

-TITLE-MOGENS STAFFELDT
-I_DATE-OCTOBER 21, 1981
-SOURCE-INTERNATIONAL LIBERATORS CONFERENCE
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT, HEAVY DANISH ACCENT
-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-DURATION-35 MINUTES
-LANGUAGES-ENGLISH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

0:00:02 Mogens, as a Dane, participated in the International Liberators Conference because there were about 7,000 Jews in Denmark and only about 450 of them were taken to Germany. Mogens was active in the rescue operations that relocated most of Denmark's Jews to Sweden. Mogens was twenty-seven when the war began. In May, 1942 he started printing illegal books with a bunch of other students. He and his wife would sit night after night translating into Danish and then typesetting various texts. Mogens opened his own book shop in Sept. 1942, and it soon became the setting of clandestine meetings of leaders from Denmark's various resistance groups. mogens says he did not seek out the rebels, but was approached by them because he was known in Copenhagen as an anti- Nazi. He joined Hanketanska (sp), the largest sabotage group in Copenhagen.

0:04:15 In October 1943, a German sea officer in Denmark named Duckwitz tipped off the resistance about the impending deportation of the Jews five days before it was to happen, on October 4. Mogens was distressed; he had a lot of Jewish friends. They decided to stop their sabotage work until they could help Jews get to Sweden. He organized members of over 16 sabotage groups, with about 200 he had worked with for a couple of years and trusted. He told his employees that for the next fourteen days the store was not a book shop but a travel agency. In that period of time, he and his group were able to arrange for the escape of over 700 Jews to Sweden. They were very organized.

0:07:55 Many of the Jews Mogens helped escaped were friends or friends of friends. He contacted them personally, traveling to their houses night after night, visiting at least 100 or 150 homes. Often, Jews did not come to the shop themselves but sent Danish Friends. Mogens relayed a time, place and person the Jews were supposed to meet, saying, look for the man with the newspaper" or "the man with the flower'. The saboteurs would then meet Jews and escort them to a boat that would take them to Sweden.

0:10:30 Mogens does not feel special because of the work he did - many others also risked their lives. He says it was his duty as a Dane, as a human being. He feels Denmark, as a country, was unique in its relationship to its Jewish citizens throughout the Holocaust because there was no history of anti-Semitism in Denmark. Jews were well assimilated. His organization could not have succeeded without the help, or at least the implicit support and averted eyes of most of the Danish people. According to Mogens, the resistance movement swelled from about 100 people to over 700 people in Denmark after the action against the Jews. This shows Danish outrage over the mistreatment of Jews.

0:13:18 Mogens and his brother were arrested on Feb 16, 1944 in his shop. They had just planned a major operation on the eastern border. They wanted to wait for British help in the form of parachuted supplies but the local people got antsy and went ahead without waiting. Some saboteurs were arrested and they revealed the names of Mogens and his brother to the S.S.

0:15:19 After they were arrested, they spent eight months in jail in Copenhagen. They were then moved to a concentration camp in southern Denmark called Fustenal(?). Fourteen days later, his brother was called and sent to Germany, where he later died. A few days later, the guard called Mogens and set him free. He was astonished -- he found later that his release was the result of a clerical error. He went underground and the Germans never caught him again.

0:18:22 Mogens was never incarcerated with Jews, and he never was in contact with any helpful Germans except for Duckwitz. All the Jews came back to Denmark after the war, and Mogens reestablished contact with many of them. His wife and infant son had fled to Sweden after he was arrested, and he was reunited with them, too. Mogens says the Swedes, when asked by the Danish government, immediately agreed to accept the Jews, and most Jews told them they were treated well in Sweden.

0:22:18 Mogens sabotage career consisted mainly of blowing up factories. Many were collaborations between academic people and working-class. In one such action, the group of five or six men placed five bombs. Mogens knows of only one Jew in the resistance groups (not his, but a group with which he worked). His name was Hovitz (SP), a leader in the group. He was a "fine, fine man" who wanted to stay in Denmark and fight the Germans even though many of his friends advised him to go to Sweden.

0:25:25 Germans retaliated for the sabotage. In the summers, Germans would destroy concert halls and even ransack the houses and arrest the families of the saboteurs. These actions only fueled the resistance. Mogens told his wife before he began the resistance movement that there was a 90% chance he would be killed, but she said of course he had to do resistance work, and she would work with him. They set up the book shop together and she worked for the resistance, even through her pregnancy. Two weeks after she had her son, when Mogens was arrested, she went to Sweden on government orders.

0:30:17 Mogens interest in World War II and the holocaust remains avid. He reads many of the relevant publications and often speaks on his experiences to school children. He dismisses revisionist history and says it isn't happening and couldn't happen in Denmark. Mogens thinks the world has learned nothing from the war. As proof of this, he points to all the wars since. This does not depress him, he says, because he didn't expect a transformation; that he knows there will always be some bad in the world.

0:33:55 Mogens says he will always hope that there will always be people in the world who will help all people and see them as human beings. He doesn't see things in broad terms but in personal ones, and he has tried to live his daily life by helping people and treating them well.

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