

פטריק דבואה - כומר קתולי צרפתי, ראש "המשרד הלאומי לקשרים עם היהדות של ועידת הבישופים של צרפת", אחד ממייסדיו ויו"ר של הארגון "יחד" - אין אונים (Yahad - In Unum), ארגון הפועל לחשיפת ותיעוד אתרי השמדה וקבורה המוניים של מאות אלפי יהודים שנורו למוות בזמן השואה על ידי חיילי האיינזצגרופן הגרמנים ושותפיהם על אדמות ברית המועצות לשעבר, למשל באוקראינה ובבלארוס.

Remembering the Holocaust

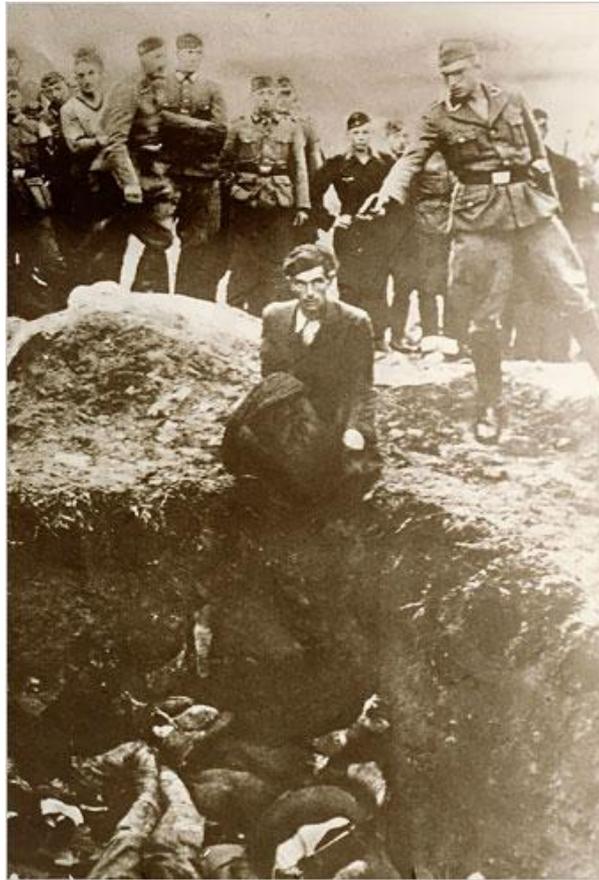
Patrick Desbois, a Roman Catholic priest from France



Patrick Desbois, a Roman Catholic priest from France, has spent four years hearing witnesses' accounts and searching for unmarked common graves in Ukraine, where 1.5 million Jews were shot dead by Nazis from 1941 to 1944 and buried throughout the country



Over four years, Father Desbois, second from right, has videotaped more than 700 interviews with witnesses and bystanders and identified more than 600 common graves of Jews, most of them previously unknown.



A Nazi soldier about to shoot a Ukrainian Jew at the edge of a mass grave. Unlike Poland and Germany, where the Holocaust remains visible through the symbols of the extermination camps, the killings in Ukraine were hidden, first by the Nazis, then by the Soviets.



In August 2006, Father Desbois's team uncovered a mass grave near the village of Busk. With few exceptions, most notably the 1941 slaughter of nearly 34,000 Jews in the Babi Yar ravine in Kiev, much of the killing history has gone untold.



In the village of Konstantinovka, witnesses to killings showed where to find mass graves.



A research team directed by Father Desbois used metal detectors to find bullets and cartridges, which help locate the graves.



Father Desbois's team found 2,490 bullet cartridges near a village in April 2006.



Members of an unidentified German paramilitary group, operated by the Nazis, watched as Jewish men and women were forced to dig their own graves. Many Ukrainians were forced to carry out tasks for the Nazis.



Jewish prisoners were forced to undress before they were executed in Chernigov, Ukraine, in 1942. Some villagers had to feed Nazi soldiers, and others had to mend the clothes stripped from Jews.



One of 15 mass graves excavated under the direction of Father Desbois. "There was nothing to see in Ukraine because people were shot to death with guns," said Thomas Eymond-Laritz, president of the Victor Pinchuk Foundation, Ukraine's largest philanthropic organization. "That's why Father Desbois is so important."



Two witnesses gestured to the location of a mass grave near Naraiv. Often his subjects ask Father Desbois to stay for a meal and to pray, as if to somehow bless their acts of remembrance.



Father Desbois, right, and a cameraman prepared to interview a witness last summer. Father Desbois does not judge those who were assigned to carry out tasks for the Nazis, and Holocaust scholars say that is one reason he is so effective.



Father Desbois and his team have been quietly seeking witnesses, roaming the back roads and forgotten fields of Ukraine. His most powerful tools are his matter-of-fact style, and his clerical collar.



Only one-third of Ukrainian territory has been covered so far, and it will take several more years to finish the research.