

GARMASH, Mykola  
Ukraine Witnesses Documentation Project  
Russian  
RG-50.575\*0016

Box 1, Tape 1

In this interview, Mykola Garmash, a life long resident of Kharkov, talks about his life under German occupation during World War II. He mainly describes the “death wagons” (“**dushegubki**”) operated by Germans throughout Kharkov.

**[01:] 00:30:00 – [01:] 03:40:59**

He gives his name, date and place of birth as October 27, 1931, Liptsy village, Kharkov Province; mentions that he lived in Kharkov during the war; talks about severity of life under occupation, and the expropriation of food by the Germans; comments on the Germans’ special cruelty to Jews and Communists.

**[01:] 03:41:00 – [01:] 09:10:59**

He describes Ivanovka in the suburbs of Kharkov where they lived; discusses the tram junction with a dispatcher’s Office in Ivanovka, and the Germans using it to place their propaganda leaflets there; mentions two Jewish families in the neighborhood, one family (from **Sakharozavodskaya** Street) had been evacuated; the other (from Garmash’s own lane) stayed; depicts the Germans’ leaflet ordering Jews to report to the dispatcher’s Office and bring all valuables and jewelry.

**[01:] 09:11:00 – [01:] 24:50:59**

He talks about “death wagons” (“**dushegubki**”), which were vans or minibuses (“**letuchka**”) without windows and hermetically closed doors at the back; describes seeing about ten Jews gathered at the dispatcher’s Office and being pushed inside the vans; discusses the Jews being taken away by German soldiers and gendarmes; conjectures that shortly afterwards there appeared rumors that these were death wagons; mentions a trial of Germans and local collaborators in 1943 during which the truth about the “death wagons” was revealed; relates how the Jewish family from **Sakharozavodskaya** Street was forced to return to Kharkov because of the bombardment of trains; comments on their reporting to the dispatcher’s Office and being taken away; talks more about the “death wagons,” and how they circulated around the city until 1943.

**[01:] 24:51:00 – [01:] 28:20:59**

He describes the operators of the “death wagons” being tried in 1943 and their subsequent execution by hanging; gives more information about the “death wagons.”

**[01:] 28:21:00 – [01:] 31:40:59**

He mentions seeing people being hanged by Germans on electrical utility poles at the dispatcher's Office; comments on one of the victims, a Jewess, who had a "Yuda – Partisan" placard affixed to her body.

**[01:] 31:41:00 – [01:] 48:13:59**

He relates more about neighbors; mentions a young Jewish family that believed that they would be sent to Germany; tells about a half-Jewish family: father, Solomon, mobilizing and serving in artillery forces ("**Katyusha**"), mother, Elena, staying in Kharkov with son Misha; talks about how the Garmashes helped hide Misha in their basement; describes how in late 1942, Elena was shot to death near their house during a curfew by Germans looking for Jews.