

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:02,970

2
00:00:02,970 --> 00:00:03,735
(film slating)

3
00:00:03,735 --> 00:00:05,468
[FRENCH]

4
00:00:05,468 --> 00:00:40,890

5
00:00:40,890 --> 00:00:44,830
Well, let's start a little
bit to talk about yourself,

6
00:00:44,830 --> 00:00:47,700
about your background.

7
00:00:47,700 --> 00:00:51,140
You were from an
assimilated Jewish family.

8
00:00:51,140 --> 00:00:52,570
That's right.

9
00:00:52,570 --> 00:00:57,370
And did you-- did you grow this
beard out of religious reasons,

10
00:00:57,370 --> 00:00:57,870
no?

11
00:00:57,870 --> 00:01:00,516
Here, no, not
religious reasons, no.

12
00:01:00,516 --> 00:01:02,520
Only just for fun.

13

00:01:02,520 --> 00:01:04,879
Yes?

14
00:01:04,879 --> 00:01:05,740
OK.

15
00:01:05,740 --> 00:01:09,750
Can you tell me a little about
yourself, about your family?

16
00:01:09,750 --> 00:01:11,120
My -- back from Czechoslovakia.

17
00:01:11,120 --> 00:01:11,620
Yes.

18
00:01:11,620 --> 00:01:14,550

19
00:01:14,550 --> 00:01:19,275
I came from, in
Czechoslovakia, by--

20
00:01:19,275 --> 00:01:20,900
I don't know whether
you-- what are you

21
00:01:20,900 --> 00:01:22,580
interested, really,
from my birth?

22
00:01:22,580 --> 00:01:23,580
Or only just after that.

23
00:01:23,580 --> 00:01:24,542
No, no, not your birth.

24
00:01:24,542 --> 00:01:25,247
That's it.

25
00:01:25,247 --> 00:01:25,830
That's better.

26
00:01:25,830 --> 00:01:27,750
So that maybe the
interesting thing

27
00:01:27,750 --> 00:01:32,130
is for you only my life in Brno.

28
00:01:32,130 --> 00:01:34,560
Because there where
the whole starting

29
00:01:34,560 --> 00:01:37,260
of the Holocaust and the
German occupation started.

30
00:01:37,260 --> 00:01:37,800
Yes.

31
00:01:37,800 --> 00:01:45,240
And I was an architect in Brno
and built quite a few homes

32
00:01:45,240 --> 00:01:47,490
for Jewish clients.

33
00:01:47,490 --> 00:01:51,480
And my first encounter
with the Germans

34
00:01:51,480 --> 00:01:53,700
was in connection
with my buildings.

35
00:01:53,700 --> 00:01:56,850
And basically,
that saved my life.

36
00:01:56,850 --> 00:01:59,850
Because the consul
general from Belgium,

37

00:01:59,850 --> 00:02:03,630
Mr. Hecht was building
apartment houses.

38
00:02:03,630 --> 00:02:05,160
And I was the architect for it.

39
00:02:05,160 --> 00:02:10,289
And he put the money for the
paying of the different bills--

40
00:02:10,289 --> 00:02:11,340
he put on escrow.

41
00:02:11,340 --> 00:02:16,740
And only I had the right to
sign the bills and the checks

42
00:02:16,740 --> 00:02:18,600
for payments.

43
00:02:18,600 --> 00:02:21,120
And because my
father-in-law, who

44
00:02:21,120 --> 00:02:23,580
was in the Jewish Agency,
one of the leading

45
00:02:23,580 --> 00:02:26,940
men in the Jewish Agency
in Czechoslovakia--

46
00:02:26,940 --> 00:02:31,170
while that time in London,
he came and took me

47
00:02:31,170 --> 00:02:32,820
into the prison.

48
00:02:32,820 --> 00:02:36,412
That was my first time
that I was in prison there.

49
00:02:36,412 --> 00:02:37,620
Who took you into the prison?

50
00:02:37,620 --> 00:02:38,190
The Germans.

51
00:02:38,190 --> 00:02:38,857
Oh, the Germans.

52
00:02:38,857 --> 00:02:40,680
The Germans, yeah.

53
00:02:40,680 --> 00:02:43,350
Because they came to ask me
where my father-in-law is,

54
00:02:43,350 --> 00:02:44,290
what we are doing.

55
00:02:44,290 --> 00:02:46,350
And I'm pretty sure we
have money here hidden

56
00:02:46,350 --> 00:02:47,160
and so and so.

57
00:02:47,160 --> 00:02:51,660

58
00:02:51,660 --> 00:02:56,340
A lot of parts of the German
department from the Gestapo

59
00:02:56,340 --> 00:02:59,580
suddenly asked to
release for me.

60
00:02:59,580 --> 00:03:04,290
Because the home,
and they could not

61

00:03:04,290 --> 00:03:06,330
be paid without my signature.

62

00:03:06,330 --> 00:03:09,060
So I was one of the
few people there that,

63

00:03:09,060 --> 00:03:11,250
instead of going to the
[GERMAN],, from where,

64

00:03:11,250 --> 00:03:16,290
[GERMAN] was deportation in some
-- so to Poland over that time.

65

00:03:16,290 --> 00:03:18,780
There, they took me
out from the prison.

66

00:03:18,780 --> 00:03:19,620
But this was when?

67

00:03:19,620 --> 00:03:20,170
This was in?

68

00:03:20,170 --> 00:03:21,490
That was in '39.

69

00:03:21,490 --> 00:03:22,320
Ah, it was in '39?

70

00:03:22,320 --> 00:03:23,190
In '39.

71

00:03:23,190 --> 00:03:24,560
After the occupation.

72

00:03:24,560 --> 00:03:27,420
After the occupation,
after Czech occupation.

73

00:03:27,420 --> 00:03:32,250

And the leader of
this department

74

00:03:32,250 --> 00:03:34,530

who was in charge
about the buildings

75

00:03:34,530 --> 00:03:37,860

told me very frankly that I
should immediately after I

76

00:03:37,860 --> 00:03:39,540

pay the last bill--

77

00:03:39,540 --> 00:03:45,270

because I had a Slovak
passport, not a Czech passport.

78

00:03:45,270 --> 00:03:47,640

He told me that I should
immediately be prepared.

79

00:03:47,640 --> 00:03:51,390

And the very moment I pay
my last bill for that house,

80

00:03:51,390 --> 00:03:54,420

to get out from Brno.

81

00:03:54,420 --> 00:03:59,230

Because the Gestapo had already
planned that the very moment

82

00:03:59,230 --> 00:04:02,257

everything is finished
and planned and paid,

83

00:04:02,257 --> 00:04:03,840

they are going to
come and pick me up,

84

00:04:03,840 --> 00:04:08,950

and then I go back
again to the prison.

85
00:04:08,950 --> 00:04:09,840
Prison, yes.

86
00:04:09,840 --> 00:04:15,990
Now, and that was my first
encounter with a German

87
00:04:15,990 --> 00:04:17,040
was basically.

88
00:04:17,040 --> 00:04:19,920
And I didn't understand
why did he help me.

89
00:04:19,920 --> 00:04:22,019
And didn't really ask him.

90
00:04:22,019 --> 00:04:25,680
And he said, certain
things we have to do

91
00:04:25,680 --> 00:04:27,060
and certain we can do.

92
00:04:27,060 --> 00:04:32,100
So I want to show my humanity,
that I give the last chance

93
00:04:32,100 --> 00:04:33,600
to get out from here.

94
00:04:33,600 --> 00:04:38,160
And to [INAUDIBLE], I
really immediately went

95
00:04:38,160 --> 00:04:42,090
with my family, with my wife
and my son to the railroad.

96

00:04:42,090 --> 00:04:45,510

And sent the last
check for this house

97

00:04:45,510 --> 00:04:47,970

from the railroad station
and the same time we already

98

00:04:47,970 --> 00:04:48,960

went to Bratislava.

99

00:04:48,960 --> 00:04:51,660

That is how I came
to Bratislava.

100

00:04:51,660 --> 00:04:55,020

And a few days later,
we received a letter

101

00:04:55,020 --> 00:04:56,820

from my mother-in-law,
who stayed still

102

00:04:56,820 --> 00:05:00,920

in Brno, that the Gestapo was
coming and then asking for me.

103

00:05:00,920 --> 00:05:01,530

To search you?

104

00:05:01,530 --> 00:05:02,610

To search me.

105

00:05:02,610 --> 00:05:04,380

But I was already in Bratislava.

106

00:05:04,380 --> 00:05:05,830

How old were you at the time?

107

00:05:05,830 --> 00:05:06,330

Pardon?

108

00:05:06,330 --> 00:05:07,590
How old were you at the time?

109
00:05:07,590 --> 00:05:12,240
I was, I think it
was, 30 years old.

110
00:05:12,240 --> 00:05:15,690
So then you were already
a well-known architect?

111
00:05:15,690 --> 00:05:16,360
That's right.

112
00:05:16,360 --> 00:05:16,860
Yes?

113
00:05:16,860 --> 00:05:17,360
Yeah.

114
00:05:17,360 --> 00:05:20,010

115
00:05:20,010 --> 00:05:24,310
But after I came
back to Bratislava,

116
00:05:24,310 --> 00:05:29,370
I think I told you that I
was editing an art magazine.

117
00:05:29,370 --> 00:05:32,130
And my friend with whom I
edited this art magazine was

118
00:05:32,130 --> 00:05:35,880
in Bratislava, architect
Szonyi After I came back,

119
00:05:35,880 --> 00:05:39,210
I spent a year in his
office, and working with him,

120

00:05:39,210 --> 00:05:43,170
and editing this newspaper,
too, called Forum.

121

00:05:43,170 --> 00:05:49,425
And in 1940, and in '41, the
time that UZ was established--

122

00:05:49,425 --> 00:05:51,808
UZ was the Judenrat.

123

00:05:51,808 --> 00:05:52,350
The Judenrat.

124

00:05:52,350 --> 00:05:53,683
Well, what is the name in Czech?

125

00:05:53,683 --> 00:05:57,090
But the time that
I came was not yet.

126

00:05:57,090 --> 00:06:01,230
But the Judenrat was established
in Slovakia, I think,

127

00:06:01,230 --> 00:06:02,580
in '40 and '41.

128

00:06:02,580 --> 00:06:03,120
Yes.

129

00:06:03,120 --> 00:06:06,300
And that time, I was
asked to come and join

130

00:06:06,300 --> 00:06:12,160
them and work there in the
[GERMAN] as an architect.

131

00:06:12,160 --> 00:06:15,060
So that is why-- that is
basically the short story how I

132
00:06:15,060 --> 00:06:20,260
came in connection from
Brno to Bratislava,

133
00:06:20,260 --> 00:06:22,050
and from Bratislava--

134
00:06:22,050 --> 00:06:25,620
and being an architect,
suddenly being in the UZ,

135
00:06:25,620 --> 00:06:27,720
that was the Judenrat
in Bratislava.

136
00:06:27,720 --> 00:06:31,332
What is the name in Czech
or in Slovak of the UZ?

137
00:06:31,332 --> 00:06:33,570
ĀššredĀ^a Ā½idov

138
00:06:33,570 --> 00:06:34,510
ĀššredĀ^a Ā½idov.

139
00:06:34,510 --> 00:06:36,600
Which means exactly?

140
00:06:36,600 --> 00:06:38,157
The Jewish Center.

141
00:06:38,157 --> 00:06:38,740
Jewish Center.

142
00:06:38,740 --> 00:06:40,800
So center of the Jews.

143
00:06:40,800 --> 00:06:41,580
Yes.

144

00:06:41,580 --> 00:06:44,937

And you enter the
Judenrat immediately?

145

00:06:44,937 --> 00:06:45,770

I didn't understand.

146

00:06:45,770 --> 00:06:47,610

No, I didn't enter Judenrat.

147

00:06:47,610 --> 00:06:50,620

I entered this special
department, the so-called

148

00:06:50,620 --> 00:06:52,050

[GERMAN].

149

00:06:52,050 --> 00:06:56,100

And through this [GERMAN],,
I came in contact

150

00:06:56,100 --> 00:06:58,200

with the state resource places.

151

00:06:58,200 --> 00:06:59,690

And started out to [INAUDIBLE].

152

00:06:59,690 --> 00:07:02,520

And I was, for quite a
few years, the architect

153

00:07:02,520 --> 00:07:04,650

and planner for the
state resort places.

154

00:07:04,650 --> 00:07:05,680

State resort?

155

00:07:05,680 --> 00:07:08,160

Yeah, State resort places.

156

00:07:08,160 --> 00:07:09,690

And why I mention it to you?

157

00:07:09,690 --> 00:07:12,720

Because that was very
important for the establishing

158

00:07:12,720 --> 00:07:16,710

of the work camps, and getting
jobs for the work camps, which

159

00:07:16,710 --> 00:07:17,820

I was in charge of.

160

00:07:17,820 --> 00:07:20,560

That was my first
activity in the Judenrat.

161

00:07:20,560 --> 00:07:22,050

I don't understand very well.

162

00:07:22,050 --> 00:07:27,420

Why was the [GERMAN],, let's
say, a building [GERMAN]

163

00:07:27,420 --> 00:07:28,090

in the Judenrat?

164

00:07:28,090 --> 00:07:29,100

Why did they need this?

165

00:07:29,100 --> 00:07:32,340

Because in '41, they
had started to do

166

00:07:32,340 --> 00:07:34,710

the concentration of the Jews.

167

00:07:34,710 --> 00:07:36,870

And concentration--
for the concentration

168

00:07:36,870 --> 00:07:40,620

there, they selected
three places.

169
00:07:40,620 --> 00:07:41,460
Sered.

170
00:07:41,460 --> 00:07:43,680
Sered, Novaky, and Vyhne.

171
00:07:43,680 --> 00:07:44,340
Yes.

172
00:07:44,340 --> 00:07:46,770
And it was necessary
now to build it up.

173
00:07:46,770 --> 00:07:48,350
Because partly, there was--

174
00:07:48,350 --> 00:07:51,100
in Vyhne, they had there
facilities already.

175
00:07:51,100 --> 00:07:53,880
But in Sered and Novaky,
there was only just

176
00:07:53,880 --> 00:07:55,350
very primitive facilities.

177
00:07:55,350 --> 00:07:59,190
And they asked me to go out to
them with Dr. Koso and Pecuch,

178
00:07:59,190 --> 00:08:02,130
who were the leaders
in this whole project

179
00:08:02,130 --> 00:08:05,010
on the Slovak side, to
look at these places

180

00:08:05,010 --> 00:08:10,080
and look into it what type
of building remodeling

181
00:08:10,080 --> 00:08:11,490
is necessary there.

182
00:08:11,490 --> 00:08:17,430
And that was how I came in
connection with the UZ, too,

183
00:08:17,430 --> 00:08:20,440
and first with the Slovak
people who led this whole--

184
00:08:20,440 --> 00:08:21,440
Who were in charge, yes.

185
00:08:21,440 --> 00:08:22,980
Yes, that's right.

186
00:08:22,980 --> 00:08:27,240
But what kind of buildings
did you build in the camps?

187
00:08:27,240 --> 00:08:30,150
Because there were
concentration camps.

188
00:08:30,150 --> 00:08:31,770
It was a concentration camp.

189
00:08:31,770 --> 00:08:35,429
But that time, we
didn't know, really,

190
00:08:35,429 --> 00:08:37,860
what kind of concentration
camp it's going to be.

191
00:08:37,860 --> 00:08:41,670
We just knew that some of the--

192

00:08:41,670 --> 00:08:43,799

you know that in
every time where

193

00:08:43,799 --> 00:08:47,580

Germans came, or the
Germans occupied, or Germans

194

00:08:47,580 --> 00:08:52,170

had influence, the first
thing was that they made--

195

00:08:52,170 --> 00:08:54,930

took the Jews out from
the economic life.

196

00:08:54,930 --> 00:08:56,110

Yes

197

00:08:56,110 --> 00:08:58,440

And now, the question
was what should

198

00:08:58,440 --> 00:09:02,460

be done with those who have
been taken from economic life?

199

00:09:02,460 --> 00:09:04,500

And firstly, we had
been told that they

200

00:09:04,500 --> 00:09:06,180

will go into these camps.

201

00:09:06,180 --> 00:09:09,300

We had no idea that it was a
concentration for deportation.

202

00:09:09,300 --> 00:09:12,360

We thought that is
concentration for work.

203

00:09:12,360 --> 00:09:13,350
Yes.

204
00:09:13,350 --> 00:09:14,520
And that's why--

205
00:09:14,520 --> 00:09:17,010
I don't know whether you
even know about those things.

206
00:09:17,010 --> 00:09:21,060
That time, Shlomo Gross,
who was mentioned very often

207
00:09:21,060 --> 00:09:25,140
and representative of the
Orthodoxy was with Dr. Koso.

208
00:09:25,140 --> 00:09:27,060
And Shlomo Gross
basically asked me.

209
00:09:27,060 --> 00:09:30,690
And he gave me the
authorization to go out and be

210
00:09:30,690 --> 00:09:33,900
helpful to build
out these camps.

211
00:09:33,900 --> 00:09:40,980
And by having this connection,
that why I want to mention it.

212
00:09:40,980 --> 00:09:44,700
Because in the whole fight
against deportations,

213
00:09:44,700 --> 00:09:48,690
later on, the working camps
had been a very important role.

214
00:09:48,690 --> 00:09:52,290

Because I proposed
to the Slovaks--

215
00:09:52,290 --> 00:09:54,840
instead of deportation,
why don't you

216
00:09:54,840 --> 00:09:57,030
leave everybody of the
Jews who are working

217
00:09:57,030 --> 00:10:00,360
in this Slovak working camp.

218
00:10:00,360 --> 00:10:02,310
And that time, we
knew it is better

219
00:10:02,310 --> 00:10:04,680
to stay in Slovakia
like to go anyplace,

220
00:10:04,680 --> 00:10:07,650
whether it was Poland or
Germany, any place as well.

221
00:10:07,650 --> 00:10:11,250
And it was my idea and tried
to-- and I think that they

222
00:10:11,250 --> 00:10:15,150
already had been finding out
that those who worked there had

223
00:10:15,150 --> 00:10:16,060
been--

224
00:10:16,060 --> 00:10:21,000
in Slovak, they used to say
it vynimky the exceptions.

225
00:10:21,000 --> 00:10:25,200
And it was agreed

upon with Dr. Koso

226
00:10:25,200 --> 00:10:28,800
who was one of the most
important Slovak politicians

227
00:10:28,800 --> 00:10:31,560
immediately after the
minister president.

228
00:10:31,560 --> 00:10:33,990
After Tiso.

229
00:10:33,990 --> 00:10:35,390
Dr. Tiso was president.

230
00:10:35,390 --> 00:10:37,140
And Tuka to next the president.

231
00:10:37,140 --> 00:10:38,682
Ah, Tuka was the
prime minister, yes.

232
00:10:38,682 --> 00:10:42,990
And Dr. Koso was his so-called
chef of the Presidium.

233
00:10:42,990 --> 00:10:45,870
But he was one of the most
important and most influential

234
00:10:45,870 --> 00:10:47,580
Slovak politicians.

235
00:10:47,580 --> 00:10:51,450
And Dr. Shlomo Gross
had contact with him.

236
00:10:51,450 --> 00:10:55,140
And Shlomo Gross was in charge
about this building up the--

237

00:10:55,140 --> 00:10:57,420
organizing concentration camps.

238
00:10:57,420 --> 00:10:59,440
And this is how I came
working with Shlomo

239
00:10:59,440 --> 00:11:06,870
Gross in the beginning, and
putting some not only the--

240
00:11:06,870 --> 00:11:12,095

241
00:11:12,095 --> 00:11:14,125
(film slating)

242
00:11:14,125 --> 00:11:16,610
[FRENCH]

243
00:11:16,610 --> 00:11:17,870
[FRENCH]

244
00:11:17,870 --> 00:11:18,620
Should I now?

245
00:11:18,620 --> 00:11:19,820
Yes, I'll let you go.

246
00:11:19,820 --> 00:11:23,780
Now, I would very much
like to say a few words

247
00:11:23,780 --> 00:11:26,390
about the Slovak working camps.

248
00:11:26,390 --> 00:11:32,630
Because my discussion
with Dr. Koso and Pecuch

249
00:11:32,630 --> 00:11:35,360
who had been below

Dr. Koso But he

250

00:11:35,360 --> 00:11:38,150
was really in charge about
the day-to-day activities

251

00:11:38,150 --> 00:11:40,700
of the camp and to prepare it.

252

00:11:40,700 --> 00:11:42,380
I convinced them
that they should

253

00:11:42,380 --> 00:11:46,430
let us parallel with the
concentration for deportation.

254

00:11:46,430 --> 00:11:50,180
They should let us do a
concentration for work.

255

00:11:50,180 --> 00:11:53,930
And all those who will go
in in the so-called working

256

00:11:53,930 --> 00:11:58,550
part of it, they are going to
be exempt from deportation.

257

00:11:58,550 --> 00:12:01,560
And Dr. Koso was
willing to do it.

258

00:12:01,560 --> 00:12:04,160
And after that
promise came from him,

259

00:12:04,160 --> 00:12:09,710
then we started to organize
part of the work camps for--

260

00:12:09,710 --> 00:12:13,340
and really work camps, not

for concentration camps.

261

00:12:13,340 --> 00:12:17,180

And the understanding
between us and the Slovaks

262

00:12:17,180 --> 00:12:22,100

was that they must, in a
period of three months,

263

00:12:22,100 --> 00:12:27,980

have enough work so that
they will be self-supporting,

264

00:12:27,980 --> 00:12:31,040

because they are not
willing to pay anything

265

00:12:31,040 --> 00:12:32,450

for the work camps.

266

00:12:32,450 --> 00:12:34,130

And I made a
promise without even

267

00:12:34,130 --> 00:12:38,480

knowing whether we are going
to be successful or not.

268

00:12:38,480 --> 00:12:39,920

And I promised it.

269

00:12:39,920 --> 00:12:42,080

Now that was the first
time that I got together

270

00:12:42,080 --> 00:12:44,720

with Gisi Fleischmann
and Dr. Neumann.

271

00:12:44,720 --> 00:12:46,940

But this much later, all this.

272

00:12:46,940 --> 00:12:47,630

Pardon?

273

00:12:47,630 --> 00:12:49,310

All this was much later.

274

00:12:49,310 --> 00:12:50,330

No, no, no, no.

275

00:12:50,330 --> 00:12:51,620

That was the beginning.

276

00:12:51,620 --> 00:12:54,540

That was even before
deportation started.

277

00:12:54,540 --> 00:12:57,350

And that is exactly why
I want to mention it.

278

00:12:57,350 --> 00:13:01,970

Because we already--
before even we started to,

279

00:13:01,970 --> 00:13:05,300

before deportation, and before
we even knew what goes on,

280

00:13:05,300 --> 00:13:08,330

we had somehow the bad feeling
that everything is better

281

00:13:08,330 --> 00:13:11,060

to stay in Slovakia
just to not to get out.

282

00:13:11,060 --> 00:13:14,300

And it was necessary
to find some ways

283

00:13:14,300 --> 00:13:17,420

what can we submit to

the Slovaks to tell them,

284

00:13:17,420 --> 00:13:18,620

please, leave these here.

285

00:13:18,620 --> 00:13:20,510

It is better for

Slovakia to have them

286

00:13:20,510 --> 00:13:23,760

here as to send them out.

287

00:13:23,760 --> 00:13:25,420

Especially because

in the same time,

288

00:13:25,420 --> 00:13:28,310

now, you know, I

remember the Germans

289

00:13:28,310 --> 00:13:33,020

asked the Slovak government for
around 20,000 Slovak workers.

290

00:13:33,020 --> 00:13:39,230

Now, the Slovak government
said, instead of giving to you

291

00:13:39,230 --> 00:13:44,900

Slovak workers, we are going to
give you 20,000 Jewish workers.

292

00:13:44,900 --> 00:13:47,330

As we heard about it, that
was one of the reasons

293

00:13:47,330 --> 00:13:49,520

that we knew that
the danger is here,

294

00:13:49,520 --> 00:13:50,930

so you have to do something.

295

00:13:50,930 --> 00:13:53,210

And that was the idea.

296

00:13:53,210 --> 00:13:55,970

And Dr. Neumann and
Gisi Fleischmann

297

00:13:55,970 --> 00:13:58,400

supported this idea.

298

00:13:58,400 --> 00:14:00,230

Shlomo Gross was very
much against this,

299

00:14:00,230 --> 00:14:03,710

and Sebestyen very
much against it, too.

300

00:14:03,710 --> 00:14:07,010

But Gisi Fleischmann and
Dr. Winterstein, too,

301

00:14:07,010 --> 00:14:09,320

and Neumann and
myself, we decided

302

00:14:09,320 --> 00:14:11,670

we are going to give it a try.

303

00:14:11,670 --> 00:14:15,650

And there was a good friend
of ours, another Zionist,

304

00:14:15,650 --> 00:14:18,320

that was Krasniansky.

305

00:14:18,320 --> 00:14:22,770

By chance, he was the head
of a so-called [SLOVAK],,

306

00:14:22,770 --> 00:14:26,000

a big building concern.

307

00:14:26,000 --> 00:14:32,990
And they needed, urgently, 400
new homes, 100 wooden stairs.

308

00:14:32,990 --> 00:14:37,460
And I thought, and I told
Krasniansky, give us this job.

309

00:14:37,460 --> 00:14:42,110
And I'm going to immediately
organize for you a big cabinet

310

00:14:42,110 --> 00:14:49,340
and workshop where we
can produce the stairs.

311

00:14:49,340 --> 00:14:49,970
Yeah.

312

00:14:49,970 --> 00:14:50,470
OK.

313

00:14:50,470 --> 00:14:51,680
We will come back to this.

314

00:14:51,680 --> 00:14:53,570
Now, we will go in order.

315

00:14:53,570 --> 00:14:56,270
But could we say that
you were yourself

316

00:14:56,270 --> 00:15:01,700
a member of the Jewish
Central, of the Judenrat?

317

00:15:01,700 --> 00:15:03,320
Not Judenrat, because I was--

318

00:15:03,320 --> 00:15:08,030
the Judenrat was divided

in different departments.

319

00:15:08,030 --> 00:15:14,000

And my so-called [GERMAN]
was part of a department

320

00:15:14,000 --> 00:15:15,720

which Shlomo Gross was head.

321

00:15:15,720 --> 00:15:16,220

Yes.

322

00:15:16,220 --> 00:15:17,780

And so long Shlomo Gross--

323

00:15:17,780 --> 00:15:21,580

and I became later head
of this department,

324

00:15:21,580 --> 00:15:26,150

but that was already, I think,
maybe in the beginning of '42.

325

00:15:26,150 --> 00:15:26,660

Yes.

326

00:15:26,660 --> 00:15:28,340

The time that after
Shlomo Gross was--

327

00:15:28,340 --> 00:15:31,820

But can we say that at the
beginning of '42, you were--

328

00:15:31,820 --> 00:15:33,450

I was a member, correct.

329

00:15:33,450 --> 00:15:35,980

You were a member of
the Slovak Judenrat?

330

00:15:35,980 --> 00:15:37,600

Of Slovak Judenrat,
that's correct.

331
00:15:37,600 --> 00:15:38,210
Yes.

332
00:15:38,210 --> 00:15:39,710
And why did they appoint you?

333
00:15:39,710 --> 00:15:42,650
Because you were
extremely young.

334
00:15:42,650 --> 00:15:47,810
I think it was basically because
of my professional background

335
00:15:47,810 --> 00:15:49,370
in architecture.

336
00:15:49,370 --> 00:15:54,170
And they knew that I have an
entrance, a very good entrance

337
00:15:54,170 --> 00:15:57,470
to even very important
Slovak, people like Koso,

338
00:15:57,470 --> 00:16:00,530
and the state resort
places directors.

339
00:16:00,530 --> 00:16:02,960
And because even
before that happened,

340
00:16:02,960 --> 00:16:07,580
I organized in the [GERMAN],, an
architectural abteilung where

341
00:16:07,580 --> 00:16:11,910
I put all the already Jewish
architects and engineers

342
00:16:11,910 --> 00:16:14,370
who had been put out
already because of

343
00:16:14,370 --> 00:16:17,620
the economic dislocation.

344
00:16:17,620 --> 00:16:19,500
And I organized,
in the framework

345
00:16:19,500 --> 00:16:21,990
of UZ architect's office.

346
00:16:21,990 --> 00:16:28,810
And this office worked for
the state resort places.

347
00:16:28,810 --> 00:16:31,050
And through that,
I had-- suddenly, I

348
00:16:31,050 --> 00:16:35,790
had a number of very good
umbrella and an excuse

349
00:16:35,790 --> 00:16:41,280
that I could go to certain
higher Slovak positions

350
00:16:41,280 --> 00:16:43,837
because it was all the
time here the excuse

351
00:16:43,837 --> 00:16:45,420
that an architect
for the state resort

352
00:16:45,420 --> 00:16:48,750
places go to Mr. So-and-so
to discuss something

353

00:16:48,750 --> 00:16:50,220
for the Slovaks.

354

00:16:50,220 --> 00:16:52,740
But were you at the time--

355

00:16:52,740 --> 00:16:54,440
you were a member
of the Judenrat,

356

00:16:54,440 --> 00:16:56,945
and you were working
for the Slovaks, too?

357

00:16:56,945 --> 00:16:57,570
That's correct.

358

00:16:57,570 --> 00:16:58,695
You were building for them?

359

00:16:58,695 --> 00:17:02,290
I was building, I was
planning, and planning

360

00:17:02,290 --> 00:17:05,849
the development of the
Slovak state resort places.

361

00:17:05,849 --> 00:17:09,319
But what-- can you explain to
me what are these state resort

362

00:17:09,319 --> 00:17:09,819
places?

363

00:17:09,819 --> 00:17:12,970
The state resort places are just
like, for instance, in France,

364

00:17:12,970 --> 00:17:15,780
you would say the Golden
Coast on the France.

365
00:17:15,780 --> 00:17:16,980
Ah, yes.

366
00:17:16,980 --> 00:17:22,260
Now, state resort places are
where you go for recreation.

367
00:17:22,260 --> 00:17:25,050
That was partly in
the high Tatras,

368
00:17:25,050 --> 00:17:28,941
and partly in Sliac
and Tatranska Lomnica.

369
00:17:28,941 --> 00:17:32,820
What is the need for this
Jewish architect at the time?

370
00:17:32,820 --> 00:17:37,770
Because as the Jewish Codes,
the laws against the Jews

371
00:17:37,770 --> 00:17:40,050
were already enforced?

372
00:17:40,050 --> 00:17:42,480
Yeah, but now,
that is partly what

373
00:17:42,480 --> 00:17:46,310
I called my Rettungsaktion
before even deportation

374
00:17:46,310 --> 00:17:47,130
started.

375
00:17:47,130 --> 00:17:53,415
I was working in Piestany, was
working together with architect

376

00:17:53,415 --> 00:17:56,970
Szonyi, with whom I was working
before I came into the UZ.

377
00:17:56,970 --> 00:17:59,880
And through architect
Szonyi and Dr. Winter,

378
00:17:59,880 --> 00:18:02,190
who was the owner of
this resort place,

379
00:18:02,190 --> 00:18:05,130
I had, again, connections to
different, other directors

380
00:18:05,130 --> 00:18:07,380
of the state resort places.

381
00:18:07,380 --> 00:18:09,630
And I proposed to
them, here is a group

382
00:18:09,630 --> 00:18:15,360
of skillfull fine architects
who are without work.

383
00:18:15,360 --> 00:18:17,820
Why don't let us
do for you the work

384
00:18:17,820 --> 00:18:19,560
for the state resort places?

385
00:18:19,560 --> 00:18:21,450
It's going to be
much cheaper for you

386
00:18:21,450 --> 00:18:25,140
like you would do to
somebody Slovak architects.

387
00:18:25,140 --> 00:18:26,610

Let us work for you.

388
00:18:26,610 --> 00:18:29,400
And I started to work
for them in Piestany.

389
00:18:29,400 --> 00:18:31,080
And it was very successful.

390
00:18:31,080 --> 00:18:33,450
And then slowly, slowly
we had to increase it.

391
00:18:33,450 --> 00:18:36,480
And instead of only Piestany,
suddenly I became the architect

392
00:18:36,480 --> 00:18:39,090
for Tatranska Lomnica,
Strbske Pleso,

393
00:18:39,090 --> 00:18:41,460
and quite a few
other resort places.

394
00:18:41,460 --> 00:18:46,320
And constantly took all
the Jewish architects

395
00:18:46,320 --> 00:18:49,110
who had been out of
work into that office.

396
00:18:49,110 --> 00:18:53,550
And that was our
first, I would say,

397
00:18:53,550 --> 00:18:55,980
cooperation with the Slovaks,
that we could show them

398
00:18:55,980 --> 00:18:59,280
that how much better it is for

the Slovaks to keep us here.

399

00:18:59,280 --> 00:19:01,260

And therefore,
Slovakia, like, instead

400

00:19:01,260 --> 00:19:04,020

of being sent out to the
Germans, Germany and work

401

00:19:04,020 --> 00:19:04,920

for the Germans.

402

00:19:04,920 --> 00:19:06,780

And it lasted a long time?

403

00:19:06,780 --> 00:19:08,580

Oh, that lasted to
the last moment.

404

00:19:08,580 --> 00:19:11,640

We had been working for the
state resort places constantly.

405

00:19:11,640 --> 00:19:16,170

Even some of the, for instance,
this cabinet shop in Seled

406

00:19:16,170 --> 00:19:18,990

had been doing work for the
Slovak state resort places

407

00:19:18,990 --> 00:19:19,750

constantly.

408

00:19:19,750 --> 00:19:21,960

And that was one of
our strongest parts.

409

00:19:21,960 --> 00:19:24,750

We made, I think
you know about it--

410

00:19:24,750 --> 00:19:28,710
that making furniture, designing
furniture, making furniture

411

00:19:28,710 --> 00:19:30,960
was an important
part of bribing.

412

00:19:30,960 --> 00:19:34,590
Dr. Vasek, for instance, even
Minister Mach, received--

413

00:19:34,590 --> 00:19:40,650
his home was furnished by,
designed by the Jewish,

414

00:19:40,650 --> 00:19:44,550
by our [GERMAN],, by
our architects, myself

415

00:19:44,550 --> 00:19:45,480
and some others.

416

00:19:45,480 --> 00:19:48,810
And in Seled, it was
produced in Seled.

417

00:19:48,810 --> 00:19:51,180
This means that you were
the position of force,

418

00:19:51,180 --> 00:19:51,930
that you could--

419

00:19:51,930 --> 00:19:52,710
Correct.

420

00:19:52,710 --> 00:19:56,130
And that gave us not
a position of force,

421

00:19:56,130 --> 00:19:58,740

but it gave us the
possibility to negotiate

422
00:19:58,740 --> 00:20:01,710
and be in intimate contact
with some very important Slovak

423
00:20:01,710 --> 00:20:02,640
positions.

424
00:20:02,640 --> 00:20:09,780
And when you were appointed
member of the Judenrat,

425
00:20:09,780 --> 00:20:12,480
did you participate in the
meetings of the Judenrat?

426
00:20:12,480 --> 00:20:13,300
Oh, yeah, sure.

427
00:20:13,300 --> 00:20:13,800
Yes.

428
00:20:13,800 --> 00:20:14,130
Yeah.

429
00:20:14,130 --> 00:20:15,043
In all the meetings?

430
00:20:15,043 --> 00:20:17,460
But all the meetings-- not all
the meetings, because quite

431
00:20:17,460 --> 00:20:20,100
a few special on
the Dr. Sebestyen.

432
00:20:20,100 --> 00:20:23,070
The meetings have been very
uninteresting and very boring.

433

00:20:23,070 --> 00:20:24,060
Why?

434
00:20:24,060 --> 00:20:25,980
This was the second
head of the UZ.

435
00:20:25,980 --> 00:20:27,480
That was the second head, too.

436
00:20:27,480 --> 00:20:30,720
First of all, because, that
is basically how our so-called

437
00:20:30,720 --> 00:20:32,280
Working Group started.

438
00:20:32,280 --> 00:20:35,130
Sebestyen was a yes man.

439
00:20:35,130 --> 00:20:40,200
Everything about the UHU,
that was the [SLOVAK],,

440
00:20:40,200 --> 00:20:45,450
that was the Slovak part of
the head of this so-called UHU,

441
00:20:45,450 --> 00:20:49,710
was the head of the UZ, too.

442
00:20:49,710 --> 00:20:53,520
And everything about the head
of this so-called Slovak UHU

443
00:20:53,520 --> 00:20:57,780
said, Sebestyen immediately
followed up together

444
00:20:57,780 --> 00:20:58,920
with Hochberg.

445

00:20:58,920 --> 00:21:00,570

Now, we didn't
like this attitude.

446

00:21:00,570 --> 00:21:03,300

We saw that all the time,
next to the negative,

447

00:21:03,300 --> 00:21:05,820

and there must be
some positives, too.

448

00:21:05,820 --> 00:21:08,190

And because we didn't
like it, some we

449

00:21:08,190 --> 00:21:11,410

decided to meet in Gisi
Fleischmann's office, Dr.

450

00:21:11,410 --> 00:21:13,390

Winterstein, Dr.
Neumann, myself.

451

00:21:13,390 --> 00:21:15,880

And all these people, Gisi
Fleischmann, Dr. Neumann,

452

00:21:15,880 --> 00:21:17,232

were members of the Judenrat.

453

00:21:17,232 --> 00:21:18,940

Part of the member of
the Judenrat, sure.

454

00:21:18,940 --> 00:21:21,250

And in this, after
Judenrat meeting,

455

00:21:21,250 --> 00:21:23,530

very often we didn't even
go, because they just

456

00:21:23,530 --> 00:21:27,190
didn't want to be part of
this completely yes, yes, yes,

457
00:21:27,190 --> 00:21:28,540
and the negative attitude.

458
00:21:28,540 --> 00:21:33,820
And we got together and
started to think about it.

459
00:21:33,820 --> 00:21:36,430
What else can we do?

460
00:21:36,430 --> 00:21:39,670
And the decision
about that time,

461
00:21:39,670 --> 00:21:42,400
that one of the positive
which we can create

462
00:21:42,400 --> 00:21:47,050
is really this different
work camps, and build them up

463
00:21:47,050 --> 00:21:49,600
as much as we can, and
prove to the Slovaks

464
00:21:49,600 --> 00:21:53,395
that it is their advantage
to let us be there.

465
00:21:53,395 --> 00:21:54,770
The work camps,
I would very much

466
00:21:54,770 --> 00:21:56,040
like to say something else.

467
00:21:56,040 --> 00:21:58,560
This was the first time

how I got together even

468
00:21:58,560 --> 00:22:00,580
with Weissmandel.

469
00:22:00,580 --> 00:22:04,360
Because after the work camps
had been really established,

470
00:22:04,360 --> 00:22:08,250
and really, I would say,
secured, too, suddenly,

471
00:22:08,250 --> 00:22:10,930
Weissmandel comes
to me and asked me

472
00:22:10,930 --> 00:22:15,325
that I should ask Dr. Koso
to give a kosher kitchen.

473
00:22:15,325 --> 00:22:16,450
For the Orthodox Jews, yes.

474
00:22:16,450 --> 00:22:18,770
For the work camps,
for the Orthodox Jews.

475
00:22:18,770 --> 00:22:19,270
And I--

476
00:22:19,270 --> 00:22:21,920

477
00:22:21,920 --> 00:22:22,555
(film slating)

478
00:22:22,555 --> 00:22:25,310
[FRENCH]

479
00:22:25,310 --> 00:22:28,940
Well, I think that what

happened in Slovakia

480

00:22:28,940 --> 00:22:36,920

was quite particular
and even quite unique.

481

00:22:36,920 --> 00:22:40,940

Because I would like
you to explain this.

482

00:22:40,940 --> 00:22:43,880

483

00:22:43,880 --> 00:22:48,260

There was a Judenrat, which
was created by the Germans

484

00:22:48,260 --> 00:22:49,130

and by the Slovaks.

485

00:22:49,130 --> 00:22:49,910

Slovaks, yeah.

486

00:22:49,910 --> 00:22:54,618

Yes, but the Slovaks
created this at the demand--

487

00:22:54,618 --> 00:22:55,535

Demand of the Germans.

488

00:22:55,535 --> 00:22:56,535

--demand of the Germans.

489

00:22:56,535 --> 00:22:58,180

That's right.

490

00:22:58,180 --> 00:23:02,030

The antisemitism
in Slovakia was--

491

00:23:02,030 --> 00:23:02,750

Was there.

492
00:23:02,750 --> 00:23:03,500
--was there.

493
00:23:03,500 --> 00:23:04,160
Were there.

494
00:23:04,160 --> 00:23:05,010
Absolutely.

495
00:23:05,010 --> 00:23:05,510
Yeah.

496
00:23:05,510 --> 00:23:09,540
There was an
anti-Jewish legislation,

497
00:23:09,540 --> 00:23:14,810
which was promulgated
in autumn of '41.

498
00:23:14,810 --> 00:23:16,250
'41, that's right.

499
00:23:16,250 --> 00:23:18,980
What is called the Jewish Code.

500
00:23:18,980 --> 00:23:24,230
And this Judenrat had to
work in order to comply.

501
00:23:24,230 --> 00:23:26,480
To comply with this code.

502
00:23:26,480 --> 00:23:30,920
With this code on the orders
of the Slovaks on the Nazi.

503
00:23:30,920 --> 00:23:32,030
That's correct.

504

00:23:32,030 --> 00:23:36,470
And what happened is that
there was a kind of--

505
00:23:36,470 --> 00:23:39,050
and this is very rare--

506
00:23:39,050 --> 00:23:43,250
internal opposition
inside the Judenrat.

507
00:23:43,250 --> 00:23:46,835
I mean among the members
of the Judenrat, yes.

508
00:23:46,835 --> 00:23:51,500
And that the Judenrat
created its own opposition.

509
00:23:51,500 --> 00:23:52,700
In this, that's correct.

510
00:23:52,700 --> 00:23:53,510
Yes.

511
00:23:53,510 --> 00:23:56,690
And this is the beginning
of the so-called--

512
00:23:56,690 --> 00:23:57,590
Work Group.

513
00:23:57,590 --> 00:23:58,193
Working Group.

514
00:23:58,193 --> 00:23:59,360
Working Group, that's right.

515
00:23:59,360 --> 00:24:00,210
So-called [GERMAN].

516
00:24:00,210 --> 00:24:01,190

[GERMAN], that's right.

517

00:24:01,190 --> 00:24:02,960

[GERMAN] means what, exactly?

518

00:24:02,960 --> 00:24:04,597

[GERMAN],, or a
shadow government?

519

00:24:04,597 --> 00:24:05,930

Shadow government, that's right.

520

00:24:05,930 --> 00:24:07,722

That's what we were,
the shadow government.

521

00:24:07,722 --> 00:24:12,050

But this shadow government
was composed with members

522

00:24:12,050 --> 00:24:13,818

of the official Judenrat.

523

00:24:13,818 --> 00:24:14,360

That's right.

524

00:24:14,360 --> 00:24:20,240

Because Dr. Neumann, and Gisi
Fleischmann, and Dr. Kovac

525

00:24:20,240 --> 00:24:21,770

all had been part of the--

526

00:24:21,770 --> 00:24:22,850

On your side.

527

00:24:22,850 --> 00:24:23,870

Yeah, that's right.

528

00:24:23,870 --> 00:24:24,630

Yes.

529

00:24:24,630 --> 00:24:25,130

All right.

530

00:24:25,130 --> 00:24:28,370

And can you elaborate
more on this point?

531

00:24:28,370 --> 00:24:30,720

Because I think it
is very important.

532

00:24:30,720 --> 00:24:33,620

And we are talking
for people who don't

533

00:24:33,620 --> 00:24:37,910

know exactly the situation.

534

00:24:37,910 --> 00:24:41,330

Now, to talk more about
how this so-called shadow

535

00:24:41,330 --> 00:24:42,590

government was created?

536

00:24:42,590 --> 00:24:43,550

Yes, exactly.

537

00:24:43,550 --> 00:24:44,850

Yeah, exactly.

538

00:24:44,850 --> 00:24:46,520

And what was the
meaning of this?

539

00:24:46,520 --> 00:24:49,160

540

00:24:49,160 --> 00:24:52,940

As I mentioned before, the
Sebestyen and Hochberg,

541

00:24:52,940 --> 00:24:55,850

they have been the
so-called group--

542

00:24:55,850 --> 00:24:57,710

Could you say the
names more clearly?

543

00:24:57,710 --> 00:25:01,130

Sebestyen, Dr. Sebestyen
was the so-called [SLOVAK]..

544

00:25:01,130 --> 00:25:02,660

He was the head of the Judenrat.

545

00:25:02,660 --> 00:25:03,890

He was a [GERMAN].

546

00:25:03,890 --> 00:25:04,640

[GERMAN]

547

00:25:04,640 --> 00:25:07,340

He was the head of
the whole group.

548

00:25:07,340 --> 00:25:08,000

Yes.

549

00:25:08,000 --> 00:25:12,170

And Hochberg was head of
the so-called [GERMAN]..

550

00:25:12,170 --> 00:25:13,370

Hochberg was a Jew?

551

00:25:13,370 --> 00:25:15,200

He was, Hochberg was a Jew.

552

00:25:15,200 --> 00:25:20,300

And he was the head of the
department in the Judenrat

553

00:25:20,300 --> 00:25:23,385

who had to follow
everything for Wisliceny,

554

00:25:23,385 --> 00:25:25,910

whether the orders
had been carried out

555

00:25:25,910 --> 00:25:29,600

and whether deportation
transport had been in time put

556

00:25:29,600 --> 00:25:30,100

together.

557

00:25:30,100 --> 00:25:31,340

This is the Dieter Wisliceny.

558

00:25:31,340 --> 00:25:32,423

Dieter Wisliceny was the--

559

00:25:32,423 --> 00:25:34,185

He was a representative
of Eichmann--

560

00:25:34,185 --> 00:25:34,950

The [GERMAN].

561

00:25:34,950 --> 00:25:35,533

--in Slovakia.

562

00:25:35,533 --> 00:25:36,700

In Slovakia, that's correct.

563

00:25:36,700 --> 00:25:38,780

He was the man in charge
of the deportations.

564

00:25:38,780 --> 00:25:39,470

That's correct.

565

00:25:39,470 --> 00:25:40,520
Of the Jews of Slovakia.

566
00:25:40,520 --> 00:25:42,410
He was the German in charge.

567
00:25:42,410 --> 00:25:44,420
Because in Slovakia was
the interesting thing

568
00:25:44,420 --> 00:25:48,830
was that you had two parts
in this whole deportation.

569
00:25:48,830 --> 00:25:51,660
It was the Slovak
and the Germans.

570
00:25:51,660 --> 00:25:52,160
Yes.

571
00:25:52,160 --> 00:25:55,970
The Dr. Vasek was the head
of the-- the official head

572
00:25:55,970 --> 00:25:58,200
of the deportation,
because he was a Slovak.

573
00:25:58,200 --> 00:25:59,540
He was a Slovak then.

574
00:25:59,540 --> 00:26:03,710
And Wisliceny was only what
they called it [GERMAN],,

575
00:26:03,710 --> 00:26:05,390
the advisor to him.

576
00:26:05,390 --> 00:26:07,010
Yes, advisor and supervisor.

577

00:26:07,010 --> 00:26:09,170
An advisor and supervisor.

578
00:26:09,170 --> 00:26:12,380
But really, the
whole action itself

579
00:26:12,380 --> 00:26:14,320
was purely in Slovak hands.

580
00:26:14,320 --> 00:26:16,835
It was-- Slovakia was
a kind of satellite

581
00:26:16,835 --> 00:26:17,780
and independent state.

582
00:26:17,780 --> 00:26:18,800
Independent state.

583
00:26:18,800 --> 00:26:21,320
And the whole deportation,
the whole organization

584
00:26:21,320 --> 00:26:25,310
of the deportation, was
in Dr. Vasek's hand,

585
00:26:25,310 --> 00:26:28,610
and in Slovakia, and
Dr. Koso and Dr. Vasek.

586
00:26:28,610 --> 00:26:31,460
Could you talk first about the
deportations from Slovakia?

587
00:26:31,460 --> 00:26:34,730
They started in
the spring of 1942.

588
00:26:34,730 --> 00:26:40,130
Started out in '42 with
a transport of girls.

589
00:26:40,130 --> 00:26:41,420
90?

590
00:26:41,420 --> 00:26:42,980
Around thousand.

591
00:26:42,980 --> 00:26:44,660
There are no less
than 1,000 girls

592
00:26:44,660 --> 00:26:46,700
have been deported
from Slovakia.

593
00:26:46,700 --> 00:26:48,455
999, let's say.

594
00:26:48,455 --> 00:26:50,060
999, let's say.

595
00:26:50,060 --> 00:26:53,750
And that was the beginning
of the deportation.

596
00:26:53,750 --> 00:26:54,410
Girls?

597
00:26:54,410 --> 00:26:54,920
Girls.

598
00:26:54,920 --> 00:26:55,580
Only girls.

599
00:26:55,580 --> 00:26:56,840
Why?

600
00:26:56,840 --> 00:26:57,710
Nobody knows.

601
00:26:57,710 --> 00:26:58,820

We didn't know there.

602
00:26:58,820 --> 00:27:01,010
And why only girls?

603
00:27:01,010 --> 00:27:03,830
We had no idea.

604
00:27:03,830 --> 00:27:06,140
Then besides that,
what the order

605
00:27:06,140 --> 00:27:10,580
given that every week must--

606
00:27:10,580 --> 00:27:15,090
two transport must
go in from Slovakia.

607
00:27:15,090 --> 00:27:18,530
And that is how the whole
deportation started.

608
00:27:18,530 --> 00:27:23,460
And really, after March and
April, going up to even June,

609
00:27:23,460 --> 00:27:25,560
nearly every week,
one or two transport

610
00:27:25,560 --> 00:27:28,020
had been sent to Poland.

611
00:27:28,020 --> 00:27:29,295
Where exactly?

612
00:27:29,295 --> 00:27:31,080
At that time, we
didn't know yet.

613
00:27:31,080 --> 00:27:33,988

But that is, again,
how Weissmandel

614
00:27:33,988 --> 00:27:34,905
came into the picture.

615
00:27:34,905 --> 00:27:40,270
Weissmandel seemingly
organized some [GERMAN]

616
00:27:40,270 --> 00:27:42,510
things, as we call it.

617
00:27:42,510 --> 00:27:44,477
Information coming
from Poland, illegal--

618
00:27:44,477 --> 00:27:45,310
Information service.

619
00:27:45,310 --> 00:27:46,860
--information services.

620
00:27:46,860 --> 00:27:49,410
And he received some letters
from that time ordered

621
00:27:49,410 --> 00:27:52,440
from Poland from
those who went out,

622
00:27:52,440 --> 00:27:55,320
I think in Auschwitz
and Treblinka.

623
00:27:55,320 --> 00:27:57,340
Yes, some went to Treblinka.

624
00:27:57,340 --> 00:27:57,840
Treblinka.

625
00:27:57,840 --> 00:27:59,472

But the others went to Lublin.

626
00:27:59,472 --> 00:28:00,180
Lublin and so on.

627
00:28:00,180 --> 00:28:02,370
Majdanek and Auschwitz.

628
00:28:02,370 --> 00:28:04,470
And then later into
Auschwitz, too.

629
00:28:04,470 --> 00:28:06,960
And some of the
information came out that--

630
00:28:06,960 --> 00:28:10,800
because we had been
told that first of all,

631
00:28:10,800 --> 00:28:13,080
the families will stay together.

632
00:28:13,080 --> 00:28:18,450
And in this whole deportation
scheme, that we go,

633
00:28:18,450 --> 00:28:21,900
all the Jews are going
to Germany in work camps.

634
00:28:21,900 --> 00:28:25,993
And the families will
stay together and so on.

635
00:28:25,993 --> 00:28:27,660
You had no idea about
the extermination?

636
00:28:27,660 --> 00:28:28,290
We had no idea.

637

00:28:28,290 --> 00:28:30,910

At that time, yeah, we
had no idea whatsoever.

638

00:28:30,910 --> 00:28:35,790

And even with the first letters
which Weissmandel received

639

00:28:35,790 --> 00:28:37,776

didn't tell us.

640

00:28:37,776 --> 00:28:41,400

That was before the
extermination started.

641

00:28:41,400 --> 00:28:44,970

But even that time,
the letters told us

642

00:28:44,970 --> 00:28:48,550

that it is not true that the
families stayed together.

643

00:28:48,550 --> 00:28:51,540

The families are
immediately torn apart.

644

00:28:51,540 --> 00:28:57,060

And only around 10% of those
who are sent out to Germany

645

00:28:57,060 --> 00:28:58,035

stay in Germany.

646

00:28:58,035 --> 00:29:01,350

That the other 90% of them
have been put into wagons

647

00:29:01,350 --> 00:29:03,600

and sent into to the
East into Poland.

648

00:29:03,600 --> 00:29:04,870

Yes.

649

00:29:04,870 --> 00:29:05,657

And there--

650

00:29:05,657 --> 00:29:06,490

But they, excuse me.

651

00:29:06,490 --> 00:29:08,462

--and they immediately
told us, immediately,

652

00:29:08,462 --> 00:29:10,170

that all that what
they had been promised

653

00:29:10,170 --> 00:29:13,530

there were a lie, because
they had been killing them.

654

00:29:13,530 --> 00:29:18,000

And appealed to us
we should be helpful,

655

00:29:18,000 --> 00:29:20,190

because they are
afraid for their life.

656

00:29:20,190 --> 00:29:23,400

Excuse me, Rabbi
Weissmandel was not

657

00:29:23,400 --> 00:29:25,290

himself a member
of the Judenrat.

658

00:29:25,290 --> 00:29:25,860

No, no.

659

00:29:25,860 --> 00:29:28,020

He was not.

660

00:29:28,020 --> 00:29:30,510

He was, I think--

661

00:29:30,510 --> 00:29:33,330

he was not a member of the
Judenrat at all, that I know.

662

00:29:33,330 --> 00:29:40,860

But he was, really,
the head or the pope--

663

00:29:40,860 --> 00:29:42,360

the very often sort
of things people

664

00:29:42,360 --> 00:29:45,480

said he is the pope
of the Orthodoxy.

665

00:29:45,480 --> 00:29:48,690

He was the guy, in spite of that
his father-in-law was the Chief

666

00:29:48,690 --> 00:29:50,340

Rabbi Anitra.

667

00:29:50,340 --> 00:29:53,850

But a really well known man in
the Orthodoxy was Weissmandel.

668

00:29:53,850 --> 00:29:55,410

He was very well
known in Slovakia.

669

00:29:55,410 --> 00:29:56,880

Very well known in Slovakia.

670

00:29:56,880 --> 00:29:58,530

And we knew him, too.

671

00:29:58,530 --> 00:30:01,020

But our first contact,
especially my first contact,

672
00:30:01,020 --> 00:30:03,750
was basically that
he used to come

673
00:30:03,750 --> 00:30:06,360
not to the Judenrat
[INAUDIBLE],, but he

674
00:30:06,360 --> 00:30:10,980
started to come to the so-called
shadow regeirung meetings.

675
00:30:10,980 --> 00:30:14,580
And at one of these meeting,
he brought letters just

676
00:30:14,580 --> 00:30:18,990
received from Poland from
families and from boys

677
00:30:18,990 --> 00:30:22,440
who had been sent to--

678
00:30:22,440 --> 00:30:25,200
Do you remember
exactly the scene?

679
00:30:25,200 --> 00:30:27,960

680
00:30:27,960 --> 00:30:28,680
You were there.

681
00:30:28,680 --> 00:30:29,820
I was there.

682
00:30:29,820 --> 00:30:32,430
I just remember that he
was showing the letters

683
00:30:32,430 --> 00:30:35,730

and telling that all what we
had been promised are not true.

684
00:30:35,730 --> 00:30:39,090
And instead of working,
only a very small part

685
00:30:39,090 --> 00:30:43,650
of the deportees are working,
are put into work camps.

686
00:30:43,650 --> 00:30:47,670
And the overwhelming majority
is sent into concentration camps

687
00:30:47,670 --> 00:30:49,750
in ghettos to Poland somewhere.

688
00:30:49,750 --> 00:30:53,450
And there, they
are dying, partly

689
00:30:53,450 --> 00:31:01,170
by being killed and partly
by health, lack of health.

690
00:31:01,170 --> 00:31:03,810
Do you know how did
he-- through which

691
00:31:03,810 --> 00:31:07,410
channels did he get the news?

692
00:31:07,410 --> 00:31:08,550
I don't know the channels.

693
00:31:08,550 --> 00:31:13,640
But I know-- we knew that
he had some Slovaks who

694
00:31:13,640 --> 00:31:14,940
went into Poland.

695

00:31:14,940 --> 00:31:18,210

And do you know that
Czechoslovakia and Poland had

696

00:31:18,210 --> 00:31:20,280

a very long common frontier?

697

00:31:20,280 --> 00:31:20,970

Yes.

698

00:31:20,970 --> 00:31:23,050

And through this
frontier, it was easy,

699

00:31:23,050 --> 00:31:27,930

especially for Slovaks, who for
good money, went into Poland,

700

00:31:27,930 --> 00:31:30,090

got the information what
happened with the Jews,

701

00:31:30,090 --> 00:31:31,298

and came back to Weissmandel.

702

00:31:31,298 --> 00:31:34,050

And this is how the whole
information started.

703

00:31:34,050 --> 00:31:36,480

But you don't remember
this scene exactly,

704

00:31:36,480 --> 00:31:38,040

how he came, how he arrived?

705

00:31:38,040 --> 00:31:40,860

Because I would like
you to describe it.

706

00:31:40,860 --> 00:31:42,560

This was your first

meeting with him.

707

00:31:42,560 --> 00:31:44,310

That was the first
meeting with him, yeah.

708

00:31:44,310 --> 00:31:44,810

Yes.

709

00:31:44,810 --> 00:31:48,330

710

00:31:48,330 --> 00:31:51,780

The details, I don't remember,
because that was a so-called

711

00:31:51,780 --> 00:31:53,700

completely apart from
the activities which

712

00:31:53,700 --> 00:31:55,230

I was involved.

713

00:31:55,230 --> 00:31:59,730

And that time, I just
was there sitting at a--

714

00:31:59,730 --> 00:32:01,590

It must have been very striking.

715

00:32:01,590 --> 00:32:03,420

Because as a matter
of fact, this

716

00:32:03,420 --> 00:32:08,400

was the first news about the
fact that the Germans lied

717

00:32:08,400 --> 00:32:11,820

and that the Jews were
shipped to the East.

718

00:32:11,820 --> 00:32:14,227

This was the first news
of the extermination,

719

00:32:14,227 --> 00:32:15,060

as a matter of fact.

720

00:32:15,060 --> 00:32:15,602

That's right.

721

00:32:15,602 --> 00:32:19,140

But these are the information--
these are the information which

722

00:32:19,140 --> 00:32:21,540

Weissmandel gathered
and organized

723

00:32:21,540 --> 00:32:23,560

without our help, that
he did by himself.

724

00:32:23,560 --> 00:32:24,060

Yes.

725

00:32:24,060 --> 00:32:27,150

And he just came
to us and told us

726

00:32:27,150 --> 00:32:29,530

that that is really the reality.

727

00:32:29,530 --> 00:32:31,980

The reality is not
what we had been told.

728

00:32:31,980 --> 00:32:34,295

This is now the reality.

729

00:32:34,295 --> 00:32:35,670

That was one of
the reasons, too,

730

00:32:35,670 --> 00:32:40,600

that we started to think
about it if that's the case.

731

00:32:40,600 --> 00:32:43,440

So we must really start,
must start to fight

732

00:32:43,440 --> 00:32:44,880

to stop the deportation.

733

00:32:44,880 --> 00:32:50,220

That was one of, really, the
factors, that the little shadow

734

00:32:50,220 --> 00:32:53,400

regeirung started not only
just to think about it what

735

00:32:53,400 --> 00:32:57,690

we can do on the work
camps in Slovakia, that we

736

00:32:57,690 --> 00:33:01,050

will have now to start to
fight against deportation.

737

00:33:01,050 --> 00:33:04,910

That was the whole idea is--

738

00:33:04,910 --> 00:33:07,960

I think it was
Weissmandel's idea, too,

739

00:33:07,960 --> 00:33:11,455

that we, Dr. Kovac, who
was in the Judenrat,

740

00:33:11,455 --> 00:33:14,370

he's the secretary-general
of the Judenrat

741

00:33:14,370 --> 00:33:16,860
had very good relations
with Dr. Vasek,

742
00:33:16,860 --> 00:33:20,490
whom he knew already
from times before,

743
00:33:20,490 --> 00:33:24,035
that he was starting now to
speak openly with Dr. Vasek

744
00:33:24,035 --> 00:33:28,240
and telling him that
this is our information.

745
00:33:28,240 --> 00:33:30,600
So you must help us
to stop deportation.

746
00:33:30,600 --> 00:33:33,600
Because we know that
deportation means--