

The Story of the “*Bread People from Freudental*”

NOTE: The source of this story is Eduard Mack as written in his book “Erinnerungen an die deutschen Kolonien des Grossliebentaler Rayons bei Odessa”. Translation was provided by Dr. Ralph Wiseman.

I had never been in Freudental until the fall of 1937 and did not know the life of its inhabitants. The Freudental community was furthest from the center of the rayon. No transportation system existed at that time between the individual villages and none of the population had automobiles or bicycles, making it difficult to get to the other villages. The four years from September 1937 to July 1941 that I spent as a teacher in Freudental left an unforgettable impression in my mind. From the first encounter, during my arrival to departure, I was always surrounded by good accommodating and hospitable people. Only one thing continued to bother me: why did the collective farmers of Freudental live so much more poorly than their countrymen in the other German neighboring communities that were only a few kilometers away and had the same climate and political conditions?

During these four years before the war the members of the community had no home baked bread to eat. They had to buy it in Odessa since they received no flour and also no bread from the kolkhoz (a cooperative agricultural enterprise operated on state-owned land) for their work.

To be able to buy the bread they had to sell the milk from their single cow or the eggs from their chickens to get money. They also did not get any money from the kolkhoz. All they received for their work in the kolkhoz was corn, some wine, and coarse fodder such as straw and corn stems.

A terrible and very sad story happened at this time, one I will always remember. It confirms again the inhumanity and brutality of the Stalin regime. As some of the collective farmers drove to Odessa in July 1941 to buy bread for their families and their neighboring families and relatives, the police arrested these men and women and put them in prison. It was said, “an order had been received from the government that it is forbidden to make advance purchases, i.e. to buy bread for many days.” These people had not made advance purchases, but rather had made purchases for the many families that stayed behind to work so that not everyone should be kept from work. The KGB in Russia was so difficult to convince, they believed no one and saw each person as an “enemy of the people.” Many women had little children, two or three even babies, and one woman left behind three small children who did not have a father. But all the crying and pleading did not help. The entire population of the village had to be present for this terrible unforgettable scene. The mothers were pitilessly torn from their children, and most of them did not see each other again. An 8 year old girl held a small child in her arms and pleaded with the policeman to let her mother quiet the 2 month old baby, but he pushed her roughly away.

This entire event was a unique pain and rage in our helplessness. No one knows anything about the fate of these people and even my inquiry in Odessa in 1994 was not

answered. This tragic story of the “*bread people*” still lives in the hearts of the people of Freudental, and remembering that day hurts all over again.

The “*bread people from Freudental;*” who were arrested in Odessa in July 1941 included:

Adolph **FREIER**
Ann **BISCHOF**
Wilhem **LOSING**
Christian **LOSING**
Scharlotte **JÄGER**
Aneta **NEUMÜLLER**
Emilie **ZIEGLER**
Jakob **ZIMMER**
Adolf **OSTER**
Friedrich **JAUCH**
Elisabeth **MOSER**
Luise **BECKER**
Wihelmina **BITZ**
Reinhold **SIELER**
Friedrich oder Johann **SIELER**
Katharina **PFAFF**
Paulina **BOLENDER**
Lydia **OHLHEISLER**
Philippina **ENZI**
Friedrich **OSTER**
Friedrich **SCHELL.**

In the history of Freudental these unfortunate people were immortalized as “*bread people*”, because they wanted to supply bread for the family completely peacefully, but were arrested and carried away, and had to pay for the bread with their lives, because almost all of them died of hunger in exile, in Stalin’s concentration camps. Only four women who had been arrested several days later returned shortly after the occupation of Odessa by German troops.