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[L.1] Commission for the compilation of the Great Patriotic War chronicle.

Smolensk. December 14, 1943

The interview was conducted by the Commission researcher Fedosov
Transcribed by Roslyakova

Klavdiya Egupova, a therapist.

Born in 1914. Graduated from Smolensk Medical Institute. Non-partisan.

I met with the Germans in Smolensk on July 17. This was unexpected for me. I went to the ferry. I looked and there was an army. I thought it was our army. I went towards this army. When I came closer, I was horrified to see the Germans! I felt terrible. This was aggravated by the fact that I was separated from my child, since my child was evacuated. I could not leave at that time, there was a hard fight, we were all lying in dugouts. When the battle started subsiding, when the people started leaving the trenches, I left the dugout. It was awful! I found it hard to see how many of our Russians remained in Smolensk. It was clear to me because I myself could not evacuate.

About a month and a half later, they started organizing the administration. This administration was under the command of the Germans. The Germans appointed the head of the city, the deputy head of the city and the chief doctor of the city – Efimov, an associate professor. I knew Efimov before the war, and he knew me as a student on the one hand, and on the other hand, as the wife of a staff member who worked with him in gynecology.

It was more expedient for me to enter the Russian administration knowing that I would be forced to work anyway.

Soon the population census was carried out and they did not consider either specialists or anyone – they sent everybody to work on cleaning the city. Here you could meet people of all kinds of professions.

A German who came to the labor exchange looked at a woman – how she was dressed, how she looked. If the appearance of a woman satisfied him, she was taken to work. If a woman was elderly or poorly dressed, she was not hired or she was sent to the kitchen. Young, blooming women were taken as cleaners. In order to get a job, women had to wear their best dress.

Those who worked on cleaning the city were totally starving. They received nine marks each. This, of course, did not suit anyone, since everything was so expensive.

There were many situations when small children were brought for a doctor's examination, they even tried to catch a finger. They were emaciated, edematous. Children died, but they were not interested in children.

The head of the medical department was the chief doctor of the city, the deputy, he was also a sanitary doctor Georgiy Nikolsky, I do not remember his patronymic, [L.1 the reverse side] the doctor who graduated in 1941. There was a milk-collecting point at the medical department, i.e. each household, which had its own cow, gave some milk. This milk was prescribed for some sick children, who received half a liter of milk twice a week. The milk went to the chiefs of the supply and management department.

The treatment was paid. Sick, disabled people who did not have funds very often got rejected. In our Rachkovo dispensary, such patients were admitted. Doctor Stepanova did so too.

I must say that we had more freedom in our dispensary than city doctors because the head of our Rachkovo outpatient clinic was Dr. Doroshevich, an elderly man who had little interest in work. He loved his vegetable garden more than working in the dispensary. Taking advantage of this, we wrote out bulletins, health certificates. Many prisoners of war received certificates that they were sick with tuberculosis, which the Germans were terribly afraid of. Those who had such certificates were released from the camp.

There were medicines in the pharmacy. Sometimes the girls who worked in the hospital would carry medicines and bring them to the pharmacy for a high price. These medicines were dispensed according to the prescriptions of doctors with long experience or with great benefits. No drugs were dispensed under our prescriptions. It was easy to leave a typhoid police officer at home. There was control for the civilian population, but they had to leave them, because the conditions in the hospital were terrible. There were no beds. Beds were taken from homes. Lousiness was terrible. Men and women lay in the same room, those who were seriously ill and those who were recovering too. When it became dark outside, it also became dark in the hospital rooms.

A codeine pill cost a mark. In general, whatever the pill was, it cost a mark.

It was hard to watch it when our hungry children were carters of German stuff. At 4 or 5 am they gathered near the station when the train arrived, and took the Germans' belongings on carts, in winter – on sledges. One could see such pictures, when a kid was pulling a cart, and a German, a big grown-up man, was walking and grinning.

Once I saw the following scene. A group of kids gathered. The Germans approached them. They pulled candies out of their pockets and teased the kids. They gave the kids candies, the kids stretched out their little hands, they took away this candy and laughed. The children were terribly ragged and emaciated. It was interesting for them to play with hungry children.

Some women engaged in financial speculation. There were cases when women came to the Germans early in the morning for an exchange, but the Germans either did not want to exchange anything or they no longer needed anything, they set dogs at those women.

There was a lot of espionage. The Germans bribed the population for 75 marks. For this money, a person could sell another person. If you informed on somebody, you would be given 75 marks. As a result, it was difficult to talk to people. Let's say I knew

you before the war, but under the Germans I could not talk to you. Sometimes you didn't say what you thought, sometimes you got off with silence or you said, "This topic is not interesting at the moment." Sometimes you just said yes to avoid falling into a trap.

Several times I had an appointment with the city head, Menshagin. [L.2] One day a woman who knew me as a doctor came up to me and said that Menshagin was the first person, a party member. I said, "It cannot be true that Menshagin was a member of the party. Most likely he was previously connected with the Germans."

The next day these words were passed on to Menshagin. I got fired from my job. I went to an appointment with him to find out why I was dismissed from work. "You are waiting for the Bolsheviks. We can't work with you." I said that I had a child on the other side. It was clear that I was waiting because of my child. My child is dear to me. The system as such did not exist for me.

I left. For two weeks I did not come. I didn't know if people talked about me or not. Some woman promised to talk to Menshagin through an acquaintance. This acquaintance replied to that woman that Menshagin, in response to his conversations about me, said, "Why are you worried about Egupova? If she wants, she will come herself."

I went to my second appointment. His attitude somewhat changed. I was nervous. He offered me some water. He waited for me to calm down. He asked if my position had been taken or not. And he said, "Keep your mouth shut."

For me, these words are still not clear.

I started working, but observers were appointed for me. Once, in March 1942, when our pilots appeared in Smolensk, I came in the evening and said, "You know what, I am pleased when our planes arrive. It feels like there is still something left!"

These words were passed on to Menshagin. He asked the chief doctor, "Is it true that Egupova is beginning to wait for the Bolsheviks?" This was passed on to me by Varik, who was the chief doctor after Efimov.

Later, when a systematic retreat of the Germans began and it came to a systematic retreat from Smolensk, I said to the wife of Repukhov, the head of the passport department, "You know, Vera Vasilievna, I'm going to flee, I'll go to the Krasninsky district. There is a forest. If they evacuate us, I will go to the forest." She said, "What should I take? I have a fur coat, another fur coat.", "Vera Vasilievna, if you have an extra fur coat, I will take your fur coat because I don't have one." These words were passed on to Menshagin.

I had an appointment with Menshagin regarding my husband.

Varik and Efimov knew my husband. I asked Varik to talk to the city governor about my husband. He said, "I will not intercede for your husband." However, they wrote a petition to the staff doctor that the city needed a gynecologist. Gynecologist such and such is in the camp. While this case dragged on, at this time the evacuation of the city started, everyone left and that was the end of it.

Since the relationship between Varik and Menshagin was very close, he did it more for her than for my husband.

During the appointment he said that he would not intercede for my husband because I was still waiting for the Bolsheviks. He told me that if I got to the Russians, then I would surely be punished because all the people who were in the occupation would be considered non-Soviet. They would either be sent to a camp or to prison.

I answered to this, “Even if I stay in prison for 10-15 years, I will still be looking for my child.”

During the evacuation of the city, I met him by chance. “Where are you going?” “To the Krasninsky district.”

[L.2 the reverse side] He was in such a state that he didn't care about me. A drowning man grasps at a straw. The reason that Menshagin did not betray me to the Gestapo perhaps was the fact that my husband's family had once been dispossessed. I said that my husband was a peasant, non-partisan, my husband's father's farm was dispossessed.

There was a very memorable occasion. My acquaintance Nikolaeva had a daughter of 17 or 18 years old, who graduated from the ten-year school in 1941. She worked as a cleaner in one of the German units. One fine time this girl came and said, “Mom, I can't work there anymore.” The Germans forced her to live with them. She started looking for a job. When she found a job, she went to the unit and said that she would no longer work here. I don't know whether she said something there or not. But two hours later they came and arrested this girl. Her mother went to the prison for five days. She saw how the prisoners were let out for a walk, but she did not see her girl. A month and a half passed. Suddenly on a street she saw a woman or a girl wearing her daughter's coat. She asked how this girl had been able to get this coat. It turned out that this girl's mother was a translator for the Gestapo. They said it happened that the best clothes were taken off and the worst ones were put on. After that, she went to the Gestapo, but each time she was told a new camp. The mother still had the hope that somehow she would meet her daughter. A German directly told her, “Your daughter was put in a cell, consider her killed.”

This girl's mother came to me at the time when I was sick with typhoid fever. I had a temperature of 39°. She asked, “Help me die, give me some poison, I don't have a reason to live!” I started telling her something, but I felt that I was saying the wrong things. My words had no effect on her. If I had not been sick, I would not have let her go.

She found a way to die. She wrote a letter with curses addressed to the German who put her girl in prison. “I am writing so that you kill me. I wish that such a fate befell your children too! ..” This woman was imprisoned and never returned.

In a village, I don't remember what it was called, a German disappeared, I don't know if it was a soldier or an officer, they found the body of that German in a manure pit with the help of a bloodhound dog. The population of this village was locked in a barn and set on fire.

The atrocities were like this.

In 1941 we were given firewood for the ambulatory, and this wood was in the Dnieper. The ambulatory itself hired people to get this firewood out of the Dnieper. We

went there and helped. The prisoners also pulled out firewood for the city. When we approached to talk to the prisoners, the sentries went aside. There were many engineers, technicians and teachers there. The prisoners asked us for salt. Valentina Stepanova went home, took some salt and bread. When she approached them, all the prisoners ran to her. She started moving aside, at this time a shot was fired, though upward. The prisoners wanted to talk to us, but at the same time they were afraid of the sentry. Before our very eyes, the sentries beat the prisoners with a whip during their work. [L.3] They took prisoners to the German units for dirty work. There they were in better conditions than in the camp. Although they ate garbage, they weren't hungry.

They were brought under escort to the ambulatory for an appointment. When you told the guards to bring the prisoners at the appointed time, they were brought on time.

The prisoners in the camps were starving terribly.

I saw the following scene. There was a camp in Raevka. Going to work, I passed this camp. I saw a German killing a dog and throwing this dog over to prisoners of war. The latter literally pounced on this dog.

One could often see our prisoners of war rummage in garbage bins. People were happy to pick up the peelings.

A prisoner of war, who himself was in the camp, told me about cannibalism in the camps. Then he managed to get out of there.

The day before the Jews were shot, I had gone to the camp. I had a friend – a manager of a hotel Anna Khesina. She was in the ghetto. Passing the ghetto, I came by her. She told me, “The mood is terrible, horrible. They'll probably kill us soon.” Before that, we had a conversation that they would be transferred to another place.

In the morning I learned that all the Jews had been shot, only a part of the specialists who did the dirtiest work were left.

When our Russian police was formed, the Jewish property was stolen by everyone who could. Good things went to the city administration. People wrote a statement to the city administration on who needed what. These things went only to the people who were closer to the authorities, to the police.