The Holocaust: assessing responsibility and conscience

Bystanders

Regina Prudnikova

In one video interview, for example, a Lithuanian witness, Regina Prudnikova, recalls that before the massacres, she cared for a Jewish child in her town, Pilviskiai. But, “I was very young and had a very red face,” she explains, and was “on the chubby side.” That wasn’t good. “I was told that Jews cut you and take your blood.” She stopped baby-sitting.

She now mocks such beliefs, but her tone becomes uncertain: “I know that they say the Jews can’t live without Christian blood. During their holidays they had to have at least a drop of that blood to taste.” Then, the recollection returns. The Jews were taken away and shot, their homes plundered. And we see a photograph of a wagon piled with loot being auctioned to passers-by.

New York Times, April 25, 2013

Issues to present in your group:

1. What were the origins of Regina’s prejudice against Jews?

2. How does prejudice cause people to disregard their moral misgivings?