

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,770

2
00:00:07,770 --> 00:00:09,870
Well, it's a difficult
question, and I

3
00:00:09,870 --> 00:00:12,570
don't know exactly how to
put the question though,

4
00:00:12,570 --> 00:00:14,940
to formulate it.

5
00:00:14,940 --> 00:00:17,700
But maybe you will help me.

6
00:00:17,700 --> 00:00:19,680
I think perhaps the most--

7
00:00:19,680 --> 00:00:22,310
you have a very good term
in French about deformation

8
00:00:22,310 --> 00:00:23,550
professionnelle.

9
00:00:23,550 --> 00:00:28,160
I think we might call
this deformation sociale.

10
00:00:28,160 --> 00:00:29,790
These people were
the products of

11
00:00:29,790 --> 00:00:33,390
a certain cultural
and educational group

12
00:00:33,390 --> 00:00:39,810
into whose fear of experience,

the problem of Jews,

13

00:00:39,810 --> 00:00:42,930

did not exist really.

14

00:00:42,930 --> 00:00:46,700

Yes, but my question is a
precisely connected with this

15

00:00:46,700 --> 00:00:52,000

even when the Jewish
question did exist,

16

00:00:52,000 --> 00:00:56,940

and it did exist for
you very obviously

17

00:00:56,940 --> 00:00:58,890

because you were in
Switzerland and precisely

18

00:00:58,890 --> 00:01:00,940

in charge of this.

19

00:01:00,940 --> 00:01:03,990

Well, I'd been involved in it
in France for two years before,

20

00:01:03,990 --> 00:01:05,110

in Italy.

21

00:01:05,110 --> 00:01:08,940

On the first challenge
you had to meet

22

00:01:08,940 --> 00:01:13,860

when you were in Switzerland
was extermination

23

00:01:13,860 --> 00:01:16,170

of the Hungarian Jews.

24

00:01:16,170 --> 00:01:20,070

And this came very soon
after the war refugee

25

00:01:20,070 --> 00:01:23,010

board was established.

26

00:01:23,010 --> 00:01:27,180

First of all, my question
is a question of climate.

27

00:01:27,180 --> 00:01:31,480

What does it mean to be in
Switzerland, even in charge

28

00:01:31,480 --> 00:01:35,580

specifically of these problems?

29

00:01:35,580 --> 00:01:43,640

What does it mean
to receive messages

30

00:01:43,640 --> 00:01:48,660

from the people who were in
the hands of the Germans?

31

00:01:48,660 --> 00:01:53,600

I would like to know if
you understood rightly

32

00:01:53,600 --> 00:01:54,770

what they asked for.

33

00:01:54,770 --> 00:01:58,590

34

00:01:58,590 --> 00:02:02,820

Well, I'm not sure I understand
your point correctly.

35

00:02:02,820 --> 00:02:08,780

No, I am thinking very
precisely about the demands,

36
00:02:08,780 --> 00:02:11,970
money demands which
we have made let's

37
00:02:11,970 --> 00:02:19,110
say by the religious Jews of
Slovakia, the group of Gisi

38
00:02:19,110 --> 00:02:23,910
Fleischmann or Weissmandel where
they asked for money, money,

39
00:02:23,910 --> 00:02:28,360
money, as if money was
the only way for them to--

40
00:02:28,360 --> 00:02:30,000
Almost the only weapon.

41
00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:31,163
Yes, the only weapon.

42
00:02:31,163 --> 00:02:32,496
They said this. they wrote this.

43
00:02:32,496 --> 00:02:33,538
Money is the main weapon.

44
00:02:33,538 --> 00:02:36,210

45
00:02:36,210 --> 00:02:40,580
And we were talking
about bureaucracy

46
00:02:40,580 --> 00:02:44,880
and you were obliged to give
accounts about the money you

47
00:02:44,880 --> 00:02:46,500
were delivering.

48

00:02:46,500 --> 00:02:50,790

You were obliged to screen the
people you were giving money

49

00:02:50,790 --> 00:02:56,420

to, obliged to choose who to
give money, who not, and so on.

50

00:02:56,420 --> 00:03:00,060

And in some of your reports
about these demands which

51

00:03:00,060 --> 00:03:08,440

were made to you, you expressed
your doubts about these people.

52

00:03:08,440 --> 00:03:12,630

I am thinking mostly about
the religious groups,

53

00:03:12,630 --> 00:03:15,072

orthodox world.

54

00:03:15,072 --> 00:03:17,420

I would like to understand why.

55

00:03:17,420 --> 00:03:21,750

Because they were
very much pressing.

56

00:03:21,750 --> 00:03:23,970

They knew what was at
stake because there

57

00:03:23,970 --> 00:03:28,600

was a fantastic emergency
that every day counted,

58

00:03:28,600 --> 00:03:34,343

that every day 15,000 Jews
were shipped to Auschwitz.

59

00:03:34,343 --> 00:03:37,010
But I would like to know what is
the meaning of is this when one

60

00:03:37,010 --> 00:03:40,950
received such messages
being in Geneva,

61

00:03:40,950 --> 00:03:45,535
even if it were your
task to deal with this.

62

00:03:45,535 --> 00:03:46,890
You understand?

63

00:03:46,890 --> 00:03:50,430
Well, I think you had
to view it as people

64

00:03:50,430 --> 00:03:55,140
in a condition of
extreme desperation

65

00:03:55,140 --> 00:04:00,060
in which you clutch at any
possibility, the old banality

66

00:04:00,060 --> 00:04:01,770
of clutching at the
straw when you're

67

00:04:01,770 --> 00:04:04,860
drowning, although you know
the straw is necessarily

68

00:04:04,860 --> 00:04:06,060
going to save you.

69

00:04:06,060 --> 00:04:08,810

70

00:04:08,810 --> 00:04:12,510

One got into the disagreeable
and difficult business

71
00:04:12,510 --> 00:04:20,250
of making choices when no
choices were really possible.

72
00:04:20,250 --> 00:04:23,370
You know, I can remember
going into the camp

73
00:04:23,370 --> 00:04:26,580
at Les Milles in the wintertime
with 20 overcoats when

74
00:04:26,580 --> 00:04:30,180
200 people needed overcoats.

75
00:04:30,180 --> 00:04:32,730
You tried not to
decide yourself but let

76
00:04:32,730 --> 00:04:38,072
the people who were under
fire decide themselves.

77
00:04:38,072 --> 00:04:48,920

78
00:04:48,920 --> 00:04:53,330
What is your recollection of the
members of the religious group

79
00:04:53,330 --> 00:04:55,240
in Switzerland?

80
00:04:55,240 --> 00:04:59,260
The representatives of the
Vaad Hatzala of America.

81
00:04:59,260 --> 00:05:04,040
I mean specifically the
Sternbuch family, Yitzchak

82
00:05:04,040 --> 00:05:07,250
and his wife Recha Sternbuch.

83
00:05:07,250 --> 00:05:08,690
What is your
recollection of them?

84
00:05:08,690 --> 00:05:13,070
Well, I suppose it's the
stereotype recollection

85
00:05:13,070 --> 00:05:21,260
of the medieval rabbi
out of a Polish ghetto,

86
00:05:21,260 --> 00:05:24,980
a little busy man with
a wild little beard

87
00:05:24,980 --> 00:05:29,780
and one eye that went off
to the right, who was always

88
00:05:29,780 --> 00:05:32,960
in a hurry, who was always
harassed, who was always

89
00:05:32,960 --> 00:05:39,660
under terrible pressure, who
was taking things terribly hard,

90
00:05:39,660 --> 00:05:42,020
to use an inadequate term.

91
00:05:42,020 --> 00:05:45,320

92
00:05:45,320 --> 00:05:47,870
Representative,
again, of what one

93

00:05:47,870 --> 00:05:53,180
thinks of as the stereotype of
Eastern Jewry, Galicia, Poland.

94
00:05:53,180 --> 00:05:57,410
You know, emotional, devoted.

95
00:05:57,410 --> 00:06:01,120

96
00:06:01,120 --> 00:06:05,060
In comparison to Saly
Mayer, night and day.

97
00:06:05,060 --> 00:06:07,010
Saly Mayer was
the representative

98
00:06:07,010 --> 00:06:12,230
of the Joint, the head of the
organized Swiss community.

99
00:06:12,230 --> 00:06:18,110
Who in every sense of the term
was a solid citizen, almost

100
00:06:18,110 --> 00:06:21,530
a ponderous man in some ways.

101
00:06:21,530 --> 00:06:30,006
Always dressed in severe black
suits or a black homburg,

102
00:06:30,006 --> 00:06:33,990
a lace or an
embroidery manufacturer

103
00:06:33,990 --> 00:06:37,550
from a commercial
city of St. Gallen.

104
00:06:37,550 --> 00:06:40,505
The contrast there was

enormous between Saly and--

105

00:06:40,505 --> 00:06:43,275

But your personal liking
went to Saly Mayer

106

00:06:43,275 --> 00:06:44,450

or to the religious Jews?

107

00:06:44,450 --> 00:06:49,100

Well, I don't think really the
question of personal liking--

108

00:06:49,100 --> 00:06:51,740

one had to attempt
to defend oneself

109

00:06:51,740 --> 00:06:55,040

against allowing personal
emotions to play any role.

110

00:06:55,040 --> 00:07:03,380

But inevitably, because I'm
a rational, white Protestant

111

00:07:03,380 --> 00:07:07,160

American brought up in
totally other traditions,

112

00:07:07,160 --> 00:07:12,590

my reaction was that Saly
was the more congenial person

113

00:07:12,590 --> 00:07:13,400

to deal with.

114

00:07:13,400 --> 00:07:15,800

He was more rational
and businesslike,

115

00:07:15,800 --> 00:07:18,370

whereas nothing with Sternbuch--

116

00:07:18,370 --> 00:07:20,510

It's what you and I
discussed this summer.

117

00:07:20,510 --> 00:07:25,300

Sternbuch represented the
wailing wall technique.

118

00:07:25,300 --> 00:07:26,000

Wailing wall?

119

00:07:26,000 --> 00:07:26,500

Yes.

120

00:07:26,500 --> 00:07:29,540

This is, I told you, an old
Jewish friend said to me,

121

00:07:29,540 --> 00:07:31,520

"You be careful,
McClelland, because you're

122

00:07:31,520 --> 00:07:33,500

going to be the wailing wall.

123

00:07:33,500 --> 00:07:35,000

And people are
going to come to you

124

00:07:35,000 --> 00:07:37,460

and they're going to tear
their hair out and beat

125

00:07:37,460 --> 00:07:40,700

their foreheads against
the wall and the world

126

00:07:40,700 --> 00:07:42,080

is coming to an end.

127

00:07:42,080 --> 00:07:46,310

And you're going to find it

quite disturbing because you're

128
00:07:46,310 --> 00:07:49,310
not used to people
acting that way."

129
00:07:49,310 --> 00:07:51,500
And I don't know whether
I found it disturbing.

130
00:07:51,500 --> 00:07:56,690
I found it less congenial,
shall we say, than

131
00:07:56,690 --> 00:07:58,660
on a personal level
and dealing with Saly.

132
00:07:58,660 --> 00:07:59,160
Yes.

133
00:07:59,160 --> 00:08:01,520
But the statement of your
friend was quite true

134
00:08:01,520 --> 00:08:04,130
because the world was
really going to an end.

135
00:08:04,130 --> 00:08:07,250

136
00:08:07,250 --> 00:08:11,317
It undoubtedly was, but I
didn't realize it either.

137
00:08:11,317 --> 00:08:12,650
I didn't realize it at the time.

138
00:08:12,650 --> 00:08:14,210
I don't think Saly realized it.

139

00:08:14,210 --> 00:08:17,470

He may have more
than I did, but--

140

00:08:17,470 --> 00:08:21,890

But did you have confidence
in this let's say

141

00:08:21,890 --> 00:08:24,990

wailing wall Jews?

142

00:08:24,990 --> 00:08:27,145

In their proposals?

143

00:08:27,145 --> 00:08:30,110

Because they were
very active people.

144

00:08:30,110 --> 00:08:31,370

They were indeed.

145

00:08:31,370 --> 00:08:32,190

They were indeed.

146

00:08:32,190 --> 00:08:32,940

And they took it--

147

00:08:32,940 --> 00:08:36,500

148

00:08:36,500 --> 00:08:39,950

well, it's a little hard to say.

149

00:08:39,950 --> 00:08:44,030

I had confidence in a
more practical approach

150

00:08:44,030 --> 00:08:49,250

to the problem rather
than an emotional approach

151

00:08:49,250 --> 00:08:49,920

to the problem.

152
00:08:49,920 --> 00:08:53,598
But you must
understand my question.

153
00:08:53,598 --> 00:08:58,010
First of all, I don't see
why these people shouldn't

154
00:08:58,010 --> 00:09:01,550
have been emotional because
the situation was very much

155
00:09:01,550 --> 00:09:04,750
emotional, as a matter of fact.

156
00:09:04,750 --> 00:09:07,940
When they sent these
cables, and Sternbuch

157
00:09:07,940 --> 00:09:12,160
was only a, how do
you say, a go-between,

158
00:09:12,160 --> 00:09:17,240
he received the frantic
appeals of the people who

159
00:09:17,240 --> 00:09:20,180
were in the hands of the Nazi
who knew what was going on

160
00:09:20,180 --> 00:09:21,820
with the Hungarian Jewry.

161
00:09:21,820 --> 00:09:23,447
The deportations every day--

162
00:09:23,447 --> 00:09:24,280
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

163

00:09:24,280 --> 00:09:27,900
Yeah, they had every
right to be emotional.

164
00:09:27,900 --> 00:09:29,870
Gas chambers and Auschwitz.

165
00:09:29,870 --> 00:09:33,750
For them, the world was really
falling apart, crumbling.

166
00:09:33,750 --> 00:09:34,910
Every day counted.

167
00:09:34,910 --> 00:09:37,530
It was hard for me
to realize that.

168
00:09:37,530 --> 00:09:40,360

169
00:09:40,360 --> 00:09:43,520
But in all the reports
you sent that we

170
00:09:43,520 --> 00:09:46,820
have found in the files
of the War Refugee Board,

171
00:09:46,820 --> 00:09:51,250
you seem to be very well
aware of the emergency.

172
00:09:51,250 --> 00:09:54,108

173
00:09:54,108 --> 00:09:55,150
Because you transmitted--

174
00:09:55,150 --> 00:09:56,770
Well, obviously, yes.

175

00:09:56,770 --> 00:09:59,800

I mean, the whole Hungarian
Jewish deportation

176

00:09:59,800 --> 00:10:07,360

in its dimensions and speed
was such a horrendous event.

177

00:10:07,360 --> 00:10:10,210

I mean, here you
had 800,000 people

178

00:10:10,210 --> 00:10:16,420

within a space of two or three
months destroyed, disseminated.

179

00:10:16,420 --> 00:10:17,410

Two months.

180

00:10:17,410 --> 00:10:19,900

Not 800,000 but at least--

181

00:10:19,900 --> 00:10:23,350

Well they all didn't know,
but a great portion of them.

182

00:10:23,350 --> 00:10:26,650

183

00:10:26,650 --> 00:10:27,980

But I'm a practical Scotsman.

184

00:10:27,980 --> 00:10:30,520

185

00:10:30,520 --> 00:10:33,250

When you're trying
to do something

186

00:10:33,250 --> 00:10:36,760

about a problem with
inadequate means,

187

00:10:36,760 --> 00:10:42,520

you have to pick the few
practical possibilities,

188

00:10:42,520 --> 00:10:45,940

the sending of practical
sums of money, let us say,

189

00:10:45,940 --> 00:10:51,760

and not speaking in terms of
we need 100 million Francs

190

00:10:51,760 --> 00:10:53,270

to save the Jews in Hungary.

191

00:10:53,270 --> 00:10:56,450

And if this isn't forthcoming
by next Tuesday morning,

192

00:10:56,450 --> 00:10:58,450

everybody will be dead.

193

00:10:58,450 --> 00:11:00,760

This was a little bit
Sternbuch's approach.

194

00:11:00,760 --> 00:11:04,590

And I'm sure that's what
he may have believed.

195

00:11:04,590 --> 00:11:14,170

And I suppose this is the
way he dealt with people.

196

00:11:14,170 --> 00:11:19,760

This was his character and
his psychological makeup.

197

00:11:19,760 --> 00:11:24,250

This was the way you went
after non-Jews, I guess.

198

00:11:24,250 --> 00:11:26,872

You gnashed your teeth
and tore your hair

199

00:11:26,872 --> 00:11:28,330

and the world was
coming to an end.

200

00:11:28,330 --> 00:11:30,180

And the world really
was coming to an end,

201

00:11:30,180 --> 00:11:32,010

but I didn't know
that or realize it.

202

00:11:32,010 --> 00:11:35,950

Considering the things in
retrospect, he was right.

203

00:11:35,950 --> 00:11:36,880

He was, yes.

204

00:11:36,880 --> 00:11:38,150

I agree with you.

205

00:11:38,150 --> 00:11:38,710

He was right.

206

00:11:38,710 --> 00:11:39,670

He was.

207

00:11:39,670 --> 00:11:43,810

I'm sorry he hadn't been a
little more conventional, shall

208

00:11:43,810 --> 00:11:47,860

we say, in his approach
and a little more realistic

209

00:11:47,860 --> 00:11:50,530

and practical.

210

00:11:50,530 --> 00:11:52,150

He was just a go-between.

211

00:11:52,150 --> 00:11:54,580

We have the letters
and the cables

212

00:11:54,580 --> 00:11:57,190

of the messages he received.

213

00:11:57,190 --> 00:11:58,960

Which is very
interesting because we

214

00:11:58,960 --> 00:12:01,960

talked about bureaucracy.

215

00:12:01,960 --> 00:12:04,480

The War Refugee
Board was created

216

00:12:04,480 --> 00:12:08,760

as a special agency
in order to avoid

217

00:12:08,760 --> 00:12:14,570

the former bureaucratic path of
the State Department and so on.

218

00:12:14,570 --> 00:12:16,420

With special powers.

219

00:12:16,420 --> 00:12:19,240

But in spite of this, when
these people were asking

220

00:12:19,240 --> 00:12:20,560

for money, money, money--

221

00:12:20,560 --> 00:12:23,320

which was only weapon
to rescue, and they

222

00:12:23,320 --> 00:12:29,290
refused to give accounts about
the ways this money was spent.

223

00:12:29,290 --> 00:12:31,260
They couldn't because
they had no time.

224

00:12:31,260 --> 00:12:35,090

225

00:12:35,090 --> 00:12:40,990
The War Refugee Board was
asking for a precise plans

226

00:12:40,990 --> 00:12:41,820
for accounts.

227

00:12:41,820 --> 00:12:44,350
You run up against this
whole thing, Claude,

228

00:12:44,350 --> 00:12:47,410
of the little story
I've told you before.

229

00:12:47,410 --> 00:12:51,100
That Daniel Reagan,
the commercial attache,

230

00:12:51,100 --> 00:12:54,340
sat in the floor above
me with instructions

231

00:12:54,340 --> 00:13:00,550
to put anybody who used American
money to buy a 10 Franc parcel

232

00:13:00,550 --> 00:13:02,380
and send to their
relatives in Germany

233

00:13:02,380 --> 00:13:05,740

on the blacklist as
trading with the enemy.

234

00:13:05,740 --> 00:13:08,980

I could sit downstairs
and send a bundle

235

00:13:08,980 --> 00:13:15,520

of half a million Swiss Francs
in currency through Nathan

236

00:13:15,520 --> 00:13:17,890

Schwab or Saly or
whatever the channel was

237

00:13:17,890 --> 00:13:20,630

into the middle of Hungary.

238

00:13:20,630 --> 00:13:23,560

So there was this
terrible decalage

239

00:13:23,560 --> 00:13:28,720

right there in perspective.

240

00:13:28,720 --> 00:13:32,400

Mr. Reagan finally completely
washed his hands of me.

241

00:13:32,400 --> 00:13:36,590

He said, "I can have nothing
to do with that mad man

242

00:13:36,590 --> 00:13:39,550

McClelland sitting down
under me, shoveling

243

00:13:39,550 --> 00:13:44,890

great piles of money into enemy
occupied territory when I have

244

00:13:44,890 --> 00:13:48,010
to do silly things like put
old ladies on the blacklist

245
00:13:48,010 --> 00:13:50,970
because they send their
cousin a parcel of--

246
00:13:50,970 --> 00:13:52,970
This is very interesting
because for, let's say,

247
00:13:52,970 --> 00:13:56,970
the American bureaucracy,
you were mad,

248
00:13:56,970 --> 00:14:01,560
and for the Rabbinical Jews,
you were not mad enough.

249
00:14:01,560 --> 00:14:03,820
You were in the middle.

250
00:14:03,820 --> 00:14:06,160
It's like the
situation, Claude, when

251
00:14:06,160 --> 00:14:09,280
the lawyers of both parties
write you nasty letters,

252
00:14:09,280 --> 00:14:11,200
then you're really
being impartial.

253
00:14:11,200 --> 00:14:17,890

254
00:14:17,890 --> 00:14:20,500
I was called by some
of my colleagues

255
00:14:20,500 --> 00:14:23,645

in the American
embassy Mr. McIsrael

256
00:14:23,645 --> 00:14:24,810
You were called McIsrael

257
00:14:24,810 --> 00:14:27,370
In fun, yes.

258
00:14:27,370 --> 00:14:31,000
I dealt with all those wild
Jews and their problems.

259
00:14:31,000 --> 00:14:32,890
This is part of this.

260
00:14:32,890 --> 00:14:39,820
I was dealing in another kind
of world, with which I was not

261
00:14:39,820 --> 00:14:41,470
that familiar either, you know.

262
00:14:41,470 --> 00:14:45,480
It took me a little
while to adjust.

263
00:14:45,480 --> 00:14:48,680
And you had to try to establish
some priorities and some order.

264
00:14:48,680 --> 00:14:51,520

265
00:14:51,520 --> 00:14:55,420
At times I didn't
even have a secretary

266
00:14:55,420 --> 00:14:57,050
because I couldn't
find anybody that

267

00:14:57,050 --> 00:15:00,050
would be cleared by the American
Legation to be employed.

268
00:15:00,050 --> 00:15:02,330
We couldn't send girls in
from the United States,

269
00:15:02,330 --> 00:15:05,960
and employing foreign girls,
you got into all the security

270
00:15:05,960 --> 00:15:08,490
problem.

271
00:15:08,490 --> 00:15:12,830
So I did a lot of work
single-handedly, telephone,

272
00:15:12,830 --> 00:15:16,910
typing, correspondence,
interviews, all the rest of it.

273
00:15:16,910 --> 00:15:21,150
Oh, yes, the amount of work that
you did is really incredible.

274
00:15:21,150 --> 00:15:23,060
It's too bad.

275
00:15:23,060 --> 00:15:25,790
I often said to
myself, if we'd had

276
00:15:25,790 --> 00:15:29,750
a tenth of 1% of the
resources the OSS had had,

277
00:15:29,750 --> 00:15:31,340
think what we could have done.

278
00:15:31,340 --> 00:15:33,750
The OSS was the intelligence?

279

00:15:33,750 --> 00:15:35,630
This was the forerunner of CIA.

280

00:15:35,630 --> 00:15:37,700
This was Allen
Dulles in Berne and

281

00:15:37,700 --> 00:15:44,240
the whole enormous apparatus,
from parachutists to money to--

282

00:15:44,240 --> 00:15:48,990

283

00:15:48,990 --> 00:15:50,080
Washington, McLelland.

284

00:15:50,080 --> 00:15:53,120

285

00:15:53,120 --> 00:15:55,470
You write in your report,
which I have here,

286

00:15:55,470 --> 00:15:59,330
that money was one
of the main tools

287

00:15:59,330 --> 00:16:01,130
that you can use
in order to rescue

288

00:16:01,130 --> 00:16:04,280
people, one of the main tools
of the War Refugee Board.

289

00:16:04,280 --> 00:16:09,700
And I have here one letter,
of the Rabbi Weissmandel

290

00:16:09,700 --> 00:16:14,840

from Slovakia, the one who sent
most of the messages and cable

291
00:16:14,840 --> 00:16:19,100
to Sternbuch for the
Hungarian affair.

292
00:16:19,100 --> 00:16:23,090
well the two things are
are astonishingly parallel.

293
00:16:23,090 --> 00:16:25,470
You say money is the main tool.

294
00:16:25,470 --> 00:16:28,120
And he writes this, "We
beg of you with tears

295
00:16:28,120 --> 00:16:30,020
running from our eyes.

296
00:16:30,020 --> 00:16:33,740
You have but one obligation,
to raise money on money

297
00:16:33,740 --> 00:16:38,810
on money in large quantities
and leave the advice

298
00:16:38,810 --> 00:16:42,265
and the suggestions to us."

299
00:16:42,265 --> 00:16:50,270
And he adds, "There are many
ways to save and there is only

300
00:16:50,270 --> 00:16:54,620
one thing missing that we
cannot get hold of, and that is

301
00:16:54,620 --> 00:16:56,260
the money."

302

00:16:56,260 --> 00:16:59,390

This means you agree
completely, as a matter of fact,

303

00:16:59,390 --> 00:17:04,099

with these religious
Rabbinical Jews.

304

00:17:04,099 --> 00:17:06,650

In that sense, yes.

305

00:17:06,650 --> 00:17:09,380

Which one would like to have
had other tools than money

306

00:17:09,380 --> 00:17:13,940

because the money always had
the implication that somebody

307

00:17:13,940 --> 00:17:15,034

was going to be bribed.

308

00:17:15,034 --> 00:17:20,300

309

00:17:20,300 --> 00:17:25,700

Also I was aware that the
pressure in Washington

310

00:17:25,700 --> 00:17:28,160

was always against
anything that was

311

00:17:28,160 --> 00:17:33,470

in any way ransom or
payment into enemy hands.

312

00:17:33,470 --> 00:17:37,070

But these people were ready
for any kind of ransom.

313

00:17:37,070 --> 00:17:41,000

They wanted to buy
Jews from the Germans.

314
00:17:41,000 --> 00:17:42,980
This is the point.

315
00:17:42,980 --> 00:17:45,740
Well, I think I probably
felt fundamentally

316
00:17:45,740 --> 00:17:49,520
that embarking on a program
solely on that basis

317
00:17:49,520 --> 00:17:57,410
was a never-ending and
probably fruitless proposition.

318
00:17:57,410 --> 00:18:03,290
You couldn't pay off and
buy from all of the Nazis

319
00:18:03,290 --> 00:18:06,350
in 100 different positions
who had some power

320
00:18:06,350 --> 00:18:11,210
over poor Jews money for them.

321
00:18:11,210 --> 00:18:12,590
The money would have run out.

322
00:18:12,590 --> 00:18:13,840
The money was limited.

323
00:18:13,840 --> 00:18:17,780
I don't recall that I had large
sums of discretionary money

324
00:18:17,780 --> 00:18:24,080
at my disposal so that I could
decide by myself, well fine,

325

00:18:24,080 --> 00:18:25,200

Dr. Sternbuch.

326

00:18:25,200 --> 00:18:29,630

Here is 500,000 Swiss Francs.

327

00:18:29,630 --> 00:18:31,320

More power to you.

328

00:18:31,320 --> 00:18:33,170

He would have taken them.

329

00:18:33,170 --> 00:18:34,350

Yeah, undoubtedly.

330

00:18:34,350 --> 00:18:38,750

But I didn't have 500,000
Francs of discretionary money

331

00:18:38,750 --> 00:18:40,650

and also I had to--

332

00:18:40,650 --> 00:18:43,920

and I don't remember the precise
instructions in that respect--

333

00:18:43,920 --> 00:18:48,710

but I am sure that I
had to receive approval

334

00:18:48,710 --> 00:18:53,390

from Washington
for major expenses.

335

00:18:53,390 --> 00:18:55,820

You needed approval
for major expenses?

336

00:18:55,820 --> 00:18:57,270

Major expenses.

337

00:18:57,270 --> 00:19:02,870
I would say maybe up to 50,000
Swiss Francs I could pay out

338
00:19:02,870 --> 00:19:05,390
on my discretion.

339
00:19:05,390 --> 00:19:09,050
I mean, I remember from the
latter part of the Musy affair,

340
00:19:09,050 --> 00:19:12,560
I think Sternbuch wanted
50,000 Francs to pay for what

341
00:19:12,560 --> 00:19:19,070
were allegedly Musy's travel
expenses to Germany and back

342
00:19:19,070 --> 00:19:23,690
in his Mercedes automobile
and his son's hotel rooms,

343
00:19:23,690 --> 00:19:26,100
or whatever it was.

344
00:19:26,100 --> 00:19:32,880
But you told me right now
that the ways they asked

345
00:19:32,880 --> 00:19:34,700
was not yours, as
a matter of fact.

346
00:19:34,700 --> 00:19:38,460

347
00:19:38,460 --> 00:19:41,030
When he writes, "We beg
of you with tears running

348
00:19:41,030 --> 00:19:43,670
from our eyes,"

that it's something

349

00:19:43,670 --> 00:19:47,620

which was very strange to
use, this way of asking, no?

350

00:19:47,620 --> 00:19:50,270

351

00:19:50,270 --> 00:19:50,945

Yes it was.

352

00:19:50,945 --> 00:19:55,730

353

00:19:55,730 --> 00:20:02,030

I tried to keep as orderly
a world within a totally

354

00:20:02,030 --> 00:20:05,090

disorderly situation.

355

00:20:05,090 --> 00:20:10,310

If a proposal came to me in
some reasonably concrete terms,

356

00:20:10,310 --> 00:20:12,500

let us say, even
if it was ransom,

357

00:20:12,500 --> 00:20:19,850

we have assurances that
Untersturmbannfuhrer Z, who

358

00:20:19,850 --> 00:20:23,750

is in charge of a camp
with 400 Jews in it,

359

00:20:23,750 --> 00:20:30,140

can be bought for 100,000
Swiss Francs or a bar of gold,

360

00:20:30,140 --> 00:20:38,680
and assurances that this is
a feasible proposition, fine.

361
00:20:38,680 --> 00:20:42,160
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

362
00:20:42,160 --> 00:20:45,170
--a completely open-ended
and kind of hysterical

363
00:20:45,170 --> 00:20:48,230
plea for unlimited
amounts of money

364
00:20:48,230 --> 00:20:53,390
to save unlimited
amounts of people

365
00:20:53,390 --> 00:20:59,870
was just too imprecise,
too emotional.

366
00:20:59,870 --> 00:21:02,330
Why do you say hysterical?

367
00:21:02,330 --> 00:21:03,080
Why do what?

368
00:21:03,080 --> 00:21:06,180
Why do you say hysterical?

369
00:21:06,180 --> 00:21:15,290
Well, hysterical in comparison
to practical proposals.

370
00:21:15,290 --> 00:21:19,100
I mean, proposals in practical
terms said in a quiet voice

371
00:21:19,100 --> 00:21:20,255
in simple language.

372

00:21:20,255 --> 00:21:23,570

373

00:21:23,570 --> 00:21:29,870

The facts can be just as clear
and precise without being

374

00:21:29,870 --> 00:21:31,920

couched in hysterical terms.

375

00:21:31,920 --> 00:21:40,010

This pushes us Anglo-Saxon
Americans, practical people,

376

00:21:40,010 --> 00:21:43,220

the wrong way, you see.

377

00:21:43,220 --> 00:21:48,360

Rather than helping their
cause by being hysterical,

378

00:21:48,360 --> 00:21:51,680

I think they harmed it,
as far as I was concerned.

379

00:21:51,680 --> 00:21:52,610

They harmed it?

380

00:21:52,610 --> 00:21:56,450

They harmed it, I guess,
because it made it difficult

381

00:21:56,450 --> 00:21:58,808

for me to help them.

382

00:21:58,808 --> 00:22:00,350

Because it's difficult
to understand,

383

00:22:00,350 --> 00:22:02,540

can you give an example
of a conversation

384
00:22:02,540 --> 00:22:06,200
with Sternbuch, for instance?

385
00:22:06,200 --> 00:22:09,560
I don't think I can in so
many words in the first place.

386
00:22:09,560 --> 00:22:13,590
The conversation I guess
was conducted in German.

387
00:22:13,590 --> 00:22:16,610
We had no other common
language and Sternbuch's German

388
00:22:16,610 --> 00:22:23,090
was, I suppose,
half Yiddish and was

389
00:22:23,090 --> 00:22:24,780
very difficult to understand.

390
00:22:24,780 --> 00:22:28,160

391
00:22:28,160 --> 00:22:30,250
He didn't speak French?

392
00:22:30,250 --> 00:22:33,170
He must have spoken some
French, but I don't recall

393
00:22:33,170 --> 00:22:35,810
that we spoke French together.

394
00:22:35,810 --> 00:22:39,080
We could have possibly,
but I don't think we did.

395
00:22:39,080 --> 00:22:45,230
Which even reinforced the sort

of wild Rabbinical stereotype.

396

00:22:45,230 --> 00:22:48,500

Yes that must have
been very difficult.

397

00:22:48,500 --> 00:22:54,950

And he was secondary
in my framework.

398

00:22:54,950 --> 00:22:59,235

My main contact was, of course,
Saly and the Joint Distribution

399

00:22:59,235 --> 00:22:59,735

Committee

400

00:22:59,735 --> 00:23:00,235

Saly Mayer.

401

00:23:00,235 --> 00:23:02,060

Can you explain why--

402

00:23:02,060 --> 00:23:04,160

Well, let me talk about the JDC.

403

00:23:04,160 --> 00:23:09,620

The JDC within the realm
of relief organizations

404

00:23:09,620 --> 00:23:12,140

is a solid,
established, practical,

405

00:23:12,140 --> 00:23:15,400

undoubtedly too conservative--

406

00:23:15,400 --> 00:23:17,030

the American Friends
Service Committee

407

00:23:17,030 --> 00:23:20,330

was also considered a very
conservative organization

408
00:23:20,330 --> 00:23:25,100
within the firmament of
relief organizations.

409
00:23:25,100 --> 00:23:27,290
Practical, you get
your work done,

410
00:23:27,290 --> 00:23:30,890
you attempt to respond
to positive needs.

411
00:23:30,890 --> 00:23:34,970

412
00:23:34,970 --> 00:23:38,990
Saly was the same way,
solid, every penny

413
00:23:38,990 --> 00:23:41,885
had to be accounted for
to the JDC in New York,

414
00:23:41,885 --> 00:23:46,310
he felt responsible to them.

415
00:23:46,310 --> 00:23:48,320
I felt he was
having his troubles

416
00:23:48,320 --> 00:23:51,710
with the various
Jewish factions, too.

417
00:23:51,710 --> 00:23:55,924
Nathan Schwab, of whom
I'm sure he was very fond,

418
00:23:55,924 --> 00:23:58,730
Saly introduced the

first time to me

419

00:23:58,730 --> 00:24:01,460

as the group that
specialized in blowing up

420

00:24:01,460 --> 00:24:02,700

buildings and Germans.

421

00:24:02,700 --> 00:24:05,480

422

00:24:05,480 --> 00:24:10,670

Blowing up buildings and
Nazis as an introduction

423

00:24:10,670 --> 00:24:13,610

to their methods
of combating this,

424

00:24:13,610 --> 00:24:18,707

which was certainly
one method of doing it.

425

00:24:18,707 --> 00:24:19,290

But this was--

426

00:24:19,290 --> 00:24:20,630

Nathan Schwab was what?

427

00:24:20,630 --> 00:24:23,960

He was that was a representative
of the Palestine Jews

428

00:24:23,960 --> 00:24:25,640

of the Zionists.

429

00:24:25,640 --> 00:24:30,890

But Saly regarded them as
sort of guerrilla fighters.

430

00:24:30,890 --> 00:24:33,050

Their methods were quite different than his.

431
00:24:33,050 --> 00:24:35,540
Saly Mayer was really a very conservative man?

432
00:24:35,540 --> 00:24:39,380
Very, very conservative in every respect.

433
00:24:39,380 --> 00:24:40,620
Yes.

434
00:24:40,620 --> 00:24:47,020
And he had personal distrust for the,

435
00:24:47,020 --> 00:24:51,830
let's say, the Eastern Jews himself?

436
00:24:51,830 --> 00:24:54,410
I suppose he had the same deformation

437
00:24:54,410 --> 00:25:00,530
that we spoke of earlier, of the Jewish old bourgeoisie

438
00:25:00,530 --> 00:25:05,280
and Basel had for the poor Jews from Eastern Europe.

439
00:25:05,280 --> 00:25:08,750
He was a solid business man from a conservative city and--

440
00:25:08,750 --> 00:25:10,380
Well, he was a businessman.

441
00:25:10,380 --> 00:25:17,460
He was the head of the

Jewish Swiss community.

442

00:25:17,460 --> 00:25:21,680

And he was the representative
of the Joint Distribution

443

00:25:21,680 --> 00:25:22,850

Committee.

444

00:25:22,850 --> 00:25:28,290

He was the man who had
the rescue money in hands.

445

00:25:28,290 --> 00:25:32,090

And he, of course, had to
deal with very conservative

446

00:25:32,090 --> 00:25:36,140

Swiss authorities who had no
real understanding of what

447

00:25:36,140 --> 00:25:40,790

was happening, whose
deformation, again,

448

00:25:40,790 --> 00:25:44,030

was the same one.

449

00:25:44,030 --> 00:25:50,190

This is a wild world in
every respect, the oppressors

450

00:25:50,190 --> 00:25:51,420

and the oppressed.

451

00:25:51,420 --> 00:25:55,770

This is something so far
from their normal frame

452

00:25:55,770 --> 00:25:57,600

of reference.

453

00:25:57,600 --> 00:26:00,330

I know the first time we
ever talked to Dr. Rothmund

454

00:26:00,330 --> 00:26:02,610

after the deportations
at Les Milles.

455

00:26:02,610 --> 00:26:06,240

And we'd come fresh from
France, of watching people

456

00:26:06,240 --> 00:26:08,080

being loaded into cattle cars.

457

00:26:08,080 --> 00:26:08,580

Excuse me.

458

00:26:08,580 --> 00:26:13,770

Dr. Rothmund was the chief
of the Swiss Federal Police.

459

00:26:13,770 --> 00:26:15,570

We had to go and call upon him.

460

00:26:15,570 --> 00:26:18,510

We were dependent upon
him for residence permits

461

00:26:18,510 --> 00:26:20,460

to work there-- this
was for the Quakers,

462

00:26:20,460 --> 00:26:23,310

this was before the
War Refugee Board.

463

00:26:23,310 --> 00:26:26,340

But I think he simply
didn't understand.

464

00:26:26,340 --> 00:26:29,130

He said the people are

turning up at our frontiers

465

00:26:29,130 --> 00:26:32,070

by the thousands,
desperate, hysterical.

466

00:26:32,070 --> 00:26:33,615

What is happening in France?

467

00:26:33,615 --> 00:26:38,290

468

00:26:38,290 --> 00:26:40,020

When they started
the deportations

469

00:26:40,020 --> 00:26:41,820

in the unoccupied zone, yes.

470

00:26:41,820 --> 00:26:46,060

I don't think he truthfully
really understood why.

471

00:26:46,060 --> 00:26:50,160

There was the problem of
young French non-Jews trying

472

00:26:50,160 --> 00:26:53,055

to escape the forced labor--

473

00:26:53,055 --> 00:27:54,000