the international Communist movement in Gammalsvenskby.

From 1934, one finds no interest to revive the Röd Svenskby commune in the materials of the local power and the executive committee of the Comintern. This is an important indicator as it proves the thesis about the total change of the course of the Kremlin in early 1930s from the World Revolution to the isolation. The social institutes created by the communists, i. e. Swedish school; Swedish national council and Swedish kolkhoz existed mechanically several years on. However, during the Great Terror, 22 villagers were arrested and executed. All of them were accused of being members of the fictitious Swedish counter-revolutionary nationalistic spy organization. Upon the version of the secret police, the leaders of organization were Edvin Blom and Hugo Lauenstein transferred from the communists into agents of the Swedish intelligence service. Not by pure accident, the active members of the socialist construction were also arrested. Among them the former SKP members Petter J. Knutas and Woldemar Utas, as well as the Komsomol members, the chairman of the kolkhoz Johannes Utas and brigadier Johannes Knutas. The mass terror was followed by the liquidation of all the national administrative, economic and cultural institutes of Gammalsvenskby: village council, Swedish kolkhoz, Swedish school, library, Swedish leisure interest group and choir.

After the split within the Swedish Communist Party, the branch loyal to the Comintern took the opportunity to flex its muscles politically in Sweden on the one hand, and prove it to be an efficient part of the Comintern, on the

other. The Comintern considered that SKP had neglected the rural question; now the time was ripe to correct this mistake in great style by bringing about the remigration of the dissenting group of villagers. A group of Swedish communists was sent by the Comintern to educate villagers about communism and organize their economic and cultural life. Among them were two future top-leaders of the Party: Erik Karlsson and Paul Söderman. The area was given special status as an ethnic Swedish territorial unit, led by local Swedes and Swedish citizens. A new local elite was created in the village from Swedish Communists and pro-Soviet colonists, and new cadres were drilled in the local Komsomol, replacing the traditional elite of successful farmers and the moral authority of the priest. However, the project was abruptly ended by the Holodomor, the man-made famine that raged across Soviet Ukraine and in 1932–1933 reaching Röd Svenskby. Faced with new problems and abandoned by the Swedish Communists, the farmers petitioned the authorities just as their forefathers sent supplications to lords and royalties. There were also calls for Sweden to help this process. In the course of mass arrests any attempts to resist the annulment of all the rights of the Swedish minority were no longer possible. Since 1934 the population of the Swedish colony was under the deep shock. The kolkhoz named after Swedish Communist Party formally existed until 1941. In 1943, the Nazi evacuated the population of Gammalsvenskby as Volksdeutsche to the Third Reich. In 1945, a part of Swedes (around 60 persons) emigrated from Germany to Sweden. Another group was deported from the Soviet zone in Germany to the Komi Gulag. Those who returned found their home village completely changed. In 1945 within the framework of the campaign on the changing names of the former ‘German’ colonies Gammalsvenskby received a new Slavonic name Verbivka. The Swedish kolkhoz was renamed in the typical Soviet matter after aviator Valerii Chkalov. After twelve years, the dream of building in Ukraine a little Red Sweden has become a blank spot on the map. Italian historian Andrea Graziosi believes that, researching the Holodomor, we must consider different scale; ethnic aspects and magnitude of mass famine depends on the region, population and ethnicity. Hopeless situation in which the peasants of Ukrainian origin in the steppe area forced to be with, allows discussing the national interpretation of a man-made famine in the Soviet Ukraine.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁹Грациози А. *Великая крестьянская война в СССР. Большевики и крестьяне 1917–1933*. Москва: РОССПЭН, 2008, 76–80.

CHAPTER 3. Normalization through terror. Gammalsvenskby on the advent of World War II

The Great Terror was intended to perform a more general and daunting task:
To breed new people, to create a fundamentally new historical community –
the Soviet nation.

Alexander Daniel

3.1. Spies in the kolkhoz. Conceptualisation and propaganda of the Great Terror in the national village.

Access to previously unavailable sources from Soviet archives has brought to light on a little-known history, namely ‘national operations’ of the Soviet secret police (NKVD) and the pre-war deportation of minorities, one of the central features of Stalinist repression.⁴³⁰ Local studies have already provided a deeper understanding of the nature and mechanism of this repression. However, most previous studies have been concerned with large minority groups or with the deportation of minorities during the Second World War. This chapter focuses on the inter-related phases and dimensions of state-run violence and discrimination in 1937-1939 and its’ role in the forced normalization of the Swedish colonists of Ukraine in a short-term perspective.

Historians have put forward many explanations for the mass repression of various ethnic groups committed by Stalin’s regime; two approaches are particularly relevant. Most scholars focus on the security dilemma in the border area, suggesting the need to secure the ethnic integrity of Soviet space *vis-à-vis* neighbouring capitalistic enemy states. They stress the role of international relations and believe that representatives of ‘western minorities’

⁴³⁰ Samuelson, Lennart & Sorokin Andrei, ”Den ryska ’arkivrevolution’, Källvolymen belyser sovjetepokens mörka sidor”, *Historisk Tidskrift*, 2007, (127): 4, 739-756.

were killed not because of their ethnicity, but rather because of their connection to countries hostile to the USSR and fear of disloyalty in case of an invasion.⁴³¹ Other scholars argue that the Soviet terror against minorities was actually genocide based on ethnic criteria.⁴³² However, previous studies usually analysed the Great Terror, deportations, and administrative and cultural discrimination separately.

Unprecedented in its scale the Great Terror required the relevant mass media propaganda. Genocide studies show that the Holocaust was prepared by the leadership of Nazi Germany through a massive propaganda campaign.⁴³³ What role did propaganda play in our case? As Leo Kuper points out, mass state-run violence is not triggered by pre-existing conditions in a society. Rather, they occur when powerful groups e.g. politicians, media opinion-makers – take the decision first to define, then isolate and finally exterminate a specific group of people.⁴³⁴ In this case, mass media is an arena where the regime first formulates the concept of hatred, then launches a powerful propaganda campaign to prepare the mass violence.

The propagandist preparation of the Great Terror included two main steps. The first phase concerns the conceptualisation of state-run mass violence, the second is the translation of the propaganda of hatred to broad layers of the population. The crucial question is how an ideology of hatred is formulated by the political leadership and then mediated to the local authorities and the broader public through official documentation and mass media.

The ideological orchestration of the mass operations of the NKVD against national minorities included two main aspects. First, the concept of a new round of mass repressions, this time directed at suspicious nationalities, then the conceptualisation of terror and its implementation in society. At the end of March 1937, the newspaper *Pravda* published a speech Joseph Stalin gave

⁴³¹ Werth, Nicolas, “The Mechanism of a mass crime. The Great Terror in the Soviet Union, 1937-1938”, *The Specter of Genocide. Mass murder in historical perspective*, Robert Gellately & Ben Kiernan (eds.), Cambridge University Press, 2003, 215-239; Mann, Michael, *The dark side of democracy: explaining ethnic cleansing*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005, 318-328; Kuromiya, Hiroaki, *The voices of the dead: Stalin's great terror in the 1930s*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2007, 141-143.

⁴³² Kostianen Auvo, “The Finns of Soviet Karelia as a Target of Stalin’s Terror”, *World Congress for Central and East European Studies, Ethnic and national issues in Russian and East European history*, John Morison (ed.), New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000, 214-229; Naimark, Norman M., *Stalin's genocides*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 2010; Snyder, Timothy, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, Bodley Head, London, 2010, 92-108.

⁴³³ Herf, Jeffrey, *The Jewish enemy: Nazi propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2006, 17-49; Jones, Adam, *Genocide: a comprehensive introduction*, Routledge, London, 2006, 487-490; Glass, James. M., “Against the Indifference Hypothesis: The Holocaust and the Enthusiasts for Murder”, *Political Psychology*, 1997, (18):1, 129-145.

⁴³⁴ Kuper, Leo, *Genocide: its political use in the twentieth century*, Yale U.P., New Haven, 1982, 40-56.

at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on 3 March 1937, titled ‘On the errors of party work and further steps to eliminate the Trotskyite and other hypocrites’.⁴³⁵ The full text appeared as a separate edition and was reprinted by the local press. In this speech, Stalin formulated the ‘essential facts’ that laid the ideological foundation of the Great Terror. If in the beginning of the 1930s repressions were directed against certain social groups (i.e. kulaks and priests), now the dictator warned about the total cleansing of the Soviet society. According to Stalin “sabotage and subversive spy work of agents of foreign states hit the Soviet state and our organisations from top to bottom”.⁴³⁶ Nevertheless, Stalin announced a thesis of the permanent nature of class struggle in the USSR. In 1937, the media dictionary of Soviet newspeak was enriched by a number of neologisms.⁴³⁷ The formula of ‘capitalist encirclement’ meant a dramatic turn of Soviet domestic and foreign politics. For the first time, Stalin did not make any exception and all the neighbouring countries entered the list of enemies. The idea of international solidarity with the working class and Western communism was abandoned in favour of isolation and distrust to foreigners. In their orders to the NKVD, the Politburo emphasised that the mass operations against Poles, Latvians, Germans, Estonians, Finns, Greeks, Iranians, Chinese, and Romanians applied to both foreign and Soviet citizens.⁴³⁸

The new Stalinist concept of ‘uprooting’, which was mentioned several times by the leader during his March speech (‘new methods are methods of uprooting and smashing’), is of interest. The technical meaning of uprooting is to remove the stumps and roots of trees and shrubs when clearing an easement area in preparation for road construction works. The political meaning of the term signified a course for complete extermination of not only arrested people, but also members of their families. In his address to the deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, Stalin repeated this concept which was enthusiastically supported by the political elite:

⁴³⁵ Сталин И. В. *О недостатках партийной работы и мерах ликвидации троцкистских и иных двурушников. Доклад и заключительное слово на Пленуме ЦК ВКП(б) 3–5 марта 1937 г.* Москва, 1937.

⁴³⁶ Hereafter the quotations of Stalin’s speech ‘On the errors of party work and further steps to eliminate the Trotskyite and other hypocrites’ cited according to: Сталин И. В. *Сочинения*. Т. 14. Москва: Писатель, 1997, 151–173.

⁴³⁷ Pöppel, Ludmila, *The rhetoric of Pravda editorials: a diachronic study of a political genre*, Department of Slavic Languages, Diss. Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2007.

⁴³⁸ “О продлении до 15 апреля 1938 года операций по разгрому шпионско-диверсионных контингентов из поляков, латышей, немцев, эстонцев, финн, греков, иранцев, харбинцев, китайцев и румын, как иностранных граждан, так и советских поданных, согласно существующих приказов НКВД СССР”, 31.01.1938. Russian State Archive of Social-Political History (RGASPI), fond 17, opis 166, delo 585, l. 27.

We are rich now and therefore we have become an object of attention of avaricious countries and fascist states. What counter-weapon do we have? To uproot their agents, to uproot them – this is our counter-weapon. Tumultuous applause, Hurrah! Long live Comrade Stalin!⁴³⁹

The title of Stalin's March speech contains the word 'elimination', which leads to analogies to the concept of 'demolition of the kulaks as a class', which in 1928–1933 was the ground for liquidation of well-to-do farmers. Stalin's speech contains a number of terms denoting enemies of the Soviet regime, which are similar but still differ in content: *class enemy*, *enemies of the working class*, *enemies of the working people of our country*, *internal and external enemies*, *enemies of the Soviet Union*, *enemies of the party*, and finally, *enemies of the people*. The creative efforts of *vozhd'* were focused on finding a better ideological alternative to the 1920s concept of class enemy. Out of all of Stalin's alternative terms, the concept of *vragi naroda* (enemies of the people) was widely spread by Soviet media during the Great Terror. This unclear term, which had no bearing in Marxism was included in the text of the 1936 Soviet Constitution (Article 131). Unlike the concept of *class enemy* a broader term of *enemies of the people* enables arrest of any individual without further discussion, regardless of class origin and political affiliation. The aim of the new aggressive vocabulary was dehumanization and marginalization of all potential victims.

The dictator stated the need to use new methods in dealing with espionage: "the method of controlling them must be changed radically". As it turned out, these methods implied mass arrests, torture and other measures of physical violence, personally authorized by Stalin in 1937.⁴⁴⁰ The March speech of Stalin launched the start of mass media campaign of spy hysteria:

To take the necessary measures to ensure that our comrades, party and non-party Bolsheviks, knew the goals and objectives of the practice and techniques of subversive work, of sabotage and of espionage by foreign agents.⁴⁴¹

Fulfilling the directive of Stalin in April 1937, military intelligence agencies officers prepared a series of articles on mass espionage against the Soviet

⁴³⁹Лубянка: *Сталин и Главное управление госбезопасности НКВД. 1937–1938. Документы*. Сост. В. Н. Хаустов, В. П. Наумов, Н. С. Плотникова. Москва: Международный фонд Демократия, 2004, 499.

⁴⁴⁰"Шифротелеграмма И. В. Сталина секретарям обкомов, крайкомов и руководству НКВД-УНКВД о применении мер физического воздействия в отношении врагов народа", 10.01.1939. Юнге Марк, Бордюгов Геннадий, Биннер Рольф. *Вертикаль большого террора. История операции по приказу НКВД № 00447*. Москва: Новый хронограф, 2008, 445–446; "Указания И. В. Сталина о допросах", 13.03.1938. Лубянка: *Сталин и Главное управление госбезопасности*, 499; Хаустов В., Самуэльсон Л. *Сталин, НКВД и репрессии 1936–1938 гг.* Москва: РОССПЭН, 2009, 287.

⁴⁴¹Сталин И. В. *Сочинения*. Т. 14. Москва: Писатель, 1997, 164.

nation.⁴⁴² A number of prints published during the Great Terror in hundreds of thousands copies described the destructive espionage of capitalist states against the Soviet Union and their internal agents. The publications were addressed to all groups of society: from the policemen and party officials to kolkhoz propagandists, librarians, and pioneer leaders.⁴⁴³ The abridged versions of central publications were reprinted in the local Kherson mass media.⁴⁴⁴ In the summer of 1937 the articles on the activities of Western intelligence agents unexpectedly entered the list of cover topics of Soviet press. Joseph Davies, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow in 1936–1938 noted that the notion of a ‘fifth column’ and ‘active internal espionage’ had not been used by Soviet propaganda prior 1937 and appeared suddenly on the eve of the Great Terror. The American diplomat explained these techniques as being directly borrowed from Nazi propaganda.⁴⁴⁵

The thesis of active espionage suggested a wide network of domestic agents, and according to the Soviet press, the agents were members of numerous minorities. The idea of a pervasive espionage system expressed by Stalin was signal to start mass repressions against Western minorities. Thus, the leader of the party in Ukrainian Donbas, Sarkis Sarkisov, believed that:

We need to be bolder and more vigilant. All Germans should be deported from the Donbas. There might be exceptions, but in general we need to get rid of them.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴² ”Записка начальника разведывательного управления РККА С. М. Урицкого И. В. Сталину о подготовке статей об иностранном шпионаже. 26.04.1937.”, *Лубянка: Сталин и Главное управление госбезопасности*, 134–135.

⁴⁴³ *О методах и приемах иностранных разведывательных органов и их троцкистско-бухаринской агентуры*. Москва: Партиздат, 1937; Колесник В. *Шпионский интернационал. Троцкисты на службе фашистских разведок*. Москва: Партиздат, 1937; Заковский Л. *О некоторых методах и приемах иностранных разведывательных органов и их троцкистско-бухаринской агентуры*. Москва: Партиздат, 1937; *Шпигуни і діверсанти за роботою*. Київ, 1937; *Шпионаж и разведка капиталистических государств. В помощь пропагандисту и беседчику*. Ленинград: Ленинградское государственное издание, 1937; *Шпионам и изменникам Родины нет и не будет пощады: В помощь библиотекарям*. Ленинград: Ленинградское государственное издание, 1937; Зильвер Л. С. *Быть на-чеку! В помощь пионервожатому. Беседы в пионерском лагере*. Москва: Издательство ЦК ВЛКСМ Молодая гвардия, 1938.

⁴⁴⁴ See as example: Соколов К. “Деякі методи шкіднико-диверсійної роботи троцькістсько-фашистських розвідників”, *НР*. № 162. 16.07.1937; Колесник В. ”Шпигунський Інтернаціонал”, *НР*. № 171. 27.07.1937; Рубин Н., Серебров Я. ”Про підривну діяльність фашистських розвідок в СРСР і завдання боротьби з нею”, *НР*. № 180. 6.08.1937, № 181. 8.08.1937.

⁴⁴⁵ Davies, Joseph Edward, *Mission to Moscow: a record of confidential dispatches to the State Department, official and personal correspondence, current diary and journal entries, including notes and current diary and journal entries, including notes and comment up to October, 1941*, New York, 1941, 273.

⁴⁴⁶ Чирко Б. В. *Національні меншини в Україні (20–30 роки XX століття)*. Київ, 1995, 37; Sarkis Sarkisov (born as Sarkis Danielian, 1898–1938) – Armenian and Azerbaijani Bol-

Not only industrial areas, but the agricultural countryside fell under the blow of spy purges. Speaking at the 1937 Plenum of the Belarusian branch of VKP(b), Mikalaj Haladzed explained the main message of Stalin's speech as follows:

The enemies are working everywhere, we have not settled down yet, I am asking our agrarian officials to take this under advisement, to search for saboteurs and wreckers in agriculture. We are hunting for them in the industry, at the cultural front, at the front of ideology, but pay little attentions to those who acted in rural area, as if it were trouble-free there.⁴⁴⁷

On 11 July 1937, the chief of the fourth secret political department of the NKVD for the Leningrad region, Petr Korkin, published in *Leningradskaya Pravda* an article titled 'On the subversive activities of foreign intelligence services in the rural area', which was reprinted by many newspapers. The author claimed that even the kolkhozes had become an active field of intelligence services of capitalist encirclement:

Naive people believe that we have to deal with the capitalist encirclement only on the borders of the Soviet Union or at frontier points, or, finally, in large industrial centres and big cities. Meanwhile the capitalist encirclement, as shown by numerous facts, sends its spies to the most remote areas, small settlements, villages and kolkhozes of our country.⁴⁴⁸

On August 3, 1937 the Central Committee of VKP(b) assumed that:

A significant drawback in waging war against the saboteurs and wreckers in agriculture was the fact that the liquidation of them was carried out only by the NKVD without publicity, and the participation of collective farmers, therefore they are not mobilized to fight against the saboteurs and wreckers.⁴⁴⁹

shevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1917. In 1933–1937 the head (first secretary) of the Donetsk Regional Party Committee. He was arrested during the Great Terror and executed August 12, 1938. Rehabilitated.

⁴⁴⁷ Кузняцоў Ігар. "Палітычныя рэпрэсіі ў Беларусі", *Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne*. 2000, № 13, 45–46; Mikalaj Haladzed (1894–1937) – Belarusian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1918. In 1927–1937 the head of the Soviet Belarusian government. He was arrested during the Great Terror, in June 1937 and committed suicide in prison. Rehabilitated.

⁴⁴⁸ Cited in: *Ленинградский мартиролог 1937–1938*. Т. 1. Санкт-Петербург: Российская национальная библиотека, 1995, ill. 11; Petr Korkin (1900–1940) – Major of NKVD. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1920. During the Great terror the head of the NKVD in the Leningrad and Voronezh regions, then in the Dnipropetrovsk region in Ukraine. He was arrested in 1939 and executed January 28, 1940. Not rehabilitated.

⁴⁴⁹ Лубянка: Сталин и Главное управление госбезопасности, 298–299.

The Central Committee sent to all regional party organizations a secret cipher telegram 1178 and ordered:

To organize in each region and district two-three public demonstrative trials over the enemies of the people – agricultural saboteurs and wreckers ... widely illuminating such trials in the local press.⁴⁵⁰

The task was performed, and in September 1937, several public trials of agricultural saboteurs and wreckers were widely covered in the Kherson press.⁴⁵¹ The state intensely imposed upon the population an ideology of ‘the virtue of denunciation.’ Speaking June 2, 1937, at the enlarged meeting of the Military Council of the Soviet Union, Stalin stressed that:

Every party member, every honest person, every Soviet citizen not only has the right, but he also has a duty to report all the shortcomings he notices. If it is least 5 percent truth, it is already worth something.⁴⁵²

The situation in the national village was rather specific. The language factor, the isolation of community from the rest of population required a number of secret agents within the ethnic group. The authorities gambled on being able to influence children and the youth. In an elementary textbook ‘A brief history of the Soviet Union’ published in 1937 in ten million copies there were a number of passages about the threat of espionage, for example: “Spies are sneaking into factories, into big cities and villages. To catch fascist agents, one has to keep a watchful eye on all suspicious people”.⁴⁵³

Under the heading ‘Both adults and children – all help the NKVD’ the leading children’s newspaper *Pionerskaya Pravda* published a series of articles dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the NKVD, calling children to actively cooperate with the secret police.⁴⁵⁴ Young assistants of security officers in pre-border kolkhozes were looking for and pointing out the foreign intelligence agents’ shelters.⁴⁵⁵ Another publication told a story of the second-grade schoolboy Leva who eavesdropped on all the neighbours in the

⁴⁵⁰ Лубянка: *Сталин и Главное управление госбезопасности*, 298–299.

⁴⁵¹”Вирок у справі контрреволюційної шкідницької банди”, *NP*, № 215. 17.09.1937; ”Процес контрреволюційної троцькістсько-бухарінської організації шкідників і диверсантів у районах бавовносіяння Одещини”, *NP*, № 224. 28.09.1937.

⁴⁵² Лубянка: *Сталин и Главное управление госбезопасности*, 209.

⁴⁵³ Cited in: Хлевнюк О. В. *1937-й: Сталин, НКВД и советское общество*. Москва, 1992, 171.

⁴⁵⁴ Вармуж В. ”Юные помощники славных чекистов”, *Пионерская правда*. № 171. 20.12.1937.

⁴⁵⁵”Ваня и Аня Кузнецовы - частые гости на пограничной заставе”, *Пионерская правда*. № 171. 20.12.1937.

communal apartment and gave valuable information to the NKVD, thus exposing spies and wreckers.⁴⁵⁶

The interface of information exchange between the local government and Gammalsvenskby was mass media. In the mid-1930s radio was not yet available in the Swedish colony. However, there was the readers' house with a mandatory subscription to local newspapers and the cinema house where political newsreels were shown.

The empirical material of media research is the official organ of the Kher-son region *Naddnyprianska Pravda* (hereafter NP). The publications for July – September 1937, the time when the mass operations against ethnic minorities was launched by the NKVD, is in focus of the study. The cross-analysis shows that in the summer of 1937 the theme of foreign espionage was the central issue for NP. The newspaper reprinted en masse the publications of central (Moscow) newspapers in abridged Ukrainian translation with simplified representation of the material.

The main news was a sharp intensification of espionage activities in rural areas of Ukraine. Articles like 'Kolkhoz farmers caught a spy', 'Fishermen caught a spy' and 'Be vigilant always and everywhere', demonstrate this.⁴⁵⁷ The local journalists popularized not only new ideas of the Kremlin, but also a vocabulary of Stalin, for example the sinister concept of 'uprooting'.⁴⁵⁸ NP tried to convince its' readers that massive espionage and sabotage was a common thing, which affected great powers in the world. Fulfilling the directives journalists paid special attention to the foreign intelligence operative methods, strongly suggesting the idea that among the agents there were a lot of Soviet citizens. This topic is reflected in such articles as 'Gestapo on the international arena', 'Criminal methods of subversion activities of the Gestapo agents in the Soviet Union', 'Spies and saboteurs in cassocks'.⁴⁵⁹ As Oleg Khlevnyuk has pointed out, in 1937 Soviet media produced many easily recognisable stories suggesting that mass purges were justified and that the country was full of spies. According to him "journalists invented simple stories so that everyone could easily put himself in the shoes of the characters described".⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁶ Тазин С. "Незнакомец со свертком", *Пионерская правда*. № 171. 20.12.1937.

⁴⁵⁷ "Колгоспники затримали шпигуна", *NP*. № 200. 16.08.1937; "Рибалки допомогли затримати шпигуна", *NP*. № 217. 20.09.1937; "Бути пильними скрізь і завжди", *NP*. № 218. 21.09.1937..

⁴⁵⁸ "До кінця викорчувати ворожу агентуру в комсомолі", *NP*. № 188. 16.08.1937, 1.

⁴⁵⁹ Соколов К. "Деякі методи шкіднико-диверсійної роботи троцькістсько-фашистських розвідників", *NP*. № 162. 16.07.1937; Колесник В. "Шпигунський Інтернаціонал", *NP*. № 171. 27.07.1937; Рубин Н., Серебров Я. "Про підривну діяльність фашистських розвідок в СРСР і завдання боротьби з нею", *NP*. № 180. 6.08.1937, № 181. 8.08.1937.

⁴⁶⁰ Хлевнюк О. В. 1937-й: Сталин, НКВД и советское общество, 170.

Instilment of suspicion was combined with detective stories with a touch of pseudoscientific terminology. On July 20, 1937, First Deputy Commissar of the NKVD Mikhail Frinovsky was absolutely serious when he reported to Stalin about Nazi Germany using crows in espionage activities in Karelia:

On 31 May a crow was killed near Ladoga Lake. The crow was ringed under the number of D 72291 with the word 'Deutschland' ... most probably the Germans are using crows to explore wind direction in pure sabotage and for bacteriological purposes, to put settlements on fire, to put ricks of rye on fire.⁴⁶¹

The first secretary of the Sverdlovsk regional party organization Konstantin Valukhin confidently reported to Stalin that in the forest fires in the Komi-Permyak national district foreign intelligence was involved.⁴⁶²

Fantastic plots were created taking into account the realities of the national area. In the essay 'Parcels of diversionist', NP told its' readers about a plant selection breeder who received a parcel from Japan with a seedling of Japanese terry cherries. As a result of sabotage, "the seedling appeared to be infected by pests and the whole orchard was ruined".⁴⁶³ The next plot was about the Americans who "sent to our country cotton seeds, infected with pink worm".⁴⁶⁴ As known the Kherson district was the area of cotton cultivation and the Swedish Communist Party kolkhoz was also involved in the production of cotton.

In November 1937 the Kherson city theatre showed the new play 'Face-to-face interrogation'.⁴⁶⁵ The authors of the play commissioned by the authorities were Ukrainian playwrights Leonid Tubelsky and Peter Ryzhyi;⁴⁶⁶ and Head of the Investigation Department of the Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine Lev Sheinin. According to the scenario, the Gestapo agent Walter (a German name) operates at the aerodrome but the investigator officer Lartsev (a Slavic name) stands against him. The play which was performed several times for the public and local officials definitely contributed to the atmosphere of spy mania and suspicion of foreigners. Based on the play a Soviet fictional film 'Mistake of Engineer Kochin' was produced in 1939.

NP emphasized to its' readers that this was not just about individual spies, but extensive espionage networks covering both the whole world and the

⁴⁶¹ Лубянка: Сталин и Главное управление госбезопасности, 251.

⁴⁶² История сталинского ГУлага. Конец 1920-х – первая половина 1950-х годов: Собрание документов в 7 томах. Отв. ред. Н. Верт, С. В. Мироненко; отв. сост. И. А. Зюзина. Москва: РОССПЭН, 2004. Т. 1, 304.

⁴⁶³ Лясс А. "Посилки диверсантів", *NP*. №170. 26.07.1937, 12.

⁴⁶⁴ Лясс А. "Посилки диверсантів", *NP*. №170. 26.07.1937, 12.

⁴⁶⁵ *NP*. № 260. 12.11. 1937, 4.

⁴⁶⁶ Leonid Tubelsky and Peter Ryzhyi wrote under the penname 'Four brothers'.

Soviet Union, from Vladivostok to Murmansk.⁴⁶⁷ Geographical remoteness uncertainty made manipulation of the public opinion possible and it was based on information that was not easily to verify even at an elementary level. Additionally, the Kherson press warned by this the local population that the next target of mass arrests would be their homeland. Although the nationality of the unmasked saboteurs and wreckers was, as a rule, not mentioned, but their non-Slavic names created the wanted effect.

Through propaganda, the population and local authorities were prepared for subsequent mass cleansing of certain minorities. This was important for two reasons. Firstly, the 'national operations' of the NKVD were secret; their progress was not reported by the Soviet media (unlike the Moscow trials). Secondly, to hide mass arrests in rural areas was not possible, and the exact number of captured people became known the next day. It was necessary for the dictatorship that the propaganda of hatred of the enemies of the people was supported by the masses and became a part of the emotional experience of bystanders. Many front-pages of NP put special emphasis on the information about meetings, at which the destruction of enemies of the people was unanimously supported by ordinary men.⁴⁶⁸ Thus, the verdict on behalf of the state became a sentence on behalf of the entire society. In the course of meetings the participants seemed to have a sense of involvement in what was going on, the feeling of mutual responsibility was created and strangers came to provoke a general fear of repression. The state-run propaganda for national operations was primarily aimed to:

- create an atmosphere of uncertainty, fear and suspicion in the minority area;
- redistribute universal fear to certain ethnic groups;
- create a negative image of the group at risk;
- introduce specific explanations for the reasons of mass arrests;
- inform local village authorities about subsequent mass arrests;

⁴⁶⁷ Соколов К. "Деякі методи шкіднико-диверсійної роботи троцькістсько-фашистських розвідників", *NP*. № 162.16.07.1937; Колесник В. "Шпигунський Інтернаціонал", *NP*. № 171. 27.07.1937; "Немецьке шпигунство у Франції", *NP*. № 175. 1.08.1937; Рубин Н., Серебров Я. "Про підривну діяльність фашистських розвідок в СРСР і завдання боротьби з нею", *NP*. № 180. 6.08.1937, № 181. 8.08.1937; Абузов Н. "Гестапо на міжнародній арені", *NP*. № 220. 23.09.1937; Абузов Н. "Підступні методи підривної діяльності агентури Гестапо в СРСР", *NP*. № 221. 24.09.1937; Шахнович М. "Шпигуни і диверсанти в рясках", *NP*. № 226. 30.09.1937; Минаєв В. "Процес німецьких шпигунів у США", *NP*. № 271. 27.11.1938.

⁴⁶⁸ *NP*. № 167. 22.07.1937, 1; *NP*. № 215. 17.09.1937, 1.

- appraise denunciations and collaboration with the secret police;
- neutralize the bystanders to make them behave mechanically and cooperate passively with the government and exhibit non-resistance to mass violence.

The aims and objects of propaganda can be schematically represented as follows:

Figure 1: Structure, aims and target groups of the propaganda of terror



The state-organised propaganda campaign reached its goals. NKVD documents show that the simple reference to the ‘foreign origin’ of an arrested

individual convinced witnesses of the guilt of the accused person.⁴⁶⁹ For provincial policemen, the official newspapers also served as information sources that helped to elaborate the design of ‘national operations’, something which was recommended to the local staff of the NKVD by their leadership.⁴⁷⁰ There was for example the order given 1937 by the chief of the Dnipropetrovsk regional NKVD, in which he obliged “all senior and operational staff and militia to study thoroughly the article by Otto Windt ‘German secret military intelligence’ published in Pravda”.⁴⁷¹ The following data show that the local policemen had understood the new direction of the Soviet leadership. In the autumn of 1937 the Odessa NKVD (Gammalsvenskby was then a part of the Odessa region) reported that “about 60–70 percent of adult German population in our region is counter-Soviet”.⁴⁷² Taking into account that in the Odessa region there were more than 150,000 German colonists, the secret police were prepared for a large-scale ethnic cleansing.

Like in Nazi Germany, the Soviet bureaucracy manipulated formal language in order to make its communication incomprehensible to bystanders.⁴⁷³ The NKVD orders, for example, used the following definitions: *kontingent* (contingent) for arrested jailed and deported people, *pervaia kategoriya* (first category) for those who were to be murdered and *vтораia kategoriya* (second category) for those to be sent to the Gulag. Such a use of language contributed to the dehumanisation of the victims. In 1937 the vocabulary of the internal documentation of the NKVD added a new term ‘national’ – a representatives of an ethnic minority or a foreign citizen. The new terminology meant a fundamentally different direction of terror in national borderland. During the early 1930s mass repressions were carried out in the rural area under the slogan ‘liquidation of the kulaks as a class’ presupposing the existence of enemies in every village of the country. Now, a national village became the target of the terror. This meant a dramatic turn in Soviet nationalities politics, from the support of minorities to their pacification. In the letter to Stalin the sergeant of NKVD Baranov evaluated the sense of national operations as follows:

⁴⁶⁹ Ватлин А. Ю. *Террор районного масштаба: массовые операции НКВД в Кунцевском районе Московской области в 1937–1938 гг.* Москва, 2004, 49.

⁴⁷⁰ Ватлин А. Ю. *Террор районного масштаба*, 56, 93.

⁴⁷¹ Ченцов В. В. *Трагические судьбы: политические репрессии против немецкого населения Украины в 1920–1930-е годы.* Москва, 1998, 136.

⁴⁷² Чирко Б. “Нацмен? Значить ворог. Проблеми національних меншин в документах партійних і радянських органів в 20–30-х рр.”, *3 архівів ВУЧК, ГПУ, НКВД, КГБ*. 1995. № 12, 103–105.

⁴⁷³ Friedlander, Henry, “The Manipulation of Language”, *The Holocaust: Ideology, Bureaucracy, and Genocide*, Henry Friedlander & Sybil Milton, (eds.), New York: Kraus International, 103–113.

Keeping in mind your words about the capitalist encirclement, me and my colleagues when arresting a counter-revolutionary, we would not only to remove the active enemy contingent, but also the all basis for it, which in our country are Germans, Poles, Harbins [re-emigrants from Manchuria] and other scum, still lurking, but ready at any moment to take up arms and oppose socialist fatherland.⁴⁷⁴

The party secretary of one of the Moscow factories explained to the wife of the arrested German specialist that actually “all Germans in the Soviet Union are spies”.⁴⁷⁵ In the summer of 1937, the management of the plant Bolshevik in Kiev banned workers of Polish origin to hold meetings in their native language.⁴⁷⁶

The people supported the propaganda of hatred. In May 1938 in Moscow on a factory fence, anonymous, pogrom-like graffiti appeared: ‘Beat all Poles and Latvians!’⁴⁷⁷ In July 1937, the deputy party leader of the Donetsk region Oleksandr Kholokholenko proudly stated that ‘our kids’ know how to unmask the enemy, and where, how and whom to report about it. For example, he read a text on denunciation from eight year old Boris and nine year old Anatoly for all the Party Plenum members to the NKVD of Mariupol about their neighbour, who “was a Pole and a former officer who slanders our leaders”.⁴⁷⁸ On March 5, 1938 *Pravda* reported about a meeting in Krasnoselski kolkhoz in the Gorky region who experienced the effects of “heinous crimes of German wreckers [agricultural local specialists of German origin], who had confused the rotation of sow and had been trying to reduce fodder crops in sowing plans”.⁴⁷⁹ The ethnic nature of the Great Terror was not a secret to critically minded people. In one of the illegal leaflets in 1937 it was stated that “Germans, Poles and Latvians are being arrested en masse in the country”.⁴⁸⁰

Little is known about the feedback from the national minorities. In July 1937, the political commissar of the Ukrainian MTS in Sokolove Comrade Willer reported to the Head of the Soviet Council of Nationalities Aliaksandr

⁴⁷⁴ Савин А. И. “Формирование концепции немецкой ‘пятой’ колонны в СССР”, *Вопросы германской истории*. Днепропетровск, 2007, 225.

⁴⁷⁵ Савин А. И. “Формирование концепции немецкой ‘пятой’ колонны в СССР”, 225.

⁴⁷⁶ Ethnic Conflicts in the USSR, accessed August 2, 2010, www.auditorium.ru

⁴⁷⁷ Schafranek, Hans, and Musienko, Natalia, “The Fictitious ‘Hitler-Jugend’, Conspiracy of the Moscow NKVD”, *Stalin’s terror: high politics and mass repression in the Soviet Union*, Basingstoke, 2003, 216-217.

⁴⁷⁸ Лихолобова З. Г. *Сталінський тоталітарний режим та політичні репресії кінця 30-х років в Україні (переважно на матеріалах Донбасу)*. Донецьк, 1996, 49; Oleksandr Kholokholenko (1905–1937) – Ukrainian Bolshevik. Member of the KP(b)U since 1924. In 1937 the deputy head (second secretary) of the Donetsk Regional Party Committee. He was arrested during the Great Terror and executed August 25, 1937. Rehabilitated.

⁴⁷⁹ “Душители колхозного крестьянства”, *Правда*. 5.08.1938.

⁴⁸⁰ Davies, Sarah, *Popular opinion in Stalin’s Russia: terror, propaganda and dissent, 1934-1941*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, 122-123.

Khatskevich that “our kolkhoz farmers who are Germans are inactive at the meetings and do not criticize the drawbacks for fear of being suspected as fascist elements”.⁴⁸¹ According to a NKVD report, the Swedish colonists of Gammalsvenskby were concerned about arrests of prominent party figures. January 30, 1937, Swedes Jakob Hernberg, Gustav Knutas and a German Adolf Fitz discussing privately the death penalty of Georgy Pyatakov, came to the conclusion that:

Comrade Pyatakov was shot for nothing. The party sentenced a lot of good people to death. And in their place improper cadets are being appointed.⁴⁸²

The Moscow trial on Georgy Pyatakov was especially interesting for villagers of Gammalsvenskby. The former leader of the Ukrainian Communist Party was a popular politician among Swedish and German colonists. His wife, Eugenia Bosch, the head of the first Ukrainian Soviet government was born in the family of Gottlieb Meisch, a German colonist in the Kherson area. In 1914–1917 Georgy Pyatakov and his wife were in exile in Sweden. A Ukrainian communist Georgy Pyatakov was believed to be one of the best Soviet economic executives. However, under the Jesuit logics of Stalin being successful at work became an aggravating circumstance, since “real saboteurs must from time to time show good progress in their work since it was the only way to be safe, as saboteurs, to earn confidence and continue their subversive activities”.⁴⁸³ The local policemen perceived ideas like that as a guide to action. Therefore, among the Old Swedes arrested in 1937–1938 many were active participants in the building of socialism: Petter J. Knutas, Waldemar Utas, kolkhoz chairman Johannes Utas, the Komsomol leader Johannes Knutas and the Stakhanovism movement laureate Alvina Hinas (see table 5 and appendix 1).

3.2. Sweden as an enemy of the socialist fatherland

Sweden as a relatively small and neutral country was not the focus of Soviet propaganda. Since 1920s the Soviet Union and Sweden had stable diplomatic, economic and political relations.⁴⁸⁴ In their annual report from 1930,

⁴⁸¹ Ethnic Conflicts in the USSR, accessed August 2, 2010, www.auditorium.ru, Aliaksandr Khatskevich (1895–1935) – Belarusian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1917. Head of the Council of Nationalities at the Soviet government. He was arrested during the Great Terror and executed November 1, 1937. Rehabilitated.

⁴⁸² DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 5, sprava 364, ark. 10 verso.

⁴⁸³ Сталин И. В. *Сочинения*. Т. 14. Москва: Писатель, 1997, 167.

⁴⁸⁴ Carlbäck, Helene, *Att byta erkännande mot handel: svensk-ryska förhandlingar 1921-1924*, Univ., Diss. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 1997.

the Soviet Foreign Office characterized relations with Sweden as normal, pointing out that “the behaviour of the Swedish government on the issue of the Chinese Eastern Railway and emigrants [Old Swedes] was quite decent”.⁴⁸⁵ In the summer of 1934, the Soviet ambassador in Sweden Alexandra Kollontai in her conversation with Stalin noted that the Swedish ‘bourgeoisie’ did not love and had a fear of the Soviet power, to which Stalin replied: “It is not bad that they are afraid of us. It is worse than they do not see their benefit”.⁴⁸⁶ The fact that the Communist Party in Sweden, unlike in Finland, acted legally and was not persecuted mattered for the Soviet leadership. Historically close contacts linked the leaders of the leftist movements in both countries. Lenin stayed in Sweden on numerous occasions and had a wide range of acquaintances there.⁴⁸⁷ As known, in 1917, a group of Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, with the consent of the Social Democratic government of Sweden came from the belligerent Germany to Russia via neutral Sweden. Stalin, who was abroad infrequently, also visited Sweden in 1906. This year in the *Folkets Hus* (People’s House) in Stockholm the fourth Congress of Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was held. It was attended by about 140 delegates, among who were the future leaders of the Soviet state: Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Georgy Pyatakov, Maxim Litvinov and Yemelyan Yaroslavsky.

As a capitalist country, Sweden, nevertheless, was not perceived as a state hostile to the Kremlin. The left-wing movement, the neutral status, early diplomatic recognition of Soviet Russia, the absence of a common border after 1917 and the peaceful foreign policy of Sweden – all these factors gave Sweden a specific role. However, the spiralling events of the Great Terror lead to adjustments. Stalin’s speech at the March Plenum did not mention Sweden; however, Scandinavia was presented. Discussing a foreign spy network, the leader gave an example of Norway (until 1905 part of the Swedish kingdom). In one of his speech in 1937 the *vozhd’* criticized the members of Scandinavian labour movement of espionage against the Soviet Union:

Take, for example, a group of the shuffler Scheflo in Norway, who gave shelter to the chief spy Trotsky and helped him play mean tricks on the Soviet Union. Doesn’t it look like a reserve? Who can deny that this counter-

⁴⁸⁵ Кен О. Н., Рупасов А. И., Самуэльсон Л. *Швеция в политике Москвы*, 34-35.

⁴⁸⁶ Коллонтай А. *Дипломатические дневники*. Т. 2, 242.

⁴⁸⁷ Kan, Alexander, “Lenin, Branting och Höglund: vad visste man inom svensk arbetarväns-ter om bolsjevikerna före Lenins sista Stockholmsbesök?”, *Scandia*, 1999:65, 97-111, 145-146; Kan, Alexander, *Hemmabolsjevikerna: den svenska socialdemokratin, ryska bolsjevikerna och mensjevikerna under världskriget och revolutionsåren 1914-1920*. Stockholm, 2005.

revolutionary group will henceforth continue to provide services to Trotskyite spies and saboteurs?⁴⁸⁸

The ideas of Stalin were creatively developed by Fritjof Lager. This leading propagandist of the Communist Party of Sweden, who for example worked with Old Swedes, published in 1938 the book 'Sovjet krossar spionerna' (Soviet Union crushes spies). Following Stalin's idea, he claimed that many Scandinavian communists acted as agents of fascism, for example, Olav Scheflo in Norway and Nils Flyg in Sweden.⁴⁸⁹

In the 1920s Soviet news about Sweden usually focused on the growth of the labour movement and the support of the Soviet policy by the Swedish working class. In the 1930s, the situation changed. In the article "Today – matches, tomorrow – grenades" the central newspaper *Izvestia* frightened its' readers with stories about growing militarism in Sweden and reported propagandist myths:

Swedish match factories are constructed so that they at any time can be switched to production of deleterious gases for military needs the necessary for this purpose parts of machines and tools are fully prepared and are under the control of high military officers.⁴⁹⁰

As noted above, on Stalin's personal order, a series of publications about the mass espionage against the Soviet Union was prepared in 1937. Leonid Zakovsky, one of the NKVD chiefs, published work at the central publishing house in the Soviet Union presenting Sweden as a base for foreign espionage. According to Zakovsky, "during World War I, a number of intelligence officers exceeded the number of tourists over the holiday season in some Scandinavian countries, for example in Stockholm".⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁸ Лубянка: Сталин и Главное управление госбезопасности, 106; Olav Scheflo (1883–1943) was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Norway. He supported Leon Trotsky during his stay in Norway in 1935–1936, about Trotsky in Norway see: Teterevleva, Tatiana, "The problem of Russian refugees in Norwegian internal policy of the 1920s - 1930s", *Den komplexa kontinenten. Staterna på Nordkalotten och samerna i ett historiskt perspektiv*, Peter Sköld & Patrik Lantto (eds.), Umeå, 2000, 223–227.

⁴⁸⁹ Lager, Fritjof, *Sovjet krossar spionerna*, Stockholm, Arbetarkultur, 1938, 23; Nils Flyg (1891–1943) – Chairman of the Communist Party of Sweden in 1924–1929. Since 1929 – Chairman of the Socialist Party of Sweden (*socialistiska partiet*), which took a critical stance towards Stalinism. At the end of 1930s Nils Flyg and the members of his party expressed their sympathy with Nazism. See: Blomqvist, Håkan, *Gåtan Nils Flyg och nazismen*, Stockholm, Carlssons, 1999.

⁴⁹⁰ "Сегодня–спички, завтра–гранаты", *Известия*, 4.12.1930.

⁴⁹¹ Заковский Л. *О некоторых методах и приемах иностранных разведывательных органов и их троцкистско-бухаринской агентуры*, 3; Leonid Zakovsky (born as Henriks Stubis, 1894–1938) – Latvian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1913. Organizer of the Great Terror in Leningrad. Deputy Commissar of the

On the wave of patriotic sentiments associated with the Spanish Civil War, the Soviet press crossly reported that “the Swedish government will submit to parliament a bill banning the sending of volunteers to Spain”.⁴⁹² In October 1937 *Journal de Moscou* – the organ of the Soviet Foreign Office published the article ‘Dwelling of inappropriate and unwanted advisers’, which argued that Sweden is the main base of the Gestapo.⁴⁹³ On November 5, 1938 *Izvestia* published an article written by professor of history Yevgeny Tarle ‘Lessons of History’.⁴⁹⁴ This well-known historian from Kiev contributed a lot to the injection of anti-Swedish sentiments. Released on March 17, 1937 from exile since then he was kindly treated by Stalin and published a number of ‘patriotic anti-Western’ works. In his article in *Izvestia* Tarle compared the 1938 Munich Agreement to a coalition of states hostile to Russia, created by Swedish diplomats in the early eighteenth century.⁴⁹⁵

The publishing of a new school textbook, ‘A Brief History of the Soviet Union’ edited in 1937 by Professor Andrey Shestakov marked a dramatic turn in Soviet historiography, the rejection of the so called proletarian history under which the struggle of non-Slavic minorities against tsarism was treated positively. In this textbook the Russian Empire is described as a foregoer of the Soviet Union and Sweden is considered a historical enemy of the Fatherland. Swedes were mentioned numerous times in the textbook as ‘oppressors’ and ‘invaders’, who in times of Karl XII “occupied Ukraine using the treason of the Hetman Mazepa”.⁴⁹⁶

In 1938, under the editorship of VKP(b) special central commission and personal commitment of Stalin ‘A Brief History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)’ was issued. This edition became a mandatory textbook for all party members, including NKVD officers and cadets. ‘A Brief

NKVD of the Soviet Union. He was arrested during the Great Terror and executed August 29, 1938. Not rehabilitated.

⁴⁹² *Известия*, 22.02. 1937, 4.

⁴⁹³ “Hôtes inopportuns et indésirables conseillers (lettre de Stockholm)”, *Journal de Moscou*, October 12, 1937.

⁴⁹⁴ Yevgeny Tarle (1874–1955) – Russian and Soviet historian, professor, member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. He spent the childhood in Kherson and studied history at Kiev University. He visited Sweden on several occasions. In 1930 he was arrested by the GPU as a member of an academic underground organization and sentenced to exile. Released from exile and restored to full membership in the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1938 by Stalin's personal order. Worked on the trilogy “Russian people in the fight against the aggressors”. The third volume of the series is “The Great Northern War and the Swedish invasion of Russia” (1958). About him: Дунаевский В. А. Чапкевич Е. И. “Евгений Викторович Тарле: человек в тисках беззакония”, *Трагические судьбы: репрессированные ученые Академии наук*. Москва, 1999, 108–127.

⁴⁹⁵ Тарле Е. В. “Уроки истории”, *Известия*, 5.11. 1938.

⁴⁹⁶ *Краткий курс истории СССР*. Ред. А. В. Шестаков. Москва: Гос. учебно-педагог. издательство, 1937, 63, see also p. 22, 40, 47.

History' reproduced the famous quote of Stalin who offered his own vision of pre-revolutionary Russia:

The history of old Russia was, among other things, about it being continually beaten for its backwardness. Beaten by the Mongol khans. Beaten by Turkish becks. Beaten by Swedish feudal lords [sic!]. Beaten by the Polish–Lithuanian nobles. Beaten by Anglo–French capitalists. Beaten by the Japanese barons [sic!]. Beaten by all for backwardness ... We trailed 50-100 years after the advanced countries. We must race this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or they will crush us.⁴⁹⁷

In the context of 1937, such a statement of the leader was read as a call for the destruction of internal and external strangers.

The Soviet cinema contributed to creating a hostile image of Sweden. On August 31, 1937 the first series of the film 'Peter I' came out. The film director Vladimir Petrov presented Sweden as the main enemy of Russia. Part of the filming took place in Kherson. The central episode of the film showed an assault of the Swedish fortress. The film claimed that Russia ruined all through by the foreign Swedes that it was impossible to find a living space. The second series of the film, shot in 1938, begins with the battle at Poltava in which "ten thousands of Swedes were hacked down and disappeared without a trace". The movie became an event in Soviet social life. Only within the first eleven days the film was watched by 1, 600,000 viewers. In 1938, the film 'Alexander Nevsky' by Sergei Eisenstein was rolled out. In this movie the medieval Russian prince was interpreted as an anti-Western figure. Russia, sandwiched between East and West, between Germany and Japan, as it was believed in 1938. However after an easy victory over the Swedes, the military triumphs over German invaders came. The spy-and-betrayal topic runs like a golden thread through the plot of the film. The film was approved by Stalin and Eisenstein received the highest award for the movie – the Order of Lenin.

A new tendency of Soviet propaganda was noticed by Sweden. On October 14, 1937 Eric Gyllenstierna reported to the Foreign Minister of Sweden, Rickard Sandler, that in the publications of the Soviet press Sweden was progressively portrayed as an ally of Hitler.⁴⁹⁸ On November 15, 1938, Nils Lindh, the press officer of the Swedish Embassy in Moscow sent Hans Beck-Friis, the head of the political department of Swedish Foreign Minis-

⁴⁹⁷ *Краткий курс истории ВКП(б)*. Москва: Государственное издательство политической литературы, 1945, 229.

⁴⁹⁸ "Med artikel över Sverige", Eric Gyllenstierna till Hans Excellens Herr Ministern för Utrikes Ärendena Rickard Sandler, den 14 oktober 1937. Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet. Avdelning HP 514, Grupp 1, Mål: Er. Politisk allmänt. Ryssland. Volym LXI. 1937. NAS.

try an analytical report.⁴⁹⁹ It was noted that the respectful Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* published an article by the historian Tarle, who visited Stockholm a few years ago. As noted by Lind, in the article based on 'a pack of lies' regarding Sweden it was stated that the enemies of the Soviet Union create a new coalition of hostile states. According to Soviet press the leaders of early modern Sweden Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna and Karl XII, were the principal initiators of aggression of European countries against Russia. Moreover Sweden aimed to conquer the entire space between the Baltic and the Black Seas.⁵⁰⁰

In Ukrainian Soviet historiography Sweden was portrayed as a faithful ally of the Cossacks who fought against Russian tsars. These ideas reached the Swedish colonists. In 1928 in the collective appeal to the Ukrainian government the Old Swedes wrote in broken Russian:

If the old Karolines [soldiers of Karl XII] could now terminate century deathly silence, they would say: 'We did not go on a crusade to Ukraine to conquer it, we came to liberate Ukraine. We laid down our lives having failed to reach the goal, but we did not shed our blood for nothing, our ideas of the great free Ukraine were not killed by the bellow of the cannon and bullets of Peter I. The Ukrainian nation accepted them. The Ukraine that was crushed under the heel of Peter and his successors could not give us thanks for the spilled blood and the goodwill, it could only give us eternal rest, however, now we have an opportunity to express gratitude not by rearing a cast iron or a marble monument, but to return thanks by not-wrought-by-hand: a benevolent act of returning to the bosom of dear common family of the colonists living on the territory of Ukraine. They were estranged, like a living tissue from the body of the birthmother, Sweden, owing to our defeat at Poltava.'⁵⁰¹

In 1937, the image of Sweden in Ukrainian memory politics changed radically to be extremely negative. At a ceremonial address published in December 1937 on the 20th anniversary of Soviet Ukraine the head of government Hryhoriy Petrovsky called the Swedes "barbarian invaders of

⁴⁹⁹ Nils Lindh has published the memoirs about the diplomatic mission of Sweden in Moscow: Lindh, Nils, *Möten mellan öst och väst: studier i samtida rysk utrikespolitik*, Stockholm, Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1949; About him see: Westlund, Peter, "'Sanningen' om Sovjetunionen: Rysslandskännaren Nils Lindhs möte med öst åren 1917-1938", *Jag har sett framtiden och den fungerar inte: journalisterna och främlingarna i öst*, Stockholm, 2002, 20-55.

⁵⁰⁰ Nils Lindh till Hans Beck-Friis, den 15 november 1938. Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet. Avdelning HP 514, Grupp 1, Mål: Er. Politisk allmänt. Ryssland. Volym LXII. 1938. NAS.

⁵⁰¹ "Заявление граждан населенных пунктов Старо-Шведского сельсовета, Бериславского района, Херсонского округа в Совнарком Украины. 17.10.1928", DAKhO, fond R-2, opys 1, sprava 526, ark. 106-107.

Ukraine”.⁵⁰² The new turn of state propaganda was immediately reflected in official historiography. In 1939, the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences arranged a conference on the 230 year anniversary of the defeat of the Swedish invaders at Poltava. It was not the jubilee that sparked the interest of the authorities. The First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine Nikita Khrushchev required all the editors of central Ukrainian newspapers to “comprehensively cover the materials on the 230 year anniversary of the defeat of the Swedish invaders in our press”.⁵⁰³ In Stalin’s Soviet Union, the coverage in the central newspapers were perceived by the local authorities as a guide to action. Following the logic of official propaganda, the NKVD officers turned the communists from Sweden working in Gammalsvenskby into leaders of a Swedish spy network. The fact that by 1937 all Swedish communists had left the Ukrainian SSR did not bother the policemen. In their version, the Swedish communists had fled the country for fear of being revealed of espionage. However, the information on the Swedish agents in the NKVD files is abstract. None of the officers of the counterintelligence department even bothered to find out the full names of the ‘residents’. The names of the Swedish communists who worked in Gammalsvenskby were written into the protocols with numerous spelling mistakes. The counterintelligence officers did not have the slightest idea where in the Soviet Union the diplomatic missions of Sweden were located and who supervised them. The officers, sending innocent people to be executed as Swedish spies, they gave no geographical references, no concrete names of any underground network and no examples of espionage. However, the main direction of the Stalin’s argumentation was preserved and the foreign communists was given the role of Swedish intelligence agents in Gammalsvenskby.

3.3. Isolation as instrument of covert policing actions

The study of the Holocaust showed that segregation and international isolation of the Jewish minority carried out by the Nazis played a central role in preparing the policy of mass extermination of the Jews.⁵⁰⁴ The question is,

⁵⁰² Петровский Г. И. “Славное двадцатилетие”, *Известия*, 24.12.1937. Hryhoriy Petrovsky (1878–1958) – Ukrainian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1897. Head of the Ukrainian government. One of the few Soviet Ukrainian leaders who survived the Great Terror.

⁵⁰³ *Історія національної академії наук України 1938–1941. Документи й матеріали*. Т. 6. Київ: Національна бібліотека України ім. В. І. Вернадського, 2003, 154.

⁵⁰⁴ Longerich, Peter, *Holocaust: the Nazi persecution and murder of the Jews*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, 29-129; Каганович А. “Вопросы и задачи исследования мест принудительного содержания евреев на территории Беларуси в 1941–1944 гг.”, *Актуальные вопросы изучения Холокоста на территории Беларуси в годы немецко-*

therefore, whether socio-geographic and international isolation facilitated the mass operations of the NKVD in Gammalsvenskby. On the eve of the Great Terror, all leaks abroad were unwanted. Reactions of the Swedish press and diplomatic intervention would have significantly complicated the NKVD practice of mass repression. Publications of the Swedish press and diplomatic intervention of Sweden in 1933 greatly complicated the plans of the Kherson secret police to carry out large-scale persecution of the Old Swedes. Apparently the case in the Swedish colony, as well as hundreds of other similar cases, was thoroughly analysed by the NKVD. As a result, in the course of the Great Terror, the authorities managed to maximally isolate the Soviet society from the West.

3.3.1. Diplomatic, border and consular isolation

By the middle of the 1930s new measures of strict border control were introduced by the state. The creation of special 'border districts' starting in 1935. This was followed by the deportations of 'suspicious' ethnic groups from the border areas: Finns, Estonians and Latvians in Northwest Russia and Poles and Germans in Ukraine.⁵⁰⁵

Every Soviet citizen, including locals, were required to have a special NKVD-border guard permission in order to enter the border zone. Entering the territory of the zone without identification documents was forbidden.⁵⁰⁶

The illegal escape of potential victims was also an issue in the Soviet-Romanian-Polish borderland. Gammalsvenskby was 320 km from Romania and the colonists seriously discussed in 1937 the illegal crossing of the Soviet-Romanian border.⁵⁰⁷

One of the first steps of the government in isolating Swedish colonists was to limit their access to diplomatic missions. The Soviet strategy was to restrict the activities of diplomatic and consular missions. In 1937-1938, the Swedish diplomats were working under tremendous pressure. The Soviet side practiced denial of visas to the newly appointed diplomats, violated the principle of the inviolability of the diplomatic bag, arrested the Soviet citizens who held technical positions in the Swedish consulates, and paralyzed

фашистской оккупации. Сборник научных работ / сост. и ред. Я. З. Басин. Минск.: Ковчег, 2005.

⁵⁰⁵ Chandler, Andrea, *Institutions of isolation: border controls in the Soviet Union and its successor states, 1917-1993*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 1998, 77-78.

⁵⁰⁶ Kotljarchuk, Andrej, "The Nordic Threat: Soviet Ethnic Cleansing on the Kola Peninsula", *The Sea of Identities. A century of Baltic and East European Experiences with Nationality, Class, and Gender*, Norbert Götz (ed.), Södertörn University Academic Studies, vol. 60, Stockholm, Elanders, 2014, 62-63.

⁵⁰⁷ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 131.

the activities of consular service. Finally, the NKVD secretly broke into the rooms and apartments of diplomats in order to install listening-in equipment.⁵⁰⁸

By 1937, the Kingdom of Sweden was represented in the Soviet Union with the embassy in Moscow and the consulate in Leningrad. The Swedish consulate in Vladivostok was closed in 1927. The vice-consulate of Sweden in Arkhangelsk was closed in 1935, with the interests of Sweden in the Barents Sea region being represented by Norway after that. However, in 1937, the NKVD conducted mass arrests of “persons affiliated and associated with the Norwegian consulate” in Arkhangelsk, the latter being accused of being ‘a nest of espionage’. During the special operation, 63 individuals were arrested, the consulate was closed, and Norwegian consul Albert Viklund who had grown up in Russia was forced to leave the Soviet Union.⁵⁰⁹ In the autumn of 1937 the Soviet government decided to close the Swedish consulate in Leningrad. After preparatory work and transportation of the property on January 13, 1938 the Consulate ceased to exist.⁵¹⁰ This oldest diplomatic representation of the Scandinavian countries in Russia reopened only in 1972. The Kherson Swedes knew that the German consulate existed in Odessa. The consulate located in the regional centre was a traditional place for the German colonists to ask for help.⁵¹¹ However, in December 1937 at the request of the Soviet government the German consulate in Odessa was also closed.⁵¹² Thus, from the end of 1937, the only possible authority to call for help was the Swedish embassy in Moscow. However, postal addresses and telephone numbers of diplomatic missions were not available to Soviet citizens living outside Moscow. This information was not available in address books and was not given by the help desk and much depended on informal connections. For example in early 1938, the Swedish embassy received a letter from the Finnish emigrant Kerssu Järvelä. Having learnt the address of the embassy in Moscow, the Finn from Karelia and turned to the diplomats of a friendly country to provide him with the postal address of the embassy of Finland.⁵¹³

Of course the Old Swedes could travel to Moscow in order to visit the Swedish embassy. But, on October 28, 1937 in the midst of mass arrests the

⁵⁰⁸ Кен О. Н., Рупасов А. И., Самуэльсон Л. *Швеция в политике Москвы*, 114, note 84.

⁵⁰⁹ Kotljarchuk, Andrej, “The Nordic Threat: Soviet Ethnic Cleansing on the Kola Peninsula”, 60-61.

⁵¹⁰ Avgående diarium för Beskickningen i Moskva 1938. Utrikesdepartementet - skrivelser. Avd: HP. Gr:1. Mål: Eг/B. Nr. 19. NAS.

⁵¹¹ Солончук Е. А. “Раскулачивание в немецких районах Одесского округа: зима–весна 1930”, 219.

⁵¹² *Документы внешней политики СССР. 1 января – 31 декабря 1937*. Т. 20. Москва: Издательство полит. лит-ры, 1957, 569.

⁵¹³ Inkommande diarium för Beskickningen i Moskva. RA 230/230100/C 1. Vol. 17. 1938. Nr. 214. NAS.

NKVD issued order 00698 “Suppression of counterrevolutionary and terrorist activities, of espionage and of subversive activities of the personnel of the embassies and consulates of Germany, Japan, Italy and Poland”.⁵¹⁴ This order launched a new term in the Soviet repressive vocabulary ‘consular connections’, which meant suppression of any contacts between Soviet citizens and diplomatic missions. The order did not stipulate any punishment, which opened up vast opportunities for punitive sanctions. The NKVD directive from February 1, 1938 equated ‘consular connections’ with other categories of political crimes, which actually could lead to a death penalty. Despite the name of the order, the embassy of Sweden also fell under its’ actions. Under paragraph 7 of the order 00698 it was prescribed “to strengthen the surveillance of other missions, through which individual representatives of Japanese, German, Italian, and Polish intelligence also lead counter-revolutionary work in the Soviet Union, as well as, Finnish, Austrian, Balkan and Scandinavian missions”.⁵¹⁵ These shocking measures of the Soviet secret police were actively discussed within the diplomatic corps in Moscow. The diplomats of Sweden, Great Britain, Greece, Iran, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, France and Japan did not know how to overcome the isolation. The ambassador of Poland proposed to use the principle of reciprocity:

If Moscow refuses our citizens visas, we will do the same for Soviet citizens, if any Pole will be arrested in the Soviet Union without grounds, we will arrest Soviet citizens in Poland and if they grab on the street and take away for questioning by police anyone who visits the Polish embassy, we will take the same measures with respect to those who visit the Soviet embassy in Warsaw.⁵¹⁶

The Swedish ambassador Wilhelm Winter informed the Foreign Minister Rickard Sandler about the impossibility of helping fellow countrymen under the conditions of diplomatic isolation.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁴ Охотин Н., Рогинский А. ”Из истории «немецкой» операции НКВД 1937–1938 гг.”, *Наказанный народ. Репрессии против российских немцев*. Материалы конференции. Москва, 1999, 47–48.

⁵¹⁵ Билоконь С. *Механизм большевистского насилия*. Киев, 2000; During the interwar period Finland was regarded together with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as one of four Baltic states. Finland was still addressed as Baltic in the secret protocol to the 1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop pact. See: *The Sea of Identities. A century of Baltic and East European Experiences*, 15.

⁵¹⁶ ”Den främlingsfientliga rörelsen i Sovjetunionen”, Wilhelm Winther till Hans Excellens Herr Ministern för Utrikes Ärendena Rickard Sandler, den 26 maj 1938. Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet. Avdelning HP 514, Grupp 1, Mål: Er. Politisk allmänt. Ryssland. Volym LXII. 1938. NAS.

⁵¹⁷ ”Den främlingsfientliga rörelsen i Sovjetunionen”, Wilhelm Winther till Hans Excellens Herr Ministern för Utrikes Ärendena Rickard Sandler, den 26 maj 1938. Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet.

The next step to ensure mass operations against ‘western’ minorities was administrative exclusion of foreigners from the Soviet Union. During the first years of Soviet regime thousands of Scandinavian immigrants legally and illegally (through Finland) moved to the Soviet Union. Among them were workers from Sweden (*Kirunasvenskar*), as well as dozens of specialists and students of the Comintern schools. The last group of Swedish workers immigrated to the Soviet Union in 1936. In 1937, the emigration stopped and Swedish citizens were no longer allowed entry.⁵¹⁸ Many immigrants, primarily those who took Soviet citizenship, were victims of the Great Terror, however, some of them returned to their homeland. In April 1937, a directive 26 of the NKVD chief Nikolay Ezhov was issued. Under this directive the secret police were obliged “to detect and remove from the Soviet Union all foreign nationals, who in one way or another were suspected of espionage and counter-revolutionary work”.⁵¹⁹ The NKVD circular 68 from August 22, ‘On foreigners’ significantly extended the list of suspects, which were almost all foreign nationals living in the Soviet Union:

It has been detected [by whom? how?] that a vast majority of foreigners are living in the Soviet Union are active members of espionage and sabotage work.⁵²⁰

Under the order fell primarily citizens of Germany, Poland and Japan; however, the order mentioned the citizens of Denmark and Finland, as well. All this made it easy for NKVD officers to apply the provisions of the circular with respect to Swedish citizens. From September 1937 the NKVD began an operation of expulsion of Swedish citizens from the Soviet Union. The overall number of foreigners expelled from the country is unknown. However, the Swedish embassy in Moscow was inundated with requests for help from the Swedes living in various regions of the Soviet Union, from Karelia to Central Asia.⁵²¹

As usual the NKVD gave the deported people two weeks for packing up. Many Swedes were born and lived all their life in Russia and Ukraine, their children and marriage partners often were not citizens of Sweden, although many people had expired Swedish passports. There was no legal currency

temetet. Avdelning HP 514, Grupp 1, Mål: Er. Politisk allmänt. Ryssland. Volym LXII. 1938. NAS.

⁵¹⁸ Gustafson, Anders, *Svenska sovjetemigranter: om de svenska kommunisterna*, 113.

⁵¹⁹ Охотин Н., Рогинский А. ”Из истории «немецкой» операции НКВД 1937–1938 гг.”, 44–46.

⁵²⁰ Охотин Н., Рогинский А. ”Из истории «немецкой» операции НКВД 1937–1938 гг.”, 46.

⁵²¹ Avdelning R, Grupp 67, Mål: Er. Utvisningar från Ryssland I; Avdelning: R, Grupp: 67, Mål: Er. Utvisningar från Ryssland II; Utrikesdepartementet 1920 års dossiersystem. Avdelning: R, Grupp: 20, Mål: B. Volym 161-166. NAS.

exchange market in the country, so people did not have money to travel to Sweden through Finland. As a result, almost the entire staff of the Swedish embassy was performing humanitarian actions to save compatriots. For this reason, the embassy in Moscow was late with the report to the Foreign Ministry for the last quarter of 1938 – an unprecedented event in Swedish diplomatic practice.⁵²² Among the victims of deportation were several Swedish citizens living in the south of Ukraine: M. Olsson from Mariupol, L. Gustafsson from Odessa, Gerda Kulbach and Karl Demulen from Kharkiv.⁵²³

The people who had lost their Swedish citizenship could not expect to leave the Soviet Union and became prisoners of their new nationality. For example, in 1937 Swedes Waldemar and Emil Anderson and Olga Anderson were arrested in Odessa.⁵²⁴ In Kiev, Mikael Hartevelde, Nina Bunge and Vadim Hermonius, Commander of the Infantry Corps, were arrested. In Poltava, police arrested Georg Mejfeldt, lecturer at the local teachers college. Traditionally the Old Swedes had good personal connections in such cities as Odessa, Mykolaiv and Kiev. On the other hand, Soviet Swedes also visited the countryside. However the small-numbered Swedish diaspora in Ukrainian cities (133 persons according to the 1926 census) was dispersed as a result of the mass arrests and the deportations and could not serve as a mediator between the Old Swedes and Sweden.

The information leakage on mass arrests in Gammalsvenskby could occur through the colonists living outside the colony. The Old Swedish families carried out intensive correspondence, reporting all the news. Among those who had immigrated to Sweden in 1929 were the Odessa residents Irja Buskas and Kristoffer Utas.⁵²⁵ The Old Swedes living in Siberia were informed about what was going on. In August 1929 the Swedish embassy in Moscow received a letter from Siberia from Anna Knutas. She was asking for permissions to enter Sweden with her family. Anna Knutas (nee Annas) was born in 1875 in Gammalsvenskby. In 1899, under the resettlement program she and her husband Mikael Knutas with three children left for the village of Privolnoye in the Omsk region. The letter from Siberia suggests

⁵²² Wilhelm Winther till Hans Beck-Friis, den 12 januari 1939. Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet. Avdelning HP 514, Grupp 1, Mål: Er. Politisk allmänt. Ryssland. Volym LXII. 1938. NAS.

⁵²³ Inkommande diarium för Beskickningen i Moskva. 230/230100/C 1. Vol. 16. 1937. Nr. 31, 71, 61; Vol. 17. 1938. Nr. 46. NAS.

⁵²⁴ *Одеський Матриолог. Дані про репресованих Одеси і Одеської області за роки радянської влади*. Одеса: ОКФА, 1997, 36.

⁵²⁵ Personal file 231 – Irja Buskas (Бускас Юрий), Lichnye dela. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Shvetsii (Personal files. Communist Party of Sweden), fond 495, opis 275, Ispolnitelnyi komitet Komintern 1919-1943 (Executive Committee of the Comintern, ECCI 1919-1943) RGASPI.

that even thirty years later the Swedish settlers in Siberia maintained close contacts with their relatives in Ukraine.⁵²⁶

It was difficult for the NKVD to exert total control over the correspondence within the country. However, the preventive police actions reduced this possibility to zero. The destinies of the colonists living in other parts of the country were dramatic. In Mykolaiv Hindrik Utas (born 1881 in Gammalsvenskby) was arrested and disappeared.⁵²⁷ Gottlieb Hernberg (born 1881 in Gammalsvenskby), a worker of the supply department of *Zaporizhstal* was arrested in Kiev. On September 29, 1938 he was executed by the NKVD in Dnipropetrovs'k.⁵²⁸ On June 30, 1937 in Balzer/Krasnoarmeisk in the autonomous republic of the Volga Germans, the nurse of the Swedish Red Cross mission Mary Belio was arrested. Mary (Maria Knutas, born 1899 in Gammalsvenskby) left the Kherson colony due to a love drama. On November 17, 1937 she was shot by the NKVD. In Bashkiria, on December 10 1937, a native of Gammalsvenskby, the farmer Karl Herman (born 1885) was arrested and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. In Pavlodar, Kazakhstan, on December 14 1937 the shoemaker Julius Utas (born 1885 in Gammalsvenskby) was arrested. He was executed in Pavlodar on December 29 of the same year. On July 12 1938, in the remote regions of Altai in the village of Gneduhino, two brothers were arrested and shot; Otto Knutas (born 1904) and Johan Knutas (born 1911), both natives of Gammalsvenskby.⁵²⁹

The arrests of the natives from the village who had never immigrated to Sweden, confirm the hypothesis of Terry Martin on ethnicity as the main criteria of repression by nationalities lines.⁵³⁰ The object of terror was any representative of the Swedish minority, regardless of social and party status and of relations with Sweden. The mass arrests significantly reduced the chances of information exchange between the colony and Sweden. The things that seemed to the uneducated colonists a tragic accident was part of a large-scale plan, the realization of which made it possible to tighten the snare of state-run terror around the neck of Ukrainian Swedish community.

⁵²⁶ Anna Knutas an die Schwedische Gesandtschaft Moskau. 5/VIII-1929. Diverse biträde åt utlänningar Gammal-Svenskby boar, 1930-mars 1956. Utrikesdepartementet 1920 års dossier-system. P 1534, Del. III. NAS.

⁵²⁷ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 248.

⁵²⁸ Реабітовані історією. Запорізька область. Книга перша. Запоріжжя: Дніпровський металург, 2004, 365.

⁵²⁹ The personal data of the victims is based on the Memorial digital database "Victims of the political terror in the USSR", with over 2,600,030 names, see: <http://lists.memo.ru>, accessed July 15, 2014.

⁵³⁰ Martin, Terry, "The origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing", *The Journal of Modern History*, 1998, (70):4, 854.

3.3.2. Limitation of correspondence with foreign countries

Correspondence with foreign countries was not prohibited by law for Soviet citizens. Moreover, the 1936 Constitution guaranteed Soviet citizens secrecy of personal correspondence. The Constitution article 128 declared that the “inviolability of homes of citizens and privacy of correspondence are protected by law”. In fact, the Soviet Constitution was a fiction. The security officers practiced confiscation of personal letters received from abroad violated the Constitution and the Universal Postal Union obligations, of which the Soviet Union was a member since 1924.

In 1937 private correspondence between Soviet citizens and other countries was stopped. No official order has yet been found in the archives. The well-known historian Ilya Dyakonov recalls that in 1937 their family in Leningrad stopped receiving letters from his uncle from Java, at the same time “the post-office stopped sending our letters abroad and postal workers were told to pass parcels through the consulates”.⁵³¹ As known the consulate was a dangerous place, as virtually any contact of a Soviet citizen with the diplomatic mission led to an arrest. In 1937, the correspondence between the Swedish workers engaged in the building of socialism and their relatives in Sweden broke down.⁵³²

Illegal control over citizens' personal correspondence became an ideal instrument to separate Soviet society from the outside world. The Kherson NKVD carried out surveillance of citizens, who maintained correspondence with foreign countries. The police conducted preventive talks with those people, requesting them to stop writing letters abroad.⁵³³ For example, Victoria Kosyak and her father were on the Kherson NKVD file since they did correspond with their relatives in Brazil and Africa. The security officers did not hide the fact that they had consistently withdrawn personal letters. Once the father during the regular prophylactic conversation in NKVD heard the following:

Ha, ha, Citizen Kosyak, if you will get a daughter, your brothers ask you to name her Victoria, in honour of a waterfall.⁵³⁴

⁵³¹ Дьяконов И. М. *Книга воспоминаний*. Санкт-Петербург: Фонд регионального развития, 1995, 427.

⁵³² ”Kirunavädjan om frisläppande av sovjetfångar från Malmfälten”, *Kirunatidningen*, den 5 maj 1955, 34.

⁵³³ Лукьяненко О. ”Фаддей Зелинский в переписке с младшей дочерью Ариадной”, *Новая Польша*. 2009. № 7–8, 51–59.

⁵³⁴ Косяк В. В. “Я знаю що таке пекло”, *Забуттю не підлягає*. Херсон, 1994, 66–77.

In 1937, Victoria's father was arrested and died in the Gulag. In 1945 for continuing correspondence with foreign countries Victoria Kosyak was also arrested.⁵³⁵ For corresponding with relatives in Bulgaria, four Bulgarians, gardeners of the agricultural farm, were arrested and shot by the Kherson NKVD in 1937.⁵³⁶ In December 1937 in Kiev was arrested the Latvian Lydia Kronberg on the basis of correspondence with her sister living in Latvia. On January 19 1938 she was shot for this 'crime'. Kronberg's dossier includes several letters in Latvian, one of them without a postal stamp; this suggests that the letter was taken out of circulation by the secret police.⁵³⁷ In the summer of 1937 the Kherson local press reprinted the materials from central newspapers about the terrible consequences of correspondence with foreign countries. On July 26, 1937, *Naddniprianska Pravda* published the article 'Parcels of the subversives' in which urged their readers to have correspondence with abroad.⁵³⁸ The absurd story contributed to an atmosphere of fear and suspicion of the people maintaining correspondence with foreign countries.

The Old Swedes were people of strong will and despite mass arrests in 1933 and systematic removal of letters they kept on corresponding with their relatives in Sweden. Moreover, the Kherson Swedes developed a system of secrecy which was unique for the Stalin's society. Firstly, the colonists stopped writing the return address of the sender and they did not indicate the name of the sender. The recipient in Sweden determined who the letter came from by the handwriting. Secondly, instead of the standard Swedish language in correspondence they wrote in the Old Swedish dialect which was well understood only by the natives of the village. Thirdly, instead of real names they used rustic nicknames also only understood by the residents. In the fourth place, the farmers used a primitive encryption. For example, the following sentence in a letter: 'We have enough bread' with a cross after the phrase meant exactly the opposite.⁵³⁹ In the fifth place, taking into account the experience of 1933, they sent letters through the post offices of other geographical places outside the Kherson district, first of all from Kakhovka on the opposite side of Dnieper River. Realizing that among the remaining in Sweden home-folk could be secret agents of the NKVD, the Old Swedes warned their recipients not to disclose the information. Thus, Kristina Sigalet from Gammalsvenskby gave a warning to Kristina Knutas in Sweden:

⁵³⁵ Косяк В. В. "Я знаю що таке пекло", 66–77.

⁵³⁶ Оленковський М. "Хочете повернутися в Болгарію? Розстріляти!", *Реабілітовані історією. Херсонська область*. Ред. А. О. Бабич. Херсон, 2005, 920–923.

⁵³⁷ Kuromiya, Hiroaki, *The voices of the dead: Stalin's great terror in the 1930s*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2007, 143–145.

⁵³⁸ Лясс А. "Посилки диверсантів", *НР*. №170. 26.07.1937.

⁵³⁹ E-mail from Jörgen Hedman to the author, March 20, 2010. The author's archives.

But I implore you. Do not tell our Swedes, what I am writing you about. They can write back, and then it would be bad for me. All I am writing to you must remain between you and the bedpost.⁵⁴⁰

Indeed, the NKVD foreign department in Sweden made for non-stop recruitment of former Soviet citizens.⁵⁴¹ Thus, Kristoffer Utas (born in Gammalsvenskby) was expelled from Sweden with his family during World War II for spying on the side of the Soviet Union. Before his departure in 1929 to Sweden, he was a criminal police officer in Odessa. In Sweden Kristoffer Utas had rather quickly found a job in the police and served at the international airport of Bromma.⁵⁴²

The correspondence between Gammalsvenskby and Sweden stopped in the fall of 1937. Kristina Knutas, who upheld correspondence from Sweden with several women from the village, did no longer receive any letters. On July 20, 1938, she sent a letter to Swedish scholar Nils Tiberger. She stressed that since the fall of 1937 she had not receive a single letter from the Soviet Union and did not know what was going on in the colony.⁵⁴³ The correspondence with relatives from Sweden resumed only in 1941, after the occupation of Ukraine by Nazi Germany. Thus, in the course of Great Terror the NKVD was able to achieve complete isolation of Gammalsvenskby from Sweden. Certainly, it freed the local secret police's hands to perform mass arrests and to kill fellow citizens.

3.3.3. Strengthening of control over trips of Scandinavian delegations and tourists

Interwar Soviet Union was not a closed country and in the beginning of 1930s about 5,000 tourists from the West visited the country annually.⁵⁴⁴ In 1936 the number of foreign tourists reached its pre-war height – 13,437 individuals⁵⁴⁵ Swedish citizens were among the most active travellers to the homeland of the proletariat. By 1937, the two countries were linked by air traffic Moscow–Riga–Stockholm and by the ferry route Leningrad–

⁵⁴⁰ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 248.

⁵⁴¹ Воскресенская З. *Теперь я могу сказать правду! Из воспоминаний разведчицы*. Москва: Республика, 1993, 94.

⁵⁴² Hedman, Jörgen, "The Ukrainian Swedes from Gammalsvenskby as living witnesses of the local events of Soviet-Ukrainian history 1931–1991", unpublished conference paper presented at the workshop at Södertörn University, August 21, 2008.

⁵⁴³ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna*, 248.

⁵⁴⁴ Голубев А. В. "Запад глазами советского общества", *Отечественная история*. 1996. № 1, 108.

⁵⁴⁵ David-Fox, Michael, *Showcasing the great experiment: cultural diplomacy and western visitors to Soviet Union, 1921-1941*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012, 178.

Stockholm. The Swedish *Sovjetunionens Vänner Förbund* (Society of Friends of the Soviet Union) edited an illustrated magazine *Det Nya Ryssland i ord och bild* (New Russia in words and pictures), with an edition of 5000 copies which informed its' readers about the achievements of socialist construction.⁵⁴⁶ The magazine published dozens of stories about Swedes travelling through the Soviet Union. Among the guests in the first country in the world of proletarian revolution were not only workers and communists, but also representatives of various left-wing parties and organizations, trade unionists, journalists and writers, housewives and the children of the Swedish unemployed.⁵⁴⁷

Southern Ukraine with its 'Potemkin villages' was one of the most popular goals of Swedish tourists.⁵⁴⁸ Here giant construction sites of the first and second five-year-plans could be found, exemplary state-farms, Jewish settlements and a route to the international resorts of Crimea.⁵⁴⁹ In 1933, a Swedish-Norwegian delegation visited one of the NKVD prisons in Ukraine, making sure that:

Soviet Russian prisons are something completely different from prisons of capitalist countries. Russian prison [sic!] is not an institution of punishment, but a place where people are re-educated into useful members of society. The prisoners have their own theatre, own wall newspaper, where they criticize openly the conditions of confinement.⁵⁵⁰

The Comintern project to create in Gammalsvenskby an exemplary kolkhoz implied visits to the village of Swedish activists. As we know, the Swedish left-wing press published several articles about *Röd Svenskby*, the authors of which were Swedish visitors. The Communist newspaper of Sweden *Ny Dag*

⁵⁴⁶ The journal was issued regularly from 1931 until 1945. Appeared under the different titles: *Det Nya Ryssland i ord och bild*; *Sanning om Sovjetland*; *Sovjetunionen idag*; and *Sovjetnytt*.

⁵⁴⁷ *Studieresor till Sovjetunionen*. UU 22/37. Volym I; ARAB; Brusewitz, Per Emil, *Bakom Rysslands järnridå: på motorcykel från Petrograd till Tiflis*, Stockholm, Geber, 1923; *En studieresa i Sovjet-Ryssland: Den svenska statsjännerdelegationens rapport från en resa i april 1925*, Stockholm, Fram, 1925; *Svenska kommunalarbetsareförbundet, Rapport avgiven av Sv. kommunalarbetsareförbundets studiedelegation till Ryssland den 25 april-5 juni 1926*, Stockholm, A.-B. Arbetarnes Tryckeri, 1926; Brandt, E. G. C., *Ett studiebesök i Sovjetunionen*, Falun, Dalademokraten, 1934; "Svensk studieresan till Sovjet-Unionen", *Det nya Ryssland i ord och bild*, 1931:3, 7-8; "Från min resa i Sovjet-Unionen", *Arbets-Kvinnornas Tidning*, 1933:4, 5.

⁵⁴⁸ David-Fox, Michael, *Showcasing the great experiment*, 98-128.

⁵⁴⁹ Adamson, Einar, *Från Lenins stad genom soliga Ukraina till Krim*, Göteborg, Svenska arbetar-Esperantoförbundet, 1926; "Vad tyckte maj delegationen om kollektivbruk, kreatur-farmer, järnverk m.m.?", *Det nya Ryssland i ord och bild*, 1931:3, 7-8; "Sovjetunionen löser judeproblemet", *Sovjetunionen idag*, 1933:4, 18-20; "Vad sade skandinaviska arbetardelegater till pressen om studieresan till SSSR okt. – nov. 1931", *Det nya Ryssland i ord och bild*, 1932:3, 1-8; "Bland pionjärer på det soliga Krim", *Arbets-Kvinnornas Tidning*, 1930:5-6, 6.

⁵⁵⁰ "Kvinnan har befriats från kökslaveriet", *Arbets-Kvinnornas Tidning*, 1933:3, 4.

even competed for a grand prize in the form of a trip to Gammalsvenskby as a part of subscription campaign.⁵⁵¹ However, after the mass famine or *Holodomor* the information on life in Gammalsvenskby disappeared from the left-wing Swedish press.

In 1937 the propaganda of international solidarity gave way to the policy of extreme isolation.⁵⁵² To completely reject visits of friendly delegations of Swedish leftist movements was hardly possible. In October 1937 the Kher-son press reported on the arrival of a delegation of the Communist Party of Sweden in Moscow, where a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the October Revolution would take place.⁵⁵³ However, on the eve of the Great Terror the number of additional measures to minimize a number of Swedish delegations to Ukraine had been taken. Firstly, only collective trips within the delegations were possible. Secondly, the travel routes were limited to Leningrad and Moscow and, as a rule, excluded a visit to Ukraine. Thirdly, judging by the Swedish press publications the number of trips had decreased dramatically in 1937. Finally, many Swedish tourists who arrived in the Soviet Union were harassed by the NKVD. In July 1937, the Swedish consulate in Leningrad prepared a special report in the political department of the Foreign Ministry of Sweden on persecution of tourists. For example, a group of Swedish teachers arrived via the *Intourist* agency for an-the-spot visit to Leningrad and Moscow.⁵⁵⁴ One of the members of the delegation, a teacher from Umeå Yngve Ljunge was arrested in Leningrad by NKVD allegedly because of problems with his passport. After three hours of questioning him about his intent to get to the Soviet Union, the interrogation was terminated.⁵⁵⁵ A delegation of Swedish municipal employees was stopped by the NKVD on the way from Leningrad to Moscow. A member of the delegation Elisabet Charlotta Vilenius was rejected in visiting the capital city and was recommended to leave the Soviet Union as soon as possible. The consul in Leningrad Knut Lundberg related grotesque, in connection with an intensified spy-mania in the Soviet Union.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵¹ Meurling, Per, *Kommunismen i Sverige*, Stockholm, Wahlström & Widstrand, 1950, 39-40.

⁵⁵² David-Fox, Michael, *Showcasing the great experiment*, 303-317.

⁵⁵³ NP. 18. 10. 1937. № 241, 1.

⁵⁵⁴ Intourist was the state travel agency that operated in the USSR between 1929 and 1991. Their name was an acronym of 'inostrannyi turist', which means a foreign tourist. The NKVD agents stuffed Intourist.

⁵⁵⁵ "Svenska turister utsatta för trakasserier", Knut Lindberg till Hans Beck-Friis, den 7 juli 1937. Avgående diarium för Beskickningen i Moskva 1937. Avd: HP. Gr:1. Mål: Er. Kungl. Svenska Konsulatet Leningrad. Utrikesdepartementet – skrivelser. NAS.

⁵⁵⁶ "Svenska turister utsatta för trakasserier", Knut Lindberg till Hans Beck-Friis, den 7 juli 1937. Avgående diarium för Beskickningen i Moskva 1937. Avd: HP. Gr:1. Mål: Er. Kungl. Svenska Konsulatet Leningrad. Utrikesdepartementet – skrivelser. NAS.

The concern of the Soviet government was far from groundless. In the course of mass repressions tours of foreigners in the country could lead to a serious leakage of information. In August – September 1937, a Social Democrat Gustav Hellström, a reporter of the leading Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* visited the Soviet Union. As an influential journalist and writer and as an author of the bestseller about Hitler's accession to power, he managed to get permission for a solo trip to Ukraine.⁵⁵⁷ There he visited an exemplary kolkhoz Bolshevik, where in general everything went according to the script written by the authorities. One of the first his stories from the Soviet Union had a characteristic pathetic title 'Revolutionary and military morality typifies Stalin's Soviet Union. The Russian proletarian is similar to a new American of the 1890s. What tourists see in the country is not decoration'.⁵⁵⁸ However, during the onward journey Gustav Hellström became a casual witness of the escorting of Gulag prisoners. What he saw affected the appraisal of achievements of Soviet regime.⁵⁵⁹ A series of reports published in *Dagens Nyheter* gave rise to the book titled *Vägen till paradiset* (Road to Heaven) published in 1937 by one of the largest Swedish Publishing houses Bonnier. Hellström's book became one of the first international condemnations of the Stalin's dictatorship. Thus the visit of a Swedish delegation to Gammalsvenskby in 1937 was practically impossible.

3.4. Terror as a method of social engineering. The investigatory records of "A Swedish nationalistic counterrevolutionary spy organization"

The study of mass killing took a major turn in the post-Second World War period because of the Holocaust. However, it has taken a rather long time for researchers to get involved in the ethnic aspects of Soviet Great Terror. Robert Conquest, who popularized the term Great Terror in his classic account of Stalin's terror, depicts these events as repressions first of all against political, cultural and military elites.⁵⁶⁰ The pioneer study of Aleksandr Nekrich was devoted to the wartime deportations of Crimean and Caucasian minorities.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁷ Hellström, Gustaf, *Det tredje riket: från Hitlerkupp till tysk folkenighet*, Stockholm, 1933.

⁵⁵⁸ "Revolutions- och krigsmoralen präglar det Stalinska Sovjet. Rysk proletär liknar 90-talets ny – amerikan. Det som turisterna få se är inte enbart kulisser", *Dagens Nyheter*, den 15 augusti 1937.

⁵⁵⁹ Hellström, Gustaf, *Vägen till paradiset*, Bonnier, Stockholm, 1937, 175-176.

⁵⁶⁰ Conquest, Robert, *The great terror: Stalin's purge of the thirties*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971.

⁵⁶¹ Nekrich, Aleksandr, *The punished peoples: the deportation and fate of Soviet minorities at the end of the Second World War*, W.W. Norton, New York, 1978.

Interwar Soviet Union was unlike many other states in Europe. This difference concerns not only the abolition of private property and the dictatorship of the Communist Party, but also a nationalities policy based on internationalism. The Soviet Union was practically the first great power in the world that systematically promoted the national consciousness of indigenous peoples and established institutional forms characteristic of a modern nation for them. While small-numbered ethnic groups faced discrimination, the Soviet Union proclaimed in 1923 and then implemented a policy of self-determination, cultural and linguistic rights for all minorities.⁵⁶² However, in 1937 this policy changed radically, when Soviet security police initiated top secret 'national operations'. At a meeting of the Politburo on 20 July, 1937, Stalin initiated the German operation by writing a proposal that "all Germans working in our military and chemical factories, electrical stations and at construction sites in all regions, all must be arrested".⁵⁶³ In total, in 1937–1938, 56,787 ethnic Germans were arrested, of which 41,898 were shot. Only 820 of them were citizens of the Reich.⁵⁶⁴ The next operation was 'Polish' in terms of which 139,815 Soviet Poles were arrested and 111,071 were executed.⁵⁶⁵ A number of smaller national operations were organized by the central government according to the Polish model. Among them were: the Greek, Iranian, Afghan, Bulgarian, Korean and Finnish operations. Moreover, the Latvian operation was initiated by the local NKVD of Smolensk. During this operation, which started 3 December, 1937, 17,851 Soviet citizens, mainly of Latvian origin, were arrested and 13,444 were executed. Altogether within the period of fourteen months August 1937 – October 1938, 335,513 people were arrested in the national operations of the NKVD and 247,157 of them were shot.⁵⁶⁶ The victims of national operations made up 34 percent of all the murdered victims of the Great Terror.

The role of ethnicity and/or class in the Soviet Great Terror is still a debated issue for historians. Some scholars believe that ethnicity is not a major component of national operations, and political and geographical aspects played a leading role, in particular the colonists' contacts with hostile countries, their resistance to collectivization, mopping-up operation in frontier areas, etc. The French historian Nicolas Werth drew attention to the fact that

⁵⁶² Martin, Terry, *The affirmative action empire: nations and nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2001.

⁵⁶³ Охотин Н., Рогинский А. "Из истории «немецкой» операции НКВД 1937–1938 гг.", 35.

⁵⁶⁴ Охотин Н., Рогинский А. "Из истории «немецкой» операции НКВД 1937–1938 гг.", 73–74.

⁵⁶⁵ Петров Н.В., Рогинский А.Б. "Польская операция» НКВД 1937-1938 гг.", *Репрессии против поляков и польских граждан*. Москва: Звенья, 1997, 37–38.

⁵⁶⁶ Werth, Nicolas, "The Mechanism of a mass crime. The Great Terror in the Soviet Union, 1937-1938", 232.

not only the Poles were among the victims of Polish operations.⁵⁶⁷ Other scholars, on the contrary, believe that suspicious ethnic origin was the root cause of national operations.⁵⁶⁸ According to Mark Adams, the idea of selection of human material made a significant impact on the Stalinist concept of the Great Purge. American geneticist Hermann Muller, who worked in the Soviet Union in 1933–1937, offered Stalin “on the force of eugenics to consolidate the victory of socialism in the time period of one generation”.⁵⁶⁹ The Russian historian Vladimir Khaustov and the Swedish scholar Lennart Samuelson talk about the erroneous exaggeration of the foreign policy factor and stress that many victims of national operations came from the easily controlled semiliterate groups of the population, who at that time had experienced the horrors. Referring to internal documents of the NKVD, these scholars note that the personnel of central and regional NKVD realized that national operations did not have solid grounds and just performed a social mandate of the Kremlin.⁵⁷⁰ In 1937 the Kherson steppes suddenly become a field of intensive operations of German, Polish, Greek, Romanian, Estonian, Iranian, Czech, Swedish and Japanese intelligence services. The absurdity of such ‘espionage’ was understood by every executer of flagitious orders. However, the security police took it easy, since large-scale ethnic cleansings were ordered by the country’s leadership. For example, the regional Party leader Sergey Sobolev explained the new line of Stalin to the NKVD staff of Krasnoyarsk in the following way:

Stop playing at internationalism; you have to beat all these Poles, Koreans, Latvians, Germans, and so on. All of them are corrupted nations which are to be exterminated ... all nationals should be caught, put on their knees and destroyed like mad dogs.⁵⁷¹

The ‘Swedish operation’ in Gammalsvenskby was officially not a part of the national operations. However the NKVD investigators in accordance with the principles of national operations designed the state-run violence against the Swedish colonists. In this connection the analysis of local material is of interest.

⁵⁶⁷ Werth, Nicolas, “The Mechanism of a mass crime. The Great Terror in the Soviet Union, 1937–1938”, 237.

⁵⁶⁸ Martin, Terry, “The origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing”, 813–861.

⁵⁶⁹ Adams, Mark, “Eugenics in Russia, 1900–1940”, *The Wellborn science: eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990, 195.

⁵⁷⁰ Хаустов В., Самуэльсон Л. *Сталин, НКВД и репрессии 1936–1938*, 48.

⁵⁷¹ Тепляков А. Г. *Машина террора: ОГПУ–НКВД Сибири в 1929–1941 гг.* Москва, 2008, 366–367; Sergey Sobolev (1900–1939) – Russian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1918. In 1937–1938 the first secretary of the Krasnoyarsk Party committee. He was arrested during the Great Terror and executed February 2, 1939. Rehabilitated.

On September 22, 1937, a new territorial region appeared on the map of Ukrainian SSR, the Mykolaiv region. Gammalsvenskby entered the newly-created administrative unit. Established the same year the new regional department of NKVD contributed to the intensification of repressions. As any other governmental institution, the NKVD was part of the Soviet planned economy. The new regional police department were required to exceed the death-penalty plan handed down from Moscow known as ‘first category quota’.⁵⁷²

The function of the NKVD troika proves that an actual target of large-scale national operations was mass cleansing of society. Only a non-judicial procedure of investigation and of sentencing allowed the murdering of over 247,000 people during a short period of time. To put such things into practice with statutory procedural rules presupposing trial and the right to a defence was unreal. A special ‘Swedish line’ of national operations did not exist. Therefore, the initiative of the case of the fictitious Swedish spy organization belonged to the local department of the NKVD. Several secret agents were recruited within the tiny Swedish community in order to collect compromising information on their neighbours. The operation was prepared in the course of a long surveillance operation number 290 under the code name ‘Twins’.⁵⁷³

On October 13, 1937 the NKVD of Beryslav initiated arrest of eight Gammalsvenskby inhabitants. On November 5, 1937 three more Swedes were arrested. All the arrested were charged under articles 54.6 (espionage), 54.10 (propaganda or agitation, calling for overthrow, undermining or weakening of the Soviet regime) and 54.11 (organizational activities as well as participation in a counterrevolutionary organization) of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. Articles 54.6 and 54.11 provided for death penalty. On October 27, 1937 all the arrested Swedes were shot in the Kherson prison. On November 14, 1937 Head of the Beryslav NKVD David Davydenko-Edvabnik reported that “in the village of Gammalsvenskby a counterrevolutionary spy organization of Swedish former kulaks was eliminated”.⁵⁷⁴ The crime initiative was rewarded, and Davydenko-Edvabnik was promoted; in the beginning of 1938 he took the position of the chief of the 3rd counterespionage department of the Kherson NKVD. Under his leadership the department fabricated numerous cases against the Germans, the Swedes, the Poles, the Greeks and the Bulgarians of the Kherson area. In 1938 Davydenko-Edvabnik and his subordinates found ‘undetected spies’ in the Swedish colony and organized a new round of mass arrests. In February 1938, Kristoffer Annas and Gustav

⁵⁷² Pringle, Robert W., “Modernization of Terror: The Transformation of Stalin's NKVD, 1934-1941”, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 2004, (17):1, 118.

⁵⁷³ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 18.

⁵⁷⁴ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 185-187.

Knutas were arrested. On July 16, 1938, the NKVD arrested a group of nine villagers.⁵⁷⁵ All the arrested were accused of crimes under articles 54.10 and 54.11 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. All in all, the victims of the Great Terror came to 22 individuals of the entire Swedish population of about 260 people in Gammalsvenskby (see appendix 1). 17 of them were shot in accordance with a decision of the troika.

On November 17, 1938 on the resolution of the Politburo the NKVD terminated mass operations.⁵⁷⁶ The complete list of victims of the Great Terror against Old Swedes together with those murdered in other regions of the country came to 29 people (see appendix 1). On the one hand, all the arrested Swedish colonists of Gammalsvenskby were 're-emigrants' and as such fell under the NKVD order number 00447. The colonists' stay of two years in Sweden was treated by the secret police investigators as a clear evidence of their spy intentions. On the other hand, in fact all the villagers visited Sweden. Therefore, re-emigration as a criterion of selection of victims does not work in this case. Moreover, in the course of the Great Terror the NKVD arrested and executed the natives of the village who had never been to Sweden.

The secret police officers were well aware that none of the Swedish farmers was a kulak. The colonists sold out all their property in 1928 and voluntarily returned to the Soviet Union to participate in the creation of the Swedish Communist Party kolkhoz. Thus, they never resisted collectivization and at the time of the arrest did not have much property. The national operations followed by enormous falsification of social origin of a victim. In the investigation files, despite the obvious facts, it was often indicated that the arrested was a kulak or a son of a kulak.⁵⁷⁷ For example, Petter K. Knutas, an orphan who was a farmhand before the collectivization, was also enrolled into kulaks.⁵⁷⁸ As a result of such a forgery a victim got into a list of open enemies of the people with all the ensuing consequences. Therefore the social background of accusation was rather a tribute to class doctrine of the Bolsheviks than real directives of the NKVD secret orders. The popularity of such a practice can be explained by the fact that the reference to a hostile class origin had long been legalized and actively used in the Stalinist legal system, whereas a direct indication of a hostile ethnic origin prior to national operations was not permitted. Investigators took little care of the offence and did not bother to search for concrete facts of espionage and sabotage. According to the absurd version of the NKVD the main espionage activity of the colonists was the spreading of provocative rumours about the Soviet

⁵⁷⁵ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 5, sprava 17, sprava 364.

⁵⁷⁶ Охотин Н., Рогинский А. "Из истории немецкой операции НКВД 1937–1938 гг.", 62.

⁵⁷⁷ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 5, sprava 17, ark. 66.

⁵⁷⁸ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 533, ark. 36.

government in Sweden, in particular, 'the predictions of war with the Soviet Union and the victory of Nazis over our country'.⁵⁷⁹ In return the villagers got "a salary for espionage" from Sweden in the form of parcels and foreign currency".⁵⁸⁰ It should be mentioned that the all correspondence with Sweden had been stopped by the NKVD prior to the mass arrests. The arrested, non-guilty person had to admit to a primitive scheme of charges. Hannah Arendt stresses that the secret police of a totalitarian state did not seek to solve problems of crime, but sought to be ready in an instant when the government decided to start arrests.⁵⁸¹ Rank and file security officers perceived the orders of the authorities and materials of party press as a direct indication to purify Soviet society from 'spy garbage'.⁵⁸² The absence of *corpus delicti* confirms that the real aim of mass arrests was the destruction of the Swedish ethnic community. At the same as NKVD arrested the Swedes, they also arrested some German neighbours.⁵⁸³ However, the Old Swedes were an exclusive target in the investigation of a Swedish spy organization (see table 1), thus making it possible to speak of an ethnic design of the Great Terror in the national borderland.

Table 1. Ethnic profile of the victims of the NKVD 'Swedish' operations in Gammalsvenskby

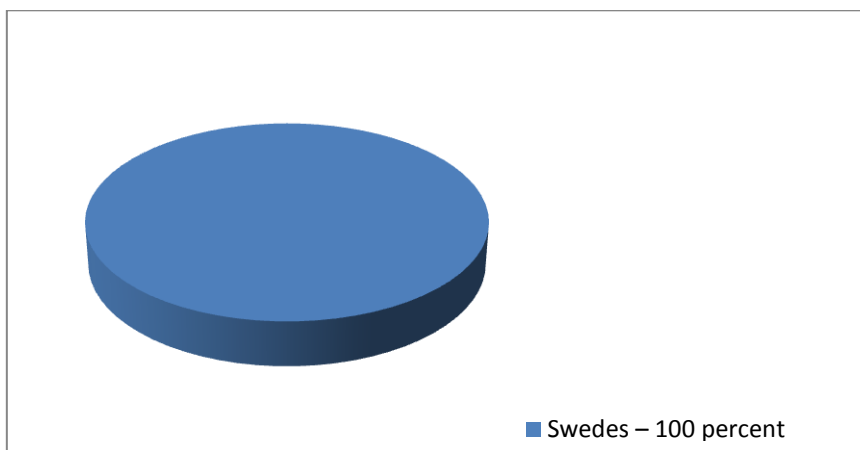
⁵⁷⁹ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 3.

⁵⁸⁰ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 3.

⁵⁸¹ Arendt, Hannah, *The origins of totalitarianism*, San Diego; New York; London, 1976, 426.

⁵⁸² See as example: "Письмо помощника начальника 3-ого отдела УНКВД по Новосибирской области В. Д. Качуровского первому секретарю обкома ВКП(б) Г. А. Баркову от 14 апреля 1939 г.", Юнге Марк, Бордюгов Геннадий, Биннер Рольф. *Вертикаль большого террора. История операции по приказу НКВД № 00447*. Москва: Новый хронограф, 2008. 455.

⁵⁸³ Among them were Jakob Kvadricius, Kristoffer Kvadricius, Gustav Tomm and Adolf Fitz, see: *Реабілітовані історією. Херсонська область*. Херсон: Наддніпрянська правда, 2005, 325–327.



Source: State Archives of Kherson Oblast (DAKhO)

The fact that a primary target of the judicial scrutiny was extermination is supported by unprecedentedly cruel tortures of the arrested Old Swedes. Tortures are known to be sanctioned by Stalin personally. In an expository telegram to the leaders of the regional Party organizations and the NKVD departments of January 10 1939, Joseph Stalin pointed out that “physical coercion as an exception must be obligatory applied henceforth in relation to explicit and unarmed enemies of people since it absolutely correct and expedient”.⁵⁸⁴ At the beginning the arrested colonists apparently did not anticipate that they could expect execution. In 1933, for the collection of signatures in support of re-emigration to Sweden Petter E. Utas, Mattias Norberg, Simon Sigalet and Kristian Herman were sentenced to three years exile. Being repeatedly arrested in 1937, they knew that this time they had done nothing controversial and believed a lenient punishment was to come. However, tortures dispelled their hopes. Anna Portje (nee Norberg) testimonies:

In 1937, when I was 14 years old, my mother and I got the right to meet our arrested father [Mattias Norberg] in the NKVD prison of Kherson. Dad was brought out with the two NKVD guards holding him under his arms, as the Holy Spirit. He had been tortured. All his fingers were broken, his teeth knocked out, he could hardly speak. He told us that it was better to be shot than to endure ten years of torment. Three times a night they raised him and tortured him until he sign up everything. A year later, my mom again went to the NKVD Kherson asking where her husband was. ‘He is alive, we have exiled him – such was the reply. We gave credit to it since our property had not

⁵⁸⁴ Юнге Марк, Бордюгов Геннадий, Биннер Рольф. *Вертикаль большого террора*, 445-446.

been confiscated as normally happened in case of supreme penalty, otherwise they would come and take our Swedish sewing machine.⁵⁸⁵

Trying to prove the existence of the fictitious spy organization the security officers carried out numerous face-to-face confrontations, making people cast aspersions on each other. Thus, besides the physical torment the patriarchal Swedish colonists survived a terrible breaking of moral norms and values.

The specificity of national operations brought to life the atmosphere of ethnic hostility and suspicion forgotten in the years of propaganda of internationalism. Thus, at the point of national operations, Stalin personally ordered that the operational personnel of the NKVD of Volga Germans Autonomous Republic and all ethnic Germans were removed.⁵⁸⁶ The victims of the Great Terror in Gammalsvenskby village council were exclusively ethnic Swedes and Germans. The Ukrainian families in this case did not come to harm. At the same time, none of the local policemen were Swedes or Germans by descent (see appendix 2). The witnesses in the case of ‘Swedish spies’ were Ukrainians from Gammalsvenskby Makar Shurduk and Vasyl Krakovsky, who actively worked with the prosecution. The Gammalsvenskby village council on behalf of Makar Shurduk gave negative characteristics to all arrested colonists. Therefore, the causes of the Great Terror in Gammalsvenskby were discussed in terms of an ethnic conflict by the survivors. Emil Utas testimonies:

My brother, the chairman of the kolkhoz Johannes Utas and other Swedes were arrested on July 16, 1938 in the blaze of the day. They were taken out to Beryslav on an open truck. In Beryslav my brother's teeth were knocked out with a butt-end. The chekists [NKVD officers] were led by Davydenko who was a Jew. On his conscience were the deaths of many Swedes and Germans.⁵⁸⁷

Most prior studies on national operations have focused on terror against thousands of single individuals arrested across the country, while the focus of this chapter is on the mass execution of members of a single ethnic community. But who become victims in a homogeneous rural community and why? A micro historical approach of quantitative studies makes it possible to

⁵⁸⁵ Interview with Anna Portje (born 1923), Zmiivka, October 28, 2004.

⁵⁸⁶ ”Шифротелеграмма № 1164/ш И. В. Сталина А. А. Андрееву об арестах в республике немцев Поволжья от 2 августа 1937 г.”, *Лубянка: Сталин и Главное управление госбезопасности НКВД*, № 157.

⁵⁸⁷ Cited in: Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, 295; Emil Utas was born in 1920 in Gammalsvenskby. In 1939–1941 he was soldier of the Red Army and then joined the Nazi occupational forces. In 1945 he left Germany for Sweden.

reach a new level of accuracy. As seen from table 2.1 and 2.2 the primary target of mass repressions in Gammalsvenskby was men.

Table 2.1. Gender of arrested victims of the Great terror in Gammalsvenskby during the ‘Swedish operation’

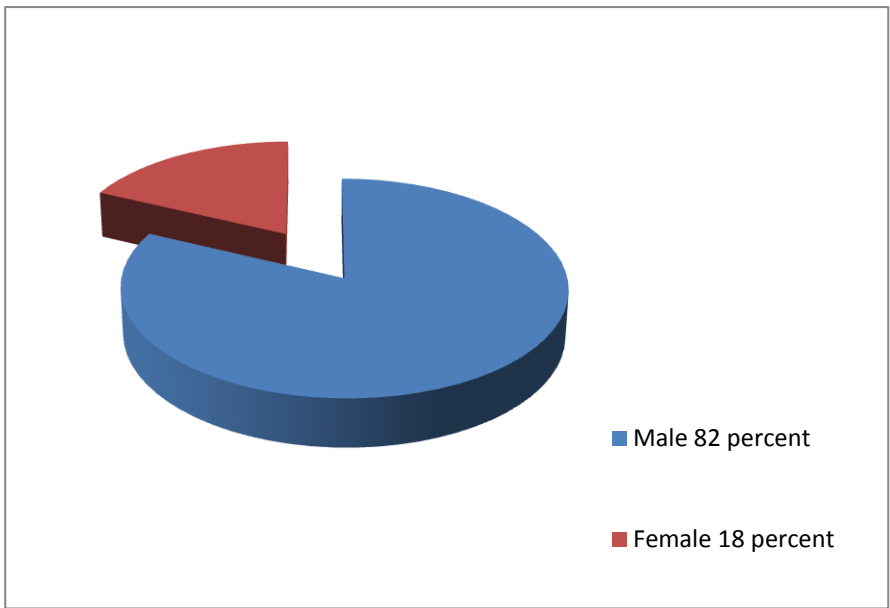
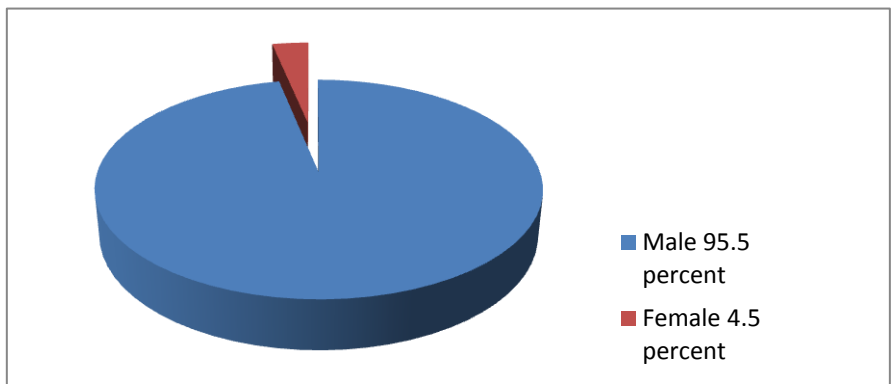
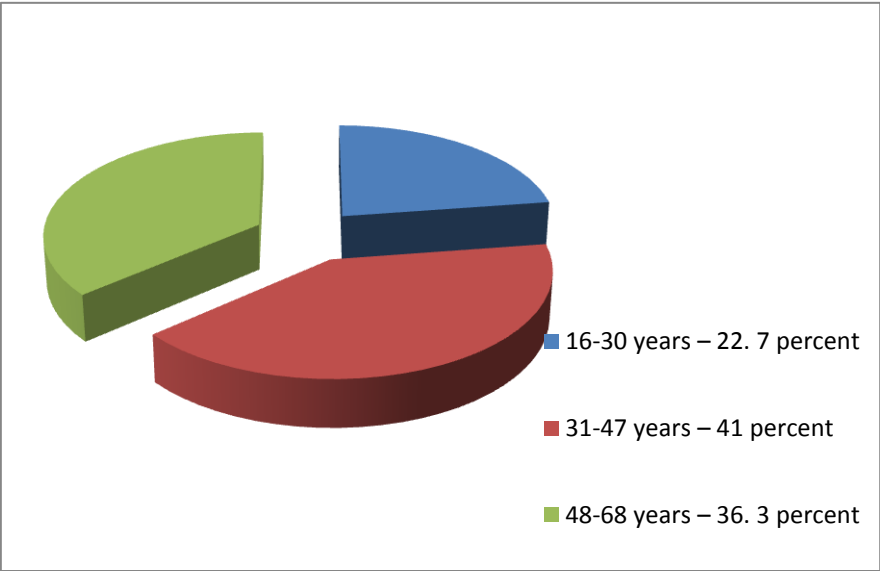


Table 2.2. Gender of executed victims of the Great Terror in Gammalsvenskby during the ‘Swedish operation’



In relation to the Old Swedish population, the Stalinist terror had a disproportional impact on those over 30 years of age, as can be seen from Table 3. The brunt of repression was directed at the Swedes who were in the reproductive phase of their lives, which in turn contributed to the vulnerability of the Swedish minority of Ukraine. The age profile of the victims may reflect the fact that elders who traditionally occupied the leading position in the local community suffered most from the terror. The great impact of the terror on men in the age group of 48–68 years of age can be explained by the fact that all of them reached adulthood before 1920 when the Bolsheviks seized power in the southern Ukraine. These people belonged to *l'ancien régime* and therefore were seen as most dangerous persons for the Soviet government.

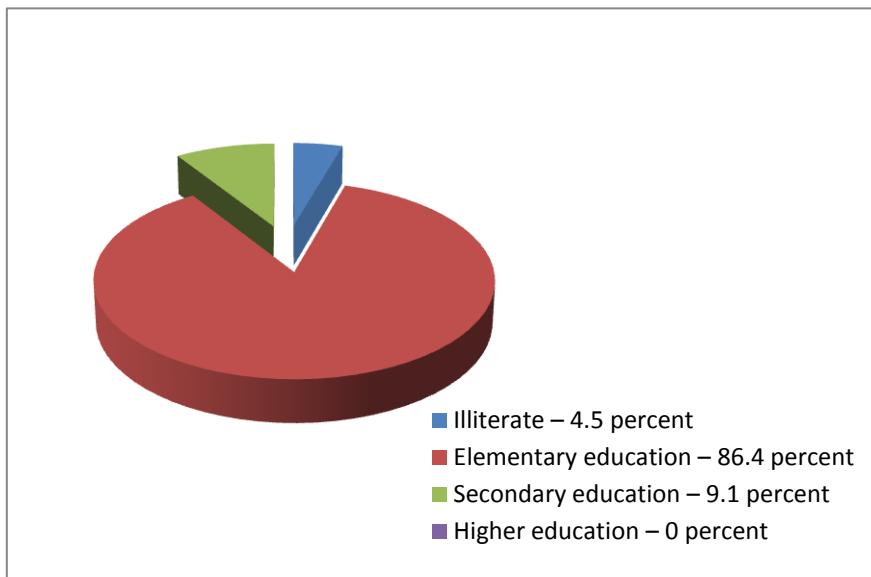
Table 3. Age profile of the victims of the Great Terror in Gammalsvenskby



Source: State Archives of Kherson Oblast (DAKhO)

As can be seen from table 4 in the course of mass arrests the educational background was of no substantial significance.

Table 4. Educational profile of the victims of the Great Terror in Gammalsvenskby



Source: State Archives of Kherson Oblast (DAKhO)

The only colonists who had successfully survived the terror was the NKVD secret agents. The Ukrainian Security Service SBU securely hides their names from researchers. Almost all information about the secret informers was deleted in the course of transfer of archival materials from the SBU to the State Archives of the Kherson region. The individuals who the villagers suspected to be in tacit collaboration with the NKVD, Julius Annas and Dmytro Krakovsky (who came from a mixed Ukrainian- Swedish family), also avoided arrest. Johannes Knutas, a Komsomol member and head of the Osoviakhim is known to be the only arrested man freed in the case of the Swedish spy organization.⁵⁸⁸ His testimony given to the Kherson NKVD is a detailed denunciation of his neighbours and relatives.⁵⁸⁹ The unexpected

⁵⁸⁸ Johannes Knutas (born in 1912 in Gammalsvenskby) was arrested by the NKVD July 16, 1938, but released in September 1938. His father Petter H. Knutas was arrested November 5, 1937 and executed January 20, 1938. During World War II Johannes Knutas joined the Nazi occupational forces. In 1945 he left Germany for Sweden.

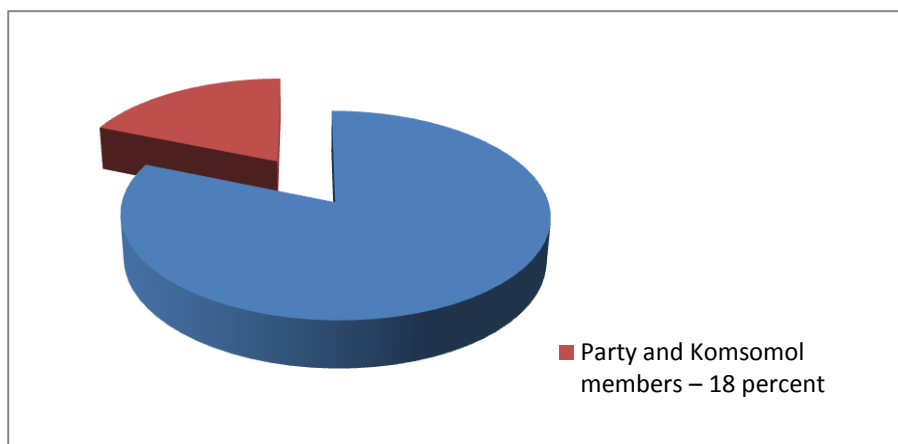
⁵⁸⁹ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 26-29.

release of Johannes Knutas in September 1938 raised well-grounded suspicions among the villagers. Johannes Hinas testimonies:

In 1939 I run into Alvina Norberg. Both her parents, Simon Norberg and Margareta Norberg, were arrested by the NKVD. Alvina was the sister of Johannes Knutas' wife. She said to me: 'Your cousin Johannes is far from being an angel. He helped destroy his own relatives, including your father. Be extremely cautious when you talk to him.'⁵⁹⁰

From the data presented in Table 5 it is evident that the Party and Komsomol members were not the primary target of repressions, although membership in communist organizations and having a leading position in the administration of the village did not serve as a protection from arrests.

Table 5. Profile of Party and Komsomol members among the victims of the Great Terror in Gammalsvensby



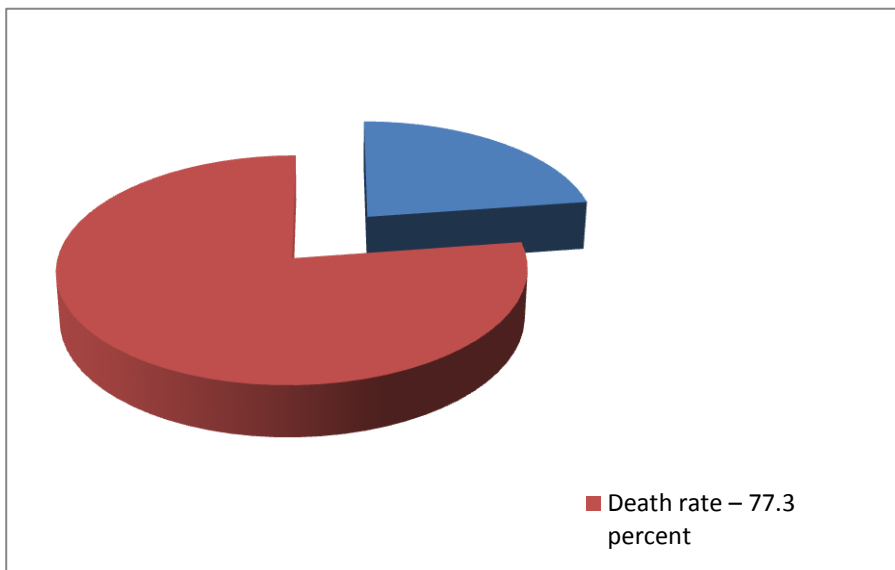
Source: State Archives of Kherson Oblast (DAKhO)

As can be seen from table 6 the death rate among the arrested Old Swedes is 77.3 percent, which is higher than the number of Soviet Latvians executed (75,3 percent) during the special Latvian operation of the NKVD and even more higher than the average of national operations (73.8 percent). In gen-

⁵⁹⁰ Högevik, [Hinas] Johannes, *Detta är mitt liv*. Handskrivet manuskript. Cited in: Hedman, Jörgen, "The Ukrainian Swedes from Gammalsvenskby as living witnesses of the local events of Soviet-Ukrainian history 1931–1991", unpublished conference paper presented at the workshop at Södertörn University, August 21, 2008.

eral, the death rate in the Swedish community correlates at that time with the figures of the Great Terror in the other national areas of the Soviet Union.

Table 6. The death rate in percent among the arrested Old Swedes



Source: State Archives of Kherson Oblast (DAKhO)

The national operations were in fact the ethnic cleansing of numerous minorities. The citizens of Polish origin made up only 1.5 percent of the entire population of Soviet Ukraine, at the same time they amounted to 18.9 percent of all the people repressed in Ukrainian SSR in 1937. The Germans made up 10.2 percent of all the victims of Great Terror in Ukraine, although their share in the population was only 1.4 percent.⁵⁹¹ The unprecedented magnitude of the Great Terror is confirmed by the statistics of arrests. If in 1936, the Ukrainian NKVD arrested 15,717 people, in 1937 this figure was already 159,573 and in 1938 it reached 108,007 people. Within the two incomplete years of the terror 122,237 residents of Ukraine were executed. At the same time only 659 persons in Ukraine were released from custody.⁵⁹² Mass killing of its' own citizens was until the perestroika the top state secret.

⁵⁹¹ Нікольський В. М. "Національні аспекти політичних репресій 1937 року в Україні", *Український історичний журнал*. 2001. № 2, 78.

⁵⁹² Ченцов В. В. "Проблемы политических репрессий против немцев Украины в свете документов НКВД", *Вопросы германской истории*. Днепропетровск, 1996, 164-175.

Executions were carried out keeping the time and place of the sentence strictly secret. In this way the arrested people merely disappeared. Following the scheme developed within the state apparatus, the secret police and the Prosecutor's Office deceived the relatives, saying that the murdered citizens were allegedly alive and had been officially sentenced to 'ten years incomunicado' and sent to remote areas of the country. In April 1938, Alvina Herman miraculously received in Sweden the only letter from the Soviet Union. Her sister, Anna Herman wrote:

Do not ask me any more questions about what you get to know. We were in Kherson and asked them why they had taken our men. The harvesting time was coming. Who would harvest? Women and children – they replied. Go home and wait, soon you will get letters from them. They are far away and are working, but one day they will return home. I think Russia exiled them to build fortifications against the Yellow Horse, Japan.⁵⁹³

The news about large-scale ethnic purges in the Soviet Union reached Sweden. On May 26, 1938 the Swedish Embassy in Moscow sent a dispatch to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden 'Hostility towards other nationalities are rampant in the Soviet Union'. It informed about Iranian, Latvian and German operations of the NKVD. Special emphasis was laid to on the fact that representatives friendly to the Soviet Union states also were among the ones arrested: Lithuanians, Czechs and Chinese. The Swedish diplomats informed that the largest national operation was Greek, the purpose of which was total cleansing of the Greek population of 100,000 people in the country: "many villages have been devastated so that there have been no Greeks left".⁵⁹⁴

On June 8, 1938 the leading daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* reported that among the multiple purges currently carried out in the Soviet Union the campaign against foreign nationalities is the central one, and all the protests of diplomatic missions are ignored. The newspaper stressed that Swedes also were among the victims of terror. However, there were no reports on the situation in Gammalsvenskby. This means the NKVD succeeded in completely isolating the Swedish colonists of Ukraine from the historical motherland.

After the termination of the mass operations, the regional leadership of the Mykolaiv NKVD was arrested. In 1941, the former chief of the NKVD Petr Karamyshev and the head of the 3rd department Yakov Trushkin were executed on the grounds of perverse methods of investigation, of torture and

⁵⁹³ Cited in: Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, 304.

⁵⁹⁴ "Den främlingsfientliga rörelsen i Sovjetunionen", Wilhelm Winther till Hans Excellens Herr Ministern för Utrikes Ärendena Rickard Sandler, den 26 maj 1938. Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet. Avdelning HP 514, Grupp 1, Mål: Er. Politisk allmänt. Ryssland. Volym LXII. 1938. NAS.

for falsification of criminal cases. The 1941 Military Tribunal stated: "Trushkin applied and encouraged illegal and provocative methods of investigation and created artificial counterrevolutionary organizations".⁵⁹⁵ However, the local perpetrators from his department who had fabricated the case of the Swedish spies avoided punishment under criminal law (see appendix 2).

The front officers of the mass operations in southern Ukraine did not doubt the ethnic criteria of the arrests. The Dnipropetrovsk NKVD investigators recognized in 1939 that the basis for the arrest was the ethnicity of the victims:

Question: Were the documents for arrests compiled on a national basis?

Answer: There was a directive of Uspensky to knock the base from the Polish and German intelligence services, so we were to arrest Poles and Germans, regardless of whether we had enough materials to arrest them. Therefore, when compiling the documents for arrests of Poles and Germans their ethnic origin played a dominant role.⁵⁹⁶

The Great Terror affected the whole community of the Kherson Swedes. Most children lost fathers. In two families (Hinas and Norberg) both parents were arrested. The son of the murdered Johan and Alvina Hinas Johannes testimonies:

We, the four children, lost our father and mother. The very notion of being an orphan is terrible, but in combination with the disappearance of parents, it is doubly scary. We were considered the children of 'the people's enemies' and in this, in that dreadful time when no one, no – nobody, not even relatives dared to help us. We were powerless creatures in a heartless world. Very quickly, we ran out of everything: food, clothing and heat – above all, human warmth. Only Aunt Kristina Hinas sometimes tried to help us, but in 1939 after the arrest of her husband, even she stopped visiting us.⁵⁹⁷

A number of features separate the national operations of the NKVD from other parts of the Great Terror, making them similar to genocide. The suspi-

⁵⁹⁵ Шитюк М. Ніколаєв І. *Тоталітарний режим і військовослужбовці та працівники органів, ДПУ–НКВС у 20–50-ті роки ХХ століття*. Миколаїв, 2007, 144.

⁵⁹⁶ Cited in: Ченцов В. В. *Трагические судьбы: политические репрессии против немецкого населения Украины в 1920–1930-е годы*. Москва, 1998, 132; Aleksandr Uspensky (1902–1940) – Russian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1920. In 1938 – Head of the NKVD in Ukraine. Uspensky deserted on November 14, 1938 from his office in Kiev, faking his own suicide. He was hiding after 1938 under a false name in the Ural Mountains. He was tracked down in April 1939 and executed January 27, 1940. Not rehabilitated.

⁵⁹⁷ Högevik, [Hinas] Johannes, *Detta är mitt liv*, cited in: Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, 310; During World War II Johannes Hinas joined the Nazi occupational forces. In 1945 he left Germany for Sweden and changed his last name to Högevik.

cious ethnicity was the determining criterion for arrests. The terror against national minorities was top-secret unlike, for example, the open Moscow trials against ‘old Bolsheviks’. The murders were conducted on a mass scale without a trial. The executions were decided out of court on a mass scale by a troika, who then sought to conceal all traces. Victims were killed under cover of the night in special remote places protected by the security service until the perestroika.

The didactic aim of the terror – the creation of a fully controlled community deprived of interpersonal solidarity – was reached.⁵⁹⁸ As a result of state-run mass violence the once unanimous Swedish community of Gammalsvenskby was suppressed and lost its possibilities for collective resistance.⁵⁹⁹

3.5. Liquidation of the Swedish national institutes

3.5.1. The Great Terror and the fate of the Swedish Lutheran parish

In 1929 the Swedish church in Gammalsvenskby was closed. Prayer books, religious articles and bells were taken to Sweden with the permission of the Soviet authorities. Pastor Kristoffer Hoas did not return to the Soviet Union and remained in Sweden. In 1932, the deserted church building was rebuilt into a club; the church tower was demolished using a tractor. Left without a temple, the Swedes began to visit the German Lutheran Church in Schlangerdorf. However, in 1933, the pastor of this church Friedrich Lang was arrested by the secret police. In the vicinity of the Swedish village there was no Lutheran minister. By 1937 almost all Lutheran priests had been arrested in the Soviet Union.⁶⁰⁰ To find a new candidate for a pastor did not seem possible. In the absence of a priest Alvina Hinas, a Swedish woman with primary education, took upon herself the role of spiritual preacher in Gammalsvenskby. Alvina organized prayer meetings, baptized newly born babies and read the last rites. In 1935, she was arrested for religious propaganda,

⁵⁹⁸ Gerner, Kristian & Karlsson, Klas-Göran, *Folk mordens historia: perspektiv på det moderna samhällets skuggsida*, Stockholm: Atlantis, 2005, 222.

⁵⁹⁹ Hinas, Nils, ”Vi vände tillbaka”, *Svenskbyborna. 25 år i hemlandet*. Visby, Sylve Norrbys bokhandel, 1954, 86-95.

⁶⁰⁰ Luukkanen, Arto, *The religious policy of the Stalinist State: a case study. The Central Standing Commission on Religious Questions, 1929-1938*, Helsinki: SHS, 1997, 122-127.

but with the help of a lawyer was exculpated by the Beryslav court.⁶⁰¹ On November 5, 1937, Alvina Hinas was arrested again. She was accused of involvement in ‘a Swedish counter-revolutionary spy nationalist organization’. According to the NKVD, she joined the spy organization in 1932 after that she: “Resisted closing the church, had regular contacts with pastor Hoas in Sweden, and reported to him all sorts of provocative information about life in the Soviet Union, hunger and diseases, all lies”.⁶⁰²

These charges were enough for a death sentence. On November 27, 1937 Alvina Hinas was shot in the Kherson NKVD prison; the place of her burial is unknown. She was the only woman among the arrested Swedes who was sentenced to death by the troika. In 1938 her husband, Johan Hinas, was arrested and executed; their four children orphaned. To conduct divine services after the Great Terror was out of the question. The religious life of the Swedish community shrunk until the Nazi German occupation in 1941.

3.5.2. The abolishment of the Swedish National Village Council

On November 29, 1937 in the midst of the Great Terror the organizational bureau of VKP(b) prepared a memorandum ‘On the national districts and national village councils’ with the proposal to liquidate all of them. The real reason for the winding up of the national councils was hidden behind fanciful wording like their ‘artificiality’, ‘economic weakness’ and ‘dwarf nature’.⁶⁰³ At the end of January 1938 the new Ukrainian leadership appointed by Kremlin came to Kiev and replaced the arrested communists. The leader (first secretary) of the Communist Party of Ukraine became Nikita Khrushchev, Russian by origin, who before this appointment was the party leader of Moscow city. Along with him from Moscow came the second secretary of the KP(b)U, Mikhail Burmistenko. He had previously been the deputy head of the department for leading party bodies of the VKP(b) and was also Russian.⁶⁰⁴ A Ukrainian, Demyan Korotchenko who had long worked in Moscow

⁶⁰¹ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 20-21.

⁶⁰² DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 20-21.

⁶⁰³ ЦК ВКП(б) и национальный вопрос. Книга 2. Составитель Л. С. Гатагова и др. Москва: РОССПЭН, 2009, 311–312, 371.

⁶⁰⁴ Mikhail Burmistenko (1902–1941) – Russian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1919. In 1938–1941, the second secretary of the KP(b)U. During World War II one of the organizers of the Soviet partisan movement in Ukraine. Killed in battle.

became the new head of the regional government.⁶⁰⁵ On January 25, 1938 the NKVD in Ukraine was headed by Aleksandr Uspensky, an ethnic Russian and former chief of the NKVD in Orenburg. It was this team who implemented the Kremlin's decision on abolishment of national autonomies in Ukraine.⁶⁰⁶

On February 16, 1938 the new composition of the Politburo of the KP(b)U considered the decision 'About the re-organizing of the national districts and national village councils in the Ukrainian SSR into ordinary districts and village councils'. The adoption of the document was based on the decision of the central Politburo of VKP(b) in Moscow and repeated the main thesis of the Soviet leadership. The decision to liquidate the national village councils was masked with the neutral word 'reorganization'. The main reason for the elimination of national autonomies was declared a routine administrative error: "national districts and village councils were not justified by the ethnic composition of their population".⁶⁰⁷ However, this statement was not consistent with reality. In the Mykolaiv region, which from 1937 included the Swedish national village council, the situation was precisely the opposite. In Karl Liebknecht German national district the Germans made up 91 percent of the population.⁶⁰⁸ In the Jewish national district of Kalinindorf, neighbouring Gammalsvenskby, the Jews constituted 82 percent of the population.⁶⁰⁹ The authorities left the Moldavian autonomous republic untouched as a part of Ukraine, although the proportion of Moldovans in the autonomy was only 30 percent.⁶¹⁰ The contrived and repressive nature of the 'reorganization' was obvious.

On April 7, 1939, the Politburo of the KP(b)U approved 'the reorganization of artificially created national districts and village councils', resting on the resolution of the Soviet Central Committee of the Party from February 16, 1939.⁶¹¹ The stated 'artificiality' of national village councils was even a

⁶⁰⁵ Demyan Korotchenko (1894–1969) – Ukrainian Bolshevik. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1918. In 1938–1941 and 1947–1954 – Head of the Ukrainian government. One of the few Soviet Ukrainian leaders who survived the Great Terror.

⁶⁰⁶ Kostiuk, Hryhory, *Stalinist rule in the Ukraine: a study of the decade of mass terror: 1929-1939*, Munich: Institute for the study of the USSR, 1960, 133-134.

⁶⁰⁷ *Німці в Україні 20–30-ти рр. XX ст.* Збірник документів. Кер. кол. упоряд. Л. В. Яковлева, В. В. Чирко. Київ: Інститут історії України НАН України, 1994, № 99.

⁶⁰⁸ Безносков А. "Карл-Либкнехтовский немецкий национальный район", *Немцы Украины. Материалы к энциклопедии*. Москва, 2002, 94–95.

⁶⁰⁹ Пасик Я. Калининдорфский еврейский национальный район <http://www.evkol.nm.ru/kalinindorf.htm>, accessed January 9, 2014; About the Jewish national district of Kalinindorf see: Фельдман Д. З., Панов Д. А. *Бурные годы Тихого поля в Новороссии: Два века еврейской колонии Сейдеменуха. Историко-генеалогическое исследование*. Москва, 2009.

⁶¹⁰ Галущенко О. С. *Население Молдавской АССР (1924-1940 гг.)*. Кишинев, 2001, 10, 27.

⁶¹¹ *Німці в Україні 20–30-ти рр. XX ст.* № 101.

bigger lie, since these village councils were created exclusively in areas with compact settlement of ethnic minorities. Liquidation was accompanied by redrawing of administrative boundaries, so “that Germans, Poles, Bulgarians and other national groups in the composition of their population formed a national minority”.⁶¹² Thus, the preamble and the provisions of the document conflicted with each other, and the government indirectly admitted that the statement of the artificial nature of national territories was a lie. Despite the controversy, it was believed ‘further existence of both special national districts and village councils is impractical’ and set out to eliminate national districts and village councils through their reorganization in the regular districts. Subject to elimination were more than 1000 national village councils, representing 10 percent of all village councils of Ukraine.⁶¹³ Thus, it was a dramatic change in nationalities policy – from support of national minorities to their outlaw discrimination.

Local authorities began a campaign on eradication of national entities without waiting for the final decision of the Ukrainian government. The Swedish national council was abolished in February 1938. As the official reason for the liquidation, a routine mistake of the administrative reform was declared. Purportedly the existence of the national districts and village councils was not justified by their ethnic composition of the population. In the Soviet Union the Swedish village council was the only administrative entity of this kind. Taking into account the obsession of the Soviet apparatus of positive statistics, the village council played an important role in demonstrating success of the so called Lenin’s nationalities policy. The Ukrainian leadership proudly reported to Moscow about the complete solution of the national question in the country, in particular, that 100 percent of the Swedish minority was “covered by the national council”.⁶¹⁴ Moreover the administrative and cultural autonomy of the Swedish minority in Soviet Ukraine was opposed to discrimination against ethnic minorities in capitalistic Finland.⁶¹⁵

However, the arguments previously formulated by the authorities did not help and the Swedish village council also was ‘reorganized’ and made into a regular rural council. In practice this meant further radical changes in the conventional way of life of the residents of Gammalsvenskby. Firstly, the citizens of Swedish origin lost their priority right for positions in the local administration. In connection with the reorganization the chairman of the village council Petter K. Utas was removed from his post. In 1942 he was executed by the Nazis for active cooperation with the Soviet regime. Secondly, the Swedish language in which general meetings of the village coun-

⁶¹² *Німці в Україні 20–30-ти рр. XX ст.* № 101.

⁶¹³ *Ukraine: A short sketch of economical, cultural and social constructive work of the Ukrainian socialist soviet republic*, Charkiv, 1929, 74.

⁶¹⁴ *Итоги работы среди национальных меньшинств на Украине*, 21.

⁶¹⁵ Глинский А. Б. *Национальные меньшинства на Украине*, 5.

cil were conducted was replaced by Russian and/or Ukrainian. Thirdly, the Swedish name of the village lost its legitimacy. In the fourth place, the abolition of the national village council meant a ban on the use of their mother tongue in official public life.

3.5.3. The suppression of the Swedish school

Founded in 1782, the Swedish school was the oldest educational institution of New Russia. The first teacher of this school Mats Magnusson (born in 1756 on the island of Dagö) had worked there until 1839. After his death, the Swedish colonists tried to find a new teacher. In Swedish-language newspapers of Finland and Estonia ads were published offering a teacher's position. Ethnographer Aleksandr Afanasiev-Chuzhbinsky who visited in 1862 the Swedish colony noted that the issue of school education in the mother tongue and absence of a teacher worried the settlers most of all.⁶¹⁶ However, from 1782 until 1938 the Gammalsvenskby School functioned nonstop with a short break in 1929. From the imperial time period the school got its' capital building and a library of Swedish literature. Since none of the former teachers returned from Sweden, the communists and new recruited personnel became Swedish teachers, among them the last rector a Komsomol member Sigfrid Utas. The Swedish School compared favourably with many schools of Ukraine. It was completed with educational literature and secured with a building. Finally, loyal Soviet teachers, rather than *l'ancien régime* teachers worked there. Remarkably, none of the teaching staff at the Gammalsvenskby school had been arrested during the Great Terror and the Swedish school could continue its' work after 1937. However, this did not happen. Moreover, the Gammalsvenskby School became the target of the government campaign on closing national schools. In March 1938, the Ukrainian Commissariat for Education prepared a memorandum for the new party leaders Nikita Khrushchev and Mikhail Burmistenko, 'On national schools of Ukraine'. In this fraud document the only Swedish school in Ukraine is mentioned four times:

In Ukraine there are 21,656 schools, with an enrolment of 5,143,789 students. There are twenty one languages of instructions. For example, with the Ukrainian language of instruction, there are 18,101 schools, Russian – 1550 schools, Jewish – 312, Moldovan – 163, Uzbek – 19, Belarusian – 9, Bulgarian – 54, Polish – 50, German – 512, Czech – 14, Greek–Hellenes – 12, Greek–Tatar –

⁶¹⁶ Афанасьев-Чужбинский А. С. "Поездка в южную Россию. Очерки Днепра", *Собрание сочинений*. Санкт-Петербург. 1861. Т. 7. Ч. 1, 251-255.

8, Tatar – 5, Armenian – 4, Turkmen – 2, Kyrgyz – 1, Swedish – 1, and Kazakh – 1. In many cases, under the guise of national schools the people's enemies Trotskyists-Bukharinites and bourgeois nationalists, handling in the Commissariat for Education of Ukraine – artificially propagated special German, Polish, Swedish, Bulgarian and other schools, turning them into centres for doing counterrevolutionary work and bourgeois-nationalistic, anti-Soviet impact on the children. In Ukraine, they created 1530 special national, German, Polish, Czech, Swedish, Bulgarian and other schools full of enemies...Most of the schools with the Polish, German, Bulgarian and other languages of instruction do not have a sufficient contingent of children...The main reason for this situation is that many national schools were artificially implanted, the children, the pupils, did not know the language of instruction at all ... there were many instances of coercive sending of Ukrainian and Russian children to Polish, Czech and other national schools...National schools are not provided by experienced teachers, textbooks, teaching plans and visual aids, and as a result the children of these schools do not acquire sufficient knowledge about science and are insufficiently prepared for secondary and higher educational institutions. The number of grades and children in national Polish, Czech, Swedish and other schools is decreasing every year, since in some schools actually there was no take in for the first grade and senior graders switch to Russian and Ukrainian schools. In this respect we ask to consider the issue of reorganization of special national schools at the next meeting of the KP(b)U.⁶¹⁷

On the basis of the memorandum of April 10, 1938 the Politburo of the Communist Party of Ukraine adopted a resolution on reorganization of the national schools in Ukraine. The aggressive wording left no room for compromise:

The inspection found that the people's enemies – Trotskyites, Bukharinites and bourgeois nationalists, who had operated in the Ukrainian Commissariat for Education forced into application separate national German, Polish, Czech, Swedish, Greek and other schools, turning them into centres of bourgeois nationalist and anti-Soviet influence on schoolchildren. The practice forced into application of national schools did a lot of harm to the cause of proper training and education, fenced the children off Soviet life and did not give them the opportunity to join in Soviet culture and science, or to get further education at colleges and higher educational institutions. Based on the decision of the Central Committee of the All-Soviet Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the Politburo of the KP(b)U considers existence of special national schools inexpedient and harmful.⁶¹⁸

The resolution of the Ukrainian Politburo was not an original document; it actually repeated the resolutions of the Politburo of the VKP(b) on Decem-

⁶¹⁷ *Хрестоматія з історії України для студентів вузів*. Укл. Б. І. Білик, Л. В. Дячук. Київ: ІСДО, 1993, № 73.

⁶¹⁸ *Німці в Україні 20–30-ті рр. XX ст.* № 100.

ber 17, 1937 and on January 24, 1938. The single edition referred to the specific minorities of Ukraine. In the All-Soviet resolution it was stated that hostile elements implanted Finnish and Estonian national schools.⁶¹⁹ The Ukrainian document states that ‘the people’s enemies’ implanted German and Swedish schools.⁶²⁰

Note that for the first time the Kremlin developed a radical reform of school education without any discussions with the leadership of Ukraine. The Politburo of the VKP(b) admitted that special national schools are harmful and delegated the commission of the Party Central Committee Andrey Andreev, Andrey Zhdanov, Nikolay Bulganin and Petr Tyurkin to develop the radical educational reform and to inform in retrospect the Communist parties of the national republics.⁶²¹

Thus, the educational reforms were under ‘special control’ and were to be completed in record time, before September 1, 1938. The act of closing the national school was drawn up by a special commission, whose main objective was to prepare a conclusion on the ‘collapse of school work in national schools’.⁶²² The party leadership of the Mykolaiv region was obliged before May 1, 1938 to report the reorganization of the Swedish school to the party’s leadership of Ukraine. Then, the Ukrainian leaders were obliged before June 15, 1938 to report to the Central Committee of the VKP(b) in Moscow on the implementation of reorganization of the minority schools.⁶²³

The Swedish School was to be reorganized and made into ‘a Soviet school of conventional type’. In rural areas, the language of instruction in national schools was changed to Ukrainian. This meant that in place of the Swedish school, a Ukrainian school was opened in Gammalsvenskby. In total, 1,167 schools were closed in 1938 in Ukraine, where over 100,000 were trained in their native language.⁶²⁴ Exceptions were Russian schools of the republic and Moldovan schools on the territory of the Moldavian autonomy. Preservation of Russian schools confirmed a new course of Stalin’s leadership to support the Russian-speaking population. Moldovan schools avoided complete elimination since they belonged to the ‘titular nation’ living on the territory of their own autonomy and because of the strategically important ‘piedmont’ which was Soviet Moldavia in regards to Romania.

⁶¹⁹ ЦК ВКП(б) и национальный вопрос, 311, 342-343; Altogether 237 Finnish schools were closed in the USSR in 1938.

⁶²⁰ *Німці в Україні 20–30-ті рр. XX ст.* № 100.

⁶²¹ ЦК ВКП(б) и национальный вопрос, 311.

⁶²² ЦК ВКП(б) и национальный вопрос, 311.

⁶²³ Ковальчук В., Корзун Ю. “Національні меншини на Заславщині у 20–30-ті роки роки XX століття”, *Метафора спільного дому: Заславщина багатьох культур*. Ізяслав-Острог: НаУОА, 2006, 68–86; *Німці в Україні 20–30-ті рр. XX ст.* № 100.

⁶²⁴ Чирко Б. В. “Шкільництво різних націй (національні меншини на Україні в 1920–1930-х рр. за документами ЦДАГО України)”, *Архіви України*. 1992. № 3-4, 39-40.

The given principle was acting on the territory of Russia. Thus, the German schools in the autonomous republic of Volga Germans were not closed.

Taking floor on the XIV congress of the Ukrainian communists in June 1938 a new regional leader Nikita Khrushchev paid particular attention to the work of the hostile intelligence services within the national schools of Ukraine. To cite Khrushchev's words, the agents of the western intelligence services, as well as the Ukrainian nationalists "imposed in the Ukraine so-called national schools. In most of the cases under the guise of national Polish, German, Swedish and other schools the enemies made a nest for carrying-out counter revolutionary work".⁶²⁵ As we see Khrushchev particularly mentioned a Swedish school, at the same time as 54 Bulgarian and 20 Greek schools were not mentioned in his speech at all. Probably it was because Sweden, unlike Bulgaria or Greece, was a 'western' country. It is also likely that by that time Khrushchev had already been informed by secret police about the elimination of the Swedish spy organization in Gammalsvenskby.⁶²⁶

The elimination of national institutions was followed by a radical change in the political vocabulary. The thing that until recently was called 'impressive results of Lenin's nationalities policy' turned into 'a subversive activities of a coterie of bourgeois nationalists'. Suppression of national schools led to a massive withdrawal of literature in minority languages from libraries. In 1938 the authorities closed the special publishing house for minorities *Ukrderzhnatsmenvidav* as littered with 'anti-Soviet elements'. The NKVD arrested most employees.⁶²⁷ The Ukrainian press stopped the mentioning of ethnic minorities in the republic except Moldavians.⁶²⁸

Simultaneously with the closing of the national schools the Russian language became a compulsory subject in all schools of Ukraine. This campaign was initiated by Stalin personally. On September 5, 1937, in his telegram to the party leaders of republics he claimed to give an account of whether Russian was taught in the national schools.⁶²⁹ Speaking at October 12, 1937 at the plenum of the central committee of the VKP(b) Stalin again paid attention to the situation in Ukraine, stressing the need for the Ukrainian youth to study Russian, which is directly related to the fighting capacity of

⁶²⁵ Сфіменко Г. Г. *Національно-культурна політика ВКП(б) щодо Радянської України (1932–1938)*. Київ, 2001, 47.

⁶²⁶ Нікольський В. М. "Національні аспекти політичних репресій 1937 року в Україні", *Український історичний журнал*. 2001. № 2, 74–89.

⁶²⁷ Шаповал Ю. І. *Україна ХХ століття: Особи та події в контексті важкої історії*. Київ, 2001, 171.

⁶²⁸ Якубова Л. Д. "Національно-культурне життя етнічних меншостей України (20–30-ті роки): коренізація і денаціоналізація", *Український історичний журнал*. 1998. № 6, 22–36. 1999. № 1, 51–52.

⁶²⁹ Сфіменко Г. Г. *Національно-культурна політика ВКП(б)*, 43.

the Red Army: "Otherwise our army would not be good enough".⁶³⁰ On December 17, 1937 the Politburo of the VKP(b) considered the fact that there were no newspapers in Russian in Ukraine as a sabotage on behalf of nationalists. Without delay, issues of newspapers in Russian were organized in each region of the Ukraine.⁶³¹ On March 7, 1938, Khrushchev left Kiev for Moscow to participate in the meeting of the committee of the VKP(b) on the issue of teaching the Russian language in national schools.⁶³² On March 13, 1938 the Party and Soviet leadership adopted a joint resolution 'On compulsory study of the Russian language in schools in national republics and regions'.⁶³³ On April 20, 1938 the Ukrainian Politburo duplicated the decision of the Kremlin.⁶³⁴ The party and government were not worried about serious financial costs associated with the preparation of Russian teachers and the publication of textbooks.⁶³⁵

The radical shift in the Soviet nationalities policy did not go unnoticed in Sweden. On July 12, 1938, the Swedish press attaché in Moscow Nils Lindh sent Minister of Foreign Affairs Rickard Sandler the note 'Språkfrågan i Sovjetunionen och dess politiska bakgrund' (The language issue in the Soviet Union and its' political background). The diplomat, in particular, wrote that the decision on studying Russian in non-Russian schools, "was, beyond a shadow of a doubt, made in Moscow and is primarily concerned with Ukraine".⁶³⁶ He put emphasis on the fact that the school reform as carried was connected with the Great Terror: "a direct connection with the ongoing political purges in Ukraine is apparent including the strengthening of Moscow's control over the republic, in which language is used as a political weapon".⁶³⁷ According to Lindh, this is evidenced by "the speech of a new leader appointed by Moscow party leadership to rule with a heavy hand in Ukraine".⁶³⁸ Lindh quoted from Khrushchev's speech in Kiev:

⁶³⁰ ЦК ВКП(б) и национальный вопрос, 298–299.

⁶³¹ ЦК ВКП(б) и национальный вопрос, № 112.

⁶³² ЦК ВКП(б) и национальный вопрос, 307.

⁶³³ ЦК ВКП(б) и национальный вопрос, № 146.

⁶³⁴ Якубова Л. Д. "Мовна проблема та її вплив на етнокультурне життя українських греків (середина 20-х – 30-і рр. XX ст.)", *Український історичний журнал*. 2004. № 4, 86.

⁶³⁵ Blitstein, Peter A., "Nation-Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Instruction in the Soviet Non-Russian School, 1938–1953", *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, Ronald Grigor Suny & Terry Martin (eds.), Oxford University Press, 2001, 257.

⁶³⁶ "Språkfrågan i Sovjetunionen och dess politiska bakgrund", Nils Lindh till Hans Excellens Herr Ministern för Utrikes Ärendena Rickard Sandler, den 12 juli 1938. Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet. Avdelning HP 514. Grupp 1. Mål: Er. Politisk allmänt Ryssland. Volym LXII 1938. NAS.

⁶³⁷ "Språkfrågan i Sovjetunionen och dess politiska bakgrund".

⁶³⁸ "Språkfrågan i Sovjetunionen och dess politiska bakgrund".

The enemies made it so that teaching in many Ukrainian schools is in German, Polish and other languages, but not in Russian. Now; however, everybody has to learn Russian to fight under the banner of Lenin and Stalin for the complete victory of Communism.⁶³⁹

As we see, being in isolation, the personnel of the Swedish Embassy in Moscow could, resting upon Soviet press publications, evaluate the true reasons for the elimination of the national schools. Apparently, as the Soviet leader fully realized, the fate of the re-emigrants, who according to the Swedish public opinion betrayed their historical fatherland by returning to the Soviet state by their own free will, would not affect the Swedish government much. There was not any documented Swedish reaction as to the fact of closing of the sole Swedish school in the Soviet Union, and the ethnic purges in Gammalsvenskby.

The change-over to teaching in non-mother tongue was accompanied with a stigmatization of teachers and with psychological stress for schoolchildren. Anna Sigalet (born 1931 in Gammalsvenskby) in 1938 went to first grade in the new Ukrainian school. Anna testimonies that it was extremely difficult to learn in a language of which she had poor knowledge. Moreover, in the second grade Ukrainian was added to the obligatory subject of Russian. Despite the fact that most children in the village were Swedish, their native language was not taught. It was, according to Anna, especially offensive, as all her older sisters and friends could read and write Swedish. Subsequently, Anna's mother taught her to read Swedish, but her written Swedish left much to be desired. It is still a personal problem for Anna, since all her correspondence with the relatives in Sweden is conducted in Swedish.⁶⁴⁰ The picture described by Anna Sigalet was typical for the Soviet minority schools. The poet Roine Tuhkanen, in 1938 a pupil of the Finnish school in Ingria (Sobolevo, Leningrad region) recalls:

When we returned from the winter holidays, we were stunned to see that the school had changed to Russian as the language of instruction, the former teachers disappeared; their place were taken by unknown Russian pedagogues. Our Russian was poor and this created difficulties in learning. In addition the school had banned the use of Finnish language even at breaks.⁶⁴¹

Prohibition of school education in their native language deformed normal psychological development of children, opening the way for forced assimilation. In 1938 the centuries-old tradition of the Swedish school – the principal

⁶³⁹ "Språkfrågan i Sovjetunionen och dess politiska bakgrund".

⁶⁴⁰ Interview with Anna Lutko (nee Sigalet, born 1931), Zmiivka, November 1, 2004.

⁶⁴¹ Мусаев В. "Северо-Запад России в национальной политике (1917–1930)", *Трагедия великой державы: национальный вопрос и распад Советского Союза*. Москва, 2005, 130.

tool of preserving and transmitting the collective identity of Kherson Swedes – was forcibly interrupted in Ukraine. Teaching in two closely related Slavic languages (Ukrainian and Russian) was one of the reasons that the primary means of communication of the Swedish population of the village today is a mix of Ukrainian and Russian, the so-called *Surzhyk*. The national school gave an opportunity for Gammalsvenskby children to master literary Swedish in its' spoken and written forms, providing a full-fledged transfer of national culture. The archaic dialect of the Swedish villagers was hardly suited to this task. At the end of the 1980s, as a result of the resumption of contacts with Sweden, a younger generation of Ukrainian Swedes developed an interest in learning the language. However, the spoken language of the older generation did not bring practical benefits, as mother-tongue speakers of modern Swedish have little understanding of this dialect.⁶⁴²

3.6. Concluding remarks

The Great Terror was prepared by the conceptualisation of state-run mass violence against ethnic minorities. The ideology of hatred was firstly formulated by the political leadership and then mediated to the local authorities and the broader public through official documentation and mass media. From the official point of view, the winding up of national territorial autonomies and minority schools gave sense to the national operations of the secret police. The government drew conclusions from early 1930s, when the protest actions of German and Swedish colonists against the collectivization and famine were supported from abroad and seriously affected the work of the NKVD. Therefore, the mass violence and the elimination of national institutions were carried out in complete isolation of the minorities from the outside world.

Terry Martin drew attention to the connection between the Great Terror and the liquidation of the system of national village councils and national schools and the expansion of the Russian language in education.⁶⁴³ Administrative reform and the shutting down of national schools were carried out simultaneously with mass violence with respect to the national village. Such a coincidence is not accidental. Using mass violence as a method of control, the Soviet government reached a maximum effect in this way. Mass arrests

⁶⁴² Mankov, Aleksandr, "A Scandinavian Island in a Slavonic Linguistic Environment. The Dialect of Gammalsvenskby: Nouns (Paper 2)", 120-127; Interview with Lilja Malmas (born 1974), Zmiivka, November 1, 2004.

⁶⁴³ Martin, Terry, *The affirmative action empire: nations and nationalism in the Soviet Union*, 422-429.

and disappearances of people of certain nationalities ensured the absence of any protests from the population and rural administration of the national areas. The Great Terror destroyed practically all the political makers of nationalities policy in Ukraine – Jan Saulevich, Joseph F. Haftel, Ivan F. Slin'ko, Mikhail I. Lobanov, Eugen Rikhlik, David M. Mats and Savva G. Yali.

The government sent a clear signal to the younger generation of the Old Swedes. During the Ukrainian Communism's project and the Comintern project speaking Swedish, 'language of the Communist Party of Sweden', was regarded as a great achievement. Now fluency in Swedish was perceived with great suspicion. Johannes Knutas testimonies about the procedure of military conscription to the Red Army in Beryslav:

On the draft board I was told that I would be sent to the Baltic Navy, but then the military commissioner asked me how many languages I know. Three – I said. No, you do not suit us – answered he.⁶⁴⁴

A number of minorities in Stalin's Soviet Union suffered systematic ethnic cleansing. It is questionable if the Great Terror in the national village falls within the scope of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It should be pointed out however that the mass killings of Jews and Roma, recognized as genocide by the international community, differs in nature from the Great Terror against ethnic minorities. The notion of genocide has a strictly defined legal meaning. The key notion for a legal evaluation of the genocidal nature of mass crimes is intent. The latter means that legal theory treats *dolus generalis* and *dolus specialis* differently in cases in cases of mass crimes against humanity. It means that genocide did not occur when the mass murder of individual members of a group (*dolus generalis*) was not done with specific intent (*dolus specialis*) of exterminating the community as such.⁶⁴⁵ The mass violence against ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union was a crime against humanity, but still do not fall within the accepted notion of genocide. So far, not a single document has been discovered that would give evidence of any intent of Stalin's regime to fully exterminate Soviet Poles, Finns, Latvians, Swedes or Germans as ethnic group. Children were not a target of the Great Terror. Moreover, many high-ranking NKVD officers and Party leaders, who introduced the Great Terror in the national borderland, were arrested and executed in 1937–1940 by the Soviet regime, which is unprecedented in many ways. However, the state placed some stakes on loyalty, and the NKVD secret agents had higher chances of survival.

⁶⁴⁴ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, 291.

⁶⁴⁵ Kotljarchuk, Andrej "World War II Memory Politics: Jewish, Polish and Roma Minorities of Belarus", *The Journal of Belarusian Studies*. 2013:1, 12-13.

Owing to the fear of further mass repressions the Swedes were leaving the native village in 1939. Alvina Utas (born 1918), sister of Johannes Utas, the chairman of the kolkhoz who was arrested in 1938, left Gammalsvenskby in the fall of 1939. She married a Red Army officer without having met him before the wedding and moved to the Far East where her husband served. This helped her to hide her ‘suspicious’ ethnic origin from others. However, it was impossible to avoid the control of the totalitarian regime, which invading the privacy of citizens. Valentina Utas recalls:

My mom [Alvina Utas] suffered a lot in her life being of Swedish nationality, ‘natsmenka’, as people called such women of non-Slavic descent. She was afraid her whole life and suffered a lot. She was the wife of a military officer and worked in the regiment as a cook. Therefore she never told strangers who she was by birth, although in the paragraph of nationality [ethnicity] of her Soviet passport was written – Swedish. In the country there was censorship, in any case, she was not allowed to write letters to her relatives in Gammalsvenskby in Swedish. She was told to go to the police and in the form of a cautionary was asked to write letters only in Russian.⁶⁴⁶

In our case, state-run terror was directed against members of one homogeneous ethnic group. Massacres of innocent people, no doubt, led to partial destruction of the Swedish minority as such. The systemic nature of state terror, tortures of arrested people, the high level of organization, execution without trials; and concealment of traces of crime – all this could open the discussion about the genocidal nature of the Great Terror in minority areas. The deliberate liquidation of all the national institutes called further existence of the Ukrainian-Swedish ethnic group into question. The Great Terror in Gammalsvenskby led to the economic collapse of the Swedish Communist Party kolkhoz,⁶⁴⁷ and provides evidence for Michel Foucault’s claim that it is meaningless to look for logically structured economic purposes in the activities of political regimes that prefer violence over dialog and do not care about economic consequences.⁶⁴⁸

There are several interacting links between the different phases of the mass violence process. Mass arrests and the disappearance of people in 1937–1938 created an atmosphere of fear that helped the authorities to destroy without protest the administrative and cultural autonomy of the Ukrainian Swedes and the native system of education. The Great Terror contributed to the lack of collective resistance in the course of World War II. Elimination of administrative and cultural autonomy became a manifestation of dramatic change of the nationalities policy. Ethnic purges and the destruction

⁶⁴⁶ Letter from Valentina Utas to the author, May 21, 2007. The author’s archives.

⁶⁴⁷ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359.

⁶⁴⁸ Nilsson, Roddy, *Foucault: en introduktion*, 83-91.

of national institutions took place in a country where the principles of equality despite ethnic origin and minority rights were enshrined in law and were instilled into the consciousness of the nation. It was hardly possible to take such a step without preventive terror. The head of the Soviet government and one of the orchestrators of the Great Terror, Vyacheslav Molotov, palliated mass repressions as follows: “1937 was necessary ... we are obliged to 1937 for having no the fifth column during the war”.⁶⁴⁹ In reality, everything unfolded exactly the opposite. The state-run terror against innocent citizens, unjustified in its’ scale and brutality, undermined the national minorities’ loyalty to the Soviet state, having created ‘a fifth column’ from them during World War II. The events in Gammalsvenskby during the Nazi occupation support this conclusion.

⁶⁴⁹ Cited in: Такала И. Р. “Национальные операции ОГПУ/НКВД в Карелии”, *В семье единой: Национальная политика партии большевиков и ее осуществление на Северо-Западе России в 1920–1950-е годы*. Петрозаводск, 1998, 161.

CHAPTER 4. Normalization through deportation: Swedish Colonists of Ukraine in the Komi Gulag

When we arrived, it was 52 degrees below zero.
We were all thinly clad.
The children did not have winter wear.
I immediately realized that my children were going to die there.
It was horrible what they had done to us.

Emma Malmas (1918–2001)

4.1. Altschwedendorf under Hitler

The implementation of the Stalinist project of normalization of the Swedish minority was interrupted by World War II. The policy of the Nazi occupational forces in Gammalsvenskby falls beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, better understanding of the nature of the post-war deportation of the Old Swedes in the Komi Gulag requires a brief analysis of the war events. In mid–August of 1941 the *Wehrmacht* occupied Gammalsvenskby. The Swedish village again changed the official name and as a colony of Altschwedendorf joined the civil zone of Ukraine as a part of *gebieten Cherson, generalbezirken Nikolajew, Reichskommissariat Ukraine*.⁶⁵⁰

The nationalities policy of the Nazi occupation regime rested upon racist ideas. A radical restructuring of the ethno-political and of the administrative structure was in store for Ukraine. The alteration of the cultural and historical landscape of the occupied territory was carried out by renaming the streets and kolkhozes, destroying Soviet monuments, ruining Jewish cemeteries and synagogues. Simultaneously the Nazis launched programs to popularize the image of the *Fuhrer* and protect the monuments of German

⁶⁵⁰ Gaunt, David, “Swedes of Ukraine as ‘Volksdeutsche’, the experience of World War II”, *Voprosy germanskoi istorii*, Dnepropetrovsk, 2007, 239-250.

culture (Lutheran churches and graves of soldiers of World War I). Posters with a portrait of Adolf Hitler were distributed among the Swedes when giving them the identity card of *Volksdeutsche* as representatives of the 'Nordic race' in November 1941.⁶⁵¹

As Doris L. Bergen points out there is a direct link between the Nazi concept of *Volksdeutsche* and the Holocaust. The 'new order' meant creating a living space for ethnic Germans, the space, which had to be 'free from Jews'.⁶⁵² The Soviet census of 1939 counted 1,532 776 Jews and 392,458 ethnic Germans in Ukraine (without Western Ukraine, Bukovina, Bessarabia and Transcarpatia which at that moment was not a part of the Soviet Union).⁶⁵³ The centre of German resettlement in Soviet Ukraine was the Kher-son, Dnipropetrovsk and Odessa regions. During the occupation of Ukraine, the creation of separate isolated areas for German colonists which were to be 'free from Jews' was under way. Driven into a ghetto the Jewish population was progressively destroyed. At the same time the German minority passed under the protection of the SS and were supposed to become the basis of the future "German home in the East".⁶⁵⁴

The Ukrainian *Volksdeutsche* were recorded in a special register *Volkliste Ukraine*.⁶⁵⁵ Marriages between the German colonists and Jews, Roma and Slavs were banned.⁶⁵⁶ The Ukrainian *Volksdeutsche* were not conscripted in the *Wehrmacht*. Nevertheless, a large number of young Swedes from Gammalsvenskby voluntarily joined the Nazi gendarmerie, local police and rear-based units. For example, Andreas Knutas served in the guard of *Obergruppenführer* Ewald Oppermann, Head of *Generalbezirken Nikolajew*. At the same time his brother Gustav Knutas became a policeman in his native vil-lage.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵¹ Дело 804 по обвинению Марии Утас, 1945 г. DDAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 1, sprava 1276; Дело 585 по обвинению Варвары Нурберг и 5 её дочерей, 1945 г. DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 1, sprava 1276.

⁶⁵² Bergen, Doris L., "The Nazi Concept of 'Volksdeutsche' and the Exacerbation of Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, 1939-1945", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1996 (29):4, 569-582.

⁶⁵³ Calculated from the 1939 All-Soviet census, <http://demoscope.ru>, accessed October 22, 2013.

⁶⁵⁴ Lower, Wendy, "New Ordering of Space and Time: Nazi Colonial Dreams in Zhytomyr, Ukraine, 1941-1944", *German Studies Review*, 2002, (25): 2, 227-254.

⁶⁵⁵ Volkliste Ukraine was the All-Ukrainian database of persons registered as individuals of German origin, which was established in 1941 and were based on ethnographic and race biological studies led by the Nazi scholars. Among the criteria of selection were the family origin, German as a native language, German name, records of Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches.

⁶⁵⁶ Berkhoff, Karel C., *Harvest of despair: life and death in Ukraine under Nazi rule*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2004, 210-212.

⁶⁵⁷ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, 354-355.

In contrast to the main massive of the Ukrainian territory the area of German colonies had to be immediately purified racially and ideologically. The latter meant immediate destruction of the Jewish and Romani population as well as Soviet activists in the Kherson area. In September 1941, the Nazi German *Einsatzkommandos* of 10a and 11a led by two German intellectuals, Heinrich Seetzen and Paul Zapp, unleashed genocide of the Jewish population in the vicinity of Gammalsvenskby.⁶⁵⁸ During three months of the autumn of 1941, the perpetrators killed thousands of Jews in an area of 30 km area around Gammalsvenskby. The massacres took place in the neighbouring towns of Beryslav, Kakhovka, Kalinindorf and the Jewish villages of Novo Beryslav and Lvovo.⁶⁵⁹ In Gammalsvenskby the Nazis executed the only Jewish family, the family of a shoemaker Jankel.⁶⁶⁰ At the end of 1941, the Nazis arrested the former chairman of the Swedish national council Petter K. Utas, and the former kolkhoz chairman Julius Annas, as well as the Soviet activist Dmytro Krakovsky. The collective denunciation on them was signed by thirty young Swedes, mainly children whose parents had been lost during the Great Terror. Soviet activists were accused of collaboration with the NKVD and gunned down on the spot in the field outside the village. The Nazis banned burials of the dead and their corpses lay by the road for a week.⁶⁶¹ Unlike the Soviet perpetrators, the Nazis did not seek to conceal their crimes. Public execution of villagers and open mass extermination of the Jewish population caused a natural rejection of the Nazi regime by locals.

Emil Norberg noted:

When the German soldiers entered the village my mom saw 'Gott mit uns' [God with us] engraved on their plates. Then she told me that the Germans must be good people, because they believe in God. Who knew that they would be such devils?⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁸ Heinrich Seetzen (1906–1945) – Head of Einsatzkommando 10a from June 1941 to September 1942. A lawyer by education, studied jurisprudence at the universities of Marburg and Kiel. Prior World War II – Chief of the SiPo and SD, first in Aachen, then in Vienna, and in Szczecin. In 1945 arrested by British military police, committed suicide in jail; Paul Zapp (1904–after 1970) – Head of Einsatzkommando 11a from June 1941 to July 1942. Philosopher, main ideologist of *Deutsche Glaubensbewegung* – a neo-pagan movement, which supposed to replace the traditional Christianity. He was hiding after 1945 under a false name in Germany. Arrested and sentenced in 1970 to life imprisonment.

⁶⁵⁹ *Сборник документов и материалов уничтожения нацистами евреев Украины в 1941–1944 гг.* Сост. А. Круглов: Институт Юдаїки. Киев, 2002, 63–76, 211–212; Елисаветский, Стер. "Холокост на юге Украины", *Голокост і сучасність*. № 1(7). 2003, 8–9.

⁶⁶⁰ Gaunt, David, "Swedes of Ukraine as 'Volksdeutsche'", 246.

⁶⁶¹ Gaunt, David, "Swedes of Ukraine as 'Volksdeutsche'", 245–249.

⁶⁶² Rolf Jakobsson, "Gammalsvenskby", *Land*, 1999:47, 30–31.

To protect against Soviet partisans, a self-defence unit was established in Gammalsvenskby in 1941. The members of the unit were called to a month-long military training. In Mykolaiv the occupants opened sergeant courses for self-defence detachments of local *Volksdeutsche*. By 1942, the self-defence detachment of Gammalsvenskby included 45 men armed with *Mauser Gewehr 98* rifles. They did not wear uniforms, but they did wear armbands with swastikas.⁶⁶³ The members of the self-defence detachment were complicit in the Holocaust, something which became taboo for Old Swedes coming to Sweden after World War II. When Maria Hinas was sheltering Miriam, the daughter of the gunned down Jewish neighbours, members of the self-defence found and arrested the eleven years old girl. She was handed to the SS detachment in neighbouring Schlangendorf and gunned down. For harbouring a Jew Maria Hinas was sentenced to a lengthy imprisonment.⁶⁶⁴

According to some plans being drawn up in Berlin Scandinavia was to become part of a Greater Germanic Reich. The Nazis have seen Scandinavians 'racial brothers'.⁶⁶⁵ Having occupied Denmark and Norway in 1940, the Nazi leadership sent considerable human and material resources to Sweden to influence the public opinion and make people positive towards the Reich.⁶⁶⁶ One of the methods of work was to establish personal contacts with some journalists and to organize exemplary media trips to the East. The Swedish colony in the Black Sea region had a special meaning for the Nazi propaganda. German scholars interpreted the medieval history of the Crimean Goths (Gothic tribes who remained in the lands around the Black Sea) and the Vikings in Ukraine to the best advantage of the rule of Nordic race over Ukraine.⁶⁶⁷ The intensive archaeological excavations were organized by *Forschungsgemeinschaft Deutsches Ahnenerbe e. V.* (Ahnenerbe's Institute) in the Mykolaiv region and Crimea in 1941–1942. The pseudo-scientific

⁶⁶³ Gaunt, David, "Swedes of Ukraine as 'Volksdeutsche', 247.

⁶⁶⁴ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, 335.

⁶⁶⁵ Werther, Steffen, "An Unimaginable Community: The SS Idea of a 'Greater Germanic Reich' and the German Minority in Denmark", *The Sea of Identities. A century of Baltic and East European Experiences with Nationality, Class, and Gender*, Norbert Götz (ed.), Södertörn University Academic Studies, vol. 60, Stockholm, Elanders, 2014, 88-95.

⁶⁶⁶ Thulstrup, Åke, *Med lock och pock: tyska försök att påverka svensk opinion 1933-45*, Stockholm: Bonnier, 1962; Gasche, Malte, *Der "Germanische Wissenschaftseinsatz" des "Ahnenerbes" der SS 1942-1945: zwischen Vollendung der "völkischen Gemeinschaft" und dem Streben nach "Erlösung"*, Habelt, Humboldt University Diss. Bonn, Habelt-Verlag, 2014. 109-127.

⁶⁶⁷ Schmaltz, Eric & Zinner, Samuel, "The Nazi Ethnographic Research of Georg Leibbrandt and Karl Stumpp in Ukraine and its North American Legacy", *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 2000, (14):1, 28-64; Schafft, Gretchen Engle, *From racism to genocide: anthropology in the Third Reich*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 2004, 122.

research activities regarding the Aryan race lead to a museum for the German administration and soldiers being opened in Dnipropetrovsk in 1942. The main purpose of the exhibition was to show the primordial German nature of the conquered territories of southern Ukraine.⁶⁶⁸ One of the main designers of Nazi nationalities policies in the occupied Soviet Union Georg Leibbrandt emphasized that, taking into account the ancient past of the Goths and of the Vikings, the Nazi occupational forces should speak about the restoration of German rule in the Black Sea region, which included the Crimean Peninsula and the mainland between the lower Dnieper River and the coasts of the sea.⁶⁶⁹ The initial plans of the Nazis intended to support the identity of the Swedish colonists. Gammalsvenskby was supposed to show an example of 'the new order' and the micro model of future Nordic settlements under the Nazi rule. Already in the autumn 1941 the Scandinavian soldiers from SS Division *Wiking* – paid a friendly visit to Gammalsvenskby.⁶⁷⁰

In September 1941, the core of the Nazi leadership cherished an idea of Scandinavian journalists undertaking a propaganda trip across Ukraine with a final stop in Gammalsvenskby. The delegation consisted of three Berlin correspondents: Gunnar Müllern, a journalist of a right-wing Swedish daily newspaper *Aftonbladet*, Eric Lindqvist, a correspondent of the Swedish Social-Democratic newspaper *Social-Demokraten* and the Danish journalist Helge Knudsen, representing the oldest conservative newspaper of Scandinavia *Berlingske Tidende*. Subsequently, everybody who took part in the trip to Ukraine shared their impressions in Scandinavian press and in their books published during World War II.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁸ Тесленко Д. Л., Тесленко О.И., Фаныгин Ю. Ю. "Діяльність зондерштабу прадавньої історії оперативного штабу Рейхслайтер Розенберг у генеральній окрузі Дніпропетровськ 1942-1943", *Вопросы германской истории: сборник научных трудов*. Ред. С. И. Бобылева. Днепрпетровск: Пороги, 2007, 382-394; Forschungsgemeinschaft Deutsches Ahnenerbe e. V. (The Ahnenerbe German Research Foundation) was a Nazi research institute founded in 1935 and purposed to study the archaeological and cultural history of the Aryan race.

⁶⁶⁹ Georg Leibbrandt (1899–1982) was born in the Kherson guberniya in the Russian Empire in a family of German colonists. Studied at the Russian universities of Odessa and Dorpat. Moved to Germany after the October revolution. In 1927, defended a PhD in political science at the University of Leipzig. He also studied at the University of Sorbonne and the London School of Economics. As a researcher at the *Deutsches Ausland Institute* (Institute for the Study of Germans Abroad, DAI) in Stuttgart, he visited the Kherson region of Soviet Ukraine. Participated at the Wannsee Conference. In 1941–1943 – Head of the Political Department of the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories. In 1945, arrested by the Allied forces; accused of involvement in the Holocaust during the Nuremberg Trials, but released in 1950. Died in Bonn.

⁶⁷⁰ Schön, Bosse, *Svenskarna som stred för Hitler: ett historiskt reportage*, Stockholm: Dagens Nyheter förlag, 1999, 131.

⁶⁷¹ Müllern, Gunnar, *Det har inte stått i tidningen: en svensk utlandsjournalists minnen från två krigsår*, Stockholm, Medén, 1942; Lindqvist, Eric, *I ofredens Berlin: intryck och upple-*

Every step of the propaganda tour to Ukraine was well-planned by the Nazis. The travel arrangements of the Scandinavian journalists were delegated to Gerhard Kuhlman, an employee of the press department of the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. He was in charge of Scandinavia in the Goebbels Ministry. Before the trip, a press conference with the Chief of the Imperial Press Otto Dietrich was held, and the importance of the trip in the eyes of the Nazi government was stressed.⁶⁷² This trip through Ukraine to Gammalsvenskby had been planned carefully; the Scandinavian journalists were accompanied high ranking Nazis who conspired and concealed their identities. Throughout the trip the journalists, who did not know Slavic languages, were accompanied by 'an ordinary interpreter' Hilmar Bassler. Actually, Bassler was a senior officer of the Propaganda Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany.⁶⁷³ In Kiev the Scandinavian journalists were taken care of by 'a local German', in reality a professor of Slavic studies at the University of Vienna, Hans Koch.⁶⁷⁴ In Mykolaiv the Scandinavian group was supervised by 'an ordinary officer' Ernst Apitzsch, in fact a head of the Propaganda Office of *Generalbezirken Nikolajew*.⁶⁷⁵

On the way to Gammalsvenskby Scandinavian journalists persistently asked why they did not see Jews. In response, the German officials implicitly explained that most Jews of Ukraine had allegedly evacuated into Russia with the retreating Red Army, and the rest worked in specially-protected military facilities⁶⁷⁶ Swedish colonists could inform Scandinavian journalists during the meeting about the destruction of local Jews by Nazis. Probably in order to avoid leaks, two of three Scandinavian journalists were suddenly

velser som utrikeskorrespondent, Stockholm, Tiden, 1942; Knudsen, Helge, *Hitler bandt min Pen*, Gyldendal, København, 1945.

⁶⁷² Otto Dietrich (1897–1952) – Chief of the Third Reich's Press. Doctor of Political Sciences. One of Hitler's closest associates At the Nuremberg trial (case of Wilhelmstrasse) he was convicted of crimes against humanity to 7 years in prison.

⁶⁷³ Hilmar Bassler (1908–1972) – Member of the National Socialist Party of Germany. Prior to World War II – Head of the Propaganda Department of East Asia, at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany. Secret Agent of SD. After World War II – Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Iraq, and then in Indonesia.

⁶⁷⁴ Lindqvist, Eric, *I ofredens Berlin*, 102; Hans Koch (1894–1959) was born and grew up in western Ukraine, then part of the Habsburg Empire, in the city Lviv (Lemberg). In 1917–1920 – Member of the Ukrainian national movement. In 1920s–1930s – Professor of history at Königsberg and Breslau universities. The author of academic works on the history of Kievan Rus and Byzantium. Had good language skills in Ukrainian, Polish and Russian. During World War II – Senior Officer of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories. In 1955 a member of an official delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany to Moscow led by Konrad Adenauer.

⁶⁷⁵ Ernst Apitzsch – High Officer of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*). Prior to World War II – Chief of the Department of Radio at the Reich's Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda.

⁶⁷⁶ Müllern, Gunnar, *Det har inte stått i tidningen*, 220.

denied a trip to Gammalsvenskby, with the fictitious reason that a car was lacking. Only Gunnar Müllern got the right to meet the villagers. At the meeting, however, he was accompanied by Job Zimmermann, who presented himself as ‘a captain of local police’ and Hilmar Bassler. In fact, Zimmermann was Deputy Head of the Press and Propaganda Ministry for the Occupied Eastern territories and understood Swedish. The driver of the car was a Dane from the town of Flensburg on the border to Germany and he understood Swedish. On October 28, 1941 on the front page of *Aftonbladet* Gunnar Müllern published a sensational report with numerous photographs of the Swedish colony in Ukraine. The journalist created an idyllic picture of life of the Ukrainian Swedes under Hitler:

The Germans treat the people of Gammalsvenskby very well. After the horrors of the Soviet regime the Swedish villagers have found peace at last. The houses are in perfect order, with clean white curtains in every home. There are no signs of decline and devastation caused by the war. The colony is under special protection of the German forces, as the road billboard advertises about it in German, Russian and Ukrainian.⁶⁷⁷

The journalist tried to convince Swedish readers that, under German control, Gammalsvenskby flourished and reviving its’ *svenskhets* (Swedishness):

The Germans gave the Swedes self-government and a Swede Kristian Utas was elected the village elder. In his house, hidden during the times of the Bolsheviks, there is a Swedish flag, the Bible of Karl XII and ancient Book of Psalms ... about 100 villagers came to meet with me, afterwards a divine service was held in Swedish in the church. On the whole the village reminded me of a typical Swedish settlement somewhere on the islands of Öland or Gotland.⁶⁷⁸

In Müllern’s tendentious publications on the Swedish colony in Ukraine, a kind of model of a bright future for Sweden as part of a Great Germanic Reich was described. The Scandinavian journalist was not interested in the fate of the murdered Jews or the mass starvation in the concentration camps for POWs in Beryslav. In order to show the advantages of the new order, the journalist focused on the discrimination of the Swedish minority in the Soviet Union and the Great Terror. Müllern described in detail the mass arrests of 1937, the shutting down of the Swedish school, desecration of the Swedish church. As we see, the bloody history of the Great Terror continued to play a role during the German occupation as well. In Mykolaiv an excursion

⁶⁷⁷ Mullern, Gunnar, ”Gammalsvenskby i eldlinjen”, *Aftonbladet*, den 28 oktober 1941.

⁶⁷⁸ Müllern, Gunnar, *Det har inte stått i tidningen*, 244-246.

to a former NKVD prison was organized by the Nazis for Scandinavian journalists.⁶⁷⁹

However the reportage by Müllern and his book did not get the reception in Sweden, which the Nazis had expected. With Denmark and Norway being occupied most Swedish readers did not relish the prospect of becoming the next vassal of the Reich. For example in 1940, after a flurry of readers' protests the newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* interrupted a series of articles by Fredrik Böök praising the German occupation of Denmark. Böök became a persona *non grata* in Swedish journalistic and political circles.⁶⁸⁰ The poor results of the propaganda trip to Ukraine stopped the Nazis playing in *Swedishness*. In early 1942 the occupation regime switches to radical germanization of the Swedish colonists of Ukraine. The village elder Kristian Utas was replaced by a German. A German replaced a Swede as the collective farm chairman. In 1942, for the first time in history, a German school was opened in Gammalsvenskby with four grades enrolling 72 pupils. Swedish youth was recruited into the regional departments of the *Hitler Jugend* and the *Bund Deutsches Mädel* (League of German Girls). Only Germans were allowed as members in these organizations in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union.⁶⁸¹

In 1942, the research team of Dr. Karl Shtump came to Gammalsvenskby with the purpose of performing anthropological, race biological and demographical field studies.⁶⁸² According to its report, from August 1942 the colony was inhabited by 480 'Deutsche', of them 265 Swedes and 215 Germans; as well as 68 Ukrainians. The victims of the Soviet Great Terror were accounted for on a separate list.⁶⁸³

In 1943 Gammalsvenskby hosted the annual meeting and parade of the aforementioned Nazi organizations, attended by the ethnic German youth from the whole general district of Nikolajew. On May 5, 1943, the German newspaper of Generalbezirken Nikolajew *Deutsche Bug-Zeitung* reported that "the residents of the Swedish colony and of the nearby villages gathered Easter gifts for the wounded German soldiers. The girls were carrying bas-

⁶⁷⁹ Müllern, Gunnar, *Det har inte stått i tidningen*, 241.

⁶⁸⁰ Hägg, Göran, *Svenskhetens historia*, Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 2003, 579-580.

⁶⁸¹ Gaunt, David, "Swedes of Ukraine as 'Volksdeutsche'", 244-247.

⁶⁸² Karl Stumpp (1896–1982) – was born in the Kherson guberniya in the Russian Empire in a family of German colonists. Studied at the Russian universities of Odessa and Dorpat. In 1922 he obtained a PhD in geography and demography at Tuebingen University, prepared a dissertation dedicated to the German colonies of Ukraine. Prior World War II – Director of Research Department for the Study of Russian Germans at the *Forschungsstelle das Russland-deutschums im Deutschen Ausland-Institut* (Institute for the Study of Germans Abroad, DAI). In 1942–1943 Stumpp and his team of circa 80 employees did extensive field studies of German colonists in Ukraine.

⁶⁸³ Gaunt, David, "Swedes of Ukraine as 'Volksdeutsche'", 243-244.

kets of coloured eggs ... Mothers gave their best wishes to the wounded liberators”⁶⁸⁴.

On October 26, 1943 the population of Gammalsvenskby was deported to Germany as part of a special SS operation on resettlement of the Black Sea Germans.⁶⁸⁵ In Germany, the Old Swedes were supposed to take a test for ‘racial purity’. According to the results of anthropological and medical examination they were divided into three groups. The highest and second rates were supposed to settle as pure Aryan colonists in Polish territories. 133 Old Swedes were enrolled in the group whose members came to take part in the Nazi experiment *Warthegau* in 1944.⁶⁸⁶ It was a new province of the Reich, established in 1939 on the occupied Polish territory. Here the Nazis carried out a large-scale experiment on the violent change of the ethnic structure of the population. The territory supposed to be subject to the rapid germanization by *Volksdeutsche* from Eastern Europe as well as Ukrainian and Estonian Swedes. The local Jews were deported and killed, local Poles – deported.⁶⁸⁷ Despite the advance of the Red Army, a fanatical Nazi leadership continued to create an outpost of German civilization in Poland. The project Warthegau is an example of continuity in German *Drang nach Osten* politics. The first plan to Germanize the Polish territories was discussed in the nineteenth century Prussia.⁶⁸⁸

Those Old Swedes who failed the racial selection were enrolled in the third group and sent to perform different kinds of coercive labour. Anna Portje recalls:

In Germany, we were made to take surveys, once in Stuttgart and twice in Offenbourg. The second survey showed that in the veins of the family members of Martis and Buskas families there is Jewish blood. How could they find they have Jewish blood, I do not know. In our families there were no Jews. I think the Germans said so on purpose; they just needed free labour force.⁶⁸⁹

The policy of germanization of the Old Swedes continued in Germany. The villagers received German citizenship and access to social benefits. Men of

⁶⁸⁴ Gaunt, David, “Swedes of Ukraine as ‘Volksdeutsche’”, 246.

⁶⁸⁵ Fleischhauer, Ingeborg & Pinkus, Binyamin, *The Soviet Germans: past and present*, Jerusalem, London, 1986, 87.

⁶⁸⁶ Granberg, Herje, ”133 Ukraina-svenskar nu samlade i Warthegau”, *Aftonbladet*, den 26 april 1944.

⁶⁸⁷ Schafft, Gretchen Engle, *From racism to genocide: anthropology in the Third Reich*, 126-134; Hedman, Jörgen & Åhländer, Lars, *Runö: historien om svenskön i Rigabukten*, Stockholm: Dialogos, 2006, 387-388.

⁶⁸⁸ *Германская колонизация польских провинций в Пруссии*. Сост. И. П. Шипов. Санкт-Петербург, 1894.

⁶⁸⁹ Tysk, Karl-Erik, *Gryningsljus: Gammalsvenskby i blickpunkten*, Skara: Skara stiftshistoriska sällskap, 2007, 54.

draft age were mobilized in the *Wehrmacht* or joined the *Waffen SS*. In April 1944 Herje Granberg, a correspondent of the Swedish newspaper *Afton-bladet* in Berlin, visited Swedish villagers in *Warthegau*. In a report to the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, he noted that the children, unlike the older generations of Swedish colonists, used German language in all contexts, including intercommunication.⁶⁹⁰ One totalitarian regime replacing another did not mean behavioural practices changed. After the Stalinist purges and the mass disappearances of people the ability of the Old Swedes to resist was suppressed. The brutal policies of the Nazi regime denied them the possibility of collective protest. Most Ukrainian Swedes preferred collaboration and did not oppose the policy of germanization, the forced deportation or the humiliating procedure of racial examination.

4.2. A new normative standard

The deportation of the Old Swedes to the Komi Gulag in 1945 was a continuation of the Stalinist project of normalization, which became all the more urgent after the Swedes' prolonged exposure to Nazi propaganda. Freed from the filtration camps in Germany to Kovel and then Brest the Kherson Swedes were gathered together on the basis of passport data and exiled as *Volksdeutsche* – ‘until further notice’ – to a special settlement in the Komi autonomous republic.⁶⁹¹ The total number of *Volksdeutsche* expelled in 1945 from Germany to special settlements, reached 208,000 people, of whom more than 10,000 were deported to Komi.⁶⁹² The NKVD was given the task of “transformation of unreliable elements into conscious builders of the socialist society”.⁶⁹³ Thus, the deportation to Komi was another stage of forced normalization of the Ukrainian Swedes.

For service in the *Wehrmacht*, police and SS troops, most men were sentenced to lengthy prison terms and sent to the camps of Vorkuta and to camps in the Urals. Therefore, among Ukrainian Swedes exiled to Komi were primarily women, children and the elderly. NKVD blamed all of them in 1945 for “fleeing abroad, voluntary acceptance of the status of Volks-

⁶⁹⁰ Herje Granberg till Kungl. Beskickningen i Berlin. 15/4 1944, Utrikesdepartementet 1920 års dossiersystem, Diverse biträde år utläningar Gammal-Svenskby-boar. P. 1534, del III. NAS.

⁶⁹¹ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 1, sprava 1276.

⁶⁹² Поболь Н. Л., Полян П. М. *Сталинские депортации 1928–1953 гг. Документы*. Москва, 2005, 619.

⁶⁹³ *Respublikanskii arkhiv obshchestvenno-politicheskikh dvizhenii i formirovanii Komi* (RGAOPDF), fond 1, opis 4, delo 180, l. 257.

deutsche, voluntary acceptance of German citizenship and enjoying Nazi privileges".⁶⁹⁴ However, according to the conclusion of the General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine, who worked in the 1990s for the rehabilitation of many Ukrainian Swedes, this guilt was far-fetched, and the actions of the Swedes during the occupation were not voluntary. The General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine stated that the Kherson Swedes were subjected to the Nazi system's repressive machinery.⁶⁹⁵

The certificate of *Volksdeutsche* was issued en masse at a general meeting of villagers with SS officials in November 1941.⁶⁹⁶ The Swedes could not refuse to participate in the event pre-announced by the Nazis because of behavioural practices learned before the war. To publicly renounce the status of *Volksdeutsche* meant to put yourself and your family at serious risk. The extermination of Jews by the Nazis and death penalties of Soviet activists left no doubt about the exceptional brutality of the occupational force. From the materials of the General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine's investigations it follows that the only privilege, which the villagers took advantage of, was the acquisition of foodstuff sets and soap.⁶⁹⁷ While NKVD regarded this as voluntary, the escape abroad was in fact a forced deportation of the villagers by the SS forces. The inhabitants were taken to Germany on October 27, 1943 as part of the resettlement of 72,000 Germans living in the Black Sea region to the Reich. The Swedes responded to this resettlement negatively which is evidenced by a folksong composed in those days:

Från Ukraina vi ut reste.
Alla svenskar stora och små,
Ingen gick den väg för rosor
Alla vara vi lika en.⁶⁹⁸

The Soviet deportation to the northern remote area of the country was the penalty for adopting *Volksdeutsche* status. The new legal constituent of the Old Swedes was written in one word *spetsposelentsy* (special settlers). The control over settlers was given to the secret police NKVD commandant's office (since 1946 a part of MVD). For all special settlers the NKVD issued registration cards. Each card includes name, date and place of birth, ethnicity, recent residence, occupation and notice about the guilt.⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁴ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 1, sprava 1276.

⁶⁹⁵ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 1, sprava 1276, ark. 196-211.

⁶⁹⁶ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 7, sprava 804, l. 9.

⁶⁹⁷ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 1, sprava 1276, ark. 196-211.

⁶⁹⁸ From Ukraine we out traveling/All Swedes big and small/No one went that way for roses/We all followed the same way. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Aleksandr Mankov for the text of this song.

⁶⁹⁹ Учетные карточки специального контингента Жешартского фанерного завода. The private collection of Nikolai Morozov (Syktyvkar, Russia).

Formally the special settlers retained some of the rights of free Soviet citizens. They could for example vote and receive state awards. Unlike Gulag prisoners, the special settlers were obliged to participate in public rituals of a political nature: meetings, elections to the Soviet Supreme Council, subscription to governmental loans, etc. An important imperative of behavioural practices of that time was to always show a positive attitude towards the Soviet government, the Red Army, NKVD and Comrade Stalin personally. At the same time the repatriates were supposed to publicly condemn Nazi Germany and never remember the positive aspects of their daily life in the Third Reich.⁷⁰⁰

The location and occupation of the settlers were determined by special NKVD commandant officers. Coercive physical labour became a major element in the “transformation of the special settlers into aware Soviet citizens”.⁷⁰¹ The terms of imprisonment were not defined or limited. The commandant’s office were obliged to isolate the settlers until special directive from the central authorities. The aforementioned facts meant that it was the central government who decided when repatriates could be considered loyal Soviet citizens merited to return home. The guilt of the Kherson Swedes before the state was considered collective; however the approach to their release was individual. Those who met the new normative standards could count on freedom. Inconsistency in complying the norms of behaviour and communication defined above, for example comparing social benefits in Nazi Germany with the domestic economic problems in the Soviet Union, or publicly displayed religiousness led to more punitive sanctions. The offenders were condemned and sent to the Gulag prison completely falling out of a ‘normal’ social and political structure of society.

The new linguistic standard for those who served settlement time was intended to ensure a rapid transformation of Swedish repatriates into the ordinary Soviet citizens. The policy of support of native language and culture was withdrawn away. Ukrainian and German was replaced by Russian, since only mastery of Russian lead to the inclusion of the Old Swedes in Soviet daily life. The Swedes came to Komi as *Volksdeutsche*, which came to influence the choice of language for daily communication. With the consent of the NKVD, many ethnic groups of special settlers (for instance Estonians and Kalmyks) have the rights to use their native language to everyday social and cultural activities. However, ‘Germans’ were forbidden to do that. The residents of the Russian North had no idea that a huge minority of over a million ethnic Germans inhabited the Soviet Union, and believed that all

⁷⁰⁰ Бруль В. ”Депортированные народы в Сибири (1935–1965). Сравнительный анализ“, *Наказанный народ. Репрессии против советских немцев*. Москва, 1990, 95–117.

⁷⁰¹ Respublikanskii arkhiv obshchestvenno-politicheskikh dvizhenii i formirovanii Komi (RGAOPDF), fond 1, opis 4, delo 180, l. 257.

Volksdeutsche were from Nazi Germany.⁷⁰² The local population treated spoken German extremely negatively as the language of the ‘anathematized fascists’. The Komi and Russians mistakenly took Swedish for German which often resulted in conflicts. For this reason Ukrainian Swedes tried to not speak their native language in public places.⁷⁰³

When they arrived in Komi, the Swedes spoke Ukrainian and their Russian was poor. The Komi and Russians hardly understood them. In Komi, the Swedes had no opportunity to read in their native language and this affected the everyday life of the adult generation. None of the books or newspapers in Swedish or German were available. The school-age children were sent to a special school for *spetsposelentsy* in the village of Zheshart. Schooling was exclusively in Russian, which was the major psychological barrier for the younger generation of the exiled Swedes. Anna Sigalet recalls education in Komi was extremely difficult due to poor knowledge of the official language. A native of Gammalsvenskby Anna Sigalet, who was born in 1931, attended to the first grade of the Ukrainian school, opened in 1938 after the liquidation of the Swedish school. During the war, she studied at German schools in Ukraine and in Germany. Over the years of war, Anna, like many other children of Kherson Swedes, mastered the standard German and preferred to communicate in German.⁷⁰⁴

The unfamiliar Cyrillic alphabet also traumatized the psyche of Swedish-Ukrainian kids. Arvid Knutas (born 1934) notes that the mastery of the new alphabet was a most serious trial for him at school. Arvid’s family re-emigrated in 1931 from Sweden to the Soviet Union. His father, Gustav Knutas, was arrested in 1937 and executed by the NKVD. The secret police, hiding the full extent of the Great Terror, deliberately misinformed Arvid’s mother Rosa, saying that her husband had been sentenced to 10 years of remote camps incommunicado. In 1945, Rosa Knutas and her family could leave from Hamburg for Sweden. This opportunity was taken by about 60 Ukrainian Swedes.⁷⁰⁵ However she preferred to return voluntarily to the Soviet Union, hoping to find her husband. Instead of meeting their father, a long-term imprisonment in Komi Gulag was in store for Arvid Knutas and his brothers. Arvid belonged to the second generation of the repressed Swedes. After the release in 1954 he remained in Syktyvkar, where he made a good career, ending up as the head of a big building company. Arvid Knutas believes that childhood trauma is the price of integration into Soviet society. His own identity is described by him in complicated words. His Swedish language is poor due to the long-term lack of practice. He speaks German;

⁷⁰² Бруль В. ”Депортированные народы в Сибири (1935–1965). Сравнительный анализ“, 111.

⁷⁰³ Interview with Anna Portje (born 1923), Zmiivka, October 28, 2004.

⁷⁰⁴ Interview with Anna Lutko (nee Sigalet, born 1931), Zmiivka, November 1, 2004.

⁷⁰⁵ Gammalsvenskbyborna, 1944, Beskickningsarkiv Berlin, P 1944, volym F1C:44. NAS.

however, his first language became Russian. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many of his relatives emigrated to Germany and Sweden. However, Arvid and his brother Oskar, who was born in Sweden, decided to stay in Russia forever.⁷⁰⁶

The NKVD commandant's office of Komi also suppressed the performance of religious rites by the settlers. Religious literature had been confiscated in filtration camps. Individual reading of the Bible and collective chanting of psalms are important elements of Lutheran religious practice.⁷⁰⁷ The authorities, demonstrating their atheistic nature, opened the main building of the Ustvymlag in an ancient Orthodox Komi monastery. There was no Lutheran church in the Komi Republic; all Lutheran priests in the Soviet Union had been murdered or sent to prison. As a result of the deportation, the Swedish Protestants were of the opportunity to maintain their religious constituent of identity. Note that during the Nazi occupation the Swedish colonists had freedom of faith. The difference between the old and new religious standard, of course, was not in favour of the latter and was one more factor of frustration.

4.3. A creation of new boundaries

The status of special settlers was determined by the two legal acts of the Soviet government in 1945: 'On the legal status of special settlers' and 'Regulations on the NKVD commandant's offices'. Formally special settlers enjoyed "all the rights of Soviet citizens except for the restrictions provided for by law".⁷⁰⁸ The single word 'restriction' influenced the configuration of the enormous world of slavery of the Gulag special settlements. The repatriates were escorted by NKVD soldiers in the remote areas of the country with harsh climatic conditions. On arrival, they were isolated from the free population, a new regime was created in the settlements, which were under the 24-hour control of the NKVD officers. Unauthorized absence from the settlement was viewed as an escape and punished by three years of camp imprisonment. Thus, the governance of local Soviet authorities was replaced by NKVD police punitive bodies, which had absolute power over the settlers. A special commandant decided where, when and how the exiled would work, he controlled any changes in their private lives, laved down production quo-

⁷⁰⁶ Letter from Arvid Knutas to the author, June 18, 2007. The author's archives.

⁷⁰⁷ Interview with Anna Portje (born 1923), Zmiivka, October 28, 2004.

⁷⁰⁸ *Генеральная прокуратура РФ. Сборник законодательных и нормативных актов*, 374-382.

tas and meted out penalty. The settlers were to obey all orders of the commandant. Under the August 11, 1945 secret directive 181, the NKVD were obliged to keep all-day surveillance over all the *Volksdeutsche* and recruit internal informers among them.⁷⁰⁹ Thus, the political regime once again changed the position of the Swedes in social hierarchy. In Nazi-occupied Ukraine the Old Swedes ranked high as representatives of the dominant 'Nordic race'. It was assumed that, as such, they would be conductors of Hitler's policy in the East. Deportation to Komi meant one of the lowest places on the social ladder. Below them (actually outside) were only Gulag prisoners.

In reality the position of special settlers (in Russian called *eska*) in many cases was worse than that of camp prisoners (*zeka*). As Eugenia Ginsburg noted, "the *eska* regime was believed to be softer than the *zeka*'s". However, it was not so".⁷¹⁰ This conclusion is true for the special settlement of Zheshart where Ukrainian Swedes were settled.⁷¹¹ The special settler Viktor Chernov wrote from Zheshart: "It is a living death here. The only one way to survey is to get to the camp as a *zeka* or escape".⁷¹²

The prisoners of the camps knew their jail term and were looking forward to the release. The Swedes were sent to the North for an unlimited period of time. The prisoners were ensured a minimum of food, heating and work-wear. The settlers had to work off a minimum ration with 'socially useful work'. The settlers were not given working clothes; they were bought against future deductions from their salary. Children's clothing was unavailable. This news was shocking for *Volksdeutsche* who arrived from Germany in December 1945 in summer clothes. The NKVD officers in charge for Komi reported that "to bring people alive, we had to give them our clothes, since most people arrived in shirts".⁷¹³ In the winter of 1945–1946 at timber harvesting in Komi one could see the exiled *Volksdeutsche* "in ballroom shoes".⁷¹⁴ Exiled as 'Germans', the Swedes were the most humiliated category of settlers sentenced to the worst kind of forced labour. The words "they all believed we were Germans", were repeated as a refrain in testimonies of Anna Portje, Anna Sigalet and Arvid Knutas. An austere landscape and daily acts of violence was intended to increase the effect of 'transforming' the Swedes into aware Soviet citizens. A new geographical reality played an important role in the technology of forced normalization. The

⁷⁰⁹ История сталинского ГУЛАГа. Конец 1920-х – первая половина 1950-х годов: Собрание документов в 7 томах. Отв. ред. Н. Верт, С. В. Мироненко; отв. сост. И. А. Зюзина. Москва: РОССПЭН, 2004. Т. 5., 473.

⁷¹⁰ Гинзбург Е. *Крутой маршрут*. Ленинград: Советский писатель, 1990, 373.

⁷¹¹ Михайлов И. *Сквозь ненастье*. Санкт-Петербург: Просвещение, 1998, 159-169.

⁷¹² RGAOPDF, fond 1, opis 4, delo 180, l. 131.

⁷¹³ RGAOPDF, fond 1, opis 3, delo 670, l. 70.

⁷¹⁴ RGAOPDF, fond 1, opis 3, delo 671, l. 51.

farmers – inhabitants of the steppe zone of southern Ukraine had to work in the Far North with forest production which was completely new to them.

4.4. Mass violence and a strategy for collective resistance

On December 12, 1945 a group of 64 Ukrainian Swedes, mainly women and children arrived from Germany to the Ustvymlag in the autonomous republic of Komi. From town of Zheshart they were sent to the timber yard site of the neighbouring Bashlykovo. The timber yard in Bashlykovo was established in 1930 as a place of kulak exile. The timber yard workers were engaged in sorting timber. By 1945 most of the old inhabitants had died, and Swedish women occupied the empty dugouts equipped with two-tire plank beds and primitive small potbelly stoves. The Swedish women worked in a team led by Armenian master Azizov. Emma Malmas recalls:

When we arrived, it was 52 degrees below zero. We were all thinly clad. The children had no winter clothing. I immediately realized that my children would die here. It was horrible what they did to us. All of us, women and children, were forced to live in dugouts, where other prisoners had lived before us. For one day's production rate one could buy only one kilogram of bread. The children and the elderly received cards for 300 grams of bread a day. It was not real bread, but some strange chaff. The first time when I gave this so called bread to the children, my son Johannes spit it out of his mouth with the words 'What is that nasty stuff, Mom?' I remember how I thought: 'Today we are alive, but tomorrow probably they will kill all of us.'⁷¹⁵

The Bashlykovo timber reloading base was notorious in Ustvymlag for extremely hard labour conditions and was a place for punishment of special settlers and prisoners. Involvement of women in this kind of work was part of the authorities' strategy, according to which the slave physical labour had become the main instrument for 'transformation'.

Anna Portje remembers:

They drove us under escort to the village of Zheshart. We walked along the Vychegda River, as wide as our Nepper [Dnieper]. It was a nipopularghtmarish hell, walking along the road in 52 degree below-zero weather. The work was terrible. We stockpiled the wood in the timber yard. In summer we

⁷¹⁵ Johansson, Gunnar & Turesson, Roger, "Vi ha varit med om sådant som man inte kan tala om. Intervju med Emma Malmas", *Expressen*, den 30 maj 1993.

worked in boots on floating logs and it was like working on slippery glass. Many of our girls were seriously injured.⁷¹⁶

The preschool children and the elderly who had to be underground all winter were particularly at risk. In the conditions of the special settlements the state disclaimed any responsibility for the lives and health of the settlers' children. Emma Malmas lost two young children who failed to survive the winter of 1945–1946. Her nine-month old daughter Elsa Malmas died on January 9, 1946, three weeks after arriving in Komi. The death certificate named the actual cause of death of the child – exhaustion. Another daughter, six year old Anna Malmas died on April 7, 1946 of bilateral pulmonary tuberculosis. On the death certificate of the sixty year old Anna Utas the cause of death was cynically stated 'senility'.⁷¹⁷ In total, 11 of 64 Swedes died of hunger and disease during the first year of deportation to Zhesart.⁷¹⁸ Despite the fact that the commandant was obliged "to ensure normal living conditions", none of the officers were incurred liability for this crime. Extremely high mortality and a catastrophic decline in birth rate were common to all groups among the deportees, but the *Volksdeutsche* were the leaders of this tragic statistics.⁷¹⁹

Milita Prasolova (born in 1926 as Milita Portje) recalls:

On January 6, 1946 my dear dad, Fredrik Portje, died. Before he died he asked for white bread and butter. I went to buy the stuff, but found nothing. Dad died with his last wish unfulfilled. Then my mom told us, her daughters: You must never, ever have babies here.⁷²⁰

The Swedes realized pretty quickly that the power created conditions in which they had no chance to survive and return home. In extreme conditions, the main mechanism of resistance became consolidation of the group on the basis of national identity. The issue of functioning and relationships of various ethnic communities in the special settlements is still understudied. In contrast to the camps with their international composition, special post-war settlements were formed primarily by ethnic criteria. The latter circumstance has significantly increased the role of ethnic identity in every-day survival

⁷¹⁶ Interview with Anna Portje (born 1923), Zmiivka, October 28, 2004.

⁷¹⁷ *Upravlenie zapisi aktov grazhdanskogo sostoyaniia Komi* (ZAGS: Civil Registry Office of Komi republic) Syktyvkar, Russia.

⁷¹⁸ Arkhiv Komi respublikanskogo blagotovoritel'nogo obshchestvennogo fonda zhertv politicheskikh repressii Pokayanie (Archives of Komi Foundation of the victims of political repressions Pokayanie).

⁷¹⁹ Бруль В. "Депортированные народы в Сибири (1935–1965). Сравнительный анализ", 111–117.

⁷²⁰ Tysk, Karl-Erik, *Gryningsljus Gammalsvenskby*, 68–69.

strategies. According to Nikolai Morozov, the proportion of non-Russian prisoners among special settlers in Komi was always significantly higher than in other regions of the country. This was due to the fact that it was believed that the harsh climate and the hard labour at the timber harvesting works and just the remoteness of these places guaranteed secrecy and separation of citizens of foreign descent from ordinary Soviet people.⁷²¹ People called the Komi republic “a prison without barbed wire”.⁷²²

In 1941, the NKVD established a new institution of slave labour – the complex of enterprises *Spetszheshartstroy* (a special building company in Zheshart). The main objective of the complex was to build a strategically important factory of aircraft plywood. The first forced labourers of the complex became the Volga Germans.⁷²³ In June 1941, during the mass deportation of the Estonian population, dozens of Estonian Swedes were evicted there.⁷²⁴ In 1945, there were 2,476 Finnish POWs in the Komi camps and many of these were ethnic Swedes.⁷²⁵ 246 soldiers of the Finnish POWs had made the group of prisoners of camp 367 of *Spetszheshartstroy*.⁷²⁶ They were more Swedes in Zheshart. Harry Hallin, a citizen of Sweden worked as a carpenter in the complex. He was born in 1922 in Sweden and immigrated to the Soviet Union together with his parents. In 1941, as ‘an unreliable element’, he was drafted into the so called the labour army and exiled to Zheshart.⁷²⁷ Another Swede, Knut Jonson, held a high position as the chief mechanic of *Spetszheshartstroy*. Known in some testimonies of the Swedish colonists as ‘engineer Anderson from Leningrad’, he was in fact a Russian Swede from the colonists of Murmansk region, who had a technical education in the Soviet Union.⁷²⁸ Knut Jonsson was born in 1912 in the village of Kovda and, most likely, was the victim of the deportation of ‘foreign nationalities’ from the Kola Peninsula, carried out in 1940 by order of the NKVD chief Lavrentiy Beria. Then as a result of the ethnic cleansing of more than 6

⁷²¹ Морозов Н. А. *Гулаг в Коми крае 1929–1956*. Автореферат диссертации д. и. н. Екатеринбург, 2006, 32.

⁷²² Letter from Arvid Knutas to the author, June 18, 2007. The author’s archives.

⁷²³ Kotljarchuk, Andrej, ”Tvångsnormaliseringens teknik och kollektivt motstånd. Ukrainasvenskar i Gulagarkipelagen”, *Historisk Tidskrift*. 2011:1, 3-24.

⁷²⁴ *En bok om Estlands svenskar. 1, Bosättningsområde, historia, andra världskriget och överflyttningen till Sverige*, Viktor Aman & Edvin Lagman, Edvin (eds), Stockholm, 1961, 197-198.

⁷²⁵ Конасов В. Б. ”Финские военнопленные Второй мировой войны”, *Север*. № 11–12, 178-191.

⁷²⁶ RGAOPDF, fond 1, opis 3, delo 1201, l. 56.

⁷²⁷ Гарри Хялин. Учетная карточка. Спецконтингент. Жешартский фанерный завод. The private collection of Nikolai Morozov (Syktyvkar, Russia).

⁷²⁸ Кнут Юнсон. Учетная карточка. Спецконтингент. Жешартский фанерный завод. The private collection of Nikolai Morozov (Syktyvkar, Russia).

000 people, mostly Finns, Norwegians, Estonians and Swedes, they were evicted from the Murmansk region.⁷²⁹

The combination of two circumstances, the possibility of mass mobilization on the grounds of ethnicity plus the contacts among compatriots, was in my opinion the secret of the successful strategy for collective resistance of the Swedish colonists in Komi Gulag. It was Knut Jonsson who became a key figure in the rescue of the Kherson Swedes. Emma Malmas remembers the settlers' first meeting with the influential chief mechanic:

Once a Swedish engineer Anderson [Knut Jonsson], a tall and elegantly dressed man, came up to our dugouts. He heard us speaking Swedish and spoke to us in Swedish:

- Good day! Are you Swedish?
- Yes, we are Swedes
- But why are you here?
- We do not know, Sweden did not take part in the war.
- You know, it's unfair, and obviously you're here by mistake.⁷³⁰

On April 22, 1946 with the assistance of Knut Jonsson, the Swedish settlers were freed from works on timber reloading base in Bashlykovo and were transferred to the disposal unit of the factory producing aircraft plywood. At the new job the Swedish women and teenagers worked in the inner premises of the plant with production and lived in normally equipped barracks. This enabled a group of Kherson Swedes to survive the following winter of 1946–1947 without significant losses. On December 22, 1946 Knut Jonsson was released from the settlement and went to the Novgorod region. Before his release, he supported the settlers in their desire to write a collective appeal to the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union. In their appeal the Swedes emphasized that they were not ethnic Germans and had been sent to special settlement by mistake.⁷³¹ On December 28, 1946, under the directive 38/10149 of MVD, Swedes were released from the special settlement “in connection with the departure to the homeland, Staroshedskoe”.⁷³² It is important to note that the Swedish families, who at that time were in other parts of Komi, were not released and remained in the Gulag until 1954.

On May 5, 1947, the Old Swedes rented a freight-car in Vorkuta at their own expense and left the Komi Gulag for home. After a month of travel in

⁷²⁹ Kotljarchuk, Andrej, “The Nordic Threat: Soviet Ethnic Cleansing on the Kola Peninsula”, 53-83.

⁷³⁰ Johansson, Gunnar & Turesson, Roger, ”Vi ha varit med om sådant som man inte kan tala om. Intervju med Emma Malmas”, *Expressen*, den 30 maj 1993.

⁷³¹ Interview with Anna Portje (born 1923), Zmiivka, October 28, 2004.

⁷³² Arkhiv Komi respublikanskogo blagotovoritel'nogo obshchestvennogo fonda zhertv politicheskikh repressii Pokoyanie (Archives of Komi Foundation of the victims of political repressions Pokoyanie).

June 1947 the settlers returned to their native village.⁷³³ However, nobody was waiting for them there. The local government had begun to house Ukrainian emigrants from Poland in Gammalsvenskby – the victims of the post-war population exchange.⁷³⁴ The village of Gammalsvenskby was renamed and given a new, typically Ukrainian name – Verbivka. The secret police continued their work and in 1947 Maria T. Utas (born 1893), who returned from the Komi Gulag was arrested again and sentenced to five years exile. The MGB accused her in the writing of “a personal address to the Nazi authorities in order to change Soviet citizenship and accept status of *Volksdeutsche*”.⁷³⁵ Oskar Utas (born 1926) was arrested by the MGB in Leipzig in 1947. He was hiding after World War II in Germany under a false name Helmut Broer. He tried to convince the Soviet secret police that he was a Greek from Ukraine. However he was accused to be ‘a *Volksdeutsche* of Swedish origin’ and sentenced to five years in prison.⁷³⁶ In 1949 Maria W. Utas (born 1923) was arrested by the MGB in Verbivka. She confessed that during World War II she “accepted the status of *Volksdeutsche* and the food aid from the Nazis”. For this ‘crime’ Maria W. Utas was sentenced to five years in exile.⁷³⁷ Her father Woldemar Utas was executed by the NKVD in 1937. At least three generations of Old Swedes affected by the Soviet mass violence. All colonists who have been in the Nazi Germany and the Komi Gulag remained under the surveillance of the secret police until the perestroika. To combine violence with soft measures of control was an effective strategy for forced normalization.

The Great Terror, World War II, the Holocaust and post-war deportations radically changed the ethnographic map of the Kherson area. About 500 Ukrainian peasants from Poland became the new residents of the Swedish colony. The Jewish neighbours of Novo Beryslav and Lvovo were destroyed in the Holocaust. About 2,000 of the German neighbours remained in the special settlements of the North and Siberia and were released only in 1954. Under the 1958 decree of the Soviet government ethnic Germans were forbidden to return to their homes in Ukraine. The ban was in effect until 1972.⁷³⁸

The unexpected release of the Old Swedes was a rare but not a unique case in the practice of Stalinist regime. For example, residents of Western

⁷³³ Hedman, Jörgen, “Svenskbybornas öden i Gulag-arkipelagen 1945–1947”, *Svenskbyborna 70 år i Sverige*, 1999, 45–52.

⁷³⁴ Кузовова Н. “Документи з історії українських переселенців із Польщі у фондї Херсонського обласного комітету КП(б)У (1944–1947)”, *Архіви України*. № 4. 2005, 219–226.

⁷³⁵ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 1, sprava 1276, ark. 199–211.

⁷³⁶ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 1, sprava 1276, ark. 212–243.

⁷³⁷ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 1, sprava 1276, ark. 244–256.

⁷³⁸ Айсфельд А. “Административные переселенцы”, *Немцы России. Энциклопедия*. Т. 1. Москва, 1999, 29–31.

Belarus and Western Ukraine of Polish ethnicity were released in 1945 to immigrate to Poland.⁷³⁹ In 1946, owing to lack of manpower, the Latvians and the Georgians were released by the request of the regional communist leaders of Latvia and Georgia.⁷⁴⁰ On January 26 1946, Ingria Finns were freed from exile as a result of the normalization of relations between the Soviet Union and Finland. However, unlike the Swedes they were forbidden to return to Ingria, except Red Army veterans with state awards.⁷⁴¹

4.5. Concluding remarks

Two factors make the history of the release of Ukrainian Swedes unique. Firstly, this is the only known case when collective liberation from special settlement was initiated from the bottom. Again, as in many other cases, the Old Swedes applied the century-used practice of collective legal protest. In at least two earlier collective appeals to the power the Swedish settlers placed emphasis on their non-German origin. The first case known to us case relates to the period of World War I, when the Russian Duma issued a law on the limitation and withdrawal of landownership in Russia for foreigners from the belligerent powers. The German colonists fell under that law. Then, on January 27, 1915, on behalf of the community of Gammalsvenskby a petition to the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire was sent. In their appeal the Swedes expressed concern about the rumours of withdrawal of land from the natives of Germany and stressed that unlike the neighbouring Germans they are Swedes loyal to Russia:

We are not Germans but Swedes, having nothing in common with the enemy of our dear Mother Russia, who gave us a home more than a century ago.⁷⁴²

The second case occurred in the spring of 1919, when the armed forces of the anarchist army led by Nestor Makhno attacked the German colonies of the Kherson area. The Makhno militia considered the colonists 'a foreign element in Ukraine', the accomplices of the Habsburg occupiers.⁷⁴³ In an atmosphere of robberies and murders of the non-Slavic population in March 1919, a delegation of the Swedish colony led by two teachers, former offi-

⁷³⁹ RGAOPDF, fond 1, opis 4, delo 180, l. 281-282.

⁷⁴⁰ Земсков В. Н. *Спецпоселенцы в СССР, 1930–1960 гг.* Москва, 2003, 49.

⁷⁴¹ Земсков В. Н. *Спецпоселенцы в СССР, 1930–1960*, 137–138.

⁷⁴² Шрадер Т.А. "Очерки жизни шведских колонистов в России", *Скандинавские чтения 2006 года*. Сост. Т. А. Шрадер. Санкт-Петербург: МАЭ РАН, 2008, 251.

⁷⁴³ Шубин А.В. *Махно и махновское движение*, Москва: МИК, 1998, 49.

cers of the Russian army Kristoffer Hoas and Petter Malmas, met the local squad of Makhno headed by Kyril Ivdienko, a former teacher and also a former officer of the Russian army and followed after him to Velikaya Lepetykha. The Chief of Staff of the Makhno army, Pavlovsky, received the Swedish delegation. He was a former officer of the Russian army who was born and grew up in the Cossack village of Velikaya Lepetykha neighbouring to Gammalsvenskby. The Old Swedes explained to the ataman and their ex-fellow veteran that the residents of Gammalsvenskby are the Swedes, not Germans. Moreover, that the colonists allegedly are the descendants of the soldiers of Karl XII, who together with the Cossacks of Hetman Mazepa fought for Ukraine's freedom. Taking into account the 200 year old alliance between the Cossacks and Sweden, Pavlovsky promised not to commit murders in the Swedish village, but be restricted to robbery.⁷⁴⁴ The 1946 appeal, in which the Swedes again focused on their non-German origin, was probably inspired by the events of 1915 and 1919.

Finally, the Ukrainian Swedes were not merely released from the special settlement. The authorities allowed them to return to their homes, they were not prohibited to reside in the central regions of the country. Thus, the Soviet government recognized the Old Swedes as full-fledged Soviet citizens. This last thing rehabilitated the Swedes fully in their own eyes. The resulting 'collective forgiveness' certainly speeded up the process of integration of the ethnic Swedes in Soviet society, while simultaneously tabooing the practice of socialization of Nazi Germany and democratic Sweden.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the Swedes who left Komi followed local Germans and moved to Germany. The so-called German section of Ustvym ceased to exist. The village of Bashlykovo was excluded from credentials and marked on modern maps as non-residential. Today old people live in the deserted villages. In the village of Vozhael unique camp barracks and a House of Culture of Ustvym lag remained. Despite the protests of Memorial, the buildings of the former Gulag are destroyed. A tragic page of the past is disappearing from space and collective memory.

Those who returned found their home village completely changed. In 1945 within the framework of the campaign on the changing names of the former 'German' colonies Gammalsvenskby received a new Slavonic name Verbiivka. The Swedish kolkhoz was renamed in the typical Soviet matter after aviator Valerii Chkalov.

The children of Ukrainian Swedes were deprived of the possibility to learn their native language at school. The use of the mother tongue was limited and reduced to short speech practices in families where both parents

⁷⁴⁴ Utas, Jan, *Svenskbyborna: historia och öde från trettonhundra till nu*, 150-152.

were Swedes.⁷⁴⁵ Moreover, owing to the smallness of the Swedish community after the homecoming, mixed marriages became more frequent in the village after return home. Gradually, Ukrainian and Russian replaced Swedish in the everyday communication. The children born after the deportation were usually given Slavic names; they received an atheistic education and did not know the history of Gammalsvenskby. A small group of the Soviet Swedes had to adopt a new normative standard. Individuals, who felt the threat of losing their identity, immigrated to Sweden in 1963–1966. For example, Matilda Norberg, who emigrated in 1965 from the Soviet Union to Sweden gave her children neutral names and taught them the Swedish language at home.⁷⁴⁶

The number of the Swedish population in the Soviet Union was below the statistical boundaries of 500 people and was not reflected in the Soviet censuses of 1959, 1970, 1979 and 1989. Even the linguists from academic centres in Moscow and Leningrad knew nothing about existence of the only Scandinavian settlement in the country. Only the Estonian Academy of Sciences organized in 1981 a short-term field study in the village.⁷⁴⁷

The process of transfer of a Swedish identity to younger generations was interrupted after the liquidation of the Swedish national village and the Swedish school. Within more or less ten years after the return from the Ust-vymlag the shift of the Kherson Swedes to the Ukrainian-Russian dialect was a fact. The correspondent of Swedish Communist newspaper *Ny Dag* Bertil Wagner who visited Gammalsvenskby in 1959 noted a high rate of assimilation of the younger generation of Swedes in the Slavic environment.⁷⁴⁸ In 1981, the Swedish journalist of the Communist newspaper *Norr-skensflamman* Sven Belf stated a high rate of mixed marriages and rapid assimilation of the younger generation of the villagers who “barely speak Swedish”.⁷⁴⁹ Children of the Ukrainian Swedes who were born after World War II speak today the so called *Surzhyk* – a mixed Ukrainian-Russian dialect. Since 2002 the standard Swedish is taught as a supplementary subject at Zmiivka School and some representatives of the younger generation have a certain command of it. However, no one is able to speak Swedish fluently. They recall how their grandparents spoke both the standard Swedish and the

⁷⁴⁵ Mankov, Aleksandr, “A Scandinavian Island in a Slavonic Linguistic Environment. The Dialect of Gammalsvenskby: Nouns (Paper 2)”, *International Journal of Slavic Studies*, vol. 3:1, 2014, 120-170.

⁷⁴⁶ Interview with Matilda Norberg (born 1919), Roma. August 1, 2008.

⁷⁴⁷ Juhkam, Evi & Joalaid, Marje, “Reigi rootslaste järeltulijad Ukrainas”, *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 1982:5, 240-245.

⁷⁴⁸ Wagner, Bertil, ”På besök i Gammalsvenskby. Artikelserie”, *Ny Dag*. 8.08.1959; 10.08.1959; 14.08.1959; 17.08.1959.

⁷⁴⁹ Bjelf, Sven, *Anna, Erika, Ture och andra svenskar i Sovjetunionen*, Moskva: Progress, 1984, 26-30.

Old Swedish dialect, but exclusively among themselves and never with the younger generation, and they note that this was done deliberately.⁷⁵⁰

The various totalitarian experiments destroyed a once consolidated community. As a result of the post-war demarcation of the borders the *boiki* – representatives of the Western Ukrainian ethnographic group – were resettled to the homes of Swedish colonists. The relations between the Ukrainian newcomers and Swedes were far from good. The state-run violence deformed interpersonal relations, leaving mutual fear and distrust. The community of the Kherson Swedes lost the main thing that distinguished it from other groups of Soviet rural populations – solidarity. The traditional mechanism to protect their rights through collective action was also lost. Loss of solidarity was one of the factors which speeded up the process of assimilation and led to the atomization of ethnic communities.⁷⁵¹ This once consolidated rural community was divided into victims of the Great Terror, NKVD agents, Red Army veterans and former Nazi German soldiers.⁷⁵² Those who passed filtering and returned home from Germany in 1945 and those who were exiled to the Komi Gulag. In 1963, the Swedish neighbours reported on the kolkhoz veterinarian Emil Norberg (1923–2005). For collaboration with the Nazi regime he was arrested and sentenced to lengthy imprisonment. Despite numerous protests of Swedish citizens directed to the Soviet government, the sentence remained in force. Recalling the years of Soviet imprisonment, Emil Norberg said:

I have been in prison for ten years, then five years in exile in Siberia. Fifteen years in total is actually not so much. In any case, it was not as hard as in 1937, when they [NKVD officers] took my mom away.⁷⁵³

Since Khrushchev's times, the Ukrainian Swedes and their relatives living in Sweden have resumed correspondence from which they have learned that dozens of villagers managed to move to Sweden in 1945. In 1959 Oskar Annas complained to a Swedish journalist about his fellow-villagers, ex-Nazi policemen who found refuge in Sweden and who he accused of the death of his father, Soviet activist Julius Annas. According to Oskar Annas: "they all fled with the Nazis, now living perfectly in Sweden, and are honourable members of a certain *Augustikommitté*".⁷⁵⁴ In 1983, the Moscow

⁷⁵⁰ Mankov, Aleksandr, "A Scandinavian Island in a Slavonic Linguistic Environment", 126-127.

⁷⁵¹ Hann, Chris, *A village without Solidarity: Polish peasants in years of crisis*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985, 109-115, 145-150.

⁷⁵² Interview with Anna Portje (born 1923), Zmiivka, October 28, 2004.

⁷⁵³ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, 418-420.

⁷⁵⁴ Wagner, Bertil, "På besök i Gammalsvenskby", *Ny Dag*, den 10 augusti 1959; The *Augustikommitté* (August Committee) was an anti-Soviet non-governmental organisation created

correspondent of the Swedish Television Malcolm Dixelius drove to the village for a one day visit. The authorities selected proper candidates for such a meeting, having excluded the relatives of victims of the Great Terror and of deportation. Nevertheless, the Swedish journalist witnessed some conflicts smouldering in the community. One Swedish family told the guests that their neighbour Johannes Portje, after the war allegedly worked for Soviet intelligence service in Scandinavia. The widow Daria Utas handed over a letter to the Swedish journalist addressed to the Swedish government with the demand to send back to the Soviet Union Emil Herman, Johan Hinas and Johannes Knutas. She accused the above-mentioned men of serving in the SS forces and of the murder of her husband Petter K. Utas.⁷⁵⁵ The trauma of the past contributed to the escalation of interpersonal conflicts in the once consolidated ethnic community.

Physiological trauma was the reason the victims of Stalinist repression were not open and did not share their memories with the children. Nadezhda Popova (nee Knutas), the daughter and granddaughter of the repressed Swedes emphasizes:

I now understand that my father [Arvid Knutas] was always afraid, even though, he does not admit it. He can be understood now when all the archives are open. It is impossible to recall that life without tears. Even today dad does not want to buy a dog to keep it even in the yard, remembering how he was dogged in the Gulag, and he does not allow himself to be persuaded to do so, so deeply it is embedded into his memory.⁷⁵⁶

In 1963 several widows of Gammalsvenskby appealed to the Prosecutor's Office with a request to know about the fate of the relatives who disappeared. They were the last in the Kherson region who sent their appeal on rehabilitation. In her appeal Emma Utas asked warily:

In 1938, my husband Gustav Utas worked on a combine harvesting corn, arrested by the police and exiled to an unknown destination, and so far I do not know where he is or maybe he is not alive?⁷⁵⁷

Kristina Sigalet was carefully finding out:

My husband, Simon Sigalet, a Swede, was born in 1899. In 1937 he was arrested and persecuted by the police. And since that time I have had no news of

in 1959 by a right-wing Swedish politician Jarl Hjalmarson in order to stop the official visit of Nikita Khrushchev to Sweden.

⁷⁵⁵ Hedman, Åhlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, 418-420.

⁷⁵⁶ E-mail from Nadezhda Popova (nee Knutas) to the author, June 18, 2007. The author's archives.

⁷⁵⁷ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 5, sprava 17, ark. 158.

my husband. Was he guilty? Why did they take him? Maybe I've written something wrong, I am illiterate.⁷⁵⁸

The case of the rehabilitation of the villagers of Gammalsvenskby was led by Odessa Military Tribunal. The investigators summoned dozens of witnesses to a crime for questioning and confirmed the absolute innocence of the victims. The chairman of the village council and member of the Communist party Makar Shurduk withheld his 1937 evidence and said that his signature in the NKVD documents, including character references for the arrested, was forged.⁷⁵⁹ The investigation asked the Main Intelligence Directorate GRU in Moscow about the colonists' complicity with the activities of Swedish intelligence service and got a negative response. On April 21, 1964 Major General Vladimir Danshin denounced the September 27, 1938 resolution of the NKVD troika 'for lack of evidence'.⁷⁶⁰

The fingerprint examination under the evidences of Makar Shurduk was not carried out. None of the former NKVD officers and prosecutors was brought to review the case and punished for the massacres of innocent civilians. The main executer of mass repressions in the colony, head of the Beryslav district department of NKVD, David Edvabnik-Davydenko was dismissed from the NKVD as long ago as in 1939 with the wording "for impossibility of further use".⁷⁶¹ The Deputy-Chief of the investigative department of the Soviet MGB in Moscow, Boris Rhodes, who began his career as secretary of the Beryslav secret police, was gunned down in 1956. However most of Stalin's 'falcons' escaped punishment and made a quick career. Many of them reached the highest Soviet positions. Thus, the prosecutor of the Beryslav district in 1937, Roman Rudenko was in 1944-1953 the Chief Prosecutor of Ukraine and in 1953-1981 the General Prosecutor of the Soviet Union. He is also well known for acting as the Soviet Chief Prosecutor at the trial of the major Nazi war criminals in Nuremberg. He was personally responsible for the Great Terror in Ukraine and for the death of many prisoners in the special camp 7 in Germany. However no trial was held. In 1972 Rudenko was awarded the Soviet highest honorary award of Hero of Socialist Labour. The prosecutor of the Mykolaiv region in 1938 Ilya Lanchukovsky worked in 1950s as a deputy prosecutor of the Odessa region. The head of Kherson department senior lieutenant Pavel Katkov was promoted to deputy chief of NKVD of the Mykolaiv region. The presence of high-ranking defendants was apparently the main reason for the slow investigation on rehabilitation of the Ukrainian Swedes.

⁷⁵⁸ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 4, sprava 359, ark. 263.

⁷⁵⁹ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 5, sprava 364, ark. 47.

⁷⁶⁰ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 5, sprava 17, ark. 182.

⁷⁶¹ Letter from S. Kokin, the director of the central archives of SBU to the author, June 18, 2010. The author's archives.

As former *Volksdeutsche*, the Swedes remained under the surveillance of KGB until the perestroika, manipulating the fates of people. Thus, in 1971, Colonel Nefedov, head of the KGB department of the military unit 44259, addressed the chief of the Kherson KGB, asking “for operational need archival case number 8966 with compromising materials on Ivan Utas, born in 1927, a native of Staroshvedskoe”.⁷⁶²

The relatives of victims of the Great Terror in Ukraine, Russia and Sweden did not learn the whole truth. To hide the magnitude of repressions the Soviet authorities falsified legal documents. Since 1950s the authorities issued death certificates to the relatives giving false reasons, dates and places of deaths, which were the result of mass repressions. The victims did not have tombs; the NKVD did not bury the victims, but dug holes for them in unknown places. However, according to Soviet official documents, they all died a natural death in the Gulag during the difficult years of the Great Patriotic War.⁷⁶³ Outrage over violations of human rights during Stalin’s regime became a major taboo during the last period of the Soviet Union. Only after 1989 people could learn the truth about the gunned down relatives. On October 2, 1990, fulfilling a directive of the central authorities, the Kherson KGB, in answer to a demand of Arvid and Oskar Knutas from Syktyvkar about the fate of his father Gustav Knutas, finally recognized that:

Your father was executed on November 1, 1938, probably in the city of Kherson. His grave site is unknown. In 1966, when recording the death of Gustav Knutas the Civil Registration Office of Beryslav was made a mistake [sic!] it is written in the death certificate that Gustav Knutas died on November 17, 1943 in the prison of lobar pneumonia.⁷⁶⁴

The history of the Great Patriotic War is still used in post-Soviet countries for political purposes. Today, in the south of Ukraine, as well as in Russia and Belarus, the memory of World War II often pushes out the memory of the Great Terror. As Varlam Shalamov notes: “If the state kills their own citizens isn’t that the main issue of our time, our morality, which is embedded into the psycho of each family? This question is much more important than the theme of World War II”.⁷⁶⁵

Complete rehabilitation of the victims and recovery of the forbidden memory became possible only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many descendants of the victims learned about the tragic fate of their parents recently from the author of these lines. Andrei Utas, resident of Kamyshin,

⁷⁶² DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 1, sprava 1276, ark. 178.

⁷⁶³ Кузнецов И. Н. “История политических репрессий: термины, понятия, определения”, *Гістарычны Альманах*. № 9. 2004, 77–91.

⁷⁶⁴ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 5, sprava 364, ark. 77.

⁷⁶⁵ Шаламов В. Т. *Колымские рассказы. Стихотворения*. Москва: Эксмо, 2008, 26.

Russia, learned from my information about the death of his grandfather as follows:

I received your letter Andrej, from which I could learn how and when my grandfather Julius Utas died. Unfortunately, my father died without ever knowing about his father tragic fate and that he was not just arrested and sent to prison but murdered by the NKVD. In 1937, after repeated arrests of my grandfather, the household was confiscated and the whole family was sent to the Gulag. Unfortunately, millions of people met the same fate during the Stalin's era. Andrej, thanks to your efforts, at least we grandchildren could learn about circumstances of the death of our grandfather, because that matters to us too.⁷⁶⁶

The abundance of memorials, exhibitions and programs and the vast historiography of Stalin's repressions against ethnic minorities of Ukraine enables civil society to analyse their own past more deeply. Nevertheless, the absence of legal processes regarding the Great Terror is still eroding moral standards. Despite the public outcry, in Kherson the street leading to the regional KGB office called Cheka Street. In 2002 a commemorative edition of the Ukrainian Security Service SBU with a foreword by the former president Viktor Yanukovych was published in Donetsk. In the book aimed for young officers at the SBU there was an attempt to excuse mass Stalinist repression:

In the first years of five-year plans and collectivization the enemies could not openly bear arms against the Soviet power as it was in the early 1920s. Now they disguised as Soviet employees, activists, trade unionists, specialist of national economy. And it was not easy to spot them. Nevertheless, the police security officers were able to find the class enemy; whatever guise they hid under ... Today's veterans are a living memory of the history of the security organs in the Donbas. Picking up the torch of the Cheka officers of the 1920s and 1930s, they give it to the younger generation of the [Ukrainian] Security Service, educating them in the spirit of patriotism and selfless service to their homeland [sic!].⁷⁶⁷

The unpunished perpetrators from the Stalin era became mentors of police officers of late Soviet Union and contemporary Ukraine, having handed their 'experience' over to their young colleagues. On September 7, 1938 Ilya Lanchukovsky, the chief prosecutor of Mykolaiv region, made a ratification to direct the case against Gustav Knutas to the Special Council of the NKVD in Moscow. According to the prosecutor's statement, the Swede Gustav Knutas who accused by police investigators for organization the second emigration

⁷⁶⁶ Letter from Andrei Utas to the author, June 8, 2007. The author's archives.

⁷⁶⁷ Cited in: Рябчук, Микола. *Зона відчуження. Українська олігархія між Сходом і Заходом*. Київ, 2004, 189–191.

to Sweden did organize the emigration of local Germans to Germany. Sending an innocent man to a certain death, Lanchukovsky did not even take pains to read the investigative file.⁷⁶⁸ Even today, it did not prevent the chief prosecutor of the Mykolaiv region Mykola Stoyanov from making the Stalinist prosecutor a good example for young colleagues. In the anniversary interview on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the regional prosecutor's office, created in 1937, he said:

We bow our heads before the legendary figures of the first prosecutors, without who it was impossible to imagine our present-day prosecutors – Lanchukovsky and others.⁷⁶⁹

The recurrences of Stalinism will send shockwaves to Ukraine unless the state makes a legal evaluation of the actions of specific individuals from the Stalinist apparatus, until exhumation and reburial of the victims are performed, until the government recoups the moral and material losses of the victims of the Great Terror and Soviet deportations. Absence of court holding, the impunity of those who, on behalf of the state, committed mass murder, undermines the prospects for democratic development in Ukraine.

Forced normalization is a mutual process according to Michel Foucault and here it resulted in a new tacit agreement between the power and the social group. By dint of normalization, a younger generation of Ukrainian Swedes almost lost the native language and their Swedishness.⁷⁷⁰ Only 18 of 111 citizens of Swedish ethnicity in the Kherson region registered in the 2001 Ukrainian census speak Swedish.⁷⁷¹ The older generation would preserve their Swedish ethnic and religious identity.⁷⁷² At the same time the younger generation of Kherson Swedes prefer to speak Ukrainian and identify themselves with the Ukrainian nation and the Orthodox faith.⁷⁷³

⁷⁶⁸ DAKhO, fond R-4033, opys 5, sprava 364, ark. 26-29.

⁷⁶⁹ "70 лет под прокурорским надзором", *Николаевские новости*, 17.10. 2007.

⁷⁷⁰ Forsman, Ludvig, "The Linguistic Ecology of the Death of Swedish in Ukraine", *Language: Competence-Change-Contact*, Annikki Koskensalo, John Smeds, Rudolf De Cillia & Angel Huguët (eds.), Berlin: Lit Verlag Dr. W. Hopf, 2012, 221-238; Mankov, Aleksandr, "A Scandinavian Island in a Slavonic Linguistic Environment. The Dialect of Gammalsvenskby: Nouns (Paper 2)", *International Journal of Slavic Studies*, 120-170.

⁷⁷¹ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, www.ukrcensus.gov.ua, accessed July 11, 2014.

⁷⁷² Forsman, Ludvig, "Svensk etnicitet utan svenskt språk i Gammalsvenskby", *Svenskan i Finland 14*, Riita Kosunen, Paula Rossi and Kirsti Lepistö (eds.), Oulu, Oulu University Press, 2014, 47-60.

⁷⁷³ Dolinski, Wojciech, "Mniejszość szwedzka na Ukrainie: Dylematy tożsamościowe przedstawicieli trzech pokoleń Szwedów we wsi Zmijivka na Chersońszczyźnie", *Sprawy narodowościowe. Oryginalne badania własne studentów*, Zbigniew Kurcz (ed.), Wrocław, 2003, 233-253.

Conclusion

Chapter one shows that the colonists' resistance strategy to Ukrainian nationalities policy was successful. The independent farmers, who had good and close relations with Sweden and a high level of internal solidarity, demanded a continuous dialogue with the political regime. Several key factors should be singled out. Firstly, their claims to the authorities were collective. The petitions to the government were signed by virtually every adult in the population of the colony. Secondly, the actions of the colonists were pertinacious. For over four months new collective petitions on emigration were drawn up and handed over to the government, regardless of the constant refusals. Thirdly, the claims of the community were legally compliant, drawn up on behalf of a legal entity of the local administrative body. In the fourth place, the radicalization of the protest should be stressed, which was manifested by the colonists regarding the land allotments, the seed fund and school attendance. In their resistance the Ukrainian Swedes showed they were well oriented in the domestic political situation and administrative structure of the Soviet Union. They successfully made use of the slogans of nationalism, the conflict of interest of Ukrainian and central Soviet authorities and organisations. Finally, the intervention of the Swedish government who supported the idea of emigration played a decisive role. However, without a firm stand of the Gammalsvenskby community such an intervention was unlikely to happen.

The first chapter confirm the hypothesis of flexibility and variability of the Soviet policies of nationalities and religions. For example, a rigid religious policy of the government towards some confessional groups was combined with serious concessions to the Swedish Lutherans. Most probably such concessions reflect the inability of the Soviet regime to dictate their terms to the strong, consolidate and cohesive community of the Ukrainian Swedes. Mass emigration sentiments in the former foreign colonies of the Kherson district made local authorities exercise extreme caution and the central authorities constantly demanded that emigration sentiments were suppressed. Our conclusions confirm the research of Kate Brown on the Polish minority of Soviet Ukraine. The 1920s nationalities policy of the Bolsheviks demonstrated the weakness rather than strength of the regime. A foreign-policy aspect was a key incentive of tolerance of the Soviet state

towards 'western' minorities. The Kremlin was interested in creating a favourable impression of the nationalities and religious freedom abroad. The ecclesiastic reforms carried out in Gammalsvenskby gave a favourable impression on the Soviet authorities abroad. The unification of religious life which was done in Gammalsvenskby enabled the Ukrainian Swedes to become full members of the Lutheran Church of Sweden. This fact certainly contributed to the rapid integration of the majority of the Kherson immigrants into Swedish society.

The partial results of the Ukrainian indigenization policy were confirmed by the Swedish inspection of the colonists' children. Surprisingly for Swedes the children showed good knowledge of spoken and written Swedish. Moreover the inspectorate also noted the children being fluent in the Ukrainian language. Owing to the policy of indigenization, the Old Swedes in Sweden related more to Ukraine than to Russia, as they had done before. Nevertheless, the first project of the Soviet regime to change softly the traditional way of life and culture of the Swedish colonists failed because of the emigration of the entire colony to Sweden.

The second chapter explores virtually unknown aspects of the development of Gammalsvenskby during the early 1930s. It shows how a disillusioned group of Gammalsvenskby villagers who returned to the USSR became a piece in a propaganda game orchestrated from the USSR and the leftists in Sweden. A grand project was set in motion, where new boundaries and terms and not the least – new hierarchy was created within a short space of time. This included a new vision of past, a new image of the oppressed and the oppressors, the introduction of a collective farm as a way of proceeding towards the bright Communist future, new linguistic practices, along with a number of other novelties.

It is difficult to say whether the decision to return to the Soviet Union was independent. This version supports by a fact that Ukrainian Swedes did not receive a permission to settle in Sweden in separate village and were resettled in different places of the country. Experienced and successful Ukrainian-born farmers resented the fact that they were sent to the practice to Swedish farmers in order to learn 'more advanced' Swedish way of farming. Despite the knowledge of the language difficulties of adaptation combined with homesickness and missing of remaining relatives in Ukraine. The external factor also has played its role. The Swedish communists were active in campaigning of the Old Swedes for return to the Soviet Ukraine.

The Soviet state decided to settle all re-emigrants in their former village and to buy back the houses already occupied by Jewish and German peasants. The area was given special status as an ethnic Swedish territorial unit, led by local Swedes and Swedish citizens. A new local elite was created in the village from Swedish Communists and pro-Soviet colonists, and new cadres were drilled in the local Komsomol, replacing the traditional elite of

successful farmers and the moral authority of the priest. The village was renamed Röd Svenskby and the Swedish Communist Party's kolkhoz was founded. After the split within the Swedish Communist Party, the branch loyal to the Comintern took the opportunity to flex its muscles politically in Sweden on the one hand, and prove it to be an efficient part of the Comintern, on the other. The Comintern considered that SKP had neglected the rural question; now the time was ripe to correct this mistake in great style by bringing about the remigration of the dissenting group of villagers. A group of Swedish communists was sent by the Comintern to educate villagers about communism and organize their economic and cultural life. Among them were two future top-leaders of the SKP: Erik Karlsson and Paul Söderman. The main purpose of the settlement was to make a laboratory for Scandinavian socialism from the Old Swedish rural community. Until 1933, the authorities could within an extremely short period of time fundamentally change the customary way of life of the Ukrainian Swedes. The first stage of the forced normalization of the Swedish villagers brought considerably results. This project was abruptly ended by the Holodomor, the man-made famine that raged across Soviet Ukraine reaching Röd Svenskby.

The modest economic results of the kolkhoz production irritated the authorities, especially compared with the high rate of the budget expense for the agricultural sector. The severe alimentary policy of Kremlin that brought about the famine was rather manifestation of weakness than the strength of the Soviet state. This was not only because of the international status of the Swedish kolkhoz. Despite the strict order given to the local authorities to immediately take steps to deal with the famine in the village, the Soviet authorities or the Comintern had done nothing in order to help Gammalsvenskby. Faced with new problems and abandoned by the Swedish Communists, the farmers petitioned the authorities just as their forefathers sent supplications to lords and royalties. There were also calls for Sweden to help this process. The rescue came again from Sweden, but it was organized by the peasants themselves. They used the same strategy as was tested throughout centuries and that enabled Old Swedes to survive the emergency without any human sacrifice. At the same time their Ukrainian neighbours were left alone to face this calamity followed by the massive mortality, the Swedish villagers had far better chances for survival. As Andrea Graziosi points out, researching the Holodomor, we must consider different scale; ethnic aspects and magnitude of mass famine depends on the region, population and ethnicity. Hopeless situation in which the peasants of Ukrainian origin in the steppe area forced to be with, allows discussing the national interpretation of a man-made famine in the Soviet Ukraine.

The third chapter explores the preparation and the implementation of the Great Terror in Gammalsvenskby. The Great Terror was prepared by the conceptualisation of state-run mass violence against ethnic minorities. The

ideology of hatred was firstly formulated by the political leadership and then mediated to the local authorities and the broader public through official documentation and mass media.

In 1937–1938 in the course of the national operations of NKVD, 22 villagers were arrested and executed. All of them were accused of being members of the fictitious Swedish counter-revolutionary nationalistic spy organization. Upon the version of the secret police, the leaders of organization were Edvin Blom and Hugo A. Lauenstein transferred from the communists into agents of the Swedish intelligence service. Not by pure accident, the active members of the socialist construction were also arrested. The Great Terror destroyed practically all the political makers of nationalities policy in Ukraine. Using mass violence as a method of control, the Soviet government reached a maximum effect in this way. Mass arrests and disappearances of people of certain nationalities ensured the absence of any protests from the population and rural administration of the national areas. The mass terror was followed by the liquidation of all the national administrative, economic and cultural institutes of Gammalsvenskby: village council, Swedish kol-khoz, Swedish school, library, Swedish leisure interest group and choir. The chapter's conclusions confirms Terry Martin's thesis on the connection between the Great Terror and the liquidation of the system of national village councils and national schools and the expansion of the Russian language in education. Administrative reform and the shutting down of national institutions were carried out simultaneously with mass violence with respect to the national village. Such a coincidence is not accidental. The winding up of national territorial autonomies and minority schools gave sense to the mass violence. The government drew conclusions from early 1930s, when the protest actions of German and Swedish colonists against the collectivization and famine were supported from abroad and seriously affected the work of the NKVD. Therefore, the mass violence and the elimination of national institutions were carried out in complete isolation of the minorities from the outside world.

In our case, state-run terror was directed against members of one homogeneous ethnic group. Massacres of innocent people, no doubt, led to partial destruction of the Swedish minority as such. The systemic nature of state terror, tortures of arrested people, the high level of organization, execution without trials; and concealment of traces of crime – all this could open the discussion about the genocidal nature of the Great Terror in minority areas. The deliberate liquidation of all the national institutes called further existence of the Swedish ethnic minority in Ukraine into question. Elimination of administrative and cultural autonomy became a manifestation of dramatic change of the nationalities policy. Ethnic purges and the destruction of national institutions took place in a country where the principles of equality despite ethnic origin and minority rights were enshrined in law and were

instilled into the consciousness of the nation. It was hardly possible to take such a step without preventive terror. By this the government sent a clear signal to the younger generation of the colonists. The mass violence against ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union was a crime against humanity, but still do not fall within the accepted notion of genocide. So far, not a single document has been discovered that would give evidence of any intent of Stalin's regime to fully exterminate certain minority as ethnic group. Children were not a direct target of the Great Terror. Moreover, many high-ranking NKVD officers and Party leaders, who introduced the Great Terror in the national borderland, were arrested and executed in by the Soviet regime, which is unprecedented in many ways.

Stalin's project of forced normalization through the mass violence was interrupted by World War II. The state-run terror against innocent citizens, unjustified in its' scale and brutality, undermined the national minorities' loyalty to the Soviet state, having created 'a fifth column' from them during World War II. The events in Gammalsvenskby during the Nazi occupation support this conclusion. The Swedish colonists accepted the status of *Volksdeutsche* and the germanization of the population of Altschwedendorf took place. In 1943 all villagers together with their German neighbours were evacuated to Germany by the Nazi occupation forces. In 1945, a part of Ukrainian Swedes (around 60 persons) emigrated from Germany to Sweden. Another group (about a hundred) was deported by the Soviet authorities to the Komi autonomous republic – a Finno-Ugric region in northern Russia. The government decided to settle all former *Volksdeutsche* in the Gulag area alongside other enemies of the Soviet state until further notice. The main purpose of the displacement of the special contingent and hard working conditions was "to make them true Soviet citizens".

Two factors make the history of the release of Ukrainian Swedes from the Komi Gulag unique. Firstly, this is the only known case when collective liberation from special settlement was initiated from the bottom. Again, as in many other cases, the Old Swedes applied the century-used practice of collective legal protest. In at least two earlier collective appeals to the power the Swedish settlers placed emphasis on their non-German origin. Finally, the Ukrainian Swedes were not merely released from the special settlement. The authorities allowed them to return to their homes, they were not prohibited to reside in the central regions of the country. Thus, the Soviet government recognized the Old Swedes as full-fledged Soviet citizens. This last thing rehabilitated the Swedes in their own eyes. The resulting 'collective forgiveness' certainly speeded up the process of integration of the ethnic Swedes in Soviet society, while simultaneously tabooing the practice of socialization of Nazi Germany and democratic Sweden.

The Great Terror and deportation to Komi accelerated the process of forced normalization of the Swedish colonists following the model proposed

by the Stalinist dictatorship. The fragmentation of the group artificially created in the years of exile, the demographic and cultural crisis of the community led to the fact that most Swedes upon return to Ukraine quickly assimilated in the environment of the Slavic population. The Swedish church which integrated various strata of the community and contributed to the consolidation of identity, was not functioning after World War II. The children of Ukrainian Swedes were deprived of the possibility to learn their native language at school. The use of the mother tongue was limited and reduced to short speech practices in families where both parents were Swedes. Owing to the smallness of the Swedish community after the homecoming, mixed marriages became more frequent in the village after return home. Gradually, Ukrainian and Russian replaced Swedish in the everyday communication. The children born after the deportation were usually given Slavic names; they received an atheistic education and did not know the history of Gammalsvenskby. A small group of the Soviet Swedes had to adopt a new normative standard. Individuals, who felt the threat of losing their identity, immigrated to Sweden in the 1960s. Changes in collective identity led to the fact that most members of the Old Swedish community imbibed the mental and cultural standards of *Homo Sovieticus*. The number of the Swedish population in the Soviet Union was below the statistical boundaries of 500 people and was not reflected in the Soviet censuses. Soviet centres for Scandinavian studies knew nothing about existence of the only Swedish settlement in the country. The process of transfer of a Swedish identity to younger generations was interrupted after the liquidation of the Swedish national village and the Swedish school. Within more or less ten years after the return from the Ustvymlag the shift of the Kherson Swedes to the Ukrainian-Russian dialect *Surzhyk* was a fact.

The various totalitarian experiments destroyed a once consolidated community. As a result of the post-war demarcation of the borders the *boiki* – representatives of the Western Ukrainian ethnographic group – were resettled to the homes of Swedish colonists. The relations between the Ukrainian newcomers and Swedes were far from good. The state-run violence deformed interpersonal relations, leaving mutual fear and distrust. The community of the Kherson Swedes lost the main thing that distinguished it from other groups of Soviet rural populations – solidarity. The traditional mechanism to protect their rights through collective action was also lost. Loss of solidarity was one of the factors which speeded up the process of assimilation and led to the atomization of ethnic communities. This once consolidated rural community was divided into victims of the Great Terror, NKVD agents, Red Army veterans and former Nazi German soldiers. Those who passed filtering and returned home and those who were exiled to the Gulag. Since Khrushchev's times, the Ukrainian Swedes and their relatives living in Sweden have resumed correspondence from which they have learned that

dozens of villagers managed to move to Sweden in 1945. Many villagers in Ukraine complained to Swedish journalists about their fellow-villagers, ex-Nazi policemen who found refuge in Sweden. The trauma of the past contributed to the escalation of interpersonal conflicts in the once consolidated ethnic community. Physiological trauma was the reason the victims of Stalinist repression and World War II were not open and did not share their memories with the children. As former *Volksdeutsche*, the Swedes remained under the surveillance of KGB until the perestroika, manipulating the fates of people.

In 1963 several widows of Gammalsvenskby appealed to the Prosecutor's Office with a request to know about the fate of the relatives who disappeared. They were the last in the Kherson region who sent their appeal on rehabilitation. The case of the rehabilitation of the villagers of Gammalsvenskby was led by Odessa Military Tribunal. The investigators summoned dozens of witnesses to a crime for questioning and confirmed the absolute innocence of the victims. However, none of the former NKVD officers and prosecutors was brought to review the case and punished for the massacres of innocent civilians. The presence of high-ranking defendants was apparently the main reason for the slow investigation on rehabilitation of the Ukrainian Swedes. The relatives of victims of the Great Terror did not learn the whole truth. To hide the magnitude of repressions the Soviet authorities falsified legal documents. Since 1950s the authorities issued death certificates to the relatives giving false reasons, dates and places of deaths, which were the result of mass repressions. The victims did not have tombs; the NKVD did not bury the victims, but dug holes for them in unknown places. However, according to Soviet official documents, they all died a natural death in the Gulag during the difficult years of the Great Patriotic War.

Outrage over violations of human rights during Stalin's regime became a major taboo during the last period of the Soviet Union. The history of the Great Patriotic War is still used in post-Soviet countries for political purposes. Today, in the south of Ukraine, as well as in Russia and Belarus, the memory of World War II often pushes out the memory of the Great Terror. Complete rehabilitation of the victims and recovery of the forbidden memory became possible only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many descendants of the victims learned about the tragic fate of their parents recently from the author of these lines.

At the beginning of this century in the village of Zmiivka (formerly Gammalsvenskby), a memorial cross and a monument with the names of the victims of the Great Terror with an inscription in Swedish was erected. At the same time, at the expense of the Ukrainian community, several Ukrainian monuments were erected in the village. Among them is the memorial 'Fighters for freedom of Ukraine' dedicated to the partisans of Ukrainian People's Republic and to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army; and a memorial sign was put

up on the 50-year anniversary of the relocation of Polish Ukrainians. In the village of Zmiivka today there are two congregations, the Greek-Catholic and the Orthodox Ukrainian. The latter is housed in the old Swedish church. As a result of the post-war population changes and the restructuring of the cultural and historical landscape, the former Swedish village has turned into one of the centres of Ukrainian culture in the southern Ukraine.

The absence of legal processes regarding the Great Terror is still eroding moral standards. The unpunished perpetrators from the Stalin era became mentors of police officers of late Soviet Union and contemporary Ukraine, having handed their 'experience' over to their young colleagues. On September 7, 1938 Ilya Lanchukovsky, the chief prosecutor of Mykolaiv region, made a ratification to direct the case against Gustav Knutas to the Special Council of the NKVD in Moscow. Sending an innocent man to a certain death, Lanchukovsky did not even take pains to read the investigative file. It did not prevent in 2007 the chief prosecutor Mykola Stoyanov from making the Stalinist prosecutor a good example for young colleagues. The recurrences of Stalinism will send shockwaves to Ukraine unless the state makes a legal evaluation of the actions of specific individuals from the Stalinist apparatus, until exhumation and reburial of the victims are performed, until the government recoups the moral and material losses of the victims of the Great Terror and Soviet deportations. Absence of court holding, the impunity of those who, on behalf of the state, committed mass murder, undermines the prospects for democratic development in Ukraine.

The history of Gammalsvenskby shows that virtually every experiment of the totalitarian regime had a chance of success. From this perspective, that entails not merely 'History of Stalinism', but 'Histories of Stalinism'. Stalin's policy and the methods of forced normalization can be explained within the theoretical frameworks of Michel Foucault and Alberto Melucci. The starting point of all experiments designed to change the collective identity of the Swedish colonists was the formation of a new historical canon and a new vision of the future. Aimed primarily at executors of the experiments the concept later was introduced into collective behaviour of Swedish farmers. The launching platform of the experiment was the creation of new administrative and social boundaries. With the help of a new normative standard and a system of privileges and penalties, the power sought to create an easily controlled human mass from once consolidated ethnic community of Ukrainian Swedes. Particular attention was paid to the creation of a new social ladder inside the community. The totalitarian nature of the transformations did not give the colonists any choice. In that regard the policy of the Stalinist regime hardly differed from the policy of Nazi Germany.

A micro historical approach and oral testimonies made it to analyse the strategy of collective resistance in the Swedish community – the least explored part of the process of forced normalization. In their first experiments,

the authorities did not count on the Swedish colonists being able to make legal protests and to make use of use of foreign-policy relations with Sweden. A strategy of collective resistance had been tried and tested by the colonists in the Kingdom of Sweden and in the Russian Empire and it snapped into action in the Soviet period as well. Seeking concessions from the government, the Kherson Swedes also took to radical protests, such as renouncing of land or a petition to the government of Sweden. Experiments of the Soviet regime under the auspices of Ukrainian national communists and the international communist movement, aimed to instill national consciousness in the colonists. In 1937–1946, another project of the government supposed was to combine the terror with radical assimilation of the Swedish colonists and with shutting down of national institutions. Without ethnic purges and deportation this task was not realistic. Open violence and isolation of the colonists from the outside world during the Great Terror and the deportation to Gulag suppressed any desire for collective resistance, paving the way to their final sovietisation. Deportation to the north of Russia consolidated the success of the last Stalinist project. The empirical research provides evidence for Michel Foucault's claim that it is meaningless to look for logically structured economic purposes in the activities of political regimes that prefer violence over dialog and do not care about economic consequences.

Forced normalization is a mutual process according to Michel Foucault and here it resulted in a new tacit agreement between the power and the social group. By dint of normalization, a younger generation of Ukrainian Swedes almost lost the native language and their Swedishness. Only 18 of 111 citizens of Swedish ethnicity in the Kherson region registered in the 2001 census speak Swedish. The younger generation of Kherson Swedes prefer to speak Ukrainian and identify themselves with the Ukrainian nation and the Orthodox faith. The Swedish colony on the banks of the Dnieper River is living the last days of its' amazing and tragic history.

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Appendices

Appendix I: List of the Swedish Colonists of Ukraine – victims of the Great Terror

	Family Name, Given Name, Patronymic	Year of Birth	Date of Arrest	Sentence Date of Execution
1.	Annas, Andreas Petersson <i>Анос, Андрей Петрович</i>	1870	16.07.38	Execution shooting 15.10.38
2.	Annas, Kristoffer Andreasson <i>Анос, Христофор Андреевич</i>	1889	17.02.38	4 years
3.	Belio-Knutas, Maria Johansdotter <i>Белио, Мери Янсовна</i>	1899	30.06.37	18.04.39 Execution shooting
4.	Hernberg, Gottlieb Simonsson <i>Геренберг, Готлиб Семенович</i>	1881	29.09.38	17.11.37 Execution shooting
5.	Herman, Karl Wilhelmsson <i>Герман, Карл Вильгельмович</i>	1905	10.12.37	15.10.38 10 years
6.	Herman, Kristian, Andreasson <i>Герман, Христиан Андреевич</i>	1878	13.10.37	Execution shooting 27.11.37
7.	Herman, Jakob Andreasson <i>Герман, Якуб Андреевич</i>	1882	16.07.38	Execution shooting 15.10.38
8.	Hinas, Alvina Wilhelmsdotter <i>Гинас, Альвина Вильгельмовна</i>	1896	13.10.37	Execution shooting 27.11.37

9.	Hinas, Johan Kristiansson	1891	16.07.38	Execution
	<i>Гинас, Иван Христанович</i>			shooting
				15.10.38
10.	Knutas, Gustav Kristiansson	1898	13.02.38	Execution
	<i>Кнутас, Густав Христианович</i>			shooting
				01.11.38
11.	Knutas, Johannes Petterson	1912	16.07.38	Exculpation
	<i>Кнутас, Иван Петрович</i>			16.09.38
12.	Knutas, Johannes Petterson	1911	12.07.38	Execution
	<i>Кнутас, Иван Петрович</i>			shooting
				15.10.38
13.	Knutas, Otto Petterson	1904	12.07.38	Execution
	<i>Кнутас, Отто Петрович</i>			shooting
				25.10.38
14.	Knutas, Petter Hindriksson	1882	05.11.37	Execution
	<i>Кнутас, Петр Генрихович</i>			shooting
				20.01.38
15.	Knutas, Petter Johansson	1894	13.10.37	Execution
	<i>Кнутас, Петр Иванович</i>			shooting
				27.11.37
16.	Malmas, Petter Simonsson	1888	05.11.37	Execution
	<i>Мальмас, Петр Семенович</i>			shooting
				20.01.38
17.	Norberg, Johan Petterson	1878	13.10.37	Execution
	<i>Нурберг, Иван Петрович</i>			shooting

				27.11.37
18.	Norberg Mattias Mattsson	1898	13.10.37	Execution
	<i>Нурберг, Матвей Матвеевич</i>			shooting
				27.11.37
19.	Norberg, Simon Greisson	1887	13.10.37	Execution
	<i>Нурберг, Семен Григорьевич</i>			shooting
				27.11.37
20.	Norberg, Margareta Andreasdotter	1891	16.07.38	Exculpation
	<i>Нурберг, Маргарита Андреевна</i>			16.09.38.
21.	Sigalet, Anna Pettersdotter	1898	16.07.38	Exculpation
	<i>Сигалет, Анна Петровна</i>			16.09.38.
22.	Sigalet, Simon Simonsson	1899	13.10.37	Execution
	<i>Сигалет, Семен Семенович</i>			shooting
				27.11.37
23.	Spichak-Knutas Alvina Pettersdotter	1910	16.07.38	Exculpation
	<i>Спичак, Альвина Петровна</i>			16.09.38.
24.	Utas, Woldemar Wilhelmsson	1891	05.11.37	Execution
	<i>Утас, Вальдомар Васильевич</i>			shooting
				20.01.38
25.	Utas, Hindrik Andreasson	1881	1937	Execution
	<i>Утас, Генрих Андреевич</i>			shooting
26.	Utas, Gustav Edvardsson	1901	16.07.38	Execution

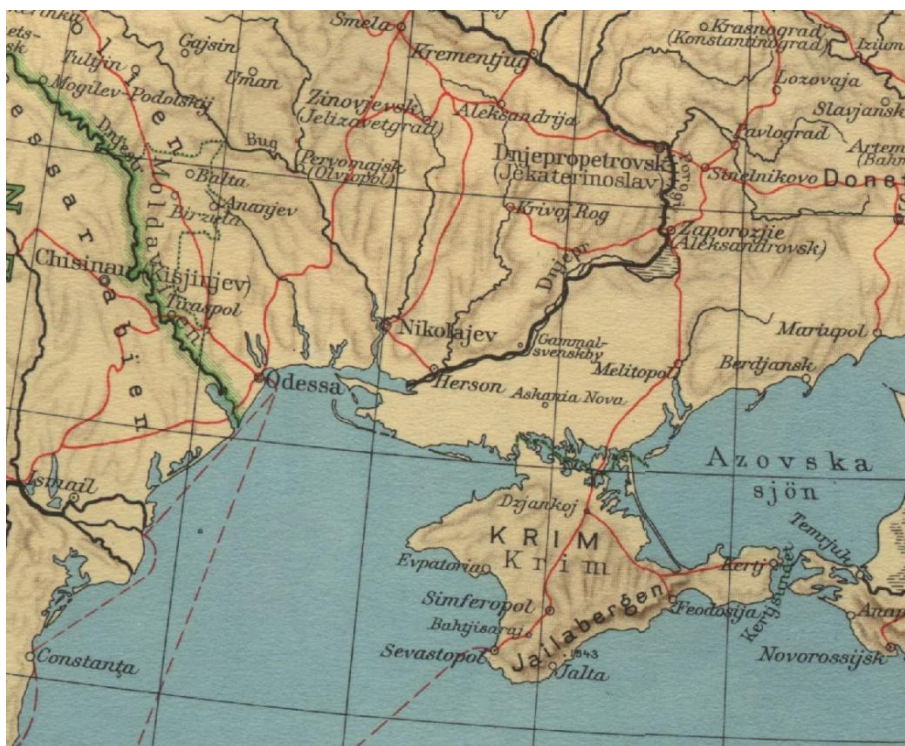
	<i>Утас, Густав Эдуардович</i>			shooting
				15.10.38
27.	Utas, Johannes Johansson	1909	16.07.38	Execution
	<i>Утас, Иван Иванович</i>			shooting
				15.10.38
28.	Utas, Petter Edvardsson	1907	13.10.37	Execution
	<i>Утас, Петр Эдуардович</i>			shooting
				27.11.37
29.	Utas Julius Andreasson	1883	14.12.37	Execution
	<i>Утас, Юлиус Андреевич</i>			shooting
				29.12.37

Appendix II: List of the NKVD officers and prosecutors, responsible for the Great Terror in Gammalsvenskby

Family Name, Given Name, Patronymic	Rank	Personnel Position	Further Active Service
1. Davydenko-Edvabnik, David, Borisovich	Junior Lieutenant of State Security	Head of Beryslav NKVD (1937) Head of 3 rd Department of Kherson NKVD (1938)	1939: dismissed from the NKVD, “owing to the impossibility of further use”
2. Goncharenko	Unknown	Criminal Investigator of Beryslav district NKVD	Unknown
3. Gordin	Unknown	Interrogation Officer of Mykolaiv regional NKVD	Unknown
4. Katkov, Pavel Ivanovich	Senior Lieutenant of State Security	Head of Kherson NKVD (1938)	1939-1940: Interim Head of the Mykolaiv regional NKVD 1942-1944: SMERSH (counter-intelligence service) 1944-1950: Deputy Head of Mykolaiv regional MGB
5. Kozar		Deputy Criminal Inves- tigator of Kherson NKVD inter-district operative group	Unknown
6. Koluzhny	Police Sergeant	Policeman of Beryslav Police department of NKVD	Unknown
7. Kriukovsky	Lieutenant of State Security	Superintendent of Mykolaiv regional NKVD (1938)	Unknown
8. Lanchukovsky, Ilya Danilovich		Procurator of Mykolaiv region	1942-1944: Procurator of Ivanovo region, RSFSR; 1957: Deputy Procurator of Odessa region, USSR

9.	Matveenکو	Lieutenant of State Security	of Criminal Investigator of Kherson NKVD	Unknown
10.	Merkulov	Lieutenant of State Security	of Criminal Investigator of Beryslav NKVD	Unknown
11.	Pavlenko, Lev Nikolaevich	Lieutenant of State Security	Acting Superintendent of Mykolaiv regional NKVD (1937)	1941: Head of Dnipropetrovsk regional NKVD
12.	Pastukhov	Police Sergeant	Policeman of Beryslav Police Department of NKVD	1946: Head of Beryslav district MVD
13.	Podgora	Senior Lieutenant of State Security	Head of Beryslav NKVD (1937)	Unknown
14.	Sheinberg, Samson Moiseivich	Junior Lieutenant of State Security	Secretary of the NKVD special troika of Mykolaiv region	1941-1942: Officer of Special Department of NKVD at South-Western Front

Maps and Figures



1. A map of the southern part of Soviet Ukraine showing Gammalsvenskby. – *Svensk världsatlas*. Stockholm, 1930.



2. A runic calendar of eight wooden panels, 1766. Originally made on Dagö and entrained by Old Swedes to Gammalsvenskby in 1781. – Nordiska museet, 89901. Photo by Nordiska museets fotoateljé.



3. Swedes from Dagö Island. – Ernst Hermann Schlichting, 1855.



4. Old Swedish Church in Gammalsvenskby, founded in 1787. – Drawing by Mats Utas.



5. Tombstone from 1892 with the inscription in Swedish: “Här vilar Matson Johan/Föd 1857/Död 1892. Söv i Fred/Den som tror på mig skall leva om han än dör (Johannes 11:25-26)”. Gammalsvenskby cemetery. – Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



6. St. Johannes Lutheran Church, built in Gammalsvenskby 1885 by donations from Sweden and the Grand Duchy of Finland. Present-day view, after the reconstruction to an Orthodox church in 1989. – Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



7. Group photo of Old Swedish colonists, ca. 1900. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



8. Waldemar Knutas, a senior non-commissioned officer of the Russian imperial army, with his wife Adelina and Elsa Utas, 1917. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



9. Wedding photo of Josef Knutas and Kristina Norberg, 1885 – Private collection of Arvid Norberg.

СТАРО-ШВЕДСКАГО
ВОЛОСТНОГО СУДА
Херсонскаго уѣзда
и губерніи.

Дискарь 11 дня 190 а.

4/10

Вс. Высокоблагородно
Господину Приставу 2-го
Бюро

Родомонт.

15-
Трижды Намному
Высокоблагородно Вою-
ющей Сударь Императрице
представив повеленію
Милостиваго Императора
которымъ воеводѣмъ бу-
дущаго года, таковой записки
А. Ребендилье Буксег
Саломе. Яковлеву в. О. Понин

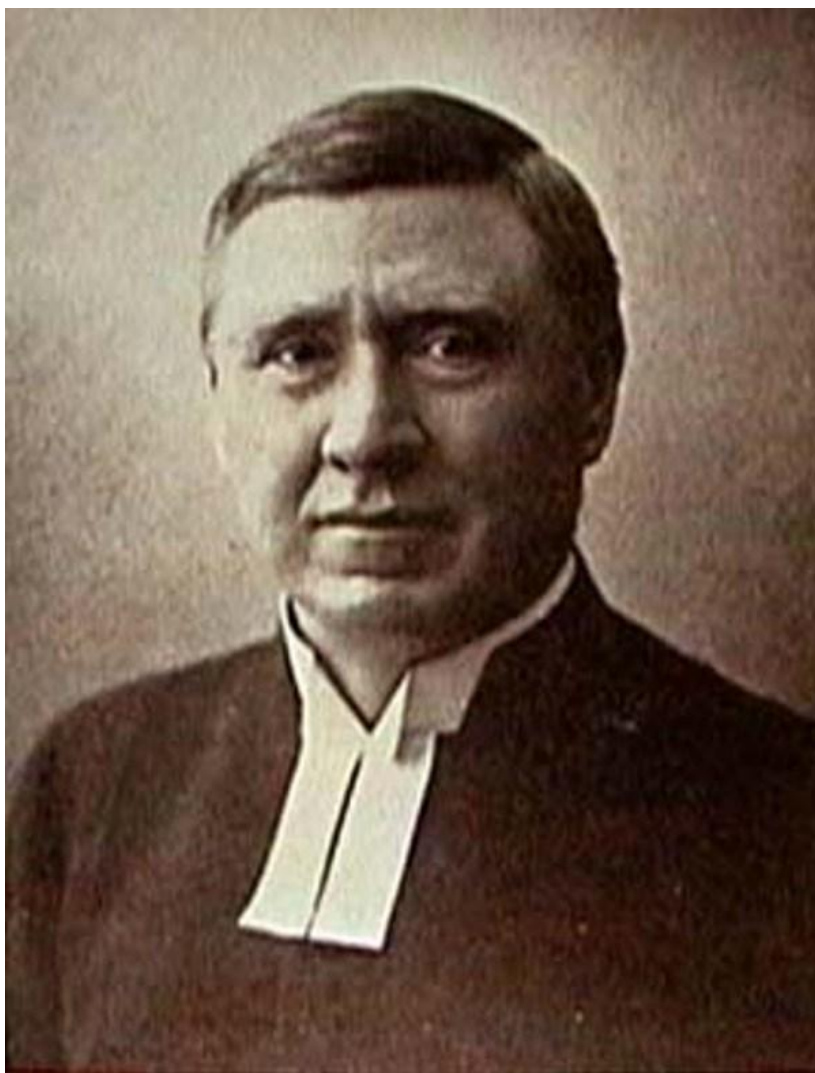
- 272



11. Unknown boy from Gammalsvenskby on a toy horse, ca. 1917. – Private collection of Arvid Norberg.



12. Wedding photo of Petter Norberg and Maria Knutas, 1919. – Private Collection of Arvid Norberg.



13. Kristoffer Hoas, the priest of Swedish church in Gammalsvenskby. –
Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



14. Emma Skarstedt Hoas, representattive of KMA in Gammalsvenskby and wife of Kristoffer Hoas. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



15. Christmas Eve in the house of Maria Norberg, 1922. The interior is decorated with a traditional Christmas tree and wreaths, Swedish flags and reproductions. Left to right: unknown employee of the Soviet authorities; representative of the Swedish Red Cross, Gösta Cedergren; Kristina, Maria, Julia and Anna Norberg; Swedish Red Cross representative Walter Hebbel; Jakob Knutas; Kristina Mutas; Emma Skarstedt Hoas and Kristoffer Hoas. Children: Oskar Norberg, Emil and Sigfrid Hoas. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



16. Peter Buskas, a village elder of Gammalsvenskby during the Tsarist period. – Private Collection of Arvid Norberg.



17. Johan Buskas, church warden of Gammalsvenskby parish. – Private Collection of Arvid Norberg.



18. Gammalsvenskby villagers, 1929. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



19. The mill in Gammalsvenskby, 1920s. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



20. Colonist Kristoffer Utas with his family in front of their own house, 1929 – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



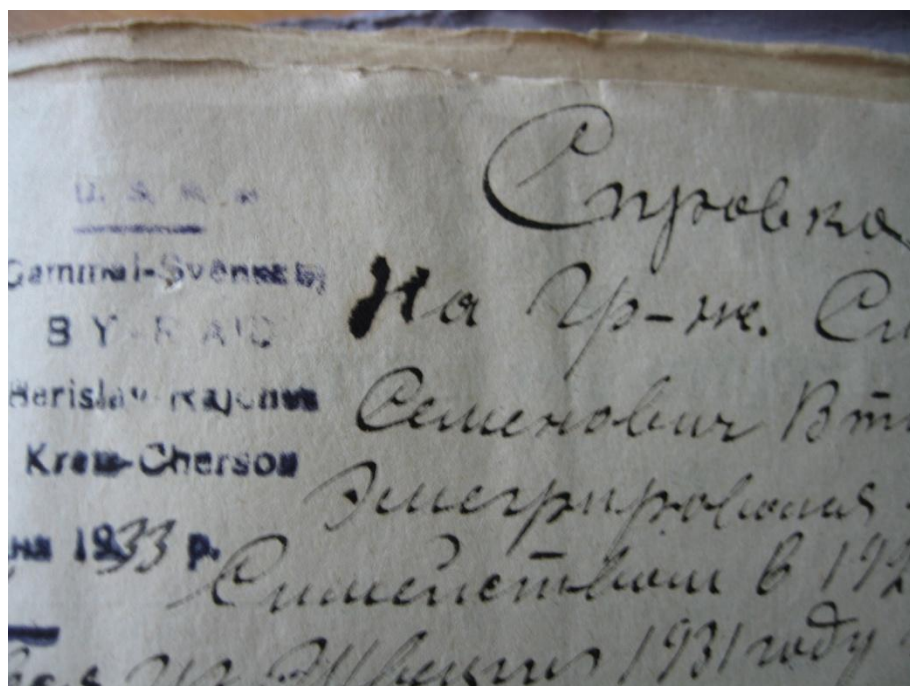
21. Christmas service for the children of Gammalsvenskby Lutheran parish, 1922. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



22. A funeral in Gammalsvenskby cemetery, ca. 1926. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



23. A Soviet poster with the text of the *Internationale* in French and Ukrainian.



24. An official stamp of the national village council (*byråd*) of Gammalsvenskby with Swedish text, late 1920s. – DAKhO.



25. A badge of the Soviet Ukrainian youth organization Aerokhem, a republican branch of the all-Union Aviakhim civil defence organisation.

<p>ОБЩЕСТВО ДРУЗЕЙ Авиационной и Химической Обороны и Промышленности РСФСР (Авиакхим РСФСР).</p>		<p>Уплата членских взносов</p>	
<p>..... организация.</p>		<p>1926 год.</p>	
<p>ЧЛЕНСКИЙ БИЛЕТ</p>		<p>Внп. 12-272.</p>	
<p>№ 1211188</p>		<p>Агес. 12-272. чоким</p>	
<p>Фамилия <u>Норберг</u></p>		<p>1927 год.</p>	
<p>Имя <u>Петтер</u></p>			
<p>Отчество <u>Петрович</u></p>			
<p>Время вступления</p>			
<p>Председатель Авиакхим РСФСР <u>А.В.В.</u></p>		<p>1928 год.</p>	
<p>Секретарь <u>И.И.И.</u></p>			
<p>16-171 1926.</p>			

26. Aviakhim membership card for Petter Norberg, 1926. – Private Collection of Arvid Norberg.



27. Andreas Utas as a Red Army soldier in Central Asia, 1928. – Private Collection of Arvid Norberg.



28. Gammalsvenskby schoolhouse, present-day view. – Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



29. Julia Buskas, who also taught at Gammalsvenskby school, with her pupils in Jönköping, Sweden, 1929. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



30. A lesson at the Jewish school of Novo-Beryslav, 1920s. – DAKhO.



31. The Gammalsvenskby choir, 1929. – Private Collection of Arvid Norberg.



32. A Soviet propaganda poster by I.P. Makarychev and S.B. Rayev, 1925.



33. A “new Soviet woman”, Alvina Herman, with her husband Gustav and son Nils, 1930s. – Private Collection of Arvid Norberg.



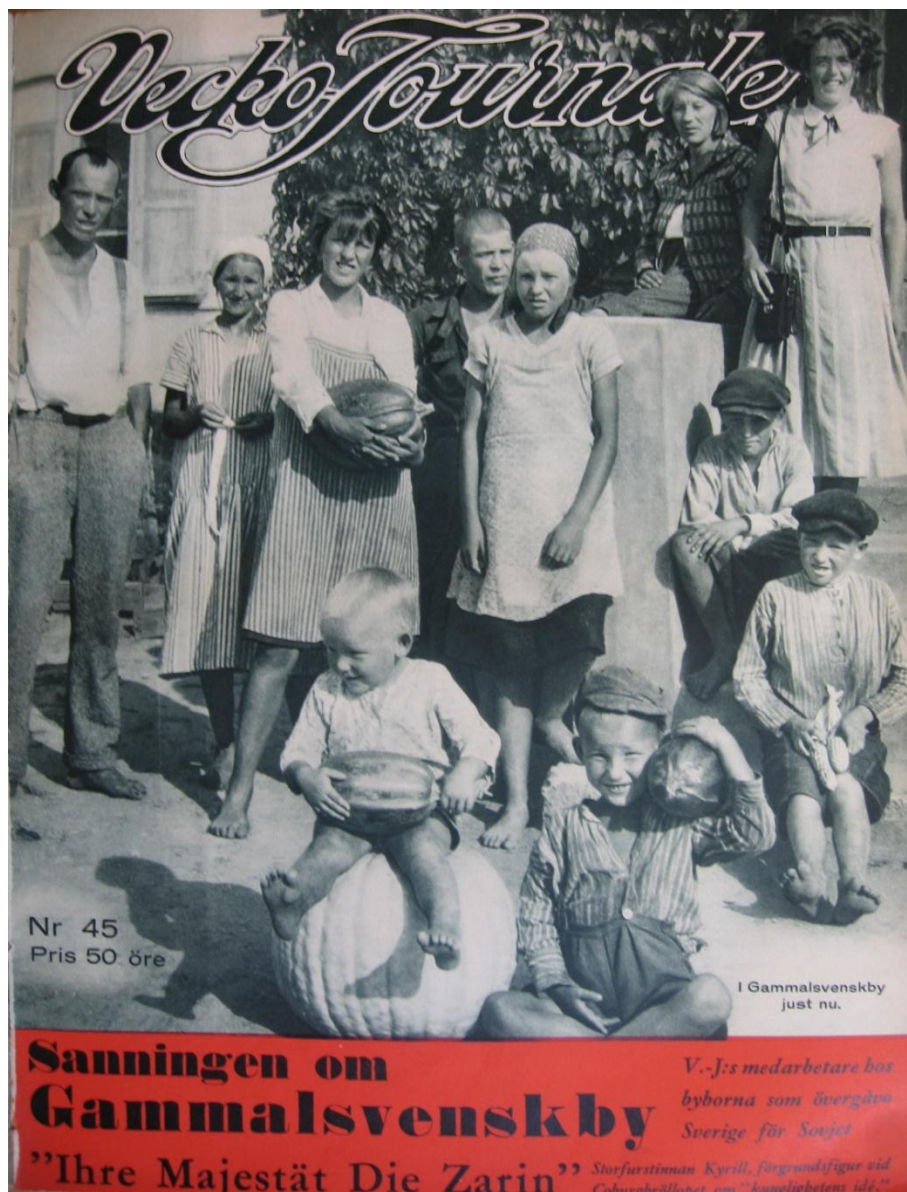
34. The departure of Ukrainian Swedes to Sweden. Kherson, 22 July 1929. –
Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



35. The arrival of Ukrainian Swedes in Sweden. 1 August 1929. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



36. The welcoming speech of Swedish Red Cross Chairman, Prince Carl of Sweden and Norway, Duke of Västergötland, to the Ukrainian Swedes, 1 August 1929 – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



38. The leaders of Röd Svenskby commune on the magazine cover of Swedish weekly magazine *Vecko-Journalen*. Leftmost: Edvin Blom; in the centre, Karl Ture Gräås; rightmost: journalist Alma Braathen from Sweden. – *Vecko-Journalen*, no. 45 (1932).

Telefon:
NORR 30325 (vaxad)
Efter kl. 6
interurbana samtal
Norr 303 27
POSTGIRO 51180

Sverges Kommunistiska Parti

(SEKTION AV KOMMUNISTISKA INTERNATIONALEN)

Barnhusgatan 12^{III} — Stockholm C



Rekommendation.

Genosse Hugo Lauenstein hat sich seit 1920¹⁹²⁰ in Schweden
aufgehalten. Er kam damals als politische fluechtling aus Hamburg,
wo er seit gruendung der KP Deutschlands Mitglied dieser Partei war.

Während seines aufenthaltes in Schweden hat er aktiv in der kom-
munistischen Bewegung gearbeitet.

Von 1 November 1924 ist er Mitglied der KP Schwedens gewesen, und
~~hat~~^{ist} in der Stockholmerorganisation immer als guter Kommunist aufge-
treten.

Da Genosse Lauenstein nun Schweden verlässt um in der Sovjet-
Union zu arbeiten, empfehlen wir ihm auf das beste an alle Partei-
instansen und Parteimitglieder, und empfehlen sein uebertritt in der
KP der Sovjet-Union.

Stockholm den 7 Oktober 1932

SVERGES KOMMUNISTISKA PARTI
Sektion av Kommunistiska Internationalen
POLITISKA BYRÅN

[Signature]

*Dettygac att rekommend Hugo Lauenstein
18/10 32 tillhör Kommanen i Tveruskbg.*

Sekretar. Blom Edvin

ножные секретаря: М. Блум и Э. Блум
государственный секретарь

Edvin Blom

государственный секретарь

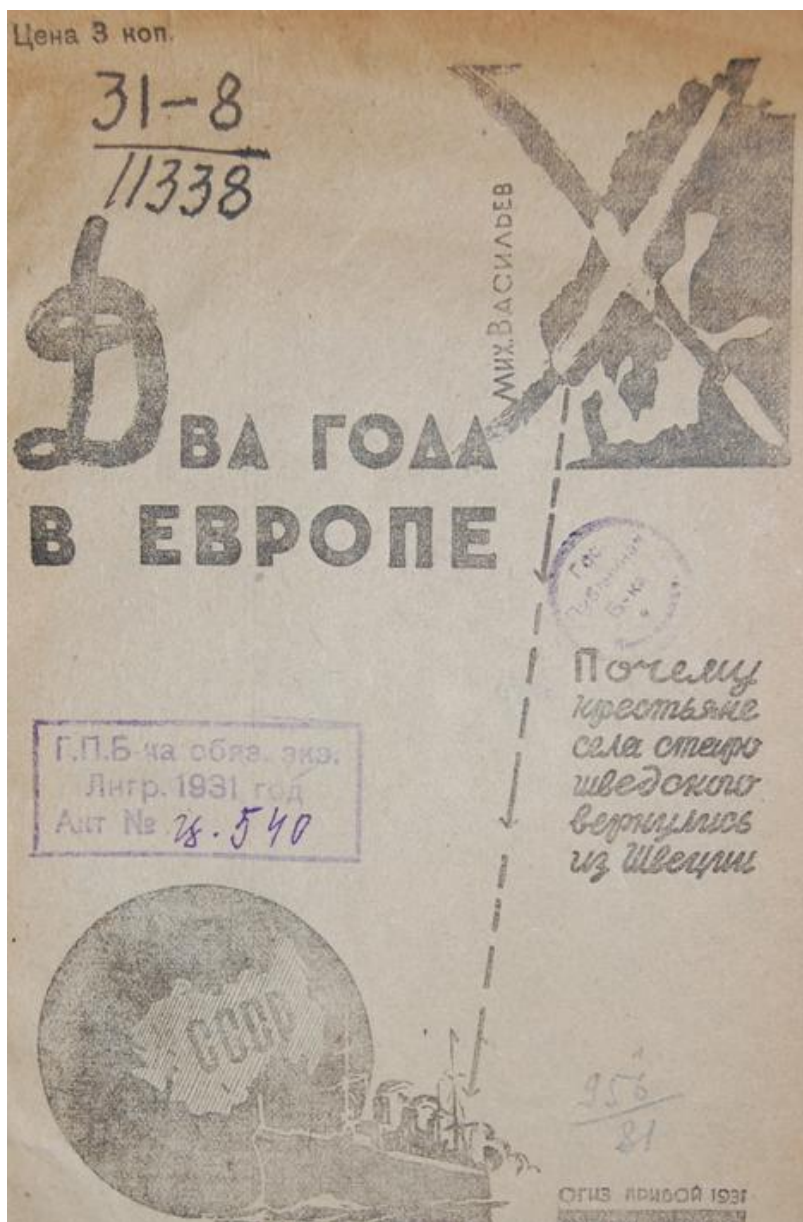
39. A letter of recommendation for Comrade Hugo A. Lauenstein, issued by the Politburo of the Communist Party of Sweden (SKP), and certified by Edvin Blom, 7 October 1932. — RGASPI.



40. The party membership book of Hugo Lauenstein, seized in 1932 by the Comintern Executive Committee in Moscow following his expulsion from the Communist Party. – RGASPI.



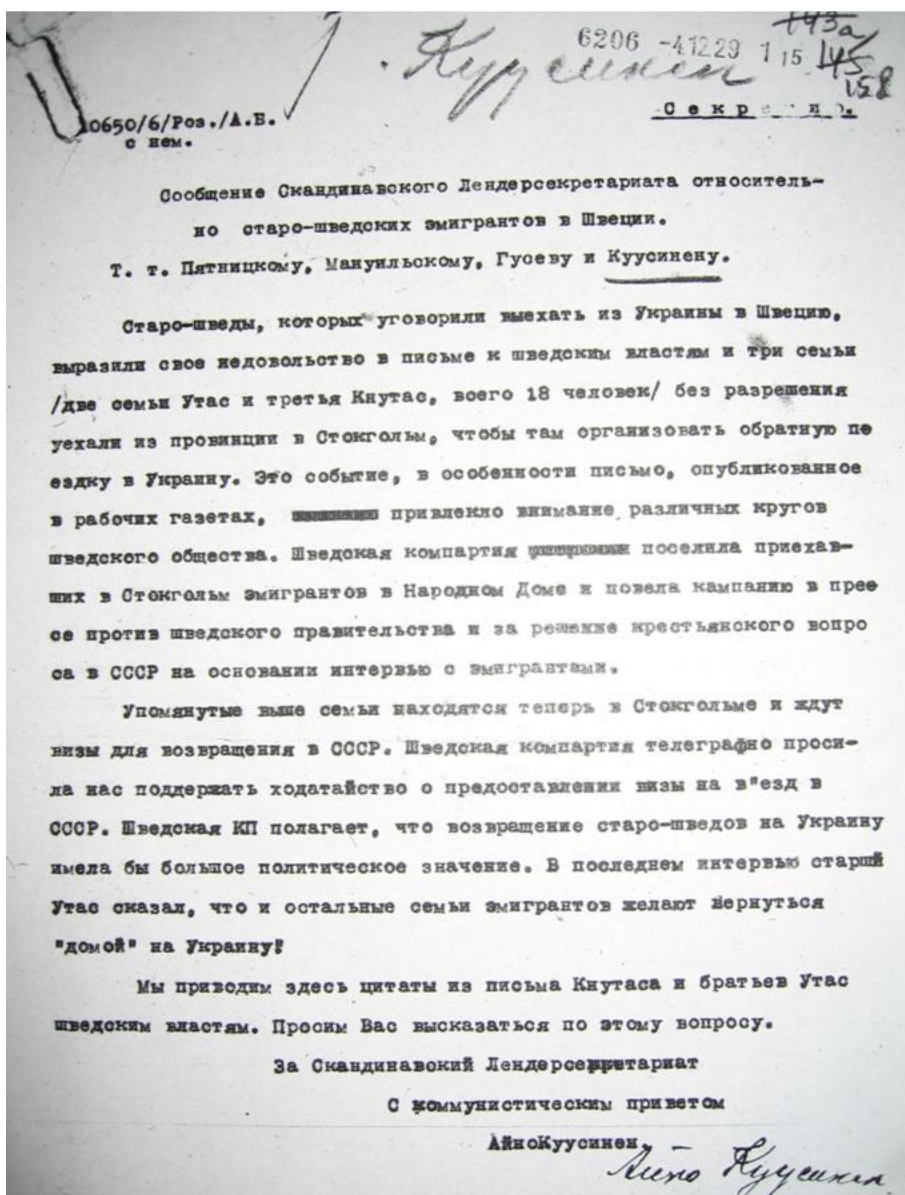
41. The first delivery of the kolkhoz grain harvest in Kherson District, summer 1930. – DAKhO.



42. The cover of *Dva goda v Evrope: Pochemu krest'iane sela Staroshvedskogo vernulis' iz Shvetsii* (Two years in Europe: Why the farmers of Gammalsvenskby have returned back from Sweden), Leningrad: Communist Party Publishing House "Priboi", 1931. Note the straightforward visual pedagogy of the cover art. – Courtesy of the Russian National Library. – Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



43. The Comintern Cinema in Kherson, opened in 1930. Present-day view – Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



44. A memorandum regarding the Ukrainian Swedes prepared by Aino Kuusinen as an expert for the Scandinavian Secretariat (*Skandinaviska ländersekretariatet*) of the Comintern, 1930. – RGASPI.



45. Communists Edvin Blom and Karl Ture Gräås on the cover of the Swedish weekly *Vecko-Journalen*. Gammalsvenskby, 1932 – *Vecko-Journalen*, no. 19 (1933).

У. С. Р. Р.

ЕРЖАВНЕ ПОЛІТИЧНЕ УПРАВЛІННЯ

~~ОТДЕЛ~~

ВСТАНОВЛЕНО в 1962 году

СПРАВА

№ 284-49055

по обвин. Нурберга Майгелс Майгелсов, Сигалова
 Мисси Семінович, Кнутааса Асселансена, Гурієва
 и Андереанс Карлс-Оскара, Гейнріха-Вітаса
 Вільяма Едундс-Оскара по ст 54¹⁰ 4х ч 1-2

речеві докази №

ПОЧАТО 8 Марта 1923 р.

СКІНЧЕНО 192 р.

НА АРКУШАХ

Здано в архив

Витяг з наказу ДПУ УСРР № 252 (внутр.)
 23 року § 6 п.п. 3, 4 і 5.
 п.п. 3 і 4. Ніяких слідств нікуди не на-
 чинаються, крім тих, які вказані в В. П. Р., а на місцях

46. The cover page of the Ukrainain SSR GPU file investigating accusations against a number of Swedish colonists preparing for re-emigration to Sweden, 1933. – DAKhO.

23

INK. UTRIKES DEPT.
D. No 165/180
Juni 1933
GR. 49
MAJ

17. hjälps med utvisning
från Ukraina
Till Sveriges Regering!

Sw. by d. 17/6-33
ink. pol. af 4 1/2

Pol.

för hämndom meddelas att underskriftad Petter Edwardson Utas, född i Jammal-Svenskby Ukraina den 4/8 1908 inflyttade med de övriga Svenskbyborna till Sverige 1929, och under min vistelse i Sverige, blev jag oftast ansökan antagen som svensk medborgare, resolution, givna i Stockholm, stött den 19 december 1930. Den 8^{de} Oktober 1932 ville jag resa till Svenskby för att hälsa på mina föräldrar och släktingar, men vid min ankomst till Leningrad den 10 okt. s.ä. blev jag omedelbart arresterad av G.P.U., och insatt i fängelse såsom misstänkt för att av Polisen i Stockholm vara skickad hit som spion. Här blev jag kvarhållen och plågad med förhör till den 25^{de} Nov-32. Därefter jag blev frigiven, jag reste ned hem till mina föräldrar och vistades här till den 18^{de} mars-33 då jag åter blev häktad av G.P.U. och insatt i fängelse i Berislav samt blev anklagad för att ha varit med om att organisera Svenskbybornas återresa till Sverige, trots att denna resa var organiserad länge förut. Jag anlände till Svenskby, den enda andel jag har, är att jag överlämnat listan till min grannar. Från Berislav blev jag, tillsammans med de 4 övriga häktade Svenskbyborna, den 6^{de} maj överflyttad till fängelse i Ber Cherson, därifrån blev jag frigiven den 26^{de} maj, och de övriga 4 den 7 juni. Den samma dag blev jag underrättad om att jag av G.P.U. kollegie var dömd till 3 års utvisning från Ukraina, eller rättare 3 års skafarbete i Ballashow vid mellersta Volga. Jag finner denna dom orättvis och vill därför bejda Sveriges myndigheter om hjälp så att jag kan få återvända till Sverige.

med hopp om att min bön skall bli hörd
tecknas underdänigast
Petter Edwardson Utas

Den 18/6-33 får jag lämna Ukraina

47. A letter by Petter Edwardson Utas from GPU prison in Kherson to the government of Sweden with the request for diplomatic assistance, 17 June 1933, - NAS.

Autobiografi för Karl Oskar Andersson
 Karl Andersson född den 21 april 1895: Hem, Anna
 Andersson, skomakare, farfar, Anton Andersson
 1, Moder Lda Andersson, morfar, Olaus - stad
 1 Anna gift med S. Högglund: skomakare, bos
 en Olaus, 2 Anders gift - skilt, yrke Chaufför bo
 3 Emma gift med Eron Bengtsson, yrke mu.
 träskor, sympletör Fr. Lm. Parli. 4 Julia gift
 med Erik Jönberg, yrke Gämningsarbete, maktman i Fr. Lm. Parli
 gift med Ernst Johansson, yrke elektriker, bos
 i Fr. Lm. Parli. 6 Jenny ogif Värverska i
 bostad Värberg, i Fr. Lm. Parli. 7 Astrid
 i textilfabrik i Värberg, bostad Värberg, partila
 ogift, mekaniker i Textilfabrik i Värberg, p

genomgått den obligatoriska 7-klässiga skolan
 fick jag böja all valla kreatur för bönderna
 och min 2 år yngre bror skiftes med dellen
 mor. Därefter har jag haft plats som bonddra
 med Gästern 1913 har följande bröder, 1 Eron Ele
 2 Anders Oleson, under sommaren 1913
 blev som obemäddat inträde i Kallindbergs folk
 blev besittad och jag fick stipendier

48. A fragment of autobiography compiled by Swedish Communist Karl Andersson for the GPU in Kherson, 1933. – DAKhO.



49. The queue outside the Torgsin hard-currency store in Kharkiv, 1933. – Photo by Andreas Winenberg.



50. The cover of *Fabrika ludei* (The Factory of human beings), by Matvei Pogrebinsky, a Ukrainian-born educator and officer of the GPU. Moscow, 1929.

22	Klaus Domsen Domsen	2.	9.	Hias Margare
23	Hans Magnusen Hias	2.	2.	Samuel K. B.
24	Knutas Gustaf Anders	3.		
25	Knutas Peter Hilde	5.		
26	Knutas Anders Elden	5.	5.	
27	Knutas Olof Kallsten-Eld	1.		Knutas Katarina
28	Knutas Gustaf Hilde	2.	7.	Knutas Gustaf
29	Knutas Mathias Kall	2.	6.	Knutas Mathias
30	Knutas Olof Hilde	3x2	2.	Knutas J.
31	Knutas Olof Kallsten-Eld	1.		
32	Knutas Alexander Kall	1.	1.	Knutas Alex
33	Knutas Peter Johansson	5.		Knutas Peter
34	Knutas Kallsten-Eld	1.	1.	Katarina
35	Knutas Olof Hilde	1.	5.	Knutas Dan
36	Knutas Peter Hilde	5.	6.	Knutas Peter
37	Knutas Olof Hilde	5.		Knutas Peter
38	Knutas Olof Hilde	2.	3.	Andreas
39	Knutas Olof Hilde	3.	4.	Knutas Hilde
40	Knutas Olof Hilde	5.	3.	Norberg-Torsten
41	Knutas Olof Hilde	9.	4.	

51. A collective appeal to Sweden with the list of starving population in Gammalsvenskby, 1933. – DAKhO.



52. Kherson grain elevator, built in 1931. During the Holodomor famine, the Soviet authorities exported grain to the West via the Kherson international seaport. — <http://www.mycity.kherson.ua>.



53. Communist Petter Knutas, chairman of the kolkhoz named in honour of the Swedish Communist Party, the SKP Kolkhoz. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



54. An excerpt from the article about the life of Röd Svensksby, by Swedish correspondent Alma Braathen. – *Vecko-Journalen*, no. 45 (1932).



55. Swedish emigrants at an agricultural commune in Karelia, 1926. Left-most: Edvin Blom with his children. – ARAB.

1934
14/8

Tillbaka till Sovjet-Unionen

Föredrag hålles

Torsdagen den 14 maj kl. 4 e. m.
(Kristi Himmelfärdsdag)

i Spånga Folkets Park

av svenskbybon

JOHAN KNUTAS

Dessutom föredrag av **FRITJOF LAGER**

Över ämnet:

Sovjet-Unionens diktatur eller Sverges demokrati

Diskussion.

Spånga Kommunistiska Arbetarkommun.

Arbetarkulturs Tr., Sthlm, 1931.

56. "Back to the Soviet Union". A Communist poster advertising a workers meeting in Spånga People's Park, with lectures to be given by Swedish colonist Johan Knutas and SKP Politburo member Fritjof Lager, 14 May 1931. – ARAB.

ARBETAR- KVINNORNAS TIDNING

Nr 2 1933

Majnummer

Pris 15 öre

Utgiven av
Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti
(Sektion av Komintern)



Inter- nationalen.

Upp trälär uti alla stater,
som hungern bajor lagt uppå.
Det dödar uti rättens krater,
snart skall utbrottets timma slå.
Störstas skall det gamla snart i gruset,
slav stiga upp för att slå dig fri!
Från mörkret stiga vi mot ljuset,
från intet allt vi vilja bli.

Upp till kamp emot kvalet!
Sista striden det är,
ty Internationalen
åt alla lycka bär.

Upp till kamp emot kvalet!
Sista striden det är,
ty Internationalen
åt alla lycka bär.

I höjden räddarn vi ej hälsa,
ej gudar, furstar stå oss bi.
Nej, själva vilja vi oss frälsa,
och samfärd skall vår räddning bli.
För att kräva ut det stulna, bröder,
och för att slita andens band
vi smida medan järnet glöder
med senig arm och kraftig hand.

∴ Upp till kamp emot etc.

Arbetare i stad, på landet,
en gång skall jorden blive vår:
när fast vi knyta brodersbandet,
och lättingen ej råda får.
Många rovdjur på vårt blod sig mätta,
men när vi till vårt förävar
en dag en gräns för dessa sätta,
skall solen stråla mera klar.

∴ Upp till kamp emot etc.

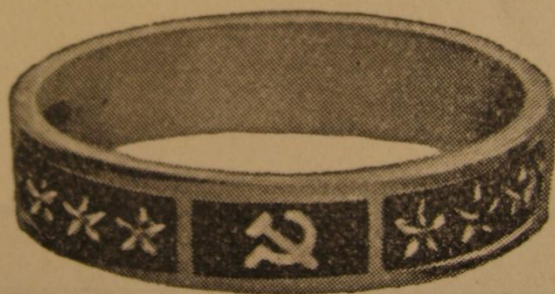
57. The cover page of the Swedish Communists' newspaper for women, *Arbeter-Kvinnornas Tidning*. This organ of the SKP expressed admiration for the socialist construction in the Soviet Union, and particularly in Gammalsvenskby. – *Arbeter-Kvinnornas Tidning*, no. 2 (1933).

SOVJETRINGEN

Kontrl. silv. embl. i röd emalj

Bäres av alla Sovjetvänner. Insänd pappersremsa som mått jämte namn och adress, så sändes ringen i önskad storlek mot postförskott + porto.

Pris
4:50



Sovjetringen Fack 2 - Sthlm 17

58. "Sovjetringen", a special ring for members of Swedish Society of Friends of the Soviet Union, 1930s.



I Sovjet-Unionen avlöses hästarna...



... av fraktörerna

Agronom Andersson och Röda Svenskby

59. Excerpt from the article “Agronomist Andersson and Röd Svenskby.” The photo caption reads: “In the Soviet Union, tractors have replaced horses.” – *Sovjetnytt*, no. 10 (1933).

4 Gammal-Svenskbybor ha deporterats av Sovjet!

Tjekans process mot svenskättlingarna ny Vickers-affär.

En av de häktade, som frigivits, åter
i Sverige på torsdag f. m.

Fullt ljus över tjekans metoder — den undkomne
skildrar processen för N. D. A.

Ohyggliga interiörer från tjekans fängelser.

Petter Knutas och Karl Andersson anklagades
för att vara Stockholmspolisens spioner.

Karl Andersson heter en man, som på torsdagen återkom till Stockholm i fullkomligt utblottat tillstånd efter de märkligaste upplevelser och äventyr i Gammalsvenskby. Till yrket är Andersson lantbrukare. Han är bördig från Spannarp i Halland, och han har genomgått Katrinebergs lantbruksskola. I 16 år har han beklätt poster i Danmark som förvaltare vid större jordegendomar. På sommaren 1930 återvände han till Sverige för att söka plats här, vilket dock icke lyckades honom. Efter en längre tids arbetslöshet kom han förra våren i kontakt med en del kommunister, vilka föreställde honom, att Sovjetryssland just var det land, där en jordbrukskunnig person kunde göra sina talanger fruktbärande. De rådde honom att tillskriva chefen för de till Sovjetryssland återvända svenskbyborna, en rikssvensk kommunist vid namn Edvin Blom.

Om sina upplevelser i Sovjetryssland och sina erfarenheter från "lyckolandet" har Andersson vid ankomsten till Stockholm för Nya Dagligt Allehanda avgivit följande i hög grad märkliga berättelse.

Andersson för glad till Sovjet.

Efter skriftliga förhandlingar med Blom uppgjordes, att Karl Andersson skulle anställas som agronom vid det svenska kollektivjordbruket i Gammalsvenskby. Dessutom hade han skyldig-

het att biträda grannkolonien, den tyska byn Klosterdorf, med råd och dåd. En förutsättning för inresetillstånd var dock, att Andersson lät enrollera sig i det svenska kommunistpartiet.

Så for Andersson till Sovjet, glad över att ha fått ett arbete. I Leningrad stannade han ett par månader, medan hans anställning definitivt klarades upp med de ryska myndigheterna. Under denna tid ingick han äktenskap med Maria Edvardsdotter Ulas, som tillhör en av de till Sovjet återvända familjerna. I november anlände Andersson med sin hustru till Gammalsvenskby.

Nödvinter kostade människoliv.

Det första Andersson kunde konstatera i Gammalsvenskby var, att full hungersnöd rådde. Sovjetmyndigheterna hade visserligen lovat gammalsvenskarna, att de vid återkomsten till sin gamla by skulle återfå sina jordegendomar med lösen på lång amorteringstid. Därav hade emellertid blivit intet. Myndigheterna dekreterade kort och gott, att gammalsvenskarna fingo bilda ett kollektiv efter modernaste ryska recept. De fingo sig förelagda en odlingoplan, enligt vilken de skulle leverera ett visst kvantum spannmål pr år. Då det var dåligt med utsädet och jordbruksskapsen, kunde gammalsvenska kollektiv icke fylla planens fordringar mer än till 74 proc. Myndigheterna konfiskerade alltså all deras spannmål och lämnade intet kvar åt dem att leva på. De fingo i stället från den kooperativa effaren inköpa mjöl efter en rangon av tre kilo mjöl pr person och tio arbetsdagar. Smär fanns icke, mjölk inte heller. Jorden var i sämsta stånd, och det var lika illa ställt med jordbruks-



Agronomen Karl Andersson,
som slappit ut ur Rysslands fångelsehållar.

maskinerna. Andersson berättar, att bykollektivet visserligen erhölet en sovjetrysk traktor, men den gick ideligen sönder och man hade inga reservdelar att återställa den i stånd med. Nöden blev från på sikt så stor, att två svenskbybör praktiskt taget svultit ihjäl. På grund av kraftlöshet kunde befolkningen blott med stor svårighet fullgöra de nödvändigaste sysslorna. Kläder fanns icke, och om kvällarna vägrade man icke gå ut av fruktarna för överfall. Det hände nämligen ofta, att en person, som hade ett par bra stövlar, kunde få halssn av någon, som önskade ett par bra stövlar. Måst förekommo ofta, och polisen bekymrade sig icke det minsta härom. Polisen — tjekorganisationen och milisen — voro synsatta med andra uppgifter.

(Forts. å sid. två.)

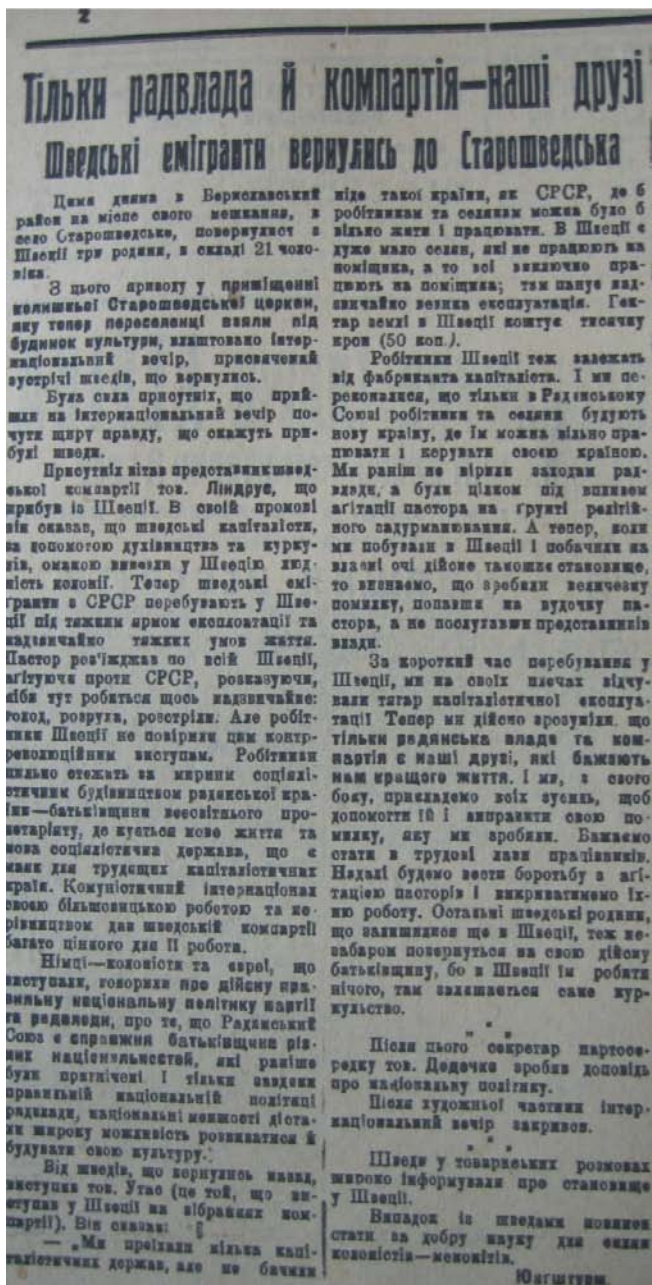
60. Karl Andersson, agronomist for Röd Svenskby and member of the SKP.
— Nya Dagligt Allehanda, 3 August 1933.



61. Andreas and Anna Utas. Röd Svenskby, 1932. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



62. Kolkhoz brigadier Johannes Knutas. Gammalsvenskby, ca. 1936. –
Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



63. Excerpt from an article in Ukrainian about the return of Swedish colonists to their homeland: 'Only the Soviet government and Communist Party are our friends; Swedish emigrants return to Gammalsvensky' – *Naddniproians'ka Pravda*, 21 January 1930.



64. A group of Swedish colonists on return from Sweden to the Soviet Union. Children had no choice but to accompany their parents – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



65. Local Communist activists demolishing the steeple of Gammalsvenskby church with a help of tractor. Drawing by an unknown artist. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



66. The interior of the workers' club in Röd Svenskby (the former Lutheran church), 1932. – *Vecko-Journalen*, no. 45 (1932).



67. A brigade from the SKP Kolkhoz on fieldwork, 1932. Rightmost: Alma Braathen. – *Vecko-Journalen*, no. 45 (1932).



68. A trial against kulaks in Kherson District, 1931. – DAKhO.



69. Members of the Utas family at the coffin of Rosalia Utas, 1936. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



70. A window grille of the Kherson NKVD prison, 1930s. – Courtesy of Kherson Regional Museum, photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



71. An internal view of the Kherson Prison, 1916 – DAKhO.



72. The former NKVD building in Kherson. Present-day view. – Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



73. The badge issued in honour of the 25th anniversary of the VChK-GPU.

Шенд Ш. И. К. Р.

С П Р А В К А.-

1. ФАМИЛИЯ ИМЯ И ОТЧЕСТВО:- МАЛЬМАС Петр Семенович.

2. ГОД РОЖДЕНИЯ: 1888 г. 3. СОСТАВ СЕМЬИ: Жена.-

4. МЕСТО РОЖДЕНИЯ: с. Старошведское Бериславского р-на.-

5. ГОД ЗАНЯТИЙ: Работает в колхозе.-

6. В КАКОМ ГОДУ РАСКУЛАЧЕН:- Не раскулачивался эмигрировал в Швецию.

7. В КАКОМ ГОДУ БЫЛ ВЫСЛАН И КАКИМ ОБРАЗОМ: Не выславлялся.-

8. В КАКОМ ГОДУ БЕЖАЛ ИЛИ ВЕРНУЛСЯ С ВЫСЛЫКИ: Н е т.

9. ПРИВОДЫ, РЕГИСТРАЦИИ, СУДИМОСТИ И ЗА ЧТО:- Н е т.-

10. АГЕНТУРНЫЕ ДАННЫЕ И ПО КАКОМУ ВИДУ УЧЕТА: Первичный у че т.-

11. ДАННЫЕ СЛЕДСТВЕННОГО ПОРЯДКА:- С 1926 по 1929 г. состоял членом контрреволюционно-шпионской организации, возглавляемой пастером Гоасом, ныне проживавшим в Швеции. В 1929 году был организатором эмиграции шведов в Швецию. В 1931 году возвратился в СССР и вступил в вновь организованную контрреволюционную группировку возглавляемую КНУТАСОМ П. И. и УТАСОМ П. З.. В 1932 г. вместе с другими членами организации готовят вторую эмиграцию, занимался шпионской деятельностью и разложеческой работой в колхозе, до момента ареста.-

12. СУБЪЕКТИВНЫЕ ДАННЫЕ ЕГО ЗДОРОВЬЯ:- З д о р о в.-

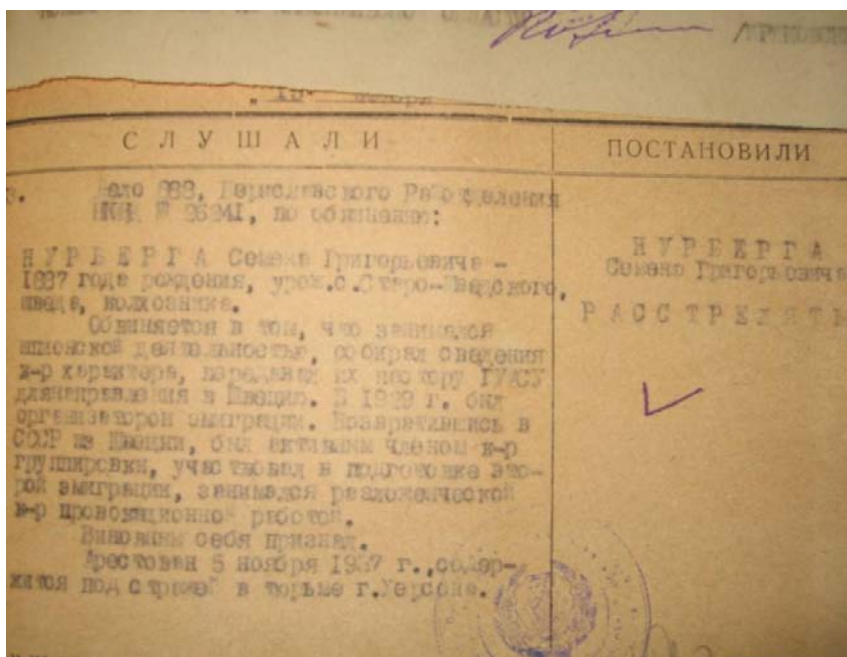
НАЧАЛЬНИК РО НКВД
МЛ ЛЕЙТЕНАНТ ГОСБЕЗОПАСНОСТИ *Давыденко* /ДАВИДЕНКО/

Составлена 11/XI-37г.
г. Берислав.

74. Background information on Petter Malmas compiled by GPU Lieutenant David Davydenko-Edvabnik, chief of the Beryslav NKVD, 1937. The abbreviation in the upper right corner stands for "Swedish nationalist sabotage and espionage counterrevolutionary organization". – DAKhO.



75. Petter Malmas. Shot by the NKVD in 1937 – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



76. The resolution of Mykolaiv Region the NKVD troika of regarding the death penalty for Simon Norberg – DAKhO.



77. Simon Norberg. Shot by the NKVD in 1937 – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



79. Waldemar Utas. Shot by the NKVD in 1937. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



80. Alvina Hinas with children and her husband Johan Hinas. Alvina Hinas was shot by the NKVD in 1937. Her husband, Johan, was shot in 1938, after which their four children became state orphans. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



81. Johan Hinas. Shot by the NKVD in 1938. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



82. Simon Sigalet. Shot by the NKVD in 1937. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



83. Mattias Norberg. Shot by the NKVD in 1937. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



84. Gustav Utas. Shot by the NKVD in 1938. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



85. The Leninist Komsomol City Park in Kherson, opposite the NKVD building, was a location for mass executions in 1937–38. – Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



86. The 18th Century gunpowder warehouse in the park was used for mass executions during the Great Terror. – Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



87. The leadership of the SKP Kolkhoz, 1939. – *Ny Dag*, 8 August 1959.



88. A postage stamp of *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* with the portrait of Hitler. The German occupation regime paid special attention to promoting the image of the *Führer*.



89. *SS-Gruppenführer* Ewald Oppermann (left) with members of the Hitler Youth, 1944. – Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe.



90. The House of Culture in Ustvymlag labour camp, Vozhael, Komi ASSR.
– National Museum of the Komi Autonomous Republic.



91. Komi Gulag barracks. – National Museum of the Komi Autonomous Republic.

Титулов Ф. № 208
ЛИЧНАЯ КАРТОЧКА №

1. Фамилия <u>Юнсон</u>	10. Специальное образование <u>нет</u>
2. Год рождения <u>1918</u> месяц <u>ноябрь</u>	учебного заведения и дата окончания
3. Место рождения: область <u>Вологодская</u> город <u>Вологда</u>	11. Знание иностранных языков <u>английский</u>
4. Национальность <u>русский</u> село <u>Польди-Яр</u>	12. Основная профессия и специальность <u>Строитель</u>
5. Партийность <u>член ВКП</u>	13. Общий стаж работы по специальности <u>с 1936 года</u>
6. Привлеченность к ВЛКСМ	14. Стаж работы по данной специальности <u>с 1936 г.</u>
7. Член профсоюза <u>восстановительный завод</u>	15. Паспорт серия <u>МР № 556315</u>
8. Образование <u>среднее, неполное среднее, начальное (сп. заочное)</u>	выдан <u>Вологодская обл. НКВД</u>
9. Политическое образование <u>нет</u>	дата выдачи <u>2 Января 1941 г.</u>
на срок <u>до 31-го 46 г.</u>	
Сведения о военном учете <u>паспорт</u>	
16. Категория учета <u>Потеряны</u>	22. Наименование военно-учетного стола по месту жительства <u>Восстановительный завод</u>
17. Группа учета <u>Б/В.О.</u>	23. Наименование РЕК по месту жительства <u>Восстановительный завод</u>
18. Состав <u>мать, брат</u>	24. Состоит ли на специальном учете <u>нет</u>
19. Военное звание <u>Рядовой 13%</u>	
20. Военно-учетная специальность № <u>13%</u>	
21. Приписан ли к войсковой части <u>нет</u>	

ВМС ЦСУ № 15 (161) 541-1994-100.0 0

92. A registration card for Knut Jonson as special contingent of Spetszheshartstroy, 1945. – Private collection of Nikolai Morozov.

спецконтингент.

1. Настоящая Лица. Христианства
2. Николаевская обл. Березово-Вологодск.
3. 1918 год
4. образование - 4 класса
5. 8/11
6. член профсоюза
7. 1940
8. специальность нет
9. сотрудничество - работа
10. сотрудничество - из крестьян
11. ранее не работала
12. документов в част. никаких
13. работала с 22/1-46 на сир. работ.
- 5/1-46. передама франзаводу
- 6/1-46. и в 1946. Стрелков. завод

93. A registration card for Emma Malmas as special contingent of Spetszheshartstroy, 1946. – Private collection of Nikolai Morozov.



LANDSARKIVET
I
VADSTENA

FOLKBOKFÖRINGSSEKTIONEN

UTDRAG
2007-08-29

Dnr: VALA 422-2007/06096

Utdrag ur födelse- och dopbok för Ljungarums församling, Jönköpings län

Reg: FDB 1930:3

Alla förnamn: Oscar Erik---
Födelsedatum: 14 januari 1930
Nedkomstort: Jönköpings Sofia församling (BB)
Fader: Knutas, Gustaf Kristiansson, född den 18 januari 1898
(1898-01-18)---
Moder: Busch, Rosina, hans hustru, född den 11 maj 1895
(1895-05-11)---
Övrigt: Oscar Erik döpt den 17 januari 1930.---
Fadern rysk undersåte.---

Landsarkivet i Vadstena
I tjänsten

Thomas Stellrot
förste arkivarie

Säkert

LANDSARKIVET
VADSTENA
FOLKBOKFÖRINGSSEKTIONEN

Obs! Uppgifterna i detta utdrag är hämtade ur kyrkobok, i vilken inga anteckningar gjorts efter 1991-06-30. För uppgifter om eventuella ändringar och tillägg, som kan ha gjorts efter detta datum, hänvisas till Skatteverket.

Postadress
Box 126

Besöksadress

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Telefax

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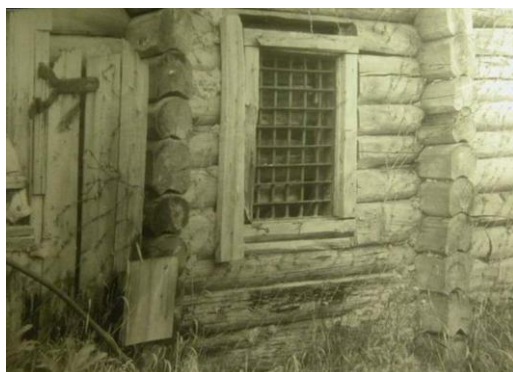
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Org.nr.

94. The Swedish birth certificate of Oskar Knutas, later a juvenile prisoner in the Komi Gulag. – Private collection of Oskar Knutas.



95. Rosa Knutas with her children. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



96. The former isolation ward of Ustvymlag, 1989. – Virtual Museum of Gulag.



97. Zheshart. – Virtual Museum of Gulag.



98. The monument to the victims of Ustvymlag at the former transit point of Vogvazdino, erected in 2000. The inscription reads: “To those who suffered in grief and humiliation, buried in unknown graves. You will always remain in our memory. That it does not happen again.” – Sakharov Centre.



99. The ruins of Gammalsvenskby Lutheran church, 1950s. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



100. Former prisoner of Gulag Maria Utas (born 1937) at the burial site of her father Andreas Utas, who died in the Komi Gulag in 1947. Photo from 2011. – Private collection of Oleg Utas.



101. Luisa Knutas in the Swedish cemetery at Zmiivka, 1953. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



102. A page from the Utas family album. – Private collection of Oleg Utas.



103. Emma Malmas, leader of the Swedish community in Zmiivka from 1946 to 2001. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



104. A plaque on the grave of Emma Malmas in Zmiivka, the first inscription in Swedish at the local cemetery after 1937. It reads: "Our Emma Malmas, 1918–2001. With great personal charm she kept up the Christian faith, Swedish language and Swedish traditions. Many heartfelt thanks!" – Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



105. Swedish-speaking inhabitants of Zmiivka, 2004. From left to right: Emma Utas, Elsa Kozenko Maria Norberg, Anna Annas, Lilja Hansas. Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



106. The monument to Lenin in front of the regional administration of Kherson. On the night of 8–9 August 2008, unknown persons added the text “Ukraine has its own heroes.” The monument was demolished on 22 February 2014 during the Maidan Revolution. – <http://www.mycity.kherson.ua>



107. The Dzerzhinsky monument in Kherson, outside the former building of NKVD, 2005. The monument was demolished on 23 February 2014 during the Maidan Revolution. – <http://www.mycity.kherson.ua>



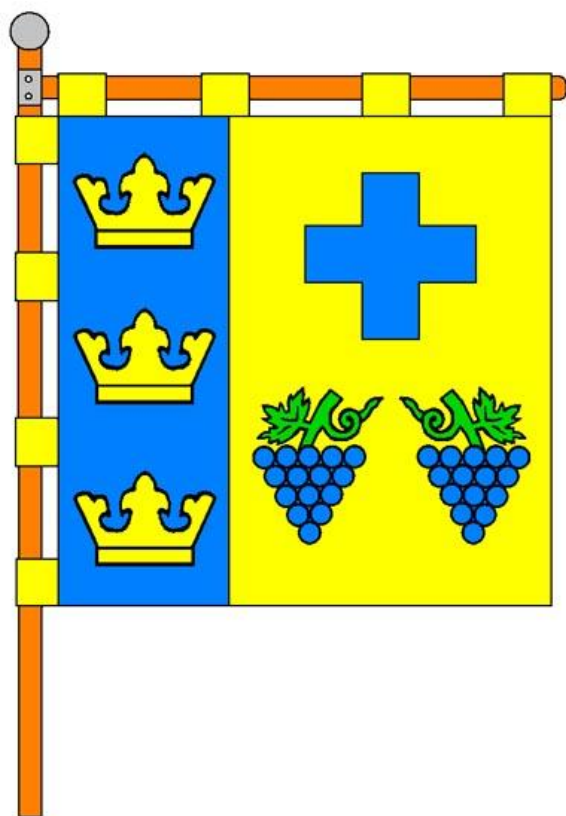
108. The monument to “the victims of the Communist regime” in Kherson, erected in 1992. — <http://www.mycity.kherson.ua>.



109. The monument to “the victims of Holodomor and political repressions” in Beryslav, erected in 2003. – <http://prosvilib.ipsys.net>.



110. A map of Zmiivka. – <http://prosvilib.ipsys.net>.



111. The official court of arms of Zmiivka, adopted in 2008.



112. The monument to Swedish colonist victims of the Great Terror in Zmiivka, unveiled in 2004. The Swedish inscription reads: “In memory of the innocent Swedish colonists that were taken away and disappeared in 1937–38”. – Photo by Andrej Kotljarchuk.



113. The memorial cross at the Swedish Lutheran church in Zmiivka in honour of the 220th anniversary of the founding of Gammalsvenskby, erected in 2002. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



114. A memorial erected in 2004 in Zmiivka in honour of the 50th anniversary of the forced resettlement of Polish Ukrainians. – Courtesy of Förening Svenskbyborna.



115. A memorial to “the fighters for freedom of Ukraine” unveiled in 2010 at the Swedish Lutheran church in Zmiivka. – Wikipedia.



116. The schoolgirl Lilja Malmas with her grandmothers Emma Malmas and Anna Utas. Zmiivka, 1983. – Private collection of Lilja Malmas.

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