

1995-01-20, Aleksando Ostrovsky, No. 093, Jan. 20, 1995, 55 min, Russian language

Transcribed by [TurboScribe.ai](https://www.turboscribe.ai), and translated from Russian by Google.

This transcript has errors and has not been checked for accuracy, but the general narrative of Mr. Ostrovsky appears intact. The words of Mr. Ostrovsky and the interviewer are mixed. Even with errors, it aims to provide a useful reference to English-language users, for whom the Russian-language testimony is otherwise inaccessible.

Introduce yourself, tell me when you were born and where you were born. So, please introduce yourself. Tell me how old you are, when and where you were born.

And then start telling about your childhood, about your family. So, gradually about everything you want to say. My name is Alexander Ostrovsky.

I was born in Ukraine, in a new place. A small town, as we called it. The small town of Kopaigorod.

It's not far from Vinnitsa, only 60 kilometers away. And next to Mogilev, Podolsk, also 50 kilometers to the east. I was born in 1933, I'm 61 years old.

This is the present moment. And life was going on by the time the war began, it was going on in this place with my parents. I had a father, a mother, a grandmother who was alive, and no other living relatives.

Other living relatives lived in other cities. There were several more relatives in this town. Door brothers, sisters, brothers, mother's sisters.

I just happen to have a photograph of my grandfather, here he is, and my grandmother, and here my mother. But my mother was still a child here. And she had many brothers, many sisters.

One of them is this one, she lived in the United States of America. The story of this photograph is that I basically got it from my sisters who lived here in the United States. The thing was that during the war, everything that concerned our family, everything disappeared, nothing was left.

But when we came here to the United States, and my sisters came to visit us, they said that they had preserved photographs from our childhood and my relatives. And after that, after some time, a short time, they really sent me this photograph and a photograph from my childhood and my brother. It was very interesting, because we actually saw ourselves in those photographs, where, in fact, I saw my relatives for the first time after a long break.

After 50 years, I only remembered seeing photos of my grandfather, my grandmother. We had enlarged photos of my grandmother and grandfather. Portraits.

Portraits. And I never knew that these portraits were made with this photograph. Here is such an interesting story with this photograph.

Now I will show you the second photo. Now I will show you photos of my parents. This photo was taken after the war.

This is my father and mother. My brother, Leonid, and me. But this was after the war, when we all gathered, when we all settled down after that wild, terrible, hard time that will never be forgotten. And when I talk about this, as now, at this very moment, I get a shiver running through my body.

Now start telling gradually about the events during the war. Yes. About family traditions.

Our family, I wouldn't say it was very patriarchal, but it was devout. Starting with my grandfather, who showed, grandfather Lieser, who was the main one in the synagogue. Starting with this, I want to say that we were very attentive to everything that had to do with Jewish things.

And my grandfather himself even gave me a special chuppah. He was a merchant and brought materials from Warsaw. Including one time he brought a chuppah with a personal inscription.

And this chuppah was kept for many years in our home, then in other people's homes. And so it survived, and it is still alive, but it is not in the United States of America. So, my parents were quite religious, because in Soviet times, by the time they were already adults, in essence, all synagogues were closed, so they, of course, did not go to synagogues, but they observed all the holidays at home.

And everything that concerned Jews, everything was done. We were brought up, children, in fact, in the same environment that should be and is, and continues to this day. It was very much loved, very pleasant, very interesting to watch, or to participate, or rather, in how they prepared for Easter, for example.

It was a bright, beautiful holiday. And I remember how we walked up and down the stairs without hands, without holding on to anything, having washed them first, so that, God forbid, we wouldn't get humets, there is such a word, humets, not clean, not tidy, so that there would be nothing, not clean, when you take the Easter dishes. These dishes were marvelous, uninteresting, and all this was an aura of such holiness, beauty, everything was very beautiful and interesting.

I remember this forever. So, you observed the traditions before the war? We had traditions, and they continued before the war, well, somehow, I may say this later, these traditions continued to this day. I must say that it was not only my parents who observed them, but in the town in general, so to speak, a lot of people observed them, because although the Soviet government forbade all this, but inside, in their conscience, everyone has their own, and everyone observed what they could.

By the time the war started, by that terrible moment, the town was living in slightly better conditions than before. It was 1940, 1941, and despite the fact that in 1939 there was the Finnish war, despite that, it somehow became a little easier for people, including my parents. And, therefore, on that day, if we go back to the day when the war started, that is, June 22, 1941, my mother sent me shopping.

It was necessary to buy bread. Bread appeared. Before that there had never been bread.

Here bread appeared on sale. I went to buy bread, and suddenly I see that something has changed among the people. People are walking along the streets, everything seemed normal, and then something has changed.

And suddenly I heard the word "war". I remembered what happened a year ago, that is, almost two years ago, in 1939. I already had some experience with this terrible word.

My mother was already worried back then that my father was being drafted into the army. True, he was drafted for one day, and then the war ended. This is the Finnish war.

And so in our family there was already some kind of pain that someone was leaving for war. And suddenly I heard the word "war" again. People immediately turned black.

Everyone went, but they became different. Everyone immediately started thinking about what would happen next, how to live, who the Germans were, and that they were fascists, and how they treated the Jews. We knew this before, because there was a movie called "Professor Mamlok", an amazing thing, where it was shown what the Jews were turning into.

That is, no one expected anything good from the arrival of the Germans. The war, it was held back all the time, and then it started. It was scary.

Now let's move on to the events. People started crying, worrying, and at about that time... And waiting, and waiting. And at that time, around July 3, Stalin came on the radio and started talking about how we should behave, especially in the areas that would be occupied by the Germans, that we should take everything apart, plunder it, destroy it, so that the Germans would get nothing.

We forgot to run the film with you. Then, yes, we forgot about it. But I, obviously... Yes, I just remembered for a second that on the question of our parents being religious, that it was all very interesting.

Mother usually sang various Jewish melodies. This was at home, what we were brought up on. In particular, there was this little melody.

Mother sang. Mother sang. In Hebrew.

Tell me what this tape is worth. The thing is, this tape is already 30 years old. I recorded it in 1965.

So the quality is not very good, of course. But I just want to show, as a fragment, that it was the Jewish spirit that lived in us. It was, it existed.

And now, returning again to the terrible days, I must say that when Stalin spoke, after that a terrible robbery began. They began to break. Everything was still there, all the shops were closed.

And then the population pounced on the stores. They started robbing, taking everything apart. Well, basically, as usual, when there is no government, and people are given the opportunity to do what they want.

True, I wouldn't say that there were many Jews among these people. They were mainly, of course, Ukrainians and Poles who lived nearby. Frankly speaking, my brother and I went.

We were little, we were interested. Everyone goes shopping, but we shouldn't. But mom didn't let us.

We also wanted to take something. Mom didn't let us. She thought that the war would end very quickly, our people would come again, they would say, these guys were taking things apart, they were robbing something, taking something apart.

Well, basically, she forbade us. She forbade us, and we immediately paid for it, because there was nothing to eat. The stores were closed, looted, there was nothing in the stores.

There were no special supplies at home. And so hunger set in. My father and I were forced to immediately go to the villages that were around us.

He learned to shave and cut hair there. He shaved those very people living in the villages. And for that we got bread, potatoes, and some other things.

Well, in general, thanks to this there was an opportunity to live somehow. I don't know how others lived, but that's how we lived at that time. By the way, I should also say that at that time, at that time, before that, about a week before the war started, we were evacuated.

Some people managed to evacuate. These were communists and the authorities, those who headed the village council, institutions like that. Very few Jews left.

They stayed, in fact almost all the people stayed, they stayed in their places, not knowing what would happen next, not expecting anything good. But what could they do? They decided to live like that. They couldn't all evacuate.

There was nothing, and no one asked to evacuate. Everyone just stayed. How old were you then? I was 8 years old.

I was 8 years old then. That age... I managed to finish two grades... School? Ten-year school. And naturally, education stopped for us.

True, for the Ukrainian guys it continued for all three years. All the guys studied, all studied, except for the Jews. And so, during this very period, when everyone left, we were waiting, so to speak, what would happen next.

At that time, about a month later, I can even later restore the date, that it was July 19, on July 19 the first Germans came to us. The Germans were signalmen. They were actually engaged in establishing communications, looked at the wires, climbed around, walked around on motorcycles.

And they arrived quickly, and they left quickly. That's how, so to speak, these were the first impressions. Didn't they bother anyone? They didn't bother anyone.

We only heard their guttural German languages. Although we ourselves spoke Yiddish, but not as gutturally as the Germans spoke. It was very scary and strange.

It was more strange than scary, because we were children and listened in the streets and, of course, did not leave the adults. A few days later, regular German troops began to arrive. These Germans, regular troops, they were practically resting in the town.

They didn't bother anyone, didn't rob anyone. They were only concerned with themselves, relaxed and were quite friendly. They didn't differentiate between Jews and Ukrainians.

They didn't differentiate between anyone, they didn't care. But a few days after they left, the SS arrived. When the SS arrived, that's when it all started.

They started behaving completely differently. We didn't think anything would change, but they immediately started going from house to house, robbing. I mean, what does rob mean? Taking what they like.

It was very strange somehow, incomprehensible. Adults come into your house and take things for themselves as if they were theirs. Personally, I looked at it that way then, I didn't understand it.

When my father didn't want to give something or said something, I don't even remember how it was, they beat him right away, beat him so badly that he never said anything again in his life not to touch something. That was the first lesson when they beat my father in front of my eyes. It was also unclear, they were beating an adult.

It was strange to me. I couldn't understand it, how could you beat an adult? And these Germans weren't with us for long. They started packing up over time and had to leave.

But before that they had already managed to do so much damage that we had a complete idea of what they imagined, these fascists, Osyatsovites. We had graves in front of our house. Even the Bolsheviks were allowed to have graves.

Well, it doesn't matter, there were people in the graves. They dug up the stones from these graves, dug holes, put wooden benches on poles and, excuse me, used it as a toilet. And this in front of people, you understand? They weren't embarrassed, they just didn't consider us people.

It was very strange and scary. But they hadn't organized anything in the camp yet. There hadn't been anything yet, no, there hadn't been anything so scary yet.

It seemed like some kind of transitional period. But then, when they left, these Germans, it all happened in the course of one week. Yes, they managed to set up the Ukrainian administration, elected Ukrainian policemen, immediately indicated that Jews should wear stars on their chests, yellow stars on their backs, yellow stars on a black background, and the armband on their hands should be white with a blue mugenduid.

Well, they dressed everyone, what could they do, they dressed everyone. After some time, it means, the bulk of the Germans left. Not the bulk, but practically all of them.

And there was only one left. Probably the hybrid commissariat, and that was the kind of administration they had, appointed this German as the city governor. I don't know what they called him, it doesn't matter.

In any case, there was one German left in the whole town. And all the rest had gone somewhere. Where? It was unclear.

Well, after that he immediately started doing strange things. He immediately started, even before he existed, for some reason started cleaning out attics, when the USSR was still around. They started cleaning out attics, taking them down somewhere.

They were beating people. I got there by accident. I just wanted to see what was going on there.

I fell under his hand, and he beat me up too. Not for nothing, just like that. And for the first time I saw in his eyes, they say, candles or sparks in his eyes.

It was scary, it was scary. They were taking people somewhere right there to work, these same Germans, even before he was the only one left. And where they were taking them, no one knew.

They did something. My father came home late one evening. We were all worried, wondering what had happened to him.

Will he come back? It is unclear. It was very late, already dark. And finally he came back.

When he came back, he told us terrible stories. We were all shocked. It turns out that the Germans forced them to do something there.

Digging a hole. He and another friend, Earl Shore, were like that. Well, they just got this job together.

So, when they finished their work, a German came up to them, a young one, with a machine gun. And he said that there were two boxes here, so they should stand on the boxes. And they shouted.

One should shout Igbenvater Finkelstein. This is Litvinov Finkelstein. This is his Jewish name.

And the second one had to shout Igbenvater Stalin. And so on in turn. Well, you understand, when they shout during the war, they are enemies, and we are their enemies too.

And we call ourselves Stalin. It is hard to imagine what will happen next. Father thought that they would already be dead.

Then, that this was their last day. Then he made them run around these boxes and crowd. Then he made them crawl, crawl, get up and crawl, get up and crawl.

They mocked me incredibly. He came all in black, all in dirt. We no longer thought that we would see him alive.

Go to the organization. Well, I must say that this German is one, he hasn't been shying away from us for a long time. He hasn't thought about how to end the Jewish question for a long time.

One very terrible black day, I would say, although the day was clear, sunny, it was announced that tomorrow at 10 am everyone should gather, the policemen already announced it, everyone should gather at the largest square, as we called it, Ushisman. And everyone should gather at this square, and from there they will go somewhere to another place Zhigystra. Were all the Jews supposed to? All the Jews of the shtetl, all the Jews of the town were supposed to gather.

Old and young. And if anyone doesn't come, they said, whoever stays at home, they will all be shot. Well, you understand, that everyone started crying.

Until that time, it seemed to be quiet, calm, conditional. But everyone thought that everything would be as it was. But in reality, everything was different.

And people started to gather the next day, taking with them all the belongings they could, leaving their houses, leaving everything. And leaving the old people. That is, our grandmother, Bluma, she basically offered to stay.

She said that I will be for you if you go somewhere to work, and you will work somewhere there. And the Germans said so, supposedly they will take you to work somewhere. True, we did not believe in it, but that is not the point.

She said, I don't want to be your burden. And she stayed. Let them kill me in my own home.

She was already an elderly, sick woman. She was an old woman, sickly. She was, of course, God forbid, and that to go somewhere with us.

She was shot on the way. She says, it's better to let them kill me in my own home. Well, in general, we'll cry, heart clenched.

We all cried. Mom cried. We said goodbye and left.

What was to be done? There was no way out. Where were they taking you? They waited a long time. Finally, they took you.

They took us somewhere, we walked for a long time. Finally, we just realized that we were going... Not far from us there is a so-called Kapai station. The town is called Kapai city, and the station is Kapai.

This is a railway station, I mean. And so they brought us to the station. They thought that they would load some freight cars and take them away somewhere.

But no. They drove us not far from the station behind barbed wire. There was one fenced-off gate, there was a fenced-off place with barbed wire.

They drove all the people there. All that crying and screaming... The crowd. Yes, that whole crowd.

They drove us there and everyone settled down in the open air. I must say, I simply did not mention earlier that by this time there were more people in this town, there were more Jews than there had been before, than there had been in peacetime. Because not long before we were driven out to this concentration camp, not long before that, rumors began to appear that Jews were being driven out of Romania, from Bessarabia and Bukovina.

And that these Jews would soon come to us through Mogilev-Podulsky. Indeed, a lot of people came. It was scary to look at them.

They already felt what it was like to be driven out of your own home, and what it was like to walk somewhere unknown. Were these Romanian Jews? These were Romanian Jews, yes. Then the whole world found out about them too.

My father wrote about them in the future. I don't know where this information comes from, that there were 100 thousand of them, and 168 thousand died during the occupation, including resettlement. Is this resettlement? They drove people and killed them along the way.

When we saw it, it was scary. We immediately felt, all the people felt, that this is what will happen to us in some time. The same as with these people.

People were literally dying standing up from hunger, from diseases. They were walking below, walking. Well, in general, they were already driven out together with these people, they were all already together, they were driven out to this construction camp.

It was already August-September. Cold August evenings in Ukraine. Sometimes very cool.

The rain was scorching in the open air. It was scary. It was an open-air camp.

And the point was, of course, that people would simply die out there and that's it. And every time, every time he would visit there, that camp, that very same German who remained in the town would visit. And he didn't visit just to see what was going on there, he knew why he was going.

It must be said that people, what people lived on. They exchanged Ukrainian women who came from the other side to the barbed fence, to the barbed wire, they exchanged things that people had for food. And so through the wire, I once gave out, through the net it was possible to exchange.

And so people existed for a little while. It is not known how, they died, of course, from hunger, and from the cold, from everything. But at the same time, there was such a thing, that people could somehow exchange something with Ukrainian women.

And what needed to be changed also had to be there. And so many people began to quietly, in the evenings, at the moment when they went specially for water, they left the ghetto, from the barbed wire, from the concentration camp, they left and went under cover of

darkness to the town, to take something from there in their own home and bring something. The distance was small, only 5 kilometers.

That is, it could have been done overnight without any problems. And I am talking about this German. Why did he visit often? He knew that people go there, obviously.

And he would come to the camp to catch those people who were returning. And when they returned, he would kill them. He would just shoot everyone.

And then one day my mother, too, like all people, because how many miserable things can be carried by three people, three adults. I was a child, three adults. Father, mother and also a brother.

What could they do? By the way, I forgot to say that the next day, when we were transported there, when we got there, they brought our grandmother. We didn't want to see her ever again, but they brought all the old people there. They weren't killed on the spot, they were brought there.

So that they could die there. Grandma was already with us. Your whole family was there? The family consisted of father, mother, brother, me and grandma.

Five people specifically. This is our family. There were many relatives too.

They were with us too, close by. They are cousins, sisters. I just don't talk about it.

Yes, so... Mom went? Mother also went one black night. She also went to get something. She went home.

Under the pretext? Under the pretext that they were going to get water. And the next morning we waited for her return. And what was our horror when we heard that a German had arrived.

Because there was some construction going on at the gate. It wasn't near us. But suddenly I heard screams near us, about five meters away from me, behind the barbed wire.

This is one Jew named Nachman. His name was Nachman the Crooked, Nachman Krymar. With his daughter Ruli.

They were also returning, apparently from their own home. They took something, brought it. And they were afraid to approach the gate.

And the barbed wires went from the other side. But when they went, they couldn't go in. Because the barbed wire was two and a half meters high.

It was practically impossible to get over it. And since they were walking and didn't know what to do, they started making noise, crying, shouting. Save, save, save.

Who could save them? But the German heard it. And he trotted to that place. It was literally like I was standing five meters away from me.

And I saw him take out a gun and shoot them both at once. Father and daughter. She was still screaming, but he shot her with several shots.

And just imagine, this happened before my eyes, and our mother is somewhere too. She should come now. Imagine the situation, our feelings.

We knew it was all for the death. But when you see the death directly, it's terrible. And just at that moment, when they were killed, the mage appeared.

She managed to get in after all. I don't know how she managed to get through at that very moment with someone with water somehow. She got through, grabbed a bucket by something and rushed over.

Well, our neighbors who were nearby were sitting on the ground where we were, they said that mother was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Can you imagine, a German was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. This time he didn't shoot.

It was possible to know that in the future it would be faster. In short, we were in this position for a very long time. But, nevertheless, in a wild position.

But nevertheless, after some time, rumors began to circulate from the town that they would allegedly return people back to the ghetto. This was a transcamp, and this was already in the ghetto. Into their own alleged homes.

Well, talk is talk. You could believe it or not. But, in fact, we learned that this German was being sent somewhere.

And that the territory we are in will be called Transnistria. And that it will be handed over to Antonescu, that is, to the Romanians. The Romanians will have to exercise their rule here.

That they can govern this land not like the Germans in their territories, but in their own way. And it seems that even the border was established not far from us. And there were Romanian border guards.

The so-called borderers. But I'll talk about that a little later. And so, when talk started about being able to return, people wanted to know how.

But, naturally, how. Romanians loved money. Romanians loved gold.

And they had obviously planned this contribution in advance, so that they would send people down from the concentration camp to the town, so that they could take the appropriate tribute from them. That's how it was. Whoever had what.

There are also rings, earrings. In our family there is also a mother, she had a burchal ring by that time. We gave it away.

And so mother, father and brother, they paid for themselves. And they were not supposed to go into town.

I was on foot, like a child, like a Ukrainian boy. I was just... They didn't touch me? They didn't touch me. I slowly made my way to the town.

I knew the way, it wasn't far. And I stayed with my relatives and friends until 2-3 days, until my parents came. Finally we went down.

The parents came from the camp. I say, they came down, because it was at the station, and it was with us. So, you gathered again... And we gathered already in the ghetto, without grandma.

True, grandma was left to die in the concentration camp, because they didn't let old people go from there, and the old sick people had to die there, and who was left there. Grandma died there? Grandma didn't die there, no. Grandma was still a little lucky.

Her mother, after all, at that moment when we were already in the ghetto, she also went to the camp one night, got in there, stole her, despite the fact that they were guarding her, carried her on her shoulders, like a small child, but she had no weight, and brought her home, and then she, the grandmother, died already, being in the basement near our house, because we had to hide her. Every time they looked for old people. If someone saw old people, they were always repatriated back to the camp.

That's why they kept her in the basement until about the beginning of 1942. She withered away so much, she died in this basement. Her own house, which she had once built with her husband.

Now what happened to you? When we moved to the town, to this city, life in the city was somewhat different than there. It became a little easier that we ended up in our own house, and there was a roof over our heads. True, we didn't live here the same way as before.

There were 5-6 families in each house. It was very crowded. Everyone huddled together.

However, it was something else. But the worst thing did not start during this period, but a little later. This time was somewhere around October-November.

And when the frosts started, it was the winter of 1942. It was the harshest winter of the entire war. This winter began to mow down people incredibly.

People died from terrible diseases. From hunger, from cold. It was a terrible time.

It was terrible to watch. I watched every day as they pulled corpses out of houses. They pulled corpses out.

And those people who were doing this held a skeleton in each hand. The people had no weight at all. They were no longer people, but skeletons, pure skeletons.

You know, it was scary. It was impossible to watch. And the screams, the groans, the tension.

Typhus appeared. Something that no one ever knew what it was. Typhoid fever.

It was only once during the Civil War. My mother told me that there were such diseases. It was scary.

And of course there was hunger. And the hunger was incredible. Of course, most people died of hunger.

What did they die from? As my father later wrote, I asked him to write his memoirs about what happened. And he once wrote about this, that those who had some specialties, that is, those who could produce something with their hands, those people were actually able to exist somehow. And all the rest died out.

He writes like this, they died out. But that was essentially the entire intelligentsia. Amazing people, amazing people, amazingly intelligent people came from Romania, from Besrabia and Bukovina.

We had some kofsmans living in our house. Yevgeny Pavlovich himself, he graduated from Yeltsin University in 1916. No, from Harvard University.

Howard graduated here in the United States of America. This was before the war. Imagine how educated these people were.

He also lectured at the University of Chernivtsi. And they all died? He survived. Why did he survive? Because his wife worked.

From the civil authorities there was a praetor, so-called engineers in the town. What they did, I don't know. But they were Romanians.

They hated Jews, were afraid to touch them. But Jews cooked for them. His wife was cooking in a restaurant for this very praetor.

The border guards came for her and brought her in. God forbid she escapes on the way. Because the ghetto was closed.

It was scary. Romanians were hiring. Some kind of forced labor.

Every day. We heard it every day. Repedi, repedi, repedi, repedi, repedi, repedi.

This is what I later heard in English. Also repedi means fast. They themselves disdained to enter the houses of the Romanians.

God forbid, get sick. And, actually, the Ukrainian policemen were afraid to come in. There were a lot of them, the policemen.

For this purpose, representatives of the Jewish administration entered the houses. There was also police. Among them were decent people, but there were also fierce ones, monsters among these people.

Well, obviously, as it happens among all nationalities. They did the devil knows what too. If we heard from time to time that a murdered person was found there.

The Romanians, then, were taking it out little by little. They couldn't do it, they didn't arrange it like the Germans. We heard that they were digging holes around.

Around us. And in those territories where the Germans are. Here the border ran next to them, with the border zone.

That they were killing all the Jews there. We knew that Kyiv was destroyed on September 29. The Jews, I mean, were destroyed.

We all knew this because we read, this Kofsmann read Romanian newspapers, and Romanians wrote about everything. He read Romanian newspapers immediately in Russian. That's how we gathered and listened.

We actually knew everything that was going on around us. And, that means, we heard ourselves what was killing a person here, what was finding a person there. About one, I didn't know all the people, I only heard about this, but my friends, here Syunya Khasyuk was my comrade, his father was going somewhere in some village, he was caught going out somewhere, he was forced to dig a hole and shot.

Other people told this. Tell us about the Romanian atrocities. When the Romanians committed atrocities, that's what the Romanians did.

But they beat people with terrible force. They took them to work and beat them mercilessly. And people simply fell off their feet from their beatings.

And there they shot. Then they found dead people under the snow. But besides that, there were enough dead people.

There were so many that no one paid attention to where it came from, where it appeared from. They saw that it was there. Who killed it, whether it was the Romanians who killed it, or the locals who killed it, it was not even known.

Didn't they die of hunger? Everything was terrible. And so at that very time, more people began to come to our town, who would join, who had escaped from the German zone.

In particular, not far from us there was a place called walled-in Kurilovtsy. And in these walled-in Kurilovtsy several families managed to escape at night, before they all were shot the next day. They dug a hole and shot them.

Were they Jews? They were Jews. And in particular, in one of the families there was a girl named Raya, who later became my brother's wife. And such an agent emerged after a long time, when everyone was alive.

This was after the war, naturally. Now come to the event. It was the most terrible time.

There was, of course, spring, autumn and winter. That was the most terrible. And they died horribly, and they killed.

It is not known how many were killed. In general, everything was terrible and black. But when these very people began to appear, people from that zone joined us.

A man named Kiznar came to our house. He was from Hattin, from Romanian Jews. And his whole family died there.

And he was saved because... He didn't want it. He wanted, maybe, to die like his whole family. But they were taken to work in Trikhatka.

And when they were being driven, he managed to grab hold of a tree in the forest. He grabbed hold and hung. They shot at him, but didn't kill him.

He survived and reached our Kapaygorod. And stayed there. They drove him to work every day.

And some returned, some didn't. There were temporary jobs, and there were permanent ones. They gathered groups of people and sent them to Odessa or somewhere else.

But no one ever returned from there. They were sent to the Pechora camp. Everyone died there.

And usually, when they caught people, they locked them in basements. Who caught them? Not the Romanians, not the Ukrainians, but the Jews themselves, the Jewish policemen. And they beat them the same way the Romanians beat them.

Here my mother was beaten. One day they were looking for our men. They were hidden in the basement, in the so-called secret, which was equipped in case you needed to hide somewhere from someone.

And so, when they hid, they started torturing my mother to tell me where the man was. She said they went somewhere, I don't know where. How they beat her in front of me.

I, again, couldn't do anything for the children. And I couldn't say anything. And watching this, it was scary.

And now I say, my voice breaks when I say it. My brother was taken away more than once. But he managed to escape.

And in our basement of our own house, on the white wall, it was scratched that the guys who were sent to the three-room prison for work were sitting here. Including my brother's name in his own basement. And come to the moment when everyone ran away.

Well, that means that three difficult years lasted like that. People were so worried and didn't believe that they would stay alive. But, nevertheless, the youth invented all sorts of things.

So, youth is youth. They came up with something, did something. They had fun somehow, expressed themselves somehow.

And at the same time we studied. For example, I finished two grades. And during the occupation, for three years, I actually did not study for two years, three years, but during that time I was taught, so this Coffsman, whom I spoke about, taught my brother English.

My brother taught me and his son Russian and mathematics. In this way, we corrected our knowledge a little. Jews always remain Jews.

They always strive for knowledge. Even in the most terrible moment, I read about this later, and in other concentration camps it was like that, it was like that everywhere. And now, finally, after these terrible days, terrible time, the time came when we felt that something could change.

It was time, already 1944, January 1944. We started talking, and in the newspapers we knew that Stalingrad, Stalingrad had fallen, and we knew about it too, and even celebrated the victory of the Soviet war over Stalingrad. We celebrated, purely conditionally, I say, we celebrated.

We gathered and talked about it. And then the time came when we felt the smell of freedom, the spring of freedom. How we did not want to die at that time.

How they wanted to stay alive. People dreamed that it would last a little longer, that it would last a little longer. On the night of March 19, self-defense was organized.

Women and children were all in the basements. Adults took whoever they could, a club, metal, whatever they could, to protect themselves from the transitional authorities. The Romanians fled.

By this time the Romanians had simply fled, without even saying goodbye. They fled like that, they scared us, so that of course they were all caught in Mogilev-Podolsk later, at the crossing. We waited for one day, because the next day, March 20, regular troops arrived.

Soviet. Soviet regular troops. Everyone rejoiced, cried, rejoiced.

My mother was the first to cry. And not because she was happy about freedom, but she immediately said that they would immediately go to fight further. My father and brother are adults.

And indeed, a month later my father left, two months later my brother left. They fought. My father ended the war in Warsaw.

His son, my brother, ended the war in Berlin. My mother and I were left to suffer for another year. There was nothing to eat.

My father wrote in his memoirs that I Bella, Bella, it was her mother's name was Bella, I never asked Bella, how do you and your son live? I knew that they had nothing. I could not leave them anything. After such a terrible time, they had nothing left.

How could I help them? I didn't even ask how they lived. Well, we lived. How we lived, that's another story.

We stayed in our house. With my mother. My father and brother went to the army.

My father and brother fought. They came in 1946. He came in 1945, my father was already demoralized after the end of the war.

And then I got demoralized, and a year later, in 1946, my brother got demoralized. That was already in 1947. He served another two years in the army.

And after that, right at that time we took photos. Here is my father. Mother.

They are younger than I am now. Here is my brother. He lives in Tula now.

And I did in those years. My grandmother died. She didn't live to see it.

But she died in 1942. Of course, we built a grave. A monument.

And at that time, when I was leaving for the United States, before we went here, I, naturally, like all people, went to say goodbye to the graves of my relatives. I visited my grandmother's grave, where I myself carved these letters. Carved.

In Russian and in Jewish. In Hebrew. Then I was at the grave, which was erected on the spot where so many children, so many people were buried.

It's hard to imagine how many people fit there. And here's a small obelisk, on which it was written that it was erected for the victims of the war of 1941-45. Of course, it was not the local authorities who did this, but the relatives of the victims.

And those people who remained in the town. When I came down from the cemetery, I saw childhood friends. Lenya Bogomolny was my friend from childhood.

He also stayed alive. Dora Kreimer, this is the daughter of my teacher, who taught me at school. The wife of Fir, this Lenya Bogomolny.

There were already a few people left there. There was practically no one left. Well, after that, after such a terrible Sodom that happened in this war, it was hard to believe, of course, that you could stay alive.

But we stayed alive. We continued studying at school. I went straight to the fifth grade of secondary school, because I had managed to study a little during the war.

Then, after that, my brother went, after the army he went to college, graduated from college. I graduated from college. Although it was very difficult, and not the college I wanted.

But they took the institute that was possible to enter, where they took Jews. Then life was very difficult, with great labors, with great difficulties. They had to fight more than once.

I still managed to defend my PhD thesis. But all my life after that I always felt like someone was walking there with a stone on their back. We were constantly waiting, it was not enough that one Holocaust happened to us, so we were waiting for a second Holocaust.

We didn't leave here. We fled here thanks to Bernie's, who sheltered us, accepted us. America has an influence, I think.

Thanks to everyone who brought some efforts to this. We are here, and only here I received the peace that I did not have all my life. When did you emigrate? In 1990 we moved here.

In what group? My wife, her father and I came here. Including our children who came here without us, before us, even earlier. My son with his family, with his wife and child, and my daughter with her husband and child.

And we all ended up here. And what about father? Father stayed with his brother in Russia, and he is no longer alive. He died two years ago.

Of course, I wanted to come here too, but he chose to stay with his brother because his mother's grave was there, he didn't want to leave. He didn't dare do it then, and that's how it turned out. I must say that I also get satisfaction from the fact that for entire generations, it would seem, life was terrible under Soviet power.

For 70 years they stifled religion and all that stuff. Life was terrible afterwards. However, look, my grandfather gave me a chuppah.

My father and my mother were married under this chuppah. My wife and I were married under this chuppah. My brother and his wife were married under this chuppah.

It was in Moscow. My son and my daughter were married under this chuppah. It was still in Russia.

I must say that in America they often think, and not without reason, that they think not without reason, that of course, there seems to be no continuity in the generation. No, there was. I think that there are more than one family like ours.

There are quite a lot of them. But even though we are in Hebrew, we haven't studied Hebrew for so many years. I don't even know it.

But my grandchildren study at Hibbrush school. Two grandchildren. They are six years old.

They both study. Two girls go to Hibbrush school. I am proud of that.

Are you happy now? Yes. Do you feel yourself here? I feel here, of course, not the same way as I felt there. Naturally, here came what I had dreamed of all my life.

To escape from this terrible place, which was once the Holocaust and remains the Holocaust. It is impossible to forget. Now do you feel like Jews, free? Now we have returned to what was partially lost.

Partially, because I showed you that our mother was religious, and we knew songs, and Jewish operettas. Our family had everything. Our family was very interesting.

Mother loved to joke and tell some joke. It was always very interesting. In conclusion, I want to say a big thank you to everyone who helped me to be here today and tell about this.

I thank Bernice, I thank you both for helping me focus on what I could say here and hang it up. And leave it for those in the future who will remember that very time that was. Let them not think that it was not.

Now someone is trying to cast a shadow on this. It is ugly and bad. It is terrible.

It's not true. It all happened. Believe me, it all happened.

Here I am. This is how I am. I was a child. And now, well, it's natural time.

This is important for the descendants too. Yes, I believe that the future of the Jews, that as the Bible records all the Jewish sufferings at all times, this is another of the sufferings that are fulfilled on the lot of the Jewish people. The Bible does not continue, does not finish writing.

It cannot be continued. But this is its continuation. And I would like future generations, who could listen to what was, so that for them it would never be repeated.

God bless. I wish it were so. God bless.

God bless America. God bless America. It is so.

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

Cet-cet.

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