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NIȚELEA, Ion
Moldova Documentation Project
Romanian
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Tape 1

In this interview, Ion Nițelea, born in 1923 in village of Olănești where he has lived his whole life, talks about the local Jewish community during World War II. He focuses on police action, the mistreatment of Jews, and the reaction of other village men. He also discusses the hanging of two people suspected of being Jewish spies as well as several roundups of Roma.

[01:] 00:30:15 – [01:] 01:21:21

Nițelea explains that he was born in Olănești in 1923; remembers the beginning of the war; comments on the existence of 16 Jewish families in Olănești before World War II, all of whom were later executed by the Romanian army passing through the village.

[01:] 01:21:22 - [01:] 09:02:17

He describes an incident related to the Romanian army's entering Olănești; remembers the Jewish families pleading their innocence before the captain of the army; comments on the conversation between the Jews and the captain, remembering that the latter had no involvement in the 16 families' execution, having left the village before the Jews' roundup; focuses on the captain's official orders, which were to only advance into and invade the Soviet Union; explains that only Russians were searched for in the village and in the nearby Părăteasca Forest during the captain's stay in Olănești; discusses the roundup and shooting of Jews by Romanian soldiers after the captain's departure; describes the Jewish families being forced out of their homes and taken to Tudora, a village approximately 15 kilometers from Olănești, and shot on the bank of the Dniester River; mentions a modern commemorative monument at the place the Jews were shot; remembers the names of the Jews who ran in the street and cried before the army captain: **Calpacciu, Unnod, Jelic, Motil, Ploșcă, Froica, Berla**; comments on standing near the captain and the Jews during their conversation; mentions that those who had direct orders from Marshal Ion Antonescu to arrest and execute the Jews were the first sergeant of the Romanian Army, a non commissioned officer and three gendarmes; explains that he personally witnessed the Jews' being arrested and escorted out of the village; talks about small children being among the escorted Jews; comments on the police effort to drive away the onlookers during the deportation; describes the roundup of Jews in Tudora village under a bridge and their execution; mentions that he did not personally witness the execution but that it was seen and described to him by village men and acquaintances from Tudora; remembers the Jewish family **Motil** having two sons recruited by the Soviet Army before the Romanians' arrival in Olănești; comments on the return of the only Jewish person left alive in the village of Olănești: the son of the peasant **Berla**, whose parents and sister had been killed in the incident involving the Romanian Army; explains

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that **Berla's** son had fought in the Soviet Army, returned to the village after his family's death and then left Olănești and went to live in a city; talks about the lack of personal items among the Jews arrested and shot by the Romanian Army; remembers the collecting of items from the Jewish households at the townhall after their deaths; comments on other thefts done by some village men and mentions one of the suspected persons' names: **Rotariu**; mentions that neither the Romanian Army nor the Soviet one punished the thieves for stealing from the deceased Jews' houses.

[01:] 09:02:18 – [01:] 14:05:16

He comments on an incident regarding the arrival of a man and a woman near Olănești, on the road coming from the villages of Crocmaz and Cetatea Albă ("the White Fortress"); mentions the couple offering money to a young girl from Olănești in exchange for food; describes the girl's denunciation of the two strangers at the local police office; mentions the policemen's assumption that the two persons were Jewish spies; describes the chase and shooting between a Romanian officer, three soldiers, and the two strangers suspected of espionage; comments on the suspected man's shooting at the soldiers, death of the woman accompanying him and then committing suicide; describes the bringing of the two strangers into Olănești and their hanging in the village square; mentions they were left there for three days then buried; talks about the time when this event happened: the night of the Odessa massacre (October 22, 1941); comments on the escape of other Jews from the area into the Soviet Union before the arrival of the Romanian Army and gives the example of a Jewish family from **Volintir [Volintiri]**, whom he has personally met; remembers the Romanian troops' arrival in Olănești around July 1; mentions that only Jews were persecuted in Olănești.

[01:] 14:05:17 – [01:] 19:04:05

He talks about the Roma (țigarii) people deported to the Bug River; describes their transportation in wooden wagons, from one village to another, in order to reach the train station and be sent to the Bug by train; remembers an incident regarding a small Roma child's death: the child was verbally harassed by Romanian soldiers, tied to a wagon wheel and murdered; [*silence until interview resumes*]; emphasizes the fact that the deported Roma people were being brought from Romania by order of Marshal Ion Antonescu and were not Transnistrian natives; remembers every wooden wagon being guarded by two or three Romanian soldiers; comments on the personal items the Roma people carried with them: mostly clothes; remembers the deportation of Roma people began after the shooting of the Jews from Olănești in September; discusses his inability to start conversations with those being deported due to strict police surveillance; mentions the evacuation of people from Olănești and the nearby villages after his recruitment into the Romanian Army due to battles being fought there.