

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,254

2

00:00:01,254 --> 00:00:02,090  
[SPEAKING FRENCH]

3

00:00:02,090 --> 00:00:05,570  
Washington, McClelland  
(film slating)

4

00:00:05,570 --> 00:00:08,540  
Well, we were talking,  
Claude, about the inability

5

00:00:08,540 --> 00:00:15,980  
of officials, people brought  
up in a certain background,

6

00:00:15,980 --> 00:00:18,590  
in particular,  
Rothmund, the head

7

00:00:18,590 --> 00:00:22,850  
of the Swiss federal police, to  
understand what was happening.

8

00:00:22,850 --> 00:00:26,690  
Again, this was an example  
of the inability of the what

9

00:00:26,690 --> 00:00:31,460  
you might call orderly  
civilized world.

10

00:00:31,460 --> 00:00:35,180  
Switzerland, for all  
its geographic location,

11

00:00:35,180 --> 00:00:38,360  
is a kind of an insular  
conservative place.

12

00:00:38,360 --> 00:00:41,900

And quite clearly, I can recall  
in our first interview with him

13

00:00:41,900 --> 00:00:44,720

when we came from France  
after the deportations

14

00:00:44,720 --> 00:00:50,330

in the summer of '42, that he  
simply did not understand why?

15

00:00:50,330 --> 00:00:53,600

What was this sort  
of a [NON-ENGLISH],,

16

00:00:53,600 --> 00:00:58,760

this hysterical fleeing  
toward the Swiss border?

17

00:00:58,760 --> 00:01:02,570

I'm sure part of this trouble--  
his trouble was that there were

18

00:01:02,570 --> 00:01:08,210

a lot of young French men,  
non-Jews, trying to get away

19

00:01:08,210 --> 00:01:11,690

from German forced  
labor recruiting,

20

00:01:11,690 --> 00:01:16,010

or recruiting by  
Vichy for Germany.

21

00:01:16,010 --> 00:01:20,030

I'm sure he also felt that  
conservative, wealthy,

22

00:01:20,030 --> 00:01:21,860

well-ordered  
Switzerland was going

23  
00:01:21,860 --> 00:01:25,100  
to be swamped with a lot  
of wild and hungry people.

24  
00:01:25,100 --> 00:01:27,720

25  
00:01:27,720 --> 00:01:30,590  
Whether in this context,  
but at a later time,

26  
00:01:30,590 --> 00:01:33,740  
I can remember Rothmund  
saying that, why,

27  
00:01:33,740 --> 00:01:37,310  
if we had to receive 50,000  
refugees in Switzerland,

28  
00:01:37,310 --> 00:01:41,210  
this would be an intolerable  
burden, which, I mean,

29  
00:01:41,210 --> 00:01:42,950  
was manifestly ridiculous.

30  
00:01:42,950 --> 00:01:44,180  
But this is an--

31  
00:01:44,180 --> 00:01:47,500  
in practical terms,  
this was an indication

32  
00:01:47,500 --> 00:01:49,285  
of his point of view.

33  
00:01:49,285 --> 00:01:51,410  
He was not the only one to  
have this point of view.

34  
00:01:51,410 --> 00:01:54,970

I think we were able to give him  
some idea of what had happened.

35  
00:01:54,970 --> 00:01:56,810  
I assume he believed us.

36  
00:01:56,810 --> 00:01:59,420  
And I think after that,  
he informed himself more

37  
00:01:59,420 --> 00:02:00,200  
precisely.

38  
00:02:00,200 --> 00:02:04,610  
I don't know what channels of  
intelligence the Swiss had--

39  
00:02:04,610 --> 00:02:09,160  
police intelligence as to  
what was going on in France.

40  
00:02:09,160 --> 00:02:10,830  
But--

41  
00:02:10,830 --> 00:02:17,420  
But do you know that already  
in 1938 after the Nazi invaded

42  
00:02:17,420 --> 00:02:20,950  
Austria, Rothmund was the one--

43  
00:02:20,950 --> 00:02:24,005  
and this is absolutely  
documented--

44  
00:02:24,005 --> 00:02:30,110  
who asked the Germans to  
mark the Jews from Germany

45  
00:02:30,110 --> 00:02:34,040  
and from Austria with  
a special insignia

46

00:02:34,040 --> 00:02:38,320

in the passport with  
a G because he wanted

47

00:02:38,320 --> 00:02:40,210

to protect the Swiss border.

48

00:02:40,210 --> 00:02:42,970

It was the same already in 1938.

49

00:02:42,970 --> 00:02:46,600

The Germans, at the beginning,  
they didn't want to do this.

50

00:02:46,600 --> 00:02:47,530

But they did it.

51

00:02:47,530 --> 00:02:53,890

But the man who asked  
for this segregation

52

00:02:53,890 --> 00:02:56,290

was Rothmund himself.

53

00:02:56,290 --> 00:03:02,200

Well, I suppose in his mind,  
Claude, like in Laval's mind,

54

00:03:02,200 --> 00:03:06,010

although the comparison  
is probably not valid,

55

00:03:06,010 --> 00:03:12,970

Jews were synonymous with  
something disorderly, hungry,

56

00:03:12,970 --> 00:03:19,270

ragged, poor, the antithesis  
of a sort of well-ordered,

57

00:03:19,270 --> 00:03:24,790

[NON-ENGLISH] Swiss existence

that they didn't want upset

58

00:03:24,790 --> 00:03:25,450  
in any way.

59

00:03:25,450 --> 00:03:28,300  
But he is not the only  
one [INTERPOSING VOICES]..

60

00:03:28,300 --> 00:03:34,630  
When Lord Moyne was high  
commissioner in Egypt,

61

00:03:34,630 --> 00:03:38,200  
when he was offered  
by Brand, Joel Brand--

62

00:03:38,200 --> 00:03:40,750  
you know the story, to--

63

00:03:40,750 --> 00:03:46,910  
when Brand came to him and said,  
we can save one million Jews.

64

00:03:46,910 --> 00:03:50,425  
Lord Moyne answered, what would  
I do with one million Jews?

65

00:03:50,425 --> 00:03:53,730

66

00:03:53,730 --> 00:03:56,370  
This was the general case.

67

00:03:56,370 --> 00:03:58,860  
I think it became  
mitigated later on.

68

00:03:58,860 --> 00:04:04,980  
We had some success in Geneva  
at a local level with the border

69

00:04:04,980 --> 00:04:05,670  
police.

70  
00:04:05,670 --> 00:04:11,820  
And I'm sure this was not  
without Rothmund's knowledge.

71  
00:04:11,820 --> 00:04:14,400  
They probably would not  
have done it independently

72  
00:04:14,400 --> 00:04:16,240  
with getting people in.

73  
00:04:16,240 --> 00:04:18,060  
But there were a lot  
of complaints though

74  
00:04:18,060 --> 00:04:21,660  
about the Swiss Border Police  
even in the Swiss press.

75  
00:04:21,660 --> 00:04:23,160  
There were, yes.

76  
00:04:23,160 --> 00:04:25,030  
Yes.

77  
00:04:25,030 --> 00:04:28,260  
Well, bureaucracies,  
and specifically

78  
00:04:28,260 --> 00:04:31,080  
police bureaucracies,  
are not notably

79  
00:04:31,080 --> 00:04:35,930  
flexible or humanitarian or--

80  
00:04:35,930 --> 00:04:38,010  
But you used [INAUDIBLE]..  
you precisely --

81

00:04:38,010 --> 00:04:39,570

To a limited extent we did.

82

00:04:39,570 --> 00:04:40,528

To get some assistance.

83

00:04:40,528 --> 00:04:43,260

Yes, with the assistance  
of other people.

84

00:04:43,260 --> 00:04:45,870

Geneva was a  
considerable headquarters

85

00:04:45,870 --> 00:04:50,640

of representatives  
of French resistance

86

00:04:50,640 --> 00:04:53,280

and other organizations.

87

00:04:53,280 --> 00:04:59,390

There was an evident sympathy  
between Francophone Geneva

88

00:04:59,390 --> 00:05:03,500

and France, a lot of relations  
with Leone across the border.

89

00:05:03,500 --> 00:05:12,120

The FFI people were there,  
the French Protestant church,

90

00:05:12,120 --> 00:05:14,130

who had friends in  
the administration

91

00:05:14,130 --> 00:05:16,830

in Geneva and  
contacts that I didn't

92

00:05:16,830 --> 00:05:19,530



have as an American there.

93

00:05:19,530 --> 00:05:21,660

And eventually,  
we got a good deal

94

00:05:21,660 --> 00:05:26,520

of-- a good deal more  
freedom and sympathy

95

00:05:26,520 --> 00:05:27,960

as things got worse.

96

00:05:27,960 --> 00:05:32,250

Of course, again, it was  
too late and too little.

97

00:05:32,250 --> 00:05:33,330

I don't think it was--

98

00:05:33,330 --> 00:05:34,860

maybe-- I don't  
know whether there's

99

00:05:34,860 --> 00:05:37,470

any history of anti-Semitism  
in Switzerland.

100

00:05:37,470 --> 00:05:40,110

I don't think it was  
anti-Semitism per such-- se.

101

00:05:40,110 --> 00:05:44,240

The Swiss Jewish community  
was so relatively small.

102

00:05:44,240 --> 00:05:46,980

It was simply that  
Rothmund, for him, this

103

00:05:46,980 --> 00:05:50,980

represented forces of disorder  
somehow or for whatever reason.

104  
00:05:50,980 --> 00:05:54,090  
And his job was to keep  
Switzerland an orderly place.

105  
00:05:54,090 --> 00:05:57,240  
He had to protect Switzerland.

106  
00:05:57,240 --> 00:05:59,790  
He later, I think,  
went a long ways

107  
00:05:59,790 --> 00:06:03,540  
on the whole Becher  
negotiations,

108  
00:06:03,540 --> 00:06:07,320  
and a lot of those hatchet  
men who came out along

109  
00:06:07,320 --> 00:06:09,420  
with Becher--

110  
00:06:09,420 --> 00:06:12,410  
Could you talk more specifically  
about this negotiations.

111  
00:06:12,410 --> 00:06:14,155  
--letting them in.

112  
00:06:14,155 --> 00:06:16,280  
Saly mainly dealt with him.

113  
00:06:16,280 --> 00:06:19,800  
Now, it would be a lot easier  
for a man like Saly Mayer

114  
00:06:19,800 --> 00:06:23,130  
to talk to Heinrich  
Rothmund and understand him.

115  
00:06:23,130 --> 00:06:27,440

They were both Swiss bourgeois,  
[INAUDIBLE] bourgeois.

116  
00:06:27,440 --> 00:06:29,130  
You mean it was easy to talk?

117  
00:06:29,130 --> 00:06:30,645  
Easier for them.

118  
00:06:30,645 --> 00:06:33,270  
Easier for Saly to persuade him  
than it might have been for me.

119  
00:06:33,270 --> 00:06:34,650  
I was, after all, a foreigner.

120  
00:06:34,650 --> 00:06:38,520  
I was a man half his age.

121  
00:06:38,520 --> 00:06:40,560  
I think he liked us  
and respected us,

122  
00:06:40,560 --> 00:06:44,890  
but we were small potatoes.

123  
00:06:44,890 --> 00:06:47,520  
I don't know what Rothmund ever  
thought about the War Refugee

124  
00:06:47,520 --> 00:06:48,090  
Board.

125  
00:06:48,090 --> 00:06:50,760  
I don't think we ever  
discussed it per se.

126  
00:06:50,760 --> 00:06:55,590  
Although he knew what  
we were trying to do.

127  
00:06:55,590 --> 00:06:58,320

Just so long as it wasn't  
too much at the expense

128  
00:06:58,320 --> 00:07:04,110  
of Switzerland's orderly  
existence, why, all right.

129  
00:07:04,110 --> 00:07:07,650  
Also the general conditions of  
the world were changing too.

130  
00:07:07,650 --> 00:07:08,260  
Yes.

131  
00:07:08,260 --> 00:07:08,760  
Yes.

132  
00:07:08,760 --> 00:07:11,440

133  
00:07:11,440 --> 00:07:15,235  
And they took a fairly big  
chunk of refugees of their own.

134  
00:07:15,235 --> 00:07:17,980  
They brought somewhere  
in the neighborhood

135  
00:07:17,980 --> 00:07:23,950  
of 20,000 people repatriated  
from the Southern Ukraine, whom

136  
00:07:23,950 --> 00:07:25,720  
they considered  
Swiss citizens who

137  
00:07:25,720 --> 00:07:29,720  
had gone to Russia in the time  
of Catherine the Great, who

138  
00:07:29,720 --> 00:07:31,900  
didn't even speak  
Suisse-Deutsch anymore.

139  
00:07:31,900 --> 00:07:35,090  
They put them in schools to  
teach them Suisse-Deutsch.

140  
00:07:35,090 --> 00:07:35,910  
As they came back.

141  
00:07:35,910 --> 00:07:36,850  
As they came back.

142  
00:07:36,850 --> 00:07:38,815  
Once a Swiss, always a Swiss.

143  
00:07:38,815 --> 00:07:41,780  
You never lose  
Swiss nationality.

144  
00:07:41,780 --> 00:07:42,610  
Yes.

145  
00:07:42,610 --> 00:07:43,690  
[INAUDIBLE]

146  
00:07:43,690 --> 00:07:45,860  
It's eternal.

147  
00:07:45,860 --> 00:07:48,060  
Yes.

148  
00:07:48,060 --> 00:07:51,000  
So this was one of the  
underlying difficulties

149  
00:07:51,000 --> 00:07:54,630  
everywhere, the  
inability to understand

150  
00:07:54,630 --> 00:07:55,695  
until it was too late--

151

00:07:55,695 --> 00:07:58,960

152

00:07:58,960 --> 00:07:59,730

Yes, is--

153

00:07:59,730 --> 00:08:01,260

--for, I think, human relations.

154

00:08:01,260 --> 00:08:06,870

If somebody confronts you with  
a horrible picture and an image

155

00:08:06,870 --> 00:08:09,930

completely outside the  
context of your experience,

156

00:08:09,930 --> 00:08:12,540

what is your reaction?

157

00:08:12,540 --> 00:08:14,850

You hide your face, or  
you don't believe it,

158

00:08:14,850 --> 00:08:22,500

or you rationalize it, or some  
sort of protective mechanism.

159

00:08:22,500 --> 00:08:24,210

You know, you had  
to protect yourself.

160

00:08:24,210 --> 00:08:27,330

I had to protect myself  
in not thinking of this

161

00:08:27,330 --> 00:08:29,940

in terms of any individual.

162

00:08:29,940 --> 00:08:32,460

As soon as you thought  
about the single individual

163

00:08:32,460 --> 00:08:37,140

you knew as a human being,  
then it became too painful.

164

00:08:37,140 --> 00:08:38,907

You had to--

165

00:08:38,907 --> 00:08:39,990

It's when you [INAUDIBLE].

166

00:08:39,990 --> 00:08:40,990

It's the same thing as--

167

00:08:40,990 --> 00:08:43,980

[INAUDIBLE] thinking, what, in  
terms of a statistic or for--

168

00:08:43,980 --> 00:08:45,570

Well, yes, you have  
to try to think

169

00:08:45,570 --> 00:08:47,030

of working with the group.

170

00:08:47,030 --> 00:08:49,890

You don't try to save A or  
B because he's a nice man,

171

00:08:49,890 --> 00:08:56,590

and he's a violinist or a  
scientist or you know, it's--

172

00:08:56,590 --> 00:08:59,640

As I say, it was a--

173

00:08:59,640 --> 00:09:05,960

maybe a better approach, because  
the Jews tried to [? serve ?]

174

00:09:05,960 --> 00:09:07,460

in [? Hungary ?] per se.

175

00:09:07,460 --> 00:09:12,060

They decided to [? serve ?]  
a kind of [NON-ENGLISH],,

176

00:09:12,060 --> 00:09:15,040

the [INAUDIBLE] of  
the Jewish community.

177

00:09:15,040 --> 00:09:19,730

Kasztner which is  
not good at all too.

178

00:09:19,730 --> 00:09:22,530

Yes, you don't like to be  
confronted with these choices.

179

00:09:22,530 --> 00:09:25,190

I don't see how they made them.

180

00:09:25,190 --> 00:09:26,760

How did they choose?

181

00:09:26,760 --> 00:09:28,550

That's a big problem.

182

00:09:28,550 --> 00:09:31,780

Anybody, I suppose.

183

00:09:31,780 --> 00:09:33,600

In a strictly Quaker  
point of view,

184

00:09:33,600 --> 00:09:35,150

they were all children of God.

185

00:09:35,150 --> 00:09:37,105

You can't pick one or the other.

186

00:09:37,105 --> 00:09:38,880

In the Quaker point of view.

187



00:09:38,880 --> 00:09:39,380  
Yeah.

188  
00:09:39,380 --> 00:09:40,970  
If you take a  
strictly theological

189  
00:09:40,970 --> 00:09:42,590  
Quaker point of view.

190  
00:09:42,590 --> 00:09:43,130  
Yes.

191  
00:09:43,130 --> 00:09:44,340  
Could you explain this?

192  
00:09:44,340 --> 00:09:47,120  
Well, I'm not enough of  
a Quaker philosopher.

193  
00:09:47,120 --> 00:09:53,670  
But, you know, the  
Quaker faith doesn't--

194  
00:09:53,670 --> 00:09:56,420  
does not use any intermediaries.

195  
00:09:56,420 --> 00:09:59,450  
Man is considered to be  
in direct communication

196  
00:09:59,450 --> 00:10:04,075  
with the divine spirit, and you  
do not need any intermediaries.

197  
00:10:04,075 --> 00:10:05,450  
This is what the  
Quakers referred

198  
00:10:05,450 --> 00:10:11,240  
to as the divine light,  
which is in every man.

199

00:10:11,240 --> 00:10:14,510

And you do not need the  
intermediary of a church

200

00:10:14,510 --> 00:10:21,030

or a religion or ritual  
or anything else.

201

00:10:21,030 --> 00:10:26,700

So within that context one human  
life is as good as the other.

202

00:10:26,700 --> 00:10:29,720

But when it comes  
to practical terms,

203

00:10:29,720 --> 00:10:33,020

obviously, some people are going  
to be more useful to humanity

204

00:10:33,020 --> 00:10:36,500

than others, and so  
you have to presume

205

00:10:36,500 --> 00:10:41,664

to select those that you  
think will be more useful.

206

00:10:41,664 --> 00:10:42,460

Did such a--

207

00:10:42,460 --> 00:10:44,930

But theologically, it is  
not your right to do so.

208

00:10:44,930 --> 00:10:45,860

Did it happen to you?

209

00:10:45,860 --> 00:10:46,693

To have [INAUDIBLE].

210

00:10:46,693 --> 00:10:49,100

Only in one or two  
instances, happily.

211  
00:10:49,100 --> 00:10:51,290  
Only in one or two instances.

212  
00:10:51,290 --> 00:10:52,070  
For instance?

213  
00:10:52,070 --> 00:10:54,230  
Well, we had one night  
at Les Milles when they

214  
00:10:54,230 --> 00:10:57,230  
were loading up the trains.

215  
00:10:57,230 --> 00:11:00,010  
The camp commandant came to  
me with an old American--

216  
00:11:00,010 --> 00:11:01,730  
To transfer for the deportation?

217  
00:11:01,730 --> 00:11:03,530  
To go to Drancy--

218  
00:11:03,530 --> 00:11:04,490  
on route for Drancy.

219  
00:11:04,490 --> 00:11:05,930  
Auschwitz.

220  
00:11:05,930 --> 00:11:07,530  
Passport of an old--

221  
00:11:07,530 --> 00:11:08,045  
an old--

222  
00:11:08,045 --> 00:11:12,686

223

00:11:12,686 --> 00:11:13,960  
[FRENCH]

224  
00:11:13,960 --> 00:11:15,966  
Washington, McClelland  
(film slating)

225  
00:11:15,966 --> 00:11:17,340

226  
00:11:17,340 --> 00:11:18,260  
OK.

227  
00:11:18,260 --> 00:11:20,780  
Well, we were talking, Claude,  
about the matter of having

228  
00:11:20,780 --> 00:11:26,360  
to make these terrible choices  
within a context of this sort

229  
00:11:26,360 --> 00:11:28,820  
where everybody was threat --

230  
00:11:28,820 --> 00:11:30,320  
threatened.

231  
00:11:30,320 --> 00:11:33,200  
I can recall one occasion  
in the little camp

232  
00:11:33,200 --> 00:11:35,840  
of Les Milles outside Marseille  
when they were loading up

233  
00:11:35,840 --> 00:11:37,040  
the trains that night.

234  
00:11:37,040 --> 00:11:41,540  
The commander of the camp came  
to me with an old and battered

235

00:11:41,540 --> 00:11:43,610  
and tattered American  
passport that must

236  
00:11:43,610 --> 00:11:45,440  
have been 20 or 30 years old.

237  
00:11:45,440 --> 00:11:50,900  
And he said, this belongs  
to an old Polish Jew,

238  
00:11:50,900 --> 00:11:55,920  
and I'll take him off the train  
on the basis of this passport

239  
00:11:55,920 --> 00:11:58,200  
if you ask me to.

240  
00:11:58,200 --> 00:12:01,880  
And-- but he said, if I  
take him off the train,

241  
00:12:01,880 --> 00:12:04,370  
I have to put somebody  
else in his place.

242  
00:12:04,370 --> 00:12:07,010  
He had a quota of  
so many people.

243  
00:12:07,010 --> 00:12:10,130  
What do you wish me to do?

244  
00:12:10,130 --> 00:12:12,140  
Well, I said, put  
him on the train.

245  
00:12:12,140 --> 00:12:13,700  
He was 75 years old.

246  
00:12:13,700 --> 00:12:14,660  
He was senile.

247

00:12:14,660 --> 00:12:17,510

The passport was 30 years old.

248

00:12:17,510 --> 00:12:22,590

But, you know, was it my right  
to make any such decision?

249

00:12:22,590 --> 00:12:25,760

I don't know that possibly  
100% Quaker would have made it,

250

00:12:25,760 --> 00:12:29,480

but I wasn't 100% Quaker.

251

00:12:29,480 --> 00:12:35,140

So we-- these are choices I'm  
sure that confronted people

252

00:12:35,140 --> 00:12:37,840

like Kasztner and the  
people in Bratislava.

253

00:12:37,840 --> 00:12:42,103

And you get what you can.

254

00:12:42,103 --> 00:12:43,270

Every [? way ?] [INAUDIBLE].

255

00:12:43,270 --> 00:12:44,410

You get what you can.

256

00:12:44,410 --> 00:12:48,190

If you have the luxury  
of choosing the best,

257

00:12:48,190 --> 00:12:53,370

I think you have to presume to  
make that decision yourself.

258

00:12:53,370 --> 00:12:56,130

Yes.

259

00:12:56,130 --> 00:12:58,980

You, you said that  
you had another case?

260

00:12:58,980 --> 00:13:01,490

261

00:13:01,490 --> 00:13:06,200

That's really the one I  
remember most vividly of having

262

00:13:06,200 --> 00:13:09,410

to make a choice of that kind.

263

00:13:09,410 --> 00:13:12,170

My wife had to make  
similar choices of children

264

00:13:12,170 --> 00:13:16,340

to be selected in France  
to go to the United States

265

00:13:16,340 --> 00:13:20,540

from children in children's  
colonies, Jewish children whose

266

00:13:20,540 --> 00:13:22,490

parents knew they would  
never see them again.

267

00:13:22,490 --> 00:13:25,130

268

00:13:25,130 --> 00:13:29,670

She went through the  
same anguish too.

269

00:13:29,670 --> 00:13:30,230

Yes.

270

00:13:30,230 --> 00:13:34,970

How do you choose one

child and not another?

271

00:13:34,970 --> 00:13:38,720

You choose the brightest  
ones, or the youngest ones,

272

00:13:38,720 --> 00:13:40,880

or the ones--

273

00:13:40,880 --> 00:13:43,490

naturally, there were ones  
who had no parents that

274

00:13:43,490 --> 00:13:45,380

were the easiest.

275

00:13:45,380 --> 00:13:47,300

But many of them  
had parents there.

276

00:13:47,300 --> 00:13:50,170

277

00:13:50,170 --> 00:13:51,270

Yes.

278

00:13:51,270 --> 00:14:01,270

And what is your general  
evaluation about the bargaining

279

00:14:01,270 --> 00:14:03,040

to buy Jews from the Nazi.

280

00:14:03,040 --> 00:14:06,700

281

00:14:06,700 --> 00:14:08,820

Well, I don't know whether  
we should formulate it

282

00:14:08,820 --> 00:14:11,380

that flatly, to buy



Jews from the Nazis.

283

00:14:11,380 --> 00:14:13,000

I suppose that's what it was.

284

00:14:13,000 --> 00:14:15,400

Our role of the War

Refugee Board, as you know,

285

00:14:15,400 --> 00:14:21,520

was simply one to back  
up the negotiations that

286

00:14:21,520 --> 00:14:23,710

started at the

Budapest end and ended

287

00:14:23,710 --> 00:14:31,300

up in Saly Mayer's hands partly  
by happenstance, as you know.

288

00:14:31,300 --> 00:14:34,510

There was no higher choice  
of this particular man

289

00:14:34,510 --> 00:14:35,500

to negotiate.

290

00:14:35,500 --> 00:14:38,950

But it fell to him

too, so that he had

291

00:14:38,950 --> 00:14:40,420

to make that type of choice.

292

00:14:40,420 --> 00:14:45,620

293

00:14:45,620 --> 00:14:47,330

I think it was helpful.

294

00:14:47,330 --> 00:14:49,840

However it was  
construed by the Nazis,

295  
00:14:49,840 --> 00:14:53,830  
we obviously wish them to  
construe this of evidence

296  
00:14:53,830 --> 00:14:56,110  
of allied concern, of--

297  
00:14:56,110 --> 00:15:00,250

298  
00:15:00,250 --> 00:15:07,680  
that what they were doing was  
not going to be forgotten.

299  
00:15:07,680 --> 00:15:09,610  
Saly-- I say we.

300  
00:15:09,610 --> 00:15:12,550  
These negotiations were  
conducted primarily

301  
00:15:12,550 --> 00:15:13,570  
by Saly Mayer.

302  
00:15:13,570 --> 00:15:16,660  
I remained in the background.

303  
00:15:16,660 --> 00:15:18,130  
He kept me informed.

304  
00:15:18,130 --> 00:15:21,520  
I tried to keep  
Washington informed.

305  
00:15:21,520 --> 00:15:23,330  
It was a holding operation.

306  
00:15:23,330 --> 00:15:26,020  
We had no authority to

pay anybody any money.

307

00:15:26,020 --> 00:15:29,620

308

00:15:29,620 --> 00:15:31,780

The most positive  
authority we ever

309

00:15:31,780 --> 00:15:34,090

got towards the end  
of the whole business

310

00:15:34,090 --> 00:15:38,320

was to show the  
Nazis a letter which

311

00:15:38,320 --> 00:15:42,610

said that there was on deposit  
to the credit of Saly Mayer

312

00:15:42,610 --> 00:15:46,940

and myself and the  
Swiss National Bank--

313

00:15:46,940 --> 00:15:49,660

20 million Swiss francs.

314

00:15:49,660 --> 00:15:53,050

But in actual fact,  
neither Saly nor I

315

00:15:53,050 --> 00:15:56,110

had authority to turn  
this money over to them.

316

00:15:56,110 --> 00:16:00,660

But the money was a  
deposit in a block account.

317

00:16:00,660 --> 00:16:01,810

It was a blocked account.

318

00:16:01,810 --> 00:16:04,660

It had to have both Saly's  
signature and my signature

319

00:16:04,660 --> 00:16:07,720

to be taken out.

320

00:16:07,720 --> 00:16:09,970

And my instructions  
were categorically

321

00:16:09,970 --> 00:16:14,580

that I could not sign for  
anything that was ransom.

322

00:16:14,580 --> 00:16:16,815

But another asset of  
these negotiations

323

00:16:16,815 --> 00:16:20,825

is when you entered  
yourself into negotiation,

324

00:16:20,825 --> 00:16:21,700

you showed yourself--

325

00:16:21,700 --> 00:16:22,540

Only once.

326

00:16:22,540 --> 00:16:23,110

Only once.

327

00:16:23,110 --> 00:16:24,400

Only once.

328

00:16:24,400 --> 00:16:26,440

Well, I think this made  
a very big impression

329

00:16:26,440 --> 00:16:28,480

on the German Party.

330

00:16:28,480 --> 00:16:29,920

We hoped.

331

00:16:29,920 --> 00:16:31,810

We hoped.

332

00:16:31,810 --> 00:16:36,190

Saly, I think, staged it quite  
effectively and as dramatically

333

00:16:36,190 --> 00:16:38,020

as possible.

334

00:16:38,020 --> 00:16:40,380

Do you-- do you recollect  
a meeting with--

335

00:16:40,380 --> 00:16:43,840

336

00:16:43,840 --> 00:16:44,440

Becher?

337

00:16:44,440 --> 00:16:47,140

[NON-ENGLISH]

338

00:16:47,140 --> 00:16:49,780

Not in detail, really.

339

00:16:49,780 --> 00:16:50,575

Not in detail.

340

00:16:50,575 --> 00:16:53,320

341

00:16:53,320 --> 00:16:56,480

I've told this story  
in various places.

342

00:16:56,480 --> 00:17:01,390

I think it's available

to the interested public.

343

00:17:01,390 --> 00:17:05,008

Yes, but please,  
you are here now.

344

00:17:05,008 --> 00:17:06,300

It was the first negotiations--

345

00:17:06,300 --> 00:17:09,470

Well, this was really--

346

00:17:09,470 --> 00:17:13,760

what Saly had told Becher  
precisely beforehand, who I was

347

00:17:13,760 --> 00:17:15,829

and what I represented,  
I do not know.

348

00:17:15,829 --> 00:17:19,970

I presume that he presented  
it in as exalted terms

349

00:17:19,970 --> 00:17:23,240

as possible, that I was no  
doubt a personal representative

350

00:17:23,240 --> 00:17:27,800

of President Roosevelt's  
specifically negotiated,

351

00:17:27,800 --> 00:17:32,360

specifically empowered  
to talk with him

352

00:17:32,360 --> 00:17:34,900

about these proposals of his.

353

00:17:34,900 --> 00:17:36,800

But as a question,  
can you summarize

354

00:17:36,800 --> 00:17:40,850

what was at stake, as a  
matter of fact, at this time?

355

00:17:40,850 --> 00:17:43,850

Cessation of the deportation  
in the first instance

356

00:17:43,850 --> 00:17:48,590

of the remaining  
Jews from Hungary;

357

00:17:48,590 --> 00:17:52,970

cessation of the entire program  
of killing and exterminating

358

00:17:52,970 --> 00:17:54,535

Jews in a larger sense.

359

00:17:54,535 --> 00:18:01,370

The last deportations took place  
in Slovakia in September '44,

360

00:18:01,370 --> 00:18:04,460

and these people were shipped  
directly to Auschwitz.

361

00:18:04,460 --> 00:18:07,200

And you met Becher in November--

362

00:18:07,200 --> 00:18:08,400

the 5th of November.

363

00:18:08,400 --> 00:18:10,888

So that had already happened.

364

00:18:10,888 --> 00:18:11,930

So that already happened.

365

00:18:11,930 --> 00:18:13,910

That had already happened.

366

00:18:13,910 --> 00:18:18,340

But there was still a good  
many Jews left in Budapest.

367

00:18:18,340 --> 00:18:20,970

And what was the incident  
of the time that--

368

00:18:20,970 --> 00:18:21,560

[INAUDIBLE]

369

00:18:21,560 --> 00:18:24,530

--Eichmann had the  
66 trains all ready.

370

00:18:24,530 --> 00:18:27,080

371

00:18:27,080 --> 00:18:31,550

The group that-- the other  
group that ended up in Strasshof

372

00:18:31,550 --> 00:18:35,960

instead of going to Auschwitz.

373

00:18:35,960 --> 00:18:42,110

This was a long,  
torturous, delaying action

374

00:18:42,110 --> 00:18:47,900

in an effort to  
play upon anything

375

00:18:47,900 --> 00:18:53,810

that could be utilized,  
ranging from Becher's

376

00:18:53,810 --> 00:18:57,380

personal vanities--

377

00:18:57,380 --> 00:18:58,670

And to win time.



378  
00:18:58,670 --> 00:19:03,050  
And to gain time,  
as the war, as far

379  
00:19:03,050 --> 00:19:08,150  
as the Nazis were concerned,  
got worse and worse for them.

380  
00:19:08,150 --> 00:19:12,220  
And what were-- what was  
the reasons of the Nazis?

381  
00:19:12,220 --> 00:19:20,990  
And motives of the Nazi  
for keeping on these talks,

382  
00:19:20,990 --> 00:19:22,750  
on these discussions?

383  
00:19:22,750 --> 00:19:23,370  
This is a--

384  
00:19:23,370 --> 00:19:24,590  
Well, they wanted--

385  
00:19:24,590 --> 00:19:25,923  
[? --motives ?] [? of ?] Becher.

386  
00:19:25,923 --> 00:19:28,710  
They wanted material goods  
in the first instance,

387  
00:19:28,710 --> 00:19:32,210  
the famous trucks, the supplies.

388  
00:19:32,210 --> 00:19:34,450  
We told them that  
was impossible,

389  
00:19:34,450 --> 00:19:40,940  
that the United States could

not be expected to supply them

390

00:19:40,940 --> 00:19:43,160  
with material which  
would assist their war

391

00:19:43,160 --> 00:19:48,200  
effort in return for  
stopping doing something

392

00:19:48,200 --> 00:19:51,230  
that they shouldn't have been  
doing in the first place.

393

00:19:51,230 --> 00:19:53,780  
I don't know that Becher  
ever gave any justification

394

00:19:53,780 --> 00:19:56,360  
of the Jewish extermination.

395

00:19:56,360 --> 00:20:01,940  
He posed as a disinterested  
party in a way.

396

00:20:01,940 --> 00:20:06,500  
He was no part of Eichmann,  
Kaltenbrunner, Mueller,

397

00:20:06,500 --> 00:20:12,440  
the whole rest of the  
extermination wing of the SS.

398

00:20:12,440 --> 00:20:15,200  
He represented the  
commercial wing.

399

00:20:15,200 --> 00:20:20,360  
He was-- had been placed in  
charge of the ManfrÃ©d Weiss

400

00:20:20,360 --> 00:20:23,070  
empire, which was a

considerable one in Hungary.

401

00:20:23,070 --> 00:20:23,625

In Hungary.

402

00:20:23,625 --> 00:20:26,130

403

00:20:26,130 --> 00:20:27,320

[INAUDIBLE]

404

00:20:27,320 --> 00:20:30,920

He had pretensions to  
being a gentleman farmer.

405

00:20:30,920 --> 00:20:32,030

He liked horses.

406

00:20:32,030 --> 00:20:33,260

He liked pretty paintings.

407

00:20:33,260 --> 00:20:36,950

He liked nice houses  
in the country.

408

00:20:36,950 --> 00:20:46,310

He indicated to Saly, certainly,  
that he was not part of these--

409

00:20:46,310 --> 00:20:48,440

the hanker.

410

00:20:48,440 --> 00:20:50,680

This wasn't his business.

411

00:20:50,680 --> 00:20:55,855

That was done by other lower--

412

00:20:55,855 --> 00:21:01,400

And how did Saly Mayer  
conduct the talks with them,

413

00:21:01,400 --> 00:21:04,400

because there were  
several meetings, no?

414

00:21:04,400 --> 00:21:07,520

I was present only at one.

415

00:21:07,520 --> 00:21:08,020

Yes.

416

00:21:08,020 --> 00:21:08,520

[INAUDIBLE]

417

00:21:08,520 --> 00:21:11,480

All the other ones were on the  
bridge at Sankt Margarethen

418

00:21:11,480 --> 00:21:13,505

and various points  
along the border.

419

00:21:13,505 --> 00:21:16,400

420

00:21:16,400 --> 00:21:18,830

I had to be a little  
careful about being involved

421

00:21:18,830 --> 00:21:24,933

in any direct negotiations  
with representatives

422

00:21:24,933 --> 00:21:25,975

of the German government.

423

00:21:25,975 --> 00:21:29,653

You're right that the Saly  
Mayer was a tremendous talker,

424

00:21:29,653 --> 00:21:30,236

and that his--

425

00:21:30,236 --> 00:21:33,730

Well, yes, his personal  
idiosyncrasies, which I think

426

00:21:33,730 --> 00:21:35,060

were very useful.

427

00:21:35,060 --> 00:21:40,100

Saly could keep a conversation  
going interminably

428

00:21:40,100 --> 00:21:42,740

without getting to  
the point, unless he

429

00:21:42,740 --> 00:21:44,432

wanted to get to the point.

430

00:21:44,432 --> 00:21:46,640

And in this case, he didn't  
wish to get to the point.

431

00:21:46,640 --> 00:21:50,540

He wished to delay  
as much as possible.

432

00:21:50,540 --> 00:21:55,070

And he had really no cards  
in his hand, poor man--

433

00:21:55,070 --> 00:21:58,460

no really usable cards.

434

00:21:58,460 --> 00:22:02,420

So it was a tour de force of--

435

00:22:02,420 --> 00:22:05,860

and infinitely more  
difficult for him as a Jew

436

00:22:05,860 --> 00:22:09,070

and under the pressures that

he was under from both ends.

437

00:22:09,070 --> 00:22:11,710

I mean, he had to--

438

00:22:11,710 --> 00:22:16,530

439

00:22:16,530 --> 00:22:17,494

[BEEP]

440

00:22:17,494 --> 00:22:23,230

441

00:22:23,230 --> 00:22:27,610

Washington, McClelland  
(film slating)

442

00:22:27,610 --> 00:22:30,220

Well, we were talking  
about Saly's negotiations

443

00:22:30,220 --> 00:22:33,290

with Becher, and specifically,  
the negotiation--

444

00:22:33,290 --> 00:22:35,890

indeed, one negotiation  
at which I was present.

445

00:22:35,890 --> 00:22:38,410

446

00:22:38,410 --> 00:22:42,480

Saly, of course, was under  
terrible pressures too--

447

00:22:42,480 --> 00:22:45,280

one might even say a  
double set of pressures.

448

00:22:45,280 --> 00:22:48,700

He was under the pressures--

449

00:22:48,700 --> 00:22:51,960  
the desperate pressures of  
the people from the Budapest

450

00:22:51,960 --> 00:22:54,760  
end, and he was  
under the pressures

451

00:22:54,760 --> 00:22:59,620  
from his own  
conservative background

452

00:22:59,620 --> 00:23:02,770  
and the conservative background  
of the Joint Distribution

453

00:23:02,770 --> 00:23:06,370  
Committee in America, which  
was supplying the money.

454

00:23:06,370 --> 00:23:08,950  
One might even add  
the third pressure

455

00:23:08,950 --> 00:23:12,460  
of the whole philosophy  
of economic warfare--

456

00:23:12,460 --> 00:23:15,400  
no trading with the enemy.

457

00:23:15,400 --> 00:23:20,980  
Not only did he have this set  
of pressures, debilitating set

458

00:23:20,980 --> 00:23:22,720  
of pressures, but  
he also had the fact

459

00:23:22,720 --> 00:23:24,265  
that he really held no cards.

460  
00:23:24,265 --> 00:23:27,160

461  
00:23:27,160 --> 00:23:29,365  
He had no money  
that he could use.

462  
00:23:29,365 --> 00:23:33,070

463  
00:23:33,070 --> 00:23:36,520  
It would have been  
terribly difficult for him

464  
00:23:36,520 --> 00:23:39,610  
to have brought himself  
probably to do it anyway.

465  
00:23:39,610 --> 00:23:43,360  
Because, you know, all  
this went completely

466  
00:23:43,360 --> 00:23:49,040  
contrary to his entire  
philosophy of life.

467  
00:23:49,040 --> 00:23:49,540  
Why?

468  
00:23:49,540 --> 00:23:51,020  
But nonetheless--

469  
00:23:51,020 --> 00:23:51,520  
Why?

470  
00:23:51,520 --> 00:23:51,800  
Why?

471  
00:23:51,800 --> 00:23:52,440  
Why?



472

00:23:52,440 --> 00:24:00,160

Well, you don't buy human  
beings in the normal course

473

00:24:00,160 --> 00:24:05,380

of civilized affairs, the  
affairs of civilized men.

474

00:24:05,380 --> 00:24:07,960

475

00:24:07,960 --> 00:24:09,910

So it must have been  
awfully difficult

476

00:24:09,910 --> 00:24:14,320

for him to conduct this.

477

00:24:14,320 --> 00:24:16,572

Possibly somebody from  
another background

478

00:24:16,572 --> 00:24:17,530

would have been better.

479

00:24:17,530 --> 00:24:18,760

This has been alleged.

480

00:24:18,760 --> 00:24:21,850

But that's afterthought--

481

00:24:21,850 --> 00:24:23,380

This has been said already.

482

00:24:23,380 --> 00:24:24,213

That's afterthought.

483

00:24:24,213 --> 00:24:24,730

Yes.

484

00:24:24,730 --> 00:24:26,170

But that was beside the point.

485

00:24:26,170 --> 00:24:27,460

He was the negotiator.

486

00:24:27,460 --> 00:24:31,330

Because he was a businessman.

487

00:24:31,330 --> 00:24:34,140

That night there was  
a little bit of drama.

488

00:24:34,140 --> 00:24:35,210

Saly always had a--

489

00:24:35,210 --> 00:24:36,220

-- when you entered --

490

00:24:36,220 --> 00:24:37,540

--sense of drama, yes.

491

00:24:37,540 --> 00:24:43,195

I was introduced after Saly  
had installed Becher in a large

492

00:24:43,195 --> 00:24:46,030

and in rather imposing  
conference room in the Hotel

493

00:24:46,030 --> 00:24:52,600

Baur en Ville in Zurich, with  
a great green, beige table that

494

00:24:52,600 --> 00:24:57,400

could have accommodated a  
negotiation of 20 people.

495

00:24:57,400 --> 00:25:00,830

Becher sitting on one side,  
and Saly on the other.

496

00:25:00,830 --> 00:25:05,890

And I came in the door and  
was introduced to Becher.

497  
00:25:05,890 --> 00:25:08,440  
This was, of course, not  
a comfortable or pleasant

498  
00:25:08,440 --> 00:25:11,600  
situation for me.

499  
00:25:11,600 --> 00:25:14,580  
I didn't like these bastards  
any more than Saly did.

500  
00:25:14,580 --> 00:25:17,440

501  
00:25:17,440 --> 00:25:23,320  
I didn't have any real  
cards either or authority

502  
00:25:23,320 --> 00:25:26,420  
to tell him one thing or  
another that would respond

503  
00:25:26,420 --> 00:25:29,230  
to what he was trying to get.

504  
00:25:29,230 --> 00:25:33,640  
So really, what we were  
doing was putting on an act,

505  
00:25:33,640 --> 00:25:37,450  
hopefully making it as  
convincing as possible.

506  
00:25:37,450 --> 00:25:38,320  
How did you act?

507  
00:25:38,320 --> 00:25:43,810  
Saly set the stage  
by translating

508

00:25:43,810 --> 00:25:47,230

for Becher's benefit

for 20 minutes

509

00:25:47,230 --> 00:25:50,500

or so an article of Dorothy

Thompson's in the Reader's

510

00:25:50,500 --> 00:25:52,880

Digest into German--

511

00:25:52,880 --> 00:25:56,230

a very hard-hitting

article about the Nazis

512

00:25:56,230 --> 00:25:58,150

were coming toward

the end of their rope,

513

00:25:58,150 --> 00:26:02,350

and they better start worrying

about their own skins.

514

00:26:02,350 --> 00:26:04,090

He started like this?

515

00:26:04,090 --> 00:26:04,600

Yes.

516

00:26:04,600 --> 00:26:08,950

This was-- I think

Becher was a little taken

517

00:26:08,950 --> 00:26:10,810

aback by the whole procedure.

518

00:26:10,810 --> 00:26:14,290

519

00:26:14,290 --> 00:26:19,580

I attempted to corroborate

Saly's position

520  
00:26:19,580 --> 00:26:22,570  
that they were not  
going to win the war,

521  
00:26:22,570 --> 00:26:25,360  
that it was a lost cause.

522  
00:26:25,360 --> 00:26:28,300  
And that by at least  
in some way relaxing

523  
00:26:28,300 --> 00:26:32,470  
this whole horrible  
business of killing the Jews

524  
00:26:32,470 --> 00:26:36,400  
and oppressing other  
people, they might at least

525  
00:26:36,400 --> 00:26:37,870  
obtain slightly better--

526  
00:26:37,870 --> 00:26:40,630

527  
00:26:40,630 --> 00:26:41,330  
Treatment.

528  
00:26:41,330 --> 00:26:43,700  
--treatment at the  
conclusion of this,

529  
00:26:43,700 --> 00:26:46,950  
and if they didn't do it--

530  
00:26:46,950 --> 00:26:51,880  
we got only responses from  
Becher that this was a--

531  
00:26:51,880 --> 00:26:58,830  
these were sort of

[NON-ENGLISH],, you know.

532

00:26:58,830 --> 00:27:00,630

This was a new  
order that was going

533

00:27:00,630 --> 00:27:03,690

to benefit the whole  
of Europe, and they

534

00:27:03,690 --> 00:27:09,790

were fighting the Bolsheviks  
and the standard Nazi line.

535

00:27:09,790 --> 00:27:12,097

They were saving Europe  
for the forces of--

536

00:27:12,097 --> 00:27:12,930

That's what he said.

537

00:27:12,930 --> 00:27:14,260

He made a propaganda speech.

538

00:27:14,260 --> 00:27:14,760

Yes.

539

00:27:14,760 --> 00:27:18,150

He made a Nazi  
propaganda speech to us.

540

00:27:18,150 --> 00:27:20,970

541

00:27:20,970 --> 00:27:27,360

Whether he really believed  
it, one doesn't know.

542

00:27:27,360 --> 00:27:28,980

And we made it  
quite clear to him

543

00:27:28,980 --> 00:27:33,990  
that we could not, as far as  
the United States was concerned,

544  
00:27:33,990 --> 00:27:36,960  
enter into any such  
proposal of buying people

545  
00:27:36,960 --> 00:27:40,670  
in return for goods or money.

546  
00:27:40,670 --> 00:27:44,870  
Were these talks entered  
in any practical matter?

547  
00:27:44,870 --> 00:27:46,610  
Well, we interjected as many.

548  
00:27:46,610 --> 00:27:49,160  
Saly did, in particular--  
a considerable list

549  
00:27:49,160 --> 00:27:52,910  
of practical  
alleviations regarding

550  
00:27:52,910 --> 00:27:55,290  
the situation in Hungary.

551  
00:27:55,290 --> 00:27:58,400  
But there was the  
exchange now, I

552  
00:27:58,400 --> 00:28:01,370  
think, well-known, about  
the Jews in Slovakia

553  
00:28:01,370 --> 00:28:04,250  
that were deported.

554  
00:28:04,250 --> 00:28:11,810  
Why had Saly taxed  
Becher for not keeping--

555

00:28:11,810 --> 00:28:15,350  
the original agreement was that  
while any negotiations were

556

00:28:15,350 --> 00:28:20,530  
going on, the deportation  
of the Jews was to cease.

557

00:28:20,530 --> 00:28:26,450  
And why had they violated  
their part of the agreement

558

00:28:26,450 --> 00:28:28,460  
by deporting the Slovak Jews?

559

00:28:28,460 --> 00:28:30,020  
And Becher said,  
well, they joined

560

00:28:30,020 --> 00:28:32,690  
the forces of the  
resistance and were fighting

561

00:28:32,690 --> 00:28:34,190  
against the Nazi troops.

562

00:28:34,190 --> 00:28:38,180  
And Saly said, well, what  
did you expect them to do?

563

00:28:38,180 --> 00:28:41,360  
Join the SS?

564

00:28:41,360 --> 00:28:44,510  
And was there an  
answer of Becher?

565

00:28:44,510 --> 00:28:47,210  
I don't recall that he  
gave a specific answer.

566



00:28:47,210 --> 00:28:50,700

567

00:28:50,700 --> 00:28:52,410

You know, you were  
two people talking

568

00:28:52,410 --> 00:28:54,540

from two different worlds.

569

00:28:54,540 --> 00:28:56,340

How long did it  
last, the meeting?

570

00:28:56,340 --> 00:29:01,020

Oh, possibly an hour,  
an hour and a half--

571

00:29:01,020 --> 00:29:03,840

not very long.

572

00:29:03,840 --> 00:29:06,450

It was-- he was very  
stiff, Becher, and nervous.

573

00:29:06,450 --> 00:29:08,870

And I expect I was  
probably rather nervous.

574

00:29:08,870 --> 00:29:11,880

It seemed to me I went and had  
two stiff brandies before I

575

00:29:11,880 --> 00:29:13,324

went into the meeting.

576

00:29:13,324 --> 00:29:13,824

Yes.

577

00:29:13,824 --> 00:29:17,520

578

00:29:17,520 --> 00:29:19,170

Now, how this was--

579

00:29:19,170 --> 00:29:21,390

I think this was

exploited considerably

580

00:29:21,390 --> 00:29:24,330

beyond my diplomatic

talents on the outside,

581

00:29:24,330 --> 00:29:28,180

both by Saly and

certainly by Kasztner.

582

00:29:28,180 --> 00:29:30,810

And by Becher, too,

because he reported

583

00:29:30,810 --> 00:29:33,310

to Himmler that, at

least [INAUDIBLE]..

584

00:29:33,310 --> 00:29:38,790

He had seen they undoubtedly

represented me as a direct--

585

00:29:38,790 --> 00:29:41,660

presented me as a direct

representative and spokesman

586

00:29:41,660 --> 00:29:42,970

of Franklin Roosevelt.

587

00:29:42,970 --> 00:29:44,670

Yes.

588

00:29:44,670 --> 00:29:47,340

I have no idea whether

Franklin Roosevelt ever

589

00:29:47,340 --> 00:29:50,120

knew my name really.

590

00:29:50,120 --> 00:29:51,930

Of course, that's  
one-- as you know,

591

00:29:51,930 --> 00:29:54,480

one of the great mysteries  
of the War Refugee Board.

592

00:29:54,480 --> 00:29:58,290

Why at certain key  
times did not somebody

593

00:29:58,290 --> 00:30:01,110

go directly to Roosevelt?

594

00:30:01,110 --> 00:30:03,480

Why did they fuss  
with the State--

595

00:30:03,480 --> 00:30:08,690

Department of State to Sumner  
Welles, the Secretary of State,

596

00:30:08,690 --> 00:30:10,890

Secretary of the Army,  
whoever it might be,

597

00:30:10,890 --> 00:30:12,732

instead of going to  
Roosevelt himself?

598

00:30:12,732 --> 00:30:13,440

What do you mean?

599

00:30:13,440 --> 00:30:16,998

Why didn't Mr. Morgenthau  
go to Roosevelt himself?

600

00:30:16,998 --> 00:30:18,540

And do you think  
that if people would

601

00:30:18,540 --> 00:30:23,155

have go to Roosevelt  
much before,

602

00:30:23,155 --> 00:30:24,780

the situation would  
have been improved?

603

00:30:24,780 --> 00:30:27,600

604

00:30:27,600 --> 00:30:29,520

One would like to think so.

605

00:30:29,520 --> 00:30:30,980

Mr. Roosevelt was a man of--

606

00:30:30,980 --> 00:30:34,990

You are obviously a great  
admirer of Roosevelt.

607

00:30:34,990 --> 00:30:36,160

Yes, I do.

608

00:30:36,160 --> 00:30:36,660

I do.

609

00:30:36,660 --> 00:30:37,350

Yes.

610

00:30:37,350 --> 00:30:40,720

I think he was an  
exceptional man who

611

00:30:40,720 --> 00:30:44,610

filled a very great role and  
in an extremely difficult time.

612

00:30:44,610 --> 00:30:48,460

He was a man of  
considerable vision.

613

00:30:48,460 --> 00:30:50,220

Of course, he was  
a politician too.

614

00:30:50,220 --> 00:30:53,820

He was subject to all  
sorts of pressures.

615

00:30:53,820 --> 00:30:56,040

He had to deal with his  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

616

00:30:56,040 --> 00:30:56,950

and his cabinet.

617

00:30:56,950 --> 00:31:00,030

And-- but nevertheless,  
he was a man

618

00:31:00,030 --> 00:31:03,060

who had a good deal  
of power and conducted

619

00:31:03,060 --> 00:31:05,770

a lot of personal  
diplomacy himself too

620

00:31:05,770 --> 00:31:09,060

that went over the head  
of the State Department,

621

00:31:09,060 --> 00:31:12,280

and he could well have  
done it in this case.

622

00:31:12,280 --> 00:31:14,760

You think that is because  
he had too much confidence

623

00:31:14,760 --> 00:31:16,830

in the people of  
the State Department

624

00:31:16,830 --> 00:31:22,170  
that he was simply not informed  
that he didn't act earlier?

625

00:31:22,170 --> 00:31:23,850  
I would think he  
simply wasn't informed.

626

00:31:23,850 --> 00:31:28,600

627

00:31:28,600 --> 00:31:31,860  
I somehow cannot imagine--  
and this is pure speculation--

628

00:31:31,860 --> 00:31:37,680  
Sumner Welles going  
to Mr. Roosevelt

629

00:31:37,680 --> 00:31:40,500  
or seeking Mr. Roosevelt out  
or the Secretary of State

630

00:31:40,500 --> 00:31:43,380  
to present him the  
problem of the Jews

631

00:31:43,380 --> 00:31:47,700  
in Budapest with the  
whole tremendous problems

632

00:31:47,700 --> 00:31:51,850  
of the war that were on Mr.  
Roosevelt's table at that time.

633

00:31:51,850 --> 00:31:54,000  
But Morgenthau did it.

634

00:31:54,000 --> 00:31:54,810  
He did.

635

00:31:54,810 --> 00:31:58,260

He presented the problem,  
yes, of the Jews [INAUDIBLE]..

636  
00:31:58,260 --> 00:32:02,086  
But on very specific occasions.

637  
00:32:02,086 --> 00:32:06,990  
[What? the report-- the  
so-called Morgenthau Report,

638  
00:32:06,990 --> 00:32:09,168  
which was the origin  
of the establishment

639  
00:32:09,168 --> 00:32:09,960  
of the [INAUDIBLE].

640  
00:32:09,960 --> 00:32:10,750  
Yes, at the start.

641  
00:32:10,750 --> 00:32:11,250  
Yes.

642  
00:32:11,250 --> 00:32:13,500  
At the start.

643  
00:32:13,500 --> 00:32:15,780  
And now let's talk  
about this question

644  
00:32:15,780 --> 00:32:19,650  
of the bombing of Auschwitz.

645  
00:32:19,650 --> 00:32:20,940  
Why was it never done?

646  
00:32:20,940 --> 00:32:25,440  
Because you forwarded  
very early--

647  
00:32:25,440 --> 00:32:31,090  
as soon as you got the

reports of the two escapees,

648

00:32:31,090 --> 00:32:33,140

the two Slovak escapees,  
about Auschwitz

649

00:32:33,140 --> 00:32:36,060

with the maps of  
the precise request

650

00:32:36,060 --> 00:32:40,470

to bomb the railroads  
leading to Auschwitz.

651

00:32:40,470 --> 00:32:41,790

I remember very clearly.

652

00:32:41,790 --> 00:32:44,280

I can remember going  
to quite some pains

653

00:32:44,280 --> 00:32:49,800

to get accurate maps of the  
area so that one could confirm

654

00:32:49,800 --> 00:32:51,720

the names of these  
places and how

655

00:32:51,720 --> 00:32:55,830

they were used in the  
English language, the names

656

00:32:55,830 --> 00:32:57,410

often being very different.

657

00:32:57,410 --> 00:32:58,470

The towns, yes.

658

00:32:58,470 --> 00:33:02,220

The towns and the line.

659



00:33:02,220 --> 00:33:05,760

Of course, I never knew the  
whole other side of this

660

00:33:05,760 --> 00:33:12,000

at all that has now been  
published by Professor Wyman,

661

00:33:12,000 --> 00:33:13,610

among others.

662

00:33:13,610 --> 00:33:15,660

And I must say I was  
personally horrified

663

00:33:15,660 --> 00:33:18,960

to read that it would have  
been perfectly practicable.

664

00:33:18,960 --> 00:33:20,760

Yes.

665

00:33:20,760 --> 00:33:24,410

--

666

00:33:24,410 --> 00:34:18,326