

Summary of Oral History: Anna Mendus

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Anna Mendus, born in 1929, lived in the village of Ternivka. She recalls that on the day of the execution of the Jews, she and other villagers were weeding barley in the field, when they were taken on carts to fill up the pit about 2 kilometers away. The pit was large, approximately 20 by 10 meters and 2 meters deep, it had been dug the day before. Villagers had also been sent to do this work.

The interviewee says there were thousands of Jews, the column of whom stretched from the village to the pit, it was herded by Germans with dogs. In cars there were village polizei [Police], who treated people worse than Germans. Some were on carts, others walked, they carried small knots. The column consisted mainly of women, children, adolescents, and old men. Anna recognized her classmates. She says no one resisted.

The Jews were brought to the pit in groups of 20-50 people, forced to take off expensive things, gold and lie down in the pit face down. There was a shooting with a machine gun. A group of villagers stood 15 meters from the pit, they were called to fill up the pit after each group of the Jews. It was a terrible sight, the villagers saw the bodies moving in the pit.

The things left by the people were taken away by Germans. Jewish houses were demolished, the rest were inhabited by foreigners, party members and military. Anna is aware of a case when a little boy was able to get out of the pit and ran to another village (Posukhivka, where her husband is from), where a woman hid the child, treated him as her own, he helped her a lot.

There were other cases of rescue. Germans let a cobbler and two shoemakers live to work on them. Hemel, a German, who was in charge of the village, took one of the shoemakers' daughters (Anna) to live with him. It was said she was pregnant. Anna Mendus also says that polizei, who worked for Germans, were later shot by Soviet soldiers (she mentions the following names: Shargan Nestor, Vydal'ko Ivan, Oleksii Medvedchuk). The village headman, who treated people badly, and sent them to Germany, was killed by guerrilla.

She does not recall any cases of people of other nationalities, gypsies or communists being killed.