

KARSKI - 1

C.L.: Let's start at the very beginning. I would like to know what were your first missions. You were a courier for the Polish Government in exile.

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K. Yes. For most of the war I was a liaison officer between the leadership of various segments of the Polish underground , and then a courier between political parties, from time to time the home army, delegate of the Government and the Polish Government in exile. ^{1. Send.} In this capacity ^{first I was sent to Anger, France.} _{P. 7} in November 1940.

C.L.: From Warsaw.

K. From Warsaw - carrying messages to the Polish Government ...

... (They broke my jaw. I have no teeth - I don't like to talk about it. I don't hear well. They were beating me, quite interrogating me. They were beating me with hoses behind the ear.)

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K. Well, Breschov was a little hole in Slovakia and their methods of interrogation were rather primitive - beating, beating, beating. SS men interrogated me, I was supposed to look at him and answer his questions without delay. And then behind me, if I stopped, if I tried to think they would beat me here. Apparently this is

a painful place.

C.L.: On your teeth?

K. And then they beat me on my teeth, they broke my jaw, they broke my ribs. I couldn't take it any more. My bad luck was that they had the Leica . They knew that I was, from their standpoint evidently, a spy. I was sure that it was developed, totally. It wasn't. Mainly, apparently, water did not come to the end and some last 4 or 5 squares, like 38 or something squares, at a certain point SS officer brings it and he says "What is this?". Thinking that everything was destroyed my explanation was "I am not concerned with the war, I have a girlfriend in Switzerland, I lived in Switzerland before (which was true - I gave correct name, street, whatsoever) and I want to escape from Poland, live in Switzerland, get out of this mess. I have nothing against Germans, I don't want to live in Poland, I have had enough of it. I found a man who told me, Give it in Geneva to somebody". I gave a name - fictional. "What is inside?" I asked. "Pictures of the ruins of Warsaw. There is nothing else in this film ." For this he gave me money, and promised that his friend in Switzerland would pay me for it. This is why I have this film ." The SS man now takes it from his drawer, stretches, gives me a magnifying glass and says "Read it". And then to my horror I see the last 4 or 5 squares, not even coded, pure, clear, text, of some report which was

insignificant. Names only, first letters. And then he says "You are lying". So then, - beating, beating, beating. "You must tell us who you are, and who sent you." He was no doubt a cultured man, young, good-looking, efficient, whatsoever. His point was, "You are in the Polish underground, we want to get in touch with your leaders. We want to have some settlement, we are not interested in killing the Poles, we are not interested in destroying your elite, we must find some accomodation so that the Poles will not fight us any more. The war is practically over, it does not make any sense. For this you must enable us to get in touch with your authorities". I was playing the role of being stupid, I did not know anything. Now, I could not take it any more. In my shoe I had a blade- very primitive at that time. I cut both my hands. This is after a cosmetic operation, eventually, in 1943. So at that time it was . They saved me. Apparently they considered that *Bruschov* was not safe for me. They sent me back to Poland, by car, with 2 Gestapo with me. I had good luck, they sent me to *NOVISONCZ*, from where I departed and where I had a liaison girl who was responsible for my trip. They sent me to a prison hospital with Gestapo. Every 8 hours they were changing and treating me, I was badly hurt, my hands were this.

C.L.: You were very important for them.

K. Yes; they wanted to save me, apparently, for confrontations. So my point was,

I had learned it was *Novisonca*, how to establish contact with the girl. I succeeded.

First, there was a doctor, whose name is *Swobibowski*. He still lives in Poland,

I saw him after the war. When he treated my hands he just whispered to me "You

are very sick. Simulate that you are very sick. Stay in the hospital as long as

possible. We will try to do something." So I understood, and I was mortally

sick all the time. Then I wanted to go to confession - "I have committed a mortal

sin, I want to go to confession". In that hospital there was a chapel, and the

Gestapo agreed. So, on wheels, I went to mass, and to confession. And then I played

a luck.(?) A priest, whatever I say is safe. I confessed, got absolution, and then

I stayed. Slovak language is very similar to Polish, and I don't know Slovak. In

Polish I whispered "Father, I have more to say." "What?" "Somebody has to go,

such is the name, such is the address. There will be a young lady - tell her what

happens here.

/ I am Vitold. Tell her Vitold is here. Nothing else. (My pseudonym at that time).

The father answered, "My son, this is confession, this is not politics. You have

no right to ask me this." But then he said "Well, I will think about it".

Two or three days later a nun comes - they were allowed ^{*finimage / -> sense*} - she approached my bed....

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K. Two or three days later a nun enters my room - they were allowed to serve the hospitals. She brought me some apples, some cookies. She approaches my bed, and I recognise her. It was my liaison girl. She put everything down and whispered to me "Yusek notified". Yusek was at that time the most prominent Socialist leader - Yusef Surankiewicz . After the war he served for 18 years as the prime minister of Poland.

C.L.: He was in Auschwitz too.

K. Yes, the same one. He organised my escape. I whispered now to the nun, the liaison girl "Do everything, whatever they want. I cannot go back to the Gestapo. I cannot take torture any longer. Either let them save me or let them give me cyanide.

C.L.: Cyanide, poison?

K. Poison. She returned again, 2 days or whatever it was, brought me some fruit, put her hand under the pillow, "This is cyanide" Very well organised, this is a pill, taped with hair around it. She whispers "Put it under your groin. Don't use it. Yusek told me they will try to save you. Only in extreme take it."

He saved me. Very simply, apparently what I learned later, one of the Gestapo

men was a so-called 'Volksdeutscher'. They bought him, gave him some false documents,

money. He ran also . He did not see that, some few nights (later?), on a signal from Dr Swobibowski; I had to take off all my clothes, naked, get out of my room, cross the corridor, approach a window - the window would be open - and jump! Without thinking of anything else.

C.L.: Completely naked?

K. Completely naked. I jumped down, it must have been about the second floor, and some men with clothes took me to the river, to a boat. I thanked them profusely for saving my life. The guy who later became my friend said "Don't thank us too much, we had orders to save you, but if there were complications, to shoot you. So that's all right, you were lucky." They took me to a little estate which the Germans allowed to function and I spent some 3 months there, first to recover, but secondly because we had a rule in the underground that once you were arrested by Gestapo and then you escaped, you had to pass through a 'quarantine' period. You are not 'cautious' and we have to check on you, observe if you are followed, perhaps you are a double agent. So 3 months passed and I recovered completely. I wanted to go back but they kept me over there. Then they said All right, and sent me back to Cracow, where I spent some 4 or 5 months. This was now 1940. Then in Cracow arrests took place. In fact the then commander of Cracow, was Borkomorowski. So he left Cracow, went to Warsaw and became the deputy commander-in-chief. Eventually, when Robetski was arrested in July 1943 he became commander-in-chief. He writes about me in this book here, of this mission. He left Cracow, and I left Cracow as well. Then came Surankiewicz. In April, I remember at Easter time Surankiewicz (was?) arrested. I had the highest admiration for him. He had saved my life. As a matter of fact I volunteered to the Polish Socialist party that if there was a rescue squad I must be in it. He saved my life, I must contribute something to him. They rejected this, they said "You are intelligentsia and this is a rough, tough job.

You are not good for this kind of thing".

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K. In the summer of 1942 I was thinking about continuing my service as a courier. R1

Among others, I approached the delegate of the Polish Government in the underground - at that time it was a certain Professor Riechankiewicz. He said "Yes, if you want to go it is a little dangerous because you are marked, your wrists are still recognisable, and of course the Gestapo knows you escaped. But perhaps it will work. As a matter of fact, the Socialist leader, Puzak, was against sending me, but I insisted and they agreed. So I went, in the same character, approaching the leadership of every major political party - Peasant Party, Socialist Party, Nationalist Party, Christian Labour Party - with messages from the delegate of the Government. Everyone had the right to ask me to deliver their messages, either to their groups in London, or even to individuals. They trusted my memory, and they trusted my honesty, that I would not make any intrigues. P. 8

C.L.: You did not make any notes, everything was memorised?

K. None whatsoever, everything was in my head. Except one thing: this was in 1942.

Already our equipment was better, already the Americans and British supplied us. I did take mainly microfilm. The size was like American matches, some 3 matches put together. It was melted into a small key, and then melted back. My mission was to hold the key, completely unrecognisable. This I succeeded in carrying with me - I was never arrested during that time. In London, when they developed that microfilm, it represented 400 typed pages. Such technique was already developed (by the) Americans, who had entered the picture and already helped us. So this was the only message. Of course I had not the slightest idea of what was in that key, I only held it. If there was danger, of course I would have thrown it away. Other-

wise it was only my memory. When I agreed, and started to circulate between political parties and the political council - we had a council of the political parties attached to the delegate of the Government. ^② the Jewish leaders learnt about it, ^③ that a courier goes, apparently he is reliable, they learned about me. So the Jewish leaders had their own underground movement. In Poland you had a hundred types of Jews - assimilated, non-assimilated, organised - well I ^{be} assume you know, they had a multitude of political parties, groups, orientations, etc. The most important groups were the Bund and the Zionists. ^{- in/image -} Politically, both of them were incorporated into the apparatus of the delegate, but they were separate. They had their own organisation.

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K. At a certain point the information came from the delegate of the Government that Jewish leaders ^④ wanted to see me, ^⑤ apparently they wanted to use my services. Did ^{you} I want to see them? "Yes, I will". ^⑥ Meetings were arranged, and I met them twice.]

C.L.: When was this?

K. October 1942. At the beginning.

C.L.: At that time the situation of the Jews of Warsaw was catastrophic.

K. Yes. ^⑦ This was at the beginning of October of course, possibly the end of September. By that time the Jewish ghettos in Warsaw, which originally consisted of approximately 400 000 Jews, over 300 000 were already deported between July and August and September. In the ghetto at that time there were approximately 50 000 Jews left.] 0.10

C.L.: All the others had already been gassed in Treblinka.

K. Yes. As a matter of fact, at that time there were some 4 ghettos within the walls of the original ghetto. In some parts the Aryans could move. Other parts were empty, nobody wanted to live in Diepel . The most important was the so-called Central ghetto, around the Platz Muranovsky, I don't know if you visited it. This was the part I was smuggled into ⁶⁸¹³ [So now for the meetings.] A meeting was arranged, _{P.10} there were 2 gentlemen and it was very formal at the beginning. They introduced themselves: "I represent for the sake of this meeting, the Bund"; "I represent the Zionists".

C.L.: They did not give their names?

K. Nobody gave their names. Only Polish leaders - I knew them, I was in contact several times - but nobody was supposed to introduce themselves, nobody was supposed to know my name. We had pseudonyms only with the Polish leaders.

C.L.: Because you knew them.

K. Yes, I knew who they were. Now, those 2 gentlemen. I was never involved in Jewish affairs - as you know, I am not a Jew. So I did not know them, naturally. ^{1/2/44} ~~To this~~ day I do not know their names. Only after the war, in all Polish publications, they mention that the man who represented Bund was Feiner.

C.L.: Leon Feiner.

K. Yes. I never knew ~~know~~ during the war. Even when I reported to London I did not report the name. "The authorised leader of Bund told me this and this". Then the Zionists, in the Polish publications after the war they said he was Bermann.

C.L.: Bermann.

K. They introduced themselves ¹⁰ [and then they told me "We know about you, we know know you are going to London. We also have messages. Will you take messages from us? We are Polish citizens, we feel we are entitled to the service, but this is up to you, Mr Vitold " - this was my pseudonym. I said Yes, I would] Then they

presented their demands.

C.L.: Can you describe the meeting, the 2 men? Did it take place in the ghetto?

K. No. Two houses outside the ghetto. They did not live in the ghetto. The Zionist leader never went with me to the ghetto. On my 2 visits to the Warsaw ghetto the Bund leader accompanied me. Feiner, the Zionist leader, I never met. I never even met the Bund leader again after those two meetings.

C.L.: Let's come back to the first meeting.

K. It was in some old house, cold - it was the beginning of October - they were well-dressed, relatively indistinguishable from the rest of the Aryan area. During the meeting, at various points, they broke down. They were of course exiled, frustrated, shouting, whispering, walking through the rooms, and they were describing their demands, what they wanted. Now I go back in my memory to another world. Do you want me to deal now with those 2 sessions, or with the ghetto?

C.L.: No, the 2 sessions. What did they specifically ask you to report to the world?

K. They gave me several messages. Some, one of them, only to the President of the Polish Republic, Wrackewicz. They specifically forbade ^{id} me to discuss the subject with the Jewish leaders in London. Mainly they were afraid that in their zeal, despair and frustration they might complicate the problem. The problem was, the Germans are physically exterminating the Jews. From what we know, this will continue regardless of the outcome of the war. On a humanitarian basis - the Zionist, ^{as a matter of fact} incidentally, interjected "Christianity has roots in Judaism" - "we feel entitled to expect protection from the Vatican. Sanctions must be applied against Catholics who take, directly or indirectly, any part in Jewish extermination."

C.L.: Did they give you the feeling, or did they themselves have the feeling that what was at stake was extermination, not of individuals but of the whole of the Jewish people?

K. Both of them. They had no doubts about it. The most outspoken was the

Bund leader, in this respect.

C.L.: What did he say?

K. "The majority of Poles consider themselves Catholic" - I repeat now their reaction - "However, there are very many Germans, German officials, who not only are born Catholics, but consider themselves still Catholics. As a matter of fact, Hitler was a born Catholic. From what we know about your Catholic church, we understand the Pope has jurisdiction in excommunicating the faithful. We leave it to the wisdom and the conscience of the ^{President of the} Polish Republic to approach the Pope. You will discuss it only with him, not even with the Prime Minister or the Jewish leaders. We understand diplomatic protocol - only the Head of State can approach the Pope on our behalf to apply sanctions against the Catholics, both Polish and German, and to make these sanctions public. Perhaps it will help a little, who knows? Perhaps Hitler will reflect if excommunication publicly is announced."

C.L.: What they asked for specifically was excommunication.

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→ on reel.

K. They mentioned several times, "We know excommunication is in the jurisdiction of the Pope. There are precedents."

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C.L.: Can you describe the meeting, how long it lasted, how you saw them?

K. Now I go back 35 years...

C.L.: I know it is difficult.

K. No, I don't go back.... (sanglots)

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K. Now, to describe what happened in our conversation: first, I was not prepared for it. I was relatively isolated in my work in Poland. I did not see many things. Thirty-five years after the war, I don't go back. I have been a teacher for 26 years, and I never mention the Jewish problem to my students. I understand this film is for historical record, so I will try to do it. They described to me what was happening to the Jews. Did I know about it? No, I did not. They described to me that the Jewish problem was unprecedented, and could not be compared to the Polish problem, or the Russian, or any other problem. "Hitler will lose this war, but he will exterminate all the Jewish population. Do ^{you} understand ^{it} this? The allies fight for their people, they fight for humanity. The allies cannot forget that the Jews will be exterminated totally in Poland, ~~all~~ Polish and European Jews." They were breaking down, they paced the room, they were whispering, they were hissing, it was a nightmare for me.

C.L.: Did they look in complete desparation?

K. Yes. At various stages of the conversation they lost control of themselves. I just sat in my chair and listened. I did not even react, I did not ask them questions, I was just listening.

C.L.: They wanted to convince you to convey...

K. I think they realised from the beginning that I did not know, I did not understand the problem. Once I had said I would take messages from them, they wanted to inform me what was happening to the Jews. And I did not know, I was never in a ghetto. I never dealt with Jewish matters.

C.L.: Did you know at the time that most of the Jews of Warsaw had already been killed?

K. I did know, but I didn't see anything, I had never heard any description

of what was happening over there. I was never there. It is one thing to know statistics, there were hundreds of thousands of Poles also killed, Russians, ^{Quicks} Serbs, so we knew about it but it was all a question of statistics.

C.L.: Did they insist on the complete uniqueness...

K. Yes, this was their problem - to impress upon me, and it was my mission to impress on all the people I was going to see, that the Jewish situation is unprecedented in history. Egyptian pharaohs did not do it, Babylonians did not do it. Now, for the first time in history ^{actually} they came to the conclusion that unless the Allies took some unprecedented steps, regardless of the outcome of the war, the Jews would be totally exterminated. They could not accept it.

C.L.: This means that they asked for very specific measures to be taken.

K. Yes, so then, (interchangeably) - at a certain point the Bund leader, at a certain point the Zionist leader, what do they want? What message am I supposed to take? They gave me me messages, various messages, to the Allied Governments as such. I was to see as many Government officials as I could. Then, to the Polish Government, then to the President of the Polish Republic, then to the international Jewish leaders, and to individual political leaders, leading intellectuals, approach as many people as possible. And then they gave me segments - to whom do I report what? In these two nightmarish ^{two} meetings I had with them - nightmarish meetings - they presented their demands, separate demands.

C.L.: Did they show some hope in the fulfilment of these demands or not?

K. Some of them, yes. "It must be done". The Polish authorities on certain subjects had so far failed to do their duties, so they were hopeful: "You ~~must~~ ^{may} help us. Certain things must be done; but certain demands, no, they didn't believe themselves.

C.L.: They did not believe what they asked for?

K. No. So now, do you want me to deal with this problem of their demands, what did they want?

C.L.: Of course.

K. The President of the Polish Republic I have covered - intervention with the Pope. Next, to the Allied Governments only, and I was supposed to do my utmost to see whomever my cleverness, my shrewdness, my perseverance would allow me to reach. Only officials, Government officials. Polish Government? Not very important. You will have to talk to the Prime Minister, the Minister of the Interior, the Council of Ministers and officially present to them our demands. What is more important? ^{is} Allied leaders. At that time I did not know, and they did not know, that I would reach ^{also} America ~~too~~ - they did not expect it. So, British Government leaders. The message was: ⁴ The Jewish situation is unprecedented, it has never happened before. Hitler cannot be allowed to continue extermination. Consequently, every day counts. Thousands of Jews are being murdered. The Allied Governments cannot treat this war only from a ^{purely} military strategic standpoint; they will win the war if they take such an attitude, but what good will it do to us? Hitler will lose the war against humanity, but he will win his war against the Jews. The Allied Governments cannot take such a stand. We contributed to humanity, we gave scientists, for thousands of years. We originated great religions, we are humans. ⁷

C.L.: That is what they said?

K. Yes ^{for James &} "The Allies cannot disregard the uniqueness of our problem."
^{→ s. sent.}

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C.L.: They said "Hitler will lose the war, but he will win his war against the

Jews".

K. What good to the Jews would come out of his victory? At times they were almost hateful towards me, they were whispering almost with hatred, "You Poles, you will survive, you will win this war, you will rebuild your country, you will live. You will make sacrifices, but you will survive as a nation. But we are perishing; do you understand, we will not survive this war! We understand, we have no country of our own, we have no government, we have no voice in the Allied council, so we have to use services, little people like you. We are trying our best. Will you do it, will you approach them? Because so far, nothing happens. The Allies are listening to the radio; they are making their way, winning the war, victories. But we are perishing. Nobody is helping us here. So what is the good to us out of all this? Will you fulfil your mission? Whatever you can do - you are a little man - perhaps you will be able to contribute something to this problem.

"Approach the Allied leaders. We want an official declaration of the Allied nations that in addition to their military strategy, which aims at securing victory - military victory in this war - extermination of the Jews forms a separate chapter and the Allied nations (must?) formally, publicly announce that they will deal with this problem - that it becomes a part of their overall strategy in this war. Not only the defeat of Germany, but also saving the remaining Jewish population. Once they make such a declaration - they have an airforce, they drop bombs on Germany, why cannot they drop millions of leaflets on the German population, informing the German population exactly what their Government is doing to the Jews? Perhaps they don't know. But they have data, they have statistics, radio, other means. We will give the names of the officials, German officials. We offer statistics - the data is available. Let them inform the German people

officially, as the Governments, of what the German Government is doing. Let them officially, publicly, inform the German people, 'We, the Allied Governments, expect the German people will exercise pressure, whatever pressure you can exercise, on your own Government, that they stop this, whatever harm they did.' Every day counts. They must do it now."

C.L.: Did they have an extraordinary feeling of urgency?

K. Yes, naturally, day after day extermination continued. This was only August 1942. Now, "Let them make an official declaration, a public declaration that if the German nation does not offer any evidence of trying to change the policy of their Government the German nation will have to be held responsible for the crimes their Government is committing. ^{And now,} If there is no such evidence, (~~they~~ are to announce) publicly, officially, ~~that~~ certain objects in Germany will be bombed, destroyed as ^aretaliation for what the German Government is doing against the Jews. The bombing which will take place is not a part of the military strategy - it deals only with the Jewish problem. Let the German people know before bombing takes place, and after it takes place, that this was done, and will continue to be done, because the Jews are being exterminated in Poland. Perhaps it will help. ~~This~~ they can do." ^{it-}

C.L.: I think it was Bermann who said...

K. Yes, I think he was more Zionist... but the most outspoken was the Bund leader, Feiner apparently. Then - "Our situation is unique. We understand ~~that~~ many people may also feel helpless about what to do. So we present their demands also, which we know ourselves, ~~since~~ probably they cannot do ~~so~~. But we have to present those demands! They were like madmen, both of them. At a certain point they were grabbing me - "Do you understand, do you understand? Let them announce that German prisoners of war, having been informed of what happens to the Jews, still profess allegiance to their Government. Let them be held responsible for those crimes. There

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are many German nationals in the Allied countries. Those Germans - and we understand they are allowed to do it - who profess allegiance to Germany still, having been informed of what happens - let the allies hold them responsible. We understand, perhaps they will not do it, but we have to advance these demands. Young man, do you understand, do you understand, we have to do it to show them. It has never happened before in history, what is happening to our people. Perhaps it will shake the conscience of the world. This you will give to the Government officials, whatever officials you are able to reach."

C.L.: Did they ask even - ~~as you write in your book~~ - for the execution of these Germans who were in the hands of the Allies?

K. If it was necessary, execution - holding them responsible.

C.L.: And you protested against this?

K. At that time I was already an educated man, I had studied law. But my curriculum was international law, and this was against international law. "Do you realise they will not do it?" They said "We know, but we want you to say it, to show them that this is again and again a unique situation, and unprecedented actions have to take place. ^{whatever} This is on my mind, that perhaps it will help. Let them try, whatever. The Allied Governments, the Allied nations, cannot disregard the Jewish extermination. They cannot just look for military victory". And then, like madmen, walking in the room -

"Do you understand, do you understand this?"

^{"I will"}
So this was one mission. Next: "There are representatives of Polish Jews.

They take part in the national council in your Government (C.L.: in London?)
in London. Probably they cannot do too much. ^{for / may 8 -} We do not doubt that they are trying to do their best.

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... "Probably the representatives of the Polish Jews in the Government cannot do more, but there are international Jewish leaders. For centuries we hear that they are so powerful, so influential in every country - in England, America, France - what are they doing? we want evidence. We don't see evidence. They send us money - it is insufficient, by the way, the amount of money we receive. It is totally insufficient. But we don't see any evidence, what else do they do? Where is their influence? Reach as many as possible, and tell them this. They must do more, we don't know what they can do, but we want to see that they are doing more for us. "

C.L.: But what did they request precisely from the Polish Jews in the Government?

K. There were also precise demands: my message was, apparently they considered three individuals as authoritative representatives of the Polish Jews:

Shmoel Zigelboim, member of the National Council; Dr Schwarzbald, member of the National Council; Dr Leon Grossfeld, who was not a member of the Bund, he was a leader of the Polish Socialist Party. They considered him also as a Jew representing the Polish Jews. I reported to those three. As a matter of fact, when I came to London and began reporting, there was another individual - his name was *Tartakowa*. He wanted to see me, but I refused:

"I have no message for you. If you want to know what I brought, ask Shmoel Zigelboim, ask Schwarzbald, ask Grossfeld." I never saw *Tartakowa*. I know he resented it. ^{Jonow,} As far as the Polish Jews were concerned, this was a message to them, and to the Prime Minister of the Polish Government, General *Czirkowski*, and to the Minister of the Interior, *Wladislaw Mikhowalczik*.

The problem was such: There are some Jews who escaped from the ghetto. They live, some of them, under false documents, they do not look Semitic, and they are living there among other Poles. Secondly, there are Jews who succeeded in escaping from Poland, who are in hiding, many of them living

with Polish families, in the cities and in the countryside.

C.L.: They had succeeded in escaping from the ghettos.

K. From the ghettos, yes. "We know there are Poles who blackmail them, murdered them, denounced them to the Gestapo. We are Polish citizens, *man!* do you understand, we are Polish citizens! There is an underground, you say you are an underground state - you say you are the Government, you must take action against them. General *Schikowski* commander-in-chief and Prime Minister of Poland, must issue orders that the underground movement in Poland will apply punitive sanctions - executions included, secret executions, - kill them! And then publish the names of those whom you have killed, in the underground press and give the nature of their crimes. (The underground press was very widespread) The others will learn this is a risky business. Such orders must be issued."

C.L.: It was a risky business to blackmail the Jews? And to denounce them?

K. Yes. I remember when I reported this to Zigelboim, and it was at a point when he was already totally disintegrated, he burst out "Such orders will be issued. I will blow up *Schikowski*'s office if he does not issue this order." Beginning in February or March 1943 - I have photostat copies - the executions were carried out, and the names were published in the underground press. The nature of the crime was specified and the commitment of the Civil Commission, as it was called: executions will continue against those against whom we have evidence that they committed one of those three crimes. This was to *Schikowski, Mikowalczek* and the Polish leaders *Jews*. I was specifically forbidden ^{by the way} in this respect ~~not~~ to discuss this problem with any of the political party leaders. They suspected some of them might not like it, apparently. Only to those individuals. Next, I was specifically forbidden to discuss the subject with any non-Polish Jews.

C.L.: This meant English Jews, etc?

K. Yes. They were making the point that this may feed anti-Polish propaganda

or antisemitism. We don't want this. We want to survive. This is not a political matter.

C.L.: But they asked something else from Zigelboim and other Polish Jews.

K. What do you mean?

C.L.: To enter into hunger strikes in front of the Government, ...

K. Oh, yes. This was another part of the mission. I carried out this mission.

That was another part.

I did not know at that time. I was not acquainted with the Jewish problem or Jewish activities. Both of them, particularly now the Zionist leader, he was again whispering, hissing to me "Something is going to happen, particularly younger elements - they will fight. They speak about a declaration of war against the Third Reich, a unique war in world history. They say they want to die fighting. By the way, I did not know at that time IRGOUN already was fighting. At that time, October, only later I learned already Jewish military organisations had emerged. They did not tell me about it - only that "Something is going to happen, the Jews will fight. We approached the commander of the Home Army. They need arms. Those arms were denied them."

C.L.: They were refused?

K. Refused. "We know that when they start fighting, we know how it will end. But they are Polish citizens, they want to fight against the enemy. They cannot be denied arms, if such arms exist. And we know you have arms". This message to the commander-in-chief, General Schikorski, to issue orders that those arms will be given ^{to} the Jews. _{on 2nd.}

C.L.: This means that they foresaw... the Warsaw ghetto uprising?

K. Apparently, but I did not know at the time

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K. Well, when they asked me to carry the message complaining against the commander-in-chief of the Home Army, I refused to carry it unless they authorised me to seek an appointment with him to repeat to him what message I am carrying.

C.L.: When they were requesting arms already at this time, this means that they foresaw there would be the Warsaw ghetto uprising?

K. Apparently. I understand... my role in this film. At that time I did not know anything about it.

C.L.: Bermann said - I would like you to repeat this - that it will be the most desperate war...

K. Yes. "The Jews in the Warsaw ghetto are talking about it. They want to declare a war against the Third Reich. Never such a war took place. They want to die fighting. What can we do? We cannot deny them this kind of death." And then, arms. So at this point I refused to carry the message unless they authorised me to seek an appointment with the commander-in-chief of the Home Army, General Stefan Robetsky, who by the way perished one year later, to repeat to him their complaint and ask him for comments. They heartily agreed. "Go, go".

I did go. I did see him. His answer was "I am a military commander. I act within the statute which the Home Army has. I am subjected to orders from the commander-in-chief. I do have arms. I am using those arms - I don't have many of them - first, for daily sabotage by members of the Home Army; secondly, for larger diversionary activities, derailing trains, blowing up buildings, etc; the most important, I act within our general strategy that I cannot waste any arms, I have to keep them because when the end of Germany comes, and when the Russian army pushes them on to our territories and we come to the conclusion that this will be the proper moment, I must

have *can put my hand on it*
use every weapon I *have* to stab Germany in the back. I know that the Jews in the ghetto are contemplating some military action. I understand, and I have respect for it. But militarily it is without any significance. What can they do against the Third Reich? I will give them whatever the commandr^a-in-chief, General Schikorski, orders me to give them. Otherwise it is beyond my jurisdiction. "

C.L.: Did he talk at the time, as I seem to remember, about the ability or inability of the Jews to fight? I think he had some distrust in this respect.

K. Well, as far as I remember he did not consider it as an action of military significance, but he was a military leader. He acted within his statute. It was a moral standpoint, ethical. But he would do it - he must receive orders.

C.L.: He said the same thing as Bermann, when Bermann said "This will be the most hopeless declaration of war."

K. Yes, only Bermann wanted the arms. And he said, "I act under orders. Within the structure of my organisation, only military actions count. I must receive specific orders from the commander-in-chief."

I did carry the message. The message was again^{my to} only Zigelboim, Schwarzbald, Grossfeld and Schikovsky - to nobody else. Particularly again they emphasised "You will not speak about it to any non-Polish Jewish leader; it may arouse anti-Polish propaganda. We don't want that, we are not interested in it.

We want to deal with our own business. I reported it. Because you must realise, at that time my mission was important and I was a little man. Nobody told me what they were going to do with what I told them. The same with General Schikovsy. "Orders will be issued. We will handle this problem, Lieutenant." At that time I was supposed to go back to Poland. "Lieutenant, either you or somebody else will carry orders." What orders he did not tell me. I could not ask him "General, what are you going to do about it?" I understand, and this I realised after the war from the Jewish publications, was that *what*

when the Warsaw ghetto uprising started in April 1943 they did receive some small arms.

C.L.: At the beginning, the first delivery Robetsky made was only 10 pistols.

K. This I have no information about. I understand they gave them some machine guns, some light weapons.

C.L.: Yes, that was later on.

K. Now, was it as a result of my mission, did he receive orders? Or was it on his own initiative? What do I know about it?

At a certain point, I remember, I raised this question. "Those demands are so varied, on such a scale. I can see my situation in London: Zigelboim, Schwarzbald, Grossfeld - what can they do about it? I am sure they are doing their best." So then again, like a nervous breakdown - I think again it was the Zionist - he shook: "So again you are saying impossible! So nothing, nothing, they can do nothing? Tell them: they are Jewish leaders, their people are dying. There will be no more Jews, so what do we need leaders for? We are going to die as well. We don't try to escape - we stay here. Let them go to important officers, in London or wherever they are, and demand action. If it is refused, let them walk out, stay in the street, refuse food, refuse drink. Let them die a slow death in view of all humanity. Who knows? Perhaps it will shake the conscience of the world." They were... like a breakdown: "Perhaps this will help! We don't know! We are trying! They are leaders, let them die!" So then came Schmulzinger (?)

So what do you want me to talk about, Schmulzinger or what?

C.L.: Do you want to talk now?

K. Whatever.

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(plan muet sur Mme Karski, puis...)

