

Your mother you say is living in a--

My mother is completely senile. She doesn't know what's going on. But my mother was the one that made me write the diary. And I have some pictures, like I told you, that I saved. And the other day I looked at them.

And it was a 15-year-old girl writing. And on the back of every picture I have who it is and the date-- in case-- I mean, we never thought we would survive. All this was if they find it one day.

Sure.

We never dreamt to survive.

Have you spoken to your children about your experiences?

Not much. I don't know why. I was certainly the kind of mother that went with them, like my mother, to libraries, and to parades, and all these experiences with kids. We had a luncheonette. And I worked very hard. But Saturday, I took them-- here I'm on Broadway and they want Ripley's Believe It or Not. And my stomach is turning, and I take them to Ripley's Believe It or Not.

And some how or other, I-- my younger boy used to ask questions. But I, really-- they're very active in their community and everything, but they are not active in second generation. My younger son and his wife registered for that thing in Washington. That, I have to admit. And in the last minute, their maid left them. And mommy wasn't babysitting because I was going to go to Washington. But they registered for that.

But probably, if somebody approaches them, they will. But you see, that they moved into a community, which is building. Which sounds that I'm bragging, but they did build eight rooms for their synagogue, for a school for their children. And my youngest is only 30. And he's president of the Solomon Schechter School and President of the Young Leadership in UGA.

And my older boy's in the National Bund for Young Leadership. And he finished his presidency in the shul last year. And he's not through. So they are building a community. And that keeps them really busy. Eli says if I knew what it means to be a president of the Solomon Schechter, I wouldn't-- because the parents called him, you know, the teachers and everybody.

But they're not active in the second generation. Maybe they will be approached. I asked once, Phil, because I hear the diary is theirs. And it's falling apart. It is written in a pencil, cheap paper. And he says, no, wait, maybe I will translate it one day. It is translated into Hebrew. That it is. And the whole diary they put in that book.

Because look, if she came and she said they caught this one and this one, I knew who it is. And I wrote it in the diary. So it does belong to the city. If they translated it, because there are a lot of things that -- Maybe two weeks before we were free-- I don't know how much you know about the old buildings from the 1400-1500s, the cities that they built with the--

So our city had pieces of the big moat and everything. And there were three gates which were downtown, but once they were the entrance to the city. So that is a big-- it's the moat and a big piece of city-- not the fence, from stones, how they--

Yeah.

But the gate, it's like from here to the end of the room. I grew up in the city. I passed through Hebrew school through that gate every single blessed day. I never knew there is a room up there, which was probably for the soldiers or what, till they caught Jews there.

It seems that the Pollack was-- in a pail-- he used to-- there was a string they used to pull up water and food. And at night, somebody saw it. Maybe two weeks. I never knew there was a hole there to hide. So things like this, she came and she told us. They called this one or that one. So of course, I mentioned it in the diary.

Or I mentioned that-- you read my diary, you have the whole Russian front, or D-Day, or the Italy. Whatever, this was vital to us. Even the little-- Sasha was her name. Today she calls herself Naomi. She used to sit up and not lie down to sleep. You knew when it's day, night, you lie down to sleep. She says, what are you sitting? Why? I'm waiting for the communicat. Communicat was the news. Because from our faces, she knew if it is good or bad. Our lives depend on it.

Once we were supposed to run. And my coat, I had tied to the-- it was the floor. But we-- took it down in the paper. The paper fall apart. The coat fall apart. And that's how we lived. But we didn't fall apart, maybe inside. Our human species is very strong. The human species is. very strong.

And the first thing I did when I went out, I went to the well and drank water, water. And I love water since.

Did you ever-- there's a very good book, Viktor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning. It describes some of his own experiences--

No, I didn't.

--and the will to survive. And it's very nicely done.

I have to take a list of books and read. I will to tell you I got some books that somebody says, oh, take this book and read it. And some of them I think are sacrilege. I'm very leery of people using the Holocaust for whatever they-- I mean, when I came out of the bunker and everybody knew I have a diary, I didn't give it to nobody.

The only time I gave it out of my hands was this, my teacher that taught me [POLISH], under the occupation. He was-- because even in Poland, antisemitism or not antisemitism, they were God-fearing people. We had a teacher who taught us religion in school. In Polish. [POLISH] in Polish is history.

We used to part. The Polish girls went with their priest. The Ukrainian University uniate priest. We went with our teacher. Now, he was a professor-- they call already professor because he was in the high school, in gymnasium, also teaching math. He taught me Hebrew too.

He survived in the forests. He came several days after we were free. His toes were frozen off. And being he was a teacher before the war, the first Jewish Holocaust Commission, or whatever you would call it, was in Lodz. Because the most Jews, after the-- you know, you're a teacher.

So they had the Historical Society there. The first Historical Society was in Lodz. And, of course, he was active there. Then he went to Argentina, was a director of a Hebrew school in Argentina. Because he had a brother in Argentina.

But he came one day to me. Says, Clara, you have a diary and I am writing-- it is like a brochure, I have the book-- a history of our city-- that was still in Poland, edited and this in Lodz-- and I need your diary. So he took that first paragraph, what I described till I start, and a few of this and he gave it back to me.

Then I came here and somebody-- to America-- and somebody said, told-- I don't know, from the Forward they called me one day. And he came, a reporter, and he's going, make me rich. And said, I'm sorry. You want, I will tell you about everything. You know how to read Polish. But you have to sign a paper. I said, I'm not rich. I'm a greener, but I know that I can sue you and your paper today.

You want to write a story, write a story. I gave him the story, like in three or four installments, about one shtetl, and one bunker, and this. I never read them. They came from that book. And that was responsible people, the ones that wrote the encyclopedia.

To do.

Ev'reet And I gave it to Mrs. Friedman from the Historical Society. She translated from the Polish to Hebrew. And that's all I gave. Now, I don't know, either I would give it to archive, or I-- I have to ask my children. But I think they would agree with me that that's where it should go.

But I read that Eisner's book. The guy is lying. You can't grow up in Warsaw where they were chasing Jews. Like I say, I don't blame them for not-- not everybody was back. But most of the people who got these false papers, stupidly went to Warsaw.

Warsaw, when they saw a new face, all they did, went to the police. They did the rest. And he doesn't even mention it. There is only one slang word-- [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH], which was the ones that sold Jews for money, but people who are not-- didn't grow up Pole, don't even know what-- even a Pollack doesn't know what it is, because it's slang.

Smalec is lard, lardist. Would you know if they called somebody? So I think it's a sacrilege. It is, to his family and everybody. Don't write. Then he puts up a Broadway show. So I'm very leery of these books, some of them.

Let me just ask you one question. I guess, when you really, really, really felt free, I assume was when you finally came to Israel. Here, you came out of the bunker. And then--

Oh, you see where I was angry, you say angry. Angry I was in the displaced persons camp.

Right.

I hate the English. You know, when I was in London and saw all these Indians, and Pakistanis, and God knows, I thought to myself, the chickens came home to roost. You enslaved half of the world and now you have it.

I just couldn't understand. I was mad. How-- and again, my father was a sage. He really was. He ran away from the yeshiva. He spoke-- well, you knew my father-- before the war, spoke perfect German. Knew about chemistry, physics anything, astronomy, every opera, all self-taught.

Now I remember when it was said. I also was reminded of it all the time. When we were sitting in Austria in displaced persons camp, Mr. Melman, who is the one that went later to Australia, he always used to say, [INAUDIBLE], because his name was Meyer Berish you were a [INAUDIBLE].

We were sitting in bunker and daydreaming, whispering. You never talked loud. And Mr. Melman said, oh, if we survive, they will come with ships-- I mean, ships-- there were no airplanes-- and they will take us to Eretz Israel.

And my father said, Eretz Israel is in the hands of the English. And there are Arabs there too. And it is politics. And all you are is a soldier, a pawn on a chessboard. And when we sat in displaced persons camp, he kept always reminding, how did you know?

And me, at 17 and 18, I was just hating the-- next to the Germans, I was hating the English. How dare they not to let me in. How dare they, after what was done to us.

So my husband, who is seven years older than me, in the camp, you had Israel, parties. And at that time, I was already grown up to go to a party. There was nothing else to do. He was Mapa, what you would call Mapai. I was Herut, [INAUDIBLE]. So what if they killed a Englishman. They just killed six million of ours. Nobody said anything.

And I'm sitting. And I have to listen to German. And I have to be-- and they didn't like me, for sure. People, they were starving. So people, in the camps, for a pack of cigarettes or this, you had German women cleaning. I did everything with my mother.

You know why? Because whenever we took somebody, you didn't ask them a question. They told you right away they

didn't know and they this. Nobody knew. They robbed all of Europe, brought it there. They didn't know.

So I didn't want to see them. I didn't want they should clean for me. And I did everything with my mother by myself. That's when I was better. I don't know, maybe under the occupation all I want to survive. So she didn't say hello, she didn't say hello. I'm a Jewish, she can't say hello. I didn't justify her. But that's it.

What do you think the lesson is of your experience?

Just yell if you don't like something, especially in America you can do it.

Yell loud.

Yell loud. Yell loud. And be heard. They can't do it to us again. I will tell you something, now is that whole question about American Jewry, what they did or didn't do. But today's American Jewry it's not the same. That was first generation. They were [INAUDIBLE].

You see, I know the difference between a [INAUDIBLE]. They felt they have this-- what was his name, Felix Frankfurter. And they have the advisor, Churchill's advisor, Baruch. And then there was-- I forgot the-- and they felt he's doing it for them, that he's talking to the [INAUDIBLE].

I mean, they worshiped Roosevelt. They didn't think that you can demonstrate. You weren't supposed to rock the boat. That was the first shtetl generation.

You know when there are sometimes instances in your life, like eye openers? When I lived in Brooklyn, I belong to a Sephardic congregation because they taught the Hebrew the way they speak in Israel. Every other, this was like that. And they made me feel so welcome. I joined the sisterhood and was active. All that activity now I learned there.

But they were-- the Latinos are here longer. So they were Americans. And one Yom Kippur, all of a sudden crashed through the wall-- through the window, a stone. Men ran out of that shul ready to kill anybody who did it. Our kids were playing. And that was during Yizkor And I didn't have already my father. Sol had his parents yet.

So I came home after Yizkor and then we went for the minyan. So I told him, you see, Sol, it would be in [INAUDIBLE], for in [PLACE NAME] we would all huddle and wait for them to come and have the pogrom or whatever they do. What does it mean to grow up free?

He's an American. He's praying in his synagogue. And nobody can touch him. They went out ready to fight. That's the difference. This generation, it couldn't happen again. Because this generation, wouldn't let it happen.

Of course, you have to be leery. You hear after 11 o'clock, after the news, that demagogue speaking. Well, it's freedom of speech. It makes you mad. But it's freedom of speech.

But you have to be vigilant.

Oh, yes, you have. I like interviews. Anything else I don't watch on television. They have on now a CNN program. They had Angela Davis. And they let her talk. That's the best thing, to let her talk. And she shows what she is.

She cannot sit here in front of the cameras with millions of people watching and say that there is repression in America because she's being left out. They'll laugh at her. So in some instances, this is good.

Sometimes gets me mad, the freedom of speech. But on the other hand, the interviewer is smart. He points her with his questions. Let her talk and see what she is. Anybody who visited Russia can't say it's repression here.

OK. I want to thank you.

I can't even say it's my pleasure, but I'm glad.

I just want to thank you for coming in.

Because maybe-- because very soon will be nobody to tell this story.