

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:09,443

2

00:00:09,443 --> 00:00:12,260

But the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

3

00:00:12,260 --> 00:00:16,200

4

00:00:16,200 --> 00:00:17,700

Why did it happen?

5

00:00:17,700 --> 00:00:21,180

It came after many deportations.

6

00:00:21,180 --> 00:00:25,920

It came late, in a
chronological sense.

7

00:00:25,920 --> 00:00:32,610

Up to the onset of the
major operation, which

8

00:00:32,610 --> 00:00:40,200

begins in July 1942 and extends
into September of that year,

9

00:00:40,200 --> 00:00:44,330

the ghetto had already lost
due to the death rate, which

10

00:00:44,330 --> 00:00:50,630

reached 1% of the population
per month, a substantial portion

11

00:00:50,630 --> 00:00:57,760

of its population, maybe 20%.

12

00:00:57,760 --> 00:01:00,210

You mean from the beginning
of the existence of the ghetto

13
00:01:00,210 --> 00:01:01,600
to the July.

14
00:01:01,600 --> 00:01:02,100
Yeah.

15
00:01:02,100 --> 00:01:07,440
It had lost let's say
15% of its people.

16
00:01:07,440 --> 00:01:11,130
In other words,
there were months

17
00:01:11,130 --> 00:01:16,020
when 5,000 died per month.

18
00:01:16,020 --> 00:01:22,140
Now 310,000 were deported in
the summer months of 1942,

19
00:01:22,140 --> 00:01:26,750
leaving approximately 70,000.

20
00:01:26,750 --> 00:01:28,280
Now, that's a remnant.

21
00:01:28,280 --> 00:01:33,140
Which means that
perhaps 90,000 had died,

22
00:01:33,140 --> 00:01:37,220
310,000 had been deported,
and 70,000 were left.

23
00:01:37,220 --> 00:01:39,200
Had been gassed.

24
00:01:39,200 --> 00:01:42,020
Yeah, naturally.

25

00:01:42,020 --> 00:01:47,450

Of the 70,000, half
were engaged in labor.

26

00:01:47,450 --> 00:01:49,885

This was the strongest
element of the community.

27

00:01:49,885 --> 00:01:51,260

Physically the
strongest, the one

28

00:01:51,260 --> 00:01:54,380

that's gotten the
biggest rations

29

00:01:54,380 --> 00:01:58,290

and best capable of survival.

30

00:01:58,290 --> 00:02:00,470

But in January, there
was another deportation

31

00:02:00,470 --> 00:02:04,550

in the course of which the
entire council was decimated.

32

00:02:04,550 --> 00:02:07,330

I mean, the people who
follow Czerniakow's--

33

00:02:07,330 --> 00:02:08,699

The people that followed him.

34

00:02:08,699 --> 00:02:09,199

--successor.

35

00:02:09,199 --> 00:02:10,940

His successors.

36

00:02:10,940 --> 00:02:13,940

And in the course

of that deportation,

37

00:02:13,940 --> 00:02:17,370

maybe 10% of those that
remained were deported.

38

00:02:17,370 --> 00:02:20,530

So now we have a
little over 60,000.

39

00:02:20,530 --> 00:02:22,940

And no Jewish council anymore.

40

00:02:22,940 --> 00:02:24,920

Hardly, no.

41

00:02:24,920 --> 00:02:28,190

There is no record of any
activity by the Jewish council

42

00:02:28,190 --> 00:02:32,420

after January of 1943.

43

00:02:32,420 --> 00:02:35,120

At this point, the
resistance organizations

44

00:02:35,120 --> 00:02:39,830

which have already begun to
organize become more important.

45

00:02:39,830 --> 00:02:43,760

They've already been shooting
at some council members.

46

00:02:43,760 --> 00:02:49,070

But now, they achieve a
distinct goal, purpose,

47

00:02:49,070 --> 00:02:53,090

and with quiet resolution,
they get a few weapons.

48

00:02:53,090 --> 00:02:55,940

Not very many.

49

00:02:55,940 --> 00:02:58,580

The battle then ensued
the following April

50

00:02:58,580 --> 00:03:00,440

between the Germans
and the Jews,

51

00:03:00,440 --> 00:03:02,750

which has come down as
the Warsaw ghetto battle,

52

00:03:02,750 --> 00:03:07,310

and which is symbolic in
a sense, to the extent

53

00:03:07,310 --> 00:03:10,610

that Auschwitz is of the
entire destruction process,

54

00:03:10,610 --> 00:03:13,940

though they were two extremes.

55

00:03:13,940 --> 00:03:22,250

That battle was a very
small infantry engagement.

56

00:03:22,250 --> 00:03:25,340

The Germans reported
16 killed and 85

57

00:03:25,340 --> 00:03:29,870

wounded throughout the battle.

58

00:03:29,870 --> 00:03:32,240

One should not look
at this statistic

59

00:03:32,240 --> 00:03:36,410

as though there were extremely
few German casualties.

60
00:03:36,410 --> 00:03:39,710
Because under the
circumstances, the Jews

61
00:03:39,710 --> 00:03:43,550
possess weapons that would not
have equipped a modern infantry

62
00:03:43,550 --> 00:03:46,910
company of that day.

63
00:03:46,910 --> 00:03:49,910
They had two or three
automatic weapons.

64
00:03:49,910 --> 00:03:53,750
They had a few dozen
rifles, pistols,

65
00:03:53,750 --> 00:03:56,750
homemade explosive devices.

66
00:03:56,750 --> 00:03:59,570
And it is with this weaponry
that they killed 16 people

67
00:03:59,570 --> 00:04:02,567
and wounded 85 more so far
as the Germans are concerned.

68
00:04:02,567 --> 00:04:04,400
There may have been a
few more because there

69
00:04:04,400 --> 00:04:09,330
may have been some of
the wounded dying later.

70
00:04:09,330 --> 00:04:12,440
But in the main, I have very

little question in my own mind

71

00:04:12,440 --> 00:04:15,480
that the statistics are correct.

72

00:04:15,480 --> 00:04:19,089
Now on the German side, there
were several thousand men.

73

00:04:19,089 --> 00:04:22,220
Of whom, some were just
trainees with perhaps four weeks

74

00:04:22,220 --> 00:04:23,570
of training.

75

00:04:23,570 --> 00:04:25,760
I noticed, for example,
that the Germans didn't even

76

00:04:25,760 --> 00:04:27,080
have mortars in the battle.

77

00:04:27,080 --> 00:04:28,910
And I suspect that
the reason for it

78

00:04:28,910 --> 00:04:31,460
is that mortar
training is something

79

00:04:31,460 --> 00:04:33,530
that is given to
soldiers not the first

80

00:04:33,530 --> 00:04:37,700
or second or third week,
but somewhat later.

81

00:04:37,700 --> 00:04:40,790
They did use the German
army for certain purposes,

82

00:04:40,790 --> 00:04:43,250
German engineers and artillery.

83

00:04:43,250 --> 00:04:45,650
They used police units.

84

00:04:45,650 --> 00:04:49,430
And they had
collaborators, Ukrainians,

85

00:04:49,430 --> 00:04:53,240
who numbered well over 300
in that battle, more than 10%

86

00:04:53,240 --> 00:04:57,240
of those that were
employed at any given day.

87

00:04:57,240 --> 00:04:59,150
So the victory came
to the German side

88

00:04:59,150 --> 00:05:04,250
after several weeks of
fighting in the streets.

89

00:05:04,250 --> 00:05:07,890
And it is this engagement,
this symbolic engagement,

90

00:05:07,890 --> 00:05:11,540
which is now known as
the Warsaw Ghetto Battle.

91

00:05:11,540 --> 00:05:13,680
On the Jewish side, of
course, the casualties

92

00:05:13,680 --> 00:05:16,200
were much higher.

93

00:05:16,200 --> 00:05:19,460

There are certain
elements to be studied

94
00:05:19,460 --> 00:05:23,030
in connection with the Jewish
organization for battle.

95
00:05:23,030 --> 00:05:26,060
The most conspicuous
of them being

96
00:05:26,060 --> 00:05:29,180
the fact that the Jews were
organized along political party

97
00:05:29,180 --> 00:05:30,410
lines.

98
00:05:30,410 --> 00:05:32,720
That even in this
final hour, they

99
00:05:32,720 --> 00:05:35,000
did not lose their
right identity

100
00:05:35,000 --> 00:05:37,140
as members of a
particular movement,

101
00:05:37,140 --> 00:05:39,800
whether it was the revisionists,
the bundists, the communists

102
00:05:39,800 --> 00:05:40,720
or what-have-you.

103
00:05:40,720 --> 00:05:41,580
Hashomer Hatzair

104
00:05:41,580 --> 00:05:43,310
Or Hashomer Hatzair.

105

00:05:43,310 --> 00:05:46,640

So they were fighting and
platoons of political parties.

106

00:05:46,640 --> 00:05:49,190

Which is a rather strange
manifestation of activity,

107

00:05:49,190 --> 00:05:51,230

but which, under
the circumstances,

108

00:05:51,230 --> 00:05:55,130

is explainable because political
parties had in peacetime been

109

00:05:55,130 --> 00:05:58,130

the primary way in which
Jews organized themselves

110

00:05:58,130 --> 00:05:59,810

for political action.

111

00:05:59,810 --> 00:06:03,380

And in the pluralistic
Polish state,

112

00:06:03,380 --> 00:06:06,110

they tried to field the
candidates for office

113

00:06:06,110 --> 00:06:08,820

both locally and nationally.

114

00:06:08,820 --> 00:06:11,240

So here is a
manifestation left over

115

00:06:11,240 --> 00:06:14,630

to be understood only in the
context of the total history

116

00:06:14,630 --> 00:06:16,505
of the Jewish community,
but which still is--

117
00:06:16,505 --> 00:06:18,980
No, but I mean if we compare--

118
00:06:18,980 --> 00:06:20,300
my question was this.

119
00:06:20,300 --> 00:06:27,570
If we try to put together
the quotation of Ringelblum

120
00:06:27,570 --> 00:06:32,190
about the mute heroes of the
common Jew in the Warsaw Ghetto

121
00:06:32,190 --> 00:06:34,560
Battle or Uprising--

122
00:06:34,560 --> 00:06:37,350
Which is [? less ?] then.

123
00:06:37,350 --> 00:06:39,810
One can say that this
uprising took place

124
00:06:39,810 --> 00:06:45,240
because they couldn't
fool themselves anymore.

125
00:06:45,240 --> 00:06:45,840
Absolutely.

126
00:06:45,840 --> 00:06:49,530
Because Ringelblum
writes in June 1942.

127
00:06:49,530 --> 00:06:51,900
And it was hard enough for
Ringelblum to fool himself,

128

00:06:51,900 --> 00:06:53,670
as he makes quite clear.

129

00:06:53,670 --> 00:06:56,190
Now, after the deportations
had taken place,

130

00:06:56,190 --> 00:06:59,730
after September 1942, it was
hardly possible for anybody

131

00:06:59,730 --> 00:07:02,610
to fool themselves,
although some still did.

132

00:07:02,610 --> 00:07:05,940
And thus, I think there
is a world of difference

133

00:07:05,940 --> 00:07:11,130
between June and the end of
1942, let alone the spring

134

00:07:11,130 --> 00:07:13,100
of 1943.

135

00:07:13,100 --> 00:07:15,930
At this time, they
knew what was at stake

136

00:07:15,930 --> 00:07:18,737
was the destruction
of the entire people.

137

00:07:18,737 --> 00:07:20,070
Of people, of the entire people.

138

00:07:20,070 --> 00:07:22,890
They could not have
any hope for survival.

139

00:07:22,890 --> 00:07:27,330

They could not even trust
production to save them.

140
00:07:27,330 --> 00:07:29,990
The factories, even that.

141
00:07:29,990 --> 00:07:33,150
Czerniakow was still capable of
writing, "a sewing machine can

142
00:07:33,150 --> 00:07:35,100
save a life."

143
00:07:35,100 --> 00:07:38,430
But these people now knew
that not even a sewing machine

144
00:07:38,430 --> 00:07:40,780
could save a life.

145
00:07:40,780 --> 00:07:43,140
And from that standpoint,
they organized themselves

146
00:07:43,140 --> 00:07:44,480
for battle.

147
00:07:44,480 --> 00:07:47,910
This was the only course left.

148
00:07:47,910 --> 00:07:57,520
It's understood and
understandable as an evolution.

149
00:07:57,520 --> 00:07:59,170
But it was such
a rapid evolution

150
00:07:59,170 --> 00:08:02,620
that we may justifiably call
it a revolution in Jewish life.

151

00:08:02,620 --> 00:08:07,180
Because once again, Jews were
fighting with weapons in hand.

152
00:08:07,180 --> 00:08:11,800
Conspicuously, visibly,
watched by the entire world.

153
00:08:11,800 --> 00:08:14,500
And they had not done
that for quite some time

154
00:08:14,500 --> 00:08:16,850
in quite that manner.

155
00:08:16,850 --> 00:08:20,590
Therefore, one justifiably
points to the Warsaw Ghetto

156
00:08:20,590 --> 00:08:24,838
Battle as a pivotal
development of Jewish history.

157
00:08:24,838 --> 00:08:25,630
As what, excuse me?

158
00:08:25,630 --> 00:08:27,830
A pivotal development
of Jewish history.

159
00:08:27,830 --> 00:08:28,330
Pivotal?

160
00:08:28,330 --> 00:08:29,480
Yeah, pivotal.

161
00:08:29,480 --> 00:08:32,809
A development that has had a
profound influence on Israel,

162
00:08:32,809 --> 00:08:38,919
for example, and its own stance
in its international relations.

163

00:08:38,919 --> 00:08:44,920

Do you think that it was a kind
of recuperation of violence

164

00:08:44,920 --> 00:08:48,350

or the violence by
the Jews themselves?

165

00:08:48,350 --> 00:08:51,560

I think that when we talk of
normalization of Jewish life

166

00:08:51,560 --> 00:08:54,070

and when we talk of an
integration of Jewish life

167

00:08:54,070 --> 00:08:57,910

into the fabric of nations,
what comes with it, whether one

168

00:08:57,910 --> 00:09:02,470

wishes it or not, is quite
simply the organization of Jews

169

00:09:02,470 --> 00:09:05,310

into armies and fighting
wars like everybody else

170

00:09:05,310 --> 00:09:09,130

does or so long as
everybody else does.

171

00:09:09,130 --> 00:09:13,870

And this begins in April 1943.

172

00:09:13,870 --> 00:09:16,880

It really begins then in Warsaw.

173

00:09:16,880 --> 00:09:19,440

174

00:09:19,440 --> 00:09:25,750

On such an idea of
resistance of fighting,

175

00:09:25,750 --> 00:09:30,000

it never occurred in the mind
of a man like Czerniakow?

176

00:09:30,000 --> 00:09:31,900

No.

177

00:09:31,900 --> 00:09:33,430

It was unthinkable for him?

178

00:09:33,430 --> 00:09:35,980

It was so unthinkable that
in this entire diary, which

179

00:09:35,980 --> 00:09:39,820

is, after all, quite long,
there is hardly the vaguest

180

00:09:39,820 --> 00:09:41,500

reference to resistance.

181

00:09:41,500 --> 00:09:44,530

One would have to read in to
the arrest of certain people

182

00:09:44,530 --> 00:09:47,560

who had been publishing
certain pamphlets

183

00:09:47,560 --> 00:09:50,270

an awareness by Czerniakow
of something going on.

184

00:09:50,270 --> 00:09:55,030

It is as though he were not
even aware of anyone else doing

185

00:09:55,030 --> 00:09:59,395

something in that connection,

let alone him doing it.

186
00:09:59,395 --> 00:10:04,250
There's no direct
spoken, written word

187
00:10:04,250 --> 00:10:05,720
that one can point to.

188
00:10:05,720 --> 00:10:07,260
It was out of bounds.

189
00:10:07,260 --> 00:10:10,820
It was completely
out of his mind.

190
00:10:10,820 --> 00:10:15,560
And his way of acting to
alleviate the situation.

191
00:10:15,560 --> 00:10:18,370
This was an alleviation attempt.

192
00:10:18,370 --> 00:10:19,610
Was what?

193
00:10:19,610 --> 00:10:22,220
It was a classical Jewish way?

194
00:10:22,220 --> 00:10:23,840
It was quite classical.

195
00:10:23,840 --> 00:10:26,690
It is intercession, you'll see.

196
00:10:26,690 --> 00:10:29,930
In normal times, each Jew
writes his own appeal.

197
00:10:29,930 --> 00:10:32,650
Each Jew makes his own petition.

198

00:10:32,650 --> 00:10:36,380

But at a time when
a ghetto is formed,

199

00:10:36,380 --> 00:10:38,360

the council takes
over the petitioning.

200

00:10:38,360 --> 00:10:40,670

That's the meaning in
Jewish terms of a council

201

00:10:40,670 --> 00:10:41,840

having been formed.

202

00:10:41,840 --> 00:10:44,660

The council petitions in
behalf of the community.

203

00:10:44,660 --> 00:10:47,870

And the chairman of the council
is the chief petitioner.

204

00:10:47,870 --> 00:10:49,970

And it is this role
that Czerniakow

205

00:10:49,970 --> 00:10:53,240

plays to the n-th degree because
he petitions almost every day

206

00:10:53,240 --> 00:10:55,010

for something or other.

207

00:10:55,010 --> 00:10:55,760

To the Germans?

208

00:10:55,760 --> 00:10:57,020

To the Germans.

209

00:10:57,020 --> 00:10:58,190

And his is not--

210
00:10:58,190 --> 00:11:03,050
his is not an attempt to save
the Jewish people as a whole.

211
00:11:03,050 --> 00:11:04,970
Rather, he devotes
everyday efforts

212
00:11:04,970 --> 00:11:08,750
to save specific Jewish people.

213
00:11:08,750 --> 00:11:10,970
And this is entirely within
the Jewish tradition.

214
00:11:10,970 --> 00:11:13,986
And this he does to the end.

215
00:11:13,986 --> 00:11:18,260
(film slating)

216
00:11:18,260 --> 00:11:23,770
When the time came
for Adam Czerniakow

217
00:11:23,770 --> 00:11:28,850
to take on his own
shoulders the responsibility

218
00:11:28,850 --> 00:11:35,830
of the deportations, this means
to execute the German orders.

219
00:11:35,830 --> 00:11:40,130
Well, he simply
choose the to die.

220
00:11:40,130 --> 00:11:42,430
He committed suicide.

221
00:11:42,430 --> 00:11:48,860

We know that there are other
leaders of the Jewish councils

222
00:11:48,860 --> 00:11:51,780
who complied.

223
00:11:51,780 --> 00:11:55,310
And we can say that
all of them did

224
00:11:55,310 --> 00:12:01,790
so because they hoped to save
at least a part of the people.

225
00:12:01,790 --> 00:12:05,420
But this was obviously
an agonizing choice

226
00:12:05,420 --> 00:12:06,985
for all of them.

227
00:12:06,985 --> 00:12:08,360
Because as a matter
of fact, they

228
00:12:08,360 --> 00:12:13,430
had to choose and to decide
who among the remnants

229
00:12:13,430 --> 00:12:21,520
of the Jewish community, who
would live and who would die.

230
00:12:21,520 --> 00:12:25,970
I think that we will never be
able to decide and we cannot

231
00:12:25,970 --> 00:12:32,180
judge what was the right way
or what was the wrong way.

232
00:12:32,180 --> 00:12:36,680

233
00:12:36,680 --> 00:12:38,630
If one were to have
assumed to begin

234
00:12:38,630 --> 00:12:40,790
with that the object
of German measures

235
00:12:40,790 --> 00:12:44,300
is the total extirpation
of the Jewish people,

236
00:12:44,300 --> 00:12:48,710
its total annihilation,
than any participation

237
00:12:48,710 --> 00:12:52,220
in the making of lists or
the preparation of transports

238
00:12:52,220 --> 00:12:57,050
is indeed participation
in that process.

239
00:12:57,050 --> 00:13:02,150
That is how we indeed look at
the event now, in retrospect.

240
00:13:02,150 --> 00:13:07,160
At the time, of course, the
councils were engaged in hope.

241
00:13:07,160 --> 00:13:09,890
Each one had its own
reasons for hope.

242
00:13:09,890 --> 00:13:14,060
But all of them put
together were still

243
00:13:14,060 --> 00:13:20,480
trying to look for a way to

save people that they presumed

244

00:13:20,480 --> 00:13:23,460
might survive this process.

245

00:13:23,460 --> 00:13:26,480
And so whenever a list
was being made up,

246

00:13:26,480 --> 00:13:30,650
whenever a quota was
placed before them,

247

00:13:30,650 --> 00:13:34,250
they would basically comply.

248

00:13:34,250 --> 00:13:37,610
Appealing only for certain
individuals or categories

249

00:13:37,610 --> 00:13:41,810
of individuals in the hope that
thereby they were saving lives.

250

00:13:41,810 --> 00:13:44,470

251

00:13:44,470 --> 00:13:47,930
There is of course a banal
comparison that one can make.

252

00:13:47,930 --> 00:13:50,245
It's the half empty glass
and the half full glass.

253

00:13:50,245 --> 00:13:52,830

254

00:13:52,830 --> 00:13:55,920
It's exactly the same.

255

00:13:55,920 --> 00:14:04,520

For them, a ghetto that was half emptied was still half full.

256

00:14:04,520 --> 00:14:08,100

That is how they looked at it.

257

00:14:08,100 --> 00:14:10,480

And Czerniakow is rare.

258

00:14:10,480 --> 00:14:16,400

He is almost unique in that
he did not fool himself.

259

00:14:16,400 --> 00:14:20,260

He did not say, well, I
still have 400,000 people.

260

00:14:20,260 --> 00:14:22,240

I still have 300,000 people.

261

00:14:22,240 --> 00:14:25,120

I still have 200,000 people.

262

00:14:25,120 --> 00:14:29,560

He did not say that with
1,000, I saved 10,000.

263

00:14:29,560 --> 00:14:32,940

And with 10,000,
I saved 100,000.

264

00:14:32,940 --> 00:14:36,580

He did not know that formula.

265

00:14:36,580 --> 00:14:38,580

That is this great merit.

266

00:14:38,580 --> 00:14:41,680

And this was a formula of
Rumkowski's [INAUDIBLE]..

267

00:14:41,680 --> 00:14:44,530

This was a formula of
any number of leaders

268
00:14:44,530 --> 00:14:48,933
of Jewish communities in Poland
and even outside of Poland.

269
00:14:48,933 --> 00:14:50,350
And it was a formula
for disaster.

270
00:14:50,350 --> 00:14:54,420

271
00:14:54,420 --> 00:14:57,315
It saved very few, if
any, of the victims.

272
00:14:57,315 --> 00:14:59,850

273
00:14:59,850 --> 00:15:03,700
What do you think
about the leaders

274
00:15:03,700 --> 00:15:11,980
of the Hungarian
Jewish community who

275
00:15:11,980 --> 00:15:17,290
organized the transport and
they knew almost for sure

276
00:15:17,290 --> 00:15:22,020
that the people of this
transport would be saved,

277
00:15:22,020 --> 00:15:23,670
would be rescued.

278
00:15:23,670 --> 00:15:25,390
And they were, in fact.

279

00:15:25,390 --> 00:15:28,114

280

00:15:28,114 --> 00:15:32,850

And they choose a sample
of the Jewish community.

281

00:15:32,850 --> 00:15:34,440

They choose their own families.

282

00:15:34,440 --> 00:15:38,820

They choose the richest, the
people who were able to pay.

283

00:15:38,820 --> 00:15:43,300

They choose some
intellectuals, some artists,

284

00:15:43,300 --> 00:15:48,530

some very famous rabbis.

285

00:15:48,530 --> 00:15:51,000

It's a kind of ark of Noah.

286

00:15:51,000 --> 00:15:53,100

It's not mine.

287

00:15:53,100 --> 00:15:58,320

I don't invent the expression,
but it was used by them.

288

00:15:58,320 --> 00:16:01,000

I think they would be
able to start again

289

00:16:01,000 --> 00:16:05,630

the life of the Jewish
people from these root,

290

00:16:05,630 --> 00:16:08,880

from this remnant, as you wish.

291

00:16:08,880 --> 00:16:13,770

In Hungary, there were
actually two bodies of leaders,

292

00:16:13,770 --> 00:16:16,950

the regular Jewish
council in Budapest

293

00:16:16,950 --> 00:16:18,030

and the Rescue Committee.

294

00:16:18,030 --> 00:16:20,010

These were two separate bodies.

295

00:16:20,010 --> 00:16:22,930

The Rescue Committee having
been formed, in actual fact,

296

00:16:22,930 --> 00:16:28,460

before the arrival of the
Germans on March 19, 1944.

297

00:16:28,460 --> 00:16:30,960

I think the predominant thinking
within the Rescue Committee

298

00:16:30,960 --> 00:16:35,190

was that it would be
hardly possible to suppose

299

00:16:35,190 --> 00:16:37,410

that the Jewish
people inside Hungary

300

00:16:37,410 --> 00:16:41,760

could not now be aware of
what was in store for them.

301

00:16:41,760 --> 00:16:44,460

Everywhere else,
Jewry had disappeared.

302

00:16:44,460 --> 00:16:48,090

In Germany, in Poland, to
the North in Czechoslovakia.

303

00:16:48,090 --> 00:16:50,100

All around, wherever
they looked.

304

00:16:50,100 --> 00:16:53,160

This was an island
in 1944 containing

305

00:16:53,160 --> 00:16:56,310

3/4 of a million
Jews, the largest

306

00:16:56,310 --> 00:16:59,400

remaining Jewish
community of Europe.

307

00:16:59,400 --> 00:17:03,720

The Russians were not too far
from the frontiers of Hungary

308

00:17:03,720 --> 00:17:05,290

itself.

309

00:17:05,290 --> 00:17:09,210

And now, the premium was placed
on sheer time, sheer delay.

310

00:17:09,210 --> 00:17:11,880

Anything that would
work was tried.

311

00:17:11,880 --> 00:17:16,079

But the only thing that was
feasible was negotiation.

312

00:17:16,079 --> 00:17:18,930

By mobilizing certain
resources for German needs

313

00:17:18,930 --> 00:17:23,130
and ignorance of the Hungarian
government, they, as a start,

314
00:17:23,130 --> 00:17:25,230
managed to put
together a transport.

315
00:17:25,230 --> 00:17:34,440

316
00:17:34,440 --> 00:17:39,930
One should point out
that whereas in Poland

317
00:17:39,930 --> 00:17:44,020
and in other parts of
Europe, the basic assumption

318
00:17:44,020 --> 00:17:46,540
of the Jewish communities
was that there was

319
00:17:46,540 --> 00:17:49,360
a chance for Jewry to be saved.

320
00:17:49,360 --> 00:17:52,720
And that therefore, they
were delivering some Jews

321
00:17:52,720 --> 00:17:57,390
to their deaths in the hope of
thereby rescuing the remainder.

322
00:17:57,390 --> 00:18:03,025
Kasztner and his associates
was operating within the Vaad

323
00:18:03,025 --> 00:18:06,770
Hatzalah within the Rescue
Committee of Hungary,

324
00:18:06,770 --> 00:18:09,610

on exactly the opposite premise.

325

00:18:09,610 --> 00:18:14,290

He really was assuming that
Jewry in Hungary was doomed.

326

00:18:14,290 --> 00:18:17,050

And that only by
saving some of them

327

00:18:17,050 --> 00:18:21,550

could one thereby
achieve anything at all.

328

00:18:21,550 --> 00:18:23,840

Do you really think so?

329

00:18:23,840 --> 00:18:28,330

I really think that he
thought that Jewry was doomed.

330

00:18:28,330 --> 00:18:32,710

He says that within Hungary,
within Budapest, the Rescue

331

00:18:32,710 --> 00:18:35,950

Committee knew and had
known for a long time

332

00:18:35,950 --> 00:18:37,270

all about Auschwitz.

333

00:18:37,270 --> 00:18:39,280

They knew what Auschwitz was.

334

00:18:39,280 --> 00:18:41,290

They could not mistake it.

335

00:18:41,290 --> 00:18:42,610

They could not.

336

00:18:42,610 --> 00:18:45,730

Once the Germans walked
into Hungary that day, that

337
00:18:45,730 --> 00:18:49,990
March 19, 1944, they
could not possibly

338
00:18:49,990 --> 00:18:53,560
mistake that development.

339
00:18:53,560 --> 00:18:56,410
And that is the reason that
almost immediately, they

340
00:18:56,410 --> 00:19:00,400
began to think in terms of
rescuing some part of Jewry,

341
00:19:00,400 --> 00:19:03,010
if not all of it,
from what they assumed

342
00:19:03,010 --> 00:19:06,892
to be the certain death
of the Hungarian Jews.

343
00:19:06,892 --> 00:19:09,100
And then this, their premise,
their basic assumption,

344
00:19:09,100 --> 00:19:11,290
was the exact
opposite of what it

345
00:19:11,290 --> 00:19:14,110
had been of the Jewish
communities and Jewish councils

346
00:19:14,110 --> 00:19:16,630
in so many parts of
Poland or Germany

347
00:19:16,630 --> 00:19:21,410

or Holland or other areas
of German-dominated Europe.

348
00:19:21,410 --> 00:19:26,230
And yet, both the Jewish
consuls who made up lists--

349
00:19:26,230 --> 00:19:29,860
made them up in Berlin,
made them up in Frankfurt,

350
00:19:29,860 --> 00:19:32,140
made them up in Slovakia.

351
00:19:32,140 --> 00:19:37,390
Putting together the
victims 1,000 at a time.

352
00:19:37,390 --> 00:19:43,780
And Kasztner, who made up his
list of 1,700 to be saved.

353
00:19:43,780 --> 00:19:45,170
--both were playing God.

354
00:19:45,170 --> 00:19:49,590

355
00:19:49,590 --> 00:19:56,040
Yes, but what do you think of
the people, of the precisely

356
00:19:56,040 --> 00:19:59,580
the Hungarian Jews who
were shipped to Auschwitz.

357
00:19:59,580 --> 00:20:04,320
Which means that they were
not included in the Kasztner

358
00:20:04,320 --> 00:20:09,380
list of people to be saved.

359

00:20:09,380 --> 00:20:12,525

These people survived
Auschwitz by chance.

360

00:20:12,525 --> 00:20:16,040

361

00:20:16,040 --> 00:20:21,340

They say that if they
had known, if Kasztner

362

00:20:21,340 --> 00:20:24,590

or the other leaders
of the Rescue Committee

363

00:20:24,590 --> 00:20:27,940

would have come in
the Hungarian ghettos

364

00:20:27,940 --> 00:20:34,730

and if they had told them what
was Auschwitz, don't go there,

365

00:20:34,730 --> 00:20:39,810

maybe 400,000
Hungarian Jews wouldn't

366

00:20:39,810 --> 00:20:42,680

have been gassed in
Auschwitz because they

367

00:20:42,680 --> 00:20:44,060

would have tried to escape.

368

00:20:44,060 --> 00:20:49,160

At least there wouldn't have
been such an amount of victims.

369

00:20:49,160 --> 00:20:51,830

It's what they say, and I think
it's a very strong argument,

370

00:20:51,830 --> 00:20:53,750
a very strong point.

371
00:20:53,750 --> 00:20:58,790
Whenever there was a situation
in which Jews were engaged

372
00:20:58,790 --> 00:21:01,820
in discussions with
German officers,

373
00:21:01,820 --> 00:21:05,450
not only in Hungary
but elsewhere,

374
00:21:05,450 --> 00:21:08,330
there was an element
of knowing which

375
00:21:08,330 --> 00:21:11,180
was imparted by the
Germans to the Jews

376
00:21:11,180 --> 00:21:15,980
and which was not passed on
to the community at-large.

377
00:21:15,980 --> 00:21:18,710
Now, all kinds of reasons
would be given, not only

378
00:21:18,710 --> 00:21:22,580
by Kasztner, who was
operating outside, really,

379
00:21:22,580 --> 00:21:24,980
the framework of the
Jewish council in Hungary,

380
00:21:24,980 --> 00:21:27,410
but also about the
councils themselves,

381

00:21:27,410 --> 00:21:31,470
for not informing the victims,
for not warning the victims,

382
00:21:31,470 --> 00:21:33,470
for not telling the
victims to stay home

383
00:21:33,470 --> 00:21:36,440
because of what the council
itself might have suspected

384
00:21:36,440 --> 00:21:38,150
or even known.

385
00:21:38,150 --> 00:21:39,800
All sorts of reasons
were invented

386
00:21:39,800 --> 00:21:42,710
for not informing the victims.

387
00:21:42,710 --> 00:21:45,530
The greater chaos
that would ensue.

388
00:21:45,530 --> 00:21:48,290
The less gentle
means that would be

389
00:21:48,290 --> 00:21:52,730
employed by S.S. units in
rounding up the victims.

390
00:21:52,730 --> 00:21:58,280
The suffering of the victims,
knowing now that they would die

391
00:21:58,280 --> 00:22:01,760
and yet incapable of fleeing
because the ghetto was

392
00:22:01,760 --> 00:22:03,740

surrounded or because
something else was

393
00:22:03,740 --> 00:22:05,360
happening to prevent
them effectively

394
00:22:05,360 --> 00:22:07,880
to oppose the orders.

395
00:22:07,880 --> 00:22:10,580
So there is, in
that sense you see,

396
00:22:10,580 --> 00:22:15,740
within Jewish leadership
generally a feeling that

397
00:22:15,740 --> 00:22:23,330
to have informed the victims
crassly of whatever those

398
00:22:23,330 --> 00:22:27,440
in the council who had access
to information had learned

399
00:22:27,440 --> 00:22:33,920
would create, if not chaos,
then some great amount

400
00:22:33,920 --> 00:22:39,090
of suffering, which at
least could be avoided.

401
00:22:39,090 --> 00:22:41,480
There is in this,
you see, a notion

402
00:22:41,480 --> 00:22:47,900
almost akin to euthanasia
of a painless if not exactly

403
00:22:47,900 --> 00:22:50,280

beautiful death.

404

00:22:50,280 --> 00:22:52,740

There is a sense of
sparing people knowledge

405

00:22:52,740 --> 00:22:55,950

because knowledge
equals suffering.

406

00:22:55,950 --> 00:23:00,420

They did not view knowledge
as a tool to be used.

407

00:23:00,420 --> 00:23:04,170

They viewed it as a
cause of suffering.

408

00:23:04,170 --> 00:23:07,120

And that's why they
withheld the information.

409

00:23:07,120 --> 00:23:12,210

Now here, I only
try to understand

410

00:23:12,210 --> 00:23:15,090

from the writings left
behind, from the diaries

411

00:23:15,090 --> 00:23:18,480

and the reports and the
testimony of these people

412

00:23:18,480 --> 00:23:20,645

what it is that
they were thinking.

413

00:23:20,645 --> 00:23:22,020

But what they were
saying, you'll

414

00:23:22,020 --> 00:23:24,660

see, in so many
different contexts

415
00:23:24,660 --> 00:23:30,240
in these different testimonies
and memoirs, was the same.

416
00:23:30,240 --> 00:23:34,110
They were going to spare
the Jews more suffering.

417
00:23:34,110 --> 00:23:37,230
And therefore, they
did not inform them.

418
00:23:37,230 --> 00:23:40,300
I see that what you
say is very important.

419
00:23:40,300 --> 00:23:46,080
And I am absolutely prepared to
admit that there is something

420
00:23:46,080 --> 00:23:52,320
absolutely obscene in
this kind of discussion

421
00:23:52,320 --> 00:23:57,030
so many years later without
having been personally involved

422
00:23:57,030 --> 00:23:57,810
in this.

423
00:23:57,810 --> 00:24:02,940
As I said, I would
never dare to judge.

424
00:24:02,940 --> 00:24:09,890
But we are obliged to go
on with this discussion.

425
00:24:09,890 --> 00:24:13,320

These survivors of
Auschwitz, Hungarian Jews

426
00:24:13,320 --> 00:24:16,050
who survived, as
I said, by chance,

427
00:24:16,050 --> 00:24:20,010
say if we would
have been warned--

428
00:24:20,010 --> 00:24:22,950
the Slovakian border was open.

429
00:24:22,950 --> 00:24:25,740
It was not so much guarded.

430
00:24:25,740 --> 00:24:28,110
At least we could have
attempt something.

431
00:24:28,110 --> 00:24:30,250
If the leaders
would have tell us

432
00:24:30,250 --> 00:24:35,110
Auschwitz means sure
death with gassing,

433
00:24:35,110 --> 00:24:41,220
we would have maybe been
able to do something.

434
00:24:41,220 --> 00:24:44,440
And I understand
very well what you

435
00:24:44,440 --> 00:24:49,510
say when you say that
Kasztner and these people

436
00:24:49,510 --> 00:24:55,760
wanted to avoid the suffering,

because knowledge is suffering.

437

00:24:55,760 --> 00:24:58,030

And this was a point
which is very strong too,

438

00:24:58,030 --> 00:25:01,100

that for Kasztner,
Jewry was doomed.

439

00:25:01,100 --> 00:25:04,840

It is probably the reason
why he wanted to save,

440

00:25:04,840 --> 00:25:08,710

this ark of Noah.

441

00:25:08,710 --> 00:25:15,460

But I thought myself that
he couldn't want the people,

442

00:25:15,460 --> 00:25:19,750

his own people precisely,
because he wanted to save them.

443

00:25:19,750 --> 00:25:23,620

But I thought that he wanted
to save a big part of them

444

00:25:23,620 --> 00:25:26,460

in the negotiation
with Eichmann.

445

00:25:26,460 --> 00:25:31,260

And he was negotiating in
order to save the Jews.

446

00:25:31,260 --> 00:25:35,660

And because he was negotiating,
he couldn't talk to the Jews.

447

00:25:35,660 --> 00:25:36,160

Absolutely.

448
00:25:36,160 --> 00:25:39,260
Because the negotiation would
have failed immediately.

449
00:25:39,260 --> 00:25:42,280
Now, you see that
that comes through

450
00:25:42,280 --> 00:25:44,070
in this particular case.

451
00:25:44,070 --> 00:25:46,810
Not in Kasztner's own reports.

452
00:25:46,810 --> 00:25:48,370
You have to read Eichmann.

453
00:25:48,370 --> 00:25:52,630
And when Eichmann talks about
those very same negotiations,

454
00:25:52,630 --> 00:25:55,930
it becomes clear
that is a bargain.

455
00:25:55,930 --> 00:25:59,440
And that in return
for 1,700 Jews being

456
00:25:59,440 --> 00:26:02,800
saved and initially, 18,000--

457
00:26:02,800 --> 00:26:05,830
as many as 18,000 later.

458
00:26:05,830 --> 00:26:11,020
In return for that, Kasztner
is supposed not to say a word

459
00:26:11,020 --> 00:26:14,080
as he tours Hungary, as he

speaks to various councils

460
00:26:14,080 --> 00:26:15,970
and various personalities.

461
00:26:15,970 --> 00:26:19,300
Kasztner is to keep his mouth
shut about what he knows

462
00:26:19,300 --> 00:26:22,510
or suspects or feels is truth.

463
00:26:22,510 --> 00:26:23,750
That's the bargain.

464
00:26:23,750 --> 00:26:29,290
But you see for Kasztner,
this was essentially

465
00:26:29,290 --> 00:26:33,760
a matter of maximizing under
these gruesome circumstances

466
00:26:33,760 --> 00:26:36,190
the chance of as many
people as possible.

467
00:26:36,190 --> 00:26:40,030
He, after all, was
negotiating not for only 1,700

468
00:26:40,030 --> 00:26:42,670
or even for 18,000.

469
00:26:42,670 --> 00:26:45,940
His ambition, especially after
the Germans found themselves

470
00:26:45,940 --> 00:26:48,820
amenable to striking
some sort of a bargain,

471

00:26:48,820 --> 00:26:51,610
was to save a large bulk
of the Hungarian Jews.

472
00:26:51,610 --> 00:26:53,050
Never, never all of them.

473
00:26:53,050 --> 00:26:55,550
Because of that-- it
was too late for that,

474
00:26:55,550 --> 00:26:57,700
and the process was
too quick for that.

475
00:26:57,700 --> 00:27:01,210
But he was, after all,
engaged in those negotiations

476
00:27:01,210 --> 00:27:04,330
in which trucks were
mentioned as a means

477
00:27:04,330 --> 00:27:08,950
to really save very large
numbers of the victims.

478
00:27:08,950 --> 00:27:11,500
And had he, at the
same time, called

479
00:27:11,500 --> 00:27:15,070
upon the victims to resist
in the ghettos or to flee,

480
00:27:15,070 --> 00:27:18,310
well, then there would be
no bargain, would there be?

481
00:27:18,310 --> 00:27:21,550
And then the entire
strategy would be one doomed

482

00:27:21,550 --> 00:27:24,250
by the negotiator himself.

483
00:27:24,250 --> 00:27:26,120
He made his decision.

484
00:27:26,120 --> 00:27:31,750
He stuck to his
decision, win or lose.

485
00:27:31,750 --> 00:27:34,270
He made decisions
under conditions

486
00:27:34,270 --> 00:27:36,670
of enormous uncertainty.

487
00:27:36,670 --> 00:27:40,010
That is something that true
leaders will appreciate and are

488
00:27:40,010 --> 00:27:42,730
familiar with.

489
00:27:42,730 --> 00:27:45,850
The fact that his successes
were extremely small

490
00:27:45,850 --> 00:27:50,440
should not detract us from
realizing that the ambition was

491
00:27:50,440 --> 00:27:52,670
much greater.

492
00:27:52,670 --> 00:27:56,050
But you seem to have a
real admiration for him.

493
00:27:56,050 --> 00:27:57,820
You seem to like him.

494

00:27:57,820 --> 00:28:00,580

What do you think
of the judgement.

495

00:28:00,580 --> 00:28:05,110

Because there was a trial
of Kasztner in Israel.

496

00:28:05,110 --> 00:28:08,330

And the sentence
which was passed--

497

00:28:08,330 --> 00:28:11,430

I mean, the etendue
of the sentence

498

00:28:11,430 --> 00:28:13,870

was that he sold his
soul to the devil.

499

00:28:13,870 --> 00:28:17,010

500

00:28:17,010 --> 00:28:24,120

Let me say in admitting that I
have some sympathy for the man,

501

00:28:24,120 --> 00:28:27,450

first, I owe to him a
great deal of insight

502

00:28:27,450 --> 00:28:29,070

into the process of destruction.

503

00:28:29,070 --> 00:28:33,270

It is from his insight
that I gathered my own

504

00:28:33,270 --> 00:28:35,990

about what transpired.

505

00:28:35,990 --> 00:28:39,000