1 00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,660

2 00:00:07,660 --> 00:00:12,220 I think one of the big problems there is--

3 00:00:12,220 --> 00:00:17,140 the lack of congruity, the problem

4 00:00:17,140 --> 00:00:21,040 that you have the Nazis in Europe doing

5 00:00:21,040 --> 00:00:23,560 the destruction of the Jews at a fantastic

6 00:00:23,560 --> 00:00:28,810 speed, and the reaction of the outside world

7 00:00:28,810 --> 00:00:32,980 is complicated, slow, contradictory.

8 00:00:32,980 --> 00:00:34,990 And the outside world knows what's happening?

9 00:00:34,990 --> 00:00:37,900 And the outside world knows what's happening.

10 00:00:37,900 --> 00:00:40,720 What is the reason for that, the basic reason for that?

11 00:00:40,720 --> 00:00:42,250 I think the basic reason for that-- 12 00:00:42,250 --> 00:00:45,820 and this comes out very clearly in the Hungarian episode

13 00:00:45,820 --> 00:00:50,710 with the Jewish Agency demanding negotiations

14 00:00:50,710 --> 00:00:53,740 and the Western world opposing it.

15 00:00:53,740 --> 00:00:57,940 The real reason behind it is that the Western powers

16 00:00:57,940 --> 00:01:04,209 were leading a war to be won by military means.

17 00:01:04,209 --> 00:01:07,970 The aim of the war was actually to change the world,

18 00:01:07,970 --> 00:01:15,160 to destroy a terrible, satanic, demonic force, the Nazi power,

19 00:01:15,160 --> 00:01:17,440 which was trying to destroy peoples.

20 00:01:17,440 --> 00:01:19,270 So in actual fact, the aim should

21 00:01:19,270 --> 00:01:22,510 have been to save people, but this

22 00:01:22,510 --> 00:01:27,190 was lost in a concept which saw the war as a purely

23 00:01:27,190 --> 00:01:30,010 military affair.

24 00:01:30,010 --> 00:01:34,870 And there was a decision taken by the American military

25 00:01:34,870 --> 00:01:40,540 in January 1944 which said in so many words

26 00:01:40,540 --> 00:01:46,540 that no military action should be taken to save civilians

27 00:01:46,540 --> 00:01:49,390 which was not in line with military needs,

28 00:01:49,390 --> 00:01:51,640 and military needs meant anything

29 00:01:51,640 --> 00:01:56,470 that was conducive to the military victory in the war.

30 00:01:56,470 --> 00:01:59,860 Now, the Jews and, in some cases, others

31 00:01:59,860 --> 00:02:05,290 were civilians who were threatened by the Nazi machine,

32 00:02:05,290 --> 00:02:10,479 but their saving was not a military aim

33 00:02:10,479 --> 00:02:11,710 of the Western powers. 34 00:02:11,710 --> 00:02:14,290 Therefore, whatever the Jewish Agency did

35 00:02:14,290 --> 00:02:17,290 and when Sharett went to London in June 1944

36 00:02:17,290 --> 00:02:19,930 to try to convince the British--

37 00:02:19,930 --> 00:02:22,210 it was useless.

38 00:02:22,210 --> 00:02:25,990 On the 2nd of June, 1944, Greenbaum

39 00:02:25,990 --> 00:02:31,750 sent a cable to America to convince the Americans

40 00:02:31,750 --> 00:02:34,240 to bomb Auschwitz.

41 00:02:34,240 --> 00:02:36,340 This was another thing that the Jewish Agency

42 00:02:36,340 --> 00:02:39,640 could do to demand the bombing of Auschwitz.

43 00:02:39,640 --> 00:02:41,800 This was actually not an idea of the Jewish Agency.

44 00:02:41,800 --> 00:02:42,425 No, it was not.

45 00:02:42,425 --> 00:02:44,540 This came from Slovakia, from Weissmandel.

46 00:02:44,540 --> 00:02:46,415 Yes, it came from Weissmandel, the first one.

47 00:02:46,415 --> 00:02:48,130 But it reached the Jewish Agency.

48 00:02:48,130 --> 00:02:49,150 They adopted the plan.

49 00:02:49,150 --> 00:02:51,460 They sent it in.

50 00:02:51,460 --> 00:02:55,000 But you see, the Americans and then the British--

51 00:02:55,000 --> 00:02:58,240 they didn't see this as a priority.

52 00:02:58,240 --> 00:03:01,330 The priority was to bomb the chemical factories

53 00:03:01,330 --> 00:03:04,660 near Auschwitz but not to bomb the concentration camps.

54 00:03:04,660 --> 00:03:07,270 So what the Jewish Agency in Palestine

55 00:03:07,270 --> 00:03:10,750 could do, even in that situation,

56 00:03:10,750 --> 00:03:14,380 was what we talked before the Judenrat could do.

57

00:03:14,380 --> 00:03:16,630 They could show good intention.

58

00:03:16,630 --> 00:03:18,610 They could press.

59

00:03:18,610 --> 00:03:22,150 There wasn't very much more they could

60

00:03:22,150 --> 00:03:25,390 do in those circumstances.

61

00:03:25,390 --> 00:03:26,800 Exactly what was asked--

62

00:03:26,800 --> 00:03:30,010

63

00:03:30,010 --> 00:03:35,410 that the Jews of Warsaw asked there already--

64

00:03:35,410 --> 00:03:40,630 in October 1942, when Karski was sent,

65

00:03:40,630 --> 00:03:44,240 he said one has to take specific measures for the Jews.

66

00:03:44,240 --> 00:03:45,880 --specific military measures.

67

00:03:45,880 --> 00:03:51,070 In 1942, when Karski came to Europe and to America--

68

00:03:51,070 --> 00:03:56,170 in October 1942, there

was no military means

69 00:03:56,170 --> 00:04:02,050 by which American bombers could reach Eastern Poland.

70 00:04:02,050 --> 00:04:07,180 But in 1944 there was, and it was realistic.

71 00:04:07,180 --> 00:04:08,830 And the Western powers wouldn't do it.

72 00:04:08,830 --> 00:04:10,637 We don't talk about the Soviet Union

73 00:04:10,637 --> 00:04:12,220 because the Soviet Union simply wasn't

74 00:04:12,220 --> 00:04:13,595 interested in the whole business.

75 00:04:13,595 --> 00:04:16,149

76 00:04:16,149 --> 00:04:20,710 Now let me come to the Hungarian problem.

77 00:04:20,710 --> 00:04:24,040

78 00:04:24,040 --> 00:04:27,140 There are several issues involved there.

79 00:04:27,140 --> 00:04:30,130 I think one basic issue has to be gotten out of the way 80 00:04:30,130 --> 00:04:34,360 straight away, and that is the question

81 00:04:34,360 --> 00:04:41,620 that Kasztner, who was the factual, not the nominal,

82 00:04:41,620 --> 00:04:46,390 leader of the Zionist Rescue Committee in Budapest

83 00:04:46,390 --> 00:04:51,640 was accused of, namely, that he was negotiating with the Nazis,

84 00:04:51,640 --> 00:04:55,120 and in return for the negotiation with the Nazis,

85 00:04:55,120 --> 00:04:58,360 he kept quiet about the mass murder in Poland

86 00:04:58,360 --> 00:05:01,870 and thereby prevented Hungarian Jews

87 00:05:01,870 --> 00:05:04,810 from reacting to the Nazi deportations

88 00:05:04,810 --> 00:05:08,520 differently from what they did react in fact.

89 00:05:08,520 --> 00:05:10,620 And this is put forward especially

90 00:05:10,620 --> 00:05:14,610 clearly in the case of one town in Eastern Hungary,

91 00:05:14,610 --> 00:05:19,560 Cluj, where Kasztner comes from, where

92 00:05:19,560 --> 00:05:23,760 it was said that he saved a number of his friends,

93 00:05:23,760 --> 00:05:28,020 and family, and so on by bringing them to Budapest.

94 00:05:28,020 --> 00:05:32,520 And he did not want the others, thereby preventing their escape

95 00:05:32,520 --> 00:05:35,100 to Romania, which was just 12 kilometers away

96 00:05:35,100 --> 00:05:37,590 across the border.

97 00:05:37,590 --> 00:05:39,720 Now, let me put this very clearly.

98 00:05:39,720 --> 00:05:47,790 I think that this whole issue is put the wrong way around.

99 00:05:47,790 --> 00:05:52,050 Hungarian Jewry, including the Jews of Cluj,

100 00:05:52,050 --> 00:05:56,880 did not have to be told about the mass murders in Poland

101 00:05:56,880 --> 00:06:00,120 or about the plan of the

Germans to annihilate

102 00:06:00,120 --> 00:06:01,330 the population of Europe.

103 00:06:01,330 --> 00:06:04,650 They saw it happening in front of their eyes.

104 00:06:04,650 --> 00:06:08,290 It is quite futile to talk about anyone,

105 00:06:08,290 --> 00:06:10,620 whether it was Kasztner or anyone else, that

106 00:06:10,620 --> 00:06:14,400 was needed for the Jews of Cluj or any other place in Hungary

107 00:06:14,400 --> 00:06:17,850 to tell them what was happening in Poland.

108 00:06:17,850 --> 00:06:20,160 How did they know?

109 00:06:20,160 --> 00:06:28,230 Well, first of all, there were 2,500 Polish Jews

110 00:06:28,230 --> 00:06:32,940 who escaped between 1942 and 1944

111 00:06:32,940 --> 00:06:35,670 into Hungary from Poland, especially

112 00:06:35,670 --> 00:06:37,980 from the area of Lvov.

00:06:37,980 --> 00:06:44,220 They told their hosts, the Hungarian Jews, about Belzec,

114

00:06:44,220 --> 00:06:48,600 about Treblinka, about Majdanek, about the mass destruction

115

00:06:48,600 --> 00:06:49,575 in all these places.

116

00:06:49,575 --> 00:06:52,270

117

00:06:52,270 --> 00:06:53,380 Some of them survived.

118

00:06:53,380 --> 00:06:56,190 We have the testimonies in Yad Vashem.

119

00:06:56,190 --> 00:07:00,600 They tell us that the Jews who hosted them, including people

120

00:07:00,600 --> 00:07:05,610 who escaped into Cluj, did not want to listen to them,

121

00:07:05,610 --> 00:07:08,850 threw them out.

122

00:07:08,850 --> 00:07:12,540 The Judenrat, the Hungarian Judenrat in Budapest,

123

00:07:12,540 --> 00:07:18,690 created a separate department which sent out emissaries

124

00:07:18,690 --> 00:07:22,440 to Hungarian provincial

00:07:22,440 --> 00:07:25,470 the Jews that they were going to be deported to Poland

126

00:07:25,470 --> 00:07:27,090 and killed.

127

00:07:27,090 --> 00:07:28,900 What does it mean?

128

00:07:28,900 --> 00:07:31,140 What does it mean precisely?

129

00:07:31,140 --> 00:07:32,220 Precisely, 12--

130

00:07:32,220 --> 00:07:36,120 If they sent people to war, what did they tell them?

131

00:07:36,120 --> 00:07:38,520 They went to the various ghettos--

132

00:07:38,520 --> 00:07:40,620 by that time, they were already ghettos, yes.

133

00:07:40,620 --> 00:07:42,540 This was after the beginning of April.

134

00:07:42,540 --> 00:07:44,200 Yes, but in order to understand one

135

00:07:44,200 --> 00:07:48,340 has to say that the lifetime of these ghettos was very short.

00:07:48,340 --> 00:07:50,850 Six weeks, six weeks.

137 00:07:50

00:07:50,850 --> 00:07:53,820 Most of these emissaries

came within those six weeks.

138

00:07:53,820 --> 00:07:59,370 They were sent out as a

measure of immediate rescue.

139

 $00:07:59,370 \longrightarrow 00:08:04,290$

They came with the task to

tell the Jews in those ghettos,

140

00:08:04,290 --> 00:08:06,840

don't agree to be

taken into trains.

141

00:08:06,840 --> 00:08:09,930

Don't agree to be

taken away because you

142

00:08:09,930 --> 00:08:12,870

are going to be shipped to

Poland, and Poland means death.

143

00:08:12,870 --> 00:08:15,780

That is what they were told.

144

00:08:15,780 --> 00:08:18,160

Of these 12 people

who were sent out--

145

00:08:18,160 --> 00:08:20,100

this was a small

department immediately

146

 $00:08:20,100 \longrightarrow 00:08:23,430$

organized to send out people

who looked not Jewish, who

147

00:08:23,430 --> 00:08:26,400

could go around.

148 00:08:26,400 --> 00:08:28,560 There isn't a single one--

149 00:08:28,560 --> 00:08:33,780 I think eight or 10 of the 12 are here in Israel today--

150 00:08:33,780 --> 00:08:37,049 who does not tell the story that he comes to this ghetto,

151 00:08:37,049 --> 00:08:39,990 and to that ghetto, and to this town, and to that town,

152 00:08:39,990 --> 00:08:42,990 and they are kicked out by the communities.

153 00:08:42,990 --> 00:08:45,300 But this is not surprising.

154 00:08:45,300 --> 00:08:47,970 It was the same in Poland, too.

155 00:08:47,970 --> 00:08:52,200 But this is two years after the destruction starts in Poland,

156 00:08:52,200 --> 00:08:54,990 and what I'm trying to say is that it is not

157 00:08:54,990 --> 00:08:58,290 a matter that the Jews of Hungary didn't know.

158 00:08:58,290 --> 00:09:00,060 It is a matter that they did not want

00:09:00,060 --> 00:09:03,370 to know because to no meant--

160 00:09:03,370 --> 00:09:05,430 No, no, but one has to enter in detail.

161 00:09:05,430 --> 00:09:09,750 These Jews who were sent as emissaries--

162 00:09:09,750 --> 00:09:10,680 what did they do?

163 00:09:10,680 --> 00:09:12,240 They gathered the people?

164 00:09:12,240 --> 00:09:13,560 They delivered the speeches --

165 00:09:13,560 --> 00:09:14,060 No.

166 00:09:14,060 --> 00:09:14,602 They talked--

167 00:09:14,602 --> 00:09:15,680 They tried try to see--

168 00:09:15,680 --> 00:09:17,055 --to the chiefs of the community.

169 00:09:17,055 --> 00:09:19,890 Yes, they try to see the chiefs of the community,

170 00:09:19,890 --> 00:09:22,740 and it is the chiefs of the community who did not 00:09:22,740 --> 00:09:25,680 want to receive the message.

172 00:09:25,680 --> 00:09:28,170 The accusation that was afterwards

173 00:09:28,170 --> 00:09:31,920 leveled against Kasztner and a few others

174 00:09:31,920 --> 00:09:35,940 was that they did not warn the chiefs of the community,

175 00:09:35,940 --> 00:09:37,830 and what I'm saying is that the chiefs

176 00:09:37,830 --> 00:09:43,770 of the community and the community had the information

177 00:09:43,770 --> 00:09:45,990 and did not have the knowledge because they didn't

178 00:09:45,990 --> 00:09:47,830 want to have that knowledge.

179 00:09:47,830 --> 00:09:52,650 Yes, but, first of all, you don't convince me absolutely.

180 00:09:52,650 --> 00:09:55,440 I'd say it's so simple what you say.

181 00:09:55,440 --> 00:09:58,960 And the second thing--

182 00:09:58,960 --> 00:10:02,890 183 00:10:02,890 --> 00:10:05,410 we don't understand very well what Kasztner,

184 00:10:05,410 --> 00:10:08,050 in the same time, was doing.

185 00:10:08,050 --> 00:10:09,940 Now, I'm coming to that, but I first

186 00:10:09,940 --> 00:10:13,270 want to make this point clear because if I didn't convince

187 00:10:13,270 --> 00:10:16,870 you, I have more points.

188 00:10:16,870 --> 00:10:23,050 There were Hungarian soldiers who came from the Ukraine

189 00:10:23,050 --> 00:10:23,950 on leave.

190 00:10:23,950 --> 00:10:25,580 No, no, no.

191 00:10:25,580 --> 00:10:27,970 No, I agree completely about this,

192 00:10:27,970 --> 00:10:30,850 that they knew about this destruction.

193 00:10:30,850 --> 00:10:32,930 This is very clear.

194 00:10:32,930 --> 00:10:35,410 But I think that

if they would have

195

00:10:35,410 --> 00:10:38,020 been warned in another way--

196

00:10:38,020 --> 00:10:40,660 and I don't know which one--

197

00:10:40,660 --> 00:10:42,370

maybe the results would have been

198

00:10:42,370 --> 00:10:45,760 different because when you talk to some of these people today--

199

00:10:45,760 --> 00:10:46,660 and I did.

200

00:10:46,660 --> 00:10:49,510 I have talked to some of them who are in Israel and who

201

00:10:49,510 --> 00:10:54,340 were shipped from Transylvania or from Cluj, even,

202

00:10:54,340 --> 00:10:57,820 to Auschwitz, these people complain.

203

00:10:57,820 --> 00:11:02,410 And they say today that they were never warned.

204

00:11:02,410 --> 00:11:04,930 Well, this is simply not true.

205

00:11:04,930 --> 00:11:09,460 In Cluj there was a

committee, a rescue committee,

00:11:09,460 --> 00:11:13,360 which was composed--

207

00:11:13,360 --> 00:11:17,230 all right, I'll start exactly from there.

208

00:11:17,230 --> 00:11:21,400 In Cluj, you had a very typical situation, a very important one

209

00:11:21,400 --> 00:11:24,550 because Cluj is a very short distance away from the Romanian

210

00:11:24,550 --> 00:11:30,010 border, and there was, theoretically, a possibility

211

00:11:30,010 --> 00:11:32,560 of crossing it, although how many, in fact,

212

00:11:32,560 --> 00:11:35,770 could have crossed the border in the middle of war

213

00:11:35,770 --> 00:11:39,100 between Hungary and Romania is very doubtful.

214

00:11:39,100 --> 00:11:42,982 In Cluj, there was a committee of community leaders.

215

00:11:42,982 --> 00:11:44,440 Kasztner wasn't a community leader.

216

00:11:44,440 --> 00:11:47,830 Kasztner was a journalist, an important journalist.

00:11:47,830 --> 00:11:52,000 But the list I have here of one, two, three, four, five,

218

00:11:52,000 --> 00:11:54,590 six central leaders of the community,

219

00:11:54,590 --> 00:11:59,590 including the rabbi of the Neolog community in Cluj--

220

00:11:59,590 --> 00:12:06,670 they were trying, during the period of the ghettoization,

221

00:12:06,670 --> 00:12:09,550 which is a very short period of time,

222

00:12:09,550 --> 00:12:14,100 to convince the Jews of Cluj to escape.

223

00:12:14,100 --> 00:12:16,300 It was a rescue committee.

224

00:12:16,300 --> 00:12:18,280 They knew what was happening in Poland.

225

00:12:18,280 --> 00:12:20,140 They were trying to warn them.

226

00:12:20,140 --> 00:12:25,840 What I'm trying to say is that, to have Kasztner come in

227

00:12:25,840 --> 00:12:30,070 or any Kasztner, any person to Cluj

228

00:12:30,070 --> 00:12:33,310

to tell the people of Cluj what was happening in Poland so they

229

00:12:33,310 --> 00:12:36,130 shouldn't go there was futile.

230

00:12:36,130 --> 00:12:38,225 They knew it in any case.

231

00:12:38,225 --> 00:12:39,100 The question of the--

232

00:12:39,100 --> 00:12:42,766 It seems that the warning was not delivered properly.

233

00:12:42,766 --> 00:12:44,470 I'm saying that the warning didn't

234

00:12:44,470 --> 00:12:48,130 have to be delivered properly because the people knew.

235

00:12:48,130 --> 00:12:51,190 In other words, the addition of somebody else telling them

236

00:12:51,190 --> 00:12:55,450 what they already knew had no meaning.

237

00:12:55,450 --> 00:12:56,740 Their own leaders told them.

238

00:12:56,740 --> 00:12:59,488 If the chiefs of the community would have said what was

239

00:12:59,488 --> 00:13:00,280 their [INAUDIBLE]--

240

00:13:00,280 --> 00:13:01,780 But that was the leadership.

241

00:13:01,780 --> 00:13:05,300 Look, Dr. Moshe Weinberger, for instance--

242

00:13:05,300 --> 00:13:07,450 he was a leader of the community.

243

00:13:07,450 --> 00:13:10,580 Hillel Danzig was the leader of the community.

244

00:13:10,580 --> 00:13:13,540 These people were on that committee.

245

00:13:13,540 --> 00:13:16,330 This was before some of them went on the Kasztner train,

246

00:13:16,330 --> 00:13:17,090 yes?

247

00:13:17,090 --> 00:13:17,590 This is--

248

00:13:17,590 --> 00:13:18,820 And what does it mean?

249

00:13:18,820 --> 00:13:22,090 The population of Cluj, the Jewish population was gathered?

250

00:13:22,090 --> 00:13:24,520 This man-- yes.

251

00:13:24,520 --> 00:13:29,560 What we discussed before, that the population of-- the Jewish

00:13:29,560 --> 00:13:33,400 population in the Hungarian provincial cities-- in fact,

253

00:13:33,400 --> 00:13:34,600 anywhere--

254

00:13:34,600 --> 00:13:38,560 simply did not want to realize what was going to happen,

255

00:13:38,560 --> 00:13:40,630 not that they didn't have the information.

256

00:13:40,630 --> 00:13:42,320 I think that they had no time--

257

00:13:42,320 --> 00:13:43,990 Ah, now I'm coming to that.

258

00:13:43,990 --> 00:13:46,270 [? --to realize ?] because it went very fast.

259

00:13:46,270 --> 00:13:49,750 And second, [? see, ?] I don't think that they have been

260

00:13:49,750 --> 00:13:52,855 warned properly by their own natural leaders.

261

00:13:52,855 --> 00:13:54,480 Well, those were their natural leaders.

262

00:13:54,480 --> 00:13:55,897 If their leaders would have said--

263

00:13:55,897 --> 00:13:58,070

I am not sure that they said--

264

00:13:58,070 --> 00:14:00,717 if their leaders would have said, run away,

265

00:14:00,717 --> 00:14:01,550 and you are doomed--

266

00:14:01,550 --> 00:14:03,077 No, they didn't say, run way.

267

00:14:03,077 --> 00:14:03,910 --you are finished--

268

00:14:03,910 --> 00:14:04,510 They said, escape.

269

00:14:04,510 --> 00:14:05,200 Some of this --

270

00:14:05,200 --> 00:14:08,530 They said, escape to Romania, in Cluj.

271

00:14:08,530 --> 00:14:11,407 In most cities in Hungary, there was no point

272

00:14:11,407 --> 00:14:12,615 in trying to escape anywhere.

273

00:14:12,615 --> 00:14:12,890 Yes, it was too far.

274

00:14:12,890 --> 00:14:13,840 I admit it.

275

00:14:13,840 --> 00:14:15,040 There's no way.

00:14:15,040 --> 00:14:18,400 But what Kasztner was accused of was

277 00:14:18,400 --> 00:14:20,770 that he was negotiating with the Nazis

278 00:14:20,770 --> 00:14:23,860 to save the whole of the Jewish population of Hungary

279 00:14:23,860 --> 00:14:28,780 if possible, yes, as against money.

280 00:14:28,780 --> 00:14:30,790 That is what he was doing.

281 00:14:30,790 --> 00:14:35,680 His first meeting-- he first met with Dieter Wisliceny

282 00:14:35,680 --> 00:14:39,760 at the end of March of 1944 and then again in April.

283 00:14:39,760 --> 00:14:45,220 They were trying to negotiate for a ransom which would free--

284 00:14:45,220 --> 00:14:47,830 first of all, which would not put the Jews of Hungary

285 00:14:47,830 --> 00:14:49,000 into ghettos--

286 00:14:49,000 --> 00:14:50,740 this was the first thing--

287 00:14:50,740 --> 00:14:55,600 and afterwards, to try to save, by some kind of negotiation,

288

00:14:55,600 --> 00:14:58,780 through the Brand negotiations and afterwards, whoever

289

00:14:58,780 --> 00:15:00,820 it was possible to save.

290

00:15:00,820 --> 00:15:05,320 Now, he was accused of-- by doing these negotiations,

291

00:15:05,320 --> 00:15:10,090 he was closing the option of turning to the Jews of Hungary

292

00:15:10,090 --> 00:15:13,450 and telling them, run.

293

00:15:13,450 --> 00:15:16,150 Now, when you analyze this now, you

294

00:15:16,150 --> 00:15:21,220 have to see that he could either have-- he could have done

295

00:15:21,220 --> 00:15:24,130 either the one or the other.

296

00:15:24,130 --> 00:15:26,005 The moment he turned to the Jewish population

297

00:15:26,005 --> 00:15:28,390 to tell them to run, that was the end

298

00:15:28,390 --> 00:15:30,490 of the negotiation with the Nazis

00:15:30,490 --> 00:15:32,460 because there was no hiding.

300

00:15:32,460 --> 00:15:33,490

Yes, it was the end of--

301

00:15:33,490 --> 00:15:34,323 [INTERPOSING VOICES]

302

00:15:34,323 --> 00:15:37,720 So the problem for Kasztner was, what was more effective?

303

00:15:37,720 --> 00:15:40,900 What had more chances?

304

00:15:40,900 --> 00:15:47,500 The Germans came into Hungary with a plan, a very quick plan.

305

00:15:47,500 --> 00:15:49,420 It took them very little time to go

306

00:15:49,420 --> 00:15:54,820 through the stages of concentration, of isolation,

307

00:15:54,820 --> 00:15:59,050 of Aryanization, and so on, and so forth.

308

00:15:59,050 --> 00:16:01,793 The ghettos existed for a very short period of time.

309

00:16:01,793 --> 00:16:02,460

They were only--

310

00:16:02,460 --> 00:16:04,030

It was the preliminary

[? stage. ?]

00:16:04,030 --> 00:16:06,370 --preliminary steps to deportation.

312

00:16:06,370 --> 00:16:09,940 The central Judenrat in Budapest had very little effect

313

00:16:09,940 --> 00:16:11,620 anywhere.

314

00:16:11,620 --> 00:16:13,930 The process was very quick.

315

00:16:13,930 --> 00:16:20,530 The cooperation of the Hungarian population and government

316

00:16:20,530 --> 00:16:23,380 was almost 100%.

317

00:16:23,380 --> 00:16:25,480 There was no possibility for the Jews

318

00:16:25,480 --> 00:16:28,180 to escape into the countryside.

319

00:16:28,180 --> 00:16:31,720 The few Jewish communities on the Romanian border

320

00:16:31,720 --> 00:16:34,270 were few communities on the Romanian border.

321

00:16:34,270 --> 00:16:38,980 All the rest were not in that situation at all.

322

00:16:38,980 --> 00:16:43,660

And Kasztner decided, together with Komoly

323

00:16:43,660 --> 00:16:46,840 together with other members of that group,

324

00:16:46,840 --> 00:16:52,900 that the only chance to save Jews was by negotiation.

325

00:16:52,900 --> 00:16:57,440 The Jewish men were in labor battalions.

326

00:16:57,440 --> 00:17:00,050 But you said the only chance to save Jews.

327

00:17:00,050 --> 00:17:03,660 You should say the only chance to save some Jews because--

328

00:17:03,660 --> 00:17:04,160 No.

329

00:17:04,160 --> 00:17:06,099 --as a matter of fact, he thought already

330

00:17:06,099 --> 00:17:07,611 that those were doomed [INAUDIBLE]

331

00:17:07,611 --> 00:17:09,069 and he wanted to save [INAUDIBLE]..

332

00:17:09,069 --> 00:17:09,609 That is not true.

333

00:17:09,609 --> 00:17:10,359

That is not true--

334 00:17:10,359 --> 00:17:10,869 I think.

335

00:17:10,869 --> 00:17:14,820 --because his negotiations, to start with,

336

00:17:14,820 --> 00:17:16,839 with Wisliceny and [INAUDIBLE]--

337

00:17:16,839 --> 00:17:18,609 But this was a--

338

00:17:18,609 --> 00:17:19,435 --a first stage.

339

00:17:19,435 --> 00:17:20,518 Yes, the very first stage.

340

00:17:20,518 --> 00:17:22,960 The second stage was Brand, and Kasztner

341

00:17:22,960 --> 00:17:25,390 believed in the Brand mission.

342

00:17:25,390 --> 00:17:28,450 And the Brand mission was to save one million Jews.

343

00:17:28,450 --> 00:17:29,450 Don't forget that.

344

00:17:29,450 --> 00:17:32,470 Yes, but there was a third stage.

345

00:17:32,470 --> 00:17:38,320 But you see, when the second Kasztner negotiations started,

00:17:38,320 --> 00:17:45,340 they did not start, as you know, before early part of June.

347

00:17:45,340 --> 00:17:47,740 By the early part of June, the process

348

00:17:47,740 --> 00:17:50,770 of the deportation of the provincial Jews

349

00:17:50,770 --> 00:17:51,520 was in full swing.

350

00:17:51,520 --> 00:17:52,603 That's exactly what I say.

351

00:17:52,603 --> 00:17:53,560 He knew it.

352 00:17:53,560 --> 00:17:56,410 So the only way that he could act

353

00:17:56,410 --> 00:17:58,510 or that he thought that he could act

354

00:17:58,510 --> 00:18:00,430 was by negotiating with the Nazis

355

00:18:00,430 --> 00:18:02,770 to save whoever he could save.

356

00:18:02,770 --> 00:18:05,230 His negotiations

turned about the Jews

357

00:18:05,230 --> 00:18:08,500 of Debrecen, the people

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who were transported,

358 00:18:08,500 --> 00:18:10,480 15,000 or 17,000 people who were transported.

359

00:18:10,480 --> 00:18:12,313 But you see, he writes himself in his report

360

00:18:12,313 --> 00:18:15,460 that he wanted to save a kind of ark of Noah.

361

00:18:15,460 --> 00:18:17,800 Now, no, it's not only that.

362

00:18:17,800 --> 00:18:19,550 What he wanted to do--

363

00:18:19,550 --> 00:18:23,610 he wanted to break the precedent.

364

00:18:23,610 --> 00:18:28,660 He wanted to create a precedent of saving Jews

365

00:18:28,660 --> 00:18:31,000 with German agreement.

366

00:18:31,000 --> 00:18:33,850 If this precedent was once created,

367

00:18:33,850 --> 00:18:38,890 negotiations could then begin to save large numbers.

368

00:18:38,890 --> 00:18:41,650 The precedent was the famous Kasztner train.

00:18:41,650 --> 00:18:43,390 By the way, Kasztner, of course, thought

370

00:18:43,390 --> 00:18:46,180 there would be more things, yes, but there was, in the end,

371

00:18:46,180 --> 00:18:49,030 only one.

372

00:18:49,030 --> 00:18:55,030 Like all leaders in Europe in similar situation

373

00:18:55,030 --> 00:19:00,010 of the adult groups, not the youngsters,

374

00:19:00,010 --> 00:19:02,860 he saved or he put--

375

00:19:02,860 --> 00:19:06,280 he took from Cluj his friends, his family.

376

00:19:06,280 --> 00:19:10,660 He took into that train people representing

377

00:19:10,660 --> 00:19:16,280 all the sections of Hungarian Jewry, and he argued--

378

00:19:16,280 --> 00:19:19,120 And many rich, too, who could pay.

379

00:19:19,120 --> 00:19:23,680 And rich people who could pay for the rest.

380

00:19:23,680 --> 00:19:29,740 He argued that, if he put his family in there, then

381

00:19:29,740 --> 00:19:31,450 people would join.

382

00:19:31,450 --> 00:19:33,430 If not, who could know?

383

00:19:33,430 --> 00:19:37,270 Perhaps the Germans were going to betray him

384

00:19:37,270 --> 00:19:39,325 like they betrayed so many times before

385

00:19:39,325 --> 00:19:41,590 and they would ship the train to Auschwitz.

386

00:19:41,590 --> 00:19:42,970 I don't know whether that is true

387

00:19:42,970 --> 00:19:45,550 or not, but what is clear to me is

388

00:19:45,550 --> 00:19:49,690 that he believed in this idea of a precedent

389

00:19:49,690 --> 00:19:50,860 because we have evidence--

390

00:19:50,860 --> 00:19:52,990 What interests me is that one can

391

00:19:52,990 --> 00:20:00,400 see the achievement of

Kasztner in a double light,

392 00:20:00,400 --> 00:20:05,245 either a complete positive one or a negative one.

393 00:20:05,245 --> 00:20:07,840 The positive one is what you say,

394 00:20:07,840 --> 00:20:11,290 that he created a precedent, and in fact, this

395 00:20:11,290 --> 00:20:18,760 was the first time that the Nazi released Jews.

396 00:20:18,760 --> 00:20:24,775 1,600 Jews-- it's nothing, and it is [INAUDIBLE]..

397 00:20:24,775 --> 00:20:27,940 And it is a tremendous thing, yes.

398 00:20:27,940 --> 00:20:29,740 And the negative thing is that he

399 00:20:29,740 --> 00:20:34,960 behaved like a classical Judenrat member.

400 00:20:34,960 --> 00:20:40,840 In one way, he was only interested in saving a handful

401 00:20:40,840 --> 00:20:44,110 because he knew that he couldn't save the [INAUDIBLE]..

402 00:20:44,110 --> 00:20:46,370 I'm not sure that you are right.

403

00:20:46,370 --> 00:20:47,410 I'm not sure at all.

404

00:20:47,410 --> 00:20:48,952 I'm not sure that you are right, too.

405

00:20:48,952 --> 00:20:49,960 All right.

406

00:20:49,960 --> 00:20:54,910 I think that I would plunge for the positive explanation

407

00:20:54,910 --> 00:21:02,650 in the case of Kasztner, not that Kasztner was, shall

408

00:21:02,650 --> 00:21:06,400 we say, the ideal representative of the Jewish people,

409

00:21:06,400 --> 00:21:07,960 by no means.

410

00:21:07,960 --> 00:21:11,780 He certainly was interested in saving his own group.

411

00:21:11,780 --> 00:21:14,860 There's no doubt about that.

412

00:21:14,860 --> 00:21:20,710 He was a person with very peculiar standards

413

00:21:20,710 --> 00:21:24,310 occasionally, but there's no doubt in my mind

414

00:21:24,310 --> 00:21:28,090 that he wanted to save the Jewish population of Hungary

415 00:21:28,090 --> 00:21:31,810 and not just that group, that the group that he saved

416 00:21:31,810 --> 00:21:34,000 was, for him, a stepping stone to save

417 00:21:34,000 --> 00:21:38,390 others, and more people, and as many as he could.

418 00:21:38,390 --> 00:21:42,010 And I think that he was right because I think that there was

419 00:21:42,010 --> 00:21:46,570 no other way of saving Jews in the situation of Hungary

420 00:21:46,570 --> 00:21:48,970 where you have all the Jewish men in the labor battalions

421 00:21:48,970 --> 00:21:51,430 and no rebellion is possible, where

422 00:21:51,430 --> 00:21:53,320 you have no weapons and no support

423 00:21:53,320 --> 00:21:56,050 from the Hungarian population, where you are

424 00:21:56,050 --> 00:21:59,050 under SS occupation in Hungary. 00:21:59,050 --> 00:22:03,610 There was no other way but by ransom negotiations.

426 00:22:03,610 --> 00:22:09,400 He conducted these negotiations very cleverly, very cleverly,

427 00:22:09,400 --> 00:22:12,940 and he, in fact, through Eichmann and afterwards

428 00:22:12,940 --> 00:22:17,170 through Becher convinced Himmler that he was somebody with whom

429 00:22:17,170 --> 00:22:19,720 it was worthwhile negotiating.

430 00:22:19,720 --> 00:22:24,850 I think it can be said that, partly due to Kasztner,

431 00:22:24,850 --> 00:22:26,300 Hungarian Jews were saved.

432 00:22:26,300 --> 00:22:27,250 [INAUDIBLE]

433 00:22:27,250 --> 00:22:28,592 (film slating)

434 00:22:28,592 --> 00:22:29,800

435 00:22:29,800 --> 00:22:35,200 I think it can be said that, even in 1942 already,

436 00:22:35,200 --> 00:22:38,110 Himmler and some of the German generals 437

00:22:38,110 --> 00:22:41,230 knew that Germany couldn't possibly win the war.

438

00:22:41,230 --> 00:22:45,580 I think you can find it in Felix Kersten's memoirs

439

00:22:45,580 --> 00:22:48,160 and in various other places.

440

00:22:48,160 --> 00:22:49,630 Kersten was the masseur of Himmler.

441

00:22:49,630 --> 00:22:51,700 Kersten was the masseur of Himmler,

442

00:22:51,700 --> 00:22:54,980 and he had discussions with him and so on.

443

00:22:54,980 --> 00:22:57,980 I think these memoirs have to be taken seriously.

444

00:22:57,980 --> 00:23:02,620 So I would say that the Jews were, for Himmler, a means

445

00:23:02,620 --> 00:23:05,410 to get to these kind of negotiations,

446

00:23:05,410 --> 00:23:08,980 and this was based on the idea that Himmler believed in,

447

00:23:08,980 --> 00:23:15,250 like most of the top Nazis, that the Jews were a world power,

448 00:23:15,250 --> 00:23:18,940 that they could influence the Western Allies,

449

00:23:18,940 --> 00:23:26,350 that those Jews who were in Nazi Germany's control

450 00:23:26,350 --> 00:23:31,450 could be used as a means to reach the Western Allies.

451 00:23:31,450 --> 00:23:33,370 This was, of course, complete fantasy.

452 00:23:33,370 --> 00:23:35,740 The Jews didn't have any power, but the Germans

453 00:23:35,740 --> 00:23:38,560 believed that the Jews did.

454 00:23:38,560 --> 00:23:41,440 And this is the basis for these negotiations.

455 00:23:41,440 --> 00:23:43,270 Otherwise you just can't explain them.

456 00:23:43,270 --> 00:23:46,030 This is enough to understand why the Jews were killed,

457 00:23:46,030 --> 00:23:47,230 powerlessness.

458 00:23:47,230 --> 00:23:52,300 Powerlessness, and they were imputed to have 00:23:52,300 --> 00:23:54,640 a power they did not have.

460

00:23:54,640 --> 00:24:02,980 Now, the Western Allies had no such illusions, of course,

461

00:24:02,980 --> 00:24:05,950 and for the Western Allies, the Jews

462

00:24:05,950 --> 00:24:11,440 were a relatively unimportant element in the whole situation.

463

00:24:11,440 --> 00:24:16,180 And the Jewish position in between this Nazi idea

464

00:24:16,180 --> 00:24:19,150 of a tremendous Jewish power through whom one

465

00:24:19,150 --> 00:24:22,380 can reach the Western Allies and, on the other hand,

466

00:24:22,380 --> 00:24:25,120 the complete lack of interest, really, of the Western Allies,

467

00:24:25,120 --> 00:24:27,700 who were fighting a war against Germany--

468

00:24:27,700 --> 00:24:31,420 that is the situation of the Brand mission.

469

00:24:31,420 --> 00:24:34,390 That is the situation in which the Brand mission failed.

470

00:24:34,390 --> 00:24:40,030 It had to fail because the Germans meant it seriously,

471 00:24:40,030 --> 00:24:42,400 and the Allies did not.

472 00:24:42,400 --> 00:24:45,700 Now, behind the Brand mission in 1944

473 00:24:45,700 --> 00:24:49,510 you have this figure of Bandi Grosz,

474 00:24:49,510 --> 00:24:55,600 that fascinating figure because Bandi Grosz was sent by the SS

475 00:24:55,600 --> 00:24:59,230 to try to negotiate a separate peace.

476 00:24:59,230 --> 00:25:03,130 It's ridiculous to think that anybody would have

477 00:25:03,130 --> 00:25:04,505 taken Bandi Grosz seriously.

478 00:25:04,505 --> 00:25:11,830 He was a smuggler, a little thief, a crook.

479 00:25:11,830 --> 00:25:16,220 But he was the only person in the whole Nazi Reich

480 00:25:16,220 --> 00:25:23,890 who, in 1944, had direct contact with the British and American

481 00:25:23,890 --> 00:25:28,480 intelligence services in Istanbul, in a neutral country.

482 00:25:28,480 --> 00:25:31,540 And he was used by the SS in order

483 00:25:31,540 --> 00:25:37,780 to try to get the negotiations with the Allies going.

484 00:25:37,780 --> 00:25:40,600 He was sent along with Brand.

485 00:25:40,600 --> 00:25:44,140 Really, Brand was a cover Grosz.

486 00:25:44,140 --> 00:25:46,350 In reality, the Brand mission--

487 00:25:46,350 --> 00:25:49,570

488 00:25:49,570 --> 00:25:55,390 he was sent in order to exchange goods, trucks for Jews--

489 00:25:55,390 --> 00:25:57,840 was just one and line.

490 00:25:57,840 --> 00:26:01,020 And the Grosz mission was the real one.

491 00:26:01,020 --> 00:26:05,310 They wanted to get to negotiations with the Allies.

492 00:26:05,310 --> 00:26:09,900 And the refusal of the Allied powers 00:26:09,900 --> 00:26:14,850 to negotiate over the Brand scheme stemmed from the fact

494

00:26:14,850 --> 00:26:18,270 that the British and the Americans realized in the end

495

00:26:18,270 --> 00:26:20,580 that the real mission was Grosz, and Grosz was

496

00:26:20,580 --> 00:26:22,620 negotiating a separate peace.

497

00:26:22,620 --> 00:26:25,510 And the Western Allies would not have anything of that.

498

00:26:25,510 --> 00:26:28,830 Do you think that they would have negotiated for the Brand

499

00:26:28,830 --> 00:26:33,050 mission only, even if they wouldn't have been Bandi Grosz?

500

00:26:33,050 --> 00:26:34,140 No.

501

00:26:34,140 --> 00:26:38,910 No, but the complete burying of the Brand mission

502

00:26:38,910 --> 00:26:41,370 was the result of finding out about Grosz.

503

00:26:41,370 --> 00:26:45,840 You see, until the Grosz mission was found out,

504

00:26:45,840 --> 00:26:47,700

a few weeks passed.

505 00:26:47,700 --> 00:26:50,700 During these weeks, both the British and the Americans

506 00:26:50,700 --> 00:26:53,820 said, OK, we are not going to give the Germans any goods

507 00:26:53,820 --> 00:26:57,990 or anything like that, but let's keep the door to negotiations

508 00:26:57,990 --> 00:26:59,010 open.

509 00:26:59,010 --> 00:27:01,350 That was the phrase.

510 00:27:01,350 --> 00:27:05,010 I don't know what would have happened if they had not

511 00:27:05,010 --> 00:27:09,450 discovered the real aim of the Grosz mission,

512 00:27:09,450 --> 00:27:11,910 but it is clear that, when they did discover it,

513 00:27:11,910 --> 00:27:13,990 it buried the Brand mission completely.

514 00:27:13,990 --> 00:27:16,890 And there again you have this Jewish situation

515 00:27:16,890 --> 00:27:22,170 where the Jews are the victims of powers which are completely 516 00:27:22,170 --> 00:27:27,360 beyond the Jewish faith, the Nazi realization--

517 00:27:27,360 --> 00:27:30,690 well, some Nazi realized that the war is lost

518 00:27:30,690 --> 00:27:33,180 or the war can be won, that they want

519 00:27:33,180 --> 00:27:35,630 to negotiate with the Allies, the Allied refusal.

520 00:27:35,630 --> 00:27:38,670 And in the middle there are millions of Jews

521 00:27:38,670 --> 00:27:42,090 who are slowly being or quickly, rather,

522 00:27:42,090 --> 00:27:48,000 being ground up in the Nazi machine while this is going on.

523 00:27:48,000 --> 00:27:49,830 It's true, but it's difficult to understand

524 00:27:49,830 --> 00:27:53,640 because, in the same time, Eichmann was killing.

525 00:27:53,640 --> 00:27:57,780 Eichmann was killing because there were, in the SS,

526 00:27:57,780 --> 00:28:01,440 two parallel lines of policy. 527 00:28:01,440 --> 00:28:03,450 One was the one that I just outlined,

528 00:28:03,450 --> 00:28:08,310 in other words, the line of Himmler, Becher which said,

529 00:28:08,310 --> 00:28:12,150 we must try to find some way of reaching the Western Allies.

530 00:28:12,150 --> 00:28:16,110 But of course, this was not known to Hitler.

531 00:28:16,110 --> 00:28:20,070 And the idea of complete destruction,

532 00:28:20,070 --> 00:28:23,550 annihilation of the Jewish people in Europe

533 00:28:23,550 --> 00:28:24,760 was the second one.

534 00:28:24,760 --> 00:28:27,360 It was carrying on, and Himmler was going on

535 00:28:27,360 --> 00:28:29,050 with this parallel--

536 00:28:29,050 --> 00:28:29,580 He knew.

537 00:28:29,580 --> 00:28:34,480 It wasn't done without his knowledge. 00:28:34,480 --> 00:28:34,980 Pardon?

539

00:28:34,980 --> 00:28:37,280 It was not done without his knowledge.

540

00:28:37,280 --> 00:28:38,280 No, of course.

541

00:28:38,280 --> 00:28:39,360 This was the second line.

542

00:28:39,360 --> 00:28:43,560 He was pursuing two lines at the same time.

543

00:28:43,560 --> 00:28:48,630 But you see, both lines are within the Nazi ideology,

544

00:28:48,630 --> 00:28:51,480 and it cannot be explained without reference to Nazi

545

00:28:51,480 --> 00:28:52,470 ideology.

546

00:28:52,470 --> 00:28:56,730 Nazi ideology did not see the Jews as human beings.

547

00:28:56,730 --> 00:28:59,010 Therefore, you could either kill them

548

00:28:59,010 --> 00:29:01,890 or sell them, whichever was more convenient.

549

00:29:01,890 --> 00:29:07,770 The selling process stemmed from the same background 550 00:29:07,770 --> 00:29:09,340 as the killing process.

551 00:29:09,340 --> 00:29:11,790 Exactly, they saw them as trucks.

552 00:29:11,790 --> 00:29:14,550 They saw the same as trucks, yes.

553 00:29:14,550 --> 00:29:16,530 And then you have the same situation

554 00:29:16,530 --> 00:29:20,400 carrying on after the failure of the Brand mission

555 00:29:20,400 --> 00:29:23,280 with the negotiations in Switzerland, which

556 00:29:23,280 --> 00:29:29,430 were conducted from August 1944 to February 1945

557 00:29:29,430 --> 00:29:33,390 by a representative of the JDC, of the Joint

558 00:29:33,390 --> 00:29:36,600 in Switzerland, Saly Mayer, with the same group,

559 00:29:36,600 --> 00:29:39,480 with Becher on behalf of Himmler.

560 00:29:39,480 --> 00:29:41,040 And it is the same line. 561 00:29:41,040 --> 00:29:45,400

Himmler there, quite clearly, is trying to get to the Americans.

562 00:29:45,400 --> 00:29:48,490 Yes, at this time it is clear.

563 00:29:48,490 --> 00:29:52,410 So you have throughout the Holocaust--

564 00:29:52,410 --> 00:29:56,490 you have, at least from 1942 on, in my view--

565 00:29:56,490 --> 00:30:01,080 it can be proved later, but I think it is true also from 1942

566 $00:30:01,080 \longrightarrow 00:30:01,950$ on--

567 00:30:01,950 --> 00:30:07,410 a line, a possibility of saying, look, the Nazi decision

568 00:30:07,410 --> 00:30:14,250 to murder all the Jews of Europe was conditional in a sense,

569 00:30:14,250 --> 00:30:19,350 that if there was somebody to buy the Jews,

570 00:30:19,350 --> 00:30:22,380 they might have sold them.

571 $00:30:22,380 \longrightarrow 00:30:25,200$ But there was nobody to buy the Jews

572 $00:30:25,200 \longrightarrow 00:30:26,750$ because the Allied idea was--

573

00:30:26,750 --> 00:30:28,550 Yes, it is very important.

574

00:30:28,550 --> 00:30:29,050 Pardon?

575

00:30:29,050 --> 00:30:34,190 To sell or to kill was the same thing, as a matter of fact.

576

00:30:34,190 --> 00:30:38,815 This cannot be understood otherwise.

577

00:30:38,815 --> 00:30:40,650 It is very important.

578

00:30:40,650 --> 00:30:43,980

579

00:30:43,980 --> 00:30:45,000 Next?

580

00:30:45,000 --> 00:30:49,700 No, no, I'm-- there are now the people of the Europa Plan,

581

00:30:49,700 --> 00:30:54,870 the Jews, Weissmandel, Wisliceny, Weissmandel,

582

00:30:54,870 --> 00:30:56,990 Fleischmann.

583

00:30:56,990 --> 00:31:03,000