

**KOFFLER, Tzvi**  
**RG-50.120\*0383**  
**One videocassette**

**Abstract**

Tzvi Koffler was born in February 1929 in Jazlowiec, Poland (now Pomortsy, Ukraine). He lived with his mother, father, twin brother, and younger sister. He experienced anti-Semitism, but says it decreased after the Russians entered the village in 1939. Refugees from other parts of Poland arrived in the village. Residents did not believe the refugees' stories until the Germans came and enforced the anti-Jewish laws. Jews were forced to leave the village at the end of 1941. His father died, and the family moved to Buchach, Ukraine.

Shortly afterward, he was sent to a labor camp Borki Wyrki, Poland and eventually escaped. Aktions began in mid-1942. Tzvi's family had heard about this in advance, and marched through snow to another village. He and his sister became separated from their mother and brother. When he and his sister returned later to Buchach, they learned that their mother and brother were among 2,800 Jews who had been killed in the aktion.

He and his sister hid during two other aktions. He was taken to work in the fields, and in the town, 1,000 people were shot and killed, including his sister. He went to a farm where he found work, and managed to hide other Jews. Ukrainians killed all Jews who worked in the fields, but he passed as gentile. In March 1944, the Russians liberated them. Tzvi was injured in one of the last bombardments by the escaping Germans.

He and other boys scavenged for food while running from the Germans, who had established a second front. In Chortkiv, Ukraine the boys were taken to an orphanage, but later were told to leave and go to Gliwice, Poland. They stayed in Gliwice for six months and were trained in a kibbutz by *shlichim* (Zionist emissaries) from Palestine.

In January 1947, they went to Marseille and boarded a boat bound for Israel, but the British caught them and sent them to Cyprus. There, they trained with smuggled weapons for a year. Finally, he arrived in Palestine, served in the army for two years, married, and had children.

**Time Coded Notes**

- 1:00 Tzvi was born in February 1929 in Pomortsy, part of Poland until 1939 (now Ukraine). His father was a grain merchant. He had a twin brother and a younger sister. The family was religious but not orthodox. He had private lessons in Hebrew.
- 1:05 Tzvi describes the village that had 150 Jewish families. He went to public school, and also to a *cheder*. He describes incidents of anti-Semitism in the village. He had relatives in Buchach, Ukraine a nearby larger town.
- 1:15 In 1939, the Russians entered their village. His father was allowed to continue his work. The school then became Communist, and they were indoctrinated. Anti-Semitism decreased during the Communist reign.
- 1:18 In 1940, refugees from other parts of Poland arrived. Villagers did not want to believe the refugees' stories.
- 1:22 When the Germans entered, they enforced anti-Jewish laws. The Ukrainians had begun killing Jews even before the Germans entered. They killed the Hungarian Jews who arrived later.
- 1:28 At the end of 1941, all Jews were ordered to leave the village and go to Potok Zloty, Poland. There was severe hunger, and Tzvi describes bringing grain to the family. His father was taken to a work camp, but was released later, and they returned to their village.
- 2:00 Tzvi's father became ill and died. Tzvi and the rest of his family were ordered to move back to Buchach. In 1942, he was taken to a labor camp in Borki Wyrki, Poland where conditions were terrible. He escaped and returned to Buchach. The camp was burned down in 1943.
- 2:08 In mid-1942, the Aktions started. Tzvi's family had previous knowledge of this, and marched through snow to another village. He and his sister were separated from their mother and brother. When he and his sister returned later to Buchach, they learned that their mother and brother, and 2,800 other Jews, were killed in the Aktion.
- 2:18 During another Aktion, Tzvi and his sister hid in a bunker and were not discovered. Six hundred people were killed during this Aktion. Tzvi and his sister were told to go to Śląski (?), where they hid during another Aktion. They heard shooting in the streets, but remained undiscovered.
- 2:30 A month later, Tzvi was taken to work in the fields. He heard shooting in the village, during which 1,000 people were killed, including his sister.

- 3:00 Tzvi went to a farm and told a peasant woman that he was an orphan looking for work. She hired him and called him Ivan. He tended to the farm animals, and managed to hide other Jews who had escaped.
- 3:09 The Ukrainians killed all Jews who worked in the fields, but Tzvi passed as a gentile.
- 3:22 The Russian front was advancing, and the Germans began retreating. The Ukrainians wanted to kill all the Jews, but a German officer protected them. In March 1944, the Russians arrived and liberated them. Tzvi was injured in one of the last bombardments by the escaping Germans.
- 3:28 After liberation, the Jews scavenged for food in farms. Then, they had to escape from the Germans, who had opened a second front.
- 3:32 Tzvi escaped with a group of boys to Chortkiv, Ukraine where they were taken to an orphanage. Later, they were told to leave and go to Gliwice, Poland.
- 4:00 They stayed in Gliwice for six months and were trained in a kibbutz by *shlichim* (Zionist emissaries) from Palestine. Then they continued to Fernwaldt (nothing similar found), where they worked for one year preparing to go to Palestine. In January 1947, they went to Marseille and boarded a boat with 600 other passengers bound for Palestine. He described the stormy passage, and being caught by the British, who took them to Cyprus.
- 4:08 They arrived in Cyprus in March 1947, and remained there for one year. They were trained with weapons that had been smuggled in.
- 4:11 In 1948, Tzvi arrived in Palestine and enlisted in the army for two years. Later, he married and had children.