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Interview with Mr. Mykola, the parishioner of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Holy Ascension of Maplewood town, New Jersey, USA

Nick (Mykola) began the interview talking about his youth, he was born in the Ukraine near the end of World War 2. His parents wanted to leave the country due to the immediate danger faced from the Soviet Union at the time. Their journey to the United States was not easy, as they went from camp to camp, surviving off of very little. Nick's father was shot in the knee, and his sister was left behind during the trip.

Surprisingly, the Germans offered protection to Nick and his family at some of the camps they stayed at. Nick then began to discuss his hometown in the Ukraine. He described it as a little village that has roughly remained the same after all these decades. While Nick's sister was adamant on staying in Ukraine even later in life, Nick felt quite the opposite. He said he has no interest in ever going back to the village in which he was born. Nick clearly feels passionate about not going back as he said the last time he was in Ukraine was during his youth, he has not once visited in his later life.

When asked about his political views, Nick clearly showed a dislike for dictatorships/government. Nick's entire family disliked many of the leaders in the Soviet Union, with Nikita Khrushchev being a name Nick recalled his father disliking greatly. Even though the Soviet Union collapsed decades ago, Nick still believes Russia isn't democratic, referring to Vladimir Putin as a dictator.

After his reflection on the past was done, the interviewers began to ask about Nick's experience in America being a Ukrainian-American. Nick stated that the church is the most important part of his culture, specifically he is a practicing member of Orthodox Christianity. Although religion is important to Nick, he didn't let it define his marriage as he fell in love with a non-Ukrainian Protestant woman. It was a lot of work to make their marriage work, as Protestantism and Orthodox have many vast differences.

The discussion then shifted to the current state of relations between Russia and Ukraine, with the interviewers asking Nick for his take on the situation. Nick reiterated the same feelings from before when discussing Russia, he is completely against what Putin is doing with regards to trying to take over Ukraine, and he feels as though the either NATO or the United Nations should be doing a lot more to punish Russia and protect Ukraine.

Nick finished the interview looking back on his childhood, and how he was fascinated with the bomb craters he saw while in Germany. Once in Germany, Nick and his family took a boat to the United States, and the rest was history.

Overall, this insight into Nick's life was fascinating and the fact that he was able to recall so many details from events that took place over 50 years ago was very impressive. The story of Nick's family is motivational and shows all of us how lucky we are to live in America.

References

Mr. Mykola (2018, May). Interview with Mr. Mykola [Interview]. Philip Nasisi, Seton Hall University.

Interview 2 (18:52). May 1, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n44r4UbxcYI&t=2s>

