

HISTORY, CULTURAL STUDIES, TOURISM, SPORTS

UDC 94(476)

SHARKOVSHCHINA IN THE FIRST POSTWAR YEARS (ON THE MATERIALS OF ORAL HISTORY)

ANTON HUBSKI, ELENA SUMKO
Polotsk State University, Belarus

The article deals with the results of the research conducted in the summer of 2017 in the genre of oral history in the Sharkovshchina district of the Vitebsk region. Western Vitebsk region is a part of the modern Vitebsk region, in the interwar period it was a part of Poland. The memories of the postwar reality of the inhabitants of the West Belarusian region of the modern Belarus have their own specifics. The return to peaceful life took place against the backdrop of not only overcoming the postwar devastation, but also the continuing sovietization of the region. The attitude towards the implementation of collectivization, the religious and cultural policies of the Soviet government were reflected in the memories of the inhabitants of the region. The article is written on the basis of oral sources, which contain not a detailed linear narrative, but episodes that are most important for the life of the narrators (mostly interviewees were born in the late 1920s and 1930s).

In July 4, 1944, Sharkovshchina was liberated under the command of Colonel Khalaev as a result of an offensive operation with the 44th mechanized brigade involved. A resident of Sharkovshchina, Anfinnia Tsyrkina (born in 1922) recalled that it was a warm day, bridges, which were set on fire by Lithuanian and Latvian legionaries during the retreat, burned. Soviet soldiers were driving along the road, they were met with flowers or simply hugged and kissed. But at the same time she noted that "there were no either joy or sorrow on the people's faces, because many of them lost their relatives, who could not be returned. However, we accepted this and after liberation began to build a new life "[10, p. 455].

During the years of occupation, 2,027 civilians were killed in the Sharkovschinsky district, 1 484 people were taken to Germany. The Nazis destroyed 700 houses, 2,000 agricultural buildings, 3,000 horses, 5,000 pigs. The industry and transport system of the region were destroyed; schools, clubs, libraries were burned. Total damage was amounted to 70 million rubles [10, p. 460].

Immediately after the liberation of the area from the Nazi troops, the residents began reconstruction work. The Sharkovshchina peasants conducted personal, independent agricultural activities, cultivated their allotments of land. The Soviet and party verticals were restored. Experts from different levels from all over the republic were sent to the region. Local leaders, former partisans and underground fighters were nominated for leadership positions. September 22, 1944, the first meeting of Sharkovshchina Council was held [10, p. 461].

As the war was not over yet, compulsory supplies of grains, potatoes and meat to the front remained. However, not everything went according to its intended purpose, and the part of the supplies was taken by the district leadership. For example, Zhuravskaya Nina Vladimirovna from the village of Savarina (born in 1920) recalled that everyone hoped to start a new life after the war, but the authorities began to build collective farms and collect high taxes from people. "They took away the last utensils and cattle, as they said for the `needs of the army`, although I myself saw how they used the things taken and did not send them to the aid of the front. An ordinary man's attempt to stand up against the Soviet regime was punished by exile to remote regions of Russia. We had 40 such people. Someone for stealing a simple grain, and someone for "contact with the German occupiers" [5].

The recollections of the Sharkovshchina residents indicate that the most painful in the first postwar years was the creation of collective farms. People did not want to give land and livestock for general use and they were very pressed by the accelerated postwar collectivization. First of all, small or landless peasants joined the collective farms. This is how the resident of the village Zhukovshchina, Baturonok Gordei Vladimirovich, recalls the process of creating a collective farm: "Almost in every village, collective farms began to be created. People did not want to join them. And our fellow villager, Lysenok Fyodor, was the first to join a collective farm called "Iskra". His parents died during the war, he lived with his grandmother and almost did not have his land. The rest, unwilling to join, were "tortured" for a week. They gathered the hosts in the same house in the evenings, often in the presence of the prosecutor or the district police officer, and told about the "happy" life on the collective farm. They said that they would take the land from the rich to the collective farm and everyone would

Linguistics, literature, philology

live well. The one who did not want to join a collective farm was intimidated. They were threatened to have their property confiscated and be sent to the Far East. The last ones who entered the collective farms were those who had more land (about 9 hectares). Soon they made the land common, left only a small part. All the economic assets were taken away: harness, wheels, equipment, horses and grain. They left only a small part of the crop and allowed to harvest the crop for the last time. Small animals were not taken away: chickens, ducks, goats, sheep." [1]

Shestakevich Maria Antonovna from the village of Germanovichi told about the creation of the collective farm due to the directivity: "Here comes the order from above about creating collective farms. The order was as follows: first of all, to give away the horses, to remove the superfluous buildings. They also took away the cattle. If there were 2 cows, they took one. It was necessary to give as much grain as much as land you have. We gave grain, but parents buried some in the ground to feed us, the children (5 people)" [4].

By 1950 there were 100 collective farms and one state farm in Sharkovinsky district [9]. The mass media talked about a flourishing agriculture, about the increasing well-being of people. However, the real life of that time was very difficult, the peasants were virtually disenfranchised, had no passports, and for their hard work they received workdays. In the memories of the Sharkovshchina residents, the personality of the chairman or foreman often appears. In the traditional rural residents' worldview, the authorities were associated with coercive, punitive measures. On collective farms, in fact, the peasants were completely dependent on the collective farm management. Purvin Maria Iosifovna from the village Iodia recalled that once she danced with her friends in a village club until morning and immediately went to work to weed beetroots. "It was afternoon. We weeded, and wanted to sleep. Nearby there was a haystack, and I and my friends decided to rest a little. Several people stayed and worked and had to warn us if the brigadier was coming. But we were not warned. The brigadier galloped on his horse and started to whip us with a whip without pity. I had the whole face spoiled and there were bloody stripes on the body" [3]. Violation of discipline on the collective farm was punished severely, and sometimes took the form of bullying. Maria Iosifovna gives an example that once, after completing the work and taking the horse and the cart to the collective-farm shed, they decided to go home earlier. However, the working day was not over and the brigadier noticed this. The punishment was as follows: "We had to run three circles around the barn with horse-collars on the neck" [3].

The content of the oral stories indicates that the collective farm chairman was evaluated depending on what position the family had in those years and the neighborhood-kinship ties. The person's character played not the least role played. For example, Gordei Vladimirovich Baturonok recalled the first chairman of the Iskra collective farm, who was constantly afraid that he would be shot for failing to fulfill any order or task: "So he spent his nights in a shed. He was afraid of the Soviet people who served in the NKVD, at that time they were responsible for order in the state" [1]. Medvedka Anna Ivanovna from the village Radyuki (born in 1930) recalled the abuse of the authorities: "the chairman was given a plan: how many types of products should be gathered from the peasants. He tried to fulfill the plan and took all the "extra" for himself" [2].

A tragic page within the framework of collectivization was the process of dekulakization, which was reflected in the memories of Sharkovshchina residents. As a result of dekulakization, the most capable groups of the population suffered, which led to a social and psychological imbalance. Some researchers note that after the end of the campaign of complete collectivization in 1952, the eviction of the majority of peasants, classified as kulaks, among the rural population of Western Belarus the mood of apathy prevailed [10, p. 512].

The memoirs feature stories about the use of repressive measures for encroachment on collective farm property, which was considered a grave offense. For example, Shestakevich Maria Antonovna, responding to the interviewer's question, recalled the case of two women stealing wheat sheaves from the collective farm field to feed their families and for this they were convicted for 7 years.

The rejection of collectivization aroused dissatisfaction with the Soviet authorities. The forms of protest were different. For example, they poured paint on the monuments of Lenin, the houses of the party workers. Some residents went to the forest, where gangs of bandits were stationed for several years after the war. The bandits had weapon and robbed shops, people on roads. The struggle against them was conducted by the police and specially organized detachments. Alexei Lukyanovich Tankonog (born in 1930) who was directly involved in the capture of one of the gangs, recalled that the years 1944-46 were very hectic. "Usually we gathered at night on alert and went to catch a gang. In the fight against the bandits, some of our comrades died. Thus, Sudakov, the head of the district police department in the village Rabartovo, and Tretyakov, the secretary of the district executive committee in the village Ruchai, died at the hand of the bandits. The bandits shot Lieutenant Ganyushin, the first chairman of the Voronkovsky village council [6]. In the Sharkovshchinsky district the most dangerous was Murzich's gang of 12 people. They acted on the territory of the state farm named after Markov. Alexei Lukyanovich recalled that "it was hard for us to find this gang. We checked every farm, but did not find anything suspicious. And in one of the houses we noticed smoke. We decided to check. As soon as we

got close to the house, the people ran out of the house. We started shooting. We wounded Murzich's brother and another bandit. The rest ran away”.

In 1950 the Sharkovshchina district was completely cleared of bandits.

During the field research, the data on the education system restoration has revealed. A month after the liberation from the Nazis in Sharkovshchina, schools began to work [8]. The network of cultural and educational institutions gradually expanded. The work of amateur cultural groups began [10, p. 466]. One of the biggest problems was the problem of illiteracy. There were 3,200 illiterate families in the district. Night schools and courses on the eradication of illiteracy for adults began to work. By September 1945 there were 48 primary schools and 3 incomplete secondary schools. According to the recollections of the local residents, the teachers were different, but there were few local ones. For example, Purvin Maria Iosifovna recalled: "There was one teacher. He taught arithmetic. He was not local, he was sent from somewhere. For the unprepared homework he beat us with a leather lash. That's how we learned." [8].

Many schools in the postwar period were located in the surviving outbuildings. Classes were organized in two shifts. Children of different ages often sat at school desks in primary classes. There was lack of furniture, textbooks, paper. For example, Maria Iosifovna recalled that the school did not have notebooks, and if anyone had, it was believed that their parents got it in a difficult way [3]. In winter school buildings were very cold. But these difficulties were gradually overcome. In 1949, there were 2 secondary, 10 seven-year, 42 elementary schools attended by 4,726 children [10, p. 477].

A separate block in the memoirs of Sharkovshchina residents features plots from everyday life in the first years after the end of the war. Many noted that there was no food and no essential goods. People survived at their own household or went to work in neighboring Latvia or Lithuania. Together with difficulties, they remembered also good moments: going out for dances, participation in festive events, joint work. However, they were sometimes clouded by tragic circumstances. For example, Vasilevsky Alexei Yakovlevich, a resident of the village of Radyuki, recalled that one day during a dance a young guy came with a homemade gun and wanted to attract attention, to have fun. On the wall of the club there was a portrait of Stalin. The guy accidentally shot and got into this portrait. Someone informed the authorities and this guy was convicted for 10 years. Oppression of believers was a common fact. Many churches were closed. Priests were not exiled to Siberia, but they were kept far from the political and ideological life of the society. All the jewels from the Catholic and Orthodox churches were taken for the needs of the state. All temples were closed, but priests organized illegal church services.

Nowadays we still have an opportunity to imagine some events, that took place in the first postwar years, but not reflected in modern historiography. The processes of collectivization and dekulakization as well as everyday life have been reflected in the materials of oral history. The value of these sources is predetermined by the peculiarities of their origin, since they belong to a specific author, and reflect the perception of the world, historical events and phenomena. First of all, they contain specific information at the socio-psychological level. Secondly, materials of a personal origin often contain such information, which is not available in other sources. Using them, historians can reproduce individual events and some characteristic features of certain epochs in more detail and more colorful.

REFERENCES

1. Written by Hubski Anton Valentinovich according to Baturonok Gordei Vladimirovich. 1935 year of birth. Village Zhukovshchina, Vitebsk region. 2016.
2. Written by Zhukovskaya Tatyana Nikolaevna according to Medvedko Anna Ioanovna, 1935 year of birth, Sharkovshchina, Vitebsk region, 2008.
3. Written by Hubski Anton Valentinovich according to Purvin Maria Iosifovna, 1935 year of birth, Rudobest', Vitebsk region, 2016.
4. Written by Hubski Anton Valentinovich according to Shestakevich Maria Antonovna. 1929 year of birth, Germanovichi, Vitebsk region, 2016.
5. Written by Hubski Anton Valentinovich according to Zhuravskaya Nina Vladimirovna, 1922 year of birth, Savarina, Vitebsk region. 2017.
6. Written by Lobachevskaya Julia Andreevna according to Tankonog Alexei Lukyanovich. 1925 year of birth, Germanovichi. 2016.
7. Written by Hubski Anton Valentinovich according to Vasilevsky Alexei Yakovlevich, 1922 year of birth. Radyuki, Vitebsk region. 2017.
8. Машара, М.Ф. Старонкі летапісу / М.Ф. Машара. – Мінск : Белінф., 1975. – 85 с.
9. National Archive of the Republic of Belarus. – Fund 987. – Series. 65. – File. 1756.
10. Памяць : истор.-докум. хроніка Шарковшчінскага раёна. – Мінск : БЕЛТА, 2004. – 608 с.