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On 25th October 1942 the Jews of Druskininkai learned that the liquidation of the second ghetto in Grodno had begun (in Grodno there were two ghettos at two separate locations in the city) and they had started taking the Jews to a concentration camp near Grodno in Kielbasin. Until then the camp was occupied by Russian prisoners – the Russian prisoners had been removed and the Jews who were expelled from Grodno settled there instead. In this connection, rumors began to spread that all the Jews in the province would be expelled and the Jews of Druskininkai liquidated.

However nobody knew anything [regarding their fate]. The mood in the ghetto was very demoralized. All the Jews felt that some bad news awaited the Jews of Druskininkai. The President, Leib Frenkel, warned his brothers in the ghetto clearly, that he could no longer revoke any fearful decree that may come and he advised [in that case] that everyone should take his fate into his own hands. The President's desperate quiet words discouraged even more the dejected Jews of the ghetto. There was nowhere to escape to, because no organized [red? communist] partisans were to be found yet there. The peasant acquaintances only found ways [to ???] the Jews and not to give them an opportunity to save themselves.

The 2nd November 1942, 4 o'clock in the morning, the Jewish police awoke all the Jews of the ghetto and told them that the ghetto had been surrounded on all sides by Lithuanian and German bandits. All the Jews already understood very well that the end of the ghetto had arrived. At 5 o'clock the German gendarmes came to the Judenrat and ordered them to tell the Jews that they should take with them a pail, a pillow, a blanket, two pairs of underwear and food for a week. The German murderers assured the Jews that all were being taken to a camp to work. In the Judenrat they took the lists of all the registered Jews in the ghetto and warned the Judenrat that the members would be answerable for every Jew missing.

At that time the wife of the President Pese Frenkel ran from the building wringing her hands and with a cry told all the Jews that they should save themselves, since they would not be taken to a camp to work but the murderers were taking all the Jews to the "black chupah" [marriage canopy], Pese Frenkel's words. But to leave the ghetto was already impossible, because the ghetto was very strongly guarded. The panic was great. One ran to ask advice from another regarding what to do. The women's eyes were full of tears. The children understood that something was not right among the adults and began to cry and scream as well.

A small percentage had the idea of not leaving the ghetto and hiding themselves. At half past seven the Jews, family by family, began to come to the square opposite the Judenrat. At 8 o'clock almost all the Jews were already in the square. There in the square they [??] everyone and under a strict guard of Lithuanians and Germans the Jews were from the square away from the ghetto and taken them to

the train station. All the Jews of the shtetl of Fotnica had already been brought to the train station. The Jews of Druskininkai and Rotnica were packed into 8 freight wagons and taken to the concentration camp of Keilbasin near Grodno.

While taking the Jews from the homes of the Druskininkai ghetto, the murderers allowed all the old and sick to remain in place. The murderers said that they would be taken away separately. But they shot them all in the ghetto, in a [garden?] of the Jewish [??] Lifšic. In that garden they covered them all with earth.

Some Jews, mostly young people, hid and remained in the ghetto until night. Using the darkness of night they all fled from the ghetto, wherever their eyes led them. About 30 young men, women and a few children hid in the ghetto and fled by night.

Berl, with his mother Sheyne-Feigl and his sister Peshe had also gone to the square. Berl noticed a [line?] on a high foundation/groundwork, took out a few stones and crawled underneath the floor. But his mother refused to crawl inside and doubted that she could lie in there. In that moment the mother and sister were noticed by the police. His mother Sheyne-Feige [parted from Berl]: "Be well my child, I will not go here. You remain the only one alive from our family"!And she went away with her daughter to the square.

Under the floor Berl found another two Jews Avrom and Chana Aranovsky (brother and sister), both good acquaintances from Druskininkai. Berl tried to stop up the entrance with the [surrounding] stones. At that moment a German went by, noticed something, took a look and then continued on. Berl covered the opening and crawled to the two Jews.

In ghetto the armed SS men closed up all the entrances to Jewish homes, piled up [??] things and then left. Lithuanian and German patrols marched back and forth in the ghetto. Shots were to be heard from many places. Later the Jews learned that they shot the old and sick people in their homes.

By night all three Jews crawled out from under the [??], jumped over the ghetto's wooden fence and fled. In the ghetto armed patrols were marching around, but the night was very dark and no one noticed them.

From the ghetto all three fled to a peasant Dominisc at the edge of the shtetl. The peasant did not open the door and did not answer, although he knew the Jews well. The first encounter with peasants made a very bad impression on the Jews who had just fled from their deaths.

From there the Jews who had saved themselves came to the village of Joskelerić [Polish: Jańskieleticze, Lithuanian: Jaskonys] to a peasant by the name of Joskelerić Stepas. The peasant was an acquaintance of the escaped Jews and did not treat them badly. He advised them to flee further into a thick forest and wait there until the fate of the deported Jews would become clear. Stepas also told them that the Druskininkai Jews Aharon Frankel with his sister and Hirsh Liskovsky had also been at his home. He gave them food and told the three to flee into the Cimakavo forest. The peasant also

assured them that the Druskininkai Jews Yankel Roshansky with another two unknown girls had also been at his home and had gone to the same forest of Cimakavo. Stepas told Berl to come back to him at an appointed time when he would know enough about the fate of the deported Jews from Druskininkai.

Two groups of Jews that had escaped from Druskininkai met in the forest. The joy at their meeting was accompanied by many tears, remembering the Jews who had been deported to an unknown fate.