Mm-hmm. I'm going to stop a couple times [INAUDIBLE] the noise and the-- OK, guys.

[INAUDIBLE]

Tell us when--

Tape speed.

You've got speed?

Yes.

One second. Can you go ahead and just talk for a second?

Oh, he needs a volume check.

Voice?

Yes, please.

One, two, three. One, two, three.

Little more.

Testing, testing, testing.

Thank you.

Thank you. Any time.

How extensive was the Polish underground?

It was very extensive because, in addition to people who were organized-- and I believe people who were organized were probably no more than 400,000-- there was a hinterland, the people who were supporting by offering hiding places or any kind of help so that, frankly, we could operate, mainly because of this kind of spontaneous assistance from people who are not themselves organized, but were ready to accept risks and to help.

Had this whole state essentially gone underground? And what kind of services were--

Well, it was really an underground state. They were called underground courts, underground justice. And there were underground universities. There was a whole underground life, really.

And it complies with the entire society, really. So Jan Karski called his book published in United States during the war The Story of the Underground State. And it was the underground state.

Who was getting prosecuted in those courts?

Oh, the traitors, collaborators with the Germans. This was the court to sentence the people who were guilty of collaboration with the enemy. Also, the people who were voices denouncing Jews were also put before this court and executed-- but Gestapo people, particularly cruel Germans.

And it was also a kind of psychological warfare, because the man who was sentenced would first get the sentence. And then he would be killed. Or he would get a warning that he's going to be put before this underground court.

But this was a regular court with attorneys. They were mostly professional judges or professional lawyers. So they were regular courts. And they were using the Polish Penal Code.

And all these spontaneous organizations and pre-war political organizations, they all came together and supported this unified system.

Correct. There were some groups that did not belong to it. Extreme right-wing groups did not belong to this underground state, and communists. Otherwise, there were people of all possible outlooks.

They were nationalists. They were social Democrats. They were Catholics, all kind of groups-- peasants, the whole spectrum of political views, with the exception of extreme rightists and communists.

Were they a problem?

They were a problem, particularly communists. But also, the extreme right wing were problems.

How did you get your supplies? And what supplies were especially important to you?

What?

How did you get the supplies the Underground needed?

Well, the money and weapons did come from London. They were parachuted. There were some weapons that were bought from Germans. Or we simply attacked the German units and took the weapons. But supply of money would come mainly from Paris and London, from outside.

What other supplies were really crucial to your efforts?

Mostly weapons, but money as well, because people had to live from something. If somebody lost his legal life-- so say he had to live with forged documents-- he couldn't work. So he had to be put on the payroll. So money was extremely important under growing pressure to buy papers.

So if you had the money, you could get any of the other things you needed.

Yes, including even weapons. But one could buy weapons from some German soldiers, weapons and ammunition.

What sort of risk did you-- did you have to personally undertake a lot of high risk?

Oh, yes. I had to risk my life very often. Any crossing of the border with forged documents and with compromising material was very risky. Moving around in Germany, being a Pole, was very risky, even considering that I didn't speak good German. Crossing from Warsaw to Stockholm was not an easy matter.

I don't want to advertise myself, but people were taking considerable risks. Many people died. Many people were arrested and died. I was very lucky.

How afraid were you at the time, or you just--

I really had probably no imagination because, as I told you before, I was once scared to death when a Jewish girl with very characteristic Jewish features asked me that I-- that she should take me on the arm to cross the so-called [GERMAN] sperre where Germans were checking. I knew that if they would arrest her, I would be executed as well. So I was afraid.

I was very much afraid before the parachute training. It was a kind of a suicide, really, to jump out of the plane. It was a-

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But otherwise, I got used to it. I never thought about dangers and risks. And I was not very much afraid, simply because I was not thinking about what may happen. This was the best thing to do.

How much initiative did you have to take versus systems that were in place for you?

Every day, every step. It all depended on my initiative, on my concepts, my ideas-- how to act, what to do, how to avoid dangers, how to find the people who can help. You are left to your own resources, mostly.

What prepared you for this?

What?

What do you think prepared you for this kind of activity?

Motivation, I think. I did want to serve my country and to help to defeat the Germans.

Tell me a little bit more about the propaganda campaign, its actual end.

Well, it was psychological warfare. The main purpose was to demoralize the Germans by all kind of tricks. For instance, instruction, how to behave to avoid frost at the East Front, which was so terrible-- the instructions, to frighten anybody going to the East Front, to Russia. That's just one example.

For instance, the Germans in Warsaw would get secret instructions that the gas attack, chemical weapon attack by Russians, is expected in Warsaw and that they should go to the such-and-such office to collect gas mask. You see? But they are not allowed to tell Poles about it, because there are not enough gas masks.

We knew there were no gas masks at all. And so these Germans would make use, would come for gas masks. They were told, we don't have any gas masks for you, which would spread panic, of course.

For instance, we would send the secret instructions-- no, not secret, open instructions-- that there is such-and-such anniversary in the Nazi movement, and the day is free from work. It was not. But if every worker and every engineer in a big factory producing weapons-- they would not come to work. And it would be a terrific waste of manpower. You see?

We were forging secret forms of all kind of Nazi documents. And all kind of managers, directors, important people would get an order. For instance, the important engineer in Munich would get an order to go to the party meeting in Hamburg. So he would put his SA uniform on him to go to Hamburg to say that you are a victim of a joke. But he would not be at work. It would inflict considerable damage to work machinery.

And so it was a kind of psychological sabotage, which was extremely effective. And above all, to give the Germans the impression that there is an anti-Nazi resistance movement which, in fact, did not exist-- that there is a anti-Hitler plot. All this had certain psychological impact on Germans. And I think we were pretty effective in this.

Were you thinking up a lot of these schemes?

No. My job was really to organize the network and distribution. And the others were thinking about finding the ideas how to do it.

Did you have any sense of how effective it was?

We did, because we did have all kind of secret German documents how to fight it. And Germans were out of their way to try to find us, to arrest us, and so on. And then we had a report from the British Intelligence Service, which found that

this is a very effective job. We got a lot of praise from the British for this kind of propaganda. They did have their own black propaganda.

And we were trying my-- one of my jobs was to establish cooperation between British black propaganda, which was mostly by radio, but radio which were posing as the German underground radios. And the man who was conducting it was a genius by the name of Sefton Delmer. I met him. And he praised our effort very highly. He respected what we were doing.

What was your biggest challenge in setting up this distribution network?

Well, to travel-- travel with forged documents, with compromising material, and with the uniform of a railway man without good knowledge of German. There was a considerable risk in it. But it was fun. I consider it to be the most fascinating part of my life.

Was it easy to recruit people for this?

It was easy. Too many people were-- there were too many volunteers. You had to be very selective. But people did want to go to work for us and were really contemptuous of the risk of life.

Now, when you were in London, you were there doing what?

Well, I arrived right after the Teheran on 11th of December, '43. And I left on, I believe, 14th of July, or maybe-- no, maybe on the 11th of July, '44. And I was in [? Riche ?] Poland on 25th of July, just before the Warsaw uprising. And I was sent there after the collapse of the uprising back. And we reached-- it was a long journey. We reached London on 22nd of January, '45. This was the last trip.

Your first trip to London-- why were you sent there? What was your role? What was your responsibility?

Emissary-- the men who were bringing some very important messages, oral briefing. I had a mission. And also, of course, I had my microfilms with me. But they were important reports from the commander in chief in Poland to the Polish commander in chief in London and to the Polish government. And my main mission was to brief and to tell people.

I met Anthony Eden. I met at least five other members of the war cabinet. It was Ernest Bevin, Archibald Sinclair who was the minister of the airforce. Lord Selbourne, psychological warfare-- Morrison, Ernest Bevin was labor. And at the end, I met Churchill. This was my last meeting. I met many parliamentarians, many journalists.

What kind of information were you taking to London?

About the underground activities, about the situation there, about our plans of action. And above all, we were trying to really get support in view of the coming danger from the Soviets. It was not only a fight against the Germans. We were then already facing great danger of the Russians, of the Soviets.

And my mission was really to convince the British and the Americans that they should, in some way, help us to resist Soviet designs to subjugate Poland and the rest of the area. This was one of my most important missions. And one of my mission was also to report about genocide of Jews. This was a high-priority mission. I got instructions to go to the-- very high priority.

Now, when you met with Mr. Eden and some of these other ministers, what kind of response did you get from them?

Well, it was friendly. There was interest, because it was unusual to have an emissary from occupied country. And at the same thing they're like, what can we do for you? Do you want us to make a war with Russia to defend Poland? How can we help you?

I was right in the middle of the game between Joseph Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt with Poland in the middle. And I was trying to use this influence. I also was telling everybody I could about the genocide, about the Holocaust. And I met with disbelief when I talk to the Jews from Joint organization with some rabbi from New York.

I was in the presence of Schwartzbart, who was a Polish Zionist, an important political figure. I sensed that they don't believe me. And only one high-level British intelligence officer was really moved by my story about the Jews. And he told me-- and the same way was told the same story by Ignacy Schwartzbart-- don't tell people the 2.5 million Jews were killed.

Nobody is going to believe you. It's something beyond imagination. They will say you exaggerate. Tell the individual stories. Tell what you saw. Use examples. But don't use statistics, because they will not believe you.

And I was trying to use it. But when I and my wife went-- after the war in '76, when I was writing my war memoirs, we both went to London to the archives, to Her Majesty's records office. Plenty of documents were already declassified. And I found a lot of documents concerning myself the reporter Anthony Eden wrote, after meeting me, addressed to Churchill.

In all these reports-- nothing about what I said about the Jews, not one word. I spoke to the intelligence officers. I spoke to Eden, to others. In all the reporting, any reference to the Jews were not repeated.

And then I was interested to find if the same story was with Jan Karski, who was one year before me. And I found a report of Anthony Eden on his conversation with Karski in the documents of the British War Cabinet. It was printed and distributed-- not one word about the Jews.

So I sent it to Karski. And he wrote me back saying, look, I told Eden when I was describing the situation in Poland. I told you about what's going on with the Jews-- not one word, not one word.

And the main reason-- I think you had to differentiate between two categories of people. There were people who simply didn't believe, because this was something beyond their imagination. There were Jews. Jews from United States I talked to, and British Jews, simply didn't believe. They didn't believe that there is a possibility of mass killing in a conveyor belt method, like in a factory, or in a butchery. You just mechanically kill people, one after the other.

They didn't believe it. And they were suspecting me of some kind of ulterior motives. They said, well, why a Pole should exaggerate? Well, because he's anti-German, and he would like to have as harsh terms imposed on the Germans after their defeat as possible. That's why he's exaggerating.

But as far as such people as Eden is concerned, or members of the cabinet, they were very well informed, because they discovered it after the war. For instance, a very high level Nazi official whose name is known was passing to a Polish intelligence officer in Berne, in Switzerland, information about the plans of final solution well before they started to implement it. And I know that this report was passed on to British and to Americans.

They knew, but they didn't-- they were afraid that, if this war become known publicly, it will generate the pressure from the Jewish communities and general public for some action that would divert limited military resources from the military targets to the targets that are, in their view, irrelevant from the military point of view. And that may prolong the war. I don't remember if it was Eden or Devin-- Bevin, rather, Ernest Bevin-- who said, well, the only way we can really save the Jews is to win the war. And the more we can focus on military targets, strategic military target, the better to the Jews.

I think they refused to bomb the railway track to Auschwitz because they believed that they would be repaired in a matter of days or hours, but the planes may be lost. The planes, which could be used to bomb the important target in Germany, would be diverted from the target. And they were wrong, because the greatest tragedy of Jews was not just their deaths-- indifference of the world.

They were absolutely lonely in the face of the death. It was in the-- they realized, well, the world doesn't care about the

methods we are killed, about this dimension of the crime. We are lonely. You see? And this was-- in my view, it was a crime not to do something. It's a kind of a moral relief-- that we tried to do something to save you.

What was your impression of Eden and Churchill?

Well, Churchill was not very friendly. I had only 10 minutes. And I was so intimidated by his appearance and some kind of impression-- well, why really this young man is taking my time, this kind of attitude-- that I lost myself. I was not good. My performance was not good, because I was so nervous that I didn't perform well. It was tragic.

But with Eden, I was pretty lucid. And as I said, he was very, very friendly. When I showed him the photographs of Warsaw with some underground descriptions of the war on the walls and all that, he said to himself, poor Warsaw. But there was the attitude, well, we cannot do anything for you. You have to accommodate yourself with the Russians.

We cannot save you. We cannot save Poland. You have to make your war effort, to contribute, and to try to find some compromise with Stalin. That was the message, basically.

Discouraging.

Discouraging. It was the worst time of my whole life-- appeasement, total appeasement.

When you returned to Warsaw-- I'm watching the clock also-- was right before the uprising, the Polish uprising.

Yes.

What were you doing during the uprising?

I was in charge of the insurgent radio station called Blyskawica, Lightning, which was broadcasting literally from the front line, because we were trying to be as close to the Germans as possible, because then they couldn't bomb us from fear they would hit their own soldiers. And we were broadcasting. I was in charge of broadcasting in English.

My own English was not good enough at that time. And I had a man who was bilingual. He was half British, half Polish. I wrote. He would translate it. And he was the announcer.

And we knew we were monitored by extremely sophisticated equipment in Caversham, in London. And monitoring bulletins would land on the desks of all high-level people, decision-making people, editorial offices. So it was an effort worthwhile. Even now, the old quote that we are saying would get through in German and all that-- is still there on the record.

During the uprising, did the home army have the support of or instructions from London?

No. We had some parachute-- some weapons, and ammunition, and food parachuted. It was not enough. But even without this kind of help, the uprising would not last 63 days.

Then we had one at the very end when the uprising was in its agony on the 18th of September, there was a mass daylight raid by American so-called fortresses so that the sky was covered by American planes. And they dropped thousands of parachutes with weapons, ammunition, and food.

But these were the last days of the uprising. We were holding a very small part of the city. So most of it went into the German hands, because they couldn't hit the small areas we were still holding.

Was there Russian support during the uprising?

Ah, only appearances of it. No, they wanted us-- they wanted Germans to finish us. I could see them with my eyes on the other side of the river. The city is separated by the-- divided by the River Vistula. They were on the other side

waiting until Hitler finish us.

Was London supportive of what you were doing at this point?

Who?

Your London government.

Of course. They were supporting. But they were helpless. It was a government in exile. All they could do was to back British and the Americans to send us ammunition, weapons, food, medical supplies.

How organized was the uprising?

It was well organized. Otherwise, we would not hold for 63 days. Again, it was a liberated city, really, with its own life. But communication was very well organized. For instance, we were using sewers, because the areas of the city were isolated. And communication between the areas we were holding were mostly through the sewers.

What kind of messages were you sending to London?

Well, information about the fighting, about our needs. This was our daily report of what was going on in the city.

Were you in your radio tower when the under-- [INAUDIBLE]

No.

--when the uprising started?

The studio was on this very-- either in the underground in the cellars, or on the first floor. We moved from place to place. We couldn't be in the same place all the time. And the normal transmitter was outside.

But you weren't really in the streets when all of this activity--

Well, we had to move through the streets.

What was happening?

We were under the bombs, under fire all the time. We had a kind of tunnels. Or we were-- to avoid the streets, which were under fire, there were corridors. The walls were so that you could travel from cellars to cellars under the houses to avoid the streets. It's the whole underground labyrinth of communication.

Did everything happen in a synchronized fashion? All of a sudden, one day, at an appointed hour, the city--

Well, yes. This was 5:00 PM, August 1. There was so-called zero hour when it did start.

Yeah.

You have 13 minutes.

OK.

I don't think I really told you all about the Jewish aspects, because you are mainly interested in non-Jewish aspects. But if this is the Holocaust Museum--

What else can I--

What kind of-- depends on you, what questions.

I feel like I've asked you a number of questions. And I think you have talked about your relationship with the Jewish people, your obligation to-- your mission to go tell London about what was happening to the Jews. If there are areas that you feel I haven't asked you about because I maybe don't know to, please.

Uh-huh. Well, only my personal experiences, which I described in my book. For instance, when I was going to-- it was the time of the agony of ghetto when, really, people were starving. And although it meant a sentence of death for any Jew to go outside the ghetto, because he would be killed on the spot by any German patrol, people were so made so desperate by starvation that they would take any risk to go outside through their own means and ways to beg for food, or for money, buy food.

And this is something that I will never forget in my life-- when I was going to a town hall to do some business there. And this was probably the spring of '43, or maybe earlier-- earlier. And I saw a young Jew who was sitting on the pavement with his back on the wall. And his head was just on-- like this, you know.

And there was a cap on the payment full of money. People were dropping some notes and some money. And he was just sitting there. So I came.

Look, if you will sit here, the first patrol will kill you. Take your money, buy your bread, and disappear. And I remember he just raised his head and look at me very intensely. And he was really a living skeleton, but he had beautiful black eyes.

The boy was no more than 16, maybe 17. And I saw that he wants to tell me something. He couldn't. So I said to him, look, I have to leave, but I will be back. Go to this church. There was a church nearby. Go inside to wait for me. I'll be back. And I left him.

20 minutes later, I left the office where I had some business. And I saw a small crowd around this place. So I came there. And the boy was still there with his head like this, sitting in the same position, but he was dead.

He had no force to really stood, go, buy something, and escape. He didn't want to tell me, probably, that I wish I could follow your advice, but I have no strength to go. So I will remember it always, this intense looking and these black eyes of the young fellow who just wanted to me tell something he couldn't.

And also, I remember-- and I just described it. When I went to a court-- and this was some problem in my civil life. I was a manager of a house and collector of rent. And I had some question. I had to go to court.

Now, the building of the courts-- some windows were to the Aryan side, to the Christian side, the other to the ghetto. And this was probably the beginning of '43 when there were only 70,000 Jews left in the Jewish district. And on that day, the Germans started again the transports to the death camps. And I was in the courtroom.

There was some trivial case against somebody who probably stole a sack with wheat or something, trivial problem. And outside on the street, there was this terrible drama of Jews who were herded. And they were running towards this place where they were boarded on the train.

There were children. There were women. There were mens. I remember somebody was pushing a cart with the sick Jews who were limping. There were almost dying people. And these Germans who were drunk with their whips, beating these people, and pushing them-- [SPEAKING GERMAN] quicker, quicker, quicker, and all that.

And there was some lady who was well dressed. And she was holding money in her hands and had a child, small child. And she probably wanted to bribe her way out. So she stretched this money towards the Gestapo man. And he just beat her with her whip so that she lost balance. And the child was dropped on the pavement.

And there was an old Jewish woman who was so desperate that she stretched her hands toward this guy and said, Hitler, the grass should-- how did she say this? The grass should cover your house, or something of that sort. And I was told later this was a old Jewish saying.

And I didn't want to see what would happen. I knew that she would be shoot or killed in some way. So I turned from the window. There was a silence in the courtroom. The judge was speechless. He was just-- couldn't concentrate because of these terrible shouts from outside and all that.

I remember that, years later, I was stationed in Munich as the director of the Polish service of radio free Europe. And my wife and I went to Berchtesgaden and looked at the house of Hitler, which was blown up by Americans. And believe it or not, in these ruins, there was bathroom. And grass was everywhere between this-- how you call it? Between bricks or [? tilts ?] everywhere was grass. So this terrible shouting that grass cover your house became true.

Anything else you want to say?

Well, that's more or less all.

OK.

More or less all. It was unspeakable misery of human beings. And I didn't care whether they were Poles, Jews, or Gypsies. It was unspeakable tragedy. And no words can really convey.

People who were condemned to death only for one kind, and they were alive. And total destruction of people-- of their race, their religion, their heritage. And above all this, this process of wives who were losing first their husband, then their children and, in the end, they were killed. This was unspeakable tragedy with no precedent.

I mean, Poles suffered. They were martyrs. There was not one single Polish family without some victims. But a Pole had a chance to survive. Jews had no hope, no chance. It was a miracle if you would survive. Yeah. OK.

Yes, Thank you.

That's all.

Thank you. [INAUDIBLE]