

This is Baruch Milch. I'm known here as Bernard Milch. I was--

That's enough.

The 13th of April, 1983, at the Convention Center in Washington DC.

My name is Baruch Milch. I've been known now in the States as Bernard Milch. As a young boy they used to call me Bunio Milch. I was born in the small village of Teofipilka. This is in Eastern Poland or now known as Western Ukraine.

Up to 1939 it was Poland. In 1939 during the pact between Russia and Germany, this part of the country was taken over by the Soviet Union. Then in June 1941, when Germany invaded Russia on and about I think July, the Germans came into our community.

Teofipilka was a small village.

Wait a minute. What month and year is this that the Germans came in?

The Germans came in, I think, in July 1980-- 1941.

'41, right at the beginning of the war.

Right in the beginning of the war, since the front collapsed immediately. Before I go in into the details what happened after the Germans marched in, I'll explain something about myself and my family.

We lived in the village Teofipilka, next to Kozova We were farmers and merchants prior to the war. And my father was in the leather business. We also were beekeepers at home, and the-- very few Jewish farmers that they farmed, actually, land.

I went to school in the public school in the city of Kozova, where my father maintained a home, where my sister and two other brothers by the name of Joshua, whose alive, he's now in Toronto, and another brother by the name David, who was a baby a year and a half older than I am, and my sister, Bronia, who lived in the city. We also had a home in the village.

Was this a very Jewish city?

The city of Kozova was approximately 6,000 souls. 3,000 of them were Jews, and 3,000 of them were Poles and Ukrainians. This part of the Poland, I would say, 60% of the population was Ukrainian and 40% were Poles. So the city itself was 50% Jewish and 50% mixed between Ukrainians and Poles. You had a Ukrainian Orthodox Church and priest and also a Catholic Orthodox Church and priest, where the Polish, who belonged to the Orthodox Church.

I grew up, I thought of myself as a Pole, even though that at home we were Jewish. My father happened to be, for 14 years, in the United States prior World War I.

Prior to World War I.

Well, he came to the United States, I would say, in the 1880, since then came back and went back again. I remember as a small child my father attended in Castle Garden a meeting against the pogroms in Russia in 1905 with Dorothy Schiff's father, who had a speech against the pogroms. And I was no more than a boy of eight or nine, he used to tell us the stories. After I emigrated to the United States, I met people that my father used to babysit when they were small children yet.

Well, the Poland collapsed in 1939. Russians came in. I finished my public school already under the Russians. And in 1941, much to our shock since we were in an isolated part of Europe, war broke out between Russia and Germany.

As soon as the Germans marched in into our area of the country, the Ukrainian nationalists, under the banner of Bandera, Banderovtsy, start taking revenge on Jews and on Poles. In the village, next village is Svoboda, where my sister Bronia lived.

Svoboda.

Svoboda. Svoboda means in English freedom, liberate. They have killed all the Jews, the Ukrainians.

All?

All. And the leader of it was the Greek Orthodox priest. They killed the Jews, women and small children. Some of them were running away. They caught them in the fields. And their corpses was there laying for quite a few days until they were buried.

The same killers from the village of Svoboda were running onto the village of Teofipilka, where we lived. The peasants from our village stopped them, said, we will deal with our Jews ourselves. We don't need outsiders to do that.

In our village of Teofipilka, there were a few Jewish families, ourselves, the Milches. We also had our cousins. And my mother's name was Katz, the Katzes. And the Katzes were two brothers. So each one my cousin, he had a wife and two children, another cousin's wife that he passed away, with two children. And there was another family of Rothstein.

My grandfather lived in that village. And my grandfather actually operated the Kretscheme. As you understand, it is like an inn in there for the nobility who own the land. So we were very well known as farmers. The peasants respected our family, Milch, and also the Katzes. They stopped the killers from the Svoboda to entering our village to kill us.

After the Germans came in, they created-- there was not ghetto. There was no ghetto immediately. The ghetto was actually formed, I would say, towards the end of 1941, 1941 or beginning in '42. That was done immediately after the aktia was, the first aktia that was created in the beginning of '42-- in the spring '42.

No, it was done in the fall, in Rosh ha-Shana of '41, when they surrounded the city of Kozova and [INAUDIBLE] together with the Ukrainian police and herded the Jews that they could find into the train. And I understand that in the same time they took the people to Belzec, to the vernichtungslager. Since nobody came--

Belsen?

Belzec.

Belzec?

Belzec. During this aktia, my oldest sister two children were taken away, including with her mother-in-law. That the Ukrainian peasant are-- the neighbor actually, when they took the grandmother, took one of my sister's youngest daughter, child, and just gave it to the grandmother to take it together to the transport.

In 1942, they issued an edict, that all Jews from the surrounding area of Kozova, from the villages, should move to the ghetto. Then my father and ourselves, we moved to the ghetto, together with my sister, who remained alive in the village of Svoboda. See, they killed all the Jews, but they did not kill my sister and her husband. Their maiden name was Hammer.

They were also farmers in Svoboda. And they-- all their family was in the United States. In fact, May's department store, Jack Weinstein, who formed the May's department store in New York, his wife was from Svoboda, and a sister of my brother-in-law.

Macy's?

May's.

May's.

Not Macy's, May's-- Jack Weinstein. And since my brother-in-law was known as the-- for the wealthy farmers, so they did-- the Ukrainians themselves killed all the Jews in Svoboda with the exception of my brother-in-law's family and my sister.

Because they were wealthy and known.

Because they knew that they were-- had the family in the United States and they were wealthy. And the reason why this was done-- see, the killing was conducted by the priests, whether they were the Polish Catholic priests or the Ukrainian Catholic priests. So you must understand, this part of Poland was 99.9% Catholic. And whatever the priest said, it was the holy.

And the propaganda you had prior the war, that the Jews are Bolsheviks and Communists. So therefore, since they are Bolsheviks and Communists, and the Germans are coming in as the protectors of the faith from the Bolshevism, so they killed all the Jews that they can lay their hands, with some exceptions. They thought that the Jews who were the wealthy farmers, they were not Communists irrespective, in some instances.

In '42, when the ghetto was created, my sister from Svoboda came there with her husband. My sister-- older sister who was with me in Teofipilka, we all had to leave our farm, leave our livestock, and move to the ghetto. Some of the peasants took our livestock, in fact, told us in our village, we will safekeep it for you.

I was then 15 years old. My other brother David, who did not survive, was maybe 16 and 1/2. My brother Joshua, who now is in Canada, he maybe was 19, 19 years old-- 19 or 20. And my brother, Sam or Sukkah, was already about 22 or 24 years old. My sister Balza, who survived the war with her husband, she was married and had two children. And the other sister, Bronia, with her husband, had one child that was born, I think, the week when the Germans marched in, into our area.

I stayed very little in ghetto, particularly the three younger brothers of ours, myself, David, and Joshua. We mostly stayed in the village of Teofipilka working for the peasants, in fact, toiling even our own fields and growing crops. And then the ghetto was started-- I used to come into the ghetto once in a while to bring in food to the ghetto at night, bring in food for the family and also for the relatives.

I remember, I worked in the fields. And that day they surrounded the ghetto with the second aktia. Aktia means that the German Einsatzgruppen came in from the county seat. And our county seat was the city of Tarnopol. Used to come in early in the morning at dawn, surround the ghetto together with the Ukrainian helpers-- and they were willing helpers-- and then just find any Jew who they could lay their hands, bring him into the Jewish cemetery, let him dig a grave, and then shooting in a mass grave, something similar as happened in Babyn Yar.

There were thousands of Babyn Yars in Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine.

Why don't we know about them? Why do we know about Babi Yar, and we don't know-- because there is no records of it.

The reason why we don't know about the other small Babyn Yars, in the city of Kozova, in the Babyn Yar, there were maybe three aktias and three mass graves like this. And each one maybe contained 1,000 or 1,500. It's the sheer enormity of Babyn Yar, of killing 150,000 people, it's known. The human mind just cannot comprehend how many Babyn Yars were there around.

In Western Poland, they had concentration camps. There were some zwangsarbeitslager. They used to take here and there young men to work on the railroad or to work in the quarries. But that was exceptions. Mostly the killing was done

on the spot. Or if they used to caught or catch a Jew without the armband or outside the ghetto, they used to kill him or bring him to the area of the Jewish cemetery, and the killing was done there.

You were outside of the ghetto.

Right.

If they found you, they would-- or were you allowed to be outside?

No, I was not allowed. But they just did not find-- find me. I was constantly aware I should not be found. And the peasants in this particular village, Teofipilka, knew us. So they, nobody really went out and denounced us or to the Germans or to the Ukrainian police. Again, in our village, Teofipilka, nobody got arrested from the Poles when the Russians came in. Nobody really went arrested, between the peasants, when the Germans came in. Nobody got arrested when the Russians came back.

The reason why was this, it was a balanced community. It was a better living. They have a harmonious living between the Ukrainian and the Poles. And the three or four Jewish families that lived with them were accepted.

The biggest troublemakers were the Ukrainians, or in some cases Poles, living outside our village of Teofipilka. I used to come into the ghetto, and I have seen that misery. And as a young man, I used to ask myself the question, the inhumanity of man to man and why, why the leaders of the church, the religious leader, the Ukrainian or the Poles never said one word, officially or unofficially?

They are killing women, children, and people. I attended mass, Catholic mass in Greek or Orthodox Ukrainian mass. I never heard any priest utter anything in defense, just the opposite.

I'll give you a incident. My sister escaped during a aktia where they used to catch Jews to kill. And she hid in the attic in the barn where the peasant kept cows, milking cows. And there are known the peasant woman came to milk the cows. And she had a small child, a girl maybe five or six years old, asking her mother, Mother, why do they kill people? The peasant woman just did not have the answer or didn't know what to say.

And after a while, she turned around to her child and said, child, they're killing Jews since they killed our God, Jesus Christ. Therefore, they're being punished. When my sister heard that, she said, there is no escape for us, if this is the rationale why they are killing people.

When the ghetto was liquidated and judenfrei was declared, and that was on about in the beginning of June of 1943.

So that included your family.

My family--

Except for your brother.

My family was still intact, with except my sister's, Bronia's, husband, who was killed during a aktia. It was typhus, in ghetto. My sister hid in the cellar. And when the-- whether it was the German SS or Ukrainian police came to the bedroom, and she heard the shot. And he had high fever. He was delirious from fever. He could not hide. So they killed my brother-in-law, Jacob, who is the brother of Mrs. Weinstein from May's department store. They killed him in bed in ghetto.

And his name was--

Jacob.

Jacob.

Yankel. Yankel Hammer. Yankel Hammer. His brother left-- actually, he was the only one from the big family left in Poland. All his brothers and half brothers and sisters emigrated to the United States.

When the ghetto was declared judenfrei, all my father, my three-- my three brothers, Sukkah or Sam, Shia or Joshua, David, and myself, my sister Balcza, and her husband Shloime, we all escaped to the villages in various areas, particularly in the village Teofipilka and the surrounding areas, where we knew the area so well that we knew every peasant, every house, the fields that I can walk at night in the wintertime, when snow was covered. I could tell the marking of where to go.

Since we lived there and we worked the fields, we knew the area very well. We were hiding in the fields, as you-- the wheat grows in June, some of them gets like half-- about, oh, about 3 feet to 4 feet high-- high. Please remember, there were no forests in our area, no forests at all, only flat fields. They used to call this the breadbasket of Europe.

There was no natural landscape to hide. There were no hills that you could see for miles. We hid in the fields and sometimes in the barns without the knowledge of the peasants. But since we knew the houses and the barns and the roads so well, we didn't have to tell them. We could hide ourselves.

There were other Jews who also escaped the ghetto before the judenfrei or during the declaration of judenfrei. During that period, between June and September, the Ukrainians, mostly Ukrainians, and some Poles, who declared themselves Volksdeutsche, that their forebears came from Germany. There was one fellow by the name of Bayer who went with me to public school. They used to go out hunting Jews in the fields like somebody goes out today and hunt rabbits or wild animals.

They used to go out in the fields, club them to death, men, women, and children. This fellow Bayer caught my brother-in-law's brother and his wife and two children, my cousin, Liebling, with his wife and children, and then some other Jews in the fields after that. That happened like hunting parties.

Now, in other words, they weren't even required to do this. There was no advantage to them. Well--

They were not required. The Germans encouraged. I have learned one thing, that the Germans really declared-- dehumanized the Jew, declared open season. That's all what they had to do. They had so much willing helpers that they didn't have to do the rest.

If the local populace would not help the Germans, it's my belief that more than 50% of the Jews in our area, and I'm sure this applies for any other area, would be alive today. And they will be definitely alive if the priests-- and they were under the popes. They listened to the Pope as God. If the Pope would have issued an edict that killing people, whether they may be Jews, Armenians, or anything, it is against the teaching of God, that most of the people would have been survived.

The Germans didn't know the difference between a Jew or a Ukrainian. No way could a German tell that I was a Jew. I spoke Ukrainian better than the Ukrainian. I spoke Polish better than a Polish peasant. I worked the fields better than he could. He could not tell. And that's basically how I later survived.

So when the Germans-- when the Poles or the mostly Ukrainians used to take the hunting parties to kill the Jews that left the ghettos and hid in the fields, they really-- a few had the ability to survive in this area. And part was my family, since we knew the area.

We were not from the city. We were from the village. And mostly the people from the city could not-- could not-- how do you say that somebody-- blends with the landscape-- could not blend into the landscape, into the field, into the peasantry as well as we did, since I was dressed like a peasant, I spoke like a peasant, and I worked like a peasant.

So in the winter of 1943 and '44, we hid out in the village of Teofipilka with and without the knowledge of certain peasants. At night we either used to steal bread and food from the peasants' barns, milk the cow at night without their

knowledge. And sometimes we used to walk over to the peasant, to certain peasants, knock on the window, and they used to give us bread and food. I remember--

Why did they give you?

Since they knew us, and they felt compassion. The peasants in our area, in Teofipilka, they will not kill us. They were-- just not kill us. My sister and her husband, her husband's brother that survived and his wife and the children were killed later in the fields by the Ukrainians who went-- who went hunting, and my older brother Sam, and brother Joshua who is in Canada, hid out at a Polish family in the village of Plaska. That was like on the outskirts of our village in Teofipilka.

They dug out like a grave underneath in the barn. And this peasant kept them there. His family didn't know. His children didn't know. Sometimes they used-- his children used to ask his father, Father, why are you cooking so many potatoes? He said, I'm feeding more pigs. Therefore, I need some more potatoes. And he used to feed them as much as he had in the village of Plaska.

In February of 1944--

Why don't I just--

February 1944, that was the-- in the Greek Orthodox holiday, they call it Jordan. And I have to take a look on the calendar what date that occurred in '44. One of the Ukrainian policemen, who, as I mentioned before, used to harm the Jews, had a girlfriend in our village. And probably somebody told him that the Jews are hiding out-- caught me and my brother. And they was taking us.

They saw it, in the middle of the night, how we went to a barn to get some bread. And they caught us. And they caught us in the middle of the night and locked us up in the village in a basement-- it's like a jail-- and put another peasant to guard us, we should not escape.

It was a-- snow was falling. It was below zero. And that evening, as that guard was marching left and right, and there were snow drifts and swirls, my brother and I made a pact that we should try to escape. Better to be shot in the back than waiting for them to shoot us.

We ripped one of the iron bars out. There were stones, millstones, that the Germans took away from the peasants to prevent them to make flours. So we broke one of the millstones and used the millstone to pry one of the bars. And to be able to escape it, we had to take whatever clothing we had, to be able to squeeze through the bars.

And the pact was, whoever goes first should not look back for the second one made it. I was the first one who ran out. And I-- they caught us at night. They kept us a whole day. And they're supposed to bring us to the county for execution next morning. So we escaped like-- it was getting dark.

I ran out first, and my brother probably ran after me. As I ran, I ran through the village. I knew my way through. I seen one barn open. I ran into the barn and climbed-- in the barn, the peasant kept a lot of hay-- climbed down all the way, burrowed inside the hay. So-- and covered after me.

Since it was getting dark, I heard later, about 10 or 15 minutes, that the peasant passed by and locked the barn from the outside. I then-- they had searching parties to looking for us, and they could not find me. And later I found out my brother escaped too. And they did not find him.

I stayed in that barn without food and without much clothing two days, until things calmed down. And then at night, I sneaked out from the barn, went through the fields maybe six kilometers. See, in the middle of the field we had a bunker, where my sister and her child, my father was there, my cousin and his wife and two children, and another cousin with two children were hiding.

I walked in [INAUDIBLE] cold all the way there. And I was never-- I never was sick, never had a cold. I found the

bunker. And then I found out after that that my brother David also escaped.

I stayed in that bunker for the next two weeks. That was already beginning of March.

When you ran out from the jail, they didn't shoot at-- the guards shoot at you?

No. The guard, they couldn't. Since the wind swirled blinded him, before he had a chance to turn around, we already escaped in different directions. And we have made the arrangement that each one of us should run in a different direction, not in the same.

And as I mentioned before, one sister and her husband and a brother-- and two brothers were hiding in Plaska. And the other sister and my father were hiding in the middle of the field. See, and the peasant just did not have the room to accommodate all.

I stayed there with them until March. The Russian Army, in March, was maybe reached about 50 miles from us, from our village. In fact, my wife was, I think, liberated already in March. And we were yet on the Russian side.

My wife was sitting here. She was already liberated in March. They took volunteers, Ukrainian volunteers, to dig trenches. And one day two Ukrainians from a neighborhood village crossing the field stumbled on the bunker. I was in the bunker. My cousin Herman, or Hersch, talked to them and begged them not to give us away.

There was no way to go since, in the village, German soldiers already were bivouacked there. See, the front was 50 miles away. He promised he wouldn't do so. And we then talked about it, what to do. And they made the decision to stay there.

I left that evening. I left that evening and hid in the village itself. Since I was the youngest, I could have done that. My sister couldn't do it, she had a child. My father was old. My cousin had a wife and two children. My other cousin had two children.

So I then-- and they made decision. They told me, you go. And I left. Next day, the two peasants brought the SS. And they gave my father, my sister, her child, my cousin, his wife and two children, all of them. And he was rewarded with 2 pounds of sugar. Same peasants next day went to church, spowiedz, confession, and he got absolution to say 10 Hail Marys without realizing if Mary would be still alive, she would be crucified too or killed together with my parents, since she was a Jewess.

You know that they got 10 Hail Marys?

10 Hail Marys as a penalty by the priest, forgiving--

How did you find this out?

I found this thing out later from the peasants. And he kept the 2 pounds of sugar for it.

And that was the end of your family.

That was the end, and that was the first breakup of my family. Up to March 1944, my immediate family was intact with the exception of my sister's husband, who was killed, and my other older sister, two children were taken away during the first aktia in village with her mother-in-law.

Now when you say that your wife-- she was not then your wife.

No.

You hadn't met yet.

I did not meet my wife then. Then the front went much nearer to our village. The front stopped maybe six kilometers from our village. The city of Tarnopol was taken back three times or four times changed hands. It was a railroad junction. They trapped a German army in south of Russia. They want to get the army out of it.

And during this fighting, many Jews who survived yet were still got killed or discovered by the Germans or given away by the Ukrainians.

Since the front stopped not far from our village, and that was the beginning of the spring, I was then hiding out in the village with the knowledge of some peasant. But in no way could a peasant help us to feed, since Germans were all over. The whole village was then occupied by the German Wehrmacht, by the soldiers.

See, the front was maybe 6 kilometers or 2 or 3 miles-- 2 or 3, 4 miles maximum in some areas from us. Rumors were going through the village that the Germans are taking Ukrainian and Poles young men to dig ditches-- to dig trenches. And it is easy to cross the front line to the Russians.

And some peasants told us-- my brother David decided that he will volunteer to dig the trenches in order to cross the front line to the Russians, since we were concerned-- since we were right in the middle of the front, in the front lines. And we--

Your brother?

My brother.

You still had your brother?

My sister was killed, and my father, but my brother David, my brother Joshua, my brother Sam or Sukkah, and my sister Becky and her husband were still alive. My brother David and myself were in the village. My sister and her husband and my brother Sam, older brother, and Joshua were hiding out in Plaska, in the peasant-- under the barn. And he dug a bunker, where they were hiding.

So my brother decided, since he's older than I, he will try to-- he will-- he will join as volunteer, as a Ukrainian--

That was the same brother, by the way, with whom he was arrested and who was awaiting execution with him together.

In the jails.

In jail.

That brother who was only about a year and a half older than he. And at the same time, when there was so much tragedy and so much murder around, the solidarity between the children and between any Jew was such that, if one could give aid, even at the risk of life-- not even, exactly at the risk of one's life-- the other one went out and tried it first. And if he was the older one-- that is, his brother was the older one only by a year or a year and a half, he would have said to him, as he did, you go through that window. You go first. Don't look back at what happens to me. Because the only way which you will have a chance and I too.

And now he's telling you the tale of this extremely extraordinarily capable and bright and very, very active extraordinarily capable boy, only a year and a half older, who did not survive. And he will tell you the story why or how.

And that brother, David, was instrumental of finding the peasant who hid my sister, my older brother, and my brother Joshua, my sister's husband, her brother. He himself was younger, so he left the hiding. He made the hiding place for the older family.

He himself and myself, who we were younger, more agile, and could blend much easier into the peasant scene, not to be hidden but try to hide from one place to another. So my brother then-- I would say it was April, end of April. He joined, he volunteered. And then rumors about two or three weeks later came to me that he was successful to cross the front. And I decided to volunteer too.

I knew the village well. Since I was from this area, I knew every village, every stone, every mark in the field. It was already in May. I was very white, so I came out from the hiding and in the field sunned myself a little bit to get some color. And then I walked into that village, [PLACE NAME], and came to the commandant of the-- to the German-- Ukrainian commandant and advised that I came to replace another Ukrainian by the name of Nahaylo.

And since the-- note that was-- since he will be needed at work at home, so the village elder sent me to replace him.

You invented this.

And I invented that. When they brought me down to the camp, I saw my brother David. And my brother David made eye to me, tell me he wants to take me on the side. He said, get out of it. You cannot cross it. And once you're in it, you can't get out.

When the commander asked me, he said-- and was look very young-- how old you are? And I told him, I'm 15. I changed my story. So then they turned around to the interpreter, the Ukrainian. Now tell the village mayor, or Soltys, that you are too young. He should send somebody older and stronger.

And they released me. And I really was happy. I started walking back. Then I realized, my God, I don't have anything in writing. I have no papers. And this is my opportunity to obtain papers.

I went back to the village administration, where the German SS was there or the Wehrmacht. And the Ukrainian elder of the village asked me, why did you came back? I said, I came back and they would not believe me that I was here. Why don't you give me a paper stating that I'm too young to work.

So they asked me, what name is you? So I used the name, the same name, a similar name that I came to replace, Nahaylo. I said, my name is Ivan Nahaylo. So they wrote out a paper that Ivan Nahaylo is hereby freed from work, since he is too young. And they put a German stamp with the hakenkreuz on it. And I already had a document.

I laughed, came back to our village, hid there. The same evening, I broke into a barn and stole a barrel of cheese, brought to my sisters and my brother, who were hiding out in another village, for them to eat. Since it was hard for them to have something to eat. And I told them that next day, with this paper, I'm going to volunteer to work in another village.

And I went in maybe 5 or 10 kilometers to another village. And it was early in the morning. And they asked me, where are you going? Where are you going, boy? I said, I'm going to looking for work. And I'm from another-- from Stanislaw³w.

This is a part I knew that the Russians are already there. And during a year before, there was also a famine in this area. So I'm looking for work, and I cannot go back to Stanislaw³w since they're already the front lines. So one peasant pointed out to another peasant, who was bringing his cows back from pasture, this man could use some help.

And I walked over and talked to him in Ukrainian. Grandfather, could you use some help? He was delighted, asked me what's my name. And I showed him the paper. And I went to work for that man. I worked for him May, June, and July.

The Russian Army liberated this area in July 1944. In the same-- and that neighbor [AUDIO OUT] neighbor's son was in the Ukrainian SS. I had problems to hide my identity, since they took me in as a Ukrainian. If they would have known that I'm Jewish, they would have hung me and tore pieces of my flesh alive. Since during working for that peasant, from other peasants' children who used to take the horses and the cows to pasture and work with the fields together with me, they were telling stories how they were hunting Jews and killing them and clubbing them like wild animals in the fields--

- after the liberation by the Russians, when I already came to the village.

One more incident I want to explain that actually made David to volunteer. It was in May, I think, or end of March or beginning May, when the frontlines was in the village. Teofipilka was part of the front. There there's no way could a peasant-- peasant were afraid to death since if they would have caught, they could be punished with death too. No way could he give us a bread.

In that period, my older brother Sam, brother David, and I were hiding out in one place. And a peasant came and told us she has no bread, she has no food, actually, to give us. Said there's no way. But not far, dug into a dugout, was a German depot of bread for the German soldiers. The peasant showed me where it is. And I decided one evening, as the German guard was guarding the bread depot, to crawl on my stomach in the middle of the night, watching the moon go behind clouds when it gets dark, to steal a sack full of bread, bring it back so it would enable us to have food.

Well when I came to the conclusion and told my sister that I'm going now to work as a peasant to survive the balance, since there was no room to hide out at that bunker in Plaska. See, that bunker was so full that, actually, one was laying on top of the other. That was a, I would say, 3 feet by 6 area. That was my two brothers-- Sam, Joshua-- my sister, her husband, Shloime, and his brother, Zigmund. So we younger had to--

3 by 6-- what do you mean, size wise?

Size wise. You know, the area itself, 3 by 6 is the area, and maybe the height was maybe 4 feet high. So that was actually under the barn floor, where he was used to storage hay for the livestock. I then went to work for the peasant as a Ukrainian. And my sister, in the front line, left the bunker and went to work also as a Ukrainian woman, since it was impossible for the peasant himself to be able to feed as many people, since there was not enough of food for him and for the family was left. He was starving himself.

So my sister then left the bunker since he left all the men there since she could not be as easily identifiable as a male, due to circumcision. Without circumcision, no way could they identify me as a Jew or my brother David. My brother David would be alive today. It's the circumcision.

My brother David, in turn, later was given away in this camp by another Ukrainian. The rumors are that this did not happen directly. This happened indirectly. He probably told one of his friends who knew him. There was one peasant from the village who knew my brother David. He knew him from childhood.

He probably told his friend, you know, there's a Jew between us. You know, as a secret as being one friend to another. And then my brother David was identified as a Jew, and he was killed.

He never crossed the frontlines. If he would have stayed with us, in all probability, he would survive as much as I. But that's a conjecture. That's very hard to speculate.

The Russians liberated us in July 1944. And as I recall, after the liberation they took a lot of young Ukrainians into the Russian Army. As they were marching, some soldiers, draftees into the army. One of them was from a neighbor's son. When I survived in the last three months as a Ukrainian, when he found out that I'm Jewish, he just could not believe. He said, OK, you want a Jew? You want-- he could not comprehend that Ivan Nahaylo could be a Jew. This is only a part of my survival.

Part of my survival is that what man can do to another man, the inhumanity, it's just incomprehensible. Even today, I cannot understand how the world was silent, how the great religious leaders were silent. But as more facts, the more I read about it, as far as the European Jewry, there was no way to hide. We were strangers in a land, strangers persecuted by the establishment and marked by the official church.

And without the cooperation of the Catholic Church or silence-- and silence is cooperation-- Hitler could have never done. That does not mean that the Protestant establishment did not have a hand in that too. But I only speak for myself from a country that was 99.9% Catholic. And you only have to see the power of the church that it even has today there,

and the power of the church that it had then, and the silence of the Pope.

So the papacy is just as guilty, for the Pope Pius XII was his name, he is just as guilty as Adolf Hitler or Himmler, since by his silence he condemned all the Jews of Eastern Europe. This is only a small fragment, since it is impossible to describe and explain what I have seen, the atrocities.

I have also seen how they have caught Jewish boys and girls that I knew him well, the Ukrainian, and they were killing them. And I had to stay by and see how that murder was committed, since I was then as a Ukrainian, as one of them.

That was at the end. The killing was going on at the-- towards the end, that the Ukrainians knew that Hitler was already being out, that the Russian Army was maybe 2 or 3 kilometers away. They were still hiding-- they were still killing the Jews.

You don't have to go far. After the liberation in Poland, they were created-- my wife will explain-- they offered this for children. The Poles were throwing grenades and killing Jews and children that survived the Holocaust. This happened after.

It didn't happen in Germany. After the fall of Hitler, there was no incident of killing Jews in Germany. But there was incident of killing in Ukraine, in Russia, and in Poland. In our own village, after the liberation, one girl was killed outside by the Ukrainian national movement-- after the liberation. She survived the horror.

Which village?

Village of Kozova. Kozova had the total 6,000 people. Village of Teofipilka had maybe mostly 1,000 people lived in the village. It's a farm village in the Ukraine.

Now, you say that you couldn't tell all the things you'd seen.

I have recently seen a movie, Gandhi. And I'm sure many people have seen the movie Gandhi. And there is a scene in South Africa. When Gandhi started his movement, General Smuts, who was the governor general of South Africa, brings in Gandhi after he was jailed and said to stop it. Stop the civil disobedience movement that you have created. And Gandhi refuses.

He said, that's not right to prosecute an account of color. Smuts says, I agree with you. But if you do not stop, I will stop issuing permits of immigration of Indians into South Africa. Gandhi then realized, by his movement against prosecution and intolerance in South Africa, he will cut out the ability of many Indians to leave the poverty of India and move to jobs in South Africa. He agreed to leave South Africa for India.

Now, as a parallel, he comes to India and then creates the nonviolent movement against the British imperial government of India. And the British tried to stop him, same as General Smuts tried to stop him in South Africa. And there is a famous statement that he makes, Gandhi. And 1,000 Englishmen cannot stop 300 millions Indians are making work if they don't want. Now, how does this apply to Jews?

Gandhi could not done this in a strange land. It was South Africa. It was not India. In India, he was in his own home. He could have done this. Jews could not survive in Poland. We were homeless. Nobody wanted us. The great length of the United States didn't want us either. People were there in ships and didn't want them.

France, all the democracy didn't want us. Hitler had a clear Carte Blanche. Kill them. Who wants them? The Pope gave him a Carte Blanche. Kill the Jews. They're the Bolsheviks. You are the defender of the faith.

Therefore, the Jews must have their own land. They must have Israel. As much as if we would have Israel, Hitler would have never done that either. There would be Israel ready to accept the Jews.

The parallel of the Holocaust is you, we can fight any injustice. But the fight really has a meaning if you do it from your

own homeland. Not all Jews could be in Israel. But for the diaspora and for the Jews that have the dignity, no matter what land they live, Israel will be there as a last resort, that never again a atrocity committed like that will happen.

Some people say there are many holocausts around, not only that happen to Jews. That's not so. In Cambodia, the Cambodians are killing Cambodians. In Vietnam, the Vietnamese were killing the Vietnamese. In Biafra, the Biafran were killing-- they were killing each other.

But there was no government sanctions and government created program developed to annihilate people, man, woman, or child. It did not happen. Even conversion didn't help, since the antisemitism has two phases. First one was the religious. During the Inquisition, anybody who converted was saved.

The Hitler's antisemitism was not antisemitism religious. It took a genocidal overtone. It started with economic religious as a basis, but only to destroy the Jews to a decision was made. And that is the lesson that I have learned. And this is the lesson, as long as I'm alive, I'm going to teach my children, whoever I can reach, even though I live in the United States and I'm a proud American.

But I'm also a proud Jew. And whatever I can, my last breath, I will defend Israel. Since if Israel-- if the Jews will have their own land, that Holocaust would have never happened. There was no spokesman for the Jews at all.

Well, at least we got Israel.