Mykola Zabolotny

[My father] worked at the state farm, not the collective farm. So the pressure to which he was subjected was different. For example, they called him a kulak, they didn’t let him graze his cow on collective farm land – we had to graze our cow by the road, in the ditches. We had to give in 180 liters of milk a year, double what the collective farmers had to give, which was 90 liters.

In 1932, people who didn’t join the collective farm but had their own horses, were taxed in the following way – they had to transport rocks for building roads. Both the people and the horses were malnourished, and the work was hard, so people set their horses free. In 1932 horses roamed the fields, like wild horses. People refused their horses. Because the horses were unfed and starving, sometimes they died in the field. That’s how they put pressure on people. By 1933, they went around with rods, searching for grain. They took everything – even if something was baking in the oven, they would take it or throw it away.

There were many arrests during dekulakization. They established a court in our school. I saw the trials. They accused those poor people who they brought from the prison in Lityn of being exploiters. What kind of exploiters were they? They simply had their own farms, and hired people to help them during the harvest. The people they hired should have been thankful that they could earn something. But for Soviet power, they were exploiters. They organized the collective farm in my grandfather’s house. They arrested him, his wife, and his youngest son Metodiy, took them to prison, and they never came back.