

Melania Momot

MM - When dekulakization started, in 1929, 1930, 1931, a lot of people died. And we were swollen [from hunger]. If we hadn't been [helped] we would have died. We lived through a lot. It's hard to remember. I don't believe that I survived. We were dekulakized; my mother's family was dekulakized in 1928 - her two brothers were taken to the prison in Melitopol. They were shot there - uncle Paul and uncle Hrytsko [Hryhoriy]. Then we were dekulakized in 1930. On February 12, 1929, my mother passed away, and left us five girls orphaned. The oldest was 13 years old, and the youngest - 5 months old. I was 11 years and 11 days old. They took everything out of the house and sold it to whoever paid most or took it to the collective farm. We were left without anything, and began to swell [from hunger]. Then our stepmother, she saved us. She'd bring us a bit of something to eat, telling us not to eat a lot, because we were swollen. And she saved us. Her name was Dasha (Daria).

Interviewer - Did you see how people died from starvation?

MM - Yes. Do you know that there was nobody to bury them? There were the collective farm fields, beside them was the cemetery. They dragged people who had starved to death by their arms - there was no other way [to take them to the cemetery] because everything had been taken for the collective farm. They dragged the dead by their arms or their legs [to the cemetery].