

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:13,600

2
00:00:13,600 --> 00:00:15,621
(film slating)

3
00:00:15,621 --> 00:00:21,280

4
00:00:21,280 --> 00:00:21,820
Do I begin?

5
00:00:21,820 --> 00:00:22,320
No.

6
00:00:22,320 --> 00:00:42,170

7
00:00:42,170 --> 00:00:44,270
OK.

8
00:00:44,270 --> 00:00:48,350
The question about American
Jewry is a very difficult one

9
00:00:48,350 --> 00:00:50,420
and it's simply this.

10
00:00:50,420 --> 00:00:54,770
How was it that an American
Jewry with the richest

11
00:00:54,770 --> 00:00:58,520
infrastructure of any ethnic
group in the United States,

12
00:00:58,520 --> 00:01:00,620
emerging from the
Depression faster

13

00:01:00,620 --> 00:01:02,840
than any other group
in the United States,

14
00:01:02,840 --> 00:01:05,870
with the chairman of the three
major committees in Congress

15
00:01:05,870 --> 00:01:09,770
associated with rescue, Solomon
Bloom, Samuel Dickstein,

16
00:01:09,770 --> 00:01:14,120
and Emanuel Celler, all headed
by Jews, and in addition,

17
00:01:14,120 --> 00:01:18,410
having very close positions
to that wonderful inner circle

18
00:01:18,410 --> 00:01:21,080
that Roosevelt
kept about himself.

19
00:01:21,080 --> 00:01:24,890
How was it that, with
such political weapons,

20
00:01:24,890 --> 00:01:26,930
American Jewry was
not appreciably

21
00:01:26,930 --> 00:01:30,290
able to move the Roosevelt
administration on the rescue

22
00:01:30,290 --> 00:01:31,460
issue?

23
00:01:31,460 --> 00:01:33,350
It's a fascinating question.

24
00:01:33,350 --> 00:01:36,030

It is.

25

00:01:36,030 --> 00:01:40,010

And the question is,
whether there is not

26

00:01:40,010 --> 00:01:44,720

a kind of messianic fantasy
about even mentioning the idea

27

00:01:44,720 --> 00:01:46,430

that there was such
a thing as American

28

00:01:46,430 --> 00:01:50,510

Jewry as an American Jewish
community in the 1930s,

29

00:01:50,510 --> 00:01:54,650

a figment of a messianic
Jewish imagination.

30

00:01:54,650 --> 00:01:57,620

As a matter of fact, there
were many Jewish communities

31

00:01:57,620 --> 00:01:58,980

in the United States.

32

00:01:58,980 --> 00:02:01,110

And when the crisis
was upon them,

33

00:02:01,110 --> 00:02:04,310

they literally came apart
the delicate bridges

34

00:02:04,310 --> 00:02:08,199

that bound them together
simply did not hold.

35

00:02:08,199 --> 00:02:11,030

Today the issues which

seem to divide them

36

00:02:11,030 --> 00:02:14,930

seem unbelievably unreal.

37

00:02:14,930 --> 00:02:17,120

The first one, of

course, was how

38

00:02:17,120 --> 00:02:20,270

to approach the Nazi menace,

and even if there was

39

00:02:20,270 --> 00:02:22,460

such a thing as a Nazi menace.

40

00:02:22,460 --> 00:02:25,640

And those old uptown

factions headed

41

00:02:25,640 --> 00:02:27,590

by the American

Jewish committee who

42

00:02:27,590 --> 00:02:30,320

remember the Germany

of Beethoven,

43

00:02:30,320 --> 00:02:33,720

the Germany of Schiller,

thought that power--

44

00:02:33,720 --> 00:02:34,220

Excuse me.

45

00:02:34,220 --> 00:02:35,870

You mean that these

people belonging

46

00:02:35,870 --> 00:02:38,570

to the American Jewish

committee were original--

47

00:02:38,570 --> 00:02:40,370

Originally German.

48

00:02:40,370 --> 00:02:45,170

Although their power
and their presence

49

00:02:45,170 --> 00:02:46,760

had been dissipated
over the years,

50

00:02:46,760 --> 00:02:49,610

there were not that many
German Jews involved anymore.

51

00:02:49,610 --> 00:02:52,910

Many downtown, many Eastern
Jews, or the sons and daughters

52

00:02:52,910 --> 00:02:55,950

of the Eastern Jews, were
now in positions of power.

53

00:02:55,950 --> 00:02:56,450

Excuse me.

54

00:02:56,450 --> 00:02:58,640

You make a difference
between the uptown

55

00:02:58,640 --> 00:03:00,560

Jews and the downtown Jews.

56

00:03:00,560 --> 00:03:03,680

Well, I use that
division classification.

57

00:03:03,680 --> 00:03:05,540

It's an old classification
that goes back

58

00:03:05,540 --> 00:03:07,040

to the beginning
of the century when

59
00:03:07,040 --> 00:03:10,190
the Jews, the original
German Jewish migration,

60
00:03:10,190 --> 00:03:12,170
moved to the Westside.

61
00:03:12,170 --> 00:03:14,900
They were then called
uptown Jews and they,

62
00:03:14,900 --> 00:03:18,740
it refers to Jews of
the reformed persuasion

63
00:03:18,740 --> 00:03:20,720
because American
Jewry was not only

64
00:03:20,720 --> 00:03:24,200
divided politically and
culturally, but also

65
00:03:24,200 --> 00:03:26,450
religiously.

66
00:03:26,450 --> 00:03:29,570
Who were of German
background and far better

67
00:03:29,570 --> 00:03:33,128
established economically than
the more recent arrivals,

68
00:03:33,128 --> 00:03:34,670
although the difference
was beginning

69
00:03:34,670 --> 00:03:37,050
to shrink by the 1930s.

70
00:03:37,050 --> 00:03:38,750
It was beginning to grow much.

71
00:03:38,750 --> 00:03:42,830
Now these Jews, of
course, had traditionally

72
00:03:42,830 --> 00:03:47,120
been disturbed by loud
and emotional displays.

73
00:03:47,120 --> 00:03:50,990
As early as 1905,
Oscar Strauss is

74
00:03:50,990 --> 00:03:55,710
wondering whether unseemly
displays of protest to pressure

75
00:03:55,710 --> 00:03:57,830
the administration really work.

76
00:03:57,830 --> 00:04:00,920
We call it Shtadlanut.

77
00:04:00,920 --> 00:04:04,400
They believed in
quiet diplomacy.

78
00:04:04,400 --> 00:04:07,970
They believed that power would
ultimately moderate Hitler

79
00:04:07,970 --> 00:04:10,040
and that the crisis
was a temporary one.

80
00:04:10,040 --> 00:04:11,630
All one had to do was hang on.

81
00:04:11,630 --> 00:04:14,740

But this was an old
traditional Jewish way of--

82
00:04:14,740 --> 00:04:15,870
Yes, the tradition.

83
00:04:15,870 --> 00:04:17,990
Pleading with the gentile.

84
00:04:17,990 --> 00:04:19,130
Right.

85
00:04:19,130 --> 00:04:23,900
Now, the issues, as I say,
were first on whether there

86
00:04:23,900 --> 00:04:25,700
was a menace.

87
00:04:25,700 --> 00:04:28,100
And then, of course,
on more concrete things

88
00:04:28,100 --> 00:04:33,260
like the possibility of mounting
a boycott against Hitler.

89
00:04:33,260 --> 00:04:36,020

90
00:04:36,020 --> 00:04:39,950
And the issue was
also political.

91
00:04:39,950 --> 00:04:43,850
Many of the uptown Jews
were not as entranced

92
00:04:43,850 --> 00:04:48,200
by Roosevelt. As were the
sons and daughters of Eastern

93

00:04:48,200 --> 00:04:51,230
Jews, which had a much more
universalistic approach

94

00:04:51,230 --> 00:04:53,450
and had been, since the
beginning of the century,

95

00:04:53,450 --> 00:04:58,100
drunk with the idea of democracy
and with the welfare state.

96

00:04:58,100 --> 00:04:59,660
The idea that
government had a role

97

00:04:59,660 --> 00:05:01,790
to play in helping the poor.

98

00:05:01,790 --> 00:05:04,160
It was a philosophy that
their parents believed them

99

00:05:04,160 --> 00:05:06,440
and they, of course,
bought it wholesale.

100

00:05:06,440 --> 00:05:08,120
You said, drunk.

101

00:05:08,120 --> 00:05:10,280
Drunk with the
idea of democracy.

102

00:05:10,280 --> 00:05:14,930
I say drunk because Jews are
the only ethnic community United

103

00:05:14,930 --> 00:05:20,510
States that had
intragroup elections.

104

00:05:20,510 --> 00:05:25,250

Two between 1910 and
1920 and one in the 1930s

105
00:05:25,250 --> 00:05:27,860
to see who should rule the
community, who should govern

106
00:05:27,860 --> 00:05:29,690
it, as if there
was a possibility

107
00:05:29,690 --> 00:05:32,000
in the voluntaristic
setting that we had

108
00:05:32,000 --> 00:05:33,560
of governing American juries.

109
00:05:33,560 --> 00:05:36,620
If one could order a Jew to
his Jewishness, of course

110
00:05:36,620 --> 00:05:38,090
that was highly impossible.

111
00:05:38,090 --> 00:05:40,610
I say drunk because they
really bought the idea

112
00:05:40,610 --> 00:05:42,330
that democracy could work.

113
00:05:42,330 --> 00:05:45,750
So much so that
between 1908 in 1921,

114
00:05:45,750 --> 00:05:49,910
the Jews actually
formed a kehilla,

115
00:05:49,910 --> 00:05:53,730
reminiscent of the old
kehal, to govern themselves.

116
00:05:53,730 --> 00:05:56,330
This was a group that was
coming to terms with America

117
00:05:56,330 --> 00:05:59,750
in far different terms
than other ethnic groups.

118
00:05:59,750 --> 00:06:04,010
Now the question, of course,
was on whether we can assign

119
00:06:04,010 --> 00:06:06,290
such a group responsibility.

120
00:06:06,290 --> 00:06:08,810
As Meir Kahane
does, as Elie Wiesel

121
00:06:08,810 --> 00:06:11,990
often does, whether this
group actually failed.

122
00:06:11,990 --> 00:06:15,110
And I would suggest to
you that a very close look

123
00:06:15,110 --> 00:06:19,820
at the documents indicates that
perhaps Nahum Goldman is right.

124
00:06:19,820 --> 00:06:22,850
Perhaps we were not
quite ready to accept

125
00:06:22,850 --> 00:06:25,430
the mantle of leadership
that had been ensconced

126
00:06:25,430 --> 00:06:26,870
for centuries in Europe.

127

00:06:26,870 --> 00:06:30,170

It came to us so
precipitously so suddenly.

128

00:06:30,170 --> 00:06:32,840

Perhaps our leadership
wasn't very intelligent.

129

00:06:32,840 --> 00:06:34,340

Perhaps it lacked stature.

130

00:06:34,340 --> 00:06:37,730

But those who took a
conscious betrayal I think

131

00:06:37,730 --> 00:06:43,880

are being unjust, perhaps
unintelligent, perhaps

132

00:06:43,880 --> 00:06:47,480

even lack of will,
but betrayal never.

133

00:06:47,480 --> 00:06:49,160

As a matter of fact,
one could safely

134

00:06:49,160 --> 00:06:56,570

say that virtually every single
one of the techniques used

135

00:06:56,570 --> 00:06:59,030

later by the Civil
Rights movement

136

00:06:59,030 --> 00:07:01,910

to move the American government
in a certain direction

137

00:07:01,910 --> 00:07:05,420

was initially conceived
by Jews during the 1930s.

138

00:07:05,420 --> 00:07:08,810

From theater techniques,
from mass protests,

139

00:07:08,810 --> 00:07:11,690

the problem was, of course, that
the Roosevelt administration

140

00:07:11,690 --> 00:07:18,140

was not attuned to a problem
central to our own kin

141

00:07:18,140 --> 00:07:20,360

and that really brings us
to the second question.

142

00:07:20,360 --> 00:07:26,630

And that is, are we assigning
American Jewry in the 1930s

143

00:07:26,630 --> 00:07:31,410

a responsibility for action
which their power did not

144

00:07:31,410 --> 00:07:31,910

match?

145

00:07:31,910 --> 00:07:33,800

Are we tilting with windmills?

146

00:07:33,800 --> 00:07:36,530

And the reason why I say
that's an important question

147

00:07:36,530 --> 00:07:42,080

is because the assumption
behind the idea that American

148

00:07:42,080 --> 00:07:44,660

Jewry did not do
enough is based on one

149

00:07:44,660 --> 00:07:48,890
of the basic facets of Jewish
political culture in Europe.

150
00:07:48,890 --> 00:07:50,930
And that culture is
this, that assumption

151
00:07:50,930 --> 00:07:54,380
is this, that there
exists in the world

152
00:07:54,380 --> 00:07:59,210
a spirit of civilized goodness
that is ready to intercede

153
00:07:59,210 --> 00:08:02,540
for Jews if Jews mobilize it.

154
00:08:02,540 --> 00:08:05,990
And what happened is
that we failed to arouse

155
00:08:05,990 --> 00:08:07,890
that spirit of civilization

156
00:08:07,890 --> 00:08:10,207
Now we looked for it
in the Oval Office.

157
00:08:10,207 --> 00:08:11,540
One looks for it in the Vatican.

158
00:08:11,540 --> 00:08:13,430
One looks for it in London.

159
00:08:13,430 --> 00:08:17,900
But how Jews came to the
notion that between Kishinev

160
00:08:17,900 --> 00:08:20,660
and Auschwitz there
was such a spirit that

161
00:08:20,660 --> 00:08:24,940
cared in the world that
could be mobilized for them

162
00:08:24,940 --> 00:08:27,530
is a strange phenomenon.

163
00:08:27,530 --> 00:08:29,690
And yet, if one
reads that famous--

164
00:08:29,690 --> 00:08:31,520
Kishinev, you mean the pogrom.

165
00:08:31,520 --> 00:08:34,130
The pogrom of Kishinev, yes.

166
00:08:34,130 --> 00:08:39,169
If one reads the cable
by Louis Marshall

167
00:08:39,169 --> 00:08:43,340
to the pope in 1915
asking him please

168
00:08:43,340 --> 00:08:46,790
to intercede to stop the
depredations against Jews

169
00:08:46,790 --> 00:08:50,210
in Poland and receiving no
answer or an indifferent

170
00:08:50,210 --> 00:08:50,900
answer.

171
00:08:50,900 --> 00:08:53,990
One could understand
that in 1942

172
00:08:53,990 --> 00:08:57,350

when we asked the same thing
there would be no answer.

173
00:08:57,350 --> 00:08:59,570
There was no spirit
of civilization.

174
00:08:59,570 --> 00:09:04,650

175
00:09:04,650 --> 00:09:06,445
(film slating)

176
00:09:06,445 --> 00:09:11,030

177
00:09:11,030 --> 00:09:12,550
Let me give you
an example of what

178
00:09:12,550 --> 00:09:16,960
I mean by that illusion
of a civilized spirit.

179
00:09:16,960 --> 00:09:22,600
In 1943, a message was sent
to Szmul Zygielbojm in London

180
00:09:22,600 --> 00:09:25,030
that he ought to do everything,
including starving himself

181
00:09:25,030 --> 00:09:26,800
to death with other
Jewish leaders

182
00:09:26,800 --> 00:09:30,760
to arouse the
consciousness of the world.

183
00:09:30,760 --> 00:09:32,260
What a bitter irony.

184

00:09:32,260 --> 00:09:34,780

Zygielbojm had already
given up the idea

185

00:09:34,780 --> 00:09:37,330

that there existed such
an animal in London,

186

00:09:37,330 --> 00:09:40,060

but the people sitting
right on top of Treblinka

187

00:09:40,060 --> 00:09:43,210

are still talking about
a conscious of the world.

188

00:09:43,210 --> 00:09:44,660

It was such a difficult thing.

189

00:09:44,660 --> 00:09:46,870

So all pervading to
root it out and it

190

00:09:46,870 --> 00:09:49,660

has a long history in Judaism.

191

00:09:49,660 --> 00:09:51,070

From the national
minority rights

192

00:09:51,070 --> 00:09:53,070

clauses at the Treaty of
Versailles and the idea

193

00:09:53,070 --> 00:09:55,420

that Judaism can
be protected even

194

00:09:55,420 --> 00:09:58,360

in Poland by legal clauses.

195

00:09:58,360 --> 00:10:01,450

And that was a very, very
hard thing to get away with.

196
00:10:01,450 --> 00:10:03,520
And it is the
assumption, on which

197
00:10:03,520 --> 00:10:05,680
the indictment
against American Jewry

198
00:10:05,680 --> 00:10:08,140
rests, that there
existed such a spirit

199
00:10:08,140 --> 00:10:10,480
in the oval office of
Roosevelt, and that we

200
00:10:10,480 --> 00:10:12,550
failed to arouse it.

201
00:10:12,550 --> 00:10:16,480
And I really seriously wonder
if we're not misreading the New

202
00:10:16,480 --> 00:10:17,680
Deal history.

203
00:10:17,680 --> 00:10:19,570
Now, let me get to
another point then,

204
00:10:19,570 --> 00:10:22,420
on the illusion of
centrality, another illusion

205
00:10:22,420 --> 00:10:24,130
in Jewish political culture.

206
00:10:24,130 --> 00:10:27,010
And that illusion is
that the Jewish question

207
00:10:27,010 --> 00:10:30,130
and that Jews in general, are
more important than they really

208
00:10:30,130 --> 00:10:31,570
are.

209
00:10:31,570 --> 00:10:35,020
It is an illusion shared by the
antisemitic imagination, which

210
00:10:35,020 --> 00:10:38,020
imagines that Jews have
power behind the scenes,

211
00:10:38,020 --> 00:10:40,480
and conspire to rule the world.

212
00:10:40,480 --> 00:10:42,700
Now of course, one can
answer very simply,

213
00:10:42,700 --> 00:10:44,380
that a people who
is really powerful

214
00:10:44,380 --> 00:10:47,020
does not lose one out
of three of its members

215
00:10:47,020 --> 00:10:49,120
in a catastrophe like
the Holocaust, which

216
00:10:49,120 --> 00:10:52,120
is the surest evidence
that it is an illusion.

217
00:10:52,120 --> 00:10:55,630
But paradoxically enough,
Jews, perhaps because

218
00:10:55,630 --> 00:10:58,570
of their own
weakness, would love

219
00:10:58,570 --> 00:11:01,870
to believe that because
they own The New York Times

220
00:11:01,870 --> 00:11:03,070
or they own CBS--

221
00:11:03,070 --> 00:11:04,390
which they don't really do--

222
00:11:04,390 --> 00:11:06,250
that they really
have such power.

223
00:11:06,250 --> 00:11:09,550
It was in fact, the reason
why the whole question

224
00:11:09,550 --> 00:11:12,160
of priorities was so bad.

225
00:11:12,160 --> 00:11:14,620
It was a weak and
vulnerable people

226
00:11:14,620 --> 00:11:16,240
that was destroyed
in Auschwitz, not

227
00:11:16,240 --> 00:11:18,490
a people who had power
anywhere in the world.

228
00:11:18,490 --> 00:11:20,860
And the fact is that
they were powerless.

229
00:11:20,860 --> 00:11:25,270

And we define that powerlessness
by saying, the surest

230
00:11:25,270 --> 00:11:28,930
meaning in the international
arena was a lack of options.

231
00:11:28,930 --> 00:11:31,300
An inability to
have alternatives

232
00:11:31,300 --> 00:11:35,530
about what to do, not only in
Europe but in America as well.

233
00:11:35,530 --> 00:11:38,680
Yes, you mean that this
weakness and this powerlessness

234
00:11:38,680 --> 00:11:39,520
existed--

235
00:11:39,520 --> 00:11:40,370
In America.

236
00:11:40,370 --> 00:11:41,537
--amongst American Jews too.

237
00:11:41,537 --> 00:11:42,250
Precisely.

238
00:11:42,250 --> 00:11:46,510
And one could really see it
from several points of view.

239
00:11:46,510 --> 00:11:50,800
In 1936, when Roosevelt
entered his second New Deal,

240
00:11:50,800 --> 00:11:56,470
most ethnic groups lessened
their loyalty to him.

241

00:11:56,470 --> 00:11:59,170

The second New Deal was a more radical one, and by that time,

242

00:11:59,170 --> 00:12:01,330

some people had had their fill.

243

00:12:01,330 --> 00:12:05,770

The Jews, on the other hand, together with Black Americans

244

00:12:05,770 --> 00:12:08,740

actually increased their proportion of their vote.

245

00:12:08,740 --> 00:12:11,950

By 1940, Jews were giving over 90% of their vote

246

00:12:11,950 --> 00:12:13,150

to the New Deal.

247

00:12:13,150 --> 00:12:13,780

A new threat--

248

00:12:13,780 --> 00:12:14,738

To the second New Deal.

249

00:12:14,738 --> 00:12:15,820

To the second New Deal.

250

00:12:15,820 --> 00:12:18,700

A new political party had to be created, the American Labor

251

00:12:18,700 --> 00:12:21,160

Party, so that Jewish socialists could

252

00:12:21,160 --> 00:12:23,560

give their votes to a highborn Episcopalian

253
00:12:23,560 --> 00:12:26,540
without compromising
their principles.

254
00:12:26,540 --> 00:12:28,840
It was a fascinating display.

255
00:12:28,840 --> 00:12:30,820
Now that really
means the following,

256
00:12:30,820 --> 00:12:35,170
that so strong was the Jewish
love affair with Roosevelt--

257
00:12:35,170 --> 00:12:38,380
because of his domestic policy
not his foreign policy--

258
00:12:38,380 --> 00:12:42,790
that Jewish leaders, like
Steven Wise and others,

259
00:12:42,790 --> 00:12:49,285
could not threaten Roosevelt
with a loss of the Jewish vote

260
00:12:49,285 --> 00:12:52,720
if he did not do their
bidding on the rescue issue.

261
00:12:52,720 --> 00:12:54,830
As a matter of fact, it
was quite the reverse.

262
00:12:54,830 --> 00:12:58,330
The archives are full of letters
from Jewish leaders asking

263
00:12:58,330 --> 00:13:02,260
Roosevelt's secretaries to
please send a letter confirming

264
00:13:02,260 --> 00:13:04,420
him or supporting
him for a position

265
00:13:04,420 --> 00:13:06,340
in a Jewish organization.

266
00:13:06,340 --> 00:13:10,390
So strong was that bind,
that tie to Roosevelt,

267
00:13:10,390 --> 00:13:13,630
that it could not be removed.

268
00:13:13,630 --> 00:13:15,640
And in a sense, Jewish
leaders were then

269
00:13:15,640 --> 00:13:19,630
dependent on the less
certain rewards for loyalty.

270
00:13:19,630 --> 00:13:23,482
They had, in other words,
a very, very limited

271
00:13:23,482 --> 00:13:24,940
political leverage
in the New Deal.

272
00:13:24,940 --> 00:13:28,570
Not only because the issue was
a minor one for the Roosevelt

273
00:13:28,570 --> 00:13:32,170
administration, one which
had a very low priority,

274
00:13:32,170 --> 00:13:35,440
but because the Jews
had in fact perhaps

275

00:13:35,440 --> 00:13:38,500
a disproportionate amount
of political leverage,

276

00:13:38,500 --> 00:13:41,560
but not enough to really
change major policy.

277

00:13:41,560 --> 00:13:46,480
Now one might argue, and I
have argued this many times,

278

00:13:46,480 --> 00:13:48,790
that in comparison to
other American groups,

279

00:13:48,790 --> 00:13:52,540
the Jews did very
well in the 1930s.

280

00:13:52,540 --> 00:13:55,690
For example, of the
German Americans in 1916.

281

00:13:55,690 --> 00:13:57,640
The German Americans
in 1916 were

282

00:13:57,640 --> 00:14:01,060
the largest single ethnic
group in the United States.

283

00:14:01,060 --> 00:14:03,310
They had none of the problems
that American Jewry did.

284

00:14:03,310 --> 00:14:04,480
They were not fragmented.

285

00:14:04,480 --> 00:14:05,920
They were coherent.

286

00:14:05,920 --> 00:14:07,270
They had a voice.

287
00:14:07,270 --> 00:14:11,440
And they were instrumental in
delivering the election of 1916

288
00:14:11,440 --> 00:14:13,990
to Wilson who ran
on the platform,

289
00:14:13,990 --> 00:14:15,850
he kept us out of war.

290
00:14:15,850 --> 00:14:18,820
German Americans wanted
America out of the war.

291
00:14:18,820 --> 00:14:20,620
They did not want
America to declare war

292
00:14:20,620 --> 00:14:22,360
against the fatherland.

293
00:14:22,360 --> 00:14:26,740
But a month after Wilson was
inaugurated in March of 1917,

294
00:14:26,740 --> 00:14:29,350
he was compelled
nevertheless to declare war.

295
00:14:29,350 --> 00:14:31,060
What happened to
German Americans?

296
00:14:31,060 --> 00:14:36,060
Well, sauerkraut
became liberty cabbage.

297
00:14:36,060 --> 00:14:39,325
Hamburgers became

Salisbury steaks.

298

00:14:39,325 --> 00:14:40,950

German was dropped
from the curriculum.

299

00:14:40,950 --> 00:14:43,140

And for a while, it was very
uncomfortable to be a German

300

00:14:43,140 --> 00:14:44,390

American in the United States.

301

00:14:44,390 --> 00:14:46,290

The German Americans
did not succeed

302

00:14:46,290 --> 00:14:49,080

in changing a major
American policy.

303

00:14:49,080 --> 00:14:53,130

The Poles did not succeed in
preventing the crime of Crimea.

304

00:14:53,130 --> 00:14:56,730

And the Irish Americans, the
most politically astute group

305

00:14:56,730 --> 00:14:58,710

in the United
States, the one that

306

00:14:58,710 --> 00:15:01,590

had captured the local
political machines, the one that

307

00:15:01,590 --> 00:15:03,420

had shown that one
could be unified

308

00:15:03,420 --> 00:15:06,210

through a religious hierarchy,

the Catholic church,

309

00:15:06,210 --> 00:15:10,410
had only one interest
between 1880 and 1910.

310

00:15:10,410 --> 00:15:13,290
It was called twisting
the lion's tail,

311

00:15:13,290 --> 00:15:16,870
preventing a rapprochement
between England and the United

312

00:15:16,870 --> 00:15:17,370
States.

313

00:15:17,370 --> 00:15:19,360
And yet, they were
not able to do so,

314

00:15:19,360 --> 00:15:22,050
but that rapprochement
did take place.

315

00:15:22,050 --> 00:15:24,450
Compared to other ethnic
groups, in other words,

316

00:15:24,450 --> 00:15:26,910
to other hyphenate
groups, American Jewry

317

00:15:26,910 --> 00:15:28,590
did not do it all badly.

318

00:15:28,590 --> 00:15:32,640
And that is a far better
comparison than the one

319

00:15:32,640 --> 00:15:34,920
that I could think of--

320

00:15:34,920 --> 00:15:38,940
were they afraid in the 30s
of a wave of antisemitism

321

00:15:38,940 --> 00:15:40,530
in the United States?

322

00:15:40,530 --> 00:15:41,400
Yes.

323

00:15:41,400 --> 00:15:45,576
Of course, that
is another factor

324

00:15:45,576 --> 00:15:49,420
in the question of
Jewish political power.

325

00:15:49,420 --> 00:15:53,100
The Depression, with
the economic dislocation

326

00:15:53,100 --> 00:15:58,800
that it caused, had released
enormously new waves

327

00:15:58,800 --> 00:16:02,790
of antisemitism which perhaps
frightened American Jewry more

328

00:16:02,790 --> 00:16:04,140
than it should have.

329

00:16:04,140 --> 00:16:05,970
Our studies of the
German American Bund

330

00:16:05,970 --> 00:16:10,530
today indicate that it was
not as powerful as we thought.

331

00:16:10,530 --> 00:16:13,050

The German American
Bund was a German Jew--

332
00:16:13,050 --> 00:16:15,490
no, not a Jew, a
German American.

333
00:16:15,490 --> 00:16:15,990
Right.

334
00:16:15,990 --> 00:16:17,370
The Fritz Kuhn.

335
00:16:17,370 --> 00:16:21,300
Now we have new work on
that by Sander Diamond.

336
00:16:21,300 --> 00:16:23,730
And he indicates that
the entire membership

337
00:16:23,730 --> 00:16:26,430
of the German American Bund
may have been only 9,000,

338
00:16:26,430 --> 00:16:30,090
with perhaps another
few thousand hangers on.

339
00:16:30,090 --> 00:16:31,470
We had overestimated it.

340
00:16:31,470 --> 00:16:34,390
Of course, there is always
Father Coughlin and others.

341
00:16:34,390 --> 00:16:36,030
The point was that
the antisemites

342
00:16:36,030 --> 00:16:39,720
were able to make a great
deal of noise by themselves,

343
00:16:39,720 --> 00:16:42,060
and were able to do something
else that we had not

344
00:16:42,060 --> 00:16:43,930
taken into consideration.

345
00:16:43,930 --> 00:16:45,840
They were able to
link themselves

346
00:16:45,840 --> 00:16:50,160
to legitimate isolationism, and
amplify their political voice

347
00:16:50,160 --> 00:16:51,510
in that way.

348
00:16:51,510 --> 00:16:55,650
And that link is borne
out by Charles Lindbergh,

349
00:16:55,650 --> 00:16:57,900
who was an American folk hero.

350
00:16:57,900 --> 00:17:00,060
Charles Lindbergh,
in September 1941,

351
00:17:00,060 --> 00:17:03,840
makes a speech in Des Moines,
Iowa in which he warns America

352
00:17:03,840 --> 00:17:08,040
that Jews and
anglophiles are plotting

353
00:17:08,040 --> 00:17:10,619
to get America into a war.

354
00:17:10,619 --> 00:17:14,160

It's an antisemitic
message amalgamated

355
00:17:14,160 --> 00:17:17,430
with the isolationist message
and therefore legitimized.

356
00:17:17,430 --> 00:17:18,750
It was that linkage--

357
00:17:18,750 --> 00:17:19,619
[INAUDIBLE]

358
00:17:19,619 --> 00:17:25,200
--that linkage that really
made the antisemitic force very

359
00:17:25,200 --> 00:17:25,920
strong.

360
00:17:25,920 --> 00:17:27,990
And of course, beyond
the antisemitism,

361
00:17:27,990 --> 00:17:31,770
there was an entire
amalgamation of forces.

362
00:17:31,770 --> 00:17:35,160
One could say, of
antisemitism, restrictionism,

363
00:17:35,160 --> 00:17:37,020
that is the refusal
to take immigrants

364
00:17:37,020 --> 00:17:38,310
into the United States.

365
00:17:38,310 --> 00:17:41,880
Isolationism existed on
a kind of a spectrum.

366

00:17:41,880 --> 00:17:45,780

While a liberal immigration
policy, and early recognition

367

00:17:45,780 --> 00:17:48,900

of the Nazis' threat, and
ultimately interventionism

368

00:17:48,900 --> 00:17:50,680

existed on the other side.

369

00:17:50,680 --> 00:17:53,490

And Roosevelt delicately
tried to balance,

370

00:17:53,490 --> 00:17:58,150

between 1938 and 1940, his
steps between one and the other.

371

00:17:58,150 --> 00:18:00,090

In the case of the
Jews, he happened

372

00:18:00,090 --> 00:18:07,740

to be, he needed to be much
more the fox than the lion.

373

00:18:07,740 --> 00:18:09,570

Perhaps the bitterest
irony of all

374

00:18:09,570 --> 00:18:12,660

is, that in the restrictionism
of the New Deal,

375

00:18:12,660 --> 00:18:16,410

in the antirefugee
policy, what we find

376

00:18:16,410 --> 00:18:20,040

is that it is a classic
example of democracy at work.

377

00:18:20,040 --> 00:18:22,170

There seems to be
very little question

378

00:18:22,170 --> 00:18:26,790

that the consensus in
America, even as late as 1941

379

00:18:26,790 --> 00:18:32,160

and perhaps as late as 1944, was
that refugees whether they were

380

00:18:32,160 --> 00:18:35,910

children or adults simply
had no place in America,

381

00:18:35,910 --> 00:18:38,490

while one third of the
nation was ill housed,

382

00:18:38,490 --> 00:18:40,500

ill clothed, and ill fed.

383

00:18:40,500 --> 00:18:42,570

And if Roosevelt
ever forgot it, there

384

00:18:42,570 --> 00:18:46,740

was always a Senator Reynolds
from North Carolina who

385

00:18:46,740 --> 00:18:50,310

could cite the
president's own ringing

386

00:18:50,310 --> 00:18:53,940

phrases to remind him that
there was need at home

387

00:18:53,940 --> 00:18:55,650

and who needs refuge.

388

00:18:55,650 --> 00:18:58,260
And the other paradox, of
course, is that in 1938,

389
00:18:58,260 --> 00:19:01,530
from all that we know, the
American Jewish community

390
00:19:01,530 --> 00:19:03,780
itself was more
American than Jewish.

391
00:19:03,780 --> 00:19:07,620
It too was afraid of an
influx of Jewish refugees

392
00:19:07,620 --> 00:19:08,620
during the Depression.

393
00:19:08,620 --> 00:19:12,420
It shared that with its
American compatriots.

394
00:19:12,420 --> 00:19:16,200
To have gone beyond that,
according to Samuel Dickstein,

395
00:19:16,200 --> 00:19:20,970
to have proposed that
America lift its paper wall,

396
00:19:20,970 --> 00:19:25,170
as one authority called it,
one historian, David Wyman,

397
00:19:25,170 --> 00:19:29,190
would have probably resulted
in a boomerang with much more

398
00:19:29,190 --> 00:19:30,450
restrictive legislation.

399
00:19:30,450 --> 00:19:32,600

Paper wall, what do
you mean exactly?

400
00:19:32,600 --> 00:19:36,160
The series of bureaucratic
and administrative measures

401
00:19:36,160 --> 00:19:39,100
that were implemented
by the state department,

402
00:19:39,100 --> 00:19:42,490
especially by
Breckinridge Long, usually

403
00:19:42,490 --> 00:19:46,270
through a weakness in
the immigration law which

404
00:19:46,270 --> 00:19:49,030
gave the counsel at the
scene the last right

405
00:19:49,030 --> 00:19:51,550
to say who would get a visa.

406
00:19:51,550 --> 00:19:54,820
The use of those devices,
the use of screening devices,

407
00:19:54,820 --> 00:20:01,660
the use of a security
psychosis to stop refugees

408
00:20:01,660 --> 00:20:03,010
from coming here.

409
00:20:03,010 --> 00:20:07,150
By 1940, it was more
difficult to get a visa

410
00:20:07,150 --> 00:20:10,480
to enter the United States,

which was not at war then.

411
00:20:10,480 --> 00:20:13,720
Great Britain,
which was at war--

412
00:20:13,720 --> 00:20:17,680

413
00:20:17,680 --> 00:20:19,520
[(film slating)]

414
00:20:19,520 --> 00:20:21,310
[SLATE CLAPS]

415
00:20:21,310 --> 00:20:26,110
Let me get back to a moment of
this question of the refugee

416
00:20:26,110 --> 00:20:27,640
visa policy.

417
00:20:27,640 --> 00:20:31,480
I said before that it is a
classical case of democracy

418
00:20:31,480 --> 00:20:32,330
at work.

419
00:20:32,330 --> 00:20:38,020
The American people simply did
not want more refugees here.

420
00:20:38,020 --> 00:20:41,140
And for Roosevelt to
have thwarted that will,

421
00:20:41,140 --> 00:20:44,290
involved a political risk which
he was not willing to take.

422
00:20:44,290 --> 00:20:46,180

And therefore, we
developed what I have

423
00:20:46,180 --> 00:20:48,790
called a politics of gestures.

424
00:20:48,790 --> 00:20:53,590
For example, the combination of
the Austrian and German quota

425
00:20:53,590 --> 00:20:56,860
in mid1938, after
the Anschluss which

426
00:20:56,860 --> 00:21:00,400
involved the recognition of
the Anschluss, but supposedly

427
00:21:00,400 --> 00:21:03,220
saved the Austrian quota.

428
00:21:03,220 --> 00:21:05,810
It may very well be that the
Evian Conference itself--

429
00:21:05,810 --> 00:21:08,020
You will elaborate
more on this because--

430
00:21:08,020 --> 00:21:09,280
Well, one of the things that--

431
00:21:09,280 --> 00:21:12,790
They should have add
but they didn't do it.

432
00:21:12,790 --> 00:21:13,860
Yes.

433
00:21:13,860 --> 00:21:18,250
The recognition, I
think in June of 1938,

434

00:21:18,250 --> 00:21:24,040
the combination of the Austrian
and German quotas, in a sense

435

00:21:24,040 --> 00:21:28,960
unofficially extended the
recognition to the Anschluss,

436

00:21:28,960 --> 00:21:31,420
to Hitler's
annexation of Austria.

437

00:21:31,420 --> 00:21:35,230
But Roosevelt did it supposedly
because if he had not,

438

00:21:35,230 --> 00:21:37,730
the Austrian quota
would have been lost.

439

00:21:37,730 --> 00:21:41,350
And this was touted in the
press as being one of the things

440

00:21:41,350 --> 00:21:44,200
that Roosevelt did to help
the Jews and the refugees.

441

00:21:44,200 --> 00:21:46,960
Another thing was the
extension of visitors' visas.

442

00:21:46,960 --> 00:21:49,090
Visas of people who
were here for six months

443

00:21:49,090 --> 00:21:51,370
were allowed to stay in 1938.

444

00:21:51,370 --> 00:21:53,920
The most classic example of
this politics of gestures

445

00:21:53,920 --> 00:21:55,900
may have been the Evian
Conference itself.

446

00:21:55,900 --> 00:21:58,830

447

00:21:58,830 --> 00:22:01,170
The reason why that
invitation was extended

448

00:22:01,170 --> 00:22:02,560
is still a mystery to us.

449

00:22:02,560 --> 00:22:05,620
We don't really know what
got into Roosevelt's mind.

450

00:22:05,620 --> 00:22:07,900
But a careful reading
of the invitation

451

00:22:07,900 --> 00:22:10,420
shows how carefully
hedged it was.

452

00:22:10,420 --> 00:22:12,700
It states that the
American government

453

00:22:12,700 --> 00:22:16,930
has no intention of
raising its quota system,

454

00:22:16,930 --> 00:22:19,690
or allowing immigrants
to enter outside of it.

455

00:22:19,690 --> 00:22:22,720
And doesn't expect anyone
else to do that either.

456

00:22:22,720 --> 00:22:25,300

How such a conference then
could have hoped to succeed,

457

00:22:25,300 --> 00:22:26,050

no one knows.

458

00:22:26,050 --> 00:22:29,080

Except perhaps if
Roosevelt had the idea

459

00:22:29,080 --> 00:22:31,900

that Latin America would
then welcome them in mind.

460

00:22:31,900 --> 00:22:34,450

Of course, Latin America
had the same reservations

461

00:22:34,450 --> 00:22:36,662

that the United States did.

462

00:22:36,662 --> 00:22:37,370

On the question--

463

00:22:37,370 --> 00:22:39,970

You mean that this was a
policy of make believe?

464

00:22:39,970 --> 00:22:41,260

Of make believe, right.

465

00:22:41,260 --> 00:22:45,820

A policy perhaps designed
to assuage and seduce

466

00:22:45,820 --> 00:22:48,250

the Jewish voting
public that Roosevelt

467

00:22:48,250 --> 00:22:52,000

was doing something,
when Roosevelt in fact

468
00:22:52,000 --> 00:22:53,440
was doing very little.

469
00:22:53,440 --> 00:22:55,540
It wasn't until much
later, of course,

470
00:22:55,540 --> 00:22:58,750
that the Jews discovered that
he was doing very little.

471
00:22:58,750 --> 00:23:01,930
Now the way that
was done, outside

472
00:23:01,930 --> 00:23:05,380
of the politics of justice,
was the enormous gap

473
00:23:05,380 --> 00:23:08,020
between what
Roosevelt was saying

474
00:23:08,020 --> 00:23:10,600
and what was actually happening
on the administrative level.

475
00:23:10,600 --> 00:23:13,448
Where men like Breckinridge
Long, and the middle echelon

476
00:23:13,448 --> 00:23:15,865
people at the State Department,
who actually had control--

477
00:23:15,865 --> 00:23:19,070
Breckinridge Long had a
very powerful position

478
00:23:19,070 --> 00:23:20,515
inside the state department.

479

00:23:20,515 --> 00:23:24,730

He controlled the series,
the potpourri of agencies,

480

00:23:24,730 --> 00:23:28,310

that were in fact the
rescue program of America.

481

00:23:28,310 --> 00:23:29,800

If we can call it that.

482

00:23:29,800 --> 00:23:32,730

Now on that level--

483

00:23:32,730 --> 00:23:35,540

And the assistant of Long
was Robert Borden Reams.

484

00:23:35,540 --> 00:23:36,040

Right.

485

00:23:36,040 --> 00:23:37,210

He was one of the assistants.

486

00:23:37,210 --> 00:23:37,710

Reams.

487

00:23:37,710 --> 00:23:39,490

And of course were
many, many others.

488

00:23:39,490 --> 00:23:42,610

They were a whole
series of them who--

489

00:23:42,610 --> 00:23:46,323

of course every Jewish mother
knew that the State Department

490

00:23:46,323 --> 00:23:48,490

was not something that--
the foreign service was not

491
00:23:48,490 --> 00:23:50,680
something that you
prepare a Jewish son for.

492
00:23:50,680 --> 00:23:54,010
Dentistry, yes, perhaps
even a doctor or a lawyer,

493
00:23:54,010 --> 00:23:55,900
but not a career in
the State Department

494
00:23:55,900 --> 00:23:59,020
because the State Department
had a subtle anti-Semitism.

495
00:23:59,020 --> 00:24:02,590
William Dodd had actually
pointed out that that was

496
00:24:02,590 --> 00:24:06,460
so, and Roosevelt himself did
not trust the State Department

497
00:24:06,460 --> 00:24:11,110
and used it very often as a ploy
so that researchers today still

498
00:24:11,110 --> 00:24:14,590
must go to the National Archives
to examine what the State

499
00:24:14,590 --> 00:24:17,740
Department did, actually
repeating the same trip that

500
00:24:17,740 --> 00:24:22,840
Jewish rescue advocates made
during the war because we

501
00:24:22,840 --> 00:24:24,910
cannot get to

Roosevelt directly.

502
00:24:24,910 --> 00:24:28,630
Now the use of the visa
policy was very interesting,

503
00:24:28,630 --> 00:24:30,310
and let me read you a quote.

504
00:24:30,310 --> 00:24:32,020
A statement by
Breckenridge Long,

505
00:24:32,020 --> 00:24:36,792
in a memorandum to James Dunn
written on June 26 1940--

506
00:24:36,792 --> 00:24:37,750
And who was James Dunn?

507
00:24:37,750 --> 00:24:40,960
--in which-- James Dunn
was a fellow official

508
00:24:40,960 --> 00:24:43,480
of the State Department,
another undersecretary.

509
00:24:43,480 --> 00:24:46,300
And in which he describes
exactly the policy

510
00:24:46,300 --> 00:24:47,890
he intends to follow.

511
00:24:47,890 --> 00:24:50,830
He says, we can
delay and effectively

512
00:24:50,830 --> 00:24:54,100
stop for a temporary
period of indefinite length

513

00:24:54,100 --> 00:24:56,620

the number of immigrants
into the United States.

514

00:24:56,620 --> 00:24:59,980

We could do this by simply
advising our consuls

515

00:24:59,980 --> 00:25:02,920

to put every obstacle
in the way and resort

516

00:25:02,920 --> 00:25:06,490

to various administrative
devices which would postpone,

517

00:25:06,490 --> 00:25:08,800

and postpone, and postpone.

518

00:25:08,800 --> 00:25:11,260

That is precisely what
the State Department did,

519

00:25:11,260 --> 00:25:14,410

and it did so by
the security gambit,

520

00:25:14,410 --> 00:25:19,040

by using the idea the
Germans had infiltrated spies

521

00:25:19,040 --> 00:25:20,900

into the refugee stream.

522

00:25:20,900 --> 00:25:23,240

Although why they would want
to be there, no one knows.

523

00:25:23,240 --> 00:25:26,150

It was a very unsafe stream.

524

00:25:26,150 --> 00:25:27,590

But nevertheless, that was done.

525

00:25:27,590 --> 00:25:30,020

A whole series of articles
appeared in the press

526

00:25:30,020 --> 00:25:32,540

about German agents,
and Roosevelt himself

527

00:25:32,540 --> 00:25:36,110

in a fireside chat talked
about fifth columns

528

00:25:36,110 --> 00:25:40,400

and Trojan horses, giving
vent to security psychosis

529

00:25:40,400 --> 00:25:46,430

so that by 1940 the security
screening process in the United

530

00:25:46,430 --> 00:25:50,780

States was far more stringent
than Great Britain, which

531

00:25:50,780 --> 00:25:52,070

was at war.

532

00:25:52,070 --> 00:25:53,570

That prevented
refugees from coming.

533

00:25:53,570 --> 00:25:56,330

And the other thing, of course
was the action of the councils.

534

00:25:56,330 --> 00:26:02,912

Now by 1938, Jews,
after periods of respite

535

00:26:02,912 --> 00:26:05,120

when they did not believe

what was happening to them,

536

00:26:05,120 --> 00:26:07,940

Jews in Germany
finally understood

537

00:26:07,940 --> 00:26:09,620

that they had to get out.

538

00:26:09,620 --> 00:26:11,660

And long and
chaotic lines formed

539

00:26:11,660 --> 00:26:14,060

in front of the consulates,
and the wonderful--

540

00:26:14,060 --> 00:26:15,290

After the Kristallnacht.

541

00:26:15,290 --> 00:26:17,660

After the Kristallnacht, right.

542

00:26:17,660 --> 00:26:21,230

Wonderful stories are
told about something

543

00:26:21,230 --> 00:26:24,380

we call gallows humor, humor
that is more bitter than funny,

544

00:26:24,380 --> 00:26:27,710

about the Polish
Jew, the aus Juda en

545

00:26:27,710 --> 00:26:29,750

Stuttgart who finally
gets the message

546

00:26:29,750 --> 00:26:31,890

and wants a visa for America.

547

00:26:31,890 --> 00:26:34,160
And he comes into the
consulate, he's 78 years old,

548
00:26:34,160 --> 00:26:37,550
bent, walking with a cane,
opens the glass doors,

549
00:26:37,550 --> 00:26:39,830
makes his way painfully
up to the desk

550
00:26:39,830 --> 00:26:42,060
and addresses the
American Council.

551
00:26:42,060 --> 00:26:43,910
I'd like a Visa.

552
00:26:43,910 --> 00:26:46,400
And the American Council
says, where are you from?

553
00:26:46,400 --> 00:26:47,840
I'm from Poland.

554
00:26:47,840 --> 00:26:52,430
Goes to his desk and
looks up the list.

555
00:26:52,430 --> 00:26:53,450
Poland?

556
00:26:53,450 --> 00:26:55,670
Come back in eight years.

557
00:26:55,670 --> 00:26:58,760
Which of course, was in a
sense, a death sentence for him.

558
00:26:58,760 --> 00:27:02,390
The Jew accepts the message and
makes his way painfully back

559

00:27:02,390 --> 00:27:04,940
to the glass doors in
front of the consulate,

560

00:27:04,940 --> 00:27:08,047
and just before he gets
to them he gets an idea.

561

00:27:08,047 --> 00:27:10,130
His head straightens up,
and he makes his way back

562

00:27:10,130 --> 00:27:12,380
again painfully to
the councils desks

563

00:27:12,380 --> 00:27:15,110
and tells him, when I
come back in eight years,

564

00:27:15,110 --> 00:27:19,100
should I come back in the
morning or in the afternoon?

565

00:27:19,100 --> 00:27:23,750
That was the bitter
story of how Jews

566

00:27:23,750 --> 00:27:29,970
were accepted in front of the
councils in 1938 and 1939.

567

00:27:29,970 --> 00:27:32,870
Now I want to just
momentarily address myself

568

00:27:32,870 --> 00:27:38,210
to the whole question of Jewish
power and have things changed.

569

00:27:38,210 --> 00:27:41,120
Of course a weak people loves

to believe it's powerful,

570

00:27:41,120 --> 00:27:44,720

the Jews were the ones who
created an all powerful God.

571

00:27:44,720 --> 00:27:47,300

It took a weak people to
conceive of such a notion.

572

00:27:47,300 --> 00:27:51,500

We would win in heaven what
we could never win on Earth.

573

00:27:51,500 --> 00:27:56,790

And the question of have
things changed is fascinating.

574

00:27:56,790 --> 00:27:57,290

Today.

575

00:27:57,290 --> 00:27:59,480

Today, and contemporary.

576

00:27:59,480 --> 00:28:05,090

And I think in a sense
things do look better

577

00:28:05,090 --> 00:28:08,180

because one of the
factors that making

578

00:28:08,180 --> 00:28:12,800

for Jewish weakness in the
1930s has in fact given way,

579

00:28:12,800 --> 00:28:17,210

and that is the
question of unity.

580

00:28:17,210 --> 00:28:20,670

The Holocaust itself has
given Jews a bit of a lesson

581
00:28:20,670 --> 00:28:23,360
in the price of disunity,
and that is something

582
00:28:23,360 --> 00:28:26,000
that we have
experienced vicariously.

583
00:28:26,000 --> 00:28:29,300
Today only 15 and half
percent of American Jewry

584
00:28:29,300 --> 00:28:31,760
is foreign born, we have been
processed through America,

585
00:28:31,760 --> 00:28:33,830
through its schools,
through its army,

586
00:28:33,830 --> 00:28:36,440
and we are more American
than ever before,

587
00:28:36,440 --> 00:28:38,300
perhaps less Jewish as well.

588
00:28:38,300 --> 00:28:41,450
And the, of course,
the other factor

589
00:28:41,450 --> 00:28:45,500
is that Israel and Israelism--

590
00:28:45,500 --> 00:28:47,210
and I don't say Zionism--

591
00:28:47,210 --> 00:28:50,990
has finally given Jews who are
no longer able to accept fully

592

00:28:50,990 --> 00:28:55,010
a religious modality,
a modern secular,

593
00:28:55,010 --> 00:28:58,370
perhaps a civil religion
in which they can believe.

594
00:28:58,370 --> 00:29:00,660
So at least on the
issue of Israel,

595
00:29:00,660 --> 00:29:03,680
which all political
commentators have noticed,

596
00:29:03,680 --> 00:29:06,630
there is a modicum of unity and
less division than ever before.

597
00:29:06,630 --> 00:29:09,560
Of course the price
is that there's also

598
00:29:09,560 --> 00:29:12,230
the question of
survival, more strongly

599
00:29:12,230 --> 00:29:13,310
today than ever before.

600
00:29:13,310 --> 00:29:15,650
Because as we become
more secularized and more

601
00:29:15,650 --> 00:29:18,710
Americanized, the whole
question of recognizing

602
00:29:18,710 --> 00:29:23,280
a common Jewish interest
becomes problematic.

603

00:29:23,280 --> 00:29:26,780

But I think that at least one
of the problems has lessened,

604

00:29:26,780 --> 00:29:28,610

and that is the problem
of fragmentation,

605

00:29:28,610 --> 00:29:30,980

and disunity, and incoherence.

606

00:29:30,980 --> 00:29:34,940

Although one can still see
ample evidence that it's so.

607

00:29:34,940 --> 00:29:35,582

We have been--

608

00:29:35,582 --> 00:29:37,040

Could we say--
excuse me-- could we

609

00:29:37,040 --> 00:29:39,740

say that there was
something, let's

610

00:29:39,740 --> 00:29:48,020

say in the 1940s, something as
a Jewish lobby today in America?

611

00:29:48,020 --> 00:29:50,130

In the 1940s?

612

00:29:50,130 --> 00:29:55,310

There were Jewish leaders who
had access to the Oval Office.

613

00:29:55,310 --> 00:29:58,670

Roosevelt was very close
to Brandeis for example,

614

00:29:58,670 --> 00:29:59,870

called him old Isaiah.

615

00:29:59,870 --> 00:30:04,730

And of course Stephen Wise,
who made a political error

616

00:30:04,730 --> 00:30:08,990

by supporting Al Smith in 1928
much to Roosevelt's chagrin,

617

00:30:08,990 --> 00:30:11,600

and did not get back
into the Roosevelt's good

618

00:30:11,600 --> 00:30:16,220

graces until 1934 when one
of Roosevelt's key advisors

619

00:30:16,220 --> 00:30:18,230

passed from the scene.

620

00:30:18,230 --> 00:30:20,990

But he has been accused
of being obsequious,

621

00:30:20,990 --> 00:30:26,030

and it wasn't until Silva came
along with a love for Taft,

622

00:30:26,030 --> 00:30:30,200

for Senator Taft of Ohio, that
the idea that Roosevelt was not

623

00:30:30,200 --> 00:30:33,290

doing enough and that the
Jewish vote, and Jewish loyalty,

624

00:30:33,290 --> 00:30:36,890

and Jewish resources, and Jews
as packagers and merchandisers

625

00:30:36,890 --> 00:30:38,600

of American politics--

626

00:30:38,600 --> 00:30:40,610

that those kinds
of leverages could

627

00:30:40,610 --> 00:30:43,310

be removed, that
the whole question

628

00:30:43,310 --> 00:30:45,650

of Jewish political
power came up.

629

00:30:45,650 --> 00:30:47,570

I think that in the
overall situation

630

00:30:47,570 --> 00:30:51,080

one must say that if
one measures power

631

00:30:51,080 --> 00:30:54,890

by the number of options it
opens up for a community,

632

00:30:54,890 --> 00:30:57,800

American Jewry was
fairly powerless

633

00:30:57,800 --> 00:31:00,430

and is not much
more powerful today.

634

00:31:00,430 --> 00:31:04,670

One of the problems, perhaps
with the entire Middle East

635

00:31:04,670 --> 00:31:07,550

problem in American
Jewry is that many people

636

00:31:07,550 --> 00:31:10,970

assign American
Jewry a role which

637
00:31:10,970 --> 00:31:12,860
it is not able to fulfill
because it does not

638
00:31:12,860 --> 00:31:14,030
have the power.

639
00:31:14,030 --> 00:31:16,640
And that is a rather
strange thing to happen,

640
00:31:16,640 --> 00:31:19,070
because we have a lesson
that what happened--

641
00:31:19,070 --> 00:31:21,980
the last Jewry that
assigned us American Jewry

642
00:31:21,980 --> 00:31:25,820
responsibility, which it did
not have the power to fulfill,

643
00:31:25,820 --> 00:31:27,740
paid for it with its
lives in the sense.

644
00:31:27,740 --> 00:31:29,540
That is German Jewry.

645
00:31:29,540 --> 00:31:31,090
Yes.

646
00:31:31,090 --> 00:31:48,000