

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,379

2  
00:00:05,379 --> 00:00:06,846  
[CLAP]

3  
00:00:06,846 --> 00:00:21,540

4  
00:00:21,540 --> 00:00:23,710  
Yehuda Bauer first  
of all, I would

5  
00:00:23,710 --> 00:00:27,820  
like you to tell us  
something about yourself.

6  
00:00:27,820 --> 00:00:32,740  
As a Holocaust professor  
and researcher,

7  
00:00:32,740 --> 00:00:37,120  
where you personally involved  
in one way or another

8  
00:00:37,120 --> 00:00:38,710  
in the Holocaust?

9  
00:00:38,710 --> 00:00:39,765  
No, not at all.

10  
00:00:39,765 --> 00:00:42,790

11  
00:00:42,790 --> 00:00:46,180  
I was not involved at all  
in the Holocaust itself.

12  
00:00:46,180 --> 00:00:50,740  
In fact, I arrived in Palestine  
before the Second World War

13  
00:00:50,740 --> 00:00:52,390

with my parents.

14

00:00:52,390 --> 00:00:56,950

And I spent a very calm  
and quiet childhood

15

00:00:56,950 --> 00:01:01,400

in Israel, Palestine,  
before the state of Israel.

16

00:01:01,400 --> 00:01:03,790

I was in-- I got  
interested in the Holocaust

17

00:01:03,790 --> 00:01:07,450

because I found that  
this is the central event

18

00:01:07,450 --> 00:01:11,290

in Jewish history,  
certainly in modern times,

19

00:01:11,290 --> 00:01:14,950

probably much longer  
than in modern times.

20

00:01:14,950 --> 00:01:19,870

And as I wanted to be a Jewish  
historian, that's what I did.

21

00:01:19,870 --> 00:01:22,090

And when did you--

22

00:01:22,090 --> 00:01:24,160

where did you come from?

23

00:01:24,160 --> 00:01:28,570

I came from Prague,  
Czechoslovakia

24

00:01:28,570 --> 00:01:31,870

when I was 12  
years old my father

25

00:01:31,870 --> 00:01:35,740

was a member of the  
Zionist movement there.

26  
00:01:35,740 --> 00:01:40,180  
And we got out on the last day  
before the Germans came in.

27  
00:01:40,180 --> 00:01:44,065  
In fact, we came out on the  
day that the Germans came in.

28  
00:01:44,065 --> 00:01:44,776  
In '39.

29  
00:01:44,776 --> 00:01:45,276  
In '39.

30  
00:01:45,276 --> 00:01:47,787

31  
00:01:47,787 --> 00:01:49,870  
But you could have been  
involved in the Holocaust.

32  
00:01:49,870 --> 00:01:50,590  
I could.

33  
00:01:50,590 --> 00:01:52,360  
I certainly could  
have been involved.

34  
00:01:52,360 --> 00:01:54,580  
In fact, the Nazis  
boarded the train

35  
00:01:54,580 --> 00:01:58,210  
as we were driving  
out of Czechoslovakia.

36  
00:01:58,210 --> 00:02:02,050  
And the Czech engine driver  
crossed the Polish border

37  
00:02:02,050 --> 00:02:05,680  
without the German agreement.

38  
00:02:05,680 --> 00:02:07,060  
And that's how we were saved.

39  
00:02:07,060 --> 00:02:07,940  
Yes.

40  
00:02:07,940 --> 00:02:11,009  
And when did you start  
to work on the Holocaust?

41  
00:02:11,009 --> 00:02:15,250  
Can you say something about  
your experience in this field,

42  
00:02:15,250 --> 00:02:18,760  
from a human point of view?

43  
00:02:18,760 --> 00:02:22,540  
I think what made me deal  
with the Holocaust was

44  
00:02:22,540 --> 00:02:29,590  
a long discussion I had with  
Abba Kovner in about 1964

45  
00:02:29,590 --> 00:02:31,040  
or 1965.

46  
00:02:31,040 --> 00:02:35,410  
I was doing a Palestinian  
Jewish history, Zionist history,

47  
00:02:35,410 --> 00:02:36,490  
at that time.

48  
00:02:36,490 --> 00:02:37,570  
Something completely--

49  
00:02:37,570 --> 00:02:39,250  
Completely different.

50  
00:02:39,250 --> 00:02:41,440  
And I began dealing

with the Holocaust

51

00:02:41,440 --> 00:02:42,700  
because you can't avoid it.

52

00:02:42,700 --> 00:02:45,310  
I mean, you cannot  
not deal with it.

53

00:02:45,310 --> 00:02:49,010  
And he told me I  
was wasting my time.

54

00:02:49,010 --> 00:02:50,950  
So [CHUCKLES] I asked him why.

55

00:02:50,950 --> 00:02:52,840  
He said because if  
you want to deal

56

00:02:52,840 --> 00:02:55,690  
with the really  
important problems,

57

00:02:55,690 --> 00:02:57,700  
you've got to deal  
with the Holocaust.

58

00:02:57,700 --> 00:02:59,950  
So I said, I'm scared.

59

00:02:59,950 --> 00:03:02,290  
So he said, well, that's a  
very good point to start.

60

00:03:02,290 --> 00:03:05,350

61

00:03:05,350 --> 00:03:09,760  
If you're scared, that's a  
very good point to start with.

62

00:03:09,760 --> 00:03:11,560  
And you work now since how long?

63

00:03:11,560 --> 00:03:17,387  
And now I've been working at it  
for about 13 years, 14 years,

64

00:03:17,387 --> 00:03:18,220  
something like that.

65

00:03:18,220 --> 00:03:23,350  
And how would you characterize  
this kind of work?

66

00:03:23,350 --> 00:03:24,880  
I think it's very taxing.

67

00:03:24,880 --> 00:03:30,280  
It's very difficult because  
it involves you emotionally,

68

00:03:30,280 --> 00:03:36,800  
and you have to,  
on the one hand,

69

00:03:36,800 --> 00:03:40,080  
if you rid yourself  
of emotions, then

70

00:03:40,080 --> 00:03:42,280  
there's nothing to work on.

71

00:03:42,280 --> 00:03:47,140  
On the other hand, if you allow  
your emotions to overcome you,

72

00:03:47,140 --> 00:03:49,760  
you cannot do any  
sort of writing.

73

00:03:49,760 --> 00:03:52,930  
You have to find  
somewhere in between.

74

00:03:52,930 --> 00:03:55,780  
And that is, in fact, what I  
do, not only for myself, also

75

00:03:55,780 --> 00:03:56,800  
for my students.

76

00:03:56,800 --> 00:04:00,490  
I always show a film  
to all my classes

77

00:04:00,490 --> 00:04:04,510  
so that they will realize that  
this is not something which

78

00:04:04,510 --> 00:04:13,960  
is sterile and dry and,  
quote unquote, "scientific,"

79

00:04:13,960 --> 00:04:19,390  
but which has a human value  
of tremendous importance, one

80

00:04:19,390 --> 00:04:24,790  
of the central humanly important  
events in human history.

81

00:04:24,790 --> 00:04:28,690  
Do you think that the people  
who were not directly involved

82

00:04:28,690 --> 00:04:32,140  
in the Holocaust  
can deal with this?

83

00:04:32,140 --> 00:04:34,970  
Well, if they don't, then  
the whole thing is lost.

84

00:04:34,970 --> 00:04:35,470  
Yes?

85

00:04:35,470 --> 00:04:36,340  
Why?

86

00:04:36,340 --> 00:04:39,400  
Well, because the people who  
went through the Holocaust

87

00:04:39,400 --> 00:04:40,690  
will die.

88

00:04:40,690 --> 00:04:43,990  
The people who witnessed  
from outside will die.

89

00:04:43,990 --> 00:04:45,820  
And then the next  
generation, nobody

90

00:04:45,820 --> 00:04:48,070  
will know anything anymore.

91

00:04:48,070 --> 00:04:51,640  
And if you want to  
objectivize this,

92

00:04:51,640 --> 00:04:55,930  
if you want to somehow transmit  
it to the next generation,

93

00:04:55,930 --> 00:04:59,500  
you have to find a way  
which will be as near as

94

00:04:59,500 --> 00:05:03,100  
possible to emotional  
involvement,

95

00:05:03,100 --> 00:05:07,240  
and yet at the same time will  
give a objective dimension

96

00:05:07,240 --> 00:05:07,930  
to it.

97

00:05:07,930 --> 00:05:12,140  
But you admit that there is  
a trend today among survivors

98

00:05:12,140 --> 00:05:16,300  
of the Holocaust,  
among writers, to say



99

00:05:16,300 --> 00:05:20,890  
that it's impossible to deal  
with, that the best thing to do

100

00:05:20,890 --> 00:05:26,830  
is to keep silent, that there  
is something obscene in dealing

101

00:05:26,830 --> 00:05:29,860  
with such--

102

00:05:29,860 --> 00:05:32,870  
Yes, well, the people who  
say that, on the other hand,

103

00:05:32,870 --> 00:05:34,405  
they are the ones who talk.

104

00:05:34,405 --> 00:05:35,650  
They talk much.

105

00:05:35,650 --> 00:05:39,790  
They talk a great deal, and  
I feel that they have to.

106

00:05:39,790 --> 00:05:43,510  
You cannot take the attitude  
to remain silent because if it

107

00:05:43,510 --> 00:05:45,700  
remains silent, then  
the whole experience,

108

00:05:45,700 --> 00:05:49,000  
which should be a warning  
to the Jewish people,

109

00:05:49,000 --> 00:05:52,620  
to all the other  
people, will be lost.

110

00:05:52,620 --> 00:05:55,390  
If the Holocaust  
is that important,

111

00:05:55,390 --> 00:05:59,680

then you have to do something  
to save it in such a way

112

00:05:59,680 --> 00:06:03,170

that it will mean something  
for the next generation.

113

00:06:03,170 --> 00:06:07,480

So you have to find a compromise  
between the emotional side

114

00:06:07,480 --> 00:06:11,500

and the objective,  
historical side.

115

00:06:11,500 --> 00:06:12,610

Yes.

116

00:06:12,610 --> 00:06:17,240

And what do you think of such  
an understatement like mine,

117

00:06:17,240 --> 00:06:21,720

to work, to try to  
make a film out of it.

118

00:06:21,720 --> 00:06:23,540

That's exactly  
what you are doing.

119

00:06:23,540 --> 00:06:26,920

You're doing exactly  
what I said just now.

120

00:06:26,920 --> 00:06:30,610

You are getting out of  
the people emotions,

121

00:06:30,610 --> 00:06:33,010

but you do it on  
an objective plane.

122

00:06:33,010 --> 00:06:37,930

You ask questions,

and you compare

123

00:06:37,930 --> 00:06:40,150  
the answers in your film.

124

00:06:40,150 --> 00:06:42,640  
And so what you  
are really doing,

125

00:06:42,640 --> 00:06:48,522  
you are doing a part of the job  
that I think has to be done.

126

00:06:48,522 --> 00:06:51,306  
Yes.

127

00:06:51,306 --> 00:07:04,790  
OK, did you (cut) to the common  
thread while (film logistics)

128

00:07:04,790 --> 00:07:05,580  
(film slating)

129

00:07:05,580 --> 00:07:06,948  
[CLAP]

130

00:07:06,948 --> 00:07:07,860

131

00:07:07,860 --> 00:07:14,190  
Well, now I would like that  
we discuss in general terms

132

00:07:14,190 --> 00:07:18,750  
about the question  
of the Judenrat.

133

00:07:18,750 --> 00:07:24,000  
I would like to know, first  
of all, if here) in Israel

134

00:07:24,000 --> 00:07:29,320  
seem to have started  
to work in this field,

135

00:07:29,320 --> 00:07:33,300

if you noticed a change in  
the outlook of the people

136

00:07:33,300 --> 00:07:38,070

towards the policy  
of the Judenrat,

137

00:07:38,070 --> 00:07:41,025

towards the question  
of the Judenrat?

138

00:07:41,025 --> 00:07:44,910

Yes, very definitely,  
there's a change.

139

00:07:44,910 --> 00:07:49,092

See the people came from the  
Holocaust, the partisans,

140

00:07:49,092 --> 00:07:50,300

were opposed to the Judenrat.

141

00:07:50,300 --> 00:07:53,400

142

00:07:53,400 --> 00:07:55,770

There was a large  
number of people,

143

00:07:55,770 --> 00:08:00,480

a relatively large number,  
who survived from Łódź,

144

00:08:00,480 --> 00:08:04,350

from Holland, from Warsaw.

145

00:08:04,350 --> 00:08:08,100

Those Judenrat, which  
especially Łódź and Holland,

146

00:08:08,100 --> 00:08:11,550

were of the very negative kind.

147

00:08:11,550 --> 00:08:14,400  
And there was a  
tendency to generalize.

148  
00:08:14,400 --> 00:08:18,150  
The term "Judenrat"  
became a term of cursing.

149  
00:08:18,150 --> 00:08:20,820

150  
00:08:20,820 --> 00:08:22,440  
It was an accusation.

151  
00:08:22,440 --> 00:08:23,948  
You didn't have to  
explain anything.

152  
00:08:23,948 --> 00:08:24,990  
You just said "Judenrat."

153  
00:08:24,990 --> 00:08:27,360  
It was an accusation.

154  
00:08:27,360 --> 00:08:31,140  
And the researchers  
that we went into

155  
00:08:31,140 --> 00:08:35,280  
have contributed to a  
change in the atmosphere

156  
00:08:35,280 --> 00:08:37,710  
where people say,  
well, first of all,

157  
00:08:37,710 --> 00:08:40,830  
they begin to understand  
what the conditions were

158  
00:08:40,830 --> 00:08:43,049  
that the Judenrat  
were working under.

159  
00:08:43,049 --> 00:08:44,850

And secondly, perhaps  
the main point

160  
00:08:44,850 --> 00:08:50,010  
is this whole concept  
of a impossibility

161  
00:08:50,010 --> 00:08:53,400  
to generalize about the  
policy of the Judenrat

162  
00:08:53,400 --> 00:08:56,580  
all together, that there  
were so many cases, so

163  
00:08:56,580 --> 00:09:01,110  
many different examples, that  
the attempt to generalize

164  
00:09:01,110 --> 00:09:05,710  
becomes very, very  
difficult, indeed.

165  
00:09:05,710 --> 00:09:06,640  
Yes.

166  
00:09:06,640 --> 00:09:12,910  
And what do you mean when you  
talk about negative Judenrat?

167  
00:09:12,910 --> 00:09:15,070  
I mean the kind of Judenrat--

168  
00:09:15,070 --> 00:09:17,740  
I will take Holland  
as an example.

169  
00:09:17,740 --> 00:09:19,750  
Holland is a  
Judenrat right where

170  
00:09:19,750 --> 00:09:25,420  
you had a compliance of the  
Judenrat with German wishes

171

00:09:25,420 --> 00:09:29,410  
before the Germans  
even expressed them.

172  
00:09:29,410 --> 00:09:35,500  
There was a complete and utter  
subservience to the Germans,

173  
00:09:35,500 --> 00:09:41,290  
to the extent that when  
the Judenrat was founded,

174  
00:09:41,290 --> 00:09:44,590  
the strike was on, the  
strike of the Dutch workers

175  
00:09:44,590 --> 00:09:48,340  
against the Germans  
for the Jews.

176  
00:09:48,340 --> 00:09:52,330  
And the Germans demanded  
of the Dutch Judenrat

177  
00:09:52,330 --> 00:09:57,670  
to intervene with the Dutch  
workers against the strike.

178  
00:09:57,670 --> 00:09:59,980  
It is the Dutch Judenrat  
who broke the strike.

179  
00:09:59,980 --> 00:10:04,360  
And the Dutch Judenrat  
broke the strike.

180  
00:10:04,360 --> 00:10:06,710  
This is how it started.

181  
00:10:06,710 --> 00:10:11,620  
So, in Holland, you have  
a very extreme case.

182  
00:10:11,620 --> 00:10:16,690  
You have an equally extreme case  
of a quite different category

183  
00:10:16,690 --> 00:10:23,170  
in Łódź, where Mordechai  
Chaim Rumkowski,

184  
00:10:23,170 --> 00:10:31,840  
an old dictator who wanted to  
save the Jews at Łódź by making

185  
00:10:31,840 --> 00:10:37,390  
them into slaves of the Germans,  
because he thought that no

186  
00:10:37,390 --> 00:10:41,640  
slave master would  
murder their slaves.

187  
00:10:41,640 --> 00:10:45,100  
So this was out of an ideology.

188  
00:10:45,100 --> 00:10:47,350  
There was no  
ideology in Holland.

189  
00:10:47,350 --> 00:10:48,813  
There was an ideology in Łódź.

190  
00:10:48,813 --> 00:10:49,855  
You mean he had a policy.

191  
00:10:49,855 --> 00:10:52,180  
He had a policy,  
no, an ideology, no.

192  
00:10:52,180 --> 00:10:55,070  
He had a policy which  
came out of an ideology.

193  
00:10:55,070 --> 00:10:58,090  
The ideology said  
that the only way

194  
00:10:58,090 --> 00:11:00,970  
in which the Jews  
could survive was



195

00:11:00,970 --> 00:11:04,120

if they listened to Rumkowski.

196

00:11:04,120 --> 00:11:08,170

And he went to  
the rabbi in Łódź,

197

00:11:08,170 --> 00:11:13,930

and we have one very  
definite case of this.

198

00:11:13,930 --> 00:11:17,530

He asked them whether what  
he was doing was correct,

199

00:11:17,530 --> 00:11:21,520

and he got the  
support of the rabbi.

200

00:11:21,520 --> 00:11:25,420

He got the support of the  
elite of the Jewish population

201

00:11:25,420 --> 00:11:26,710

in Łódź.

202

00:11:26,710 --> 00:11:28,220

He was supported there.

203

00:11:28,220 --> 00:11:30,340

He did not act in a vacuum.

204

00:11:30,340 --> 00:11:33,760

He was supported by some of  
the people who, after the war,

205

00:11:33,760 --> 00:11:37,300

attacked him because he was  
responsible for the murder

206

00:11:37,300 --> 00:11:39,160

of the children.

207

00:11:39,160 --> 00:11:42,775  
He knew where they were going,  
and he delivered the children

208  
00:11:42,775 --> 00:11:45,730  
into the hands of the Germans.

209  
00:11:45,730 --> 00:11:49,150  
Can you enter into  
details about this?

210  
00:11:49,150 --> 00:11:56,290  
Yes, the knowledge of what was  
happening in Auschwitz in 1942

211  
00:11:56,290 --> 00:11:57,250  
was spreading.

212  
00:11:57,250 --> 00:11:59,680  
Rumkowski knew what was  
happening in Auschwitz.

213  
00:11:59,680 --> 00:12:04,810  
We know this from a  
discussion which Rumkowski

214  
00:12:04,810 --> 00:12:11,650  
had with a German, a Christian.

215  
00:12:11,650 --> 00:12:15,010  
I mean, not a Gentile, a  
Christian who went into Łódź

216  
00:12:15,010 --> 00:12:18,370  
in order to try to help Jews.

217  
00:12:18,370 --> 00:12:20,890  
And there was a discussion  
between that German

218  
00:12:20,890 --> 00:12:23,710  
and a rabbi and Rumkowski.

219  
00:12:23,710 --> 00:12:26,590  
And in that discussion,

it was perfectly clear

220  
00:12:26,590 --> 00:12:31,120  
that Rumkowski knew what  
the Nazi policy was.

221  
00:12:31,120 --> 00:12:34,510  
The man was not  
Friedrich Hielscher.

222  
00:12:34,510 --> 00:12:36,910  
Hielscher, yeah.

223  
00:12:36,910 --> 00:12:40,450  
And the report--

224  
00:12:40,450 --> 00:12:42,220  
He met Rumkowski personally?

225  
00:12:42,220 --> 00:12:44,140  
No, he met Leon Rosenblat--

226  
00:12:44,140 --> 00:12:46,800  
He met Leon Rosenblat  
and he met Rumkowski.

227  
00:12:46,800 --> 00:12:47,300  
Yes?

228  
00:12:47,300 --> 00:12:47,967  
Personally, yes.

229  
00:12:47,967 --> 00:12:50,730

230  
00:12:50,730 --> 00:12:54,700  
And the problem  
there that you have

231  
00:12:54,700 --> 00:13:07,210  
is that, after this discussion,  
the children were delivered.

232  
00:13:07,210 --> 00:13:10,630

The children were  
delivered to the Nazis.

233

00:13:10,630 --> 00:13:11,830

The Germans asked for them.

234

00:13:11,830 --> 00:13:13,288

The Germans asked  
for the children.

235

00:13:13,288 --> 00:13:15,250

They were delivered  
to the Nazis.

236

00:13:15,250 --> 00:13:18,310

So he knew exactly  
what was happening.

237

00:13:18,310 --> 00:13:25,330

But you see, his policy was,  
through the German bureaucracy

238

00:13:25,330 --> 00:13:28,000

in Łódź, to keep  
the ghetto alive,

239

00:13:28,000 --> 00:13:31,690

saying that if you  
destroy the ghetto,

240

00:13:31,690 --> 00:13:34,870

all these workers will not  
be working for the Germans

241

00:13:34,870 --> 00:13:36,580

anymore.

242

00:13:36,580 --> 00:13:40,750

And it is a fact  
that in July 1944,

243

00:13:40,750 --> 00:13:45,220

when there was no longer  
any ghetto anywhere

244

00:13:45,220 --> 00:13:49,120  
in Eastern Europe, and  
certainly not in Poland.

245  
00:13:49,120 --> 00:13:50,950  
There was a remnant  
of Kovno Ghetto, yes?

246  
00:13:50,950 --> 00:13:54,820

247  
00:13:54,820 --> 00:13:58,990  
There was still a remnant  
ghetto in Łódź because they were

248  
00:13:58,990 --> 00:14:03,610  
working like slaves  
for the German machine.

249  
00:14:03,610 --> 00:14:05,590  
And it was only  
in July and August

250  
00:14:05,590 --> 00:14:08,860  
that the ghetto was  
finally destroyed.

251  
00:14:08,860 --> 00:14:14,750  
The last 60,000 Jews were  
shipped to Auschwitz.

252  
00:14:14,750 --> 00:14:16,960  
Yes, and what do you  
think about this?

253  
00:14:16,960 --> 00:14:21,620  
I call this a policy, this  
policy of rescue through words.

254  
00:14:21,620 --> 00:14:25,330

255  
00:14:25,330 --> 00:14:27,700  
Why did they think  
in such a way?

256

00:14:27,700 --> 00:14:32,440

Why did they-- why were they  
so much mistaking what it was?

257

00:14:32,440 --> 00:14:37,930

Well, it was a logical  
thing to think, because

258

00:14:37,930 --> 00:14:43,750

in the logic of modern  
society, where economics

259

00:14:43,750 --> 00:14:47,440

is a very central problem,  
and the Germans were very hard

260

00:14:47,440 --> 00:14:56,920

put in 1943 and 1944 to get  
their uniforms, to get weapons,

261

00:14:56,920 --> 00:15:01,210

to get all kinds of things, just  
to throw away all these tens

262

00:15:01,210 --> 00:15:02,770

of thousands of slave laborers?

263

00:15:02,770 --> 00:15:04,630

That would be silly.

264

00:15:04,630 --> 00:15:08,770

And so Rumkowski in Łódź  
and Barash in Białystok,

265

00:15:08,770 --> 00:15:14,050

and Gens in Vilna, and  
not very many others--

266

00:15:14,050 --> 00:15:15,502

And Merin in Sosnowiec.

267

00:15:15,502 --> 00:15:18,710

Merin in-- no.

268

00:15:18,710 --> 00:15:20,950

Merin, yes, all right,  
Merin in Sosnowiec.

269

00:15:20,950 --> 00:15:24,850

But there weren't  
that many more who had

270

00:15:24,850 --> 00:15:28,510

had this very logical policy.

271

00:15:28,510 --> 00:15:32,140

And you can prove, for  
instance, in Bialystok,

272

00:15:32,140 --> 00:15:39,650

that between, shall we say,  
the end of 1942 and early 1943,

273

00:15:39,650 --> 00:15:44,200

there was a discussion, in  
German Nazi bureaucracy,

274

00:15:44,200 --> 00:15:46,630

what to do about the  
ghetto in Bialystok.

275

00:15:46,630 --> 00:15:50,890

And this was one of the  
problems they had to confront.

276

00:15:50,890 --> 00:15:54,310

We get very important  
things out of this ghetto.

277

00:15:54,310 --> 00:15:55,070

What shall we do?

278

00:15:55,070 --> 00:15:57,430

Shall we destroy it, or  
shall we not destroy it?

279

00:15:57,430 --> 00:16:01,540

This was decided, finally,  
really only by a direct order

280

00:16:01,540 --> 00:16:04,090  
by Himmler.

281

00:16:04,090 --> 00:16:12,160  
And it is a fact, you see, that  
in the spring of 1944, in Łódź,

282

00:16:12,160 --> 00:16:15,350  
there were 69,000 Jews left.

283

00:16:15,350 --> 00:16:22,480  
And if the Soviet army, which  
was standing from July 1944

284

00:16:22,480 --> 00:16:27,220  
to January 1945 on  
the Vistula River,

285

00:16:27,220 --> 00:16:32,140  
if they had advanced like  
they did in 1945 in January,

286

00:16:32,140 --> 00:16:35,650  
in three days, and  
conquered Łódź,

287

00:16:35,650 --> 00:16:43,120  
they would have saved or  
rescued 60,000, 69,000 Jews.

288

00:16:43,120 --> 00:16:45,910  
And perhaps you and I  
would have thought then

289

00:16:45,910 --> 00:16:48,010  
that Rumkowski was a great hero.

290

00:16:48,010 --> 00:16:48,675  
I don't know.

291

00:16:48,675 --> 00:16:49,975  
Was a savior.

292

00:16:49,975 --> 00:16:55,210



Was a savior, maybe there would  
be a statue to him somewhere.

293

00:16:55,210 --> 00:16:56,950  
But as it is, he was a murderer.

294

00:16:56,950 --> 00:16:57,850  
He was a murderer.

295

00:16:57,850 --> 00:16:59,720  
There's no doubt about it.

296

00:16:59,720 --> 00:17:02,170  
And when he was  
shipped to Auschwitz,

297

00:17:02,170 --> 00:17:06,339  
a Jewish figure of the  
underworld in Łódź,

298

00:17:06,339 --> 00:17:09,550  
whom he had sent  
personally to Auschwitz,

299

00:17:09,550 --> 00:17:13,030  
got hold of him and threw  
him alive into the fire

300

00:17:13,030 --> 00:17:13,978  
in Auschwitz.

301

00:17:13,978 --> 00:17:15,660  
Are you sure of this?

302

00:17:15,660 --> 00:17:19,927  
This was what the man told  
a witness after the war,

303

00:17:19,927 --> 00:17:21,510  
and this was published  
quite recently.

304

00:17:21,510 --> 00:17:24,859  
Yes, I know, but there  
are several versions

305  
00:17:24,859 --> 00:17:27,400  
of the death of Rumkowski.

306  
00:17:27,400 --> 00:17:28,660  
I think it's a true version.

307  
00:17:28,660 --> 00:17:31,210

308  
00:17:31,210 --> 00:17:45,940  
Yes, but they were very clear  
in their [INAUDIBLE] in one way.

309  
00:17:45,940 --> 00:17:50,670  
People like Rumkowski like  
Gens, all those pictures,

310  
00:17:50,670 --> 00:17:52,290  
they delivered the--

311  
00:17:52,290 --> 00:17:54,280  
They were very clear, yes.

312  
00:17:54,280 --> 00:17:55,710  
But there's a big difference.

313  
00:17:55,710 --> 00:18:03,660  
Again, you see Rumkowski wanted  
to cooperate with the Germans.

314  
00:18:03,660 --> 00:18:06,150  
Merin wanted to cooperate  
with the Germans.

315  
00:18:06,150 --> 00:18:08,760  
Barash did not.

316  
00:18:08,760 --> 00:18:10,430  
Barash supported--

317  
00:18:10,430 --> 00:18:14,820

318

00:18:14,820 --> 00:18:15,832  
(film slating)

319

00:18:15,832 --> 00:18:17,760  
[CLAP]

320

00:18:17,760 --> 00:18:22,140  
Yes, but I think  
that we must try

321

00:18:22,140 --> 00:18:29,290  
to go deeper because there  
was not inside the ghetto

322

00:18:29,290 --> 00:18:35,190  
a situation of potential  
civil war, like, for instance,

323

00:18:35,190 --> 00:18:40,470  
in the occupied countries like  
France, like other countries.

324

00:18:40,470 --> 00:18:46,980  
Let take France, where there  
is always a permanent struggle,

325

00:18:46,980 --> 00:18:50,970  
even if that door is not  
open between the bourgeoisie

326

00:18:50,970 --> 00:18:53,100  
and the workers.

327

00:18:53,100 --> 00:18:55,980  
However, for instance,  
the French bourgeoisie

328

00:18:55,980 --> 00:18:59,970  
who collaborated with the  
Germans were a big part of it,

329

00:18:59,970 --> 00:19:03,420  
because they  
preferred this, they

330

00:19:03,420 --> 00:19:11,280

had a kind of ideological  
agreement with them.

331

00:19:11,280 --> 00:19:15,620

One cannot say that it was  
the case in the ghettos.

332

00:19:15,620 --> 00:19:18,150

On the streets of the  
ghettos, they didn't--

333

00:19:18,150 --> 00:19:20,790

334

00:19:20,790 --> 00:19:24,810

There's a great difference  
between what I call cooperation

335

00:19:24,810 --> 00:19:27,750

and collaboration.

336

00:19:27,750 --> 00:19:32,490

Collaboration is an  
ideological identification

337

00:19:32,490 --> 00:19:36,060

between the group or the  
person that collaborates

338

00:19:36,060 --> 00:19:38,290

and the Nazis.

339

00:19:38,290 --> 00:19:41,730

They agreed to the Nazi aims.

340

00:19:41,730 --> 00:19:45,120

They want to help the  
Nazis to win the war.

341

00:19:45,120 --> 00:19:48,510

Now we have only one case  
like that amongst the Jews,

342

00:19:48,510 --> 00:19:50,070  
and that's not Judenrat.

343  
00:19:50,070 --> 00:19:52,200  
That's the 13 in  
the Warsaw Ghetto.

344  
00:19:52,200 --> 00:19:53,070  
[NON-ENGLISH]

345  
00:19:53,070 --> 00:19:55,500  
[NON-ENGLISH].

346  
00:19:55,500 --> 00:19:59,140  
The others want the war to end.

347  
00:19:59,140 --> 00:20:01,620  
They don't want the Germans  
to win, although some of them

348  
00:20:01,620 --> 00:20:03,270  
think that the Germans will win.

349  
00:20:03,270 --> 00:20:06,130  
They don't want them to win.

350  
00:20:06,130 --> 00:20:09,960  
And they want to save  
the Jews, somehow,

351  
00:20:09,960 --> 00:20:12,900  
until the end of the war,  
because at the end of the war,

352  
00:20:12,900 --> 00:20:16,020  
there will be peace, and  
the situation will be safe.

353  
00:20:16,020 --> 00:20:18,540  
And this is Rumkowski's idea.

354  
00:20:18,540 --> 00:20:19,710  
This is Gens's idea.

355

00:20:19,710 --> 00:20:21,390  
This is Barash's idea.

356  
00:20:21,390 --> 00:20:24,240  
And Barash is expecting  
the Russian army

357  
00:20:24,240 --> 00:20:26,670  
to come quickly to rescue.

358  
00:20:26,670 --> 00:20:29,910  
I mean, no collaborator,  
no Quisling no Laval,

359  
00:20:29,910 --> 00:20:32,550  
hope for the Russian  
army to come and liberate

360  
00:20:32,550 --> 00:20:33,510  
France and Norway.

361  
00:20:33,510 --> 00:20:35,820  
There's a vast difference there.

362  
00:20:35,820 --> 00:20:38,640  
So the Jews are  
forced to cooperate.

363  
00:20:38,640 --> 00:20:47,430  
And these Judenrat that want  
to save the Jews through slave

364  
00:20:47,430 --> 00:20:51,600  
labor are operating,  
I would say,

365  
00:20:51,600 --> 00:20:56,250  
on a logical basis, which  
in the case of the Nazis

366  
00:20:56,250 --> 00:20:59,370  
didn't work because the hatred  
of the Nazis of the Jews

367  
00:20:59,370 --> 00:21:03,390

was not based on economic  
or political foundations.

368

00:21:03,390 --> 00:21:07,590

It was based on ideological  
and quasi religious foundation.

369

00:21:07,590 --> 00:21:10,110

And so the end was murder.

370

00:21:10,110 --> 00:21:12,930

They wanted to save as  
many as possible, you see.

371

00:21:12,930 --> 00:21:15,870

And Barash, for  
instance, in Bialystok

372

00:21:15,870 --> 00:21:18,990

had relationships  
with the underground.

373

00:21:18,990 --> 00:21:24,510

He wanted the underground to  
act when there was no other way

374

00:21:24,510 --> 00:21:25,500

out.

375

00:21:25,500 --> 00:21:29,640

In the end, he missed  
the last point,

376

00:21:29,640 --> 00:21:31,890

and the underground rebelled.

377

00:21:31,890 --> 00:21:36,710

And Barash led the people  
to the trains to Treblinka.

378

00:21:36,710 --> 00:21:42,300

But there's a big difference  
between Barash and Rumkowski,

379

00:21:42,300 --> 00:21:45,690

because Barash was  
an honest person who

380  
00:21:45,690 --> 00:21:47,460  
was trying to save  
as many people

381  
00:21:47,460 --> 00:21:50,220  
as he could the only  
way he knew how.

382  
00:21:50,220 --> 00:21:54,620  
Whereas Rumkowski knew  
that he was murdering.

383  
00:21:54,620 --> 00:22:01,810  
And he was doing everything to  
suppress the living standards

384  
00:22:01,810 --> 00:22:03,310  
of the people in  
the Łódź Ghetto.

385  
00:22:03,310 --> 00:22:06,135  
He was combating the  
underground there.

386  
00:22:06,135 --> 00:22:07,510  
There was an  
underground in Łódź.

387  
00:22:07,510 --> 00:22:09,840  
He destroyed it.

388  
00:22:09,840 --> 00:22:11,270  
So there's a big difference.

389  
00:22:11,270 --> 00:22:16,140  
But you see, these cases  
of rescue through labor

390  
00:22:16,140 --> 00:22:18,400  
are not that many.

391  
00:22:18,400 --> 00:22:21,780



There are a few  
very clear examples.

392  
00:22:21,780 --> 00:22:25,830  
But if you take, for  
instance, Warsaw,

393  
00:22:25,830 --> 00:22:27,710  
there's very little of it there.

394  
00:22:27,710 --> 00:22:30,060  
There was an economic  
activity, but it

395  
00:22:30,060 --> 00:22:31,680  
was done by the Germans--

396  
00:22:31,680 --> 00:22:33,720  
Tobbens and Schultz and others.

397  
00:22:33,720 --> 00:22:39,520  
It was also done by Jews,  
illegally, underground.

398  
00:22:39,520 --> 00:22:44,370  
You practically have  
none of it in Lublin.

399  
00:22:44,370 --> 00:22:49,240  
You had very little of this  
in Lvov, and in other places.

400  
00:22:49,240 --> 00:22:51,150  
Certainly nothing  
of it in Minsk,

401  
00:22:51,150 --> 00:22:53,310  
which was a rebellious ghetto.

402  
00:22:53,310 --> 00:22:55,890  
And so here, too,  
you see, if you say--

403  
00:22:55,890 --> 00:22:59,330  
if you try to make a stereotype

of it, it doesn't work.

404

00:22:59,330 --> 00:23:01,440

Yes, completely right.

405

00:23:01,440 --> 00:23:03,840

Now you see there  
were other Judenrat.

406

00:23:03,840 --> 00:23:05,640

We discussed Holland.

407

00:23:05,640 --> 00:23:12,706

We discussed Łódź,  
Bialystok, and Vilna.

408

00:23:12,706 --> 00:23:20,350

Now there's Judenrat like, for  
instance, Shavil in Lithuania.

409

00:23:20,350 --> 00:23:25,410

Now there, the ghetto population  
supported the Judenrat.

410

00:23:25,410 --> 00:23:27,010

There's no doubt about that.

411

00:23:27,010 --> 00:23:33,270

And the Judenrat organized  
labor but on a different level,

412

00:23:33,270 --> 00:23:38,430

trying to save as many people,  
identifying with a population.

413

00:23:38,430 --> 00:23:42,120

It was a popular Judenrat.

414

00:23:42,120 --> 00:23:43,620

Yes, but did they succeed?

415

00:23:43,620 --> 00:23:48,420

As a matter of fact, in '72,  
there were a children's Aktion,

416

00:23:48,420 --> 00:23:52,560  
and they gave the people too.

417

00:23:52,560 --> 00:23:54,960  
They gave the  
people to the labor.

418

00:23:54,960 --> 00:23:57,616  
They tried to save the children.

419

00:23:57,616 --> 00:24:01,680  
You see, the difference  
between Łódź, Rumkowski,

420

00:24:01,680 --> 00:24:05,730  
and Shavli is tremendous,  
because in Shavli the police,

421

00:24:05,730 --> 00:24:09,180  
when it heard about  
the Kinder Aktion,

422

00:24:09,180 --> 00:24:14,190  
the action against the children,  
they sent the policemen around

423

00:24:14,190 --> 00:24:18,070  
to the families to  
hide the children.

424

00:24:18,070 --> 00:24:21,710  
Now between that and the  
fact that they did not

425

00:24:21,710 --> 00:24:27,140  
manage to save them  
is a second problem.

426

00:24:27,140 --> 00:24:29,390  
But what we are  
discussing is the attitude

427

00:24:29,390 --> 00:24:31,530  
of the Jewish leadership.

428

00:24:31,530 --> 00:24:34,710

It was objectively limited  
in what it could do.

429

00:24:34,710 --> 00:24:37,230

But we are discussing  
is not the outcome.

430

00:24:37,230 --> 00:24:40,820

What we are discussing  
is the intention.

431

00:24:40,820 --> 00:24:44,300

It's the moral action  
that we are discussing.

432

00:24:44,300 --> 00:24:46,550

The outcome was the  
same everywhere,

433

00:24:46,550 --> 00:24:48,380

as far as the children  
were concerned.

434

00:24:48,380 --> 00:24:50,870

In Shavli By the way,  
it worked in a way,

435

00:24:50,870 --> 00:24:55,560

because Shavli and Kovno were  
the two last ghettos in Eastern

436

00:24:55,560 --> 00:24:56,060

Europe.

437

00:24:56,060 --> 00:25:00,260

In July 1944, they were  
shipped to Germany,

438

00:25:00,260 --> 00:25:05,270

and most of the survivors  
in the South German camps

439

00:25:05,270 --> 00:25:10,950

were Lithuanian Jews from

Shavli and from Kovno.

440

00:25:10,950 --> 00:25:12,810

Now you have a  
ghetto like Kovno,

441

00:25:12,810 --> 00:25:17,580

for instance, where the head  
of the Judenrat, Elhanan Elkes,

442

00:25:17,580 --> 00:25:22,050

was active in trying to  
help the underground,

443

00:25:22,050 --> 00:25:25,290

protecting the ghetto  
as far as he could,

444

00:25:25,290 --> 00:25:27,900

cooperating with the  
Jewish police, who were

445

00:25:27,900 --> 00:25:31,500

on the side of the resistance.

446

00:25:31,500 --> 00:25:36,440

And this is something which  
is, again, unique in a way,

447

00:25:36,440 --> 00:25:38,630

because there are not  
very many ghettos where

448

00:25:38,630 --> 00:25:42,860

the Jewish police act on  
the side of the resisters

449

00:25:42,860 --> 00:25:45,620

against the Nazis.

450

00:25:45,620 --> 00:25:49,040

Now you can say,  
again, the majority

451

00:25:49,040 --> 00:25:54,110

of the Kovno Ghetto inhabitants  
were killed, including Elkes.

452

00:25:54,110 --> 00:25:58,250

But the action of Elkes  
was an action of somebody

453

00:25:58,250 --> 00:26:01,760

who was thrown into the  
position of leadership

454

00:26:01,760 --> 00:26:04,540

and tried to do his best  
to protect the ghetto.

455

00:26:04,540 --> 00:26:06,050

And who didn't want to be--

456

00:26:06,050 --> 00:26:07,860

He didn't want to be the leader.

457

00:26:07,860 --> 00:26:09,590

He was forced to be a leader.

458

00:26:09,590 --> 00:26:12,710

And then to take  
the same area, you

459

00:26:12,710 --> 00:26:16,670

have Minsk, where  
you have 80,000 Jews

460

00:26:16,670 --> 00:26:21,500

and a leader who was put there  
by pure accident, Eliyahu

461

00:26:21,500 --> 00:26:25,910

Myschkin who the moment he  
became the head of the Judenrat

462

00:26:25,910 --> 00:26:29,960

began to help in organizing  
armed resistance.

463

00:26:29,960 --> 00:26:31,820

And this is not a  
small ghetto, yes?

464  
00:26:31,820 --> 00:26:33,290  
This is the fourth  
largest ghetto

465  
00:26:33,290 --> 00:26:36,230  
in Europe, 80,000 people.

466  
00:26:36,230 --> 00:26:39,950  
And we don't know to this  
day exactly how many,

467  
00:26:39,950 --> 00:26:45,800  
but approximately 10,000 Jews  
were smuggled out of Minsk

468  
00:26:45,800 --> 00:26:48,530  
into the forest.

469  
00:26:48,530 --> 00:26:55,070  
So you have from Holland,  
Łódź, Bialystok, Shavli,

470  
00:26:55,070 --> 00:26:57,020  
and Kovno to Minsk.

471  
00:26:57,020 --> 00:27:02,940  
You have a whole gamut of  
completely different reactions.

472  
00:27:02,940 --> 00:27:05,120  
And when you go  
to each Judenrat,

473  
00:27:05,120 --> 00:27:09,080  
whether it's Slovakia, or  
it's France, or it's Belgium,

474  
00:27:09,080 --> 00:27:12,350  
a regional country,  
each Judenrat

475  
00:27:12,350 --> 00:27:17,360

had essentially a slightly  
different policy from any other

476  
00:27:17,360 --> 00:27:19,070  
you could examine.

477  
00:27:19,070 --> 00:27:22,220  
There are not  
exactly two Judenrat

478  
00:27:22,220 --> 00:27:25,670  
which are precisely alike.

479  
00:27:25,670 --> 00:27:29,270  
So the attempts that  
were made after the war

480  
00:27:29,270 --> 00:27:35,330  
to present the Judenrat  
as a stereotype must fail.

481  
00:27:35,330 --> 00:27:38,030  
There was no stereotype.

482  
00:27:38,030 --> 00:27:45,170  
Yes, how do you explain  
these different positions?

483  
00:27:45,170 --> 00:27:48,980  
Well, to start with,  
the German policy--

484  
00:27:48,980 --> 00:27:50,180  
--from the leader--

485  
00:27:50,180 --> 00:27:52,730  
No, no, no, no, not  
only from the leaders.

486  
00:27:52,730 --> 00:27:55,910  
Although, when you take, for  
instance, the places like Vilna

487  
00:27:55,910 --> 00:28:01,010  
and Kovno, which have the same



environments and the same type

488

00:28:01,010 --> 00:28:03,740  
of Jewish people and  
the same German rules,

489

00:28:03,740 --> 00:28:05,600  
and yet the behavior  
of the Judenrat

490

00:28:05,600 --> 00:28:08,540  
is completely  
different, you begin

491

00:28:08,540 --> 00:28:11,600  
to wonder whether  
it's not very much

492

00:28:11,600 --> 00:28:15,080  
a question of the  
character of the leaders.

493

00:28:15,080 --> 00:28:17,970  
And undoubtedly,  
that plays a role.

494

00:28:17,970 --> 00:28:22,520  
But look, Minsk, for  
instance, had forests.

495

00:28:22,520 --> 00:28:27,140  
And there was a beginning of  
a partisan Soviet movement

496

00:28:27,140 --> 00:28:30,520  
from end of 1941.

497

00:28:30,520 --> 00:28:33,460  
Now this is not the case  
in central Lithuania,

498

00:28:33,460 --> 00:28:38,020  
certainly not in Łódź,  
not to speak of Holland.

499

00:28:38,020 --> 00:28:42,880  
So you have completely different  
environment, non-Jewish, local.

500  
00:28:42,880 --> 00:28:47,020  
You have also slightly different  
policies of the Germans,

501  
00:28:47,020 --> 00:28:49,540  
not in the overall  
attitudes of the Jews,

502  
00:28:49,540 --> 00:28:51,580  
but whether there's  
a military government

503  
00:28:51,580 --> 00:28:53,770  
or a civilian government.

504  
00:28:53,770 --> 00:28:56,890  
A military government in  
Belgium, for instance,

505  
00:28:56,890 --> 00:29:00,010  
versus a civilian  
government in Holland,

506  
00:29:00,010 --> 00:29:02,170  
where the civilian  
government in Holland

507  
00:29:02,170 --> 00:29:06,550  
has thousands of  
SS men in Holland

508  
00:29:06,550 --> 00:29:10,750  
to execute a command of  
the German government.

509  
00:29:10,750 --> 00:29:16,690  
Whereas in Belgium, the enmity  
between the military and the SS

510  
00:29:16,690 --> 00:29:20,440  
made it easier for the  
Jews to escape, to hide,

511

00:29:20,440 --> 00:29:26,930

to make contact with the  
Belgian resistance, and so on.

512

00:29:26,930 --> 00:29:43,000