

Mr. Pollack, during the break, you harked back to 1938 in Vienna, and you said you'd like to talk more about those times.

Yes. During those times, shortly after the Germans marched into Austria and into Vienna, Hitler was received in Vienna like nobody else, thousand years back, and maybe a thousand years coming from now. He was really greeted with enthusiasm in Vienna, from all the people except Jews.

Short time after, so that we could realize what was going on in Vienna, we did not realize what was going on in the provinces of Austria. I was lucky enough to have traveled with my former boss through the Austrian provinces. My boss himself, when he came back to Vienna, he was always sick what the Nazis-- the Nazi terrorists-- did in the provinces of Austria, especially where the mountains are.

They did everything possible. And the Arab terrorist, they must have learned something from the Austrian terrorist, because they did terrible things. The police, the fire department, they were all already, before the Germans walked in, 90% Nazis. This is about the truth.

Especially one province, which borders to Hungary. The name is Burgenland. They had the large Jewish population. There are different little towns. They confiscated all the belongings from those unfortunate people overnight. They just throw them out. Nobody realized it. So they chose to, not only in the other part of the provinces.

In provinces which we thought they will be a little friendlier to the Jews, they did just the opposite. Because the word goes around very fast. You can take anything you want from a Jew. Or you'll give him a small fraction of his property. And that you don't pay in cash or pay with something else. And the Jew can-- anyhow, he cannot take it with him.

And hundreds and hundreds of those unfortunate people came to Vienna. It was the point where the people had to go. It's the only place that was to the east and to the west of Austria. And to the north, the same thing happened. Overnight, all their property was confiscated-- businesses established for 100 and 200 years. People stayed there for generations. They had no home. They had to live under terrible circumstances in Vienna.

Did you keep track of your former boss?

Yes. He managed to go to Israel. And since then, he must be dead a long time ago. So this is a little remark what was going on at this time. And that was only the beginning.

It goes without saying that many of my friends went to the concentration camps. I never saw them again. Very few people, if any, came back. And still, at this time in April, they said, oh, don't be afraid. Nothing will happen to you.

Who said that?

People I know that-- Viennese people I know, I worked together for many years, said that we have nothing to fear. Only the people who came from Poland and Russia will have something to fear. Not only that they tried to kill us. They divided us between-- they made two different classes of people there, which is really important to know.

The people who came from the east-- Poland Russia and so on. At this time, it was not occupied. And people who were citizens of Austria-- I was a citizen. I was born there. As I said, my father died during the First World War. The population did absolutely nothing, with a few exceptions, to help us-- absolutely nothing.

And they were happy to get something for nothing, which they thought they were getting-- and they got a lot from us. They got some papers for Jewish property that they bought this legally. And I saw a movie here only a few weeks ago that a pharmacist bought his pharmacy from some people who came back. The son came back, that they bought it legally. But it was all in shambles. There was-- Vienna was bombed.

If you read the Jewish history, the author is [Personal name] which is one of the best books I know. He did write about

the famous mayor of Vienna around the turn of the century. His name was Lueger. And he's especially mentioned in that book. He was a very good-looking man. And he was an ardent anti-Semite.

And when I was young, people 20 years after that, they said, he was the mayor who we should have today because he gave the Jews-- at this time, which was at the turn of the century-- already at this time, a hard time.

So the Germans had, actually, not much work to do concerning the Jew. They could learn from the Austrian population. And they did. The Austrian population was already ready, even before they came in.

When you read today's paper-- not today's paper, but a week ago-- some Nazi flags went up already in some other towns, like in Linz and Graz. Before the Nazis marched in, they had the swastika already there before they came in. And the police ought [? to fight it, ?] but didn't do anything about that.

Just a short remark-- the atrocities what the Austrian did against the Jews is a matter of history. And from all people-- it's almost to the day, today, that I left Austria, 50 years ago. From all people who kind of apologize for that-- what the Austrians did-- a lot of Austrians, it's only Mr. Waldheim.

This is from The Star-Ledger last week. "'We must not forget that many of the worst Nazi henchmen were Austrians,' he said in a TV speech. 'There were Austrians who were victims and others who were perpetrators. As head of the state of the Republic of Austria, I wish to apologize for Nazi crimes committed by Austrians.'"

This is by the man himself, who is accused of war crimes. I don't want to read the whole thing. This is today, March, 1988. 50 years after that what happened. He doesn't mean that. But they just want to put it in there.

So tell us tell us more about your life in the Dominican Republic.

Dominican Republic-- once I had a farm. And I knew what I was doing. I just took at least a year or more. I was kind of happy to do that kind, because I was independent. I depended on the weather and the quality of the livestock, and other circumstances.

What did your wife do on the farm?

She helped me a lot. She was very active. And when I became-- don't laugh about me. When I became the first prize for a really beautiful cow. The other settlers were very jealous about me. They couldn't believe it.

But naturally, it is a lot more than just to look at your cows. There's a lot of work behind that. You have to know what you're doing. I didn't do it by myself. I had a native man who helped me. Actually, I helped him, to be honest.

You dispelled the notion that Jews were not good farmers, right?

Yes, and when I left, I really cried that that I had to leave. I didn't have to leave. I could have stayed there. The dictator, Trujillo, didn't do anything to us. As a matter of fact, he was really friendly to us.

He was smarter than we think, because the Jewish committee-- the Joint-- put a lot of money in a territory, which belonged to the United Fruit Company. They abandoned it. And from a wilderness we went to kind of cultivate land.

As the experts thought in New York that we can do agriculture-- this was 100%-- 200%-- wrong. What grows here cannot grow over there. Besides of that, they did not realize that we produced something. There was no customer for that. As I mentioned before, they had to throw it away.

What were you growing?

That was before I had the farm. We worked like in a kibbutz, many people on the land. We had beautiful tomatoes and some other things, cucumbers.

So it was a collective, in other words.

It was not a collective because when you come to a place where you work for ideals, then you work different-- different than you work with people you never saw in your life before. And you know those people will go away. They don't like it here and they will go away. And that particular person is not interested in myself. He is only interested to put 8 hours work in, in the sun, which was terrible anyway.

We were not made for agriculture there. There are completely different things over there which grow easy, which are not as good as the things we eat here. Nobody told us about it. We had to learn it the hard way. Everybody like, what the [? hell, ?] at this time wanted to leave. I had nobody to write me affidavit, so I had to stay there. Many people were able to leave. And they left for the United States.

They had relatives and friends here.

They had relative or friends to give them [? beds. ?] We had many visitors there-- missionaries, a lot of missionaries. They came especially to my farm and the neighbor's farm. But they did not try anything because they know that we are not the right people to be converted. They knew that. Or somebody told them that.

When you were living in the Dominican Republic, did you have any Jewish activities?

Yes, we had a synagogue there. We had our own cemeteries when people died. And we had some older people, at this time, who were able to conduct the services. We had activities. We had also our rabbi there, and mohel. And we just--

You had everything.

The people there, their children grew up, like my son, had proper Jewish care.

He was bar mitzvah?

What?

Your son was bar mitzvah?

He was bar mitzvah in this country.

I see.

More and more, we realized that we just couldn't stay there. It's because of the children. Education was not so hot. And we lived on a-- the Dominican Republic and Haiti is an island. We lived on an island. And our place was an island by itself because our way of life was much higher than that of the natives. And we just cannot do that.

We had a cooperative for the milk. We had a lot of milk, cheese, and so on. And it worked. And we sold that in the capital of the [INAUDIBLE]. So we more and more realized that sooner or later we had to leave.

And I was lucky enough that a very famous author came to the Dominican Republic. And there was not much to see, but almost everybody was led to the place we were after-- a Jewish agricultural home or whatever. So he saw that and he understood that you need more than bread alone.

And he gave me the affidavit. And I was really grateful to him. His name was Morris. He or his wife had a bestseller at this time. And finally, after many letters, and so on, to other people, I was able to come to the United States.

Where did you live when you first came here?

I lived in kind of a miserable hotel on 88th Street in New York. And through friends and so on, I found another miserable place in New Jersey. It was a furnished apartment. And little by little, I just got myself up like everybody else. This can happen only in America. And I mean that. Like the book from Mr. Golden, "Only in America." And I'm happy that I am here.

Where do your children live now?

My children live-- actually they will live near me and also in-- where I stayed. in New Jersey. And they are doing all right.

What do they do?

My children are teachers. Unfortunately, my wife died two years ago. We have many friends. We were able to make friends. And we Americanized our [INAUDIBLE].

And you have grandchildren?

I have two grandchildren, yes. They're already grown up.

Very nice. Do they go to school, the grandchildren?

A month ago, my grandson-- [INAUDIBLE]. They go to the Hebrew school, the Solomon Schechter School. And the grandson who is 17, he will go to college. And the girl, hopefully next year too.

And hopefully what happened in Europe, people here will realize what happened over there. My personal adventures, I might call them, doesn't make so much difference. That what so-called cultured nations like the Germans, the Austrians did, can happen everywhere. If it's happened over there, it can happen other place too.

What has been your experience with respect to relating the Holocaust to your children? Have you been able to talk to them about it? And to your grandchildren. Have you been able to discuss, communicate it? Are they--

Yes, I'm glad you asked that question. Sometimes I'm very disappointed. Not only with my children or the grandchildren, other people too. They kind of close their ears for that. They don't want to hear too much anymore about that. Maybe they were sympathetic when I came to this country in 1951. But now they say, I heard so much about it, let's talk about something else.

My children, they were-- they know about that. We told them many times. But at the moment-- now, I mean, at the present time-- they are not so interested any more in that, to be truthful to you.

How do you read that attitude? Yourself, I mean. How do you see-- how do you interpret their behavior or their thinking?

How I had to interpret that? Well, I hope you or some other people will not be offended. Many Jewish people today, as a matter of status quo, as a kind of a symbol that they can afford it, they have cars like Mercedes, BMW, Audi, and so on. And they are kind of happy to have those cars.

And when I see the advertisement, like for Mercedes, "the best engineered car in the world" and I remember very well in those same damned-- excuse the word-- damned Mercedes, those big generals-- the SS, and so on-- they were riding around in Vienna and in France and all over the places in those big Mercedes cars. And they were looking that everything is all right.

And I'm sure they were riding around in the concentration camps and other places. And the same goes for the BMW and the Audis. Or when I heard about other companies, we make business today, and they employ a lot of Jews today. There were a lot of Jewish salesmen here. And they can't make of --

IG Farben?

Farben.

Bayer.

Bayer and other places. And Volkswagen had a lot of Jewish establishments here. They let people know that they have no prejudice against Jews. I wish it would be true.

So you think the people in this country who are tired of hearing about the Holocaust, and maybe own an Audi or a Mercedes, you feel, perhaps they're a little guilty about buying German goods and that's why they don't want to hear about it anymore?

Guilt is not the right way of saying that, because you cannot be guilty when you buy with your own money something. And we have no right to tell anybody what you should do with your money. I would understand that somebody will tell me what to do. This is a free country. And I respect it very much. I respect it maybe more than anybody else because I went to countries which were not free.

They are not guilty. They just don't think about it. They like that particular car and they buy it.

And they don't want to talk about the Holocaust?

Maybe they don't think about it. Maybe they do. They still buy it.

Well, Mr. Pollack this has been extremely interesting and very valuable and very helpful.

Thank you very much.

Thank you so much for sharing with us.

It's my pleasure. And when I'm gone and some people should have nothing else to look at that, they will remember.

Absolutely. That's the whole purpose.

It can happen any place, like we saw that so many times.

Thank you.

Thank you very much.