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Summary

Stanley Bors (né Stanislaw Przedborski) was born in a Polish city of 100,000 near the German border [Sosnowiec, Poland]. He lived with two sisters, a brother, and his parents. Grandparents and aunts and uncles lived nearby. He did not know, or remember, much about the Jewish community, although he did live in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood. His father was active in the socialist Zionist group, Mapai. He went to public school until the 7th grade where there was a mix of Jewish and non-Jewish students and then to gymnasium where there were few Jewish students. He experienced little antisemitism until he reached high school, since his neighborhood was largely Jewish. There he faced discrimination and remembered a priest who called Jews names and taught other students to hate Jews. Bors then went to university where discrimination was even worse. There were quotas on Jews and antisemitic German influence was strong, including student political parties that espoused antisemitism. He remembered a teacher who taught part-time in Poland and part time in Germany who was outspoken in his opposition to antisemitism, but he had to resign over harassment by antisemitic students. Bors studied agricultural engineering which was to prove important for his survival.

When the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939 Bors had just finished university. He and his family went to a town in Poland occupied by the Russians. He met his future wife there, and they married during the war. Because of his expertise he had a good job. When the Germans invaded Russia in the summer of 1941 his family was killed. He and his wife decided to return to go to Warsaw where her parents were. They were later killed. Conditions were terrible in the ghetto, especially for the poor. The Jewish police were a constant threat to other Jews. He was treated better because of his agricultural skills. His wife worked in the post office set up by the Judenrat. When he heard about the upcoming liquidation of the ghetto he was able to escape by jumping off a truck and was helped by gentiles. His wife's uncles lived nearby. Two had spouses who were Catholics, and the uncles also pretended to be Catholic. He and his wife stayed at one uncle's house for a while, but the uncle asked them to leave when he thought it was getting too dangerous. Later Bors found out that all the people in the house were later killed by the Nazis, except for the Catholic wife. He and his wife went to another uncle who also was in a mixed marriage and stayed there until the Russian liberation.

After liberation Bors returned to his hometown and quickly found a job in his field. In 1946 his daughter was born. But antisemitism among the Poles made them decide to leave. He remembered one incident where a Jewish doctor, a former Polish officer, opened a practice but was killed by members of the Polish underground. He and his wife were able to get visas to the United States. They came to Chicago where an uncle lived but later moved 50 kilometers away to a small town in Indiana. He had good relations with neighboring farmers. There was no Jewish community. In a parting comment he related that life in the United States was so much freer for Jews and that the state of Israel is so important for Jews who are being persecuted.