

Interviewee: Luba Kachmarsky (née Maria Bortnik Vasilivna), born October 13 1922, in the village of Male Starosillya, Smiliyansk raion, Kyiv/Cherkasy oblast.

Interviewer(s): Ariadna Ochrymovych

Date: August 1, 2008

Description: Danusia Tsehelska

00:00:37 – Interviewee introduces herself. Her name is a pseudonym from the war.

00:02:15 – Interviewee talks about her family.

00:02:47 – BREAK IN INTERVIEW

00:02:51 – Interviewee continues to talk about her family.

00:03:59 – Interviewee describes her village.

00:04:51 – Interviewee describes her grandfather's property and land. He owned one half of the village while another gentleman owned the other half.

00:06:00 – Interviewee recounts her family's experience of dekulakization. Her father ran away to hide while the rest were dispossessed and displaced.

00:08:38 – Interviewee recalls her mother traveling to Kyiv while the children stayed with their godmother.

00:10:24 – Interviewee recounts moving back home and getting robbed by three men from the village.

00:12:39 – BREAK IN INTERVIEW

00:13:24 – Interviewee recalls how her mother buried 18 bags of potatoes that she later covered with a fallen tree and clay. This prevented the robbers from sticking their pikes down in search of hidden food and saved the family from starvation.

00:15:22 – Interviewee mentions other foods they were able to find.

00:16:03 – Interviewee describes staying home all winter.

00:18:23 – Interviewee recalls her village experiencing severe mortality from hunger.

00:21:37 – Interviewee recalls witnessing acts of cannibalism.

00:23:07 – Interviewee discusses mortality in their neighborhood.

00:23:19 – Interviewee mentions returning to school with five other students out of about 26.

00:24:14 – Interviewee remembers her grandfather feeling hopeless following dekulakization. He lived in the forest and refused to go into the village.

00:26:33 – Interviewee discusses people from her village joining kolhops, and those who refused were severely harassed, dispossessed, and taxed.

00:27:06 – Interviewee describes Stalinist propaganda in the kolhops.

00:27:44 – Interviewee talks about the other landowner (kurkul) and his family deported to Arkhangelsk in Russia for refusing to join the kolhosp.

00:28:46 – Interviewee recalls how her mother kept the family alive through severe poverty and hardship.

00:29:33 – Interviewee describes how her and her siblings suffered from ongoing lice infestation.

00:29:53 – Interviewee talks about Stalinist propagandist Nadia Krupska. She arrived from the city in a vehicle called the “black raven”.

00:30:16 – Interviewee recalls people keeping to themselves for fear of saying something that could be considered punishable.

00:30:38 – Interviewee recalls seeing her father and her uncles discussing the theory that the famine was created by the Jewish people with the aim of a Ukrainian Israel.

00:34:09 – BREAK IN INTERVIEW

00:34:12 – Interviewee describes her father’s education.

00:35:13 – BREAK IN INTERVIEW

00:35:28 – Interviewee recalls her father appearing after the famine. Her mother took the children to see their father in Siberia but they were not allowed to refer to him as their father.

00:39:40 – Interviewee recounts traveling to Donbas with her mother. After returning to their village, they stayed with their aunt.

00:40:35 – Interviewee talks about seeing her father at home one day and her mother treating his scabies.

00:41:57 – Interviewee describes her father’s work while he was away.

00:43:39 – Interviewee recalls writing dictations in school and that she was confused about her ethnic identity.

00:45:10 – Interviewee talks about the church in her village which had been closed and turned into a club for students for theatrical performances.

00:45:47 – Interviewee mentions that priests and nuns deported to Siberia from a neighboring Monastery. The Soviets then turned the Monastery into a hospice.

00:48:53 – Interviewee recalls people saying the famine occurred because there was no harvest (rather than a fabricated famine). Mentions locked barns storing ruined wheat, because it was covered in white powder (poison).

00:50:33 – Interviewee remembers shopping in bazaars and discusses the nature of hunger and what it does to the human psyche.

00:51:40 – Interviewee mentions a neighboring family that all passed away.

00:53:05 – Interviewee recounts ‘donating’ money to fund Korean and Spanish communist efforts at school. If Soviet citizens did not contribute to the effort, Soviet propaganda convinced them they would be treated as kurkuls and shunned.

00:54:53 – Interviewee names the villagers which were loyal to the government and its propaganda and would therefore follow orders to harass and expose those against the communist cause.

00:56:25 – Interviewee describes the Soviet propaganda she was taught in school.

00:59:10 – BREAK IN INTERVIEW

01:00:08 – Interviewee returns to the subject of kolhosps and mentions that she was forced to work in a kolhosp for the Germans during the occupation.

01:04:50 – Interviewee recalls people eating all the animals in the village during the famine.

01:05:00 – Interviewee recalls hearing of a failed revolution in 1933 after which the situation improved slightly.

01:06:29 – Interviewee describes people eating all the leaves in the village during the famine. Her mother would think of food substitutions with items found in nature.

01:07:44 – Interviewee recalls having a swollen stomach during the famine.

01:08:38 – Interviewee mentions a malaria outbreak in the village and that she contracted the disease for about three years.

01:09:14 – Interviewee provides further details on local bazaars and recounts a story in which a girl from their village was cannibalized attempting to sell *‘laverda’* at the bazaar in Smila.

01:11:00 – Interviewee recalls her mother exchanging her gold bridal cross necklace for wheat at a Torgsyn.

01:15:28 – Interviewee recounts the case of cannibalism she witnessed.

01:17:23 – Interviewee talks about a neighbor’s son who was called to the army (Terchas) after his family died.

01:19:15 – Interviewee discusses a statue of Lenin that was placed in their village amongst other forms of Stalinist propaganda in kolhosps.

01:21:04 – BREAK IN INTERVIEW

01:21:09 – Interview about Holodomor ends.

01:21:17 – Interviewee describes life in her village up the Germans invasion.

01:22:46 – Interviewee recalls her village being looted as much by the Germans as the Communists.

01:24:11 – Interviewee recounts how she was driven out to Germany for work in factories during the spring of 1942.

01:29:24 – Interviewee talks about being harassed and punished incessantly by a German supervisor who lived with her and the girls working at the factory.

01:30:25 – BREAK IN INTERVIEW

01:30:29 – Interviewee recalls being arrested and taken to a labor camp for not wearing an ‘ost’ patch.

01:32:38 – Interviewee mentions that the labor camp had a crematorium.

01:32:59 – Interviewee describes meeting American soldiers in the labor camp. The Red Cross collected people and took them to the hospital.

01:36:10 – Interviewee describes living in American camps and being in constant fear of being taken back to the Soviet Union.

01:38:07 – Interviewee recounts moving to Canada with three other women and describes working in the factories.

01:40:29 – Interviewee describes communicating with family and friends in Europe. Her friend in Germany refused to move back to Ukraine out of fear.

01:41:27 – Interviewee discusses reestablishing contact with her family in Ukraine.

01:44:40 – End of interview.