

Transcript of conversation with Priiska Spasskaya

[1.1]

Transcribed during a personal conversation with the Commission researcher, Comrade B.L. Likhter.

Dikanka village, 15 February 1945

Priiska Antonovna Spasskaya, wife of a team leader of the Dimitrov collective farm who was shot by the Germans.

I was born in the village of Dikanka. I am 48 years old and illiterate. Our father had a lot of us – sevenchildren. I could not study. I worked more as a nanny.

I did not particularly work on the collective farm, my children did not let me. My husband worked. The war began, he worked under the Germans a little. For eight years before the war, he was a foreman on a collective farm, for two years he was a household manager. We lived well. We got enough bread, we could afford everything. We lived well. We had enough clothes and shoes, and all the children received education. Under the Germans, our own people made him a foreman. The Germans shot him on July 4 1942. When he was arrested, they kept him for eight days. They captured him for his connection with the partisans. He was a partisan himself in 1918. People came to us. He was shot in a nearby ravine. I heard the shots. It was not far from my house, I counted 15 shots. When he was in jail, I brought him a package. On Saturday afternoon at 2 o'clock I went to pass him a package. I asked [the guards], "Will you take the package?" – "Sure, put it on the table." "But you don't know who it is for." They took it, but I saw that they did not take it the usual way. One of the policemen asked me, "What was he wearing? What shirt was he wearing?"

Yes, my gut feeling told me that something had happened. I thought that I had to go there again. I went to see the same guard and asked him, "Tell me, is my husband alive? Or is it a day off, or does he not want to eat? My package is still on the table." He said, "True, he is gone. He was shot. Go get his dishes."

I did not take the dishes. When a person has been eaten, dishes are not needed. I was walking and a woman was walking towards me, her husband was also arrested. She told me, "My husband left for the Poltava commandant's office". And I told her, "He left for the ravine. Yesterday they were shot at two o'clock." Together we cried. For two weeks I cried, people were afraid of me after the execution, wherever I went, people did not bow to greet me, did not talk to me. In addition, the Germans took my cow, pig, and calf from me.

Now my son works as a tractor driver. My eldest son died at the front and this son is 15 years old. He is a tractor driver. The collective farm and the District Executive Committee helped me. I just bought a pig, I got a little job – I have a heart condition. And my dad, who is 82 years old, started working as a carpenter. He receives rations and bonuses. That's how we are living, little by little. [1.2]