

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,040

2
00:00:01,040 --> 00:00:04,780
(film slating)

3
00:00:04,780 --> 00:00:09,370
So Vrba you escaped
from Auschwitz

4
00:00:09,370 --> 00:00:14,560
the 7th of April, 1944.

5
00:00:14,560 --> 00:00:17,500
It was a successful attempt.

6
00:00:17,500 --> 00:00:19,470
I would like to know two things.

7
00:00:19,470 --> 00:00:24,340
First, how many attempts
of escape from Auschwitz

8
00:00:24,340 --> 00:00:28,660
did exist, how many
were successful?

9
00:00:28,660 --> 00:00:31,698
And the last question,
why did you do it?

10
00:00:31,698 --> 00:00:35,120

11
00:00:35,120 --> 00:00:40,560
Well, the statistics about
the escapes from Auschwitz

12
00:00:40,560 --> 00:00:42,375
exist, and I have read various.

13

00:00:42,375 --> 00:00:44,970

14

00:00:44,970 --> 00:00:49,530

They say that there were
80 successful escapes

15

00:00:49,530 --> 00:00:53,490

and 400 attempted escapes
which ended with death.

16

00:00:53,490 --> 00:00:56,160

But I'm not so sure that
the statistics are true

17

00:00:56,160 --> 00:00:59,520

because from those 80
people who escaped pro --

18

00:00:59,520 --> 00:01:03,690

supposedly, we didn't
hear very much.

19

00:01:03,690 --> 00:01:04,920

We don't know about them.

20

00:01:04,920 --> 00:01:06,870

So I don't know.

21

00:01:06,870 --> 00:01:08,250

What was your second question?

22

00:01:08,250 --> 00:01:09,900

How-- how long--

23

00:01:09,900 --> 00:01:14,070

My second question were how
many successful attempts?

24

00:01:14,070 --> 00:01:18,910

Successful attempts, before
Wetzler and I escaped?

25
00:01:18,910 --> 00:01:19,410
Yes.

26
00:01:19,410 --> 00:01:24,170

27
00:01:24,170 --> 00:01:27,030
I'm not aware of
any to my knowledge.

28
00:01:27,030 --> 00:01:31,760
There might have been, but
I don't know about them.

29
00:01:31,760 --> 00:01:35,390
You don't recall the
escape of Lederer?

30
00:01:35,390 --> 00:01:38,490

31
00:01:38,490 --> 00:01:39,270
Oh, yes.

32
00:01:39,270 --> 00:01:40,770
I do recall it now.

33
00:01:40,770 --> 00:01:44,820
This was shortly
before I escaped.

34
00:01:44,820 --> 00:01:47,130
But if that escape
was successful or not,

35
00:01:47,130 --> 00:01:49,590
at that time, I didn't
have any possibility

36
00:01:49,590 --> 00:01:53,580
to check on it because if he

didn't return within three days

37

00:01:53,580 --> 00:01:55,920
or within four days,
there was no way of saying

38

00:01:55,920 --> 00:01:58,320
that an attempt was
successful or not.

39

00:01:58,320 --> 00:02:02,410
But the Lederer escape,
I remember very well.

40

00:02:02,410 --> 00:02:02,910
Yes.

41

00:02:02,910 --> 00:02:05,160
But I say it was a
successful one, as I recall.

42

00:02:05,160 --> 00:02:06,540
It was, yes.

43

00:02:06,540 --> 00:02:08,580
Looking back on it,
I can say that it

44

00:02:08,580 --> 00:02:09,780
was a successful escape.

45

00:02:09,780 --> 00:02:11,580
Yes, we know it.

46

00:02:11,580 --> 00:02:15,750
OK, my question is now,
why did you escape?

47

00:02:15,750 --> 00:02:18,900
Why did you do it?

48

00:02:18,900 --> 00:02:23,660

Well, naturally, everybody--

49

00:02:23,660 --> 00:02:25,850

I don't say how
because I know that--

50

00:02:25,850 --> 00:02:27,040

The reasons for escape?

51

00:02:27,040 --> 00:02:28,520

Yes.

52

00:02:28,520 --> 00:02:34,130

Well, it was my intention to
escape from the first moment

53

00:02:34,130 --> 00:02:37,040

when I have seen where I am.

54

00:02:37,040 --> 00:02:40,550

But at that time, it
was particularly urgent

55

00:02:40,550 --> 00:02:45,740

because I knew that all was
prepared for the murder of 1

56

00:02:45,740 --> 00:02:48,230

million Jews from Hungary.

57

00:02:48,230 --> 00:02:51,140

And because it was
close to Slovakia,

58

00:02:51,140 --> 00:02:56,140

I saw that it would be
possible to give the warning.

59

00:02:56,140 --> 00:02:59,560

Naturally, I wanted to live too.

60

00:02:59,560 --> 00:03:04,780

I mean, I knew that if
I escaped successfully,

61
00:03:04,780 --> 00:03:07,250
that I might survive.

62
00:03:07,250 --> 00:03:11,920
And naturally, I was
interested in surviving myself.

63
00:03:11,920 --> 00:03:14,390
But not at any price.

64
00:03:14,390 --> 00:03:16,080
You could have been killed too.

65
00:03:16,080 --> 00:03:16,580
Oh, yes.

66
00:03:16,580 --> 00:03:18,400
The risk-- there was
some risk involved.

67
00:03:18,400 --> 00:03:22,030

68
00:03:22,030 --> 00:03:23,740
Yes.

69
00:03:23,740 --> 00:03:31,420
But as far as I know, you
always since the very beginning,

70
00:03:31,420 --> 00:03:34,140
even before being
shipped to Auschwitz,

71
00:03:34,140 --> 00:03:39,100
you had always idea
to escape, not to let

72
00:03:39,100 --> 00:03:43,330

you be taken into this trap.

73

00:03:43,330 --> 00:03:51,160

Well, when it was announced to me from the Jewish community

74

00:03:51,160 --> 00:03:57,580

leaders that I have to come and let myself ship into some wagon

75

00:03:57,580 --> 00:03:59,590

to an unknown place, naturally, it

76

00:03:59,590 --> 00:04:04,390

didn't come into my mind to obey such a stupid instruction.

77

00:04:04,390 --> 00:04:06,550

And I tried to escape first to Hungary.

78

00:04:06,550 --> 00:04:07,730

And for a certain reasons--

79

00:04:07,730 --> 00:04:09,710

But this was at the very beginning.

80

00:04:09,710 --> 00:04:12,070

This was before they got me to Auschwitz.

81

00:04:12,070 --> 00:04:13,390

Then--

82

00:04:13,390 --> 00:04:15,220

Can you explain how it was announced

83

00:04:15,220 --> 00:04:17,290

to you by the Jewish community leaders?

84

00:04:17,290 --> 00:04:23,600

Can you describe the situation
as it was at the time,

85

00:04:23,600 --> 00:04:24,770

in Slovakia?

86

00:04:24,770 --> 00:04:27,500

Looking backwards--
looking back,

87

00:04:27,500 --> 00:04:34,520

it was done in a way which
could be called [NON-ENGLISH]

88

00:04:34,520 --> 00:04:39,890

because they said, first, that
only men from 60s to 30 will

89

00:04:39,890 --> 00:04:44,015

have to be resettled because--

90

00:04:44,015 --> 00:04:45,680

and if they go
voluntarily, nothing

91

00:04:45,680 --> 00:04:49,060

will happen to their families.

92

00:04:49,060 --> 00:04:51,240

Yes?

93

00:04:51,240 --> 00:04:54,030

But there was
already talk about--

94

00:04:54,030 --> 00:04:56,600

and only those who were not
married were supposed to go.

95

00:04:56,600 --> 00:05:02,320

96
00:05:02,320 --> 00:05:04,720
Now this was announced--

97
00:05:04,720 --> 00:05:08,350
the Jews were by that time
organized in such a way

98
00:05:08,350 --> 00:05:09,670
by the authorities.

99
00:05:09,670 --> 00:05:11,560
There was no direct
contact between

100
00:05:11,560 --> 00:05:14,680
the official authorities
and the individual Jews.

101
00:05:14,680 --> 00:05:19,000
All the contact was channeled
through so-called Center

102
00:05:19,000 --> 00:05:21,160
for Jews.

103
00:05:21,160 --> 00:05:24,300
And that was a Jewish
council, basically.

104
00:05:24,300 --> 00:05:24,830
Ah, yes.

105
00:05:24,830 --> 00:05:25,480
Judenrat.

106
00:05:25,480 --> 00:05:28,200
Judenrat.

107
00:05:28,200 --> 00:05:29,210
Yes, go on.

108
00:05:29,210 --> 00:05:33,250

109
00:05:33,250 --> 00:05:36,100
Now, you said that you
didn't want to obey

110
00:05:36,100 --> 00:05:38,970
such a stupid order, you say.

111
00:05:38,970 --> 00:05:39,640
Yes.

112
00:05:39,640 --> 00:05:42,490
Yes, well--

113
00:05:42,490 --> 00:05:45,140
But the orders were obeyed.

114
00:05:45,140 --> 00:05:45,640
Yes.

115
00:05:45,640 --> 00:05:48,910
I was surprised how
that they did obey it.

116
00:05:48,910 --> 00:05:50,740
And what is your
explanation for this?

117
00:05:50,740 --> 00:05:55,610

118
00:05:55,610 --> 00:06:02,750
My impression is that
the Jewish communities

119
00:06:02,750 --> 00:06:08,920
were trained very
much to obey always

120

00:06:08,920 --> 00:06:12,690

somebody who is in authority.

121

00:06:12,690 --> 00:06:18,030

And there was an enormous
amount of conformity among them.

122

00:06:18,030 --> 00:06:23,260

They always tried
not to be different.

123

00:06:23,260 --> 00:06:26,840

They were always
afraid to be different.

124

00:06:26,840 --> 00:06:27,340

Yes?

125

00:06:27,340 --> 00:06:30,370

126

00:06:30,370 --> 00:06:38,450

And everybody somehow
knew too well his place.

127

00:06:38,450 --> 00:06:41,530

For instance, if I would
come and say, don't go,

128

00:06:41,530 --> 00:06:44,380

this is stupid, or this is a
nonsense to go voluntarily.

129

00:06:44,380 --> 00:06:47,660

They would say, who are you?

130

00:06:47,660 --> 00:06:54,920

I mean, big people say we should
go, important people, people--

131

00:06:54,920 --> 00:06:56,540

and who are those

important people?

132

00:06:56,540 --> 00:07:03,690

It was usually people who
had some social substance,

133

00:07:03,690 --> 00:07:09,630

had some doctor degrees and
property, preferably both,

134

00:07:09,630 --> 00:07:16,800

and people with vast
qualifications or higher

135

00:07:16,800 --> 00:07:20,280

religious qualifications, a
good position in the synagogue

136

00:07:20,280 --> 00:07:20,980

and so on.

137

00:07:20,980 --> 00:07:23,230

So it had to be obeyed by
the rest of the community.

138

00:07:23,230 --> 00:07:28,670

It was just-- was unimaginable
not to obey those characters.

139

00:07:28,670 --> 00:07:31,280

Yes?

140

00:07:31,280 --> 00:07:31,820

But, OK.

141

00:07:31,820 --> 00:07:35,010

We will come back
to this later on.

142

00:07:35,010 --> 00:07:38,510

OK, you said that you escaped
in April '44 because--

143

00:07:38,510 --> 00:07:41,360

mostly because you
wanted to give a warning.

144

00:07:41,360 --> 00:07:43,260

Oh, this be coming
back now to Auschwitz?

145

00:07:43,260 --> 00:07:45,930

Yes.

146

00:07:45,930 --> 00:07:58,980

Well, obviously, to give it
a meaning to the two years

147

00:07:58,980 --> 00:08:05,460

which I spent in Auschwitz and
to escape only for my own sake

148

00:08:05,460 --> 00:08:06,410

would be ridiculous.

149

00:08:06,410 --> 00:08:09,000

150

00:08:09,000 --> 00:08:11,690

And because I had
the information

151

00:08:11,690 --> 00:08:15,560

in considerable detail that
the Hungarian Jews are going

152

00:08:15,560 --> 00:08:21,320

to be murdered en masse
in a very short time,

153

00:08:21,320 --> 00:08:24,620

this means I expected that
it should start in May.

154

00:08:24,620 --> 00:08:27,970

And it did start in May.

155

00:08:27,970 --> 00:08:32,080

And I thought-- I could
see that the whole murder

156

00:08:32,080 --> 00:08:34,395

machinery could work
only on one principle,

157

00:08:34,395 --> 00:08:35,770

that the people
came to Auschwitz

158

00:08:35,770 --> 00:08:40,360

and didn't know why they are
going and for what purpose.

159

00:08:40,360 --> 00:08:45,580

And I assumed that the natural
instinct of self-preservation,

160

00:08:45,580 --> 00:08:50,080

if nothing else, will
create, if nothing else,

161

00:08:50,080 --> 00:08:52,330

if not resistance, then
at least sufficient panic

162

00:08:52,330 --> 00:08:56,020

that this organized
transport of human beings

163

00:08:56,020 --> 00:08:59,980

into a center like Auschwitz
where they are being

164

00:08:59,980 --> 00:09:03,970

slaughtered like
pigs or less humanely

165

00:09:03,970 --> 00:09:07,240

and with the efficiency
of a major slaughterhouse,

166
00:09:07,240 --> 00:09:12,010
say, in Chicago, that
this process could

167
00:09:12,010 --> 00:09:15,160
be at least slowed down if the
actual people would have been

168
00:09:15,160 --> 00:09:20,310
warned in advance and panicked.

169
00:09:20,310 --> 00:09:23,190
Because once there
is a panic, you see,

170
00:09:23,190 --> 00:09:25,110
I thought if they--
of course, I hoped

171
00:09:25,110 --> 00:09:27,870
that there might be resistance,
armed resistance, or any sort

172
00:09:27,870 --> 00:09:30,390
of resistance because
the Germans were

173
00:09:30,390 --> 00:09:32,970
so sure that no
resistance is possible

174
00:09:32,970 --> 00:09:34,140
that they became cocky.

175
00:09:34,140 --> 00:09:38,250
I mean, it wasn't so
difficult to hit back.

176
00:09:38,250 --> 00:09:40,710
And they would

have been probably

177

00:09:40,710 --> 00:09:43,230

very surprised if there
would be a resistance.

178

00:09:43,230 --> 00:09:46,170

179

00:09:46,170 --> 00:09:49,670

But even if there wouldn't be
a resistance, but only a panic,

180

00:09:49,670 --> 00:09:53,570

you see, it is a big
difference to slaughter pigs

181

00:09:53,570 --> 00:09:54,920

or to hunt deer.

182

00:09:54,920 --> 00:10:00,140

If you have to hunt each one
separately, hunt him down,

183

00:10:00,140 --> 00:10:01,910

it never goes so fast.

184

00:10:01,910 --> 00:10:05,870

Like if you drive thousands,
10,000 or 50,000 pigs

185

00:10:05,870 --> 00:10:10,520

in a well-organized fashion and
manner into a slaughterhouse,

186

00:10:10,520 --> 00:10:12,020

once they are in
the slaughterhouse,

187

00:10:12,020 --> 00:10:14,730

obviously, nothing can be done.

188

00:10:14,730 --> 00:10:18,560

Therefore, I thought that
a warning to those people

189

00:10:18,560 --> 00:10:19,550

is characteristic.

190

00:10:19,550 --> 00:10:22,580

In the whole time of Auschwitz
was whenever we asked people

191

00:10:22,580 --> 00:10:25,190

who came there and lost
their wives and children

192

00:10:25,190 --> 00:10:27,003

and fathers and
mother, we ask them,

193

00:10:27,003 --> 00:10:28,670

we are here already
a year or two years.

194

00:10:28,670 --> 00:10:29,960

Why did you come here?

195

00:10:29,960 --> 00:10:34,160

And they always told us well,
we didn't know what's happening.

196

00:10:34,160 --> 00:10:36,980

If we knew what's
happening, we wouldn't have

197

00:10:36,980 --> 00:10:39,600

volunteered for this journey.

198

00:10:39,600 --> 00:10:42,380

So the secrecy of
its operation was--

199

00:10:42,380 --> 00:10:43,980

I don't think they

were volunteer.

200

00:10:43,980 --> 00:10:44,870

These arrived.

201

00:10:44,870 --> 00:10:46,291

They didn't volunteer.

202

00:10:46,291 --> 00:10:50,620

203

00:10:50,620 --> 00:10:52,734

(film slating)

204

00:10:52,734 --> 00:10:55,120

I agree completely

with what you said,

205

00:10:55,120 --> 00:11:00,370

that in order to have a
smooth process of destruction,

206

00:11:00,370 --> 00:11:03,580

the Nazi needed to
have people completely

207

00:11:03,580 --> 00:11:08,990

ignorant of their fate.

208

00:11:08,990 --> 00:11:13,380

But in another way, you
said that the people came

209

00:11:13,380 --> 00:11:16,210

voluntarily to their death.

210

00:11:16,210 --> 00:11:19,720

I discuss the word

"voluntarily" because that's

211

00:11:19,720 --> 00:11:21,100

a matter of if they didn't know.

212
00:11:21,100 --> 00:11:22,475
If they wouldn't
have known, that

213
00:11:22,475 --> 00:11:25,830
means they would have
something against it.

214
00:11:25,830 --> 00:11:28,490
Well, by voluntarily,
I mean that when

215
00:11:28,490 --> 00:11:32,040
they were given the
information via the channels

216
00:11:32,040 --> 00:11:36,570
of the Judenrat of
the Jewish leaders

217
00:11:36,570 --> 00:11:40,230
to come with 25 kilograms
of their belongings

218
00:11:40,230 --> 00:11:43,620
for a collection place which
is on such and such street,

219
00:11:43,620 --> 00:11:45,090
they went there.

220
00:11:45,090 --> 00:11:50,250
So I don't see that they
went there with pleasure.

221
00:11:50,250 --> 00:11:54,570
But they went there without
any particular resistance.

222
00:11:54,570 --> 00:11:57,660
This means they
went there basically

223
00:11:57,660 --> 00:12:01,740
in an orderly fashion,
according to plan.

224
00:12:01,740 --> 00:12:02,680
Yes.

225
00:12:02,680 --> 00:12:04,630
This is absolutely true.

226
00:12:04,630 --> 00:12:08,150
But there is something that
I don't understand very well.

227
00:12:08,150 --> 00:12:11,130
You say that you escaped
because you wanted

228
00:12:11,130 --> 00:12:13,510
to warn the Hungarian Jewry--

229
00:12:13,510 --> 00:12:14,010
Yes.

230
00:12:14,010 --> 00:12:16,420
--of impending fate.

231
00:12:16,420 --> 00:12:16,920
Yes.

232
00:12:16,920 --> 00:12:19,350
But during the two years
that you spent yourself

233
00:12:19,350 --> 00:12:22,590
in Auschwitz, you
saw a lot of people

234
00:12:22,590 --> 00:12:25,630
already arriving and being
immediately killed and gassed.

235
00:12:25,630 --> 00:12:27,830
Yes.

236
00:12:27,830 --> 00:12:29,310
Yes?

237
00:12:29,310 --> 00:12:31,410
It's not a polemic
question, but if you

238
00:12:31,410 --> 00:12:36,040
wanted to warn, why did
you wait for two years?

239
00:12:36,040 --> 00:12:41,850
Well, when I saw what the
Nazis are doing there,

240
00:12:41,850 --> 00:12:44,640
this means when I could
see that Nazis with bamboo

241
00:12:44,640 --> 00:12:48,450
sticks in their hands were
driving children or old women

242
00:12:48,450 --> 00:12:51,250
or old man into
the gas chambers,

243
00:12:51,250 --> 00:12:55,230
it was my opinion
that it is my duty

244
00:12:55,230 --> 00:12:57,840
to jump at the neck
of the first one,

245
00:12:57,840 --> 00:13:00,660
no matter what
the cost would be.

246
00:13:00,660 --> 00:13:01,960
You saw this?

247
00:13:01,960 --> 00:13:02,460
Yes.

248
00:13:02,460 --> 00:13:03,660
This is why I was convinced.

249
00:13:03,660 --> 00:13:07,320
I was convinced that nobody
is supposed to stay--

250
00:13:07,320 --> 00:13:11,280
to tolerate the sight of
anything of this sort.

251
00:13:11,280 --> 00:13:14,790
But, of course, I know also
that the moment I would

252
00:13:14,790 --> 00:13:18,990
have made the first move,
that I would be killed,

253
00:13:18,990 --> 00:13:23,400
and that many would be killed
in reprisal from the prisoners

254
00:13:23,400 --> 00:13:24,180
there.

255
00:13:24,180 --> 00:13:26,460
So this is one
problem, the reprisal.

256
00:13:26,460 --> 00:13:29,460
And the reprisals
were of such a nature

257
00:13:29,460 --> 00:13:33,810
that final deaths of those who

were subjected to the reprisals

258

00:13:33,810 --> 00:13:35,490
was only the end point.

259

00:13:35,490 --> 00:13:36,660
It was only the liberation.

260

00:13:36,660 --> 00:13:38,910
The reprisals-- the Nazis
were very inventive in that.

261

00:13:38,910 --> 00:13:41,520
They have got quite
a bit of imagination.

262

00:13:41,520 --> 00:13:43,380
So there was
another possibility,

263

00:13:43,380 --> 00:13:44,910
how to cope with the situation.

264

00:13:44,910 --> 00:13:51,720
And that possibility was
to die in a meaningful way

265

00:13:51,720 --> 00:13:54,780
if it is necessary to die.

266

00:13:54,780 --> 00:14:01,620
And I thought that my life
would have some meaning there,

267

00:14:01,620 --> 00:14:06,630
that my tolerance is the
way that I kept quiet

268

00:14:06,630 --> 00:14:10,830
while seeing all this would
get a meaning if I would manage

269

00:14:10,830 --> 00:14:14,200
to carry the message out.

270
00:14:14,200 --> 00:14:18,560
And of course, it is
easy to say post-facto.

271
00:14:18,560 --> 00:14:21,760

272
00:14:21,760 --> 00:14:26,680
But, of course,
it was clear to me

273
00:14:26,680 --> 00:14:31,360
that if I risk my life in
order to bring out that message

274
00:14:31,360 --> 00:14:35,720
that my survival was justified.

275
00:14:35,720 --> 00:14:38,090
I mean, to survive
for two years.

276
00:14:38,090 --> 00:14:40,040
Yes, that it was justified.

277
00:14:40,040 --> 00:14:42,045
It was justified to survive.

278
00:14:42,045 --> 00:14:43,670
Because as a matter
of fact, the people

279
00:14:43,670 --> 00:14:48,590
who jumped at the neck of
the killers were very few.

280
00:14:48,590 --> 00:14:50,400
Nobody did it.

281

00:14:50,400 --> 00:14:50,900
No.

282
00:14:50,900 --> 00:14:52,580
There was no resistance.

283
00:14:52,580 --> 00:14:57,270
There's no case recorded
until much later,

284
00:14:57,270 --> 00:14:59,528
and those cases
are only very few.

285
00:14:59,528 --> 00:15:01,070
And I think that
the main reason was,

286
00:15:01,070 --> 00:15:03,590
of course, the
fear for reprisals

287
00:15:03,590 --> 00:15:08,060
against other prisoners
who were hostages.

288
00:15:08,060 --> 00:15:13,430
If somebody moved, the Nazis
would kill, say, the next 100

289
00:15:13,430 --> 00:15:15,170
or something like that.

290
00:15:15,170 --> 00:15:16,880
And there was
already in the camp

291
00:15:16,880 --> 00:15:22,160
a certain sort of a feeling of
responsibility to one another.

292
00:15:22,160 --> 00:15:24,740

293
00:15:24,740 --> 00:15:25,990
Among the survivors?

294
00:15:25,990 --> 00:15:26,740
Among the people--

295
00:15:26,740 --> 00:15:27,880
Among the prisoners, yes.

296
00:15:27,880 --> 00:15:28,380
Yes.

297
00:15:28,380 --> 00:15:29,750
And that feeling
would [INAUDIBLE]??

298
00:15:29,750 --> 00:15:30,320
Yes.

299
00:15:30,320 --> 00:15:31,010
Yes.

300
00:15:31,010 --> 00:15:33,650
There developed a sort of
feeling among the prisoners

301
00:15:33,650 --> 00:15:36,440
that they are something
different from those victims

302
00:15:36,440 --> 00:15:38,660
who are being
constantly murdered

303
00:15:38,660 --> 00:15:40,980
day and night in the same camp.

304
00:15:40,980 --> 00:15:43,430
And it was something like
there's-- others were called

305

00:15:43,430 --> 00:15:46,500
the civilians.

306

00:15:46,500 --> 00:15:48,570
This is a peculiarity
of the camp.

307

00:15:48,570 --> 00:15:49,950
Who were the civilians?

308

00:15:49,950 --> 00:15:53,168
Those who came into the camp and
never became prisoners and were

309

00:15:53,168 --> 00:15:54,210
straightforward murdered.

310

00:15:54,210 --> 00:15:55,050
And they were considered.

311

00:15:55,050 --> 00:15:56,467
As they were called
the civilians.

312

00:15:56,467 --> 00:15:57,150
The civilians.

313

00:15:57,150 --> 00:15:58,930
It seems the Poles,
for instance,

314

00:15:58,930 --> 00:16:02,550
there was an unrest among the
Polish political prisoners,

315

00:16:02,550 --> 00:16:05,350
when there were, very often,
executions every Monday

316

00:16:05,350 --> 00:16:05,850
morning.

317

00:16:05,850 --> 00:16:10,200

150 or 200 of them would be
executed in the block 11.

318

00:16:10,200 --> 00:16:10,950

In Auschwitz einz.

319

00:16:10,950 --> 00:16:12,580

In Auschwitz einz.

320

00:16:12,580 --> 00:16:14,910

And unrest developed
among them, which

321

00:16:14,910 --> 00:16:17,880

could have led to
a revolt. And then

322

00:16:17,880 --> 00:16:20,230

somehow the Nazis
spread the rumor

323

00:16:20,230 --> 00:16:23,415

that nobody from the prisoners
will be any more executed

324

00:16:23,415 --> 00:16:25,470

there, only civilians.

325

00:16:25,470 --> 00:16:29,080

This means people were coming
from the Gestapo in Katowice,

326

00:16:29,080 --> 00:16:31,950

in Krakow and so on They were
brought there in block 11

327

00:16:31,950 --> 00:16:33,030

and murdered.

328

00:16:33,030 --> 00:16:36,300

And once it was said

that it's civilians,

329

00:16:36,300 --> 00:16:40,810
it had somehow a different ring
because Poles in the camp said,

330

00:16:40,810 --> 00:16:41,760
well, that's--

331

00:16:41,760 --> 00:16:44,010
we are not responsible
for the civilians.

332

00:16:44,010 --> 00:16:45,510
We are responsible for--

333

00:16:45,510 --> 00:16:47,610
It quiet the [INAUDIBLE]--

334

00:16:47,610 --> 00:16:48,110
Yes.

335

00:16:48,110 --> 00:16:48,753
Yes.

336

00:16:48,753 --> 00:16:49,440
--the prisoner.

337

00:16:49,440 --> 00:16:49,940
Yes.

338

00:16:49,940 --> 00:16:51,090
It quiet down the prisoner.

339

00:16:51,090 --> 00:16:53,190
Well, I would like very
much now if we could--

340

00:16:53,190 --> 00:16:55,680
for how long did
you work at the ramp

341

00:16:55,680 --> 00:17:00,310

when the civilians
precisely arrived?

342

00:17:00,310 --> 00:17:11,369

Well, I worked there from August
18, 1942 until June 7, 1943.

343

00:17:11,369 --> 00:17:13,637

This means almost one year.

344

00:17:13,637 --> 00:17:14,970

Well, it would have been about--

345

00:17:14,970 --> 00:17:16,170

10 months.

346

00:17:16,170 --> 00:17:17,430

Nine to 10 months.

347

00:17:17,430 --> 00:17:18,540

Yes.

348

00:17:18,540 --> 00:17:24,270

And could you describe exactly
what was the work at the ramp?

349

00:17:24,270 --> 00:17:26,550

But in details, please.

350

00:17:26,550 --> 00:17:27,550

In details?

351

00:17:27,550 --> 00:17:28,050

Yes.

352

00:17:28,050 --> 00:17:31,200

Well, basically, we were
belonging to a command--

353

00:17:31,200 --> 00:17:32,940

to a working detachment--

354

00:17:32,940 --> 00:17:35,705

I was put in August 1942--

355

00:17:35,705 --> 00:17:37,080

which enabled me

to have a closer

356

00:17:37,080 --> 00:17:41,880

look on what was actually

happening in Auschwitz.

357

00:17:41,880 --> 00:17:43,330

There was a place

called the ramp

358

00:17:43,330 --> 00:17:47,640

where the trains with

the Jews were coming in.

359

00:17:47,640 --> 00:17:50,430

And they were coming

in day or night.

360

00:17:50,430 --> 00:17:53,100

And sometimes, one per

day, and sometimes five

361

00:17:53,100 --> 00:17:59,220

per day from all sorts

of places in the world.

362

00:17:59,220 --> 00:18:02,900

And so our detachment

was brought

363

00:18:02,900 --> 00:18:10,010

to there, this Canada command,

to deal with the property

364

00:18:10,010 --> 00:18:12,110

of those people.

365
00:18:12,110 --> 00:18:13,660
Yes?

366
00:18:13,660 --> 00:18:16,210
So what happened
was the following.

367
00:18:16,210 --> 00:18:21,730
Say a transport of Jews was
announced to come at 2:00.

368
00:18:21,730 --> 00:18:24,872
So when the transport came
to the closed station, say,

369
00:18:24,872 --> 00:18:26,440
in MysÅ,owice.

370
00:18:26,440 --> 00:18:28,120
You got the
announcements yourself.

371
00:18:28,120 --> 00:18:29,110
Pardon?

372
00:18:29,110 --> 00:18:31,130
The inmates got the
announcement too.

373
00:18:31,130 --> 00:18:31,630
Not

374
00:18:31,630 --> 00:18:32,130
No.

375
00:18:32,130 --> 00:18:34,210
The announcement came to the SS.

376
00:18:34,210 --> 00:18:35,860
Yes?

377

00:18:35,860 --> 00:18:37,810

Now, once the announcement
came to the SS,

378

00:18:37,810 --> 00:18:40,450

one SS man came and woke us up.

379

00:18:40,450 --> 00:18:44,380

We had to get up and
move to the ramp.

380

00:18:44,380 --> 00:18:47,380

We immediately got an
escort in the night.

381

00:18:47,380 --> 00:18:49,570

And we were escorted
to the ramp.

382

00:18:49,570 --> 00:18:52,900

Say, we were about 200 man.

383

00:18:52,900 --> 00:18:54,100

In stripped--

384

00:18:54,100 --> 00:18:54,800

Yes.

385

00:18:54,800 --> 00:18:55,600

[INAUDIBLE]

386

00:18:55,600 --> 00:18:58,400

387

00:18:58,400 --> 00:19:01,970

And the ramp was sort
of a platform which

388

00:19:01,970 --> 00:19:07,190

was about a mile long,
1 and 1/2 kilometers,

389

00:19:07,190 --> 00:19:09,935
more than a kilometer long.

390

00:19:09,935 --> 00:19:11,840
Now, before the
train arrived, there

391

00:19:11,840 --> 00:19:16,400
came another detachment
of SS who first surrounded

392

00:19:16,400 --> 00:19:21,660
the ramp in a rather dense way.

393

00:19:21,660 --> 00:19:25,860
See, there was one every 10
yards with a gun in the hand.

394

00:19:25,860 --> 00:19:27,220
This means many people.

395

00:19:27,220 --> 00:19:27,720
Oh, yes.

396

00:19:27,720 --> 00:19:29,220
There was a
detachment of SS which

397

00:19:29,220 --> 00:19:32,550
could be, say, the ramp
was surrounded perhaps

398

00:19:32,550 --> 00:19:33,190
with hundred--

399

00:19:33,190 --> 00:19:35,850
100 of them.

400

00:19:35,850 --> 00:19:38,590
And lights went on.

401

00:19:38,590 --> 00:19:44,550
So once we were brought in
into this circle of this ramp,

402
00:19:44,550 --> 00:19:47,100
then our own guards
could go away

403
00:19:47,100 --> 00:19:50,130
because we were inside a
strictly guarded circle.

404
00:19:50,130 --> 00:19:51,930
There was a ramp.

405
00:19:51,930 --> 00:19:54,780
Around the ramp were lights.

406
00:19:54,780 --> 00:19:58,980
And under those lights
were the cordon of the SS.

407
00:19:58,980 --> 00:20:02,810

408
00:20:02,810 --> 00:20:07,250
So we were in the
middle, the prisoners.

409
00:20:07,250 --> 00:20:10,790
Then, later, and
we were waiting.

410
00:20:10,790 --> 00:20:11,930
Waiting for the train.

411
00:20:11,930 --> 00:20:13,010
Waiting for the train.

412
00:20:13,010 --> 00:20:16,940
Waiting for the
next [INAUDIBLE]..

413

00:20:16,940 --> 00:20:21,890

So the prisoners were
aligned up in five,

414

00:20:21,890 --> 00:20:24,080

you know, and had to stay there.

415

00:20:24,080 --> 00:20:28,760

And then came the SS officers
sort of higher entourage.

416

00:20:28,760 --> 00:20:31,820

These were not the guards.

417

00:20:31,820 --> 00:20:36,710

But that was the people
who were supposed to deal

418

00:20:36,710 --> 00:20:37,877

with the transport itself.

419

00:20:37,877 --> 00:20:39,710

You must understand
that in Auschwitz, there

420

00:20:39,710 --> 00:20:43,760

was a system by
which the guards who

421

00:20:43,760 --> 00:20:48,740

had nothing to do but to
watch that nobody escapes were

422

00:20:48,740 --> 00:20:51,170

completely different
detachments than those

423

00:20:51,170 --> 00:20:55,680

who were then acting in the
middle of this guarded place.

424

00:20:55,680 --> 00:21:00,350

So now came the gangster elite,
all dressed up as officers,

425
00:21:00,350 --> 00:21:03,620
in military uniforms.

426
00:21:03,620 --> 00:21:04,880
And there was usually--

427
00:21:04,880 --> 00:21:09,710
one of them was a doctor who
had actually a medical degree.

428
00:21:09,710 --> 00:21:12,980
And they came, say, it's
about 10 or 12 of them,

429
00:21:12,980 --> 00:21:16,610
15, 20, depends
what the vessel was

430
00:21:16,610 --> 00:21:19,222
and how big the transport
was supposed to be.

431
00:21:19,222 --> 00:21:24,300
Now, when all this was
done, everybody was there.

432
00:21:24,300 --> 00:21:27,750
The transport was rolled in.

433
00:21:27,750 --> 00:21:31,890
This means in a
very slow fashion.

434
00:21:31,890 --> 00:21:35,700
The locomotive, which
was always at the front--

435
00:21:35,700 --> 00:21:36,450
At the front.

436

00:21:36,450 --> 00:21:40,900

--at the front-- was
coming to this ramp,

437

00:21:40,900 --> 00:21:43,390

and that was the end
of the railway line.

438

00:21:43,390 --> 00:21:47,110

That was the end of the line for
everybody who was on the train.

439

00:21:47,110 --> 00:21:50,710

Who was driving the locomotive?

440

00:21:50,710 --> 00:21:52,990

It was a civilian.

441

00:21:52,990 --> 00:21:55,570

And I cannot--

442

00:21:55,570 --> 00:21:58,540

I have never had an opportunity
for a discussion with him.

443

00:21:58,540 --> 00:22:01,470

So I can't tell you
anything about it.

444

00:22:01,470 --> 00:22:06,230