

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Anelė Delkienė

RG-50.473*0157

Part 2 English

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00:37 Interviewer: You said that there were constant actions in ghetto, that things were collected from Jews. Tell me, please, how do you know that such actions were taking place? Did you see anything like that?

00:50 Interviewee: No, I did not see that but it was known. How was it leaking out - perhaps they themselves [talked about it]. I was still a child, no one shared things like that with me, of course, although I worked all those years. I once did not come to work and a policeman came to look why I did not come to work.

01:24 Interviewer: Please tell me, there was that ghetto, the second one. And what happened then?

01:31 Interviewee: It happened in 1943 on ((...)), the commemoration of the dead. The first day was calm, and on the second day, when there was a church service and more people were going to light candles, people saw that a group of Jews were lead [somewhere]. There was only one German with a gun, and all others were security guards...

02:16 Interviewer: Who?

02:18 Interviewee: ...with white armbands. At that time there was a service in the church, it was on the second day of the holiday. November 2, 1943. Bells started ringing and those Jews quietly, like sheep, were brought to the train station, put in a train and taken to Grodno. There was a concentration camp Kielbasin near Grodno.

02:57 Interviewer: Tell me, did you see how they were taken there, to the train?

03:01 Interviewee: No, I did not see. Because I did not have such an opportunity. Well, my mother did not let me go where it was unnecessary.

03:17 Interviewer: I also have another question to you...

03:20 Interviewee: Yes, I will add. After that, when they [Jews] were taken away, [they] began searching whether someone hid somewhere, whether someone stayed. And they found around ten people. As I was told by my school friend who lives here nearby -- he went to Poland when he grew up and became a pilot. He came here and told me, 'Lida, I should bequeath you one thing so that it is known [to others]. After Jews were taken away, a group of people was brought here on the next day. I sneaked out of the house so that neither my father nor the mother knew that I went to watch. Eight or eleven Jews were shot there'. This place is here, you can see it now. I did not tell anyone.

04:34 Interviewer: Did he show you the place?

04:36 Interviewee: He showed me this place. I can show it to you as well.

04:40 Interviewer: Alright... But why did not you tell anyone about this?

04:44 Interviewee: I do not know. I found out only after I returned from Vilnius. When things have simmered down. I think why to bother those people [bodies], they rest in peace there.

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05:03 Interviewer: When people with white armbands came to you, for your father..

05:11 Interviewee: ...they came in the afternoon.

05:13 Interviewer: Did they have guns?

05:16 Interviewee: No. They were at all -- nobody expected such craftiness.

05:24 Interviewer: But were they with a white armband?

05:26 Interviewee: With a white armbands.

05:28 Interviewer: Is anything known about the reasons why your father and others were arrested?

05:37 Interviewee: Well, they... there was no trial. Maybe... as I read the book of ((Suraiches)), he warned that it would happen, that royal families and the descendants of royal families who were called on to build the resort, would suffer. I think that was the reason because my father was not a Communist, but of course he was loyal to the Soviet government. After all... we spoke Russian since childhood. First we studied Old Slavonic and after that only we studied Russian. Although at home children used to speak Polish because Polish was spoken at school. And my grandmother, the mother of my father – here is her portrait, she was Polish and from Warsaw. Her last name is Falic(h)ia Tuholska. At the time when they married with grandfather, one had to change his or her religion. Either my grandfather had to become Catholic or my grandmother had to become Orthodox Christian...

07:06 Interviewer: And she converted...

07:07 Interviewee: Well I also fell attached to Poland. You know, all her [grandmother's] relatives are there in Tuhol near Warsaw. There are also many very close relatives we have lost touch with. It is quite a... patriotic issue.

07:38 Interviewer: My last question. Is there anything related to German occupation that you did not tell but would like to? Is there anything I forgot to ask maybe?

07:55 Interviewee: It was a nightmare. There was such a policy here that at the very beginning Lithuanians were ordered to run things and command. Those with white armbands tortured the Poles, the Jews, and the Russians. Germans looked at them and decided that they should be eliminated. They again created the border here and guarded it themselves. Later they decided that the Poles would run things in here. They brought very decent people so that someone would decide to become the burgomaster of the city. They called Pan Bernacki but he fell before the German on his knees and began kissing his feet - 'I am an agronomist, I have no idea how to deal with this matter. Dismiss me, please'. He persuaded them. After that they started looking for Volksdeutsche. Do you know what that is?

09:12 Interviewer: Yes, yes, yes.

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09:14 Interviewee: So, Volksdeutsche were found and they worked here. There was one local Vitor who moved the whole ghetto to his home. The ghetto was literally robbed – they were taking shoes, cloth from there, everything they wanted.

09:28 Interviewer: Who was taking that?

09:31 Interviewee: The activists who came to power. First those who killed and then those who remained took what was there. Because for some time it was impossible to freely get inside and look what was going on in there.

09:51 Interviewer: In ghetto?

09:53 Interviewee: Yes. When everything was falling apart and plundered, only then the fence was removed. And there were no people, there was nothing.

10:02 Interviewer: Were there any belongings in ghetto?

10:04 Interviewee: yes.

10:05 Interviewer: Could you see how those belongings were taken out of the ghetto?

10:07 Interviewee: I know that there was a relative of the Verkiat bishop. How was his last name.. His relative was lodging here at Pani ((..)) and their grave is here as well. She went to the ghetto and took some metal bowl from there. And was caught by the German who beat her with a whip.

10:48 Interviewer: Did you see it yourself?

10:50 Interviewee: Our neighbors told us. She started [railing against] in French and in German. She was an intelligent woman. Like how could he beat her?!

11:03 Interviewer: Did you see yourself how people were taking things out of the ghetto? Or out of Jewish houses maybe?

11:12 Interviewee: We only saw things on people.

11:15 Interviewer: You mean they wore the cloth [they took from the houses]?

11:17 Interviewee: The way people dressed... Those were not their cloths, but belonged to those and to those.

11:26 Interviewer: How did you know that those cloths were not theirs?

11:30 Interviewee: Well we knew who was who and whom they became after.

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11:38 Interviewer: Were there many people who wore the cloths [of Jews]?

11:41 Interviewee: Well Vitor took many things [out of the ghetto]. He was a local resident but became some commander in the town. I do not know what kind of commander he was.

11:52 Interviewer: Was he a local resident of German descent?

11:55 Interviewee: Yes. And after... Dimuntkovsky had a Polish last name but was also considered Volksdeutsche. Who else... Dobros was the same [with Polish last name but considered Volksdeutsche]

12:06 Interviewer: And they also started dressing better?

12:10 Interviewee: Yes, yes. But I also think that, you know, Jews employed a certain method. My friend told me this - Jews used to hide [things] at her house. They had a big yard and allowed Jews to hide there whatever they wanted. They even buried things. I think that -- at the place where [a big house] is now being built near Meduna, there was the center of the ghetto -- that when the house foundation was made three stories deep, it was possible to get so many things [the Jews buried] there that two more houses could be built.

12:58 Interviewer: Do you think Jews buried things inside the ghetto?

13:02 Interviewee: I am certain about it.

13:06 Interviewer: Alright then. There were many Jews. First they were taken to the ghetto and then all of them were killed. Did the life in the city change somehow because of that? Did it become better? Or worse? Or what?

13:22 Interviewee: Oh God, not at all. Everyone looked to the East and waited for salvation. People lay on the ground and listened the explosion of shells when Bolsheviks came to Minsk; we ran into the street. I told you, I did not work only for one day until some sort of power was established here. After that my mother and I used to go to work every day. I did all kinds of jobs.

13:55 Interviewer: Was it a requirement to work?

13:57 Interviewee: Certainly. Once I had a fever of 40C and could not get up. So Siegert, a gendarme, was sent to check me. He came with a dog and asked why I did not come to work. And I worked in the kitchen, washed dishes. They sent this gendarme to check what happened to me.

14:21 Interviewer: And how were the Germans met?

14:24 Interviewee: They were met this way. It was an official meeting - a lot of children gathered as well as a small group of adults and a representative of Jews. He owned a toy store, Schaps. I saw that Schaps with my own eyes. He came with a huge bouquet of flowers. I could not hear what they were saying among themselves, but Schaps handed the bouquet to the German. They immediately divided those flowers so that each had a flower in their buttonholes. They then sat on a motorcycle and left.

That is how it was... When all Jews were being gathered in the ghetto, they even brought the wife of the major general Beglyukov who lived in our town and used to be a Jew long time ago. And she was taken

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as well. Although he was the military officer of Imperial army. There was a teacher in our school, Schwalb. He converted to Catholicism, was baptized by the name of Edward, and was going to church. The director of our school was Voleyko back then -- the school named after Piotr Skarga where we studied. He was also taken [to the ghetto] as well despite conversion. Therefore, there was no salvation from the ghetto. Everyone who had at least a drop of a Jewish blood was killed. When the Poles were murdered for Germans... if a German soldier was killed. So many innocent people died. Out of 2000 Jews 800 were killed. Some died during the war. When only few people left, it was hard to get 100. So from that neighboring house, the one that is next to mine, a husband, a wife and two girls were taken.

17:10 Interviewer: To those 100 people?

17:14 Interviewee: yes.

17:15 Interviewer: Did you see how they were taken away?

17:17 Interviewee: No, I [live] on the other side. My aunt lived here. The house belonged to her. There were [houses] here at the crossroads. That house that is painted in yellow. You noticed when you entered. A man and his wife were taken from there together with a boy and a girl. A lot of people from this neighborhood died. It was assumed that they searched for the Polish nationalist underground resistance because a number of young people joined the white Polish guerilla warfare. Several Jews joined partisans as well but only one person returned. His name was Khone Korup. Later he moved to Israel and died there, as my classmates told me. When Jews began asking to return their public property, no single person required the return of anything in Druskininkai. Neither synagogue nor anything. No one asked for anything.

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