

Victor Royenko

The methods were simple in the Bolshevik system. They came to your house and said, "You join the collective farm. If you don't join we'll take everything from you." And it was better for those who had joined earlier than for those who refused to join. Because those who didn't join, first they'd take away their cattle, horses, whatever they had. And first of all they dekulakized, and took everything from them, then they went after the poor farmers and the middle farmers.

I believe there was resistance, because people escaped to the forest. Sometimes they burned the houses of the activists. And this was resistance, obviously. And not only in our village. After dekulakization, those who didn't join the collective farm were thrown out of the village. They would come and throw everyone out of the house. Later, men were taken away, and women and children were left. There were a great many arrests, and there wasn't a house where there hadn't been an arrest. In 1932-33 there were no individual farmers left. Everything was in the collective farm. And whether he was a *Komnezam*¹ as they were called, or dekulakized, who hadn't been sent to Siberia, they all fell under this category. Nobody could leave or escape, because Ukraine's borders were closed. You couldn't even go to Belarus. From time to time, someone would send something from the Donbas, or bring some assistance to the village. For example my brother Leonid, who survived, would bring something [from the Donbas].

¹ *Komitet nezamozhnykh selian* - Committees for poor farmers