

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,880
(film slating)

2
00:00:03,880 --> 00:00:08,680
Do you think that without
your personal actions,

3
00:00:08,680 --> 00:00:12,100
the action of Morgenthau,
the action of the Treasury

4
00:00:12,100 --> 00:00:13,990
Department--

5
00:00:13,990 --> 00:00:18,970
do you think that the War
Refugee Board would have

6
00:00:18,970 --> 00:00:22,654
been in any case established?

7
00:00:22,654 --> 00:00:26,920

8
00:00:26,920 --> 00:00:30,120
Well, this is hard to tell.

9
00:00:30,120 --> 00:00:35,520
But if any such
action had been taken,

10
00:00:35,520 --> 00:00:37,380
it would have
obviously been taken

11
00:00:37,380 --> 00:00:43,800
even later than the War Refugee
Board establishment took place.

12
00:00:43,800 --> 00:00:47,430
And it was already

very late in the war.

13

00:00:47,430 --> 00:00:50,250

Otherwise, I can't read as to--

14

00:00:50,250 --> 00:00:53,940

it's clear that the Treasury
was the impetus by which

15

00:00:53,940 --> 00:00:55,660

the board was established.

16

00:00:55,660 --> 00:00:58,470

Whether some other
action would come along

17

00:00:58,470 --> 00:01:01,990

to have the same effect
at some later date,

18

00:01:01,990 --> 00:01:03,620

I have no way of knowing.

19

00:01:03,620 --> 00:01:04,410

Yes.

20

00:01:04,410 --> 00:01:12,210

And could you try to explain
what happened psychologically

21

00:01:12,210 --> 00:01:15,240

with a man like Morgenthau?

22

00:01:15,240 --> 00:01:19,240

Because he was obviously
an assimilated Jew.

23

00:01:19,240 --> 00:01:23,340

And how did he become
so much involved

24

00:01:23,340 --> 00:01:27,360

in the plight of
the European Jewry?

25

00:01:27,360 --> 00:01:35,130

Well, he had on his staff a
number of Gentile lawyers.

26

00:01:35,130 --> 00:01:36,570

As you.

27

00:01:36,570 --> 00:01:37,920

I was one.

28

00:01:37,920 --> 00:01:42,020

And they got interested
in this matter.

29

00:01:42,020 --> 00:01:45,900

And they brought it to his
attention very forcibly.

30

00:01:45,900 --> 00:01:51,940

And his conscience was such that
he recognized he had to act.

31

00:01:51,940 --> 00:01:55,640

Is there anything you can say?

32

00:01:55,640 --> 00:01:57,540

Seems to me that I said it.

33

00:01:57,540 --> 00:01:58,040

Yes.

34

00:01:58,040 --> 00:02:03,560

35

00:02:03,560 --> 00:02:06,810

Because what is
remarkable in the report

36

00:02:06,810 --> 00:02:14,150

he sent to the president,
that he took specifically

37
00:02:14,150 --> 00:02:19,200
very strongly about
the Jewish problems.

38
00:02:19,200 --> 00:02:23,320
And he's not afraid to act.

39
00:02:23,320 --> 00:02:25,220
You know, he faced
up to the issue

40
00:02:25,220 --> 00:02:34,230
in a very strong
and forceful way.

41
00:02:34,230 --> 00:02:37,230
And he used his own
relationship with the president,

42
00:02:37,230 --> 00:02:41,400
which was a very close one,
to get the board established.

43
00:02:41,400 --> 00:02:41,910
Yes.

44
00:02:41,910 --> 00:02:43,020
And he acted as a Jew.

45
00:02:43,020 --> 00:02:45,780

46
00:02:45,780 --> 00:02:50,800
He acted as a member of the
Cabinet of the United States.

47
00:02:50,800 --> 00:02:51,300
Yes.

48

00:02:51,300 --> 00:02:55,080

49

00:02:55,080 --> 00:02:58,470

I don't want to interpret his--

50

00:02:58,470 --> 00:03:01,560

what he did in any way
other than the facts which

51

00:03:01,560 --> 00:03:03,960

we've talked about.

52

00:03:03,960 --> 00:03:10,100

What was actually the powers
of the War Refugee Board?

53

00:03:10,100 --> 00:03:14,090

Well, the board-- the executive
order establishing the board

54

00:03:14,090 --> 00:03:15,927

was written in the
Treasury Department.

55

00:03:15,927 --> 00:03:20,220

56

00:03:20,220 --> 00:03:24,000

And the importance of it
was that, as I've said,

57

00:03:24,000 --> 00:03:26,470

it's changed the policy
of the United States.

58

00:03:26,470 --> 00:03:27,420

[? Overall ?]

59

00:03:27,420 --> 00:03:31,980

It stated the policy
of the United States

60

00:03:31,980 --> 00:03:36,900
in a rather forceful way.

61

00:03:36,900 --> 00:03:40,470
First place, it's recited
that he was issuing this order

62

00:03:40,470 --> 00:03:43,440
as President of
the United States

63

00:03:43,440 --> 00:03:45,540
and Commander in Chief
of the Army and Navy.

64

00:03:45,540 --> 00:03:49,020

65

00:03:49,020 --> 00:03:54,070
He established the board in
his own executive office.

66

00:03:54,070 --> 00:03:57,330
And this means inside the
building of the Treasury?

67

00:03:57,330 --> 00:04:00,150
It was in-- well, we
were physically located

68

00:04:00,150 --> 00:04:02,100
in the building of the Treasury.

69

00:04:02,100 --> 00:04:04,860
But the office,
officially, was part

70

00:04:04,860 --> 00:04:07,740
of the executive office
of the president, not part

71

00:04:07,740 --> 00:04:09,870

of the Treasury Department.

72

00:04:09,870 --> 00:04:13,170

He put on the board
the top Cabinet people

73

00:04:13,170 --> 00:04:15,300

who were concerned--
the secretary of state,

74

00:04:15,300 --> 00:04:19,140

the secretary of war, and the
secretary of the treasury.

75

00:04:19,140 --> 00:04:25,770

And then he charged the board
with carrying out this policy.

76

00:04:25,770 --> 00:04:29,490

In the policy, he said, "it
is a policy of this government

77

00:04:29,490 --> 00:04:32,280

to take all measures
within its power

78

00:04:32,280 --> 00:04:34,620

to rescue the victims
of enemy oppression

79

00:04:34,620 --> 00:04:37,050

who are in imminent
danger of death,

80

00:04:37,050 --> 00:04:40,560

and otherwise to afford such
victims all possible relief

81

00:04:40,560 --> 00:04:44,100

and assistance consistent
with a successful prosecution

82

00:04:44,100 --> 00:04:45,750

of the war."

83

00:04:45,750 --> 00:04:49,650

And then he went on to,
in the executive order,

84

00:04:49,650 --> 00:04:52,770

to direct the state Treasury
and War departments to be

85

00:04:52,770 --> 00:04:55,110

of assistance to the board.

86

00:04:55,110 --> 00:04:58,290

He arranged for funds
to be available to it.

87

00:04:58,290 --> 00:05:03,570

He directed them to cooperate
with the private organizations

88

00:05:03,570 --> 00:05:06,090

and to facilitate
their operations.

89

00:05:06,090 --> 00:05:10,710

Why the board was
called the War Refugee

90

00:05:10,710 --> 00:05:17,560

Board when it is known that
Morgenthau, in his report

91

00:05:17,560 --> 00:05:18,390

was about--

92

00:05:18,390 --> 00:05:22,700

deals specifically
with the Jews?

93

00:05:22,700 --> 00:05:24,400

And when he talks
himself about--

94
00:05:24,400 --> 00:05:28,380
Well, we weren't excluding
non-Jewish refugees from help.

95
00:05:28,380 --> 00:05:29,100
I understand.

96
00:05:29,100 --> 00:05:33,060
And we made that clear
in the Board's operation.

97
00:05:33,060 --> 00:05:37,050
There were Catholic
organizations,

98
00:05:37,050 --> 00:05:40,800
who obviously were not directing
their activities primarily

99
00:05:40,800 --> 00:05:42,690
to Jewish relief.

100
00:05:42,690 --> 00:05:44,640
There were other
religious organizations

101
00:05:44,640 --> 00:05:46,110
who cooperated with the board.

102
00:05:46,110 --> 00:05:48,920
So it had a broader scope.

103
00:05:48,920 --> 00:05:52,250

104
00:05:52,250 --> 00:05:54,140
Yes, but it was done--

105
00:05:54,140 --> 00:05:57,220
it was created
specifically for the Jews.

106
00:05:57,220 --> 00:05:58,220
Could we say this?

107
00:05:58,220 --> 00:06:01,207

108
00:06:01,207 --> 00:06:02,040
I didn't understand.

109
00:06:02,040 --> 00:06:07,170
No, I say, but can we say that
the board, in spite of this,

110
00:06:07,170 --> 00:06:09,420
was created specifically--

111
00:06:09,420 --> 00:06:12,210
I think it was recognized that
that was the major problem we

112
00:06:12,210 --> 00:06:13,090
were dealing with.

113
00:06:13,090 --> 00:06:15,520
Yes, yes.

114
00:06:15,520 --> 00:06:18,390
And what were you--

115
00:06:18,390 --> 00:06:22,697
because it seems that you had
a formal power, very strong,

116
00:06:22,697 --> 00:06:23,530
as a matter of fact.

117
00:06:23,530 --> 00:06:24,570
Yes.

118
00:06:24,570 --> 00:06:29,820

But what were the ways of
implementing that action?

119
00:06:29,820 --> 00:06:33,510
That was left to the
War Refugee Board,

120
00:06:33,510 --> 00:06:35,760
and really to the staff
of the War Refugee Board

121
00:06:35,760 --> 00:06:37,420
to do their best with.

122
00:06:37,420 --> 00:06:38,040
Yes.

123
00:06:38,040 --> 00:06:41,700
And what were the
first steps you--

124
00:06:41,700 --> 00:06:42,200
Well--

125
00:06:42,200 --> 00:06:42,700
--you took.

126
00:06:42,700 --> 00:06:45,630
One of the first things
we recognized we had to do

127
00:06:45,630 --> 00:06:49,860
was to get representatives
of the board abroad.

128
00:06:49,860 --> 00:06:58,980
And we sent people to Turkey,
to Spain, to London, to Sweden

129
00:06:58,980 --> 00:07:02,640
to work in the
field, to facilitate

130

00:07:02,640 --> 00:07:05,250

the private organizations who
were already in the field.

131

00:07:05,250 --> 00:07:06,090

Yes.

132

00:07:06,090 --> 00:07:10,650

But these people were mostly
members of the Treasury?

133

00:07:10,650 --> 00:07:11,820

Yes, mostly.

134

00:07:11,820 --> 00:07:13,200

Not entirely.

135

00:07:13,200 --> 00:07:14,760

But mostly?

136

00:07:14,760 --> 00:07:15,960

Well, some of them were.

137

00:07:15,960 --> 00:07:18,930

They-- our
representative in London

138

00:07:18,930 --> 00:07:21,480

was, the representative
in Spain was.

139

00:07:21,480 --> 00:07:26,550

Sweden, not Ira Hirschmann,
who went to Turkey.

140

00:07:26,550 --> 00:07:30,070

Not Roswell McClellan,
who went to Switzerland.

141

00:07:30,070 --> 00:07:31,650

He was already.

142

00:07:31,650 --> 00:07:35,280

But I have seen that in
the order which established

143

00:07:35,280 --> 00:07:41,790

the board, it is said
that the board will

144

00:07:41,790 --> 00:07:47,490

have to report very often,
regularly to the president.

145

00:07:47,490 --> 00:07:50,730

Was this actually done?

146

00:07:50,730 --> 00:07:53,160

Well, we did make
reports to the president.

147

00:07:53,160 --> 00:07:57,210

And very often, we
wrote to the president

148

00:07:57,210 --> 00:07:59,250

when there was some
action we wanted

149

00:07:59,250 --> 00:08:01,680

him to take or to approve.

150

00:08:01,680 --> 00:08:02,970

Yes.

151

00:08:02,970 --> 00:08:06,660

One of the things that the
executive order established

152

00:08:06,660 --> 00:08:09,240

was that the board's
representatives abroad

153

00:08:09,240 --> 00:08:11,920

were to have diplomatic status.

154

00:08:11,920 --> 00:08:16,110

This was something the State
Department didn't likely give--

155

00:08:16,110 --> 00:08:19,500

didn't like to give to
non-State Department people.

156

00:08:19,500 --> 00:08:22,870

But it helped our
operations a great deal.

157

00:08:22,870 --> 00:08:24,460

Yes.

158

00:08:24,460 --> 00:08:29,550

And about the first
step you took--

159

00:08:29,550 --> 00:08:31,500

because as a matter
of fact, as you say,

160

00:08:31,500 --> 00:08:34,020

it was already very
late in that war.

161

00:08:34,020 --> 00:08:35,990

Yeah.

162

00:08:35,990 --> 00:08:39,919

Already almost 5 million
Jews had been killed.

163

00:08:39,919 --> 00:08:42,690

164

00:08:42,690 --> 00:08:45,010

And it was very difficult,
as a matter of fact,

165

00:08:45,010 --> 00:08:49,640

to do something practical
in order to rescue the Jews

166

00:08:49,640 --> 00:08:52,800

who were still in the
hands of the Germans.

167

00:08:52,800 --> 00:08:55,932

How did you face this problem?

168

00:08:55,932 --> 00:08:58,140

Well, one of the things we
thought was very important

169

00:08:58,140 --> 00:09:04,030

was that the Germans know
this new policy in the United

170

00:09:04,030 --> 00:09:05,700

States.

171

00:09:05,700 --> 00:09:10,800

And we felt it was important
that the significant countries

172

00:09:10,800 --> 00:09:16,150

fighting Germany made
it clear that Germans

173

00:09:16,150 --> 00:09:21,090

who involved themselves
in murdering Jews

174

00:09:21,090 --> 00:09:23,760

would be punished after the war.

175

00:09:23,760 --> 00:09:28,950

And this, we felt, would
be much more effective now,

176

00:09:28,950 --> 00:09:32,670

because the war was reaching a stage where the Germans could

177
00:09:32,670 --> 00:09:34,830
see they were going to lose.

178
00:09:34,830 --> 00:09:37,260
And therefore, they
had to face the problem

179
00:09:37,260 --> 00:09:40,560
of what was going to happen
after the war when they lost.

180
00:09:40,560 --> 00:09:43,040
Not only the Germans, but
the satellites as well.

181
00:09:43,040 --> 00:09:45,330
Yes, the satellites, too.

182
00:09:45,330 --> 00:09:48,960
So we thought it was
very important to get

183
00:09:48,960 --> 00:09:55,860
an unequivocal declaration of
warning beamed to all the enemy

184
00:09:55,860 --> 00:09:57,960
territories.

185
00:09:57,960 --> 00:10:00,740
This was the first step.

186
00:10:00,740 --> 00:10:03,350
One of the early steps
that we took, yes.

187
00:10:03,350 --> 00:10:03,850
Yes.

188

00:10:03,850 --> 00:10:06,570

189

00:10:06,570 --> 00:10:10,050

Was this declaration made?

190

00:10:10,050 --> 00:10:11,370

There was a declaration.

191

00:10:11,370 --> 00:10:17,520

We had an argument with
the British about this.

192

00:10:17,520 --> 00:10:24,450

The British took the position
that such a declaration

193

00:10:24,450 --> 00:10:26,910

would not be
effective, pointing out

194

00:10:26,910 --> 00:10:29,900

that there had been
declarations in the past,

195

00:10:29,900 --> 00:10:32,490

and that they didn't
seem to have slowed down

196

00:10:32,490 --> 00:10:36,720

the annihilation of the Jews.

197

00:10:36,720 --> 00:10:38,970

We countered that
by saying we felt

198

00:10:38,970 --> 00:10:42,150

that a declaration, at
the time when Germany

199

00:10:42,150 --> 00:10:44,670

could see it might
lose the war, was

200
00:10:44,670 --> 00:10:46,895
an entirely different matter.

201
00:10:46,895 --> 00:10:50,850
Because the first declaration
was made in December 1942.

202
00:10:50,850 --> 00:10:52,740
Yes.

203
00:10:52,740 --> 00:10:58,990
Then the British,
in opposing this,

204
00:10:58,990 --> 00:11:03,880
reported to our ambassador
in the United Kingdom,

205
00:11:03,880 --> 00:11:05,000
Ambassador Winant.

206
00:11:05,000 --> 00:11:07,820
And he reported back that the--

207
00:11:07,820 --> 00:11:08,850
Hold on, we will change.

208
00:11:08,850 --> 00:11:14,530

209
00:11:14,530 --> 00:11:19,300
(film slating)

210
00:11:19,300 --> 00:11:23,380
Early in the operations
of the War Refugee Board,

211
00:11:23,380 --> 00:11:26,950
they were confronted
with the British attitude

212

00:11:26,950 --> 00:11:33,820
about the whole problem of
rescuing Jews from Germany

213

00:11:33,820 --> 00:11:37,210
and occupied territory.

214

00:11:37,210 --> 00:11:42,400
This came about because
Undersecretary Stettinius, who

215

00:11:42,400 --> 00:11:45,850
had shown himself
to me to be quite

216

00:11:45,850 --> 00:11:49,450
favorable to our
operations, referred

217

00:11:49,450 --> 00:11:53,020
to the board for comment
a message he had gotten

218

00:11:53,020 --> 00:11:57,760
from the British, commenting
negatively on the proposal

219

00:11:57,760 --> 00:12:01,960
that a new warning to
the Germans be issued.

220

00:12:01,960 --> 00:12:04,850

221

00:12:04,850 --> 00:12:08,020
We replied to Mr. Stettinius.

222

00:12:08,020 --> 00:12:13,120
And in our reply, we
stated, "the statement

223

00:12:13,120 --> 00:12:16,960

by the British that the
1942 declaration seemed

224
00:12:16,960 --> 00:12:20,050
to indicate to the Germans
a means whereby they

225
00:12:20,050 --> 00:12:25,720
could distress and embarrass the
Allies is not fully understood.

226
00:12:25,720 --> 00:12:27,730
So long as any
government participating

227
00:12:27,730 --> 00:12:30,130
in such a declaration
is determined

228
00:12:30,130 --> 00:12:33,710
to do all in his power to
prevent the murder of the Jews

229
00:12:33,710 --> 00:12:38,410
and this fact is
made clear, we do not

230
00:12:38,410 --> 00:12:41,770
see how any such statement
could embarrass such government.

231
00:12:41,770 --> 00:12:45,490
On the other hand--" and I'm
reading from our memorandum

232
00:12:45,490 --> 00:12:47,230
to Mr Stettinius.

233
00:12:47,230 --> 00:12:50,380
"--if the position of such
government is that expressed

234
00:12:50,380 --> 00:12:53,530

by certain British officials
to our embassy in London

235
00:12:53,530 --> 00:12:55,050
in December--

236
00:12:55,050 --> 00:12:59,860
see cable 8717 from
Winant, December 15--

237
00:12:59,860 --> 00:13:02,890
In simple terms, that they were
apparently willing to accept

238
00:13:02,890 --> 00:13:06,820
the probable death of thousands
of Jews in enemy territory

239
00:13:06,820 --> 00:13:10,780
because of quote 'the
difficulties of disposing

240
00:13:10,780 --> 00:13:13,690
of any considerable number
of Jews should they be

241
00:13:13,690 --> 00:13:16,180
rescued,' unquote.

242
00:13:16,180 --> 00:13:18,310
And if this attitude is
known to the Germans,

243
00:13:18,310 --> 00:13:22,180
by virtue of the actions if not
the words of such a government,

244
00:13:22,180 --> 00:13:24,100
then the contention
that a declaration

245
00:13:24,100 --> 00:13:27,690
might embarrass such government

has some significance."

246

00:13:27,690 --> 00:13:33,960

Yes, I think it had very great
significance as an [INAUDIBLE]..

247

00:13:33,960 --> 00:13:38,390

And clearly, this
means that they

248

00:13:38,390 --> 00:13:41,395

would have been embarrassed
if Hitler would have--

249

00:13:41,395 --> 00:13:45,040

if the Nazis would
have released the Jews.

250

00:13:45,040 --> 00:13:48,250

This says that certain British
officials had expressed

251

00:13:48,250 --> 00:13:50,040

this view to Ambassador Winant.

252

00:13:50,040 --> 00:13:52,790

253

00:13:52,790 --> 00:13:55,790

They didn't stop to follow the
same line, as a matter of fact.

254

00:13:55,790 --> 00:13:59,890

Because I have here a
statement, an aide memo,

255

00:13:59,890 --> 00:14:03,040

a memorandum that the
British sent to the United

256

00:14:03,040 --> 00:14:09,520

States in March '43 before
the Bermuda Conference,

257

00:14:09,520 --> 00:14:11,830

where they say almost
the same things.

258

00:14:11,830 --> 00:14:16,390

And this was almost
one year before.

259

00:14:16,390 --> 00:14:19,090

They say, "there
is a possibility

260

00:14:19,090 --> 00:14:22,750

that the Germans
or their satellites

261

00:14:22,750 --> 00:14:26,830

may change over from the
policy of extermination

262

00:14:26,830 --> 00:14:28,600

to one of extrusion.

263

00:14:28,600 --> 00:14:31,550

This means expelling.

264

00:14:31,550 --> 00:14:34,180

And aim, as they
did before the war,

265

00:14:34,180 --> 00:14:38,080

at embarrassing other
countries by flooding them

266

00:14:38,080 --> 00:14:39,963

with alien immigrants."

267

00:14:39,963 --> 00:14:43,250

268

00:14:43,250 --> 00:14:46,556

It is exactly the same.

269
00:14:46,556 --> 00:14:53,100
And do you know
that the Jews who

270
00:14:53,100 --> 00:14:58,720
were in the hands
of the Germans,

271
00:14:58,720 --> 00:15:05,530
Jewish leaders in
Poland or in Slovakia,

272
00:15:05,530 --> 00:15:09,663
when they could send
messages, requested always

273
00:15:09,663 --> 00:15:10,330
the same things.

274
00:15:10,330 --> 00:15:14,530
They wanted a
declaration specifying

275
00:15:14,530 --> 00:15:16,960
that, for instance,
bombings which

276
00:15:16,960 --> 00:15:20,020
could be made over
the German cities

277
00:15:20,020 --> 00:15:24,790
should be explained to the
Germans as retaliatory bombings

278
00:15:24,790 --> 00:15:27,060
specifically for the
murder of the Jews.

279
00:15:27,060 --> 00:15:27,560
Right.

280
00:15:27,560 --> 00:15:31,330

281
00:15:31,330 --> 00:15:37,720
Without attempting to
explain the British position,

282
00:15:37,720 --> 00:15:40,480
particularly the one you just
quoted from the aide memoir

283
00:15:40,480 --> 00:15:43,210
at the time the
Bermuda Conference,

284
00:15:43,210 --> 00:15:50,980
it is true, I believe, that if
Hitler had said, if the United

285
00:15:50,980 --> 00:15:53,350
States will accept
all the German Jews,

286
00:15:53,350 --> 00:15:56,170
I'll send them over there,
there would have been

287
00:15:56,170 --> 00:15:59,360
a great deal of embarrassment.

288
00:15:59,360 --> 00:15:59,860
Yes.

289
00:15:59,860 --> 00:16:01,150
Yes.

290
00:16:01,150 --> 00:16:02,304
There would have been.

291
00:16:02,304 --> 00:16:05,940

292
00:16:05,940 --> 00:16:06,875
No doubt.

293
00:16:06,875 --> 00:16:09,810
But this is a very
difficult question.

294
00:16:09,810 --> 00:16:10,340
It is.

295
00:16:10,340 --> 00:16:14,700
And the position of the United
States in this sort of thing

296
00:16:14,700 --> 00:16:21,510
has changed drastically since
the War Refugee Board days.

297
00:16:21,510 --> 00:16:24,930
We have admitted hundreds
of thousands of Cubans.

298
00:16:24,930 --> 00:16:29,280
We are admitting hundreds
of thousands of Vietnamese.

299
00:16:29,280 --> 00:16:32,850
We admitted a lot of
Hungarian freedom fighters

300
00:16:32,850 --> 00:16:36,630
after the Hungarian
revolt. Mexicans

301
00:16:36,630 --> 00:16:39,920
are coming over our border,
many of them illegally.

302
00:16:39,920 --> 00:16:45,150
But there is very little attempt
being made in a concerted way

303

00:16:45,150 --> 00:16:48,180

to do anything about
the immigration.

304

00:16:48,180 --> 00:16:50,143

So there has been a change.

305

00:16:50,143 --> 00:16:50,810

Today, you mean.

306

00:16:50,810 --> 00:16:52,095

Today, yes.

307

00:16:52,095 --> 00:16:56,550

Do you think that the policy
today is much more liberal?

308

00:16:56,550 --> 00:16:58,410

Oh, yes, there's no doubt.

309

00:16:58,410 --> 00:17:00,560

The Cuban thing, for example.

310

00:17:00,560 --> 00:17:02,340

There was very
little disturbance

311

00:17:02,340 --> 00:17:07,290

in the United States that
hundreds of thousands of Cubans

312

00:17:07,290 --> 00:17:09,030

are coming in.

313

00:17:09,030 --> 00:17:09,900

Very little.

314

00:17:09,900 --> 00:17:13,290

Then they have done well
in the United States.

315

00:17:13,290 --> 00:17:18,660

And I think it's been a very
satisfactory experience.

316

00:17:18,660 --> 00:17:20,349

Yes, I understand what you mean.

317

00:17:20,349 --> 00:17:23,310

I am not sure that these are--

318

00:17:23,310 --> 00:17:24,540

Completely comparable?

319

00:17:24,540 --> 00:17:26,352

Maybe not, maybe not.

320

00:17:26,352 --> 00:17:28,324

Yes.

321

00:17:28,324 --> 00:17:36,690

And if I ask you what was
achievements of the board,

322

00:17:36,690 --> 00:17:40,190

I mean the we will talk
specifically tomorrow.

323

00:17:40,190 --> 00:17:47,683

But did the board basically
succeed in this task?

324

00:17:47,683 --> 00:17:48,600

What would you answer?

325

00:17:48,600 --> 00:17:52,170

The board succeeded
in one task, and that

326

00:17:52,170 --> 00:17:55,275

was to change the policy of
the United States government.

327

00:17:55,275 --> 00:17:58,250

328

00:17:58,250 --> 00:18:01,380

And that was done very quickly.

329

00:18:01,380 --> 00:18:03,270

Right after the board
was established,

330

00:18:03,270 --> 00:18:06,600

Undersecretary
Stettinius called me

331

00:18:06,600 --> 00:18:08,520

and asked me to
come to his office

332

00:18:08,520 --> 00:18:11,160

and asked me what the
State Department could

333

00:18:11,160 --> 00:18:13,270

do to be helpful.

334

00:18:13,270 --> 00:18:17,370

And I said, the State
Department could be very helpful

335

00:18:17,370 --> 00:18:20,860

once they understood
what the new policy was.

336

00:18:20,860 --> 00:18:23,370

And so he said, ask
me to be in his office

337

00:18:23,370 --> 00:18:25,690

the next morning at 9:30.

338

00:18:25,690 --> 00:18:28,980

And then I came and he had
all the division heads,

339
00:18:28,980 --> 00:18:31,380
the operating heads, there.

340
00:18:31,380 --> 00:18:34,980
And he told them that the
policy of the State Department

341
00:18:34,980 --> 00:18:38,228
was to cooperate 100% with
the War Refugee Board.

342
00:18:38,228 --> 00:18:40,770
And he went around the room and
said, do you understand this?

343
00:18:40,770 --> 00:18:41,730
Do you understand it?

344
00:18:41,730 --> 00:18:43,410
Do you understand?

345
00:18:43,410 --> 00:18:44,640
This was a powerful thing.

346
00:18:44,640 --> 00:18:48,200
Nothing like that had ever
been done I had ever heard of.

347
00:18:48,200 --> 00:18:50,670
But had told the people
at the operating level

348
00:18:50,670 --> 00:18:51,990
that there had been a change.

349
00:18:51,990 --> 00:18:53,800
And there had been.

350
00:18:53,800 --> 00:18:54,610
Yes.

351

00:18:54,610 --> 00:18:56,670

And they didn't try anymore to--

352

00:18:56,670 --> 00:18:58,520

Oh, I wouldn't say that.

353

00:18:58,520 --> 00:19:03,390

We did have delays
and difficulties.

354

00:19:03,390 --> 00:19:05,880

But they knew we could
go to Mr. Stettinius

355

00:19:05,880 --> 00:19:07,270

and straighten them out.

356

00:19:07,270 --> 00:19:09,800

And they were
minimized that way.

357

00:19:09,800 --> 00:19:10,880

Yes.

358

00:19:10,880 --> 00:19:16,180

The way it represented
a big change whatsoever.

359

00:19:16,180 --> 00:19:16,680

Yes.

360

00:19:16,680 --> 00:19:20,090

361

00:19:20,090 --> 00:19:22,195

Now, and the accomplishments
of the board--

362

00:19:22,195 --> 00:19:27,050

they lie in all sorts
of different ways.

363

00:19:27,050 --> 00:19:31,120

One was to give the
private agencies

364

00:19:31,120 --> 00:19:34,120

the feeling they have
a claimant for them

365

00:19:34,120 --> 00:19:37,030

in the government, somebody
that would come and fight

366

00:19:37,030 --> 00:19:39,140

their battles for them.

367

00:19:39,140 --> 00:19:41,230

And the most important
private agency

368

00:19:41,230 --> 00:19:45,000

was called the Joint
Distribution Committee.

369

00:19:45,000 --> 00:19:48,460

And the head of that was a
man named Moses Leavitt, Moe

370

00:19:48,460 --> 00:19:51,520

Leavitt, who came to me
immediately and said I had just

371

00:19:51,520 --> 00:19:53,230

changed his life completely.

372

00:19:53,230 --> 00:19:57,920

Because instead of battling with
everybody in the government,

373

00:19:57,920 --> 00:20:00,640

he now had somebody who
would take his side.

374

00:20:00,640 --> 00:20:06,310
And we were able to facilitate
the operations of the Joint

375
00:20:06,310 --> 00:20:11,410
Distribution Committee
by transmitting funds,

376
00:20:11,410 --> 00:20:15,670
by licensing, by sending
messages in, too,

377
00:20:15,670 --> 00:20:18,220
that they could
never get through,

378
00:20:18,220 --> 00:20:22,570
by supporting their
activities across the board.

379
00:20:22,570 --> 00:20:25,440
That's one of the things
that's changed right away.

380
00:20:25,440 --> 00:20:28,870
And what were the results?

381
00:20:28,870 --> 00:20:34,690
Well, it was a matter
of false passports.

382
00:20:34,690 --> 00:20:39,100
The Latin American councils,
many of them in Switzerland,

383
00:20:39,100 --> 00:20:44,500
had been issuing passports
that people had paid for.

384
00:20:44,500 --> 00:20:47,560
These were people who had never
been to Latin America, who

385

00:20:47,560 --> 00:20:52,840
didn't speak Spanish, and these
passports really were invalid.

386
00:20:52,840 --> 00:20:55,240
The Germans rounded
up a lot of refugees

387
00:20:55,240 --> 00:20:59,200
who had these
passports and put them

388
00:20:59,200 --> 00:21:02,080
in a special camp in France.

389
00:21:02,080 --> 00:21:02,950
In Vittel.

390
00:21:02,950 --> 00:21:04,360
At Vittel.

391
00:21:04,360 --> 00:21:08,410
And started to inquire whether
these passports were valid.

392
00:21:08,410 --> 00:21:12,200
And of course, if they weren't,
they would be shipped out.

393
00:21:12,200 --> 00:21:13,240
We heard about this.

394
00:21:13,240 --> 00:21:15,790
And we got the State
Department to send a message

395
00:21:15,790 --> 00:21:18,970
to every embassy we
had in Latin America

396
00:21:18,970 --> 00:21:22,870
instructing them to
strongly urge the government

397
00:21:22,870 --> 00:21:26,800
not to deny these
passports' validity

398
00:21:26,800 --> 00:21:28,650
while the war was going on.

399
00:21:28,650 --> 00:21:31,810
And we saved-- by
that method, none

400
00:21:31,810 --> 00:21:34,000
of these countries turned
these passports down

401
00:21:34,000 --> 00:21:35,780
while the war was going on.

402
00:21:35,780 --> 00:21:39,260
So these people were
preserved because of that.

403
00:21:39,260 --> 00:21:40,490
Yes.

404
00:21:40,490 --> 00:21:43,060
But that was the sort of
thing it was possible to do.

405
00:21:43,060 --> 00:21:45,738

406
00:21:45,738 --> 00:21:47,780
This means that things
which were possible to do,

407
00:21:47,780 --> 00:21:52,690
it was a very, very small scale.

408
00:21:52,690 --> 00:21:53,240
That's right.

409

00:21:53,240 --> 00:21:56,610

It was a small scale,
and it was late.

410

00:21:56,610 --> 00:21:58,990

And you were conscious of this?

411

00:21:58,990 --> 00:21:59,630

Oh, yes.

412

00:21:59,630 --> 00:22:00,610

Oh, yes.

413

00:22:00,610 --> 00:22:02,110

We were very conscious of it.

414

00:22:02,110 --> 00:22:02,940

Did you have the--

415

00:22:02,940 --> 00:22:05,530

416

00:22:05,530 --> 00:22:07,810

because you were a
special agency created

417

00:22:07,810 --> 00:22:11,680

for special tasks
with a special power,

418

00:22:11,680 --> 00:22:15,150

did you have in the
daily life of the board

419

00:22:15,150 --> 00:22:18,180

the feeling of emergency?

420

00:22:18,180 --> 00:22:19,080

That every day--

421

00:22:19,080 --> 00:22:19,580

Oh, yes.

422

00:22:19,580 --> 00:22:19,870

Every day was counting.

423

00:22:19,870 --> 00:22:20,990

Oh, yes.

424

00:22:20,990 --> 00:22:25,660

The staff of the board was very
dedicated and very absorbed

425

00:22:25,660 --> 00:22:26,330

in their job.

426

00:22:26,330 --> 00:22:31,420

427

00:22:31,420 --> 00:22:32,160

(film slating)

428

00:22:32,160 --> 00:22:35,370

(film slating)

429

00:22:35,370 --> 00:22:39,810

One of the most difficult
things to understand

430

00:22:39,810 --> 00:22:44,980

is really what does it mean to
be informed when one lives here

431

00:22:44,980 --> 00:22:48,130

in Washington or in New York.

432

00:22:48,130 --> 00:22:50,590

What is the meaning
of Treblinka?

433

00:22:50,590 --> 00:22:52,390

What is the meaning

of the extermination?

434

00:22:52,390 --> 00:22:55,180

And what is the
meaning of Auschwitz?

435

00:22:55,180 --> 00:22:56,420

What does it mean to know?

436

00:22:56,420 --> 00:23:01,170

I mean, does it penetrate
the conscience of the people?

437

00:23:01,170 --> 00:23:07,400

And I have a feeling that in
many cases, it didn't at all.

438

00:23:07,400 --> 00:23:08,290

Even if they knew.

439

00:23:08,290 --> 00:23:11,330

440

00:23:11,330 --> 00:23:14,710

I've had a funny experience
preparing for this interview.

441

00:23:14,710 --> 00:23:17,230

442

00:23:17,230 --> 00:23:22,810

Obviously, I know what happened.

443

00:23:22,810 --> 00:23:26,050

But nevertheless, it
has been a shock to me

444

00:23:26,050 --> 00:23:31,790

to go over it again, to
see people's attitudes.

445

00:23:31,790 --> 00:23:36,260

446
00:23:36,260 --> 00:23:39,600
Some of this material
we're dealing with

447
00:23:39,600 --> 00:23:43,880
is so shocking that people
put it out of their minds

448
00:23:43,880 --> 00:23:46,050
or disbelieve it.

449
00:23:46,050 --> 00:23:47,126
Disbelieve?

450
00:23:47,126 --> 00:23:50,530

451
00:23:50,530 --> 00:23:57,730
I had a very peculiar experience
in the War Refugee Board when

452
00:23:57,730 --> 00:24:02,890
we first got the two eyewitness
accounts of people that

453
00:24:02,890 --> 00:24:09,010
were in Auschwitz
and had escaped,

454
00:24:09,010 --> 00:24:14,080
who were able to say
definitely what was happening,

455
00:24:14,080 --> 00:24:17,500
where it was happening, in
what way it was happening,

456
00:24:17,500 --> 00:24:20,200
in a very convincing way.

457

00:24:20,200 --> 00:24:22,720
And the board seized upon this.

458
00:24:22,720 --> 00:24:29,370
Because general statements
that Jews were being killed,

459
00:24:29,370 --> 00:24:35,110
people would reject
or not take seriously.

460
00:24:35,110 --> 00:24:39,100
They would try to
avoid believing it.

461
00:24:39,100 --> 00:24:41,410
But now, we had the
eyewitness accounts.

462
00:24:41,410 --> 00:24:45,820
So we put out a press
release, for a release date

463
00:24:45,820 --> 00:24:50,500
of a week after it was out
before it would be printed.

464
00:24:50,500 --> 00:24:53,900
And we sent it out.

465
00:24:53,900 --> 00:24:56,770
And I had a call
from Elmer Davis.

466
00:24:56,770 --> 00:25:00,010
Elmer Davis was a
fine journalist.

467
00:25:00,010 --> 00:25:01,960
He was head of the
government's information

468
00:25:01,960 --> 00:25:05,940

office, the Office
of War Information,

469
00:25:05,940 --> 00:25:08,170
an excellent person.

470
00:25:08,170 --> 00:25:12,360
And he asked me to
withdraw this press release

471
00:25:12,360 --> 00:25:13,360
and to call it back.

472
00:25:13,360 --> 00:25:16,353
And I said there was no
possibility of doing that.

473
00:25:16,353 --> 00:25:18,520
And he said, well, I'd like
you to come down and see

474
00:25:18,520 --> 00:25:21,040
me and talk to my staff.

475
00:25:21,040 --> 00:25:22,360
I went and talked to them.

476
00:25:22,360 --> 00:25:26,290
And to a man, they said,
it should be withdrawn.

477
00:25:26,290 --> 00:25:30,280
Not because it wasn't true, but
that no one would believe it.

478
00:25:30,280 --> 00:25:31,690
And that everybody
would say this

479
00:25:31,690 --> 00:25:35,380
is another Belgian atrocity
story from World War

480

00:25:35,380 --> 00:25:38,600

I, some of which turned
out not to be true.

481

00:25:38,600 --> 00:25:42,490

And that therefore, other
releases by the government

482

00:25:42,490 --> 00:25:45,520

would be discounted, too.

483

00:25:45,520 --> 00:25:48,250

Well, we didn't call it
back, needless to say.

484

00:25:48,250 --> 00:25:54,290

But the fact that he felt this
way had a real lesson to me

485

00:25:54,290 --> 00:26:00,760

that people reject believing
in such awful things.

486

00:26:00,760 --> 00:26:02,250

Yes.

487

00:26:02,250 --> 00:26:06,150

As a matter of fact, one
of these two witnesses

488

00:26:06,150 --> 00:26:08,990

is the protagonist of this film.

489

00:26:08,990 --> 00:26:09,830

Who?

490

00:26:09,830 --> 00:26:11,230

Yes.

491

00:26:11,230 --> 00:26:13,710

We met him last
week in New York.

492
00:26:13,710 --> 00:26:17,080

493
00:26:17,080 --> 00:26:18,310
All right.

494
00:26:18,310 --> 00:26:23,590
Now I ask you something else
about the State Department,

495
00:26:23,590 --> 00:26:28,430
about the motivations of people
like Long, like [Personal name]

496
00:26:28,430 --> 00:26:33,370
but we can give their
names like [? Dobo. ?]

497
00:26:33,370 --> 00:26:39,200
Do you think they were
motivated by real and actual

498
00:26:39,200 --> 00:26:42,400
antisemitism?

499
00:26:42,400 --> 00:26:46,930
I don't like to ascribe
motives to people.

500
00:26:46,930 --> 00:26:54,280
But I think that most
non-Jews and some Jews

501
00:26:54,280 --> 00:26:56,590
are antisemitic to some extent.

502
00:26:56,590 --> 00:26:58,310
Well, there are, yes.

503
00:26:58,310 --> 00:27:04,030
And I've become

conscious of this myself.

504

00:27:04,030 --> 00:27:06,085

And I've been
conscious of the fact

505

00:27:06,085 --> 00:27:08,680

that the fact that you're
Jewish doesn't mean

506

00:27:08,680 --> 00:27:11,410

you're free from prejudice.

507

00:27:11,410 --> 00:27:16,930

I had an interesting experience
in this regard at a golf club.

508

00:27:16,930 --> 00:27:24,490

Golf clubs are noted
for their prejudice

509

00:27:24,490 --> 00:27:26,860

of one sort or another.

510

00:27:26,860 --> 00:27:31,840

And a long time ago,
three of my friends and I

511

00:27:31,840 --> 00:27:34,780

started to play golf
together every weekend.

512

00:27:34,780 --> 00:27:38,320

We soon found that the public
courses were too crowded.

513

00:27:38,320 --> 00:27:40,850

And we want to join
a country club.

514

00:27:40,850 --> 00:27:44,020

But two of them were Jewish
and none of the regular country

515
00:27:44,020 --> 00:27:46,930
clubs would accept
Jewish members.

516
00:27:46,930 --> 00:27:50,830
So we joined a country club
that was primarily Jewish.

517
00:27:50,830 --> 00:27:52,310
And it worked out fine.

518
00:27:52,310 --> 00:27:56,080
And we played there ever since.

519
00:27:56,080 --> 00:27:59,110
Although the two Jewish
members have since died.

520
00:27:59,110 --> 00:28:02,380
But the two Gentile
members are still there.

521
00:28:02,380 --> 00:28:05,200
About six years
ago, the question

522
00:28:05,200 --> 00:28:10,090
came up of Black people
wanting to join a country club.

523
00:28:10,090 --> 00:28:12,930
And the question was
whether this country club

524
00:28:12,930 --> 00:28:15,740
would admit a Black member.

525
00:28:15,740 --> 00:28:19,020
And it was a very
difficult thing.

526

00:28:19,020 --> 00:28:21,310

They felt this was
their club, why

527

00:28:21,310 --> 00:28:24,200

should they admit Black
members, and so forth.

528

00:28:24,200 --> 00:28:28,420

But finally, they were convinced
that any group of people

529

00:28:28,420 --> 00:28:32,770

who had been treated as
the Jews had been treated

530

00:28:32,770 --> 00:28:37,870

couldn't, in good conscience,
discriminate against Blacks.

531

00:28:37,870 --> 00:28:40,090

And so we had Black members.

532

00:28:40,090 --> 00:28:45,470

And they are the most courteous.

533

00:28:45,470 --> 00:28:47,440

They are the best golfers.

534

00:28:47,440 --> 00:28:49,510

And they're very welcome.

535

00:28:49,510 --> 00:28:53,410

And they're-- it's
a complete success.

536

00:28:53,410 --> 00:28:57,700

But it was overcome by people
recognizing that saying no

537

00:28:57,700 --> 00:29:03,481

would be showing prejudice that
had been shown against them.

538
00:29:03,481 --> 00:29:07,410

539
00:29:07,410 --> 00:29:08,200
Yes.

540
00:29:08,200 --> 00:29:09,070
Interesting story.

541
00:29:09,070 --> 00:29:14,670

542
00:29:14,670 --> 00:29:17,900
[FRENCH]

543
00:29:17,900 --> 00:29:19,272
(film instructions)

544
00:29:19,272 --> 00:29:29,115
[FRENCH] Don't move.

545
00:29:29,115 --> 00:29:37,040

546
00:29:37,040 --> 00:29:39,920
And you play golf every week?

547
00:29:39,920 --> 00:29:43,100

548
00:29:43,100 --> 00:29:45,590
It's possible to film
you playing golf?

549
00:29:45,590 --> 00:29:47,016
Oh, no.

550
00:29:47,016 --> 00:29:49,430
No.

551

00:29:49,430 --> 00:29:53,410

You could film me raking
leaves, but not playing golf.

552

00:29:53,410 --> 00:29:53,930

Why not?

553

00:29:53,930 --> 00:29:54,930

This would be very good.

554

00:29:54,930 --> 00:29:56,630

Yeah.

555

00:29:56,630 --> 00:29:59,690

And this, in a Jewish
club, Jewish golf.

556

00:29:59,690 --> 00:30:11,090

557

00:30:11,090 --> 00:30:12,640

OK.

558

00:30:12,640 --> 00:30:19,166