

ZARA, Chirilă  
Moldova Documentation Project  
Romanian  
RG-50.572\*0057

Box 1, Tape 1

In this interview, war veteran Zara Chirilă, born in 1923, talks about the events at the beginning of the war in his home village of Pociumbăuți, and comments on the situation of the Jews living in that village.

**[01:] 00:19:03 – [01:] 10:19:15**

He recalls the first bombings at the beginning of the war and the arrival of the German, Italian, and Romanian troops; discusses the fact that he and another young man doing their premilitary service were assigned to dig the graves; says that he did not follow the instructions and that he and a friend hid in the bell tower of the church.

**[01:] 10:19:16 – [01:] 18:51:19**

He describes the case of a Communist Jew, **Picoru Bernstein**, who stabbed his wife **Esra** and his daughter **Boțica**, set the house on fire, and finally killed himself; discusses how the Romanian Communists live in fear of execution; mentions how his father acted as an informer to the Germans but did not denounce any of the Communists in the village; explains that that was the reason why the Communists did not denounce him later on when the Russians came; mentions a concrete case, that of Mr. **Hăbășescu**, a Communist who was not punished by the Superior Court because of his father's statement.

**[01:] 18:51:20 – [01:] 35:26:15**

He comments on the escape of **Bernstein**'s sister, who had been hiding at the house of the neighbor, the **Germel** Family; explains that she was eventually arrested and brought to a camp; explains that he cannot give any details on the execution of the Jews because he could not see or hear anything from the bell tower; tells a story that he heard from the other villagers, about two young beautiful Jewish women, one of whom did not fall down after the first shot; says that the German soldiers treated the villagers with decency; tells the story of a legend that the queen and mother of King Mihai of Romania also hated Jews because her husband Carol II left her for a Jewish woman; explains that it was not only Hitler who hated the Jews; discusses the impression of visiting a concentration camp in Poland in 2006 left on him.