The Voice of Your Brother's Blood

The Murder of a Town in Eastern Galicia
February 13, 2017
59 minutes

Speakers: Omer Bartov

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Holocaust Living History Workshop
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Time	Transcription
00:00	[uctv / University of California Television / www.uctv.tv]
00:12	[Read Write Think Dream / The Library Channel / UC San Diego / www.uctv.tv/library-channel]
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00:24	[The Voice of Your Brother's Blood: The Murder of a Town in Eastern Galicia]
00:35	[Omer Bartov / Professor of History and German Studies, Brown University]
00:15	Omer Bartov: In 1995 I decided to ask my mother about her childhood. And a friend of mine, who also was, was the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, told me that if you want to interview a parent or someone close the best thing to do would be to produce a tape recorder because then people actually speak to something - at the time we use tape recorders. And so, that's for your students who don't know that such an instrument existed. And so, I came to my mother's kitchen, uh, in the morning with my daughter, who was then a baby and my son was then about six, and she was making chicken soup, and I turned on - uh literally making chicken soup - and I turned on the tape recorder. And I said, Ima [Hebrew word for mother] can you tell me about your childhood? And she spoke for 90 minutes as if she had been waiting for this question all those years and I never asked it. I was then in my mid-40s. My father, who is a writer as you heard, wanted to also participate in the conversation. And I said, look Abba [Hebrew word for father] why don't you go to your study and write something, which he did. And then she could talk and she spoke for 90 minutes. I recorded the conversation. I transcribed it. Actually, I had my eldest son transcribe it so that he learned something also about his grandmother. And I used it as a first set of questions. But why did I do this in the first place? After all, I'm an historian, and I was thinking about it as an historian, and not simply, uh, as a personal, uh, issue as to where my mother came from.
2:07	Omer Bartov: I'd been asking myself a certain question by then for quite a long time, which was about the nature of genocide. What happens when perpetrators encounter victims? Now we had a certain view of the Holocaust, which is that the Germans did everything they could to create distance between the killers and the killed, between the perpetrators and the victims. And they perfected the system that we by now all, uh, know all about, uh, of a kind of industrial killing - which was actually the subtitle of one book that I wrote. But I asked myself were there other cases in which there was no such industrial killing, that is, an encounter between the killer and the killed, and what happens in that encounter? I raised that question. I was visiting several seminars in Germany at the time, and meeting young German students who were studying the Holocaust very intensely, and reading a lot of materials, mostly in German and mostly written by German historians. And those were attempts to understand how the perpetrators organized

genocide. And when I asked them that question, they didn't know much about it. They hadn't read too many memoirs by survivors. They were very much geared on the perpetrators. And so, I thought, how do we find out about such encounters? And it took me back, Deborah mentioned my, my early work, uh on the Wehrmacht, Hitler's army was my second book, and, but both the first and the second were based on case studies of three German divisions. And I tried to know what happened to the soldiers in those specific divisions. What, how were they trained? How were they educated? What experiences they had at the front? So as to understand why they acted the way they did and to understand what it was that they did.

04:13 Omer Bartov: And so, in some ways, I was going back to that. But instead of doing a case study of army units, I thought the best way to do this would be to examine genocide, the Holocaust in this case, in one place to see what happened in that one specific point. And so, which point would I choose? I thought, well I'll choose some town in Eastern Europe. And then I thought, well my mother came from there, uh, so why not, uh, check out her town? Now her town was not an unknown town, most of you will not have heard of it. It's called Buchach. You can see on the left that's a Polish spelling, Buchach. It's now transliterated from Ukrainian. It's the same word exactly, so it's written B-U-C-H-A-C-H, Buchach. Now Buchach is not unknown in Israel, although elsewhere it's not known, because it was the hometown of a very famous, uh, Hebrew language author, Shmuel Yosef Agnon, Shai Agnon, whose original name was Czaczkes but he changed it to Agnon. There, there are reasons why but I won't go into that. Um and so, we all knew something about Buchach because he used the town Buchach - which he called the different names in his writings - as a kind of model of East European Jewry. And particularly small-town Jewry in the period leading to World War I, from the late middle ages, early modern period into World War I. So I knew something about it but I knew nothing about my mother's own childhood and I knew nothing about that town apart from what Agnon wrote about it. And Agnon being a Jewish writer he, in 1966 he won the Nobel Prize in Literature - the only Hebrew language author to have ever won that prize. He wrote only about the Jews of Buchach, and for most people in Israel, people knew well Buchach. That's a Jewish town. And as many people who came from there would say, well it doesn't exist anymore. Of course, it does exist, but there are no Jews there. So it's not a Jewish town anymore. It exists as something else, and what that something else is for many people who remember Jewish lives there, it didn't really matter anymore. So it doesn't exist for them anymore.

06:45 Omer Bartov: So I thought, why not choose Buchach and see what happened in Buchach during the war? What was this encounter all about? Okay, that led to a whole series of much more complicated questions than I ever anticipated because, as I learned, the encounter was not simply between Germans and Jews. There were other people living in that town. And in this town, as in many other towns in

that part of Europe - this is Eastern Galicia - as it was called. Later it became South Eastern Poland, or Eastern Minor Poland, or Eastern Lesser Poland, many names to it and now it's in Western Ukraine. So that town was in a region which had three major population groups. The largest were Ruthenians, later known as Ukrainians. The second largest were Poles, uh, and the third were Jews. And Jews were about 10 percent, if slightly more than 10 percent, of the population. And so, first of all, there were different people living in this town, and secondly, each of these groups had its own story to tell about that town, about its relationship to the town. And that story that that group told was not only its own story but a story of its relationship to the other groups. And all those stories came into play once the Germans arrived on the scene. And they remained, these stories, even afterwards, so that each group tells what happened very differently.

08:29 Omer Bartov: And so, once I started thinking about this, then the project that I was about to do started crystallizing. I also realized that it would be a very difficult project because ultimately it entailed using nine languages, doing research in nine countries, and using documents from about 50 archives. So that's why it took so long and I'm glad that it's over. So let me give you some specific points, uh, that were raised by this, and then I'd like to take you a little bit through the chapters of the book and show you how I try to, um, structure this whole thing. Um, I'll say one thing that in writing the book what I had in mind, and that's the subtitle of the book - Buchach, biography of a town - is to write it in a sense as the life of a town. To write it as a biography and to a large extent to tell the story of the town through the voices of the people who live there. That is obviously a challenge, uh, because I'm not divorcing myself from the tale. I am the historian who's putting it together, who's choosing which voice to use, and how much of each voice. But at the same time, I wanted to give each voice its due and it, this did not have to do with whether one person was telling the truth and another was not if one person was accurate and another was not. It was to try and tell the story through their own voices so that we get an understanding of how people actually understood their own existence there, and in some ways why they behave the way they did.

10:31 Omer Bartov: So one thing that we understand is the question of agendas. When we think about genocide, about the Holocaust, we would think about a place like Buchach into which the Germans came. They had one clear agenda, which was to murder the Jews, and they did that, and they did it very efficiently. But when we look at it from the point of view of the people on the ground, we realize that there were many other agendas. So, for instance, uh - without getting into a lot of um historical criticism - if some of you know the book *Bloodlands* by Timothy Snyder which by and large takes the point of view that Eastern Europe became the bloodlands of a struggle, a titanic struggle, between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany and the people living in that area became in various ways victims of that struggle. Now that is not untrue. This is what happened, but other, each group in that area, and in this case, Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians had their own agendas.

Ukrainians wanted an independent Ukraine. Poles wanted to keep this territory as part of larger Poland. And Jews, well in that case Jews basically wanted to survive there. But they had no national claims on that territory itself, and that played out very clearly - as I'll say later on - in what happened on the ground, who did what.

12:05 Omer Bartov: A second question that interested me very much was the question of the relationship between coexistence and genocide. When we think of towns such as Buchach, and there were hundreds of them throughout Eastern Europe, we are talking about an area in which there was never - at least since the middle ages - there was never a community that was ethnically or religiously homogeneous. All these communities were mixed. Throughout Eastern Europe, you had Latvians and Lithuanians, the Belarusians, and Poles, and Ukrainians, and Jews, and Armenians, and Roma, and so forth. And many of them lived mixed together. Now that does not mean that they did not know and adhere to one set of identities or another, although they could be quite fluid, but it does mean that these were communities of coexistence. People went to the market, went to school, they interacted with each other. At some point, these communities of coexistence are transformed into communities of genocide. And when that happens there is a particular ferocity of violence in these communities. I should say that when I started thinking about it in the early 1990s, as you know, this is right after the fall of the Soviet Union. And we were told that that was the end of history and that now we would live with peace ever after. And right after that, we had what happened in the former Yugoslavia in 1992, and what happened in Rwanda in 1994. And in both cases, these are communal genocides. These are places where people had lived together for a long time, turn on each other, and slaughter each other, often in the most horrific ways. As you may know, in Rwanda about 800,000 people were murdered, mostly by machetes and fire - actual fire, not firearms - in the fastest genocide ever, done mostly by hand.

14:15 Omer Bartov: So this question with it, was in the back of my mind. How does this happen? So I was interested also then in thinking, what are the stories that people tell? What stories does each group tell about how it came to be, where it was, and what is its relationship with the other groups? So for instance, if we think again about this town, for Poles, uh, this part that the Poles referred to as the Kresy, or the frontier, or the borderland. This was the area to which they started coming in the 16th century, bringing civilization and culture to the uh peasants, the people become serfs, uh, the local population that is, a population that really didn't have much of a name. But they were the peasants, and they're bringing their own culture and civilization to the wild east. And, and there was a term the wild east. And in the 19th century, uh, some writers such as the Polish writers Sienkiewicz, because they couldn't return to that wild east went to the wild west to see what the wild east looked like. So they traveled to America to get ideas of what it looked like in the 16th and 17th century in the wild east of Europe. The, the Ukrainians, those who became Ukrainians, the Ruthenians, told the story of being subjugated,

colonized, dehumanized, enslaved by the Poles, the Poles, and their Jewish lackeys. Because the people who were often acting on behalf of the Polish landlords, estate owners, nobility, were the Jews to whom the Polish nobility leased estates, mills, um, um, distilleries, uh, in order to, uh, provide them with ready cash while they stayed in Warsaw and did their own. You know, as we do here in Washington [DC]. So they stayed inside the beltway of the time and on their estates they, they had Jewish estate managers. One of whom, eventually, was my great-grandfather, who was an estate manager for the owners of Buchach the Pototkis.

16:43 Omer Bartov: For the Jews, there was also a narrative, and the narrative - one of which - one narrative is told by Agnon himself, who wrote himself a kind of biography of Buchach. That book has recently been partly translated into English. It's available now. It's, it just came out. He never finished it while he was alive, so it was published posthumously by his daughter. A very beautiful, complicated book but in it he tells the myth of creation of Buchach. How did Buchach come about? And in his story, there were a group of Jews who lived in Ashkenaz, which is in Germany, someplace in central Europe, and decided to go to the land of Israel. And how do you go to the land of Israel from Germany? You walk east. So they walked east, and they walked east, and then they got into forests, and snow, and bears, and wolves, and they camp. And as they camp, they're surrounded by noblemen, and these noblemen speak with the Jews, and they hear that they're so intelligent and so smart, and so well-spoken. And they suggest to them to stay there. And they say, maybe you can build a city for us because we are here, but we don't know how to do commerce and trade. And you seem to be capable of that. And the Jews stay. And they think they'll stay just for a little bit. Some of you may know that the Hebrew name, the traditional name for Poland, is Polin. And Polin can be also read as we'll sleep here. So it was as if on the way, we just stayed for a bit. It took several centuries but they stayed for a bit, just on the way to Israel.

18:41 Omer Bartov: And so they stay, and they build the city. And so there was a kind of Jewish pride in these cities, the sense that they had created urban living, that they had created trade, they were those who energized the actual economy of these places. So each group had its own story to tell, and these are very important to understand. I'll, I'll get back to that in, in a moment. Another element that interested me very much was the recovery of voice. I said that, um, when you try - or at least I believe - that when you try to write a biography of a place, you have to give it a voice. It's like a biography of a person; you have to give it some character. How do you recover, uh, the voice of of a place? So, at least for the latter parts - because earlier parts you can use myth, and legends, stories, novels - for the latter parts, you actually have voices. And that brought me to using testimonies. Now testimonies had been used by, less by historians and more by literary scholars, psychologists, collectors of information about, in this case, the Holocaust. But

historians were very, um, wary of using testimonies because of the so-called subjective nature of testimonies. That people tell what they remember, they often tell it at a distance of time, they forget details, they get things wrong. So historians preferred, in writing the Holocaust, to use documents. Documents are great because they have stamps, they come from archives, people write the date on them, they sign them, we know who wrote them, and we have to believe that they did what they say they did, or they ordered what they said they ordered, and so forth.

20:39 Omer Bartov: Obviously documents from genocide, certainly from the Holocaust, come from the perpetrators. Uh, it's very hard for people incarcerated in camps or taken to labor camps to leave behind documents. They may leave behind a diary but not an official document with a stamp. And so, the use of official documentation in writing the Holocaust, I started to understand, had greatly skewed our understanding of the Holocaust because it was based very much on the documents of the perpetrators. It's just like if you use photographs of a genocide and the photographs are taken the eye behind the camera is the eye of the perpetrator. You get a certain view, very much the perpetrator's view of killing people. But you don't get the other side, because they don't take photographs. They are either trying to hide or getting killed. And so, I thought, I want to use testimonies, diaries as historical documents. I wrote some articles about that but in the book I wanted to use them as the voices of the people as they experience what is happening to them, and as they speak, uh if you have and I had some of these, as they speak about previous times, about what happened World War I, what happened in the inter-war period, and how they interact with their neighbors. So that was also, the recovery of voice was, was extremely important for me. It was also a challenge to try then and juxtapose all of those together, because if you have different voices - you have testimonies of, uh, Jewish Holocaust survivors, but you also have many Polish testimonies. Um, many Poles - I may have time to get into that a little bit later - but many Poles were deported under Soviet occupation of this area between 1939 and 1941. Many of those who were deported, if they survived, um, gave testimonies about their experience and these testimonies, large numbers of them, were stored at the Hoover Institution in Stanford [University]. And there's, there's a big bunch of them and they're very interesting. Um, they present a very different view, obviously, of what happened under these conditions, not only about the Soviets who were deporting them, but also about their neighbors, and who was denouncing them, who was betraying them, and so forth.

23:06 Omer Bartov: How does one juxtapose them? How does one create a thick description of what happens using these different voices was really a major challenge, uh, because you want to give each voice its due. But what I did not want to do was to say well, this is the story as it happened, and these people are getting it right, and these people are getting it wrong. First, because it wasn't clear

what was right and what was wrong. And secondly, because that was not the intention of the book. The intention of the book was to say how people saw it and not how I see what they saw. Finally, those who are familiar with this, um, region, um, know that the historiography of this region, the memories of this region, the commemoration in this region, still very much carry all these tensions - all these disputes that had been there before the event, and that played into it. And so, in some ways, I wanted also to understand it. And I'll give you one example. When you speak about liberation, now we know liberation: you were in a camp, the Red Army came, or the US [United States] Army came, or the or the British Army came and you were liberated. There's no question about it. People have written about the fact that when, uh, survivors were liberated often this didn't cause necessarily joy but, but, in fact, sadness and depression because people understand now that they no longer are struggling to survive. That they lost their entire families. So liberation is not a simple concept, but at least it means that you were liberated from your oppressor.

24:56 Omer Bartov: If you go to these parts, that's not so simple. To tell Ukrainians that they were liberated when the Red Army came in, they did not think they were liberated at all. They thought they were reoccupied by the Soviets. The Poles, many Poles did not think they were liberated by the Red Army either. There were of course communists. There were people who supported them, but the vast majority probably also did not feel that they were liberated. Jews felt that they were liberated, and at least in the sense that the Nazis were gone and were not trying to kill them. So liberation is a very complicated issue. Not only that, but for Ukrainians, when they were reoccupied by the Soviets, they saw the Soviets very often as revenge by the Jews. Jews who encountered Red Army officers, who spoke Yiddish, and who said to them, we are Jews like you - don't be afraid of us. For Ukrainians, this was proof that the Bolsheviks were Jews, were synonymous with Jews, and that they were being reoccupied as revenge for what happened during the war. The same with collaboration. We use the term collaboration to, to say, okay, um, you are ruled by, by an evil regime and some people will collaborate with it because they, um, for personal reasons, because of their, uh, character, because they want to protect their family. There are many reasons why people will collaborate, but we don't look kindly on collaboration, right? But who collaborated with whom? And when? Uh, when, when you, when you look at these events, you discover that everyone was collaborating with other people at different times. So the diff-, the, the common argument, uh, particularly among uh Ukrainians and Poles in a town like Buchach was that the Jews collaborated with the Soviets.

27:03 Omer Bartov: There was, what was called in in Polish historical historiography, the zydokomuna, not only in historiography in politics as well, uh Judeo-communists. So the Jews collaborated with the Soviets. The Soviets deported us, therefore we are victims of the Jews. Of course, statistically, Jews were more likely to be

deported than Poles. On the other hand for Jews to be deported from that area - although it was a tragedy when it happened - actually saved them, because, um, the death rate of those who were deported was about 30 percent. The death rate of Jews who stayed was over, over 90 percent, close to 95 percent. So for Jews to be deported, not that they knew it at the time, but turned out to be a good thing. For Poles, to be deported was a tragedy because it destroyed their communities; many people died in deportation. Even those who survived were injured physically or mentally for life. So, deportation was, it was a tragedy. So again, collaboration, deportation, liberation, all those concepts become much more complicated when you look at it this way. And finally, the concept - we, we often use these three terms of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders - that's a very common way of looking at genocide, and certainly, the Holocaust has seemed to be, uh, um, particularly apt, uh, for this division uh and and we say the victims were a minority. Uh, the majority of, uh, Europeans were not persecuted to that extent as the Jews.

28:48 Omer Bartov: The Germans, or certain Germans, were perpetrating genocide and then much of the rest of the population were bystanders. They were standing by. They were looking on, right? Well, when you look at a small town, none of this actually works. And if you think about any town, a town that you would be living in, if anything like that happened it wouldn't work like that either. Because what happens when say, a Jewish policeman and a Ukrainian policeman, working together break into a Jewish home and take the family out, hand it over to the Germans, who take it over to the nearby hill and shoot them. Now, this apartment is empty. They have some pots and pans. They, they have a nice blanket, feather blanket, down blanket. They may have a piano, maybe. What do you do? So maybe you move in and then a week later someone knocks on the door and say hide me and my baby because they're trying to kill me. Do you let them in or not? This kind of engagement, constant engagement, with a genocide which is not a one event but a series of events that happen over months and months, as a daily routine of existence for everyone on the ground, means that everyone is engaged in it from complete collaboration - that is, let's say, you join, uh, the Germans and act as a policeman and so forth - to total resistance, that you hide people, you shoot back - or in between. The, the idea of people simply looking on doesn't really have any meaning.

30:33 Omer Bartov: So again, when when you look at genocide on, on that level, you realize that none of these terms, uh, actually work. And now, uh, having uh given you the introduction, that leaves me only with 15 minutes to talk about the book. I'll talk about the book. Um, these are just a few photographs of the city. This is from a postcard. It's a view from the Zamek, from the castle Widok ze zamku. Many of the postcards from that period before World War I are written in German, Polish, Ukrainian, rarely in Yiddish sometimes. But they use the three official languages very often. There's a set of fantastic photographs from World War I taken by the Austrians. This is one of them, very high-quality photographs of the city. Some of

them show also the destruction in the city. I'm just showing you some to give you an idea of what it looks like. Agnon describes it as a beautiful city that looks like Jerusalem because it's built on hills. That's of course somewhat literary imagination, but it is a beautiful spot, which is now extremely shabby after years of rule by the communists, and destruction of two wars, and bad construction.

31:52 Omer Bartov: So, I want to say something about the reason that I call the book that, and I don't know how you're good with your Bible, but I'm going to read this to you because this is [Hebrew phrase] in Hebrew, the voice of your brother's blood. I was just in Ukraine now for a discussion of possibly creating a memorial in a museum for Babi Yar, which is the main killing site in Kyiv where 33,000 Jews were murdered by shooting in two days in late September 1941. And the, one of the memorials that is there, there are many, uh, has exactly these lines written on it in Hebrew and in Ukrainian. *And God said to Cain: Where is Abel your brother? And he said: I don't know; am I my brother's keeper? And He said: What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.* And I thought, that for me at least, this encapsulated what this entire project was about because it is about the voice of the place. All these towns in Ukraine, um, certainly Buchach but many many others, not only was there a community there that was murdered, and not only was half of it murdered right there - and it's it's everywhere it's about 50 percent were murdered in situ the rest were deported to Belzec mostly and gassed there - but these people are still there. These towns are surrounded by mass graves. They're usually unmarked. Often, the graves were very shallow which means that bones come out every thaw, children grew up playing with human bones in the, around. So, the the dead and the living are still right next to each other.

33:50 Omer Bartov: How it's remembered, how it's articulated, how people think about it, is another question. I asked myself that question on main, on many occasions - not only thinking that I grew up next to in in Israel next to villages that had been entirely obliterated and that I played in Muslim cemeteries, and in so-called abandoned Palestinian houses. And so, this engaged me on a variety of levels. But seeing those sites in Western Ukraine, Eastern Galicia, these, these abandoned mass graves, cemeteries that have become now grazing areas for the local goats, or marketplaces, uh, the the desecration of memory, uh, which is largely because of ignorance, because of simply people do not know, have not been told, have not learned anything about that. They, they're suffering from collective amnesia. Uh, that is what I wanted to point out and to bring back this voice. Uh, and so, what I did in this book - and I'm just giving you here the the outline quickly - is to talk about the progression. Initially, I wanted to talk by and large about what changes the different narratives being told by different groups, from narratives that live side by side - and each group tells itself its own story - to narratives that become hostile to each other, that creates animosity. That say, this

is mine and not yours. I belong, you do not. And that is a process that, in large part, occurs there, as in many other places in Europe, between 1848 and 1914.

35:40 Omer Bartov: The introduction of nationalism to that area, which is relatively late and which begins with the Poles, then Ukrainians, and finally Jews - the Jews are very late with that Jewish nationalism, basically Zionism, in Eastern Galicia - creates this narrative of a different kind of separateness. Not a separateness where we can all live together but we tell each other different stories, but one where we cannot live together. You have to go, this is all mine, and you do not belong, and if you do not go then we have to make you go, and, and if we still cannot then we have to kill you. Uh, this is a narrative that begins in the, in the last third of the 19th century and gathers momentum toward 1914. But in Eastern Galicia, it's not violent, and what is important to understand is that despite our own images of that area - that it's always been extremely violent and people are wild and, and savage there - it is not true. Uh, the last time that there is major, major violence in that area is the 17th century. Uh, now the 17th century is very important in people's collective memory. That's the time of the Cossack Uprising of 1648, Khmelnytsky, you know Bohdan Khmelnytsky, and there are many butcheries in that area. Then the wars with the Turks, which affect Buchach and that area a great deal too. All that is, by and large, over by 1700, and from 1700 on there's actually very little violence. But violent talk about your neighbors gathers momentum in the latter part of the 19th century.

37:23 Omer Bartov: Then comes World War I. Now World War I, again we think about World War I - often many of us, uh, there are a lot of people in the - well it's been a long time - I was part of that myself - think about World War I as the Western Front. Uh, we know the literature of the Western Front, the movies about the Western Front, uh, uh, the, the romantics of the the the tragedy of it, uh, and so forth. And very few people know much about the Eastern Front. And without getting into too many details, what one can say is that it was extremely violent, extremely bloody and that people were exposed to the fighting in World War I in these areas, uh, which included depopulations, deportations of large numbers of people, massive violence against civilians, were naturally deeply affected by that. And in fact, we cannot understand the violence that comes after World War I, in the inter-war period, and then in World War II, without knowing what happened in World War I because that violent talk that existed before the war is translated into actual physical violence during the war. And in the case of Galicia, in its immediate aftermath. World War I does not end in 1918 there; it goes on until 1921. It includes several wars in this area. There's a war between the Poles and the Ukrainians because the Ukrainians want to create an independent western Ukraine and the Poles want to have it as part of independent Poland.

38:59 Omer Bartov: You may know that Poland disappears in the late 18th century, and is resurrected only after World War I. And the one thing that the Poles and the

Ukrainians agree on in fighting each other, is that they don't want the Jews there. There's, it actually appears again and again in nationalist arguments, both by Polish Nationalists and Ukrainian Nationalists. So World War I is crucial to understand. The inter-war period, uh, is again very important, particularly if we want to understand why, subsequently, when we talk about what happens in Buchach under - or in all this area - under German occupation. The preoccupation of Poles and Ukrainians is mostly about each other, and not at all about what's happening with the Jews, and not at all about what's happening in the largest scene of the war. The reason for that is because in the interwar period, um, as I said Poland takes over this part of what is now western Ukraine, which is Ukrainian majority. It tries to colonize it so it brings more and more Poles from central Poland into that area, which creates increasing tensions between indigenous Poles and indigenous Ukrainians - more and more tension between the two. It promises autonomy to the Ukrainians, uh, but never delivers. And in fact, it clamps down increasingly on, on, on any signs of Ukrainian Nationalism. As a result of this, Ukrainian Nationalists go underground. In 1930 there's an attempt that it's not exactly an uprising but a burning down of, of Polish properties throughout Eastern Galicia. As a result of this, there is a police and military action by the Poles and in the 1930s there's increasing violence between the two groups.

40:58 Omer Bartov: The Ukrainian secret organization, the organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, is underground and that is the organization that comes out the minute it can, comes out of hiding, and organizes both Ukrainian militias, and then is incorporated into the German organization, um the German Administrative Police organization, until about 1943. So without understanding this background, we cannot understand how this works under the German rule. The next part is also crucial, and that is Soviet rule. So, as you know in 1939 there is an agreement between [German Foreign Minister Joachim von] Ribbentrop and [Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav] Molotov, that is between Hitler and Stalin. The the secret part of that agreement is to share Eastern Europe between the two powers. That enables Germany to attack Poland on September 1st, 1939, because it knows that he would not have to fight the Soviet Union, and 17 days later the Soviet Union moves into the other side and annexes, among other parts, Eastern Galicia. So Eastern Galicia is under, uh, Soviet rule from September 1939 to July 1941. That period is a period of, uh, increasing violence by the rulers, in which large numbers of people are deported, first largely Poles - including much of the Polish nobility - then Jews - who are deported either for political activities, if they're Jewish nationalists - that is if they're associated with Zionism - or for social, economic reasons - that is if they're owners of factories, or businesses, or whatever, and then Ukrainians, the last was targeted. And right before the German attack on the 22nd of June 1941, there are several thousand political prisoners in local prisons throughout this region, most of them - not all but most of them - are Ukrainian political prisoners and the, the NKVD [Naródnyy komissariát vnútrennikh del, interior ministry of the Soviet Union] gives an order - either take them with you as

you're withdrawing or shoot them. Well, shooting is easier than taking them along, so thousands of them are shot in prison and that's the situation that the Germans encounter as they come in. And as a result of this, not only this but this certainly facilitates it, the massive pogroms throughout that region.

43:40 Omer Bartov: So, what Deborah [Hertz] mentioned earlier, the Wehrmacht Exhibition, the main debate over some photographs in that exhibition was about photographs that were taken in Galician towns in July 1941 in which you see German soldiers and police standing over bodies. And who are these bodies? Who took the photograph? When was it taken? Who are the victims? That was the debate. The victims are actually two groups. One is, uh, mostly Ukrainian political prisoners who were murdered by the, uh, Soviet Secret Police, uh, and the other are Jews who were forced by Ukrainian Nationalists, and by German Army, and police to exhume these bodies, and then were killed over these bodies. So this is, this is the moment of extreme violence July 1941. Now, when you get into the German period, what I tried to do because this is obviously the heart of the whole thing. I'll stop for a moment and show you some photographs. So this is what was Galicia and Eastern Galicia is this part. And Buchach is right here. So it's on the Eastern part of Eastern Galicia, Southeastern part of Eastern Galicia. That's a map from the Austrian period. Nowadays you can see, this is Ukraine and Buchach is someplace here. So this is Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia. So it's over here. This is my mother. Uh, okay, this is World War I in Buchach. This is a Soviet period.

45:22 Omer Bartov: So now, when the Germans come into Buchach and that's important to understand - I won't keep you much longer than this - they organize their rule and in order to accomplish what they want to accomplish, they have to put certain things in place. There are three main elements, one is the Jews, the second is the non-Jews, and the third is the Germans themselves. So with the Jews, they very quickly organize a Jewish council, a Judenrat, and a Jewish police, Ordnungsdienst. These are crucial to accomplishing what the Germans want to accomplish. That is, they save them a lot of work. Secondly, they take the Ukrainian militias that were formed there from the underground that now surfaced - and this underground surfaces as the Soviets leave and before the Germans come in - the Germans incorporate them into their own system and create both local police, and police battalions. These are crucial to perpetrating genocide. The Germans have very few people on the ground themselves. And thirdly, there are the Germans themselves, they create outposts of the security police. There's one outpost for the area of Buchach-Chortkiv, which is a town nearby. They're between 20 and 30 German personnel there. Not all of them are German, and a number of the Germans are actually ethnic Germans; so a number of them are Czech or Polish, who speak also the local language as well as German. These up to 30 people, together with a battalion of about 300 Ukrainian policemen, and German

police on the ground - very few in each town - Jewish police and Ukrainian police on the ground kill, in that area alone, 60,000 people in about a year and a half.

47:16 Omer Bartov: Most of the killing starts not right away, although there's one, uh, wave of killing at the beginning. Most of the killing is between summer-fall of 1942 and summer 1943. By the end of June 1943 most of the Jewish population in that area - as in all of Eastern Poland, Eastern Galicia - are dead. Not all of them, there are some who survive, and there's a complicated story about that, but the vast majority have been killed. So the Germans organize this extremely well, and they do it with the local population. Now the second, uh, aspect that I looked at - oh, I should add that what was really important for me in trying to reconstruct this is not tell the story that they organize and kill, but how they perceive what they're doing. And as you see, these guys are having a good time. These are, these are known people from Buchach, German officials. What you find when you read testimonies, many uh, trials that were conducted after the war, you find that Germans had an extremely good time in this area. They brought their wives. They brought their children. They brought their parents. They had cars. They had infinite power. They could get as much alcohol and tobacco as they, as they wished, very good food, or if not good at least plenty of it. Um, they had a tremendously comfortable time there. They were also, of course, not fighting the war like many other Germans had to go to the Eastern Front and get killed. They were killing others, and living very comfortable lives, and you get a sense of their interaction with the population. They had Jewish maids, and cleaners, and nannies, uh, most of whom are later killed. They know them by name. They testify about them 20 years later, and they still remember them by name.

49:20 Omer Bartov: So what you're getting is a complex picture of a society. If you like, it's a little bubble, living very comfortably, floating over an ocean of blood because the killings are happening all the time, all around them. They can see them from the windows. They report about them when they, when they testify in court 20, 30 years later and so it's a, it's a, it's a very powerful moment that you understand that this kind of local genocide has nothing to do, in a sense, with our notion that you have to dehumanize the victims before you kill them. They know them. They interact with them. In some cases, they also have sex with them and, and, and so forth. Uh, sex with, with, uh, Jews is not prohibited at all there, uh, amorous relations are. So, in one case, someone actually falls in love with the Jewish woman and tries to take her to Vienna, and then he's executed. But rape is fine, and brothels operate and actually provided by the Judenrat in Buchach. So this is one part. The second part here - and I'll just talk about this and the last - is, um, the case of the Jews. When you read, uh, I had over 250 different Jewish voices talking about this experience. Now obviously, these are biased in the sense that these are voices, in almost all of them, of people who survive. They have a few diaries, but most of them are people who survived. And people who survived, as

Primo Levi said, they, they don't necessarily represent those who drowned, those who died, but they still represent a great deal.

51:01 Omer Bartov: What interested me most there, was the fact that in order to survive you had to be helped. You could not survive without somebody giving you shelter. It, it was extremely rare that you could survive without someone hiding you in the attic, in the barn, giving you milk, giving you bread, someone, at some point, helping you. And many of the people who survive are very young, many were children or young teenagers. And what is so, uh, well, interesting and, and, and moving, and troubling in in this story is that those Jews that survived are constantly balancing between being betrayed by the population - they cannot trust anyone, and most of them are betrayed, and handed over for one reason or another, and very often it's material - and the fact that they are also saved. They were saved by someone, and often not one but many. And it's this that, that, that was important for me to, to understand because again, when, when we talk about the dynamics of genocide on this level, it is all about that. People made choices the whole time. Every time that somebody knocked on your door and said, please shelter me, you had to make a choice. Do you let them in, or not? Often, people who hid Jews were poor, had children of their own, were obviously putting themselves in great danger, and yet some chose to do so. Some people who sheltered also denounced. In fact, in many cases, people gave shelter, later denounced. They denounced maybe because the people they were hiding ran out of money, and they needed the money because they were poor, and you had to go and buy milk, or bread, or something for those people you were sheltering, and they no longer had it. Maybe because they thought that they would be denounced by others in the village, which happened very often because people in the village thought, how come, you seem to be buying a lot of milk? What is going on here?

53:17 Omer Bartov: And if you are hiding Jews, you're making money off of it. They're probably giving you gold, and some people killed because the people they were sheltering had something that they wanted now. They had a fur coat. They had a gold ring. It was easier just to axe them, and then to take that, and bury them. And so this dynamic of genocide can only be understood from the stories. And I would say that when you hear victims of genocide, survivors of genocide, who speak about those who help them, then you're getting as close to the truth as you can. This is the people who were helped, and not the people who claim to have helped. And finally, and I'll, I'll just say a couple of words on that - in the last chapter, I talk about neighbors, that is, I talk about Poles and Ukrainians. A, a penpal of mine, who is a Ukrainian, whose father lived in Buchach in the interwar period - his father was a Nationalist, I have a lot of documents on him, and was then arrested and murdered by the Soviets - just read this chapter and wasn't very happy with me. Uh, and I still haven't answered him. Uh, the, when, when you read Polish and Ukrainian accounts about this period, by and large, Jews are incidental. They don't really play much of a part. For Jews, how Poles and Ukrainians behave was

crucial, of course, because they could betray you, or shelter you, and they often were people you knew from school, from the workplace, from the marketplace. But Poles and Ukrainians were mostly interested in each other. And the Ukrainians, Ukrainian Nationalists who are the main force there underground and then coming out of the underground in 1943, have an agenda. The agenda is to create an independent Ukraine. What they could not create after World War I, they now hope to create it. And to create an independent Ukraine, it has to be Pole and Jew-free.

55:23 Omer Bartov: And they begin a campaign of ethnic cleansing that begins in Volhynia, north of Galicia, and then in late 1943, early 1944 descends into Eastern Galicia. And they massacre entire Polish villages. So, when you think about resistance when you think about people in the forest who are arming themselves and fighting, they're not fighting the Germans. They're fighting each other. And most of the Jews who end up in the resistance and there are some, for one thing, many of them were before that in the Jewish police, and then they moved to the resistance because you cannot be in the Jewish police anymore. There is no Jewish police. So they move to the forest. The Jews, the Ukrainians, and the Poles are mostly fighting each other. A number of Jews join the Poles, but there are no, they don't create any risk for the Wehrmacht. The Wehrmacht is way too strong for them, but they are trying to intimidate each other so as to stop the killing. And what is extraordinary is, at this last stage where the German control is beginning to disintegrate, and as the Soviets are getting closer and closer, is that again what we have - the kind of stereotypes that we have change - don't fit this situation.

56:47 Omer Bartov: The last Jews of this area are saved by Germans. There is one German agricultural officer who employs Jews on a farm and protects them from marauders, from, from, from bandits, from Nationalists who are trying to kill them. And then in one town, [unclear] - which is not far from Buchach - about 600 Jews converge on that town because they hear that there is one Wehrmacht officer, apparently someone who came from the east and who is appalled by what he see, because this extraordinary killing there. Um, the Gestapo is not on the ground anymore and he tells them, I will stay here and protect you until the last moment. And he stays there until the Soviets arrive. He leaves a few hours earlier the Red Army arrives, and tragically at that point there's an aerial bombardment by the Luftwaffe and about 100 of those survivors are killed in a barracks that is hit by an aero-bomb. And so again, this notion that we have these, these rows that we assign conveniently to ourselves look very different on the ground. Okay, I'll stop here. I've kept you long enough and I'm happy to answer questions. Thank you.

58:14 [The Voice of Your Brother's Blood: The Murder of a Town in Eastern Galicia / February 13, 2017]

58:21 [Featuring Omer Bartov, DPhil / John P. Birkelund Distinguished Professor of European History / Professor of German Studies / Brown University]

58:26 [Presented by, The Holocaust Living History Workshop / Deborah Hertz, Ph.D. / Director, The Jewish Studies Program, UC San Diego / Susanne Hillman / Program Coordinator, The Holocaust Living History Workshop]

58:32 [The UC San Diego Library / Audrey Geisel University Librarian, Brian E.C. Schottlaender / Director of Communications and Outreach, Dolores Davies]

58:36 [UCTV / Producer, Shannon Bradley / Camera Operators, Marci Bretts, John Menier / Editor, John Menier / Post-Production Supervisor, Mike Weber]

58:42 [The views, contents, and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of the University of California]

58:48 [Read Write Think Dream / The Library Channel / UC San Diego / www.uctv.tv/library-channel]

58:54 [uctv, University of California Television / www.uctv.tv /]