

BUTCOVAN, Gavril
Romania Documentation Project
Romanian
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Box 1, Tape 1

In this interview, Gavril Butcovan, born on July 20, 1934, in the village of Ip, talks about the massacre that took place in Ip on September 14, 1940, which was triggered by Hungarian soldiers and resulted in the killing of most Romanians in the village. In addition, Mr. Butcovan describes an explosion that took place a few days before the incident and gives an account of its consequences. He also discusses the deportation of the Jews of Ip which was carried out in the spring of 1944.

[01:] 00:38:05 – [01:] 06:44:16

He focuses on September 7, 1940, the day on which the Hungarian troops entered the village of Ip; mentions that on September 14, 1940, at 6 a.m., when the massacre started, he was at home with his family; remembers that they heard gun shots and saw soldiers and civilians on the street; mentions that he heard shots coming from the mayor's home, later in the yard and in the neighbors' house as well; describes how three soldiers entered the Butcovan family's home and asked his father where he kept his gun, which he did not have.

[01:] 06:44:17 – [01:] 15:29:10

He mentions that his father was taken out of the house and that afterwards he heard five gun shots; remembers that he was taken out as well; describes how the soldiers shot at him but missed him; describes how his eighteen-year-old sister was shot in the leg and chest and died; focuses on the death of his eleven-year-old brother, Vasile, who tried to run and was therefore shot in the head; *[he shows a piece of bone from his brother's head:]* mentions that he found it the day after the massacre; describes the murder of his eight-year-old brother **Mihai [Mihalyi]** and his five-year-old sister Ana; mentions that his mother survived; talks about lying on the ground until the morning; mentions that in the morning, his thirteen-year-old brother and six-year-old sister appeared from the house; explains that the two had been sleeping in a separate room that the soldiers did not enter; describes finding his eleven-month-old sister shot and smashed in her bed; notes that he sent his brother and sister who survived to hide at neighbors and hid his mother in the stable, while he hid in the attic.

[01:] 15:29:11 – [01:] 22:28:23

He focuses on the next morning, when around 9 a.m. some Hungarian villagers came with a carriage to pick up the corpses; notes that the corpses were put on the carriage by Roma who lived in the village; mentions that while he was staying in the attic he heard that the people who collected the corpses found a one-year-old child at the neighbors' house and killed it; notes that he heard Lieutenant **Vasváry Zoltán [Vasvári]**, the commander of the company that entered the village, saying that the previous day when they came into the village, the Romanians shot at them, but the army managed to defeat all of them; notes that he later

climbed down from the attic; discusses the arrival of the notary and the chief of the Hungarian gendarmerie in the afternoon, who came in order to seal the houses in which there were no more Romanians; remembers talking to the chief of the gendarmerie and being told that nobody would hurt him; mentions that he did not sleep at home for six weeks, as he was very afraid.

[01:] 22:28:24 – [01:] 31:04:23

He focuses on an explosion that took place a few days before the massacre; remembers that on August 30, the reassignment of Transylvania to Hungary was ordered in Vienna; mentions that the Romanian soldiers went back to their villages, leaving two boxes of grenades in the trenches in Marghita; notes that on September 7, when the Hungarian army entered Marghita, the Romanian citizens notified the commander of the company about the grenades and asked him to remove them, whereupon the boxes of grenades were put on a carriage by Hungarian soldiers; says that he heard this information from the coachman who survived the explosion; remembers that when the company reached Ip, the army took a two-hour break and in this time, some villagers from Ip took food and alcohol to the soldiers; mentions that some drank too much; remembers that the carriage exploded before it reached the village limits; says that when the commander arrived at the scene of the explosion, some Hungarian villagers lied and told him that the **Cozari** family had caused the explosion, as they supposedly had had grenades in a sack of apples; remembers that a soldier told the sub-lieutenant that the sergeant had been dancing on the carriage and thereby caused the explosion; mentions that the **Cozari** family was arrested due to the allegations of the other villagers.

[01:] 31:04:24 – [01:] 40:25:00

He remembers that two days after the incident, the two soldiers who died in the explosion were buried; discusses the members of the **Cozari** family being taken to Zalău, but being released due to the declaration of a soldier who was injured in the explosion and later stated that the sergeant who had been dancing on the carriage was responsible for the explosion; explains that from the time the soldiers entered the village to September 14, when the massacre took place, the Hungarian leaders of Ip sent a commission to Nușfalău – where the army was located – every day asking troops to go to Ip and execute the Romanian population responsible for the death of the two soldiers; notes that on September 13, Lieutenant **Vasváry Zoltán**, the commander of the troops in Nușfalău, reached Ip with his soldiers; comments on the leaders of the Hungarian National Guard, “Garda Națională Maghiară,” ordering that the soldiers should not enter the village until all villagers were asleep; discusses the commander and a few other members of the army going into the village and talking to Baron Faragó **Ștefan** [probably **István** – the Hungarian equivalent of Ștefan], the teacher Újhelyi Adalbert and the reformed priest Kovács Béla, who were the leaders of the Guard, about what would happen to the Romanians who lived in the village; notes that the Lieutenant gave two guns to two villagers and told them to shoot in the air without injuring anyone when the army appeared; explains that when the army entered the village at 11 p.m. and the two villagers shot in the air, the Lieutenant yelled that the Romanians were shooting at them; discusses that he later found out how the execution of the Romanians had been discussed in the school and a list had been drawn up with ten Romanian persons who were considered the biggest enemies of the Hungarians; mentions that these ten people were taken to the school, beaten, taken home and executed.

[01:] 40:25:01 – [01:] 49:10:05

He remembers hearing that an order had come from Budapest that approximately ten Romanians should be executed; notes that the commander and the villagers decided that all Romanians in the village should be executed so that they would not have the chance for revenge; mentions that before the massacre some villagers had a suspicion, others knew for sure that the Romanians were going to be executed.

[01:] 49:10:06 – [02:] 01:57:21

He discusses the spring of 1944, when the Jews were deported from the village; notes that at that time he was in pre-military training and was in charge of street supervision; remembers seeing three gendarmes and a commander going to a Jewish family; notes that the husband had already been deported; describes the deportation of the rest of the family to Șimleu; mentions the daughter of a shoemaker who was taken to the police and raped; notes that some men returned from the concentration camps, but left the village; mentions that the families of the men never returned from the camps; clarifies that the soldiers did not attack the population before the explosion; adds that there were indeed certain incidents in the village a few days before the massacre; explains that some Romanians were beaten by other villagers, one even died; mentions that only seven people survived the massacre.