

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Fetinija Lapuchina

RG-50.473*0205

English

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

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00:31 Interviewer: First, I would like to ask you to introduce yourself. What are your first name and your last name?

00:37 Interviewee: Agapuhina Stasinia.

00:40 Interviewer: In what year were you born?

00:42 Interviewee: In [19]23.

00:44 Interviewer: And where?

00:46 Interviewee: Eh -- In Nekruny. Here in Lithuania.

00:52 Interviewer: I understand. It is -- Nekruny is a --

00:55 Interviewee: -- a village.

00:56 Interviewer: A village not far from?

00:57 Interviewee: -- the city.

00:58 Interviewer: From Lazdijai?

00:59 Interviewee: Um-hum.

1:01 Interviewer: When the Second World War started, or rather when the Germans came, where were you when?

1:07 Interviewee: At home.

1:09 Interviewer: And what happened next?

1:12 Interviewee: Well -- when the Germans were coming, we were leaving to another village, maybe 20 kilometers from here. And Germans reached us there, we stayed there overnight and returned home.

1:33 Interviewer: Were you often visiting Lazdijai? Did you know the city Lazdijai?

1:37 Interviewee: I went to school there.

01:41 Interviewer: Tell me, please, did Jews live in Lazdijai?

01:44 Interviewee: Lived. There were more Jews -- mostly Jews and Poles lived in the city...

02:01 Interviewer: Um... Did you see what happened to Jews when the Germans came?

02:08 Interviewee: well I saw once how they were -- when they just came -- well I do not know for how long in the city but I saw how they [Germans] were chasing everyone. Through the mud, through the bog.

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02:26 Interviewer: How did it look like? Tell me about it.

02:27 Interviewee: Scary. ((In a mud they were ordered -- both old and young, all -- if someone do not - to stand and then lie down)) Those who were slow were hit on the back with a stick. It was very scary. But I saw that only once.

02:57 Interviewer: Who was chasing them?

03:03 Interviewee: I saw two Lithuanians were chasing them. ((Konchavekus)) Oh, I forgot the last name. See, old silly woman.

03:24 Interviewer: Um-hum. How many Jews were there approximately?

03:28 Interviewee: Jews -- well quite a few. Many.

03:31 Interviewer: Well approximately? Ten? Fifty?

03:35 Interviewee: Maybe more than a hundred, more. From the whole town.

03:45 Interviewer: Were Germans there?

03:47 Interviewee: No. There were no Germans. And then they were sent to the barracks, not far from there were barracks. When Russian soldiers entered the town, barracks were built there for them. They had their warehouses there. So Jews were thrown into those barracks.

04:10 Interviewer: Did you see them in those barracks?

04:13 Interviewee: No. No. But they were let out - one or two, to walk around the village and ask for something to eat.

04:28 Interviewer: What happened next?

04:30 Interviewee: And then they -- for how long they stayed -- they were taken to be shoot. One day they came and even my brother went to dig the hole. Many. ((But did not say what for)) maybe five or six holes were dug. ((They were digging that but were told not to come the day after)) When they [Jews] were taken to be shot - there were different people who shot them and who buried. I lived not far from the village where they were shot. A friend of mine came and said, 'we were told to leave because they would shoot Jews'. There was a high hill nearby and we went with her [to watch]. Crazy. We saw how one group of people was brought. They were taken to the forest and undressed. Then we went home. We did not see any more how many more people were brought there.

05:55 Interviewer: When you saw how they were taken, how many people approximately were there in the group?

06:05 Interviewee: I do not know.

06:07 Interviewer: Well, approximately, Five? Fifty? A hundred?

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06:09 Interviewee: Well maybe fifty, maybe less. They were not brought in big groups. By little.

06:18 Interviewer: How many people were taken there?

06:21 Interviewee: I do not know. I could not see from far away.

06:25 Interviewer: Could you hear any voices or anything?

06:29 Interviewee: Well first we could hear how they were crying, but after that I do not know how..

06:36 Interviewer: Were they crying when they were taken away?

06:40 Interviewee: Well when they were taken there or when they were undressed and brought to the graves - I do not know.

06:48 Interviewer: How were they undressed? Were they completely naked or what?

06:53 Interviewee: No, they remained in their underwear.

07:01 Interviewer: Who were there – men or women?

07:03 Interviewee: They were altogether.

07:06 Interviewer: But in that group?

07:09 Interviewee: The one which was brought?

07:11 Interviewer: Um-hum.

07:12 Interviewee: Both women and men. They were not separated. The next day, probably, ((Rabin from Rudamin)) was let out and he came to us and asked for food. When was that... in winter or summer. I do not know. When they were shot, not in winter and not in summer. And he came, asked for food and told us, "I was let out. I was asking to let my little brother go and leave me there. To show where the father ((Zorof)) was buried." I do not know where he went afterwards, whether he left or he was taken away by someone, I do not know.

08:16 Interviewer: Did he tell anything about this shooting?

08:19 Interviewee: He told this way, "We were brought to the hole – we were like sheep. We were undressed and brought to that hole. Whatever we are – chicken or sheep."

08:41 Interviewer: Could you see the holes from that hill?

08:46 Interviewee: No, no. The holes were down there. We only could see the forest and how they were brought to the forest. We could not see a lot. ((The way the forest is right now, back then we could not see much, they were next to it, on the side of the forest))

09:13 Interviewer: And when you saw the group, did you know they were Jews?

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09:19 Interviewee: We did. Everybody was saying that Jews dug a hole to shoot.

09:29 Interviewer: Um... Could you hear any shots when the shooting started?

09:34 Interviewee: We were very scared. Yes.

09:46 Interviewer: And did you see how that undressed group was taken to the holes?

09:52 Interviewee: No. When they were brought there and started undressing, we left.

10:03 Interviewer: Tell me, please, that ((Konchavekus)) who was guiding that humiliation, was he wearing any uniform?

10:15 Interviewee: No. He was an old man already. He was around sixty or seventy years old. All that time he lived ((in Jewish)).

10:29 Interviewer: Where did he live?

10:30 Interviewee: In Jewish. In a hut. In a Jewish house.

10:36 Interviewer: Before the shooting?

10:37 Interviewee: -- yes, yes, before the War.

10:42 Interviewer: So he lived with Jews?

10:44 Interviewee: Yes.

10:46 Interviewer: Um-hum. Did he have any gun?

10:51 Interviewee: Back then – no, only bludgeons. There were no guns. They guarded those Jews.

11:04 Interviewer: Did you see how they were guarded?

11:06 Interviewee: No. No, I did not.

11:10 Interviewer: Did you see how people came to take your brother to dig the hole?

11:17 Interviewee: I saw when ((Seniunus)) came. He said, “Take a shovel and come tomorrow to the ((Kaspavitch)) forest.” He was not the only one, many people from the village [were told to come].

11:37 Interviewer: What was the last name of ((Seniunus))?

11:39 Interviewee: He was Rakus.

11:46 Interviewer: What happened with the cloths of Jews?

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11:55 Interviewee: ((What was taken away from them and what remained after the shooting – was sold in a house that is located on the street where Petrusha lives)).

12:13 Interviewer: Whose house was that?

12:15 Interviewee: ((Rudinkas's)).

12:18 Interviewer: Did you see how [the clothes] were sold?

12:20 Interviewee: No. We did not go. Such things...

12:32 Interviewer: Tell me please, was there any propaganda against Jews or something like that in the town?

12:39 Interviewee: There was nothing like that. Before the war.

12:45 Interviewer: And during the war – was there anything like that?

12:48 Interviewee: Well during the war, as soon as they came -- as soon as Germans came, they captured Jews right away.

12:56 Interviewer: Did you have a chance to see how Jews were taken from their houses and driven to barracks?

13:02 Interviewee: No. From their houses they were driven together into one house. Altogether.

13:18 Interviewer: Into one house? Was it before barracks?

13:21 Interviewee: Um-hum. Before barracks.

13:24 Interviewer: How could they fit into one house?

13:31 Interviewer: What was the destiny of that ((Konchavokus)) after? He lived all that time?

13:36 Interviewee: -- He had lived.

13:37 Interviewer: And then, after the war?

13:39 Interviewee: He died. He was also old.

13:54 Interviewer: When the group was taken to the shooting, were there Germans?

14:01 Interviewee: Well I do not know, but people were saying there were. And also – I worked with a janitress in a bank — there was a guard who told us how he was taken to Germany to work. How a German gathered Lithuanians and showed a film, 'Come, I will show you a film how your Lithuanians shoot Jews.' And they were shown how Lithuanians were shooting while Germans stood on the edge and took photographs of everything. I do not know but that is what I was told...

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14:54 Interviewer: Do you remember maybe the name of that friend with whom you went to the hill? What was her name?

15:02 Interviewee: Irina... Muravieva.

15:10 Interviewer: Is she alive still?

15:11 Interviewee: No, she died already. No.

15:17 Interviewer: Recall, please, when did you hear those gunshots? You said that you heard some gunshots. When was it? ...When was it shot?

15:33 Interviewee: At what time?

15:36 Interviewer: Well was it when you stood on that hill?

15:39 Interviewee: Um-hum. Well when the first group of people was brought, when they were taken there and shot. We ran away back home once we heard the shooting. We left.

15:57 Interviewer: Were there any other occasions when you heard the shooting?

16:03 Interviewee: We did not leave the room after that and heard nothing.

16:12 Interviewer: And on the other day?

16:13 Interviewee: No, nothing on the other day. They were shot in one day.

16:19 Interviewer: When you heard the shootings there, how long did they last?

16:27 Interviewee: Two days. How long was it... [They] were taken to the hole, some were shot, and others were buried alive. We even were there when they were disinterred and transported. But nobody was let inside, only the cousin of ((Petrushi)) Anna came and told to go to watch how they were dug up. We went and watched from afar. ((Some were dug out, some were put on hands, on one leg – one leg was [turned] back. One could even recognize them))

17:27 Interviewer: Was it after the War?

17:28 Interviewee: They were dug up after the war. After Germans were banished. I do not what time the Jews gathered here and they were let to dig up [the bodies].

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