Mr. President, before having left Poland, I was charged with this mission by the most important Jewish leaders. They organized for me two visits in the ghetto. I saw extermination camp. The name is Belzec. Mr. President, the situation is horrible. The point is, without the outside help,
the Jews will perish in Poland.

The end.

I remember every second of this conversation.

The Allied Nations--

Excuse me.

What did he answer, specifically?

Nothing.

He enters the picture now.

Nothing.

This was the end of your report?

Yes.

Nothing.

It came at the end of the Jewish--
I never had the chance.

So now, his answer.

The Allied Nations are going to win this war!

No more wars!

Justice will be done!

Your country will be alive again, and more prosperous than before.

Criminals will be punished.

The United States will not abandon your country, as a matter of fact.
Now he says, Poland, as re-compensation,  

39  
00:02:22,060 --> 00:02:32,170  
will receive East Prussia,  
or a part of East Prussia.

40  
00:02:32,170 --> 00:02:35,560  
No more corridor!

41  
00:02:35,560 --> 00:02:37,180  
And now, to the Ambassador.

42  
00:02:37,180 --> 00:02:40,855  
Mr. Ambassador, what  
do you think about it?

43  
00:02:40,855 --> 00:02:42,880  
Of course, Mr.  
Ambassador loves it,

44  
00:02:42,880 --> 00:02:45,820  
only he wants all of  
East Prussia, [LAUGHS]

45  
00:02:45,820 --> 00:02:48,010  
not part of East Prussia.

46  
00:02:48,010 --> 00:02:51,040  
Short conversation about that.

47  
00:02:51,040 --> 00:02:54,820  

48  
00:02:54,820 --> 00:02:58,630  
Then when you return  
to Poland, you

49  
00:02:58,630 --> 00:03:03,730  
will tell your Polish  
leaders, this country
will never fail them.

They have a friend in the President of the United States.

And now he does ask me questions.

Oh, yes.

Underground movement.

Do you know what question he asked me?

Do I understand correctly, young man, that before the war Poland was essentially an agricultural country?

Yes, Mr. President, it was so.

Well, now, what we understand in the Russian campaign,

Germans had to use tremendous amount of horses.
Did they take those horses from Poland?

Because with your agricultural economy, you need horses.

Mr. President, yes.

He asked me other questions also.

About--

I had no chance, except my initial statement,

to tell you Mr. President, listen to me.

Well, you don't speak to the President of the United States.

No Jewish problem was mentioned until the end of the conversation, which lasted one hour 20 minutes.
But excuse me to insist, but it is my theme.

74
00:04:49,510 --> 00:04:53,125
About the Jews, did ask specific questions?

75
00:04:53,125 --> 00:04:53,625
No.

76
00:04:53,625 --> 00:04:53,900
Not one?

77
00:04:53,900 --> 00:04:54,530
No.

78
00:04:54,530 --> 00:04:55,450
Not a single one.

79
00:04:55,450 --> 00:04:56,482
Not a single one?

80
00:04:56,482 --> 00:04:57,190
Not a single one.

81
00:04:57,190 --> 00:04:57,690
How do you--

82
00:04:57,690 --> 00:05:02,320
What I said, I said only on my initiative.

83
00:05:02,320 --> 00:05:06,980
As an opening statement, when he asked me,

84
00:05:06,980 --> 00:05:13,270
I presume you want to pass certain information.

85
00:05:13,270 --> 00:05:14,950
Bring attention.
You gave everything on the Jew that are in--

General terms I told again to him.

But he didn't ask one specific question--

Not a single one.

And how do you explain this?

I don't.

He did make a gesture.

Now, what was the significance of this gesture?

Was it a gesture, or was it an expression of good will of the center of power, who does not deal with particular problems?

I don't know until today.
His minor [INAUDIBLE].

Wiser people than I could not decipher FDR.

[LAUGHS] He was a great man, mainly.

After we left the White House, and then of course,

as you can imagine, we'll return to the embassy,

and the ambassador gives me one typist.

He goes to another room, another typist, and his instructions.

Now, you write your report, I write my report.

And Johnny, be careful.

Everything counted.

If you noticed his smile, put it in the report.
We just saw the center of power of humanity.

And then we will compare our both.

Report I have to send the report to London, of course.

Yes.

Then.

So we cooked up whatever it was.

Then comes problem.

I think it was next day.

Very soon.

It might be even the same evening, as a matter of fact.

He sees me, the ambassador, and says,

well, Johnny now, I got from the White House a message.
Apparently, the President would like you to see the following individuals.

And he wants you to pass to them all your reports.

Now, on that list—

now, it was a long list—

some individuals, for instance.

Oh, yes, there was Rabbi Weiss, whom I saw other, by the way.

Goldman, Valdeman, I remember.

As a matter of fact, a certain Jesuit priest's father, Father Walsh.

There was a Supreme Court Justice Frankfurter.

Yes, Justice Frankfurter.
I saw him on the recommendation of President Roosevelt.

But there were names.

Secretary of War, Stimson was.

Secretary of State, Cordell Hull.


The apostolic delegate, Cicognani.

So delegate from the pope?

The apostolic delegate from the pope.

Now, I interpreted this, and the ambassador,

that the president was interested

in the Jewish problem, only on his level.
The problem was not of direct, so to say, his jurisdiction.

He sent me to the people whom he considered actually could take some action, knowing that I was sent to them on his recommendation.

It might have been also--

Did you feel yourselves a tragic discrepancy between the difference of the expectations, hopeless expectations of the people in Dachau?

I mean the Jews.

That you met on these reserves this visit?

Because there is no communication?
I understand.

157
00:09:39,170 --> 00:09:40,270
History passed.

158
00:09:40,270 --> 00:09:44,080
35 years passed, so I understand the European,

159
00:09:44,080 --> 00:09:46,120
your archives, film archives.

160
00:09:46,120 --> 00:09:49,000

161
00:09:49,000 --> 00:09:52,780
After my audience with President Roosevelt,

162
00:09:52,780 --> 00:09:57,650
I was so overwhelmed by this fact,

163
00:09:57,650 --> 00:10:03,520
I reported to the President of the United States,

164
00:10:03,520 --> 00:10:05,950
I didn't think about anything else.

165
00:10:05,950 --> 00:10:10,070
I was totally overwhelmed by him.

166
00:10:10,070 --> 00:10:14,700
Years passed, and of course, now I maybe think about it.

167
00:10:14,700 --> 00:10:17,810
What was the significance?
And I don't have the answer.

Perhaps he wanted, expected others to do.

Perhaps they did do things.

None of the Allied leaders on the level as I met them would tell me what he was going to do.

You understand?

This I know.

Perhaps if you want to be skeptical or cynical,

perhaps he passed the buck.

Perhaps it was an act of courtesy

towards the Polish ambassador.

I am doing something within your immense mission.
I don't know.

OK.

A few days later, the Ambassador tells me, Johnny, now you are going to see Justice Frankfurter.

He will come here.

Justice Frankfurter, and he was a member of the Supreme Court.

Of the Supreme Court.

Now again, he gave me his briefing.

He will come here, he said?
As a matter of fact, except cabinet members, usually people came to the embassy.

I lived in the embassy.

OK.

So he will come here.

Now, he gave me his briefing.

Now Johnny, again, be careful.

He always would brief me.

Now, all knowledgeable people considered this man the most brilliant man in the administration.

As a Justice of the Supreme Court, the institution is very important.
But the next four years he's a confidant of the President.

All America knows about him.

And he was a Jew.

Now.

And he says, Johnny, now, he's a Jew.

So be sure he will be interested in your report.

All right.

So I wait again, carefully.

On the appointed hour, as a matter of fact

I even remember it was between breakfast and lunch, before lunch in the morning hours.

We'll be on time.
I was sitting in the living room salon, the ambassador comes from the first floor with the Justice Frankfurter. Justice Frankfurter, a little man. He did emanate some brilliance. Very alive with his eyes, and impressive physically. A little man, Jewish looking. Very friendly. Friendly smile. Towards me, all the time friendly.
Several times he called me, young man during our conversation.

Well, I introduce myself, we sit down.

He in front of me, Ciechanowski on my left.

Justice Frankfurter starts.

Mr. Karski, I have been invited but my very good friend,

your ambassador, to come here to see.

I was also advised that I should see.

Apparently, you have some information

which I should know.
What do you have to say?

My answer.

Sir, I don't know what you are interested in.

Could you ask me some questions?

It will be easier on me.

Frankfurter.

Young man, do you know that I am a Jew?

Yes, sir.

Mr. Ambassador told me about this.

Well, tell me about the Jews.
We have heard many reports.

What happens to the Jews in your country?

Now, I become a machine again.

I give my stuff.

The men sits.

I remember he looked like smaller and smaller, somehow.

Like careening.

Looking at the floor.

But he listens, he doesn't interrupt me.
I report, as you know from this film, usually it lasted 15, 20 minutes.

I tell him.

Jewish leaders, ghetto, Belzec.

Well, 15, 20 minutes passed, and I stop.

Now, Justice Frankfurter, he sits, looks at me still at this moment,

and tells me the following.

Young man, as I mentioned, I have been informed about your activities.
I was told that you came out of hell.

And I was told that you are going back to hell.

My admiration for a people like you.

And then now.

Young man, I am no longer young.

I am a judge of men.

Many like me, with many like you, must be totally honest.

And I am telling you,
I do not believe you!

291
00:18:01,600 --> 00:18:05,320

Ciechanowski breaks in.

293
00:18:06,940 --> 00:18:10,600
Felix, what are you talking really about?

294
00:18:10,600 --> 00:18:12,040
What do you know about him?

295
00:18:12,040 --> 00:18:17,110
He comes with the president, he was checked, rechecked 10 times

296
00:18:17,110 --> 00:18:18,620
in England, here!

297
00:18:18,620 --> 00:18:23,240
Felix, he's not lying!

298
00:18:23,240 --> 00:18:27,710
Frankfurter, still walking.

299
00:18:27,710 --> 00:18:38,450
Mr. Ambassador, formally I did not say that he is lying.

300
00:18:38,450 --> 00:18:44,360
I said that I don't believe him.

302
00:18:44,360 --> 00:18:45,560
These are different things.

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.
And my mind, my heart, they are made in such a way that I cannot accept it.

No, no, no!

I'd never met something that shocked me even.

He's beginning amends.

Eventually he did ask me--

Did he--

--few friendly questions.

And did he tell you, I know human soul.

I know what's--
Says, I am a judge of men.

I know humanity.

I know men.

Impossible!

No, no.

Total negation.

No.

Now, was he sincere?

That's my question.

What is the meaning of it?

Was it an act?
Theatrical act?

00:20:11,740 --> 00:20:15,160
What could I do?

00:20:15,160 --> 00:20:18,520
How do you argue with Justice Frankfurter?

00:20:18,520 --> 00:20:23,890
Ciechanowski tells me he's a powerful man,

00:20:23,890 --> 00:20:25,210
as a matter of fact.

00:20:25,210 --> 00:20:27,690
But he was even a key figure in the Jewish community.

00:20:27,690 --> 00:20:28,190
Yes.

00:20:28,190 --> 00:20:29,240
As a matter of fact--

00:20:29,240 --> 00:20:29,350
He was at the--

00:20:29,350 --> 00:20:29,500
--when he--

00:20:29,500 --> 00:20:30,070
--center of--

00:20:30,070 --> 00:20:30,570
--asked me--

00:20:30,570 --> 00:20:31,390
[INAUDIBLE] too.
Mr. Karski, do you know who I am?

So then I said, yes, sir.

You are an associate to justice of the Supreme Court.

And then I cracked a little.

My ambassador also told me that you are a very important man.

I remember this.

Justice Frankfurter looks at Ciechanowski,

then he introduces himself.

And what is the meaning of this, now, according to you?

I don't believe you.

What didn't he believe?

Yes.
I think he believed me, of course.

I have no doubt he did his best whatever he could have done.

He took it for granted I was going back to Poland.

Probably he wanted to show me, yes,

that the world is unprepared.

This is an unprecedented problem.

This is a horrible problem.

Probably he wanted to impress upon me.

Did he ask you specific questions,

like Zygielbojm or not?

No.
No, he didn't come to [INAUDIBLE].

No, no.

I am not talking about Zygielbojm

If, like Zygielbojm he asked specific questions.

On a certain day I received instructions.

You are going to see Lord Selborne.

The instructions, all of them coming from the prime minister's office.
Who is the Lord Selborne?

The public opinion does not know about it, of course.

He is in charge of the British government.

Of the European underground movements.

Member of the war office.

Of the war office it was called.

Yes.

Organizational problems, communications, radio,

financing on behalf of the British government

belonged to this.

The instructions were, it is worthwhile to see him,

to report, he may be helpful in every respect.
He's an operational officer.

I go to see Lord Selborne.

Old man.

Old man at that time already.

Well, a typically English aristocrat, of course.

Self-disciplined, precise, friendly, correct receiving me,

as he should.

Read your report.

Hmm?

I said, your report.

My report.
Now, he was essentially interested in the operations of the Polish underground movement. Diversion, sabotage.

What is my evaluation? What do we need? Does cooperation with the British officer, does it work correctly?

I come to the Jewish problem. And your Lordship, well, I have also a mission on behalf of the Jews.

I visited twice ghetto, visited camp in Belzec. Would your Lordship like to tell me?
He's yes.

I then more or less told him the whole story, and then the certain point I finish.

Lord Selborne, with typical English correctness,

benevolence, tolerance, rationality, answers.

Mr. Karski, during the First World War we were propagandizing that the German soldiers were crushing the heads of the Belgian babies against the walls.

I think we were
doing a good job.

We had to weaken German morale, we had to arouse hostility towards Germany.

The war was a very bloody war.

We knew it was untrue.

Speak about your problem, your report.

Try to arouse the public opinion.

I want you to know, you do contribute to the Allied cause.

We want this kind of report.

Your mission is very important.
He's clearly telling me, Mr. Karski, you know and I know,
it ain't so.

It's not true.

But it's good for the propaganda.

Yes!

Speak about it.

Same problem as you were in first World War.

Yeah.

Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection
I understand that you conveyed the request of the Jewish leaders to all of the people you met in England and the United States?

Yes.

And what is, without entering the details of each one, those answers of each one, what is your general appreciation of their answers?

Your evaluation.

Was they interested, or was it--

I answer that.

--considered by them as a minor--

I understand.
Yes.

The Allied government leaders, British and Americans, did not show interest in details.

Did not ask me questions to elaborate on my generalities.

Horrible, unprecedented.

I saw it, et cetera.

Next.

People I met were actually the key people in the British and American government.

Evidently for them, all together Polish problem
was not an essential problem.

Now, within Polish problem, a young agent coming from Poland reporting on the Jews.

The Jews had no country of their own.

They were not members of the Allied Counsel.

Excuse me.

Do you think that you succeeded in your report in the way you reported yourself?

Do you think that you succeeded to convey the most essential fact that it was a extinctions extermination
of a whole people?

Yes.

In most cases, in no more detail the way as you stated yourself at this moment.

In most cases, I had no opportunity to enter into more details.

Why?

Because you had no time?

Because they didn't ask me.

How do you tell Eden, Roosevelt, Stimpson, Cordell Hull,

I want you to listen to me.

I want you to give you details.
But for instance, to a man like Eden,

did you have some opportunity to describe

And the story of the train with the quick lime?

No.

Did you do this or no?

None whatsoever.

Impossible.

Impossible.

I was counting, of course, every minute.

Dr. Rettinger, you know, he was sort

of the Chief of Staff General Sikorski was with me.
Again, I was briefed by him.

You know, I don't know how much time he then would give you.

We had to work very hard that he all together receives you.

Essentials, essentials.

So now, I did this straight to Eden.

Again, I was in the ghetto twice, I was in Belzec.

In general terms, horrible.

Total helplessness.

They are perishing.

Without the outside help, they will perish, all of them.

This is what the Jewish leaders asked me to say,
and this is what is my conviction.

Edens's answer.

Mr. Karski, do I understand correctly that you reported on this matter,

you passed through the Polish Government?

Yes, sir.

I presume the Polish government will inform his Majesty's government on this subject.

His Majesty's government will take proper action.

This was answer?

This was the answer.

And the Cordell Hull, Secretary of State of the United States?
Cordell Hull.

Total, total lack of interest all together.

How did this lack of interest was shown?

My original statement the same.

Belzec, ghetto.

Two, three minutes.

Most general terms.

The conversation was switched again.

Poland.

Does the government control your underground, by the way?

Does the government have support?

What do you expect from the American government?
You realize we have the problem with the Soviet Union.

Are your leaders aware?

The rhetorical questions.

How do you tell Cordell Hull, Sir, stop!

I want to talk!

[LAUGHS] You understand, then?

I do.

And did they get of the Pope?

Cicognani?

Benign.

Archbishop very
friendly treating me.

561
00:33:13,500 --> 00:33:14,930
Calling me--

562
00:33:14,930 --> 00:33:17,240
Pardon, pardon, pardon.

563
00:33:17,240 --> 00:33:28,455