Well, I see that you have everything.

What?

[INAUDIBLE] get out my notes.

All right.

Let's start with the very beginning.

I would like to know, what were your first missions?

You were a courier of the Polish government in exile after the--

Yes, most of the war.

I was a liaison officer between the leadership
of various segments of the Polish Underground,
and then a courier between political parties--
from time to time, the home army,
delegate of the government, and the Polish government in exile.
In this capacity, first, I was sent to [INAUDIBLE], France, in November 1940.
From Warsaw? From Warsaw.
Carrying the messages to the Polish--
Well, Presov was a little hole in Slovakia, and their methods of interrogation were rather primitive—beating, beating, beating.

SS men interrogated me. I was supposed to look at him, answer his question without any delay. And then, behind me, if I stopped, if I tried to think, they would hit me here. Apparently, this is a painful place.
And your teeth?

And then, they were beating me.

They broke my teeth.

They broke my jaw.

They broke my ribs.

I couldn't take it anymore.

My bad luck was that they had Leica.

They knew that I was, from their standpoint, evidently a spy.

I was sure that it was developed totally.

It wasn't.

Mainly, apparently, water did not come to the end, and some
last four or five squares--

Leica had 38-or-something squares.

At a certain point, the SS officer brings it, and he says,

what is this?

Now, thinking that everything was destroyed,

my explanation was, I am not concerned with the war.

I have a girlfriend in Switzerland.

I lived in Switzerland before, which was true.

I gave the correct name, street, whatsoever.

I wanted to escape from Poland, live in Switzerland,

to get out of this mess.

I have nothing against Germans.
I don't want to live in Poland.

I've had enough of it.

I found a man who told me, give it in Geneva to somebody.

I gave the name, fictional now.

What is inside?

I asked him.

Pictures of the ruins of Warsaw.

There is nothing else in this film.

For this, he gave me money and promised me

that his friend in Switzerland will pay me for it.

This is why I have this film.

SS man now takes it from his drawer,
stretches, gives me a magnifying glass, says, read it.

And then, to my horror, I see the last four or five squares--

not even coded-- pure clear text of some report,

which was insignificant.

Names only-- first, letters.

And then, he says, you are lying.

So then, beating, beating, beating.

You must tell us who you are.

Who sent you?

He was a rather cultured man, as a matter of fact-- a young man,

good-looking, efficient, whatsoever.

His point was, you are in the Polish Underground.
We want to get in touch with your leaders.

We want to have some settlement.

We are not interested in killing the Poles.

We are not interested in destroying your elite.

We must find some accommodation, so that the Poles will not fight us anymore.

Well, the war is practically over.

It doesn't make any sense.

For this, you must enable us to get in touch with your authorities.

Of course, I was playing that role.
I am stupid.

97 00:06:10,040 --> 00:06:12,760
I don't know
anything, et cetera.

98 00:06:12,760 --> 00:06:16,600
Beating-- well, I
couldn't take it anymore.

99 00:06:16,600 --> 00:06:22,480
Now, in my shoe, I had a blade,
very primitive at that time.

100 00:06:22,480 --> 00:06:28,110
I cut both hands,
succeeded in cutting--

101 00:06:28,110 --> 00:06:29,080
Your veins?

102 00:06:29,080 --> 00:06:32,590
Now, I had-- but this is
after cosmetic operation,

103 00:06:32,590 --> 00:06:35,950
eventually in 1943.

104 00:06:35,950 --> 00:06:37,990
So at that time,
it was [INAUDIBLE]..

105 00:06:37,990 --> 00:06:40,360
They saved me.

106 00:06:40,360 --> 00:06:46,240
Now, apparently, they considered
that Presov is not safe for me.

107 00:06:46,240 --> 00:06:53,320
They send me back to Poland by
car with two Gestapo with me.
Now, I had good luck.

They send me to Nowy Sacz, from which I departed, and where I had a liaison girl who was responsible for my trip.

They sent me to a prison hospital, public hospital.

Only in my room, the Gestapo--

every eight hours, they were changing and treating me.

I was badly hurt.

My hands were this.

You were very important for them.

Yes.

They wanted to save me, apparently, for confrontations.
And now, so my point was, I learned this is Nowy Sacz.

How to establish contact with the girl?

I succeeded, mainly first.

There was a doctor.

His name is [INAUDIBLE].

He still lives in Poland.

I saw him after the war.

When he treated my hands, he just whispered to me,

you are very sick.

Simulate that you are very sick.

Try to stay in the hospital as long as possible.

We will do something.
You are sick.

So I understood.

I was mortally sick all the time.

Then, I want to go to confession.

I committed a mortal sin.

I want to go to confession.

In that hospital, there was a chapel.

Gestapo agreed.

So on the wheels, I went to mass.

I went to confession.

And then, I played luck.

A priest-- whatever I say is safe.

I confessed, got
absolution, and then I stay.

145
00:08:49,170 --> 00:08:52,110
Slovak language is
very similar to Polish.

146
00:08:52,110 --> 00:08:53,250
I don't know Slovak.

147
00:08:53,250 --> 00:08:58,600
In Polish, I whispered,
Father, I have more to say.

148
00:08:58,600 --> 00:08:59,100
What?

149
00:08:59,100 --> 00:09:02,310

150
00:09:02,310 --> 00:09:06,130
Somebody has to go.

151
00:09:06,130 --> 00:09:08,010
Such is the name.

152
00:09:08,010 --> 00:09:11,465
Such is the address.

153
00:09:11,465 --> 00:09:15,200
There will be a young lady.

154
00:09:15,200 --> 00:09:17,390
And tell her what happens here.

155
00:09:17,390 --> 00:09:19,430
I am Witold.

156
00:09:19,430 --> 00:09:20,240
Tell her.

157
00:09:20,240 --> 00:09:21,920

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Witold is here.

Witold was your code name?

My pseudonym at that time.

Amusing story, Father answered.

My son, this is confession.

This is not politics.

You have no right to ask me for this.

But then, he said, well, I will think about it.

Two or three days later, a nun comes.

They were allowed to serve.

He approached my bed.
Well, the two or three days later, a nun enters my room.

They were allowed to serve in the hospital.

She brought me some apples, some cookie.

She approaches my bed.

I recognized her.

It was my liaison girl.

She put everything.

She whispered to me, Jozef notified.

Jozef was at that time the most prominent socialist leader.

Jozef Cyrankiewicz.

After the war, he served for 18 years as the prime minister of Poland.
And he was in Auschwitz, too.

Yes, the same one.

He organized my escape.

Yes.

Now, I whispered now to the nun, to the liaison girl, do everything, whatever they want.

I cannot go back to Gestapo.

I cannot take torture any longer.

Either let them save me, or let them give me cyanide.

I cannot take it.

Cyanide?

Cyanide.

Poison?
Poison.

She returned again.

Two days, whatever it is.

Brought me some fruits, puts her hand under a pillow.

This is cyanide.

Very well, organized.

This is a pill.

It is well-adapted on a tape with hair around it.

Whispers to me, put it under your groins.
Don't use it.

Jozef told me they will try to save you.

Only in extreme, take it.

He saved me, very simply.

Apparently, what I learned later--

one of the Gestapo men was so-called volksdeutsche.

They bought him.

They gave him some false documents, money, [INAUDIBLE]

also.

He did not see that some few nights,

on some signal from Dr. [INAUDIBLE],

I had to take all my clothes,
naked, get out of my room,

00:12:58,560 --> 00:13:02,350
cross the corridor,
approach a window,

00:13:02,350 --> 00:13:05,780
the window would be
open, and jumped,

00:13:05,780 --> 00:13:09,240
without thinking
about anything else.

00:13:09,240 --> 00:13:10,260
Completely naked.

00:13:10,260 --> 00:13:14,130
Completely naked, I jumped down.

00:13:14,130 --> 00:13:18,970
And some [INAUDIBLE] it was,
I believe, the second floor

00:13:18,970 --> 00:13:19,470
thing.

00:13:19,470 --> 00:13:25,680
Not [INAUDIBLE] some
clothes, took me.

00:13:25,680 --> 00:13:30,150
There is some river,
to a river, to a boat.

00:13:30,150 --> 00:13:34,980
I thanked them profusely
for saving my life.

00:13:34,980 --> 00:13:38,290

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The guy who later became my friend said,

well, don't thank us too much.

We had two orders to save you, if there would be complications, to shoot you.

He says, that's all right.

We were lucky you were lucky.

Took me to some estate, a little estate,

which the Germans allowed to function.

And I spent there some three months, first to recover.

Secondly, we had a rule in the Underground.

Once you were arrested by Gestapo, and then you escaped, we called it, you had to pass through quarantine period.
You are not kosher, you know.

And we have to check, are you observed, are you followed,
or perhaps you are a double agent, whatsoever.

So three months passed.

I recovered completely.

I wanted to go back.

Still they kept me over there, and then they said, all right.

I went back to Kraków, spent in Kraków some four, five months.

This is now-- we are in 1940.

Then in Kraków, arrests took place.

As a matter of fact, at that time,
was Bor-Komorowski, who--

255
00:15:10,600 --> 00:15:14,560
so he left KrakÄw,
went to Warsaw,

256
00:15:14,560 --> 00:15:17,590
became the deputy
commander-in-chief.

257
00:15:17,590 --> 00:15:26,470
And eventually, when Rowecki
was arrested in July 1943,

258
00:15:26,470 --> 00:15:28,690
he became commander-in-chief.

259
00:15:28,690 --> 00:15:31,630
He writes about me
in his book here--

260
00:15:31,630 --> 00:15:32,890
all this mission.

261
00:15:32,890 --> 00:15:37,990
And he left KrakÄw.

262
00:15:37,990 --> 00:15:40,690
I left KrakÄw as well.

263
00:15:40,690 --> 00:15:43,540
Then came Cyrankiewicz, mainly.

264
00:15:43,540 --> 00:15:49,285
In April, I remember, Easter
time, Cyrankiewicz arrested.

265
00:15:49,285 --> 00:15:52,000

266
00:15:52,000 --> 00:15:55,690
I had highest
admiration for him.

00:15:55,690 --> 00:15:57,700
He saved my life.

00:15:59,590 --> 00:16:02,080
As a matter of fact, I volunteered to the Polish Socialist Party.

00:16:06,770 --> 00:16:09,520
I want to contribute now something for him.

00:16:09,520 --> 00:16:10,720
They rejected this.

00:16:10,720 --> 00:16:13,330
They said you are intelligentsia,

00:16:13,330 --> 00:16:16,760
and this is a rough, tough job.

00:16:16,760 --> 00:16:20,025
You are not good for this kind of things.

00:16:20,025 --> 00:16:20,525
OK.

00:16:20,525 --> 00:16:36,720
Well, somewhat in the middle of 1942, first, I was thinking about continuing my service as a courier. Among others, I approached the delegates of the Polish government in the Underground. At the time, it was a certain professor [INAUDIBLE]. He said, yes, if you want to go, it is a little dangerous, because you are marked. You have still-- your wrists are recognizable.
And of course, the Gestapo knows that you escaped.

But perhaps, it will work.

As a matter of fact, the socialist leader, Pużak he was against sending me.

But I insisted.

They agreed to do it.

So now, I went in the same character,

approaching the leadership of every political major party--

peasant party, socialist party, nationalist party,

Christian Labor Party with the messages from the delegate

of the government.

And everyone had the right to ask
I will not make any intrigues.

You didn't take any kind of notes?

None, whatsoever.

Everything was memorized?

Purely everything was in my head--

nothing except the one thing.

This is now-- we are in 1942.

Already, our equipment is better.

Already, Americans and British supplied us.
Yes, I did take mainly microfilm.

The size of it was like American matches, some three matches put together, rolled.

It was melted into a key, small key, and then melted back.

And my mission was to hold the key, completely unrecognizable.

This I succeeded to carry with me.

I was not arrested during that time.

Then in London, when they developed that microfilm, it represented 400 typed pages.

Such technique was already developed.

Americans entered the picture and already helped us.
So this was the only message I had.

Of course, I had no slightest idea what was in that key.

Only hold this key.

If there is a danger, of course, throw it [INAUDIBLE].

Otherwise, everything to my memory.

Now, when I agreed and started to circulate

between political parties, and then political counsel--

we had a counsel of the political parties attached

to the delegate of the government.

Now, the Jewish leaders learned about it--
that the courier goes.

Apparently, he's reliable, et cetera.

They learned about me.

So now, the Jewish leaders--

they had their own underground movement.

As you know, in Poland, you had 100 types of Jews--

assimilated, not assimilated, organized--

I presume you know.

They had a multitude of political parties, groups,

orientations, et cetera.

So now, the most important groups were Bund and Zionists.

Politically, both of them already were, so to say,
incorporated into the apparatus of the delegate,

but they were separate.

They had their own organization.

(filmslating)

Well, at a certain point, the information came from the delegates of the government that Jewish leaders want to see.

Apparently, they want to use your services.

Do you want to see them?

Yes, I would.

Meetings arranged--
I met them twice.
When was it?

This was in October 1942, at the beginning.

At the time, the situation of the Jews of Warsaw was catastrophic.

Yes.

In October-- at the beginning of October, of course--

end of September, possibly.

By that time, a Jewish ghetto in Warsaw,

which originally consisted of approximately 400,000 Jews--

over 300,000 were already deported to--

To Treblinka?

Yes-- between July or August, whatsoever, maybe September.
Still, in the ghetto, at that time, approximately 50,000 Jews left. And all the others had been already gassed in Treblinka.

As a matter of fact, at that time, even the ghetto--practically, there were four ghettos within the walls of the original ghetto.

In some parts, the Aryans could move. Some parts of it, they were empty. Nobody wanted to go too deeply and live over there.
The most important part was the so-called central ghetto,

around the Platz Muranowski I don't know whether you visited.

This was the part I was smuggled in.

Well, so now, to the meetings--

a meeting was arranged.

There were two gentlemen.

It was very formal at the beginning.

They introduced themselves.

I represent for the sake of this meeting, Bund, one.

I represent Zionists.

They didn't give their names?

Nobody gave the names.
Only Polish leaders--
you know, I knew them.

I was in contact several times.

Of course, nobody introduced--

nobody was supposed to know
my name, as a matter of fact.

We had pseudonyms.

Only with the Polish leaders.

Yes, because you knew them.

Yes, I knew who they were.

Now, those two gentlemen--

I was never involved
in Jewish affairs.

I say, no, I am not a Jew.

So I didn't know
them, naturally.

Until today, you know, I
do not know their names.
Only after the war, in all Polish publications, they mentioned that the man who represented Bund was Feiner.

Leon Feiner?

Yes.

I never knew during the war.

When even I reported to London, I did not report the name.

Only authorized leader of Bund told me this and this.

Second, the Zionist-- in the Polish publications after the war, they say, he was Berman.

Adolf Berman.

They introduced themselves,
and then they told me,

420
00:25:36,190 --> 00:25:37,510
we know about you.

421
00:25:37,510 --> 00:25:39,475
We know you are going to London.

422
00:25:39,475 --> 00:25:42,070

423
00:25:42,070 --> 00:25:44,350
We also have messages.

424
00:25:44,350 --> 00:25:48,160
Will you take messages from us?

425
00:25:48,160 --> 00:25:51,420
We are Polish citizens.

426
00:25:51,420 --> 00:25:55,870
We feel we are entitled
to the services.

427
00:25:55,870 --> 00:25:58,650
But this is up to
you, Mr. Witold--

428
00:25:58,650 --> 00:26:00,450
that was my pseudonym.

429
00:26:00,450 --> 00:26:03,060
I said, yes, I will do it.

430
00:26:03,060 --> 00:26:06,930
Then, they presented
their demands.

431
00:26:06,930 --> 00:26:09,840
Can you describe the
meetings with the two men?
Did it take place in the ghetto, the meeting?

No.

No, twice, two houses outside of the ghetto.

They did not live in the ghetto.

The Zionist leader never went with me to the ghetto.

On my two visits to the Warsaw ghetto,

Bund leader accompanied me-- apparently, Feiner.

Zionist leader, I never met him again.

I never met again after those meetings.

Bund leader-- not [INAUDIBLE].
Yes.

But let's come back to the first meeting.

In some old house, ruined, cold.

It was the beginning of October, cold.

They were well-dressed, relatively, undistinguishable from the Aryan, naturally Aryan.

Then during the meeting, at various points, so to say,

they did break down--

They broke down?

Yes, they broke down.
They were of course excited, frustrated, shouting, whispering, walking in the rooms.

When they were describing their demands--

what do they want?

Well, so now, I go back in my memory to the other world.

So what is your--

do you want me now to deal with those two sessions?

Oh, yes.

Or about the ghetto?

No, no, no.

The two sessions.

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media. It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.
What did they ask specifically, for you to report to the world?

They gave me several messages. Some of them-- one of them, only to the president of the Polish Republic, Władysław Raczkiewicz.

They specifically forbade me to discuss this subject with the Jewish leaders in London, mainly. They were afraid that in their zeal, despair, frustration, they might complicate the problem.

The problem was, the Germans are physically exterminating the Jews. From whatever we know, this will continue, regardless
of the outcome of the war.

On a humanitarian basis--

Zionist, as a matter of fact, he interjected, Christianity has roots in Judaism.

We feel entitled to expect protection from the Vatican.

Sanctions must be applied against Catholics who take directly or indirectly any part in Jewish extermination.

Excuse me.
Did they give you the feeling, and did they have themselves a feeling that what was at stake at the time was extermination not of individuals but of the whole of the Jewish people?

Both of them, they had no doubts about this.

The most outspoken was the Bund leader--

What did he say?

--in this respect.

Many-- of course, the majority of the Poles consider themselves Catholics.

I repeat now their reaction.
Now, however, there are very many

Germans, many German officials who not only are born Catholics but who consider themselves still Catholics.

As a matter of fact, Hitler was a born Catholic.

From whatever we know about your Catholic church, we understand the pope has a jurisdiction in excommunicating the faithful.

We leave it to the wisdom, to the conscience of the president of the Polish Republic, to approach the pope. You will discuss it only with him, not
even with the prime minister, not with the Jewish leaders.

516
00:31:32,470 --> 00:31:35,080
We understand diplomatic protocol.

517
00:31:35,080 --> 00:31:40,120
Only the head of state can approach the pope

518
00:31:40,120 --> 00:31:48,040
on our behalf to apply sanctions against the Catholics,

519
00:31:48,040 --> 00:31:54,610
both Polish and Germans, and to make those sanctions public.

520
00:31:54,610 --> 00:31:58,240
Perhaps it will help a little.

521
00:31:58,240 --> 00:31:59,500
Who knows?

522
00:31:59,500 --> 00:32:05,980
Perhaps Hitler will reflect, if excommunication publicly

523
00:32:05,980 --> 00:32:07,390
will be announced.

524
00:32:07,390 --> 00:32:08,740
What did they ask?

525
00:32:08,740 --> 00:32:14,080
Specifically it was excommunication?

526
00:32:14,080 --> 00:32:15,970
They mentioned several times--
we know excommunication is in the jurisdiction of the pope.

There are precedents that he did it.