

Vera Lechky

VL - The second [train] stop was in Kyiv. When we got to Kyiv, we saw hell. At the station there were masses of people. The trains ran very rarely, and when they did come, they were so full that people were not only inside, but on the roof as well. At the station, dying people were lying by the walls. Their eyes were so sunken, and full of lice. We were there for two days before we got home.

Seven kilometers from us there was a sugar factory, and sugar beets were planted all around. So they planted the sugar beets, I was seven years old or so, and I and others like me, went around collecting the insects, the bugs, that would infest the beets. We had pails that we would put them in. I remember a young boy, he may have been a bit older than me, he always watched that brigadier. And when the brigadier [wasn't looking the boy] grabbed a beet and put it in his pail. But [the brigadier] saw, he came over, took the beet out of the pail, and started to hit [the boy] in the face with the beet. His nose started to bleed. [The brigadier] cursed at [the boy] terribly. A different brigadier, one who had a heart, even if he saw, would pretend he didn't notice. But this one, he did this.

Sometimes I cried, telling my sister that I wanted to eat. My sister would tell me, "Vera, go to sleep, if you're asleep you won't want to eat." But when a person is hungry, it's very hard to fall asleep. When you're hungry, you don't think about anything else, you only think about a piece of bread. The Bolsheviks destroyed our parents, my father and mother.